

State House
NEWSLETTER

1ST EDITION, JANUARY 2023



**A DRIVE TO CONSOLIDATE
GAINS IN GOVERNANCE
PEACE AND SECURITY**

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Overview

This edition of the **Statehouse Newsletter** highlights critical developmental milestones in some sectors of the country's development, specifically in the areas of Health, Education, and Foreign Policy.

The development areas highlighted focused on the main achievements in these sectors and plans by the Government and its partners to improve them further. Significant improvements have been made in the Health Sector to ensure quality healthcare is available for all Gambians. Community Ambulance Services, Health Posts in some remote parts of the country, the ongoing construction of a 1000-bed capacity Hospital and the availability of the first clinical waste plant are some strategic improvements in the sector.

In the Education Sector, the Newsletter also highlighted significant achievements such as the foundation stone laying of two universities in the West Coast Region and the other important initiatives to improve quality Education for all Gambians. President Barrow's Government made significant strides in Education during the first term of his Presidency. His second

term has already witnessed some laudable improvements as well.

Other areas this edition highlights include the President's official engagements with foreign diplomats and Gambians and swearing-in ceremonies in his quest to improve service efficiency in Government.

The Newsletter also overviews the 2022 Presidential Meet the People Tour. The tour is a Constitutional mandate requiring the President to dialogue with people to assess the impact of the Government's policies and programmes on the people's lives.

It also creates an opportunity to share updates on the Media and Communications Unit at the Presidency.

Finally, the Newsletter also covers the First Lady's activities in her efforts to complement the President's development aspirations.

Acknowledgement

I sincerely thank my team for the cooperation and commitment displayed during the production of the eleventh edition of the **State House Newsletter**. The dedication demonstrated by the Senior Communications Officer, Ya Marie Bojang, in ensuring that a draft was submitted for review at a time when we were busy with the annual Meet the People tour is commendable. I thank another editorial team member, Social Media Officer Zainab Faal, for oscillating from home, University and to the office and dedicating time to review the draft. The Newsletter will only be complete with the input of our Senior Photographer, Sulayman Touray and our team supporting the Office of the First Lady, in particular Momodou Njie, for multitasking. I must acknowledge the contribution of Audio Visual Officer Junkung Jawneh for being a team player and making sure our video productions add to the flow of products we share with the public.

I acknowledge the team's cooperation in contributing to the advancement of the Unit and, by extension, the Office of the President.

The fantastic support of Senior Management and the cordial relations with Protocol and Security created a conducive environment that allowed us to come up with this edition.

The drivers and cleaners are equally behind the scene contributing their quota. They made it possible for us to realise our commitment for the year, including this edition's publication. I thank them all.

Finally, I seize the opportunity to wish our readers a happy 2023.

Amie Bojang-Sissoho

Director of Press and Public Relations

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GOVERNANCE

State of the Nation Address

The State of the Nation Address (SONA) is a Constitutional mandate for the President to address the Legislative Assembly annually, where he gives detailed accounts of the progress of his policies and programmes in the previous legislative year.

On September 15 2022, President Barrow delivered the 2022 SONA at the National

Assembly in Banjul. It was the President's first address since his re-election, as well as to the sixth legislature.

Members of the legal fraternity, the diplomatic and consular corps, Cabinet Ministers, senior government officials, and the public graced the occasion.



President Barrow with Members of the National Assembly

In his statement, the President first congratulated the new members of the National Assembly while reassuring them of his Government's support and corporation in carrying out their legislative responsibilities.

The President provided a detailed report on the various sectors of Government, outlining the successes and projects planned for the next five years of his term. The full Address and an abridged version are available on

www.op.gov.gm

Foreign Affairs at a Glance

In diplomacy and Foreign Policy, The Gambia has come a long way in rebuilding and strengthening its diplomatic relations with its partners over the past five years. Consequently, the nation joined the decision-making bodies of regional and international organisations. The Gambia was elected to the African Union Peace and Security Council, the United Nations Human Rights Council, and the ECOWAS Commission Presidency in June 2022. The country's foreign portfolio has expanded because of these historical milestones since 2017.

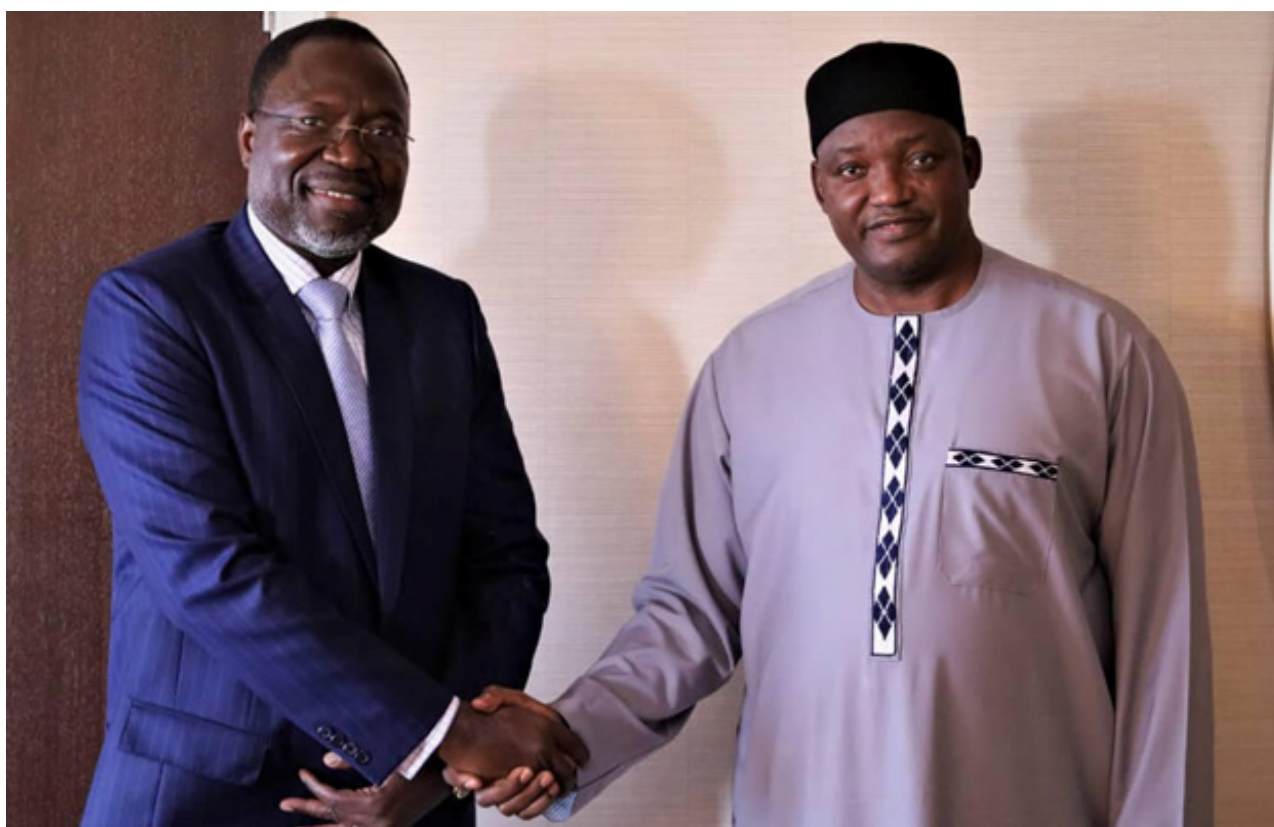
Gambians are also highly placed in international organisations around the global, African and sub-regional levels, with responsibilities to promote global cohesion, peace and advancement through global networks and institutions. Membership in these organisations is all geared towards ensuring peace, security and sustainable development for humanity.

The Government reaffirms its commitment and acknowledgement of the role of the Gambian Diaspora by dedicating a Directorate at the Foreign Ministry to coordinate Diaspora-related issues with different Ministries, Departments and Agencies to enhance the part of the Gambian Diaspora in national development.

The responsibility of the Foreign Services involves technical-level engagements with authorities of Gambian migrant destinations in Europe on cooperation in migration management and jointly reviewed partnership strategies in curbing irregular migration.

The Foreign Services aims to improve consular services, as well as bilateral relations and migration dialogues with countries with high numbers of Gambian citizens and vulnerable migrants, such as Italy, Spain, Germany and Libya.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Cooperation and Gambians Abroad and its Diplomatic Missions continue to undertake facilitation, coordination and follow-up in implementing national priorities and programmes relevant to the country's National Development Plan.



President Barrow with President of ECOWAS Commission, Dr Omar Touray

Transforming the Health Sector

In Health, the significant achievement in this sector is the introduction of **The Gambia National Health Insurance** Scheme, which aims to provide affordable healthcare services for all Gambians.

On the issue of improving healthcare delivery, especially in remote areas of the country, it is unprecedented that the Barrow Government introduced the Community Ambulance Service and initially distributed **eighty new ambulances** to facilitate transportation and referrals to health facilities. A move widely applauded around the country.

To state a clear direction for the health sector, a new National Health Policy (2021-2030) and the National Health Strategic Plan (2021-2025) have been developed to guide its programmes.

Access to health care services involves having the proper infrastructure, equipment and human resources to provide the services. Thus, a significant and notable achievement of the Barrow administration, aside from the major renovation of the Edward Francis Small Teaching Hospital in Banjul, is opening opportunities to specialist areas in health care services. Work is also progressing with constructing a **National Emergency Treatment Centre, CAT Lab – Interventional Cardiology**, special health services like **Kidney Transplant Centre**, and **Open Heart Surgery**. This is in addition to the **new 1500-bed hospital and the Blood Transfusion Centre** under construction in Farato.

Additionally, nine (9) machines, including two for children, for the first time, have been added to the **extension of the hemodialysis services** in Banjul. Equally, the new hemodialysis centre in Bansang General Hospital is ready, and the Government is partnering with UNDP in handling the procurement of machines.

Still relating to Health, but in a different context, the country experienced the unfortunate death of seventy- (70) babies due to Acute Kidney Injuries – AKI, which left the country devastated. As a result, the President called for an immediate investigation. He set up a Task Force to conduct a holistic analysis, reviewing the laws governing the importation and sale of medical drugs and strengthening the capacity of the Medical Control Agency – MCA and the partnership with the Ministry of Health. Meanwhile, a Taskforce was set up to look into the AKI death cases and is expected to present its report in January 2023.



