

# STATE HOUSE Newsletter



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## **Acknowledgement**

The publication of the bi-annual Newsletter is tedious but exciting. It brings fun memories of the great achievements realised every six months. A reminder of the strength and resilience of a united force with a sole objective of achieving a common goal. The first part of the year has been hectic with the coverage of the Diamond Jubilee, yet the team remained poised to meet its target.

The publication of this edition coincided with the strengthening of the staff capacity, with new members joining the team. The commitment and dedication of each member to realising the 15th Edition of the State House Newsletter are well noted. We express our appreciation to all those who contributed to the process, from drafting and reviews to the final editing. Our photography team ensured we captured the moments in the best possible manner.

We commend the OP Management team for ensuring the right administrative processes are followed and for the timely publication. The patience of the support staff who endured long hours of waiting outside the official period is appreciated.

Special gratitude to the Media and Communication team:

Amie Bojang-Sissoho	-	Director
Prince B.A. Sankanu	-	Deputy Director
Mabinta Colley	-	Media Officer
Sulayman Touray	-	Senior Photographer
Junkung Jawneh	-	Audiovisual Officer
Momodou Njie	-	Audiovisual Assistant
Tijan Bojang	-	Photographer
Khaddijatou Suwaneh	-	Multi-Media Assistant
Sulayman Jallow	-	Driver



## **Overview**

The 16th edition of the State House Newsletter delves into the activities of His Excellency, President Adama Barrow, from January to June 2025.

The newsletter includes an analysis of the Presidency's efforts to expand enrolment and fast-track the development of the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) sector. Moreover, readers will gain insight into the government's efforts in providing financial assistance to entrepreneurs for the expansion of their businesses, and creating more meaningful employment.

Under the leadership of President Barrow, the government has demonstrated its commitment to cementing ties at both regional and global levels. During the period under review, President Barrow received several letters of credence from more than nine (9) states and the signing of new strategic agreements between the Government of The Gambia and the Province of Heilongjiang in the People's Republic of China.

Infrastructure has been a priority for the government in delivering long-term economic and social benefits for all. This edition features the inauguration of the OIC Highway, schools and other development projects.

Also, it showcases the Presidency's effort in bolstering the agricultural sector. Under the Programme for Accelerated Community Development (PACD), the Barrow administration has handed over tractors and procured 25 pregnant "Brown Swiss" cows and two bulls from France, through ANIPL- Senegal.

## PRESIDENTIAL FORA

### National Economic Council (NEC) Meeting

Quarterly the President hosts a national economic meeting - a monitoring mechanism for timely intervention and update on the state of the economy.

The President and NEC members reflect on the state of the economy, risks, and policy decisions to resolve economic challenges, with leading institutions in the economy presenting their quarterly reports. The April 2025 economic forum covered the end of 2024 and the first quarter of the year 2025 reports. The sector presentations covered programmes guided by policies, the challenges in policy implementation, lessons learned and executive decisions guided by available technical information.

The Central Bank of The Gambia (CBG) closely monitors the global scenario and the possible impact on the domestic front and the natural depreciation of the national currency, the Dalasi.

The Global economic outlook predicts a 3.3% growth for 2025-2026, but could be jeopardised by a trade war that could impact global and domestic economies. The Sub-Saharan Africa region is a major economic driver and is expected to realise over 5% growth, including The Gambia's projected 5.9% growth. This decline is also associated with the FAO food price index. Other indicators include the drop in the crude oil price index in February 2025 to 76.81% compared to preceding month of January 2025.

The natural depreciation of the Dalasi is currently stable. However, Economic researchers are closely monitoring the possible effects of proposed deportations on remittance flows. Meanwhile, remittance stood at 130.3 million Dalasis in the first two months of the year 2025.

Timely budget support is key to advance the processes in advancing the government's programme. Under the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs, a total of 3.1 billion Dalasis was received as budget support in December 2024, and the IMF programmes are linked to Public Policy implementation of the National Development Plan (NDP), the White Paper on Transitional Justice, and macroeconomic stability and public financing.

Additionally, there is an increase in the number of households receiving financial support as part of Social Protection Reforms. At least two thousand (2000) with an additional two thousand, eight hundred and fifty (2850) households will receive financial assistance, this year.

As a tax-based domestic economy, the Gambia Revenue Authority (GRA) conducted tax audits on ten (10) large taxpayers, and the CBG requested Executive support for approval of Cabinet papers related to budget support and electronic Value Added Tax (VAT) invoicing, following the completion of procurement.

The GRA exceeded its 2024 revenue target by 8% and realised overall growth of 32%. In addition, fuel marking is contributing to revenue growth and the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs (MoFEA) revealed that all health facilities will be solarised by the end of December 2025.

Meanwhile, the Accountant General's Department (AGD) is on the right trajectory towards the digitalisation of the government payment system and easing the monitoring of expenditures. The AGD:

- Working of reforms of the payment gateway, collaborating with Fintech companies, from revenue to data collection.
- Completed the stocktaking of government assets in the country, and for embassies to update its records of assets abroad.
- Completed and submitted the 2021 and 2022 government financial statements to the National Audit Office for finalisation before submitting them to the National Assembly.
- Digitalisation has also positively impacted the revenue collection at the Basse and Fatoto bridges between January and March 2025.

The MoFEA also indicated that while delays in government payments could be frustrating, it is due to the monitoring mechanism placed on government expenditures to enhance accountability.

The Gambia's drive in encouraging direct investment in yielding dividends with the Gambia Investment and Export Promotion Agency (GIEPA).

- Nine new companies recorded in 2024 operating in industry, agriculture and the service sectors.
- GIEPA has launched The Gambia e-market platform and the GAMLUMO platform for promoting and delivering Gambian products to the global market, as part of the National Export Strategy 2021 – 2025.

In another important key development, the Gambia Public Procurement Authority (GPPA) has established an e-GP / GPP portal for upgrading pre-bidding and authorisation and is working on a standard vehicle specification for public procurement and a local content bill development. Moreover, the institution is also processing a National Public Procurement Policy and Strategic Plan to guide the next phases of its engagements.

An update on the migrant workers scheme agreements under the Ministry of Trade, Industry, Employment and Regional Integration, indicated fifty-seven (57) Gambians left for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA). For Spain, three hundred Gambians are needed for the pilot project and the selection will be jointly conducted by the Gambian and the Spanish authorities.

## State of the Nation Address 2025

Annually, the President of the Republic in accordance with the 1997 Constitution of The Republic of The Gambia, is required to give account of the State of the Nation - (SONA) in an Address before the National Assembly. In June 2025, President Adama Barrow delivered to the Second Ordinary Session on the Legislative a summary of the nation's current state of affairs, highlighting key accomplishments, ongoing challenges, and strategic priorities for the future.



The energy sector remains central to the government's national development objectives for economic growth, industrialisation, social modernisation, and progress. Recent assessments indicate that, by end 2025, ninety percent (90%) of Gambians will have access to electricity. In 2024, the country unveiled the first-ever utility, a large-scale solar power of twenty-three (23) Megawatts (MW) in Jambur, in the Kombo South district of The Gambia. Furthermore, a tender is underway for an extra fifty-Megawatt (50 MW) solar plant in Jarra Soma, which can be scaled up to one hundred and fifty Megawatts (150 MW) of renewable energy.





In addition, Cabinet has also approved the splitting of NAWEC into separate water and electricity companies. The strategy is to improve service delivery, ensure accountability, and enhance operational focus.



The Barrow administration continues to prioritise investments in electricity generation, renewable energy, petroleum exploration, and mineral resource management to ensure sustainable energy for all Gambians. In the search for Oil and Gas, a total of five wells were test drilled in The Gambia, two of them under current administration namely Samo-One Well, drilled in 2018, and Bambo-One Well, drilled in 2021. Although the results from both wells are very promising and positive, no discovery has been made.

and one thousand, one hundred Dalasis (D1100) per fifty-kilogramme (50kg) bag in the last two farming seasons, respectively.

Under agriculture, the Barrow administration has procured twenty-eight thousand tons (28,000) of fertiliser and reduced the price from two thousand, five hundred Dalasis (D2,500) per bag to one thousand, one hundred and fifty Dalasis (D1150) per fifty-kilogramme (50kg) bag





Through various agricultural projects, the Government distributed eight thousand, six hundred and ninety-seven (8,697) metric tons of fertiliser, over one thousand (1000) metric tons of certified rice seeds, three hundred (300) metric tons of certified maize seeds, and one hundred and forty thousand (140,000) litres of herbicides to farmers across the country, free of charge. One hundred and eighty (180) tractors and twenty (20) Rotavator boats have been procured for deployment during the 2025-26 cropping season.



Aside from re-establishing the two ferries in service, the government awaits the delivery of two new procured green ferries. Private ferry services operated by Negmar Ferry Company will also commence soon on the Banjul-Barra route. These initiatives will guarantee reliable, safe, and affordable ferry services on this route.

Security is many times linked to livelihood. Thus, the Gambia Armed Forces has launched a twenty-hectare (20 ha) rice pilot project at Jahaly Pacharr to support national food security efforts. They have also established a fully operational poultry farm in Yundum, together with a vibrant vegetable garden that serves the local community. ECOMIG is equally engaged in rendering impressive social services.



This is a joint venture between The Gambia Port Authority, representing the Government, and Albayrak. Alport Banjul will expand and, eventually, move its operations to Sanyang, after completion of the deep-sea port terminal construction which is under construction. The Trans-Gambia Corridor Special Economic Zone Project is progressing well, as part of the wider Praia-Dakar-Abidjan-Lagos Multi-modal Corridor.

The President concluded by acknowledging the government's determination to make The Gambia a shining example in Africa. He called for Gambians and partners to join his government in the journey to advance the Smiling Coast.

