

State House NEWSLETTER

12TH EDITION, JULY 2023



DEMOCRACY - A Recipe for Peace and Development



▲ The Gambia Celebrates
58 years of Independence



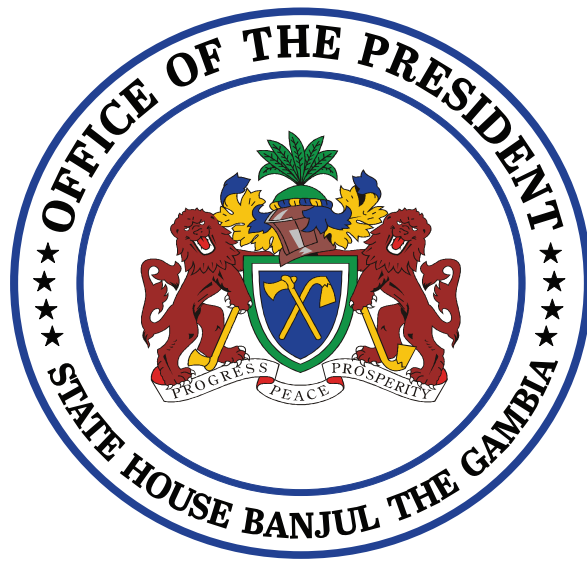
▲ Jambur Solar Plant
Increasing Access to Electricity



▲ The U.S. Under Secretary
Pays Courtesy Call on
President Barrow



▲ Her Excellency First Lady
Fatoumatta Bah-Barrow
attended the Warwick
Africa Summit



12th Edition
State House Newsletter
July 2023

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	4
OVERVIEW	5
GOVERNANCE	7
State of the Nation	7
Economic Council Meetings	7
Security Council Meeting	7
Interface	7
58 Years of Nationhood	7
V.P. Jallow's Character Vouched for him	9
Performance Contract for State-Owned Enterprises	10
Commission to Inquire About Local Councils	11
University of The Gambia 15th Convocation Ceremony	13
WAEC Hailed for Exemplary Service	14
Gambia's Commitment to Democratic Values	15
TRRC Donor Conference- Road to Justice for Victims	16
FINANCE AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS	18
IsDB Supported Projects Impacts Lives	18
GRA Revenue Grows from Eight to Twelve Billion Dalasi in 2022	18
The Gambia Attains IMF Final Assessment	20
President Barrow Receives New World Bank Country Director	21
World Customs Organisation 29th Conference	22
DIPLOMACY AND FOREIGN RELATIONS	23
The U.S. Under Secretary Pays Courtesy Call on President Barrow	23
President Barrow Receives UAE Minister of African Affairs	25
President Barrow Extols Gambia-Senegal Relations	26
ECOWAS Commission President, Outgoing ECOMIG Commander visit	27



French Ambassador Pays Courtesy Call on President Barrow	29
Collective Responsibility to Negotiate Peace	30
The Gambia-German Relations Heightens	30
Civil Defence Organisation Calls on the President	31
President Barrow Congratulates Nigeria, Calls for Prioritising of Agric-Business	32
UNICEF Country Representative Leaves ‘Back to School Legacy’	33
President Barrow Attends Tinubu’s Inauguration	34
Building on Bilateral Relations with Cote d’Ivoire	35
INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT	36
North Bank Roads Project: A Boost for Economic Activities	36
Jambur Solar Plant: Increasing Access to Electricity	37
Brikama Market Inauguration	38
President Barrow Inaugurates Laminkoto Power Plant	39
Inauguration of 70 New Buses: Boost for Public Transport	40
YOUTHS AND SPORTS	41
President Barrow Presents D5 Million to U20 Team	41
PEACE AND SECURITY	42
Peace and Security Tops Agenda in April	42
Youth Leading Peacebuilding	42
SOS Children Transiting to Communities	42
WOMEN’S EMPOWERMENT CENTRAL TO THE GOVERNMENT’S AGENDA	44
OFL ADVOCATES IN SUPPORT OF GOVERNMENT’S DEVELOPMENT AGENDA	46



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

It is always a tedious but exciting period for the staff to produce the bi-annual **State House Newsletter**. This is the 12th Edition since 2017, and we are grateful that we can maintain its regular publication.

I must commend the Social Media Officer, Zainab Faal, for multitasking and being able to provide a draft for this Edition.

The beautiful pictures Senior Photographer Sulayman Touray produced make the Edition colourful and attractive to readers.

With the dedication and commitment of the Assistant Audio Visual Editor, Momodou E. Njie, it was easier to catch up with the beautiful work of the Office of the First Lady. He handles the video and photography productions and manages to provide the stories on the First Lady's engagements.

Another team member, Junkung Jawneh, focuses on producing the videos accompanying the stories, which you can follow on the State House YouTube Channel via the website www.op.gov.

Dear reader, I must thank all the support staff, the driver, Sulayman Jallow, for his patience with my late hours at work to ensure that the tasks at hand are completed. He goes the extra mile to support the staff when needed to display and distribute our publications and advocacy materials.

Aside from the daily handling of H.E's Scheduled engagements, the team is on social media updating and monitoring, production of the monthly President's Diary and other administrative engagements.

I cannot end without commending the administrative team at O.P. for the management and logistical support. I thank our colleagues, the I.T. team, for the website management and ensuring that we are connected to the internet; the Protocol and Security Units for their understanding and cooperation.

Amie Bojang-Sissoho
Director of Press and Public Relations



OVERVIEW

In this 12th Edition of the **State House Newsletter**, stories covered the engagements of the His Excellency President Adama Barrow on amplifying and enhancing the visibility of his government's socio-economic policies and programmes as they relate to governance and building on the diplomatic relationship with other countries and institutions. The engagements also reinforce his office's role in coordinating and strengthening collaboration amongst sectors.

The President expresses political will to initiate and launch projects that bring social and economic benefits to the citizens, strengthen institutions and bring hope to the people.

Engagements with partners provide an overview of the financial and economic affairs of the country, domestic efforts to improve the economy, as well as opportunities to share their assessments of the national outlook. They share diplomatic and external perspectives to support the development agenda, encourage and explore investment opportunities, build friendship for mutual benefits.

The President also gives his perspectives on the government's development agenda and issues of mutual interest. Examples are the Implementation of the TRRC, having a new Constitution and the overall Institutional Reform programme of the government.

His engagements strengthen bilateral relations with countries through interfaces with diplomats, regional and international organisations geared towards peace and development.

At the national level, infrastructure development is a priority for the President, including roads, electricity and water and other social amenities.

Efforts to boost Youth and Sports are also referenced in this Edition of the **State House Newsletter**, taking pride in The Gambia's performances at the AFCON and other competitions.

Peace and security are top on the hierarchy of priorities. Thus, the President held audiences to amplify his firm belief that without peace and security, there cannot be sustainable development or a thriving private sector.

The Gambia opens investment opportunities by encouraging local business and international investments. President Barrow takes pride in his government's policy to advance women's empowerment, reiterating the steps taken to realise women's empowerment and gender equality, and encourages women's leadership. Receiving members of the African Women Leadership Network members, amongst them two of his former Vice Presidents, tells a story.

In this Edition, the **State House Newsletter** gives insight into the advocacy Her Excellency, the First Lady, engages in to promote and support the government's policies on health and education as they affect women, children and vulnerable groups.

The 12th Edition allows the reader to appreciate the energies being asserted to move The Gambia forward, notwithstanding the challenges.



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GOVERNANCE

State of the Nation

The President is required by law to address the citizens through the National Assembly annually to report on his government's policies and programmes, achievements and challenges for the year. It is also an opportunity to talk about burning issues at the time of the address. The event brings together officials, partners and members of the public to hear the President give his address. **The State of the Nation 2023** address was delivered on 6th June. For more, visit www.op.gov.gm

Economic Council Meetings

The President has maintained a monthly Economic Council Meeting to hear firsthand information from the Policy makers and technicians on the economy. The monthly meetings allow the President to listen to updates, ask questions for clarity, and influence decisions. The gatherings also promote better coordination amongst the actors and speedy actions on crucial decisions to eliminate stumbling blocks in the economy's administration and management. It is also an opportunity for policy harmony on issues that require multi-sectoral actions.

Security Council Meeting

Governance has a lot to do with peace and security. Conscious of the sector's importance, the President maintains weekly Security Council meetings with the Security heads. These briefings present opportunities for the President to be on top of security matters.

Interface

Coordinating governance issues also require interface with officials, development partners, diplomats, and ordinary citizens through audiences, thus the daily engagements of the President. The administrative aspect is also critical to the President's engagement and state governance.

58 Years of Nationhood

The Gambia celebrated 58 years of nationhood in a colourful ceremony held at McCarthy Square in Banjul on Saturday, 18th February.

A spectacular parade by the security forces and a match pass by students marked the event.

In his address, President Adama Barrow said that democracy is a framework to attain peace, development, and stability and that his government is duly committed to good governance entrenched in the principles of democracy.

"We believe in democracy for peace and development, as well as democracy for self-determination, economic growth and protection of human dignity. In brief, we believe in inclusive democracy for inclusive development and stability." He noted.



According to the President, his government legitimately derives its mandate and authority from the people and must defend their values, principles, beliefs, practices, aspirations, and social structures. This, he added, would ensure harmony between the government and the people. The President urged all Gambians to be patriotic, loyal and willing to accommodate one another.



“Our National Day reminds us to showcase our patriotism and loyalty as proud Gambians willing to accommodate one another... To this end, my government is determined to unite the people to work together for peace and development and leave behind durable achievements. Our governance approach and development initiatives illustrate our commitment to democracy and how we have successfully used it as a development model”.

President Barrow stated.



As part of the Independence celebrations, the Organising Committee of the 58th Independence Anniversary of The Gambia held a successful public forum on the theme: Democracy- A Recipe for Peace and Development at the SDKJ International Conference Centre in Bijilo.

The intergenerational forum, which brought together a cross-section of society, focused on reflections from panellists and the audience on social and political issues in exercising democratic rights to ensure peace and progress.

It was an opportunity for Gambians to discuss the values that unite us. Many hailed the gathering as timely and suggested that the reflections be included in the government’s policies and programmes.



V.P. Jallow's Character Vouched for him

His Excellency President Adama Barrow, on 7th March, presided over the swearing of the new Vice President, H.E Muhammed B.S Jallow, describing him as loyal and trustworthy.

