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## Acknowledgement

Dedication and commitment have been the driving force to ensure the production of this edition of the State House Newsletter published in July 2020. Though constrained, the staff put in the effort to make it possible as it is a key output of the Media and Communications Unit of the Office of the President. It took months of compilation, writing and editing to put together the information not only for update on the events and activities of the Head of State but also to archive the events for historic records.

The production of this edition of the Newsletter is in tandem with other means of communications utilised by the unit to reach out to Gambians and the general public alike to keep them informed about the President's engagements towards promoting good governance, and policies his government pursue.

In this context, I must commend each member of the unit for their contributions and creating the environment for it to be possible. From the writing of the original stories and compilation, review, editing, making the professional and aesthetic pictures to the layout design demonstrate the massive potential we have to set the pace for motivation and inspiration of many others.

As always, the support of the larger teamwork that made the process possible through information sharing and cooperation, towards the realisation of the overall national goal as expressed in the National Development Goal is appreciated.

The resilience of the staff, even when some had to work from home due to the global pandemic, COVID-19, others had to be frontliners to gather the information and pull us together. To all, I say thank you team.

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As part of China's role in the fight against the coronavirus, Her Excellency Peng Liyuan, wife of the President of the People's Republic of China donated 18, 000 medical masks and 120 infrared thermometers as part of their valuable assistance given to all African First Ladies through the Organization of African First Ladies against HIV and AIDS (OAFLAD). The assistance given to The Gambia further confirms, the existing friendly relations between The Gambia and China. As schools were reopening at the time, it was deemed important to protect our children from the virus, hence the items were subsequently given to the Honorable Minister of Basic and Secondary Education for distribution among the schools.



In collaboration with Merck Foundation, capacity building programs (postgraduate diplomas) were offered for the health professional in various areas including Endocrinology, Preventive Cardiovascular Medicine, Diabetes Management, Acute Medicine, Respiratory Medicine and in Sexual & Reproductive Medicine.

The Office participated in virtual meetings organized by the Global Alliance for First Ladies on Mitigating the impacts of COVID - 19.

Launched the Helpline for Children in collaboration with the Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare and UNICEF on July 14, 2020



## Overview

This is the 6th Edition of the State House Newsletter, which reviews and analyses the engagements of His Excellency, Adama Barrow, President of the Republic of The Gambia for the period January –July 2020.

The areas covered include governance, highlighting Cabinet decisions regarding policy commitments and programmes towards achieving the goals of the National Development Plan. The policies and programmes cover the Civil Service Reforms including repeal of the Pensions Act, 1950, strengthening institutions under agriculture, i.e proposed enactment of the Plant Health Bill 2014 to financing programmes to boost agribusiness such as the Regional Rice Value Chain Development Project.

Other Cabinet decisions reached were the operationalisation of a Single Treasury Account (STA) for government, Financing of the Resilience of Organisations for Transformative Smallholder Agriculture project and more. Other sectors cover under governance include Information and Communication, Transport, Works and Infrastructure, Civil and Public Institutions, Women's Affairs, Petroleum and Higher Education.

During the period under review, several officials have taken the Oath of Office, Allegiance and Secrecy to serve the nation in various capacities. Amongst them were Judges, the Secretary General and Head of the Civil Service, and Deputy Secretary General, Permanent Secretaries and a new Justice Minister. As part of the Institutional Strengthening programme, the Constitutional Review Commission has submitted the Draft Constitution 2020 to the Head of State.

In line with keeping the promise and progress towards achieving the National Development Programme, a series of infrastructural development projects inaugurated included roads in the Upper River Region and the West Coast Region, as well as the first rural college. The \$50M International Conference Centre described as the 'Pearl of the Smiling Coast' had also been inaugurated.

Also in this edition, readers can keep track of engagements in the areas of development support, celebrations of events, diplomatic engagements and networking. Society and politics is another highlight of this edition of the State House Newsletter. It has also captured ratings by international observers monitoring press freedom as well as fiscal transparency as best practice in governance. Readers cannot miss out on the strategies employed by the Presidency in addressing the global pandemic regarding COVID-19.





## GOVERNANCE

### Cabinet Meetings

During the biannual review of Presidential activities, the Cabinet Office coordinated ten (10) Cabinet sessions between 9th January 2020 and 4th June 2020. Several policies and programmes were reviewed, discussed and approved.

### Policies and Programmes

Key policy decisions taken at Cabinet level

#### Civil Service Reform

- Repeal of the Pensions Act, 1950. The Pensions Bill once ratified, will ensure pensioners are paid retirement benefits within 30 days, minimize the undue delay in the processing of pension benefits, and a centralized Directorate of Pension under the Personnel Management office (PMO) charged with the responsibility for the administration and management of the pension of public sector workers will be in place.

#### Agriculture

- Reconstitute the Revitalization of Co-operatives in the existing Agribusiness Service Unit of Ministry of Agriculture.
- Proposed the Enactment of a Bill to provide for effective regulations.

#### Health

Proposed Enactment of the Plant Health Bill, 2014

vegetable and rice production, record keeping and business management will be trained to enable them to operate their businesses sustainably. The Project will be implemented in five regions.

#### Finance and Economic Affairs

- Cabinet adopted a \$29.8 million project between The Gambia, the Islamic Development Bank and the Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa (BADEA) for the financing of a regional rice value chain development project. The project development goal is to pave the way for private sector participation in rice production processes through community agreements that are endorsed by the government as well as strengthen farmer organizations so that they will serve as the entry point to reach farmers and sustainably provide services.

The project will enhance the homegrown school feeding programme and boost the income level of farmers especially women who are traditional rice growers in The Gambia.

- Cabinet approved the operationalisation of a Single Treasury Account (STA) for the government, which is a consolidated account for all government agencies and departments and shall be maintained at the Central Bank of The Gambia. It is to ensure accountability of government revenue, enhance transparency and avoid misappropriation of public funds. It aims to ensure proper cash management by eliminating idle funds usually left with different commercial banks and enhance reconciliation of revenue collection and payment.

- Provisional Approval of Loan and Grant Agreement between the Government of The Gambia and International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) for the Financing of the Resilience of Organisations for Transformative smallholder Agriculture project (ROOTS) has been solicited.

The \$80 million loan agreement between The Gambia and International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) has been adopted.



A proposal was sent to the Organization of African First Ladies for Development (OAFLAD) for proposing for African First Ladies to take steps to comfort vulnerable communities and as part of their already existing efforts, to fight this pandemic in Africa under the leadership of OAFLAD in a coordinated manner. It could be agreed amongst the Member states to collectively develop different initiatives with key partners to address various impacts on vulnerable communities, using the OAFLAD Joint Statement as a basis. It is suggested for such an initiative to start with a joint message calling for an end to gender-based violence with the support of UNFPA. This would entail a short video clip featuring various First Ladies using the same platform and one voice. The joint video clip would contain different key messages and a strong call for an end to gender-based violence against women and girls. (Awaiting response)



Through the Gambian Honorary Consul in Japan, H. E. the First Lady signed a Petition on Food Support and Measures against the novel coronavirus Sars - Cov - 2 Infection in cooperation with the Asia Pacific Africa Women's Economic Exchange Association. A short message was also shared by H. E. Fatoumatta Bah - Barrow, the First Lady of the Republic:

*"The coronavirus break is a health crisis that has both direct and indirect impacts on food security. The communities in affected countries with weak systems are now faced with the additional challenge of managing the food crisis. Thus, proper measures ought to be taken to protect the most vulnerable and ensure food security, to minimize the threat of malnutrition and hunger towards children. In my view, maintaining and scaling up food support efforts to reach those in need, with a particular focus on children are necessary,"*







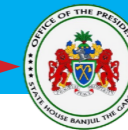
In collaboration with Merck Foundation, a call for entries has been made for a “Media Recognition Awards” for various media professionals engaged in raising awareness on the coronavirus outbreak. The Media Recognition Awards was initiated to show appreciation and recognition of the work of journalists that raise awareness on how to stay safe and be physically and mentally healthy during these trying times. It further seeks to distinguish the most creative and influential media work aiming to raise awareness and sensitize communities about COVID - 19 as a preventive measure.



