

THE REPUBLIC OF THE GAMBIA

# State House Newsletter

Vol: 2 Jan 2018 Edition



"The realization of the vision is possible if all of us here dare to assert professional ethics in our daily interactions" says **President Barrow**

# Contents

Acknowledgement	3
Overview	4
Achievements in one year	5
Governance	8
Cabinet meetings:	8
Cabinet Appoints	11
Strengthening the Justice System	13
Swearing of Judicial Service Commissioners	13
New Gambian judges take oath to uphold justice	14
The National Security Council inaugurated	15
Security Sector Reform Project Launched	15
Participants of Nigerian Air Force War College on study tour	18
President with Nigerian Air Force War College	18
International Relations	19
Debut at the 72nd UN General Assembly	19
On the side lines of the 72nd UNGA	20
Ambassadors present their letters of credence	21
Commonwealth Secretariat assessment team visits	25
Promoting Regional Peace and Integration	28
Enhancing regional peace	28
Modeling regional integration with Senegal	29
President Ernest Bai Koroma Visits The Gambia	30
New Political entrant in the sub-region	31
The inauguration of Senegal's New Airport	31
Thank you visit to Nigeria	32
Supporting the Development Agenda	34
International Conference Centre	34
Visit to Kotu Power Plant	35
Education and Youth Empowerment	36
Curbing youth migration	36
Support for investment in the education sector	37
10th Convocation of the University of the Gambia	38
Advocacy on youth empowerment	39
Advocating for Health	40
Investment Promotion	42
Inauguration of QCITY	43
Networking	44
State visits	44
Germany pledges support to The Gambia	44
State Visit to The People's Republic of China	46
Social and Religious Affairs	51
The new Khalifa of the Tidiania, Sereign Ababacarr Mbaye Sy Mansour	51
Politics	53
Meeting Gambians Abroad	54
Information and Communication	56

# Acknowledgement

It has been another challenging but exciting six months. Special thanks go to all those who made it possible for the six months to be engaging, exciting and well as challenging. Special thanks go to the media team at statehouse. Our appreciation also goes specifically to Sulayman Touray for the beautiful pictures. This second edition was produced at the time when we had to re-adjust to the realities of limited staff capacity. We are however grateful that there were many behind the scenes who continuously gave us courage and hope to march on. We acknowledge the supporting roles of outgoing Secretary General, Dawda D. Fadera and Secretary to the Cabinet, Isatou Auber-Faal. In the same vein, we welcome the new team, Secretary General, Mr Habib S. Drammeh and Secretary to the Cabinet, Ebrima S. Ceesay.

Thank you guys for the dedication and professionalism, let us keep focused to realise our goal in the New Gambia. We recognise your contributions, the team spirit, the extra time and efforts. To our families, we thank them for their understanding and support, we love you all.

# Overview

This second edition of the **State House Newsletter** is source of information on the engagements of the Gambian Head of State, President Adama Barrow. It spells out governance policies as embedded in, the National Development Plan 2018-2021, security sector reforms, promotion of education and youth empowerment, regional peace and integration. It also brings to the fore front, the President's engagements with the international partners and his presence at the global stage.

The main issues in this edition of the Newsletter include outcomes of meetings with cabinet, development partners both at the national, regional and at the international levels. It shares thoughts on curbing youth migration, support for investment in education, advocacy for youth empowerment and adding value to higher education.

The meetings with health experts demonstrate political will to encourage partners to invest in health.

The belief that The Gambia no longer want to be isolated is advanced through engagements promoting

regional and international relations. Having consultations and meetings on development issues have not only built confidence in the government but also opens the opportunity to learn from others.

We are motivated by the increase of 70% in the followership of **BarrowPORG** Facebook page and 68% likes of the page. Meanwhile the twitter handle **@BarrowPresident** followers has an increase of 161% in six months. While we appreciate the interest, it has also challenged us to work harder to improve and try to meet the expectations.

It is hoped that this edition will further bring the ideals and policies of President Barrow to the fore amongst partners, ministries, agencies, institutions, civil society and others amongst.

As this edition came in the New Year, I wish you all a Happy and prosperous 2018.

Amie Bojang-Sissoho

Director of Press and Public Relations  
Media and Public Relations Unit  
Office of the President

# Achievements in one year

## Overviews of achievements in one year

### Area of progress from 2016 to 2017

#### Policies

- Setting up of the Truth Reconciliation and Reparation Commission
- The Constitutional Review Commission
- The Human Rights Commission
- Information bill

#### Cabinet approved these and many other Bills for presentation to the National Assembly

- A Three year National Development Plan 2018 – 2021 validated and finalized
- Civil Service Reform Programme 2018-2027 over 3,000 ghost workers were recorded
- Five UN Treaties signed

#### MACRO ECONOMIC STABILITY

Gross international reserves 1.6 months of import cover 3.7 months

GDP growth 2.2% to 3.0%

Inflation 8.8% to 7.4 between January to October 2017

Government's borrowing reduced closed to 50 percent

#### TAX REFORMS

Import duty on rice	15% to 0% until 2020
Duty on imported flour reduced	47% to 20%
personal income tax	30% to 25%
Tax-free threshold	D18,000 p/a to D24,000 p/a
Reduced corporate income tax rate on profits	30% to 27%
Rate on turnover for audited accounts	1.5% to 1%
Rate on turnover for unaudited accounts	2.5 % to 2%
Reduced Residential income tax	10% to 8%
reduced tariff on commercial rent	15% to 10%
reduced excise tariff for new cars	25% to 20%

#### MAJOR PROJECTS STARTED

A State of Art Health Facility valued at \$27 million at Resort in Kololi

\$50 Million International conference Center Bijilo

\$20 Million Power Plant in Brikama

## **PROJECT INHERITED AND COMPLETED UNDER THE BARROW ADMINISTRATION**

Stink-Corner Access Road  
Soutouma-Sereh-Gambissara Road  
Wellingara-Sinchu  
Nusrat High School Road  
Master Jatta Road  
Progress of 47% on Trans-Gambia Bridge  
progress of about 27% Laminkoto-Passimas Road  
progress of 65% Sukuta-Janbanjelly Road  
Studies conducted for the widening of the Bertil Harding Highway and  
Kairaba Avenue Road

## **YOUTH EMPOWERMENT PROJECT (YEP)**

Signed 11 Million Euros MOU with International Trade Centre (ITC), a four year EU Trust for Africa project on the returnees' reintegration

## **GAMBIA PORTS AUTHORITY**

Commissioning of New Ferry for Banjul-Barra (Kunta Kinteh)  
Procurement of a tugboat (Kanku Jeri)

## **GAMBIA CIVIL AVIATION AUTHORITY**

Completion of Airport Improvement Project Phase II

## **GAMBIA INTERNATIONAL AIRLINES**

Cargo Complex at Banjul International Airport

## **EDUCATION**

220 Classrooms built for 70 Madrassah  
339 Classrooms for 50 conventional  
curriculum review: syllabuses for 6 learning areas revised  
75 Teachers in various disciplines sent to UTG in 2017

## **JUDICIARY**

Gambian judges and Commissioners appointed

## **AGRICULTURE**

Fertilizer subsidized and groundnut trade season 2017/2018 \$17.5 million, Islamic Development Bank support

## **ENERGY**

Rural electricity supply      Average supply available between 20- 24 hours  
Greater Banjul Area      Stabi

**The Barrow doctrine is:  
To promote democracy,  
freedom and rule of  
law in the pursuit of  
development**

**Five key priority areas  
of President Barrow's  
development agenda:**

**Energy  
Agriculture  
Health  
Education and Youth  
Empowerment  
Tourism**

**The priorities are in line  
with the  
National Development  
Plan 2018 - 2021**

# Governance

## Cabinet meetings:

### **Review of policy proposals, proposed bills, project and reports**

During 2017, Cabinet held 8 sessions. President Barrow noted that expectations are high and that his government has to place urgency on a transformative national development agenda in line with the Coalition manifesto. He highlighted the huge task ahead and the need to be action oriented. He set out the priority areas to include the energy sector, fixing the broken economy, unifying the nation, improving the health and agricultural sub-sectors and ending the country's isolation. He further highlighted the urgency for institutional, electoral and constitutional reforms in line with what he described as "our new democratic principles that will respond to the realities of our time." The President pointed out to his Cabinet that all these will be addressed alongside with the Civil Service and Security as well as state owned enterprise reforms.

In line with democratic principles, President Barrow advised Cabinet to debate constructively to reach consensus on the common agenda. This, he said, will require collective responsibility to further the national development agenda. He called on the cabinet to work hard and take advantage of the good will of our development partners to achieve the expectations of Gambians.

Also last year, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) organised a three-day retreat for Cabinet on the theme "**Collaborative Leadership and Dialogue**". Its objectives were to achieve more effective and holistic strategies for inclusive processes that advance governance in the country and identify key priorities of the government and refocus on ways forward.