The President said V.P. Jallow earned his trust and respect for his performance and comportment during his tenure as Secretary General.

"He demonstrated high professionalism and loyalty to the nation, hence his subsequent appointment to represent The Gambia at the Senegalo-Gambia Secretariat. While in active service, he also showed exemplary character and left his mark in the institutions he served." The President noted.

Stating that V.P. Jallow came at a time the pace had been set for the revised national agenda, the **Green-Focused National Development Plan 2023-2027**, President Barrow said his knowledge and experience in public

administration would be an asset to the country, particularly his supervisory role in overseeing government institutions under his purview as well as participation in Cabinet deliberations.

Citing the signing of performance contracts with State Owned Enterprises (SOEs) as an indication of his government's readiness to set public service delivery targets, the President stressed that he is committed to leaving an enviable legacy with the support and cooperation of all arms of government.

The newly sworn-in Vice President was challenged to maintain and promote cordial team spirit and high professionalism that bind Cabinet members in their collective task of developing The Gambia with unquestionable sincerity.

For his part, H.E V.P. Jallow expressed gratitude to the President for the trust bestowed on him and assured him that he would work within the reimits of the rule of law and due process in developing the country. He paid tribute to his late predecessor, H.E VP Joof, whom he called a teacher and mentor, pledging to continue from the strong foundation he had built.

V.P. Jallow's appointment came following Former Vice President Badara A. Joof's demise in January.



V.P. Jallow's Swearing



Performance Contract for State-Owned Enterprises

The Gambia's State-Owned Enterprises—Gambia Ports Authority - GPA, Gambia National Petroleum Corporation - GNPC, and the Social Security and Housing Finance Corporation (SSHFC), are amongst the most important entities that significantly impact the lives of Gambians and the government's economic performance.

In this vein, President Adama Barrow, on 7th February, presided over the signing of performance contracts between the Executive and three State-Owned Enterprises—GPA, GNPC and SSHFC.

President Barrow said the SOEs play a vital role in the country's national development endeavours. By 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.

Despite the enormous investments made by Government in SOEs, it is with great concern that many of these entities continue to incur losses. This has necessitated a renewed strategy to change the narrative and strengthen their operations and performance. The President added that delivering on their mandate effectively, efficiently and transparently is critical in the country's current development trajectory.



“Moving forward, the Government will continue to work with all Public Enterprises and ensure that they deliver public services reliably and efficiently and contribute to Government fiscal operations by disbursing dividends payable to their shareholders.” The President added.





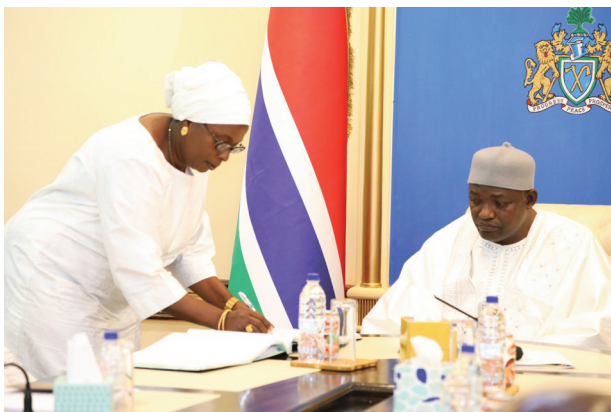
Performance Contract Signing



Commission to Inquire About Local Councils

President Adama Barrow, on Friday, 24th February, swore in five Commissioners to inquire about the conduct of Local Councils following complaints and non-adherence to legal rulings on administrative matters.

The Commission members, Jainaba Bah Sambou, Samba Faal, Oreme E. Joiner, Sukai Secka Sanyang and Alhaji Sillah, took oaths of Office and Secrecy.



Commending the members of the Commission for accepting to perform the task, the President reiterated his government's commitment to addressing corrupt practices at all levels of public service delivery while urging the Commission to indulge judiciously and professionally in

gathering facts on the conduct of the councils. Recognising his government's responsibility in establishing the rule of law, the President asserted his position stating, "Guided by Section 200 of the 1997 Constitution of the Republic of The Gambia, I deem it necessary to establish a Commission of Inquiry to investigate the alleged irregularities."

The Commission has three months to investigate and present its report to guide the government in adopting relevant policy and administrative options.

The Chairperson, Jainaba Bah- Sambou, promised to carry out the exercise with the rest of the members and was grateful for the trust bestowed on them.

The setting up of the Commission came in the context of the Barrow government's commitment to respect the rule of law and fight corruption in



public institutions. It could be recalled that an Anti-Corruption Bill has been presented to the National Assembly since 2020 and, once enacted, would support the administration's desire to curb such negative practices affecting the country's advancement, both at centralised and decentralised levels



Commissioners Of inquiry Into Local Council





The President Presented Certificates And Awards To Deserving Students



University of The Gambia 15th Convocation Ceremony

As the Chancellor of the University of The Gambia, it would be the sixth time President Barrow presided over the annual convocation of the country's citadel of higher education. 18th March 2023 marked the 15th gathering, and the theme was: **Higher Learning Skills and Entrepreneurship for Sustainable Development.**

Addressing the students, the President said the convocation signified progress and underscored our collective commitment to educating our youths, whose skills and training we need badly for the socio-economic transformation of our country. As Head of State and Chancellor of the UTG, he was happy to grace the ceremony and celebrate another accomplishment in Higher Education of a new breed of Gambians.



"Today's graduation ceremony marks another spectacular milestone in the history of education in The Gambia. It is also a point of reference in the lives of the graduates and their families, as well as The University of The Gambia (UTG) and the Gambian nation at large. In addition, the occasion symbolises the dedication and determination of the youths to uplift themselves and their families by carving out careers and building on their past glories through academic pursuits."



Highlighting the theme, he said skills and entrepreneurship are critical enablers of speeding up socio-economic transformation and essential for a sustainable future.



WAEC Hailed for Exemplary Service

The West African Examination Council – WAEC is one of the oldest colonial-era institutions in the subregion that survived for seven decades. President Adama Barrow speaking during the official opening, applauded the body’s evolution. The 71st Annual Council Meeting of the body’s Governing Board was held on 14th March at the SDKJ Conference in Bijilo.

Commending the major examination body in West Africa, President Barrow stated,

“I found it quite fascinating when I was informed that, among the regional bodies established during the colonial era, WAEC is the only body that has survived to this day. This shows that the quality of structures, administrative arrangements and procedures that the Council maintained over the years are viably effective. While this is indeed worthy of emulation by other regional institutions, it is a unique achievement that represents a formidable challenge for Council. Given the dynamic nature of society, one may wonder whether Council can exist for another seventy years of such commendable success.”



The President added that the needs and aspirations of its stakeholders must be met with consistent quality service delivery, keeping up-to-date with the fast-changing scientific World and its ever-evolving and productive technological innovations and development.

The government commits to education as a development catalyst and continues exploring international education standards and goals to improve the sector to promote excellence.

The Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education is revising the school curriculum to introduce Civic Education at the senior secondary school level to instil greater citizenship awareness, patriotism and a more profound sense of nationalism.



The 71st Annual Council Meeting of WAEC

Gambia’s Commitment to Democratic Values

The Gambia is the Human Rights Capital, gaining recognition for The African Charter on Human and People’s Rights, popularly called the Banjul Charter. Banjul is home to the African Commission on Human and People’s Rights. These landmarks are strongholds for democracy in the country and worth upholding democratic principles, shared obligations, and global cooperation.

During a virtual address to the Second Summit on Democracy on 29th March 2023, His Excellency, President Adama Barrow, while acknowledging the recent gains in democratic transitions around the World, stated that more efforts are required to improve the governance trajectory for the much-needed development across countries, particularly in Africa.

The Gambia’s democratic trajectory mainstreamed democracy and human rights

in her governance and political systems since 1965 and opted for multiparty democracy when the one-party design was fashionable in many countries.

“Our nation is solidifying its democratic foundations for development, peace and stability, and our experience demonstrates that democracy yields freedom and strengthens the rule of law.” He noted.

Under President Barrow, The Gambia has ushered in economic freedom, private sector development and public-private partnerships, and strengthened bilateral relations to attract development partners.

The Second Summit on Democracy was co-hosted by the United States, Costa Rica, the Netherlands, the Republic of Korea and the Republic of Zambia.



Second virtual Summit on Democracy





TRRC Donor Conference- Road to Justice for Victims

Since assuming power in 2017, the Barrow administration embarked on a series of reform processes to accept the country's past and set the ground for democratic governance. Key among the reforms is the Transitional Justice, which saw the establishment of the Truth, Reconciliation and Reparations Commission (TRRC), mandated to investigate the Human Rights Violations of the former regime. The TRRC, after three years, submitted a report on its recommendations.

In this vein, President Adama Barrow, on Friday, 12th May, presided over the opening of the Stakeholder's Conference and Donor Roundtable on implementing the Truth Reconciliation and Reparations Commission recommendations at the SKDJ conference Centre in Bijilo.

The convergence of senior government officials, the U.N. system in The Gambia, the E.U., development partners, civil society organisations and victims to collaborate on implementing the recommendations manifested the multi-stakeholder commitment to realising the outcomes.

President Barrow highlighted that the event was a period of laying a solid foundation for a brighter and just future for all Gambians.

"This event has come at a crucial moment in our nation's history and a critical stage in our journey to transform the dark legacy of the past, uncover the truth hidden in it, administer justice, and bring about healing for our people." He observed.

Hailing the resilience of Gambians and his government's determination for a democratic and just society, President Barrow said setting up the TRRC in 2018 was a significant milestone in attaining justice and accountability, yielding positive results.

"We have since made significant strides towards justice and reconciliation. The TRRC's final report and valuable recommendations have set the stage for a transformative era in The Gambia. Knowing the truth, enables some Gambians to reconcile and forgive their perpetrators, but for most, it is about reparation and perpetrators facing justice. Thus, the country has arrived at a critical juncture that requires the implementation of those recommendations."

The event also highlighted the unveiling of the EU-UNDP GREAT Initiative, a Nine (9) million Euros fund to support a Responsive and Accountable Democratic Transition in The Gambia.





TRRC Donor Conference



FINANCE AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

IsDB Supported Projects Impacts Lives

President Adama Barrow commended the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) for supporting his government when he received the President of the Bank, Dr Muhammed Al Jasser, at the State House in Banjul on Sunday, 29th January.

