



*Empowered lives.  
Resilient nations.*

# THE GAMBIA COMMON COUNTRY ASSESSMENT SEPTEMBER, 2015

**September, 2015**



## TABLE OF CONTENT

<b>A. Executive Summary .....</b>	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
<b>B. Introduction.....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>C. The Gambia Economy Context.....</b>	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
<b>Key Poverty Characteristics in The Gambia.....</b>	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
<b>The Gambia Social Context .....</b>	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
<b>Chapter 1: Economic Management of Country .....</b>	<b>49</b>
1.1 The Economic Environment.....	49
1.1.1 The Fiscal Environment.....	51
1.2 Resource Mobilisation by Government.....	55
1.2.1 Domestic Revenue Generation .....	55
1.2.2 Aid and Resource Mobilization.....	56
1.2.3 Source and Allocation of ODA .....	57
1.3 Policy Environment.....	58
1.4 Employment .....	60
1.5 Rural and Urban Poverty .....	62
1.6 Data Collection: Quality and Timing.....	63
1.7 Key Issues and Challenges.....	64
1.7.1 Priority areas for Government of The Gambia.....	65
1.8 Opportunities for UN System Support and Collaboration with Government .....	65
<b>Chapter 2: Private Sector Development and International Trade.....</b>	<b>67</b>
2.0 Overview .....	67
2.0.1 Trade Statistics .....	69
2.1 Challenges faced in the Export (Re Export) Sector .....	70
2.1.1 Agriculture as a Contributor to Growth and Exports .....	70
2.1.2 Tourism as an Industry and Exporter .....	72
2.1.3 Challenges faced by Main Export Sectors: Agriculture and Tourism.....	73
2.2 Private Sector challenges .....	74
2.2.1 Electricity.....	74
2.2.2 Access to Finance .....	75
2.2.3 Taxes.....	77
2.4 Opportunities for UN System Support and Collaboration with Government .....	79
<b>Chapter 3: Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition.....</b>	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
3.0 Overview .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>

3.1 Policy Overview .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
3.1.1 ANR Policy.....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
3.1.2 Food Security Policy .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
3.1.3 Nutrition Policy and Education Policies.....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
3.2 Analysis of Issues.....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
3.2.1 Agricultural Production and Productivity.....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
3.2.2 Land Management and Productivity.....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
3.2.3 Environmental Sustainability .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
3.2.4 The Food Availability Situation .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
3.2.5 The Nutrition Security Situation.....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
3.3 Opportunities for UN System Support and Collaboration with Government ..	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
<b>Chapter 4: Infrastructure development.....</b>	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
4.0 Overview .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
4.1 Analysis of the Issues.....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
4.1.1 Transport Infrastructure.....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
4.1.2 Energy.....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
4.1.3 ICT.....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
4.2 Opportunities for UN System Support and Collaboration with Government ..	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
<b>Chapter 5: Human Capital Development .....</b>	<b>107</b>
5.0 Overview .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
5.1 The Education System.....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
5.2 Health .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
5.2.1 The Health System Overview.....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
5.2.2 The Health Care System.....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
5.2.3 Staffing and Human Resource Constraints.....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
5.3 Maternal and Child Health and Nutrition.....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
5.6 Water and Sanitation .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
5.7 Population Divergence and its Impact on Social Service Provision	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
5.8 Key Issues and Challenges.....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
5.9 Opportunities for UN System Support and Collaboration with Government ..	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
<b>Chapter 6: Governance, Justice and Human Rights .....</b>	<b>138</b>

6.0 Introduction .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
6.1 Judicial Sector Reform .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
6.2 Decentralisation.....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
6.3 Civil Service Reform.....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
6.4 Civil Society Actors .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
6.5 Gender-based violence .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
<b>CHAPTER 7: Environment, Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction.....</b>	<b>159</b>
7.0 Introduction .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
7.1 Policy Overview .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
7.1.1 Environmental Management.....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
7.2 Natural Resources and Sustainable Development....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
7.3 Climate Change Impact and Vulnerability .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
7.4 Disaster Risk Reduction .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
7.5 Impact of urbanization on the environment and sustainability of growth	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
7.6 Opportunities for UN System Support and Collaboration with Government ..	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
<b>Chapter 8: Cross Cutting Themes.....</b>	<b>174</b>
8.1 Gender Mainstreaming.....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
8.2 Science, Technology and Innovation .....	178
8.3 Social Protection in the Gambia.....	180
8.4 Data for Development .....	1855
8.5 Child Protection in the Gambia .....	1879
8.6 Migration, Refugees and Asylum Management in the Gambia	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
8.7 People Living with Disabilities.....	225
<b>Annexes .....</b>	<b>2136</b>

## SELECTED SUMMARY FACTS FOR COMMON COUNTRY ASSESSMENT REPORT

COUNTRY	THE GAMBIA
Land Size	11.300 sq. km
Population	1.9 million
Density	173.6 persons per km <sup>2</sup>
GDP	\$807.1 million
GDP Growth Rate	-0.2% (2014)
Inflation	6.3%(2014)
Revenue collection	D5.001.000.000
Currency	Dalasi (GMD) (1,00 US\$ = 42.6000 GMD as at May 2015)
Per capita income	\$428 (2014)
HDI increased from 0,438 in 2012	to 0,447 in (2013)
Human Development ranking	172nd out of 187 countries (2013).
Population living in extreme poverty	Fell from 58% in 2003 to 48.4% in 2010 (IHS)
Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI)	Decreased from 0.32 in 2006 to 0.29 in (2013)
1 million people are multi-dimensionally poor	Out of the total population of 1.9 million
Mortality rate (1000 people)	Female: 237                      Male: 295
Mortality rate in 2012 (per 1000 live)	Infants: 49                      Under 5years: 73
Child Malnutrition, under 5 (2008-2012)	Stunting: 24.5%                      Overweight: 1.9%
Literacy rate (2005-2012)	15 & above: 51.1%                      15-24: 68%
HIV prevalence (Youth 15-24)	Female: 0.2                      Male: 0.5
Primary dropout rate	(2003-2012) : 17.2%
Bordering Countries	Senegal
Capital City	Banjul
Regions	West Coast Region (WCR), Lower River Region (LRR), Central River Region (CRR), Upper River Region (URR) and North Bank Region (NBR)
Municipalities	Banjul and Kanifing
Political System	The Gambia became independent in 1965 and practices multi-party democracy. It has a parliamentary system of Government. The second Republic came into being in 1997 following a two -year transition from military rule in 1994 - 1996.
Main Ethnicities	Mandinka, Wollof, Fula, Jola, Serer and Sarahule
Main Sources of Revenue	Manufactured Products (58%); Agricultural Products 40%; Tourism is primary foreign-exchange earner

Main Exports	Groundnuts, fruit, nuts; seed, fish, crustaceans, molluscs,
5 Export destinations of The Gambia in 2012	China, India, Mali, France, and United Kingdom
5 Import origins of The Gambia in 2012	China, Senegal, Brazil, United Kingdom, and India
Fiscal deficit has steadily increased	GMD 4.45 billion 2014, against surplus in 2007
External public debt	US\$403 million at end 2014
Domestic debt estimated	GMD 16.2 billion at end-2014
Public debt	100 percent of GDP at end 2014

#### MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS (MDGs) REPORT 2014

MDG	Status
Goal1: Eradicate Extreme Poverty and Hunger	Improvement Made
Goal 2: Achieve Universal Primary Education	Significant Improvement
Goal 3: Promote Gender Equality and Women Empowerment	Partially Achieved
Goal 4: Reduce Child Mortality	Achieved
Goal 5: Improve Maternal Health	Improvement Made
Goal 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, Malaria and Other diseases	Improvement Made
Goal 7: Ensure Environmental Sustainability	Partially Achieved
Goal 8: Global Partnership for Development	Partially Achieved

#### MAP OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE GAMBIA



### List of Acronyms

AfDB	African Development Bank
ART	Anti-Retroviral Therapy
CBPP	Contagious Bovine Pleuropneumonia
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CBA	Cost Benefit Analysis
CBOs	Community Based Organisations
CCA	Common Country Assessment
CESCR	Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
CPAP	Country Programme Action Plan
CPI	Corruption Perception Index
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CSO	Civil Society Organisations
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
DRM	Disaster Risk Management
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EMPRETEC	Entrepreneurs and Technology
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organisation
FAR	Fiscal Adjustment Road Map
FASDEP	Food and Agriculture Security Development Project
FGM/C	Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting
GamCoTRAP	Gambia Committee on Traditional Practices Affecting the Health of Women and Children
GBOS	Gambia Bureau of Statistics
GCCA	Global Climate Change Alliance
GDP	Gross Domestic Product

GIEPA	Gambia Investment and Export Promotion Agency
GGCP	Gambia Growth and Competitiveness Project
GoTG	Government of The Gambia
HDI	Human Development Index
HRC	Human Rights Council
ICZM	Integrated Coastal Zone Management
KAPs	Key affected Populations
LWD	Living with Disability
LFS	Labour Force Survey
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MoFEA	Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs
MoECCWWF	Ministry of Environment, Climate Change, Forestry, Water and Wildlife
MOHSW	Ministry of Health and Social Welfare
MTEF	Medium Term Expenditure Framework
MTR	Medium Term Review
MSME	Micro, Small, Medium Enterprises
NAC	National Aids Council
NAS	National AIDS Secretariat
NALA	National Agency for Legal Aid
NDMA	National Disaster Management Agency
NDS	National Development Strategy
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NHPF	National Health Policy Framework
NRM	Natural Resources Management
NSDS	National Strategy for the Development of Statistics
NSPS	National Social Protection Secretariat
PAGE	Programme of Accelerated Growth and Employment
PAU	Policy Analysis Unit
PDL	Poverty Datum Line
PFM	Programme Finance Management
PLHIV	People living with HIV
PMTCT	Preventing Mother-to-child Transmission
PRSAP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Action Programme
ODA	Overseas Development Assistance
OVC	Orphans and Vulnerable Children
RBM	Results Based Management
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment
SFP	School Feeding Program
SWAP	Sector Wide Approach Programme
TANGO	The Association of Non-Governmental Organizations
TOR	Terms of Reference
TVET	Technical Vocational Education and Training
VHS	Village Health Services
UN	United Nations
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund

UNAIDS	United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNICEF	United Nations Children Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
OHCHR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
WB	World Bank
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization

## **A. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **Preamble**

The Gambia Common Country Assessment (CCA) was jointly commissioned by the Government of the Gambia (GoTG) and the United Nations System (UNS) in The Gambia. The United Nations Country Team and The Gambian Government commissioned a team of consultants, (Dr. Godwin Hlatshwayo, International Lead Consultant; and the National Consultants, Mr. Yaya S. Jallow, Mr. Bolong L. Sonko and Dr. Katim S. Touray) for the research, facilitation and preparation of the Common Country Assessment (CCA). A UN-Government of The Gambia Coordination Team comprising Ms. Yemesrach Assefa (UNDP Senior Economic Advisor), Mr. Mustapha Yarbo (M & E Officer), Mr. Essa Coker (UNDP Procurement Associate), Mr. Thomas Kimaro (Coordination Specialist), Mr. Alagie Fadera (Director of Development Planning, Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs), Mr. Muhamadou Lamin Jaiteh (Director, Policy Analysis Unit, Office of the President) and Ms. Amie Balde (Intern) coordinated the planning and logistical support to the consulting team. Government and UN officials, development partners and other stakeholders provided guidance and information during the Assessment.

The Assessment was conducted during the months of August-September, 2015. The Executive Summary synthesises salient issues and provides key challenges and priority actions from the seven content areas (chapters) in the main body of the CCA and recommendations for both the Government and the UN system. The CCA content areas comprehensively cover critical issues; policy framework and key achievements; key challenges and priority areas for Government; recommendations for Government; and finally areas of opportunity for UN support and engagement with Government.

This Executive Summary follows guidance from the validation workshop that it should give a full overview and synopsis of the CCA. Since cross cutting themes have been given adequate and separate coverage in the CCA, they have deliberately been omitted from this executive summary.

### **1. ECONOMIC MANAGEMENT OF THE COUNTRY**

Over the past decade the Gambia registered an average growth rate of 3% (2004-2014). During the period covering the PAGE (2012 to 2015)<sup>1</sup>, the country achieved combined growth rate of 3.9%. However, the country's growth has been extremely erratic over the past 15 years. The Gambia is extremely susceptible to weather shocks, either in the form of drought, erratic rainfall or less than optimal rains leading to poor performance in the agricultural sector. The national currency, the Dalasi, has depreciated by nearly 30% against the dollar over the past 3 years. Over the same period the country also has carried a burden of a high debt stock that is costly to finance. A large component is domestic debt at interest rate of 19%<sup>2</sup> (1 year Treasury Bills), making domestic banks are more willing to lend to the government than to the private sector and leading to the crowding out the private sector from the market. Credit to the private sector (14.7% of GDP) is well below the regional average of 58.7%. The result has been the sectors such as industry, tourism and agriculture have adversely suffered and starved of the necessary funding to expand their businesses.

---

<sup>1</sup> Note that growth rate for 2015 is a projection by the Gambia Bureau of Statistics

<sup>2</sup>The Treasury bill rate as of end of 2014

Spending on social services has risen by 28% between 2011 and 2014<sup>3</sup> in line with the requirements of implementing the PAGE, although a closer look at the annual budget reveals that budgeting was mostly driven by debt servicing (25%-30%), staff salaries and wages (40%-45%), and goods and services procurement (30%-40%). Education and Health made up the bulk of the spending on social services (53% and 36%<sup>4</sup>) in 2014. The result of an increase in the budget allocated to social services, along with a number of other market friendly policies and favourable weather have led to an average GDP growth rate of 3.9% and a fall in the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) by 9.5% from 32.40 (2006) to 29.31 (2013).

Preliminary data shows that nearly half of the 2014 public debt was due to Government's settling of debts for the public enterprises, NAWEC, GAMTEL and GAMCEL<sup>5</sup>. The three institutions, though semi-autonomous, have run into financial difficulties leading to the need for Government to settle their financial obligations. In addition to increasing the Government's debt burden, the 3 firms have also tax arrears estimated at over D800 million (2.5% of GDP). These 3 firms account for 60% of the tax arrears of public enterprise owed to Government. As of April 2015, the GoTG has decided to put these firms on a better financial footing, increase tariffs (in the case of NAWEC) and reposition the entities with the aim of privatizing the telecommunications companies in 2016.

The Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) and the CBG kept the policy rate at 23% in August 2015 due to inflation, staying above the CBG target of 5% to 6%. Overall growth in the Economy for 2014 has also been revised downwards by the Gambia Bureau of Statistics (GBOS) to 0.4% from 1.6%. The transport and telecommunications sector registered a weaker growth rate than expected (3.3%) along with services (5.2%). Agriculture is estimated to have contracted by 8.4% for 2014, but is likely to be revised once additional information is gathered in the coming months.

## **1.2 Resource Mobilisation by Government**

The increase in debt over the past 4 years has been due to fiscal spending outpacing domestic revenue collection. The GoTG, through its main revenue collecting agency, the Gambia Revenue Authority (GRA) has made great strides in increasing revenue collected through taxes and non-taxes. Domestic revenue collection has grown every year between 2011 and 2014 by a total of 37%. Although revenue has grown, it has not been able to keep pace with the expenditures (including budget support from donors) and as a result, the need to finance the gap with debt.

The GRA targeted a 20% annual growth in revenue over the period of the PAGE. This has been largely achieved through the implementation of the VAT (to replace the sales tax) in 2012, a broadening of the tax base and investment in information technology and systems for better tracking and monitoring of processes and revenue flows. The institution has increased compliance by increasing the number of audits and increased revenue collected from D5.1 billion in 2013 to D6.2 billion in 2014 with D4, 6 billion collected in the first half of 2015<sup>6</sup>. Though GRA has

---

<sup>3</sup> Various sources: Calculation done using data from Budget Performance report 2014 and SSPER 2013

<sup>4</sup> Data from Government of The Gambia, Budget Performance Report 2014

<sup>5</sup> IMF Country Report No 15/104, April 2015

<sup>6</sup> Data collected from GRA presentation of 2015-202 Strategic Plan to donors and partners.

registered a number of successes, there are still challenges faced by the institution with regards increasing revenues for government.<sup>7</sup>

The GoTG recognizes the importance of Official Development Assistance (ODA) in its bid to eradicate poverty, achieve inclusive growth and ultimately turn The Gambia into a middle income country as outlined in Vision 2020. The PRSP II (the national development plan prior to the PAGE) needed \$752 million with 13% from domestic resources mobilized whilst the remaining 87% from grants and loans. For the PAGE with budget of \$651 million, the expected government's contribution was higher at 35%, with development partners contributing the remaining 65%.

Although ODA forms a major part of the government's total expenditure during the implementation of the PAGE, ODA flows have not been stable over the course of the PAGE (2012-2015). The volatility of flows, especially grant, has led to a dependence on loans from commercial banks and Treasury bills. ODA has been extremely volatile; with 2013 ODA receiving only 30% of 2012. ODA doubled from 2013 to 2014, but was less than the 2012 value by almost D3 billion (nearly 40% of government revenue in 2014).

### **1.3 Policy Environment**

The lack of a systemic approach to policy development process, the limited technical skills and experience in the public sector due to the high turnover of staff, and the dependency on donor support for policy development and analysis have been identified as major challenges in the national policy landscape. Additionally, the development process of the sectoral policies is not in line with the PAGE or Vision 2020 and lacks alignment with the national agenda. This lack of policy coherence leads to overlaps, conflicts and inconsistencies among sector policies hence curtailing cross-sectoral cooperation, collaboration and partnerships especially on sector-wide issues. This has an adverse effect on policy development and analysis, implementation, and Monitoring and Evaluation. The statutory approval process for policies tend to stall, resulting in long and protracted delays. Participatory policy analysis, particularly among policy makers and analysts, could minimise these problems and improve policy development and approval.

### **1.4 Employment**

As of 2015, the latest nationwide survey of the labour force was the Labour Force Survey (LFS) of 2012. It should be noted that the Ministry of Trade Industry and Employment is working on a Labour Management Information System (LMIS) to serve as a repository for all labour force related data.

The unemployment rate, as estimated by the LFS, stands at 29.2% national, with the male and female unemployment rates at 20.9% and 38.3% respectively. There is a slight rural-urban difference in unemployment rates with the rural unemployment rate at 31.1 versus 28.4 for urban areas. The youth unemployment rate, defined as between the ages of 13 and 30, stood at 38%.

Unemployment by educational attainment shows that the unemployment rate peaks at those with junior secondary education (37%). The Gambian labour force is characterised by a high degree of workers with no formal education (currently at 60% of the labour force). This is coupled with only 11% of the labour force having some form of technical or vocational training. Although the LFS

---

<sup>7</sup>UNDP Policy Brief 2015, (pp. 5)

does not show the education level and vocational (and technical) education relationship, we can safely assume that not all people with TVET training have any formal education.

There has been a change in the structure of the labour force from agriculture to distributive trade. This change has been driven by the youthful population preferring trade over agriculture. The labour force is still engaged in low productivity jobs and median wages are still low. The labour force is characterized by a high degree of workers with no formal education and the proportion of the labour force with TVET skills training is extremely low.

### **1.5 Rural and Urban Poverty**

A number of studies, including the Integrated Household Survey (IHS<sup>8</sup>) of 2010 and Drivers of Growth studies (2014<sup>9</sup> and 2015<sup>10</sup>) have shown that growth has been inclusive in The Gambia, with both rural and urban populations seeing a fall in the poverty headcount during the PAGE implementation. However, the benefits of growth have been skewed towards the urban areas with 30% of urban households (in 2013) multi-dimensionally poor (poverty headcount) as opposed to 80% in the rural areas. Poverty levels remain extremely high in rural areas even though there has been efforts by the government to provide basic social services such as schools, health care services and electricity to rural settlements.

### **1.6 Data Collection: Quality and Timing**

Timely, quality and complete data continues to be a challenge for government institutions, especially for GBOS and CBG. For a comprehensive database to be available there is a need for coordination within the National Statistical System, comprising of government ministries, MDAs and non-government institutions. Efforts should be made to produce and disseminate timely data that would inform government's policies and spending decisions.

### **1.7 Key Issues and Challenges**

The priority areas for the GoTG can be divided into two groups, the first being priorities that require immediate action and the second set of priorities that need to be taken in concurrence with the immediate steps but whose effects are more medium to long term.

#### **Immediate Priorities**

- Reign in current spending and strengthen the cash management system: Controlling spending by matching spending to revenue is necessary if debt is to be controlled. There is a need to reallocate spending away from recurrent towards development;
- Reduce domestic debt to more manageable levels;
- Take steps to return public enterprises to a sound financial footing and sustainable debt levels;
- Consolidate all debt obligations of government and MDAs, even those not guaranteed by government and strengthen the existing database;
- Consistency in implementing policy and restraining from implementation of ad hoc policy directives.

---

<sup>8</sup> Integrated Household Survey, GBOS, 2010

<sup>9</sup> Growth Drivers, Poverty and Inequality in the Gambia, GBOS, 2014

<sup>10</sup> Study on Multidimensional Poverty and Inclusive Growth in The Gambia, UNDP, 2015

### **Medium Term Priorities**

- Increase capacity in GBOS and CBG for improved data collection: there is a need to provide more funding and training to staff of GBOS and CBG to enable timelier collection of data and an increase in the scope of data collected. Other ministries should also forge closer links with these institutions and providing the necessary data.
- GRA to find ways of collecting taxes owed to it by public enterprises. The current amount owed, coupled with the financial difficulties faced by some of the PEs means that it would be difficult for GRA to collect in the short term. GRA, Government and PEs need to engage to determine a sustainable way of paying GRA taxes owed to it.

### **1.8 Opportunities for UN System Support and Collaboration with Government**

- The UN system in The Gambia needs to coordinate its data needs and work jointly with GBOS to collect data for its UNDAF. A more coordinated approach towards engaging GBOS would allow GBOS to conduct a more comprehensive data collection exercise, allocating its best staff rather than splitting limited resources to cater to the separate needs.
- Along with funding of surveys is the development of the human resource capacity base of GBOS, MoFEA and CBG. The UN can help these institutions forge links with international institutions that can provide training.
- The UN, along with other donors can join hands with the IMF to fund some of the activities of GRA's 5-Years Plan. Without adequate funding, GRA would continue to encounter the challenges that hamper its ability to improve revenue collection. The end result would be a vicious cycle whereby, decreased funding from government leads to reduced ability to collect revenue further reducing government's ability to general domestic revenue. In relation to revenue collection, there is a need to fully understand the dynamics and avenues through which illicit financial flows leave the country. The Central Bank of The Gambia will need support from UN to conduct a thorough study of this phenomenon.
- Increased Funding of Social Services and Social Protection. With the current difficulties faced by the government there is a possibility that development spending on social services could be adversely affected as government seeks to reign-in spending. The Gambia is currently ranked as one of the top recipients countries of budget support from donors. It is very likely that this situation will continue for the foreseeable future. The UN should be ready and willing to step up its support of the Government, particularly in social protection (agriculture, health and education).

## **2. PRIVATE SECTOR DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL TRADE**

The private sector in The Gambia is dominated by Micro Enterprises, with 97% of businesses having less than 5 employees; small firms, with 5 to 9 employees, make up 2.2%; whilst medium and large firms make up less than 1% of firms. The sectors in which these firms operate is also highly concentrated as 61% of businesses operate in the distributive trade business; 16% in manufacturing; 4% in the repair (automotive repairs), and the remaining 19% spread across 13 different sectors<sup>11</sup>. There is a significant untapped market that exists for micro finance institutions and Village Savings and Credit Associations (VISACAs). Human resource constraints faced by

---

<sup>11</sup> Private Sector Development Strategy Paper, 2015

VISACAs and Credit Unions and the quality governance in village and savings credit associations limit their operations and ability to expand.

The Gambia has been reliant on tourism and agriculture as sources of foreign exchange earnings for the past 5 decades. Tourism and groundnuts, which account for 60% and 19% of foreign exchange earnings respectively, are by far the largest contributors and the most promising sectors. Other exports that are also showing promise are cashew and sesame, both currently account for less than 5% of export revenue. The Gambia is heavily reliant on imports (39% of GDP, 2014), mainly for food and agricultural products (33%) and as inputs into production (43%). The result of a fairly stagnant domestic exports and imports growth that shows no sign of slowing down is an ever-widening current account (CA) balance. The CA deficit stood at 12.7% of GDP in 2014. A consistent current account deficit has persisted for the past 30 years, with the gap widening recently. This has led to the depreciation of the dalasi and loss of reserves by the CBG in its bid to fill the gap and protect the dalasi. The latest results show that international reserves held by the CBG have fallen to 3.1 months of import cover in the first half of 2015 from 5.5 months in 2011<sup>12</sup>, the year before the implementation of the PAGE.

### ***2.1 Challenges faced in the Export (Re Export) Sector***

Studies have shown that in addition to competition from the Dakar ports, a number of challenges internally have also led to a loss in competitive advantage regarding re-exports. The increase in tariffs due to the ECOWAS Common External Tariff (CET) has led to a loss in the advantage held by the country, as then lower tariffs had attracted a greater demand for the Banjul port by its neighbours. Limited investment in the Banjul ports has meant that the port cannot dock large container vessels, which are becoming more common in international shipping now due to economies of scale. There is also inadequate equipment for offloading cargo leading to longer offloading times than in Dakar (World Bank, 2015). The Banjul ports scores below the ECOWAS average for the Line Shipping Connectivity Index (LSCI).

### ***2.2 Agriculture as a Contributor to Growth and Exports***

The poor state of roads and limited number of paved roads around the country, especially in rural areas, affects not only transit trade but also Agriculture. As a sector that employs 32% of the labour force (LFS, 2012), agriculture serves as a sector that generates incomes for those into cash crops, and as a source of food security for non-cash crop farmers. Engaging in agriculture for the rural population is an effective way of combating poverty. The reliance of farming in The Gambia on rains has led to erratic output over the past decade, more so in the last 7 years with multiple years of negative growth in agriculture (cropping). Over the past 15 years, there has not been a period when output from agriculture has grown for more than 3 consecutive years.

With the scaling up of irrigation, one of the priorities of government in its bid to achieve self-sufficiency in rice by 2016<sup>13</sup>, it is expected that more resources will be allocated to Agriculture for investments in irrigation. Gambian private sector operators are also being encouraged to invest in the production, processing and marketing of locally grown rice.

---

<sup>12</sup> Minutes of the Monetary Policy Committee Meeting August 2015

<sup>13</sup> One of the priority areas for Agriculture in the current Budget Framework Paper (2015-2017) is the scaling up of irrigation infrastructure to reduce reliance on rains.

A promising addition to the agricultural exports is cashew. Gambia has amongst the highest quality cashew nuts within the sub region, primarily due to cashew trees being relatively young (less than 15 years old)<sup>14</sup>. Cashews can serve as an alternative source of foreign exchange especially with the opening of a large sale private industrial plant (Cashew-Gam), which started operation in 2014.

### ***2.3 Tourism as an Industry and Exporter***

Although tourism has been the country's major foreign exchange earner over the past 15 years, the sector is facing increasing competition, which could lead to a fall (or stagnation) of tourist arrivals in the near future. The Ebola epidemic has had a negative impact on the industry, leading to cancellation of bookings and a reduction of tourist arrivals in the 2014/15 season by 60%<sup>15</sup> compared to the previous seasons. A forecast by the IMF for the industry expects a rebound in 2016 for the industry, assuming the epidemic is under control by late 2015.

The tourist industry in the Gambia has been facing competition from places such as Senegal, Kenya and Egypt recently. These are destinations that offer higher quality infrastructure, a more diversified product mix and lower prices. Quality is perhaps the biggest challenge faced by the industry with a lack of investment in 5 star hotels since 2009. Additionally, investment in ecotourism and inland exploration is an untapped resource with great potentials.

Unreliable electricity and its high cost is a major deterrent for investment. The lack of diversity with regards to the number of activities available to tourist is another drawback limiting growth in the sector (World Bank, 2015). The quality of the services provided by hotel and restaurant staff has also been raised by tourist groups; along with the ever-present “bumster” problem.

### ***2.4 Challenges faced by Main Export Sectors: Agriculture and Tourism***

Gambia's two main exports, though in very different sectors, face virtually identical problems. The main problems are related to quality, infrastructure, lack of diversification and very little investment. The quality of groundnuts is considered inadequate for the European confectionary markets leading to sales in the less lucrative bird feed market. Tourists and tour operators have rated Gambian hotels as below international standards. Tour operators would rather send their customers to places like Kenya, Ghana and Senegal where the quality of hotels are better.

### **2.5 Private Sector challenges**

The three significant challenges faced by the private sector are electricity, access to credit and the tax code. The Gambia has the highest unit cost of electricity in the sub region. This coupled with the inability of the current supply of electricity to meet demand means that the cost of electricity is high whether firms are using NAWEC or alternative methods of generating power. Electricity is also the biggest obstacle preventing the industry sector from growing.

Agriculture and Tourism, two of the country's biggest exports, have seen a decline in their share of credit. Their combined share has dropped from 12% in 2011 to 6% in 2014, a fall of 50% within a 3-year span. The reduced share of credit going to agriculture and tourism has starved businesses in these sectors, hampering their ability to increase output and the quality of their products.

---

<sup>14</sup> World Bank, 2015

<sup>15</sup> IMF Country Report No 15/104, April 2015

The second area where the country has lost ground is in the area of taxes. The Gambia has the second highest tax on profits in the sub region at 63%. Although each tax levied is not high, the combined taxes (GRA and councils taxes) are very high and the transaction cost is daunting for businesses to keep track and regularly pay. There is a need to simplify the tax code by eliminating the “nuisance” taxes.

## **2.6. Recommendations for Government**

- Increase Investment in Exports Sectors
- Increase Credit to Private Sector
- Streamlining Tax Code

## **2.7 Opportunities for UN System Support and Collaboration with Government**

- Electricity has been cited by the private sector as the biggest stumbling block to expansion, especially in the energy hungry sectors (manufacturing, industry, and hotels and hospitality). Government has agreed to work on putting NAWEC on more sustainable financial path and address the governance issues within the company. The UN can provide much needed expertise in the areas of restructuring NAWEC, particularly in the area of governance and management.
- Provision of technical expertise in research in improving and distribution of quality seeds. The Gambia currently has yields that are on average one sixth of the potential output for the agricultural products grown. The lack of high yielding seeds and other agricultural inputs have been identified as a major contributor to the poor performance of the sector.
- Funding and expertise for scaling up of irrigation and establishment of large-scale rice milling machines across the country. The majority of Gambian farmers are still dependent on rains for production and there are limited rice milling machines that are functional. Without a shift to irrigation based agriculture and processing of rice, the sector will only operate for half a year and rice that is produced will be lost through *loomos*, into neighboring countries. This has both income and food security implications. Investing in irrigation and adequate machinery would allow agro-entrepreneurs to farm, process and market rice year round; prevent households from having to go through “Hungry Season” for 4 to 5 months of the year. As agriculture is being commercialized, incomes of actors in the value chain would rise and their ability to produce more output increase.
- The UN can provide help to government by providing expertise in the area of streamlining the taxes levied on the private sector and the demarcation of taxes that are the responsibility of GRA and Local area councils; and providing support for capacity building of local area councils and GRA staff to keep up with their increased role in the collection of taxes.
- The UN can support the industry to achieve its goal of being a tourist haven by 2020 through support for strengthening coordination between the Ministry of Tourism & Culture and the satellite institutions with the Ministries responsible for Agriculture and Trade. The UN can provide guidance and expertise to MoTC to coordinate and develop a long-term plan to increase the inclusiveness of the tourism industry in the country.
- The Ministry envisages having the Gambia Tourism and Hospitality Institute address the capacity issues faced by the industry. The UN can fund and help the GTHI create links with other Hospitality Institutes in other countries, through South-South Cooperation, that have successfully provide the Tourism industry with the required labour supply.

- The inability of tourism to have a significant impact on the rural population means that a lot needs to be done to address this. The UN can play a major role in increasing inclusive tourism by supporting skills development as well as support to the development of eco-tourism.
- The UN system, working in unison, to bring together the ministries responsible for Education, Tourism & Culture, Trade and Youths to set up TVET institutions in each region of the country; update and upgrade the TVET curricula; train an initial group that will serve as instructors in the newly created/ renovated TVET institutes; and upgrade the capacity of the National Accreditation and Quality Assurance Authority (NAQAA) to effectively serve as a quality control and monitoring agency for TVET in the country.

### **3. AGRICULTURE, FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION**

The agriculture sector comprising crop, livestock, fisheries and forestry production is one of the key drivers for economic growth in The Gambia. It employs 70% of the labour force, contributes 26% of the GDP and meets 50% of food needs. This sector holds great potential for increased production, productivity improvements and synergy with other sectors, notably tourism and industry. In recognition of these factors, the sector has been a focus and major plank of national development blue prints formulated by Government including the Vision 2020,<sup>16</sup> Vision 2016 and Vision 2025. Additionally, several national medium-term development frameworks, sectoral policies, strategic plans, programmes and projects have been formulated for implementation in the bid to support agricultural development in the country.

However, crop production and productivity of crops are heavily dependent on rainfall. Seed availability and quality, availability and affordability of fertilizers, pests and diseases, processing, high cost of inputs and pricing policy are key challenges. Crop yields are generally low, with an average of about 1.5 tonnes/Ha compared to an estimated potential of 3-4 tonnes/Ha for cereals, excluding rice, for which yields of up to 6 tonnes/Ha have been obtained. For this reason, food self-sufficiency is relatively low, with an estimated national ratio of about 50%. Moreover, there is limited value addition with stakeholders acutely constrained by inadequate support in value chain management, including inadequate capacity in threshing, milling, packaging and storage.

#### ***3.1 Policy Overview***

A number of policy instruments have been employed for the achievement of macroeconomic and sectoral goals, notably, “The Gambia Incorporated Vision 2020”, which identified agriculture and natural resources (ANR) as top priority, consequently, the development of the sectors is a major objective of a series of policies, strategies, and programmes developed over the past 20 years. Government’s focus on food security is crystalized by the World Food Summit organized by FAO, when global leaders made the commitment to half the number of hungry people in the world. This culminated in the formulation of National Medium-Term Investment Plan ((NMTIP) and the complementary Bankable Investment Project Profiles (BIPPs) on National Food Security and Natural Resources Management with support from FAO. Between 2000 and 2008, food security became a major policy objective for the sector and was used to measure the sector’s contribution to poverty reduction and economic growth. The attainment of food security was also a cardinal objective of the PAGE (2012-2015).<sup>17</sup> In particular, food security was included in the fifth pillar of the PAGE, i.e. reinforcing social cohesion and cross cutting interventions. The current PAGE

<sup>16</sup> GoTG. 1996. Vision 2020 The Gambia Incorporated

<sup>17</sup> GoTG. 2012. Programme for Accelerated Growth and Development (PAGE) 2012 - 2015

called for improving the agricultural extension programmes to increase the flow of technology to farmers, improving water resources management to boost agricultural productivity, and encouraging greater private sector participation in agriculture.

### ***3.3 Nutrition Policy and Education Policies***

In recognition of the important role of proper and adequate nutrition in national development, The Gambia Nutrition Policy (2000-2004) was formulated and approved in 2000.<sup>18</sup> The implementation of the nutrition policy helped to elevate the position of nutrition in the GoTG's development agenda, and provided the legal and institutional framework for nutrition management in the country. In addition, the policy contributed to reducing the burden of malnutrition and improved the health and nutritional status of the population.

The Gambia Education Policy (2004-2015) is another initiative aimed at addressing food and nutrition security for children in the country, using the school feeding programme (SFP) that provides school children meals at school. Specifically, the Education Policy calls for the expansion of the SFP, and the expansion of school canteens to improve the nutritional standards of school children.<sup>19</sup> It also calls for working with the WFP to ensure the sustainability of the SFP. The GoTG has also implemented various programmes aimed at private sector-led commercialization of agriculture and trade. These are principally guided by The Gambia Investment and Export Promotion Act (GIEPA 2010), which is aimed at promoting private sector investment in the country by providing a range of incentives. In this regard, government has been implementing since 2012 the World Bank-funded Growth and Competitiveness Project (GCP) to enhance the investment environment through business registration and tax administration reforms, streamlining business registration processes, and providing support for investment promotion and facilitation. The GCP is expected to enhance private-sector development, attract foreign direct investments, and promote pro-poor growth and job creation, especially in the productive and service sectors.

### ***3.4 Key Challenges***

Agriculture in The Gambia is mainly subsistence, with rain fed production of crops along with traditional livestock rearing, and a large artisanal fisheries sub-sector. The area of land under cultivation was 336,440 Ha in 2013, up 11.1 percent from 302,725 Ha in 2008.<sup>20</sup> Although the majority of land cultivated in 2013 was for coarse grains and groundnuts, with 49.8% and 29.8%, respectively. Both crop types registered significant declines in cropped area between 2008 and 2013. In contrast, the percentage of total area under rice increased significantly from 7.6 percent in 2008 to 19.6 percent in 2013, mostly because of an increase in the cultivation of NERICA rice. In addition to these crops, an estimated 3,000 Ha annually is cropped with cotton, while cassava, potato and horticultural crops each take up an average of between 1,500 and 2,000 Ha annually.

The Gambia is the smallest country on continental Africa and has limited land resources. Not all land in the country is cultivable. Only about 38% of the total land area of the country, or about 430,000 Ha is cultivable. The country is also one of the Sub-Saharan African countries most affected by land degradation and deforestation. Against this background and the generally low productivity of Gambian farms, land management and productivity are important issues in The

---

<sup>18</sup> GoTG. 2010. National Nutrition Policy (2010-2020)

<sup>19</sup> GoTG. 2004. Education Policy 2004-2015

<sup>20</sup> Department of Agriculture, Planning Services Unit. 2013 National Agricultural Sample Survey (NASS) Report.

Gambia, with profound impacts on national development. The Gambia has thus sought to address land management and productivity issues in various policies and programmes.

Almost 40 years ago in 1977, the GoTG made the Banjul Declaration, the first policy statement on the need for environmental conservation in the country. An Environment Unit was established in 1981 in the Ministry of Natural Resources to advice on environmental issues. By 1987, the country faced a myriad of environmental problems such as salt water intrusion into the fresh water of the upper aquifer of coastal areas, deforestation, desertification, and loss of natural resources. In response, government enacted the National Environment Management Act (NEMA) and developed the first Gambia Environmental Action Plan (GEAP I) and started implementation in 1993. In 1994, the GoTG created the National Environment Agency (NEA) to coordinate the implementation of GEAP I to help The Gambia achieve sustainable economic and social development, and soundly manage ecological processes, natural resources and the cultural and natural heritage of the country. The GEAP I provided a sound basis for environmental management in The Gambia, based on national legislation and international conventions.

Gambian agriculture is predominantly subsistence, rain fed, and with very little irrigation, use of improved seeds and inputs such as fertilizers. In addition, many Gambian soils inherently have very low fertility, thus making food production relatively low. This point was raised in all regions by communities during the Countrywide Community Consultations. The climate change related problem of erratic and declining rainfall also makes Gambian agriculture very risky and food security a huge development challenge. For example, the seasonal nature of rain fed crop production culminates in temporal acute food shortages during the so-called “hungry season” (July-September) when households exhaust their food supply from the previous rainy season before the harvest of new crops.

Malnutrition is a major public health problem in The Gambia and it is aggravated by poverty, shortage of food, environmental degradation and various other factors. Based on WHO classification of nutrition emergencies, The Gambia borders on an emergency given that it has a national global acute malnutrition prevalence of 9.9 percent.<sup>21</sup> Furthermore, the estimated minimum national dietary energy intake of 1,770 calories per person per day is below the recommended minimum requirement of 2,200 calories per person per day. Malnutrition is also an important development challenge because it is women and children, the most vulnerable groups, that are most affected. Most women in rural areas are constantly energy-deficient because of poor dietary habits, heavy work and frequent infections. Children under five are vulnerable to malnutrition because of poor feeding practices, inadequate care, and exposure to infections. Although breastfeeding is universally practiced in The Gambia, only 48 per cent of mothers practice exclusive breastfeeding for six months, and complementary feeding does not provide children with adequate nutrition (DHS 2013).

### **3.5 Recommendations to Government**

- Seek technical assistance from UN and other development partners to strengthen institutional capacity in policy development, programming, agricultural statistics, extension and research;

---

<sup>21</sup> NaNA. 2013. National Nutritional Survey in The Gambia Using Standardised Monitoring and Assessment of Relief Transition (SMART) Methods.

- Support value chain development particularly of cereals, horticulture, livestock, groundnuts and fisheries for enhanced exports, income and food security;
- Expand irrigation capacity, particularly surface (tidal) and underground water to ensure year-round agricultural production;
- In the next PAGE emphasis should be placed on structural transformation for employment creation and value addition. This needs to be tied to the need to invest heavily in education, particularly in adult education and TVET, to produce the necessary human capital to drive the transformation process;
- Make concerted effort to improve women access to and ownership of productive resources, especially land, in order to enhance their agricultural production and productivity;
- Support nutrition education at community and household level to support particularly hygienic infant food preparation and feeding practices;
- Promote public awareness and household access to the consumption of adequate, safe and nutritious food.

### ***3.6 Opportunities for UN System Support and Collaboration with Government***

UN agencies have a number of areas in which they have competitive advantage, by virtue of their mission, track record and national experience.

- UN agencies such as the FAO and WFP played significant roles in assessing the crop performance during and after the 2011/12 cropping season failure, thus helping provide valuable data that formed the basis for developing a sound national response and resource mobilization.
- UN agencies can also help strengthen research, vulnerability assessments, data collection, nutrition surveillance, monitoring and evaluation, and knowledge management capacities of government agencies. Technology transfer is a key area for UN support in relation to promotion of food security and boosting agricultural production and productivity. Capacity building for efficient and effective public service delivery in agriculture sector is key starting for planning, implementation and monitoring capacity.
- UNICEF, WFP and UNDP have a distinct advantage in working on social protection issues, which is closely related to the issue of food and nutrition security for children and women, especially mothers. UNICEF, UNFPA and WHO can help improve investment in maternal and child nutrition focusing on the 1,000 days window of opportunity, which is the most crucial in the development of human capital. Similarly, WFP and UNICEF have the capacity to support the implementation of the Integrated Management of Acute Malnutrition (IMAM) protocol.
- Given that the National Nutrition Policy (2010 – 2020), the ANR Policy (2009 – 2015) and the National Education Policy (2004 – 2015) are at or close to their conclusion, UN agencies can help the GoTG update and align these with the next UNDAF and NDP.
- To provide continuity from the MDGs and mainstreaming of the SDGs, the UN should also support government through its UNDAF in designing the next PAGE to address the imperatives of SDGs.

## **4.0 INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT**

The importance of infrastructure in national development is recognized in the national development blueprint, Vision 2020, and many sector and sub-sector policies and strategies. The

Vision 2020 identified the development of a solid infrastructural base as a national objective, and recognized that seaport, airport, as well as the road and water transport networks have crucial roles in national development. It called for the integration of the country into the global information infrastructure to increase access to telecommunications services and make the country a major data processing centre. This is in line with the imperatives of SDGs 8, 9 and 11, and the GoTG and UN system objective to develop a successor PAGE and UNDAF that are SDGs compliant.

The PAGE envisaged state-of-the-art infrastructure that forms the basis of the socio-economic wellbeing of people in the country. It also focussed on transforming The Gambia into a developed country that provides an effective and sustainable transportation system road, air and water transport system; a diversified, reliable, efficient, affordable, and environmentally friendly energy infrastructure; an information and communications technologies infrastructure that provides connectivity, and facilitates the exchange of data, information and knowledge to enrich lives, and enhance services; and a well-defined social infrastructure programme that is environmentally friendly and adaptable to climate change. The Government, while encouraging the participation of the private sector, has invested heavily in transport, energy, ICT and social infrastructure.

#### ***4.1 Critical Issues in the Energy Sector and ICT***

The key challenges include:

- 1) Rehabilitation and expansion of the Transmission and Distribution Networks with the eventual target of establishing a national grid;
- 2) Expansion of generation capacity
- 3) Interconnection with West African Power Pool (WAPP) through OMVG Energy Project. This will enable The Gambia to access cheaper electricity.
- 4) Off grid and mini-grids are very important to increase access to energy. Renewable energy is more suitable for off grid and mini-grid applications. The concept of mini-grids can be integrated with the Multi-functional Platforms to make the program more attractive for private sector investment.
- 5) About 90% of domestic energy comes from forest resources. This is a huge burden on the forest and is causing rapid deforestation. To avert this looming environmental problem, there is urgent need to promote other sources of energy (LPG, Biogas, Solar Cookers, and Briquettes) for cooking and heating.

The energy sector in The Gambia has a number of challenges that hamper growth and contribution to national development. Among the major challenges are:

1. The dual challenge of energy access and reliable supply, which impact all sectors of the economy and citizens.
2. The over dependence on biomass for energy. This has serious implications for land degradation, deforestation and health. The need to provide rural populations with affordable energy without degrading the environment or threatening health is likely to increase as the population of the country increases.
3. The provision of electricity is a challenge, both in terms of access and quality. Although the power infrastructure has been modernized and rehabilitated, there still is room for improvement.

An exemplary ICT infrastructure project is the ECOWAS Wide Area Network (ECOWAN) project, which is building a 947 km nationwide fibre optic backbone to further improve telecommunications and Internet services in the country.<sup>22</sup> The ECOWAN project will provide wireless access through a 4G LTE network to 300 government and ECOWAS offices in the GBA. In addition, the ECOWAN fibre optic backbone will be connected to the ACE submarine cable thus permitting the introduction of high-speed broadband services nationwide.

#### **4.2 Recommendations to Government**

- Create a lead road safety agency.
- Expedite the process of establishing an ICT Agency, responsible for ICTs implementation for the public sector.
- Create a taskforce to work on the implementation of axle load protocol of ECOWAS.
- Introduce new technologies into infrastructure and promote innovative financing of infrastructure projects
- Factor social protection in all infrastructural development, resettlement impact assessment, and environmental impact assessment.
- Review and strengthen the social protection laws in the country
- Develop an institutionalize Data Collection system. The integration of ICTs in the public sector will enhance this.
- Establish a Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT) to help protect internet users especially the children online.
- Introduce the Lent Man System in the maintenance of feeder roads. This will mitigate the rural urban drift and the back way syndrome.
- Establish rural electrification agencies to concentrate in the rural areas.

#### **4.5 Opportunities for UN System Support and Collaboration with Government**

The priority areas for UN and other development partners' support are as follows:

- **Transport:** WFP can support in capacity development for road transport users such as logistics/transport supply chain, maintenance, truck-load, and road safety measures.
- **ICT:** The priority areas for support include activities that would lead to the achievement of the MOICI strategic plan objectives, notably, reforming and restructuring of the Department of Information Services, capacity building of MOCI staff, resource mobilization and strengthening the e-government programme.
- **Energy:** Promote private sector involvement/investment in the energy sector: Off grid and mini-grids are very important to increase access to energy. Renewable energy is more suitable for off grid and mini-grid applications. The concept of mini-grids can be integrated with Multi-functional Platforms to make the program more attractive.
- Promotion of alternative sources of energy. About 90% of our domestic energy comes from forest resources. This is a huge burden on the forest and is causing rapid deforestation. To

---

<sup>22</sup> <https://www.telegeography.com/products/commsupdate/articles/2013/12/06/gamtel-signs-usd33m-contract-with-huawei-to-transform-national-backbone/>

avert this looming environmental problem, there is urgent need to promote other sources of energy (LPG, Biogas, Solar Cookers, and Briquettes) for cooking and heating.

- Support the development and implementation of policies, strategies, incentives and risks-implications and opportunities for attaining SE4ALL objectives.

## **5.0 HUMAN CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT**

The Gambia, recognizing that nearly a half of its population lives on less than \$1.25 a day, has placed emphasis on poverty reduction either through growth (PSRP I and II) or the creation of employment (PAGE). A breakdown of the budget for the past 4 years shows that between 20%-25% of the budget is spent on basic social services, with Education (MoBSE) and Health (MoHSW) taking up 86% of the budget. The emphasis on education and health are not misplaced given that health indicators are still lagging behind the country's peers<sup>23</sup> (especially for maternal and child health indicators). Education statistics show that The Gambia lags behind English speaking countries in the sub region in a number of indicators. In the successor PAGE and UNDAF, the CCA recommends to build on the gains of the MDGs and incorporate the imperatives of appropriate SDGs, especially SDGs 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 8.

### **5.1 The Education System**

The achievement of virtual universal access to primary education in The Gambia is a tremendous achievement. Statistics published by the Ministry of Basic and Secondary education show that for 2015, Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) has increased to 101.2%. This has gone hand in hand with a significant closing in the gender gap at the primary level, with a gross enrolment of 98.7% for boys and 95.4% for girls. The gap of 3% is considerably less than the 12% gap in 2000. Primary completion rates have almost doubled between 1990 and 2013 (from 44% to 74%)<sup>24</sup>. Similar, headway is being made at the Early Childhood Development (ECD) level, as enrolment has steadily increased over the past 3 years from 36.5% to 45.4%. It is important to note that there has been a balance in admissions in terms of gender with more girls (46.1) attending ECD than boys (44.6), a small margin but one that echoes the progress that has been made at the lower basic cycle with the closing of the gender gap.

There are significant differences by RED for Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) and Completion Rate (CR) at the Lower Basic Cycle (LBC), grades 1 to 6. To a large extent, GER and CR are in line with poverty rates around the country. REDs 1 and 2, where poverty rates are lowest, have the highest enrolment and completion rate of students at the lower basic cycle. Whilst RED 5 (CRR), which has the country's two poorest districts has the lowest enrolment and completion rates at the LBE level. As in the LBE, enrolment and completion rates at the Upper Basic Education (UBE) level vary significantly between the best performing region (RED 1) and the worst performing (RED 6). Where almost 100% of student who enter grade 7 complete grade 9 in RED 1, less than 25% of students who enter grade 7 complete in RED 6. Completion rates in RED 5 (CRR) are not much higher than RED 6, with only a third of students entering grade 7 completing the UBE cycle. Seventy percent of the children within the school going age for senior secondary education are enrolled in school within RED 1, with a completion rate of 60%. As was seen at the UBE, RED 6 (URR) has the lowest GER and CR in the whole country at 11% and 8% respectively. This is a

---

<sup>23</sup>Peers referrers to two sets of countries, least developed countries (LDCs) and sub Saharan African countries (SSA).

<sup>24</sup>World Bank Open Data, 2014

dismal statistic, which shows the wide disparities that exist in terms of access to education and the ability of the system to retain students across all 12 years.

### ***Tertiary and Technical and Vocational Education Training (TVET)***

Completion rates at the primary are still too low (73%) and at the senior secondary school level only 2% of students taking the West African Senior Secondary Certificate Examinations (WASSCE) pass. The Gambia ranks among the bottom performers at the WASSCE in terms of success rate, with Ghana and Nigeria having success rates of 10% and 20% respectively<sup>25</sup>.

The lack of education and vocational skills limits the opportunities available to workers, preventing them from moving into more lucrative sectors such as industry/manufacturing, telecommunications, and Banking & Insurance (the three sectors with the highest value added per worker). Only 11% of the labour force (15-64 years) has had vocational training (LFS, 2012). This is extremely low for a country that aims to achieve middle-income status within a decade. There is also a lack of diversification in the skills in vocational training. The areas of focus for vocational training are tailoring (21%), Masonry (9%) and Carpentry (8%)<sup>26</sup>. The lack of diversification is across all regions, with tailoring, carpentry, masonry and welding & fabrication making up the top four most learnt trades in every region outside Banjul and Kanifing<sup>27</sup>. Given the breadth of courses on offer at TVET schools and the demand for other types of skills in these regions, there is a need to understand the reasons for the high concentration of students in these 4 areas.

## ***5.2 Health***

The Gambia health system operates using a Primary Health Care (PHC) structure, with the primary level, operating at the community level. The primary level, comprised of the health posts and community outreach clinics, serves as the primary point of contact between the community and the population. Health posts are set up at PHC villages with each post manned by a village health worker and a traditional birth attendant (TBD). For a village to qualify to be a PHC, it must have at least 400 people and a Village Development Committee (VDC).

A joint study was conducted by the WHO and the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare (MoHSW) in 2013 to get a better understanding of the amount and sources of payment for health services in the country. The preliminary results show that between 2010 and 2013 the share of the budget allocated to health as a percent of GDP by the government of The Gambia ranged from 7.56% (2011) to 12.18 (2012). Between 2004 and 2013, the share of money spent on health services by households increased from 9% to 21%. This is a significant rise and one that puts households under pressure as they have to reallocate spending from other needs (such as education, utilities and food) to pay for health services.

The lack of functioning PHC in some villages and adequately trained staff in others has led inadequate access to basic health services for the poor and vulnerable members of the population, who are also more likely to live in remote areas. This has serious equity issues. There is an urgent need to reinvigorate the PHC system to improve the health indicators for women and children.

---

<sup>25</sup>ibid.

<sup>26</sup>Labour Force Survey, GBOS, 2012

<sup>27</sup>A critical analysis of TVET and its contribution to job creation in The Gambia, NTA & VSO, 2015

In relation to human resource constraints, the Health Strategy Plan (2014-2020) lists 3 issues that need to be addressed:

1. High attrition of skilled health and social workers,
2. Inadequate skilled and competent health workers,
3. Low staff production from health training institutions

### ***Maternal and Child Health and Nutrition***

Coverage of the antenatal care services is high in The Gambia. The proportion of pregnant women who received antenatal care is about 99% according to the 2013 DHS. Notwithstanding the high antenatal care coverage, a major challenge is access to comprehensive emergency obstetric care, a major determinant of maternal survival. The distribution of facilities providing emergency obstetric care services is inadequate.

Needless to say, government's spending on social protection services have had a positive effect in health, where we observe an improvement is in the maternal, infant and child mortality rates over the past 15 years. Between 2005 and 2010, there was a general trend of improving health indicators related women and children followed by a deterioration of some of these indicators between 2010 and 2013. Although the rates for immunization (87%), contraceptive prevalence (13%) and vitamin A supplementation (80%) improved in 2005, they subsequently fell in 2013 to 76%, 9% and 69% respectively. ANC 4+ visits and skilled delivery are two indicators that have continually improved over the past 15 years.

A significant contributor to the stagnation of some health indicators and deterioration was the 2011 drought that had an adverse effect on the economy and rural households in particular. The Standardized Monitoring and Assessment of Relief Transition (SMART) survey conducted during the "lean season" of 2012, gives the clearest picture of the effect of drought on child health. It was discovered that Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM) had risen to 9.9% from the MICS, 2010 (9.5%), with one fifth of children under 5 being stunted. A disturbing statistic found in the report showed that 1 in every 5 pregnant women was undernourished. Given the plethora of studies showing the effect of in-utero experiences on birth weight and later life health outcomes of children, there needs to be concerted effort to tackle the emerging child and maternal health and nutrition issues before it becomes a national emergency.

### ***Non- Communicable and Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTD)***<sup>28</sup>

According to the World Health Organization (WHO) 2005 report on chronic diseases, the majority of deaths worldwide for all ages are due to chronic diseases such as cardiovascular diseases (mainly heart disease and stroke), cancer, and chronic respiratory diseases. Non-communicable diseases (NCDs) – mainly cardiovascular diseases, cancers, chronic respiratory diseases and diabetes – are now a major public health challenge, undermining socio-economic development globally. The major NCDs share four common modifiable risk factors, which are tobacco use, unhealthy diet, harmful use of alcohol and physical inactivity. Although morbidity and mortality from NCDs mainly occur in adulthood, exposure to risk factors begins in early life<sup>29</sup>.

---

<sup>28</sup> This is a group of medically diverse infectious diseases that thrive in impoverished settings, especially in the heat and humidity of tropical climates. Most are parasitic diseases, spread by vectors. Others are spread by contaminated water and soil infested with the eggs of worms. These conditions are considered not to have received sufficient attention from donor community and public health planners – hence the term 'Neglected Tropical Diseases'. In addition to causing morbidity and mortality, NTDs are responsible for high social burden in terms of the stigma, blindness, deformity and other forms of disability that they cause.

<sup>29</sup>WHO Briefing on key and critical areas of public health importance, July 2014

Chronic NCDs are on the increase in The Gambia<sup>30</sup>. Van der Sande *et al*; (1996, 2001) recommended further research in the following areas as a means of addressing NCDs in the country. These include:

- Surveillance to create a data base on NCDs
- Effectiveness of current treatment practices
- Primary prevention taking into account the determinants or risk factors for NCD

The most recent WHO STEPWISE Survey<sup>31</sup> was conducted to contribute to the on-going data collection on NCDs in The Gambia in order to describe the current levels of risk factors for chronic diseases, track the direction and magnitude of trends in risk factors, develop an appropriate health promotion or preventive strategy for NCD prevention and control, and develop a national NCD policy. The study concluded that the major risk factors for developing NCDs are smoking; low level of physical activity; being overweight; eating less than five servings of fruits and vegetables; and raised blood pressure (defined as SBP  $\geq$  140 and/or DBP  $\geq$  90 mmHg). The survey also suggested concerted efforts need to be implemented so that people consumed the recommended five servings of fruits and vegetables a day to get the maximum benefits that they provide.

The number of people affected by mental disorders in the Gambia is significant, estimated at about 120,000. There is limited infrastructure for mental health treatment and care in the Gambia. Human resources for mental health are also inadequate. Currently, the only mental health professionals working in The Gambia are located in the Polyclinic and the Campama Psychiatric Unit. There are no specific budget allocations for mental health and the primary sources of mental health financing are grants, which are directed towards the upkeep of the Campama Psychiatric Unit. The current mental health legislation, the 'Suspected Lunatic Act' of 1942, is outdated. CSO's have encouraged to decentralize mental health care facilities and personnel to provincial regions and provide rehabilitation centres for mentally ill persons.

### ***HIV and AIDS Response***

The Gambian response to the HIV and AIDS pandemic has always been guided by national policies and strategic plans. The Gambia has championed a politically led and nationally driven, multi-sectoral response to the HIV epidemic in Sub-Saharan Africa since 1986. Administratively, the National AIDS Council (NAC) provides overall strategic and policy leadership and oversight to the national response to HIV. The Gambia has made tremendous progress in reducing morbidity and mortality related to HIV and AIDS<sup>32</sup>. The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) estimates<sup>33</sup> that the AIDS epidemic can be ended as a public health threat by 2030. However, for The Gambia, additional efforts are required to achieve universal access to a comprehensive prevention, treatment and care package.

---

<sup>30</sup> The prevalence of the common risk factors of Non-Communicable diseases in the Gambia. Cowan (2011)

<sup>31</sup> Cowan (2011). The prevalence of the common risk factors of Non-Communicable diseases in the Gambia.

<sup>32</sup> Recent DHS data shows that 1.9 percent of adults age 15-49 were infected. Prevalence rate is 2.1 percent among women and 1.7 percent among men. HIV prevalence peaked at 5.9 percent in the 35-39 age groups for both sexes. Banjul is lowest (1.1 percent) and highest is Mansakonko (2.9 percent).

<sup>33</sup> Piot P, Abdou Karim SS, Hecht R, Legido-Quigley H, Buse K, Stover J, Resch S et al. Defeating AIDS – advancing global health. The Lancet. 2015; 386(9989):171-218.

Resource Mobilization, especially domestic resource mobilization, need to be intensified for the implementation of the new National Strategic Plan. The total funds required for the NSF is US\$ 46,084,562 million. It is anticipated that the Global Fund will fund the 3 year NFM to the tune of US\$29 million thus there will be gap of US\$17million. The absence of many donors in the country affects resource mobilization efforts and without adequate resources the effective implementation of the National Strategic Framework will be jeopardized.

Emerging issues around HIV Testing and Counselling (HCT), Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission (PMTCT) leading to elimination of Mother- to-Child Transmission (eMTCT), the 2015 new WHO treatment guidelines and increasing availability of antiretroviral therapy call for changes in the policy direction. Key priorities for the national response should be among others prevention of new infections; reduction of morbidity and mortality; impact mitigation and response management. These can be achieved by:

- Implementation the Three Ones Principle
- Strengthening capacity for input –output and impact monitoring , analysis and reporting
- Strengthening capacity for surveillance and Operational Research
- Better management of the HIV and AIDS Policy Advisory Committee
- Strengthening financial resources mobilization for the national HIV response

### **5.3 Water and Sanitation**

As one of a few MDG indicators that the country has achieved, is the proportion of the population with access to safe drinking water reached 91% in 2013 (DHS, 2013). This has occurred despite relatively limited spending by government in the area of water supply (0.01% of GDP). Results of the 2013 DHS show that less than 40% of the population has access to improved sanitation. The “...fragmentation of the sanitation sector, giving rise to a weak and confusing institutional framework for sanitation and hygiene coordination”<sup>34</sup> has slowed progress towards achieving the MDGs related to sanitation. Significant human capacity constraints also exist, leading to a need to for training at the senior and middle management levels in government and civil society. Vocational training for artisans and technicians of sanitary facilities should also be considered. The National Policy for Hygiene and Sanitation (2011) laments the lack of coordination between the different stakeholders in the area and recommends “improving inter-sectoral and inter-agency coordination and management of sanitation and hygiene issues in the country”<sup>35</sup>. An area where coordination can have a lasting effect is in the area of nutrition, health and sanitation at the school level. The implementation of programmes such as the school feeding programme can be integrated with issues of hygiene and sanitation, allowing UN agencies to tackle multiple child related issues within the same setting.

### **5.4 Population Divergence and its Impact on Social Service Provision**

There has been tremendous success in reducing mortality rates for infants, children and mothers over the past 15 years. This achievement, coupled with a stagnant fertility rate (5.6 in 2013 compared to 5.1 2005) has translated into a fast population growth rate. The Gambia has one of the world’s fastest growing populations (3.3%), with little sign of slowing down. Contraception use among married women 15-49 is only at 9%. The dwindling income from agriculture, a crumbling Primary Health Care system and a poorly educated youthful population; are all

---

<sup>34</sup> The Gambia National Policy for Sanitation and Hygiene, 2011

<sup>35</sup> *ibid.*

ingredients for rural - urban migration explosion. It is estimated that close to 65% of the rural area's productive capacity has been lost due to the internal migration (MoFEA, 2011).

Extreme, unidirectional internal migration has adverse effects on the economy and pose additional challenges for the economy. It is estimated that 60% of the country's population lives in the urban areas, accounting for less than 20% of the country's area; with the remaining 40% on 80% of the land. The first effect is the divergence in population densities between the urban and rural areas. The increased density in the urban areas has led to a strain on social services such as electricity, water, housing, transportation; and pressure on the Government to invest more in basic services.

### **5.5 Recommendations to Government**

- Health system: The health system in The Gambia is faced with a plethora of challenges, chief among which are in the areas of human resource capacity, weak monitoring mechanism (especially timely data collection), poor quality of services at all levels, and limited distribution of and access to primary or secondary care around the country. The CCA recommends the strengthening of the PHC structure.
- Education Sector: Although a great deal of improvement has been registered, there is a need to increase the number of senior secondary schools in rural areas. There is also a need to improve the quality of teachers in rural areas to reduce the need for children to migrate to urban areas for senior secondary schooling. Improving quality should be a focus of the Next Development Plan (2016 – 2020) through continuously upgrading teachers and increasing pay to attract better teachers.
- The focus on TVET is essential in helping transform the labour force, both rural and urban, to match the needs of an economy that seeks to transform from an agriculture-based economy to a more industry and service-oriented economy. Coordination between the Education ministries (MoBSE and MoHERST) and the ministries responsible for Tourism, Agriculture and Trade is vital in order to ensure that skills taught by TVET institutes cater to the needs of the private and export sectors.
- Internal Migration and Social Service Investment: There is an urgent need for government to allocate spending on social services in rural areas to help stem and possibly reverse the flow of internal migration. Investments should focus on bid to expand electricity access to rural areas along with steps to reduce the unit cost, to make affordable to lower income households. There should be an increase in agricultural extension workers to train farmers on the most current farming techniques in order to increase income from agriculture.
- The GoTG is encouraged to regulate and supervise health-care practices to prevent ill-treatment of people affected by mental disorders, and to investigate and prosecute cases.

### **5.6 Opportunities for UN System Support and Collaboration with Government**

- The UN agencies responsible for health (especially maternal and child health), nutrition and food security need to step in to address the emerging issues before they turn into a full blown crises. The UN agencies need to ensure that a holistic approach is used in tackling these issues, knowing that the issues of health, nutrition and food security are interrelated.
- Address the increase in child malnutrition from birth to 12 years of age. The current school-feeding programme should play a greater role in helping to address the issue of nutrition by providing expertise, funding and logistics to scale up the programme.

- Address the human resource constraints, as one of the main challenges faced by the health system and other local partners engaged in activities related to health, nutrition and food security. The focus on building capacity at of health staff should continue to be a priority for the UN agencies.
- Ensure appropriate indicators in the next UNDAF for regular monitoring. A coordinated and joint approach to data collection for monitoring and evaluation must be emphasized by the UN and advocated to implementing partners both in government and civil society.
- Improving Coordination and management of funding in the sector, in line with the Health Policy
- Move towards universal health coverage based on poverty rates and inadequate health services (PHC)
- As in the area of health, nutrition and food security, there is scope for the UN to support the Government in jointly tackling the issues related to NCDs. This would increase the potency of the interventions and prevent overlapping projects.
- The UN, in particular UNAIDS<sup>36</sup> should expand its work in the arenas of women and children's health, working with such initiatives as Every Woman, Every Child and the Partnership on Maternal, New-born and Child Health to achieve collective momentum in scaling up the response and improving maternal and child health outcomes.
- To transition into the Sustainable Development Goals agenda the UN system should continue to research new models to fast track the response and continue to adhere to and nurture principles of good partnership. UN system's leadership, inclusiveness, political advocacy, funding and effective communication will be essential to progress during the coming period<sup>37</sup>.

## 6. GOVERNANCE, JUSTICE AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Promotion of good governance and respect for human rights are requisite pillars for ensuring sustainable development and the building of a resilient nation. Good governance, justice and respect for human rights principles are important national objectives set out in the Constitution of The Gambia (1997) to guide the work of the State and all citizens, institutions and agencies. To fully appreciate the broad scale of socio-economic, civil and political topics, legal framework and mechanisms, and the national and international obligations of The Gambia, the first part of the section summarizes current milestones the government and its partners are working on, including: judicial sector reform; civil service reform; decentralization; and the state and role of civil society actors. The second part of the section deals with the challenges the country is confronted with in terms of human rights, access to justice and governance. This CCA recommends that the government should build on its achievements to incorporate imperatives of appropriate SDGs, including SDGs 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and especially 16.

