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**Saturday, December 15**

**Celebration of PDC Africa**

- Representative from the Ministry for the promotion of Good Governance
- Representative from the Mayor's office of Grand Yoff
- Madame, the President of the Association of Senegalese Alumni
- Madame, the Director of PDC-Africa
- Madame, the Director of the Association of Handicapped People
- Family members of the departed Oumar Diop
- Musicians and dancers from the Zoumba theatre group
- Peacekeepers and U.S. alumni
- Invited guests

I am so pleased to be here today – to represent the Ambassador and also to represent the Public Affairs Section of the U.S. Embassy which I oversee.

At the Public Affairs Section, we have been running exchange programs for decades to promote mutual understanding between our peoples. During this time, we have sent nearly 1,000 Senegalese to the United States on programs like the International Visitor Leadership Program, Fulbright, Humphrey scholarship, and the Study of the United States Institutes, or SUSI. Many alums from these programs, including not only the President of our Alumni Association, but also the Director of PDC, and the head of the Zoumba theatre group – whom I also got to meet earlier in St. Louis. Thank you for being here, it is great to see you.

These exchange participants, after they return from the United States, are what we call alumni. In recent years we have tried to do much more to

support our alumni and make them feel part of the larger American family through our Embassies. Part of this recent support has been to open up competitions for funding, and this is why we are here today.

We are here to celebrate the work initiated by Anne Marie Sow, a 2005 participant from the International Visitor Leadership Program. Ms. Sow's PDC Africa (Peace, Democracy and Citizenship) applied for funding through our Alumni Engagement Innovation Fund Grant, a program to support new and innovative ideas that include many alums. Ms. Sow, working with alums from Senegal and four other countries, applied and succeeded from over 700 proposals considered. This was truly a grand success as it was the first Senegalese project to apply and succeed.

Ms. Sow was awarded a special trophy for her efforts, and it is this trophy before us that we celebrate today.

The award, a grant of \$20,000, was given to support the project's efforts to develop community-level peace, democracy and citizenship *trainers* in Senegal and also other countries in West Africa. Ms. Sow and her fellow Peacekeepers led this effort by putting together a manual to guide them. This manual is also being formally presented today.

Finally, I don't want to finish without mention that the PDC Africa project supports our own objectives for Africa and for Senegal – objectives that are explained in President Obama's Strategy for Sub-Saharan Africa, which he released in June. The strategy has four pillars, one of which is to promote and strengthen democracy on the continent.

Once again, thank you for inviting me to be here, and thank you most of all to Anne-Marie Sow who spearheaded this project. We hope that all our alumni will follow Anne Marie's lead and remain committed to sharing what they have learned upon return.

Now it is my pleasure to offer a certificate from TIWA, the International Alliance for Women, based in Washington, DC, my nation's capital, to Ms. Ndeye Dague Gueye, from the Association of Handicapped people. Congratulations, Ms. Gueye.