The President highlighted key projects supported by the Bank, including the Laminkoto-Passamas road and the agriculture and electricity sectors, noting they significantly impact people's lives. He added that the country largely depends on agriculture which ensures food security and is critically linked to national security.

The roads increased the inclusivity of rural communities, easing travelling, and connecting businesses and services, positively impacting the economy. The President assured the Bank of his government's continuous partnership for the mutual benefit of the country and the institution.

IsDB's President, Dr Muhammad Al Jasser, regarded The Gambia as a vital member and has financed up to a Billion Dollars in projects in the country over the years. He commits to standing with the Government and people of The Gambia in our journey to development.

Dr Jasser assessed the roads and electricity projects they are financing. While some have been completed, others were steadily progressing.

Supporting the government's food security endeavour, the IsDB signed a grant with the government to enhance productivity in agriculture by providing suitable crop varieties.



"Agriculture is a pivotal sector in every and any economy, especially in developing countries, and to have such a mapping of the land of any country will be very important to choose the right crop for the right place to have the quantities," Dr Jasser observed.



The Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs, Honourable Seedy Keita, thanked the IsDB for the trusted partnership over the years, saying the Bank is financing many projects that positively impact the lives and livelihoods of Gambians.

GRA Revenue Grows from Eight to Twelve Billion Dalasi in 2022

At the centre of the Barrow administration is the conviction that the country's economic prosperity should hinge on expanding its tax base and leveraging technology rather than interfering with the tax codes. As a result, the policy position aims to improve the fiscal space and enhance trade facilitation for the private sector to succeed. The Gambia Revenue Authority is one of the major avenues for raising funds for national development projects.

Aside from the institutional reforms to adapt to new technology to enhance efficiency and effectiveness in its operations and minimise leakage in the management of public revenue,



the GRA engages in advocacy and media sensitisation to motivate taxpayers to do so on time.

Five years in a row, GRA annually organises a high-level advocacy event in the form of a Tax Payers Award ceremony that recognises businesses that comply with the accurate and timely payment of taxes.

To encourage the positive steps achieved over the recent past, His Excellency President Adama Barrow presided over the 5th Edition on Saturday, 4th March 2023. He commended GRA for the hard work and dedication that has positively impacted revenue performance.

The President encouraged the private sector to continue supporting the State through their contributions while assuring that the government will continue to create the environment for the private sector to thrive.

The growth in tax revenue results from a sound government policy to expand the country's tax base and tighten the loopholes in our national tax collection system.



“Since my administration came into office in 2017, GRA’s total revenue receipt grew significantly from about D8 billion to almost D12.8 billion in 2022, representing more than sixty (60) per cent increase. In the same period, the average monthly revenue collection grew significantly from D664 million in 2017 to D1.06 billion in 2022.”



The Gambia Attains IMF Final Assessment

The Barrow administration made strategic decisions to ensure fiscal discipline and better manage public finances. Consequently, the country's economic outlook continues to show positive progress, particularly with the Monthly National Economic Council (NEC) meeting, which comprises ministers and senior officials managing the economy and public financial institutions to share updates on the State of the economy.

On 24th March, President Adama Barrow received the IMF Mission Chief, Mr Ivohasina Razafimahefa, who briefed him that The Gambia, for the first time, reached the final stage of its IMF programme on a positive note.

President Barrow received the briefing with delight and said his government is determined to do everything possible to improve the country's scorecard.

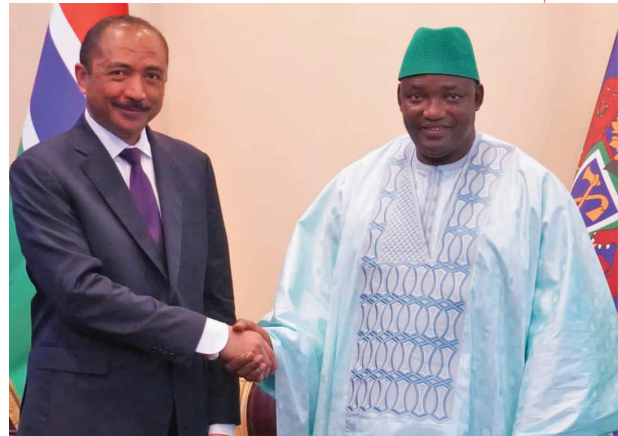


"At times, you take difficult decisions and do the right thing for the good of the majority," He noted.



He congratulated his economic team and thanked the IMF for the guidance and support, adding that the transition was difficult with high expectations from the citizens.

Acknowledging the deficit areas impacted by the outbreak of COVID-19 and the War in Ukraine, the President looks forward to more flexibility being asserted in the following programme cycle to address the areas where there are deficits.



The Barrow administration prioritises digitalisation and e-governance to increase revenue collection and reduce corruption. He referenced the digitalisation of tax collection and performance contracts with SOEs as necessary domestic revenue collection measures to fast-track development.

President Barrow cited electricity and infrastructure as the key to the country's advancement as the government works towards its target for universal access to electricity in remote areas in a few years.

The IMF Chief of Mission expressed confidence to proceed with a new country programme as it is the first time The Gambia has reached a final assessment programme. The mission's findings revealed that the economic growth improved despite not getting the pre-COVID level due to external shocks such as the post-COVID recovery. The positive trends in tourism, remittance, and private and public construction works are promising signs of the economy. However, The Gambia still needs to escape the impact of global events on food prices and fuel, flexible exchange rates, and cross-border trade.

On the challenges, it was noted that inflation was high and public debt was still flat at 80% of GDP, but it recorded that foreign reserves and credit to the private sector are on the right path, with interest rates decreasing. Appreciating the government's efforts for economic growth, Mr Razafimahefa concluded, **"The Gambia can be a model of a success story."**



IMF Country Rep

President Barrow Receives New World Bank Country Director

With over five decades of partnership between the World Bank and The Gambia, President Adama Barrow welcomed the new Dakar-based World Bank Country Director, Ms Keiko Miwa, who paid him a courtesy visit at the Statehouse in Banjul on 16th May.

The President applauded the government's partnership with the World Bank in various development projects and emphasised the importance of peace and stability, which are prerequisites for economic growth.

Touching on her priorities as the new Director, Ms Kieko said the focus will be on building the success stories; governance transparency agenda, private sector-led equitable growth, human capital agenda and climate change adaptation.



World Bank Country Director



World Customs Organisation 29th Conference

The 29th Conference of World Customs Organization (WCO)- West and Central Africa Directors General opened at the SDKJCC in Bijilo on 4th May.

Addressing the gathering, President Adama Barrow said the theme of the conference, **‘Nurturing the Next Generation by Promoting a Culture of Knowledge Sharing and Professional Pride in Customs’**, is captivating and thought-provoking, adding that it mirrors the aspirations of the African continent to strengthen South-South cooperation in our collective drive for self-reliance and the attainment of our development goals.

“With the creation of the African Continental Free Trade Area by the African Union, the need to share knowledge continues to increase by the day. Of necessity is also the capacity enhancement of Customs Administrations for use as a basis to develop further the knowledge and skills required to tackle the challenges that plague the continent.” President Barrow stated.

Through cooperation, African Customs Administrations can work together more efficiently and effectively to deliver better results by developing and applying joint solutions to remove barriers that hinder progress. Fostering cooperation and sustaining a culture of sharing and updating approaches, trends, and perspectives could ensure the full integration of economies. Customs are crucial in promoting economic growth, ensuring national security, facilitating international trade, collecting data, and protecting our environment and cultural heritage.

The conference allowed Customs officials to engage with the wider community, learn from their experiences, and celebrate their successes. It is thus a source of motivation for excellence in service and an avenue to sustained performance and more significant achievements.



World Customs Organisation 29th Conference

DIPLOMACY AND FOREIGN RELATIONS

Diplomacy in the 21st century is wider than the traditional system of exchanges in diplomats using diplomatic channels, letters etc. It now includes **Social Media Diplomacy**, which citizens and thousands of followers appreciate. The public likes to hear the views and position of the President on current issues internally and externally, be it regional or beyond. Therefore the Office of the President manages the social media handle of the President to deal with **Social Media Diplomacy**, tagging Presidential handles and that of relevant partners or hashtags trending issues. It is a popular means of speedily reaching out on topical issues, be it congratulatory messages, sharing condolences, or celebrating national, religious and global events. It no longer has to wait for months to receive an acknowledge event-related letters.

The U.S. Under Secretary Pays Courtesy Call on President Barrow

In an audience with the U.S. Secretary of State for Civilian Security, Democracy and Human Rights, Ms Uzra Zeya, on Monday, 13th March 2023, at the State House in Banjul, President Adama Barrow recognised the United States support to The Gambia. The Gambian President acknowledged the threshold and Compact support the United States offered to the country.



U.S. support will help consolidate the gains

Ms Uzra is the most Senior Biden government official to visit The Gambia, and it is encouraging that the U.S. support will help consolidate the gains the Barrow regime realised in the areas of democracy and good governance, including the implementation of the recommendations of the TRRC White Paper 2021.

Establishing a hybrid court

Reparation and access to justice in the country's transitional programme are crucial,



"We want to adequately compensate the victims of injustices because most of them are breadwinners of their families, and it has taken a long time to get to where we are." President Barrow emphasised.



He added that his government is working on establishing a hybrid court to prosecute perpetrators of heinous crimes, as indicated in the White Paper on the TRRC Report.

Investing in social projects

President Barrow noted that while his government is limited with resources, it manages citizens' expectations by investing in social projects that meet the people's demands, create job opportunities for the youth and generally improve the welfare of Gambians. "Social projects help maintain



peace and stability, and democracy cannot be without peace and stability,” President Barrow remarked. He observed that generally stabled and developed countries uphold democracy. These are best practices and values his regime wants to emulate and invest in various development sectors by enhancing domestic resource mobilisation.

New futuristic Constitution

The President informed Ms Zeya that he is a fan of term limits and that his government will re-introduce a new futuristic Constitution for all citizens, adding that lack of term limits is one of the problems in Africa’s governance and security environment. While noting the strong political will to fight corruption, President Barrow observed the challenging forces against it but said he was happy with the progress.

