

*State House*

# NEWSLETTER

9<sup>TH</sup> EDITION, DECEMBER 2021

A photograph of President Adama Barrow of The Gambia, wearing a blue traditional Gambiai outfit and a blue cap, waving his right hand from the open back of a dark-colored car. He is smiling and looking towards the camera. The background is slightly blurred, showing an outdoor setting with trees and a building.

# PRESIDENT BARROW'S RE-ELECTION

*A DEMAND FOR CONTINUED  
DEVELOPMENT*

FORMULATION OF THE NATIONAL  
DEVELOPMENT PLAN (2018-2021)

PRESIDENT BARROW ASSENTS TO SEVEN  
NEW ACTS TO GUIDE SOCIO-ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT

BUILDING OUR INFRASTRUCTURE AND RESTORING  
ENERGY SERVICES TO POWER OUR ECONOMY

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# ACKNOWLEDGMENT

With the events from the recent elections reinforcing the significance of having a robust liaison Office between the Presidency and the media, my office remains committed to bridging the information gap between these two bodies now more than ever. We also strive to provide timely, accurate and helpful information on all governance and related issues.

During the past five years, the **Media and Communications Unit** has grown from strength to strength due to the enormous support from the Presidency, the Office of the Secretary-General and Head of Civil Service and related units for all team members' exemplary dedication, including ancillary staff. It is also perhaps fitting for me to acknowledge the vital role of the media fraternity during this process. Our public, private, and international media colleagues provided top-notch professional support to execute our day-to-day duties.

The importance of collaboration between our partners and us was pretty evident in 2021, especially during the election and post-election period when the 'eyes of the world' were literally on our beloved country. We have garnered invaluable experience in the past five years. The team strives to realise the mandate of this Office through the provision of timely and accurate information.

As we gear up for another exciting chapter under His Excellency President Adama Barrow, I reaffirm the Unit's commitment to providing quality services and unflinching support to realise the priorities of his Government's new development plan.

## **Amie Bojang-Sissoho**

Director of Press and Public Relations

# Media and Communications Unit

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# OVERVIEW

The Ninth Edition of the **State House Newsletter** delves into the series of interventions spearheaded by His Excellency President Adama Barrow across all sectors of the government. Driven by a relentless thirst to deliver on his campaign promises that led to the change in December 2016, the Barrow administration formulated sound strategic policies and programmes to propel the Gambia's leap forward into a democratic, pluralistic and prosperous society.

Under the Barrow administration, the energy sector witnessed its most significant development, moving on from the temporary measures to stabilize the supply of electricity in the country particularly in the urban areas. President Barrow pushed for increased access to electricity supply by rolling out electrification projects to villages, including those in Kiang, traditionally marginalised under the previous governments.

President Barrow's desire to decentralise development and ensure inclusiveness led to building of a number of schools predominantly in rural Gambia. These interventions increased access to education for Gambians particularly in rural Gambia. The Barrow administration also facilitated tertiary learning opportunities for young Gambians through increased local and international scholarships.

The newsletter also looks into the President's focus on the health sector in strengthening and ensuring quality service delivery for all Gambians. President Barrow commissioned about 18 health facilities across the country during his **2021 Meet the People Tour** to increase the healthcare infrastructure in the country. These new facilities will bring affordable and accessible healthcare to the doorsteps of all Gambians.

On the policy front, this Edition of the State House Newsletter also highlights the **National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS)** enacted by National Assembly on 8th November 2021. The NHIS is part of the Barrow administration's holistic approach to ensuring quality, affordable healthcare to every Gambian.

His Excellency President Adama Barrow also continues to prioritise the development of the Gambian youth. As highlighted in this newsletter, the Government launched several policies and infrastructure development initiatives, which has helped to galvanise Gambian youths and contributed to more employment and employability opportunities.

This edition of the State House Newsletter also highlights achievements in all other sectors during His Excellency's first term in office. President Barrow's accomplishments and successes in transforming the lives of Gambians by fulfilling campaign promises, can perhaps be attributed to as the catalyst to his historic reelection in the 4th December 2021, Presidential elections.