### **Proposed Bills**

- **The Continental Shelf and Maritime Zones Bill, 2015.**
- **Basic and Secondary Education Act 2016 - which will support strategies to improve basic and secondary education in the country**
- **Setting up of the Truth Reconciliation and Reparation Commission**
- **Waste Management and Forestry Bill**
- **The 2018-2027 Civil Service Reform Programme**
- **The 2016 Food Safety and Quality Amendment Bill**
- **Progress on an Information bill to guide the sector, including the sub-sector of broadcasting.**
- **A bill on the establishment of the Constitutional Review Commission**
- **The Human Rights Commission**
- **The ratification of the Convention on Cluster Munitions**

**Cabinet approved for the presentation of the bills to the National Assembly for enactment**



## Policies tabled for discussion

- *A communications strategy that would ensure regular communication from government to the Gambian public.*
- *The Gambia had been invited to become a signatory to the International Energy Charter*
- *Bilateral agreement on agriculture with Turkey*
- *The National Development Plan of Action*
- *The revised 2017 national budget*
- *A policy to further liberalize the broadcasting sector and to further promote freedom of expression and empower citizens.*
- *To issue licensing for more TV stations to operate in The Gambia, as well as expand the market for more Gambians to engage in the information and communication sector.*
- *The Policy on 2017–2030 Health Sector Financing*
- *A memorandum of understanding between the government and development partners introducing the Gambia Country Compact*
- *A national climate policy.*
- *Financial agreement with the International Development Association (IDA), the arm of the World Bank Group that makes concessionary loans and grants to development countries. The agreement is worth \$56 million and will be presented to the National Assembly for final approval.*
- *A travel policy paper*
- *A levy on fuel as an alternative source of financing for sports.*
- *The naming and re-naming of roads, other infrastructure and government facilities.*
- *A budget policy framework for 2018/2020*

# REPORTS OF MEETINGS ATTENDED BY CABINET MEMBERS

- Agriculture - participation in the 9th Annual Forum on Agriculture and the 12th International Agricultural Fair.
- World Bank and International Monetary Fund Spring Meetings in Washington.
- USD15 million supports available to improve livestock rearing, energy and the promotion of healthcare service from the Islamic Development Bank (IDB).
- African Development Bank (AfDB) to support African countries, focusing on five critical areas, all of which resonated with The Gambia's development needs. They are: electricity, food security, industrialization, regional integration and improving people's quality of life.
- Financing for Integrated Financial Management Information System (IFMIS) and the results for education achievement and development projects.
- The Airport improvement project phase II.
- The status of petroleum exploration and production of licenses for off-shore blocks A1 to A6, as well as on-shore blocks in the Lower and Upper River regions of the country.
- Land allocation and management in the Tourism Development Area (TDA).
- The joint border verification and densification between The Gambia and Senegal.
- A report on the 4th Conference of African Ministers in Charge of Border Issues, which took place in Addis Ababa in October 2017.
- The Harvard Ministerial Leadership Forum for Education and Health Ministers in the United States in June as well as the 7th Ministers of Youth and Education World Forum, held in South Korea in July.
- The 51st Ordinary Session of the ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government, held in Monrovia in June.
- The 29th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union, held in Addis Ababa in July.
- Report on official visit to Turkey by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, International Cooperation and Gambians Abroad.
- The Continental Free Trade Area which aims at creating modalities that will promote trade within Africa. It is expected to provide a policy framework for Gambian businesses to be part of the process to expand trade in goods and services in a conducive investment environment and boost the economy within the continent.
- Review and adoption of policy papers presented on trade, information and communication, population data, finance, energy, constitutional review.
- Progress on the Electricity Roadmap as well as the Chino-Gambian Energy Cooperation.
- Study tour to Rwanda on civil registration and vital statistics undertaken last May.
- The Presidency of the ECOWAS Commission.

# Cabinet Appoints

Swearing of the Vice President



In his capacity as the President of the Republic, of The Gambia, Mr. Adama Barrow, acting under the provisions of Sections 70(1) and 70(3) of the Constitution of the Republic of The Gambia has appointed Mrs. Fatoumata Jallow-Tambajang as Vice President and Minister for Women's Affairs with effect from 8th September, 2017. She was sworn-in a month later on 9 November, 2017.

Also acting under the provision of Section 71 (4) (b) of the Constitution of The Republic of the Gambia, decided to relieve Mr. Mai Ahmad Fatty of his appointment as Minister of The Interior with effect from Friday, 10 November 2017.

The Attorney General and Minister of Justice Honourable Abubacarr M. Tambadou was overseer of the Interior Ministry until the appointment of Mr Habib Saihou Drammeh as Minister of Interior on the 4 December 2017. Mr Drammeh was sworn-in to fully assume the functions of his office.

In other developments in the Cabinet during the reporting period, President Barrow re-assigned Mr Dawda Fadera as Ambassador to Washington and re-deployed Mr Habib Saihou Drammeh as Secretary General and Head of the Civil Service. Mr Ebrima M Mballow took over as Minister of Interior and was sworn in on the 11th January 2018.

Also Secretary to the Cabinet, Mrs Isatou Auber Faal has been moved to Gambia National Petroleum as Deputy Managing Director, while Permanent Secretary Office of the President, Mr Ebrima S. Ceesay has been appointed and sworn in as the new Secretary to The Cabinet.



President Barrow with Hon. Mballow, SG Habib Saihou Drammeh, and SC Ebrima Ceesay after the swearing

# Strengthening the Justice System

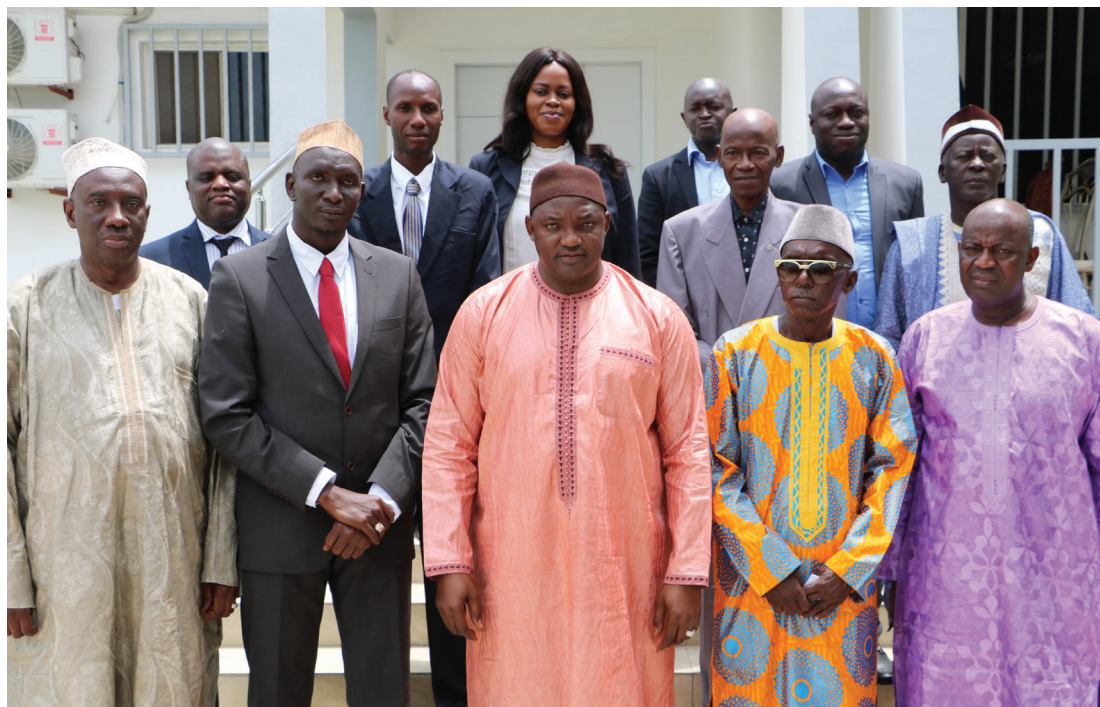
## Swearing of Judicial Service Commissioners

The Judiciary Service Commission is responsible for recommending appointments of judges and magistrates. It also advises the President and the government on measures to improve efficiency.

Based on *section 145(1)(e) and section 145(1)(f) of The Gambia's 1997 Constitution*, President Adama Barrow has sworn in two new members of The Gambia's Judicial Service Commission. Former National Assembly member Lamin Ceesay of Jarumeh Koto and veteran agronomist Bolong L.K. Jatta of Busumbala both took the oath at a swearing-in ceremony in the Office of the President on the 7th August 2017.

Constituting the membership of the commission and getting it fully operational is part of the institutional reforms underway to improve efficiency in the Gambian Judiciary.

Chief Justice Hassan Abubacarr Jallow said the new members of the Judicial Service Commission brought a wealth of community experience to the work of the body, and strengthened it immensely. He expressed confidence in their ability to discharge their responsibilities with professionalism and integrity.



Senior officials from the Judiciary with President Barrow

In October 2017 President Adama Barrow swore in six new Gambian judges to ensure that in future, the entire Gambian judicial system would be efficiently and professionally managed by qualified Gambians.

The judges are expected to uphold virtues of integrity, professional ability, command trust and respect through their conduct. Such virtues would preserve public confidence in the competence and independence of the judicial system. The judges were reminded that citizens rely on the law, and that the oath they took requires that justice be done according to the law, without discrimination.

President Barrow assured the new judges that his administration would continue to create the conducive environment for them to deliver on their mandate without any interference from the Executive branch. He urged them to maintain impartiality and be fearless in the administration of the law.

The appointment of Justice Awa Bah marks the first time that a woman has been appointed as President of the Court of Appeal. Half the number of new judges sworn-in today is women. The appointments reflect President Barrow's commitment to promote gender equality in decision-making positions.



⌄ New Gambian judges take oath to uphold justice

## The National Security Council inaugurated

President Adama Barrow in August 2017 launched a seven-member National Security Council (NSC). He urged the Council members to work together and complement their efforts. The President emphasized the unity of purpose amongst the members in serving one government for a strong, safe and secure nation. The Gambian leader said with coordination and corporation, the different units of the armed and security forces could overcome potential from being real threats, nationally and globally to guarantee the security of all Gambians. President Barrow urged the various security units to take up their responsibilities to protect the country.

***“Let us through our Gambia Police Force and related services enforce our laws and deter the criminals. Let us through our State Intelligence Service based on informed analysis, provide advice to policy makers to enable them make informed policy options, take decisions and enhance strategic interventions.”***

The importance of having structures in place to properly advise to make informed decisions on security matters are linked to peace and security to socio-economic development.

The launching of the NSC was followed with the **Security Sector Reform Project in September 2017.**

President Barrow recalled the situation of the sector when he took over the leadership of the country. ***“When my administration was sworn in last January, it was clear to us that we were taking over a security sector that had been deeply politicised and not responsive to the needs of our people.”***



Security Sector Reform Project Launched

The reforms initiated are to ensure an effective and accountable security sector under democratic control with full respect for human rights, the rule of law, and fundamental principles of good governance. The reform is to transform the country's security sector into a functional and effective one that delivers for the good of the Gambian people.

Supported by the United Nations and other partners, the Security Sector Reform project is an initiative by the Barrow administration to transform the country's security sector into institutions that are effective, professional and accountable to the state and the people of The Gambia. It will help the government design and implement an inclusive security reform strategy, which will ensure that the security forces accomplish their constitutional mandate and mission, in line with the rule of law and democratic principles of transparency and accountability.

The government has set up a steering committee to provide guidance and oversight of the reform process. It is made up of representatives from relevant ministries, including Defense, Interior, Foreign Affairs, International Cooperation and Gambians Abroad, Finance, Justice, and key security sector reform partners, notably the United Nations, African Union, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the European Union (EU).