### 6.1 *Judicial Sector Reform*

Significant efforts have been undertaken over the years to address the constraints in the Justice Sector, including reinforcing the administrative and management capacity of the Department of State for Justice; elaborating a human resources strategy for the legal sub-sector that takes account the University's Law Department; enhancing the capacity of the Attorney General's Chambers to

<sup>36</sup> UNAIDS Strategy for 2016–2021, p63

<sup>37</sup> UNAIDS Strategy for 2016–2021, p64

coordinate and supervise the unified criminal justice system; improving the Registrar General's and Curator of Intestate Estates' operations; establishing an alternative dispute resolution (ADR) system to increase access to justice, particularly for the disadvantaged; decongesting the courts to reduce delays; supporting and complementing court reform; and reducing the cost of litigation. The existing infrastructure has been upgraded and measures taken to foster efficient dissemination of legal information, and to update and harmonize the legal and regulatory framework. The establishment of a National Agency for Legal Aid (NALA) and a children's court to promote access to justice is also part of the enhancement.

### ***6.1.1 Key Issues and Priorities for Government***

The reform initiatives continue to be affected by many constraints which include human, institutional, financial, and organisational and logistics inadequacies. The attrition rate for lawyers at the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) is quite high. On average, lawyers stay only between 3-5 years.<sup>38</sup> This is principally linked to the low remuneration compared to other public institutions and the judiciary. Although lawyers at the MoJ are better paid than counterparts in the civil service, their salaries lag behind those working for satellite agencies under the MoJ, public enterprises and judges. Government should focus on addressing the constraints facing the sector.

### ***6.1.2 Opportunities for UN and Development Partners collaboration***

The UN can support the Government in capacity development to promote and enhance good governance, justice and the rule of law, particularly in the areas of logistics and information system, training at the decentralised levels, and strengthening access to justice for children.

## ***6.2 Decentralisation***

Generally, progress has been slow in translating the policy intentions of decentralisation into an effective local government system capable of ensuring improved service delivery and contributing to the improvement of rural livelihoods. This is mainly due to the limited capacity of councils to drive the decentralization process; the narrow revenue base of some councils to effectively carry out meaningful development in their communities; and the continued failure of the Central Government to effect fiscal transfers as required by the Local Government Act 2002 to provide councils with much needed funds.

### ***6.2.1 Priority Actions for Government***

Some of the key intervention areas as highlighted in a recent assessment report include<sup>39</sup>

- Building Council staff capacity for transformational leadership;
- Building Council staff capacity on management systems, strategic planning, monitoring and evidence-based decision making;
- Strengthening the Council Development Planning system and its links with rural livelihood activities, including the revamping and training of sub-district structures.
- Building Council financial capacity, management, transparency and accountability so they can finance and implement services and demand-driven rural livelihood activities;

---

<sup>38</sup> Attorney General's Chambers And Ministry of Justice Strategic Plan (2015 – 2019), August 2014

<sup>39</sup>Review of The Decentralization Process In The Gambia, September 2012

- Building the capacity of the Ministry of Lands and Regional Government to enable it to coordinate and drive the processes, and support the councils efficiently and effectively in the implementation of the decentralization Policy.

### ***6.2.2 Opportunities for UN and Development Partners collaboration***

The UN System and other donors should support the decentralisation process, particularly in capacity building at the central and the decentralised levels. This requires a renewed commitment of the Government and donors. Recent experience of UNDP support to Kuntaur Area Council, one of the poorest in the country, shows that with improved organisation and strengthened capacity, council can increase revenue and sustain their operations.

## ***6.3 Civil Service Reform***

Public sector institutions play a central role in the delivery of infrastructural and social services, and in the creation of an enabling environment for the private sector to realize its full potential. The sector's institutional performance is a critical factor in the design and implementation of development programmes as well as in the effective realization of policy goals and development targets. The public service is required to provide the vital human and institutional capacity and to create and sustain the environment for these policies to be implemented successfully. The critical issues facing the public service are human resource capacity and absorptive capacity, aggravated by scarce technical and financial resources.

### ***6.3.1 Key Challenges***

The challenges faced by the civil service include its size, which raises issues of sustainability; and the limited analytical capacity of many Government institutions, especially in policy analysis, policy-making and planning. This limitation is aggravated by the high attrition of high-level staff at technical and policy levels, which raises the issue of security of tenure within the civil service. Other issues relate to the poor management of human resources, and the quality of the civil service delivery and its efficiency. However, some proposed reforms such as the development of a pay strategy and the conduct of a new grading and job evaluation exercise, yet to take place are expected to alleviate the situation.

### ***6.3.2 Recommended Priority Actions for Government***

Among the priority actions recommended are to streamline the size of the civil service to manageable proportion and improve the pay and working conditions of the staff. In this regard, the proposed reforms of a pay strategy and the conduct of a new grading and job evaluation exercise should be implemented. These reforms are to be supported by capacity building programmes to improve the quality of service delivery. Oversight institutions, such as the Ombudsman and the Industrial Tribunal, should be strengthened with capacity building, more financial resources and greater autonomy.

### ***6.3.3 Opportunities for UN and Development Partners collaboration***

The UN System and donors can provide an important support in capacity development of the civil service, particularly in the areas of policy analysis and human resources management.

## ***6.4 Civil Society Actors***

Civil Society actors, comprising NGOs and CBOS have been very active in the socio-economic development of The Gambia. Whilst NGOs and CBOs are considered the most appropriate vehicle to reach out to communities and ensure participatory approaches, they face deficiencies in managerial and technical capacity, and resource constraints to effectively deliver on their mandates, especially among the local CSOs. Other challenges, especially for those working in the area of human rights, include the close monitoring of their activities by the NGO Affairs Agency, resulting in organizations exercising self-censorship.

#### ***6.4.1 Recommendations to Government***

There is a need for greater dialogue and cooperation between the CSOs, the Government and other actors. This may require establishing a multi-sectoral structure for coordination, implementation and monitoring of programmes by Government, CSOs and the UN System. To improve access to justice and develop a conducive environment for human rights, good governance and participation, the Government should monitor the human rights situation and bring abuses to public scrutiny and debate; support the work of local CSOs working on the promotion and protection of human rights; respect the independence of NGOs; and take concrete steps to facilitate the work of human rights defenders to ensure that NGOs can safely carry out their functions in a manner consistent with the principles of a democratic society. Institutions and capacities of state actors, non-state actors and oversight bodies should be enhanced to promote accountability, human rights, equitable access to justice for all and people's participation in decision making processes at all levels

#### ***6.4.2 Opportunities for UN and Development Partners Collaboration***

There is a lot of room for the UN system to address these challenges and partner with civil society actors to deliver services at the community level. Several UN agencies have shown good experiences in this area. UN agencies have supported these efforts, for instance OHCHR, UNICEF and UNFPA worked on strengthening NGO capacities. Other examples include UNDP's support to the TRY OYSTER Association, a local NGO involved in the Tanbi Wetland Complex in multifocal interventions for addressing environmental sustainability and enhancing livelihood.

### ***6.5 Human Rights***

Improving humans is critical to responding to SDG 16, which requires countries to promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels. The achievements made include the preparation and presentation of the Universal Periodic Review report and use of the Special Procedures mechanisms; a relatively large number of submissions from civil society; organization of awareness-raising campaigns with civil society actors on access to justice for women; and the training on governance and human rights issues for non-state actors.

#### ***6.5.1 Key Challenges***

Despite the trainings and awareness campaigns there has not been any significant improvement in NGO participation in national dialogues and decision making, or engagement with Government on governance and human rights issues. There are limited processes and institutions facilitating national dialogue on governance. The shrinking space for divergent views and dissenting opinion has constrained the unfettered participation of the general public on governance issues. There is a perceived mistrust between Government actors and representatives from civil society which has resulted in inadequate consultations and unexploited opportunities for synergy. There is only a limited implementation of recommendations from the Universal Periodic Review (UPR). Many

of the 2010 recommendations have not been implemented and similarly those of 2015. It is, however, promising that the Government is showing will to implement the UPR recommendation they have accepted. Civil society engagement with international human rights mechanisms has increased, but enlargement of the enabling environment for civil society actors to work is constrained, particularly in areas considered ‘sensitive’. The limited capacities of human rights defenders needs to be addressed with support and training on monitoring and reporting; engaging with human rights mechanisms; and advocacy actions towards the implementation of UPR, Special Procedures mechanisms and Treaty Bodies observations and recommendations.

#### **6.5.2 Recommendations to Government**

To ensure full respect for human rights, access to justice and good governance, The Gambia needs to consider acceptance of several international norms by **ratification** of outstanding conventions.

### **7. ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE CHANGE AND DISASTER RISK REDUCTION**

The Gambia remains committed to sound environmental and natural resources management in keeping with the Vision 2020. Environmental vulnerabilities range from the fragility of the land, high population pressure and the adverse impacts of natural hazards such as flooding and extreme temperature. These national challenges are mirrored in the global development agenda, SDG 6 on sustainable management of water and sanitation for all; Goal 13 combatting climate change and its impacts; and Goal 15 on the protection, restoration and promotion of sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests and combat desertification, halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss.

The Government has recently developed a strategic plan (Strategic Plan 2015 – 2019) to guide and develop the environment and the natural resources sector. The overall objective of the Plan is to ensure that the environment and natural resources (including water, forest and wildlife) are managed and utilized sustainably in partnership with all relevant stakeholders so as to contribute to the attainment of Vision 2020 and other national development blueprints while mitigating and adapting to the impacts of climate change. Within this broad strategic framework the various sectors have been allocated specific responsibilities in keeping with their mandates.

The Government is currently implementing the Gambia Environment Action Plan (GEAP) Phase II, the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) and the Gambia National Agriculture Investment Programme (GNAIP), which are all important for promoting sustainable land management and the overall goal of ensuring sustainable development by developing a fully effective and financially self-sustaining environmental and natural resource management system.

By virtue of its geographical position, The Gambia is exposed to frequent occurrence of several hazards, particularly drought, flood, windstorms, domestic and forest fires, and locust infestation which in some cases cause large-scale destruction. The causes are both anthropogenic and nature induced, and significantly disrupted lives and livelihoods of the affected populations causing loss of lives and destruction of vital economic assets thereby increasing the level of poverty and human suffering. Although drought is considered as **divine phenomenon**, floods, especially in the urban areas, are considered to be the result of poor planning including poor drainage systems.

## 7.1 Key Challenges

The main challenges in the sector include understanding climate change and its coastal impacts amongst decision-makers. Although there is general perception of the links between weather, climate, climate change and coastal erosion, the limited understanding is a barrier to identifying, to planning and to initiating measures. There are presently numerous conflicts between different stakeholders with respect to the management of coastal resources such as fisheries, mining of minerals (sand, ilmenite), agriculture and forestry, which have implication for policy coherence.

Indiscriminate and haphazard waste dumping is a major challenge. Due to the inability of the local government authorities to collect domestic waste for disposal, people resort to various methods of disposal such as open burning and indiscriminately dumping. There are health and environmental risks in many dumpsites, including a major cause of flooding because the sites are located in waterways and flood plains. A recently concluded study identified 98 dumpsites in 38 communities throughout the Gambia and 70% of these are situated in wetlands, drainage channel, gullies, depressions and water ways and constitute high or severe flood potential<sup>40</sup>. The study recommended that dumpsites with high or severe flood potential should be cleared immediately and use discontinued. Meanwhile, councils are to develop and implement effective strategies and plans for waste management in environmentally sound manner.

In forestry and wildlife there is still the need to strengthen institutional capacity to undertake inventory, monitoring, assessment and enforcement of regulations. This will involve a combination of training and logistics support. A major limitation of the sector policies is that they focus on strategies to develop, maintain and protect the forest and wildlife resources; while there are no strategies to fully integrate interrelated sectoral priorities. In the case of forestry the development of improved cooking stoves and the expansion of alternatives to biomass fuel and LPG have important implications for the reduction of deforestation. Similarly, alternative construction material that require little or no beach sand can have important consequences on the unsustainable use of beach sand and coastal erosion.

In the fisheries and water resources sectors, there is need to strengthen the capacity at individual and institutional levels to undertake the scientific and technical work identified in their policy documents. For the water resources sector, this involves the full implementation of the IWRM as well as providing access to water supply in communities experiencing access difficulties as highlighted in the community consultations in Kanifing Municipality and Lower River Region.

In land use planning there are serious capacity constraints at both individual and institutional levels. There are limited qualified personnel to develop, implement and monitor the land use plans. Existing plans are out-dated and not adequately monitored to ensure compliance because of limited manpower and poor logistics support. The land cover and land use maps for the whole country were last created in 2003 and since there has not been any new maps even though the recommended practice is to have them recreated every five years. Finally, there is the lack of clarity in the institutional mandates such as between the municipal/area councils and national agencies.

The revised national policy has brought out key overarching challenges relating to the effective implementation of risk reduction measures in the country. These include the low capacity to

---

<sup>40</sup>The Mapping and documentation of dumpsites that cause, or have potential to cause flooding by NEA and Mahfous Engineering Consultants 2014, Kanifing.

undertake risk assessments and multi-hazards risk or vulnerability analysis to establish the probability and possible impact of hazards on people, livelihoods and sectors; the inadequate integration of DRR into development planning and national policies; and the spread of hazard-data multiple institutions at national level. Similarly, data on disaster losses and damages are not yet systematically brought together and analyzed to monitor vulnerability and hazard trends. Accessing data from various sources relevant to predict and monitor vulnerability and hazard trends is an additional challenge. Additional challenges are the low levels of risk awareness especially among communities in disaster-prone areas, not previously affected by disaster and the inadequate capacity especially at the decentralized levels-district that are closest to high-risk area. In the face of these challenges the CSOs have played important roles in promoting DRR at the community level but these efforts have largely dependent on external funding and do not adequately address the critical national capacity gaps in DRR. The involvement of the private sector in this domain is also negligible.

In many cases the rapid urban expansion has been uncontrolled and unplanned with the result that settlements have emerged in erosion and flood prone areas such as Ibo Town and Bakau Faro Kono, which the Greater Banjul Master Plan designated as not fit for habitation. All the flood prone areas in Greater Banjul Area are mostly settled by deprived members of the community. In the absence of adequate storm water management and drainage facilities and adherence to land use zoning regulations, urban areas prone to flash floods will continue to be affected by abnormally heavy rainfall events. This situation is exacerbated by the much reduced infiltration and overland flow of storm runoff due to increase in the impervious surfaces in urban areas and increasing discharge velocities. Rapid urbanization has threatened important wetlands such as Tanbi Wetland Complex and Kotu Creek, and placed a lot of pressures on the natural resources and the social services.

## **7.2 Recommendation to Government**

- Develop a national policy framework with a strategy at national and regional levels to sustainably manage waste. Within this policy framework it will be necessary to clearly define the roles of the various actors - municipalities, central government agencies and private sector. With close to 50% of the population living in the urban areas there is an urgent need for an effective urban waste management system;
- Promote sustainable land management to improve food security and environmental protection so that agriculture becomes part of the environmental solution through enhancing farmer's knowledge and utilization of climate smart agricultural practices;
- Strengthen individual and institutional capacity in the sector to ensure effective formulation and implementation of policies;
- Prepare a new land use policy and plan that would guide the use of the limited land resources of the country;
- Promote and support environmentally friendly enterprises in the form of 'Green Jobs'. This requires an assessment of socio-economic, financial and environmental factors impeding the development of such business enterprises and the development of a strategy that effectively link environmental protection with employment creation and poverty reduction;
- Strengthen public awareness on environmental issues for attitudinal changes and greater commitment at individual and community levels to promote popular initiatives in addressing environmental challenges through partnership with local communities and community based organizations to ensure greater effectiveness at the grassroots;

- Assess all areas currently having water access problems and develop a programme to address this basic need.
- Formulate a national policy with the necessary legal framework to help identify priority areas and strengthen capacity in climate change sensitive sectors to ensure a systematic mainstreaming of climate change in all sectors sensitive to climate change in keeping with Goal 13 of the SDGs, which requires countries to “...Integrate climate change measures into national policies, strategies and planning”;
- Improve and strengthen climate data collection, management and dissemination.
- Mainstreaming CC/DRR issues in all government policies, development plans and strategies;
- Increase community awareness of, and capacity to participate in early warning systems (CBEWS)
- Improve the collection, management and dissemination of hazard data;
- Strengthen the capacity of DRR agencies at central and local levels and increase resources for DRR programme;
- Promote closer collaboration between government, CSOs and the private sector to ensure sustainability of DRR interventions at all levels;
- Support communities to develop resilience to disasters and the projected negative impacts of climate change in keeping with the desire expressed by local communities through community consultations.

### 7.3 Opportunities for UN System Support and Collaboration with Government

The sectors discussed above constitute areas where the Government and the UN System have collaborated in the past. The UN System continues to provide valuable assistance to NDMA, the forestry sector, and in the environment and climate change sectors. It is important to continue to strengthen this collaboration. Taking account of the UN System’s comparative advantage the following areas have been identified:

- **Institutional strengthening and capacity building:** The UN System should support government to strengthen institutional and individual capacities in policy formulation and strategic planning at national, regional and local levels to improve food security and environmental protection through support for sustainable livelihood initiatives;
- **Policy formulation and implementation:** This relates specifically to the formulation of national waste management policy, the new land use policy and planning, climate change policy and implementation of the IWRM policy;
- **Resource mobilization:** The UN System should also support the government in the mobilization of resources, particularly with respect to accessing funds under the multilateral environment agreements and through the preparation of bankable projects;
- **Public education and awareness:** UN System support will be required on:
  - ✓ environmental issues in order to bring about attitudinal changes and greater commitment at individual and community levels and to promote popular initiatives in addressing environmental challenges through partnership with local communities and community based organizations to ensure greater effectiveness at the grassroots;
  - ✓ climate change and disaster risk reduction to create a greater awareness of disaster risks and the negative impacts of climate change, identify and implement resilience

and adaptation strategies, and building early warning systems based upon district level contingency planning structures;

- **Data collection, management and dissemination:** The UN System's support should focus more on climate data and hazard data to ensure that reliable data is collected, processed and disseminated to end users;
- **Improving Access to services:** UN System support should assist government to meet the water demand of communities not already covered in existing water supply programmes.

## ***B. INTRODUCTION***

The Gambia has been implementing the Programme for Accelerated Growth and Employment (PAGE) 2012 – 2015 (extended to 2016), the country's overarching development blueprint which aims to achieve the objectives of Vision 2020 and attain the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Similarly, the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) 2012 - 2016, the joint support of the UN System to the national development priorities, in line with PAGE and Vision 2020 as well as the MDGs, is being implemented. The UNDAF outlines the strategic direction and results expected from cooperation between the Government of The Gambia (GoTG) and the United Nations System for the period 2012 -2016. While the UNDAF interventions target the whole country, the UN decided to adopt the equity approach with emphasis on selected sectors, regions and target groups in order to achieve sustainable gains in education, health care, employment, the environment and economic growth in line with the principles of the human rights based approach. The UNDAF places focus on capacity strengthening strategies, policies and systems.

As both the PAGE and UNDAF are nearing the end of implementation, road maps leading to the development of the successor medium term plan and next framework for UN support are being developed. A major activity, common to both road maps, is the country diagnostic study or Common Country Assessment (CCA). The Government and the UN System have decided to jointly undertake this assessment, aimed at identifying emerging national priorities that will guide the formulation of the next National Development Plan (NDP) and UNDAF.

### **Methodology and Structure of the Common Country Assessment**

The assessment is based on secondary data review, consultations with development partners including civil society organisations, and structured regional and community consultations across the entire country. To the extent possible, the assessment will examine the UN and other partners' contributions to national development results and identify areas of UN's comparative advantage.

The content and structure the Gambia CCA has been formulated around seven Content Areas as follows:

1. Economic management of the country
2. Private sector development, tourism, domestic, regional and international trade
3. Human capital development
4. Agriculture, food security and nutrition
5. Infrastructure development
6. Governance, human rights and access to justice
7. Environment, climate change and natural resources

Additionally, six Cross Cutting Themes have been explored as follows:

- a. Gender Mainstreaming
- b. Science, Technology and Innovation
- c. Social Protection
- d. Data for Development
- e. Child Protection
- f. Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons and Asylum Management

## **The Community Consultations**

During the mid-term reviews of both the UNDAF and the PAGE, communities expressed concern that their views were not taken on board during implementation of the various programmes and initiatives. To ensure a participatory process amongst duty bearers and rights holders, and as innovation to this Common Country Assessment process, communities were extensively consulted and their view will contribute to the key findings of this Common Country Assessment.

The main purpose of the community consultations is to gather information from the grassroots across districts throughout the country on matters of development concerns, the challenges they face, their priorities and ideas on how these challenges can be sustainably addressed, recognizing communities as key actors in national development. Through the community consultations critical information was collected to complement the data on factors that determine individuals' chance to be socially excluded in the development process; enhance the alignment and inclusion of regional/district level disparities into the NDP; ensure that stakeholders at the regional/district levels take part in the formulation process and influence the PAGE successor Plan in order to enhance ownership and sustainability of interventions; embed the human rights based approach principles relating to persons as rights-holders and the corresponding human rights obligations of duty-bearers as well as the immediate, underlying, and structural causes of the non-realization of rights; promote greater cohesion between the central government priorities and the needs at decentralised regional levels; and to serve as platforms for sensitization and awareness building on the PAGE successor plan.

## **Key findings from the Community Consultations**

It was generally recognised during the community consultations that there was limited knowledge about the PAGE and the UNDAF among the local communities. While participants were able to cite projects implemented under the PAGE during the last four years, they could not relate these to the planning cycle/programme of the PAGE. With respect to the role they should/could have played, the participants expressed the need for more involvement in the entire process, recognizing them as key actors in their own development. On the UNDAF, the participants had no knowledge about it although they were able to point out projects funded by the UN agencies such as FAO, WFP, UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF during the last four years.

### **1. Challenges and Development Priorities under sectoral/ thematic areas**

**Health:** The community consultations revealed that all the districts have at least one health facility, except Tumana. The core problems identified include the availability of drugs and qualified personnel, such as qualified medical doctor. In some cases the existing health care facilities were considered to be minimal thus requiring an expansion. Accessibility to facilities was also raised as a challenge that is compounded in some areas by the poor state of roads, particularly during the rainy season.

**Education:** It was acknowledged that a lot of investment has been made in school construction, especially at the basic cycle level. More schools at basic level was only raised at Wuli East where there were only three schools. The local communities' concerns focused on access to quality

education for all children, having and retaining qualified teachers, and putting an end to the mass promotions at the basic level, which they felt deprives the children of '*proper education because they are automatically promoted before they understand their subjects.*' Another important challenge they raised is the absence of skills training centres for the youth, which they said, is partly responsible for the migration of youth. Other challenges in education include costs related to education, such as lunch, transport fares, books, etc. Priority areas include the provision of skills training centres and availability of qualified teachers.

**Agriculture:** Communities identified the main challenges as low agricultural production due to poor soil; erosion of farmlands, lack of farming implements, especially for the women; and late delivery of farm inputs. Another challenge is the marketing of farm produce and this includes distance from the trading point for groundnuts (*seccos*), late start of the trade season which means farmers have to keep their nuts themselves and in the absence of proper storage facilities the nuts get infested because of the long storage time. In the livestock sub-sector the challenges included limited grazing land for livestock, as well lack of cattle watering points and access roads. The priority areas for attention are supply of farm implements, timely supply of farm inputs, stores for the storage of harvests, and increase in the number of groundnut buying points.

**Natural Resources & Environment:** In this area the main development challenges are erosion, flooding which causes a lot of damage to farmlands and settlements, deforestation through illegal logging and bushfires, and sand mining. The priority intervention areas are reforestation and ecological restoration programmes, and developing the resilience and adaptive capacity of people to flood and other natural disasters.

**Nutrition and Food Security:** Access to adequate and quality nutritious food at all times is the biggest challenge in this area for local communities. Food produced from their fields lasts between 3-6 months only. For the rest of the time most communities said they rely on selling their assets such as livestock, remittances and selling their labour at low rates to purchase food.

**Energy and Road Infrastructure:** For this subsector the biggest challenge identified is accessibility between villages and the main truck roads. This was particularly evident in Wuli and Sandu districts. Other challenges they raised are lack of electricity and lack of access to communication, e.g. radio and television transmission, and telecommunication facilities. The priority concern is feeder roads.

**Gender (Women's Empowerment):** The challenges facing women include lack of access to education (with illiteracy as a debilitating consequence), lack of sufficient access and equal opportunity to work, providing adequate compensation, right to land and property (farmland and credit), low level of awareness of their rights and negative impact of harmful traditional practices such as forced and early marriage. The household chores also contribute to the disempowerment of women and girls as they affect equal access to education of girls and give very little time to women to ensure equal access to decent work and remuneration. To address these challenges, the participants insisted on guarantee for equal access to land and credit for women; continuing the awareness raising; providing labour saving devices; and protecting and promoting equal access to education for girls. Priority actions include the provision of credit facilities for women, supply of labour saving devices and mechanisms that guarantee equal participation in decision-making.

**Youth:** The participants underlined that the biggest challenge was migration, particularly to Europe – commonly known as the “back-way”. The impact of this on the community is said to be reduced agricultural production because of the shortage of labour. This situation places a lot of pressure on those left behind, especially the elderly and those not receiving remittances. All these contribute to increased poverty. Migration has also resulted in increased loss of life on the way to Europe. For the participants the root causes to the migration flow is the lack of skills and employment opportunities. To address these challenges, communities suggested the establishment of skills centres and business opportunities in the region.

**Governance:** The main challenge for local communities is how to make people, as right holders, participate fully in the development process and hold duty bearers accountable. This they said is due to the lack of awareness of the rights holders about their human rights and deliberate sidelining of the community members to what is taking place in the village. To address this, they suggested strengthening the village development committee through regular training on their rights and responsibilities. In this respect, reference was made to the School Management Committee set up by the Ministry of Basic Education, and the type of training and responsibilities given to them that allowed the full involvement of the community in the management of the school. In addition, the participants suggested regular meetings to discuss projects implemented on their behalf.

**Non-discrimination: Social Exclusion/Vulnerable Groups:** Generally, among the socially excluded, the participants considered the disabled, widows and poor households. The root causes of social exclusion they concluded to be poverty, landlessness and God. With reference to God it showed that in some cases participants also rely on religious beliefs to explain the reason for social exclusion. To address social exclusion, they proposed special community assistance, for example, through “zakat”. Government, they said, should also ensure that vulnerable groups are identified and protected without discrimination.

## **2. Summary Conclusions from Consultations and Literature Review**

**Capacity development** across all sectors remains a key bottleneck to the realization of development outcomes in The Gambia. When capacity development initiatives have been implemented properly, marked improvements were registered. Capacity strengthening for Public Finance Management (PFM), Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) and sector wide approaches (SWAp) has resulted in stronger pro-poor policy planning and budgeting, and these have contributed to economic growth from 5.1% in 2010 to 6.2% in 2013. This has also improved transparency and public accountability. Outcome indicators show a need for greater work in the areas of strengthening national capacities for results oriented focus for implementing and monitoring the PAGE, ease of doing business, creating a national environment conducive to investment and building the capacities of the public sector for improved service delivery.<sup>41</sup>

Specifically, support under the UNDAF in the area of health has contributed to an increase in equitable access to immunization for children and in increasing access to Comprehensive Emergency Obstetric Care (CEmOC). In **Education**, this contributed to the achievement of MDG 2 targets. Enrolment has grown in all three levels of education (Lower Basic, Upper Basic and

Senior Secondary) over the PAGE and UNDAF implementation period; with a 17% percentage change for Lower Basic Education achieved from 2010-2014, 13% growth in Upper Basic Education, and 28% growth in Senior Secondary Education. However, the completion rates for Upper Basic Education and secondary schools remain a challenge, especially for Upper River regions (URR) (Region 6). On improving learning achievements, according to the Gambia Annual Report 2013 (UNICEF), quality of education is a major challenge for the sector. The 2013 National Assessment Test at Grade 5 showed that only 35% of children meet the minimum requirement in Mathematics, a drop from 2012 NAT results when 55% had met the minimum requirement. The results are even worse in the Central River and Upper River regions (CRR and URR) where only 9% and 3% of children passed mathematics, respectively. The Committee on the Rights of the Child also underlines the low quality of education, the disparities between urban and rural areas, the insufficient number of well-trained teaching staff and the high school drop-out of girls in remote areas due to child marriage as main concerns.

**Policy development and implementation challenge across sectors:** Linkages between PAGE and sector policies and strategies have not been well defined. The full policy development and implementation cycle has to be collaboratively reviewed between government and development partners. The PAU Capacity assessment has put forward big challenges in the policy making cycle, which include policy coherence and inadequate alignment of sector policies to national/macro-level policies (Vision 2020 and PAGE); the lack of a systemic approach to policy development process resulting in confusion in the policy landscape; the lengthy and sometimes unclear statutory approval process for policies leading to long and protracted delays, and limited popularization of policies and implementation strategies resulting in low-level of awareness of their existence;

**Implementation of the PAGE and UNDAF:** The MTRs of both the PAGE and UNDAF concluded that the delays in their implementation were caused by poor coordination, weak ownership and leadership by government of the UNDAF, capacity constraints, rapid staff turnover and lack of continuity, weak government - NGO relations that undermine the implementation of the UNDAF as the framework was designed based on the participation of NGO partners, weak policy implementation, and the inadequate resources for the PAGE implementation as only 65% of the required resources has been mobilized.

The UN has made positive steps to address these challenges by establishing joint monitoring and evaluation thematic groups that work closely with PCG; increased consultations/engagement with government partners in developing monitoring frameworks and for timely implementation as recommended in the MTRs and for the PAGE successor plan.

**Further Noteworthy Capacity Development Achievements in the Gambia**

Despite the challenges encountered thus far, the Government of The Gambia and the UN system should be encouraged and bring to scale the successful partnership they have built through a number of initiatives, including but not limited to the following:

- ✓ Building and strengthening institutional capacities to implement entrepreneurship and enterprise development programmes, through the EMPRETEC Gambia Project.
- ✓ Preparation of the 2012 National Human Development Report focusing on youth employment.

- ✓ Strengthening decentralization through policy and strategy development and capacity building of Local Government Councils.
- ✓ Youth and transformative agricultural business development through the Songhai integrated agricultural development model.
- ✓ Achieving the MDG1c targets for increasing household food security and incomes.
- ✓ Improving data for development and informed policy formulation through institutional support to Gambia Bureau of Statistics (GBOS), the Project Support Unit (PSU) of the Department of Agriculture; the development of the analytical report for the Demographic Health Survey (DHS) in 2014; the launch of the Country STAT, a web based information system for gathering and monitoring of national and sub-national food and agriculture data in tandem with international standards; the production of the national agricultural survey report (2012); the conduct of a Labour Force Survey (LFS) in 2012; collection of the Core Welfare Indicator Survey (CWIQ); and the development of the National Strategy for the Development of Statics (NSDS).
- ✓ Using the conceptual and methodological framework for human rights indicators developed by the OHCHR (HRI/MC/2008/3), the government collected data, produced and used statistics for human rights indicators, disaggregated by age, sex and urban/rural population.
- ✓ Supporting the GoTG in the implementation of the Sexual Offenses Act (2013), Domestic Violence Act (2013), and Women's Act (2010); the National Review report on the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action-Beijing+20 (June 2014); the development of a National Action Plan on the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325; the development of the Action Plan for the African Gender Development Index; and support for the review of laws, policies and Vision 2020 for gender sensitivity.
- ✓ Strengthening capacities of governance institutions, including the National Assembly for effective delivery of their legislative, representation and oversight roles; the development of strategic and operational plan for the National Audit Office (NAO); the development of a Strategic Plan for the Ministry of Justice; the review and update of the national HIV policy and National HIV and AIDS Strategy Framework (NSF) and resource mobilization from the GFATM.
- ✓ Training on human rights instruments, including training manuals in Human Rights Based Approach for relevant stakeholders at centralized and decentralized levels; the Attorney General's Chambers and Ministry of Justice in the development of the Universal Periodic Review Action Plan to ensure that recommendations of the UPR are duly implemented and updates on the relevant UN oversight institution; institutional reforms to improve governance, strengthen capacities for budget analysis and provide effective support in cases of human rights violations; policy reforms to combat discrimination, implementing recommendations of human rights treaty bodies to provide relevant and authoritative guidance on the nature and extent of many of these obligations.
- ✓ Establishing a national platform for comprehensive social protection systems, resulting in a number of outcomes, notably the production of strong evidence to advocate at the highest level for an integrated and equitable social protection programme. The Government established the National Social Protection Steering Committee to promote inter-sectoral dialogue among national and international stakeholders; the development of a National Social Protection Policy for 2015-2025 and the Implementation Plan. MOUs were signed

by key government agencies on Social Protection and the government committed to expand fiscal space for social protection up to 3.2% of GDP.

- ✓ Establishing a child protection system, including policies, legislation, strategies, guidelines and M&E framework. Key achievements include the development of a comprehensive child protection strategy; the development of sensitization materials around the core responsibilities of law enforcement and the judicial system, and the development of a manual for training on and the eradication of child labour and sexual exploitation in the tourism industry.
- ✓ Mainstreaming of climate change and disaster risk reduction into national development planning and implementation. Succeeded in linking local livelihoods to sustainable natural resource management with a conscious effort to create green jobs to promote sustainable development; the review and revision of the National Biodiversity Act and Policy of 2003 and the profiling of protected areas; and establishing a national climate change and disaster risk reduction information system, and coordination and emergency response system.

## **C. THE GAMBIA COUNTRY CONTEXT**

### **The Location and People**

The Gambia is located on the West African coast and extends about 500 km inland, with a population density of 174 persons per square km. The width of the country varies from 24 to 28 km and has a land area of 10,689 square kilometres. The Gambia is the smallest country in continental Africa, and is bordered on the North, South and East by the Republic of Senegal and on the West by the Atlantic Ocean.

Overall, provisional results of the 2013 population and housing census show that 1,882,450 persons were enumerated in the Gambia, and revealed that there are more females than males in the country; 50.5% female compared to 49.5% male. The population primarily comprises of youth due to a high fertility rate and low life expectancy. Nearly 40% of the population is below 15 years, 21% between 15-24 years, and only 3.2% above 65 years. This demographic trend contributes to a high dependency ratio, given that the average household size is 8.3. The country is also undergoing rapid urbanization, characterized by significant rural to urban migration. The urban population increased from 50% in 2001 to 58%, with an annual rate of urbanization of 3.7% (MoFEA, 2011). The DHS 2013 preliminary report shows maternal mortality ratio at 433/100,000 live births; annual population growth rate is 3.3%, Crude Birth Rate and Crude Death Rates are estimated at 46.2 and 19.2 per 100,000 respectively. Infant Mortality Rate is 34 per 1000 live births (DHS 2013) while Under 5 Mortality Rate is 109 per 1000 live births (MICS 2010). The country has a high fertility rate estimated at 5.8 births per woman, resulting in a very youthful population structure. About 42% of the population is below the age of 15 and 22% is between 15 and 24 years.

The Gambia is multi-ethnic and multi-religious society, exhibiting a high degree of ethnic and religious tolerance. The country's main ethnicities are the Mandinka (42%), Wolof (16%), Fula (18), Jola, Serer and Sarahule groups (2003 Census). The population is predominantly Muslim at 90%, Christians (8%), and indigenous African beliefs (2%) (2003 Census). Although a certain degree of diversity exists in cultural beliefs and practices among ethnic groups, similar overarching traditions contribute to strong social cohesion. This has important bearing on informal, community-based social protection, which is the main source of support for the poor and vulnerable.

The Gambia is a patriarchal society characterized by gender inequality. Though slowly changing, gender inequality is still pervasive. The Gambia has a Gini coefficient value of 0.594, ranking it 128 out of 148 countries in the 2012 index (HDI, 2013). Although women play a major socio-economic role in Gambian society, their access to land, productive resources, healthcare and education remains very limited due to discriminatory gender cultural bias and practices. This has prompted the Government to focus attention on women's empowerment through a gender policy framework. In 2010, the Government enacted the Women's Act. New women's empowerment initiatives have been explored to impact on gender stereotypes as a key driver of discrimination against women and girls leading to poverty and social vulnerability.

### **The Political context**

The Gambia is a multi-party parliamentary democracy with a government divided into independent executive, legislative and judicial branches. A coup d'état in 1994 deposed the first president, who

had ruled since independence in 1965, and suspended the country's 1970 Constitution. A presidential election in 1996 brought in the then Military leader, retired Col. Yahya A.J.J. Jammeh as Head of State with 56% of the vote. The Alliance for Patriotic Reorientation and Construction (APRC) won the legislative elections in January 1997 with 33 of the 45 seats in the National Assembly. The APRC led by President Jammeh have dominated the political sphere since 1994.

The Gambia continues to enjoy relative stability and peace in a turbulent region. However, the human rights context came under strong scrutiny with the lifting of the moratorium on the death penalty in August, 2012 and the subsequent execution of 11 prisoners, including a woman, despite the intervention of the AU and ECOWAS to convince the President to rescind the death penalty. The execution of the prisoners as well as the closure of independent newspapers and community radios together with arrests of journalists and human right activists drew unprecedented national and international criticisms, particularly from the resident donor community. In October 2014, the President assented to the Bill amending the anti-homosexual Act and an immediate crack down on suspected gays, leading to the arrest and detention of three people suspected of homosexual acts. Two were subsequently released after about seven months in detention for lack of evidence. In November 2014, two Special Rapporteurs on extrajudicial executions and on torture and inhuman treatment made a joint mission to The Gambia on the invitation of the government. The mission was originally scheduled for August 2014, but was postponed by the Government at the last minute. The November mission was, however, suspended as the two Rapporteurs claimed they were denied unrestricted and confidential access to "restricted areas" of the central prison, which was contrary to the agreed TORs of the mission. The reports of both rapporteurs have been released. On 30 December, 2014 there was a failed coup attempt. Alleged plotters, their contacts and some relatives were arrested and detained. A Court Martial was held for six military personnel allegedly involved in the coup plot and the officers were found guilty, with three officers condemned to death and three given life sentences. They have launched appeals against their convictions and the process is underway. Three naturalized Gambians/USA Citizens were also arrested in the USA for being implicated in the coup and are currently on trial in the US. The Minister of Justice presented the Gambia's human rights record at the Universal Periodic Review of the UN Human Rights Council in October, 2014 and received 171 recommendations from 62 countries on various issues especially on female genital mutilation, criminalization of same-sex relations and amendments to the Information and Communications Act. A review of the UPR was held in March, 2015 and the government agreed to work on the recommendations it has accepted. The Government of the Republic of The Gambia withdrew from the Commonwealth in October 2013, and broke diplomatic relations with Taiwan in November 2013.

Preparation for the 2016/2017 presidential and parliamentary elections has started. A UN Needs Assessment Mission was fielded in July, 2015. In general, the NAM recommends a flexible UN support to the elections. It also recommends that Government introduces measures to create a more conducive environment for the conduct of elections and establish opportunities for dialogue with the opposition parties. The Gambia anticipates peaceful elections to take place in 2016 and 2017.

### **The Economy and Economic Context**

The Gambia is classified as a low-income economy country, with Gross National Income (GNI) per capita of US\$ 500 in 2012. Low-income economies by World Bank Classification are countries with GNI US\$ 1,025 or less. The Gambia has an open economy with limited natural resources, and an average per capita GDP of US\$505 in 2011 (World Bank, 2011). The Gambia is ranked

172 out of 187 in the United Nations Development Programme's Human Development Report (HDR), 2014. The main drivers of economic growth for The Gambia remain the agriculture sector and tourism industry<sup>42</sup>. Agriculture accounted for around 25% of GDP over 1994-2013 and provides work for 70% of the labour force. The industrial sector accounted for about 15% of GDP over the same period, and consisted mostly of construction and agro-processing activities. Services accounted for 60% of GDP, with trade and transport, and communications being the two largest components. Tourism is Gambia's primary foreign-exchange earner.

While mixed, there has also been progress in the areas of public sector, economic and fiscal management, civil service and justice, anti-corruption and public procurement as a result of various reforms implemented by the Government. However, The Gambia remains vulnerable to external shocks as the main sources of domestically generated foreign exchange come from tourism and re-exports trade, activities heavily dependent on exogenous factors; and agriculture, which employs the majority of the labour force, and is most vulnerable to weather conditions.

The Gambian economy had been generally strong in the past decade, with an average annual real GDP growth rate of about 6% during 2003-2006, and a slight reduction to 5.3% during 2006-2010. Despite the global economic crisis in 2007-2008, economic growth has remained robust, mainly owing to the good performance in the agricultural and service sectors. Indeed, the service sector's contribution to GDP is becoming increasingly dominant, having contributed 60% of GDP in 2011 (African Economic Outlook, 2013). Of concern is that the long term GDP growth in The Gambia, which from 1994 through 2013 has been undulating and quite unstable, averaging a modest 3.5 percent a year, against an average of 4.1 percent for sub-Saharan Africa. The performance of the agriculture sector, which in itself depends on weather conditions, and the ability of the other sectors of the economy, especially tourism, to eventually counterbalance swings in output are key elements that explain growth variability. Current investment in these promising sectors is weak and requires substantial mid- to long-term planning and investment. For some time, The Gambia has faced challenging and unpredictable macroeconomic policy environment, characterized by sudden policy shifts, extra-budgetary spending, excessive borrowing, weak institutions, and efficient resource utilization, which negatively affected growth. This has generated uncertainty and hampered economic activity, and over the long term could undermine confidence in the economy. The persistent fiscal deficits have largely been financed by short-term domestic borrowing, pushing up interest rates and crowding out private sector investments<sup>43</sup>. The Gambia's economy and macroeconomic stability is also vulnerable to various risks and structural constraints. The two most critical channels of vulnerability include the heavy debt burden and susceptibility to macroeconomic shocks and environmental risks (African Economic Outlook, 2013).

### **Household Poverty and Vulnerability**

The Gambia is among the poorest countries in Africa. Poverty remains widespread in spite of a decline in the last decade. Income poverty and household food insecurity are widespread with nearly half of the population (48.4%) living below the absolute poverty line of US\$1.25 per day; while 36.7% live in extreme poverty (2010). About 40% of people are considered 'working poor'; meaning that their earning capacity and standard of living is inadequate to meeting basic needs. Despite being a service led economy, about 46% of rural households fall below the food poverty

---

<sup>42</sup> Programme for Accelerated Growth and Employment (2012-15)

<sup>43</sup> THE GAMBIA: Policies to Foster Growth – Volume Two (World Bank, p52)

line (MoFEA, 2011). Poverty is higher in rural as opposed to urban areas mainly due to a reliance on agriculture for income and exclusion from economic opportunities and social services. The highest incidences of poverty are in Kuntaur (79%), Janjanbureh (73.2%), as compared to Banjul (16.4%) and Kanifing (26%) (IHS, 2010). Notably, urban poverty is also rising because of increasing urbanization; almost one-third of the population in Kanifing is classified as poor (26%). Poverty disproportionately affects populations of young people and the elderly. IHS data (2010) shows higher poverty rates among children 0-5 years (55.6% headcount rate) and 6 -14 years (55.8%), as well as those aged 65 years and above (57.9%), indicating a high dependency rate, requiring substantial investments in reproductive care and social services. This high dependency burden and rapidly urbanizing population are creating new poverty and welfare challenges, including growing demands on access to reproductive care in both urban and rural localities and pressure on basic services in urban areas. Consequently, these issues have important implications for social protection policy and programming.

When assessed from a multidimensional poverty perspective, the poverty headcount is even higher, as 60.4% of the population live in multi-dimensional poverty, while 17.6% are vulnerable to multiple deprivations in education, health and broader standard of living (Multiple Poverty Index, 2006; HDI 2013). Poverty in The Gambia is concentrated in rural areas, among very young and elderly populations, and is strongly associated with the education level and sector in which the head of household is employed. The multidimensional poverty study (2015) found the households where the head with no education or did not complete lower basic cycle, being twice more likely to be poor than households where the head has completed primary school. Households headed by subsistence farmers and unskilled workers have significantly high rates of poverty (79.3 per cent and 65.4 per cent respectively).

The drought-related crop failure in 2011 was compounded by a complex set of emergency challenges caused by floods and windstorms in 2012, necessitating a large-scale emergency response by The Gambian Government. The severe crop failure in 2011 left an estimated 605,000 people, including 102,000 children, vulnerable to hunger and economic impoverishment (WFP, 2012). Respondents in rural focus group discussions indicated that the effects of seasonal droughts and associated economic vulnerability caused by erratic rainfall patterns result to low agricultural production, recurring food security stresses known as the 'hungry seasons'.

The economic, social and health effects of environmental shocks and stresses can be severe. Inadequate rainfall and floods do not only lead to lower crop yields and a subsequent drop in household income and food security, but also affect people's access to safe habitat (especially through flooding) and health hazards due to the risk of malnutrition, poor sanitation and disease epidemics, affecting both rural and urban families. Heavy flooding in 2011 in the Upper River Region (Tumana District), for example, inflicted severe damage to crops and food stocks, temporarily displaced 254 people (45% children), damaged social infrastructure including schools and health facilities, and increased the disease burden. (URR Annual report, 2012).

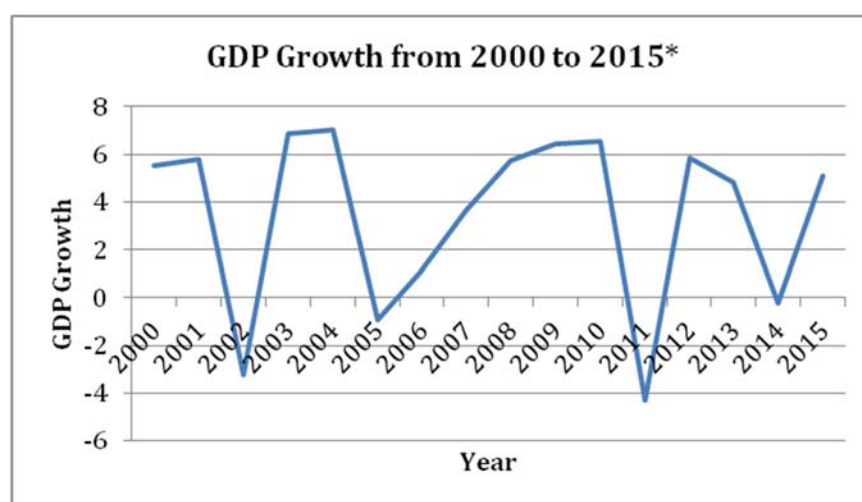
## CHAPTER 1: ECONOMIC MANAGEMENT OF THE COUNTRY

### 1.1 The Economic Environment

The Gambia has been able to register an average growth rate of 3% over the past decade (2004-2014), and 3.9% over the period 2012 to 2015<sup>44</sup> (the time period covering the PAGE). The average growth rate though masks a disturbing fact; growth has been extremely erratic over this period. Over the past 15 years, The Gambia has experienced years of negative growth (2002, 2005 and 2011), one of which was due to policy slippages (2003) and the other two due to external weather shocks. The above, coupled with an average population growth rate of 3.3% between 2003 and 2013 and a depreciating currency has meant that GDP per capita in dalasi has risen but in dollar terms has fallen from \$551 (2010) to \$428 (2014, est.)<sup>45</sup>.

As will be discussed in Chapter 7, The Gambia is extremely susceptible to weather shocks, either in the form of drought, erratic rainfall or less than optimal rains. This has, over the past 4 decades, led to erratic output in the agricultural sector that has also been accompanied with a value added per worker that has been trending downwards (Figure 1.2). Unreliable rains, an Ebola epidemic (despite the country not registering a single case of Ebola) that has threatened the sub region and had an adverse effect on tourist arrivals, have negatively affected foreign exchange earnings and put pressure both on the Dalasi and government revenue. The result has been a depreciation of the Dalasi by nearly 30% against the dollar over the past 3 years. The Gambia, being an open economy, relies heavily on imports, has a very high exchange rate pass through to domestic prices (Jallow, 2012). This means that, a depreciation of the dalasi translates to an increase in prices fairly quickly and nearly one for one; resulting in a faster growth of prices.

Figure 1.1: GDP Growth from 2000 to 2015



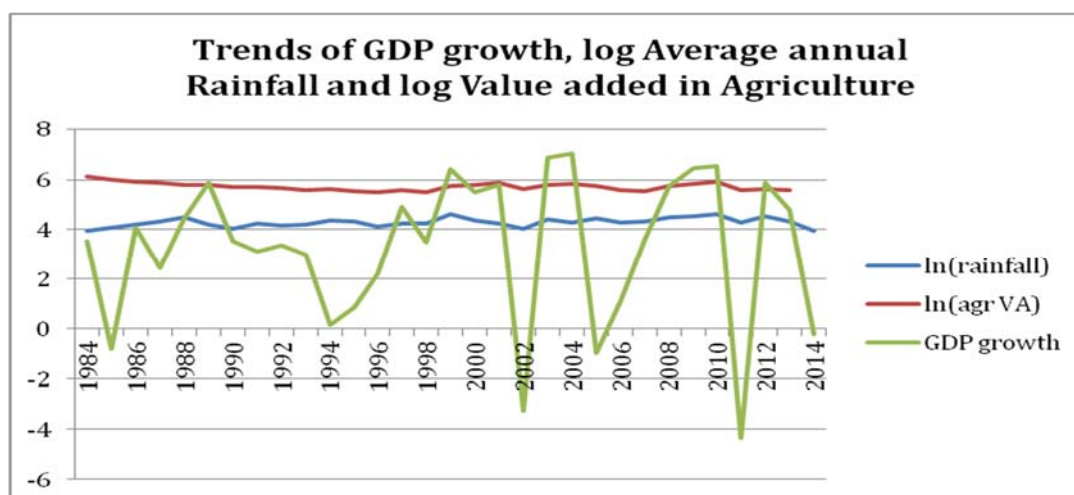
Source: World Bank, Penn Open Database, 2014

\* GDP growth for 2015 an estimate by GBOS.

<sup>44</sup> Note that growth rate for 2015 is a projection by the Gambia Bureau of Statistics

<sup>45</sup> IMF Country Report 15/104, April 2015

Figure 1.2: Time series values for GDP Growth, log of rainfall and log of Value Added per Worker in Agriculture.



Source: World Bank, Penn Open Database, 2014

The continued depreciation of the dalasi over the past year has contributed to an inflation rate above the Central bank of The Gambia's target range of 5% to 6%. Furthermore, there has been an increase in the current account deficit, from 9% of GDP in 2012 to a projected 18% of GDP in 2015<sup>46</sup>. Fiscal expansion in the face of reduced foreign exchange earnings has led to increased use of domestic debt (CBG financing of debt) as a means to make up for the shortfall. The result has been a significant increase of government debt over the last 3 years. Table 1.1 shows the debt to GDP ratio (total, domestic and foreign) and the proportion of the government budget dedicated to making interest payments on debt. In 2014, domestic public debt increased by 12.5% of GDP, an extremely high number for any country. The result was a jump in the debt stock to 100.2% of GDP in 2014. Preliminary figures show that in the first half of 2015, the government debt was 10% of GDP, with the interest payments on debt accounting for 35% of government's revenue collected.

Table 1.1: Debt stock as a percent of GDP

As a percent of GDP, unless otherwise stated						
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014 (prelim)	2015 (est.)
Public Debt stock	69.6	77.3	77.0	83.3	100.2	
Domestic Debt stock	29.4	33.2	33.3	37.1	47.0	
Foreign Debt stock	40.2	44.1	43.7	46.2	53.2	
Public Debt	5.3	4.3	4.3	8.8	13.2	
Domestic Debt	3.8	3.5	3.2	7.0	12.1	
Foreign Debt	1.5	0.8	1.1	1.8	1.1	
As a percent of Government Revenue, unless otherwise stated						
Interest payment	19.3	22.7	22.5	24.8	29.4	35.2

Source: IMF country Report 15/104, April 2015

<sup>46</sup> The current account deficit excludes budget support from donors.

Reduced income from foreign exchange, a depreciating currency and a widening current account balance by themselves are a potent mix that would challenge any country seeking to reduce poverty through growth and job creation. Adding the extra burden of a high debt stock that is costly to finance, this potent mix has the makings of a perfect storm. In small amounts debt can serve as a good policy tool and allow for stable tax rates whilst the country tries to increase the tax base. In large doses, domestic debt has the ability to crowd out the private sector from the market and ultimately have an adverse effect on the economy. This is what is currently occurring in the Gambia, with private sector credit growth reaching negative levels for two consecutive years. This means that there has been a fall in the amount of money banks lend to the private sector. Credit to the private sector (14.7% of GDP) is well below the regional average of 58.7%. Domestic banks are more willing to lend to the government at 19%<sup>47</sup> (1 year Treasury Bills) than to the private sector. The result has been the sectors such as Industry, Tourism and Agriculture have adversely suffered, being starved of the necessary funding to expand their businesses.

Table 1.2: Macroeconomic variables, GDP growth, GDP per capita, exchange rate and inflation

Indicator	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014 (prelim)	2015 (est.)
GDP growth	6.5	-4.3	5.9	4.8	-0.2	5.1
GDP per capita (D)	16,214.2	15,768.5	16,861.2	17,889.7		
GDP per capita (\$)	551.0	506.0	409.0	479.0	428.0	395.0
Dollar rate (annual average)	28.0	29.6	31.1	35.0		
Inflation (consumer prices)	5.0	4.8	4.6	5.2	6.3	7.2

Source: IMF and Gambia authority estimates, April 2015

### 1.1.1 The Fiscal Environment

#### 1.1.1.1 Allocation of Government Spending:

##### Fiscal Balance

Over the past 5 years, the Government of The Gambia has experienced a negative overall budget balance. Prior to 2014, the overall budget deficit had been less than 10% of GDP. In 2014, increased fiscal slippages resulted in a widening overall deficit amounting to 12.9% of GDP for that year. The basic primary balance, which excludes interest payments, has seen a fluctuation between deficit (2010, 2013 and 2014) and surplus (2011 and 2012). As in the overall balance, the primary balance has also moved towards a deficit, although it is expected that the government would achieve a basic primary balance surplus (4.7%) for 2015.

##### Short versus Long-term spending

A look at the government budget over the period 2012 to 2015 shows that government is committed to achieving growth and poverty reduction by implementing the PAGE. A deeper analysis of the allocation shows that government's spending is heavily skewed towards recurrent expenditure. Recent data shows that 30% of the government's budget in 2014 was used to service the debt with another 45% dedicated to salaries. On average, during the last 15 years, less than 5% of the budget has been allocated to development spending with the rest financed externally. This could remain a challenge if we consider that recurrent spending that has been financed by domestic borrowing is crowding out the private sector. The country is sacrificing long-term investment in the economy

<sup>47</sup>The Treasury bill rate as of end of 2014

by the private sector for short-term gains. The former is expected to reap returns above the market interest rate whilst the latter serves more as maintenance with negligible returns.

Table 1.3: Domestic Tax Revenue and Government Expenditure

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014 (prelim)	2015 (est.)
As a percent of GDP						
Domestic Tax Revenue	18.9	21.2	25.3	18.5	22.4	26.3
Government Expenditure	24.0	26.0	29.7	27.1	31.4	30.6
<i>of which: Wages</i>	5.7	6.4	6.2	5.8	5.6	5.6
Overall Balance	-5.8	-4.5	-4.5	-8.8	-12.9	-4.0
Basic Primary Balance*	-0.4	1.5	1.6	-1.2	-2.8	4.7

Source: IMF and Gambia authority estimates, April 2015

\* The basic primary balance is the overall balance excluding: statistical discrepancies, expenditures financed by projects grants & external borrowing and interest payments.

There is a need for government to reallocate spending towards development to achieve a more balanced and optimal mix between recurrent and development spending. Addressing the debt issue, which should reduce interest payments, can be a way to increase development spending without sacrificing recurrent spending in the short run. Moving forward, the government has agreed (in the Budget Framework Paper, 2015-2017) to allocate 50% of GLF funds (excluding debt servicing) on activities that have the aim of reducing poverty. The priority areas for spending would be in agriculture, education and health:

### 1.1.1.2 Government Spending on Social Services

Spending on social services has risen by 28% between 2011 and 2014<sup>48</sup> in line with the requirements of implementing the PAGE, although a closer look at the annual budget reveals that budgeting was mostly driven by debt servicing (25%-30%), staff salaries and wages (40%-45%) and goods & services procurement (30%-40%). Education and Health made up the bulk of this spending on social services (53% and 36%<sup>49</sup>) in 2014. The result of an increase in the budget allocated to social services, along with a number of other market friendly policies and favourable weather have led to an average GDP growth rate of 3.9% and a fall in the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) by 9.5% from 32.40 (2006) to 29.31 (2013).

From 2013 to 2014, Government spending on social services increased nearly 4%; as is the case, Health and Education making up almost four fifths of spending (see Table 1.5). Table 1.5 shows that although, Education and Health grab the biggest share of government spending on social services, each of these is further dominated by one area. In the case of education, pre-primary and primary education makes up 37% of Education's 53% share whilst Health services<sup>50</sup> takes up virtually all of the spending on Health. Spending on Social security and Welfare accounted for less than 1.5% of total spending on social services, which translates to less than 1% of total government expenditure. Spending on Water supplies, which goes through the Ministry of Fisheries and Water Resources, is equal to 0.2% of spending on social services, a very small amount.

<sup>48</sup> Various sources: Calculation done using data from Budget Performance report 2014 and SSPER 2013

<sup>49</sup> Data from Government of The Gambia, Budget Performance Report 2014

<sup>50</sup> A further breakdown of Health Services was not available in the data preventing further analysis.

The increase in spending on social services over the past 5 years, though commendable, hides a disturbing fact; the spending is skewed towards recurrent expenditure. Figure 1.4 shows the distribution of spending between recurrent (short-term) and development (long-term). Less than 10% of spending on social services is aimed at long term investment on services that protect the poor and vulnerable in society.

Table 1.5: Total and disaggregated spending by Government on Social Services, 2013 and 2014

	Total Spending (D,000)		% of Total Social Spending	
	2013	2014	2013	2014
<b>Social Spending</b>	<b>1,545,349</b>	<b>1,603,029.67</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
<b>Education</b>	<b>825,203</b>	<b>924,478.03</b>	<b>53.4%</b>	<b>57.7%</b>
Pre-primary & Primary Education	582,780	616,404	37.7%	38.5%
Education Services not Defined by Level	131,905	161,391	8.5%	10.1%
Subsidiary Education Services	16,500	35,620	1.1%	2.2%
Education Services NEC	94,018	111,063	6.1%	6.9%
<b>Health</b>	<b>560,806</b>	<b>562,403.30</b>	<b>36.3%</b>	<b>35.1%</b>
Hospitals	2,563	2,879	0.2%	0.2%
Health Services NEC	558,244	559,524	36.1%	34.9%
<b>Social Security &amp; Welfare</b>	<b>18,174</b>	<b>9,169.38</b>	<b>1.2%</b>	<b>0.6%</b>
Welfare	6,186	2,809	0.4%	0.2%
Social Security & Welfare NEC	11,988	6,360	0.8%	0.4%
<b>Housing &amp; Community Amenities</b>	<b>80,146</b>	<b>64,185.90</b>	<b>5.2%</b>	<b>4.0%</b>
Housing & Community Development	-	40,777	-	2.5%
Water Supplies	-	2,555	-	0.2%
Housing & Community Development NEC	-	20,854	-	1.3%
<b>Recreational, Cultural &amp; Religious Affairs</b>	<b>61,020</b>	<b>42,793.05</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>2.7%</b>
Recreational, Cultural & Religious Affairs	-	42,793	-	2.7%

Source: Gambia Budget Performance Reports 2013 and 2014. Represents Actual Expenditure

### 1.1.1.3 State of Public Enterprises

Preliminary data shows that nearly half of the 2014 public debt was due to Government's settling of debts for the public enterprises, NAWEC, GAMTEL and GAMCEL<sup>51</sup>. The three institutions, though semi-autonomous, have run into financial difficulties leading to the need for Government to settle their financial obligations. These are debts incurred "... as a Result of Unapproved Commitments by MDAs<sup>52</sup>". In the case of NAWEC, higher costs of production which had not been passed on to consumers (tariffs were less than cost of production) along with a weak system of

<sup>51</sup> IMF Country Report No 15/104, April 2015

<sup>52</sup> Budget Framework Paper (2015-2017), Government of The Gambia, 2015

collecting revenue led to an inability to pay loans, which had been guaranteed by the Government of The Gambia. As of April 2015, the Government of The Gambia has agreed to put NAWEC, GAMTEL and GAMCEL on a better financial footing, increase tariffs (in the case of NAWEC) and reposition the entities with the aim of privatizing the telecommunications companies in 2016.

In addition to increasing the Government's debt burden, the 3 firms have also tax arrears estimated at over D800 million (2.5% of GDP). These 3 firms (NAWEC, GAMTEL and GAMCEL) account for 60% of the tax arrears of public enterprise owed to government. A key challenge relates to issues such as corporate governance and PPP could be considered as part of the reform initiatives to address these issues.

Table 1.4: Tax owed by Public Enterprises to GRA

		in millions of dalasi		
		Prior 2014	2014	Total
National Radio and TV	GRTS	2.6	1.5	4.1
National Lottery	GNL	10.0	-	10.0
National Petroleum Corp	GNPC	1.6	0.2	1.8
Groundnut Corporation	GGC	28.1	1.5	29.6
Gambia Ports Authority	GPA	33.2	0.3	33.5
International Airlines	GIA	154.3	-	154.3
National Water & Electricity	NAWEC	56.2	101.8	158.0
Gambia Cell phone	GAMCEL	208.0	64.3	272.3
Civil Aviation Authority	GCAA	290.6	-	290.6
Gambia Telecom	GAMTEL	364.2	24.0	388.2
<b>Total</b>		1148.8	193.6	1342.4
<b>In percent of GDP</b>		3.4	0.6	4.0

Source: IMF and Gambia authority estimates, April 2015

A few countries around the world have debt stocks above 100% of GDP and managed to avoid negative growth. Unfortunately, The Gambia cannot afford to have such a high level as the cost of debt, which stands at 19% for a 1 year Treasury bill, is extremely high and unsustainable, leading to interest payments on debt of nearly 35% of the Government's budget. To put this in perspective, this is more than what Government spends on social services; which include Education, Agriculture, Health and Social Welfare. There is a need for government to get a better grasp of its liabilities, both explicit and contingent for both the civil service and public enterprises. A consolidated debt database that aggregates the debts of government and public enterprises is necessary if government is to get a full picture of all its liabilities.

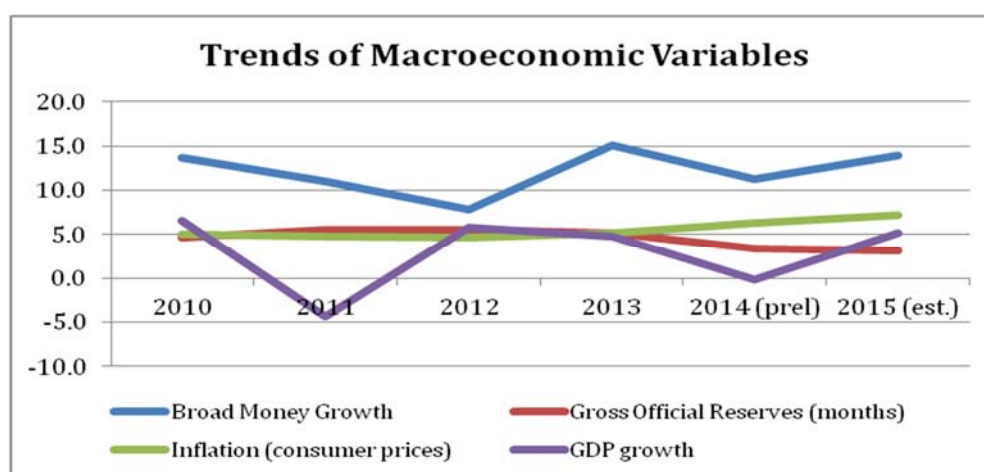
#### 1.1.1.4 Monetary Policy

Minutes of the August MPC (Monetary Policy Committee) meeting show that the CBG has kept the policy rate at 23% due to inflation still staying above the CBG target of 5% to 6%. Overall growth in the Economy for 2014 has also been revised downwards by the Gambia Bureau of Statistics to 0.4% from 1.6%. The transport and telecommunications sector registered a weaker growth rate than expected (3.3%) along with services (5.2%). Agriculture is estimated to have contracted by 8.4% for 2014, although this is likely to be revised, once more information is gathered in the coming months.

Despite experiencing near stagnant growth for 2014, money supply grew by 11.6% and assets of the banking industry grew by 14% (D29 billion). Non-performing loans fell to 11% this year compared to 15% in 2014, and so did return on assets (2.5%). With the current state of the economy (expansionary fiscal expenditures, continued increase in domestic debt and continued money supply growth) there is little room for the CBG to manoeuvre and lower its policy rate. This has an adverse effect on the private sector, which will continue to experience limited funding from commercial banks, due to competition with government for the limited funds in the credit market.

As long as the current situation persists, rates are unlikely to decrease in the near future. The fixing of the exchange rate<sup>53</sup> that started in May is having an adverse effect on revenue for Government and GRA in particular. The over valuation of the dalasi has led to reductions in the fees collected to importers thus reducing the revenue collected by the Authority. The effect of the directive can also be traced to the Banking sector, where we see a drastic reduction in the value of foreign exchange transactions; an activity that generates significant returns to banks.

Figure 1.3: Trend of Macroeconomic Variables



Source: Gambian Authorities and IMF staff estimates.

## 1.2 Resource Mobilisation by Government

### 1.2.1 Domestic Revenue Generation

The increase in debt over the past 4 years has been due to fiscal spending outpacing domestic revenue collection. Domestic revenue collection has grown every year between 2011 and 2014 by a total of 37%. Although revenue has grown, it has not been able to keep pace with the expenditures (including budget support from donors) and as a result, the need to finance the gap with debt.

The Government of The Gambia, through its main revenue collecting agency, the Gambia Revenue Authority (GRA) has made great strides in increasing revenue collected through taxes and non-taxes. The GRA targeted a 20% annual growth in revenue over the period of the PAGE. This has been largely achieved through the implementation of the VAT (to replace the sales tax) in 2012, a broadening of the tax base and investment in information technology and systems for better

<sup>53</sup> A Policy directive from the Government in May of 2015, setting the exchange rates for the Dollar (D40/\$1), Pound (D63/£1) and Euro (D44/€1) and thereby over valuing the currency by almost 20%.

tracking and monitoring of processes and revenue flows. The institution has also been able increase compliance by increasing the number of audits and also hiring more staff to conduct audits. As a result, GRA has been able to increase revenue collected from D5.1 billion in 2013 to D6.2 billion in 2014 with D4, 6 billion collected in the first half of 2015<sup>54</sup>.

Though the Authority has registered a number of successes, there are still a number of challenges faced by the institution with regards increasing revenues for government. Chief among these are:<sup>55</sup>

1. The authority is hampered by low staff skill capacities in a wide range of positions.
2. The tax revenue collected as a proportion of potential revenue is still low. It has been estimated that only 58% of the potential tax revenue is collected by GRA.
3. The performance of the economy since 2014 has had an effect on the revenue collected by GRA, as revenue collected depends on economic activity.
4. Infrastructure, in the form of electricity and building is also a challenge for GRA.

