



**Remarks by David A. Sampson  
Acting Deputy Secretary of Commerce  
U.S. Commercial Service Ribbon Cutting Ceremony  
Dakar, Senegal  
Tuesday July 19, 2005  
[Text As Prepared for Delivery.]**

Today we're realizing a vision ... a vision that has been a long time coming. After years of being underserved, West Africa now has a fully operational network of U.S. commercial offices.

This new office we're opening today will help American entrepreneurs realize the wonderful business potential that exists not only in Senegal but across Western Africa. All told, we now have some 50 commercial staff working in six African nations ... a clear sign of America's commitment to Africa.

And there is no better way to help people help themselves than by opening markets and encouraging free and fair trade. Our American republic was founded on that principle, and we have done very well following it.

Perhaps one of our greatest founding fathers, Benjamin Franklin, said it best: "No nation was ever ruined by trade."

As most of you know, I'm here to attend the 4<sup>th</sup> annual AGOA Forum. Opening our new office is a high point of my trip. The AGOA legislation called on the Commercial Service to develop a strong presence in sub-Saharan Africa as a way to deepen our relations and to help bring an end to poverty.

So, on behalf of President Bush, I'm delighted to be here to make good on that promise by opening the Dakar office.

Let me introduce our new team. Ms. Cynthia Griffin-Greene is our new senior commercial officer. Some of you might know her already as she and her team have been working hard for many months to get the office ready to open its doors. Cynthia's staff includes Ms. Youhanidou Wane Ba and Mrs. Medina Sy.

We like to call them our "shining stars" of Dakar. And you can count on them to help America and Africa become ever stronger partners. Let's give them a round of applause.

President Bush fully understands how important it is to develop stronger business ties between Africa and the United States. Senegal is the main engine for Western Africa, and as such, we saw a need to have a greater presence here.

Along with our offices in Ghana and Nigeria, the new Dakar office completes a network that will help U.S. companies get a foothold in the emerging markets of Western Africa.

It will also be a strong voice on behalf of U.S. business interests, while developing relationships with local businesspeople. This is doing what governments should be doing: creating conditions so that businesses can succeed.

Remember this: governments don't create wealth ... the private sector creates wealth. And speaking of the private sector, I also want to congratulate Steve Jones, as well as Cynthia, for the work they have done in getting an American Chamber of Commerce up and running here. As a former president of the Chamber in Arlington, Texas, I know how difficult but important their work can be. I look forward to sitting down later with members of the Chamber to discuss opportunities in Senegal and West Africa.

In closing, let me thank Ambassador Roth as well as the entire embassy for the tremendous support you have given to our new operation. From the moment we first asked for help, you were behind us 100%. That level of support is deeply appreciated. Thank you, Ambassador Roth, for helping make our vision a reality.

Thank you all very much.