President Launches Security Sector Reform Project



The security sector reform project is an important political process backed by the United Nations Development Project Banjul office and other partners. The UN Secretary-General's Special Representative, Dr. Mohamed Ibn Chambas, explained that the security sector reform process ought to be inclusive and participatory, with the aim of making justice and security institutions accessible and responsive to the needs and rights of all Gambians.

ECOWAS Ambassador to The Gambia Vabah Gayflor said ECOWAS was proud of the restoration of democracy in The Gambia. There is optimism for The Gambia to set the pace in the implementation of its security sector reform and to serve as the security sector reform template to follow in Africa.

EU Ambassador Attila Lajos said security sector reform in The Gambia faced deep-seated challenges after 22 years of a repressive regime. He added that the country's stability was important, and reforming the security sector was a key priority in stabilizing its democracy and making The Gambia a hub for human rights champion.

The fulfillment of the commitment of partners on their promise to The Gambia, coordination and timely sequencing are of paramount importance for the success of the implementation of the reform. The reform process would lead to the emergence of a professional, ethical and competent security sector. This will position the country to confront the security challenges of the 21st century and promote a democratic society. It will also strengthen the environment for economic development. The futuristic reform would balance defense and the needs of the country, while working with various structures of society.

Former Interior Minister Hon. Mai Ahmad Fatty, expressed optimism in the future of national security and the challenges of the 21st century.

The new National Security Adviser, Retired Colonel Momodou Badjie and the Director of Press and Public Relations, OP moderated the launching, and was attended by security chiefs, cabinet ministers, members of the diplomatic corps and senior officials.

## Participants of Nigerian Air Force War College on study tour



President with Nigerian Air Force War College

In November 2017 Air Commodore, MC Nnaji led a thirteen-member group of Nigerian Air Force War College to pay a courtesy call on President Adama Barrow. Choosing The Gambia for a study tour was a source of pride for the country. The knowledge sharing from the tour was expected to benefit both countries and strengthening African solidarity.

Nigeria plays a leadership role in the sub regional body, ECOWAS. The Nigerian Head of State, President Muhammadu Buhari, and his government supported The Gambia during its political impasse last year to defend truth and democracy. The strong ties are further expressed with the support Nigeria continues to provide to The Gambia, with the active presence of the Nigerian contingent to the ECOWAS Military Mission in The Gambia.

The exchange visit allowed the group to learn from The Gambia how its military uses skills in engineering, construction, and medical outreach to engage and contribute to national development. It was meant to enhance their skills in the development of their career, as fighters and peace makers. The military is one of the security units playing a pivotal role in the ongoing security transformation of The Gambia.



WALO military officers called on President Barrow

# International Relations

## Debut at the 72nd UN General Assembly



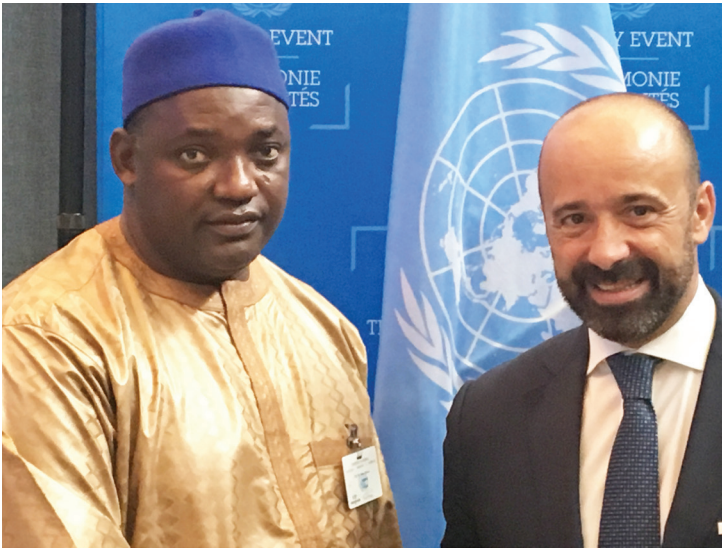
⌄ President Barrow addressing United Nation General Assembly in New York, USA

In New York, President Adama Barrow attended the 72nd United Nations General Assembly -UNGA72. There he made his maiden statement at the UNGA72 and attended the debates.

Apart from his widely acclaimed speech, President Barrow made history by being the first Gambian President to sign five United Nations treaties at once, while attending the 72nd United Nations General Assembly.

Alongside the Assembly, the President participated in the UN meeting on the Sustainable Development Goals, the African Union meeting on Global partnership towards Harnessing the Demographic Dividend in Africa. He also held bilateral meetings with several world leaders, business leaders, individuals and groups. In his last engagement, he attended a town hall meeting with hundreds of Gambians and friends of The Gambia.

## On the side lines of the 72nd UNGA

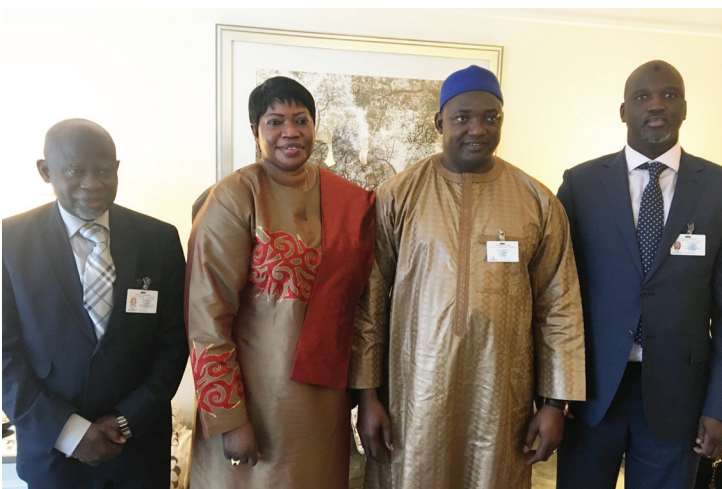


### Five treaties signed:

1. *Abolition of the Death Penalty as part of the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*
2. *International Convention on The Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families*
3. *International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance*
4. *United Nations Convention on Transparency in Treaty-Based Investor-State Arbitration*
5. *Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons*



The Moroccan Minister of Foreign Affairs, Nasser Bourita, an envoy of His Majesty, King Muhammad IV, while attending the United Nations General Assembly in New York made a courtesy call President Adama Barrow to promote African solidarity and to improve relations with The Gambia. Their discussion also emphasized the importance of security in achieving other development goals.



The Gambia has turned a new page in its history to bring in new laws that would promote equality and justice. Morocco is building a new office complex for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in The Gambia, contributing to the infrastructural development of the country.

Meeting with different delegations

## Foreign Ambassadors present their letters of credence

The new Gambian government continues to build its diplomatic relations globally. Under the year under review, The Gambia strengthened bilateral ties with thirteen countries in Africa, Middle East, Asia, Europe and North America.

President Barrow received envoys from Turkey, United Kingdom, Guinea Bissau, Kuwait, Mauritania, Nigeria, South Korea, Switzerland, Namibia, Canada, Netherlands, Austria and Germany. The Ambassadors presented their letters of credence to President Barrow and pledged to cement relations, in various sectors, including education, health, fisheries and mechanised agriculture, while also looking at investment in trade, energy and telecommunication. Technology, access to clean water, Tourism are areas that would be strengthened through diplomatic ties.

President Barrow told the diplomats that his government advocates for peace and democracy, as well as encourages communication and dialogue between countries.

The Gambian leader expects closer cooperation with the wider world to yield support for the country's National Development Plan. He urged the development partners to support the resource mobilisation conference scheduled to take place in early 2018, for the effective implementation of the national agenda for reforms in various sectors including the security, judiciary and civil service. An improved energy sector promotes investment, thus creating jobs, and building confidence of the youth to address the multi thronged dimension of migration with skilled labour force.

The Gambia's membership to the International Criminal Court – ICC, promotes the principles of democracy. Regional cooperation through South-South Cooperation and collaboration at the multilateral level is important in foreign relations.

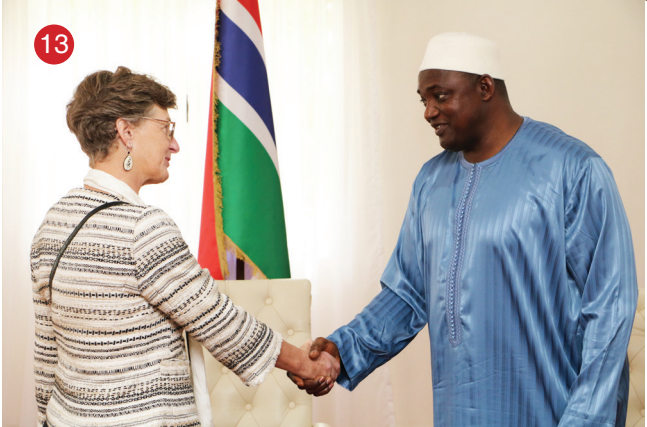
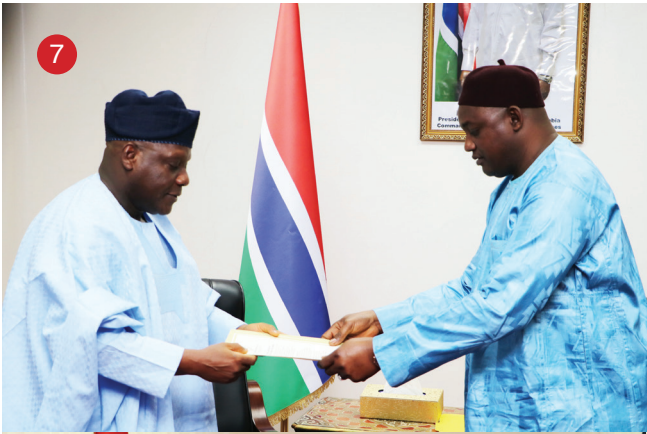
*“Nobody wants to be isolated. We want to be part of all international bodies. This was one man's decision and not something that was put to all Gambians. If it had been a referendum, the decision would never have been taken.” Said President Barrow.*

President Barrow receiving the diplomats thanked his colleague head of states through their Ambassadors for the support provided to his government and The Gambia at large.



⌵ Thirteen Ambassadors presenting Letter of Credentials to President Barrow

- 1. Turkey
- 2. United Kingdom
- 3. Guinea Bissau
- 4. Netherlands
- 5. Kuwait
- 6. Mauritania



- 7. Nigeria
- 8. South Korea
- 9. Switzerland
- 10. Namibia
- 11. Canada
- 12. Germany
- 13. Austria

President Barrow called on the diplomats to build on the progress that their predecessors had made in constructive bilateral cooperation toward the mutual benefit of their citizens and the Gambian people. He said an ambassadorial presence was evidence of the strong ties that The Gambia enjoyed with their countries. He assured the envoys of his support to ensure that they have successful terms in office.

