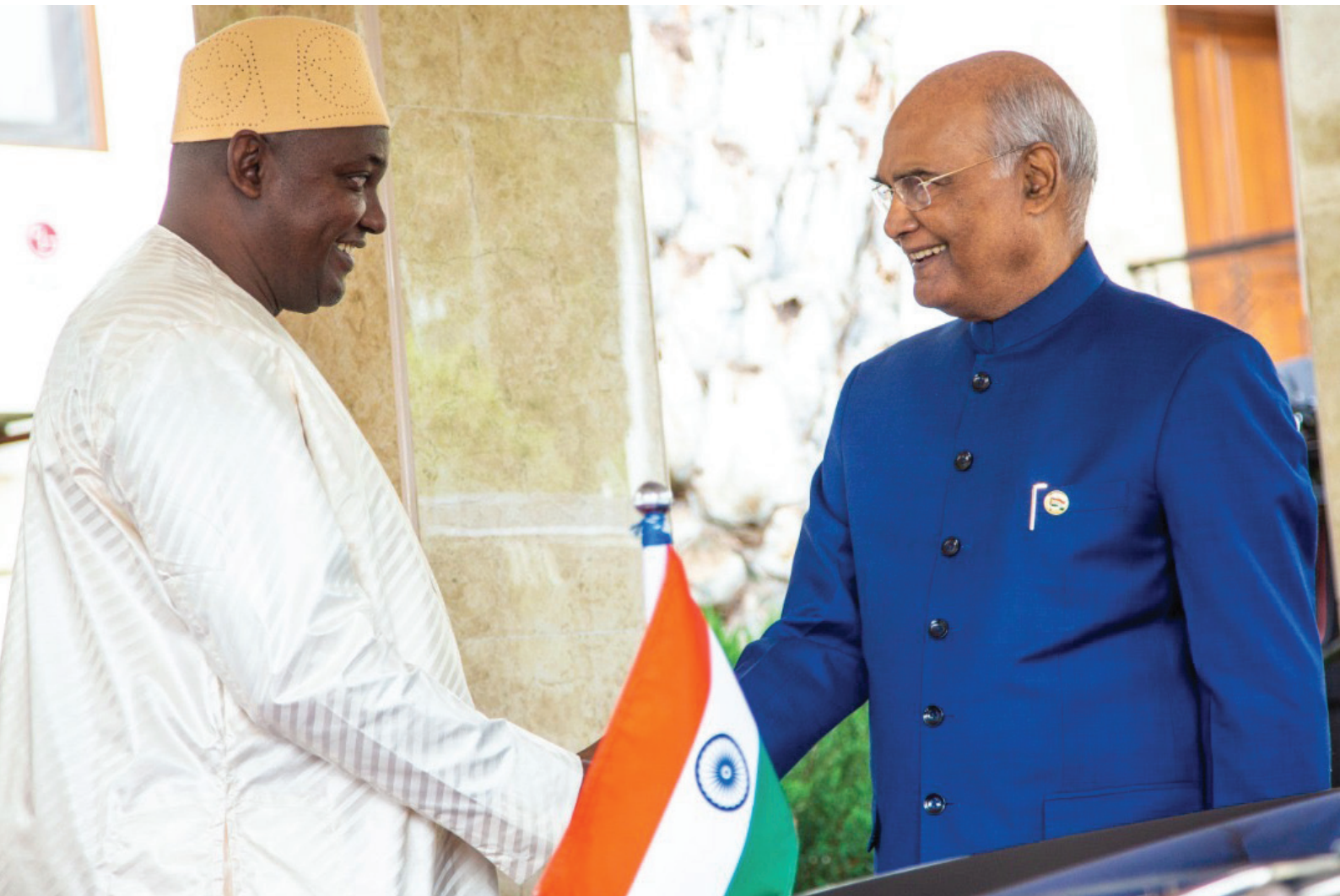


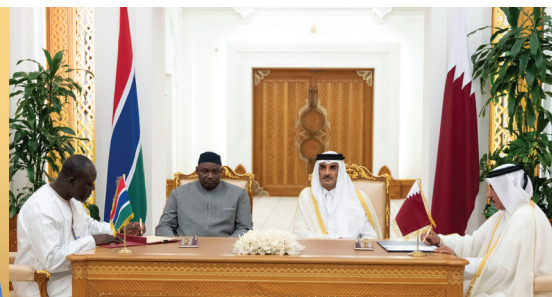
REPUBLIC OF THE GAMBIA

State House Newsletter

STAYING CONNECTED, GLOBALLY AND LOCALLY



▲ President Barrow presented with the report of the Janneh commission



▲ Signing of Agreements in The State of Qatar



▲ Dialogue with the people

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Acknowledgment

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Special thanks to Mr Nfally Fadera for the immense contribution in producing the initial draft of this publication. Unfortunately, he is not around the witness the process for the final product due to his transition to another institution. We take this opportunity to wish him the best in his endeavours.

Appreciation goes to our colleagues, the security, protocol, and the administrative department of the presidency for their cooperation. Also, the offices of the Secretary General and Secretary to Cabinet deserve special mention for facilitating the information sharing processes.

Special thanks to all those who have been extending feedbacks and recommendations after each edition of this very rich account of the President's activities. Your encouragements are acknowledged.

Meet the Media and Communications Team:

Amie Bojang-Sissoho	Director of Press & Public Relations
Sanna Camara	Media Officer
Junkung Jawneh	Audio Visual Editor
Sulayman Touray	Senior Photographer
Modou Njie	Audio Visual Assistant
Zainab Faal	Social Media Assistant
Amie Manneh	Assistant Photographer
Mamie Sarr	Web Admin (MOICI)

Overview

This edition of the **State House Newsletter** delves into the diplomatic engagements of the President which saw high profile visits of both Heads of State and other dignitaries. It gives a rich background of The Gambia's strive, aligned with the policy goals of the Barrow government since coming into power to restore the country back to the global stage. Thus, the theme of this edition is: ***Staying Connected, Globally and Locally.*** Diplomacy cuts across the different engagements in the formal settings with leaders of nations or institutions. At the grassroots level, leaders have been reaching out and where the opportunity arises, President Barrow met and discussed issues of mutual interest with the people.

The visits and other engagements featured in this report point out to the fact that the leadership of the country does not only inspire hope and confidence in Gambians but as well attracts the outside world to see The Gambia as a model of resilience.

Covering the activities of the Presidency from July-December 2019, the 5th edition is a great resource material to serve as reference point for research purpose as well as keeping track of the progress being registered by the current government in pursuit of the National Development Plan. The issues he engaged with ranged across the various sectors, connect the policy issues with the implementation processes. It gives an account of The Gambia's ongoing reforms and building of institutions that would serve as pillars of the country's nascent democracy.

The main highlights of this edition include the signing of bilateral agreements that would have ripple effects on the lives of ordinary Gambians, the country's swift evolution into having a viable economy, through the expansion of trade links with the outside world. It also to some great extent looks at the Cabinet resolutions in line with President Barrow's focus driven agenda to deliver on the promises of the NDP.

This edition also showcases President Barrow's quest to gather first-hand information on the impact of government policies and programmes on the lives of the people through his constitutionally mandated **Meet The People Tour**. It reveals the government's plans in improving the lives of the masses through infrastructural development and livelihood skills enhancement.

It also provides a highlight of the engagement of the Office of The First Lady in its effort to complement the efforts of the government and support the priority areas of the President.

Amie Bojang-Sissoho

Director of Press and Public Relations

Office of the President

Social Media Platforms:



@BarrowPresident



BarrowPORG



(@Presidency_GMB)



PresidencyGambia)



State House of The Gambia

Website: statehouse.gov.gm

GOVERNANCE



New Defence Minister

As part of ongoing reforms in the security sector, President Adama Barrow has created a new Cabinet portfolio for Defence and appointed ex-military officer and now-diplomat, Mr. Sheikh Omar Faye. The portfolio had been overseen by the Head of State of the Republic for 22 years, until 2019.

The new appointments came alongside those of Interior Minister, Mr Yankuba Sonko, and Mr. Muhammed B. Jallow as Secretary General and Head of the Civil Service.

Release of Janneh Commission Report

In September 2019, His Excellency, President Adama Barrow acting on the provisions of the Commission of Inquiry Act, gave Executive Directive for the Ministry of Justice to publish the full report of the Janneh Commission.

The report emanated from the Inquiry into the Financial Activities of former President, Yahya Jammeh and His Associates.

The Attorney General and Minister of Justice, Honourable Abubacarr Tambadou said the President gave his blessings to the full release of both the Report and the Cabinet White Paper, following a Special Session of Cabinet on the matter.



President Barrow with members of the Janneh

EU 'Optimistic' About Gambia's Judicial System, Press Freedom



Chief EU election observer to The Gambia

The Chief European Union Election Observer to The Gambia, Miroslav Poche praised the efforts made by The Gambia Government in improving the judicial system and the situation of press freedom in the country.

These reforms were in line with the recommendations made in September 2017:

"We are optimistic that, for example, the judicial system and the field of freedom of the speech have done a lot," Mr Poche said. He expressed hope that more is to be done once the ongoing constitutional review process is completed.