President Barrow Presenting Ambulances to the Minister of Health, Dr Ahamadou Lamin Samateh



H.E.'s registration for the National Health Insurance Card



Medical Waste Management Centre in Farato

Ministry of Public Service – ‘The Nerve Centre of the Government Machinery’- President Barrow

The Civil Service Reform Programme 2018-2027 is critical in pursuing The Gambia’s development goals. The availability of specific skills and competencies is crucial to the adequate performance of strategic functions and timely, efficient and effective implementation of development programmes and quality public services delivery.

President Barrow has emphasised, on numerous occasions, the importance of the fully functioning, highly disciplined, practical and innovative civil service. The Personnel Management Office and the Public Service Commission have since 2017 ensured that the Public service is effective and efficient.

To ensure this, President Barrow, in announcing his cabinet earlier this year, set up a new Ministry responsible for the management and coordination of the day-to-day affairs of civil servants. The Ministry of Public Service, Administrative Reform,



*The Minister for Public Service Honourable
Baboucarr Bouy*

Policy Coordination and Delivery.

Speaking at the swearing-in ceremony of the new Minister of Public Service, Honourable Baboucarr Bouy, on October 27, 2022, President Barrow described the new Ministry as **“the nerve centre of the Government machinery”**. He tasked the new minister to ensure that the civil service regains the glory of the past decades ago, one marked by professionalism and commitment to serving the country through its invaluable human resource.

As part of best practice and in his role to monitor and consult with various institutions, President Adama Barrow applauded senior members of the Public Service Commission (PSC) for their professionalism and dedication to delivering its mandate and instilling discipline in public service.

During a meeting in October 2022, the President told the PSC team that his office would not interfere with their work and would support them to continue being independent in their delivery. He congratulated the Commission for embracing modern technology in keeping with the Government’s **Institutional Reform** programme by implementing an **E-recruitment system**.

The Chairman of the Commission, Mr Lamin Samateh, gave an update on its activities, including public services and outreach administrations, to monitor the welfare of employees at rural postings. The audience availed the PSC team to share the challenges the Commission faces, including difficulty in postings, especially with senior public servants, and the lengthy tenure of Permanent Secretaries and other senior officials in MDAs.

In their discussion, the Commission was dedicated to ensuring promotions based on performance reviews and discipline in the public service. The Chairman applauded the President's Office for ensuring that the PSC is an autonomous institution carrying out its mandate without interference.



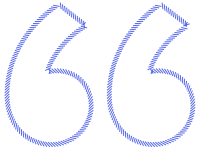
President Barrow with Members of The Public Service Commission

To monitor the delivery efficiency of the MDAs, the Office of the President developed a monthly Economic Council and a Delivery Forum for detailed updates and interaction with the technical staff and the policymakers. The forums allow for frank discussions and solutions seeking the challenges identified.

In another development, the President signed Performance Contracts with State-Owned Enterprises – SOEs to monitor and enhance the performances of these institutions because of their vital role in the country's national development endeavours.

Despite the enormous investments made by Government in SOEs, many of these entities continue to post losses. This has made it necessary to devise a renewed strategy to change the narrative and strengthen their operations and performance. The expectation is that, in providing essential social services for the public, they do so financially and operationally robustly to ease the pressure on Central Government resources and contribute positively to economic growth.

Thus, the essential steps to remedy the legacy issues constraining Public Enterprise operations. Among them was conducting a **Special Purpose Audit** on all thirteen SOEs in the country.



President emphasised, “We have reached a critical stage in the development process of this country wherein all public institutions have to deliver on their mandates in the most efficient, effective, and transparent manner. That is the only way we can realise our collective goals as a nation.”

Aside from the audit, it was deemed suitable to introduce an SOE Bill, which would be presented to the National Assembly. The SOE Bill, if passed, will create a Commission with oversight duties over all SOEs.

Focus on Higher Education

As part of its educational transformation agenda, the Government of The Gambia has set the ground for formulating policies and strategies to guide the transformation process. Improving access to quality education for all, particularly girls, for more significant gender equity is one of the Government’s priority areas.

The Education Sector Policy 2016 – 2030 is the first sector-wide Policy written after separating the portfolio of Higher Education from Basic and Secondary in 2007 to the Ministry responsible for Higher Education, Research, Science, and Technology and the repositioning of the former Ministry of Education to focus on Basic and Secondary Education matters.

The main thrust of the document is to provide a policy framework that sets out the national agenda for delivering quality education in The Gambia for the period 2016- 2030.

The document outlined the aims and objectives of Education in The Gambia, which are synchronised with the education-related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the provisions of the National Development Plan 2018 – 2021.

The Gambia remains highly committed to developing its human resource base, prioritising education. The aim of the Education Policy 2016 – 2030 is to:

- i. Promote a broad-based education at the primary level for lifelong learning and training.
- ii. Mainstream gender creates opportunities for all to acquire literacy, livelihood skills, and the utilisation of these skills to earn a living and become economically self-reliant members of the community (to be achieved through the **TVET** Initiative.
- iii. Develop the physical and mental skills which will contribute to nation-building economically, socially, and culturally in a sustainable environment.
- iv. Encourage creativity and the development of a critical and analytical mind and skills.
- v. To further an understanding and appreciation of the contribution of science, technology and innovation to the development.

- vi. Ministry's Transformation of the Tertiary and Higher Education sector was premised on this need; to develop a highly skilled workforce that would champion the growth and development of various sectors of the economy.

The Ministry of Higher Education has also developed a Strategic Plan 2021 – 2025 with support from international partners. The Policy will guide the transformation agenda of the tertiary and higher education system in The Gambia. As outlined in the Policy, the tertiary and higher education system will strive to provide relevant, sustainable, and high-quality Education and research to support the human resource needs for national development. The system will help the nation's socioeconomic, scientific and technological advancement. It will constantly pursue the quest for excellence by maintaining high standards and empowering students with the opportunity to realise their full potential.

In the past five years, the Government has made significant strides in the education sector, especially in the areas of Infrastructure. The expansion of the University of The Gambia to the new UTG Faraba Banta Campus is almost complete at 70%. In addition, the Government has also taken initiatives to increase the opportunities for access to Higher Education by upgrading The Gambia Technical Training (GTTI) to now the University of Applied Science, Engineering and Technology -(USET), which operates through mentorship programmes.

Meanwhile, the President laid the foundation stone to relocate the institution to Brikama, West Coast Region. With this initiative, The Gambia is now part of 53 centres under the Africa Centres of Excellence (ACE) Impact Project.

ACE is sponsoring three faculties of the USET Campus. These are Electrical/Electronic Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, and Civil Engineering.





Foundation Stones Laying of USET Campus

Similarly, the Ministry of Higher Education is equally **upgrading the Management Development Institute (MDI) into a degree-awarding institution**. Over twenty-one students have enrolled in the institution's degree programme supported by Soup de Corp of Senegal. The Gambia College schools of agriculture, nursing, and public health are part of the UTG to offer degree programmes. The Gambia College Annex in Basse complements these efforts by training teachers within URR.

The Ministry of Higher Education, Research,

Science and Technology has validated the country's first-ever National Research Policy to promote research. Incidentally, The Gambia is known for its quality research works, especially in the medical and biological sciences. The Edward Francis Small Teaching Hospital, under refurbishment at the time of writing this report, is the country's leading teaching hospital; thus, the Research policy will strengthen this success.

With the support of the Korea International Cooperation Agency and UNESCO, The Gambia **TVET Policy (2021-2030)** is also in operation.



The Ministers of Basic Education and Higher Education at the Launching of the TVET Policy

Connecting Secondary and Higher Education

In the second part of 2022, the Minister for Higher Education announced that the Government would introduce a **tertiary education loan scheme** for some of the country's needy and bright students in 2023. Every year, hundreds of underprivileged students who graduate from senior schools in the country struggle to gain admission into tertiary institutions to further their Education due to financial constraints. The Government issues 500 scholarships annually; however, this is not sustainable. Thus, the education loan scheme aims to introduce a payment system that will allow many students to attend University without worrying about finances.

Policy Environment

The National Development Plan will guide the policy environment for the next five years. Through the support of the United Nations Development Programme, the Government has formulated a **Recovery-Focused National Development Plan (RF-NDP: 2023-2027)** and a *Long-Term Development Vision (LTDV: 2050)*.

The RF-NDP will succeed in the National Development Plan (2018-2021), and the LTDV will follow Vision 2020 for the country's long-term development targets and transformation.



University of The Gambia Faraba Campus

DIPLOMACY AND FOREIGN RELATIONS

TICAD8 Summit of African Heads of State and Partners

President Barrow Calls for the Transformation of Africa's Challenges into Opportunities

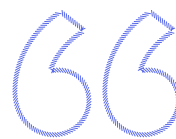
Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD) is a conference on Africa's development initiated by Japan in 1993. The first Conference (TICAD 1) was held in Japan; however, it has since been co-hosted by the Government of Japan, the United Nations, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the World Bank, and the African Union Commission.

TICAD is a process involving not only African countries but also international and regional organisations, the private sector, donor countries, and civil society organisations working for Africa's development and promoting high-level political dialogues between African leaders and their partners on issues related to economic growth, trade and investment, sustainable development, security, and good governance.

The TICAD 8 conference also presented an opportunity for African investors to explore opportunities to expand partnerships for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) financing. With the COVID-19 pandemic recovery, the impacts of the war in Ukraine, the climate emergency, and the financial crisis placing vulnerable populations under extreme stress, SDGs financing presents an opportunity to overcome and address Africa's security and sustainable development needs.

The year 2022 marked the eighth conference, dubbed TICAD 8, held in Tunisia on August 27th – 28th. It was President Barrow's first TICAD attendance, and he delivered an inspirational message at the august gathering, urging member states and partners to work together to transform Africa's challenges into opportunities to drive its development priorities.

President Barrow emphasised the urgent need to support Africa's youthful and diverse population to explore green businesses and other development opportunities. Africa is a burgeoning continent, but it must redouble efforts to explore its development objectives. *"Africa presents unique opportunities for closer cooperation with the world, but we must build enough capacity to finance and drive our development sustainably."* He noted.