Another initiative taken in partnership with Merck Foundation includes a comic book entitled “Making the Right Choice” that will be launched and shared shortly. The storybook aims to raise awareness about Coronavirus and give important information on what needs to be known about the virus to protect you and your family.

Working with UNFPA Country Office to raise awareness on mental health and psychosocial support as well as gender-based violence, following the establishments of hotlines as part of psychosocial support efforts undertaken by the Ministry of Health. These services are open to COVID - 19 patients, health workers on the frontlines, those in quarantine centres and GBV survivors. Given the fact that one of the impacts of the pandemic is the surge of gender-based violence cases in The Gambia and everywhere else in the world, information on the prevention and the available psychosocial services for vulnerable women is key in addressing GBV.

Launched the Gender-Based Violence Hotline 1313 on July ..., 2020 in collaboration with the Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare and UNFPA.



The project focuses on creating accessible markets, improving the participation of women and rural youth in farming activities. Female entrepreneurs in vegetable and rice production, record keeping and business management will be trained to enable them to operate their businesses sustainably. The Project will be implemented in five regions.

- Proposed the Amendment on The Gambia Public Procurement Act 2018
- Financing Agreement for the Rehabilitation and Development of Banjul International Airport Project Phase II from Additional Loan between the Republic of The Gambia and the Saudi Fund for Development was approved.
- Information and Communication Infrastructure
  - Adopted the Data Protection and Privacy Policy and Strategy 2019, and
  - Cyber Crime Bill, 2020.

- Transport, Works and Infrastructure
  - Adoption of the National Building and Facilities Policy and
  - Draft Gambia Maritime Administration (GMA) Charges.
- Civil and Public Institutions (OVP)
  - Establishment of a National Centre for Coordination of an Early Warning Response Mechanism in The Gambia.
- Women, Children and Social Welfare
  - Adopted the Women Enterprise Fund Bill 2020 and
  - Disability Bill, 2020.
- Petroleum and Energy
  - Adopted the Petroleum Commission Bill 2020.
- Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology
  - Adopted the University of The Gambia Bill, 2020 and
  - The Gambia Institute of Public Administration and Management (GIPAM) Bill, 2020.

### Institutional Strengthening Swearing-in Ceremonies

The swearing-in of another new Gambian Judge, Justice Zainab Ngui Mboob, and two new members of the Public Service Commission, Baboucarr Alieu Suwareh and Musa Sanneh on the 13th February 2020, is part of the on-going search for Gambian citizens who will contribute towards the strengthening of our governance structures. The appointments of these senior officials are meant to improve further on the performance of their various offices in delivering service to the citizenry. The pace has already been set, and there is optimism that the three branches of government will continue to work in harmony for the realisation of the ideals of the Constitution and the successful implementation of Government policies and strategies, as spelt out in the National Development Plan.

*“As you take up your appointments, remember that your decisions and actions in the course of executing your duties will impact on the lives of Gambians, who do not have the privilege to be where you are. Thus, I urge you to be righteous, honest and trustworthy wherever you may be.”*



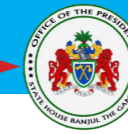


**Judiciary regaining public confidence as two new judges sworn**

The Barrow Administration has given rule of law a priority through the independent administration of Justice, key in the practice of good governance. Providing a nationalist's outlook is strategic in building confidence and raising the expectation of the citizens. The Judiciary is re-gaining its lost image and public confidence within three years of the Barrow led government. Such development impacts positively on the country's democracy and promotes investment for the socio-economic development of the nation.



On 16th April 2020, President Barrow presided over the swearing-in ceremony of yet another two new Gambian judges and a permanent secretary. 'Gambianising' the judiciary has been central to the judicial reform programme of his government's National Development Plan. From 2017 to date, Gambians accounted for 17 out of 25 Superior Court Judges. This has become a source of pride for the President, as he tasked the appointed judges to commit and dedicate themselves to service. "I must challenge you to commit to serving the nation with honour and to the best of your ability. Your commitment and desire to serve professionally, without fear or favour, will go a long way in giving hope to the public sector and ensuring that set results are achieved,"



In collaboration with a major GSM company, text messages were sent to about half a million users at given intervals and have also distributed posters with prevention measures in various communities, government departments and other offices. We have put up billboards throughout the urban area and developed a short video clip using different people including the First Lady to convey different messages on the prevention measures, staying at home and also thanking the health care workers and all those on the frontlines of the fight against COVID - 19. The persons used were from different professions including the Minister of Women and Children's Affairs, an Officer from the Gambia Armed Forces, the UNICEF Country Representative, a student, a local, market vendor, one of the Bishops as a religious leader, a person with special needs amongst others to raise awareness and demonstrate the preventive measures.



Water dispensers produced by the Gambia Training Technical Institute were donated along with other sanitary materials to various communities.



Another important aspect of our interventions is the donation of basic commodities/food items and sanitary materials to various communities living in vulnerable situations. Furthermore, donations were made to children's shelters, the psychiatric hospital, to Associations of people with special needs/disabilities and to those living with HIV and AIDS who have preexisting conditions making them at high risks of contracting the virus. Donations have been made to thousands of households.







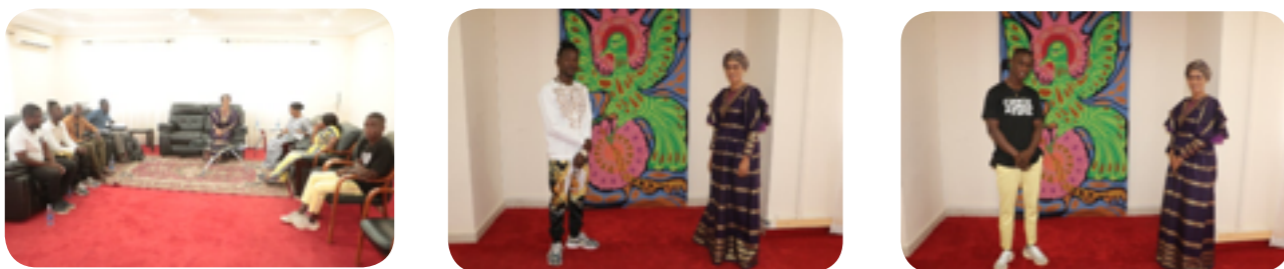
Different forums or platforms were used to raise awareness about the virus. H. E. the First Lady started her sensitization campaign with a particular focus on the most vulnerable groups of society i.e. women, children and those with special needs. She talked about the preventive measures of COVID - 19 in various health facilities situated in densely populated areas. The First lady used the opportunity at all the functions she attended to sensitise the people about the virus, especially the preventive measures. The First Lady also visited numerous schools to sensitise children on the issue including schools for those with special needs.



The Office is working with various partners including the UN agencies, female entrepreneurs, business community / private sector as well as philanthropists.



In collaboration with UNICEF, known musicians and the Red Cross drama troupe, songs, comedy songs and a short play have been developed using English and local languages to educate people about the virus and on how to protect themselves from it.



Justice Momodou S.M. Jallow and Justice Landing M. Sanneh are Gambian trained judges who served considerable years in the judiciary and rose through the ranks to their new appointments. It brings the number of new judges in 2020 alone to four in addressing the “continuous concern” for the transformation and strengthening of the judiciary.

For Permanent Secretary Momodou Mbai Jabang, he gathered a wealth of experience as a civil servant in the agriculture ministry before he was appointed Permanent Secretary.