In light of the above, GRA has developed a 5 year Strategic Plan (2015-2020) to address the issues listed above. The Plan focuses on 5 key areas:

1. Increase compliance through improving standards, educating the population on the tax system and its benefits and an increase in the number of audits done among other activities.
2. ICT Development: GRA plans to roll-out the GAMTAXNET in the near future and migrate from the current ASYCUDA++ to ASYCUDA World.
3. Improve infrastructure of the GRA office building and staff quarters around the country.
4. Capacity building of staff at different levels.
5. Performance Monitoring and Evaluation of staff to ensure jobs are aligned to the strategic goals of the institution. An active use of M&E tools is expected to lead to an increase in standards as envisaged in (1) above.

It is expected that of the 5 areas of focus mentioned above, the government will provide 80% of the funding, with the remaining 20% donor funded.

An area of focus that should be looked at, given a recent study on illicit financial flows (IFF), is the amount of money that could be leaving the country. A report by Global Financial Integrity, estimates that almost \$31 million is lost each year by the country in the form of illicit financial flows. This is equal to over 200% of government's expenditure in Health and 37% of GDP. The study also shows that Gambia ranks amongst the top 25 in the world in terms of IFF to GDP ratio and IFF to social services expenditure. The sheer size of the amounts means that the Government of The Gambia is losing out on revenues that could have been collected in the form of taxes. Unfortunately, the report does not elaborate on the sources of these illicit flows. There is a need to study this given the possible ramifications IFF has as a source of revenue loss to the government.

### **1.2.2 Aid and Resource Mobilization**

The government of the Gambia, recognizes the importance of Official Development Assistance in its bid to eradicate poverty, achieve inclusive growth and ultimately turn The Gambia into a middle income country as outlined in Vision 2020. The PAGE and PRSP II (the national development plan prior to the PAGE) needed \$651 million and \$752 million respectively in order for

---

<sup>54</sup> Data collected from GRA presentation of 2015-202 Strategic Plan to donors and partners.

<sup>55</sup>UNDP Policy Brief 2015, (pp. 5)

government to achieve its goals. In the case of the PSRP II, 13% of the total sum came from domestic resources mobilized whilst the remaining 87% came from grants and loans. For the PAGE, it is expected that government's contribution would be higher this time, at 35%, with development partners including the private sector contributing towards the remaining 65%.

Due to the high dependence on ODA, the government has recognized that:

*“...effective and efficient utilization of ODA is critical to achieve its strategic goals articulated in the PAGE and Vision 2020 documents”<sup>56</sup>*

As a result, the Gambia Aid Policy document (2014) has been developed aimed at ensuring that:

1. There is national leadership, ownership, consistency with development priorities and alignment to national planning processes for economic growth, poverty reduction and debt sustainability;
2. The institutional and regulatory frameworks are streamlined to ensure cost-effective and efficient implementation, delivery and accountability mechanism ;
3. External resources are applied to high impact programmes/projects that are demand driven and that represent value for money for both Gambian and development partners' citizenry;
4. Predictable external aid flows with a higher grant element and ensure higher utilization and absorption;
5. There is a strategy for harmonization of development partner policies, procedures and practices while aligning them to the government's systems.

### **1.2.3 Source and Allocation of ODA**

Although ODA forms a major part of the government's total expenditure during the implementation of the PAGE, ODA flows have not been stable over the course of the PAGE (2012\_2015). The volatility of flows, especially grant has led to a dependence on loans from commercial banks and Treasury bills. Table 1.6 shows that ODA (including grants and loans from development partners) have been extremely volatile, with 2013 ODA received only 30% of 2012. Although assistance double from 2013 to 2014, it was still less than the 2012 value by almost D3 billion (nearly 40% of government revenue in 2014).

Table 1.6: Source of Funds disbursed (2012\_2014)

	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>
Loans	19%	63%	31%
Grants	81%	37%	69%
Total (D, millions)	7,804	2,366	5,047

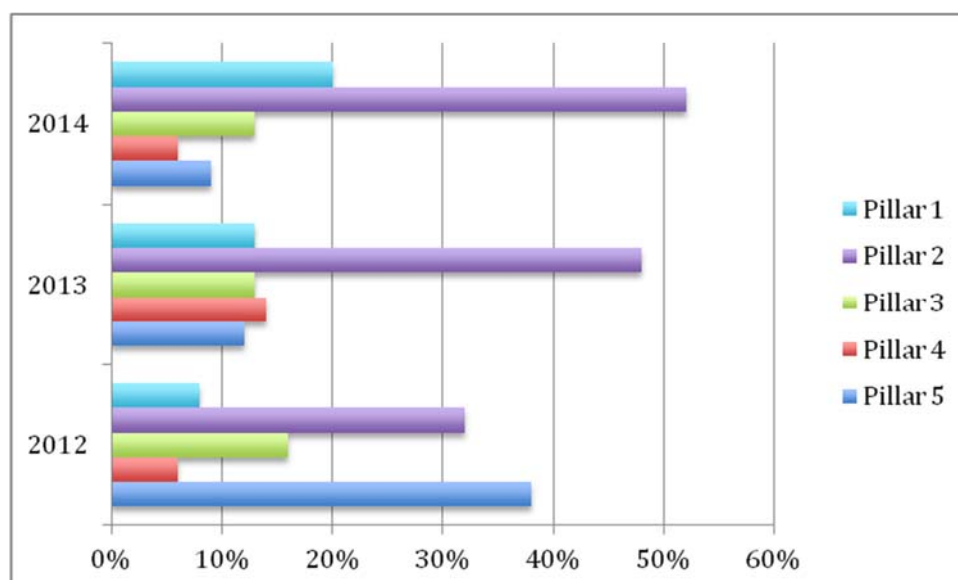
Source: Aid Bulletin of The Gambia, MoFEA, July 2015

The amount of funds disbursed by donors among the pillars of PAGE, between 2012 and 2014, has been extremely volatile. The relative spending proportion on a pillar varies wildly from one year to the next. For example, Pillar 5 (*Re enforcing social cohesion and cross cutting interventions*) received the most funding of all 5 pillars in 2012 (38%) but had dropped to third and fourth (2013 and 2014 respectively) on terms of proportional allocation to the other 4 pillars.

<sup>56</sup>The Gambia aid Policy (2015-2020), GoTG

This can be seen with other pillars' allocation varying wildly. This gives the impression that funding might not be dictated by the development goals but rather the preferences of the donors.

Figure 1.5: Allocation of ODA funds by Pillar of PAGE



Source: Aid Bulletin of The Gambia, MoFEA, July 2015

Pillar 1: Accelerating and sustaining economic growth.

Pillar 2: Improving and modernizing infrastructure.

Pillar 3: Strengthening human capital stock to enhance employment opportunities.

Pillar 4: Improve governance and fighting corruption.

Pillar 5: Reinforcing social cohesion and cross cutting interventions.

If ODA is to be effectively used as a tool for achieving the Next Development Plans and Vision 2020, a number of issues will need to be addressed. Chief among these are:

1. Addressing the human and resource capacity constraints faced by the Aid Coordination Department at MoFEA and other key stakeholders within and outside Government.
2. Unpredictability of Development Assistance.
3. Coordination of Programmes and Missions by development partners. Enticing the major development partners (WB, AfDB, ISDB and IFAD) to have permanent country offices would help increased coordination of programmes and missions to the country.

### 1.3 Policy Environment

The policy environment, as has been described in the Capacity Assessment of the Policy Analysis Unit, can be defined as being fairly chaotic. The Policy Analysis Unit (PAU), situated at the Office of the President, was established for the purpose of providing advice to the President, through the office of the Secretary General. What has occurred over the last 2 decades has been a deviation from its core mandate of “... to sustainably guide overall policy formulation, coordination and implementation” in government. What has occurred though is a situation wherein PAU has not been actively engaged in the formulation of policy, either at central (macro) level or at the sectoral

(micro) level. As a result, policy formulation has become more fragmented and disjointed, leading to policies and strategies at the sectoral level being unaligned to the macro development plans in some cases.

The limited engagement of PAU by other sectors within government has resulted in the awareness of the purpose and duties of the Unit being minimal at best. The capacity assessment study mentioned above found that, a number of ministries stating that their engagement with PAU was limited to “*inviting them to attend our workshops*”.

The gap created by the PAU not taking the role of a central policy formulation unit, coupled with a continuous turnover of staff in government, has led to a situation where policy is no longer seen as a continuum from formulation to implementation, but rather policy formulation as an end in itself.

The current challenges faced by the Government to a great extent can be linked to the prevailing policy environment. The current policy environment, as evidenced by the PAU capacity assessment report, is faced with a number of challenges, which have led to an inability of the government to achieve the goals set out in the PAGE. These challenges include:

- i. Policy-making cycle and link with PAGE: The development process of the Sectoral policies where, they exist, are not in line with the PAGE or Vision 2020. The lack of alignment of sectoral policies to the national agenda has led to conflicts with the national goals and other sectors. A lack of coherence can also be seen as each sector/MDA has its own set of policies, with none talking to each other or aligned to the PAGE and the budget. There is also evidence that some sectors are operating with outdated strategy plans (developed prior to the PAGE and Vision 2020), leading to sectoral activities that focus on outdated national priorities.
- ii. Policy making at Community Level: Drafting of policies are usually not participatory. Communities that are beneficiaries are not consulted during the development thus leaving out the contributions of key people who were part of the PAGE development process, and are not sensitized when the Policy is finalized. With little or no information of sector Policy implementation. This has been echoed in the community consultations across all regions, as people interviewed have generally mentioned wither not knowing about PAGE or having heard but not knowing the details of the PAGE. The community consultations have shown a lack of knowledge increasing the further one gets away from Banjul.
- iii. Limited collaboration between ministries and MDAs especially in areas that require multi sectoral collaboration; Education, Social protections, employment and trade.
- iv. High staff turnover in the public sector, leading to loss of institutional memory and uncertainty about tenure. The high turnover of staff has an adverse effect on policy implementation as knowledge and institutional memory is continuously being lost in the public sector. This instability is one of the primary factors leading to policy incoherence, as those currently implementing national / sectoral policies are most likely not the same people who drafted them.
- v. Capacity issues: Limited technical skills and inadequate experience in the public sector especially in the areas of policy development & analysis and M&E also leads to this situation.

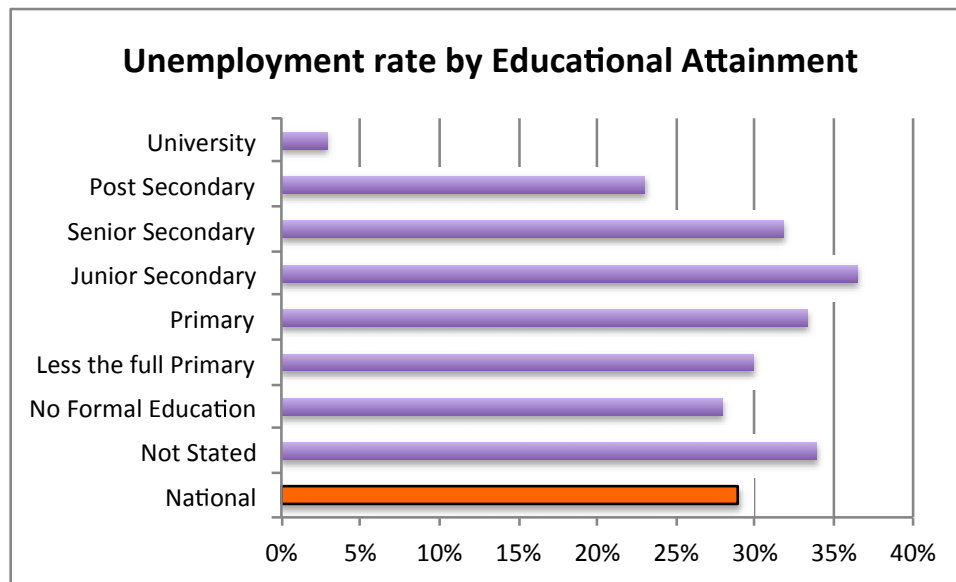
- vi. Policy development and implementation challenge across sectors: This should feature in the economic management chapter. A linkage between PAGE and sector policies and strategies not well defined. The full policy development and implementation cycle has to be looked. The PAU Capacity assessment has put forward big challenges in the policy making cycle. Please refer to it. Some of the challenges include:
- vii. Problems of policy coherence or inadequate alignment of sector policies to national/macro-level policies ( Vision 2020 and PAGE);
- viii. Overlaps, conflicts and inconsistencies among sector policies hence curtailing cross-sectoral cooperation, collaboration and partnerships especially on sector-wide issues such as environment, women, disability, youth and employment;
- ix. Lack of a systemic approach to policy development process resulting in confusion in the policy landscape;
- x. The statutory approval process for policies stalls, resulting in long and protracted delays;
- xi. Limited popularization of the policies and implementation strategies results in low-level of awareness of their existence;
- xii. Evidence-based policy and decision-making is not widely popular among senior-level policy makers and analysts;
- xiii. Participatory policy analysis is not popular among policy makers and analysts; and
- xiv. Uncertainty of continuous donor support for policy development and analysis.

#### ***1.4 Employment***

As of 2015, the latest nationwide survey of the labour force was the Labour Force Survey (LFS) of 2012. Although there have been other survey related to employment since then, such as the VSO sponsored study on TVET education, surveys such as these are either not national in scope, or focus on small segment of the labour force. AS a result, data on employment from this section will to a large extent focus on the results of the LF 2012. It should be noted that the Ministry of Trade Industry and Employment is working on a Labour Management Information System (LMIS) to serve as a repository for all labour force related data.

The unemployment rate, as estimated by the LFS, stands at 29.2% national, with the male and female unemployment rates at 20.9% and 38.3% respectively. There also exists a slight rural-urban difference in unemployment rates with the rural unemployment rate at 31.1 versus 28.4 for urban areas. The youth unemployment rate, defined as any person between the ages of 13 and 30, stood at 38%. Surprisingly, looking at unemployment by educational attainment will show that the unemployment rate peaks at those with junior secondary education (37%); see figure 1.6.

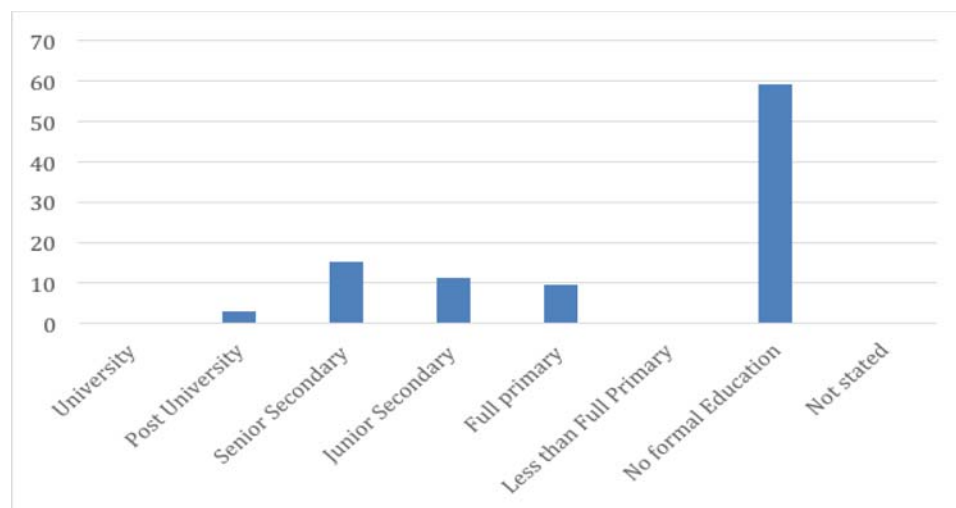
Figure 1.6: Unemployment rate by educational attainment



Source: Labour Force Survey, 2012

Note: Figure constructed from table in LFS 2012, page 145

Figure 1.7: Highest level of education in Gambian labour force



Source: Labour Force Survey, 2012

The Gambian labour force is characterised by a high degree of workers with no formal education (currently at 60% of the labour force). This is coupled with only 11% of the labour force having some form of technical or vocational training. Although it the LFS does not show the education level and vocational (and technical) education relationship, we can safely assume that not all people with TVET training have no formal education. Even if this was assumed that all the 11% with TVET training had no formal education<sup>57</sup>, then we are still left with 49% (60%-11%) of the

<sup>57</sup>It should be noted that Madrassas do form a part of the formal education system.

labour force without formal education or technical or vocational skills. This means that at least half of the labour force has no formal education or TVET skills training. As a result of this, we observe that the bulk of the labour force is engaged in low productivity sectors that require little to no education. The most distribution of labour by sector is Agriculture (31.5%), Services (54.7), of which distributive trade is (32.5%), and Industry (13.8%). Over the past two decades, we have observed a shift from agriculture to distributive trade, especially for the youth. Unfortunately, median incomes for those in the distributive trade sector (D1500 per month) is only slightly more than that for the agriculture sector (D1000 per month). In short, what we have observed is a shifting of the structure of the labour force from agriculture to distributive trade (driven by the youth) but with only a small increment in the wage rate. As a result, the Gambian labour force can still characterised by low productivity although there has been a shift in the structure (dominant sector).

What we know about the labour force:

- 1) There has been a change in the structure of the labour force from agriculture to distributive trade. This change has been driven by the youthful population preferring trade over agriculture.
- 2) The labour force is still engaged in low productivity jobs.
- 3) As a result of the first two above, median wages are still low.
- 4) The labour force is characterized by a high degree of workers with no formal education.
- 5) Given the proportion of the labour force with no formal education, the proportion of the labour force with TVET skills training is extremely low.

### ***1.5 Rural and Urban Poverty***

A number of studies, including the Integrated Household Survey (IHS<sup>58</sup>) of 2010 and Drivers of Growth studies (2014<sup>59</sup> and 2015<sup>60</sup>) have shown that growth has been inclusive in The Gambia, with both rural and urban populations seeing a fall in the poverty headcount over this period. Unfortunately, the benefits of growth have been skewed towards the urban areas with 30% of urban households (in 2013) multi-dimensionally poor (poverty headcount) as opposed to 80% in the rural areas. Poverty levels remain extremely high in rural areas even though there has been an effort by the government to provide basic social services such as schools, health care services and electricity to rural settlements.

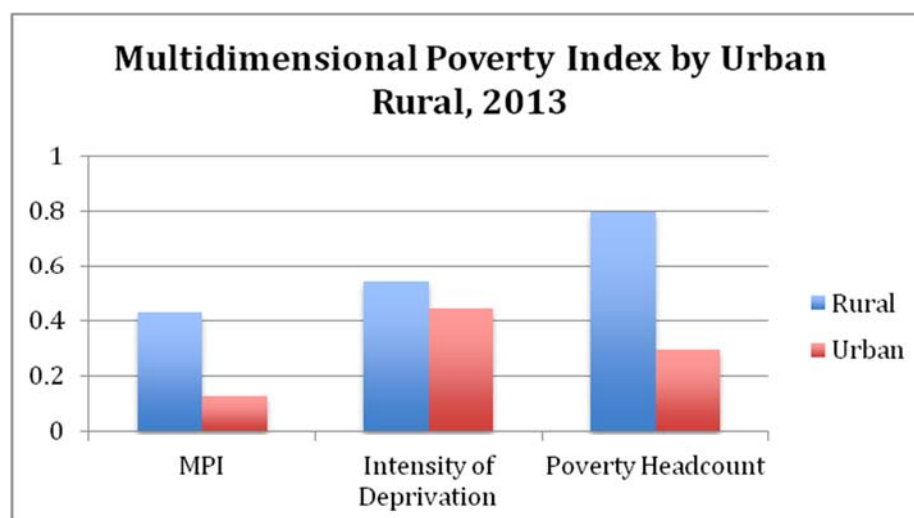
---

<sup>58</sup> Integrated Household Survey, GBOS, 2010

<sup>59</sup> Growth Drivers, Poverty and Inequality in the Gambia, GBOS, 2014

<sup>60</sup> Study on Multidimensional Poverty and Inclusive Growth in The Gambia, UNDP, 2015

Figure 1.8: Multidimensional Poverty, Intensity of Deprivation and Poverty Headcount by Urban/Rural



Source: Study on Multidimensional Poverty and Inclusive Growth in The Gambia, UNDP, 2015

To further reduce poverty and deprivation levels in rural areas, there is a need for government to continue its aim of providing basic social services to the rural population. This will be difficult to maintain if both the debt stock and cost of borrowing are not brought down. There is an urgent need for the debt stock, especially domestic debt to be reduced to more sustainable levels. If debt levels are not brought back under control, the increased cost of borrowing would further eat into the budget thereby preventing the government on spending on social services to fight poverty. If the current policy path is maintained, there is a great risk of losing the gains made in reducing poverty in the country over the past decade.

### ***1.6 Data Collection: Quality and Timing***

Although there are institutions in place to collect data, timely, quality and complete data still continues to be a challenge for government institutions, especially for GBOS and CBG. For a comprehensive database to be available there is a need for coordination within the National Statistical System, which is comprised of government ministries, MDAs and non-government institutions. For example, the current statistics on the contribution of the tourist industry to GDP is not adequately understood; the current breakdown of the services sub-sector in the national accounts should be reviewed so the contribution of the tourist sector stands out. Efforts should be made to produce and disseminate timely data that would inform government's spending decisions. This would allow government to adjust budgets to be in line with the reality on the ground.

The Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs has taken steps to producing budgets that have a longer term focus which take into account the views of the public with the implementation of the Citizens' Budget in 2014. Based on the recommendation of the Public Expenditure and Financial Assessments of the World Bank in 2007 and 2009, the Medium Term Expenditure Framework was introduced and piloted in 2013, and is currently being implemented by the Ministry. It is expected that all Ministries will be on board by 2016.

There is also a need for GBOS to collect and release data in a timelier manner and to increase the number of variables collected. It has been expressed by GBOS and other stakeholders that capacity

and funding are the biggest constraints to achieving better quality data in a timelier manner. MoFEA listed Monitoring and Evaluation as a central part of the Next Development Plan (NDP), which would require GBOS to take centre stage with regards the collection and dissemination of data; both to establish a baseline<sup>61</sup> for the NDP and for monitoring over the course of the NDP. Provision of data and evidence for informed planning and budgeting choices is crucial role.

## ***1.7 Key Issues and Challenges***

### **Reign in Debt and Reallocation of Government Spending**

Public debt currently stands above 100% of GDP whilst debt has grown by 10% of GDP for the first six months of 2015. The current debt situation is on an unsustainable path and would require fiscal adjustment. The increase in debt is due to expansionary fiscal policy. Growth in spending has far outpaced revenue collection by GRA leading to a widening fiscal deficit. With donors not likely to be forthcoming with budgetary support for 2015, the only avenue left for government is to cut back on spending and avoid the past mistakes of extra budgetary spending<sup>62</sup>.

Higher debt levels have led to an increase in the interest rate and an increase in the proportion of the budget used for debt servicing. The cost of paying debts (interest plus principal) now exceeds the total amount spent on social services. With Social service spending below the target of 3-5% of GDP, reductions in the amount used for debt service can be used to increase the amount allocated to social services (and social protection).

Reduction in uncontrolled spending must also go along with a reallocation of spending. First, once the debt is brought under control, any space created should be diverted to development (capital) spending, which is currently woefully low (less than 5% of government spending). The country cannot continuously rely on donors to be solely responsible for capital investments; government must take a leading role. Secondly, an increase in spending on Social services should be considered along with social protection.

### **Improve Revenue Collection**

A slowing economy, due to the twin shocks of Ebola and the 2014 erratic rains, has negatively impacted the ability of GRA to increase revenue collected for 2015 and possibly 2016. The exchange rate directive, which has led to an overvaluation of the dalasi, has led to revenue lost for the Authority. With little room for fiscal policy to manoeuvre, it will be unlikely that government can fully fund the Strategic Plan for GRA, further hampering its ability to collect revenue. The arrears owed to GRA by public enterprises amounting to D1.3 billion should also be settled as soon as possible.

### **Data Collection Issues**

There is currently a big gap between the data needs for the government and what is currently available. The major stumbling blocks to filling this gap are human resource capacity constraints to collect data at GBOS (and also CBG and MoFEA) and the inadequate funding for data collection, especially at the national level. There is also inadequate coordination between the main

---

<sup>61</sup> The Integrated Household Survey 2015 is currently underway, and is meant to inform the Next Development Plan. Unfortunately, it is running into financial difficulties threatening the purpose of the HIS and the NDP.

<sup>62</sup> The government had to request extra budgetary spending approval from parliament of D1 billion in November of 2015 for expenditures made outside of approved spending.

data collection agencies (GBOS, CBG and MoFEA) and other government entities that collect data needed by the 3 main institutions. There is no act that requires other institutions to share data collected, of national interest, to GBOS, CBG and MoFEA. Without an act that empowers the 3 institutions to collect and be sent data, data collection will continue to be incomplete and plagued with delays.

### ***1.7.1 Priority areas for Government of The Gambia***

The priority areas for the Government of The Gambia can be divided into two groups, the first being priorities that require immediate action. These are actions that, if not taken soon, can have adverse effects of the economy. The second set of priorities is those that need to be taken in concurrence with the immediate steps but whose effects are more medium to long term.

#### **Immediate Priorities**

- Reign in current spending, and strengthen the cash management system: Controlling spending by matching spending to revenue is necessary if debt is to be controlled. There is a need to reallocate spending away from recurrent towards development.
- Reduce domestic debt to more manageable levels:
- Take steps to return public enterprises to a sound financial footing and sustainable debt levels.
- Consolidate all debt obligations of government and MDAs, even those not guaranteed by government and strengthen the existing database.
- Consistency in implementing policy and restraining from implementation of ad hoc policy directives.

#### **Medium term Priorities**

- Increase capacity in GBOS and CBG for improved data collection: there is a need to provide more funding and training to staff of GBOS and CBG to enable timelier collection of data and an increase in the scope of data collected. Other ministries should also forge closer links with these institutions and providing the necessary data.
- Help GRA to find ways of collecting taxes owed to it by public enterprises. The current amount owed, coupled with the financial difficulties faced by some of the PEs means that it would be difficult for GRA to collect in the short term. GRA, Government and PEs need to engage in a discussion to determine a sustainable way of paying GRA taxes owed to it.

### ***1.8 Opportunities for UN System Support and Collaboration with Government***

#### **Data Needs**

Monitoring and Evaluation of the progress made in achieving the goals set out in the Next Development Plan is crucial. The government needs to have accurate data at the needed time and a baseline of the situation prior to the start of the Next Development Plan (NDP). In this regard, the government needs help from the UN (and other donors) to first of all complete the Integrated Household Survey 2015/6, which is meant to serve as a baseline to inform the NDP. The survey is currently experiencing difficulties with regard funding.

The UN system in The Gambia needs to coordinate its data needs and work jointly with GBOS to collect data for its UNDAF. It has been noticed by the Team that there are numerous overlapping studies being conducted by UN agencies (with GBOS) that are in line with the agency's CPAP. A more coordinated approach towards engaging GBOS would:

1. Allow GBOS to conduct a more comprehensive data collection exercise and thereby collecting a set of baseline figures for all indicators needed by the UN rather than have indicators with baselines from different years and surveys using incompatible methodologies.
2. Allocate its best staff to a unified (and coordinated) data collection exercise rather than splitting limited resources to cater to the separate needs of the different UN agencies.

Along with funding of surveys is the development of the human resource capacity base of GBOS, MoFEA and CBG, especially GBOS given the wide range of topics that the institution is tasked with collecting. Without adequate human resource at the data collection units of these institutions, the quality of data collected will be compromised. The UN can help these institutions forge links with international institutions that can provide training (both short and long duration trainings).

### **Revenue Collection**

The current fiscal difficulties faced by the government and the need to reign-in spending are very likely to have an effect on spending on projects deemed not to be a priority. Two such areas are development spending on social services and funding of long term development plans (for example GRA). The GRA case in particular, given its strategic importance, should not be left to government alone to shoulder. The UN, along with other donors can join the IMF is helping fund some of the activities of institution's 5 years plan. Without funding, GRA would encounter the same challenges as it currently does, hampering its ability to improve revenue collection. The end result would be a vicious cycle whereby, decreased funding from government leads to reduced ability to collect revenue further reducing government's ability to fund GRA.

In relation to revenue collection, there is a need to fully understand the dynamics and avenues through which illicit financial flows leave the country. An amount of \$31 million is not trivial for a country such as The Gambia. The Central Bank of The Gambia will need support from UN to conduct a thorough study of this phenomenon.

### **Increased Funding of Social Services (and Social Protection)**

With the current difficulties faced by the government of The Gambia, there is a possibility that development spending on social services could be adversely affected as government seeks to reign-in spending. The Gambia is currently ranked as one of the countries with the top recipients of budget support from donors; it is very likely that this situation will continue for the foreseeable future. In this regard, the UN should be ready and willing to step up and provide support in areas that government cannot; for example social protection (particularly in the areas of agriculture, health and education).

## CHAPTER 2: PRIVATE SECTOR DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL TRADE

### 2.0 Overview

The private sector in The Gambia is dominated by Micro Enterprises, with 97% of businesses having less than 5 employees (formal or informal sector). Small firms, those with 5 to 9 employees, make up 2.2% of the private sector whilst medium and large firms, together, make up less than 1% of firms. The sectors in which these firms operate is also highly concentrated as 61% of businesses operate in the distributive trade business whilst 16% are in manufacturing, 4% in the repair (automotive repairs), with the remaining 19% spread across 13 different sectors<sup>63</sup>. This is not a surprise given the low education levels of the labour force, as nearly half of the labour force has no formal education. This has the effect of limiting the job prospects of a large segment of the population in terms of the types of jobs open to them.

Due to the high number of workers with no formal education, coupled with the lack of interest in agriculture by the youth, distributive trade have become the most common occupation in the country, now surpassing agriculture (which includes cropping, livestock and fishing). Individuals operating within the informal sector selling retail dominate the distributive trade business.

Table 2.1: Percentage distribution of enterprises by size of enterprise, 2013

Size of Enterprise (Number of Employees)	Number	Percentage
Micro: 1 - 4 paid employees	47,300	53.5
Small: 5 - 9 paid employees	1,980	2.2
Medium: 10 - 49 paid employees	696	0.8
Large: 50 plus paid employees	115	0.1
No paid employees – mainly to be found in micro enterprises	38,400	43.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>88,490</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Mapping Study, 2013 & Consultant's computations.

The MSMEs Mapping study, conducted in 2013, showed that personal savings (60.9%) were the most common primary way entrepreneurs raised capital in The Gambia. Remittances and money from friends were the second (6.5%) and third (3.7%) most common after personal savings. Less than 1 percent of entrepreneurs interviewed cited loans from VISACAs and Micro finance institutions as a source of capital for investment in their business. The inability of micro enterprises to raise capital from VISACAs and micro finance institutions is surprising given that the private sector is dominated by micro enterprises in both the formal and informal sectors.

There is a significant untapped market that exists for micro finance institutions and VISACAs) that has not been taken advantage of. A possible explanation for this could be due to human resource constraints faced by VISACAs and Credit Unions in the country. Managerial quality and

<sup>63</sup> Private Sector Development Strategy Paper, 2015

the lack of trained cashiers have been cited as some of the human resource constraints faced by VISACAs in their operations. This has had an effect on the quality of governance and constrained the ability of individual VISACAs to expand.

Table 2.2: Percentage distribution of selected MSMEs by main source of capital investment of the enterprise, 2013

Source of Capital	Frequency	Percentage
Remittances	5,752	6.5
Family/inheritance	11,504	13
Friends	3,274	3.7
Osusu/ROSCO	1,416	1.6
VISACAs	88	0.1
Micro finance - e.g. Reliance, GAWFA, IFAD, Women	177	0.2
Banks	531	0.6
Personal savings	53,890	60.9
Other	11,769	13.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>88,490</b>	<b>100</b>

MSME Mapping Survey, 2013

Table 2.3 shows the membership, deposit (savings for VISACAs) and loans given out in 2013 and 2014 by VISACAs and micro finance institutions. Membership has grown for both VISACAs and MFs by 9.7% and 9.4% respectively. Deposits by customers have grown for MFs and total saving by members has grown for VISACAs as an industry. Although loans distributed have increased between 2013 and 2014, the loans to deposit ratio (27% in 2013 and 37% in 2014) remains very low for micro finance institutions. The growth in loans was in large part due to the growth in loans given out by credit unions. All credit unions in the country are supervised by the National Association of Cooperative Credit Unions (NACCUG), which is in turn supervised by the Central Bank of The Gambia. As of December 2014, 72 credit unions are in operation, with a total membership of 52, 094, a 22 percent increase from 2013.

Table 2.3: Membership, Deposit and Loans for VISACAs and Micro finance institutions, 2013 and 2014

Microfinance	Membership		Deposits/Savings		Loans	
	2013	2014	2013	2014	2013	2014
VISACAs	38,389	42,104	15.2	18.5	28.2	20.3
Major Finance Companies*	47,612	52,094	273.6	382.2	75.1	145.97

Source: Central Bank of The Gambia Authorities, 2015

## 2.0.1 Trade Statistics

The Gambia has been reliant on tourism and agriculture as sources of foreign exchange earnings for the past 5 decades. Tourism and groundnuts, which account for 60% and 19% of foreign exchange earnings respectively, are by far the largest contributors and the most promising sectors. Other exports that are also showing promise are cashew and sesame; both currently account for less than 5% of export revenue.

Table 2.4: Data on Exports, Imports and Remittances

As a percent of GDP, unless stated						
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014*	2015**
Exports	10.0	11.4	13.8	14.7	13.8	14.2
<i>Of which: Re exports</i>	8.9	10.2	11.8	13.4	12.3	12.8
<i>Of which: Domestic goods</i>	1.1	1.2	2.0	1.3	1.5	1.4
Imports	-32.8	-32.6	-35.8	-34.3	-38.9	-37.5
Trade Balance	-22.8	-21.2	-22	-19.6	-25.2	-23.3
Remittances	4.7	3.0	6.8	5.4	6.1	6.8
Current Account Balance (excl. budget support)	-16.3	-12.3	-8.9	-10.7	-12.7	-18.0
Current Account Balance (incl. budget support)	-16.3	-12.3	-7.9	-10.7	-12.7	-13.5
<i>Months of import cover</i>						
Gross International Reserves, (current year)	4.7	5.5	5.5	5.2	3.8	3.1

\*Based on preliminary estimates

\*\* Based on projections

Source: IMF Country Report 15/104, April 2015

The Gambia is heavily reliant on imports (39% of GDP, 2014), mainly for food & agricultural products (33%) and as inputs into production (43%). The result of a fairly stagnant domestic exports and imports growth that shows no sign of slowing down is an ever-widening current account (CA) balance. The CA deficit stood at 12.7% of GDP in 2014. The current account deficit has persisted for the past 30 years, with the gap widening recently. This has led to a depreciation of the dalasi and a loss of reserves by the CBG in its bid to fill the gap and protect the dalasi. The latest projected results show that international reserves held by the CBG have fallen to 3.1 months of import cover in the first half of 2015 from 5.5 months in 2011<sup>64</sup>, the year before the implementation of the PAGE.

Although imports have been rising, due mainly to an increase in demand domestically, a significant proportion of imports is due to re-exports. Gambia serves as the port to many countries within the sub region (such as Mali, Guinea Bissau, Guinea Conakry and Southern Senegal). Table 2.4 shows that re export volumes have grown over a 5 year period leading to 2013, but has since decreased as The Gambia faced more competition from Dakar and lost competitiveness as a result of the implementation of a number of policy decisions related to trade. Since 2006, the country has increases import tariffs from 18 to 20% and the sales tax on imported goods from 10 to 15%<sup>65</sup>. As Table 2.5 shows, The Gambia has the highest trade tariffs in the sub-region.

<sup>64</sup> Minutes of the Monetary Policy Committee Meeting August 2015

<sup>65</sup> The sales tax was replaced with a Value Added Tax system, in January 2013.

Table 2.5: Average Weighted Tariff levied in Gambia and neighbouring countries

The Gambia	Senegal	Guinea	Liberia	Nigeria	ECOWA S	SSA
14.6	10.5	11.6	10.7	11.0	11.2	10.3

Source: World Integrated Trade Solutions (WITS)

Tariffs correspond to average of all applied tariff rate, weighted by Trade partner.

### ***2.1 Challenges faced in the Export (Re Export) Sector***

Studies have shown that in addition to competition from the Dakar ports, a number of challenges internally have also led to a loss in competitive advantage regarding re exports. The increase in tariffs due to the ECOWAS Common External Tariff (CET) has led to a loss in the advantage held by the country, as then lower tariffs had attracted a greater demand for the Banjul port by our neighbours. Limited investment in the Banjul ports has meant that the port cannot dock large container vessels, which are becoming more common in international shipping now due to economies of scale. There is also inadequate equipment for offloading cargo leading to longer offloading times than in Dakar (World Bank, 2015). The Banjul ports scores below the ECOWAS average for the Line Shipping Connectivity Index (LSCI), a measure of how integrated a port is to the global liner-shipping network (5.6 versus 5.8 for the sub region and 12.8 for Dakar).

The challenges faced by the ports are one aspect of a much bigger picture for re-exports that includes roads (transit corridors) quality and checkpoints. Data from a recent World Bank study lament the poor state of roads in the country. It should be noted that improvements have been made in some of the transit corridors, for example Soma to Basse and Barra to Amdallai. There is a need for the Government to build up on the European Development Fund (EDF) financial support in the area of improving transport infrastructure, which was part of the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> EDF programmes to improve regional interconnectivity. Government should engage other donors such as the WB, AfDB and IsDB to raise funds in order to continue the improvement being made in upgrading roads network around the country.

As will be discussed further, the biggest barrier faced by the export sector is not tariff related but rather standards. With agricultural goods not meeting the sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) requirements of the US and EU the country has been unable to take advantage of AGOA (Africa Growth and Opportunity Act), which ended in early 2015 and EBA (Anything But Arms). As a result, there is a need to expand the country's trading partners within the sub region whilst steps are being taken to address the quality and standards challenges faced by the export sectors.

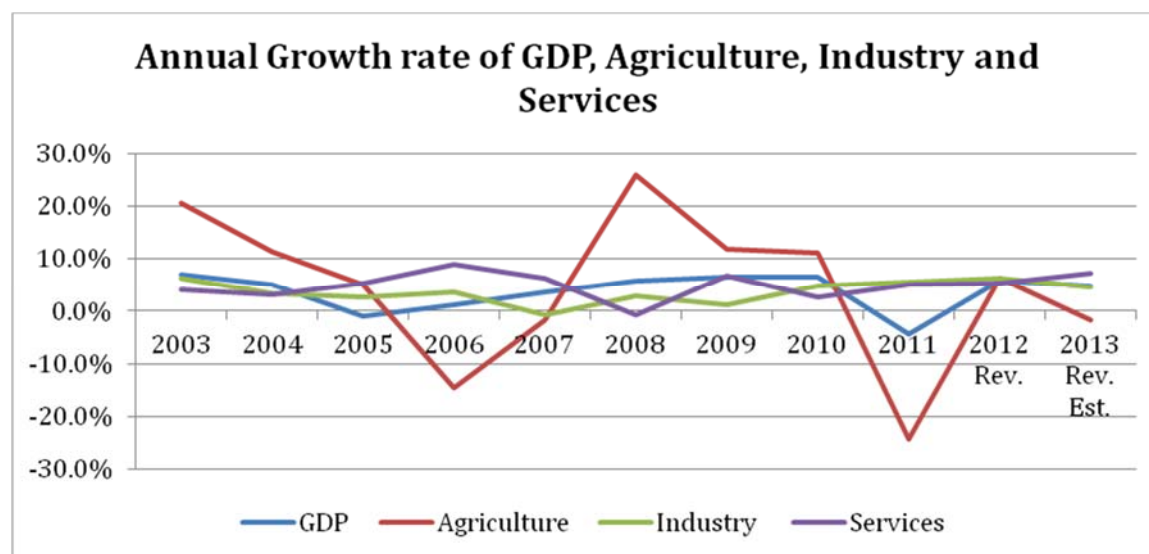
Currently, The Gambia has strong trade links with Guinea-Bissau, Guinea and Mali and a fairly strong link with Senegal. Results of the Trade Complementarity Index (TCI) calculated by the World Bank, under the World Integrated Trade Solutions, show that Guinea-Bissau, Guinea and Mali have the highest complementarity ratings, and thus the best match for our exports within the sub region; Senegal comes fourth. Given that the most cost efficient way to transport our goods to these countries is by road, there is a need for 1) a good relationship with Senegal and 2) good road links between The Gambia and the our neighbours, particularly Guinea-Bissau, Guinea and Mali.

#### ***2.1.1 Agriculture as a Contributor to Growth and Exports***

The poor state of roads and limited number of paved roads around the country, especially in rural areas, affects not transit trade and Agriculture. As a sector that employs 32% of the labour force (LFS, 2012), agriculture serves as a main source of incomes for those into cash crops and source

of food security for non-cash crop farmers. Regardless of the crop farmed, engaging in agriculture for the rural population is an effective way of combating poverty. The reliance of farming in The Gambia on rains has led to erratic output over the past decade, more so in the last 7 years with multiple years of negative growth in agriculture (cropping). Over the past 15 years, there has not been a period when output from agriculture has grown for more than 3 consecutive years.

Figure 2.1: Growth rates of Agriculture, Industry and Services sectors



Source: GBOS Gross Domestic Product estimates, 2015

If the current trend continues, negative growth in agricultural output will be more common and output will fall over time. Current output in the sector is still yet to reach pre-2011 levels. The result of which could be a reversal of the gains made in reducing poverty in the country. There is an urgent need to reduce reliance on rains and increase the use of irrigation for farming in rural areas as rains have trended downwards over time, both in duration of rainy season and the amount of precipitation, adversely affecting output in groundnuts and other crops such as sesame.

With the scaling up of irrigation now one of the priorities of government in its bid to achieve self-sufficiency in rice by 2016<sup>66</sup>, it is expected that more resources will be allocated to increasing the amount of money allocated to Agriculture, solely earmarked for investments in irrigation. Gambian private sector operators are also being encouraged to invest in the production, processing and marketing of locally grown rice.

A promising addition to the agricultural exports is cashew. Gambia has amongst the highest quality cashew nuts within the sub region, primarily due to cashew trees being relatively young (less than 15 years old)<sup>67</sup>. Cashews can serve as an alternative source of foreign exchange especially with the opening of a large sale private industrial plant (Cashew-Gam), which started operation in 2014.

<sup>66</sup> One of the priority areas for Agriculture in the current Budget Framework Paper (2015-2017) is the scaling up of irrigation infrastructure to reduce reliance on rains.

<sup>67</sup> World Bank, 2015

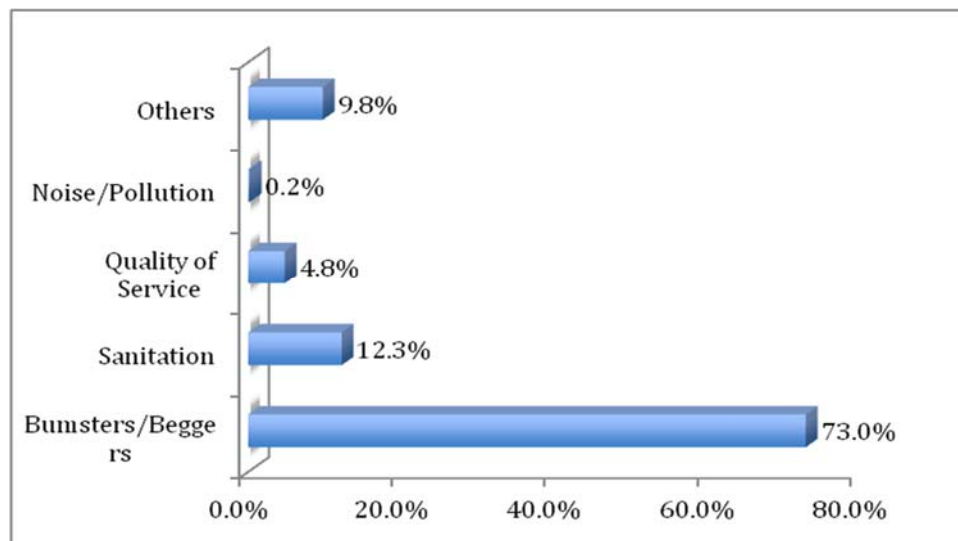
### 2.1.2 Tourism as an Industry and Exporter

Although tourism has been the country's major foreign exchange earner over the past 15 years, the sector is facing increasing competition, which could lead to a fall (or stagnation) of tourist arrivals in the near future. The Ebola epidemic has had a negative impact on the industry, leading to cancellation of bookings and a reduction of tourist arrivals in the 2014/15 season by 60%<sup>68</sup> compared to the previous seasons. A forecast by the IMF for the industry expects a rebound in 2016, assuming the epidemic is under control by late 2015.

The tourist industry in the Gambia has been facing competition from places such as Senegal, Kenya and Egypt recently. These are destinations that offer higher quality infrastructure, a more diversified product mix and lower prices. These destinations have been able to tap into the increased demand for travel by Europeans by offering hotels that are of higher quality than those in The Gambia and more reliable infrastructure such as electricity, telecommunications and better roads. Quality is perhaps the biggest challenge faced by the industry with a lack of investment in 5 star hotels (the Coco Ocean Resort & Spa being the last one, built in 2009). Additionally, investment in ecotourism and inland exploration is an underutilized.

Unreliable electricity and its high cost (\$0.23/KWh) is a major deterrent for investment that eats into the profits of hotels and reduces their ability to invest in major improvements. The lack of diversity with regards to the number of activities available to tourist is another drawback limiting growth in the sector (World Bank, 2015). The quality of the services provided by hotel and restaurant staff has also been raised by tourist groups; along with the ever-present “bumster” problem. The Tourism, Culture and Hospitality Strategic Plan (2015-2020) reveal that the “bumster” problem ranks number 1 among complaints by tourists (with 73% of respondents).

Figure 2.2: Most Common complaints by tourists visiting The Gambia



Source: Tourism, Culture and Hospitality Strategic Plan (2015-2020)

<sup>68</sup> IMF Country Report No 15/104, April 2015 Survey conducted at Banjul International Airport from October 2013 to November 2014, using the Tourism Satisfaction Survey.

The Strategic Plan identified the challenges faced by the tourist industry (i) Sex tourism & child abuse and exploitation; (ii) *Bumsterism*; (iii) Undeveloped and Under-development of the lands allocated at the Tourism Development Area; (iv) Seasonality of the Industry, that is highly dependent on charter flights; (v) Global shocks that can have adverse effect on tourist arrivals.

The Ministry of Tourism and Culture aims to increase the contribution of the tourism industry to 25% of GDP, from the current 16%. In addition, the sector's stakeholders (MoTC, NCAC, GTHI, GT Board) have also identified the need for emphasis on the "Culture" component of the tourist package, additional training at GTHI to meet the needs of the industry and financial support from Government; the ministry currently gets only 0.3% of Government's budget.

The Ministry of Tourism and Culture, and its satellite institutions have recognized that the draw of the "Sun, Sand and Sea" can no longer be relied on as a way to attract tourists, hence the renewed focus on the "Culture" aspect of the country. As a result, projects such as the Foni Tourism Product at Ndemban currently serves as a way of showcasing Gambian culture to tourists, whilst simultaneously creating an opportunity for rural folk to acquire the benefits of tourism.

If The Gambia, and the stakeholders in the tourism sector are to achieve the above, there is a need to focus on enhancing quality of both infrastructure and human capital and increasing the product mix of the sector across all regions in the country. In this regard, the Gambia Tourism and Hospitality Institute has been tasked with pursuing accreditation at the international level and forging links with other institutions with the aim of improving the quality and range of its programmes on offer.

In the short term, the sector should look at coordinating with the education ministries (MOBSE and MOHERST) in the area of TVET to provide skills especially for the youth that are relevant to the Industry. MOHERST has the aim of building or upgrading a TVET centre in each region of the country. Increasing access to training in areas like tailoring, mechanic and construction should lead to an improvement in the quality of products created and sold to tourists. Value addition of products sold would be made possible as youths, equipped with the necessary vocational skills, can now add value to primary products whilst also improving quality.

### **2.1.3 Challenges faced by Main Export Sectors: Agriculture and Tourism**

Gambia's two main exports, though in very different sectors, face virtually identical problems. The main problems are related to quality, inadequate infrastructure, limited diversification and investment. The quality of groundnuts is considered inadequate for the European confectionary markets leading to sales in the less lucrative bird feed market.

A lack of supporting infrastructure (irrigation, roads, storage, research and development) has created bottlenecks that limit the growth of the agriculture sector. Similarly, aging hotels that need investment and unreliable and expensive electricity have prevented the hotel industry from upgrading its infrastructure to meet the minimum international standards leading to the country losing ground to its competitors. A number of large European tour operators have mentioned not including Gambia in their list of destinations due to the lack of quality rooms available at hotels<sup>69</sup>.

---

<sup>69</sup>ILM (2010). *The Gambia Draft Tourism Marketing Plan*, Banjul, The Gambia.

A related challenge is the high cost of credit that limits the amount of financing that these two sectors get from commercial banks. Tourism and Agriculture sectors together get less than 10% - 9% of the credit to the private sector (Tourism 5% and Agriculture -4%).

Lack of product diversification has led to The Gambia being dependent on a single major cash crop. The result has been more volatile exchange rate earnings than would be the case had there been a more balanced mix between groundnut, cashew and sesame. The effect of a lack of diversification in the tourist industry pertains to the lack of activities that tourists can engage in whilst in The Gambia. The concentration of the sector to the Greater Banjul Area, with a few places in the rest of the country also limits the number of locations that tourists can visit when on vacation. A related point is the lack of quality accommodation in some rural areas creates a situation where tourist operators minimize the time spent at a tourist site, thereby preventing the local population from marketing their products to tourists who visit.

Gambia's exports products face minimal external barriers to trade. The implementation of Everything but Arms (EBA) by the EU means that the main barrier faced by the country in the area of agriculture, is meeting the quality standards set by the importing country. Similarly, there are no barriers to tourists coming to the country. The barriers to increasing exports are internal. There is an urgent need to increase the output of NAWEC whilst also reducing the unit cost of electricity. There needs to be a focus on improving quality of products (and value addition especially for primary products) in both the agriculture and tourism sectors. Finally, there needs to be considerable investment in infrastructure for both sectors.

## ***2.2 Private Sector challenges***

### ***2.2.1 Electricity***

The Government of The Gambia has acknowledged the importance of the private sector as an engine of growth. This has led to numerous policy positions and the establishment of institutions such as the Public Private Partnership unit in the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs and the Gambia Investment and Export Promotion Agency (GIEPA). The desire to move towards a private sector led economy over the last 5 years is without doubt. Though the intention and drive have brought about some gains, there are still towering obstacles to achieving an economy where growth is led by the private sector. The three significant challenges faced are electricity, access to credit and the tax code. The Gambia has the highest unit cost of electricity (\$0.23/KWh) in the sub region (see Table 2.6). This coupled with the inability of the current supply of electricity to meet demand makes electricity the biggest obstacle preventing the industry sector from growing.

The inability to meet demand is not the only challenge faced by NAWEC. With tariffs levied less than the cost of generating electricity (\$0.33/KWh versus \$0.50/KWh) (Table 2.6), NAWEC has fallen into heavy debt, requiring financial assistance from government. As mentioned, PE's debt accounted for nearly half of government's debt in 2014. As long as these issues regarding electricity generation are not addressed, the private sector will continue to be stifled.

Along with investing in equipment and infrastructure to solve the problems mentioned above, there is a need to find a long-term solution to its debt problems to move NAWEC to a sustainable and

profitable path. A highly anticipated solution to the electricity challenges faced is the OMVG<sup>70</sup> project that is currently underway. The Project is expected to provide electricity to the country and its neighbours within the River Gambia basin (Senegal, Guinea and Guinea-Bissau). Once completed, an estimated 55MW of electricity will be available for The Gambia at an estimated unit cost of \$0.09-\$0.15 kWh, a significant reduction to current unit costs. Although this will not meet all that the country needs, it will bridge the gap by 40% and effect a significant reduction in cost.

Table 2.6: Statistics on Capacity, Unit cost and Revenue and Collection rate of electricity companies in OMVG

	<b>The Gambia (2013)</b>	<b>Guinea (2012)</b>	<b>Guinea-Bissau (2012)</b>	<b>Senegal (2013)</b>
Utility	NAWEC	EDG	EAGB	SENELEC
Installed Capacity	102 MW	235 MW	11 MW	757 MW
Available Capacity	45 MW	160 MW	5.5 MW	618 MW
Peak demand	75 MW	277 MW	58 MW	487 MW
Estimated Cost of Supply (US\$/kWh sold)	\$0.50	\$0.19	n/a	\$0.31
Average tariff (US\$/kWh sold)	\$0.33	\$0.12	\$0.40	\$0.24
Average revenue (US\$/kWh sold)	\$0.30	\$0.11	n/a	\$0.24
Bill collection rate	90%	87%	90%	81%
T&D losses	20%	41%	47%	18%

Source: OMVG Interconnection Project Document, World Bank, 2015

### 2.2.2 Access to Finance

As mentioned in Chapter 1, the current situation in the debt market has led to government crowding out the private sector. By crowding out the private sector, Government is in essence starving the private sector of much needed credit to expand and contribute towards growth. The other effect is to raise the cost of borrowing, which as a result will force some firms out of business. A study by the World Bank has shown that at market-lending rates of 25% to 28%, only firms with a profit margin of 35% can afford to borrow money from commercial banks.

Table 2.7 shows the distribution of credit by the banking system to the private sector (and individuals) and the credit to GDP ratio between 2011 and 2014. Starting with the credit to GDP ratio, we see that although credit has grown in absolute terms, it has grown at a slower rate than GDP. This is as a result of the crowding out of the private sector by Government through its increased demand for credit. The result being that the private sector has not been able to access credit to expand, to keep up with a growing economy.

Table 2.7: Credit to Private Sector (and Personal loans) by sector, 2011 to 2014

	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>
AGRICULTURE	7%	4%	4%	3%
FISHING	0%	0%	0%	0%

<sup>70</sup>The Gambia River Basin Development Organisation (OMVG) / Organisation pour la Mise en Valeur du fleuve Gambie).

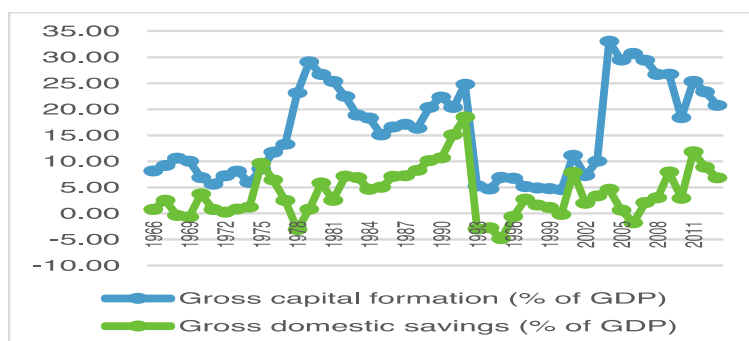
MANUFACTURING	5%	6%	5%	4%
BUILDING & CONSTRUCTION	10%	11%	13%	12%
TRANSPORTATION	7%	7%	6%	8%
DISTRIBUTIVE TRADE	28%	30%	31%	33%
TOURISM	5%	5%	5%	3%
FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS	4%	4%	4%	4%
PERSONAL LOANS	11%	9%	8%	8%
OTHERS	24%	25%	23%	25%
TOTAL (D'000)	64,758,636	65,358,000	71,989,705	72,529,527
Credit to GDP ratio	2.43	2.23	2.25	2.25

Source: Central bank of The Gambia, August 2015

Agriculture and Tourism, two of the country's biggest exports, have seen a decline in their share of credit to private sector. Their combined share has dropped from 12% (2011) to 6% (2014), a fall of 50% within a 3 year span.

The Gambia has a very low domestic savings rate of 5% (between 2008 and 2012), compared to 14.9% between 2004 and 2007. This has led to an over reliance on foreign savings, foreign direct investment in particular, to fuel growth. Without an increase in the domestic savings rates, capital available for investment will be limited, thus limiting private sector growth. Policies that promote savings could be implemented, although it is common for savings rates to pick up as incomes rise in the economy. The Private Sector Development Strategy paper revealed that over 99% of businesses in the country are MSMEs with less than 1% making up large business (more than 50 employees). The sheer dominance of MSMEs in terms of quantity is testament to the ease of opening a business. Although the Gambia has fallen in the World Bank's *Ease of Doing Business* (2015) rankings, the number of days required to open a business has fallen from 28 to 26 days and the stamp duty has now been eliminated. The number of documents needed to open a business has also been reduced. The areas where the country performed the worst (distance between country and efficient frontier) was in getting access to credit and paying taxes.

Figure 2.4: Gross Capital formation and Gross Domestic Savings in The Gambia



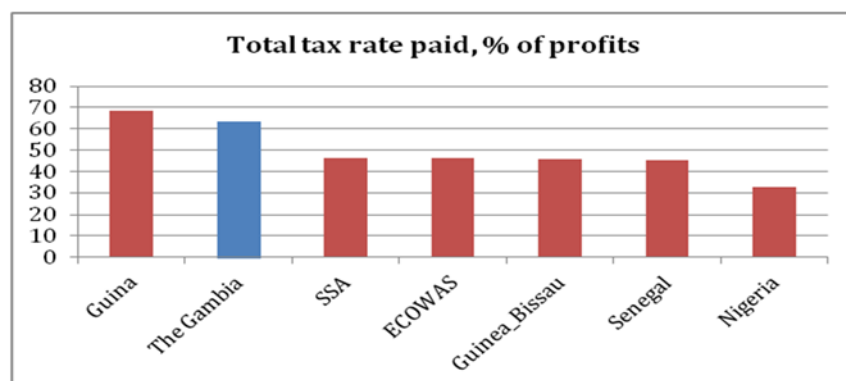
Source: World Bank open data source

This confirms the data and observations in this and previous chapters, where public debt has led to a crowding out, making it more difficult for the private sector to access credit. Although starting a business has been made easier for all, especially MSMEs, maintaining and scaling up that business with the use of credit has become more difficult than before.

### 2.2.3 Taxes

The second area where the country has lost ground is in the area of taxes. Figure 2.5 shows the proportion of profits that is used to pay taxes. The Gambia has the second highest tax on profits in the sub region at 63%. Although each tax levied is not high, they add up to a very high amount. Just the sheer number alone can be daunting for a business to keep track and regularly pay. A contributing factor to this is the need for firms to pay both GRA and councils taxes. This leads to an overlap in the types of taxes paid by the private sector. There is a need to simplify the tax code by eliminating the “nuisance” taxes.

Figure 2.5: Total taxes paid as a percentage of profits



Source: Ease of doing Business Report, the Gambia World Bank 2015

## 2.3 Key Issues and Challenges

### Low Investment in Export Sectors

The Gambia has been reliant on Groundnut and Tourism as sources of foreign exchange earnings since independence. The lack of diversification has increased the country susceptibility to shocks (weather and economic), which have adverse effects on exchange earnings. The drop in tourist arrivals due to competition from destinations that offer a similar product and the inability of agricultural output to rebound to pre-2011 levels has led to an ever widening current account deficit. There are signs that sesame and cashew could also add to the mix of agricultural products exported, but inadequate investment in infrastructure (roads, irrigation and storage) and timely supply of farming equipment and seeds are likely to lead to below potential output for both products for the foreseeable future.

Inadequate investment in tourism by the public sector has hampered growth in this industry. The concentration of the tourist industry to the urban areas has prevented the rest of the country from being included in the benefits of the tourism industry. The lack of integration of tourism with other economic sectors and the poor coordination between the Ministry of Tourism and Culture and its satellite institutions in the areas of product development, supply of labour with adequate skills to the industry and quality of infrastructure, highlights a challenge that needs to be addressed. There

is a concerted effort by the ministry and its satellite institutions to coordinate their activities and take advantage of synergies that exist between them to overcome the industry's challenges.

### **High Cost and Low Supply of Energy**

The cost of energy has been identified by the private sector as the biggest challenge faced; The Gambia has the highest unit cost of electricity in the sub region. Without an alternative to diesel fuel, there is little hope of reducing the cost of electricity in the near future. The most promising alternative, in terms of cost and ability to meet capacity is the OMVG project currently underway. As long as the electricity problem is not addressed, there is little hope of having a thriving industry sector that contributes towards growth and structural transformation.

### **Lack of Access to Credit due to Crowding out by Government**

The exploding public debt of the past few years has led to a stifling of private sector credit. If this persists, the health of the private sector will be seriously impacted along with its ability to meaningfully serve as an engine for growth. Current interest rates are too high for a majority of businesses, especially MSMEs, which are faced with interest rates of 25%-28% in the commercial bank market (Microfinance lending rates are higher than commercial bank rates). With credit to the export sector very low prior to the escalating cost of debt, it is not guaranteed that a reduction in the cost of borrowing would increase credit to those two particular sectors of the economy.

### **Streamlining on Nuisance taxes at Central and Local levels**

The third most cited challenge faced by the private sector is the number nuisance taxes levied on firms. Firms in the country are faced with both national and local area council taxes, which in some cases overlap. Although each tax levied is on its own small, the total effect of these “nuisance” taxes eats up a significant proportion of firms’ profits. If the tax code is not simplified, and the overlap of national and local taxes eliminated, firms will be squeezed, further preventing their contribution towards job creation and economic growth.

## **2.3.1 Priority for Government**

### **Increase Investment in Exports Sectors**

There is a need to work on providing the necessary infrastructure to improve yields, create a robust infrastructure to allow for a sustainable value addition chain and an improvement in quality. Without these in place, sesame and cashew will meet the same fate as groundnuts in the past. The lack of adequate infrastructure and funds has led to groundnut products having higher than allowed aflatoxin amounts leading to sales of groundnut products in the less lucrative bird feed market. The move towards greater collaboration by the Ministry of Tourism and Culture with its satellite institutions is a step in the right direction. The collaboration should focus on:

1. Increasing quality of staff in the hospitality industry with GTHI offering programs more tailored to the needs of the industry.
2. A focus on diversifying the products on offer by the industry, taking advantage of activities like bird watching and the demand by tourist for a more authentic Gambian village experience.
3. Increasing the impact of the industry to the rural population. This can be done in collaboration with others sectors such as MoBSE & MoHERST and MoA.

4. Increase the focus on the “Culture” component of the tourist package given that the “sun, sand and sea” has lost its allure.

### **Energy Cost and Supply**

Government is currently working on getting access to the OMVG project, which is expected to reduce the electricity gap by 40 percent. In addition, it is expected that unit cost of electricity would drop four fold. Government should continue working towards joining the OMVG grid given the opportunities it could offer through the stimulation of the Industry and manufacturing sector. The focus on renewable energy also should be continued as a complementary source and an alternative for parts of the country that are remote.

### **Increase Credit to Private Sector**

Increasing access to credit for the private sector would require a multi-pronged approach from government and the private sector. No single act of policy would solve achieved the desired effect. AS a result, the following steps need to be taken:

1. Reduce domestic public debt to more manageable levels, thus freeing up credit for the private sector.
2. Increase the amount of information about bank customers to banks. The establishment of the Credit Reference Bureau at the Central Bank of The Gambia is a step in the right direction. The Bureau needs support in order to increase the amount of information it can share with banks. The data needs to be expanded to MSMEs, focusing on MSMEs in the tourism and agriculture sectors.
3. Help improve staff capacities at VISACAs and Credit Unions. The lack of capacity has hindered the ability of VISACAs and credit unions to expand coverage and increase internal efficiencies.

### **Streamlining Tax Code**

Multiplicity of taxes has been cited as one of the major problems encountered by businesses; they also prevent informal businesses from entering the formal market, for fear of financial losses. GRA and local governments need to take a look at the tax code and determine those that can be removed or merged. The institution responsible for collecting the different types of taxes should be discussed.

## ***2.4 Opportunities for UN System Support and Collaboration with Government***

### **Investing in infrastructure**

#### **NAWEC: Restructuring**

Electricity has been cited by the private sector as the biggest stumbling block to expansion, especially in the energy hungry sectors (Manufacturing, Industry, and Hotels & Hospitality). Government has agreed to work on putting NAWEC on more sustainable financial path and address the governance issues within the company. The UN can provide much needed expertise in the areas of restructuring NAWEC, particularly in the area of Governance.

#### **Linking Government with Donors to improve road network**

The Gambia government is currently engaged in the construction of the major roads, to serve as transit corridors for goods and improve the movement of people and goods within the country. Although the EU has been a great partner for the country in providing funding for the constructions

of main roads, this is unlikely to continue. There still remains a considerable amount of work the needs to be done regarding building more roads within the country. In this regard, the UN can serve as an advocate for government by linking government with donors willing to fund road projects.

#### Scaling up of Irrigation

The Gambia has been experiencing a widening current account balance (imports increasing at a faster rate, than exports) over the years, with Food and agricultural products make up over 30% of imports. As a result, government has pledged to attain food self-sufficiency in rice by 2016. This would require heavy investment in equipment and infrastructure. Two areas where the UN can step in are:

1. Provision of technical expertise in research in improving and distribution of quality seeds. The Gambia currently has yields that are on average one sixth of the potential output for the agricultural products grown. The lack of high yielding seeds has been identified as a major contributor.
2. Funding and expertise for scaling up of irrigation and establishment of large-scale rice milling machines across the country. The majority of Gambian farmers are still dependent on rains for production and there are limited rice milling machines that are functional. Without a shift to irrigation based agriculture and processing of rice, the sector would only operate for half a year and rice that is produced will be lost through *loomos*, into neighboring countries. This has both income and food security implications. Investing in irrigation and adequate machinery would allow agro-entrepreneurs to farm, process and market rice year round; preventing households from having to go through a “Hungry Season” for 4 to 5 months of the year. As agriculture is being commercialized, incomes of actors in the value chain would rise, as their ability to produce more output increases.

#### Tax Reform

The tax number and rate of taxes rankings among the 3 most cited challenges facing the private sector in The Gambia. The Ease of doing business shows that 63% of profits are used to pay taxes. In our interviews with the private sector and government, the volume and duplicity of taxes have been identified as the major cause. Firms have to pay both taxes at the central level (to GRA) and to the local area council they are situated at. Firms are sometimes asked to pay the same type of tax to both GRA and the Area council.

Government has accepted there is a need to streamline the tax code, and eliminate some of the nuisance taxes. It is of our opinion that the process should not stop there. Central government and the local area councils need to define the taxes to be collected by each in order to reduce duplicative taxes. The capacity of area councils needs to be upgraded to keep up with the new demands for efficiency and timeliness of collection and auditing of firms. The UN can provide help to government in:

1. Providing expertise in the area of streamlining the taxes levied on the private sector and the demarcation of taxes that are the responsibility of GRA and Local area councils.
2. Provide support for building the capacity of local area councils and GRA staff to keep up with their increased role in the collection of taxes.