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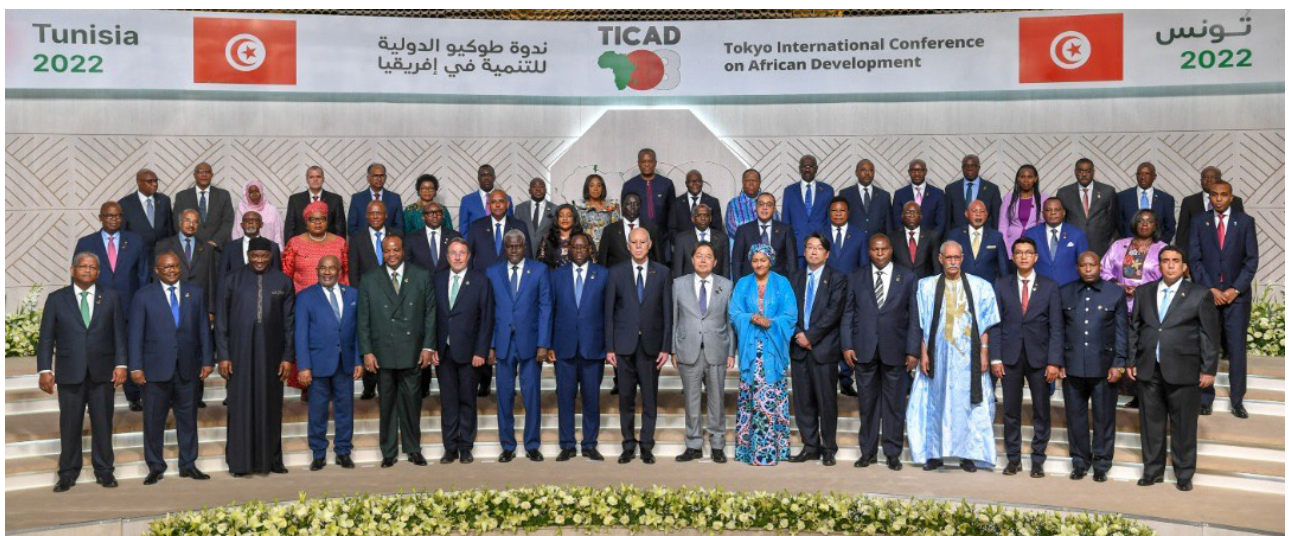


H.E President Barrow with H.E President Kais Saied, President of Tunisia

The Japanese Government's support to the continent amidst the ongoing global economic crisis was commendable. The Japanese Prime Minister, His Excellency Fumio Kishida, and the Government and people of Japan assumed greater prominence in the collective endeavour to build resilient economies, communities, and environmental systems in Africa.



While the continent needs to manage its biodiversity and ecosystem services effectively, it is equally vital to share best practices with the globe to overcome its development challenges.



Pushing for Inclusive Development in The Gambia

On the sideline of the TICAD8 Conference, President Adama Barrow received in audience the UNDP Assistant Administrator and Director, Regional Bureau for Africa, Ms Ahunna Eziakonwa. The purpose of the meeting was for the UNDP to initiate a strategic bilateral discussion with President Barrow to improve partnerships and cooperation in support of The Gambia's inclusive and resilient development.

The focus of their discussions centred on issues such as the impact of Covid-19, climate change, the recent floods in the country, and the impact of the Russia-Ukraine war on the Gambian economy. They reflected on some of the opportunities to grow the economy and how to improve Social Development, supporting vulnerable populations to get better livelihood opportunities and build their Resilience.

Japan had committed thirty billion dollars (\$30bn) to support Africa's development, and UNDP is part of the planning process and monitoring of the deployment and utilisation of these resources. The Gambia will continue to create an enabling environment to encourage foreign investment into the country.

The Gambia got commendation for consolidating its democracy over the past five years, which is essential in ensuring good governance and the rule of law. It was, therefore, crucial that the President was present at TICAD8, opening opportunities for private foreign investors in The Gambia.

to the challenges, thus, prefer being appointed to limited positions, which affects female representation.



President Barrow and Ms Eziakonwa

President Barrow Echoes The Gambia's Position on Global Matters at UNGA77

Leadership is crucial in defining a country's foreign policy process and direction. This is because foreign policies are developed at the highest levels of Government, where leaders decide how they will be packaged and implemented.

President Barrow has made it a priority since taking office in 2017 to restore the country's international reputation and rebuild ties with the international community. In this regard, The Gambia has participated in the UNGA77 held in New York in September 2022. The President, accompanied by a delegation of senior government officials, attended a series of side events and had several bilateral meetings with friends and partners to support The Gambia's development agenda.

The UNGA is one of the world leaders' largest gatherings to discuss global development issues. The theme for the 2022 assembly was "***A watershed moment: Transformative challenges to interlocking challenges.***" President Barrow delivered a statement on this international platform and gave an account of the country's stance on national, continental, and global issues.



President Barrow and First Lady Fatoumata Bah-Barrow with U.S. President Joe Biden and First Lady Jill Biden at the 2022 UNGA in New York

The global economic challenges that most countries are facing especially developing countries took centre-stage in the deliveries, and the urgent need for world leaders to put together concerted efforts to tackle the challenges. This was emphasised by the Gambian leader, saying, ***“the current cost-of-living crisis across the world is a wake-up call for an immediate global response to alleviate the suffering and poverty that hold our nations to ransom.”*** Thus, he supports Secretary-General’s Global Crisis Response Group, which was set up to work on recommendations and solutions for the ongoing crisis.



“the current cost-of-living crisis across the world is a wake-up call for an immediate global response to alleviate the suffering and poverty that hold our nations to ransom.”

The President also sought the support of the U.N. and partners as the country works towards realising its New National Development Plan (2023-2027). The Gambia prioritises its national development initiatives, including the Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2063 of the African Union

Security in the African continent is crucial to accelerating development which hinges on addressing the underlying causes of insecurity and underdevelopment. The continent has witnessed a series of political instability, especially in the West African Sub-region. The United Nations and the international community are responsible for “shoulder their fair share of the burden of the African Union peace endeavours”, demanding that Africa be supported with adequate equipment to play its peace enforcement role for the international community. The Gambia pledged continued support to the Secretary-general’s actions for the peacekeeping initiative.

The Gambia’s plans and initiatives for tackling climate-related crises as a topic of discussion at the UNGA77. According to Climate Action Tracker, as of September 2021, The Gambia is the only nation to take action in line with the Paris Agreement. The Gambia had taken significant steps to fully fulfil the Paris Agreement, including installing solar systems to reduce spending on fossil fuel by 2025.

President Barrow urged the international community to invest in Climate financing, saying, ***“The international community should also consider providing long-term, predictable funding that allows for capacity development, risk integration, and promote climate finance for gender-responsive climate actions, as well as effective and equitable finance delivery.”***



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HE speaking at the UNGA

Cementing Bilaterals on the Sidelines of the UNGA 77

A series of engagements on the sidelines of the 77th Session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York availed President Barrow to hold bilateral meetings with leaders in government, institutions and organisations.

Sudanese leader, His Excellency Lieutenant General Abdel – Fattah Al-Burhan Abdelrahman Al-Burhan was among them. The two leaders discussed the significance of the cordial and longstanding historical ties between their two countries and the cooperation in the education and security sectors. The two countries share memberships of the A.U. and OIC. The two leaders expounded on political developments and the sustenance of democratic governance in Sudan. The Gambia contributed to maintaining peace and security in Sudan by deploying military and police personnel to the A.U. and U.N. Peacekeeping Missions.



Nigeria International Economic Partnership Forum

Many countries participate in the annual UNGA to explore opportunities to engage their citizens in the Diaspora, particularly in the USA. President Barrow honoured an invitation from the Nigerian President, H. E Muhammadu Buhari, to attend the Nigeria International Economic Partnership Forum held in New York. The forum brought together business people from the Nigerian Diaspora and others in the United States to explore the possibilities of investing in Africa.

President Barrow also received the Minister of State of the United Arab Emirates, Sheikh Shakhbut Bin Nahyan Bin Mubarak, while in New York to participate in the UNGA77.

During the meeting that was meant to strengthen the already existing relations between their two countries, President Barrow emphasised the importance of partnerships that would enhance the livelihoods of Gambians, saying, “We want partners who would invest in areas that would impact on the lives of our people.”

On his part, Minister Mubarak expressed his country’s desire to partner with The Gambia for the mutual interest of both countries.

The two leaders discussed the UAE’s participation in the use of port operators in the maritime domain, ratification of the UAE and The Gambia treaty, agricultural development, funding of OIC projects, and the situation of Gambian detainees in the UAE.



President Barrow with UAE Minister of State

In building networks during the UNGA77, President Barrow received the Secretary General of the Muslim Council of Elders, Judge Mohamed Abdelsalam, in New York. The theme of their discussion was peaceful co-existence between Muslims and Non-Muslims and the promotion of World Peace in anticipation of the Gambia’s hosting of a Muslim Ulama Conference in December 2022.

The Gambian President took pride that The Gambia is known as a country where Christians and Muslims co-exist peacefully, stating that the December Conference would avail an opportunity to share best practices and experiences on interfaith tolerance.

In his reaction, SG Abdelsalam volunteered to be an Ambassador for The Gambia in promoting peace and development. At the same time, he presented President Barrow with an Award from the Secretary General of the Muslim Council of Elders.

Also, in New York, the ECOWAS leaders used the opportunity and convened an extraordinary meeting to discuss the state of affairs in the sub-region. The leaders maintained their commitment to the mediation and processes for a quick return to constitutional order, which is necessary for peace, stability, and development in the West African sub-region.



Ecowas Extraordinary Meeting in New York

Following the New York meeting, President Barrow was part of the ECOWAS High-level Heads of State Mission to the Republic of Mali to engage with the military leadership. Aside from the diplomatic pleasantries at the airport, the leaders met for hours to discuss the transition phase, as required by the ECOWAS Good Governance Protocol to resolve illegitimate government changes. On November 6, 2022, the report was given to the 62nd Ordinary Session of the Heads of State and Government in Abuja, Nigeria.

The curtains were drawn on the side events with an audience with the Executive Secretary of the U.N. Capital Development Fund – UNCDF, Preeti Shinhan. The Gambia could explore possibilities to enhance youth and women’s access to funds, digital financing, skills development, and opportunities for Small and Medium Enterprises – SMEs.

