

# Remarks on Building Sustainable Partnerships in Africa

## Remarks

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Good morning. It is such an honor and a pleasure for me to be here, and let me begin by thanking the Foreign Minister. We are very proud that you were educated in part in our country, and we are very pleased to see you in this position. And I thank you for quoting one of my favorite sayings and admonitions about what we are to do with our time on this earth. And I am grateful to you, Foreign Minister Cisse.

Let me also thank President Ndiaye for that warm welcome to this distinguished university. I have been looking forward to being here, a place that has trained so many of the leading citizens of Senegal and of West Africa, and to have this opportunity, joined by a broad cross-section of Senegalese society – government officials, religious leaders, members of the business community and civil society, young people and students, everyone representing the rich mosaic of democracy in Senegal.

I have many fond memories of my first trip to Senegal with my daughter, Chelsea, in 1997. And already last night and today, I have met people who I met for the first time during that visit. I met so many impressive and courageous men and women working to improve rural health, to protect the health of your girls, to be on the forefront of developing the economy. Even then, 15 years ago, I felt the promise and the potential that you were realizing, and I was so excited.

I remember going to Goree Island, I remember a memory of the darkest chapter in our long shared history, and feeling such despair at what human beings are capable of doing to one another, but then meeting with people who were committed to a future of hope and promise. When I went back to the White House, I told my husband he had to go to Senegal. And occasionally, husbands listen. (Applause.) So the very next year, I came back with him. Over 12 days, he took the longest trip to Africa by any American president yet. And he met with peacemakers and entrepreneurs, with students and statesmen and women. And here in Senegal, Bill talked about an African renaissance. Standing on Goree Island, he said, “As certainly as America lies over the horizon behind me, so I pledge to the people of Africa that we will reach over this ocean to build a new partnership based on friendship and respect.” And he followed through. (Applause.)

He followed through on that pledge with initiatives like the African Growth and Opportunity Act, which began opening U.S. markets to African goods, beginning to shift the focus of our relationship from aid to trade. His successor, President George W. Bush, first visited Senegal and other African nations in 2003. And he too was committed to deepening the partnership between our nations. Under President Bush’s leadership, the United States launched two landmark programs – PEPFAR to fight HIV/AIDS, and the Millennium Challenge Corporation to link our assistance with improvements in governance and accountability.

And then President Obama, a son of both Africa and America – (applause) – advanced and personalized America’s commitment in his historic 2009 speech to the parliament in Ghana. He laid out a vision for our relationship designed to build strong institutions embedded in democracy. As he memorably said, “Africa doesn’t need strong men. It needs strong institutions.” (Applause.) I certainly think Senegal has proven that to be true. (Applause.)

President Obama also acknowledged that historically, Western powers had too often seen Africa as a source of resources to be exploited or as a charity cause in need of patronage. And he issued this challenge to Africans and Americans alike: Africa needs partnership, not patronage. And we have tried to build on that challenge. And throughout my trip across Africa this week, I will be talking about what it means, about a model of sustainable partnership that adds value rather than extracts it. That’s America’s commitment to Africa.

The Obama Administration’s comprehensive strategy on Sub-Saharan Africa is based on four pillars: first, to promote opportunity and development; second, to spur economic growth, trade, and investment; third, to advance peace and security; and fourth, to strengthen democratic institutions. Our partnership with Senegal embodies all four of those pillars.

First, when it comes to development, we are building on the progress of programs like AGOA, PEPFAR, and MCC, and incorporating the lessons learned over the past decades. We are pursuing what is called country ownership of development. That means a nation’s own efforts to lift your own people out of poverty, improve health and education, grow your economy, are led, planned, and ultimately implemented by your own government, your own communities, your own civil society, your own private sector.

Now, I know that in some quarters, the phrase “country ownership” raises questions. Some worry that it means donors are supposed to keep money flowing indefinitely while a handful of unaccountable ministers pick and choose how to spend it, or conversely, that it is code for abandoning our partners. Still others fear that country-owned really means government-run, freezing out civil society and the private sector.

Well, I think it is fair to ask these questions, because like many donors, the United States has not always done the best job promoting and explaining what we mean. But as I travel across Africa, I will be highlighting progress we’ve made in translating that phrase into reality. For example, when I am in South Africa, we will be announcing that South Africa will be taking over the management of their HIV/AIDS programs that treat nearly 6 million people a year. The United States has been a partner and a donor, and we continue to provide assistance, but the South African Government and people have said, “This is our issue that we must address with our people.”

