

**Ambassador Zumwalt Remarks
for the Senegal Emergency Health Operation Center Groundbreaking Ceremony
August 16, 2-16**

(As prepared)

Minister of Health and Social Action,
Representatives of the diplomatic corps and UN Agencies,
Representatives of United States Government Agencies,
Members of the Press,
Honorable Guests,

Thank you all for joining us today to break ground for the Emergency Health Operations Center

The concept of an Emergency Operations Center goes back to the Ebola outbreak. In November 2014, the United States and Senegal began working together more closely to detect, prevent, and respond to public health emergencies.

Ministry of Health representatives worked with colleagues from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to define the roles and responsibilities of this Center.

And today, we celebrate a new milestone -- completion of the design and the start of construction of this Emergency Operations Center.

The Government of Senegal has brought leadership and passion to guide our shared effort and strengthen our health partnership.

This center, when complete, will stand as a concrete example of our strong bilateral ties and serve as a bulwark against new epidemic storms.

We hope that the Center may also spur further collaboration among Senegalese ministries because it will provide efficient space for core staff and sufficient space to bring in other ministries responding to public health emergencies. .

The partnership between the Senegalese Ministry of Health and Social Action and the United States Cooperative Biological Engagement Program will not end with the construction of this Center. Both the Cooperative Biological Engagement Program and Center for Disease Control and Prevention will organize simulation trainings and workshops to prepare the Operation Center staff to respond to health emergencies.

We are proud of our combined efforts and our partnership with Senegal. And we believe our partnership will make the world safer.

Thank you all very much.