State House
NEWSLETTER
14TH EDITION, AUGUST 2024



SMALL GAMBIA HOSTS BIG COUNTRIES



On the Path to Universal Electricity Access



The Gambia-Senegal Opt to Build Resilient Bilateral Relations



Delivering Education

State House NEWSLETTER

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The Presidential Newsletter of The Republic of The Gambia

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

It is gratifying that the Media and Communication unit is able to sustain the bi-annual publication of the State House Newsletter first published in July 2017. It is with dedication, commitment and the desire to reach our readers with the historic documentation of the President's engagements to promote his Government's policies and programmes as pledged to the citizenry.

OVERVIEW

The 14th edition of the State House Newsletter covers the engagements of the Head of State, His Excellency President Adama Barrow. The newsletter spells out the President's engagements with the international partners and his presence on the global stage.

In this edition, readers will come across topics under Governance and other priority areas, including agriculture, health, education, security sector, diplomacy and foreign policy by the State House Media and Communication Unit.

Under Governance, His Excellency President Adama Barrow chaired Delivery Forums and National Economic Council Meetings. Several Ministries briefed the Presidency about their past activities and action plans.

Under the Barrow administration, the energy sector witnessed the most significant development as the country enjoys the best solar radiation conditions in Africa, marking a new era of sustainable energy for The Gambia.

Agriculture is the key sector for investment to achieve long-term food security and reduce poverty levels, as stated in the Sustainable Development Goals. Realising these goals, the Barrow administration has been collaborating with key stakeholders for The Gambia to be food self-sufficient.

On health, His Excellency President Barrow called for collaboration between The Gambia and critical stakeholders in improving the health care system.

The Gambian leader also prioritises education as it impacts development. The Government acknowledge the importance of education as the driving force of poverty.

The Gambia is leading the way towards increased political and economic productivity that allows investment, trade, and entrepreneurship between The Gambia and other countries. In other diplomatic engagements, President Adama Barrow received Ambassadors and High Commissioners from various countries to deepen Gambia's bilateral ties.

PRESIDENTIAL FORUMS



NATIONAL ECONOMIC COUNCIL

The National Economic Council forum continues to update the Presidential Council on the state of the economy during its two sessions held in March and June 2024 respectively.

Permanent Secretary Strategic Policy and Delivery at the Ministry of Public Service, Alieu Loum presented the Report on the National Economic Council sessions of 2023 and stated

> *"30 resolutions were made in 2023 and 14 were resolved while 13 are ongoing and 3 unresolved resolutions ."*

The Economic Council is one of the main pillars that the President uses as an internal monitoring mechanism to have regular updates on the economic variables, while a new dashboard was launched to provide the President with real-time information on some of the key economic indicators.

President Adama Barrow acknowledged the updates from the key players in the economy. He gave guidance to policy issues of concern. Amongst them is the impact of foreign exchange which businesses need to import essential goods.

The Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs has a Tax Policy to guide the stakeholders including the Gambia Revenue Authority- GRA.

Digitalisation is contributing to the efficiency and effectiveness of financial management. This has been evident in the area of revenue collection. The Gambia Revenue Authority - GRA reported improvements in its Customs and Excise and Domestic tax collection.

The Government did not increase tax, instead, it broadened the tax base to include all those doing business. In May, GRA reported that it had doubled its collection due to the digitalisation of its systems and was on target as of the end of June 2024.

DIGITALISATION AT THE REVENUE AUTHORITY ENABLES:

- Tracking trucks to their destinations
- Single Window platform for efficient transactions

ONGOING GRA PROGRAMMES:

- Rental Tax Compliance System,
- VAT collection and other tax sources,
- Development of a Corporate Strategy.

The increased collection efficiency has been reflected in the **incomes realised from the Senegambia, Basse and Fatoto bridges**. Beyond the collections of revenues, the Accountant General Department continues to monitor budgets of Ministries, Department and Agencies in guiding the Executive in its expenditure and enhancing accountability.

The Trade Ministry reported on the stock level of food in the country, price variations and the expected shipments. In its bid to promote local trade, Wellingaraba Lumo Market in the Lower River Region had been constructed and it has a borehole and street lights. To increase special economic zones, **a master plan was being developed for the TransGambia Corridor** that would create an integrated system for more efficiency.

GIEPA IN PURSUIT OF INVESTMENT IN NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND ECONOMIC GROWTH:

- v Banked over 7000 hectares of land
- v Seven businesses on site to commence rice and vegetable productions.
- v Hosted an investment forum and a trade fair on the sideline of the OIC Summit in May this year.
- v Eighty-eight (88) exhibitors, mostly Small and Medium Enterprises took part in the OIC side event.
- v The Gambia is attracting investors in various fields including Production of Chicken feeds, Mortgage, Maize production, energy and digital economy.
- v Meanwhile, local businesses are investing in Agriculture, promoting the Government's vision of sustainable food security.
- v Investing in value addition has been an important factor for economic growth, thus efforts have been mounting and a market has been developed in Jenoi in the Lower River Region and a processing centre is on track.

In its endeavour to ensure accountable procedures are institutionalised, the Gambia Public Procurement Agency - **GPPA now has Procurement Regulations accessible to the public**. In June, all GPPA regulatory instruments have been updated to international standards and the procurement system has been digitalised. So far, sixty institutions are on the GPPA Digital Portal 2024.

Subsidising the price of fertilizer is part of the government strategy to empower farmers, together with favourable rain conditions yielded positive harvests. The Food Security, Processing and Marketing (formerly known as Gambia Groundnut Corporation- GGC) bought **about 40,000**

tonnes of groundnut for the 2023/2024 trade season.

The Agriculture Ministry is also taking advantage of a digital platform, Jokalanteh Platform to positively impact the marketing of local products. Meanwhile, livestock production has realised growth except for cattle which has dropped by a minus one percent point.

Another key player in the economy is the Tourism sector. **Tourist arrivals increased in both traditional and non-traditional destinations, and the Ministry is piloting new destinations.** To meet the demand for training, the Ministry is working on expanding the facilities at the Gambia Tourism and Hospitality Institute. It would also contribute to meeting the Government's target to create jobs for 150,000 youths.

In addition, The Gambia has been commended for ratifying and reporting on most of the UNESCO Conventions. Furthermore, there is consideration for a Tourism Satellite Account to report the performance of the tourism industry in the economy.

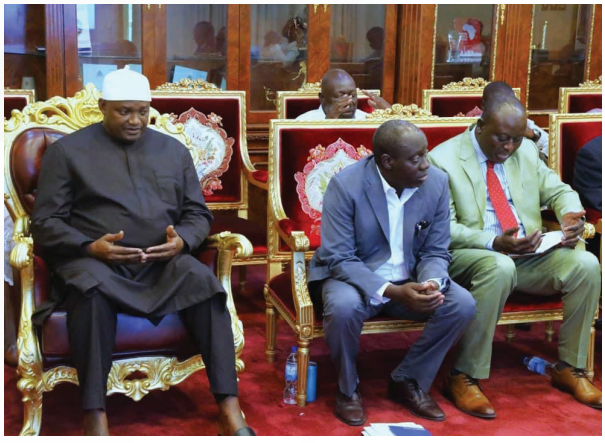
DELIVERY FORUMS

WORKS, TRANSPORT AND INFRASTRUCTURE

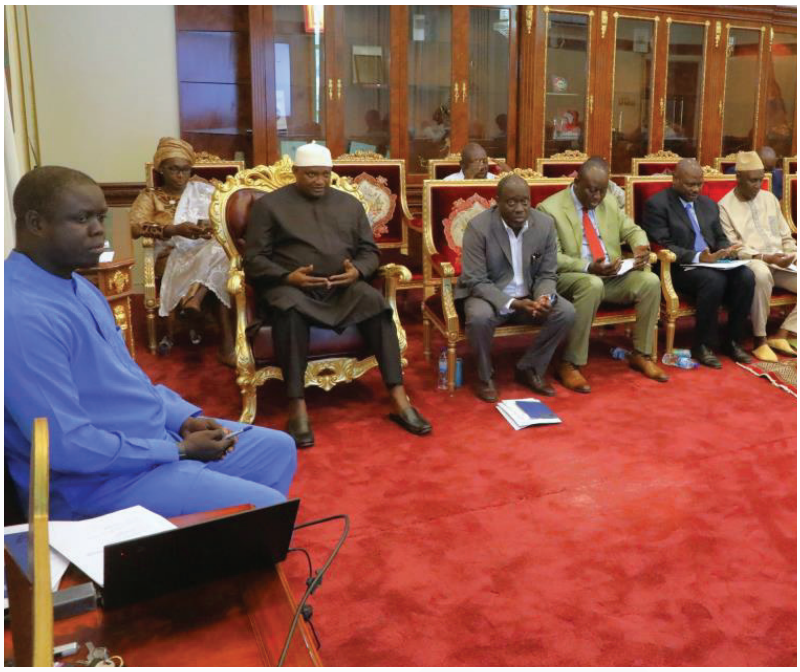
President Adama Barrow received a team of policy-makers, contractors, and technicians to review the state of projects in the country at a two-day Delivery Forum. The forum was held at the State House in Banjul in March 2024. The President has declared 2024 as a year of delivery and the forum is to monitor and assess the state of affairs of the social projects he promised to deliver to Gambians.



The Delivery Forum provides an opportunity for frank discussions on critical issues for decision-making, improving communication among stakeholders and addressing bottlenecks to project implementation. During the Delivery Forum stakeholders learn lessons in projects, including process management, implementation strategies, safety and maintenance plans.



Ministry of Works, Transport and Infrastructure gave an update on the state of the road works on the OIC roads, and urban and rural roads projects funded by the Government and external partners. It focused on the technical state of the works, financial situation, and issues relating to contractors and consultants.



Cooperation of Contractors and Consultants is critical in the timely completion of the projects, without which "the slow pace of projects would cost the Government more." President Barrow expressed concern that the delays would require the revision of contracts and, at times, incur logistical costs that were not factored at the beginning.



The Government was confronted with challenges regarding the relocation of services, demolition and right of way for future projects. Other challenges were attributed to poor urban planning and lack of proper records on service locations.



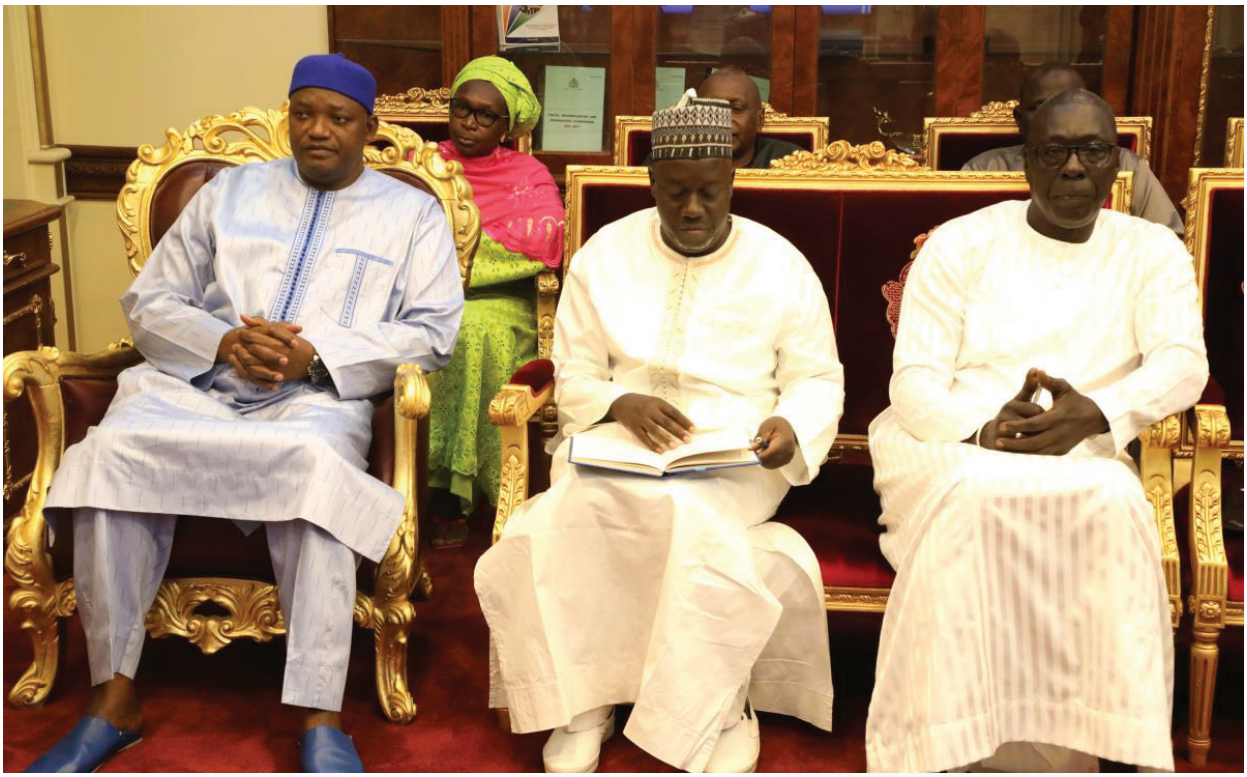
Despite the challenges during implementation, the Barrow administration had set the pace for future governments and citizens' expectations, because upon completion the roads would "open up The Gambia." During this reporting period, about 800 km of road works were ongoing in different parts of the country.