Friendship and Mutual benefits

On regional and multilateral issues, President Barrow took pride in The Gambia’s leadership at the ECOWAS Commission and the Authority’s peace efforts in the sub-region. He assured Under Secretary Zeya of The Gambia’s friendship and support at all levels for the mutual benefit of both countries and their people. He expressed delight in President Biden’s pledge at the US-Africa Summit to support The Gambia amongst other African countries for their development and prosperity, the Gambian leader concluded.

“We will continue building our institutions with genuine partners and visible projects for sustainable development.”

The Gambia TRRC is a model

Ms Uzra Zeya, for her part, observed that The Gambia TRRC is a model worth saluting, as it incorporates reparation and prosecution. She disclosed that America’s development agency, USAID, will re-establish itself in The Gambia and support the access to justice programme of the government in partnership with CSO stakeholders.

Elaborating on the USAID project, Her Excellency Ambassador Sharon Cromer informed the President that the support would include support to the office of the Special Prosecution in drafting legislation and a joint commission in establishing a hybrid court, and working with CSOs.

Support agriculture for food security

Ambassador Cromer also disclosed that the United States would support agriculture in ensuring food security by providing food aid which would be monetised to support the agriculture programme. The support also includes assisting The Gambia to transit from Malaria control to malaria elimination.

The support will also extend to the security sector on humanitarian and disaster management, as in sixteen other countries. She referenced the outcome of a recent visit by a U.S. technical team with delight for The Gambia’s progress. Thus, the U.S. will support the Ministry of Finance with technical assistance support with a Budget Adviser embedded in Ministry’s team.

The U.S. support for the country is noticeable as the U.S. Under Secretary described it as “The Gambia’s dramatic progress” that led to the MCC’s recognition, the U.S. upgrading the country to Tier 2 on Trafficking in Person status and investing in host communities to support migration challenges while partnering in other shared concerns in diplomacy.





Zeya and Ambassador Cromer flank H.E Barrow

President Barrow Receives UAE Minister of African Affairs

President Barrow has called for the United Arab Emirates Investors to invest in light industries in The Gambia during an audience with the Emirati Minister of State for African Affairs, H.E. Sheikh Shakhboot Nahyan Al Nahyan, on 22nd March at the State House in Banjul.

The President informed the Emirati Prince that his government is keen on partnering with UAE in several areas, including tourism and health, noting that several Gambians engage in health tourism for treatment abroad. The President took pride in the Sheikh Zayed Eye Clinic in The Gambia, which provides services beyond its borders while appealing to the UAE for its expansion and upgrading with modern equipment.

H.E Nahyan, for his part, said the UAE and The Gambia relation had been built on solid ground, and his visit is a continuation of the common interest in the partnership and close relationship between the two brotherly nations.

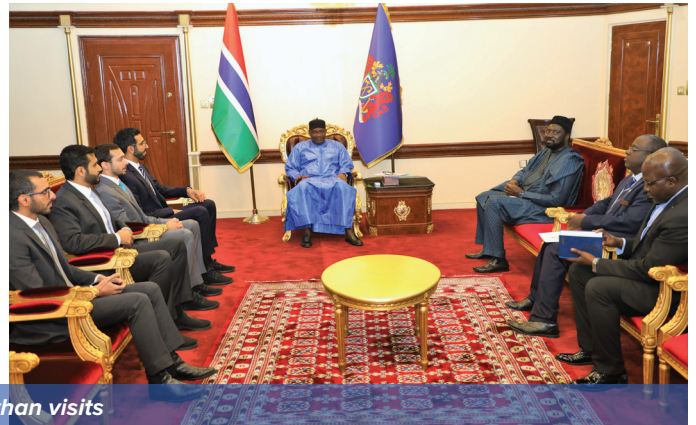
He further revealed that other areas of mutual interest are agriculture and digitalisation, and they would assess and explore those opportunities in the country. He added that The Gambia is well situated for investment in a peaceful environment and has a youthful population to fill the gap in the labour market doubled with an independent judiciary to protect investments.

The two leaders also reassured each other of the conviction to enhance and improve the partnership. President Barrow took the opportunity to thank H.E Nahyan for the prompt action taken to support the return of some Gambians stranded in the UAE following their meeting in New York in September 2022.





Minister Nayhan visits



President Barrow Extols Gambia-Senegal Relations

A Ministerial delegation headed by the Senegalese Minister for Culture and Historical Heritage, Professor Alioun Sow, was at the State House on 6th January to embrace the friendly and brotherly relations between The Gambia and Senegal, reiterating the socio-cultural bond. President Barrow described the bond as 'natural' and urged them to take pride in it. "We should be proud of who we are and believe in ourselves," he added.

The synergy between the two authorities would unite the people through the policies they developed to strengthen the excellent neighbourliness between the two countries. The Gambian President stressed the importance of the relations.

saying, "Your immediate neighbour is your strongest partner, and we will succeed together." At the same time,

He prayed for peace to continue to prevail in the region.

Already, there is a strong partnership with The Gambia Navy and the National Council for Arts and Culture in The Gambia and their Senegalese colleagues.

To further strengthen the ties at the people-to-people level, it was revealed that there were plans to host joint annual Cultural festivals in border communities between the two countries and celebrate the Senegambia heritage.



Receiving the guests manifested President Barrow's desire to preserve, promote, and advance the Senegambia culture, which could further inspire and promote national development and regional peace.



Senegalese Culture Minister



ECOWAS Commission President, Outgoing ECOMIG Commander Visit

The Gambia takes pride in assuming the Presidency position of our sub-regional body, ECOWAS, when the sub-region yearned for diplomacy and technical expertise to tackle the challenges confronting it. Thus deserves all the support as asserted by the Gambian leader, President Adama Barrow, when he received the ECOWAS Commission President, H.E. Dr Omar Touray and the outgoing ECOMIG Commander in The Gambia, Colonel Cheikh Omar Tamba, at the State House in Banjul.

"You came at a time when the subregion is confronted with many challenges, but with your expertise and diplomatic skills, we will continue to support you," President said.

Dr Touray was on his first official mission since assuming office to express gratitude to the Gambian people through the President and Government of The Gambia for being selected in his current position.

"I believe thousands of Gambians could have been selected for this position. Having this role assigned to me is a mark of confidence that I greatly appreciate." He stated.

The visit was an opportunity to recommit and re-engage himself to work for what is best for the region and seek guidance from the President on several issues the region is facing.

Peace and security are key strategic goals to strengthen the region's response capabilities through early warning systems, deployment, and preventive diplomacy.

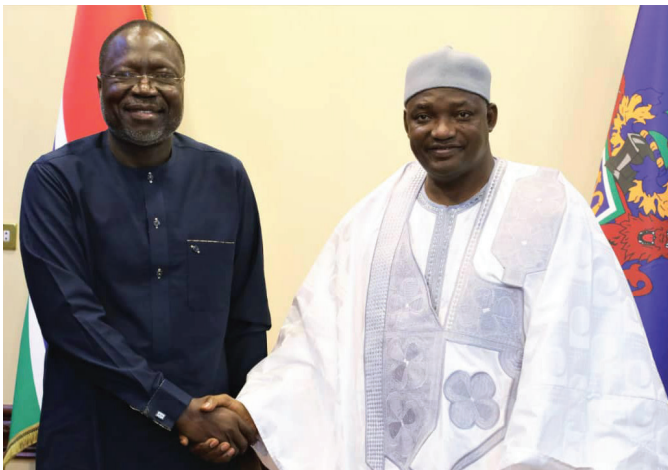


Given the region’s highly youthful population, mainstreaming women and youth in development is critical. Trade and constitutionalism, amongst others, need crucial attention. Dr Touray urged ECOWAS citizens to cherish and strengthen the community for future generations.

Coincidentally, the Gambian Leader bade farewell to the Commander of the ECOMIG forces in The Gambia, Cheikh Omar Tamba, who completed his tour of duty. He described himself as a ‘professional, frank and trustworthy person, nobly served The Gambia.’

“ECOWAS wants to use The Gambia as a model, and I am grateful to all the Heads of State for their support. I believe in democracy, and we can entrench it in our country,” the President said,

expressing optimism that the continued security sector reforms would strengthen its capacity-building component.



In a separate diplomatic engagement, the ECOWAS Commissioner for Economic and Agricultural Affairs, Mrs Massanje Tour- Litse, discussed regional integration and ECOWAS' commitment to continue supporting and working with The Gambia. President Barrow stressed that Africa has the human and natural resources and should invest in making agribusiness a priority through industrialisation to feed itself. He decried Africa, with a much bigger population, having to suffer due to the unfortunate War in Ukraine.



“The way forward for Africa is prioritising Agric-business for economic development and food security,” President Barrow emphasised.



French Ambassador Pays Courtesy Call on President Barrow

France was the first foreign country outside the ECOWAS to receive President Barrow in its territory in 2017. Since then, the relationship has grown stronger. In an audience with the French Ambassador to The Gambia, Philippe Lalliot, on Monday, 20th March, at the Statehouse in Banjul, The President reiterated his government's commitment to development, prioritising national security through training, infrastructural development, and logistics to promote political stability in a safe, stable, and peaceful environment as part of its reforms.

Discussing other sectors, President Barrow called for partner intervention with financial and technological support to transform agriculture

He commended the ECOWAS Commissioner for prioritising agriculture, school feeding and working with the youth, adding,



“We cannot continue blaming colonialism; it is time to be innovative and do things for ourselves.”



into a business enterprise, stating that the government is already supporting the sector, especially land rehabilitation.



“Agriculture can change people's lives, create job opportunities, and help address migration.”



He cited health and energy as other important priorities of his government.

Additionally, President Barrow acclaimed the friendly, peaceful, stable, and legal environment for doing business in The Gambia and urged French investors to explore the positive climate that serves beyond the Gambian market.



Collective responsibility to negotiate peace

He called for dialogue and diplomacy to thrive on bilateral and other global geopolitical issues, stating that “the social and economic consequences of war are not helping either side, and I call for us to take collective responsibility to negotiate peace.” Refrencing the Russia-Ukraine war.

Talking to the State House Press Corps, Ambassador Philippe Lalliot revealed that his visit was to sign three agreements in higher education, water access and management, and €3 million in budget support to reduce the fiscal deficit and respond to the 2022 floods disaster.

As a member of the Francophonie organisation, the bilateral ties would be further solidified with cooperation in other areas such as agriculture, food security, environment, health, education and public finance management.



French Ambassador

The Gambia-German Relations Heightens

The escalation of the Gambia-German diplomatic ties has led to opening of an embassy in Banjul. In May, the Minister of State of the Federal Republic of Germany, Ms Katja Keul, came to the

State House in Banjul to further strengthen the commitment to the relationship.