He emphasized the need to put migration on a wider context that will require cooperation to promote investment in source countries like The Gambia to create jobs and help in the management of migration.

The Gambia's foreign policy is to be open to all nations, and it seeks friendship and cordial relations with all countries. The goal is to enhance cooperation for the socio-economic development of The Gambia and those countries.

President Barrow and his team were commended for their leadership, noting that they had set an example of democracy worthy of emulation.



# Commonwealth Secretariat assessment team visits



Members of the Commonwealth Secretariat team with Ms McKenzie were: Dr. Roger Koranteng, Head of Public Sector Governance; Ms Marie-Pierre Olivier, Legal Policy Advisor, Rule of Law; and Ms Lindiwe Maleleka, Political Officer, Africa in the Secretariat's Political Division. The team was accompanied by Ms Saffie Sankareh, Permanent Secretary from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Gambians Abroad.

Efforts to enrol The Gambia back in the Commonwealth organization led to an official assessment mission in September 2017. The team led by Head of Human Rights at the Commonwealth Secretariat, Karen McKenzie explained that the Commonwealth Secretariat assessment of how well The Gambia met membership prerequisites. That would form part of the Commonwealth Secretary General's consultation with member states.

The formal process, thereafter, will entail the Government of The Gambia being invited to submit a formal request to re-join the Commonwealth. That formal expression of interest would then be considered by the members.

The Gambia re-applied for membership of The Commonwealth because of the deep-seated feeling by Gambians that they had never really left the Commonwealth family.

It was unfortunate and unilateral decision of the former President to withdraw the country from the organisation in 2013.

The fact-finding mission would provide all the needed information for The Gambia to return back to the Commonwealth. The people of The Gambia took a decision in December 2016 about the direction of their future as a new democracy and a new Gambia.

As member of the Commonwealth, The Gambia benefited from wide ranging technical support particularly in education, health and governance.

## EU Human Rights Chief pledges support for The Gambia

*“The Gambia, through its example as a human rights leader, could continue to inspire many countries on the African continent and around the world, and demonstrate that it is possible for human rights, security and development to all work together” said EU Special Representative for Human Rights, Stavros Lambrinidis.*

In another development, The Gambia received assurances of continued strong support from the European Union as President Barrow welcomed a delegation from the European Union Human Rights External Action Service.

The leader of the delegation, EU Special Representative for Human Rights Stavros Lambrinidis, congratulated President Barrow for what he described as “the remarkable democratic transition in the country and the bravery of the Gambian

people”. The EU commits to remain a steadfast partner of the Gambian government and people in the transition.

President Barrow told the EU Special Representative that upholding human rights remained one of the big issues for his government, which was optimistic and willing to learn from others’ experiences. He informed them that The Gambia was undertaking comprehensive reforms in different areas, including the security sector. The government was working towards a new and all-encompassing constitution for the Third Republic. It is crucial for citizens to work together to nurture the change that they all fought for, despite their coming from different political leanings and are stakeholders in the reforms taking place. It is therefore key for all to embrace the change of regime and support the government reform agenda.



≡ EU Special Representative for Human Rights Stavros Lambrinidis



Mr Barrow: ***“In politics there are no permanent friends and no permanent enemies.***

***One has to be courageous to take criticism.”***

Some activists have expressed concern that the law banning female genital mutilation –FGM might not be upheld following the change of government. However, dilating on the issue, President Barrow gave assurances that his government would uphold the law banning FGM, and stressed the need to raise more awareness about the harmful practice and the law banning it in The Gambia.

Mr Lambrinidis acknowledged that ***“It was not easy to build institutions, instill a culture of freedom and security, and at the same time secure a presence for one’s country in the international community all at once.”*** He appreciated the efforts of the government to change policies, hearts and minds, and integrate human rights in its reforms. He added that the Barrow administration had encouraged many with the inclusion of members of civil society in its endeavours. He assured the President of the EU’s commitment to support an exchange idea with other countries. ***“Focus on human rights as your new stamp, and keep in mind that you are an inspiration to many others,”*** he told President Barrow.



Series of Delegates called on President Barrow in 2017

# Promoting Regional Peace and Integration

## Enhancing regional peace

Since the inception of the Barrow administration, relations between The Gambia and countries in the subregion have improved significantly.

The Republic of Senegal has sent several missions to improve the bilateral relations and promote peace and stability in the region. President Adama Barrow would like the close relationship that he and Senegalese President Macky Sall enjoy to be extended to all sectors and institutions of their two countries. He made these remarks to Senegalese Army Chief General Cheikh Gueye stating that security engendered peace and stability so that other sectors could develop. He emphasised that with continued trust and confidence building among all stakeholders, it was possible to maintain peace and stability in the region.



⌄ Promoting Regional Peace and Integration

## Modeling regional integration with Senegal

President Adama Barrow and his Senegalese counterpart, President Macky Sall continued to consult with one another and engage in dialogue over issues. President Barrow called on both countries to work towards being a model of regional integration by facilitating free trade across their borders. In March this 2017, The Gambia and Senegal signed several cooperation agreements to promote trade, fisheries, peace and security for the mutual benefit of the Gambian and Senegalese people.

Senegalese Foreign Minister Sidiki Kaba delivered a special message to President Barrow, reiterating President Sall's commitment to the spirit of friendliness and good neighborliness between The

Gambia and Senegal. The message also included a formal introduction of Foreign Minister Kaba to the Gambian leader following his recent appointment.

Mr Kaba and President Barrow discussed a series of bilateral issues to further cement the friendly ties between the two countries. The President commended the positive role President Sall continued to play in building confidence and strengthening their cordial relationship.

Presenting a piece of African art to President Barrow, Minister Kaba said the choice of artwork was a representation of the freedom Mr Barrow brought to the people of The Gambia, and the pride that Africa derived from such an achievement.



⌘ President Barrow with Senegalese Foreign Affairs minister Sidiki Kaba

# President Ernest Bai Koroma Visits The Gambia

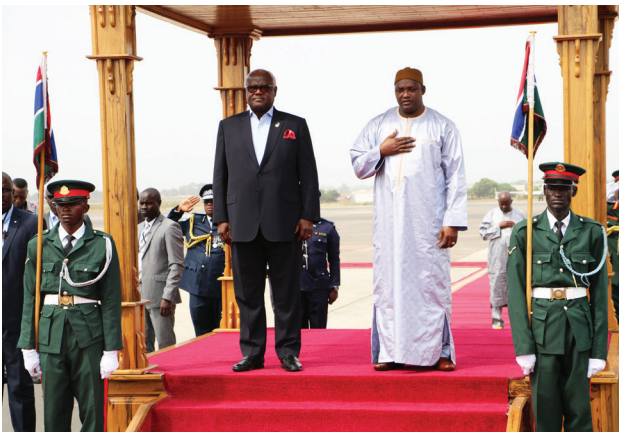
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In this edition, the visit of the Sierra Leonean President, Dr. Ernest Bai Koroma is featured as the first African head of state to visit since the inauguration of President Barrow last February. His official visit reinforced the historic ties between Sierra Leone and The Gambia.

President Koroma was amongst the ECOWAS head of states who worked tirelessly to ensure that The Gambia went through a peaceful transition and avoided bloodshed when the former president reversed his earlier decision to accept the

2016 free and fair presidential elections results, won by President Adama Barrow. President Koroma is the 4th and current President of Sierra Leone and he is serving the end of his second term as President since he was first democratically elected in 2007. He is amongst the African leaders who are championing democracy and good governance by respecting term limits in Africa. President Koroma is not vying for the presidency in the upcoming 2018 elections in Sierra Leone.

Sierra Leone and The Gambia have had a long history of relationship, bound together by colonial experience, culture and intermarriage. The two countries have in the past supported each other in difficult times during the war in Sierra Leone, the Ebola outbreak and in the recent flood and landslides in which many lives were lost and many maimed.



President Ernest Bai Koroma during ceremony at the airport



President Barrow and President Ernest Bai Koroma at the Qcity multi purposed center

## New Political entrant in the sub-region: Liberia elects a new President

On behalf of the people of The Gambia, President Barrow congratulated President-elect George Weah and people of Liberia for his election victory. It is another victory for democracy in Africa, transferring power from one democratic government to another in a peaceful manner. This message of goodwill further consolidates the relationship with Liberia strengthened through the out-going President, H.E Ellen Johnson Sirleaf.

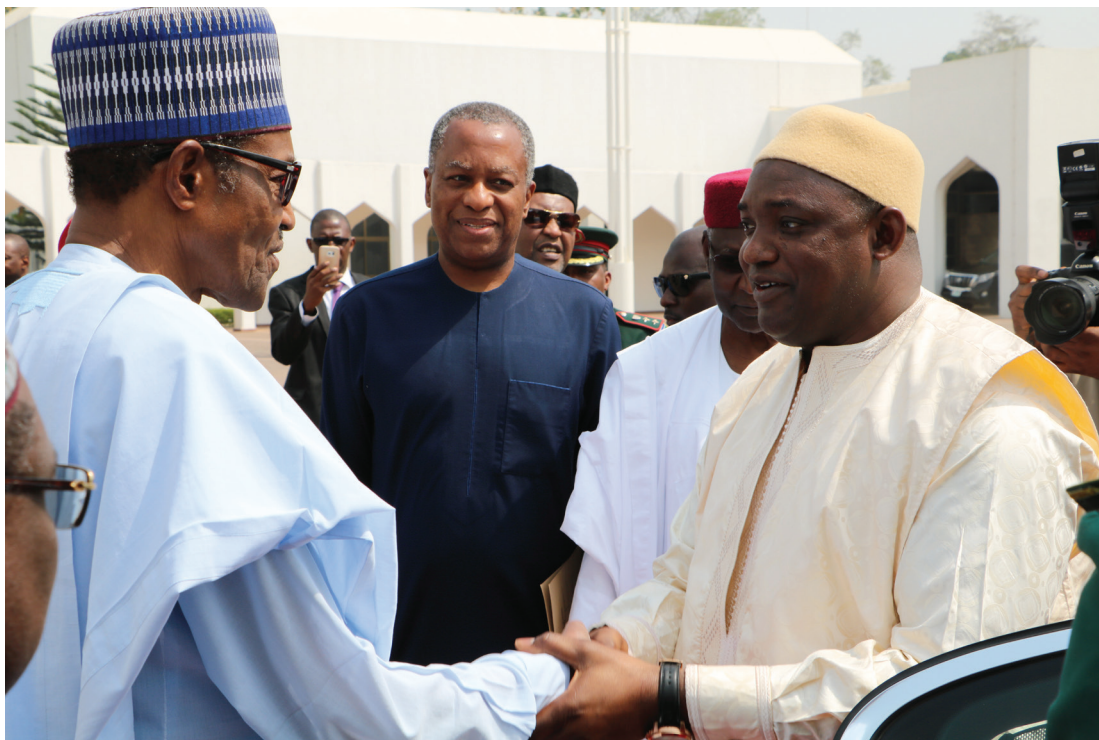
## The inauguration of Senegal's New Airport

President Adama Barrow was amongst several heads of state attended the inauguration of the second international airport in Senegal, Blaise Diagne International Airport is situated at Ndiass, in the region of Thies about 50 KM away from the Senegalese capital, Dakar in December 2017. The President was accompanied by Her Excellency, the First Lady, cabinet ministers and other senior officials.