## CABINET RETREAT

Cabinet took a decision to have a structured and accountable approach to monitoring the executing of its decisions. Thus, "Focused on Delivering Gambia's Goal" is the guide for an open engagement and constructive dialogue to seek innovative solutions that aligns with the priorities of the Gambian people. The dialogue was held during a two-day Cabinet retreat under the theme "Delivering Results" at the State House in Banjul.



Increased efficiency and higher performance levels was the centre for discussion as President Barrow calls for a more functional Cabinet to deliver on the promises made to Gambians in achieving the significant progress and development that the nation deserves. This includes delivering a high value-adding port infrastructure to reposition the country as a leading trading hub of the region, ensure universal energy access by the end of 2025, and the construction of one thousand two hundred (1,200) kilometres of roads, amongst others.



The President declared 2025 as the “Year of Results”, and stressed that it must resonate across all sectors. Cabinet Ministers reflected on delivery challenges, and how best to improve and resonate their ideas on Gambia’s key priorities and goals.

The retreat is a step towards a more effective and result-driven government to deliver The Gambia’s key development agenda.



## TRANSFORMATIVE AGENDA ON THE MOVE

### Building Trust in the Public Service

Working towards the realisation of a reformed Civil Service, re-building trust and confidence in service delivery in the public sector, His Excellency President Adama Barrow launched The Gambia Public Administration Modernization for Citizen-Centric Service Delivery Programme (PAMP) in June 2025. The 47.7 billion US dollars project is strategically designed to enhance domestic resource mobilisation, strengthen innovation in public administration, and promote citizen engagement to use in-country mechanisms and systems to achieve national goals and objectives.





The project focuses on three key inter-connected results areas that are vital for enhancing service delivery. The first pertains to attaining Enhanced Domestic Resource Mobilisation and Financial Reporting to strengthen our tax administration and policy. Another pillar seeks to realise Enhanced Human Resource Management aligned with our Civil Service Reform agenda. The third pillar emphasises Enhanced Citizen Engagement in Education, seeking to foster greater transparency and accountability within the education sector.

An Investment Project Financing (IPF) element will be integrated into the programme to provide crucial technical assistance,

capacity-building inputs, and change management support to achieve and sustain the desired results.



Concluding his remarks, President Barrow called upon all stakeholders, both within and outside of government, development partners, and Gambian citizens to actively engage in and support the successful implementation of PAMP.

PAMP reflects a shared commitment to transparency and modernisation as part of the government's resolve to establish a stronger, more efficient, and better structured public service. The Barrow administration considers it imperative to modernise the service delivery systems, develop sufficient capacity, and entrench a culture of accountability and transparency across all levels of government. This transformative initiative is led by the Ministry of Public Service, Administrative Reform, Policy Coordination and Delivery in collaboration with the World Bank.

## Bertil Harding Highway Renamed OIC Highway

President Barrow unveiled the new name of the Bertil Harding Highway as the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) Highway during the inauguration of the modern 22 km stretch from the Airport Junction to Sting Corner. Phases One (1) and Two (2) of the now OIC Highway have been completed, easing the congestion on the Kanifing Municipality (KM) and the West Coast stretch.



The commissioning of Phases One (1) and Two (2) and the launch of Phase Three (3) of the OIC Highway, together with the signing of the contract for its implementation, marked a new era in infrastructural development in The Gambia. This vital infrastructure project aims at enhancing economic growth, creating connectivity and new opportunities for businesses in The Gambia and beyond.

Additionally, the President signed a contract to mark the commencement of the necessary construction works of Phase Three (3), which will include key infrastructural improvements, such as additional lanes, drainage systems, street lighting and pedestrian walkways, interchanges and junctions, landscaping and, most importantly, an overpass bridge at the Sukuta-Jabang intersection. The overpass will greatly reduce traffic congestion and, by extension, enhance safety for motorists and the communities in the area.



The project complements the government's ongoing efforts to accelerate the nation's infrastructure and create a modern, interconnected, and prosperous nation.

Speaking at the inaugural ceremony, the Gambian leader unveiled his administration's plans for developing marine and air transportation to ensure the country remains a competitive and well-connected nation. The idea will provide tremendous opportunity to create jobs, facilitate commerce and strengthen the economy towards sustainable development. He also stressed the importance of planting trees alongside the road as it gets completed.





## MECCNAR Complex – Home to Environment Plus

In an innovative approach to infrastructural development, the Barrow administration has undertaken a path to self-reliance by using domestic funds to finance the construction of the Ministry of Environment, Climate Change, and Natural Resources (MECCNAR) headquarters' project. It contracted local companies for the construction to generate jobs, boost the local economy, and solidify national pride.

The government took the necessary step to implement the projects as part of the promise to continue providing infrastructure to the people to enhance the quality of life in the country. The modern infrastructure with 94 offices matches the 21st-century aspirations of Gambians and takes into account the mobility needs of people with disabilities to access public buildings as required in the National Disability Act.



In his remarks, President Barrow called on all Gambians to collectively work towards this drive promising more ground-breaking projects. “It is part of a country-wide drive for resilient, modernising our infrastructure, including health centres, modern markets, and roads.” He added.



On the environmental issues at hand, President Barrow observed Climate Change issues, stressing that farmers and the economy suffer the impact of erratic rains, causing droughts and floods in severe cases, and heatwaves strain health systems. "Therefore, the 'Yiriwa' (RF-NDP) calls for resilient, climate-smart infrastructure in all our regions." Climate change is one of the most pressing issues in the globe, however The Gambia under the leadership of President Barrow has implemented stringent policies to mitigate the impact of climate change. In 2021, Climate Action Tracker identified The Gambia as the sole nation taking steps in line with the Paris Agreement meant to help nations prevent imminent ecological catastrophe.

## TRANSFORMATION OF TVET, ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND TOURISM

### Enhancing Engineering and Technological Education

In a historic ceremony in June 2025, President Barrow officiated the joint commissioning of the College of Science and Engineering (CoSE) Building and the Inaugural Convocation Ceremony for the first group of home-grown engineers at the University of Applied Science, Engineering, and Technology (USET) in Brikama. The convocation celebrated the graduation of twenty-eight (28) students from the Departments of Civil Engineering, Electrical and Electronics Engineering, and Mechanical Engineering.



Aware of Science and technology in advancing a nation, the Barrow administration commits to its ambition to transform The Gambia into a knowledge-driven, technologically empowered, and self-reliant nation, especially in the critical areas of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM). The establishment of the new university underscores the government's initiative in harnessing engineering and technological capabilities.

The campus is equipped with state-of-the-art equipment, materials, tools, and teaching aids that serves as a beacon of opportunity, quality and accessible education for all Gambians. President Barrow assured that it would be a game changer for the Gambian people, he reiterated his government's policy focus on building a skilled workforce in The Gambia, highlighting the role of youths as a driving force for national development. ***"My policy direction is for Gambians to feel the change."*** He stressed.





Expressing joy at the event, the President reaffirmed the government's commitment to investing in quality, relevant, and accessible education for all Gambians especially in the area of STEM. The occasion also witnessed the conferment of a Honorary Doctor of Engineering and Technology (Honoris Causa) University of Applied Science, Engineering and Technology (USET) on President Barrow, in recognition of not just his tangible achievements but his enduring legacy of integrity, vision, and service - a true architect of national progress.

## Institution Heads Urged to Utilise SIE Fund

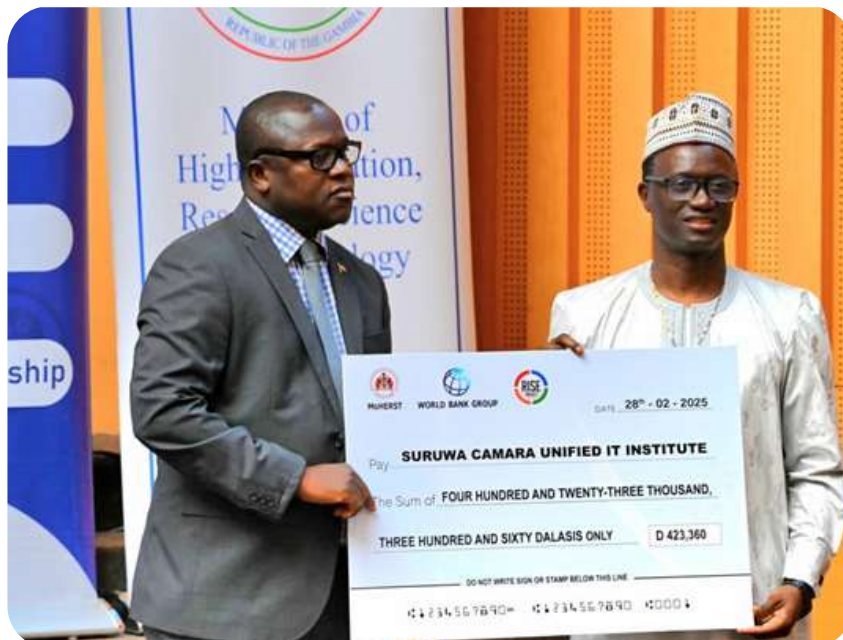
Youth unemployment is a major concern to the Government of The Gambia due to a lack of qualifications and requisite skills needed for certain jobs. The Barrow administration believes that Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) is the key to creating employment opportunities for the youth, thereby contributing to the YIRIWA agenda to achieve the Recovery-Focused National Development Plan (2023 - 2027).

The government, through the Ministry of Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology, and World Bank-supported RISE Project, invested a whopping amount of **GMD 396,761,321** in



TVET to improve quality and ensure that students have the relevant skills and training they need to succeed in their careers.