President Barrow expressed gratitude for the support already provided to 6,000 youths to mitigate illegal migration. He informed the meeting that his Government prioritises



Ecowas Mission to Mali

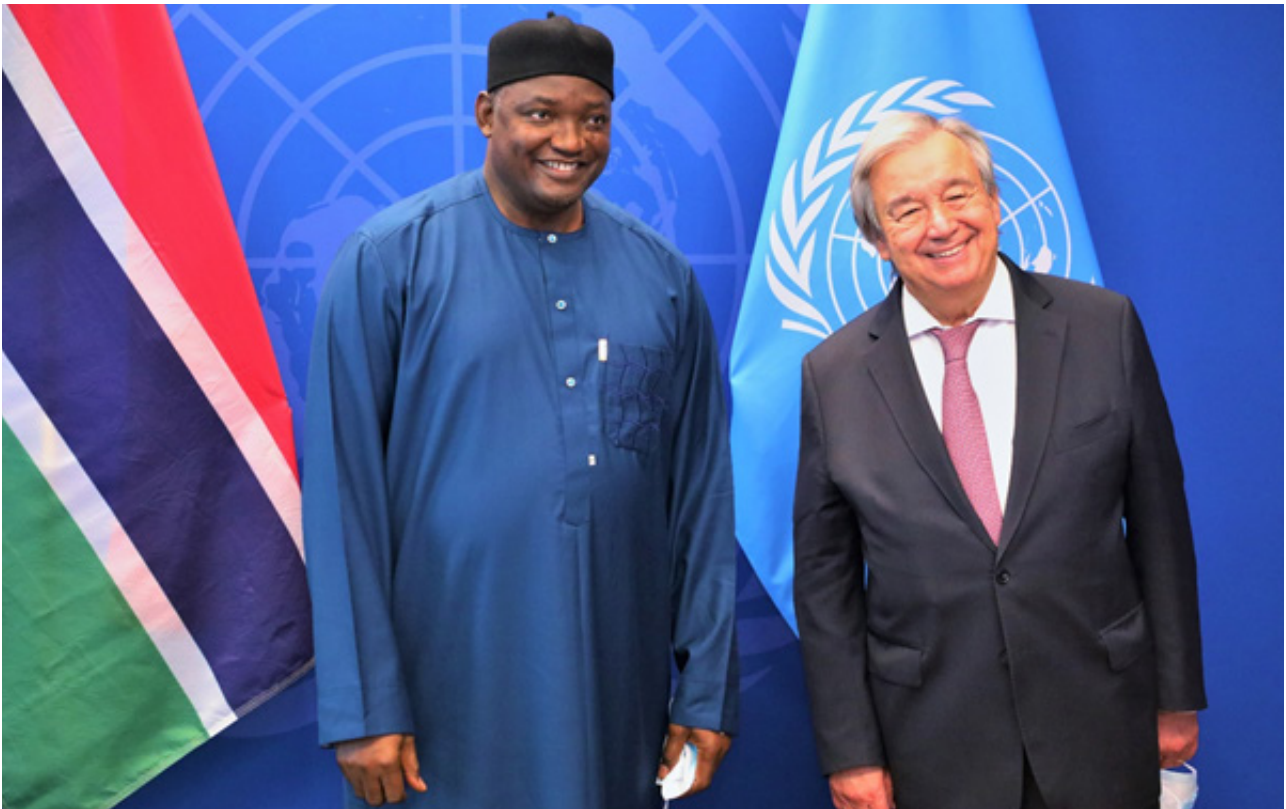
Agric-business to create jobs for the youth in poultry, horticulture, and fisheries in particular, as well as skills development.

Executive Secretary of The U.N. Capital Development Fund expressed interest in working with The Gambia Government to create a platform that guarantees and attracts investors to access capital for bankable projects.

President Barrow wrapped up his official engagements with a Bilateral meeting with the Secretary General of the United Nations, H.E António Guterres, on the morning of September 27 2022, at the U.N. Headquarters in New York.

The President thanked the U.N. family for supporting The Gambia to promote peace and development. Mr Guterres admired President Barrow and pledged his continued support to the country.

In addition, President Barrow met Young Gambian Professionals in New York and encouraged them to explore the opportunities back in The Gambia.



President Barrow with UN Secretary general

President Barrow Hails Gambia-Saudi Relations

The Gambia and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia have had strong bilateral relations over the past decades. The two countries have mutually benefited from this relationship, especially in trade.

President Barrow commended this fruitful corporation during an audience with the Saudi Intelligence Chief, Khalid Ali Al-Humaidan, at

Statehouse on November 21, 2022.

The visit would strengthen the partnership between the two countries, built on mutual trust and respect for the benefit of their people. Diplomatic steps to enhance people-to-people connections would further strengthen the relationship.

Speaking on building on The Gambia's international portfolio, President Barrow cited hosting the Africa Inter-faith Conference in The Gambia on December 6 as further improving the

country's positive image as a peaceful place where all good investors are welcomed. He seized the opportunity to extend his gratitude to the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud and the Crown

Prince, Mohammed bin Salman Al Saud. The Saudi delegation was in The Gambia to attend a Regional Meeting of Intelligence Chiefs from ten countries hosted by the Gambia's State Intelligence Services.



President Barrow with Saudi Intelligence delegation led by Chief Khalid Ali Al-Humaidan

The Gambia's TRRC, a 'Model for the Rest of the World' – U.S. Ambassador-at-Large

The **Truth, Reconciliation and Reparations Commission (TRRC)** was a commission set up through an act of parliament on July 20 2017, by the Government of The Gambia to investigate Human Rights violations allegedly levied against former President Yahya Jammeh and create an impartial historical record of violations and abuses of human rights from July 1994 to January 2017. The Commission took almost two years to question victims and perpetrators and eventually submitted its report to His Excellency President Adama Barrow in 2021.

The international community closely monitored the process and hailed The Gambia for creating such a platform.

The US Ambassador-at-large for Global Criminal Justice, H.E Beth Van Schaack, was the most recent to praise the TRRC approach. On October 3, 2022, the Ambassador paid a courtesy visit to the President to express the United States Government’s support for bringing justice to the victims of the former regime.



US Ambassador-at-Large

During their discussion, the President discussed plans for carrying out the TRRC’s recommendations.

Ambassador Van Schaack, said The Gambia has an outstanding global reputation for International Justice. She hailed the TRRC as a model for the rest of the world and the importance of implementing the report. She emphasised the need for reparations to ensure that those guilty of human rights violations by the Commission are held accountable. The Gambia’s model was described as “the state of the art of transitional Justice,” and the United States pledged to support the process. The case of a former “Jungler” living in the United States, charged with six counts of torture and one count of conspiracy to commit torture, was also discussed.

It could be recalled that the Gambia had a history of respect for human rights before it was interrupted for over two decades. Thus, it was not a surprise that the current government committed to regaining that image both at home and abroad, including filing a case at the International Court of Justice involving the genocide against the Rohingya Muslims minority in Myanmar.



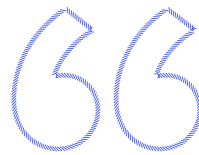
AGRICULTURE & SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The Gambia's Food Self Sufficiency Attainable – President Barrow

The modernisation and transformation of the agriculture and fisheries sector for economic growth, food and nutritional security, and poverty reduction have been top priorities for President Barrow, as outlined in his Government's National Development Plan (NDP) blueprint 2017-2021 as well as in the successor plan 2023-2027.

The Government acknowledges that training personnel on modern farming techniques to shift from subsistence to commercial agriculture is essential in The Gambia's drive to attain food self-sufficiency. To achieve this objective, the Government has been working with its partners to provide the necessary training and technology. One such partner is the South Korean Government, which commits to supporting The Gambia in its efforts to become food self-reliant.

On October 24 2022, President Barrow received Mr Chaeho Cho, a Special Envoy of the South Korean President, His Excellency Yoon Suk-yeol, and commended the Korean Government for its support. The Gambian leader continues to seek partners to help the country realise its food self-sufficiency and security agenda. ***“Nobody imports groundnut or coose because we produce enough, but we import 83% of the rice we consume. So, we want to industrialise to produce rice twice or three times annually.”*** Remarked President Barrow

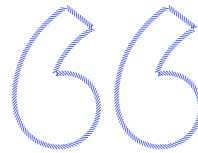


“Nobody imports groundnut or coose because we produce enough, but we import 83% of the rice we consume. So, we want to industrialise to produce rice twice or three times annually.”

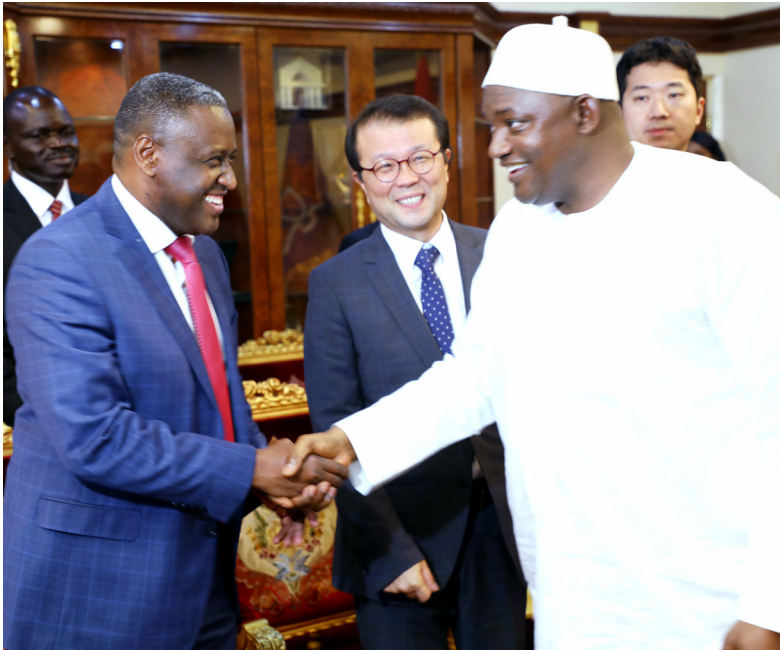
The Government's support to the private sector could transform rice cultivation to certify the Gambian market. The Gambia is affected by external factors in the importation of rice but needs internal control using innovative ideas crucial in the Government's national development drive.