Here in Senegal, we are working in the MCC agreement and with USAID to make sure we are responsive to the needs that we hear about from our experts and yours. So when I visited a health center this morning, I saw what we were doing to work with you about malaria and tuberculosis, but I also heard that what Senegal needs is more help with maternal mortality and health for mothers, more help with child survival and increasingly more help as every country in the world with chronic diseases, like diabetes and hypertension. So rather than us sitting in the United States, in Washington, in our office buildings deciding what Senegal needs or wants, we are determined to work with you to listen, to learn, and then to produce results together. (Applause.)

Now, we also believe that good governance and political will matter. Sustainable development hinges on political leaders making good choices to fight corruption and to create jobs, to prioritize investments in health and education, to put in place fair tax systems, transparent budgeting, and other responsible measures. And I heard from the President in our very constructive, comprehensive meeting earlier today about the steps that he is taking in every one of these categories. Because this goes beyond the portfolios of health or development ministers. It takes leadership from the top. And so I raised these issues with prime ministers and presidents, also with civil society, also with the private sector.

But ultimately, in a democracy such as Senegal's, the decisions should lie with the people, with people exercising their rights of citizenship to get the kind of services that you know you need for yourselves and your families. We welcome President Sall's focus on transparency and accountability in government and on independence for the judiciary. We believe his plans to boost agricultural production and reform land ownership rules will be very important. We also wish to help him fulfill his pledge to resolve the long-running conflict in the south. (Applause.) And we are committed to help in every way with the prosecution of former President Habre of Chad. All of these commitments are important ones that speak to the kind of government and country that Senegal is and intends to be. And the United States stands ready to help, as a partner and a friend.

The foundation for our investments in Senegal is a \$540 million Millennium Challenge Compact, one of the largest in the world. Here is what it is intended to do based on the very tough competition that Senegal had to go through in order to receive this grant. It is helping Senegal improve roads, build bridges, irrigate some 90,000 acres of farm fields, make it easier for farmers to get their products to market. In addition to that, this year, the United States Agency for International Development is investing \$19 million to build schools and train teachers, \$17 million to strengthen the food supply, \$55 million to improve public health. I saw the public health money in action at that health center this morning, because what I saw was a well-organized plan that put in one place the services that people will need. Now, that may sound obvious to you, but Senegal is leading in this area. Too many countries still have health services scattered all over. So if you're a pregnant woman who goes for a checkup, but who also wants to get a bed net for malaria protection, you have to go two different places. But at this health center based on the model that Senegal is building, it's more efficient, and it produces results faster. Working together, Senegal has driven child mortality down by 40 percent over the past five years. But there is still more work to be done.

The second pillar of our strategy is spurring economic growth, trade, and investment. Trade between the United States and Senegal rose 20 percent last year. We are really beginning to make progress, but as I told the President, we know there's more we must do to get that number even higher. The IMF recently reported that Senegal's democratic resilience has positioned you to achieve long-term growth, and the United States wants to be part of your success. Indeed, we believe – (applause) – that if you want to make a good investment in the midst of what is still a very difficult global economy, go to Africa. In Africa, you have seven of the ten fastest-growing economies in the world.

But too many businesspeople around the world don't know that. So we're going to do more to try to make sure businesses and investors in the United States know about the opportunities in Senegal and elsewhere across Africa. (Applause.) But in order to be meaningful, it's not just the numbers and the statistics that count. Growth needs to be translated into widely shared prosperity. It will not be a success if a small group of people get richer. What you want to see is sustainable inclusive growth over the long term. And I will be making that point everywhere I stop.

We're encouraging greater economic integration between regional neighbors. If one looks at Sub-Saharan Africa and you look at the barriers to growth, many of those are the barriers that exist between and among neighbors. If countries and regions of Africa traded as much between themselves as countries in Latin America or Asia do, growth would even be faster. So how can we work with you, with your businesses, with your governments to try to create more integration to fuel faster economic growth? We're also working with resource-rich nations to help make sure that their mineral and energy wealth actually improves the lives of their citizens. The days of having outsiders come and extract the wealth of Africa for themselves leaving nothing or very little behind should be over in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. (Applause.)