Miroslav Poche made these remarks following an audience with President Adama Barrow in October 2019. His team was in Banjul to follow up on the recommendations that came out of the EU Electoral Observatory Report of September 2017.

These recommendations addressed pertinent political and civic issues that would be instrumental for the next election cycle in 2021. Issues like women participation in elections, campaign financing, the roles of the civil society and the media, featured prominently in those recommendations.

DIPLOMACY AND FOREIGN RELATIONS

INDIAN PRESIDENT, H.E. Mr. RAM NATH KOVIND VISITS BANJUL

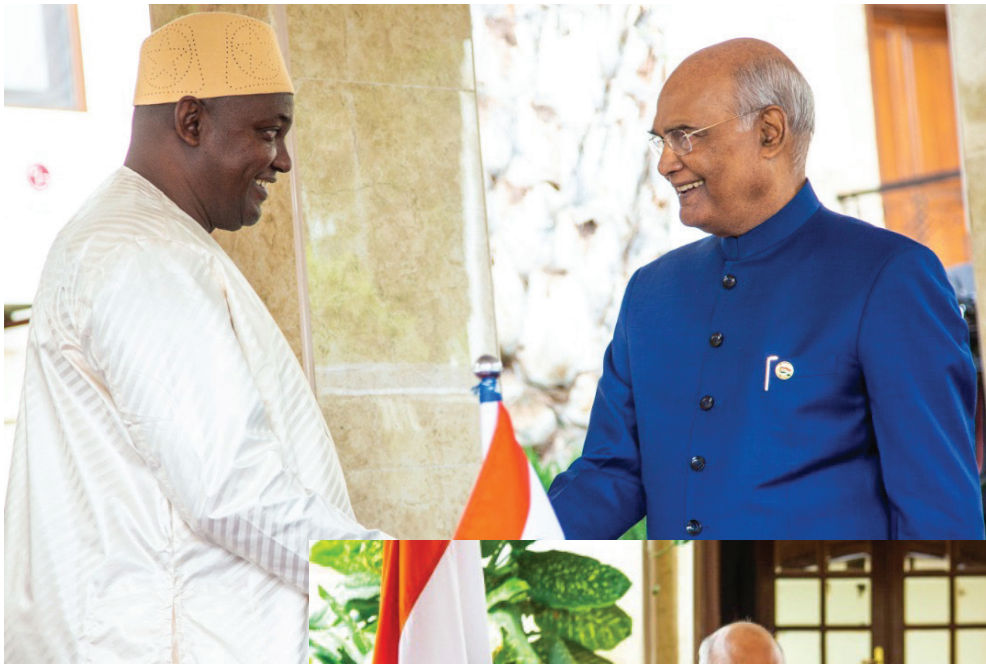


Indian President Ram Nath Kovind arrives at Banjul International Airport

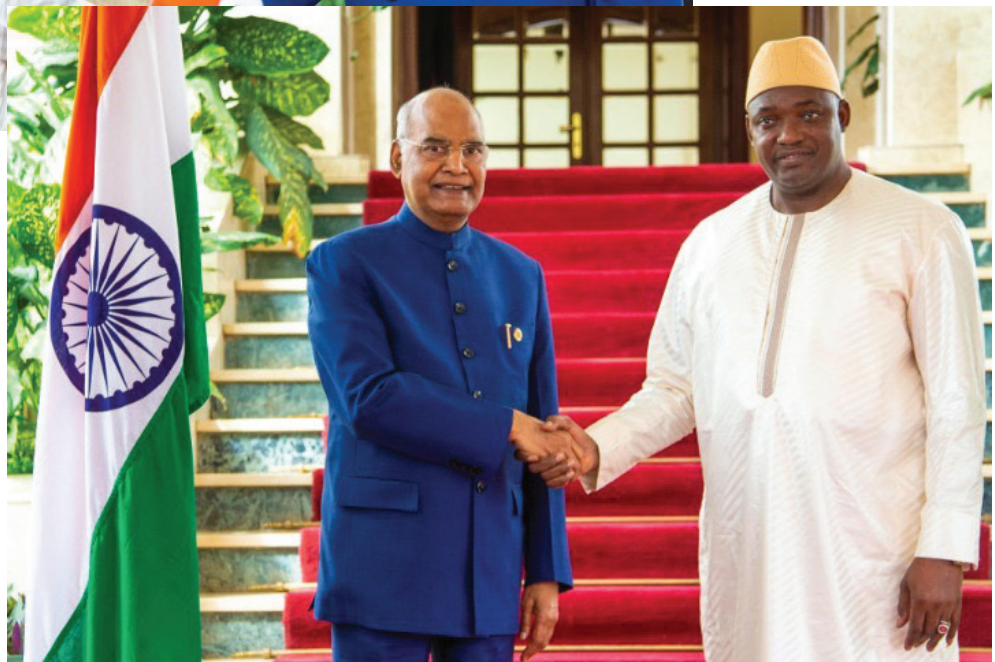
The Barrow Administration continues to consolidate its international cooperation. This was evident in July 2019, when The Gambia witnessed a historic visit of the President of the Republic of India, His Excellency, Ram Nath Kovind. It was the highest level Indian official to ever visit the Smiling Coast. The visit demonstrates the opportunities the country presents to the world to build not only political ties but also economic opportunities. Already, a number of Indian investors are operating in The Gambia.

The two Heads of State held a *tete-a-tete* where they reaffirmed their commitment to support each other in areas of development cooperation, trade, and democratisation.

"To take it forward, we are keen to implement a grant-based solar project in select villages in The Gambia," President Kovind said. A Memorandum of Understanding was signed to seal the said agreements.



Presidents Barrow and Nath Kovind after Press Conference at the State House



World's biggest, smallest democracies forge partnership

During a media briefing following the bilateral talks, President Barrow admitted that Africa's smallest nation is indeed inspired by the world's biggest democracy – India. With a population of just 2 million, the country could learn from the conducted elections in India, where 900 million people voted peacefully in their last election.

President Kovind felicitated his host on his determination to foster "greater democracy and inclusive growth" in The Gambia. He lauded the steps the Gambian leader is taking towards stability and nation-building.

India and The Gambia are both member states of the Commonwealth; they share a longstanding bilateral bond of friendship. As a demonstration of this bond, the Indian President was honoured with an address at a Special Session of The Gambia National Assembly.

On Debt Servicing

The Government is keen to achieve good governance, accountability, social cohesion, national reconciliation and a revitalised and transformed economy under its National Development Plan 2018-2021.

However, it has a debt of 120 percent to its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) inherited from the former regime. The Gambia currently pays 60 percent of its national budget to debt servicing, thus making it adopt alternative reform policies to fix its broken economy, and stimulate the confidence of development partners.

In the spirit of South-South cooperation for the progress, prosperity, and development of their peoples, India has extended a five-year debt relief to assist The Gambia implement some of its social projects that would impact the lives of the population.

“*“We have decided to extend assistance of half-a-million US Dollars in support to skills development and cottage industry project,” President Kovind told journalists. “We also agreed to offer training in the fields of judiciary, police, administration and technical expertise, as per the request and in line with the priorities of the Gambian side,”*”

The outcome of the visit:

- The governments of India and The Gambia reached an agreement on a financial assistance package, to re-allocate a Line of Credit of \$92 Million to The Gambia for the construction of roads and other infrastructural development projects.
- The assistance of half-a-million US Dollars in support of skills development and cottage industry project.
- Protocols of agreement on the International Solar Alliance Treaty, traditional medicine and homoeopathy were presented.
- India agreed to offer training in the fields of judiciary, police, administration and technical expertise.

BANJUL, DOHA SIGN NEW AGREEMENTS

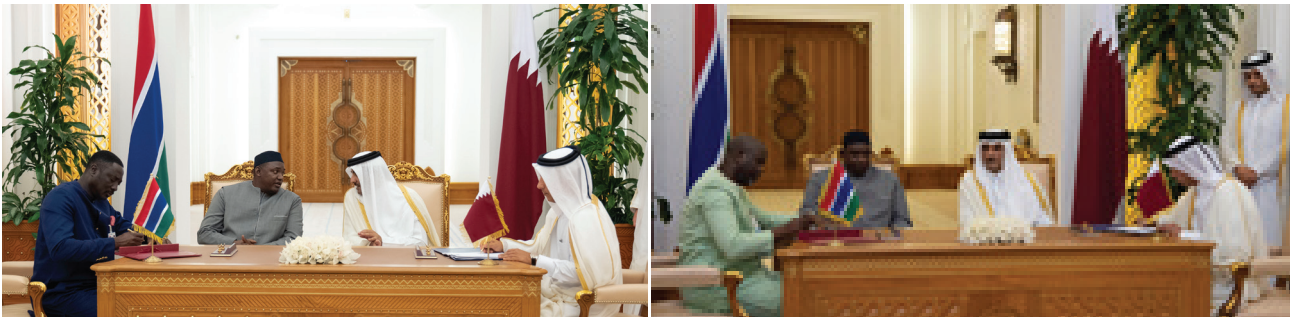


Signing of Agreements and MOUs between The Gambia and the State of Qatar

The relationship between the State of Qatar and the Republic of The Gambia has been renewed with a strong bond of friendship. The leaders of the two countries, President Adama Barrow and His Highness Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al-Thani presided over the signing of four new Memoranda of Understanding and bilateral agreements between the governments of The Gambia and Qatar.

