

Remarks
Chargé d’Affaires, a.i. Sandra Clark

Book Donation to Schools in the Regions of Saint-Louis and Matam

Dakar, Tuesday, July 8, 2014

(As prepared)

President of ASDEN,
Minister of National Education,
Inspectors of the Academy,
Representative of the Nigerian Embassy,
Honorable deputies,
Locally-elected officials,
General Directors and National Directors,
Madame Director of the Peace Corps,
Peace Corps Volunteers,
Invitees, journalists,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thank you for inviting me to speak to you today. Today, we celebrate the reception of more than 36,000 books from the organization *Books for Africa*. In the last year, this American organization has sent books from Minnesota to 22 African countries to -- in their words -- “end the book famine” on the continent. These English-language books will be distributed to 30 schools and universities located in the regions of Dakar, Matam, St- Louis, and Thiès. I would like to congratulate Peace Corps Volunteer *Edens Duphresne* for organizing the donation.

I would like to acknowledge the role of two other organizations who worked together to facilitate getting the books from the United States to Senegal. Each played an important role in getting them here. They are the Senegalese NGO ADSEN, and the Nigerian Ambassador’s organization, the Sir Emeka Ofor Foundation.

Thanks to all of these partners, this donation became reality.

I speak for a dedicated team of men and women -- Americans and Senegalese -- who understand and appreciate your contributions to Senegal’s education efforts.

According to the World Bank, the literacy rate of Senegalese youth between the ages of 15 and 24 Senegal is 65%. This donation is aimed at increasing the literacy rate of

precisely this group. Many students and their families lack financial resources that can be used for materials that would help further their knowledge. Many institutions do not have additional materials for students to use, to back up the teachers' encouragement to read for leisure. This project started when Edens noticed that English teachers in the region of Matam would print materials from the Internet. Only one English book was available in the school's library. These books include some geared for developing reading skills. In addition, this donation will contain some English literature, and some books that are general leisure books. The books will help primarily high school students and young adults develop their intellectual capabilities, such as reading and comprehension skills. We are so pleased to be a part of this endeavor.

Knowledge is key to a nation's development. And reading plays a major role in increasing knowledge. We know that children and students will find motivation and inspiration in these books. It is our hope that these books will play a role in reducing illiteracy in Senegal.

Thank you for allowing us to participate as a partner in this important and critical effort, and congratulations again to all of the people and organizations who made this very important endeavor possible.