



The Government of The Gambia

Government of The Gambia

National Child Protection Strategy 2016-2020

Final draft – For submission to Cabinet

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Acknowledgements

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During early 2015 when the Strategy and the Plan of Action were being developed, the Child Protection Sub-Committee¹ was established, and many of the key participants in the exercise became members of the Committee. Their experience of child protection in many different settings proved to be invaluable in making the documents grounded and appropriate to the Gambian context. Other child protection agencies and organisations not represented in the Committee also intervened, engaging actively in this lengthy exercise. They provided a wealth of inputs, contributions and expertise essential to the development of the Strategy.

The Strategy would not have been complete without the voices of children, their parents, the *alkalolu* and *seyfu*, members of community-based and faith-based organisations and of the Local Government Authorities. Their daily work on child protection helped to inform the Strategy as it grew out of the mapping and assessment of the child protection system carried out in 2013.

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Our sincere sentiments of gratitude and appreciation go to all who have taken part in the development of the Strategy and the Plan of Action, and we look forward to their continuing collaboration and involvement as we move forward to achieve our vision of child protection in The Gambia.

¹ The Child Protection Sub-Committee is associated with the National Social Protection Steering Committee

Foreword

Key suggested points

- It has been a collective endeavour, which benefitted from the contribution of everybody
- A process that started in 2013 with the mapping and assessment, which represents a continuum
- First strategy for the Gambia, a big challenge ahead, a binding document that brings together all actors and their interventions under a unique umbrella
- A common responsibility to implement for everybody, from families and communities to State actors, that start with the validation and adoption of the strategy
- A document that calls for collective commitment for coordination, effectiveness and oriented towards results for children.
- Reminder of the Government's commitment toward an improved protection of children
- The expected role and contribution of the CPSC in implementing the Strategy

DRAFT

Acronyms

CBOs	Community-based organisations
CCPC	Community Child Protection Committee
CP	Child Protection
CPMIS	Child Protection Management Information System
CPS	Child Protection Strategy
CPSC	Child Protection Sub-Committee
DHS	Demographic and Health Survey
DSW	Department of Social Welfare
FGM/C	Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus / Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
MDAs	Ministries, Departments and Agencies
MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey
MoBSE	Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education
MoHSW	Ministry of Health and Social Welfare
MTEF	Medium Term Expenditure Framework
NGOs	Non-Government Organisations
NSPSC	National Social Protection Steering Committee
PBB	Programme-based budgeting
PFM	Public Finance Management
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
VDCs	Village Development Committees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund

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Executive Summary

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 systems approach to child protection is guided by a number of international conventions all of which The Gambia has ratified. As the 2012 – 2015 Programme for Accelerated Growth and Development 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”**.

In The Gambia, assessments carried out in 2013 pointed to a range of child protection issues, the most significant being child marriage, violence against children, female genital mutilation and cutting, and the worst forms of child labour. All of these are aggravated by widespread poverty. In accordance with the systems approach, the assessments analysed: the legal and policy frameworks relating to child protection; the functions and capacities of those responsible for child protection, whether within government, in the community or in the non-governmental sector, and the extent of coordination and collaboration among them; the availability of quality services for children and of accurate data about them; the financial resources and public knowledge and attitudes towards children and their protection.

Based on the findings of the assessments, and aiming to strengthen the existing child protection system, the Government of The Gambia and its partners came together in early 2015 to develop a national strategy for child protection and a costed plan of action to guide its implementation.

The present strategy is underpinned by the vision of what Gambian child protection actors want to achieve: : *“A country where all children receive comprehensive protection that contributes to the achievement of their full potential, and participate in their own protection from risks of violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation”*. The changes needed to achieve such a vision and thus to strengthen the child protection system in The Gambia, and the principles underlying the changes, were also identified.

From these elements, the five-year Child Protection Strategy (2016 – 2020) was prepared and validated in April 2015. 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.

Each objective is accompanied by the actions necessary to achieve them. All six are interrelated, and any intervention on one of them will have a bearing on all the other five. Strategic Objective 5, on the expansion of protective and preventive services, has been identified as the pivotal point of the entire Strategy.

The Child Protection Sub-Committee, formed in early 2015, brings together representatives of key child protection actors and will be responsible for overseeing the Child Protection Strategy and its Plan of Action. References to its roles and responsibilities are given for each Strategic Objective.

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1. The systems approach to Child Protection

Child protection seeks to guarantee the right of all children to a life free from violence, abuse, exploitation and neglect in both emergency and non-emergency settings. In The Gambia as in most other countries with a similar context, many actors are engaged in child protection, including children and youth, families, communities, government, civil society and private organisations. International experience demonstrates that all these actors need to work together to ensure that child protection is effective for all children. Achieving child protection goals requires the following elements: (i) a strong framework of policies, legislation and regulations; (ii) a clear understanding of the roles, functions and relationships of the various actors, strong capacity to carry out those roles, and coordination and collaboration among them; (iii) supportive social norms, including traditional beliefs and customs; (iv) effective promotion, prevention and response actions; (v) high quality evidence and data for decision-making; and (vi) sufficient resource allocation and efficient fiscal management.

The systems approach to child protection is guided by a number of international conventions and instruments, including the African Charter for the Rights and Welfare of the Child, the African Youth Charter, the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Optional Protocols. The Gambia has ratified all of these. These conventions and instruments establish that States have responsibility for the protection of all children, regardless of local context. In 2008, UNICEF defined a child protection system in the following terms: "A child protection system is comprised of the set of laws, policies, regulations and services needed across all social sectors to support prevention and response to protection related risks. At the level of prevention the aims of the system include supporting and strengthening families to reduce social exclusion and to lower risk of separation, violence and exploitation"².

Children and their families face complex problems that require a multi-disciplinary response. An individual child can be confronted by multiple needs, violations, and vulnerabilities, of differing durations and severity in both stable and emergency settings: overall, poverty increases the vulnerability of children. These will all vary across their life cycle. The systems approach aims to **promote** the right to child protection, through raising knowledge and awareness and increasing access to protection measures, to contribute to the **prevention** of violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation, through early identification and intervention when problems arise and by building the resilience (including

"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 Programme for Accelerated Growth and

² UNICEF Child Protection Strategy, 2008

economic) of children, families and communities; and to **respond** when violations or issues occur, through the provision of appropriate services and through community mechanisms such as mediation to restore a positive environment. The approach aims to move away from fragmented, single-issue responses, and towards more comprehensive and sustainable interventions, ensuring that quality child protection services are available to all who need them. It also aims to address factors such as inadequate legal and policy frameworks, low levels of capacity among actors and a lack of coordination among them, as well as a lack of child protection data for programming, advocacy and resource mobilisation. In addition, the systems approach aims to tackle social norms, practices and beliefs that are not protective and may actually be harmful to children, and to improve the level of knowledge and information at all levels, including among communities, about child protection issues and the best way of resolving them.