The agreements entail mutual cooperation in the sectors of communications, judiciary, customs, and youth and sports. On behalf of The Gambia, the various Ministers of Information and Communication; Justice, and Foreign Affairs signed the agreements with their respective Qatari counterparts in the following areas:

Communication: The two governments agree to operate in each other's territories in the service areas of satellite communication. Honourable Ebrima Sillah signed the agreement with the Qatari Minister of Transport and Communications, Jasim Saif Al-Sulaiti.



Signing of Agreements and MOUs between The Gambia and the State of Qatar

Mutual Administrative Assistance: Both parties agreed to exchange information between the customs authorities of the two countries. The Qatari Minister of Finance, Ali Sharif Al-Emadi, signed with Minister of Foreign Affairs of The Gambia, Dr Mamadou Tangara.

Legal Affairs: It involves the capacity enhancement of the judicial systems of both countries, through experience sharing. The two countries also agree to cooperate and assist each other in the area of customs law enforcement, focusing on two specific areas: *“Administrative Assistance for Optional Application of Customs Law”* and *“the Repression, Investigation and Combating of Customs Violations.”* The Minister of Justice, Abubakar Tambadou signed for the Gambia while Hon. Essa Saad Jaffal Al- Naimi signed for Qatar.

Youth and Sports: The Gambia and Qatar agree to promote a friendly exchange of youth camps and football tournaments between the two countries. Minister Tangara and the Sport and Culture Minister of Qatar, Mr. Salah Ghanim Al-Ali signed on behalf of their respective governments.

Other engagements

Amongst the President’s other engagements during his visit to the State of Qatar included a meeting with the Chief Executive Officer of the Qatar Charity, where they discussed a possible partnership to have the organization begin operations in The Gambia. This was followed by a visit to the Qatar National Museum, in Doha. In the bid to encourage foreign direct investment in The Gambia, the Gambian President also held separate meetings with the Chairman of the Arabiya Trading, Abdulrahman Al Mahmoud, and Muhamad Sultan Al Jabeer of Jabeer Construction.



A visit to Qatar National Museum

PRESIDENT BARROW INSPIRED BY QATAR'S 2022 WORLD CUP PLANS

On the sidelines of a three-day official visit to the State of Qatar, President Barrow was taken on a conducted tour of facilities being built ahead of the 2022 FIFA World Cup in Doha.

Impressed with the facilities, President Barrow said his experience from the tour was inspiring and it shall be a learning curve for him and the government in the effort to successfully organise the Organization of Islamic Conference Summit in The Gambia in 2022.

"It is a coincidence that Qatar and The Gambia are both small countries, yet would be hosting two global events in 2022," President Adama Barrow.



During a conducted tour of facilities being built ahead of the 2022 FIFA World Cup in Doha

The president also visited a new ultra-modern underground train station, an exhibition centre, the complex of the Supreme Committee for Delivery and Legacy - the body responsible for organising the hosting of the World Cup. His Excellency, Mr Abdulla bin Abdulaziz bin Turki Al Subaie, Minister of Municipality and Environment, who is in charge of these infrastructural developments, accompanied President Barrow on this tour of the facilities.

President Barrow Meets Gambians in Qatar

The President wrapped up the State visit in Qatar with a meeting held with a cross-section of the Gambian community, where he reiterated the need for collective participation of all Gambians in the development of the country.

"My government is committed to providing solutions to some of the challenges we inherited when Gambians voted us into office. We need every citizen to work hard in order to take the country to where we collectively desire," President Barrow.

Over 900 Gambians lived in Qatar and the meeting discussed their situation in Qatar as well as current social and political developments in The Gambia.



President Barrow meeting with Gambians in Qatar

"A community of 900 Gambians is not negligible. Hence the government places a high premium on its diaspora by recognising them as the eighth region of the country," Gambian Ambassador to Qatar, Mr. Foday Malang said, pledging to look into their concerns.

Qatar Dispatches Follow-up Team to Assess Gambia's Development Needs

Within five weeks after President Adama Barrow's three-day working visit to Qatar, a high-level delegation from Doha was dispatched to Banjul to conduct a first-hand assessment of the development priority needs of The Gambia. The fact-finding mission would provide information and knowledge to help assess means to enhance the existing relationship, through partnership in various areas of potential intervention.

The group visited the Office of the President, among other government agencies, where they were taken through a presentation on the various aspects of the National Development Plan, particularly in high priority areas.



Qatari Follow-up Team to Assess Gambia's Development Needs

Mr Hamad Mohamed Al-Rumaihi from the Central and West African Countries' Division, Department of African Affairs at the Qatari Ministry of Foreign Affairs described the trip as "a fact-finding" one.



"We know that there is an excellent relation between Qatar and The Gambia, which translated into the state visit by President Barrow to Qatar. The two leaders held fruitful discussions on various areas of potential intervention. This is a follow up to that state visit to help assess Gambia's needs," Mr. AlRumaihi explained.



Qatari Follow-up Team to Assess Gambia's Development Needs

The Qatari delegation comprised line ministries of health, education and economic empowerment areas like agriculture, youth, and sports. Additionally, private sector, national and international NGOs operating from Qatar were also represented. They were led by officials of the Qatari Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Qatari Fund for Development.

Goodwill Messages to World Leaders

The Head of State was engaged in a range of diplomatic engagements, forging new ties and consolidating existing ones. Against this backdrop, His Excellency, President Adama Barrow sent several goodwill messages to colleague leaders in China, the ECOWAS and India.

ECOWAS President De Souza

In a letter to the President of ECOWAS, Jean –Claude Kassi Brou, President Barrow, on behalf of the Government and the People of The Gambia, expressed shock at the news of this death of the former President of the ECOWAS Commission, Mr Marcel A. De Souza, which occurred in Paris on the 17th July 2019. He described Mr De Souza as “a selfless man” who worked hard to promote peace, stability and economic integration in the sub-region and Africa in general.

“Under his leadership at the ECOWAS Commission, The Gambia benefited from his wisdom during the political impasse the country experienced, between December 2016 and January 2017.”

Li Peng, former Chinese Prime Minister

In another condolence message to his Chinese counterpart, President Xi Jinping, President Barrow said he received with deep sadness news of the death of His Excellency, Li Peng, the former Prime Minister of the People’s Republic of China.

He described the ex-Chinese statesman as “a great leader” who served his people with diligence. He was instrumental in the efforts to unite the Chinese People under the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party. Li Peng died in Beijing on the 22nd July 2019, at the age of 90.

Sushma Swaraj, the former Minister of Foreign Affairs

President Barrow also sent a message to the President of the Republic of India, His Excellency Ram Nath Kovind to express “great sadness” of the sudden passing of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of India, Her Excellency Sushma Swaraj.

On behalf of the Gambian people, President Barrow conveyed his sincere and heartfelt condolences to the people of India, on the loss of such a national and international icon. He described Madam Swaraj as “an epitome of dignity and courage” who dedicated her entire life to public service.

59th Independence Anniversary of Burkina Faso

President Barrow congratulated his colleague, the President of the Republic of Burkina Faso, His Excellency Roch Marc CHRISTIAN KABORÉ, on the occasion of the 59th Independence Anniversary of Burkina Faso. He prayed for peace and tranquillity to continue to reign in Burkina Faso, the sub-region and the world. The Gambian leader expressed optimism that the friendly and fraternal relations and cooperation between the two countries will be further enhanced in the years to come for the mutual benefits of the two peoples.

DIPLOMATIC FAREWELLS

Outgoing Senegalese Ambassador says NDP is Excellent plan

His Excellency, Professor Salieu Ndiaye, who was the outgoing Senegalese Ambassador to The Gambia, described The Gambia's development blueprint as "an excellent plan that needs the support of everyone to make its goals achievable."

The envoy made the statement as he bid farewell to President Adama Barrow at the State House following the end of his tour of duty in Banjul.

"There are great transformations ongoing in rural infrastructure, access to energy, institutional building, and reforms, among other areas. It will require strong participation of the population to ensure its success," Ambassador Ndiaye said after his audience with President Barrow.

For President Barrow, Senegal and The Gambia will always be one people in spite of their colonial legacies. "What binds the two people are greater than what divides us", he said as he thanked the government and people of Senegal through the envoy for standing by The Gambia in times of need.



Out-going Senegalese Ambassador

TONY BLAIR: GAMBIA MADE 'HUGE PROGRESS' UNDER BARROW

The Chairman of the Tony Blair Institute for Global Change (TBI), Mr Tony Blair, was at the Presidency in Banjul as part of his institute's support to the Barrow administration. The monitoring visit provides him the opportunity to assess the situation and share his opinion. During his latest visit, Mr Blair noted progress in the direction the country is taking.



"I think The Gambia has made huge progress in recent times", Mr. Blair said. ***"The Gambia has got high [economic] growth rate, tourism is up substantially and there are still big challenges but I found the president very focused on those and I am very optimistic about the future of the country"***.