Justice Sanneh speaking on behalf of the newly sworn-in officials emphasised the need for taking responsibility in their service to the nations. “It is incumbent on all of us to contribute our quota in the development of our beloved country in service to Gambians in positions bestowed on us,” he stated.

### New Draft Constitution 2020



President Adama Barrow has said that the new Draft Constitution 2020, premised on strong foundations and all-inclusiveness, will provide a haven for all citizens to enjoy the path to peace, freedom and prosperity.

The President made this remark in receiving the new draft constitution presented by the Constitutional Review Commission (CRC) at the State House on 27th January 2020. The drafting process took the 11-member Commission, headed by Justice Cherno Jallow, under two years to consult, draft, review and submit a validated new draft Constitution to His Excellency, President Adama Barrow.

The exercise was meant to provide Gambians with a constitutional framework to enjoy their rights as citizens of the country.

**“This springs off from the belief that every Gambian should comfortably relate to the Constitution, and that our institutions must be structured for sustained performance,”** President Barrow said at a ceremony attended by Chief Justice of The Gambia, Speaker of the National Assembly and a cross section of Cabinet Ministers.





The Draft Constitution was expected to promote and nurture best practices, as well as to maintain the country's values as a nation.

“Accommodating our diversity allows us all to enjoy the fundamentals of democracy, freedom and the rule of law,” President Barrow maintained, noting that the new Constitution will allow Government to focus on development, and create the environment for all to enjoy their citizenship and realise their full potentials.

The Attorney General and Minister of Justice, Abubacarr Tambadou said several Bills tabled before the National Assembly for enactment, on top of this new Draft Constitution, will transform the legal landscape of the country, particularly for the country's criminal justice system.

In June 2018 the 11-member Constitutional Review Commission was sworn into office and mandated to execute their assignment in two phases: First, to review the 1997 Constitution of the Republic of The Gambia and write a new Constitution; second, to prepare a report about the new Constitution. The Draft Constitution under review is currently a subject of national debates.

As required by the Constitutional Review Commission Act 2018, His Excellency, President Adama Barrow having received the Draft Constitution on 30th March 2020, the Ministry of Justice published the national document in the Gazette in May 2020, before it is subsequently tabled to the National Assembly in August 2020.

**Keeping the Promise – The NDP in Progress  
The DKJIC - “The Pearl of the Smiling Coast”**

**FACTS about DKJIC:**

**Cost: US\$50Million, Employees: Over 500 Workers, Duration: Over 2 years.**

**Contractor: Jiangsu Provincial Construction Company Consultant: PMC, Ministry of Transport, Works and Infrastructure**

**It provided opportunity for transfer of knowledge and skills to Gambian nationals for the development of our local construction industry.**

**Inaugurated by: H.E Adama Barrow, President of the Republic of The Gambia**



Basic information about natural resource extraction awards was publicly available. The report also noted that The Gambia's fiscal transparency would be improved by publishing its executive budget proposal online within a reasonable period and ensuring the supreme audit institution publishes audit reports within a reasonable time.

“The U.S. Embassy in The Gambia commends the government of The Republic of The Gambia, and in particular the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs and the National Assembly, for the continued focus and attention on enhancing transparency in this and other important areas.”

**Office of the First Lady  
COVID - 19 RESPONSE EFFORTS**

As part of our prevention efforts and in support to the Ministry of Health, the Office of the First Lady engaged in raising awareness about COVID - 19 even before The Gambia registered its first case of the coronavirus which was recorded on 17th March 2020. H. E. the First Lady was amongst the first dignitaries in the country to step up and render her voice to fight against COVID - 19 at a time when most people were unaware, indifferent or even understood the gravity of the coronavirus. Some of the steps taken as part of the First Lady's efforts to support the national response against the pandemic include the following:



The Office started by organizing a stakeholders meeting and invited the Minister of Health and the country Representatives of UN agencies including the WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA, the Ministers of Women and Children's Affairs, t Basic Education, and other key players to ascertain the level of preparedness in the fight against the pandemic.

At that meeting, the partners were informed of the First Lady's decision to render support by playing a leading role in the advocacy campaign against COVID - 19. The need to protect children at all cost was emphasized during this meeting which consequently eventually resulted in the closure of schools very early in a bid to protect the children from contracting the virus.







“Despite our diversity as members of the Commonwealth family, we are all affected by the global pandemic, which has devastated our national economies and increased unemployment.”

A special Commonwealth COVID-19 relief fund will assist the the small, poorest and least developed Commonwealth Members.

### Rating Good Governance under President Barrow’s Leadership

#### The Gambia has moved five (5) places forward in the World Press Index

Director of RSF West Africa Office in Dakar Mr Assane Diagne, on 22nd April 2020 told The Point Newspaper that The Gambia has moved five (5) places forward in the World Press Index which re-groups 180 countries in the world. The Gambia has moved from its 92nd position of last year to 87th which is also scored 30.62.

It improves both its rank and its score, moving from 31.35 in 2019 to 30.35 this year, a gain of 0.75 points. It is worth noting that countries are assessed on a grid with a scale of 0 to 100.

The lower the score, the better the situation of press freedom in the country. The Gambia, therefore, continues its progress in press freedom which started when President Adama Barrow came to power, even if the pace was slower during the year 2019.

#### The United States Concludes The Gambia Made Significant Progress In Fiscal Reform

US Embassy in Banjul newsrelease reproduced below: The United States government has said The Gambia made significant progress in its ‘continuing’ efforts at government fiscal reform. The US Department of State on June 15, 2020, released its 2020 Fiscal Transparency Report.

The Department’s fiscal transparency review process assesses whether governments meet minimum requirements of fiscal transparency.

For the purpose of this report, the minimum requirements of fiscal transparency include having key budget documents that are publicly available, substantially complete, and generally reliable, the US government through its Embassy in Banjul said in a press release on (13th July 2020).

The press release added: “The review includes an assessment of the transparency of processes for awarding government contracts and licenses for natural resource extraction. Fiscal transparency is a critical element of effective public financial management, helps build market confidence, and underpins economic sustainability.

Fiscal transparency fosters greater government accountability by providing a window into government budgets for citizens, helping citizens hold their leadership accountable, and facilitating better-informed public debate. “During the review period, The Gambia published its enacted budget and end-of-year report online and improved the completeness of budget documents. Information on debt obligations was publicly available and updated at least annually. Budget documents were substantially complete.

The criteria and procedures by which the national government awards contracts or licenses for natural resource extraction were specified in law and followed in practice.



Committed to democracy and development, it is the pride of the Barrow government that during its three years in office, it worked through diplomacy and struck a balance between preserving our natural resource and infrastructural development to be able to put up a magnificent edifice in the heart of the beautiful Bijilo National Park. Situated there is the **Sir Dawda Kairaba Jawara International Conference Centre (DKJIC)**, which President Adama Barrow described as “an attractive landmark on our seafront overlooking the Atlantic Ocean,” and The People’s Republic of China Ambassador to The Gambia, H.E Ma Jianchun once described it as “*the Pearl of the Smiling Coast.*”

The construction of the Fifty Million US Dollar (US\$ 50 Million) Centre, with grant-aided by the People’s Republic of China was a prioritised project, as it is a pre-requisite for hosting the Organization of Islamic Conference Summit in 2022. The facility has also come to fill a long-standing need for a tourism and development niche, as reflected in the National Development Plan (2018-2021). Its specifications comply with The Gambia National Public Building and Facilities Policy (2018-2027).

Its magnitude demonstrates The People’s Republic of China’s resolve to link its development plan with development support to The Gambia. The re-new relationship is rooted in a mutually beneficial cooperation formula for Africa and The People’s Republic of China.



