



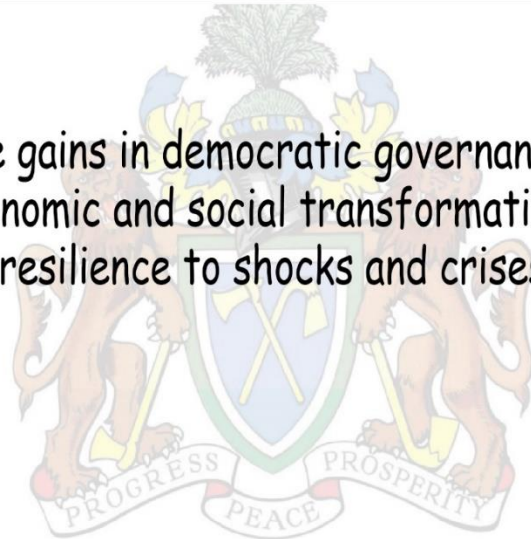
THE REPUBLIC OF THE GAMBIA

# **RECOVERY FOCUSED NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

## **(RF-NDP) 2023 - 2027**

**“YIRIWAA”**

*“Consolidate gains in democratic governance, accelerate green economic and social transformation and build resilience to shocks and crises”.*



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## Foreword



Fellow Gambians and well-wishers, it is my singular honour and pleasure to present to you the Recovery Focused-National Development Plan (RF-NDP) 2023 – 2027 locally branded as “YIRIWAA”, a Mandinka word meaning development. This Plan is the second National Development Plan under my Presidency, and it mainstreams the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Vision 2050, African Union Agenda 2063, and the Sustainable Development Goals 2030. The RF-NDP succeeds the National Development Plan (NDP) 2018 – 2021/22 and build on the gains registered during its implementation.

The formulation process of the RF-NDP has been broad-based, participatory, and inclusive, benefitting from a series of stakeholder consultations. These include Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs); development partners; the private sector; civil society and community organisations; and the diaspora. Consultations were held in the 120 wards across the country targeting, men, women, youth, children, and persons with disability. The formulation of this blueprint comes at a time when countries around the globe are reeling from the impact of COVID-19 and the effects of the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war with untold suffering in lives and livelihoods. This Plan will help address these and other development challenges, with a view to achieving the development aspirations of our citizens.

Against this backdrop, the RF-NDP aims to consolidate gains in democratic governance, accelerate green economic and social transformation, and build resilience to shocks and crisis.

To support the attainment of the above goal, seven (7) pillars are outlined as national priorities, namely: (1) Building Community Resilience to Shocks and Crises; (2) Governance Reforms; (3) Macroeconomic Stability and Growth; (4) Human Capital Development; (5) Agriculture, Environment, Natural Resources and Climate Change; (6) Empowerment, Social Inclusion and Leaving No One Behind; and (7) Energy, Infrastructure, and ICT/Digital Connectivity.

Successful implementation of the RF-NDP will help address the country’s recovery needs in the short and medium term, anchored on green recovery and resilience, and also further help enhance growth, reduce poverty and inequality, address gender disparities, build resilience, enhance youth employment, and more importantly address the triple development challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change, and the risk of debt distress thus by extension contributing to the realisation of our global and regional commitments such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and African Union (AU) Agenda 2063.

In conclusion, I wish to call on the citizenry both at home and abroad, multilateral, and bilateral partners, and other stakeholders to collaborate with the Government to mobilise resources needed for the implementation of the RF-NDP, which if effectively done can enhance our competitiveness, boost growth, and development, and eventually reduce poverty. This may not be an easy journey considering the national and global challenges, however, with dedication and commitment, we shall prevail. My Government shall optimally ensure value for money and leave no stone unturned in the implementation of this Plan.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Adama Barrow". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**His Excellency Adama Barrow**  
**President of the Republic of The Gambia**

## Acknowledgements



I wish to extend profound appreciation to His Excellency the President and his entire Cabinet for the overall guidance and foresight in the formulation of the RF-NDP, “YIRIWAA”. Their support and guidance during the entire formulation period is immensely commended.

A special acknowledgment goes to the Consultant whose dedicated efforts have resulted in the development of this Medium-Term Plan that captures the country’s development needs for the period 2023-2027. Similar gratitude is extended to the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs through the Directorate of Development Planning for their effective coordination throughout the formulation process.

Appreciation is extended to Ministries, Departments and Agencies; Private Sector; and Civil Society Organisations particularly the Sector Working Group members whose inputs helped to inform the Strategic Objectives and Pillars of the RF-NDP.

I am also indebted to multilateral and bilateral partners particularly the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Country Office for not only the technical and financial support but also the rigorous scrutiny that helped to further enrich the Plan.

Finally, my sincere thanks to all stakeholders who actively participated in the ward and regional consultations. Your insights and contributions have been pivotal in providing the necessary information for the development of the RF-NDP.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'S. Keita' with a stylized flourish at the end.

**Seedy K.M. Keita**  
**Honourable Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs**

## Executive Summary

### The Context

The Government of the Gambia's new Recovery Focused National Development Plan (RF-NDP 2023 - 2027) charts the recovery of the Gambia from COVID-19, climate change and other shocks. The plan is a successor to the elapsed NDP 2018-2021/22 developed under the leadership of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs (MoFEA). The approach used in the preparation of this plan is a "whole of society" one that articulates the medium-term transformational aspirations of the country.

The plan has been formulated and will be implemented in a challenging global and regional economic context, and continuous uncertainties are expected to have adverse impacts on developing countries, including the Gambia. This context is characterised by a contraction in economic activities in the main advanced economies and which is worsening the current and trade account balances of the Gambia through reduced external demand for Gambian goods and services for export. The global inflationary trend has led to increasing domestic inflation on prices of imported food and energy. The tightening of monetary policy in the major advanced economies is increasing the cost of debt servicing in developing countries like the Gambia. Furthermore, the tight global financial conditions pose challenges in accessing adequate financing for our development. Finally, there are heightened fears of erosion in the advances made in health, education, environmental protection, and livelihoods. This could result in reversing gains in poverty reduction and increasing household fragilities and vulnerabilities, and potentially undermining gains in democratic governance.

Government will therefore endeavour to build the resilience of our institutions and people in responding to these and other shocks, given the likelihood that they will reoccur; hence the importance of factoring them in our development planning.

### The Foundations of the Plan

Drawing upon the extensive stakeholder consultations and comprehensive analysis of the global, regional, and national development context, the following seven overarching imperatives that will drive and inform this national development plan have been identified:

1. **Imperative 1:** Address fragility, vulnerability and build resilience of households and communities to shocks and crises;
2. **Imperative 2:** Consolidate gains made in democratic governance and address the outstanding gaps;
3. **Imperative 3:** Vigorously pursue macroeconomic reforms to ensure stability and inclusive growth;
4. **Imperative 4:** Prioritise Human Capital Development for economic and social transformation;
5. **Imperative 5:** Strengthen integration and linkages within the Agriculture and Natural Resources (ANR) sector for enhanced economic growth and productivity with more job creation with increased incomes, accompanied by climate action;



6. **Imperative 6:** Act to advance the empowerment and social inclusion of women, girls, children, youth, persons with disabilities and older persons for a more productive, better and fairer society; and
7. **Imperative 7:** Build our infrastructure to boost connectivity, promote growth and render Gambia more competitive, especially in the context of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

### **Overview of the Recovery Focused National Development Plan (2023-2027)**

The overall goal of the RF-NDP 2023-2027 is to *consolidate gains in democratic governance, accelerate green economic and social transformation and build resilience to shocks and crises*. This goal will be realised through three strategic objectives, namely:

1. Strategic Objective 1 (SO1): Build household and community resilience to address shocks and crises arising from climate change, economic volatility and to counter the effects of pandemics like the COVID-19;
2. Strategic Objective 2 (SO2): Consolidate gains and address critical development gaps in governance and in economic and social transformation;
3. Strategic Objective 3 (SO3): Strengthen accountability, build partnerships and set up robust and sustainable resource mobilisation strategies for effective delivery of development actions and expected outcomes.

The Plan will be implemented through the following seven (7) pillars:

- 1) Pillar I: Building Community Resilience to Shocks and Crises;
- 2) Pillar II: Governance Reforms;
- 3) Pillar III: Macroeconomic Stability and Growth;
- 4) Pillar IV: Human Capital Development;
- 5) Pillar V: Agriculture, Environment, Natural Resources and Climate Change;
- 6) Pillar VI: Empowerment, Social Inclusion and Leaving No One Behind;
- 7) Pillar VII: Energy, Infrastructure and Information and Communication Technology (ICT)/Digital Connectivity.

#### *Pillar I: Building Community Resilience to Shocks*

Gambians have over the last few years been subjected to the shocks and crises linked to the COVID-19 pandemic and the food and energy crises arising from the Russia-Ukraine war. These crises have aggravated existing fragilities arising from effects of climate change by worsening food security, livelihoods, and poverty. Urban poverty has increased from 31.6 per cent in 2015/16 to 35.4 per cent in 2020 and there are growing pockets of food insecurity/malnutrition in the urban areas. Meanwhile, rural poverty has decreased from 69.5 per cent in 2015/16 to 64.6 per cent in 2020 which is still very high. In the context of the RF-NDP, Government in collaboration with partners and stakeholders, is committed to assisting communities and households recover from these multiple threats and build resilience against future shocks. In doing so, Government will build upon existing initiatives and scale up its interventions at both household and community level to mitigate the impact on the poor and vulnerable citizens of the country.

Under this pillar, Government will design and implement community-driven programmes as mechanisms to address community level needs, and as a complement to the ongoing household level social protection interventions. Through these community-driven programmes, Government will seek to address unmet needs in areas such as small-scale rural infrastructure for improved access to potable water, energy (off-grid), rural access roads (not more than 5 km), causeways and bridges, community food security (labour saving devices, year-round integrated food production schemes) and environment protection schemes. The programmes will include measures for the sustainability of services and assets.

### *Pillar II: Governance Reforms*

The Gambia has registered significant progress in governance since the new Government came into power in 2017. This is recognised both internally and externally and is evidenced by the improved position of The Gambia in many internationally recognised indices of good governance.

However, The Gambia's performance has been lacklustre in other areas. There are challenges regarding a new constitution, transitional justice and security sector reform. Government therefore recognises that the governance agenda is a work in progress and consequently commits to consolidate the gains made and address the outstanding gaps during the new development plan. In addition, Government will pay particular attention to issues related to decentralisation, including the critical matter of land governance that requires urgent attention. To this end, measures will be taken to ensure that the government machinery is efficient and effective in meeting citizens' expectations.

Accordingly, this pillar will seek to create the enabling conditions for the consolidation of good governance, including the protection of human rights, rule of law, political and electoral governance, land sector governance and security sector reform, with a view to improve the country's constitutional democracy, transparency, accountability, government effectiveness and regulatory oversight. Over the next five years, Government will focus on ensuring that:

- A new Constitution is adopted, and legal reforms undertaken, especially with respect to the criminal code, the public order act, and other undemocratic provisions still in the statutes;
- Policies and regulatory frameworks for decentralisation and local governance are enhanced and harmonised;
- Elections are regular, transparent, inclusive, free and fair;
- Policy and institutional reforms to ensure rule of law, respect for human rights and equitable access to justice are fully implemented;
- Transitional justice – implementation of the Government White Paper – is fully realised and a reconciled society emerges in which victims are fully paid their reparation dues;
- A reformed security sector with adequately capacitated security institutions is attained; and
- An efficient, motivated, accountable and results-oriented public service is put in place.

### *Pillar III: Macroeconomic Stability and Growth*

The Gambia continues to experience macroeconomic instability characterised by low and volatile growth caused by shocks and low investment in the productive sectors, high poverty rate, high public debt, limited financial inclusion, rising inflation, exchange rate fluctuation, and high trade

and current account deficit. These challenges have been the source of the macroeconomic instability that has been inhibiting inclusive growth in the country for decades. Therefore, the key issues to be addressed under the plan are high public debt, limited financial inclusion, rising inflation, exchange rate fluctuation, high trade and current account deficit, and low and volatile growth.

At the sectoral level, tourism is hampered by a narrow market, small and undiversified tourism products, inadequate human and financial resources, and poor policy implementation. Private sector growth has also been stalled by uncondusive business environment provisions and processes relating to registration, access to land, the complex taxation regime, access to finance, labour market issues, and access to the regional markets.

Achieving macroeconomic stability and inclusive growth is therefore a top priority of Government, which recognises the importance of sound monetary and fiscal policies for poverty reduction, social equity, and economic growth. In this medium term, the goal of Government is to provide a stable economic environment that is conducive to fostering strong, sustainable, and private sector-led economic growth for job and wealth creation for improved standard of living. Under this Pillar, Government will therefore seek to achieve the following three outcomes:

- Reforms on fiscal and monetary policies, public financial management will be enhanced, and inclusive growth, and poverty reduction efforts will be redoubled;
- Private sector-led growth, with enhanced trade, inclusive and sustainable industrialisation, services, and employment will be pursued and strengthened;
- A competitive and diversified tourism sector contributing to overall Inclusive growth, job creation and poverty reduction will be vigorously promoted and supported.

#### *Pillar IV: Human Capital Development*

Human Capital Development is a key priority for any government, given the growing importance of the knowledge economy worldwide. Enhancing human capital can help end extreme poverty and create more inclusive societies. When human capital increases in areas such as science, education, and management, it leads to increase in innovation, social wellbeing, equality, and productivity, all of which contribute to economic growth. Although some progress has been made by The Gambia with respect to developing the country's human capital, it still falls short of our overall optimal requirements.

In addition to health and education, the analysis of the national development context also underscored the need to give priority to issues related to population and demography, migration and urban planning and provision of affordable housing. These are areas that have hitherto not been accorded the place they deserve in national planning.

Government, under this pillar, is therefore committed to achieving the following outcomes within the Plan period:

- Equitable access to quality and relevant education for all;
- Quality, accessible and affordable health care services for all;
- Improved nutritional status of children under five years and women of child-bearing age;

- Increased access to safe drinking water, proper sanitation and hygiene;
- Demographic dividend harnessed;
- Socioeconomic benefits of migration to national development are enhanced and adverse consequences mitigated;
- Affordable and quality housing for all, and improved urban planning.

Under the pillar, Government will give a significant boost to Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) education as a matter of strategic choice to build the necessary skills for the country's economic and social transformation, as well as to create employment and jobs for the youth.

*Pillar V: Agriculture, Environment, Natural Resources and Climate Change*

The Gambia has immense opportunities for making increased production and productivity of the Agriculture and Natural Resource (ANR) sector contribute much more to economic growth. However, environmental problems such as land degradation, deforestation, salinity in the lowlands, coastal erosion and traditional, unsustainable production systems in the forestry, agriculture, and fisheries industries constrain the production and productivity potential of the sector. Over the past ten years, the sector's contribution to Gross Domestic Products (GDP) decreased or has not increased sufficiently to cater to the needs of a growing population.

Despite the sector policies and strategies developed, the implementation rate is low and mostly uncoordinated. The uncoordinated interventions have led to duplication and conflicting development interventions. Formulation of legal frameworks, action plans and tools are required to ensure coordinated approaches of the Ministries of Agriculture, Fisheries, Water Resources, Forestry and Lands and Local Governance to ensure a productive and well-balanced natural resource base.

Government, in the context of the RF-NDP, is committed to fostering productivity and strengthening intersectoral linkages, enhancing synergy and balancing the allocation and utilisation of natural resources across the ANR sector. Government will revitalise the ANR sector through policy reforms and innovative programmatic interventions, and will therefore, towards this end, pursue interventions and strategies and actions to attain the following three outcomes:

- A modern, productive and sustainable agriculture for food and nutrition security, economic growth and poverty reduction;
- A vibrant fisheries and aquaculture sector contributing to economic growth and employment creation;
- Sustainable environment and natural resources management, enhanced climate action and disaster risk reduction.

At the end of the Plan period, Government expects to have made significant strides in attaining food self-sufficiency, a better management of our natural resources and environment and making the country is more climate resilient.

### *Pillar VI: Empowerment, Social Inclusion and Leaving No One Behind*

Government of The Gambia has a strong commitment to address issues of lack of empowerment, social exclusion, discrimination and stigmatisation for women, girls, children, persons with disabilities and older persons. It recognises that removing such barriers is a key to unleashing the potential of large segments of society and establishing a just and equitable society.

Older persons (elderly) have up to now not been a specific factor in the national planning agenda, despite representing 3.1 per cent of the population of The Gambia and still growing. They are a resource whose potential contribution to society remains untapped.

Under this pillar, the Government will redouble efforts to address issues and challenges faced by Gambian women, children, youth, persons with disabilities, and elderly to achieve the following outcomes:

- Gambian women empowered economically, socially and politically;
- Children are nurtured and enjoy their full rights and reach their potentials in life;
- Enhanced economic opportunities and all-round social and cultural development for youth empowerment;
- Inclusiveness and care for persons with disabilities and older persons improved;
- Resilience of households and individuals strengthened, and safety nets put in place to address vulnerability through the National Social Protection Secretariat (NSPS).

The above outcomes when considered together with the actions foreseen under Pillar IV (Human Capital Development), clearly demonstrate that the Government of The Gambia aspires to be a people-centred government. This is further reinforced by its desire and commitment to advance democratic governance.

### *Pillar VII: Energy, Infrastructure and An Inclusive Digital Nation*

Energy, Infrastructure, and Information and Communications Technology (ICT) connectivity are critical economic and social cohesion enablers for any society. African countries infrastructure lags other countries elsewhere, mainly in “access and quality”. Like many other African countries, the Gambia has evident infrastructure deficits in both quantity and quality.

The launch of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) in April 2018, in Kigali, Rwanda, established the African common market of a combined GDP of USD1.3 trillion, with a population of 1.3 billion people. It set the stage for repositioning and enhancing African economies through the expected economic and financial benefits of regional and global value chains (RVCs/GVCs), hence making Africa the new frontier for competitive trade investment. Accordingly, The Gambia is developing its strategic regional trade infrastructure, such as the Basse Freight Logistics Platform (Basse Dry Port), and the Trans-Gambia Corridor Special Economic Zone (TG-SEZ) Project supported through a joint AU-NEPAD-AfDB initiative which was launched in 2019 in Banjul.

Government will therefore continue during the next five years to consolidate efforts and implement strategic infrastructure projects in the areas of energy, transport, and ICT to catalyse growth and

tap into the many opportunities offered by the AfCFTA and other developments. In this regard, Government, over the plan period, will seek to achieve the following outcomes and ensure:

- Accessible and affordable energy for all and effective policies, legal and regulatory frameworks in place for sustainable development of petroleum and mining resources;
- Land, river, sea and air transport expanded and strengthened for affordability, accessibility and competitiveness;
- A digital/ICT and broadband nation attained.

Government will adopt and implement a multi-modal approach to the transport sector to create the right balance between river, port, air, and rail transport, which will also create significant opportunities for regional linkages/connectivity and position the country to be more competitive in the context of the AfCFTA.

### **Accountability for Delivery of Development Results**

Government is committed to ensuring that the Plan is fully implemented, monitored, and regularly reported on to ensure transparency, accountability, and impact. The plan has a comprehensive monitoring framework with 237 indicators to assess the achievement of its 30 outcomes. In addition, the following provisions have been made:

1. **Institutional:** A robust and inclusive institutional framework is being put in place to coordinate the implementation of the plan and provide the necessary oversight. Key elements of this framework include the following:
  - A troika of Cabinet, Inter-Ministerial Committee and National Assembly are maintained to provide strategic direction, oversight and budget scrutiny, respectively.
  - A National Technical Steering Committee composed of all Permanent Secretaries will be maintained and strengthened to oversee implementation. It will be chaired by the Secretary General of the Civil Service and shall meet quarterly;
  - A Development Cooperation Forum (DCF) will be revitalised as a biennial forum for consultation
  - A National Monitoring and Evaluation Platform shall be maintained and coordinated by the Directorate of Development Planning (DDP) under MoFEA and supported by the Gambia Bureau of Statistics ( GBoS).
  - The thematic clusters will be replaced by Sector Working (coordinating) Groups which were established during the plan formulation process. These Sector Working Groups (SWGs) will have two co-chairs, one from the line Ministry and one Development Partner (DP).
  - A Regional Technical Advisory, ward development and village development Committees, shall for the purposes of plan implementation work closely with MoFEA DDP.

The SWGs set up during plan formulation will continue to operate as the main technical platform to ensure that relevant institutions effectively monitor designated aspects of plan implementation. The functions of the Gambia Strategic Review Board (GSRB) will be strengthened. The Plan also foresees the revitalisation of the Government- Development Partners' coordination forum.

2. **Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E):** Government will ensure that there is a robust M&E system to facilitate the coordination, monitoring and reporting on the various outcome indicators. This will involve:

- M&E processes at both Executive and Sector level;
- Government will harmonise and align sector strategic and action plans, improve infrastructure, and continuously develop the capacity of M&E staff or personnel tasked to implement M&E plans;
- The National Audit Office (NAO) and the Gambia Bureau of Statistics (GBoS), whose focus is data quality, will both play crucial roles in ensuring effective M&E.
- To strengthen performance management, the newly created Ministry of Public Service will play the role of performance management champion and will lead the advocacy and emphasise the importance of performance management for good governance, effective development planning, evidence-based policy making and greater public accountability.

### **Partnerships and Resources**

Government will continue to develop partnerships and cordial relations in line with its traditions, based on mutual respect and equality, differentiated responsibilities and international solidarity. In line with this, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Cooperation and Gambians abroad will be playing a more proactive role.

It is evident that significant resources will be required to implement the Plan. Government, fully cognisant of the country's debt situation, and to meet the financing needs of the RF-NDP, will use three interlinked strategies: domestic resource mobilisation; innovative financing; concessionary financing.

## List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

ACD	Aid Coordination Directorate
ACE	Africa Centre of Excellence
ADRS	Alternative Dispute Resolution Secretariat
ACH	Automated Clearing House
ACP	Automated Cheque Processing
AfCFTA	African Continental Free Trade Area
AfD	French Development Agency
AfDB	African Development Bank
AFOLU	Land Use Change and Forestry
AGD	Accountant General's Department
AGM	Annual General Meeting
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ANC	Antenatal Care
ANR	Agriculture and Natural Resources
ANS	Air Navigation Service
AOMA	African Ombudsman and Mediation Association
ART	Antiretroviral Therapy
ARV	Antiretroviral
AU	African Union
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
PIDA	Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa
BCC	Banjul City Council
BCLP	Bryan Cave Leighton Paisner (Law firm)
BEmONC	Basic Emergency Obstetric and Newborn Care
BER	Business Environment Reform
BFCI	Baby Friendly Community Initiative
BFH	Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative
BP	British Petroleum
BReST	Building Resilience through Social Transfer
BRT	Bus Rapid Transit
BSOs	Business Service Organisations
CaDO	Catholic Development Office
CAPs	Community Action Plans
CBG	Central Bank of The Gambia
CBOs	Community Based Organisations
CCPCs	Community Child Protection Committees
CCT	Conditional Cash Transfer
CE	Citizen Engagement
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women



CEmONC	Comprehensive Emergency Obstetric and Newborn Care
CFSVA	Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Analysis
CIT	Corporate Income Tax
CLTS	Community- led Total Sanitation
CMCs	Centre Management Committees
CMS	Central Medical Stores
CNOCC	China National Offshore Oil Corporation Company
COHA	Cost of Hunger in Africa
CP	Cabinet Paper
CPR	Contraceptive Prevalence Rate
CRC	Constitutional Review Commission
CRDs	Chronic Respiratory Diseases
CRR	Central River Region
CRS	Catholic Relief Services
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
CSRP	Civil Service Reform Programme
CTS	Corporate Turnaround Strategy
CVDs	Cardiovascular diseases
DBB	Design-Bid-Build
DCD	Department of Community Development
DCF	Development Cooperation Forum
DD	Demographic Dividend
DFI	Development Finance Institutions
DHS	Demographic and Health Survey
DLEAG	Drug Law Enforcement Agency, The Gambia
DoF	Department of Fisheries
DP	Development Partners
DPOs	Disabled Persons Organisations
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
DSPD	Department of Strategic Policy and Delivery
DSW	Department of Social Welfare
EAF	Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries
EBA	Everything But Arms
EbA	Ecosystem-based Adaptation
ECD	Early Childhood Development
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EE	Energy Efficiency
EEP	Electricity Expansion Project
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone
e-GP	e-Government Procurement
EID	Early Infant Diagnosis
EMIS	Education Management Information System
e-MTCT	Elimination of Mother-to-Child Transmission

EPI	Expanded Programme on Immunisation
EPZ	Export Processing Zone
ERMS	Electronic Records Management System
ERP	Enterprise Resource Planning
ESC	Electoral Service Code
ESIA	Environmental and Social Impact Assessment
EU	European Union
FAQs	Frequently Asked Questions
FAWEGAM	Forum for African Women Educationalists Gambia Chapter
FBOs	Farmer Based Organisations
FGDs	Focus Group Discussions
FGM/C	Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting
FIFO	first in, first out
FIT	Feed-In-Tariff
FIU	Financial Intelligence Unit
FPAC/PEC	Finance and Public Accounts Committee/Public Enterprise Committee
FSPs	Financial Service Providers
FTA	Free Trade Area
FTTH	Fibre to the Home
GABECE	Gambia Basic Education Certificate Examination
GAF	Gambia Armed Forces
GAFNA	Gambia Food and Nutrition Association
GAMWORKS	Gambia Agency for the Management of Public Works
GARD	Gambian Association of Resident Doctors
GBA	Greater Banjul Area
GBoS	Gambia Bureau of Statistics
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GCAA	Gambia Civil Aviation Authority
GCCI	Gambia Chamber of Commerce and Industry
GCCPC	Gambia Competition & Consumer Protection Commission
GCM	Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration
GDHS	Gambia Demographic and Health Survey
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEAP	Gambia Environmental Action Plan
GEAP	Gambia Electricity Access Project
GERMP	Gambia Electricity Restoration and Modernisation Project
GEWE	Gender Equality and Women Empowerment
GFD	Gambia Federation of the Disabled
GFRS	Gambia Fire and Rescue Services
GFSC	Gambia Ferry Services Company
GGC	Gambia Groundnut Corporation
GHE	Gambia Horticultural Enterprise

GHGs	Greenhouse Gases
GIA	Gambia International Airlines
GID	Gambia Immigration Department
GIEPA	Gambia Investments and Exports Promotion Agency
GIS	Geographical Information Systems
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit/German Development Agency
GLCP	Generation Least Cost Plan
GLF	Government Local Fund
GLFS	Gambia Labour Force Survey
GMA	Gambia Maritime Administration
GMGs	Green Mini-Grids
GMNS	Gambia Micronutrient Survey
GMSI	Governance Management Service International
GNPC	Gambia National Petroleum Corporation
GoTG	Government of The Gambia
GOVI	Gambia Organisation of the Visually Impaired
GPA	Gambia Ports Authority
GPB	Grassroots Participatory Budgeting
GPF	Gambia Police Force
GPHC	Gambia Population and Housing Census
GPMB	Groundnut Produce Marketing Board
GPPA	Gambia Public Procurement Authority
GPRS	General Packet Radio Service
GPS	Gambia Prison Service
GPTC	Gambia Public Transport Corporation
GRA	Gambia Revenue Authority
GRTA	Gambia River Transport Authority
GSRB	Gambia Strategic Review Board
GTHI	Gambia Tourism and Hospitality Institute
GTSC	Gambia Transport Service Company
GTTI	Gambia Technical Training Institute
GTU	Gambia Teachers' Union
GVCs	Global Value Chains
GWCC	Gambia Women Chamber of Commerce
GYCC	Gambia Youth Chamber of Commerce
HACCP	Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point
HCI	Human Capital Index
HePDO	Health Promotion and Development Organisation
HFC	Home Finance Company of The Gambia Limited
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HPAG	Health Policy Advisory Group
HRMIS	Human Resource Management Information System

IABCC	Interagency Border Coordination Committee
ICAO	International Civil Aviation Organisation
ICB	International Competitive Bidding
ICDs	Internal Container Depots
ICPD	International Conference on Population and Development
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
ICZM	Integrated Coastal Zone Management
IEC	Independent Electoral Commission
IFMIS	Integrated Financial Management Information System
IHR	International Health Regulations
IHRIS	Integrated Human Resource Information System
IICF	Industrial Injuries Compensation Fund
IM	Infrastructure Manager
IMAM	Integrated Management of Acute Malnutrition
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IMNCI	Integrated Management of Neonatal and Childhood Illnesses
IMO	International Maritime Organisation
IOI	International Ombudsman Institution
IPPs	Independent Power Producers
IUU	Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated
IWRM	Integrated Water Resources Management
KMC	Kanifing Municipal Council
KOICA	Korea International Cooperation Agency
KPIs	Key Performance Indicators
LBS	Lower Basic School
LGA	Local Government Authority
LGAs	Local Government Areas
LMICs	Low- and Middle-Income Countries
LNG	Liquefied Natural Gas
LNOB	Leaving No One Behind
LPG	Liquefied Petroleum Gas
LRR	Lower River Region
LTV	long-Term Vision
M&A	Memorandum & Articles of Associations
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MCS	Monitoring, Control and Surveillance
MDAs	Ministries, Departments and Agencies
MDFT	Multi-Disciplinary Facilitation Team
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MDI	Management Development Institute
MECCNAR	Ministry of Environment, Climate Change, and Natural Resources
MHC	Mobile Harbour Crane

MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey
MIDAS	Migration Information and Data Analysis System
MMR	Maternal Mortality Rate
MoA	Ministry of Agriculture
MoBSE	Ministry of Basic and Secondary and Education
MoCDE	Ministry of Communication and Digital Economy
MoD	Ministry of Defence
MoFEA	Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs
MoFWR	Ministry of Fisheries and Water Resources
MoGCSW	Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Welfare
MoH	Ministry of Health
MoHERST	Ministry of Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology
MoI	Ministry of Interior
MoJ	Ministry of Justice
MoPE	Ministry of Petroleum and Energy
MoPS	Ministry of Public Service
MoTC	Ministry of Tourism and Culture
MoTIE	Ministry of Trade, Regional Integration and Employment
MoTWI	Ministry of Transport, Works, and Infrastructure
MoUs	Memorandum of Understandings
MPAs	Marine Protected Areas
MRRC	Migrant Resource and Response Centre
MSGBC	Mauritania, Senegal, Gambia, Guinea Bissau, and Guinea Conakry Basin
MSMEs	Micro Small and Medium Enterprises
MTEFF	Medium Term Expenditure and Fiscal Framework
MTWG	Multi-sectoral Technical Group
NA	National Assembly
NAATIP	National Agency Against Trafficking in Persons
NALA	National Agency for Legal Aid
NAMA NSP	Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Action Support Project
NaNA	National Nutrition Agency
NAO	National Audit Office
NAQAA	National Accreditation and Quality Assurance Authority
NAWEC	National Water and Electricity Company
NBFIs	Non-Banking Financial Institutions
NBR	North Bank Region
NCAC	National Centre for Arts and Culture
NCCE	National Council for Civic Education
NCCRM	National Centre for Coordination of Early Warning and Response Mechanism
NCD	Non-Communicable Disease

NDP	National Development Plan
NEET	Not in Education, Employment, or Training
NEMA	National Environment Management Act
NEP	National Energy Policy
NFE	Non-Formal Education
NFSPMC	National Food Security Processing and Marketing Corporation
NFSS	National Food Security Survey
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
NHIS	National Health Insurance Scheme
NHRC	National Human Rights Commission
NMP	National Migration Policy
NMS	National Multimodal Strategy
NMTS	National Multi-modal Transport System
NODD	National Observatory on Demographic Dividend
NPA	National Plan of Action
NPBFA	National Public Building and Facilities Authority
NPCS	National Population Commission Secretariat
NPHL	National Public Health Laboratory
NPP	National Population Policy
NQF	National Quality Framework
NRA	National Roads Authority
NRM	National Referral Mechanism
NRS	National Records Service
NSDS	National strategy for the Development of Statistics
NSPSC	National Social Protection Steering Committee
NSPP	National Social Protection Policy
NSPS	National Social Protection Secretariat
NSS	National Statistical Systems
NTDs	Neglected Tropical Diseases
NTP	National Transport Policy
NTPS	National Tourism Policy and Strategy
OAN	Open Access Network
O-D	Origins and Destinations
ODF	Open-Defecation Free
OICs	Organisation of Islamic Cooperations
OMVG	The Gambia River Basin Development Organisation
PACD	Programme for Accelerated Community Development
PAI	Public Administration International
PC	Performance Contract
PCG	Partial Credit Guarantee
PEPLA	Petroleum Exploration and Production License Agreement
PETS	Public Expenditure Tracking Systems
PFM	Public Financial Management

PGS	Petroleum Geo-Services
PHC	Primary Health Care
PHEOC	Public Health Emergency Operations Centre
PIT	Personal Income Tax
PLR	Policy, Legal & Regulatory
PMI	Progressive Mathematics Initiatives
PMO	Personnel Management Office
PMS	Performance Management System
PMTCT	Prevention of Mother-to-Child Transmission
PoC	Proof of Concept
PPPs	Public-Private Partnerships
PSI	Progressive Science Initiatives
PSTN	Public Switched Telephone Network
PURA	Public Utilities Regulatory Authority
PURC	Public Utilities Regulatory Commission
PwDs	Persons with Disabilities
QC	Quality Control
RBF	Result Based Financing
RE	Renewable Energy
RF-NDP	Recovery Focused-National Development Plan
RHDs	Regional Health Directorates
RMNCAH	Reproductive Maternal, Newborn, Child, and Adolescent Health
RoWs	Right of Ways
RVCs	Regional Value Chains
SBCC	Social and Behavioural Change Communication
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SEA	Sexual Exploitation and Abuse
SENELEC	Société nationale d'électricité du Sénégal
SEZ	Special Economic Zone
SIG	School Improvement Grant
SIS	State Intelligence Services
SMEs	Small and Medium Enterprises
SOEs	State-owned Enterprises
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
SPC	Special Purpose Company
SQF	Sector Qualification Framework
SR	Social Registry
SRH	Sexual and Reproductive Health
SSA	Sub-Saharan Africa
SSGs	Ship-to-Shore Gantry Crane
SSHFC	Social Security and Housing Finance Corporation
SSNP	Social Safety Net Project
SSR	Security Sector Reform

STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
STP	Straight-Through Processing
SWDCs	Sub-Ward Development Committees
SWGs	Sector Working Groups
T&D	Transmission and Distribution
TAC	Technical Advisory Committees
TANGO	The Association of Non-Governmental Organisation
TB	Tuberculosis
TDA	Tourism Development Area
TFR	Total Fertility Rate
TGSB	The Gambia Standards Bureau
TG-SEZ	Trans-Gambia Corridor Special Economic Zone
TICAD	Tokyo International Conference on African Development
TOWA	TRY Oyster Women Association
TRRC	Truth, Reconciliation and Repatriations Commission
TSA	Tourism Satellite Account
TSA	Treasury Single Account
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
TWG	Technical Working Groups
UHC	Universal Health Coverage
UN	United Nations
UNCRPD	United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIDO/GEF	United Nations Industrial Development Organisation /Global Environment Facility
URR	Upper River Region
USET	University of Applied Science, Engineering and Technology
USSD	Unstructured Supplementary Service Data
UTG	University of The Gambia
VAT	Value-Added Tax
VDCs	Village Development Committees
VNR	Voluntary National Review
WAPP	West African Power Pool
WAPs	Ward Action Plans
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene



WASSCE	West African Senior School Certificate Examination
WB	World Bank
WCR	West Coast Region
WDCs	Ward Development Committees
WEF	Women Enterprise Fund
WEO	World Economic Outlook
WHO	World Health Organisation
WHO-PEN	World Health Organisation -Package of Essential Noncommunicable
YEP	Youth Empowerment Project

**PART ONE: INTRODUCTION, DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT AND PLAN  
IMPERATIVES**

Chapter 1: Introduction, Background and Context  
Chapter 2: Performance of NDP 2018-2021/22  
Chapter 3: Development Context and Plan Imperatives

## Chapter 1: Introduction, Background and Context

### 1.1 Introduction

The Government of the Gambia has formulated a new planning framework, the Green Recovery Focused National Development Plan (RF-NDP 2023 - 2027) to chart the recovery of the Gambia from COVID-19, climate change and other shocks. The Plan is a successor to the elapsed NDP 2018-2021/22 developed under the leadership of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs (MoFEA). The preparation of the new Plan adopts a “whole of society” approach that articulates, the medium-term transformational aspirations of the country. The Plan is in three parts as shown in Box 1.1.

#### Box 1.1: Structure of the RF-NDP Document

- ❖ **PART ONE: Introduction, and Development Context and Plan Imperatives**
- ❖ **PART TWO: The Plan Strategic Framework, Pillars, Outcomes, Programme Priorities, Strategies and Interventions**
- ❖ **PART THREE: Strengthening Delivery, Accountability, Resource Mobilisation, Partnerships and International Positioning**

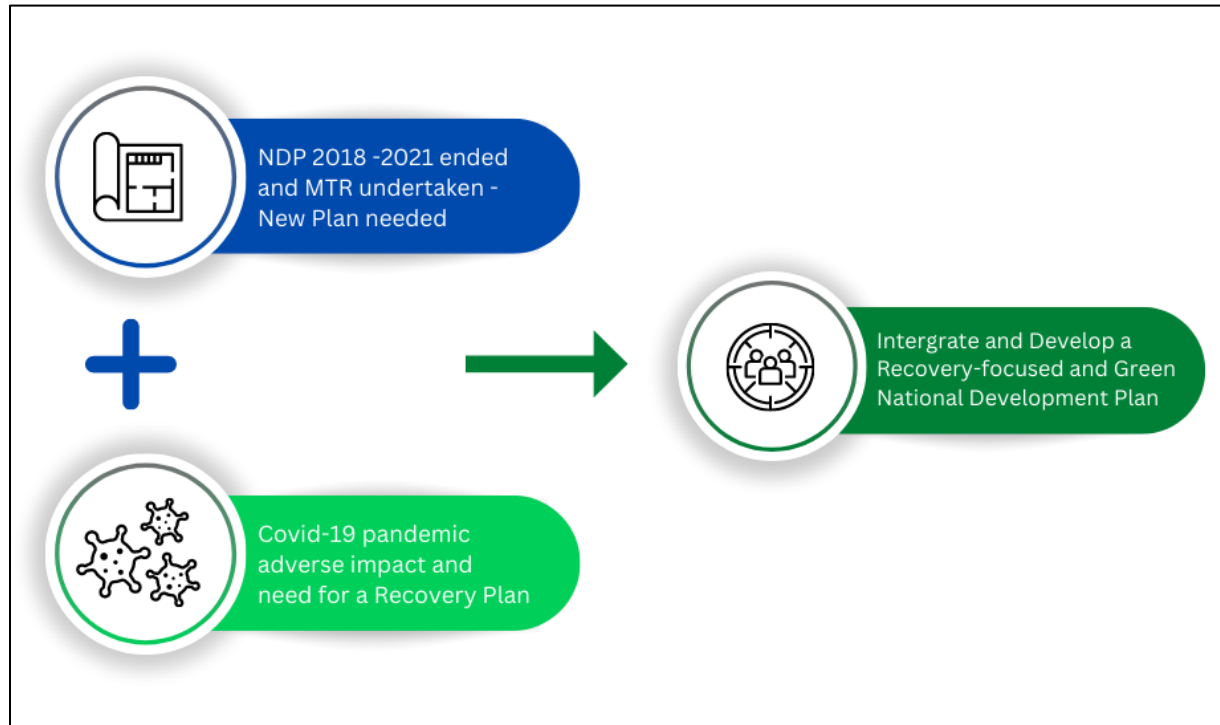
### 1.2 Background

The previous National Development Plan (NDP) 2018-2021/22, which was extended to 2022, was formulated just after the historic change that ushered in a new democratic dispensation following over two decades of autocratic rule under former President Jammeh. With its eight strategic priorities and seven critical enablers, the NDP 2018-2021 set out to rebuild the country’s battered economy, restore democratic institutions and values, deliver transitional justice, and broaden citizens’ participation space in public discourse. It also sought to revitalise infrastructure and the productive sector (agriculture, tourism, industry) and improve health and education outcomes.

Notwithstanding the progress made, the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, mid-way, dashed the hopes and aspirations and adversely impacted implementation of the NDP 2018-2021/22. A response strategy to address the short-term challenges posed by the pandemic was formulated. However, the combined effects of the global, regional and national economic downturn, the continuing impact of the pandemic and the repercussions of the war in Ukraine led to a notable rise in the cost of living, amid mounting climate change challenges. Following its renewed mandate, the Government therefore called for the formulation of a new RF-NDP (2023-2027). The new Plan builds on the gains of the current NDP and addresses the country’s recovery needs in the short and medium term, underpinned by the concepts of green recovery and resilience as guiding themes. See Figure 1.1 below.

This chapter, following the introduction, outlines the process for the formulation of the successor Plan – RF-NDP; and presents an overview of the performance of NDP 2018-2021/22 and draws implications for the new Plan.

**Figure 1.1: Genesis and Background of the RF-NDP 2023-2027**



### 1.3 Plan Formulation Process and Methods

Despite situation caused by the COVID-19, the formulation of the RF-NDP was fully participatory and went through the following key stages and processes:

1. **Comprehensive Desk Review:** Relevant documents - local, regional, continental, and global - were reviewed. key among these were: the mid-term evaluation of NDP 2018-2021, sector policies and strategy documents, studies and reports, development partners' programming documents, and relevant regional and global documents and publications.
2. **Stakeholder Consultations and Engagements:** Involving key stakeholders at the national, regional, and ward levels.
3. **Sector Working Group Sessions:** to carry out diagnoses and define the priorities, targets, interventions and strategies using workshops and small group discussions;
4. **Preparation of draft RF-NDP:** through small group discussions and targeted consultations with senior policy makers in government and other stakeholders; and
5. **Validation, finalisation, and adoption of the RF-NDP:** through a national validation workshop and subsequent finalisation and official adoption by Cabinet.

The above processes are detailed in the Inception Report which was validated at a national stakeholders' workshop held 11<sup>th</sup> March 2022. The methods and processes for stakeholder consultations and sector working groups are further elaborated below.

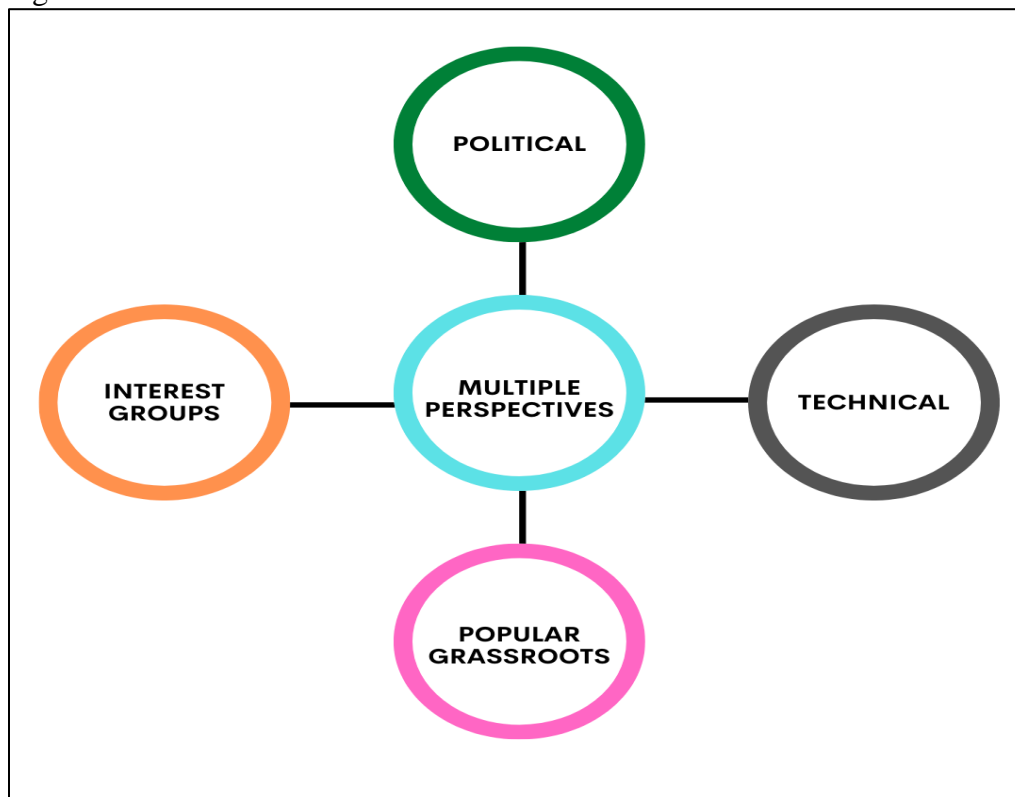
### 1.3.1 The Stakeholder Consultations

The RF-NDP should reflect the key policy priorities of Government and be in line with the principle of “leaving no one behind”. Thus, the views of all other stakeholders, at all levels and segments of society – national, regional and grassroots levels – were sought in the plan formulation exercise. In summary, the consultations covered the following key categories of stakeholders:

- *Government institutions*: comprising Ministries, Departments and Agencies;
- *Private Sector entities*: Chambers of Commerce and Business Associations, Trade Unions and private sector operators;
- *Civil Society/NGOs*: youth, women, Persons with Disabilities (PwDs), Inter-Party Committee, civil society groups;
- *Communities/grassroot*: at regional and ward levels throughout the country;
- *The Diaspora*: Gambians abroad;
- *Individuals*: through an online platform designed to reach Gambians who may wish to provide inputs but for various reasons could not take part in the planned in-person consultations; and
- *Development Partners*: UN system, multilateral financial institutions, and bilateral partners.

The consultations provided the opportunity to obtain multiple perspectives and views on the key national priorities to inform the RF-NDP from various stakeholders as depicted in Figure 1.2. The process of the consultations is further spelt out below.

Figure 1.2: Framework for Stakeholder Consultations



Over 5,000 participants country-wide took part in the stakeholder consultations at ward, regional and national levels, representing by far one of the most inclusive planning process in the country.

### *National Level Consultations*

The national level consultations were designed with the following objectives:

- a) All relevant national stakeholders participate in the Plan formulation process;
- b) Relevant information and data are gathered from stakeholders on their development priorities, challenges and opportunities for the Plan;
- c) Stakeholder views on what needs to be done differently are fully integrated in the development of the new Plan.

Stakeholders targeted for the national level consultations included: Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs); Judiciary; Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs)/Civil Society Organisations (CSOs); Private Sector; Gambia Federation of the Disabled (GFD); Academia; Trade Union; Inter-Party Committee; the Media; Youth networks; Women Associations/Kaffos, Children & Elderly, and the Diaspora.

The national level consultations took the form of one day workshops for each stakeholder group and was conducted through a combination of plenary and working group sessions to maximise participation. The key issues discussed during the one-day national level consultations are in the Box 1.2 below.

<b>Box 1.2: Key Themes and Questions discussed at the National Level Consultations</b>	
<b>Diagnostic Assessment</b>	1. What in your view are the main challenges for your stakeholder group that the RF-NDP should address? 2. What in your view are the main opportunities/strengths of your stakeholder group that the NDP should build upon?
<b>Priorities for The National Development Plan (NDP)</b>	3. What, in your view, should be the key national priorities for the RF-NDP (2023-2027)? 4. What in your view should be the main priorities with respect to your stakeholder group that the RF-NDP (2023-2027) should consider?
<b>Strengthening Accountability for Results</b>	5. What measures are needed to strengthen accountability for results and ensure effective implementation of the RF-NDP? 6. In what ways can your stakeholder group be involved in the implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of the RF-NDP (2023-2027)?
<b>Additional Inputs</b>	7. State any additional inputs and suggestions you may have

### *Regional Level Consultations*

Consultations at the regional level covered all eight Local Government Areas (LGAs). Meetings at regional level were held with representatives from the districts, Technical Advisory Committees (TACs), and other key stakeholders such as the private sector, NGOs/CSOs, women, persons with disabilities, youth, and children. Each regional level consultation targeted approximately 40

participants and served as platforms to gather views to inform the formulation of the RF-NDP 2023-2027.

The regional level consultations were in the form of Focus Group Discussions (FGDs). Two groups were formed; one FGD for women, youth, children; and another for council of elders and men. The key themes discussed are presented in Box 1.3 below. In total 21 themes/issues areas were discussed in the FGDs. For each of these themes, participants discussed trends, causal factors, major challenges and made recommendations for the RF-NDP. Participants also highlighted actions being taken by the local populations to address the related challenges. The RF-NDP Inception Report provides full details on the questionnaires administered.

**Box 1.3: Themes discussed during the Focus Group Discussions at Regional and Ward Levels**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1. Livelihoods and economic activities  | 11. Environment, weather, and disasters                 |
| 2. Poverty and Vulnerability  | 12. Access to justice and security                      |
| 3. Food and Nutritional Security  | 13. Women   |
| 4. Access to and quality of education (Including Madrassa)                                  | 14. Youth   |
| 5. Access to and quality of health services   | 15. Children  |
| 6. Access to and quality of energy and electricity  | 16. Sports, creative arts, and culture                  |
| 7. Access to and quality of waste disposal and Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH)        | 17. Persons with disabilities and older persons         |
| 8. Access, quality, and affordable housing  | 18. Migration   |
| 9. Access to and ownership of land (agriculture, residential, investment, public use, etc.) | 19. Remittances   |
| 10. Agriculture activities (seeds, fertilisers, farm implements, technology, markets)       | 20. Impact of COVID -19                                 |
|   | 21. Top priorities for the NDP over the next five years |

*Ward Level Consultations*

For the first time in a national plan formulation process in The Gambia, the consultations covered all 120 wards of the country. The ward level consultations created the platforms for communities to articulate their development needs and possible solutions. They also served to ensure that communities at all levels took part in the formulation process in inclusive ways, with attention to gender balance and the representation of all other relevant groups. The information collected not only served to inform the priorities of the RF-NDP, but also enhanced the alignment and cohesion between central government priorities and needs at decentralised levels.

Consultations at the ward level were in the form of FGDs and involved a total of approximately 30 participants in each ward - men, women, youth, children, the elderly, persons with disabilities, councillors, NGO/CSO representatives, private sector representatives, and members of the Multi-Disciplinary Facilitation Teams (MDFTs). The themes discussed were identical to those at regional level presented in Box 1.3 above.

## *Cross-Border and Riverine Communities*

The Gambia shares land and sea borders (with attendant border communities) with the Republic of Senegal and most of the communities living there are engaged in cross-border economic activities that are a source of their livelihoods. It was therefore considered opportune to assess the extent to which border and riverine communities face challenges and/or opportunities that are unique to them.

Cross-border policies that support the smooth flow of these activities are core to the growth of these local economic centres. Within the framework of existing regional protocols on free movement of people and goods, the consultations were geared towards identifying administrative bottlenecks that hinder cross-border activities and the development of these communities. The ultimate objective was to assess how to promote closer economic and social cooperation and people-to-people interactions among cross-border communities, while at the same time identifying constraints and obstacles faced by border communities.

The communities along the River Gambia were once thriving riverine communities who used to play a key role in the socio-economic life of the country. Unfortunately, many have declined in importance over the years. However, these riverine communities if revitalised could once again make significant contributions to the socio-economic development of the country. In formulating the RF-NDP, it was therefore ensured that the needs of these communities were fully considered.

The regional and ward consultations were facilitated by six teams composed of the consultant team, staff from MoFEA and other institutions. A one-day training session was held on the tools developed to ensure that the field teams were adequately prepared, including coaching on how to frame the questions in key national languages. A comprehensive report was prepared for each of the seven administrative regions of the country as well as a synthesis report, which are all available and were fed into the work of the SWGs.

### 1.3.2 The Sector Working Groups

To add depth to the consultations, SWGs were constituted to provide the necessary technical inputs and analysis to support the Plan formulation process, and effectively enable the involvement of line Ministries and other stakeholders in the eventual implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of the Plan.

Members of the SWGs were drawn from MDAs, academia, private sector, civil society, NGOs, and other relevant stakeholders with the related sector expertise. The existing Thematic Working Groups were reconstituted to form the SWGs and comprised technicians from different institutions clustered into various sectors. A total of 12 SWGs were established. Annex 1 presents the membership and composition of the twelve SWGs.

Over 200 participants from MDAs, private sector, civil society, and other representatives from apex organisations took part in the sessions of the Sector Working Groups.



The SWGs were required to come up with:

- a) A comprehensive review of sector-specific issues, including past trends and possible future performance of the sector;
- b) Proposals on goals, objectives, priorities, targets and strategies for the respective sectors;
- c) Inputs into the implementation arrangements, as well as make suggestions to strengthen accountability for results.

Each SWG was chaired at Permanent Secretary level from one of the lead institutions in the SWG. Where the SWG has two or three main institutions, the chairpersonship rotated. The SWGs met twice every week over a two-month period (June to August 2022) to carry out their work. The main areas of work for the SWGs are presented in Box 1.4 below.

#### Box 1.4: Plan of Work of the Sector Working Groups

1. Conduct a detailed end-term assessment of the NDP (2018-2021): Although a mid-term evaluation of NDP 2018-2021 was conducted, no final evaluation had been undertaken at the time the new Plan was being formulated. A stakeholder technical assessment of the final achievements was therefore deemed essential to inform the new Plan formulation. The SWGs were tasked with carrying out this end-term assessment;
2. Carry out a diagnostic assessment of the sector/sub-sector: to identify key constraints and bottlenecks, as well as opportunities to build upon. In carrying out the diagnostic assessment, the SWGs also assessed the impact of COVID-19 and climate change, and reviewed the extent to which the SDGs and Agenda 2063 goals and targets had been taken into account;
3. Conduct a rigorous prioritisation exercise: to identify a limited number of key national priorities based on defined criteria (see below). This process built upon the outcomes of the national, regional and ward level consultations, government policy priorities, updated sector policies, the SDGs and Agenda 2063 and other relevant international commitments The Gambia has subscribed to;
4. Identify indicators, targets, strategies and implementation arrangements for the priorities identified for RF-NDP;
5. Identify enabling factors, necessary for the successful achievement of the priorities and targets.

The prioritisation process by the SWGs was based on the following five criteria:

1. *Transformative*: game changers (i.e., catalytic and ability to bring about significant changes in current situations and create new trajectories for the sector and The Gambia's development).
2. *Resource Mobilisation Prospects*: good prospects for mobilisation of domestic resources and attracting external resources, without contributing to worsening the debt burden.
3. *Potential for rapid implementation to achieve results*: impacts are felt at the grassroots and are sustainable.
4. *Contribution to Regional and Global Commitments*: contribute to the fulfilment of The Gambia's regional and global commitments (e.g., Agenda 2030 and Agenda 2063)
5. *Consistency with Government policy*: e.g., be in line with Government policy pronouncements and sector/sub-sector specific priorities.

The prioritisation exercise also included root-cause analyses to coherently bring out linkages between the problems and solutions being offered.

### 1.3.3 High Level Policy Consultations

The Plan formulation process considered key policy priorities of the recently elected Government following the 4<sup>th</sup> December 2021 Presidential elections. These executive policy priorities were identified through a dialogue with the relevant policy circles of Government. A starting point was the inaugural statement of H.E President Adama Barrow, as well as the outcomes of the Cabinet retreat held in June 2022.

The priorities identified and the targets set by the SWGs were subjected to further review by senior policy makers through a series of steps, namely:

Meetings were held with the key principals within each Government Ministry (Minister, Permanent Secretary, Heads of Departments) specially targeting working sessions that discussed and validated the outcomes of the SWGs. These high-level consultations were held during September and October 2022.

### 1.3.4 Other Consultations

The draft Plan was also shared with Development Partners and discussed at a meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> December 2022 to obtain their inputs prior to validation.

### 1.3.5 National Validation of the RF-NDP

A national validation workshop was organised on 21<sup>st</sup> December 2022 during which participants representing a cross-section of all stakeholders were given the opportunity to provide final inputs prior to adoption.

Based on inputs received, a final version of the RF-NDP 2023-2027 was prepared and submitted for Cabinet approval on the 27<sup>th</sup> April 2023.

## 1.4 Assessment of NDP 2018-2021 Implementation

The starting point for any robust plan formulation process is the evaluation of the preceding plan to take stock of its achievements and shortfalls and draw appropriate lessons to inform the new Plan. A mid-term review of the NDP 2018-2021 was conducted in 2019.

Unfortunately, a final evaluation of the NDP 2018-2021 was not undertaken. However, feedback from grassroots communities and national level stakeholders on the implementation of NDP 2018-2021 was obtained during the various consultations. To complement these, a detailed end-term assessment was undertaken by all 12 SWGs which identified progress made, challenges experienced, and recommendations formulated. Appendix A presents a detailed picture of the main achievements of each of the strategic priorities and critical enablers.

The sections below highlight at a broad level, the performance of the NDP 2018-2021, the views of the grassroots and national level stakeholders and overall conclusions. The degree to which the SDGs were considered in the previous Plan and the progress made by the country in achieving them are also presented below.

#### 1.4.1 Assessment of Overall Performance of NDP 2018-2021/22

The NDP 2018-2021/22 was implemented through eight (8) strategic priorities and seven (7) critical enablers – see box 1.5 below.

<b>Box 1.5: Overview of NDP 2018-2021/22</b>
<b>The Strategic Priorities</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Restoring good governance, respect for human rights, the rule of law, and empowering citizens through decentralisation and local governance;</li> <li>2. Stabilising our economy, stimulating growth, and transforming the economy;</li> <li>3. Modernising our agriculture and fisheries for sustained economic growth, food and nutritional security and poverty reduction;</li> <li>4. Investing in our people through improved education and health services, and building a caring society;</li> <li>5. Building our infrastructure and restoring energy services to power our economy;</li> <li>6. Promoting an inclusive and culture-centred tourism for sustainable growth;</li> <li>7. Reaping the demographic dividend through an empowered youth; and</li> <li>8. Making the private sector the engine of growth, transformation, and job creation.</li> </ol>
<b>The Critical Enablers</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) A public sector that is efficient and responsive to the citizenry;</li> <li>2) Empowering the Gambian Woman to realise her full potential;</li> <li>3) Enhancing the role of the Gambian Diaspora in national development;</li> <li>4) Promoting environmental sustainability, climate resilient communities and appropriate land use;</li> <li>5) Making The Gambia a Digital Nation and creating a modern information society;</li> <li>6) A civil society that is engaged and is a valued partner in national development; and</li> <li>7) Strengthening evidence-based policy, planning and decision-making.</li> </ol>

The performance of the eight Strategic Priorities at mid- and end-term is shown in Figure 1.3 below, and Figure 1.4 for the critical enablers.

Figure 1.3: Performance of NDP 2018-2021/22 by Strategic Priority at Mid- and End-Term

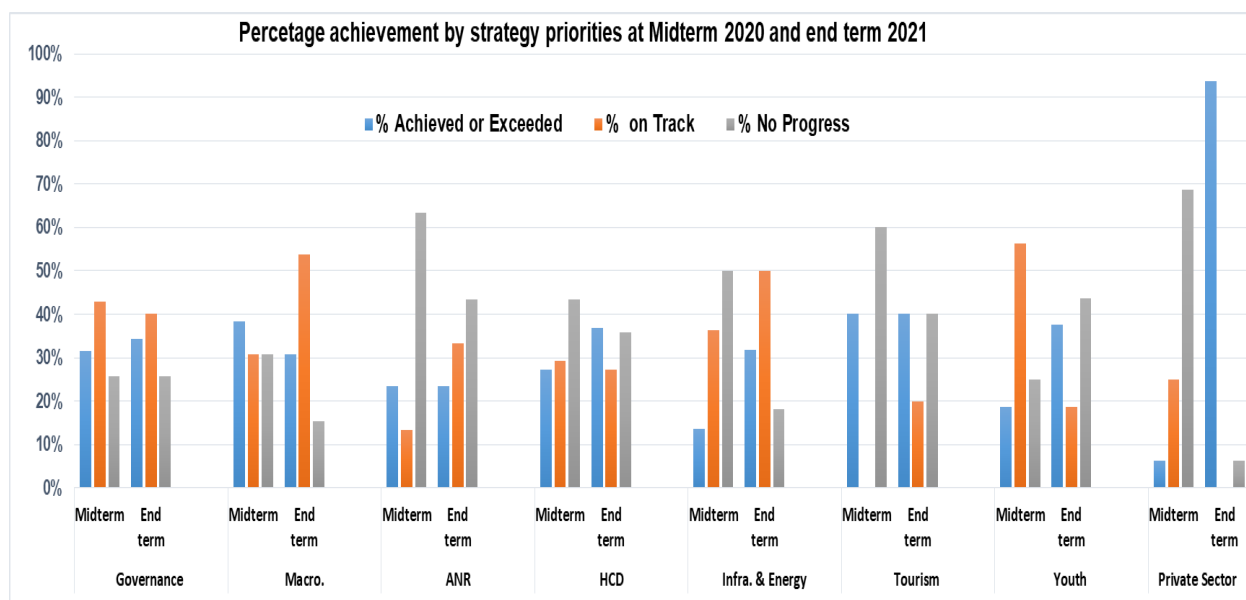
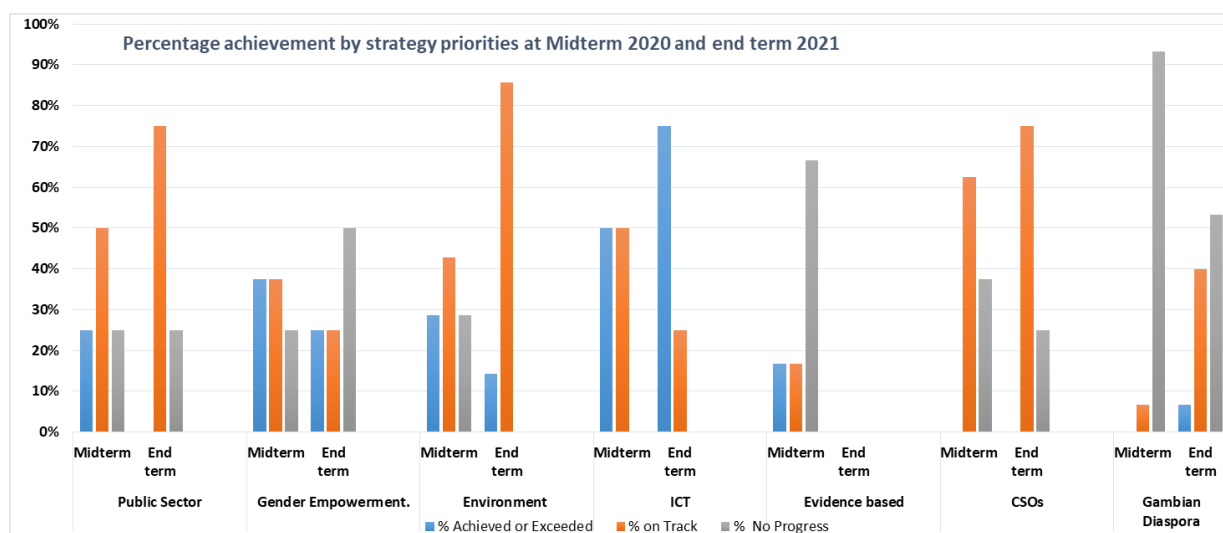


Figure 1.4: Performance of NDP 2018-2021 by Critical Enabler at Mid- and End-Term



The following observations can be made on the performance of the eight strategic priorities:

1. On average, performance was reasonably strong at mid-term – 25 per cent, 31 per cent and 44 per cent of the targets overall had been achieved and/or exceeded, were on track and made no progress, respectively.
2. At end term, 38 per cent, 31 per cent and 31 per cent of the targets overall had been achieved and/or exceeded target, were on track and made no progress, respectively.

❖ The modest increase in performance at end term as compared to mid-term, and the fact that a third of the targets still registered limited progress is indicative of the impact of COVID-19.

With respect to the critical enablers, the following trends were observed:

1. Performance at mid-term was 17 per cent, 31 per cent and 52 per cent of the targets overall had been achieved and/or exceeded target, were on track and made no progress, respectively.
  2. At end term, 12 per cent, 41 per cent and 24 per cent of the targets overall had been achieved and/or exceeded target, were on track and made no progress, respectively.
- Similarly, limited progress was made in achieving the targets under the critical enablers between the mid-term and end-term assessment, due to COVID-19 and the Russia – Ukraine war.

Resource mobilisation data collected at mid-term showed a positive trend as summarised below:

- a) A total budget: US\$ 1.7 billion was pledged at the international conference for The Gambia. Additional resources after conference were US\$ 176.12 million, making a total of US\$ 2.4 billion.
  - b) As at midterm of the NDP evaluation:
    - A total of US\$1.32 billion was committed to Flagship Projects related to Strategic Priorities; and of this amount, 34.6 per cent were loans and 65.4 per cent were grants. 42.1 per cent of this amount had been disbursed.
    - With respect to Critical Enablers, a total of US\$48.7 million grant money was committed, of which 36.2 per cent was disbursed.
- ❖ In total therefore, approximately US\$1.37 billion was committed and 41.9 per cent was disbursed mid-way in the implementation of NDP 2018-2021.

#### **1.4.2 Views of Stakeholders at Regional and Ward levels and Recommendations**

In the FGDs conducted at regional and ward levels, participants expressed their views on awareness of the NDP, its main achievements and recommendations to improve implementation of future national plans. The responses are summarised below. Full details are available from the Regional and Synthesis Reports on the regional ward consultations.

Most respondents in the FGDs knew about the NDP, although in some cases they did not know enough of its contents. The main achievements highlighted across all regions were:

- Infrastructure development was cited across all regions, as respondents pointed to construction of roads, bridges, markets, schools, etc;
- Improvement in access to electricity was highlighted by most communities interviewed;
- Improved freedom of speech, media and justice system;
- Improved school infrastructure, rural ambulances, water supply;
- Youth and women empowerment and social protection through the Nafa<sup>1</sup> program.

One shortcoming highlighted was the lack of attention to the needs of older persons in the NDP 2018-2021.

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<sup>1</sup> Nafa is a Mandinka word meaning benefit. The 'Nafa' programme is a component of The **Gambia** Social Safety Net **Project** (SSNP)

To improve/strengthen future formulation and implementation, the following recommendations were made:

- The need for communities to be fully consulted on future plans and consequently ensuring that the plans reflect their priorities;
- Institutionalizing a participatory approach to national development processes;
- Implementing the programmes as planned and avoiding the interference of politics in national development matters;
- Strengthening decentralisation, empowering local authorities and ensuring equity in access to development resources by fully implementing the decentralisation agenda with its accompanying devolution of power and authority;
- Transparency and accountability in terms of the key results to be achieved and adequate monitoring of the implementation of projects;
- Appointing the right people to key positions in institutions throughout the country;
- Improving governance and the fight against corruption.

#### **1.4.3 Views of National -Level Stakeholders**

There were mixed views regarding progress made and the impact of the implementation of NDP 2018-2021/22 in the consultations with national-level stakeholders. Progress was noted with respect to governance and freedom of expression, infrastructure development, increases in ambulance services, increased capacity building, improvements in budget allocations to development activities, economic growth, and improvement in the number of businesses. However, some stakeholders noted the following weaknesses:

- Limited progress was made in terms of achieving key targets in areas such as: renewable energy and private sector involvement in power purchase agreements; harmonisation of taxes and rates; access to water is still an issue; challenges in the health sector with a spike in Maternal Mortality Rates (MMR) over the period; poor quality of education.
- Limited monitoring reviews of the plan were done to assess what was accomplished and the way forward, resulting in inclusion of things which were not captured in the NDP; leading to diverting resources away from agreed priorities.
- The heavy reliance of Government on donor support which sometimes comes with conditionalities.

To enhance implementation in future plans, national level stakeholders recommended that Government should strengthen accountability and transparency in the implementation of projects and institute a robust monitoring and evaluation framework and undertake periodic reviews of progress and ensure timely sharing of information. Government was also requested to take measures to encourage full participation at all levels to enhance the sense of ownership and responsibility and undertake regular sensitisation on the plan and its implementation. Finally, Government was strongly requested to fight corruption and progressively reduce overdependence on foreign aid and to use domestic resources wisely.

#### **1.4.4 Alignment and Progress with Respect to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**

A strong effort was made during formulation of the NDP 2018-2021 to ensure integration and alignment of the Plan with Agenda 2030. The assessment of alignment undertaken at the onset of

NDP 2018-2021 demonstrated that 42 per cent and 35 per cent of the indicators were respectively aligned with the SDGs and the AU Agenda 2063, which indicates that a substantial degree of alignment was achieved.

In terms of progress made, The Gambia has undertaken two Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) processes and produced detailed reports on progress. Drawing on these and international reports, much remains to be done. A key bottleneck hampering monitoring of progress on the SDGs is inadequate data. According to the 2020 VNR report, The Gambia has data on just one-third of the total SDG indicators, 78 out of the 230 SDG indicators. The country has no data to measure SDGs 10 and 12, only 8 per cent of the data to measure SDGs 11 and 15, and less than a third of the data to measure SDGs 8, 1, 14 and 16<sup>2</sup>.

However, the country appears to be doing better than its peers. The 2022 SDG Report ranks Gambia at 122/163 and a country score of 60.2 which is above the regional average of 53.6. The status of progress with respect to the SDGs is summarised in the Table 1.1.

Table 1.1: Summary Overview of Progress with respect to the SDGs

Status	SDGs
<b>Achieved</b>	SDG 12 (Responsible Production and Consumption); SDG 13 (Climate Action)
<b>On track or maintaining achievement</b>	SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions)
<b>Moderately Improving</b>	SDG 1 (End Poverty); SDG 5 (Gender Equity)
<b>Challenges</b>	SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities); SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities); SDG 15 (Life on Land)
<b>Significant Challenges</b>	SDG 2 (Zero Hunger); SDG 3 (Good Health and wellbeing); SDG 4 (Quality Education); SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation); SDG 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy); SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth); SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure); SDG 14 (Life below Water); and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals)

Source: SDG Report 2022<sup>3</sup>

#### 1.4.5 Overall Conclusion on NDP 2018-2021 Implementation

As shown above, much progress was made regarding the implementation of NDP 2018-2021, but progress was also constrained by the following factors:

1. The COVID-19 pandemic that reached the country in March 2019 – after the first year of the implementation of the Plan - had an adverse impact across all sectors of the economy and society and therefore negatively affected implementation of the Plan.
2. The prescribed institutional arrangements to ensure effective and inclusive coordination of plan implementation were not put in place. The implementation of the Plan therefore largely

<sup>2</sup> UN Common Country Assessment 2022

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.sustainabledevelopment.report/reports/sustainable-development-report-2022/>

became the exclusive responsibility of government, without the involvement of many key stakeholders, including those at the grassroots level.

3. With less than a decade to go, Gambia still lags in terms of attaining the SDGs. The new Plan ends in 2027, which is just three years to 2030. Thus, RF-NDP should be an important opportunity for the country to make significant progress to attain the SDGs.
4. Finally, no detailed implementation plans on how to achieve the targets set were drawn up by the respective sectors.

As can be seen in various parts of the document, Government has fully considered these shortcomings, as well as the recommendations on strengthening participation, accountability and transparency and increased use of domestic resources to finance the country's development. The issues and recommendations raised in the First Annual Progress Report of the NDP, and the mid-term evaluation were also considered.

Among the key measures that Government has taken at the onset was to broaden participation in the plan formulation process by reaching out to communities in all 120 wards of the country; and by putting in place robust institutional arrangements that are inclusive and will enhance coordination at all levels – national, regional, and local. Furthermore, upon validation of the Plan, all sectors will be required to draw up detailed implementation plans on how the targets set will be attained

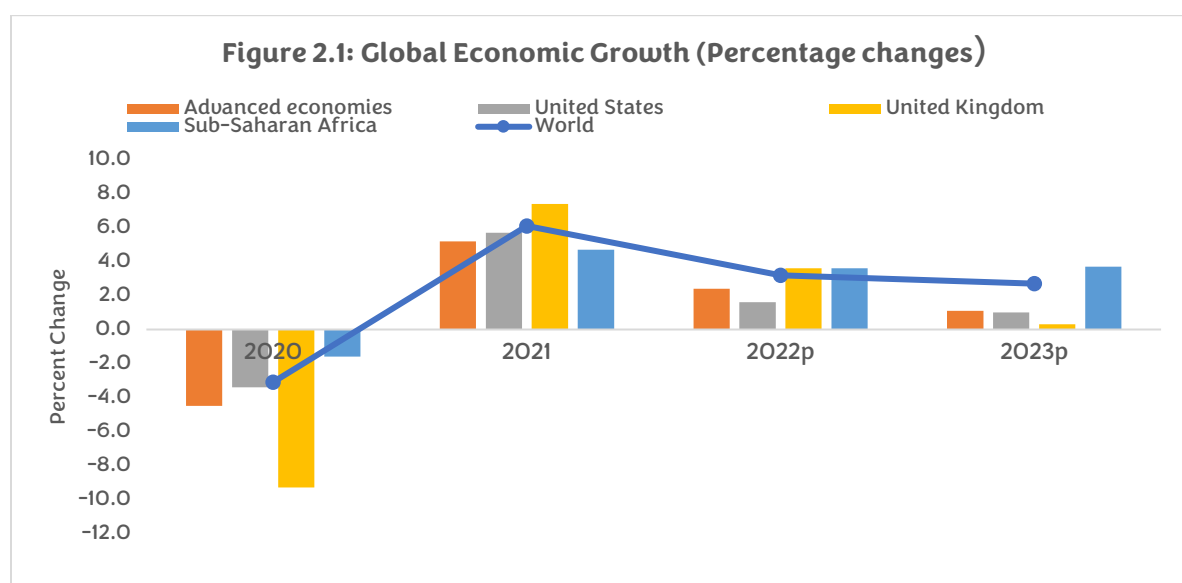


## Chapter 2: The Development Context and Plan Imperatives

This chapter reviews the global and regional context within which the new Plan is being designed and presents a succinct overview of the national development context. Based on this review and analysis, a set of imperatives to which the new development plan needs to respond, are identified. This lays the foundation for determining the priorities that Government through the RF-NDP will address.

### 2.1 Global and Regional Economic Context and Implications for the RF-NDP 2023-2027

Since the previous NDP 2018-2021 was launched, much has changed in the regional and global economic context. The global economy contracted by 3.1 percent in 2020 due to the impact of COVID-19, but in 2021, it exhibited signs of recovery, expanding by 6.1 percent. However, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) World Economic Outlook (WEO) in October 2022, showed that the 2022 global outlook has deteriorated significantly, caused by the lingering effects of three major factors: the Russia-Ukraine conflict, a cost-of-living crisis caused by persistently rising inflation and the economic slowdown in China. Moreover, the tightening of the monetary policy triggered by high inflation remained a significant downside risk to growth. The global economic activities declined in the second quarter of 2022 showing sluggish growth in the advanced economies, especially in the United States and the United Kingdom. As a result, the IMF in its October 2022 WEO, projected global growth to slow from 6.1 per cent in 2021 to 3.2 per cent in 2022. In 2023, the global economy growth is forecast to decline to 2.7 percentage points below the July forecast with a 25 per cent chance of falling below 2 per cent; this is premised on the expected disinflationary monetary policy around the world, the effects of the war in Ukraine, and the remaining effects of supply chain disruptions and lockdowns caused by the pandemic – see Figure 2.1.



Source: IMF, World Economic Outlook, October 2022. P means projections

The recovery of Sub-Saharan Africa has stalled. GDP growth in 2021 improved to 4.7 per cent due to economic activity finally recovering last year. However, as a global slowdown, tighter financial conditions, and a dramatic increase in global inflation spilt into a region already worn out by an ongoing series of shocks, growth was projected to slow sharply in 2022 by more than 1 per cent to 3.6 per cent. The most vulnerable people in the region are feeling the effects of rising food and energy costs, and inflation and public debt are at levels not seen in decades. With limited options, many nations find themselves getting closer to the edge. The prospects for the immediate future are dim. Changes in the global economy have a direct impact on the region's prospects. The IMF WEO Report of October 2022 forecast that growth in Sub-Saharan Africa would grow by 3.7 per cent in 2023; 0.3 percentage points below the July forecast. Policy makers are facing one of the most difficult policy environments in years. They must find the right balance between fighting current socioeconomic challenges and building resilience for future shocks with limited resources.

Global inflation rose beyond anticipated levels in 2022, surpassing inflation targets set by central banks. Global inflation was projected to increase from 4.7 per cent in 2021 to 8.8 per cent in 2022. A decrease to 6.5 per cent in 2023 and to 4.1 per cent by 2024 will bring about much needed relief. However, the relief will be relative across the world, given that regions of the world are set to experience different levels of inflationary pressures. In advanced economies, inflation is expected to reach 7.2 per cent in 2022 and 4.4 per cent in 2023. In emerging markets and developing economies, prices were anticipated to rise to 9.9 percent and 8.1 per cent in 2022 and 2023, respectively. Inflation in Sub-Saharan Africa was also projected to increase to 14.4 per cent in 2022, before decelerating to 11.9 per cent in 2023.

Africa experienced a rebound in economic performance in 2021 as GDP grew by 6.9 per cent, representing a strong recovery from the pandemic-battered growth of 1.6 per cent in 2020. This positive trend was a result of resumption of usual levels of household consumption and investments following the easing of COVID-19 restrictions, as well as a strong rebound in global oil prices as the world slowly opened leading to increased global demand for oil. A gradual improvement in the macroeconomic environment was observed as fiscal deficit narrowed to 4.0 per cent of GDP in 2022; up from 5.1 per cent in 2021 largely due to the reduction in COVID-19-related expenditures and strengthening of domestic revenues (AfDB, 2022<sup>4</sup>). Trade deficit and current transfers also narrowed in 2022 leaving a better current account deficit and better environment for exchange rate fluctuations as foreign exchange inflows increased. This put the continent on a path of strong economic recovery, judging by the AfDB Africa Economic performance and outlook report. But hopes for a stronger and better recovery were soon dashed by the outbreak of the war in Ukraine, which undermined the hard-earned progress towards macroeconomic stability. The continent by mid-2022 was experiencing high inflation rates, faster depreciation of most national currencies, and in some countries, severe shortages of staple food leading to unrest. There are fears of a looming debt crisis as countries struggle to mitigate the impact of the war in Ukraine and as the continent continues to experience the lingering effects of the pandemic.

The challenging global and regional economic developments since 2022 and current uncertainties are expected to have adverse impacts on developing countries, including The Gambia.

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<sup>4</sup> [https://www.afdb.org/sites/default/files/2022/05/25/aeo22\\_chapter1\\_eng.pdf](https://www.afdb.org/sites/default/files/2022/05/25/aeo22_chapter1_eng.pdf)

- a) The contraction in economic activities in the main advanced economies and China could worsen the current and trade account balances of The Gambia through lower external demand for Gambian exported goods and services.
- b) The strengthening of the US dollar could increase the servicing cost of dollar-denominated liabilities, which, in turn, could put pressure on the exchange rates and the external reserves situation of the country.
- c) The global inflationary pressures are expected to put pressure on domestic prices through imported food and energy prices.
- d) The tight global financial conditions, the appreciation of the US dollar, and the tightening of monetary policy in the major advanced economies are expected to increase the cost of debt servicing in developing countries like the Gambia.
- e) Furthermore, the tight global financial conditions could reduce the level of project and budget support from development partners. This has implications for the national budget, given that most of the development projects are donor funded.
- f) Finally, there are heightened fears of erosion in the advances made in health, education, environmental protection, and livelihoods with strong possibility of reversing gains in poverty reduction and increasing household fragilities and vulnerabilities, as well as potentially undermining gains in democratic governance and respect for human rights.

The NDP 2023-2027 is therefore being prepared in this context of a challenging economic outlook both at the global and the regional levels. This context required a rigorous analysis during the preparation of the NDP, given that the country's main source of income (tourism and trade) are seriously exposed to risks in such a context. The COVID-19 pandemic is a living example of how changes in the global economy adversely affected the tourism sector and wiping off many gains made and severely affecting livelihoods. With a limited market size, non-diversified economy, high dependence on imported goods and a sluggish private sector growth, in the face of a global economic downturn, The Gambia needs to adopt a transformative approach in its development perspectives.

Furthermore, Government is cognizant of these global and regional trends and realises that they underscore a very challenging macroeconomic context for RF-NDP. In view of the above, there is a need for rigorous prioritisation of activities. They also underscore the need to put in place measures to provide relief to households and communities. Finally, they point to the imperative to develop new and innovative financing mechanisms, notably linked to domestic resource mobilisation for the sustainable financing of the RF-NDP and future plans.

## 2.2 The National Development Context

The development landscape of The Gambia is a complex and intertwined web of challenges and opportunities spanning many areas. A thorough review and analysis of this landscape is critical to developing a sound and robust plan. The review and analysis of the national development context presented in this document is organised along the following areas/clusters: (i) Governance and democratic reforms; (ii) Macroeconomic stability, growth, and private sector development; (iii) Human capital development; (iv) Agriculture, natural resources, environment, and climate change; (v) Social development; and (vi) Energy, infrastructure, and digital connectivity.

In view of the recent shocks and crises driven by global and regional factors, issues relating to fragility and vulnerability are analysed with the aim of improving understanding of how the country can build and/or strengthen resilience and better prepare the nation for future shocks. A comprehensive analysis of the national development context is available as an accompanying document to the RF-NDP, a summarised version of which is found in Appendix B.

## 2.3 Plan Imperatives

Drawing upon the extensive stakeholder consultations and comprehensive analysis of the global, regional, and national development context, seven (7) overarching imperatives (Box 2.1) that will underpin and drive this National Development Plan have been identified.

### **Box 2.1: Plan Imperatives**

1. **Imperative 1:** Address fragility, vulnerability and build resilience of households and communities to shocks and crisis.
2. **Imperative 2:** Consolidate gains made in democratic governance and address the outstanding gaps.
3. **Imperative 3:** Vigorously pursue macroeconomic reforms to ensure stability and inclusive growth
4. **Imperative 4:** Prioritise Human Capital Development for economic and social transformation
5. **Imperative 5:** Strengthen productivity of, and integration and linkages within the Agriculture and Natural Resources (ANR) sector for enhanced economic growth and productivity, increased incomes, jobs and climate action.
6. **Imperative 6:** Act to advance the empowerment and social inclusion of women, girls, children, youth, persons with disabilities and older persons for a more productive, better and fairer society
7. **Imperative 7:** Build our infrastructure to boost connectivity, promote growth and render Gambia more competitive, especially in the context of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA)

#### ***1. Imperative 1: Address fragility, vulnerability and build resilience of households and communities to shocks and crises***

The Gambia is classified as a fragile state from a political, governance, security, economic and social standpoint. According to the index on fragile states, in 2021, The Gambia stood at 80.5 after having moved from 76 in 2007, at an annual rate of 0.43 per cent. At the time of the transition to democratic rule in 2017, a study undertaken by the World Bank and the African Development Bank reported that Gambia's fragility indicators had been steadily worsening over the previous decades<sup>5</sup>. The report identified the main drivers of fragility as:

- a) Political instability;
- b) Slow growth, high inequality, and unsustainable fiscal balances;
- c) Limited capacity of the public administration;

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<sup>5</sup> The Gambia Fragility Risk and Resilience Assessment. June 9, 2017 (World Bank/African Development Bank)

- d) Structural vulnerabilities and exogenous shocks;
- e) Regional instability and external relations.

Likewise, a Conflict & Development Analysis (CDA) conducted jointly by the Government of The Gambia, the United Nations, and the West African Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP) in 2018 and updated in 2019<sup>6</sup> identified the following key conflict drivers:

- a) Accountability and political leadership during transition
- b) Land governance, land disputes and resolution practices
- c) Status of national reforms and commissions
- d) Social cohesion, social behaviour, and the role of civil society
- e) Gambia's young population
- f) Vulnerabilities of climate and the natural environment

Many of these drivers persist today. Recent data from the Integrated Household Survey (IHS) shows that poverty in The Gambia has increased from 48.6 per cent in 2015/16 to 53.4 per cent in 2020. In absolute terms, the number of poor has increased from 935,282 to 1,083,373 in the same period. This is confirmed by the findings from the ward level consultations – see Report on the Regional and Ward Level Consultations (MoFEA 2022).

Data collected during the ward level consultations have brought into sharp relief the fact that communities are contending with worsening food security, poverty, and vulnerability over the past five years, as well as environmental and climate change challenges. In addition, The Gambia, over the past five years, has experienced heightened shocks arising from the impacts of climate change, the COVID-19 pandemic, and the effects of the Russia-Ukraine war.

The combined effects of these crises and shocks heightened vulnerability of already hard-pressed households and communities. Government is therefore fully cognizant of the need for urgent action to facilitate household and community recovery and build resilience and will take measures to that effect in the context of RF-NDP 2023-2027.

## ***2. Imperative 2: Consolidate gains made in democratic governance and address the outstanding gaps.***

The Gambia has registered significant progress in governance since the current Government came into power in 2017. This is recognised both internally and externally and is evidenced by the improved position of The Gambia in many internationally recognised indices of good governance.

With an overall governance score of 55.9 (+9.2), The Gambia is ranked 16<sup>th</sup> out of 54 countries on the Mo Ibrahim index of African Governance (2020). This puts the country above the average for West Africa which stands at 53.1. In terms of participation, rights and inclusion, The Gambia is ranked 12<sup>th</sup> out of 54 countries with a score of 57.1, having gained 19.5 points. Similarly, with 58 per cent, The Gambia is ranked 16<sup>th</sup> out of 54 countries, having gained 14.2 points from the standpoint of security and rule of law. In terms of human development, The Gambia is ranked 27<sup>th</sup> out of 54 countries with 51.4 points, having slipped backwards by 1.8 points. The Gambia has jumped 10 places in the 2022 Global Peace Index and is now considered the 45<sup>th</sup> most peaceful

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<sup>6</sup> Conflict and Development Analysis: The Gambia. June 2019 (Government of the Gambia, United Nations, WANEP).

country in the world out of a total of 163 countries for which data was collected. This ranking place the country as the third most peaceful country in Sub-Saharan Africa (behind Ghana and Mauritius).

The Gambia is also making strides in improving its human rights record since 2017<sup>7</sup>. For example, in 2021, the country submitted a Universal Periodic Report (UPR) for the first time in 18 years, documenting how it is implementing the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights. This is a significant step forward for the country and holds the promise of improving the lives of its citizens. In 2019, The Government of The Gambia accepted almost all (93%) of the suggestions made by the UPR Working Group to improve its human rights record. In contrast, in 2013, the Jammeh regime only accepted half of the recommendations made by the same body.

Compliance with good governance principles is now a key feature of The Gambia<sup>8</sup>. The country is on course to become a thriving democracy, with high citizen satisfaction and trust in democratic institutions<sup>9</sup>. In 2017, the Government established a National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) to protect the rights of Gambians. In terms of how Gambians perceive the state of democracy in the country, the Afro Barometer survey (2021) found that ninety-one per cent of Gambians surveyed said they believe their country is a fledgling democracy. 70 per cent indicated that they are free to express their opinions, and 87 per cent of Gambians feel they are free to vote for any political candidate.

However, in other areas The Gambia's performance has not been that impressive. There are challenges regarding a new constitution, transitional justice, and security sector reform. The Afro Barometer survey (2022) reveals that corruption is perceived to have risen significantly and the Government has thus far not been able to contain it. That perception is corroborated by Transparency International which ranks the country 102<sup>nd</sup> out of 180 countries on the Transparency International Corruption Perception Index for both 2020 and 2021 with a score of only 37 points. Government therefore recognises that the governance agenda is work in progress and consequently commits to consolidate the gains made and address the outstanding gaps during the new development Plan. In addition, Government will pay particular attention to issues related to delivering a new constitution, accelerating transitional justice and security sector reform. Also of concern is decentralisation, of which land governance is a critical and urgent aspect; and which calls for effective and efficient government mechanisms to meet citizens' expectations.

### ***3. Imperative 3: Vigorously pursue macroeconomic reforms to ensure stability and inclusive growth***

The diagnostic assessment of the macroeconomy (real sector, fiscal sector, financial sector, and external sector) shows that the key macroeconomic challenges of the country: are low and volatile growth caused by shocks and low investment in the productive sectors, high poverty rate, high public debt, limited financial inclusion, rising inflation, exchange rate fluctuation, and high trade and current account deficits. All these challenges cause macro-economic instability and hamper inclusive growth. The Plan will seek to effectively address them.

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<sup>7</sup> UN CCA 2020

<sup>8</sup> UN CCA 2020

<sup>9</sup> Ibid

At the sectoral level, tourism is hampered by a narrow market, small and undiversified tourism products, inadequate human and financial resources, and poor policy implementation. The private sector growth has also been stalled by an uncondusive business environment relating to business registration process, access to land, complex taxation regime, access to finance, labour market issues, and access to the regional market.

The most important goal of macroeconomic stabilisation policies should be to achieve stable and inclusive growth through stabilising intermediate variables that can have a strong impact on growth or drivers of growth. The most important among these for The Gambia is the management of public debt. Achieving fiscal sustainability will include the creation of fiscal buffers, which in turn will enable the government to carry out public investments in the productive sectors of the economy (agriculture and tourism), promote industrialisation through manufacturing, and enhance trade through the development of the private sector. Government, with the support of partners (mainly World Bank and IMF), has undertaken several reform efforts aimed at achieving macroeconomic stability. With the support of IMF, progress has been made in the following areas: revenue mobilisation; public finance management; debt management; State Own Enterprise (SOE) governance reforms; and Central Bank and banking reforms. In the context of RF-NDP, the Government will build upon these past reform achievements with a view to achieving macroeconomic stability and inclusive growth.

#### ***4. Imperative 4: Prioritise Human Capital Development for Economic and Social Transformation***

Developing the country's human capital is a key priority for Government, given the growing importance of the knowledge economy worldwide. Human capital consists of the knowledge, skills, and health that people accumulate throughout their lives, enabling them to realise their potential as productive members of society. Developing Human Capital can help end extreme poverty and create more inclusive societies. When human capital increases in areas such as science, education, and management, it leads to increases in innovation, social wellbeing, equality, increased productivity, improved rates of participation, all of which contribute to economic growth. Increases in economic growth tend to improve the quality of life for a population. It is an indispensable means for 'unlocking' and protecting human, economic, and social rights. In The Gambia, a study on the effect of human capital on economic growth for a 30-year period in The Gambia (1990 to 2019) showed that education is vital to the economic growth of The Gambia<sup>10</sup>.

According to the World Bank Human Capital Index, a child born in The Gambia today will be 42 per cent as productive when she/he grows up having had complete education and full health. This is slightly higher than the average for Sub-Saharan Africa and higher than the average for Low-income countries. Between 2010 and 2020, the HCI value for The Gambia increased from 0.37 to 0.42, as reflected The Gambia in the following trends<sup>11</sup>:

- Probability of Survival to Age 5: 94 out of 100 children born in The Gambia survive to age 5.

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<sup>10</sup> Significance of Human Capital on The Economic Growth of The Gambia Musa Sawaneh Kocaeli University, Turkey (2020)

<sup>11</sup> World Bank Human Capital Project - October 2, 2019

- Expected Years of School: In The Gambia, a child who starts school at age 4 can expect to complete 9.5 years of school by her 18th birthday.
- Harmonised Test Scores: Students in The Gambia score 353 on a scale where 625 represents advanced attainment and 300 represents minimum attainment.
- Learning-adjusted Years of School: Factoring in what children learn, expected years of school is only 5.4 years.
- Adult Survival Rate: Across The Gambia, 75 per cent of 15-year-olds will survive until age 60. This statistic is a proxy for the range of health risks that a child born today would experience as an adult under current conditions.
- Healthy Growth (Not Stunted Rate): 81 out of 100 children are not stunted. 19 out of 100 children are stunted, and so are at risk of cognitive and physical limitations that can last a lifetime.

However, in terms of investments in Human Capital Development, there is much room for improvement as shown below:

- Health Spending: The Gambia spends 1.5 per cent (2017) of its GDP in public spending on health. This is lower than both the regional average (2.4%) and the average for its income group (2.1%). 0 percent (2015) of the population incurs catastrophic health expenditure measured as out-of-pocket spending exceeding 10 per cent of total household spending.
- Education Spending: The Gambia devotes 2.4 percent (2018) of its GDP to education. This is lower than both the regional average (4.0%) and the average for its income group (3.6%).
- Social Assistance Spending: In The Gambia, data on social assistance spending are not available. The average for the region is 1.5 percent and for its income group 1.3 percent.
- Government Revenue: General government revenue in The Gambia is 15.4 percent (2018) of GDP. This is lower than both the regional average (20.6%) and the average for its income group (19.1%).

Government therefore places a high premium on enhancing the country's human capital and this was one of the top strategic priorities of NDP 2018-2021. Government intends to consolidate the gains made and address the existing challenges within the context of RF-NDP.

In addition to health and education, the analysis of the national development context also underscored the need to give priority to issues related to population and demography, migration and urban planning and provision of affordable housing. These are areas that have hitherto not been accorded the place they deserve in national planning.

***5. Imperative 5: Strengthen productivity of, and integration and linkages within the Agriculture and Natural Resources (ANR) sector for enhanced economic growth and productivity, increased incomes, jobs and climate action.***

Sector reviews, local and national level consultations during the formulation of the RF-NDP have revealed immense opportunities for making production and productivity of the ANR contribute more to economic growth. However, environmental problems such as land degradation, deforestation, salinity in the lowlands, coastal erosion, traditional and unsustainable production systems in the forestry, agriculture, and fisheries industries constrain the potentialities of the



sector. Over the past ten years, the sector's contribution to GDP decreased slightly but surpassed the contribution of industry, indicating the minimal transformation of products of the ANR sector.

The Agriculture and Natural Resource Sector was prioritised in The Gambia's latest Long-Term Development Plan entitled "The Gambia Incorporated Vision 2020" in 1996, aiming to transform the country into a middle-income export-oriented country by 2020. It was also a priority of the NDP 2018-2021/22, which aimed at attaining a *modern, sustainable, and market-oriented agriculture, livestock and fisheries sector for increased food and nutrition security, poverty reduction and enhanced economic growth*. The promotion of environmental sustainability, climate resilient communities and appropriate land use was also identified as a critical enabler.

During this period, The Gambia made significant progress in ensuring that the ANR sector is guided by policies and relevant laws and regulations. These include the Medium-Term Agriculture and Natural Resources Sector Policy Objectives and Strategy (1998-2002), the National Agricultural Development - Horizon 2010, and the National Food Security Outline. The Gambia Environmental Action Plan (GEAP) was prepared and is one of the frameworks that integrate all sub-sectors of environmental concerns into the country's socio-economic development objectives. Specific to the ANR sector, the Agriculture and Natural Resource (ANR) Policy, 2009 - 2015, was developed, followed by the Gambia National Agricultural Investment Plan (GNAIP 2011 – 2015). Finally, The Government of The Gambia (GoTG) developed the ANR Policy (2017 – 2026) as a follow-up to the 2009 – 2015 Policy. The policy aims to optimise the use of the sector's resources to reduce poverty, enhance food and nutrition security and increase incomes whilst safeguarding the integrity of the environment.

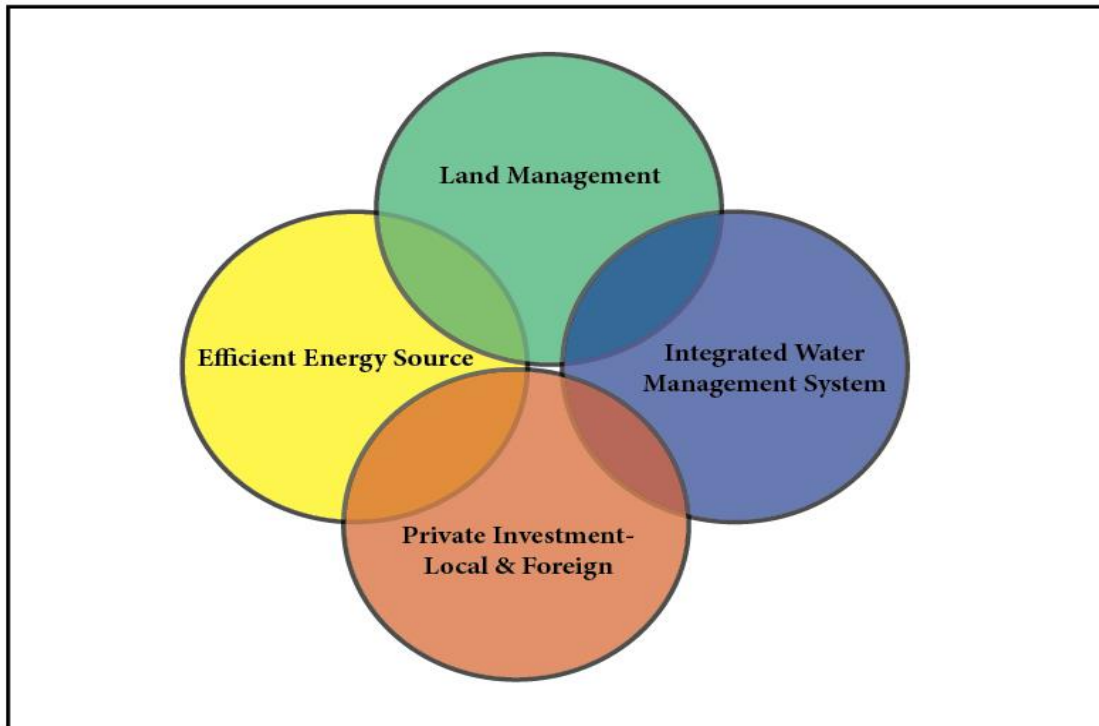
Government developed a supplementary ANR policy in 2017 to address the uncoordinated, fragmented delivery system in the ANR sector that resulted from the overlapping mandates of the Departments of Agriculture, Fisheries, Forestry, Environment and Water Resources and Lands. The policy aims to ensure balance in managing and utilizing natural resources for sustainable socio-economic development. The Statement of Intent of the supplementary ANR policy is "Work with resource-users to balance the ecosystem while enhancing their livelihoods and food security through sustainable natural resource management". And its goal is to increase overall agricultural productivity and production through the judicious utilisation of natural resources on a sustainable basis. Sub-sector policies and strategies were also developed for components of the ANR sector, which consists of the following seven core agencies: Department of Agricultural Services, Fisheries, Forestry, Livestock Services, National Environment Agency, Parks and Wildlife, and Water Resources.

Despite the policy pronouncements made and sector strategies developed, the implementation rate of sector strategies is low, unsustainable, and uncoordinated. This has given rise to duplication and conflicting development interventions. Therefore, the formulation of appropriate legal frameworks, action plans and tools should enable the departments concerned to implement their respective strategies in coherent and coordinated ways for the optimal development and utilisation of the resources in the sector.

A productive and balanced ANR sector that supports growth and sustained socio-economic development would require the formulation and delivery of integrated plans and programmes that

effectively leverage the following interlinked factors: (1) mobilising private financing, (2) managing the utilisation of water (3) allocating and utilising land effectively and (4) generation of adequate energy. These were highlighted by all stakeholders during the RF-NDP consultations as critical determinants of success for the ANR Sector.

**Figure 2.2: Integrated Approach to ANR**



Currently, the ANR Working Group is the default structure used by Departments to collaborate, coordinate and build synergy in the implementation of their activities under various programmes and projects of the ANR Sector. However, its effectiveness is limited by the lack of legal mandate and operational support. Areas of conflict and duplication are not effectively dealt with in a coordinated and balanced manner. There is a need for a national intersectoral coordination mechanism to ensure balanced protection and conservation of interventions in a resolute, efficient, effective, and sustainable manner guided by the principles of the ANR policy framework.

Government, in the context of the RF-NDP, is committed to fostering productivity and strengthening intersectoral linkages, enhancing synergy and balancing the allocation and utilisation of natural resources across the ANR sector. Government will revitalise the ANR sector through policy reforms and innovative programmatic interventions.

***6 Imperative 6: Act to advance the empowerment and social inclusion of women, girls, children, youth, persons with disabilities and older persons for a more productive, better and fairer society***

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), to which The Gambia fully subscribes, are a strong call to empower and promote the social, economic, and political inclusion of all. In this regard, the concept of Leaving No One Behind (LNOB) is a highly conducive transformative approach. In the context of RF-NDP, and building upon past efforts, Government of The Gambia has a strong commitment to address issues of empowerment, social exclusion, discrimination and stigmatisation of women, girls, children, persons with disabilities and older persons. It recognises that removing such barriers is key to an equitable society in which the potential of large segments of the population could be unleashed.

Government recognises the vital role of women and the need for their full and equal participation and leadership in all areas of sustainable development and has taken important steps to strengthen women's empowerment. It however, recognises that gender inequalities are still deep-rooted in Gambian society. Women suffer from limited access to decent work and face occupational segregation and gender wage gaps. While much progress has been made in terms of gender parity in education, there are significant challenges related to health care. They tend to predominantly operate in the informal sector of the economy and are under-represented in political and economic decision-making processes.

Similarly, while progress is being made with respect to people with disabilities, Government recognises that many barriers to social inclusion and empowerment for persons with disabilities still exist. These include system-level and institutional barriers (e.g., lack of inclusive policies and legislation), physical barriers (e.g., challenges in access to vehicles and buildings), information barriers (e.g., lack of sign-language interpretation at meetings), and perhaps most importantly, barriers due to stigmatising attitudes and discriminatory behaviours and practices. Consequently, Government will strive to overcome these barriers.

Despite constituting 3.1 per cent of the population and growing, older persons potentials towards national development planning remain untapped. This RF-NDP provides the opportunity to tap into their experience and wisdom and ensure that they fully participate in all spheres of social life.

### ***7 Imperative 7: Build our infrastructure to boost connectivity, promote growth and competitiveness***

Infrastructure and ICT connectivity are critical economic and social cohesion enablers for any society. African countries infrastructure lags other countries elsewhere, mainly in “access and quality”. For example, access to electricity in Africa, on average, is 38 per cent, compared to Gambia, which is 62.1 per cent<sup>12</sup> at the national level with urban areas at 78.6 per cent and 24.7 per cent for rural areas. The total annual road maintenance backlog in Africa is estimated at USD0.6bn<sup>13</sup> (which translates to over USD2bn of future capital expenditure outlays), compared to Gambia's periodic road maintenance backlog estimated at \$37m<sup>14</sup>, annually.