## **Tourism**

The 5-year strategic plan for the tourism Sector identifies both the challenges and the way forward for the sector; Product improvement and diversification, capacity development of labour supply for the sector and an emphasis on inclusive tourism. The areas that the UN can support the industry to achieve its goal of being a tourist haven by 2020 are:

1. Coordination: the Ministry of Tourism & Culture and the satellite institutions with the Ministries responsible for Agriculture and Trade. With hotels and restaurants purchasing a limited set of agricultural produce domestically, (due to quality and standards issues), there needs to be coordination between the Tourism ministry and other relevant ministries to find ways to address these issues. The UN can play a role in this by providing guidance and expertise to MoTC to enable it to coordinate and develop a long-term plan to increase the inclusiveness of the tourism industry in the country.
2. The Ministry envisages having the Gambia Tourism and Hospitality Institute address the capacity issues faced by the industry. The UN can provide support in form of funding and helping GTHI create links with other Hospitality Institutes in countries (in the form of South-South cooperation) that have been successful in providing the Tourism industry with the required labour supply.
3. The lack inability of tourism to have a significant impact on the rural population means that a lot needs to be done to address this. Although the Ministry has listed a number of activities designed to address this issue, the UN can play a major role in increasing inclusive tourism by supporting skills development as well as support to the development of eco-tourism. Tourists and the hotel industry have cited the level of quality (and innovation) of products on sale at tourist sites, outside the urban areas, as a reason for the low purchase of local products by tourists. The lack of vocational skills (such carpentry, construction and tailoring) to produce goods and provide services that have been deemed up to standard is a main cause. This would require support from the UN system, working in unison, to bring together the ministries responsible for Education, Tourism & Culture, Trade (Entrepreneurship and MSMEs) and Youths to:
  - a. Set up TVET institutions in each region of the country.
  - b. Update the TVET curriculum, and create new ones for those that do not currently have.
  - c. Train an initial group that will serve as instructors in the newly created/ renovated TVET institutes.
  - d. Upgrade the capacity of the (NAQAA) to effectively serve as a quality control and monitoring agency for TVET in the country.

## CHAPTER 3: AGRICULTURE, FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION

### 3.0 Overview

The agriculture sector comprising crop, livestock, fisheries and forestry production is one of the key drivers for economic growth in The Gambia. Overall it employs 70% of the labour force, contributes 26% of the GDP and meets 50% of food needs<sup>i</sup>. This sector holds great potential for increased production, productivity improvements and synergy with other sectors, notably tourism and industry. In recognition of these factors, the sector has been a focus and major plank of national development blue prints formulated by Government including the Vision 2020,<sup>71</sup> Vision 2016, and Vision 2025. In a similar vein, several national medium-term development frameworks, sectoral policies, strategic plans, programmes and projects have been formulated for implementation in the bid to support agricultural development in the country.

Recent developments in the sector have been guided by the ANR Policy (2009-2015), grounded in the national long-term development blue print, Vision 2020(1996-2020); the medium-term Programme for Accelerated Growth and Employment (PAGE 2012-2015), and the MDGs. For 2015 development agenda this sector has great potential to contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 1, 2 and 3. The ANR sector is characterized by the following:

Crop production dominated by subsistence production of food crops comprising cereals (early millet, late millet, maize, sorghum, rice and findo) and semi-intensive cash crop production (groundnuts, cotton, sesame and horticulture). Farmers generally practice mixed farming, although most agricultural production is accounted for by crops.

Crop production and productivity of crops is heavily dependent on rainfall (because of the low levels of adoption of irrigation). Seed availability and quality, availability and affordability of fertilizers, pests and diseases, processing, high cost of inputs and pricing policy are key challenges. Crop yields are generally low, with an average of about 1.5 tonnes/Ha compared to an estimated potential of 3-4 tonnes/Ha for cereals, excluding rice, for which yields of up to 6 tonnes/Ha have been obtained. For this reason, food self-sufficiency is relatively low, with an estimated national ratio of about 50 percent, i.e. the country's food production can only meet 50 percent of its needs. Moreover, there is limited value addition with stakeholders acutely constrained by inadequate support in value chain management, including inadequate capacity in threshing, milling, packaging and storage.

The Gambia is endowed with livestock, including cattle, sheep, goats, horses, donkeys, pigs and poultry. However, the sub-sector remains under-exploited, attributable to inadequacy of drugs and veterinary services, watering facilities, feed and fodder, high morbidity and mortality. Thus despite the high potential for livestock, the country continues to be an importer of livestock and livestock products.

Despite having a coastline that is only about 80 Km (one of the shortest in Africa) long, it is highly endowed with riches in fisheries due to its location in the highly productive up-welling zone of the Atlantic Ocean and the Canary Current Large Marine Ecosystem (CCLME) region.<sup>72</sup> As such, the country has abundant and diverse pelagic fish species which potentially make substantial

---

<sup>71</sup> GoTG. 1996. Vision 2020 The Gambia Incorporated

<sup>72</sup> GoTG. 2011. Fisheries Strategic Action Plan (2012-2015)

contribution to the socio-economic development of the country. However, a variety of economic, social, institutional, physical and technical constraints impeding the sustainable development, growth and management of the fisheries and aquaculture sectors in the country.

The forestry sub-sector is another important sub-sector covered in the ANR policy, although its contribution to the GDP has been estimated at 1-2%. In addition, the effects of population growth, expansion of agricultural lands and climate change have resulted in alarming losses of the country's forest cover. However, the potential of the sub-sector to contribute to poverty reduction has been recognized, and a policy framework for the sector has been prepared. The "Gambia Forest Management Concept" has also been developed as a strategy for the sustainable and participatory management of forests in partnership communities and other stakeholders. Efforts are also being made to link the sub-sector to other sectors, especially tourism through ecotourism, and the production of products for local and export markets.

There is recognition of the importance of wildlife conservation and its sustainable use, and the potential of the sub-sector to help achieve Vision 2020. In particular, the GoTG recognizes that parks and wildlife can increase the productivity of the land and soil resources of the country, and increase national competitiveness in high-value products and services such as tourism. A policy framework and national biodiversity and strategy action plan was prepared in 1998 to meet the country's obligation under the UN Convention on Biodiversity, and recently updated.<sup>73</sup> In addition, a Biodiversity/Wildlife Act (2003) was passed, and provides for the establishment of national parks and nature reserves. A total of twenty-two (22) protected areas have been established. A total land area of 76,064 hectares (i.e. about approximately 6.4% of the Gambia's land area) is under formal protection.

There is availability of ample water resources (surface and underground) that can be exploited to boost productivity in the agriculture sector and address the vulnerability of the sector to weather conditions. According to the FAO statistics, The Gambia's actual renewable water resources are estimated at 8 km<sup>3</sup>/year, of which about 3 km<sup>3</sup> are internally produced and the remaining 5 km<sup>3</sup> represent the inflow of the River Gambia from Senegal. For this potential to be realized a heavy initial investment on infrastructure development by the government is needed. The ability of the government to finance this huge infrastructure needs is constrained by huge domestic debt payments. As indicated in the recent mission of the IMF, investment in irrigation is prioritised as major area for addressing vulnerability. For this reason, greater attention has to be paid to using water resources for irrigation, in addition to the needs of the horticulture, livestock, poultry, aquaculture, and other sub-sectors of the economy.

Whilst significant potential exists in the ANR, its development has been marred by a number of daunting challenges/constraints including predominance of the practice of traditional farming and dependence on a short and unreliable rainy season, which inhibit the realization of its full potential. Evidence from recent data show that 71% and 91% of the poor and extremely poor, respectively work in agriculture. Given the high proportion of the labour force dependent on the sector as source of livelihood, the high rate of urbanization and an ageing farming population, agricultural development remains an imperative if poverty is to be reduced, and food and nutrition security attained in The Gambia.

---

<sup>73</sup> GoTG. 2015. Draft Revised NBSAP

### **3.1 Policy Overview**

A number of policy instruments have been employed for the achievement of macroeconomic and sectoral goals. These comprise the long-term development blue print of “The Gambia Incorporated Vision 2020”, aimed at transforming the country into a middle-income, export-oriented one by 2020. The Vision 2020 identified agriculture and natural resources (ANR) as top priority, consequently, the development of the sector has been a major objective of a series of policies, strategies, and programmes developed over the past 20 years.

The Vision is being implemented through a sequence of discrete national medium-term development frameworks comprising the Strategy for Poverty Alleviation (SPA, 1995-1999), Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper 1 (PRSP I 2003-2005), PRSP II (2007-2011) which were tightly knit to the MDGs and the Programme for Accelerated Growth and Employment (PAGE 2012-2015).

The SPA with its agenda to reduce poverty laid focus on the ANR sector, especially on the achievement of food self-sufficiency, income security and diversification of the food and export base. However, the SPA did not succeed in reducing poverty because of limited natural resources, inadequate investment in productive sectors, poor coordination and alignment of interventions, and inadequate social services. The successor Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP I) (2003-2005) aimed at reducing poverty by increasing focus on the productive sectors of the economy and increasing the performance of the ANR sector. This was followed by PRSP II (2007-2011) aimed at accelerating economic growth and reducing poverty and its successor PAGE (2012-2015).

#### **3.1.1 ANR and Food Security Policy**

The ANR policy (2009-2015) provides the overarching medium term development framework for food security and covers crops, livestock, fisheries, forestry and water resources subsectors. It has the following key strategic objectives:

- (i) Improved and sustainable measurable levels of food and nutrition security, particularly among vulnerable populations (women and youth);
- (ii) Commercialization through food and agricultural value chains, including linkages to markets;
- (iii) An enabling environment and strengthened institutions (public and private) and provision of services, including reducing vulnerability; and
- (iv) Sustainable management of natural resources.

Government’s focus on food security is crystalized by the World Food Summit organized by FAO, when global leaders made the commitment to half the number of hungry people in the world. This culminated in the formulation of National Medium-Term Investment Plan ((NMTIP) and the complementary Bankable Investment Project Profiles (BIPPs) on National Food Security and Natural Resources Management with support from FAO. Between 2000 and 2008, food security became not only a major policy objective for the sector, but was also used to measure the sector’s contribution to poverty reduction and economic growth-two national priorities of the period. As a result, government integrated ANR sector policies and plans with global initiatives such as the MDGs, and regional initiatives such as the GNAIP linked with the CAADP/NEPAD and in line with the ECOWAS Common Agricultural Policy (ECOWAP). By 2009, the GoTG increased its focus on transforming the ANR sector into a modern, market-driven one with a diversified production base, and efficient value chains. Toward this end, the ANR policy called for the intensification (through irrigation and mechanization) of the staple food, rice, as well as the

diversification of the food production base (including increasing the amount of fish caught and processed).

The attainment of food security was also a cardinal objective of the PAGE (2012-2015).<sup>74</sup> In particular, food security was included in the fifth pillar of the PAGE, i.e. reinforcing social cohesion and cross cutting interventions. The PAGE called for improving the agricultural extension programmes to increase the flow of technology to farmers, improving water resources management to boost agricultural productivity, and encouraging greater private sector participation in agriculture.

Other sector related policies and strategies include the GIEPA National Export Strategy (NES) formulated to provide a national framework for export development and promotion. The NES will also promote public-private partnerships, increase export competitiveness, and promote trade with ECOWAS member states, under the auspices of the ECOWAS Trade Liberalization Scheme (ETLS) and bilateral trade agreements, which ease requirements for trade among member states.

The Food Safety and Quality Act (2011) was passed to promote and help the country meet international quality standards, particularly sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) requirements for access to European markets, thereby helping the country increase its exports to Europe. The Gambia Trade Policy (2011) has also been approved, with the aim of opening and liberalizing the domestic and regional trade to promote national integration and competitiveness in sub-regional, regional and global markets. These efforts are gradually paying off, given that the country climbed in the Doing Business ranking from 145 out of 183 countries in 2011, to 138 out of 189 countries in 2015.<sup>75</sup> The Gambia was thus ranked higher than SSA (142), Senegal (161), and Guinea Bissau (179).

A number of other policies aimed at helping develop the ANR sector include (i) the Gender and Women Empowerment Policy (2011-2020), aimed at promoting mainstreaming of women into development processes in all sectors, to enhance equal access to opportunities, and achieve gender equity; (ii) the Youth Policy (2009-2018), which is aimed at building self-reliance by mainstreaming youth into productive sectors of the economy, including agriculture and rural employment; (iii) the National Seed Policy (2008), aimed at developing an effective seed system to provide adequate, timely, accessible improved seed at reasonable prices; and (iv) the National Nutrition Policy and Action Plan (2010-2020), which addresses nutrition challenges faced by the country, including achieving the MDGs. In addition, the Education Policy (2004-2015), has the School Feeding Programme (SFP) and agricultural and nutritional education as core features, while the microfinance strategy framework is aimed at providing smallholders with access to beneficiary-managed credit and sustainable rural finance system.

### **3.1.2 Nutrition Policy and Education Policies**

In recognition of the important role of proper and adequate nutrition in national development, The Gambia Nutrition Policy (2000-2004) was formulated and approved in 2000.<sup>76</sup> The implementation of the nutrition policy helped to elevate the position of nutrition in the GoTG's

---

<sup>74</sup> GoTG. 2012. Programme for Accelerated Growth and Development (PAGE) 2012 - 2015

<sup>75</sup> World Bank. 2014. Doing Business 2015. Going Beyond Efficiency. Economy Profile, Gambia, The

<sup>76</sup> GoTG. 2010. National Nutrition Policy (2010-2020)

development agenda, and provided the legal and institutional framework for nutrition management in the country. In addition, the policy contributed to reducing the burden of malnutrition and improved the health and nutritional status of the population.

The current Nutrition Policy (2010-2020) is aimed at improving the nutritional status of the Gambian population, and thus reduce malnutrition. Toward this end, the Nutrition Policy covers 12 priority areas including the improving maternal nutrition, promoting optimal feeding of infants and young children, and improving food and nutrition security at various levels (national, community, and household). Other priority areas include improving standards, quality and safety, and the prevention and management of micro-nutrient malnutrition and diet-related non-communicable diseases. The Nutrition Policy also focuses on caring for the deprived and nutritionally vulnerable, the nutrition guide for PLHIV, nutrition in emergency situations, and research

Furthermore, the Nutrition Policy (2010-2020) will implement activities in the focus areas using various means, including community nutrition programming, mainstreaming nutrition into development policies and programmes, promoting effective nutrition education, and resource mobilization.

The Gambia Education Policy (2004-2015) is another initiative aimed at addressing food and nutrition security for children in the country using the school feeding programme (SFP) which provides school children meals at school. Specifically, the Education Policy called for the expansion of the SFP, and the expansion of school canteens to improve the nutritional standards of school children.<sup>77</sup> The Education Policy also called for working with the WFP to ensure the sustainability of the SFP.

### **3.2 State of the Sector and the Implementation of Programmes and Initiatives.**

A number of programme and project initiatives have been formulated and implemented in support of the ANR policy. Key amongst these is the GNAIP (2011-2015) formulated in 2010 with technical support of the FAO as a medium-term strategic plan to achieve the vision for the development of the sector within the framework of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). The GNAIP is fully aligned with the goals of Vision 2020, as well as the ANR policy, and its proposed interventions are expected to help achieve a growth rate of at least 8 percent for the ANR sector in the country. In addition, the GNAIP is expected to, in combination with the growth of the non-agricultural sector, help significantly reduce poverty, and transform the rural areas of the country. The overall goal of the GNAIP is to increase the contribution of the ANR sector to the national economy by improving productivity through commercialization and active private sector participation based on a sound national macroeconomic framework that enhances growth and reduces poverty. Toward this end, the GNAIP aims to increase food and nutritional security and household incomes, and consists of six strategic programmes, namely:

- (i) Improved agricultural land and water management
- (ii) Improved management of the other shared resources
- (iii) Development of agricultural chains and market promotion
- (iv) National food and nutritional security
- (v) Sustainable farm management

---

<sup>77</sup> GoTG. 2004. Education Policy 2004-2015

(vi) GNAIP coordination, monitoring and evaluation

The GoTG with technical support of FAO and AfDB prepared a proposal of \$29.3 million to the public sector window of the Global Agriculture and Food Security Programme (GAFSP) to help reduce the GNAIP funding gap by 39 percent.<sup>78</sup> Approval was granted and a five-year Food and Agricultural Sector Development Project (FASDEP) formulated and currently under implementation. The GAFSP is aimed at increasing the contribution of the agriculture and natural resource sector to economic growth by increasing the food and nutrition security, as well as household incomes in WCR, LRR, and CRR. The FASDEP follows and builds on similar programmes and projects such as the IFAD-funded Lowlands Agricultural Development Project (LADEP), the Global Environmental Facility (GEF), Participatory Integrated Watershed Management Project (PIWAMP), the National Agricultural Land and Water Management Development (*Nema*) Project, and the Sustainable Land Management Project (SLMP).

Other ongoing interventions aimed at enhancing agricultural production, productivity and food security include the FAO and WFP implemented EU funded MDG 1C Project, the IFAD and AfDB funded Livestock and Horticulture Development Project, the World Bank Funded Gambia Agricultural Commercialization and Value Chain Management (GCAV) and West African Agricultural Productivity Programme (WAAPP).

The GoTG has also implemented various programmes aimed at private sector-led commercialization of agriculture and trade. These are principally guided by The Gambia Investment and Export Promotion Act (GIEPA 2010) with this aimed at promoting private sector investment in the country by providing a range of incentives. In this regard, government has been implementing since 2012 the World Bank-funded Growth and Competitiveness Project (GCP) to enhance the investment environment through business registration and tax administration reforms, streamlining business registration processes, and providing support for investment promotion and facilitation. The GCP is expected to enhance private-sector development, attract foreign direct investments, and promote pro-poor growth and job creation, especially in the productive and service sectors.

In the area of nutrition, and related to improving the nutritional status of children, the government launched a new initiative to implement a home grown school feeding with the support of WFP. Followed by the development of its framework government continue to demonstrate full commitment to taking over full ownership of school feeding by 2020. The current school feeding programme covers only Lower Basics Schools and some Early Childhood Development centers in the most affected regions (3-6). However the need to expand as expressed the retiring Education policy (2004-2015) is reinforced in the upcoming new Education policy. To this end, Government with other stakeholders in the new education policy (206-2030) will expand and strengthen the school feeding program to cover all regions and other levels from ECD to UBS. SSS will be encouraged to established school canteens as well. In this regard, School farms and garden programs will be supported and promoted to enhance the home grown initiative. Government will gradually take ownership of the school feeding program through the implementation of the Home-Grown School Feeding framework. In facilitating the gradual take over, capacities will be built to support the management of the program both at central and regional levels.

---

<sup>78</sup> GoTG. Global Agriculture and Food Security Programme (GAFSP) Request for Funding - Public Sector Window

The World Food Programme (WFP) of the UN has, for the past 40 years, been an important partner in helping ensure food and nutrition security for school children in The Gambia.<sup>79</sup> Toward this end, the WFP has implemented various projects, and reached school children in all parts of the country. As recently as 2012, the WFP launched a project to transition its SFP to a sustainable, home-grown, as well as nationally-owned and managed programme, in line with the objectives of the Education Policy (2004-2015).

The implementation of these nutrition policies and related programmes has undoubtedly brought about significant improvements in the nutritional status of the Gambian population. For example, the introduction of the Baby Friendly Community Initiative (BFCI), which uses a participatory approach to empower communities to improve the health and nutritional status of mothers, their infants and young children, and provides a comprehensive health and nutrition package to beneficiaries, resulted in an increase in the exclusive breastfeeding rate.<sup>80</sup>

Similarly, the World Bank-funded Participatory Health Population and Nutrition Project (PHPNP) implemented from 2000 to 2005 resulted in an increase in exclusive breast feeding for six months from 17 percent to 45.6 percent nationally, and reaching 70 percent in Baby Friendly Communities. Similarly, the WFP-supported SFP reached an average of 113,000 children per year throughout the country between 2010-2015, on average 100,425 school children were reached

### **3.3 Challenges**

The ANR sector experiences a multitude of challenges that impede its development and impact on the national economy. Among these are agricultural production and productivity, sustainable land management, environmental stewardship, as well as climate change and disaster risk reduction.

#### **3.3.1 Agricultural Production and Productivity**

Agriculture in The Gambia is mainly subsistence, with rain fed production of crops (mainly groundnuts, coarse grains<sup>81</sup>, rice, and cassava), along with traditional livestock rearing, and a large artisanal fisheries sub-sector. The area of land under cultivation was 336,440 Ha in 2013, up 11.1 percent from 302,725 Ha in 2008.<sup>82</sup> Although the majority of land was cultivated in 2013 was accounted for by coarse grains and groundnuts, with 49.8 percent and 29.8 percent, respectively, of cultivated land in 2013, both crop types registered significant declines in cropped area between 2008 and 2013. In contrast, the percent of the total area under rice increased significantly from 7.6 percent in 2008 to 19.6 percent in 2013, mostly because of an increase in the cultivation of NERICA rice. In addition to these crops, an estimated 3,000 Ha annually is cropped with cotton, while cassava, potato and horticultural crops each take up an average of between 1,500 and 2,000 Ha annually.

Almost all rural households own livestock and/or poultry, and the total estimated cattle population in 2013 was 436,054 of which 93 percent are of the indigenous breed, Ndama.<sup>82</sup> The population of small ruminants (sheep and goats) was 308,305, while the population of chicken (excluding

---

<sup>79</sup> Jagne, M. A. Report of the Mid-Term Evaluation of the School Feeding Programme. Prepared for World Food Programme and the Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education

<sup>80</sup> National Nutrition Agency (NaNA). 2011. Report on the Nation-wide Baseline Survey on Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices (KAP) on Optimal Infant and Young Child Feeding Practices, Micronutrient Malnutrition and Environmental Sanitation

<sup>81</sup> Early and late millet, sorghum, and maize

<sup>82</sup> Department of Agriculture, Planning Services Unit. 2013 National Agricultural Sample Survey (NASS) Report.

commercial farms) was estimated at 516,806. Commercial poultry farms were estimated to have about 700,000 birds, or 90 percent of the national poultry flock in 2009. The number of donkeys and horses totalled 32,563, with the majority (86.1 percent) being donkeys.

Despite the increase in the area under cultivation, crop yields remain very low, and if anything, are declining. Thus, coarse grain yields declined from 1.14 tonnes/Ha in 2008 to 0.94 tonnes/Ha in 2013.<sup>82</sup> Similarly, rice yields fell from 1.49 tonnes/Ha in 2008 to 1.05 tonnes/Ha in 2013.<sup>82</sup> In contrast, groundnut yields increased slightly from 0.89 tonnes/Ha in 2008 to 0.94 tonnes/Ha in 2013, although yields reached a high of 1.03 tonnes/Ha in 2012.<sup>82</sup> The rice yields are less than the average of 1.62 tonnes/Ha for West Africa, just as maize yields are also below the West African average of 1.7 tonnes/Ha.<sup>78</sup> Furthermore, the decline in crop yields is attributable to the inherently low fertility of Gambian soils, limited use of irrigation, and low use of fertilizers by farmers. Despite having abundant surface and ground water resources, an estimated 1 percent of cultivated land is under irrigation.

Another major handicap in increasing productivity is the fragmentation of the extension services. The ANR public expenditure analysis shows that the five main and institutionally separate extension services for crops, livestock, fisheries, forestry and wildlife are acutely underfunded in relation to their work programmes. The analysis shows that separate extension services are a costly, inefficient and unaffordable way of providing knowledge and information to the rural poor, whose livelihoods are themselves woven around integrated, multi-dimensional food security and income generating strategies. Reforming the extension services is therefore an urgent task.

Horticultural crops are mainly grown by women, and include tomatoes, onions, cabbage, eggplant, okra, peppers and lettuce. Although total domestic production levels of vegetables are not available, vegetable exports have been reported to have declined on account of high transportation costs, cargo space availability and difficulties in meeting European export standards.

The ANR sector has many challenges, which result in low production and productivity. Among these challenges are erratic and low rainfall patterns, over dependence on subsistence, highly seasonal, and mostly rain-fed production, land degradation, unreliable access to inputs, as well as insufficient supplies and limited use of improved seeds. Other constraints include diminishing access to good arable land due to population growth, weak research and extension systems, land degradation, weak sectoral linkages and lack of coordination and timely statistics and information.

In addition to these, women farmers face challenges such as limited access to investment resources, high cost of credit, low functional literacy, and difficulty in getting access to land because of gender-discriminating customary land tenure systems. They also experience inequitable access to inputs and services, and lack processing and storage facilities, market outlets, and market information systems. Women in the small ruminants and poultry sub-sectors also face constraints such as high disease incidence, inadequate and expensive feeds, and the low genetic potential of local breeds.

Given the low yields and the various constraints faced by the ANR sector, it is not surprising that national cereal production can cover only 60 percent of annual consumption needs. This has important implications for the fight to end poverty, and for food insecurity, which was reported to be 11 percent in 2011. Other negative impacts of low agricultural production and productivity include high incidence of malnutrition, weakened household resilience, and reduced economic

growth. As such, low agricultural productivity not only threatens the attainment of national and international development objectives, it also threatens national, and by implication, regional security because of its impact on food security.

### ***3.3.2 Land Management and Productivity***

The Gambia is the smallest country on the continent of Africa, and as such has limited land resources. Furthermore, not all land in the country is cultivable, and only about 38 percent of the total land area of the country, or about 430,000 Ha is cultivable. The country is also one of the Sub-Saharan African countries most affected by land degradation, caused by processes such as the degradation of soil, vegetation, biodiversity, and water quality. Other factors leading to land degradation include deforestation, and land conversion. Against this background, and the generally low productivity of Gambian farms, land management and productivity are important issues in The Gambia, with profound impacts on national development. The Gambia has thus sought to address land management and productivity issues in various policies and programmes.

Thus, the ANR policy (2009-2015) identifies a number of constraints in the management of land in the country. Among these are inadequate institutional capacities and instruments (e.g. land-use and soil maps, and expertise), lack of guidelines, legislation, and monitoring systems for the use and management of lands and soils for agricultural and other purposes, and inadequate knowledge and skills of small producers and their use of appropriate technologies to manage land resources.

To address these constraints, the ANR policy defined a number of policy objectives including reducing land and soil degradation, monitoring of appropriate land use and soil management best practices, providing proper advice, supervision, guidance and monitoring on the appropriate use of land and soil resources, as well as conducting periodic reviews and assessments of lands, soils and water resources.

Similarly, Programme 1 (Improvement of Agricultural Land and Water Management) of the GNAIP, with a budget of \$82.77 million has three components, namely: (i) lowland development for rice production; (ii) irrigation for horticulture and upland crops; and (iii) capacity building of support services institutions. These proposed interventions will put 25,000 Ha of under sustainable land management practices, and follow similar efforts such as the Participatory Integrated Watershed Management Project (PIWAMP).

Land management also has significant gender dimensions, given that women constitute 78 percent of the economically active population in agriculture, and hence have direct impact on land in The Gambia. Despite this, women lack access to, and ownership of productive resources, especially land, thus resulting in low agricultural production and productivity.

### ***3.3.3 Environmental Sustainability***

Almost 40 years ago in 1977, the GoTG made the Banjul Declaration, the first policy statement on the need for environmental conservation in the country. Less than a decade later, an Environment Unit was established in 1981 in the Ministry of Natural Resources to advice on environmental issues. By 1987, the country faced a myriad of environmental problems such as salt water intrusion into the fresh water of the upper aquifer of coastal areas, deforestation, desertification, and loss of natural resources. In response, government enacted the National Environment Management Act (NEMA), and a few years later, developed the first Gambia Environmental Action Plan (GEAP I) and started implementing it in 1993. In 1994, the GoTG

created the National Environment Agency (NEA) to coordinate the implementation of GEAP I. GEAP I was implemented between 1991 and 2001 to help The Gambia improve achieve sustainable economic and social development, and soundly manage ecological processes, natural resources, and the heritage (cultural and natural) of the country. The GEAP I policy objectives provided a sound basis for environmental management in The Gambia, based on national legislation and international conventions.

In order to achieve these objectives, the GEAP I implemented three sector programmes, namely; natural resource management (NRM), energy, and environmental health. The NRM programme was the largest component of GEAP I, and was aimed inter alia at increasing the adoption of improved land and natural resource management (including coastal and freshwater resources), developing institutional capacity for NRM, and the decentralization of the NRM. The energy component, on the hand, was aimed at providing the population with adequate and alternative sources of energy, while the environmental health component addressed problems caused by increasing population and inadequate environmental management.

The implementation of GEAP I had many successes, including the establishment of a functional institutional framework (in the NEA, and the National Environmental Management Council, NEMC) for environmental management and planning. The implementation of the GEAP I also increased public awareness about environmental issues, and raised the profile of the environment in the national agenda. In addition, the institutional capacities for effective environmental management were strengthened by providing them various environmental management tools and guidelines. The first State of the Environment Report (SOER) was produced in 1997 during the implementation of GEAP I, and The Gambia's successes in environmental management were showcased by the World Bank and the UNDP.

Despite these successes, the implementation of the GEAP I was beset by challenges including the dormancy of the NEMC, the highest policy-making body for environmental management in the country. The implementation of GEAP I was also hampered by difficulties mainstreaming environmental concerns into the macroeconomic framework, and inadequate capacities of the NEA, line Departments, and various stakeholders at levels of government, as well as the private sector. In addition, GEAP I faced the challenge of a lack of a coherent national decentralization policy, as well as lack of donor coordination, and inflexibility of donor rules and procedures for accessing the resources they provide.

Despite these challenges, the implementation of GEAP I provided valuable lessons and achievements which formed the basis of GEAP II (2009-2018). GEAP II is aimed at ensuring the sustainable development of the country, and toward this end, the programme will develop an effective and financially self-sustaining environmental management system. In particular, GEAP II will continue working on sustainable natural resource management, energy, and environmental health, with particular focus on agriculture and livestock, natural resources, trade and investment, tourism and infrastructure, waste management and coastal zone management.

### ***3.3.4 The Food Availability Situation***

Gambian agriculture is predominantly subsistence, rain fed, and with very little irrigation, use of improved seeds and inputs such as fertilizers. In addition, many Gambian soils inherently have very low fertility, thus making food production relatively low. This point was raised in all regions by communities during the Countrywide Community Consultations. The climate change related

problem of erratic and declining rainfall also makes Gambian agriculture very risky and food security a huge development challenge. For example, the seasonal nature of rain fed crop production culminates in temporal acute food shortages during the so-called “hungry season” (July-September) when households exhaust their food supply from the previous rainy season before the harvest of new crops.

Given that producing households are net consumers, The Gambia relies heavily on food imports, with about 30 percent of its cereal needs being covered by rice imports. A food security and vulnerability survey conducted in 2011 showed that national food insecurity was 11 percent, with marked variation across regions and gender.<sup>83</sup> It was observed that CRR, LRR, and WCR had the highest rates of poor, food insecure and vulnerable populations. In the same vein, female-headed households were poorer and more food insecure than male-headed households.

The availability of food in a household is also dependent on food prices, poverty, and natural disasters. In particular, rising food prices and natural disasters reduce access to food, especially for poor households. Poor households are as such, vulnerable to price shocks as well as droughts and floods, and can easily be made food insecure by these phenomena. Children are particularly vulnerable to food insecurity because reduced food intake and associated problems leads to chronic malnutrition, stunting, and wasting, all of which have adverse effects on child development.

### ***3.3.5 The Nutrition Security Situation***

Malnutrition, especially under-nutrition is a major public health problem in The Gambia, and is made worse by poverty, shortage of food, environmental degradation and various other factors. Based on WHO classification of nutrition emergencies, The Gambia borders on an emergency given that it has a national global acute malnutrition prevalence of 9.9 percent.<sup>84</sup> Furthermore, the estimated minimum national dietary energy intake of 1,770 calories per person per day is below the recommended minimum requirement of 2,200 calories per person per day.

Malnutrition is also an important development challenge because it is women and children, the most vulnerable groups, that are most affected. Most women in rural areas are constantly energy-deficient because of poor dietary habits, heavy work, and frequent infections. On the other hand, children under five are vulnerable to malnutrition because of poor feeding practices, inadequate care, and exposure to infections. Although breastfeeding is universally practiced in The Gambia, only 48 per cent of mothers practice exclusive breastfeeding for six months, and complementary feeding does not provide children with adequate nutrition (DHS 2013).

Malnutrition also has regional dimensions in The Gambia, being more prevalent in the predominantly rural LGAs of Kuntaur, Janjanbureh, Kerewan, and Basse. Kuntaur LGA has the highest prevalence of global acute malnutrition and stunting, while urban areas such as Banjul and its environs had lower malnutrition rates. Over nutrition is also increasingly becoming a problem in The Gambia, especially in urban areas. According the 2012 national nutrition survey, over 22 percent of women of reproductive age in The Gambia were obese or overweight.

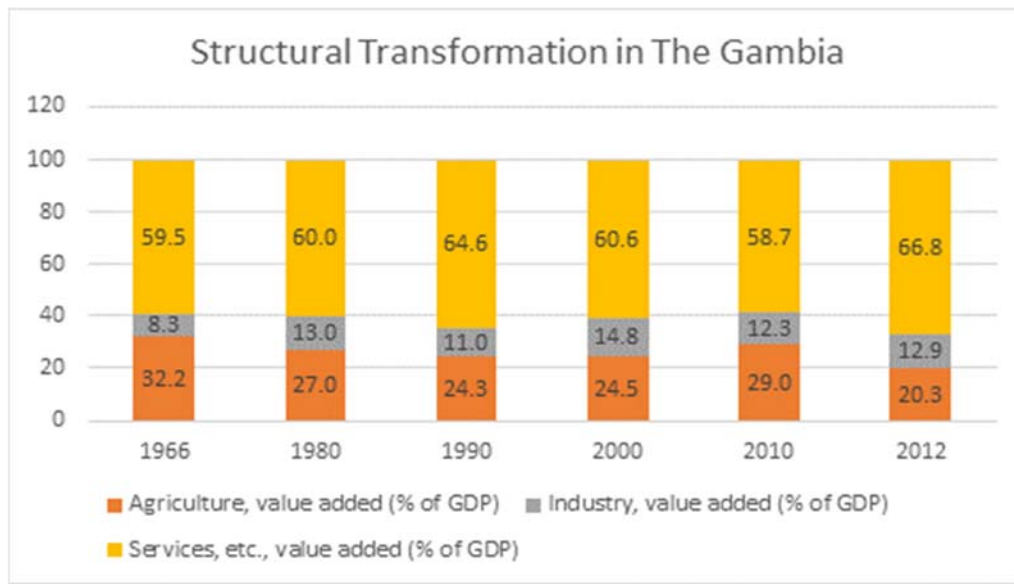
---

<sup>83</sup> WFP. (2011). Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Analysis (CFSVA) The Gambia.

<sup>84</sup> NaNA. 2013. National Nutritional Survey in The Gambia Using Standardised Monitoring and Assessment of Relief Transition (SMART) Methods.

### Structural transformation:

Before concluding on this chapter it is important to highlight the central issue of structural transformation which should feature as a strategic issue for the next PAGE. The structural transformation happening in Africa and in The Gambia in particular, seems to suggest that instead of resources being allocated to high productivity activities across and within sectors, especially to manufacturing and modern sectors, resources are channelled to low productivity activities mainly to the informal sector- see figure below.



Source World bank.

As shown in the figure above, while agriculture value added declined from 32.2 per cent in 1966 to 20.3 per cent in 2012, the industry and services value added increased from 8.3 per cent to 12.9 per cent and from 59.5 per cent to 66.8 per cent, respectively. To the extent that the rural population share exceeds the agriculture value added share of GDP, it implies that a relative large segment of the rural population is relying on a smaller share of the national pie. This has been typically the case in The Gambia. The economic structure of The Gambia, where services are the dominant sector is atypical in the sense that the base (agriculture and industry) is not sufficiently developed to support and ensure a beneficial services sector. The services sector remains largely informal, predominantly low value distributive trade with low skilled workers and low paying jobs.

### 3.4 Recommendations to Government

- i. Seek technical assistance from UN and other development partners to strengthen the institutional capacity development in policy, programming, agricultural statistics, extension and research;
- ii. Support value chain development particularly of cereals(rice and maize), horticulture, livestock (poultry and small ruminants, groundnuts and fisheries for enhanced exports, income and food security;
- iii. Expand irrigation capacity, particularly surface (tidal) and underground water to ensure year-round agricultural production;

- iv. In the next PAGE emphasis should be placed on structural transformation for employment creation and value addition. This needs to be tied to the need to invest heavily in education particularly in adult education and TVET to produce the necessary human capital to drive the transformation process;
- v. Make concerted effort to improve women access to and ownership of productive resources, especially land, in order to enhance their agricultural production and productivity;
- vi. Support nutrition education at community and household level to support particularly hygienic infant food preparation and feeding practices;
- vii. Promote public awareness and household access to the consumption of adequate, safe and nutritious food.

### **3.5 Opportunities for UN System Support and Collaboration with Government**

UN agencies have a number of areas in which they have a competitive advantage, by virtue of their mission, track record, and national need. First, UN agencies such as the FAO and WFP played significant roles in assessing the crop performance during and after the 2011/12 cropping season failure, thus helping provide valuable data that formed the basis for developing a sound national response, and resource mobilization. UN agencies can also help strengthen the research, vulnerability assessments, data collection, nutrition surveillance, monitoring and evaluation, and knowledge management capacities of government agencies. Technology transfer is a key area for UN support in relation to promotion of food security and boosting agricultural production and productivity. Capacity building for efficient and effective public service delivery in agriculture sector is key starting form planning, implementation and monitoring capacity.

FAO plays a significant role in the ANR sector and has the technical expertise and distinct advantage in supporting the government to increase agricultural output through increased production, productivity, capacity strengthening of relevant public and private institutions in order to improve resource delivery. In the same vein, UNICEF WFP, and UNDP have a distinct advantage in working on social protection issues, which is closely related to the issue of food and nutrition security for children and women, especially mothers. Furthermore, UNICEF, the WHO can help improve investment in maternal and child nutrition focusing on the 1,000 days window of opportunity, i.e. from conception to 2 years of life. This period is the most crucial in the development of human capital. Similarly WFP and UNICEF have the capacity to support the implementation of the Integrated Management of Acute Malnutrition (IMAM) protocol.

Given that the National Nutrition Policy (2010 – 2020), the ANR Policy (2009 – 2015), and the National Education Policy (2004 – 2015) are at or close to their conclusion, UN agencies can help the GoTG update and align them with the next UNDAF and the NDP. Agencies that can help in this regard include UNICEF and WFP, in partnership with the World Bank. To provide continuity from the MDGs, the UN can also support government through its UNDAF in designing the next PAGE to address the imperatives of SDGs 1, 2, 3, 6, 12, 13 and 14.

The comparative advantage of the UN with regards to ANR, and food and nutrition security will be in the following areas:

## **1. Resource Mobilization**

The successful implementation of both the NDP and the next UNDAF will depend heavily on successful mobilization, and effective and efficient use of resources. For this reason, both documents should plan for adequate, effective, and timely mobilization of resources. The UNCT has demonstrated its comparative advantage in resource mobilization. In the aftermath of the failure of the 2011/12 cropping season, the UNCT led efforts of the donor community to respond to the crisis. Although the GoTG's formal declaration of the 2011/12 cropping season as a failure was a bit late, the UNCT was able to help raise about \$14 million, in addition to the \$800,000 pledged by the Asian Development Bank. Key partners in this regard were the FAO and WFP, which mobilized \$900,000 and \$500,000, respectively, from un-earmarked funds, in addition, to the almost \$5 million from CERF.<sup>85</sup> WFP and FAO were also able to jointly mobilize EUR7.6 million from the European Commission in 2013. In 2014, \$2.5 million was mobilized for underfunded emergencies for the Gambia. The UNCT can and should continue with this vital role of mobilizing resources to help implement the next UNDAF, and National Development Plan.

## **2. Capacity-building**

The inadequacy of capacity is a recurrent issue, and major development challenge faced by The Gambia. Since the UNCT has to a global network of expertise (both internal to the UN, and in various UN member states), the UNCT is uniquely positioned to leverage this advantage to help address the capacity constraints faced by the country. For example, the FAO can help the country access assistance via the TCP and similar programmes, while WFP and the UNDP can help capacity through the South-South cooperation programme.

## **3. Policy and programme development and implementation**

The UNCT can also help in policy and programme development and implementation. Given the fact that The Gambia is going to have to mobilize resources from external sources to implement many programmes and projects under the next UNDAF and NDP, and given the UNCT's expertise and networks of development partners, the UNCT should help The Gambia tap into various opportunities for mobilizing resources. In the same vein, the UNCT has been a development partner of The Gambia for decades now, and has a significant role to play in the preparation and implementation of various development interventions in the country.

## **4. Coordination**

By its very nature, the UNCT is a diverse group of entities with a long tradition of working toward a common objective, namely, helping UN member states around the world achieve national development. In addition, the UN has placed increased emphasis on its "Delivering as One" approach to development cooperation. The UNCT is thus uniquely positioned to help coordinate the GoTG development partnership programme, and manage the contribution of the efforts of various UN agencies toward national development efforts.

With regards the priority areas for support in the ANR sector, the UNCT should help in the following areas:

---

<sup>85</sup> UNOCHA. 2012. List of all humanitarian pledges, commitments and contributions in 2012  
[http://fts.unocha.org/reports/daily/ocha\\_R10c\\_C77\\_Y2012\\_asof\\_1210180205.pdf](http://fts.unocha.org/reports/daily/ocha_R10c_C77_Y2012_asof_1210180205.pdf)

## **5. Policy Development**

The UNCT and other donors should help in policy development in general, and specifically, help update the ANR policy and develop the National Development Plan. Toward this end, expertise should, when required be sought and developed through South-South cooperation programmes, sponsor study tours, and fund consultations.

## **6. Land Resources Management**

Recently, the GoTG prepared a Gambia Sustainable Land Management Investment Framework (GAMSIF)<sup>86</sup> to provide a national framework for sustainable management of land resources. GAMSIF is a \$42 million framework to be implemented between 2016 and 2020 with support from development partners, and the next UNDAF and NDP should take the proposed GAMSIF interventions into consideration. In the same vein, efforts should be mobilize adequate resources to meet the GAMSIF budget.

## **7. Nutrition Security**

The UNCT should focus on the following priority areas for support to the government:

1. Access to adequate, safe and nutritious food
2. Reduction of childhood malnutrition
3. Controlling diet related non communicable diseases
4. Improving infant and young child feeding practices
5. Food processing and preservation - transformation and value chain addition and diversification;
6. Recipe formulation and cooking demonstrations.
7. facilitating home-grown school feeding programme capacity development plan

---

<sup>86</sup> It is directly linked to the Gambia National Agricultural Investment Plan (GNAIP)

## CHAPTER 4: INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

### *4.1 Overview and policy framework*

The importance of infrastructure in national development is recognized in the national development blueprint, Vision 2020, and sector and sub-sector policies and strategies. Vision 2020 identified the development of a solid infrastructural base as a national objective and recognized that seaport, airport, road and water transport network as having crucial roles in national development. It called for the integration of the country into the global information infrastructure to increase access to telecommunications services, and make the country a major data processing centre. This is in line with the imperatives of the SDGs 8, 9 and 11 since this CCA prepares and positions both the GoTG and UN system to develop the successor PAGE and UNDAF.

The most recent national medium-term development plans the PRSP II and SPA II (2007-2011)<sup>87</sup> and the PAGE (2009-2015) recognized the importance of quality infrastructure to national development. Infrastructure development has been made a key national objective. Specifically, the PRSP II identified various challenges and priority interventions for the energy and transport sectors of the country. Similarly, the PAGE highlighted inadequate infrastructure as a major constraint for businesses in the country and recognized the importance of modern, well-maintained infrastructure for to economic growth and employment creation. For this reason, the PAGE envisaged state-of-the-art infrastructure that forms the basis of the socio-economic wellbeing of people in the country. It also focusses on The Gambia becoming a developed country that provides:

1. An effective and sustainable transportation system road, air and water transport system;
2. A diversified, reliable, efficient, affordable, and environmentally friendly energy infrastructure;
3. An information and communications technologies infrastructure that provides connectivity, and facilitates the exchange of data, information, and knowledge to enrich lives, and enhance services; and,
4. A well-defined social infrastructure programme that is environmentally friendly and adaptable to climate change.

Toward this end, the GoTG collaborated with the development partners to develop the national infrastructure during the implementation of the both the PRSP II and the PAGE. In addition, the GoTG committed itself to encourage the private sector to invest in the following sub-sectors:

This is why, for the period 2012-2015, the Government, while encouraging the participation of the private sector, has decided to heavily invest in transport, energy, ICT, and social infrastructure. The aim for each of these sub-sectors is as follows:

1. **Transport.** Provide an effective, efficient, and affordable mass transport infrastructure that impacts the lives of people, and contributes to sustainable development.
2. **Energy.** Provide adequate, affordable, reliable and environmentally friendly and sustainable energy supply
3. **ICT.** Develop the telecommunications and IT infrastructure to provide adequate bandwidth at affordable prices, and improve the delivery of services.

---

<sup>87</sup> GoTG. 2006. Poverty Reduction Strategy: 2007-2011

4. **Social infrastructure.** An improved and modernized social infrastructure programme such as health, education and social facilities like market outlets to assist in the attainment of MDGs 2 and 5.

The GoTG has also prepared policy documents on the development of infrastructure. Among these are the National Transport Policy (1998-2006), a National Investment Programme on Access to Energy Services in The Gambia (2012), The Gambia Sustainable Energy for All (SE4All) Action Agenda (2015), and an Electricity Strategy and Action Plan (2012).

## **4.2 Analysis of the Issues**

### **4.2.1 Transport Infrastructure**

The importance of the transport sector in the national economy is recognized in the PAGE (2012-2015), and its development is addressed by the second of five PAGE pillars, Pillar II (Improving and Modernizing Infrastructure). The PAGE recognizes that transport infrastructure facilitates and supports economic activity and social interactions, and is vital to sustaining the productivity capacity and expansion of the economy. The transport, storage and communication sector accounted for 11 percent of the GDP of the country in 2010, compared to 9 percent for the tourism sector, and 12 percent for the industrial sector.<sup>88</sup>

The development of the transport sector in The Gambia has been driven by the fact that the River Gambia, throughout its course in the country, divides it into two, and hence the need to connect the two banks for social and economic reasons, and to achieve national integration. In addition, the country is surrounded by Senegal on all sides, except the Atlantic coast, and hence, there is need to coordinate sector development. Third, the export driven development strategy of the country means that quality transport infrastructure should be provided to support transit traffic and the re-export trade to other neighbouring countries in West Africa.

The demand for transport is driven by the productive and social sectors of the economy. The transport sector must connect producers to markets and improve access to social amenities facilities to achieve the socio-economic growth of the country.

The institutional framework for implementing the transport policies and programmes lies with the Ministry of Transport, Works, and Infrastructure (MOTWI), which has overall mandate for parastatals and agencies under it, which are responsible for regulating and operating the various modes of transport. These parastatals and agencies are the National Roads Authority (NRA), which is responsible for the national road system, the Gambia Civil Aviation Authority (GCAA), which manages the civil aviation sub-sector, and the Gambia Ports Authority (GPA), which is responsible for the maritime/inland waterways infrastructure, and the Gambia Maritime Administration (GMA), which is responsible for regulating the maritime sub-sector.

Other entities under the purview of MOTWI include the Gambia International Airlines (GIA), the Gambia National Transport Control Association (GNTCA), a non-profit organization responsible for the control of the transportation of goods and people in The Gambia, and to other ECOWAS

---

<sup>88</sup> AfDB. 2014. Gambia Transport Sector Diagnostic Study

countries. Although this institutional framework has by and large worked well, there are issues such as institutional capacities and structures that need to be addressed.

Against this background, the GoTG developed a National Transport Policy (1998-2006) whose objectives covered technical, financial, and economic issues in addition to aspects such as adequacy, safety, reliability, and environmental protection.<sup>89</sup> Recently, the MOTWI drafted a strategic plan (2016-2020) in line with the Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF), and Public Financial Management (PFM) Reforms being conducted by the GoTG.<sup>90</sup> The MOTWI draft strategic plan (2016-2020) is aimed at building on the past successes in building the road transport infrastructure, including transitioning from a situation where 82 percent of the road network was in poor condition in 1998, to where 80 percent of it was in good condition in 2013.

The Gambian road network is above the average for most SSA countries, sub-Saharan African countries in terms of coverage (a density of about 35 Km/100 Sq. Km), connectivity, and accessibility. The network also meets the established base benchmark for The Gambia as established under the AICD Study. These successes are the result of a relentless effort by the GoTG to invest to develop the road infrastructure of the country over the past 20 years. Among the major achievements in this regard are:

1. Over D388.1 million of subventions to the Road Fund between 2007 and 2013 for the road maintenance programme<sup>91</sup>;
2. D156 million spent on paving Banjul streets and major thoroughfares with concrete;
3. Completion of major trunk roads on the north and south banks of the River Gambia; and,
4. Completion of feeder roads, including bridges in various parts of the country.

The Gambia has also contributed to building the regional ECOWAS road transport infrastructure with the launch of works on the Trans-Gambia Bridge project and associated interventions, as well as the completion of major roads linking the country to Senegal.

### **Challenges in the road sector**

There is serious inadequate roads maintenance which leaves some sections of the network in poor condition, leading to high costs of operating vehicles. Related to this is the backlog of periodic maintenance and the need to rehabilitate a major part of the road network. Although about 80 percent of the primary road network is periodically upgraded and rehabilitated, the challenge is to rehabilitate the rural road network which is critical to the success of the agricultural transformation agenda (including Vision 2016), and the attainment of the inclusive growth envisaged by the PAGE.

Although there is a Road Fund (as in many African countries), its availability for maintenance can be problematic. Thus between 2006 and 2011, NRA consistently received less than 30 per cent of the cost of maintenance of roads. Efforts are underway to address the issue by instituting a fuel levy as part of the central fund, and using other sources such as government subvention.

---

<sup>89</sup> GoTG. 1998. National Transport Policy (1998-2006)

<sup>90</sup> GoTG. 2015. Ministry of Transport, Works & Infrastructure Draft Strategic Plan (2016-2020)

<sup>91</sup> Source: MOTWI, 2015

The network experiences operational challenges concerning safety and excessive loads. Over 36 percent of trucks were found to be overweight in a 2009 survey, putting considerable pressure on the road network. In addition, there is yet to be an institutional framework to address road safety, and not much attention is given to promoting road safety, although efforts are underway to change this through the setting up of a National multi-sectoral roads committee.

There is inadequate pool of local construction and maintenance industry and capacity, lack of appropriate transport policies and regulations, including a road infrastructure master plan, an inadequate local expertise in the road construction industry and the management of urban transport.

Against this background, the MOTWI draft strategic plan (2016-2020) was prepared to build on the gains made in the past years, and continue to contribute to the achievement of national Vision 2020, and other national development objectives. Toward this end, the MOTWI draft strategic plan has the following strategic objectives including developing an appropriate policy, legal and regulatory framework, enhancing institutional capacity and human resources development, maintenance of transport infrastructure, promoting public-private partnership, and using ICT to facilitate effective management of projects and programmes. Examples of activities that will be carried out under the MOTWI draft strategic plan include domesticating the ECOWAS Axle Load limit, to suit laws and regulations of the Gambia, developing a Road Infrastructure Master plan, conducting annual road condition surveys and road maintenance, and paving urban roads.

### **Maritime Transport**

Maritime transport has an important role to play in national development given that the Port of Banjul, the only maritime port in the country handles over 80 percent of total international trade of the country.<sup>88</sup> Furthermore, Vision 2020 articulates the importance of the Banjul Port as a regional entrepôt, and a major gateway in the context of the Trade Gateway Project<sup>89</sup>. For this reason, a Master Plan was prepared in 1991 to develop the port.

The Port of Banjul is managed by the GPA, and presently has two jetties with a quay length of 428 metres. The two jetties have five berths and a Ro-Ro Ramp facility, but their use by larger vessels is constrained by inadequate depth at the approach channel and at berth sides.

The port throughput increased 22.6 percent from 1.4 million MT in 2010 to 1.8 million in 2011, and increased 9.0 percent when these years are compared to previous years. Based on the 2008 Ports Master Plan Study recommendation to use a berth occupancy ratio of 65 percent as a trigger for additional capacity, the GoTG plans to add a 200 m wharf with capacity for larger vessels of over 20,000 DWT. However, this expansion plan is conditional upon the restoration of the competitiveness of the port, which is being threatened by the ports of Dakar, Senegal, and Conakry, Republic of Guinea. The Banjul Port has a public service model, which is less efficient than the landlord model ports used by Dakar and Conakry, making them more competitive than Banjul.

The Banjul Port is constrained by the inadequate container storage, inter-modality for inland transport connections (especially for regional road networks and use of River Gambia complemented with Inland Container Depots). However, there is need for port reforms before major investments can be made.

The commitment of the GoTG to the development of maritime transport in the country is demonstrated in the PAGE which called for an increase the use of maritime transport through the rehabilitation and expansion of the Port of Banjul, and an improvement of safety in the maritime sector. Similarly, the MOTWI Strategic Plan (2016-2020) calls for the various projects to develop the Banjul Port. Among the planned projects are the rehabilitation and extension of the New Banjul Wharf, the construction and rehabilitation of container terminals, the procurement of a tug boat, cargo handling equipment, and dredger, as well as the computerization of port operations and the construction of a dry port.

### **River Transport**

River transport used to be the backbone of the Gambian transport system before road transport system was developed. The River Gambia was then vital to internal commerce of the country, and river going vessels used to load cargo at Kaur, 193 Km upstream from Banjul. At present, river transport is almost non-existent and there are no regular boat services plying the River Gambia. River transport into the hinterland of the country is now taken over almost completely by road vehicles.

The collapse of river transport means that river ports infrastructure are no longer used, and in a state of disrepair. For this reason, it will take more than infrastructure development alone to revive the river transport industry, despite the results of a survey showing that some goods presently transported by road can be shifted to river transport. Thus, there is need to level the playing field for all modes of transport, and various incentives and pricing policies and incentives should be instituted to encourage private sector participation in river transport services. Among these incentives are axle load control for vehicles, increase in road access fees, and providing tax holidays to water transport operators.

Despite these challenges, the GoTG is still interested in exploiting the full potential of river transport, and increasing the contribution of River Gambia to national development efforts. Thus, Pillar II of the PAGE highlights the advantages of river transport, including:

1. Serving as an agent of decentralization and equitable distribution of markets and amenities
2. Relieving the two trunk roads up-country from wear and tear caused by heavy trucks
3. Reductions in the cost of maintaining roads
4. Reductions in the amount of greenhouse gases emitted by the transport sector, and greater eco-friendliness

The GoTG thus committed in the PAGE to improve ferry services across the river, and encourage private sector participation in the revival of river transport.

### **Air Transport**

Air transport is an important component of the Gambian transport system, providing international connectivity to the rest of the world, and being indispensable to the tourism sector. However, domestic air transport has been limited due to the small size of the country.

Banjul International Airport (BIA), located at Yundum, and about 24 Km from Banjul is the only airport in the country. The passenger traffic at the BIA has been variable, and heavily dependent on the economic trends, especially those that affect tourism. As such, passenger traffic declined

15 percent from 345,040 in 2007 to 293,305 in 2009, but increased to a high of 318,240 passengers in 2011; registering a 5 percent growth between 2010 and 2011.

The capacity of the BIA is generally under-utilized, except during the tourist season, which coincides with the months of November to April. The GCAA is thus actively marketing the capacity of the BIA (especially for periods outside the tourist season), and as an air transport hub for West Africa. However, the vision for BIA becoming a regional air transport hub requires buy-in from stakeholders in and outside The Gambia to raise the required funds to expand the passenger terminal and runway. However, it has been deemed important by the African Development Bank (AfDB) Sector Diagnostic Study that, constraints during the peak of the tourist season justify the expansion of the apron and runway, and navigational aids can be upgraded for safety reasons.<sup>88</sup> The AfDB study also concluded that the relatively low volume of passenger traffic do not make the BIA attractive for private sector investment, except where there is a long-term management contract.

#### **4.2.2 Energy**

The Gambia has a dual energy system which consists of both traditional and modern energy systems and practices. In the traditional energy system, household energy needs are dominated by the use of biomass fuels and inefficient technologies.<sup>92</sup> On the other hand, a modern system uses electricity and modern fuels, and modern appliances. The Gambian energy sector is further characterized by rural/urban disparities in energy systems and practices. As such, policy makers in The Gambia face enormous challenges in trying to address the energy issues in an integrated and holistic manner.

#### **Key Challenges**

The key challenges include:

1. Rehabilitation and Expansion of the Transmission and Distribution Networks with the eventual target of establishing a national grid
2. Expansion of the Generation Capacity
3. Interconnection with West African Power Pool (WAPP) through OMVG Energy Project. This will enable the Gambia to access cheaper electricity.
4. Off grid and mini-grids are also very important to increase access to energy. Renewable energy is more suitable for off grid and mini-grid applications. The concept of mini-grids can be integrated with Multi-functional Platforms to make the program more attractive for private sector investment.
5. About 90% of our domestic energy comes from forest resources. This is a huge burden on the forest and is causing rapid deforestation. To avert this looming environmental problem, there is urgent need to promote other sources of energy (LPG, Biogas, Solar Cookers, and Briquettes) for cooking and heating.

#### **5. *Energy efficiency is another area to help achieve increased energy access and sustainable energy for all (SE4ALL).***

The importation of fossil fuels is a major problem for government because of the demand it places on the country's limited foreign exchange reserves. In 2009, the importation of petroleum products cost about \$47 million; about 15.5 percent of total imports. Furthermore, records show that the importation of petroleum products has been on the increase since 1995.

---

<sup>92</sup> GoTG and NEPAD. 2015. The Gambia SE4ALL Action Agenda

In 2010, Total Energy Supply (TES) of the Gambia was about 408 TOE (Tons of Oil Equivalent). The Energy consumption (per capita Kilogram Oil Equivalent [KOE]) of The Gambia was 81 KOE in 2007. About 80 percent of the country's energy supply is provided by biomass, comprising fuelwood. Biomass also accounts for over 90 percent of household energy consumption; and in some rural areas, up to 97 percent of their energy needs are met by biomass.

Petroleum products, consisting of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG), heavy fuel oil (HFO), and diesel account for 20.6 percent of energy the country's energy needs, while electricity provides 1.6 percent of energy needs. LPG is mainly used for cooking, while HFO is used for generating electricity. Renewable energy (mainly solar) accounts for a negligible 0.03 percent of the energy needs of the country.

Households and the transport sector are the two biggest energy consumers in The Gambia. Although the use of LPG has been increasing marginally in urban areas, its use is largely limited by relatively high cost.

The institutional framework for the management of the energy sector in the country consists of the Office of the President (OP), which is the final authority on regulations, tariffs, and IPPs, and manages the governance of the sector. In addition, the Ministry of Energy (MOE), the Ministry of Petroleum (responsible for the petroleum sub-sector), and the Ministry of Forestry and Natural Resources (MOFEN) are responsible for policy issues in the respective sub-sectors.

The energy sector also has three regulators, namely, the Public Utilities Regulatory Authority (PURA), the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs (MOFEA), and the Department of Forestry. The main operator in the energy sector is the National Water and Electricity Company (NAWEC), which is a public enterprise responsible for electricity generation, transmission, distribution, and retail supply in the country. NAWEC also provides water to the urban communities it services. Other operators in the energy sector include the Euro Africa Group (which imports various petroleum products), as well as a number of petroleum product retailers such as Total, Elton, and the Gambia National Petroleum Company (GNPC).

The GoTG has a prepared a number of energy sector policies, programmes and action plans for the development of the sector in the country. For example, the Energy Policy adopted in 2005 aims to ensure a reliable and adequate supply of energy and at affordable prices to support the development of other sectors of the economy, and help achieve national development objectives. In the same vein, an Electricity Act was enacted in 2005 to promote the development of the sub-sector and establish PURA as the body responsible for regulating public utilities, including energy services.

The energy sector in The Gambia has a number of challenges that hamper its growth and contribution to national development. Among the major challenges are:

- The dual challenge of energy access and reliable supply which impacts all sectors of the economy and all citizens.
- Over dependence on biomass for energy. This has serious implications for land degradation, deforestation, and health. This challenge, the need to provide rural populations with affordable energy without degrading the environment or threatening health is likely to increase as the population of the country increases. Thus, it has been estimated that while

the population of the country doubled between 1983 and 2004, the standing stock of fuel wood resources was halved over the same period.

- Electricity. Providing electricity is challenge, both in terms of access and quality. Although the power infrastructure has been modernized and rehabilitated, there still is room for improvement.

In the energy sector the UN System can provide support in the following areas:

- I. Promote private sector involvement/investment in the energy sector: Off grid and mini-grids are very important to increase access to energy. Renewable energy is more suitable for off grid and mini-grid applications. The concept of mini-grids can be integrated with Multi-functional Platforms to make the program more attractive.
- II. Promotion of alternative sources of energy: About 90% of our domestic energy come from forest resources. This is a huge burden on the forest and is causing rapid deforestation, as people sometimes cut down live trees. To avert this looming environmental problem, there is urgent need to promote other sources of energy (LPG, Biogas, Solar Cookers, and Briquettes) for cooking and heating.
- III. Policies, strategies, incentives and risks- implications and opportunities for attaining SE4ALL objectives.

#### **4.1.3ICT**

For over 20 years, the GoTG has acknowledged the importance of information and communication technologies (ICTs) to socio-economic development, and the need for an ICT-led development strategy if the country is to be transformed from a weak, agriculture-based economy into an information- and knowledge-driven one. For this reason, the GoTG has worked hard to leverage ICTs to help achieve the Vision 2020 objective of transforming the country into a technologically advanced, information-rich, middle-income country by 2020. The GoTG has thus prepared the National Communication and Information Policy (NACIP), followed by the preparation of a National Information and Communications Infrastructure (NICI) policy, as well as various other plans and strategies to support ICT development in the country. These efforts were supported by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) in the context of the African Information Society Initiative (AISI).

The NICI policy specified the GoTG policy commitments in terms of **what** needs to be done to leverage ICTs to support the socio-economic development of the country. Details of **how** to translate the NICI policy into concrete programmes and initiatives are elaborated in the ICT for Development (ICT4D) Action Plan, which was to be implemented over four 4-year plans from 2010 to 2015.

The ICT4D Action Plan was to be implemented in four four-year Action Plans from 2010 to 2015, with the first plan (ICT4D-2013) ending in 2013. The ICT4D-2013 Action Plan was developed in two phases, with the first phase focused on developing sub-plans for human resource development, ICTs in Education, and ICTs in communities. On the other hand, the second phase involved the development of sub-plans for e-government, private sector development, e-commerce, and other remaining pillars of the ICT4D Action Plan.

Another important initiative of the GoTG has been the enactment of the IC Act 2009 which provided the legal and regulatory framework for the ICT sector. The Telecommunications Act and related policies liberalized the ICT sector, resulting in massive investments in infrastructure by the private sector, and the development of public-private partnerships in the sector. The establishment of data centre for GOTG through the support of UNDP has been another laudable achievement. The data centre hosts the government websites, information systems and email system.

These efforts are now paying off, as evidenced by the penetration of mobile phone and Internet services, as well as the significant increase in the capacity of the country's Internet connection to the outside world. While the total bandwidth available to the country around 1998 was about 1 MB/sec, landing of the Africa Coast to Europe (ACE) submarine fibre optic cable in 2011 has provided the country with connectivity at speeds of at least 1.9 TB/sec.<sup>93</sup> Two years after the launch of the ACE cable in The Gambia, Internet capacity increased over ten fold..

Another important ICT infrastructure project is the ECOWAS Wide Area Network (ECOWAN) project, which is building a The 947 km nationwide fibre optic backbone to further improve telecommunications and Internet services in the country.<sup>94</sup> The ECOWAN project will as such provide wireless access through a 4G LTE network to 300 government offices and ECOWAS offices in the GBA. In addition, the ECOWAN fibre optic backbone will be connected to the ACE submarine cable thus permitting the introduction of high-speed broadband services nationwide.

#### **4.3 Recommendations to Government**

- i. The need to create a lead road safety agency.
- ii. Expedite the process of ICT Agency establishment to be responsible for ICTs implementation for the public sector.
- iii. A taskforce to be created to work on the implementation of axle load protocol of ECOWAS.
- iv. Introduce new technologies into infrastructure and promoting innovative financing of infrastructure projects
- v. Social protection should be factored in all infrastructural development; resettlement impact assessment, environmental impact assessment is needed in any infrastructural development.
- vi. Review and strengthen the social protection laws in the country
- vii. Data Collection should be institutionalized. The integration of ICTs in the public sector will enhance this.
- viii. Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT) is being established to help protect internet users especially the children online.
- ix. To introduce the Lent Man System in the maintenance of feeder roads. This will mitigate the rural urban drift and the back way syndrome.
- x. Compulsory national service for youths
- xi. Rural electrification agencies to be established to concentrated in the rural areas

---

<sup>93</sup><http://unique.gm/index.php/in-the-news?start=5>

<sup>94</sup> <https://www.telegeography.com/products/commsupdate/articles/2013/12/06/gamtel-signs-usd33m-contract-with-huawei-to-transform-national-backbone/>

#### **4.4 Opportunities for UN System Support and Collaboration with Government**

Although the GoTG has made a lot of progress in developing the country's transport, energy and ICT infrastructure, there still is room for the involvement of specific UN agencies such as UNDP in these sectors. In this regard, the UNDP has an important comparative advantage with regards to capacity building, resource mobilization, and South-South exchanges of experience and lessons learned. The priority areas for support from the UNCT and other partners are as follows:

- **Transport**

The strategic objectives of the MOTWI strategic plan (2016-2020) provide a good starting point for determining the priority areas in which the UNCT and other partners can support the GoTG. The six MOTWI strategic objectives include developing an appropriate policy, legal and regulatory framework for the sector, enhancing institutional capacity building and human resources development, enhancing the use of ICT for better management of the sector, improving safety, promoting public-private partnership, and providing a cost-effective and sustainable maintenance of transport and public works infrastructure. WFP can support in capacity building for road transport users such as logistics/transport supply chain, periodic maintenance, truck-load, road safety measures, etc.

- **Energy**

The Gambia SE4ALL Action Agenda identifies a number of priority action areas, and these could also provide opportunities for UN support. The priority action areas in the SE4ALL Action Agenda are energy access, renewable energy, energy efficiency, and enabling action areas. In addition, the National Investment Programme on Access to Energy Services identifies four priority projects for its investment programme, namely: increasing access to improved cooking systems, rural electrification through concessions, and provision of solar PV for off-grid electricity, and the provision of multifunctional platforms for communities.

- **ICT**

With regards to the ICT sector, the priority areas for support from the UNCT and other partners include activities that would lead to the achievement of the MOICI strategic plan objectives. Examples of such activities include reforming and restructuring of the Department of Information Services. Other areas include capacity building of MOCI staff, resource mobilization, and strengthening the e-government programme.