In many countries, the amount of the government budget allocated to child protection is very low. Nevertheless, it is increasingly recognised that investing in child protection contributes to the achievement of national development and poverty reduction agendas. Children who are protected from violence, abuse, exploitation and neglect are more likely to attend and remain in school, to perform better in the classroom, and are less likely to experience health issues, including sexually transmitted diseases and HIV/AIDS. When combined with adequate nutrition and stimulation in the early years, children protected from violence are more likely to experience better physical growth, higher IQ scores, reduced mortality, and improved earning potential.

In The Gambia, while the level of birth registration is increasing (from 52.5 % in 2010 according to MICS 4 to 72% according to DHS 2013) and helps to reduce children's vulnerability to various risks, it could still be further improved: child abuse and neglect affect children's ability to enter, perform well and remain in school, while female genital mutilation and child marriage contribute to maternal mortality and low birth weight in children. Thus, investing in child protection is a sound investment in the development of human capital and in national development. When children thrive -- nations thrive.

2. Preparing for Child Protection System strengthening in The Gambia

The development of a child protection system in The Gambia stems from the Programme for Accelerated Growth and Employment, 2012 – 2015, which states the intention of the government to "strengthen the national child protection system by developing and implementing a national child protection strategy, plan of action and monitoring and evaluation framework"³. The first step in strengthening child protection efforts is to assess the strengths and weaknesses of what already exists. Thus, in 2013, 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

³ PAGE 2012 – 2015, paragraph 348

assessment of the child protection system⁴ 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. The mapping and assessment exercise included desk review of over 150 documents, semi-structured interviews with 21 key informants from Ministries and departments, and focus group discussions with the staff of 3 key NGOs. To gather stakeholders' perspectives on the risks and vulnerabilities children face in The Gambia, all 6 regions of the Gambia were visited during the mapping and assessment exercise. 475 adults (parents, primary caregivers and local gatekeepers) and 210 children were interviewed or took part in focus groups.

In parallel with the child protection mapping, an assessment of the structures, technical and functional capacities of the DSW⁵ was undertaken, and of public financial management arrangements⁶. The findings of these three studies were validated at a national workshop in November 2013 and were further discussed in the two-day strategy development consultations held in Banjul in February 2015. At the end of March 2015, consultations were held with Local Government Authorities and representatives of communities to gather information on what communities can do to sustain the proposed strategy, and their inputs included. The Child Protection Strategy 2016 - 2020 and its accompanying Plan of Action 2016 - 2018 were finally validated in a workshop in Banjul in April 2015⁷.

3. Child protection in the Gambia; the context

The Gambia is the smallest country on the African continental mainland, covering 11,290 square kilometres, with a 2013 population of 1,882,450⁸ people, of which nearly half were children. It had an average per capita GDP of US\$1.557 in 2012⁹ and a 2014 Human Development Index ranking of 172nd out of 178 countries. The fiscal environment is volatile with high debt and limited donor support. Recent sharp decreases in tourist revenues due to the Ebola epidemic in West Africa, the consequences of the drought in 2013 and the 2011 food crisis have placed further strains on the economy.

The mapping exercise identified a range of child protection risks and concerns. The major issues identified are child marriage, violence against children (including in the form of "discipline"), female genital mutilation and cutting (FGM/C), and the worst forms of child labour. Other identified problems include; sexual abuse of

⁴ The Gambia Child Protection System Mapping and Assessment report, Maestral International and Family for Every Child. 2013

⁵ Capacity Assessment of the Department of Social Welfare, Maestral International and Family for Every Child. 2013

⁶ Public Expenditure and Public Administration Components of the Child Protection System, Maestral International. 2013

⁷ The list of all the stakeholders that contributed to this process, from the mapping and assessment to the development of the strategy and plan of action, is provided in Annex C.

⁸ National Census data, 2013

⁹ UN Human Development Report, 2014

children, whether at home, in the community or through tourism; child trafficking, with The Gambia as a source, transit and destination country; children, including those orphaned by HIV/AIDS, not living with their parents; children in conflict or in contact with the law: discrimination against children with disabilities: and low levels of birth registration.

Indicator	Total	Source
Birth registration	72%	DHS 2013
Child marriage, total, married by 18	41%	DHS 2013
Child marriage, total, married by 15	16%	DHS 2013
FGM/C (15-49) total	74.9%	DHS 2013
FGM/C (15-49) urban	71.6%	DHS 2013
FGM/C (15-49) rural	79.1%	DHS 2013
FGM/C (< 5) total	54.8.4%	DHS 2013
Prevalence of extreme form of FGM/C (15-49)	6.8%	MICS 2010
Child discipline (2-14 years)	90.3%	MICS 2010
% of children aged 2-14 years who experienced physical punishment during the past month	74.1%	MICS 2010
Children (aged 0-17) orphaned by AIDS (000s)	2800	Global Report
Children (0-17) orphaned by all causes (000s)	83000	MICS 2010
Orphan school attendance ratio	66.8%	DHS 2013

All of these are aggravated by poverty (in 2010, an estimated 48.4% of the population was living in poverty, and just over 60% in multidimensional poverty¹⁰) and economic vulnerability, including the risks arising from food insecurity, environmental degradation, migration, and urbanization. Although

¹⁰ Multidimensional poverty encompasses a range of deprivations that a household may suffer. The Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative has identified the following five 'Missing Dimensions' of poverty that deprived people cite as important in their experiences of poverty: quality of work, empowerment, physical safety, social connectedness and psychosocial wellbeing. Source <http://www.ophi.org.uk/research/multidimensional-poverty/>. The UNDP office in The Gambia has recently finalised a study on multi-dimensional poverty in the country.

child protection risks are well known both at the level of the government and in communities, the data measuring their scale and scope are incomplete and of variable quality and few data exist about regional variations in their prevalence. Since they are collected by different Ministries and structures, data can generally not be compared or cross-referenced, and there is no standard set of indicators on child protection: research capacity is also limited.

a. Legal and policy framework

The Gambian government has signed, ratified, and/or accepted the major international instruments relating to child rights and children, including the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and two of its Optional Protocols and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child. The domestic child protection legal framework consists of several Acts, among which the Children's Act 2005 is the central one. However, the Act is little known, may not be wholly appropriate in the context of The Gambia, and its implementation is weak. In some quarters, particularly at the local/traditional level, the Act is perceived as being in conflict with tradition, culture and Sharia law. In two key child protection areas, female genital mutilation and cutting (FGM/C) and child marriage, there is currently no legislation.