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<sup>12</sup> The Gambia Demographic and Health Survey 2020

<sup>13</sup> Africa's Infrastructure: Overview; a time for Transformation

<sup>14</sup> This amount is the combined periodic road maintenance required funding, transferred to the road fund from the fuel levy for the period 2016-2021; NRA

The World Bank and the African Development Bank (AfDB), in their infrastructure diagnostic assessment report<sup>15</sup> on African countries, notably West Africa, stressed the importance of infrastructure, given its contribution to GDP, estimated at 2 per cent annually. This potential impact on economic growth, and by extension – on sustainable development and inclusivity - is further compounded by the huge deficits confronting African countries in critical infrastructure. For instance, energy (i.e., power) and transport (i.e., connectivity) account for 44 per cent and 18 per cent, respectively, of the total infrastructure deficit, in terms of annual capital investment (CAPEX) and Operation and Maintenance (O&M) expenditures.

The launch of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) in April 2018, in Kigali, Rwanda, established the African common market of a combined GDP of USD1.3 trillion, with a population of 1.3 billion people. It set the stage for repositioning and enhancing African economies through the expected economic and financial benefits of regional and global value chains (RVCs/GVCs), hence making Africa the new frontier for competitive trade investment. Accordingly, The Gambia is developing its strategic regional trade infrastructure, such as the Basse Freight Logistics Platform (Basse Dry port), and the Trans-Gambia Corridor Special Economic Zone (TG-SEZ) Project supported through a joint African Union – New Partnership for Africa’s Development (AU-NEPAD-AfDB) initiative which was launched in 2019 in Banjul.

Given the role of infrastructure and ICT connectivity to economic transformation, Government will continue during the next five years to consolidate efforts and implement strategic infrastructure projects in the areas of energy, transport, and ICT to catalyse growth and tap into the many opportunities offered by the AfCFTA and other developments.

**The seven imperatives that have been presented in the foregoing serve as the bases for the strategic framework, pillars, programme priorities, strategies and interventions of the Plan that are set out in Part II**

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<sup>15</sup> AICD, WB, 2009, Financing African Infrastructure, AfDB, 2015

## **PART TWO: THE STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK, PILLARS, PROGRAMME PRIORITIES, STRATEGIES AND INTERVENTIONS**

- Chapter 3: The Strategic Framework
- Chapter 4: Pillar I: Community Resilience to Shocks and Crises
- Chapter 5: Pillar II: Governance Reform
- Chapter 6: Pillar III: Macroeconomic Stability and Inclusive Growth
- Chapter 7: Pillar IV: Human Capital Development
- Chapter 8: Pillar V: Agriculture, Fisheries, Natural Resources, Environment and Climate Change
- Chapter 9: Pillar VI: Empowerment, Social Inclusion - Leaving No One Behind
- Chapter 10: Pillar VII: Energy, Infrastructure, and ICT Connectivity

## Chapter 3: The Strategic Framework

### 3.1 Plan Orientation

The strategic framework presents in succinct form the priorities of Government over the next five years. The Plan considers the challenging external environment triggered by the global economic, climatic, and other shocks. Through this Plan, Government will therefore endeavour to build the resilience of our institutions and people in responding to shocks, given the likelihood they will reoccur and the need to factor them in our development planning frameworks. An overriding consideration of Government is to ensure that the transformational aspirations of Gambian citizens are addressed.

Against this background, the 7 pillars, 30 target outcomes and 237 indicators<sup>16</sup> that relate to its design, implementation and monitoring are set out in this chapter. These outcomes, covering all dimensions of national development, as schematically illustrated in Figure 3.1 below, are briefly outlined below and further developed in the ensuing chapters. The RF-NDP 2023-2027 builds upon the gains made in the previous Plan (NDP 2018-2021/22) and seeks to assure continuity within a new context.

### 3.2 Overall Goal of RF-NDP 2023-2027

The overall goal of RF-NDP is to *consolidate gains in democratic governance, accelerate green economic and social transformation and build resilience to shocks and crises.*

### 3.3 Strategic Objectives

The three (3) strategic objectives of the RF-NDP are:

1. Strategic Objective 1 (SO1): Build household and community resilience to address shocks and crises arising from climate change, economic volatility and to counter the effects of pandemics like the COVID-19;
2. Strategic Objective 2 (SO2): Consolidate gains and address critical development gaps in governance and in economic and social transformation; and
3. Strategic Objective 3 (SO3): Strengthen accountability, build partnerships, and set up robust and sustainable resource mobilisation strategies for enhanced delivery and development outcomes.

### 3.4 The Pillars of RF-NDP 2023-2027

The RF-NDP has seven (7) pillars:

1. Pillar I: Resilience to Shocks and Crises;
2. Pillar II: Governance Reforms;
3. Pillar III: Macroeconomic Stability and Growth;

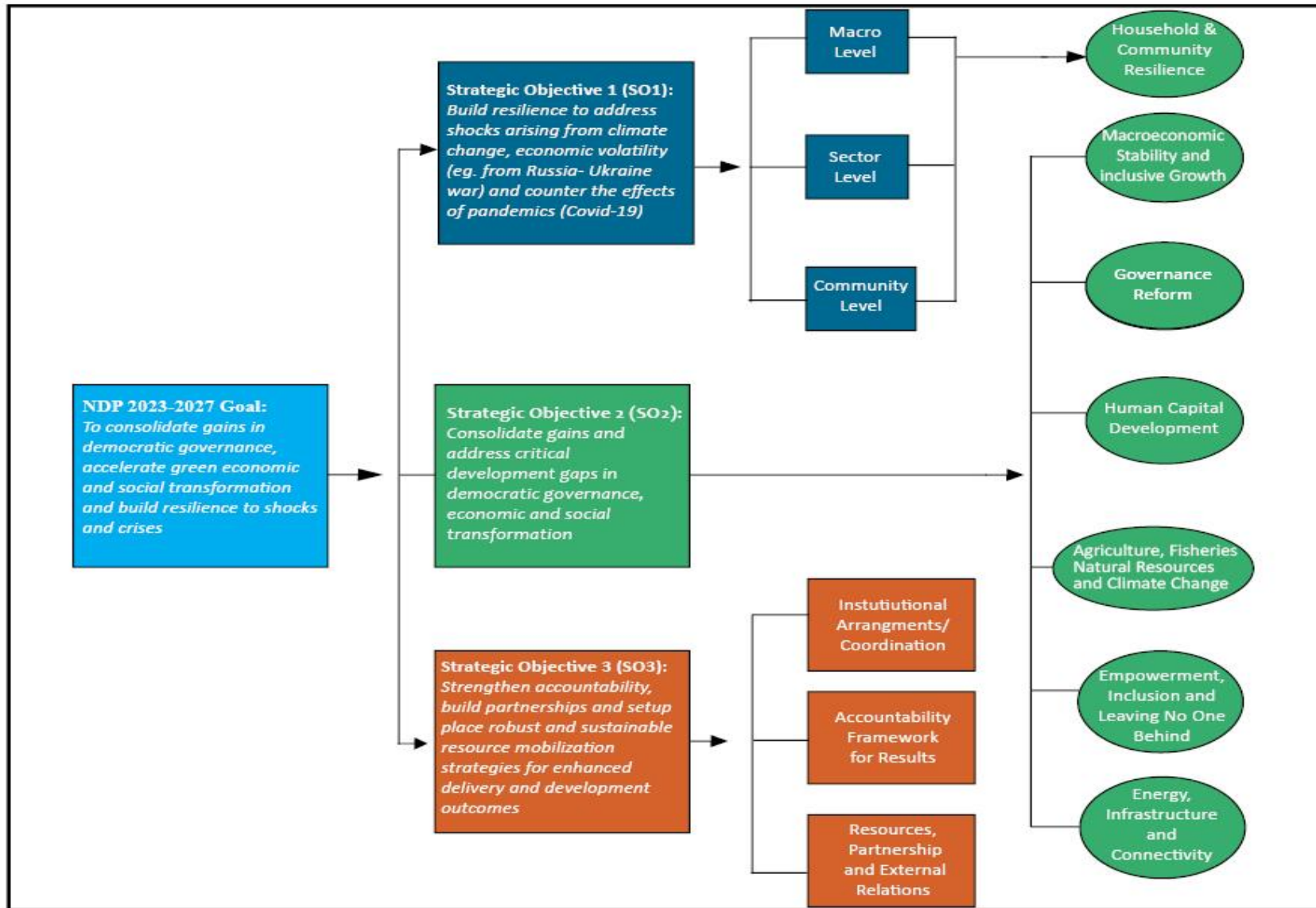
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<sup>16</sup> In comparison, NDP 2018-2021 had 63 outcomes and 289 indicators; reflecting an enhanced prioritisation process this time around.

4. Pillar IV: Human Capital Development;
5. Pillar V: Agriculture, Environment, Natural Resources and Climate Change;
6. Pillar VI: Empowerment, Social Inclusion and Leaving No One Behind;
7. Pillar VII: Energy, Infrastructure, and ICT/digital Connectivity.

A summary matrix of the Plan outcomes and priorities, the results matrix (monitoring framework) and the implementation arrangements are in Annex 2, Annex 3, and Annex 4, respectively.

Figure 3.1: NDP 2023 - 2027 Strategic Framework





## Chapter 4: Pillar I: Building Community Resilience to Shocks and Crises

Gambians have over the last few years been subjected to multiple shocks and crises in the form of disease epidemics (COVID-19) and the effects of the economic downturn and inflationary prices of food and energy arising from the Russia-Ukraine war. These crises have aggravated prevalent fragilities arising from the effects of climate change, notably, worsening food security, livelihoods and increases in urban poverty.

Government, in the context of the RF-NDP 2023-2027, in collaboration with partners, is committed to assist communities and households recover from these multiple threats and build resilience against future shocks. This pillar focuses on strengthening resilience. In doing so, Government will build upon existing initiatives and scale up its interventions at both household and community levels to have the desired impact for the largest proportion of the poor and vulnerable.

### 4.1. The Need to Strengthen Resilience to Address Shocks and Crisis

The adverse impacts of COVID-19 and climate change at community level and the worsening situation with regards to vulnerability, poverty, livelihoods and food and nutritional security underscores a high degree of stress and fragility at household and community levels in all regions of the country. The consultations identified many examples of coping strategies deployed by communities which can be built upon.

While Government and partners have been implementing many national programmes to address most of these problems, it appears that these often do not address the immediate needs of communities; and are mostly affected by bureaucratic obstacles that affect the quality of their implementation and eventual impact.

There are a number of on-going initiatives, such as ecosystem-based adaptation approaches, across many sectors, and whose activities should contribute directly and indirectly to building resilience. However, more dedicated efforts are needed, and therefore within the context of this Plan Government will implement a nation-wide community-based programme to build resilience to shocks through improved and accelerated local development initiatives, by extending the scope of the Programme for Accelerated Community Development (PACD) funded by Government and implemented by the UNDP.

Box 4.1 below sums up the guiding principles of the concepts of recovery and resilience.

<b>Box 4.1: Conceptual Definitions for Recovery and Resilience</b>	
<b>Recovery</b>	The restoring or improving of livelihoods and health, as well as economic, physical, social, cultural, and environmental assets, systems, and activities, of a disaster-affected community or society, aligning with the principles of sustainable development and “build back better”, to avoid or reduce future disaster risk.
<b>Resilience</b>	Resilience is the ability of a system, community or society exposed to threats to anticipate, adjust to and recover from its effects in a timely and efficient manner, including through the preservation and restoration of its essential basic structures and functions.

Recovery and resilience will be mainstreamed across all pillars of the RF-NDP at the level of both activities and expected outcomes; but with particular attention given to Pillar V (agriculture, natural resources, environment, and climate change) and Pillar VI (empowerment, social inclusion and leaving no one behind).

A fully integrated and effective early warning and early response system needs to be put in place. This would provide alerts on potential threats to human security, propose appropriate responses, activate, and coordinate local/national-level response actors, monitor the implementation of response-related processes, assess their effects and report on their impact.

Additionally, weather index-based insurance (macro and micro), which has already been introduced in the country, will be strengthened as a community resilience-enhancing tool for managing weather and climate risk. It uses a weather index, such as rainfall, to determine payouts, and these can be made more quickly and with less argument than is typical for conventional crop insurance.

#### ***4.2 Outcome 1.1: Community level resilience to shocks and crisis enhanced***

The regional and ward level consultations have also revealed challenges faced by local communities in terms of access to basic services such as health, education, water and sanitation, roads, and other services. These are mostly related to small infrastructure that serve critical needs, yet often lie outside the radar of large-scale national programmes. Despite Government and partner efforts, rural areas continue to lag in access to services and have limited opportunities for local economic development. Government is therefore committed to work with local authorities, partners, and other stakeholders to address those needs to revitalise local economies, create jobs, and build resilience.

Community-driven programmes would be a good mechanism to address these needs, as a complement to the household-level social protection interventions. In fact, the community-driven programmes, if implemented via labour-intensive public works, can also assist households in times of shocks and crises, and strengthen the resilience of communities with appropriate assets.

Government, in partnership with UNDP, is piloting a PACD, whose aim is to improve sustainable access to basic socio-economic infrastructure and services, and the creation of a local economy to improve the socio-economic conditions of communities.

In the context of the RF-NDP 2023-2027, Government in collaboration with stakeholders, especially communities and local authorities and key line ministries, and with the support of partners, will scale up the PACD to national level through building on the achievements and lessons of the one-year pilot phase. The key interventions will cover the following:

1. Small-scale rural infrastructure for improved access to potable water, energy (off-grid), rural access roads (not more than 5 km), causeways and bridges;
2. Community food security (labour saving devices, year-round integrated food production schemes) and environment schemes; and
3. Sustainability of services and assets.

The goal is to revitalise local economies, rehabilitate and improve community infrastructure, create jobs especially for youth and advance environment sanitation and health. Key partners to be involved are:

- a) At national level: a government implementing agency, which will work with line ministries, Gambia Agency for the Management of Public Works (GAMWORKS) and other actors;
- b) At decentralised level: Local Government Authorities, CSOs, Community Based Organisations (CBOs), youth and women's groups, etc.

To build community resilience to shocks, the Plan will ensure capacity building of community-based structures on asset management, Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) as well as operationalise an integrated sustained, effective, and efficient early warning and response system at the national and regional levels. Also critical would be the finalisation of relevant policies such as: a community and rural development policy, a decentralisation and local government act etc. All of these will contribute to enhancing community resilience to shocks through coherent linkages between community structures.

## Chapter 5: Pillar II: Governance Reform

Sustainable Development Goal 16 of the 2030 Agenda emphasises the need to build peaceful, just, and inclusive societies that provide equal access to justice, rule of law and strong institutions. Similarly, Aspiration 3 of Agenda 2063 aims to have an Africa of good governance, democracy, respect for human rights, justice, and the rule of law. Accordingly, this pillar seeks to create the enabling conditions for good governance, regarding the protection of human rights, rule of law, political and electoral governance, land sector governance and security sector governance. This is expected to improve the country's constitutional democracy, transparency, accountability, government effectiveness and regulatory oversight. It will also address the weak policy, legal and regulatory frameworks for effective governance, as well as the limited access to justice.

Government will therefore, under this Plan, make deliberate efforts to consolidate the gains made in democratic governance by addressing its shortcomings. The Governance Reform Pillar of the RF-NDP comprises the eight (8) outcomes shown in Table 5: The associated programme priorities, interventions and strategies for each outcome are also set out in this section.

**Table 5.1: Outcomes of the Governance Pillar**

Outcome 2.1: A new Constitution adopted, and legal reforms undertaken
Outcome 2.2: Policies and regulatory frameworks for decentralisation and local governance enhanced and harmonised
Outcome 2.3: Climate and climate change governance enhanced.
Outcome 2.4: Regular, transparent, inclusive, free and fair elections ensured
Outcome 2.5: Policy and institutional reforms to ensure rule of law, respect for human rights and equitable access to justice
Outcome 2.6: A reconciled society in which victims are fully paid their reparation dues and transitional justice attained
Outcome 2.7: A reformed security sector with adequately capacitated security institutions
Outcome 2.8: An efficient, motivated, accountable and results- oriented public service

### *5.1 Outcome 2.1: A new Constitution adopted and legal reforms undertaken*

#### **Programme Priorities, Strategies and Interventions**

Government will in the context of RF-NDP implement the following priorities to ensure that The Gambia gets a new constitution and legal reforms are undertaken by 2027:

1. Adoption of a new Constitution for The Gambia; and
2. Legal reforms to repeal and/or amend restrictive laws.

#### ***Adoption of a new Constitution for The Gambia***

Government is determined to ensure that the country has a new constitution as befitting a modern, progressive, and democratic state, in line with expectations of its citizens. To that end, Government

in collaboration with all stakeholders and with the support of development partners will undertake the following steps:

*Re-Introduce the Draft Constitution to the National Assembly and ensure it proceeds to the Committee Stages*

The Ministry of Justice will take the necessary measures to revive the constitutional building process that was stalled since the 22<sup>nd</sup> of September 2020. The key result Government expects to achieve is that all the contentious issues that led to the initial failure of the bill are resolved through discussion and dialogue, and the draft constitution is re-introduced, debated, and passed by the National Assembly. Government will therefore launch an inclusive dialogue and consultation process towards this end.

*Popularise the Draft Constitution to build support for it*

The draft constitution will be popularised, and Gambians encouraged to adopt the Constitution in a referendum. Government will work with all national stakeholders – political parties, civil society organisation, religious leaders, Local Government Authorities, youth, women, and other opinion leaders in this effort.

*Organise a Referendum for its adoption*

Government will work with all national stakeholder groups to organise a referendum and exhort Gambians to vote “YES” to adopt the new Constitution that will usher in the Third Republic. Following its adoption, measures will be taken to sensitise the public on the progressive provisions in the new constitution. The proposed timeline and Roadmap for the above key interventions for the constitutional review process are outlined in Table 5.2.

**Table 5.2 Constitutional Review Roadmap**

<b>CONSTITUTIONAL REVIEW ROADMAP</b>		
Consultations on reviving the draft Constitution	MoJ/NA	`Q1 2023
Legislative/policy measures for revival of the Constitutional enactment process	MoJ/NA	`Q1 2023
Public/political consultations on the draft Constitution	MoJ/NHRC	`Q2 2023
Review of Draft Constitution and finalization for resubmission to the National Assembly	MoJ	`Q3 2023
Parliamentary debate on draft Constitution	MoJ/NA	`Q3 2023
Referendum	IEC/NHRC	`Q1 2023
Adoption of new Constitution	MoJ/NA	`Q2 2023

<sup>17</sup> Ministry of Justice (MoJ), National Assembly (NA), Independent Electoral Commission (IEC), National Human Rights Commission (NHRC)

### ***Legal reforms to repeal and/or amend restrictive laws***

Government will continue to review all existing laws to align them with the new constitution and repeal and/or amend any acts/laws judged to be restrictive of the freedoms of citizens and to strengthen transparency and accountability. The criminal code and other laws (Public Order Act, 2009) will be amended or repealed as necessary.

### ***5.2 Outcome 2.2: Regular, Transparent, Inclusive, Free and Fair Elections Held***

The conduct of regular and transparent elections is the backbone of every modern democratic state. The Gambia is no exception and there has been a non-interruption of election cycles since independence in 1965, except for a brief period during the military overthrow of the democratically elected government in 1994. The Government of The Gambia, recognizing the importance of elections, is keenly aware of the adverse consequences of contested elections and is committed to ensuring that a fair and level playing field is put in place for elections at all levels.

### **Programme Priorities, Strategies and Interventions**

Taking account of all the above, government, through the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) as lead, is committed to implementing the following six programme priorities towards the needed electoral reforms over the next five years, in collaboration with stakeholders and the support of partners:

1. Reform the electoral regulatory framework;
2. Build Institutional capacity;
3. Improve stakeholder engagements;
4. Undertake boundaries delimitation;
5. Enhance voter participation in the electoral process; and
6. Maintain an accurate and up-to-date voter register.

### ***Reform the Electoral Regulatory Framework***

It is best practice to put in place flexible mechanisms for the continuous review of electoral legislation. Over the RF-NDP period therefore, the IEC intends to review and amend all the relevant Acts in a bid to harmonise conflicting roles of the IEC with regards to the demarcation/delimitation of electoral boundaries, the re-introduction of interviews during the voter registration process, the deletions and transfers of voters, the institutionalisation of continuous voter education, the deregistration of inactive political parties and the issuance of permits for political forums. This strategic priority will also address the issue of discriminatory and non-inclusive and conflicting laws governing elections (such as the 1997 Constitution, the Elections Act 2015 and Local Government Act, 2002) that need to be aligned.

It is expected that addressing the above shortcomings will deliver the following outcomes: inclusiveness of the electoral process; improved transparency; removal of the ambiguities in the laws; and availability of a robust, harmonised regulatory framework and election management system.

To achieve these outcomes, the following key programmatic interventions and strategies have been identified. They include advocacy for the revision and enactment of a revised electoral regulatory framework; regular stakeholder engagements; advocacy for the introduction of a paper ballot system of voting; the introduction of electronic voting and voter/civic education.

### ***Build Institutional Capacity***

The Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) has major capacity constraints. It does not currently have the required range of adequately trained personnel and logistical outlay for the needed efficient and effective election governance system. It is therefore imperative to provide the institution with the requisite physical and ICT infrastructure for efficient and effective day-to-day operations and delivery of electoral services. The full computerisation of its electoral and administrative processes is a critical requirement. The IEC is conscious of the urgency to establish the following units over the RF-NDP period: a legal unit, a monitoring and evaluation unit, and a gender and disability unit.

It is anticipated that addressing the above challenges and gaps will deliver the following outcomes and impacts: Credible elections; fit-for-purpose elections infrastructure, a conducive work environment and a well-trained professional staff.

To achieve the above objectives, the IEC has prioritised key programmatic interventions and strategies such as: enhancing IEC's collaboration with training and learning institutions in The Gambia; University of The Gambia (UTG), Management Development Institute (MDI), Gambia Technical Training Institute (GTTI) etc; conducting study tours to learn about best practices in elections governance; seeking full funding for all its operations; refurbishing office infrastructure across the country; establishing fully equipped professional departments; building storage facilities across the country; providing adequate mobility for operations; providing appropriate training to staff.

### ***Improve Stakeholder Engagement***

The relationship between organisations that have stakes in election governance needs to be improved. The sensitivities and tensions associated with electoral processes, owing to the mistrust among the different stakeholder groups, calls for the institutionalisation of continuous dialogue between the IEC, the political parties and the CSOs that participate in election monitoring and observation. This will build stakeholder confidence, increase transparency in the electoral process, reduce electoral disputes and enable the general acceptance of election results when declared.

To achieve the above objectives, the IEC has prioritised the following key programmatic interventions and strategies: continuous engagement/dialogue with stakeholder groups; capacity building of stakeholders; and greater use of multimedia platforms for stakeholder engagement.

### ***Undertake Boundaries Delimitation***

Equal representation is one of the areas that need improvement in The Gambia's electoral system. Currently, there is the issue of disproportionate constituency representation. It is the situation of

the asymmetric link between the size of the population of a constituency and its number of National Assembly Members. There is a huge disparity in representation that the IEC seeks to narrow as much as possible. For instance, a constituency such as Janjanbureh with a voting population of less than 2,000 has one National Assembly member, just like Sannehmentereng with over 40,000 voters. This is widely perceived to be inequitable and unfair. The IEC intends to work with stakeholders to review, identify and re-demarcate electoral boundaries to put an end to such anomalies within constituencies and wards.

To achieve the above objectives, the IEC has prioritised the following key programmatic interventions and strategies: reviewing the current electoral boundaries; delimitation of current electoral boundaries; developing a standard demarcation strategy; undertaking stakeholder engagements; implementing the demarcation strategy; creating more constituencies and wards, using General Package Radio Service (GPRS)/Google maps and other digital apps and liaising with the Gambia Bureau of Statistics to generate the necessary population statistics.

### ***Enhance Voter Participation in the Electoral Process***

Undeniably, Gambians come out in their numbers during presidential election but are less keen on participating in parliamentary/legislative election. The December 2021 presidential elections and the April 2022 parliamentary election give credence to that. Whereas 89.3 per cent voted during the presidential election, only 49 per cent of the voters came out during the parliamentary elections. The IEC intends to work actively to improve this trend through adequate civic education outreach activities, in partnership with the National Council for Civic Education (NCCE). Addressing these challenges will deliver the following outcomes: Increased and sustained turn-out of a well-informed and appropriately sensitised voting public in all elections.

To achieve the above objectives, the IEC will implement the following key programmatic interventions and strategies: intensive voter sensitisation through multimedia outreach; civic education campaigns; a thorough and sustained engagement with stakeholders; engagement with educational institutions to mainstream voter education in the school curriculum; and the use of public outreach programmes (face to face, television/radio, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, WhatsApp, advocacy materials, etc.).

### ***Maintain an Accurate and Up-to-Date Voter Register***

At every election, many Gambians who have attained the age of 18 miss out simply because they were still underage at the time of the supplementary registration. To enfranchise Gambians as they turn 18, it is imperative to introduce a continuous voter registration process. This enables the maintenance of an accurate, credible, up-to-date, and accessible voter register, and significantly reduce the high cost associated with mass voter registration exercises prior to general elections. This will enable the IEC to have only eligible Gambians on the register. This will ensure that eligible Gambians get to be registered at locations where they should vote during elections; thus, facilitating the verification of voters.



Addressing the above shortcomings will deliver the following outcomes and impacts: A credible electoral register is generated with the following features: Improved accuracy, credibility and accessibility of the voter register.

The following key programmatic interventions and strategies will be implemented by the IEC and partners: Continuous voter registration; removal of dead persons from the voter register; curbing the practice of transfer of voting cards.

### **Enabling Factors**

Government recognises that to fully implement these priorities there is need to do things differently. To that end, Government commits as follows – see box below.

#### **Box 5.1: Proposed Reforms, Institutional Alignments, and Innovative Modalities for Implementation**

1. Currently, the IEC uses the marble and the ballot drum method which does not cater for diaspora enfranchisement and voting. The upsurge in the number of candidates vying for elective office constitutes additional challenges that the institution needs to take in its stride. All these factors mean that the marble and drum system can no longer be considered as practical and suitable. There is thus the need to change the voting method by introducing a paper ballot system. The IEC intends to avail itself of the powers of technology to modernise its infrastructure and will consider the following options in the next electoral cycle: electronic voting; Diaspora voter registration and voting; Digital Means of Communications (Zoom, WhatsApp, TikTok, Twitter, YouTube, Facebook, etc.); the use of GSM companies to send message alerts; use of Opinion and Religious Leaders; use of Traditional Communicators; and GPRS instruments and Google Maps.
2. In terms of innovative implementation modalities, the following measures are envisaged: allowing proxy voting; advance voting for people with duty certificates; introducing braille voting; and using digital communication means for communication.
3. To further incentivise the IEC staff, the following interventions will be critical success factors: introduction of health insurance schemes; increase the scholarship awards for staff training; expansion of units and departments; purchase of fleet of vehicles; expand office facilities and storage capacity.

### ***5.3 Outcome 2.3: Climate and Climate Change Governance enhanced***

Climate governance, acting through laws, strategies, and institutions, based on national circumstances, supports climate change adaptation and mitigation by providing frameworks through which diverse actors interact, and a basis for policy development and implementation. Climate governance is most effective when it spans multiple policy domains, helps realise synergies and minimise trade-offs, and connects national and sub-national policy-making levels. Effective and equitable climate governance builds on engagement with civil society actors, political actors, businesses, youth, labour, media, and local communities. Climate governance

enables mitigation and adaptation by providing an overall direction, setting targets, mainstreaming climate action across policy domains, enhancing regulatory certainty, creating specialised organisations, and creating the context to mobilise finance.

### **Programme Priorities, Strategies and Interventions**

1. Develop and enact Climate and Climate Change Acts
2. Develop the National Adaptation Plan (NAP), and review and revise the National Climate Change Policy (NCCP 2017-2023) and the Climate Change Strategies.

#### ***Develop and enact the Climate and Climate Change Acts***

Effective governance requires adequate institutional capacity at all levels to address coordination across sectors, scales, and actors, build consensus for action among diverse interests, and inform strategy setting. Institutional and regulatory capacity, innovation, finance, improved governance and collaboration across scales, and multi-objective policies enable enhanced climate change responses and shifts in development pathways. Such interventions can be mutually reinforcing and establish positive feedback mechanisms, resulting in accelerated mitigation and adaptation to climate change. Accelerated mitigation and shifting development pathways necessitate both re-directing existing financial flows from high- to low-emissions technologies and systems, and to provide additional resources to overcome current financial barriers. Opportunities exist in the near term to close the finance gap.

The governance required to address climate change has to navigate power, political, economic, and social dynamics at all levels of decision making. The effectiveness of decision-making and governance will be enhanced by the involvement of local stakeholders (particularly those most vulnerable to climate change including local communities, women, youth and the poor and marginalised) in the selection, evaluation, implementation, and monitoring of policy instruments for land-based climate change adaptation and mitigation. These actions also bring social, ecological, economic and development co-benefits that can contribute to poverty eradication and more resilient livelihoods for those who are vulnerable.

#### ***Develop the National Adaptation Plan (NAP), and review and revise the National Climate Change Policy (NCCP 2016-2025)***

Implementation of climate change adaptation is transitioning from project-based adaptation planning and implementation to an integrated approach to adaptation across all vulnerable economic sectors to urgently deal with climate change in a more coherent and efficient way. This is what the National Adaptation Planning (NAP) process intends to achieve in The Gambia. The process will be supporting the country's capacity building efforts in planning and implementing an integrated approach to adaptation at all levels and across sectors. It will produce a costed adaptation strategy for the country and provide the tools, mechanisms, systems, and information with which to replicate the NAP process at regular intervals and mainstream adaptation into existing and future

policies, programmes and activities across levels and sectors. The NAP process will align existing and planned adaptation actions to the implementation of the national, sub-national and sectoral development plans, especially the RF-NDP 2023 – 2027; enhance the collection of information on needs and priorities for adaptation planning country wide; further facilitate the integration and mainstreaming of climate change into policies and strategies at the national, sub-national and sectoral levels, and increase resilience. The NAP will place climate change at the forefront of the political agenda and strengthen the capacity of all stakeholders to advance the NAP process. It will improve the quality, quantity and access to climate information and knowledge, and increase public resources and private investments in adaptation.

## Enabling Factors

### **BOX 5.2: National, sub-national and sectoral enablers and nation-wide engagement**

1. For effective adaptation to climate change, extensive and intensive engagement of all stakeholders, and effective coordination with the development community are required.
2. National Level adaptation planning enables an overall guiding policy framework, national legislation/regulation, exercise of some key functions, management of international relations.
3. Sub-national, community and lower levels of governance are the best levels for observing / understanding development and climate change impacts; vulnerability to climate change and other shocks and adaptive capacity are context specific. Most adaptation options require local implementation; and there is potential for piloting/pioneering initiatives.
4. At sectoral level, adaptation is enabled by operationalizing and implementing climate change adaptation integrated sector-specific policies, legislation, and regulation; Other enablers include promotion of ownership of initiatives, development of capacities and good practices and encouragement and facilitation of transboundary cooperation on climate-relevant issues.
5. Understanding of the science, impacts and relevant adaptation and mitigation responses to climate change; Understanding the linkages between climate change and development issues; finance, technologies and capacities needed at the local level to implement climate change that are integrated in Local Development Plans.
6. Country-specific evidence to enable understanding of planning, mainstreaming of and implementation of climate change adaptation in (sub)national and sector policies, strategies, programmes.
7. Awareness and partnerships to develop and promote national consensus and commitment to climate-resilient, low-emission development, costing, assessing, and selecting adaptation options and measures and mainstreaming of climate change in the domestic budgetary process, and Performance Assessment Frameworks (PAFs) for monitoring, evaluation, reporting and verification of adaptation indicators and targets.
8. Strengthening institutions and capacities through needs assessment, working mechanisms, learning by doing and mainstreaming.
9. Improving the population's access to climate information using the Multi-Disciplinary Facilitation Teams (MDFTs) as bridge between research institutions and the population, leading to a more direct dialogue that gives voice to the most vulnerable groups.

10. Use of the MDFTs to promote a shared understanding of long-term climate risks between the state and populations at both the national and local levels.
11. Promote active participation in inter-institutional coordination at local and national levels.

#### *5.4 Outcome 2.4: Policies and regulatory frameworks for decentralisation and local governance enhanced and harmonised*

The decentralisation agenda which has remained stalled for many years will be revitalised in the context of the RF-NDP; with the goal of enhancing the efficiency and responsiveness of Local Government Areas (LGAs) to citizens, improved land governance and a better organised management of the civil society landscape.

#### **Programme Priorities, Strategies and Interventions**

In the context of RF-NDP 2023-2027, government in collaboration with stakeholders and support of partners, plans to implement the following priorities:

1. Strengthen human and institutional capacities of LGAs;
2. Improve land governance, property valuation, physical planning and development control;
3. Enhance governance and management of civil society organisations.

#### ***Strengthening Human and Institutional Capacities of LGAs for Decentralisation***

It is widely recognised that there is insufficient capacity in the Area Councils around the country to deal with the exigencies of a robust decentralisation framework/agenda. It is thus anticipated that when implemented, the above strategic priority will deliver greater efficiency and effectiveness of LGAs in providing quality public service to citizens at the decentralised level; decision-making processes will be guided by expert knowledge and responsibilities that are as close to the people as possible, in line with the principles of subsidiarity.

Government, over this RF-NDP period, will: support capacity building on local governance; assess Village Development Committees (VDCs) and Ward Development Committees (WDCs) to determine their functionality; train stakeholders on local governance; update the Community Action Plans (CAPs) and the Ward Action Plans (WAPs); conduct community-based participatory planning and budgeting based on the community action plans; and fast-track skills development training for women and youth groups.

The following strategies will be implemented to achieve the targets and outcomes:

- Development of professional programmes on Local Governance by the University of The Gambia and Rural Development Institute and the training of LGA personnel;
- Development/updating of Community and Ward Action Plans;
- Comprehensive capacity building training, including on the functions of the LGA structures.

Furthermore, the action points which are critical to supporting the decentralisation reform agenda will be prioritised: They include: (i) extension of Integrated Financial Management Information System (IFMIS) to Local Government Authorities to improve the transparency of public finances

and budget execution at the municipal levels; (ii) revision and execution of the fiscal transfer formula (perhaps as part of the updated Public Finance Act) to ensure that LGAs are receiving the correct fiscal transfers on a full and timely basis, and in line with the legal framework; (iii) development of a legal and institutional framework to govern Own Source Revenues of local governments, which are critical to supporting municipal services; and (iv) review and rationalisation of devolved competences to the local level (as per the 2002 Local Government Act) to ensure that adequate administrative structures and capacities exist to deliver these devolved services.

### ***Improving Land Governance, Property Valuation, Physical Planning and Development Control***

The prevailing population pressure and the associated urban development is leading to increasing tensions and conflict over land. It is therefore imperative to improve land governance to tackle these grievances and to put in place redress mechanisms that will offer safeguards to all citizens.

Property valuation also needs to be rationalised. The prevailing system is far from equitable and is making Area Councils and Local Government Authorities lose significant revenue. The uniform rates charged on properties of different standing in the same neighbourhood is perceived to be unfair and thus needs to be informed by the value of each structure. Also, there appears to be lack of coordination between local authorities and central government on broadening the fiscal base to capture more households for both local and income taxes. For example, the average tax collections to GDP in similar nations is 45 per cent, whereas in The Gambia, it is a paltry 15 per cent. About 80 per cent of properties in the municipalities are not paying rates due to lack of proper registration and identification of properties and ownership. The GPS mapping of households within Banjul and the Kanifing Municipality is an effort in the right direction; and Government will encourage all other LGAs to follow suit to identify compounds and compound owners within their jurisdiction to boost revenue collection.

It is anticipated that when implemented, the above strategic objective will deliver the following outcomes: land grabbing is significantly reduced; land administration is rationalised and conflicts related to land ownership are minimised; recognition of customary rights and informal land tenure system; compliance with development control measures will be enhanced; reserved lands will be adequately protected; LGAs' capacity to generate income will improve, resulting in higher revenue collection for the councils; and accurate property assessments will be linked to an established database for revenue generation.

To achieve the above objectives, the Government of The Gambia over this RF-NDP period will: develop a land policy; undertake cadastral mapping; train land administrators on land policies and regulations; sensitise local communities on land regulations including communal land tenure system; improve capacity of Local Government Authority (LGA) Officers to do land valuations; review and update the Physical Planning and Development Control Act 1991 and the Regulation 1995; build the capacity of Local Government Authorities; develop local and physical development plans and sensitise communities on customary rights and informal land tenure system.

The following strategies will be implemented: development of National Geospatial Data Infrastructure including Geographic Information System (GIS) for all LGAs; implementation of a land policy for effective land administration; strengthening LGA performance management; development and enforcement of service delivery standard across the LGA sector; undertaking a comprehensive functional analysis of the LGA service; conducting a comprehensive review of the LGA fiscal decentralisation policy; development and operationalisation of a property valuation strategy; and setting up of a property and lands records information system.

### ***Enhancing Governance and Management of Civil Society Organisations***

Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) play an important role in complementing the efforts of Government in delivering development to citizens. The operating environment for CSOs has improved since the change in Government in 2017. Over the RF-NDP period, Government will endeavour to consolidate these gains and build a viable partnership framework with CSOs to enhance development results and foster national cohesion. The underlying principle is to work together to deliver quality goods and services to the Gambian people.

When implemented, the above strategic priority will deliver: a strong partnership between CSOs, Central Government and Local Government Authorities, based on mutual trust. CSOs will proactively share their activity reports outlining under which strategic priority/pillar of the RF-NDP they are operating or contributing towards. The institutional frameworks that govern the activities of the CSO sector will be significantly improved. To achieve the above objectives, Government, under this RF-NDP, will undertake beneficiary and stakeholder training on human rights- based approaches; conduct annual NGO forums; monitor the operations and projects of NGOs on a quarterly basis and review and update relevant policies that affect the sector.

The following strategies will be implemented to strengthen the capacity of duty bearers; reform rules and procedures; organise NGO Annual forum, sensitise communities on human rights-based approaches; organise supervision missions; and develop an NGO policy.

Citizen engagement is without doubt, a useful lever to improve development processes and to enhance service delivery. Government will create the space for CSOs to independently monitor the RF-NDP and then report periodically to enhance citizen oversight. This will help build trust between Government and local communities and Civil Society Organisations, as well as with partners. Strengthening citizen engagement over the RF-NDP period will significantly add value to the national and local government development processes.

### **Enabling Factors**

Government recognises that to fully implement these priorities, there is a need to do things differently. To that end, Government commits to undertake some reforms and adjust existing institutional arrangements, and in some cases, use new and innovative implementation modalities.

### **Box 5.2: Policy and Institutional Reforms**

1. The Government will develop a comprehensive training policy and strategy to build the capacity of a broad spectrum of actors in local governance. The operationalisation of the policy will lead to the training of personnel on: GIS, land valuation and administration, cartography, urban planning, mapping, civil engineering, etc. The specialised training will be offered to different cadres of staff and technical departments within the line ministry and other key stakeholders. The ministry will solicit the support of other stakeholders and partners to achieve this.
2. The development of an NGO National Policy and the updating of the expired NGO Affairs Agency Strategic Plan to align it with the RF-NDP would enhance local government and NGO governance in the country. These frameworks will ensure that NGOs abide by the laws that govern their sector, by their own constitutions, by the protocol of accord and by the NGO code of conduct. This will also entrench good governance principles and ensure compliance, accountability, and transparency in their operations.
3. The policy will outline the criteria to assess the performance of NGOs in the country. It will lead to a well-coordinated and managed NGOs sector that is participating effectively and constructively in national development processes. The policy will also promote efficiency and accountability of the NGOs and will help streamline and simplify the procedures for registration of NGOs and CBOs.
4. In terms of land governance, the government will ensure that there is a unified legal framework that takes into consideration Islamic and customary law. Such an approach will resolve most of the inconsistencies that are triggers of conflict. The State Lands Act 1990 and the Lands Acquisition and Compensation Act 1991 will be revised accordingly.
5. Two important policy documents have been developed and then validated with a view to improving the governance of the Local Government Authorities. They are: The MDFT Policy 2021-2030 and the Community Development Policy 2024-2033. Other important policy reforms are required to fully implement this strategic priority and realise the expected development objective over the RF-NDP Period. The Local Government Act 2002 needs to be reviewed and updated to align with the exigencies of a robust local governance framework. Equally, the current arrangement for oversight of Local Government Authorities should be reviewed to enhance and accelerate the decentralisation process by empowering local authorities.
6. Government will encourage and support LGAs to build resilience and preparedness into their strategies, to respond to emergencies when they occur. Waste management and environmental protection is becoming a critical issue in all Local Government Authorities. These issues will be dealt with by exploring recycling and energy generation options.
7. Local councils have elaborated regional development plans aligned to the NDP (2018-2021). For enhanced RF-NDP implementation, the Government will provide support and establish coordination mechanisms to ensure effective alignment.

#### *5.4 Outcome 2.5: Policy and institutional reforms to ensure rule of law, respect for human rights and equitable access to justice*

Much progress has been made with respect to delivery of justice, rule of law and human rights. The country has seen the establishment of a NHRC, the judiciary's independence has been fully

restored and indigenised, and efforts are underway to decentralise justice delivery. Government intends to build upon this foundation by implementing the priorities outlined below.

### **Programme Priorities, Strategies and Interventions**

Government, through the Ministry of Justice and in collaboration with all stakeholders and support of development partners, is committed to implementing the following priority actions related to human rights, access to justice and rule of law over the next five years:

1. Decentralise the rule of law and justice delivery institutions;
2. Improve case management systems and access to justice delivery;
3. Strengthen institutional capacity;
4. Promote good governance and human rights.

#### ***Decentralise the rule of law and Justice Delivery Institutions***

Access to justice is not uniform across the country. The higher courts are all in the urban areas. Few institutions, such as the office of the Ombudsman and the NHRC, have regional offices; whilst the services of the National Agency for Legal Aid (NALA) and Alternative Dispute Resolution Secretariat (ADRS) are only available in the Greater Banjul Area (GBA). The NHRC has regional offices in Central River Region (CRR) overseeing the Upper River Region (URR), and another one in North Bank Region (NBR) overseeing the Lower River Region (LRR). Plans are afoot to open more regional offices. This strategic priority will make it easy for those living outside the GBA to have access to more judicial and other legal services. Findings from the ward level consultations confirmed the citizens' perceived lack of equal access to justice delivery institutions. It is anticipated that addressing the above shortcomings will enhance justice delivery and reduce delays in access to justice.

To achieve the above objectives, Government, with support from development partners, will implement the following key programmatic interventions: development of a digitalised information system; promotion of legal awareness; investment in human capital development; resource mobilisation; development of infrastructure (office complex to ease congestion and backlogs); alignment of interventions and programmes of all justice delivery institutions.

#### ***Improving Case Management Systems and access to Justice Delivery***

Government recognises that there are challenges in case management (investigation, prosecution, and judgement) and this has resulted in huge backlogs, inefficiencies, and frustrations among those interacting with the justice delivery system. The modernisation of the court and justice delivery system is now recognised as a priority; hence the need to embrace modern technologies to help speed up judicial processes. Modern techniques/tools can offer the judiciary greater functionality in emergency situations. Accordingly, this strategic priority seeks to improve the case management system, and the justice delivery system in general. To achieve the above objectives, Government will develop and enhance a digitalised information system; invest in human capital; undertake resource mobilisation; develop awareness and educational materials for the public; develop an improved case management system and its requisite infrastructure.



### ***Strengthening Institutional Capacity***

Government is cognizant of the necessity to strengthen institutional capacity for more impactful development. Like in all the sectors of Government, there are high levels of capacity gaps in the governance, access to justice and rule of law sector and inadequate financial and logistic resources to deliver high impact services. It is expected that by addressing the above constraints/challenges the following outcomes will be achieved: effective implementation of institutional mandates; enhanced service delivery; reduced capacity gaps; a highly motivated work force and reduction in staff turnover.

Government, with support of development partners, will implement key programmatic interventions, such as: providing support to the institutional training bodies such as the civil service training committee and the judiciary training institute. Government will commission training for institutional staff; provide adequate functional infrastructure; provide adequate security for justice officials and state counsels; enhance witness protection provisions; build capacity to reduce knowledge gaps and increase the number of security personnel.

### ***Promoting Good Governance and Human Rights***

Significant strides have been made since 2017 to promote good governance and human rights, but undeniably, there is still room for improvement, hence the need for this strategic priority. As universally decried, “justice delayed is justice denied”. And without doubt, there are delays in the administration of justice in the country; delays in implementing the outcomes of the transitional justice mechanisms; delays in the enactment of human rights bills and delays in establishing the anti-corruption commission. The training curricula of law enforcement agencies are not fully human rights compliant. The access to Information Commission is yet to be set up. Also, there is inadequate protection of vulnerable groups.

Addressing the constraints outlined above will deliver timely and quality dispensation of justice; improved welfare of the vulnerable groups; enhanced national development and human security; accountability and reconciliation will be achieved, and victims of human rights violations will be compensated.

To achieve the above objectives, Government will: expand the justice delivery institutions; establish a Gambia-specific Infrastructure for Peace (I4P) with a Peace and Reconciliation Commission at its centre; mainstream issues of persons with disabilities and other vulnerable groups in all Government policies, interventions and programmes; train in-service law enforcement officials on human rights and humanitarian law; undertake resource mobilisation; carry out institutional strengthening (by training prosecutors, investigators, police, judges, NHRC, The Association of Non-Governmental Organisations (TANGO) and other CSOs working in governance) and undertake nationwide awareness campaigns.

### **Enabling Factors**

To ensure that the implementation of this priority is effectively carried out, Government commits to institute several supporting measures, such as the ones detailed in Box 5.3.

### **Box 5.3: Enabling Measures**

1. Develop a Standard Operation Manual for the access to justice delivery institutions; and provide autonomy for agencies like the National Agency for Legal Aid (NALA) and the National Agency against Trafficking in Persons (NAATIP)
2. Develop a Complaints Handling Manual, an Investigation Handbook, and a user-friendly manual for the use of the case management system
3. Develop a Training Policy, a Human Resource Strategy and review the content of the curricula of all law enforcement agencies for accreditation purposes
4. Develop a framework for the operationalisation of the Disability Act 2021
5. Enactment of pending bills - Criminal Offences and Criminal Procedure Code Bills, Prevention of Torture, International Crimes Bill, Mutual Legal Assistance and Cooperation Bill
6. Domestication of the Convention against Enforced Disappearances
7. Enactment of a Witness Protection Act and development of an adequate Witness Protection Policy
8. Introduce human rights education in the curricula of teaching and learning institutions
9. Introduce a social welfare reform initiative and capacity building for enhanced social welfare services
10. Advocate for the enactment of the Public Integrity Reform Bill and the Public Ethics Bill
11. Review the Ombudsman Act 1997, enactment of a Whistleblowing Act and Development of a Whistleblowing Policy
12. Signing of Memorandum of Understandings (MoUs) and partnership agreement with key institutions and stakeholders
13. The introduction of Case Management Software to improve rule of law and justice delivery
14. The use of online and offline training platforms to build institutional capacity
15. The institutionalisation of performance management

#### *5.5 Outcome 2.6: A reconciled society in which victims are fully paid their reparation dues and transitional justice attained*

While much progress has been made in the quest to deliver transitional justice, there is still a long way to go with a significant gap between the pace of progress and citizens, especially victims' expectations. Government will therefore accelerate its efforts to achieve transitional justice.

#### **Programme Priorities, Strategies and Interventions**

Government, through the Ministry of Justice and in collaboration with all stakeholders and support of partners, is committed to implementing the following priority actions related to human rights, access to justice and rule of law over the next five years:

1. Develop a post-Truth, Reconciliation and Reparation Commission (TRRC) Act and a prosecution strategy;

2. Finalise the Victims' Bill;
3. Set up and operationalise a hybrid Gambia-ECOWAS court;
4. Promote national reconciliation.

### **Develop a post -TRRC Act and a prosecution strategy**

An Act establishing the post-TRRC framework, and a prosecution strategy will be necessary. The Government will set up a special prosecution division to ensure that the preliminary work of looking into the evidence is carried out, and the preliminary investigation is conducted where necessary. The Special Prosecution Unit for investigation and prosecution will also decide on the type of court to adjudicate TRRC cases and create a credible Witness Protection Programme.

### **Finalise the Victims' Bill**

This bill seeks to establish an institution that would take up the reparation payments for the benefit of over half of the TRRC-registered victims who haven't received their full payment.

### **Set up and operationalise a hybrid Gambia-ECOWAS court**

The Gambia's domestic courts do not have jurisdiction to try some of the offences that were alleged to have been committed in the TRRC report. A hybrid Gambia-ECOWAS court will be empowered to hold detainees and conduct trials outside of The Gambia. Such an option would allow torture and crimes against humanity - written into the court's statutes - to be prosecuted without facing the bar of retroactivity. The Government is already exploring the modalities of cooperation between The Gambia and Senegal, under the auspices of ECOWAS, to set up such a court. ECOWAS member countries would have a vested interest in The Gambia's Transitional Justice Programme, given that West African nationals were also victims of human rights abuses in the Gambia.

### **Promote reconciliation**

Recognizing that not all the victims of the 22 years of Jammeh's misrule showed up at the TRRC, the Government will create a new entity that will have the mandate to continue to receive petitions or applications from individuals who want to be recognised as victims. To show commitment to the post TRRC process, Government allocated about Gambian Dalasi (GMD) 75 million for victim compensation in the 2023 budget.

The implementation of the Government Whitepaper is cross cutting and touches on many areas of the Development Plan. The document is relevant to the education sector in terms of reviewing the school curricula to address issues such as religious tolerance and human rights, as well as Security Sector Reform, the health sector (sexual and gender-based violence) and the Justice sector in terms of prosecutions and legislative reform. The White Paper implementation is a core part of the RF-NDP.

A detailed roadmap for implementation of the Government White Paper on the TRRC recommendations is presented in Table 5.3.

Table 5.3 **WHITE PAPER IMPLEMENTATION – PRIOTIY AREAS AND ROADMAP**

<b>ACTIVITY</b>	<b>Implementi ng agency</b>	<b>Time frame</b>
Establishment of the Special Prosecutor’s Office and Special Investigations Unit for the Prosecutions outlined in the White Paper.	MoJ	Q1 2023
Finalisation of a treaty between the Government of The Gambia and ECOWAS with regards to cooperation in the establishment of an internationalised court for the prosecution of human rights violations committed under former President Jammeh.	MoJ	Q1 2023
Enactment of legislation and legislative review for the establishment of an internationalised court for the prosecution of Jammeh-era crimes.	MoJ/Judiciar y	Q1 2023
Establishment of the Victims Reparation Commission for the payment of reparations emanating from the TRRC Report	MoJ	Q1 2023
Renaming the Arch 22 to Never Again Arch and constructing a memorial wall in memory of victims	MoJ/MoTC	Q1 2023
Strengthening and capacitating the Law Reform Commission to carry out rolling review of all laws to ensure they are in line with democratic principles	MoJ	Q1 2023
Provide adequate training for all soldiers in areas of international criminal law, Rome Statute etc.	MoD/NHRC	Q2 2023
Establishment of Peace and Reconciliation Commission to spearhead peace and reconciliation efforts nationally.	MoI	Q2 2023
Renovation and equipping of the Gambia National Library to hold the TRRC archives for wider public access	MoJ/GLS/N HRC	Q2 2023
Implement legislative measures as part of new or existing legislation, for banning individuals who benefit from amnesty/immunity from holding public office.	MoJ/MoD/M oI	Q2 2023
Secure accreditation of training courses for the Police and the Army.	MoJ/NHRC	Q2 2023
Upgrade the major prisons to meet standards required by relevant laws.	MoI	Q3 2023
Establishment of the Internationalised Court for the prosecution of offences laid out in the Government White Paper	MoJ/Judiciar y	Q4 2023
Mainstream victim-centric strategies as part of the national policy and planning process.	MoFEA/OP/ MoJ	Q4 2024

<sup>18</sup> Office of the President (OP), Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs (MoFEA), Ministry of Tourism and Culture (MoTC), Ministry of Defence (MoD), Ministry of Interior (MoI), Ministry of Justice (MoJ), National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), Gambia Law School (GLS)

### ***5.6 Outcome 2.7: A reformed security sector with adequately capacitated security institutions***

Security sector reform is a top priority of Government, given the difficult legacy of decades of authoritarian rule, while at the same time recognising the vital role security institutions play in safeguarding sovereignty, territorial integrity, and personal safety of citizens. Government recognises that the security sector reform is still work in progress and is committed to advancing the reform agenda within the Plan period.

## **Programme Priorities, Strategies and Interventions**

In the context of the RF-NDP, Government and stakeholders are committed to implementing the following three priorities:

1. Consolidate gains and finalise security sector reform
2. Improve the policy and legal frameworks and enhance institutional capacity
3. Strengthen coordination within the Armed and Security Services and strengthen partnerships and collaboration with stakeholders (both national and international)

### ***Consolidate Gains and finalise Security Sector Reform***

Under this strategic priority, Government will continue to address/undo the bad legacies of the 22 years of authoritarian rule by ensuring that the rule of law is espoused and entrenched within the different security sector outfits/entities. The agenda of right-sizing the security sector will be pursued over the RF-NDP period, with support from development partners.

Key measures will include developing an overarching and individual security institution governance, legal and regulatory framework; setting up mechanisms to enable civilian management and oversight of the security sector and operationalizing the rightsizing of the security sector. It is anticipated that by 2027, The Gambia will have a security sector that is apolitical, affordable, well-trained, right-sized, well-equipped and is run by professionals that cherish the rule of law, human rights, and the principles of good governance, thus earning the trust and confidence of Gambians. Additionally, the legal and regulatory frameworks of security institutions, which have become obsolete over the years, will be reviewed, and updated for better service to the citizenry. This would then entail putting the security sector under civilian management and oversight and be made accountable and transparent. On the other hand, the Government has set up a Counter Terrorism Elite Force Unit to respond to possible terrorist attacks.

### ***Improve the Policies and Legal Frameworks and Strengthen Institutional Capacities***

This priority is multi-pronged and will focus on improving the institutional legal frameworks and policies, building the capacity of the security institutions, and addressing their operational challenges such as infrastructure and logistical needs.

#### ***Improving the Institutional Legal Frameworks and Policies***

The Security Sector Reform (SSR) report underscores the absence of an overarching policy framework to guide the security institutions as its most critical deficit. Similarly, the security sector reform strategy (2020-2024) underscores the lack of a framework to integrate the security sector and provide command, control, and coordination. To contribute to the achievement of peace and security as enshrined in the National Security Policy of The Gambia (2019), it is imperative to review and upgrade and/or draft a robust regulatory framework. It is expected that addressing the above sub-priority will deliver improved operational standards, systems, regulations, and procedures. The RF-NDP will accordingly prioritise key programmatic interventions such as: reviewing the security sector operations; conducting stakeholder consultations/engagements; undertaking development communication; empowering the security sector and reinforcing

oversight mechanisms; and building a one-stop- shop for security institutions under the Ministry of Interior.

The reforms required to fully implement this strategic priority and realise the expected goals over the RF-NDP period include drafting, validating, and enacting new institutional legal framework and policies for the sub-sector. In terms of institutional alignments and innovative implementation modalities aimed at achieving results, the following action interventions are envisaged: the setting up of a legal unit in the following institutions: Gambia Prison Service (GPS), National Centre for Coordination of Early Warning and Response Mechanism (NCCRM) and Gambia Fire and Rescue Services (GFRS); and a holistic bottom-up approach in developing the legal framework and policies to foster ownership by the different stakeholder groups.

#### *Enhancing Institutional Capacity*

Cognizant of the challenges that they face in discharging their duties, the security sector institutions see the need to re-prioritise capacity building to address the gaps that hinder operational effectiveness. The SSR Report (2017) outlined the overarching deficits and malfunctioning linked to the inadequate capacity in the security sector institutions. Similarly, the National Security Strategy (2020-2024) aims to have trained, motivated, and professional members of the security institutions to enable effective and efficient execution of mandates. Consequently, there is an urgent need to build the relevant, specialised skills set/capabilities to improve the performance and the quality-of-service delivery in the security services sector. This will serve to restore public trust and confidence.

Addressing the above sub-priority will result in the enhancement of operational efficiency; improved staff capacity for quality service delivery; improved performance monitoring systems; well-structured and transformed MDAs with the requisite capacity. Government will prioritise the following key programmatic interventions: implementation of the National SSR Strategy, needs assessment of the security sector institutions; integration of the security sector and their effective coordination; institutional capacity development; development of robust organisational development plans; collaboration and partnership with other higher learning institutions; study tours to learn best practice; plan and develop a robust monitoring and evaluation framework.

#### *Acquiring /Developing Modern and Well-Equipped Infrastructure*

Overall, the infrastructure of the armed and security services requires modernisation. The pace of renovation of the office and accommodation facilities is slow and making the security personnel to put up with the overcrowded office spaces and dilapidated housing facilities that are not fit for purpose. The development of modern and well-equipped, state-of-the-art infrastructure will create the enabling environment for the security institutions to discharge their duties effectively and efficiently.

Government will prioritise the following key programmatic interventions and strategies: construction of modern offices for the security; construction of a General Security Academy for all institutions under the Ministry of Interior and an Academy for the Army. The Government is

committed to build a Police Academy to serve as a General Security Centre of Excellence for all security institutions, a combined Security Services Hospital, and a joint-standard laboratory.

#### *Providing Adequate Mobility and Equipment for the Armed and Security Services*

The nature of security operations demands that all the security sector institutions are nimble and responsive to any security threats that the country or citizens are confronted with. However, mobility is a major constraining factor for the security services. Often when solicited by citizens, there is a significant time lag to respond effectively, owing to inadequate vehicles. Sometimes, victims must provide transport for action to be taken. Providing adequate number of vehicles for ease of mobility and responsiveness will enhance the operational and administrative capability of the Armed and Security Services. Addressing these challenges will lead to rapid response capability and effective service delivery.

Government will prioritise the following key programmatic interventions and strategies: adequate mobility for the Armed and Security Services administrative and operational use; a resources mobilisation strategy; bilateral/multilateral partnerships; specialised equipment; improved and expanded infrastructure for the Armed and Security Services.

#### *Strengthening the Coordination Mechanisms within the Armed and Security Services*

Coordination is one of the weakest links in the operational management of the security sector. Consequently, the need to have an integrated framework to harmonise interventions in a timely and orderly manner cannot be overemphasised. It is important to create synergies and to avoid the duplication of efforts that lead to the wastage of resources and inefficiencies in service delivery. Reinforcing coordination will deliver security in cost-effective ways. It is expected that addressing the above shortcoming and imbalances will result in an effective, efficient, and responsive security service. The RF-NDP will prioritise the following key programmatic interventions and strategies: development of legal frameworks aimed at setting up functional directorates of planning and planning units at the security institutions; improved methods for staff selection, recruitment and training; development of a resource mobilisation strategy; finalisation of the National Security Council Bill; development of a coordination framework for internal and external partnerships; and organisation of a human security forum, and then expediting the implementation of the National Security Policy.

The policy reform required to fully implement this sub-priority and realise the expected goals over the RF-NDP period are as follows: reform to address the lack of a legal basis for the establishment of the Office of National Security (ONS). In terms of institutional alignments and innovative implementation modalities aimed at achieving results, the following action points are envisaged: Institutionalise coordination mechanism at strategic, operational, and tactical level; and establishment of a Security Coordination Committee.

## Enabling Factors

To ensure effective implementation of this priority, Government commits to undertake some reforms and adjust existing institutional arrangements, and in some cases, use new and innovative implementation modalities by undertaking the reform measures outlined below in Box 5.4.

### Box 5.4: Enabling Factors

1. Draft, validate and enact new institutional legal frameworks and policies
2. Assign liaison officers to coordinate security related affairs and foster partnership and collaborations at national and international level
3. Provision of professional training institutions for security and related institutions such as: GAF, GPS, GFRS, GRA, GPF, NCCRM, SIS, GID, NHRC, FIU and DLEAG
4. Synchronised capacity enhancement programmes in some specialised areas for the armed and security forces and agencies (training)
5. Provision of online training
6. Engage in public private partnership
7. Build and regularly update the institutional websites of security institutions and engage bilateral and multilateral partners
8. Institutionalise coordination mechanism at strategic, operational and tactical level, and the establishment of a Security Coordination Committee.

### 5.6 Outcome 2.8: An efficient, accountable and results oriented public service

Government recognises that an efficient, accountable and results-oriented public service is critical to deliver policy objectives and achieving development outcomes. It has taken the step of creating for the first time a new Ministry of Public Service (MoPS) which will play a key role in advancing government priorities outlined in this Plan. Government will therefore take further measures to strengthen the public service through the priorities identified in the Plan.

### Programme Priorities, Strategies and Interventions

The Ministry of Public Service, in collaboration with all stakeholders and support of partners, is committed to implementing the following three (3) priority actions related to the reform of public institutions:

1. Develop frameworks for harmonisation of policy formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation
2. Attract, retain and motivate optimal number of qualified and skilled personnel in the public service and strengthen the pension welfare scheme
3. Professionalise and instil meritocracy, ethical conduct, transparency and accountability in the public service and personnel management



***Develop frameworks for harmonisation of policy formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation***

Policy formulation has sometimes been based on anecdotal rather than empirical evidence. This is because there is inadequate knowledge about the policy making process. To address this shortcoming, Government intends to improve and standardise the policy making processes to ensure that policies deliver better value for money and are regularly evaluated for efficiency and effectiveness. This proactive measure will curb the perceived inefficiencies and ineffectiveness in the public service and will foster coherence and consistency to improve synergy in Government policy making, implementation and reporting.

In the context of the RF-NDP, MoPS will: develop and support institutional capacity in steering, coordinating and monitoring the policy making process; conduct regular staff audit exercise for the entire public service; conduct sector consultation for the development of the policy formulation framework; draft a policy to guide policy formulation and conduct validation; monitor adherence to the policy framework; and initiate post policy approval stakeholder information, communication and education.

Key strategies by MoPS in this regard will include improving public sector governance through policy formulation, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation; systematically and continuously inform, educate and communicate to all public servants the necessity to observe the code of ethics/conduct and General Orders; institutionalise regular audits of MDAs on compliance with standards, rules and regulations; and undertake regular policy mapping.

***Attract, retain and motivate optimal number of qualified and skilled personnel in the public service and strengthen the pension welfare scheme***

Overall, the human resource endowment of the civil service is inadequate. Unlike some other countries where the public service is competitive enough to draw away the most talented personnel from the private sector, the contrary is the case in The Gambia where the huge disparities in salaries has resulted in the inability of the public sector to compete for such personnel. This has placed enormous constraints on Government's desire to make the civil service the driving force for the country's development. The irregular and ad hoc salary increments are not aligned with the increasing cost of living, thus making civil servants vulnerable to different kinds of shocks. Furthermore, there are limited benefits and incentives for public servants. Retired civil servants decry the low level of pensions, and slow administrative procedures in processing pension benefits. Undeniably, the current civil service structure has major gaps in skills and competencies. The service is bloated in size with a rapidly expanding wage bill that may not be sustainable. Furthermore, there are shortages in some vital competencies, in addition to a weak recruitment, performance management and promotion system. Against this background, building capacity of the public service within context is essential for sustainable development.

To achieve the above objectives, the Government, over this RF-NDP period, prioritises the following strategies and key programmatic interventions:

- Conduct job categorisation and classification to ensure harmony, equity and fairness in pay across jobs and grades in the public service

- Review incentives to attract and retain adequate numbers of qualified personnel to serve in difficult and risky work environments
- Develop pension regulations and implementation of the public service Pensions Act 2022
- Introduce and implement a new pay and grading system
- Review and strengthen the civil service revolving loan scheme and then introduce public service welfare scheme

It is anticipated that implementing these interventions will deliver the following results: emergence of well-remunerated and highly motivated public servants; good pension package for retired civil servants. Additionally, it will improve the time for processing pension benefits, and will have an overall salutary effect on the performance of the public service.

***Professionalise and instil meritocracy, ethical conduct, transparency and accountability in the public service and personnel management***

Building capacity and promoting the professionalisation of the public service is essential for sustainable development. Government recognises that there are important capacity gaps in the public sector which, if addressed, will increase the productivity/output levels of the MDAs, and then accelerate the country's transformation towards a more human-centred development. MoPS thus intends to institutionalise and integrate human resource planning and development to address the bottlenecks with a view to supporting the country's development aspirations.

Government is expected to deliver on its policy choices. To this end, innovative solutions with the likelihood of helping government overcome enduring development challenges should be tried. The Government sees the need to establish effective, efficient, and meritocratic public institutions that can deliver quality public goods. To further improve efficiency of the public sector, the Government will engage the National Assembly to approve a new pay and grading system, and the Ministry of Public Service will develop and implement a pay policy, design/develop, and implement a Performance Management System and set service standards for public service providers to enhance efficiency in public service delivery.

In this regard, Government through MoPS will strengthen citizen engagement and build trust by undertaking the following:

- **Production of Service Delivery Barometer Reports:** The provision of periodic barometer reports can proactively support the timely production and disclosure of key fiscal and service delivery performance reporting data in selected sectors
- **Citizen Satisfaction Survey:** Frequent and real-time feedback from service-delivery users (e.g., through SMS, phone calls, social media, etc.) can provide timely information on what is and is not working well, as well as frequent snapshots of citizen satisfaction with service delivery in selected sectors
- **Grievance Redressal:** A key identified need is to reduce fragmentation and improve usability of the Grievance Redressal Mechanism (GRM) that will allow citizens, particularly women and other vulnerable groups, to lodge complaints and receive responses from Government
- **Citizen Oversight Mechanisms:** Development and deployment of citizens audits, in conjunction with the National Audit Office, as well as Citizen Compacts and/or Service

Charters, which are necessary to improve oversight and accountability in key service delivery sectors

- **Open Government:** Development and implementation of an Open Government Partnership National Action Plan will allow the Government to effectively prioritise and implement its transparency and citizen engagement reform agenda

The public institutions will over the RF-NDP period function according to good governance and good management principles, both internally and in their interactions with non-state actors. This strategic priority seeks to address bureaucratic/red tape in Government, nepotism and favouritism, limited accountability, and indiscipline in the public service; and then move towards the professionalisation of the civil service to enhance public service delivery and development impact.

The importance of a strong regulatory institution which can effectively manage other actors cannot be overemphasised. Performance standards in the civil service significantly dropped over time during the Second Republic. Undoubtedly, well-thought out and well implemented civil service reforms can be a critical enabler for fundamentally transforming the performance and outcomes of the civil service delivery system. There is consensus that the low performance in the civil service is the result of the absence of a robust performance management system that holds officers in the public service accountable. To transform the sector, the Government of The Gambia will institute performance management as a way of increasing productivity and output. The MoPS will enhance work ethics, punctuality, performance metrics, transparency, and accountability in the management of public services over the RF-NDP period. This strategic objective is aligned to the aspiration of Agenda 2030 to build effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions at all levels by 2030.

Government through MoPS will undertake the following interventions: map and harmonise policies, legislation and regulatory frameworks to improve service delivery; introduce an integrated Human Resource Management Information Systems (HRMIS) across the public service; introduce performance management systems; expand the usage of the Electronic Records Management System (ERMS) across the Public Service; develop or build on the existing policy and regulatory initiatives and frameworks for e-governance; enforce/ensure effective and efficient implementation of laws, policies and regulations required to stimulate and accelerate digital transformation and modernisation for national development; increase advocacy on Government policies and programmes and introduce citizen engagements and feedback mechanisms; conduct a revised capacity needs assessment to identify key technical and leadership capacity gaps; conduct continuous training programmes to address identified capacity gaps; implement the Revised Capacity Needs Assessment Report; conduct a comprehensive capacity development of a core team to effectively participate in the entire review process; conduct a horizontal review of operations across Government institutions to determine the extent of any duplication in mandates; develop and implement Performance Management System (PMS) around current planning, budgeting and staff appraisal systems; design and implement a strategy to transform public servants' behaviour with regard to time management; and develop and implement a performance management system with objective ways of rewarding and sanctioning personnel on the bases of their performance. The mechanism would also lend itself to the assessment of the performance of MDAs.

The key strategies will include: systematically identifying and sustainably closing capacity gaps in the public service; achieving optimal organisational and staffing of the public service; reviewing the organisational structures of the MDAs to determine how the various departments/units align and relate to the achievement of their mandates; reviewing the range and distribution of all functions of Government and allocation among state organs to confirm relevance and identifying areas of overlap/duplication, opportunities and options for more efficient and effective performance, including rationalisation, decentralisation, outsourcing and enhancing Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs); reviewing the administrative procedures, processes, and arrangements to determine their efficiency and effectiveness in assisting to deliver the mandates and missions of the MDAs; determining the adequacy of current staffing and establishing the future staffing requirements with necessary skills to achieve the institutions' mandates and perform the functions identified; accelerating the institutionalisation of an integrated e-governance system; increasing advocacy on government policies and programmes and introducing citizen engagements and feedback mechanisms; expanding and integrating ICT solutions via the e-governance framework to improve public service delivery.

The implementation of the measures outlined under this strategic priority will enhance ethical conduct, performance orientation and overall discipline in the public service. An integrated Human Resources (HR) solution will also lend itself to the overall improvement in service delivery across the public service. It is anticipated that when the civil service is endowed with highly trained, skilled, and result-oriented public servants, a more cost-effective public service delivery mechanism will emerge and the overlaps and duplications in the government structure will be eliminated. ICT-based solutions will be harnessed and expanded to improve public service delivery within an integrated Government information system.

## **Enabling Factors**

### **Box 5.5: Enabling Measures to Public Service Reform**

1. Development of a policy formulation framework
2. Development of pay and pension welfare policies
3. Revision of the public service administrative policies and instruments; enforcement of legal and regulatory frameworks (laws and policies); optimisation of planning for evidence-based decision making
4. Align the Public Service and National Records Service (NRS) Acts with the Constitution and institutionalise the training needs assessment as a mechanism for capacity development
  - Public Service Reforms (institutional, administrative and financial), i.e., introduction/implementation of a comprehensive and robust Performance Management System across the public service
  - Enforcement of legal and regulatory frameworks (laws and policies); and
  - Optimisation of planning for evidence-based decision-making

## Chapter 6: Pillar III: Macroeconomic Stability and Inclusive Growth

Achieving macroeconomic stability and inclusive growth is a top priority of Government that recognises the importance of sound monetary and fiscal policies for poverty reduction, social equity, and economic growth. Therefore, in this medium term, the goal is to provide a stable economic environment that is conducive to fostering strong, sustainable, and private sector-led economic growth for job and wealth creation for improved standard of living.

To achieve macroeconomic stability, Government will continue to monitor the performance of key sectors such as services and agriculture, as the country strives to expand and diversify the economy. Government will continue to monitor and design appropriate measures in response to changes in economic output, inflation, interest rates, foreign exchange rates and the balance of payment with a focus on agriculture and services.

The pillar comprises three outcomes as presented in Table 6.1. These will be achieved through the implementation of eleven priorities with related programme interventions and strategies further elaborated below.

Table 6.1: Outcomes of Macroeconomic Stability and Inclusive Growth Pillar of RF-NDP 2023-2027

- **Outcome 3.1:** Enhanced fiscal and monetary policies, public financial management, inclusive growth, and poverty reduction
- **Outcome 3.2:** A private sector-led growth with enhanced trade and services, inclusive and sustainable industrialisation, , and increased employment
- **Outcome 3.3:** A competitive and diversified tourism sector contributing to overall Inclusive growth, job creation and poverty reduction

### ***6.1. Outcome 3.1: Enhanced fiscal and monetary policies, public financial management, inclusive growth, and poverty reduction.***

The economic growth of The Gambia has been low and volatile for decades. The low and volatile growth is caused by low productivity in the sectors of the economy such as agriculture and tourism. Low private and public investments and shocks, such as climate change, to these productive sectors have been the sources of low productivity. Decades of poor macroeconomic policy management resulted in the deterioration of the Government fiscal balances (macro-fiscal instability), which in turn led to limited fiscal space. The limited fiscal space constrains the Government to carry out public investments in infrastructure and human capital necessary for mitigating shocks to the productive sectors of agriculture and tourism. Thus, one of the objectives of this pillar is to restore macroeconomic stability through improvement in public financial management and sound monetary policy.

Ongoing efforts that aim to achieve macro-fiscal stability in the country includes The Gambia Fiscal Management Development Project. The two macro-fiscal stability objectives of this project are to (i) improve debt and public investment management, and (ii) enhance the transparency and governance framework of State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs). The project is expected to create further fiscal space for the Government to carry out public investment in infrastructure and social programmes.

The Gambia is about to complete a three-year reform programme with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) under the Extended Credit Facility (ECF)<sup>19</sup> programme, and there is consideration of a successor programme in 2023. The successor programme is expected to contribute to achieving macroeconomic stability just like the ECF 2020-2023. The Government has received Technical Assistance (TA) in the areas of banking supervision, public financial management, and revenue administration. The TA helped to advance key structural reforms including improving revenue mobilisation, public financial management, debt management, transparency, good governance, and central bank operations. The establishment of the Directorates of Revenue and Tax Policy and the State-Owned Enterprises at MoFEA would further enhance public financial management.

### **Programme Priorities, Strategies and Interventions**

To build on these gains in macroeconomic stability (fiscal and monetary) and inclusive growth, Government is committed to implementing the following three priorities to achieve the broader goal of inclusive growth and poverty reduction:

1. Enhance Public Financial Management (PFM) - for macro-fiscal stability
2. Prudent Monetary Policy - for exchange rate and price stability; and
3. Inclusive Growth – for poverty reduction

#### ***Enhance Public Financial Management for macro-fiscal stability***

The objective of enhancing public financial management is to create fiscal space for Government to carry out needed public investment programmes in the productive sectors that will improve growth that is sustainable, inclusive, and green. Implementation of this priority will bring about: macro-fiscal stability, improved revenue mobilisation, productive public spending, enhanced public procurement management, improved public investment management, and prudent debt management. Government will implement the following programme interventions and strategies to achieve enhanced public financial management:

- a) **Enhance fiscal policy management** – Prudent fiscal policy management will create the needed fiscal space for the Government to invest in the productive sectors of the economy. The attendant reduction in domestic borrowing will also enhance the supply of domestic credit to the private sector of the economy, leading to increased private investment in the productive sectors of the economy. To improve fiscal policy management to achieve macroeconomic stability, Government will implement the following:
- Enhance budget compliance with the Medium-Term Expenditure and Fiscal Framework (MTEFF) – Ensure fiscal discipline through adherence to MTEFF in budget preparation and execution. For effective monitoring, annual variance analysis report of MTEFF against budget execution will be prepared. This will ensure that the approved budget does not deviate from the MTEFF and cause a high fiscal deficit. The Government will also develop capacity in fiscal forecasting (revenue, expenditure, and debt).
  - Develop a fiscal rule or a Fiscal Responsibility Act – This will ensure accountability for breaching budget ceilings from MTEFF.
  - Restructuring external debt – A good debt management policy, such as restructuring the external debt by deferring the servicing of the debt, will give the Government the needed fiscal space by extending the debt maturity profiles

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<sup>19</sup> The ECF gives financial support to countries that are facing lingering balance of payment issues. The ECF program goal is to help countries to achieve macroeconomic stability that is consistent with stable and sustainable growth and poverty reduction.

- Promote external concessional financing – Government will finance new projects through highly concessional loans if grant financing is not available
  - Extend the maturity of the domestic debt portfolio by issuing long-term bonds and utilizing a portion of the long-term debt to repay short-term debt – This strategy considers extending the maturity of the domestic debt portfolio by gradually introducing securities with longer maturities. This creates the possibility of converting short-term securities into three-year, five-year, and other long-term bonds
  - Prepare an annual borrowing plan that is consistent with the medium-term debt management strategy
  - Promote Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) – This will provide alternative means of financing development and reduce borrowing pressures through public investment programmes
  - Strengthen corporate governance of SOEs – Strengthen the internal and oversight functions of SOEs through performance contracts, establishment of a standard financial reporting framework, and fiscal risk reporting
- b) Improve revenue administration and management** – The main reason for limited fiscal space is due to inadequate revenue mobilisation caused by weak revenue administration and management. Hence, Government will pursue strategies that will optimise revenue mobilisation. These strategies include:
- Develop revenue mobilisation strategy and tax expenditure policy
  - Consultation and Coordination - enhance consultation and coordination between Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs (MoFEA) and the Gambia Revenue Authority (GRA)
  - Empower and build capacity at GRA - GRA will be empowered legally to curb non-compliance via the courts, as well as further develop capacity in revenue administration and management
  - Improve Data Management – this will enhance reliability of forecasting, thus, reducing the variance between out-turn and forecast
  - Accounting – ensure timely and full accounting for all Government receipts and revenue, and effective control of write-offs and arrears
  - Digitalised revenue administration and management - Digitalisation of revenue administration and management would enhance tax registration, filing, and payment. Also, increase the reliability of the information technology platform and management software, GAMTAXNET
  - Harmonise and simplify revenue administration and management at both central and local government levels – Government will prepare a report on revised relevant laws and regulations affecting tax administration and management, and then use the report to harmonise and simplify the tax process. This will reduce the cost of doing business, increase tax compliance, expand business activities, and create jobs. This ultimately will enhance revenue mobilisation
  - Broaden the tax base – Government will expand the scope and design of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) tax policies and enhance strategies to formalise the informal sector. Use the tax policy to rationalise the tax expenditures to ensure there is an economic rationale behind them. Conduct a rented commercial property survey to determine properties that are not under the tax net

- Digitalisation - increase the digitalisation processes of public services, development of e-payment systems and continued roll-out of digital addressing systems that will support domestic resource mobilisation
- c) **Enhance public expenditure management** – For the creation of fiscal space, Government will rationalise public expenditure, especially recurrent expenditure through structural reforms and improve the effectiveness and efficiency of public spending. Some of the strategies to improve the efficiency of public spending that Government will pursue include:
- Improve the spending capacity of big sectors such as agriculture, education, and health to ensure value for money.
  - Public sector reform with a view to enhancing the sustainability of the wage bills.
  - Rationalise public spending through strengthening the linkage between planning and budgeting with a view to aligning priorities with expenditures.
  - Accelerate SOE reforms with a view to enhancing their financial viability and reducing the risk posed to the national treasury.
  - Strengthen the capacity of the budget committees.
  - Introduce Public Expenditure Tracking (PET) systems including Climate Change Budget Tagging (CBT), Coding, Tracking and Reporting System.
- d) **Enhance procurement management**– To ensure value for money, transparency, and accountability in the procurement process, which in turn will create fiscal space, Government will implement the following strategies:
- Digitalised procurement process - with a one-stop-shop facility for e-GP infrastructure
  - Enhance the functionality of the Complaints Review Board
  - Availability of functional contract committees in all MDAs and Local Government Authorities (LGAs)
  - Stronger coordination of procurement functions across the Government.
  - Functional procurement unit at the Local Government Authorities (LGAs)
  - Strengthen the capacity of Gambia Public Procurement Authority (GPPA) and Complaints Review Board
  - All procuring organisations to submit their procurement plans to the GPPA on time.
  - Gender-responsive and inclusive procurement
  - Enhanced capacity and decentralisation of the procurement functions
- e) **Enhance public investment management** – This will create the needed fiscal space for public investment programmes in the real sectors of the economy. The following strategies will be employed to enhance efficiency in public investment management:
- Enhance the technical capacity in project formulation and implementation by training MDAs and Local Government Authorities (LGAs) on project guidelines, appraisal, and selection criteria
  - Strengthen the oversight function of The Gambia Strategic Review Board (GSRB)- to ensure quality public investment in priority sectors- agriculture, education, health, energy, tourism, and infrastructure
  - Review all major projects by GSRB and enhance monitoring throughout the project cycle.
  - Develop a public investment programme linked to the Plan
  - Develop and maintain the national asset register



**f) Strengthen Internal Oversight functions**

- Enhance implementation of internal audit recommendations
- Strengthen and automate internal auditing
- Strengthen the capacity of the Internal Audit Directorate of MoFEA
- Roll out internal audit functions to all MDAs and Local Government Authorities (LGAs)

**g) Strengthen the External Audit and Oversight functions** – To ensure that the National Audit Office (NAO) and the National Assembly perform external audit and oversight functions respectively, the following strategies will be implemented:

- Enhance the operational and financial independence of NAO to effectively carry out its mandate
- Strengthen the capacity of the NAO to audit State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs) instead of a third party
- Enhance the capacity of National Assembly members on the Finance and Public Affairs Committee (FPAC) and the Public Enterprise Committee (PEC) to effectively execute their mandates
- Develop National Assembly monitoring mechanism for the implementation of the Auditor General’s audit recommendations
- Strengthen the National Assembly budget office
- Strengthen the relationship between the National Assembly and NAO

**h) Enhance financial management, accounting and reporting** – This will be achieved through the implementation of the following strategies:

- Roll out the Integrated Financial Management Information System (IFMIS) – the Public Finance Management (PFM) system, to MDAs and self-accounting projects
- Enhance the timeliness of the financial reports
- Strengthen the capacity of the Accountant General’s Department (AGD).
- Fully implement the Treasury Single Account (TSA)
- Develop and implement a financial reporting framework for SOEs

**i) Greening Public Financial Management** – Government will achieve this through the following policy actions:

- Adopt and adapt the Gambia IFMIS system to serve as the climate change Public Finance Management (PFM) System which has been recognised as an important mechanism for elaborating the process of planning, budgeting, and reporting on climate financing at the sector level, as well as costing for climate change in government programmes and/or projects. The climate finance codes used under the Chart of Accounts (COA) of a PFM are applicable within the IFMIS used as the financial management system in The Gambia. Hence, it is feasible to modify and use the current IFMIS as the climate change PFM System
- Mainstream environmental and climate change concerns in The Gambia PFM Strategy 2021-2025, sector and regional strategies, and national budget to ensure that overall budget formulation explicitly includes environment and climate change investment concerns. Line ministries of government must establish climate-related key performance indicators

that allow them to account for the performance of climate expenditure; and sectoral departments and agencies must also submit budget requests that integrate climate change across their programmes. As public finance management systems, the Treasury uses IFMIS, so that climate expenditures can be tracked, and the budget expenditure reports address climate expenditures and impacts which feed into planning and budgeting processes and are presented to the National Assembly.

- Public investment in low-carbon infrastructure: The systemic transition of all forms of infrastructure, particularly urban forms, through low-emission development pathways towards net-zero emissions can create opportunities to increase resource efficiency and significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions in urban areas. It also involves the use of nature through ecosystem-based adaptation. For example, using reforestation and green infrastructure (terracing, contours) activities to achieve environmental benefits such as increased species diversity, enhanced tree cover and decrease in degraded land and soil erosion. The increased use of grey, green, and blue infrastructure, and upgrading design standards and city plans, can reduce risks to critical infrastructure; for example (a) reduced risk from flooding for riverside households and infrastructure; and (b) enhance mobility due to less flooding on roads and bridges. For new infrastructure, decision points arise and lean towards sustainable supply chains, institutional capacities for evidence-based and integrated decision-making, financial alignment towards low-carbon socially responsible investments, just transitions and shifts in behaviour and norms to support shifts away from fossil fuel consumption. Widely recognised as low-regret measures for disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation, green and blue infrastructure investments and natural area conservation in cities can provide Nature-based Solutions (NbS) across scales to reduce temperature shocks and provide natural flood defences among other adaptation and resilience benefits. Blue infrastructure for example provides ecological and hydrological functions (e.g., evaporation, transpiration, drainage, infiltration, retention) critical to sustainable urban water management. Public parks, urban forests, street trees and green roofs, as well as lakes, ponds and streams are widely documented for providing local cooling. Grass and riparian buffers and forested watersheds can enhance flood and drought protection for cities and settlements, and mangrove stands and wetlands in coastal areas can reduce storm surges. Urban green infrastructure including urban gardens, can bring benefits to social cohesion, mental health and wellbeing and reduce the health impacts of heatwaves by decreasing temperatures, thus reducing inequities in exposure to heat stress for low income, marginalised groups. Adapting to climate change will require higher specifications for existing transport infrastructure and awareness of projected impacts. Companies can benefit from understanding and quantifying risks to infrastructure to justify capital investment and assess supply-chain risk and build resilience.
- Fiscal incentives for greening production, investment, consumption, trade, and research development. Fiscal incentives for greening of all value chains include use of proceeds from taxation. Revenues from tax structures, for example, a carbon-based tax on imports

and subsidy on exports and taxes on all fuels used in all modes (air, road and water) of transportation can be used to (a) increase funding for greening transportation infrastructure, transit, and other means to reduce miles travelled, and (b) redistribute the revenue to assist low-income groups for which a tax on fuels would represent a larger fraction of disposable income than for higher income groups. Trade policy is suggested as a mechanism to facilitate compliance and participation in global mitigation, and supplement domestic measures to internalise the cost of climate distortions. Trade policy, amongst others, maintains a free trade regime that is crucial for technology transfers. Trade and trade liberalisation are enhancing the greenhouse effect, global warming and climate change and its impacts. In a country with a comparative advantage in the “clean” industries, trade liberalisation will cause a further expansion of the clean industries and reduce the level of aggregate pollution. Two major channels through which trade reduces emissions per unit of output are (a) trade facilitates technology transfer, hence, cleaner technologies become available for adoption by domestic producers, and (b) trade can reduce the emission per unit of output through consumer preferences and political processes.

Implement Green bond to finance projects. Large non-market and non-economic losses are projected, especially at higher warming levels. New financial instruments can help to support investment in, for example, ecosystem-based adaptation. For example, green bonds have shown their ability to raise significant amounts of capital in support of projects with environmental/climate benefits. Most green bonds focus on energy, buildings, and transport infrastructure. Like green bonds, blue bonds earmark the use of bond proceeds for specific purposes such as the sustainable use of marine resources.

### **Enabling Factors**

Government has recognised that to fully implement these climate change governance priorities, transformational and innovative policy and decision-making strategies and actions, beyond business-as-usual, are needed. To that end, Government of The Gambia developed and submitted the most globally promising Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Secretariat which commits, amongst other actions, to undertake enhancement of the climate change governance. The enhancement includes the development and enactment of a National Climate and Climate Change Act. It will reform and adjust existing related policies, strategies, institutional arrangements, and use new, innovative, and transformational implementation modalities. Box 5.6 presents transformational and innovative policy and decision-making strategies and actions to enhance climate and climate change governance.

#### **Box 5.6: Enabling Factors**

1. Develop and enact a New National Climate and Climate Change Act, and revise and validate other Environment and Natural Resources Acts and Regulations.
2. Develop and/or revise Climate and Climate Change related Policies, Strategies and Action Plans (National Climate Change Policy (NCCP) 2017-2023, Strategic Programme for Climate Resilience (SPCR), National Adaptation Plan (NAP) 2015,

Gambia Environmental Action Plan (GEAP) 2009-2018, National Bio-diversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) 2015-2020, etc.

3. Revise, consolidate and/or transition the Management, Organisation and Structures (Climate Change Secretariat (CCS), ANR Working Group, National Climate Committee (NCC), National Biodiversity Task Force, National Desertification Committee) of the Ministry of Environment, Climate Change and Natural Resources.
4. Develop and implement a Climate Change Mainstreaming Framework and Guidelines.
5. Adopt and adapt the Current IFMIS of the Directorate of Treasury to serve as the Climate Change Public Finance Management System.
6. Develop and implement a transparent and sustainable Resource Mobilization Mechanism and Framework.
7. Establish, capitalise and operationalise the National Climate Change Fund and its local level windows
8. Develop and implement a climate change budget coding/tagging, tracking and reporting system.
9. Establish and promote a conducive financial and economic environment for private sector participation in financing of climate change
10. Establish, resource, and operationalise a National Multidisciplinary Climate Change Research, Projection and Prediction Centre.
11. Strengthen the National Climate Services System of The Gambia to support climate change resilience.

### ***Prudent Monetary Policy for price and exchange rate stability***

The purpose of prudent monetary policy is to achieve low and stable inflation, exchange rate stability, and a stable financial system to promote high, sustainable, and inclusive growth. Monetary policy can reduce macroeconomic instability if it is countercyclical (that is, raising interest rates during a period of high inflation, and cutting interest rates during a period of low inflation) by stabilizing volatility in economic activities and employment. Stabilizing inflation, fluctuation in economic activities, and employment through monetary policy interventions help to stabilise the disposable income of vulnerable households. Hence, monetary policy has a positive impact on inclusive growth if it is countercyclical. The implementation of this programme priority will bring about low and stable prices, stability in exchange rate fluctuation, and a stable financial system.

Government will implement the following programme interventions and strategies to achieve prudent monetary policy:

- a) Enhance Countercyclical Monetary policy – Implement countercyclical monetary policies to dampen inflationary pressures and counteract recessions to stabilise output fluctuations and employment
- b) Enhance macroprudential regulation:
  - Build human capacity for macroprudential formulation and implementation at the Central Bank of the Gambia (CBG)
  - Enhance capital adequacy of financial institutions to deal with unanticipated shocks

- Lessen and thwart excessive maturity mismatch and market illiquidity
  - Reduce direct and indirect exposure concentrations
  - Reduce moral hazard in the financial system
  - Perform periodic stress testing.
- c) Development finance - indirectly intervene through development finance in the real sector, especially agriculture, to enhance agricultural productivity with a view to reducing the rising food inflation

***Inclusive Growth for poverty reduction***

The macroeconomic stability of the country is tied to achieving macro-fiscal stability, and price and exchange rate stability through sound monetary policy. Through fiscal and monetary policy interventions and strategies, the country will be able to create the fiscal space which will be used to finance public investment programmes like infrastructure, human capital, and social programmes for green and inclusive growth. The development of a nationwide Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) will help fast track Government’s inclusion agenda, notably, the implementation of targeted social protection schemes.

The projected average economic growth during the Plan period is 7 per cent,<sup>20</sup> driven mainly by the service sector, especially tourism. The services sector is expected to contribute 4 percentage points to the projected 7 per cent growth, agriculture is expected to contribute 1.5 per cent, and industry 1.5 per cent. The contribution of the services sector to overall growth is premised on key intervention that are detailed in the tourism sector policy and strategy. The projected average poverty rate at the national level for the Plan period is expected to be 48 per cent, from 53.4 per cent in 2020; and the inequality rate expected to slide to 0.28 from 0.39 in 2020.

**Enabling Factors**

To ensure the effective implementation of this priority, the Government commits to undertake the enabling measures outlined in Box 6.1.

<b>Box 6.1: Enabling Factors on Macroeconomic Stability and Inclusive Growth</b>
<b>Enhance Public Financial Management – for macro-fiscal stability</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Political commitment – PFM reform must be supported from the highest level and must enjoy continuing and steadfast support for the long term</li> <li>• Human Capacity – Skillful human resources are crucial to establishing and running PFM institutions</li> <li>• Government Structure - Clarity in the allocation of government functions</li> <li>• Institutional Arrangement - Enhance relationship between key PFM institutions, clarity of mandate, and institutional independence</li> <li>• Fiscal Policy Framework – Clear Medium-Term Economic and Fiscal Framework (MTEFF) that determines the overall resources envelope</li> </ul>

<sup>20</sup> In 2018 Gambia economic growth rate was 7.2 per cent this was driven mainly by growth in the service sector, 10.1 per cent. The projected economic growth of 7 per cent assumes that all the three sectors of the economy will grow on average due to different programme intervention in the seven pillars of the RF-NDP plan 2023-2027

- Establish and Empower Key Institutions - The PFM institutions such as NAO, Directorate of Internal Audit, CBG, GRA, GPPA, etc. need to be empowered to operate with a high degree of autonomy
- Fiscal rule/Fiscal Responsibility Act – Legislate the fiscal ceilings that come from the MTEFF
- Promotion of e-Procurement, e-Governance, and e-Tax Administration
- Communicate the PFM reform – Reforms need to be communicated to the citizens via Citizen Engagement (CE) or Grassroots Participatory Budgeting (GPB)<sup>21</sup>, government employees, and development partners
- Collecting accurate and timely data
- Monitoring & Evaluation - Monitor progress of PFM reform; set performance benchmark; produce PFM performance report
- Development partners - The continuation of development partners' assistance in enhancing PFM to achieve macro-fiscal stability

#### **Prudent Monetary Policy for price and exchange rate stability**

- Recapitalise Central Bank of The Gambia (CBG) - The CBG can be financially empowered through the recapitalisation of the Bank for enhanced effectiveness of monetary policies
- Development Partners - The continuation of development partners' assistance in enhancing monetary policy formulation and implementation for price and exchange rate stability
- Political commitment to CBG's operational independence
- Strengthen monetary and fiscal coordination to avoid fiscal dominance
- Human capacity – Skillful human resources are vital for carrying out effective monetary policy
- Finance government deficit with longer maturity profiles – The financing of fiscal deficit should be done by medium to long-term Government securities. This will ensure that CBG bills that are floated at shorter maturity do not compete with Government bills with shorter maturities

#### **Inclusive Growth for poverty reduction**

- Achieving macro-fiscal stability through sound public financial management – This will create the needed fiscal space for public investment in infrastructure and human capital in the growth sectors
- Achieving price and exchange rate stability – through sound monetary policy formulation and implementation

### ***6.2. Outcome 3.2: A Private Sector-Led Growth with enhanced Trade and Services, Inclusive and Sustainable Industrialisation, and increased Employment***

Government recognises the importance of private sector development for inclusive growth and reducing poverty through manufacturing, employment creation, and trade, and is committed to creating the right conditions for a private sector-led growth.

<sup>21</sup> CE aids local communities, civil society organisations, and other stakeholders in collaborating with the city and municipal governments to propose projects for the national budget. This enhances participatory budgeting.

***Establish a conducive financial and economic environment for Private Sector financing of climate change***

Climate change financial flows in The Gambia have mostly been from the public sector, supported by bilateral and multilateral development partners. Despite the many challenges experienced in bringing the private sector of the country to partner with the public sector on climate change and other environmental issues, more efforts must be explored and utilised to mobilise domestic and foreign private sector capital in climate finance. The mobilisation efforts must involve public-private partnerships; multilateral, regional, and national development banks; and national and international financial institutions. Policies for attracting domestic and foreign private sector capital in climate-related products must be achieved by overcoming existing risks and constraints, including inadequate knowledge and capacities of the private sector on climate change and its business opportunities, the small size of the market, and the absence of carbon pricing and business models applicable to circumstances in The Gambia.

Public funding and policies that influence private sector investments include carbon taxation, emissions trading, clean technology subsidies, command-and-control regulations, and direct government investments in green projects. These policies should lead to a change in incentives and a shift in public and private spending toward climate goals. Climate finance policies can complement mitigation and adaptation policies. Proper regulations would allow for reallocation of capital across industries and enable a transparent prevalence of market prices.

Suggested solutions for attracting private sector climate finance include collective involvement of multilateral and national development banks and international financial institutions. Blending public and private sector finance is a useful solution to de-risk these investments for private sector capital in general, through for example, performance guarantees. The solutions are based on structuring innovative financing in ways that will bring out the benefits of climate investment to the public eye. Strong state capacity and legal frameworks, together with mechanisms to monitor investment projects, will be helpful to ensure that de-risking does not lead to fiscal losses. This is particularly applicable to The Gambia as a smaller Low-Income Country (LIC).

As a Least Developed Country (LDC), Gambia needs to secure globally available funds and channel them to implement various programmes and maintain highest international accountability standards and transparency for climate financing. Since concrete climate change responses are implemented at the local community level, the available funds should reach the local people who are most affected by climate change impacts; and the existing public financing arrangement must accommodate these needs as climate funding continues to increase in the future.

Through the national budget coding system, it is possible to determine the amount of thematic climate change-related expenditures. Using a dedicated methodology and attendant criteria, climate change considerations are introduced in the annual budget of the government, using a modified Government Budget Circular and budget preparation documents. The Budget and

Planning staff of the MoFEA and other MDAs are trained on Medium Term Expenditure Framework and the climate change budget coding system. Validation mechanisms are developed and applied in reviewing tagged expenditures, confirm their climate relevance, and reduce the risk of “greenwashing,” which is the exaggeration of the climate relevance of programmes and projects. The CBT is designed by (a) assessing the existing budget classification structure; (b) reviewing of the existing climate change mitigation and adaptation relevant tagging; (c) assess the national IFMIS system features and coverage for updating elements of the budget classification; and (d) lift the limitations in the IFMIS with regards to CBT (e.g., in capturing details of sub-national spending).

### **Programme priorities, Strategies and Interventions**

To accomplish private sector-led growth through trade, inclusive and sustainable industrialisation, services, and employment creation, Government is committed to implementing the following seven priorities to ensure inclusive growth and poverty alleviation:

1. Promote a favourable environment for business operations
2. Enhance financial inclusion
3. Establish National Local Content Board, Act, regulations, policy, strategy, and fund
4. Strengthen the National Quality Infrastructure of the country
5. Promote inclusive and sustainable industrialisation through the Development of Agropolis, Industrial Parks and Special Economic Zones (SEZs)
6. Promote employment and decent work; and
7. Strengthen regional integration for economic development

#### ***Promote a favourable environment for business operations***

Despite recent improvements in the business environment, starting and running a business in The Gambia remains difficult for investors. The processes are time-consuming and expensive, the land regime is complicated, paying taxes is not fully digitalised, and supply-side constraints and policy issues also make it hard to reach export potential. Given the above, there is room for improvement in the competition, environmental, and labour policies. The Government of The Gambia is therefore committed to implementing the following programme interventions and strategies to improve the business environment:

- a) Enhance business registration – The following strategies will be used to enhance business registration:
  - Organise and streamline the procedures of the Single Window Business Registry (SWBR) for starting a business through a functional online application form
  - Address regional decentralisation of business registration through direct presence in growth hubs (e.g., Farafenni, Basse, etc.). The Gambia Investment and Export Promotion Agency (GIEPA), with support from partners, is setting up one-stop-shop registration centres in rural Gambia
- b) Improve accessibility to land for investment - One of the main obstacles facing all businesses is the problem of access to land for investment, which is hindering the growth of private investment in the productive sectors, especially in agriculture. The Gambia Investment and



Export Promotion Agency (GIEPA) was obligated by the GIEPA Act of 2015 to develop a database of serviced land, sites, and buildings that are available for investment. This database has not yet been established. In terms of impact, it is expected that addressing access to land issues will lead to more related investment. Government is therefore committed to implementing the following programmes interventions and strategies to improve access to land for investment:

- Land Investment Committee - Set up Land Investment Committee to simplify the land appraisal processes between the Ministry of Lands and the GIEPA
  - Customary land to state land – Outline the timelines, conditions, and compensation mechanisms for customary land that can be individualised or transformed into state land, as well as the criteria and procedures for doing so
  - Increase efforts to promote secure, effective, and timely title registration - Increasing the efforts towards establishing secure, effective, and timely land registration procedures, including introducing a fully electronic registry and cadaster
- c) Simplify the taxation regime:
- Continue simplifying and reviewing the tax system, including key rates and municipal taxes
  - Allow binding advance tax rulings to make the tax system more transparent and predictable
  - Introduce electronic tax filing and payment
- d) **Enhance Trade:**
- Continue to improve the transparency of customs procedures through the effective implementation of Automated System for Customs Data (ASYCUDA) World and the establishment of Single Window Customs Clearance System
  - Step up efforts to train and build the export capacity of local producers through value chain development in the priority sectors
  - Address infrastructure gaps surrounding Export Processing Zones (EPZs), including access to reliable electricity and transport infrastructure
  - Intensify efforts to secure access to markets through the implementation of market access preference schemes such as African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), Ecowas Trade Liberalisation Scheme (ETLS), Inter-State Road Transit (ISRT), Everything But Arms (EBA) and China's Duty-Free Quota-Free (DFQF) scheme, and other bilateral trade agreements
  - Government continued engagement with other developed nations for the granting of duty-free and quota-free access to their markets as required under the World Trade Organisation (WTO)
  - A second highway to connect Banjul and its port direct to Abuko and the airport. This will make Banjul and its port more accessible for economic activity purposes
- e) Promote the competition policy and regulation:
- Review and update the National Competition and Consumer Protection Policies and Regulations
  - Enhance the capacity of the Gambia Competition and Consumer Protection Commission (GCCPC) to adequately enforce and promote the Competition Act 2007
  - Promote the mainstreaming of competition and consumer protection issues in Government policies and programmes

- Introduce competitive neutrality principles in the Competition Act and eliminate regulatory provisions that allow the preferential access to credit (e.g., concessionary loans), essential facilities and key inputs to SOEs below market prices
- Eliminate exclusions of statutory monopolies from the Competition Act and subject SOEs to similar market rules as their peers in the private sector to improve performance and service delivery
- GCCPC to step up its efforts to promote effective enforcement of its investigation findings
- GCCPC, in collaboration with relevant stakeholders, to review and adjust regulatory provisions that might inhibit the entry of the private sector in competitive segments and any mechanisms that can shield SOEs from competition (e.g., import bans)
- Strengthen the surveillance capacity of sectoral regulators as well as enforcement tools from the Competition Commission to monitor markets and apply similar market rules to all players.
- Decentralisation of the consumer protection tribunal for effective protection of consumer rights
- Simplify coordination mechanisms between the Competition Commission and the Public Utilities Regulatory Authority (PURA)
- Apply the Memorandum of Understanding signed by the two entities, PURA and Competition Commission
- Specialised training for MDAs on competition-oriented policy and competition neutrality
- Strengthen the capacity of GCCPC to promote competition neutrality in the procurement process and eliminate all forms of collusive agreements

### ***Enhance Financial Inclusion***

Private sector-led growth is mainly constrained by limited access to credit, and resilience is diminished by a lack of insurance options. The main source of financing investment for the private sector is the commercial banks' credit. The Government's increasing appetite for domestic credit to finance the fiscal deficit exerts upward pressure on interest rates, leading to crowding out of the private sector. The low level of private investment in the productive sectors of the economy constrains productivity and economic growth. Additionally, the private sector cannot deal with the negative effects of high volatility caused by shocks, because of lack of insurance schemes. The lack of financial access also limits the variety of services and credits available to households. Poor people must rely on their low incomes or other means to invest in their education. This limits their ability to acquire the necessary skills to participate in the labour market and earn a sustainable income, making it difficult to eradicate poverty and reduce inequality.

