

Speech
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Dakar, West Africa Research Center (WARC)
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(As prepared)

Dear Director,
Dear Members of the Diplomatic Corps,
Dear Journalists,
Dear Guests:

Thank you my good friend Ousmane Sène, the Director of WARC, for having invited me here to speak today. WARC has been one of our closest partners and I am sure will continue to be for many years to come. It is always a pleasure to be at this center. We have done much together recently, including a youth leadership program called DAART. DAART followed a highly-successful regional peace initiative. No matter what the project is, we know that we have a good friend and partner in WARC, and that is due to Ousmane Sene and his fantastic staff. So thank you all for your work and in particular for organizing this event today. There is no place I would rather be to give my farewell address before I depart Dakar as Ambassador in just about 10 days' time.

And thank you all for coming here today. This is a bittersweet occasion for me. As I have noted from time to time, I have spent more time in Senegal than in any other place outside of the United States. I was here during my early childhood, and then of course the last three years as U.S. Ambassador. I will leave Senegal with fantastic memories of my time here, both professional, and personal. I will remember especially the people I have met and the incredible “teranga” and warmth of the Senegalese.

Before I leave, I would like to use this occasion to spend some time reflecting on what we have achieved together after the past three years, and to look at where the U.S. - Senegalese relationship is going.

It really has been an extraordinary three years.

My Embassy was pleased to support civil society during the national elections in 2012, which was a very important moment in Senegalese history. It seems long ago, but at the time, there seemed nothing more important on the continent than the democratic future of Senegal. It was a key milestone that consolidated Senegal's role as a beacon of democracy.

In March 2013, we moved to our beautiful new facility located in the Almadies neighborhood, which hosts one of the most modern and ecologically-efficient buildings in West Africa. Now all U.S. government agencies, outside of the Peace Corps, are under one roof, symbolizing the strength and size of our relationship.

Our flagship development agency, USAID, celebrated 50 years of partnership with Senegal in 2011, and the U.S. Peace Corps, which has over 200 American volunteers throughout Senegal celebrated its own 50-year anniversary last year. Our Millennium Challenge Compact, a \$540 million infrastructure development plan in cooperation with the Senegalese government, grows every day closer to its finality which will be in September 2015.

We had several very important top level visits between our leaders. In August 2012, we welcomed my old boss, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, and she gave a large address on the then-new U.S. Strategy for sub-Saharan Africa at the university auditorium, not far from where we are today. Her emphasis on a relationship with Africa built on partnership still resonates today. President Obama invited Macky Sall to the White House in early 2013, and of course President Barack Obama visited here with Michelle and their girls in June 2013 as the first stop on a three-nation African tour, the first since he took office. Each one of these moments speaks to the importance the United States places on its relationship with Senegal, and the recognition we give to Senegal as a democratic leader in the region and our strongest francophone partner in sub-saharan Africa.

As we look back, we also look to the future, and leadership is one of the four topics I want to discuss with you today before I hear your questions and comments afterwards.

So, first: **Leadership.**

Senegal has achieved a high degree of transparency, has a solid record of good governance, and has successfully maintained an open government making it already a strong regional leader. That leadership extends to Senegal's military professionalism and its role in global peacekeeping operations. And this leadership has come at a cost. Six Senegalese peacekeepers died just this past year while working to bring an end to wars and conflicts around the region. This season marks 20 years after the Rwandan genocide, and Senegal had a hero who played a role in trying to stop it. Just two weeks ago, the United Nations Security Council created a first-of-its-kind medal for Captain Mbaye Diagne who lost his life while serving with the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda in 1994. Unarmed and in the face of extreme danger, Diagne saved hundreds, perhaps even a thousand, Rwandans from death. Named the "Captain Mbaye Diagne Medal for Exceptional Courage", the medal will be awarded to military, police and civilian United Nations or associated personnel. I am proud to say that our own government recognized Captain Diagne in 2011, when Secretary Clinton gave seven people from around the world courage awards, and Captain Diagne's widow was there to receive it in his honor. Captain Diagne is an example of the courage and leadership the world has come to expect of Senegal. We see these same qualities in Senegal's contribution toward bringing peace to Darfur and Mali and restoring democracy in Guinea-Bissau.

It seems to me, however, that Senegal sometimes turns away from leadership in its foreign policy even as Senegal's soldiers and diplomats serve with distinction. I listened for but did not hear Senegal's strong voice when the United Nations voted to condemn Russia's aggression in the Crimea, the use of chemical weapons in Syria, and the abuse of human rights in North Korea and Iran.

Standing to one side on such occasions may be diplomatically convenient, and to some it may seem appropriate for a small country. But is it courageous? Senegal stands out in the world because so many people from this country have the courage of their convictions, just as Captain Mbaye did. Senegal should not settle for less than that in its foreign policy. The second topic, one that is linked to leadership, is the **Advancement of human rights**.

Why am I talking to you about human rights when Senegal has a long and famous tradition of tolerance and inclusiveness? It is true. You are known for this – your first president famously being a minority Christian; he and your second and third president both having non-Muslim wives. You are truly a model for Muslim-Christian understanding, participating in each other's religious celebrations, even marrying between religions without it even being a big deal. Some would say the human rights issue of this generation is equal treatment for homosexuals. We are seeing this debate play out in some parts of Africa – in South Africa, in Uganda, in Cameroon. Even in Senegal, there is some room for discussion and debate -- currently an exhibit about homosexuality in Africa at a cultural center, and an event for the rights of homosexuals that took place last weekend. For Americans, this is a hot button issue, far from resolved. We know that Macky Sall told our own president that this issue will take time in Senegal. But I hope that Senegal's attitude of tolerance will grow and that this country will continue to be a leader in the region. Being a leader means taking a moral stand, even when difficult or uncomfortable. Standing up to countries that are bullies or to infringements on human rights is being a leader. And I think that this is an important leadership role for Senegal to fill in the future.