- Petroleum will need Technical Assistance for the downstream sector
- Support the National Information Policy formulation
- Support in Resource mobilization
- Provide Technical Support to infrastructure development institutions

## **CHAPTER 5: HUMAN CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT**

### **5.0 Overview**

The human capital development is imperative in the sustainable development of the country. Efforts should be in the areas of education, vocational and skills training and health sector to ensure a sustainable human capital development. The Gambia, recognizing that nearly half of its population lives on less than \$1.25 a day, has placed an emphasis on poverty reduction either through growth (PSRP I and II) or the creation of employment (PAGE). The common thread that can be found in all development plans from the ERP (1985-1989) to the PAGE (2012-2015) is the provision of basic social services for the population. A breakdown of the budget for the past 4 years shows that between 20%-25% of the Budget is spent on basic social services, with Education (MoBSE) and Health (MoHSW) taking up 86% of this. The emphasis on education and health are not misplaced given that health indicators are still lagging behind the countries in the sub-region (especially for maternal and child health indicators). Education statistics show that The Gambia lags behind English speaking countries in the sub-region in a number of indicators.

### **5.1 The Education System**

#### **5.1.1 The Basic and Secondary Education Levels**

The Gambia education system follows the same structure as its English speaking West African neighbours, with the Basic Cycle, comprising grades 1 to 6 (Lower Basic Cycle), grades 7 to 9 (the Upper Basic Cycle), the Senior Secondary level (grade 10 to 12) and the tertiary level. Madrassa (Arabic educational facilities) and Vocational schools are also part of the formal education system, with madrassas also following the same structure as the conventional English taught schools. Technical and Vocational institutions, though formally recognized, serve in parallel to the formal English speaking schools as students from conventional schools can enter vocational schools either before or after completing grade 12. Students in the conventional system take national exams at grades 3 and 5 (National Assessment Test), 9 (Gambia Basic Education Cycle Examinations) and 12 (West African Senior Secondary Certificate Examinations).

As of June 2015, there were 1,116 Early Childhood Development (ECD) centres, 928 Lower Basic schools, 361 Upper Basic schools and 145 Senior Secondary schools in the country<sup>95</sup>. These make up the pre-tertiary education system and are under the purview of the Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education (MoBSE). The tertiary and vocational institutions are under the Ministry of Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology (MoHERST).

The achievement of virtual universal (97.1%) access to primary education (lower basic cycle) in The Gambia is a tremendous achievement. This has gone hand in hand with significant closing the gender gap at the primary level, with a gross enrolment of 98.7% for boys and 95.4% for girls. This gap of 3% is considerably less than the 12% gap in 2000. Primary completion rates almost doubled between 1990 and 2013 in the process (from 44% to 74%).

Similar headway is being made at the ECD level, as enrolment has steadily increased over the past 3 years from 36.5% to 45.4%. It is important to note the balance in admissions in terms of gender with more girls (46.1) attending ECD than boys (44.6); a small margin but one that echoes the progress that has been made at the lower basic cycle with the closing of the gender gap.

---

<sup>95</sup>Education Statistics 2014/15, MoBSE

Table 5.1: Gross Enrolment Ratio for ECD (2013-2015)

	Male	Female	Total
2013	35.4	37.5	36.5
2014	40.1	42.1	41.2
2015	44.6	46.1	45.4

Source: Presentation by MoBSE at the Joint Donor Review and Supervision Meeting, July 2015

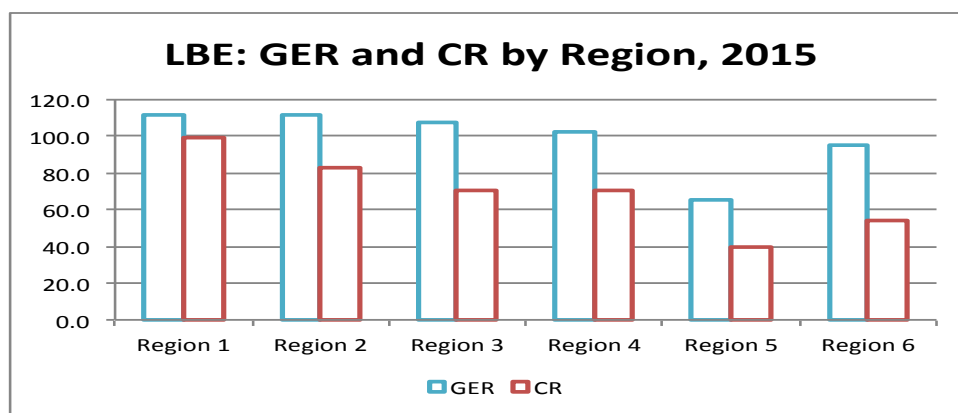
Table 5.2: Indicators for Education at Primary, Secondary and Tertiary levels

All figures in percent			
Education Indicators	2000	2011	2013
School enrolment, primary, female (% gross)	84.2	87.3	98.7
School enrolment, primary, male (% gross)	96.8	85.6	95.4
School enrolment, primary, total (% gross)	N/A	86.5	97.1
Primary completion rate, female (% of relevant age group)	64.0	70.3	73.6
Primary completion rate, male (% of relevant age group)	79.8	71.2	73.3
Primary completion rate, total (% of relevant age group)	71.9	70.9	73.4
5 credits in WASSCE (including Math and English)	N/A	4.5	5.0
School enrolment, tertiary (% gross)	1.1	3.4	N/A

Source: Study on Multidimensional Poverty and Inclusive Growth in The Gambia, UNDP, 2015

Focusing on national statistics can hide the disparities that exist at the regional level, especially between the higher and lower performers. The Basic and Secondary Education system is broken into 6 regions, with each Regional Education Department (RED) responsible for the schools within its districts. Each region has a fair amount of autonomy, but decisions regarding funding and staffing are still made at the central level. The education regions to a large extent follow the national regions with Banjul and Kanifing making up RED 1, WCR (RED 2 2), NBR (RED 3), LRR (RED 4, CRR (RED 5) and URR (RED 6). RED 5 (CRR) and 6 (URR) are among the poorest regions in the country and it is no surprise that these are the poorest performing regions in the country in many sectors including education, health and training.

Figure 5.1: Gross Enrolment and Completion rates at Lower Basic Education Cycle, by region (2015)

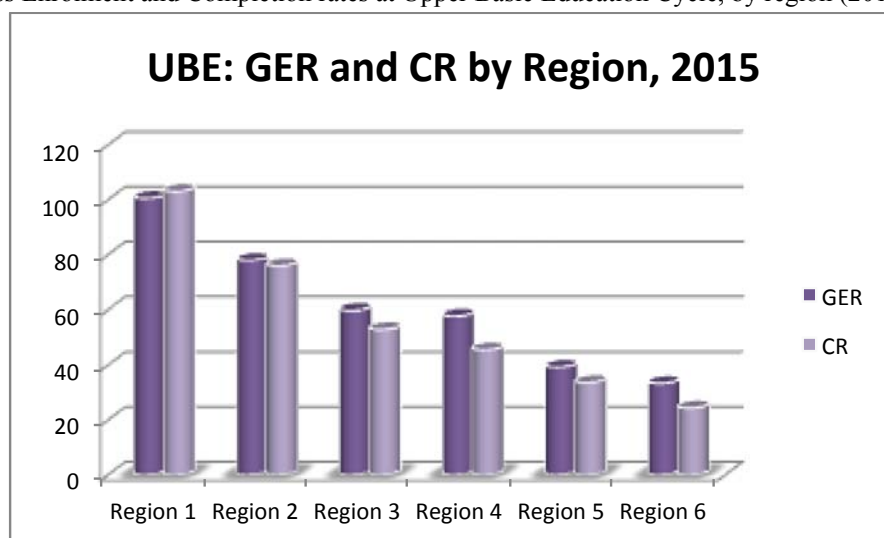


Source: Education Statistics 2014/15, MoBSE - LBE: Lower basic Education

There are significant differences by RED for Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) and Completion Rate (CR) at the Lower Basic Cycle (grades 1 to 6). To a large extent, GER and CR are in line with differentials in poverty rates observed around the country. REDs 1 and 2, where poverty rates are lowest, have the highest enrolment and completion rates for students at the lower basic cycle. Whilst RED 5 (CRR), which has two of the country's poorest districts has the lowest enrolment and completion rates at the LBE level.

It should be noted that the GER is measured as a ratio between the number of children in school (from grades 1 to 6 for LBE) and the total school going age population of children who should be at the basic cycle level. In the case of GER for LBE, this is, the total number of children between grades 1 to 6 and the number of children between the ages of 7 and 12. Due to students repeating and other students entering late, it is common to have GER above 100; more children in school than children of schooling going age for that level. A GER in excess of 100 can also be explained by the large number of children travelling to schools outside their localities. A case in point is Banjul where the number of children attending school in the town exceed the number of children of school-going age resident in the town.

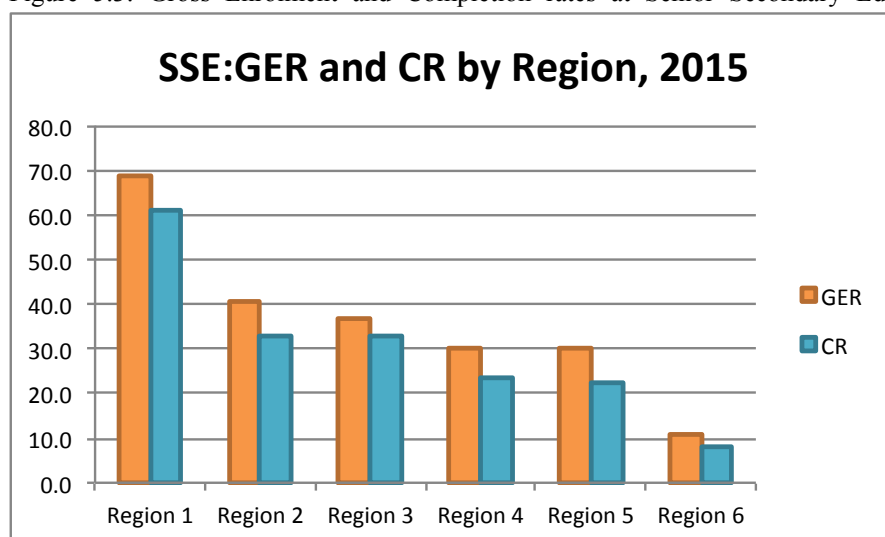
Figure 5.2: Gross Enrolment and Completion rates at Upper Basic Education Cycle, by region (2015)



Source: Education Statistics 2014/15, MoBSE

As in the LBE, enrolment and completion rates at the Upper Basic Education (UBE) level vary significantly between the best performing region (Region 1) and the worst performing (Region 6). Where almost 100% of student who enter grade 7 complete grade 9 in Region 1, compared to less than 25% of students who enter grade 7 completing grade 9 in Region 6. Completion rates in Region 5 (CRR) are not much higher than Region 6, with only a third of students entering grade 7 completing the UBE cycle. Seventy percent of the children within the school going age for senior secondary education are enrolled in school within Region 1, with a completion rate of 60%. As was seen at the UBE level, Region 6 (URR) has the lowest GER and CR in the country at 11% and 8% respectively. This means that less than 10% of students that enter grade 10 in URR complete grade 12. This is a dismal statistic, which shows the wide disparities that exist in terms of access to education and the capacity of the system to retain students across all 12 years.

Figure 5.3: Gross Enrolment and Completion rates at Senior Secondary Education Cycle, by region (2015)



Source: Education Statistics 2014/15, MoBSE

Table 5.3: Completion rates and Efficiency of education system, by region, 2015

Efficiency of System by Region, 2015				
	CR (LBE)	CR (UBE)	CR (SSE)	Efficiency
<b>Region 1</b>	98.6%	103.0%	61.0%	60.1%*
<b>Region 2</b>	82.5%	75.9%	33.0%	20.7%
<b>Region 3</b>	70.4%	52.9%	33.0%	12.3%
<b>Region 4</b>	69.9%	45.5%	23.5%	7.5%
<b>Region 5</b>	39.5%	33.6%	22.2%	2.9%
<b>Region 6</b>	53.6%	24.3%	8.3%	1.1%
<b>National</b>	73.6%	64.7%	41.6%	19.8%

Note: The efficiency of the regions is calculated as a product of the completion rates of the 3 levels (LBE, UBE and SSE) for each RED. For example, Efficiency for RED 4 is CR (LBE)\*CR (UBE)\*CR (SSE)

\*: The GER for UBE (103%) was replaced with 100% in calculating the efficiency given that enrolment cannot be above 100%.

Source: Education Statistics 2014/15, MoBSE

The table above gives the efficiency of the education system by region; this is done, by multiplying the completion rates of each level per RED. The result tells us what proportion of students will complete to grade 12 for every 100-student cohort that starts at grade 1. We see that RED 1 has the highest efficiency with 60% of students starting grade 1 completing grade 12 whilst 40% drop off, which is followed by RED 2 (20%) and RED 3 (12%). RED 6 (URR) has the lowest completion rate, at a dismal 1%. The completion rate for RED 1 is greater than the completion rates for all other REDs combined; this is the epitome of regional disparities.

### 5.1.2 Tertiary and Technical & Vocational Education Training (TVET)

In the area of education, the low hanging fruit have been picked, but there still remain the higher hanging fruit. Completion rates at the primary are still too low (73%) and so are pass rates at the senior secondary school level as only 5% of students taking the WASSCE (West African Senior

Secondary Certificate Examinations) pass; this translates to an efficiency of 2%. What this means is that for every 100 students that enter grade 1, only 2 will pass the WASSCE<sup>96</sup>. The Gambia ranks among the bottom performers at the WASSCE in terms of success rate, with Ghana and Nigeria having success rates of 10% and 20% respectively<sup>97</sup>.

Therefore it is no surprise that a large proportion of the labour force has little or no formal education. Results of the 2012 Labour Force Survey show that 31% of the labour force is engaged in retail/wholesale trade, with average income of D 1,500 (\$38<sup>98</sup>) per month. This is marginally higher than the 32% of the labour force engaged in farming with an average income of D 1,000 (\$25) per month. The picture painted by the LFS 2012 is that of a labour market where the youth are turning away from agriculture in favour of another sector (retail trade) only to receive marginally better incomes that put them barely above the \$1.25 per day threshold. Limited education also poses a problem for the country as a whole, as not all new entrants can be retailers. Unfortunately, the lack of education and vocational skills limits the opportunities available to these workers preventing them from moving into more lucrative sectors such as industry (manufacturing), telecommunications and Banking & Insurance (the three sectors with the highest value added per worker). As can be seen in Table 5.5, only 11% of the labour force (15-64 years) has had vocational training (LFS, 2012). This is extremely low for a country that aims to achieve middle-income status within a decade.

A study by VSO Gambia and the National Training Authority (NTA) on the contribution of TVET to job creation in the Gambia showed a lack of TVET institutions outside the urban areas, with only 10% of TVET institutions found in rural areas. The remaining 90% found in Banjul (3%), Kanifing (72%) and Brikama (15%). It was observed that 60% of people interviewed did not have a TVET institution within their vicinity (0 to 5 km). A further 12% were oblivious to the presence of TVET schools within the immediate environs. This was one of the issues that came up in the community consultations, with communities suggesting an increase in the teaching of vocational and technical skills in schools within their areas.

Results of the study also found that illegal TVET institutions operating without the knowledge of NTA. These schools also operate without using the Gambia Skills Qualification Framework (GSQF) recommended by NTA, thus the quality of graduates coming from these institutions is questionable. Unfortunately, the study could not determine the size of these illegal institutions across the country.

There is a lack of diversification in the skills acquired by those with vocational training. The areas of focus for vocational training are tailoring (21%), Masonry (9%) and Carpentry (8%)<sup>99</sup>. No other vocation makes up more than 3% of the total. The lack of diversification can be found across all regions, with tailoring, carpentry, masonry and welding & fabrication making up the top four most learnt trades in every region outside Banjul and Kanifing<sup>100</sup>. Given the breadth of courses on offer at TVET schools and the demand for other types of skills in these regions, there is a need to understand the reasons for the high concentration is students in these 4 areas. This is all the more

---

<sup>96</sup>Study Growth and Multidimensional Poverty in the Gambia, UNDP, 2015

<sup>97</sup>ibid.

<sup>98</sup>Exchange rate at D40/\$1

<sup>99</sup>Labour Force Survey, GBOS, 2012

<sup>100</sup>A critical analysis of TVET and its contribution to job creation in The Gambia, NTA & VSO, 2015

perplexing given that the same study found building constructors to be highly in demand in the Basse and Mansakonko LGAs and auto mechanics highly demanded in Basse and Kuntaur. These are two trades were only 5% (building construction) and 4% (auto mechanic) of the TVET graduates reported learning these trades. There needs to be methods in place to guide students at TVET institutions towards skills that are in demand within their region. This would reduce the length of time spent looking for work which is fairly high for TVET graduates, with 38% of graduates sitting for more than a year after graduation before getting work.

Table 5.4: Percentage of working age population with vocational training

Age Range	Urban			Rural			The Gambia		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
15-64	19.0	7.5	13.1	11.8	6.6	8.8	15.7	7.0	11.0
13-30	17.6	7.0	11.9	10.2	7.4	8.5	14.3	7.2	10.3
15-24	15.6	6.0	10.5	7.3	6.9	7.1	11.8	6.4	8.9
25-34	23.1	9.8	16.3	16.2	8.5	11.3	20.3	9.1	13.9
35-54	19.5	7.4	13.7	14.0	4.9	9.1	16.9	6.0	11.3
55-64	17.2	7.9	13.0	11.1	2.8	7.2	13.8	5.0	9.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>19.0</b>	<b>7.4</b>	<b>13.1</b>	<b>11.3</b>	<b>6.4</b>	<b>8.6</b>	<b>15.4</b>	<b>6.9</b>	<b>10.9</b>

Source: Labour Force Survey, GBOS, 2012

Note: Vocational training can be formal training, informal training or work experience in an occupation requiring vocational training.

The Ministry of Higher Education Research Science and Technology has plans to create a more structured TVET cycle, similar to conventional schools that would operate at multiple levels, just as conventional schools.

The challenges faced by the Education ministry are twofold, short term (immediate) and long term. The former pertains to the current stock of uneducated workers in the labour force. The Gambia cannot progress in the medium term without significant structural change. This requires the labour force itself changes to match the needs of the economy. There is a need to shift labour from the low productive sectors of agriculture and retail trade, to industry and transportation. The solution to this is a heavy investment in non-formal education and TVET (Technical and Vocational Education Training). A TVET policy that emphasizes the training of skills needed by the economy shifting from retail trade to industry sectors such as tailoring, carpentry and construction is vital if structural transformation is to occur. To avoid the mistakes of the past, there is a need to put in place checks and balances and to have an authority responsible for quality assurance of all TVET and non-formal programmes in the country. MoHERST and MoBSE have taken a step in the right direction by recently inaugurating NAQAA (National Accreditation and Quality Assurance Authority). NAQAA, which has taken over the role of NTA, is responsible for ensuring quality at all levels of the education system. Incentives for trainers will be key if TVET is to achieve the desired result, as trainers could feel that with the new skills they have acquired, leaving the teaching field to start their own firms would be more profitable.

It is important to remember that the focus on TVET as a way to bring about structural change can only be ultimately successful if the two biggest challenges faced by the private sector are addressed; electricity and access to credit. Without these bottlenecks being removed, transforming

the skills of the labour force would only serve to exacerbate the problem as a mismatch between supply of labour (a labour force with skills in industry) and demand (a demand for labour less interested in industry). The result would be a labour force where workers are more skilled than they are now, but a private sector that still has the same structure as we currently do.

The second issue to be tackled is increasing retention at all levels of the education cycle and improving quality. On these fronts, MoBSE looks to be on the right track by offering in-service training to teachers during the summer vacation in mathematics and English and encouraging teachers to enrol at the University of The Gambia. Both of these steps are geared towards addressing the issue of quality, as a study by the World Bank showed that a significant number of teachers at the lower basic cycle did not have the required knowledge to teach at the level they taught at the time.

Educational research has shown that foundational skills, particularly, in reading is absolutely critical in the delivery of quality education. This is because performance in the upper grades is determined by the strength of foundational grades (grades 1, 2 and 3). Studies have also shown that children who attend day care/kindergarten are more likely to complete their schooling and perform better in exams. As a result, the focus on ECD (Early Childhood Development) should contribute towards early stimulation, improved parenting practices and school readiness leading to increased retention of students across all cycles.

Results of an assessment of the education quality in 2007 (2007 EGRA) showed that 32% of Grade 3 students had correct letter identification, 34% of children in the same grade had correct phoneme pronunciation and a third of students in this grade could read ten words per minute with virtually no comprehension. Forty-six per cent of third grade students could not correctly read a single word of connected text. Government at the time responded to these abysmal performance indicators to put in place a policy on foundational reading. The measure put in place led to improvements in the average correct words read by Grade 3 students from 6.3 in 2007 to 21.4 in 2013.

When education quality is assessed using the results of the GABECE results for 2012, 2013 and 2014, there has been general improvements in the pass rate across the regions and gender. A review of the results further showed that most of the gains have been made in English language and science, but a drop in the pass rate was observed for mathematics. Across regions the worse performing schools in examination were found in Regions 5 and 6. For the WASSCE results for the period under review, it was generally observed that girls (27.5%) had higher failure rate than boys (15.94%). Across regions, although the failure rate was higher for girls in all regions, girls' failure rates were highest in Regions 3, 4, 5 and 6. The results showed improvements from 2012 to 2013 but the gains were lost in 2014. The mix results for both GABECE and WASSCE points to the need for increased investment in the education sector to reduce regional disparities and improve on the teaching methods in the core subjects of English, Mathematics and the sciences.

## ***5.2 Health***

### ***5.2.1 The Health System Overview***

The Gambia health system comprises of three levels: primary, secondary and tertiary. The primary level, comprised of the village health posts and primary health care services. Basic primary health services are offered by village health workers, and a community health nurse. The most common illnesses and injuries for men, women and children can be treated at this level, thus reducing the

need to visit the secondary level (major and minor health centres). Illnesses that cannot be treated at the primary level are referred to the secondary level. There is a total number of 634 primary health care villages in the country.

The secondary level comprise of major and minor health centres that offer more specialised and wider range of care than at the primary level. In addition to basic ANC and PNC services, health centres also offer disease management (Malaria, TB, HIV/AIDS and STIs). Major health centres, in addition, also perform surgeries. Major health centres normally cater for populations in the range of 150,000 to 200,000 with 110-150 beds available in each facility. Minor health centres on the other hand have 20 to 40 beds per every 15,000 people served. There are currently major health centres and 41 minor health centres in the country.

The final level is the tertiary level, which comprise of hospitals. There are currently 7 hospitals in the country, existing in all Health regions except LRR and URR. Tertiary level facilities have significantly more autonomy than lower level facilities given that they have a management board of their own and are not supervised by the Regional Health Team within the region. These facilities offer more specialized care, with larger number of beds and the ability to treat a wider range of health conditions than primary and secondary level facilities.

As in the education sector, the Health sector is divided into regions, with each region is overseen by a Regional Health Team (RHT). There are 7 health regions, roughly demarcated according to regions with the exception of NBR, which has been divided into NBR West and NBR East; and WCR, which is now WCR 1 and WCR 2. The RHTs are responsible for supervising the facilities within their health region. Supplies of drugs and equipment to facilities are coordinated by the RHT, and they inform the Ministry and Central Medical Stores of the needs of facilities in their health region. The RHTs are also collect data prepared by each facility under their purview, compile and share with the Health Management Information System Directorate in Kotu.

Table 5.5: Number of Health facilities (Primary, Secondary and Tertiary) by Health region

	HEALTH	WHR1	WHR2	NBWR	NBER	LRR	CRR	URR	Total
<b>Tertiary</b>	Hospitals	4	1	0	1	0	1	0	7
<b>Secondary</b>	Major Health Centre	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	6
	Minor Health Centre	5	4	4	6	5	7	10	41
	NGO Facilities and Clinics	5	4	2	1	2	0	4	18
	Private Health Facilities	6	9	0	0	1	2	5	23
	Community Managed Facilities	7	9	6	5	4	8	1	40
<b>Primary</b>	Specialized RCH Clinics	2	0	0	1	0	1	0	4
	RCH Outreach Clinics	13	24	32	31	34	62	61	257
	RCH base Clinics	18	6	6	7	5	9	7	58
	Total RCH Clinic sites	31	30	38	38	39	71	68	315
	Total PHC Villages	26	92	100	95	92	159	70	634
	Service Clinics	4	0	0	1	1	1	1	8

Source: Health Facility Database, HMIS Unit 2012

Table 5.5 gives a more complete picture of the total number of facilities in the country, including both facilities owned and operated by the private sector, communities and NGOs. As can be seen,

the health sector is dominated by the public sector with 94% of facilities in the country owned by government. Private health facilities (23) largely concentrate in the urban areas, with a few operating in rural areas. There are 18 NGO clinics, spread evenly across the health regions. As can be seen, the bulk of the facilities in the country are the PHC (634) followed by the Reproductive and Child Health (RCH) clinics (315).

A joint study by WHO and the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare (MoHSW) in 2013 was conducted to get a better understanding of the amount and sources of payment for health services in the country. The preliminary results showed that between 2010 and 2013 the share of the budget allocated to health as a percent of GDP by the government of The Gambia ranged from 7.56% (2011) to 12.18 (2012).

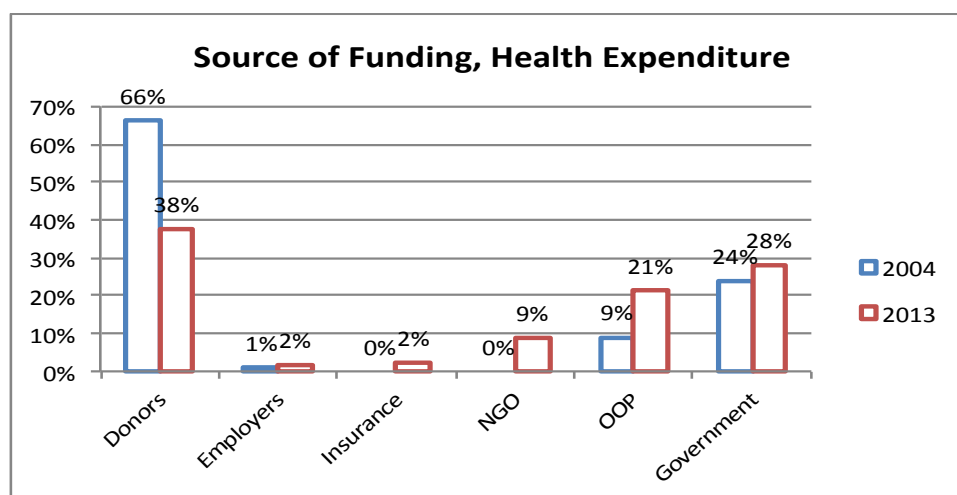
The government of The Gambia is not the only provider of health services, as it provides only 28% of the total amount of money spent on health services in the country. The major source of funds for health service provision comes from donors (38%). Out of Pocket (OOP) expenditures are especially high at 21%, meaning that households are responsible for one fifth of the purchases of health services, directly paying from the pocket as opposed through insurance. This has the consequence of adversely affecting households that find themselves in a position where they have to purchase health care. OOP can seriously dent the savings of households, and can push vulnerable households into poverty or wipe out household savings.

Between 2004 and 2013, the share of money spent on health services by households (OOP) has increased from 9% to 21%. This is a significant rise and one that puts households under more pressure as they have to reallocate spending from other needs (such as education, utilities and food) to pay for health services .

Expenditure on Health by Government as share of GDP				
Year	2010	2011	2012	2013
Health Budget, as percent of GDP	7.58	7.56	12.18	8.66

Source: Gambia National Health Accounts 2013, WHO& MoHSW

Figure 5.4: Source of funding for expenditure on health in The Gambia, 2004 and 2015



Source: Gambia National Health Accounts 2013, WHO& MoHSW

### **5.2.2 Primary Health Care system**

Results of the Demography and Health Survey 2013 show that although Gambia will not achieve the MDG goals 4A and 5A, significant improvement has still been made in reducing infant (and child) mortality and maternal mortality. The greatest improvements made are in the areas of prolonging life (increased life expectancy) and reducing preventable deaths (declining mortality rates). Studies have shown that malnutrition indicators (stunting, wasting and underweight) have been on the rise in the past 8 years. This has been mainly due to successive years of erratic rains and a drought in 2011, which adversely affected farming communities in the rural areas.

Another area where we see significant improvements is in the reduction the prevalence of Malaria and tuberculosis. Preliminary results of the Malaria Indicator Survey (MIS), 2014 show that there has been a 90% reduction in malaria cases over a 4-year period across all the health regions. Similar results have been observed for TB, whilst the HIV/AIDs has stagnated recently. The virtual elimination of Mother to Child Transmission (eMTCT) of HIV/AIDs by 2015, though not achieved, is not far from becoming a reality.

The challenges faced at the Primary Health Care level have exacerbated the problems of health service delivery, leading to pressures on the secondary and tertiary levels of the health care system, given that these two levels were not built to handle such high demand. The PHC system is plagued with lack of equipment and supplies for both the Village Health System and the Health Posts, which make up the primary level of the PHC. Similar challenges can also be seen at the secondary level, with Health centres not equipped with the necessary equipment to provide basic health services. Numerous studies have shown that Human resource capacity is a major challenge at all levels. It has been found that only 30% of villages have a Village Health Worker, a necessary cadre of the PHC and the first points of contact with the health system for most people in rural areas.

The lack of functioning PHC in some villages and adequately trained staff in others has led to the poor and vulnerable members of the population, who are also more likely to live in remote areas, not having access to basic health services. This has serious equity issues, as the most vulnerable members of society lack access to basic health services; a service that, if operating to its full potential, should serve nearly 70% (all women and children under 15) of the population. There is an urgent need to reinvigorate the PHC system to improve health indicators for women and children.

Discussions with the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare indicate the current aim of the Ministry is to reinvigorate the PHC system by 2016. The Ministry has now created a PHC Unit with a Director. Given the daunting task faced by the PHC Unit it should come as no surprise that the greatest obstacle faced by this unit would be adequate funding to implement all activities needed to enable the PHC to optimally function.

A number of issues were raised in the area of health during the community consultations. The three most common complaints were lack of medicines; lack of qualified personnel and the need to expand the facilities in certain communities where demand has increased beyond the facility's capacity. Communities complained of lack of medicines when they visit hospitals, leading to higher medical costs, as they have to buy medicines from pharmacies. This can cause significant distress to families that are vulnerable to financial shocks.

### **5.2.3 Staffing and Human Resource Constraints**

Probably the biggest challenge faced by the health sector is an inadequate human resource capacity, both in terms of quantity and the availability of adequate trained staff. This challenge spans across all levels of the health system and across all regions. The National Health Strategic Plan (2014-2020) acknowledges that:

*“Although, there are constraints in the Health and Social Welfare Sectors, the most pressing is the ineffective management structure at the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare (MOH&SW). It has not helped matters that in the recent past, frequent changes were made in the top management positions that hindered policy implementation, and weakened institutional memory”*

In relation to human resource constraints, the Health Strategic Plan (2014-2020) lists 3 issues that need to be addressed:

- High attrition of skilled health and social workers,
- Inadequate skilled and competent health workers,
- Low staff production from health training institutions

The high attrition of health staff has posed serious challenges to providing quality health services to the population. It has led to the inability of the health system to accumulate an adequately trained core of health personnel across all levels. The high attrition does not only affect senior management, but also lower level cadre that deal directly with the population, compromising the quality of the services offered. A related point is the frequent moving of staff between health regions and within departments of the same hospital. For staff that have been trained or received an upgrading of their skills in specialized areas, a movement to another region or a department would normally lead to a redundancy of the concerned staff as the new assignment may not be compatible with the training offered prior to the move. The frequent moving of staff should be looked at to determine possible solutions.

The Ministry of Health and Social Welfare has registered progress in its attempts to tackle this significant challenge of recent with the strengthening of the incentives package for health staff (e.g. for those in hard to reach areas and a risk allowance), drafting a HRH Strategic Plan and the Health Systems Strengthening Project (in terms of training health staff). Medical doctors are also being sent to health centres (secondary level) across the country, rather than being concentrated at tertiary hospitals. More still needs to be done, especially given the desire of the Ministry to reinvigorate the PHC system. This would require training and incentives for staff at the primary level (Village Health System and Health Posts).

The Community Nurse training school at Mansakonko has been identified as the only school that trains community health nurses in the country. With the planned expansion of PHC, there is need to upgrade the school and if possible build others around the country, to cater for the demand for CHNs by the system.

### **5.3 Maternal and Child Health and Nutrition**

Coverage of the antenatal care services is high in The Gambia. The proportion of pregnant women who received antenatal care is about 99% according to the 2013 DHS. Notwithstanding the high antenatal care coverage, a major challenge is access to comprehensive emergency obstetric care, a major determinant of maternal survival. The distribution of facilities providing emergency obstetric care services is inadequate. This has led to UNFPA intervening in two health facilities -

Soma Health Center in Lower River Region and Kuntaur Health Center in Central River Region. The theatres in these facilities were refurbished, and vital equipment procured and the capacities of staff built through UNFPA support. Both facilities are now providing emergency obstetric care services thereby drastically reducing referrals to Banjul consequently saving the lives of women and children in the beneficiary communities. In addition to the provision of equipment UNFPA has also been providing much needed maternity life-saving drugs, state-of-the-art ambulance and a monitoring vehicle and 20 motor bikes to monitor the provision of maternal health services in the predominantly rural regions. There are plans to support other health facilities to enable them provide emergency obstetric care services.

UNFPA has been the sole provider of contraceptives in The Gambia for many years now and from 2012 to date has provided contraceptives worth over \$10,000,000 to The MOH. In addition the capacity of service providers has been built over the years through UNFPA support. UNFPA is also providing financial and technical support for the conduct of maternal death audits and reviews which are now being conducted in major health facilities and hospitals regularly.

Needless to say, government's spending on social protection services have had a positive effect in health, where we observe an improvement is in the maternal, infant and child mortality rates over the past 15 years. From Table 5.6, we see that between 2005 and 2010, there was a general trend of improving health indicators related women and children followed by a deterioration of some of these indicators between 2010 and 2013. Although the rates for immunization (all basic vaccinations) (87%), contraceptive prevalence (13%) and vitamin A supplementation (80%) improved in 2005, they subsequently fell in 2013 to 76%, 9% and 69% respectively. ANC 4+ visits and skilled delivery are two indicators that have continually improved over the past 15 years.

Table 5.6: Indicators for ANC, FP, Child health and Under 5 Anthropometry

All figures in Percent			
	2005	2010	2013
ANC 1st trimester	N/A	N/A	37.7
ANC 1 visit	99.0	98.1	99.0
ANC 4+ visits	N/A	72.0	77.6
Skilled delivery	56.8	55.6	57.2
Contraceptive prevalence rate	N/A	13.3	9.0
Vitamin A supplementation	80.1	72.8	68.7
Immunization (all basic)	74.5	87.4	76.0
Low Birth Weight	19.9	10.2	11.7
Wasting (Moderate to Severe)	6.4	9.5	11.5
Wasting (Severe)	1.0	2.1	4.2
Stunting (Moderate to Severe)	22.4	23.4	24.5
Stunting (Severe)	8.3	6.8	8.3
Underweight (Severe)	3.9	4.2	3.9

Source: Data collected from multiple sources, 2005 from MICS 3, 2010 from MICS 4 and 2013 from DHS 2013

Results of the child anthropometry measures show a different statistic from the other indicators with a growing increase in the incidences of wasting, stunting and underweight children over the past 8 years. It can be observed that wasting and stunting have increased to 2.1% and 6.8% in 2010, from 1% and 8.3% in 2005 respectively. This was the case for underweight (severe) for children under 5 (from 3.9% in 2005 to 4.2% in 2010). Where the fall in underweight children has decreased in 2013, wasting and stunting have continued to regress a bit, increasing to 4.2% and 8.3% respectively in 2013.

A significant contributor to the stagnation of some health indicators and deterioration was the 2011 drought had an adverse effect on the economy and rural households in particular. The SMART (Standardized Monitoring and Assessment of Relief Transition) survey of 2012 conducted during the “lean season” of 2012, gives perhaps the clearest picture of the effect of the drought on child health. It was discovered that GAM (Global Acute Malnutrition) had risen to 9.9% from the MICS, 2010 (9.5%), with one fifth of children under 5 being stunted. A disturbing statistic found in the report showed that 1 in every 5 pregnant women was under nourished. Given the plethora of studies showing the effect of in utero experiences on birth weight and later life health outcomes of children, there needs to be a concerted effort to tackle the emerging child and maternal health (and nutrition) issues before it becomes a national emergency.

The Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Assessment (CFSVA)<sup>101</sup> took place in April 2011, a few months prior to the start of the drought found significant levels of food insecurity at the national levels, 11% of the population were found to be food insecure; a considerable number of who live in urban areas. It was found that households spend 58% of their income on food, making them vulnerable to the possibility of being food insecure when an adverse shock occurs.

The National Survey of School Children (2013), focusing on North Bank Region and Central River Region, found that school children between the ages of 3 and 5 had wasting, stunting and underweight prevalence rates of 10.7%, 13.3% and 11.7% respectively, falling under the “*serious category*” of the WHO classification of malnutrition in populations<sup>102</sup>. The report recommended a continuation of the school feeding programme at the ECD and Lower Basic cycle levels.

The country continues to experience the highest maternal mortality rates in the sub-region although some progress has been registered in the reduction of maternal mortality. Over the period 1999-2003 the MMR was estimated at 730 dropping to 556 (2004-2008) and then further dropping to 433 over the period 2009-2013. These improvements can largely be attributed to improvements in maternal health services. These relative high maternal mortality rates calls for concerted efforts to further improve maternal survival.

Table 5.7: Five year average of Maternal, Infant, Child and Under 5 mortality (from 1999-2013)

	<b>Maternal mortality</b>	<b>Infant mortality</b>	<b>Child mortality</b>	<b>Under 5</b>
<b>2009-2013</b>	433	34	20	54
<b>2004-2008</b>	556	46	27	72
<b>1999-2003</b>	730	50	41	89

Source: The Gambia Demography and Health Survey, 2013 estimates

<sup>101</sup> The CFSVA, 2011, was a study funded by WFP, EU, UNICEF, UNFPA, GOTG, FAO and USAid

<sup>102</sup> Assessment of the Nutritional Status of School children in the North Bank and Central River Regions of The Gambia, NaNA, 2013

#### **5.4 Non- Communicable and Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTD)<sup>103</sup>**

Non-communicable diseases (NCDs) – mainly cardiovascular diseases, cancers, chronic respiratory diseases and diabetes – are now a major public health challenge undermining socio-economic development globally. Currently there is a paucity of data on non-communicable diseases in the Gambia, and there is need to be guided by local trends. The major NCDs share four common modifiable risk factors, which are tobacco use, unhealthy diet, harmful use of alcohol and physical inactivity. Although morbidity and mortality from non-communicable diseases mainly occur in adulthood, exposure to risk factors begins in early life<sup>104</sup>.

Chronic non-communicable diseases such as hypertension, diabetes and cancers are on the increase in the Gambia<sup>105</sup>. A population based situation analysis<sup>106</sup> conducted in 2001 revealed that 8.6% of the adult urban population and 1.4% of the rural adult population had diabetes mellitus. The same study revealed that between 10 to 20% of the population was chronically infected with hepatitis B. These findings are not at great variance from studies conducted by Van der Sande *et al* (1996 & 2001) which showed 9.5% of adults over 15 years were hypertensive according to WHO criteria (a diastolic blood pressure of 95 mmHg or above and/or systolic blood pressure of 160 mmHg or above). By less conservative criteria (a diastolic blood pressure of 90 mmHg or above and/or systolic blood pressure of 140 mmHg or above), the study concluded that 24.2% of the adult population was hypertensive with prevalence being similar in major ethnic groups in urban and rural communities. Although findings of the 2001 study do provide useful insights on the prevalence of NCDs in the country; they may not however reflect the true picture of the current situation given the time lapse. Moreover, hospital data only provide information on official reports and do not therefore take into account cases that occur in the communities.

Van der Sande *et al*; (1996, 2001) recommended further research in the following areas as a means of addressing NCDs in the country. These include in surveillance to create a data base on NCDs; effectiveness of current treatment practices; primary prevention taking into account the determinants or risk factors for NCD

Another important survey conducted by the Medical Research Council (Nyan, 2001) estimated the prevalence rate of diabetes among the adult population (35 years and above) of the capital, Banjul, at 8.6%, while the rural prevalence was estimated at 1.4%. This study showed a rural urban gradient reflecting differences in obesity, physical inactivity and other aspects of urbanisation/westernisation. Overall, the study indicated 21.7% of the subjects as being obese.

---

<sup>103</sup> This is a group of medically diverse infectious diseases that thrive in impoverished settings, especially in the heat and humidity of tropical climates. Most are parasitic diseases, spread by vectors. Others are spread by contaminated water and soil infested with the eggs of worms. These conditions are considered not to have received sufficient attention from donor community and public health planners – hence the term ‘Neglected Tropical Diseases’. In addition to causing morbidity and mortality, NTDs are responsible for high social burden in terms of the stigma, blindness, deformity and other forms of disability that they cause.

<sup>104</sup> WHO Briefing on key and critical areas of public health importance, July 2014

<sup>105</sup> The prevalence of the common risk factors of Non-Communicable diseases in the Gambia. Cowan (2011)

<sup>106</sup> Ibid.

A separate study conducted by WHO and a local Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) called the International Organisation of Good Templars (IOGT) in 2008 showed a 24.5% prevalence rate of smoking amongst 13-15 year olds. Thus it can be concluded that the prevention and control of NCDs in the Gambia is critical. Consequently this topic is high on the agenda of the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare and its partners as articulated in the National Health Policy (2007-2011) and the National Nutrition Policy (2010-2020). Consultations with the Ministry Health and Social Welfare confirmed the critical and urgent need to establish a national NCD Control Programme but they expressed acute lack of data on the prevalence and driving factors that undermine systematic planning. Funding is also lacking in annual budgetary allocations to provide baseline information that will guide policy formulation, planning and programming.

Anecdotal evidence also suggests that Gambians are not spared from the changing global lifestyle phenomenon. With the proliferation of modern supermarkets, fast food outlets, increases in motor vehicle ownership, there is an increasing trend for people to abandon their traditional diets and lifestyles and engage in risky lifestyles<sup>107</sup>.

The most recent WHO STEPWISE Survey<sup>108</sup> was conducted to contribute to the ongoing data collection on NCDs in the Gambia in order to:

- Describe the current levels of risk factors for chronic diseases in the Gambia
- Track the direction and magnitude of trends in risk factors
- Develop an appropriate health promotion or preventive strategy for NCD prevention and control
- Develop a national NCD policy

The study concluded that the major risk factors for developing NCDs are smoking; low level of physical activity; being overweight; eating less than five servings of fruits and vegetables; and raised blood pressure (defined as SBP  $\geq$  140 and/or DBP  $\geq$  90 mmHg).

In this study, only 2.1% of respondents had none of the above risk factors, and when segregated, 2.7% are men and 1.6% women. About a quarter of the respondents (25.8%) had three or more of the risk factors, and when segregated, 26.8% are men and 24.8% women. In the 25-44 –year age group, 20.7% had three or more of the risk factors, and when segregated, 22.8% are men and 18.4% women. In those aged 45-64 years, 39.8% had three or more of the risk factors, and when segregated, 37.6% are men and 42.0% women.

Although this survey reveals that the vast majority (97.4 %) never drank alcohol, there is growing concern that the rate of alcohol consumption is increasing in both urban and rural areas. The survey also suggested concerted efforts need to be implemented so that people consumed the recommended five servings of fruits and vegetables a day to get the maximum benefits that they provide.

On physical activity the survey recommends that government, especially the Local Governments/Municipalities should be sensitized on the importance of recreational facilities so that in their plans, land allocation and construction of recreational facilities would be taken on

---

<sup>107</sup> A recent survey (Cowan 2011) records that in the Gambia, being overweight or obese is seen as a sign of wealth and there is a belief amongst people that if one is not overweight or obese, one is not in happy matrimony.

<sup>108</sup> Cowan (2011). The prevalence of the common risk factors of Non-Communicable diseases in the Gambia.

board. The Ministry of Education's policy on physical activity is commendable and should be strengthened if required so that pupils would understand the rationale for doing physical education and not merely seen as an opportunity to not attend lessons.

On physical measurements the survey concludes that the Gambia is experiencing the "double burden of malnutrition" with overweight and obesity on one hand and under-nutrition on the other hand. Both have consequences to the health of people. Malnutrition is a state of nutritional imbalance arising when the supply of one or more nutrients is less or in excess of the body's need for such nutrients. When the nutrients intake is inadequate it causes under-nutrition (underweight) and when it is in excess it causes over nutrition or obesity<sup>109</sup>.

### **5.5 HIV and AIDS Response in the Gambia**

The present 2007-2020 National Health Policy Framework (NHPF) seeks to 'promote equity (both gender and territorial) in access and affordability of quality health services, maintain ethics and standards promote health system reforms and improve staff retention and client satisfaction. Other health sector policies currently being implemented include the National Reproductive Health Policy, National HIV AND AIDS Policy, the National Nutrition Policy and the National Population Policy and Plan of Action.

These health policies and programmes have made significant impact evident in the tremendous increase in government hospitals, effective, accessible and affordable reproductive health services, low prevalence rate of HIV as well as the decline of infant mortality rate.

The Policy addresses and ensures equity in access and affordability of quality health services. The NHPF has targeted twelve major achievement indicators, including the following, which have gendered significance and are in conformity with MDG targets:

- i. Reduce the maternal mortality ratio from 730 per 100,000 births to 150 per 100,000 by 2015;
- ii. Increase life expectancy for women from 65 years to 70 years by 2015;
- iii. Increase life expectancy of men from 62.4 years to 68 years by 2015;
- iv. reduce HIV AND AIDS prevalence rates: HIV 1 from 1.1% to 0.5% and HIV 2 from 0.7% to 0.2% by 2015;
- v. reduce the total fertility rate from 5.4 to 4.6 by 2015,
- vi. 2002 - D256,081; and
- vii. 2003 - D1,571,239

The achievement of the indicators is hampered by high attrition of senior and trained staffs, lured away by the more lucrative incentives in local private sector and international health facilities.

To redress these staff attrition trends, especially of female health personnel, the PHPNP dedicated a sizeable amount of funding and the largest chunk of programme activities to RCH, out of which training was well catered for, in order to build the capacity of the health staff. The World Bank continues to provide funding for the health human resources development strategies under the Global Fund, to support malaria, HIV AND AIDS and tuberculosis prevention and care. These are

---

<sup>109</sup>Bah, A., Jeng-Ngom, I., Phall, M.C., Chazaly, C, Dembele, B and Becquey, E. (2008) Food Vulnerability in the Urban Areas of Banjul and Kanifing Municipality -The Gambia.

three major areas from which both Gambian women (the main victims) and men could continue to benefit directly, today, while they resonate into future gains.<sup>110</sup>

The Gambian response to the HIV and AIDS pandemic has always been guided by national policies and strategic plans. The Gambia championed a politically led and nationally driven, multi-sectoral response to the HIV epidemic in Sub-Saharan Africa since 1986. Initially it was health focused, with the setting up of a National AIDS Control Programme in 1987 under the Ministry of Health. The first national policy and guidelines on HIV and AIDS was developed in 1995. In July 2001, the Gambian government signed a credit agreement for over US\$15 million with the World Bank to implement an HIV and AIDS Rapid Response Project (HARRP). The HARRP triggered the establishment of a National AIDS Council under the Office of The President and chaired by The President and a secretariat responsible for co-coordinating the national response, the National AIDS Secretariat. The HARRP witnessed the decentralization of HIV and AIDS programmes and activities to regional, district and community levels, with funds being provided to community based organizations (CBOs) and non-governmental organizations. Divisional and municipal structures were created headed by co-ordinators and supported by AIDS committees. By the end of 2012, a total of 45 health facilities offer HCT (23 government, 22 private), 32 facilities provide PMTCT (22 government, private) and 10 Anti-Retroviral Therapy (ART) centres (6 government, 4 private) existed in the country<sup>111</sup>. The Gambia's health care delivery system<sup>112</sup> is organized into a hierarchical three-tier system: Village Health Services (VHS) providing primary care, Major and Minor Health centres providing secondary health services, and Hospitals providing tertiary health services. There are 7 public hospitals at the tertiary level; 6 major health centres and 41 minor health centres at the secondary level; 40 community clinics and 634 Primary Health Care Villages at the primary level. The public health system is complemented by more than 60 other special private, NGO and community managed health facilities. HIV-related services are provided mainly among the tertiary and secondary level facilities (HMIS Report, 2012—Annex 13). Administratively the National AIDS Council (NAC) provides overall strategic and policy leadership and oversight to the national response to HIV. NAC was formed in 2002 and is composed of representatives of Government, PLHIV, Civil Society, Private Sector, development partners, academic and research institutions. The National AIDS Secretariat (NAS) is the administrative structure of NAC, which is responsible for day-to-day coordination and management of the national response. NAS has established multi-sectoral committee and taskforces that provide suitable platforms for stakeholder participation in coordination of the response. These include the ARV Steering Committee, National PMTCT Coordinating Committee, National PMTCT Technical Working Group, National Monitoring & Evaluation Reference Group (MERG), Regional AIDS Committees, The National Orphans and Vulnerable Children Committee, Inter-Grant Coordinating Committee and National HIV Training Committee.

The Gambia has made tremendous progress in reducing morbidity and mortality related to HIV and AIDS<sup>113</sup>. The UNAIDS estimates<sup>114</sup> that the Joint Programme has established that the AIDS

---

<sup>110</sup>Country Report on The Gambia 'African Gender and Development Index Survey 2000-2012' 27.

<sup>111</sup> HIV and AIDS Policy 2014, p10

<sup>112</sup> The Global Fund Standard Conceptual Note, p9

<sup>113</sup> Recent DHS data shows that 1.9 percent of adults age 15-49 were infected. Prevalence rate is 2.1 percent among women and 1.7 percent among men. HIV prevalence peaked at 5.9 percent in the 35-39 age groups for both sexes. Banjul is lowest (1.1 percent) and highest is Mansakonko (2.9 percent).

<sup>114</sup> Piot P, Abdool Karim SS, Hecht R, Legido-Quigley H, Buse K, Stover J, Resch S et al. Defeating AIDS – advancing global health. The Lancet. 2015; 386(9989):171-218.

epidemic can be ended as a public health threat by 2030. However, for the Gambia, additional efforts are required for the country to achieve universal access to a comprehensive prevention, treatment and care package. To that effect the Gambia has developed a comprehensive HIV and AIDS Policy (2014) that provides the framework for the delivery of a nationwide response to the reduction of HIV and AIDS. HIV and AIDS is still one of the major public health and development challenges of The Gambia. The estimated number of people living with HIV (PLHIV) in the country according to the 2012 sentinel surveillance is projected at 32,380; the age groups 15-49 accounting for 11,030 People Living with HIV (PLHIV)<sup>115</sup>. The socio-economic burden of HIV/AIDS on individuals, families and the state is not sustainable because funding in this area is all covered by donor support.

The ART Survival Study (2013) documented mortality rates at 12 months among those started on ART of 12% and 8% for 2010 and 2011 cohorts respectively. The 24 months mortality rate for the 2010 cohort fell dramatically to 3%. Secondary analysis of the available data from the ART Survival Study gave an overall mortality of 8.5 per 100 person-years of observation. Additionally, data from the RVTH (now EFSTH), national tertiary centre, indicates a mortality rate of 6.2% for all enrolled PLHIV in 2012.

Heterosexual transmission, however, continues to be the main mode of spread of HIV in the country. Preliminary DHS 2013 Report indicates a national prevalence of 1.9%. This figure is higher than the 2011 and 2012 Sentinel Surveillance estimates of 1.65% and 1.57% for HIV prevalence respectively. The HIV epidemic<sup>116</sup> is largely driven by infections among Key Affected Populations (KAPs). Based on available evidence in The Gambia, the KAPs by definition include Female Sex Workers and ‘other KAPs’. The DHS findings indicate that despite the several policy, strategy and financial investments in the fight against this major social menace, HIV is still a major challenge to the socio-economic development of The Gambia. The 2012 Behavioural Change Surveillance indicates an increase in risk of infection with age of the woman. The percentage of positive women age 25-34 years almost doubles (54.9%) those within the 15-24 years (32.1%). The 2012 report also shows that women with college level education were least infected with HIV (0.9%) as opposed to women who attained primary, secondary (15.2%), madarasa/Arabic and no education (39.3%). The findings<sup>117</sup> tend to show a strong correlation between the socio-economic status of the woman and risk of HIV infection. These findings, therefore, call for revolutionary approaches for prevention of new HIV infection in the population to achieve the national goal of reducing the burden of HIV and AIDS on the population of The Gambia to a level where it ceases to be a major public health problem. HIV related death rate is still high and stigma and discrimination of PLHIV is still high<sup>118</sup>.

---

<sup>115</sup> 2012 National Sentinel Surveillance Report

<sup>115</sup> Country Classification July 2012 World Bank

<sup>115</sup> Programme for Accelerated Growth and Employment

<sup>115</sup> The Gambia GARP Report 2012

<sup>115</sup> The Gambia 2010 Behavioural Surveillance Survey on HIV and AIDS Report

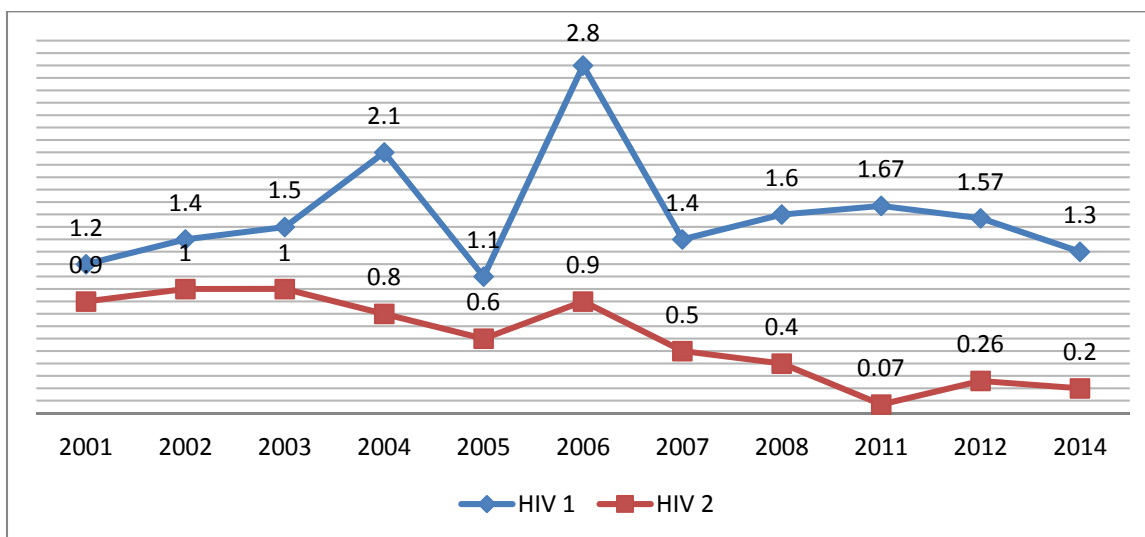
<sup>115</sup> Treatment Care and Support Situation Report (Ousman Nyan), October 2013

<sup>116</sup> The Global Fund Standard Conceptual Note, p4

<sup>117</sup> Nation HIV and AIDS Policy, 2014. Piii.

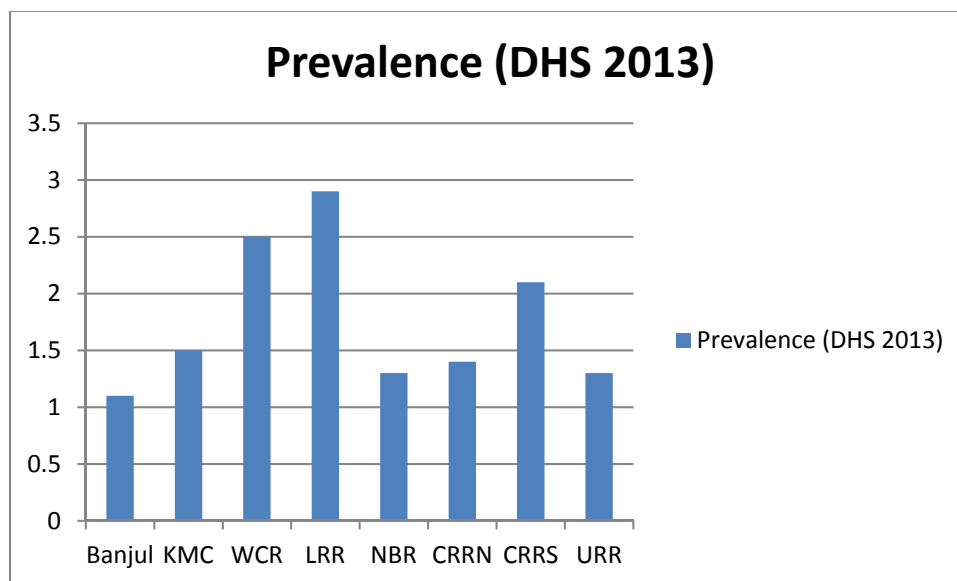
<sup>118</sup> The Gambia PLHIV index stigma and discrimination study of 2009 found out that sixty-seven percent (67%) of interviewees had experienced enacted stigma at least once during the previous year. Forty-five percent (45%) experienced employment discrimination and 23% experienced housing discrimination. Twenty-five percent (25%) skirted nearby hospitals and clinics, going to distant facilities to seek for care. Six percent (6%) had been denied services in the past year. Three percent (3%) of women were tested for HIV without their knowledge and 12% of participants were tested without informed consent.

Figure 5.1: Percent of population with HIV 1, HIV 2 and Dual by Survey Period



Source: NAS Report 2014

Figure 5.2: Prevalence of HIV



Source: Demography Health Survey, 2013

Figure 5.1: Percent of population with HIV 1, HIV 2 and Dual by Survey Period

The major international HIV and AIDS funding support to the Gambia is from the Global Fund. Partners such as UNICEF, WHO, UNDP, UNFPA, IDB, Global Alliance for Vaccine Initiative (GAVI) and various bilateral partners, also provide financial and/or technical support to the health sector. However the Global Fund support to the Gambia reduced from over US\$29 million to the period ending June 2015 to US\$13,598,585dollars for the period July to December 2015-2017<sup>119</sup>. Given funding challenges all the health system pillars based on World Health Organization's (WHO)'s six building blocks of: human resources for health <sup>120</sup>; health financing; health information; health service delivery; medicines, vaccines and medical technology; and leadership/governance (stewardship) are consequently considerably weakened

The Global Fund Project for Malaria, HIV/AIDS and TB are major contributors to the provision of pharmaceutical and medical products. However, uninterrupted availability of supplies requires that the requisite financial resources are allocated effectively and efficiently. Government budgetary allocation for health products has not increased significantly lately despite major increase in demand due to population increase, rapid increase in public hospitals and a significant decrease in the purchasing power of the national currency. During community consultations PLHIV were unanimous that they suffer the negative effects of the periodic shortages of medicines and other medical supplies. The bureaucratic process involved in the procurement of pharmaceuticals and other medical supply also requires improvement.

Overall, in the Gambia there is growing demand for health care services which has led to an increase in the number of health facilities and the need for more skilled staff<sup>121</sup>. This is exacerbated by inadequate output from the health training institutions and the high attrition rate from the public health sector. During consultations key informants expressed concern about the inequitable distribution of available health care professionals. The pay and incentive packages for health care professionals does not seem to have paid dividends for poor and especially rural communities. As at 2013, the health financing strategy in place is the Cost Recovery Programme – payment of user fees. This strategy was introduced in 1988 as part of the Economic Recovery Programme of the country. Government allocations to the health sector as a percentage of the total national budget have ranged from 7% to 10% over the past five years<sup>122</sup>. This is still below the 2000 Abuja Declaration of 15% of total government budget to be allocated to the health sector. In 2007, the first National Health Accounts (NHA) for The Gambia was produced covering the fiscal years 2002 – 2004. The results revealed marginal increase in total health expenditure. As a percentage of GDP, the total health expenditure was 16.1% in 2002, 13.9% in 2003 and 14.9% in 2004. Per capita health expenditure was D895 in 2002, D1026 in 2003 and D1203 in 2004. The trend has deteriorated in recent years and this scenario compromises the health status of poor populations and PLHIV.

Overall mortality due to AIDS is projected to decrease by almost 70% from 688 in 2014 to 208 by end of 2019<sup>123</sup>. The recent TB prevalence study conducted in 2012 in The Gambia showed a

---

<sup>119</sup> Current Global Fund approved funding for the Gambia

<sup>120</sup> According to the Health Management Information System Service Statistics Report (HMIS 2012), there are 1,357 trained health workers in the public sector. About 72% of these are trained nurses and midwives, 15% medical doctors, 9% public health officers and 4% others. The proportion of medical doctors is 1:8,993 populations, Nurses 1:1,784.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid.

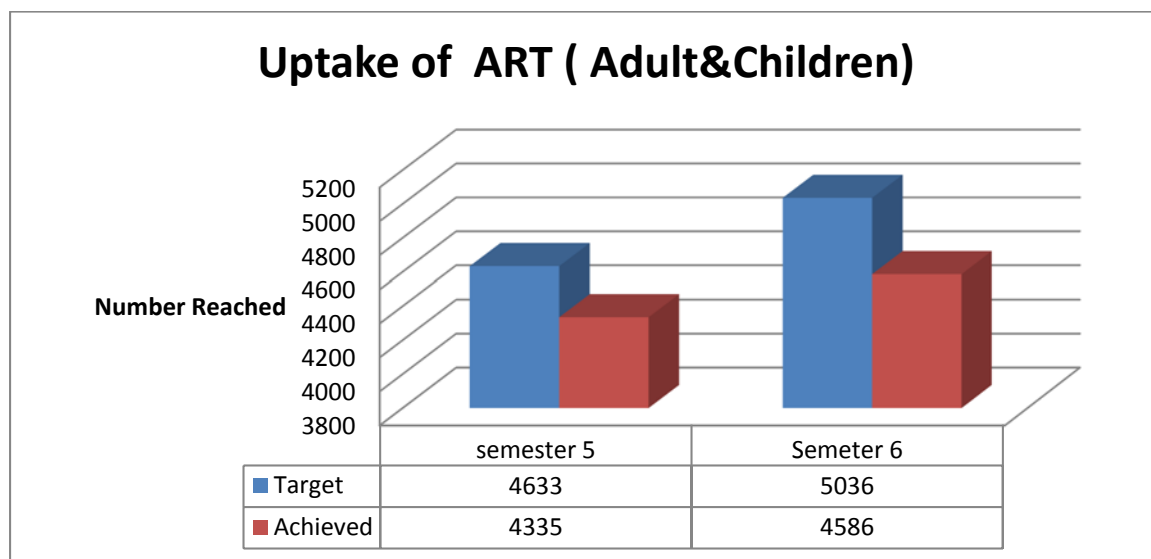
<sup>122</sup> Budget estimates for the period 2002 – 2007.

<sup>123</sup> Budget estimates for the period 2002 – 2007.

<sup>123</sup> The Global Fund Standard Concept Note, p6.

prevalence of rate of 128 per 100 000 population which is 3.8 times less than the WHO estimate of 490 per 100 000 population for The Gambia. The incidence of TB in the same study is 130 per 100 000 and the prevalence of smear positive TB is 53 per 100 000 which is 5 times less than the WHO estimate of 292 per 100 000 population (GAMSTEP 2012-annex 6). About 35% of HIV patients in care were screened for TB in 2013. The HIV prevalence among the cohort of TB patients in 2013 was 14% compared to 16% for 2012 (NLTP Case Notification Report-Annex 7 and Global TB Report 2013-Annex 8). Overall the number of PLHIV on ART is commendable as a percent of the national population.

Figure 5.3: Figure 5.3:



Source: NAS Report 2014

Emerging issues around HIV Testing and Counselling (HCT), Prevention of Mother to child transmission (PMTCT) leading to elimination of Mother- to-Child Transmission (eMTCT), the 2015 new WHO treatment guidelines and increasing availability of antiretroviral therapy call for changes in the policy direction. Key priorities for the national response should be among others Prevention of New Infections; Reduction of morbidity and mortality; Impact mitigation and Response Management. These can be achieved by:

- Implementation the Three Ones Principle
- Strengthening capacity for input –output and impact monitoring , analysis and reporting
- Strengthening capacity for surveillance and Operational Research
- Better management of the HIV and AIDS Policy Advisory Committee
- Strengthening financial resources mobilization for the national HIV response

As noted elsewhere in this assessment the national HIV prevalence in The Gambia is estimated at 1.9% among 15-49 of the general population. The country has a generalised low HIV epidemic characterised by disparities in prevalence levels among the regions and pockets of high HIV prevalence concentrated among key populations<sup>124</sup>. The government has determined that although

<sup>124</sup> IBBS 2011

the HIV epidemic is low, the national response needs to be scaled up and sustained to ensure that gains made are not reversed and the impact of the epidemic is reduced to the minimum<sup>125</sup>. HIV remains as a public health problem and remains high among our national development agenda priorities through a multi-sectoral approach, all government sectors should continue to mainstream and scale-up HIV and AIDS programmes in their respective constituencies.

The communities remain concerned about:

- (a) The lack of integration into school curricula of reproductive health education, the lack of sufficient youth centres which provide youth-friendly reproductive information and services, and the low knowledge of HIV transmission and prevention among the population;
- (b) The legal provisions considering abortion as an offence except to save the life of a pregnant woman, which result in the likelihood of pregnant girls and women who are affected by HIV/AIDS seeking risky illegal abortions.

During consultations civil society groups and communities added their voices as follows:

- Strengthen reproductive health education by, inter alia, making it part of school curricula, and improve knowledge and availability of relevant services with a view to preventing HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and reducing teenage pregnancies
- Provide adequate access to affordable modern methods of contraception, including emergency contraception
- Decriminalize abortion; ensure that the best interests of pregnant teenagers are guaranteed.
- ensure access to age-appropriate information and education on sexual and reproductive health rights for girls and boys
- Expediently amend Article 29.1 of the Women's Act to abolish the reference to "personal law" so as to ensure women's access to health care services, including those related to family planning

### **Summary Achievement of the HIV Response through a Gender Mainstreaming Lens<sup>126</sup>**

According to the most recent National Sentinel Surveillance (NSS) study conducted among 6120 antenatal women in 12 health facilities (3 hospitals and 9 health centres) in 2011, the prevalence of HIV-1 is estimated at 1.67% and HIV-2 at 0.07%.<sup>127</sup>

Measures are being taken to address the gender aspects of HIV and AIDS. A comprehensive **National HIV AND AIDS Strategic Framework (NSF) 2009-2013** has been adopted to guide the national response to HIV AND AIDS. The NSF aims at reducing the percentage of women and men aged 15-49 who are HIV positive from 2.8% in 2006 to 1% by 2014; decrease mortality among PLHIV from 23% in 2004 to at least 10% by 2014; and improve quality of life for OVC, PLHIV and their families and other vulnerable groups by 2014.

