



**Speech by Mr Lewis Lukens, Ambassador of the United States of America -
Citizen Certification Awards Ceremony
Theatre Daniel Sorano, Dakar February 12, 2013**

(As delivered)

Your Excellency, Mister President of the Republic of Senegal,
Mister Prime Minister,
Distinguished Ministers,
Distinguished Ambassadors,
Honorable Members of Parliament,
Honorable elected local officials,
Dear Forum Civil and Enda Graf coordinators,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Dear Recipients,

It is indeed a great pleasure and honor for me to take part, alongside His Excellency President Macky Sall, in this "Citizen Certification Label Ceremony."

First of all, I would like to welcome this excellent initiative which is the result of a synergistic partnership between the State, civil society, local communities, grassroots organizations, and donors.

For more than two years, all these actors have helped develop a tool to measure local governance based on citizen participation.

With support from the governments of the United States and the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, Senegalese organizations created specific criteria that have allowed us to provide "Citizen Certification" to 25 rural collectives. We are really proud that these are the results of a shared, voluntary commitment by all these actors.

This model of inclusive and participatory partnership reflects the quality of local democracy and the sustainability of the decentralization process in Senegal.

Nearly all US government-funded programs, in health, education, natural resource management and local governance, help to strengthen Senegal's decentralization policy.

Beyond the tangible results already visible in Senegal's communities, the United States encourages transparent and sustainable governance. However, the viability of any public policy depends largely on citizens taking ownership, as the policy is for them.

That is why we are presenting these awards. Real citizen participation:

- Reflects a demand-driven civic commitment based on a bottom-up process, starting from the grassroots level;
- Creates a space for dialogue and trust between elected officials and citizens in their communities;
- Gives citizens the right to impose a duty of accountability on elected officials; and
- Finally it contributes to creating a type of citizen capable of carrying the hopes of change, development and good local governance.

I would like to express my warmest thanks to President Sall for honoring this ceremony with his presence.

I would also like to congratulate the recipients. Finally, I would like to encourage the *Forum Civil* and Enda Graf in their continued pursuit of citizen initiatives for the construction of a democratic and prosperous Senegal.

Thank you for your attention.