In February, President Adama Barrow graced the launch of the award ceremony of Window 2 of the Skills, Innovation and Entrepreneurship (SIE) Fund. The project awarded 1087 scholarships across 25 public and private TVET institutions, four hundred Dollars (\$400) per student for tuition and stipends, with additional support for regional TVET centre students to cover transportation and accommodation expenses. The project is designed to support the government's effort to enhance the TVET sector and nurture the potential of the youth on their educational journeys.



The project targets 80% employability rate among the beneficiaries. The Gambian leader pledged to institute a rigorous monitoring mechanism to ensure that the project target of reducing youth and women unemployment in the country is met.

In his address at the gathering, President Barrow unveiled the plans of his administration to launch Window One (1) of the SIE Fund. This will provide grants for TVET institutions to get high-quality infrastructure and equipment with the objective to support and improve the technical and teaching capacity of vocational training centres.

In addition, Window Three (3) will be launched to provide start-up support and mentorship for the youth during the last quarter of 2025. The objective is to raise The Gambia's TVET programmes to the right quality levels that match the labour market requirements. The President urged the beneficiary TVET institutions to support their students by ensuring they complete their programmes and get employed or establish their businesses.

## EU-YEP and Creative Industries Project Launch

Tourism sector in The Gambia has a huge economic potential as it contributes to approximately 20% of the GDP and 17.3% of the employment rate in The Gambia.



The Government of The Gambia plans to create one hundred and fifty thousand (150,000) new employment opportunities for Gambians by end of 2027 and ensure that economic policies contribute more significantly to national prosperity.

In February, President Adama Barrow launched the EU-YEP Tourism and Creative Industries Project. The initiative seeks to boost the tourism sector in The Gambia by creating and sustaining jobs,

generating income and boosting economic incentives for climate change adaptation. The President challenged the European Union (EU) project team, stakeholders, and partners to make sure that the project goes beyond just activities and interventions but delivers tangible impact by transforming lives, empowering businesses, and strengthening the national economy.





During the event, President Barrow held a bilateral with European Union and the International Trade Centre (ITC). He thanked them for their support to vulnerable groups - youth and women, urging them to collaborate and to ensure the project impacts the lives and livelihoods of Gambians.

The President emphasized the critical need to create job opportunities, adding that the project is important for democracy and stability of the country.

The government recognises the need to boost the tourism industry and has shown commitment to developing tourism infrastructure as the significance of the creative economy continues to grow.

### Enhancing Entrepreneurship in The Gambia

With a determination to make life easier for home-grown businesses in the country to thrive, the Government and the World Bank developed a Tourism Diversification and Resilience (TDR) project as part of the post-COVID-19 pandemic recovery process. The TDR project will enhance entrepreneurship across the country by increasing access to capital to create new opportunities, boosting existing businesses, and promoting overall economic growth.

The beneficiaries include Kaddy Sidibeh (Khaddy Experience), Ida Cham (Yabouy Home Cooking), Neneh Saidy Bah (Glow Beauty Palace), Mariama Jabang (Kaba Girl), Kawsu Samateh (Kawsu Tours) among others.

In May, President Barrow presented US\$ 1.4 Million cheque to the Tourism Diversification and Resilience Gambia Project Beneficiaries to expand their operations.



Ms. Kaddy Sidibeh spoke on behalf of the first cohort of beneficiaries. She expressed gratitude to The Gambia Government and World Bank for extending the magnificent gesture of empowering micro and small enterprises in the country.

Entrepreneurship and tourism are driving forces of economic growth and employment in the country, as such, plans are underway to train the 2nd cohort of entrepreneurs in the tourism sector to foster entrepreneurship as a significant contributor in economy.

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## **SITE VISITS**

H.E. President Adama Barrow spearheaded the inspection of major development projects ranging from infrastructure to businesses, aimed at gathering first-hand information and assessing the status of construction works in the Greater Banjul Area.

### **Commitment to Education**

Lot 2 of the UTG Faraba Campus comprises three buildings, including the Chancery Building, the School of Agriculture and Environmental Science and the Faculty of Law.



The President used the opportunity to interact with the engineers, consultants and contractors. He expressed dissatisfaction over delays in completing government-funded projects, stressing that the project was behind schedule. The President demanded for a realistic reverse work plan for timely delivery, putting emphasis on the government's commitment to delivering high-quality projects across the country within the approved budget and on schedule.

In contrast, the on-going construction at the Schools of Agriculture and Law, both progressing with 90% of the work done. It would be the first time the Faculty of Agriculture will include a laboratory for practical field work. This will provide students with opportunities to develop problem-solving skills through experiential learning.







In addition, a moot court is being constructed at the Faculty of Law to enable law students practice their legal skills.

### Private Sector Business

The private sector plays a critical role in the government's strong desire to drive its economic diversification agenda. Hydera Car City in Abuko, with 300 stalls constructed to connect buyers and dealers of spare parts, motorbikes, vehicles, among others.



This is geared towards complementing the government's efforts to mitigate unemployment. In addition, there is a plan to construct 300 more stalls upon effective operations.





## Strengthening Health Care System

Advancements in the health care system continue to evolve at a rapid rate as the Edward Francis Small Teaching Hospital (EFSTH) with the installation of a state-of-the-art water treatment plant and the expansion of dialysis services. Fully funded by Government of The Gambia, this project marks a significant stride towards transforming the health sector, while bringing relief to patients with kidney problems.



While touring EFSTH, President Barrow witnessed the level of improvement at the nation's main referral hospital. Other facilities aimed at providing quality health care for all include modern and new medical lab, x-ray machines, and oxygen plants for dialysis patients, air-conditioning systems, and medical drugs at both the general and paediatric hospitals in Banjul. President Barrow observed that the clean environment was conducive for both patients and health personnel. Stakeholders of these sectors extended gratitude to the President for his commitment to promoting national development.

Impressed with the standardised facilities at the Egyptian Hospital in Kanifing, President Barrow assured his government's support for qualified medical personnel to work with the Egyptian team to address issues surrounding health tourism for Gambians travelling abroad to seek health care services and attract others to seek medical treatment in The Gambia.





Efforts to complement the Gambia Ferry Services in Banjul, a new service, NEGMAR ferry service has started work to provide private ferry service in the country.



### **President Barrow Sympathises with Market Vendors**

Following the fire outbreaks in Brikama, Latirkunda and Serekunda markets, His Excellency President Adama Barrow commiserated with the traders for their loss and assured them of his willingness to work with the Local Government Authorities to relocate the “Sandica” markets to a more comfortable and suitable environment.



Various factors have been blamed for recurring fires in markets that are of concern for the government.

Addressing the unfortunate circumstances, President Barrow expressed sympathy to the affected vendors, noting that the handling and management of goods in these markets were not ideal.

He affirmed his government's commitment to collaborating with local councils and municipalities to modernise the markets, improve accessibility, and provide a more suitable environment to protect the goods that are essential for daily consumption.





The market authorities expressed their gratitude to the President for his efforts in gathering first-hand information on the incident, his ongoing support and urged him to help secure a more conducive environment for better access.

The National Disaster Management Agency (NDMA) has conducted a preliminary assessment to guide the government in determining how best to support the victims who have been contributing to national development.

## DIPLOMACY

### Diplomatic Farewell

Diplomatic farewell plays a significant role in foreign policy, marking transitions and honouring relationships built over time. It has become customary for Ambassadors and High Commissioners to bid farewell to a Head of State before departing to another designation or returning to their home countries.

Ms. Sharon L. Cromer concluded her tenure as United States Ambassador to The Gambia and paid a farewell visit to the Gambian leader, President Adama Barrow. The President expressed his appreciation for the efforts Ambassador Cromer made to strengthen the relations between The Gambia and the United States, wishing her success for the future.



The President outlined that the relationship between his government and the US Embassy became more visible, and the envelope increased, leaving it on a strong footing. He stated that he looks forward to working with the current Ambassador.



Ambassador Cromer thanked the government and people of The Gambia for the support and cooperation, which is an integral part in diplomacy.

The Minister Chief of Staff to the Presidency Honourable Mod K. Ceesay thanked the outgoing Ambassador for working diligently to enhance the bilateral relations between The Gambia and the US, and wished her well in her future endeavours.



### Presentation of Credentials

The presentation of diplomatic credentials is a significant part of the world of diplomacy. The practice has been steeped in tradition for diplomats who formally assume their role as High Commissioners or Ambassadors from their States to an external government.

In January, the Ambassadors of the European Union (EU) and the Slovak Republic, H.E Immaculada ROCA I. CORTES and H.E. Thomas Felix, as well as the High Commissioner of the Republic of Sierra Leone, H.E. Martha C. Kanagbo, presented their Letters of Credence to President Adama Barrow.



In March, the President received credence from H.E. Mariam Sy from Senegal and H.E. Hassan Asgari from Iran as they assumed their roles as High Commissioner and Ambassador Plenipotentiary, respectively.



In a flurry of diplomatic engagements, another batch of diplomats' credentials were received in May 2025. Diplomats from the Republic of Cuba, Carmelina Ramirez Rodriguez; France, Christine Fage; Canada, Marcel Lebleu and Malta, Domenico Giani.



The presentation ceremonies allow the Gambian President and the diplomats to identify areas of mutual interest, explore new opportunities to pursue and strengthen cooperation between The Gambia and their respective countries.

### Strengthening Ties with the Diaspora Population

Since his government's inception, President Barrow has significantly strengthened the long-lost relationship between the Government of The Gambia and the Gambian Diaspora. He has made it a norm to engage with the Gambian community whenever he travels abroad. Such engagements provide the opportunity to discuss issues of concern and ensure that Gambians living abroad are connected and supported.