≡ President Barrow and First Lady attends the Inaugural Ceremony of Blaise Diagne International Airport

# Thank you visit to Nigeria

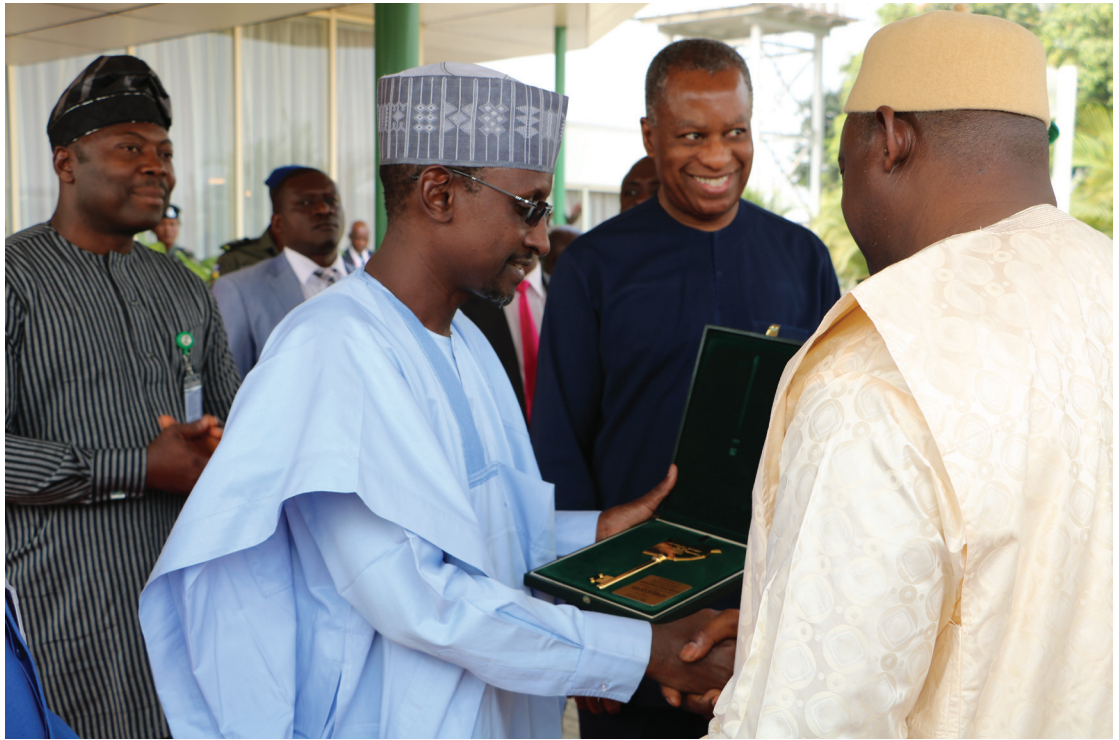


President Barrow with with President Muhammadu Buhari of Federal Republic of Nigeria

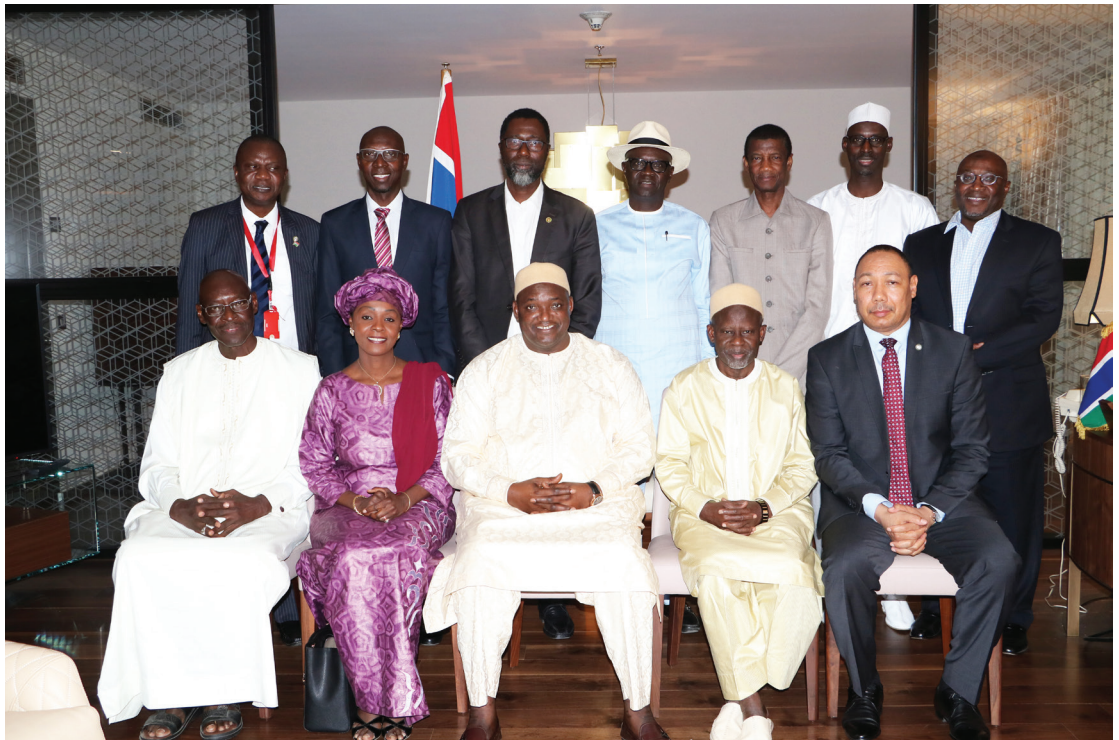
An official visit to the Federal Republic of Nigeria was undertaken by President Barrow to thank President Muhammadu Buhari for his role and the support Nigeria gave to ECOWAS to ensure peace and stability in The Gambia. President Barrow said President Buhari's statement at the ECOWAS leaders meeting in Mali was decisive. ***"If Jammeh wants to challenge the sub-region, he is welcome."*** President Barrow said that statement was important for The Gambia and defending the truth. At Aso Rock, the state house

in Abuja, the two leaders held a Tete-a-Tete to review the progress of democracy and the important support Nigeria through ECOWAS is currently providing to The Gambia. Also, Nigeria has been a strong partner in providing technical assistance to The Gambia. The two Heads of State pledged to continue to strengthen their bilateral relations in different areas including education, the judiciary, peace and security among others. The technical teams of the two countries will draw a practical programme in the realization of the cooperation.





⌘ During the visit, the Minister of the Federal Capital Territory, Muhammed Musa Bello, awarded a symbolic key to Abuja to President Barrow and declared him as honorary citizen.



⌘ President Barrow also met Gambians expatriates in Nigeria.

# Supporting the Development Agenda

## International Conference Centre



≧ Laying of the foundation stone for the International Conference Centre

Government of People's Republic of China (PRC) funds the construction of the International Conference Centre at Bijilo (Monkey Park) in September, 2017. The project is estimated to cost 50 million Dollars.

President Adama Barrow laid the foundation stone of the center, which marked another significant milestone in the drive to transform and modernize the country in line with the philosophy and dictates of the "New Gambia".

The construction of the conference center is expected to last two years, and shall be jointly undertaken by a contractor and consultant firms from the People's Republic of China. They will be assisted by local engineers and technicians throughout the duration of the project.

The Gambia is in a new era of potential opportunities, prosperity, greater freedom and dignity for the people. The government commits to enhance trade, investment and boost the service sector of the economy.

# Visit to Kotu Power Plant

Following periodic updates from National Water & Electric Corporation (NAWEC) management on improvements to electricity supply across the nation, in **September 2017** President Adama Barrow paid a visit to have first experience of the NAWEC main power station at Kotu and expressed dissatisfaction on the situation in the Greater Banjul Area.

*“I wanted to come to NAWEC’s main generation facility here in Kotu myself, and see what is going on; to hear from staff on the ground, and get a better understanding of the challenges that are keeping us from getting stable and reliable electricity. It is important for the public to realise that I share their concerns about electricity supply.”*

≡ Président Barrow at the NAWEC main power station at Kotu



The President learnt about the obsolete generators that were purchased. He was informed that NAWEC was working on various projects to boost generation capacity and alleviate the pain being felt by the Gambian public in terms of electricity supply. The President was shown one of several new generators – a 6.5 megawatt capacity generator, which was being installed at the Kotu power plant and a second new generator at Brikama. NAWEC also reported that it was also implementing a new 11 megawatt generation expansion project

at the Kotu Power Station by the end of December. It promised that another new 8.9 megawatt generator will go into operation in February 2018 to significantly overcome the challenges.

***“I think my visit was timely. I know that there is a lot of concern out there. People are talking and complaining about electricity. I want them to understand that we are taking this seriously. It is important for us to inform the public about what is being done, and how best we can solve the problem.”***

# Education and Youth Empowerment

## Curbing youth migration

The Barrow government has continued to engage its development partners to address youth migration and other development challenges.

A major partner, the European Union, has conducted several missions to The Gambia dialogue with the government on various areas of cooperation including youth migration. In August 2017, the Director

General of the European Commission's Directorate for Development Coordination, West and Central Africa, Ms Carla Montesi and team made a courtesy call on President Adama Barrow. During the discussions, European Union pledged significant financial and technical support to The Gambia. In addition to the 8 billion Dalasi pledged as budget support, a 25 million Euros was to be provided as the EU's first concrete contribution to help address the illegal migration and related challenges.