Regarding the Health sector, significant progress was made in the construction works at the National Emergency Treatment Center at Farato, the renovation at the main referral hospital -the Edward Francis Small Teaching Hospital, and the Poly Clinic in Banjul. The delivery session detailed the advancements in the construction of rural health facilities critical to making access to health services a reality for deprived communities.

> *" When people are sick, they need to go to the hospital. Therefore, we must ensure the timely delivery of our projects," said* ***PRESIDENT BARROW.***

PETROLEUM AND ENERGY

The Barrow Administration continues striving towards providing electricity to most communities that are yet to be served. This was evident with the delivery of a 23MW Solar Power Plant in Jambur, a significant target for the development of its electricity sector and the realisation of Universal Access to electricity by 2025.



During an update at the Presidential Delivery Forum held at the State House in March 2024, the President also expressed delight in the progress achieved with the ongoing energy projects.

He further pointed out that electricity dependent on fuel heavily impacts negatively on the availability of foreign exchange, hence the need to explore alternative and sustainable options.
NAWEC is a critical service in the socio-economic advancement of the country and, thus an important player in national security. Mr. Nani Juwara said universal access would be achieved in the whole country by 2025, stressing the importance of the project.

> *"These are life-changing projects for our people and as Gambians, we are seeking your continuous support so that the projects can be delivered as per the expectation of the President."*

Project Coverage Area covers

- ECOWAS Regional Electricity Access Project 292 communities in 5 regions 42% on the West Coast

particularly in Kombo East and the Foni area.

- Backbone Phase 2 Project 280 communities, contractors to double their efforts in ensuring that they meet the time lines for delivery.

- Gambia Electricity Access Project 147 communities in WCR, CRR and NBR 78% progress.

- Gambia Electricity Network Enhancement Project Greater Banjul Area Aims to improve transmission and distribution.





AGRICULTURE

Agriculture is critical in economic growth but most importantly for sustainable food security. Thus the Barrow Government prioritises increasing food security and farmers' income. Since agriculture is a major part of The Gambia's economy which contributes a significant proportion of the country's GDP, its relevance as part of the National Development Plan (NDP) 2023-2027 YIRIWA agenda to transform the country cannot be over-emphasised.

Addressing Rice dependency

> *"The Gambia has been struggling for almost 60 years to feed itself. We cannot blame anyone because we have the land and the human resources,"*

the President observed during the March 2024 Presidential Delivery Forum at the State House. A shift in the government's Agriculture is to support Gambians to invest in rice production and value addition.

The population heavily relies on rice as the main staple food. Hence partnership and support from both the private sector and the Ministry will go a long way in helping the country's needs to be self-sufficient in domestic rice production and reduce rice importation.

The country has been doing well with cereal but has stagnated in rice production. A combination of the country's human resources and technical knowledge has the potential to boost rice production and must be challenged to minimise rice importation.



Mechanising Agriculture and values addition

To further boost agriculture, the Government has invested in 180 farm implements, mainly tractors, and further subsidised the price of fertilizer for the 2024/2025 farming season, supporting communities and champion farmers with ploughing and provision of improved rice seeds. Mechanisation, land development, availability of high-yield seeds, farmer education and youth encouragement in agriculture are critical to increasing food self-sufficiency and security. In addition, the government is focusing on Cereal Banking and cold storage in the country.

Ongoing Agriculture projects

The 80 million Dollar Roots project launched in 2021 aimed to increase agricultural productivity and access to markets, while the GIRAV project focuses on supporting vegetable gardening and other components to make agro-food systems more inclusive, productive, and sustainable. Additionally, the ongoing Regional rice value chain project is supporting the hardware component of rice production.

> *"For us to yield crops we must increase productivity and this can only be achieved if our seed yield more from 2 tonnes per hectare to 7 tonnes per hectare."*
> ***Agriculture Minister , Dr. Sabally stressed.***

Increments in crop production reported in 2024 are as follows:

Crop Increment by % of production
Rice production 27%
Groundnut 12%
Maize 25%

BASIC AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

Education is a right for every child and accessibility must be matched by quality, thus, it has become a central issue in the Government's agenda. Amongst the Presidential priorities are providing opportunities for quality and affordable learning for all.

Kuwait Fund Arab Economic Development-KFAED aims to build 27 upper and senior secondary schools in six regions of the country. Meanwhile, MoBSE collaboration with the MRC Holland Foundation is building infrastructure for learning, furnishing classes and construction of toilet facilities, and 9 out of 11 schools were completed in April 2024. MRC Holland Foundation has been a reliable partner with the Barrow administration since 2017 in providing education infrastructure and supporting the Government's Education Sector Strategic Plan.

MoBSE completed less than 50% of its school construction and repair projects contracted, while significant progress was realised with Lot 3 having over 70% of the work completed.

TURNING POINT FOR EDUCATIONAL TRANSFORMATION

In its bid to improve education and widen access to higher education for all, The Gambia College is being transformed into a University of Education. This transformation requires a significant increase in investment and President Barrow seeks to mobilise actions and solutions to transform the education sector, aligned with the Recovery Focussed - National Development Programme (NDP) "YIRIWA" agenda.

Providing education infrastructure is a priority for the Barrow administration. It is committed to developing human capital by giving quality education opportunities to Gambian youths. In this regard, the School of Agriculture and Nursing and Public Health under Gambia College would be integrated into The University of The Gambia Schools of Agriculture and Medicine, respectively.

The Government and the World Bank RISE Project will build state-of-the-art National Laboratory Equipment at Gambia College. The transformation would affect all sectors and support the National Agency for Quality Assurance in monitoring and taking care of the quality assurance component.

School of Medicine and Allied Health Sciences

To maximise the impact of education on society and ensure its success and sustainability, changes have been put forward at the Faraba Banta Campus regarding the construction of the School of Medicine and Allied Health Sciences.

All these developments required funding, thus the resource mobilisation is critical in realising state-of-the-art facilities and medical laboratories for the School of Medicine. ***"For the first time, the country will have medical equipment we never have."*** Higher Education Minister remarked.

Civil Servants University

The transformational journey in the education sector includes the construction of TVET Centers across all regions and transforming the Management Development Institute (MDI) into a Civil Servants University, which would enhance the professional training of Civil Servants for more efficient public service delivery. The President remarked, ***"This is part of our Civil Service Reform programme."***

Supporting TVET & USET Education

The Government's agenda is not just in the field of education but also from the perspective of entrepreneurship and innovation. For the first time in history, the Government, through MOHERST, will approve an annual stipend for students of the TVET programme equivalent to 400 Dollars per student to enable them to start their business upon completing their course.

In addition, construction of Lot 2 of the Faraba Banta Campus and the Government's partnership with MRC Holland Foundation is ongoing and the plan includes building a dormitory for UTG students in Faraba.



Meanwhile, the briefing confirmed that the construction of the University of Science Engineering and Technology (USET) is progressing satisfactorily.



Another new initiative under the Higher Education Ministry is the **Skills Innovation and Entrepreneurship (SIE) Fund Project**. His Excellency President Adama Barrow launched the Skills, Innovation, and Entrepreneurship (SIE) Fund in May 2024, marking a significant milestone in entrepreneurship and vocational training aimed at transforming The Gambia's future.

The SIE Fund project initiative, the first of its kind in the history of The Gambia since independence addresses issues facing the youth and Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) sector, which are institutional for TVET Centres, training youth, scholarships for start-up support, and targeting job-ready sectors such as agriculture, tourism, engineering, and ICT. The World Bank funds the SIE in partnership with the Gambian Government.

RIVER TRANSPORTATION

UNANNOUNCED VISIT TO FERRY TERMINAL

In mid-April, the river transportation faced a breakdown of its ferries, causing a major upheaval amongst commuters between the Banjul - Barra crossing. As a concerned leader, President Barrow made an unannounced visit to the ferry terminal to get an update on the maintenance amidst concerns about difficulties commuters were experiencing.

The engineers reported that they would complete the work earlier than the anticipated six weeks.



The President used the opportunity and apologised to ferry users and the public for the lack of services due to the breakdown of both the Kunta Kinteh and Kanilai ferries, which he described as an unfortunate emergency blamed on lack of scheduled maintenance and poor planning, thus affecting national and international communities.



that the President visited and it was an opportunity for him to hear from them. Having heard narratives of different commuters, boatmen and security officers at the terminal. The President commended the boatmen and security officials for maintaining calm and security within the area. With humility, he asserted,

While the ferries were under repair, People vying between the Banjul and Barra had no option but to travel by canoes. At the Canoe terminal, people were excited

SMALL GAMBIA HOSTS BIG COUNTRIES



The Gambia hosted the 15th edition of the Islamic Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). About four thousand dignitaries including world leaders from the fifty-seven (57) member countries of the OIC and beyond were in attendance.



The Summit is the second largest Inter-Governmental Organisation after the United Nations. In 2018, a Secretariat was established with the intent to mobilise necessary resources for the coordination and implementation of all programmes and projects needed for the successful hosting of the OIC Heads of State Summit, first scheduled to be held in The Gambia in 2020. The Gambia's hosting was postponed on three proposed dates. Following the OIC Summit in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in December 2023, and the assessment of the OIC head office in Riyadh, President Barrow announced that the 15th OIC Summit would take place in May 2024. Due to a series of rescheduling, some doubted The Gambia's capability of hosting the Summit but the OIC Banjul Summit happened to be one of the most successful OIC Summits in its history.



PLANNING STAGE

The success of the Summit was credited to the proper planning processes which started in 2019, involving high-level training in organising international conferences, and security planning in The Gambia and overseas. The OIC Secretariat had also secured security gear and apparatus as well as uniforms to support the police and The Gambia army. In addition, dozens of Gambian journalists benefited from training to equip them with the technical knowledge necessary for effective coverage of international summits.



Moreover, close to 160 protocol officers were equally trained. The training aimed at building the knowledge of participants in the area of international protocol, VVIP treatment, dress code and related practical simulation exercises.

INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

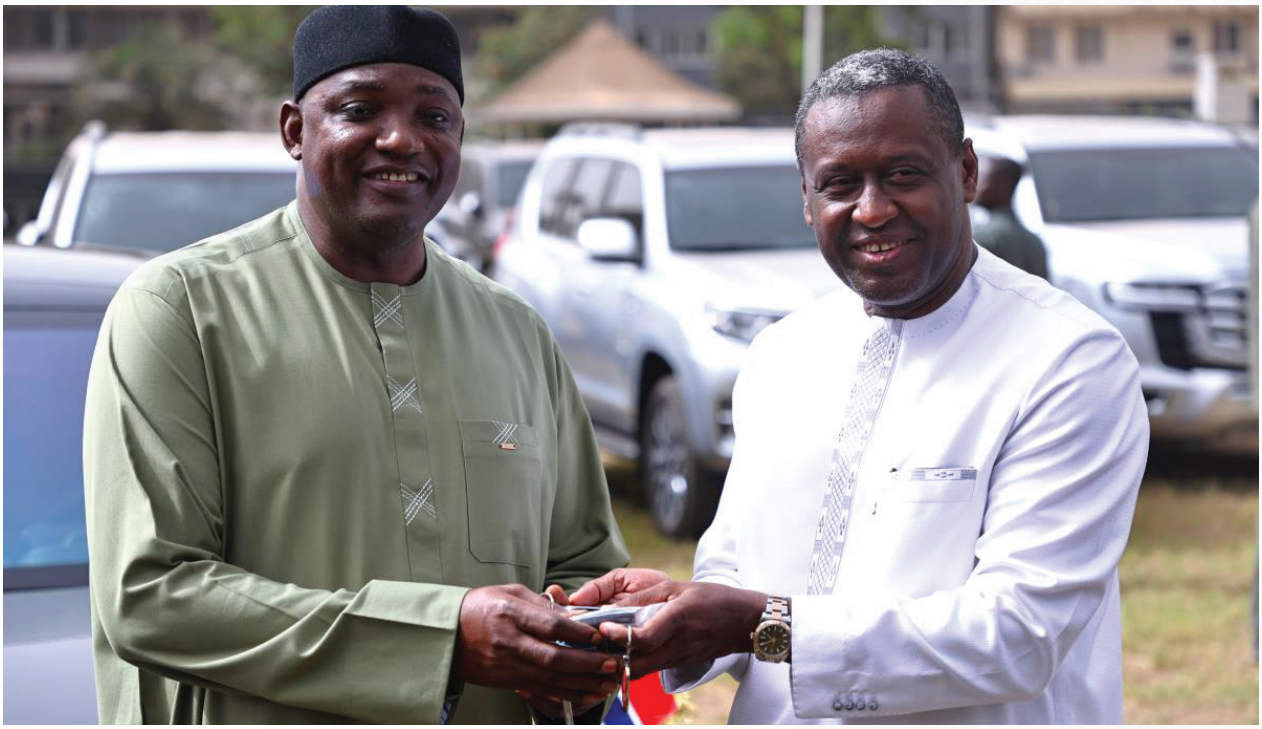
Meanwhile, The Gambia has benefited from the OIC infrastructural projects such as the construction of the International Conference Centre, VVIP lounge at the country's main airport, five-star hotel, and construction of roads among others, projected to transform the infrastructural landscape of the country.



