

**Remarks by Ambassador Zumwalt
RN6 Tanaff-Kouankané Inauguration Speech
Diaobé
November 12, 2015**

(As prepared)

Assalamu alaikum
Mr. Prime Minister (TBC)
Mr. Minister of the Interior
Representative of MCC Washington (TBC)
Mr. Director General of the Millennium Challenge Account - Sénégal
Distinguished guests and citizens of Diaobé

It is an honor to join you for this inauguration of the National Route 6. We celebrate today this physical embodiment of the Senegalese-American partnership and cooperation. The road between Ziguinchor and Kouankané represents a valuable lifeline for this region.

A major component of the Millennium Challenge Corporation's \$540 million Compact with Senegal is the rehabilitation of this 252 kilometer road. The road will open the region to the economic growth. It will reduce travel times and increase economic opportunities for the farmers, traders, and families of the Casamance. This road is an investment of approximately \$97 billion CFA francs, a portion of which will be provided by your government for its completion.

A few months ago when President Obama spoke in Ethiopia, he reminded us that "Africa is moving, a new Africa is emerging. "I cannot find a better illustration to his words than the inauguration of this newly rehabilitated section of the RN6.

Construction of this road segment was launched in 2013. Through the joint efforts of all involved, we have overcome many obstacles. With the continued commitment of the Government of Sénégal, our combined efforts will benefit over one million people. Our presence here today at the Diaobé market, one of the markets being rehabilitated alongside the RN6, underlines how the road increases economic opportunity in the Casamance.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The investment of the Millennium Challenge Corporation is an integral part of the United States' assistance in the region and our commitment to support the peace process. The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has invested more than more than 118 billion CFA in the Casamance in the past five years. These development projects have supported agriculture, good governance, health and education. The United States Department of Agriculture continues to support cashew producers in Kolda and Sedhiou. They also are financing the rehabilitation of 130 kilometers of secondary roads that link up to the RN6. Finally, over thirty Peace Corps Volunteers, some of them among us today, work daily in the Casamance to improve the lives of their neighbors.

These are just a few examples of the strong partnership between our two countries. In the Casamance, our work together will continue long after the end of the MCC compact.

Finally, I wish to express my gratitude to you, the people of Casamance. Your enthusiasm and vision of how this road can improve the lives and economies of your communities are the guarantees that this investment exceed its objectives. I hope that every time you travel this part of the National Road, you remember the generosity and friendship of the American people, and our enduring partnership with Senegal.

Thank you.