One of the areas in which President Barrow took pride is the creation of investment opportunities for the Diaspora. Investment programmes and facilities have been created to ensure that Gambians abroad can contribute to the development of the country effectively and efficiently.



## President Barrow Paid Respect to Late Jimmy Carter

In January 2025, His Excellency, President Adama Barrow signed the condolence book of pursuant to the demise of the former US President, Jimmy Carter at the residence of the United States Ambassador in Fajara

Late Jimmy Carter's leadership brought about the Panama Canal Treaty, the Camp David Accords - peace treaty between Egypt and Israel and resolution of the Iran hostage crisis. In October 2002, he was awarded the Noble Peace Prize for his efforts in promoting peace and advancing democracy and human rights. Equally, late Jimmy Carter was a renowned environmentalist who championed the most elaborate energy and environment legislations in modern times.



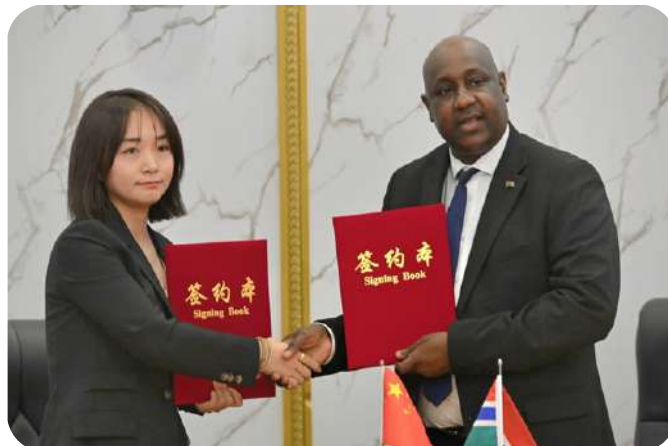
In his condolence message, President Barrow described late President Carter as a democrat and peace maker "leaving behind a leadership of legacy."

## The Gambia Heightens Diplomatic Relations with China

The Barrow administration continues to nurture strong bilateral relations with The People's Republic of China and President Barrow has leveraged the productive relations to socio-economic development of the country. In April, President Adama Barrow witnessed the signing of four strategic Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) between the Government of The Gambia and Province of Heilongjiang in the People's Republic of China.



The MoUs would contribute to the government's broader effort to revitalise the sports sector, provide access to safe water, free Cataract surgery, talent exchange and training, and transform the agricultural sector.



In a separate contractual signing ceremony, Longjian Company signed four contracts with Gambian institutions for the construction of a bridge and road maintenance, rice seed production and land rehabilitation.

### National Identity to Gambian Diaspora

The Government of The Gambia has facilitated the issuance of identity cards (ID Cards) to Gambians in the Diaspora. The initiative enables Gambians in the Diaspora to access key services without having to travel to The Gambia for processing such documents.

The process started in Mauritania and would be replicated in other countries. The service provides great relief to Gambians abroad. Whenever the President met Gambians in the Diaspora, top on their requests is to have national documents or renewal of expired ones. Delegations would explain the difficulties they encounter in processing birth certificates and passports for themselves and their families. The government's

support to issue birth certificates for their children born outside The Gambia would simplify documentation processes and ease reintegration. The new initiative is expected to provide solutions to the issue of undocumented immigrants and statelessness.

The Gambians in the diaspora have the potential to invest in The Gambia to boost economic growth, create jobs and foster national development. Consistently, the President advises Gambians abroad to adhere to the laws of their host country.





## CEMENTING REGIONAL TIES

### The Gambia-Ghana Relations

The Gambia continues to play a crucial role in democracy and governance, a cornerstone of modern civilisation. Diplomatic engagements reflect a commitment to fostering strong relationships and ensuring the nation's progress.

The Gambia and Ghana have been enjoying long, and amicable relations. In January 2025, His Excellency President Adama Barrow alongside counterparts, graced the swearing-in of President-Elect John Dramani Mahama, commencing his second term as the fourth President of the Republic of Ghana. President Mahama was among the sub-regional leaders of ECOWAS who supported The Gambia during its political impasse, following the 2016 Presidential election.



Weeks after the inauguration as President of the Republic of Ghana for the second time in December 2024, President John Mahama chose The Gambia as his first destination for a day's working visit.



President Barrow and his guest held a tete-a-tete meeting at the State House and focussed on the expansion of friendly relations and further reinforcing cooperation on the free movement of goods. Other areas of their discussions centred on the TRRC processes, bringing people to justice, and funds to compensate victims of the former regime. The ECOMIG mission aims to advance peace within the sub region, thus central in realising Peace and Security.

## The Gambia-Senegal Ties

At the invitation of President Bassirou Diomaye FAYE, His Excellency President Adama Barrow graced the 65th independence celebration of Senegal in April 2025. President Barrow's attendance significantly complements the momentous ceremony which was held at the Place de la Nation. The historic relations between The Gambia and Senegal extend beyond diplomatic ties, encompassing trade, security, education and cultural exchange.



During a night stay in Senegal, President Barrow visited Gambian state properties within the capital, Dakar to assess the living conditions for embassy staff. His administration is committed to improving job conditions and living standards for civil servants.

## The Gambia-Gabon Relations

As diplomacy is crucial for building partnerships with other countries, President Barrow is committed to strong and constructive ties with Gabon, a host to numerous Gambians.

The President was among the eighteen (18) Heads of State that graced the swearing-in ceremony of President-elect Nguema at Stade de l'Amitié in the Republic of Gabon following the Presidential election held on 12th April 2025. The ceremony marks a turning point for Gabon as the country transitions from military rule to civilian government.



The inauguration was characterised by solemn affair, blending constitutional formalities with rich religious and cultural traditions. The ceremony featured vibrant displays of national colours and symbols, alongside impressive military demonstrations. Emphasising pan-African unity, the event drew over a dozen African Heads of State and Government, alongside representatives from regional and continental bodies, as well as international partners, underscoring its diplomatic significance.





During President Barrow's first official visit to Gabon, the diaspora members welcomed him and also hailed his development progress. The Gambian leader had a constructive dialogue with the Gambian community in Gabon.

### OMVG Bairo Ndam Lero-Antufa Substation in Antula, Bissau

President Adama Barrow was amongst several international delegates at the commissioning of the OMVG Bairo Ndam Lero-Antufa Substation in Antula, 18 minutes from the capital, Bissau, in April 2025. This project includes a 220 KV double-circuit high voltage transmission line loop and associated substations, benefiting The Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Senegal, and Guinea. The project aims to develop and manage the shared resources of The Gambia, Kayanga-Geba, and Koliba-Corubal rivers among its member countries.



Delivering his statement, President Barrow expressed satisfaction with the project and emphasised the significance of energy development. He assured his continued support for the OMVG project and urged the organisation to expedite the finalisation of the remaining power purchase agreements.

The OMVG energy project plays a crucial role in the socio-economic development of member states by enhancing power generation and distribution, providing long-term economic benefits, and fostering regional cooperation.





**THE GAMBIA @60****Second National Dialogue**

The country embarked on a journey to self-reliance as the National Dialogue Preparatory Committee (NDPC) coordinated by the Office of the President provides platforms to engage citizens from all regions to discuss critical national issues and way forward to sustainable development. Earlier in February, 45 regional dialogues were conducted across seven regions of the country to ensure comprehensive national participation.



The National Preparatory team actively engaged with various communities across all regions on key pressing issues and actionable solutions towards National Development. These consultative processes foster collaboration, as listening to the voices of the citizens create a more inclusive and effective development plan for all.





The initiative aims to strengthen the capacity of Gambians at the grassroots level as we reflect on our journey since Independence. It also emphasises the collective roles we all share in embracing our Diamond Jubilee theme: **"Marching in Solidarity for Self-Reliance and National Development."**

It is important to note that the NDPC does not only provide a platform for citizens to voice out their concerns, but the committee ensures that key recommendations are implemented by central government and relevant stakeholders.

The dialogue is a testament to the government's commitment to reorient its policies and programmes to achieve greater development outcomes.

The Regional Dialogues was culminated to the 2nd National Dialogue on 16th February 2025. The Second National Dialogue, celebrating The Gambia's Diamond Jubilee was successfully held at the SDKJ International Conference Centre in Bijilo. The event featured statements from senior government officials and a variety of panellists from diverse backgrounds in Civil Society shared their insights on the theme.



### 60th Independence Anniversary

The Gambia's 60th Independence anniversary was celebrated in a grand style. The eve of the auspicious occasion witnessed a State banquet at the State House in honour of international delegates, prominent Gambians and members of the diplomatic corps. Thus, culminating with the Independence Day Parade on the 18th of February at McCarthy Square. The Diamond Jubilee celebration was attended by thousands of Gambians, symbolising patriotism and national unity. The formalities continued with a military display sponsored by the Turkish government, wrestling competition, and a musical Jamboree.







The 2025 theme consolidates with the government and citizens' collective spirit and steadfastness in harnessing human and natural resources. President Barrow emphasised the need for greater solidarity, confidence, looking inwards for answers to challenges, and acting on realistic and sustainable solutions.



Despite highlighting numerous achievements by his administration, President Barrow stressed unemployment and poverty rates in the country, vowing to continue expanding livelihood opportunities to uplift the status of the citizenry.

The Diamond Jubilee was graced by His Excellences President Umaro Sissoco Embalo and President Bassirou Diomaye FAYE, representatives of other invitees and the Emir of Kano State, Nigeria and cross-section of the Gambians.





## ON THE PATH TO UNIVERSAL WATER ACCESS

### WASIB Project to Serve One Million People with Safe Water



In 2010, the United Nations General Assembly recognised the right to safe and clean drinking water as a human right. Hence, expanding water supply remains a priority for the Barrow administration, and the government has been undertaking significant steps to achieve the journey towards universal access to clean and safe drinking water.