MONITORING

Monitoring the logistical arrangements it was confirmed that The Gambia was in high gear. Espace Motors procured and handed over 87 vehicles to the Office of the President. The vehicles increased the fleet of vehicles available to accommodate delegates of the 57 member states during the OIC Banjul Summit 2024.







THE SUMMIT

Out of 57 member states, The Gambia became the 4th African country to successfully host the OIC Summit. A few days before the event, the Islamic summit was preceded by a preparatory meeting, as senior OIC officials discussed the documents of the session and submitted a report ahead of the Summit. Instrumental in the processes were the OIC Secretariat in Saudi, and the Gambian teams in The Gambia and Saudi providing the proper support in hosting the Summit.



The OIC Secretary General, Mr. Hussein Brahim Taba and his team updated President Adama Barrow on the Technical and Ministerial meetings ahead of the main Summit. He congratulated and commended President Barrow for the progress and transformation registered within a short period which demonstrated that despite the challenges, President Barrow accepted The Gambia to host the Summit.

President Barrow encouraged the OIC Secretariat to emphasise issues that would unite the Ummah through dialogue, stating,

> ***The most important things are unity and solidarity amongst the member states, which would make us strong and allow us to achieve what the Ummah wants.***



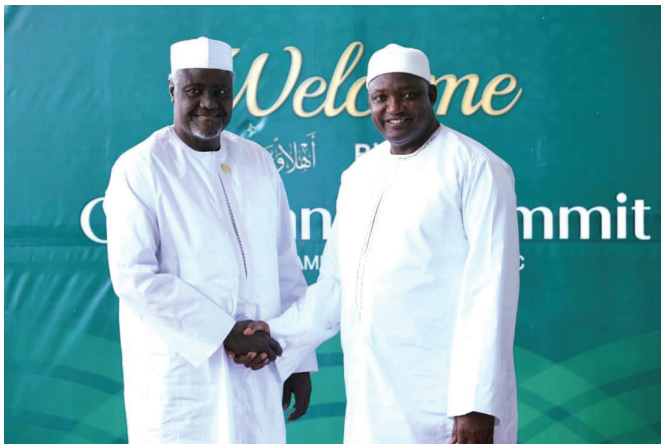
5th May 2024 marks the official ceremony of the OIC Gambia Summit. At the opening, His Excellency President Adama Barrow took over the Chairmanship of the OIC for the next three years. The event highlighted The Gambia's consistent commitment to the principles and purpose of the OIC, in fostering unity and solidarity within the Muslim Ummah. He would preside over meetings and events of the Organisation, an opportunity which would further enhance the global imagery of The Gambia and open it to potential trade and investment possibilities.














DIPLOMACY

BILATERAL DIPLOMACY

In the first half of 2024, President Adama Barrow engaged in high-level diplomacy, receiving twenty-nine (29) representatives of his counterparts from different regions of the globe at the State House.



Receiving the Diplomats, President Barrow assured them of his Government's readiness to expand the scope of the mutually beneficial cooperation between our countries, particularly in responding to their shared aspiration of global prosperity, peace and stability.



Additionally, he called for active partnerships and constant dialogue as well as creating the space for people-to-people partnerships.

Diplomacy opens opportunities for dialogue, which is crucial in bridging gaps and resolving misunderstandings. Thus diplomacy builds relationships, facilitates development and creating people to people friendships and partnerships.

Presentation of diplomatic credentials is an opportunity to renew commitments on bilateral and multi-lateral commitments.

The Gambian leader welcomed new Ambassadors and High Commissioners Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to the Republic of The Gambia in a moderate and colourful ceremony at State House in Banjul.

The diplomats represented various friendly countries, and presented their Letters of Credence to the President, marking the beginning of their official tour of duty.



Accordingly, President Barrow stated the critical roles of the diplomats in accomplishing these goals. He also called for collaboration for the realisation of the Recovery-Focused National Development Plan (RF NDP) - YIRIWA goals.

During his statements, President Barrow reiterated his dedication to strengthening the friendly ties and cooperation between the Government and people Republic of The Gambia and the Government and peoples of the respective countries represented by the diplomats.

In total, twenty-nine diplomats Present their Credentials:

1. H.E. Mr. Klaus Botzet, Federal Republic of Germany
2. H.E. Mr. Fahri Turker Oba, Republic of Turkiye
3. H.E.Mrs. Florbela Alhindo Paraiba, The Republic of Portugal
4. H.E. Anu Saxen, Republic of Finland
5. Mrs. Ingrid Mollestad, Kingdom of Norway
6. Mrs.Ursula Fahringer, Republic of Austria
7. H.E. Khaled Aref, Arab Republic of Egypt
8. H.E. Mr. Veluppilal Kananathan, Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka
9. H.E. Monsignor Walter Erbi, Republic of Vatican
10. H.E. Mr. Nazim Adil Oglu Samadov, Republic of Azerbaijan
11. H.E. Mrs. Carmen Hagennaars, Kingdom of the Netherlands
12. H.E. Mrs. Marie-Genevieve Mounier, Republic of Canada
13. H.E. Mr. Bartlo Miej Zdaniuk, Republic of Poland
14. H.E. Emma Henewah Mensah, Republic of Ghana
15. H.E. Mrs. Saima Sayed, The Republic of Pakistan
16. H.E. Mr. Héléne De Bock, Kingdom of Belgium
17. H.E. Mr. Dato Zainal Izran Zahari, The Republic of Malaysia
18. H.E. Mr. Rachid Saidani, The Republic of Tunisia
19. H.E. Mr. James Maridadi, The Republic of Zimbabwe
20. H.E. Madam Caterina Bertolini, The Republic of Italy
21. H.E. Ms. Leilani Bin Juda, The Republic of Australia
22. H.E. Mr. Ado Pinto, The Republic of Angola
23. H.E. Melaka Legeese Gebrehiwot, Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
24. H.E. Colonel Mandjou Dioubate, The Republic of Guinea
25. H.E. Mr. Nasser Jadallah, The State of Palestine
26. H.E. Mr. Dinkar Asthana, The Republic of India
27. H.E. Mr. Saidou Maiga, The Republic of Burkina Faso
28. H.E. Christophe Muzungu, The Democratic Republic of Congo
29. H.E. Nelson Ocheger, The Republic of Uganda

THE GAMBIA-SENEGAL OPT TO BUILD RESILIENT BILATERAL RELATIONS



The excellent bilateral relations that have existed between The Gambia and Senegal, are underpinned by strong trade and economic ties. The two countries are culturally and ethnically intertwined, as almost all the ethnic groups in Senegal are also found in The Gambia, and they have the same cultural lifestyles.

The entrenched and long-lasting bonds of friendship have solidified the bilateral ties between The Gambia and Senegal, necessitating more vital collaboration, cooperation and partnership. In April 2024, His Excellency President Adama Barrow travelled to Senegal to witness the inauguration ceremony of President-Elect, H.E. Bassirou Diomaye Faye. President Barrow was among over a dozen Heads of State and Government who witnessed the official ceremony at which former President Macky Sall officially handed over the Office of the Presidency to his successor, H.E. Faye.

President Barrow's attendance is a positive sign to further strengthen the existing fraternal and brotherly relationship between The Gambia and Senegal, and his expectation from the new President Faye is to maintain peace and further strengthen the relationship between the two countries. President Barrow said ***"We are one family and one people, so I expect us to build on that and nothing less,"*** he emphasised in an interview with the press.

During the solemn ceremony held at the Exposition Center in Diamniadio, President Faye, who became Africa's youngest democratically elected President said his Government would promote reconciliation and collaborate with neighbouring countries and institutions in the best interest of the Senegalese people.

Barely two weeks after his inauguration, President Faye arrived in The Gambia as part of his maiden State visit to strengthen the growing ties between the two countries. In a special gesture, His Excellency President Adama Barrow received the Senegalese President Bassirou Diomaye Faye at the Banjul International Airport in April and accorded him a ceremonial welcome.



The Gambia and Senegal share historical, cultural and socio-economic ties, which President Barrow describes as, "We are two countries, but one people." As a result, it is not a surprise that H.E. Faye chose The Gambia as one of the first countries he would visit as Head of State.

Such visits accord the two Heads of State the opportunity for a private talk, and due to the commonality in the language they speak, did not need an interpreter.

Meeting with their policymakers and technical teams, a joint communique was shared and the media was in attendance to capture the moment.

The Presidential Council, established in 2018 between the two countries, provides a forum to strengthen bilateral relations without administrative bottlenecks.



It creates an opportunity for the two countries to converge and dialogue on significant issues of common interest and make concrete decisions for the mutual benefit of our two countries and peoples.

In 2023, The Gambia and Senegal solidified their commitment to bolstering their economic, trade, and investment opportunities during the inaugural edition of the Economic Trade and Investment Forum in Dakar.

The pivotal role of fishing in the economy and society has been recognised by both countries. Hence, they deemed it necessary to cooperate in the sector. In 2017, The Gambia signed a fisheries agreement with Senegal and is partly dependent on the country for its fish supply. The purpose of the partnership revolves around the allocation of 250 motorised boat licenses, which is to substantially benefit artisanal fishing operators in both Senegal and The Gambia to improve the livelihoods of local fishermen and the fishing industry.





The Barrow administration has always been engaging in ways to strengthen the already existing sisterly ties between the two countries. In 2024, The Gambia and Senegal signed an agreement to combat cross-border crimes to secure and jointly control the spaces in the two neighbouring countries.

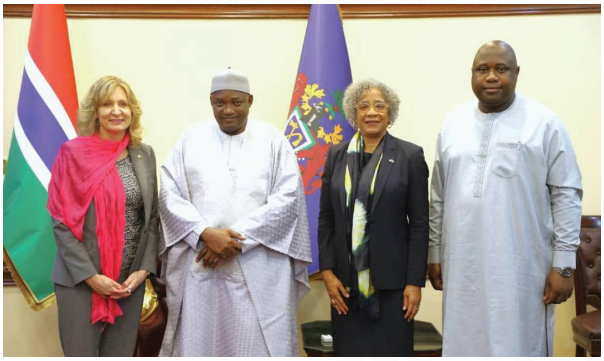


The friendly exchanges between The Gambia and Senegal date back to the pre-colonial era. Both countries and their people befriend each other and embrace peace, love and harmony.

Courtesy Visit to President Adama Barrow

In an increasingly interconnected and interdependent world, diplomacy and diplomatic courtesy are central to successful international relations. Diplomacy plays a crucial role in addressing global challenges, fostering economic development and promoting peace among nations.

In a series of diplomatic engagements, President Barrow gave assurance of his administration's commitment to the implementation of the TRRC Report working with partners in realising the recommendations.



He received the US Ambassador at large on Global Criminal Justice, Ms. Van Schaack, for a second time, within two years of making progress on The Gambia's Transitional Justice Programme.

Similarly, in an audience with Switzerland's Ambassador, H.E.Andrea Semadeni, the President stressed his government's commitment at the highest level to the TRRC processes in ensuring "justice and reparation are accorded to victims," and thus looked forward to the conclusions of the court processes in Switzerland, involving The Gambia's former Interior Minister, Ousman Sonko.