In 2020, German Ambassador to The Gambia, Stephen Roken, pledged that Germany would elevate its diplomatic presence in The Gambia higher than a Liaison Officer.



Germany would continue its diplomatic engagement with The Gambia to intensify political, economic, and cultural relations between the two countries.

The German Minister was updated on the transitional justice and the Security Sector Reform, victims' support and reparations to promote reconciliation alongside other processes of the transitional Justice programme.



German Ambassador to The Gambia

Civil Defence Organisation Calls on the President

A delegation from the International Civil Defence Organisation – ICDO led by Director Mariatou Yap met President Adama Barrow to discuss the country's recruitment as a member earlier in January 2023.

President Barrow underscored the importance of membership to organisations that support their members with capacity and logistics, adding that capacity building in disaster management is crucial, recalling the challenges the country had to deal with during the unfortunate disasters due

to windstorms and floods. The unpredictability of climate change makes it necessary to develop capacity.

“When a disaster occurs, people look to the government for food, shelter, and protection. the importance of having the capacity and logistics to do so.” The President said

as he looked forward to The Gambia becoming the 61st member of the International Civil Defence Organisation established after World War 1- (WWI). He advised the relevant stakeholders to pursue legal advice and the possibility of The Gambia becoming a member.



The organisation focuses on providing technical and humanitarian support to members, mainly in Africa, through training and capacity building, data collection and sharing at the regional level, hence increasing its membership.

President Barrow Congratulates Nigeria, Calls for Prioritising of Agric-Business

African cooperation and strong political commitment are essential in reinvigorating the potential of our countries through diplomacy. As the Federal Republic of Nigeria concluded its Presidential elections, President Adama Barrow congratulated H.E Muhamadu Buhari, his government and the people of Nigeria for a successful and peaceful election and a demonstration of leadership by example for ECOWAS. The President extended the message through the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, His Excellency Zubairu Dada, who was in The Gambia on a two-day visit.

The brotherly relations with the Federal Republic of Nigeria provide great opportunities through which The Gambia enjoys technical support in various sectors. President Barrow recounted the valuable role of Nigeria in The Gambia's transition since 2017 and called for continued support as the country moves to the next phase of implementing its reform programme.



UNICEF Country Representative Leaves ‘Back to School Legacy’

UNICEF is one of the long-standing partners in protecting and promoting children’s rights in The Gambia. Outgoing UNICEF Representative Mr Gordon Jonathan Lewis left a legacy in the country by launching a Back to School programme, targeting around sixty-six thousand school-aged children who dropped out of school.

President Barrow, on 7th June, bid farewell to Mr Gordon Jonathan Lewis, who was at the presidency for a farewell meeting.

During the meeting, President Adama Barrow highlighted his government’s work with partners to build the capacity of teachers and provide an enabling environment for all children to access quality education.

He added that on health promotion, there are plans to construct public restrooms at strategic places along the highways in rural areas to eliminate open-air defecation and promote general hygiene. He encouraged advocacy and public awareness campaigns towards attitude change.

Under President Barrow’s leadership, The Gambia Government realised great achievements in school infrastructure to make education accessible and immunise children. Mr Gordon commended these efforts and encouraged the government to invest in improving quality education and endeavour to regain its position among the countries that attained the region’s highest level of childhood immunisation.

The Outgoing UNICEF Rep is leaving The Gambia with one of his legacies being the recently launched “Back to School” programme.



UNICEF rep



President Barrow Attends Tinubu's Inauguration

President Adama Barrow, Monday 29th May, attended the swearing-in ceremony of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu at the Eagle Square in Abuja, Nigeria.

President Barrow and a host of other world leaders witnessed a democratic transition of power, making it the 5th since 1999. President Bola Ahmed called for unity and concerted efforts to develop Nigeria in his inaugural speech. He said the peaceful transfer of power is now Nigeria's political tradition.

“The handover symbolises our trust in God, our enduring faith in representative governance and our belief in our ability to

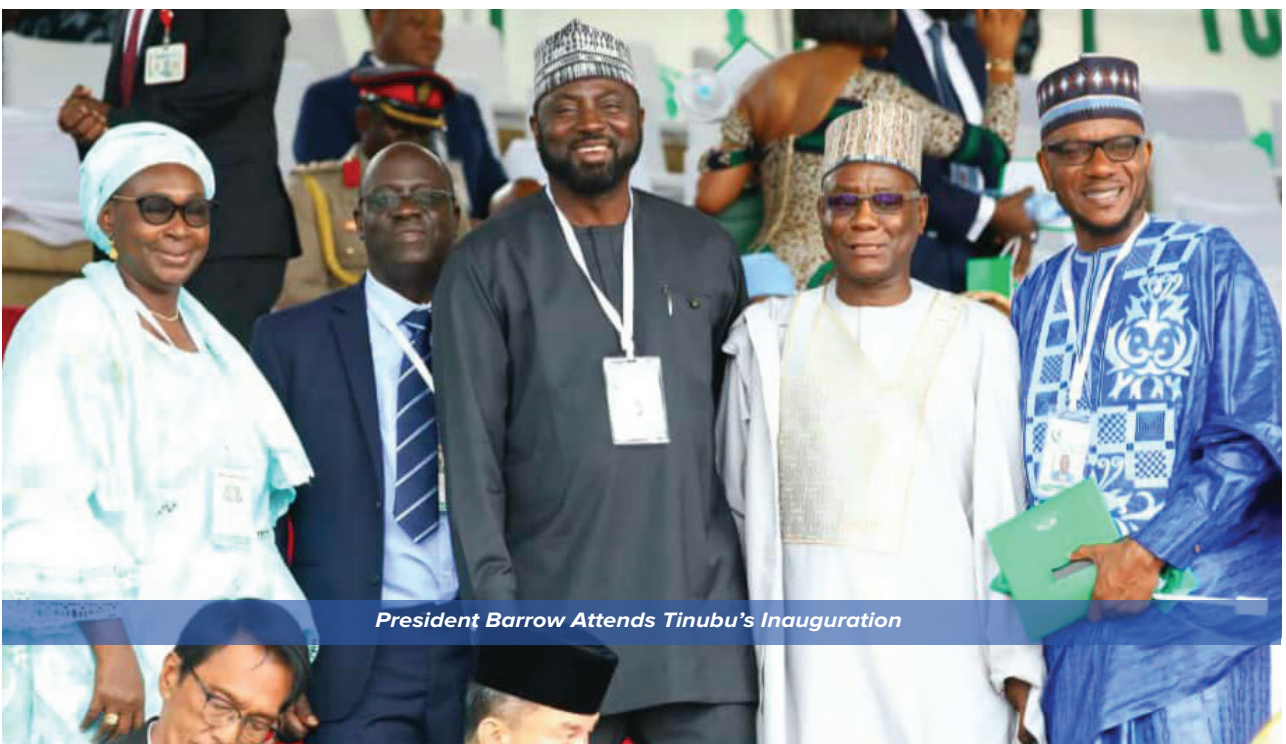
reshape this nation into a society it was always meant to be.”

The event was characterised by a display of remarkable national symbols and cultures to celebrate sovereignty and democracy, but also what binds the country.

Despite its diversity in people, Nigeria continues to promote democracy beyond its borders and stands tall with countries whose democracy is threatened.

It's significant to highlight the strides the Federal Republic has made in its efforts to entrench democracy under the leadership of former President Muhammadu Buhari.

In The Gambia, President Buhari played a significant role in ensuring that democracy prevails and that the people's will was respected following President Barrow's election in 2016.



President Barrow Attends Tinubu's Inauguration

Building on Bilateral Relations with Cote d'Ivoire

President Barrow's two-day official visit to the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire in April culminated in signing of three agreements between the two countries to provide a general cooperation framework, an air service agreement to promote the development of air travel between the two countries. The agreement will allow Air Cote D'Ivoire, the national carrier, to expand services to The Gambia and an agreement to promote energy cooperation, under which the two countries agreed to cooperate in the trade of all forms of energy and petroleum.



Signing Ceremonies And Other Pictorial Of The Visit



INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

North Bank Roads Project: A Boost for Economic Activities

In November of 2021, President Adama Barrow laid the foundation for the North Bank Roads project, Sabach Sanjal Loop, in a ground-breaking ceremony attended by thousands across the region and beyond. The people were delighted to witness the long-awaited North Bank Roads Project.

Three years later, the President inaugurated the project in a colourful ceremony at Sara Kunda, describing it as a great day for the communities in the area.

The new fifty-four (54) kilometres, nine-metre-wide double-sealed carriageway,

connecting the trunk road to the riverside settlements of the region, would significantly promote trade activities and foster regional connectivity. He added that the road is a notable symbol of development that would positively impact thousands of lives, creating access to health care and education while enhancing the free movement of people, goods, and other services.

It is a lasting testimony of the unwavering commitment to upgrading the North Bank Trunk Road to a multi-purpose standard carriageway.

On behalf of The Government and People of The Gambia, President Barrow expressed gratitude to all for the noble efforts to achieve the infrastructural development component of our National Development Plan (NDP).



Jambur Solar Plant: Increasing Access to Electricity

As part of The Gambia Electricity Restoration and Modernisation Project, President Adama Barrow, on 4th February, laid the foundation for the construction of a 23 Mega Watts Solar Plant and an eight (8) Mega Watt-Battery Energy Storage System, with three (3) years of operations and maintenance.

Co-financed by the World Bank and the European Investment Bank, the project is pegged at an estimated budget of US\$27 million (twenty-seven million United States dollars) to provide additional reliable, affordable, sustainable, and green energy generation capacity to meet the increasing energy needs of the Gambian people.

Drawn from the National Strategic Roadmap, 2021-2024, the Solar project is aimed at attaining universal energy access by 2025 and transforming The Gambia Electricity Sub-sector so that Gambians can benefit from reliable and affordable electricity, leading to NAWEC becoming an efficient, financially sustainable power utility, as approved by Cabinet in November 2021.



The strategic roadmap serves as the development blueprint for the electricity sub-sector in the short and medium term. Renewable energy is highly placed on its order of priority.

The project is expected to inject clean energy into the electricity grid, thus contributing to the achievement of The Gambia's Climate Change Targets of Nationally Determined Contributions, as well as diversify electricity generation sources, reducing the country's over-dependence on imported petroleum products.



