

ADDRESS TO THE NATION BY
HIS EXCELLENCY ADAMA BARROW,
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE
GAMBIA
ON THE WINDSTORM DISASTER OF 7TH
JULY

DATE: 9TH JULY 2021

Fellow Gambians and Residents,

These are challenging times for us as a nation. As a predominant farming country, we always look forward to the rainy season with excitement. However, we are also conscious that the season may come with some natural disasters. As the rainy season starts this year, we are beginning to experience such unfortunate calamities.

Last Wednesday night's thunderstorm, accompanied by lightning and heavy winds that downed electric poles, destroyed buildings, uprooted trees, and littered our streets and communities with debris. Above all, it is most regrettable that our report recorded ten (10) deaths across the country due to the storm.

On behalf of the Government and the entire nation, I commiserate with all those affected directly or indirectly. In particular, I extend heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families for the sad loss of lives, and I pray for solace for those who suffered damage to property. In the same vein, I pray for the speedy recovery of all those injured and their loved ones who perished in the storm to rest in eternal peace.

I wish to inform all citizens and residents of the country that my Government is fully aware of the scale of the damage caused by this natural tragedy. We have since taken immediate steps to redress the situation.

Working with the National Disaster Agency (NDMA) and the relevant line institutions, the Government has activated the country's 'Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan.' The National Disaster Management Agency staff deployed around the country are working tirelessly to assess the full extent of the damage, and they are instituting measures to mitigate the effects of this natural disaster.

Based on an NDMA preliminary assessment report, the storm destroyed property worth millions of Dalasis and injured many people, apart from claiming ten (10) lives.

I appeal to all citizens and residents, all corporate bodies, and our development partners to work with

the NDMA on disaster risk reduction mechanisms and support the victims.

Fellow Gambians,

Agriculture is vital for our food security and survival. At the same time, we also benefit from it for subsistence. Therefore, I will seize this opportunity, as I always do, to call on the youth and all able-bodied citizens to engage in agriculture as a business venture.

It is also worth noting that we can improve environmental sanitation by maintaining waterways clear of debris and garbage.

My Government will urge the Department of Physical planning to learn lessons from the poor planning of old settlements and, in the future, plan

new communities better, taking account of waterways and proper drainage systems.

In conclusion, I reiterate my call for support and solidarity with the victims of the storm as they rebuild their lives and livelihood.

I thank you for your attention.