Third topic: **The Environment, and specifically trash.**

During my three years in Senegal, I have been struck by the incredible natural resources of this beautiful country. Some of you may know that I ran a coastal run from Lompoul to Yoff beach earlier this year and witnessed miles of beautiful coastal beaches. At the same time, this run highlighted some of the challenges that Senegal faces in preserving its environment. As a partner and a friend, I must say that I have long thought that the environmental situation in Senegal has been a hindrance to the country's economic development. One can say that the first impression that many visitors to Senegal have is a mixed one. Upon leaving the airport, we see hardworking people, the crashing waves of the Atlantic on the beaches of Virage, and the baobab trees that signify Senegal and the Senegalese people. And we also see trash by the road. A lot of trash.

The trash I see every day is a great disappointment to me, because I can see how it is holding Senegal back. I think that if there's one thing that has been proven to me in all of the countries that I have worked and lived in over the years, it is that environment and a country's branding go hand in hand. Successful firms, and successful countries, understand the connection between environment and health. The piles of trash throughout this country dissuade investment, and they create serious health risks. Therefore, I implore you, all Senegalese, to consider the importance of protecting and taking care of Mother Earth. A cleaner, healthier future starts with each and everyone of you, and the choices that you make. It starts with that plastic coffee cup that you decide to throw in a proper trash receptacle -- and not on the ground. It extends all the way to your decisions on how and where to build a factory or manufacturing center. And it

transfers to what you teach your students, and your children. I know at some level, the government of Senegal is aware of this problem and trying to make efforts to improve it. But the responsibility also lies with each of us personally.

The process of cleaning up the United States was a long one. We experienced many challenges in raising awareness. Many people my age can cite advertisements that reminded us to “keep America green.” Ultimately, we found that directing messaging towards children was the most effective route towards changing habits, because of their ability to repeat these ideas to their parents -- many times, incessantly. It will also be a long process in Senegal. But at the end, every child and adult will know that it is not right to consciously put trash on the ground, or in the sea. I believe that this situation is also damaging the health of many Senegalese. During my coastal run from Lompoul to Yoff beach, we organized trash pick-ups to draw attention to the problem. This was a small, and symbolic effort. It is time to start working on combating this problem, and as we say -- there is no time like the present.

Fourth, **Economic and commercial progress.**

With a solid foundation of political stability, Senegal has grown to become a regional economic leader. Il y a de nombreuses raisons d’être optimistes sur les perspectives économiques du Sénégal et sur nos relations. Le gouvernement a lancé un ambitieux programme de développement intitulé “*Plan Sénégal Emergent*”, axé sur les réformes économiques et la promotion des investissements du secteur privé. Il a aussi entrepris de cibler l’amélioration du climat des affaires, la réforme foncière et les réformes du secteur de l’énergie, afin de contribuer à rendre le Sénégal plus compétitif pour les investissements. Le Sénégal a de grandes ambitions et de bonnes perspectives pour se développer encore davantage en tant que plateforme régionale de transport et de logistique.

As it pursues these ambitious plans, Senegal also faces substantial economic challenges. L’an dernier, le Sénégal a été classé cent soixante-seizième sur cent quatre-vingt-neuf pays, dans le rapport “Doing Business” de la Banque mondiale. J’ai entendu des réactions diverses au classement du Sénégal. Beaucoup de gens étaient vraiment perplexes, se demandant “Comment un pays comme le Sénégal – un leader dans sa région, doté d’institutions solides – peut-il avoir un classement aussi bas ?” Certains se sont plaints que l’index devait être biaisé et que les efforts du Sénégal n’étaient pas suffisamment reconnus. D’autres ont choisi de prendre ce rapport comme une critique constructive. Pour ces personnes-là, le Sénégal doit redoubler d’efforts pour améliorer l’environnement des affaires, afin de remédier à certains problèmes réels et d’améliorer son classement. Je trouve encourageant que cette réaction semble prévaloir et que le gouvernement semble réellement focalisé sur ces questions.

Lastly, before I close, I want to mention the very exciting Young African Leadership Initiative, or “YALI,” and its expansion coming up this summer. Under this program -- which was conceived of and is led by the White House -- 15 young leaders representing Senegal’s public management, civil leadership, and business and entrepreneurship will attend a six week fellowship program in universities around the United States as part of 500 young African leaders to meet American leaders in all of these fields, culminating with a meeting with President Obama. Some of them will go onto internships in American counterpart organizations or

businesses. I met with these young leaders last week, and they are such an impressive group. This is another exciting exchange that will certainly impact our future relationship. In August, at the U.S.-Africa Summit in Washington, D.C., President Obama will host African heads of state. The theme of “Investing in the Next Generation” will be the thread running through all Summit discussions, which will encourage active, creative discussions on Africa and the global economy, including capital flows, trade and investment. This will be an exciting moment, an opportunity to capitalize on the gains already realized through our growing cooperation with Africa. As a regional leader and an important partner in West Africa, Senegal will have an important role to play in these discussions. And we will look towards Senegal to play a leadership role in advancing human rights, protecting the environment, increasing economic cooperation and expanding opportunities for the youth of Africa.

Thank you all for your attention today. It has truly been an honor for me to serve as U.S. Ambassador to Senegal and Guinea-Bissau for the last three years. I look forward to your questions and comments.