

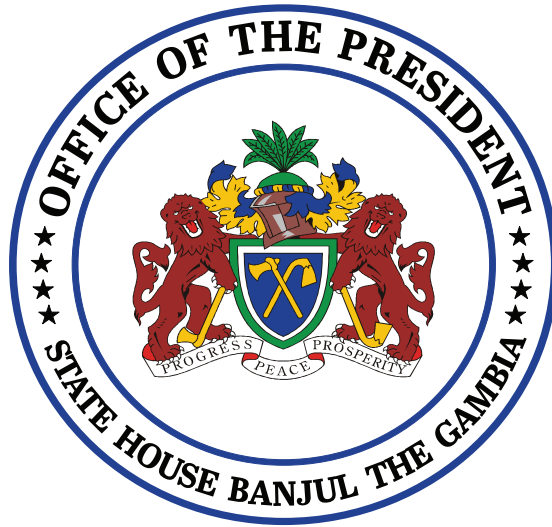
# STATE HOUSE NEWSLETTER

15<sup>th</sup> EDITION, DECEMBER 2024

## STRENGTHENING GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP

CONFÉRENCE DES CHEFS D'ÉTAT ET DE GOUVERNEMENTS  
SESSÃO ORDINÁRIA DA AUTORIDADE DOS CHEFES DE ESTADO E DE GOVERNO





— — — *State House*  
**NEWSLETTER**

**15<sup>TH</sup> EDITION**

*The Presidential Newsletter of  
The Republic of The Gambia*

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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

My sincere appreciation for the production of the 15th Edition of the State House Newsletter goes to the Media and Communications Unit staff. It is gratifying that the team maintains its commitment to ensuring that our readers continue to access authentic information about the engagements of the Head of State, His Excellency Adama Barrow, President and Commander in Chief of the Republic of The Gambia.

I acknowledge the contribution of the Media Officer, Mabinta Colley, a new addition to our team, bringing more energy and professionalism to our efforts to amplify the visibility of the Presidency's activities.

I commend the Audio-visual team -Junkung Janneh and Momodou Njie, Senior Presidential Photographer Sulayman Touray and our latest addition, Tijan Bojang ensuring the visual and audio materials to complement our text for publication are available.

The incredible yet invincible support of Social Media Officer Zainab Faal deserves mention.

Under the leadership of President Adama Barrow, we made history by maintaining a regular biannual production of the State House Newsletter for eight years. This 15th edition coincides with the 60th Independence Anniversary celebration of The Gambia. Production of the newsletter is possible due to the teamwork at the Presidency. Our gratitude goes to all the unit and department heads and their teams for their support in facilitating our work.

I acknowledge the support the management, administrators and support staff offer my team in a safe and secure environment we enjoy.

**Amie Bojang-Sissoho**

Director of Press and Public Relations

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# OVERVIEW

This 15th edition of the State House Newsletter analyse the engagements of His Excellency President Adama Barrow. Developments in key sectors such as Agriculture, Health, Education and Foreign Policy are also highlighted in the booklet.

The areas under review include the analyses of the Presidential Delivery Forums and National Economic Council Meeting, a monitoring mechanism the President capitalises on to be informed, on some of the key economic indicators.

The Newsletter covers significant strides in education, as the government is transforming higher education and expanding scholarship to national and international students to encourage innovation, inclusive and gender-equitable.

Under agriculture, the Ministry has procured 180 tractors, 20 rotavator boats, 340 Mt certified rice seed, and the procurement of 28,000 tons of fertilisers, among others in achieving rice self-sufficiency by 2030.

Significant achievements have been made in the Fisheries sector as 20 artisanal fishing boats have been handed over to the Gunjur community to boost youth employment, and curb irregular migration.

Other areas include the President's activities with the diplomatic corps to strengthen The Gambia's bilateral ties, swearing-in of Ministers, audience in the quest to improve development.

Finally, the Newsletter also covers the Office of the First Lady's engagements in her efforts to complement the President's development initiatives.

# PRESIDENTIAL FORUMS

## NATIONAL ECONOMIC COUNCIL



The second phase of the National Economic Council Forum updates President Adama Barrow and other Executive members about the state of the economy. Gambia Revenue Authority, Gambia Investment & Export Promotion Agency, Central Bank of The Gambia, Ministries of Tourism and Culture, Finance, Trade and Agriculture met to update the President on the state of the economic development in August 2024.

President Adama Barrow acknowledged the updates from the key players in the economy and gave guidance to policy issues.

The presentation made by Deputy Chief of Staff Mr. Alieu Loum stated that The Gambian economy has accelerated by 4.8% in 2024, and foreign exchange bureaus continue to operate smoothly following the publication of foreign exchange guidelines, which promote

a transparent, fair, and liquid foreign exchange market

The monthly collection of Gambia Revenue Authority (GRA) and the excise and domestic tax had increased in July 2024, and the later by 23%. GRA has reformed initiatives such as SISPA- a digital tax stamp for excisable goods. The initiative is ongoing and showing signs of positive impact.



In other to combat tax evasion, GRA has also launched the second component of the SISPA project, which is the marking of fuel products dumped at petrol stations, and a digital way bridge, which detects the tonnage of all cargos going through the bridge. As part of the implementation of the National Export Strategy 2021-2025, GIEPA launched The Gambia E-market platform, Gambia Export Promotion and Tourism Destination videos in July. The institution seeks executive assistance in the documentation of additional investment lands for agriculture and industrial development in all regions.



Reports also indicated that the WACOMP project under the Ministry of Trade have established three onion curing facilities in three regions, helped women onion farmers manage the marketing of their produce at a competitive price in 2024, and will be replicated in the remaining regions of the country. In addition, the Food Reference Lab in Abuko has been completed and is currently waiting to install the last batch of equipment from UNIDO.

To display compliance with standards and also help tourists make well informed decisions, the Ministry of Tourism is working to introduce placards for registered tourism establishments.

Towards achieving rice self-sufficiency by 2030, the Ministry of Agriculture has procured 180 tractors, 20 rotavator boats, 340 Mt certified rice seed, and the procurement of 28,000 tons of fertilisers.



# DELIVERY FORUMS

## MINISTRY OF PUBLIC SERVICE

The quarterly Presidential delivery forum was initiated under the Barrow government to review the state of projects for frank discussions on critical issues and decision-making. The Deputy Chief of Staff and his team ensure that relevant institutions deliver towards government development priorities.

The Ministry of Public Service, with support from the World Bank, is spearheading a Public Administration Modernization Project - PAMP, which

aims to improve fiscal and human resource management capacity for improved service delivery.



### Outcome of the Project:

- ▶ Strengthen the management of public revenue expenditures and the government's audit reports to improve accountability and decision-making.
- ▶ Strengthen public administration.
- ▶ Improve transparency and citizen engagement in service delivery.

To successfully attract, retain and motivate technical and professional personnel into the civil service, the Ministry's presentation indicated that it has introduced the following reforms:

- ▶ Pay reform
- ▶ Pay and grading review
- ▶ Pension reform
- ▶ Recycling of loan scheme among others

Key among the reform initiatives in the Public Service is enhancing discipline, ethical conduct and high performance of civil servants. Electronic clocks have been installed in 20 Ministries, and a further 100 procured to be installed in MDAs. This will instill discipline to promote good governance, transparency and accountability among civil servants and improve the image of the civil service in time management.

During the session, President Barrow acknowledged the Ministry's effort and suggested that the Ministry set up a monitoring team to add to the professional guidance to ensure Ministries and civil servants become more productive.

Recruitment guidelines have been developed to outline the processes, best practices and strategies for recruiting and selecting candidates for a job to re-institutionalise meritocracy, due process and professionalism in personnel administration. The Ministry strategically reviewed the General Orders and the Public Service Act 1991, including developing and reviewing policies and other documents. The reviews aim to improve service delivery and the welfare of civil servants.



The Barrow administration saw the need to restore Public Service core values and create behavioural change, hence the Government of The Gambia established the Ministry of Public Service aimed at providing efficient and effective civil service.

## MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE

At its appearance at the third quarter of the Delivery Forum, the Ministry of Agriculture updated the Presidency on its recent achievements and developments since its last appearance in March 2024.

A promising transformation has started in the agriculture sector as the government is increasingly using innovative approaches to improve the agriculture sector.

After President Barrow challenged the Private sector to engage in commercial agriculture to boost rice production in The Gambia, Jah Oil developed 1,200 hectares of land in the Central River Region for industrial rice production. The new entrant enhances commercial rice cultivation, along with Marou Farms and other commercial farmers.





At the delivery forum, the Ministry of Agriculture reported that it had distributed eleven thousand bags of fertiliser at no cost, separate from the heavily subsidised fertiliser for farmers. In addition, over 200 metric tonnes of rice seeds and 400 tonnes of maize seeds were also distributed to farmers nationwide at no charge. The Ministry also ploughed over nine thousand hectares of land for farmers and subsidised costs to increase crop yields by promoting healthy plant growth. The Ministry has supported private and commercial sectors with over twenty million Dalasi grants to enhance farmers' access to finance and resilience, increasing productivity and production.

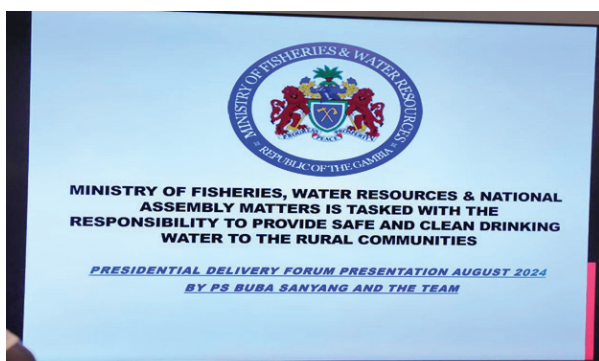
In addition, the Ministry reported that it established the National Rice Secretariat under the Gambia Accelerated Rice Sufficiency Initiative (GARSI), which is responsible for aggregating all activities regarding rice in the country, creating a pathway for rice self-sufficiency.

## MINISTRY OF FISHERIES

The government's intervention to encourage sustainable and aquaculture development is necessary for food security. As a result, the Ministry of Fisheries, Water Resources, and National Assembly Matters and donor partners embarked on the Fish 4 ACP project to unlock the potential of oysters in The Gambia, improve processing and handling, and thereby contribute to economic prosperity, and employment opportunities.

During the Presidential Delivery Forum, the Ministry also stated that it had embarked on another project, dubbed, the EU-Gambia Sustainable Fishing Partnership Agreement. The project seeks to support the management measures for fisheries, develop scientific and research capacities, and the conservation of fragile ecosystems.