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# INTRODUCTION

In his quest to accelerate the socio-economic development of The Gambia, His Excellency President Adama Barrow, for the past five (5) years, has championed numerous interventions geared towards alleviating poverty and transform the country's economy. Different sectors launched various project interventions to actualise the objectives outlined in the **National Development Plan (NDP) 2018-2021**.

After his historic election as President of the Republic of The Gambia in the 2016 Presidential elections, President Barrow inherited a country scarred by an era of human rights violations and bad governance. The country was also grappling with an erratic energy supply, an inadequate and dilapidated infrastructure, especially road networks, a health sector struggling to provide affordable health care for all Gambians and an underperforming agricultural sector.

The country was also confronted with massive youth unemployment exacerbated by the low supply of a highly skilled workforce.

Massive human rights violations, abuse of office, an underperforming civil service and an undeveloped economy with a public debt that stood at over 120 per cent of GDP by the end of 2016 are attributes of the former Government.

The onus was on the President to address the challenges that put the country at a crossroads and its development at a standstill, stirring change in The Gambia. His Excellency embraced the arduous task of leading The Gambia's emergence from 22 years of dictatorial rule with aplomb from the onset.



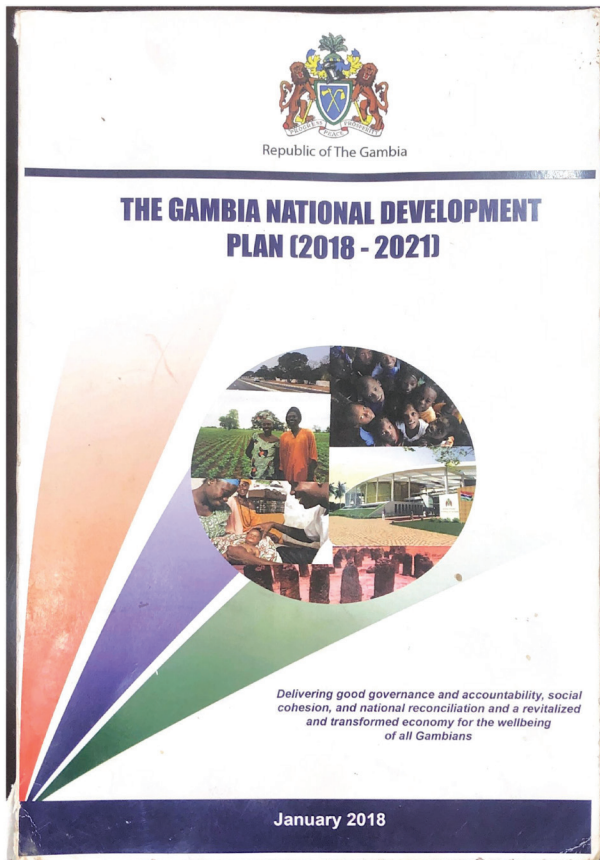
# FORMULATION OF THE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN (2018-2021)

## *President Barrow's Development Blueprint*

With the implementation cycle of the Program for Accelerated Growth and Employment ending in December 2016, The Gambia Government was finalising the formulation process of a successor short term development plan to provide strategic guidance for socio-economic transformation.

However, with the election of His Excellency President Adama Barrow, the priorities in the new development blueprint were shifted and aligned to reflect the pronouncement of the Coalition Manifesto and His Excellency's development agenda. The National Development Plan 2018-2021 provided the strategic framework for implementing the President's progressive development agenda.

The overriding goal of the National Development Plan 2018-2021 is to ***"deliver good governance and accountability, social cohesion, and national reconciliation and a revitalised and transformed economy for the wellbeing of all Gambians"***.



Cover of the National Development Plan Document, Launched in January 2018

The National Development Plan 2018-2021 anchored on eight strategic priorities and seven crosscutting critical enablers;

## Strategic Priorities



**1. Restoring good governance, respect for human rights, the rule of law, and empowering citizens through decentralisation and local governance;**



**2. Stabilising our economy, stimulating growth, and transforming the economy;**



**3. Modernising our agriculture and fisheries for sustained economic growth, food and nutritional security and poverty reduction;**