The third pillar is a commitment to shared security and regional problem-solving. And here, too, the United States and Senegal are working together closely, working to combat terrorism, tackling regional threats such as drug trafficking, supporting peace and security throughout the region and the world. And I especially want to applaud and thank Senegal for your contributions to peacekeeping missions from Cote d'Ivoire and the Democratic Republic of the Congo all the way to Haiti. I hear many compliments about the professionalization, the expertise of the Senegalese military. (Applause.) And we, for one, thank you for that.

We have also welcomed the leadership of the African Union in promoting peace, security, and democracy. The African Union sent very strong messages about Africa's emerging norms by suspending Madagascar, Guinea-Bissau, and Mali after their coups and calling for the restoration of elected civilian governments. And I look forward to discussing the future of the African Union with its newly elected woman chair in South Africa next week. (Laughter.)

With Senegal's participation, the Economic Community of West African States, ECOWAS, has also become a leader in responding to political and security crises. ECOWAS stood up for democracy by opposing the illegitimate Gbagbo regime when it held on to power after losing the election in Cote d'Ivoire. It's coordinating regional responses to transnational threats such as narcotics, piracy, and small arms trafficking. And we are working together to train police, prosecutors, and security forces to help strengthen the rule of law and uphold human rights.

It's especially appropriate to emphasize the fourth pillar of our approach here in Senegal because it is the heart of the American model of partnership, and that is our enduring support for democracy and human rights, our helping other nations and people fulfill their own aspirations. By every measure, democracies make better neighbors and better partners. They are more capable of working together to solve shared challenges. They innovate more. They give people a way to devote their energies to productive political, economic and civic engagement, which reduces the allure of extremism. And open societies offer more opportunities for economic, educational, cultural, and people-to-people exchanges, which are the foundation for peace.

Now, I know there is sometimes an argument that democracy is a privilege belonging to wealthy countries, and that developing economies must put economic growth first and worry about democracy later. But that's not the lesson of history. Over the long run, you can't have effective economic liberalization without political liberalization. Without the rule of law, people with a good business idea or money to invest cannot trust that contracts will be honored and corruption punished, or that regulations will be transparent and disputes resolved fairly, and so many will end up looking for opportunities elsewhere, some even migrating out of their countries of origin. Last year, the World Bank reported evidence that respect for economic freedom and civil and political liberties helps explain why some countries

achieve better long-term economic outcomes than others. So instead of viewing democratic reform as an afterthought, we see it as key, a key building block of sustainable development.

And if anyone doubts whether democracy can flourish in African soil, let them come to Senegal. (Applause.) Americans admire Senegal as one of the only countries in West Africa never to have had a military coup. (Applause.) And we stood firmly behind the people of Senegal as you defended your democracy and your constitution in the recent presidential elections. (Applause.) It was a compelling example for Africa and the world. We saw a handful of musicians and young activists sparking a mass movement with a simple slogan: "We're fed up." (Applause.) We saw diverse civil society organizations rallying together, registering and educating voters. We saw students marching in the streets proclaiming, "My voting card is my weapon." (Applause.)

We saw soldiers and police upholding democratic principles by steering clear of politics. We saw long lines of citizens waiting to vote. We saw civil society activists monitor more than 11,000 polling stations, texting vote counts and reports of irregularities to an independent center in Dakar. We saw perhaps the most sophisticated monitoring program ever deployed in Africa or anywhere else. (Applause.) And in the end, we saw a peaceful transfer of power. We saw democracy reaffirmed. We saw Senegal's traditions preserved. And we joined with the rest of the world in praise and respect for the Senegalese people. (Applause.)

And on a personal note, I have to add – I was particularly impressed that Senegalese voters elected women to 65 of the 150 seats in the new National Assembly. (Applause.) You probably know this, but that gives Senegal one of the highest percentage of women in directly-elected legislative bodies in the world. (Applause.) And of course, it makes perfect sense because democracies must be open to and include all of their people, men and women, not just to vote, but to have the chance to participate and to lead. And Senegalese women took a leadership role during the voting, including the Women's Platform for Peaceful Elections, a network of more than 60 organizations. And the Situation Room, which was such an important clearinghouse – (applause) – it was such an important clearinghouse for information and activism that President Sall made it a point to visit the first day after his victory was announced.