The Fisheries Ministry has handed over 20 artisanal fishing boats with the aim of supporting youth and women in the fishing sector and addressing the issue of illegal migration. The project targets coastal fishing communities, migrant returnees, Gambian fishermen associations, and youth groups.



To expand sustainable aquaculture development in the country and reduce pressure on *capture* fisheries, the Ministry has registered and marked artisanal fishing vessels to fight against illegal fishing while ensuring the traceability of fishery products.

To ensure that people have access to clean, safe and hygienic facilities, the Ministry reported having identified public places like schools, markets, and health centres for constructing public latrines.

On water resources, the Ministry has installed 55 solar-powered water supply systems across the four provincial and West Coast regions. The second phase of the project is expected to begin in early 2025 to increase water accessibility in the communities.



President Barrow was satisfied with the Ministry's activities. However, he expressed discontent with the delay of projects in some communities and advised the Ministry to put more effort into social projects. He urged the Ministry to fast-track the testing and create considerable employment for women and youth to generate income growth.

## MINISTRY OF BASIC AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

The Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education (MoBSE) led by Permanent Secretary, Louis Moses Mendy updated on the overall situation of Basic and Secondary education outlining developments in the infrastructure, education quality and human resource capacity of the Ministry's quarterly Presidential Delivery Forum, held at the State House in October 2024.

As part of the government's effort to support marginalised and disadvantaged youths, MoBSE has enrolled over two thousand students through the Second Chance Education Policy, which had success stories, including students in higher education. In addition, the



Ministry also reported on its support to seventeen Islamic /Arabic Centres, and others benefited from sustaining their centres through gardening and other ventures. The support strengthens religious schools to improve and nurture academic achievement. Donor partners contributed to advancing access to education in remote and needy communities, and policies have been implemented to review and make the school curriculum inclusively relevant to advancing the country.



The Government of The Gambia in collaboration with MRC Holland and other donors provided thousands of school furniture, over two thousand desktops, office computers and printers in addition to constructing and renovating classrooms, toilets, kitchens and teachers' quarters across the country. The gesture aims to make education more accessible and motivate teachers to go for posting in rural and remote areas. MRC Holland also constructed the first Regional Education College in Basse and a Science lab in Kaur.

President Adama Barrow commended the Ministry and its technical departments for a comprehensive presentation. He thanked the donors for their support and praised Mrs Henrietta Sonko of MRC Holland for her diligent coordination,

supporting the government, and providing infrastructures and other facilities needed to advance education.

## SITE VISITS

Governance and accountability come with monitoring and evaluation of projects for effective and timely implementation. H.E. President Barrow has conducted numerous visits to project sites in many parts of the country.





The visits accord the President the opportunity to see for himself, and ask questions to gather first-hand information on the progress of on-going works.

## THE GAMBIA HOSTS OMVG CONFERENCE

The Gambia has witnessed a remarkable progress in electricity expansion and moving faster from fossil fuels to meet the climate change goals. The country's capacity has substantially increased to 25,418 per annum under the Barrow government compared to 3,755 in the previous government. The increase indicates a total of 51% since 1965. In December 2024, the former Chairman of OMVG and President of The Gambia presided over the 11th Ordinary Session of the conference of the Organisation for the Development of The Gambia River Basin (OMVG) at Sir Dawda Kairaba Jawara International Conference Center.





The OMVG programme generates and extends the electricity network to the four OMVG member countries (The Gambia, Guinea, Senegal and Guinea-Bissau). Additionally, the sub-regional body increases access to electricity, meets the demands of the citizens, fosters economic cooperation among member states, and reduces the dependence on fossil fuels.



At the conference, Member States signed the Conventions on the legal

status of the Kayanga/Geba and Koliba/Corubal Rivers, thereby acquiring and leveraging the shared status of the international rivers for shared socio-economic development.



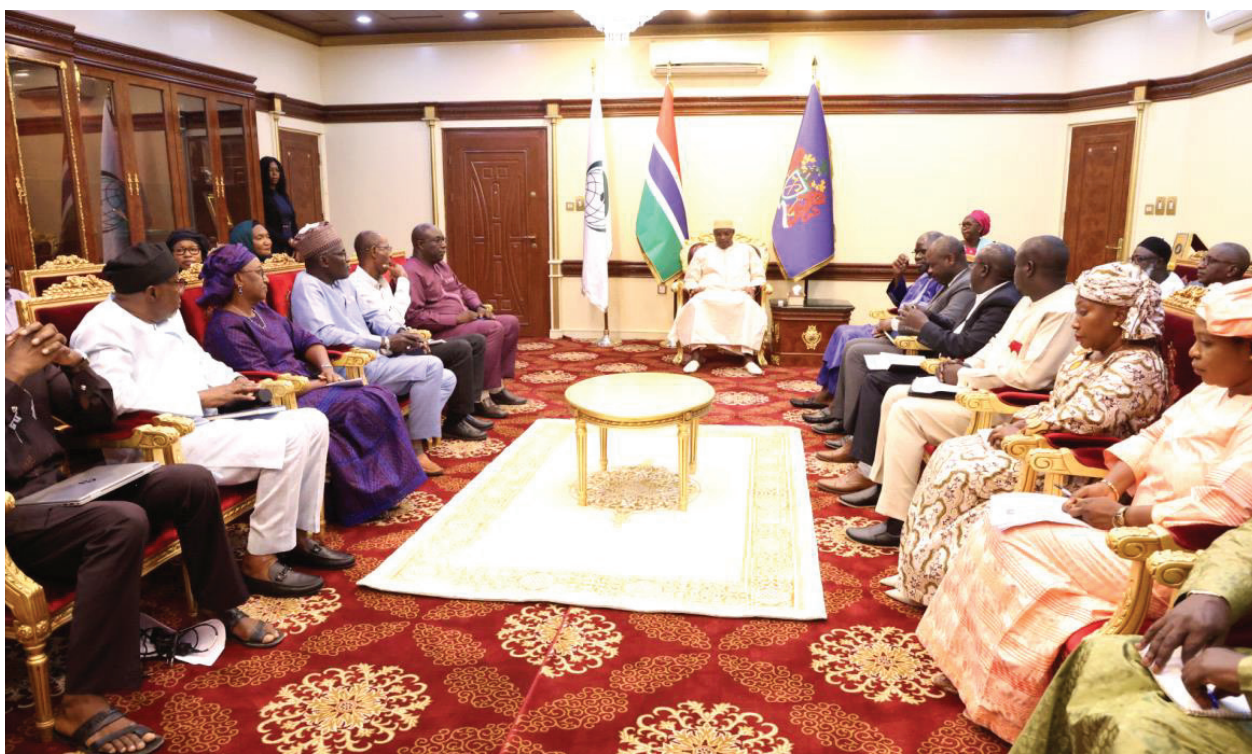
The conference also brought together Prime Minister Ousmane Sonko and officials from member State countries to renew the leadership of the OMVG, which rotates among the Authority of Heads of State and Government.

## COMMISSION ON STATE-OWNED ENTERPRISES

As part of the Government's Public Sector Reform agenda to hold institutions accountable, in February 2023, President Barrow presided over the signing of Performance Contracts with State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs), to tackle underperformance in the institutions. After the establishment of the SOE Commission, notable Gambians with expertise in various fields were appointed to enhance service delivery performance.

In June 2024, the Commission on State-Owned Enterprises and the National Water and Electricity Company - NAWEC's Board and management presented the assessment of NAWEC's performance for 2021-2022. The evaluation included NAWEC's financial, technical, operational, and management performances for the review period. The Commission determined that NAWEC only achieved 30% and 20% of the targets set for its Key Performance Indicators in 2021 and 2022, respectively.

In recognition of NAWEC's recent efforts, President Barrow instructed the Commission to implement its recommendations while taking account of the recent steps NAWEC took. The Executive Secretary of the Commission, Mr. Bai Madi Ceesay, informed the meeting that they used 2017 as a baseline for the Key Performance Indicators.



The Commission reduced the salaries of NAWEC staff by 5% for not meeting the Key Performance Indicators (KPI) targets set for 2021-2022. The decision did not go well with the officials of NAWEC, as they argued that using 2017 as a baseline for assessment was not fair because NAWEC did not have audited accounts for that year and faced a difficult transition. Nonetheless, the SOE Commission will fully implement future appraisal recommendations, considering the support NAWEC is currently receiving from the Government of The Gambia and Partners.

The Session advised top management to take the challenges seriously, as electricity is crucial to the people, and they must deliver on their promise.

As a result, the Managing Director of NAWEC, Gallo Saidy, accepted the decision and pledged to work harder with his team for better performance.

He emphasised that the presence of the senior management served as a testimony for everyone to take responsibility for improving their performance.

## ENGAGING AT THE GRASSROOT LEVEL

The Barrow administration blew a historic chance that created a new and inclusive society based on shared values and mutual respect. Under the coordination of the Office of the President, a regional consultative forum was established to build an all-inclusive society, especially the provincial people in the process of policy-making. The Gambian leader, President Adama Barrow, sees it paramount to engage policies from a grassroots perspective that encompasses the views, needs and aspirations of communities. He, therefore, advised the national



preparatory committee to engage the local people. The committee was headed by six representatives from the Office of the President.



Forty-five Consultative Dialogue sessions were held country-wide in 45 districts from the 3rd – 11th July 2024. The programme enabled local people to come together and engage in dialogue, decision making and ways to tackle local challenges together. The dialogue focuses on six thematic discussions covering the political environment, religious tolerance, ethnic diversity,

sovereign security, safeguarding the media and irregular migration.

The Regional Governors and Chiefs have been tasked to support the Committee in this important endeavour to collect grassroots voices on the theme: Our Collective Responsibility of Preserving the Nation, Safeguarding the State and Securing our Resources.



# DIPLMACY

## PRESENTATION OF DIPLOMATIC CREDENTIALS

The Government of The Gambia, committed to enhancing the well-being of the Gambian people, has been playing an active role in establishing and expanding trade and investment connections that lead to tangible outcomes.

Towards the end of 2024, His Excellency

President Adama Barrow received the credentials of three designated Ambassadors to The Gambia. The diplomats were from the Republic of Chad, Mrs. Kalzeube Neldinkingar Madjimta, the United Nations Country Representative, Mr. Karl Frederick Paul, and the Ambassador from the Kingdom of Spain, María Dolores Ríos Peset.



Following the presentations, President Barrow expressed that his Government's Foreign Policy centres on strengthening and deepening relations with other countries, promoting peace, security, the economic and social developments. He used the opportunity to congratulate them and extend felicitation to their Heads of State.

Intra-regional trade would boost markets and strengthen regional cooperation and socio-economic development in

a rapidly evolving global economy. In a bilateral meeting with the Chadian Ambassador, President Barrow highlighted the potential for African countries to enhance bilateral relations and cooperation to facilitate the free movement of goods and services.

