

**Statement by H.E. Adama Barrow,
President of The Republic of The Gambia, at
the Launch of the Book “The Village Boy
Who Would Be President” By FyeN
Publishers**

Venue: State House, Banjul

Date: 21st February 2024

Esteemed Guests,

The Authors and Publishers,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Wonderful Children Present,

Members of the Media Fraternity,

It is truly a humbling and joyous moment for me to be present at the launch of this very special children's book that recounts the story of my childhood titled “**The Village Boy Who Would Become President: The Story of Adama Barrow.**”

As a child, I never imagined that my humble life would become the subject of a book, especially one designed to inspire and entertain young minds.

This book, therefore, presents a testament to the power of dreams and the belief that everything is possible in life.

I hope that, as you read about my childhood adventures, you will see a reflection of your own dreams and aspirations that would encourage you to pursue them with conviction and strong determination.

Childhood is a precious time when our imaginations know no bounds, so we dream freely without limits. As the book shows, it is a time of discovery, learning, and growth, and the experiences we gather during those tender years contribute to shaping us into the individuals we become as adults.

As a result, I am really thankful for the opportunities and challenges that shaped my childhood and led me to the path of leadership.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Boys and Girls,

People seek validation, regardless of who we are or where we come from; hence, I am always reminded of the narratives surrounding my Presidency in The Gambia.

Conscious of this, the Dream Big, African Child Series with FyeN gave me the great opportunity to tell my story, in my own way, and with my voice to dispel rumours and misinformation.

My goal is simply to inspire the younger generation, who will grow to become leaders and prominent global citizens.

I believe that, while reading, the book will satisfy your curiosity about my humble beginnings and take you on a journey through my village life in Mankamang Kunda, my introduction to formal education, community service, and the spark that led to my political ambitions.

Importantly, this book is not just about me. It is also about resilience, friendship, and the pursuit of knowledge. It celebrates the values that guided me through life, which, I assume, will echo in your minds. It is thus a book that shares the message that *every child can positively impact the world*.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Students,

Although telling stories holds great significance in every culture and community, Africans have a long tradition of storytelling. Knowledge about the past is vital for understanding and appreciating our identity and status in local, regional, and global communities.

We all have stories to tell, stories of our leaders, heroes, and men and women who sacrificed their lives for the prosperity of this country and humanity. We need to share such stories with our children, in the schools, in conferences, debates, market places, and in religious gatherings to invoke pride and love for the nation in the younger generation.

Growing up, we all enjoyed “Lebon Lupain” and “NtalinNtalin, Ntaa-ling Ndeemaa.” We must realise, however, that storytelling is not merely for entertainment. It is similarly a means of preserving and transmitting knowledge from generation to generation. Having said this, we must accept that this increasingly digitalised world now preserves stories better in books, Kindle devices, and animated shows on iPads.

As the third President of The Gambia, my wish is that the book motivates and inspires Gambian children for generations to come, which means ensuring that sufficient copies are available and affordable across the country.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am deeply honoured and grateful to all those who made this book a reality, ranging from the talented authors and illustrators to the dedicated team behind its publication.

To those who inspired me to narrate my story, Anna, Manuela, and Ya Adam, the illustrators, Mariana and Musu, and the editor, Saul, I extend heartfelt thanks for bringing my childhood to life in such a beautiful and imaginative way.

Likewise, my profound appreciation and gratitude go to Lucy Fye, Dr. Cherno Omar Barry, and Mr. Yankuba Darboe for organising this event successfully.

My sincere appreciation is also due to everyone who contributed either to the publication of the book or the success of this book launch.

Equally, I deeply appreciate the kind gesture of those who pledged to buy copies in quantities and distribute them to the schools.

To the children in the audience, I say: Your dreams are worth pursuing, no matter how big or small they may seem. Never under-estimate the power of your imagination, the strength of your spirit, and the support of those who believe in you.

I pray that the book inspires you to dream big, explore the world with wonder, and embrace the values of kindness, perseverance, and compassion. My wish is that the adventures of my childhood awaken your curiosity and ambition and lead you to success.

Finally, I thank everyone present for gracing this occasion. Together, we can surely nurture the dreams of our children and empower them to shape a brighter future for themselves and for humankind.

With these remarks, I wish you happy reading of the book: **“The Village Boy Who Would Become President: The Story of Adama Barrow.”**

I thank you all for your kind attention.