To solve this, Government is committed to putting in place policy interventions to enhance financial inclusion within the financial sector. Financial inclusion enhances access to credit, reduces credit constraints and increases private investment that will spur economic growth<sup>22</sup>. Implementing this priority will increase private investment in agriculture, tourism, and manufacturing, and that in turn will promote private sector-led growth. Financial inclusion

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<sup>22</sup> The Gambia, National Financial Inclusion Strategy, NFIS

encourages businesses to expand by providing credit to both new and existing ones. It benefits the economy by accelerating economic expansion, intensifying competition, and increasing labour demand. Typically, those at the bottom of the income ladder will see their incomes rise, reducing poverty and income inequality.

Financial inclusion as a priority does not only include access to finance, but the quality and usage of financial products and services are also considered. Financial inclusion has been classified as an enabler for 7 of the 17 SDGs<sup>23</sup>. Financial inclusion is seen by the World Bank as a key enabler to reduce extreme poverty and boost shared prosperity.

To enhance financial inclusion, Government undertakes to implement the following programmes and strategies in the context of RF-NDP:

- a) Improve access, quality, and usage of financial products and services – The goal of this intervention is to enhance access to finance for individuals and businesses, especially the most vulnerable groups (women and youth) and Micro Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs). This will be achieved through the implementation of the following strategies:
  - Promote Digital Financial Services (DFS), agent banking and insurance to increase access point proximity
  - Improve Financial Literacy - promote financial literacy, especially among MSMEs to influence their demand and usage of financial services and products
  - Strengthen grass-root and community-based financial institutions (e.g., credit unions) and other savings groups among Financial Service Providers (FSPs) working on financial literacy) to deliver a wide range of products and services
  - Facilitate the availability of biometric ID cards for all nationals by reducing the cost and decentralizing the registration points
  - Explore synergies/linkages/ integration of different government-led funding mechanisms and instruments (e.g., Women Enterprise Fund, Youth Fund, MSME Fund etc) to create economies of scale and reduce duplication
  - Promote Business Registration - Formalise the informal sector by enabling their registration, to enhance their access to financial products and services. The Gambia Chamber of Commerce and Industry (GCCCI), the Gambia Youth Chamber of Commerce (GYCC), and Gambia Women Chamber of Commerce (GWCC), in collaboration with GIEPA, to organise quarterly business registration campaigns
  - Support decentralisation of business development service provisions in rural Gambia through more permanent institutional presence (including business registration)
  - CBG to promote cheaper refinancing for credits granted to growth sectors
  - Create a development finance institution that will be dedicated to green financing of the productive sectors and provide technical support to the unbanked segments of the population
  - Introduce guarantee fund schemes using best international practices
  - Set up a micro-insurance scheme with support from the donor community
  - Develop inclusive Islamic financial instruments such as Micro-Takaful to cater for the large unbanked population
  - Develop financial products and services using Human Centred Design (HCD) approach

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<sup>23</sup> The seven SDGs are: SDG1, SDG2, SDG3, SDG5, SDG8, SDG9, and SDG10

- Operationalise capital market and develop diaspora bonds to diversify sources of credit
  - Create a geospatial mapping of access points to inform expansion by financial service providers
  - Promote a national savings mobilisation programme to build a saving culture.
  - Introduce a warehouse receipt that can be used by farmers, in the absence of collateral, to borrow from financial institutions
  - Strengthen the capacity of Non-Banking Financial Institutions (NBFIs) to help women, rural communities, and others to have access to financial products and services
  - Develop agricultural value chain financing and agriculture-centred financial products especially for poultry, horticulture, livestock, and fish value chains
  - Enhance access to international remittance inflows by building the capacity of the remitters
  - Develop Credit Reporting System - The quality of the financial information like credit scores should be enhanced to ensure the right pricing of credit. There is also a need to develop a well-functioning collateral registry
  - Improve innovation funding and Impact Investment – Use fiscal incentives to attract venture capital investors and business angels, give incentives and loans based on performance to encourage green growth and innovation, and encourage the use of intellectual property as collateral. The Gambia Angel Investors Network (GAIN) can be a leader in this innovative funding
- b) Enabling financial infrastructure – The purpose of enabling financial infrastructure is to support innovation for the efficient delivery of financial services through strengthening of payment systems oversight, bolstering the payment systems platforms and services, increasing credit reference information on borrowers, and strengthening the secured transactions and collateral framework. This will be achieved through the implementation of the following strategies:
- Pass the National Payment System Bill to update the payment system environment, ensure compliance of commercial banks with Straight-Through Processing (STP), Automated Cheque Processing (ACP)/Automated Clearing House (ACH)
  - Enhance interoperability of the payment system
  - Extend GamSwitch membership to NBFIs
  - Ensure all FSPs have equitable channel access such as Unstructured Supplementary Service Data (USSD), General Packet Radio Service (GPRS), etc in reaching out to customers
  - Support the inter-ministerial efforts at improving electricity and internet connectivity
- c) Financial innovation – This will be achieved through the implementation of the following strategies:
- Develop an integrated ICT policy that exploits the potential of financial innovation and digitalisation of the economy
  - Develop Digital Financial Services (DFS) policy or strategy to provide a roadmap for a digital economy
  - Set up a functioning credit registry to support lending
  - Build capacity in financial engineering, IT, and ICT to drive needed innovation.
  - Provide fiscal incentives to spur innovation by de-risking investment in ICT

- Set up a regulatory framework to test new and innovative methods
  - Launch sensitisation campaign for the use of DFS targeting women, youth, and the rural areas
  - Encourage other GSM operators to provide DFS. This will enhance competition in financial innovation
  - CBG in collaboration with GCCPC, PURA and other stakeholders to enhance competition in DFS through the promotion of interoperability of the mobile money service providers
- d) **Consumer protection and empowerment** – The objective of this intervention is to protect consumers from unfair advantages by service providers through effective regulation and supervision. This will be achieved through the implementation of the following strategies:
- Strengthen the awareness capacity and skills of stakeholders in consumer protection and cybersecurity matters
  - Devise a consumer empowerment strategy and protection guidelines
  - Develop a consumer disputes resolution framework
  - Develop data protection and disclosure guidelines to protect data and consumer privacy
  - Enhance financial education
  - Operationalise the consumer protection unit to complement the efforts of GCCPC<sup>24</sup>
  - Work with other regulatory agencies such as GCCPC, PURA, and the Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU) on issues of data protection
  - Ensure that financial institutions adhere to the global customer data privacy policy
  - Formulate and implement a cybersecurity framework and public cybersecurity emergency response plan to strengthen digital security
  - Strengthen legal and regulatory frameworks to protect individuals against fraud and over-indebtedness
  - CBG to enforce reporting to credit reference bureaus

### ***Establish National Local Content Board, Act, Regulations, Policy, Strategy, and Fund***

The establishment of a National Local Content Board and associated tools will be a catalyst for employment creation and a driver for private sector development. It will create opportunities for wealth creation for the citizenry, foster economic empowerment for women and youth, spur foreign direct investment, encourage knowledge and technology transfer (SDG 9), and encourage buying indigenous and Made-In-The Gambia products and services.

In this regard, Government and partners are therefore committed to implementing the following programmes:

- a) Enact the National Local Content Act;
- b) Establish National Local Content Funds;
- c) Sector Local Content Funds;

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<sup>24</sup> Gambia Competition and Consumer Protection Commission

- d) Develop a National Local Content Policy and Regulations;
- e) Establish the National Local Content Board;
- f) Amend the GPPA Act to promote and capture local content, and
- g) Amend the Public Finance Act to accommodate marginalised groups (Youth and Women).

***Strengthen the National Quality Infrastructure (NQI)***

Strengthening the National Quality Infrastructure will support the regulatory authorities to effectively execute their mandates. Currently, most regulators have small labs that are not accredited. There is no accredited lab in the country. Thus, businesses and regulatory agencies incur huge costs to obtain test results and certificates for their products; and all testing services are outsourced for both regulatory authorities and businesses. Government will also improve coordination among the regulatory authorities on the development and accreditation of labs. Expected impacts will include reduced time and cost of obtaining test results and certificates; increased competitiveness in the export of Gambian products; and assured safety and quality of both imported and exported products.

Legal metrology is another key component of the quality infrastructure which mainly deals with application of law to measurement. This is a critical component which is essential for the protection of consumers of trade that require the use of measuring devices. To ensure continuous protection of consumers, the Weights and Measures Bureau regularly verifies and calibrates all commercial weighing and measuring devices to ensure fair trade. These interventions are done in our markets, warehouses, fuel stations, etc.

In this regard, Government and partners are therefore committed to implementing the following programmes:

- a) Review and update the National Quality Policy
- b) Update the National Standardisation Strategy with a target to develop 300 national standards over the RF-NDP period
- c) Develop a national laboratory policy and its legal framework
- d) Establish a sustainable Centralised National Quality centre and its legal framework
- e) Strengthen the national metrology system and build its capacity to improve consumer confidence in the performance of weighing and measuring devices
- f) Accredite the current certification body of the Gambia Standards Bureau
- g) Improve the national quality culture across all sectors

***Promote inclusive and sustainable industrialisation through the Development of Agropolis, Industrial Parks and SEZs for light manufacturing.***

To promote inclusive and sustainable industrialisation through the Development of Agropolis, Industrial Parks and SEZs light Manufacturing, Government is committed to implementing the following programmes and strategies:

**a) Promote Agropolis development:**

- Establish the required infrastructure, utilities, and business development services for 3 Agropolises
- Facilitate integration of the supply chains that allow efficient flow of produce from farmers to industry and market
- Provide a platform for industry-agriculture interaction and facilitation of trade all year round
- Provide farmers and traders or exporters with market intelligence and information
- Facilitate agricultural technology transfer, mechanisation and diffusion in agriculture and agro processing
- Develop entrepreneurship skills of farmers, traders, and other value chain actors.
- Maximise resource (land holding) efficiency across value chains and enable industrial ecology and symbiosis

**b) Encourage Inclusive and sustainable industrialisation:**

- Conduct a feasibility study to establish two industrial parks
- Secure access to clean and reliable energy for the two industrial parks
- Establish the required infrastructure and utilities
- Attract domestic and foreign direct investment in the parks
- Support the development of national skill sets to match the needs of industry
- Establish necessary connectivity platform to the regional and continental markets and advantage of the AfCFTA, and other trade promotion schemes

**c) Establish Special Economic Zones (SEZ):**

- Conduct an economic impact assessment for the establishment of one SEZ
- Develop a corridor investment master plan for SEZ
- Prepare GIS based land use spatial master plan
- Establish the required infrastructure and utilities
- Attract domestic and foreign investments into the SEZ
- Establish the necessary connectivity platform to the regional and continental markets and take advantage of the AfCFTA and other trade enhancement schemes

***Promotion of Employment and Decent Work<sup>25</sup>***

The Ministry of Trade, Industry, Regional Integration and Employment (MoTIE) has developed a National Employment Policy and Action Plan (NEAP) 2022-2026 to promote decent and productive employment opportunities, as one of the ways of eradicating poverty. MoTIE recognises that productive employment and decent work cannot be achieved through fragmented and isolated interventions. Hence, the policy calls for sustained and concerted efforts of stakeholders, including government, employers, trade unions, civil society, and development partners to ensure an effective implementation of the National Employment Policy (NEP).

The current Decent Work Country programme is outdated, and the Ministry has submitted a request to the International Labour Organisation (ILO) to support its updating in line with the new NEP. The Ministry has, on the other hand, submitted the Labour Bill to the National Assembly in

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<sup>25</sup> Most of the work sited under this priority is taken from the “National Employment Policy and Implementation Plan 2019-2024”

2022. This has a wider regulatory scope than the previous Labour Act of 2007. It is expected that once the Labour Bill is enacted, it will remedy the labour market challenges.

The implementation of the NEP is linked to the following structural frameworks such as the Platform for Employment, Networking, Dialogue and Action (PENDA), Labor Market, Migration, Information System (LMMIS), Technical Working Group, the Tripartite Technical Working Group – Government-Industry- Academia Partnership, and most importantly, a side-cabinet committee to hold a supervisory role on the implementation of the NEP.

The NEP will be enabled by the following: Regional Job Centres, Regional Job Fairs and Career Guidance, and a tracking mechanism as LMMIS, which will provide periodic reports in view of the employment target of 150,000 jobs over the policy period.

The creation of new jobs is widely acknowledged to be one of the country's most pressing issues today. The population faces a lack of employment opportunities in both urban and rural areas. Therefore, if we are to achieve the objectives outlined in the RF-NDP, employment creation is crucial.

To promote full, productive, decent, and freely chosen employment, which will eradicate poverty and reduce income inequality, the Government and development partners are committed to the implementation of the following programmes and strategies:

- a) **Pro-employment macroeconomic policies** – The Government will continue allocating resources from the budget to those sectors that are already helping to increase employment. The following strategies will be used to promote pro-employment macroeconomic policies:
  - Mainstream employment in macroeconomic and sectoral policy frameworks/industrial policy
  - Create sustained fiscal strategies to finance systematic, well-resourced, multidimensional programmes to create decent work opportunities and sustainable enterprises
  - Increase investment in labor-intensive sectors, including rural industrialisation, infrastructure, and green production
  - Mainstream gender, youth, and other vulnerable groups in all economic activities that aim at creating employment
  - Strengthen the labor market information system
  - Advocate for fiscal and trade policies that aim at promoting value addition and discourage the export of raw materials
  - Simplify business registration procedures and regulations
  - Improve access to capital and other services for SMEs and informal businesses
  - Undertake an assessment of the feasibility and potential of green economy and jobs
  - Build mass awareness on green economy and jobs
  - Build local capacity on green economy and jobs
- b) **Focusing on Employment-Generating Sectors** - The Gambian economy is highly dependent on the agriculture and service sectors, especially the tourism sector.



Additionally, the public sector continues to be the largest employer in the economy. Thus, employment strategies should focus on enhancing planning and investment in these sectors to create more employment in these sectors, especially in the agricultural sectors where most poor and vulnerable people are employed. The following strategies will be used to promote employment creation in the employment-generating sectors:

- Promote commercial agriculture to create more employment opportunities
- Promote the development of Agricultural Insurance
- Increase public investments in agro-industries and encourage private sector participation
- Put in place measures to strengthen forward and backward linkages to other economic sectors through supply and value chains
- Create greater access to microfinance for rural youth to support micro and small enterprises and productive investment
- Continue supporting women-led activities, especially in agriculture and in rural areas.
- Promote technology dissemination and adaptation
- Put in place measures to protect infant industries and support for emerging industries
- Provide incentives for the use of local raw materials in agriculture and agro- industries
- Promote the selective subsidisation of subsistence farmers to boost their production and contribution to the national food basket

c) **Promote Skills development** - In The Gambia, there is remarkable agreement that there are numerous skill shortages. In most economic sectors, the problem of skill shortages is clearly a national concern. Key government policy documents also highlight the disparity between the skills taught by training institutions and the skills needed by industry, commerce, and other parts of the economy. This issue is widespread and affects educational establishments at all levels, including primary education. Government and partners are committed to the implementation of the following strategies to improve education and training systems to meet the needs of the labour market:

- Develop a Skills Bank consisting of the competencies derived from the successful completion of the apprenticeship programme
- Operationalise the National Youth Service for University graduates
- Conduct periodic surveys to determine employment opportunities and needs
- Establish an Investor in People Scheme, through which TVET graduates are admitted to career centres, provided with career advice, offered facilitative support (including financial) under an apprenticeship programme
- Identify and develop the skills (both formal and non-formal) and qualifications required in the labour-market with a focus on target sectors
- Develop tailor made skills packages for in-service training for existing SMEs and other sectors
- Encourage internships, apprenticeship, and career guidance and vocational counselling, especially for women and persons with disabilities starting at the lower basic education level
- Promote regular review of the curricula in both traditional learning institutions and vocational training institutions to accommodate the dynamic needs of industry

- Revamp the vocational training system, and invest in providing vocational training centres with appropriate equipment and training conditions that are consistent with the latest norms in their respective sectors
- Develop an agricultural training centre within an agro-industrial pole
- Interact with hospitality training centres in the sub-region to complement current training opportunities
- Promote lifelong learning strategies
- Promote adult learning strategies and recognition of prior learning
- Promote standardisation of educational offer and certification of learning institutions

d) **Strengthening Labour administration and labour standards** - For Gambia to have productive employment and decent work, labour administration and labour standards are essential. Through the drafting of the new labor law, which will soon be reviewed and approved by Parliament, significant advancements in labor standards have been made. To strengthen the labor administration and labor standards, Government and partners are committed to implementing the following strategies:

- Enforce contract of employment, in line with the Labour Act
- Enact the Labour Bill 2022
- Strengthen labour inspections by adopting clear guidelines for technical, occupational safety and health and other labour standards
- Implement the expatriate quota system in accordance with the Labour Act 2022
- Grant foreign workers automatic work and residency permits where local employees cannot fulfil the job requirements
- Strengthen structures necessary for the implementation of the new National Employment Policy and Action Plan (PENDA, LMMIS technical working group, Cabinet Support Committee)
- Support the development of skills that are in line with the market and employer requirements
- Ensure all businesses file employment data as part of requirements for tax clearance
- Maintain an accurate and up-to-date database on job seekers and vacancies in each LGA and across the country
- Popularise the database and services
- Strengthen the institutional and human resource capacity of public employment services
- Promote job canvas and other pro-active employment demand assessment approaches.
- Introduce and implement active labour market policies
- Regulate and coordinate private employment agencies

### ***Strengthen Regional Integration for Economic Development***

The Government of The Gambia and stakeholders intend to benefit maximally from the regional integration programmes and schemes thus advocating for the full implementation of the regional integration programmes at the AfCFTA, AU, ECOWAS, and OIC levels. Regional integration for economic development aims to achieve the goals of creating a single economic space to help boost

trade and economic growth and attract foreign direct investment, by expanding its trade and investment opportunities through bilateral cooperation with its sub-regional neighbouring countries. Government and partners are committed to implementing the following programmes and strategies to achieve regional integration:

**a) Strengthen bilateral cooperation with neighbouring countries in the sub-region:**

- Engage and advocate for the establishment of joint industrial parks and agropolises with Senegal
- Strengthen advocacy to attract Senegalese and sub-regional investment into The Gambia
- Development of a tripartite agreement to strengthen economic cooperation
- Advocate for the establishment of an annual sub-regional trade fair for The Gambia, Guinea Bissau, and Senegal

**b) Strengthen national coordination to benefit from the AfCFTA market, AU, OIC and multilateral schemes:**

- Establish and coordinate a regional integration ministerial committee to oversee and encourage cooperation at sub-regional, AfCFTA, AU and Organisation for Islamic Cooperation (OIC) levels
- Build capacities of national stakeholder to implement regional integration programmes
- Strengthen and engage with relevant national sectors and stakeholders to take advantage of the regional markets and opportunities

**Enabling Factors**

The policy reforms, institutional alignments and innovative implementation modalities that will underpin the successful implementation of all priorities are in Box 6.2.

<b>Box 6.2: Enabling Factors for Private Sector Development</b>
<b>Policy Reforms</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adopt a new industrial policy that addresses the needs of the sector</li> <li>• Clearly articulating government’s position, priorities, and direction for the development of the sector</li> <li>• Spelling out Government expectations with regards to the various players in the sector</li> <li>• Offering a package of support measures and incentives geared towards promoting and encouraging new investments and expansion of existing ones</li> <li>• Strengthening support institutions established by Government to render effective services to the sector</li> <li>• Address the high cost of logistics related to the infrastructure deficit, especially for energy, telecommunications, and transportation, which burden is hindering manufacturing capacity</li> </ul>
<b>Institutional Alignment</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transfer custodianship of designated lands for investment to GIEPA</li> <li>• MoTIE to lead the development of Policies and Act for local content</li> <li>• GIEPA to lead the implementation of the local content development programme.</li> <li>• The existing Petroleum Local Content Committee in GIEPA is to be transformed into the National Committee for Local Content Development</li> </ul>

- Merge TGSB and Weights and Measures Bureau
- Centralisation of all sectoral labs to the National Quality Centre (clustering for synergy gains for expertise and resources)
- Alignment of TGSB, and private sector actors (for joint operation and ventures, partnership, and capacity building)

#### **Innovative Implementation Modalities**

- Develop a policy for access to land for investment
- Develop legislation for the identification of Special Economic Zones
- Promote the development of EPZ and Industrial Zones, especially at the regional level, The Gambia and Senegal.
- Implementation of National Export Strategy.
- Implementation of AfCFTA National Strategy.

#### **Employment Creation**

- Promote sustainable commercial and year-round agriculture to create more employment opportunities
- Promote the development of agricultural insurance
- Establish an Investor in people scheme through which TVET graduates are admitted to career centres for advice, guidance, orientation and given facilitative support (including financial under an apprenticeship programme
- Develop a skills bank that contains the range of competencies derived from the successful completion of the apprenticeship programme
- Develop an institutional framework to promote cooperation and collaboration among regulators and enforcement agencies
- Promote the development of a capital market to promote investment
- Promote entrepreneurship and enterprise development
- Operationalisation of the National Youth Service Scheme for university graduates and the UTG graduate schemes are opportunities that can enhance youth employment

### ***6.3. Outcome 3.3: A competitive and diversified tourism sector contributing to overall inclusive growth, job creation and poverty reduction.***

The Gambia has registered steady increases in tourist arrivals, except during periods of economic and/or health shocks. The sector has been one of the main drivers of GDP. However, the sector performance has been inconsistent over the years due to economic and health-related shocks, narrow market, small and undiversified tourism products, inadequate human and financial resources, poor policy implementation, weak institutional coordination and synergy, and poor linkages to other sectors of the economy, such as agriculture.

The Gambia has launched the Tourism Diversification and Resilience Project to support the diversification and climate resilience of the tourism sector in The Gambia. This project will enhance productivity in the tourism sector during the implementation of RF-NDP.

## **Programme Priorities, Strategies and Interventions**

Based on the challenges of the sector and to realise a competitive and diversified tourism sector contributing to inclusive growth, job creation and poverty reduction, the following priorities will underpin the development of the tourism sector:

1. Legislation, institutions, and human resources
2. Tourism products and services
3. Marketing, market development and promotion, and quality assurance
4. Supporting and cross-cutting measures

### ***Legislation, Institutions and Human Resources***

The legal, regulatory, and institutional framework of the tourism sector is the main system that consists of government rules and regulations and the intermediating institutions governing how the sector functions. Under the GTBoard Act, 2011, The Gambia Tourism Board is responsible for the coordination, administration, and marketing of destination Gambia and connected matters. However, there are several grey areas or outright conflicts with legislative provisions (Chapter 92: 01, 1941 Lands Provinces Act, Physical Planning Regulations) in other sectors or vested in other authorities which touch on GTBoard's mandate, and therefore pose challenges to the tourism sector. Also, given the critical importance of human resources for the development of the tourism sector in more competitive and attractive ways, appropriate capacity development must be provided to its practitioners and stakeholders.

To address these challenges, Government and partners will: develop, implement, and enforce policies, legal and regulatory frameworks; establish an inter-sectoral Tourism Technical Working Group for policy harmonisation and joint programming (chaired by MoTC); put in place bilateral arrangements for training in specialised tourism and hospitality areas overseas; reflect the creative economy e.g., music, video, performing arts, crafts in TVET; and adopt a Sector Qualification Framework (SQF) for the purposes of training institutions and stakeholders.

### ***Tourism Products and Services***

The tourism products of The Gambia are old and worn out in the sense that the same products have been around since the beginning of the industry. There is a need to diversify tourism products to meet the changing demands of tourists. Such diversification should be encouraged both within the core product base and for other tourism products and niches, such as culture and heritage, traditional ceremonies, domestic tourism, community tourism, eco-tourism, conference and incentive travel, sports and recreation tourism, culinary tourism, medical and wellness tourism, and all-inclusive packages. With such diversification, "*Destination Gambia*" will be more attractive to tourists, whilst overcoming the limitation of seasonality.

Other enabling or accompanying measures for the realisation of the foregoing include: re-establishing the National Troupe of The Gambia; piloting the All-Inclusive (AI) package in selected hotels; construction of a multi-purpose cultural centre; continuous upgrading of historical sites and monuments with innovative techniques; continuous capacity building of key players in the arts and culture sector; establishment of regional museums and upgrading of sacred sites;

drawing on the potential of eco-tourism and bird watching; investment in environmental and social sustainability standards; creating an industry-wide code of conduct.

To achieve the above programme interventions, Government and partners will implement the following strategies: rejuvenate and refresh The Gambia's tourism product package and portfolio; convene a national conference on funding arts and culture; resource mobilisation; increase entrance and registration fees; and increase its development budget.

### ***Marketing, Market Development and Promotion, and Quality Assurance***

Marketing is a central activity in tourism due to the competitive nature of the industry, arising from new destinations all vying for visitors from the global market. The country lacks an effective marketing strategy that takes account of new innovative marketing platforms as well as emerging opportunities in domestic and regional tourism. Thus, there is a need for the tourism sector to refocus its marketing strategies to better promote “*Destination Gambia*”.

In this regard, Government and partners are committed to implementing the following programmes: research target markets and their needs as well as trends at local, regional, and global levels; social media marketing and influencer campaigns; prepare marketing materials (videos, photos, write-ups for identified products and services); designation of famous Gambians and celebrities as brand ambassadors for marketing of “*Destination Gambia*”; and strengthening domestic tourism marketing and promotion.

### ***Supporting and Crosscutting Measures***

Six thematic areas play a critical supporting role in The Gambia's tourism sector. These are access by air and travel facilitation; financing, investment, and infrastructure; tourism security; statistics and data; environment, waste management and climate change; and media and communication.

**Access by air and travel facilitation:** Adequate and reliable air connectivity is vital to tourism, business, and economic growth. However, a combination of inadequate services and interconnection limitations, and the high cost of air access has constrained the potential of the tourism industry to contribute to economic development.

**Tourism financing and investment:** Tourism financing and investment are critical for further growth and development of the industry. The Government, private sector and development partners all have a key role to play. The tourism sector is financed by the Government budget and levies (the tourism development levy, the Tourism Development Area (TDA) development levy, and licensing for operators). It is worth noting that since 2017, the Government has been providing significant budgetary support to the tourism sector.

**Statistics and Data:** Tourism research and development data is vital for effective tourism planning, as well as formulation of targeted marketing strategies. Despite the existence of a statistics unit at GTBoard, there is weak collaboration between actors in tourism statistics. Additionally, the nonexistence of a Tourism Satellite Account (TSA) and lack of a centralised database, make it difficult to obtain reliable and timely statistics on the goods and services of the sector.

**Environment and Climate Change:** Climate has a strong influence on the tourism and recreation sector. It is, at least, the third most common factor in tourists' decision-making. Coastal degradation due to climate change impacts is contributing to damaging some of the country's economic assets. The beach erosion along the Senegambia, the Kunta Kinteh and Fort Bullen coastal areas is an urgent issue, given its current and future impact on investments and jobs in the sector. Climate change impact on forests, biodiversity and other ecosystems will also adversely affect Gambia's tourism products, particularly rural tourism, and the River Gambia. Thus, urgent actions are needed to address the impact of climate change on the environment. These urgent actions include agroforestry and reforestation (including payment for environmental services schemes) to enhance income prospects for ecotourism and payment for ecosystem services schemes; and enhanced food security for improved human health; establishment and/or expansion of ecotourism facilities in the local communities; nurture and promote alternative livelihoods from artisan crafts to low-impact forestry and wildlife tourism; promote green/ecotourism as a strategy to regenerate rural economies and thus encourage rural-urban migrants to return to the rural areas; and get the Gambia Tourism and Hospitality Institute (GTHI) to provide training to sectoral extension agents on climate change and ecosystems-based adaptation, cultural and heritage tourism, and nature-based tourism.

**Media and Communication:** Awareness of the importance of tourism and its potentially huge economic benefits is generally low among the public and seriously underappreciated in policy circles within the Government. There is a clear need to develop programmes to address this gap in educational institutions, in the broader society, as well as within Government policy circles. The role of the media in this campaign is immense. In this regard, Government and partners are therefore committed to implementing the following programmes:

- a) Enter into a partnership agreement with reliable airline companies around the world.
- b) Promote Public Private Partnership
- c) Increase the Tourism Development Area (TDA) levy
- d) Improve security infrastructure and equipment to assure safety and security
- e) Establish the Tourism Satellite Account (TSA)
- f) Implement a sustainable Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) plan
- g) Encourage local media to promote the tourism sector and project a positive image of the country

### **Enabling Factors**

The policy reforms, institutional alignments and innovative implementation modalities that will underpin the successful implementation of all four priorities are presented in Box 6.3.

### **Box 6.3: Enabling Factors for Tourism Sector**

1. The Licensing Act (Cap. 92.01) which empowers Local Government facilities to license hotels and restaurants will be repealed and replaced by a law which transfers this mandate to MoTC, which will be rightfully vested with the sole responsibility for licensing the industry
2. The 1950 Liquor Act will similarly be repealed and superseded by a more appropriate version, which transfers licensing powers to the MoTC and brings its provision in line with modern realities in bars and public houses
3. The Hotels and Restaurant Act of 1974 (CAP 94.01) although relevant in its governing and operations of the hotels, restaurants, and night clubs, need to be amended to reflect the exigencies of the present national economic situation
4. Review and revise the GTHI curricula and training programme to include climate change and ecosystems-based adaptation which are required in relation to ecotourism, cultural and heritage tourism, and nature-based tourism and develop a sector qualification and accreditation framework for use by institutions and stakeholders with the assistance of the National Accreditation and Quality Assurance Authority (NAQAA)
5. Strengthening linkages between Tourism and other critical sectors such as Agriculture, ICT etc
6. Consolidate the Sexual Offence Act 2013, Tourism Offence Act 2003, Women Act 2010, Children Act 2005, Trafficking in Person Act 2007
7. MoTC and the MoJ to set up a Collecting Society of The Gambia to protect the rights of the creative industry
8. Introduce a results framework to enhance the Monitoring and Evaluation of activities
9. Creation of a statistics department at MoTC to set up and manage the tourism data base
10. Reform and regulate ownership and access to land in the TDA
11. Develop and implement a coastal protection strategy to address the ongoing erosion impacts



## Chapter 7: Pillar IV: Human Capital Development

This pillar brings together the sectors and sub-sectors relating to education, health, WASH, nutrition, population, migration, and housing and human settlements. Table 7.1 presents the target outcomes of the pillar. The related programme priorities, interventions and strategies under this pillar are further elaborated in the following outcomes.

Table 7.1: Outcomes of the Human Capital Development

- Outcome 4.1: Equitable access to quality and relevant education for all
- Outcome 4.2: Quality, accessible and affordable health care services delivered for all.
- Outcome 4.3: Improved nutritional status of children under five years and women of child-bearing age
- Outcome 4.4: Increased access to safe drinking water, proper sanitation, and hygiene
- Outcome 4.5: Demographic dividend harnessed
- Outcome 4.6: Socioeconomic benefits of migration to national development enhanced and adverse consequences mitigated
- Outcome 4.7: Affordable and quality housing for all and improved urban planning

### *7.1 Outcome 4.1: Equitable Access to Quality and Relevant Education for all*

The Gambia has made great strides at all levels in the education sector, with strong performance in the areas of access, enrolment, and gender parity. However, key challenges remain with respect to quality and relevance. Government will continue to build upon these successes in the education sector and address the outstanding gaps. An emerging priority is recognition that Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) education at all levels – basic, secondary, tertiary and madrasa<sup>26</sup> – is of vital and strategic importance in the quest to address youth unemployment and economic transformation. As such, Government is committed to integrating TVET education throughout the education system.

#### 7.1.1 Basic and Secondary Education

##### **Programme Priorities, Strategies and Interventions**

Government, through the Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education (MoBSE) will implement five priorities during the Plan period, namely:

1. Equitable access to education
2. Quality and relevance of all education and training programmes
3. Research, innovation, and development
4. ICT and TVET
5. Adult and non-formal education

##### ***Equitable access to Education***

The capacity of the country to produce highly skilled, professional, and productive citizens for the labour market and improve quality of life through the education system is facing challenges despite the progress made over the last decades.

<sup>26</sup> Derived from the Arabic word “madras” – a school where the medium of instruction is Arabic with emphasis on Islamic education

Disaggregated data on education at the basic and secondary level shows that there have been disparities in enrolment at all levels of the education system over the last five years: gender, rural/urban, income, and regional disparities in Gross Enrolment Rate (GER), Net Enrolment Rate (NER) and completion rates at all levels of education. The data also shows that females have a higher GER than males at all education levels. However, the dropout rate (3.2% at the primary level) increases with the level of education, reaching 10.1 per cent at the senior secondary school level. There are also limited early intervention services for children with special needs at the Early Childhood Development (ECD) stage.

To address these challenges, Government, through MoBSE, will implement the following actions:

- Expand and scale up the provision of appropriate learning structures and facilities including electricity and internet facilities, and undertake enrolment drives
- Maintain and strengthen the attachment of ECD centres to public lower basic schools to ensure smooth transition
- Construct and/or rehabilitate inclusive child friendly schools and facilities
- Consolidate and improve the school feeding programme
- Expand the School Improvement Grant (SIG) to reduce the cost burden of education on households. Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) to heads of majalis<sup>27</sup> will also be expanded to attract out-of-school children who are placed under their custody. This will ensure that those children are provided with numeracy, literacy, life and livelihood skills to enable them to follow the normal curriculum in parallel with attending the majalis
- Provision of a conducive environment that takes cognisance of the importance of hygiene, water, and sanitation facilities; and to enhance mobility by scaling up the donkey cart initiative and expanding the provision of bicycles to pupils, especially for girls in the rural areas
- Government will also expand the Second Chance Education programme to bring the remaining out-of-school children into the system

The expected impacts from the implementation of this priority are:

- Reduction in the level of illiteracy
- Expansion of ECD, Basic and Secondary education
- Development of life skills and creation of awareness
- Improved management capacity and professional development of ECD facilitators/teachers at all levels
- Improved retention and completion rates, particularly for girls
- Equal opportunities for all children to access ECD services, including those with special needs, to ensure a fair start in life

### ***Quality and relevance of all education and training programmes***

The issue of quality and relevance of the curriculum and learning materials has been a concern for teachers and parents alike. Currently, the quality and relevance of the curriculum is inadequate. Efforts have been made to revise and improve the curriculum to include bilingual and civic education, as well as help foster effective communication and socialisation; promote global citizenship; and promote communication to safeguard the intangible cultural

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<sup>27</sup> Derived from the Arabic language depicted traditional Quranic education

heritage of the country. There is no policy on the use of national languages to enhance performance and ease the smooth transition from home to school. Although much progress has been made, there is still need for timely provision of relevant teaching and learning materials, improving teacher quality, continuous in-service teacher training, strengthen new teaching initiatives such as remote learning/distance learning; strengthen monitoring, supervision, and evaluation at all levels, as well as early literacy and numeracy including digital literacy. The provision of teaching, learning and play materials in most ECD centres is also inadequate. Furthermore, Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) including agriculture education is weak due to limited/inadequately equipped labs and workshops and poor integration of ICT into the education system.

In terms of the organisational capacity of MoBSE to deliver on its mandate, many areas require strengthening, such as: the ability for the leadership to better co-ordinate and manage the programmes at all levels; the capacity of the central and regional directorates in terms of planning, monitoring and evaluation of education policy implementation; financial and procurement management system which needs strengthening through training and computerised record keeping at all levels; the Education Management Information System (EMIS) and processes used for the monitoring and evaluation of the education system; and the Performance Management System (PMS) that needs to be reviewed and fine-tuned for careful targeting of resources for training, promotion and other rewards.

To enhance quality and relevance, MoBSE will therefore implement the following measures:

- Design and develop a set of principles, norms and standards underpinning curriculum review and development to provide regular and systematic feedback
- Design and develop curriculum using the panel system which entails the following: research, comparative studies, and contextualisation; development of scope and sequence charts (based on time allocation); writing and editing workshops; validation of the framework and syllabuses; and development of handbooks
- Ensure/facilitate the provision of age-appropriate toys, teaching and learning materials and train parents, caregivers, and management committee members
- Conduct both short- and long-term training and facilitate the provision of School Improvement Grants (SIG)
- Launch/initiate innovative teaching and learning initiatives: Progressive Science Initiative (PSI) and Progressive Mathematics Initiative (PMI); use of tablets in lower grades and promote the use of ICT in education
- Promote the use of national language as a medium of instruction for early grades
- Roll-out PMS, ensure continuous professional development, introduce classroom observation tools, minimum standards for monitoring and supervision and put in place school improvement plans.
- Support effective and evidence-based policy, planning and decision-making by ensuring the availability of up-to-date data

In addition, MoBSE shall also strengthen strategies and initiatives such as: school star award scheme; timely supply of teaching and learning materials; and increasing the number of trained ECD facilitators including those in madrassas.

By implementing the above, Government expects to achieve the following results:

- Revised and improved general education curriculum to: attract diversity, ease communication and foster understanding and cooperation; upgraded and harmonised

curricula across all levels based on explicit learning objectives upon which assessments will be more reliably based

- Improved students' and teachers' performance
- Increased number of trained teachers in grey areas; improved performance, better informed policy making decisions and good practices
- Enhanced capacity and competency of teachers
- Increased percentage of intake and graduates in STEM
- Skills in relevant areas aligned to labour market needs
- Students as global citizens
- Reduced dropout rates
- Enhanced children's readiness to start Lower Basic School (LBS) and promote their holistic growth and development using the integrated approach
- Improved literacy rate of parents for effective participation
- Improved organisational structure and decentralisation
- Strengthened educational policy and planning
- Improved financial management and procurement systems and monitoring and evaluation, as well as promote data driven decision making

### ***Research, innovation, and development***

Research and innovative practices at all levels of basic education is critical for the education of children. Yet these are currently insufficient, due to inadequate ICT skills for researchers, poor research skills and facilities and the insufficient use of research findings, amongst others.

To address these issues, MoBSE will implement the following:

- Organise field visits, career days, symposia at school level; collaborate with partners to identify and undertake research on topics of relevance
- Strengthen the practice of project work at senior secondary school level to inculcate the scientific method
- Put in place/constitute research teams with requisite knowledge in research

Government expects that implementing the above will: create opportunities for innovation and knowledge production; improve the culture of reading and use of ICT; stimulate the culture of research at all levels; and promote the use of research findings to enhance performance.

### ***ICT and TVET***

With the current curriculum review, The Gambia's education system places emphasis on the pre-vocational and technology education at the basic and secondary levels to build competency and good foundation for employability, further learning, and global citizenship.

Despite this potential, TVET continues to have inadequate infrastructure, small number of TVET graduates, non-responsive TVET training to meet the labour market needs and inadequate number of scholarships for TVET teachers, instructors, and students. It also suffers from a perception that TVET is a second option for most students.

To address these issues, the following will be implemented:

- Formulate and implement a TVET operational policy. It will provide a national TVET framework with clear directions on linkages between TVET and pre-vocational delivery, general education, quality service delivery and promote PPP arrangements
- Recruit and train personnel in TVET and ICT
- Establish pre-vocational structures with equipped labs/workshops; expand the electrification and solarisation of schools
- Provide internet facilities and computers in schools for pedagogy and building of schools with strong focus on agricultural training. The relationships among these institutions and the private sector will be governed by regulatory measures that will ensure synergy in their operations, and that TVET education is mainstreamed into the overall educational system with emphasis on relevance and multi-stakeholder participation

When implemented, this priority will result in the following: relevant pre-vocational curriculum in all schools; enhanced pupils' interest in skills education; strengthened capacities of teachers; establishment of pre-vocational structures; and continuity for learners to transit from basic to tertiary education and help identify the potentials of pupils and guide them to work towards their career of interest.

#### ***Adult and Non-Formal Education (NFE)***

Adult and NFE is critical for boosting literacy, enhancing worker productivity and participation in the democratic process and decision-making. However, there are several challenges such as: limited NFE centres; low enrolment and retention rates of youth and adults in NFE; inadequate quality and relevance of NFE programmes; inadequate human resources; nonexistence of NFE training programmes in teacher training institutions; inadequate funding for NFE programmes; low recognition of NFE certificate; inadequate and unreliable data on NFE; and inadequate life and livelihood skills.

To implement and achieve the targets for this priority on Adult and NFE, MoBSE will:

- Execute a relevant and comprehensive NFE programme including distance education using modern technological media focused on literacy, numeracy as well as life and livelihood skills
- Strengthen partnership with stakeholders, including PPP
- Review and validate a standardised integrated curriculum in collaboration with stakeholders
- Review and develop workbooks and guides; build capacity of NFE personnel
- Advocate for incorporation of NFE training programmes in The Gambia College and UTG
- Advocate for increased budget support for NFE programmes
- Develop a standardised competency assessment framework
- Conduct monitoring and evaluation and data collection of the NFE programme; and
- Promote income generating activities

In implementing this priority, Government is seeking to reverse the current situation and anticipates the following results:

- Increased enrolment and retention rates of youths and adults

- More relevant and adequate instructional and learning materials provided
- Improved NFE administration and quality teaching and learning; availability of qualified personnel for effective NFE programmes
- Increased and sustained support to NFE
- Greater recognition of the NFE certificates
- NFE data management system established
- Increased funding and other support to NFE
- Enhanced sustainability of post-literacy activities

Given the increasing number of partners working with MoBSE and Ministry of Higher Education, Research Science and Technology (MoHERST) and their dependence on donor funds (especially for non-salary expenditures), Government will continue to pay attention to the need for effective sector-wide coordination to ensure coordinated financing and action.

### 7.1.2 Tertiary and Higher Education

Five key priorities for Tertiary and Higher Education will be implemented during the Plan period, namely:

1. Equitable access and retention in Tertiary and Higher Education
2. Quality and relevance of all education and training programmes
3. Research, innovation, and development
4. STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics – including Agriculture)
5. TVET (Technical and Vocational Education and Training)

#### ***Equitable access and retention in Tertiary and Higher Education***

To implement and achieve the targets for this priority, MoHERST will implement the following programmes and strategies:

- Train administrative and academic staff
- Build Special Needs- Friendly Tertiary and Higher Education structures
- Foster and build partnership with other Tertiary and Higher Education institutions outside the country, as well as donor agencies; and
- Put in place a robust financing model for the funding of Tertiary and Higher Education

Government anticipates the following results from implementing this priority:

- Increased employment rates; increased economic productivity
- Greater youth participation in the labour force
- Increased public private partnerships
- Increased opportunities for lifelong learning (continuous professional development)
- Improved management capacity
- Enhanced girls and women participation in tertiary and higher education particularly in TVET and STEM
- Decreased rural-urban and irregular migration
- Enhanced entrepreneurship
- Increased foreign direct investment
- Increased funding and prioritisation of STEM and TVET education

### ***Quality and relevance of all education and training programmes***

A central plank of the Government's educational reform agenda is to align the curricula to the labour market needs of the country. This is currently hampered by: the limited scope and content of curricula in the institutions, as well as across the regions; the skill/job mismatch in the labour force; the lack of mandatory internship/apprenticeship programmes; insufficient modern teaching and learning materials, including labs and workshops; weak capacity of trainers/lecturers; inadequate and ill-adapted teacher training curricula (including for special needs); and weaknesses and insufficiencies in monitoring, inspection, supervision and quality assurance. There is also the insufficient utilisation of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) for curriculum development, course design and accreditation of programmes.

To address these challenges on Quality and Relevance, MoHERST will:

- Undertake periodic evaluation, review, revision, and development of curricula
- Intensify professional capacity development of lecturers and trainers, as well as administrators and staff on quality assurance
- Develop capacities of assessors in monitoring and evaluation, implementation of the National Qualification framework and Registration and Accreditation Standard
- Undertake periodic quality audit visits and regular needs assessments to respond to emerging needs in a timely manner
- Ensure the provision of relevant and modern teaching/learning materials, as well as workshops and laboratories
- Establish career guidance and counselling centres in all institutions
- Set up a functional quality assurance unit in each institution

In implementing these initiatives, Government anticipates achieving the following impacts: improved curricula that is aligned to labour market needs; highly skilled human capital base of the country; improved lecturers/trainers capacity and students performance; provision of relevant data for evidence-based policy and decision making; improved professional competency; improved quality delivery of teaching and training services; improved pedagogical skills of lecturers and trainers; effective STEM/TVET education policy; and improved quality and quantity of STEM/TVET graduates.

### ***Research, innovation, and development***

Government efforts to promote and strengthen research and innovation across the tertiary education level is stymied by the following: inadequate ICT skills; inadequate and poorly equipped research centres; poor utilisation of research findings; unreliable and expensive cost of internet and electricity; limited capacity in research management and grant proposal writing; lack of ICT integration into teacher education curricula; limited awareness of STEM/TVET; inadequate funding for the promotion of research and innovation activities; and low number of qualified researchers (especially women).

To implement and achieve the targets for this priority on Research and Innovation, MoHERST will:

- Establish Research Boards and Councils and a National Research Fund
- Develop a documentation centre/unit
- Develop and review policies and regulations on research and innovation
- Prioritise research and innovation activities at national level

- Establish incubation centres, and science and technology parks
- Mainstream STEM and TVET into the programmes and priorities of Government
- Conduct national/international seminars/conferences on research and innovation
- Undertake outreach and sensitisation programmes in the form of seminars and workshops including promotional videos/radio talk shows and documentaries on the importance of TVET/STEM
- Strengthen / institutionalise the cooperation between MoHERST and MoTIE to ensure alignment of industrial, trade and investment policies and the skills /education agenda
- Set up joint e-learning and digital/virtual learning platform for institutions of Tertiary and Higher Education in the country

### ***STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics – including Agriculture)***

Government aims to have an increasingly skilled labour force to render the country more productive and competitive. Accordingly, it is keen to: improve student achievement and proficiency; produce highly skilled professionals, especially in STEM and TVET; reduce illiteracy and dropout rates; increase admission in the STEM and TVET fields; increase funding for STEM and TVET education; provide adequate and equipped scientific labs/workshops for STEM and TVET education; integrate ICT (digital literacy and skills) in to the education system; reduce youth unemployment; spur entrepreneurship, job creation and innovation.

However, this is hampered by: insufficient number of tertiary and higher education institutions in the country particularly in rural areas (in relation to TVET); limited number of graduates; limited opportunities for the underprivileged and deprived; and the over centralisation of TVET education.

To implement and achieve the targets for this priority on STEM, MoHERST will:

- Undertake sensitisation and awareness campaigns on the importance of STEM Education in national development
- Fully implement the national Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) policy (2015-2024)
- Provide scholarship packages for students in STEM
- Provide teaching and learning resources needed for STEM and adequate infrastructure needed to support STEM education

Government anticipates the following results:

- Developed culture of research and innovation in education institutions and across all sectors
- Enhanced evidence-based decision making
- Improved ICT knowledge and skills
- Viable research centres; vibrant innovation ecosystem
- Developed culture of entrepreneurship and start-up economy
- Improved technology, technology transfer and FDI
- Strengthened research, teaching, and learning particularly in TVET and STEM

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

To implement and achieve the targets for this priority, MoHERST will:

- Decentralise TVET by building at least one TVET centre in regions it doesn't exist



- Undertake sensitisation and awareness campaign on the importance of TVET education in national development
- Fully implement the National Science Technology and Innovation (STI) policy
- Provide teaching and learning resources and adequate infrastructure for STEM and TVET education
- Rehabilitate and transform existing TVET centres
- Provide scholarship packages for TVET students
- Harmonise TVET curricula and programmes in accordance with the NQF
- Reinforce and scale up the apprenticeship programme, including the use of mastercraft persons in upskilling programmes, and the use of the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) process in training programmes
- Promote public private partnership to facilitate knowledge transfers and innovation  
This links to the local content policy and work on SEZs
- Organise annual TVET competitions and exhibitions
- Strengthen collaboration and partnership with development partners and relevant parties including NGOs and CSOs

### ***7.2 Outcome 4.2: Quality, accessible and affordable health care services delivered for all***

The National Health Policy 2021-2030 and the National Health Sector Strategic Plan 2021-2025 provide clear guidance on the health priorities that will reduce morbidity and mortality rates across the population. They include dealing with the major diseases, promoting healthy lifestyles, and reducing environment-related health risks. The target health outcomes of the RF-NDP therefore reflect Government's commitment to improve the quality of care across the health system.

#### **Programme Priorities, Strategies and Interventions**

In the context of the RF-NDP, Government, through the Ministry of Health (MoH) with stakeholders, will implement the following sector priorities:

1. Achieving Universal Health Coverage (UHC) through the provision of quality and equitable essential health services for all
2. Financial risk protection and equity
3. Environment, health promotion and social determinants of health
4. Integrated health information systems and research
5. Partnerships

#### ***Achieving UHC through the provision of quality and equitable essential health services for all***

Quality health care service is an integral part of achieving UHC, which is a product of both the wider health systems environment, and the actions of providers and individuals working within the system.

Appropriate health care services during pregnancy, childbirth and after delivery are important for the survival and wellbeing of both the mother and the infant. The provision of Comprehensive Emergency Obstetric and Newborn Care (CEmONC) and Basic Emergency Obstetric and Newborn Care (BEmONC) are critical to the reduction of maternal and neo-natal morbidity and mortality. Whilst progress has been made in reducing maternal mortality (433

per 100,000 in 2013 and 289 in 2020), neonatal has increased from 22 in 2013 to 29 in 2020 per 1000 live births. In the same period, under-5 mortality has increased from 54 to 56 per 1000 live births (Gambia Demographic and Health Survey, 2019-20).

The country is currently experiencing the double burden of both Communicable and Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs), just as in many Low- and Middle-Income Countries. Poor lifestyle choices and disregard of risk factors continue to increase the incidence of NCDs. On the other hand, there is still a high prevalence of tuberculosis and HIV/AIDs despite a slight reduction in the latter. In The Gambia, the only available data on prevalence of HIV/Aids from households is from the GDHS 2013 which shows a prevalence rate of 1.9 per cent for the population aged 15-49 years. The most recent data on HIV/Aids is from the National Sentinel Surveillance Survey<sup>28</sup> which shows a prevalence rate of 1.5 per cent. Malaria cases have been increasing, thus reducing the chances of achieving the malaria pre-elimination goal. There is high prevalence of Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs) such as schistosomiasis in Central River Region (CRR) and Upper River Region (URR). Furthermore, there is a growing number of youth with drug-induced psychosis and high number of relapse cases at the in-patient facilities.

At the institutional and operational level, health care delivery is hampered by several factors such as: low implementation of the Primary Health Care (PHC) Roadmap; lack of quality testing of medical products; weak patient safety monitoring (pharmacovigilance; interruption of supply system; inadequate storage conditions for health products; unregulated traditional medicine practices; and inadequate human resource capacity and lack of a functional Human Resource for health database for the Ministry, as well as inadequate infrastructure.

The starting point for achieving UHC is the full implementation of the Essential Health Care Package (EHCP) at all levels of service delivery. This requires ensuring access to health services for all through the renovation of dilapidated health facilities, maintenance of equipment and provision of medical supplies.

Government, over the Plan period, expects to achieve the following:

- Improve maternal health, neonate, infant and child health services
- Significantly expand sensitisation activities to increase awareness of the lifestyle behaviours that are risk factors for developing NCDs
- Eliminate mother-to-child transmission of HIV and enhance uptake of antiretroviral therapy (ART)
- Reduce transmission rate of tuberculosis and reduce the incidence of malaria
- Strengthen the organisational and operational capacity of MoH to achieve improved health care outcomes

To this end, Government will implement programmes in the following areas:

- (1) Maternal health
- (2) Neonatal, infant and child health; and
- (3) Prevention and control of NCDs (cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, cancers, chronic respiratory diseases,) and road traffic injuries

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<sup>28</sup> It is important to note that in the National Sentinel Surveillance Survey only pregnant women attending antenatal care were tested

In addition to the above, Government will consolidate the programmes on the following:

- HIV/AIDS, TB and malaria
- Neglected Tropical Disease (NTD)
- Improve immunisation coverage for the boosters (Penta3, Measles/Rubeola2 and DPT)
- Strengthen organisational and operational capacities through: (i) implementing the PHC Roadmap; (ii) assuring the quality of all medical products in circulation; (iii) providing an uninterrupted supply of health products; (iv) scaling up training of specialists; (v) putting in place integrated human resource information system (IHRIS) and (vi) expansion of infrastructure.

The MoH will use the following strategies to implement the above programme interventions:

- **Maternal, neonatal, and child health:** Scale up services to attain universal coverage of emergency obstetric, neonate and infant care services; ensure the availability of skilled personnel at health facilities; and ensure that health care workers especially those at primary level are trained on Integrated Management of Neonatal and Childhood Illnesses (IMNCI) Case Management Skills and strengthen community base interventions for the prevention, identification and treatment of common childhood illnesses at the community level and to facilitate timely and appropriate referral; improve access to immunisation services
- **Adolescent health:** Expand Adolescent and Sexual Reproductive Health (ASRH) services and integrate adolescent and youth friendly services; and address traditional barriers such as socio-cultural factors, misconceptions, and low male partner acceptance that hinder access and use of modern contraceptives
- **NCDs:** Increase awareness on the risk factors and major determinants of diet-related NCDs; build capacity of health facility and community-based service providers on the prevention and management of diet-related NCDs; advocate for increased public recreational facilities and their usage; promote physical activity amongst the adult population and adoption of the Food Based Dietary Guidelines; strengthen and scale up the nutrition and lifestyle counselling for people with NCDs; promote the increased consumption of fruits and vegetables; capacity strengthening of health care providers to readily screen for NCDs to facilitate early detection, diagnosis and management of NCDs at all levels; advocate for the continuous availability of essential NCD medicines, supplies and technologies for screening, diagnosis, treatment and monitoring at all levels; establish a multisectoral committee on NCDs prevention and control chaired by the Office of the President; establish a Multi-sectoral Technical Working Group (MTWG) for NCD prevention and control; pilot the World Health Organisation Package of Essential Non-Communicable Disease Interventions (WHO-PEN) in public health facilities; strengthen the implementation of WHO-PEN in primary health care facilities; and expand the implementation of complementary PEN-plus services focusing on severe chronic NCDs at district hospitals
- **TB:** Scale up diagnostic services by five facilities; put in place a more robust system of contact tracing; procurement and installation of four more Xpert MTB/Rif machines to improve TB case detection; increase the number of Directly Observed Treatment Shortcourse (DOTS) with iLed microscopes from 45 to 50 in 2023; use of Gene Xpert as first diagnostic tool for all presumptive TB patients in facilities with Gene Xpert machines (a total of 13 expert machines exist in the country); and strengthen the radiology services in all hospitals for clinical diagnosis of TB
- **HIV and AIDS:** Work with civil society organisations, community health workers and community leaders to: create awareness on Elimination of Mother-to-Child Transmission (e-MTCT) and encourage pregnant women to visit Antenatal Care (ANC) sites; conduct meetings with National Assembly members to sensitise their constituents on e-MTCT; and to advocate for funding for the Prevention of Mother-to-Child Transmission (PMTCT)

from the Government budget; training of all ANC staff to enable these sites to provide PMTCT and Early Infant Diagnosis (EID) services; provision of HIV test kits and commodities for HIV testing; provide and retain trained staff at PMTCT sites; provide adequate funding for the expansion of the services to all the health facilities in the country; make available lab commodities at the PMTCTs; increase lab staff at the sites; implement the stigma reduction strategy; intensify community involvement and participation as well as HIV sensitisation

- **Malaria:** Put in place an effective and efficient malaria surveillance system with the following features: support testing all individuals with suspected malaria and recording all confirmed cases; supporting the identification, investigation, classification, and management of all transmission foci with appropriate measures to terminate transmission as soon as possible; including community case detection, confirmation, and reporting of malaria cases
- **Immunisation:** Conduct Periodic Intensification of Routine Immunisation (PIRI) in low performing districts; ensure uninterrupted vaccine supplies; and community engagement and sensitisation on uptake of routine immunisation services; and conduct defaulter tracing and vaccination in all the communities
- **Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs):** There is high prevalence of NTDs such as Schistosomiasis in Central River Region (CRR) and Upper River Region (URR). Measures will therefore be taken to reduce the percentage of endemic districts affected, with 75 per cent reduction of schistosomiasis (SCH) and Soil-Transmitted Helminths (STH) prevalence
- **Organisational, operational, and quality assurance:** Setting up of Quality Control (QC) testing laboratory for quality control testing of all medical products in circulation; improve the capacity to carry out pharmacovigilance responsibilities; provide technical, financial and human resources to the decentralised Central Medical Stores (CMS); expand the CMS by constructing a new one and upgrading health facilities' storage capacity; develop a traditional medicines policy. Review and update the Medicines and Related Products Act 2014; establish school of pharmacy at UTG and setting up of an e-learning platform; and ensure an operational and effective Integrated Human Resource Information System (IHRIS)
- **Human Resources for Health (HRH):** Develop incentive policy for effective incentives management; provide conducive work conditions e.g., adequate working tools for health care providers in health facilities; strengthen and build the capacity of staff to provide quality health care services with a sufficient, well skilled, resilient, and motivated health workforce; establish and upgrade specialised training institutions to address critical shortages in their respective fields
- **Infrastructure:** Improve and expand health infrastructures to suit both able and the physically challenged; ensure the availability of a conducive and safe working environment for staff across all regions; routine refurbishment, expansion, and maintenance of infrastructure at all levels; ensure the establishment and operationalisation of a national emergency treatment centre, a public health laboratory and training centre with a conference centre, and a National Blood Transfusion Centre
- **Epidemic Preparedness and Response:** Increase responsiveness against epidemics and enhance a functional Public Health Emergency Preparedness and Response including, a well-equipped National Public Health Laboratory (NPHL) and effective surveillance to enhance timely detection and control of all public health threats; ensure the operationalisation of the Public Health Emergency Operations Centre (PHEOC) using the One Health Approach at national, regional, district, and community level; ensure cross-border collaboration and compliance with the International Health Regulation (IHR) 2005 and other international commitments; ensure the availability and implementation of the

National Health Emergency and Response Communication Plan; and strengthen partnership with relevant institutions in the prevention and control of emerging and re-emerging zoonotic diseases.

### ***Financial Risk Protection and Equity***

The Government budgetary allocation to the health sector is insufficient, and this has hampered the provision of quality and affordable health care services. The government health budget allocation is well below the 15 per cent of the Abuja Declaration target. The percentage of out-of-pocket expenditure on health by the population is high. Until recently, there was no health Insurance scheme in the country. With the establishment of the 2021 National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS), Government will work to ensure that adequate resources are allocated for its effective implementation. Steps will also be taken to always ensure the crucial enrolment of participants into the scheme.

In the context of the Plan, Government will increase budget allocation for health to meet the 15 per cent Abuja Declaration target. Government will also explore new financing mechanisms for the health sector.

### ***Environment, Health Promotion and Social Determinants of Health***

Health promotion interventions are essential to effectively address specific public health problems including maternal and child diseases, HIV and AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria, neglected tropical diseases, non-communicable diseases, including malnutrition. The interventions seek to promote healthy behaviours and empower individuals, families, households, and communities to take recommended pre-emptive, coping, or remedial actions. Currently the country does not have adequate expertise on IHR. Besides, effective communication to foster positive attitudes is hampered by lack of adequate funding. Nevertheless, there is need to strengthen relations with the media in the form of a partnership for the judicious coverage and dissemination of health issues and messages. Such an approach can help dispel social media-enabled misinformation and be used for sensitisation and advocacy purposes. Although health promotion activities are undertaken in schools, efforts are still modest. This is in part due to the absence of a policy for health promotion in schools, lack of a communication strategy and implementation guidance.

Government will therefore develop and update the policy, strategy, and implementation plan; develop health promotion in school curricula and associated resources; ensure that health promotion features in teacher training courses; involve students, parents, caregivers, and the local community; ensure access to a comprehensive school health service. Government will strengthen pandemic preparedness and consolidate the gains made with the COVID-19 response.

### ***Integrated Health Information Systems and Health Research***

Currently, the health information management system is not adequate and consequently, timeliness of reporting is low. Only few Health Facilities have internet access and there is limited capacity for data management at all levels; thus, hindering the implementation of the e-Health system. Under this Plan, government aims to reduce paper-based system, which is prone to data loss. Support will be provided to ongoing efforts in developing electronic versions

of the following: civil registration and vital statistics; human resource management; logistics management; national health insurance; health records, etc.

In addition, health research is currently handicapped by weak health research governance, inadequate financing for health research and inadequate capacity for health research. Under the Plan, government expects to promote an effective, credible, and sustainable health research system in The Gambia based on sound ethical principles. In this regard, it aims to ensure the availability of adequate human, material, and financial resources for health research. Government intends to institutionalise international and national declarations on financing for health research e.g., the Algiers Declaration of allocating 5 per cent of health budget and 2 per cent of aid or project funds to health research.

Thus, over the Plan period, Government will take the following measures: recruit more ICT experts to support the implementation of digital solutions (e-health); build the capacity of ICT staff through long-term, short-term and professional courses; connect health facilities, through the e-health system, for efficient and timely sharing of reports and relevant information.

### ***Partnerships***

Government aspires to ensure improved coordination and resource management within the health sector. However, currently, there is inadequate harmonisation and alignment within the ministry of health. Furthermore, there is a need to strengthen partnership structures for better coordination, resource mobilisation and a better mutual understanding for the implementation of health interventions.

Government will therefore: establish a Health Policy Advisory Group (HPAG) that will comprise of key stakeholders in the health sector, including Development Partners, UN Agencies, heads of key health professional organisations and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) or Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and ensure its functionality; conduct Joint Annual Review meetings; and sign and implement the UHC 2030 COMPACT.

### ***7.3 Outcome 4.3: Improved nutritional status of children under five years and women of child-bearing age is assured***

The Gambia is faced with the triple burden of malnutrition i.e., undernutrition, overnutrition and micronutrient malnutrition. Undernutrition continues to be a major public health problem in The Gambia, especially for children under five years of age.

However, declining trends have been observed over the past few years among children under 5 years of age, with stunting reduced from 25 per cent in 2013 to 17.5 per cent in 2019-20; while wasting was reduced from 12 per cent in 2013 to 5.1 per cent in 2019-20; and underweight reduced from 16 per cent in 2013 to 11.6 per cent in 2019-20 (Gambia Demographic and Health Survey, 2019-20).

The prevalence of anaemia among women of childbearing age was reported at 44.3 per cent in 2019-20, compared to 60 per cent in 2013 (Gambia Demographic and Health Survey, 2019-20). The same report showed the proportion of children 0-5months of age, who were exclusively breastfed, increased from 47 per cent in 2013 to 53.6 per cent in 2019-20, surpassing the World Health Assembly Target of 50 per cent.

The proportion of women of childbearing age classified as overweight or obese increased from 23 per cent in 2013 to 36 per cent in 2019-20, while the prevalence of overweight among children under 5 years of age has reduced from 2.7 per cent in 2013 to 2.1 per cent in 2019-20 (Gambia Demographic and Health Survey, 2019-20). However, the gains registered in nutrition were impacted by the effects of COVID-19, climate change, increased food and energy prices on households. Therefore, investing in proven nutrition programmes could help in improving and sustaining the gains, as well as achieving 12 out of the 17 SDGs.

### **Programme Priorities, Strategies and Interventions**

Over the Plan period, Government will through the National Nutrition Agency (NaNA), MoH and other partners implement the following three programme priorities:

1. Reduce stunting, wasting and obesity in children under 5 years of age through improved nutritional and health interventions
2. Improve nutritional and health status of adolescent and women of childbearing age

The broad strategies cutting across the two priorities are described below.

- a) Reducing the prevalence of malnutrition among adolescent and women of childbearing ages
- b) Promoting optimal infant and young child feeding practices
- c) Promoting the utilisation of diverse and safe foods of high nutritional value
- d) Preventing and controlling micronutrient deficiencies among the population, especially adolescents, women, and children under-five years of age
- e) Reducing the prevalence of diet-related non-communicable diseases.

#### ***Reduce stunting, wasting and obesity in children under 5 years of age through improved nutritional and health interventions***

Over the Plan period, Government in collaboration with stakeholders and partners, will implement the following measures to reduce stunting, wasting and child obesity and promote exclusive breastfeeding:

- **Stunting:** Support the implementation of community-based programmes, which promote, protect and support optimal maternal, infant and young child nutrition; support interventions that promote improved water, hygiene and sanitation practices; strengthen and scale-up the implementation of all the components of the Integrated Management of Acute Malnutrition (IMAM) Protocol; build capacity of stakeholders on the prevention and control of malnutrition; and intensify social and behavior change communication on the causes, consequences, prevention and control of malnutrition
- **Wasting:** Strengthen growth monitoring and promotion at community and health facility level; strengthen and expand the Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative (BFHI) and Baby Friendly Community Initiative (BFHI) Programme; promote the implementation of Early Childhood Development interventions that stimulate and encourage responsive feeding; promote home fortification through the use of Multiple Micronutrient Powders (MMP) in improving complementary foods for children under the age of 2 years
- **Child obesity:** Advocate for the mainstreaming of infant and young child feeding issues into other relevant sectoral policies and plans; increase awareness of legislators, policy makers, councillors and the public on the importance of optimal infant and young child feeding; and advocate for automatic inclusion of Early Childhood Development in public

schools with School Feeding Programme, and promote exercise and physical education at all levels

- **Exclusive Breastfeeding:** Strengthen the enforcement of the Breastfeeding Promotion Regulation 2006; advocate for the provision of an enabling environment to facilitate breastfeeding at workplaces; strengthen and expand the Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative and Baby Friendly Community Initiative Programmes; improve capacity of health care providers, community-based extension workers and community representatives on infant and young child feeding; advocate for the incorporation of infant and young child feeding into the curricula at all levels of the formal, non-formal and Madrassa education system, as well as health training institutions; strengthen monitoring systems to effectively track progress of infant and young child feeding trends; promote the use of safe and nutritious locally available complementary foods; promote the consumption of biofortified crops and fortified food products; advocate for the scale up of bio fortified crops; increase awareness of legislators, policy makers, councillors and the public on the importance of optimal infant and young child feeding.

### *Improve nutrition and health status of women of childbearing age*

Interventions to address nutrition and health of adolescent and women of child-bearing age will focus on, reducing anemia and obesity, promoting micronutrient supplementation, and other health interventions through the following measures:

- **Anemia:** Promote social and behavior change communication for collective action to improve knowledge, attitude and practices on micronutrient deficiencies; promote the production, processing, preservation and consumption of foods rich in micronutrients; support the enforcement of the Food Fortification Regulation 2020; strengthen micronutrient supplementation programmes at all levels, particularly for the vulnerable groups; and include or strengthen micronutrient interventions in other public health measures such as Expanded Programme on Immunisation (EPI) / Reproductive, Maternal, Neonatal, Child and Adolescent Health (RMNCAH) services, malaria programmes and Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)
- **Obesity:** Strengthen social and behavior change communication on the causes, prevention, and management of diet-related NCDs; build capacity of health facility and community-based service providers on the prevention and management of diet-related NCDs; strengthen and scale up nutrition and lifestyle counselling for people with NCDs and strengthen the monitoring of diet-related NCDs

### *7.4 Outcome 4.4: Increased access to safe drinking water, proper sanitation, and hygiene*

The Government of The Gambia recognises that safe water, improved sanitation, and hygiene are essential to people's good health and development; and in contributing to the attainment of SDG 6 target 6.1 (To achieve universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water for all) and target 6.2 (Achieve access to adequate and equitable sanitation for all). The Gambia has policies to address the water and sanitation needs of the population, such as the National Sanitation and Hygiene Policy which was designed in 2011 but approved and adopted in 2017. There is also a National Water Policy 2006-2016 currently being reviewed.

The Demographic and Health Survey (2019-20) shows that significant progress has been made on access to safe drinking water. Overall, 95 per cent of the population have access to improved water sources; of which 96 per cent is urban and 92 per cent rural. In terms of sanitation, 72



per cent of households have improved sanitation although with significant differences between urban (80%) and rural (44%). The proportion of household members with a handwashing facility where water and soap or detergent are present is 30.9 per cent (Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, MICS 2018) which is low and therefore, there is a need for more sensitisation to the population on handwashing.

### **Programme Priorities, Strategies and Interventions**

Under RF-NDP, Government will implement the following three priorities:

1. Improve access to safe drinking water
2. Improve access to sanitation facilities
3. Improve good hygiene practices

#### ***Improve access to safe drinking water***

Key interventions to improve access to safe drinking water will include: community engagement on household water quality; chlorination of water sources; monitoring of water quality; improving access to safe potable water in schools and health centres; provision of new water supply systems and upgrading of existing water and sanitation facilities to enhance good hygiene practices among the beneficiaries; enhancing the capacity of partners to implement WASH services; and mapping of sanitation and water points in the country to better monitor coverage.

#### ***Improve access to sanitation facilities***

Key interventions to improve access to sanitation facilities will include: provision of improved sanitation facilities to institutions; community engagement; enhancing sanitation around public places, markets, and garages through the construction of public latrines; capacity building within community structures for proper upkeep to ensure hygiene; and improving access to basic sanitation in schools and riverine communities; and exploring innovations and initiatives to provide appropriate sanitation solutions to riverine communities and areas with difficult soil formations.

#### ***Improve good hygiene practices***

Key interventions will include: provision of handwashing facilities; undertaking sensitisation campaigns to enhance good hygiene practices; implementing community- led total sanitation (CLTS) approaches and school-led total sanitation ones aimed at stopping open defecation through the use of social/peer pressure education, collective community action to assist vulnerable people and support public facilities; promoting building of household latrines and Ventilated Improved Pit (VIP) latrines in schools and public places. The findings of the MICS (2018) shows that household population practising open defecation was 1 per cent at national level, 2 per cent at rural and 0.6 per cent in the urban area. Despite only 2 per cent of household population practised open defecation, this gains can be consolidated by scaling up the last mile campaign using UNICEF *NSA KENNO*<sup>29</sup> approach to achieve 100 per cent ODF status.

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<sup>29</sup> *NSA KENNO* – is a Mandinka word meaning “we can do it”

#### ***7.4 Outcome 4.5: Appropriate policies and strategies to harness the demographic dividend***

In six decades, The Gambia's population has increased steadily from 0.3 million in the pre-independence year of 1963 to 1.9 million in 2013. Subsequent projections recorded 2.3 million in 2018 (GLFS, 2018), and 2.6 million in 2021 (World Bank -WB 2021). The proportion is almost equal between males and females (UNFPA 2021); and about 43 per cent and 64 per cent of the population are below the age of 15 and 24, respectively (UNDESA 2021). Furthermore, the country's population growth is estimated at an average annual rate of 2.9 per cent (WB 2021) which is comparatively higher than the Sub-Saharan Africa average of 2.6 per cent (WB 2021) per annum. Currently, The Gambia is among the most densely populated countries in the continent with a population density of 203 persons per square kilometer (UNFPA Gambia 2022). Government is therefore cognizant of the need to put in place sound policies to face the challenge of rapid population growth, and at the same time, reap the demographic dividend.

#### **Programme Priorities, Strategies and Interventions**

Government, through the National Population Commission Secretariat (NPCS) and in collaboration with stakeholders and partners, will implement the following programme priorities:

- Accelerate the attainment of the demographic dividend
- Integrate demographic variables into sectoral plans and policies for socio-economic development
- Promote access to quality universal Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) services and information for all to make informed choices
- Manage fertility for a meaningful age structure to alleviate the dependency burden

#### ***Accelerate the attainment of the Demographic Dividend (DD)***

African Heads of State and governments, recognizing Africa's unique opportunity for accelerated economic growth presented by its youthful population, adopted a common position on DD at the African Union summit in January 2014 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. This was followed by the meeting of the high-level committee of Heads of State held in N'Djamena, Chad on 28 February 2014, which led to the adoption of the related African Union Resolution, and its subsequent inclusion in Africa Agenda 2063. Consequently, African Heads of State and Governments declared the year 2017 as the year for harnessing the Demographic Dividend. Reaping the demographic dividend becomes possible as fertility declines, and the proportion of a country's working-age population (15 to 64) grows faster than the proportion of the elderly (65 and older) and the very young (14 and younger) dependent segment of the population. This resulting low dependency ratio is perceived as opening a window of opportunity for accelerated economic growth. The dependency ratio construct assumes that the income generated by the working-age population can effectively support those who are economically dependent, such as children and the elderly. The example of the Asian Tigers (East and South-East Asian countries) is instructive in terms of the positive impact of demographic change on economic growth, when circumstances are favourable. In other words, reaping the demographic dividend will require the presence of certain contextual enabling factors.

The Gambia has experienced a significant change in its population age structure over time. Current estimates are that 38.5 per cent are within the age bracket 15-34 (youth) and 53 per cent in the age bracket 15 – 64 (Population Reference Bureau, 2021). This huge percentage of the youthful population, as well as the ratio of working population vis-à-vis the non-working

population (47%) is seen as an asset. However, what deserves to be underlined here is that the ratio between the number of effective producers and the number of effective consumers is more important for policy and planning purposes than the mere ratio between the dependent population and working-age population.

Reaping the dividend is not automatic, and the window does not last forever. Currently, there are inadequate plans in place to further accelerate the demographic transition (increase the gap between the working and the dependent population) as well as take advantage of the potential presented by the current shift in age structure in favour of the working population. This is the reason why The Gambia is making it a priority to domesticate the AU roadmap for reaping the Demographic Dividend, including investing in the following pillars as a matter of priority and urgency: Employment and Entrepreneurship, Education and Skills Development, Health and Wellbeing, Rights, Governance and Youth Empowerment; putting in place an Observatory for the Demographic Dividend, as well as other strategic interventions targeted at the opportunity presented by its youthful age structure.

The interventions under this priority area shall seek to provide a multi-sectoral approach to reaping the demographic dividend. Government through the NPCCS and partners will, to this end:

- Formulate and implement the National Population Policy 2023-2050 for reaping the demographic dividend and develop five-year action plans for the implementation of the policy
  - Conduct periodic monitoring and evaluation of the policy
- Establish and operationalise a National Observatory on the Demographic Dividend (NODD)
- Update The Gambia's demographic dividend profiling using National Transfer Account (NTA) and National Time Transfer Accounts (NTTA) Models
- Develop a Demographic Dividend Index (DDMI) and a Gender Demographic Dividend Index (GDDI)
- Promote Demographic Dividend and Gender Sensitive budgeting
- Undertake a study on harnessing the Demographic Dividend: accelerating socio-economic transformation
- Develop DD Theory of Change (ToC) to provide multi-sectoral priorities (results framework) through systematically analyzing the critical factors that influence the DD drivers' desired outcomes
- Carry out a remodeling exercise to build a case for investing in harnessing the DD across the key sectors
- Develop a DD Roadmap; conduct regular research in the field of generational economy and public policy
- Promote entrepreneurship and skills development
- Promote increased investment in access to affordable and quality education; and
- Promote increased investment in access to quality health services including adolescent and youth sexual and reproductive health; and promote good governance

By implementing this priority, government expects to achieve the following impacts:

- Significant change in the age structure in favour of the working population
- Low dependency ratio
- Improved quality of human capital (health, education, and vocational training)
- Increased savings, public and private investment, and economic performance

- Sufficient productive and remunerative jobs, especially for young people created leading to a reduced unemployment rate among youth
- Poverty reduced
- Socioeconomic growth and sustainable development stimulated
- Increased budgetary allocation to sectors that are key to reaping the DD

***Integrate demographic variables into sectoral plans and policies for socio-economic development***

Taking population dynamics into account in the design and implementation of policies and programmes is essential for achieving economic growth and sustainable development. Population is both a determinant and a consequence/outcome of any development effort. Therefore, policies and strategies aimed at achieving broad-based socio-economic development should consider demographic variables.

However, in the Gambia, the integration of population and demographic variables into the development process has been fraught with challenges. These include inadequate tools and modules for integration, limited expertise, limited appreciation of the value of integrating population factors into all aspects of development planning, and the lack of systems to aid the process. Even though population variables are integrated to some extent in some planning processes, there has not been any systematic integration of these factors at the various levels of planning. It is thus important that population variables be integrated constantly into all aspects of development planning and programming, to make the most of the structure and functional characteristics of the population.

Accordingly, Government through NPCCS, in collaboration with the Directorate of Development Planning, the University of The Gambia, and partners will:

- Develop the capacity of NPCCS staff and population focal persons in the Planning Units of various MDAs to effectively utilise population data for planning purposes; promote multi-sectoral coordination and strengthen NPCCS and the Directorate of Development Planning to ensure population dynamics are integrated into all sectoral planning and implementation processes
- Develop a Population database and a module for integration; enhance availability and use of data for population and development planning;
- Develop and implement advocacy programmes to strengthen and sustain political commitment, promote increased fiscal allocations, and release of adequate resources to enhance the integration of population variables into sectoral plans and policies; and
- Establish a legal framework to support the implementation of the National Population Policy.

By implementing this priority, government expects to achieve the following impacts:

- Policies and programmes that are responsive to the needs of the people
- Improved quality of development planning
- Enhanced equitable distribution of resources
- Availability of a National Population database and Integration Module
- Strengthened coordination mechanisms of NPCCS
- Strengthened planning units of the various MDAs
- Strengthened statistical system to provide adequate and reliable data
- Increased economic growth and sustainable development
- Enhanced knowledge of the inter-relationship between population and development

***Promote access to quality universal Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) services and information for all to make informed choices***

The Gambia has made progress in the areas of SRH over the past years. This can be largely attributed to different interventions undertaken by the government in collaboration with development partners and civil society organisations in pursuit of providing access to affordable SRH services and information, including Family planning in all government health facilities. This progress is evident in the various survey reports, particularly the Demographic and Health Surveys. Findings from the GDHS show that the Contraceptive Prevalence Rate (CPR) among currently married women increased from 9 per cent in 2013 to 19 per cent in 2019-20. Among adolescent girls, CPR slightly increased to 5.4 per cent in 2019-20 from 3 per cent in 2013. Total demand for family planning among currently married women has increased from 34 per cent to 43 per cent during the same period. Similarly, total demand for family planning among adolescent girls has increased from 20 per cent to 34.8 per cent. A decrease has been observed from GDHS in the maternal mortality ratio between 2013 to 2019-20 from 433 to 289 per 100,000 live births respectively. The decrease in maternal deaths and increased family planning uptake among married women over the years can be attributed to the increased access to SRH services.

However, deaths among infants, neonates and under-5s have all increased to 42, 29 and 56 from 34, 22, and 54 deaths per 1000 live births, respectively. Similarly, The Gambia continues to experience setbacks in its effort to provide universal health coverage across the country, particularly among adolescent girls and hard-to-reach areas. Consequently, there are still gaps in the attainment of the set targets for the health related SDGs. Therefore, it is necessary to intensify programmes to ensure that no one is left behind in the quest to achieve universal health coverage.

Government, through NPCS, in conjunction with the reproductive maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health (RMNCAH) plan and partners, will to this end:

- Undertake Information education communication/behaviour change communication (IEC/BCC) campaigns at both facility and community levels on SRH, including family planning, to change people's attitudes and practices regarding family planning
- Advocate for and sensitise women about the importance of early booking for their safety and that of their child
- Promote preventive and curative programmes for childhood illnesses
- Strengthen the existing coordination and monitoring of the delivery of SRH services and information
- Promote retention of women and girls in schools up to tertiary levels

By implementing this priority, Government expects to achieve the following impacts:

- Decreased infant, neonatal, and under-5 mortality
- Further reduction in the maternal mortality ratio
- Increased secondary completion rate among adolescent girls and teenagers
- Increased age at first marriage
- Increased age at first birth
- Improved health and economic status of women and children

### ***Manage fertility for a meaningful age structure to address the dependency burden***

Trends in fertility levels tend to have a significant impact on a country's age structure and dependency ratio. High fertility rates often lead to a large percentage of children in a country's population which increases the dependency burden on the working-age population, leading to negative socioeconomic implications. Generally, countries with high levels of fertility and very young populations require significant investments of resources to address their health and educational needs. In contrast, in countries with low fertility levels, the dependency ratio is low which enables countries to save and invest in other productive sectors of the economy.

Over the years, The Gambia has experienced a modest reduction in the total fertility rate from 5.6 in 2013 to 4.4 in 2019-20 (GDHS). Despite this progress, a more concerted effort is required to consolidate these gains. This would minimise the dependency burden on the working-age population and reduce government expenditure on social services, to facilitate the attainment of sustainable socioeconomic development. The demographic reality has resulted in a dependency ratio of 85 per 100 persons, which means that every 100 persons aged 15-64 years, who are economically active, support 85 persons aged 0-14 years, as well as those who are 65 years and above. Both the dependency ratio (85%) and the child dependency ratio (81%) are conservative figures based on the standard calculation of dependency. This assumes additional significance given that a lot of people in the active population are not as economically productive as they are assumed to be or are self-employed predominantly in the informal sector, which is characterised by uncertainty and precarious working conditions. The informal work rate in The Gambia was 79.5 per cent in 2018, according to ILOStat.

Government through NPCS in collaboration with RMNCAH-MoH and partners will, to this end:

- Promote access to family planning services and information
- Promote female education and employment opportunities
- Advocate for the integration of family planning and safe motherhood programmes into the primary healthcare system
- Promote the inclusion of family planning in the National Health Insurance Scheme
- Advocate for the creation of a separate budget line for family planning
- Promote preventive and curative programmes for childhood illnesses

By implementing this priority, Government expects to achieve the following:

- Reduced neonatal, infant, under-5 and maternal mortality
- Reduced dependency ratio
- Increased age at first marriage
- Increased age at first birth
- Accelerated demographic transition
- Increased savings and investment
- Empowered women and the girl child to realise their full potential
- Enhanced economic development
- Improved access to quality social services e.g., health, education, and social amenities
- Highly educated and productive workforce

## Enabling Factors

To ensure successful implementation, Government will put in place the following measures in the areas of policy reform, institutional alignment, and innovative implementation modalities – see Box 7.1.

<b>Box 7.1: Enabling Factors for Population and Demography</b>
<b>Policy Reform</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Enactment of a Bill for the National Population Commission including the Observatory for the Demographic Dividend</li><li>• Adopting an integrated planning approach to population and development</li><li>• Integrating family planning into the National Health Insurance Scheme</li><li>• Introduction of free tertiary education for girls</li><li>• Invest in disease prevention and public health</li><li>• Provide inclusive access to financial services.</li><li>• Enhance family planning delivery and outreach</li><li>• Creation of a separate budget line for family planning</li></ul>
<b>Institutional Alignments</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• NPCS to work closely with the Directorate of Development Planning and all the planning units of relevant MDAs to ensure that demographic variables are incorporated into sectoral plans and policies</li><li>• A Multi-sectoral coordination Committee for the Observatory established (NPCS, MoH, Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Welfare (MoGCSW), Ministry of Youth and Sports (MoYS), GBoS, Directorate of Development Planning, UTG, and all relevant institutions)</li><li>• Ensure the functionality of the Commission and the Technical Advisory Committee</li><li>• Harmonised coordination mechanism for population and development</li></ul>
<b>Innovative Implementation Modalities</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Establishment of a National Population database and an Integration Module</li><li>• Coordinated approach to monitoring indicators for the demographic dividend through the DDMI</li><li>• Having population focal persons in the planning units of all relevant MDAs, and regularly build their capacities on the importance of integrating demographic variables into sectoral plans and policies</li><li>• Introduction of demographic dividend and gender sensitive budgeting across all budget entities</li><li>• Introduction of a diploma programme on population and development at UTG</li></ul>

### *7.6 Outcome 4.6: Socioeconomic benefits of migration to national development enhanced and adverse consequence mitigated.*

The Gambia continues to be a country of origin, transit, and destination for migrants. As such the promotion of safe, orderly, and regular migration cannot be overemphasised. While relative progress is being made, a lot of challenges, including financial, human, and other structural issues, need to be addressed. Moreover, improving the technical capacities of stakeholders, strengthened coordination, and increased financial input will be needed to support the implementation of migration programmes which are in the National Migration Policy (NMP) 2020-2030. Capacity building and education trainings should be provided to a broad spectrum of migration actors, including policy makers, law enforcement agencies, and labour and social welfare officers. Efforts should be directed at ensuring that the collection and analysis of data

is expanded beyond data currently available to identify key migration issues. The other challenges include lack of a Migrant Resource and Response Centre (MRRC) and absence of a reintegration strategy. Government is therefore committed to ensuring that migration is conducted in a safe, orderly, and regular fashion, and will, to that effect, strengthen existing institutions and mechanisms, through mainstreaming migration across all the relevant cross-cutting policy domains. On protection of migrants, the government has made significant strides with the launching of the Labour Migration Strategy and the development of Ethical Recruitment Guidelines and pre-departure training manual. The Government has also signed bilateral labour agreements with migrant destination countries. All these efforts require critical support for full implementation.

### **Programme Priorities, Strategies and Interventions**

In the context of RF-NDP, Government, in collaboration with stakeholders and partners will implement the following five priorities:

1. Create conditions for migrants and diasporas to easily contribute to sustainable national development; enhance consular, protection assistance and cooperation throughout the migration cycle
2. Manage borders in integrated, secure, and coordinated ways
3. Prevent, combat and eradicate trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants internationally
4. Minimise the push factors (adversity, structural realities) behind irregular migration; and enhance opportunities and pathways for those eligible for regular migration
5. Reduce rural urban migration through decentralisation of basic and social amenities

***Create conditions for migrants and diasporas for full contribution to sustainable national development and enhance consular, protection assistance and cooperation throughout migration cycle***

The Gambia has been particularly proactive in seeking to harness and optimise the benefits of diasporadevelopment, in line with the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM). This proactive approach is because about 10 per cent of the citizens live abroad, and their financial contributions through remittances account for over 60 per cent of the country's GDP (CBG, 2022). The Gambia has undertaken a range of practical actions on all 10 action points of GCM Objective 19 to facilitate and optimise diaspora contributions to development.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Cooperation and Gambians Abroad has designated First Secretaries or Counselors in The Gambia's diplomatic missions abroad as diaspora and migration liaison or focal points. Additionally, the Ministry also organises consular missions to discuss the feasibility of opening consular missions and equally embarks on visits to Gambian migrant destination countries to collect firsthand information on ways to involve migrants in nation- building, and to ensure that they have consular protection within those jurisdictions.

The implementation of this priority is expected to lead to increased remittances, investment and skills transfer, incentives for enabling diaspora voting, and regular consular missions and bilateral engagements to ensure the protection and welfare of Gambians abroad.

To this end, Government will: promote circular migration; undertake diaspora skills mapping; establish a diaspora development fund; issue diaspora bonds; harness diaspora talent and skills



(human capital) in support of national development; take measures to attract short-term targeted capital inflows; foster long-term investment through partnerships; and increase consular representation.

The key related strategies will include encouraging the use of formal channels for transfer of remittances, outreach programmes, training of embassies and consular officers, mentorship programmes, voter registration of Gambians in the diaspora, increase consular representation in key strategic countries.

### ***Manage borders in integrated, secure, and coordinated ways***

The management of migration in Gambia is beset with many problems. These include unsystematic border management and uncoordinated border control, poor infrastructure, and inadequate facilities at the borders. The limited capacity of border officials, absence of mobility and communication tools for border patrols are also a challenge. Enhanced border management will result in well-coordinated and systematic border management and cross cutting Standard Operational Procedure (SOP) on border controls; as well as availability of standard infrastructure equipped with the requisite facilities, and enhanced capacity of border officials.

To this end, Government will take the following measures: Installation of Migration Information and Data Analysis System (MIDAS) system at four official land borders; construction of two border offices (Sabi and Nyimanyary); creation of an Interagency Border Coordination Committee (IABCC) and the juxtaposition of the offices of the agencies at border control points.

The following strategies will be implemented: periodic internal training of all border operatives on coordination and collaboration; harnessing internal revenue to complement the efforts of partners who are assisting in improving border post physical facilities; and put in place security arrangements that are in line with the role of offices which serve as the first point of contact at the land borders.

### ***Prevent, combat, eradicate trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants internationally***

The Gambia is a party to several multilateral international treaties and conventions to combat trafficking in persons. The National Agency Against Trafficking in Persons (NAATIP) established in 2011 is the lead government agency tasked with handling trafficking in persons. Although the Government has underscored its willingness to fight against the menace, the country in 2019, fell to tier 3 ranking of the US State Department's Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons Report. However, there have been efforts by NAATIP, and by extension, the Ministry of Justice which include the revival of the National Task Force on Counter Trafficking that aims to strengthen protection, prevention, prosecution, and partnership. These efforts resulted in the upgrading of the country in tier ranking from lowest Tier 3 in the 2020 US TIP Report to Tier 2 Watch List, and recently to Tier 2. Increased efforts to investigate, prosecute, and convict traffickers needs to be made. Furthermore, The Gambia Trafficking in Persons Act of 2007 is outdated and there is a need to review the legislation in view of current trafficking trends. The smuggling of migrants is also being seen in the country. In this regard, a smuggling bill is currently at the Ministry of Justice for legal advice. By implementing this priority, government expects to see a reduction in trafficking and smuggling cases, with the advent of legislation that is likely to deter traffickers and provide redress and justice to potential and actual victims.

To this end, Government will undertake sensitisation activities, training of key stakeholders, securing convictions for perpetrators, training of judges and law enforcement officers, improve surveillance, and further decentralise the NAATIP.

***Minimise the push factors (adversity, structural realities) behind irregular migration; and enhance opportunities and pathways for those eligible for regular migration***

The main drivers of irregular migration in The Gambia are: political (stringent visa regimes and sanctions, coupled with weak public policies, tend to push people to move irregularly in search of greener pastures); economic (poverty, unemployment, lack of industrialisation, low level of commercial agricultural production, foreign-dominated economy); social (inadequate skills, corruption, limited educational opportunity, pressure from family and peers, inadequate support for entrepreneurship; and access to resources and environmental degradation (inadequate availability of land).

By implementing this priority, Government expects the following positive effects: strong public policy to increase youth employment; promotion of industry; intensive commercial agriculture; improved and adequate skills training (TVET) for the youthful population.

To this end, Government with the support of development partners, will: provide entrepreneurship training to youth who are susceptible to irregular migration; strengthen already existing structures such as the National Coordination Mechanism (NCM) TWGs; continue awareness programmes on the dangers of irregular migration by key stakeholders and implement the Labour Migration Strategy. Government will work to achieve a relaxation of conditions on visa regime and sanctions, correct weak public policies, establish skills centres, invest in mechanised agriculture across the country.

***Reduce rural urban migration through decentralisation of basic and social amenities***

The absence of social amenities, the lack of employment and job creation opportunities in rural areas has led to the large number of people migrating to the urban areas, about 58 per cent population of The Gambia live in urban areas (2013 Gambia Population and Housing Census). This rural-urban drift has led to a growing demand for accommodation that cannot be met, leading to increased pressure on basic social amenities in urban areas, and increased population urban areas.

The measures to be taken by Government will lead to increased basic social amenities in rural areas, reduced rural urban migration, more people staying in rural areas. To this end, Government will undertake: decentralisation of services and empower municipalities and local governments to integrate migration into their respective strategies; employment creation at the rural levels; investment in agriculture and establishment of manufacturing industries.

***7.7 Outcome 4.7: Quality and affordable housing for all and urban planning improved***

Feedback from the regional and ward level consultations has revealed the issue of affordable housing is of key concern in all regions. Stakeholders complained of high cost of house rent, difficulties with real estate companies and rent agents, high cost of building materials, land, and cost of labour.

Even though housing and human settlement is considered a fundamental human right, its policy, strategy and regulatory environment in The Gambia is weak, critically inadequate, and in many cases outdated. For instance, despite the dynamism of the actors and activities, the laws and policies that govern the housing industry are obsolete. Many were developed in the 1980s and 1990s, with the most recent act being the Rent Act of 2014. Similarly, there is no act to govern the operations of the emerging real estate agencies, despite their growing presence within the housing industry. Thus, public perceptions are increasingly unfavorable towards housing and land governance.

The rapid pace at which The Gambia is urbanizing, and its unprecedented demographic boom, has led to an increase in population living in Kanifing and Brikama Local Government Areas within a relatively short period. Such urban growth in the country is currently accompanied by slow structural transformation, mainly due to lack of proper urban planning which leads to costly urban sprawl and uncontrolled development. A consequence of poor urban planning is the frequent and devastating annual flooding that affects many communities during the rainy season in Banjul, Kanifing and Brikama Local Government Areas. Dealing with these challenges at the local government level requires proper urban planning and good governance.

A National Urban Policy is a key step towards harnessing the gains of urbanisation. It also provides the required direction and course of action to support urban development. In the absence of an urban policy, Gambia is failing to provide an overarching framework to address the pressing issues confronting urban areas because of rapid development. These should include access to land, basic services, and infrastructure; urban legislation; delegation of authority to sub-national and local governments, amongst others. The Greater Banjul Sustainable Urban Development Programme 2020-40 (GB -SUDP) has been developed, which if implemented, can address the above issues. In the context of this Plan, Government is committed to taking steps towards affordable housing and promoting urban planning.

### **Programme Priorities, Strategies and Interventions**

Under this outcome, there are two (2) priorities:

1. Provision of affordable and quality housing for low- income earners
2. Improvement of urban planning

#### **Provision of affordable and quality housing for low- income earners**

When fully implemented, Government expects a reduction in overcrowding within urban areas, reduced number of slum-like settlements, more planned and organised settlements, and reduction in house rents.

To this end, Government in partnership with stakeholders will undertake the following measures: decentralisation of land administration; undertake land banking; strengthen of the housing unit at Department of Physical Planning; capacity building of actors; development of a national housing policy; formulate a regulatory framework for real estate development in The Gambia; institute the New Urban Agenda in Africa; establish planning and coordination mechanisms; strengthen the institutional capacity of Department of Lands, Surveys and the Department of Physical Planning and Housing and Local Government Authorities; encourage a Circular Economy in waste management with Councils partnering with Small and Medium waste recycling enterprises to promote waste recycling; sensitisation campaigns on waste management strategies; harness opportunities inherent in regulation, ICT, and decentralisation;

and support catalytic projects which involve mixed use and mixed income integrated settlements which integrate communities spatially, socially and economically into urban areas.

There are many other complementary issues linked to this priority but are dealt with elsewhere in the plan, such as:

- a) Legal frameworks and operational tools to address land disputes (formulation of a land policy; review of the existing Acts; formulation of the waste management Act)
- b) Development of a Land Use Master Plan for the whole country, cadastral mapping for the whole country; reduction of steps in the process of land documentation
- c) Proper waste management and sanitation strategies and DRR
- d) Proper land use planning and management (recognised land use categories, revised land use master plan, updated regional planning zones)

Government will therefore adopt a comprehensive and integrated approach to the provision of affordable housing in the context of this Plan.

### ***Improvement of urban planning***

Government will take measures to ensure the phased implementation of the priority actions identified in the GB-SUDP.

### **Enabling Factors**

Government will undertake a feasibility study on the establishment of a Ministry for Urbanisation and Urban Planning to move away from the current fragmented approach to urban planning.

## Chapter 8: Pillar V: Agriculture, Fisheries, Natural Resources, Environment and Climate Change

The Agriculture and Natural Resources (ANR) sector is a crucial driver of growth in The Gambian economy, providing livelihood opportunities for a significant proportion of the population. The findings of the Gambia Labour Force Survey (GLFS) shows that only 21 per cent of the population were engaged in market oriented agriculture. Under this pillar, Government is committed to reinvigorate the ANR sector and will pursue the following three outcomes presented in Table 8.1, and implement the priority programmes, interventions and strategies further elaborated below.

Table 8.1: Outcomes of Pillar V (ANR Sector) of the RF-NDP

Outcome 5.1: A modern, productive, and sustainable agriculture for food and nutrition security, economic growth and poverty reduction
Outcome 5.2: A vibrant fisheries and aquaculture sector contributing to economic growth and employment creation
Outcome 5.3: Sustainable environmental and natural resources management, enhanced climate action, and disaster risk reduction

### *8.1 Outcome 5.1: A modern, productive, and sustainable agriculture for food and nutrition security, economic growth, and poverty reduction*

Despite substantial investments in agriculture, the country remains a net importer of basic food commodities. However, the Government with the support of partners, intends to change this situation by implementing strategies and programmes to support transformation, modernisation, and sustainable commercialisation of the agricultural sector. Land reforms in partnership with communal landowners will be executed to provide economically viable farm sizes that support modernised and commercial crop and livestock production (to reduce the import bill). Initiatives to enhance private financing and insurance will be provided to boost private investment. Incentives for establishing small-scale industry for processing, packaging and quality assurance will be provided. Market linkages will be enhanced with the local hospitality industry and external markets to boost income and exports.

The revitalisation of the River Gambia as a reliable means to transport agricultural produce and sustainable source of water for irrigation will be explored. During the implementation of this RF-NDP, it is recommended to take measures to help farmers adapt to the negative impacts of saline-water intrusion, resulting from climate change. The measures must include the revision and updating of policies that relate to the frequency and volume of water that is pumped from the river, which enhances saline-water intrusion in the river, development and provision of saline-tolerant rice cultivars, and increase training support for rice farmers on most appropriate cultural and land use practices.

## **Programme Priorities, Strategies and Interventions**

Considering the poor performance of the sector, Government will prioritise the following over the Plan period:

1. Modernisation and commercialisation of the rice and maize value chains to enhance economic growth
2. Enhance the poultry value chain to improve food security and reduce the import bill
3. Scale up all year-round vegetable production to support the hospitality industry, reduce the import bill and enhance nutritional status
4. Enhance the production of small ruminants

### ***Modernisation and commercialisation of the rice and maize value chain to enhance economic growth***

To modernise and commercialise rice and maize production, Government will implement several key programmes such as land development (rehabilitation of the canals, bunds, sluice gates, peripheral dikes, field and access roads, field levelling, de-silting canals and integrating water sanitation, hygiene, and waiting sheds). It will support the development of new rice irrigation schemes. The introduction and promotion of hybrids, as well as appropriate technology development, testing and dissemination to boost production and productivity will be facilitated, and fortification scaled up. Steps will be taken to strengthen capacities through long-term training for rice breeders, seed technologists, biotechnologists, and laboratory technicians. Government will take measures to rehabilitate existing rice milling and other processing facilities and reorganise and strengthen existing farmer groups. To address the challenge of access to finance for the agricultural sector, Government will establish an Agricultural Development Bank and insurance schemes.

Several strategies will be deployed to implement the programmes referred to above. Government will:

- a) Transform the production, processing, packaging, and marketing of rice and maize to enhance food self-sufficiency, reduce the rice import bill and supply raw materials for the poultry industry
- b) Develop and implement a land utilisation strategy that supports the transformation of rice production from subsistence to commercial
- c) Support/engage smallholder farmers to partner with commercial farmers through leasing arrangements, to increase the land size under cultivation of rice for local consumption and export and for maize to serve as raw material for the poultry industry. This will be done through land development and utilisation of machinery and technology that supports commercial production (6 metric tons per hectare)
- d) Increase irrigation schemes in irrigable lands with emphasis on tidal irrigation as the most sustainable climate change adaptation option for The Gambia<sup>30</sup>. Increase the land under tidal irrigation for rice cultivation in the Central River Region and Upper River Region where tidal freshwater availability is higher. There are 81,000 hectares of irrigable land, of which only 3 per cent are under irrigation. Fifty-six per cent of the total irrigable lands are in Central River Region and 44 per cent in Upper River Region.

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<sup>30</sup> GoTG/UNEP/CTCN, 2028: Technology Action Plan (TAP)

- e) Introduction of fortified short-cycle high-yielding varieties that are resistant to adverse effects of climate change (erratic rainfall and salinity) will be explored. The capacity of breeders will be enhanced to introduce hybrids.
- f) Establish a centralised laboratory for the ANR sector.
- g) Implement the seed policy and scale-up interventions that support existing/established seed growers' centres, with seed out-grower schemes to produce timely quality -certified rice seeds. Government will support the establishment of joint ventures between private companies and Farmer Based Organisations (FBOs) or SMEs producing rice seeds.
- h) Support farmers to shift from traditional processing and production systems. Through Government support, processing companies will be established using PPP models. This intervention will create employment and enhance market value. GoTG will support and protect local SMEs that are into the processing of grains.
- i) Promote resilience-building activities that include community asset creation (e.g., construction of dykes to prevent saltwater intrusion, gabions, and contour farming to prevent soil erosion).
- j) Promote conservation agriculture, agroforestry, and tree growing to prevent windstorms and flooding, and to sequester carbon.

***Support the poultry value chain to enhance food security and reduce the import bill***

Programme interventions that strengthen the poultry value chain and reduce the import bill will include: establishment of parent stock; operationalise existing feed processing plants; long-term training for poultry nutritionists and veterinarians; establishment of quality assurance system for poultry; promote and strengthen the existing hatcheries, processing, packaging, cold storage and transportation facilities; provide social and behavioral change communication to promote poultry production and consumption; and reorganise poultry farmers into cooperatives and strengthen existing poultry organisations into out-growers.