As of December 2024, the government installed 55 boreholes to serve 117 communities in the four provincial regions and the West Coast Region to enhance water supply in the communities. As the government continues to implement initiatives to improve water accessibility, NAWEC's water network would be extended by three hundred thousand (300,000) metres, and productivity capacity would be increased by 25%. In addition, state-of-the-art Water Quality Monitoring Laboratory was constructed to ensure water is free from contamination for eighty thousand (80,000) new beneficiaries, and improve supply for nine hundred and twenty thousand (920,000) residents.



Ultimately, the project is designed to last for 18 months, and fourteen (14) new boreholes, including four deep wells will be commission.

The European Investment Bank and the Government of France, with a total investment of fifty-nine million, one hundred thousand Euros (€59.1million) support this landmark project.

## ENHANCING MEDIA FREEDOM

### President Adama Barrow received Media Freedom Award

The Gambia has achieved considerable progress in its press freedom landscape over the years, culminating in its ranking 50 out of 180 countries in the world by Reporters Without Borders (RSF). Press freedom in The Gambia continues to play a critical role in information dissemination in the Republic as the Government encourages journalists and citizens to publish and broadcast responsibly without fear of retaliation, thereby serving its purpose.

The Gambia demonstrated its commitment to press freedom by signing the Access To Information Act in 2021. The long-awaited law marked the first time the right to access public information was legally recognised as a right in the country.

In February 2025, President Adama Barrow received Media Freedom Award from Star TV at the maiden launch of its new TV headquarters along the OIC Highway. This occurred during the launch of the Star FM/TV new building aimed at reinforcing information, freedom of expression, and national development. The President was honoured alongside other notable recipients, including the Director of Press and Public Relations, Office of the President, Mrs Amie Bo-jang-Sissoho, for her exemplary contribution to media freedom and good governance.



During his remarks at the opening, the President reiterated his commitment to freedom of expression, democracy, and national development, “which my government will continue to cherish dearly and champion openly.” He said.

It is critical to empower the press to operate freely, fairly, and beneficially, while striving for excellence, upholding ethical journalism, and embracing new technologies to reach a wider audience and improved services. The role of the media in nation-building cannot be overstated as they have a huge and unique potential to unite a nation, while fostering accountability and civic participation. The Gambian leader was praised for gracing the inauguration of a media outlet, showing a good relation between the Barrow government and the media.





## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

### Inauguration of AGIB

In February, President Adama Barrow officially inaugurated the headquarters of Arab Gambia Islamic Bank (AGIB), designed to contribute to the nation's economic landscape, and the growing strength and vibrancy of our nation's private sector. In line with Government policies to promote sustainable economic development, the bank provides an inclusive banking services, accessible to all Gambians regardless of their financial preferences. The government is committed to fostering an environment where businesses can thrive, by encouraging investment and innovation in complementing the government's efforts toward nation-building.



The President expressed hope that the bank will continue to grow and serve as a model for financial excellence in the country.



## The Gambian Leader Honours Taxpayers

Digitalisation advances reform initiatives, enabling state institutions to work more efficiently. Gambia Revenue Authority (GRA) is amongst state institutions that introduced new digital solutions in revenue administration to enhance collection and provide funds for the government to meet its social contract with the citizens.

From 2017, the tax revenue has grown remarkably from seven billion, nine hundred million Dalasis (GMD 7.9 billion) to twenty billion, eight hundred and thirty million Dalasis (D20.83 billion) in 2024. The growth has enhanced public trust and set a new standard for excellence.



The government realised that a nation cannot rely solely on foreign grants and loans to develop the country, as a result, the need to build the requisite capacity to mobilise more domestic resources to finance the country's development agenda. The ongoing development projects across the country are mostly funded by the taxes paid to provide essential services. These include health, education, infrastructure and public service delivered.

The Gambia's economy is fundamentally a tax-based economy and the taxpayers, are the bedrock of the nation's development. The GRA Annual Taxpayers' Award Ceremony held in April 2025, motivates Tax Payers to ensure timely returns and improve revenue collection.



The essence of our Domestic Revenue Mobilisation (DRM) drive is to channel every bit of the revenue collected into public works and services that directly benefit the Gambian people. Furthermore, minimising the burden on businesses and fostering a conducive business environment for every stakeholder in the economy, create the necessary enabling environment for businesses to thrive. Aside from its constitutional obligation, the annual GRA award serves as a powerful reminder of the crucial role of taxpayers and powerful demonstration of patriotism and commitment to nation-building.



## FOGECA Economic Integration in Africa Award

FOGECA presented the Economic Integration in Africa Award to President Adama Barrow at its 17th edition held in The Gambia. The gesture is in recognition of President Barrow's unprecedented contribution to promoting Africa's growth and economic development.

At the launch of the 17th FOGECA Economic forum held at SDKJ International Conference Centre, emphasises the importance of socio-economic growth and the critical role it plays in shaping the future of The Gambia. It creates the potential for investment, innovation and entrepreneurship that will attract both national and international investors. Additionally, Stakeholder-collaboration, critical in sustainable economic progress could harness The Gambia's potential and ensure that the benefits of economic development reach every corner of society.



The President seized the moment to commend the President of FOGECA Mr Ahmadou Diagne, and his team for choosing the Smiling Coast of Africa to host such a high-level event, with main players of the African economy in various fields, aimed at strengthening intra-African trade and promoting African integration.

## African Development Bank AUDIENCES

Since its operations in The Gambia in 1963, the African Development Bank (AfDB) has been funding projects to promote economic and social development in The Gambia. His Excellency President Adama Barrow received Executive Directors at the State House in Banjul to brief him about their engagements with The Gambia and highlighted the positive contribution of their development projects. They also discussed support for 300 communities to connect to an electricity grid as the country targets universal access to electricity by the end of 2025.



AfDB finances development projects and policies in sectors including in energy, industry, agriculture, transport, water and sanitation, governance and the social sector in the form of loans or grants to foster economic growth and employment.

### **Update on Anti-Doping in Sport**

In late January, The Gambia hosted the high-level Inter-Regional African Ministerial Meeting on Anti-Doping in Sports. The meeting aimed to establish a network for cooperation to support the implementation of sports governance that promotes clean sports, safeguarding the ethics and integrity of athletes against prohibited substances. The Gambia is among the 192 countries that are signatories to the anti-doping convention.

Doping in sports remains challenging, questioning the integrity of competition, and above all, threatening the health of athletes worldwide. Sports federations, international organisations and governments have a critical role to play in the fight against doping.

It is optimistic that through cooperation at the international level and the advancement of cutting-edge technologies that allow the detection of substances

The team was headed by AfDB country representative Mr. Rufus N. Darkortey who complements the Barrow administration for seeking in country solutions, and at the same time realising growth and fiscal deficit dropped from 5% to 1%. He assured the Bank's commitment to support the National Development Plan 'Yiriwa' agenda.

that were previously undetectable, anti-doping will soon become a thing of the past. The rules aim to protect athletes' rights to compete without the influence of performance-enhancing drugs.

The event signifies the strong commitment of the Gambian government to promote ethical standards in sports in The Gambia. Following the successful commemoration of the event at the International Conference Centre, representatives from the sub-region paid a courtesy call on the President to update him on the meeting's agenda. President Barrow highlighted the importance of sports in economic and national development, underscoring its role in promoting unity and fostering a sense of national cohesion.





### New ECOMIG Commander Received at the State House

Earlier in January, the new ECOMIG Commander Colonel Ndiangne Diouf took over from outgoing Commander Colonel Baboucarr Toure. Both met President Barrow at the State House and exchanged gratitude and appreciation of the trust to undertake the duties bestowed on them.

ECOWAS Heads of State and the ECOMIG forces continue to provide support in the area of peace and stability as the country nurtures its nascent democracy. Since the 2016 political impasse, following the Presidential election, ECOMIG was launched to restore peace and ensure stability in The Gambia, and supports the democratic transition programme.



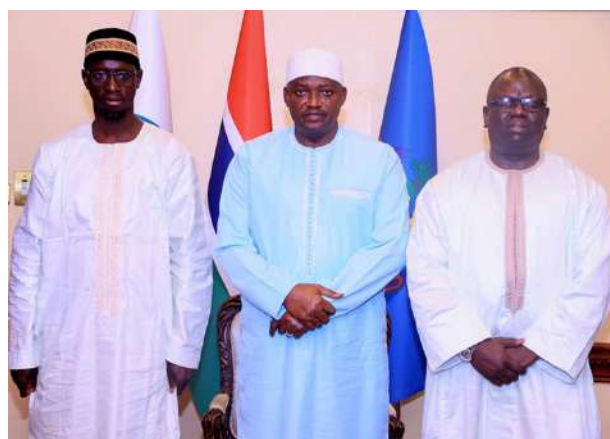
### President Barrow discusses EU Partnership

The European Union (EU) is a critical partner to The Gambia Security Sector Reform, transitional justice and socio-economic sector. In May, His Excellency President Adama Barrow received the EU Managing Director for Africa, External Action Service, Rita Laranjinha. The duo discussed The Gambia's long-lasting partnership with the European Union (EU) in different areas of collaboration.

### The Gambia Red Cross Society Courtesy visit

The Gambia Red Cross Society (GRCS) complements the government's effort in the area of health as prioritised in the National Development Plan. Related to this is its focus on disaster management and well-being of citizens and people in The Gambia.

President Adama Barrow received members of the Gambia Red Cross Society (GRCS) on a courtesy visit, in April 2025. The Society invited the President to launch their 1.9 million MARIDA project, funded by the Chinese International Development Agency, to support the elimination of malaria in The Gambia over four years.



