

**Remarks for James P. Zumwalt
U.S. Ambassador to Senegal
Inauguration of Seed Treatment Center,
Richard Toll, May 22, 2015**

(As prepared)

Mr. Minister of Agriculture and Rural Equipment,
Mr. Governor of the St. Louis Region,
Mr. President of the Departmental Council of Dagana
Mr. Mayor of the Municipality of Richard Toll,
Distinguished Directors and regional department heads
Mr. Director of the COO-SEN,
Ladies and gentlemen private seed operators
Distinguished representatives of professional organizations
Distinguished representatives of media organizations,
Distinguished Guests

Selam Alekum

It gives me great pleasure to participate in today's inauguration of the rehabilitated and revitalized Seed Processing Center of Richard Toll.

Investments by the U.S. government reflect the United States' commitment to promote food security through the USAID Economic Growth Project and the Global Feed the Future initiative.

The upgrade and modernization of this important facility will more than double its previous production capacity. This investment will support key priorities identified by the Government of Senegal through the *Plan Senegal Emergent* and the Accelerated Program for Agriculture in Senegal, or PRACAS.

In Senegal, agriculture is a critical source of income for producers, employment for workers, raw materials for industry, and foreign exchange for the economy. It is especially important in the production of food and livestock.

Of course, everyone needs to buy food. Its cost and availability depend heavily on the performance and productivity of the agricultural sector.

High quality seed production is crucial to ensuring that farmers across Senegal can cultivate hearty, nutritious crops at a reasonable cost.

To this end, USAID has provided technical and financial assistance worth over one billion CFA to upgrade and construct infrastructure dedicated to seed processing.

This includes:

- the rehabilitation of two research stations managed by *the Institut Senegalais pour les recherches agricoles* at Fanaye in the Senegal River Valley and in Nioro in the groundnut basin;
- the construction and equipping of three regional laboratories for analysis and certification of seeds in Richard Toll, Kaolack and Kolda; and
- two seed processing facilities in Kaolack and Kolda as well as this facility we are dedicating today.

For me, what's really exciting about the Richard Toll center is the involvement of the private sector in its operation.

Over a year ago, USAID facilitated the creation of a private-public partnership to manage and operate the facility between the Ministry of Agriculture, which owns the building, and the COO-SEN enterprise, which represents 90 percent of the region's farmers.

This innovative structure represents a real institutional revolution, and one that I am proud to say will bring the power of the private sector to meeting the goals of Senegal's economic development over the coming years.

The United States remains committed to working with Senegal in meeting the critical challenges of fostering inclusive growth to the benefit of everyone in Senegal.

Before I close, I would like to thank the Ministry of Agriculture and the leadership of COO-SEN for hosting our delegation this morning. I wish you continued success in all your endeavors.

Thank you very much for your kind attention.

Jere jef.