*EU latest figures in August 2017, indicate that some 12,000 Gambian migrants arrived in Europe. Gambians were said to be among the highest percentage of youths leaving their home country for Europe. Conversely, some young Gambians are known to have voluntarily returned home from Libya with the hope of resettling back in the Gambia.*

*"Stakeholders should engage in dialogue, as migration was a global problem that could be best addressed through job creation for the youth. We should have investments that would create jobs to engage the youth in industrial development and in agriculture." President Barrow pointed out.*



⏪ EU Human Rights Chief pledges support for The Gambia

# Support for investment in the education sector



President Barrow with the Gambia Teaching Trust Delegation

On the home front, the Gambian leader continued to lay emphasis on institutional reforms, which he noted require transparency, accountability and discipline in structures to avoid unnecessary wasteful practices.

The President received a delegation from Gambia Teaching Trust is an independent non-profit charitable organisation that seeks to complement the efforts of the government in recognising, supporting and appreciating the efforts of Teachers in The Gambia. The Trust had recently introduced a annual one million Dalasi

Award Scheme in recognition of the most outstanding Gambian teacher of the year.

In the discussions, President Barrow observed that wages of public servants in general and teachers in particular, were appallingly low and a review of this situation needed to be factored into on-going reform discussions. He assured the young members of the Gambia Teaching Trust of his government's commitment and support for investment in the education sector.

# 10th Convocation of the University of the Gambia

At his maiden role as Chancellor of the University of the Gambia, President Adama Barrow presided over the graduation of over 1000 students from various schools – Agriculture and Environmental Science, Arts and Science, Business and Public Administration, Education, Engineering and Architecture, Information Technology, law, Medicine and Allied Health Sciences. The first President of the Republic of The Gambia, Sir Dawda Kairaba Jawara and

current Head of State, Adama Barrow were conferred Honoris Causa in recognition of their efforts to promote human rights and rule of law. While President Barrow appreciates the award, he would maintain his name as simply, Mr. Adama Barrow, President of the Republic of The Gambia. Honourable Omar A. Jallow received the award on behalf of former President, Sir Dawda Kairaba Jawara.



10th Convocation of the University of the Gambia

# Advocacy on youth empowerment

On a similar visit to State House, Pro – Gambia is a newly established youth led association briefed the Gambian leader on its commitment to end all forms of violence in The Gambia, while contributing to socio-economic development and the promotion of peace and stability through youth sensitization. The organization shared its activities including youth empowerment

by providing for their needs and appealed for scholarship to further their education. The group is also aware that most of the returnees from the backway journey to Europe were school dropouts or youths without skills. Pro-Gambia pledged to accommodate and train them to improve their livelihood.



# Advocating for Health

## President Barrow receives three delegations of health experts

Health is one of the top priority areas of President Barrow's administration. The renewed relationship The Gambia now has with the international community is being nurtured to achieve the desired common goals. Three different delegations of health experts from West African College of Surgeons (WACS), United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Medical Research Council Unit, The Gambia (MRC) respectively were received by President Barrow at Statehouse. He assured them of the political will to improve the country's health sector.

The Executive Committee members of the West African College of Surgeons briefed President Barrow on plans for an upcoming conference in The Gambia scheduled early 2018.

The President and Chairman of the council, Professor King David Terna Yawe informed the Gambian President that the upcoming conference in The Gambia would be an opportunity for the New Gambia to benefit from the college's capacity building and other programmes. He revealed that its 22 member council and over 6000 specialists provide free services and that the Gambia would benefit from surgical outreach services as a way of giving back to the people as well as train personnel who would serve in rural areas.

Gambian health experts in the persons of Dr Melville George, Dr Abubacar Jah (head of Edward Francis Small Teaching

Hospital), Dr Samateh, Dr Roberts and Dr Sowe were amongst the team that called on President Barrow in December 2017.

Similarly, a USAID team from Ghana expressed interest to embark on a health assessment mission of the public health system of The Gambia. The assessment would provide the Ministry of Health with guidance and support for financing, policy and infrastructure. It would also provide opportunity for discussions that would shape the assistance USAID would provide to the ministry.

The re-engagement of USAID in The Gambia is as a result of the New Gambia promoting democratic governance. The United States Ambassador to The Gambia, Her Excellency, Patricia Alsup accompanied the team to State House.

As part of the 70th anniversary celebration of the MRC in The Gambia, the Director of London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, Sir Professor Baron Piot and the Head of the Medical Research Council – MRC, Professor Umberto D'Alessandro were accompanied on a courtesy call to State House by the British Ambassador to The Gambia, Her Excellency, Sharon Wardle.

The MRC celebration, provided researchers from different parts of the world the opportunity to meet in The Gambia. The research center has a long history of working in the Gambia and recent institutional restructuring placed the center under the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. This however does not affect MRC's



community work in the country. MRC would continue to provide capacity building through training. Professor Piot was impressed and he pledged to be an advocate for the New Gambia story of good governance.

In June last year, President Barrow laid the foundation stone of a new hospital that is expected to revolutionise healthcare for Gambians. Horizons Hospital is the brainchild of renowned Gambian neurosurgeon and urologist Professor James Ndow.



⏏ President Barrow laid the foundation stone of Horizons Hospital

# Investment Promotion

President Adama Barrow continues to encourage potential investors in various sectors of development including the health sector. Some are in search to promote health tourism in The Gambia that would likely result in other African countries reach out to The Gambia for health care services and other development avenues.

Turkish Ambassador to The Gambia Ismail Sefa Yuceer, led a 4-member delegation of the Turkey–Gambia Business councils, who presented specific proposals for alternative energy, health care service, aviation and support to the education sector with scholarships to Gambian students.

President Barrow is optimistic that with the democratic atmosphere, respect for rule of law, and a secure environment for business, his government will continue to encourage genuine private sector investment. The political will is manifested through the setting up of an investment committee to review all serious business proposals. He also encourages partnership with The Gambia Chamber of Commerce and other stakeholders.

His Excellency, Mr. Adama Barrow, in an official visit to Dubai attended the Global Investment Forum and the 4th Annual CROSAPF Summit. He was on a panel of three African Heads of state to discuss Investment Opportunities in Africa. This accorded him the opportunity to promote The Gambia and its investment opportunities.

He demonstrates his encouragement Gambians abroad to return by partaking in their events. One such event that brought together hundreds of Gambians together was at the Third Edition of the Taf Africa Global Networking event held last December. The event motivated many Gambian intellectuals and other high achievers to interact and proposed ideas towards nation building.



President Barrow at the 4th Annual CROSAPF Summit in Dubai



President at Taf Africa Global Networking Annual Conference



Gambia Contractors' Association

# Inauguration of QCITY



⌘ Inauguration of QCITY Multi Purposed Center

The Government places high premium on the rapid transformation and modernization of this country in line of the demand and expectations of the public. It calls for the participation of a vibrant and innovative private sector. The private sector needs to play its full part as an engine for growth to the economy in partnership with government whose role is to create the enabling environment for all actors to discharge their full potential necessary to boost the economy of the country, through investment for job creation and improvement of living standards.

The Gambian leader continued to encourage local business people to promote the opportunities in the country.

The test of his government's interest to promote democracy was manifested with the licencing of the first private TV station and inauguration of a multi purposed center – QCITY in November 2017 at Bijilo. It is an innovative undertaking and a firm commitment to discharge corporate social responsibility as expected.



⌘ Inauguration of QCITY Multi Purposed Center

# Networking

During 2017, President Barrow travelled on both official and state visits to Europe, Africa, Asia, the Middle East and the United States. He was at times accompanied by the First Lady and senior government officials. He also received heads of state and missions at home contributing to the realization of the government's development goals.

## State visits

### Germany Pledges to support The Gambia



President Barrow with German President, Frank-Walter Steinmeier

The Gambia and German relations was re-ignited with the visit of the German President, Frank-Walter Steinmeier in December 2017. The historic visit of President Steinmeier, the first European President to visit the New Gambia, marked sincere appreciation to him and to the people of the Federal Republic of Germany. His visit happened during his first year in office when he was elected the 12th Federal President of the Republic of Germany in February 2017. The visit of the German President established the foundation for re-engagement with Germany to support The Gambia with skills training and investment in various areas

including youth, business investments and energy.

President Steinmeier pledged Germany's short term support for the emergency energy situation by repairing the existing generators but also a long term solution by inviting German companies to invest in the energy sector. The visit also brought optimism in supporting to nurture The Gambia's young democracy to promote respect for human rights. Meanwhile, Germany will work within the EU-Africa Summit by partnering to address youth migration.

Gambian President is aware of the sensitive nature of migration but said that with determination, every problem has a solution. He emphasised on working together to agreeable solutions to youth migration. He made specific appeal to the youth to regain their self confidence that they can succeed at home and shared his story as a young migrant to appease the youth on emotional issues that affect them as illegal migrants.

Gambia is admired for what it has achieved, and it is an encouragement to Gambians and beyond. The country needs support to enrich its diversity and culture but also investment in business ventures and sports.

Realising the potential in The Gambia, the German President Steinmeier said “our destinies are interwoven to shape the future together” but emphasised Africa must find its solution to advance. He gave official figures in Germany of Gambian migrants as 35,000 but 1500 were not entitled to stay. Discussions are on to find a win-win solution.