**Voluntary Counselling and Testing (VCT), Anti-retroviral therapy (ART)**, services for prevention of parent to child (PPTCT), and treatment for infections are offered free of charge. As of 2012, the number of HIV counselling and testing has increased to 48 and 32 PMTCT sites have been established. 69,533 people tested and all received their results in 2012 and 62% of HIV

---

<sup>125</sup> The National Strategic Plan for HIV and AIDS 2015-2019.

<sup>126</sup> Adapted from National Review Report on The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action-Beijing Plus 20

<sup>127</sup> National Aids Secretariat, *Country Progress Report: The Gambia (Reporting Period 2010-2011)* (2012) 6.

positive pregnant women received ARV prophylaxis for PMTCT by 2011. In addition, there has been a scaling up of the ART centres from 6 in 2007 to 10 in 2011 established at least one in each Health Region to increase access. High survival rate among PLHIV 12 months after treatment increased from 82% in 2010 to 86% in 2012.

NAS supported the training of 414 health care personnel of various cadres and 161 health technicians. In addition, NAS supported the UTG to establish the Health Technician Training Programme as well as refurbish the training institutions, including providing them with furniture, ICT equipment, teaching and learning aids. The GWEP has mainstreamed HIV as an issue to be addressed. The framework on Accelerated Country Action for Women, Girls, Gender Equality and HIV has been launched and is currently being implemented. Violence against women has been recognised as both a cause and consequence of HIV. NAS recently trained security officers at the TDA areas on GBV, HIV and human rights

## 5.6 Water and Sanitation

As one of a few MDG indicators that the country has achieved, the proportion of the population with access to safe drinking water reached 91% in 2013 (DHS, 2013). This has occurred despite relatively limited spending by government in the area of water supply, as spending on the water subsector was equivalent to 2.6% of social spending (0.01% of GDP). The achievement of this MDG indicator is due mainly to donor funding in projects such as the Gunjur Water Scheme, Rural Water Supply Project, the Kotu Ring and the 100 Water Points.

Table 5.6: Access to Improved Water and Sanitation Facilities, 2010 and 2013

Indicators for Water and Sanitation	2010	2013
Access to improved water source	85.8	91.0
Proportion living with water on premises	32.0	46.1
Proportion living within 30 minutes (round trip)	35.8	42.3
Proportion living more than 30 minutes (round trip)	17.0	10.9
Living with improved sanitation	N/A*	39.8

\* Figures from the MICS 4 do not distinguish between shared and not shared improved facilities. As a result, could not be compared with the DHS figures of 2013.

Despite achieving the DG target of having 86% of the population with access to safe drinking water, work still needs to be done in the area of sanitation. Results of the 2013 DHS show that less than 40% of the population has access to improved sanitation, although there is a caveat. The definition for improved sanitation requires a household to have met the requirements of an improved sanitary facility whilst not sharing with others households. The preponderance of sharing is a major contributor to low improved sanitation figures. Although progress has been made since 1990, the “...fragmentation of the sanitation sector, giving rise to a weak and confusing institutional framework for sanitation and hygiene coordination”<sup>128</sup> has slowed progress towards achieving the MDGs related to sanitation. Significant human capacity constraints also exist, leading to a need to for training (short and long term) at the senior & middle management levels in government and civil society. Vocational training for artisans and technicians of sanitary facilities should also be considered. Noting the progress achieved in improving access to safe drinking water and sanitation, concerns remain that access by the population in rural areas to safe

<sup>128</sup> The Gambia National Policy for Sanitation and Hygiene, 2011

drinking water and sanitation remains inadequate. During consultations civil society groups and communities added that continued attention should be given to providing universal access to safe drinking water and to adequate sanitation facilities, particularly in rural areas.

The National Policy for Hygiene and Sanitation (2011) laments the lack of coordination between the different stakeholders in the area and recommends “*improving inter-sectoral and inter-agency coordination and management of sanitation and hygiene issues in the country*”<sup>129</sup>. An area where coordination can have a lasting effect is in the area of nutrition, health and sanitation at the school level. Statistics from MoBSE show that in 2015, 13% of schools in the country lack access to safe drinking water. Although the majority of schools have access to safe drinking water lack of adequate sanitation more still needs to be done in order to achieve universal coverage for schools. An area where progress is being made is in sanitation, with 82% of schools having separate toilets for boys and girls. Increasing efforts to achieve 100% for school is crucial that a lack of sanitation and hygiene facilities that cater to the gender needs of adolescents can contribute to a reduced willingness for girls to attend school (at the upper basic and secondary levels). The implementation of programmes such as the school feeding programme can be integrated with issues of hygiene and sanitation, allowing UN agencies to tackle multiple child related issues within the same setting.

### 5.6 Water and Sanitation

As one of a few MDG indicators that the country has achieved, the proportion of the population with access to safe drinking water reached 91% in 2013 (DHS, 2013). This has occurred despite relatively limited spending by government in the area of water supply, as spending on the water subsector was equivalent to 2.6% of social spending (0.01% of GDP). The achievement of this MDG indicator is due mainly to donor funding in projects such as the Gunjur Water Scheme, Rural Water Supply Project, the Kotu Ring and the 100 Water Points.

Table 5.8: Access to Improved Water and Sanitation Facilities,\* 2010 and 2013

Indicators for Water and Sanitation	2010	2013
Access to improved water source	85.8	91.0
Proportion living with water on premises	32.0	46.1
Proportion living within 30 minutes (round trip)	35.8	42.3
Proportion living more than 30 minutes (round trip)	17.0	10.9
Living with improved sanitation	N/A**	39.8

\* Refers to a household with an improved sanitation (see DHS for definition) that is not shared with another household.

\*\* Figures from the MICS 4 do not distinguish between shared and not shared improved facilities. As a result, could not be compared with the DHS figures of 2013.

Despite achieving the DG target of having 86% of the population with access to safe drinking water, work still needs to be done in the area of sanitation. Results of the 2013 DHS show that less than 40% of the population has access to improved sanitation, although there is a caveat. The definition for improved sanitation, requires a household to have meet the requirements of an improved sanitary facility whilst not sharing with others households. The preponderance of sharing is a major contributor to low improved sanitation figures. Although progress has been made since 1990, the “...*fragmentation of the sanitation sector, giving rise to a weak and confusing institutional framework for sanitation and hygiene coordination*”<sup>130</sup> has slowed progress towards achieving the MDGs related to sanitation. Significant human capacity constraints also exist,

<sup>129</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>130</sup> The Gambia National Policy for Sanitation and Hygiene, 2011

leading to a need to for training (short and long term) at the senior & middle management levels in government and civil society. Vocational training for artisans and technicians of sanitary facilities should also be considered.

The National Policy for Hygiene and Sanitation (2011) laments the lack of coordination between the different stakeholders in the area and recommends “*improving inter-sectoral and inter-agency coordination and management of sanitation and hygiene issues in the country*”<sup>131</sup>. An area where coordination can have a lasting effect is in the area of nutrition, health and sanitation at the school level. Statistics from MoBSE show that in 2015, 13% of schools in the country lack access to safe drinking water. Although the majority of schools have access to safe drinking water lack of adequate sanitation more still needs to be done in order to achieve universal coverage for schools. An area where progress is being made is in sanitation, with 82% of schools having separate toilets for boys and girls. Increasing efforts to achieve 100% for school is crucial that a lack of sanitation and hygiene facilities that cater to the gender needs of adolescents can contribute to a reduced willingness for girls to attend school (at the upper basic and secondary levels). The implementation of programmes such as the school feeding programme can be integrated with issues of hygiene and sanitation, allowing UN agencies to tackle multiple child related issues within the same setting.

### **5.7 Population Divergence and its Impact on Social Service Provision**

As mentioned above, there has been tremendous success in reducing mortality rates for infants, children and mothers over the past 15 years. This achievement, coupled with a stagnant fertility rate (5.6 in 2013 compared to 5.1 2005) has translated into a fast population growth rate. The Gambia has one of the world’s fastest growing populations (3.3%), with little sign of slowing down. Contraception use among married women 15-49 is only at 9%. With rains becoming more erratic over time and also average rains (period and amount) falling over time, rain fed agriculture has become less reliable as a stable source of income. Add to the mix a crumbling Primary Health Care system and a poorly educated youthful population and we have the makings of all the ingredients for a rural urban migration explosion. It is estimated that close to 65% of the rural area’s productive capacity has been lost due to the internal migration (MoFEA, 2011).

Extreme, unidirectional internal migration has adverse effects on the economy and pose additional challenges of their own. It is estimated that 60% of the country’s population lives in the urban areas; an area that covers less than 20% of the country’s area. This leaves the remaining 40% on 80% of the land. The first effect is the divergence in population densities between the urban and rural areas (see Table 5.7 below). The increased density in the urban areas has led to a strain on social services such as electricity, water, housing, transportation and pollution. This has led to increases in fares, electricity and water tariffs and transport fees, yet supply has yet to meet demand. There is no doubt that government needs to invest more in these services in order to prevent a collapse of these basic services.

With a divergence in population densities leading to urban areas being 50 to 60 times denser than rural areas, government has to decide how to allocate resources between two segments of the population. To ignore the urban areas is to invite a collapse of the urban area with the effect being poor electricity and water supply, poor roads, increase in pollution, high rental process and an

---

<sup>131</sup> *ibid.*

increase in crime. Transportation times will also increase as road quality collapses and the demand for transport further outpaces supply.

If the rural areas are ignored, the result would be an increase in poverty levels leading to a further escalation of the internal migration, further requiring more resources to be diverted to the urban areas. To avoid such a scenario, there is an urgent need for government to increase spending in social services now (especially in education, health and agriculture) before the country reaches a tipping point. Reigning in debt and allocating a larger proportion of the budget to development expenditures would be a good start.

Table 5.9: Population density, National and by LGA (1973-2013)

<b>LGA</b>	<b>1973</b>	<b>1983</b>	<b>1993</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2013</b>
Banjul	3204	3613	3461	2867	2539
Kanifing	522	1344	3021	4272	4992
Brikama	52	78	133	221	390
Mansakonko	26	34	41	45	50
Kerewan	41	50	69	77	98
Kuntaur	33	39	46	54	66
Janjangbureh	38	48	62	75	87
Basse	42	54	75	88	115
<b>The Gambia</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>127</b>	<b>174</b>

Source: Gambia Population Estimates, GBOS Authorities

The results of the last Integrated Household Survey show that the poverty rates are nearly 3 times higher in rural areas than urban. Similar results were found in the study on Growth and Multidimensional Poverty in the Gambia, 2015. Tackling poverty in the rural would require government working in close collaboration with donors and CSOs, using a multi-pronged approach. This is due to the fact that the causes of and solutions to reducing poverty span a number of sectors. From low agricultural output, to poor education and a lack of job prospects, all these play their part in keeping incomes low and poverty high in rural areas.

The primary health care system needs to improve to tackle maternal and child health illnesses. Providing access to health care to the rural population at their doorstep would greatly reduce the burden currently placed on the secondary and tertiary levels of the health care system. The number of basic and upper basic schools in the country is unprecedented, but there is a need to increase the number of senior secondary schools. There is also a need to improve the quality of teachers in rural areas to reduce the need for children to migrate to urban areas for senior secondary schooling. The current plans of MoHERST to have a TVET institution in every region needs to be supported. This would offer alternative routes for those who have an interest in acquiring vocational skills as opposed to going through the academic route. Having a youthful labour force with vocational skills could lead to the provision of better quality and a more diverse range of products by MSMEs in rural areas. One such area is in inclusive tourism, where a study has shown the inability of MSMEs

in rural locations frequented by tourist to take advantage due to the perceived poor quality of products.

## **5.8 Key Issues and Challenges**

### **Health system**

The health system in The Gambia is faced with a plethora of challenges, chief among which are in the areas of human resource capacity, weak monitoring mechanism (especially timely data collection), poor quality of services provided at all levels and a large number of areas without primary or secondary care access nearby. These issues cited above have led to:

1. A weak PHC system with health centres that constantly experience stock out of supplies and equipment.
2. Frequent complaints by people at the community level about the poor service on offer at public health facilities as has been seen in the community interviews.
3. A lack of data pertaining to a number of health indicators that are essential to monitoring the PAGE and UNDAF.
4. Reduced demand for health services, particularly for ANC and under 5 services.

### **Education sector**

Enrolment and completion rates have increased in the country over the last 5 years. This has occurred across all regions, although significant differences can still be found. The quality of the system, as measured by examination results and the efficiency of the system show that there is still a lot that needs to be done. Pass rates at the GABECE are relatively high, but for the WASSCE, the pass rate of 5% (5 credits including maths and English) is abysmally low.

The significant disparities that are observed across the regions can mostly be attributed to poverty and the lack of social amenities (electricity, access to running water, improved sanitation, nutrition etc.) that are beyond the control of the education ministries. Data shows that the disparities in terms of school per capita and teacher per capita by region is not significant, although the issue of quality teachers has been raised by communities in their education sector discussion. The perception by the communities in the rural areas is that the teachers are not adequately equipped to teach and need to be replaced.

The popularity of distributive trade can be viewed as a symptom of the lack of opportunities for the youth due to limited formal education. The importance of education in creating opportunities for the youth, especially skills training cannot be overstated. Less than 12% of the labour force have any form of skills training (either formal or informal), whilst nearly half have little or no formal education. This means that out of every 10 workers, 5 have little or no education and only one has any form of skills training. Assuming that the person with the skills training is part of the 5 people with little education, then there are 4 people with little education and no skills. This is an upgrading and scaling up of the TVET system can help to create opportunities for the labour force, particularly the youth of the country.

#### **5.8.1 Priority areas for Government**

##### ***The Health System***

There is a need to strengthen and scale up the current PHC system to be more effective and cover a wider geographical area. Health centres also need to be provided with equipment and prescription

drugs on a consistent basis. The issue of low staff morale and high attrition also must be tackled if the Health sector is to adequately serve the population.

The PHC system, which serves as the primary point of contact for a majority of the country would relieve the current strain on the Health centres and District hospitals. Reinvigorating the PHC system will require building new health posts, re-training of PHC staff/ volunteers, adding new settlements into the PHC system, training staff & volunteers for the new PHC settlements and providing equipment & drugs for health workers in all PHC settlements.

To achieve all the above, funding needs to be available. The Ministry of Health and Social Welfare needs to put PHC at the forefront of its agenda moving into the Next Development Plan. It is imperative that the Ministry shows to donors that it means business when it comes to the much-delayed revitalization of the Primary Health Care system.

### ***Education Sector***

Although a great deal of improvement has been registered, there is a need to increase the number of senior secondary schools in rural areas. There is also a need to improve the quality of teachers in rural areas to reduce the need for children to migrate to urban areas for senior secondary schooling. Improving quality should be a focus of the Next Development Plan through continuously upgrading teachers and increasing pay to attract better teachers.

The Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education should focus on increasing retention (completion rates) at the secondary levels also. Increased investment in ECD to increase enrolment should continue to be at the forefront of the Ministry's plans in the NDP.

The focus on TVET is essential in helping transform the labour force, both rural and urban, to match the needs of an economy that seeks to transform from agriculture based economy to a more industry and service-oriented economy. Coordination between the Education ministries (MoBSE and MoHERST) and the ministries responsible for Tourism, Agriculture and Trade is vital in order to ensure that skills taught by TVET institutes cater to the needs of the private and export sectors.

### ***Internal Migration and Social Service Investment***

Internal migration has picked up over the past decade leading to a divergence in population density between the urban and rural areas in favour of the urban areas by a factor of 50 to 60. If this continues, there will be a strain on public services in the urban areas, resulting in increased pressures on infrastructure and escalating costs of providing and maintaining public (and social) services for people in urban areas. There is an urgent need for government to allocate spending on social services in rural areas to help stem and possibly reverse the flow of internal migration. Investments should focus on:

- a. **Electricity:** The bid to expand electricity access to rural areas must continue, along with steps to reduce the unit cost, to make it within reach of households with lower income levels. The current steps taken by the government to join the OMVG grid is step in the right direction that could reduce the gap between demand for and supply of electricity in the country, whilst also addressing the high cost of energy.
- b. **Agriculture sector:** Farmers in rural areas are surely desperately in need of inputs that would help in increasing output. Quality seeds and access to reliable water supply are two of the main challenges at the production stage. Provision of improved seed varieties is a direct way of solving this issue. There should be an increase in agricultural extension workers to train farmers on the

most current farming techniques and pass on challenges faced by farmers, to policy makers at the central (or district) level.

### ***5.9 Opportunities for UN System Support and Collaboration with Government***

#### ***Health and Nutrition***

Over the past 15 years, the country has made tremendous strides in improving health indicators as a whole, and in particular the areas on maternal and child health, and mortality. Of concern is the recent reversal in some maternal and child related health indicators. There is high malnutrition in children and pregnant women, relatively low contraceptive prevalence rates and a stagnant skilled delivery statistic (between 2005 and 2013). The drought of 2011, combined with the erratic rains of 2014, has not allowed farming households, especially those in rural and peri-urban areas to adequately cope with these shocks. Food security has begun to creep up, putting children, women and vulnerable populations at greater risk. Gains that have been made are likely to be lost if steps are not taken. The UN agencies responsible for health, nutrition and food security need to step in to address these emerging issues before they turn into full blown crises. The UN agencies need to ensure that a holistic approach in tackling the interrelated issues of health, nutrition and food security. The main areas of focus should be:

1. Addressing the increase in child malnutrition from birth to 12 years of age, as results of the recent evidence shows that malnutrition has increased for children under 5 as well as for children 5 to 10 years of age. The current school-feeding programme should play a greater role in helping to address the issue of nutrition by working with other UN agencies able to provide expertise, funding and logistics to scale up the programme.
2. Addressing the human resource constraints have been identified as one of the main challenges faced by the health system and other local partners engaged in activities related to health, nutrition and food security. The focus on building capacity of health staff should continue to be a priority for the UN agencies.
3. Ensuring there is regular monitoring of indicators. A coordinated and joint approach to gathering data for monitoring and evaluation must be emphasized by the UN and implementing partners in government and non-government agencies.
4. Improving Coordination and management of funding in the sector, in line with the Health Policy.
5. Moving towards universal health coverage and adequate health services (PHC).

#### ***Health System: Increasing Access, particularly for the vulnerable population***

Although government must be at the forefront of advocating for the revitalization of the Primary Healthcare System, the UN must be ready to provide support in the form of capacity development, funding and supply of equipment & supplies. The current state of the PHC has led to decrease in the quality of service provision. Demographic changes since the PHC was initially implemented have left a good number of vulnerable populations without access to basic healthcare. By supporting the revitalization of the PHC system, the UN can use the PHC system to build on other interventions currently used, such as communication (community and household level), education and provision of social protection services. Strengthening of the PHC can be used as a stepping-stone towards achieving Universal Health Coverage for the population, which can offer quality and is affordable.

### ***Education***

The low hanging fruit of increasing access has been extremely successful over the last 15 years. The focus should now be on increasing completion rates at both primary and secondary levels. Early marriage is one of the main reasons for girls dropping out at the secondary level. Implicit education costs (uniforms, books, extra classes) are another reason that are not well understood for The Gambia, but studies have shown have a strong relationship with dropping out. Programmes such as the school feeding programme should be expanded and the possibility of conditional cash transfers used as an incentive for parents facing financial difficulties to keep their children in school. As in the area of health, nutrition and food security, there is scope for agencies such as UNICEF, WFP and FAO to work jointly in tackling this issue. This would increase the potency of the interventions and prevent overlapping projects benefitting the same set of people whilst leaving out other vulnerable populations.

### ***Non-communicable and Tropical Diseases***

The specific challenges to combat NCDs in The Gambia include scarcity of both financial and skilled human resources, and adequate infrastructures. There is no reliable and recent data available for and to both children and adults to give the full extent of the burden of NCDs. The population also lack information and knowledge about unhealthy diet and lifestyle such as tobacco use, physical inactivity and harmful use of alcohol and their impact on their health.

This therefore means the best methods to combat these challenges include emphasizing primary prevention measures, including promotion of healthy lifestyles; intensifying advocacy initiatives at all levels to ensure more resources are allocated to NCDs; strengthening UN System collaborative efforts in dealing with health, food and nutrition, education and financing to health; and UN System and GoTG collaboration in reducing the NCDs burden.

### ***HIV/AIDS Linkages***

Key challenges remain as weak policy and strategic leadership of the national response: The NAC has not been meeting regularly and thus affecting policy and strategic direction as well as oversight of the national response.

- Weak coordination and mainstreaming of the response in public and private sector institutions. Majority of public sector institutions (line ministries), do not allocate adequate resources for their HIV and AIDS programmes.
- A systematic and all-inclusive capacity gap analysis has not been conducted. This makes it difficult for the country to invest in strategic capacity development for the national response.
- Inadequate strategies and resources for sustained advocacy, to improve the policy and legal environment necessary to effectively address HIV stigma and discrimination and safeguard the rights of PLHIV, other KAPs and Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC).
- Weak capacity of civil society networks and individual civil society organizations (CSOs) to effectively coordinate and implement the national response. These organizations are mostly located in rural or remote areas, operate with limited human resources, and are often staffed by volunteers. Most of the CSOs lack sufficient experience and systems to access resources to strengthen their management systems.
- There is limited strategic information on FGM, rape, early marriage and other forms of gender based violence and how they influence HIV transmission.

As a way forward there is need for further engagement with partners (e.g. UN, Private,) to increase funding of HIV activities. More advocacy is required for the involvement of NAS and other HIV stakeholders during annual work-plans development to avoid duplication and maximize resources. The UN system needs to intensify advocacy for access to HIV services for KAPs. In particular UNAIDS<sup>132</sup> should expand its work uniting with key movements in the arenas of women and children's health, working with such initiatives as Every Woman, Every Child and the Partnership on Maternal, New-born and Child Health to achieve collective momentum in scaling up the response and improving maternal and child health outcomes.

More work should also be done with young people, empowering them to strengthen programmes to prevent HIV and stem urban migration<sup>133</sup>, renew the dialogue with the family planning community and their own 2020 agenda to maximize synergies with regards to contraceptive choice, triple protection against HIV, other STIs, unwanted pregnancies and reproductive health care delivery. To transition into the Sustainable Development Goals agenda the UN system should continue to research new models to fast track the response and continue to adhere to and nurture principles of good partnership. UN system's leadership, inclusiveness, political advocacy, funding and effective communication will be essential to progress during the coming period<sup>134</sup>.

---

<sup>132</sup> UNAIDS Strategy for 2016–2021, p63

<sup>133</sup>Stakeholder consultations for the development of the Regional Consultations on the UNAIDS Strategy 2016 – 2021 were unanimous that “the Rural/Urban Migration will impact on the response as we continue to observe continued influx of people into major towns resulting in increased level of poverty and increased risks of transmission and the need for more HIV/Aids services. Therefore, this translates into the need to expand prevention and treatment services in these towns/cities faced with limited resources” Report, p5.

<sup>134</sup> UNAIDS Strategy for 2016–2021, p64

## **CHAPTER 6: GOVERNANCE, JUSTICE AND HUMAN RIGHTS**

### **6.0 Introduction**

Promotion of good governance and respect for human rights are requisite pillars for ensuring sustainable development and the building of a resilient nation. Good governance, justice and respect for human rights principles are important national objectives set out in the Constitution of The Gambia (1997) to guide the work of the State and all citizens, institutions and agencies. As stated in the “Transitional and consequential provisions” section: “For this Constitution contains our will and resolve for good governance and a just, secure and prosperous society.” and “The fundamental rights and freedoms enshrined in this Constitution will ensure for all time respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, without distinction as to ethnic considerations, gender, language or religion”. Chapter IV – Protection of Fundamental Rights and Freedom - of the Constitution fully elaborates the rights and freedoms of citizens. To fully appreciate the broad scale of socio-economic, civil and political topics, legal framework and mechanisms, and the national and international obligations of The Gambia, this chapter is presented in two sections. The first summarizes current milestones the government and its partners are working on, including: judicial sector reform; civil service reform; decentralization; and the state and role of civil society actors. The second section of the chapter deals with the challenges the country is confronted with in terms of human rights, access to justice and governance. This CCA recommends that the government should build on its achievements to incorporate imperatives of appropriate SDGs including SDGs 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and especially 16.

### **6.1 Judicial Sector Reform**

#### **Critical issues and policy framework**

To raise the accessibility and quality of legal services, the judicial system is faced with major constraints which include insufficient human and institutional capacities coupled with inadequate financial resources to consolidate and sustain the reforms initiated. These constraints have resulted in court delays and difficulties in accessing justice especially for the poor. Over the years the Government developed policies with programmes to address these constraints.

#### **Programmes and actions to address the constraints**

Significant efforts undertaken over the years to address these constraints include: reinforcing the Department of State for Justice’s administrative and management capacity; elaborating a human resources strategy for the legal sector which takes account of the University’s Law Department; enhancing the capacity of the Attorney General's Chambers to coordinate and supervise the unified criminal justice system; improving the Registrar General's and Curator of Intestate Estates’ operations; establishment of an alternative dispute resolution (ADR) system to increase access to justice (particularly of the disadvantaged), decongesting the courts, reducing delays, supporting and complementing court reform and reducing the cost of litigation. The existing infrastructure (courts, equipment) has been upgraded and measures have been taken to foster efficient dissemination of legal information; update and harmonize the legal and regulatory framework; the establishment of a National Agency for Legal Aid (NALA); and promoting access to justice especially for children in conflict with the law through the establishment of children’s court.

## **Key Issues and Challenges**

The reform initiatives continue to be affected by many constraints which include human, institutional, financial, and organisational and logistics inadequacies. The attrition rate for lawyers at the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) is quite high. On average, lawyers stay only between 3-5 years at the MoJ.<sup>135</sup> This is principally linked to an inadequate number of lawyers and low remuneration Vis a Vis other public institutions and the judiciary. Even though lawyers at the MoJ are better paid than their counterparts in the civil service as a result of allowances they receive, their salaries lag behind those working for satellite agencies under the MoJ, public enterprises and judges.

Currently the MoJ runs a highly centralised legal service with only one office, even though most of its legal services are required by Gambians across the country. Persons wishing to register a business or CBO must travel to Banjul and spend more on transport than registration fees. This also affects persons living in the diaspora. This defeats the MoJ's mission and strategic objectives of providing accessible and affordable quality legal services. Accessibility of the MoJ is desired with a permanent presence in the major urban and rural centres. The children's courts and the services of the NALA are still limited and mainly centred in the GBA.

## **Priority Actions for Government**

It is against these and other challenges that the MoJ developed a strategic plan which has identified the following key priority areas: i) Promote and Protect Justice for all, Rule of Law and Good Governance; ii) Human Resource Development and Capacity Building; iii) Institutional Development/ Strengthening/ Support Facilities; iv) Partnership and Resource Mobilization; v) Information, Educational and Communication/Advocacy; vi) Promoting Economy, Efficiency and Effectiveness in Quality Service Delivery; vii) Strengthening Coordination Mechanisms (Organizational Structure and Functions); and viii) Ethics and Behavioural Issues. Other priority areas include increased access, capacity building at community levels and strengthen

## **Opportunities for UN and Development Partners collaboration**

Support the Government in the capacity development to promote and enhance good governance, justice and the rule of law particularly in the areas of logistics and information system, training at the decentralised levels, and strengthening access to justice for children in conflict with the law.

## **6.2 Decentralisation**

### **Policy framework and actions undertaken**

In 2002 the Government enacted the Local Government Act after a broad consultative process. The Act seeks to bring government nearer to the people and provide them with an opportunity to participate fully in the development process at the local and community level. Decentralisation to promote good governance at the local level is also seen as a cornerstone for maintaining peace and attaining the development objectives of the PAGE and Vision 2020. Decentralisation to promote good governance at the local level is also seen as a cornerstone for maintaining peace and attaining the development objectives of the PAGE and Vision 2020. To ensure success the act provides for both political and financial devolution. Since its enactment, the Local Government Finance and Audit

---

<sup>135</sup> Attorney General's Chambers And Ministry of Justice Strategic Plan (2015 – 2019), August 2014

Act was enacted in 2004, the Decentralisation Policy approved in 2007, Local Government Service Commission Regulations in 2010; and Local Government Staff Service Rules in 2006. These legal instruments provided the regulatory framework for the decentralization policy with provision for the devolution of functions, services and powers vested in the Ministry to Councils.

### **Key Challenges**

Generally, progress has been slow in translating the policy intentions of decentralisation into an effective local government system capable of ensuring improved service delivery and contributing to the improvement of rural livelihoods. This is mainly due to:

- i. The limited capacity of councils to drive the decentralization process;
- ii. The narrow revenue base of some councils to effectively carry out meaningful development in their communities; and
- iii. The continued failure of the Central Government to effect fiscal transfers as required by the Local Government Act 2002 to provide councils with much needed funds.

### **Priority Actions for Government**

Some of the key intervention areas as highlighted in a recent assessment report include<sup>136</sup>

- a. Building Council staff capacity for transformational leadership;
- b. Building Council staff capacity on management systems, strategic planning, monitoring and evidence-based decision making;
- c. Strengthening the Council Development Planning system and its links with rural livelihood activities, including the revamping and training of sub district structures such as Village and Ward Development Committees;
- d. Building Council financial capacity, management, transparency and accountability so they can finance and implement services and demand-driven rural livelihood activities;
- e. Building the capacity of the Ministry of Lands and Regional Government, to ensure that the Ministry can ably coordinate and drive the processes, and support the Councils efficiently and effectively in the implementation of the decentralization Policy;

### **Opportunities for UN and Development Partners collaboration**

There is a need for the UN System and other donors to support the decentralisation process particularly in the area of capacity building at both the central and the decentralised levels. Although daunting, the challenges are not insurmountable. However they require a renewed commitment of the Government and donors. Recent experience of UNDP support to Kuntaur Area Council, one of the poorest in the country, shows what can be achieved with improved organisation and strengthened capacity. Not only did the council increase its revenue but it was the only one that did not have to take an overdraft to pay its staff.

## **6.3 Civil Service Reform**

Public sector institutions play a central role in the delivery of infrastructural and social services and in the creation of an enabling environment for the private sector to realize its full potential. The sector's institutional performance is a critical factor in the design and implementation of development programmes as well as in the effective realization of policy goals and development targets. The public service is required to provide the vital human and institutional capacity and to

---

<sup>136</sup>Review of The Decentralization Process In The Gambia, September 2012

create and sustain the environment for these policies to be implemented successfully. The critical issues facing the public service are human resource capacity, absorptive capacity, aggravated by scarce technical and financial resources.

### **Programme Initiatives and actions**

To meet these challenges the Personnel Management Office has undertaken some reforms which included capacity building within ministries, human resource management, result-based management and service delivery.

### **Key Challenges**

The challenges faced by the civil service include its size which raises issues of sustainability; the limited analytical capacity of many Government institutions, especially in policy analysis, policy-making and planning. This limitation is aggravated by the high attrition of high-level staff at technical and policy levels which raises the issue of security of tenure within the civil service. Other issues relate to the poor management of human resources, and the quality of the civil service delivery and its efficiency. However, some proposed reforms such as the development of a pay strategy and the conduct of a new grading and job evaluation exercise are yet to take place.

### **Recommended Priority Actions for Government**

Among the priority actions recommended is to streamline the size of the civil service to manageable proportion and improve the pay and working conditions of the staff. In this regard the proposed reforms of a pay strategy and the conduct of a new grading and job evaluation exercise should be implemented. These reforms are to be supported by capacity building programmes to improve the quality of service delivery. Oversight institutions such as the Ombudsman and the Industrial Tribunal should be strengthened with capacity building, more financial resources and greater autonomy.

### **Opportunities for UN and Development Partners collaboration**

The UN System and donors can provide an important support in capacity development of the civil service, particularly in the areas of policy analysis and human resources management.

## **6.4 Civil Society Actors**

Civil Society actors, comprising NGOs and CBOS have been very active in the socio-economic development of The Gambia. Within the overall policy framework and priorities defined by the Government, they have supported the Government to achieve its policy objectives. Over 68 NGOs are registered with the Association of NGOs (TANGO) (2008)<sup>137</sup>. In terms of administrative oversight, all NGOs have to register with the NGO Affairs Agency, a Government institution under the Office of the President that provides oversight over the activities and performance of NGOs. To facilitate coordination and consultation among NGOs an Association of NGOs (TANGO) was established. This umbrella organisation aims to promote collaboration among NGOs and facilitate their growth through capacity building and identifying funding sources.

---

<sup>137</sup>The Association of Non-Governmental Organizations -TANGO- Membership Directory, 2008

### **Noteworthy Programmes and initiatives**

Operating at local and community levels their activities have contributed to improving the lives of many people through interventions in health, education, agriculture, natural resources, gender and HIV/AIDS as well as human rights. With respect to human rights there are a number of NGOs working in this field, such as GAMCOTRAP advocating for women's rights, particularly against FGM; the Female Lawyers Association providing legal aid to women; Gambia Press Union; Gambian Federation for Disabled; ActionAid, TANGO, IHRDA, Concern Universal, Child Protection Alliance, Conscience International, etc.

NGOs making a vital contribution in the Health Sector include:

- The Gambia Family Planning Association (GFPA) and BAFROW run the MCH and the Well Woman Clinic. The Gambia National Association of AIDS Support Societies (GAMNASS) gives support to people living with HIV/AIDS.
- Home based care services continue to be provided by CSOs like Hands on Care, GRCS and organizations of PLWHA such as Santa Yalla, Nyanaikyiling and Mutapola. HIV/AIDS prevention activities are carried out by Nova Scotia Gambia Association (NSGA), TANGO, Lend a Hand Society (LAHS), Gambia Red Cross Society (GRCS), the Trust Agency for Rural Development (TARUD), NASSO, Soul Talk and Concern Universal.
- Action Aid International The Gambia (AAITG) as a principal recipient of the Global Fund provided nutritional and educational support to Orphans and Vulnerable Children.

### **Key Challenges**

Whilst NGOs and CBOs are considered the most appropriate vehicle to reach out to communities and ensure participatory approaches, they face deficiencies in managerial and technical capacity and resource constraints to effectively deliver on their mandates especially among the local CSOs. Other challenges, especially for those working in the area of human rights, include the close monitor of their activities by the NGO Affairs Agency, resulting in organizations exercising self-censorship. NGOs do not easily state that they are active in the area of human rights and governance. There are reports that (women) human rights defenders have faced harassment, attacks, threats and intimidation.

### **Recommendations to Government**

There is a need for greater dialogue and cooperation between the CSOs, the Government and other actors. This may require establishing a multi-sectoral structure for coordination, implementation and monitoring of programmes by Government, CSOs and the UN System. To improve access to justice and develop a conducive environment for human rights, good governance and participation, the government should: monitor the human rights situation and bring abuses to public scrutiny and debate; support the work of local CSOs working on the promotion and protection of human rights; respect the independence of NGOs; and take concrete steps to facilitate the work of human rights defenders to ensure that NGOs can safely carry out their functions in a manner consistent with the principles of a democratic society. Institutions and capacities of state actors, non-state actors and oversight bodies should be enhanced to promote accountability, human rights, equitable access to justice for all and people's participation in decision making processes at all levels.

Whilst NGOs and CBOs are considered the most appropriate vehicle to reach out to communities and ensure participatory approaches, there are important challenges that need to be recognised and addressed to increase the capacity and effectiveness to deliver, including: (1) Improvement of

management skills including financial management and governance (decision making processes and information sharing); (2) Development of resource mobilization skills (projects and funding proposals); (3) Development of technical skills in project implementation (development of monitoring systems, skills in participatory rural appraisal, advocacy etc.).

### **Opportunities for UN and Development Partners Collaboration**

There is a lot of room for the UN system to address these challenges and partner with civil society actors to deliver services at the community level. Several UN agencies have shown good experiences in this area. UN agencies have supported these efforts, for instance OHCHR, UNICEF and UNFPA worked on strengthening NGO capacities. Other examples include UNDP's support to the TRY OYSTER Association, a local NGO involved in the Tanbi Wetland Complex in multifocal interventions for addressing environmental sustainability as well enhancing livelihood systems for the oyster harvesters.

## **6.5 Human Rights**

Human rights cover many areas which are treated below in terms of the achievements, challenges and recommendations to government. Improving humans is already responding to SDG 16 which requires countries to promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.

### **6.5.1 Improving capacities of non-state actors and communities for participation in governance, national dialogue, decision making, human rights and the rule of law**

#### **Achievements**

The achievements thus far include: (1) the provisioning of information to non-state actors on how to contribute to the Universal Periodic Review process and to use Special Procedures mechanisms, which resulted in a relatively large number of submissions from civil society; (2) the organization of an awareness-raising campaign with civil society actors on access to justice for women; and (3) training sessions organized on governance and human rights issues for non-state actors.

#### **Key Challenges**

The following challenges remain:

1. Despite the trainings and awareness campaigns there has not been any significant improvement in NGO participation in national dialogues and decision making, or engagement with Government on governance and human rights issues.
2. There are limited processes and institutions facilitating national dialogue on governance. The shrinking space for divergent views and dissenting opinion has constrained the unfettered participation of the general public on governance issues. In the community consultations the participants expressed little or no ability to hold duty bearers accountable.
3. There is a perceived mistrust between Government actors and representatives from civil society which results in inadequate consultations and unexploited opportunities for synergy.
4. There is only a limited implementation of recommendations from the Universal Periodic Review (UPR). Many of the 2010 recommendations have not been implemented and

similarly those of 2015 (see annex on recommendations from UN human rights mechanisms).

5. Civil society engagement with international human rights mechanisms has increased, but enlargement of the enabling environment for civil society actors to work is constrained (particularly in areas considered ‘sensitive’). Further capacity strengthening (both technical and institutional) is of crucial importance ;
6. Limited capacities of human rights defenders (within the government and from civil society), which needs to be addressed with support and training on monitoring and reporting, engaging with human rights mechanisms, advocacy and actions towards the implementation of UPR, Special Rapporteurs and Treaty Bodies observations and recommendations.

### **6.5.2 Capacity to promote accountability, transparency, the rule of law and to protect and report on international instruments (CRC, CEDAW, ACRWC, etc.) for human rights**

#### **Noteworthy Achievements**

Government and UN Agencies cite the following achievements: (1) preparation and submission of overdue reports to the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (May 2012), the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (October 2012), and the Committee on the Rights of the Child (October 2011), following a training on UN treaty body reporting provided by OHCHR in 2011; (2) a strengthened National Assembly to perform public accountability oversight functions; and (3) a draft Bill exists for the establishment of a National Human Rights Institute.

#### **Key Challenges**

The outstanding challenges in this area include:

1. Timely reporting: reports to treaty bodies are often submitted after the deadlines and there is still a significant backlog of outstanding reporting obligations to be met, most notably to the CERD and the ICCPR;
2. Capacity of reporting: reports are usually elaborated with the support of international agencies, particularly the UN, prompting questions about capacity issues and knowledge management. As a result, engagement of the Gambia with UN human rights mechanisms is partial and often subject to the availability of external funding. When reports are submitted, some of the Treaty obligations are met and the recommendations are not implemented;

#### **Recommended Actions to Government**

1. A permanent national coordination mechanism in charge of monitoring the implementation of recommendations of international and regional mechanisms should be established and provided with the necessary resources to function;
2. Ratification: A significant number of core human rights instruments have not yet been ratified, or the instrument of ratification still needs to be deposited. These include: OPICESCR, OP-CEDAW, ICMW, CED, CAT, OP-CAT, OPICCPR-2, OP-CRC-AC;
3. Domestication: The ratified treaties are not fully domesticated in the national legal framework (see annex on recommendations from UN human rights mechanisms);

4. Establishment of the National Human Rights Institution. NHRIs that fully comply with the international principles (Paris Principles) play a crucial role in promoting and monitoring the effective implementation of international human rights standards at the national level. The NHRI draft law should be revised to ensure its conformity with the Paris Principles and enacted by the National Assembly. It is crucial to safeguard the independent function of the NHRI with adequate resources and proper election/appointment procedures of its members.

### **6.5.3 Justice sector reform and oversight mechanisms at national and decentralized levels. Achievements**

Noteworthy achievements in this area include: (1) decentralization of the justice system with court sittings in all the administrative Regions of the country; (2) establishment of Children's Courts, and training of police and prison officers on child rights; (3) training of police officers on human rights issues and gender-based violence, and inclusion of gender-based violence into the curriculum of the police training academy; (4) extension of the Alternate Dispute Resolution system (ADRS) to two other administrative Regions; and (5) establishment of the National Legal Aid Agency (NALA) and the extension of its services to two administrative Regions beyond Banjul.

#### **Key Challenges**

The following challenges remain:

1. Limited awareness of human rights among all law enforcement agencies;
2. Limited funding for initiatives relating to governance and human rights
3. Limited capacity of key actors to carry out the reporting and other tasks required under international obligations.

#### **Recommendations to Government**

1. Revision of the Criminal Code and laws need to conform to international norms and standards (see annex on recommendations from UN human rights mechanisms);
2. Strengthening of the capacities of key actors (relevant Ministries, National Assembly and Judiciary) on the harmonization of laws.
3. Establish a more robust system for the security of tenure of Judges and Magistrates.
4. Provide more dedicated funding for initiatives at Government level pertaining to governance and human rights to reduce reliance on donor funds.
5. Trainings of law enforcement officers on human rights should be continued and extended to target not only the Gambia Police Force, but also the NIA and NDEA, etc.;
6. Full integration of human rights issues in the training curricula of law enforcement officers.

### **6.5.4 Capacity of Media practitioners in advocating for MDGs/SDGs, equity and human rights.**

#### **Achievements**

1. Provision of training to NGOs and media houses on the MDGs and human rights issues were organized with UN support. However, this has not translated into increased coverage

## **Key Challenges**

1. Only limited coverage of human rights issues and the MDGs by the media;
2. Self –censorship as a result of the restrictive national legal framework, limited press freedom, access to information, and the relatively high frequency of arrests of journalists and the severe penalties, especially on human rights issues.
3. Adoption of commercial approach by media houses, featuring publications and programs that are paid for by the general public and the private sector, and therefore limiting the space that may be available for unsponsored publications and programs, such as human rights issues and the MDGs.

## **6.5.5 International human rights instruments ratification and domestication**

The Gambia has ratified the following international human rights instruments:

- ✓ International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD);
- ✓ International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and its Optional Protocol ((OP)ICCPR);
- ✓ International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR);
- ✓ Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW);
- ✓ Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC);
- ✓ Optional Protocol to the CRC on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography;
- ✓ Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD);
- ✓ African Union Convention on Preventing and Combating Corruption;
- ✓ Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa.

The Gambia adopted the following legislative measures:

- 1) Domestic Violence Act and Sexual Offences Act 2013;
- 2) Women’s Act 2010;
- 3) National Legal Aid Act 2008;
- 4) Trafficking in Persons Act 2007 and its amendment in 2010;
- 5) Labour Act 2007;
- 6) Children’s Act 2005.

The Gambia approved the following institutional and policy measures:

- 1) Maternal and Child Nutrition and Health Results Project 2014 – 2018;
- 2) National Plan of Action for Accelerated Abandonment of Female Genital Mutilation 2013-2017;
- 3) National Plan of Action on Gender Based Violence 2013-2017;
- 4) National Nutrition Policy (2010–2020) and the establishment of the National Nutrition Agency;
- 5) National Gender Policy and Women Empowerment (NGPWE) 2010-2020;
- 6) National Education Policy 2004–2015;
- 7) National Agency against Trafficking in Persons;
- 8) Special Needs Education and Inclusive Policy Framework 2009 – 2015;
- 9) National Early Childhood Development Policy Framework 2009 – 2015.

## Recommendations to Government

To ensure full respect for human rights, access to justice and good governance, The Gambia needs to consider acceptance of several international norms by **ratification** of the following conventions:

- 2<sup>nd</sup> Optional Protocol to the ICCPR, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty;
- Optional Protocol to the ICESCR;
- Optional Protocol to the CERD;
- Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT) and its Optional Protocol (deposit instrument of ratification, as ratified by the national assembly in 2006);
- Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (CMW);
- Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (CED);
- Optional Protocol to the CRC on the involvement of children in armed conflict;
- Ratify ILO Convention No. 189 (2011) concerning Decent Work for Domestic Workers.

To ensure full effect and harmonization of national legislation, the following pending actions need to be considered:

- On the Child Act:
  - Amend to cover issues related to child marriages, FGM and child labour;
  - Effectively enforce the Act, including by establishing a monitoring mechanism;
  - Strengthen its dissemination among law enforcement agencies, religious and community leaders, local government authorities and the general public.
- On the Domestic Violence Act:
  - Ensure its enforcement, including by providing adequate budget and administrative structures as well as trained professionals and policy / decision-makers;
  - Harmonize legislation, including the Constitution, the Women's Act and personal laws (Sharia and customary law) with CEDAW, by repealing all discriminatory provisions to ensure that women and girls enjoy equal rights as men in all areas of life.
- Other legislation requiring review:
  - Repeal Article 33(5) 1997 Constitution providing that the prohibition of discrimination does not apply to adoption, marriage, divorce, burial and devolution of property on death;
  - Repeal Criminal Code (Amendment) Acts sections 144 and 147 on "carnal knowledge of any person against the order of nature... and any other homosexual act" and "aggravated homosexuality";
  - Repeal or amend The Indemnity Act of 2001;
  - Repeal or amend The Information and Communication Act of 2013;
  - Review legal provisions that impede freedom of expression and repeal or amend amendments to the Criminal Code which broaden definitions and impose harsher penalties for various offences, such as sedition, libel, public disorder, and giving false information;
  - Repeal or amend Section 18 (4) of the Constitution, which sets the threshold for the use of force excessively low;
  - Incorporate provisions into the Constitution and laws for an absolute and non-derogable prohibition of torture and make torture offences punishable by appropriate penalties;

- Amend the Criminal Procedure Code concerning evidence to be admitted in judicial proceedings to explicitly exclude any evidence obtained as a result of torture;
- Review criminal legislation on drug offences and sentencing policies on drug offences and other lesser, non-violent offences to reduce lengthy sentences.

Key comprehensive policy and strategic frameworks that await further action include:

- The National Child Protection Strategy needs to be adopted, plans for its implementation developed and sufficient resources allocated;
- The Ministry of Children's Affairs should be rendered operational to coordinate activities related to the implementation of the CRC;
- Allocation of sufficient resources for the protection and promotion of the rights of the child, including Department of Social Welfare and the Ministry of Justice;
- Implementation of the National Plan of Action for Accelerated Abandonment of FGM;
- A study on domestic violence and development of a comprehensive national strategy to prevent and address all forms of violence against children.

The following **regional and international mechanisms** require Government action:

- Formulate a national action plan, through an inclusive process, to implement UPR recommendations;
- Ensure regular and timely reporting to the human rights treaty bodies;
- Invite the Special Rapporteur on Prisons and Conditions of Detention of the ACHPR;
- Extend a standing invitation to all special procedures of the Human Rights Council;
- Implement resolutions 134 (2008) and 145 (2009) of the ACHPR and comply with the rulings of the ECOWAS Court of Justice in the cases of Mr. Hydera and Mr. Manneh;
- Commit to full respect of the terms of reference for fact-finding missions, including for an investigation of the Manneh and Hydera cases.

### **Specific Recommendations:**

#### **Non-discrimination**

Comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation needs to be adopted: All legislation that results or could result in discrimination, prosecution and punishment of people because of their sexual orientation or gender identity should be repealed or amended, including the 2014 Criminal Code Amendment on "aggravated homosexuality"; and legal provisions discriminating against girls and youth, particularly relating to inheritance. Leaders should take more active roles to prevent discrimination. All necessary measures should be taken to ensure equal access of children with disabilities to public services, in particular health care and education. The situation of children in the most marginalized or disadvantaged situations (e.g. children born out of wedlock, children living in poverty, working children, children in street situations, children living in rural areas, and refugee children should be addressed as a matter of priority. Individuals who engage in freedom of expression, association or peaceful assembly should not be target of intimidation, harassment or violence.

#### **Availability of Resources**

To enable better access to justice and improve the human rights environment the government should increase budgetary allocations and regularly assess the adequacy and available resources in the justice system.

### **Dissemination and awareness-raising**

More active measures should be taken to raise awareness and systematically disseminate and promote the human rights instruments, taking into account the high illiteracy levels, in particular in rural areas. The capacity of technical experts and members of the judiciary should be strengthened on the respect, protection and delivery of human rights.

### **Access to information**

Legislations and regulations governing the conduct of law enforcement officials should be publicly available and easily accessible. Affordable internet access, particularly for disadvantaged and marginalized individuals and groups and in the remote areas, could enhance access.

### **Good Governance**

The emerging issue of corruption, particularly in the public sector, and the lack of effective mechanisms to address the issue has led the government to embark to a strategic approach. An anti-corruption bill has been developed and awaiting approval of the National Assembly. Government has planned a study tour to inform on the establishment of a National Anti-Corruption Institution.

The following recommendations are proposed for effective anti-corruption drive and improved accountability:

- Combat corruption and impunity and ensure that public affairs are conducted transparently;
- Raise awareness of politicians and officials on the economic and social costs of corruption;
- Make judges, prosecutors and the police aware of the need for strict enforcement of the law;
- Ensure security of tenure for government officials, including high-ranking ones;
- It was noted that during PAGPEG settings some irregularities of financial dispensation of resources were not properly dealt with and adequate follow up of PAGPEG recommendations is lacking. It is recommended to speed up the establishment of the anti-corruption commission to follow up on this;
- The mandate of PMO and PSC should be respected.

### **Access to justice**

A fully functioning and effective justice delivery sector is the foundation for the rule of law. Key stakeholders in the justice delivery system, including the judiciary, the prosecuting authority, prisons and correctional services, law enforcement agencies and legal practitioners, are critical for effective access and delivery of justice. A major challenge in The Gambia's justice system is the limited access to justice and inadequate access to government legal aid services. Although the ADRS and NALA facilitate improved access to justice, particularly for the marginalized, the services are limited. The poor and vulnerable population, particularly women, children, youth, unemployed, landless and people living with disability remain disadvantaged in terms of their access justice due to the prohibitive costs. Specifically for women, there are social and cultural practices, norms and attitudes that become systemic barriers to their access to justice. The underlying causes are attributed to the constraints in financial, human and capital resources that reduce the ability of the justice law and order institutions to effectively deliver justice. The judiciary faces capacity limitations which have negatively affected the quality of case management, despite support provided by the UN and other partners. For communities, the root

cause is attributable to extreme poverty and reliable income to pay for legal services, which significantly limits their ability to access justice. Inadequate policy, legislative and institutional frameworks for accessing justice have also compounded the inability of the judicial system to deliver justice due to the minimal application of normative standards on justice derived from international, regional and national instruments.

### **Recommendations**

- Design a comprehensive judicial policy to eliminate barriers faced by women and girls in accessing to justice, including legal aid;
- Promote appointment of more women judges in the judiciary, including in Cadi and District Tribunals
- Ensure women's effective access to justice (including to refugee women) by ensuring confidential and gender-sensitive complaint mechanisms, reinforcing the legal aid programmes, duly prosecuting alleged perpetrators of violence by a competent criminal court, and protecting and compensating victims;
- Enhance women's awareness of their rights and legal literacy;
- Build the capacities of government and CSOs to give timely advice to affected individuals;
- Lawyers should be empowered to take up cases of human rights violations, without fear for reprisals.
- Ensuring an active role of the judiciary in the oversight of places of detention;
- Establish an independent mechanism to investigate allegations of torture or ill-treatment, prosecute those responsible and impose administrative and judicial penalties;
- Guaranteeing detainees the right to a lawyer; and access to a lawyer from the moment of deprivation of liberty; and ensure that they are brought before a magistrate within 48 hours;
- Guaranteeing detainees the possibility to challenge the lawfulness of their detention by having NALA and the judiciary visits to locate detainees entitled to habeas corpus relief or bail;
- Investing in NALA to operate independently and have sufficient qualified lawyers to provide services to persons charged with any offence from the moment of apprehension through all stages of criminal proceedings, including investigation, detention, interrogation, arrest and incarceration, to ensure compliance with the rule of law and to demand improvements as necessary;
- Training of judges to have a more effective role in safeguarding detainees' rights.
- There is a need to improve detention conditions and put in place the rights mechanisms to reduce overcrowding.

There is need to improve the monitoring and inspection mechanisms of places of detention.

### **On Freedom of expression**

Specific Recommendations include:

- Review provisions in the laws that are not conform with international standards and with the constitution;
- Build the capacities of law enforcement agencies and government agencies on the subject;
- Establish a self-regulatory mechanism to regulate the media;
- Build the capacities of media practitioners and organizations;
- Facilitate a dialogue between the government and the media
- Investigate attacks on freedom of expression;

- Ensure that individuals who engage in freedom of expression, association or peaceful assembly are not targeted through tactics of intimidation, harassment or violence.

### **Law enforcement:**

Norms and regulations on the use of force by law enforcement appear not to be fully compliant with international standards, including the Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials and the Code of Conduct for Law Enforcement Officials.

It is recommended that:

- The independence and effectiveness of the Human Rights Unit within the Gambian Police Force is strengthened and that similar units within the NIA and the NDEA are established;
- Further human rights training provided to law enforcement, correctional service officers and military personnel to ensure that human rights are an integral part of the curricula;
- Investigations are conducted into alleged violations by law enforcement agencies and perpetrators convicted;

### **Accountability and investigations of allegations of human rights violations**

To strengthen accountability and investigations of allegations of human rights violations, it has been recommended to:

- Investigate cases of extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary execution, enforced disappearance, arbitrary detention and torture or ill-treatment and bring perpetrators to justice;
- Ensure that victims and their families obtain redress and compensation;
- Establish mechanisms to provide victims with medical, psychological and social rehabilitation;
- Ensure that medical staff can conduct independent examinations at the time of arrest, upon transfer to another place of detention or upon request;
- Train law enforcement, military and prison authorities in human rights law to ensure that procedures are compliant and that preventative measures are integrated in their working methods;
- Ensure the carrying out of independent forensic examinations into all deaths in custody;
- Seek assistance to establish a training programme for forensic experts on the assessment of ill-treatment and torture, and train prosecution and the judiciary on how to evaluate forensic reports.

### **Prisons and Places of Detention**

There is need to strengthen the monitoring and inspection mechanisms of prisons and places of detention. This could include creating a system of regular prison monitoring by national and independent experts, and establishing an effective complaints mechanism. The establishment of the National Human Right Commission could enhance the monitoring and inspection mechanism, especially in collaboration with national and international NGOs. This should go hand-in-hand with training for law enforcement, health and legal professionals on international human rights standards and on detecting, reporting and preventing torture and ill-treatment.

There is also need to improve the conditions of places of detention and put in place the rights mechanisms to reduce overcrowding through targeted programs. The review of cases of non-violent and low-risk offenders to release them unconditionally or under reasonable conditions so

that bail and effective monitoring becomes a standardized practice, considering time spent in custody on remand during sentencing, providing training to the judiciary in case management, implementing a fast-track system for less serious cases and ensuring that detainees are tried within a reasonable period. To further strengthen the criminal justice system, more emphasis should be further move from a purely punitive penal system to an approach including reform, rehabilitation and reintegration. To further improve the conditions of prisons, inmates should be provided with the minimum acceptable amount of floor space, quantity of air, adequate sanitary conditions and opportunity for physical exercises. Establishing an independent body under the Ministry of Health to regulate and improve the quantity and access to health care for inmates and the quality of prison food could also be considered. Additionally and special recommendation for women inmates are:

- Ensure that female inmates are protected from gender-based violence and sexual harassment;
- Ensure that women are under the supervision of female guards and that gender-sensitive complaint mechanisms are available to them;
- Ensure that all cases of violence against women in detention are investigated and prosecuted;
- Uphold the UN Rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-custodial Measures for Women Offenders (the Bangkok Rules) and implement alternative measures, especially for women who are pregnant or have dependents;
- Conduct a study on infanticide and ensure that women charged with infanticide have access to psychological assessment and care.

### **Administration of juvenile justice**

The population welcomes the provisions of the Children's Act 2005 providing for the establishment of five children's courts, alternative measures to detention, raising the age of criminal responsibility, and the abolition of the use of corporal punishment in the juvenile justice system. People also welcome the adoption of the Legal Aid Act 2008. However, there is concerned about:

- The establishment of only three equipped children's courts;
- The reported lack of implementation of alternative measures to detention provided for in the Act;
- The lack of separate detention facilities for boys and girls and the lack, in most police stations, of separate pre-detention facilities for children and adults, as well as in transport;
- The limited use of legal aid due to the insufficient human resources allocated to NALA and the low level of awareness among the population of the existence of legal aid. As a result, some children are left in detention until they reach adulthood before they are taken to court;
- The need for public awareness-raising on the Children's Act;
- The need for continuing and strengthening the training of the police, magistrates and social workers on the provisions of the Children's Act and on international standards regarding the administration of the juvenile justice system;
- The weak capacity of Child Police Welfare Officers.
- The need for training the judiciary and government officials so that bail and other alternatives to detention are considered for children in conflict with the law;
- The absence of specific legal provisions on the conditions of detention of children, especially regarding visitation rights;
- The restrictive access to the children's court and juvenile centres by non-government actors.

- The limited measures taken for rehabilitation, reintegration and follow-up of children.

### **Sexual Exploitation of children.**

In Africa, UNICEF and ECPAT International have conducted research during the past years in order to understand better how to prevent and stop sexual exploitation of children and to seek justice and assist victims. For instance, in 2006-2007 ECPAT groups in six African countries (i.e., Zambia, Togo, The Gambia, Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda) in collaboration with ECPAT International initiated a study to examine the “Linkages between HIV/AIDS and the Commercial Sex Work. A 2013 Sexual Exploitation of Children in Africa study for Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children in the Gambia” showed that most of the children engaged in commercial sex are aged between 14 to 17 years and are mainly girls. It was also discovered that the number of young boys engaged in commercial sex is on the rise as there is an increasing number of male tourists seeking young boys. Children engaged in commercial sex are predominantly poor.

So far, no mechanisms, procedures and guidelines to ensure mandatory reporting of cases of child sexual abuse and exploitation have been established. So far, no programmes and policies for the prevention, recovery and social reintegration of child victims have been developed.

#### **Recommendations:**

- Legislation relating to sexual abuse and exploitation should be effectively enforced.
  - Actions to respond to health, legal and psychosocial needs of child victims of sexual exploitation should be strengthened and activities of awareness-raising to combat sexual exploitation of children and to ensure efficient coordination between all actors should be resourced.
- Ensure that mandatory reporting is done and fight against the culture of silence & maslaha;
  - Initiate reporting mechanisms in relation to sexual exploitation of children and youth;
  - Strengthen the capacity and operational mandate of the GT Board to effectively respond to the issue;
  - Reinstate police as the TSU with the mandate of investigating and prosecute rather than the army;
  - Adopt the legal age of marriage to 18 as child marriage can be seen as a form of sexual violence.

### **Street children**

There is absence of detailed information on the number and situation of street children. There is concern about reports of children forced to beg or work in the street. Despite Government actions, this is still in existence and in different dimensions. Communities and civil society participants urged government to:

- Study the causes and scope of the issue of street children situations and measures to provide protection and assistance, and prosecute of child labour offences;
- Increase surveillance to track down children and their families engaged in the new dimensions of begging to identify the root cause and seek preventions measures with the aid of NGOs;
- Implement a comprehensive policy to address the root causes;

- Ensure that children in street situations are provided with adequate means of living in order to support their full development and return and reconciliation with their families and community;
- Develop prevention programmes to ensure that children, including Almudos children, are not forced to work or beg in the street, and involve the Islamic religious education teachers or Marabouts in the development of these programmes, when deemed relevant.

## **6.6 Gender-based violence**

The recommended actions in this section are in line with SDG 5 which seeks to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls which include eliminating all forms of violence against all women and girls in public and private spheres and elimination of all harmful practices such as female genital mutilation.

### **6.6.1 Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C/C)**

In 2010 the UNFPA/UNICEF Joint Programme and Trust Fund for the accelerated Abandonment of Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C) in collaboration with the Women's Bureau contracted AFRICONSULT to undertake a Situational Analysis of FGM/C in The Gambia to map out stakeholders, coverage, best practices, perspectives and impacts of the existing interventions. The Analysis established that FGM/C is a harmful traditional practice and a form of violence that directly infringes upon women and children's rights to physical, psychological and social wellbeing. Female Genital Mutilation /cutting therefore is an act, which "comprises all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genital or other injuries to the female genital organs whether for culture or other non-therapeutic reasons", (WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA, 1997:3).

The Government of the Gambia should be applauded for the development of the National Action Plan (NaPA) on FGM/C. This Plan was supported under the UNICEF /UNFPA Joint programme for accelerating the abandonment of FGM/C in 17 countries within a generation<sup>138</sup>. The partnership for the implementation of the National Action Plan with civil society, religious leaders, community leaders and faith based organizations is essential in enhancing local level commitment to the abandonment of FGM/C practices. The Plan is aimed at the attainment of article 5 of the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the Maputo Protocol and Children Act 2005. The fight against FGM/C and other Harmful Traditional Practices in the country has been difficult, challenging and protracted because it evokes a lot of sensitivities from numerous quarters resulting to strong patriarchal resistance<sup>139</sup>.

In The Gambia, FGM/C is practiced by all ethnic groups but more predominantly by Mandinka, Jola, Sarahule and Fula ethnic groups each of which has prevalence rates of more than 80%. The overall prevalence rate in The Gambia stood at 78.3% each of which has prevalence rates of more than 80%. The practice is moderate among the Serere and Wollof ethnic groups. Differences have been observed amongst women in various regions with the practice more prominent in URR (99

---

<sup>138</sup> The National Action Plan (NaPA) on FGM/C (2012). The formulation of the NaPA on FGM/C was guided by three studies conducted in 2010 notably: Situational Analysis on FGM/C in the Gambia, and the Gender Based Violence Study as well as the Multi-sectoral Cluster Indicators Study MICS4.

<sup>139</sup> Situational Analysis Report on FGM/C in the Gambia 2009

%), LRR (95.9 %), NBR (60.8 %) and Banjul (44.8%). (MICS 2005; GBoS 2007). According to the MICS 2005/2006, 72.9% of the women interviewed reported that they would like their daughters to undergo the practice. Location, education, ethnicity and wealth are also important determinants of the type of people who practice FGM/C. Rural women (81.3%) were reported to approve of the practice compared to 61.5% of their urban counterparts. Women with no education (78.5%) are more likely to approve of the practice than their peers with secondary education (59.0%) and women from the poorest households (75.1%) approve of the practice more than their richer counterparts (50.2%). Sustained campaigning by Women's Rights NGOs supported by UN agencies and other Human Rights bodies may have contributed to a reduction in these figures as in the interim period from 2006 to-date over 400 circumcisers have dropped their knives as a public declaration that they will not continue the practice. There is absence of a provision criminalizing female genital mutilation in The Gambia's domestic legislation.<sup>140</sup>

FGM/C is one of the worst harmful practices in the country. During consultations for this study there was widespread agreement that government should:

- Prohibit FGM/C by urging the National Assembly to pass/implement the Prohibition of Female Genital Mutilation Bill, 2012 and ensure that this law, the Domestic Violence Act and the Sexual Offences Act are fully implemented to help eradicate gender-based violence
- Prosecute and adequately punish those responsible, and compensate victims.
- Provide physical and psychological recovery programmes for victims of FGM/C.
- Raise awareness of health practitioners on FGM/C and the remedies and assistance available to victims.
- Raise awareness of youth, men and children, government officials, extended families, chiefs and other traditional, religious and community leaders of the harmful impact of FGM/C on the psychological and physical health and welfare of the girl child. Support and empower the media and NGOs in their work
- Provide alternative means of livelihood for practitioners of FGM/C.

Civil society noted that there is lack of political will (evidence derived from consultative meetings with relevant stakeholders and recommended that NGOs need to be supported financial and technical resources to use evidence based advocacy i.e. extensive clinical resource.

## **Domestic Violence**

The GoTG adopted the Domestic Violence Act and the Sexual Offences Act in 2013. However, violence against women remains widespread. Different actors are particularly concerned about the lack of criminalization of marital rape. Different provisions in the Domestic Violence Act relating to the definition of « aggravated » domestic violence are very vague and allow for out-of-court settlements which often do not take into account women's best interest.

Other recommendations are the following:

- Ensure that the definition of “aggravated” domestic violence is based on objective elements, covers all forms of violence including psychological violence;
- Ensure that provisions allowing for out of court settlements are repealed or accompanied by adequate legal safeguards to ensure that mediation is not imposed on the victim;
- Implement the Domestic Violence Act and the Sexual Offences Act, by adopting the necessary regulations and guidelines, reinforcing reporting mechanisms, allocating adequate resources.

---

<sup>140</sup> UNFPA, Evaluation of the Sixth Country Programme, Dec. 2010

- Strengthen the Victims of Violence Advisory Committee;
- Strengthen psychosocial rehabilitation and reintegration programmes for women victims of violence;

### **6.6.2 Marriage and Family**

There are issues relating to marriage, Child marriage, divorce, inheritance, marital property, adoption, burial and devolution of property on death are still regulated under personal law (Sharia and customary law) which contains discriminatory provisions against women. The registration of marriages is not systematically ensured, particularly in rural areas. Women are discriminated against particularly in enjoyment of all the rights that are subjected to personal law. Civil society recommends ensuring strict enforcement of men's obligation to take care of their wives and children according to Sharia law. It is recommended to:

- Undertake a study on the good practices of other countries with Muslim populations which have non-discriminatory personal status laws
- Harmonize legislation, including the Constitution, Women's Act and personal laws (Sharia and customary law) with CEDAW, repealing all discriminatory provisions, to ensure that women enjoy equal rights as men in marriage, divorce, inheritance, marital property, adoption, burial and devolution of property on death.
- Replace the term "equitable" by "equal" on women's access to property in the Women's Act
- Ensure that polygamous marriages and levirate are prohibited without
- Strengthen efforts to register all marriages, particularly in rural areas.
- Ensure that the minimum age of marriage is set at 18 years of age for both girls and boys;
- Seek effective measures to combat the practice of child marriage (e.g. awareness-raising);
- Ensure effective monitoring systems to assess progress towards the eradication of child marriage.
- Consistently apply the best interest of the child in all legislative, administrative and judicial proceedings and decisions and in all policies, programmes and projects that are relevant and have an impact on children
- Conduct programmes and awareness-raising activities to promote the meaningful and empowered participation of all children within the family, community, including traditional community, schools, and the care and judicial systems, including the Children's Court, the Cadi Courts and the Community Child Protection Committees, with particular attention to girls and children in vulnerable situations.
- Provide opportunities for children to express themselves especially on issues affecting them.

### **6.6.3 Birth registration / Name and nationality**

With technical and financial support from UNICEF, The Gambia developed a strategy (2013-2017) Strengthening the Birth Registration System of The Gambia and Achieving Universal Birth Registration. The Strategic Plan (2013-2017) focuses on increasing birth registration of children in the country and, at the same time, providing a framework for strengthening the system, expanding its coverage and ensuring that the measures taken are sustainable and that the system caters to the needs of the Gambian people. Divided in different objectives and activities, the Plan is the result of the collective efforts of the various stakeholders and a display of the leadership of the MoHSW in that regard.