**4. Investing in our people through improved education and health services and building a caring society;**



**5. Building our infrastructure and restoring energy services to power our economy;**



**6. Promoting inclusive and culture-centred tourism for sustainable growth;**



**7. Reaping the demographic dividend through an empowered youth**



**8. Making the private sector the engine of growth, transformation, and job creation**

## Seven Critical Enablers

**1. A public sector that is efficient and responsive to the citizenry;**

**2. Empowering the Gambian Woman to realise her full potential;**

**3. Enhancing the role of the Gambian Diaspora in national development;**

**4. Promoting environmental sustainability, climate-resilient communities and appropriate land use;**

**5. Making The Gambia a Digital Nation and creating a modern information society;**

**6. A civil society that is engaged and is a valued partner in national development;**

**7. Strengthening evidence-based policy, planning and decision-making.**

Priority action plans propelled The Gambia's socio-economic recovery, and the transformation process accompanies the Strategic Priorities and Critical Enablers of the NDP 2018-2021. These interventions have led to massive development across all sectors, creating conducive environments and the requisite infrastructure to support socio-economic development efforts.

## SOCIETY AND POLITICS

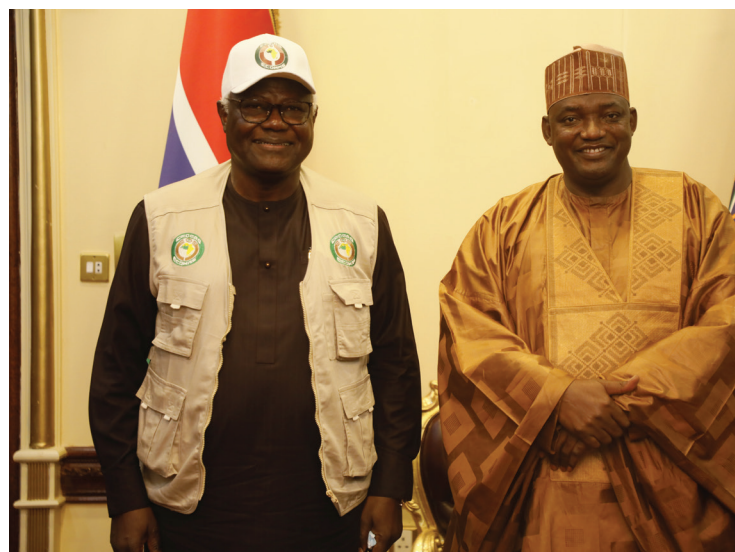
The **December 4th 2021 Presidential Elections** was the first test of The Gambia's newfound democracy as it was the first after the 22 years of the former Government. The elections represented an opportunity for Gambians to consolidate and reaffirm their commitment to nurturing the democratic rule that President Barrow has overseen during the past five years.

The Presidential elections registered the biggest voter turnout in The Gambia, an indication of the commitment of Gambians to this democratic process. The polls attracted much interest from various local and international stakeholders, including local, regional and international bodies, non-governmental organisations and the media.

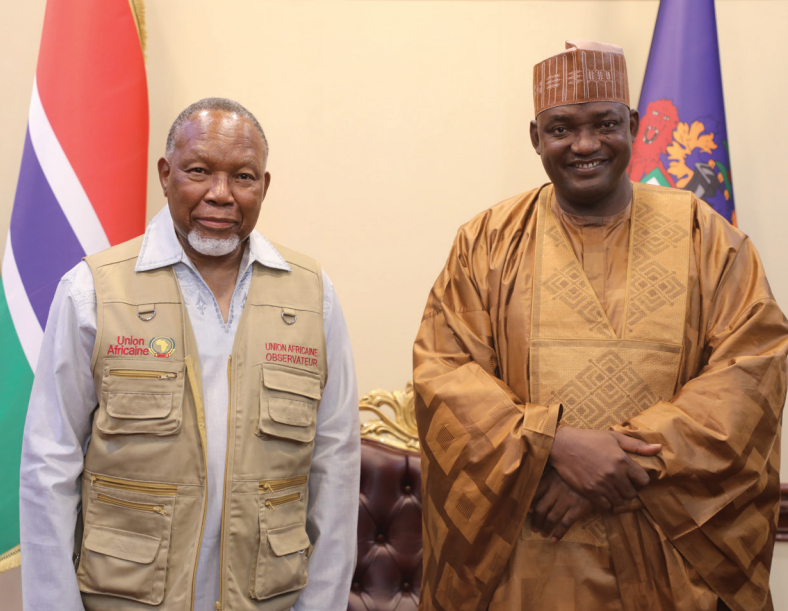
The International Observer Missions for the December 4th Presidential Elections included, E.U. Observer Mission, Commonwealth Observer Group headed by H.E. Gen. Olusegun Obasanjo, Former President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, ECOWAS Electoral Mission headed by H.E Ernest Bai Koroma, former President of the Republic Sierra Leone, AU Observer Mission headed by H.E Ngalema Motlanthe, Former President of the Republic of South Africa, and the Electoral Institute for Sustainable Democracy in Africa (EISA) Observer Mission led by H.E John Dramani Mahama, Former President of the Republic of Ghana. This is the first time in the history of The Gambia that a presidential election attracted such a large number of high ranking personalities and many other local and international election observers.

