Contemporary Faces of Islam in West Africa

A workshop sponsored by the West African Research Association
29 October – 5 November 2006
at the West African Research Center, Dakar, Senegal

Organizers:
Professor Ousmane Sene, WARC director
Professor Penda Mbow, Workshop coordinator
Professor Leonardo A. Villalón, US project coordinator

Preliminary workshop schedule:

Saturday 28 October:    Participants arrive in Dakar

Sunday 29 October:     Tour of Dakar. Evening: Opening reception; dinner

Monday 30 October:     9-10 AM: Opening of workshop: overview of region and
                       workshop themes.
                       10h-13h: Theme one: The impact of international factors
                       13h-15h: lunch
                       15h-18h: Theme two: Democracy, secularism, and the public and
                                private spheres.

Tuesday 31 October:     10h-13h: Theme three: Citizenship and the transformation of
                         religious frameworks.
                         13h-15h: Lunch
                         15h-18h: Theme four: Modernity and Gender issues

Wednesday 1 November    10h-13h: Theme five: Inter-religious relations
                         13h-16h: Lunch
                         16h-18:30h: Public session: “Contemporary Dynamics of Islam in
                          West Africa”
                         19-21h: Reception (sponsored and hosted by US Embassy? As per
                          Ambassador’s offer)
Thursday 2 November: Dakar-Touba: early morning departure
Visit of great mosque in Touba, followed by lunch
Late afternoon travel to St. Louis. Check into hotel.

Friday 3 November: Historical visit of St. Louis mosques and religious sites
Meet with colleagues at Université Gaston Berger

Saturday 4 November: St. Louis-Tivaouane: early morning departure
Visit of mosques/religious sites of Tijaniyya zawiya
Lunch and continuation to Dakar
Free evening in Dakar

Sunday 5 November: Departures

NOTE: For discussion of the five themes: Each West African participant will have 10-12
minutes to lay out the major issues or dynamics in question in his/her country. 2
invited commentators (scholars invited from the US and/or local scholars) will then
be asked to comment generally and ask questions for 10 minutes each, followed by
general and open discussion of the topic among all participants. This format will
allow for this to be a real “workshop” with intensive interaction among participants
and commentators.

For the Wednesday afternoon public session, invitations will be sent out broadly to
interested parties in Dakar, and it will be set up in a conference format for the
“grand publique”. Several speakers (or all of the West African guests) will be asked
to make short presentations summarizing the main themes, debates, and conclusions
reached by the participants during the workshop. Participants should decide on the
precise format and set of topics among themselves in accordance with discussion in
the workshop sessions.