*“We will take joint responsibility to support our youth migrants and women through entrepreneurship development that will facilitate job creation, and encourage returnees to reintegrate in their communities as well contribute to building The New Gambia.*

*Our re-engagement with Germany will further strengthen our bilateral cooperation and mutual interest to promote democracy for socio-economic development of our people.”– President Barrow*

A means must be found to make the Gambia the Germany, America and Europe for its youth, through skills development and job creation. This was captured in the inspirational words of Higher Education Minister, Badara Joof, **“Now there is re-newed hope of a new Gambia – a dividend of New Gambia. Returnees**

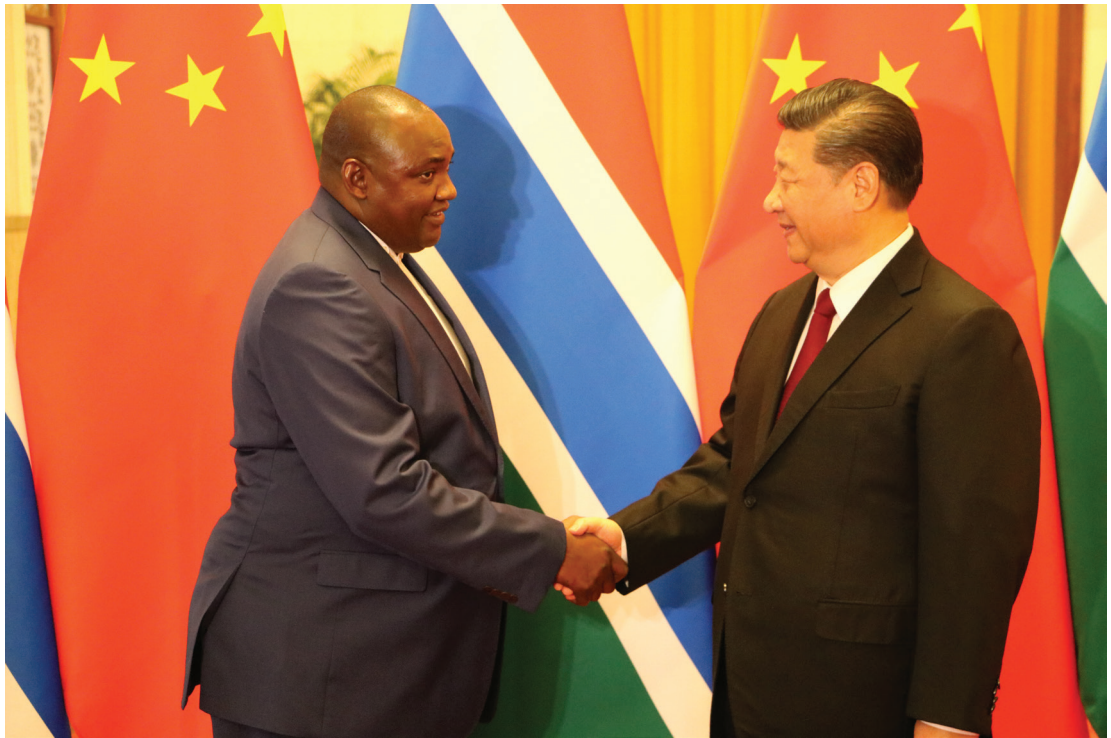
**are coming back to their home and family. Key in this is empowerment, engagement and employment.”** With renewed commitment and relevant skills, the youth could realise the change and take responsibility.

The Gambia government supports Germany’s application to the UN Security Council because of Germany’s global track record of championing democracy, peace and security.

Germany has in the past assisted The Gambia in diverse areas, under its Technical Assistance programme in the areas of agriculture, forest and wildlife conservation, water resources, capacity development, amongst others. Germany is instrumental in providing humanitarian assistance to irregular migrants, including Gambians. Some of the challenges of irregular migration could be controlled through the successful implementation of the National Development Plan. Mr. Barrow looks forward to a strong support from Germany to champion our resource mobilisation strategy at the donors’ conference in Brussels in early 2018.

*“In 1988, I traveled to England via Germany. It was an emotional moment because I also lost my father in the same year. I left a job of D200 salary but managed to develop myself. After 4 years in England, I decided to return to establish my own business. I had a start-up capital of sixty thousand Gambian Dalasis. I started in a 3 x3 meter office space with one staff member. I allowed the business to dictate what to do and my business grew and I ended having my headquarters. I never gave up on hope, determination and hard work.”*  
*President Barrow talking at a GTTI roundtable meeting on migration.*

# State Visit to The People's Republic of China

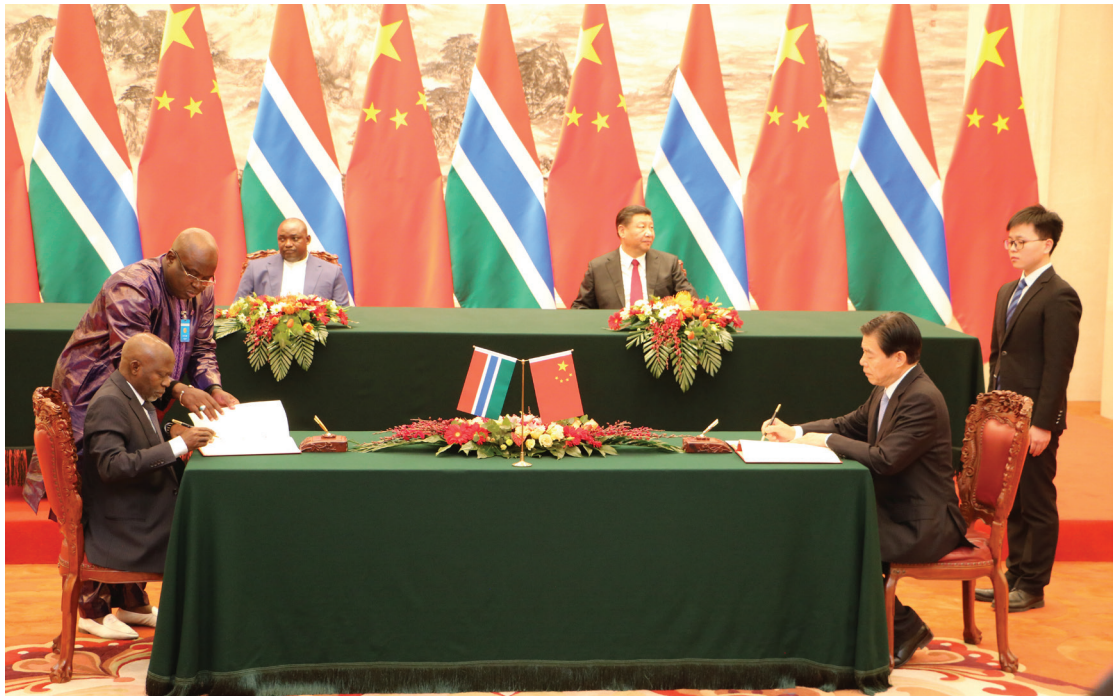


President Barrow with the Chinese President

## **President Barrow's visit to the People's Republic of China concluded with cooperation agreements to support The Gambia**

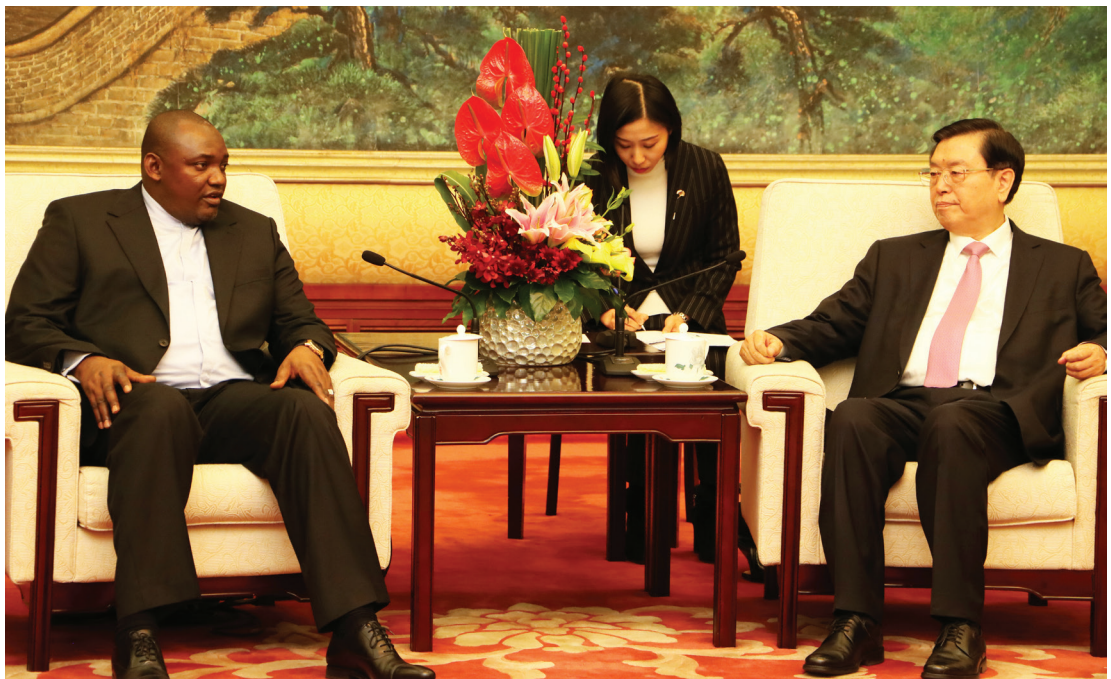
President Adama Barrow has **concluded a six-day state visit** to the People's Republic of China which further strengthens bilateral relations between The Gambia and China. The two countries have signed bilateral cooperation to support The Gambia in the areas of investment and trade, communication infrastructure, road and bridges in the Upper River Region of The Gambia, concessional loan, and human resource development through knowledge transfer and training.

President Barrow and his host, President Xi Jinping presided over the signing ceremony by the foreign Ministers of the two countries, as well as the Chinese commerce minister and the Gambian Ambassador to China, H.E. Faye Ceesay respectively. The signing was held at the Great Peoples' Hall in Beijing.



President Barrow and his host, President Xi Jinping presided over the signing ceremony by the foreign Ministers of the two countries

During the visit the Gambian President and his delegation met and interacted with the Prime Minister of China, H.E Li Keqiang, Chairman of the China National People's Congress, H.E Zhang Dejiang, other government officials in Beijing. He was honoured with a state banquet hosted by President Xi Jinping. President Barrow also visited the Forbidden City and laid a wreath in memory of the fallen heroes Tiananmen Square in Beijing



President Barrow with the Prime Minister of China, H.E Li Keqiang, Chairman of the China National People's Congress,

# Outcomes of the visit

The China 2017 state visit detailed specific practical outcomes to support The Gambia in its human resource in Agriculture, education and tourism. Infrastructural development in the Upper River Region of The Gambia by investing over 75 million dollars for the construction of:

- ***Basse-Koina road***
- ***Fatoto-Passamance bridge***
- ***Basse-Wuli bridge***
- ***Communication Infrastructure - The development of the national internet broadband***
- ***Tourism - Promote The Gambia as destination for Chinese tourists and investors***
- ***Exemption of visa for diplomatic and service passport holders***
- ***Increase and promote people to people exchange programmes with civil society and NGOs in various sectors.***

## At the Chinese Provincial level

President Barrow visited and met with the governors and officials from Xiamen in the Fujian province and Guangzhou in Guangdong province.