The Korean Government is committed to building capacity for The Gambia to modernise its agriculture sector to ensure that food self-sufficiency in The Gambia through Public-Private partnerships. A new initiative of such collaboration was developed with the Republic of Korea and the QGroup in piloting the cultivation of 1000kg of rice seeds distributed to farmers to try on 20 hectares of land.

The CEO of QGroup, who doubles as the Korean country Consul, Mr Muhammed Jah, capture it squarely, *“the Private sector is not competing with the Government but instead supporting the Government’s development aspirations.”* The private sector would play a significant role in the project’s implementation and success to improve the lives and livelihoods of Gambians through food self-sufficiency.



“the Private sector is not competing with the Government but instead supporting the Government’s development aspirations.”



South Korean Special Envoy During a Courtesy Visit to the State House

REGIONAL INTEGRATION

ECOWAS - President Barrow Calls for Concerted Efforts in Cross-Border Trade

Cross-border trade is very curial is ensuring peace and security with neighbouring countries. The Gambia's closest and most important trade partner is Senegal. Given The Gambia's location and small size, all of its land trade is with or via neighbouring Senegal, and much involves transit and re-export operations.

Therefore, there are substantial benefits for both in cooperation. In 2016, The Gambia Revenue Authority and the Senegalese Custom Administration signed a memorandum of understanding to facilitate the bilateral movement of goods between the two countries.

ECOWAS launched the Africa Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) Agreement in 2020 as one of the flagship projects of the First Ten-Year Implementation Plan (2014-2023) under the African Union's Agenda 2063. According to the African Union (A.U.), AfCFTA has the potential to create a continental free-trade zone with a combined Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of USD\$ 3.4 trillion, a significant step forward in Africa's economic transformation.

During a meeting with the ECOWAS Resident Representative to The Gambia, Ms Miatta Lily French, at the Statehouse on October 5, 2022, President Barrow tasked her with developing strategies to facilitate the free movement of people, goods, and services across borders within the regional bloc, and particularly between The Gambia and Senegal.

The President emphasised that ECOWAS member States should use the AfCFTA in consolidating and addressing trade conditions. He emphasised The Gambia and Senegal border trade as one that can serve as a model in the sub-region. The trade agreement has helped foster bilateral relations between the two countries.

Adapting new experiences would reinforce the ECOWAS Commission's work and address unconstitutional governance and instability in the West African States. The Gambia was commended for its political stability, given the ongoing political instability in some parts of the ECOWAS sub-region.



Ecowas Resident Representative to The Gambia

The Gambia Committed to Safeguarding Human and Peoples' Rights – President Barrow

Arbitrary arrests, detention, and extra-judicial killings under the former regime marred The Gambia's human rights record. However, since 2017, the Barrow Government has prioritised ensuring that people's human rights are safeguarded and protected and that freedom of speech is guaranteed.

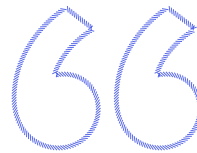
The office of the National Human Rights Commission and the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights are testimonies of the current human rights situation in the country.

President Barrow has once again reaffirmed his and Government's commitment to protecting and safeguarding human and people's rights in The Gambia during a meeting with the Deputy Chairperson for the African Union Commission, H.E Dr Monique Nsanzabaganwa, at the State House on October 21, 2022.



Deputy Chairperson for the African Union Commission

Her visit coincided with the opening of the African Commission for Peoples' Rights session and celebrating 35 years of the existence of the Commission. To further entrench The Gambia as the 'Home of Human Rights', the foundation stone of headquarters of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights was laid and the title deed signed, which was described as ***“a good gesture from The Gambia as a host of the African Commission to give it its permanent headquarters.”***



“a good gesture from The Gambia as a host of the African Commission to give it its permanent headquarters.”

The Government commits to mobilising resources to deliver on the headquarters of the Human Rights Commission, a milestone reinforcing the need to continue to work together and to ensure financial sustainability and independence on the continent.

Exalting The Gambia's human rights record and transitional justice since 2017, Dr Nsanzabaganwa noted that it serves as a model for the continent and the world at large, saying, ***“The Gambia has a record of defending and protecting human and people's rights right from the beginning.”***



“The Gambia has a record of defending and protecting human and people's rights right from the beginning.”



The Gambia's Dr Omar A.Touray Pledges to Enhance Regional Peace and Security as He takes Oath of Office.

President Adama Barrow attended the 62nd Summit of the Heads of State and Government of the West Africa Economic Community-ECOWAS, held in the Nigerian capital, Abuja, where he witnessed the swearing ceremony.

Reacting to the Summit, President Barrow said, "it is a good day for The Gambia." The Gambia took centre stage at the opening ceremony as it was the first time a Gambian was sworn in as President of the ECOWAS Commission in the person of Dr Omar Aliou Touray to formally take the mantle of office as President of the sub-regional group.

In his maiden speech, Dr Touray highlighted the subregional economic scenario marked by the unconstitutional change of governments, terrorism, and fake news. He, however, spelt out his team's strategic objectives to enhance regional peace and security, deeper regional integration, good governance, and inclusive and sustainable development, which would be driven through capable institutions and equitable partnerships.

Another highlight of the opening ceremony was the presentation of the ECOWAS Excellence Award to deserving citizens, during which the First President of the Republic of The Gambia, the Late Sir Dawda Kairaba Jawara, was awarded the **Eminent Persons Award**.

His widow, Lady Chilel Jawara and his sons, Dawda Jawara Junior and Ebrima Jawara, represented the family to receive the honour.

Late Sir Dawda was recognised for his leadership, restoration of peace in the sub-region, the establishment of ECOMOG and for championing and making Banjul the 'Home of Human Rights.' The Award includes a cheque for \$20,000, a plaque and a certificate.

Other recipients were Senegalese singer Omar Penn, two Nigerians, writer Wola Soyinka, and Business tycoon Tony Elumelu.

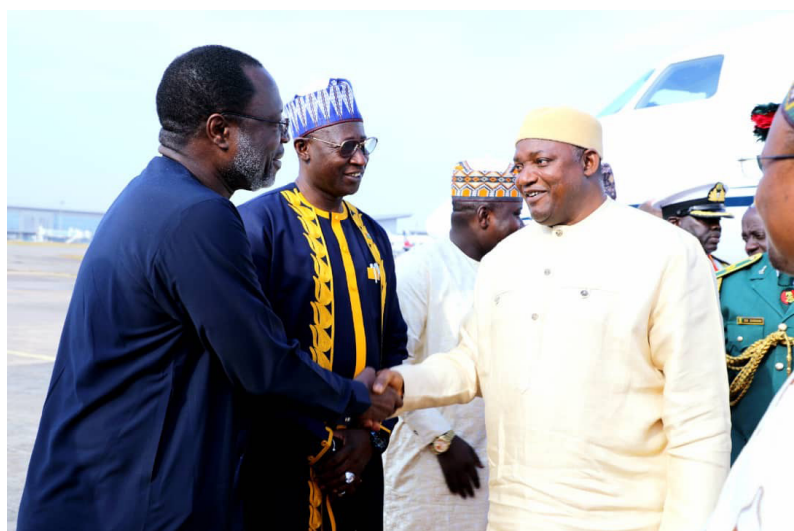
The President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, His Excellency Muhammadu Buhari, welcomed his colleagues to the 62nd Summit of ECOWAS, the last he would host as President, as his term of office ends in early 2023.

In his message, President Buhari said this was the 8th Summit he had hosted in Nigeria. He paid tribute to former and current Chairpersons of ECOWAS. He tasked the new management to execute the reforms that have commenced harmonising the excellent governance Protocol, fight against terrorism and others.

The agenda for the closed-door consultation of the West African leaders included the annual reports, reports from the Ministerial Mediation and Security Council and missions on the conflicts and transitional governments in the sub-region. The leaders also discussed Special reports on the ECOWAS Single currency and the High-Level Mission of Heads of State.



Dr Touray Taking Oath During the 62nd Ecowas Summit in Abuja



FINANCE AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

The Gambia's 2022 & 2023 Economic Projections

According to a World Bank report updated in September 2022, *as a result of economic recovery, the share of Gambians living below the international poverty line of \$2.15 (in 2017 PPPs) declined from 11.7 per cent in 2020 to 11.1 per cent in 2021, equivalent to more than 8,000 people lifted out of extreme poverty.*

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) also released a Regional Economic Outlook Report in October 2022, indicating the Growth in Domestic Product (GDP) of countries in Sub-Saharan Africa. The report highlighted that The Gambia's GDP growth has increased from 4.3% in 2021 to 5.0% in 2022, projected to be 6.0% in 2023.

Over the last two years, The Gambia's economic growth has been steadily improving. Since 2017, the country has gained 4.6 points in total economic freedom, owing to an IMF Extended Credit Facility Loan in 2020, which has resulted in fiscal health recovery.

The IMF also released a list of the ten countries in Sub-Saharan Africa with the highest food price increase in 2022. The Gambia is not on the list, which can be attributed to the robust economic recovery plans the government is implementing.