Brikama Market Inauguration

In March 2023, the people of Brikama and, by extension, the West Coast Region were presented with the newly constructed Brikama market amidst fanfare and jubilation, replacing the old one engulfed by an inferno in late 2022.

In his inaugural statement, President Barrow said the damage was heart-breaking, especially for the new businesses that had been established.



The new market, which comprised 88 stores and other facilities, provides Gambians with basic services that will enable them to live dignified lives while revitalising the economy by improving businesses and business centres similar to other parts of the country, as recounted by the President.



“Upon receiving the news, my government promised to rebuild the whole market. It is most gratifying that, despite all the global economic crises, the government was able to fully fund the first phase of the Market Project at an estimated cost of thirty-eight and a half million Dalasi (GMD38.5 million),” he noted.



“We have built markets in Farafenni, Soma, Basse, and Latri-kunda. These centres facilitate trade and commerce, enhancing business income creation within business-friendly environments.”



Brikama Market inauguration



President Barrow Inaugurates Laminkoto Power Plant

Providing electricity to communities to improve lives and livelihoods has always been a priority for the Barrow administration. The inauguration of the 230kv electricity line from Laminkoto to Diabugu Batapa on 7th May would extend electricity to 46 communities in the Sami and Sandu districts. Providing rural electrification is a well-deserved achievement for the people of Central and Upper River Regions who strongly need such.

It is an eight-million U.S. Dollar (US\$ 8

million) medium voltage 30 K.V. line network initiative fully loaded with distribution facilities. The package includes electricity connection meters for two thousand five hundred and twenty (2,520) beneficiaries. Among them will be household, institutional, and commercial end-users or customers.

Stating that the project has come to transform the communities, President Barrow, with optimism, said the electricity supply would enable Communities to process and add value to their agricultural product, facilitate access to quality social services and enhance better living conditions.

The project is part of the Barrow government's commitment to provide universal access to electricity to all by 2025.



Laminkoto Power Plant Inauguration

Inauguration of 70 New Buses: Boost for Public Transport

In a moderate but historic ceremony at McCarthy Square in Banjul, President Adama Barrow inaugurated seventy (70) new buses, fifty-nine (59) of which would be utilised for public transport and the remaining eleven (11) for school transportation.

The commissioning of the buses is a significant milestone in the country's road communication, and the President elaborated on it, *"This development is not accidental. It is a timely strategic initiative designed to accompany the infrastructural upgrading of our national road network*

through improving the existing roads and constructing new ones, particularly in areas where the need is greatest."

The buses would ease mobility challenges and create employment for many people. The government's partnership with GTSC and TK EXPORT was crucial, and President Barrow paid homage to the late VP Badara Alieu Joof for championing the negotiation of the vehicles on behalf of the Gambia government.

Following the ceremony, the President, accompanied by his cabinet, senior government officials and some public members, embarked on a maiden ride on the buses around the Kombos and spontaneously welcomed by communities expecting the bus services.



YOUTHS AND SPORTS

President Barrow Presents D5 Million to U20 Team

The Gambia's youthful population presents the country with a solid human resource base to utilise fully. In the area of Sports, there has been a steady and brilliant performance in different sports.

The performance of the U20 National team heightened the excitement of the nation, and President Barrow, a football fan himself, could not but show his excitement at the brilliant performance at the U20 AFCON in Egypt.

Upon their return to The Gambia, the President received the U20 national team and GFF officials and presented a cheque for five million Dalasis as a token of appreciation. He commended the team for putting up respectable performances in all the games while expressing admiration for the head coach Abdoulie Bojang whom he

recalled as a tactful player in his active years as a footballer. He encouraged the team to emulate his steadfastness, discipline and foresight.

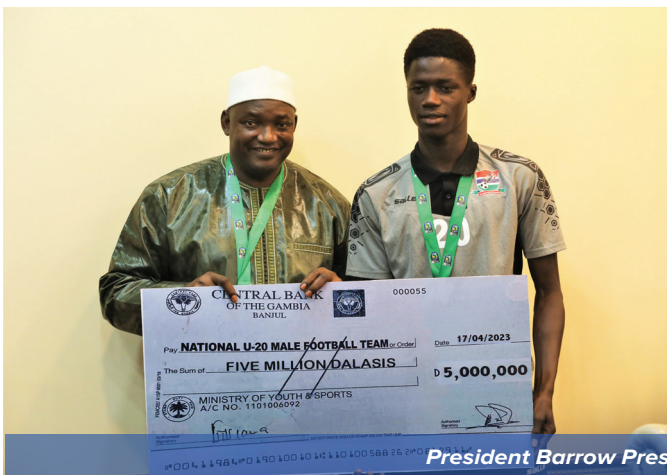
Touching on the team's potential, President Barrow urged the GFF officials to see football as a lucrative venture, adding that football promotes unity and development.



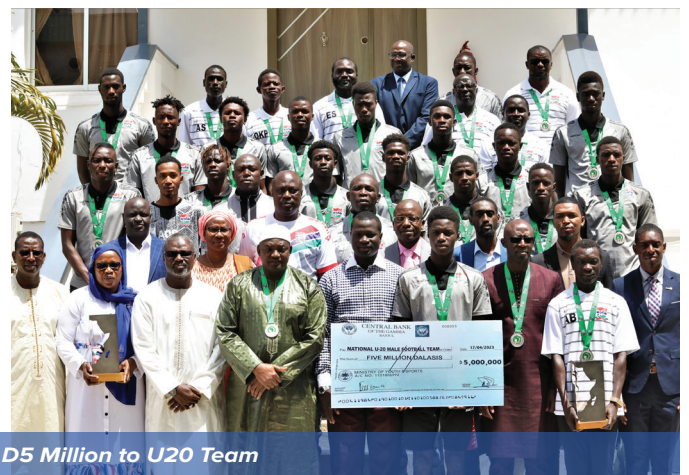
"You made us proud, and as a government, we will do anything possible to support you," said the President cheerfully.



The Minister of Youths and Sports, Hon. Bakary Badjie, said the government remains committed to supporting all sporting activities in the country, especially football. He referenced collaborating with the GFF in partially funding the AFCON as a testament to the government's willingness, also hailed by the officials of the GFF.



President Barrow Presents D5 Million to U20 Team



PEACE AND SECURITY

Peace and Security Tops Agenda in April

President Adama Barrow reiterated his government's priority in promoting peace and food security in maintaining national security during a series of engagements held at the State House on 4th April 2023.

Youth leading peacebuilding

The President emphasised that it is through peace and stability that there can be development during an audience with Peace Network. He further stated that to fight poverty; there must be reorientation through advocacy and education for citizens to engage in agriculture as a business venture and ensure food security. He said rice production and value addition to local products would make investments in the agriculture sector worthwhile.

He raised concern that non-Gambians dominate most skilled areas and called for partners to invest in skills development for the youths. President Barrow highlighted the potential of investment in agriculture to realise food security and health tourism, as The Gambia's tourism sector contributes about 20% to the GDP.

SOS Children transiting to communities

Receiving the SOS Village Management team led by its new National Director, Jean Pierre Kouamin, President Barrow thanked SOS 'for putting a smile on the faces of many Gambians.' He pledged his government's support for SOS children transiting into

the Community by having the right policy environment to guarantee their national identity.

Young people taking the lead in peace advocacy amid social media trouting hate speech, misinformation, and fake news gives hope to the nation. It was welcoming that the President held an audience with members of Peace Network, a national network of professionals, researchers and consultants on peace and international security. Professor Momodou Mustapha Fanneh founded the network and mentored young people to take the lead under its CEO, Alasana Jallow. Their discussion with the Head of State centred on national security concerns that could threaten peace and development.

The Barrow government asserts efforts to curb crimes and fight food insecurity by prioritising agriculture to end poverty. To maintain peace, the President stressed on leadership by example to maintain peace and stability,

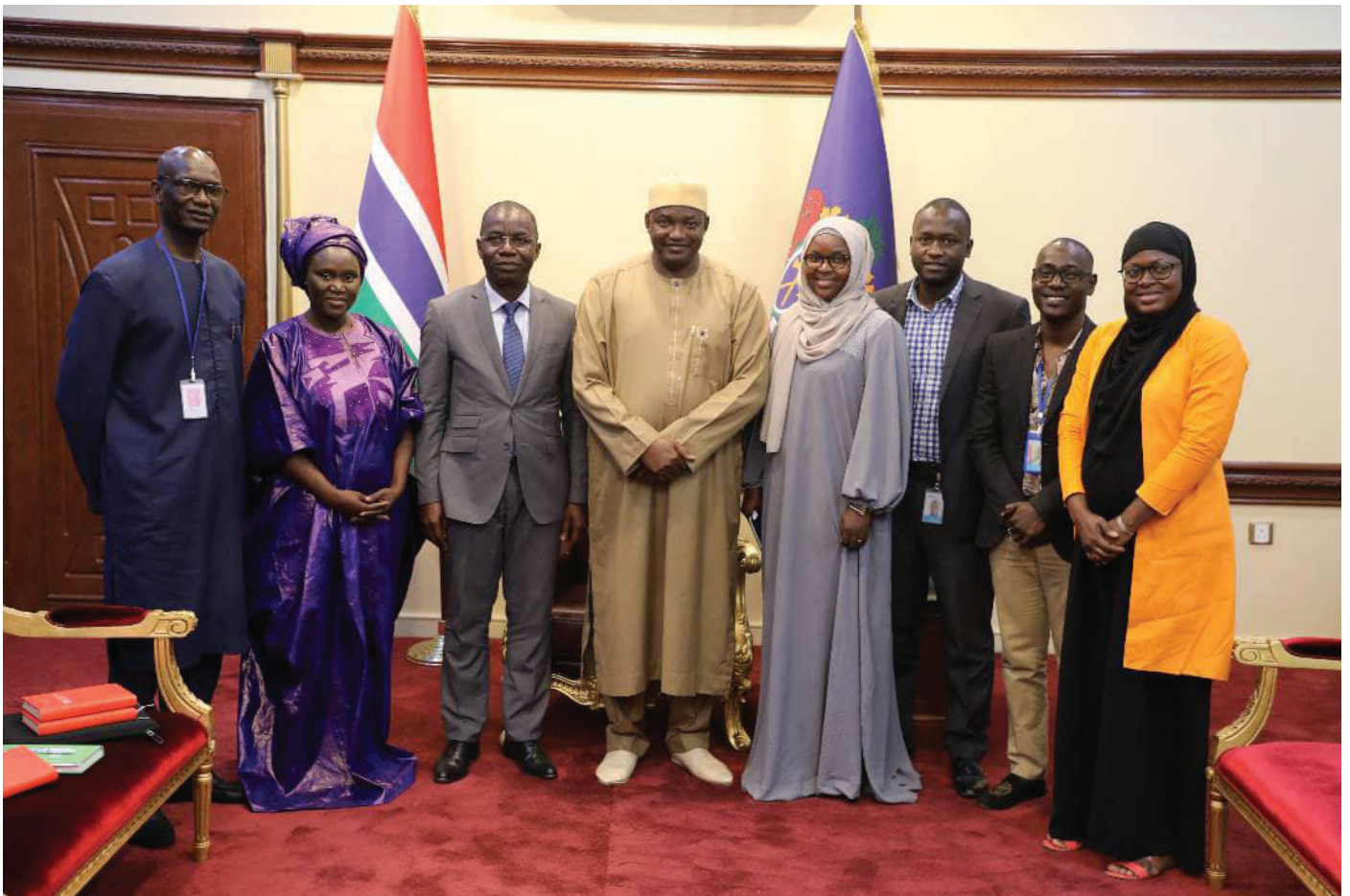


"I have to lead by example by being tolerant and allowing communication with citizens, considering our history of 22 years of dictatorship."



