

**Speech**  
**Deputy Chief of Mission Sandra Clark**

**Launch of the Second Phase of the  
Women's Leadership and Civic Journalism Project**

**November 20, 2013**  
**Kairé**

*(As prepared)*

Madame Minister of Women, Children and Family  
Distinguished Governors and Prefects  
Honorable Directors and Heads of Service  
Dear Presidents of Rural Councils  
Honorable Religious Leaders  
Madam Vice-President of World Education  
Madam President of ARLS  
Ladies and Gentlemen

*Nangen def!*

It is a real pleasure to represent the U.S. Government today at this launch of the second phase of the USAID Women's Leadership and Civic Journalism project.

I am pleased to announce that through USAID, the United States will provide an additional \$1.5 million to continue the Women's Leadership and Civic Journalism project through a second phase over the next three years.

This support will help consolidate the gains made during the initial phase. This support will also increase the project's reach from 60 villages to 85 villages.

Special emphasis will be placed on building the capacity of the project's local implementer, the *Association Rurale de Lutte contre le Sida*, or ARLS. ARLS and the NGO World Education will collaborate during the second phase, over the next three years.

This project, already supported with \$1 million by the American people through USAID since 2010, has served to improve the stature of women in their communities through training of sixty "women reporters" to become credible, and sometimes exceptional, radio journalists.

Each day, despite having households to manage and children to raise, these reporters cover community events. Significantly, their work reporting the news in real time on Gindikou FM radio reaches over 150,000 people in the Thiès region.

Panel discussions with government officials and community leaders have raised awareness of important political and social issues -- above all, the rights of women and gender equity. The reporters also bring together men and women to address sensitive issues, such as domestic violence and girls' education for broadcast on the radio. Through these activities, the

reporters have become leaders in their communities, driving debate at the grassroots level and advocating for social progress.

Through these activities, women have learned to:

exercise their land use rights, and

have come together to negotiate with credit and health *mutuelles*, to obtain loans for small business and access more reliable health insurance and health care for their communities.

Reporter Rama Sène played an important role following a fire in Diack which decimated the local marketplace. The closest market was a half-day's walk away. Rama understood that Diack would stagnate without its vibrant weekly market. She spoke repeatedly about the need for a new market to these groups of men and women, which were broadcast over the radio.

Local officials responded, and today Diack boasts an all-new market on the village outskirts. "We can do anything with the power of radio," Rama said last year.

By all accounts, the project has left a very positive impact on participating communities. Crucially: village men have embraced the role of these women reporters -- as have the religious and political leaders of Thienaba.

We salute these leaders for their support of this project, encouraging positive changes in gender relations for a more fair, balanced and development-oriented society.

I congratulate and encourage ARLS and World Education for the results they have achieved. And I wish you continued success in engaging women as critical contributors toward the development of dynamic, prosperous communities.

I would like to also thank all the people of Thienaba and its surroundings for today's wonderful celebration.

*Djere Djeff*