In a bid to build on and strengthen the foundation of democracy, pioneered by the founding father of the nation, Sir Dawda Kairaba Jawara, it was a well applauded decision to pay tribute to the first President of the Republic, and name the Centre after him. The initiative is expected to nurture democratic principles as the norm in governance and societal culture.



Former First Lady Chilel Jawara joined President Barrow and Chinese officials at the opening of the DKJICC





### Inauguration of Lamin Koto-Pasamass Road



Close to the border with North Eastern Senegal, the roads were smooth, tarred with clear signboards to guide drivers. Travelling from Banjul to that part of the country, Wuli usually takes over 11 hours. For over 50 years after gaining independence from Britain, the area has been the most marginalized in terms of access. With the Barrow government in office, projects funds were secured to fully implement the construction as promised during the campaign for the Presidency in 2016.

This road project extends for 121 kilometers, fulfilling the goal of completing the Gambia's North Bank trunk road to bituminous standard was inaugurated on the 29th February 2020.

From Barra, the road connects the northern part to the southern part of the country. It is a symbol of development that will impact thousands of lives, as it will ease access to health care and education while enhancing the movement of people, goods and services. By all measures, it will further promote trade and regional connectivity.

It came with such other advantages as improving access to the great agricultural potential of the northeastern region, facilitating effective implementation of the Government's rural development programmes.

The road will also stimulate the provision of better and more effective public services, including an agricultural extension to encourage greater production. All these are critical to The Gambia's food self-sufficiency drive and foreign exchange earnings.

*"The project provides a viable pathway to economic prosperity and social progress," President Barrow said.*



It is worth noting that at the time of the meeting Sierra Leone is the Chair of the ECOWAS Finance Minister's Committee

### Sharing Solutions in Challenging Times

The Secretary General of the Commonwealth Secretariat, Rt. Hon. Patricia Scotland hosted a virtual meeting of its member Heads of State and Government on the 24th June 2020 on a consultation on finding solutions to the Coronavirus pandemic.

President Barrow lauded the initiative to explore the establishment of a special Commonwealth COVID-19 relief fund, with the mandate of assisting the small, poorest and least developed Commonwealth Members.

Solutions within the Commonwealth include protecting Small and vulnerable nations that depend heavily on tourism and fishing have been hit hard by the pandemic.



Unhindered access for developing countries within the Commonwealth to all markets is a prerequisite for economic growth, sustainable development, employment and poverty reduction. In this respect, implementing the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement is immensely vital.

Financial and technical assistance to Commonwealth Developing Member Countries would ensure more effective implementation of sound macroeconomic policies that will lead to equitable distribution of the benefits of sustaining high rates of economic growth for poverty reduction. National development efforts could be further enhanced with Foreign Direct Investment.

Commonwealth Developed Member Countries are encouraged to provide adequate funds to the Commodity Futures Trading Commission – CFTC to assist developing Member Countries to elaborate and effectively implement policies supporting the development and accelerated growth of small and medium-sized enterprises.

Finance for green growth initiatives and green infrastructure should be part of the efforts to create a sustainable future for all.





“The impact of the pandemic on human lives and livelihoods is extremely destructive. It has disrupted the momentum and gains made towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and other development targets.” President Barrow

The Summit was convened by President of Kenya, Mr. Uhuru Kenyatta who serves as President-in-Office of the OACPS, the 79-member states’ group. The Gambian Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs, Honourable Mambury Njie, is current Chairman of Council of Ministers and Gambia’s Ambassador to Belgium, Her Excellency, Tenengba Jaiteh, serves as Chairperson of the Committee of Ambassadors, respectively.



**ECOWAS Single Currency- ECO**

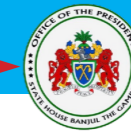
The President of Sierra Leone, H.E Julius Maada Bio convened an ECOWAS meeting on the “Implementation of ECOWAS Single Currency- ECO” on the 23rd June 2020. The meeting discussed the ECOWAS regional integration programme which is guided by the ECOWAS Monetary Cooperation Programme for the introduction of the single currency in its revised Roadmap. Decisions have already been taken on the name and symbol of the future currency, the exchange rate regime, the monetary policy framework, the model Central Bank, and the name of the common Central Bank.

Furthermore, to introduce the single currency, and for its effective implementation, Member States must sustainably achieve, on a three-year basis, all the criteria.

While the ECOWAS Authority has made progress on the proposed introduction of the ECOWAS Single Currency by the year 2020, the West African Economic and Monetary Union has recently announced a similar programme with opposing exchange rate monetary policies within the same region. There is a need, therefore, to review these decisions in line with Article 15 of the 48th Ordinary session of the Authority of the Heads of State and Government of 16th December 2015.

The West Africa Monetary Zone - WAMZ coordinated the meeting which concluded with the following:

- To call an emergency meeting of all ECOWAS members
- Renew commitments to the monetary union in ECOWAS
- Members to appeal to colleagues in the French-speaking ECOWAS members
- Call on West African Economic and Monetary Union not to go ahead with its plan until the proposed emergency meeting was held



**College Education reaching Rural Gambia**

Right to educational opportunities and making higher education accessible to the rural Gambia is in fulfilment of one of our Constitutional mandates. Furthermore, education has been a key priority of my government, as clearly manifested in the National Development Plan. The Barrow government is resolved to remedying the disadvantages that our people in the rural Gambia have suffered from in the past when children had to abandon their parents in search of college education in the Greater Banjul Area. **Historic will record 2nd March 2020 as another important date in the calendar of Barrow administration. It was the date when The Gambia College, School of Education Annex, constructed in Basse, Upper River Region was inaugurated.**



**Opening of the first Rural College, The Gambia College Annex at Basse**





Since he assumed the mantle of leadership of the country, his government has taken and continues to take concrete steps to make education, in general, and tertiary and higher education, in particular, accessible. In the process, The MRC-Holland Foundation that sponsored the great edifice in Basse has been a valuable partner in the education sector. The first-ever outreach campus of The Gambia College, which took a little over a year to construct, will also play a significant part in reducing the rural-urban migration and by extension immigration of our youths outside the country. The teachers who will graduate from this annex, will stay in the rural area and provide the youth with the quality education they equally deserve.

**Mitigating Impact of Climate Change**

President Barrow on March 4th 2020 inaugurated the national hydrological complex in Bansang, Central River Region.

This facility was constructed under the *Strengthening Climate Services and Early Warning Systems Phase II Project*, in conformity with the major climate change strategic documents of The Gambia.



It is meant to address the main challenge facing the country in the context of climate change, its capacity to conduct climate monitoring and collection of reliable data and information on climate change. The development of alerts and early warnings had been low in the country because of several infrastructural constraints and human capacity limitations, including such a facility. This facility consequently will be used to serve as a hub for the collection of all hydrological data necessary for analysis and planning, and dissemination of such information to all key stakeholders. The Bansang hydrological headquarters will directly address the needs of the country in terms of advising the relevant Ministries and stakeholders on the quality and quantity of both surface and groundwater available in the country. It will contribute also to achieving the goals stated in the National Development Plan. Its commissioning was welcomed news for the country.



**Transcending COVID 19: Building Resilience through Global Solidarity**

Addressing a virtual Extraordinary Inter-Sessional Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS), on the theme, *“Transcending COVID 19: Building Resilience through Global Solidarity”*, in early June 2020, His Excellency, President Adama Barrow described as “extremely destructive” the impact of the COVID 19 pandemic on human lives and livelihoods.



As a member of the troika, President Barrow challenged member countries to place the human being at the centre of the deliberation, adding that the pandemic already disrupted the momentum and gains made towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and other development targets. “Financing development should be central to discussions on building resilient economies and advancing social inclusion and development,” He noted.

Addressing the debt burden on developing countries, expanding fiscal space and fostering domestic resource mobilisation is essential to strengthening member states’ socio-economic systems. Furthermore, the cooperation of the European Union and other development partners to further prevent the economic challenges member countries already face was crucial to respond effectively to the economic challenges posed by COVID-19.