Six candidates, including the incumbent President Adama Barrow, contested the 4th December 2021 election. The total number of registered voters is **962,157**. **545,318** of whom are women and **416,839** men. However, **859,567** voted on elections day at **1,554** Polling Stations across **53** constituencies, representing a record **89%** voter turnout.

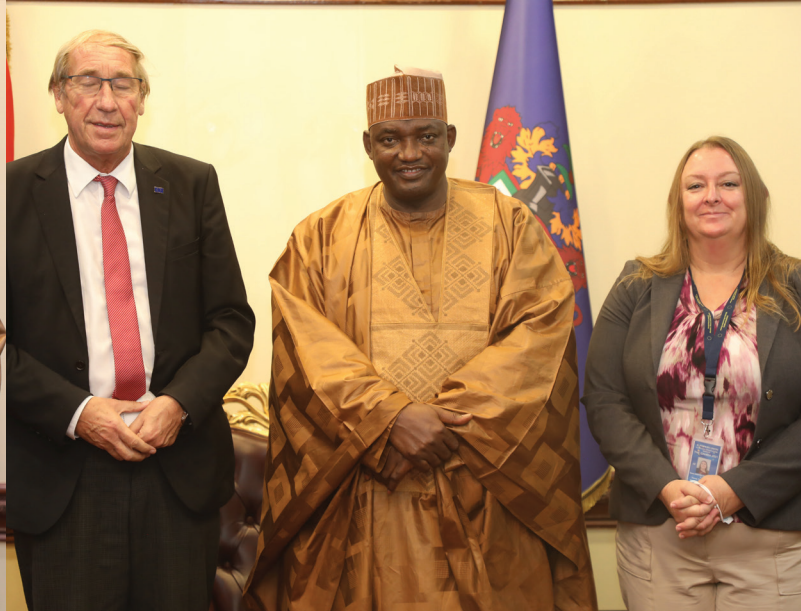
The Independent Electoral Commission announced the results from the fifty-three constituencies. Gambians re-elected President Barrow with a landslide victory scoring a record **457,519** votes representing **53.2** per cent of the total votes cast. The victory demonstrated deep appreciation of His Excellency by the Gambian people and recognition of the President's remarkable imprints on the socio-economic transformation of The Gambia.



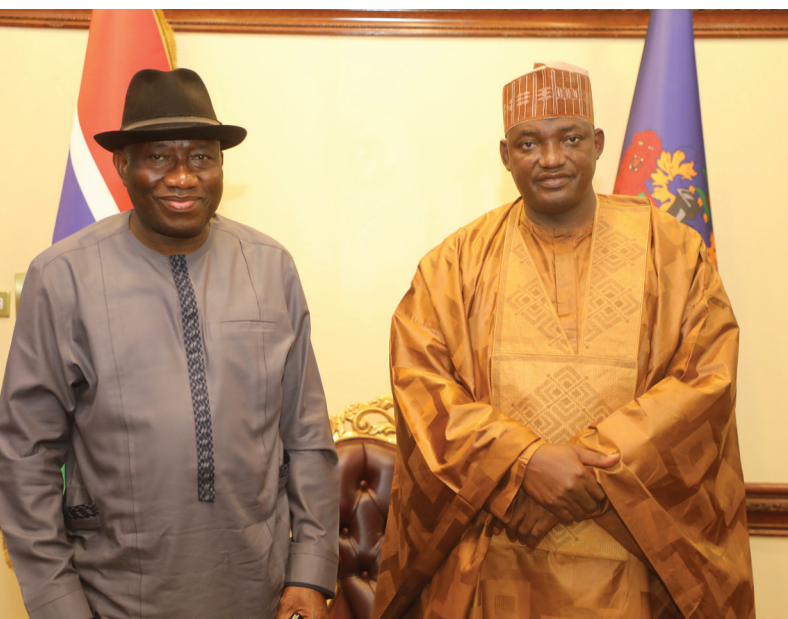
President Barrow with Ernest Bai Koroma, Former President of the Republic of Sierra Leone and head of the ECOWAS Electoral Mission