RANKING OF SUB-SAHARAN AFRICAN COUNTRIES WITH HIGHEST FOOD PRICE INCREASE IN 2022

COUNTRY	FOOD PRICE INCREASE	RANKING
GHANA	22%	1 st
SENEGAL	11%	2 nd
UGANDA	7%	3 rd
NIGERIA	6.5%	4 th
KENYA	4%	5 th
SOUTH AFRICA	2%	6 th
ANGOLA	1.5%	7 th
MOZAMBIQUE	1.0%	8 th
ZAMBIA	0.9%	9 th
CONGO	0.4%	10 th

SOURCE: WORLD BANK

Joy Business, Joy Business Ghana, JOY NEWS, JOY BUSINESS

Economic forecasts: Sub-Saharan Africa

(real GDP growth; percent)

	2021	PROJECTIONS	
		2022	2023
Sub-Saharan Africa	4.7	3.6	3.7
Angola	0.8	2.9	3.4
Benin	7.2	5.7	6.2
Botswana	11.4	4.1	4.0
Burkina Faso	6.9	3.6	4.8
Burundi	3.1	3.3	4.1
Cabo Verde	7.0	4.0	4.8
Cameroon	3.6	3.8	4.6
Central African Republic	1.0	1.5	3.0
Chad	-1.1	3.3	3.4
Comoros	2.2	3.0	3.4
Congo, Democratic Republic of the	6.2	6.1	6.7
Congo, Republic of	-0.6	4.3	4.6
Côte d'Ivoire	7.0	5.5	6.5
Equatorial Guinea	-3.2	5.8	-3.1
Eritrea	2.9	2.6	2.8
Eswatini	7.9	2.4	1.8
Ethiopia	6.3	3.8	5.3
Gabon	1.5	2.7	3.7
The Gambia	4.3	5.0	6.0
Ghana	5.4	3.6	2.8
Guinea	3.8	4.6	5.1
Guinea-Bissau	5.0	3.8	4.5
Kenya	7.5	5.3	5.1
Lesotho	2.1	2.1	1.6
Liberia	5.0	3.7	4.2
Madagascar	4.3	4.2	5.2
Malawi	2.2	0.9	2.5
Mali	3.1	2.5	5.3
Mauritius	4.0	6.1	5.4
Mozambique	2.3	3.7	4.9
Namibia	2.7	3.0	3.2
Niger	1.3	6.7	7.3
Nigeria	3.6	3.2	3.0
Rwanda	10.9	6.0	6.7
São Tomé & Príncipe	1.9	1.4	2.6
Senegal	6.1	4.7	8.1
Seychelles	7.9	10.9	5.2
Sierra Leone	4.1	2.4	3.3
South Africa	4.9	2.1	1.1
South Sudan	5.3	6.5	5.6
Tanzania	4.9	4.5	5.2
Togo	5.3	5.4	6.2
Uganda	6.7	4.4	5.9
Zambia	4.6	2.9	4.0
Zimbabwe	7.2	3.0	2.8

Source: IMF World Economic Outlook Database, October 2022.

World Bank Announces Human Capital Development

The World Bank, through its International Development Association (IDA), supports primary education, energy and agriculture projects. The Bank has been supporting the country's priorities. It has approved \$20 million to support The Gambia's effort to improve debt and public investment management, financial viability and service delivery in the energy and telecom sectors. It also helps enhance the transparency and governance framework of State-owned Enterprises (SOEs).



World Bank Resident Representative for The Gambia

Given the relationship, President Barrow held an audience with a team from the World Bank led by the Resident Representative for The Gambia, Ms Feyi Boroffice.

In a scheduled meeting on October 28, 2022, at the State House in Banjul, the team discussed areas of support for the Government. This new project will support the country's Human Capital development.

President Barrow said his Government's Policy is to prepare the youth for the job market through skills development at the central and decentralised levels. The Gambian leader thanked the World Bank for its continuous support and cooperation while indicating that priority goes to skills training and development to equip youth for the job market at the central and decentralised levels. To make a statement of youth empowerment, 65% of scholarships go to science and technology. Government employment is limited, but the private sector, as the growth engine, can constantly expand and create jobs.



The World Bank's support to The Gambia through the ongoing projects under its portfolio and the development of new projects, such as the Human Capital Development project, is geared to support the country's development agenda. The Projects ensure that Gambian citizens have the productive skills to lay the foundation for future jobs. Enhancing Human Capital Investments to develop an effective workforce will expand ongoing engagements in essential Health, social protection, and Education, including exploring avenues to improve the skills and employability of women and youths.

IMF Briefs President Barrow on its 5th Review Mission

President Adama Barrow called on IMF to consider in its advisory the problematic economic situation that is affecting the lives of poor citizens as the economy recovers post-COVID-19. The President made the remarks on Tuesday, October 4, 2022, when the International Monetary Fund Mission Chief, Mr Ivohasina Fizara Razafimaheta, paid a courtesy call to him at the State House in Banjul.

The briefing was on the conclusions of the 5th Review Mission of the Government's Programme, supported by the IMF under the Extended Credit Facilities arrangements. It also included the economic developments in the first six months of the year and the Government's policy direction for the next six to twelve months.

The inflation and price hikes witnessed by The Gambia are driven by external factors like the war in Ukraine, which is affecting global fuel and food prices.

While acknowledging the Government's efforts to relieve the hardship that higher prices of commodities are inflicting on the population, the IMF Mission Chief said they are advising Government on steps to contain the increase of inflation and the foreign exchange the country is facing. The consultations included the Central Bank of The Gambia on policy options to address the economic situation.

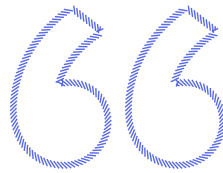
Despite the floods that marred this year's rainy season and the weak performance, the IMF Mission Chief's assessment of the Gambian economy activities found that; even though tourist arrivals have not yet reached pre-pandemic levels, there are an increasing number of tourists arriving, a thriving construction industry, and an anticipated bumper harvest in 2022.



Diaspora Remittances are an Important Contributor to the Economy- President Barrow

The Migration and Sustainable Development in The Gambia' (MSDG) project pilot phase was implemented from August 2017 to December 2018, during which a Gambian Diaspora Strategy (GDS) was developed and incorporated into National Development Plan (NDP 2018-21). It built on the initial 'Induction and Training Workshop for the Cabinet Ministers' conducted by G.K. Partners (GKP) on February 11, 2017, in The Gambia, and the subsequent one-to-one briefings with the President, Ministers, senior government officials and development partners.

President Adama Barrow acknowledged the support GK (GKP) Partners provides through the MSDG project, stating, *“ This is what we expect from Gambian Diaspora, bringing solutions to the table.”* He emphasised that there must be leadership; however, all citizens must contribute to national development, citing Diaspora remittance as a critical contributor to the economy.



“ This is what we expect from Gambian Diaspora, bringing solutions to the table.”

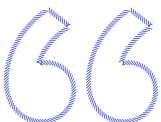
The President made the remarks when he received the senior members and partners of the MSDG project on Friday, October 28, at the Statehouse in Banjul. The delegation, led by Professor Gibril Faal, the Project Director, provided an update on the Project's most recent activities.

The MSDG project has been collaborating with

the Office **of the** President since 2017, and the cooperation will be strengthened with support from the Office of the Chief of Staff.

The MSDG's work cuts across MDAs in the Government, and the Office of the President plays a significant part in the process. Supporting the implementation of the Project throughout the years helps achieve the country's development goals.

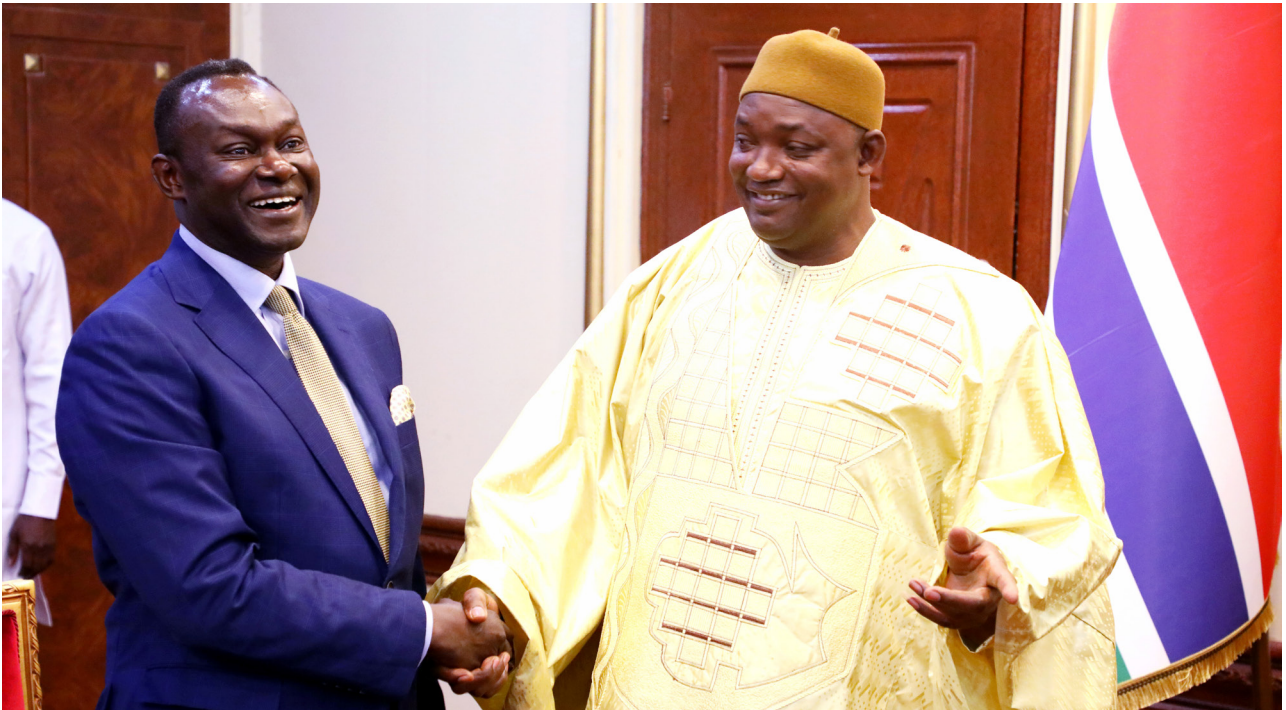
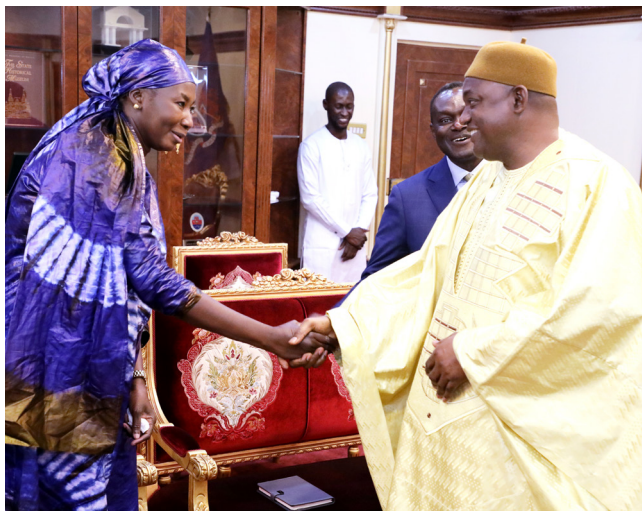
The overall goal of the MSDG project is *“to enhance the role of the Gambian diaspora in national development as the Eighth Region of the country”*. The specific objectives are: *“to create a fully operational service delivery Gambia Diaspora Directorate (GDD), and to expand and enhance diaspora participation in Gambian development policy and practice”*.