The Former British Prime Minister expressed excitement about the strong partnership between the presidency and his organisation in improving performance and delivery on the priorities of the President as per the National Development Plan.

Blair Meets with State House Permanent Secretaries, top officials

Shortly after his engagement with President Barrow, Mr Blair also held a closed-door meeting with senior officials of the presidency. The meeting enabled the former British Prime Minister to exchange ideas with the senior staff of the presidency, with the hope of enhancing the delivery and performance of government.

They further touched on management and coordination strategies among the various units at the Presidency, and wider government by extension. The objective was to maximise efficiency and effectiveness. Mr Blair informed the meeting that he had observed marked improvement at the Presidency since 2017.

*Chairman Tony Blair Institute
for Global Change*



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Central Bank Presents New Banknotes

In August 2019, the Governor of the Central Bank of The Gambia presented samples of the country's new banknotes to His Excellency, President Adama Barrow at the State House. In line with international norms, the new set of notes were decorated with pictures depicting the flora and the fauna of The Gambia, replacing the image of the former president, Yahya Jammeh.

The Governor of the Central Bank, Mr. Bakary Jammeh explained that the President was informed that the Central Bank will maintain the old currencies in circulation alongside the new notes until further notice.



The Governor of the Central Bank, Mr. Bakary Jammeh present new Bank notes to President Barrow

PARTNERING ON ENVIRONMENT DEVELOPMENT

Government sign \$2Million Environmental Project with UNDP

Project to rid The Gambia of 75 tons of PCB-contaminated equipment and waste



Signing of Ceremony between UNDP and The Gambia government

A great majority of Gambians rely on the river and marine resources for their livelihoods, thus the need to provide make them clean and safe for the people. Conscious of the importance of the environment in development, efforts are being explored to improve the environment for the citizens to enjoy these resources.

The Gambia Government and the United Nations Development Programme Country Office in Banjul partnered to execute a two million environment project. On September 19 2019, the representatives, Secretary General, Muhammed S. Jallow and Resident Representative, Dr Aissata De penned their signatures on the two million Dollar environment project document intended to support The Gambia, on the path to the achievement of the goals of the NDP, the SDGs, the Agenda 2020 and Agenda 2063.

The funding covers the necessary technical and financial assistance to reduce the risks posed by a group of oily liquids and solid man-made chemicals called PCBs (Poly Chlorinated Biphenyls) and unintended Persistent Organic Pollutants (U-POPS), through improved waste management practices and reduction of open burning of waste.

STATE BURIAL FOR FORMER PRESIDENT JAWARA

Following the passing of the former President, Sir Dawda Kairaba Jawara in August 2019, His Excellency President Barrow acted swiftly to pay condolence to the family of the former statesman and discuss funeral plans.

The president declared a seven-day national mourning period from 27th August to 2nd September 2019, in respect of the passing. During this period, the national flag of The Gambia at all State Institutions was lowered at half-mast.

A state funeral was organised where the founding father of independent Gambia was laid-in-state at the National Assembly. A condolence book was opened for the public to register their sympathy.

President Barrow called on all Gambians to use the trying moment to reflect and emulate the virtues Sir Dawda Jawara left as his legacy – peace-loving, tolerant and democratic.



The State Funeral of Former President, Sir D.K Jawara at the National Assembly



RELIGION AND SOCIETY

Bissau-Guinean Chiefs meet President Barrow



A visiting delegation of traditional chiefs from the sister-republic of Guinea Bissau paid a courtesy call on His Excellency, President Adama Barrow at State House. The delegation was in Banjul as guests at the annual Conference of Chiefs hosted in Mansa Konko, Lower River Region.

Coming from a country with a long history of civil war and intermittent political violence, the Bissau-Guineans advised their Gambian brothers and sisters to show more love, and pursue dialogue when in disagreement, stating that war and violence could only bring destruction and social stagnation.

Gambians are urged to cherish and jealously guard the prevailing peace and stability in the country. The traditional rulers came after an exchange visit of Gambian Chiefs to Bissau facilitated by the Gambian Embassy in Bissau to strengthen the historic and cultural ties between the two countries. The Gambia and Guinea share a history as former Gabu and Fulladu empires prior to the demarcation of colonial boundaries.

Chiefs have always been important mediators of peace and custodians of tradition and culture, hence the need for the present day Chiefs to be steadfast in advocating for people continue to live in peace and harmony. Therefore, it was important that the Government attaches great importance to the institution of Chieftaincy in The Gambia.

"Not only do we have regular salary attached to the officeholders, government also doubled their income and created a standard salary for security and batch messengers working for their offices across the country," Local Government Minister Musa Drammeh stated.

The Gambian Ambassador to Bissau, H.E Alieu K. Jammeh, and his Bissau-Guinean counterpart in Banjul, H.E Mailo Cassama led the delegation to the State House in Banjul.

'Gambia must not allow religious extremism to take roots'



In his annual Christmas Message delivered to the nation, President Adama Barrow warned Gambians against distortions of religious teachings, as excuses for extremism, leading to evil, social disorder, instability and loss of lives.

"We must not allow this to take root here," he warned.

President Barrow describes Christmas as one of the occasions that truly demonstrate the religious harmony that Gambians are renowned for. Religion is a part of The Gambia's diverse cultural heritage and adds meaning to life through the values it teaches and the manner it shapes and modifies behaviour.

"We encourage all venerable leaders to remain steadfast, with the reassurance that my Government acknowledges their contribution to our development, progress, and overall wellbeing," the President maintained.

He, however, pointed out that the dignity of the people has to be maintained through reason, dialogue and strengthening interfaith collaboration. Hence, Christmas is a reminder for all to continue to propagate the true teachings of Jesus Christ.

President Barrow assured that his Government maintains a focused-attention on creating, sustaining and expanding the public space for responsible participation in national development.

He urged all to exploit the moment to re-energise themselves in readiness for the coming year so that the country can maximise national output and achievements.

Women advancement will remain a priority - President Barrow

On Friday, 2nd August 2019, a delegation of Lady Councillors and members of the Gambia Women Federation from across the country called on the President to discuss ways of furthering the advancement of women. The occasion was used to share the women empowerment programmes and policies of the Barrow administration and the concerns of the women.

Since coming into office in 2017, President Adama Barrow made the empowerment of women a personal crusade, spearheading policies that place women in positions of decision making, self-reliance and empowerment. Appointments of women vice presidents and four Cabinet ministers are a few examples.

"The rules of the game have changed, and so is the narrative for my government. The establishment of the Ministry of Women and appointing key gender advocates to lead it, along with that of agriculture speaks to our priorities as government," President Barrow told the delegation.



Women Councillors and leaders with President Barrow

POLITICS AND SOCIETY

COALITION 2016 STAKEHOLDERS DISCUSS WITH PRESIDENT BARROW



The Chairperson of Coalition 2016, Her Excellency, Aja Fatoumata Jallow Tambajang led a delegation of Coalition stakeholders to State House, where they held discussion with His Excellency, President Adama Barrow over the Memorandum of Understanding amongst parties in 2016.

Following the audience with President Barrow in

September 2019, Madam Jallow-Tambajang declared that the stakeholders present agreed to support the extension of the agreed three years MoU to five years, as per the constitutional mandate of a sitting President of the Republic.

Such an extension was triggered by the fact that the development programs of the Coalition Government led by President Barrow, could not be fully implemented within three years.

"On the basis of the incompleteness of the reforms agenda, we, as a Coalition, have decided to extend his social legitimacy from three (3) years to five (5) years," Mrs Jallow Tambajang, who co-chaired the Coalition, revealed.

She explained that the decision followed two years of consultations on this contentious issue with all stakeholders both at home and abroad. The decision to extend was borne out of the realisation that it defeats logic and reason to abandon the ongoing reforms halfway and call for a new election within three years.

"The MoU is important. But the fundamentals are the agreements signed by all parties. If that reform agenda is incomplete, and considering the state in which we took government, we cannot leave that half-way and ask for elections or find another president. That is not rational. It is not logical," Mrs. Tambajang maintained.

'TEAM BAKARY BADJIE' MEETS PRESIDENT BARROW

The top officials in support of Mr. Bakary Badjie, who was part of a new crop of young politicians that vied for the Mayoral seat of the Kanifing Municipality, paid a courtesy call on President Adama Barrow in September 2019.

The team, led to the State House by their Chairperson, Ms Nyima Saidy, expressed admiration for the leadership style and development trajectory of the country under President Barrow. They, therefore, declared their "believe and trust" in the potential of the National Development Plan to deliver progress, peace, and prosperity for the country.



"We are with you, and we support your agenda all the way to 2021," declared Mr Bakary Badjie, who joined the meeting by telephone from the United States. Mr Badjie said their decision to express solidarity with President Barrow was informed by the need for young Gambians to take center stage in the development discourse of the country.

The current political environment has given courage for the youth to strengthen their firm belief that only citizens can take the country forward, a belief they have noted in President Barrow's style of administration.

President Adama Barrow lauded their decision, welcoming them with open arms. He expressed admiration for the commitment, unity, and team-spirit demonstrated in their bid for the mayoral seat despite losing the election.