**Impact on The Gambia economy**

Economically, women and the youth are the most vulnerable groups in The Gambia, as their income-generating activities centres heavily on the tourism, fisheries and artisanal industries. It is advised that containment measures will have multiple effects in both urban and rural settings, thus emphasizing strategies and action points to minimise disruption to the food and agriculture systems, while adequately supporting the livelihoods of all vulnerable groups.





### Financing For Development in the Era of COVID-19 and Beyond

“Our economies have been virtually shut down for the past several months as economic growth has become seriously compromised for the foreseeable future,

In another virtual engagement, President Barrow spoke at the AU High-Level Virtual Event on Financing For Development in the Era of COVID-19 and Beyond on the 28th May 2020. He indicated The Gambia’s support for the discussion of the areas that have been identified as topics for this high-level event.

The Summit discussed strategies for developing countries to overcome the burden of debts, economic growth, tackling corruption amongst others.

**Amongst them:**

- Provision of access to financial resources and special facilities along with enhanced balance of payments support.
- Debt relief or debt cancellation to free up fiscal resources for life-saving interventions in the battered economies. As least developed countries, debt servicing is compromising their recovery efforts.
- Ways to increase economic growth save existing jobs and create more new jobs through access to various forms of external finance. For some of African countries, migrant remittances are a lifeline; therefore, reduction in transaction costs would make more resources available as remittance.
- To tackle corruption, requires international cooperation and the International partners urged to do more towards development assistance. The pandemic represents an opportunity to take bolder actions to truly leave no one behind and calls for solidarity to recover from its impact.



### Inauguration of Sukuta to Jambanjelly Road



**Facts**

Funder: Islamic Development Bank  
 Implementing Partner: GAMWORKS  
 Design and Supervision Consultant: STUDI International  
 Local partner: MAHFOUS Engineering Consultants  
 Contractor: AREZKI  
 Ministry: Ministry of Transport, Works & Infrastructure  
 Agency: National Roads Authority

Building Infrastructure, including the expansion of the road network, is one of the strategic priorities of the NDP 2018 -2021. The completion of the Sukuta to Jambanjelly dual carriageway is an important milestone in the infrastructural development of The Gambia, in particular, Kombo North and Kombo South. Inaugurating the road on the 7th March 2020, President Adama Barrow said his government was aware of the challenges people faced when they attempted to travel to places like Jambur and Jambanjelly before this road was built. It was difficult to reach communities along this route.

The Islamic Development Bank one of the valuable partners in the Gambia’s development financed the 13.5KM road. It contributes to the booming economic activities within the area, hence new housing estates and light industries continue to be constructed along the corridor. Additionally, this road is also helping to decongest and provide an alternative route to reach Brikama and environs.

The completion of the Sukuta to Jambanjelly Road is an important achievement towards the realization of the goals of the NDP. Also, it contributes to achieving our other commitments as envisaged in the Sustainable Development Goals and the Africa Union (AU) Agenda 2063, giving priority to communications and infrastructure connectivity across Africa.





## Supporting Development

### High Profile Visits

#### World Bank Group, Mr Charles J. Cormier



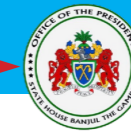
In the National Development Plan (NDP 2018- 2021), energy is categorised as a priority sector in the context of the United Nation’s Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs 2030).

In his first year in office, His Excellency, President Adama Barrow was faced with one of the biggest crisis in the electricity sector. His vision of the electricity sector is to reach universal access by 2025. Besides access, there is also the issue of the cost of electricity for average Gambians. The Gambia currently pays 23 Cents on average, while the US pays 12 cents on average for electricity. This pricing also impedes competitiveness of the economy if electricity is expensive.

To address its challenges, the National Water and Electricity Company - NAWEC needs to build local capacity to effectively manage the state company. The World Bank aware of the need to support NAWEC has invested \$175 million in the national energy investment plan, out of a \$400 million planned budget, representing about 40 per cent. The Practice Manager of the Energy and Extractives division of the World Bank Group, Mr. Charles J. Cormier in a courtesy call on President Adama Barrow stated The Gambia is currently ranked fourth among African countries working to meet the universal access to electricity target by 2025.

Making a comparative analysis of the situation within a period of two to three years, during his visits to The Gambia.

“If you recall in 2017, after the change of regime, there were huge power cuts of up to 16 to 18 cuts per day. The availability of electricity was only 25 megawatts on a grid that has a demand of up to 100 megawatts at the time.” Cormier further observed that NAWEC did a good job to bring back the reliability of the service to two to three power cuts a day, an improvement he associated with the successful execution of its emergency plan. “The Gambia is among the few countries that want to achieve this target five years earlier, including Ghana, Senegal, and Cote d’Ivoire,” Mr. Cormier assessed.



## ECOWAS: Situation and Impact of the Coronavirus (COVID -19)

President Barrow shared the situation of the country with his colleagues at the first-ever virtual Extraordinary Session of Heads of State and Governments convened by ECOWAS to share country experiences on COVID-19 on the 23rd April 2020, stating that **“two-thirds of workers in The Gambia work in the informal sector, which accounts for 80% of the informal economy. It is tragic that the vast majority have no regular income and, therefore, have neither savings nor any social security buffer in case of loss of wages. In this difficult situation, they cannot meet their necessities.”** In revisiting his government’s policies to address COVID-19, health and social protection measures have been given priority, ranging from testing and treatment to building the human resource base in the health sector and expanding social assistance.

The Gambia’s Fiscal policy measures include deferring filing and payment, reducing social contributions, granting low-interest loans to firms, re-prioritising spending and financing larger fiscal deficit. Efforts placed on protecting employment and incomes for enterprises and workers negatively impacted by the indirect effects of COVID- 19. Financial, industrial and trade policies will be reviewed further.







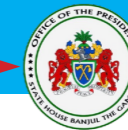
At the Presidency, measures have been put in place to encourage hand washing, insistence on officials wearing a mask and keeping social distancing while attending meetings, and to ensure that non-essential staff work from home.

President Barrow set up a Cabinet sub-committee on COVID -19 chaired by Her Excellency the Vice President, Dr Isatou Touray to fast track policy decision making processes, and oversee the response process. The work of the Committee led to the President launching a national relief package of rice, sugar and oil worth over seven hundred and thirty-four million Dalasi (GMD734,000,000).

### Virtual Summits of World Leaders

While the world is waking up to the realities of COVID -19, the role of information technology in global dialogues and consultations has taken a center stage. Communications through the use of new technology had temporarily replaced flights to attend a face to face conference. In this regard, President Barrow joined his colleagues in various Summits held during the first half of 2020. He participated in the following Virtual Summits:

Virtual Summit	Convener	Theme	Date
Extraordinary Session of The ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government	H.E Issoufou Mahamadou, President of Niger	“Situation and impact of the Coronavirus (COVID -19)”	23 <sup>rd</sup> April 2020
UN High-Level Virtual Event on Financing For Development in The Era of COVID-19 and Beyond	PM of Canada, Justin Trudeau, PM of Jamaica, Andrew Holness and UN SG Antonio Guterres	“Financing For Development in The Era of COVID-19 and Beyond”	28 <sup>th</sup> May 2020
Extraordinary Inter-Sessional Summit of Heads of States and Governments of the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS)	H.E Uhuru Kenyatta of Kenya	“Transcending COVID-19: Building Resilience through Global Solidarity.”	3 <sup>rd</sup> June 2020
ECOWAS Virtual Summit	H.E Julius Maada Bio, President of Sierra Leone	“The Implementation of ECOWAS Single Currency-ECO”	23 <sup>rd</sup> June 2020
Virtual Commonwealth Leaders’ Meeting	Commonwealth Secretary General	“Sharing Solutions in Challenging Times”	24 <sup>th</sup> June 2020



## Celebrations

### 12th Convocation Ceremony of the UTG

The Gambian Leader told UTG graduates that his government is aware of the opportunities and strengths that must be harnessed to realise the development goals and objectives set out in the National Development Plan (2018-2021).