The government is fighting all forms of crimes, and the statistic received at the time indicated the Police recorded only thirty-five reported crimes countrywide. While encouraging, the government should not be complacent and should continue working for a peaceful environment.





President Barrow discusses peace and security with youths



WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT CENTRAL TO THE GOVERNMENT'S AGENDA

High-level advocacy for women's empowerment brought representatives of the Gambia Chapter of the African Women's Leaders Network (AWLN) to the State House in Banjul. The Chapter called on President Barrow to thank him for his support of the successful launch of their network and to welcome him to the AWLN Circle of Champions.



The President commended the Women leaders and reiterated his government's commitment to women's empowerment. He cited examples such as having a woman, Salimatou Touray, as the current Secretary General position as strategic in his government to influence decisions for gender sensitivity. He added that the role of The Ministry of Gender, Women and Social Welfare is a testament to that commitment.

Initiatives towards women's empowerment include the economic transformation of Gambian Women, providing opportunities for women to access the Women Enterprise Fund (WEF) with 5% interest. The Gender Ministry is also partnering with the Central Bank of The Gambia to support more women with loans through the WEF.

While acknowledging the calibre of women in the AWLN network leading to its successful

launching, the President pledged to support the AWLN agenda on national and global stages and encouraged more women, especially the elite, to participate in politics at all levels to increase their involvement in critical political decisions making processes.

The A.U. Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security and the AWLN Co-Convener H.E Mme. Bineta Diop said the network is under the leadership of H.E Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, with support from key figures and political leaders, with the U.N. technical support. She noted that the AWLN is in solidarity for economic transformation and will meet grassroots leaders to bring them on board.

AWLN is a movement of women created to enhance the leadership role of African women in the transformation of the continent in line with the aspirations of Africa's Agenda 2063 and the United Nations 2030 Agenda. The Gambia national chapter was launched on 16th May 2023.



AWLN Delegation:

Ms Muna Jallow, AWLN Gambia National Coordinator and Chairperson, former Vice Presidents, Their Excellencies, Dr Isatou Touray, AWLN Gambia Co-Chairperson,



and Fatoumatta Tambajang, Senior Adviser, Honourable Minister Fatou Kinteh, H.E Jainaba Jagne, Head of Mission, Permanent Representative to the A.U. and UNECA, Embassy of the Republic of The Gambia, H.E Fatou Bensouda High Commissioner of The Gambia to U.K., H.E Qwabe Bongiwe, Ambassador of South The Gambia and Senegal, H.E Fatima Kyari Mohammed, Rep of A.U. to the U.N., Ms Seraphine Wakana, U.N.

Gambia Resident Coordinator, Ms Aissata De, UNDP Resident Rep, Mrs Elena Ruiz Abril, UN Women Rep, Ms Sarata Conateh, AWLN Gambia SC member, Dr, Marema Toure, representation AWLN Senegal, Fatou Sombie, UN Women, Jane-Ange Musekura, UN Women, Terrence Langenhoven, Tiffany Mostert, Ms Miatta L. French, Gambia Head of ECOWAS Mission.



OFL Advocates in Support of Government's Development Agenda

The Office of the First Lady under the Presidency supports the government's development agenda through advocacy nationally and internationally. Her Excellency, Fatoumatta Bah-Barrow, during this reporting period, continued her advocacy for women's and children's health and wellbeing.

Below are a series of her engagements partnering with international organisations and institutions on such concerns.

Nine African First Ladies attended the high-level Summit, **1st Asia Pacific Africa Women's Economic Exchange Summit 2022**, on the theme: **"To Cope with Food Crises for the Future of Children"**. Her Excellency, First Lady Fatoumatta Bah-Barrow, and a high-powered delegation from the Ministry of Agriculture were

among the participants in Tokyo, Japan. The objective of the Summit, supported by the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, was to secure food self-sufficiency for the future of children living in Asia, the Pacific and African Regions.

Due to the rise in natural disasters like drought, storm and flood damage, and earthquakes brought on by climate change, the delegates discussed and developed a cooperation system for resource mobilisation.



Her Excellency, the First Lady Madam Fatoumatta Bah-Barrow, was a Keynote Speaker at the Women United Foundation Event in Honoring Iconic First Ladies of

Africa, at the world-renowned Smithsonian Museum of African Art in Washington DC, on 12th December 2022. The theme for the event was: **Cultural Diplomacy Reveals the Soul of a Nation.**





In her keynote address, Her Excellency First Lady Fatoumatta Bah-Barrow called on her counterparts and partners to intensify the advocacy for girls' education. She said girls should be encouraged to enter Sciences, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics – STEM, arguing “that is where the future lies”.

The President of the Central African Republic, Faustin-Archange Touadéra, Sierra Leone President, H.E Julius Maada-Bio and six other African First Ladies honoured the event.

At the official invitation of Warwick University, Her Excellency First Lady Fatoumatta Bah-Barrow attended the Warwick Africa Summit in Coventry. Accompanied by the Honourable Professor Pierre Gomez, Minister for Higher Education Research, Science and Technology and At the official invitation of Warwick University, Her Excellency First Lady Fatoumatta Bah-Barrow attended the Warwick Africa Summit in Coventry. Accompanied by the Honourable Professor



Pierre Gomez, Minister for Higher Education Research, Science and Technology and delegation, the First Lady was received by The Gambia High Commissioner and her staff at Heathrow Airport.

During her visit, Madam Bah-Barrow also met the Warwick Africa Summit President Mariam Dunseath and the Summit organising committee.

On a side engagement, Her Excellency met with Goldsmith University Professor Lauren Stewart, who recognised Madam Bah-Barrow as a Patron and Ambassador for their CHIME project in The Gambia. The project is a research-based initiative examining women's mental health associated with miscarriages and postnatal depression. Using music in therapy is a practice Gambians have used for many years. The women mostly used music and



comedy entertainment to overcome their sorrow – due to stillbirth, neonatal, and under-fives are locally called *Kanyelengho* in the Mandinka language.

It is, therefore, no surprise that the First Lady accepted to patronise such a cause. She supports any endeavour promoting the health and well-being of women and children. Madam Bah-Barrow pledged to work closely with academic institutions in the United Kingdom to promote research and knowledge development regarding women's and children's health.



In her advocacy engagement, Her Excellency First Lady Fatoumatta Bah-Barrow led a high-level delegation to the sixty-seventh session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) from 6 to 17th March 2023 at the United Nations in New York, USA.

Representatives of Member States, U.N. entities, and ECOSOC-accredited non-governmental organisations (NGOs) from all regions of the World converged to contribute to the session on the following themes:

- ▶ Priority theme: Innovation, technological change, and education in the digital age for achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls.
- ▶ Review theme: Challenges and opportunities in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls



The Gambian delegation, including Honourable Ministers of Gender Children and Social Welfare, Fatou Kinteh, Basic Education, Claudiana Cole, and Communications and Digital Economy, Ousman A. Bah, together with their Permanent Secretaries, women representatives from the Civil Society and NGOs, participated in sessions and side events. Other delegation members at the 67th session of the CSW in New York included the Governors of the West Coast and Upper River Regions.



On the sidelines of the 67th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women at the U.N. Headquarters in New York, Her Excellency First Lady Fatoumata Bah-Barrow and her counterpart, Her Excellency Clar Marie Weah, First Lady of Liberia, in partnership with the World Health Organization, made an advocacy statement on the topic: ***Gender Equality and Rights in the Prevention and Control of Non-Communicable Diseases-NCDS: The Role of Digital Health.***

The event brought together experts, advocates and member states to raise consciousness on preventing and controlling NCDs through digital health programmes, research, innovation, data, and digital solutions.

Discussions centred on ways to engage women and girls meaningfully to co-create spaces for overcoming barriers, sharing experiences, and solidarity while considering the digital divide's impact on women and men and their understanding of NCDs.

It also discussed the role digital health could

play in preventing and controlling NCDs using a gender equity and rights approach, spotlighting grassroots innovations that have identified precise needs and gaps in local communities while promoting equitable, inclusive and sustainable solutions for addressing NCDs among women and girls.

The event equally aimed at inspiring and supporting the development of initiatives to accelerate National NCDS responses and reduce premature NCD-related mortality through digital health programmes.

The Permanent Mission of The Gambia and Liberia to the U.N. and WHO organised the event, supported by the Organisation of African First Ladies for Development - OAFILD, Spouses of Caribbean Community and Common Market - CARICOM Leaders Action Network -SCLAN, and African Leaders Malaria Alliance -ALMA.



“Entrepreneurship significantly contributes to poverty reduction, generates revenue and employment and promotes domestic investment,” said Her Excellency First Lady Fatoumatta Bah-Barrow at an event marking Women’s Day, where she handed over cheques to various women’s groups from the Kanifing Municipality – K.M. A total of 51 Women’s Groups from the Municipality benefited to the tune of six million, nine hundred and fifty thousand Dalasi (D6,950,000.00) from the Government’s Women Enterprise Fund.