Team Bakary Badjie

HIGHER EDUCATION, RESEARCH, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

FAST-TRACKING UTG FARABA CAMPUS CONSTRUCTION: \$37 MILLION SECURED

The Gambia government and a consortium of donors have agreed to fast track the construction works of the permanent campus of the University of The Gambia in Faraba Banta.

The project has been dormant since it was signed in 2010, due to financial challenges that hampered the completion of the construction works. It was almost a decade later, under the Barrow administration that the meeting with the partners resulted to securing \$37 million, out of the \$54 million total sums, for the first phase of the project.

The details of the funding meeting were presented in a report which was shared with President Barrow at the State House.



The Minister of Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology Hon. Badara Joof led a delegation which included officials from funding partners such as the Kuwaiti Fund, Islamic Development Bank, Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa (BADEA), OPEC and, the Saudi Fund. He elaborated on the plan to inaugurate the project in 2021.

"The state of works at the campus is slow, and it needs to be improved. That is why they are here to make sure that we accelerate the pace of works at the Faraba Banta campus."

Science, Technology, Engineering University to be constructed in The Gambia

In November 2019, the Vice Chancellor of the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST), Professor Kwasi Obiri-Danso revealed that his university has signed an agreement with The Gambia to establish a University of Science, Technology and Engineering in the country. This is a lesson learned from Ghana where, former President Nkrumah, realised that a country's advancement is highly dependent on science and technology, thus, establishing such a university in Kumasi, Ghana which today impacted Ghanaian society tremendously.

KNUST will help with the establishment and development of Gambia's own university to help train Gambians in engineering, develop the country's economy, just as it contributed to the development of Ghanaian economy and society.

“ *“Science and Technology education is greatly needed in The Gambia if we are to develop our country. Education is a priority area of my government's development plan (NDP 2018-2021). Hence the establishment of this university will be something that will be good for The Gambia.*

”

“Most Gambian engineers are trained at KNUST. Hence bringing that to your doorstep will help advance the developmental challenges in The Gambia. I hope that we can start this new university in January 2020,” Prof. Obiri-Danso said.

“The World Bank, Government of The Gambia and OISCA Foundation are jointly funding this university as a grant to The Gambia. It will complement the already existing technician training programmes run by the GTTI but providing degree qualifications for those interested in pursuing courses in those fields,” Minister Joof said.



KNUST University team

ENERGY AND PETROLEUM

The Gambia Adopts New Petroleum License Model

The government revised and amended its petroleum licensing model to upgrade it to international standards.

The review of the Petroleum Exploration, Development, and Production Licences Model was disclosed by the Minister of Petroleum and Energy, Honourable Fafa Sanyang after a briefing session with President Adama Barrow in September 2019.

"This new model license is of [an] international standard, which represents an improvement on the existing ones. It will hence be the basis for any future license negotiations for The Gambia," Minister Fafa Sanyang informed the president. On how the new model will impact on existing licenses, Petroleum and Energy Minister explained that based on the new model, FAR Ltd and PETRONAS now hold fifty per cent (50%) shares each in Blocks A2 and A5. Furthermore, it means that the existing licences of FAR and PETRONAS' for blocks A2 & A5, which were signed in 2012, shall operate within the remits of the new licence model leading to the resumption of active exploration work on these blocks.

Consequently, the participating interests in the revised licences held by FAR and PETRONAS are currently 50% each, while the government of The Gambia reserves the right to take up to 15% participating interest.

As part of the agreement, the government will be paid a bonus of \$4.5m for both licences, along with training, resource contribution as well as surface rentals per annum.

Other issues that the new model takes into account include the introduction of additional profit, capital gain tax, payment requirements, and restructuring of the exploration periods and legal requirements.

A team from FAR Ltd. and Petronas with President Barrow



YOUTHS AND SPORTS

Enhancing Decentralised Skills and Technical Training

GTTI-annex Mansakonko Fully Refurbished, Ready for Use

In line with the drive of the Barrow government to decentralise technical and skills training and youth empowerment, the Mansakonko branch of the Gambia Technical Training Institute has been inaugurated by German Ambassador to The Gambia.

The institution is fully refurbished and equipped with modern technology and engineering tools to ensure advanced learning in technical and vocational training for young people in the lower middle belt of rural Gambia.

This development was the focus of a courtesy call between President Adama Barrow and the Dakar-based German Ambassador to The Gambia, His Excellency Stephan Roken, who was at the presidency to brief the President on the fulfilment of the promises made by the German President during his visit to The Gambia in 2017.

Following President Frank-Walter Steinmeier's trip, the German government began improving the institute in Mansakonko, Lower River Region, which, going forward, will be providing training for Gambian students in solar energy installation and repairs and agricultural machinery repair and maintenance. The regional extension will enable youth in the rural Gambia to acquire skills and meaningfully contribute to the development of the country.

During his 2017 visit, the German President also expressed commitment to support the energy sector in the bid to address the energy supply deficit in the country.



The Ambassador revealed that his government has handed over to NAWEC a capacity-building project package designed to improve electricity supply in the Greater Banjul Area through improvements in monitoring and communication.

"We did a lot of training on monitoring systems and we helped in communication systems but what is important is the training of engineers into collaborators of NAWEC. With this monitoring

system, there will be fewer power cuts in the Greater Banjul Area," Ambassador Roken added.

He noted that the German companies that were working with NAWEC on the project were impressed by the skills and dedication demonstrated by the NAWEC staff.

AGRICULTURE

Gambia to Benefit 50,000 Hectares of Rice Fields under OMVG

Some 50,000 hectares of desalinated land will be available for rice production to The Gambia under the Samba Ngalo Dam Project of the OMVG. This was revealed by the Council of Ministers of The Gambia River Basin Development Organisation (OMVG) in a meeting with President Adama Barrow at the State House.



President Barrow received Council of Ministers of The Gambia River Basin Development Organisation (OMVG)

“The project has social and economic benefits like agriculture, which through the Samba Ngalo Dam, will push back the saltwater... It will make 90, 000 hectares of land available to member countries for rice cultivation,” Gambian Minister of Environment, Lamin Dibba said.

With the 50, 000 of this land available to The Gambia, the OMVG will help contribute to achieving the Social Development Goals and food self-sufficiency objectives in The Gambia. It will help eradicate hunger, malnutrition, and poverty in the country.

The Ministers, along with the High Commissioner of the regional organisation, were led to the State House to pay a courtesy call on President Adama Barrow as the Chairperson of the Conference of Heads of States of the group.

The Gambia River Basin Development Organisation (OMVG) and its dam projects were the brainchildren of former President of The Gambia, Sir Dawda K. Jawara, and his Senegalese counterpart, President Leopold S. Senghore, beginning in 1976. Currently, it enjoys the backing of eight international donors.

TRADE AND INVESTMENT

Turkey-Gambia Trade and Business Ties Gather Momentum

The government is tirelessly exploring every opportunity to lure investors to the Gambian economy. One of the key priority areas is energy. It could be recalled that during President Barrow's State visit to Ankara in 2017, he engaged the Turkish Business Community to encourage them to explore and invest in The Gambia.

The need for energy stabilisation in The Gambia, agricultural mechanisation, value addition, and commercial production, as well as tourism development, are top on the possible areas of investment

In October 2019, members of the Turkey- Gambia Business Council, were in The Gambia and held its third meeting in Banjul to discuss areas of mutual benefit with their Gambian counterparts. Areas of mutual interests to both countries, include the Banjul seaport, solar energy ventures, agriculture, and fisheries, among others.



The delegation, comprising leading Turkish private sector operators and industrialists includes the Mayor of Ezurum City, Honourable Mehmet Sekmen. As the Mayor of one of the biggest cities in Turkey, he said Turkey has also realised that it can work with The Gambia in urban planning at the level of the municipalities.

A delegation of Turkish investors

"Turkey is ready to share experiences with Kanifing in terms of municipal management and development. We have many experiences that we can utilise in the cities of The Gambia in many aspects of their problems", he said.

The delegation led by the Turkish Ambassador to The Gambia, H.E. Ismael Yusuf paid a courtesy call on President Adama Barrow at the State House. President Barrow expressed delight that the council is building on the cooperation that he and President Erdogan rekindled during his historic visit to Ankara in 2017. He thanked Turkey for standing by The Gambia through challenging times and assured them of Gambia's fraternal solidarity.

INTERIOR

President Barrow Applauds Gallantry of Firefighters

The Gambia witnessed one of the worst industrial disasters in a long time in October 2019, when a huge inferno emanated from a gas depot, ravaged an entire neighbourhood in the Kanifing Industrial Complex.

The scale of the incident, sent the country into shock and alarm as thick dark smoke emerges in the horizon, clouding the atmosphere of Kanifing and Jeshwang townships. A huge explosion reverberated kilometres away and with it went with millions of dollars worth of businesses.

The fire would have expanded to engulf entire communities of nearby residence if not for the swift response, gallantry, and professionalism of the members of the Fire and Rescue Services. The Serekunda unit got reinforcement from as far away as the airport unit and others from the Greater Banjul Area in order to tame the inferno. They fought for hours in order to contain its effects.