Birth registration rate in The Gambia, according to the 2010 Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, is 55.1 per cent – it was 55.1 per cent in 2005 (MICS 2010). With a leap from 32 per cent in 2000 to 55 per cent in 2005, The Gambia was seen as a role model for the countries where birth registration was placed within health systems. Since The Gambia's birth registration is connected with its health systems, it would be logical to say that increase in birth registration is directly related to the expansion of the country's health system coverage.

While welcoming the progress made in birth registration, the population remains concerned about:

- (a) The huge number of children who are not immediately registered at birth and the lack of awareness among parents, especially in remote areas, of the importance of birth registration;
- (b) The complicated procedure for children above 5 years of age to be registered;
- (c) Obstacles to birth registration of children born out of wedlock, mostly due to the stigmatization faced by single mothers;
- (d) The reported lack of provision of identification documents to children of refugees parents in The Gambia or arriving as minors, which puts them at particular risk of statelessness.

Recommendations:

- Ensure complete and immediate birth registration, including children born out of wedlock, in rural areas, and children of refugees and arriving minors.
- Launch extensive awareness-raising programmes on the importance of birth registration
- Establish a reliable path to access citizenship, education and health.
- Provide identification documents to refugee minors born in The Gambia or arriving as minors

#### **6.6.4 Trafficking of youth and children**

The Gambia remains a source and destination country for youth and children subjected to trafficking for labour and sexual exploitation purposes. Government is urged to:

- Combat trafficking in persons for labour and sexual exploitation purposes
- Implement the anti-trafficking legislation and national action plan and allocate adequate resources,
- Address exploitation of youth and girls in prostitution and child sex tourism
- Ensure early identification and referral of victims of trafficking
- Prosecute offenders and punish them with penalties commensurate with the gravity of the crime
- Provide free legal and psychological support and compensation to victims of trafficking
- Provide assistance and rehabilitation to victims, as well as economic alternatives to prostitution
- Strengthen international cooperation with neighbouring and other countries
- Conduct nationwide awareness-raising programmes, including campaigns
- Investigate the extent and root causes of trafficking in youth and girls and prostitution
- Introduce a data base system on trafficking
- To strengthen the institutional capacity of NAATIP.

#### **6.6.6 Death penalty**

It is recommended that:

- An official moratorium on executions with a view to the abolition of the death penalty is declared;
- Mandatory imposition of the death penalty is removed from law;
- Review the desirability of the death penalty, with a view to its abolition;
- Outstanding death sentences are commuted to term sentences

- Strengthen capacities of key stakeholders on international human rights law applicable to the death penalty.

### **Opportunities for UN and Development Partners collaboration**

Already the UN System and other donors have been collaborating with the Gambia to assist it meeting its reporting and other obligations under the various international treaties. This support should be continued and expanded to assist the Government develop the necessary capacity to be able to carry out these assignments.

In addition, the other specific areas where UN System and other donors' assistance will be helpful include:

1. Support to child justice within the framework of on-going reforms in the judicial sector;
2. Establishment of a Human Rights Commission in accordance with the Paris Principles and establishment of anti-Corruption Agency;
3. Support to the further decentralization of NALA/ADRS services;
4. Technical assistance for implementation of recommendations from international treaties, conventions and periodic reports (UN coordination for a Joint Programme in this area);
5. UN assistance to build and sustain partnerships given the low number of donors working in the Gambia;

## **CHAPTER 7: ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE CHANGE AND DISASTER RISK REDUCTION**

### **7.0 Overview**

The Gambia remains committed to sound environmental and natural resources management in keeping with the Vision 2020. Although a lot of measures have been taken in the past, major environmental challenges still remain, which include land degradation, loss of forest cover, coastal degradation, loss of biodiversity and habitat loss, improper disposal of solid wastes and increasing effects of climate variability and change. Environmental vulnerabilities range from the fragility of the land, high population pressure coupled with adverse impacts of natural hazards such as flooding and extreme temperature. These national challenges are mirrored in the global development agenda, SDG 6 on sustainable management of water and sanitation for all; Goal 13 combatting climate change and its impacts and Goal 15 on the protection, restoration and promotion of sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests and combat desertification, halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss.

The Government has recently developed a strategic plan (Strategic Plan 2015 – 2019) to guide and develop the environment and the natural resources sector. The overall objective of the Plan is to ensure that the environment and natural resources (including water, forest and wildlife) are managed and utilized sustainably in partnership with all relevant stakeholders so as to contribute to the attainment of Vision 2020 and other national development blueprints while mitigating and adapting to the impacts of climate change. Within this broad strategic framework the various sectors have been allocated specific responsibilities in keeping with their mandates.

### **7.1 Policy Overview**

Overall environmental management is guided by several policy instruments such as Forestry Act 1968, Wildlife Act 2003, Fisheries Act, Water Resources Act and the National Environment Management Act (NEMA) (1994). The NEMA enable the establishment of National Environment Agency (NEA), which mandate is to ensure an environmentally sustainable economic and social development in The Gambia through coordination, consultation advice and oversight. Under the NEMA, 1994, NEA is empowered to take direct implementation action in matters dealing with environmental impact assessment, establishing environmental quality and monitoring standards, and controlling the importation and use of pesticides and hazardous chemicals. In the area of environmental quality (mainly pollution control), the NEA has the mandate to enforce compliance with national standards and has the legal authority to seek redress whenever there is non-compliance under the guidance of the Polluter Pays Principle.

#### **7.1.1 Environmental Management**

The Government is currently implementing the Gambia Environment Action Plan (GEAP) Phase II which has the overall goal of ensuring sustainable development by developing a fully effective and financially self-sustaining environmental and natural resource management system for The Gambia. Areas of particular interest to the GEAP Phase II Programme include agriculture and livestock, natural resources, trade and industry, tourism and infrastructure; environmental quality monitoring and waste management; coastal zone management and environmental health.

The GEAP specifically promotes increased adoption of environmentally friendly practices in the economy as a viable long-term solution to the problem of achieving sustainable development in The Gambia. Accelerated incorporation of environmental considerations into economic decisions will constitute the ultimate measure of goal achievement under the proposed programme.

### ***Key Challenges***

The priorities identified for a sound environmental management in the GEAPII can be summarized as: (i) Improved and strengthened institutional framework for environmental management in place; (ii) Effectively mainstream environmental considerations in to the policy and planning processes; (iii) Strengthened environmental regulatory framework and enforce the regulatory codes, and environmental regulations fully; (iv) Ensure functioning institutional and legal framework for sustainable management and protection of the coastal zone and its resource; (v) Strengthen advocacy and sensitization for sustainable development; (vi) Ensure the participation of the private sector, CSOs, parastatals, women's groups etc. in sustainable natural resource management and use; (vii) Support decentralization and Local Government Reform for community based natural resource management and sustainable development planning; (viii) Improve environmental quality monitoring and enforcement and solid waste management.

### ***7.1.2 Coastal Zone Management***

The coastal region of The Gambia provides valuable natural resources and supports a rich variety of biological diversity as well as the tourism industry which is estimated to contribute about 12% to the GDP. The overall responsibility for the management of the coastal zone falls within the purview of the NEA which has set a multidisciplinary working group comprising the various stakeholders in the sector.

### ***Critical issues and policy initiatives***

Erosion has recently intensified along the coast posing a serious threat to the tourism infrastructure, wildlife habitat and the livelihood of communities living along the coast. There are anthropogenic and natural causes of erosion in The Gambia. The anthropogenic ones are poor construction of the coastal zone, illegal sand mining and the cutting down of mangroves. The growing construction industry over the years has increased the demand for sand. Rapid population growth in the coastal area (West Coast Region) has also given rise to additional demand for beach sand for the construction of new settlements. These factors severely affected the coastline and its resources. Erosion rates measure, on average, an alarming rate of one to 2meters/year, amounting to about 200 000 to 300 000m<sup>3</sup>/yr. (ICAM Plan 1998). Recent studies indicate that, in some places such as Bijilo beach area the rate is up to 4m/year (Haskoning, 2000). The destruction of the coastline not only destroys wildlife habitat but poses a serious threat to the hotels and other recreational facilities in the tourism area.

Mangroves form part of the vegetation cover around the coastal areas and they help to stabilize the sediments and the banks of the river as well as being important spawning and nursery grounds for juvenile fish. The cutting down of mangroves loosens sand particles, thus expediting the erosion process. In addition to the destruction of mangroves, the increased economic activities in the coastal areas has made it more vulnerable to erosion and destruction of the coastal ecosystems.

Another major threat to the coastline is the projected impact of climate change. Climate change scenarios for the West African Region depict an increase in mean surface temperatures of 0.5C per decade and an increase in evapotranspiration, rainfall variability and intensity as well as accelerated sea level rise. The Gambia is ranked by UNEP as one of the top 10 countries affected by sea level rise.

In response to the environmental challenges mentioned above, the Government has formulated and implemented several sectoral policies, developed action plans and ratified international conventions and treaties to support national efforts in environmental management. Beach sand mining has been moved from Bijilo to Kartong. Presently, the designated sand mining site in Sanyang (Kachumeh) has reached a critical stage, thus the need for an alternative site in order to help meet the high demand for sand while reducing the pressure on coastal sand mining. The Government is currently, implementing projects to address coastal zone management by developing a framework for an integrated coastal zone management. In addition one of the projects will also physically intervene in certain critical areas along the coastline which are seriously affected by erosion.<sup>141</sup>

### ***Key Challenges***

The main challenges in the sector include:

- i. Understanding of climate change and its coastal impacts amongst decision-makers remains limited. Although there is general perception of the links between weather, climate, climate change and coastal erosion, this limited understanding is a barrier to identifying, to planning and to initiating measures.
- ii. There are presently numerous user conflicts between different stakeholders with respect to the management of coastal resources such as fisheries, mining of minerals (sand, ilmenite), agriculture and forestry;
- iii. High costs of coastal protection which the national budget is not large enough to cover entirely.

### ***Recommendations to Government***

The Government's effort to develop an integrated coastal management that takes account of the various stakeholder interests and addresses issues such as erosion, which has been identified as a major concern in the community consultations in Kanifing municipality, is to be supported.

### ***7.1.3 Waste Management***

#### ***State of the sector***

Solid waste and its management have become an increasing environmental problem especially in the major municipalities of Banjul, Kanifing and Brikama local government areas that have experienced large increases in urban population. Responsibility for solid waste management and disposal rests with the councils although a few private collectors operate in BCC, KMC and BAC. The NEA provides oversight as well as organising monthly cleansing exercises. It is estimated that the total waste in the KMC Area in 2003 was 63, 611.07 Tons as opposed to 6910.52 tons for Banjul (World Bank Survey Report 2004).

---

<sup>141</sup>(a) GCCA Support Project to The Gambia for Integrated Coastal Zone Management and The Mainstreaming of Climate Change funded by the European Union

(b) Enhancing Resilience of Vulnerable Coastal Areas and Communities to Climate Change

Despite efforts in the past, solid waste management and disposal continue to be a major problem for the country, which was clearly identified during the community consultations, particularly in the Kanifing Municipality.

### ***Key Challenges***

One major challenge is that waste is dumped indiscriminately and haphazardly. Because of the inability of the local government authorities to collect domestic waste for disposal, people resort to various methods of disposal such as open burning and indiscriminately dumping in any available space outside their premises. There are no sanitary landfills and waste is dumped at official dumpsites such as Bakoteh dump site in KMC and the Mile II Dumpsite for Banjul which is situated in a wetland area. The Bakoteh dump site which serves KMC and parts of Kombo North is situated in an old quarry completely surrounded by residences and in close proximity to a school and an orphanage. The site is a constant source of smoke to the surrounding areas.

In addition to the health and environmental risks many dumpsites are also major sources of flooding because they are located in waterways and flood plains. A recently concluded study on dumpsites (legal and illegal) has identified 98 dumpsites in 38 communities throughout the Gambia and 70% of these are situated in wetlands, drainage channel, gullies, depressions and water ways and therefore constitute high or severe flood potential<sup>142</sup>. The study concludes by recommending that dumpsites with high or severe flood potential be cleared immediately and use as dumpsites be discontinued. Meanwhile, councils are to develop and implement effective strategies and plans to manage the waste within their jurisdiction in an environmentally sound manner.

In the past UNDP support for waste management at Bakoteh dumpsite brought significant improvement as dumping became more organized due to improved access and fencing. Most of the environmental impacts such as smoke and stench reduced significantly. However, the situation has become more critical with the increase generation of waste due to increased population. Waste management problem is, in part, the result of rapid unplanned urban development and the limited capacity of the municipalities and area councils to fully assume this responsibility.

### ***Recommendation to Government***

- Develop a national policy framework with a strategy at national and regional levels to sustainably manage waste. Within this policy framework it will be necessary to clearly define the roles of the various actors- municipalities, central government agencies and private sector. With close to 50% of the population living in the urban areas there is an urgent need for an effective waste management system;
- Increase awareness on, and develop capacity for proper waste management at the decentralised and community levels.

### ***7.2 Natural Resources and Sustainable Development***

Land constitutes an important natural resource upon which most production systems depend- agricultural production, animal rearing, fuel wood as a source of energy, and infrastructural development. Land degradation has intensified in the last two decades as a result of human and climatic factors resulting to decline in agricultural production with serious implications for food

---

<sup>142</sup>The Mapping and documentation of dumpsites that cause, or have potential to cause flooding by NEA and Mahfous Engineering Consultants 2014, Kanifing.

security and cash crop production. During the countrywide community consultations deforestation was identified as one of the major environmental problems in rural Gambia.

### ***State of the sector***

Deforestation, habitat loss, forest encroachment and land use over the past decades have greatly affected productivity. Consequently, this led to the de-reservation of four community forest parks in the West Coast region. Besides being the source of natural resources products such as fuel wood, timber and fruits and other non-wood forest products, the forest also constitutes wildlife habitat which contain important biotic resources. Against the background of continuous destruction of forests, the ecological goods and services in The Gambia have continued to decline. The National Forest Assessment Report 2010, in comparing forest inventories for the periods 1981/82, 1997/1998 and 2009/2010 indicated a significant loss of forest cover: 97,000 ha i.e. from 505,300 ha (44% of all land area) in 1981/1982 to 423,000 ha (37%). The loss of mangrove cover accounts for 73% of this loss from 67,000 ha in 1981/1982 to 35,700 ha. The changes in natural forest cover have been generally attributed to pressure from agricultural expansion, bushfires, drought, settlement encroachment and road construction which all pose a serious challenge to forest and Protected Area management. The expansion of farming into forestland in 1983 converted over 100,800ha of close and open woodlands for agricultural production. The rate of forest to farm conversions stand at 1.3% or 1,400ha per annum and the highest conversion rates occurred in the Central River Region and Lower River Region (SOER 2010). Another major cause for deforestation, identified during the community consultations has been logging (legal and illegal). As exclaimed by at one of the participants during the discussions: “*the chainsaws have finished our forests*”- meaning the loggers have destroyed the forests. The use of chainsaws for commercial purposes influenced by weak export policies has significantly contributed to forest cover lost.

Table 7.1 illustrates the forest cover change (destruction) based on land use studies of 1946 and 1999 and a projection to 2015 in relation to population growth.

**Table 7.1: Development of Forest Cover from 1946 to 2015**

	1946	1968	1980	1993	1998	2005 (Est.)	2015 (Projected)
<b>Closed woodland (%)</b>	60.1	8.0	1.3	1.1	0.7	1.5	2.8
<b>Open woodland (%)</b>	13.3	17.6	10.7	7.8	6.2	12.0	12.2
<b>Savannah (%)</b>	7.8	31.7	24.8	31.8	34.6	31.5	25.0
<b>Total forest cover (%)</b>	81.2	57.3	36.8	40.7	41.5	45.0	40.0
<b>Population density (person per km2)</b>	25.0	35.0	57.0	91.0	108.0	132.0	225.0

Source: NAD-Gambia: Action Plan on Forest and Wildlife Management (1999), FAO-Gambia: Forest Resources and Plantations (1999)

Forest fires are another major challenge and they continue to be a problem in the Gambia with negative effects on people’s lives and livelihoods. The primary causes are slash and burn crop agriculture, hunting, wild honey harvesting and charcoal burning.

For biodiversity, similar destruction of ecosystems as habitat for biodiversity continues. The current situation of biodiversity goods, services and products in The Gambia indicates that the resources are declining and the situation is likely to worsen, unless appropriate regulatory and

management measures are undertaken (SOER 2010). The challenges include the illegal harvesting of thatch grasses. Shifting cultivation and itinerant farming practices that enable a sizeable population to establish ownership over every single strip of land leads to further fragmentation of wildlife habitats and destruction of migratory corridors. Illegal logging of timber and fuel wood are also greatly contributing to the destruction of wildlife habitat.

### ***Recent Policy Initiatives***

Some of the policy measures instituted to address these natural resources management challenges include, for forestry: i) to reserve, maintain and develop forest land resources covering at least 30% of the total land area which is capable of protection; ii) to ensure that 75% of forest lands are managed and protected according to forest management principles; and iii) to ensure that sufficient supply of forest produce needed by both urban and rural population is available through the rehabilitation of forest lands and the establishment of fast growing plantations and woodlots.

For Parks and Wildlife similar policies include the expansion of the total protected land area from 6.4% to 10%, and the re-introduction of indigenous large mammal species that have become extinct in The Gambia. Up to 2007, the national Protected Area (PA) network coverage stood at 4.1% and within a period of about eight years, this rose to its current level of 6.4% of the national territory (2015). With the new UNDP Project approximately 13 new community PAs will be gazetted, which will increase the total PA coverage to over 10% of the national territory. This is a significant achievement for The Gambia. In September 2015, government transferred ownership of 78 community forests to local communities across four regions of the country, a significant step in the implementation of the policy on community-based natural resources management.

However, by far the most important development, for the Departments of Forestry and Parks and Wildlife, is the recent policy shift from 'institution-based' to 'community-based' approach in the management and sustainable use of natural resources which allows local communities a greater say and ownership over the resources in and around their communities.

In the Fisheries sector the major constraints include: i) Lack of precise knowledge on the biology, population and characteristics of fish species; ii) Inadequate knowledge of the mangroves as breeding and feeding grounds and habitats for juvenile and adult fish; and iii) Insufficient knowledge of the potentials of aquaculture. To address these constraints the government, within the broad policy framework of sustainable management of the fisheries resources, has adopted strategies that include: (a) Developing the research capacity of Fisheries Department; (b) Conducting studies and inventory on biology, taxonomy and ecology of species; (c) Developing and implement a research plan on ecology of mangroves; (d) Developing a 5-year master plan for fisheries resources survey to establish reliable biomass estimates and the Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY); (e) Strengthening regional and sub-regional cooperation in fish stock assessment; and (f) Involving communities in management through publicity, information and education.

In the water resources sector the population continues to be served with potable drinking water with an access rate of 65 per cent in 2013 (*Water Resources Strategic Plan 2014-2016: Department of Water Resources*). Although the Gambia is said to be endowed with abundant groundwater resources it is important to assess the water reserves across the country to ensure proper management and use. This is important in the context of the uncontrolled drilling of boreholes along the coast. The implementation of the National Water Resources Policy (2006) should help address some of these challenges.

In the area of water and sanitation the Government and its partners continue to provide safe drinking water supply and improved sanitation facilities to all education and health facilities across the country. The Government also plans to improve the operation and maintenance arrangements for water and sanitation facilities and to mobilize stakeholders in the sector so as to improve governance of water resources and address climate change issues.

Land administration, particularly land use and planning is another important area. The last land use plans prepared by Department of Physical Planning Housing for the Greater Banjul Area expired in 2000 and there has not been any new plan since then. The result is unplanned urban expansion with serious social and environmental consequences. Urban services, if provided, come after development of settlements and sometimes after significant densification which affects the construction of proper drainage systems and access roads. These were some of the major complaints raised by the residents during the community consultations.

### ***Key Challenges***

- i) In forestry and wildlife there is still the need to strengthen institutional capacity to undertake inventory, monitoring, assessment and enforcement of regulations. This will involve a combination of training and logistics support. A major limitation of the sector policies is that they focus on strategies to develop, maintain and protect the forest and wildlife resources while there were no strategies developed fully to integrate interrelated sectoral priorities. In the case of forestry the development of improved cooking stoves and the expansion of alternatives to biomass fuel as well as LPG have important implications for the reduction of deforestation. Similarly, alternative construction material that require little or no beach sand can have important consequences on the unsustainable use of beach sand and coastal erosion.
- ii) Similarly in the fisheries and water resources sectors there is a need to strengthen the capacity at individual and institutional levels to undertake scientific and technical work required of the departments and as identified in their policy documents. For the water resources sector this will involve the full implementation of the IWRM as well as providing access to water supply in communities experiencing access difficulties as highlighted in the community consultations in Kanifing Municipality ( parts of Faji Kunda) and parts of Lower River Region;
- iii) In land use planning there are serious capacity constraints at both individual and institutional levels. There are limited qualified personnel to develop, implement and monitor the land use plans. Even the existing out-dated plans are not adequately monitored to ensure compliance at all times because of limited manpower and poor logistics support (computers, vehicles, fuel etc.). The land cover and land use maps for the whole country were last created in 2003 and since there has not been any new maps even though the recommended practice is to have them recreated every five years. Finally, there is the lack of clarity in the institutional mandates such as between the municipal/area councils (BCC, KMC and BAC) and national agencies (Gambia Tourism Board, DPPH and NEA).

### ***Recommendations to Government***

The following are recommended for government's consideration:

- Promote sustainable land management to improve food security and environmental protection so that agriculture becomes part of the environmental solution through enhancing farmer's knowledge and utilization of climate smart agricultural practices
- Strengthen individual and institutional capacity in the sector to ensure a more effective formulation and implementation of policies;
- Prepare a new land use policy and plan that would guide the use of the limited land resources of the country;
- Promote and /or support environmentally friendly enterprises in the form of 'Green Jobs'. This requires an assessment of socio-economic, financial as well as environmental factors impeding the development of such business enterprises and the development of a strategy. Such a strategy will effectively link environmental protection with employment creation and poverty reduction;
- Strengthening public awareness on environmental issues in order to bring about attitudinal changes and greater commitment at individual and community levels and to promote popular initiatives in addressing environmental challenges through partnership with local communities and community based organizations to ensure greater effectiveness at the grassroots.
- Assessment of all areas currently having water access problems and develop a programme to address this basic need.

### ***7.3 Climate Change Impact and Vulnerability***

#### ***Potential Impacts***

Climate change and variation place a major burden on national development because the productive base of the economy thrives on climate-sensitive activities such as crop production, livestock rearing, fisheries, energy, and water resources. These climate sensitive sectors have already started to experience some of the adverse effects of climate change and variability characterized by changing seasonal rainfall patterns, higher temperatures, increase frequency of droughts and flooding.

The challenges of climate change with regard to human settlements include the potential losses due to sea level rise. A 1-meter sea level rise (expected by ~2090, Brown et al 2011) is projected to drown over 8.7% of the total land area of the country including the port and capital city, many infrastructural facilities including buildings and a 26km of paved roadway linking Banjul and the Kombos, all the harbors and ferry landing sites along the Gambia River (Jaiteh and Sarr 2011). In addition there is also the urban heat island effect. The increase in temperatures increases in urban areas increases demand for air-conditioning which in turn increases greenhouse gas emissions from power plants that provide that extra energy. But perhaps the worst result of the heat island effect is the number of heat-related deaths that can result from the high temperatures.

In the agricultural sector the decline in rainfall, shorter growing season and increased inter-annual variability are likely to be the most important climate risks to farmers. Changes in rainfall and temperature are expected to constrain productivity of some crops. It is estimated that there will be a 40 per cent drop in groundnut yields due to rising temperatures (Cole *et al.* (2005). The projected disappearance of freshwater swamps and soil salinization in lowland areas resulting from sea level rise are likely to reduce rice production which would adversely affect the lives of vulnerable groups

including women farmers in these areas. Elsewhere, intensive cropping and/or shorter fallow periods would threaten soil fertility and the natural resource base (Cole et al., 2005). All of these factors coupled with poor intra-seasonal rainfall distribution could result in greater food insecurity which could also increase rural poverty and hardship.

Other climate sensitive sectors are also expected to suffer similar negative impacts from climate change. Forest regeneration rates are expected to suffer a decline under the combined effects of rising temperature and more erratic rainfall patterns. Dry conditions and high temperatures are also likely to contribute to forest fire hazards. Changes in species composition within natural vegetation cover types could arise from a combination of climatic stress, interspecies competition and forest use. The degeneration in forest cover would also affect the wildlife habitat and biodiversity. For health the populations living near coastal areas, rivers/streams and other waterways could be at a higher risk of flooding and diseases like cholera, distress and psychological trauma. Changes in air and water quality could also increase the risks of schistosomiasis and acute respiratory infections (NAPA 2007). Relative risks of meningococcal meningitis outbreaks also increase with the frequency of dust storms and air dryness.

In the fisheries sector changes in seasonal rainfall patterns combined with sea level rise and global warming could also change the mangrove system significantly which are very important ecosystems for the artisanal coastal fisheries industry, serving as spawning grounds for juvenile fish species. It is estimated that 51% of the fish caught in the artisanal fisheries benefit from the food chain related to mangroves. A one meter sea level rise could inundate over 61% of the current mangrove area and over one-third of swampland (Jaiteh and Sarr 2011). Sea level rise would also have a serious effect on lowland agricultural production through the destruction of rice fields and vegetable gardens. Already saline water intrusion has degraded many farmlands making a large proportion of farming households poorer. The biggest threat of saline water intrusion into the River Gambia comes from sea level rise. 1 meter sea-level rise in The Gambia will lead to inundation of about 92 km<sup>2</sup> of coastal land area or over 8.7% of the total land area of the country including the port and capital city, a host of critical infrastructural facilities including 26km of paved roadway in greater Banjul and all the harbors and ferry landing sites along the Gambia River (Jaiteh and Sarr 2011).

Tourism, one of the driving forces of the country's economy, depends to a large extent on the coastal zone where many ecologically sensitive areas can be found and where most of the tourism development infrastructure such as hotels and resorts are located. Shoreline retreat due to inundation is projected to vary, depending on topography, between 6.8 m in cliff areas to about 880m in flatter and sandier areas (Jallow et al. 1996). This would have catastrophic impact on the hotels most of which are sited along the beach and it would also destroy the trade mark of Gambian tourism known for the sun and the beach. Already the beach front of some of the hotels such as Senegambia Beach has been seriously eroded. The road networks to the various tourist sites will also be destroyed further destroying the industry.

Despite these potential negative impacts climate change presents economic opportunities especially in the adaptation and mitigation actions. The TRY Oyster intervention at the Tanbi Wetland complex has provided mangrove regeneration and protection with economic opportunity for women to engage in sustainable oyster harvesting.

### ***Recent Initiatives***

In face of these potential negative impacts the Government has taken measures that include the formulation of the National Adaptation Programme of Action (NAPA), the Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions (NAMA), and the GHG Inventory all of which identify courses of action to address climate change. As mentioned above, there are currently studies to develop a national climate change policy.

### ***Recommendations to Government***

The recommendations include:

- The formulation of a national policy with the necessary legal framework to help identify priority areas and ensure a systematic mainstreaming of climate change in all sectors sensitive to climate change in keeping with Goal 13 of the SDGs which requires countries to “..Integrate climate change measures into national policies, strategies and planning.” Strengthen capacity in climate change sensitive sectors;
- Improve and strengthen climate data collection, management and dissemination.

## ***7.4 Disaster Risk Reduction***

### ***Critical Issues***

By virtue of its geographical position, The Gambia is exposed to frequent occurrence of several hazards, particularly drought, flood, windstorms, domestic and forest fires, and locust invasion which have, in some cases, caused large-scale destruction. The causes are both anthropogenic and nature induced and they have significantly disrupted lives and livelihoods of the affected populations resulting in loss of lives and destruction of vital economic assets (infrastructure, housing etc.) thereby increasing the level of poverty and human suffering. Floods and droughts were two major disasters highlighted during the community consultations as having major impacts on the lives and livelihoods of communities. Although drought is considered as coming **divine phenomenon**, the floods, especially in the urban areas, are considered to be the result of poor planning including poor drainage systems.

### ***Policy initiatives and actions***

To address these challenges the Government has put in place an institutional framework with a legal, policy and programme to manage disaster. The new approach marked a shift of emphasis from response to reduction of natural hazard risks, in line with the Sendai Framework for Action (SFA 2015 – 2035 and its successor the Sendai Framework for Action 2015-2035; the African Union Programme of Action for the Implementation of The African Regional Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction (2006 – 2015); and the ECOWAS Policy for Disaster Risk Reduction and the Humanitarian Policy and Plan of Action. The measures instituted by the Government include the enactment of the National Disaster Management Act 2008, the establishment of a National Disaster Management Agency and Disaster Management Committees at regional and local levels and the development of a National Disaster Management Programme 2008-2011 which provided a strategic framework for national disaster management in the country. In addition, the Government also prepared the NAPA in response to the projected negative impacts of climate change which is in line with SDG 13 which requires that nations “Strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards and natural disasters in all countries.”

The existing National Disaster Risk Reduction & Management Policy and the Action Plan, “The Gambia Strategic National Action Plan (2014 – 2017)” which await final approval seek to enhance the effectiveness of disaster preparedness and risk reduction, as well as humanitarian response to disasters. The Plan identifies five contingencies for which preparedness /risk reduction activities were prepared and these include floods, forest fires, oil spill, disease outbreak, and population movement. Other proposed priority intervention areas include the promotion of risk conscious and resilience development; building capacities of communities and other actors; evidence based decision making through the conduct of risk assessment and mapping; adequate regulatory frameworks to promote and enforce DRR measures in land use planning and building regulations.

There are, however, hazards that have not been included which pose real potential threats to the country include sea-level rise, coastal erosion, drought and storms. In fact it is important to have a comprehensive hazard profile of the country by carrying out a comprehensive disaster risk assessment of the country, taking into account the nature of the hazards (potential disasters), geographical locations and the necessary preventive and remediation measure associated with each in determining the existence and degree of vulnerabilities and exposure of the population to those disaster risks.

Already there are emerging/changing patterns of risk in the Gambia due to climate change, rapid but planned urbanization, industrialization and the emergence of ‘new’ global infections which are all bringing along new hazards to the country. The occurrence of climate hazards which threaten lives, properties and livelihoods has increased significantly and this is likely to continue for the future.

The Gambia’s National Communications and the National Adaptation Programme of Action (2007) indicated The Gambia to be highly vulnerability to climate change and variability exacerbated by a low capacity to address and adapt to the phenomenon. This low capacity is evident at all levels – from the rural households through urban communities and the private sector that is currently benefiting from a robust tourist industry, to local and national governments.

Table 7.2: Summary of emerging risk patterns in The Gambia

	<b>Emerging/Changing Hazards</b>	<b>Risks/Threats</b>
1	Rapid and unplanned urbanization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increasing areas of ‘urban’ areas annually inundated by the seasonal rains</li> </ul>
2	Climate change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sea level rise</li> <li>Food insecurity</li> <li>Floods or siltation of fertile farmlands</li> </ul>
3	Industrialization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Concentration of hazardous/explosive facilities</li> <li>Regular transportation of oil tankers up country</li> </ul>
4	‘New’ pandemics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Avian Flu</li> <li>H1N1 virus</li> </ul>

Table 7.3: Summary of Hazard impacts during 2000 - 2009

<b>Year</b>	<b>Hazard</b>	<b>Pop Affected</b>	<b>Assets destroyed</b>	<b>Livelihood Destroyed</b>	<b>Areas Affected</b>
1999	Floods	105,288 or 10% of population affected	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>190 classroom blocks destroyed</li> </ul>	5,500 households	Upper Baddibou, NBR Fulladu West, URR

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>D16 million school-related needs of children</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>650 ha of lowlands rice fields submerged in CRR</li> <li>932.75 metric tons of paddy rice lost in CRR</li> <li>4,500 tons of early millet lost in NBR</li> </ul>	Jahally and Patcharr, CRR Sandu, URR, Wulli, URR, Fulladu East, URR Kantora, URR
2003/04	Riverine and flash floods		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Over 800 houses</li> </ul>	Crop fields	Basse, URR
2002	Capsized boat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>15 lives lost</li> </ul>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Banjul/Barra</li> </ul>
2004/05	Desert Locust	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6,837 ha of farmland was infested</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All six administrative regions</li> </ul>
2007	Industrial fire and explosion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5 lives lost</li> </ul>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local. Contained within the SSS soap factory</li> </ul>
	Industrial fire and explosion				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local. Contained within the SSS candle factory</li> </ul>
2010	Floods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>35,000 affected</li> <li>9 Dead</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-1442 houses partially destroyed</li> <li>-829 houses completely destroyed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tons of food crops destroyed</li> <li>Hectares of cropland submerged</li> </ul>	All regions of the country including Banjul and KMC

Source: NDMA

### **Key Challenges**

The revised national policy has brought out key overarching challenges relating to the effective implementation of risk reduction measures in the country. These include:

1. Low capacity levels to undertake Risk assessments to establish the probability and possible impact of hazard events on people, livelihoods and sectors. This is particularly acute in conducting multi-hazard risk or vulnerability analysis;
2. Inadequate integration of DRR into development planning and national policies;
3. Hazard-data is spread out over several institutions at national level. Similarly, data on disaster losses and damages are not yet systematically brought together and analyzed to monitor vulnerability and hazard trends. Accessing data from various sources relevant to predict and monitor vulnerability and hazard trends is currently a major challenge
4. Low levels of risk awareness especially among communities in disaster-prone areas but who have not been previously affected by disaster.
5. Inadequate capacity especially at the decentralized levels-district that are closest to high-risk area
6. In the face of these challenges the CSOs, have played an important role in promoting DRR at the community level but these efforts have largely depended upon external funding and

are not adequate to address the critical national capacity gaps in DRR. The involvement of the private sector in this domain is also negligible.

### ***Recommendations to Government***

- i. Mainstreaming CC/DRR issues in all government policies, development plans and strategies;
- ii. Increase community awareness of, and capacity to participate in early warning systems (CBEWS)
- iii. Improve the collection, management and dissemination of hazard data;
- iv. Strengthen the capacity of DRR agencies at central and local levels and increase resources for DRR programme
- v. Promote closer collaboration between government, CSOs and the private sector to ensure sustainability of DRR interventions at all levels;
- vi. Support communities to develop resilience in the face of disasters and the projected negative impacts of climate change in keeping with the desire expressed by local communities in all the regions during the community consultations.

## ***7.5 Impact of urbanization on the environment and sustainability of growth***

### ***State of the sector***

The last four decades have witnessed an unprecedented rapid urbanization from 23 per cent to 41 per cent (Source: GBoS). In 1963 the population of Banjul, Kombo St. Mary, Kombo North and Brikama (the current Greater Banjul area), was 53,000, in 1973 it was 95,000 (excluding Brikama), in 1983 it was 200,000, in 1993 it was 430,000 (including Kombo South) and currently over 640,000 (**Table 4**). The current annual growth rate of the GBA is 8% (2003 census) which is double the national population growth rate.

Table 7.4: Urban population growth (1963-2013)

	1963	1973	1983	1993	2003	2013
Urban Pop. (Series 1)	53,457	95,283	200,012	430,493	643,460	n/a
National Pop. (Series 2)	318,486	493,499	687,817	1,038,681	1,360,681	1,856,417

Source: Urban National Population trends (SOER 2010)

Such rapid urban expansion has placed a lot of pressure on the environment and the natural resources. Growth in the construction industry has often come at high environmental costs. The demand for land for housing has significantly increased, resulting in mass conversion of land from other uses such as agriculture to residential. This has a major impact on the forest cover as well as agricultural production. Mining of beach sand for construction aggregate in public projects and real estate development has contributed to severe coastline degradation which required US\$20 million (or 570 million Gambian dalasi) to fix temporarily. (NAPA document 2007).

### ***Key Challenges***

In many cases the rapid urban expansion has been uncontrolled and unplanned with the result that settlements have emerged in erosion and flood prone areas such as Ibo Town and Bakau Faro Kono

which the Greater Banjul Master Plan designated not fit for habitation. All the flood prone areas in Greater Banjul Area are mostly settled by deprived members of the community.

In the absence of adequate storm water management and drainage facilities and adherence to land use zoning regulations, urban areas prone to flash floods will continue to be affected by abnormally heavy rainfall events. This situation is exacerbated by the much reduced infiltration and overland flow of storm runoff due to an increased in the impervious surfaces in urban areas and increasing discharge velocities. Rapid urbanization has threatened important wetlands such as Tanbi Wetland Complex and Kotu Creek and placed a lot of pressures on the natural resources and the social services, which constitute major challenges for sustainable development.

### ***General Recommendations to Government***

- Promote sustainable land management to improve food security and environmental protection so that agriculture becomes part of the environmental solution through enhancing farmer's knowledge and utilization of climate smart agricultural practices
- Promote mainstreaming of DRR into sectoral strategies to ensure risk sensitive planning;
- Mainstream CCA and DRR issues into all government policies, development plans and strategies as well as establish partnership with non-state players where they have comparative advantage;
- Increase community awareness of, and participation in early warning systems (CBEWS);
- Strengthen Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and or Strategic Environment Assessment (SEA) at both central and decentralized levels with particular reference to road construction, property development etc.;
- Increase sustainable and non-consumptive use of riverine resources by the relevant sectors for year round sustainable tourism; Explore the potential for securing sustained government budget allocation for DRR and CCA programmes;
- Increase awareness on, and develop capacity for proper waste management such as sorting of different waste components for effective recycling and reuse;
- Undertake in-depth analysis of the potential impact of the fisheries sector on the environment.

### ***7.6 Opportunities for UN System Support and Collaboration with Government***

The sectors discussed above constitute areas where the Government and the UN System have collaborated in the past. The UN System (UNDP and WFP) continue to provide valuable assistance to NDMA, FAO continues to provide assistance to the forestry sector, while UNDP, UNEP and GEF have been active in the environment and climate change sectors. These are some of the support provided by the UN System to the sector and it is important to continue and strengthen this collaboration.

Taking account of the UN System's comparative advantage the following areas have been identified:

- ii. **Institutional strengthening and capacity building-** The UN System should support government to strengthen institutional and individual capacities in policy formulation and strategic planning at national, regional and local levels to improve food security and environmental protection through support for sustainable livelihood initiatives;
- iii. **Policy formulation and implementation:** this relates specifically to the formulation of national waste management policy, the new land use policy and planning, climate change policy and IWRM policy implementation;

- iv. **Resource mobilization:** the UN System should also support the government in the mobilization of resources particularly with respect to accessing funds under the multilateral environment agreements and through the preparation of bankable projects;
- v. **Public education and awareness:** UN System support will be required on:
  - ✓ environmental issues in order to bring about attitudinal changes and greater commitment at individual and community levels and to promote popular initiatives in addressing environmental challenges through partnership with local communities and community based organizations to ensure greater effectiveness at the grassroots;
  - ✓ climate change and disaster risk reduction to create a greater awareness of disaster risks and the negative impacts of climate change and identify and implement resilience and adaptation strategies and building early warning systems based upon district level contingency planning structures
- vi. **Data collection, management and dissemination:** the UN System's support will focus more on climate data and hazard data to ensure that reliable data is collected , processed and disseminated to end users;
- vii. **Improving Access to services:** UN System support will assist government to meet the water demand of communities not already covered in existing water supply programmes.

## CHAPTER 8: CROSS CUTTING THEMES

### *8.1 Gender Mainstreaming*

Women's rights and gender equity are given prominent positions in the national development agenda of The Gambia. As such, both Vision 2020 and PAGE explicitly state the resolve of the GoTG to ensure that women and girls play a central role in national development efforts. Vision 2020, for example, states that government shall focus on eradicating all forms of discrimination against women and children, especially the girl child. In addition, Vision 2020 commits government to improving female enrolment in schools, and their full participation in the development processes and decision-making at all levels. This CCA recommends that the government should build on its successes on the MDGs and incorporate imperatives from relevant SDGs especially from SDGs 4 and 5.

The Gambia is signatory to many international conventions, agreements and declarations that directly affect women's rights. Among these are the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, The AU Solemn Declaration On Gender Equity in Africa, and other human rights instruments.

In the same vein, the PAGE pillar on reinforcing social cohesion and cross-cutting interventions include gender equity and women's empowerment. **Error! Bookmark not defined.** Specifically, the PAGE recognizes the cross-cutting nature of women and gender issues, and the need for all sectors and actors to address it. The PAGE also recognizes the patriarchal nature of Gambian society, and the impact of socio-cultural factors on women, resulting in low responsiveness to women and gender issues in the country.

In recognition of the important role of women in national development, government has over the past 30 years established institutions, passed various laws, and prepared various policies. In 1980, government established the National Women's Council and Bureau by an Act of Parliament. This was followed by the establishment of the Ministry of Women's Affairs in 1996, and the creation of the Federation of Gambian Women in 2010. In the same vein, government developed and implemented the first National Policy for the Advancement of Gambian Women (NPAGW 1999-2009), and updated it to the National Gender and Women Empowerment Policy (2010-2020) in 2010.<sup>143</sup>

The institutional framework for managing women and gender issues consists of the Ministry of Women's Affairs (MWA), National Women's Council (NWC) and the Women's Bureau (WB). The Minister of Women's Affairs is also the Vice President of the Republic, and the Ministry is responsible for coordinating and harmonizing the efforts of all stakeholders on women, gender and development. On the other hand, the role of the National Women's Council is to advice government on all issues related to Women, Gender and Development, while the Women's Bureau which is the administrative arm of the Council is responsible for coordinating the development and implementation of Government laws and policies for the advancement of women, and the implementation and reporting of other international treaties and commitments

---

<sup>143</sup>GoTG. Gender and Women Empowerment Policy

such as the International Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and Beijing Platform for Action.

Government also developed and implemented the gender empowerment plan from 2007 to 2011, and prepared a Gender Mainstreaming and Women Empowerment Strategic Plan (2010-2015) in 2010. A Trafficking in Children's and Persons Bill was enacted in 2005 (amended in 2007), followed by the enactment of the Women's Act in 2010. Recently, government enacted the Domestic Violence Act 2013, and the Sexual Violence Act 2013 to further strengthen the protection of women's rights, and protect women from sexual and gender-based violence.

Under the coordination of the Women's Bureau, Government Ministries and other stakeholders through their Gender Focal Points are responsible for operationalizing and implementing specific areas of the National Gender and Women Empowerment Policy as it pertains to them. In addition, CSOs, development partners, The Gambia Women's Federation, and the Gender Policy Implementation Committee all play vital roles in the development and empowerment of women, and the implementation of women and gender policies and programmes.

Furthermore, women and gender issues are addressed in many sectoral policies, plans and development strategies prepared by the GoTG in collaboration with CSOs and development partners. Among the sector policies and plans that are geared toward mainstreaming gender in development are:

1. The National Health Policy, and the Health Master Plan 2008-2020
2. The National Education Policy 2004 to 2015
3. Gambia Education Policy 2004 – 2015
4. HIV AND AIDS Strategic Framework, June 2009- June 2014
5. National Employment Strategic and Policy 2010 – 2014
6. National Nutrition Policy 2010 – 2020
7. National Plan of Action for Accelerated Abandonment of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) in The Gambia
8. The Gambia's development Strategy and Investment Programme for 2012 to 2015
9. National Policy on Non-Formal Education 2010 – 2015
10. National Population Policy 2007-2015
11. Social Welfare Policy 2009 – 2013
12. The Gender Mainstreaming and Women Empowerment Strategic Plan, 2010 – 2015
13. The Gender Empowerment Plan, 2007-2011
14. National Plan of Action on Gender-based Violence 2013 – 2017

The Gambia has made considerable progress in empowering women, and mainstreaming gender issues in development. For example, at the Early Childhood Development (ECD) level, the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) for girls was 42.1 percent in 2014; 2 percent more than the GER for boys. The Gross Enrolment Rate (GER) for girls at the lower basic cycle increased from 80 percent in 2001/2002 to 92 percent in 2007/2008<sup>144</sup>, and 98.7 percent in 2014, taking into account the Madrassa enrolment. In contrast GER for boys increased from 85 percent to 87 percent between 2001/2002 and 2007/2008, and reached 95.4 percent in 2014.

---

<sup>144</sup>GoTG. 2011. Country Report on The Gambia: African Gender and Development Index Survey 2000-2011

Similarly, the Net Enrolment Ratio (NER) for girls increased from 56 percent in 2005/2006 to 60 percent in 2007/2008, and reached 68 percent in 2014. In contrast, the NER for boys decreased from 62 percent in 2001/2002 to 68.2 percent in 2014. The reasons for the increase in the enrolment of girls are varied and include reducing the cost of schooling through scholarships, the UNICEF-support Child Friendly School Initiative, CSO involvement in education, and the partnership between MOBSE and Madrassa proprietors.<sup>144</sup>

Significant gains have also been made with regards to the protection of women against violence. Thus, two innovative legislations, the Sexual Offences Act 2013 and the Domestic Violence Act 2013 have been enacted to combat domestic and sexual violence against women and children. In addition, the Gambia National Plan of Action (NPOA) on gender-based violence (GBV) (2013-2017), which was supported and adopted under the Joint UNFPA/UNICEF Program for the accelerated abandonment of FGM/C.

Women have also made significant strides in the economic and political sphere. For example, female representation at the National Assembly increased slightly from 6.5 percent in 2006 to 7.5% in 2014. Similarly in regional and local administration women are making inroads with a regional governor, deputy regional governor and a deputy mayor in place.

Other important gains include the UNDP-supported translation of the Women's Act 2010 into local languages to increase its comprehension by people who do not speak English.<sup>145</sup> In addition, the Female Lawyers Association- Gambia (FLAG) has successfully litigated cases that resulted in two landmark decisions on the enforcement of the Women's Act's provision on the equitable sharing of joint property.<sup>145</sup> The UNFPA supported integration of Gender and Gender Based Violence into the curricular of the Gambia Police Training Academy, the establishment of a Gender Unit at the academy, the training of police Gender and Child Welfare Officers across the country and the community sensitisation programmes by the police on their role in the management of GBV cases has resulted in the increase in the number of GBV cases reported to the police for their intervention. Lessons learnt from the work with the police will be replicated with other security apparatus.

UNFPA, UNDP, UNICEF and UNAIDS provided technical support in the establishment of the One Stop Centre on GBV. In addition UNFPA also provided financial support for the operations of the centre as well as in the implementation of the sensitisation activities of the National Steering Committee on GBV which is responsible for the One Stop Centre.

The social mobilisation and training programmes supported under the Joint UNFPA/UNICEF Programme for the accelerated abandonment of FGM/C resulted in 481 communities in URR and CRR north making public declarations to abandon FGM/C and 109 more in CRR south were ready for such declaration in 2015. FGM/C has been successfully integrated into the curricular of all the health professional schools and about 600 nurses and midwives trained on FGM/C and the management of FGM/C complications.

In addition to supporting social mobilisation efforts, the FGM/C programme will strengthen collaboration with the Ministry of Health and the Nurses and Midwives Association in collecting

---

<sup>145</sup>GoTG. 2014. 1<sup>st</sup> Draft – The Gambia's National 6<sup>th</sup> Periodic CEDAW Report to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women

data on FGM/C complications as well as the training of nurses to further engage them in advocating against FGM/C. Similar collaboration will be strengthened with government and CSOs in the continuous engagement of youth in advocating against FGM/C.

### ***Key Challenges***

The implementation of various policies and programs for women's development and gender equity has not been without challenges. Among the many challenges are:

1. Limited awareness of gender issues.
2. Weak support, advocacy, awareness raising, coordination and monitoring by other stakeholders.
3. Cultural patterns, traditional roles, and stereotypes which continue to prevent women from exercising their rights.
4. Inadequate resources and lack of ownership of the GWEP which hampers its implementation.
5. Low representation of females in decision-making positions.
6. The general low self-esteem of women.
7. The highly patriarchal nature of Gambian society characterized by male hegemony
8. Inadequate capacity at all levels to mainstream gender and apply gender analysis skills.

### ***Recommendations to Government***

Strengthen the capacity of stakeholders to engender effective mainstreaming of gender in policy, programming and implementation of development interventions.

Promote affirmative action to increase greater involvement of women in decision-making structures at local, regional and local administrative levels.

Support programme interventions geared towards women's empowerment including in entrepreneurship, access to microfinance, literacy, FGM.

### ***Opportunities for UN System Support and Collaboration with Government***

As a polyvalent development partner, the UNCT is uniquely positioned to support the GoTG in its development efforts related to cross-cutting issues. For example, UN Women, as the lead UN agency on women and gender issues has a comparative advantage with regards to gender mainstreaming. In the same vein, the UNDP, being responsible for various programs such as the South-South cooperation, and UNESCO which deals with scientific, communication, and cultural issues can play important roles in supporting STI programs. However, other UN agencies such as UNFPA, WHO, UNICEF, and UNAIDS with mandates that directly affect the welfare of women also have important roles to play with regards to women and gender issues. Similarly, the FAO can help strengthen Science Technology Innovation (STI) programs for the national agricultural research system (NARS) and women in agricultural development. UN Volunteers can be effectively deployed to build government capacity in different sectors (cross-cutting and otherwise) supported by UN agencies.

Against this background, the priority areas for UN support are as follows:

### ***A. Gender Mainstreaming***

The women and gender mainstreaming agenda in The Gambia is guided by national priorities and the international obligations of the GoTG. These national priorities have already been articulated in Vision 2020, the PAGE, the Gender and Women's Empowerment Policy (2010-2020) and various other action plans and strategies. As such, gender-mainstreaming support should focus on the priority areas identified by the GWEP, namely:

1. Capacity building for gender mainstreaming
2. Poverty reduction, economic empowerment and livelihoods development
3. Women and technological development for reduction (time and drudgery)
4. Gender and education
5. Gender and health and HIV AND AIDS
6. Gender human rights
7. Gender and governance
8. Gender and the environment
9. Women's empowerment
10. Gender Based Violence
11. Harmful Traditional Practices including FGM/C

### ***B. Joint Project Women's Empowerment***

UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, FAO and UNAIDS are presently working very closely with the Office of the Vice President on a Joint Project on Women's Empowerment Project, which will address issues related to women's economic empowerment, entrepreneurship, sexual and reproductive health and rights, women in decision making, gender based violence and child marriage. Once completed, this project will bring together the expertise of the different UN agencies both resident and non-resident involved in the advancement of women, for its effective implementation.

## ***8.2 Science, Technology and Innovation***

The national development blue print, Vision 2020, envisages The Gambia becoming, by 2020, an export-oriented agricultural and manufacturing middle-income country with a highly-educated, trained, skilled, healthy, and enterprising population.<sup>71</sup> Vision 2020 also laments the fact that past human resources development efforts in the country have neglected science, technology, agriculture and industry, and called for a revamping of the educational system to better meet the development needs of the country.

The PAGE also places a strong emphasis on the important of science and technology (S&T) in the human resources development agenda of the country. **Error! Bookmark not defined.** The third pillar of PAGE (*Strengthening Human Capital Stock to Enhance Employment Opportunities*) reaffirmed the commitment of government to develop the S&T competencies required for growth and development of the country.

The PAGE also recognizes the challenges in S&T development in the country, especially those that concern the paucity of the skilled human resources base. **Error! Bookmark not defined.** For example, enrolment in S&T courses is very low, with the University of The Gambia (UTG) having only 37 percent of the student enrolment of 3,550 in the 2010/11 academic year being in the sciences. **Error! Bookmark not defined.** Similarly, only 10 percent of Gambia College students and 34 percent of the Gambia Technical Training Institute (GTTI) were enrolled in S&T in the

2010/11 academic year. The low enrolment in S&T courses at the tertiary level of education is mainly caused by the negative impact of poverty on access and equity in S&T education, as well as low achievements in mathematics and science subjects at the secondary school level.**Error! Bookmark not defined.**

For this reason, the PAGE includes a plan for government to conduct advanced training, especially on S&T, the establishment of a digital campus, and procurement of laboratory equipment to ensure effective teaching and learning of S&T. In addition, government will develop a national research policy, establish a national research council, and create a research fund. The inclusion of S&T issues in the PAGE shows that the GoTG realizes the critical role that science, technology and innovation (STI) can play in national development, and the need to strengthen and mainstream it into all sectors of the economy, and all levels of the national development agenda.

The GoTG has demonstrated its commitment to harness, use, and STI by establishing the Ministry of Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology (MoHERST) in 2007, and the Presidential Declaration of 2012 as the Year of STI in The Gambia. In addition, the GoTG established the UTG in 1999, included STI issues in the formulation of PAGE (2012-2015), and developed National Science, Technology and Innovation Policy (NSTIP 2015-2024) in 2014.<sup>146</sup>

In addition, GoTG has made efforts to encourage innovation by enacting and updating intellectual property laws such as the Industrial Property Act Cap: 95:03 and the Merchandise Marks Act Cap 95:05.<sup>146</sup> In addition, there is the Banjul Protocol on Marks, adopted in 1993. The Gambia also belongs to the African Regional Intellectual Property Organization (ARIPO). The GoTG also encourages both domestic and foreign investment in all sectors of the economy and towards this end, established the Gambia Investment and Export Promotion Agency (GIEPA), and provides various investment incentives.

The NSTIP is based on the first pillar of the PAGE (Accelerating Economic Growth), which calls for strengthening of the country's economic base by mainstreaming STI in all walks of life.<sup>146</sup> Furthermore, the NSTIP is aligned with Africa's Science and Technology Consolidated Plan of Action (2005), and the ECOWAS Policy on Science and Technology (2012) to ensure alignment with continental and regional issues of common concern, and with relevant international policies and programs.

The preparation of the NSTIP could not have come at a better time. Although some research institutions have been established in the country, the research and development (R&D) infrastructure and facilities are still inadequate, as are the capacities of researchers and research institutions. A 2012 UNESCO-funded study conducted by the MoHERST found that there were 60 researchers in the country, and 13.3 percent of them were female. In addition, the total R&D spending by the UK Medical Research Council (MRC) in The Gambia and the National Agricultural Research Institute (NARI) in 2011 was \$1.2 million, clearly demonstrating a very low level of R&D spending in the country.<sup>146</sup>

The challenges faced by the national research system is demonstrated by the agricultural R&D indicators, show there is room for improving the institutional and human capacities, as well as

---

<sup>146</sup> GoTG. 2014. Draft National Science, Technology and Innovation Policy (2015-2024) - Harnessing Science, Technology and Innovation for A More Vibrant and Sustainable Socio-economic Growth and Development

funding.<sup>147</sup> Agricultural research spending decreased 11 percent from \$4.9 million in 2001 to \$4.4 million in 2005, and increased to \$5.5 million in 2011, mostly because of increased donor funding. However, The Gambian has very few researchers (65.9 full-time equivalents in 2011), and only 9 percent of have a Ph.D., compared to 70 percent and 17 percent, for Senegal and Sierra Leone, respectively.<sup>147</sup>

Another challenge for the STI development in The Gambia is the low level of public-private partnership in the area of research. Although there recently have been efforts to increase private sector participation in agricultural research through the West African Agricultural Productivity Project (WAAP) under the Ministry of Agriculture, there still is room for more PPP in research. The low level of PPP in research, coupled with the weakness of the national R&D system means that it is a difficult to obtain adequate and timely data for policy development and decision-making, not to mention its negative impact on national competitiveness.

Against this background, the NSTIP was prepared to “build and strengthen national capacity and competencies in STI that will enhance the attainment of economic development and national competitiveness.” Toward this end, the NSTIP has short, medium and long term objectives that will be achieved through 9 pillars, namely:

- Strategic Pillar 1: Education and Training
- Strategic Pillar 2: Elaboration of Indicators and Data Management
- Strategic Pillar 3: Research and Development
- Strategic Pillar 4: Information and Communication Technologies
- Strategic Pillar 5: STI Infrastructure
- Strategic Pillar 6: Legal and Regulatory Framework
- Strategic Pillar 7: Science, Technology and Society
- Strategic Pillar 8: STI Governance
- Strategic Pillar 9: Funding and Sustainability

Furthermore, each strategic pillar has objectives which will be met through the implementation of various strategies. The strategic pillars are expected to provide the building blocks for a dynamic innovation-led economy, and reinforcing them will help the country leverage STI to improve the lives of people.

### **Opportunities for UN System Support and Collaboration with Government**

STI are complex issues that touch, and are impacted by other sub-sectors of the Gambian economy and development agenda. For this reason, the priority areas for support in this area will depend on various factors, and the agenda of various sectors. Be that as it may, The Gambia already has a national STI policy, which includes 9 strategic pillars, each with its own objectives and strategies. UN agencies can support strategic pillars in their mandate and support it alone or in partnership with other UN agencies and development partners.

### **8.3 Social Protection in the Gambia**

The Ministry of Health and Social Welfare (MOHSW) is responsible for the protection and improvement of the health of the population. A social protection system is “the key structures and

---

<sup>147</sup> IFPRI. 2014. Agricultural R&D Indicators Factsheet.

mechanisms facilitating the addressing of multiple vulnerabilities and poverty in a holistic and integrated manner” (UNICEF, 2011). The Gambia conducted the first diagnostic analysis of the country’s social protection system in 2012/13, as well as a comprehensive mapping of various social protection programmes. These studies provided important insight into existing social protection policy and programming initiatives and were precursors to the development of the country’s first Social Protection Policy. The Gambia’s first National Social Protection Policy 2015-2025 (NSPP)<sup>148</sup> based on the country’s national development and poverty reduction frameworks was designed to contribute towards the alleviation of poverty and vulnerability in the country, in line with the GoTG’s Vision 2020 and the PAGE (2012-2016). Based on existing widespread poverty and multidimensional vulnerability in The Gambia, as well as gaps in the provision of social protection, more planning and social protection initiatives are required in the successor PAGE. This CCA recommends that the successor PAGE and UNDAF should strive to incorporate imperatives from SDGs 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5.

The Government recognises<sup>149</sup> that its social protection system requires modernisation and expansion in order to provide more reliable and effective protection from multifaceted shocks and stresses and to build people’s resilience to adversity and hardship. The National Social Protection Policy comprises five priority policy areas that seek to: (1) safeguard the welfare of the poorest and most vulnerable populations; (2) protect vulnerable populations from transitory shocks; (3) promote the livelihoods and incomes of the poorest and most vulnerable economically active populations; (4) reduce people’s exposure to social risks and vulnerabilities, including discrimination and exclusion; and (5) strengthen leadership, governance and social protection systems in order to design and deliver effective and efficient programmes. Included in the Gambia Social Protection Policy is the Social Protection Floor (SPF), which is a basic guarantee of social protection for the entire population, addressing key vulnerabilities that occur throughout the life-cycle for children, pregnant women and mothers, youth, the working-age population and the elderly. The SPF is comprised of universal access to essential services (such as health; education; housing; and water and sanitation, as nationally defined); and cash or in-kind social transfers (meant to ensure income security, food security, adequate nutrition and access to essential services). The Gambia Social Protection interventions include social assistance, social insurance, labour market policies, productive safety nets, social welfare services and legal and social equity measures – all of which aim to protect people from exploitation and discrimination.

The Gambia perceives poverty and vulnerability<sup>150</sup> and risk<sup>151</sup> as multidimensional and dynamic, based on the recognition that each of these concepts has both economic and social dimensions. Therefore poverty is not only a material (income-related) aspect of wellbeing; it is also experienced through a range of non-income dimensions such as food and nutrition security, education, psycho-social welfare, social equality, and physical security and protection. While people living under or

---

<sup>148</sup> The NSPP defines social protection as: transformative policies and programmes designed to reduce poverty and population vulnerability by promoting efficient labour markets, diminishing individuals’ exposure to risk, and equipping people with the means to protect themselves from hazards and the interruption or loss of income.

<sup>149</sup> Consultations with Ministry of Health and Social Welfare.

<sup>150</sup> The Gambia adopted the World Bank’s definition of risk as “a potentially dangerous event (or set of circumstances), which if, and when, they occur negatively impact people who are vulnerable to that risk” (World Bank, 2012). When a risk event occurs, it becomes a shock. Risks can be natural and environmental (e.g. droughts, floods, failed harvests), economic (e.g. cessation of employment, the global food price crisis), health (e.g. HIV, malnutrition) and social (e.g. violence, discrimination). Shocks can be individual (e.g. loss of employment, health shock) or economy/community-wide (e.g. macroeconomic shock, natural disasters).

<sup>151</sup> The Gambia Social Protection Policy (2015-2025), p10

near the poverty line tend to be more vulnerable to the negative outcomes of shocks some social groups – irrespective of their income status – are particularly vulnerable to certain risks due to social exclusionary drivers such as social identity and power structures (e.g. gender, ethnicity, HIV status, poverty status, dependency status, disability) and spatial exclusion (e.g. variations between and within urban/rural areas and disparate regions), among other structural factors. The Gambian population is impacted by various and mutually reinforcing risks. Environmental shocks and stresses (such as droughts, floods, and over-exploitation of natural resources, particularly in the form of deforestation) have been increasing in frequency, with important consequences for people’s incomes, food and nutritional security, health status, and general wellbeing (Jaffa, 2011; WFP, 2012). These natural hazards are likely to become even more commonplace in the future, as expected effects of climate change.

### ***8.3.1 Poverty and Vulnerable Context in the Gambia***

The Gambia has made significant progress towards reducing poverty in the last decade. With an annual GDP averaging six per cent from 2003-2006 (MoFEA, 2011) and a decade-long commitment to its comprehensive poverty reduction strategy, poverty rates in The Gambia fell from 58 per cent in 2003 to 48.4 per cent in 2010 (ibid). Despite these achievements, however, extreme poverty remains widespread, with nearly 40 per cent of the population existing on less than US\$1 per person per day (GBS, 2010). Income poverty remains concentrated in rural areas, particularly among households headed by subsistence farmers and unskilled workers (with poverty rates of 79.3 per cent and 65.4 per cent, respectively). IHS data (2010) show higher poverty rates among children 0-5 years of age (55.6 per cent headcount rate) and 6 -14 years of age (55.8 per cent), as well as among adults aged 65 years and above (57.9 per cent). Economic, environmental and health risks have translated into high levels of food and nutrition insecurity: only 18 per cent of Gambian households are considered to be food secure (WFP, 2014), while the national malnutrition prevalence rate of 9.9 per cent verges on emergency level in terms of severe malnutrition (NaNA, 2012).<sup>152</sup> Approximately 90 per cent of extremely poor Gambians are dependent on subsistence agriculture for their survival (MoFEA, 2011).

### ***8.3.2 Characteristics of The Gambia Social Protection Offerings<sup>153</sup>***

The majority of interventions is short-term, emergency-oriented, and has limited reach. In terms of coverage major gaps and challenges persist including the following:

- Social security is only accessible to a tiny minority of formal sector employees.
- It excludes unemployment insurance and paid maternity benefits;
- The country has no national health insurance programme;
- The country has no state-led crop insurance programme for farmers, despite the prevalence of weather-related risks;
- Social services remain weak and under-resourced;
- The legislative framework has notable gaps, including the absence of a national minimum wage or disability bill;

---

<sup>152</sup> Food insecurity and malnutrition are compounded by reduced access to clean drinking water and healthy living environments, as well as an increased reproductive care burden, particularly among women and girls (The Gambia Common Country Assessment Community Consultations-August, 2015).

<sup>153</sup> The Gambian government has decided that beneficiaries of Social Protection will include; extremely poor individuals and households; Vulnerable children; Elderly; People with disabilities; chronically ill; Individuals and families affected by HIV; Vulnerable women and youth; Refugees and migrants; Prison inmates and their families.

- Support is inadequate in peri-urban locations where the extreme poor and migrant families reside;
- The coverage and level of support to particularly vulnerable groups (the elderly, People Living with Disability (PWD)<sup>154</sup>, PLHIV) is inadequate and sporadic;
- Migrants, refugee families, single parents, widows, and child-headed households rarely feature in social protection programming.

In terms of delivery, coordination and knowledge systems the Gambia Social Protection system is characterized by the following:

- Lack of coordination among implementing agencies and untimely funding and delivery of benefits;
- Social welfare programme delivery, case management and referral processes remain weak;
- Inadequate budgets and human resources lead to less-than-optimal enforcement of the laws;
- high degree of fragmentation between various programmes and an absence of effective mechanisms to coordinate different types of initiatives and streamline the activities of various actors working in the field;
- Projects and services often run in isolation, causing considerable overlaps in targeting;
- There is weak horizontal coordination among multiple actors involved in managing (and financing) programmes;
- There is no recognized central coordinating institution for social protection.
- There is no integrated monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system;
- There is a lack of systematic data that is required to determine the coverage and impact of work undertaken and to inform policymaking and programme development;
- There is an absence of a unified MIS (e.g. single registry);
- Programmes employ inefficient beneficiary targeting approaches, often with unclear criteria, thereby causing leakage problems.

In the areas of Capacity Development and Financing the Social Protection system is characterized by the following:

- Technical and administrative capacity is weak with regard to policy formulation, design of integrated social protection projects and programme delivery;
- Key actors face basic problems with regard to staffing and resources (e.g. transportation, work space, equipment, IT facilities);
- Social welfare agencies suffer severe capacity deficits in staff, planning and budgeting, inter-agency coordination and supply of social workers;
- Beneficiary knowledge of rights and social protection entitlements is weak;
- Programmes suffer from resource shortfalls, resulting in inadequate coverage and provision of benefits;
- There is limited fiscal space to expand schemes and services.

---

<sup>154</sup> In the 2003 census it was reported that 2.4% of the population was disabled.

If properly targeted<sup>155</sup> and implemented<sup>156</sup> Social Protection interventions can play a pivotal role in accelerating and sustaining pro-poor and inclusive economic growth, poverty reduction, human capital development, social cohesion and the attainment of basic human rights for the population in The Gambia, specifically;

- Contributing to greater equity, pro-poor growth and social cohesion;
- Contributing to food and nutritional security and access to basic services;
- Contributing to inclusive economic development.

Operational implications are that while the Policy Analysis Unit (PAU) and the National Social Protection Secretariat (NSPS) will be responsible for overall monitoring, the capacity of other stakeholders at all levels of government should be strengthened in order to undertake regular and decentralized M&E. The NSPS should establish a detailed organizational and management structure for a national M&E framework with linkages to all social protection programmes, while data collection tools and reporting formats should be harmonized into a common reporting format based on this framework.

The capacity building strategy should focus on the following:

- Creating a strong advocacy component to inform and educate government and communities about the new social protection agenda (e.g. integrated, harmonized framework, etc.);
- Building technical and advisory capacity within ministry departments responsible for social protection policy planning, coordination and programme implementation;
- Providing practical training, initially at the sub-national level, to those regions prioritised for implementation of government-led social protection programmes (first phase);
- Strengthening skills in policy planning, programme design, targeting and grievance procedures, delivery procedures, running the MIS, systems for data collection and analysis, and financial management;
- Putting in place plans to adequately resource key departments responsible for the administration of on-going social protection programmes, including trained and well-incentivised staff and adequate administrative and logistical support (e.g. ICT equipment, electricity, vehicles, mobile phones etc.);
- Strengthening the capacity of non-state and community-based social protection providers (e.g. credit unions, local financial associations, Community Child Protection Committees, etc.);
- Putting in place plans to regularly assess needs and deliver supplementary guidance as programmes evolve.