The Gambia has established a strong relationship with the UN System and is expected to strengthen during the tenure of Mr. Karl Paul. In a meeting with the UN System Resident Representative,



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discussions centred on security sector reforms, human rights, peacekeeping missions, and the preservation of peace. President Barrow, dedicated to peace and stability, expressed optimism for a new era of improved relations and cooperation between Banjul and New York.



The designated UN Representative congratulated the progress made in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and congratulated President Barrow and the people of The Gambia.

In a separate engagement with the Spanish Ambassador, the Gambian and Spanish sides expressed their mutual interest in collaborating to address poverty. The President thanked the Spanish government for their extensive support to The Gambia, emphasising the strength of their bilateral relationship. Additionally, he conferred with the Ambassador on the possibility of exempting diplomatic passport holders from visa requirements.

The Spanish Embassy based in Senegal improved consular services and introduced the Secular Migration Programme, aimed at creating employment opportunities for Gambians in Spain.



## THE GAMBIA-SPANISH OPT TO BUILD RESILIENT BILATERAL RELATIONS

The Gambia and Spain speed up their relations by signing two significant memoranda of understanding on Circular Migration and Security Cooperation.

The migration agreement will enable Gambians to legally migrate and work in industries to tackle labour shortages in Spain. On the other hand, the Security Cooperation Agreement aims to enhance cooperation in addressing security challenges through information sharing and intelligence to combat organised crime and other security threats.

The two agreements are crucial for facilitating legal migration and ensuring stability and security. Honourable Bueno emphasised that Spain commits to safe, regular and humane migration and the fight against human trafficking. President Barrow welcomed the Spanish

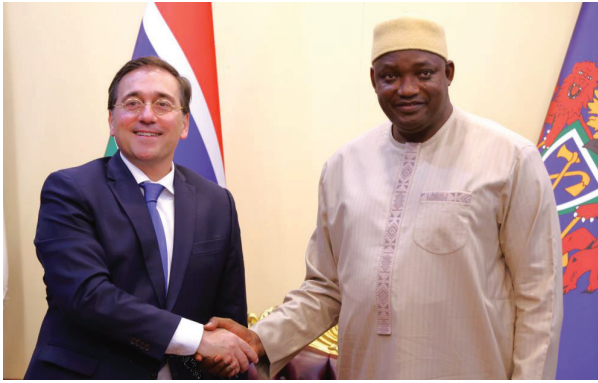
partnership in transforming Irregular migration into legal migration.



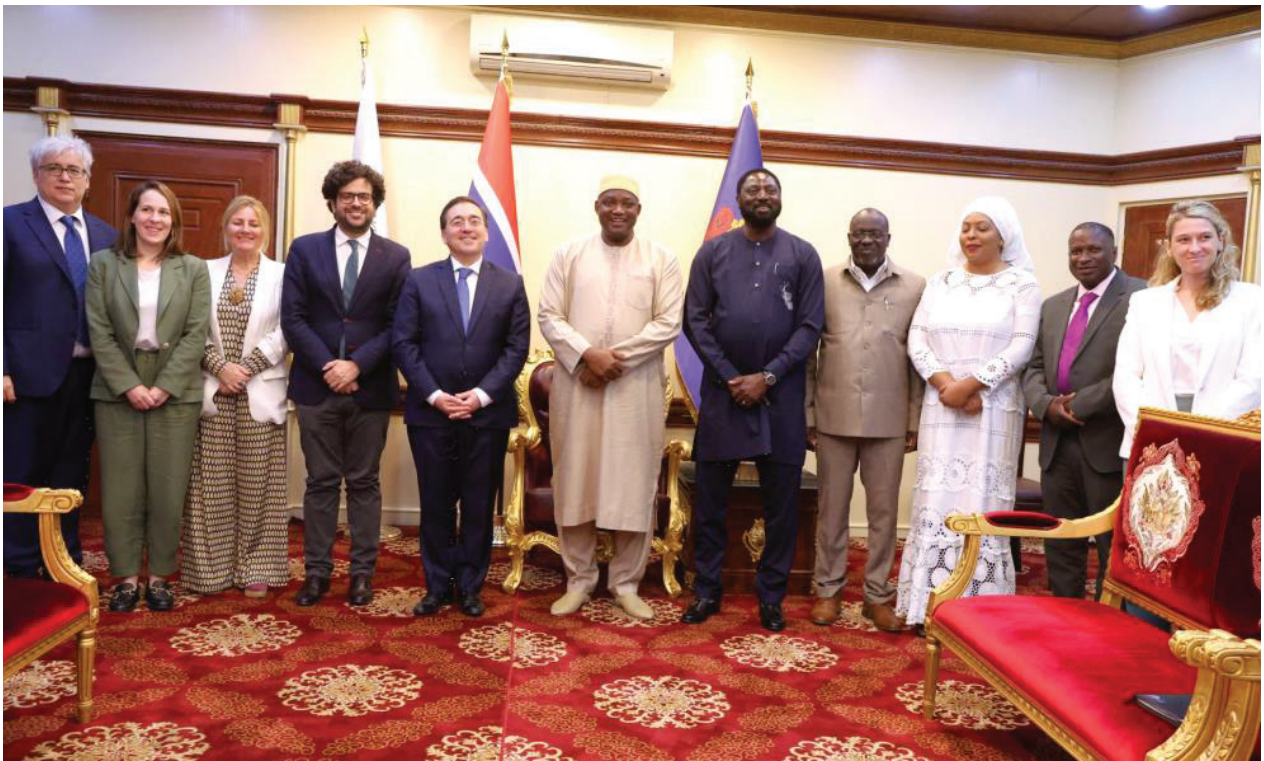
The State visit highlights strengthening ties between The Gambia and the Kingdom of Spain, focusing on bilateral development. By addressing key areas such as migration and security, both nations aim to unlock new opportunities for mutual benefit, enhancing their partnership.

President Adama Barrow hosted the Spanish Minister for Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation, Honourable José Manuel Albares Bueno, at State House in Banjul, prior to the State visit.





The visit marks an important occasion to deepen cooperation in education, health, regular migration, security and anti-crime sectors. Other areas discussed included democracy, human rights issues and following due processes in the Transition Justice programme. The visit will drive progress in strengthening the partnership between The Gambia and Spain.



## THE GAMBIA-GHANA OPT TO ENHANCE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The government has a standing history of taking a pragmatic approach to its relations with foreign countries and has continued to play a significant role in regional politics.

The Gambia-Ghana Cooperation is one of the major foreign policy initiatives of the Barrow administration aims at building capacity in fighting insecurity and enhancing economic development.

President Barrow is optimistic that the two countries will continue to champion sustainable security, facilitate trade and investment, and promote prosperity in their countries.



The Gambia and Ghana enjoy stable and peaceful relations. 'Ghana Town,' a residence for Ghanaian migrants in the country, with a population of over one thousand and five hundred inhabitants, was established in 1961. The Gambia's overwhelming openness to citizens of neighbouring countries is essential, as it defines who we are as a nation.



The Gambia-Ghana bilateral relations had been nurtured over the years with various cooperation strengthening their ties. These include the education, trade and security sectors.

In July, Former Ghanaian President H.E. Nana Akufo-Addo visited the country for a one-day working visit and held a tete-a-tete meeting with President Barrow. The meeting highlighted their commitment to strengthening the long-standing tie of friendship and cooperation between the two countries—a relationship based on shared values, peace, and prosperity.



Additionally, their discussion fruitfully cited the twenty Gambian engineering students who graduated from Ghana in 2024, amongst many other areas of bilateral cooperation.

## BISSAU'S 60TH CELEBRATION OF ARMED FORCES DAY

The bond between The Gambia and Guinea-Bissau has grown increasingly tight as both countries continue to grow, allowing their citizens to embrace economic and social interactions.



President Barrow participated in the joint commemoration of Guinea-Bissau's 51st Independence Anniversary, the 60th celebration of Armed Forces Day, and the centenary celebration of Amílcar Cabral. He was among other Heads of State and invited dignitaries from across Africa, who were honoured to decorate veteran fighters at the joint colourful event.

H.E. Omaro Sissoco Embaló, Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of Guinea-Bissau, paid tribute to past heroes, from Amílcar Cabral to Nino Vieira and other pioneers of African liberation. In his address, President Embaló called for an end to the culture of violence and preached the importance of peace. He also emphasised the need to conduct elections in an atmosphere of law and order. H.E. Embaló expressed his gratitude to President Barrow for accepting his invitation, stating that he was pleased to receive him in Guinea-Bissau.



## THE GAMBIA AND SENEGAL DIPLOMATIC TIES FLOURISHES

The Gambia and Senegal continue to make steady efforts to deepen and broaden the scope of the bilateral cooperation. Upon the invitation of President Bassirou Diomaye Faye in November, President Barrow joined Senegal to mark the Commemoration of the massacre of West African tirailleurs (riflemen) French troops killed for

demanding their pay at Thiaroye in 1944. The Commemoration was to restore the honour and dignity of the fallen riflemen.



The Gambian President was among the leaders who laid a wreath at the Thiaroye cemetery to pay respect to the fallen heroes.



The Senegalese Tirailleurs were among West African army troops who fought for the French during colonial days. After their repatriation at the Thiaroye military camp in Senegal, the African soldiers demanded their unpaid wages, which did not go well with the French, and they massacred them.

