



**AMBASSADOR LEWIS LUKENS
REMARKS
Codex Colloquium for African and the U.S.
Monday, March 5, 9:00 am
Radisson Blu Hotel**

(As prepared)

Dr. Amadou Diouf, President of the Codex Committee in Senegal,

Joani Dong and her staff at the USDA Foreign Agricultural Service in Dakar,

Karen Stuck and her staff at the U.S. Codex Office in Washington, D.C.,

Lisa Kurz and Alex Singh of the USDA Foreign Agricultural Service in Washington, D.C.,

Esteemed Delegates of the Codex Colloquium for Africa and the United States,

Ladies and gentlemen,

I am delighted to welcome everyone to Senegal and the fifth Codex colloquium for Africa and the United States. This is a great tribute to outreach efforts and support for food safety, through our U.S. Codex Office, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Foreign Agricultural Service, and CCAfrica.

The Codex Alimentarius Commission is an important international body with over 170 members for the purpose of protecting the health of consumers and ensuring fair practices in food trade. Food safety authorities all over the world acknowledge that ensuring food safety must

not only be tackled at the national level but also through closer linkages among food safety authorities at the international level. So I am glad to see a great turnout and commitment to these ideals.

Just as in past colloquiums, you will be talking about where Codex should go in the future, and also about the issues for the near-term Committee meetings.

Through your support of science-based food safety standards, consumers can be more confident in the world's food supply. But I know that with many stakeholders in questions of international food safety, building consensus isn't always easy. Colloquiums like this, bringing together international actors through the Codex Alimentarius Commission, are key to building mutual understanding and identifying standards. We know that this can be a difficult task, and it takes the cooperative efforts of people like you in many countries working together.

The United States has been pleased to have the opportunity to collaborate with African countries in Codex over the last several years. We have many successes to build on, and the future offers many more opportunities as we work for the common goals of promoting food safety and establishing harmonized standards that facilitate trade.

In closing, I would like to thank the U.S. Codex office and the USDA Foreign Agricultural Service for bringing this workshop to Dakar. It is my hope -- our hope -- to foster spirited discussion and especially cohesion in the international community when it comes to food safety. I applaud your presence here today as you collectively continue to advocate for comprehensive solutions. I wish you all a fruitful exchange of ideas to take back and share with your constituents.

Thank you.