To implement these programmes, Government will adopt the following strategies:

- a) Formulate a comprehensive strategy for the development of the poultry industry. The strategy will include production, processing, storage, and packaging for the industry
- b) Take measures to address poultry feed and day-old chicks which pose the biggest challenge to the poultry farmer. This strategy will consider the private sector. Government will support creation of joint venture/partnerships with the private sector or investors to establish local commercial firms that produce day-old chicks, stock feed, and other livestock-related products, using mostly existing local ingredients. This will boost the production of different raw materials such as grains, fish, groundnuts and sesame, and livestock feed as critical inputs will be readily available on the local market
- c) Establish regional services to distribute veterinary drugs and vaccines and deliver veterinary health services
- d) Organise and support poultry farmers into producer groups and out-growers to meet the demand. The leadership and organisation skills of these groups will be strengthened to produce high-quality animal and animal products; and coordinated marketing, through group marketing, would enable them to negotiate better prices for bulk produce

- e) Provide incentives for the local private sector and hospitality industry to participate in contract farming so that the farmers have access to inputs and a ready market for quality products. This will see a boost in agriculture production, especially livestock
- f) Strengthen and restructure the advisory and extension services to support precision agriculture.
- g) Strengthen data collection and management to inform policy measures, balance food security needs (short term) with import substitution objectives (long term)
- h) Promote diversification with dual-purpose breeds to increase resilience and rural development (a pilot is underway with the establishment of a parent stock of dual-purpose chicken)

***Scale up all year-round vegetable production to support the hospitality industry, reduce the import bill and enhance nutritional status***

Key programmatic interventions by Government to scale up year-round vegetable production will include: supporting social and behavioral change communication to promote the production and consumption of micronutrient-rich vegetables; reorganising and strengthening existing vegetable groups into producer organisations; introducing and promoting climate-smart vegetable varieties; reorganising and scaling up operations of existing local processors; promoting and strengthening the existing processing, packaging, cold storage and transportation facilities; strengthening Plant Protection Services to tackle common vegetable pests and diseases; and promoting, scaling up and diversifying water supply for vegetable production through private investment, promoting water labour- efficient technologies such as drip system, sprinkler and central pivot, and introducing and promoting greenhouses for vegetable production.

Government with support of partners will implement the following strategies:

- a) Through land reform, facilitate the allocation of economically viable plot sizes for vegetable production. Most farmers utilise 3-5 hectares of vegetable gardens to cultivate multiple crops. While this can lead to increased income for female farmers, it is laborious and is not meaningful in attaining envisaged growth targets
- b) Exploit a niche for Gambian vegetables: organic vegetable production is a clear niche for The Gambian vegetable growers who will be sensitised and trained on organic vegetable production and marketing. With access to the international market, farmers will gain premium prices and financing to expand their enterprises
- c) In partnership with the private sector, invest in reliable and sustainable water sources. Irrigation schemes will be developed to provide reliable water sources. Extensive irrigation will support large-scale vegetable production, especially using underground water from aquifers. Reservoirs will be built to capture surface water for additional supply.
- d) Facilitate and organise producers into groups or cooperatives to provide required quantities of the right quality for industry and export. These groups will produce inputs when needed, and aggregate and market produce for export. Quality assurance and product testing laboratories will be established for quick product testing and random sampling of batches. This will increase high-end market demand.
- e) Establish platforms for sharing/dissemination of the latest market information for farmers. Domestic, regional, and international market information will be available to farmers and investors to make informed decisions. The data will be collected, analysed, and disseminated



through various media channels. This will build upon already existing platforms (e.g., Roots MLS, ITC/MoTIE *Jokkalante*<sup>31</sup>) to connect vegetable gardens to buyers with in-built market linkage functionalities.

- f) Explore opportunities in urban agriculture to strengthen resilience. Some new estates in GBA are already trying out related initiatives.

### ***Enhance production of small ruminants***

Key programmatic interventions by Government to enhance production of small ruminants will include the following: strengthen the prevention and control of pests and diseases; promote and scale up pasture production and conservation; strengthen and enforce anti-bush fire laws; long-term training for breeders and nutritionists to strengthen community breeding programmes; establish and strengthen abattoirs, slaughterhouses, and market facilities; promote and maintain the existing processing, packaging, storage and transportation facilities; promote technology development, testing and dissemination; strengthen and enforce ECOWAS protocols on transhumance; provide social and behavioural change communication to promote the production and consumption of small ruminant protein; and create livestock watering points and range land.

Key strategies for implementation will include the following:

- a) Implement the extension policy and develop models of offering regional support services for the management and development of livestock. Services to control pests and diseases will be provided
- b) Develop a land use policy to provide for the demarcation of areas for livestock to avoid farmer/herder conflicts. With increasing population, intensive livestock production will be introduced and encouraged to reduce the pressure on land
- c) Promote and give incentives for the supply of raw materials used in making animal feed. This will cut down on exports until the local demand is met. This would include maize and small grains, fishmeal, groundnut cake and pollards or brans
- d) Support training in veterinary, livestock nutrition and production courses at different levels (certificate, diploma, and degree) and strengthen local colleges and universities in key livestock production, marketing, and processing/ value addition areas
- e) Form partnerships to establish meat production companies that meet international standards and growing needs of the hospitality industry. This will include livestock slaughtering, production of special meat cuts. The meat processing companies can be linked to producers, who then supply the company with fattened animals. This will boost local livestock production and marketing, as there will be available markets or off-takers
- f) Construct additional livestock watering points to provide water for smallholder farmers. Public water systems in the form of dams, boreholes or small flowing rivers are used to supply water. Some farmers use women to fetch water for their livestock during the dry season. Most farmers use pumped water from wells or boreholes with water tanks for storage or piped water systems in commercial or peri-urban areas for intensive livestock production systems

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<sup>31</sup> Jokkalante – Wolof word meaning “connecting”

## Enabling Factors

Enabling factors for the agriculture sector are presented in Box 8.1.

### **Box 8.1: Enabling Factors for the Agriculture Sector**

- The sector has comprehensive policies and strategies, but these strategies need to be implemented
- New policies need to be developed such as: water management policy and strategy; policy for genetically modified crops, cross border zoonotic diseases; land use policy, water use, energy reforms, trade and agricultural policies alignment and financial reforms
- Rural infrastructure: marketing, storage and refrigeration, and access roads.

## *8.2 Outcome 5.2: A vibrant fisheries and aquaculture sector contributing to economic growth and employment creation*

The Gambia is endowed with abundant fisheries resources. Although it has a relatively short coastline of about 80 km, it consists of diverse fish species in its territorial waters. The fisheries sector contributes approximately 12 per cent to GDP. From 2019, fisheries production surpassed crop production as a key driver of growth. The sector is a key foreign exchange earner and contributing to food and nutrition security. Its rational conservation, management and sustainable utilisation can make a substantial socio-economic impact on national development. According to the Department of Fisheries (DoF), the fisheries sector provides livelihoods for over 300,000 people in fishing or value chain activities.

### **Programme Priorities, Strategies and Interventions**

For the RF-NDP, five (5) programme priorities will be implemented by Government, with the support of partners:

1. Management and sustainability of fisheries resources
2. Aquaculture development
3. Climate change adaptation for fisheries habitat
4. Strengthening capacity for fisheries management and development (inland and coastal management)
5. Improved artisanal value addition, post-harvest, and marketing

### *Management and sustainability of fisheries resources*

An effective monitoring, control, and surveillance system, consisting of a reasonable mix of land, sea and air-based capabilities, new technologies and administrative mechanisms, is critical for proper management and ensuring the sustainability of fisheries resources. Government, over the Plan period, will therefore strengthen the monitoring, control and surveillance system in a manner that encourages and enforces compliance to prevent Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) fishing in the country.

Government will formulate and implement a national Monitoring, Control and Surveillance (MCS) strategy and National Plan of Action to prevent and eliminate illegal and unregulated fishing by introducing the following: supporting infrastructure and capacity-enhancing initiatives; systems to

electronically report fishing trip data, reports on purchases and information on fishing locations; a follow-through penalty scheme to serve as a deterrent to illegal fishing activities; support mechanisms for bilateral, sub-regional and regional cooperation to combat IUU; and systems that facilitate regional and international collaboration to monitor trans-shipment, and the fight against IUU products from entering the country.

### ***Aquaculture development***

Aquaculture is at its infancy in The Gambia. Development of aquaculture would enhance food security, create employment, reduce pressure on the catches and generate foreign exchange for the country. Among the key challenges of aquaculture in the country are low level of awareness in aquaculture, inadequate capacity, and low capital investment.

To tap the aquaculture potential of the country, Government will take measures to improve the capacity for commercial aquaculture development through human resources development and training. Furthermore, Government will establish aquaculture model farms in three regions of the country on a pilot basis to provide the space for research, experimentation, training, and extension services. This will result in trained aquaculturists, reliable and affordable access to aquaculture inputs and will enhance citizens' capacity for practical and tailor-made training on aquaculture.

To implement the aquaculture programme, high-potential aquaculture zones will be mapped out where land-based aquaculture can be permitted. Sustainable aquaculture investments will be promoted in those areas. An inventory of existing and planned investments in aquaculture will be developed to determine the country's full potential for aquaculture resources. Supportive programmes will promote joint public-private partnerships to enhance access to financial services, credit and incentives for promoting smallholder aquaculture as a business.

The facilities at the feed mill plants at Jahally and Kuloro will be strengthened to make them fully operational. Support will be provided to growth farmers in the form of pond construction, cages, and fingerling supply. The safety and quality of the farmed fish products will be ensured through the application and promotion of safety and control mechanisms, such as the statutory Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) methodology. To close the human resource gap, a curriculum will be developed in collaboration with competent educational and training institutions in the country to incorporate aquaculture training and education at all levels of the country's education system. Model farms will be used to provide training and acquisition of knowledge on different techniques of aquaculture. Practical and tailored training opportunities will be offered in collaboration with non-state actors for individual and group fish farmers.

### ***Climate change adaptation for fisheries habitat***

Coastal and soil erosion, increasing temperature, mangroves die-back, salt intrusion and habitat destruction are threatening the fisheries resources of the country. To conserve and develop the dwindling fisheries resources of the country there is an urgent need to ensure: improved adaptation and mitigation measures to climate change effects on fisheries and aquaculture resources; mangroves regeneration; and improved conservation of aquatic ecosystems associated with fish production.

The Department of Fisheries (DoF) will work to conserve and protect the aquatic environment, including the habitats and biodiversity to sustain fish production. The Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries (EAF) principles and its human dimensions in fisheries and aquaculture management systems will be incorporated into planning and management. Promotion and sensitisation campaigns will be held on improved adaptation and mitigation measures to climate change effects on fisheries and aquaculture resources, and strategies for averting the risk. Aquatic biodiversity and sensitive and critical habitats (such as mangroves, seagrass beds and marine habitats) will be monitored, and their contribution to ecosystem periodically assessed to identify critical changes, and their origin, for sustainable management. Non-biodegradable fishing gear will be reduced through gear replacement schemes. Advocacy programmes will be conducted to promote the use of selective, environmentally safe, and cost-effective fishing gear. The declaration of Marine-Protected Areas (MPAs) will be promoted for sustainability and genetic conservation, in line with the principles of marine and coastal zone management. Institutional capacity will be developed in relation to Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM), Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA), monitoring and restoration of mangroves, adaptation, and mitigation in relation to climate change and fisheries impact mitigation.

***Strengthening capacity for fisheries management and development (inland and coastal management)***

There is a capacity gap at the community-based level to adequately manage the fisheries resources in the coastal and inland waters. This is because of low-level knowledge of the sector policy and cultural and customary norms, as well as inadequate infrastructure in inland waters. Over the Plan period, Government will implement measures to ensure that capacity for the management and development of the fisheries sector is significantly strengthened.

This is expected to result in:

1. Improved enabling legal environment to support the operations of Centre Management Committees (CMCs)
2. Availability of a Master Plan to tap the full potential of inland fisheries resources
3. Increased allocation, management and monitoring of fishing rights through co-management arrangements
4. Established regional and national networks of Non-State Actors in the sector; and
5. Availability of mechanisms and guidelines to address conflicts in the fisheries sector

To this end, Government will enhance the efficient management of the inland and artisanal fisheries through effective extension services, using fisheries management institutions, based on community and stakeholder structures. Government will develop the mechanism and guidelines to address conflict in fisheries through DoF.

Government will assess the potential of inland fisheries resources and develop a Master Plan to tap them. Studies will be conducted to identify and address socio-economic, management and technical constraints associated with the failure of many inland fisheries projects. Partnerships will be formed with relevant institutions in managing the Gambia River Basin to maintain the biodiversity of the inland fisheries ecosystem, and promote integrated conservation, protection, and development of coastal and inland environments.

Regional headquarters will be built and equipped to support fisheries extension services. Advocacy, sensitisation, training, and demonstration campaigns will continue to encourage the fisher folk to adopt appropriate fish handling, preservation, and processing techniques. The fisher folk and local government structures will be trained to support Government control and surveillance activities.

Co-management arrangements will be encouraged for the management of the allocation of fishing rights. This will include participatory monitoring and enforcement for management of the inshore fisheries; legal and regulatory frameworks will also be provided in the form of byelaws to support the existence and operations of locally based participatory management institutions. The declaration of co-management areas, co-management agreements, and allocation and utilisation of proceeds of fishing rights will also be made. Training programmes will be provided to upgrade the skills and expertise of the co-management associations in assets management, basic business and financial management, and organisational management. This will increase the number of women and youth participating in fish production, processing and marketing in artisanal and industrial fisheries and aquaculture. Mechanisms and guidelines for addressing latent, emerging, and manifest conflicts in fisheries resource management will be put in place. Management committees will be provided training on addressing and managing conflicts in the artisanal fisheries subsector.

#### ***Improved artisanal value addition, post-harvest and marketing***

The fisheries sector is characterised by dilapidated infrastructure (smoke house, drying racks, fish handling platforms, fish processing equipment, inadequate ice and cold storage, poor hygiene and sanitary facilities, poor fish landing facilities, low capacity of post-harvest operators). Over the Plan period, Government will seek to improve access to investment, finance, and credit to enhance the sustainable development of the fisheries sector, and thereby enhance the contribution of fisheries to the economy. This will ensure that the availability and accessibility of fish is always sustained and utilised in forms that are safe and nutritious for consumption, as part of healthy living.

Measures will therefore be taken to improve dilapidated infrastructure and improve health, hygiene, and sanitary conditions. The economic returns from fisheries will be increased through investments in post-harvest fisheries infrastructure and facilities.

Government, in partnership with development partners and the private sector will establish the required onshore infrastructure and facilities at all major inland and coastal fish landing sites to increase the economic value of fish products. The facilities and services at the Banjul Fisheries Jetty will be upgraded to the standards of a modern fishing harbour. These improvements will promote fish landings and exports to enhance employment opportunities for Gambians and increase earnings from artisanal and industrial fisheries. The shelf life of fish will be improved through the provision of facilities for cold storage, refrigerated trucks to transport fresh fish to distant markets, and cooler boxes for fishermen along the value chain. Processing and packaging of fish and fish products will be established. A bycatch and post-harvest loss reduction and utilisation programme will also be instituted.

Institutional linkages between the DoF and other institutions will be strengthened. Guidelines on fish processing and preservation will be developed and implemented to preserve nutrient integrity. The ICZM Secretariat will be established and managed.

### *8.3 Outcome 5.3: Sustainable environmental and natural resources management, enhanced climate action and disaster risk reduction*

The Gambia cherishes the national ecological resource base of the environment, which is essentially the basis for livelihood across the country. However, this natural endowment is constantly being degraded and destroyed at an alarming rate due to several factors. Overall, the country's rich biodiversity is at risk of depletion due to habitat destruction, increased urbanisation and cultivation, uncontrolled burning, and wood utilisation. Furthermore, The Gambia is faced with challenges in waste management, leading to sanitation and health related problems.

The Gambia's main environmental concerns include deforestation, desertification, waste management, water pollution, and the adverse effects of climate change. The country has a forest cover of 423,000 hectares (about 47% of the total land area), 300,000 hectares as forest, and 123,000 hectares considered to be other woodlands (National Forest Assessment 2010), but nearly 70 per cent of these forests are degraded. Anthropogenic factors, exacerbated by climate change, pose a tremendous threat to the environment and natural resources of the country. These factors stem from the increasing population pressure, expansion of farmlands, and socio-economic/livelihood activities that cause deforestation and land degradation.

Addressing environmental challenges is a global problem, irrespective of the economic status of the country. Therefore, The Gambia is ready to partner with any country or organisation in its efforts to play its part by using development approaches that are both sustainable and environmentally friendly.

Despite these challenges, it is important to note that progress is being made to address the effects of climate change. In 2015, before the signing of the Paris Agreement, the country submitted its Intended Nationally Determined Contribution (INDC). Finalised in 2015, The Gambia's NDC aims to reduce emissions by 45.4 per cent by 2030 (compared to a business-as-usual scenario). The Climate Action Tracker has rated the country's unconditional NDC targets as being among the most ambitious; and affirmed that they are compatible with the Paris Agreement target of keeping global warming below 1.5°C by 2050. The Gambia's second NDC is set to improve upon this further by increasing its emissions reduction target to 49.7 per cent by 2030, given the strong mitigation potential through circular economy actions. This is in line with the 2050 Climate Vision and the already ambitious mitigation targets set out in the Energy masterplan. The Gambia has also in 2022 submitted its long-term climate change strategy which sets out clear mitigation and adaptation targets towards 2050. The Gambia as a member of the LDC negotiating group is also a front runner for the LDC Initiative For Effective Adaptation and Resilience (LIFE-AR).

During the implementation of the preceding NDP, the use of Ecosystem-based Adaptation (EbA) to restore degraded ecosystems by increasing tree cover, and the promotion of natural resource-based enterprises and value addition for natural resources products were found to be the most cost-effective and impactful in building resilience to climate change. Highly targeted EbA

measures such as planting of mangroves in degraded wetlands, planting of high-value climate resilient agroforestry tree species in farmlands, and enrichment planting and fire management in forests and national parks were found to significantly increase tree cover and yield expected outcomes in a relatively short period. The introduction of natural resource-based enterprises such as beekeeping, ecotourism and management of baobab groves also showed great promise during the last NDP implementation.

### **Programme Priorities, Strategies and Interventions**

Government will pursue implementation of the following programme priorities over the Plan period:

1. Agriculture, Forestry and Other Land Use (AFOLU)
2. Sustainable Waste Management – Waste sector adaptation
3. Coastal Resilience and Adaptation
4. Hazardous chemical and Pesticides Management
5. Greening Energy and Transport Sectors
6. Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM); and
7. Disaster Risk Reduction

### **Agriculture, Forestry and Other Land Use (AFOLU)**

Government will increase forest cover under sustainable management and slow down or control the conversion of forestlands for residential settlements, farmland, or other land uses. Encourage increased use of wood in construction in place of materials like steel or cement with higher carbon footprints. This can incentivise private forest owners to keep land forested thereby maintaining and enhancing forests as a net Green House Gas (GHG) sink.

The Government plans to implement a series of actions that will build on successes of the last NDP as well as institute the necessary policies, strategies that will enable the Gambia to achieve the desired economic development without jeopardizing its long-term climate change commitments, as laid out in the Nationally Determined Contributions and Long-term Strategies. The proposed activities, through the mainstreaming of EbA will involve the the Gambia adoption of policies and actions that aim to reduce ecosystem degradation in the short term, while increasing derived benefits through value addition and product enhancement.

To this effect, the following actions will be prioritised during the RF-NDP implementation.

- Develop and implement policies and strategies to reduce, halt and reverse ecosystem degradation, driven by unsustainable practices such as agricultural expansion, extraction for firewood and charcoal and uncontrolled bushfires. These include the development of an integrated bushfire management strategy and action plan, a national policy, strategy, and action plan on minimum tree cover in settlements and agricultural landscapes
- Invest in the transition from the use of firewood and charcoal to Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) as main cooking fuel in urban areas by the 2032. This transition will have the multiplier effect of significantly reducing pressure on woodland ecosystems and improvement in the health of women and children, who are the most affected by indoor air pollution resulting from cooking with wood fuel

- Upscale and mainstream ecosystem-based approaches to combat the negative impacts of climate change

Strategies to manage the forest to reduce the risk of fires would reduce future carbon emissions, especially given longer fire seasons caused by climate change. Existing forests will be sustainably managed for greater carbon sequestration through participatory forest management (Community-Based Forest Management- CBFM), intensive restoration of degraded areas, planting of fast-growing exotic and indigenous tree species. Promote forest product-based enterprises and Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFPs) to reduce logging.

Government will also implement nature - based solutions such as agroforestry practices using leguminous species to improve on farm production, productivity and food security. Other actions include mangrove rehabilitation for conservation of biological diversity, serving as windbreaks, control run-off, regulating and nourishing the aquifer of the underground water table, providing shade for crops and animals, and stabilizing coastal areas. This will contribute to sustainable agricultural and fisheries production and productivity, and food security.

#### ***Sustainable Waste Management – Waste sector adaptation***

During the Plan period, Government will promote the concept of a circular economy and work with stakeholders and partners to carry out a national awareness campaign to encourage the composting of organic household waste, as well as the general recycling of household waste; introduce waste separation at landfills.

Government will implement integrated waste management strategies and adequate regulatory frameworks (enact a waste management strategy and bill) to guide waste management processes, practices, and facilities (landfills, recycling, and incinerators), coordinate management of watercourses, and enforce environmental regulations. Safe waste disposal methods will be identified for the fraction of residual waste that cannot be reused. Plans to close open dumpsites will be implemented and alternative sites identified. Opportunities to create jobs and improve working conditions in the sector will be initiated. Awareness, enforcement, removal, and proper disposal of waste, such as plastic products, hazardous waste and e-waste will be enhanced. Mitigation strategies will be employed to reduce landfill methane generation through waste prevention, recycling and banning biodegradable waste from landfills, orga-oxidation, waste separation and collection.

#### ***Coastal and Riverine Adaptation and Resilience to Climate Change***

The lowlands on both banks of the River Gambia contain the major arable lands and ecosystems which are most suitable for agricultural production and other livelihoods. The extensive mangrove systems and mud flats flanking the river are important for spawning, and as habitats for aquatic species. Fish and shrimp from these wetlands provide the population with their daily protein supply. Shrimp farming is becoming very important with its potential as an export commodity. The mud flats and adjacent low marshy lands are also used for rice cultivation. Reducing saline intrusion into freshwater zones and arable lands on both banks is a key climate change adaptation



and resilience- building activity. The salinisation of freshwater, soil and arable lands, as a result of climate-induced sea-level rise and reduction in the quantity of surface and groundwater resources due to reduced rainfall, has devastating effects on agriculture and the ecosystem. This is particularly so for rice farming in The Gambia lowland areas.

Promoting sustainable management and protection of the coastal, marine, and inland water resources is a top priority under the Plan period. Climate change effects like sea level rise, and coastal habitat destruction along the coastal zone are now becoming evident; and will inevitably increase the vulnerability of coastal and riparian communities. As such, Government intends to implement a range of engineering solutions, both hard and soft. In this regard, the soft solution of using vegetation to protect the land from further erosion is considered to be achievable within the timeframe of the Plan.

The proposed interventions will include:

- Nature-based solution measures (re-vegetation) also referred to as green measures to reduce flood risk while producing additional economic, environmental and/ or social benefits
- Provide advice on techniques to reduce coastal hazard risks in settlements
- Creating natural sinks around the coastal areas by avoiding infrastructural development within the adjacent wetlands
- Formulating and implementing climate change adaptation strategies is a determinant in tackling saline intrusion in the coastal and riverine zones of the country has become urgent. In the quest for food security and building climate resilient communities, the country must create a robust adaptation policy to effectively address the salinity threat in rice-growing ecologies. Many food security and poverty alleviation policies and strategies in the country have failed to satisfactorily factor in the salinity issue. Therefore, with projected severe impacts of sea-level rise and reduced rainfall for The Gambia, there is an urgent need for effective salinity proofing for crop protection. In this regard, the development of salt tolerant crop cultivars and species through research in biotechnology could be an effective adaptation to the impacts of saline intrusion on the coastal zone and the estuary of the River Gambia.
- Finalise the Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) Bill and Strategy and strengthen the coastal and marine programme to an ICZM Secretariat.

### ***Hazardous Chemical and Pesticides Management***

The Government of The Gambia attaches high priority to reducing chemical pollution and promoting sound management of chemicals and associated wastes. The country has been working closely with international partners on the implementation of the Chemicals Conventions which is considered crucial to further strengthen international commitment on the reduction of exposure to chemicals.

Cognisant of the health risks of local exposure to chemicals especially persistent organic pollutants, Government recognises the need to create the right level of awareness. Furthermore, The Gambia has recognised the urgent need to take steps towards the development of an

institutional framework for the sound management of chemicals to support a rapidly evolving industrial and agricultural sector.

Accordingly, Government with support from development partners intends to develop and implement an integrated approach to address the financing and sound management of chemicals and waste; increase sustainable institutional capacity for the sound management of chemicals and waste throughout their life cycle; strengthen the participation of CSOs/NGOs and the private sector in addressing chemical issues and their health and environmental effects; enable a collective approach to developing adequate responses to situations and circumstances; and work towards creating awareness on issues related to chemicals and enforce national legislation for their production and use.

### ***Greening of energy and transport sectors***

Government is committed to achieve a net zero emission target by 2050 within the electricity generation sub-sector. During the Plan period, the following interventions will be implemented: 13 solar PV farms with storage capacity installed of 250 MW by 2050; 10MW of wind power by 2030; subsidies to encourage the use of improved cooking stoves; subsidies to facilitate the use of power-saving devices and appliances; Hydro Energy Power Plant (Sambangalou hydro-electricity Dam) to supply 250MW by 2030; capacity building programmes and public sensitisation in renewable energy development; set up a biomass facility to produce 10MW of power.

To curb Green House Gas (GHG) emissions, Government is determined to promote and encourage the use of renewable energy resources that would assist the country in achieving a net-zero GHG emission scenario by 2050. In its electricity strategy, The Gambia plans to achieve a 30 per cent renewable energy proportion by 2030. Government will continue to implement the National Energy Policy (NEP) 2015-2020, which plans to double the share of renewable energy resources every 10 years.

Government will invest in research and adoption of renewable energy from carbon-free sources (i.e., solar, wind, power-saving devices and appliances and hydropower) and biomass (i.e., organic materials from plants or animals). This will bridge the gap between the discourse and reality of net-zero CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. The use of these clean energies and renewables will place the country on the path to carbon neutrality and net-zero CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

With respect to the transport sector, Government is committed to achieve a 95 per cent reduction in emissions. To this end, the following interventions will be implemented: vehicle fuel efficiency standards improved by introducing eco-driving training and promotion of vehicles using low-emission fuel and hybrid electric vehicles; introduce nationwide annual vehicle emission testing by providing every administrative region with the required facilities; strengthen public transport system by increasing the number of Government-owned buses, whilst maximising their comfort, speed and reliability; revive river transportation of goods and passengers; construct new roads and improve existing roads to have designated lanes for public transport, bicycles and pedestrians, as well as flyovers to ease choke points; set the age limit for imported vehicles at the maximum of 3 years.

### ***Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM)***

To enhance the integrated management of water resources, Government over the Plan period will: review and update the IWRM roadmap of 2009; carry out stakeholder mapping and consultations at local and regional levels; assess household and domestic use of water; monitor boreholes and study demand-supply-recharge; undertake human and infrastructure capacity development; carry out sensitisation and awareness creation on the IWRM approach and concepts; enhance data collection and analysis; and enhance transboundary cooperation.

All this will be underpinned by the IWRM policy and strategy that Government will formulate. Guidance, awareness, and sensitisation on settlement patterns will be conducted nationwide. Activities will support judicious utilisation of water resources. Groundwater and surface water bodies will be monitored to ensure sustainability and enhanced availability of healthy ecosystems. Regional cooperation and collaboration will be strengthened in water resource management.

### ***Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR)***

As loss and damage from climate-related events such as droughts and floods increase, Government under the Plan period will implement urban flood risk management to build resilience through disaster risk reduction measures. Government has selected Kotu stream, covering 2,476 ha and with an estimated population of more than 200,000 as a priority project area to implement fluvial and pluvial risk reduction measures, partly using nature-based solutions. The interventions to be undertaken include enlarge or renew bridge or culvert openings in Kotu stream, clean and reprofile the stream and flood plains, develop plans for accessible green river parks, among other options.

Government will continue to review resilience building and DRR concepts and their applicability in anticipating and alleviating the often-unpredictable impacts arising from climate change variations. Government together with the development partners will create risk awareness, take preventive measures, increase preparedness, and build back better as well as promote learning and sharing as part of systematic capacity building on climate change risk, planning and response. These efforts will complement actions planned under Pillar I and Pillar 6 of the Plan.

Household and community resilience will be built to address shocks and crises arising from climate change. Urban development will be controlled and building norms and renovations to the existing building stock will be adapted to reduce vulnerability. The use of technology to facilitate information sharing, data collection and analysis will be promoted to ensure sustainable environment management and protection.

As part of risk financing mechanisms, the Government will ensure that the governance of the emergency relief fund is improved and will be adequately and frequently resourced to ensure timely response to disasters. To promote risk transfer, a policy framework will be developed to support macro, meso, and micro-insurance schemes to respond to climate related hazards through Weather Index Insurance (WII), weather-based risk financing mechanisms and systems to assess loss and damage. In addition, Government will focus on promoting concrete resilience building activities that include community asset creation (e.g., construction of dykes to prevent saltwater intrusion, gabions, and contour farming to prevent soil erosion), promote conservation agriculture, agroforestry, and tree planting to counter windstorms and flooding.

## Chapter 9: Pillar VI: Empowerment, Social Inclusion - Leaving No One Behind

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which The Gambia fully subscribes to, are a strong call to empower and promote the social, economic, and political inclusion of all. In this regard, the concept of Leaving No One Behind (LNOB) is the central, transformative promise of the Agenda 2030 and its SDGs. In the context of RF-NDP and building upon past efforts, Government has a strong commitment to address issues of inadequate empowerment, social exclusion, discrimination and stigmatisation of women, children, persons with disabilities and older persons. It recognises that removing such barriers is key to unleashing the potential of large segments of society and establishing a just and equitable society.

Under this pillar, the Government will redouble efforts to address issues and challenges faced by Gambian women, children, youth, persons with disabilities, and older persons (elderly). The outcomes, programme priorities, interventions and strategies are described in Table 9.1.

Table 9.1 Outcomes of the RF-NDP Pillar on Empowerment and Social Inclusion

Outcome 6.1: Empowered Gambian women economically, socially, and politically
Outcome 6.2: Children are nurtured and enjoy their full rights and potentials in life
Outcome 6.3: Enhanced economic opportunities and all-round social and cultural development for youth empowerment
Outcome 6.4: Inclusiveness and care for persons with disabilities and older persons improved
Outcome 6.5: Resilience of households and individuals strengthened, and safety nets put in place to address vulnerability through social protection in The Gambia

### 9.1 Outcome 6.1: Empowered Gambian women economically, socially, and politically

The Gambia is signatory to several international and regional protocols that seek to secure the rights of women and girls including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). At the national level, the Constitution of The Gambia guarantees women their full rights as citizens, in addition to other national legal instruments. The Women's Act, (2010) domesticates the provisions of the CEDAW and further strengthens the rights of women in society. Apart from the strong legislative environment to protect women, the country has registered some other significant milestones to empower women, notably, the increase in judicial appointments, the ban on Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C), participation of women in peace keeping amongst others. Despite this progress, challenges to women's advancement remain inhibited by deeply rooted societal norms and barriers. These barriers include but are not limited to financial inclusion and women's overall participation rate in the workforce, which is lower than that of men. About 55.5 per cent (GLFS, 2022-23) of women are economically inactive. In addition, women reach lower education levels and show a lower awareness and understanding of financial products than men. About 35 per cent of women have no education compared to 21.6 per cent of men (GDHS 2019-20). Adult female literacy is 47 per cent, compared to 67 per cent for men 15-49 years (GDHS 2019-20). Women's low participation in the economy and their low level of literacy and skills have exacerbated their poverty.

## **Programme Priorities, Strategies and Interventions**

For the RF-NDP, Government in collaboration with stakeholders plans to implement the following programme priorities:

1. Gender mainstreaming in sectoral policies and plans
2. Women's economic empowerment (public procurement, mobile banking)
3. Women's political empowerment (participation and representation in decision making)
4. Ending Sexual Gender Based Violence (SGBV)
5. Engaging women in peace and security

### ***Gender mainstreaming in sectoral policies and plans***

The primary aim of gender mainstreaming is to consider the differential needs of the target groups and beneficiaries when designing, implementing, and evaluating policies, programmes, and projects, so that they benefit all groups equally, and enhance gender equality. Mainstreaming gender in policies and programmes ensures equal opportunities for all groups in society and their full participation so that development efforts can have an equal impact. It may also lead to changes in organisations – structures, procedures, and cultures to create organisational environments which are conducive to the promotion of gender equality. Gender mainstreaming can have a positive impact on social and economic goals and make communities safer.

According to the assessment of NDP 2018-2021/22, out of a target of 16 sectors, 12 had successfully mainstreamed gender in their policies and plans. More sectors and institutions are yet to mainstream gender. However, several constraints remain to be addressed. These include conceptual confusion, inadequate understanding of the linkages between gender perspectives and different areas of work and gaps in capacity to address gender perspectives once identified. Effective gender mainstreaming and policy implementation is predicated on the availability of adequate financial resources which ensure that budgets have specific provisions for gender equality initiatives.

Under this pillar, Government will implement the following key interventions: high level engagement with heads of institutions on gender mainstreaming in policies and plans, capacity building of a critical mass of public servants in gender mainstreaming and gender budgeting, mandatory online training of Government staff on gender, public seminars to keep gender alive, and introduction of the Gender Equality Seal in institutions to address gender gaps and structural inequalities.

The following strategies will be deployed to address these constraints: conduct gender institutional situational analysis of the sectors, enhance the capacity of MDAs and Public Enterprises (PEs) to mainstream gender and build capacities on gender budgeting, monitor performance of MDAs and State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs) in gender mainstreaming.

**Box 9.1: Enabling Factors and Innovative Approaches to support Gender Mainstreaming**

1. The MoGCSW shall be supported with a budget for gender mainstreaming to achieve this outcome
2. The Ministry shall make available gender mainstreaming manuals, brochures, and flyers for use by various internal and external stakeholders in their gender mainstreaming activities, as well as guidelines on Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) to provide stakeholders with a guiding framework
3. The capacities of designated Gender Focal Points shall be built in all ministries
4. Online training on gender should be mandatory for all public sector servants

***Economic empowerment (public procurement, Women Enterprise Fund (WEF), financial inclusion)***

Economic empowerment of women in The Gambia can yield enormous benefits. Despite inherent challenges, Gambian women continue to make enormous contributions to the economy, whether in business, on farms, as entrepreneurs or employees, or by doing unpaid care work at home. Evidence shows that when women are living safe, fulfilled, and productive lives, they can reach their full potential, contributing their skills to the workforce and raise happier and healthier children, thus justifying their economic empowerment. Women's economic condition has been worsened by the COVID-19 pandemic as most of them are in the informal sector which was the hardest hit. The Russia-Ukraine war has triggered increased prices in food, fuel for cooking, (charcoal and firewood) oil, gas, basic commodities, and transportation costs. This has affected women's abilities to access distant markets that offer better prices and conditions to sell their farm produce, especially in rural areas. Additionally, social norms, and low level of education constrain women's capacity to access and meaningfully use financial services.

To overcome financial barriers faced by women, Government will:

- Employ measures to close the gender gap by supporting the inclusion of the financially excluded women -the unbanked, and non- digitally literate
- Support the development of women-led businesses through their access to and use of financial services and access to public procurement; and
- Expand and scale up initiatives such as the WEF

At the more social level, to support women in their reproductive role, the Government and private institutions will take steps to subsidise the cost of care work through ensuring the availability of care facilities in workplaces e.g., crèches for parents (especially lactating mothers).

Other robust strategies to address this priority include ensuring timely disbursement of WEF resources, amendment of the GPPA Act for gender sensitivity and development of a mobile app. Furthermore, Government will support digitalisation of women-owned businesses through supporting e-commerce platforms and use of mobile money, capacity building on entrepreneurship skills, provision of start-up capital and loan recovery schemes, strengthening monitoring and evaluation of women's economic empowerment systems, creating a women economic block to provide guidance and counselling in finance, and setting up of coaching and mentoring programmes in finance for women.

**Box 9.2: Enabling Factors: Policy Reforms and Innovative Approaches for Economic Empowerment of Women**

1. Government to institute a law of 30 per cent affirmative action for public procurement for marginalised groups (women, youth, and Persons with Disabilities (PwDs))
2. Ensure regulatory framework for mobile banking
3. Ensure e-procurement is instituted
4. Amend the Women's Enterprise Fund Act 2020 (e.g., payment modalities)
5. The Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Welfare (MoGCSW) should, in the long-term, work towards the creation of a Women's Bank with networks that operate independently from the Ministry
6. The MoGCW shall conduct studies to ascertain the formalisation of *Osusu groups*<sup>32</sup>. This is a well-known form of informal savings mechanism, enabling people to mobilise resources needed for business and personal use

***Political empowerment (women's participation and representation in decision making)***

In The Gambia, women constitute 51 per cent of the population and 58 per cent of voters (UNOWAS-UN Women 2018). However, the trend in women's political participation and representation in decision making continues to show that women in The Gambia still suffer inequality, partly because their interests, needs and priorities are not considered in the political field. In the cabinet, as of 2022, only 3 out of the 23 Ministers are women, compared to 4 out of 21 Ministers in 2016, including the Vice President. This shows a percentage reduction in Cabinet portfolios occupied by women from 19.05 per cent to 13.04 per cent in 2016 and 2022, respectively. This also means The Gambia is far below the prescribed 30 per cent target of the CEDAW on women's representation at the Cabinet level. In 2018, councillorship election recorded a total of 409 contestants (362 male, 47 female). Out of a total of 128 ward councillors elected within the 8 LGAs, only 8 are women (6.25%), compared to 120 men (93.75) (NGP, 2023-2030). Also in 2018, there was only 1 female candidate in the Mayoral and Chairperson election. In 2022, there were 27 judges in the country of which 14 were females. In addition, there were 34 Permanent Secretaries out of which 9 were females (PMO). In 2022, there were only 3 female Cabinet Ministers accounting for 14 per cent in the Cabinet. This shows that there is significant room for improvement. Constitutional provisions for increasing the chances of more women acceding to positions in s both Local Government and National Assembly, coupled with the establishment of capacity development and mentorship forums such as the Women in Local Government Forum, are recommended.

According to the recommendations of the Beijing Platform for Action to which The Gambia is signatory,

*“Women's equal participation in political life plays a pivotal role in the general process of the advancement of women. Women's equal participation in decision-making is not only a demand for simple justice or democracy but can also be seen as a necessary condition for women's interests to be considered. Without the active participation of women and the incorporation of women's*

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<sup>32</sup> An osusu is a form of rotating savings and credit association for microfinancial capital accumulation.

*perspectives at all levels of decision-making, the goals of equality, development and peace cannot be achieved”.*

Strategies to achieve this outcome are focused on the demand for 30 per cent affirmative action to ensure women’s representation across the board, and addressing socio-cultural norms and beliefs and practices that hold women back.

More specifically, efforts will be aimed at: grassroots and public sensitisation on the need for women’s political participation, sensitisation of community and religious leaders, high level advocacy for affirmative action to achieve the 30 per cent representation, targeting the leadership, engaging men to support women in politics and increased advocacy for women to support women in leadership positions.

The following are key programmatic interventions that will be implemented: providing support to Gambia Federation for the Disabled (GFD) to advocate for inclusion of PwDs in the National Assembly, ensure targeting of potential female candidates and political party select committees for confidence building and training on leadership, encouraging political party manifestos to ensure parity of males and females and employing the use of social media to increase awareness of the public on the significance of female participation and representation in decision making positions.

**Girls:** Girls’ empowerment networks and CSOs are making their mark in highlighting issues that directly hinder girls’ development and performance in society. These include FGM/C, early marriage, sexual harassment in schools and the workplace and in addressing the new forms of violence that have emerged, such as cyber bullying. The Government will leverage on the support from development partners, in collaboration with NGOs and CSOs to amplify their voices and accord them greater freedom and space to realise their potential and contribute to the public discourse.

Government is committed to creating the right environment for girls to thrive and ensure improvement in women’s representation in decision making at all levels.

**Box 9.3: Policy Reforms and Enabling Factors for Girls’ Empowerment**

1. Ongoing civil service and governance reforms need to be drawn from a gender sensitive angle
2. Reactivation of the Gender Management Information System (GMIS) and an M&E framework is necessary to help track gender results
3. There should be gender training for all public servants, and such training should be mandatory for staff working on programmes

**Ending Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV)**

SGBV as defined by the UN Refugee Agency refers to any act that is perpetrated against a person's will and is based on gender norms and unequal power relationships. SGBV is mostly rooted in individual attitudes that allow violence in the family, workplace, and community. Although men may be victims of SGBV, ample evidence suggests that women are more likely to suffer from



SGBV. All forms of SGBV such as rape, child marriage, and FGM/C are criminal offences, and the statistics show its occurrence in The Gambia is high. Seventy-three per cent of girls between the ages of 15-19 have undergone FGM/C (GDHS 2019-20). A decrease has been observed in the practice of FGM/C for women aged 15-49 from 75.7 per cent from MICS 2018 to 73 per cent in GDHS 2019-20. The proportion of girls aged 15-19 who think the practice of FGM/C should continue was 40.7 per cent in MICS 2018 which has increased to about 46 per cent in GDHS 2019-20. Findings of the 2019-20 GDHS shows that the proportion of women who reported that a husband is justified in beating his wife for burning the food is 11 per cent which is the same as MICS 2018. It is observed that the proportion of women aged 15-49 reported that it is justified for a husband to beat a wife if she neglects the children has increased from 34.6 per cent in MICS 2018 to 36 per cent GDHS 2020. Although this question was administered to both sexes aged 15-49, the proportion of men who reported that a husband is justified in beating the wife if she burns the food has increased from 3.7 per cent in MICS 2018 to 7 per cent in GDHS 2019-20. In the same period, the proportion of men aged 15-49 who believed that a husband is justified in beating the wife if she neglects the children increases from 15.4 per cent in MICS 2018 to 22 per cent in GDHS 2019-20. However, an increase has been observed in both situations for men, the proportions are still lower compared to their female counterparts. During the consultation, despite the existence of anti FGM/C Act of 2015, communities were of the view that the Act was for the previous regime therefore, there is no need for them to adhere to it and the practice should be continued. This shift in attitudes could be seen as a major drawback for the realisation of women's rights in The Gambia.

According to a study conducted in February 2021 by the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), the prevalence of sexual harassment in workplaces is as high as 74 per cent. It is seen to be occurring more often in role allocation, promotion and employment seeking. Moreover, there is insufficient support for victims of violence, including legal assistance, shelters, and rehabilitation services. The Government of The Gambia is committed to addressing these challenges and ending all forms of SGBV and will lend support to ongoing advocacy and sensitisation programmes, re-activation of GMIS to address challenges regarding data collection, and ensure a standardised hotline service. Key interventions will include increased advocacy for the enforcement of the Women's Amendment Act 2015, Children's Amendment Act 2016, Domestic Violence Act 2013, and Sexual Offences Act 2013; as well as increase in the number of facilities and services to address SGBV.

**Box 9.4: Policy Reforms and Enabling Environment to counter SGBV**

1. Review of the Sexual Offences Act 2013 and incorporate implementation of penalties
2. Introduction of laws to regulate cyberbullying and paedophilia to protect children
3. Increased and effective enforcement of the law is necessary to reduce incidences of SGBV
4. Public and private institutions are to be encouraged to develop SGBV workplace policies

**Engaging women in Peace and Security**

Women's participation in peacekeeping is gaining momentum. The Gambia was one of the ECOWAS member states that had developed a National Action Plan on the implementation of the

United Nations Security Council Resolutions (UNSCR 1325) in 2012. Since its adoption in 2000, the resolution calls on peacekeeping operations to incorporate a gender perspective in all their work and maintain gender equality at all levels of the entire mission. In line with this obligation, Gambian women security personnel have participated in several peace-keeping missions, both in and outside the region. The Council of Foreign Relations created a dataset generated from empirical studies of peace processes since 1990 and found that parties are more likely to reach an agreement when women’s groups exercise strong influence on the process. In The Gambia, increasing female participation is still a challenge even though there is growing agreement that female participation enhances the chances for lasting peace following a conflict.

Under the RF-NDP, Government will seek to address challenges relating to women’s participation in peace and security through the following strategies and interventions: strengthen and expand regional peace building committees, set up and/or strengthen gender units in all the security institutions, support representation of females in the senior positions of the security sector, strengthen and increase the number of female mediators, and provide scholarships to female officers to attain higher level training in conflict prevention and resolution.

**Box 9.5: Enabling Factor for Women in Peace Building**

1. There should be deliberate inclusion, involvement, and representation of women in peace and security issues of the country
2. Security institutions should mainstream gender in policies and plans

**11.2 Outcome 6.2: Children are nurtured and enjoy their full rights**

Despite progress in some areas, many challenges remain in safeguarding the health and nutrition status of children. The prevalence of stunting among children under-5 has decreased from 19 per cent in MICS 2018 to 17.5 per cent in GDHS 2019-20. The proportion of children underweight was 13.9 per cent in MICS 2018 and has dropped slightly to 12 per cent in GDHS 2019-20. The prevalence of wasting among children under-5 has dropped from 6.2 per cent in MICS 2018 to 5.1 per cent in GDHS 2019-20. Likewise, there have been improvements in health as seen in the reduction of maternal mortality ratio from 433 to 289 per 100,000 live births in GDHS 2013 and 2019-20 respectively. Although a reduction in MMR has been observed, much need to be done to achieve the set target of 70 per 100,000 live births by 2030 (National Health Policy 2021-2030).

Furthermore, as revealed in the diagnosis, apart from health and nutrition challenges, children continue to suffer violence and abuse. Besides the traditional forms of violence (physical, sexual, domestic, and psychological), the diagnosis has highlighted: child marriage, FGM/C, violence as a way of discipline in households, gender-based violence, child labour, sexual exploitation, and commercial sexual exploitation of children, as other forms of violence. It is also recognised that new forms of violence such as cyber and social media bullying are beginning to emerge. The plight of vulnerable children, especially those in “*Majlis*” or “*Darra*” and children with disabilities, is also highlighted. The diagnosis further highlighted wider systemic issues that relate to gaps in the juvenile justice system and low participation of Children’s National Assembly in decision making. Furthermore, rural urban disparities in access to quality Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) is also noted. In conclusion, the analysis points to an urgent need for an expanded social

protection safety net to tackle child protection in the country to enhance child wellbeing, safety, and security.

Under the RF-NDP, these are key challenges that will be addressed through the priorities described below, to ensure children enjoy their full rights:

### **Programme Priorities, Strategies and Interventions**

In the context of RF-NDP, Government in collaboration with stakeholders plan to implement the following programme priorities:

1. Improvements in nutrition and health care to promote child wellbeing;
2. Protect children from violence and abuse and secure the rights of vulnerable and marginalised children
3. Establish affordable high-quality Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) facilities especially in rural communities

#### ***Improvement in nutrition and health care to promote child wellbeing***

Since the health and wellbeing of children is a right, there is a huge potential for large positive social and economic returns on child nutrition and health investments. Proper nutrition allows for the vitamins and energy needed to function and grow, as well as ensure optimal brain development. As healthy habits are developed from childhood, nutrition from an early age impacts a child's current and future weight. Data on wasting for children under-5 was 6.5 per cent for children in rural areas which has dropped slightly to 5.3 per cent in GDHS 2019-20. Whilst in urban areas, it was 6 per cent in MICS (2018) which has dropped to 4.9 per cent in 2019-20. During the Plan period, the capacities of childminders will be strengthened. There are ongoing interventions or programmes that could significantly contribute to improve child health, particularly in the areas of nutrition, communicable disease prevention and control, and health education which will be further strengthened and sustained. The Government under the National Social Protection programme will ensure full food and nutrition security of mothers and vulnerable children in all parts of the country.

#### **Box 9.6: Enabling Factors for Child Health and Care**

1. The Government needs to ensure that the social registry is extended to the remaining LGAs and map out and identify the most vulnerable children and their families who need support
2. Mandatory birth registration is required. Without legal proof, children are unaccounted for and invisible
3. Job protection and breastfeeding breaks for new mothers is a necessity

***Protect children from violence and abuse and protecting the rights of vulnerable and marginalised children***

Children in The Gambia are susceptible to violence, abuse, and exploitation. The country has been trying to put in place a more systematic approach to child protection. However, services for vulnerable children are limited and in need of strengthening. The Directorate of Children’s Affairs (DCA) and the Directorate of Social Welfare (DSW) were recently placed under the MoGCSW and have expanded their services to the grassroots levels by establishing regional offices. In each region, there is an Assistant Social Welfare Officer providing childcare and protection services. However, this is not sufficient as services are not effectively provided, and the awareness of the services is limited to few communities. Resources, both human and financial, have been cited to be major challenges for the provision of services at all levels. At community level, a group of volunteers have been formed into Community Child Protection Committees (CCPCs) to refer child protection cases to formal structures. However, these structures do not exist in all communities and have several capacity constraints. There is currently only one Government-run shelter for children that accommodates children in need of shelter and protection. There is need for more family-strengthening programmes, as well as shelters in every region to respond to the growing demands in child protection. Of equal importance are the deeper systemic issues that contribute to making children more vulnerable to neglect, violence, abuse, and exploitation. These need to be addressed by giving attention to the following: limited investment in child protection, inadequate/low quality of child protection services, harmful social norms and attitudes against children, especially girls, limited capacities and coordination amongst key actors and unsuitable detention conditions at Gambia Police Force (GPF) and Gambia Immigration Department (GID) stations. During the Plan period, the Government will focus attention on the need to invest in strengthening the national child protection system by building the capacity of the Directorates of Children’s Affairs and Social Welfare in addressing these gaps in services and to ensure their availability in all communities.

A study conducted on the profile of 2,500 children hosted in 50 “*Majalis*” by UNICEF and Institute for Social Reformation and Action (ISRA) in 2017-2018 highlighted the use of corporal punishment by marabouts as a form of discipline. The study further revealed that children in “*Majalis*” do not fully enjoy their right to education and are likely to be “left behind” and not provided with equal opportunities and perspective to further their studies in the formal school system.

It is recognised that child rights cannot be considered as fulfilled unless there is full protection of children under the law, backed by financial investment in services for children and enforcement of laws. Therefore, during the Plan period, Government in partnership with actors will review and revise the Children’s Amendment Act 2016 for a more comprehensive legal standing for the fulfilment of children’s rights. Alternatives to institutionalisation of children, such as - kinship care, family-based care within the child’s extended family or with close friends of the family known to the child – will be explored by adopting a legal framework that will include criteria, procedures as well as monitoring and follow-up mechanisms related to foster care. In a bid to further strengthen the child protection system at the national and regional levels, ongoing interventions directed at ending FGM/C and child marriage, gender-based violence, cyber bullying and child trafficking will be supported. Given the weak coordination in interventions amongst

various actors, efforts will be focused on increasing synergy with other child rights related issues identified in the diagnosis, such as ECCD and social protection.

Government will adopt the following strategies and interventions to address these concerns:

- Increase public knowledge on child protection and the rights of the child.
- Strengthen the DCA to lead and coordinate child protection issues in the country through increased financial investments.
- Generate evidence for children and child protection issues by building the capacities of DCA and other stakeholders on child protection case management and data collection and sharing.
- Invest in social behavioural change communication programmes that comprehensively tackles negative social behaviours and practices, gender prejudices, religious misinterpretations that hamper the rights of children.
- Promote positive parenting in families and communities through capacity-building programmes to foster child-friendly discipline and combat violence.
- Equip “*Quranic*” schools<sup>33</sup> with national documents related to child rights translated in Arabic.

Enabling factors for Child Rights and Protection are summarised in Box 9.7.

**Box 9.7: Enabling Factors for Child Rights and Protection**

1. Integrate child protection outcomes in policies, programmes, and operations of social protection systems and to consistently bring together expertise from the different sectors through a series of interconnected programmes to address issues of children with special needs and those with vulnerabilities
2. Tracking of child abuse and exploitation (especially of young children)
3. Quranic schools should be given Government support so that the children are not forced to beg for alms from the public
4. Building of Quranic education centres to create a safe space for children for child survival and development
5. Create recreational facilities for children across the country
6. Support family strengthening programmes, especially for those with children with special needs
7. To have an integrated curriculum for children in both formal and informal sector to avoid discrimination in terms of career opportunities
8. Support the Ministry of Gender by allocating sufficient budget from the Government Local Fund (GLF) to coordinate child protection issues across the country
9. Creation of emergency support fund for children under institutional care

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<sup>33</sup> A Quran school is a place where children are taught the reading of the Quran, life skills, and Islamic values.

***Establish affordable high-quality Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) facilities especially in rural areas***

Amongst its many benefits, placing children in ECCD centres yield advantages for both the parent and the child. In The Gambia, most organisations offer little or no flexibility in working hours. Parents employed in both the formal and informal sectors need to be able to earn income whilst their children are taken care of in some form of childcare facility during working hours. Finding a quality childcare provider will not only ensure a safe and stimulating environment for children to develop but provides the opportunity for children to interact with other children to develop their social skills and better prepare themselves for kindergarten classrooms.

There are significant rural/urban disparities both in terms of quality of education and access to ECCD centres that need government attention. Evidence suggests that most quality ECCD centres are located in the Greater Banjul Area. Additionally, a significant challenge in the education system is the low level of foundational reading and numeracy. Only 12.4 per cent (urban – 15.7% and rural – 6.6%) of children aged 7 – 14 demonstrated foundational reading skills and 8.6 per cent (urban – 12.3% and rural – 2.6%) demonstrated foundational numeracy skills according to the MICS 2018. The urban-rural disparity in foundational reading and numeracy is also very clear. There needs to be an urgent solution to the problem as these are skills that are critical and essential for all future learning experiences.

Furthermore, findings from the FGDs revealed the high cost and poor quality of ECCD in rural areas. The requirements for uniforms and clothing as well as school related fees also puts further financial pressures on the poorest households. Under this pillar, Government will ensure that non-governmental actors offer quality and equitable service for poor communities as well as ensure training of ECCD service providers, especially in the rural areas.

**Box 9.9: Enabling Factors – ECCD**

1. Ensure ECCD facilities are built in rural areas with quality service provision
2. Promote and build the capacity of local government actors to establish their local development plans and a child-friendly budget, through which resources will be provided to meet the local needs of children

***9.3 Outcome 6.3: Enhanced economic opportunities and all-round social and cultural development for youth empowerment***

Government with the support of partners has been implementing several programmes to benefit Gambian youth. However, respondents from the FGDs (including youth) perceive the status of youth as unsatisfactory. The reasons they provided include limited access to farmlands and farming inputs, inadequate availability of skill centres, limited access to services, and employment. They further cited a remarkable increase in drug use, irregular migration (the backway syndrome), low technological transfer, and limited access to TVET education as key bottlenecks affecting youth development and advancement. Government in the context of the RF-NDP will build upon existing initiatives to address the challenges.

## **Programme Priorities, Strategies and Interventions**

Government in collaboration with partners will implement the following programme priorities:

1. Enhance and advance youth entrepreneurship and employment in the sectors such as: agriculture, fisheries, technology, and innovation, and related services to curb migration
2. Promote and develop sports to improve competencies for effective participation in national and international competitions
3. Drug and substance abuse and mental health rehabilitation
4. Promote youth empowerment and volunteerism

### ***Enhance and advance youth entrepreneurship and employment in the sectors such as agriculture, fisheries, technology and innovation, and related services as means to curb migration***

Youth employment in sectors such as agriculture, fisheries and technology will be enhanced in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. However, limited access to land, finance, natural resources, and low remuneration of workers have turned many youths away from agriculture and food systems. Solid actions are required to make the agro-food sector more climate smart and attractive to young people in the country. To facilitate the entry of young people into farming, access to farmland with accompanying investments should be provided. Likewise, youth involvement in artisanal fishing and its related value chains can be encouraged and enhanced with matching grant schemes. In the same vein, it must be recognised that, within and beyond these two sectors, there could be a lot of scope for innovative ways of tapping into the potential of the young people.

During the Plan period, the Government will encourage PPP to facilitate market access for young people working with businesses and innovators; and to identify, design and scale up specific, proven solutions that can meet their needs. Emphasis will be placed on training on value addition, standards and certification, market price information, consistency of supply etc. Given the transformative potential of technology, Government will encourage youth participation in e-commerce and other digital platforms - such as service delivery in food services, accommodation, and other sectors – to make it easier to sell goods and services, lower costs of entry to markets and costs of doing business, and boost youth employment productivity and profits. Government will invest in modern ICT, such as mobile phones and improved internet availability for facilitating access to information: to enhance productivity on the farm, enable agricultural innovation, provide access to financial services and markets, promote the use of “made in the Gambia” products, and provide coaching and mentorship for youth in business and skills in packaging, processing, labelling, marketing, and branding.

### ***Promote and develop sports to improve competencies for effective participation in national and international competitions***

The Gambia has made significant strides in sports development in recent times. These factors alone justify increased investment in sports. Additionally, apart from the more obvious benefits, sports programming has the potential to foster peace and unity across communities and ethnic and tribal lines. Yet, institutions have typically marginalised sports, according to its low status. Strategies adopted under this priority include full reintegration of sports in lower basic and tertiary

institutions, while developing the capacities of all personnel in sports, including athletes and coaches, and ensuring improvement in sports infrastructure in local communities.

Other key interventions planned under this priority are ensuring the inclusion of sports as a course at the tertiary level e.g., UTG; formulation and enactment of a National Youth Act that will legislate how youth organisations/networks/associations and institutions operate; establish regulations for the effective and efficient management of youth and sports organisations, associations, and facilities. An enforcement mechanisms will also be put in place to ensure compliance; build partnerships and alliances to promote the youth development agenda; strengthen evidence-based planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation in all youth related programmes for greater efficiency; formulate a sports development communication strategy and a sports development resource mobilisation strategy; establish sports academies at regional and national levels; organise summer youth and sports camps at both national and international levels; strengthen existing sports facilities and build new ones where necessary; build multi-purpose indoor sports facilities in at least four regions; and organise inter-schools multi-sports competitions in different regions of the country.

### ***Drug and substance abuse and mental health rehabilitation***

A growing number of young people in the country are affected by drugs and substance abuse, and with no apparent way of adequately dealing with the problem. In The Gambia, marijuana is the most popular and commonly abused illicit drug because of its relative affordability and accessibility. Statistics from seizures revealed the presence of other forms of controlled and prohibited drugs like cocaine, heroin, clonazepam, diazepam, bromazepam<sup>34</sup>. The advent of new psychoactive substances is a threat that The Gambia is not exempted from. The data from the country's only psychiatric hospital shows that about 60 per cent of their admissions are cases of drug-induced psychosis. To curb this fast-growing menace, the Drug Law Enforcement Agency-The Gambia (DLEAG) will continue to work with relevant stakeholders at both the demand and supply ends to stem the availability and distribution of these substances.

In the context of the RF-NDP, the Government will tighten up prevention methods through awareness raising and sensitisation on drugs and substance abuse; whilst bringing the full force of the law on drug peddlers and users. On the other hand, the Government will also seek to address the service and infrastructure deficits that exist in terms of provision of psychosocial support, treatment, and care facilities for those affected. Prevention methods aimed at creating awareness about the side effects and the consequences of addiction will be provided in major youth centres around the country. To fully address youth behaviour and attitudes, mandatory youth service schemes will be instituted to instil general discipline in youth especially as it relates to love for the country (nationalism) work attitudes and social responsibility.

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<sup>34</sup> <https://dleag-gambia.org/en/article/drug-abuse-situation-gambia>



Enabling factor to address drug use is summarised in Box 9.10.

**Box 9.10: Enabling Factor**

1. Civic Education to be instituted as a standalone subject in schools to address youth behaviour and to instil a sense of nationalism

### **Youth Empowerment and Volunteerism**

Currently, the Youth and Sports Ministry is working on the introduction of a National Youth Service Scheme, as a means of productively using the gap between leaving school and employment. This will provide youth the opportunity to be properly groomed and integrated into employment. Therefore, the Government will craft a new vision that is more development oriented, technical, and professional.

Youth in The Gambia are engaged in different types of volunteering activities. The Ministry of Youth and Sports has under its purview the following institutions, mandated to empower youth to engage in national service and volunteerism to contribute to the country's socioeconomic development: The National Youth Council (NYC), National Sports Council (NSC), National Enterprise Development Initiative (NEDI), President's International Award (PIA) scheme, and National Youth Service Scheme (NYSS). These institutions have registered youth volunteer organisations that are engaged and focused on climate change and environment-related issues. The Gambia currently is the only country on target to meet the Paris Agreement according to the Nationally Determined Contributions but again youth and children's voices are often not heard. These youth volunteers for climate change and environment are making solid contributions to climate action in ways that demonstrate how local perspectives can engender local solutions.

Under the RF-NDP, the Government will encourage and strengthen volunteer programmes by according to them greater privileges and opportunities to contribute to development efforts. The Government believes that volunteer work will instil in youth greater understanding of the world of work, boost their confidence and self-esteem, create a better understanding of citizenship, break with the old attitudes and structures inimical to progress and development, and bring about a new work ethic that is more professional and development oriented.

Enabling factors for youth development are summarised in Box 9.11.

**Box 9.11: Enabling environment / Policy reforms**

1. Mandatory National Youth Service Scheme to be instituted
2. Harmonise the work of Business Service Organisations (BSOs)
3. Clearly designate an institution to be responsible for standardised TVET training programmes
4. All projects with youth related programmes should be negotiated with the Ministry of Youth and Sports
5. Projects coming into the country should be aligned to operate under the relevant ministry, agency, or department
6. NAQAA officers should regularise TVET and should not be part of these institutions' Board of Directors

7. Civic education to be instituted as a standalone subject in schools to address youth behaviour and to instil a sense of nationalism
8. Give special attention to child protection issues as a standalone area of focus

#### **Institutional arrangements**

Current institutional arrangements hamper Youth development therefore the following are suggested:

1. NAQAA and The Gambia Standards Bureau should regularise TVET institutions and close those operating without license
2. NAQAA officers should work with personnel specialised in the sectors they are certifying
3. Ensure functional steering committees of projects related to youth programmes
4. NEDI to coordinate all entrepreneurship related programmes related to youth
5. NYC to coordinate all programmes related to youth empowerment and volunteerism
6. NSC to coordinate and regulate all sports and sports facilities under MoYS
7. The Department of Youth and Sports to coordinate all the satellite institutions under MoYS

#### **Innovative implementation modalities**

1. Unified e-Government platform for central coordination and communication.
2. Elimination of unnecessary procurement procedures
3. E-learning platforms
4. Establishment of innovative hubs
5. Dissolve institutions with duplicate mandates
6. Launching of the payment gateway
7. Promote Public Private Partnership to avoid monopoly
8. National Records Service to be transformed into a National Data Management Service

### ***9.4 Outcome 6.4: Inclusiveness and care for Persons with Disabilities and older persons improved***

In the context of RF-NDP, the Government is committed to addressing the barriers facing PwDs and older persons and enhancing their inclusion.

#### **9.4.1 Persons with Disabilities (PwDs)**

In The Gambia, as in most developing countries, PwDs tend to be among the most deprived and vulnerable, and largely overlooked in the development agenda. They continue to face barriers that limit their ability to use their full potential. With the advent of the RF-NDP, efforts towards greater equality and inclusiveness in addressing and ensuring the rights of all, including the PwDs are envisaged.

The GFD is the umbrella body that advocates for the empowerment and protection of the rights of PwDs in the Gambia. Through collaboration with MoGCSW, The Gambia ratified many international and domestic legal instruments such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) on the 7<sup>th</sup> July 2015; and is currently engaging key

stakeholders on the ratification of the African Disability Protocol to which The Gambia is a signatory. Gambia Federation of the Disable facilitated many livelihood skills training activities and provided relief services for its members during the COVID-19 period. The Federation has constituted a Disability Advisory Council for the implementation of the Disability Act 2021.

Under the purview of MoGCSW, a draft PwD policy is in the making. It is an overarching policy that will ensure that all PwDs, especially the poor, vulnerable and marginalised receive adequate social protection and economic assistance through social welfare programmes as well as those that enhance their capacity for self-realisation and to functionally contribute to society through involvement in economic and development activities. The policy considers *three big roadblocks* as responsible for PwDs not participating in society on equal terms with non-disabled; and categorises them as follows:

1. Attitudinal barriers (prejudice, discrimination, and stigma)
2. Environmental barriers limit or pose challenges to access schools, public facilities, and public transportation
3. Institutional barriers (exclude or segregate PwDs from employment, legal system, and health service provisions)

In the context of RF-NDP, Government in collaboration with partners will implement the following priorities regarding PwDs that would help to address these roadblocks:

1. Strengthen data collection and support research on PwD and related services (such as inclusion in the development of e-learning or other learning platforms)
2. Ensure access to buildings, health services and other physical structures and amenities for PwD
3. Ensure representation/inclusion of PwDs in the National Assembly (NA) and in top decision making

### ***Strengthen data collection and support research on PwD and related services***

Given the scarcity of data on disability, this priority will ensure that research is carried out to obtain information on lives and experiences of PwDs: ranging from impairments, difficulties in undertaking and participating in social activities, and barriers they face in their lives. There was an observable limited inclusion in e-learning or other platforms that accommodate PwDs following the closure of schools during COVID-19. This shows that more research is needed to ensure inclusion of PwDs in such platforms. A broader understanding of disability should be factored into all areas of policymaking, programming, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, and the analysis of cost-effectiveness of interventions.

Key strategies under this priority include awareness creation on public and community radios to reduce stigma and discrimination, national survey, and research on PwDs regarding their living conditions and needs, and inclusion in e-learning platforms.

### ***Improved access to buildings, health services and physical environment for PwDs***

Persons with Disabilities in The Gambia face many barriers that include inaccessibility of Government buildings, educational institutions, workplaces, service buildings<sup>35</sup> and transport; thus, limiting their potential to fully participate in society, and with negative implications on their personal, family, and socioeconomic lives. The more barriers they face, the less motivation they may have to seek to fully participate in society. The Government planned to undertake the following enabling measures in respect of the PwDs; provision of technical aid (crutches, wheelchairs, brailles, hearing aids etc) to facilitate movement, hearing, and sight; ensure equal opportunities for participation in education and social activities; ensure ease of access transport and buildings; provide better access to health care through health insurance schemes.

### ***Representation/Inclusion of PwDs in NA and top decision making***

Participation in decision making improves the social inclusion of marginalised groups in society. The social inclusion process takes care of all the individuals and groups that are either unable to participate in social life or shut out by society due to their inability, which could be physical, psychological, or mental. PwDs are more likely to be shut out by society and sometimes face discrimination. Decision-making choices are influenced by the values and beliefs of the individuals or groups involved in the decision-making process. Groups that are excluded from decision making will not be part of decisions or formation of concepts that shape their lives. Moving forward, the Government will ensure PwDs are allowed the opportunity to participate in decision making processes to ensure their needs and interests are taken into consideration. It will expand the family strengthening programme to include PwDs, conduct research and communication on disability and disability needs, and expand other social assistance schemes targeting PwDs.

### **Enabling Factors**

To ensure achievement of the outcome and targets for PwD, several enabling factors are necessary, and these are summarised in Box 9.12.

#### **Box 9.12: Enabling Factors for PwD**

1. Enact a Public Order Act on buildings to make them accessible to PwDs
2. Finalise and adopt the National Disability Policy
3. Invest in a mobile health clinic targeting PwDs
4. Include PwDs in NA and top decision making
5. Provide support to National Advisory Council for PwDs
6. Promote and strengthen inter-sectoral collaboration, co-ordination, and networking to operationalise the disability policy for the delivery of integrated and holistic services to PwDs
7. MoGCSW to oversee the overall coordination, monitoring, resource mobilisation and allocation for the implementation of the policy

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<sup>35</sup> Service building -means a structure located within a labor community that contains toilet, hand sink, bathing, laundry, or recreational facilities.

#### 9.4.2 Older persons

As indicated in the diagnosis under population, demography, and migration, several decades after the First Demographic Dividend, the Second Demographic Dividend will follow with a high proportion of older persons in the population (age 65 years and above). It is usually triggered when a country is undergoing rapid population aging, driven by declining fertility and mortality rates, coupled with rising life expectancies at birth. Although The Gambia currently has a low aging population, it is not immune to this demographic transition.

Older persons in The Gambia are seen to be playing diverse roles in the society. They are an invaluable reservoir of knowledge and can be a source of technical experience and expertise. This is very much the case with the current cohort of well-trained professionals (many of whom left the Civil Service for international organisations during the Jammeh era) who are now retiring from their international positions and returning to The Gambia. Some of these professionals are being invited back into the system to serve as consultants, trainers and/or board members. This is a valuable talent pool that now fuels the newly established “University of Senior Citizens” (USC). In the rural areas, older persons continue to make important contributions to the socio-economic development of their communities through subsistence and micro-level cash crop farming. In addition, they often support the household and the community as caregivers for young children. Despite their enormous contributions to the development of their communities, they are for the most part marginalised in development planning. The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) in The Gambia advises that most of them would require support and protection in order not to be left behind.

In the context of RF-NDP, Government in collaboration with partners will implement the following regarding older persons:

1. Safeguard the rights of and increase the knowledge base on older persons
2. Promote the health and social wellbeing of older persons
3. Increase safety and security of older persons

#### ***Safeguarding the rights of and increasing the knowledge base on older persons***

The diagnosis on older persons shows non-ratification of the AU Protocol and absence of policy on them. Older persons’ susceptibility to abuse in their own homes and facilities, negative attitudes of society towards ageism, denial of medical care, and their marginalisation in development planning are factors that present strong justification for measures to safeguard and secure their rights. Despite the relative disregard of their rights leading to isolation, exclusion, and poverty, many can make useful contributions to society through their years of experience and wisdom.

There is evident scarcity of data and information on older persons. Without meaningful and reliable data, decision makers face critical difficulties in defining informed and successful public policy that is inclusive of the needs of older persons. In this Plan, the Government will ensure the availability of disaggregated data by gender and other critical sociodemographic variables through research to inform policy, contribute to awareness, and to reveal the structural and systematic ways in which older persons are left behind. It will ensure the ratification of the AU Protocol on Rights of Older Persons and develop a policy to further strengthen and secure their rights.

### ***Promoting the health and social wellbeing of older persons***

Ageing increases risk of chronic disease, illness, isolation, and disability which can lead to increased health care costs. Promoting the health, physical and social wellbeing of the elderly will enable a potential reduced risk of dementia, and a wide range of physical problems including arthritis and cardiovascular disease. Increased social interaction of older persons presents enormous benefits that can lead to a higher quality of life. During the course of this RF-NDP, the Government will take measures: that will support community initiatives such as conversation circles to keep older persons meaningfully engaged; that provide support to organisations working to harness the untapped skills and talents of older persons; that support community interventions to promote the physical and social health of older persons; and to ensure the development of social protection schemes for older persons to enhance their wellbeing. As a key intervention, the Government will set up a care facility for older persons who are destitute, out of the care of their families, and in need of shelter.

### ***Increased safety and security of older persons***

Better protection, increased safety and security of older people will help to restore their dignity and allow society to better capitalise on their potential. Studies have shown that when older people's right to social security is realised, there is a positive impact on reduction of child labour and increased enrolment in schools. During the Plan period, the Government will ensure ratification of the AU Protocol on Rights of Older Persons as well as the availability of citizen's protection programmes at the community level that address their safety and security.

### **Enabling Factors for Older Persons**

The factors outlined in Box 9.13 have been identified as necessary for the successful achievement of the targets and outcomes related to older persons.

#### **Box 9.13: Enabling factors for older persons**

- Step-up policy commitments to ensure that the older persons have access to adequate support, given the high poverty rate that affects them, and the very limited social protection measures focusing on them<sup>36</sup>.
- Ratify the AU Protocol
- Formulate a policy on older persons

### ***9.5 Outcome 6.5: Resilience of households and individuals strengthened, and safety nets put in place to Address Vulnerability Through Social Protection***

As outlined in the national development context (Appendix 2), The Gambia is prone to many shocks and crises which have heightened vulnerabilities at both community and household levels.

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<sup>36</sup> Only three schemes were identified, including a social transfer delivered by DSW with exceptionally small coverage. A study commissioned by UNICEF showed that only 25 people received a transfer in 2012, and periodic health support offered by the Aging with a Smile Initiative (UNICEF, 2013). There is also a residential home, which provides care services to persons without families.

Measures to address vulnerability and build resilience at community level have been dealt with under Pillar I.

To strengthen resilience at household and individual levels, the Government will build upon the existing social protection programme. The National Social Protection Policy 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.*

GDP growth averaged 2.9 per cent over the period 2010-2021 (GBoS). Poverty rates in The Gambia according to the Integrated Household Surveys fell from 58 per cent in 2003 to 48.4 per cent in 2010 before slightly increasing to 48.6 per cent in 2015/16. However, recent data shows that due to the impact of COVID-19, poverty increased to 53.4 per cent in 2020. The population of The Gambia 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 consequences on people's incomes, food and nutritional security, health status, and general wellbeing. These natural occurrences are likely to become even more common place in the future, as expected effects of climate change.

People's livelihoods are particularly affected by numerous challenges such as low returns on labour, inadequate support for entrepreneurship development, and harvest failures among farming households. The limited capacity of the formal labour market forces most people to engage in precarious low-paid employment in the informal sector and agriculture. Young people in particular face disadvantages in the labour market. Economic, environmental and health risks have resulted in high levels of food and nutrition insecurity, while the national malnutrition prevalence rate of 7.2 per cent for children under-5 years (GDHS 2019-20) is close to the emergency level that is termed as severe malnutrition.

Pregnant and lactating mothers, children under-5, people living with HIV/AIDS and other chronically ill persons, PwDs, and older persons – are at a heightened risk of malnutrition due to their physical vulnerabilities, greater dependence on care, and constrained access to support networks. High and persistent vulnerability to health shocks is exacerbated by physical and financial limitations that impede access to healthcare as well as the limited health insurance system which is restricted to the small population of formal sector employees.

The Government of The Gambia established the National Social Protection Secretariat (NSPS) under the Office of the Vice President to support the National Social Protection Steering Committee in providing leadership and coordination of all social protection efforts. Since its establishment in 2019, NSPS has helped to provide much needed coordination in the social protection sector in the country. Principally, it has among others, transformed the National Social Protection Steering Committee (NSPC) into an active and authoritative body that spearheads policy/decision making on social protection issues. In line with the National Social Protection Policy (NSPP) 2015-2025, the Government of The Gambia developed the first ever Social Registry to serve as a common platform for determining eligibility for social protection interventions.

## **Programme Priorities, Strategies and Interventions**

In the context of the RF-NDP, Government will implement the following programme priorities:

1. Reduce people's exposure to risks and vulnerabilities; and enhance social inclusion and equity through social protection financial schemes and safeguarding the welfare of the poorest and most vulnerable
2. Strengthen leadership, governance and social protection service delivery systems and resource mobilisation, to design and deliver effective and efficient programmes
3. Promote food and nutrition security, environmental, disaster management, mitigate, build resilience, and respond to climate change

### **Reduce people's exposure to risks and vulnerabilities; and enhance social inclusion and equity through social protection financial schemes and safeguarding the welfare of the poorest and most vulnerable**

As enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), social protection is a human right. This means that states have an obligation to guarantee a minimum level of social protection and that all individuals have the right to social protection. The fact that vulnerable groups are more prone to risk and other social misfortunes gives rise to the need to address their inclusion and equity through social protection financial schemes.

To address this priority, the Government will employ the following strategies:

- Strengthen social protection support during disasters and emergencies
- Expand unconditional cash transfer (*NAFA* Project) for extremely poor households, children and to cover nutrition needs - (nutrition-sensitive social protection)
- Eliminate the economic and social barriers preventing the poorest and most vulnerable from accessing services
- Ensure access to social welfare and legal services to promote social inclusion

Key interventions:

- Provide social assistance and expand insurance mechanisms
- Strengthen social security schemes and labour standards
- Provide psychosocial support targeting marginalised persons and PwDs
- Strengthen 'lean safety nets' to tackle seasonal food insecurity and price shocks

**Target:** The extreme poor and labour-constrained households, providing complimentary social welfare services for vulnerable groups including Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC), the elderly, chronically ill people (including individuals and families affected by HIV), the severely disabled, and families with a large burden of care.

### **Strengthen leadership, governance and social protection service delivery systems and resource mobilisation to design and deliver effective and efficient programmes**

The social protection system in the country remains largely uncoordinated and fragmented, thus causing duplication of efforts in terms of interventions. Against this background, there is a need to



enhance coordination mechanisms, create synergy and harmony on social protection interventions in the country.

To fulfil this priority, Government will:

- Strengthen National Social Protection Steering Committee through quarterly meetings
- Institute regular social protection review meetings with stakeholders
- Strengthen the use of Gambia Social Registry Information System and national M&E framework; conduct national social protection forums and regional forums
- Develop sustainable financing strategy for social protection programmes. Harmonise cash transfer through the development and implementation of National Cash transfer guidelines
- Create an integrated Grievance Redress Mechanisms (GRM) system
- Conduct national baseline survey on formal and non-formal social protection
- Undertake research on the social protection needs of PwDs
- Draft and enact a Social Protection Act

Key interventions will include strengthen synergies between the formal social protection system and informal social protection structures and mechanisms to ensure that traditional forms of support continue to play their vital social protection role at the community level.

### **Promote food and nutrition security, environmental, disaster management, mitigate, build resilience and respond to climate change**

In The Gambia, climate related disasters such as droughts and floods because of heavy rainfall are the most frequent natural disasters – taking a heavy toll on the people and the economy. They can undermine gains made in aid programmes as well as the resilience of poorer communities and households who may not have fully recovered from preceding or on-going environment-related disaster. The Gambia in partnership with key stakeholders is implementing various approaches to manage risks and enhance the resilience of people affected by shocks and stresses. The most common approaches include – but are not limited to – food and nutrition security; sustainable livelihoods; disaster risk reduction; climate change adaptation; and social protection approaches. During the Plan period, the Government will continue to work with key development partners to mitigate the effects of climate change and build the resilience of communities to stresses and shocks, whilst particularly alleviating hunger through ensuring food security for the most at-risk population.

The following strategies and interventions will be implemented to complement actions foreseen under Pillars I and V:

- Strengthen resource mobilisation mechanisms for social safety net programmes
- Strengthen coordination and partnership with stakeholders
- Strengthen the national social protection interventions with focus on inclusion of socio-economically deprived and nutritionally vulnerable groups
- Scale up and expand the cash transfers with Social and Behavioural Change Communication (SBCC)

- Expand and scale up in-kind transfers (small ruminants and farming tools for improved food and nutrition security)
- Clarify Institutional roles and mandates (which remain unclear) with regards to social protection

## Chapter 10: Pillar VII: Energy, Infrastructure and ICT Connectivity

Given the role of infrastructure and connectivity in economic transformation, Government will continue during the next five years to consolidate efforts and implement strategic infrastructure projects in the areas of energy, transport, and ICT to catalyse growth and tap into the many opportunities offered by the AfCFTA and other regional and continental development initiatives.

Pillar VII of the RF-NDP covers three clusters, namely: (i) petroleum, energy, and minerals; (ii) transport infrastructure and connectivity; and (iii) ICT digitalisation. The outcomes are presented in Table 10.1 below, and the programme priorities, interventions and strategies are further developed in the sections that follow.

**Table 10.1: Outcomes of Pillar VII of RF-NDP relating to Energy, Infrastructure and ICT/Connectivity**

Outcome 7.1: Accessible and affordable energy for all and effective policies, legal and regulatory frameworks in place for sustainable development of petroleum and mining resources
Outcome 7. 2: Land, river, sea and air transport expanded and strengthened for affordability, accessibility and competitiveness
Outcome 7.3: A digital/ICT and broadband nation attained

### *10.1 Outcome 7.1: Accessible and affordable energy for all and effective policies, legal and regulatory frameworks in place for sustainable development of petroleum and mining resources*

#### 10.1.1 Energy Sector

The energy sector is one of the key economic drivers of the economy. Given the current global economic crisis caused by COVID-19 pandemic and Russia-Ukraine war, the energy situation in The Gambia has become more challenging. Furthermore, given the global external shocks mentioned above, which greatly impacted global supply chains, the country continues to face economic challenges such as rising food prices and dwindling foreign exchange reserves due to poor performance of sectors such as tourism, and agriculture. Government is committed to address the immediate challenges of the energy sector and lay the basis for ensuring affordable access to energy for all by the end of the Plan period and stimulate economic growth. Government will also prioritise renewables and enhance their share in the energy-mix to both boost access, as well as contribute to meeting its commitments under the Paris Agreement.

#### **Programme Priorities, Strategies and Interventions for Energy Sector**

Under the RF-NDP, Government will implement the following programme priorities:

1. Universal access projects (energy)
2. Renewable (Solar PV) projects (energy)
3. Key policy, legal and regulatory reforms (energy)

The main interventions and strategies for the programme priorities are described below:

### ***Universal Access (UA), and Transmission and Distribution (T&D) Projects***

The Gambia is faced with low access to electricity and erratic supply. Electricity access in The Gambia is estimated at 62.1 per cent and the proportion was higher in the urban areas (78.6%) than in the rural areas (24.6%) as reported in the GDHS 2019-20. The goal of the Government is to achieve universal access to electricity by 2025 (Strategic Electricity Sub-sector Roadmap 2021-2040).

To achieve this, Government will prioritise the generation and access projects through the following measures and strategies: extension of 225kV T&D line from Soma Gambia River Basin Development Organisation (OMVG) sub-station to Basse; deployment of Green Mini Grid Electrification through PPPs; promotion of improved cooking stoves, and the use of alternative cooking energy sources such as LPG and biogas; expansion of T&D infrastructure in other areas; and provision of community cooling systems (i.e., multifunctional platforms).

### ***Renewable Energy***

Electricity generation in the country is entirely dependent on fossil fuel, which is unsustainable and more so, contributes to climate change effects, due to high GHG emissions. To avert such negative externalities to the environment, Government will prioritise renewable energy sources (i.e., solar PV, wind, small hydro, biomass/biogas, etc.) which are sustainable and cleaner than fossil fuel.

To achieve the expected goal of boosting renewable energy, the national and regional renewable energy projects listed below will be prioritised and implemented by Government through the support of partners.

- 150MW Regional Solar PV power plant in Soma (IPP)
- 20MW Jambur solar PV project
- 10.5MW NAMA solar PV project

### ***Policy, Legal & Regulatory (PLR) Reforms***

The current National Energy Policy 2015-2020 is outdated and requires urgent update to accommodate pressing new policies and regulations required to govern a robustly de-regulate electricity sector. Given the need to leverage on increased renewable investments in the sector to achieve a more balanced energy-mix, there is need to amend the Electricity Act 2005, and the Renewable Energy Act 2013. In this regard, the Government with the support of partners will undertake the requisite electricity PLR reforms.

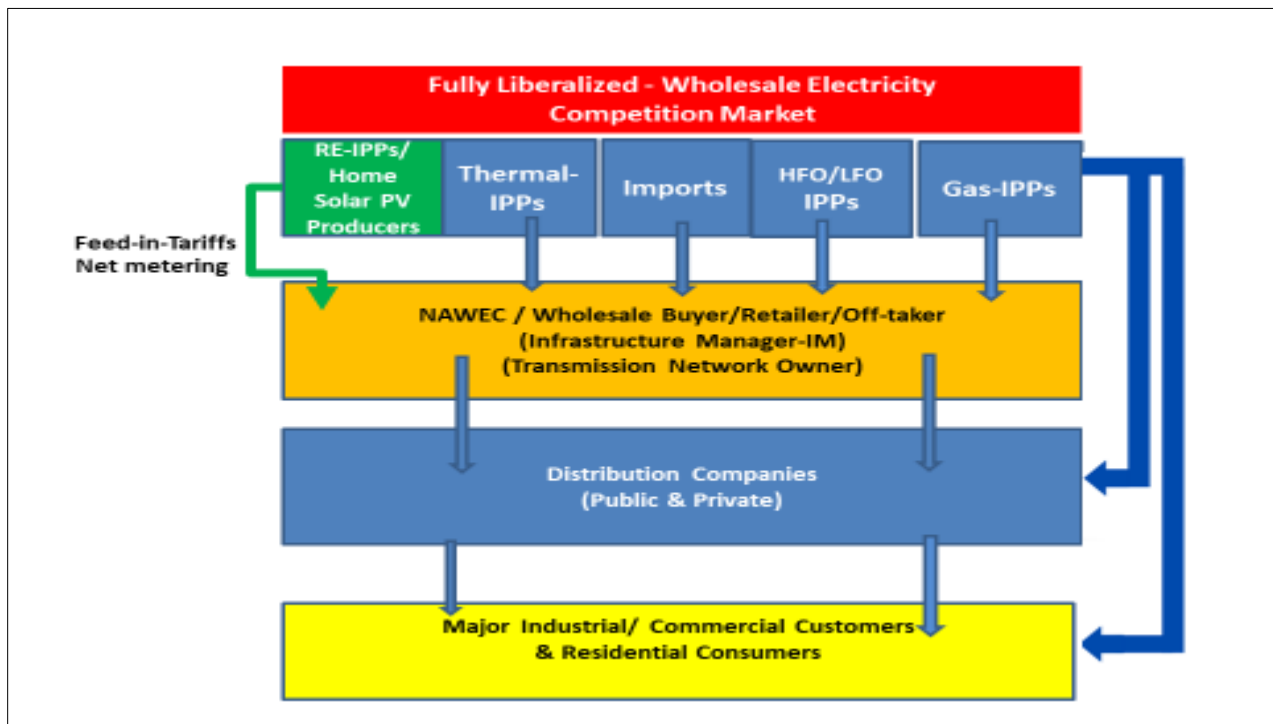
### ***De-regulation of the Electricity Sector***

The Gambia's electricity sector is fully de-regulated by the Electricity Act 2005 and the Renewable Energy (RE) Act 2013. The 2005 Act provides for the Minister to issue generation, transmission,

and distribution licences to private power producers, distributors, and dispatchers respectively. To further deepen the de-regulation process, the Government enacted the Renewable Energy Act 2013 which provides for renewable energy Independent Power Producers (IPPs) to produce and sell electricity to the market. However, such a market opportunity has not been fully exploited over the years due to a lagging regulatory effort.

To accelerate the deepening process of the liberalised electricity market, the role of National Water and Electricity Company (NAWEC) in addition to being a “producer” of electricity, will be a “buyer” (i.e., off-taker); as well as acting as Infrastructure/network Manager (IM) - who owns the legacy T&D network. This re-positioning of NAWEC is necessary to enable IPPs to utilise the managed public T&D infrastructure - through “open access” policy - to sell energy/electricity to other “buyers” in the market, i.e., major industrial and commercial and residential users under the guidance of PURA.

**Figure 10.1: Fully Liberalised - Wholesale Competitive Electricity Market**



Section 11 of the Renewable Energy Act 2013 empowers the regulator, PURA, to formulate Feed-In-Tariffs (FITs), and rules to diversify the electricity market and encourage increased participation of RE-IPPs to enter the market. Despite the existence of a sound legal framework for a fully de-regulated competitive electricity market, the regulator, PURA, needs to urgently develop FITs, and net metering pricing and technical guidelines to promote, and encourage new entrants (i.e., RE-IPPs, conventional IPPs, Home Solar PV excess electricity producers) to participate in the generation and supply of electricity to the market.

## Enabling Factors

To achieve the goals set for the energy sector, several measures need to be taken and these are summarised in Box 10.1. They centre on policy and institutional measures as well as innovative implementation modalities.

<b>Box 10.1: Enabling Factors for Energy Sector</b>	
<b>POLICY &amp; INSTITUTIONAL MEASURES</b>	<b>IMPLEMENTATION MODALITIES</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Amendment of the existing Electricity Act 2005, Renewable Energy Act 2013, and their respective regulations; Memorandum &amp; Articles of Associations (M&amp;A) of NAWEC; de-coupling of water from electricity, and the creation of two (2) separate utility companies; and the re-purposing of NAWEC as Infrastructure/network Manager (IM) and wholesaler to improve the PLR <sup>37</sup> environment</li> <li>• Review and update the National Energy Policy (2015-2020); Amendment of Electricity Act 2005 and Renewable Energy Act 2013; NAWEC Strategic Plan and the Electricity Roadmap</li> <li>• Amendment of Electricity Act 2005 and Renewable Energy Act 2013; Green Mini-Grid (GMG) policy and regulatory framework document; RE action plan; Review and update the National Energy Policy (2015 -2020)</li> </ul>	<p>For each of the energy priorities – key project-specific implementation strategies will be actioned, as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. Universal Electricity Access:</b> Accelerate the implementation of all access projects under NAWEC</li> <li><b>2. Renewable Energy:</b> Swift implementation of grid connected renewable energy projects such as 20MW Jambur solar PV Plant, NAMA 10.5MW Solar PV Plant, Green Mini Grid, and Solar Home Systems</li> <li><b>3. Policy, Legal &amp; Regulatory (PLR) Reforms:</b> Ensure the Energy Policy is aligned with sector development priorities</li> </ol> <p>An Implementation Plan has been drawn out by Ministry of Petroleum and Energy (MoPE), outlining the institutional arrangement of stakeholders and development partners. This is necessary to successfully implement the energy priorities of the RF-NDP over the next 5 years. In addition to the implementation plan, an Annual Work Plan (AWP) and budget will be developed and funded by Government and partners to support the Project Implementation Unit (PIU). This will help the PIU in project preparation and development activities - and monitoring, and reporting to the sector Ministry and Government</p> <p><b>Implementation Plan Process</b> The implementation processes are outlined below:</p>

<sup>37</sup> PLR: policy, legal and regulatory environment

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish multi-criteria project implementation framework that truly factor in all relevant criteria and requirements for addressing the embedded imperatives of RF-NDP.</li> <li>• Establish project implementation plan or roadmap to provide initial clarity and direction for the project management team and the secretariat.</li> <li>• Review and align the project implementation plan to milestones identified in the results framework and enabling factor matrix.</li> <li>• Deploy resources in accordance with the multi-project implementation criteria.</li> </ul>
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### 10.1.2 Petroleum

The petroleum sector is a prospective economic enabler for the economy and people given the prospects for commercial-scale hydrocarbon (oil & gas) exploration discoveries within the Gambia's 200 nautical miles Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). However, the potential of the petroleum sector is yet to be realised. Nonetheless, Government will continue to consolidate current efforts on policy and regulatory reforms to lay the basis for a sustainable and profitable petroleum sector.

#### **Programme Priorities, Strategies and Interventions for the Petroleum Sector**

In the context of RF-NDP, Government will focus on both the upstream and downstream sub-sectors of the petroleum sector. Specifically, Government will develop policies, legislations, and regulations, for the upstream petroleum sector to bring in line the sector to conform to the national energy security objectives and international best practice. Government will also undertake Policy, Legal and Regulatory (PLR) reforms for the downstream petroleum sector.

In this regard, Government will implement the following actions, and strategies to further enhance the policy-toolkit for the effective management of upstream and downstream sub-sector activities:

- Amendment of the Petroleum Act 2004
- Review of Schedule II of the Income and Value Added Tax (IVAT) 2012
- Amendment of existing downstream regulations
- Development of regulations for the upstream sub- sector
- Amendment of the seven (7) Regulations governing the downstream sector
- Increase storage facilities
- Development of petroleum products testing lab

## Enabling Factors

To achieve the goals set for the energy sector, several measures need to be taken and these are summarised in Box 10.2. These centre on policy, institutional measures, and implementation modalities.

<b>Box 10.2: Enabling Factors for Petroleum Sector</b>		
<b>POLICY</b>	<b>INSTITUTIONAL</b>	<b>IMPLEMENTATION MODALITIES</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of regulations for upstream sub sector</li> <li>• Amendment of existing downstream regulations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish Petroleum Directorate</li> <li>• Incorporate Government processes to guide the management and regulatory mandate of the Petroleum Sector.</li> <li>• Formulate the participation of stakeholders in the management of the environment and project social setting.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish multi-criteria project implementation framework that factor in all relevant criteria and requirements for addressing the embedded imperatives of RF-NDP.</li> <li>• Establish project implementation plan or roadmap to provide initial clarity and direction to the project management team and the secretariat.</li> <li>• Review and align the project implementation plan to milestones identified in the results framework.</li> <li>• Identify resource sharing, crashing-in (joint implementation) and potential sources of mutual synergies and disparities for proactive management and successful implementation outcomes.</li> <li>• Deploy resources in accordance with the multi-project implementation criteria.</li> </ul>

### 10.1.3 Mining

Although The Gambia is not well endowed with mineral resources, mining contributes to the socio-economic development of the country and has the potential to benefit local communities where mining activities take place. Unfortunately, the sector is beset with policy and regulatory challenges resulting in limited benefits to local communities and the related activities are often associated with widespread environmental degradation due to sand mining and quarries. The poor capacity of the institutions tasked with providing policy and regulatory oversight and the lack of transparency combine to aggravate the situation. Government is committed to transforming the sector so that it can contribute more to the national economy, benefit local communities, and reduce environmental degradation associated with mining activities.



## **Programme Priorities, Strategies and Interventions for the Mining Sector**

Government over the Plan period will focus on carrying out institutional reforms and human resource capacity building, promoting the development of mines and minerals policy framework, as well as revising existing legislation and regulation.

In this regard, Government will undertake the following key interventions and strategies:

- ***Policy, Regulatory, Institutional and Technical Capacity Gaps:*** The long-term development of the mining sector requires enabling and critical expertise and capacity in terms of infrastructure, equipment, and skill sets. Thus, Government with support of development partners, will address the following gaps:
  - a. ***Development of mines and mineral policy:*** MoPE in collaboration with stakeholders in the mining sector will formulate a fit-for-purpose mines and minerals policy to provide the Geology Department with guiding principles for the effective management and the progressive issuing/handling of licensing, permitting and the regulation of the minerals, mines and quarries sector, as well as other geology-related matters.
  - b. ***Review current geological and mineral resource report:*** The Geology Department as the technical arm of the mining and minerals sector will undertake geological mapping of the country with a view to increase, identify, and demarcate prospective mineral resource sites for future beneficiation activities. The Department will also update the Geological and Mineral Resources Report (1995) to designate more sand mining sites to prevent the occasional communal flashes/conflicts when inhabitants feel that there is too much sand mining in their localities.
  - c. ***Review and validate the existing mines and quarries regulations:*** The Government will review and amend the Mines and Quarries Act 2005 to optimise resource utilisation, improve efficiency in mining practices, and minimise environmental degradation which results from excessive and bad mining practices.
  - d. ***Development of Mining Cadastre:*** As mining and quarrying are becoming more relevant to investors, a cadastre system will be developed by Government for receiving applications for licences and for evaluating eligibility criteria; accepting and processing applications for renewals and extension of mining licenses; and for coordinating technical and environmental evaluations. In addition to the mining cadastre, Government will develop the *National Registry of Mining Rights* to electronically store all mining licenses.

***Construct and equip geological laboratory for standard analysis of mineral occurrences in the country:*** Most of the current stock of laboratory testing equipment at the Geology Department is obsolete and need to be urgently replaced. There is also the need for training/re-training of laboratory personnel whose capacity and expertise would be utilised to conduct research and laboratory tests throughout the country in anticipation of more mineral resource's discoveries. To

address such technical and human resource training needs, the Government will approach development partners for assistance.

- **Rehabilitation of old mines and quarries:** The mining of construction materials started well before the establishment of the Geology Department. The largely unregulated and current mining activities, without adequate monitoring have resulted in deplorable environmental situations in many parts of the country. To redress such environmental challenges, these old mines and quarries would be rehabilitated and improved and offered to surrounding communities to engage in productive income earning activities like horticultural gardening, fish farming (aquaculture), and as eco-tourism and biodiversity hotspots for visiting tourists.
- **Encourage sea sand dredging as an alternative to coastal sand dunes mining in the Greater Banjul Area (GBA):** The continued use of coastal sand materials if left unaddressed, would have serious environmental consequences not only for the adjacent communities but for the whole GBA. This will lead to increased sea erosion and generational floods due to climate change effects and global warming; and impacting low lying communities around the delta basin of the River Gambia such as Banjul and communities around the Cape Peninsula. A potential alternative to coastal sand-dunes mining is “sand dredging at sea” currently taking place near Denton Bridge. Although such an alternative source of sand for construction should be encouraged, it is important that such a potentially invasive activity be validated and informed by a detailed Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA). This will help to establish the potential impact(s) including the recommended adaptation remedy(ies) needed to weather-proof the important civil and marine infrastructure and cultural sites around the vicinity of the sand dredging operations (i.e. Sarro Oil Mill facility, Banjul-Serrekunda highway, Denton Bridge, Banjul cemeteries, Banjul Port, etc.).

### Enabling Factors

To achieve the goals set for the mining sector, several measures need to be taken and these are summarised in Box 10.3. These centre on policy, institutional measures, and implementation modalities.

<b>Box 10.3: Enabling Factors for Petroleum Sector</b>		
<b>POLICY</b>	<b>INSTITUTIONAL</b>	<b>IMPLEMENTATION MODALITIES</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop policy; review and amend the existing legislation and regulations for the minerals sector</li> <li>• Develop Mines and Minerals Policy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build a new office complex for Geology Department with state-of-art equipment.</li> <li>• Incorporate government processes, to guide the management and regulatory mandate of the Geology Department</li> <li>• Formulate the participation of stakeholders in the management of the environment and project social setting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish multi-criteria project implementation framework that factor in all relevant criteria and requirements for addressing the embedded imperatives of RF-NDP</li> <li>• Establish a project implementation plan, or roadmap to provide initial clarity and direction to the project management team and the secretariat</li> <li>• Review and align the project implementation plan to milestones identified in the results framework</li> <li>• Identify resource sharing, crashing-in (joint implementation) and potential sources of mutual synergies and disparities for proactive management and successful implementation outcomes</li> <li>• Deploy resources in accordance with the multi-project implementation criteria</li> </ul>

## ***10.2 Outcome 7. 2: Land, river, sea and air transport expanded and strengthened for affordability, accessibility and competitiveness***

The Government of The Gambia is cognizant of the important strategic value in building the country's infrastructure to enhance connectivity, boost economic growth, enhance social mobility, and create the needed regional connectivity to capitalise on the AfCFTA. Government is fully committed to building road, river, port, and air transport infrastructure as expeditiously as possible. Fortunately, a long-term National Transport Policy (2017-2028) has already been developed, and therefore, the RF-NDP will constitute an important basis for the implementation of this policy.

### **10.2.1 National Multimodal Transport Strategy (NMTS)**

The National Transport Policy (NTP 2017-2028) hinges on the promotion of multimodal planning, coordination, and operations of the transport sector. The two (2) fundamental objectives and benefits of the proposed National Multimodal Transport Strategy (NMTS) are: (1) cost efficiency, i.e., transport cost savings to the customers/consumers of traded goods and services; and (2) direct, or indirect cost savings, to the environment (i.e., "external cost" savings that accrues to the wider economy), in terms of less pollution, cleaner environment, less traffic congestion - that enhances healthy living environment and sustainable livelihoods.

To this end, the Government will robustly pursue the overarching goal of the National Transport Policy in recognition of the transformational role infrastructure and connectivity plays in the socio-economic development, and to achieving the development objectives of the medium and long-term.

To implement the NMTS – three (3) fundamental strategies will be required:

- A public policy goal statement and targets (relative to achieving "intermodal balance", and the economic and social benefits and objectives associated with the NMTS)
- Proof of Concept (PoC), i.e., pilot-project
- Pre-requisites for implementing the NMTS

#### **Public Policy Goal Statement and Target(s)**

The economy is largely based on agriculture, trade, and services which is poised to benefit from the revival of river transportation. This is expected to improve the agricultural sector and the demand for the movement of agricultural inputs (i.e., fertilizers, seeds, machinery, etc.), outputs (i.e., crops), re-exports, and transit trade business as well as growth in intra-Africa trade (i.e., AfCFTA). It can also facilitate access to more areas of the hinterland for tourism purposes.

The expected improvement in economic outlook is complemented by the on-going GBA and rural infrastructure development programmes launched by Government to modernise the GBA road network (i.e., dualisation of Airport junction to Sting Corner - corridor), the rehabilitation of 20 strategic urban roads within the GBA as well as the past and planned rural roads and bridges – infrastructure development programme.

To ensure the long-term utility of the GBA and rural roads infrastructure investments, Government will implement the NMTS Framework – by formulating a public policy goal statement and targets to drive the multimodal strategy - aimed at significantly shifting freight/traffic volumes from roads to river transport and possibly to a third mode (i.e., rail). The adoption of such a robust multimodal coordination, planning and operations strategy is expected to lead to achieving increased “consumer/producer surplus” benefits, as well as external cost benefits, i.e., less pollution/cleaner environment, reduced traffic congestion and accidents for the greater good of society.

The objectives and benefits of the public policy goal and targets are to:

1. Achieve a significant modal split i.e., shift in freight volume/traffic from road to river of between 20 to 30 percent by 2027
2. Achieve equilibrium i.e., intermodal balance of 50:50 split in traffic (freight) volumes by 2050
3. Achieve reduced axle load bearing on the national road network (especially GBA roads), lowering road maintenance costs, Vehicle Operating Costs (VOCs), and external cost savings

### **The Multimodal Project Concept (Proof of Concept - PoC)**

The National Multimodal Transport Strategy (NMTS) will be implemented through the development and validation of a “Proof of Concept (PoC)” - to demonstrate the technical feasibility and business case of the multimodal Roads-Port of Banjul -TransGambia-Kaur-Basse-Fatoto-Nyamanari – transport operations nexus.