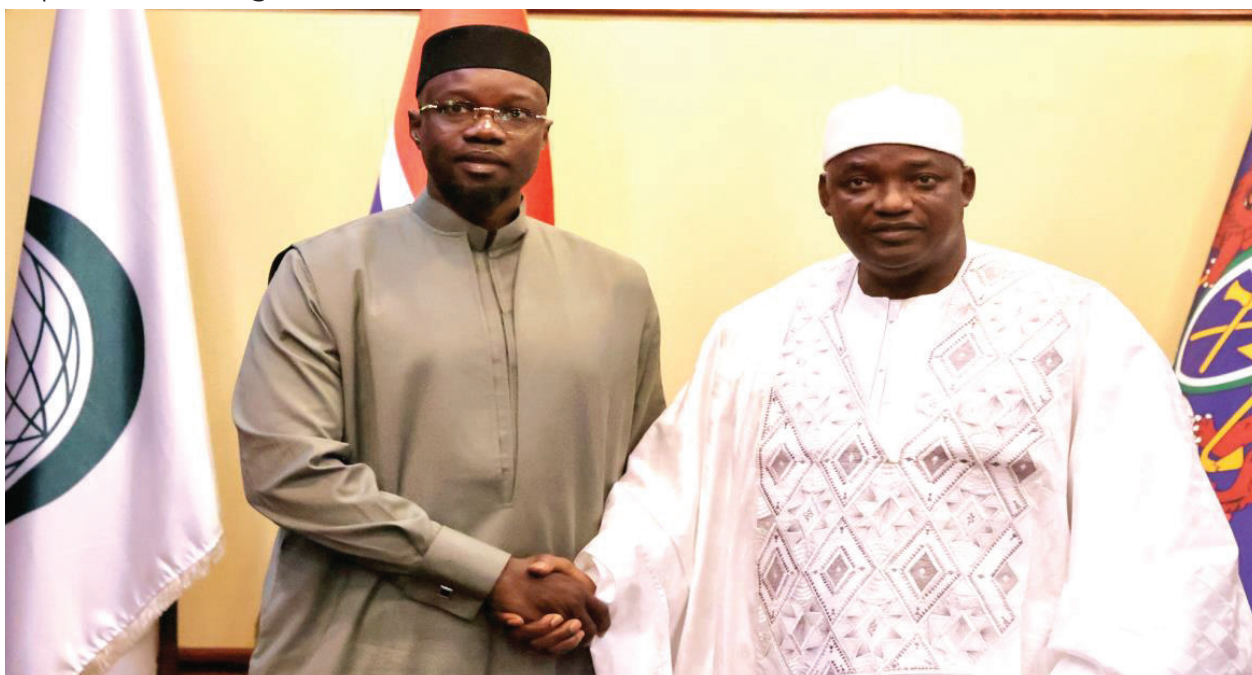
The high-level Summit established in 2018 continues to bring the Gambia and Senegalese governments closer to the people. Barely a month after the OMVC Conference, held in Banjul, Prime Minister Ousman Sonko visited the country for a two-day working visit to attend The Gambia- Senegal Economic, Trade and Investment Forum.





The Forum fosters connections to enhance cooperation and strengthen trade partnerships, which aligns with The Gambia's strategic vision for investment and economic diversification between the two nations.

After the conference, Senegalese Prime Minister Sonko called on President Barrow at the State House in Banjul. The duo held an audience where the President conveyed his salutations to his colleague and brother, President Basiru Diomaye Faye of the Republic of Senegal.



During the closed-door meeting with his guest, President Barrow called on the officials of Senegal and The Gambia to work towards strengthening the historic ties between the two countries and sustain the achievements towards integration. The shared values, cultures and languages characterised the uniqueness of the relationship between the two countries. They have the potential to showcase a shining example of African integration and Pan-Africanism by working to ease movements at the border communities. The two sisterly countries could deepen their partnership, especially on border issues based on peace, security, trade, and transport, among others.



Vice President H.E. Muhammed B.S. Jallow hosted the Senegalese Prime Minister and acknowledged the importance of enhancing cooperation in the trade sector.

## SAUDI FUND FOR DEVELOPMENT

Saudi Fund for Development -SFD contributes to financing projects in developing countries, mainly Africa and Asia, to foster development and cooperation. The entity has contributed immensely to the infrastructure development of The Gambia, including education, health, and road networks, among others.



During H.E. President Barrow's visit to the Holy City of Makka, Saudi Arabia, he met with the General Manager of Africa Operations of the Saudi Fund for Development -SFD, Mohammed A. Alshammari. They discussed the progress of projects the SFD is funding in The Gambia, as well as exploring new areas of cooperation.



The Fund's active projects are the 50km Bertil Harding Highway, feeder roads in the West Coast Region and the Kanifing Municipality, and the Greater Banjul Water and Electricity Expansion projects. While these projects registered progress, there were some delays, due largely to re-locating utility services and demolition of the obstructions on the roads' corridors. The principals recognised the resumption of work and committed to supporting the contractors in completing the projects on time.





The President thanked the SFD representative for a long partnership since 1977 and urged SFD to expand their portfolio to expand rural road constructions and related infrastructure investments.

## GUEST OF HONOUR AT KENYA'S INDEPENDENCE DAY

President Barrow pledged to support the Kenyan bid for the position of Chairmanship of the African Union (AU). He made the announcement during the 61st National Day Anniversary celebration, which he attended as the Guest of Honour of the President of Kenya, H.E. William Ruto.

In his toast, President Barrow cited the need to address trade barriers in the continent, stressing Africa must trade more amongst itself to pave the way for unprecedented growth and development. This call aligns with the Africa Continental Free Trade Agreement of the AU.

The two nations have much in common, from their history and culture to their colonial experience, and building ties will explore numerous opportunities, such

as innovation in technology, agriculture and education.

Both Heads of State reaffirmed their collective commitment to the ideals of Africa's Pan-Africanist founding fathers - unity, solidarity, and cooperation. President Barrow urged African leaders to work towards a better future characterised by economic prosperity.

## DIPLOMATIC FAREWELL

Diplomatic farewell is crucial in maintaining good relationships and fostering a culture of respect and appreciation. In the second half of 2024, the European Union country representative, Ambassador Corrado Pampaloni and World Bank Resident Representative, Ms. Feyi Boroffice, bade farewell to His Excellency President Adama Barrow after a successful four-year stint in The Gambia. The outgoing High Commissioner of Senegal to The Gambia, Bassirou Sène, also bade him farewell.





Through collaboration, the Government and the World Bank have achieved a lot of things in terms of budget support to The Gambia Government and investment in energy, agriculture and the health sector, among others.

It could be recalled that at the beginning of the Barrow administration in 2017, the government endured an economic setback, which has now been stabilised to the current upward trend in the figures, reflected in the growth rate of the economy to 5.3%.

President Barrow welcomed the World Bank and its plans to support the country under the leadership of Ms. Boroffice. She contributed immensely to realising the World Bank-supported Projects in The Gambia during her tenure.

In another area, the solid long-term partnership between The Gambia and the European Union covers politics, trade and development cooperation. Through the support of the EU, the country has found peaceful solutions during challenging times, particularly in the Transitional Justice programme, the Security Sector Reform, and in protecting the rights of women and girls. The EU has also contributed to various development initiatives in the country, including building modern police stations. Ambassador

Pampaloni reassured the President of the continuity of projects, such as the dumpsite project and the provision of solar panels for schools.

The Senegalese former High Commissioner to The Gambia, Bassirou Sène, was optimistic about the future relations of the two governments during a courtesy call on President Adama Barrow as he concluded his diplomatic tour of duty.

His Excellency Sène recognised the development projects carried out by the Barrow administration. Acknowledging that his leadership has solidified the bilateral ties between the two neighbouring countries. He expressed the President's appreciation for his efforts to strengthen the relationship between the two countries.

The Barrow administration has always been engaging in ways to strengthen the existing sisterly ties between The Gambia and Senegal. The President takes every opportunity to remind technicians of both countries to work diligently to enhance the already harmonious relations established between the people of the two countries by embracing peace, love and harmony and overcoming administrative barriers to advance trade and integration between the neighbours.

## CEMENTING TIES IN FOCAC 2024

The Forum for China-Africa Cooperation FOCAC2024 builds on existing ties the People's Republic of China has in areas of diplomacy, health, agriculture and trade to boost the environment for socio-economic development.

The Summit brought together Heads of State and Government, business leaders, and other stakeholders to discuss cooperation in various development fields. The theme for the 2024 Forum is *"Joining Hands to Advance Modernization and Build a High-Level China-Africa Community with a Shared Future."*

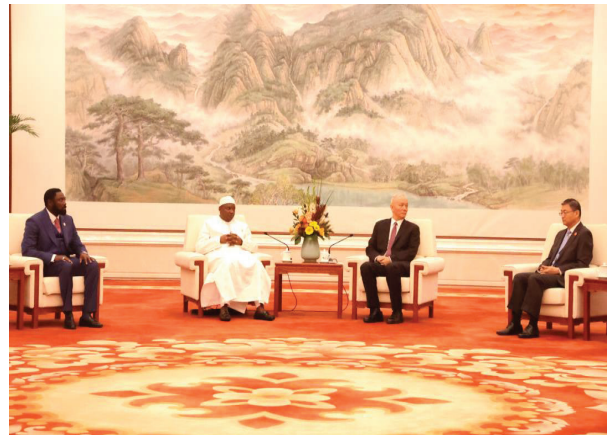
*"Joining Hands to Advance Modernization and Build a High-Level China-Africa Community with a Shared Future."*



The Gambia government invests in renewable energy to fight the negative impact of climate change. Moreover, the Barrow administration has been attracting capital for green energy at a faster pace. One such example is the signing of a Memorandum of

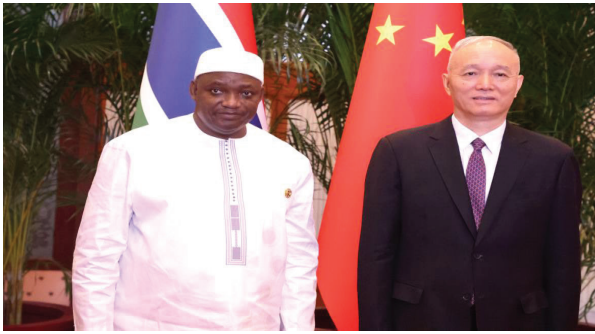
Understanding, between the Ministry of Petroleum and Energy and a Chinese company, TBEA, at a ceremony held in Beijing.

The government aims to strengthen its ties with the People's Republic of China in agriculture, health, trade, and diplomacy to foster an environment conducive to socio-economic development.



At a bilateral meeting with the Secretary of the Heilongjiang Provincial Committee of the Communist Party of China and the Chairman of the Standing Committee of Heilongjiang People's Congress, Mr. Xu Qin reaffirmed China's commitment to a strategic partnership with Africa. He expressed optimism that his province would initiate a new and strategic partnership with The Gambia in agriculture and other development sectors, aligning with President Xi Jinping's dedication to global cooperation.

The Gambian leader reaffirmed The Gambia's dedication to establishing a trustworthy and authentic partnership with the People's Republic of China at both bilateral and multilateral levels. President Barrow took the opportunity to express gratitude to the Communist Party for their support.



President Barrow also visited Longjian Company Limited, Board Chairman Mr. Tian Yulon in Songhuajiang Province. Mr. Yulon committed to collaborating with The Gambia in the implementation of the three-year FOCAC Action Plan.

President Barrow expressed his gratitude to the Longjian team for supporting the Roads and Bridges projects, which positively impact people in The Gambia.

His government has confidence in the company and awarded it a contract to construct the ongoing Kabada roads project, which spans over 100 kilometers. The visit to the company's Head Office increased President Barrow's confidence, and he assured them of the government's continued partnership in completing the second phase of his campaign promise to build about 800 kilometers of road in The Gambia.