President Barrow acted swiftly to comfort those directly affected by the fire, vowing to institute measures that will prevent a recurrence. Accompanied by a high-level government delegation, he visited the affected complexes at the Kanifing Industrial Area and made first-hand assessment of the extent of damage to inform the next steps of the government.

The fire reportedly broke out of a gas depot and quickly spread to the nearby companies,

warehouses, and car garages.

"It is a very unfortunate and difficult situation....," he told the newsmen and women on site.

"We cannot thank enough the respondents from the fire service team for the hard work. They worked under very difficult circumstances but the good thing is, they were very determined to put out the fire and contain the situation," he added.

He assured that preventive measures will be taken to reassess the safety standards in place at similar facilities across the country. President Barrow announced that a Task Force will be set up to make an inquiry into the incident, how this happened and provide facts that will inform the government's response.

THREE GIANT FIRE TENDERS, OTHER EQUIPMENT FOR GAMBIA FIRE SERVICE



Development is multifaceted and calls for partnership between government and partners in various fields. One critical area is providing emergency service to rescue lives and also protect properties, where The Gambia Fire and Rescue Services (GFRS) takes lead in providing such vital services, including first aid in emergency situations.

Over the years, The Gambia Fire and Rescue Services has partnered with the Avon Fire Brigade in the United

Kingdom. In 2019, GFRS received three giant fire engines and other fire fighting accessories donated from their UK partner, Avon Fire Brigade.

To express the level of appreciation, and how pleased he was with the partnership, President Barrow presided over the presentation of the donated items at the State House in Banjul, witnessed by the United Kingdom High Commissioner to The Gambia, Her Excellency, Sharon Wardle and officials from Avon.

The Chief Fire Officer of the Avon Brigade, Michael David Crennell said they cherished their partnership with The Gambia Fire and Rescue Services, which began in the 1990s. He expressed commitment to continue supporting and growing the relationship for the mutual benefit of both services.

"We are honoured and privileged to be able to have the partnership and we will continue to support," CFO Crennell said describing the partnership as a two-way exchange.

Over the years, the level of support is growing, and the level of the professionalism of the fire service in The Gambia grows along with this.

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer of The Gambia Fire Rescue Service, Lamin Sanyang expressed gratitude for the assistance, stating that they also receive training manuals, practical training, and equipment. It resulted in more advanced support, which could have been difficult to get in a timely manner. "It is based on this partnership that a fully-equipped fire engine like this was acquired." He explained.

DIPLOMACY

UNOWAS Representative lauds Gambia's Ongoing Reforms

The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for West Africa and the Sahel, Dr Muhammed Ibn Chambas in October 2019 said the United Nations is pleased with the Barrow government's commitment to the ongoing reform processes in The Gambia.

The envoy was at the State House to express the UN's gratitude to President Barrow for hosting the 2019 West African Sahel Women's Open Day on Peace and Security. The meeting enabled the leaders to discuss many issues pertinent to the country's development.

The UN Special Envoy also briefed the President on the consultations the team had with different stakeholders like political parties, Civil Society Organisations, and development partners, all of whom, he said, underscored the importance of moving forward with the reform process in The Gambia.

President Adama Barrow's administration received high rating on ongoing reforms initiated after change of government in 2017.

"Today, we leave The Gambia very satisfied that the commitment is there on the side of the government and the people to move ahead with these reforms," Dr. Chambas said after an audience with the President.

Various reform programmes like the Constitutional Review Commission, the Truth, Reconciliation, and Reparations Commission, the Security Sector Reform, the establishment of the National Human Rights Commission and institutional strengthening, among others enjoy strong support from the Gambian people.

"We remain engaged, we remain committed so on an occasion like this, we would like to reiterate that the President and The Gambia community can continue to rely on the UN and the International Community, which is still ready and willing to accompany The Gambia through these reforms," he added.



US Congressional Delegation Meets President Barrow

The advocacy to promote responsive, effective governance, media and strengthened democratic institutions was a mission undertaken by “The House Democracy Partnership”, a parliamentary group committed to assisting legislatures in emerging democracies.

Representatives of the House Democracy Partnership of the United States Congress undertook a similar mission to the Gambia in October 2019 and paid a courtesy call on President Adama Barrow at the State House in Banjul.

The parliamentary group led by Congressman David Price of North Carolina, described the purpose of the Banjul visit, *“We are here to show support, to learn and to express the solidarity that our country feels with The Gambia as they take this path forward”*.

Their discussions with the president was *“very productive.”* They discussed democratic reforms aimed at transforming The Gambia into a full-fledged member of the comity of democratic nations in the world.

“The reforms are still ongoing with the start of many important projects, such as the constitutional review, truth and reconciliation, civil service and security sector reforms. We are focused on the goals,” President Barrow told them.

The Gambian President told the delegation that The Gambia cherished its longstanding friendship with the United States, and that his government appreciates the support given by the United States during this transition period.



Representatives of the US Congress with President Barrow

First Russia-Africa Summit

Africa is rapidly becoming a global partner in business and socio-economic fora. Its potential is recognised and opportunities are being created to explore how best economic powers could forge bilateral partnerships. In October 2019, President Adama Barrow joined more than sixty African Heads of State and Government, along with leaders in business, development, and politics to participate in the first-ever Russia-Africa Summit in Sochi, Russia.

In his welcoming remarks, the President of the Russian Federation, His Excellency, Vladimir Putin said the economic forum was designed to build “concrete avenues of cooperation and further development of the Russia-Africa Cooperation.”

Russia would seek to double trade with the African continent in the next five years, as the Russian leader maintains that the current Russia-Africa trade level of \$20 million was “not enough.”

“I believe, we have the powers to easily double the volume of trade within the next four to five years, at the minimum,” Putin said in a speech at the plenary forum of the Summit.



President Barrow at first ever Russia - Africa Summit

Laying out Gambia's investment potentials at Russia-Africa Summit

President Adama Barrow addressed the first plenary session of the Summit, laying out the investment opportunities in The Gambia.

The Summit was convened for the first time, providing an opportunity for African leaders to engage their Russian counterparts in expanding the political and trade ties between them. Top managers of almost 2,000 Russian and foreign companies took part in this high-level meeting.

"The Gambia has investment opportunities that bode well for this forum. Our National Development Plan, has, among its strategic priorities modernising our agriculture and fisheries sectors for sustained economic growth, food and nutritional security, and poverty reduction," President Adama Barrow

Among other development and investment priorities, the president invited Russian and foreign investors to take advantage of the country's year-round sunlight to explore and invest in renewable energy. He also highlighted the opportunities in the country's maritime sector, stressing that the Banjul Seaport is a gateway to the West African market.

"Investment opportunities in river transport exist along our navigable River Gambia. The Banjul port is the hub of West Africa with access to over three hundred million people, and just six hours away from Europe by flight," he said, noting similar opportunities in education, tourism.



President Barrow with Russian president

NEW SENEGALESE AMBASSADOR PRESENTS CREDENTIALS

Senegalese Ambassador to The Gambia, His Excellency, Bachirou Sene presented his Letters of Credence to His Excellency, President Adama Barrow at the State House in Banjul. The ceremony marked the beginning of his diplomatic tour of duty in Banjul, replacing prof. Saliou Ndiaye, who served his country in Banjul for five years.



New Senegalese ambassador to The Gambia

In welcoming the new Senegalese Ambassador to The Gambia, President Barrow stressed the historic and unique relations between The Gambia and Senegal: ***“The fact that we are speaking Wolof to each other says a lot about the ties we share.”***

The president expressed optimism that the high level of peaceful co-existence between the two countries will continue to advance the development of their respective peoples. He extended heartfelt gratitude to his colleague, brother, and friend, President Macky Sall, for his great choice of diplomatic envoys to The Gambia.

TRADE

Business Activities at Banjul sea port Grown from 7% to 20%

In an unannounced visit to The Gambia Ports Authority in October 2019, President Barrow was apprised of the state of the Banjul seaport. He was informed that business activities there grew from a projected 7 per cent in 2016 to 20 per cent in the last quarter of 2019.

The purpose of the President's visit was to see the situation of the port and gather firsthand information on how to address the bottlenecks largely associated with limited space and dwindling infrastructure.

"I have been receiving reports from the management of the ports and technicians in the ministry about the situation at the GPA. I, therefore, take the initiative to come... I think it is a blessing for The Gambia that everyone is coming [to do business here] and we need to maintain that through the expansion of the ports," President Barrow said.

Going forward, President Barrow said the government will devise strategies to maintain the momentum: "This is because if people have confidence in you, you should match that confidence so that you can maintain them as customers".

Given the strategic importance of the Banjul Seaport, the President said the Government is open to a private partnership to expand its capacity and be able to compete with other seaports in West Africa.

The conducted tour also took him to the affiliated institutions of the ports authority, such as the Banjul Shipyard, the Ferries as well as the Container Terminal and the Dry Harbour on Bond Road.



During a conducted tour of Gambia Ports

CABINET SESSIONS

A National Health Insurance Scheme in 2020



The Barrow administration has announced the introduction of a national health insurance scheme that will ensure easy and affordable access to primary healthcare for members of the public.

These were among several issues of discussion at a Special Cabinet Meeting convened on Tuesday 5th November 2019. The outcome was the approval of a Cabinet Paper proposing the plan. Others included the 2020 budget estimates and other pressing matters.