The PoC is essentially a pilot to be implemented at “early stage” of the original project. It will be limited in scope in terms of the following:

- Barge service coverage/area: example, Banjul port-TransGambia- Kaur/Kuntaur
- Vessel type/capacity: multipurpose river barge (cap.: 500-1000 tons)
- Vessel acquisition/procurement modality: Leasing (short term)
- Operating frequency: example: 2 or 3 days of weekly sails depending on freight volumes (between origin – destination)
- Pilot duration: one - two years (2023-2025)
- Stakeholders:
  - Ministry of Transport, Works and Infrastructure (MoTWI): Promoter/Co-Sponsor
  - Gambia Ports Authority (GPA): Co-Sponsor/promoter/investor/user
  - National Food Security Processing and Marketing Corporation (NFSPMC): Investor/user
  - Private sector: investors/users
  - Government: MoTWI, MoFEA, Trade, Agric., Tourism (Policy enablers/Facilitators)

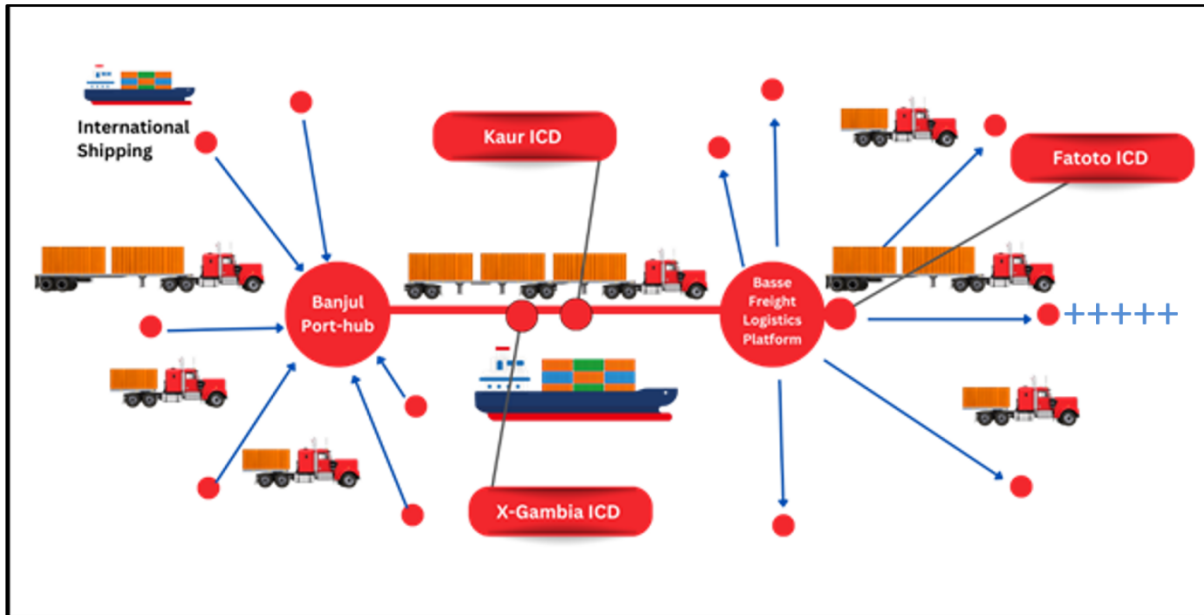
While the Basse Freight Logistics Platform (BFLP) Project (i.e., Dry Port) is being formulated by GPA and partners (InfraCo and CPCS Transcom<sup>38</sup>) to revitalise river transportation, and to enhance the competitiveness of Banjul port, in the short term, the PoC/ pilot initiative will be

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<sup>38</sup> CPCS Transcom Limited- CPCS Transcom Limited (commonly known as CPCS) is an international infrastructure development firm specialising in private sector participation in transportation and power infrastructure, operations, investment, policy and regulation

implemented as a forerunner to validate the BFLP anchor projects (i.e., acquisition of 2000 tons river barge, and the operation of the BFLP) – by implementing on a pilot basis- a freight haulage river barge service, using key river-ports (<sup>39</sup>Trans-Gambia, Kaur, Kuntaur, Basse) as ports-of-call (Figure 10.2).

Figure 10.2: National Multimodal (Port-Hub and Spoke) Transport Nexus



### Prerequisites for Implementing the NMTS

The successful implementation of the multimodal transportation operational framework will depend on Government and Partners, recognition of the importance to preserve the built road infrastructure network, and connectivity, over the period of their design lives (e.g., Airport-Sting Corner highway; Banjul-Serrekunda highway; South Bank and North Bank trunk roads and cross-bridges; Senegambia bridge, etc.).

In the same vein, it is important that Government engenders a sustainable river transportation system. This is due to its importance to the national and rural economy especially to the adjoining river-communities and the agriculture sector particularly for the transportation of farm inputs and production/outputs and the tourism industry.

In collaboration with partners, the following prerequisites will be put in place by Government through MoTWI:

1. Public policy goal statement/declaration and targets – to pursue the goal of achieving an intermodal (road-river traffic) shift of a minimum of 30 per cent road-freight to river

<sup>39</sup> Given the strategic location of the Trans-Gambia Corridor/Senegambia Bridge – the Government should develop Yellitenda or Bambatenda, as an inland river port, to position the Corridor as a “Special Economic/Industrial Development Zone” – SEZ/IDZ

transportation by 2027; and to achieve an ultimate intermodal balance of 50:50 per cent by 2050

2. Promulgation of an enabling legal framework (i.e., Transportation Act and Regulations), which formally regulates the transport sector and provides mandates and incentives to stakeholders operating in the transport and logistics value chain.
3. Intermodal infrastructure and <sup>40</sup>logistics equipment at key ports-of-call and the anchor ports: Banjul port-(TransGambia-Kaur)-Basse multimodal freight logistics terminal.
4. Improved stakeholder coordination between public, private and civil society stakeholders (customers, shippers, freight forwarders, shipping agents, shippers' association/council, port management, etc.).
5. Inter-agency task force to formulate and coordinate the implementation of the river barge pilot project initiative.

A key deliverable of the task force is the preparation of a comprehensive regional market demand study to ascertain the total freight demand flows (i.e., volume), and distribution within the hinterland of Banjul port. The study inter alia will determine the following: Origin and Destination (O&D) of freight-throughput (exports/imports) including their corresponding trip-lengths, and related transport costs and current vehicle fleet (and their technical specifications), used in the transportation of the throughput freight between Banjul and the hinterland destination and origination countries.

### **Regional Rail Connectivity Project**

The Gambia is endowed with one of the most navigable rivers in Africa – River Gambia. The port of Banjul, the country's major international gateway is strategically located just a few nautical miles from the mouth of the River Gambia/Atlantic Ocean near to the confluence of one of the busiest international shipping lanes: Africa-Europe; Africa-North America; and Africa-South America.

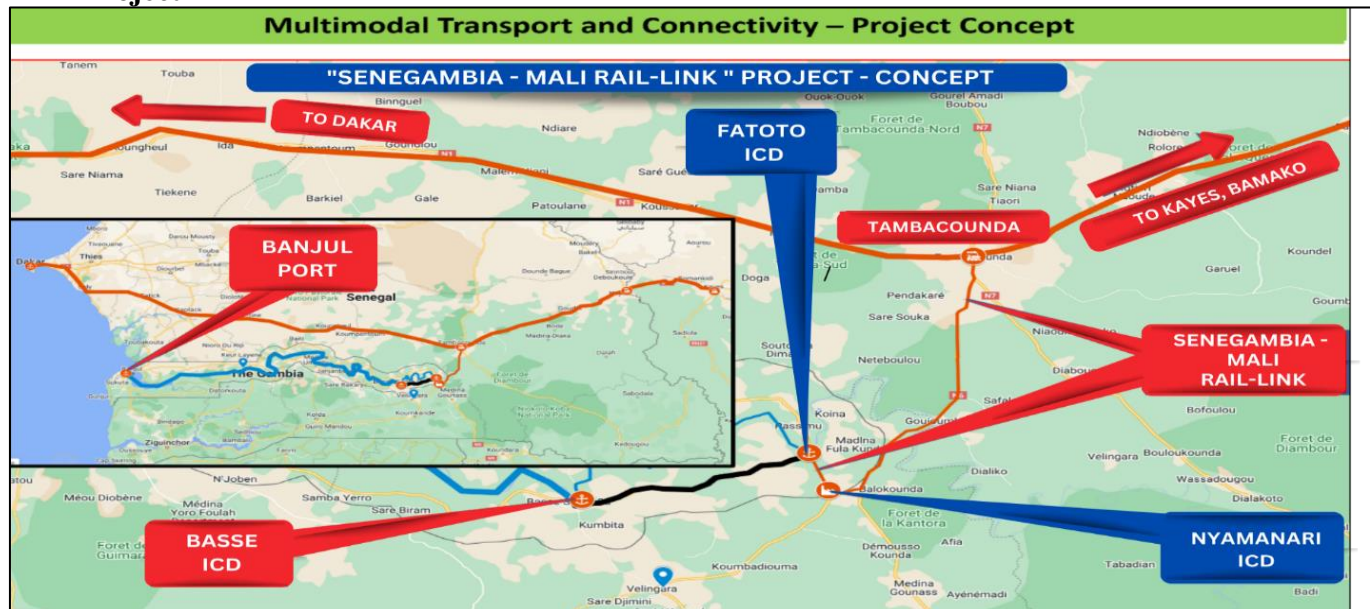
Despite this strategic location, the river has clearly been under-utilised given its potential as a channel for much economic activity. The other significant feature of the country is being surrounded on three sides by Senegal making it almost like an enclave. These realities condition the extent and modalities of linking up with its regional neighbours and the rest of the world. In this regard, the Government of The Gambia, under the auspices of ECOWAS Commission, will co-sponsor with Senegal and Mali the development of a regional rail-link (i.e., "Sene-Gambia-Mali Rail Link") – to connect The Gambia with its neighbours via the *West Africa Railways Network, and the planned AU Agenda 2063 - High Speed Railways Network Project*. This will further deepen and position the country strategically as a prospective Regional/Global Value Chain (RVC/GVC) investment destination within the context and framework of the AfCFTA.

**Figure 10.3** Illustrates the National Multimodal Transport Strategy (NMTS) – Regional Rail Connectivity Project

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<sup>40</sup> Re-capitalised freight transport industry, overhead gantries, reach stackers, unitised containers, etc.

**Figure 10.3: National Multimodal Transport Strategy (NMTS) – Regional Rail Connectivity Project**



### Programme Priorities, Strategies and Interventions

#### Programme 1: National Multimodal Transport Strategy and Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) System for the GBA

1. National Multi-modal Transport Strategy (NMTS)
2. Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) for the GBA<sup>41</sup>

#### Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) System for the GBA

The Gambia urban transportation system is grossly challenged by the sheer lack of an integrated mass transportation system to address the increasing demand for passenger transportation in Banjul, Kanifing and Brikama LGAs. To address this *critical urban challenge*, previous regimes have introduced some form of public transportation system. The Gambia Public Transport Corporation (GPTC) was a flagship project of the First Republic. The Gambia Transport Service Company (GTSC), a beneficiary/successor of GPTC (and assets) and a subsidiary of the Social Security and Housing Finance Corporation (SSHFC) was introduced by the Second Republic to revive urban and national public transportation. Recently, the current regime through GTSC has acquired 38 minibuses with a view to enhance fleet availability and strengthen the urban transport service within the GBA.

<sup>41</sup> GBA: contrary to “GBA 2040 Masterplan”, the GBA, will be defined as Banjul, KM, Kombo North, Kombo Central, Kombo South, and Kombo East. GBA 2040 Masterplan excludes “Kombo East”.

In the light of the almost endemic urban transportation challenge, the Government is committed to resolving the problem, by introducing a modern, fit-for-purpose sustainable urban transportation system. This will be in the form of a hub-and-feeder Battery Electric Vehicles (BEVs) or Compressed Bio-Gas (CBG)/ bio-CNG - BRT System to act as anchor for a Mobility-as a Service (MaaS) urban passenger transportation eco-system for the Greater Banjul Area (GBA), where e-taxi services (Yellow-Black taxis), and the “low speed” tricycles (i.e. “Batch-cars”), will act as short haul licensed “feeders” for the inner and outer-perimeter zones of the BRT System, respectively. The personal Non-Motorised Transport (NMT) movers (i.e., bicycles, e-bikes, e-scooters) also feed the inner and outer perimeter of the BRT system.

The following will be designated as multimodal BRT Zones and Corridors:

- Outer Perimeter Zone (Coordinates): Banjul-Kartong-Darsilami-Dimbaya-Jiboro-Faraba Banta-Kubuneh-Mandinari Tank farms-Banjul
- Inner Perimeter Zone (Coordinates): Banjul-Denton Bridge-Cape Point-SeneGambia-Bijilo/Brufut Heights-Brufut-Salagi-Jabang-Old Yundum-Busumbala-Bafuloto-Kubuneh-Mandinari Village-Banjul
- BRT Corridor: Banjul Serrekunda Highway – Sting Corner-Westfield – Abuko-Lamin – Airport Gate-Airport Junction- Busumbala-Brikama – Mandina Ba – Faraba Banta (UTG campus)
- BRT Corridor: Banjul Serrekunda Highway – Sting Corner-Bertil Harding-Kairaba Traffic Lights-Senegambia- Brusubi Turntable-Airport Junction
- BRT Corridor: Westfield-Serrekunda-Tipper Garage-Sukuta-Brusubi Turntable

The successful implementation of the integrated BRT system will contribute to address key Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and contribute to the Gambia’s Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) commitments. Reducing the country’s transport sector Green House Gas (GHG) emission footprint will be a significant step towards achieving net zero emissions status by 2050.

### Enabling Factors

Table 10.2 illustrates the enabling factors that would facilitate the planning, development and implementation of the National Multimodal Transport Strategy and BRT project priorities by 2027.

**Table 10.2: Enabling Factors: NMTS & BRT Priority Projects: RF-NDP (2023-2027)**

<b>Sector/sub-sector Priority</b>	<b>Policy reform</b>	<b>Institutional alignments</b>	<b>Innovative implementation modalities</b>
National Multi-modal Transport System (NMTS)	Public policy goal statement; Integrated Transportation & Land use Masterplan; Regional Market Demand Study	MoTWI/ Directorate of Transport, GPA, Transport Union, National Roads Authority (NRA), Gambia Maritime Administration (GMA)	Government /GPA funding of anchor projects: 200-ton barge(s); Basse Dry Port multimodal equipment: reach stackers, overhead gantry, etc.; PPP/JV/BOT: (GPA, InfraCo, CPCS Transcom Limited)



BRT System for the GBA	Project planning & development	MoTWI/ Directorate of Transport, Transport Union, NRA	GoTG, AfDB, World Bank (WB), China
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**Implementation Modalities**

An Implementation Plan for the planning, development, and implementation of the NMTS and the BRT System for the GBA is illustrated in Table 10.3.

The implementation process for the development of the NMTS & BRT system will be led and coordinated by the Directorate of Transport of MoTWI, working closely with GPA and NRA, and all stakeholders (Government, private sector, donors, Municipalities, Area Councils, Transport Unions, Civil Society, etc.), to ensure the successful implementation of the two (2) multimodal priority projects by 2027.

**National Urban Transportation and Land Use Masterplan 2050**

A well-functioning national transportation system is inextricably linked to the fit-for-purpose, land use masterplan and its regulatory instruments, without which, the transportation system is bound to fail in both the short term and long-range planning horizons. The Gambia currently lacks a national urban transportation and land use masterplan to guide the transportation planning and development processes. There is a lot of unplanned use of land in the GBA. A result of this has been the growing and increasingly unsustainable pressure on the limited and inadequate existing road infrastructure. This has been exacerbated by existing “open-door” policy of Government on the importation of used vehicles without due regard to age and road worthiness.

The appalling situation on the transport side is further compounded by the lack of a land use zoning ordinance and an effective building permit monitoring system to control the on-going sporadic and laissez-faire<sup>42</sup> land use changes taking place within the GBA. Such changes very often lead to encroachments into adjoining spaces that eventually further constrain the flow of traffic which is already snarled-up in single lanes. And in the absence of spot zoning regulations and other possible alleviating measures, road users and transit vehicles continue to endure long traffic peak hours. To address such negatively disruptive practices, the Government with the support of partners, will develop an integrated urban transportation and land use masterplan 2050 to inform the planning, and development of the transport infrastructure as well as the implementation of the BRT system for the GBA.

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<sup>42</sup> Land use changes are mostly from “residential to commercial”, or residential-commercial mixed uses

**Table 10.3: Implementation Modalities for the National Multimodal Transport System (NMTS) and Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) System: RF-NDP**

Multimodal Transport Sector	2023 <sup>43</sup>	2024	2025	2026-2027: 2028-20230	Lead	Stakeholders	Funding/ Financing Options
<b>National Multi-modal Transport System (NMTS)</b>	Public policy goal statement; comprehensive regional market demand study	PoC: Business case; PS; Financial Close		Project implementation	MOTWI	GPA, NRA, Gambia Teacher's Union (GTU), GMA, MANR, GGC	SPV; PPP: BOT
<b>PoC: River Barge Service Transport Service</b>							
<b>BRT for GBA -Planning &amp; Development</b>	Concept note; P/F	Business case; F/S; DED	PS; Financial Close/ Project implementation	Project implementation	MoTWI/ Directorate of Transport	NRA, AfDB, UNCDF/UNDESA UNOPS, GTSC, GTU	PPP: BOT, SPV, Blended finance

## 10.2.2 Roads Infrastructure Sector

### *Rationale and justification*

The road transport network is the major artery and conduit of the national transport system – interconnecting and facilitating intermodal transfers. Without a fully functioning road transport network – economic and social activities will be negatively impacted with great costs to the economy (GDP) and society at large.

### **Programme Priorities, Strategies and Interventions**

1. Storm water drainage and sewerage system in GBA: timely relocation of services and appropriation of affected properties within the right-of-way; timely procurement of contractors and consultants; and timely availability of funds/resources
2. Sting Corner- Abuko Bypass
  - Option 1: BOT (solicited international competitive bidding-ICB): preferred option)
  - Option 2: Design-Bid-Build (DBB)
    - Feasibility studies currently being carried out
    - Preparation of bidding documents, tendering and selection of contractors

<sup>43</sup> For ease of reference key abbreviations are used: DED: detailed engineering design/technical studies; Pre-feasibility Study; F/S: Feasibility Study; PS: Project Structuring; PoC: Proof of Concept

### 3. Banjul-Barra Bridge

- Option 1: BOT solicited International Competitive Bidding (ICB): preferred option
- Option 2: Bilateral Assistance (e.g., China Aid)
  - Feasibility studies to be carried out

### 4. Construction/ Upgrading of 1200 km of National, Urban and Rural Roads

- Option 1: DBB
  - Feasibility studies to be carried out
  - Prepare bidding and tendering documents, and select contractors
  - Financing option: Self-financing (national budget) and donor support
- Option 2: BOT (e.g., Sting Corner-Abuko By-pass: solicited ICB): preferred option

### 5. Dedicated Lead Agency for Road Safety

- Option 1: Government Funding
- Option 2: Donor/ multilateral funding

## Enabling Factors

The implementation of the roads sector priority programmes/projects of the RF-NDP may be constrained by the lack of innovative financing mechanism to trigger the desired outcome (i.e., project financial close). For example, a lender for the “Sting Corner – Abuko By-pass Toll Road Project” may seek to mitigate against possible credit default by the SPV/BOT Concessionaire failing to keep-up with scheduled Principal and Interest (P&I) debt repayments. Hence the lender seeks to de-risk such a likelihood of failure and requires the borrower (i.e., concessionaire) to take on the risk precedent to project financial close.

In this regard, the borrower (SPV/BOT Concessionaire) may seek to apply for a Partial Credit Guarantee (PCG) from Development Finance Institutions (DFI) such as AfDB, or IFC, etc., to issue a guarantee to the lender (banks, or SPV investors), to cover repayments for P&I for a specified period of the concession. Table 10.4 illustrates the enabling factors critical to facilitate project bankability of the roads infrastructure sector priorities.

**Table 10.4: Enabling Factors: Roads Infrastructure Sector – Project Priorities: RF-NDP**

<b>Sector/sub-sector Priority</b>	<b>Policy reform</b>	<b>Institutional alignments</b>	<b>Innovative implementation modalities</b>
<b>Sting Corner- Abuko Bypass</b>	Mid -Term Review of NTP/ National Transport Plan/ Transport Masterplan	MoTWI/ NRA	PPP (BOT, JV, SPV) Infrastructure Bond, Partial Credit Guarantee Insurance; Government Funding
Improvement of Storm water and sewerage system in Greater Banjul Area	Mid -Term Review of NTP	MoTWI	Self-financing Donor Funding
Banjul-Barra Bridge	Mid -Term Review of NTP/ National Transport Plan/	MoTWI/ NRA	PPP (BOT, JV, SPV) Infrastructure Bond, Government Funding

	Transport Masterplan		
Construction/Upgrading of 1200 km of National, Urban and Rural Roads	Mid -Term Review of NTP/ National Transport Plan/ Transport Masterplan	MoTWI/ NRA	Self-financing, Donor, Blended Financing
Establishment of a Road Safety Lead Agency	Mid -Term Review of NTP/ National Transport Plan/ Transport Masterplan/ Road Safety Strategy	MoTWI/ NRA/ Road Safety Committee/ Working Group	Self-financing, Donor,

### **Implementation Modalities**

The implementation arrangement for the roads infrastructure sector priority projects must address the “how and where” questions, i.e., (1) how programmes/projects can be brought to bankability at the shortest possible time; and (2) how funding will be sourced, and from where, and at what cost? Hence, the proposed institutional and implementation plan, and recommended funding options to achieve the key results by 2027. See Table 10.5 below.

### **Dedicated Lead Agency for Road Safety**

There has been a significant deterioration in road safety in The Gambia in recent years which is creating a heavy burden on the country’s economy and its people. A methodical approach is required to tackle this issue. The following strategic projects need to be put in place:

- Build Government and community capacity to tackle the problem
- Begin to tackle high priority safety issues in a sustainable way
- Monitor and review progress and develop an increasingly sophisticated response

Several strategic directions are set out to assist in prioritizing our efforts, developing projects, and increasing investment in road safety. By focusing our planning and delivery efforts along these paths, it is expected to make best use of our resources, help drive achievement of our targets and ultimate safety goal.

Important decisions over the years have underpinned road safety governance and management in The Gambia. This includes the establishment of essential inter-agency governance and management arrangements under the Gambia Road Safety Committee and recruitment of dedicated road safety staff within MoTWI. The Committee reports to the Minister of Transport, Works and Infrastructure and comprises senior public servants responsible for road safety. Its role is to:

- Oversee and coordinate the delivery of road safety activity across the critical delivery arms of the Government
- Provide a coordinated line of advice to the Minister of Transport, Works and Infrastructure on critical road safety issues affecting the country
- Provide direction and governance to the implementation of multi-sectoral work programmes to tackle road safety crisis
- Lead the promotion of a safe systems approach to road safety within the country

Ministry of Transport, Works and Infrastructure provides the secretariat function for the Committee which will also be supported by a road safety working group that includes a wider group of stakeholders outside government. These essential steps will build towards establishment of a dedicated road safety agency, possibly in association with assuming responsibility for motor vehicle registration and driver licensing as is the case in many other African countries. A key function of the new road safety agency will be to lead and coordinate the planning, delivery, and management of road safety activity across Government. Funding, legislation, promotion, monitoring and evaluation and capacity building will be critical issues to address.

**Table 10.5 Implementation Plan for the Roads Infrastructure Sector – Project Priorities: RF-NDP**

<b>Infrastructure Connectivity Programme</b>	<b>2023<sup>44</sup></b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2025 Bankability</b>	<b>2026-2027: 2028-2030</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Stakeholders</b>	<b>Funding/ Financing Options</b>
Sting - Corner Abuko Bypass	Concept note; P/F	Business case; F/S DED	PS; Financial Close	Project implementation	PPP Directorate	MoTWI, NRA	PPP: BOT, SPV, Project finance
Storm water Drainage and Sewerage System in GBA	Concept note; P/F F/S	DED; PS. Financial Close	Project implementation	Project implementation	NRA	MoTWI, MoFEA	Self-financing/ Donor funded
Banjul - Barra Bridge	Concept note; P/F	Business case; F/S DED	PS; Financial close	Project implementation	PPP Directorate	MoTWI, NRA GPA, GMA	PPP: BOT, SPV, Project finance
Construction/ Upgrading of 1200 km of National, Urban and Rural Roads	Concept note; P/F F/S	DED; PS. Financial Close	Project implementation	Project implementation	NRA	MoTWI, MoFEA	Self-financing/ Donor funded
Establishment of a Road Safety Lead Agency	Concept Note	Project Implementation	Project Implementation		MoTWI	Road Safety Committee/ Working Group	Self-financing/ Donor funded

<sup>44</sup> For ease of reference key abbreviations are used: DED: detailed engineering design/technical studies; Pre-feasibility Study; F/S: Feasibility Study; PS: Project Structuring; PoC: Proof of Concept

### 10.2.3 Ports and River Transport

#### **Programme 3: Ports and River Transport Sector – Priorities, Interventions & Strategies**

##### *Project rationale and justifications*

Ports and river transportation are two (2) of the most important transport systems the Gambia is endowed with. The Port of Banjul is the principal gateway, handling over 90 per cent of the country's international trade. The river transport system, despite its current underutilisation, is an important transport component of the NMS. It is envisaged that with the implementation of the NMTS strategy, and the development of the Basse Freight Logistics Platform (BFLP) the River Gambia will regain its lost glory and economic status, and thus contribute significantly to GDP.

The ports and river transport programme comprises of three (3) elements: Banjul Port, Gambia Ferry Services (i.e., cross-river transportation), and longitudinal river transportation; the latter to be provided by GPA and joint-venture partners vis-a-vis the BFLP (i.e., Dry port).

##### **Fourth Banjul Port Expansion Programme**

The rationale and justification for the Fourth Banjul Port Expansion Programme is as follows: (1) to principally decongest Banjul port from its current capacity constraints (Quayside/Container Yard); (2) to improve port operational efficiency in terms of container<sup>45</sup> and general cargo handling; and (3) to enhance Banjul port's competitiveness vis-a-vis the regional competitors.

##### **Strategic Policy Interventions**

- 1. Port institutional reform:** A key enabling factor for the port transformation is the Government's decision to transform the GPA's operating model from a "Service port" to "Landlord model/Hybrid", whereby the GPA will sign a PPP agreement with private partners to jointly operate the Port of Banjul under a BOT arrangement for the period of the concession. However, while this strategic move by GoTG to invite private participation in the ports sector (i.e., Banjul port operations) is commendable and indeed a landmark policy shift, a "structured Joint Venture (JV)", instead of an outright "BOT", concession to private investor(s) is more prudent, given the strategic nature of the assets of Banjul port.
- 2. GPA Corporatisation:** GPA is one of the most strategic and efficient SOEs, albeit the only provider of port services nationally. However, despite its statutory monopoly posture (Ports Act 1972), GPA is increasingly facing fierce regional competition from bigger and efficient ports – thanks to private PPP modalities adopted by such ports (Dakar, Accra, Freetown).
- 3. Cognizant of this increasing threat, the GoTG will reform GPA's "public corporation legal structure" to a "public limited liability company", registered under the Companies Act 2013.**

Below is a summary of the key strategic priorities for the ports and river transport sector to achieve the expected results by 2027.

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<sup>45</sup> Current container handling productivity is 7Teus per hour; bulk cargo handling is 48tons/gang hour

## 1) Fourth Banjul Port Expansion Programme

- Container Jetty extension (200-345m), and ancillary structures
- Container Jetty: replacement of northern part of the jetty due to existing damage
- Policy and tariff reforms
- Port Digitalisation Project (TOS)
- Sanyang Deep Seaport (Cabinet approval and declaration of Sanyang as Port Zone)

## 2) River Transport

- Basse Intermodal Freight Logistics Platform i.e., Dry port
- Relocation of Banjul Ferry Terminal and the acquisition of new ferries for Gambia Ferry Services Company (GFSC)

### Enabling Factors

The implementation of the Banjul port's priority programmes/projects may be constrained by the lack of an innovative financing mechanism to trigger the desired outcome (i.e., project financial close). For example, to secure the financing of the "4<sup>th</sup> Banjul Port Jetty Expansion Project", a structured financing strategy will be designed such that GPA (i.e., the public BOT/JV partner's) financial exposure in the concession arrangement with the private partner(s) is mitigated such that, the value (i.e. non-cash) of the ports fixed assets (jetty, land, buildings, etc.) is transferred from its balance sheet to the JV operating company's books - to be matched with equivalent financial contributions of private capital (i.e., cash injection), and technology provided by the private partner(s).

Table 10.6 illustrates the enabling factors critical to facilitate project implementation of the ports project priorities.

**Table 10.6: Enabling Factors for the Ports and River Transport Sector – Project Priorities: RF-NDP**

Sector/sub-sector Priority	Policy reform	Institutional alignments	Innovative implementation modalities
4th Banjul Port Project Components	Mid -Term Review of NTP/ Business Plan	GPA/MoTWI	PPP (BOT, JV, SPV) Structured Finance
Basse Freight Logistics Platform (BFLP)/Dry port	Mid -Term Review of NTP/ National Transport Plan/ Transport Masterplan	GPA/GMA/ MoTWI	SPV, PPP (BOT, JV)
Relocation of Banjul Ferry Terminal/ Acquisition of Ferries	Cabinet Decision	GPA/GFSC/ MoTWI	Procurement
Deep Seaport in Sanyang (Cabinet Approval and Declaration of Port Zone in Sanyang)	Mid -Term Review of NTP/ National Transport Plan/ Transport Masterplan/ Cabinet Approval	MoTWI/ GPA	PPP (BOT, JV, SPV) Structured Finance



## Implementation Modalities

The implementation arrangement for the Port’s priority projects of the RF-NDP should address the “how” and “where” questions, i.e., how sector programmes/projects can be brought to bankability at the shortest possible time; and how, and where funding would be sourced from, at the least cost to GPA and the economy at large. (See Infrastructure Financing Section). The Implementation Plan for the ports and river transport priority projects is illustrated in Table 10.7.

**Table 10.7 Implementation Plan for the Port and River Transport Sector – Project Priorities: RF-NDP**

Infrastructure Connectivity Programme	2022-2023 <sup>46</sup>	2023-2024	Lead	Stakeholders	Funding/ Financing Options
4th Banjul Port Project Components	EOI; Business Case; ESIA Financial Close	Project Implementation	GPA, PPP Directorate (MoFEA)	MoTWI, MoTRIE	PPP: BOT, SPV, Project Finance
River Transport (Basse Dry Port)	Concept Note; PoC; P/F F/S	DED; PS. Financial Close	MoTWI/GPA	GGC, MoA., MoTC, MoTRIE	PPP: BOT, SPV, Project Finance
Deep Seaport in Sanyang (Cabinet Approval and Declaration of Port Zone in Sanyang)	Studies/ Business Case/ Concept Note/ Cabinet Memorandum	Studies / Business Case/ Concept Note/ Cabinet Memorandum	MoTWI/ GPA	GMA	PPP: BOT, SPV, Project Finance/ Government Funding

### 10.2.3 Air Transport Sector

#### Priority 1: Policy De-coupling of Gambia Civil Aviation Authority (GCAA) “regulatory” mandate from its “commercial operations”

The Government policy position on separation of functions of GCAA is warranted by the fact that efficiency, profitability, and quality of service could be improved through restructuring of the Authority to address conflict-of-interest issues, etc. while opening the door to private sector participation in the management, operations, and development of Banjul International Airport (BIA).

<sup>46</sup> For ease of reference key abbreviations are used: DED: detailed engineering design/technical studies; Pre-feasibility Study; F/S: Feasibility Study; PS: Project Structuring; PoC: Proof of Concept

To this end, Cabinet approved a study recommendation of a phased implementation plan to reform the GCAA. An inter-agency project implementation team, assisted by a consultant, has been set-up by Government to oversee and implement the de-coupling process and plan respectively.

**Key programmatic strategies and interventions**

- Inter-Agency Committee setup by Government to oversee the de-coupling process
- Consultant hired to advise the Inter-Agency Committee

**Priority 2: Construction of parallel taxi way, turning loop and repair of runway**

Government will approach traditional donors/development partners to secure funding for the implementation of the civil works (repair of runway, parallel taxiway and turning loop) projects listed in Table 10.8.

**Enabling Factors**

The implementation of Air Transport sector priorities may be constrained by the need for a legal amendment to the GCAA Act to separate regulations from commercial operating activities of the Authority. Hence, the proposed enabling measures: policy reforms, and innovative measures to be undertaken to achieve the expected outcomes by 2027.

Table 10.8 Illustrates the enabling factors critical to facilitate project implementation of the Air Transport project priorities.

**Table 10.8: Enabling Factors: Air Transport Sector Priority Projects: RF-NDP**

Sector/sub-sector Priority	Policy reform	Institutional alignments	Innovative implementation modalities
Policy de-coupling of GCAA “regulatory” mandate from its commercial “operations”	Policy de-coupling of GCAA “regulatory” mandate from its commercial “operations”	MoTWI/GCAA	Cabinet Paper/Cabinet Decision/Consultancy
Overlay of Runway and Construction of parallel Taxi Lane, and construction of a <i>turning loop</i> for aircraft at the end of the runway at BIA	1). Develop Business Plan for BIA 2). Review NTP 3). Develop Policy for Air Navigation Service (ANS) Provision	GCAA/New Airport Company/GIA	PPP (BOT, JV, SPV) Infrastructure Bond, Government Funding

**10.3 Outcome 7. 3: National Public Buildings and Facilities Policy (NPBFP)**

The National Buildings and Facilities Policy envisages a legal and regulatory framework that would: lead to the efficient provision of sustainable NPBF infrastructure, provide adequate

guidance to Government agencies and the subsector to ensure compliance with the NPBF, promote adoption of best practices and standards by support institutions and consulting and contracting firms in building their respective capacities.

To this end, Government through the NPBFs committee and its technical secretariat will assume an enabling role in encouraging and guiding donors and investors to establish programmes to strengthen private actors in the subsector. In this regard, Government will allow institutions and organisations to decide on matters within their respective areas of expertise, such as programme/content-development and construction methodologies. In addition to general policy support, a wide array of government agencies – MoTWI, MoFEA and MoLRG - are assigned specific and determinant roles in the execution of the NPBF. The Ministry is the key technical adviser to Government on matters related to public buildings and facilities. Hence, in operationalizing the NPBF, the Ministry’s National Public Buildings and Facilities Authority (NPBFA) will play a key role.

The NPBF subsector is currently faced with the following challenges:

- Incomplete or out-of-date land development laws; several key bodies in the regulatory framework are absent, only partly functional, and/or not always included in decision-making processes
- Low budgets and inadequate technical expertise resulting in technical regulatory bodies unable to properly execute their mandates to plan development and provide design review and building inspection services to the NPBFs subsector. In most cases, development has overtaken the planning and development control efforts of Government; giving rise to unsafe buildings being constructed in unplanned areas and unsuitable locations
- MoTWI is not always involved in the construction or structural alteration of public buildings and facilities. In addition, it is not evident that the Ministry carries out the half yearly inspection of Government buildings to determine necessary repairs as required by law (Government Order). While MoTWI engineers are generally co-opted into the contract or procurement committees of Government agencies, it is not clear whether they do so in their capacity as Ministry construction experts who are expected to provide technical advice
- Although standard “maintenance-free” designs exist for buildings such as schools and health centres, there is no government-wide policy to encourage sustainability in the design, use and maintenance of NPBFs. Government agencies do not always have sufficient financial resources committed to projects before embarking on them; often resulting in inadequate design, poor construction and/or unfinished buildings
- There is a shortage of qualified workers in the industry. Competencies do not always exist in Government agencies to prepare design briefs, defend budgets, carry out bid evaluation and supervise construction works, among other things. Consulting firms are not always trained or experienced to produce appropriate design solutions, and/or provide adequate supervision of construction works. Contractors have difficulties finding qualified workers, tradesmen or professionals for their building construction projects
- Training institutions do not fully cater for the needs of the industry, especially in preparing students for immediate employment (inadequate work exposure) to fill key roles in the subsector (no courses on facility maintenance, surveying, mapping), and with some

competency in prevailing technologies (Computer-Aided Design (CAD), GIS, Photoshop). A very high proportion of raw materials and finished products in the industry are imported. These could be replaced with locally available materials, provided there is sufficient incentive to develop them

- Firms have generally been unable to deliver projects on-budget and on-time. With the proposed widening and deepening of construction codes and standards, projects will have more rigorous and complex design and construction requirements. Therefore, clients must select design and construction firms more prudently. Firms, in turn must be equally diligent in ensuring the projects they undertake fall within their core expertise

### **The National Public Buildings and Facilities Authority (NPBFA)**

The Ministry of Transport, Works and Infrastructure is responsible for overall coordination of the NPBF. The NPBFA will issue and administer public buildings and facilities - policies, guidelines, standards, and criteria throughout the Government. It will ensure compliance with all laws and statutes that direct the construction, utilisation, and management of NPBFs. In executing these tasks, it will collect and disseminate relevant information, monitor the progress of the subsector, examine key technical issues relevant to the subsector and advise Government entities, or projects on appropriate structures and procedures in supporting activities in the public buildings and facilities subsector. It will standardise and simplify requirements for the design, construction, and maintenance of NPBFs by issuing standard forms and technical guidelines as required. In all these activities, it will liaise with training institutions, construction consultants and contractors' associations. Within Government, the NPBFA will advise MoFEA on budgetary requirements for constructing, refurbishing or repairing existing public assets, assets inventories, commissioning new assets, decommissioning of existing assets, and other matters relevant to proper financial administration of NPBFs.

The Authority will also liaise with PMO to determine Government annual requirements for office and residential space and identify appropriate channels for the supply of such infrastructure in line with the MoFEA budget. NPBFA will support MoLRG administration in construction codes and standards by assuming responsibility for and “signing-off” on development control permits for public and/or complex buildings.

The NPBF Committee chaired by MoTWI, comprises relevant MDAs, private sector institutions and civil society representatives. The approved 10-year Action Plan (2017-2026) for the development of the NPBF subsector is annexed to the National Development Context Annexure.

### **Programme priorities, strategies, and interventions**

**Table 10.9: Enabling Factors: Public Building Facilities( PBF) Priority Projects: RF-NDP**

<b>Sector/sub-sector Priority</b>	<b>Policy reform</b>	<b>Institutional alignments</b>	<b>Innovative implementation modalities</b>
Construction of New Government Offices	Review of NPBFA/ Establishment of NPBFA	MoTWI/ NPBFA/ All MDAs	Government Funding/ Donor funding

Complex (New Quadrangle)			
Construction of New Embassies abroad	Review of NPBFA/ Establishment of NPBFA	MoTWI/ NPBFA/ MoFA	Government Funding/ donor funding
Construction of Governors Office Buildings and Residences	Review of NPBFA/ Establishment of NPBFA	MoTWI/ NPBFA/ Governors' Offices	Government Funding/ donor funding

### Implementation Modalities

**Table 10.10: Implementation Modalities for the National Buildings and Facilities Policy (NPBFP): RF-NDP**

Public Works Sector (Buildings and Public Facilities)	2023	2024	2025	2026-2027: 2028-2030	Lead	Stakeholders	Funding/ Financing Options
Construction of New Government Offices Complex	Mid-Term review of NPBFP	Project implementation	Project implementation	Project implementation	MOTWI	MoTWI/ NPBFA/ All MDAs	Government Funding/ donor funding
Construction of New Embassies abroad	Mid-Term review of NPBFP	Project implementation	Project implementation	Project implementation	MOTWI	MoTWI/ NPBFA/ MoFA	Government Funding/ donor funding
Construction of Governors Office Buildings	Mid-Term review of NPBFP	Project implementation	Project implementation	Project implementation	MOTWI	MoTWI/ NPBFA/ Governors' offices	Government Funding/ donor funding

<b>Public Works Sector (Buildings and Public Facilities)</b>	2023	2024	2025	2026-2027: 2028-2030	Lead	Stakeholders	Funding/ Financing Options
and Residences							

#### **10.4 Outcome 7.4: A Digital/ICT and broadband nation attained**

Despite its early successes, the ICT Sector is beset with a systemic quadrangular malaise of political interference poor governance and management, policy uncertainty, and regulatory asymmetry; all of which pose an unfair burden of competition on the public sector (GAMTEL/GAMCEL) – who are operating in a private sector-business environment where decision-making is encumbered by the red tape that exists in the public domain.

Government will have to address these constraints under the “re-positioning” and “turnaround strategy” of GAMTEL/GAMCEL, that will be formulated.

#### **Programme Priorities, Strategies, and Interventions**

To deepen the ICT development gains of the past five (5) years, the Ministry is prioritizing programmatic interventions aligned with the AU Digital Transformation Strategy for Africa 2020-2030, and the ICT sector development priorities and targets set under SDG 9 of Agenda 2030.

To this end, the Ministry will adopt a *whole of society approach* for the development of the four foundational pillars of the digital economy listed below.

- Pillar 1: Enabling environment, policy, and regulation
- Pillar 2: Inclusive digital infrastructure
- Pillar 3: Digital innovation and entrepreneurship
- Pillar 4: Digital skills and human capital development

#### **Pillar 1: Enabling environment, policy, and regulation**

An enabling environment creates conditions for the digital economy to flourish, create jobs and provide quality services to citizens. In this regard, the ministry has earmarked the development of robust policy and regulatory instruments that will help further consolidate the gains registered in terms of ensuring an enabling ICT environment. The policy and regulatory instruments will be premised on predictability and transparency. The strategies will also focus on increasing public

investments, putting in place subsidies, flexible tax regimes, providing incentives for infrastructure development, amongst others. Key activities to be implemented under this pillar include:

1. Formulation of the Communications Bill 2023
2. Formulation of National Digital Economy Masterplan
3. Development of a holistic e-commerce Policy and Strategy
4. Strengthening cybersecurity governance mechanisms through the adoption of the cybercrime, Data Protection and Privacy Bills, and establishment of Cybersecurity entity within the Ministry
5. Revitalisation of Postal Services through the formulation of robust policy and regulatory frameworks
6. Formulation of a dig-once infrastructure sharing policy

### ***Formulation of the Communications Bill 2023***

To strengthen the regulatory framework, the Government will finalise the review of the ICT Act (as Amended) 2014 and formulate the Communications Bill 2023. This Bill is expected to serve as the main regulatory instrument of the ICT sector going forward. The new Bill will include a proposition for a study that will look into the merits of implementing a robust and progressive universal licensing framework, that will strengthen competition and improve access to affordable and quality ICT services.

### ***National Digital Economy Masterplan***

The Ministry is set to formulate the National Digital Economy policy and strategy in 2023 with support from partners. The policy and strategy will provide informed guidelines and a robust roadmap that would help accelerate digital transformation.

### ***Holistic e-commerce Policy and Strategy***

The Ministry is also working with stakeholders to develop a holistic e-commerce policy and strategy which will provide informed references for the development of the e-commerce sub-sector and the proliferation of digital financial services. The development of the policy and strategy is also driven by the recognition that e-commerce can help accelerate the inclusion of small and medium-sized enterprises into local and international supply chains and markets. The Ministry is also working with MoTRIE and relevant stakeholders to ensure that there is a robust dedicated digital platform to support e-trade, in view of the implementation of AfCFTA.

In addition, the Ministry will also prioritise the strengthening of cyber security governance mechanisms during the period. The medium-term measures include the enhancement of the cyber security legislative framework, through the adoption of the cybercrime and Data Protection and Privacy Bills. The cybersecurity governance structure will be championed through the establishment of a dedicated entity within the Ministry. The entity will spearhead the implementation of the policy and regulatory instruments on cybersecurity, cybercrime, and related issues.

### ***Revitalisation of Postal Services***

The Ministry is working towards putting in place a robust policy and regulatory framework for the postal services sector. This framework will provide informed guidelines for the sector as well as institute progressive market- friendly regulations to steer competition and improve service delivery in the sector.

### ***Dig-once Infrastructure Sharing Policy***

The Ministry is also working with the regulator to formulate an Infrastructure sharing policy by the end of 2023. The policy will amongst others provide robust guidelines on collocation and other infrastructure sharing arrangements. This will help in the optimal utilisation of infrastructure and ensure increased presence of operators, especially in underserved and unserved communities.

### **Pillar 2: Inclusive digital infrastructure and payment systems**

The Ministry recognises that for the Gambia's digital economy to thrive, the enhancement of digital infrastructure and payment systems is essential. In this regard, the following interventions have been earmarked for implementation during the RF-NDP:

1. Second undersea fiber optic cable (Gateway)
2. Integrated payment gateway
3. Implementation of a National Tier-4 Data centre
4. Enhancing broadband infrastructure through the implementation of the Universal Access Service (UAS) policy
5. Digital Terrestrial Transmission (DTT) project
6. E-government rollout
7. Electronic (e) - Gambia Power Project
8. Government service bus and open digital data platform
9. Public Key Infrastructure (PKI)
10. Establishment of a cybersecurity certification body and conformity assessment lab
11. Upgrading the Gambia Cybersecurity Incidence Response Team (GM-CSIRT) infrastructure

### ***Second undersea fiber optic cable (Gateway)***

The Gambia is perhaps the only country in the sub-region, except Guinea Bissau, without a second undersea landing station to act as a mutual redundancy with the ACE-GSC gateway to ensure reliable and minimum internet/broadband downtime.

The need for a second landing site is further warranted by the following justifications: (1) high cost of the current redundancy option (CG1), (2) the need to support growth across the digital value chain, and (3) to mitigate against the risk of future nationwide internet blackouts, and its attendant financial cost implications to the country.



To achieve the expected outcomes and targets to boost the realisation of “building the digital nation”, and at the same time harness the “digital dividend”, the establishment of a second subsea cable is a top priority for Government, which will be implemented in collaboration with development partners.

### ***Integrated payment gateway***

The Gambia, like most African countries, is committed to a cashless digitalisation transformation agenda to position itself to compete effectively in an increasingly cashless e-commerce world. The local e-commerce industry is currently supported by a basic and limited-in-scope web and mobile payment solutions Point of Sale (PoS) platform supported by Gamswitch, a public private company established and supervised by the Central Bank of The Gambia (CBG).

Gamswitch currently does not have an integrated payment gateway solution platform to provide e-commerce and mobility companies and Fintechs with the requisite Application Programming Interface (API) technology <sup>47</sup>solution to integrate In-app digital wallets with customer bank accounts for re-charge and settlement purposes. Technological innovation will be stifled without recourse to the use of proprietary applications of commercial banks; most of whom are hesitant and cherry-pick on supporting start-ups. In a bid to support the quest to transform The Gambia from cash-based to cashless economy and society, Government will invest in an integrated payment gateway infrastructure platform to address the payment gateway infrastructure deficit to achieve the expected outcomes and results.

### ***Implementation of a National Tier-4 Data centre***

The availability of a Data Centre (DC) is increasingly becoming the gold standard of a stable, reliable, and modern ICT digital infrastructure economy. The proposed Gambia national data centre will provide better access to reliable and timely data, and enhanced data-security environment. The availability of DC will also address the risk against data loss through mitigating measures.

A typical Tier-4 DC has the following redundancies/capacities: (i) two or more power sources<sup>48</sup>; (ii) two or more cooling sources; (iii) robustness i.e., the ability to undertake maintenance without going offline; (iv) uptime rating of 99.995 per cent equivalent to 26 minutes of yearly downtime; and (v) fault tolerance.

### ***Building a Broadband Nation***

The increasingly developed national digital infrastructure will act as “motherboard” and launchpad in the country’s quest to build an inclusive broadband nation, as espoused in the ICT for

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<sup>47</sup> Ex., PayPal, Stripe, et al

<sup>48</sup> A potential challenge for Gambia, since there is only one (1) power grid source, NAWEC. However, most data centres in South Africa, according to the Uptime Institute, are connected to one (1) Eskom sub-station, and two (2) independent feeds from 2 transformers within the substation; or they’re connected to multiple different national grids, rendering such DCs, acceptable in terms of power redundancy; source: Uptime Institute. New York, New York, USA

Development Policy Statement 2018 – 2028, which envisages the Gambia to be transformed into an information-rich, and knowledge-based economy and society by 2028. The national broadband strategy of “building a broadband nation” is a fundamental component of the “inclusive digital infrastructure” ecosystem of Pillar 2. The approved National Broadband Policy 2020-2024 articulates the strategies for the transformation into a broadband nation through a national<sup>49</sup> broadband access goal as reflected in the following key targets:

1. Broadband connectivity of 75 per cent of homes with affordable access and a minimum download/upload speed of at least 5Mbps, by 2022
2. Provision of almost 100 per cent of homes with affordable broadband connectivity of a minimum download/upload speed of at least 5Mbps by end of 2023
3. Increase access to broadband coverage of 4G to not less than 85 per cent of the population by 2024
4. Extend broadband service of not less than 5Mbps to “anchor institutions” such as universities, schools, hospitals, and government institutions by 2024
5. Increase digital literacy in schools to 75 per cent by 2024
6. Extend broadband services to all LGAs and Districts by 2024, and to achieve a digital literacy of 75 per cent amongst Government employees and 65 per cent of the total workforce by 2024
7. Ensure that public safety first-responders’ institutions are equipped with alarm monitoring and security infrastructure and have access to nationwide wireless and inter-operable broadband public safety network by 2024

To achieve the above laudable broadband access targets, the Government/Ministry will develop an M&E Framework for the implementation and monitoring of the targets.

### ***Digital Terrestrial Transmission (DTT) project***

The global telecommunication community (International Telecommunication Union - ITU member countries) has set itself the goal to migrate from analogue broadcasting to digital, this invaluable resource (radio spectrum) will allow for more efficient use of ICT, mobile digital telephony, and broadband technologies and services. Thus, a critical infrastructure requirement for the Gambia to migrate effectively to digital TV broadcasting is the setting up of a Digital Terrestrial TV Network to enable Digital Gambia Limited (DGL) to address the “access to quality” issues of broadcasting, and to create the opportunity for spectrum utilisation for emerging technologies and services.

Therefore, to achieve the expected outcomes/ targets, Government through DGL will increase the transmission sites for better coverage. Hence the need to fast track resource mobilisation efforts to construct the national DTT infrastructure, through the sale of spectrum as approved by Cabinet. A PPP/BOT arrangement with a private partner/investor will be adopted by Government to design, build, operate and transfer through either a JV or BOT modality, the DTT infrastructure, and services for an agreed period.

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<sup>49</sup> Gambia National Broadband Policy 2020-2024

### ***Digital Government Development***

The Ministry has earmarked the implementation of impactful digital Government development initiatives over the next five years. This will help consolidate the gains registered under the e-government strategy and programme 2020-2024. The new interventions will include the development of a one-stop-shop for Government services, which will enable citizens to access a wide range of government services online. To this end, the Ministry will work with relevant stakeholders to implement an aggressive public sector digitalisation initiative to revolutionise service delivery and improve outcomes.

Digital government development strides will also include the establishment of a Government Service Bus and an Open Data Platform that would enable Government entities and associated systems and e-services to integrate and effectively share data among themselves. This will add value to the ICT policy making process, and importantly, ensure judicious utilisation of government digital resources as required.

Additionally, the Ministry will prioritise the implementation of a National Digital Identity initiative during this period. This initiative will focus on creating an e-citizen platform that assigns unique digital IDs to all Gambians from birth. The merits of the digital ID include providing more accurate data to support policy making, social development interventions, ease economic activities and strengthen national security amongst others.

### ***Electronic (e) - Gambia Power Project***

The e-Gambia Power Project intends to transform the country into a digital nation by first leveraging on the existing infrastructure and capacity to expand ICT services that will provide Quadruple Play technologies nationwide, as well as maximise revenue for public and private sector entities. The Quadruple Play services will provide broadband internet, IP enabled smart electricity meters, cable TV/IP TV, and IP telephony for users. The infrastructure being mentioned is referring to the National Power Grid that connects many homes and businesses with electricity. This project will utilise this infrastructure to simultaneously provide optical Fibre to the Homes (FTTH). The Quadruple Play services will then ride on this FTTH to provide increased quality broadband access for the people.

### ***National Digital Addressing System***

The Ministry will work with the relevant authorities to achieve nationwide rollout of the national digital addressing initiative. The initiative has tremendously improved revenue collection for the local governments in Banjul and Kanifing after its successful rollout. The initiative is also supporting the proliferation of e-businesses in these areas.

The Ministry will also focus on putting in place a robust digital addressing policy to provide informed guidelines on the management of the digital addressing database as well as the prudent utilisation of the associated services.

### ***Public Key Infrastructure (PKI)***

It is evident that every aspect of the world is becoming digital including the way we communicate, do business, interact, or conduct financial transactions. As such, it is critical to ensure communication, business, and financial transactions and interactions are done in a secured and trusted manner. This can only be possible through the availability of a PKI in the country; to ensure the identification and authentication of users and devices in the digital space using digital signed certificates to ensure trusted services. The implementation of KPI will include development of the right infrastructure, human resources, and policy frameworks.

### **Pillar 3: Digital innovation and entrepreneurship**

The Government of The Gambia is cognizant of the reality that the digital economy requires an ecosystem that fosters private initiative and provides technical and financial support to those willing to take risks and innovate. In lieu of this, the Ministry will implement interventions geared towards spurring digital innovation and entrepreneurship, especially amongst the youthful population. These measures will include the following:

1. Development of innovation ecosystems such as regional ICT innovation hubs
2. Strengthening entrepreneurship skills, and provision of funding for digital entrepreneurs
3. Putting in place the requisite policies to support start-ups
4. Putting in place a regulatory sandbox to ease market entry and promote local content development

These measures will ensure the enabling environment is in place for local entrepreneurs to design viable new products and bring them to scale; thus, promoting local content proliferation across all sectors whilst increasing employment and employability opportunities for Gambian youth.

To realise this, the Ministry conducted a feasibility study for the establishment of a national technology hub. The hub will be implemented in partnership with the University of The Gambia. To ensure inclusiveness, the Ministry will also establish at least a technology hub in each region. This initiative will serve as the bedrock for an inclusive digital transformation process.

### **Pillar 4: Digital skills and human capital development**

The Ministry fully realises that to accelerate the development of the digital economy, it needs to aggressively devise measures that would rapidly scale up digital skills levels and human competencies in ICTs. Owing to this, the Ministry is working with stakeholders to come up with strategies that would help address basic, intermediate, and advanced digital skills gaps in the Gambia.

The following priority interventions will be implemented under this pillar:

1. Digital skills development: - digital literacy training programmes for 5,000 Gambians annually in line with the pledge to ITU's "Partner to Connect" initiative, aimed at connecting the unconnected globally
2. Capacity building for ICT professionals
3. Mainstreaming ICT education in schools
4. Scaling up capacities of key institutions on cybersecurity

The digital skills development interventions will help equip all citizens with basic digital literacy, including basic digital financial literacy to be able to use digital products and services effectively, safely and to their benefit. The interventions will also focus on developing intermediate skills for the workforce, especially those in the public sector. This will help in job retention and facilitate career progression for workers.

To reap the digital dividend, the Ministry will also prioritise capacity building for ICT professionals and young entrepreneurs in advanced and specialised digital skills. This will help ensure rapid digital transformation of Government services and other existing businesses.

The Ministry will also work with the relevant institutions to ensure ICT education is mainstreamed from the grassroots to build a generation of tech savvy and smart citizens. Crucially, the Ministry will also prioritise scaling up capacities of key institutions on cybersecurity and related areas. This will help strengthen resilience and improve national capability on this integral facet of digitalisation.

### ***Strengthening coordination and collaboration with other sectors to accelerate digital transformation***

As spelled out in the ICT4D Masterplan and its accompanying eight crosscutting strategies, the Ministry will prioritise supporting the rapid digitalisation of products and services across all sectors with emphasis on the critical areas.

### ***Supporting the digital transformation of the education sector***

Conscious of the fact that digital technologies present tremendous opportunities to transform teaching and learning in The Gambia, the Ministry will prioritise support to the education sector to ensure outcomes are significantly improved through the availability of broadband infrastructure and digital teaching and learning devices. The provision of the requisite broadband infrastructure in learning institutions at all levels will provide the right environment for the injection of tech-based teaching and learning tools, as highlighted in the Promoting Technology-Enabled Education and Science Technology and Innovation (STI) Development Strategy 2020-2024.

### ***Support to the digital transformation of the health sector***

The COVID-19 pandemic clearly demonstrated the critical role digital technologies can play in terms of readiness and response. The Ministry will strive to ensure the availability of robust broadband infrastructure to support the ongoing digitalisation endeavours of the health sector. It will also provide strategic support to the Ministry of Health to ease the deployment and utilisation of smart health tools like Telemedicine and others across the country for improved access to quality health care services.

The Ministry will also support the digitalisation of processes and workflows in health facilities across the country by providing the requisite infrastructural and technical support. Importantly, the Ministry will also work with relevant authorities to develop and deploy interoperable digital platforms that would support social assistance delivery programmes.

### *Support to the Digital Transformation of the agricultural sector*

To optimise gains from the huge potentials in the Gambia’s agriculture sector, it is essential to leverage digital technologies at all stages. AgTech presents a timely opportunity for the delivery of agricultural products and services via digital channels. The support will also look into deploying drones and other advanced technologies to significantly scale up production capacities in the agriculture sector.

The Ministry of Communications and Digital Economy (MoCDE) will collaborate with the Ministry of Agriculture and relevant stakeholders to provide digital agriculture solutions to smallholder farmers helping them at different stages of the crop cycle, including crop planning, buying seeds, planting, growing, harvesting, packing, storing, and selling. The support will also include capacity building for extension workers and farmers on the use of digital technologies to improve production capabilities and increase access to local and international markets.

### **Enabling Factors**

The successful implementation of the ICT sector priorities will depend largely on critical enablers that the Government may have to put in place to facilitate expected outcomes. Key possible interventions are for example, prescribed policy reforms i.e., amendment of existing legislation (IC Act 2009) and regulations and implementation of game changing project interventions.

<b>Priority Projects</b>	<b>Policy Reform</b>	<b>Innovative Implementation Modalities</b>
Integrated payment gateway	Formulation of a robust policy to guide the implementation of a payment gateway	Government to setup an inter agency committee comprising of MoCDE, MoFEA, CBG, Gambia Telecommunication Company Limited (GAMTEL), and representatives of the Fintech industry, Gambia Chamber of Commerce, and banking sector to formulate a procurement strategy for the implementation of a national Integrated Payment Gateway Platform.
Second undersea fibre optic landing cable	Amendments to the existing legal, regulatory and policy instruments to overcome systemic inefficiencies and loopholes in PLR environment. e.g., Information and Communications (ICs) Act 2009.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fast-track the West African Regional Digital Integration Project (WARDIP) interventions to complete the procurement process of second landing site.</li> <li>• Establish a new consortium/SPV to handle the commercial aspects of the new landing site.</li> <li>• Corporate Governance framework to ensure that the investment required to establish the new landing site can return value.</li> </ul>

Establishment of a national tier-4 Data Centre	TBD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MoCDE to work with the PPP unit, MoFEA to prepare a detailed proposal and search for partners that can fund the project through PPP or BOT arrangement.</li> </ul>
Digital Terrestrial Transmission (DTT) project	“ICs Act 2009 Broadcasting Service Content Regulations 2021”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fast track the sale of spectrum (digital dividend) to accelerate the implementation of DTT (Infrastructural deployment)</li> <li>• Restructure the shareholdings structure of DGL to allow for private sector capital injection through PPPs.</li> <li>• Corporate Governance framework to ensure that the investment required to implement the DTT that can return profits to shareholders.</li> </ul>
Implementation of a National Digital Identity scheme	Formulation of robust policy and regulatory frameworks to guide the implementation of the digital ID initiative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Put in place a multi stakeholder technical working group to look into the feasibility of implementing the digital ID scheme within the next five years.</li> <li>• Intensify resource mobilisation to support the implementation of the digital ID scheme.</li> </ul>

An implementation plan has been drawn up by the Ministry, outlining the institutional arrangement of stakeholders and development partners necessary to successfully implement the ICT sector priorities over the next five years.

In addition, an Annual Work Plan (AWP) and budget will be developed and funded by Government and partners to support the Project Implementation Unit (PIU) in its task at undertaking project preparation/ project development activities and monitoring and reporting to the sector ministry and Government.

Below is a summary of the implementation process and supplementary actions to undertake: establish multi-criteria project implementation framework that truly factor in all relevant criteria and requirements for addressing the embedded imperatives of the RF-NDP; establish project implementation plan or road map to provide initial clarity and direction to the project management team and the secretariat; review and align the project implementation plan to milestones identified in the results framework; identify resource sharing, crashing-in (joint implementation), and potential sources of mutual synergies and disparities for proactive management and successful implementation outcomes; and deploy resources in accordance with the multi-project implementation criteria.

### **Supplementary implementation modalities**

1. Constitution of a multi-stakeholder project governance committee that is representative of relevant private sector entities, CSOs, and public entities, including key members of the ICTSWG. This committee will be appointed by the sector minister
2. Provide terms of reference that are aligned to the envisaged outcomes of the implementation of ICT SWG's RF-NDP broad-based goals and specific milestones
3. Establish a Secretariat or RF-NDP Sector Project Coordination Unit to streamline project delivery and performance optimisation efforts by rendering professional services to the project governance committee



## **PART THREE: STRENGTHENING DELIVERY, ACCOUNTABILITY, RESOURCE MOBILISATION, PARTNERSHIPS, AND INTERNATIONAL POSITIONING**

- Chapter 11: Institutional Arrangements, Monitoring and Evaluation, Resource Mobilisation, Partnerships, and International Positioning

### **Chapter 11: Institutional Arrangements, Monitoring & Evaluation, Resource Mobilisation, Partnerships, and International Positioning**

#### 11.1 Institutional arrangements for coordination

A robust institutional framework is required to ensure that all stakeholders play their part in the implementation of the RF-NDP to enhance strong accountability for results. Government, CSOs, the private sector and development partners all have a role to play, and the extent of their close collaboration will determine achievement of the objectives of the RF-NDP. Government will make it a priority to finalise and officially adopt a comprehensive institutional coordination mechanism during the first quarter of implementation. Nonetheless, key elements of the institutional framework are described below.

##### 11.1.1 Overview of the RF-NDP institutional framework and guiding principles

The proposed institutional framework is guided by the following principles:

- a) *Coherence* – promote horizontal coherence across ministries and vertical coherence across Government levels (national, subnational, and local)
- b) *Inclusiveness* – all relevant stakeholders can effectively take part
- c) *Subsidiarity* – empowers actors at the relevant levels to take decisions and act accordingly
- d) *Engagement* - engages high level decision makers, but at the same time facilitate collective decision-making
- e) *Functional and effective* – easily fits into the normal responsibilities of stakeholders in order not to overburden them
- f) *Results-oriented* – a clear focus on decisions that result in tangible implementation progress
- g) *Accountable* – strengthen accountability to citizens
- h) *Foster Inter-institutional collaboration* – many of the goals and targets of the RF-NDP, SDGs and Agenda 2063 are interlinked, so “silos” need to be broken and the institutional framework must address this

Based on experiences from the NDP 2018-2021/22, the RF-NDP institutional framework has been revised as follows:

- 1) A troika of Cabinet, Inter-Ministerial Committee and National Assembly are maintained to provide strategic direction, oversight, and budget scrutiny, respectively
- 2) A National Technical Steering Committee composed of all Permanent Secretaries will be maintained and strengthened to oversee implementation. It will be chaired by the Secretary General of the Civil Service and meets quarterly

- 3) A Development Cooperation Forum (DCF) will be revitalised as a biennial forum for consultation
- 4) A National Monitoring and Evaluation Platform shall be maintained and coordinated by the Gambia Bureau of Statistics (GBoS)
- 5) The Thematic clusters will be replaced by Sector Working Groups (SWGs) which were established during the plan formulation process. These SWGs will have two co-chairs: the line Ministry and one Development Partner
- 6) A regional technical advisory, ward development and village development committees shall, for the purposes of plan implementation, be linked to MoFEA Directorate of Development Planning

#### 11.1.2 Sector Working Groups/sector wide approaches

Sector strategies are of key importance in implementing the RF-NDP. Steps will therefore be taken to strengthen sector coordination mechanisms through the recently established SWGs. The Government will ensure development/updating of sector strategies and action plans to be aligned with the RF-NDP. All DPs will participate in the work of the SWGs.

#### 11.1.3 The Gambia Strategic Review Board (GSRB)

Government will streamline the project development and approval process to ensure that development resources are used for highly impactful projects and programmes. Government has set up the GSRB, and whose functions are presented in Box 11.1 below. The GSRB will act as the clearing house for all projects developed for implementation in the context of the RF-NDP.

#### **Box 11.1: The Gambia Strategic Review Board**

- To strengthen and emphasise the leadership role of the Government in aid coordination and management, the GSRB has been established to appraise and endorse all programmes and projects, subject to compliance and alignment with national and sectoral development strategies and priority action plans. Endorsement of the projects and programmes by GSRB will be the final step for commencement of implementation
- The GSRB is a highly technical level decision making body, chaired by the Permanent Secretary of MoFEA and co-chaired by the Department of Strategic Policy and Delivery (DSPD). The GSRB will be composed of permanent and invited members, and will include Permanent Secretaries, representatives of multilateral partners, such as the United Nations (UN) and World Bank (WB), representatives of the NGO community and the private sector. The Aid Coordination Directorate (ACD)-MoFEA will be the secretariat of the GSRB
- The GSRB will meet monthly or upon the call of the chair, if extra-workplan submissions require a fast-tracking approach
- Government ministries and agencies shall prepare and submit project/programme concept notes to the GSRB through the ACD-MoFEA for appraisal. Concept notes shall contain essential information for unambiguous identification and appraisal of the project, such as the cost, donor, title, objective, implementing partners, expected outputs, outcomes, and impacts, as well as an monitoring and evaluation plan. Concept notes submitted for appraisal and endorsement will be accompanied by an analytical note/report generated by the ACD-MoFEA from Aid Information Management System (AIMS) on the subject area of the

respective projects and programmes, depicting currently observed financing gaps, ongoing and previous interventions and results achieved. This will enable the GSRB to make an informed and objective decision on the projects under review

- The ACD-MoFEA shall be responsible for entering the approved projects and programmes into AIMS and management of all information flows pertaining to external aid delivery

## 11.2 Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Framework and Processes

The monitoring and the evaluation of the RF-NDP will be done at two (2) levels: (i) Executive level; and (ii) Sector level, as outlined below.

### 11.2.1 Executive Level M&E Processes

An executive monitoring and evaluation system will allow for the monitoring and tracking of selected key results/outcomes of the RF-NDP at the highest level of the executive. The main aim is to provide the executive with timely and objective information to keep a close watch on progress to make the necessary decisions.

### 11.2.2 Sector Level M&E Processes

As an integral part of implementing the RF-NDP, an M&E plan including a results matrix was developed where each pillar has a set of outcomes, indicators (disaggregated to appropriate level) with baselines and targets to facilitate the tracking and reporting of implementation progress. The setting of the results at the outcome level in the RF-NDP shifts the focus to monitoring and evaluating the transformative change in the lives of the people rather than on the activities and inputs. However, this new approach will require the sectors to develop their strategic action plans with outputs and indicators corresponding and contributing to the outcomes in the RF-NDP.

Government will ensure that there is a robust M&E system to facilitate the coordination, monitoring, and reporting on the various outcome indicators.

To ease Government's burden in monitoring and reporting progress on the international and regional agreements, the indicators in the RF-NDP were closely matched to those of the SDGs and Agenda 2063. The aim is to have a national M&E process that is uniform and a "one stop shop" for all information on both national, regional, and international plans and agreements.

To meet the growing demand for information and accurately report on the progress of results on a timely basis, the following key activities have been identified:

- *Annual review of progress*: This will be conducted with the SWGs on an annual basis, preferably before the end of year to inform the annual budget preparation and enhance transparency and accountability in the management of national resources. It will involve active participation of the relevant sectors monitoring and reporting on the set of agreed indicators in the RF-NDP
- *Tools*: A formatted template for reporting will be drafted and adopted as a key tool for reporting on the progress towards achievement of the results for the RF-NDP. This will ensure that all

the information needed is captured, that there is uniformity, and it can be easily inputted in a web-enabled database for easy access and public consumption

- *Evaluations:* A mid-term and end-term evaluation will be conducted to determine lessons learned and the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability of programmes and policies outlined in the RF-NDP. The mid-term evaluation will be held in late 2025, and the end term will be held in 2027
- *Capacity Building:* A capacity needs assessment will be undertaken to evaluate the current capacity of planners and M&E staff at the MDAs in results-based management. Subsequently, based on the results of the evaluation, a relevant training package will be provided to respond to their needs.

For the M&E system to work, Government will: (i) harmonise and align sector strategies and action plans (ii) improve infrastructure and (iii) build capacity. Measures will be taken to upgrade the skills and knowledge of staff on emerging concepts in M&E. Government will continuously develop the capacity of M&E staff or personnel tasked to implement M&E plans. The M&E SWG will develop and make available to all MDAs complete M&E guidelines, incorporating relevant existing ones, some simple Results-Based Monitoring (RBM) tutorials, and samples of M&E forms and checklists.

The National Audit Office (NAO) has an important role in the implementation of the RF-NDP by being a key partner in the M&E processes. They have a lead role in monitoring and auditing of Government's public expenditure management, performance appraisals, and sharing findings with the National Assembly, as well as the institutions tasked with coordinating the implementation of the RF-NDP. The NAO will be instrumental in pushing forward reforms towards improving budgeting and the degree of compliance with Government's rules regarding programme/project management.

The Gambia Bureau of Statistics (GBoS) is the principal body responsible for the collection, analysis, and dissemination of statistical data. The Bureau will therefore chair the M&E SWG and will play a crucial role in ensuring that quality data is produced and made available in time to meet the demand for monitoring and reporting on the RF-NDP. The Bureau has developed and will implement the National Strategy for the Development of Statistics (NSDS III 2024-2028) which will strictly adhere to the calendar of major surveys and censuses as part of the M&E system.

To strengthen the M&E system, the Ministry of Public Services will play the role of an M&E champion and lead the advocacy by emphasising the importance of M&E as a management tool for good governance, effective development planning, evidence-based policy making and greater public accountability.

### 11.2.3 National Strategy for the Development of Statistics (NSDS)

With the many development challenges The Gambia continues to face, there is increasing demand on the National Statistical System (NSS) to respond to the data needs of the country particularly in relation to development priorities as identified in the RF-NDP. The increasing demand for data, both locally and internationally in response to the regional and international agenda has created a new data-ecosystem transcending the NSS, which calls for the expansion of the number of data

producers and users. The NSDS provides leverage to overcome these challenges and indicates the capacity that the NSS should have to effectively play its role. For the NSS to respond to the national, regional, and international statistical needs, it should have the requisite funding to conduct statistical activities, coordinate all the stakeholders of the data ecosystem and prioritise efforts to address the challenges regarding data production, analysis, and use.

The NSDS III will be at the heart of the RF-NDP monitoring and evaluation mechanism. The NSDS III is closely linked with the RF-NDP thus making it possible to monitor the performance of the RF-NDP with the same sets of indicators either as proxy or for comparative purposes. In this, the stakeholders of the NSS will work in close collaboration with the RF-NDP stakeholders to decide on the list of key indicators for monitoring and evaluating the RF-NDP and define key strategic targets, risks, and mitigation measures. In short, the results-based logical framework of the NSDS III will be designed as a platform for the implementation of the RF-NDP.

### 11.3 Resource mobilisation

The country's economy is facing a challenging period with limited fiscal space to directly fund key Government priorities requiring partnerships with the donor community. However, due to changing landscape in international development assistance, Government is strongly cognizant of the need to boost domestic resource mobilisation and craft innovative approaches to finance development.

To meet the financing needs of the RF-NDP, Government will pursue three (3) interlinked strategies: domestic resources mobilisation; innovative financing; concessionary financing.

#### 11.3.1 Domestic resource mobilisation

Reliance on domestic resourcing is becoming increasingly important to meet the financing needs of developing countries. At the third international conference for financing development, mobilising domestic resources was recognised as a major strategy to fund development, including the SDGs and AU Agenda 2063.

Already The Gambia relies heavily on taxation to finance Government expenditure. However, due to the debt servicing obligations, Government has been unable to allocate significant resources to finance development. In the context of the RF-NDP, three measures will be adopted to increase Government's contribution to implement its development agenda:

- Continue on the path of prudent fiscal management, sound monetary policy and structural reforms which is expected to rationalise the budget
- Prudent debt management, especially domestic borrowing which will lead to increased fiscal space
- More efficient revenue collection mechanisms and simplifying and expanding the tax base

#### 11.3.2 Innovative financing

To ensure a successful implementation of the RF-NDP, critical focus must be anchored on alternative and more innovative ways of financing for development. Public Private Partnerships, capital markets, blended finance, among other means, must be explored as priorities to ensure

sustainability and efficiency, especially in the light of how the modern economy and the global financing agenda is moving away from aid.

Climate funding is an important potential window for financing. The agreement at the recently concluded COP 27 in Egypt to establish a “Loss and Damage Fund”, presents many opportunities as do other climate financing mechanisms (e.g., Green Climate Fund, REDD++, Adaptation Fund etc.). Government will vigorously pursue these opportunities and launch preparatory measures to tap these funds.

### 11.3.3 Concessionary financing

Due to the state of the economy, external support will be vital to enable The Gambia to meet the financing needs of the RF-NDP. The Government’s limited fiscal space because of high debt servicing, has led to a reliance on grants and loans of a highly concessionary nature. To avoid further exposure, increasing the fiscal risks and vulnerability of the economy, Government will work with both traditional and non-traditional partners to secure the necessary financing.

## 11.4 International and regional cooperation and positioning

### 11.4.1 Overview

At independence in 1965, The Gambia registered its first major foreign policy victory after successfully leveraging sufficient regional and international backing to gain admission into the UN, despite strong opposition at that time to microstates joining the world body<sup>50</sup>. The country’s international relations/foreign policy continues to be instinctively driven by the need to remain viable, while managing challenges linked to vulnerability in terms of defence capability, human and institutional capacity, public administration, human security, public finance, limited market diversification, and a limited natural resource endowment.

The emergence of COVID-19 in 2020 and the Russia-Ukraine war in 2022 (like the global economic crisis of 2008), disproportionately affected the country.

The Gambia uses two (2) pathways at the strategic level to guide the Ministry in operationalizing its foreign policy direction: Foreign policy strategies and international development programmes like Agenda 2030 and the AU Agenda 2063.

The foreign policy strategy for the period 2012-2017 has elapsed. The successor strategy and the Strategic Plan for the sector are being formulated and will integrate migration and diaspora related issues. At the international level, key programmes include the AU/NEPAD (Africa Peer Review Mechanism), Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CEN-SAD), ECOWAS, Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD), Forum On China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC), Education programmes at bilateral levels, health programmes with Cuba, migration programmes with the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), and other multilateral and bilateral programmes.

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<sup>50</sup> (Omar A Touray, 2000).

Important issues have emerged and are not being addressed by the current policy frameworks. They include posting of MoFA staff, resource mobilisation at the level of MoFA, the development of a policy on the establishment of the diplomatic cadre, a policy addressing the strategic geopolitical interest of the country, and one which addresses the mandate of the MoFA.

However, there are outstanding challenges that need to be addressed. One of the main challenges affecting MoFA is the absence of a clear policy framework outlining the modalities for the institutional functionality of the Ministry and the predictability of the policy positions of the country. There is also lack of clarity regarding which Foreign Service Rules are in used and the need for a thorough review and realignment of the foreign service for greater effectiveness. Equally challenging is the fact that MoFA is not structured to enable support to the marketing of the Gambia's development agenda as envisioned in the successive National Development Plans.

The other challenges include: insufficient financial, human and material resources; weak internal and public relations/communications strategy; weak collaboration and coordination mechanisms between MoFA and other MDAs to facilitate the pursuit of an effective foreign policy; the absence of a diplomatic academy to adequately train and groom MoFA staff and its pool of diplomats; insufficient funding of foreign missions; inadequacy of foreign missions; lack of technical capacity to effectively serve The Gambia's interests. This staff arrangement is not consistent with the professional and institutional needs to serve the nation and other outside stakeholders on multiple fronts. Similarly, MoFA lacks the institutional structure to technically advise the espousing and management of a predictable and consistent baseline foreign policy. The inexistence of a diplomatic career path and the development of human capacity within the generic civil service, and then deploying them to the foreign service without due regard to the peculiar nature of skills necessary for the efficient management of foreign relations is yielding sub-optimal results. The inadequate awareness among stakeholder groups about the mandate of MoFA and its rationale is also not helping the agenda of the Ministry.

Notwithstanding the challenges, the Ministry has very good reasons to be optimistic about the future. The existence of the National Assembly Select Committee on Foreign Relations lends itself to accessing legislative support which can have both strategic and operational significance for the Ministry. The President has the primary responsibility for foreign policy, and MoFA continues to operate as an arm of the Office of the President, with significant executive support in the execution of its mandate. The completion of MoFA office complex currently avails it the much needed work space and conducive work environment.

At the geopolitical level, the geographic nature of The Gambia and how it is surrounded on all fronts except on the Atlantic seafront is both an opportunity and a threat. This unique nature inevitably reduces the need for balancing immediate relationship interests and the implications of their management. Even though one of the smallest countries in Africa and the world, The Gambia has a favourable outlook in its use of soft diplomatic powers; and this continues to be relished for national influence and relevance. The Ministry has a close liaison with the Diplomatic and Consular Corps in the country. There is also the willingness of development partners to engage on both key issues of mutual interest and differences.



The existence of a significant number of Gambians who are well placed in key international organisations not only confers a significant advantage to the country, but also provides the possibility of tapping their expertise and experience. Nonetheless, the country remains active visible in international events and organisations.

*The Gambia as a valued member of the International Community:* Except during the 22 years of dictatorship when its diplomacy was at an all-time low, The Gambia has played a key role as a member of the League of Nations contributing to the prevailing international order and adhering to good governance principles, respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, supporting rules-based political and economic systems, multilateralism, and global peace and security. To support these, The Gambia ratified many conventions at the UN and other bodies, addressing, in a collective manner, issues such as climate change, peace, gender equality, energy security, natural resource sustainability, and so forth.

The quest for political and economic achievements (e.g., investment promotion, trade facilitation) continued to drive its diplomatic actions with respect to global normative characteristics. In 2022, The Gambia signed up to the AU's Africa Peer Review Mechanism – a voluntary arrangement amongst African states to systematically assess and review governance at Head of State peer level, to promote political stability, accelerated sub-regional and continental economic integration, economic growth, and sustainable development. On the corruption perception index, which has implications for diplomatic efforts to attract investments, The Gambia has been ranked 102 least corrupt nation out of 180 countries, according to Transparency International in 2021.

As it strives to attract meaningful migration and residency through its diplomatic efforts, it is worth noting that in the Legatum Prosperity Index™ 2021 that aims at helping countries create pathways from poverty to prosperity, The Gambia is 116<sup>th</sup> out of 167 in the overall Prosperity Index rankings. Since 2011, Gambia has moved up the rankings table by 5 places. The Index also notes that the country performs most strongly in Social Capital and Governance but is weakest in Economic Quality. The biggest improvement came in Safety & Security.

Commendably, The Gambia has made significant progress in relation to the World Press Freedom Index published yearly by Reporters Without Borders, having been ranked 50 out of 180 countries in the world. The country in 2021 was ranked 85 out of 180 countries with a score of 69.24 per cent. It is also ranked 8<sup>th</sup> in Africa, as compared with 9<sup>th</sup> last year. The Gambian passport currently ranks 69<sup>th</sup> according to the Guide Passport Ranking Index. It provides visa-free access to 63 destinations.

International assistance from bilateral partners, international organisations and private donors is a major factor in the Gambia's diplomacy. The country has signed or ratified several key multilateral instruments, including the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights aiming to abolish the death penalty, the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, and the Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance. The Gambia also gained widespread acclaim for filing a case at the International Criminal Court (ICC) against Myanmar in 2019, concerning the latter's treatment of the Rohingya. The Gambia is one of only a handful of countries (thus far) indicating it will be able to meet the commitment to limit temperature increases as



stipulated by the 2015 International Paris Climate Agreement. Government has also complied with adverse decisions against the Gambia at ECOWAS Community Court of Justice. The Gambia has also signed bilateral agreements with countries such as Switzerland to address civil aviation and irregular migration. The Government has not signed or acceded to several multilateral agreements advocated for by domestic and international civil society organisations. Notable examples include the Arms Trade Treaty, the African Union Convention on Cyber Security and Personal Data Protection, and the African Union Road Safety Charter. The Gambia remains the seat of the African Union's African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights.

### 11.5.2 Strategic Orientations

As the Gambian diplomats promote its image and prestige, and re-position it, the country can aspire to be part of the Good Country Index which looks at how countries contribute to the common good of humanity and the country's external impact on the world. The Gambia will strive to:

- *Deepen Rules Based Systems in Country and Abroad to promote Sovereignty and Territorial Integrity, Peace, Security, Rule of Law, and Human Rights (Political Diplomacy):* MoFA plays a vital role in political diplomacy and strives to deepen Rules Based Systems; promotes national sovereignty; territorial Integrity, peace, security, rule of law, and human rights. This priority recognises that globally, multilateralism is under threat and the rules-based system is being challenged by the sudden increase in populist nationalism. As a small state with relatively low natural endowment and military resources, The Gambia can only prevail in an environment that pushes functional and inclusive rules-based systems
- *Enhance Economic Diplomacy/Relations at Multilateral and Bilateral levels to foster The Gambia's Sustainable Development (Economic Diplomacy):* MoFA plays a vital role in economic diplomacy and strives to enhance diplomatic relations at multilateral and bilateral levels to contribute to the Gambia's sustainable development. This strategic priority takes into consideration the challenges and complexities emanating from internal and external environments that The Gambia cannot address singlehandedly. Climate change, the COVID-19 pandemic, the Ukraine – Russia war, etc. are good examples. The country is vulnerable to political turmoil/instability arising from the economic hardships created by such challenges. Overall, MoFA does not have the capacity to facilitate trade and promote investments that support the national development agenda
- *Promote Global Development Cooperation supportive of The Gambia's Interest at National and International Levels (Development Diplomacy):* Over the next five years, MoFA intends to revitalise its development diplomacy by promoting global development cooperation supportive of The Gambia's interest at national and international levels. This strategic priority seeks to address the perceived inadequacies of the country's budgetary allocation to development programmes by ensuring that more sources of budget support are identified and secured for development financing. Furthermore, there is increasing need for financing of the country's obligations to international commitments such as the SDGs, Agenda 2063, etc.; and this cannot be funded through domestic resource mobilisation alone.
- *Improve The Gambia's Image and Prestige abroad (Public & Cultural Diplomacy):* It has become imperative to re-brand the country. Thus, MoFA as part of its public and cultural diplomacy, is poised to improve the country's image and prestige abroad. This strategic

priority seeks to enhance the understanding of the country's foreign policy positions. There is a continuous risk to The Gambia's image and prestige abroad, owing to Government action/inaction and/or citizen's actions. There is a need for international goodwill and collaboration to support The Gambia's trajectory towards sustainable development within the context of its scarce resource endowment.

- *Deliver a Service - Oriented and Competent Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Operational Diplomacy):* The Government of The Gambia continues to strengthen and leverage the capacity of MoFA to deliver a service-oriented and competent institution through operational diplomacy. Measures will be taken over this RF-NDP period to ensure that the policy, legal and regulatory framework for effective pursuit of international relations is strengthened. Furthermore, MoFA's consular services also need to be strengthened, as it is currently not operating at its full potential. There is an increasing unmet demand for consular services from Gambians travelling abroad, the diasporans, and foreign visitors to the country.

### Annex 1: Sector Working Groups (SWGs) Membership Matrix for 2022

Sector Working Group (SWGs)	SWGs Leadership	Public/Government	Private Sector and Civil Society	Development Partners
Education	2022 MoHERST 2023 MoBSE	MoBSE; MoHERST; PMO; UTG; MDI; GTTI/University of Science, Engineering and Technology; GTHI; Gambia College; National Accreditation and Quality Assurance Authority; GBoS; MoH; Institute for Travel and Tourism of The Gambia (ITTOG), MoTIRIE.	SOS Childrens' Village ISRA Future In Our Hands (FIOH) ABWE TOSTAN Action Aid International Gambia (AAITG) MRC Holland Private Educational Institutions AMANA Secretariat, IOU, Nifty Solutions, Quantum Institute of Technology, Gaye Njorro Skills Academy, American International University West Africa, CRS, YMCA.	UNICEF UNFPA IOM WFP WB IsDB
Agriculture, Environment, Climate Change, Natural Resources & Land	2022 MoA 2023 MoECCNR	MoA; MoTIE; MoFWR, MoLRG; DoA; Department of Livestock Services; NARI; GCCI; NGO Affairs; NaNA; Gambia Livestock Marketing Agency; Department of Water Resources; MoECCNR; NEA; NDMA; Department of Fisheries; Department of Water	AAITG United Purpose National Poultry Farmers Association National Farmers Platform	FAO IOM ITC IMF UNICEF UNDP IFAD

		Resources; Department of Parks and Wildlife; SSHFC; Geology Department; National Population Commission Secretariat; Department of Physical Planning; Department of Lands and Survey; Local Government Authorities; NAWEC; Lands Commission; GBoS; SDF; UTG (School of Agriculture); National Early Warning Centre; MoGCSW, MoTC,	National Livestock Owners Association Young Poultry Farmers Association Gamsheep Breeders Association Fisheries Association Gambia Red-Cross Society Green-Up Gambia	UNCDF WFP WB AfDB
Health, Water, Sanitation, Hygiene, and Population	2022 MoH 2023 MoF&WR	Ministry of Health; NAWEC; Department of Water Resources; FSQA; NaNA; National Aids Secretariat; NAWEC; Gambia Bureau of Statistics, Medical and Dental Council, Pharmaceutical Council, Nurses and Midwives Council, Medicines Control Agency; UTG (School of Medicine and Allied Health Sciences); MoGCSW; Traditional/ Alternative EFSTH; MoECCNAR; NEA; Country Coordinating Mechanism (CCM) of the Global Fund against HIV/Aids, Tuberculosis and Malaria; National Population Commission Secretariat	GFPA YMCA NSGA United Purpose MRC GAMCOTRAP CRS Hands-On Care Sharab Medical Centre SZRECC GRCS Medicine Practitioners/Association; CIAM Innovarx Global Health GALGA;	UNICEF WHO UNFPA IOM UNDP UNAIDS UNCDF WFP WB

Energy, Petroleum, Transport & Infrastructure	MoTWI	MoTWI; NRA; GPF (Traffic); GAMWORKS; GCAA; GIA; GPA; GTSC; GCCI; GBoS; MoPE; Geology Department; NAWEC; MoECCNR; MoTRIE; GIEPA; GNPC; Gambia Petroleum; Directorate of Social Welfare, GCCI; Gambia Transport Union, National Petroleum Commission	Mbolo Unique Group Oil Marketing Companies Gambia Federation for the Disabled	UNDP UNCDF FAO IMF WB EU IsDB AfDB
Trade, Private Sector Development, & Employment	MoTIRIE	MoTIRIE; MoFEA (PPP, MPAU); GCCI; GIEPA; GRA; Gambia Competition Commission; Gambia Standards Bureau; GBoS; FSQA; Gambia Women Chamber of Commerce; MOA; MOTC; MOCDE	GCCI Youth Chamber of Commerce, Gambia Manufacturers Association, Reliance Financial Services, Start Up Incubator Gambia	ITC UNCDF FAO IOM UNDP IMF UNICEF EU WB
Social Protection, Women & Children	OVP	MoGCSW; MoFEA; Women's Bureau; Department of Social Welfare; NDMA; MoTIE (Employment and Labour Directorates); GBoS; Social Protection Secretariat; National Coordination Mechanism (NCM); MOBSE; MOHERST; MOH; MOJ; SSHFC; National Early Warning Centre; OVP; NaNA, National Population Commission Secretariat	Child Fund, FAWEGAM, SOS Children Village, CPA	WFP UNODC UNFPA IOM UNDP IMF IFAD UNAIDS FAO UNICEF WB EU

Information & Communications Technology	2022 MOCDE 2023 Ministry of Information	Ministry of Communications and Digital Economy; Gambia Bureau of Statistics; PURA; MoTWI; MoICI; PURA; GAMTEL; GAMCEL; GRTS; MoFEA; CBG (GAMSWITCH);	Gambia Press Union, AFRICELL; Qcell; Comium;	UNDP FAO ITC WB
Governance, Justice, Security, International Relations & Migration	2022 MoFA 2023 MoJ 2024 Min. Interior	MoJ; Ministry of Public Service, Administrative Reforms, Policy Coordination & Delivery MoD; MoI; MoFA; National Assembly; National Human Rights Commission; Judiciary; Ombudsman; GPF; Gambia Armed Forces; GID; SIS; GFRS; GPS; GDLEA; ADRS; NALA; NAATIP GBoS; Office of the National Security Adviser (ONS). NCCE	TANGO, Beakanyang, Gambia Participates, CEESPRAS, Gambia for Victims of Human Rights Violation (GVHRV), IHRD	UNDP IOM UNODC WB UNICEF USAID
Macroeconomy & Public Financial Management	MoFEA	MoFEA (All Units); OP; GRA; CBG; AGD; GBoS; NAO; FIU; MOTIE	GICA (Gambia Institute of Chartered Accountants), Chambers of Commerce; GPPA, Bankers Association, Gambia Participates, Open Society Platform the Gambia	IMF WB UNICEF UNCDF UNDP IsDB AfDB EU AFD
Public Sector Management, Decentralisation & Rural and Urban Development	2022 Min. of Public Service 2023 MoLRG	Ministry of Public Service, Administrative Reforms, Policy Coordination & Delivery; PSC; MoFEA (DDP, DoB, MPAU); NAO; AGD; GPPA; MoLRG; MoECCNR; MoI; MoD; Office of the Ombudsman	GALGA, Future in Our Hands; United Purpose	UNCDF FAO IOM

				UNDP IMF UNICEF WB
Tourism & Culture	MoTC	MoTC; GTBoard; GTHI; MoFA; NRA; GCAA; GIA; MoECCNR; MoI; MoD; NEA; GCCI; GBoS; GIEPA; Dept. of Parks and Wild Life; Dept. of Forestry; NCAC; MoFEA, MoTRIE, GIEPA, GPF, MoA.	Migrants Association; Gambia Hotel Association, GALGA, Gambia Restaurants Association, ASSETS, Ground tours Association, ITTOG, CPA, Tour Guides Association,	FAO IOM UNDP UNICEF UNAIDS WB UNESCO
Youth	MoYS	MoYS; MoFEA; MoFA; MoTIE; MoTC; MoHERST; MoBSE; NYC; National Sports Council; GCCI; Gambia Football Federation; NCM, NYSS	Youth Chamber of Commerce; Women Chamber of Commerce; Child Protection Alliance (CPA), Activista the Gambia, Think Young Women (TYW), Youth for Civic Education Movement; National Youth Parliament	UNFPA UNODC FAO IOM UNDP UNICEF UNAIDS ITC
Monitoring, Evaluation & Resource Mobilisation	MoFEA	GBoS; MoFEA; Chair of all Sector Working Groups; Internal Audit (MoFEA); Auditor General (NAO).		FAO UNFPA UNDP UNICEF WFP UNRCO

Annex 2: Overview of Outcomes and Priorities – RF-NDP 2023-2027

Pillar	Outcomes	Programme Priorities
1. Building Community Resilience to address Shocks and Crises	Outcome 1.1: Community-wide resilience to shocks and crises enhanced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small-scale rural infrastructure for improved access to portable water, energy, health, and education services</li> <li>• Community food security and environment schemes</li> <li>• Sustainability of services and assets</li> </ul>
2. Governance Reform	Outcome 2.1: A new Constitution adopted, and legal reforms undertaken	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A new Constitution for the Gambia</li> <li>• Legal reforms to repeal and/or amend restrictive laws</li> </ul>
	Outcome 2.2: Policies and regulatory frameworks for decentralisation and local governance enhanced and harmonised	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthen human and institutional capacities of LGAs</li> <li>• Improve land governance, property valuation, physical planning and development control</li> <li>• Enhance governance and management of civil society organisations</li> </ul>
	Outcome 2.3: Climate and Climate Change Governance enhanced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop and enact Climate and Climate Change Acts</li> <li>• Develop the National Adaptation Plan (NAP), and review and revise the National Climate Change Policy (NCCP 2017-2023) and the Climate Change Strategies</li> </ul>
	Outcome 2.4: Regular, transparent, inclusive, free, and fair elections ensured	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reform of the electoral regulatory framework</li> <li>• IEC institutional capacity</li> <li>• Stakeholder engagement</li> <li>• Boundaries delimitation</li> <li>• Voter participation in the electoral process</li> <li>• Accurate and up-to-date voter register</li> </ul>
	Outcome 2.5: Policy and institutional reforms to ensure rule of law, respect for human rights and equitable access to justice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decentralise the rule of law and justice delivery institutions;</li> <li>• Improve case management systems and access to justice delivery;</li> <li>• Strengthen institutional capacity; and</li> <li>• Promote good governance and human rights</li> </ul>
	Outcome 2.6: A reconciled society in which victims are fully paid their reparation dues and transitional justice attained	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a post TRRC Act and a prosecution strategy</li> <li>• Finalise the Victims’ Bill</li> <li>• Set up and operationalise a hybrid Gambia-ECOWAS Court; and</li> <li>• Promote reconciliation</li> </ul>



Pillar	Outcomes	Programme Priorities
	Outcome 2.7: A reformed security sector with adequately capacitated security institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consolidate gains and achieve security sector reform</li> <li>• Improve policies and legal frameworks and enhance institutional capacity</li> <li>• Strengthen coordination, collaborations, and partnerships</li> </ul>
	Outcome 2.8: An efficient, motivated, accountable and results- oriented public service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop frameworks for harmonisation of policy formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation</li> <li>• Attract, retain and motivate optimal number of qualified and skilled personnel in the public service and strengthen the pension welfare scheme</li> <li>• Professionalise and instil meritocracy, ethical conduct, transparency and accountability in the public service and personnel management</li> </ul>
3. Macroeconomic Stability and Inclusive Growth	Outcome 3.1: Enhanced fiscal and monetary policies, public financial management, inclusive growth, and poverty reduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhance Public Financial Management (PFM) for macro-fiscal stability</li> <li>• Prudent Monetary Policy for exchange rate and price stability; and</li> <li>• Inclusive Growth for poverty reduction</li> </ul>
	Outcome 3.2: A Private Sector-Led Growth with enhanced Trade, inclusive and sustainable industrialisation, Services, and Employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote a favourable environment for business operations;</li> <li>• Enhance Financial Inclusion</li> <li>• Establish National Local Content Board, Act, Regulations, Policy, Strategy, and fund</li> <li>• Strengthen the National Quality Infrastructure of the country;</li> <li>• Promote inclusive and sustainable industrialisation through the Development of Agropolises, Industrial Parks and SEZs</li> <li>• Promote employment and decent work</li> <li>• Strengthen regional integration for economic development</li> </ul>
	Outcome 3.3: A competitive and diversified tourism sector contributing to overall Inclusive growth, job creation and poverty reduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Legislation, institutions, and human resources</li> <li>• Tourism products and services</li> <li>• Marketing, market development and promotion, and ensuring quality</li> <li>• Supporting and cross-cutting measures</li> </ul>

Pillar	Outcomes	Programme Priorities
4. Human Capital Development	Outcome 4.1: Equitable access to quality and relevant education for all	<p><b>Basic and Secondary Education</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Equitable access to education</li> <li>• Quality and relevance of all education and training programmes,</li> <li>• Research, innovation, and development</li> <li>• ICT and TVET</li> <li>• Adult and non-formal education</li> </ul> <p><b>Tertiary and Higher Education</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Equitable access and retention</li> <li>• Quality and relevance of all education and training programmes,</li> <li>• Research, innovation, and development</li> <li>• STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics – including Agriculture)</li> <li>• TVET (Technical and Vocational Education and Training)</li> </ul>
	Outcome 4.2: Quality, accessible and affordable health care services delivered for all	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Towards universal health coverage: quality and equitable essential health services for all</li> <li>• Financial risk protection and equity</li> <li>• Environment, health promotion and social determinants of health</li> <li>• Integrated health information systems and research</li> <li>• Partnerships</li> </ul>
	Outcome 4.3: Improved nutritional status of children under five years and women of child-bearing age is assured	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce stunting, wasting and obesity in children under 5 years old through improved nutritional and health interventions</li> <li>• Improve nutrition and health status of women of child-bearing age</li> </ul>
	Outcome 4.4: Increased access to safe drinking water, proper sanitation, and hygiene	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve access to safe drinking water</li> <li>• Improve access to sanitation facilities; and</li> <li>• Improve good hygiene practices</li> </ul>
	Outcome 4.5: Appropriate population policies and strategies to harness the demographic dividend	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accelerate the attainment of the demographic dividend</li> <li>• Integrate demographic variables into sectoral plans and policies for socio-economic development</li> <li>• Promote access to quality universal SRH services and information for all to make informed choices</li> </ul>

Pillar	Outcomes	Programme Priorities
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manage fertility for a meaningful age structure to address the dependency burden</li> </ul>
	Outcome 4.6: Socioeconomic benefits of migration to national development enhanced and adverse consequence mitigated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create conditions for migrants and diasporas for full contribution to sustainable national development and enhance consular, protection assistance and cooperation throughout migration cycle</li> <li>• Manage borders in an integrated, secured, and coordinated manners</li> <li>• Prevent, combat, eradicate trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants internationally</li> <li>• Minimise adverse drivers and structural factors compelling people to leave their country of origin and enhance availability and flexibility of pathways for regular migrants.</li> <li>• Reduce rural urban migration through decentralisation of basic and social amenities</li> </ul>
	Outcome 4.7: Quality and affordable housing for all and urban planning improved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provision of affordable and quality housing for low- income earners.</li> <li>• Improvement of urban planning</li> </ul>
5. Agriculture, Environment, Natural Resources and Climate Change	Outcome 5.1: A modern, productive, and sustainable agriculture for food and nutrition security, economic growth and poverty reduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Modernisation and commercialisation of the rice and maize value chains for enhanced economic growth</li> <li>• Enhance the poultry value chain to enhance food security and reduce the import bill</li> <li>• Scale up all year-round vegetable production to support the hospitality industry, reduce the import bill and enhance nutrition status; and</li> <li>• Enhance production of small ruminants.</li> </ul>
	Outcome 5.2: A vibrant fisheries and aquaculture sector contributing to economic growth and employment creation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Management and sustainability of fisheries resources;</li> <li>• Aquaculture development;</li> <li>• Climate change adaptation for fisheries habitat;</li> <li>• Strengthening capacity for fisheries management and development (inland and coastal management); and</li> </ul>

Pillar	Outcomes	Programme Priorities
	Outcome 5.3: Sustainable environmental and natural resources management, disaster risk reduction attained, and adverse impacts of climate change minimised	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved artisanal value addition, post-harvest and marketing.</li> <li>• AFOLU- land use, land use change and forestry;</li> <li>• Sustainable waste management – waste sector adaptation;</li> <li>• Greening energy and transport sectors;</li> <li>• Enhanced Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM); and</li> <li>• Disaster risk reduction.</li> </ul>
6. Empowerment, Social Inclusion and Leaving No One Behind	Outcome 6.1: Empowered Gambian women economically, socially, and politically	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gender mainstreaming in sectoral policies and plans</li> <li>• Women’s economic empowerment (public procurement, mobile banking)</li> <li>• Women’s political empowerment (participation and representation in decision making)</li> <li>• Ending Sexual Gender Based Violence (SGBV)</li> <li>• Engaging women in peace and security</li> </ul>
	Outcome 6.2: Children are nurtured and enjoy their full rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improvements in nutrition and health care to promote child wellbeing</li> <li>• Protect children from violence and abuse and secure the rights of vulnerable and marginalised children</li> <li>• Establish affordable high-quality Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) facilities especially in rural communities</li> </ul>
	Outcome 6.3: Enhanced economic opportunities and all-round social and cultural development for youth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhance and advance youth entrepreneurship and employment in the productive sectors such as: agriculture, fisheries, technology and innovation, climate change and related services to curb migration</li> <li>• Promote and develop sports to improve competencies for effective participation in national and international competitions</li> <li>• Drug and substance abuse and mental health rehabilitation</li> <li>• Youth empowerment and volunteerism</li> </ul>
	Outcome 6.4: Inclusiveness and care for Persons with disabilities and Older Persons improved	<b>PwDs</b>

Pillar	Outcomes	Programme Priorities
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthen Statistics collection and support research on PwD and related services (such as inclusion in the development of e-learning or other learning platforms)</li> <li>• Ensure access to buildings, health services and physical environment for PwDs</li> <li>• Ensure inclusion of PwD in NA and top decision making</li> </ul> <p><b>Older Persons</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safeguarding the rights of and increasing the knowledge base on older persons in the Gambia</li> <li>• Promoting the health and social wellbeing of older persons</li> <li>• Increased safety and security of older persons</li> </ul>
	Outcome 6.5: Resilience of households and individuals strengthened, and safety nets put in place to Address Vulnerability Through Social Protection in The Gambia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce people’s exposure to risks and vulnerabilities; and social inclusion and equity through social protection financial schemes and safeguarding the welfare of the poorest and most vulnerable</li> <li>• Strengthen leadership, governance and social protection service delivery systems and resource mobilisation to design and deliver effective and efficient programmes</li> <li>• Promote food and nutrition security, environmental, disaster management, mitigate, build resilience, and respond to climate change</li> </ul>
7. Energy, Infrastructure and Connectivity	Outcome 7.1: Access and affordable energy for all and effective policies, legal and regulatory frameworks in place for sustainable development of petroleum and mining resources	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Energy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Universal energy access</li> <li>○ Renewable (Solar PV) energy</li> <li>○ Key policy, legal and regulatory reforms</li> </ul> </li> <li>2. Petroleum <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Policy, Legal and Regulatory (PLR) reforms for the downstream petroleum sector</li> </ul> </li> </ol>