It has become a norm for The Gambian leader to meet with Gambian associations in foreign countries to discuss issues of concern, assess their situation and strengthen relations with the diaspora. During the President's stay in China, he received representatives of Gambian Students in Beijing.

The leader of the Gambian students, Mr. Omar Nget outlined their concerns,

including delays in receiving their scholarships and requested stipends for self-sponsoring students.

The Gambian leader informed the students that the Government's expenditure is guided by an annual budget, making it difficult to accommodate self-sponsored students, adding, ***"It is not good governance and best practice to be requesting additional funds requiring Parliamentary approval."*** Also, he informed them that the Cabinet was aware of the challenges students in China and elsewhere faced and would assess their situations.

***"It is not good governance and best practice to be requesting additional funds requiring Parliamentary approval."***

The Government is committed to innovative and wise spending of the limited resources available amidst the high expectations. Despite the challenges, capacity building and youth employment are a priority for the Government. It invests in preparing the youth for future leadership, with about 75% of UTG students on scholarship.

## PRIORITIES AT FOCAC 2024 TALKS

Given The Gambia's strategic foreign policy, international aid has contributed immensely to the socio-economic development of the country. At the FOCAC Summit held in China in



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September 2024, President Barrow called for support in the digital economy and rural connectivity.

In support of its people-to-people diplomacy, China has pledged to construct a health clinic for the State House, expressing its interest in partnering in agriculture, industry, education and infrastructure. In addition, China pledged 200 million Yen support to the Gambian Government to implement agreed projects in the country. China would apply a zero tariff policy to Gambian goods exported to boost trade and deepen economic ties in both nations.

China has heavily invested in advancing technology and economic growth in most African countries, and The Gambia is not an exception. The support includes constructing the Sir Dawda Kairaba Jawara International Conference Centre, roads and bridges in the Upper River Region. President Jinping declared that China will stand with the Barrow administration to realise its development agenda. Aware that Africa is awakening to modernisation for a shared future for humanity, the Chinese President called for collaboration and renewal that consider national realities, equal rights and a win-win for all countries.

A Strategic Partnership has been developed between China and Africa for the next three years, which will focus on inclusive industrialisation, agriculture, trade, and capacity building to reduce poverty and advance cultural exchanges. The \$50bn three-year FOCAC Action Plan will also prioritise green development in modernisation, narrow the energy gap, peace and security and independently uphold world peace.

H.E. Cai Qi reiterated China's willingness to collaborate with The Gambia in partnership on the FOCAC three-year Action Points 2025-2027. He also promised to support The Gambia's development agenda to advance agriculture, health, and infrastructure development within the framework of the ten-point Action Plan of FOCAC during a banquet in honour of President Barrow. H.E. Cai Qi spoke highly of the bilateral ties with the Barrow administration and The Gambia's support of its One China Policy and global initiatives to promote development and justice for all.

The Gambian leader commended the ten-point Action Plan announced by President Xi Jinping during his opening remarks at the 4th FOCAC Summit in Beijing. He also mentioned that the partnership with the PRC has grown to a strategic level, providing projects that impact the lives of Gambians.

President Barrow pledged his Government's commitment to the partnerships with the PRC based on mutual benefit and to advance the One China policy.

## CALL FOR URGENT REFORMS AT THE UN SYSTEM

Since its inception in the 1940s, the UNGA has served as a forum to address critical challenges in governance and cooperation, including poverty, development, peace and security. The body is seen as a beacon of hope for redressing and promoting necessary changes.



The world has undergone drastic changes, including the increased number of independent countries, gender representation in public life, and the participation of the youthful population, with increased interest in good governance and democratising public institutions.

In late September, President Barrow used the 79th Summit in New York to call for an urgent comprehensive reform within the UN system. He urged the International Community to recommit to implementing the *'Summit for the Future'* resolutions to overcome critical global challenges such as poverty, climate change, transnational crimes and conflict.

World leaders called for a more just world order, void of discrimination and biases against the less privileged and vulnerable, to achieve the critical goal of peace for all. The Israel war on Palestine was featured in all statements, demanding an end to the Israeli occupation of Palestine and calling for peaceful co-existence within a two-state resolution.

Conflicts and wars leading to the killing of civilians in Gaza, Sudan, the Sahel, Ukraine and Russia, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Libya and other conflict zones,

warrant the call for world leaders and countries to work together and commit to justice for all. President Barrow called for lasting peace worldwide, acknowledging that, although entire communities suffer the consequences in the advent of war, women and children, due to their sex and status in society, often bear the brunt in war zone areas.



Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals is central to the foreign policy of the Barrow administration, and it is leaving no stone unturned to ensure the development efforts are both sustainable and impactful. The President urged the global community to assist the Third World countries in addressing the burden of inequality, build more robust economies, and create policy shifts for economic growth.

Throughout history, people have migrated in search of greener pastures, which significantly contribute to growth. President Barrow's government is collaborating with relevant countries to improve the plight of migrants. However, he stated that human beings should not risk their lives in pursuit of a better future, and calls on the International Community to regulate migration and decriminalise it.

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The President, also sought the UN and other Partners' support in fulfilling their commitment to the official development assistance pledge to address inequalities with compassion.

Since his leadership in 2017, the Gambian leader has taken pride that no political prisoner, journalist, or human rights activist has been jailed in The country. Furthermore, The Gambia was recognised as one of Africa's leading freedom of expression defenders.

## STRENGTHENING TIES ON THE SIDELINES OF UNGA 79

President Adama Barrow held bilateral meetings with a number of world leaders and Presidents on the sidelines of the 79th session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York to partner in shaping the future of The Gambia. His discussions with the President of Mauritius, H.E. Prithvisingh Roopun, centered on a mutual interest in their nations and strengthening cooperation.

Notably, the Government of The Gambia has shown a willingness to work with other countries to strengthen strategic coordination and deepen practical cooperation in the economy and other areas.

In a separate engagement held with the CEO of the Millennium Challenge Corporation - MCC, Madam Alice Albright, President Barrow thanked the MCC team for its confidence in awarding The Gambia Compact and the Threshold project to support the country's constraint to economic growth

and electricity. This is in line with his government's priorities in achieving the National Development Plan-Yiriwa, for the socio-economic advancement of the people.

In building networks, key among the Leaders President Barrow met the UN Secretary-General. Antonia Guterres commended the President for his leadership in the region and assured him of the UN's support of The Gambia toward sustainable development.

As Chairman of the OIC, President Barrow meets with Kosovo, H.E. Dr Vjosa Osamani Sadriu on the importance of dialogue amongst the Muslim Ummah and support for each other. Other areas of mutual interest, including the advancement of their peoples, the promotion of democracy, and the rule of law at both national and international levels to ensure equal access to justice, were discussed.

In his capacity as Chairman of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation, the President shared his vision with the Secretary General of the Organisation, His Excellency Hussein Brahim Taha. It was during this period the President instructed the Riyadh team to develop a three-year Strategic Plan outlining a programme to promote peace and advancement in regions of the OIC member states.

In November, President Barrow received a delegation from the OIC Headquarters at the State House in Banjul headed by the Assistant Secretary General of the OIC Secretariat, H.E. Amb Yousef M.S. Aldobeay, who briefed the President on



the plans for the development of a three-year roadmap.

The President assured the Secretariat that he would consider its proposal for a roadmap, reiterating that under his Chairmanship, he desires to engage the OIC membership to put out strong statements committing to advancing the Ummah. He stressed it was time to **move from the ceremonials to actions to solve the problems.**

The President's outstanding leadership in promoting unity, cooperation and development aligns with the OIC's desire to strengthen relationships and support each other in achieving the desired results.

## APPROACHES TO SUB-REGIONAL CHALLENGES

Highlights of progress in the Transitional Justice of The Gambia emerged from the 66th Ordinary session of the ECOWAS Summit, as member States approved the long-awaited decision for the establishment of a Special Tribunal for The Gambia along with a statute for the tribunal. The decisions will redress the massive human rights violations committed during the former Jammeh regime, from 1994 to 2017.



The Gambian leader, President Barrow and his counterpart Heads of State and Government were present at the ECOWAS Summit, in Abuja where the revelation was made. The Barrow administration committed to addressing human rights violations by ensuring justice prevails for the victims of the past government.

As countries navigate economic challenges, the President highlighted poverty, women empowerment, irregular migration, and youth unemployment that impede development and integration. He called for more innovation and practical approaches to tackle these challenges.



Reaffirmation of the ECOWAS' commitment to remain steadfast in achieving the objectives of the organisation will strengthen the peaceful transition of power among member countries. The 2024 general and parliamentary elections in Ghana

and Senegal were examples of political maturity and how smooth elections could reinforce democratic principles.

In contrast, Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger will officially cease to be members of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) at the beginning of 2025 after refusing demands to restore democratic rule.

Moreover, progress has been achieved to enhance cooperation in regional economic integration, as member states have shown resilience amid regional and global challenges. ECOWAS continues to garner support from continental organisations, amongst them the AU.





# SWEARING-IN CEREMONY

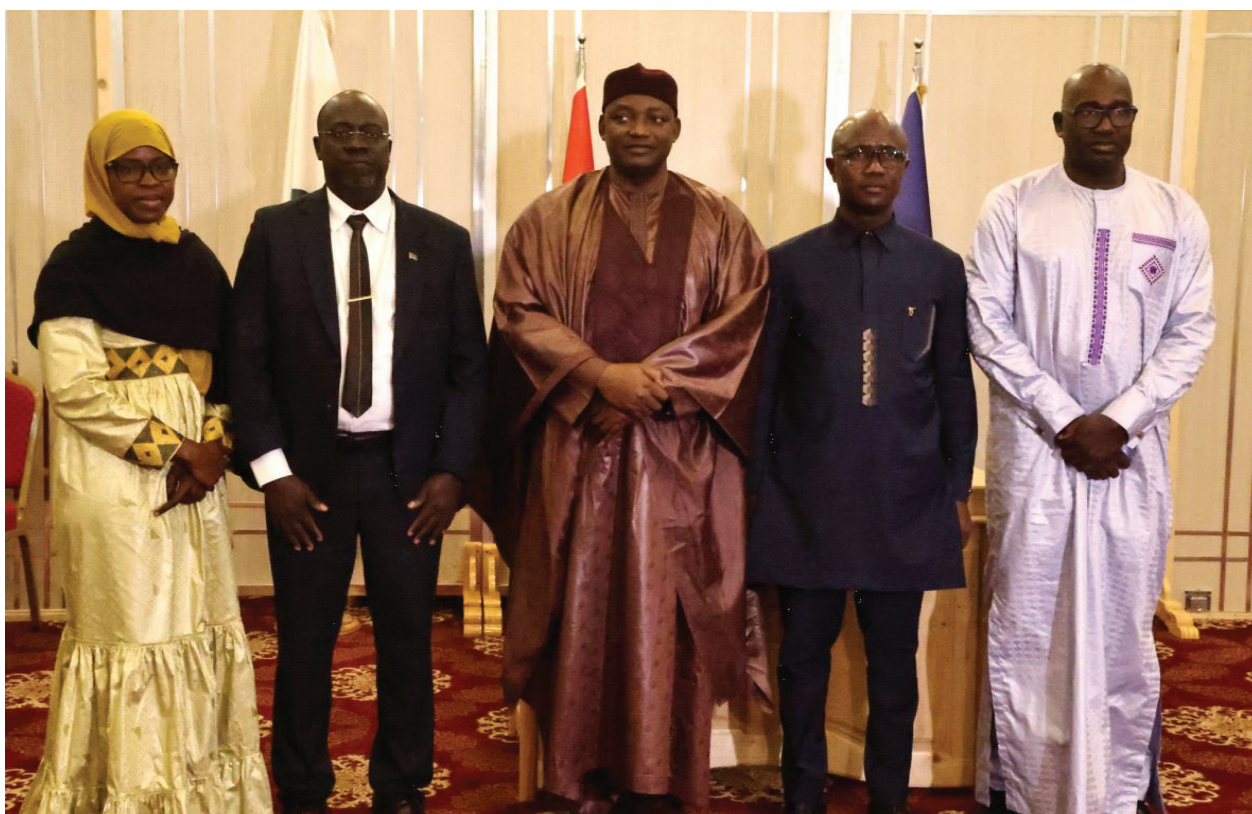
President Barrow on Friday, 29th November 2024 swore-in three newly appointed ministers, as well as the Secretary to Cabinet and Head of the Civil Service. The officials include:

Honourable Mod K. Ceesay Minister and Chief of Staff to the Presidency.

Hon. Habibatou Drammeh Minister for Basic and Secondary Education.

Hon. Lamin Jabbi, Minister for Communication and Digital Economy and,

Mr. Alieu Njie Secretary to Cabinet and Head of Civil Service took oath of Office and Secrecy,



The Minister for Presidential Affairs and Chief of Staff to the Presidency now ensures decisions made at the Executive level are effectively implemented across Ministries and Departments.

The President unveiled that the decision to create a new position at the Office of the President aims to ensure the Office operates with precision and efficiency. Merging the roles of Secretary to Cabinet

and Head of Civil Service eliminates overlapping responsibilities and facilitate a smoother transition from policy development at the Cabinet level to policy implementation within the Ministries.

Speaking on behalf of the newly appointed Ministers, Hon. Habibatou Drammeh assured their commitment to serving the people of The Gambia.



# SOCIAL AND RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS

Peace is a prerequisite for sustainable development, transforming communities and the lives and livelihoods of Gambians. Peace and stability of the country give confidence to outsiders to invest in the development processes and provide social projects to the less privileged in society.

Renowned Islamic Scholar Mufti Menk and other members of a charitable organisation, Abdullah Aid in The Gambia, realised the importance of a peaceful environment to facilitate their work in the country. They provide water facilities, Masjids, health services and scholarships, and funded shelters in 300 communities over the years.

During a courtesy call at the State House, President Barrow commended their work and emphasised the importance of preaching peace and stability in developing the nation and enhancing the well-being of the Muslim Ummah.

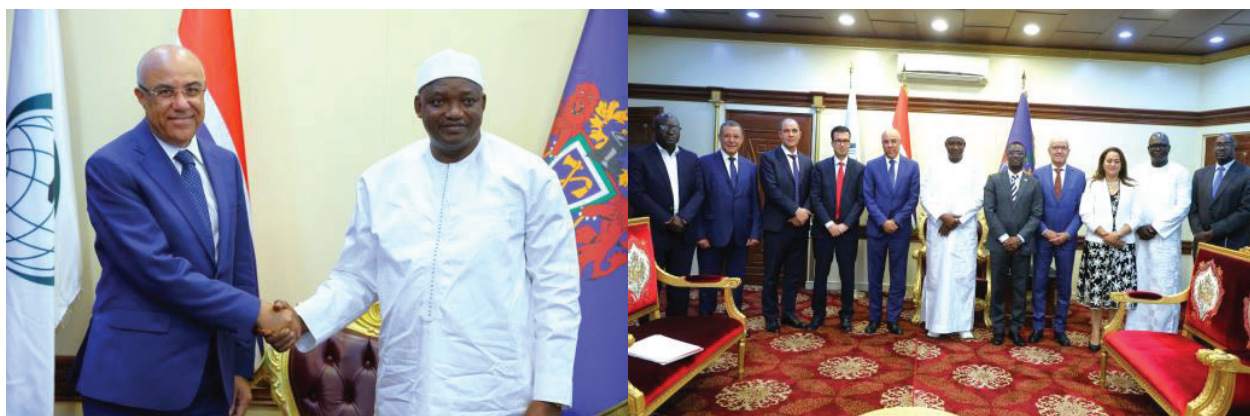
Mufti Menk pledged commitment and plans to provide more development projects to improve social services. He further praised The Gambian leader for vigorously pursuing infrastructural development and observing the country's major transformation since his visit in 2018.



# EMPOWERING THE YOUTH THROUGH TVET

The friendship between The Gambia and Morocco is seen as excellent and maintained cooperation agreements in the fields of economic and social development. To strengthen bilateral relations to improving Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) and Technical and Vocational Education Training (TVET), meets the need for a skilled and capable workforce for the country, thus strengthening the twinning process and partnership between them and universities in both countries. Emphasising the significance of higher education is part of the reform agenda to develop and bridge the skills gap.

The education sector receives a top priority for building and preparing people scientifically. In July, President Adama Barrow received the Moroccan Minister for Higher Education, Scientific Research and Innovation, Honourable Abdellatif Miraoui, at the State House in Banjul.



The Minister for Higher Education, Honourable Professor Pierre Gomez, has announced a signed memorandum of understanding (MoU) between the two parties to construct TVET infrastructure in The Gambia. The initiative will significantly empower young people and enhance The Gambia's capacity in TVET.



This agreement marks a pivotal moment in Gambia-Morocco relations, as both nations aim to improve the quality of education, particularly in digital skills and information technology.

The Barrow Government focuses on ambitious plans to reshape higher education by embarking on key reforms to make the educational system relevant to changing national development priorities and renewed goals and aspirations. It is also to ensure that The Gambia's educational system adjusts to context and time and the advancement in technologies, industry, and creativity.



The partnership between The Gambia and Morocco has made significant progress, with the Government securing 120 scholarships for Gambian students to study in Morocco in 2024.



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# PRESIDENT BARROW DROPS CIVIL SUIT AGAINST THE VOICE

Free and independent media are the cornerstones of every free and democratic society, cognisant to this belief, the Barrow administration has been promoting and protecting media freedom as an essential foundation for democracy.

Despite the fact that the threat to free and independent media has been a thing of the past for more than 8 years, it is also crucial to note that media has an essential role in the way information is disseminated, consumed and perceived by the public.

His Excellency Adama Barrow sued journalist Momodou Justice Darboe and Editor Musa Sheriff for false publication regarding the succession plan of the Gambian leader and National People's Party.

At the beginning of the court proceedings in November 2024, President Barrow received an appeal from the media

fraternity, comprising the Gambia Press Union, the Media Council of The Gambia, the Newspaper Publishers Association and the Women's Journalists Association to drop civil and criminal cases against The Voice newspaper journalists.

Emphasising the role of the media as an essential pillar of democracy, human rights and sustainable development, President Adama Barrow called on journalists to respect professional ethics and prioritise accuracy in their work. He further reiterated his commitment and that of his government to the protection of freedom of expression and respect for the world of the media in promoting democracy and the rule of law, adding that it was never his intention or that of his government to prosecute journalists. The Management of The Voice Newspaper appreciated the President's gesture to drop the civil suit against the paper and regretted any inconvenience its publication may have caused to the President and his party.

# INAUGURAL PRESIDENTIAL MEDIA DINNER

In the government's commitment to media freedom and acknowledging the role of media in nation-building, President Barrow hosted a historic ceremony at the state House for the inaugural Presidential Media Dinner, aimed at enhancing relations between the Government and the media.

The event brought together media personalities and veteran journalists from across the country, highlighting the significance of cooperation for the Nation's interests. Moreover, information officers across various Ministries who are central figures in providing public information and raising awareness of government policies graced the occasion.



Sharing words of wisdom, President Barrow emphasised that the media's role as watchdogs is essential in a democracy and urged journalists to make the best use of their profession to take the country to a higher level.



Prior to the event, the Media and Communication Unit (MCU) at the Presidency developed a communication handbook designed to guide the operations of the communication unit. The book will also serve as a guide to State House-accredited media to familiarise themselves with the procedures and processes. At the dinner, the Minister and Chief of Staff to the Presidency, Honourable Mod K. Ceesay, launched the Office of the President MCU Handbook.



The Director of Press and Public Relations, Amie Bojang-Sissoho, highlighted the occasion as a significant demonstration of various professional roles in and outside Government, all contributing towards the same goal-national building.



She paid homage to the media for the fruitful partnership since 2017, saying, *"We have also extended a warm hand of friendship and cooperation to both the conventional and new or social media because we are fully aware and quite mindful of the transformation of the media landscape, globally."*

*"We have also extended a warm hand of friendship and cooperation to both the conventional and new or social media because we are fully aware and quite mindful of the transformation of the media landscape, globally."*

The focus on media freedom is being strengthened by the Government's new strategy to create an environmentally friendly atmosphere. For the first time in the history of The Gambia, journalists had the opportunity to dine and interact with the Head of State. The engagement would effectively bridge the gap between the media and the Presidency, promoting a more informed and engaged citizenry.



The media delegation welcomed the gesture of the President, describing it as a giant step towards the maintenance of the good reputation of the country as a bastion of press freedom and the gains made under his leadership.



# THE GOVERNMENT RECEIVES PARTNERS' AID

In December 2024, the government through President Adama Barrow in partnership with donors have received several donations, which seeks to significantly improve the lives and livelihood of Gambians.



StartUP, an NGO in The Gambia handed over equipment donated to the Fire Service and the Ministry of Health to H.E President Barrow at the State House.

The donations include:

- ▶ 1 fire truck (7,500 litres)
- ▶ 1 fire truck (3,000 litres)
- ▶ 1 medicalized ambulance
- ▶ 3 vehicles



- ▶ A radio communication emergency system, including all necessary installation materials (cables, antennas, radios, etc.)
- ▶ Road traffic accident (RTA) equipment
- ▶ Mattresses, sheets, and towels for 12 fire stations
- ▶ 28 hospital beds/mattresses for 8 fire service clinics



- ▶ Bed sheets and towels for hospitals

StartUp supports fire stations and other institutions through the Canary Island Government, and the generous support contributes to the Government's efforts to enhance emergency service delivery.