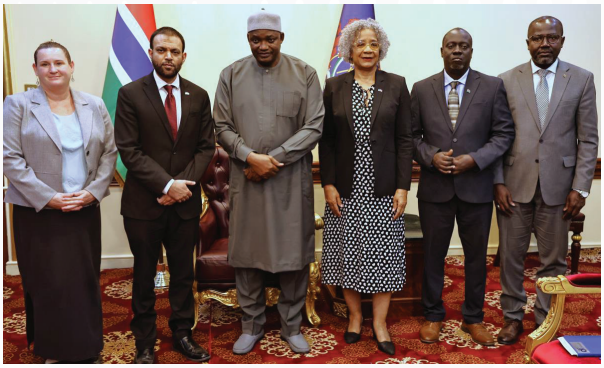
TRRC was set up at the beginning of President Barrow's Administration to investigate human rights violations committed during Former President Yahya Jammeh's 22 years of dictatorship and to consider reparations for victims.

The Gambia's transitional justice programme, Security Sector Reforms, and other development programmes could be realised with the required support and measure up to international standards.

International migration is another concern that needs a multifaceted approach to address it. There are narratives that job creation and skills training for the youth in their countries of origin would provide a development perspective of migration. While many young people are tempted to use illegal migration for economic reasons, some Diaspora Gambians are taking advantage of the democratic environment to return home and invest in securing livelihood and self-empowerment.

President Barrow Meets U.S Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom

The Gambia is a country of many faiths and it is known for its hospitality and religious tolerance due to the peaceful co-existence between Muslims and Christians. As such, the constitution provides every person the right to practice any religion, as long as doing so does not impinge on the rights of others or the national interest.



Religious tolerance is key in every democratic setting which promotes greater respect and preservation of religious liberty. In April 2024, His Excellency President Adama Barrow received the U.S. Ambassador-at-large for International Religious Freedoms, Rashad Hussain, who visited the country to engage with members of the Government and Civil Society.

The trip marked the Ambassador's second visit to The Gambia, and President Barrow was pleased to exchange ideas with him at the President's Office in Banjul to strengthen the bilateral partnership between The Gambia and the United States.

The Campaign to Protect Girls from FGM

The Gambia enacted a law in 2015 to protect girls from Female Genital Mutilation and other harmful traditional practices.

Under President Barrow, the government took several policy decisions to advance the rights of women and girls. These included the establishment of a separate Ministry for Women, Children and Social Welfare. To further support women's economic empowerment, a Women's Empowerment Fund was established along with mainstream gender policies across sectors.



As The Gambia continues to strive to build on its gains, in 2024, a member of the National Assembly tabled a Private Member's Bill to repeal the ban on FGM, creating a national and international outcry for an attempt to roll back gains made to protect girls children from human rights abuses.



Since the tabling of the bill, President Barrow has been engaged in countless behind-the-scenes consultations involving national and international interest groups. There are different viewpoints on the deeply rooted culture, which has been widely practised in The Gambia despite numerous efforts of awareness campaigns against the practice. Some religious leaders in the country categorise FGM as a religious practice, yet many Muslim-majority countries under Sharia law do not practice it.

President Barrow recognised for promoting peace, also has respect for the rule of law made his only public statement on the proposed repeal of the FGM law during his Annual State of the National address, giving his government's position. Having gone through the parliamentary processes, the proposed Bill to repeal the FGM law was thrown out by the National Assembly on 15th June 2024 thus, The Gambia maintains the law to protect girls from FGM and the law implementing agents have a responsibility to enforce the law.

UNICEF Commended for Supporting the Gambia's Development Agenda

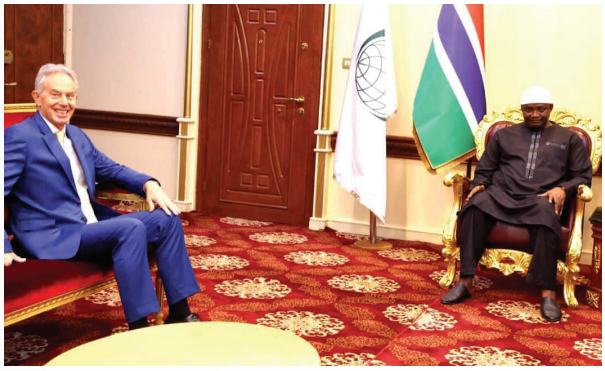


UNICEF's support to the country, particularly in areas of education, health, water and sanitation. Is well noted. "The youth need to be supported to prepare them for the future. Education and skills development are key to empowering them." H.E. President Barrow applauded UNICEF for supporting education, health and other development areas during the first bilateral meeting with the Country Representative, Ms. Nafisa Binte Shafique who started her tour of duty in The Gambia. She assured her to uphold the rights of every child, particularly girls and women who are fighting for their rights, and how to take The Gambia forward.

> *We will make The Gambia outshine,* ***she said.***

The new UNICEF Representative took the opportunity to congratulate President Barrow for winning the African Peace Promoter Prize for 2024. She added she was proud of the President's leadership for children. Ms Shafique emphasised that The Gambia has a young population and needs to invest in them.

Gambia's progress Impresses TBI founder



President Barrow received a former British Prime Minister during his latest visit in 2024. The duo discussed a wide variety of issues on how to accelerate the process of digitalisation to further boost the nation's economy.

The meeting also featured ways to develop human capacity and the agricultural output of the country.

Mr Blair expressed delight about the ongoing infrastructural development saying

> *I am enthusiastic about the progress the country is making, you can feel that things are moving forward in the country.*

It has now become an annual practice for the Former Prime Minister of the UK and founder of the TBI Foundation, Rt. Hon. Tony Blair to visit The Gambia's President. The TBI gives support to the Office of the President on delivery matters and works with other institutions in the country.

President Barrow Anticipates Stronger Ties with the Commonwealth

His Excellency President Barrow discussed the bilateral relationship and other areas of development issues of common interest with the African Director for the Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) Ms. Kate Foster. They expressed commitment to further build on the long-standing friendly ties between The Gambia and other Commonwealth nations.

The Gambia and the British High Commission shared a cordial and warm relationship based on common values and shared vision, and The Gambia is committed to being a reliable partner of the Commonwealth.

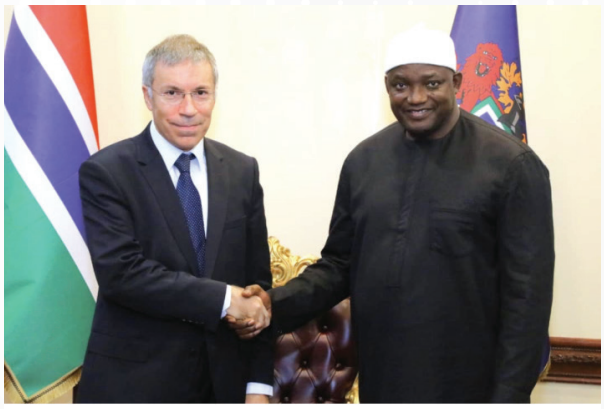
Outgoing Diplomats bade farewell to Gambia's President. Turkish Ambassador

Diplomatic farewell is a testament to the strong ties that have been forged between nations. Members of the diplomatic corps who ended their tour of duty in The Gambia bade farewell to His Excellency President Barrow.

Upon completion of an assignment, it is customary for a permanent representative to pay a farewell visit to the executive heads of the organization or organizations to which he or she is accredited and to inform other permanent representatives, in writing, of his or her departure.

Turkish Ambassador to The Gambia, Tolga Bermek bids farewell to President Barrow. The President commended the excellent and fruitful relationship between The Gambia and Türkiye citing the high-level exchanged state visits between him and his counterpart, President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. The bilateral relationship yielded fruitful and mutual benefits to both countries and has been characterised by cooperation in technology, trade, capacity building and human resource development, among other areas.

The outgoing Ambassadors positively appraised Gambians for creating a fair and friendly environment.



Others who completed their tour of duty included officials of the International Community.

WHO
UNDP
WB

COLLECTIVE COMMITMENT TO DEMOCRACY - VIRTUAL SUMMIT

A collective commitment to democracy was the focus of the third Virtual Summit for Democracy hosted by the President of the Republic of South Korea, H.E. President Yoon Suk Yeol. It was noted that 2024 is significant in global politics, as more than half the countries and a population of 4.2 billion will elect their leaders this year. It becomes apparent that while nations enjoy democracy, it comes with its challenges.







President Barrow was amongst the democratic leaders invited to address the virtual meeting. He appealed to nations and his fellow Heads of State to collectively embrace democracy since it solves the world's socio-political challenges. He added that democracy and political freedom will continue to be reinforced in Gambian institutions to transform the lives and livelihoods of Gambians, while he urged other global members of the summit to uphold democracy peacefully.

Since coming to office, President Barrow has taken concrete steps to ensure democracy prevails. State-sponsored brutal acts of enforced disappearances, extra-judicial killings, detentions without trial and other unlawful acts of the past regime are a thing of the past.

GAMBIA HONOURS DISTINGUISHED PERSONALITIES



Embracing democracy, The Gambia had regained its rightful position amongst democracies. Since the Barrow administration came to office over seven years ago, friends of The Gambia increased and it re-connected with old friends lost during dictatorship. Many of The Gambia's friends supported in different ways to ensure that it refocussed its development agenda and grew its economy through the practice of Good Governance, democracy and respect for the rule of law.

In recognition of the commitment to The Gambia's agenda and the critical support to the country, H.E. President Barrow conferred medals of honour to two distinguished personalities. The Chairman of the Islamic Development Bank Dr. Muhammad Sulaiman Al Jasser was bestowed an Insignia of the Grand Commander of The Republic of The Gambia Honourary. An insignia of the Commander of the Order of The Republic of The Gambia Honourary was conferred on the outgoing World Bank Team Leader for The Gambia Dr. Samuel Lantei Mills was conferred.

The honourary conferment is in recognition of their profound achievements in their respective fields, and enormous contributions to society most especially in the education and health sectors.

Dr. Al-Jasser has made exemplary contributions towards the socio-economic development of The Gambia. Under his leadership, the Islamic Development Bank-IDB has initiated tremendous interventions in The Gambia such as:

1. The development of the University of The Gambia
2. Widening of Bertil Harding highway
3. Enhancing value addition in the groundnut sector
4. Small ruminant production enhancement
5. Regional Rice Value Chain development
6. Strengthening Rural Community Adaptation,
7. Increase of Rice Production project,
8. Solar Energy Project
9. Bi-lingual Support Education project,
10. 20 Megawatts Brikama power project among others.

On the other hand, Dr. Mills had also made notable achievements under his leadership as the World Bank Team Leader for The Gambia. This includes the establishment of:

1. The state of the art environmentally friendly health care waste management system,
2. Setting up the national food and drug quality control laboratory,
3. Construction and equipment of Farato Emergency Treatment Center,
4. Intensive care unit,
5. Emergency observation treatment, among others.

In addition, the national diagnostic emerging center project is to be completed this year, which will contribute to the preparedness and response to future pandemics.

The two gentlemen did not only serve in their distinguished roles but supported The Gambia by investing in the welfare and well-being of the citizens.

SWEARING-IN CEREMONY



NEWLY APPOINTED MINISTERS

President Adama Barrow acting in the powers vested on him in section 172 of the 1997 constitution of the Republic of The Gambia, officiated the swearing-in ceremony of the newly appointed Cabinet Ministers, tasking them to live up to the expectation of meeting the development needs of the people.

The Ministers are expected to play pivotal roles in shaping and implementing Government policies and decisions. In his remarks, President Barrow congratulated the newly sworn-in ministers, and reminded all serving leaders that their work is to serve the citizens and the country while reminding them that they are working to transform citizens' lives for the better; and not working for their gains.

President Barrow pointed out that 2024 was a year of "delivery, due diligence, and quality service," and therefore encouraged the Public Service Commissioners who were newly sworn-in to promote positive transformation in work ethics and attitude to duty.

Appraisal tools are critical for the accountability of civil servants. Thus to effectively monitor and ensure discipline in the Civil Service, prompted the President to request the Ministry of Public Service- MOPS to give urgent attention to design performance appraisal instruments for use by the Public Service Commission, this year.

The PSC and MOPS significant strides in partnering with sister institutions overseas through initiating a series of reforms such as the introduction of a robust online recruitment system and reform of the Pension Scheme, in collaboration with the Personnel Management Office to enhance efficiency.

Speaking on behalf of the newly sworn-in Minister, Hon. Hamat N.K. Bah expressed deep gratitude to President Barrow for bestowing trust upon them. He propelled his counterparts to work collectively in their quest to deliver maximum services.