“to enhance the role of the Gambian diaspora in national development as the Eighth Region of the country”.



“to create a fully operational service delivery Gambia Diaspora Directorate (GDD), and to expand and enhance diaspora participation in Gambian development policy and practice”.



Senior Members of MSDG Project

DEFENCE AND SECURITY

Transforming the Security Sector in a Democracy

As the Commander-in-Chief of the Gambia Armed Forces, President Barrow continues to support the transformation of the Security Sector through reforms and consultations with relevant stakeholders. While overall reported crime cases declined in 2022, the President is concerned about the rising domestic violence, burglary and recent crimes resulting in the death of several young people in the country. Consequently, he authorised The Gambia Police Force to conduct investigations and map out mechanisms to get the situation under control.

The reinforcement of community policing is given priority for the public to provide the necessary support in curbing domestic crimes and violence.

At the institutional level, policy documents have been formulated to support the Security Reform process, including the National Security Policy, National Security Strategy, and the first-ever National Defense Policy, thus emphasising teamwork and cooperation between the security outfits.

The Security Sector Reform (SSR) process has also improved capacity building for the members of the security sector through training from the British and Turkish Army, respectively. To further motivate the men and women, some merited decoration and were promoted based on sacrifice, dedication to community service, and core mandate.





Passing out parade for GAF Recruit Intake 37 held at the Fajara Barracks in Bakau. Intake 37 comprised 226 personnel, 61 females and 4 Cadet Officers.

President Barrow Inaugurates First-GAF Council

Security Sector Reform has been one of the priorities to transform the sector into a more accountable, efficient, and effective institution with respect for the rule of law and human rights.

The reform project started in 2017 has brought about significant changes and improvements in security affairs. Strives have been made to implement the SSR to yield tangible, sustainable results fully.

Thus, establishing the First Gambia Armed Forces Council in September 2022 is a requirement vested in the President under Section 189, Sub-section (1. g) of the 1997 Constitution. It is a body created to serve as a structural layer with oversight functions to facilitate the achievement of the objectives and desire for a responsive, professional, efficient, and effective security sector.

The selection of the Council is a significant step forward in the Security Sector Reform framework considering that Barrow Government inherited a security apparatus that needed a comprehensive review and a major structural and operational reform.

The guidance and expertise of the Council would contribute to the development of our democratic values and principles, as well as significantly influence the checks and balances within the Armed Forces. All Council members are expected to measure up to the trust and confidence reposed in them.

In December 2022, the National Sector Advisory role changed from Retired Colonel Momodou Badjie to Aboubakarr Suleiman Jeng, a Security Expert with a wide range of experience locally and internationally.



Members of the Gambia Armed Forces Council during the swearing-in ceremony

Vice President, His Excellency Badara Alieu Joof, the Chairman of the Council, thanked the President for the trust bestowed on them to carry out such an important task. He pledged the Council's support to the President as the Commander-In-Chief of The Gambia Armed Forces in his efforts to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of service delivery of the Armed forces and the security sector as a whole.

The GAF Council consists of the seven members mentioned below: -

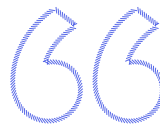
- Vice President Badara Alieu Joof - Chairman
- Minister of Defense, Sering Modou Njie - Member
- Permanent Secretary Ministry of Defense, Rohie Bittaye Darboe - Member
- Chief of Defense Staff of the GAF, Lieutenant General Yankuba A. Drammeh - Member
- Deputy CDS, Major General, Mamat O. Cham - Member
- Commander of Republican National Guard, Brigadier General Turro Jawneh - Member
- Lieutenant Colonel (Retired) Abdoulie Conteh - Civilian Member of the Council

RELIGION AND SOCIETY

President Barrow Calls for Peace and Religious Tolerance at African Ulama Conference

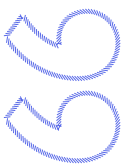
As 2022 drew to a close, in December, The Gambia successfully hosted the **African Religious Ministers and Ulamas Conference** at the Sir Dawda Kairaba Jawara International Conference Centre. His Excellency President Adama Barrow, the Secretary of the Muslim World League, H.E Dr Mohammad Alissa, former Vice Presidents of the Republic of The Gambia, senior government officials, and members of the diplomatic community and 81 national delegates from 38 African countries graced the occasion.

The Muslim World League and The Gambia Government organised the event through the Ministry of Lands and Religious Affairs under the theme ***“Promotion of Peace, Understanding, and Unity among Communities and Nations.”*** The music was befitting, given the ongoing war and conflicts in different regions, destabilising peace and security.



“Promotion of Peace, Understanding, and Unity among Communities and Nations.”

President Barrow called for the Ulamas to continue their impressive work in promoting Islam as a religion of peace and tolerance. ***“Let us harness the media to repel attacks against Islam while educating and creating better awareness of the beauty and good that this great religion brings to humankind. Our collective duty is to run institutions that effectively educate the people to make them better world citizens, Muslims and better human beings who can live with their neighbours and compatriots peacefully and productively.”***



“Let us harness the media to repel attacks against Islam while educating and creating better awareness of the beauty and good that this great religion brings to humankind. Our collective duty is to run institutions that effectively educate the people to make them better world citizens, Muslims and better human beings who can live with their neighbours and compatriots peacefully and productively.”

It is argued that Islamic thoughts and practices influence our socio-economic, political, and legal systems, forming the acknowledgement of our similarities and differences. As human beings, we should accept and accommodate the reality of our similarities and differences and acknowledge each other’s strengths and weaknesses.

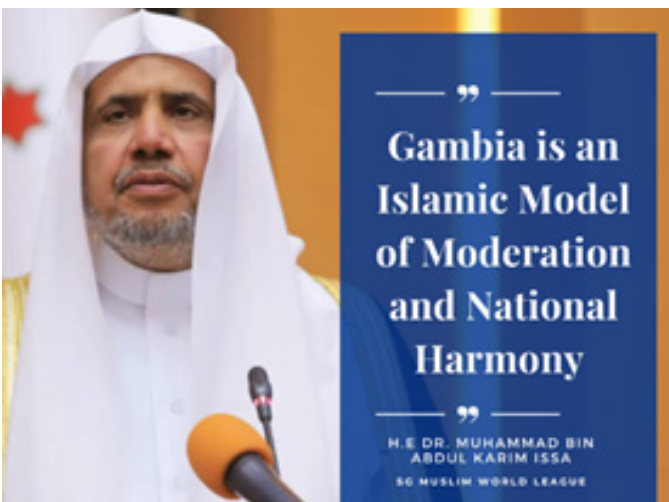
Noting that the complexities globally confronting us have a telling effect on religion. Dividing religious beliefs from culture and social settings or religious obligations from civic responsibilities is impractical. Thus, vital to harmoniously blend and balance them.

The Conference was a forum for Africa to reflect on contending world powers and the epicentre of ethnic rivalry and conflict, leading to the fluidity of our cultures and values and the politicisation of religion.

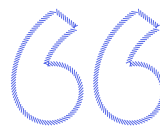
The Secretary General of the Muslim World League, H.E Dr Mohammad Alissa, described The Gambia as “an Islamic Model of Moderation and National Harmony,” urging the African Ulamas to work together collectively to preach the good word of Islam and its teachings.



Religious tolerance promotes peace, patience, and forgiveness for Muslims and non-Muslims on the continent and around the world.



At a separate engagement, Excellency President Adama Barrow decorated the Secretary General of the Muslim World League, H.E Dr Mohammad Alissa, with the Honor of Commander of the Republic of The Gambia – CRG.



“I am proud that the Muslim World League has chosen The Gambia to host the conference to discuss the issues affecting the 1.8 billion Muslims worldwide.”

The conference was the first of the African Religious Ministers and Ulamas hosted in The Gambia. The excited President said, *“I am proud that the Muslim World League has chosen The Gambia to host the conference to discuss the issues affecting the 1.8 billion Muslims worldwide.”*



SG of the MWL, H.E Dr Mohammad Alissa & President Barrow delivering his statement at the conference



Ulamas at the Conference

Messages

Condolence Message to His Majesty, King Charles III

The death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II on September 8 September 2022, sent shock waves worldwide. Leaders around the world sent condolence messages to the Royal family. His Excellency, Adama Barrow, President of the Republic of The Gambia, on Friday, September 9, dispatched a letter of condolence to His Majesty King Charles III.

On behalf of the Government, the People of The Gambia, and his behalf, the President expressed grief and extended heartfelt condolences to His Majesty, the Royal family, and the entire people of Great Britain. The President prayed for Allah to bestow mercy on Her Majesty's soul and grant the Royal family, the people of the United Kingdom, and the Commonwealth family the fortitude to bear this significant loss.

The President also signed the book of condolence at the Residence of the British High Commissioner to The Gambia.



President Barrow Signing the Condolence Book

The President is constitutionally required to reach out to Gambians through a nationwide tour, to assess the impact of his policies and programmes on their lives. The President's 2022 Meet the People Tour lasted 22 days. The discussions concentrated on crucial sectors of the country's socio-economic development, addressing the trading season, increase in the price of groundnuts, agric-business for local consumption, private sector involvement, model farmers' motivation, livestock, and cut down on rice importation.

Additionally, the tour promoted skill development among Youths through TVET education. During that period, the President laid the foundation for constructing TVET centres in various parts of the country. He re-echoed his call for Gambian youths to acquire vocational skills to gain employment or become employers.

He similarly encouraged the participation of young people in agriculture to contribute to the Government's food self-sufficiency drive. In addition, hundreds of women benefited from the Women Enterprise Fund, an initiative by the Government to boost the socio-economic status of women.

President Barrow seized the occasion, as he does with every tour, to underline his Government's commitment to the country's development, notably road infrastructure. Scores of speakers in various regions expressed satisfaction at the growth rate and vowed to rally behind the President as he continued to deliver his promises to the people.

The host Minister, Lands, Local Government and Religious Affairs, Honourable Sherrif Abba Sanyang, focused on consciousness for communities to preserve land for future

development and public use, afforestation, bushfires, religious tolerance, and peaceful co-existence at the community and district levels.

While politics and policies are linked, the moderator of the meetings focused the messages on development and kept party political issues minimal.