The government and private sector partnership is crucial in driving sustainable development initiatives, hence the government under the leadership of President Adama Barrow is committed to collaborative approaches focused on effective sustainable development efforts. President Barrow recognised the humanitarian work the Society is doing to complement the government's efforts in various sectors, and assured the GRCS of his administration's support.

Mr. Fabakary Kalleh, the President of GRCS, briefed the Gambian President on the Society's activities and cooperation with the government. He highlighted key developments, including their position on the International Humanitarian Map and the recent appointment of Prof. Muhammed M.O. Kah as the Vice Chairperson of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement for the next four years.



Highlighting their achievements, particularly in health and well-being Mr Ebou Faye Njie, the Secretary General of GRCS, expressed gratitude to the Gambian government, especially the Ministry of Health, for their tremendous support in achieving their successes.

The Gambia Red Cross Society is expected to host the Pan-African Conference, bringing together all African societies in The Gambia, and their role as the Chairperson of the SAHEL committee, which includes 11 Red Cross member countries.



The GRCS was established by an Act of Parliament in 1966. The Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of Health, Dr. Yusupha Touray, accompanied the team to the State House.

### **The ECOWAS Bank for Investment and Development Delegation**

Following the successful hosting of the 23rd Ordinary Session of Board of Governors in The Gambia on 14th April 2025, the Minister for Finance and Economic Integration Honourable Seedy Keita led EBID President, George Donkor and his delegation for a courtesy visit to the State House. President Adama Barrow encouraged the Bank's authorities to support the private sector to drive economic development, recognising the efficient operations of the private sector, pointing out that government procedures and processes delay implementation time.





Additionally, President Barrow appreciated the support the Bank gives to its member countries and encouraged them to look inwards for alternative revenue sources to advance development and improved livelihoods of its citizens. He cited The Gambia's revenue collection and how it grew by 163% from 2017 to 2024, providing government with the requisite funds to construct roads and provide other social amenities.



The EBID meeting provided a platform for member States to reflect and confront challenging issues ranging from food insecurity, slow regional trade among others in West Africa in line with its mandate to shape the economic future of the sub-region through harnessing infrastructural, social and institutional growth.

### **Inauguration of the National Muslim Elders Advisory Council**

Strengthening the existing cordial relations between the government and religious entities is crucial towards national development. The National Muslim Elders Advisory Council (NMEAC) was established in September 2023 as a religious advisory body to the government, the council consists of 17 executive members and 87 regional committee representatives. Its purpose is to collaborate with religious entities such as the Supreme Islamic Council and religious advisors to the President, as well as provide support and advice to the President in pursuit of peace and tranquillity.

In April 2025, His Excellency President Adama Barrow officially inaugurated the National Muslim Elders Advisory Council. In his remarks, the President extended profound gratitude to the council members for their commitment to working closely with his government in promoting peace and unity across the country.





He further highlighted the importance of unity and having establishments such as the National Muslim Elders Advisory Council to enhance cooperation between communities. The President assured the council of his government's support in making its benefits noticeable across the country and beyond. He pledged to donate NMEAC members a vehicle to facilitate their outreach activities. Speaking on behalf of the council, Imam Lamin Touray, the President of NMEAC, expressed gratitude to President Barrow for being the most peaceful and harmonious President who is always putting The Gambia first.

### The Information Commissioners

The Information Commissioners briefed the President on their designed plans and progress in making access to information easier and more accessible for everyone. They sought the government's support in implementing these plans during an audience with President Barrow. The access to information is a pivotal act that provides the right to access to information. This empowers citizens to effectively monitor and obtain information from public offices.

President Barrow recognises the importance of implementing access to information which was enacted for the first time to support the democratization process of The Gambia. This demonstrates his government's commitment to transparency and build public trust and confidence. He expressed delight at the progress made by the commission and assured them of his continued support.

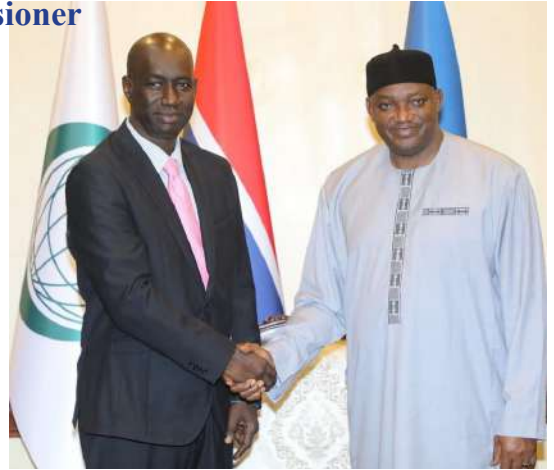


The commission extended gratitude for the President's commitment to making access to information a reality which is crucial in building a stronger and more transparent nation.



## President Barrow Receives New OMVG High Commissioner

The Gambia assumed the position of High Commissioner of the OMVG, led by Mr. Demba A. Jallow. The new team held an introductory audience with the outgoing Chairman President Adama Barrow, who expressed his delight and emphasised the importance of working towards advancing the OMVG agenda. The Organisation has a crucial role in making African integration a reality.



OMVG projects include a water component, critical in boosting rice cultivation, contributing to food self-sufficiency. Rice is a main consumable in the OMVG member states and its massive production would stabilise its prices and ease the cost of living in the sub-region. Already their member states are realising ongoing efforts in the electricity project, which would positively impact lives and sustainable development.

## BRINGING EDUCATION CLOSER TO COMMUNITIES

### Making Education Accessible

As part of the government's efforts to leverage advancement in education and cater for the vulnerable, President Adama Barrow inaugurated two schools during the week of the 60th Independence Anniversary. The schools were built with the support of the MRC Holland Foundation to ease access to quality education, equip students with modern learning facilities.

The Bakoteh Shelter School and Maladah Upper Basic and Senior Secondary School in Kunkujang Jaataya were built to create a future, where every child would have the opportunity to fulfil their potential and contribute to the prosperity of the nation. The transformations are vital part of social protection strategies. "Our children represent the future of our nation; therefore, it is our collective responsibility to create a safe and enabling environment where they can grow, learn, and reach their full potential," he stated.



MRC Holland Foundation has been a reliable partner of the Government and the Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education in particular, in making school projects a reality. They have taken great strides in modernising school buildings and related facilities.

In another centre for education, Bakoteh Shelter, vulnerable children and people living in toxic conditions have a safe and supportive place, which is a basic human necessity.

At the solemn ceremony, President Barrow emphasised the importance of education as a foundation for growth and development. He highlighted the government's commitment to providing quality education to every Gambian child. This signifies a commitment from the government and a promise to ensure that every Gambian child has access to quality education. Teachers, parents, community leaders, and students have a crucial role in supporting the school as part of community efforts to cultivate an atmosphere where education is valued and fully utilised.





### UTG Convocation

The Gambia's Recovery-focused National Development Plan (YIRIWA 2023-2027) and the TVET Policy (2021-2030) reflect the government's determination to aligning education with labour market demands and fostering youth employability and entrepreneurship. Under President Adama Barrow's leadership, these initiatives aim to address skills gap, reduce unemployment, and promote self-reliance among graduates.



This year's convocation witnessed the graduation of 1,228 students, speaking on the occasion, the Chancellor of the University of the Gambia (UTG) and President of the Republic of The Gambia emphasised a strong commitment to empowering the youth. He challenged the graduates to unlock their unlimited potential as the government through the Ministry of Higher Education remains actively committed to ensuring that graduates are productive.

Ground-breaking developments within the tertiary and higher education sector include the completion of Mansakonko Multi-Purpose Skills Centre, a centre of excellence for agri-business in Pacharr in CRR South to promote sustainable and inclusive business opportunities. The government also has integrated Madrassah education into mainstream tertiary and higher education, with emphasis on TVET and STEM to ensure that no Gambian youth is left behind.



The completion of Lot 1 of the Faraba Campus and the ongoing Lot 2 construction would further improve infrastructure for a conducive learning environment at the UTG.

At the convocation, President Barrow recognised the achievements of outstanding students with prestigious awards of excellence for their achievements.



## Madrasah Integration for Inclusive Development

The Barrow administration has launched another ground-breaking initiative, the Gambia Madrasah Integration Strategy (GMIS) to mainstream Madrasah education into the country's development agenda. This strategy ensures that Madrasah graduates gain equal access to tertiary education and are equipped with the skills, qualifications, and opportunities needed to thrive in diverse professional fields.

The strategy is designed to connect language and STEM literacy programmes, offer technical and vocational education and training (TVET) along with apprenticeship opportunities for Madrasah graduates, reform the curriculum and teaching methods, strengthen institutional partnerships, and empower Madrasah students to make meaningful contributions. Ultimately, it ensures that every child in The Gambia has the opportunity to succeed.



This milestone reflects the government's commitment to inclusive and equitable education, empowering every Gambian to make meaningful contributions to the nation's socio-economic growth. With over 700 Quranic memorisation centres across the country and more than 26,000 students residing in boarding schools, Madrasahs in The Gambia serve as institutions of religious education, influencing the spiritual and moral foundation of Muslims. Since the first republic, these institutions encounter difficulties in incorporating mainstream education into their curriculum, hindering their capacity to prepare students with the skills required for a competitive job market.



In the past, Madrassas were considered religious education institutions; however, as part of the National Development Plan 2023-2027 ‘YIRIWA’, focused on a more skilled population to enhance the nation’s human capital. Thus, a need for inclusive skills education in the religious education curriculum. GMIS will address the challenges Madrassah students face, particularly in transitioning to post-secondary education, including inequalities.