The newly sworn-in Minister for Interior, Hon. Abdoulie Sanyang, Minister for Basic and Secondary Education Hon. Khadijatou Sey, Minister for Petroleum and Energy Hon. Nani Juwara, and Minister for Information Hon. Dr. Ismaila Ceesay. Also sworn-in were Minister for Tourism and Culture Hon. Abdoulie Jobe, Minister for Lands and Regional Governance Hon. Hamat N.K. Bah, and two other newly appointed members of the Public Service Commission Mr. Kemo Conteh and Ms. Sainabou Ancha Ceesay took the oath of Office, Secrecy and Allegiance at State House in Banjul.

The swearing-in ceremony follows the reshuffle of Cabinet by President Barrow, on the 15th March 2024. However, two of the Cabinet members, Ministers for Basic Education and Digital Economy were relieved of their duties in July.



THE GAMBIA @59 YEARS

The Independence anniversary of The Gambia is an official national holiday celebrated yearly throughout the country. 18th February holds tremendous ground in the list of national days since it reminds every Gambian about the dawn of a new beginning of an era of deliverance from British colonial rule.

The people of The Gambia have shown admirable commitment to multi-party democracy since the reign of control was handed over to national leaders, following political independence in 1965.



Before the 18th February 2024 celebration, His Excellency President Barrow initiated the National Dialogue on the theme

Our Collective Responsibility in Preserving the Nation, Safeguarding the State and Securing our Resources.

The dialogue created platforms for political parties and civil society organisations to discuss divergent issues of national interest. The President emphasised that such divergence must not result in enmity or disunity.

> *Instead, it should be tapped into as a source of strength for us to tolerate, appreciate, and empathise with one another*



Many Gambians celebrated the 59th anniversary of Independence by reflecting on our journey of freedom and self-determination and the essential roles vibrant citizens have played in shaping the country's democratic ethos.



Dignitaries, including Ministers, Members of Parliament, the diplomatic corps, leaders from other African countries, and other high-profile personalities were invited to The Gambia to join the celebration at McCarthy Square with a spectacular parade by the security forces and a match pass by students.



In his address, President Barrow said we need to preserve our nation by cherishing and safeguarding our identity, culture, social structures, relationships, and everything else that distinguishes us as a people

> *Embedded in these traits are our shared values and ways of co-existing in peace and harmony as Gambians, hence we must make sure that they are not corrupted to give way to indecency.*
> ***The President said.***

In May, The National Preparatory Committee presented the Report of the National Dialogue and updated the Head of State on the state of affairs as the team prepared for regional consultations.

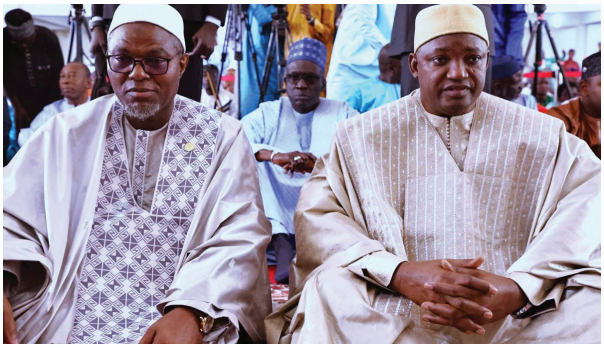


At the beginning of July 2024, the National Preparatory Committee under the Coordination of the Office of the President conducted forty-five Regional Consultative Dialogues in all regions of the country. More than 3700 people men and women young and elderly participated in the consultations.

SOCIAL AND RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS



The annual Eid-ul-Fitr Meeting with Banjul Elders is a practice initiated during the colonial days to bring issues of concern to the leadership. President Barrow thanked the Banjul Elders for expanding the annual event to include representatives of The Gambia Supreme Islamic Council, Ahmadiya Jamaat and religious sects.



His call for all Gambians to maintain the peace in the country was re-echoed, emphasising the obligation of all citizens to live and work hard for the country. It was an opportunity for The Gambian leader to remind citizens, especially preachers, of the fact that even though The Gambia is 95% Muslim, the Constitution and other laws of the land govern the country, and not Sharia Law.

> *There are Laws that may not favour everyone but must be respected by all for peace to reign."* ***He emphasised.***

Responding to various issues raised by the speakers, including the state of the traffic on the Bertil Harding Highway, the President urged all road users to be patient as work progresses within the Greater Banjul Area.

Enforcement of government policies and laws governing the roads dubbed "Operation Clear the Roads" - regarding hawkers who illegally occupy the roads brought outcry amongst some street vendors, and rhetoric coming from some quarters. The President cautioned people doing negative propaganda. He pointed out that a few people wrongly put the clearing of the streets as a fight against people with low incomes trying to make a living. President Barrow added that people should be aware of the risks of accidents posed by such illegal occupants on roadsides. ***"I will stand by what is for the greater good, and I want to emphasise that the 'operation clear the roads is here to stay."*** President Barrow asserted.

Other critical issues raised and discussed included :

- Keeping the environment clean
- Electricity supply and power outages
- Price hikes on imported food items

The meeting with elders and religious leaders gives the executive to update them on the government policies and programmes regarding their concerns.

On independent funding of development projects, the President emphasised digitalising the tax system to enhance revenue collection. He clarified that the Government has not increased taxes; instead, it ensures leakages are blocked and the businesses pay the correct taxes.

To address the price hikes on imported food items, particularly rice, the President urged Gambians to take agriculture more seriously to cater to the demand for rice. Already, the Government is supporting Gambian investors in growing rice for commercial purposes. "We expect that if we grow more rice locally, we would not complain about the price of imported rice."

The Chairman of the occasion, Alhagie Momodou Senghore, on behalf of Banjulians, commended the Government for improvements in electricity, observing the improvements beyond the urban areas. "You cannot make a judgement on NAWEC based only on the urban area only. Nationwide, there is verse improvement in electricity access." The Police were also commended for their efforts in controlling crime. The other concerns included the call for mutual respect, promotion of peace and Gambians to take up agriculture to address the price hikes on imported commodities such as rice. A persistent challenge highlighted was that the Gambian youth want to avoid taking up unskilled jobs, citing the dominance of non-Gambian youths in the construction and other sectors.

ON THE PATH TO UNIVERSAL ELECTRICITY ACCESS



The Barrow Administration, with unwavering determination, is committed to tackling the long-standing electricity challenges faced by the people of The Gambia. The Government understands the importance of reliable and accessible electricity for the progress and prosperity of the citizens, and it is leaving no stone unturned in its efforts to address this issue.

The Gambia, now enjoys one of the best solar radiation conditions, thanks to the ambitious support of the partnership between the Government of The Gambia, the World Bank, the European Union and the European Investment Bank, the country is now deploying solar energy to power its national grid.



The unprecedented level of support from the international community provides The Gambia with the opportunity to transform the energy sector and emerge as one of the leading energy sectors in the sub-region and the African continent.

This achievement would not have been possible without the collaboration of all the partners who executed the project diligently and in a timely manner, ***President Barrow acknowledged.***

The number of communities without access to electricity has declined due to the significant progress that has been made by President Barrow's Administration on various aspects of the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) of ensuring universal access to affordable, reliable, and modern energy services.

A committed partnership with the government would help address the power shortage and transform the electricity access in rural communities, most especially the education and health sectors to benefit from reliable power.



This serves as a significant milestone in the organisation of the energy sector of The Gambia. ***"It has come at a time when the whole world is promoting investment in renewable energy, particularly through solar energy projects"*** President Barrow stated during the inauguration of the Jambur Solar Plant supported by the World Bank, EU and other partners.

The foundation stone for the solar plant project was laid on the 4th February 2023 and inaugurated in March 2024, as part of the Gambia Electricity Restoration and Modernization Project.



The partners of the solar power plant project reiterated their support of the Government's vision towards achieving universal access to electricity by 2025.

FARABA SUTU IN KOMBO EAST GETS WATER SUPPLY SYSTEMS

The unprecedented level of support from the international community provides The Gambia with the opportunity to transform the energy sector and emerge as one of the leading energy sectors in the sub-region and the African continent.

The project was jointly implemented by the Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and the Department of Water Resources under the Ministry of Fisheries and Water Resources of The Gambia.



> *The project components include reducing hunger , enhancing good health and well-being, improving the policy environment to create equal opportunities for children and women, as well as ensuring access to clean water and proper sanitization opportunities.*
> ***Said President Barrow***

Under the leadership of President Barrow, his administration has made significant strides towards achieving access to water supply which has contributed meaningful social and economic impact towards enhancing the quality of life for citizens and empowering them to lead dignified lives.

The project was inaugurated as part of the President's mandate to provide safer and cleaner drinking water across the length and breadth of the country. Despite the Government's efforts over the years, some rural communities still face challenges in overall water supply. However, President Barrow's administration is still committed to addressing the challenges faced by rural communities to access cleaner and safer drinking water.

While acknowledging the rapid population growth and its impact on the demand and supply rates for safe drinking water, the President said

> *My administration's collaboration with partners to construct water supply facilities country-wide is, therefore, strategic."*

He further highlighted that the installation of 494 tap points, 30 boreholes, 30 solar water pumping systems, and 20 water tanks with storage capacities ranging from 30,000 litres to 140,000 litres was meant to increase access to water.

The Government in partnership with the African Development Bank to construct and install 144 large and mini solar-powered water supply systems in five administrative regions of the country to provide quality drinking systems to an additional 400,000 rural dwellers. "Our commitment, therefore, to ensuring that rural Gambians have safe clean water is quite evident."

President Barrow also underscored the importance of water availability in people's daily lives and reiterated his Government's commitment to the welfare of all citizens.



AUDIENCES



STRONGER PARTNERSHIP WITH GAMBIAN PUBLISHERS

Journalism was in peril, faced with increased crackdowns on press freedom, and threats during the former regime. However, the environment took a drastic change ever since President Barrow assumed the Office of the Presidency in 2017.

The Gambia has seen significant progress in terms of press freedom during the Barrow administration, moreover, the country has been ranked 5th in Africa and 46th globally out of 180 member States of RSF Reporters Without Borders press freedom ranking in 2023.

Protecting and promoting 'free, independent and diverse' media in The Gambia is critical under the Barrow Administration. The President hosted a delegation of Gambian publishers, led by their President, Pap Saine of the Point Newspaper earlier in April. They discussed ways to strengthen the relations between the Government and the Publishers, without undermining Press freedom.

The relationship between the government and the media is crucial and President Barrow deemed it necessary to interface with the publishers to enhance greater understanding. Professionalism is fundamental to press freedom and democracy. The President encouraged the media to hold the Government and those in power accountable for their actions while promoting the possibilities in The Gambia and endeavour to bring visibility to the positive developments happening in the country, thus promoting citizens' rights, and access to information.

Considerable progress in press freedom and respect for divergent views have been realised. The Publishers commended and acknowledged the goodwill and positive atmosphere the media operates under President Barrow's leadership, but called on the Government to repeal draconian media laws still posing a threat to journalists.

Limited resources in running media housing is a major obstacle to advancing the media business. The Publishers lamented the limited business environment for the media, including limited advertisements, delays in receiving payment of invoices and access to information from some government institutions.



SUPPORT TO VICTIMS OF HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS

It could be recalled that the Truth Reconciliation and Reparations Commission (TRRC) was established in 2017 to look into the human rights violations of the former regime. Having concluded its public hearings in 2019, the final report was handed over to the Government in 2021. The report entails the human rights violations committed from 1994 to 2017 and provides comprehensive recommendations to hold those involved in committing heinous atrocities against the people of The Gambia and Ghana. This aims to promote reparations and reconciliation.

In a dialogue with the President, victims, and survivors of the 22-year rule of the previous regime, a delegation of the Alliance of Victim-Led Organisations demanded justice and speedy implementation of the TRRC recommendations, including the enactment of the Victims Reparations Bill, and other concerns.

In response to their quest, President Barrow stressed the Government was following the due procedures for the implementation of the TRRC White Paper, which might take a while since the Government has to follow the democratic processes.

President Barrow re-echoed his commitment to uphold human rights and the rule of law by supporting the implementation of the TRRC report. He assured the delegates of the Government's priority in making sure that victims and survivors are taken care of in terms of health, compensation, and wellbeing.

Massive human rights violations, including arbitrary detentions and violations, extra-judicial killings, as well as torture and ill-treatment under the former regime have been revealed through the TRRC processes, and they continue to impact the lives and livelihood of victims, victims' families, and the Gambian population at large.