Child protection has little visibility in the current crop of national policies and programmes. Since several major programmes and policies are currently due for revision or renewal, there are opportunities to advocate for more specific references to CP and action to address child protection issues. These include:

- The Programme for Accelerated Growth and Employment (2012 – 2015);
- The National Health Sector Strategic Plan (2014 – 2020);
- The Education Policy (2004 – 2015) which identifies some CP issues;
- The Social Protection Policy (2015 – 2025).

Among the available opportunities, the Social Protection Policy and its Plan of Action, currently awaiting approval, provide a very significant avenue for addressing child protection risks and concerns¹¹. Social protection is defined by the Government of The Gambia as “policies and programmes designed to reduce poverty and population vulnerability by promoting efficient labour markets, diminishing individuals’ exposure to risk, and making people more able to protect themselves from hazards and from the interruption or loss of income” (MoFEA, 2011). Interventions include, at a minimum, social insurance, labour market policies, social safety nets and social welfare services.

The Gambia’s social protection system aims to address the social vulnerabilities that exacerbate people’s exposure to protection-violation risks (especially violence, neglect and abuse), and to counter discrimination and poverty by developing appropriate social services and legislative measures. The core target group includes vulnerable children, people with disabilities, people and families affected by HIV, vulnerable women and youth, refugees and migrants, and prison

¹¹ The social protection system in this context is defined as “the key structures and mechanisms that facilitate addressing multiple vulnerabilities and poverty in a holistic and integrated manner” (UNICEF, 2011).

inmates and their families. The policy underlines the need to integrate and coordinate social protection interventions, to build a wide range of partnerships, including with non-State actors, and to ensure reliable and sustainable funding for the system. Measures to strengthen leadership, cross-sectoral governance and capacity are envisaged as is the design of a Management Information System and of appropriate monitoring and evaluation measures.

Discussions in mid-2015 in the National Social Protection Steering Committee (the NSPSC became operational in 2012) identified the following new programmes as priorities to be implemented on a national basis:

- Cash assistance for pregnant women
- Benefits for people with disabilities
- Pensions for elderly people

Pilot schemes should also be carried out in a few regions to test a Rural Health Insurance Scheme, benefits for children living in low income families and for women with low incomes. The NSPSC also recommended the extension of existing programmes, such as the MoBSE schools feeding programmes as well as the protection of existing social protection programmes¹².

The National Social Protection Steering Committee in February 2015 decided to create a Child Protection Sub-Committee (CPSC), guaranteeing a high degree of alignment between these two sectors, both of which have DSW as their lead agency.

The Child Protection Sub-Committee (its Terms of Reference are attached as Annex A) was established in mid-February 2015. In the letter of invitation to the first meeting, the Director of Social Welfare stated that, "The multi-disciplinary and multi-sectoral nature of child protection requires the setting up of a multi-sectoral National Child Protection Committee to help maintain an integrated approach to child protection and to facilitate a joint strategy in addressing child protection issues."

b. Structures, functions, and capacities

A number of different branches of the Gambian government have child protection responsibilities. The primary ministry responsible for child protection is the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare (MoHSW), through the Department of Social Welfare (DSW). However, the DSW's capacity in terms of human and financial resources is limited. Social work is not a recognised profession in The Gambia, social workers are few in number and their level of initial training is inadequate. Other Ministries with child protection responsibilities include the Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education, the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Justice, the National Women's Council and Bureau and the Ministry of Tourism and Culture. The responsibilities of these different actors are not always well-articulated and in most cases the activities of these structures are concentrated in the Greater Banjul

¹² Adapted from, "Developing a Costed Minimum Social Protection Package of Interventions in The Gambia and Identification of Fiscal Funding Mechanisms" (Greg McTaggart, April 2015)

area, with only small numbers of staff at sub-national levels and limited decentralisation of services. At the legislative level, child protection is under the jurisdiction of the National Assembly's Committee on Health, Women, Children, Disaster and Refugees, and Humanitarian Relief. In the justice system, there are Children's Courts in three of the country's 6 regions which have responsibility for ensuring justice for children.

Given the limited presence of government structures at local levels, the majority of child protection interventions are undertaken by **local authorities, communities and families**. About half the population of The Gambia lives in rural areas. Sub-national governance consists of 8 area councils: each of these has a Technical Advisory Committee, chaired by the Governor and supported by a Multi-Disciplinary Facilitation Team. At the next level are 144 Ward Development Councils with elected chairpersons and some 1,500 Village Development Committees. VDCs¹³, whose members are all volunteers, are *de facto* the main child protection actors at the village level although they have limited preparation for the role and few resources. The VDCs are not trained in child protection, and their attitudes towards children are naturally influenced by the social-cultural norms of their communities. They must seek to strike a balance between community cohesion and the best interests of the child.

District chiefs (*seyfu*) and village heads (*alkalolu*), who play a significant role in child protection day-to-day, have considerable experience in negotiating and problem-solving at the local level, although their knowledge of child protection issues may not be extensive. The National Council of *Seyfu* is convened periodically by the Paramount Chief, and a council of *alkalolu* is currently in formation. There are also 70 Community Child Protection Committees established by DSW with multi-sectoral voluntary membership, mostly located in the West Coast Region and Upper River Region. According to the CCPC terms of reference, there is no institutionalised link between the CCPC and the VDC, though the Village Head sits in both the Committees.

There is some **NGO** engagement with child protection issues although their capacity is generally not extensive and their priorities are often donor-driven. Relatively few faith-based or community-based organisations are active in child protection. As far as the **traditional and religious authorities** are concerned, traditional beliefs and customs have a strong influence on public perceptions of child protection issues such as child marriage, child discipline and violence against children and FGM/C. In many settings, traditional approaches to child-related problems (such as custody, behaviour, or abuse) may be preferred to "formal" or "official" approaches. These may in fact be unknown to many, if not most, communities¹⁴.

¹³ The VDCs' responsibilities include: identify local development needs; prioritise them; develop, implement and manage appropriate plans; raise, coordinate and manage financial resources; mobilise community participation in development activities, and support and strengthen all development oriented groups within the community.