In the later part of the month, the Government of the People's Republic of China, through its Development Assistance Programme, China Aid, donated to the Government of The Gambia rice worth 10 Million RMB Yuan, equivalent to 98.65 Million Dalasis. The Barrow Government will distribute the annual food donation to needy families within communities in the country.



In addition, the Ministry of Health received supplies of medical equipment valued at one million USD, equivalent to seventy-two (72) Million Dalasis, including four medicalised ambulances and assorted materials.



At the ceremony, President Barrow acknowledged the support of the Chinese Government, adding that the donations would accelerate the Government's efforts towards universal health coverage. The Gambia and the People's Republic of China are making South-South Cooperation a reality, fostering strong relationships and creating a win-win situation.

The Chinese Ambassador to The Gambia, H.E. Liu Jin appreciated cementing the relationship with the Chinese Government and pledged that China will send more health professionals to strengthen the health system.

Furthermore, China is building on its relationship with The Gambia by encouraging exchange programmes to enhance mutual understanding and friendship.



# AUDIENCES

## SPEAKER OF ECOWAS PARLIAMENT CALLS ON PRESIDENT BARROW

The ECOWAS Parliament in The Gambia held a five-day meeting of the Joint Committee in August 2024. The meeting brought together parliamentarians from across the region to discuss the protocol for the free movement of persons and goods to deepen regional integration and enhance economic collaboration.



The Speaker of ECOWAS Parliament Honourable Hadja Memounatou Ibrahim, expressed admiration for President Barrow's efforts in maintaining peace and unity in The Gambia and the sub-region.

During a courtesy visit briefing, the Gambian leader held the view that hosting the meeting in the country reaffirmed The Gambia's commitment to continue working with ECOWAS to

advance peace and maintain unity in the sub-region.





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## INTERNATIONAL FINANCE CORPORATION AND WORLD BANK OFFICIALS VISIT

His Excellency President Adama Barrow emphasised the urgent need for reliable and affordable energy for sustainable development, create job opportunities for young people and regenerate income at the meeting with the Vice Presidents of World Bank, Mr Ousmane Diagana and International Finance Corporation (IFC), Mr Sergio Pimenta, during the first joint mission in The Gambia.



The government promotes agriculture as a business venture to reduce poverty and significantly contribute to The Gambian economy. The President expressed deep appreciation for the World Bank's continued support in assisting The Gambia in achieving the National Development Plan and strengthening the partnership with the World Bank and IFC, through the One World Bank structure in The Gambia.

### THE OMBUDSMAN SUBMITS REPORTS TO PRESIDENT ADAMA BARROW

The Ombudsman, an administrative watchdog plays a crucial role in good

governance and has jurisdiction over all public institutions, including the Independent Electoral Commission. The office contributes to election observations to gain first-hand knowledge on how people were interviewed and how voter registration was conducted, aimed at ensuring free and fair elections.

In addition, the Ombudsman visits prisons across the country to investigate the condition of prisoners, Prison Officers and other institutions.

In August 2024, the Ombudsman submitted the 2021 and 2022 reports of all the investigations it carried out to President Adama Barrow, as required by the Constitution. The reports contain



complaints against public offices and officers, psychiatric centres and police stations.

President Barrow encouraged the Ombudsman, Mr Bakary K. Sanyang to maintain its independence. At the meeting, the President revealed his administration's plan to build a new prison and rehabilitation centers encouraging prisoners to contribute

positively to national development.

The 1997 Constitution of the Republic of The Gambia requires senior Public Officers to declare, in writing, their properties and assets to the Ombudsman. This aims at preventing conflict of interest and corruption, increasing transparency and integrity. Mr Sanyang also, mentioned that his office was expecting more senior government officials to send their asset declarations.



## IMPORTANCE OF DATA IN PLANNING

President Adama Barrow during the visit of the National Social Registry Secretariat and The Gambia Bureau of Statistics at the State House, highlighted the vital role of data in digitalisation to support development programmes. He encouraged the public to respond positively by providing data that can be used for planning and implementing social protection programmes.

The Social Registry Manager at the National Social Protection Secretariat, Mr. Fily Susso, acknowledged the support of the Office of the President in recognising their effort to improve social protection services, especially for the vulnerable.

The Gambia Social Registry is an information system the government has in place to determine potential eligibility for social protection programmes. It seeks to support the most vulnerable members of society and provide accurate data for various programmes

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as the country advances a modern and comprehensive system that will provide a “one-stop shop databank on health, agriculture, education, source of income and households needing assistance.

## INTEGRATING REFUGEES IN THE COUNTRY

The Gambia has ratified the 1951 Refugee Convention and the 1967 Refugee Protocol. The Government has taken significant strides in integrating refugees and engaging them productively in the country. During the meeting, President Barrow reaffirmed his continuous support to promote the protection and successful integration of refugees during a meeting with The Gambia Commission for refugees, who briefed him at the State House on the status of refugees and stateless individuals in the country.

As per the report by The Gambia Commission for refugees, over four thousand three hundred refugees from twenty-one countries are currently settling in The Gambia.

The UNHCR representative in Dakar, Mr. Ali Mahamat commended President Barrow for his remarkable achievement towards sustainable development, human rights and democracy.

The government and partners are providing social amenities, healthcare services, technical and vocational

education training, and scholarships, from the basic to the university level, thereby enhancing job opportunities. The gesture is transforming the lives of refugees in The Gambia.

The Director General of Immigration Mr. Ebrima Bai Mboob expressed gratitude for the President's leadership in supporting refugees.

## NATIONAL BAKERS UNION

The main objective of the National Bakers Union is to introduce standardisation to improve the hygienic quality and quantity of bread consumed by the public since flour is a highly consumed commodity in The Gambia, therefore there should be a specific quota system to increase production and ensure bread safety and quality.

National Bakers Union engaged President Adama Barrow on issues surrounding the production of bread in the country and sought his support to regulate separate entities, suggesting a multi-sectoral approach to the problem.

The President advised the bakery union to provide specific guidelines for bread production to ensure it is healthy. He further encouraged members to strengthen the union's formation as a unifying body and to continue engaging with the Ministry of Trade for productive dialogue.



## CELEBRATING THE NATIONAL SCORPION FANS CLUB

Embodying one's national colours erects a profound sense of national pride and identity. Upon receiving the National Scorpion Fans Club at the State House in August 2024, President Barrow expressed profound gratitude for the sacrifice, commitment and support to the National Team.



The team shows patriotic love by carrying the national flag and cheering the National team as they play against other countries. Equally, the Barrow administration has contributed immensely to assisting and improving grassroots sporting facilities, including drafting the National Sports Policy. Additionally, taking leadership and providing tremendous investment in sports demonstrates the Government's effort to advance sports, especially football.



Despite the investments, the fans club called for supporting them with mobility

and office rent. The President promised to assist in paying their office rent and provide them with mobility to ease their work.

## WEST AFRICA COASTAL AREA

WACA is a regional initiative that supports West African countries in improving the management of coastal resources and reducing issues affecting coastal communities.

The Minister for Environment Honourable Rohey John Manjang briefed President Adama Barrow on the West Africa Coastal Area (WACA) Gambia project plans and implementation. The project supports infrastructure and livelihood improvement interventions around the Kotu stream. Additionally, the Project plans to hire an international consultant in partnership with local companies to conduct a feasibility study and detailed engineering design for the Kotu stream.



The President expressed satisfaction that the project concept has advanced. Furthermore, he encouraged the team to look for sustainable strategies beyond the project implementation, including community engagement and attitudinal change towards illegal dumping in waterways.



# DEFENCE AND SECURITY

## EXERCISE KANSALA 2024: A KEY IN THE SECURITY SECTOR REFORM

The Gambia Armed Forces conducted a five-day joint military exercise dubbed Exercise Kansala 2024, from 19th to 23rd December 2024. The training includes military exercises and outreach activities, including health screening and supporting communities to ensure operational efficiency for enhanced national security. Army Commander Brigadier General Sait Njie detailed the operations of the Joint Field Training based on the concept that “The best form of welfare for troops is first-class training.”



Modernising the operations of the military workforce is a crucial step towards the Security Sector Reforms. The Commander in Chief of The Gambia Armed Forces President Adama Barrow commended the military for conducting exercises that keep their personnel fit. Moreover, he reminded the senior command to adhere to its designated role in fostering a supportive and peaceful environment.

Strengthening military professionalism remains key in the National Development Plan as President Barrow assured his administration’s continued support. He signified the military as a noble profession and urged them to remain professional in their duties.

The Chief of Defence Staff, Lt General Momar Cham, commended the President for being supportive and giving them space to focus on their mandate.



## A SENEGALESE CONTINGENT OF ECOMIG ENDS TOUR OF DUTY

President Barrow presented Certificates of appreciation to eighty Senegalese contingent of gendarmerie soldiers at the State House following the end of their tour of duty as part of the ECOMIG forces.

The President stated that the mission ended, but the relationship with Senegal would continue. He thanked President Diomaye Faye and Senegal for supporting the troops during their duties in The Gambia over two to three years.



The President applauded them for serving the country honourably. He further appreciated Senegal and ECOWAS for supporting The Gambia's democracy by deploying ECOMIG officers. President Barrow thanked them for their peaceful service in The Gambia and wished them blessings and progress in their future endeavours back home.

He signified the military as a noble profession and urged them to remain professional in their duties.

Senegal and ECOWAS support The Gambia's democracy by deploying ECOMIG officers to provide peaceful service in The Gambia and wish them blessings and progress in their future endeavours back home.





# OFFICE OF THE FIRST LADY

## UNESCO - ICESCO COMMUNITY PROJECT LAUNCHED

First Lady Fatoumatta Bah-Barrow launched the UNESCO - ICESCO Support to Community Reforestation Programme in The Gambia. The project aims to produce 10,000 Seedlings and mangrove propagules in WCR, LRR, and CRR. In launching the project, Her Excellency called on everyone planting the trees to name them after their loved ones, especially children, motivating them to care for the trees like their children.

Her Excellency planted five trees and named them after the first family's children. These trees have numerous benefits, providing edible food and shade and producing oxygen for humanity. She expressed her gratitude to UNESCO and ICESCO for this commendable project, which involves planting highly efficient and adapted woody forest species in nurseries and reforesting 20 hectares of degraded community lands.





## SHELTER GETS AIR CONDITIONERS

Her Excellency First Lady Fatoumatta Bah-Barrow presided over the handing over of the Chinese Embassy-sponsored Shelter Improvement Project in The Gambia through the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Welfare.