PRESIDENT COUNTED IN 2024 POPULATION CENSUS



The Gambia holds a national census every ten years and the last one was carried out in 2013. To kick off 2024, His Excellency President Adama Barrow received delegates from The Gambia Bureau of Statistics as he was interviewed and counted in the 2024 Population Census.

The President spoke about the importance of a population census and how the counting plays a critical role in guiding planning, programme implementation, policy formulation and monitoring development progress in line with the National Development Plans. Data is important in development because it guides the government in every aspect of governance.

The Head of State appealed for public support in gathering information for the 2024 census, noting the significant role of the enumerators in getting correct data.

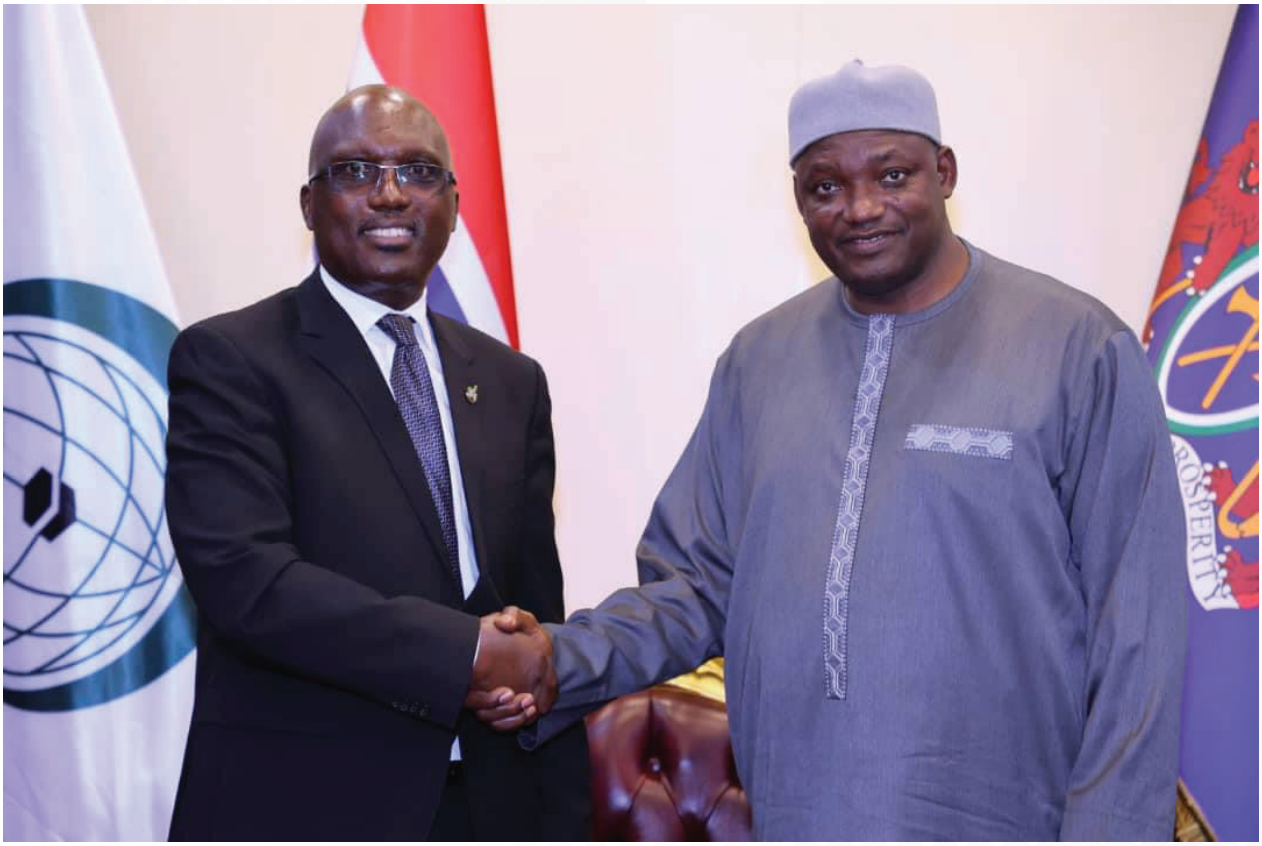
I called on all Gambians to be supportive and get counted.

The Gambia is reaping the benefits of digitalisation and making use of digital recording to collect and process data for the 2024 Population and Housing Census. The digital census will enable The Gambia Bureau of Statistics (GBOS) to produce accurate and timely statistics.

PRESIDENT BARROW WELCOMES ARIPO DELEGATES

His Excellency President Adama Barrow held talks with a delegation of the Africa Regional Intellectual Property Organization (ARIPO) on ratification of some of the protocols and how to use intellectual property to foster innovation and creativity for the prosperity of humanity.

ARIPO's IP initiatives align with the national strategy of The Gambia focusing on youth empowerment to help them in the creative sector in using their talents to create jobs, and wealth and transform people's lives.





PROMOTING GAMBIAN ENTERPRISES

DEVELOPMENT OF SUSTAINABLE AVIATION

The Barrow government continues to create an enabling environment for businesses to grow and encourages Gambian investors to invest in the country. In February, one such investment, NIRO Company Limited at the Banjul International Airport was inaugurated, adding to the economic landscape of The Gambia but also setting a precedence for innovation and success in the African aviation industry.



It provides employment opportunities and is expected to support the aviation sector and enhance the efficiency of air travel, paving the way for positive transformations and enhancing the nation's global standing. The facility serves as a testament to the potential that emerges from collaboration between the public and private sectors.



As we inaugurate this magnificent edifice, let us recognise the significance of NIRO Company Limited in influencing the future of our youths and the nation, and may it serve to inspire other young entrepreneurs to dream big, work hard, and contribute meaningfully to the economic growth of the country," said President Barrow.

Global Properties is one of the success stories in property development in the country. It has great achievements within a short span of time and is an inspiration for Gambians with the requisite knowledge to come home and engage in innovative investments. There is a conducive environment with a secure, peaceful, stable and protective legal operating environment for investment, which is critical for investors to have confidence in the country.



The Government is working on a land administration policy to regulate land operators and the sector.



AIMING TO BOOST LOCAL RICE PRODUCTION

Agriculture is the key sector for investment to achieve long-term food security as well as reducing poverty levels as stated in the SDGs. To achieve these goals, President Barrow's administration has been collaborating with key stakeholders in introducing an agriculture modernization project to enhance the sector's productivity and sustainability.

The social, economic, and environmental footprint of investment in agriculture and food systems cannot be underestimated hence, the Government deem it necessary to set out ways to increase rice production and the development of new technology and innovative ways of farming, with a focus on practical solutions that advance food productivity.



In efforts to create sustainable food security through rice production, Mr. Muhammed Jah CEO of Q-Group, and South Korean Consulate in The Gambia.



Rice production is a top priority as rice is the staple food for most Gambian families. Women farmers have been the backbone of rice production in the country but with limited technology, they could not advance their production. The partnership between Q-Group and South Korean partners is expected to change the scenario. Already Marou Farms is producing and packing rice from The Gambia.

The Government seeks to increase food multiplication projects and technical support projects to transform the livelihood sector. South Korea has been contributing immensely to seed multiplication and distribution to The Gambia Seed Growers Association and Gambian farmers.

INDUSTRIAL RICE PRODUCTION



In his Government's bid to promote industrialisation, President Barrow visited two sites in the Central River Region. At Bayaba, the Jah Group developed 1,200 hectares of land for industrial rice production in the Sami Central River Region. To facilitate his work, the Jah Group has invested in machinery to pump water from the River Gambia to the Sami rice field. In addition, he is rehabilitating the road leading to the rice field.

Mr Hamidu Jah aims to expand this initiative across all regions, targeting 15,000 hectares of land to produce enough food for all Gambian citizens.

Investing in scale local rice production will create jobs, grow our economy, and reduce reliance on foreign exchange to import rice and aligns with the President's pledges to the people, especially for the country's self-sufficiency in rice production by investing in locally produced agricultural products.

INDUSTRIAL BANANA FARMING



Swami Company is involved in industrial banana farming, sourcing water from the River Gambia at Kurof, in the CRR. The banana land is produced for both export and local markets. Their employees are mostly women and youth.

DELIVERING HEALTH CARE SERVICES

RURAL GAMBIA GETS STATE-OF-THE-ART HEALTH FACILITIES

The Barrow Government's commitment to bolstering the health sector was realised following, His Excellency President Adama Barrow's inauguration of five Health Centres in the provinces within one week to advance universal health coverage.



My government, through strategic investments and partnerships, continues to revitalise, expand, and upgrade existing health facilities nationwide, particularly in under-served areas, while constructing new ones with limited access."
President Barrow said.

The health facilities are:

NAME OF HEALTH CENTER	COMMUNITY	DISTRICT	REGION
Alkali Nyakudi	Jali	Kiang West	Lower River Region
Hon Assan Musa Camara	Tumana	Tumana	Upper River Region
Aja Juma Jallow	Makamang	Jimara	Upper River Region
Sheriff Mustapha Dibba	Salikenni	Central Baddibu	North Bank Region
Seyfo Jim Fatma Jobe	Chissay Majaw	Jokadou	North Bank Region

They all have the following facilities:

1. Examination room
2. Two Labour rooms
3. Antenatal room with 3 beds
4. Post-Natal with 3 beds
5. Counselling room
6. Reception
7. Office
8. Store
9. Male ward with 4 beds
10. Female ward with 4 beds
11. Paediatric ward with 4 beds
12. Waiting room
13. Immunisation and Birth Registration room
14. Laboratory
15. Out-Patient Department - OPD 2

STRONGER PARTNERSHIP IN FIGHTING CANCER



Assessing the capacities and needs of improving cancer programme infrastructure in The Gambia, will guide the country to put forward specific priority interventions towards cancer prevention and control. His Excellency President Barrow called for collaboration between The Gambia and key stakeholders in the fight against cancer during an audience with the leader of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Mr. Alfred Carago, with his team.

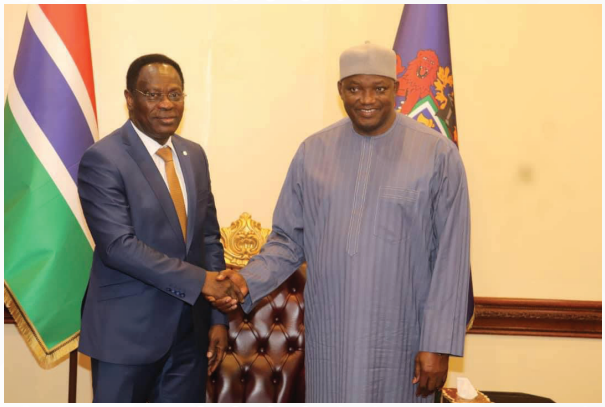
Emphasising joining forces will help leverage the Government's efforts to tackle a growing cancer burden in other to make a greater impact on the lives of people with cancer. He urged all the stakeholders to work together to sustain lifesaving opportunities for all those who are impacted by cancer to deliver the best possible outcomes for them.

According to the latest WHO data published in 2020, breast cancer deaths in The Gambia reached 26 or 0.20% of total deaths. The age-adjusted death rate is 4.44 per 100,000 of population ranks in The Gambia.

The Gambia Government has taken significant steps by providing scholarships for oncology fellowship training to build cancer care capacity to increase the limited number of trained oncologists hence improving patients' access to quality and equitable cancer care in The Gambia. Collaborating with partners like the UN agencies, The Government is taking a holistic approach to cancer control for continuous care. It will explore continuous dialogue and knowledge sharing to improve cancer treatment and radiation therapy in The Gambia.

The cancer investments required a lot of resources to change the cancer narrative. Cancer affects everyone, regardless of social status, age, or gender, and represents a tremendous burden for patients, families, and societies.

PRESIDENT ADAMA BARROW RECEIVES WAHO DIRECTOR GENERAL



Meeting the essential health needs of the people has always been the goal of the Government and it has contributed immensely to strengthening the health system by improving health care, responding to people's needs, lessening health care inequalities, and protecting equity in financing health care.

The Government of The Gambia has been working closely with the Ministry of Health and other health agencies towards meeting the health needs of the people.

Welcoming WAHO Director General, President Barrow emphasised that Health is a right and working in collaboration in the sub region is important in delivering services. The President further advised on strengthening subregional arrangements for resource mobilisation. Giving priority to health is important, especially when health tourism is putting financial stress on the national economy and negatively contributing to inflation.

The affordability of health care services has forced the Government to intervene to improve the efficiency and equity of these services to meet the essential needs of the people.

