



**Remarks for Ambassador Lewis Lukens
Private Sector Working Group meeting
September 26, 2013**

(As prepared)

Mr. Minister of Investment Promotion and Partnerships,
Mr. Ambassador of Canada,
Mr. Ambassador of Great Britain,
Representatives of the business community,
Representatives of technical and financial partners
Ladies and gentlemen,

I am pleased to be here today to open this meeting as chair of the Private Sector Working Group in Senegal.

I would like to extend a special thanks to Minister Sarr for taking the time to attend today's meeting. His presence here provides an excellent opportunity for us to better understand the institutional architecture in the government of President Sall. It is also an opportunity to hear about Minister Sarr's priorities for the new Ministry as it seeks to improve the enabling environment for private sector investment.

I also would like to welcome my colleagues the ambassadors of Canada and Great Britain. After the Minister's remarks, the Canadian ambassador will provide us with an overview of Senegal's progress in joining the G-8's New Alliance on Food Security and Nutrition. Among the points of discussion following the presentations, is a proposal to rename this Working Group to better capture its broader role in Senegal's economic development. I will hold off on announcing the new name so as not to derail the agenda, but will say there appears to be a broad consensus for the change.

The United States has had the pleasure of coordinating this Working Group since its founding in 1999, the same year Senegal launched its Private Sector Development Strategy.

Since then, the Group has played a useful role in advising the government on creating an atmosphere of fruitful collaboration with the private sector.

The Group has helped Senegal create an investment roadmap survey that identified key barriers to private sector investment, analyze the tax burden and other constraints on private enterprises, conduct a private sector assessment, and prepare Senegal's first National Competitiveness Report.

I applaud the collaboration between the government and the private sector over the last year to foster a healthier business climate, such as last November's Competitiveness Forum.

In closing, I would like to reaffirm the United States' commitment to helping Senegal strengthen its partnership with the private sector through support of this Group and through other U.S. economic assistance.

I am convinced that these partnerships will play a crucial role in improving competitiveness and increasing economic growth in Senegal.

At this point, I would now like to turn the floor over to Minister Sarr.

Thank you