Now sustaining this participation will be critical in the days ahead, because you know things cannot happen overnight. It takes time. But you have a leadership that you have elected that has made public commitments to the changes that you want them to make. And I know from our own work with your new leadership they are absolutely committed to see those changes happen. (Applause.) So we will stand with them and with you as you begin the hard work of translating into reality and results the rhetoric of what happens in a political campaign.

Now the resilience of democracy is being repeated across the continent. We've seen the restoration of constitutional order in Niger and Guinea following coups. We've seen credible elections in Benin, Cape Verde, Liberia, Nigeria, Zambia, and Togo over the last year alone. We've seen freer media, fairer justice systems, more effective legislatures, more vibrant civil societies.

Take Cote d'Ivoire, for example, which last year had to fight off a serious threat to democracy and this year is reaping the economic rewards. The World Bank, the IMF, and the Paris Club have agreed to forgive nearly \$4 billion in debt – \$4 billion in debt. And whereas their GDP declined by more than 6 percent in 2011 during their crisis, it's expected to soar by more than 8 percent this year. And Cote d'Ivoire, because they are now at peace and democratic order has

been restored, has been able to unlock global financing for long-delayed infrastructure projects, including new bridges, hydroelectric dams, and much more.

So democracy and peace pay off. This week, all of us join the people of Ghana in mourning the passing of President Mills, a good man and a good leader for his country. (Applause.) But we are also celebrating the smooth, peaceful, constitutional transfer of power to President Mahama. The Ghanaian people will head to the polls later this year and will have an opportunity to add another accomplishment to one of Africa's great democracy stories.

Earlier this year, I had the privilege of attending the second inauguration of President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf in Liberia, a country that only recently emerged from years of war and economic ruin. There were troubling signs that this last election might reignite the flames of conflict, but Liberia's leaders and its young, democratic institutions proved strong and kept the country on track.

Now I know how hard it can be to keep faith in a democratic system when your preferred candidate or party loses an election. I've won elections and I've lost elections. I know that boycotting or obstructing is no way to advance an agenda or to solve a problem. It's a recipe for gridlock and conflict.

I'm often asked, all over the world, how I could agree to serve in President Obama's Cabinet after we had campaigned so hard against each other. I was trying to beat him, he was trying to beat me, and he succeeded. And I always give the same answer: Because we both love our country. (Applause.) Because that's what democracy is all about, and that's what patriotism is all about. And you know that here in Senegal. And we hope to see that spirit and experience take hold in many more countries in the region. Because as proud as we are to see the successful elections and the peaceful transitions, there are still too many places in this region and across the continent where democracy is threatened, where human rights are abused, where the rule of law is undermined. There are still too many Africans living under autocratic rulers who care more about preserving their grip on power than promoting the welfare of their citizens. Violent extremism, transnational crime, and rampant corruption all threaten democracy.

And we have seen some backsliding because we have seen that in less than a decade, the number of electoral democracies in Sub-Saharan Africa have fallen from 24 in 2005 to just 19 today. Now, that's far better than it was 20 years ago, but not nearly good enough.

And here in Senegal, there are some worrisome developments in your neighborhood. In Guinea-Bissau, no elected president has successfully served a full five-year term, and this past April a military coup once again disrupted constitutional rule. And we thank Senegal for contributing troops to the ECOWAS stabilization force there. The already weak economy is collapsing. Cashew production is forecast to drop by half. But what is growing? Drug trafficking. Rampant corruption, greed, is taking over. And we see a very troubling trend, that Guinea-Bissau, unless the people of Guinea-Bissau with the help of their neighbors and the international community say no, could become a totally dependent state on drug traffickers from Latin America. What a terrible development. The President and I talked at length about what more we could do to help, and we stand ready to do so, because the people of Guinea-Bissau certainly deserve better.

Mali was, by most indicators, on the right path until a cadre of soldiers seized power a little more than a month before national elections were scheduled to be held. By some estimates, this could set back Mali's economic progress by

nearly a decade. It certainly created a vacuum in the North in which rebellion and extremism have spread, threatening not only people's lives and the treasures of the past, but the stability of the region. And recent reports from Human Rights Watch raises concern about alleged torture and extra-judicial killings at the hands of the mutineers.