The Gambia has made a lot of progress, further motivating WAHO to commit to supporting the country to have the best health system in West Africa. Its support would focus on strengthening the surveillance system, capacity building, and the provision of life-saving equipment, and ambulances amongst others.

Barrow's administration strives to give more importance to health and is committed to building a stronger and more resilient health system. This is articulated in his vision to provide 1,500 beds at Farato Hospital, set up of national ambulance command center and construct modern theatre for kidney transplants and open-heart surgery.

NEW GLOBAL FUND GRANT CYCLE IN THE GAMBIA



"A healthy nation is a wealthy nation" The Government of The Gambia, in partnership with The Global Fund, will launch a new grant cycle worth US$40.9 million from 2024 to 2027. The grant aims to accelerate progress in the fight against HIV, tuberculosis, and malaria while strengthening health systems across the country.

The grant will cover different aspects of the prevention, treatment and support of HIV, tuberculosis and malaria, from equipment to strengthening laboratories, provision of medication, capacity building and logistics support, among others. This will contribute significantly to the achievement of universal health coverage.

The Gambia has made remarkable progress in its fight against HIV, tuberculosis, and malaria through investments and support from donors and partners. The Gambia is entrusted with the grant based on the country's performance in health care delivery.

DELIVERING ON THE PROMISE TO IMPROVE HEALTH

High-quality and equitable healthcare and health protection services are vital in improving and maintaining health, addressing health inequalities and protecting us from communicable and environmental threats.

Delegates of the Medical and Dental Association of The Gambia led by Dr. Lamin E.S. Jaiteh paid a courtesy call to His Excellency President Adama Barrow to brief him about the functions and challenges of the association. Among the challenges discussed were the welfare of doctors and healthcare workers. Dr. Jaiteh said there is a need to consider the welfare of doctors and health workers to increase the efficiency of work and the quality of service delivery.

Government's priority is to improve health care for Gambians and people living in The Gambia, which is in line with the Medical and Dental Association's vision.

The Association fosters collaboration by providing a forum for discussion on the medical profession's guidelines for patient management. It is an adviser to the Government and Non-Government Organisations that deal with health.

President Barrow's administration has been engaged in strategic partnerships with stakeholders in strengthening the health service delivery in the country. He acknowledged the role of the Medical and Dental Association and reiterated his continuous support to the Association and the health sector in general.





DELIVERING EDUCATION

GRADUATES AS AGENTS OF CHANGE

As the Chancellor of the University of The Gambia (UTG), His Excellency President Adama Barrow, in April graced the 16th Convocation Ceremony of students who have completed their studies at diploma, undergraduate, and postgraduate degree levels. The ceremony was held at the University Campus at Faraba Banta for the first time.

Before the Convocation ceremony, it has become a best practice that the Governing Council of the University of The Gambia visits the Presidency to pay homage and update the President on the preparations for the UTG convocation. President Barrow received the council and assured them of his support in successfully holding the convocation.



Graduation is an annual Ceremony that recognises and celebrates students who have completed their programmes of study. More than a thousand students in Agriculture, Education, Engineering, Law, medicine, information and communication technology, and journalism, amongst others, were awarded first and second Degrees.



For the first time in the history of The Gambia, the University anticipates awarding bachelor's degrees to 10 civil engineering students who have completed their studies.

The government places on building capacity through higher education to fill the skill gap in technical areas for national development. The President took pride in the newly inaugurated Faraba Campus, ' a permanent home of the University.'



while reiterating the call for citizens to pay their taxes so that the Government can use the funds wisely to advance the nation.

The new graduates were further encouraged to strive to become agents of change by "using their knowledge to be pro-active, innovative and resilient in solving society's challenges."

The President challenged and encouraged the graduates to a transformational journey questioning who among them could promise to invent a life-changing device for humanity. And how many are determined to develop new business models or revolutionise agriculture to transform the Gambian economy?

Nation building requires genuine patriotic change agents to identify, initiate, and guide the necessary change processes to shape the future through the positive social transformation of our institutions and communities." The President added.

THE LATEST CHAPTER IN ITS STORIED HISTORY



> *After thirty-four years of existence, the UTG now has a permanent home. The bitter experience of students trekking to and from rented halls and makeshift classrooms or, sometimes, attending classes under trees is now history"*
> ***said President Barrow.***



The campus is estimated is accommodate over 3,500 students at the same time while the Dr. Badara Alieu Joof library building has a capacity of 1,200 students.

Meanwhile, a new strategy is being piloted at the University of Applied Sciences, Engineering, and Technology (USET) through a World Bank project on Africa Higher Education Centers of Excellence.

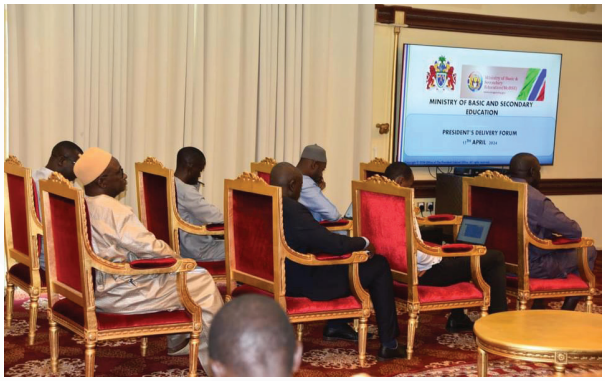


The administration is committed to establishing well-resourced TVET Centres (TVET Centres of Excellence and Agribusiness) in all regions across the country through World Bank support. This is part of ongoing efforts towards transforming education and training in The Gambia, in addition to supporting innovation and Entrepreneurship Hubs.

Alongside the inauguration, a foundation stone was laid for the commencement of Lot Two of the project funded by The Gambia Government in collaboration with international organizations such as the Saudi Fund, Islamic Development Bank, OPEC Fund, IsDB, Kuwaiti Fund, and BADEA.

Many partners are accompanying the Barrow administration in transforming the education sector. Stakeholders include UNESCO, the European Union, the Chinese Government, the Republic of Türkiye, the US Government, and The Government of South Korea.

MORE INFRASTRUCTURE FOR BASIC EDUCATION



Four schools in the Provinces have benefited from new classrooms. His Excellency President Adama Barrow joined Harrieta Sonko of MRC Holland Foundation to inaugurate new-storey building classrooms in Numuyel, Koina, Garawol in the Upper River Region and Badibu Illiassa in the North Bank, respectively.

The Government, in partnership with MRC Holland Foundation, added the newly-developed 12 classroom blocks with fully equipped computer labs, kitchens and stores, mainly assisting with community infrastructure, such as rehabilitation of school facilities, and water supply systems, thereby addressing various basic human needs at the grassroots levels.

The ground-breaking ceremonies set the stage for a brighter future for the schools. The communities have opened up to conventional education, giving opportunities to both boys and girls.

This incredible initiative aims to enhance school programmes by integrating technology into the curriculum to empower students to compete globally. Through the MRC Foundation, the new school buildings will accommodate hundreds of children from the surrounding communities.



PRESIDENT ADAMA BARROW LAUNCHED THE SIE FUND

His Excellency President Adama Barrow launched the Skills, Innovation, and Entrepreneurship (SIE) Fund in May 2024, at Sir Dawda Kairaba Jawara Conference Center, marking a significant milestone in entrepreneurship and vocational training aimed at transforming The Gambia's future.



The World Bank funds them in partnership with the Gambian Government and the Ministry of Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology (MOHERST). The SIE Fund project represents the first of its kind in the history of The Gambia since independence. This initiative addresses issues facing the youth and Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) sector, which are institutional for TVET Centres, training youth, scholarships for start-up support, and targeting job-ready sectors such as agriculture, tourism, engineering, and ICT.

SIE to Overcome Challenges to TVET Education

The shortage of financial resources to implement the desired improvement in TVET institutions and the lack of resources to provide TVET tuition for students needing skills and competencies to fit into the labour market. The third is insufficient capital to start and scale up businesses.



> The establishment of the SIE Fund is tactically situated within my Government's tertiary and higher education transformation agenda. As detailed in the 2023-2028 Recovery-Focused National Development Plan (YIRIWA), it has the prospect of increasing skills acquisition, employability, and job creation among Gambian youths and women."
> **President Barrow noted.**

The significance of this partnership cannot be emphasised. It seeks to provide young people with the skills and economic opportunities they need by integrating them into the community and social activities, 'fostering a more cohesive society.'

The SIE Fund supported by the World Bank is poised to enhance graduates' employability and job readiness, fostering a vibrant and future-oriented workforce.

PRESIDENT BARROW COMMENDS AUF INITIATIVE



Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie -AUF West-Africa Regional Director Professor Oiudad Tebba briefed President Barrow on the AUF Conference on scientific publication and academic mobility.

The AUF programme has supported the University of The Gambia in terms of academic mobility and the development of the first employability centre in Brikama, which supports students in careers and creates new job opportunities.

Students' experience is a key aspect of having expertise across the continent. UTG students will have the opportunity to be mentored and trained in various aspects, particularly creating their jobs.

Establishing a fully equipped employability Centre at Brikama to prepare students for life after university would link education and employment opportunities for students to leave the university with the mind that they could create their own job

opportunities. Such initiatives would align with the Government's Reforms to bring new initiatives and impact the people's lives.

WAYAS'S MISSION ALIGNS WITH THE GOVERNMENT'S VISION

Delegates from WAYAS and Management Development Institute (MDI) briefed the President on the activities of WAYAS in providing a counselling course on the mental health programme at MDI and offering mental health assessment and treatment to people in The Gambia, and The Gambian Diaspora since its establishment in 2019.

WAYAS' mission aligns with the government's vision to provide quality education to Gambians as the provision of professional Counselling impacts the lives of individuals, families and communities.

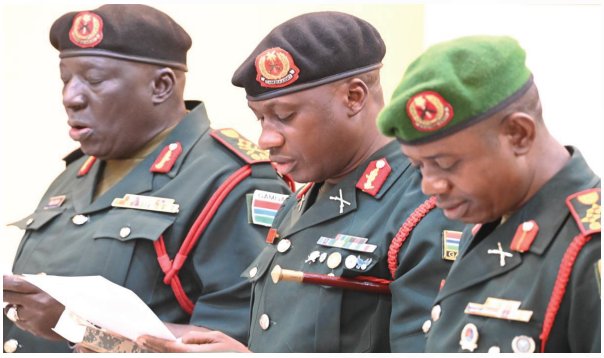
The training provides tools and insight to manage mental issues, such as anxiety and depression, and the training ranges from responding to mental health difficulties to using brief interventions to help people get on track. The trainees from different works of life in the social work field, teaching, and nursing would create a pool of human resources in Professional counselling.



SERVICE OFFICERS GET PROMOTIONS

GENERAL OFFICERS OF GAF DECORATED

On behalf of the Government and the people of The Gambia, President Barrow thanked the GAF High Command for their loyalty and enduring hardships to work for the nation, despite the constraints. In March 2024 at a decoration ceremony Lieutenant General Mamat O.A Cham, Major General Ousman Gomez and Brigadier General Sait Njie were decorated in recognition of their outstanding contributions and achievements to the nation.



As the Commander in Chief, the President assured them of his Government's support despite operating under a tight budget. The President said the country is working to build a strong foundation for democracy and the GAF is key in the reform process. He encouraged them to further enhance the friendly civil-military relationships, as they are in positions of trust.





Chief of Defense Staff, Lt General Mamat O.A Cham presented the symbol of his office to President Barrow signifying their loyalty and appreciation.

TEN SERVICE MEN RANKED COLONEL

Commander in Chief of The Gambia Armed Forces (GAF) decorates ten Senior Officers to Colonel Rank. The ceremony for presenting state decorations signifies enormous respect for members of the Armed Forces, who have made colossal contributions in making the nation's security their top priority in life.

Each security, adorned with their high office's symbols, pledged their loyalty to ensure the peace, unity and security of The Gambia, said having been promoted to the rank of colonel to the armed forces of The Gambia and thereby swore to bear true allegiance and absolute loyalty to the Republic of The Gambia.

The newly decorated service men Yero NA Jallow, Director of Operations, Musa Kah, Director of Medical Services, Omar B Bojang, Deputy National Security Adviser to the President, Seedy Joof, Program Officer Department of Political Affairs, Musa M Kambi, Director of Finance, Bunja Darboe, Director of procurement, Ousman Bah, Senior Logistic Officer, Abdoulie Bah, Commanding Officer One Infantry Battalion, Lamin K Sanyang, Director of Press and Public Relations GAF, and Abdoulie Mboob, Commanding Officer of State Guards Battalion.