Seasonal Messages

As is customary, the President used the Christmas and New Year holidays to send out goodwill greetings, urging peace and stability in the development direction. He also emphasised the global scenario and its connection to the national economy, urging Gambians to unite and work hard to improve their living conditions.

Media and Communications Unit

The Media and Communications Unit at the Presidency continues exploring innovative ways of informing the public on the official engagements of the President within and beyond the country. During the review period, the MCU expanded its reach through digital media to improve information delivery. One such Project is the digital Newsletter, which serves as an extra mechanism for distributing media releases in a simple, efficient, and modern manner. Similarly, the MCU introduced the Statehouse Kibaro, a weekly local language roundup of news from the Presidency and burning national issues of concern. These initiatives, notably the Kibaro, are well received by Gambians at home and abroad.

In its quest to bridge the communication gap between the Presidency and the public, the MCU

facilitated interview requests to the President on various issues. While some requests are still pending, a substantial number have been granted, which has made a significant difference regarding access to information.

The MCU mailing list also increased, with several media houses and personnel expressing interest in receiving our daily Press Releases on the President's engagements. This shows the commitment to ensuring Gambians get timely and credible information.

The Social Media handles of the Presidency also continue to register massive success in the number of followership and engagements. The official Facebook page of the Presidency, for instance, has increased from **79k** to **81,203** followers in the last six months of 2022. The First Lady page is also substantial, with **15k** followers.

Equally, the Twitter pages for the State House and the President's pages have dramatically increased. In the last six months, the Statehouse **@PresidencyGambia** grew from **24k** to **36.7k** while the President's page **@BarrowPresident** reached 65k from 41k. Meanwhile, YouTube has increased from **7.4k** followers to **7.62k**.

The unit also developed and published an abridged version of the State of the Nation Address with pictures for the message to reach more people.

Furthermore, the MCU facilitates sharing internal production with media outlets in audio and video format.

As we clock out of 2022, we look forward to providing more engaging and timely information from the Presidency to the public to reach more people.

OFFICE OF THE FIRST LADY

First Lady's high-level Advocacy globally and locally

Organisational Development



The Organisation of African First Ladies for Development - OAFIAD was founded in 2002 by 37 African First Ladies. At its inception, the organisation's goals were to advocate for increased awareness of the HIV and AIDS epidemic, mobilise resources, and establish a permanent action to improve maternal and child health.

In 2017, H.E. Madam Fatoumatta Bah-Barrow joined the OAFIAD. The Gambia's First Lady advocates to influence and support the government's policies to advance the lives of women and girls, and vulnerable groups in health, education, and social development.

OAFIAD this year celebrated two decades of its existence under the theme: at its 26th General Assembly, held at the Republic of Congo on June 8th.

The First Lady was with eleven (11) of her African colleagues to review their organisation's activities and elect leaders to stir the affairs of OAFLAD.

The First Lady of Namibia, Madam Monica Geingos, and the First Lady of the Democratic Republic of Congo, Madam Denise Tshisekedi, were elected President and Vice President of OAFLAD, respectively. They will serve for a tenure of two years.



Supporting Continental Peace and Stability

In line with supporting their Governments' agendas, OAFLAD members joined the AU in calling for peace and security on the continent. On the sidelines of the 16th Extraordinary African Union Summit in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, the African First Ladies Peace Mission (AFLPM) Caucus under the Presidency of the First Lady of Nigeria, Madam Aisha M. Buhari, AFLPM called on her colleagues to use their platforms to help end conflicts and promote peace in their respective countries and the continent.



African Women’s Leadership in advancing peace and development

While in Malabo, First Lady of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea, Madam Constanca Mangué de Obiang, partnered with the African Women Leaders Network (AWLN), an initiative of the A.U. Commission and U.N. to advance peace and development on the African continent. She hosted her colleagues, including Madam Bah-Barrow, at the launch of a national chapter of AWLN in Equatorial Guinea.

The Network is led by H.E. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, former President of Liberia, in collaboration with other prominent women in Africa who seek to enhance the leadership of African women for the continent’s transformation in line with the A.U. Agenda 2063 and the U.N. Global Agenda 2030. The Network is a platform to galvanise women’s leadership toward lasting peace and sustainable development and promote gender equality and women empowerment at all levels.



End Fistula Campaign

Back home, the Gambian First Lady, was at the forefront of the Zero Fistula Gambia campaign in the capital of the Eastern part of the country, Basse, Upper River Region, where she launched a community sensitization and outreach programme.

Working in partnership with UNFPA, the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Welfare, the Campaign seeks to educate women and men about obstetric Fistula, its causes, and treatment to eradicate it in The Gambia by 2030.

In her remarks, Madam Bah-Barrow said early antenatal care helps prepare pregnant women for safe delivery. Studies have associated most fistula cases in The Gambia with the lack of antenatal care among pregnant women, early marriage and other traditional female reproductive health practices such as FGM. Thus, early maternal healthcare intervention during pregnancy is vital to the well-being of women.

Obstetric Fistula in The Gambia is of significant concern to the Government, and the Office of the First Lady works with partners to eradicate it.



Education Plus Initiative – Actions and Investments

On education, Her Excellency the First Lady, Madam Fatoumatta Bah-Barrow, lent support to the Education Plus Initiative by the Government in partnership with the United Nations. The high-level political advocacy initiative aims to accelerate actions, and promote investments in gender-responsive policy reforms, laws, and practices to guarantee the Education, Health, and other socio-economic rights of adolescent girls.

On June 7, The Gambia launched the Education Plus initiative, joining eight other countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, demonstrating a commitment to accelerate the empowerment of adolescent girls and young women, the achievement of Gender Equality and the prevention of HIV/AIDS.

Through the initiative, UNFPA partners with UNAIDS, UNESCO, UN Women and UNICEF to support high-level advocacy.





Honouring the First Lady Bah-Barrow

The First Lady’s charity work has been noticed. The Mayor of Broward County, Michael Udine and the Mayor of Miramar, Wayne Messam presented Madam Bah-Barrow with “Keys” to their Cities. They pledged to assist her foundation in achieving its goals. The First Lady supports health promotion, education, women’s empowerment, particularly for girls, including social and charitable work for children. The presentations were held during a farewell gala dinner in her honour.



Additionally, in recognition of her work supporting and empowering women and girls, the First Lady received the Premiere Choice Group -PCG's inaugural **Global Woman of the Year Award**.

In her speech, Madam Bah-Barrow thanked the Mayors, stating that the recognition would encourage her to continue working harder for the welfare of women and children in The Gambia.



She seized the opportunity to invite the International Trade Consortium investors to visit The Gambia, to explore investment opportunities and fortify ties between Miami and The Gambia.



Her Excellency also visited the Jackson Memorial Hospital in Miami, and had fruitful conversations with hospital administrators to support The Gambia. At the hospital's Family Medicine Center, she met members of the mother-daughter team, Dr Ramatoulie Dabo and Isatou Bobb Njie, a nurse who hailed from The Gambia.



The recognition of her work to promote girls' education, in particular, earned her the Honorary Degree of Doctor of Humane Letters (LHumLitt). The Board of Trustees of the American International University, West Africa (AIUWA), conferred the Award to the First Lady of the Republic of The Gambia, Madam Fatoumata Bah-Barrow, and her counterpart, the First Lady of the Republic of Sierra Leone, Madam Fatima Maada Bio at a graduation ceremony of 179 student graduates from AIUWA.

Both First Ladies expressed their gratitude and urged the graduating students to be valuable citizens and contribute their quota towards the development of The Gambia and beyond.



Gambia- Nigeria Annual Trade Fair - Boosting AfCFTA

In line with boosting the Intra and Inter-African Continental Free Trade Agreement, the Nigerian Export Promotion Council and the Gambia Investment and Export Promotion Agency hosted The Gambia-Nigeria Annual Trade Fair in October 2022. Her Excellency Madam Fatoumata Bah-Barrow was at the fair in solidarity with the 60 business owners, determined to foster business relationships and network among themselves.

It was also an occasion to kick off the 2022 Breast Cancer Week. The First Lady encouraged people, especially women, to monitor their status.



Gender Inclusion through Media, ICT

The Office of the First Lady continues to network and search for opportunities to promote The Gambia through her work. In October 2022, the African Women Conference -AWC organised its 4th Edition in The Gambia on the theme, ***“Accelerating Women’s Economic Empowerment and Gender Inclusion through the Media, ICT and Entertainment Industries.”*** AWC provided a platform for African women to deliberate on and adopt action plans to deliver rapid growth and development in Africa.



“Accelerating Women’s Economic Empowerment and Gender Inclusion through the Media, ICT and Entertainment Industries.”

In her keynote speech, the First Lady described information and communication technology as a force in transforming socio-economic and political lives globally. She called for women and girls to be included in the digital era. ***“ICT is an important component of development in the information age, and its role as a tool for development and poverty reduction has become important in our world. It is used to provide services, education, jobs and entertainment.”***



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African First Ladies on the Sidelines of the UNGA77

During the UNGA77, Madam Fatoumatta Bah-Barrow was among African First Ladies organizing on the sidelines of the Assembly to bring the ‘End Fistula Campaign’ to the global stage.

She urged her fellow First Ladies to collaborate their efforts in the fight against Fistula.



“It is an honour to champion the End Fistula initiative in The Gambia as a woman, mother, and First Lady dedicated to advancing the well-being of women and girls. I’m pleased that my fellow First Ladies have joined me in this campaign.”

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The First Ladies and public personalities anticipated collaborating with their respective governments, UNFPA, and other parties to improve the healthcare delivery system and ensure those who have fistulas also receive appropriate care.



While in New York, the African First Ladies also convened a high-level event to review the activities of the Organisation of African First Ladies for Development- OAFSLAD, adopt its proposed strategic priorities and align its vision and priority areas for the next two years.

Speaking at the event, Madam Bah-Barrow reaffirmed The Gambia's support for extending the current strategy to 2024 to prioritise reproductive and maternal child health.



In Support of Women Sports in The Gambia

Her personal love for football pushes H.E Madam Fatoumatta Bah-Barrow to show solidarity with female footballers at the International Women's Football Symposium jointly organised by the Gambia Football Federation -GFF and FIFA. The aim was to consolidate the progress made in women's football in The Gambia and provide an opportunity for key stakeholders to network, collaborate, and share success stories.



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