Now the interim President has returned and we encourage all parties to set aside their differences, work to restore democracy, schedule elections by April of next year, preserve the territorial integrity of the country, reject the appeals of violent extremism.

The African Union has suspended Mali, ECOWAS has imposed sanctions, the United States is holding back funding, and we've continued critical humanitarian assistance for programs in health and food, and we're contributing \$10 million to assist the more than 260,000 Malian refugees who have been displaced. And we're well aware of the greater food crisis across the Sahel, and we're getting more than \$355 million to try to address the food and refugee crisis across the Sahel. I've also dispatched some of my top aides to work with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees to go to Mali, to go to Burkina Faso, and elsewhere to assess further what the needs are. But we cannot and will not resume assistance to the government until the military accept civilian control and a democratically-elected government once again takes office.

Now, Mali and Guinea-Bissau are just two examples. There unfortunately are more. And in places where jobs are scarce and a tiny elite prospers while most of the population struggles, people – especially young people – can turn their frustrations into social, economic, and political change. That's the right channel. But they can also be attracted to violence, to conflict, to extremism out of frustration and anger at what they see happening around them.

It is time – it is past time – for all leaders to accept accountability, to treat their people with dignity, to respect their rights, to deliver economic opportunity and services for all. As I told the African Union in Addis Ababa last summer, leaders who hold onto power at all costs, who suppress dissent to enrich themselves, their families, and their supporters at the expense of their own people, who define democracy as one election, one time are on the wrong side of history. (Applause.) We are seeing that in North Africa, and we are seeing everywhere, where people finally say, "Enough. We're fed up." (Applause.)

So the links between democracy and development is a defining element of the American model of partnership. And I acknowledge that in the past our policies did not always line up with our principles. But today, we are building relationships here in West Africa and across the continent that are not transactional or transitory. They are built to last. And they're built on a foundation of shared democratic values and respect for the universal human rights of every man and woman. We want to add value to our partners, and we want to add value to people's lives. So the United States will stand up for democracy and universal human rights, even when it might be easier or more profitable to look the other way, to keep the resources flowing. Not every partner makes that choice, but we do and we will.

I also acknowledge that some people back in the United States say we shouldn't bother, that we should just focus on America's immediate economic or security interests, not worry so much about the slow, hard work of building democracy elsewhere. But I think that is shortsighted. It's not only in what we see to be the interest of the people of

Senegal and elsewhere, it's also in our interest to have strong and stable partners in the world, and democracies are by far the strongest and most stable partners. So this isn't altruism. This is a strategic commitment to shared prosperity, to common security.

During the recent elections here, many young people and students talked of a new type of Senegalese citizen emerging – active, engaged, committed to democracy. Well, that's the kind of partnership we want with you, and particularly with your young people. This is a young country, and this is a young continent. (Applause.) And we know that young people are now connected to each other in ways that were not imaginable just a few years ago. A young student here at this university knows what's happening not only in South Africa, but in South Asia. You can see what other people are doing, how they're participating, and you begin to say to yourself: What about our talent? What about our potential? What about our future? I am here to tell you we believe in the young people of Senegal and the young people of Africa. (Applause.) And we believe that talent is universal, but opportunity is not.

So what does that mean? We believe that right now somewhere in Senegal a young boy or a young girl could be a scientist that helps discover a cure for a rare form of cancer – (applause) – could be a president in 30 or 40 years, could be an entrepreneur that creates a new business that employs hundreds, even thousands – (applause) – of other Senegalese. We believe that. And we believe the best way to test that is to do what Senegal is doing, to keep doing the hard work of education, of healthcare, of development, and especially in the rural areas, of gender parity, so you don't lose the talents of half the population of Senegal – (applause) – as you build this new future.

We want to advance your aspirations and our shared values. We want to help more people in more places live up to their own God-given potentials. We want this to be our mutual mission. That is the work we are called to do in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It is a race, a race between hope and fear, a race between potential realized and despair imbued in every pore of one's body. It is a race that we are in between those who believe as you and we believe, that there is an unlimited future for those who are willing to work together.

So thank you, Senegal. Thank you for what you have done in your own country. Thank you for being a model in this region, a champion of democracy, a force for peace, prosperity, and progress. And thank you for being a partner and a friend to the United States of America. Thank you and God bless you. (Applause.)