¹⁴ For example, recourse to Cadi courts is provided for by S.137(4) of the Constitution which states that the Cadi Court shall have jurisdiction to apply the Sharia in matters of marriage, divorce, and inheritance where the parties or other persons are Muslims. See

c. Coordination and collaboration

Given the dispersion of child protection responsibilities among different structures and levels of government and the community, strong coordination and effective collaboration among them would be necessary to put in place a systems approach to child protection. In fact, government departments and agencies have limited experience of collaborating and coordinating with each other or with the non-governmental and community sectors. Although a number of coordinating structures are already in existence, they do not operate to their full potential, have limited follow-up capacity, and are generally focussed on specific issues rather than taking a broader view of issues affecting children.

d. Child protection services

Few formal child protection services of any kind (apart from some provided by the DSW and NGOs on a small scale) exist at present, whether in the area of prevention or response. Those that do function are mainly available at the central level and there are virtually none at the sub-national level. Birth registration, a core child protection service, reaches around 72% of children¹⁵. While birth registration is overall the responsibility of the Civil Registration service in many countries, in the Gambia birth registration is the responsibility of Public Health Officers and the Birth Registration Unit is located in the MoHSW. This suggests that integration of services and room for collaboration of child protection mainstreaming in line ministries is available and can be expanded.

e. Public knowledge and understanding of child protection

Levels of understanding and knowledge of child protection are limited and the media needs to be engaged in creating awareness. Traditional and religious beliefs tend to express a rather repressive view of childhood, for example in areas such as discipline and participation. The media should be a useful vehicle for messaging about child protection, although the extent of media outreach is not clear. However, over 90% of the population apparently have access to radio. Literacy rates are around 51.1% although reportedly higher among young people (72% male, 63% female in the 15 – 24 age group¹⁶).

f. Financial resources for child protection

The level of resources available to the DSW for child protection from government budgets remains very low; in 2012, DSW expenditure amounted to 9.082 million Gambian Dalasi¹⁷. 56% of this came from the government and the remainder came from a small number of other sources (mainly UNICEF). About 34% of this expenditure was on recurrent costs (mainly salaries). There is only limited donor interest in The Gambia (about 2.5% of GDP in 2007-2010), and it goes mostly to

Agim, E.A., 2010, The Gambia: Legal System, Revised edition, Artwords Production (pages 46 – 48)

¹⁵ DHS 2013

¹⁶ This figure is from the Gambia Bureau of Statistics, 2003, quoted in http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/ED/pdf/Gambia_01.pdf.

¹⁷ DSW capacity assessment p. 20.

health, education, agriculture and social protection. So far, very little donor support has been directed towards child protection.

However, adding together funding for child protection activities and programmes in other line Ministries and from different sources (government, NGOs and development partners) results in the following figures: for Fiscal Year 2010, 128.6 million Dalasi; FY 2011, 123.0 million Dalasi; and FY 2012, 65.6 million Dalasi¹⁸.

The Government of The Gambia is also in the process of introducing two key economic governance shifts, towards a Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) and a Programme Based Budget (PBB)¹⁹. These have already been introduced in several major ministries and are now being implemented in the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare. It is worth pointing out here that these MTEF and PBB approaches are pertinent to all the Ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs) involved in child protection since they underlie the basic principles of their operation. Consequently, they should be taken into account in future planning of child protection activities.

4. Child protection strategy development in The Gambia: vision, characteristics and principles

a. The Vision

The findings of the assessments conducted in 2013, the mapping of the child protection system and the capacity assessment for DSW, received broad consensus and were endorsed at the end of November 2013. In February 2015, a two-day consultation to begin the strategy development process brought together about 50 participants from a wide range of structures and organisations: Government ministries and agencies, representatives of local government, the police and the defence forces, the Prison Services, UN Agencies and national and international NGOs. Participants began by reviewing the findings of these assessments and then focussed on developing a vision:

A vision for child protection in The Gambia

"A country where all children receive comprehensive protection that contributes to the achievement of their full potential, and participate in their own protection from risks of violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation".

The meeting discussed the systems approach to child protection and agreed that the comprehensive vision of child protection laid out above can only be achieved through a systems approach²⁰. This approach must be multisectoral, ensuring that

¹⁸ Public Expenditure and Public Administration Components of the Child Protection System, First Phase. MAESTRAL International. November 2013.

¹⁹ The paper cited in footnote 18 above provides an in-depth analysis of these developments in the Gambia

²⁰ The Gambia's "Vision 2020" states, "In the context of Vision 2020, attention shall focus on child survival, protection and development programmes. Special attention will be given

child protection interventions are mainstreamed into the entirety of the social sectors – social protection, education, health and justice – and into their structures, whether at national, regional or local level. Local authorities already have a child protection mandate but need to be equipped with the necessary resources and training to carry out their protection and response mandates, engaging children and families, civil society, and the traditional and religious authorities. The expertise and experience of NGOs, whether they work at national or local level, can be drawn on to help create the necessary capacity throughout the system. Coordination and collaboration among all the actors are vital to the successful functioning of the system. Participants in the national consultations also discussed the role of the Child Protection Sub-Committee which was about to be formed at the time of the meeting. Participants agreed that the Committee would have a key role in facilitating the implementation of the national Child Protection Strategy, with the overall objective of aligning all child protection activities carried out in The Gambia with the Strategy.

Based on these discussions, a vision for the system was articulated:

A vision for the child protection system

A system where all actors:

- *Work together to prevent and respond to current and potential risks and vulnerabilities, which are identified through continuous monitoring;*
- *Are guided by international standards and promote appropriate national laws and policies;*
- *Create a collaborative environment among all the social sectors, engaging government and non-governmental partners, and recognising cultural values and the role of families and communities;*
- *Utilise accurate information and knowledge drawn from research, monitoring and evaluation; and*
- *Draw on the support of well-trained and accountable human resources, and adequate, sustainable financing ring-fenced for child protection.*

The DSW as lead agency will need to strengthen considerably its outreach and its partnerships to bring about the essential multi-sectoral approach to child protection expressed in this vision.

b. Characteristics and principles of change

In a systems approach, change initiatives cannot operate in isolation: they must interact fully to bring about the desired outcomes. The success of the change

to children’s rights, health, education, cultural practices that impede their development as well as the preservation of positive family values and attitudes” (chapter 14)

process depends on maintaining the dynamic relationship among the different elements. Approaching the development of the strategy, some fundamental **characteristics** of the change process may be identified:

- The strengthening of the child protection system will be an **incremental process**, testing different approaches to the prevention and resolution of child protection problems and measuring their outcomes;
- **Resource and capacity considerations** will define the pace of the system strengthening process;
- Since all elements of Gambian society – officials, social workers, local authorities, communities and families – are influenced by their **social environment and norms and by local culture**, these will also be highly influential in the change process;
- **The identification of risks and vulnerabilities** and their integration into broader social protection and poverty reduction initiatives will both increase the resource pool and embed child protection concerns across the social spectrum;
- In order to be effective, change in the child protection system must be **multisectoral and multidisciplinary** in all its aspects: design, planning, implementation and monitoring. Collaborative approaches to child protection will include a wide range of partners: Government Ministries and Departments with child protection mandates; regional and local government; national and international NGOs; civil society, traditional and religious authorities; children and families;
- **Public ownership and community participation** in the child protection system are vital to its success, based on a broad knowledge and understanding of child protection issues;
- **Political commitment is essential**, expressed through government budget allocations to child protection and leadership in promoting child protection as national priority.