The project aims to fence the Shelter and create pavement for easy access,

especially for people with disabilities. During the ceremony, the Chinese Embassy handed air conditioners to the Office of the First Lady for eventual submission to the Shelter.

The First Lady expressed her gratitude to the Chinese Ambassador for the swift support and emphasised the strong friendship and collaboration between the two countries.



## FIRST LADY INSPECTS OXYGEN PLANT AT HOSPITAL

Inspecting the newly installed oxygen plant at the Edward Francis Small Teaching Hospital, the First Lady, Madam Fatoumatta Bah-Barrow, expressed gratitude for the milestone and transformative impact of the state-of-the-art facility on healthcare delivery in The Gambia.

Various organisations made generous grants to the project, symbolising a significant step forward in enhancing the quality of healthcare services in the nation.



## HER EXCELLENCY FIRST LADY PARTICIPATES IN FOCAC 2024

The Forum of China-Africa Cooperation allowed African Leaders to meet and discuss policies and cooperation agreements with officials from the Continent's biggest lenders and investors. Those agreements will set the tone for the two side's burgeoning relations.

The African First Ladies met on the sidelines of the Forum to discuss China-Africa joining hands for Women's Empowerment Through Education, hosted by the First member of the Secretariat of All-China Women's Federation Ms. Huang Xiaowei.





## WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP TRAINING PROGRAMME

Her Excellency Fatoumatta Bah-Barrow presided over the closing ceremony of the Women in Leadership Training Programme, the Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Welfare organised in collaboration with the MAA Foundation for Women. In her closing remarks, the First Lady emphasised that when women have equal opportunities to lead and make decisions, societies become more inclusive, and peace and stability become more sustainable.

The UNDP funded the training to empower women in decision-making to contribute significantly to social development.





## OFFICE OF THE FIRST LADY SUPPORTS THE VULNERABLE

Under the visionary leadership of Her Excellency the First Lady of The Gambia, the Fatoumatta Bah Barrow Foundation (FaBB) continues supporting impoverished communities, disadvantaged women, youth, children, and vulnerable groups across the country.

In collaboration with the Muslim World League, FaBB distributed essential food baskets to 103 underprivileged families, each receiving a bag of Rice, Sugar, Onion, Cooking Oil, and cash of two thousand Dalasi. The initiative reflects the commitment to addressing pressing needs and ensuring dignity and support for vulnerable communities.





## FIRST LADY GRACES ALL PROGRESSIVE CONFERENCE IN NIGERIA

Her Excellency the First Lady of the Republic of The Gambia, Madam Fatoumata Bah Barrow, attended the All Progressive Conference (APC) forum in Nigeria on 2nd November 2024, upon receiving an invitation from the women leader of the party.

The forum aims to empower women's leadership by promoting girls' education and skills development, increasing women's representation in party branches, and empowering women in politics.



H.E. Madam Bah-Barrow applauded the organisers and encouraged the forum to create a future where every woman thrives and contributes to society.

Several speakers at the event highlighted the contributions of women to the economic, political, social and cultural development of a nation.





## FIRST LADY LEADS THE NATIONAL POLIO VACCINATION CAMPAIGN

First Lady Fatoumatta Bah-Barrow relentlessly supported the Ministry of Health and presided over the launching ceremony of the National Polio Vaccination Campaign at the Poly Clinic in Banjul.

During the gathering, the First Lady encouraged parents to get their eligible children vaccinated against the polio disease and emphasised the importance of immunisation, noting the number of lives it would save and keep The Gambia polio-free.

The Government of The Gambia, the UN System, the World Health Organization, and Partners supported the campaign.



## EMPOWERING GIRLS THROUGH EDUCATION

The Fatoumatta Bah Barrow Foundation- FaBB and Merck Foundation joined forces to empower girls through education.

At a memorable event held at the State House in Banjul, FaBB celebrated forty (40) deserving female students from various regions of The Gambia as beneficiaries of the Educating Linda

Initiative. This impactful programme supports underprivileged girls in their academic journey.

The Educating Linda Initiative was introduced in 2021 by Merck Foundation in partnership with FaBB to encourage girls to stay in school and pursue their education as a priority. The programme also includes full scholarships for Science students to pursue studies abroad, contributing to their professional

and personal development. Over the years, hundreds of girls have benefited from this initiative, which has proven instrumental in breaking barriers and creating opportunities.

Since 2017, Merck Foundation has partnered with FaBB Foundation on various impactful projects, focusing on women empowerment, health, and

education. Their unwavering support has been central to initiatives like Educating Linda, which provides holistic solutions for the challenges faced by young girls in accessing education.

FaBB Foundation extends its deepest gratitude to Merck Foundation for their continued partnership and dedication to improving lives.





## FIRST LADY COMMEMORATES WORLD CHILDREN'S DAY

As part of the commemoration of World Children's Day, Her Excellency the First Lady Fatoumatta Bah-Barrow Graced the event on "OUR WORLD THROUGH OUR EYES; " A STORY OF CHILDREN IN THE GAMBIA held 27th – 31st October 2024. The event marks a photo exhibition at the Alliance Franco-Gambia complex at Kairaba Avenue, showcasing twenty children from the Lower River Region trained in photography to tell their stories.



The First Lady called on stakeholders and parents to support children in pursuit of their educational journey. She further urged people to use children's stories to judge their vision for a better future, providing children with hope, opportunities and protection of their rights. She added they must advocate for increased knowledge and awareness to achieve the vision.





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## BREAST CANCER AWARENESS

In honour of Pink October, which raises awareness about breast cancer, the FaBB Foundation, in collaboration with Africell, participated in the “Walk for Health” event. The initiative, organised in partnership with One For All, All For One, and Walk 4 Health The Gambia, aimed to highlight non-communicable diseases such as breast cancer and emphasise the importance of physical health.

Her Excellency, the First Lady, presided over the walk and urged the public to join the fight against cancer by participating in regular screenings to know their health status. She also encouraged everyone to participate in the Walk for Health, recognising its benefits for overall well-being.





In preparation for the Annual Baby of the Year event, Her Excellency First Lady Fatoumatta Bah-Barrow received a donation of 480 blankets from Mr. Sanjay V. Bhagat, a family friend from India. Mr. Sanjay Punjabi has pledged to support Her Excellency in her developmental initiatives through his brother, who facilitated the donation. The pledge occurred while Her Excellency was in India, attending the Merck Foundation's Luminary Summit in 2023.



## FIRST LADY FATOUMATTA BAH-BARROW HONOURS LATE FATHER BRUNO TOUPAN

Honouring the memory of the late Father Bruno Brendan Toupan, the former priest of Holy Spirit Parish and the pioneer of the Harvest Feast, H.E. Madam Fatoumatta Bah-Barrow attended the Holy Spirit Parish's annual Service and Harvest Feast 2024 at St. Augustine Senior Secondary School in Banjul.



The feast was a fundraising event that brought together people from all Catholic dioceses, among Christians and individuals from other faiths, to promote harmony.



## AFRICAN FIRST LADIES (OAFLAD) LAUNCHES CAMPAIGN

Her Excellency First Lady Fatoumatta Bah-Barrow launched the African First Ladies (OAFLAD) campaign **#WeAreEqual** during the World Aids Day commemoration at Tanji in the West Coast Region.

**#WeAreEqual** is a campaign focused on closing the gender gap in Africa, emphasizing that achieving gender equality is essential for social and economic progress.

The campaign, led by OAFLAD, advocates for equity in health care, education, economic opportunities, and freedom.

The Four Pillars of **#WeAreEqual** include health, education, economic empowerment, and gender-based violence.



## CROP-H PROJECT KICKS OFF

Her Excellency, First Lady Fatoumatta Bah-Barrow officially launched the “USDA Food for Progress Climate

Resilient Optimization and Productivity in Horticulture (CROP-H) Project” at the Sir Dawda Kairaba Jawara Conference Center in Bijilo. The initiative is organized by Shelter For Life and sponsored by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).



The five-year project, 2023-2028, aims to support the development of the horticultural value chain across all six regions of The Gambia. The CROP-H Project centres on three main components that primarily focus on sustainability for women and youth. It seeks to increase horticultural productivity through various strategies, including:

- Enhancing marketing efforts
- Building farmer associations and cooperatives
- Creating a trade-enabling environment alongside Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) regulations.



Specific activities within the project will include providing irrigation and advisory services, implementing climate-smart agriculture practices, promoting bio-fortified and diversified crops such as orange-fleshed sweet potatoes and cowpeas, improving access to markets and market platforms, and developing a better regulatory framework.





## BRIKAMA DARSILAMEH GETS A NEW WOMEN'S MARKET

Her Excellency, First Lady Fatoumatta Bah-Barrow, inaugurated the Brikama Darsilameh Women's Market. Sharing Wonders Charity, a non-profit organisation based in the UK and operating in The Gambia, donated the market to the women.

Sharing Wonders is founded on the belief that everyone is blessed with different wealth and abilities, referred to as "favours." Our mission is to encourage individuals to share these blessings with those who are less fortunate.

The Brikama Darsilameh Women's Market empowers women sellers, providing them with a safe and supportive environment for earning a livelihood for their families. The market is built with inclusivity in mind, offering easy access for buyers and sellers with disabilities.

Thanks to its convenient location, the market serves the large surrounding community, bringing essential goods closer to home. This initiative is made possible by the generous donors at Sharing Wonders.





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The Fatoumatta Bah Barrow Foundation (FaBB), under the leadership of Her Excellency Madam Fatoumatta Bah Barrow, First Lady of the Republic of The Gambia, continues to touch lives through its impactful initiatives.

On January 1st, 2025, FaBB celebrated the annual Baby of the Year event, honouring the first babies born in the new year at various hospitals.

This year's celebration brought joy to the Edward Francis Small Teaching Hospital in Banjul, Serekunda General Hospital, and Bundung Maternal and Child Health. The First Lady personally delivered gifts and cash donations to the mothers of the first three babies born in 2025:

- **First Baby: Received D25,000 and a set of baby items.**
- **Second Baby: Received D20,000 and a baby hamper.**
- **Third Baby: Received D15,000 and a baby hamper.**

In addition to celebrating new life, the Foundation also marked a milestone, inaugurating a newly constructed mortuary at the Basse General Hospital, a significant contribution to improving the regional health infrastructure.

The day ended on a high note. The First Lady hosted 200 children to a Kids Fun Day at the State House in Banjul. This side event highlighted FaBB's dedication to creating memorable experiences for children of the nation.

FaBB remains committed to supporting impoverished communities, disadvantaged women, youths, children, and vulnerable groups through health and social welfare initiatives. Together, we continue to make a difference in the lives of many across The Gambia.











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