



# USAID | SENEGAL

FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

## GOVERNING JUSTLY AND DEMOCRATICALLY

### OVERVIEW

#### PROFILE

Date of Independence: 1960  
Population: 12.8 million (2008)  
Languages: French (official),  
Diola, Fula, Mandinka, Seereer-  
Siin, Soninke, Wolof  
GDP per capita: \$1,800 (PPP)  
*Source: U.S. State Department*

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### BACKGROUND

Senegal has progressed significantly in the past decade, both politically and economically. Senegal is a moderating voice in the Islamic and African worlds as a democratic, predominantly Muslim, secular country. USAID works with its Senegalese partners to enhance lives by creating jobs, improving access to education and health care, further institutionalizing democracy, and developing the agriculture sector to increase production and incomes.



### DEMOCRACY AND GOVERNANCE PROGRAMS

While Senegal remains one of the few stable democracies in west Africa, its government is becoming an increasingly centralized entity with weak checks and balances. In September 2009, a Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) compact was signed between the U.S. Government and the Government of Senegal. The United States is expanding its efforts to promote government-wide transparency and accountability. Governance issues are also systematically integrated in each sector program.

### GOOD GOVERNANCE

Senegal is reputed to have one of the most democratic and stable systems of governance in West Africa and is the only country in the region never to have experienced a coup. Although it continues to compare favorably, especially to other countries in the sub-region, political rights and civil liberties in Senegal have been decreasing, and the Government of Senegal continues to face challenges in its fight against corruption. This overall deterioration undermines good governance and overall development efforts. Consequently, USAID has identified improving democracy and governance in Senegal as the highest development and overall priority.

Insufficient progress in fighting corruption could jeopardize existing USAID development investments in health, education and natural resources management sectors, as well as the MCC compact. In response, USAID's work supports greater transparency and accountability and strengthening fiscal decentralization. These programs aim to improve the degree to which public resources contribute to poverty reduction, the amount of increased funding that is available to local governments for strengthening fiscal decentralization, and the extent to which citizen participation in government is increased. USAID also provides support for improving Government auditing practices and obtaining greater access to information about public resource management.

### POLITICAL COMPETITION AND CONSENSUS-BUILDING

Senegal has a strong democratic foundation and a history of stable government within a sub-region that experiences increasing levels of instability and deteriorating democratic processes. However, studies including the 2009 Freedom House survey show that political rights and civil liberties have decreased in



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recent years. Limited representation of the opposition in the legislature due to a boycott of last year's elections, re-creation of a largely appointed Senate and power increasingly being concentrated in an executive branch with limited oversight combined with repressive acts against the media have all exacerbated this trend.

Recent assessments indicate increasing tensions about the 2012 elections. These tensions include a growing concern by the electorate and opposition parties that the 2012 elections could be marred by electoral fraud stemming from a lack of transparency in the electoral process, a lack of consensus on the rules and regulations guiding the election of the next president and concern of an imposed succession of the current president's son.

USAID has developed a new multi-year program that includes support for free and credible 2012 elections as a means to strengthening Senegal's democracy. This program supports the Autonomous Electoral Commission and its independence, a comprehensive audit of the voter registry, modifications to the electoral code and efforts to improve contentious voting day procedures to avoid violence and wide-scale conflict. USAID works to strengthen political parties by improving responsiveness to their constituents and transparency in their operations. Given the rising tensions related to these elections, support to political parties and elections, as well as political processes, is crucial.

## FUNDING