The **principles** underlying child protection systems strengthening are based on international conventions, especially the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child:

- **Upholding the best interests of the child**: In taking action for and on behalf of children, their safety and well-being are the prime considerations;
- **Combating discrimination and promoting gender equality**: All children are treated equally, regardless of their age, sex, family status, physical or mental health status;
- **Listening to children's voices and empowering families and communities**: Children, families and community systems must be fully involved in the planning, implementation and monitoring of child protection actions. Investment in family and community mechanisms, the first and most valuable source of protection and support for children, enables them better to provide that care and support;

- **Ensuring that all children can live and develop to their full potential:** Since all children have an inherent right to life and to full development, every possible effort must be made as they grow up to be adults to ensure that they are protected from any risk or harm that could hamper their good and sound development;
- **Ensuring that The Gambia's community and family strengths are drawn upon:** The Gambia's cultural traditions favour harmony and a sense of belonging, with a strong sense of responsibility to community and family. Religions, traditions and customs influence day-to-day behaviour and attitudes. These dynamics need to be taken into consideration to strengthen child protection at all levels of society;
- **Ensuring that all interventions are planned and implemented according to the principle of subsidiarity:** implementation and decision-making should happen as closely to community as possible. According to this principle, actors at one level should only intervene if they are able to act more effectively than actors at other levels²¹.

5. Strategic Objectives

The two-day national strategy consultations in February 2015, as well as developing the visions on child protection and the child protection system, also discussed priorities among the child protection issues identified in the assessments. Discussions largely confirmed the findings of the mapping and assessment as to priorities: child marriage, FGM/C, the worst forms of child labour, violence against children, and issues related to children and justice²². They also emphasised the significant role played by poverty and the lack of access to quality social services as factors aggravating child protection problems and emphasised the importance of social inclusion and strong parental involvement in tackling violence, abuse and exploitation. The discussions also led to the identification of a series of long-term goals and strategic objectives for the period 2016 - 2020, which are set out below. These goals and objectives provide the framework for the Multiyear Plan of Action 2016 - 2018 which was developed to accompany the Strategy. The Plan was validated in April 2015 and a summary of it is attached as Annex B.

During the community consultations held in all six regions of The Gambia in March 2015, communities reported that they are in the front line when it comes to the identification of child protection cases and in helping and directly supporting children in need. Community actors are the closest to children and their families, and are often given a child protection mandate they cannot totally fulfil, since in effect they are substituting, often without the necessary skills or resources, for

²¹ See, for example, the [principle of subsidiarity](#) in the European Union.

²² Other issues mentioned were: birth registration, trafficking, street children, and commercial sexual exploitation (especially in the tourism sector).

scarce child protection services. The outcomes of these consultations are reflected in the strategic objectives.

The long-term goals and strategic objectives outlined below make reference to the relevant responsibilities of the Child Protection Sub-Committee, established in February 2015 (see section 4 above).

While six distinct strategic objectives are identified, they are of course strongly interrelated. Since all the objectives have at their heart the need to provide more and better protective and preventive services for the children of The Gambia, this relationship can be visualised in a diagram:



Long-term goal 1: Promote the right to protection

The rights of all children to be protected from violence, abuse and exploitation are widely acknowledged and understood, and a national consensus on the importance of child protection inspires and upholds the system.

The Child Protection Sub-Committee has as one of its responsibilities: "Raise awareness in the wider community and among government ministries and agencies, institutions, NGOs and the media, about the importance of child rights and child protection and the need for broad involvement in safeguarding children and promoting their welfare".

Strategic Objective 1: create an active and inclusive constituency for the protection of all children in The Gambia through awareness-raising and knowledge-sharing at national, regional and community levels.

- **Strategies to achieve the long-term goal:**

- **Create public awareness of child protection as the basic right of all children:** negative attitudes, misconception and resistance to change are to be tackled by building awareness through the development of child protection messages for a variety of audiences (politicians and decision-makers at national and local levels, child protection actors in the social

sectors, traditional and religious authorities, communities, families, and children): involve children and communities in designing messages for maximum impact.

- **Identify the most effective means of disseminating information about the importance of child protection:** information on child protection should be geared towards encouraging positive norms and values; select the most appropriate way of reaching different audiences (for example, through press, radio, advertising campaigns, educational materials, meetings etc), and engage respected public figures and leaders to act as high-profile "child protection ambassadors".
- **Periodically monitor levels of public knowledge and awareness;** assess the impact of awareness-creation efforts through surveys and studies and refine messages and approaches as required.

Long-term goal 2: Strengthen the legal and policy frameworks

The legal framework of The Gambia is appropriate to the social and cultural context of the Gambia and fully conforms to the country's international treaty obligations. Child protection laws and regulations are implemented: government policy across all social sectors reflects the child protection dimension.

The Child Protection Sub-Committee has among its responsibilities, "Draw up an annual work plan based on the Child Protection Strategy 2016 - 2020 and its Plan of Action 2016 - 2018" and "Publish periodical updates on child protection issues, for example on the status of child protection law reform, or new information gathered on child protection through studies and data collection".

Strategic Objective 2: complete and strengthen the legal and policy frameworks for child protection.

- **Strategies to achieve the long-term goal:**

- **Identify the most effective way to remedy gaps in child protection-related legislation:** through dialogue with policy-makers and legislators, determine whether urgent priority areas (for example, child marriage, violence against children, especially corporal punishment, and FGM/C) should be addressed through the preparation of new legislation or the revision and expansion of existing legislation, and take the necessary steps to ensure that these areas are fully covered.
- **Examine the interaction between formal, customary and Sharia law and the consequences for children in both civil and criminal domains:** identify any anomalies or contradictions and advocate with religious and traditional leaders to align the different systems and practices; ensure that existing and future legislation takes full account of the need to reconcile the systems and enables them to operate in a coherent and supportive manner for the benefit of children.
- **Review implementation arrangements for current legislation relevant to child protection to ensure that they are adequate and**

consistent; revise them as necessary: conduct a cross-sectoral review of current legislation in the social sectors to identify the most effective approaches to implementation and develop a model aligned with the availability of human and financial resources: progressively apply the model to all legislation relevant to child protection and ensure that it is applied to future legislation as well. Raise awareness among child protection actors about new and existing legislation and provide materials that explain their implementation responsibilities.

- **Identify all opportunities to introduce child protection concerns and issues into evolving social sector policies;** as new policies are developed and existing plans and policies are revised, especially in the area of social protection, advocate for the inclusion of the child protection dimension by providing information to policy-makers and stakeholders.