In her keynote address at the ceremony, the First Lady reminded her audience that in The Gambia, entrepreneurship promotes growth and boosts the country’s gross domestic product (GDP). Furthermore, the success and growth of any nation and society depend heavily on the entrepreneur as an engine of economic growth and development. It is argued that globally women entrepreneurs play a critical role in national growth and development.

In The Gambia, women constitute the majority of the population. Yet, challenges in accessing soft loans that require collateral and high levied interest create obstacles for them and further subject them to poverty. Realising these challenges, the Women Enterprise Fund charges only five per cent interest and a grace period of six months to support women’s enterprises.



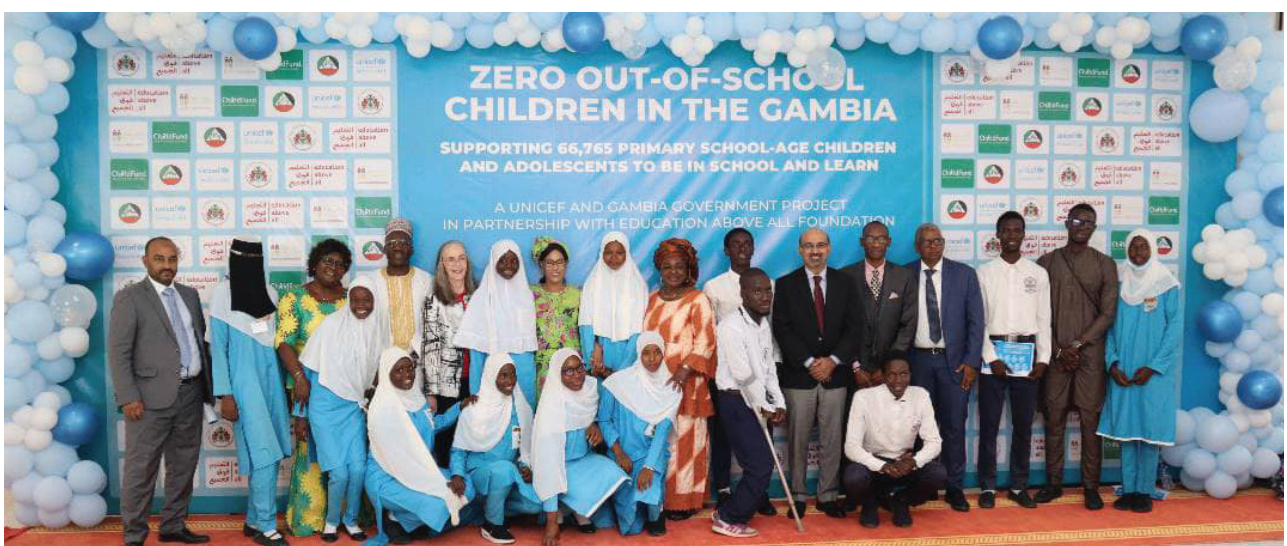
First Lady Bah-Barrow said, “All this is achieved due to the support and leadership of His Excellency Adama Barrow, the President of the Republic. I am confident that the Government of The Gambia will continue to support women and women’s empowerment to ensure they realise their fullest potential.”



In her bid to promote education, the First Lady, Fatoumatta Bah-Barrow, received a delegation from Qatar-based Education Above All Foundation, UNICEF, Child Fund and EFANET led by the Minister of Basic and Secondary Education, Honourable Claudiana Cole and the Executive Director of Educate A Child, Mary Pigozzi at State House in Banjul. *Educate A Child* is a programme of the Education Above All Foundation.



The First Lady was updated on launching the *Zero Out of School Children in The Gambia* project, which she initiated following her visit to the State of Qatar. She later launched the project at the SDKJ International Conference Centre ceremony.



The Gambia is known for religious tolerance and peaceful co-existence between Muslims and Christians. During a charitable event to recognise the Holy Month of Lent, H.E, First Lady Fatoumatta Bah-Barrow presented sugar, rice and gallons of Vegetable Oil to the Christian Council for onward distribution to needy members of the Christian Community. The First Lady said it was her social responsibility as a mother of the nation to support the Christian community during the holy month of Lent.

Reverend Father Sonko, receiving the assistance, thanked the First Lady for her generosity and support to his community during a holy period for Christians.

In her social engagements, the Gambian, the First Lady Fatoumatta Bah-Barrow, graced the Ordination of Reverend Father Louis Mendy and Reverend Father Sawyer, organised by the Diocese of Banjul, at the Presentations Nursery School, Brikama Jamisa, West Coast Region.

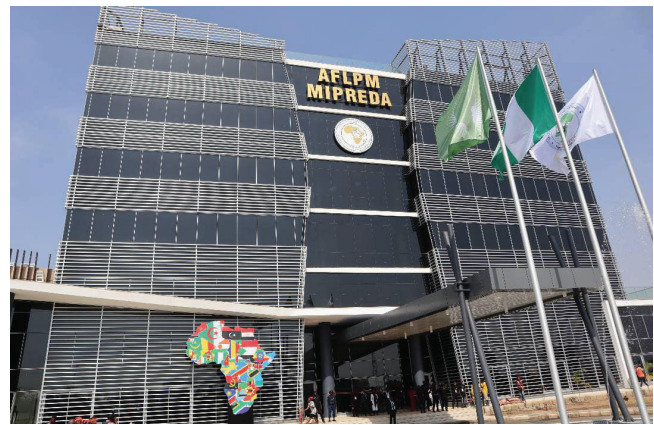


Her Excellency Fatoumatta Bah-Barrow joined her counterparts in Abuja, Nigeria, to commission the African First Ladies Peace Mission Headquarters by Her Excellency Mrs Aisha Buhari, First Lady of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and President of African First Ladies Peace Mission (AFLPM).





“My special thanks and appreciation to Her Excellency First Lady Aisha Buhari for supporting some African First Ladies to attend the commissioning of the African First Ladies Peace Mission (AFLPM) Headquarters in Abuja, Nigeria. The gesture shows the cordial relationship among all the African First Ladies and our resolve to work together to achieve Africa we want.”

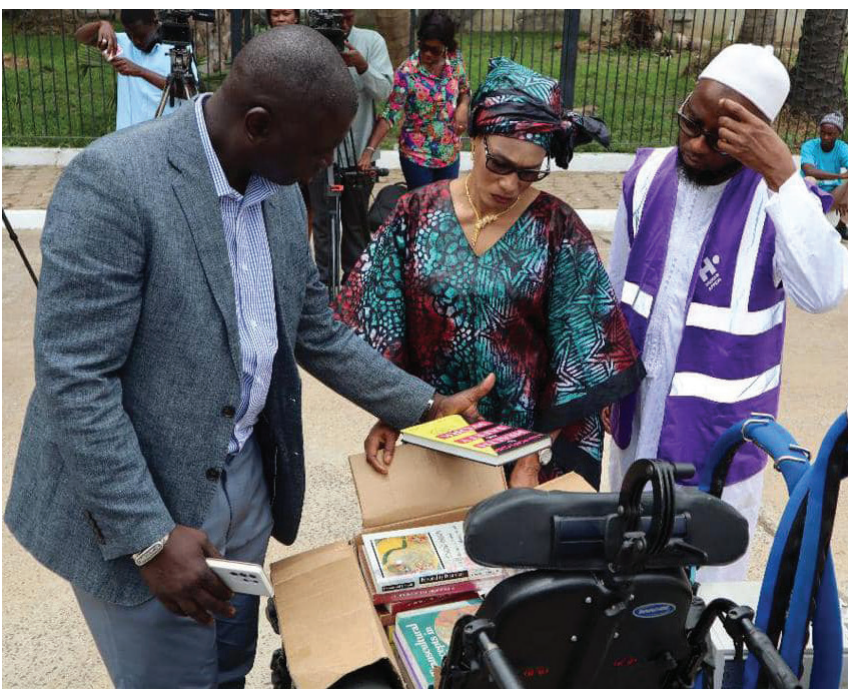


Partnering with philanthropists to enhance access to medical items, Her Excellency First Lady Fatoumatta Bah-Barrow, through her Foundation FABB at the end of May 2023, received two Forty-Foot containers of assorted medical equipment and surgical supplies worth half a million Euros (€500,000) equivalent to thirty-two million Gambian Dalasis – (D32M) from Human Appeal Ireland, presented by Imam Ebou Ndure at State House.

Mr Ebou Ndure said Human Appeal is happy to donate the medical items to Gambian Hospitals through FABB in recognition of the First Lady’s commitment to promoting women and pledged to continue working with FABB to increase support in the health sector.

In receiving the medical, Board Member of FABB Foundation, Musa Ceesay, thanked Mr Ndure and his charity organisation for supporting the health sector. He assured him that the medical items would be distributed to the various hospitals nationwide.





Her Excellency Fatoumatta Bah-Barrow earlier received the Chinese Ambassador to the Gambia, Mr Liu Jin, who briefed her on the level of preparedness on the launching of the joined collaboration between the First Lady of the People's Republic of China, Her Excellency Peng Liyuan and the African First Ladies' Organisation, (OAFLAD).

The project is to collaborate with the African First Ladies to improve the health care of vulnerable children, especially orphans. It will entail the Chinese medical team travelling to Africa to give orphans free medical treatment.

H.E Madam Bah-Barrow and the Chinese Ambassador Launched the Project "Warm Children Heart: A China – Africa Joint Action Children Caring Initiative, which was part of the Commemoration of International Children's Day, held at the Bakoteh Children's Shelter.

Her Excellency and the Chinese Ambassador would spare-head the distribution of gifts to the vulnerable and children with special needs to Warm their Hearts as the programme Theme. The Children would also receive free medical care for orphans from a team of Chinese doctors.

In Her remarks, her Excellency First Lady Fatoumatta Bah-Barrow expressed pleasure to be part of what she described as a "noble initiative showing love for the children to celebrate their uniqueness, promote their wellbeing and appreciate them whenever they may be."

She said children are often used, exploited and manipulated in indecent activities, including trafficking, sexual exploitation, abuse, labour and armed conflict, often leading to a lack of education, malnutrition, diseases and immoral ways of life.



She stressed that "It is important to recognise that children also have dignity, which needs to be safeguarded and restored by all means, which is why activities like this need to be reinforced to advocate and highlight the importance of children all over, the need for their protection and rights including access to education and proper healthcare."





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