Theme for the 12th Convocation ceremony of the UTG:  
 “The Role of Higher Education in Sustaining Peace and Stability in The New Gambia.”



Speaking at the 12th Convocation, the Chancellor, President Adama Barrow highlighted the responsibilities of upholding and promoting the dignity of the citizenry, equality and rights surpassing race, religion, creed, political affiliation and other strands of diversity.

Recognising that universities are designated institutions to examine and find solutions to societal challenges, engineer growth and shape policy, among other critical pursuits, the UTG is relevant in our national development endeavour. Its unique position as a citadel of knowledge makes it an equally vital partner for progress, peace and prosperity. The University has a role in providing crucial support through expert knowledge and informed options and alternatives for Government. It is influential in developing human capital and bringing out the brightest and best in society. The Gambia urgently needs policymakers to engage academics, and benefit from their practice and knowledge to ensure that their expertise is embedded in policy formulation processes and implementation for optimum performance and results.







### 55th Independence Anniversary in Renewed Freedom



A selected group of school children converged at the McCarthy Square in the Island capital, Banjul to join the armed and security forces in the Independence anniversary parade, to celebrate The Gambia at 55 years.

School children sang songs of freedom and independence, the bands of the Police, the Army and the Scout beat drums that rang nostalgia. Flags were raised high and 21 gun salute disperses birds from treetops.

The 55th anniversary of this historic event should trigger thoughts to guide Gambians redefine their roles as citizens to situate and reposition the motherland better on the global stage.

Never have Gambians been given the space to participate so genuinely and passionately in nation-building processes as witnessed in the drafting of a new Constitution, the various Commissions established to probe crimes that are both financial and human rights in nature; the establishment of multitudes of political parties, the economy and various other aspects of governance.

The Legislature is equally operating under so much independence, openness, freedom and liveliness as never before, taking into account the editorial independence of the media, several media outlets and the political developments areas progress worth celebrating. Socially, cultural freedom continues to enable Gambians to showcase their diversity and encourage tolerance for one another. This was reechoed in the President's call for unity, solidarity and love for the country.

*“As this is our National Day, it is a moment to unite and deliberate on national issues, and not on partisan conflicts and interests. As true sons and daughters of The Gambia, this is a moment to reflect on the implications of Independence; not only political independence but also social and economic independence,” he added.*

“Today, we can all look back and, with relief, celebrate and embrace democracy, good governance and the rule of law. This is highlighted by the political excitement that has gripped the nation, resulting in a series of useful dialogue, cross-party discussions, and bipartisan solidarity and collaboration,” President Barrow said in his speech to the parade.



GMD500,000 made available to Ministry of Health in the fight against for COVID-19



**FIGHT AGAINST COVID-19**

Observe Social Distance.  
Cover your mouth when you sneeze or cough.  
Wash your hands regularly or use hand sanitizer.  
Wear a mask when you going into a crowd.  
Call 1025 when you realise symptoms. COVID-19 is real and can affect anyone.



### Cabinet sub-Committee on COVID -19

While it has impacted on world economies, COVID 19 has also forced governments to redirect resources to health and other social realities. National Budget has been revisited to accommodate the new demands in our health sector but also relief packages to support families as they adjust to preventing, containing and managing the pandemic.

Global support has been revisited to accommodate the impact on COVID-19 on our health sector but also the economic realities it has brought along.





## COVID -19 Comes with a New Order Waking Up to COVID -19 Pandemic

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, caused by Coronavirus, the Ministry of Health and partners, all frontline health workers and support staff took important steps to put together a responsive emergency programme.

On 30th January 2020, the World Health Organisation declared Coronavirus or the Covid-19 disease a Public Health Emergency of International concern. As a result, the Gambia Government through the Ministry of Health began alerting the Gambian public about the global outbreak of Coronavirus and measures for the prevention, containment and management of COVID-19 cases in the country by raising public awareness through the media and orientating health workers, along with other necessary preventive measures.



The Ministry of Health and partners have been working extremely hard over the period to enhance their preparedness against COVID-19. For this purpose, an extra-ordinary emergency meeting comprising members of the National Health Emergency Committee and senior medical practitioners in various specialisations was convened.

Another important measure taken has been to strengthen surveillance at the airport and various points of entry along the Gambian border. Also, the public has been encouraged to take sanitary measures,

among other precautionary actions. Isolation centers and rooms have been prepared also to deal with suspected cases at all major health centers. There are surveillance teams at all major entry points into the country, whether by air or land.

Aside from the administrative meetings and consultations, following the official announcement of the COVID 19 pandemic, Media and Communications Unit of the Office of the President took the responsibility to share press releases on all the major policy decisions that have been taken as well as coordinate His Excellency's addresses to the Nation on COVID -19. A series of Press releases on the suspension of travels by officials, flights from countries affected by COVID, closure of airspace, state of emergency and address to the nation by the President have been published through various media outlets, including, radio, TV, newspapers, and social media platforms. Sign language interpreter was engaged to interpret to the people with hard of hearing.



It has been the second consecutive year that President Barrow presided over the Legal Year celebration after a break from over two decades of dictatorship. The government of President Adama Barrow took measures to consolidate and sanitise the judicial administration as well as ensure judicial independence in The Gambia.

"...as witnessed in the past, no judicial officer has been arbitrarily dismissed from office since I assumed office," President Barrow said, in his address at the ceremony held at the High Court Complex in Banjul in January 2020.

To guarantee judicial independence, the 1997 Constitution of The Gambia provides for the financial autonomy of the Judiciary by providing for the direct presentation of the Judiciary's budget to the National Assembly, rather than through the Ministry of Finance.

*"For the first time since the 1997 Constitution came into force, this Constitutional provision was given effect this year, 2019, after I approved the request by the Honourable Chief Justice,"* The President added.

To attract "the very best legal brains" to the judiciary, the government also instituted reviewed conditions of service for judicial officers. Effective January 2019, an improved pay package for judicial officials has already been in place.

## Society and Politics

### Basse Market to be rebuilt into international shopping centre

Basse is one of the growth centres situated in the Eastern part of The Gambia. It attracts a lot of economic activities with investors ranging from nationals to others from ECOWAS member countries. It provides services for traders across the region and the country at large. The Basse market grew over the years and became overcrowded with limited access. Unfortunately, in early 2020, disaster struck and the market was razed to the ground due to an inferno.







Immediately receiving the sad news, the President dispatched a delegation led by Vice President, Dr. Isatou Touray to express solidarity with the victims and conduct a preliminary assessment of the extent of the disaster. Following her visit, on 27th February 2020, His Excellency President Adama Barrow visited the market scene and saw first-hand evidence of the destruction caused by the fire incident. The President said inferno saddened him personally; his government, the entire country and sub-region as a whole. He observed from the list of victims, that the market truly depicts an international one. Its impacts are far reaching beyond just the vendors and commercial community who in fact, bear the brunt of the loss.

Vendors of the inferno include nationals from Senegal, Mali, Guinea, Mauritania, Sierra Leone, and Nigeria among others. According to the Alkalo of Basse, Hon. Sellu Bah, the devastating impacts would have included human lives had the fire started during the day. On behalf of the victims, a female representative of the market vendors calls for urgent intervention by government, to rebuild the market as the millions lost do not compensate the lack of source of livelihood for thousands who directly depend on the market. While that fire disaster was an unfortunate incident, it also created an opportunity for it to be rebuilt into a modern market. President Barrow pledged that his government will to rebuild Basse market into a “first class international shopping centre.” He also made a personal contribution of two million towards the emergency fund created by URR authorities to support victims.