Long-term goal 3: Bring about effective coordination and collaboration

A child protection system in which all stakeholders have defined roles and responsibilities, work together towards shared objectives and are accountable to children, communities and society for their actions.

Major roles of the Child Protection Sub-Committee include, "Facilitate and improve communication between the different agencies involved in child protection by promoting information exchange and partnership approaches to child protection activities and projects" and "Create linkages between the CPSC and other coordination mechanisms (both at national and at sub-national levels) with child protection mandates and identify opportunities for joint work on child protection issues".

In addition, the CPSC will;

- *draw up an annual work plan based on the Child Protection Strategy 2016 - 2020 and its Plan of Action 2016 – 2018:*
- *monitor, co-ordinate and evaluate the implementation of the CPSC annual work plan:*
- *monitor the activities of all child protection actors in The Gambia to ensure that they are in line with the priorities identified in the National Child Protection Strategy and its Plan of Action.*

Strategic Objective 3: bring about effective coordination and collaboration among all child protection actors with the Child Protection Sub-Committee as the principal mechanism for ensuring this.

- **Strategies to achieve the long-term goal:**
 - **Establish the status and authority of the Child Protection Sub-Committee as the leading child protection agency in The Gambia:** ensure that the mandate, priorities and programme of work of the CPSC are widely disseminated and advocate with the Committee's member agencies and institutions to ensure that their representation in the Committee is high-level and consistent.

- **Create connections between the CPSC and existing coordination mechanisms in related fields:** set up procedures to enable information on child protection policies, activities and issues to flow in a systematic manner among mechanisms in different sectors (among others, these include the Child Justice Committee, the Coordinating Committee Meetings in the education sector and the National Steering Committee for Orphans and Vulnerable Children).
- **Establish a reporting system for the CPSC:** put in place a system for the CPSC to report on its activities at regular intervals to its parent committee, the National Social Protection Steering Committee, and to other senior levels of government and ensure that regular reports are also provided to the public and to the development partners.

Long-term goal 4: Develop human capacity and ensure financial resources

All stakeholders in the child protection system – national and local government, NGOs, traditional and community leaders, families and children – have the knowledge, skills and financial resources required to fulfil their child protection mandates.

The Child Protection Sub-Committee’s responsibilities include, “Encourage and help develop effective working relationships between the various institutions and professionals, based on trust and mutual understanding”.

Strategic Objective 4: develop the human capacity to develop and implement cross-sectoral child protection approaches, and ensure that it is supported by sufficient, predictable and assured financial resources.

- **Strategies to achieve the long-term goal:**

- **Enhance the capacity and numbers of social workers and para-professionals:** to professionalise social work, review and upgrade as necessary initial and in-service training of social workers, and introduce licensing and assessment systems, codes of conduct, and incentive schemes to monitor quality and increase retention: seek funds for the recruitment of additional social workers and para-professionals, prioritising the needs at regional and local level.
- **Include child protection elements in the training of social protection, education, health, police and justice personnel:** design a common core of child protection training to cover the basic prevention and response elements in initial training ; incorporate specific elements of child protection into in-service training for serving staff in relevant Ministries (for example the social protection trainings to be carried out as the system is created); adapt (or if necessary design new) manuals and information materials for use in the field.
- **Clarify child protection responsibilities and accountabilities:** ensure that staff in Ministries, local officials, NGO staff and others including volunteers with child protection mandates are explicitly informed of their

child protection responsibilities and are equipped with the necessary guidelines and tools to carry them out : advocate for inclusion of these responsibilities and for interagency collaboration on child protection issues in job descriptions and in performance assessments.

- Engage NGO partners with relevant experience and knowledge:

identify the NGOs and CBOs who are working effectively in the child protection area and involve them in the design and implementation of training and the production of information and guidance materials.

- Advocate for appropriate levels of funding for child protection:

using an approach based on costing of services and the data collected by a Child Protection Management Information System²³ (for example, on ratios of staff to child protection cases, volumes of cases etc.) , make the case for multi-year allocations of financial resources from government through budgetary mechanisms (MTEF, PBB, etc.); advocate for funds from development partners through round tables, forums, etc. Provide the Child Protection Sub-Committee with the necessary capacity and resources to carry out its coordinating role.

Long-term goal 5: Expand protective and preventive services

A comprehensive range of preventive services guarantee respect for the protection rights of all children in The Gambia, and protective services provide remedies for children whose protection rights have been violated.

The Child Protection Sub-Committee has among its responsibilities to, "Facilitate and improve communication between the different agencies involved in child protection by promoting information exchange and partnership approaches to child protection activities and projects".

Strategic Objective 5: preventive and protective services, working in a coordinated way and using a multi-disciplinary approach, are established throughout The Gambia.

• **Strategies to achieve the long-term goal:**

- **Build on existing services provided by government and NGO partners to increase their coverage and impact:** assess child protection services which are already operational and which address identified priorities to select the most effective and expand them as resources allow. As well as the DSW's services (for example, the Family Strengthening Programme), these might include activities such as the MoBSE's programmes to promote alternative discipline and to counter sexual abuse in schools, and the Mothers' Clubs and School Management Committees established in selected schools which have a child protection role, and programmes implemented by NGOs such as Tostan, the Child

²³ It would be preferable to develop a Child Protection MIS as part of the existing Health MIS or proposed Social Protection MIS and ways to do this should be examined

Protection Alliance and ActionAid. To ensure high-quality service provision both by government and NGOs, a framework of standards and regulations will need to be created and applied.

- **Improve coverage, targeting and performance of services:** At present, child protection services and activities are provided by several public agencies without clear prioritisation and fragmented among groups of beneficiaries, e.g., working children, orphans, children in contact with the law etc. This reduces the impact of programmes and their ability to produce positive change for children, and jeopardise the most efficient use of limited resources. Clear criteria need to be developed to identify the children to be targeted by the different services and programmes, and to assess their vulnerability to existing risks in order to enhance programme planning and rationalise the use of human and financial resources, leading to the development of cost-effective interventions. As part of the preparation of this process, more locally-based approaches involving NGOs and communities could be tested and strengthened
- **Develop the capacity of communities and community-based mechanisms (such as VDCs and CCPCs) to create a protective environment for children:** initially on a small scale and based on an assessment of existing knowledge and skills, enable selected communities to take responsibility for the promotion of child protection through awareness-creation and advocacy, for the provision of basic preventive and protective services (for example, identification of children at risk or in need of legal protection and their referral to appropriate service providers) and for the maintenance of recording and reporting systems. Enlist the assistance of Technical Advisory Committees and Multidisciplinary Facilitation Teams in identifying communities to participate and in monitoring the experience: build on the knowledge gained to expand the experience.
- **Establish systems for the handling of child protection referrals:** develop procedures and guidelines, initially on an experimental basis, to address child protection referrals at the appropriate level (community, local, regional, and/or through the judicial system), to meet the child's immediate and long-term needs and to monitor outcomes: ensure that experience and knowledge gained in the initial phase are analysed with a view to generalising the system, while retaining sufficient flexibility to adapt to local situations and conditions.

