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PRESS RELEASE

Prime Ministers of Mali and Senegal reaffirm the need to improve transport fluidity, governance on Dakar-Bamako corridor

Kayes, Mali, 21 May 2011 – The prime ministers of Mali and Senegal, accompanied by ministers from their respective governments and experts from both countries, met in Kayes, Mali, today to push for the application of reforms to facilitate trade between the two countries. USAID missions in Mali, Senegal and West Africa provided detailed recommendations on the subject to all present.

“There is a great deal of hope in applying the recommendations from this high-level meeting,” said Mor Talla Kane, a representative of the private sector in Senegal who attended the meeting. “Improving road governance, investment and infrastructure will reinforce trade, create jobs and increase revenues in both countries.”

During the meeting, the heads of government agreed to implement important recommendations, including:

- Eliminating corruption along the Bamako-Dakar corridor, which is a drag on the free movement of goods, people and vehicles
- Limiting to three (3) the number of checkpoints for goods – one at the departure point, one at the border and one at the point of arrival – in accord with ECOWAS rules. The most recent UEMOA-USAID West Africa Trade Hub report on road governance shows that between Bamako and Dakar there are 12 active checkpoints in Mali and 33 in Senegal.
- Implementing UEMOA axleweight rules that limit trucks to 11.5 tons per axle
- Completing road maintenance projects on the corridor. The two countries pledged to work together to identify sources of financing necessary for the projects.
- Instituting quarterly meetings of authorities to monitor and evaluate progress, which would alternate from one country to the other

USAID Trade Hub studies on the gaps in the implementation of regional trade policies provided information and insights that led to the recommendations. Ibrahima Ba, the director of Senegalese agro-processing company SOCODIV, participated in the study in Senegal in 2010. His company sells the products of more than 500 farmers, fishers and other agro-processors, as well as those of Malian livestock herders in the sub-region.

“It’s important to apply the rules and eliminate corruption – this will have a major impact on trade,” Ba said. “That is the point of trade – we sell our products in Mali and they have products that we need. We need to implement the rules in order to reach a sufficient level of trade.”

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