### Inspirational talk with students from his alma mater

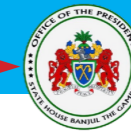
Koba Kunda is one of the oldest schools in Basse and the Upper River Region. A lad from Mankamang Kunda, full **with life and hopes** was enrolled by his dad in 1976.

Born to Mamudou Barrow and Kadijatou Jallow, Adama Barrow grew up in a small village of Mankamang Kunda in Jimara, Upper River Region. He would be among the few children opportune to be sent to school. That school was Koba Kunda Primary School.

From 1976 to 1981, he made very friends with teachers due to his discipline at school and exceptional performance in subjects like Mathematics. One of such was Mr. Jallow. Their relationship would have continued beyond the school to become a family one. Mr. Jallow became a personal mentor for the young Adama Barrow.

Over forty years later, he returned to the school to pay an unannounced visit as President of The Gambia. Headmaster, Mr. Saibeh Darboe was elated to have a former student of the school pay a surprise visit as President of the Republic. When he took over as headmaster some eight years ago, he recalled how dilapidated the school was.

Today, it is in very good shape, which makes President Barrow proud as he visited his alma mater. For 41 years as a career teacher, headmaster Darboe said he had never experienced a teaching environment as bad as what he found at Koba Kunda.



To embolden the concept of **One People, Two Republics**, senior officials and the political leadership of the two countries are engaged in constant dialogue and consultations to remove obstacles that are hindrances to smooth transport of persons, goods and services between The Gambia and Senegal. Through such engagements, border closures are being successfully managed, as dialogue with unions on both sides is yielding fruit accordingly.

### Commitment to Ending Violence

#### Washington, Banjul discuss Migration, Human Trafficking

The Gambia Government held a high-level meeting with stakeholders to respond to the Human Trafficking report published by the US State Department. Positive actions to address human trafficking and exploitation will enable The Gambia to continue to benefit from the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) Programme that is geared towards attracting up to \$300 million US investment towards reducing poverty through economic growth. The MCC programme focuses on the energy, transport infrastructure projects, among a series of others.

On January 31, 2020, the Gambian leader received in audience, the US Ambassador to The Gambia, Richard Carlton Paschall at the State House. The two leaders discussed critical issues of mutual concern to the two governments and two peoples, key among them is the thorny issues of illegal migration and human trafficking.

President Adama Barrow pledged firm commitment to ensuring that the government acts on addressing illegal migration and human trafficking, referring to the tragedy of the boat accident that claimed lives of dozens of Gambians off the coast of Mauritania.







I welcome our resolve to heighten the bilateral relations between us and to broaden multilateral collaboration through south-south cooperation arrangements. H.E Barrow

The assembly provided the political leadership of the two countries with an avenue to dialogue on key issues of common interest and take concrete decisions on them for the mutual benefit and socio-economic development of their peoples.

Some “successes and appreciable levels of implementation” have been registered since the first Presidential Council Meeting held in Banjul, in March 2018. However, more needs to be done to enable both countries fully and successfully implement the programmes agreed jointly.

It was an intensive three days of diplomatic engagements in the Senegalese capital. Technical experts and political leadership of the two countries deliberated on policy matters of strategic interests to both their peoples and respective countries.



Despite socio-cultural, historical, geographical and economic ties, the two countries have been facing challenges to fully integrate their socio-economic policies. Their model of integration is believed to serve as an embodiment of the much dreamt of African unity.

Since the boundaries separated them as independent republics over a century ago, consecutive heads of state from both sides for the five decades have been working to realise such a unity dream.

In the area of trade, for example, a key success story for the two countries is the inauguration of the Senegambia Bridge in 2019. It enables free traffic flow, facilitates trade and movement of people between the northern and southern parts of both The Gambia and Senegal and to a larger extent, facilitates increased sub-regional trade in pursuance of ECOWAS integration objectives.

The two governments continue to work together to remove obstacles to the full implementation of the Agreement on Road Transport, including by setting up the Observatory of Abnormal Practices, following the conclusions of the First Presidential Council held in Banjul.

Upon coming to office in 2017, the President on a tour of the country noticed the poor state of his alma mater and sought the intervention of the MRC foundation. Until the MRC Foundation began an intervention in 2018, the school used to be a thoroughfare.

**“It had no perimeter fence: classroom blocks were at the lowest standards, and water supply was very scarce for the students, and the morale of the teachers were at an all-time low,”** said the headmaster. The Foundation has already built 52 classrooms in the school, with tiled floors, fully furnished and equipped with a new fence and a borehole. Three storey classroom blocks have been built and the school is now fully secured. The school is fully transformed from a lower basic (formerly primary) school to an upper basic and a senior secondary – all within one perimeter. There was also a plan to provide the school with an assembly hall and staff quarters.

As a government, education ranks top on the priority sectors of the National Development Plan. The president assured them of continuous government support. A right infrastructure is ideal for student learning. He encouraged the headmaster to support his staff and students. That will make Koba Kunda a better school.



“In school, the teachers and the students are very important. As my friend (Mr. Jallow) said, other staff is auxiliary in a school. To constitute a school, you need teachers and students. Without the headmaster or others, the school can function, but not without teachers and students,” he told the headmaster as they conversed in a tiny office with a desk and chairs lined along the wall.

The headmaster is proud to have such a transformation under his watch. The President promised solar power for the school as a lasting means for the power supply.

On a conducted tour of the school, President Barrow was taken to his former classroom and he gave a vivid account of the position of his desk at the back of the classroom.

He also visited the school garden and showed appreciation of the culture of gardening that is still alive in the school by pledging to construct a perimeter barbed wire fencing for the garden... As a proud descendant of a farming family, he recalled his school days spending entire summer holidays on the farm to help his dad.

Later as a businessman based in the city, he had maintained a farm at the Yarambamba estate to explore a tradition his dad handed over to him.





**President Barrow had advice for the students:**



**“Let them be disciplined. They are the leaders of tomorrow. This is proven. I have been a student here, today I am the president,”** he said. “I was among students that marched at the 1978 Independence Anniversary and got addressed by President Jawara. In 2018, I was addressing students at the same venue with President Jawara among the audience.” If this could happen for him, so it can for the students that lined and cheered him as he waved and stopped to offer words of inspiration. “Whoever thought a poor boy from Koba Kunda would be President?” he asked.

**Basse Development Initiative Presents Road Map**

**‘My record in office will surpass Jawara, Jammeh put together’**

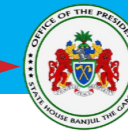
Commitment to development is mostly driven by personal experiences. Having spent his childhood in the rural Gambia, and exposed to the hardship and challenges students and travellers experienced has influenced his perception of policy decisions his government made towards bringing development to the people.

In March 2020, delegation, comprising prominent and influential citizens of Basse called on

President Barrow and presented to him a road map for the development of Basse and the Upper River Region as a whole. A group called Basse Development Initiative was tasked to develop among other things, a master plan for the development of Basse. Such a plan will cover a central market for Basse, roads infrastructure, youth empowerment and business development. The initiative is to provide a solid complement and support to President Barrow’s vision for the development of their region.

His Excellency, President Adama Barrow has told a delegation from Basse that he intends to deliver a development record that will surpass the 50-year record of the first and second Gambian Presidents put together.

Responding to his fellow citizens of the Upper River Region, Gambian President informed them of his intension to build a legacy that will uplift Basse from marginalisation to a commercial and business hub, and as a model for other regions in the country. Under such a plan, Basse would benefit from a first-class market complex in place of the one lost to an inferno, a dry harbour, fuel storage facility and a four-star hotel. Such aspiration is in line with the current infrastructural development being implemented in the URR.