Additionally, the implementation of GMIS calls for investment opportunities, ranging from supporting infrastructure development and teacher training, to providing scholarships and technical assistance, to bring this vision to life.

The Gambia Madrassah Integration Strategy is in line with both national and international frameworks, such as the National Development Plan (NDP 2023-2027), the Sustainable Development Goal on inclusive and equitable quality education, the African Union 2063 Agenda, and UNESCO’s Global Education Strategy.



The strategy was commissioned by the Ministry of Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology (MoHERST) in partnership with the World Bank through the RISE Project, to examine and provide strategic policy direction for integrating Madrassah education into the mainstream tertiary and higher education ecosystem.



## PROGRAMME FOR ACCELERATED COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

### Livestock Support Assistance

Boosting the country's agricultural sector is part of the government initiative aimed at revitalising the country's cattle industry, thereby contributing positively to the national development efforts. Considerable effort is aimed at supporting and improving the productivity of local breeds by introducing high milk-producing animals, manifesting the government's commitment to transforming the livestock industry.



Under the Programme for Accelerated Community Development (PACD), the Barrow administration has procured 25 pregnant "Brown Swiss" cows and two bulls as part of broader efforts to modernise the dairy sector and make animal breeds (cattle and goats) stock accessible to farmers. The cattle will be distributed to master farmers with the knowledge, skills, and resources to sustainable agricultural practices.



In April, President Barrow visits the West Africa Livestock Innovation Centre (WALIC) to inspect the cattle and goats. He expressed optimism that the trial stage of the project will drive meaningful progress in the livestock sector and further strengthen the country's economy, aiming to increase its Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

The Programme for Accelerated Community Development (PACD) is a Gambia Government flagship project initiated in April 2020. This is being implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) with coordination by the Department of Strategic Policy and Delivery (DSPD) under the Ministry of Public Service, Administrative Reforms, Policy Coordination and Delivery.



## LEGAL YEAR

The commitment to championing justice, democracy and the rule of law remains a priority to the Barrow administration. In February, President Barrow presided over the opening ceremony of the annual legal year which signifies the collective commitment of the executive, legislative and the judiciary arms of government to strengthening the justice system.



The justice system of The Gambia has experienced a series of legal reforms, marking a transformative period at enhancing good governance and improving the overall judicial landscape. Through legislative and administrative efforts in recent years, the independence of the judiciary has improved significantly, thereby restoring public confidence in the legal institutions.



The Judiciary of The Gambia has empowered district tribunals through training and capacity building, convening magistrates to establish a collective path towards quicker access to justice, as well as educating communities on legal matters. These initiatives are making a substantial difference, particularly for those in the rural area.





Delivering his remark at the ceremony, President Barrow said the commitment to delivering justice impartially and swiftly prompted the establishment of additional courts and the appointment of highly qualified judges. The President took pride in the security sector reform and anti-corruption commission which illustrates the impeccable efforts to combat corruption.

Following the release of the White Paper in 2022, the government set in motion mechanisms to ensure justice for victims and accountability for perpetrators of human rights violations. The President said the decision to establish a Special Prosecutor's Office, and a Special Tribunal underscores the determination to address past injustices with transparency and integrity.

## SECURITY

### Military Cooperation Agreement

The Gambia solidifies its diplomatic relations with the Republic of Türkiye during President Adama Barrow's tenure. The bilateral relations between the two states underscored the win-win approach of The Gambia-Türkiye relationship across multiple sectors, including politics, health, security, economic, and culture, among others.



Under the Military cooperation agreement in January, the Turkish government, through the Turkish Ambassador to The Gambia, H.E. Fahri Turker Oba handed over 17 Armoured Personnel Carriers -APCs to President Barrow to enhance the military capabilities of The Gambia Armed Forces (GAF).



The significance of APCs cannot be overstated as they serve a pivotal role in modern military operations and will go a long way in supporting The Gambia Armed Forces to participate in international peacekeeping missions, and significantly increase the capability of GAF to carry out their constitutional mandate of safeguarding the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the country.



Training and equipping the military as stipulated in the Security Sector Reform are strong pillars of Military and security cooperation, enhancing the operational capabilities of the GAF for the success in UN peace-keeping operations.

During the 60th Independence celebration at McCarthy Square, the Turkish government sent over fifty (50) personnel to display Turkish culture in strengthening the relationship.





## Equipping GAF to Boost its Agriculture Capacity

Guided by the National Development Agenda, the Commander-in-Chief and President of the Republic of The Gambia handed over five buses and five tractors to the Gambia Armed Forces GAF at the State House. This magnanimous gesture would enhance GAF's transportation and logistics capacity, ensure the punctuality of security personnel and empower them in their agricultural initiatives for food security and self-sufficiency.



Strengthening the human resources of the security sector—one of the critical areas in realising the National Development Plan (NDP) 'YIRIWA'. Engaging in peace time activities is in line with the transformation of the security sector to function within a democratic system, as the nation strives for peace and stability alongside other developmental goals. GAF has great potential to significantly meet its food and nutritional requirements, and contribute to the country's needs as capacity increases.

## Border Security Cooperation

Border security cooperation with neighbouring countries plays a pivotal role in safeguarding a country's sovereignty while combating various threats such as drug trafficking and smuggling.

Senegalese General Mame Seydou Ndour was on a 5-day working visit to The Gambia from 7th – 11th January 2025, focused on strengthening security-related matters. Consultative meetings, on strategic discussions, in exploring avenues to enhance cooperation in areas of mutual interest, were held.

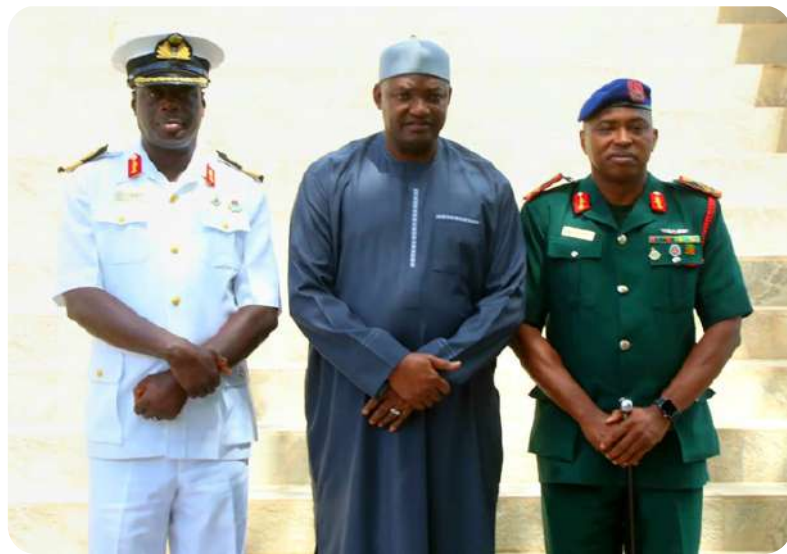
By implementing effective border security, both countries can maintain peace and stability. The visit underscored the strong desire of both governments to enhance cooperative efforts aimed at improving security, reflecting the government's commitment to advancing security sector reform. There are high hopes for both nations to effectively manage their security responsibilities and strengthen security collaboration between the two states.



### Honouring and Entrusting Duty to GAF Members

The Commander-in-Chief of The Gambia Armed Forces, His Excellency President Adama Barrow, decorated two newly promoted General Officers of The Gambia Armed Forces to the ranks of Commodore and Brigadier General, respectively. H.E. President Barrow extended heartfelt congratulations to the decorated officers, emphasising that their prestigious appointments reflect their dedication to service and recognition of their potential.

The officers honoured during the ceremony were Commodore Sambou Barrow, Commander of the Gambia Navy, and Brigadier General Yaya Drammeh, Commander of the Republican National Guards. Adorned with symbols of their high office, both officers pledged their loyalty to ensure peace and security in The Gambia.



Following the decoration ceremony, the President observed the swearing-in of the newly appointed members of the Armed Forces Council. Vice President of The Gambia, Muhammed B.S. Jallow, serves as the Chairman of the council. Other members are Brigadier General Sait Njie, Commodore Sambou Barrow, Brigadier General Yaya Drammeh, as well as two civilians: Professor Chernó Omar Barry and retired Army Commander Rear Admiral Sarjo Fofana. Their appointment is to ensure effectiveness and efficiency in coordinating with the Ministry of Defence and The Gambia Armed Forces.



The President reinforced his commitment to continue supporting institutional and the Security Sector Reforms, while remaining committed to the principles of the Constitution.



## GAF Intake 39

His Excellency Adama Barrow, President of the Republic and Commander-in-Chief of The Gambia Armed Forces (GAF), presided over the momentous graduation ceremony of 'Intake 39' of The Gambia Armed Forces. The ceremony marked the graduation of 351 gallant soldiers who had undergone six months of intensive training.



The passing out occasion was held in May 2025 at the McCarthy Square in Banjul. The inspiring parade and military displays, showcasing skills under pressure, martial arts, firing, raid response, and Tug of War, were performed by officer cadets who took the six oaths.

President Barrow emphasised that the recruited soldiers have demonstrated the resilience, discipline, and mental fortitude required to transition from civilian life to military ranks after going through rigorous training.



The President, while congratulating the soldiers for answering to a noble and honourable calling, urged them to carry out their duties diligently and serve as ambassadors of national unity. The Commander-in-Chief urged The Gambia Armed Forces to remain a pillar of democratic governance by holding themselves accountable to civilian authority, and protective of the freedoms and rights of every Gambian citizen.





As part of the moves to transform the Army into a modern, professional, and well-resourced institution, the Government's continuous to invest in infrastructure, training, logistics, equipment, and the welfare of the GAF personnel.