### **8.3.3 Opportunities for UN Action (based on comparative advantage)**

Through a clear allocation of roles by the NSPS, Social Protection should be mainstreamed in all GoTG ministries for effective implementation. The UN agencies should play a key role in driving social protection reform forward as part of the next UN UNDAF, offering technical, financial and

---

<sup>155</sup> The Social Protection Policy (2015-2025) promises to ensure greater transparency and better targeting of social protection schemes and will assess the scope for adopting a standardized and harmonized system of categorizing, identifying and targeting eligible individuals and households, p22.

<sup>156</sup> Ibid: The Social Protection Policy (2015-2025) promises to develop a robust and participatory monitoring and evaluation system to undertake regular monitoring and rigorous evaluation of programmes and to monitor progress towards the delivery of policy objectives. This would include development of an integrated and results-based M&E framework, procedures and tools, p22.

advocacy support to the Government in the areas relevant to social protection policy and programming, such as food security and agriculture development (WFP, FAO), sustainable livelihoods and decent work agenda (UNDP, ILO), social protection for health (WHO, UNAIDS), and gender equity (UNFPA). All partners should continue to build partnerships with bilateral actors that actively fund and implement programmes related to social protection in the areas of health, education, social development (e.g. FGM/C), nutrition, employment and livelihoods promotion, illegal migration, and agricultural support.

The Civil society community should be actively engaged in advocacy and sensitization efforts for greater policy response to social protection issues, while continuing to deliver innovative social protection activities designed to alleviate poverty; improve health and educational facilities particularly for girls, women and youth; promote food security; support employment and income-generating activities in both rural and urban areas; and empower vulnerable groups. This allocation of roles can also be done through the next GoTG PAGE design period.

The GoTG should mobilize funds from government, donor, civil society and private sources for social protection programmes, by developing a resource mobilization strategy under the leadership of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs (MoFEA) recognizing that the Gambia currently has inadequate social protection spending<sup>157</sup>. The next PAGE should allocate a specific budget for social protection<sup>158</sup> and identify and create fiscal space for the sustainable (long-term and predictable) financing of social protection programmes.

To ensure an alignment in financing from disparate sources, including government revenue and contributions from development partners and the private sector, the GoTG should undertake a scoping study to explore the possibility of establishing a Social Protection Basket Fund. This strategy is critical for avoiding fragmentation and overlaps in efforts, which are characteristic of current social protection programming in The Gambia.

#### ***8.4 Data for Development***

The importance of data cannot be over stated, especially as a tool to inform policy makers. The GoTG in the PAGE has emphasized the use of data to inform policy and for monitoring & evaluation purposes. Though progress has been made, significant gaps still exist with regards the collection, dissemination and use of data (to inform and for M&E). The challenge of data can be regarded as a cross cutting issue given the breath of sectors affected and the benefits of having an efficient data gathering ecosystem that collects quality data on a wide range of indicators necessary for development disseminated in a timely manner.

The main issues coming out of consultations with government and development partners with regards data are:

1. The lack of breadth regarding the amount of indicators collected in the country.
2. Issues of quality (accuracy) of the data collected.

---

<sup>157</sup> Currently the Government only spends approximately 1.2 per cent of GDP on social protection programming (Gavrilovic, 2013).

<sup>158</sup> The Social Protection Policy (2015-2015) points out that the Government will develop a strategy for increasing revenues to finance interventions under this social protection strategy, with the aim of reaching 3-5 per cent of GDP in Phase 1 of the NSPP (2015-2020) and a view to allocating 10 per cent of GDP to social protection by the end of the policy period.

### 3. Timeliness of data dissemination by institutions responsible for collecting certain data.

The lack of breadth in terms of the data needed for development planning collected can be found in a number of areas. An example is the tourism industry. As the country's primary source of foreign exchange earnings, the amount of data available to inform government development partners and the private sector is minimal. It is still difficult to get a reliable estimate of the impact of the tourism sector to the economy. This needs to be addressed if tourism is to play a bigger part in the Next Development Plan.

Health is another area where data on the demand for and supply of services is sorely lacking. The National Health Strategy Plan (2014-2020) lists data as one of the challenges faced by the Ministry in its attempts to deliver quality health services to the population.

There is also a lack of data in the area of Disaster risk management, with hazard data housed in a number of institutions. In the same vein, disaster losses (financial, human, and assets) and damages data can be found at different MDAs with limited sharing of data and findings between them. This lack of sharing among DRR stakeholders has affected development partners interested in providing assistance in the area of DRR, as without data, little can be done in the way of providing help.

The stakeholders, in our consultations, have identified a lack of adequately trained personnel as a major reason for the lack of data quality that we see. This cuts across all sectors. The National Aid Bulletin (MoFEA, 2015) mentions a lack of staff numbers and resources necessary for the Aid Coordination Department to be able to collect the data it needs. Similar challenges have been found in the National Health Strategy Plan (2014-2020) and the Department of Social Welfare Capacity Assessment study to name a few.

The Gambia Bureau of Statistics (GBOS) has been tasked with collecting data for national development and has been exclusive rights when it comes to national surveys in the country. This has led to an increase in the demand for the services of the institution by government, CSOs and development partners. The lack of coordination between institutions for the services of GBOS has created a strain on the resources of the institutions. As with most government institutions (and public enterprises) in the country, GBOS is also faced with human resource and funding constraints, which have hampered its ability to deliver on its goals consistently.

Development partners need to coordinate their need for data and approach GBOS to undertake a reduced number of surveys that are more national in scope. Incorporating data needs into the development plans, such as the UNDAF, would help allow for longer-term planning and more consistent data collection.

Coordination of data collection is paramount for the UN Agencies, and every effort must be made to incorporate data needs into the UNDAF. A plan for data collection sources over the course of the UNDAF would allow institutions like GBOS, MoFEA and GRA to incorporate, anticipate and take steps towards allocating resources towards collecting the data needed by its partners.

However, key achievements under this cross cutting area should be acknowledged as good practice. First is the institutional support to Gambia Bureau of Statistics (GBOS) and Project Support Unit (PSU) Department of Agriculture. Support was provided for the development of the analytical report for the Demographic Health Survey (DHS), which was produced in 2014. With UNDP support the country launched the Country STAT which reached about 70 national

stakeholders and partner institutions. The Country STAT is a web based information system for gathering and monitoring of national and sub-national food and agriculture data in tandem with international standards.

The Country STAT is now available on the internet for wider access by stakeholders. UNDP also supported the national agricultural sector survey and an analysis leading to the production of national agricultural survey report in 2012 generating the latest data for agricultural planning and programming. It should be noted that the report comes since the last one was produced in 2002. The UNDP Country Office also provided equipment and refurbished the Department of Agricultural planning, provided two professional international UNVs for two years to support capacity building in agricultural data collection, analysis and reporting.

The UNDP with other UN partners trained staff of GBOS on the updating of GAMINFO, which updated in the process. A Labour Force Survey (LFS) was also conducted in 2012 and validation done in 2014. The LFS though significantly late, has provided up to date information on employment issues in the country. In 2014 a national team for collection of the Core Welfare Indicator Survey (CWIQ) was trained and data were collected although the work awaits completion.

Although there are institutions that are faced with difficulties in the collection of data, leading to issues with data accuracy and consistency, one such ministry that has been able to overcome this is the Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education. The Ministry has been able to consistently (especially over the period of the PAGE) to collect data on virtually every aspect of education at the Basic and Secondary levels. This is evident in the annual release of the Education Statistics Yearbook. The document provides data for all levels of the education cycle (ECD to senior secondary school), from enrolment numbers to the number of tables and toilets in schools. The disaggregation by region, district and gender is a commendable effort that should be copied by other institutions.

The issues that need to be tackled in the Next Development Plan regarding data collection are:

1. Increase resources allocated to institutions responsible for collecting data. This would require spending on staff trainings (long-term), helping to forge links between data gathering institutions in country with similar institutions abroad engaged in best practices.
2. Coordination of data gathering exercises by development partners in the future. This would require closer collaboration between development partners rather than the business as usual of working in silos.
3. Institutions responsible for collecting data to learn from institutions in country that are engaged in best practice. A good example is the Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education, which has done a great job of collecting relevant statistics in the area of Basic and Secondary education.

## ***8.5 Child Protection in the Gambia***

### ***8.5.1 Child Protection Framework***

With the support of UNICEF the Government of the Gambia has developed the Child Protection Strategy 2016-2020, and of its accompanying costed Plan of Action 2016-2018. The Child

Protection Sub-Committee<sup>1</sup> was established during 2015<sup>159</sup>. Child protection seeks to guarantee the right of all children to a life free from violence, abuse, exploitation and neglect. In The Gambia, many actors are engaged in child protection, but their efforts need to be brought together to be fully effective. The systems approach aims to promote the right to child protection, to contribute to the prevention of violence, abuse, exploitation and neglect, and to respond when violations of this right occur. The strategy seeks to structure and operationalize the PAGE, which States; “In line with its treaty obligations, the Government is committed to promoting, fulfilling and protecting the rights of all children in The Gambia, including their right to protection from violence, abuse and exploitation”. The Strategy consists of 6 long-term goals and 6 major objectives: 1). Promote the right to protection; 2). Strengthen the legal framework; 3). Bring about effective coordination and collaboration; 4). Develop human capacity and ensure financial resources; 5). Expand preventive and protective services; and 6). Create the necessary knowledge and information.

This Strategy started in 2013, when the Department of Social Welfare (DSW), under the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare (MOHSW), with technical and financial support from UNICEF, undertook a comprehensive mapping and assessment of the child protection system<sup>4</sup> which examined a broad range of issues: the policy and legislative framework, the roles, responsibilities, activities and capacities of the different child protection actors (whether formal or informal) and coordination among them, the type, nature, quality and availability of child protection services and their uptake by the public, the influence of traditional practices and beliefs on child protection, and the quality of data available about child protection. To its credit the Republic of the Gambia has ratified the following international human rights instruments:

- 1) Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, in 2010;
- 1) Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol, in 2015;

The republic of the Gambia has also adopted the following legislative measures in support of its citizens:

- i. Domestic Violence Act and the Sexual Offences Act in 2013;
- ii. The National Legal Aid Act 2008;
- iii. Trafficking in Persons Act 2007 and its amendment in 2010;
- iv. Labour Act 2007;
- v. Children’s Act 2005.

The Gambia has approved the following institutional and policy measures to improve the lives of all residents in the country:

1. The Maternal and Child Nutrition and Health Results Project 2014 – 2018
2. National Plan of Action for Accelerated Abandonment of Female Genital Mutilation 2013-2017;
3. The National Plan of Action on Gender Based Violence 2013-2017;
4. National Nutrition Policy (2010–2020) and the establishment of the National Nutrition Agency;

---

<sup>159</sup> The Child Protection Sub-Committee is associated with the National Social Protection Steering Committee

5. The National Gender Policy and Youth Empowerment (NGPWE) 2010-2020;
6. National Education Policy 2004–2015;
7. National Agency against Trafficking in Persons.
8. The Special Needs Education and Inclusive Policy Framework 2009 – 2015; and
9. The National Early Childhood Development Policy Framework 2009 – 2015.

Key comprehensive policy and strategic frameworks that still await further action include:

- Adopt/implement the National Child Protection Strategy
- Develop appropriate plans for its implementation, and allocate sufficient resources to this end.
- Render operational the Ministry of Children’s Affairs to coordinate all activities related to the implementation of the Convention at cross-sectoral, national, regional and local levels;
- Ensure sufficient resources for the existing institutions for the protection and promotion of the rights of the child, including the Department of Social Welfare and the Ministry of Justice, as well as the future Ministry of Children’s Affairs
- Ensure implementation of the National Plan of Action for Accelerated Abandonment of FGM/C 2013 – 2017;
- Undertake a study on domestic violence and develop a comprehensive national strategy to prevent and address all forms of violence against children

**A child protection system** including policies, legislation, strategies, guidelines, M&E framework established and main stakeholders aware of and knowledgeable on child protection issues. UNICEF has been the main UN agency spearheading achievements within this output through its country programme focus on child protection, social policy, knowledge and advocacy. Key achievements in the realization of this output are:

- Development of a comprehensive child protection strategy through a child protection mapping and assessment exercise in collaboration with the Department of Social Welfare.
- A more child sensitive law enforcement and judicial system through the development of sensitization materials around the core responsibilities of the judicial system to children, coupled with the incorporation of child sensitive training and post arrest procedures within the police training curriculum. In-service trainings have also been conducted on Child Protection, Children’s Act and Child Friendly court procedures for Police Child Welfare Officers, Prison Officers, Magistrates, Social Welfare Staff and Panel Members of the Children’s Court
- UNICEF together with NGOs such as TOSTAN and CaDO (Catholic Development Office) continued to carry out child protection service delivery focusing on providing core services to 500 OVCs in CRR and URR and support the work of NGOs on advocacy against FGM/C resulting to more than 145 out of 387 communities in Upper River Region making public declarations to abandon FGM/C/C and early/forced marriage.

### ***8.5.2 Critical Issues and Challenges***

#### ***Availability of Resources***

The current macroeconomics situation in the country does not allow for effective deployment of resources. However to enable better access to justice and improve the human rights environment in the country the government

- Increase the budget for health and social welfare to adequate levels.

- Regularly evaluate budget allocations to assess whether the maximum available resources are being used in progressively achieving the realization of ESCR rights
- Utilize a child rights approach in the elaboration of the State budget by implementing a tracking system for the allocation and the use of resources for children throughout the budget

### ***Dissemination and awareness-raising***

More work is still needed in the following areas:

- Raise awareness of the general public and members of the judiciary of economic, social and cultural rights and the justifiability of those rights.
- Take more active measures to systematically disseminate and promote the conventions, taking into account the high level of illiteracy, through oral, written or artistic awareness-raising programmes, including campaigns, across the State party, in particular in rural areas.
- Ensure that professionals working with or for children are trained on children's rights (e.g. judges, lawyers, law enforcement, teachers, school administrators, health workers including psychologists, social workers, personnel working in all forms of alternative care, and traditional or community leaders).

### ***Data collection needs***

- Collect data and use statistics for human rights indicators, including for economic, social and cultural rights, disaggregated by age, sex and urban/rural population.
- Set up a comprehensive data collection system covering all areas of the CRC, including child labour, child trafficking, child mortality, sexual abuses and exploitation of children, and child domestic violence, disaggregated by age, sex and urban/rural population.
- Establish a reliable system for statistical data collection on violence against youth, disaggregated by age, forms of violence and the relationship between victims and perpetrators, and on the number of complaints, out of court settlements, prosecutions, convictions and sentences imposed on perpetrators as well as on reparations provided to victims.

### ***Non-discrimination requirements***

- Adopt comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation.
- Repeal or amend all legislation that results or could result in discrimination, prosecution and punishment of people because of their sexual orientation or gender identity.
- Combat and prevent discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons, and ensure their enjoyment of all the human rights.
- Ensure that no legal provisions that discriminate against girls and youth apply, in particular those relating to inheritance
- Ensure that children born out of wedlock can inherit from the estate of their fathers.
- Invite local, religious and other leaders to take a more active role in supporting the efforts to prevent and eliminate discrimination against the girl child.
- Take all necessary measures to ensure equal access of children with disabilities to all public services, in particular health care and education.
- Address as a matter of priority the situation of children in the most marginalized or disadvantaged situations (e.g. children born out of wedlock, children living in poverty, working children, children in street situations, children living in rural areas, and refugee children).

- Ensure that individuals who engage in freedom of expression, association or peaceful assembly are not targeted through tactics of intimidation, harassment or violence.

### ***Administration of juvenile justice***

The population welcomes the provisions of the Children's Act 2005 providing for the establishment of five children's courts throughout the country, alternative measures to detention, the raising of the age of criminal responsibility, and the abolition of the use of corporal punishment in the juvenile justice system. People also welcome the adoption of the Legal Aid Act 2008. However, they are concerned about:

- (a) The establishment of only three equipped children's courts out of the five courts provided for in the Children's Act;
- (b) The reported lack of effective implementation of alternative measures to detention provided for in the Children's Act;
- (c) The lack of separate detention facilities for boys and girls and the lack, in most police stations, of separate pre-detention facilities for children and adults;
- (d) The limited use of legal aid due to the insufficient human resources allocated to the National Agency for Legal Aid and the low level of awareness among the population of the existence of legal aid, especially in civil cases;
- (e) The remand wing is over congested due to fact there is a slow process of cases and others had never been tried
- (f) Some detention centres are not fit for human habitation
- (g) There are no toilets in are the police detention centres
- (h) Empower CSOs to take up cases in court,
- (i) Also consider the UN Special Rapporteur on the condition of the prisons
- (j) Provision of toilets in certain detention centres like the police

The need for continuing and strengthening the training of the police, magistrates and social workers on the provisions of the Children's Act and on international standards regarding the administration of the juvenile justice system;

- (a) The absence of specific legal provisions on the conditions of detention of children, especially regarding visitation rights;
  - (b) The limited measures taken for the post-release rehabilitation, reintegration and follow-up of children.
- Establish specialized juvenile court facilities in all regions, as provided for by the 2005 Children's Act
  - Ensure that specialized judges receive appropriate education and training;
  - Provide additional training to the judiciary and officials of the Office of the Attorney-General so that bail and other alternatives to detention are considered for children in conflict with the law
  - Ensure the effective implementation of the legal provisions on alternative measures to detention
  - In unavoidable cases, ensure that children are not detained together with adults
  - Strengthen the human resources of the National Agency for Legal Aid.
  - Provide prompt, qualified and independent legal aid to children in conflict with the law
  - Ensure that children in detention maintain regular contact with their families.
  - Strengthen the rehabilitation and reintegration programmes of the Juvenile Wing.

- Juveniles and adults are not separated when been transported
- There is a need to provide a separate transport for children in trial
- Remove restrictive access to the children's court by non-government actors

### ***8.5.3 Areas requiring further improvements for Child Protection and Youth Participation***

Regarding Access to information for children the government should:

- Ensure effective monitoring of information accessible to children in internet cafes and video showrooms so that they don't access pornographic materials.
- Increase the number of libraries in particular in rural areas
- Ensure that television programmes inadequate for children are not aired at prime time.
- Provide to the child helpline the financial, human and technical resources, including the provision of trained staff, in order to ensure that it provides 24-hour quality child protection services throughout the State party.

### ***Institutional Experiences/Challenges***

During consultations civil society groups and communities added their voices as follows:

- No control over youth and children use of internet - In video showrooms and internet café children go to pornographic websites
- No control mechanism in internet cafes as this is business venture
- PURA is trying to formulate regulatory mechanisms....they have set up a committee one of NGO CPA is sitting in that committee
- No existence of public libraries in Rural Areas
- Libraries available in schools are not properly equipped i.e. relevant learning materials and resources not in place
- There are child protection institutions e.g. DSW, Child Police Welfare Unit in police department but they lack human resource capacity and lack of financial resources to effectively fulfil their roles
- Inadequate motivational TV programmes for children/Youth on National TV

They further made the following recommendations:

- ✓ Provide funding in providing adequate educational resources and materials for children and youths to access information e.g. libraries with books etc.
- ✓ Decentralize internet infrastructure, Public libraries and school based libraries for children and youth to access educational information
- ✓ Initiate (gov't) control mechanism for internet and video show rooms. PURA to exercise an active role in the initiation for these control mechanism
- ✓ Strengthen capacity of child protection institution and put up a coordinated 24-hour helpline with proper human resources for effective implementation

### ***Administration of juvenile justice***

The population welcomes the provisions of the Children's Act 2005 providing for the establishment of five children's courts throughout the country, alternative measures to detention, the raising of the age of criminal responsibility, and the abolition of the use of corporal punishment

in the juvenile justice system. People also welcome the adoption of the Legal Aid Act 2008. However, they are concerned about:

- (c) The establishment of only three equipped children's courts out of the five courts provided for in the Children's Act;
- (d) The reported lack of effective implementation of alternative measures to detention provided for in the Children's Act;
- (e) The lack of separate detention facilities for boys and girls and the lack, in most police stations, of separate pre-detention facilities for children and adults;
- (f) The limited use of legal aid due to the insufficient human resources allocated to the National Agency for Legal Aid and the low level of awareness among the population of the existence of legal aid, especially in civil cases.

The need for continuing and strengthening the training of the police, magistrates and social workers on the provisions of the Children's Act and on international standards regarding the administration of the juvenile justice system;

- (g) The absence of specific legal provisions on the conditions of detention of children, especially regarding visitation rights;
  - (h) The limited measures taken for the post-release rehabilitation, reintegration and follow-up of children.
- Establish specialized juvenile court facilities in all regions, as provided for by the 2005 Children's Act
  - Ensure that specialized judges receive appropriate education and training;
  - Provide additional training to the judiciary and officials of the Office of the Attorney-General so that bail and other alternatives to detention are considered for children in conflict with the law
  - Ensure the effective implementation of the legal provisions on alternative measures to detention
  - In unavoidable detention, ensure that the children are not detained together with adults
  - Strengthen the human resources of the National Agency for Legal Aid.
  - Provide prompt, qualified and independent legal aid to children in conflict with the law
  - Ensure that children in detention maintain regular contact with their families.
  - Strengthen the rehabilitation and reintegration programmes of the Juvenile Wing.

### ***Institutional Experiences/Challenges:***

During consultations civil society groups and communities added their voices as follows:

- Child Police Welfare Officers don't act out their role
- NGOs at times denied access to juvenile centres
- Lack of Children's Court in other administrative regions -
- Inadequate knowledge of child rights issues of those in the justice administrative system and law enforcement agency ...re-deployment of police do not take into consideration of the child welfare police unit i.e. not anybody can be under that unit
- Lack of proper enforcement of the Children's Act in court by both justice administrative officers and law enforcement officers
- Lack of separate detention facilities for children and adult
- Children and youth access to legal aid is inadequate— children are left in tension centres at times till they reach adulthood before taken to court

- Police Welfare officers having many roles hence they were uniform so that can perform all roles and Police Welfare officers should not wear uniform.

They further made the following recommendations:

- Civil Society's working on children and youth's be given access juvenile detention to enable them to file independent reports
- Popularization of the Children's Act 2005
- State organize capacity building initiatives and provide adequate child protection services
- Specific roles of Child Police Welfare Officers in their TOR and specific training for police child welfare officer not ordinary police training

### ***Child Sexual Exploitation***

In Africa UNICEF and ECPAT International have conducted research during the past years in order to understand better how to prevent and stop sexual exploitation of children and to seek justice and assist victims. For instance, in 2006-2007 ECPAT groups in six African countries (i.e., Zambia, Togo, The Gambia, Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda) in collaboration with ECPAT International initiated a study to examine "Linkages between HIV/AIDS and the Commercial. A 2013 Sexual Exploitation of Children in Africa study<sup>160</sup> for Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children in the Gambia showed that most of the children engaged in commercial sex are aged between 14 to 17 years and mainly girls. However it was also discovered that the number of young boys engaged in commercial sex is on the rise as there is an increasing number of male tourist seeking young boys. Children engaged in commercial sex are predominantly poor.

### ***Concerning Sexual exploitation of children the government is urged to:***

- Establish mechanisms, procedures and guidelines to ensure mandatory reporting of cases of child sexual abuse and exploitation;
- Ensure that legislation relating to sexual abuse and exploitation is effectively enforced.
- Strengthen actions to respond to health, legal and psychosocial needs of child victims of sexual exploitation
- Strengthen activities of awareness-raising to combat sexual exploitation of children
- Ensure the development of programmes and policies for the prevention, recovery and social reintegration of child victims
- Strengthen coordination between all actors and allocate sufficient resources.

### ***Institutional Experience and Challenges:***

During consultations civil society groups and communities added their voices as follows:

- State has shown high commitment in tackling the issues through legislations of Acts etc.
- Law enforcement officers within TDA do not know their roles, etc.

They further recommended as follows:

- Mandatory reporting not effectively being implemented – culture of silence & maslaha
- State to initiate reporting mechanisms in relation for issue to sexual exploitation of children and youth in the rather
- Strengthen the capacity and operational mandate of GT Board to effectively respond to the issue

---

<sup>160</sup> Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children related to Tourism & Reporting mechanisms in The Gambia (2013) p31

- Police to be reinstated as the TSU with the mandate of investigating and prosecute rather than the army
- State to Adopt the legal age of marriage to 18 as child marriage can be a form of sexual violence

### ***Children's rights and the Business sector***

The population welcomes the measures taken by the Government to protect children from violations of their rights arising from tourism activities, including the adoption of the Tourism Offences Act 2003; the establishment of community child protection committees across the country and of adolescent neighbourhood watch groups in communities around the Tourism Development Area; the development of a manual for training on and the eradication of child labour and sexual exploitation in the tourism industry; and the introduction of the Tourism Code of Conduct to hotels, motels and restaurants within the Area. However, there is concern about the persistent violations of children's rights arising from tourism activities

### ***Institutional Experience and Challenges:***

During consultations civil society groups and communities added their voices as follows:

- Most of business sector are not sensitized to children's right in their business dealings
- Executive Body of the state do not believe existence of Child labour in the Gambia
- Non-Existence of Ministry of Children's Affairs have made efforts fragmented.

They further recommended as follows

- Company Act and Single Window Business Registration Act to be reviewed to incorporate child rights protection clauses in business dealings
- Other arms of the government and CBOs present evidence to the state to highlight existence of child labour

### ***Street children***

There is absence of detailed information on the number and situation of street children. It also expresses its concern about reports of children forced to beg or work in the street

Communities and civil society participants urged government to:

- Undertake a study and statistical analysis on the causes and scope of the issue of children in street situations and measures to provide protection and assistance, and prosecute of child labour offences.
- Implement a comprehensive policy to address the root causes of the phenomenon of children in street situations, in order to prevent and reduce it;
- Ensure that children in street situations are provided with adequate means of living in order to support their full development and return and reconciliation with their families and community
- Develop prevention programmes to ensure that children, including Almudos children, are not forced to work or beg in the street, and involve the Islamic religious education teachers or Marabouts in the development of these programmes, when deemed relevant.

### ***Challenge and Institutional Experience:***

During consultations civil society groups and communities added their voices as follows:

- It is still in existence and increasing but taking a different dimensions (parents residing near mosques, children involving in petty traders...using it as occasion to beg, child beggars)

They further recommended as follows:

- State increase its surveillance to be able to track down children and their families engaged in the new dimensions of begging to identify the root cause and seek preventions measures with the aid of CBOs and NGOs

#### ***8.5.4 Corporal punishment***

The physical punishment of children is a burning child protection issue in the Gambia. The Children's Act 2005 defines a child as a person under the age of 18 years. The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child defines 'corporal' or physical punishment as any punishment in which physical force is used and intended to cause some degree of pain or discomfort, however light. There are other non-physical forms of punishment that are also cruel and degrading. These include punishment which belittles, humiliates, downgrades, threatens, scares or ridicules the child. The 2010 Gambia Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) revealed that the prevalence of physical and or psychological punishment among children 2-14 years was 90 %. Children in The Gambia are ignorant of their rights to protection. Most children have no knowledge of the international instruments that guarantee their rights. The survey set the scene for follow up surveys on the state of physical punishment of children in the country. According to the 2003 Housing and Population Census, children form 50.4% of the total population of The Gambia. The Gambia is a highly traditional society and people's beliefs and societal values have a profound influence on their views of, attitudes to, and behaviour towards child protection and child upbringing which can contradict the very principle of child rights and protection.

In November-December 2014 the Child Protection conducted a survey on Physical and Humiliating Punishment of Children in The Gambia. The findings were astounding. Fifty per cent (50%) of the children said Physical and Humiliating Punishment was being practiced by teachers in their school and 48% said the act was not being practiced in their school. When this question was put to the teachers, 43% said physical and humiliating punishment was practised by teachers in their school. When asked if they would physically punish their children when they grew up, 79% of the interviewees responded in the negative and 19% in the affirmative<sup>161</sup>.

The population welcomes the prohibition of corporal punishment in the child justice system and the provisions of the Children's Act declaring that those with parental authority must ensure that discipline respects the dignity of the child. However, there remains concern about:

- (a) The absence of legislation explicitly prohibiting corporal punishment in the home, in school and in alternative care settings;
- (b) The existence of provisions in the common law allowing parents, guardians and others in loco parentis to "reasonably chastise" their child;
- (c) Frequent incidents of corporal punishment, including severe physical punishment, suffered by children, especially in the home.

---

<sup>161</sup> Survey on the Physical and Humiliating Punishment of Children in the Gambia (Child Protection Alliance, p11)

However most community consultations recommended as follows:

- Repeal all provisions that authorize corporal punishment, including the Children's Act provisions on the right for parents, guardians and others in loco parentis to "reasonably chastise" their child and explicitly prohibit corporal punishment of children in all settings.
- Strengthen public education, awareness-raising and social mobilization programmes, involving children, families, communities and religious leaders, on the harmful effects and promote positive, non-violent and participatory forms of child-rearing and discipline as an alternative

***Institutional Expertise and Challenges:***

Civil society organizations and communities further recommended that:

- State to monitor corporal punishment in school...strengthen the capacity and raise awareness of teachers on the prohibition of corporal. CBOs and NGOs need to financial support to train children care-givers (teachers and Parents) on other means of discipline mechanisms.

***For Family environment of the child they urged government to:***

- Elaborate strategies for providing parent education and establish social protection systems to support poor families in their child rearing
- Repeal legal provisions, such as provisions authorizing polygamy, that discriminate against youth and ultimately have a negative impact on their children be repealed
- Regulate the practice of informal adoption within the extended family, encourage formal domestic adoptions, and set up an effective monitoring mechanism.

***Institutional Experience and Challenge:***

During consultations civil society groups and communities added their voices as follows:

- Government formulated and adopted the social protection policy and a costed-minimum package seeks to support the poor in accessing education and other social services.

They Recommend that:

- CSOs and NGOs be provided the human resource and financial resources to monitor the effective implementation of the above policy

***8.5.5 Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C/C)***

In 2010 the UNFPA/UNICEF Joint Programme and Trust Fund for the accelerated Abandonment of Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C) in collaboration with the Women's Bureau contracted AFRICONSULT to undertake a Situational Analysis of FGM/C in The Gambia to map out stakeholders, coverage, best practices, perspectives and impacts of the existing interventions. The Analysis established that FGM/C is a harmful traditional practice and a form of violence that directly infringes upon women and children's rights to physical, psychological and social wellbeing. Female Genital Mutilation /cutting therefore is an act, which "comprises all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genital or other injuries to the female genital organs whether for culture or other non-therapeutic reasons", (WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA, 1997:3).

The Government of the Gambia should be applauded for the development of the National Action Plan (NaPa) on FGM/C. This Plan was supported under the UNICEF /UNFPA Joint programme

for accelerating the abandonment of FGM/C in 17 countries within a generation<sup>162</sup>. The partnership for the implementation of the National Action Plan with civil society, religious leaders, community leaders and faith based organization is essential in enhancing local level commitment to the abandonment of FGM/C practices. The Plan is aimed at the attainment of article 5 of the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the Maputo Protocol and Children Act 2005. The fight against FGM/C and other Harmful Traditional Practices in the country has been difficult, challenging and protracted because it evokes a lot of sensitivities from numerous quarters resulting to strong patriarchal resistance<sup>163</sup>.

In The Gambia, FGM/C is practiced by all ethnic groups but more predominantly by Mandinka, Jola, Sarahule and Fula ethnic groups. The overall prevalence rate in The Gambia stood at 78.3% each of which has prevalence rates of more than 80%. The practice is moderate among the Serere and Wolof ethnic groups. Differences have been observed amongst women in various regions with the practice more prominent in URR (99 %), LRR (95.9 %), NBR (60.8 %) and Banjul (44.8%). (MICS 2005; GBoS, 2007). According to the MICS 2005/2006, 72.9% of the women interviewed reported that they would like their daughters to undergo the practice. Location, education ethnicity and wealth are also important determinants of the type of people who practice FGM/C. Rural women (81.3%) were reported to approve of the practice compared to 61.5% of their urban counterparts. Women with no education (78.5%) are more likely to approve of the practice than their peers with secondary education (59.0%) and women from the poorest households (75.1%) approve of the practice more than their richer counterparts (50.2%). Sustained campaigning by Women's Rights NGOs supported by UN agencies and other Human Rights bodies may have contributed to a reduction in these figures as in the interim period from 2006 to-date over 400 circumcisers have dropped their knives as a public declaration that they will not continue the practice<sup>164</sup>.

**FGM/C/C is one of the worst harmful practises in the country.** During consultations for this study there was widespread agreement that government should:

- Prohibit FGM/C by urging the National Assembly to pass/implement the Prohibition of Female Genital Mutilation Bill, 2012 and ensure that this law, the Domestic Violence Act and the Sexual Offences Act are fully implemented to help eradicate gender-based violence
- Prosecute and adequately punish those responsible, and compensate victims.
- Provide physical and psychological recovery programmes for victims of FGM/C.
- Raise awareness of health practitioners on FGM/C and the remedies and assistance available to victims.
- Raise awareness of youth, men and children, government officials, extended families, chiefs and other traditional, religious and community leaders of the harmful impact of FGM/C on the psychological and physical health and welfare of the girl child. Support and empower the media and NGOs in their work
- Provide alternative means of livelihood for practitioners of FGM/C.

---

<sup>162</sup> The National Action Plan (NaPA) on FGM/C (2012). The formulation of the NaPA on FGM/C was guided by three studies conducted in 2010 notably: Situational Analysis on FGM/C in the Gambia, and the Gender Based Violence Study as well as the Multi-sectoral Cluster Indicators Study MICS4.

<sup>163</sup> Situational Analysis Report on FGM/C in the Gambia 2009

<sup>164</sup> UNFPA, Evaluation of the Sixth Country Programme, Dec. 2010

Civil society noted that there is lack of political will (evidence derived from consultative meetings with relevant stakeholders and recommended that CSO and NGOs need to be supported financial and technical resources to use evidence based advocacy i.e. extensive clinical resource

### **Further Harmful practices: Child Marriage**

Child marriage, polygamy and levirate are regulated under personal law and are not prohibited; During consultations civil society groups and communities added their voices as follows:

- Ensure that the minimum age of marriage is set at 18 years of age for both girls and boys
- Seek effective measures to combat the practice of child marriage (e.g. awareness-raising and information programmes, including campaigns, on the harm and danger resulting from child marriage).
- Put in place effective monitoring systems to assess progress towards the eradication of child marriage.

### **Best interests of the child**

- Consistently apply the best interest of the child in all legislative, administrative and judicial proceedings and decisions and in all policies, programmes and projects that are relevant and have an impact on children.

### **Inclusion of the views of the child**

- Conduct programmes and awareness-raising activities to promote the meaningful and empowered participation of all children within the family, community, including traditional community, schools, and the care and judicial systems, including the Children's Court, the Cadi Courts and the Community Child Protection Committees, with particular attention to girls and children in vulnerable situations.
- Provide opportunities for children to express themselves especially on issues affecting them.

### **Birth registration / Name and nationality**

With technical and financial support from UNICEF the Gambia has developing a strategy (2013-2017) Strengthening the Birth Registration System of The Gambia and Achieving Universal Birth Registration. The Strategic Plan (2013-2017) focuses on increasing birth registration of children in the country and, at the same time, providing a framework for strengthening the system, expanding its coverage and ensuring that the measures taken are sustainable and that the system caters to the needs of the Gambian people. Divided in different objectives and activities, the Plan is the result of the collective efforts of the various stakeholders and a display of the leadership of the MoHSW.

Birth registration rate in The Gambia, according to the 2010 Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, is 55.1 per cent – it was 55.1 per cent in 2005 (MICS 2010). With a leap from 32 per cent in 2000 to 55 per cent in 2005, The Gambia was seen as a role model for the countries where birth registration was placed within health systems. The drop of two per cent is not huge but it challenged the strategy for integration of birth registration into the RCH, adopted hitherto, and prompted taking a new look at the issue in order to find a way to increase the percentage of registration as well as sustain the achievements. Since The Gambia's birth registration is connected with its health systems, it would not be completely illogical to say that increase in birth registration is directly related to the expansion of the country's health system coverage.

While welcoming the progress made in birth registration, the population remains concerned about:

- (e) The huge number of children who are not immediately registered at birth and the lack of awareness among parents, especially in remote areas, of the importance of birth registration;
- (f) The complicated procedure for children above 5 years of age to be registered;
- (g) Obstacles to birth registration of children born out of wedlock, mostly due to the stigmatization faced by single mothers;
- (h) The reported lack of provision of identification documents to child refugees born in the Gambia or arriving as minors, which puts them at particular risk of statelessness.

During consultations civil society groups and communities added their voices as follows:

- Ensure complete and immediate birth registration, including children born out of wedlock or in rural areas.
- Launch extensive awareness-raising programmes on the importance of birth registration
- Enable them to access citizenship, education and health
- Provide identification documents to refugee minors born in The Gambia or arriving as minors

### ***Access to education***

The Gambia should be commended for achieving gender parity in enrolment in primary education and that the President Educational Trust fund for girls' education provides scholarships for girls. However, there is widespread concern by stakeholders about:

- i. The lower completion rates of girls at the primary level as compared to boys, their considerably lower enrolment and retention at the secondary and tertiary levels and in vocational education, and the insufficient use of temporary special measures in this regard;
- ii. Disparities between rural and urban areas in access to education, quality of education and adequacy of school infrastructures, including sanitary facilities;
- iii. High dropout rates among girls, particularly in rural areas, due to child marriages and early pregnancies;
- iv. The insufficient number of female teachers to serve as role models, especially in rural areas;
- v. The lack of adequate gender and age appropriate sexual and reproductive health rights education at school;
- vi. Reports on frequent cases of sexual harassment of girls in schools by peers and teachers;
- vii. The lack of inclusive education for girls and youth with disabilities, and the absence of temporary special measures in this regard.
- viii. Continuing disparities between rural and urban areas in access to education and the hampering of access to education for refugee children;
- ix. Hidden costs of education, mainly affecting children belonging to marginalized and disadvantaged groups;
- x. Poor school infrastructure, including limited access to water and sanitation facilities, particularly in rural areas, and the low quality of learning and teaching materials;
- xi. High dropout rates, especially among girls, reportedly due to child marriage

During consultations civil society groups and communities added their voices as follows:

- Continue to increase spending on the education sector and to use it effectively with a view to reaching full primary school enrolment, attendance and completion by all children
- Address the problem of access to schools for children living in rural areas, and ensure that refugee children are issued with identity cards so as to facilitate their access to education
- Address indirect and hidden costs of school education
- Improve school infrastructure and learning and teaching materials, in particular in rural areas
- Reduce the dropout rate of children, in particular girls
- Improving accessibility and the quality of education, and provide quality training for teachers
- Strengthen efforts to improve the quality of education, in particular in rural areas, and the enrolment and retention of girls and youth at all levels
- Ensure the effective implementation of Section 28 of the Youth's Act 2010 which prohibits the withdrawal of girls from school for the purpose of marriage
- Strengthen the use of temporary special measures to promote access to education by girls and youth living in poverty, rural youth and girls and youth with disabilities
- Implement comprehensive programmes on sexual and reproductive health and rights as a regular part of the school curriculum
- Ensure access to inclusive education for girls and youth with disabilities
- Adopt policies that address sexual abuse and harassment in school and ensure that perpetrators are prosecuted and adequately punished

### ***Economic exploitation of children***

During consultations civil society and communities confirmed that there is persistence of child labour in family businesses and in the informal sector. The population is also concerned about the limited implementation of the Labour Code and lack of information on the labour inspectorate. There are reports that a high number of children are not immediately registered at birth and that cumbersome procedures are in place for the registration of children above 5 years of age.

Stakeholders urged government to:

- Combat and prevent economic exploitation of children under the age of 16, especially child labour in family businesses and in the informal sector
- Ensure that the legal provisions on child labour are effectively enforced
- Ensure that individuals who exploit children are duly sanctioned
- Strengthen the labour inspectorate to monitor effectively compliance with the legal provisions on child labour and that individuals who exploit children are duly sanctioned,
- Undertake research on the extent, nature, root causes and impact of child labour and Collect reliable data in order to understand the dynamics of child labour

### ***Trafficking of youth and children***

The Gambia remains a source and destination country for youth and children subjected to trafficking for labour and sexual exploitation purposes. Government is urged to:

- Combat trafficking in persons for labour and sexual exploitation purposes

- Re: 2007 Trafficking in Persons Act + 2005 Children's Act prohibiting trafficking in children: Implement vigorously the anti-trafficking legislation and national action plan and allocate adequate resources,
- Address exploitation of youth and girls in prostitution and child sex tourism
- Ensure early identification and referral of victims of trafficking
- prosecute offenders and punish them with penalties commensurate with the gravity of the crime
- Provide free legal and psychological support and compensation to victims of trafficking
- Provide assistance and rehabilitation to victims, as well as economic alternatives to prostitution
- Strengthen international cooperation with neighbouring and other countries
- Conduct nationwide awareness-raising programmes, including campaigns
- investigate the extent and root causes of trafficking in youth and girls and exploitation of prostitution

### ***Trafficking of children and Youth***

The Gambia remains a source and destination country for children and youth subjected to trafficking for labour and sexual exploitation purposes. Government is urged to:

- Combat trafficking in persons for labour and sexual exploitation purposes
- On 2007 Trafficking in Persons Act + 2005 Children's Act prohibiting trafficking in children: the government is urged to implement vigorously the anti-trafficking legislation and national action plan and allocate adequate resources,
- Address exploitation of youth and girls in prostitution and child sex tourism
- Ensure early identification and referral of victims of trafficking
- prosecute offenders and punish them with penalties commensurate with the gravity of the crime
- Provide free legal and psychological support and compensation to victims of trafficking
- Provide assistance and rehabilitation to victims, as well as economic alternatives to prostitution
- Strengthen international cooperation with neighbouring and other countries
- Conduct nationwide awareness-raising programmes, including campaigns
- Investigate the extent and root causes of trafficking in youth and girls and exploitation of prostitution.

### ***Adolescent health***

While welcoming the development of the National HIV/AIDS Strategic Plan 2015-2019, the communities are concerned about:

- (c) The lack of integration into school curricula of reproductive health education, the lack of sufficient youth centres which provide youth-friendly reproductive information and services, and the low knowledge of HIV transmission and prevention among the population;
- (d) The legal provisions considering abortion as an offence except to save the life of a pregnant woman, which result in the likelihood of pregnant girls and youth who are affected by HIV/AIDS seeking risky illegal abortions.

During consultations civil society groups and communities added their voices as follows:

- Strengthen reproductive health education by, inter alia, making it part of school curricula, and improve knowledge and availability of relevant services with a view to preventing HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and reducing teenage pregnancies
- Provide adequate access to affordable modern methods of contraception, including emergency contraception

- Decriminalize abortion; ensure that the best interests of pregnant teenagers are guaranteed.
- ensure access to age-appropriate information and education on sexual and reproductive health rights for girls and boys
- Expediently amend Article 29.1 of the Youth's Act to abolish the reference to "personal law" so as to ensure youth's access to health care services, including those related to family planning

### ***Breastfeeding***

While welcoming the existence of the National Nutrition Policy (2010–2020), there is concern that:

- (a) Breastfeeding rates are very low and exclusive breastfeeding is interrupted too early;
- (b) There is no national breastfeeding committee or coordinator;
- (c) There is no information on the implementation of the capacity-building of health-care providers;
- (d) Maternity leave is not provided to all working mothers, and domestic workers, in particular, are excluded from taking it.

During consultations civil society groups and communities added their voices as follows:

- Ensure the effective implementation of the 2010-2020 National Nutrition Policy and strengthen its awareness-raising efforts on the importance of breastfeeding

On mental care and psychiatric institutions government is urged to:

- Regulate and supervise health-care practices to prevent ill-treatment and investigate and prosecute cases

**Children with disabilities:** In particular, girls with disabilities have limited access to inclusive education, health, employment and participation in political and public life. The population welcomes the adoption of the Special Needs Education and Inclusive Policy Framework 2009–2015 and the large number of measures taken by Government for the rights of children with disabilities. However, there remains concern about:

- (a) The high level of discrimination against, and stigmatization of, children with disabilities;
- (b) Lack of adequate financial and human resources allocated to Special Needs Education Unit;
- (c) The lack of full implementation of the Special Needs Education and Inclusive Policy Framework;
- (d) The lack of adequately prepared and equipped schools to receive children with disabilities, in particular in rural areas;
- (e) The inadequate provision of infrastructure and personnel for access of children with disabilities to health care.

During consultations civil society groups and communities added their voices as follows:

- Adopt a human rights-based approach to disability
- Strengthen awareness-raising programmes aimed at combating the high level of discrimination against and stigmatization of people with disabilities, in particular youth and children.

- Increase human and financial resources of the Special Needs Education unit with a view to achieving inclusive education for children with disabilities
- Improve health care services for persons with disabilities
- Further encourage inclusion of children with disabilities, including by making schools more accessible
- Ensure the effective implementation of the recommendations of the Special Needs Education and Inclusive Policy Framework 2009-2015 and the National Disability Study Report 2013
- Expedite consultations on the draft disability act and ensure that it contains the legal framework to apply the CRPD
- Expedite the adoption of the Disability Integrated Policy
- Ensure that youth and girls with disabilities have effective access to inclusive education, health, justice, employment and participation in political and public life, among others

### ***Impact of Poverty on Children and Youth***

There are high levels of poverty in the Gambia, disproportionately affecting youth and the population in rural areas. There is also concern about the lack of information on the results achieved by the previous poverty reduction strategies

### ***Economic empowerment of youth***

The population welcomes the initiatives taken by the Government to promote the economic empowerment of youth, such as the provision of microcredits. However it is concerned that youth's access to credit remains insufficient and that youth's economic empowerment has not been sufficiently mainstreamed within the overall development strategies. Rural youth and girls have limited access to income-generating opportunities, credit, land and other productive resources, justice, health, education and participation in decision-making processes relating to issues that are of concern to them. The government is encouraged to:

- Adopt a coherent strategy on youth's economic empowerment which feeds into the overall development strategies of the State
- Develop adequate indicators and a monitoring mechanism for the strategy and include as key elements access to credit, markets, land and other productive resources.

### ***Adequate housing and social housing***

There is inadequate information provided on the situation of housing, as well as on the existence of social housing. In this respect, there is concern about the lack of clarity on the legal status and mandate of the Social Security and Housing Finance Corporation.

There is also widespread concern about the:

- (a) Impact of the increasing changes in rainfall patterns on the livelihood and property of the population, particularly in the northern parts of the country and in urban slums;
- (b) Reported population movement to unplanned and unregulated settlements in urban areas, which lack adequate housing and where there is often no access to safe drinking water and adequate sanitation

During consultations civil society groups and communities added their voices as follows:

- Provide information on access to adequate housing, on homelessness and on the existence of social housing.

- Clarify the legal status and mandate of the Social Security and Housing Finance Corporation.
- Address the adverse impact of changes in rainfall patterns on the right to adequate housing.
- Provide statistics on population movement from rural to urban areas.
- Take steps to improve the living conditions of the population in informal settlements, including by facilitating access to safe drinking water and improved sanitation, while seeking long-term solutions and ensuring that this population is guaranteed security of tenure.

### ***Water and sanitation in rural areas***

Some progress achieved in improving access to safe drinking water and sanitation but concerns that access by the population in rural areas to safe drinking water and sanitation remains inadequate.

During consultations civil society groups and communities added their voices as follows:

- Ensure universal access to safe drinking water and to adequate sanitation facilities, particularly in rural areas.

### ***Right to food and nutrition***

There is concern about the high levels of food insecurity in the Gambia and about the prevalence of malnutrition, especially among children under 5. There is also concern about the low agricultural production, which generates high food prices and significant reliance on food imports

During consultations civil society groups and communities added their voices as follows:

- Intensify its efforts, including under the National Nutrition Policy, to address chronic food insecurity, chronic malnutrition and the critical nutritional needs of children
- improve agricultural production, including by ensuring that support to farmers is provided on a non-discriminatory basis, targeting small-scale farmers in particular

**Maximum available resources:** While appreciating the increase in the budget allocated for education, the population expresses its concern that allocations for health and social welfare remain very low

During consultations civil society groups and communities added their voices as follows:

- Provide updated information on the prevalence of poverty, identifying the groups and individuals most vulnerable to poverty, and concrete measures taken to assist them, as well as on the impact of the previous poverty reduction strategies
- Ensure that the Programme for Accelerated Growth and Employment is implemented with a rights-based approach and supported by an effective, participatory and transparent monitoring mechanism.
- Consider holding targeted consultations with families, children and children's rights civil society organizations on the issue of child poverty.

According to the PAGE Progress Reports 2012 produced by the Department of Social Welfare, total budget allocation for that year amounts to 10,103,761 GMD. The Department received

9,853,761<sup>165</sup> GMD, and spent 9,082,746 GMD<sup>166</sup>. Part of unspent funds, provided by UNICEF, was partly refunded to the donor and partly reallocated for 2013. Out of what the Department received from the Government, 5,520,000 GMD, 18.66% (1,030,000 GMD) went to administrative costs and the balance, 4,490,000 GMD, was spent on programmes and provision of services by the different units of the Department (81.34% of government-funded expenditures). The share of programme and service provision budget reaches 8,052,746 GMD, if all funding sources are included (88.66% of the overall Department expenditure). The annual report for 2012 does not provide details on how the funds were allocated and spent across the different programmes and services, a part from funds provided by the Netherlands Foundation and the Social Security House Financial Corporation for the scholarship and sponsorship programme and from VSO which were used for community outreach and to produce a documentary<sup>167</sup>

### **8.5.6 Performance of Government Departments Dealing with Child Protection**

The most recent Capacity Assessment of the Department of Social Welfare<sup>168</sup> highlighted some of the bottlenecks to achieving most of the Child Protection initiatives across the Gambia. Most of bottlenecks arise for the key implementing and authorizing agency; the Department of Social Welfare. The performance of the Department of Social Welfare is affected by several factors. On one side, there is a considerable level of staff mobility across units. In a couple of cases, mobility has responded to temporary necessity, due to pregnancies or sickness. In a few cases, mobility was used as a consequence of professional mistakes on handled cases. Whatever the reason, in most cases mobility has undermined the availability of acquired and specific skills and knowledge within a unit. For example, the only Child Care Officer was moved from the Child Care Unit and placed as Head of Unit of the TMEU.

On the other side, the lack of middle managers, paired with the persistent high level of training needs, is also undermining the performances of the Department. As already noted above, most of Heads of Units do not have the appropriate grade required (SSWO, grade 9), hence they are asked to perform some duties that are not in their job description and for which they did not receive specific training. These two aspects, besides negatively impacting the overall performances of the Department, are also affecting the workload of senior management, which feel the need to fill the gap. The on-line survey demonstrated that 2/3 of the respondents think that the Department's staff is moderately skilled, and the same holds true for the respondent's Unit's staff. The UN system has great opportunity to continue supporting the Government through the strengthening of Department of Social Welfare including identifying who the services of the Department of Social Welfare reach in order to ensure effectiveness, efficacy and a high level of performance. For example, while the work plan for the first quarter of 2013 identified the following children as targets of the Department's intervention: Children at risk or in need of special protection; Orphans and other vulnerable children; Children on the move; Children at risk; Children from families in need of support due to issues of custody, paternity, access or maintenance, and; Children in conflict

---

<sup>165</sup> According to the PAGE Progress Report 2012, the department received from the Government 250,000 GMD less than what allocated.

<sup>166</sup> This amount does not match with 9,112,736, the figure reported in the PAGE Progress Report 2012.

<sup>167</sup> International Development Association, Programme Document On A Proposed Grant In The Amount Of Special Drawing Rights 3.9 Million (Us\$6.0 Million Equivalent) To The Republic Of The Gambia For A First Economic Governance Reform Grant, May 2, 2012, page 14

<sup>168</sup> MAESTRAL INTERNATIONAL – FAMILY FOR EVERY CHILD, Feb, 2014. p27.

with the law, no progress report in 2014 or 2015 shows the extent and the numbers of such children who were served by the Department.

## ***8.6 Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons and Asylum Management in the Gambia***

The office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees is responsible for UN interventions in migration, refugees and displaced peoples and asylum management in the Gambia. Substantial work has been carried out by the UN in particular UNHCR and Government, hosting communities and NGOs for the socio-economic, legal and physical protection of refugees.

- For example, there is Refugee Act which domesticates the international instruments for the protection of refugees. MoU for refugees' access to basic social services is in place to avoid discrimination in the payment of fees in public health facilities.
- UNHCR in collaboration with Government have ensured refugees have ID cards to facilitate their free movement in the country.
- The national Refugee Commission under the Ministry of Interior have been supported with various trainings to enhance capacity in international protection, refugee status determination etc.

After the application of the two cessations (Sierra Leoneans and Liberians -2008 and 2012 respectively), the current refugee population in the Gambia comprise of Senegalese (11036), Ivoirians (243), Sierra Leoneans (134), and few other nationalities (195).

The fifth Joint Assessment Mission (JAM) of Senegalese refugees in The Gambia took place in the context of the then on-going emergency operation. With data collection conducted in November 2012 it was the first JAM that was undertaken since November 2009, which at the time resulted in the phase out of food based assistance to refugee households and the gradual introduction of livelihood based support in favor of their increased self-reliance.

The overall objectives of the JAM were to assess the food security and vulnerability situation of the Senegalese refugees in Foni area, analyze the extent to which the drought and the resultant crop failure of 2011 have led to food insecurity and undermined livelihood projects implemented since 2010. The assessment is also meant to help determine the appropriate response framework for 2013-2014 and provide a solid basis for resource mobilization efforts by the Government and partners in the future.

### ***8.6.1. Economic and livelihoods Initiative***

Senegalese refugees are mainly farmers<sup>169</sup>. These refugees arrived without their basic belongings or food resources and spontaneously settled mainly among Gambian families along the Senegalese border. A year later of their arrival, they were issued with individual refugees identification cards by the local authorities the then Gambia Immigration Department (GID). Following a consultative meeting with refugees during an AGDM exercise conducted with a team from UNHCR Regional Representative in Dakar and the partners, main problems presented by the refugees were those related to the lack of structured livelihood, and therefore, it was decided that interventions were urgently needed. With consideration of the fact that refugee population was spread across 56

---

<sup>169</sup> LOCAL INTEGRATION AND LIVELIHOOD STRATEGY FOR REFUGEES IN THE GAMBIA (2010), p3

villages, failure to assist them towards self-reliance will hinder their overall livelihoods and local integration process in the hosting communities. Access to formal labor markets is not feasible with the Senegalese refugees since they are mainly farmers, and some women refugees are particularly vulnerable. It should be noted that in the cases where access to livelihood facilities is possible, refugees have explained that there is high competition with nationals, and therefore it is quite unfavorable for them to compete with them. Various institutions have expressed willingness to jointly work with UNHCR for the improvement of refugee livelihoods. Areas of Food Security, Reproductive Health, HIV/AIDs, shelter, WASH, skills training and livelihood projects for self-reliance have shown to be the strategic and niche programming opportunities of the UNHCR.

The urban refugees are part of the beneficiary groups from the UNHCR programming. The overall strategy by the UNHCR is to develop livelihoods programmes that include skills development trainings, micro-financing activities, and entrepreneurship and petty-trading. In that strategy the rural refugees, majority of who are traditional farmers, will be capacitated with material resources (agricultural equipment and inputs) to be able to increase their food production levels. With adequate funding these refugees can learn durable skills like masonry, carpentry, welding, plumbing, fishing, and other skills. Women could be supported with practical skills like hair dressing, tailoring, cookery, soap making, Tie-dye etc. The socio-cultural aspect of the livelihoods interventions are tailor made to enhance environmental sustainability, community development initiatives and women empowerment activities.

The JAMs helped to come up with strategy and framework for refugees in the Gambia and the intervention sites which indicated the potential positive changes in the quality of lives of about 60% of the refugees. The intervention is market driven to enhance economic growth and sustainable livelihoods. Linking refugees to access MFI's to open savings will be fostered through seed money, grants for skillful and business oriented refugees and vulnerable. The assessments carried out includes, market, labor market, value chain analysis and institutional capacity analysis.

Refugees and IDP's, carry their knowledge, skills, and life's experiences wherever they go.<sup>170</sup> Others bring precious productive asserts; tools, working animals, or financial capital. However, livelihoods interventions in UNHCR allow refugees to protect and build their own resources and forge their own futures. This is critical to maintain their sense of purpose and normality, and their dignity. Self-reliance and livelihoods for refugees also benefits the host communities through the social, economic and cultural dynamics it generates. In this note, investing in livelihoods is essential to curb the costs of assistance and protection, and enhance preparedness for return, local integration, or resettlement.

#### ***8.6.2. Recommended Collaboration for the Government and UN System***

All countries in the region are parties to the main international and regional refugee instruments: the 1951 convention relating to the status of refugees and its 1967 Protocol as well as the 1969 OAU convention governing the specific aspects of refugee problems in Africa. They are parties to the 1975 Treaty of Economic Community of West African States ( ECOWAS ) as well as its 1979 Protocol A/P.1/5/79 relating to Free Movement of Persons, Residence, and Establishment and the four supplementary protocols.

---

<sup>170</sup> Ibid, p6

The Gambia has signed and ratified these international and regional conventions, protocols and treaties, particularly the UNHCR's convention and protocol on the rights of refugees. Thus, the government of the Gambia, in particular the Ministry of Interior and its immigration department, with the legal assistance of the RRWA, has developed a national refugee law (the 2008 Gambian Refugee Bill). This positive development shows how the government and the Gambian people are committed to the rights and welfare of refugees. Some others already available laws that affects refugees in the Gambia are;

- (1) Immigration law (Aliens documentation and Work permits). Alien card (introduced in 1998 with the Aliens certificate for non-Gambian citizens). It reads that all non-Gambian citizens are entitled to hold an alien card but to obtain it is need to pay GMD 1000 for ECOWAS nationals, and GMD 1500 for non - ECOWAS nationals. There is no exemption of fees for the grant of an alien's card. An alien's card is needed as soon as you stay within the Gambia. The aliens' card is authorized for only one year, and shall be renewed annually with the same amount to be paid. The refugee identity card has similar purpose as the alien's card. For residence permits to be issued to an immigrant, it should be specified whether the permit is for residence only or for residence and employment. The names of the dependents of the immigrant concerned that are or may be resident in the Gambia shall be endorsed on the resident permit. The validity of the residence permit is valid from the date of issue until 31<sup>st</sup> January of the following year. There are currently two types of resident permits:
  - Resident permit 'A' for residence only (students and retired persons)
  - Residence permits 'B' for residence and employment for skilled workers only and the cost is GMD 1800 for non-ECOWAS nationals, and GMD 1300 for ECOWAS citizens.
- (2) The Gambian Citizenship Law states that, with regards to the naturalization laws of the Gambia, section 12 of the Gambia's Constitution stipulates that "any person who has been ordinarily resident in the Gambia for a continuous period of not less than fifteen years and who satisfies the conditions set out in subsection (2) may apply, in such manner as may be prescribed by or under an Act of the National Assembly, to be Naturalized as a citizen of the Gambia.

In case of marriage to a Gambian, section 12 of the Gambia Constitution stipulates that "any person who is married to a citizen of the Gambia and, since the married has been residence in the Gambia for a period of not less than seven years; or has been married to another person who was, during the subsistence of the marriage a citizen of the Gambia and, since the end of the marriage (whether by annulment, divorce or death) has been ordinarily resident in the Gambia for a period not less than seven years, shall be entitled, upon making application in such manner as may be prescribed by or under an Act of the National Assembly, to be registered as a citizen of The Gambia".

### **8.6.3. Protection Initiative**

Regarding to the protection needs of refugees in the Gambia, UNHCR and other stakeholders from will advocate for policy issues that affect the rights of refugees to education, health, and other social services available to nationals to be equally enjoyed by refugees. There will be an ongoing provision of training on refugee law and international refugee protection to local authorities, inter alia, immigration, police and security officials in the Gambia to ensure that they are aware of refugee rights in the country.

To undertake continued advocacy with government to ensure that refugees have equal access to Education as nationals. Under the children's Act 2000, section 18 (1) and (2), every child has a right to free and compulsory basic education and that it shall be the duty of Government to provide the education. The Act also continues to state that every parent or guardian should ensure that his or her child attend and complete basic education. The actual practice of free education in the Gambia appears to donate only exemption of the payment of tuition fees. Hence, all other schooling materials such as uniforms, exam fees, and text books have to be purchased. Another level of advocacy with Government is to ensure that refugees have equal access to higher/ university education and employment as nationals. Also at the UN agency level is to advocate for the inclusion of refugees in national strategy programmes like the UNDAF.

The advocacy at the national, regional, and local levels about gender based violence on refugee women, girls and children will continue with high sense of vigor. The issues of employment opportunities, skills developments and empowerment of refugees women, girls and children including youths, for them to access basic social services and human dignity cannot be over emphasize.

In view of reducing violence and diseases on refugees, there will be series of sensitization workshops on these areas. The issue of HIV/AIDS and SGBV in the lives of refugees is crucial and all measures necessary will be applied to make awareness programmes geared towards reducing these problems.

Participatory assessments with girls have highlighted the prevalence of the FGM practice against girls among Senegalese refugees. UNICEF has estimated the FGM prevalence in the Gambia at 94-96 %, especially along the border with Casamance.

UNICEF and UNFPA have established a joint project to eradicate the practice. While these projects are targeting other regions, it remains important to continue to advocate with the concerned Agencies to extend their projects in refugee hosting areas in the Western region. UNICEF is implementing this project through TOSTAN and UNFPA through BAFROW (Foundation for Research on Women's Health, Productivity and the Environment). There should be more collaboration between UNHCR and UNICEF and UNFPA in this regard

#### **8.6.4. Socio- cultural Initiative**

As an ongoing collaboration among the UN Agencies and GoTG, it is recommended that during the next PAGE harmonized efforts in bringing about socio-cultural understanding between the host communities and the refugee population be carried out. The need to identify and study the factors, activities and projects likely to enhance peaceful co-existence between refugees and their host communities for better protection of refugees.

#### **8.6.5. Public Health Care Initiative**

This CCA recommends that UNHCR and Government should ensure that the MOU is fully understood by, among others, the health personnel and refugees to facilitate the implementation of the MOU. All vulnerable groups are to be assisted in line with the guidance stipulated in the health SOP.

#### ***8.6.6. Education Initiative***

The Gambia has one of the best education programs which meet the MDG goals. The country has a 10 year Education Sector Strategic Plan 2006-2015 (ESSP) which has been successfully funded by donors in order to support the universal access to basic and quality education by 2015. There are no discriminatory practices against refugees and displaced persons from accessing to schools. Refugees and other foreigners are not distinguished from nationals with regard to access to education. UNHCR is supporting Nursery, primary education, secondary education and tertiary education. Direct assistance is provided to students in terms of schools fees/Tuitions, uniforms, copy books, and transport (in some cases, if included in the school bill).

Working closely with other UN Agencies the UNHCR support to education should first target basic education (from 1<sup>st</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> grade) within public schools. While recognizing the right of refugee to provide for their children high quality education in institutions of their choice, UNHCR assistance being humanitarian, should be provided to vulnerable children, at the standard of public school. Any additional cost resulting from attendance in a private school institution should be borne by the parents.

- The UNHCR should work with WFP, UNFPA, and UNICEF to increase the attendance of refugee children to school at a minimum of 30-50% during the coming years through allocation of adequate budget for basic education in public schools.
- Only a refugee child registered with his/her parent could be eligible to the UNHCR education assistance. A child not registered should not be considered until such regularizations is made.
- Concerning secondary education, priority will be given to college students. Secondary education in the Gambia being funded only by private and grant aided school; priority will be given to girls, to children of vulnerable families and to those who meet excellence. Criteria's will be established and a committee, comprised of UNHCR, Refugee Representatives and implementing partners should be put in place for selection of applicants

#### ***8.7 Persons Living with Disabilities***

Disabled persons in The Gambia, especially women and children, are considered to be among the poorest and most marginalized and their condition is aggravated by mythical, social and cultural beliefs about persons living with disabilities. Social condescending attitudes reinforce tendencies to exclude them from benefiting in many social development programmes.

The Gambia does not have specific legislation guaranteeing the human rights of persons living with disabilities. However, The Gambia has some legislation in place that partly guarantees the human rights of people living with disabilities. The 1997 Constitution, most notably in its Section 31 on the "Rights of the Disabled", stipulates that "(1) the right of the disabled and handicapped to respect and human dignity shall be recognised by the State and society; (2) Disabled persons shall be entitled to protection against exploitation and to protection against discrimination, in particular as regards access to health services, education and employment; (3) In any judicial proceedings in which a disabled person is a party, the procedure shall take his or her condition into account." The Children's Act 2005 also recognizes the right of all children to non-discrimination.

The Gambia acceded to the ICRPD in July 2015, engaging itself to work towards the protection and promotion of the human rights of persons living with disabilities. In 2009, the Gambia finalised

its draft National Disability Policy 2009-2018. However, this draft Policy has still not been adopted or endorsed by the Cabinet. The draft Policy, with as a main objective to enhance care for and help individuals living with disabilities to cope with the challenges they face and to be fully functional in their communities, identifies and defines key areas for policy intervention in the Gambia for persons living with disabilities.

***Women with disabilities***; In particular, Women and girls with disabilities have limited access to inclusive education, health, employment and participation in political and public life.

***Children with disabilities***: The population welcomes the adoption of the Special Needs Education and Inclusive Policy Framework 2009–2015 and the large number of measures taken by Government for the rights of children with disabilities. However, there remains concern about:

- (f) The high level of discrimination against, and stigmatization of, children with disabilities;
- (g) Lack of adequate financial and human resources allocated to Special Needs Education Unit;
- (h) The lack of full implementation of the Special Needs Education and Inclusive Policy Framework;
- (i) The lack of adequately prepared and equipped schools to receive children with disabilities, in particular in rural areas;
- (j) The inadequate provision of infrastructure and personnel for access of children with disabilities to health care.

During consultations civil society groups and communities added their voices as follows:

- Adopt a human rights-based approach to disability.
- Strengthen awareness-raising programmes aimed at combating the high level of discrimination against and stigmatization of people with disabilities, in particular women and children.
- Increase human and financial resources of the Special Needs Education unit with a view to achieving inclusive education for children with disabilities
- Improve health care services for persons with disabilities
- Further encourage inclusion of children with disabilities, including by making schools more accessible
- Ensure the effective implementation of the recommendations of the Special Needs Education and Inclusive Policy Framework 2009-2015 and the National Disability Study Report 2013
- Expedite consultations on the draft disability act and ensure that it contains the legal framework to apply the CRPD.
- Expedite the adoption of the Disability Integrated Policy.
- Ensure that women and girls with disabilities have effective access to inclusive education, health, justice, employment and participation in political and public life, among others.

END

## ANNEXES

### 1. Common Country Assessment Countrywide Community Consultation Report



Report of  
Countrywide Commur

### 2. Governance, Access to Justice and Human Rights Additional Mechanisms



UN OFFICE OF  
HUMAN RIGHTS.docx

### 3. List of Participants consulted for the Common Country Assessment



List of People  
Interviewed for the C

### 4. List of Participants who participated at the CCA Validation Workshop



CCA \_Attendance list  
of validation worksho

---