**Regional Networking**

**ECOWAS Parliamentary Session in Banjul**

His Excellency, President Adama Barrow has called for a sharper focus on implementing ECOWAS Protocols as he presided over the opening of the Parliamentary Seminar on the Evaluation of the Fourth Legislature of the ECOWAS Parliament in Banjul on 23rd January 2020.

The parliamentarians’ meeting was an important one, as the sub-regional parliamentarians met with special focus on the Implementation of the Strategic Plan and the Supplementary Act on the Enhancement of Powers of the ECOWAS Parliament. It brought together representatives of the citizens of the sub-region to review and evaluate their performance. They also reviewed the implementation status of the ideals and goals of integrating the economies and peoples of the region as envisioned by the founding fathers of the Organisation.

“All processes relating to the improvement of the governance systems of the ECOWAS institutions should be oriented towards efficient management of regional cooperation and integration programmes,” President Barrow told participants at the opening ceremony, noting that institutional capacity is another major driver of regional integration.



“The vision and emphasis of the Community is shifting from an ‘ECOWAS of States’ to an ‘ECOWAS of Peoples.’”

**Second Presidential Council between The Gambia and Senegal**

New roadmap, Call for full implementation of Senegambia agreements President Adama Barrow and his Senegalese counterpart, President Macky Sall have entreated respective governments of The Gambia and Senegal to endeavour, upon signature, to fully implement the bilateral agreements reached during the second Presidential Council Meeting held in Dakar from 10th-12th March 2020.





### BHC Sharon Wardle ends her tour of Duty

The outgoing British High Commissioner to The Gambia H.E Sharon Wardle has said that she is optimistic about the future of The Gambia during a courtesy call on His Excellency, President Adama Barrow at the State House, marking the end of her diplomatic tour of duty in The Gambia, which began in 2017 when the country was beginning the search for new solutions to its past governance, human rights and economic challenges.

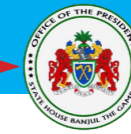
The three years she spent in the country exposed her to a lot of experiences about the challenges, but she remained optimistic about the future.

“I genuinely feel that the foundations are being laid for a more prosperous, more secure future for The Gambia. The transition journey is not yet done. The next 18 months will continue to be crucial to The Gambia and we will continue to render our unflinching support to the transition journey,” HC Wardle said.



The UK funded several components of the government’s National Development Plan 2018-2021, including strengthening the National Assembly, the Judiciary; Ministry of justice, environment and other areas of bilateral support.

The Gambia and the UK shared a long history, and Britain had been a strong bilateral friend of The Gambia in the first republic, until 1994, when relations weakened due to the infamous military coup. However, President Barrow’s government was readmitted into the Commonwealth, with a visit to London and a meeting with the Queen of England.



“What I am delivering to the URR within three years is already unprecedented in the fifty years’ history of independent Gambia. I aim to deliver in ten years what former Presidents Jawara and Jammeh were not able to deliver during their period in office,” President Barrow said.

As a metropolitan town, Basse is a hub to trade from Conakry, Bamako, Bissau, Freetown and eastern Senegal. Hence such facilities, along with 24-hours electricity supply will turn the town into a city and make it ripe for industrial growth through commerce.

To accomplish such a lofty ambition, President Barrow urges all to give his mandate the support it requires, especially the URR.



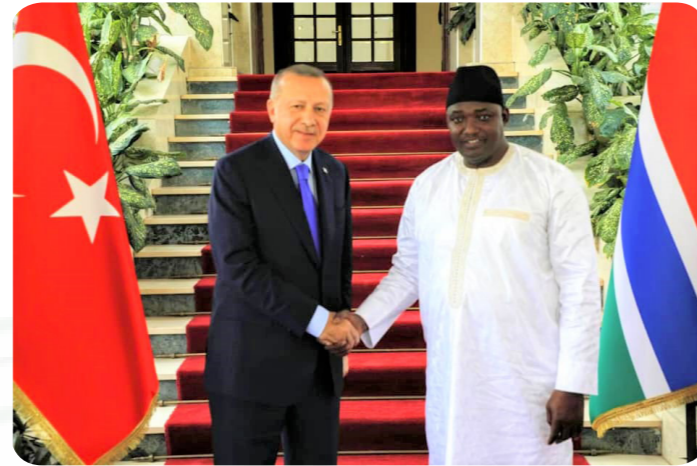




## DIPLOMACY

Turkish President,  
H.E Recep Tayyip Erdogan

### Harnessing Foreign Direct Investment from Turkey



Bilateral Support in harnessing and strengthening cooperation

- Military support to the tune of \$17 million for a period of five years
- Capacity of 500 officers on peacekeeping
- Pledges to build a children's hospital and offices for Parliamentarians
- Support The Gambia to host the OIC Summit
- Establishment of the office of the Turkish Agency for International Development (TIKA) in The Gambia
- Formation of the Joint Economic Commission between our two countries,
- Trade and investment
- Commencement of the Banjul-Istanbul route with Turkish Airlines
- People-to-people ties

Over the years, cooperation between Ankara and Banjul has been established, with Turkey supporting vital sectors of the Gambian economy. **The partnership between the Republics of The Gambia and Turkey has been further harnessed with the state visit of the Turkish President, H.E Recep Tayyip Erdogan in January 2020.**

The visit was aimed at further strengthening the bilateral cooperation and mutual interest to promote socio-economic development of the two peoples. Strong people-to-people ties continue to underpin the many facets of the "excellent bilateral relations" between The Gambia and Turkey.

President Adama Barrow extolled Turkey's "**instrumental role**" in supporting The Gambia host the OIC Summit, just as it shared the Turkish experience in hosting such a world event.

## French Ambassador, H.E, Philippe LALLIOT

### France grants Euros 16.5 million in support of urban water sector



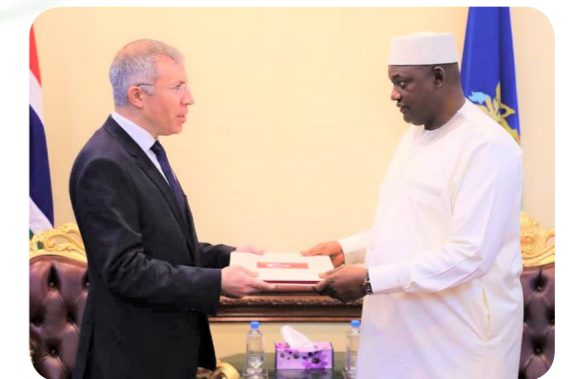
The French Ambassador to The Gambia, Mr Philippe LALLIOT on January 27th 2020 led a delegation to State House to discuss budget support to the country, support to strategic sectors of the National Development Plan. Further to the 2017 democratic transition in The Gambia, the Government of France expressed willingness to rebuild a strong relationship with the country.

It was the first European country President Barrow visited, symbolizing the profound relationship between The Gambia and France. The French Ambassador's visit formalised a Euros 16.5 million euros project agreement to support The Gambia urban water sector development. It is meant to restore enhanced water supply conditions in the Greater Banjul Area (GBA). Key areas of the project include stabilising supply continuity and support to NAWEC to improve its services to the already connected population.

The project shall also enable network extensions to a newly served population and newly connected settlements. It shall increase water production capacity and diversify water resources in use for the drinking water production of The Gambia.

### New Turkish Ambassador presents credentials

Diplomacy between The Gambia and Turkey has deepened since the Barrow Administration came to office. In January, this year, he received the second diplomat to be posted to The Gambia. The new Turkish Ambassador, Mr. Tolga Bermek presented his Letters of Credence to President Barrow, a week before the high level official visit of the Turkish President to Banjul.



The Ankara diplomat came to Banjul as his predecessor, Ambassador Ismail Yuseef completed his tour of duty. The great partnership and friendship with Turkey can be exploited to bring in more Turkish investments and business opportunities to The Gambia.