

*Administration of Barack Obama, 2013*

**Remarks at a Meeting With Civil Society Leaders on Goree Island, Senegal**  
*June 27, 2013*

*President Obama.* Well, let me just say thank you so much for taking the time to meet with me. We've had a wonderful visit here in Senegal, and I had good opportunity to discuss a range of issues with President Sall this morning.

And obviously, it was very powerful to be visiting the Slave Museum here in Goree as a reminder of the potential for man's inhumanity to man, but also as a reminder that we all have to continually be vigilant on behalf of human rights.

The leaders—just for the press—the leaders who are gathered here today, these are all representatives of civil society, which is incredibly strong here in Senegal. And last year, when there were some significant questions as to whether Senegal's democracy would continue to represent the will of the people, it is leaders like these that were able to maintain the pressure and to maintain the focus on the peaceful transfer of power and the continuation of democratic traditions here in Senegal. And it's a reminder that democracy is not just about election day.

Democracy and good governance involves the need for transparency and accountability on the part of government, but also active citizens who are monitoring what the government is doing, that are speaking out. It involves a free press, freedom of assembly, rule of law. And it also involves organizations like this that aren't just working politically, but are also working to increase youth employment, helping to empower women, making sure that children and other vulnerable populations are protected. That's all part of the democratic process.

And I think that history shows that those countries that enjoy good governance, respect human rights, also end up having better economic growth, greater social stability and cohesion.

And so I just want to say, again, thank you for taking the time to meet with me. I'm looking forward to hearing how we can be more helpful in forging stronger ties between the United States and Senegal, but also to continue to encourage the kinds of empowerment that all of you represent; and that a particular focus of mine is how do we encourage more young people to get involved.

So, for example, Aissatou here attended the Young African Leaders Forum that we held at the White House a couple of years ago, and we're going to be talking during the course of this trip about how we can continue to expand and recruit more outstanding young African leaders to network and participate.

Thank you, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:46 p.m. at the Goree Institute. In his remarks, he referred to Aissatou Padane, a participant in the White House Young African Leaders Forum held in August 2010.

*Categories:* Addresses and Remarks : Senegal, civil society leaders, meeting with President Obama on Goree Island.

*Locations:* Goree Island, Senegal.

*Names:* Padane, Aissatou; Sall, Macky.

*Subjects:* Developing countries : Democratic governance and rule of law; Foreign policy, U.S. : Civil and human rights, promotion efforts; Foreign policy, U.S. : Open government and transparency, promotion efforts; Senegal : Civil society leaders, meeting with President Obama on Goree Island; Senegal : Democracy efforts; Senegal : President; Senegal : President Obama's visit; Senegal : Relations with U.S.

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