

Remarks
Sandra Clark, Deputy Chief of Mission
African Contingency Operations Training and Assistance – Equipment Handover
Ceremony
Dakar - Thursday, March 20, 2014

(As prepared)

It is a pleasure to join you here today. This ceremony has two purposes: to recognize Senegal's contribution to peacekeeping forces and to recognize the partnership the United States and Senegal have built through the African Contingency Operations Training and Assistance (ACOTA) program. Senegal is among the leading providers of peacekeeping forces in Africa and throughout the world. Currently, Senegal has deployed over 2,055 military and 765 Gendarmes to peacekeeping operations across Africa and in Haiti. Senegal also provides observers, staff officers and commanders to a number of missions of the United Nations, Africa Union, and Economic Community of West African States. Perhaps most importantly, full battalions of Senegalese troops and formed police units are in Darfur, Cote d'Ivoire, and Mali. Senegal has sent formed police units to The Democratic Republic of the Congo and Haiti.

We recognize that Senegalese soldiers and Gendarmes participating in these missions are at risk every day. Many Senegalese have given their lives in this effort to bring peace and stability to other nations. The Government of the United States thanks you for your service and your commitment to these efforts.

This morning we also recognize the longstanding partnership between Senegal and the United States in the ACOTA program. This program began in 2001 to assist African nations in building their capacity to participate in peacekeeping missions on this continent. Senegal was the first African partner to join the ACOTA program. Today, Senegal is one of the most important and valued participants in ACOTA.

Through the ACOTA program, the United States has assisted in the training of soldiers. And it has also built training facilities at Thiès and Dodji and has equipped Senegalese forces. Today, we see before us examples of the equipment provided for the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali -- or MINUSMA -- mission, such as uniforms and personal protective equipment for the Senegalese troops. Generators, night vision devices, trucks, and other equipment -- including the 31 Armored Personnel Carriers promised by President Obama during his visit last year -- will soon be delivered to Senegalese troops in Mali. All together, training and equipment for this one deployment is valued at over \$15 million.

These contributions are all significant. But our continuing partnership to build peacekeeping capabilities is the most important aspect of this relationship. Later this year, Senegal will host Western Accord, a peacekeeping exercise designed to build peacekeeping capacity in the ECOWAS region. Senegal will provide the facilities; ECOWAS will provide the command and control; and the United States will provide troops, transportation, and other logistical resources. We look forward to a day when Senegalese and other ECOWAS trainers will completely replace those currently provided by the United States. We believe that -- just as Senegal led the way in Africa at the establishment of the ACOTA program -- Senegal will continue to lead the way in the evolution of the ACOTA program.

We thank you for your dedication to the cause of peace in Africa and around the world. And it is in this spirit that we look forward to continuing partnership in building peacekeeping capacity.