Pillar	Outcomes	Programme Priorities
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Policies, legislations, and regulations, for the upstream petroleum sector</li> </ul> <p>3. Mining</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Institutional reform and capacity building,</li> <li>○ Develop mines and minerals policy framework</li> </ul>
	Outcome 7. 2: Land, River, Sea and Air Transport expanded and strengthened for affordability, accessibility and competitiveness	<p>1. National Multimodal Transport System &amp; BRT System</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ National Multi-modal Transport System (NMTS)</li> <li>○ Multimodal: Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) for the GBA</li> </ul> <p>2. Roads Infrastructure Sector</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Sting Corner- Abuko bypass</li> <li>○ Improvement of storm water and sewerage system in Greater Banjul Area</li> <li>○ Banjul-Barra Bridge</li> <li>○ Construction of urban roads (250km); construction of rural roads (514km)</li> <li>○ Dedicated lead agency for road safety</li> </ul> <p>3. Ports and River Transport</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Fourth (4th) Banjul port expansion programme</li> <li>○ River transport</li> </ul> <p>4. Air Transport</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Policy de-coupling of GCAA “regulatory” mandate from its “commercial operations”</li> <li>○ Construction of parallel taxi way, turning loop and repair of runway</li> </ul>
	Outcome 7.3: National Public Buildings and Facilities Policy (NPBFP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Construction of new government offices complex</li> <li>● Construction of new embassies abroad</li> <li>● Construction of Governors’ office buildings and residences</li> </ul>
	Outcome 7.4: An Inclusive Digital Nation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Enabling environment, policy and regulation</li> <li>● Inclusive digital infrastructure</li> <li>● Digital innovation and entrepreneurship</li> <li>● Digital skills and human capital development</li> </ul>

Annex 3: National Development Plan 2023-2027 - Monitoring and Evaluation Framework

Outcomes	Indicators	Baseline 2022	National Targets (2027)	Means of Verification
<b>PILLAR I: BUILDING COMMUNITY RESILIENCE TO ADDRESS SHOCKS AND CRISIS</b>				
Community level resilience to shocks and crisis enhanced.	Number of communities provided with electricity	11	54	PACD Reports
	Number of communities provided with clean water	31	120	
	Number of youths access to finance (land, equipment, tools)	0	480	Integrated Household Survey
	Number of hectares of land provided with irrigation for pasture growth and exotic animal breeding	5 hectares	10 hectares	
	Number of Communities provided with dairy livestock (goats and cattle)	12 diary goats (including 2 bucks and 10 does)	750 cattle (710 cows and 40 bulls), 1000 goats; (800 does and 200 bucks)	National Disaster Management Agency Annual Reports
	Number of Communities provided with Labour saving Devices	38	207	Civil Registry
	Proportion of households that are food insecure	25%		PACD Reports Gambia National Food Security Survey
<b>PILLAR II: GOVERNANCE REFORM</b>				
A New Constitution adopted, and legal reforms undertaken	Existence of a new constitution	No	Yes	Ministry of Justice National Gazette
	Existence of an Anti-corruption Commission	No	Yes	
Regular, transparent,	Voter turnout (%)			

Outcomes	Indicators	Baseline 2022	National Targets (2027)	Means of Verification
inclusive, free, and fair elections				IEC
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Presidential elections</i></li> <li>• <i>Parliamentary elections</i></li> </ul>	90% 48%	95% 89%	
	Local Government elections <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Mayoral</i></li> <li>• <i>Councillor</i></li> </ul>	29% 34%	50% 50%	
	Availability of balanced electoral boundaries	No	Yes	
	Harmonious regulatory framework	No	Yes	
Climate and Climate Change Governance is enhanced.	Existence of climate change act	No	Yes	MECCNAR
	Existence of a National Waste Management Act	No	Yes	
	Existence of Wildlife and Biodiversity Bill	No	Yes	
	Existence of Forestry Bill	No	Yes	
	Existence of water Bill	No	Yes	
Policies and regulatory frameworks for decentralisation and local governance enhanced and harmonised	Enactment of a New Local Government Act	No	Yes	MoLRG
	Proportion of Local Councils operating on a Programme Based Budgeting	0	100%	
	Number of Local Councils with qualified budget officers	0	8	
	Number of Local Councils with functional Internal Audit Units	0	8	
	Number of Councils with functional Procurement Units	0	8	



Outcomes	Indicators	Baseline 2022	National Targets (2027)	Means of Verification	
	Existence of a Property Valuation Mechanism	No	Yes		
	Existence of a Civil Society Governance and Management Strategy	No	Yes		
Policy and Institutional reforms to ensure rule of law, respect for human rights and equitable access to justice.	Proportion of Regional Headquarters with functional sub-offices for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>National Human Rights Commission</i></li> <li>• <i>Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADRS) Secretariat</i></li> <li>• <i>National Agency for Legal Aid (NALA)</i></li> <li>• <i>National Agency Against Trafficking in Person (NAATIP)</i></li> <li>• <i>Office of the Ombudsman</i></li> </ul>	0%	100%	Ministry of Justice Sector Reports  National Human Rights Commissions Annual Reports  World Bank CPIA  Mo Ibrahim Governance Index  Transparency International Corruption Perception Index	
	Existence of amended criminal and criminal procedure codes	No	Yes		
	Country Policy and Institutional Assessment (CPIA) Scores (World Bank)	3.1% (2022)	4%		
	Mo Ibrahim Governance Index score	55.3 (2021)	60		
	Corruption Perception Index (CPI)	37 (2021)	60		
A reconciled society in which victims are fully paid their reparation dues.	A post TRRC implementation plan and prosecution strategy adopted	No	Yes	National Human Rights Commission's Annual Reports	
	Existence of a social service mechanism for victims and victim groups	No	Yes		
	% of TRRC Recommendations implemented	0%	60% (2024)	Ministry of Justice	
	Existence of a Victims' reparation fund	No	Yes		
	Proportion of Victims Compensated	0	100%		

Outcomes	Indicators	Baseline 2022	National Targets (2027)	Means of Verification
A reformed security sector and adequately capacitated security sector institutions in terms of policies, infrastructure, equipment, and mobility	Existence of an internal security policy	No	Yes	Security Sector Reforms Secretariat's Annual Reports MoI, MoD
	Existence of gender sensitive recruitment and human resource management strategy for security agencies			
	• <i>Drug Law Enforcement Agency</i>	No	Yes	
	• <i>Gambia Armed Forces</i>	No	Yes	
	• <i>Gambia Police Force</i>	No	Yes	
	• <i>Gambia Immigration Department</i>	No	Yes	
	• <i>Gambia Fire and Rescue Services</i>	No	Yes	
	• <i>State Intelligence Services</i>	No	Yes	
	• <i>Gambia Prison Services</i>	No	Yes	
	Existence of an Asset Disposal Policy	No	Yes	
Existence of a joint training institution for the Armed and Security Forces	No	Yes		
Existence of functional directorates of planning in all security agencies	4	8		
Number of cases of major offences reported	365 (2021)	133		
• <i>Murder</i>	24 (2021)	10		
• <i>Rape</i>	61 (2021)	33		
Unsentenced detainees as a proportion of overall prison population	52% (2021)	10%		
Number of fire and rescue fatalities reported	48 (2022)	15		
Cases of drug trafficking reported	196 (2020)	110		
Number of road accident cases reported	1,218 (2021)	650		

Outcomes	Indicators	Baseline 2022	National Targets (2027)	Means of Verification
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of fatal accidents</li> </ul>	77 (2021)	23	
An efficient, motivated, accountable and results- oriented public service.	Existence of a standardised policy formulation framework for sectors	No	Yes	Ministry of Public Service and Administrative Reforms' Annual Reports
	Conduct survey on civil service turnover rate	No	Yes	
	Existence of a new pay policy	No	Yes	
	Existence of a public service performance management system	No	Yes	
	Number of MDAs using Electronic Record Management System (ERMS)			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ministries</li> <li>Agencies</li> <li>State-Owned Enterprises</li> </ul>	5 0 0	23 20 15	
	Existence of a Public Sector Human Resources Capacity Development Policy	No	Yes	
<b>PILLAR III: MACROECONOMIC STABILITY AND GROWTH</b>				
Enhanced fiscal and monetary policies, public financial management, inclusive growth, and poverty reduction	Real GDP growth	5.3% (2021)	≥7%	GBoS (National Accounts) GBoS (Household Survey) MoFEA (Statement on Government Fiscal Operations-SGO) MoFEA (SGO)  MoFEA (Annual Debt Bulletin) GBoS & CBG
	% of people below USD 2.15 per day/poverty rate	53.4% (2020)	≤48%	
	Revenue share of GDP	10.13	≥17%	
	Overall fiscal deficit as a share of GDP	5.81%	≤ 3.0%	
	Debt to GDP ratio	84.15%	<70%	
	Annual Inflation	13.0%	<10%	
	Net Domestic Borrowing as a share of GDP	2.54%	≤ 1.0%	
	CBG financing of fiscal deficit as % of last year tax revenue	0.0%	0.0%	
	CPIA economic management (1=low to 6=high)	2.7	≥ 3.5	
CPIA macroeconomic management (1=low to 6=high)	3.0	≥ 4.0		

Outcomes	Indicators	Baseline 2022	National Targets (2027)	Means of Verification
	CPIA fiscal policy rating (1=low to 6=high)	2.5	≥ 3.5	MoFEA & CBG CBG & MoFEA CBG
	CPIA debt policy rating (1=low to 6=high)	2.0	≥ 3.2	
	CPIA debt policy rating (1=low to 6=high)	3.0	≥ 4.0	
	Gross external reserves (months of import cover)	5.81 Months	≥ 4 months	
	CPIA debt policy rating (1=low to 6=high)	2.0	≥ 3.2	
	CPIA quality of budgetary and financial management rating	3.0	≥ 4.0	
Private sector-led growth with enhanced Trade, inclusive and sustainable industrialisation, Services, and Employment	Trade balance as a share of GDP	-30.24%	≤ -20%	GBoS & MoTRIE CBG (BOP) GBOS website GBoS & MOTRIE World Bank Finscope Survey MoLR MOTRIE MOTRIE LFS Labour Force Survey 2022-23
	Value of total exports as a share of GDP	7.4%	25%	
	National unemployment rate disaggregated by sex	National: 7.6% Female: 7.2% Male: 7.8%	National: 30% Female: 52.1% Male: 37.9%	
	Manufacturing employment as a proportion of total employment	Male: 21.9% Female: 5.0% National: 9.1%	Male: 27% Female: 10% National: 15%	
	Informal sector employment	62.8% (2022-23)	58%	
	% of adults using formal accounts	19%	70%	
	Existence of the National Local Content Act	No	Yes	
	Development of a National Laboratory Policy	No	Yes	
	A functional National Quality Centre	No	Yes	
	Number of Accredited laboratories	0	3	
	Number of Accredited certification schemes	0	4	
	Manufacturing share to GDP	5%	15%	
Number of new Jobs created	0	150,000		
A competitive and diversified tourism sector contributing to	Tourism as a share of employment	19.2%	25%	GBoS, GTBoard & MoTC GBoS, MoTC GBoS (TSA)
	Tourist arrivals	449,725	1,500,000	
	Number of cultural heritage sites rehabilitated	6	12	
	Number of eco-tourism sites	4	11	

<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Baseline 2022</b>	<b>National Targets (2027)</b>	<b>Means of Verification</b>
overall Inclusive growth, job creation and Poverty reduction	Existence of a National Theatre	No	Yes	
	Existence of a comprehensive TDA land use plan	No	Yes	
	Existence of an Inter-sectoral Tourism Technical Working Group	No	Yes	
	Number of research conducted on target market and their needs as well as their trends at local, regional, and global levels	0	5	
	Availability of a finalised Tourism Satellite Account (TSA)	No	Yes	
	Availability of a coastal climate resilience strategy and plan to address the ongoing erosion and flood impacts	No	Yes	
<b>PILLAR IV: HUMAN CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT</b>				
Equitable access to quality and relevant education for all	Human capital index	0.42	0.5	Education Management Information System (EMIS)
	Proportion of communities within 2km access to Lower Basic Education	80	98	
	Proportion of schools meeting Pupil Book Ratio of 1:1	65	90	
	Proportion of ECD school infrastructure meeting the minimum standards	56	70	
	Existence of a Language Policy	No	Yes	
	Introduction of competency curricula in all schools (Nursery, LBS, UBS and SSS)	No	Yes	
	% of students with five credits in WASSCE disaggregated by sex	16.4	18.5	
	% of students with Aggregate $\leq 42$ in GABECE disaggregated by sex	49.7	51.7	

Outcomes	Indicators	Baseline 2022	National Targets (2027)	Means of Verification
	Number of or Percentage accredited institutions by level, TVET, tertiary and higher education	TVET:26 Tertiary:8 Higher Education:80%	TVET:60 Tertiary:50 Higher Education:100%	
	Proportion of tertiary and higher institutions in the provincial areas	11%	20%	
Quality, accessible, and affordable health care services delivered for all	Life Expectancy (National)	63.4 (2013)	66.3	Mortality 2013 Census Report, GBoS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Women</li> <li>• Men</li> </ul>	65.9 60.8	68.9 63.6	
	Under 5 Mortality Rate	56/1000 (2019-20)	34/1000	Ministry of Health's Annual Sector Reports GDHS 2019-20
	Infant Mortality Rate	42/1000 (2019-20)	21/1000	
	Neonatal Mortality Rate	29/1000 (2019-20)	17/1000	
	Maternal Mortality rate	289/100,000 (2019-20)	135/100,000	
% of mothers receiving antenatal care from a skilled provider	98% (2019-20)	100%		
% of live births delivered in a health facility	83.8% (2019-20)	95%		
Improved nutritional status of children under five years and women of child-bearing age is assured	Stunting rate for children under 5yrs	18% (2019-20)	14.7%	GDHS 2019-20 National Nutrition Agency Reports
	Underweight for children under 5yrs	11.6% (2019-20)	9.7%	
	Wasting rate for children under 5yrs	5.1% (2019-20)	5%	
	Prevalence of anaemia in women of childbearing age	44.3% (2019-20)	35%	
	Exclusive Breastfeeding rate under 6 months	53.6% (2019-20)	60%	
	Prevalence of overweight and obesity among adults	23%	15%	
Increased access to safe drinking	Proportion of the population with improved sources of safe drinking water	95% (2019-20)	100%	

Outcomes	Indicators	Baseline 2022	National Targets (2027)	Means of Verification
water, proper sanitation, and hygiene	Proportion of the population using safely managed drinking water: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>National</i></li> <li>• <i>Rural</i></li> <li>• <i>Urban</i></li> </ul>	33.8% (2018) 1.9% (2018) 49.8% (2018)	35.8% 5% 52.8%	Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, 2018 GDHS
	Proportion of the population with access to improved sanitation facilities	72% (2019-20)	75%	
	Proportion of the population with improved access to good hygienic practices	76.3%	85%	
Appropriate populations policies and strategies to harness the demographic transition	Existence of a demographic dividend profile using the NTA Model	No	Yes	GDHS Annual National Budget NPCS Reports
	Existence of National roadmap for harnessing the demographic dividend	No	Yes	
	Number of planners trained on integration of demographic variables	0	42	
	Contraceptive Prevalence Rate (CPR)	19% (2019-20)	35%	
	Teenage childbearing	14% (2019-20)	10%	
	Existence of integration Module and software for integration	No	Yes	
	Existence of Demographic Dividend and gender sensitive Budgeting	No	Yes	
	Total Fertility Rate	4.4/woman (2019-20)	4.0	
	Existence of a functional National Observatory on Demographic Dividend	No	Yes	
Socioeconomic benefits of migration	Value of annual remittance flow (US\$)	712.5M (US\$) (2022)	1.08 billion (US\$)	Gambia Immigration Department
	Diaspora voting in national elections	No	Yes	

Outcomes	Indicators	Baseline 2022	National Targets (2027)	Means of Verification
enhanced for National Development and adverse consequences mitigated	Existence of an amended Trafficking in Person Act	No	Yes	MoFA CBG GDHS
	Number of migrant returnees provided with return/arrival assistance	National: 7,774 Male: 7,550 Female: 224	National: 2,700 Male: 2,623 Female: 78	
	Number of returnees' reintegration assistant to training programmes disaggregated by sex	National: 6,035 Male: 5,819 Female: 216	National: 2,340 Male: 2,256 Female: 84	
Quality and affordable housing for all and urban planning improved	Existence of a National Housing Policy	No	Yes	Ministry of Lands and Regional Administration
	Existence of a National Programme for Low Income Housing	No	Yes	
<b>PILLAR V: AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES, NATURAL RESOURCES, ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE</b>				
A modern, productive and sustainable agriculture for food and nutrition security, economic growth and poverty reduction	Agriculture contribution to GDP (GDP)	25.4% (2021)	30.06%	GBoS National Accounts National Agriculture Sample Surveys, MoA
	Annual Agriculture growth rate	13.7% (2021)	10%	
	Annual Value of rice imports (MT)	196,886	98,443	
	Annual Value of poultry imports (GMD)	38,411,774	19,205,887	
	Area of land under cultivation (Ha)			
	• <i>Rice (Ha)</i>	61,013	77,869	
	• <i>Maize (Ha)</i>	25,250	40,665	
	Annual production (Metric tons)			
• <i>Rice (MT)</i>	40,298	194,674		
• <i>Maize (MT)</i>	19,610	81,330		
Cereals yield (Metric Tons per Hectare)				
• <i>Rice (Mt/ha)</i>	0.94	2.5		
• <i>Maize (Mt/ha)</i>	0.78	2.0		



<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Baseline 2022</b>	<b>National Targets (2027)</b>	<b>Means of Verification</b>
	Volume of poultry meat produced annually (MT)	51,963	83,686	
	Volume of vegetable produced annually (MT)	589,850	949,959.32	
	Volume of production of small ruminant meat annually (MT)	1,634,200	2,631,895	
	Small ruminant mortality rate	6%	2%	
	Area of land under irrigation practices	4050	81000	
A vibrant fisheries and aquaculture sector contributing to economic growth and employment creation.	Fisheries GDP value added	11.7%	15.7%	GBoS website Ministry of Fisheries and Water Resources
	Existence of Fisheries (artisanal and industrial) Masterplan	No	Yes	
	Existence of National Monitoring Control and Surveillance Strategy	No	Yes	
	Number of artisanal fisheries onshore infrastructure with support facilities constructed in major fish landing sites	11	30	
	Existence of artisanal fisheries and aquaculture insurance policy	No	Yes	
Sustainable environmental and natural resources management, disaster risk reduction attained, and adverse impacts of climate change minimised	Existence of National policy on minimum tree cover	No	Yes	GBoS website IFMIS Ministry of Lands and Regional Administration Sector Report Department of Water Resources
	% of National Budget disbursed for climate change financing	14%	25%	
	Creation of a climate change budget code	No	Yes	
	Existence of national cadastral map	No	Yes	
	Existence of an ICZM Secretariat	No	Yes	
	Hectares of Marine Protected Areas Gazetted	67,381 ha	84,381 ha	
	Existence of an integrated fire management policy	No	Yes	
Existence of weather-based index risk financing mechanism	No	Yes		

Outcomes	Indicators	Baseline 2022	National Targets (2027)	Means of Verification
	Proportion of population having access to early warning information.	60%	100%	
	Existence of national water policy	No	Yes	
	Degree of IWRM implementation	30%	100%	
<b>PILLAR VI: EMPOWERMENT, SOCIAL INCLUSION AND LEAVING NO ONE BEHIND</b>				
Empowered Gambian Women Economically, socially, and politically	Proportion of women representation in Cabinet	18%	30%	MoPS
	Proportion of seats held by women in the National Assembly	8.6%	30%	Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Welfare Sector Reports MICS, LFS, SDGs Monitoring Survey
	Proportion of seats held by women in Local Government Councils	9.43%	30%	
	Proportion of Women in Managerial positions	36.1% (2022-23)	38.5%	
	Proportion of victims of sexual violence reporting their cases to competent authorities	1.5% (2021)	25%	
Children are nurtured and enjoy their full rights	Proportion of children under 5 who are registered at birth	59.0% (2019-20)	70%	Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Welfare Sector Reports, Labour Force Survey MICS GDHS
	Percentage of children attending the first grade of primary school who attended early childhood education	69% (2018)	89%	
	No. of childcare givers trained	0	300	
	No. of recreational centres built/rehabilitated by region	0	7	
Enhanced economic	Youth (15-35) unemployment rate <sup>51</sup> disaggregated by sex	National: 38.6% Female: 44.9%	National: 30%	Labour Force Survey

<sup>51</sup> This is based on the combined rate of unemployment and potential labour force. In The Gambia, even those who are not searching for work but want to work consider themselves as unemployed. Therefore, this was adopted as the unemployment rate. Based on the ILO definition of unemployment that was adopted in this survey, the unemployment rate for the youth which includes only those actively searching for employment is 10.5 per cent (male: 10.5 per cent and female:

<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Baseline 2022</b>	<b>National Targets (2027)</b>	<b>Means of Verification</b>
opportunities and all-round social and cultural development for youths		Male: 31.5% (2022-23)		NEDI Reports Ministry of Youth and Sport Sector Reports
	Unemployment rate <sup>52</sup> , by sex, age and PwDs (15yrs and above)	National: 31.6% Female: 37.9% Male: 24.9%		
	Youth Neither in Employment nor in Education or Training (NEET) disaggregated by sex	National: 45.3% Female: 47.3% Male: 43.1% (2022-23)	National: 35% Female: 37% Male: 32.8%	
	Proportion of youth owned businesses with access to finance	15%	85%	
	Number of youths graduating from entrepreneurship trainings (NYSS, NEDI, PIA,) by region and by sex	National: 728 Male: 674 Female: 54	National: 1000	
	Number of stadia built by region	5	7	
Inclusiveness, and care for Persons with Disabilities (PwD)	Employment to population ratio	Persons with Disability: 30.5% Persons without Disability: 40.8%	Persons with Disability: 35% Persons without Disability: 45.3%	Labour Force Survey Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Welfare Sector Reports

10.5 per cent). This includes those who are actively searching for work and anyone who is not searching but want to work is excluded by the conventional indicator and this does not reflect the reality.

<sup>52</sup> This is based on the combined rate of unemployment and potential labour force. In The Gambia, even those who are not searching for work but want to work consider themselves as unemployed. Therefore, this was adopted as the unemployment rate. Based on the ILO definition of unemployment that was adopted in this survey, the unemployment rate for the population 15 years and above which includes only those actively searching for employment is 7.6 per cent (male: 7.8 per cent and female: 7.2 per cent). This includes those who are actively searching for work and anyone who is not searching but want to work is excluded by the conventional indicator and this does not reflect the reality.

<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Baseline 2022</b>	<b>National Targets (2027)</b>	<b>Means of Verification</b>
	Special Needs Schools built by Government in regions	1	3	MoGCSW
	Conduct survey or study of public structures accessible to PwDs	0	1	
	Number of PwDs benefitting from government social support and services schemes	Support schemes: 50 Service schemes: 1,643	Support schemes: 200 Service schemes: 2,500	
	Provision of disability service centres	1	3	
	Number of minibuses allocated to Special Needs School	2	5	
	Number of public transport services accessible to PwDs	1	3	
Inclusiveness, and care for Older Persons improved	Ratification of AU protocol on the rights of older persons	No	Yes	Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Welfare Sector Reports Gazette
	Existence of policy on older persons	No	Yes	
	Existence of research-based data on older persons in The Gambia	No	Yes	
	Availability of health insurance cover	No	Yes	
Resilience of households and individuals strengthened, and safety nets put in place to address	Proportion of households exposed to risks and vulnerabilities	4%	2%	NDMA Reports
	Proportion of extremely poor households receiving formal transfers	11,676 <sup>53</sup>	40%	

<sup>53</sup> Based on the NAFA Cash Transfer, it is important to note that this 11,676 households only cover poor households in the following regions; Kerewan, Kuntaur, Janjanbureh and Basse. For Brikama Local Government Area, the data has been collected but households have not yet received cash transfers. For Banjul and Kanifing, the survey is not yet conducted in these two LGAs.

Outcomes	Indicators	Baseline 2022	National Targets (2027)	Means of Verification
vulnerability through social protection in The Gambia				
<b>PILLAR VII: ENERGY, INFRASTRUCTURE AND CONNECTIVITY</b>				
Access and affordable energy for all and effective policies, legal and regulatory frameworks in place for sustainable development of petroleum and mining resources	% of households with access to electricity	62.1% (2019-20)	100%	GDHS Ministry of Petroleum and Energy, NDP Progress Reports
	Proportion of population with primary reliance on clean fuels and technology	2.5% (2019-20)	10%	
	Existence of a Policy, Legal and Regulatory (PLR) reforms for the downstream petroleum sector	No	Yes	
	Existence of policies, legislations, and regulations, for the upstream petroleum sector	No	Yes	
	Existence of a mines and minerals policy framework	No	Yes	
Land, River, Sea, and Air Transport expanded and strengthened for affordability, Accessibility and Competitivity	Proportion of the rural population who live within 2 km of an all-season road	63.4% (2021)	75%	SDG Survey Ministry of Transport, Works, and Infrastructure NDP Progress Reports NRA Network Survey
	Passenger volumes, by mode of transport	Air: 359,909	Air: 500,000	
		Maritime/River: 3,863,738	Maritime/River: 4,500,648	
	Existence of a National Multi-modal Transport System (NMTS)	No	Yes	
	Existence of a Multimodal: Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) for the GBA	No	Yes	
Number of kilometers of urban roads constructed	261.56 (2021)	511.56		

<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Baseline 2022</b>	<b>National Targets (2027)</b>	<b>Means of Verification</b>
	Number of kilometers of rural roads constructed	64.3 (2021)	578.3	
	Fourth Banjul port expansion programme implemented	No	Yes	
	intermodal freight logistics terminal (Dry port) constructed	No	Yes	
	Number of ferries plying the Banjul/Barra Sea route	3	4	
	A revised air transport regulatory framework	No	Yes	
	A parallel taxi runway in the airport in place	0	1	
National Buildings and Facilities Policy (NPBFP)	Existence of a National Building and Facilities Policy	No	Yes	
	Number government office complexes constructed	0	1	
	Number of Embassy Complexes constructed	2	4	
	Number of regional Governor's office complexes constructed	2	5	
An Inclusive Digital Nation	Proportion of individuals who own a mobile telephone	81.0% (2019-20)	100%	GDHS Ministry Communication and Digital Economy NDP Progress Reports
	Existence of a second undersea fiber optic landing cable	No	Yes	
	Existence of an integrated payment gateway system	No	Yes	
	Existence of a national tier-4 Data	No	Yes	
	Broadband internet subscription as a proportion of total internet subscription	60.7%	85%	
	Digital terrestrial transmission sites	16%	100%	

Annex 4: Implementation Arrangements at outcome level

<b>PILLAR I: BUILDING COMMUNITY RESILIENCE TO ADDRESS SHOCKS AND CRISES</b>		
<b>Outcome 1.1:</b> Community-wide resilience to shocks and crises enhanced	<b>Lead Government Institutions:</b> Ministry of Public Service (DSPD), MoLRG&RA (DCD), National Centre for Coordination of Early Warning and Response Mechanism	<b>MDAs:</b> MoA, MECCNAR, MoFEA, MoH, NDMA, MoD, MOI
		<b>Civil Society/Private Sector Entities:</b> GALGA, TANGO, GCCI, United Purpose, Action Aid, GAFNA
		<b>Development Partners:</b> UNDP, WFP, FAO, WHO, UNFPA, UNICEF
<b>PILLAR II: GOVERNANCE REFORM</b>		
<b>Outcome 2.1:</b> A new Constitution adopted, and legal reforms undertaken	<b>Lead Government Institution:</b> MoJ,	<b>MDAs:</b> NA, IEC, NCCE, NHRC, NHRC, MoD, MoI, MoFEA, OP, Judiciary, UTG
		<b>Civil Society/Private Sector Entities:</b> WANEP, Gambia Participates, TANGO, Gambia Bar Association
		<b>Development Partners:</b> UNDP, EU, USAID, ECOWAS
<b>Outcome 2.2:</b> Policies and regulatory frameworks for decentralisation and local governance enhanced and harmonised	<b>Lead Government Institution:</b> Ministry of Lands, Regional Governance & Religious Affairs	<b>MDAs:</b> Department of Community Development, NGO Affairs Agency, Department of Physical Planning and Housing, Department of Lands & Surveys, National Land Commission, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Justice, Department of Forestry, Local Government Authorities, NEA, Department of Parks and Wildlife, Gambia Tourism Board, Geology Department Molar, Ministry of Works (NRA), Directorate of Governance, NGO Affairs MoJ, MoFEA, MoI,
		<b>Civil Society/Private Sector Entities:</b> Association of Real Estate Companies, TANGO
		<b>Development Partners:</b> UNDO, WB, EU, UNOPS, UNEP, UNCDF, FAO, WFP, UNDP,

		UNICEF (Nsa-kenno), UNCDF/JSF, PACD, SSNP (Nafa), SRPEP (IsDB)
<b>Outcome 2.3:</b> Regular, transparent, inclusive, free, and fair elections ensured	<b>Lead Government Institution:</b> Independent Electoral Commission (IEC)	<b>MDAs:</b> Political Parties, Ministry of Justice, National Assembly, UTG and professional institutions (MDI, GTTI, etc.), MoHERST, Ministry of Public Service, MoFEA, GPPA, GPF, Regional Authorities, NCCE, MoLRG&RA
		<b>Civil Society/Private Sector Entities:</b> Media, CSOs, NCCE
		<b>Development Partners:</b> ECOWAS, AU, UNDP, Commonwealth
<b>Outcome 2.4:</b> Policy and institutional reforms to ensure rule of law, respect for human rights and equitable access to justice	<b>Lead Government Institution:</b> Ministry of Justice, Judiciary	<b>MDAs:</b> NALA, NHRC, NAATIP, ADRS, Ombudsman, MoLRG
		<b>Civil Society/Private Sector Entities:</b> TANGO and other CSOs
		<b>Development Partners:</b> UN Agencies, EU, and TIKA, Governance Management Service International (GMSI), International Ombudsman Institution (IOI), Public Administration International (PAI), African Ombudsman and Mediation Association (AOMA), other development partners
<b>Outcome 2.5:</b> A reconciled society in which victims are fully paid their reparation dues and transitional justice attained		<b>MDAs:</b>
		<b>Civil Society/Private Sector Entities:</b>
		<b>Development Partners:</b>
<b>Outcome 2.6:</b> A reformed security sector with adequately capacitated security institutions	<b>Lead Government Institution:</b> MoI, MoD and OP	<b>MDAs:</b> ONS, OVP, MoFEA, OVP
		<b>Civil Society/Private Sector Entities:</b> CSOs, CBOs, NGOs, Private Sector
		<b>Development Partners:</b> Bilateral and Multilateral partners
<b>Outcome 2.7:</b> An efficient, motivated, accountable and results- oriented public service	<b>Lead Government Institution:</b> Ministry of Public Service, Administrative Reforms, Policy Coordination and Delivery	<b>MDAs:</b> Office of the President; (Cabinet Office), Office of the President, MoFEA, MoLRG&RA, Ministry of Transport, Works and Infrastructure, Public Service Commission, MoJ, National Assembly; Office of the Ombudsman, Ministry of Communication and Digital Economy, Media; MoHERST, Tertiary and Training Institutions, NAQAA, All Ministries, Departments and Agencies, and Public Enterprises
		<b>Civil Society/Private Sector Entities:</b> CSOs, Tertiary and Training Institutions



		<b>Development Partners:</b> World Bank, UNDP, ACBF
<b>PILLAR III: MACROECONOMIC STABILITY AND INCLUSIVE GROWTH</b>		
<b>Outcome 3.1:</b> Enhanced fiscal and monetary policies, public financial management, inclusive growth, and poverty reduction	<b>Lead Government Institution:</b> MoFEA	<b>MDAs:</b> CBG, NAO, GPPA, National Assembly, GRA, GBoS, Gambia Participates, MoTIE, GIEPA, MoTC, GTBoard, GTHI, NCAC, MoCDE, MoA, NARI, MoJ, NaNA, Gambia Manufacturers Association, MoBSE, PURA, NCAC
		<b>Civil Society/Private Sector Entities:</b> GCCI, Gambia Manufacturers, Association, Farmers Platform, GCCI, Livestock Dealers Associations
		<b>Development Partners:</b> WB, IMF, UNDP
<b>Outcome 3.2:</b> A Private Sector-Led Growth with enhanced Trade, inclusive and sustainable industrialisation, Services, and Employment	<b>Lead Government Institution:</b> MOTIE,	<b>MDAs:</b> MoCDE, GRA, MoLGLA, GIEPA, MoJ, State Agencies, GCCI, GYCC, GWCC, NACOFAG, ITAG, AGM, NBC, GamCIF, CBG, MoFEA ,MoHERST, MoJ, GCCPC, Startup Incubator Gambia, Information Technology Association of The Gambia, Bankers Association, MoLRGRA, MoJ, Regional / District Land Authority, Local Government Structures, SIG, NACOFAG , GPPA , MDAs, MoJ, MoPE, FSQA, PURA, MoA (PPU), NARRI, Dept. of Fisheries, W&M, NEA, TSGB
		<b>Civil Society/Private Sector Entities:</b> Association of Real Estate Companies, Private Landowners
		<b>Development Partners:</b> IMF, World Bank, AfDB, UNDP, GIZ, ECOWAS, UNCDF, EU, Commonwealth, UNCTAD, French Development Agency, TIKa, DEIK, ITC, WTO-EIF, UNIDO, ENABEL, IFAD, FAO, IDB, EIF, IRI, Turkish Government, WACOMP, EBA
<b>Outcome 3.3:</b> A competitive and diversified tourism sector contributing to overall Inclusive growth, job creation and poverty reduction	<b>Lead Government Institution:</b> MoTC	<b>MDAs:</b> GTBoard, GTHI, NCAC, MoLRG, MoFEA, GBoS, the Gambia Standard Bureau, Department of Forestry, Parks and Wildlife, GCAA, Gambia Immigration Department, MoJ, GTBoard, GTHI, NCAC, Department of Physical Planning, NAQAA, Gambia Hotelier Association (GHA), GSM operators, GCCI, Media outlets, MECCNAR, , Central Bank of the Gambia (CBG),NEA, Ministry of Information, MoTIE,

		<p><b>Civil Society/Private Sector Entities:</b> Civil Society Organisations CSOs</p> <p><b>Development Partners:</b> UNESCO, UNEP, UNDP, International Trade Fairs</p>
<b>PILLAR IV: HUMAN CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT</b>		
<b>Outcome 4.1:</b> Equitable access to quality and relevant education for all	<b>Lead Government Institution:</b>  MoBSE	<p><b>MDAs:</b> MoFEA, Gambia College, Committees, MoHERST, Ministry of Information, MoPE ,UTG</p>
		<p><b>Civil Society/Private Sector Entities:</b> Universities Village Development Committees, Mothers Clubs, School management Committees, Tostan, Action Aid, NKO, Local Communities, ABWE, FIOH, ISRA, SOS, NaWFA, FAWEGAM</p>
		<p><b>Development Partners:</b> World Bank, UNICEF, WFP, EU, BADEA/OFID, KUWAITI FUND, MRC Holland Foundation, FAO, WEC</p>
	<b>Lead Government Institution:</b> MoHERST	<p><b>MDAs:</b> NAQAA, PMO, Tertiary and Higher Education Institutions, Department of Physical Planning, MoTCI, MoFEA, MoI, GBoS, NAQAA, MRC, NARI, MoICI, GPA, National TVET Committee, Media, MoGCSW</p> <p><b>Civil Society/Private Sector Entities:</b> Tertiary and Higher Education Institutions, NGOs and CSOs</p> <p><b>Development Partners:</b> World Bank, UNESCO-KOICA, MRC Holland Foundation, UNDP, EU, Commonwealth, WASCAL, WACOMP, ECOWAS</p>
<b>Outcome 4.2:</b> Quality, accessible and affordable health care services delivered for all.	<b>Lead Government Institution:</b>  Ministry of Health	<p><b>MDAs:</b> MoH Directorate of Planning and Information, (RMNCAH) Expanded Programme on Immunisation (EPI), NMCP, National AIDS Control Programme (NACP), PHC, Integrated Management of Neonatal and Childhood ,Illness(IMNCI), Result Based Financing (RBF), National Pharmaceutical Service(NPS), National Public Health Laboratory(NPHL), RFH, HMIS, RHD, RMNCAH), NPS, NACP, NaNA, SHNU, NACP, NCD Unit, NLTP, School Health and Nutrition, Mental Health, EFSTH, EDC, EHP, SZRECC, HCU, Environmental Health Unit(EHU), Medicine</p>

		<p>Control Agency (MCA), DHRH, Health Financing Unit-HFU, MoFEA, NHIA, EHU, WASH, Occupational Health (OHU), EHU, M&amp;E, Research, RMNCAH, DHR, NAS, CRS, NPCS, MRCG@LSHTM, NAWEC, GFPA, FSQA, Child Fund, TGSB, MoA, Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Welfare, Department of Water Resources, GAFNA, MoBSE, HePDO, Department of Community Development, RAID- the Gambia, IOGT, RHTs, Hospitals, Training institutions, CIAM, NEA, NDMA, GPA, Gambia Immigration Department(GID), Local Government Authority, Civil Education, UTG, Ministry of Information, GBoS, NSGA, NCAC</p> <p><b>Civil Society/Private Sector Entities:</b> GFPA, YMCA, Wassu Kafoo Gambia, NSGA, Private Clinics, United Purpose, AATG, Gambia Diabetes Association, Gambia Sickle Cell Association, GRCS, Paradise Foundation, Supreme Islamic Council, Christian Council, TANGO, HePDO, Association of Health Journalists, Media Houses, GAMCOTRAP, Activista The Gambia, Hands on Care, Santa Yallah Support Society, CRS, ADWAC, Child Fund, PATH, One Sight</p> <p><b>Development Partners:</b> UNFPA, WB, WHO, UNICEF, Global Fund, UNFPA, EU, WFP, FAO, World Diabetes Foundation, WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, Tobacco Policy Action Fund for Africa under Management Sciences for Health, Defeat NCD Partnership Development Partners (WHO, WDF, MSH, DNCD), IOM, GAVI, ACDC, Reference Laboratory, WAHO, USAID, CHINA AID, University of Oslo, HISP West Africa, Africa CDC, UK Public Health, other UN bodies</p>
<p><b>Outcome 4.3:</b> Improved nutritional status of children under five years and women of child-bearing age is assured</p>	<p><b>Lead Government Institution:</b></p> <p>NaNA, MOGCSW</p>	<p><b>MDAs:</b> NSPS/OVP, DoL/MoTIE, NPCS, NDMA, NAATIP, SSCHFC, MoFEA, MoBSE, MoH, MoJ, MoFA, PURA, NA, NaNA, GBoS, TGSB, GT Board, GCCPC LCA structures, NSPS</p>

		<p><b>Civil Society/Private Sector Entities:</b> GCCI, SOS, AIG, CRS, Red Cross, TANGO, Activista The Gambia, Media, ISRA, CPA, GFD</p> <p><b>Development Partners:</b> UNICEF, UNFPA, ILO, UNDP, IOM, WFP, FAO, WB, ADB, IDB, CF, UNICEF, GIZ</p>
<b>Outcome 4.4</b> Increased access to safe drinking water, proper sanitation, and hygiene	<p><b>Lead Government Institution:</b> MoF&amp;WR (DWR), NAWEC, MoH</p>	<p><b>MDAs:</b> MoTWI, MoLRG, Gambia Standards Bureau, MoBSE, NDMA, FSQA</p> <p><b>Civil Society/Private Sector Entities:</b> GRCS, ADWAC, United Purpose, HePDO</p> <p><b>Development Partners:</b> UNICEF, UNDP, JICA, AfDB, Saudi Development Fund (SSP), IsDB, BADEA, WB, EU</p>
<b>Outcome 4.5:</b> Appropriate population policies and strategies to harness the demographic dividend	<p><b>Lead Government Institution:</b> NPCS</p>	<p><b>MDAs:</b> MoHERST, MoBSE, MoTIE, MoH, MoGCSW, NYC, GBos, RMNCAH, MoYS, GIEPA, NPCS, MoFEA (DDP), Planning Units of Relevant MDAs, NaNA, DGEWE,</p> <p><b>Civil Society/Private Sector Entities:</b> GCCI, Start-up Incubator, GAMCOTRAP, MRC Holland, GFPA, NGBV, NSGA</p> <p><b>Development Partners:</b> UNFPA, UNDP, WHO, UNECA, EU, WB, YEP, PPD, RCP, PRB, UNECA, CREGG, UNICEF, Child Fund</p>
<b>Outcome 4.6:</b> Socioeconomic benefits of migration to national development enhanced and adverse consequence mitigated	<p><b>Lead Government Institution:</b> MoFA</p>	<p><b>MDAs:</b> MoI (GID), NAATIP, MoLRG&amp;RA, MoTIE CBG, GRA, GPF, SIS, DLEAG, MoH, Military Police (MP), MoJ, MoGCSW, MoHERST, MoTWI, MoYS (NYC)</p> <p><b>Civil Society/Private Sector Entities:</b> GRCS, TANGO, CPA</p> <p><b>Development Partners:</b> MSDG, IOM, UNDP, UNODC, US Embassy, UNODC, UN Habitat, EU, UNOPS, World Bank, ADB</p>
<b>Outcome 4.7:</b> Quality and affordable housing for all and urban planning improved	<p><b>Lead Government Institution:</b> MoLRG&amp;RA, NGO affairs, Office of the Vice President</p>	<p><b>MDAs:</b> MECCNR, Land Commission, Department of Lands and Survey (DLS), Department of Physical Planning and Housing, SSHFC, NEA, MoJ, MoI, Local Government Authorities, Departments of Forestry, Parks and Wildlife, Geology Department</p> <p><b>Civil Society/Private Sector Entities:</b> Association of Real Estate Companies</p>

		<b>Development Partners:</b> UNDP, UN Habitat, World Bank, UNOPS, EU, ADB, IMF, African Pacific Caribbean Organisation, AU, Waste Aid AU, UNEP, ECOWAS, Shelter Afrique
<b>PILLAR V: AGRICULTURE, ENVIRONMENT, NATURAL RESOURCES AND CLIMATE CHANGE</b>		
<b>Outcome 5.1:</b> A modern, productive, and sustainable agriculture for food and nutrition security, economic growth, and poverty reduction	<b>Lead Government Institution:</b>  Ministry of Agriculture	<b>MDAs:</b> NaNA, NARI, National Seed Secretariat, Department of Agriculture, Department of Planning, Department of Livestock Services, MoLRG, MoTIE, MECCNAR, Department of Water Resources, Gambia Livestock Marketing Agency, West African Livestock Innovation Centre, UTG
		<b>Civil Society/Private Sector Entities:</b> Private investors, NACOFAG, National Farmers Platform, National Livestock Owners Association, National Poultry Farmers Association, Action Aid, The Gambia, National Master Farmers Association, Young Poultry Farmers Association, Gam Sheep Breeders Association
		<b>Development Partners:</b> FAO, WFP, World Bank, IFAD, IsDB, AfDB, EU, UNICEF, WHO
<b>Outcome 5.2:</b> A vibrant fisheries and aquaculture sector contributing to economic growth and employment creation	<b>Lead Government Institution:</b>  Ministry of Fisheries and Water Resources	<b>MDAs:</b> Gambia Navy, Department of Fisheries, Department of Forestry, NEA, Department of Parks and Wildlife, Department of Water Resources, MoGCSW
		<b>Civil Society/Private Sector Entities:</b> Fisheries Association, Fish Farmers, Observers Association, PONSAFAG, GRCS
		<b>Development Partners:</b> Sub-regional Fisheries Commission, EU, MAVA Foundation, FAO, SRFC, EU
<b>Outcome 5.3:</b> Sustainable environmental and natural resources management, disaster risk reduction attained, and adverse impacts of climate change minimised	<b>Lead Government Institution:</b>  Ministry of Environment, Climate Change and Natural Resources (MECCNAR)	<b>MDAs:</b> MoFEA, MoFA, DPWM/DoF, NEA and Local Government Councils, NDMA, Dept. of Physical Planning and Housing, NCCRM, Energy/forestry, GPPA, AG Chambers, livestock services, customs, security sector, Department of Parks and Wildlife, Department of Water Resources, Gambia Navy, MoGCSW

		<p><b>Civil Society/Private Sector Entities:</b> CBOs, NGOs, CSOs, Fisheries Association, Fish Farmers, Observers Association, PONSAFAG, GRCS</p> <p><b>Development Partners:</b> UN agencies, AFDB, World Bank, GEF, GCF, international NGOs, Multi-national organisations</p>
<b>PILLAR VI: EMPOWERMENT, SOCIAL INCLUSION AND LEAVING NO ONE BEHIND</b>		
<b>Outcome 6.1:</b> Empowered Gambian Women economically, socially, and politically	<b>Lead Government Institution:</b>  Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Welfare (MOGCSW)	<b>MDAs:</b> Public Enterprises (PEs), MoFEA, MoTIE, SDF, GPPA, GEIPA, CBG, Ministry of Information, MoCDE, NCCE, IEC, NYC, MoTC, NAATIP, GID, GPF (Gender and Child Welfare Units), NYC, MoBSE (Gender unit), GTU (Women's wing) MoD, MoI, NALA, ADRS, NHRC, National Assembly
		<b>Civil Society/Private Sector Entities:</b> GTU, Action Aid, FAWEGAM, Action Aid, GCCI, GWCCI, Micro financial institutions, NGBV, NSGA, WANEP, Tele communication providers, Political parties, TANGO, Civil Society Coalition on Election, Gambia Participates, AAITG, Activista the Gambia, Youth Ambassadors, GFD, Safe Hands for Girls, The Girls Agenda, Think Young Women (TYW), GAMCOTRAP, HePDO, Wassu Kafo, Paradise foundation, women in leadership and liberation, TOSTAN, Peace Ambassadors, African Centre for Democracy and Human Right Studies, NOPSWECO, ROAJELF, WANEP, Working Group on Women, Youth, Peace and Security for West Africa and the Sahel- (WGWYPS-WAS)
		<b>Development Partners:</b> UN women, UNDP, EU, ECOWAS, AU, UNFPA, UNCDF, WFP, FAO, ITC, WAHO, Institute for Human Rights and Development in Africa (IHRDA), AU, International Republican Institute (IRI), UNICEF, UNOWAS, UN women, UNODC
<b>Outcome 6.2:</b> Children are nurtured and enjoy their full rights	<b>Lead Government Institution:</b> MoGC&SW	<b>MDAs:</b> MoBSE, MoH, GPF, GPS, MoJ, NAATIP
		<b>Civil Society/Private Sector Entities:</b> CPA, SOS, Children's Parliament, Child Fund,

		<b>Development Partners:</b> UNICEF,
<b>Outcome 6.3:</b> Enhanced economic opportunities and all-round social and cultural development for youth	<b>Lead Government Institution:</b>  Ministry of Youth and Sports (MoYS)	<b>MDAs:</b> MoHERST, MoFEA, GIEPA, NAQAA, NEDI, PIA, NYSS, GSI, GTTI, MoTIE MoFA, NPCS, GBoS, GNOC, MoH, MoBSE, MoLRG, MoI, MoF&WR, NARI, NDLEA.
		<b>Civil Society/Private Sector Entities:</b> GCCI, Youth Against Irregular Migration Gambia, Sport Associations, ITAG, TECH Hubs (The Hub, Disruptive Labs and Jokkolabs), Green-Up Gambia, GYIN Gambia, Registered Youth groups addressing drug issues, Organisation for Psychosocial Innovation, NSGA Supportive Activist's Foundation, Victim Centre, ITC,
		<b>Development Partners:</b> EU, UNDP, GIZ, IOM, TIKA, FIFA, CAF, International Sports Federations, UNESCO, Great Green Wall, UNDP (Accelerator Lab, Poverty and Economic Management), Diplomatic Missions accredited to the country, WHO, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNODC, UNHCR, MRC Holland Foundation
<b>Outcome 6.4:</b> Inclusiveness and care for Persons with disabilities and Older Persons improved	<b>Lead Government Institution:</b> MoGC&SW	<b>MDAs:</b> MoGC&SW, Social Protection Secretariat, NPCS, NHRC
		<b>Civil Society/Private Sector Entities:</b> Aging with a Smile,
		<b>Development Partners:</b> UNICEF, WHO
<b>Outcome 6.5:</b> Resilience of households and individuals strengthened, and safety nets put in place to Address Vulnerability Through Social Protection in The Gambia	<b>Lead Government Institution:</b> Social Protection Secretariat/OVP	<b>MDAs:</b> NaNA, MoGC&SW
		<b>Civil Society/Private Sector Entities:</b>
		<b>Development Partners:</b> UNICEF, WFP, FAO
<b>Pillar VII: ENERGY, INFRASTRUCTURE AND CONNECTIVITY</b>		
<b>Outcome 7.1:</b> Access and affordable energy for all and effective policies, legal	<b>Lead Government Institutions:</b>	<b>MDAs:</b> PURA, GIEPA, MoFEA, MECCNR, MoJ, NA, TGSB, NEA, MoLRG, GAMPETROLEUM, MoHERST, TGSB, GTTI



and regulatory frameworks in place for sustainable development of petroleum and mining resources	MoPE, a NAWEC, Geology Department, Petroleum Commission, GNPC	<b>Civil Society/Private Sector Entities:</b> <i>Mbolo</i> , Energy Solution, Unique Solutions, Private Sector, Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs), GACH Global Trading Company, GAMSOLAR
		<b>Development Partners:</b> WB, AFDB, UNDP, UNIDO, EIB/EU, MCC, USAID, ECOWAS, Commonwealth Secretariat, IMF, UNESCO, IEA, WAPP, ECREEE, Government of India (International Solar Alliance)
<b>Outcome 7.2:</b> Land, River, Sea, and Air Transport expanded and strengthened for affordability, accessibility and competitiveness	<b>Lead Government Institutions:</b> NRA/ MoTWI, GMA, GPA, GCAA	<b>MDAs:</b> NEA, Dept. of Physical Planning and Housing, Local Councils. NAWEC, GAMTEL, GTB, NEA, OP, All MDAs
		<b>Civil Society/Private Sector Entities:</b>
		<b>Development Partners:</b> Exim Bank of India, Kuwaiti Fund, BADEA, KFID, SF, EU, Abu Dhabi Fund, China Aid, AfDB DP World
<b>Outcome 7.3:</b> National Buildings and Facilities Policy (NPBFP)	<b>Lead Government Institution:</b> MoTWI	<b>MDAs:</b> MoLRG (DPPH), SSHFC, NAWEC
		<b>Civil Society/Private Sector Entities:</b>
		<b>Development Partners:</b>
<b>Outcome 7.3:</b> An Inclusive Digital Nation	<b>Lead Government Institution:</b> MoCDE	<b>MDAs:</b> GAMTEL, GAMCEL, PURA, MoPS, Ministry of Information, MoFEA, MoTWI
		<b>Civil Society/Private Sector Entities:</b> GSM Companies, IT Companies, Gambia Cyber Security Alliance, ITAG, Internet Society of the Gambia
		<b>Development Partners:</b> WB, UN, ITU, Digital Cooperation Organisation (DCO), IsDB, EU



Appendix A: Summary of Key Achievements – NDP 2018-2021

Strategic Priority	Main Achievements under NDP (2018-21) as of 31 December 2021
<p>Restoring good governance, respect for human rights, the rule of law, and empowering citizens through decentralisation and local governance</p>	<p><b><u>Governance</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Commission initiated several processes that culminated in the development of key policy and strategic documents aimed at guiding the Constitutional building process. These included: an Action Plan for the period June 2018 – November 2019; a Communication and Media Strategy; a Communication and Media Plan; a Public Consultation Strategy – in-country public consultations and External consultations; a Monitoring and Evaluation Strategy; a Research and Documentation Strategy; a leaflet on frequently asked questions, an Issues Document with over 369 questions and Talking Points.</li> <li>• The Draft Constitution and the accompanying report were finalised and submitted to His Excellency, the President, pursuant to the requirement of section 21 (1) of the CRC Act, 2017 and assented to by the President on the 13<sup>th</sup> January 2018.</li> <li>• Before release of the first draft, the CRC engaged the public including people with disability using 5 local languages and external consultations with Gambians in the diaspora covering select countries in Africa (2), Middle East (1), Europe (5) and 6 states in the United States of America.</li> </ul> <p><b>Elections</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The IEC has organised a successive round of Presidential, Parliamentary and Local government elections which have been deemed free and fair by local and international observers</li> </ul> <p><b>Decentralisation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developed a strategic plan for all the Local Government Authorities (LGAs).</li> <li>• LGAs have an independent control of their fiscal operation and have proper financial management system</li> <li>• The councils supported towards standardizing their financial management and accounting system have successfully expanded their revenue base</li> </ul> <p><b>Human Rights, Access to Justice and Rule of Law</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Human rights council is now fully operational</li> <li>• The office of the Ombudsman is also operational and is beginning to be decentralised</li> <li>• The Truth, Reconciliation, and Reparations Commission (TRRC) has submitted its report to the Gambia Government following which a White paper was issued and the country will be embarking on another phase with support from international partners</li> </ul>

Strategic Priority	Main Achievements under NDP (2018-21) as of 31 December 2021
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The mobility and availability of judges, court processes and management of court cases have improved remarkably and the perception on the court’s independence has improved significantly, and judges are viewed as independent</li> </ul> <p><b>Enhanced Good Governance and Freedom of Expression</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Progress made on the Mo Ibrahim index of governance and existence of an amended Information and communication Act</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Human Rights and Democratic Institutions Established and Strengthened</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Human rights and democratic institutions have been established and strengthened, notably the Human Rights Commission</li> <li>• The Judiciary has made significant progress, having most of their indicators on track or have in some cases achieved their targets, but under their satellite agencies (ADRS, NALA, NAATIP) and Ombudsman are not achieved due to a common constraint, namely the lack of or inadequate funding and infrastructure to operate effectively.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Flagship Programmes</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The first phase of the TRRC has been completed, thus giving way to the post TRRC phase on the Reconciliations and Reparations. On the 25th of May 2022 the TRRC submitted its reports following which the Gambia Government issued a White Paper accepting almost all the recommendations</li> <li>• The Janneh Commission was set up to investigate the financial dealings of the former President and the other ongoing law reforms</li> <li>• Establishment of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), and with it, the compliance in terms of reporting on International Human Rights Treaty obligations has also improved</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Governance Instruments:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NAATIP has already validated the following policy documents: Standard Operation Procedures (SOPs), National Plan of Action (NPA) and National Referral Mechanism (NRM)</li> <li>• NALA intends to: Develop an Instruction Manual and Review the Legal Aid Act (2008)</li> <li>• The Ombudsman Act 1997 is currently being reviewed</li> <li>• TANGO is poised to re-brand and is in the process of drafting a New Constitution</li> </ul>

Strategic Priority	Main Achievements under NDP (2018-21) as of 31 December 2021
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Judiciary: Under the auspices of the judiciary, two important policies have been developed, namely: the Judges Bill which is currently at the National Assembly awaiting to be processed for enactment, and the Judiciary Services Regulation which is yet to be validated</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Security Sector Reform</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The validation of the National Security Policy, the National Security Strategy and the Security Sector Reform Strategy addressed the deficit in terms of legal and regulatory frameworks to guide the operations of the sector</li> <li>• Functional National Security Council that meets monthly and the structure serves as a platform for the Armed and Security Forces to deliberate on matters pertaining to national security</li> <li>• A security sector audit conducted</li> </ul>
Stabilizing our economy, stimulating growth, and transforming the economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Progress in fourteen performance indicators were set at the macroeconomy and public financial management levels, shows that out of the fourteen performance indicators, two targets were achieved, four targets were not achieved, and significant progress has been made on eight indicators.</li> <li>• Reduction in public debt as a share of GDP from a baseline of 120.3 percent to 84.7 percent while the target was 87.1 percent.</li> <li>• Domestic debt stock as a share of GDP declined to 41.8 percent from a baseline of 67.9 percent while the target was 45.1 percent</li> </ul>
Modernizing our agriculture and fisheries for sustained economic growth, food and nutritional security and poverty reduction	<p><b><u>Agriculture</u></b></p> <p><i>I. Value chain</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not performed well over the NDP 2018-2021 period as shown below, with most of the production and productivity and transformation targets not met</li> <li>• No data to assess progress on Processed Fruits, Processed Vegetable, Processed Rice, per cent of post-harvest losses in major crops</li> <li>• Processed livestock dairy: Processed livestock dairy has increased over the years, surpassing the target.</li> <li>• Processed honey: Processed honey has increased over the years, surpassing the target</li> </ul> <p><i>II. production of basic agricultural commodities</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rice: Rice production is increasing at a very slow rate and far from meeting the target.</li> </ul>

Strategic Priority	Main Achievements under NDP (2018-21) as of 31 December 2021
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maize production: Maize production has been decreasing over the years.</li> <li>• G/nut production: Groundnut production has been decreasing over the years.</li> <li>• Cattle production: Cattle production has increased over the years and surpassed the targets.</li> <li>• Sheep: Sheep production has increased over the years and surpassed the targets.</li> <li>• Goat: Goat production has increased over the years and surpassed the targets.</li> <li>• Swine: Pig production has increased over the years and surpassed the targets.</li> <li>• Poultry chicken: Poultry production has increased over the years and surpassed the targets.</li> <li>• Onion production: No data available.</li> <li>• No data available to assess progress for tomato production, onion production</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Fisheries</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formulated a draft policy and strategic document and is on track to amend the Fisheries Act 2007 and Fisheries Regulations</li> <li>• Fisheries contribution to GDP increased from 6.4 per cent to 10 per cent due to increase in fishing vessel license fees,</li> <li>• Total production of fish resources has increased from 53 719 to 89 316.41 tons. An artisanal sub-sector contributed the highest value with 60,673.99 mtn, while the industrial sub-sector contributed 28,621.42 mtn,</li> <li>• Increased national budgetary allocation for aquaculture development from GMD2,000,000 to GMD5,000,000 to enhance the development of aquaculture against the target of GMD10,000,000</li> </ul>
Investing in our people through improved education and health services, and building a caring society	<p><b><u>Basic and Secondary Education</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ECD: targets were met or exceeded with respect to: Gross Rate by Gender ECD; boys target of 50.2% of ECD and girls targets of 52.9% .ECD teachers trained targets of 75% and ECD permanent structures meeting the minimum standard targets of 62.5%</li> <li>• Gross enrolment ratio: progress were made in both upper basic and senior secondary levels. At lower basic, target was exceeded by mid-term but fell below target by end-term. It is unclear if this was due to the differentiated impact of COVID-19 on the different educational levels. LBS: Target =117% , Midterm evaluation =120.7% and as at year 2022 =104.7%. At UBS: Target =84 % , Midterm evaluation= 73.15% and as at year 2022</li> </ul>

Strategic Priority	Main Achievements under NDP (2018-21) as of 31 December 2021
	<p>=73.7% and SSS= Target =46 % , Midterm evaluation = 50.8% and as at year 2022 =52.7%</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Completion rates: targets were met for all educational levels. However, completion rate for girls at lower basic were not met. LBS ;Target= 97% ,UBS target = 79%: SSS: target 41% and LBS girls target of 97% were not met as highlighted</li> <li>• For NAT 8: none of the targets for English: 55 per cent; Mathematics: 43 per cent; and Science: 46 per cent - were met.</li> <li>• GABECE: all targets were met - five credits including Maths and English target of 7 per was met</li> <li>• WASSCE Percentage of students with at least 5 credits and above including Maths and English target of 6 per cent were met.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Tertiary and Higher Education</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gross enrolment rate in post-secondary (19–25-year-olds): the target was met - 13.34% (<b>National</b>); <b>Higher education</b>: 26.7 per cent; Tertiary:46.3%; <b>and non-tertiary</b>:27.0%</li> <li>• Percentage of graduates as proportion of total gross enrolment by level: target not met but some progress made - <b>Higher education</b>: 12.55%; <b>Tertiary</b>:45.77%; <b>and non-tertiary</b>:41.75 per cent</li> <li>• Proportion of post-secondary institutions accredited B=0%; T=90%: <b>Target not met, but significant progress was made (89 versus 90%)</b></li> <li>• Number of graduates in STEM, Health and Agriculture: no data was available at the time of assessment.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Health</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maternal mortality was reduced from 433 to 289/100,000 population and this is mainly attributed to the introduction of the Result Based Financing (RBF) into the health sector</li> <li>• Reduction of neonatal mortality</li> <li>• Significant increase in the number of people having access to ARVs</li> <li>• No progress made on NCDs. The latest WHO (2018) NCD profile indicated that NCDs account for 34 per cent of total annual mortality in the Gambia, with CVDs accounting for the highest proportion of NCD-related mortality for all and affected all COVID-19 Pandemic</li> </ul>

Strategic Priority	Main Achievements under NDP (2018-21) as of 31 December 2021
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is therefore recommended that government: scale up the RBF support to cover other programmes; and allocate enough resources for sustainability of RBF mechanism</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Nutrition</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Progress on Children under nutrition (underweight, stunting, wasting) were not met, it is important to note that undernutrition in children &lt;5 has declined considerably over the period 2013- 2020 (DHS)</li> <li>• Decline in the prevalence of anemia in pregnant women and the proportion of underweight women</li> <li>• According to the CFSVA report (2016 and 2021), The food insecure population increased from 148,458 in 2016 to 329,189 in 2021, representing 8 per cent and 13.4 per cent, respectively</li> </ul> <p><b><u>WASH</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There has been an improvement in access to improved water due to the various interventions by the Department of Water Resources, the National Water and Electricity Company (NAWEC) (<i>94.1% of the population with access to safe drinking water – DHS</i>)</li> <li>• Sanitation and hygiene seem not to be getting the desired policy response resulting in the lack of an efficient coordination mechanism for basic sanitation issues in the country</li> <li>• Significant achievements have been recorded in hygiene (47% Rural Areas)</li> <li>• Community structure, Local Government Authorities and MDFTs have also been engaged to ensure that all households have a hand washing facility with soap and running water.</li> </ul>
Building our infrastructure and restoring energy services to power our economy	<p><b><u>Energy</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved policy and regulatory environment: development of electricity tariff methodology</li> <li>• Enhancement of sustainable energy policies</li> <li>• Improved electricity access</li> <li>• OMVG interconnection, and rural electrification project</li> <li>• Mini-Grids, e.g., Solar Green mini-grid project, at Nyamanari, URR (a private investment initiative: Unique Group Co. Ltd., Gambia)</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Petroleum</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National petroleum laboratory (work-in-progress)</li> <li>• National refinery facility (not achieved)</li> </ul>

Strategic Priority	Main Achievements under NDP (2018-21) as of 31 December 2021
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National petroleum storage facilities (Mandinari Tank Farm, and Castle Oil Co. Ltd., storage facility)</li> <li>• Development of seven (7) legal and regulatory instruments, to improve handling; public health; safety and security of the environment; emergency supply; storage; and transportation, of petroleum products. Petroleum (Exploration, Development and Production) Act 2004 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I. Petroleum Products Emergency Supply Plan Regulations 2018</li> <li>II. Petroleum Products, Health, Safety and Environment (HSSE) Regulations, 2020</li> <li>III. Petroleum Products Service Stations Regulations 2018</li> <li>IV. Petroleum Products Importation Regulations 2018</li> <li>V. Petroleum Products Storage Facility Regulations 2020</li> <li>VI. Petroleum Products Road Transportation (Business) Regulations 2018</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b><u>Mining</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of Mines and Quarries Act 2005</li> <li>• Development of regulations (Restricted Minerals Regulations 2018)</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Road Transport</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Out of 250 km of planned reconstruction of urban roads in GBA area, 84Km (34%) was achieved.</li> <li>• Out of 514 km of planned reconstruction of feeder roads in rural areas, 363Km (70%) was achieved.</li> <li>• Senegambia Bridge</li> <li>• Laminkoto-Passimus road (120Km)</li> <li>• Sukuta-Jambanjelly road (13Km)</li> <li>• Basse-Fatoto-Koina road</li> <li>• Basse-Wuli Road</li> <li>• Banjul urban roads reconstruction</li> <li>• Hakalang roads (work-in-progress)</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Ports and River Transport</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Procurement of the state of the art-communication system for the pilots and vessel crew</li> <li>• Completion of negotiations and payment of residential properties and schools near the port facility for port expansion</li> </ul>

Strategic Priority	Main Achievements under NDP (2018-21) as of 31 December 2021
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The relocation of the car park component from the Port to reduce congestion</li> <li>• License to Operate ICD granted to SMG Dry Port to ease congestion</li> <li>• Completion of negotiations and transaction for legal acquisition of lands for the Basse Dry Port is near completion.</li> <li>• Advanced preparation and negotiations for the commencement of the Jetty Expansion project</li> <li>• Completion of the signing of an agreement between SMG and Port for off dock terminal to reduce port congestion</li> <li>• Ongoing maintenance and capital dredging</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Air transport</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New VVIP Building under construction</li> <li>• Main Passenger Terminal, remodeled and renovated</li> </ul>
Promoting an inclusive and culture-d tourism for sustainable growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shows that out of the seven (7) performance indicators or targets for tourism and culture, two targets were achieved, one was not achieved, one is a work-in-progress, and the remaining three could not be graded because there is no national data on them.</li> </ul>
Reaping the demographic dividend through an empowered youth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The National Youth Policy was developed and approved by cabinet.</li> <li>• National Youth bill and the National sport bill has been completed and now under review for finalisation.</li> <li>• A youth Development Fund was established in 2020 and a youth revolving loan fund rolled out.</li> <li>• Several entrepreneurship programmes successfully instituted: The TEKKI FII programme funded by EU and implemented by GIZ Germany through national Implementing partners had conducted entrepreneurship training programmes, grant schemes, and loan facilities where over 4,000 youth and women had benefitted ITC through YEP and other stakeholders also established several training programmes and access to finance programmes (Mini-grant, loan, and matching grants)</li> </ul>
Making the private sector the engine of growth, transformation, and job creation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shows that out of sixteen performance indicators or targets for trade and private sector, one target was fully achieved, six were not achieved, significant work has been done on eight targets (work-in-progress), eight targets were not achieved, and one target could not be graded due to lack of data.</li> </ul>



## Appendix B: The National Development Context

The review and analysis of the national development context is organised along the following clusters: (i) Governance and democratic reforms; (ii) Macroeconomic stability, growth, and private sector development; (iii) Human capital development; (iv) Agriculture, natural resources, environment, and climate change; (v) Social development; and (vi) Energy, infrastructure, and digital connectivity. The key challenges as well as opportunities in each of these areas/clusters are identified and contribute to informing the priorities of the Plan.

### 1. FRAGILITY AND VULNERABILITY TO SHOCKS AND CRISES

The Gambia is classified as a fragile state from a political, governance, security, economic and social standpoint. According to the index on fragile states, in 2021, the fragile states index for Gambia was 80.5. The index increased from 76 in 2007 to 80.5 in 2021, growing at an average annual rate of 0.43 per cent. At the time of the transition to democratic rule in 2017, a study undertaken by the World Bank and the African Development Bank reported that Gambia's fragility indicators had steadily worsened over the previous decades<sup>54</sup>. The report identified the main drivers of fragility as:

1. Political instability;
2. Slow growth, high inequality, and unsustainable fiscal balances;
3. Limited capacity of the public administration;
4. Structural vulnerabilities and exogenous shocks;
5. Regional instability and external relations.

Likewise, a Conflict and Development Analysis (CDA) conducted jointly by the Government of The Gambia, the United Nations, and the West African Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP) in 2018 and updated in 2019<sup>55</sup> identified the following key conflict drivers:

- a) Accountability and political leadership during transition
- b) Land governance, land disputes and resolution practices
- c) Status of national reforms and commissions
- d) Social cohesion, social behaviour, and the role of civil society
- e) Gambia's young population
- f) Vulnerabilities of climate and the natural environment

Many of these drivers persist today. Recent data (IHS 2020) has shown that poverty in The Gambia has in fact increased since the last assessment in 2015-16 from 48.6 per cent to 53.8 per cent respectively. In absolute terms, the number of the poor has increased from 935,282 in 2015/16 to 1,083,373. This is attributed to population growth, which compounds an already risky and fragile situation. This has been substantiated by the findings from the ward level consultations as shown below.

On a positive note, the report cited above also identified critical sources of resilience, namely: the diaspora, the role of ECOWAS and its Member States, women and youth, migration, Civil Society

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<sup>54</sup> The Gambia Fragility Risk and Resilience Assessment. June 9, 2017 (World Bank/African Development Bank)

<sup>55</sup> Conflict and Development Analysis: The Gambia. June 2019 (Government of the Gambia, United Nations, WANEP).

Organisations, religious and traditional leaders, and the media sector, which can be built upon to successfully address the above sources of fragility.

### **Poverty, Livelihoods and Food and Nutrition Security, and environment Trends at Community Level**

Data collected during the ward level consultations have brought into sharp relief the fact that communities are contending with worsening food security, poverty, and vulnerability over the past five years, as well as environmental and climate change challenges.

As can be seen, there are strong perceptions at ward level of rising poverty, declining sources of livelihoods and increased food and nutritional insecurity across all regions of the country, including the urban conglomerations of Banjul and KMC. A silver lining is that there appears to be clear positive impact of the horticultural gardens on livelihoods and food and nutritional security, particularly in the West Coast Region. These need to be expanded.

Community perceptions derived from the ward level consultations of rising food and nutritional insecurity are borne out by the October 2022 National Food Security Survey (NFSS), which showed that food insecurity rose from 13.4 per cent in 2021 to 26.5 per cent in 2022, which represents over a 100 per cent rise.

### **Impacts of Shocks and Crisis at Community level**

The Gambia, over the past five years, has experienced heightened shocks arising from the impacts of climate change, COVID-19 pandemic, and the effects of the Russia-Ukraine war. In the context of the formulation of the RF-NDP 2023-2027, detailed assessments of the impacts of these three (3) shocks - COVID-19, climate change and effects of Russia-Ukraine war - at macro, sector and community levels were conducted. The assessments were based on community level consultations and analytical work carried out by the Sector Working Groups set up for the Plan formulation. The impacts with regards to COVID-19 and Climate Change at community level are summarised below.

#### *Impacts of COVID- 19*

In the community level consultations held in all seven (7) administrative regions and all 120 wards, stakeholders provided feedback on the impact of COVID-19 at community level, assistance and support received, their own initiatives to counter the adverse effects of the pandemic and their recommendations for future pandemics. The responses are summarised in box 1.

<b>Box 1: Summary of Impacts of COVID-19 at Community Level</b>	
Increase in unemployment	Rising Inflation resulting from rises in cost of basic goods
Disruptions in the education system (loss of contact hours)	Loss of lives due to pandemic
Increase in the level of poverty and unemployment	Disruptions in primary health care, business activity, education, and farming
Agricultural production decreased	Closure of weekly markets (Lumos)

Businesses shut down and there was a rise in cases of bankruptcy	Negative impact on remittance inflows from the diaspora with adverse impacts for communities.
Loss of foreign currency earnings	
Negative social impacts	

The impact at community level was reported to be severe, mainly related to loss of livelihoods and disruptions to education and health services, as well as social networking. These findings are corroborated by the World Bank Poverty and Gender Assessment (2022), which concluded as follows:

Prior to the COVID-19 induced crisis the national poverty rate declined at a slow pace, from 48.6 per cent in 2015/16 to an estimated 45.8 per cent in 2019, due to low and variable economic growth trajectory. Data collected in 2020 during the ongoing pandemic finds that national poverty rate climbed to 53.4 per cent, a level last seen in 2008; instead of declining to a projected 44.9 per cent based on pre-COVID growth rates (WB Data Bank<sup>56</sup>);

Poverty rates in 2020 were highest in Kuntaur and Kerewan, but the number of the poor was highest in Brikama. Poverty rates were much higher in urban areas, with some Local Government Areas (LGAs) experiencing an increase in the number of the poor.

## **GOVERNANCE AND DEMOCRATIC REFORMS**

### **1. Democratic Governance**

The Constitutional Review Commission (CRC) was established under the Constitutional Review Commission Act, 2017. Its mandate as stipulated in Section 6 of the 2017 CRC Act, was to review the 1997 Constitution, draft a new Constitution and prepare a report in relation to the drafting of the new Constitution within 18 months. In the process, the CRC was required to consult with Gambians both at home and abroad to seek their opinions on what they wished to see included in a new, progressive, and inclusive Constitution. Gambians seized the opportunity to contribute meaningfully and to take ownership of the constitutional building process, with the hope that when adopted, it will ultimately deliver a country built on good governance principles. Accordingly, the constitutional review project commenced in 2018 with the appointment of the Commissioners on the 4<sup>th</sup> of June and ended on 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2020 when the bill failed the required threshold of 75 per cent in favour for enactment on the floor of the National Assembly. Thus, by default, it is still the much-decried 1997 Constitution that continues to govern the country. The challenge is to get the constitutional building process back on track, now that Gambians know the value of a constitution, as demonstrated throughout the consultation process.

The main challenges that the CRC grappled with included the following: managing the expectations, contradictions, and the tensions inherent in constitutional building. However, deliberate efforts were made to accommodate all strata of Gambian society. But due to time and budgetary constraints, the CRC could not accommodate all the demands coming from communities, including Gambians in the Diaspora.

<sup>56</sup> [http://databank.worldbank.org/data/download/poverty/987B9C90-CB9F-4D93-AE8C-750588BF00QA/current/Global\\_POVEQ\\_GMB.pdf](http://databank.worldbank.org/data/download/poverty/987B9C90-CB9F-4D93-AE8C-750588BF00QA/current/Global_POVEQ_GMB.pdf)

In the aftermath of the rejection of the Draft Constitution, three eminent personalities issued statements that resonated well among Gambians and contributed to nurture hope for the future of constitutionalism in the Gambia. The Chief Justice declared authoritatively that the Gambia's constitutional journey was not over yet; and that the country 'should not relent in its effort to ensure that we come up with a new constitutional framework'. Similarly, the CRC Chairperson said during the last press conference of the Constitutional Review Commission held at the Kairaba Conference Centre on 1<sup>st</sup> of October 2020, that the Draft Constitution was not dead, but was momentarily in cold storage. He further stated that the country's constitutional reform agenda will always be alive. President Adama Barrow also informed Gambians and development partners before the December 2021 Presidential elections that he will ensure that the Draft Constitution is part of his legacy, implying that there will be another initiative during his second term to advance the document through the remaining stages of the National Assembly and to referendum. The overarching priority that needs to be achieved over the RF-NDP period is to ensure that the Draft Constitution is reviewed, discussed, processed through the National Assembly, and then passed, followed by a referendum for its adoption.

### *Elections*

Section 42 of the 1997 Constitution of The Gambia outlines the mandate of the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) as thus: the conduct of the public elections and referenda, conduct of registration of voters, the conduct of election of speaker and deputy speaker, the registration of political parties, ensuring that the date and time and places of public elections are determined in accordance with the law and that they are publicised and elections are held accordingly; ensuring that candidates participating in elections make full declaration of their assets at the time of nominations.

In furtherance of the mandate, IEC has developed a mission and a vision statement. The Commission also developed an electoral calendar that spells out the activities covering the electoral cycle 2021 to 2023, which includes the registration of voters, the conduct of the Presidential elections, National Assembly elections and Local Government elections 2023.

IEC develops and adopts policies based on the Constitution, the Elections Act, the Local Government Act, and other relevant national documents. Current policies guiding IEC activities include the Electoral Service Code (ESC), the Code on Elections Campaign Ethics, the Code of Conduct for Polling Personnel, the Code of Conduct for Election Observers, the IEC Strategic Plan 2020-2024, the Administrative Procedures Manual, Polling Staff Training Manual, Financial Operations Manual, etc. The draft election bill has already been submitted to the Ministry of Justice. The institution is fervently working towards developing a Communication Strategy to address communication bottlenecks internally and with its public.

Programme activities include the general voter registration exercise, Presidential and National Assembly elections, voter sensitisation and stakeholders engagement, the Local Government Elections in 2023, review of the legal framework, monitoring and supervision of political party congresses, staff training and development, resource mobilisation, infrastructural development, career development through staff growth and retention, medical insurance scheme, registration of political parties, update of the current ICT infrastructure, etc.

There are several emerging issues that current policies and programmes are not addressing. They include change of residency of eligible voters and the impossibility to transfer voters to address such a situation; the influence of social media on the electoral process leading to misinformation, disinformation and malinformation; diaspora voting, as there are inadequate laws to conduct this exercise; the introduction of the paper ballot system and other digital innovations to manage elections.

### *Decentralisation and Lands*

The Gambia has a two-tier system of Government, i.e., the State as the first tier and the Local Government Authorities as the second. There is also provision for Local Government and traditional rulers in the country's governance architecture. The country is divided into eight Local Government Areas (LGAs), including two urban municipalities (Banjul City Council and Kanifing Municipal Council, headed by Mayor/Mayoress), and six Area Councils (Brikama, Mansakonko, Janjanbureh, Kuntaur, Basse, and Kerewan Area Councils headed by Chairpersons).

Sections 193 and 194 of the 1997 Constitution establishes the basis for LGA to complement Central Government in ensuring direct contact between the majority of the country's citizenry with a formal institution of governance. However, the status of decentralisation remains uncertain. The Local Government Act 2002 that defined the relationship between Central Government and Local Government authorities has been amended many times; to the extent that the process of decentralisation inevitably stalled under the Second Republic.

Local Governance in the Gambia is driven by the following policy instruments and frameworks: the MDFT (Multi-Disciplinary Facilitation Team) policy 2021-2030; the Community and Rural Development Policy 2021 – 2030; the Local Government Act; NGO Decree 81; the State Lands Regulations 1995; the Physical Planning and Development Control Act 1991 and the Commission Act 2007 (E) Rent Act 2014. The new policies being developed include the National Land Policy and the NGO Act. The devolution of certain responsibilities from Central Government to the Local Government Authorities is of utmost importance. A review of the Local Government Act 2002 is thus urgent to ensure that the country has a good decentralisation framework that is fit for purpose and one which will gain stakeholder buy-in at all levels.

The goal for decentralisation in NDP 2018-2021 was to engender “fully empowered and functional local government structures that stimulate and respond to the demographic and economic trends of the Gambia”. As of December 2021, the results achieved have been less than optimal. The targets in relation to the availability of enough professional staff have not been met. Funding challenges remain the sticking point for all Local Government Authorities. Also, the mechanisms that are in place for the coordination of the activities of the multi-disciplinary facilitation teams are grossly inadequate and need to be well thought through to make them more effective.

The main challenges in terms of decentralisation and local governance include: the non-availability of a National Land Policy; the non-availability of a resource mobilisation plan for all the LGAs; the low level of CSO participation in Government decision making processes; the NGO Act that has not been promulgated, due to the lack of inputs from stakeholder groups.

There is a consensus that the decentralisation process stalled during the second republic for lack of a strong political will to drive and deliver it. The other challenges raised by sector stakeholders include the low level of NGO participation in Government delegations to international forums; the shortage of technical skills required for quality service delivery; the constraints in collecting revenue (lease, rates, etc.) from the sector.

Furthermore, land lease/acquisition processes are very slow. Land disputes are commonplace, and the lack of adequate supervision of estate agents/ developers is a major concern in land governance. The Department of Physical Planning and Development Control has capacity constraints and needs to be strengthened during the RF-NDP period. NGO compliance with the rules that require them to submit their activity reports to the NGO Affairs Agency is hardly complied with; and the agency does not have the capacity to enforce it. Finally, there is inadequate coordination of MDFT activities at the district and ward levels.

**Table 1: SWOT Analysis - Local Governance:**

<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>
<p>Local councils all have elaborate strategies and make mention of The NDP as having been considered in the elaboration stage of their strategies.</p> <p>Sensitisation and awareness creation on policies and programmes of Local Government Institutions.</p>	<p>Lack of redistribution of indirect taxes from Central Government to support municipalities deliver the basic social services.</p> <p>Local Government Services Commission was set up, but powers usurped and effected through a centralised Local Government Service Commission appointed by the Minister with no accountability mechanism to LGA's.</p> <p>An apparent lack of coordination between local authorities and Central Government on broadening the fiscal base to capture more households for both local and income taxes.</p> <p>About 80% of properties in the municipalities are not paying rates due to lack of proper registration and identification of properties and owners.</p> <p>Mining activities remain a monopoly of Central Government and its agencies, whilst LGAs are left to deal with the impacts and resulting environmental issues.</p> <p>The lack of regular property valuations continues to impede the accurate rating and rate collections from households.</p> <p>Non-availability of National Land Policy.</p> <p>Non-availability of resource mobilisation plan for all the LGAs.</p> <p>The level of CSO participation in Government decision making platforms is low.</p> <p>The NGO Act not yet enacted due to lack of input from stakeholders.</p>

	<p>Slow implementation of the decentralisation policy retards the progress of local structure strengthening and development.</p> <p>The level of NGO participation in Government delegations to international forums is low.</p> <p>Shortage of technical skills required for quality service delivery.</p> <p>Inadequate equipment and accessories render the operations of Area Councils difficult.</p> <p>Revenue collection lacks transparency</p>
<p><b>Opportunities</b></p> <p>The development of a new National Development Plan</p> <p>The development of an MDFT Policy and a Community Development Policy</p> <p>Availability of Government and donor support for the development of the sector</p> <p>Availability of structures such as the Technical Advisory Committees (TAC).</p>	<p><b>Threats</b></p> <p>Urban poverty is becoming a major challenge that will require a pro-active response from Central Government to strengthen local responses at the urban level.</p> <p>The effects of rising sea level on the coastal front due to climate change</p>

### *Human Rights, Access to Justice, and Rule of Law*

The decades of bad governance experienced by The Gambia under former President Jammeh has had wide-ranging impacts on all segments of society and sectors alike. Restoring good governance, rebuilding, and restoring public confidence in key institutions, upholding the tenets of human rights, and strengthening access to justice, in the context of transitional justice, have become the backbone of state building. The 2030 Agenda (SDG 16) recognises the need to build peaceful, just, and inclusive societies that provide equal access to justice and strong institutions. Aspiration 3 of Agenda 2063 is to have an Africa of good governance, democracy, respect for human rights, justice, and the rule of law.

In The Gambia, access to justice and rule of law institutions continue to grapple with the following challenges: insufficient funding for decentralisation for all sectors in the access to justice delivery system; inadequate implementation and enforcement of policies, laws etc.; insufficient experienced senior personnel to guide and mentor young lawyers; unavailability of a Director of Public Prosecution (DPP) since 2017; limited capacity and resources for rule of law and justice delivery system; lack of subvention for the federation of persons with disability; lack of a permanently owned secretariat and regional offices for NHRC and insufficient finance to support NHRC operations; continuing dependence of NALA on the Ministry of Justice. Without independence, NALA may not be able to play its role effectively. Likewise, inadequate funding for the office of the Ombudsman and the National Human Rights Commission are constraining factors that could affect their ability to carry out their roles and functions fully and effectively.

Having moved away from dictatorship since January 2017, the country is now in a more favourable disposition to embark on policy and institutional reforms to fast-track its development. Already, the country can boast of having a judiciary that has demonstrated its independence. The National

Human Rights Commission which gained “A” status accreditation from GANHRI is jealously guarding against all forms of human rights abuses. The institutions under the governance pillar have relatively good internal management systems and have clear mandates, vision, and mission. Decentralisation is continuing with a view to improving access to the country’s justice system; and the indigenisation of the judiciary is effective. The Office of the Ombudsman has adequate human resources already deployed across the regions for decentralisation purposes. The independence of the Office of the Ombudsman, the Judiciary and the NHRC is strong. The broad mandate of the NHRC provides the space to hold public officials accountable. The Gambia is a member of the Human Rights Council, and by virtue of that membership, is committed to upholding the principles of good governance. For the year 2023, the Gambia serves as Vice-President of the body. The Gambia has also moved from tier 2 watch list to tier 2 of the US State Department TIP report 2022; and there is increased recognition of the institutions responsible for access to justice and the NHRC.

### *Transitional Justice*

The Transitional Justice programme was achieved through the establishment of the Truth, Reconciliation and Reparations Commission (TRRC), the Constitutional Review Commission, the establishment of the National Human Rights Commission and the Janneh Commission. The TRRC had as its overarching objective to investigate and establish an impartial historical record of the nature, causes and extent of violations and abuses of human rights committed during the period July 1994 to January 2017. It was also expected to consider the granting of reparations to victims in line with the strategic priority of the NDP to restore good governance, respect for human rights, the rule of law, and empowering citizens through decentralisation and local governance. The final report of the TRRC, released in December 2021, documented the grave violations of human rights, including murder, extrajudicial executions, torture, and rape which occurred during the 22 years of the Jammeh administration. Gambians expect the Government to demonstrate that it has the political will to deliver justice to the victims of the past crimes. The Government has already reassured victims and the public that it was committed to prosecute Jammeh and members of the former regime.

The inauguration of the Stakeholder-Monitoring Committee (SMC) on the implementation of the Truth, Reconciliation and Reparations Commission (TRRC) gives credence to the commitment of Government towards the implementation of the TRRC, as contained in its White Paper. An independent body like the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) with the statutory mandate to promote and protect human rights in the Gambia will be tasked with the responsibility of monitoring the implementation of its recommendations, and then produce an annual report on the status of implementation for the attention of the National Assembly. Training security services and stakeholders on forensics investigations is planned in anticipation of the search and exhumation of disappeared persons. Similarly, national consultations with victims-led organisations on the development of a framework on the drafting of the Victims Reparations Bill is at an advanced stage. The development of a prosecution strategy to guide prosecution of TRRC crimes has been completed. The Government intends to set up, within the framework of the Victims’ Bill, an agency responsible for reparations and a victims’ fund to which resources will be allocated by Government through the national budget.



### *Public Institutions*

The Personnel Management Office (PMO) and the Department of Strategic Policy and Delivery (DSPD) were merged in the aftermath of the December 2021 elections to form the Ministry of Public Service (MoPS); with the mandate to develop, manage and administer human resource policies, management systems and procedures for responsive public service delivery. In that capacity, it serves as an oversight body for all Government institutions – Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs), ensuring compliance and the enforcement of public service rules and regulations, such as the general orders, financial instructions, code of conduct and the Public Service Commission’s regulations.

The current civil service structure has major gaps in skills and competencies. The service is bloated in size with a rapidly expanding wage bill that may not be sustainable. There are performance gaps in some important competencies with weak performance management, recruitment, and promotion system. MoPS intends to institutionalise and integrate human resource planning and development to address the bottlenecks and the binding constraints.

The information systems in the public sector are operating in silos and have not been integrated in ways that would significantly enhance the performance of the civil service. Such a proliferation of stand-alone information systems across the public service continues to deliver sub-optimal outcomes characterised by inefficiencies, red tape, and lack of responsiveness in public service delivery. There is a heavy dependence on manual procedures and systems. There is no standard government email and internal communication systems. Similarly, there is no functional and standard websites for government officials.

The main challenges for the public sector management that the RF-NDP should address (in the short and medium term) include: a bureaucratic system that is an impediment for effective service delivery; inadequate/ad hoc capacity building initiatives that are not well thought through; lack of robust policy coordination and implementation mechanisms; outdated laws (e.g. Public Service Act 1991, National Records Service Act 1993); inadequate policies (e.g. 2010 Training Policy); weak policy implementation; inadequate standards set for quality service delivery; failure to leverage on ICT to improve service delivery; proliferation of public entities with overlapping roles and mandates; lack of strategic plan for certain MDAs; absence of a performance management system resulting in sub-optimal outputs and outcomes in public service delivery; inadequate/weak institutional arrangements to coordinate service delivery; lack of effective citizen engagement mechanism to enhance development results; low remuneration for civil servants, often resulting in high turnover rates and shortcomings in discipline and ethical conduct.

### *Security sector reform*

The protection of the state as well as the promotion of human security and the core values from which they emerge, remain the single most important responsibility of the Government<sup>57</sup>. Coming out of 22 years of autocratic rule during which the security services were used as “tools for political repression” and human rights abuses, the overarching priority of the current Government was to embark on serious, multi-pronged, democratic governance reforms. With support from

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<sup>57</sup> National Security Policy of The Gambia, 2019

development partners, the Gambia initiated a process to reform the security and justice delivery sectors to make them “more responsive to the needs of the populace”.

The review of the operating environment and the prevailing conditions of the Armed and Security Forces revealed that the security sector and the other arms of government were under the yoke of an overbearing executive, and thus could not discharge their duties independently and effectively. Starting with the Security Sector Assessment from August to December 2017, followed by the development of the National Security Policy of the Gambia (2019), the National Security Strategy of the Gambia (2020) and the Security Sector Reform Strategy 2020-2024, the country is well endowed with all the instruments to deliver a successful security sector reform. The current administration inherited a bloated security services sector that still accounts for around 50% of the government wage bill. The issue of downsizing/right-sizing by providing viable alternatives and severance packages to those that are likely to be affected by the measure is yet to be implemented. Relying solely on the attrition rate and on those who reach the age of retirement to right-size will not deliver the expected outcomes within the stipulated timeframe.

The diagnostics revealed that overall, the security sector has important capacity gaps that need to be addressed as a matter of urgency. They lack training in critical areas such as human rights and gender mainstreaming, to make them more gender sensitive in their lines of duty.

## **2. MACROECONOMIC STABILITY, GROWTH AND PRIVATE SECTOR DEVELOPMENT**

### **Macroeconomy Overview**

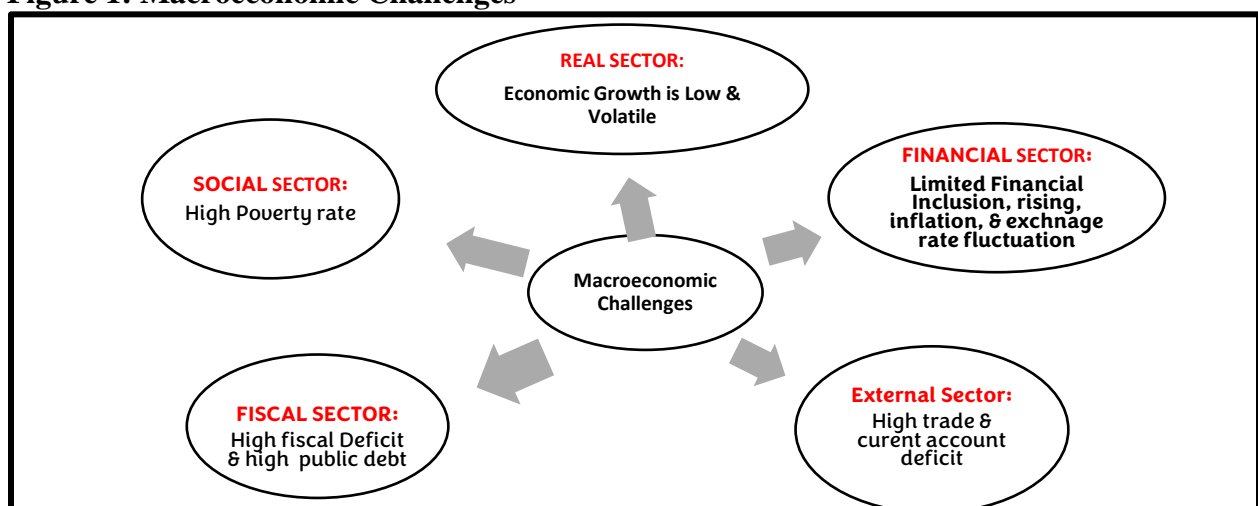
The Gambian economy is driven mainly by the service sector, followed by the agricultural sector which is largely rain-fed. Since 2005, the service sector average share of GDP has been approximately 53-54 per cent, the agriculture share has been 28-29 per cent, and that of industry has been approximately 12 per cent of GDP. From 1970, the growth rate of the country had been low and volatile. The growth volatility comes from internal and external shocks to the main drivers of the economy, agriculture, re-export trade, and tourism sectors. As agriculture is rainfall dependent, any unfavourable rainy season affects agricultural production and the growth of the economy. External shocks also affect the tourism sector which serves as one of the biggest sub-components of the service sectors. The re-export (wholesale and retail) which constitutes the biggest share of the service sector, has also been affected by the emergence of regional competition, a narrow export base, and export market. The main macroeconomic challenge the country faces at the macro-level can be summed up as follows:

- a) Real sector Challenge - Economic growth is low and volatile which is caused by low productivity and limited economic diversification. The low productivity is caused by low private investment and unproductive public investment in the productive sectors of the economy.
- b) Fiscal Sector Challenge - Weak public financial management environment which in turn causes macro-fiscal instability (high fiscal deficit and high public debt).
- c) Financial and Monetary Sector Challenge - Underdeveloped financial sector which in turn leads to limited access to finance and low private sector investment in the priority sectors

of the economy. Moreover, the rising inflation and exchange rate fluctuations make the living conditions difficult, especially for the more vulnerable households.

- d) External Sector Challenge- High trade account and the current deficit are driven by a deficit in merchandise trade.
- e) Social Sector Challenge - High level of poverty caused by low and volatile per capita income. Most of the vulnerable and poor households are employed in the agricultural sector which is very prone to bad weather and climate change. The low productivity caused by low private investment and unproductive public investment in the agricultural sector is the leading cause of poverty, especially rural poverty in the country.

**Figure 1: Macroeconomic Challenges**



These macroeconomic challenges have been the sources of macroeconomic instability, and this in turn has been negatively affecting productivity at the sectoral level (tourism, agriculture, re-export trade) and ultimately inclusive growth in the country for decades.

#### *Macroeconomic Stabilisation Efforts Underway*

Government, with the support of partners (mainly World Bank and IMF), has undertaken several reform efforts aimed at achieving macroeconomic stability. With the support of IMF, progress has been made in the following areas:

- Revenue mobilisation: The programme helped restore key fundamentals required to modernise and enhance revenue mobilisation, improve tax compliance, tax audit and controls, expand the tax base and improve the relationship with taxpayers. The key reforms included the cleansing of the tax registry, the restoration of the tax ledger for large taxpayers, the streamlining of tax expenditures, building capacity on tax audits, the issuance of the taxpayer charter and the modernisation of the IT systems with the launching of the ASYCUDA World and restoration of Gamtanext, pending the completion of ITAS project with WB's support.
- Public Financial Management: The reforms focused on improving cash management, enhancing budget processes, and addressing the weakness identified in the 2019 Public Investment Management Assessment. In this regard, the alignment between the budget and

NDP improved with the regular production of Medium Term Economic and Fiscal Framework, and project selection was enhanced by the development of an appraisal tool and the creation of the Gambia Strategic Review Board. The new procurement bill was enacted, and a Public Finance bill was drafted to improve fiscal transparency and spending efficiency. Other PFM reforms aimed at ensuring transparency of the use of COVID-19 funds, streamlining subsidies, and containing fiscal risks arising from SOEs.

- Debt Management: Debt vulnerabilities remain high, requiring building strong debt management capacities and regular data reconciliations with partners. Government developed a medium-term debt strategy and produces quarterly debt bulletins to better inform the public and the market.
- Governance SOEs reform: Government has undertaken several measures such as: submitting a revised SOE Bill to the National Assembly; publishing annual statements on MDAs' compliance with internal audit recommendations to the National Assembly; and regularly prepare and publish SOEs' annual audited accounts. Government has also signed a performance contract with an SOE (NAWEC) and prepared a new Public Finance Bill aimed at enhancing the governance and financial conditions of SOEs, to reduce fiscal risk and contingent liabilities. A governance diagnostic and corruption vulnerability assessment took place in early 2023 to pave the way for a decisive reform agenda that would support the implementation of the anti-corruption bill when approved, and the work of the anti-corruption committee when established.
- Central Bank and Banking Supervision: Government has strengthened CBG's internal controls and audits. The IMF supported the CBG to carry out stress testing to improve monetary policy formulations to better address inflationary pressures and support growth. The Central Bank established an action plan to implement the recommendations from the 2019 Financial Sector Stability Review for the development of a strong and stable financial sector.

Despite the progress made, the Gambia will need to sustain the reform momentum to restore macroeconomic stability and reduce debt vulnerabilities, while building resilience to shocks required for sustained inclusive and green growth. The RF-NDP will provide a basis for renewed engagement to help deepen the ongoing reforms and support the country in building resilience to climate change and pandemic preparedness while supporting the government efforts toward meeting the SDGs including reducing poverty and inequality, job creation and ensuring gender equality and better social services (education, health, and social protection).

### **Private sector, Trade, and Employment**

The Gambia's Development Plan goal is to promote a strong and competitive private sector that can alleviate poverty, create jobs, improve the quality of life of Gambians and help the country achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. It identifies the role that the private sector can play in achieving these objectives. However, the Gambia and other low-income countries share several supply-side constraints, such as the transportation and energy industry infrastructure gap. The vulnerability to external shocks, difficulties with regulation, and institutional bottlenecks are examples of these constraints. They have all harmed the growth of the private sector. Moreover, the policy approach to Private Sector Development (PSD) has been characterised by frequent interventions in the form of sporadic measures that frequently have unintended effects. Despite

their good intentions, business operations-related decisions are frequently made without adequate consultation with the stakeholders. As a result, investors are left with the impression that the business climate is uncertain and not transparent. As a result, the Investment Policy Review (IPR) conducted by UNCTAD calls for a new policy approach to private sector development: It recommends that Government play a facilitating role that focuses on making the business environment favourable to investors and entrepreneurs. The creation of efficient mechanisms for public-private dialogue is an essential component of this strategy. Additionally, the IPR calls for gradually substituting company-specific support with a level playing field that encourages business creation and expansion.<sup>58</sup>In summary, the main challenges to the private sector are:

- a) Business registration – There have been significant efforts to streamline business establishment procedures. However, the efficiency of business registration is still hindered by obstacles.
- b) Access to land for investment - The absence of safety of land titles has been distinguished as one of the principal limitations for all organisations.
- c) Access to credit - Limited financial inclusion involves limited access to credit for private investment
- d) Taxation regime - The tax system is still too complicated, despite previous and ongoing reforms.
- e) Trade - Transparency remains a problem despite improvements in import and export procedures. Supply-side constraints such as a lack of laboratories, reliable and affordable electricity, the state of infrastructure at Banjul Ports, and difficulties in Banjul International Airport in attracting cargo companies, have hampered the export capacity of the country. Also, border administration disputes affect trade.
- f) Labour - Termination provisions often lack clarity and can result in unpredictability for both the employee and the employer. Also, the rights to organise and strike are recognised, although they are limited.
- g) Governance and access to justice - The risks of rent-seeking behaviour are exacerbated by the Government's involvement in business operations and the unpredictability of law enforcement. It is also challenging to gain access to judgments, regulations, and laws.
- h) Local Content Usage - The use of local raw materials as an input is very small relative to the imported raw materials for production.
- i) Infrastructural gap - Reliable and affordable electricity and transport networks, especially feeder roads are problems affecting business operations.

## **Tourism and Culture**

Tourism has and continues to play a crucial role in Gambia's economy over the years, contributing jobs, foreign exchange, and other benefits. The Gambia is now recognised as a destination for mass tourism worldwide, with steady increases in tourist arrivals, except during periods of health or economic situation-related shocks. Since tourists began arriving in 1967, there was overall an almost linear growth pattern with periodic slumps in numbers, due respectively to the global financial meltdown in 2008 and the impact of the Ebola outbreak in West Africa in 2013. There was a marked decrease in arrivals during the COVID-19 pandemic.

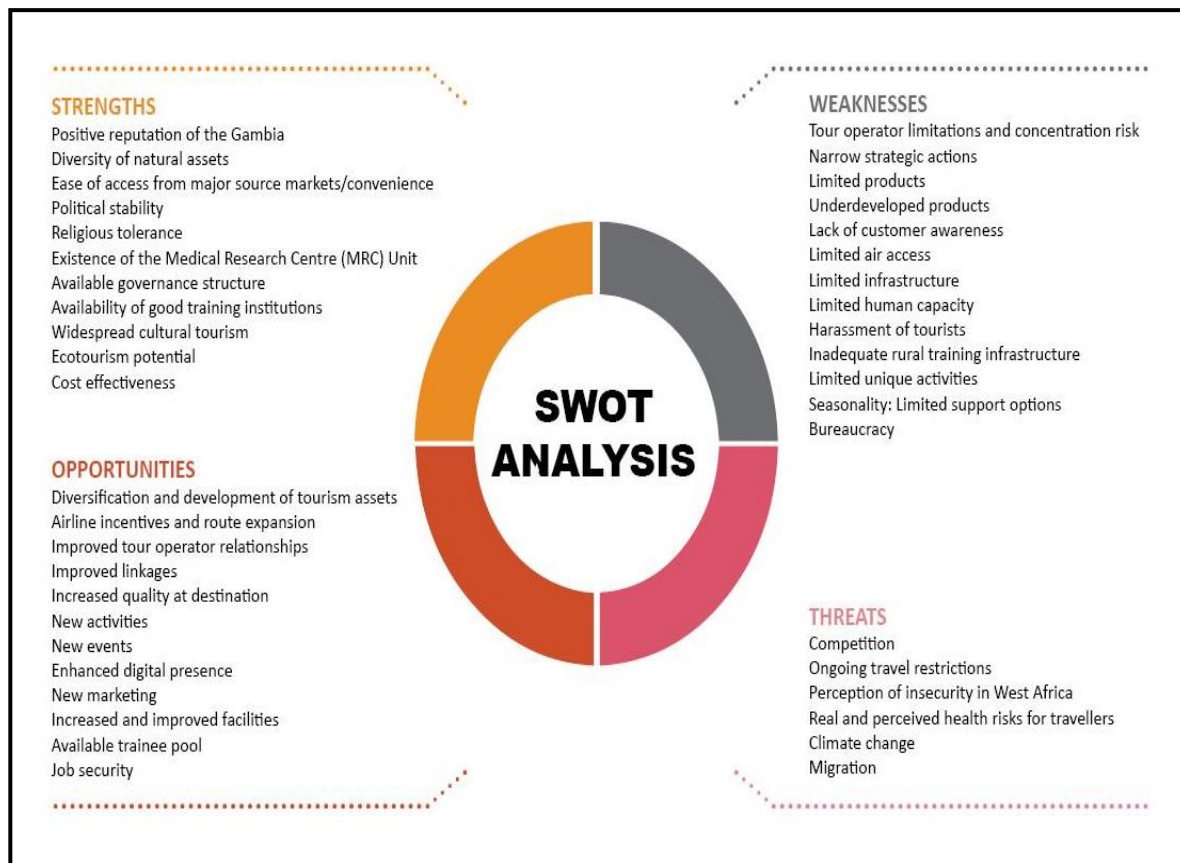
In addition to the increasing number of tourists visiting, with the support of the Government, much has been achieved in the following areas: (i) policy and legislation; (ii) institutional development;

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<sup>58</sup> UNCTAD, Investment Review 2017

(iii) product development and marketing; (iv) financing and investment; (v) improvements in quality and standards. The sector boasts of many strengths and opportunities, however, it also faces many challenges and threats that hinder realising its full potential, as shown by the SWOT analysis of the sector presented in figure 2.