Speaking on their behalf after the administration of six oats, the Director of Medical Service of GAF Colonel Musa Kah enjoined all of them to remain resolute and committed to their military profession, a profession of integrity, dedication to service, loyalty and availability.





The state decorations were awarded to servicemen who are deserving in character and have demonstrated patriotism, dedication and commitment to duty.

Sadly, shortly after the promotions, the nation lost one of its finest officers, the State Guard Commander Colonel Abdoulie Mboob. His sudden death left the nation in mourning. May his soul rest in peace.

CONDOLENCES

In May 2024 the Commander of the State Guard, Colonel Abdoulie Mboob's sudden death shocked the whole nation. The President visited the Mboob family to express his condolences and paid his last at the family home in Fajara.



OFFICE OF THE FIRST LADY COMPLEMENTS GOVERNMENT'S EFFORT

Her Excellency the First Lady of The Gambia, Madam Fatoumatta Bah-Barrow, and the delegation wrapped up their engagements in Washington DC with a high-level meeting with Her Excellency Samantha Power, Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

The First Lady thanked Ms Power for playing a crucial role in The Gambia's democratic transition during the 2016 political impasse, when Administrator Power served as the United States Ambassador to the United Nations.

The First Lady acknowledged the presence of USAID in The Gambia and the support they are rendering to the Gambian people. She called on the USAID to support more programmes in the areas of health and education.

Administrator Power committed and assured the First Lady of to USAID continuing to work closely with The Gambia Government in the areas of health and education.









In her first assignment as the President of the African First Ladies Peace Mission (AFLPM), First Lady Fatoumatta Bah Barrow signed a partnership with the Africa Center at the United States Institute of Peace (USIP), in June 2024.

Formalising the partnership between USIP and the AFLPM aims to building the capacity of African Women Leaders locally, nationally, and regional levels. It would strengthen their fund raising capacity to access resources and networking between coalitions of women peace-builders across the continent.

USIP is a national, non-partisan, independent institute founded by the US Congress and dedicated to the proposition that a world without conflict is possible, practical, and essential for national and global security. The Institute works with local partners to prevent, mitigate, and resolve violent conflict. The Institute established the Africa Center in 2020 to underscore its commitment to curbing violent conflict through dialogue and informing policy to achieve durable peace.






Her Excellency, Madam Fatoumatta Bah Barrow, held a discussion with Dr. Geeta Rao Gupta, Ambassador-at-Large for the Office of the Secretary of State for Global Women's Issues at the U.S. Department of State in May 2024. The two discussed contemporary challenges facing global women's health issues and shared experiences championing various initiatives in their respective countries to address some of these challenges. They exchanged ideas on common areas of interest and agreed to work together to empower women further and improve care for children in The Gambia.





Her Excellency, First Lady Fatoumatta Bah-Barrow, and her delegation have arrived in Abuja for the Seminar of First Ladies from member countries of the African Group of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) on Cancer. The seminar was held from the 14th to the 17th May under the theme

"Promoting Awareness against Cancer and Advocacy Programs in African Member States of OIC".

The programme is a continuation of the commitment made by the First Ladies of the OIC, as per the declaration of Istanbul on April 14, 2016. The commitment was made during a special session of the First Ladies leadership on cancer control held in Istanbul, Turkey. The session was held under the patronage of the First Lady of Turkey on the sidelines of the 13th Conference of Member States of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC).






HIGH-LEVEL REGIONAL SEMINAR ON PROMOTING CANCER AWA
AND ADVOCACY PROGRAMMES FOR THE MEMBER STATES OF THE OR
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THEME INNOVATIVE APPROACHES TO CANCER PREVENTION AND EARLY DETECTION








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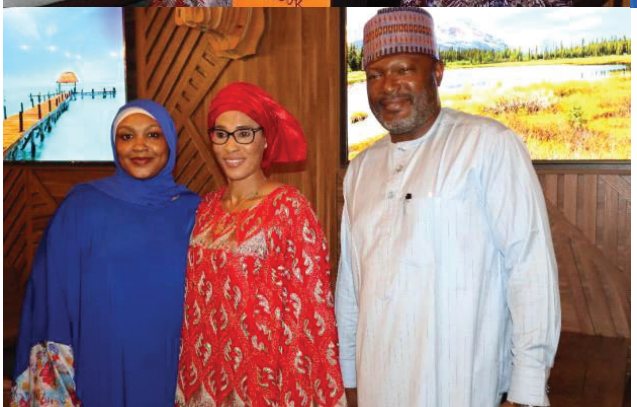
On the sidelines of the High-Level Regional Summit on Promoting Cancer Awareness and Advocacy Programmes for the Member States of the Organization of Islamic Cooperations (OIC) in Abuja, Nigeria, the Gambian First Lady held meetings with several potential investors and partners. Mr Dangote, businessman expressed interest to explore possible areas for investment in The Gambia.

During the First Lady's engagement with the Regional Director of International Atomic Energy Center for West Africa Mr. Shaukat Abdulrazak promised to support scholarships in Nuclear Medicine and Radiation Therapy.








Her Excellency Fatou Bah Barrow extend her heartfelt sympathies to the family of Rev. Father Bruno Toupan, the Christian community, and the people of The Gambia on his demise. Father Toupan was a distinguished gentleman who selflessly served The Gambia in various capacities. His contributions will always be remembered, and he will be deeply missed. May his soul rest in eternal peace.



H.E. First Lady Bah-Barrow attended the launch of the Initiative for Women in Education City, under the patronage of Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser, Chairperson of Qatar Foundation. The project aims to cater to the religious, developmental, and social needs of Muslim women in Qatar, providing a space for them to engage in dialogue, study, and worship together.

Her Excellency took a tour of the Women's Center and visited various country stands, including The Gambia, at the Qatar EXPO 2023 and had a closed-door meeting with Her Royal Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser at the Qatar Foundation Headquarters.















Her Excellency First Lady Fatoumatta Bah-Barrow, together with a high-level delegation, attended the 68 Session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) in New York.

The theme for the CSW 68 was "Accelerating the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls by addressing poverty and strengthening institutions and financing with a gender perspective".

On the sidelines of the CSW, Her Excellency and delegation graced the launching of the La International Trade Center-UN Women Global Champaign on Gender -Responsive Public Procurement, aimed to see women in business to improve both social and economic outcomes. It also involves supporting enterprise development to better position women for procurement opportunities, as well as setting standards to encourage all suppliers to be gender-responsive.



The Ministry of Gender Children and Social Welfare, in partnership with UNDP, UNICEF, World Bank, UNFPA, and The Gambian Government through The Gambia Permanent Mission organised an event the First Lady, Fatoumatta Bah-Barrow presided over. The side event at the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) focussed on empowering women and girls by addressing poverty and financing sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) programmes.










King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Centre has a long-standing partnership with The Fatoumatta Bah Barrow foundation (FaBB) and has been assisting the Foundation since inception in the areas of Health, Education, food security, and national development projects all geared towards complimenting the development agenda of The Gambia Government. The Gambian First Lady was in Saudi Arabia where she met with partners of her foundation.

In the other meetings, she met with World Assembly of Muslim Youth (WAMY), Al Balsam, World Muslim League and the Islamic Solidarity Fund, to renew the existing partnership on extending assistance to humanity more especially less privileged societies in The Gambia.

It was a successful visit as King Salman Aid has doubled the slots of Saudi visiting Doctors to The Gambia in 2024.



Think Equal, a multi-award winning social and emotional learning programme for children aged 3-6, the optimal window for co-creating positive pro-social neural pathways while the brain is still developing.
This Project seeks to achieve a global system change in education, introducing social and emotional learning as a compulsory new subject on national curricula worldwide. Think Equal is partnering with the Ministry of Basic Education and Future in our Hands on this Project.

Passionate about supporting children, Her Excellency the First Lady Fatoumatta Bah-Barrow graced the launching of the THINK EQUAL "EMPOWERING CHANGE THROUGH EDUCATION and The Gambia Teachers Union Award Night Gala Dinner at the Sir Dawda Kairaba Jawara Conference Center, Bijilo.



The First Lady, Fatoumatta Bah-Barrow graced the launch of the Free School Feeding Programme. The McGovern-Dole Food For Education project in The Gambia aims to provide daily nutritious meals to 57,000 students from 186 schools. The initiative helps to improve students' literacy skills and overall health, thereby continuing to improve education for all Gambian children. The project is known as "NA DINDING O LA KARANGO LEH KUMAYATA' (FFE-NDOKK)."

This five-year project is funded by the Catholic Relief Services (CRS) and the United States Department for Agriculture (USDA) and will be implemented by MoBSE, Catholic Relief Services (CRS), and partners such as Caritas Gambia and Future in Our Hands The Gambia.



The World Organization of United Cities and Local Governments Caring Territories Against Gender-Based Violence and the Banjul City Council organised a three-day International Training on Creating Safe Spaces for Women Victims of Violence in The Gambia. Her Excellency First Lady Fatoumatta Bah-Barrow graced the ceremony at the Sir Dawda Kairaba Jawara International Conference Centre.

The High-level training conference brought together women worldwide in the fight against gender-based violence. In her closing remarks, Her Excellency re-echoed her office's support to fight gender-based violence.



The Qatar Fund demonstrated remarkable generosity by donating medical items valued at $76,000 to the Urology Unit at the Edward Francis Small Teaching Hospital through the FaBB Foundation. The distinguished presence of the First Lady of The Republic of The Gambia, Fatoumatta Bah Barrow, and the Deputy Ambassador of the Republic of Qatar highlighted the significance of this contribution.

The Head of the Urology Unit, alongside other department heads and nurses, graciously received the donated items. Notably, the CEO of the FaBB Foundation, Mrs. Betty Saine, and her dedicated staff were also present to witness this meaningful collaboration.

FaBB foundation has been contributing immensely in The Gambia's health sector and is committed to improving the quality of healthcare services and facilities in The Gambia.

The Minister for health Dr. Ahmadou Lamin Samateh has tirelessly worked to create an environment that encourages and facilitates the involvement of organisations such as FaBB in the health sector.

The Qatar Fund and Qatar Embassy in The Gambia played a pivotal role which has undoubtedly enhanced the foundation's ability to provide effective medical care to those in need.



On this year's International Women's Day, the FaBB Foundation, under the esteemed leadership of Her Excellency, the First Lady of the Republic of The Gambia, extends warm wishes to all hardworking women worldwide. "We celebrate the remarkable contributions and achievements of women in every sphere of life." She said.

International Women's Day serves as a powerful reminder of the progress made towards gender equality, while also highlighting the challenges that still persist. It's a day to honour the resilience, strength, and determination of women who continue to break barriers and pave the way for future generations.

FaBB Foundation is committed to empowering women and girls, ensuring they have equal access to education, healthcare, economic opportunities, and leadership roles. Through various initiatives, the foundation continues to create a more inclusive and equitable society where every woman can thrive and fulfill her potential.

As we commemorate this day, let us recommit ourselves to championing the rights and dignity of women everywhere. Together, we can build a world where every woman is valued, respected, and given the opportunity to soar. Happy International Women's Day!"



During the African Peace Conference in Mauritania, Her Excellency First Lady Fatoumatta Bah-Barrow delivered the opening remarks at the Women and Youth Summit on Empowerment and Resilience. The summit was organised by the Abu Dhabi Forum for Peace under the leadership of Her Excellency Mariem Mint Ahmed Fadel Vall Dah, the First Lady of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania.

Her Excellency First Lady was honoured with the African Peace Award for her crucial role in supporting His Excellency the President who won the prestigious African Peace Award in 2024.





Annually, Madam Fatoumatta Bah Barrow partakes in the celebration of the momentous occasion of the "Baby of the Year" event. She personally presents baby gift items and cash prizes to the first, second, and third infants born in the New Year.

In a gesture of generosity, this year the initial prize amounted to D25, 000 for the first baby, while the second and third infants received D20, 000 and D15, 000, respectively and baby hampers.

The First Lady visited the Edward Francis Small Teaching Hospital, Serrekunda General Hospital, and the Bundung Maternal and Child Hospital as part of the annual Baby of The Year event.

Meanwhile, a delegation of the First Lady were in Brikama, Bwiam, Soma, Bansang hospital, Basse and Essau district hospital to dispense cash prizes and baby items.

Accompanying her were notable figures such as Betty Saine, the CEO of the Fatoumatta Bah Barrow Foundation, the Board Chairman of FaBB Foundation, Mr Lamin Jassey, Ministry of Health, a representative from The Ministry of Gender, The Mayoress of Banjul, Rohey Malick Lowe, and The Deputy Mayor of Kanifing Municipality, along with other dignitaries.








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