Long-term goal 6: Create the necessary knowledge and information

Accurate information, up-to-date knowledge and validated experience support an effective and evolving child protection system.

The Child Protection Sub-Committee has among its responsibilities, "Monitor the activities of all child protection actors in The Gambia to ensure that they are in line with the priorities identified in the National Child Protection Strategy and its Plan of Action, and that they are compliant with the standards set for child protection and "Publish periodical updates on child protection issues, for example on the status of child protection law reform, or new information gathered on child protection through studies and data collection". The Committee will also "Review annually the National Plan of Action 2016 – 2018 and the National Child Protection Strategy 2016 - 2020: produce a new multiyear Plan of Action to begin in 2019, and conduct a mid-term review of the Child Protection Strategy in 2018".

Strategic Objective 6: continuously gather child protection data and monitor and evaluate child protection interventions and policies to generate information and knowledge to guide decision-making.

- **Strategies to achieve the long-term goal:**

- **Acquire more and better data on child protection issues:** build an information system and data-bases using a standard set of indicators shared among all social welfare actors to collect and analyse data on child protection issues; share the information generated through data analysis and research with all actors to create a common understanding of the scale and scope of The Gambia's child protection needs. Address information gaps by undertaking focussed research as necessary.
- **Create a shared understanding of monitoring and evaluation among child protection partners:** develop through the CPSC a set of monitoring and evaluation tools to be adopted by all child protection actors: create formats for the recording of lessons learned and ensure their dissemination and the application of experience.
- **Regularly review the Child Protection Strategy and Plan of Action to ensure their continuing relevance:** using the knowledge acquired from data collection and from monitoring, evaluation and research, periodically review the Strategy and Plan of Action and adjust them to take account of emerging experience and new trends.



ANNEX A: Terms of Reference of the Child Protection Sub-Committee

The scope of the Child Protection Sub-Committee's responsibilities extends to all children, particularly those who are victims of, or at risk of, abuse and exploitation.

The Committee's work will be based on achieving the vision for child protection in The Gambia developed in 2015:

"A country where all children receive comprehensive protection that contributes to the achievement of their full potential, and participate in their own protection from risks of violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation".

The Committee's main responsibilities are:

1. Advocacy and awareness-raising

- Raise awareness in the wider community and among government ministries and agencies, institutions, NGOs and the media, about the importance of child rights and child protection and the need for broad involvement in safeguarding children and promoting their welfare.
- Publish periodical updates on child protection issues, for example on the status of child protection law reform, or new information gathered on child protection through studies and data collection.

2. Planning and monitoring

- Draw up an annual work plan based on the Child Protection Strategy 2016 - 2020 and its Plan of Action 2016 - 2018: disseminate through CPSC members to all child protection actors.
- Monitor, co-ordinate and evaluate the implementation of the CPSC annual work plan and prepare two periodic reviews of its state of implementation, one as of 30th June and one as of 31st December: prepare an annual report on the outcome of the Action Plan.
- Monitor the activities of all child protection actors in The Gambia to ensure that they are in line with the priorities identified in the National Child Protection Strategy and its Plan of Action, and that they are compliant with the standards set for child protection.
- Review annually the National Plan of Action 2016 - 2018 and the National Child Protection Strategy 2016 - 2020: produce a new multiyear Plan of Action to begin in 2019, and conduct a mid-term review of the Child Protection Strategy in 2018.

3. Coordination

- Facilitate and improve communication between the different agencies involved in child protection by promoting information exchange and partnership approaches to child protection activities and projects.

- Encourage and help develop effective working relationships between the various institutions and professionals, based on trust and mutual understanding.
- Create linkages between the CPSC and other coordination mechanisms (both at national and at sub-national levels) with child protection mandates and identify opportunities for joint work on child protection issues.

Operational arrangements.

- ✓ The Child Protection Sub- Committee should meet quarterly (or more frequently if necessary). To facilitate planning and participation, the Committee will meet on the second Wednesday of each quarter.
- ✓ Invitations will be sent by the Chair of the Committee two weeks in advance, with a proposed agenda for the meeting.
- ✓ Minutes of the meetings are to be prepared and circulated to all members by the Secretariat within two weeks from the meeting.
- ✓ The Child Protection Sub- Committee should present the two review reports on the implementation of the annual work plan to the National Social Protection Committee, together with its annual work plan for the following year.
- ✓ The Committee may set up working groups or subgroups, on a short-term or on a standing basis, as necessary.
- ✓ Organizations wishing to join the Committee may apply in writing to the Chair of the Committee and the Committee will then consider whether to invite them to join.

ANNEX B: Summary of the Plan of Action 2016 -2018

Please note that a complete version of this Plan of Action, including outcomes, milestones, lead agencies, implementing partners, and costs, is available from the Department of Social Welfare, Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, Banjul.

Long-term goal 1: the rights of all children to be protected from violence, abuse and exploitation are widely acknowledged and understood, and a national consensus on the importance of child protection inspires and upholds the system.

Strategic Objective 1: create an active and inclusive constituency for the protection of all children in The Gambia through awareness-raising and knowledge-sharing at national, regional and community levels.

Strategic actions	Output
<i>1.1. Through communication campaigns, promote discussion about child protection among parents, communities and the public</i>	Knowledge and awareness of child protection issues is widespread among all sections of the population of The Gambia
<i>1.2 Periodically monitor levels of public knowledge and awareness about child protection</i>	A measurable consensus around child protection is created through continuous updating of knowledge and awareness

Long-term goal 2: the legal framework of The Gambia is appropriate to the social and cultural context of the Gambia and fully conforms to the country's international treaty obligations. Child protection laws and regulations are implemented: government policy across all social sectors reflects the child protection dimension.

Strategic Objective 2: Complete and strengthen the legal and policy frameworks for child protection.

Strategic actions	Output
<i>2.1 Review the legislation relevant to child protection, its adequacy, completeness and consistency. Identify the most effective way to remedy gaps in the legislation and address them</i>	Priority gaps in child protection legislation are remedied and the legal framework is fully aligned with international obligations
<i>2.2. Review how well child protection legislation is applied by service providers and their level of compliance with it</i>	All child protection legislation is accompanied by the necessary regulations, procedures and standards for its implementation, taking into account available human and financial resources
<i>2.3. Harmonise the interaction between formal, customary and Sharia law and the consequences</i>	Children in contact with the law have their rights consistently

Strategic actions	Output
<i>for children in both civil and criminal domains</i>	protected and upheld by all elements of the justice system
<i>2.4.Mainstream child protection into current and evolving social sectors policies</i>	All social sector policies and plans express a commitment to addressing child protection priorities

Long-term goal 3: a child protection system in which all stakeholders have defined roles and responsibilities, work together towards shared objectives and are accountable to children, communities and society for their actions.