The special session was convened pursuant to Section 152 of the 1997 Constitution, requiring the government to submit to the National Assembly, Estimates of Revenue and Expenditures for the following year at least 30 days before the end of Financial Year.

The 2020 Budget was reported to be pro-poor and demonstrated the giant steps being undertaken by the Barrow government to respond to the social and economic needs of Gambians.

Such was the rationale for the Health Insurance Scheme, which once in place, guarantees vulnerable families to have medical attention as and when the need arises. To ensure proper implementation of the National Health Insurance Scheme, Cabinet tasked the Ministry of Finance to critically analyse the process for the benefit of the citizenry.

Freedom of Information Bill, 8 others among the latest legislative reforms approved by cabinet



In fulfilment of promises to engage in comprehensive media and legislative reforms of the governance architecture to bring it in line with democratic standards, the Cabinet, under the leadership of President Adama Barrow, approved the draft Freedom of Information and the Media Services Bills.

This session also approved the draft Criminal Offenses Bill and the Criminal Procedure Bill.

The Minister of Justice, Honourable Abubakar Tambadou, who presented the bills before Cabinet colleagues, said the momentous decision, when enacted by the National Assembly, will advance the cause of press freedom, freedom of speech and expression in the country.

“Both bills will go a long way to strengthen the media in this country. But also to promote and facilitate the exercise of the right to freedom of expression,” Minister Tambadou said, following intensive two-day Cabinet deliberations.

Similarly, Cabinet also considered and approved the draft Criminal Offenses Bill and the Criminal Procedure Bill to ensure that it caters to the needs of the modern international justice standards. The country has been relying on the laws that were outdated and need legislative reforms, taking democratic developments into consideration.

When enacted, the Criminal Code and the Criminal Procedure Code would subsequently be called the Criminal Offenses Act and the Criminal Procedure Act, respectively.

The Justice Minister also announced the approval of Cabinet to eliminate “almost 95% of discriminatory laws against women” in the country. The overall number of bills considered and approved by Cabinet summed to nine (9). They were to be presented to the National Assembly in December 2019.

PEACE PROJECT BY GAMBIAN MUSICIANS

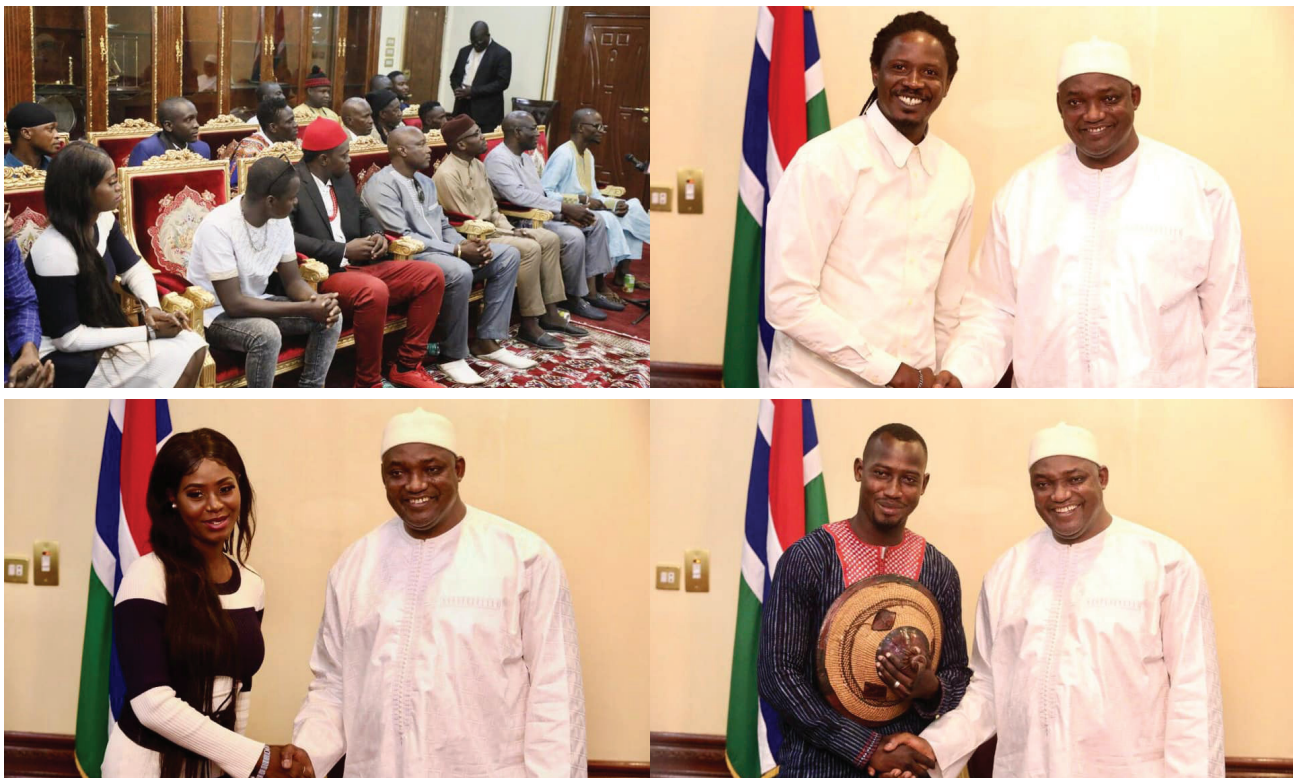
An initiative by a cross-section of Gambian musicians to promote peace and social cohesion received a presidential endorsement after a courtesy call on His Excellency, President Barrow in November 2019.

The musicians met the President at the State House to present the project with the hope of enlisting the support of the government in promoting national unity through the power of music. The President said his support to the cause stems from his recognition of the values of peace and stability in the country.

"As President, I and my government will support this project to its success. I have a mandate to the Gambian people and therefore take ownership of this project," he assured.

The government places a high premium on arts and culture and has increased the budgetary allocation for the sector significantly.

Lamin Cham of Champion Sound, who led the delegation to the State House, said the project objectives include producing songs that will represent all ethnicities in The Gambia. Their approach also involves holding concerts and caravan tours across the country to promote peace and unity.



NDP PRIORITIES

BANJUL: A NATIONAL PRIORITY

Infrastructural development is one of the key priority areas of the Barrow administration. Banjul the capital is a priority for the government, due to the poor sanitation, sewage and the dilapidated road conditions.

It was not a surprise that jubilant crowds greeted the President and his entourage as he inspected the on-going rehabilitation works in Banjul in an unannounced visit. Considering the strategic and symbolic importance of the capital city in any country, the President said it behoves all citizens to unite in improving its outlook and infrastructure.

"We have nowhere that is more important than Banjul. Banjul is our Capital City," he emphasised. That was the key message that President Barrow carried with him when he toured Banjul.

The President urged Gambians to put aside regionalism and political affiliations in support of the progress of the rehabilitation project, adding that there is an urgent need to overhaul the city.

With only 30% of work done, Banjul has already taken shape in its transformation into a modern city. Inhabitants chanted praises for the President in what they described as "salvation" to their plight for decades.



MEET THE PEOPLE TOUR 2019

His Excellency, President Adama Barrow embarked on a nationwide tour of the country to dialogue with the people; assess their conditions and gather first-hand information on the impact of his government's policies and programmes on their lives as dictated by section 222 (15) of the 1997 Constitution of the Republic of The Gambia.



In 2019, more than 60 public meetings and site visits were held throughout the country. He used the opportunity to reiterate his call for unity, social cohesion, and harmony in the pursuit of peace, security and socio-economic and political progress of the country.



The tour was an opportunity to engage with the members of the public on the National Development Plan, particularly the President's priority areas. It attracted a lot of media attention. For instance, the OP Media team produced ... news releases, social media posts and short videos. A new initiative this year was the Mobile video van at meeting grounds showing short videos and slide shows on President Barrow's engagements both at the national and international levels. Also, the meetings were shown to communities while on the move.

Hakalang Road, Electricity Plant to be Commissioned in Niumi

Hakalong road - the only highway that connects most of Upper Niumi to the rest of the North Bank Region is ready for launch in 2020. A \$66 million electricity project for the surrounding communities will accompany the road project.

To cater to the financial needs of women and increase access to credit facilities, the Minister for Women revealed that the government has secured a EUR 3million contribution from the European Union and a GMD12 million Gambia government-funded Women Empowerment Fund project that will soon open applications for women to apply with little interest.

18km road for Salikenni

President Barrow said the next plan of his government is to tar the 18KM road that links Salikenni to the main highway.

Sabach Sanjal, 12 villages to be connected to electricity grid

The community will also be part of at least 12 villages that will be connected to the national electricity grid.



Community Garden generating D3 Million in One Season

A visit to a 4-hectare horticultural garden in Fass village, Central River Region North is generating up to D3million for its members. Many like these are being replicated across the country.



URR as a regional hub

In the bid to reboot the regional economy of Upper River Region, President Barrow announced plans to build a dry port as an extension of to the Banjul Seaport; a four-star hotel, and fuel storage facility to boost economic activities.