Figure 2: SWOT Analysis of Tourism Sector



### 3. HUMAN CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT

#### Education

Over the years, the education sector has made much progress, especially in terms of access to education at the levels of Early Childhood Development (ECD), basic education and senior secondary levels. The Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education and its partners have put up thousands of classrooms across the country. There has also been an increase in the number of qualified teachers posted at various levels of the basic and secondary education. The Ministry's attention to teacher welfare is shown by the staff quarters it has been building in many schools, especially those in the hard-to-reach areas of the country. Progress made in terms of enrolment and gender parity are depicted in the figures below. However, completion rates at Upper Basic and Senior Secondary School levels have not progressed as much.

Figure 3: GROSS ENROLMENT RATE LBE,UBE & SSE

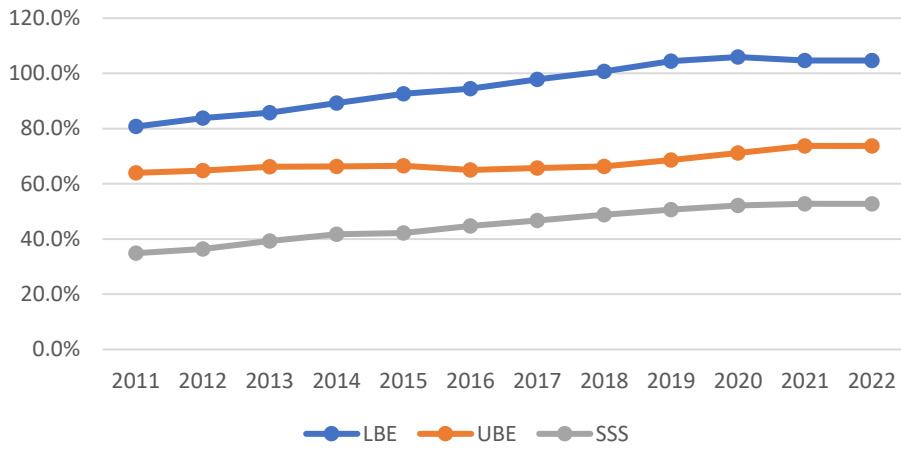
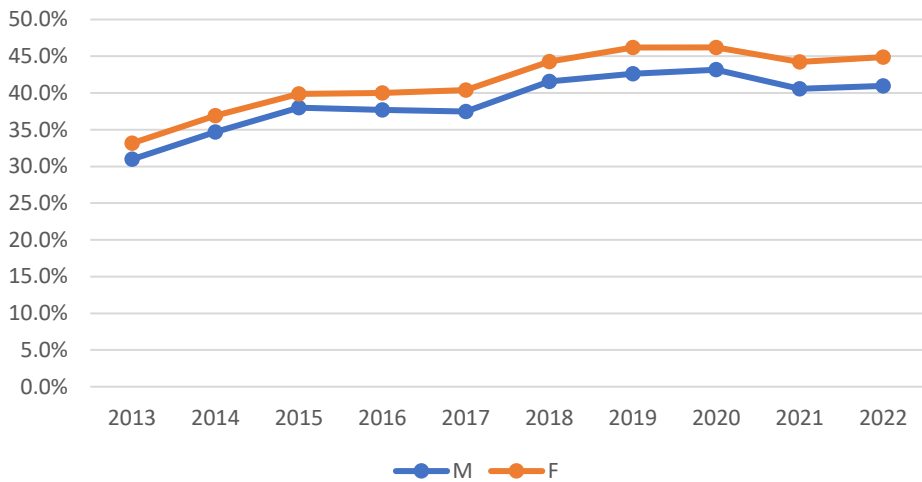
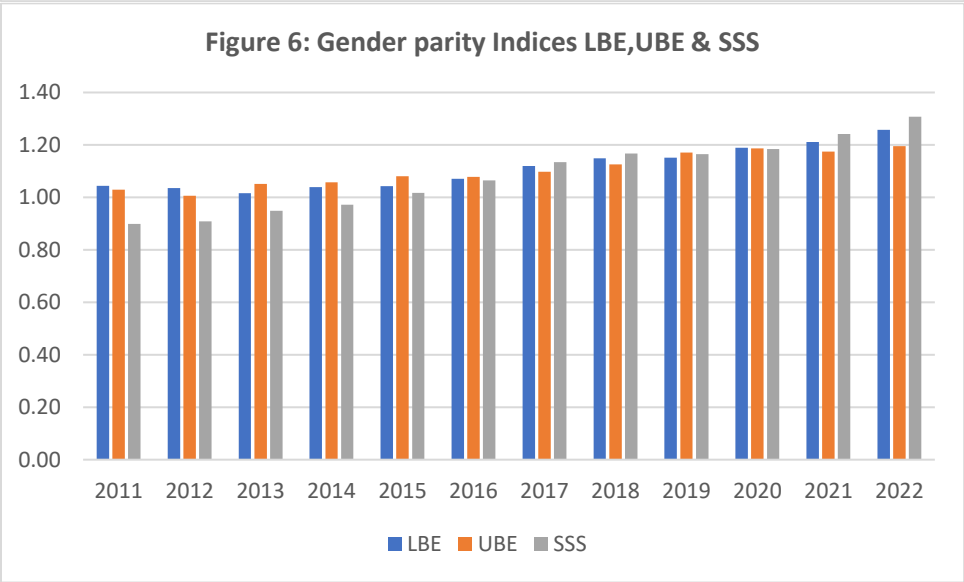
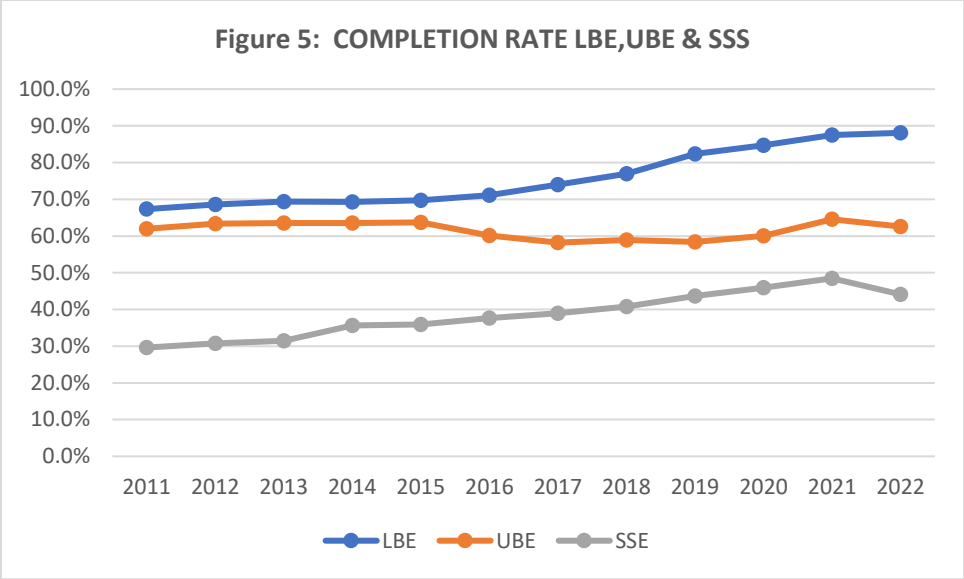


Figure 4: GROSS ENROLMENT IN ECD





At the level of post-secondary education, the Ministry of Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology continues to implement its transformation agenda for the Tertiary and Higher Education sector, as part of the Government’s National Development Plan (NDP 2018-2021). These reforms are geared towards strengthening the sector by improving access to quality and relevant tertiary and higher education for all Gambians. To this end, the Ministry has made great strides.

- a) Infrastructure development: Over 80 per cent of works on the UTG Faraba Banta has been completed and the contractor is due to complete and hand over the first phase to the Ministry by October 2022; the Ministry has laid the foundation for the construction of a University of Applied Science, Engineering and Technology (USET), through the support of the Africa Centres of Excellence (ACE) for Impact Project, which already has enrolled two cohorts of engineering students. Also, the Ministry has rehabilitated Ndemban and Kanilai Skills Centres, which are due to begin operation in the 2022/23 academic year. In addition, rural skills centres – Mansakonko and Julangel have both been refurbished and expanded to increase their intake and enhance quality learning. Further, through the support of KOICA and UNESCO, the



Ministry of Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology has provided teaching and learning materials for GTTI and USET, in the form of computers and 3D-Printers. Several physical facilities have been constructed to cater for teachers in hard-to-reach areas. More schools continue to be built to address access while local transportation is put in place to ensure pupils reach schools with minimal effort. MDI and the Gambia College are also going through transformations towards being degree awarding institutions.

- b) Curriculum development and review: The UTG WASCAL campus has introduced PhD programmes in climate change and education. MoHERST has for the first time developed a comprehensive policy on Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) for the Gambia, aimed at transforming TVET education to make it more relevant to the labour market needs of the country. Also, the Gambia College has phased out the diploma programmes in education, and only offers advanced diploma programmes in education. This is geared towards improving the quality of teachers in schools.
- c) Human Resource Development: Part of its efforts to ensure that needy students are catered for, MoHERST has been able to provide scholarships to over 1400 students at the UTG to attain degrees in various programmes. Many teachers with Higher Teachers Certificate and Advanced Diploma are sponsored to do their professional bachelor programmes. The Ministry through the Africa Centre of Excellence (ACE) project has awarded 14 scholarships to Gambia Technical Training Institute (GTTI) staff to pursue PhD programmes in various disciplines of engineering, to prepare them to serve as future lecturers at the University of Applied Science, Engineering and Technology (USET).
- d) Quality Assurance: The National Accreditation and Quality Assurance Authority continues to conduct training on quality assurance to improve the quality of delivery at tertiary and higher education institutions.

Despite this progress, there have been challenges, especially in terms of quality and relevance of education.

1. Quality: There is poor quality, poor delivery and a resultant underachievement and low mastery of curricula content<sup>59</sup>. Part of this has been demonstrated in the low pass rates at the WASSCE, especially in Maths, English, and Science, giving fewer children opportunities to access university education. University graduates are also found to have limited soft skills. The teachers trained have poor content knowledge of their areas of expertise. At the higher institutions of learning, teachers with the adequate expertise are limited and the teaching methodologies used are often inappropriate and ineffective. Limited laboratories and other learning tools also contribute to this inefficacy.
2. Relevance: Misalignment between skills development and labour market demands as well as the weak linkage between industry and education institutions have been other challenges. There is no national review of the curricula to harmonise and improve them in line with the National Development Plan.
3. The sector has enjoyed expansion and reform in the last five years. Some of these are the establishment of a new University, the plan to transform the MDI and Gambia College to degree awarding institutions, the implementation of Progressive Science Initiative (PSI) and

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<sup>59</sup> The extent to which the curricula is relevant to the Gambian context is another matter for reflection and action.

Progressive Maths Initiative programmes by MoBSE and the decentralisation of the training facilities (the expansion and rehabilitation of TVET centres, building of Gambia College Basse Annex) and perhaps the most striking, the attainment of gender parity at basic and secondary education level (with high completion rates).

4. Despite the huge investment in teacher training, many have low content knowledge, and many of the qualified ones leave the teaching field to seek other higher paying jobs. Teaching continues to be difficult where there are inadequate teaching resources, learning tools, limited technology, and poor learning conditions. With inadequate funding, the *Madrassa* has been affected, there is little chance to expand technology to the schools.

## Health

The Gambia has a three-tier system for delivering public health services (Primary, Secondary and Tertiary)<sup>60</sup>. Despite the high priority given to basic health care services in national strategies, budgetary allocations are skewed towards the tertiary. At the central level, MoH is responsible for setting health policies, regulations, research and mobilizing resources. The regional level comprises seven Regional Health Directorates (RHDs) that are responsible for implementing the policies and programmes of MoH. These RHDs oversee health care delivery and provide stewardship for primary and secondary levels of care in the peripheral health facilities within their regions (National Health Sector Policy 2021-2030).

Primary health care is delivered through the village health services by village health workers who provide promotion and preventive health care. Secondary care is provided through health centres (minor and major), which deliver up to 70 per cent of the essential health care package, including emergency obstetric and neonatal care. Tertiary health care consists of the hospitals (General and District), including the teaching hospital, which is the highest referral level of the system. Hospitals are semi-autonomous and are not supervised by RHDs but are responsible for providing them with patient usage data.

### *Key Trends in Health*

In the Gambia, life expectancy at birth (years) has improved by 62.23 years from 59.2 years in 2000 to 65.5 years in 2019. (WHO Database, 2019).

According to the DHS 2019-20, maternal mortality rate has been significantly reduced from 433/100,000 to 289/100,000 live births; and the country is expected to reduce MMR to 70/100,000 live births by 2030 (Gambia National Health Sector Policy, 2021).

Unfortunately, an increased in childhood mortality has been observed over the period from 2013-2019-20. Infant mortality has increased from 34 per 1000 to 42 per 1000, under-5 mortality has reduced from 54 to 56 per 1000 and neonatal mortality has increased from 22 to 29 per 1000 (GDHS 2019-20). This manifest that gains have not been registered in the reduction of childhood

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<sup>60</sup> *Vision of MoH*: A healthier and more productive population through Universal Health Coverage. Mission: - The Ministry of Health will create an enabling framework for full participation and provide leadership in the integrated delivery of quality, effective and responsive health services and prevention measures to improve the physical, mental and social wellbeing of all people in the Gambia. *Goal of MoH*: To provide quality and affordable health care services for all in the Gambia.

mortality. Although the Gambia has not reached its target in reducing MMR, infant and child mortality, there has been a massive improvement in some indicators. Gains have been registered in reducing neonatal deaths to 29/1,000, with a target of 12/1,000 live births or less.

Tobacco usage, consumption of unhealthy diets, harmful use of alcohol, physical inactivity and indoor air pollution has also decreased drastically in the past five years.

There has been a slight reduction in malaria cases from 2018 (40.6/1000 population) to (30.1/1000 population) in 2021; and inpatient malaria deaths from 60 in 2018 to 42 in 2021 (HMIS Service Statistic Report, 2021).

Furthermore, the sector has significantly reduced the transmission of HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, neglected tropical diseases and other communicable diseases. The national response has been strengthened in terms of emergencies (outbreaks, emerging diseases, and other emergencies). Access to sexual and reproductive healthcare services, including family planning, information, and education, has also improved in the sector. Capacity in climate change early warning, risk reduction and management of national and global health risks has also improved.

## **Nutrition**

The Gambia is faced with the burden of malnutrition, undernutrition, overnutrition and micronutrient malnutrition. Undernutrition continues to be a major public health problem, in especially for children under five years of age. However, declining trends have been observed over the past few years among children under 5 years of age, with stunting reduced from 25 per cent in 2013 to 17.5 per cent in 2019-20; while wasting was reduced from 12 per cent in 2013 to 5.1 per cent in 2019-20, and underweight reduced from 16 per cent in 2013 to 11.6 per cent in 2019-20 (Gambia Demographic and Health Survey, 2019-20). The prevalence of anaemia among women of childbearing age was reported at 44.3 per cent in 2019-20, compared to 60 per cent in 2013 (Gambia Demographic and Health Survey, 2019-20), while the same report showed the proportion of children 0-5 months of age who were exclusively breastfed increased from 47 per cent in 2013 to 53.6 per cent in 2019-20, surpassing the World Health Assembly Target of 50 per cent. The proportion of women of childbearing age classified as overweight and obese increased from 23 per cent in 2013 to 36 per cent in 2019-20. On the other hand, the prevalence of overweight children under 5 years of age has decreased from 2.7 per cent in 2013 to 2.1 per cent in 2019-20 (Gambia Demographic and Health Survey, 2019-20). However, the gains registered in nutrition have been affected by the effects of COVID-19, climate change, and the rise in food and energy prices, largely because of the Russia-Ukraine war. Therefore, investing in proven nutrition (intervention) programmes could help in sustaining the gains.

It was estimated that between 2013 and 2018 a total number of 6,316 child deaths in the Gambia were directly associated with undernutrition (Cost of Hunger Study in Africa-the Gambia Report, 2020). These deaths represent 20.3 percent of all child mortalities for that period. Thus, it is evident that undernutrition significantly exacerbates the rates of death among children and limits the country's capacity to reduce child mortality. The study also found that a total number of 23,429 children repeated grades 1 to 12 in 2018 (representing 4.6 per cent repetition rate in 2018) and

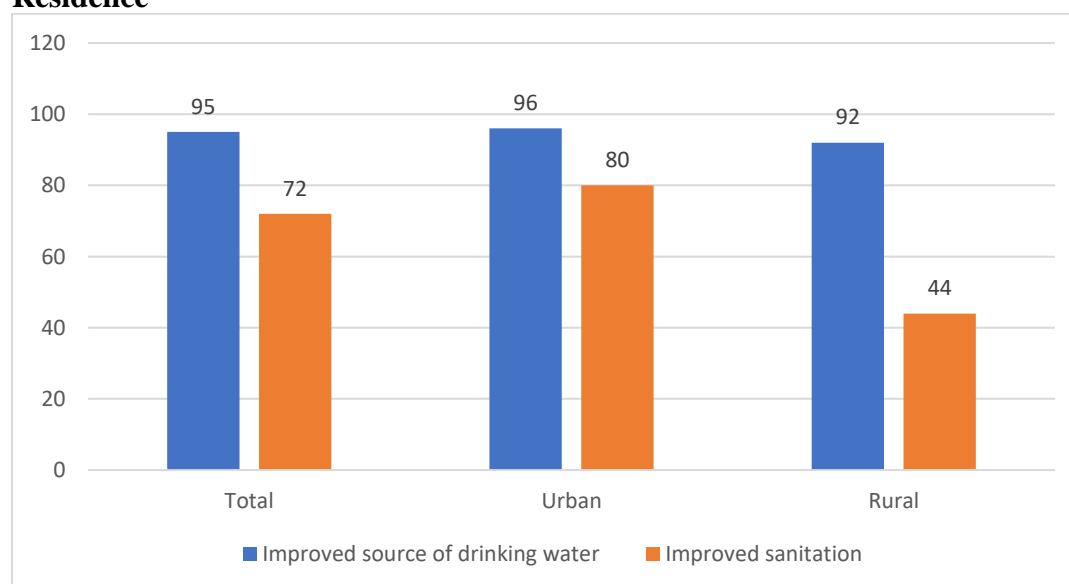
estimated that the country lost the equivalent of about GMD 3.956<sup>61</sup> billion in 2018, which represented 5.1 per cent of GDP due to child undernutrition (COHA, 2020).

## Water and Sanitation

The Government of recognises that safe water, improved sanitation, and hygiene are essential in achieving improvements to people's health and development; and in contributing to the attainment of the targets under SDG 1.4 (to achieve universal access to basic sanitation services) and SDG 6.1 (to achieve universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water for all). The National Sanitation and Hygiene Policy was originally designed in 2011 but approved and adopted by the Government in 2017.

The DHS (2019-20) shows that significant progress has been made in terms of access to safe drinking water with 95 per cent of the population accessing improved water sources; 96 per cent of urban and 92 per cent of rural households. Compared to MICS 2018, the proportion of households with improved water source was 90.4 per cent, and the proportion was highest in the urban areas compared to the rural areas 86.9 per cent. In terms of sanitation, 72 per cent of households have improved sanitation compared to 61.8 per cent (MICS 2018) with significant differences between urban (80%) and rural areas (44%) compared to the 2018 level which was 73.9 per cent for urban and 36.6 per cent for rural areas. In addition, only 0.8 per cent of the population practise open defecation putting the country on track to achieve the global targets by 2030.

**Figure 7: Percentage of households with Improved Source of Water and Sanitation by Residence**



<sup>61</sup> This is based on the estimation of the model on the current population that identified the percentage of that population who were under nourished before the age of 5, and then estimate the associated negative impact experienced by the population in the year of the analysis.

The findings of MICS 2018 shows that only 33.8 per cent of household members with an improved drinking water source located in premises free of E.coli and available when needed in The Gambia have access to safely managed drinking water. The proportion was highest in the urban with 49.4 per cent while it was only 1.9 per cent in the rural area. The proportion of household members with handwashing facility where water and soap are present was 30.9 per cent in MICS 2018 which has increased to 36 per cent in GDHS 2019-20.

Increasing the population's access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation dramatically reduces their susceptibility to water-borne diseases, especially for women and children. Government, in partnership with all stakeholders and UN Agencies, is committed under RF-NDP to supporting the strengthening of institutional capacities for planning, implementing, and monitoring sustainable WASH.

## **Migration**

In the Gambia, migration is both a crucial development opportunity and a challenge. The contribution of the Gambian diaspora to the socio-economic development of the country is significant, with remittances amounting to over US\$ 770 million in 2021 (21% of GDP). But there are significant challenges related to irregular migration, which is resulting in serious economic, political, and diplomatic consequences for the country.

In December 2020, Government registered a milestone with the official launch of the first stand-alone National Migration Policy (NMP) 2020-2030. Cognizant that migration is ever present in the lives of many Gambians, Government, through MoI and with the technical support of partners, demonstrated its commitment to manage migration, address challenges of irregular migration and maximise the benefits of well-managed migration in accordance with the National Migration Policy. Fundamentally, the launch of the policy document underscores the Government's commitment to abide by both national and international principles related to the plight of migrants. The policy also promotes national-level coordination and calls for necessary revisions of migration-related legislation to comply with current global norms on migration management. It is also gender-responsive and stresses the importance of gender mainstreaming throughout the policy document. Specifically, the NMP calls for improved nationwide services for vulnerable female migrants and provides a mechanism for a gender analysis to improve the working conditions of female migrants. Furthermore, the establishment of the National Coordination Mechanism on Migration (NCM) has strengthened and supported the coordination, synergy, and complementarity of various stakeholders in the migration landscape. In addition, Government has taken significant steps through the National Voluntary Review, including the formulation of an updated National Employment Policy and Action Plan (NEAP) 2020-2025, review of the Labour Act of 2007, National Investment Policy 2018-2022, amongst others. In addressing drivers of migration such as climate change, the Government of has formulated the National Climate Change Policy (2016-2025) as part of its efforts to manage risks associated with climate change; with the overall goal of ensuring inclusion of climate change in national planning and budgeting, decision-making and programmes, amongst others.

The Gambia continues to be a country of origin, transit, and destination for migrants. As such the promotion of safe, orderly, and regular migration cannot be overemphasised. While relative

progress is made, a plethora of challenges including financial, human, and structural issues are bottlenecks in the migration landscape. Moreover, improving the technical capacities of stakeholders, strengthened coordination, and increased financial input will be needed to support the implementation of migration programmes which are in the NMP. Capacity building and education trainings should be provided to a broad spectrum of migration actors including policy makers, law enforcement agencies, and labour and social welfare officers. Efforts should be directed at ensuring that the collection and analysis of data is expanded beyond data currently available to identify key migration issues. The other challenges include lack of a Migrant Resource and Response Centre (MRRC) and absence of a reintegration strategy. Government is therefore committed to ensuring that migration is conducted in a safe, orderly, and regular fashion, and will, to that effect, strengthen existing institutions and mechanisms, through mainstreaming migration across all relevant policy domains, as migration is a crosscutting topic.

### **Housing and Urban Planning**

Feedback from the regional and ward level consultations has revealed the issue of affordable housing as a key concern in all regions. Stakeholders complained of high rents, difficulties with real estate companies and rent agents, high cost of building material and land, among other factors. Rent agents go to the extent of demanding a minimum of six months deposit and a consultation fee.

Even though housing and human settlement is considered a fundamental human right, its policy, strategy and regulatory environment in the Gambia is weak, critically inadequate, and in many cases outdated. For instance, despite the dynamism of the actors and activities, the laws and policies that govern the housing industry were mostly developed in the 1980s and 1990s, with the most recent being the Rent Act of 2014. Similarly, there is no Act to govern the emerging real estate agencies despite their growing influence and activities within the housing industry. Thus, public perceptions are increasingly unfavourable towards housing and land governance, thus making the public quite wary of land issues.

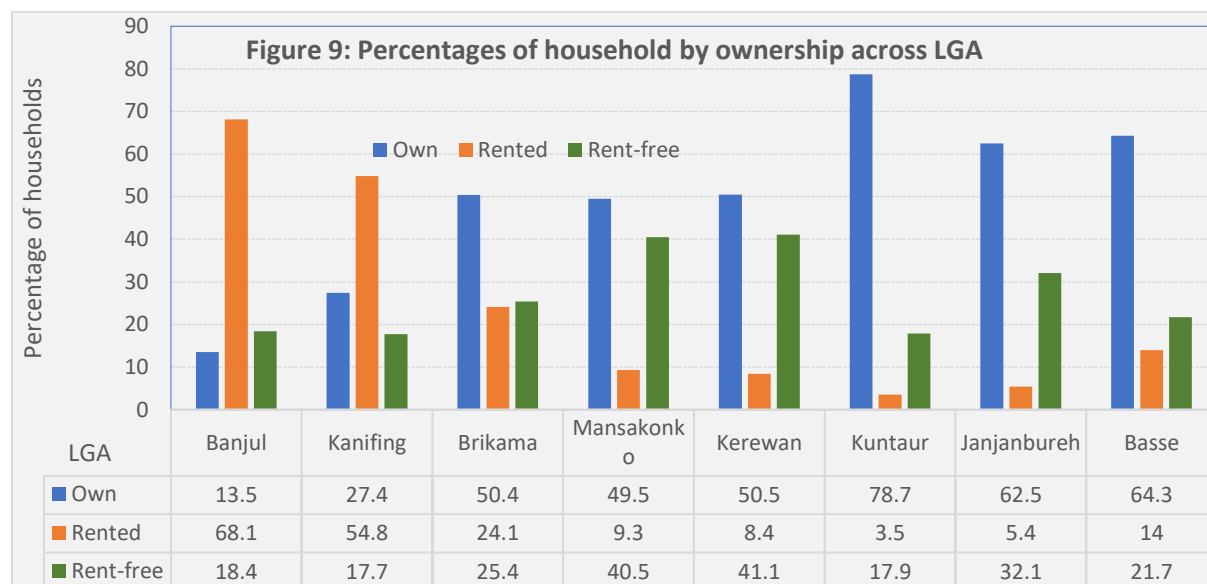
Despite its best intents and purposes, there has not been meaningful Government financial investments in housing. Instead, Government has created an enabling environment to facilitate private sector participation, while positioning SOEs like SSHFC to address the housing needs of the population. Evidently, this strategy has failed to yield its intended outcome. With the growing rural -urban migration trends, a situation has been created where demand for housing has continued to exceed its supply for many decades now.

There is also a strong phenomenon of rapid urbanisation in The Gambia. Sixty-three per cent of the population live in urban areas (UNECA 2022), and this has resulted in a dramatic increase in demand for social services. Sixty-two per cent of the population has access to electricity, and with the potential to achieve universal access by 2030.

Regarding tenure of accommodation, the findings from MICS 2018 shows that most of the households owned their dwellings with about 47 per cent. But it is important to note that the proportion who owned their dwellings was higher in the predominantly rural LGAs (Mansakonko, Kerewan, Kuntaur, Janjanbureh and Basse) and was lowest in Banjul, Kanifing and Brikama. Twenty-eight per cent households were renting their accommodation and the proportion was

highest in Banjul, Kanifing and Brikama. The data also shows that 25.2 per cent of households were occupying their dwellings on rent-free basis. The proportion range from about 18 per cent from Kanifing and Kuntaur to 41.1 per cent in Kerewan to.

An overview of the access to housing is illustrated by the data presented in the figures below from the Gambia Multi-Indicator Cluster Study (MICS) 2018.



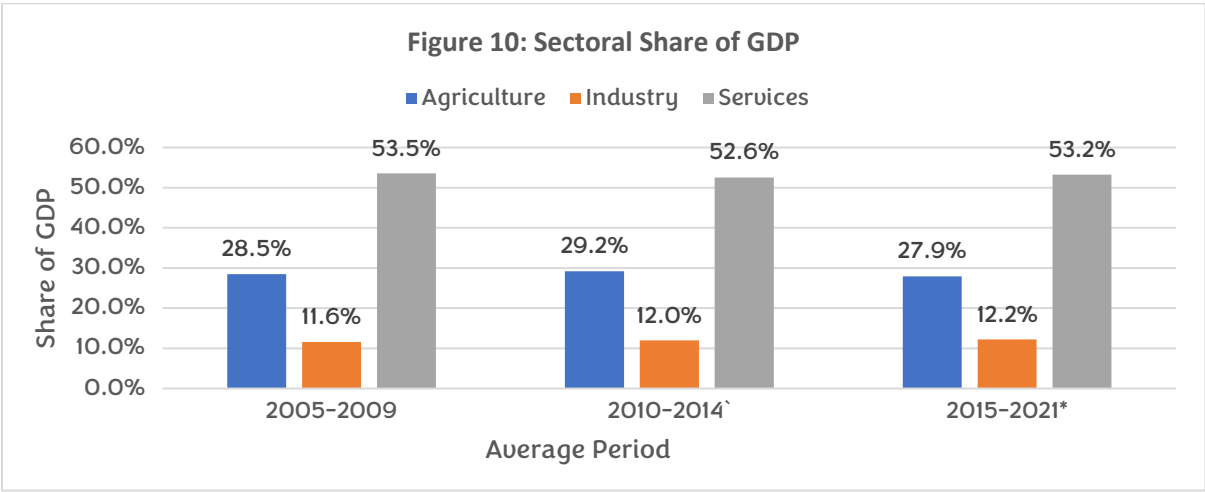
Mortgages and housing loans are also not well developed in the Gambia despite the satisfactory results emerging from the national agenda on financial inclusion. The terms and conditions for mortgage are beyond the reach of the average Gambian. The 2021 Africa Housing Finance yearbook reports that the Home Finance Company of the Gambia (HFC) is the only financial company licensed by the Central Bank of the Gambia to provide mortgage housing finance loans to the public. Further analysis shows that the services offered by the company are no different from those provided by major banks, even though the latter are not allowed to call them mortgages. The HFC has very narrow portfolio, with just 49 mortgages on its books as of July 2021. The total portfolio of approximately GMD40.4 million (US\$790 254) is insignificant when compared to the total banking industry construction finance loan portfolio of approximately GMD2,284,420,000 (US\$44 684 980). Meanwhile, the HFC’s mortgage products generally finance up to 70 per cent of the value of a property payable over a maximum period of 15 years. The company also maintained its mortgage interest rate at 17 per cent up to June 2020, when it reduced the rate to 15 per cent. The transformative potential of this portfolio is thus worthy of attention and policy measures.

Rapid urbanisation and the growing unaffordability of housing in many quarters has also led to the phenomenon of urban informality. Many urbanites are resorting to building informal structures whose fragility exposes them to damage and destruction during seasonal floods. Another environmentally undesirable practice in the urban areas is the illegal and haphazard dumping of waste; a situation that is not helped by the lack of consistent collection services and the absence of laws to enforce proper waste management.

Significant unemployment, high cost of building materials, high cost of land and high cost of borrowing has led to a general situation of housing unaffordability in the Gambia. The combination of lack of access to affordable housing, proper water, sanitation, and hygiene facilities is affecting the socioeconomic wellbeing of the poor segments of society.

**4. Agriculture, Natural Resources, Environment and Climate Change**

Sector reviews, local level and national consultations leading to the formulation of the RF-NDP reveal immense opportunities for increased production and productivity of the ANR sector and improved contribution to economic growth. However, environmental problems such as land degradation, deforestation, salinity in the lowlands, coastal erosion and traditional, unsustainable production systems in the forestry, agriculture, and fisheries industries are recognised as significant threats to the sector. Over the past ten years, the sector's contribution to GDP decreased slightly but surpassed the contribution of industry, indicating the minimal transformation of products of the ANR.



The ANR sector was prioritised in the Gambia's last long-term strategy plan entitled "The Gambia Incorporated Vision 2020" in 1996, aiming to transform the country into a middle-income export-oriented country by 2020. It was also a priority of the recently concluded National Development Plan 2018-2021, which aimed at attaining a *modern, sustainable and market-oriented agriculture, livestock and fisheries sector for increased food and nutrition security, poverty reduction and enhanced economic growth, whilst the promotion of environmental sustainability, climate resilient communities and appropriate land use* were identified as critical enablers.

During this period, the Gambia made significant progress in ensuring that the ANR sector was guided by policies and relevant laws and regulations. These include the Medium-Term Agriculture and Natural Resources Sector Policy Objectives and Strategy (1998-2002), the National Agricultural Development - Horizon 2010, and the National Food Security Outline. The Gambia Environmental Action Plan (GEAP) was prepared as one of the frameworks that integrate all sub-sectors of environmental concerns into the country's socio-economic development objective. Specific to the ANR sector, the ANR Policy 2009 - 2015, was developed and followed by the Gambia National Agricultural Investment Plan (GNAIP) 2011 – 2015. After this, the GoTG



developed a follow-up policy to the 2009 – 2015 ANR Policy, ANR Policy (2017 – 2026). The policy aims to maximise poverty reduction and enhance *food, income, and nutrition securities through the optimal utilisation of the sector's resources, consistent with safeguarding the integrity of the environment*.

The objectives of the 2017 – 2026 ANR Policy are:

- a) To achieve a higher level of production and productivity of primary commodities through rehabilitation, intensification and expansion of ANR production systems and processes
- b) To enhance higher level of expansion and development of the food industry sub-sector
- c) To achieve wider and more effective participation and representation of subsistence farmers/operators, especially women and youths, in modern and commercial production, agribusiness and trade
- d) To achieve balanced development between the ANR sector and other sectors of the economy
- e) To enhance the economic and structural integration of the ANR sector with the rest of the economy, especially the manufacturing, tourism, and hotel industries

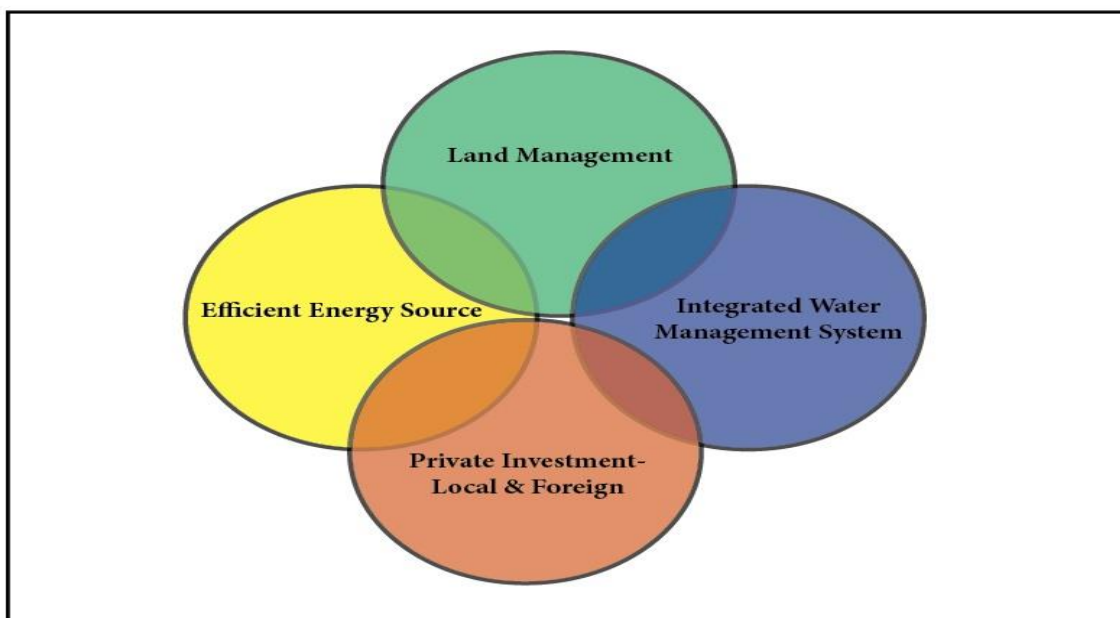
Government developed a supplementary ANR policy in 2017 to address the uncoordinated, fragmented delivery system in the ANR sector that resulted from overlapping mandates of the Agriculture, Fisheries, Forestry, Environment and Water Resources and Lands. The policy aims to ensure balance in managing and utilizing natural resources for sustainable socio-economic development. The Statement of Intent of the supplementary ANR policy is "work with resource-users to balance the ecosystem while enhancing their livelihoods and food security through sustainable natural resource management". And its goal is to increase overall agricultural productivity and production through the judicious utilisation of natural resources on a sustainable basis.

Subsector policies and strategies were also developed for components of the ANR sector- The sector encompasses seven core agencies, namely: National Environment Agency, Departments of Agricultural Services, Fisheries, Forestry, Livestock Services, Parks and Wildlife, and Water Resources for programme implementation.

Despite the policy pronouncements made and sector strategies developed, the implementation rate of sector strategies is low, uncoordinated, and not abided by in several instances. The uncoordinated interventions led to duplication and conflicting development interventions. Formulation of legal frameworks, action plans and tools are required to ensure coordinated approaches of the Ministries of Agriculture, Environment, Fisheries and Water Resources, and Lands and Regional Government to ensure a productive and well-balanced natural resource base. This framework will require a coherent and strategic operational approach to promote sustainable natural resource development, management, and utilisation.

A productive and balanced ANR sector that supports and sustains socio-economic growth is highly dependent on the formulation and delivery of integrated plans and programmes to effectively support four crosscutting areas (1) mobilise private financing, (2) manage the utilisation of water, (3) allocate and utilise land effectively and (4) generation of energy. These were highlighted by all stakeholders during the RF-NDP consultations as critical determinants of success for the ANR sector.

**Figure 11: Integrated Programmes for the ANR Sector**



### **Private Financing**

Development interventions of the ANR sector are currently dependent on public financing, mainly traditional donor funds and government subsidies for the farming community. Approximately below 5 per cent of the lending portfolio of commercial banks support the ANR sector. Foreign direct investment, diaspora funding and local financing are low or non-existent.

Financial instruments and products of the financial sector are unsuitable for the ANR sector. They are short-term in nature and an apparent mismatch for agribusiness and industry. The prevailing interest rates and terms of borrowing are unfavourable. Attempts to utilise such funds to support business operations resulted in bankruptcies and collapse. Establishing an Agricultural Development Bank or similar institution may resolve the situation. Innovative mechanisms to insure, modernise and formalise the local savings and banking schemes that have survived for ages are also worth considering. The upcoming Capital Markets Bill and proposals to establish a capital market, develop green bonds, or introduce long-term savings schemes for all Gambians, present an excellent opportunity for the ANR sector to mobilise foreign and local financing. These varied funding sources may reduce the large Government subsidy bill, which may create distortions in the ANR market.

The production process and products of the ANR sector are characterised as high-risk investments by private financiers, due to minimal knowledge and understanding of the operations of the ANR sector and the absence of tools and approaches to bridge that gap. Financial services also lack a basic knowledge of the ANR sector, and actors in the industry lack financial literacy and an overall understanding of financial operations. Sector ministries and departments are not adequately equipped to engage the private sector and private financiers.

The GoTG has implemented various incentives and subsidies to support agricultural development in the country and made substantial public investments in the sector. In particular, the Gambia Investment and Export Promotion Agency (GIEPA) has five types of incentives to encourage investments in agricultural development. These incentives include exemptions from income tax payment, turnover, and value-added taxes on imported goods, an annual allowance for the depreciation of buildings, a duty waiver on imported capital goods, a reduction of the corporate income tax rate, and an exemption of import or excise duty.<sup>62</sup> Other incentives are GIEPA's support in capacity-building, financial planning and advice, export market research, product design, advertisement, and publicity in foreign markets. In line with the National Development Plan (NDP),<sup>63</sup> which makes the modernisation of agriculture and fisheries a priority. GIEPA has identified investment opportunities in agriculture and fisheries to promote to potential investors in the Gambia. However, there is a need to ensure that sector experts have the necessary level of understanding of both the ANR sector and financing and investment mechanisms. Well-articulated sector investment packages and communication strategies must be developed.

### **Land**

The need to have a balanced approach to using land is evident. The scale and magnitude of land conflicts (Conflict and Development Analysis The Gambia 2019), depletion of natural resources, and adverse effects of climate change – recent floods- are clear indications. There is a need to balance the values, benefits, risks, and trade-offs when planning and managing resource extraction, land use activities and environmental conservation and management. Public and private land needs to be managed through enhanced land use planning.

The sectors under the ANR should actively work in an integrated manner on allocating and enforcing laws and regulations to protect much-needed land resources. The formulation and delivery of the upcoming land policy and land use plan by the GoTG should be done with the participation of all sectors under the ANR. In addition to the stakeholder engagement and approval process, the land development and utilisation process for various components of the ANR should involve all sectors under the ANR.

### **Water**

As stipulated in the ANR policy 2017-2026, the Government formulated an integrated water resources management strategic plan as a framework for water resources development and management. The strategic plan defined seven strategic areas: legal and institutional transformation, water information and knowledge; water resource development and monitoring; climate change implication and monitoring; transboundary water sharing and collaboration; stakeholder awareness and participation; and human resource development.

High demand and need for such resources due to population growth and living standards call for integrated and balanced approaches in the extraction and utilisation of water, exploitation of deep

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<sup>62</sup> UNCTAD 2017 Investment Policy Review - The Gambia  
[https://unctad.org/en/PublicationsLibrary/diaepcb2017d5\\_en.pdf](https://unctad.org/en/PublicationsLibrary/diaepcb2017d5_en.pdf)

<sup>63</sup> NDP

sandstone aquifer water resources, and management of rain and soil resources through watershed management. The need for irrigated lands to boost crop production poses several questions as to its implications on our groundwater reserves. The sporadic digging of boreholes to supply water for household needs poses several health and sanitation issues that require close management and monitoring. The increased need to enhance and expand aquaculture production presents another dimension that requires coordination and effective management. The adverse effects of climate change in the form of runoff and flash floods call for urgent water conservation measures.

## **Energy**

Commercialisation of agriculture production, fishing, and development of the agro-based industry depend a lot on reliability and efficiency of energy supplies to support light industry and irrigation. 85 per cent of the domestic energy is from fuel wood which has degraded our forest cover, whilst contributing to global warming. Despite some seasonal variations (dry and rainy seasons), the country has favourable conditions for solar power and wind power near the coast, which can be sourced as renewable energy for use in the ANR sector. The high cost of energy production results in increased cost of production of goods and services, thus impeding progress in the ANR sector.

Currently, the ANR Working Group is the structure used to cross-fertilise ideas, enhance synergy, and foster coordination of activities under various programmes and projects of the ANR sector. However, its effectiveness is limited by the lack of legal mandate and operational support. Areas of conflict and duplication are not effectively dealt with in a coordinated and balanced manner. There is a need for a functional national intersectoral coordination mechanism to ensure balanced protection and conservation of interventions in a resolute, efficient, effective, and sustainable manner, guided by the principles of the ANR policy framework.

Government in the context of the RF-NDP is committed to fostering intersectoral linkages, enhanced synergy and balanced allocation and utilisation of natural resources across the ANR sector. This will support the implementation of programmes that resolve issues pertaining to private financing, land, water, and energy. Government will revitalise the ANR sector through policy reforms and innovative programmatic interventions.

## **Agriculture**

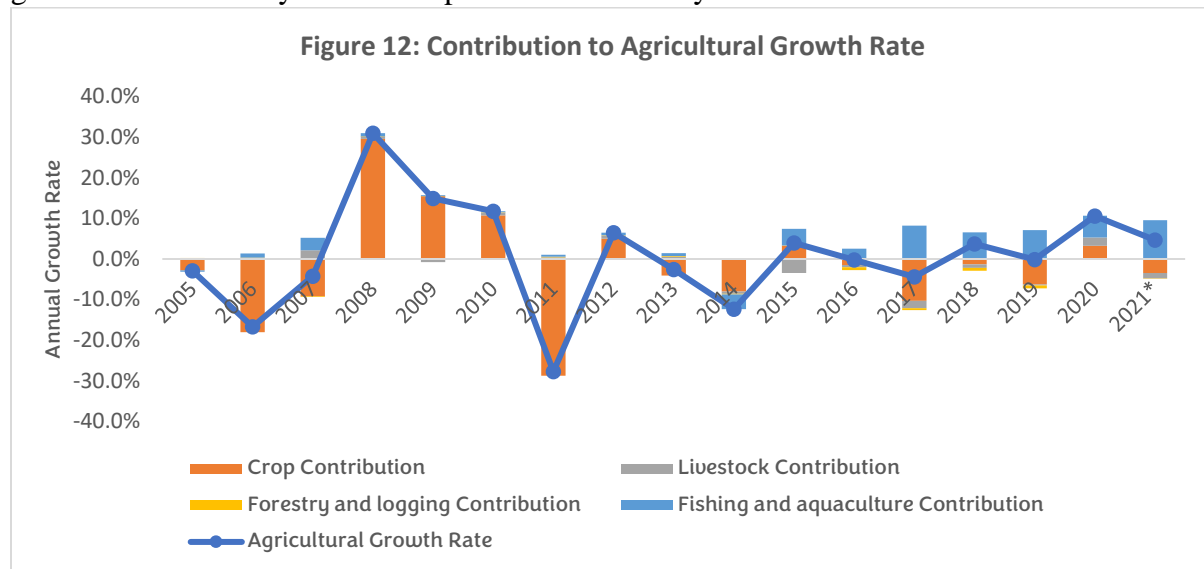
Agriculture in The Gambia is rain-fed and predominantly subsistence and accounting for 28 per cent of GDP. The sector generates about 40 per cent of foreign exchange earnings, provides 75 per cent of household earnings, and employs 9.2 per cent<sup>64</sup> of the population (aged 15-64) excluding subsistence farmers. The Gambia food self-sufficiency ratio is about 50 per cent.

Farmers mainly practice mixed farming, but the activities are highly skewed towards crop production. Crop production contributes about 60 per cent of the 25 per cent of agriculture contribution to GDP (GBoS 2017). Crop production was the key driver of growth in the agriculture

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<sup>64</sup> This figure is for Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing (GLFS, 2018)

sector, but over the past five years, fisheries and aquaculture have been the primary drivers of growth in the industry. Livestock production is mainly traditional.



Along with agriculture, agro-processing is also done mostly at small to medium-scale manufacturing level, which features the processing of groundnut and sesame oil extraction, cereals, fish, vegetables, cotton ginning and animal hides.

The Gambia has a total area of 11,365 km<sup>2</sup> (4388 sq. miles), and about 1,300 km<sup>2</sup> is of water bodies. Its width varies from about 50 km near the mouth of the river to about 24 km inland. Agricultural land is 6,550 km<sup>2</sup>, and the arable land is 588,000 hectares, of which 334,000 are under cultivation. There are 81,000 hectares of irrigable land, of which only 5 per cent are under irrigation with 56 per cent of the total irrigable land in Central River Region and 44 per cent in Upper River Region. Farming is mainly done at individual household level, where land holding ranges between 0.5 to 1.5ha. The demand for land is on the increase, largely due to population growth.

The Gambia's terrain comprises the river's flood plain flanked by its old terraces, which are flat and undulated with altitudes ranging from 0 to 53m. The country's highest point is 174 ft (53m) and the lowest is the Atlantic Ocean (0m). The remainder of Gambia's terrain is a grassy flood plain with Guinean mangroves covering the landscape as you move closer to the coastline.

The Gambia is characterised by a hot wet season (between June and October) and a cooler, dry season (November to May). The rainfall ranges between 600 to 1,200mm per annum. Up to 98 per cent of the annual rainfall is between June and October, with August receiving the most rain, up to 37 per cent of the yearly rainfall, though a shift in rainfall pattern has been experienced lately due to climate change. For instance, in 2022, the initial rains came as early as May. The southwest part of the Gambia receives an estimated 1,200mm per annum, while the north–northeast of the country receives the lowest annual rainfall. The average number of rainy days ranges between 54

days in Banjul and 31 days in Basse Santo Su. The dry season is about 6 to 7 months of no rains and is dominated by dry and dust-laden winds blowing from the northeast, which is from the Sahara Desert, locally known as harmattan. The long dry spell in some lowland areas resulted in the salination of the River Gambia in some lowland areas.

The main crops grown are early millet, groundnut, rice, maize, vegetable, sesame, and cowpeas. Based on the rainfall pattern indicated above, The Gambia has three major agro-ecological zones: the Sahelian, Sudan-Sahelian and Sudan-Guinean.

### *Cereals and main cash crops*

Grain production in The Gambia accounts for 56 per cent of the cultivated land, with rice as the staple food accounting for 25-35 per cent of total cereal production. Groundnut is the main cash crop in farming communities and is the main export commodity, accounting for 32.7 per cent. In comparison, cashew nuts constitute 20.6 per cent of all exports from the Gambia, followed by sesame and cotton. Rice is grown in lowland and riverine areas (rain-fed swamps or under irrigation) for subsistence and cash. Rice is produced to meet household food requirements, and then the excess is sold. Most cereal crops, such as maize, sorghum and millet, are for household consumption with excess sold. Cereals occupy about 274,954 ha or the total arable lands.

The average yield per hectare for most cereals is about 1.5 metric tonnes per hectare, against an estimated potential yield of 3-4 metric tonnes per hectare. Under research conditions, rice yields were estimated at 6 metric tons per hectare. 60 per cent of the national cereal requirements, especially rice, are grown by smallholder farmers in lowland or irrigated farmland. To meet the national demand for staple food, the Gambia imported on average 200,000MT of rice annually between 2018 and 2022. Rice is imported from Asia and the Americas.

Most of the inputs for cereal production, such as seeds, fertilizers, and chemicals, are all imported, and thus putting a heavy markup on the cost of production. Most of the certified seeds used are imported as the Gambia's seed industry is in its infancy. Regarding mechanisation of agriculture, some Field-Based Organisations (FBOs) and individuals use power tillers and other farm implements. However, several farmers still use traditional hand hoes and donkey/horse/ox-drawn tillage equipment. With the increased absence of youth in the farming communities due to rural-urban migration, some farmers have resorted to hiring farm labour or renting out the lands to individuals from neighbouring countries. At the producer level, there is no appropriate infrastructure for grain post-harvest handling and processing. Most grains or oilseeds are harvested, dried on the ground, and then packed into bags for the market. Some FBOs, where possible, are now buying part of the harvest from their members before taking these to bigger markets, processing, or export companies. Due to the high volumes and weight of grains, nuts, and oil seeds, viable means of transportation needs to be explored to ensure that the end products remain cheaper than imports. If landing sites are rehabilitated, transportation through the River Gambia will prove much more affordable than road transport.

Cereal crops are produced at individual levels and then sold to individual buyers, traders or FBO buyers who take part in the harvest for group marketing. The balance is brought to the *lumo* market or local regular market. Traders and bulkers move crops from local markets to national urban markets and supply the SMEs and companies who are into processing or value addition. Small grains and maize are mostly sold in markets across the border, which sometimes offer better prices than local markets. Rice is not exported but sold through *lumo* or regular markets and urban markets for household consumption. It was also noted that in cases where the supply and demand dynamics changed, alternative food flows would also be possible. Usually, these grains are brought back into *lumo* markets and urban markets at higher prices or value added.

### *Livestock*

The livestock subsector is the second largest employer in The Gambia after crops and contributes about 25 per cent of the annual agricultural GDP and over 5 per cent of GDP. Livestock production in the Gambia is predominantly traditional and subsistence, requiring low input. Poultry production is primarily free range, with most of the farmers rearing animals for prestige or as a sign of wealth, a passed-on family inheritance, capital build-up (savings), household food and nutrition security, socio-religious and cultural reasons, draught power, transport, manure, and livelihood safety net. Such animals are only sold when there is a crisis. Livestock production has essentially been a source of livelihood for many rural, peri-urban, and urban Gambians. The subsector enhances the nutritional status of the general populace, especially women and children, by producing nutritious animal products such as eggs, meat, and milk., The livestock population is about 300,000 cattle, 140,000 sheep, and 200,000 goats.

Notwithstanding, the Gambia is a net importer to the tune of GMD659 million of live animals and animal products, which include milk and milk products, eggs, whole poultry birds and cuts, chicken wings and feet, red meat special cuts. This is due to the increasing demand for meat and animal products from within the country, especially the hospitality industry, general consumers, and regional exports. The growing demand does not match the current production levels or the very low ruminant off-take in the country, and the very low supply levels of animal products by the local producers. Hence the importations to cover the gap.

### *Small Ruminants*

There are very few commercial farmers producing small ruminants, though, in recent times, it is on the increase with very few dairy farmers. Dairy production and pen fattening are primarily done in the peri-urban and commercial farming areas in GBA, WCR, LRR, NBR and CRR. These are the most suitable regions for accessibility, moderate temperatures, water availability and good grazing areas. The commercial farming of small ruminants in peri-urban areas is mainly on purchased land; hence livestock numbers are limited by available land and the ability of the farmers to produce supplementary feed and pastures for the semi to the intensive system. The Gambia is considered the most densely populated country based on the total number of livestock against the available surface area. Most small ruminant farmers struggle to have adequate water supply, especially in semi-intensive production systems, as animals are fed in confinement or semi-confinement structures, requiring much water. Feeding in the extensive free-range system depends

on natural forage such as open grazing lands, field crop residues and agro-processing crop by-products. Most smallholder farmers depend on public water systems, which might be a common river flowing by or dammed waters, shallow to deep wells or boreholes. A few farmers, depending on location, have their wells or boreholes. In addition, due to the porous nature of the borders, it is difficult to control pests and diseases from neighbouring countries, as 50 per cent to 80 per cent of the animals are from them. Therefore, the hospitality industry also shies away from such meat products. Most livestock farmers, especially the commercial poultry producers, import their veterinary medicines and vaccines from Senegal and Netherlands.

Structures for processing and packaging are dilapidated. Most weekly *lumo* or local regular markets have no abattoirs but slaughter slabs, which require a lot of attention. At the slaughter slabs, slaughtering is done by butcher apprentices while the abattoir is run by the private company which uses its slaughter equipment. The absence of modern meat cutting equipment and knowledge on meat types as required by hospitality industry, limits the chances of supplying such facilities. Generation of electricity is driven by generators, and this has limited coverage. Therefore, the high cost of power limits the use of cold rooms for meat storage. Reliable, affordable, and comfortable livestock transport is important to reduce animal losses in transit, such as deaths or theft, as well as reduce marketing costs.

### *Poultry*

Most poultry producers are doing backyard poultry, which requires additional land space. Commercial poultry production is on the increase. However, energy is key in livestock production, especially poultry for running hatcheries, brooders, feed mills, pumping water, running abattoir machines and cold storage rooms. Most farmers are off the national grid system, except for a few urban, peri urban and commercial areas. Electricity from the national grid is also expensive and so is the on-farm generator-run systems.

Production of local chicks involves importing fertilized eggs from Brazil and EU under fragile air transportation conditions. There are currently three commercial underutilised hatcheries in the Gambia, namely: Empasse, with a capacity of 150,000, Tee farm- 20,000, and Rhue farm. Supply of day-old chicks is a challenge and poultry producers currently import chicks from Europe or Senegal. There are challenges with transportation losses which are incurred by farmers, hence the need for locally produced chicks. To improve the breeding stock, pure-breed cocks are imported from Senegal - Rhode Island Red, Plymouth Rock, and Light Sussex. The broiler and commercial layer parent stock for Cobb 500 from Brazil and Hyline from France are obtain in Senegal and Europe.

Commercial stock feed in The Gambia is imported from Senegal, Belgium and Netherlands by importers, individual commercial farmers or agro dealers who then retail it. Locally manufactured stock feed, especially for poultry, was said to be of poor quality and irregularly available as the local feed millers had no qualified personnel to handle the feed formulation process.



### *Hatchery Facilities*

There are three key commercial hatcheries in the Gambia that can produce the number of chicks required by the Gambian market. The biggest challenge however has been securing the fertilized eggs from Senegal.

Many small commercial poultry producers sell their birds live or slaughter and dress them in their backyard under doubtful hygiene conditions. The state-of-the-art slaughter facilities at Empasse with capacity to process about 1,500 birds per hour or 15,000 birds per day is currently underutilised or not in use, except for slaughter services provided for outsiders.

### *Vegetables*

The horticulture subsector plays a significant role in meeting national objectives of employment creation, food and nutrition security, poverty reduction and industrial transformation.

Horticulture is one of the key economic growth areas which contribute about 4.2 per cent to GDP, and 24 per cent of agriculture's contribution to GDP. Over 65 per cent of the agricultural labour force is actively engaged in this subsector and has about 88 per cent women participation as evidenced by their very high presence in vegetable production in individual or communal gardens. Men on the other hand, dominate in the production of fruits within the subsector.

Vegetables contribute to agricultural diversification and constitute an important source of on-farm income and food for many rural households; whilst ensuring food and nutrition security, as well as enabling them meet other household basic needs. The vegetable crops grown include tomatoes, onions, cabbage, eggplant, okra, colored and green peppers, lettuce, cucurbits, cucumber, butternut, hot chilies, baby corn, carrots, and fine beans. The bulk of production is carried out by small scale individual producers and individuals in village-based communal gardens, with some of the latter being sponsored mainly by GoTG, donors, UN Agencies and NGOs. Vegetable production offers great potential for the export trade, and as a source of additional foreign exchange earnings, with prolific forward and backward linkages with other sectors.

Land: Women traditionally produce vegetables in small lowland plots. This production system is associated with the cultural norms of land ownership where women generally have no ownership rights to land but are permitted only to grow temporary crops such as vegetables. This means that any attempt by women to plant fruit trees, which are deemed permanent, is seen as another way of securing the right of ownership to the piece of land in question. The size of individual plots within the communal garden depends on the developed land size which varies between 3 ha to 5 ha, and the number of households that participate. The horticulture subsector also has medium-scale producers whose land is about 5 – 20 ha private peri-urban farms, and large-scale growers whose farms are over 100 ha. The individual plots in communal gardens are economically unviable to grow the diverse crops that the women normally try to produce. This reduces the total volumes going to the market and affects consistency of supply.

*Water Sources:* Most of the lowlands small scale individual or communal gardens use ground water as a source of irrigation, which is either dug up wells, lined deep wells or drilled boreholes. Wetlands and riverside plots or farms use shallow wells or river water for irrigation. The biggest cost is pumping water in large scale horticulture farms, as they use electricity or fuelled generators. With support from FAO, WB and IFAD, women community gardens have been modernised with solar pumping systems and labour-saving irrigation water technologies. This has recently boosted horticulture production and increased the income levels of vegetable growers.

*Machinery and Equipment:* Small scale producers rarely use modern farm machinery such as tractors, sprinklers for irrigation, harvesters, etc., as most of their work is done manually, which is laborious. Land preparation and weeding are done using hand hoes. Watering is done by women and girls, mostly using cans or buckets with few using drip irrigation which is costly. Such farm machinery could be used in donor-sponsored communal garden schemes. Large scale horticultural farmers use more modern farming tools, machinery and equipment as their land is big and have sprinkler or drip irrigation systems.

*Seeds and seedlings:* Access to improved seed varieties for vegetables is very limited for small scale producers as they rely on agro dealers found mostly in big urban centres in the country or Senegal either to buy or otherwise, they use local seed from previous harvest. In fruit production, farmers produce seedlings from local seeds. The absence of local seed producing companies or government centres prevents farmers from attaining their potential yields, in both quality and quantity.

*Fertilizers and Chemicals:* Most smallholder farmers in communal gardens or individual gardens are into organic farming, as chemical fertilizer application is not a common practice. In donor funded communal gardens, there is an increase in the application of chemical fertilizers, as these are part of the package given to participating women gardeners. Generally, chemicals and fertilizers are sold at expensive prices by agro dealers who import or are distributors for importers. Such unaffordable prices and irregular availability limit their use among smallholder farmers and in rural areas.

*Labour:* Generally, horticulture production is labor-intensive, compared to other crop production practices. The volume of produce by small-scale producers mostly depends on the available family labour, especially women, communal garden size as well as types and quantities of the variable inputs. In large scale commercial production, labour is hired but mechanisation reduces the demand for labour. To curb labour shortages, the commercial farms have established out-grower schemes where they give all inputs to smallholder farmers to produce to specifications and then buy out the produce.

*Fencing Materials:* Fencing the gardens and orchards is of utmost importance as vegetables easily attract the attention of free-range poultry, goats, and cattle. Due to the high cost of fencing, most communal gardens are being fenced under donor funded projects. An alternative cheaper way needs to be found to protect communal gardens in affordable ways.

## Markets

Once the household food security needs are met, the excess is sold to village traders or local *lumo* markets. On the other hand, commercial producers export and supply domestic markets such as retail supermarkets, hotels, restaurants, and urban regular markets. The report estimates that about 61 per cent of total vegetables produced are marketed soon after harvest and sold at very low prices, especially by the end of the local market day. It also revealed that small-scale producers experienced a 3 per cent loss in the form of perished products, although this might be higher depending on products.

There are no records to indicate the volumes of vegetables produced per crop and season. More formal surveys need to be conducted to know how much is being produced by the Gambian smallholder farmers. Most of the smallholder producers have no access to post-harvest handling facilities such as grading sheds, cleaning and packaging facilities, cold chain storage facilities or agro-processing centres.

There are no big processors except for 1-2 medium size private companies such as GHE and many SMEs who process fruits into juice and jams as well as chilies into hot chili sauce. Food processing training has been conducted but appropriate technology and equipment to enable SMEs to commercially produce quality products without contamination is limited. Transportation is an important factor in the supply chain of horticultural products, given the need to reach the market fresh and in good appearance. Suitable modes of transportation are non-existent in most areas.

During the implementation of the NDP 2018 -2021, the GoTG formulated key policies, strategies and plans to enhance private sector investment, improve provision of agricultural inputs, transform the delivery of research and extension service delivery, standardisation and quality control, livestock management and veterinary services. However, the average contribution of the agriculture sector to GDP decreased slightly from 29 per cent to 27 per cent.

Major crops such as rice and maize registered an average decrease in yield due to the inappropriate technology, sporadic rains, and lack of required inputs. However, commercial farms such as Maruo Farms reported an increase in rice production. Due to unavailability of data, vegetable production could not be assessed during the period under review, but there appears to be an increase in production, based on anecdotal evidence. What is certain is that the import bill for vegetables and post-harvest losses remain high.

Production of poultry, small ruminants, eggs, and milk increased during the period under review, but the import bill for poultry, eggs, and meat and meat products for the hospitality industry remains high.

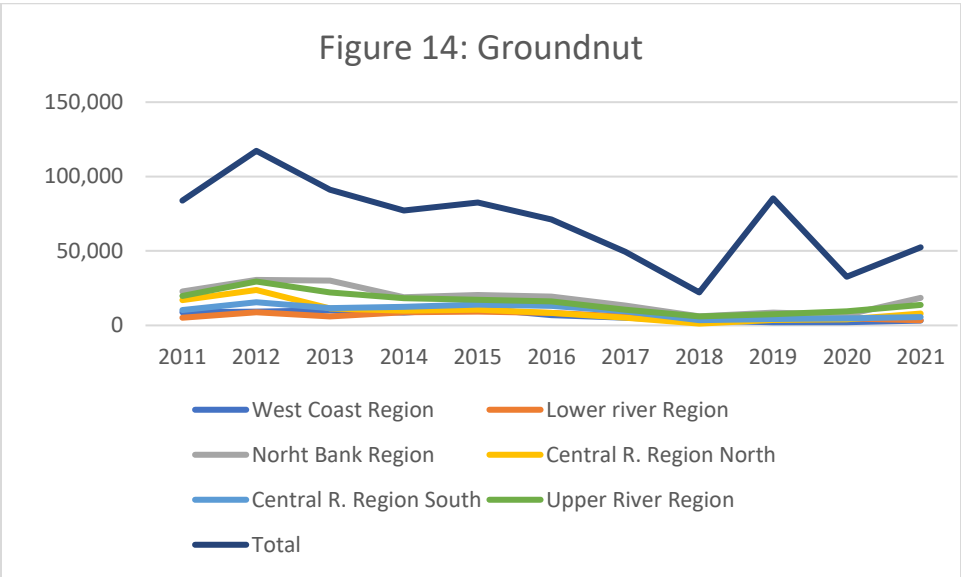
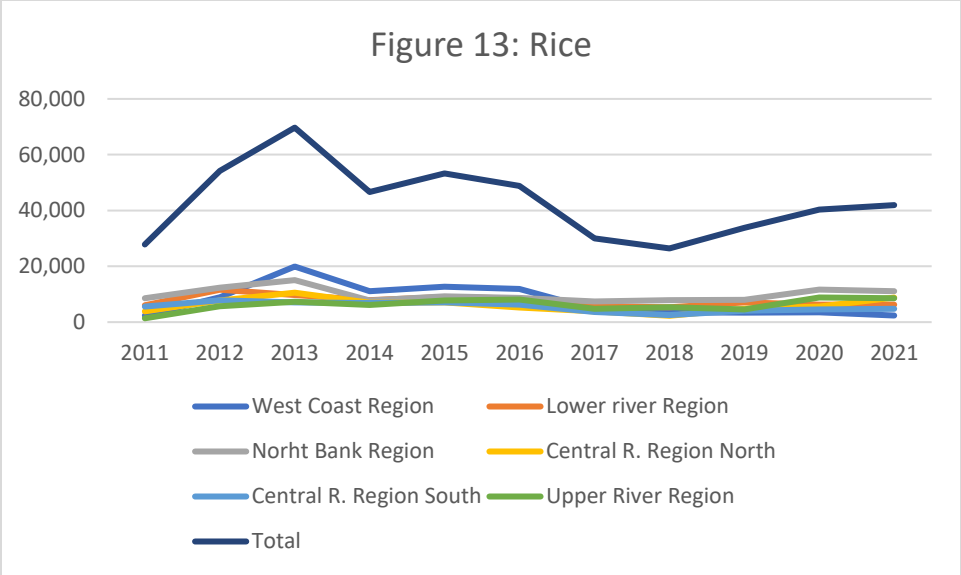
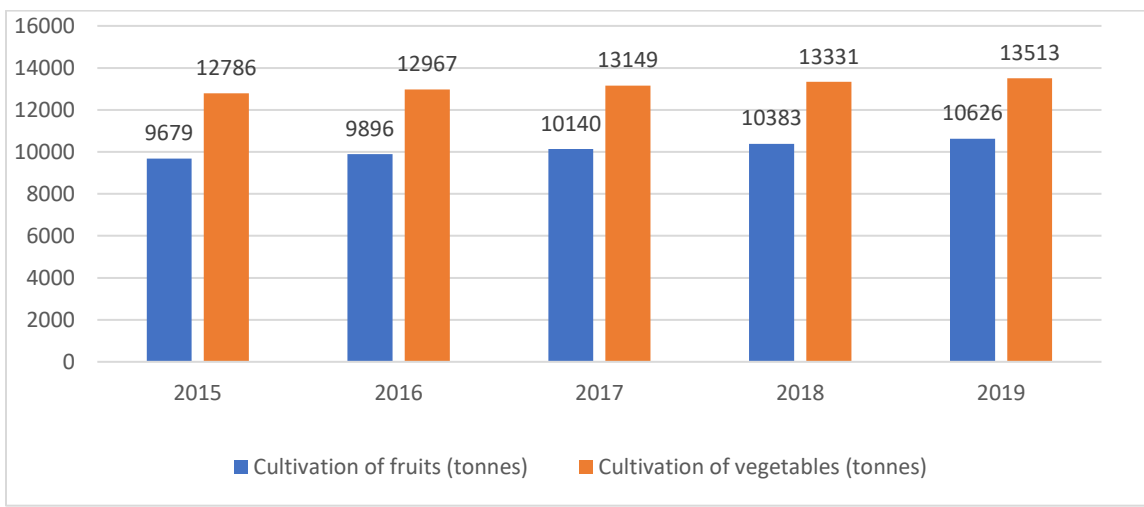
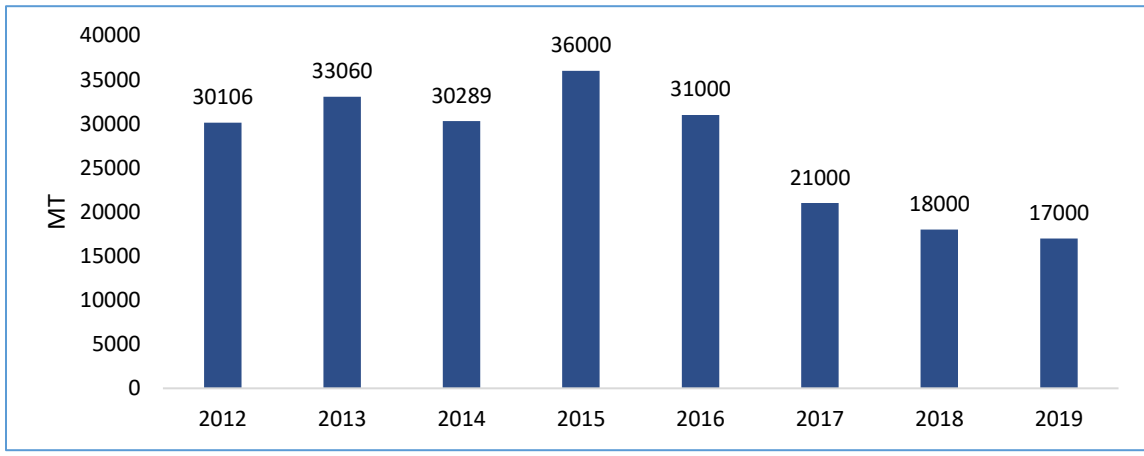
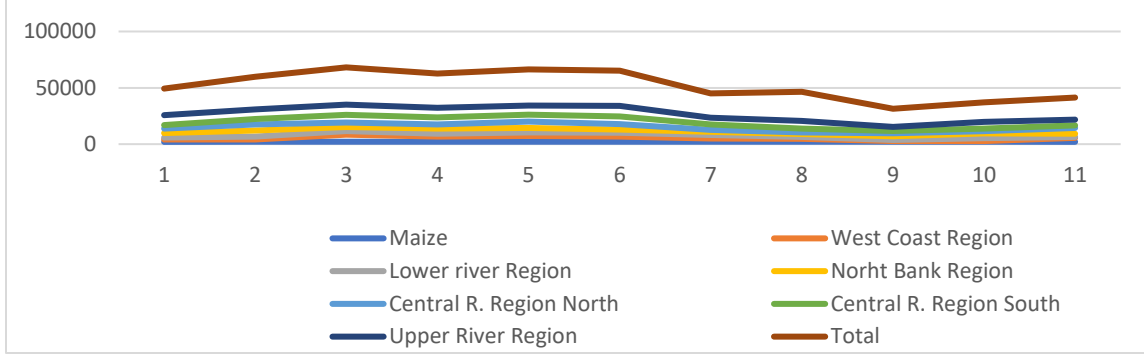


Figure 15: Maize Production



## **Fisheries and aquaculture**

The Gambia is endowed with abundant fisheries resources. Despite its relatively short coastline of about 80 km, The Gambia has diverse fish species in the territorial waters. The fisheries sector contributes approximately 12 per cent to GDP. Over the past five years, fisheries production surpassed crop production as a key driver of growth. The sector is a key foreign exchange earner and contributing to food and nutrition security. Its rational conservation, management and sustainable utilisation can make a substantial socio-economic impact on national development. According to the Department of Fisheries (DoF), the sector provides livelihoods to over 300,000 people in related fishing activities. The sector is categorised into Artisanal, Industrial, Shellfish Fisheries and Aquaculture.

The artisanal sub-sector provides direct employment to 4,234 fishermen, of which 1,230 are head fishermen, and 3,004 are assistant fishermen. This sub-sector contributes 90 per cent to the total national fish consumption. It also supplies about 80 per cent of its output to the industrial fisheries processing plants.

The industrial fishing activities are carried out in coastal and marine waters up to the limits of the Exclusive Economic Zone by industrial fishing vessels, comprising mainly of fishing trawlers targeting mainly pelagic and demersal species with a preference for cephalopods, shrimps and other value species (barracuda, groupers, snappers etc.). The fishing activities are concentrated along the Atlantic coast. The Gambia has no fishing trawlers, but Senegal has; hence they benefit more from the existing bilateral agreement between the two countries. Due to the absence of fish ports or properly developed fish landing sites, except for the limited Banjul Port, these trawlers harvest, process and export catch with minimum supervision or monitoring. However, by rule, each trawler should have an observer on board. The system, although in place, has its strengths and weaknesses, which can lead to some vessels failing to account for their daily catch, thereby distorting production and trade statistics.

The main activities under Shellfish Fisheries include the oysters and cockles harvesting fishery, which is an essential source of livelihood for many women in coastal and brackish waters of the River Gambia, particularly in the Tambi National Park, the Allahein "Bolong" in Kartong, and Bintang in West Coast Region, the north bank villages of Tambana and Bakang, and Kemoto in the Lower River Region. According to the studies conducted by the Department of Fisheries in the 1980s, the West African mangrove oyster has excellent commercial potential. However, a commercialisation strategy needs to be introduced to realise its full potential. Due to conservation needs and purposes, it requires a shift in current harvesting from the wild towards oyster aquaculture, as the oyster stock is already fully exploited/over-exploited to avoid more extensive damage to the fragile mangrove ecosystem. On a small-scale, oysters are currently exported, mainly for family use in the UK and the United States. To reach its full potential, oyster marketing must be intensified to expand the demand.

### *Aquaculture*

Though still in an embryonic stage, aquaculture is deemed to have huge growth potential in the Gambia. It represents an additional source of animal protein, contributing to food security in

reducing pressure on wild stocks (particularly the shrimp and oyster stocks). It can also create new jobs and generate foreign exchange. The country is particularly well positioned for shellfish farming with shrimp exports attracting high prices in Europe.

There is limited infrastructure to support the fish value chain in The Gambia. These include well-equipped fish ports with landing bays, cold chains, ice-making centres, and initial processing and loading facilities; hence the heavy post-harvest handling losses are estimated to be 20-30 per cent. The poor infrastructure leads to substandard handling facilities being used with poor sanitation, thereby affecting the confidence of potential key buyers in the quality of processing and safety for consumption. Hotels and supermarkets resort to importing some seafoods from Senegal or the EU. The absence of dedicated and well-equipped fish ports in has denied the country landing facilities for industrial trawlers, and recognition of the volumes of catch as Gambian. Consultations undertaken during the RF-NDP formulation revealed that most landing sites in The Gambia do not have proper artisanal boat docking bays, jetties/wharves, or deep-water fish ports for bigger vessels. Artisanal boats are offloaded from the ocean to a beach where all transactions are done in the open. About ten poorly equipped, substandard landing sites along the coastline are neither developed nor equipped. Only one dedicated fisheries facility at Banjul Port commenced operations in 2012.

The potential of the fishing industry is also affected by illegal fishing in both marine and riverine waters. Though the Gambia Navy has taken up the responsibility, inadequate operational resources hinder the effective monitoring and control of overexploitation.

### **Environment and Natural Resources Management, Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change**

The Gambia's main environmental concerns include deforestation, desertification, waste management and water pollution, and most recently, the adverse effects of climate change. The Gambia has a forest cover of 480,000 hectares (about 44% of the total land area), but nearly 70 per cent of these forests are degraded. Desertification and land degradation are major environmental issues faced by the Gambia. Anthropogenic factors exacerbated by climate change pose a tremendous threat to desertification due to continued deforestation and forest degradation. The underlying driver is the increasing population pressure and lack of adequate socioeconomic/livelihood opportunities.

Regarding rainfall patterns, National Communication to the UNFCCC indicates that statistically significant trends in historical rainfall indicate decreases in rain during the primary rainy season from July to September. Future projections of potential evapotranspiration suggest likely increasing rates ranging from 2 per cent to 45 per cent. Annual temperatures have risen by approximately 1.0°C since 1960 and are expected to increase between 1.1 and 3.1°C by 2060. Seasonal rainfall variability and changes in the rainfall distribution pattern, high temperatures and drought will negatively affect agricultural production and productivity. Soil salination in lowland areas and decreasing freshwater swamps have specifically affected rice production. The trend of decreasing rainfall is impacting the availability of fodder under the free-range grazing system. This would lead to reduced animal production, as well as human-wildlife conflict.

The expected increasing rise in sea level, due to global warming, and its resulting flooding makes communities and natural habitats in low-lying coastal environments, like we have in The Gambia, particularly vulnerable.

Climate change results in behavioral changes in wild animals and affects specific wildlife habitats. For instance, the habitat suitability for the dwarf crocodile and osprey species may be highly reduced.

According to the long-term climate-neutral development strategy of the Gambia, waste management is becoming a growing concern. Most of the waste generated in the Greater Banjul Area is taken to the Bakoteh dump site, which is in one of the country's most populated areas. There is continuous indiscriminate waste disposal in the area, which is left to rot or regularly burn, creating environmental pollution in the neighboring communities.

The range of hazards and potential disasters that The Gambia is exposed to include drought, flood, oil spillage, windstorms, environmental degradation, fire outbreaks and pandemics. The current disaster management institutional structure was designed in 2008 for initial take off to lay a solid foundation for the proper institutionalisation of disaster management and risk reduction in The Gambia.

Therefore, the current disaster management structure is strategically and technically inadequate for the successful implementation of the policy and its accompanying strategic action plan. There is an urgent need for a qualitative change in the national structure for DRR to make it fit for purpose.

### *Flash Floods*

The Flash Floods that hit The Gambia in 2022 are amongst the worst in nearly half a century. The torrential rain and thunderstorms caused widespread damage and affected large parts of the country, particularly the densely populated Greater Banjul area.





The Flash Floods of July 30th and 31st are the worst to have hit The Gambia in nearly half a century. According to the Department of Water Resources "rainfall quantity recorded during this period was 276 mm at Banjul International Airport, Yundum". Further flooding occurred on 5th and 6th of August and further heavy rainfall is forecast, both on The Gambia and the river basin which extends into Senegal. Ongoing assessments have identified at least 47,104 people that have been directly affected. The suburbs of urban settlements have been the hardest hit, however needs are also very high in rural areas. 7 fatalities have been reported with many more lives at risk. Thus far, a total of 4,186 affected households have been documented around the country. The most affected regions are Kanifing Municipal Council with 1,657 affected households and West Coast Region with 1,483 affected households.

### Summary

#### Affected populations



#### Environment



#### Water, Hygiene and Sanitation



### Evolution of the situation

Increase in People Affected



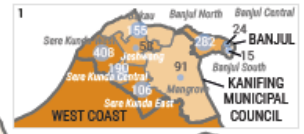
Increase in People Displaced



Number of IDPs by region

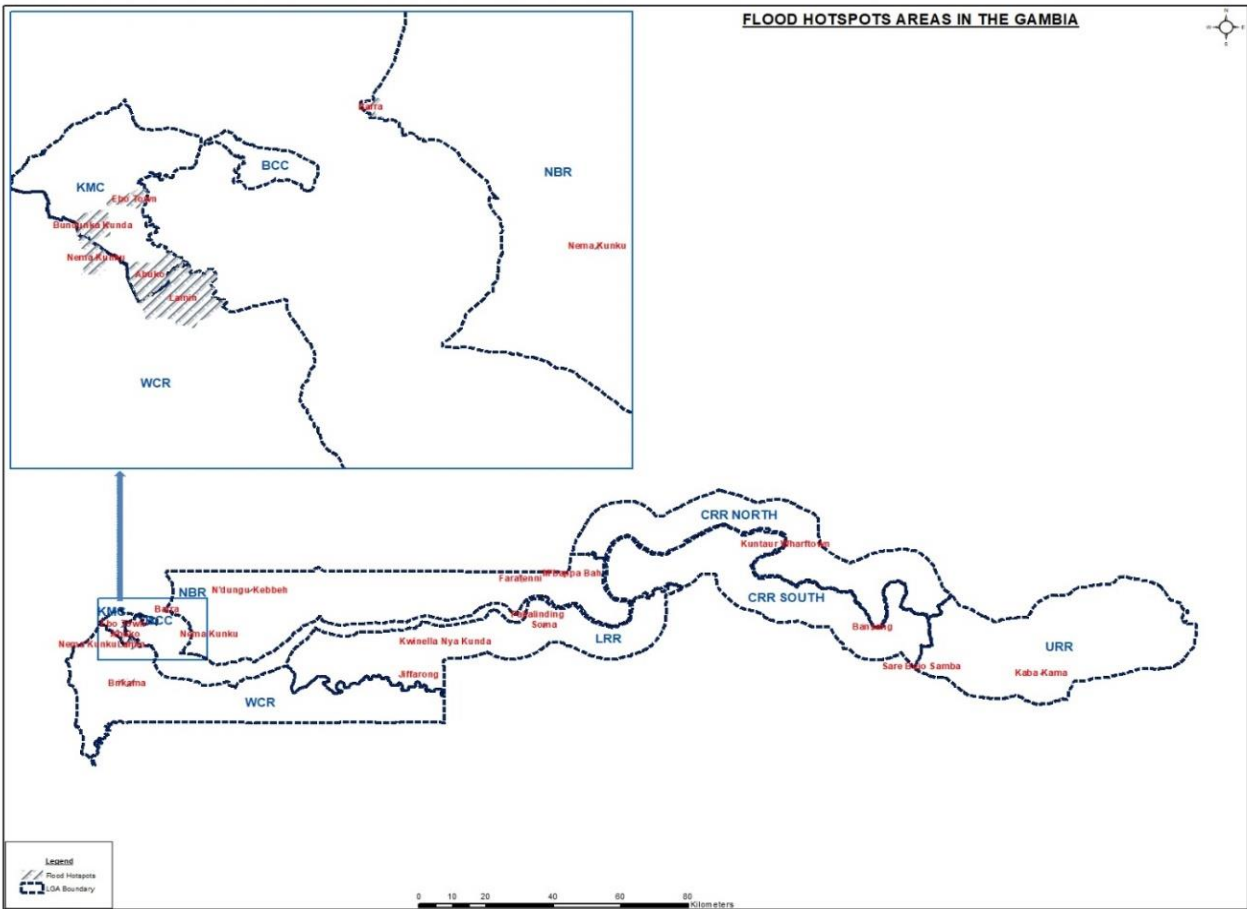


Number of people affected by district



The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.  
 Creation date: 2 September 2022 Sources: OCHA, Gambia NDMA, UNCS, ESRI. Feedback: ocharowca@un.org www.unocha.org www.reliefweb.int

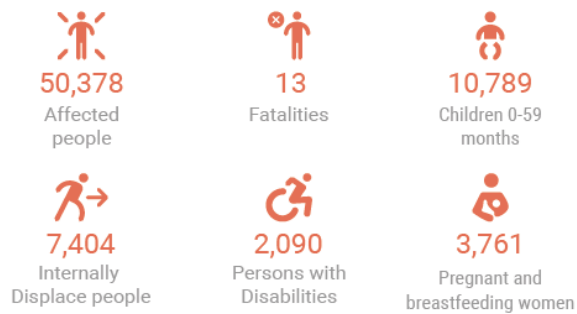
## Flash floods hotspots across The Gambia



- |                       |                            |
|-----------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Barra              | 11. Sarebuja Samba         |
| 2. Bakalar Nema Kunku | 12. Niro Jataba            |
| 3. Farafenni Jamagen  | 13. Brikama Jambarr Sanneh |
| 4. Mbapa Marigeh      | 14. Kombo Lamin            |
| 5. Kuntaur            | 15. Nema Kunku             |
| 6. Bansang            | 16. Abuko Abusy            |

### Summary

#### Affected populations



#### Environment



#### Water, Hygiene and Sanitation



### *Windstorm*

In July 2021, the country experienced her first windstorm surge which significantly affected the entire country; and with North Bank Region (NBR) and West Coast Region (WCR) being the hardest hit. 107,828 people, 6,464 households were directly affected, with 10 lives lost. Critical infrastructure like schools and health facilities were damaged, traffic disrupted, and people sustained injuries.

### *Oil Spillage*

In August 2022 NAWEC Power Stations 1, 2 and 3 at the Brikama Industrial Area had oil discharge/spillage due to overflow of water after the heavy downpour of rains at the end of July. Each of these three (3) stations generate a quantity of used oil daily, and which is kept in large trenches dug behind each of the stations but without concrete linings. The overflow of oil from the trenches found its way to the nearby communities, including Kembujeh Sabu Kunda resulting in ecological damage, soil contamination, surface water contamination, contamination of flora and fauna (rodents, reptiles, vermin, and some microorganisms). The contamination also touched on farms, such as groundnut fields, cassava fields and beans fields, as well as leading to the death of some chicks and ducks.

### *Fire outbreak*

Domestic fire is one the most frequent hazards in the Greater Banjul area and West Coast. Almost all the fire incidents reported to the office are said to have emanated from electrical short circuits and poor wiring.

Despite the frequent occurrence of natural and man-made disasters, there are no national or local level financing mechanisms in place for the management of disaster and support of victims. The absence of early warning systems at the national and community levels hinders the efficient management and prevention of disasters. There is low level of awareness and knowledge among the general population on prevention and management of disasters, hence the increase in man-made disasters.

## **5. Social Development**

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), to which the Gambia fully subscribes, are a strong call to empower and promote the social, economic, and political inclusion of all. In this regard, the concept of Leaving No One Behind (LNOB) is the central transformative promise of the 2030 Agenda and its SDGs. Notwithstanding the tremendous progress made, there is an urgent imperative to address issues of lack of empowerment, social exclusion, discrimination and stigmatisation for women, youth, children, persons with disabilities as well as older persons. Government recognises that removing such barriers is key to unleashing the potential of large segments of society, as well as establishing a just and equitable society. This section reviews the situation regarding women, children, youth, persons with disabilities and older persons.

## Women

The Gambia is signatory to several international and regional protocols that seek to secure the rights of women, including CEDAW. At the national level, the Constitution of The Gambia guarantees women their full rights as citizens in addition to other national legal instruments. The Women's Act domesticates the provisions of CEDAW, further strengthening the rights of women in society. Apart from the strong legislative environment to protect women, the country has registered some other significant milestones in attempts to empower women. Notably, the increase in judicial appointments, the ban on FGM, and expanding the space to highlight women's issues, amongst others. Despite this progress, challenges to women's advancement remain inhibited by deep-rooted societal norms and barriers. These barriers include and are not limited to; access to agricultural land, inadequate financial inclusion, women's overall participation in the workforce which is lower than that of men, sexual and gender-based violence, low participation of women in politics, decision making and peace keeping, and the inadequate mainstreaming of gender in sectoral policies and plans.

*Gender mainstreaming:* At the institutional and sectoral level, there is inadequate gender mainstreaming and gender budgeting. Although in the previous NDP (2018-2021), out of a target of 16 Ministries, 12 managed to mainstream gender in their sectoral policies, an institutional assessment of the MoGCSW, conducted in 2019, revealed that overall, gender mainstreaming capacities were low. For effective gender mainstreaming in sectors, there is need for capacity strengthening especially for programme and planning staff across all MDAs. Training should aim to equip staff with the right skills and tools in gender analysis, gender responsive budgeting, developing gender sensitive indicators; as well as the primordial requirement of fully understanding what gender mainstreaming entails. Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare should collaborate with UTG in this endeavour.

*Women's economic empowerment:* About 57 per cent of women in The Gambia are economically inactive, and on average, earn US \$700 less than men (UNCDF, Power Assessment of Women Economic Empowerment in The Gambia June, 2019). Women are still lagging behind men when it comes to literacy. The proportion was 67 per cent for men and 47 per cent for women (GDHS 2019-20). Women's low participation in the economy, the burden of responsibility posed by unpaid care work and their low level of literacy and skills have exacerbated their poverty.

In addition to the effects of COVID-19 lockdown, the Russia-Ukraine war has triggered increased food prices, fuel for cooking (charcoal and wood), oil and gas prices and high transportation costs. This has had an overall negative impact on entrepreneurial and business activities. It affected women's abilities to access distant markets that offer better prices and conditions for their farm produce, especially in rural areas. Additionally, the increase in prices, coupled with high interest rates has also limited women's capacity to access loans from micro-finance institutions to acquire needed farming inputs. Consequently, this hinders production and productivity for those women involved in horticultural activities, among others. The rising cost of energy on the other hand, has also affected the production of fertilizer, which is often a necessary input for a productive agricultural sector (largely dominated by women). The existence of the Women Enterprise Fund (WEF) has increased women's opportunities of acquiring loans with low-interest rates, coupled with flexible repayment periods, and entrepreneurship skills training.

To overcome financial barriers faced by women, the Government will employ the following measures 1) to close the gender gap by supporting the inclusion of the financially excluded women -the unbanked, and non- digitally literate; 2) support the development of women-led businesses through access to and use of financial services, and access to public procurement; and 3) expand and scale up initiatives such as the WEF. At the more social level, to support women in their reproductive role, the Government and private institutions will take steps to subsidise the cost of care work through ensuring the availability of care facilities in workplaces, e.g., crèches for parents, especially lactating mothers.

*Gender Based Violence:* Gender based violence continues to hamper the growth, health and development of women, children, and girls in The Gambia. The major forms of violence perpetuated are domestic and sexual violence, child marriage, forced marriage, and FGM/C. The MICS (2018) shows that 9.5 per cent of women aged 15-49 married before they were 15 years, while the proportion of women aged 20-24 years who were married before aged 18 was about 26 per cent. The Department Social Welfare continues to receive complaints of young girls being taken out of school and forced into marriage by their families. The FGM/C prevalence rate was 75.7 per cent (MICS 2018).

During the COVID-19 pandemic, 164 cases of sexual abuse were recorded in the “one-stop centres” run by the Network Against Gender-Based Violence (NGBV), representing (23.9%) of the 685 cases of GBV recorded within this same period. At the national level, the NGBV recorded a sharp increase in violence against women which could be attributed to the COVID-19 pandemic and its related factors, especially during the lockdown. The number of cases recorded within GBA rose to 151 cases. Out of them, 116 cases were related to sexual violence against children under 17 years and below; representing 77 per cent of the cases recorded in Kanifing and Brikama. Despite the notable rise in GBV because of COVID-19 lockdown, significant progress was generally being made to address GBV, thanks to massive funding and quick response mechanisms.

Several sensitisation and training activities have been conducted on GBV following the enactment of Sexual Offences Act 2013 and Domestic Violence Act 2013. The multi sectorial National Steering Committee on GBV continues to provide the platform for sharing of best practices in addressing GBV. In collaboration with Paradise Foundation, which is a Civil Society Organisation, a GBV helpline (1313) was installed. MGCSW recently launched a pilot scheme of the Gender Management Information System portal (GMIS), which is linked to police stations for the tracking of cases, as well as generating a data base on GBV in the Gambia. Currently the DSW is providing psychological rehabilitation and reintegration for women victims of GBV. Despite the progress made, work must continue to ensure safer environment for women that is free from GBV. The physical, emotional, and psychological consequences on victims warrant immediate action.

*Participation in peace keeping:* Women’s participation in peacekeeping is gathering momentum. The Gambia was one of the ECOWAS Member States that had developed a National Action Plan on the implementation of the UNSCR 1325 in 2012. Since its adoption in 2000, the resolution calls on peace keeping operations to incorporate a gender perspective in all their work and the maintenance of gender equity at all levels of the entire mission. In line with this obligation, Gambian women security personnel have participated in several peace-keeping missions both in

and outside the region. The current Government is undertaking reforms to strengthen social cohesion and peace among Gambians. These include: the transitional justice reform, constitutional reform, judicial reform, security sector reform, the Truth Reconciliation and Reparation Commission (TRRC) among others. In line with the implementation of the UNSCR 1325, the country has engaged in peace actions such as raising the voices of women and promoting women's leadership and involvement in decision making, participation and representation.

The second-generation National Action Plan will focus on sensitisation on and popularisation of the UNSCR 1325 and related resolutions. It will involve the promotion of peace, targeting decision-makers, various sectors, women and men at all levels, educational and academic institutions, as well as opinion, religious and traditional leaders, and other stakeholders. This is expected to build more awareness and appreciation of the reasons for enabling women's participation in peace keeping and peace building. This will be complemented and supported by collaboration with the West Africa Network for Peace building (WANEP Gambia) in strengthening early warning systems to avoid conflict.

*Women's participation in politics:* Gambian women form 51 per cent of the population and 58 per cent of voters, yet their participation in politics is seen to be on the decline. Women's representation in the National Assembly remained the same between 2016 and 2019. It fell from 10.0 per cent in 2016 (45 male 5 female) to 10.3 per cent in 2019 (52 male 6 female). In 2022, only 3 out of 21 Cabinet Ministers were female, representing about 15.0 percent in the Cabinet. Entrenched cultural beliefs, attitudes and the typical traditional roles women have played in our society tend to generally limit women's ambitions to get into leadership positions. This is too often mirrored in public perceptions that make it difficult for the few women who wish to, for example, serve in local government getting sufficient support from the electorate. The Government of will endeavour to address these key concerns during the RF-NDP.

*Girls' empowerment:* The empowerment of girls, although not often discussed, deserves due attention. A confident girl child grows up to become an empowered woman. Currently, there are some organisations that are running programmes that aim to empower girls; some of which are headed by girls. These include the CSOs Think Young Women and Girls Agenda whose work addresses issues that specifically affect girls' development and advancement in society, such as challenges of FGM/C, early marriage, sexual harassment and safety and security in schools and in the workplace. Other CSOs such as the Forum for African Women' Educationalists (FAWEGAM), in collaboration with MoBSE, have actively promoted girls' education and contributed to the increase in girl's enrolment in lower and upper basic schools. The UNFPA is providing support in Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) with a view to raising their awareness of their reproductive rights. During the RF-NDP Government, in collaboration with development partners, will continue to support girls to amplify their voices and accord them space in the public discourse.

The Government will make adequate provision to ensure the rights of women and girls are fulfilled.

Below is a SWOT analysis of the sector, highlighting the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats:

<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The existence of a separate Ministry in charge of Gender</li> <li>• Availability of laws and policies, legal frameworks</li> <li>• Women issues given rightful place in the RF-NDP</li> <li>• Existence of Women’s Enterprise Fund</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low representation of women at political and other decision-making levels, committees, and board management forums</li> <li>• Inadequate enforcement, implementation and monitoring of laws and policies that call for non-discrimination</li> <li>• Traditional gender roles that limit men and women’s choice of vocation and advancement in society</li> <li>• Harmful traditional practices (Child marriages, FGM/C, etc.)</li> <li>• Low level of functional literacy among women</li> <li>• Limited scholarship packages for women and girls for higher education</li> <li>• Low employment of women in private institutions</li> <li>• Absence of equal balance policies in public and private institutions</li> <li>• Inadequate, and rigorous access to finance (loans and credit) due to issues of collateral</li> <li>• Inadequate access to and ownership of land for women</li> <li>• Low inclusion of women in public procurement and other economic operatives</li> <li>• Limited livelihood skills for women and girls</li> <li>• Inadequate financial resources for women, thus affecting their economic development and participation in politics</li> <li>• Limited sexual and reproductive health rights and services for women</li> <li>• Low representation of women at political and other decision-making levels. For example, the Executive,</li> </ul>

	<p>National Assembly and governance and executive boards</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inadequate enforcement, implementation and monitoring of laws and policies promoting gender equality</li> <li>• Absence of gender issues in the school curriculum</li> <li>• Low capacity to implement gender and women’s empowerment programmes</li> </ul>
<b>Opportunities</b>	<b>Threats</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Existence of viable strategic plans, legal and policy frameworks</li> <li>• Existence of a National Constitution that promotes women’s rights and equality</li> <li>• Section (15) Women’s Act 2010 allows temporary special measures to address gender imbalance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deteriorating security situation</li> <li>• Limited enforcement of the laws to protect women</li> <li>• Non-involvement of men in women’s empowerment issues</li> <li>• Underrepresentation of women in key decision making</li> <li>• Inequality</li> </ul>

## Children

To fulfil its legal obligations towards children, the Gambia is signatory to the Convention on the Rights of the Child which sets out the rights that must be guaranteed for children to develop to their full potential. The Convention firmly sets the focus on the holistic development of the child and presents the child as a human being and a member of a family and community, with rights and responsibilities appropriate to his or her age and stage of development. Despite progress in some areas, many challenges remain in safeguarding the welfare of children in The Gambia.

In The Gambia, a child is regarded as any human being below the age of eighteen. The proportion of the population under 18 years was 51.1 per cent (MICS 2018). Several factors characterise the conditions of children in the Gambia; and of paramount concern is the issue of child poverty. Child poverty is a problem which threatens not only the future of children, but also the national economic and social development objectives of the country. The 2018 MICS data revealed that an estimated 23 percent of children under-five and 22 per cent of children aged 5-17 were living in the poorest households (have limited opportunity right to health, education, food and nutrition, and social protection).<sup>65</sup> Such children have higher vulnerability to be exposed to abuse, violence and exploitation, child marriage, child trafficking, FGM/C, child labour, and being in conflict with the law.<sup>66</sup> Statistics further revealed that 89 per cent of children aged 1-14 years experienced violence (90% for boys and 88 per cent for girls). Since the age of 15, 41 per cent of adolescents have experienced gender-based violence (physical and sexual) (GDHS 2019-2020). They include, but are not limited to severe and pervasive destitution, an accompanying weak extended family system,

<sup>65</sup> UNICEF, Situation Analysis of Children and Adolescent, 2021; The Gambia DHS 2019-20; MICS 6, 2018

<sup>66</sup> The ILO Committee of Experts



poor access to quality education and health, poor access to quality social services, inadequate care and learning opportunity. During the RF-NDP period, attention will be focused on addressing these key interlinked concerns.

*Children's right to food and nutrition:* In The Gambia, the NDP (2018 – 2021) and several national policies and strategies give prominence to reducing child undernutrition. International protocols to which The Gambia is signatory include the SDGs, African Regional Nutrition Strategy (2015-2025) and the Agenda 2063. Although there has been some improvement in the reduction of malnutrition in the country over the past decade, child undernutrition remains a persistent threat to the lives of Gambian children, particularly the under five-year-olds.

According to the Gambia Micronutrient Survey (GMNS) conducted in 2018, stunting among children under five years was 15.7 per cent, down from 24.5 per cent. According to the 2013 Gambia Demographic and Health Survey (GDHS), underweight and wasting were 10.6 per cent and 5.8 per cent down from 16.2 and 11.5 per cent, respectively. Despite this overall progress, child undernutrition remains unacceptably high. Micronutrient deficiencies are also a common public health problem; with notable ones being vitamin A deficiency, iron deficiency anaemia and iodine deficiency. The GDHS (2013) estimated that 73 per cent of children in The Gambia suffered from some level of anaemia, and with 4 per cent being severely anaemic. The prevalence of anaemia was higher among children in rural areas at 78 per cent, compared to 67 per cent in urban areas. Kuntaur was shown as having the highest proportion (85%).

It is well-established that there is a correlation between nutrition and educational aptitude in children. A total number of 23,429 children repeated grades 1 to 12 in 2018 representing 4.6 per cent rate in 2018. Using data on increased risk of repetition among stunted students, the model that was used estimated that out of the 23,429 children of grades 1 to 12 who repeated in 2018, the rate for stunted children was 83 per cent, while the repetition rate for non-stunted was 3.4 per cent (Moro, 2022) Thus, given the proportion of stunted students, the model estimates that 8,106 students or 3.4 per cent of all repetitions in 2018 were associated with stunting. Undernutrition weakens the immune system, stunts physical growth and cognitive development, and can have a lifelong and intergenerational effect on educational attainment and economic potential for individuals, families, and nations. It has been estimated that co-exposure to a range of related factors which have undernutrition as their underlying cause (including a weakened immune system and susceptibility to infectious diseases, such as malaria, diarrhoea, and pneumonia) combined with the effects of growth restriction, micronutrient deficiencies, and sub-optimal breastfeeding, account for 45 per cent of all child deaths in the Gambia (Black et al. 2013).

The consequences of stunting and cognitive development tend to be irreversible after the age of two, with the period from conception until a child's second birthday being the first 1,000 days 'window of opportunity' to prevent irreversible damage. Children who are undernourished in the first two years of life and who put on weight rapidly later in childhood and in adolescence are at high risk of chronic diseases in adulthood.

Major predisposing factors for under nutrition include over-dependence on subsistence rain-fed agriculture, insufficient dietary diversity, as well as high poverty levels, low literacy levels and the high prevalence of malaria, diarrheal diseases, and acute respiratory infections.

To hope to overcome these challenges, there should be increased investment in nutrition, strengthening of multi-sectoral coordination and collaboration mechanism for nutrition, mobilizing resources for enhancement of nutrition, health, and education services through an innovative financing strategy. In this regard, the implementation of the RF-NDP zero hunger strategy and the comprehensive Multi Sectoral Nutrition Action Plan should go a long way in addressing the food and nutrition challenges facing children.

*Safety and security and protection of children's rights:* Children have been prioritised as part of the National Social Protection Programme (NSPP), and some progress has been made in respect of children-specific issues, including birth registration, child discipline (violence against children), child labour, child marriage and FGM/C. Nevertheless, there are indications that a considerable amount of work is still needed to improve the situation of children in The Gambia, as shown in the table below:

**Table 2: Child Protection Data**

Indicator	Ages	Prevalence 2010	Prevalence 2018
Birth registration	Under 5 years	52.5%	57.9%
Child Discipline	1 – 14 years		89.2%
	2 – 14 years	90.3%	
Child labour	5- 17 years	N/A	24.7%
Child marriage	(20-24) before aged 15	7.3%	7.5%
	(20-24) before aged 18	36.4%	25.7%
FGM/C	0-4 years	38.2%	27.3%
	10-14 years	72.3%	68.4%

Source: MICS 2010, 2018

It is important to note that the child discipline question the mother or the caregiver of children in these age groups were asked if a child be discipline if he/she does something wrong but not whether the child was disciplined in actual fact.