Strategic Objective 3: bring about effective coordination and collaboration among all child protection actors with the Child Protection Sub-Committee as the principal mechanism for ensuring this.

Strategic actions	Output
<i>3.1 Operationalise the Child Protection Sub-Committee as the coordinating body for all child protection actors in The Gambia</i>	The actions and priorities of all child protection actors in The Gambia are authorised and guided by the CPSC
<i>3.2 Create connections between the CPSC and existing central and sub-national coordination mechanisms in related fields</i>	The work programmes of all coordination mechanisms with child protection mandates are informed by the priorities and activities of the CPSC and they work together to address child protection issues
<i>3.3 Establish a reporting system for the CPSC</i>	The work, achievements and plans of the CPSC will be widely known to all actors in the child protection sphere
<i>3.4. Regularly review the Child Protection Strategy and Plan of Action to ensure their continuing relevance</i>	Updated Plans of Action and a periodically revised Child Protection Strategy ensure that the work of the child protection sector remains focussed and responsive to the emergence of new issues and new actors

Long-term goal 4.A: a child protection system with sufficient human and financial resources to provide a comprehensive response to child protection needs.

Strategic Objective 4.A: ensure that sufficient human and financial capacity is available in the social sectors to implement cross-sectoral child protection approaches.

Strategic actions	Output
4.A.1 Increase the numbers of social workers and para-professionals to meet child protection needs	The overall ratio of social work staff to population reaches 1:30,000 and works to established standards
4.A.2. Increase the numbers of staff with child protection responsibilities in other social sectors (health education, justice, police etc)	Sufficient staff are available in all relevant social sectors to ensure that child protection needs are addressed intersectorally
4.A.3 Advocate for the acquisition and allocation of appropriate levels of funding for child protection	The child protection sector is provided with multi-year, predictable funding from a variety of sources, based on accurate and up-to-date information and estimates

Long-term goal 4.B: a child protection system in which all actors - national and local government, NGOs, traditional and community leaders, families and children - have the knowledge, skills and tools required to fulfil their respective child protection mandates.

Strategic Objective 4.B: ensure that all those engaged in child protection actions (whether in the formal or informal sector) have the knowledge, skills and tools to carry out their responsibilities.

Strategic actions	Output
4.B.1 Ensure that all social work staff (existing and new) are adequately trained in child protection matters	All existing social workers and para-professionals are equipped with the necessary skills to discharge their responsibilities
4.B.2 Include child protection elements in the training of social protection, education, health, police and justice personnel	All social sector workers in government employment understand the principles and practice of child protection
4.B.3 Clarify child protection responsibilities and accountabilities	All social sector workers are aware of their child protection duties and responsibilities and take ownership of them
4.B. 4 Develop community-level-capacity to undertake child protection actions	A model for community capacity building exists, based on experience acquired in selected pilot communities

Strategic actions	Output
4.B. 5 Engage NGO partners with relevant experience and knowledge	High-quality child protection training and reference materials are available with the involvement of skilled and experienced NGOs

Long-term goal 5: a comprehensive range of preventive services guarantee respect for the protection rights of all children in The Gambia, and protective services provide remedies for children whose protection rights have been violated.

Strategic Objective 5: preventive and protective services, working in a coordinated way and using a multi-disciplinary approach, are established throughout The Gambia.

Strategic actions	Output
5.1 Assess and build on existing services provided by government, NGO partners and other CP actors	An expanded network of services, validated for their quality, their adherence to standards and their impact, provides basic preventive and protective services to 30% of identified target groups by the end of the PoA period
5.2 Improve coverage, targeting and performance of services.	A strengthened targeting approach ensures that priority in service provision goes to the most vulnerable, increasing the impact and cost-effectiveness of these services
5.3 Develop community-based mechanisms to promote a protective environment for children;	A tested model for community-based provision of child protection services (promotion, prevention and protection), building on existing community mechanisms such as VDCs and CCPCs and NGO capacity is ready for replication
5.4. Establish systems for the identification of children at risk, for referrals and for the handling of child protection cases	Systems and procedures to meet the needs of children at risk of violence, abuse and neglect, have been developed and tested

Long-term goal 6: accurate information, up-to-date knowledge and validated experience support an effective and evolving child protection system.

Strategic Objective 6: continuously gather child protection data and monitor and evaluate child protection interventions and policies to generate information and knowledge to guide decision-making.

Strategic actions	Output
<i>6.1 Define information needs and priorities for child protection actors at all levels</i>	A Child Protection Management Information System and a series of data bases provide up- to-date information for all child protection actors
<i>6.2 Create a shared understanding of monitoring and evaluation among child protection partners</i>	A common approach to monitoring and evaluation allows the creation and application of knowledge about successful and cost-effective approaches to child protection

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ANNEX C: Organisations participating in the development of the Child Protection Strategy, 2013 to 2015

1. Policy Unit Office of the President
2. Ministry of Health and Social Welfare
 - a. Department of Social Welfare
 - b. Department of Clinical Services
 - c. Department of Planning
 - d. Registry of Births
3. Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education
4. Ministry of Interior
 - a. The Gambia Police Forces
 - b. National Legal Aid Agency
 - c. National Agency Against Trafficking in Persons (NAATIP)
 - d. Drug Law Enforcement Agency
5. Labour and Employment Department
6. NGO Affairs Agency
7. Ministry of Information, Communication and Infrastructure
8. Ministry of Justice
9. Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs
10. The Gambia Army Forces
11. Child Protection Alliance
12. The Programme for Girls' Education
13. Children's Court
14. The Gambia Tourism Board
15. Child Fund
16. SOS Village
17. Sinchu Orphanage
18. The Voice
19. Child Environmental Development Association Gambia - CEDAG
20. Gambia Committee on Traditional Practices Affecting the Health of Women and Children - GAMCOTRAP
21. The Association of Non-Governmental Organizations in the Gambia - TANGO
22. Association of Working Children and Youth - AWCY
23. Gambia deaf and hard of hearing - GADHOH
24. Forum for African Women Educationists in The Gambia - FAWEGAM
25. Tostan
26. Gambia Radio and Television Services - GRTS
27. Gambia Association of Local Government Authorities - GALGA
28. United Nations Children's Fund - UNICEF
29. United Nations Development Programme - UNDP