The new plans, in addition to the ongoing roads and bridges projects, including the Basse College annexe, amongst others, will fast-track the transformation of Basse into an economic hub.



President Barrow lays the foundation stone for Yorobawol-Basse road project.



New Gambia College annex Basse.

7 Containers of Medicine and Surgical Items

The government of The Gambia has procured seven (7) containers of medical supplies and surgical items, disclosed the Minister of Health, Dr Ahmad Samateh.

The drugs were reported to have already arrived in-country and will be distributed to health centres across the country to improve to basic primary health care for all. The government is also on a major rehabilitation program of all health centres and replacement of dysfunctional medical equipment at major hospitals across the country.

7 Health Centres for LRR

The communities on the Kabada belt of the LRR will benefit from a government project that seeks to construct seven (7) health centres with funding from GAVI and UNICEF.



Government to empower Foni through agriculture

In Foni, President Barrow pledged to empower the people through agricultural mechanisation, value addition and industrialisation.



The President explained that his government's policy towards such empowerment includes holistic approach especially with critical enablers like road networks, electrification and training of youths to acquire new skills needed to move the economy.

A Technical Education Senior School for Somita

President Barrow visited the construction site of a new modern technical and vocational centre in Somita, Foni Berefet. Two similar TVET centres are being constructed in Gunjur and Sanyang in Kombo South.



The project, supported by the BADEA-OFID project, will ease access and decentralise technical and vocational training. Upon completion, the facility will be equipped with modern offices, a multipurpose hall, computer and science labs, toilet blocks, high-security perimeter fencing, and a water supply infrastructure.

A D1.77 million income for Kampant gardeners

On a site visit to a mix-farming centre in the community of Kampant supported by GICAF project and the World Bank, the gardeners informed President Barrow that they generate a revenue of up to D1.77 million for the 444 members of the garden.

The two-hectare horticultural garden largely produces baby corns, also known as cornlets, among other horticultural crops. The corn variety is highly commercial yielding, harvestable up eight times in a season.



A cassava flour mill in Duwasu, West Coast Region

The President said this plant enabled him to see how a cassava value chain is created with flour and animal feed as end products. A venture between Gambian and German entrepreneurs, Government supported the project with a third of funding through FAO, while commercial bank funded with a third of the percentage.

The project created a cassava farmers' cooperatives across the country that will henceforth be supplying the factory with their produce for cash.

Additional 90 Mega Watts power generation capacity for NAWEC Brikama

Continuing his tour of the West Coast Region, President Barrow made three site visits in Brikama. The OMVG power station under construction is installing transformers and supporting infrastructure that will generate 75 Mega Watts of hydroelectricity for The Gambia.

In addition, a German manufactured engine that has been under installation will be launched by February 2020. The generator will provide an additional 20 MW to the current capacity of Brikama power station that was established by Global Electrical Group and now operated by NAWEC.



“Banjul is clean again” - Residents Applaud President’s Rehabilitation Project

During the concluding meeting of the President’s nationwide Meet the People Tour in Banjul, natives of the capital city hailed as important the Banjul Rehabilitation Project, which is the brainchild of President Barrow.

The project, which seeks to restore Banjul back to its former glory as a clean and beautiful capital city, involves the construction of 37 KM of roads and the rehabilitation and maintenance of the drainage and sewage systems.

“Banjul is clean and safe again. Mosquitoes no longer drive us out of the city... We used to get vexed due to the state of the city. We lived years of indecency because we had no choice,” said the Banjul-born Minister of Basic Education, Ms Claudiana Cole.

President Barrow launched the flagship infrastructural project in February 2019 to the tune of \$35.6 Million.

The Minister of Works and Construction, Bai Lamin Jobe, also a native of Banjul, credited President Barrow for not only conceiving and spearheading the project but also for giving it maximum support.

“He called me and lamented the state of the capital city and insisted that we provide a solution,” Minister Jobe said, noting that it was a tough process but he’s happy that Banjulians are attesting to the benefits.

Responding to the overwhelming sentiments of appreciation expressed by the residents of Banjul, President Adama Barrow said the Banjul project enjoys so much political goodwill from his government. He explained he had to summon the Ministers of Works, and Finance at his office several times to find a solution to the Banjul problem.

Contracted to a Gambian-owned Gai Construction company, the rehabilitation project is fully a Gambian affair. According to President Barrow, it was conceived, implemented, and financed 100 per cent by Gambian citizens.

The project also created job opportunities for the youths in the capital city, as 90 per cent of the jobs from the rehabilitation are held by natives and residents of Banjul. More jobs be created with the commencement of the seaport expansion project and the construction of a dry harbour in Banjul.

Minister of Fisheries, Honourable James Gomez urged youths of the city to take advantage of the employment opportunities available no matter how much income they can make from it.

"There's dignity in labour. So hold on to any work you can find, and blessings will find you one day," he admonished.

The Minister of Local Government, Hon. Musa Drammeh traced the genesis of the project to 2017 when the city got flooded and the assessment that followed revealed that the project was beyond the capacity of the City Council.



Banjulians at the Banjul Meet the People 2019 meeting

Gynaecological Centre at Edward Francis Small Teaching Hospital

President Barrow inaugurated a refurbished and upgraded Gynaecology Ward that is now a one-stop centre for all Gynaecological diagnosis and treatment at the EFSmall Teaching Hospital.

The centre is equipped with the latest state of the art machines that will enable doctors to conduct tests, diagnosis, treatment of the most complex forms of gynaecological complications.



Gynaecological Centre at Edward Francis Small Teaching Hospital

OFFICE OF THE FIRST LADY

First Lady Barrow Receives Distinguished Global Award for Excellence at the UN



On the margins of the 74th Session of the United Nations General Assembly, Her Excellency Fatoumata Bah-Barrow, the First Lady of the Republic of The Gambia on September 20, 2019, received the Distinguished Global Award for Excellence from the Global Empowerment Movement (GEM-USA).

The award was in recognition of her work to reduce extreme poverty through assisting marginalised rural women, girls and vulnerable children in The Gambia. The First Lady was celebrated for her dedication and selfless work in various initiatives aimed at positively impacting the lives of the people.

"Madam Barrow has been exemplary at using her platform as First Lady to making a difference in terms of development and the protection of the rights of Gambian women and children with the support of various Government departments and development partners,".

Present at the event were members of the Gambian mission in the US, led by H.E Lang Yarbo, a cross-section of the Gambian community, as well as representatives of the Nigerian First Lady, amongst others.

African First Ladies reinforce calls for Gender Equality, Women Empowerment

The Organisation of African First Ladies (OAFLAD) came up with a resolution renewing their call for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Africa on the margins of the 74th United Nations General Assembly in New York.

OAFLAD concluded that investing in women and girls will yield high returns for poverty eradication, economic growth, which are quite key to realising a future of sustainable development.

They recognised that women in Africa remain the majority of the poor, the dispossessed, the landless, the unemployed, and those working in the informal sector. The African First Ladies also expressed concern that whilst gender parity at the primary education level is close to being achieved, the gap is wider at the secondary level.

"African women and girls' participation in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) at secondary and tertiary levels remain minimal," the resolution stated.

The Organisation called on all member-states of the African Union, the Heads of State, leaders at community and institutional levels and all stakeholders to honour the commitments made at the Global, Continental and national levels; to ensure Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment become a reality in our communities.



African first ladies at the 74th UNGA

FIRST LADY SENDS 43 GAMBIANS TO UNDERGO TRAINING IN AGRIBUSINESS IN CHINA

The First Lady, Her Excellency, Fatoumata Bah Barrow, in October 2019 sent off 43 Gambians, mostly women to China, to undergo a six-week intensive training on beekeeping and honey processing technology.

The capacity building training is a joint collaboration between the Office of the First Lady and the Embassy of The People's Republic of China in The Gambia.

Such capacity building complements the Barrow government's commitment to empowering women. The newly established Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare seized the opportunity to partner with the Office of the First Lady and the Ministry of Agriculture as the trio have a shared target group. The partnership will enhance coordination and collaboration. Minister Fatou Kinteh was at the send-off ceremony and challenged them to be good ambassadors of The Gambia while in China. *"This training will further enhance your capacity in processing and packaging. My ministry will closely work with the Agriculture Ministry to make sure you are provided with outlets and a market base in all the regions,"* she said.

It was also an occasion for diplomacy and the Chinese Ambassador to The Gambia, His Excellency, Ma Jianchun seized the opportunity to applaud First Lady Barrow for always attaching great importance to the capacity building of Gambians.

"I wish to express my heartfelt gratitude to the First Lady, for her strong support and kindness to the China-Gambia relations," he said. The training will enhance China's relations with The Gambia, particularly in improving cultural and people to people ties.

First lady bids farewell to Gambians undergo training in China



Contact:

Press & Public Relations
Office of the President, State House, Banjul
Email: absissoho@op.gov.gm
dpprop2017@gmail.com
Tel: +220 9957592

Social Media Platforms:

Twitter: @BarrowPresident
Facebook: BarrowPORG
Twitter: (@Presidency_GMB)
Facebook: PresidencyGambia)
State House of The Gambia- Youtube
Website: statehouse.gov.gm