The Gambian leader saw first-hand how China was able to practice its opening up policy that allowed Chinese citizens to engage in the development of their country using new technology. The visit exposed him to the use of technology to advance urban planning and development, increased efficient use of maritime ports, modernized agriculture and industrial development. The Presidential delegations also visited the Tourism Institute, the agricultural technology promotion center and the Meisee lingerie company in Guangdong Province.





President Barrow visited  
Xiamen Port

Xiamen municipality, developed into a modern urban settlement, blending it with the old settlement and an ecologically friendly environment, makes it a tourist attraction. Xiamen also has one of the biggest ports in China, the Xiamen Port - Fujian Pilot Free Trade Zone, using technology to contribute efficiently to China's economic growth.



President Barrow visited  
Xiamen Port

The Gambia could learn from China by opening up to investment to create jobs for rapid economic and infrastructural development. This requires the right investments, knowledgeable and skilled people to transform the country at a more rapid pace. Its land, river and youthful population gives it advantage for rapid growth.

It could be noted that China was able to realise unprecedented development in less than four decades by putting in place the right policies and having the commitment of its people. It has instilled values of discipline, professionalism, respect for authority and rule of law in their interactions and engagements in

providing services. These values coupled with commitment of civil servants and civil society members have contributed to the rapid development of modern China.

On foreign policy, the Barrow administration supports the One-China Policy to promote togetherness, this is in line with the home policy of promoting unity and solidarity the Coalition government was built on which led The Gambia to achieve the desired change from dictatorial regime to democratic governance. The partnership between the Gambia and China is being strengthened within the Forum of China-Africa Cooperation framework and the recommendations that emerged from the Johannesburg 2015 Summit.



President Barrow was accompanied by Foreign Minister, Honourable Ousainou Darbo, Tourism Minister, Honourable Hamat Bah, Finance Minister Amadou Sanneh, Works Minister, Honourable Bai Lamin Jobe, Energy Minister, Fafa Sanyang, Secretary General, Honourable Dawda Fadara, Permanent Secretary Njogou Saer Bah, Presidential Adviser, Alhajie Musa Drammeh and other government officials.

#### In pictures

The Presidential delegation received at Beijing airport by the Vice Minister... and the Chinese Ambassador to Gambia, H.E Zhang Jiming).

# Social and Religious Affairs

## The Gambia a shining example of religious tolerance

President Adama Barrow called on Gambians to continue to be the shining example of the world for peaceful co-existence between Christians and Muslims. While there is intolerance and mistrust about religious beliefs of different faiths elsewhere in the world, The Gambia has been known for its religious tolerance worthy of emulation. President Barrow called for all Gambians to redouble their efforts to rededicate themselves to the development of our country.

The Gambia is known for its religious tolerance and maintains a culture where people from both Christian and Muslim religions celebrate their religious feasts by sharing with their neighbours and families from a different faith.

During major Muslim and Christians religious feast the government declares public holidays and the President, on behalf of the First Family, extended very best wishes to all.

The tie between the Gambia and Senegal is strong amongst the population and they use religious gatherings to show solidarity. During the reporting period, President Barrow received both Christians and Muslims religious leaders from Senegal.

### Archbishop Ndiaye Benjamin Ndiaye of Dakar visits

Archbishop Ndiaye Benjamin Ndiaye of Dakar was in Banjul to celebrate the Christian feast of the Assumption

– also known locally as ‘Sang Marie’ – at the invitation of Gambia’s Christian community. His visit also coincided with the 60th Anniversary of the Catholic diocese of Banjul. Archbishop Ndiaye was encouraged by the solidarity of Muslim religious leaders from Banjul and prayed for success and peace for the Barrow administration and for humanity at large. President Barrow was praised for the maturity demonstrated as a leader in promoting religious tolerance among citizens. Christians in the country felt they were part of the government, with the presence of three Christian members in the Barrow cabinet.

### Khalifa of the Tidiana calls for peaceful co-existence, unity and solidarity

The new Khalifa of the Tidiana, Sereign Ababacarr Mbaye Sy Mansour was in The Gambia to attend the annual “Gamo” of Kerr Ousman Jeng, celebrating the birth of Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him).

The Khalifa called on the Gambian leader to be accommodative of people who speak truth to power, and to know that as a leader, he should always listen to what his conscience tells him and what he is told. He stressed that leaders have responsibilities as they lead people who have different levels of commitment and kinds of character. He advised that President Barrow’s focus should be on the goal of leadership and to stick to certain important values and principles.



⌘ The new Khalifa of the Tidiana,  
Sereign Ababacarr Mbaye Sy Mansour

He emphasised that leadership goes with truthfulness, accountability, compassion and the ability to balance issues carefully.

The Khalifa advised coalition members to be truthful and to realise that there cannot be an easy fix for all the challenges that The Gambia faces because of the difficult circumstances that the government inherited but Allah had intervened and directed the change, which brought President Barrow to lead them. He called for peaceful co-existence, unity and solidarity for the nation to succeed.

# Politics

## First Anniversary of the Coalition Victory

A thanksgiving for the historic declaration of change on 2nd December 2016 was marked by a mass celebration at the Buffer Zone. Organised by youths, it brought together coalition members, diplomats, various political leaders and masses of women and men from across the country. President Adama Barrow was grateful to witness the momentous occasion marking the first anniversary since the country ushered in a new democracy after 22 years of dictatorship. He acknowledged the nation's stand to liberate itself from politics of fear, intimidation and division, and embraced hope, diversity and respect for human dignity and the rule of law.

The change was both dramatic and decisive with the people of the country determined to witness a new and unfolding democracy based on justice, freedom, equality and fraternity.

President Barrow maintained respect for the courageous individuals, groups and partners both within the country and abroad who contributed greatly to the success of the struggle for democracy and good governance. He asserted, *"This day therefore is quite befitting for us to assemble in this impressive numbers to once more say thank you to all Gambian women and men; our youth, Gambians in the diaspora, ECOWAS bloc, UN, EU and other development partners and friends of The Gambia who were at the forefront of the struggle to end impunity and dictatorship. I must also commend the leaders of the political parties for setting aside personal ambitions in favour of national interest by uniting to support my candidacy as the flag bearer following my election at the convention."*

He paid tribute to the brave and gallant Gambians who have paid the ultimate price for the country to enjoy the freedom, democracy and rule of law that prevails.

He informed them of the National Development Plan 2018-2021. The plan has among other things mainstreamed youth development, gender and poverty reduction as well as sound fiscal and macro management policies with the tendency to grow the economy and create decent jobs for unemployed youths and women.

It was also an occasion to launch a youth group: **The President Barrow National Youth Development Front**, which was named in his honour. He described it as an endeavour that can *progressively harness the demographic dividends of our youths*. President Barrow advised the group to work with other groups, to stay disciplined and focused on acquiring knowledge and skills necessary for nation building.

### Tribute Gambians who paid the ultimate price

*"They held the beacon of freedom and liberty high in the face of tyranny. We thank God for their sacrifice but let me say this and say it with the utmost conviction: their lives, pains, and struggles shall never go in vain. We owe them a debt of gratitude and this must be manifested in our efforts to strengthen democracy, human rights and positive development geared towards improving quality of lives for the population irrespective of political affiliation, gender, ethnic or religious considerations. The strength of our nation lies in its unity in diversity."*

# Meeting Gambians Abroad



Meeting Gambians Community in Dubai

During his visits to various countries – Dubai, China, Nigeria, President Barrow reiterated his messages of unity and togetherness to pursue the goals of freedom, rule of law in nurturing democracy in The Gambia. He also renewed his called for Gambian experts with know and skills to take the risk returning home to contribute in nation building.



Meeting Gambians Community in Federal Republic of Nigeria

He also shared his story as an immigrant to decide to return home and started a small business that grew into a big real estate business. Furthermore, in serving the nations there are risks of losing the comfort one might have been enjoying in well paid jobs, because government salaries are not attractive. He also enjoined on those Gambians with business skills to consider investments in the country.



President at the MSDP Launching

The government is encouraging Gambians in the Diaspora to effectively contribute by creating a directorate of Gambian Diaspora at the Foreign Affairs ministry which is operationalising the Migration for Sustainable Development Project - MSDP supported by the European Union and the Swiss government.



Other members of the delegation with Ambassador Lajos and Ms. Montesi were the European Commission Director for Migration and Protection, Mr Laurent Muschel, Special Envoy, Ambassador Jose Luis Pardo from Spain, Senior Counsellor Thomas Wixler of the Embassy of Germany in Dakar, and Ms Sibylle Rieder from the European External Action Service.

# Information and Communication

The Media and Public Relations unit continues to bring visibility to the engagements of President Barrow through different media. These include sharing information about his engagements with the public through news releases, positing on social media – Facebook and Twitter. All official information about the president is also posted on the official State House website – <https://statehouse.gov.gm>






The media is also given opportunity for direct engagements through eight (8) media briefing held in one year as well as the President responding to one to one sit down interviews and three press conferences at the home front between January 2017 to January 2018.

From the last reporting in July to January 2017, 68 News releases were shared from State House, bringing the total number of news releases from February 2017 – December 2017 to a total of 129 disseminated to the public.

Social media also continues to attract people in and around the globe. This has been reflected in the increase in the number of followership of President Barrow's social media handles. There is an increase in the **BarrowPORG** Facebook page followership from 10K followers to 17K, an increase of followership by 70% and from 9943 likes to 16,688, an increase of 68% likes on Facebook. Meanwhile the twitter handle **@BarrowPresident** followers has increased from 1286 to 3356, an increase of 161% in six months.

Thus such interest is a motivation for the team to continue to reach out, as more people are eager to be informed about President Barrow's policy decisions and engagements in support of the Coalition government's development agenda.

Follow President Barrow on:

-  @BarrowPresident
-  Barrow PORG
-  [statehouse.gov.gm](https://statehouse.gov.gm)





## Contact:

Director of Press & Public Relations

Office of the President, State House, Banjul

✉ [absissoho@op.gov.gm](mailto:absissoho@op.gov.gm) / [dpprop2017@gmail.com](mailto:dpprop2017@gmail.com)

☎ +220 9957592

🐦 @BarrowPresident

📘 Barrow PORG

🌐 <https://statehouse.gov.gm>