Graduating cadets took the oath of allegiance, and awards were presented to those who demonstrated outstanding performance.

## OFFICE OF THE FIRST LADY COMPLIMENTS GOVERNMENT'S POLICIES

Her Excellency, the First Lady Fatoumatta Bah-Barrow continues to actively engage in various sectors to complement the Government's development agenda. She engages both in country and -outside our borders advocating and lobbying on issues that would advance the livelihood of the women, children and vulnerable persons. This Edition of the State House Newsletter will amplify some of the critical engagements.

### First Lady Attends Annual Africa-Asia Luminary Gathering

The First Lady of the Republic of The Gambia, Her Excellency Fatoumatta Bah-Barrow joined her African and Asian counterparts in Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania, to attend the 11th edition of the annual Merck Foundation Africa Asia Luminary under the theme "Together We Make a Difference."

Fifteen African and Asian First Ladies partner with the Foundation on developmental initiatives in health, education, fashion, awareness creation, women's empowerment, and the arts. The partnership with the Gambia's First Lady's Office began in 2017 and continues to yield mutual benefits.





## Empowering Girls Through Education

Celebrating one of the outcomes of the mutual partnership with Merck Foundation commitment to girls' education and empowerment, First Lady, Fatoumatta Barrow launched a Scholarship package for forty (40) deserving girl students from various regions of The Gambia through the Educating Linda Initiative, an impactful programme that supports underprivileged girls in their academic journey.

In 2021, Merck Foundation in partnership with the First Lady's foundation, FaBB introduced The Educating Linda Initiative aimed at encouraging girls to stay in school and pursue education as a priority. The programme also includes full scholarships for science students to pursue higher education abroad. The efforts are geared towards contributing to their professional and personal development. The initiative aligns with the Yiriwa agenda of the Government, prioritising STEM, has over the years benefitted hundreds of girls in breaking barriers and creating opportunities.

Some previous beneficiaries of the Educating Linda Initiative have been pushed into early marriages, cutting short their educational dreams. Notwithstanding, others have succeeded and shared their testimonies as scholarship beneficiaries, highlighting the life-changing impact of the initiative. Similarly, parents of the beneficiaries expressed gratitude for the scholarship support and its role in transforming the future of their daughters.



## Supporting Early Childhood Development

Early Child Development is an important pillar in the basic and secondary education cycle of the government's Education policy. A philanthropist Mr. Lang Konteh financed the establishment of the Aja Bintou Sawo Memorial Day Care Centre and Playground in Badibu Kinteh Kunda Janneh-ya in the North Bank Region.

Considering the importance of early childhood development, H.E. the First Lady Bah-Barrow inaugurated the Centre as a symbol of solidarity for the initiative and in line with supporting the national education policy. She stressed that investing in children for a better future is a worthwhile community-driven initiative, adding it would provide an opportunity for mothers to pursue other empowerment activities. The First Lady Madam Barrow, commended the Konteh family and the project team for their dedication, emphasising the need for collective efforts to uplift every child and family in The Gambia.



## First Family Graces the launch of the ECO-TAXI APP

Private investment in various sectors of development is welcome to contribute their quota in building and transforming The Gambia. A key sector that is developing is public transportation. Global Multi-Service is a private entity aims to make transportation more accessible and efficient and has initiated a digital taxi service - ECO-TAXI APP





Eager to see transformation in all areas of development, complementing the government's development agenda, YIRIWA, the spouses of the President, their Excellencies First Lady Fatoumatta Bah-Barrow and Madam Sarjo Mballow-Barrow, graced the launch of the ECO-TAXI APP, an Uber or taxi-style service designed to connect people effortlessly in urban or remote areas. Supporting such ventures will help build a smarter, more connected, and more prosperous country for all.



### First Lady Commemorates International Women's Day

In marking International Women's Day, Her Excellency Fatoumatta Bah Barrow lauded Gambian women for their strength, resilience, and achievements. From breaking barriers to building bridges, women are shaping a brighter future for all.

During the commemorative march passing from the Quad-rangle to the Never Again Memorial Arch, Her Excellency called for the empowerment of women and girls.



### Gambian First Lady Champions Economic Diplomacy

The International Chamber for Consulting and Promotion (CICP), a distinguished African institution, is dedicated to fostering economic, industrial, technical, and financial partnerships. Under its auspices, the African Business Forum in Paris, France, was convened under the theme: "Economic Diplomacy: Importing Investment into Africa."

In recognition of Her Excellency's exemplary leadership and influential role as the First Lady of The Gambia, her participation elevated the event, inspiring Gambian, African, and European business leaders to deepen economic collaboration and advance innovative solutions for sustainable development.

The forum served as an exclusive platform for high-level dialogue among business leaders. It facilitated dynamic discussions on forging strategic alliances and exchanging innovative ideas to drive Africa's economic growth on the global stage.



Amidst her busy schedule, Her Excellency engaged in a dialogue with the Gambian community in Paris. She expressed gratitude to Gambians in the diaspora and urged them to unite, support one another, and The Gambia's development agenda.

The event was graced by Pascal Pelain, Mayor of Villeneuve-la-Garenne, who has been instrumental in supporting the Gambian community in France. compliments



### First Lady Wins Global Female Impact Leadership Award

Her Excellency Fatoumatta Bah- Barrow is a passionate advocate for women's rights and a proud champion of the 'No More' campaign, which combats violence against women. She leads numerous initiatives aimed at promoting the welfare and well-being of women and girls in The Gambia. Her humanitarian and charitable work extends to various causes, especially those supporting the most vulnerable groups in society.

In recognition of her immense contribution and significant achievements, including her exceptional work through the FaBB Foundation, Her Excellency, Fatoumatta Bah-Barrow, was awarded the Global Female Impact Leadership Award at the "Night of Honour and Celebrations of Global Women Power (GPW) in Leadership" ceremony held in London.

Her Excellency, Madam Fatoumatta Bah-Barrow, was represented at the award ceremony by Mrs. Sainey Barrow-Mbye, Counsellor, and Mrs. Mama Conateh-Jobe, Protocol Officer at the Gambia High Commission in London.

Counsellor Barrow-Mbye extended heartfelt congratulations to the other award recipients and encouraged women leaders to continue advancing the global agenda for the empowerment of women and girls through their influential roles.





### First Lady Graces SWEDD+ Project Launch

Her Excellency First Lady Fatoumatta Bah-Barrow graced the launch of the Sub-Saharan Africa Women's Empowerment and Demographic Dividend Plus (SWEDD+) Project in The Gambia, combined with the Social and Behaviour Change Communication (SBCC) strategy; a transformative movement dedicated to uplifting and empowering young girls and women of The Gambia.

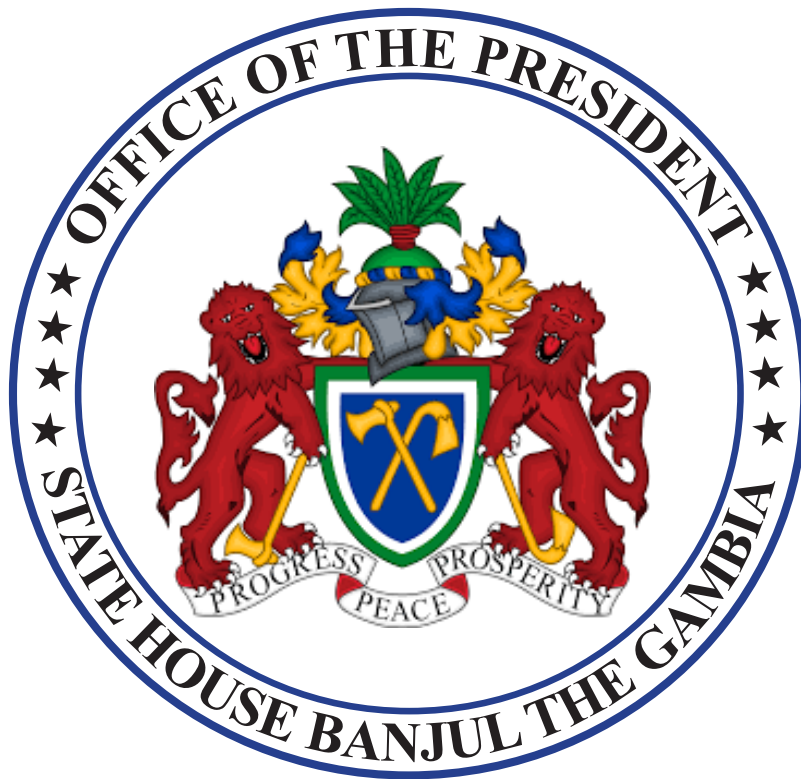
Through the SWEDD plus, the government is building a future where every young woman is equipped with the tools to realise her full potential, free from the barriers of discrimination, social exclusion and inequality. These objectives align with the First Lady's endeavour in uplifting the life of adolescent girls and young women, by ensuring that they have access to quality education, economic opportunities, protection from and support due to Gender Based Violence, and other essential health services.



### Strengthening Inter-faith Relations

In her pursuit of social cohesion and interfaith tolerance, the First Lady joined congregations of Resurrection Brikama and St Charles Lwanga Parishes' Feasts to mark 40 years of St Charles and celebrating the legacy of the Late father Bruno Toupan who was a family friend to Her Excellency for over three decades.





*Media and Communication Unit  
Office of the President, State House, Banjul*

*Email: [mcu@op.gov.gm](mailto:mcu@op.gov.gm)*

*Tel: +220 4201900*

*Facebook: State House of The Gambia*

*Twitter: @Presidency\_GMB*

*Presidential Twitter: @BarrowPresident*

*Presidential Facebook: Barrow PORG*

*Website: [op.gov.gm](http://op.gov.gm)*