### **The following are key protection issues facing children**

**Birth registration:** Currently, 58 per cent (MICS 2018) of children in The Gambia are registered. Although the country is still a long way from achieving its goal of universal birth registration, it has overcome some of the initial obstacles that prevented registration. Despite the increased, there are disparities in the rate of birth registration in the LGAs and by place of residence which are likely to affect the right to identity of children.

**Female Genital Mutilation and Cutting (FGM/C):** A decreased has been observed for children 0-4 years who have undergone FGM/C from 38.2 per cent in 2010 to 27.3 per cent in 2018. Whilst for children aged from 10-14 years a decreased in the practice has also been observed from 72.3 per cent in 2010 to 68.4 per cent in 2018. A slight increase was also noted in the percentage of girls (0-14 years) who underwent circumcision from 42.4 per cent (MICS 2010) to 50.6 per cent (MICS 2018). Despite the existence of a policy against FGM/C, the practice is still a challenge. As underlined by the GDHS (2019-20), women who are circumcised are more likely to believe that FGM/C should be continued than those who are not circumcised (61% and 5% respectively).

They are also more likely, than those who are not, to believe that FGM/C is required by their religion (69% and 11% respectively). This increases the risk of exposing their daughters to FGM/C and helping to perpetuate it in an inter-generational way. This situation underlines the need to consistently run sensitisation and awareness-building programmes, especially in rural communities where women and men (84% and 60%, respectively) are less likely to be aware that FGM/C is illegal, because it is considered as an accepted norm.

**Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA):** Sexual abuse of minors, sexual exploitation of children, and child pornography are on the increase. In exchange for their services, the girls sometimes receive support in the form of tuition, money for medical expenses and gifts. According to Child Protection Alliance (CPA) and End Child Prostitution and Trafficking (ECPAT), children engaged in sex tourism are aged 14-17 years and are mainly girls. However, there is also an increasing number of young boys engaged in sex with male tourists. Generally, children engaged in child sex tourism are predominantly from poor households. This illustrates the link between child protection issues and poverty, and the need for Government to adopt robust and effective programmes to combat poverty and improve the plight of poor families and households. These activities often take place in urban hotels and lodges, and often in plain sight, with no deterrence, because of the use of bribery to make those who should stop such practices look the other way. It is therefore crucial that ways and means be found to reach out to the parents, families, and households from which these children come from to step in. Another form of sexual abuse occurs within more familiar contexts like the school and family set up. There is also a growing concern about online sexual exploitation in The Gambia because children get in contact with potential perpetrators with the support of “operators who make money through recommending dating sites to their customers and even helping them register on those sites”. According to CPA, the grooming of children in sexual exploitation is taking place through the internet and other social media platforms.

The protection gaps faced by migrant children, unaccompanied migrant children, arriving or leaving The Gambia, can expose them to risk of exploitation. Children from The Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Senegal, and Mali who are placed under the responsibility of quranic teachers, often choose to run away, and end up wandering from one unfamiliar place to the other, unprotected, destitute and, therefore, at risk.

### **Child trafficking**

According to the IOM and the National Agency Against Trafficking in Persons (NAATIP), there is a developing trend in child trafficking in The Gambia (related to both sexual and labour migration). Recently, cases of trafficking for sexual purposes were identified and perpetrators imprisoned, while others were recently sentenced by the Children’s Court of Brikama (2021). Victims of trafficking for labour exploitation are girls and boys aged 14 to 16 years, mostly children on the move. ILO Convention 182 defines the worst forms of human exploitation as child labour, child trafficking, the sale of a child, bonded labour, forced labour, use of children in armed conflict, commercial sexual exploitation of children, use of children in the commission of crimes, including trafficking and production of drugs.

## **Forced and Child Marriages**

The deep-rooted and longstanding cultural practice of marrying off girls at an early age has been prohibited in The Gambia since 2016. This was done through an amendment of Sections 2 and 24 of the Children's Act, which expressly set the legal age for marriage at 18 years. In the recent amendment of Section 2, child marriage is defined as a "marriage contracted between a child and an adult or between a child and another child". This amendment states that "a child shall not be capable of contracting a valid marriage and a child marriage is prohibited". Despite this pronouncement in law, child marriage among girls is common, and is more prevalent in rural areas (46.8%) than in the urban area (29.2%). Another indicator of the prevalence of child marriage is the proportion of women aged 15-19 years who are currently into union or marriage. According to the MICS (2018), 17.1 per cent of women aged 15-19 years are currently in a union. This trend is confirmed by the GDHS (2019-20), which highlights a similar prevalence at 18.9 per cent. This situation is alarming because of the devastating physical, psychological, and mental effects on the life and health of these young girls, and not to mention the foregoing of educational and training opportunities and their effect on their future life chances.

## **Child Labour**

Children often run away from situations that they cannot handle or process in their young minds, and they end up being homeless. Child labour refers to work that is mentally, physically, socially, or morally dangerous and harmful to children; and interferes with their schooling by: depriving them of the opportunity to attend school and obliging them to leave school prematurely; or requiring them to attempt to combine school attendance with excessively long and heavy chores. In its most extreme forms, it involves children being enslaved, separated from their families, exposed to all sorts of physical hazards and insalubrity; and/or left to fend for themselves on the streets of large cities, and all of this often at a very young age. Despite an observable declining trend, there is still reason for concern. As evidenced by the MICS (2018), at the national level, child labour is more prevalent among children in adolescence (15-17 years) at 30.6 per cent, early adolescence (12-14) at 33.8 per cent and mid-childhood (5-11) at 20.0 per cent. This child protection issue equally affects both male (24.3%) and female children (25.0%); and is manifested mainly in rural areas, where it is two times higher (38.0%) than in urban areas (17.0%). At the LGA level, child labour is more common in Kerewan (43.6%), Mansakonko (37.07%), Janjanbureh (36.7%), Basse (32.5%) and Kuntaur (31.0) than in Banjul (7.5%), Kanifing (10.5%), and Brikama (18.4%).

## **Marginalised children**

The population of street children is very high in The Gambia, particularly in border towns. Government measures have been adopted to reduce this phenomenon. The authorities take children to transit centres where they try to return them to their families. There are, however, not enough resources to care for all the children, who, moreover, do not want to be taken back to their homes. Many children thus still live and work in the street and remain vulnerable to adults and other children. They are often malnourished and physically abused. Poor families who place their children under the tutelage of a marabout to provide them with Quranic education inadvertently facilitate child trafficking. Many of the children wind up in the streets begging for alms. Children

attending Majalis are mainly boys (76.5%) with a good number of girls (23.5%). They are from all age groups (mid-childhood to adulthood), ranging from less than 10 years to over 24 years. However, most children enrolled in these schools are aged 10-18 years and are mainly Gambian (88.2%), with a few from Senegal (8.4%) (UNICEF & ISRA 2017-2019). Due to their “fragility and vulnerability”, such children are unable to protect themselves from abuse. These include orphan children, children without parental care, children in institutions, children on the move (unaccompanied and separated children), and children with disabilities. More needs to be done to provide these children with shelter and vocational education to make them productive members of society.

### **Children with disabilities**

In The Gambia, children with disabilities are among those who face the most discrimination and lack adequate support. According to some Focused Group participants during the consultations, “children with disabilities were not given much attention in (terms of) social protection. The situation worsened during the COVID-19 pandemic because they were neglected, and no specific interventions were targeting them”. According to MICS 2018, children aged 2- 4 years who are with functional disabilities in at least one domain, represent 5.2 per cent of the population of children (6,146 children). Functional difficulties faced by children are the following: controlling behaviours (2.8%), learning difficulties (1.5%), communication (1%), walking (0.4%), hearing (0.2%) and sight difficulties (0.1%). The limited access to education was one of the issues most highlighted by children during Focus Group Discussions (FGDs). Unanimously they urged the Government to support children with disabilities by providing them with “braille machines, walking aids and mobility devices, as well as hearing aids, for children with learning difficulties”. As acknowledged by the Children’s Act and the Constitution, state institutions have the legal obligation to provide the necessary types of equipment and means for children to access inclusive education.

**Effect of COVID-19 on child protection:** Beyond the socio-economic impact, the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted children and their human rights. During the regional and ward level consultations, as part of the preparation of the RF-NDP, some FGD participants reported increases in child protection issues during the pandemic. This trend was confirmed by children who noted that child marriage was “very rampant but not reported”. They underlined that most especially during the lockdown, a good number of girls got married and cases were not reported. Likewise, gender-based violence directed at children also increased during the lockdown. According to CSOs and NGOs, the most vulnerable children affected by the lockdown and the pandemic were children with disability, and those without parental care (migrant children, children in the streets and children on the move). Child protection issues faced by children include: the lack or limited access to health, education, accommodation, social protection, and social welfare services.

**Systemic issues:** The Gambia has adopted legislative measures in support of its citizens: Domestic Violence Act and the Sexual Offences Act in 2013; the National Legal Aid Act 2008; Trafficking in Persons Act 2007 and its amendment in 2010; Labour Act 2007; and Children’s Act 2005. A child protection system, which includes policies, legislation, strategies, guidelines, M&E framework, has been established and main stakeholders are sufficiently knowledgeable in child protection issues. UNICEF has been the main UN agency behind these achievements through its

country programme focus on child protection, social policy, knowledge, and advocacy. In The Gambia, most of the preventive measures provided by CSOs and Government institutions are related to advocacy (awareness-raising and sensitisation campaigns, education, and training programmes). Such measures have the effect of combating the negative social norms and behaviours which are at the root of the need to offer child protection. Based on their complementary mandates, these institutions are expected to work in collaboration through an integrated approach; but their interventions are often disjointed and fragmented.

The analysis of national policies and strategies underscores their strong child rights-based approach, as recommended by UNICEF. Therefore, the most vulnerable children are targeted by these policies. However, the scope of these policies is limited with respect to child protection, because the six strategic priorities of the National Child Protection Strategy have not been mainstreamed into sectoral policies. Therefore, some key strategic child protection priority issues are not fully addressed by these sectoral policies. This is an area where stronger coordination should be displayed by the MoGCSW to ensure that child protection priorities are integrated into sectoral policies. The analysis of the child protection system also underlines the limited knowledge and involvement of children and communities in policy design and implementation. An effective framework should be established to involve the Child Parliament and community members in a systematic and sustained way.

With regards to the services provided by all the participating institutions, their quality and standard have been found to be inadequate. The keeping of children or juvenile offenders in detention cells at the GPF or GID is considered to be inappropriate. The justice system does not have any dedicated provisions for handling cases involving children. The Rapid Assessment of the child justice system conducted in 2018, has underlined the fact that Children's Courts "suffer from being co-located within the adult courts, making it difficult to protect the identity and privacy of the children going to the court". The above-noted inadequacies in facilities and services are areas where Government efforts can be directed to contribute to the fulfilment of children's right to protection.

Whilst the analysis shows the existence of various preventive and protective measures or interventions, it does not touch on interventions oriented towards the rehabilitation of children victims of abuse and violence, or children in conflict with the law. With respect to the latter, rehabilitation programmes including vocational, educational and life-skills training are lacking. MoGCSW is tasked to improve on its strategic capacity to address the fragmented approach in the implementation of child protection programmes, and weaknesses in the judicial system.

### **Addressing poverty of vulnerable children through social protection measures**

As a country, The Gambia is vulnerable to food insecurity. This situation is due to the decline in agricultural production and low rainfall since 2010, which could be a contributory factor to rural poverty. The dependence on rain-fed agriculture as a source of livelihood makes households susceptible to hunger. The IHS (2020) suggests that more than half of the population (60.2%) do not have enough to meet their food needs. The situation is more acute in the rural areas where 73.2 per cent cannot meet their food needs, compared to the urban area where 49.6 per cent are affected by food insecurity. The largest proportion of households experiencing food insecurity across

regions and are food-poor are found in Kuntaur (79.1%), Kerewan (73.7%), Basse (68.7%), Mansakonko (62.6%), Brikama (61.8 %), and Janjanbureh (60.8%).

Food insecurity affects children living in households where parents are food poor. It is therefore, a source of multiple deficiencies with consequences for the health of women and children, increasing the risk of vulnerability of these populations. Besides, poverty and food insecurity affect conversely households' capacity to access basic health and education services. On a general note, the current trend of extreme poverty impacts negatively on children and their human rights.

To add to the increasing food insecurity, COVID-19 induced child poverty and malnutrition in The Gambia, because of lost earnings due to unemployment and shortages in nation's food supply. Several programmes implemented by NaNA are designed to address hunger and poverty, focusing particularly on pregnant and lactating women and young children in food-insecure areas. NaNA offers cash transfer support to 6,000 of these women until their children reach two years. WFP and NaNA also provide nutritional supplements to children with or at risk of malnutrition.

The current social protection programme is also designed to help reduce growing inequality in The Gambia and create economic opportunities for the poor. Social protection will promote the progressive realisation of human rights, as articulated in the Constitution. The introduction of predictable and long-term social assistance measures targeted at extremely poor households and vulnerable individuals will support them in meeting their daily food requirements and essential needs. By reducing barriers to social services among poor households, social protection measures (e.g., cash stipends, school feeding programmes, health fee waivers) will also contribute to improvements in human development outcomes.

### **Establish affordable high-quality early childhood care facilities especially in rural communities**

As a signatory to the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, The Gambia is obligated to make education available, accessible, acceptable, and adaptable to all children without discrimination. Furthermore, the Constitution guarantees the right to education and prescribes basic education to be compulsory for every child. Provisions guaranteeing the right to education are again repeated in the Children's Amendment Act 2016 and in the Women's Act 2010. In the Gambia, children can spend 3 – 4 years in pre-primary school before they enter primary school at age 7. Although Government encourages and supports pre-primary schooling, it has not made it mandatory despite its well-known foundational benefits. Significant progress in school readiness will be achieved if at least one year of mandatory pre-primary school experience is implemented. In 2018, 79.6 percent of the wealthiest and 63.5 percent of the poorest children attending first grade of primary school had attended pre-school the previous year (MICS, 2018). Pre-school experience is essential for school readiness as it provides opportunity to stimulate cognitive, physical, and socio-emotional development in children.

Notably, a significant challenge in the country's education system relating to ECCD, is the low level of foundational reading and numeracy. Only 12.4 per cent (urban – 15.7% and rural – 6.6%) of children aged 7 – 14 demonstrated foundational reading skills and 8.6 per cent (urban – 12.3% and rural – 2.6%) demonstrated foundational numeracy skills (MICS 2018). The urban-rural

disparity in foundational reading and numeracy is very clear. These are skills that are critical and essential for all future learning experience. The World Bank calls this learning poverty, when a 10-year-old child cannot read a simple text. Although alternate and supplementary radio and TV-based-learning modes can offer crucial learning support, only a few children currently have such access. It is therefore urgent that the education system invests in innovative ICT-based techniques to narrow the learning aptitude gap amongst children, by committing to significantly improve the foundational reading and numeracy skills of children.

The relative education expenditure of households is highest at ECCD level and has increased over the years. This raises major equity and sustainability issues. In 2015, households contributed GMD 77 towards ECCD for every GMD 23 provided by the Government; in 2018, the ratio was 86/14. Increased levels of enrolment in non-public ECD centres may account for this. Children from poorer backgrounds are most affected, with households in the richest quartile spending nearly twice as much as households in the poorest quartile. Food-related expenses occupied a disproportionate share of spending amongst the poorest -54% against 42% on average for other income groups. The requirements for uniform and clothing as well as school-related fees also put further financial pressures on the poorest households.

To ensure that non-governmental actors offer quality and equitable service, MoBSE will need to strengthen its oversight, quality assurance and monitoring mechanism. MoBSE will need sufficient resources and strong co-ordination mechanisms to avoid duplication and inefficiencies. Public money could prioritise disadvantaged groups (including children with disabilities and hard-to-reach areas, leaving non-governmental actors to operate in more affluent areas. MoBSE could assess the financial feasibility of subsidising some or all school-related costs. MoBSE could also subsidise children enrolled in non-public ECCD services that meet minimum quality standards (Early Learning Partnership, 2016), thus promoting enrolment of the poorest and most vulnerable.

### Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats (SWOT analysis)

<p><b>Strengths</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Existence of frameworks, policies, and strategies on children</li> <li>• Existence of international organisations and NGOs offering services to children</li> <li>• Child protection system is in place</li> </ul>	<p><b>Weaknesses</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inadequate recreational centres for children</li> <li>• low child support from families due to poverty</li> <li>• Inadequate access to affordable ECCDs in rural areas</li> <li>• limited community libraries</li> <li>• Fragmented interventions</li> <li>• Cultural and legal restrictions on disciplining children</li> <li>• Inadequate shelter for vulnerable children</li> <li>• Inadequate enforcement of the law for crimes against children such as FGM, early marriage, and child trafficking</li> </ul>
<p><b>Opportunities</b></p>	<p><b>Threats</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mental health</li> </ul>



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children’s court</li> <li>• Shelter for Children</li> <li>• Existence of a Directorate for children’s affairs at the MoGCSW</li> <li>• Existence of a Children’s Parliament</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Homelessness</li> <li>• Environment</li> <li>• Violence</li> <li>• Technology (including social media)</li> <li>• Child abuse</li> <li>• Family financial problems</li> <li>• Bullying</li> </ul>
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**YOUTH**

In The Gambia, the youth (which includes the population between 15-35 years accounts for 37.2 percent of the total population (The Gambia Population and Housing Census, 2013). The pace of youth population growth presents both opportunities and challenges for the Government. The Gambia could benefit from the demographic dividend if the right social and economic policies are in place. The Government, through the Ministry of Youth and Sports, and partners is continuing to support youth through various programmes. However, there is grave concern that youth still have limited access to high-quality education, decent employment, and sexual and reproductive health programmes. Many are leaving school with limited learning outcomes and skills. According to GLFS 2022-23, 45.3 percent of youth are Not in Employment, Education, or Training (NEET) with males at 43.1 per cent, compared to 47.3 per cent for females. Unemployment among the youth stands at 38.6 per cent.

Some participants in the RF-NDP FGDs (including youth) perceived challenges impeding youth development. Reasons advanced include inadequate farms and farming inputs, inadequate availability of skill centres, limited access to services and employment. They further cited the increase in drug abuse, irregular migration (the backway call), low technological transfer, limited access to land, and limited interest in Technical Vocational Education and Technology (TVET) as key bottlenecks affecting youth development and advancement. Despite making up more than half of the population, young people are seen as lacking the skills and experience to engage in political activity and lead positive change in their communities.

It needs to be considered that youth are not a homogenous group and are thus affected differently by the threats they face. The 2022-23 GLFS confirms that female youth are less likely to be employed, in education or training. Girls are dropping out of school due to forced and early marriages and teenage pregnancies, which is also an indication that young women require specific reproductive health services in this regard. Likewise, youth in rural areas are generally more disadvantaged than those who live in urban settings, due to limited access to services and facilities such as the uneven distribution of skills training centres, youth centres and employment opportunities. However, the GLFS (2018) shows that young people living in cities and towns are much more likely to be unemployed than their rural counterparts. This underscores the different nature of urban and rural economies, and in particular, the important role that the agriculture sector plays in absorbing young rural workers.

Additionally, social, and cultural activities have also played an important part in youth development. The Gambia, with its unique cultural heritage and vibrant youth, is poised to make

improvements in arts and culture, and support youth talent and nurture their creativity. In 2017, the Youth Empowerment Project (YEP) was launched to contribute to the economic development of the Gambia by improving the employability of the youth population, especially potential and returning migrants. Under its TEKKI FI project, it has registered impressive successes in many dimensions of development and made significant contributions to arts and culture and the creative economy. It has enabled girls to venture into male dominated fields such as solar panel and satellite installation, refrigeration, and air conditioning. Young aspiring artists in music and dance were awarded the opportunity to make their mark in the entertainment industry. The Government intends to sustain and scale up the TEKKI FI approach based on the lessons learnt. It will also encourage youth volunteerism to open new avenues for youth.

Currently, MoYS is in high gear in its proposition to introduce a national youth service scheme as means to address the gap between leaving school and employment; and provide youth the opportunity to be properly groomed and integrated into the world of work. Volunteering in the past has been closely linked with charity from philanthropic organisations. The Government like to initiate a new vision that is more development-oriented, technical, and professional. Young people in the Gambia are already engaged in different types of volunteering activities. Young Volunteers for the Environment (YVE –The Gambia) is a youth-led non-profit organisation created in 2012 with branches and clubs situated in schools focused on energy and climate change, natural resource management, and youth and eco-citizenship. The Gambia currently is the only country on target to meet the Paris Agreement according to the Nationally Determined Contributions, but again youth and children's voices are often not heard enough. However, YVE-the Gambia is changing this perception by making solid contributions to environment and climate change by providing unique insight into the problems and local solutions that could be implemented.

During this RF-NDP, the Government aims to encourage and strengthen such volunteer programmes; providing them greater privileges and opportunities to contribute to development efforts. The Government believes that volunteer work will instil in youth greater understanding of the world of work, boost their confidence and self-esteem, create a better understanding of citizenship, break with the old attitudes and structures inimical to progress, and permit the establishment of a new work culture more professional and one that is technology and development oriented.

Currently, technology is greatly impacting the life experiences and perspectives of young people, and the development landscape is becoming far more complex as the challenges affect youth in a distinct manner. Youth who are not equipped with the economic, cultural, and social resources necessary to acquire digital practices valued by the knowledge economy, may not be able to participate actively. In the Gambia, gaps in technical and vocational training warrant Government attention. Based on this realisation, the RF-NDP will leverage technology and ensure the inclusion of youth in SDG-induced national development efforts towards the attainment of sustainable economic growth.

## Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities Threats (SWOT Analysis)

Strength	Weakness /key challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Availability of a multiplicity of partners to support Government on youth matters</li> <li>• Existence of youth empowerment programmes to create more job opportunities</li> <li>• Increased funding targeted at youth in business</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Youth inclusion in governance and leadership</li> <li>• Youth unemployment</li> <li>• Inadequate law enforcement of drug control measures</li> <li>• Inadequate youth friendly centres and services</li> <li>• Unavailability of well-equipped testing laboratories (Scientific and Agriculture)</li> <li>• Inadequate youth farms, modern farm tools and machines</li> <li>• Unavailability of a compulsory youth service scheme (senior secondary, tertiary and university)</li> <li>• Inadequate youth agricultural service centres and storage facilities</li> <li>• Inadequate youth skills training centres (TVET)</li> <li>• Unavailability of logistic agencies for youth farm produce transportation</li> <li>• Limited access to land</li> </ul>
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demographic dividend (youthful population)</li> <li>• Existence of decentralised youth structures</li> <li>• Existence of funding mechanism</li> <li>• Existence of technology hubs</li> <li>• Existence of business development programmes for youth</li> <li>• Youth dialogues and inclusion in national discourse</li> <li>• Increased investors interest in youth development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Political instability</li> <li>• Climate change impact</li> </ul>

## Persons with Disabilities (PwDs)

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN-CRPD) was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in December 2006, and came into force in May 2008. The Convention provides the normative framework for work on disability by States Parties, the UN system, and other counterparts.

The overall prevalence of disability in the Gambia according to the 2013 Population and Housing Census is 1.2 per cent, compared to 2.4 per cent in 2003. There was a relatively higher proportion of males with disabilities 1.3 per cent and females 1.2 per cent. The country has not conducted a survey on disability since 1998, hence the unavailability of up-to-date data. Most PwDs in The Gambia, as in most developing countries, are generally found among the poorest people; and have been largely overlooked in the development agenda. However, within the context of the RF-NDP, there are moves towards greater equality and inclusiveness in addressing and ensuring the rights of all, including PwDs.

**Gambia Federation for Disabled (GFD)** was formed by the Disabled Persons Organisations (DPOs) as the platform, voice and coordinating organ for DPOs in The Gambia. Its focus is to strengthen the DPOs and disabled persons in by advocating and lobbying for social change that can result in tangible benefits for its constituency. GFD's approach to disability is from a human rights approach; and the organisation has registered some success in the implementation of its programmes in the past. Support from UNDP for institutional strengthening of the Federation made it possible to reorganise the governance structure and strengthen the secretariat to effectively manage the DPOs and to implement PwD activities. UNDP funding made it possible to organise an Annual General Meeting (AGM), leading to the development of a new PwD Constitution.

**Support from the Department of Social Welfare (DSW):** The largest provider of support is the Disability Care Unit of the DSW. The unit provides rehabilitation and social services i.e., physiotherapy, vocational advice, and counselling services, as well as financial support to members of disabled people's organisations to support livelihood promotion activities. In recent times, there has been huge progress made in the disability sector. The long-awaited Disability Bill was assented to and promulgated into the Disability Act 2022. The Act guarantees PwD their rights in several areas, including employment, transportation, public accommodation, communications, and access to state and local government programmes and services, and prohibits all forms of discrimination against PwDs.

**Drafting of a PwD policy:** Under the purview of MoGCSW a draft PwD policy is in the making. It is an overarching policy that will ensure that all PwDs, who are poor, vulnerable, and marginalised receive adequate economic and social protection, have access to social welfare programmes can help develop and enhance their social functioning. The policy considers *three big roadblocks* to preventing PwDs from participating in society on equal terms with non-disabled peers, and categorises them as follows:

1. Attitudinal barriers (prejudice, discrimination, and stigma)
2. Environmental barriers (access to schools, public facilities, and public transportation)
3. Institutional barriers (excludes or segregates PwDs from employment, legal system, and health service provision)

Provisions to address these roadblocks are highlighted in the policy. With a policy and a legal instrument in place, the rights of PwDs can now be effectively promoted.

Findings from the Regional consultations on the preparation of RF-NDP corroborates this view of the policy. The findings revealed that PwD face a myriad of challenges in communities, and which t require urgent Government action. Most of the participants from the ward consultations saw

PwDs as the most discriminated in the wards and communities. The Constitution of the Gambia stipulates that "disabled persons shall be entitled to protection against exploitation, and protection against discrimination, in particular, as regards access to health services, education and employment" and "in any judicial proceedings in which a disabled person is a party, the procedure shall take his or her condition into account." However, the consultations revealed, amongst other challenges, that PwDs are not adequately represented in decision making, and face major challenges relating to access to buildings and transportation. Also, as women and girls with disability, particularly, continue to face multiple forms of discrimination, the disability community would like to see the maximum protection of their fundamental rights by the Government.

**Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats (SWOT Analysis)**

<p><b>Strengths</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Existence of Persons With Disability Act 2022</li> <li>• Existence of PwD Council</li> <li>• Persons with Disability policy</li> <li>• Existence of Federation for Disabled</li> <li>• Existence of PwD secretariat to coordinate PwD activities</li> <li>• PwD under the ambit of MoGCSW</li> </ul>	<p><b>Weaknesses/challenges</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low income-earning</li> <li>• High cost of living</li> <li>• Limited projects to support PwDs</li> <li>• Limited access to health facilities.</li> <li>• Inadequate livelihood skills</li> <li>• Absence of rural cooperatives or organisations to support PwDs.</li> <li>• Low awareness of the opportunities available for PwDs in rural communities.</li> <li>• Neglect due to stigma and discrimination</li> <li>• Inadequate access to public and private institutions</li> <li>• Lack of up-to-date data on PwDs</li> </ul>
<p><b>Opportunities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PwD Act 2022</li> <li>• Family and community care for PwDs</li> <li>• Existence of diaspora and philanthropic organisations support for PwDs</li> <li>• Existence of social protection schemes</li> </ul>	<p><b>Threats</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>

**Older Persons**

**Older persons as a resource ... older persons needing resources:** Older persons in the Gambia are seen to be playing diverse roles in society. They are an invaluable reservoir of knowledge and can be a source of technical experience and expertise. This is very much the case with the current cohort of well-trained professionals (many of whom left the civil service for international organisations during the Jammeh years) who are now retiring from their international positions and returning to The Gambia. Some of these professionals are being invited back into the system to serve as consultants, trainers and/or Board members. This is a valuable talent pool that now fuels the newly established University of Senior Citizens (USC). In the rural areas, older persons

continue to make important contributions to the socio-economic development of their communities through subsistence farming and micro-level cash crop farming. In addition, they often support the household and the community as caregivers for young children. However, despite their enormous contributions to the development of their communities, they are for the most part marginalised in development planning. The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) in the Gambia recognises the fact that most of them would require support and protection so that they are not left behind.

**The need for better and more disaggregated data:** The living conditions of older persons, their health, disability, and economic security are key concerns worldwide for governments when it comes to ageing. However, there is considerable variance in this problem from country to country and community to community. While in some parts of the world policy makers are grappling with the implications of an ageing population (where the proportion of older persons in the population is increasing), by contrast in developing countries like The Gambia, the growing youthful population continues to put pressure on the government's meagre budgetary resources. In The Gambia, there have been limited focus on older persons which puts them at risk of being left behind. This lack of focus is reflected in the scarcity of data and information when it comes to older persons, as invariably they are simply lumped together in the "over 50" category, with no disaggregated data available. The limited information about older persons that we have today comes either from censuses, or from anecdotal evidence gathered from the work of a few philanthropic organisations. Such evidence does suggest, however, that although older persons make up a relatively small proportion of the total population in the Gambia, their numbers are steadily increasing.

**The breakdown of the traditional systems of caring for older persons:** Providing support for older persons in The Gambia, as in most of the developing world, is seen primarily as a family responsibility, supplemented in some cases by kinship networks and philanthropic organisations. The fact is that with increased modernisation and urbanisation — exacerbated further by the recent socioeconomic transformations brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic and the Russia-Ukraine war - traditional caring and support mechanisms are now seriously strained. Traditional social norms and values that used to emphasise respect and care for older persons are gradually being weakened. This often means that the informal system within families and communities that used to care for older persons can no longer be relied on for support. In the light of these changing developments, it is now clear that the Government (at the level of central government and/or the municipality) will be required to step in to provide ways and means of addressing the needs of older persons. Only in this way can we be sure that older persons are not left behind, as we move towards achieving our SDGs by 2030.

**The health of older persons:** The results of recently concluded consultations on the RF-NDP has helped to bring older persons' challenges and issues at the ward and village levels to the forefront. Focused group participants (including older persons) reported that families do take on support roles; although in some instances, the quality of such support was said to be poor. They felt their poverty stemmed primarily from inadequate support and cited difficulties in mobility and transport. The findings of the field consultations further revealed that their health and wellbeing is characterised by the increasing prevalence of non-communicable diseases, with the most common being: dizziness, high blood pressure, hypertension, diabetes, joint pain, and stomach pain. Despite these ailments, they felt discriminated against in terms of access to health care and health

insurance. In an attempt to give NCDs among older persons due attention, and the need for older persons to know their status with respect to the most wide-spread NCDs; the NHRC in collaboration with GARD (the Gambian Association of Resident Doctors) and Chosen (the Charitable Medical Foundation) have organised free health screenings in Banjul, Serrekunda and Brikama for older persons, particularly older women, to commemorate the International Day of Older Persons.

**Stigmatizing older persons:** Stigma, negative stereotyping and even discrimination with regards to aging exists in Gambian culture. This became even more evident during Jammeh's reign when older persons were the prime targets of his witchcraft hunt. Indeed, in many parts of West Africa if an older woman has red eyes, she is accused of being a witch, which can easily lead to her isolation and/or quick death. During the TRRC hearings a good number of older persons who were accused of being witches narrated their ordeal and explained how stigma and discrimination has followed them since. WHO globally confirms that one in six older persons is subject to elderly abuse, both physical and sexual. Ageing with a Smile has further uncovered cases of abuse of the elderly in the Gambia by family members and caregivers, and by young men who threaten older persons with violence, if they do not meet their request for financial support or refuse to hand over their income to them. Furthermore, lack of information on how to access justice is a key challenge facing older persons; thereby increasing their vulnerability. In addition, the mobility issues they face make it difficult for them to access the courts and fight for their rights. The NHRC urges the country to partner with NGOs that are involved in advocating for the rights of older persons to harmonise efforts for effective human rights-based care and support.

**Ageing with a Smile** is a Community-Based Organisation (CBO) that was founded in 2010 to promote and protect the health and welfare of older persons in the country. The activities of the organisation are delivered by a pool of volunteers, motivated purely by their desire to give back to the society and to older persons. Over the past seven years, Ageing with a Smile has conducted more than 20 free community-based health screening and consultations for older people, with a particular focus on diabetes, hypertension, and eye problems. As part of their activities, they have engaged in improving access to basic health care services for disadvantaged older persons, and in advocating for their rights. However, in the absence of the founder/promoter, the organisation has not been very active over the past year or so. For the most part, the organisation has most recently been focused on awareness-raising activities through panel discussions, radio podcasts and information published in local newspapers. The organisation develops partnerships with other organisations who have the capacity to deliver programme activities that will help further the cause of older persons; and has someone representing older persons on the NHRC's Thematic Group for vulnerable groups.

**Social protection programmes:** The marginalisation of the elderly was noted in the analysis report of the last social protection cash transfer of the World Bank during COVID-19. It shows that the low coverage of interventions via social protection programmes in the regions still needs to be addressed. The previous NDP pillar 4 stressed the development of human capital and social protection, but older persons were left out. Based on the cardinal principle of LNOB, the Government puts issues of older persons squarely in the nation's development agenda in the RF-NDP, to better address their needs. The Government will ensure that suitable social protection programmes are put in place to reduce the poverty rate among older persons.

**AU Protocol:** The success and impact of the foregoing activities will be significantly enhanced by the AU Protocol on the Rights of Older Persons. The protocol enjoins state parties to recognise the rights, duties and freedoms enshrined in the protocol, and undertake to adopt legislative or other measures to give effect to them. The Gambia is yet to ratify the protocol, but the process of ratification has been initiated by the MoGCSW created to give due attention to marginalised groups. The efforts of the Ministry have led to the preparation of a Cabinet Paper (CP) which is to be forwarded to Cabinet for approval, as a first step.

## **Social Protection**

To strengthen resilience at household and individual levels, Government will build upon the existing social protection programme. The National Social Protection Policy 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*.

The Gambia has made significant progress towards reducing poverty in the last decade. With an annual GDP averaging 6 per cent from 2003-2006 (MoFEA, 2011) and a decade-long commitment to its comprehensive poverty reduction strategy, poverty rates increased from 48.6 per cent in 2015/16 to 53.6 per cent in 2020. Extreme poverty remains widespread with nearly 26.3 per cent of the population living on less than US\$2.15 per person per day (IHS, 2020).

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. These natural hazards are likely to become even more commonplace in the future, because of climate change.

People's livelihoods are particularly affected by numerous challenges such as: low returns on labour, inadequate support for entrepreneurship development, and harvest failures. The limited capacity of the formal labour market forces most people to engage in precarious low-paid employment in the informal sector and agricultural work. Young people, in particular, face disadvantages regarding the labour market. Economic, environmental and health risks have translated into high levels of food and nutrition insecurity. The prevalence of malnutrition among children under-5 is 7.2 per cent (GDHS 2019-20) which is on the emergency level of severe malnutrition.

Socially excluded members of the population, including pregnant and lactating mothers, children under five, people living with HIV/AIDS and other chronically ill persons, PwDs, and older persons are at a heightened risk of malnutrition, due to their physical vulnerabilities, greater dependence on care, and constrained access to support networks. High and persistent vulnerability to health shocks is exacerbated by physical and financial limitations that impede access to healthcare, as well as the limited medical insurance system, which is restricted to the small population of formal sector employees.



The Government of The Gambia established the NSPS under the Office of the Vice President to support the National Social Protection Steering Committee (NSPSC) in providing leadership and coordination across the totality of social protection efforts. Since its establishment in 2019, NSPS has helped to provide much needed coordination in the social protection sector in the country. Principally, it has, among others, revitalised NSPSC into an active and authoritative body that is spearheading policy/decision making on social protection issues. In line with the NSPP, the Government is developing the first ever Social Registry System to serve as a common platform for eligibility determination for social protection interventions. A Social Protection Policy (NSPP) 2015-2025 is also in place. The following are key institutions making solid contributions to strengthening the social protection efforts in the country.

#### *Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Welfare*

In line with the National Development Plan (NDP) 2018-2021, the Ministry has developed a Strategic Plan (2021-2025) to guide its operations and achieve its goals. Under the purview of the Ministry, the National Disability Bill was enacted and a draft policy on PwDs is being prepared to protect and enhance the empowerment of PwDs. Furthermore, to address capacity gaps of key Ministries and institutions in social protection, the Ministry through the support of the European Union, conducted a situational analysis and capacity training needs assessment report in 2021 to build the capacity of government officials and NGOs in social protection. In addition, the Ministry has also developed a National Child Protection Strategy 2016-2020 in line with the NDP. Currently the Social Welfare policy is also under review to make it relevant to current realities.

#### *The National Population Commission Secretariat*

In line with its mission, the Secretariat developed a National Population Policy (NPP) in 1992. The policy has gone through several revisions, with the latest in 2021. The policy aims to address and incorporate all population issues into national development planning and policies. Issues relating to food security, poverty alleviation, sexual and reproductive health, youth and adolescents in harnessing the demographic dividend, emerges to be a key priority area of intervention that also has a positive impact on social protection.

#### *The National Nutrition Agency (NaNA)*

NaNA is working with different sectors that are players in social protection, in line with the NSPP. Currently, the Agency is implementing the SSNP together with DCD, DSW and NSPS. The project is supporting the establishment of a Social Registry (SR) and providing cash transfers to 14,700 households, accompanied with Social and Behavioural Change Communication (SBCC). In addition, the Agency works with various UN agencies in The Gambia and supports implementation of social protection interventions.

#### *Social Security and Housing Finance Corporation (SSHFC)*

The SSHFC Act has made it mandatory for every employer to register all the employees in the organisation. An employer who defaults in registration or payment of remittance to SSHFC breaches the Act and may be subjected to pay penalty and interest without any cost on the employee. The SSHFC has a Pension Scheme to which the employer contributes with monthly deduction from the employee's salary. The concept of the Provident Fund and Pension scheme is

to protect a worker from loss of income in old age when he/she has retired and is no longer able to work. This effectively, grants workers in formal employment social protection.

*The Department of Labor is a specialised Department*

The core mandate of the Department is to achieve social justice, industrial peace, and harmony at the workplace. The Department of Labor includes the Provident Fund and Industrial Injuries Compensation Fund (IICF) in their routine inspections, and any employer found wanting is advised to register his/her employees with SSHFC and will go further to report such cases to Social Security for their action. The Department has in place a Strategic Plan (2021-2025).

*The National Disaster Management Agency (NDMA)*

The NDMA was established by an Act of Parliament in 2008 and mandated to coordinate disaster/emergency issues in the Gambia with a strategy and policy framework. The Agency has decentralised structures at regional/municipal, district, and village levels in the seven administrative regions. The Agency developed the following strategies - National Early Warning Strategy (2021-2026), National Disaster Preparedness and Response Plan (2019-2030), Disaster Risk Assessment Strategy (2017) and National Response Strategy for COVID-19 (2020-2021).

*The Gambia Federation of Disabled (GFD)*

GFD is the recognised institution or body that advocates for the protection of rights of persons with disabilities (PwDs) in The Gambia. The Federation engages in consultations for the protection of the rights and promotion of inclusion and equal participation for PwDs. The work of the Federation made it possible for the Government to assent to the Disability Bill of 2020. The Federation, as the umbrella body mandated for the empowerment of PwDs, has facilitated many livelihoods skills training and provision of relief services during COVID-19 to its affiliated members.

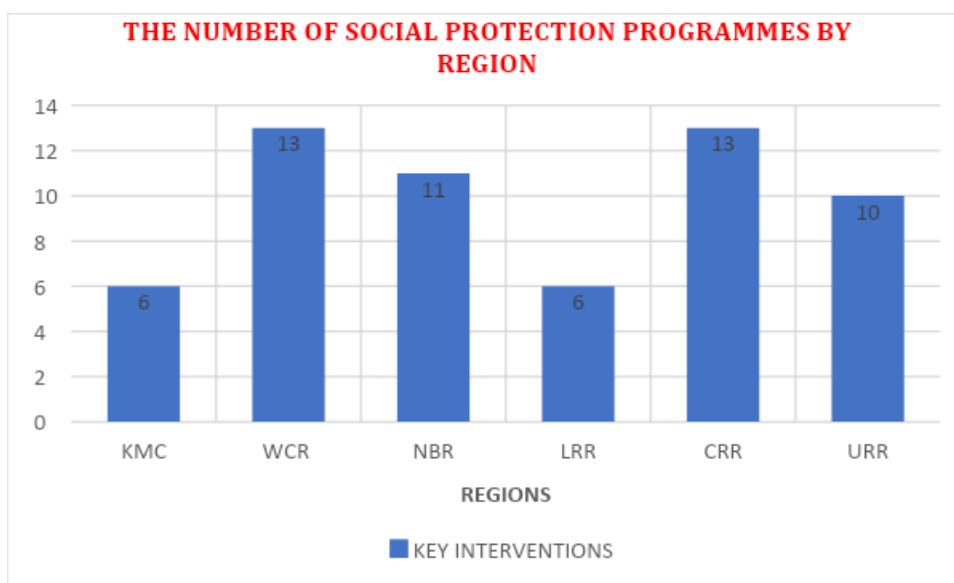
***Establish and strengthen a social protection secretariat for leadership and coordination and develop an integrated Management Information System***

During the last NDP, the Government set up a National Social protection Steering Committee (NSPSC) under the Policy Analysis Unit (PAU) of the Office of The President. The Committee serves as a platform to promote networking, coordination, and the harmonisation of social protection programming. Its specific tasks include guidance on the development of a National Social Protection Strategy, action plan and legislation. The global financial and economic crisis has pushed social protection to the top of today's development agenda. Government is now shifting attention towards social protection reform, leading to the creation of MoGCSW to develop and implement interrelated policies, strategies, and programmes to address social protection challenges. The Government is also moving towards the development of an integrated Management Information System (MIS) for better coordination of social protection programmes.

***Design, implement and expand social safety nets i.e., cash and in-kind transfers, public works, minimum wage, with effective and efficient targeting including during disaster emergencies and food price shocks***

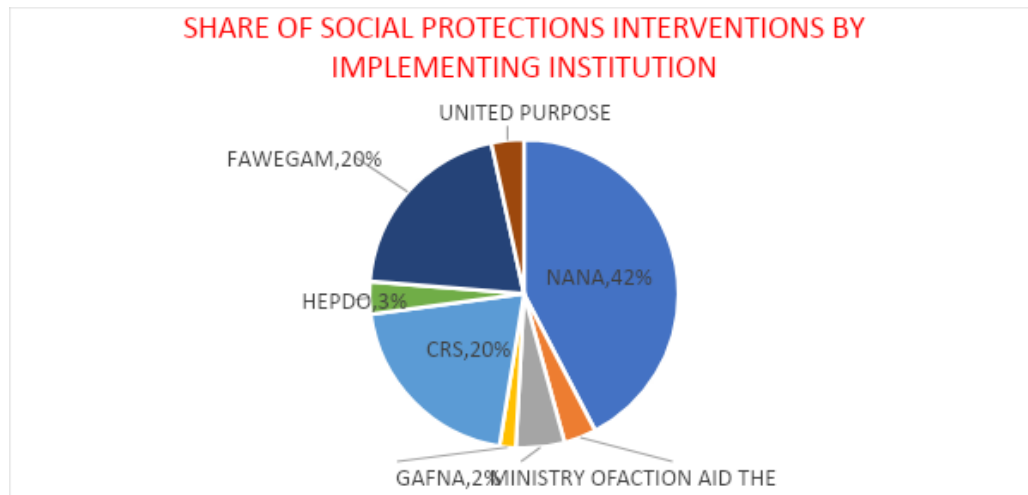
Government is also supporting essential social safety nets in the various flagship programmes and strategic social protection interventions. Through the family strengthening programmes, Government is providing safety nets to address vulnerabilities through: a) Building Resilience through Social Transfer (BReST) programme, to enhance resilience and improve the nutritional status of lactating women and children aged less than 24 months b) provision of life and livelihood support for income generating activities through cash transfers, among other safety nets programmes c) an integrated approach to school meals for improved nutrition and a guaranteed market (safety net) for children and small holder farmers; and d) scholarships and school fee waivers for children from very poor and vulnerable families. Given the fragmented and diverse scholarship schemes in operation, involving state and non-state actors, there is need to address the lack of coordination and proper monitoring of the sponsorship of needy children.

The diagram below shows the number of social protection programmes in The Gambia by region. The diagram reveals that there are more interventions in CRR (22%) and WCR (22%) with a total of 13 intervention programmes in each region, while NBR is (19%) the second highest with 11 interventions, closely followed by URR (17%) with 10 interventions, and KMC (10%) and LRR (10%) with 6 interventions each. This comes to a total of 59 programmes in the country. The Gambia.



Source: Mapping matrix of social programmes.

The figure below shows the share of social protection interventions by Implementing Partners (IP) across the country. NaNA is implementing 42 per cent of the share of the interventions, the Catholic Relief Services (CRS) and the Forum for African Women Educationalists Gambia Chapter (FAWEGAM) 20 per cent each, MoGCSW with 5 per cent, Health Promotion and Development Organisation (HePDO) and ActionAid International The Gambia 4 per cent each, United Purpose 3 per cent, and Gambia Food and Nutrition Association (GAFNA), 2 per cent.



In The Gambia, climate-related disasters such as droughts and floods are the most frequent natural disasters, exacting a heavy toll on the people and the economy. They work against the gains made in aid programmes and threaten to undermine the resilience of poorer communities and households to absorb loss and recover from disaster impacts. The Government, in partnership with key development stakeholders, is implementing various approaches to manage risks and enhance the resilience of people in the face of shocks and stresses. The most common approaches include, but are not limited to, food and nutrition security, sustainable livelihoods, disaster risk reduction, climate change adaptation, and social protection approaches. The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP), Global Agriculture and Food Security Project (GAFSP) is aiming to reinforce food security and nutrition, and increase the incomes of 170,000 vulnerable people, including farmers, food processors, community members and school children. IFAD’s strategy in the Gambia is to contribute to the reduction of poverty, food insecurity, vulnerability, and youth unemployment in rural communities. Particular attention is paid to gender, nutrition, and climate change activities, as well as focus on agriculture and rural development to open on-and off-farm employment opportunities for young people, women, and men. Rural communities are living the dramatic effects of both the timing and the changing pattern of seasonal rains.

The adverse effects of climate change are already with us and will continue to increase in the future at a pace and scale much higher than formerly thought. Climate change acts as a multiplier of existing threats to food & nutrition security. Such degradation impacts more vulnerable people such as children, breastfeeding mothers, pregnant women, and the elderly. The Government of The Gambia will continue to work in partnership with development partners to scale up existing projects, and sustain gains already made through social protection measures.

The following are major challenges of the social protection programme in The Gambia:

### **Main Challenges**

- Social assistance schemes are generally short-term and emergency oriented
- Predictable, long-term cash transfers targeting the extreme poor are lacking

- Social transfers generally have extremely limited reach and the size of transfers are inadequate for the attainment of basic needs
- 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 program 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
- 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, PwD, PLHIV) is inadequate and sporadic
- Migrants, refugee families, single parents, widows, and child-headed households rarely feature in social protection programming
- Projects rarely take into account the social risks and vulnerabilities, lifecycle vulnerabilities and/or specific needs of groups
- There are considerable challenges in programme implementation, including a 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
- There is a 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 recognised central coordinating institution for social protection.
- There is no integrated Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) system
- There is a lack of systematic data 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)
- 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, workspace, 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

## **6. Energy, Infrastructure and Digital Connectivity**

Energy, infrastructure (transport – land, sea, and air) and mineral resources can be key drivers of economic transformation. In recent times, much progress has been made in expanding energy access, digital connectivity and building the transport infrastructure of the country. This notwithstanding, and as outlined below, much needs to be done to ensure that The Gambia benefits from modern and transformative infrastructure to boost energy access, enhance logistics and mobility and enhance the competitiveness of the Gambian economy.

### **Energy**

The Gambia, over the years, has made significant investments in the energy sector, which is exemplified by the Government securing substantial donor funding support for the implementation of the following energy development initiatives: The Gambia Electricity Restoration and Modernisation Project (GERMP), co-funded by World Bank and European Union; the Electricity Expansion Project (EEP), funded by India Exim Bank; The Gambia Electricity Access Project (GEAP), funded by African Development Bank (AfDB); and the ECOWAS Regional Electricity Access Project, funded by the World Bank, and implemented by NAWEC. All these projects are mainly geared toward improving and expanding the national Transmission and Distribution (T&D) network systems.

However, the power supply sector has been experiencing several problems in meeting the nation's electricity demand. The major issues in the current power crisis include inadequate capacity in all segments of the value chain to meet the demand, the high technical and commercial losses in the power sector and the high electricity tariffs (one of the highest in the World) for all categories of consumers. Although the availability of generating plants is satisfactory, inadequacy of capacity, low network accessibility and reliability rates, and limited distribution network capacity have resulted in a high frequency of power outages. Low total power system losses and tariff optimisation are key to attaining sub-regional competitiveness in electricity energy supply. NAWEC, currently under the purview of MoPE, should meet the needs of up to 350,000 households, but due to the limitations highlighted above, the current (2021) electricity coverage is estimated at 60 per cent nation-wide, in relation to the 80 per cent universal access target by 2025. Thus, for the electricity sector to play its rightful role in national development, it is imperative that private sector investment complements public sector efforts, and the prerequisites for this type of intervention include a review of the existing institutional framework, legal and regulatory provisions, and participation in sub-regional and regional energy-related initiatives.

NAWEC is currently served by thermal power stations that mainly run on heavy fuel oil in the GBA, and diesel power stations in the provincial towns and clusters they serve. Its demand deficit is compensated for through private power contracts from Karpower, and regional power supplies from OMVG and Senegal. While imports are critical to meeting the short-term electricity needs, a more home-based and long-term sustainable energy resource such as biofuels/bioenergy should be encouraged by Government.

The electricity sub-sector saw Gambia's first IPP, Gampower, exit with the decommissioning of its 8.5MW power plant. Gambia Electrical Company (GEC) entered the sector with a power plant

of Deutz generators (HFO), with an installed capacity of 25.6 Mega Watts. A renewable energy actor, GamWind, recently entered the sector as an Independent Power Producer (IPP) with about 1.0MW installed wind turbine capacity. There are two other power stations in service in the GBA: Brikama Power Station (I) IPP and Brikama Power Station (II). The total installed capacity (including provinces) is about 100MW.

The National Energy Policy (2014-2018), although out of scope, provides the framework for efficient utilisation and management of the Gambia's energy resources and related services. The policy provides for energy planning, increased generation, transmission, and distribution of electricity and production of renewable energy sources. It also provides for contingency energy supplies, adequate investment for the development and maintenance of energy infrastructure, as well as ensuring the availability of critical data and information required for energy demand analysis.

The Government has recognised the high costs of electricity generation through fossil fuels and the attendant environmental implications. It is also cognisant of the widespread and extensive use of biomass (firewood and charcoal) which accounts for about 70 per cent of the country's energy supply and more than 90 per cent of household energy consumption. The latter can reach up to 97 per cent in some rural areas. Petroleum products, consisting of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) for cooking, diesel, and heavy fuel oil (HFO) for generating electricity, account for 26 per cent of domestic energy in the country. This recognition was demonstrated by the establishment of the Gambia Renewable Energy Centre (GREC) in the 80s to promote adaptive research and development of renewable energy and energy efficiency technology services, as well as to coordinate all renewable energy activities in the country. A related development has been the formation of the Alliance for Sustainable Clean Cooking Energy of The Gambia (ASCEG).

On Renewable Energy (RE), the current share of RE in the electricity generation mix is very negligible, as the country continues to depend largely on fossil fuel imports to meet its power needs. To ameliorate this high dependency, there are *grid connected renewable energy projects* underway such as the 20MW Jambur Solar PV plant with storage capability; the 10.5MW NAMA NSP project, as well as the 150MW WAPP Regional Solar Park. Apart from the on-grid renewable energy projects, there are numerous efforts to intensify *off-grid renewable energy access* that include the UNIDO/GEF programme which has installed various small to medium scale renewable energy systems in the country. There is also the National Green Mini-Grid (GMGs) support initiative, which has developed the framework document for GMGs in The Gambia, including carrying out studies of 10 more GMG sites; one of which has already been developed with 200kW solar PV generation capacity. These efforts at improving access are also being complemented by the ongoing Solar Home System programme to enhance off-grid rural electricity access and connectivity.

On Energy Efficiency (EE), there has not been much effort to increase EE in The Gambia. However, with support from the World Bank, the country recently developed and launched its National Strategy for Energy Efficiency, which outlined measures to be implemented in the short, medium to long term. Some of these measures include energy auditing for public buildings, and the development of the EE framework document anchored on the development of EE law for the

first time in The Gambia. In addition, the Ministry will be conducting a nationwide awareness campaign on efficient cooking stoves and alternative cooking fuels, such as LPG and briquettes.

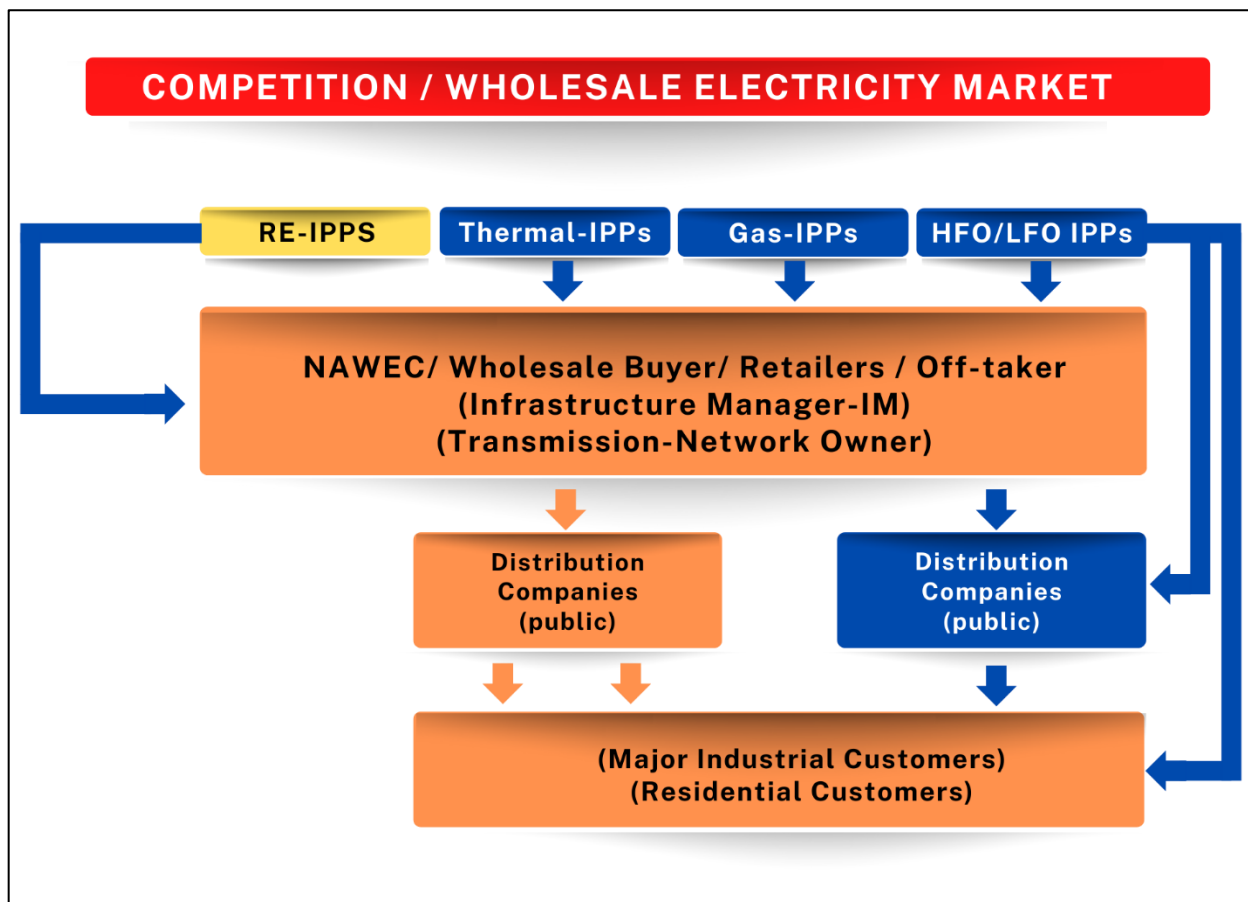
A critical success factor for the implementation of the strategic roadmap priority projects under the new RF-NDP is the implementation of NAWEC's Strategic Development Plan (2019-2025) - five (5) Pillars. The Strategic Roadmap (2021-2040) is potentially a transformational narrative with unprecedented, expected outcomes and impacts on the industrialisation, commercialisation, trade competitiveness, and long term sustained development of the Gambian economy by 2050. However, for the country to realise such a transformational goal, it is incumbent on GoTG to ensure that the critical "emerging policy, governance, institutional, regulatory and investment issues" are addressed, prior to, or during the implementation of the all-important Phase 1 & 2 (2020-2030) of the roadmap.

The Gambia's electricity sector is fully de-regulated by the Electricity Act 2005 and the RE Act 2013. The 2005 Act provides for the Minister to issue Generation, Transmission, and Distribution Licences to private power producers, distributors, and dispatchers. To further deepen de-regulation of the sector, the Government, enacted the RE Act 2013 which provides for renewable energy IPPs to produce and sell electricity to the market.

In the context of a liberalised electricity market, NAWEC's role in addition to "producer" will be "a buyer"; as well as an Infrastructure/network Manager (IM) - who owns the legacy T&D network. This re-positioning of the incumbent is necessary to enable IPPs to utilise the managed public T&D infrastructure through "open access" policy, to sell energy/electricity to other "buyers" in the market, i.e., major industrial and commercial users under the guidance of PURA. Figure 10.



## Wholesale Competitive Electricity Market



Section 11 of the RE Act 2013 empowers the regulator, PURA to formulate Feed-In-Tariffs (FITs) and Rules – to diversify the electricity market and encourage increased participation of RE-IPPs to enter the market. Despite the existence of a sound legal framework for the fully de-regulated competitive electricity market, the regulator, PURA, needs to urgently provide FITs, and net metering pricing and technical guidelines to promote and encourage new entrants (i.e., RE-IPPs and conventional IPPs) to participate in the electricity generation/supply market.

Given the critical need to deepen access to more sustainable, affordable, and environmentally acceptable energy alternatives, in 2012, the UN launched the Sustainable Energy for All (SE4ALL) initiative, which called for UN member countries to work toward achieving the goal of sustainable energy for all by 2030. In support of the UN SE4ALL initiative, in June 2012, the Government, in collaboration with development partners, undertook a comprehensive rapid assessment and gaps analysis desktop study for potential sustainable energy production in The Gambia, including appropriate distribution and utilisation – infrastructure.

The desktop study focused on the following three (3) key objectives: (1) Universal access to electricity, and the pursuit of clean fuel alternatives (and devices) for cooking/heating, in the light of the negative impacts of biomass cooking products on women’s health and its impact on the environment (i.e., climate change); (2) improvements in Energy Efficiency (EE); and (3) the need

to increase the share of renewable energy in the national energy mix. To further enhance sustainable energy access, efficiency, and parity, as well as mainstream gender in the energy priorities of the RF-NDP, GoTG, with the support of partners, will provide resources to ensure compliance with the relevant provisions of the ECOWAS Renewable Energy Policy (EREP), and the ECOWAS Energy Efficiency Policy (EEEP), as well as the ECOWAS Directive for Gender Assessment in Energy Access (EDGE).

The roadmap recommends the Gambia’s continued reliance on energy imports from WAPP partners (140MW), and Gas to Power supplies from Senegal and Cote d’Ivoire for the period 2023-2025, when current global supply chain challenges may continue to impact the country’s economy. Such a recommendation must be revisited at a time when The Gambia, like most countries, is facing challenges related to its current account balance of payments position, in the face of obligations to pay external energy suppliers, as well as from a national security perspective. Box below sums up the main challenges and opportunities for the energy sector.

<p><b>Challenges of the Energy Sector</b></p> <p>Heavy dependence on imports (30MW Karpower Ship, and 14MW from SENELEC/OMVG)          Electricity technical losses (23%)          Endemic water losses (leaking water pipes)          Renewable energy contribution to the national electricity supply-mix (0%)          Lack of Tariff Guidelines, for different IPP-based technologies for a fully de-regulated electricity market          Lack of effective policy on electricity-imports, in the light of the current constraints, experienced by NAWEC, vis- a- vis fuel and electricity import-bill (SENELEC, OMVG), and electricity sale by Karpower Ship          Gender mainstreaming          Increased demand in electricity due to population growth and urbanisation.          Repair and maintenance of aging generators and plants, as well as inadequate investments and financing options for T&amp;D infrastructure development to support future potential electricity capacity produced by IPPs.          The need for a Biomass Strategic Framework, as per Section 15 of the RE Act 2013, to assess and inform Gambia’s long-term sustainable biomass strategy.</p>
<p><b>Opportunities</b></p> <p><i>Biomass/Bio-energy technologies:</i> Given such external threats to the Gambia’s energy security posture and the need for balanced and predictable energy supply mix; it is prudent that bio-energy technologies (biomass) be prioritised and encouraged as a matter of policy through domestic and foreign direct investments. This will enable the country to transition to clean energy sources (LNG, biofuels, wind, solar, etc.).</p> <p><i>Green mini grids</i></p> <p><i>De-Coupling of NAWEC through the</i> establishment of two (2) independent utilities (electricity and water); and a new electricity company, to be designated as Infrastructure Manager (IM), wholesale, and off-taker in a competitive market.</p> <p><i>Feed-In-Tariff (FIT) and Net Metering:</i> The Renewal Energy Act 2013, provides for the development of FITs to achieve a balanced energy supply-mix through increased renewables such as solar PV, wind, biomass (biofuels), etc. Hence, PURA and NAWEC will work closely</p>

to introduce feed in tariffs (FITs) and net metering technologies. This will facilitate the sale of excess renewable energy by RE-IPPs and home producers to the off taker/buyer (NAWEC).

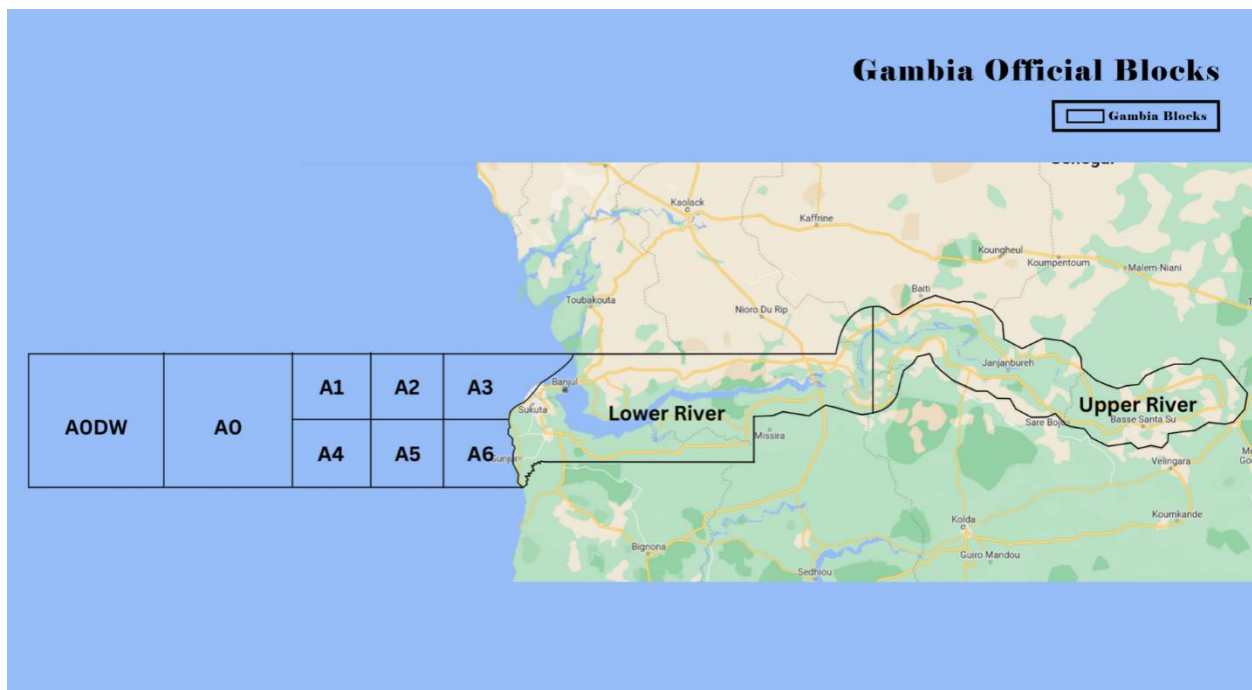
## Petroleum and Mining

As compared to other countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, The Gambia is not well endowed with petroleum and mineral resources. Mining activities are limited with no known deposits of minerals. However, the discovery of petroleum of commercial potential, if successfully prospected and properly exploited, will have a significant impact on the country's development trajectory. This section provides an overview of the petroleum and minerals sub-sector and reviews some of the main challenges faced by the sub-sector.

The Gambia Petroleum Sector consists of two subsectors: upstream and downstream. A diagnostic assessment of the two (2) sub-sectors are described below.

### Upstream

The Gambia is part of the MSGBC (Mauritania, Senegal, Gambia, Guinea Bissau, and Guinea Conakry) Basin which is fast becoming one of the most promising petroleum basins in the world. With the support from geophysical service companies such as TGS, PGS and Geo-partners, coupled with further interventions by International Oil Companies (OICs) like FAR, Cairn, Conoco, and Phillips, amongst others - major hydrocarbon resources have been discovered in the Basin, and have attracted the interest of major and supermajor global oil companies to the MSGBC Basin. The Gambia's offshore acreage is delineated into 7 blocks: A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, A6 & A0; the onshore acreage is delineated into 2 blocks: Lower River Region (LRR), and Upper River Region (URR) - Figure 6.



In 2017, the Government of The Gambia, through the MoPE, initiated a bidding round for its open blocks with the launch of its first ever successful licensing round in November 2017. This led to a Request For Information (RFI) phase, which attracted 21 companies, including Tullow, Woodside, BP, FAR, CNOCC, TOTAL and other players, that expressed interest in the Basin. Preliminary assessments estimate pivot blocks A1 and A4 as The Gambia's most prospective blocks followed by blocks A2 and A5. Following the licensing round and the necessary protocols which were coordinated by the Ministry, with support from stakeholders, the international law firm BCLP - BP was found to be the most responsive bidder and awarded license to A1 Block in 2019. The A1 Block was the first license, signed under the new Model License PEPLA, which gave GoTG, through GNPC, a stake of 10 per cent participating interest, following signature of the license (i.e., exploration phase). Prior to the development of the new Model License, Government had the option to take up its participating interest at the "development phase".

The status of the offshore blocks is briefly summarised below:

**A1 BLOCK:** In 2019, Block A1 was licensed to BP Exploration (Gambia) Ltd after intense negotiations, as the IOC seeks to extend its operator acreages in the Basin. In 2021, BP exited the block due to their change in strategy. Following BP's exit, the Ministry decided to license A1 Block through a Mini-Licensing round. A consultant was hired, and a plan was drawn-up leading to the announcement of the Licensing Round at the Africa Oil Week in Dubai in November 2021, with a plan to publish the bidding documents which were launched in February 2022.

**A4 BLOCK:** Block A4 was licensed to PetroNor after successful out-of-court settlement negotiations. The new PetroNor Licence was signed under the terms of the new Model Licence: Petroleum Exploration and Production Licence Agreement (PEPLA), which is a more progressive and industry standard document, compared to the previous PEPLA, under which African Petroleum signed the previous A1/A4 Licence.

**A2 AND A5 BLOCKS:** In October of 2018, joint venture partners, FAR Gambia Ltd and PETRONAS Gambia Ltd started drilling operations for The Gambia's first offshore well since 1979. This well received serious international attention especially due to discoveries made across its maritime border in Senegal. Unfortunately, contrary to global expectations and the high spirits of the Operator (FAR), the well was unsuccessful in registering The Gambia's first discovery. In December 2021, joint venture partners, FAR Gambia Ltd and PETRONAS drilled another well and unfortunately, the well was unsuccessful but the well had oil shows, and potential reservoirs were encountered. Although no live oil columns were present, the result confirms further potential in the blocks and the area. As per their obligations under the A2 and A5 Licences, the joint venture partners, FAR Gambia Ltd and PETRONAS Gambia Ltd have concluded the drilling and presented the well results to the Government. Engagements continue with a technical meeting being organised with FAR to further discuss the well analysis report which was presented to the Government in February 2022.

**A3 AND A6 BLOCKS:** Following the signature of a data agreement with Geopartners on these blocks, they are being promoted to encourage the market to prefinance a multi-client data programme on these blocks. There are ongoing works with GP in gathering the geologic information needed in promoting the blocks.

The Gambia's onshore acreage is delineated into Upper River and Lower River blocks. The Lower River block has shown better prospects than the Upper River block. Even though The Gambia has some onshore coverage for its geophysical data, this is not as extensive as offshore data. On exploratory drilling however, two wells were drilled onshore Gambia in 1960 in Serrekunda and Brikama. Both wells were unsuccessful in registering a discovery, but showed trace amounts of hydrocarbons which suggested the presence of a petroleum system which would need further exploration. The MoPE during its 2017-2019 Licensing Round received interest for the Lower River block. Separate from interests shown by IOCs during the Licensing Round, GNPC also showed interest in furthering the exploration activities of onshore Gambia. A prospecting permit has been agreed with HydroGenesis for the search for Hydrogen and Helium in the onshore areas.

**A0 BLOCK:** In 2020, The Gambia acquired 3195 km<sup>2</sup> of 3D seismic data and demarcated the area in 2022. The block is now open for licensing.

The Gambia's License regime includes a royalty plus tax system and is for 30-years' license with the option of a 10 year' extension. It is further separated into a 6-year exploration phase, which is divided into 3 periods of 2 years each. Following a discovery, an exploration appraisal phase begins to ascertain, among others, the commercial value of the discovery before proceeding to a development and a subsequent production phase. The natural cycle of an Oil and Gas License is followed to the letter by the License Regime.

#### *Downstream*

The Gambia imports 100 per cent of its refined petroleum products and these products include PMS (Gasoline), AGO (Diesel), Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG), Jet Fuel and Heavy Fuel Oil. The Gambia currently has two (2) Petroleum Storage Facilities located in Mandinari with a storage capacity of 51,000 MT (Gam- Petroleum) and 30,000 MT (Castle Oil Limited/GPS). The Government is a majority shareholder of Gam- Petroleum; and Castle Oil Limited/GPS is 100 per cent privately owned. There are four (4) main petroleum traders, namely: TRAFIGURA, ADDAX, VITOL and PSTV. Since the Gam-Petroleum depot is a bonded warehouse, some of these traders store their products in the storage tanks for potential buyers (Licence Importers). Buyers engage these traders and when an agreement is reached, Gam-Petroleum releases the products. Currently, there are more than 50 petroleum products importation licence holders.

The downstream petroleum sub-sector promotes re-exportation to the sub-region particularly Mali, Guinea-Bissau, and Guinea-Conakry. The Light Fuel Oils (LFO) imported in The Gambia is consumed locally while some are re-exported, The Heavy Fuel Oil (HFO) has two main clients: NAWEC and for re-export to the Malian market. There has been a sharp increase in the level of activities in the downstream petroleum sub-sector, as reflected in the number of retailers, importers and re-exporters licensed. In 2019 alone, 12 new operators received their licences, ranging from Re-Export, Retail, and the LPG business. The retail business though liberalised in licensing, is strictly controlled in pricing by the Pricing Sub-Committee under the Ministry.

## *Challenges of the Petroleum Sector*

The main challenge faced by the petroleum sector is internal market size for the consumption of petroleum products. This has implications for needed critical investments such as petroleum refinery, and petroleum test laboratory to be undertaken as investible assets, jointly owned (PPP), or independently owned by the private sector.

The GPA Basse Freight Logistics Platform (Dry port) facility, and the Africa Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) market does present opportunities for investments, given the opportunity of a larger market (ECOWAS/AU), and the existence of a strategic intermodal freight logistics and distribution facility (Dry port) to serve the sub-regional market.

The sector is also confronted with the lack of national cutting-edge HR technical skill sets to manage the petroleum upstream sector activities.

### *Increase Storage Facilities*

Currently there are two (2) Petroleum Storage Facilities in The Gambia, with a total storage capacity of 81,000 MT. Given the importance of the <sup>67</sup>re-export trade in commodities, there is a potential opportunity to grow the petroleum products “re-export” business, and/or, the bunkering of bonded petroleum products for foreign OMCs from the sub-region to use the Gambian port as preferred gateway for strategic imports, hence the strategic importance of the Basse Freight Logistics Platform.

To this end, the GoTG/MoTIE, will designate the Trans-Gambia corridor (Farafenni-Soma) as a Special Economic Zone (SEZ), with special financial incentives to attract foreign and domestic investments.

### *Develop Petroleum Products Testing Lab*

Notwithstanding the limited market size and the low appetite for private investment for the development of a petroleum products laboratory in The Gambia, the Government/MoPE will seek bilateral technical assistance for the development of a testing lab. Other challenges of the petroleum sector include: the overlapping of mandates among stakeholders; inconsistencies in legislation; processes and systems that are not yet fully tested; health and safety and environmental risks (e.g., tank leakages); inadequate enforcement of standards, and the need to manage public expectations.

## **Mining**

Mining in The Gambia began in the 1950s for the exploitation of heavy mineral sands rich in titanium, containing large concentrations of ilmenite, zircon, rutile, and gangue minerals. The heavy mineral deposits in The Gambia exist inside the relic beach dunes that run parallel to the coast in low sand ridges. The ridges are usually 2-3 meters thick with maximum thickness of 5

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<sup>67</sup> Re-exports accounts for 15% of GDP, 20% of fiscal revenue, and 85% of all exports (i.e., “landed imported goods re-exported”)

meters in a few places. The mineral content of the deposits in these ridges range from 1- 8 per cent, or 30 per cent of maximum purity. To date, over 300,000 metric tons of heavy minerals have been exploited and exported.

The country is endowed with large deposits of glass-grade quartz sand. Although the deposits are found in different locations, the largest deposits are found in Darsilami, estimated at over 41 million tons. Other locations with potential large deposits include Faraba Banta, Abuko/Lamin and Brufut. However, due to rapid and uncontrolled urbanisation, many locations where the large deposits have been found were later transformed into settlements, or the minerals mined, and used as a source of construction materials.

The five largest kaolin deposits are found in the eastern part of the country, namely Kuntaur, Basse, Kundam and Fatoto areas. The deposits vary in length from 60 to 800m and their thickness varies from 1.5 - 4 meters reaching a maximum depth of 9 meters. The Kundam deposits are the largest, estimated over 3 million metric tons. However, due to the high content of impurities such as ferric oxide and titanium oxide, the deposits can only be used as low-grade raw materials in the manufacture of chemical ceramics, refractories, and rubber.

Several geological investigations of mineral and groundwater resources were conducted on an ad-hoc basis between 1927 and 1976. Besides these investigations, some geophysical research had also been conducted during the said period. The Government, realising that all mining and mineral resources related matters could be better coordinated in a structured manner, created the Geological Department of The Gambia in 1976 within the Department of Lands and Surveys. In 1980, the Geological Department was transferred to the Ministry of Mines and Lands; and subsequently in 1986, was transferred again to the Ministry of Economic Planning. After becoming a fully-fledged Directorate, the Geology Department was transferred to the Office of The President until 2017 when it was finally transferred to the Ministry of Petroleum and Energy for policy oversight, following the advent of the new administration,

The Mines and Quarries Act 2005 and the Restricted Minerals Regulations 2018 are the two (2) principal legal and regulatory instruments that respectively govern the mining and extractive industry activities in The Gambia. However, the hydrocarbon extractive industry is regulated under the Petroleum Act 2004 and its seven (7) regulations governing both upstream and downstream activities.

The Geology Department is the custodian of all mining and minerals resources of the country. The department is also the technical advisory arm of the Ministry.

A fundamental provision of the Act is Section 4(2) which provides for the legal ownership by the state of all mineral resources found in the country. Further, Section 113 provides for environmental protection of mining and extractive activities, in line with the National Environment Management Act (NEMA, 1994), while Section 115 provides for the development of regulations by the Minister.

A key challenge of the minerals sector currently is the lack of a policy framework and modern legislation - to optimise resource utilisation, improve efficiency in mining practices, enhance

occupational safety as well as curb environmental externalities resulting from bad mining practices. In a bid to address the shortcomings of the sector, work is underway to develop the policy framework, and review the legislative framework (Mines and Quarries Act 2005) with a view to drafting and enacting a new legal framework to govern the minerals and mining sector.

### ***Challenges of the Geology and Minerals Sector***

- a) Conflict of interest of some communities who consider themselves as custodians of the mineral resources found within their communities; and want to take the lead in any mining activity within their localities.
- b) Inadequate geoscientists in the Geology Department
- c) Inadequate geological knowledge of mineral deposits and occurrences in the country
- d) Inadequate construction materials, especially within the Greater Banjul Area (GBA) and major growth centres
- e) Endemic and illegal sand mining and gravel extraction activities taking place throughout the country
- f) Severe environmental degradation in and around mining and quarrying sites - a failure of the mining companies to rehabilitate abandoned mines, which occasionally results in drowning of humans and livestock in water-filled mining pits
- g) Mining activities within the communities do have negative impacts on sources of livelihoods affecting mainly vegetable gardening; for example, there are increasing cases of salt intrusion, and permanent waterlogging of old gardens
- h) Limited human resources capacity to enforce provisions of the Mines and Quarries Act throughout the country
- i) Depleting resource of sand dunes along the coast, which is the main source for fine aggregates used in building. 90 per cent of the sand mined is consumed in the Greater Banjul Area (GBA)
- j) Lack of appropriate and alternative sources of sand.

### **Transport Infrastructure**

The transport sector is one of the strategic economic and social enablers for the Gambian economy – the key driver of the <sup>68</sup>service sector facilitating the movement of goods (freight) and services and people. The transport sector currently contributes 16 per cent to <sup>69</sup>GDP, out of the total of 57 per cent contribution of the “Services” sector. The Gambia transport sector covers:

1. Urban transport system;
2. Road transport network;
3. Port and river transport;
4. Air transport.

The National Transport Policy (NTP) 2018-2027, is the principal policy instrument which informs the Ministry’s oversight of the SOEs and agencies under its purview. The NTP policy framework, despite its relevance and adequacy for the current planning period 2018-2027, lacks the following critical enabling policy instruments for the effective management and oversight of the sectors/sub-sectors under the Ministry’s portfolio:

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<sup>68</sup> GBOS: Services (57%): wholesale & retail trading, transport, and storage

<sup>69</sup> Ibid



1. National Transport Plan (i.e., Action Plan): to execute the National Policy Framework (NPF)
2. Enabling legislation: to implement the Policy and Plan (i.e., Transportation Act)
3. National Multimodal Transport Strategy (NMTS): to coordinate coherently the running of the multimodal transportation framework

The National Buildings and Facilities Policy envisages a legal and regulatory framework to govern the efficient and sustainable provision of the infrastructure of the National Public Buildings and Facilities (NPBF). It seeks to: provide adequate guidance to government agencies and the subsector; ensure compliance with the National Public Buildings and Facilities Policy (NPBFP); promote adoption of best practices and standards by support institutions; and consult with industry and contracting firms to ensure that they have the required capacities. Government, through the National Public Buildings and Facilities Committee and its technical secretariat, plays a facilitative role in encouraging and guiding donors and investors to establish programmes in support of private actors in the subsector.

**National Multimodal Transport Strategy (NMTS):** The goal of the National Transport Policy (NTP 2017-2028) is to promote multimodal planning, coordination, and operations of the overall transport sector. The two (2) fundamental objectives and benefits of the proposed NMTS are: (1) cost efficiency, i.e. accrual of transport cost savings to customers/consumers transporting goods and services through least-cost analysis; and (2) direct or indirect cost savings to the environment (i.e. “external cost” savings that accrues to the wider economy - in terms of less pollution, less traffic congestion, and a cleaner environment for healthy living and sustainable livelihoods. To ensure sustainable long-term utility of the public infrastructure investments (GBA modernised road network), the Government will formulate a Public Policy Goal Statement and Targets to institute multimodal transport coordination, planning and operations. The aim here is to significantly shift freight/traffic volumes<sup>70</sup> from road to river transport with, a view to achieving increased “consumer/producer surplus” benefits, as well as external cost benefits for the greater good of society.

**Urban Transport Agenda:** A well-functioning urban transport infrastructure, and public transport system are considered critical to a sustainable urban living environment. According to the World Urbanisation Prospects (2018) for The Gambia, the country is urbanising very rapidly, faster than the average rate in Africa (44%, 2021); as evidenced by the fact that, most Gambians (62%, 2018 GBoS) live in urban areas. Given that The Gambia is one of the most densely populated countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, it is evident that the increase in urbanisation, caused largely by rural-urban migration, will continue to put pressure on the already congested urban transport infrastructure, and on the public transport service delivery system. This will increase the level of pollution and GHG emissions due to the large number of mostly second-hand and poorly maintained imported vehicles (taxis, jitneys, minivans & buses) that ply the urban areas. If no sound public policy measures are put in place by Government to formulate a robust “Urban transport Agenda,<sup>71</sup>” with an integrated Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system at its core, the expected long-term benefits of the Government’s planned, and on-going road infrastructure modernisation

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<sup>70</sup> 20-30 per cent road-river modal split by 2027; and achieving 50-50 per cent modal balance by 2050

<sup>71</sup> At the core of the national urban transport agenda, will have to be an effective public mass transit system (BRT); a stringent vehicle import policy; control of “low-speed” motorised tricycles, to operate at the outer perimeter of the BRT Zone, as “last mile” feeders; and taxis to complement the BRT, as inner-zone last mile feeders.

programme will be less durable and not yield the intended economic and social benefits. The successful implementation of the integrated BRT system will contribute to SDG targets 3.6, 7.3, 9.1, 11.2, and 12.

The following challenges have been identified as key constraining factors for the effective functioning of the Roads Infrastructure sector:

- a) Poor national and regional connectivity
- b) Lack of effective strategy to affect an integrated multimodal planning, coordination and operations of all modes
- c) Inadequate transport regulations and policy implementation (i.e., Transportation Act)
- d) Inadequate road maintenance and investment financing (i.e., upgrading/new construction)
- e) Inadequate public transport infrastructure (taxi garages, designated curbside pick-up, and drop-off bays)
- f) Inadequate road infrastructure - safety measures (e.g., “raised crossings” at intersections to enhance better pedestrian safety)
- g) Inadequate data collection and management capacity
- h) Lack of Intelligent Transport System (ITS) to improve road traffic management and safety
- i) Inadequate private investment and involvement (i.e., PPPs, BOT concessions)
- j) Inadequate human resource capacity

Other challenges are:

#### *Roads Classification System and Roads Hierarchy*

The Gambia’s road classification system is not in line with international norms. There is need to urgently re-classify/rationalise the “secondary and tertiary networks”, a major source of jurisdictional dispute between central and local government authorities in terms of maintenance responsibilities of these networks. In addition, the current classification system is too conducive to conventional traffic data collection and reporting as well as for long term planning and development of the road network.

Another key challenge is the lack of devolution or decentralisation of responsibilities to Municipalities and Area Councils to maintain the secondary road network, and the Tertiary urban roads in Banjul, and the provincial growth centres. This challenge continues to cause occasional bureaucratic friction between Municipalities and Area Councils, and the central Government authorities (MoTWI/NRA).

#### *Road Investment Planning and Financing*

The NRA has proposed the expansion and upgrading of the road network through the construction, rehabilitation, and maintenance of roads with the objective of increasing the capacity of the existing road infrastructure within the country. The current maintenance policy is to prioritise the preservation of all roads that are in good and fair condition, by channelling funds first to routine maintenance and then to periodic maintenance. The current Road Fund (RF) (April 2022) allocation of one Dalasi/litre is sufficient to cover only routine maintenance requirements (14% of

current RF revenue) of the Core Road Network (CRN). However, the total RF revenue is insufficient to cover periodic maintenance requirements.

Although the Government The Gambia prioritises “rehabilitating” the road network through the national budget to support sustainable economic development, there is a huge maintenance backlog due to inadequate allocation of funds from the Road Fund, to undertake periodic and network upgrading, as well as for new sector investments. For this reason, Government calls on partners to support the financing of the latter activities; and also encourages PPPs ventures to complement its efforts in this regard.

### ***Traffic Management***

The multiple and possibly conflicting responsibilities of the police for licensing, testing, and road traffic control needs to be reviewed. . Hence, the need for Government to establish a National Road Traffic Authority under the MoTWTI, in the short to medium term (as best practice), to address these functions.

**Port infrastructure:** The Banjul seaport (Ports) is the principal international gateway of the Gambia for international trade, and shipping. The port handles more than 90 per cent of the total cargo throughput, destined in and out of the country. The Gambia Ports Authority (GPA) is the Government Agency mandated by law (Ports Act. 1972) to manage and operate all ports in the Gambia. However, the Ports Act provides for the participation of the private sector, through licences issued to third parties to operate complementary port activities and services e.g., off-dock facilities, Internal Container Depots (ICDs), Dry ports, etc.

**Port institutional reform:** A key enabling factor for the transformation of Banjul port is the government’s decision to transform the port’s operating model to “Landlord model/Hybrid”, effectively ending the Port’s 50 years (2022 – 1972) “Service-port” operating model. While, the GoTG should be commended for this prudent landmark policy decision, it is important that the mode of Private Sector Participation (PSP) be a gradual process, by adopting a Joint Venture - PPP modality, and not an outright BOT concession to a private concessionaire. The decision to open the Port to private sector involvement, presupposes the need to reform the ports legal framework from its current public corporation (Ports Act 1972) to a “public company” registered under the Companies Act 2013.

Since its inception in 1972, Banjul port has undergone a series of port-expansion programmes to respond to the increased port traffic, in particular, imports. Given the changing nature of global shipping of goods from traditional bulk cargo (bagged cargo) to boxed cargo (containerised cargo), the GPA commissioned the *Fourth Banjul Port Expansion Programme, and a 5-Year Business Plan* to address the capacity constraints of the port of Banjul, which has impacted negatively on port operations, business, and the economy.

**Port Capacity:** The operational capacity of the port of Banjul is based on three principal infrastructure/superstructure assets: (1) Quay, i.e., Jetty, (2) Yard Storage, and (3) Ship Gear: Reach Stackers (RS), and transport systems, and a Mobile Harbour Crane (MHC)( which is currently not operational) *Quay infrastructure* comprises mainly of two (2) jetties: Banjul Wharf:

128m, New Banjul Jetty: 123m (Outer Berth 3A), and 177m (<sup>72</sup>Outer Berth 3B). The main traffic handled at the jetties are boxed cargo/ containers, general cargo (including RoRo/vehicles), and <sup>73</sup>dry bulk (rice, sugar, cement, flour, etc.). Current Yard storage capacity at the port consists of the following stacking areas: Old PwD Area (19,000m<sup>2</sup>); North Container Terminal (20,000m<sup>2</sup>); and an additional capacity (i.e., Phase 1) of 22,000 m<sup>2</sup>, acquired through demolition of existing buildings and bonded warehouses. Total storage/stacking space is 63,000 m<sup>2</sup>. An additional 41,000m<sup>2</sup> of storage space will be available, following construction of a new container terminal, under the 4<sup>th</sup> Banjul port project. With the availability of off-dock storage capacity for empties, and exports at SMG Dry Port Ltd, at Bund Road, yard storage capacity has greatly improved.

**Cargo Handling Gear and Productivity:** The port of Banjul utilises three (3) main types of cargo handling equipment: (1) Mobile Harbour Crane (MHC), (2) Reach Stackers (RS), and (3) Trailer-trucks. The mobile harbour crane and reach stacker are GPA’s main equipment handling gear, both of which, need urgent recapitalisation to improve cargo handling (“moves”) and turnaround from quay to stack. Given the low productivity performance of 7 TEUs per hour, and 48 tons per gang hour for bulk bagged cargo, investment in such high-capacity port handling gear/equipment could immensely raise productivity and performance to respectable levels.

**Port Traffic:** The volume of cargo handled at the Port has experienced a surge during the past few years with throughput increasing from 2.5 million tons to 2.7 million in 2019. There was a drop of 3 per cent in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, among others. Despite the increase in throughput, available space for stacking of containers in the port has remained unchanged.

The volume of cargo has outgrown the facility to the extent that the congestion at the container terminal is causing some safety concerns. This is because containers being discharged from ships are being stacked at the same location where sorting, customs examination and delivery are also taking place. Delays in cargo clearance, caused by congested terminals, lead to demurrage charges which importers can seek to recover by increasing prices of goods. The average waiting time for container vessels has declined from 14 days to 7 days, according to recent productivity and efficiency gains data. This is due to GPA- Symantec Messaging Gateway (SMG) arrangements for exports and empties to be stacked and handled at the off-dock facility. Despite such efficiency gains, shipping agencies still impose congestion surcharges for inbound cargo at a minimum USD 200 per twenty-foot equivalent unit (TEU), which translates to USD 12 million annually of added cost of doing business in Banjul, when factored against a minimum import figure of 60,000 containers per annum.

**River transport** is a key component of the NMTS policy objective of the Government. Currently, the River Gambia is grossly underutilised, despite its capacity to be an efficient, and effective mode for the transportation of heavy and bulk cargo. In a bid to revitalise the River Gambia and enhance the Gambia’s regional trade competitiveness with hinterland countries, the GPA signed an MOU in July 2019, with InfraCo Africa and CPCS, for the development and implementation of an intermodal Freight Logistics Platform/Dry Port in Basse. The Project components include the upgrading/construction of Basse River Wharf/Jetty, procurement of 2000-tonne river barge at

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<sup>72</sup> This berth is designed to accommodate high-capacity ship gear, i.e., SSG-Ship-to-Shore Gantry Crane, to improve cargo handling at quay side (stevedoring services)

<sup>73</sup> Liquid bulk cargo, including ports products, is handled at Mandinari

an estimated cost of approximately USD10 million. The Freight Logistics Platform will be financed and structured as a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) with InfraCo, and GPA as co-sponsors, and CPCS as Developer. To this end, a *Developer’s Services Agreement* was signed between InfraCo (the main sponsor), and CPCS Transcom Limited (Developer) to raise the requisite private capital and provide the technical expertise required to successfully operate and manage the Freight Logistics Platform. A *Shareholding Agreement* will be signed with the investors to develop the logistics platform.

Below is a SWOT analysis of the foregoing.

<p><b>Strengths</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategic location of the country, and the port (sheltered port)</li> <li>• Commercialised, and less bureaucratic port business culture</li> <li>• Skilled management and technical employees</li> <li>• Four (4<sup>th</sup>) Banjul port expansion project</li> <li>• Excellent brand “GPA”</li> <li>• GPA credit worthiness, to leverage project finance-debt, and equity</li> <li>• SMG Dry Port: availability of additional off-dock capacity for stacking/storage of empties and exports (containers)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Opportunities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PPP/innovative options: to leverage private investments in port operations</li> <li>• Basse Freight Logistics Platform: to leverage increased transit and re-export business</li> <li>• Increased regional trade, and throughput, due to availability of Deep seaport</li> <li>• Adopt a “Landlord-port” operating model/or a hybrid model (PPP, JV, BOT) to improve operational efficiency and investment</li> <li>• Revive river transportation by Government</li> <li>• Corporatisation of GPA by Government into a limited liability company to leverage private investment in port operations, and services</li> <li>• SOE law enactment by Government: to improve governance, financial performance and accountability of SOEs</li> </ul>
<p><b>WEAKNESSES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Current port (quay/yard) capacity limitations</li> <li>• GPA “Service- port” operating model</li> <li>• Small market size</li> <li>• Ports Act: not fit for purpose</li> <li>• Port shipping channel: recurrent need for capital dredging</li> </ul>	<p><b>THREATS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multiplicity of jurisdictional levies/charges on core port business (i.e., imports) viz. GRA entries, scanning, examination, agency fees, security, stamps, logistics charges, all of which makes Banjul port increasingly uncompetitive</li> <li>• Intense regional competition, and the lack of investment in deep seaport infrastructure</li> <li>• Sene-Gambia Bridge, and existing regional road-rail connectivity infrastructure, pose a threat to Banjul port’s attractiveness, vis a vis transit/re-export trade</li> <li>• COVID-19 and Russia-Ukraine war</li> <li>• Coastal erosion activity along GBA coastline</li> </ul>

**The Air transport sector** is one of the most important drivers of economic growth in The Gambia. In addition to creating thousands of employment opportunities, the industry also promotes and enhances tourism, which is a significant contributor to GDP, as more than 90 per cent of tourists visiting The Gambia travel by air. Over the years, the industry registered significant strides in passenger demand, aviation safety and infrastructure development. In 2019, Banjul International Airport handled 477,336 passengers and was on track to meet the target of handling 500,000 passengers set in the National Transport Policy and the NDP. However, the advent of COVID-19 derailed the upward trajectory in passenger traffic growth. In terms of aviation safety oversight, The Gambia continues to perform well above average in International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) audits of the country's aviation safety systems. Similarly, massive investments have been made on improving facilities and infrastructure at the airport.

Despite these major improvements and gains, there are still challenges to address if the aviation/air transport sector is to fulfil its potentials and continue to significantly contribute to the socio-economic development of the country. Some of the key issues include:

- a) Conflict of interest in Gambia Civil Aviation Authority (GCAA) functions
- b) Lack of a National Airline
- c) Heavy reliance on charter tourist traffic
- d) Absence of economies of scale in airport activities (low traffic volumes, etc.)
- e) High cost of air travel

## **ICT and Digital Connectivity**

The Government of The Gambia took its first institutionalised steps for ICT policy development through the establishment of the new Ministry on 6<sup>th</sup> May 2002. The transformation of the Ministry went through a series of institutional reforms, in terms of scope of mandate and nomenclature over the past years. Its nomenclature was changed from the Department of State for Communications and Information Technology (DoSCIT) to Ministry of Communication, Information, and Information Technology (MoCIIT) to Ministry of Information and Communication Infrastructure (MoICI) in 2010. Despite this, its core mandate has always revolved around providing policy oversight for the ICT sector and building the requisite national ICT infrastructure to fully harness the huge economic potentials of the sector.

The first phase of ICT policy development was anchored on the National Information and Communications Infrastructure (NICI) policy cycle and a set of ambitious strategic plans that helped lay the foundation for robust policy interventions over the years. With the historic decoupling of the Ministry in May 2022, the focus has now shifted to putting in place the requisite infrastructure and enabling environment to accelerate the development of The Gambia's digital economy.

## **Evolution of ICT Policy and Strategy in The Gambia**

The NICI Policy adopted in 2005 was the maiden standalone ICT policy that set the basis for the development of the sector. The NICI policy was premised on building and sustaining partnership with the private sector and donors; putting in place an effective information and communication

infrastructure, ensuring universal connectivity and achieving a liberalised and competitive ICT market. It also focused on value addition and improving outcomes in cross-cutting sectors like trade and commerce by leveraging ICTs. NICI 1 achieved an 81 per cent implementation success rate as highlighted by an evaluation conducted in 2016.

The Gambia ICT4D Policy Statement 2018-2028 was formulated to succeed NICI 1. The policy statement identified eight (8) pillars that will drive the transformation process of the country into a digital nation and an information rich society.

In terms of ICT infrastructure development, the Ministry continues to work in collaboration with stakeholders including the Telecoms State-Owned Enterprises, private sector players and donor community. These collaborative efforts yielded the establishment of the national fibre backbone and the ACE Submarine Cable through the ECOWAN and WARCIP project interventions, respectively.

The ICT sector comprises of two (2) public operators, i.e., an incumbent (GAMTEL), which manages the fixed-network, public switched telephone network (PSTN), and the broadband backbone/infrastructure (first, middle and last mile) which provides voice and data services. GAMTEL's mandate is complemented by a subsidiary company, GAMCEL – the entity which provides GSM mobile services, using the network of the parent company. The public sector is currently bundled, and operates under a unified management structure, with a General Manager, managing the subsidiary (GAMCEL). The ICT sector has three (3) licensed private MNOs: Africell, QCell, and Comium; an additional operator has been issued an operating license and will soon enter the mobile market as fourth operator. Several licensed Internet Service Providers (ISPs) are operating in the sector, providing internet services at competitive rates. The sector is currently regulated under a multi-sector regulatory regime by PURA.

### **Liberalisation of the ICT Sector**

De-regulation, or liberalisation is a development policy doctrine, introduced during the structural adjustment era of the 1980s and '90s to introduce market solutions to address challenges of the public sector in the provision of public services. While de-regulation has brought immense benefits, and improvement in providing services to the public, it has not been able to do so at fair market rates; hence the outcry of the consumers, in many instances, bemoaning the exorbitant prices of basic communication services, i.e., mobile GSM bundled rates. While the market has the potential to address the needs of the consumers, so could the public provider if provided with the conducive environment it requires to operate profitably in the public domain without undue external interference.

While the market may be fully liberalised as in many countries, including The Gambia, a disruptive technology, not usually “priced” in such public policy decisions where the data and voice gateways are de-regulated, is “network/ technology convergence”; i.e., the existence of a single network which is able to transmit a multiplicity of signals/services (i.e. voice, data, and video) - all bundled together to achieve greater efficiency (triple play).

The ICT Sector in The Gambia is fully liberalised in terms of data, with the private MNOs - operating and routing traffic, through their independent data gateways. The international voice gateway, a strategic component of the public PSTN (fixed telephony) has also been recently liberalised by Government; a decision Government should review – in view of “network convergence” opportunities, and the need to safeguard national security, and the long-term viability of the national incumbent (GAMTEL).

**Acquisition of Second (2<sup>nd</sup>) Landing Station:** The Government of The Gambia (GoTG), through a grant support of USD25m from development partners, will acquire a Second Landing Station for The Gambia to provide redundancy support of GSC-ACE, a PPP special purpose submarine cable company.

### **Network Access and Usability of Fixed Broadband Services**

Despite Gambia’s historical development progress in modernising its telecommunications and ICT infrastructure, the mobile broadband infrastructure continues to experience persistent usage gaps, affecting access to fixed broadband to the last mile. In line with broader African trends, the broadband market in The Gambia is overwhelmingly <sup>74</sup>mobile with <sup>75</sup>fixed broadband penetration remaining at a very low level, i.e., 0.19 per 100 inhabitants (ITU, 2020), well below the global average of 13.7%. However, mobile penetration in The Gambia is significantly high at 130%, with the country ranked 7th on the continent in terms of mobile tele- density. While the number of active sim cards per 100 inhabitants has reached 136 (ITU, Dec 2020) only 67% of customers use data (PURA, Q1 2021).

The GSM-Association estimates that there are only 580,000 internet subscribers in the country, against the background of 1.8 million active data sim cards. Broadband 3G+ covers 88% of the population, but 63.5% of those covered, are not using broadband services (the second highest level among LIC countries); which is reason for PURA to review the tariff structures of GSM operators (supply side).

This usage gap hindering people not using the internet may also be a result of the following reasons: quality, content relevance, and security (on the supply side) as well as literacy and digital skills (on the demand side).

The 2020 Network Readiness Index ranked The Gambia 122nd out of 134 countries in terms of online content, which includes mobile app development sub indicator, where the country ranks 120th, reflecting the scope to improve local content, app development and hosting options, and the availability of an integrated payment gateway platform to support content, and Fintechs/Apps developers.

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<sup>74</sup> 2G, 3G+,4G

<sup>75</sup> E.g., ADSL/VDSL



## **Building an Inclusive Digital and Broadband Nation**

In The Gambia, a minimum broadband delivery goal/target of 5Mbps at affordable rates is set for every end-user, premises and businesses with high-speed access to voice, data, and multimedia, and other applications, under an interactive, secured, and quality network for the next 5 years (2023-2027).

Given the above goal, there is a silver lining, and opportunity to transform The Gambia into an inclusive digital and broadband nation, as espoused in the ICT for Development Policy Statement (2018 – 2028), which envisages The Gambia to be transformed into an information-rich, and knowledge-based economy and society by 2028, and beyond.

The national <sup>76</sup>broadband access goal is expressed under the following key strategic targets of the approved National Broadband Policy (2020-2024)

- a) Broadband connectivity of 75 per cent of homes with affordable access having a minimum download/upload speed of at least 5Mbps, by 2022.
- b) To scale up to almost 100 per cent of homes having affordable broadband connectivity of a minimum download/upload speed of at least 5Mbps.
- c) Increase access to broadband coverage of 4G to not less than 85 per cent of the population by 2024.
- d) Extend broadband service of not less than 5Mbps to “anchor institutions” such as universities, schools, hospitals, and government institutions by 2024.
- e) Increase digital literacy in schools to 75 per cent by 2024.
- f) Extend broadband services to all LGAs, and Districts, by 2024; and to achieve a digital literacy of 75 per cent amongst Government employees, and 65 per cent of the total workforce by 2024.
- g) Ensure that public safety first-responders’ institutions, with alarm monitoring and security infrastructure have access to nationwide wireless, inter-operable broadband public safety network by 2024.

To achieve the inclusive digital broadband nation, the above laudable access targets will be prioritised by Government and monitored during the implementation of RF-NDP.

Despite its early successes, and positive posture, the ICT Sector is beset with a systemic quadrangular malaise of political interference; poor governance & management; policy uncertainty; and regulatory asymmetry; all of which pose an unfair burden of competition on the public sector operators (GAMTEL/GAMCEL) in a highly unleashed, private sector-business environment, where business decision-making is largely at will, and unencumbered with bureaucratic red tape as it exist in the public domain.

It is therefore fair to conclude that the non-performance of the public companies is attributed to this quadrangular malaise which Government will address under the “re-positioning” and “turnaround strategy” of GAMTEL/GAMCEL.

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<sup>76</sup> Gambia National Broadband Policy 2020-2024