**President Barrow with H.E Ngalema Mothanthe, former president of South Africa and head of the AU Observer Mission**



**President Barrow with Head of the EU Observer Mission**



**President Barrow with H.E Goodluck Jonathan, former Nigerian President and Head of WAEF Election Observer Mission**



**President Barrow with Former Sierra Leonean Ambassador, Sulaiman Daramy and Head of Kaba Foundation Observer Mission**



**President Barrow with H.E Gen. Olusegun Obasanjo, former Nigerian President and Head of Commonwealth observer Group**



**President Barrow with H.E John Dramani Mahama, former President of Ghana and Head of Electoral Institute for Sustainable Democracy in Africa (EISA)**

# GOVERNANCE

## *Establishment of the TRRC*

The establishment of the **Truth, Reconciliation and Reparations Commission (TRRC)** marked the beginning of His Excellency President Adama Barrow's desire to lead the country to turn a new page and reconcile the people. The **TRRC**, which lasted for three years, allowed victims and their families to bring to light the ordeals they had faced under the previous regime. The TRRC served as a platform for reconciliation and reparation. The successful completion of the TRRC process is an achievement for the Government of The Gambia under the leadership of His Excellency Adama Barrow.

**On 25th November 2021**, President Barrow received the report of the TRRC. Upon receipt of the report, the President promised justice for the victims and called on Gambians to be **"patient and allow the legal process to take its course."** The President assured the commissioners under the leadership of Dr Lamin Sise that his Government would carefully study the report and take appropriate action within six months.

The TRRC is an important milestone in The Barrow administration's transitional justice program, as it forms part of other reform initiatives. Speaking at his Post-election press conference, President Barrow said that he is proud to have set up the TRRC to help unearth the truth of over two decades of human rights violations and other abuses under the Jammeh administration.



President Barrow receiving the TRRC Report from the Commission's Chairman Dr. Lamin Sise



President Barrow and other senior Government Officials pose for a Photo with Members of the TRRC after receiving the final TRRC Report

## Security Sector Reform

In a bid to consolidate peace and reorient the country's security sector, President Adama Barrow prioritised the restructuring of the National Security entities anchored on the new National Security Policy to guide the security sector reform process. The formulation and validation of the **National Security Policy** was an outstanding achievement that will serve as the prerequisite to building strong security institutions in The Gambia.

With the 2016 post-elections impasse raising question marks over peace and stability in the Gambia in the short and medium terms, the Government of The Gambia sought support from **ECOWAS** for the restoration of peace and order. The **ECOMIG** mission in The Gambia began in January 2016 with peacekeeping forces from The Gambia's sister **ECOWAS** countries. The deployment of the **ECOMIG** peacekeeping force strategically supports The Gambia Armed Forces in executing their functions of protecting the peace, of which The Gambia is synonymous. On top of this vital function, the **ECOMIG** forces have also provided regular training for The Gambia Armed Forces on various security programmes.

As peace and tranquillity gradually returned to The Gambia and the security sector reform process took shape, the Government of The Gambia and ECOWAS started to downsize the presence of the **ECOMIG** forces in The Gambia. In other developments, the **60th ECOWAS Ordinary Session** of Heads of State and Government, held in Abuja, Nigeria, on 12th December 2021, agreed to transform the **ECOMIG** forces in The Gambia to a police mission starting in **January 2022**.



ECOMIG Soldiers patrolling the streets to ensure peace and security



## National Human Rights Commission (NHRC)

In line with His Excellency's new democratic dispensation principles, the Government of The Gambia prioritised the **National Human Rights Commission (NHRC)**. The attainment of this laudable milestone is a historic feat of which the Barrow administration can be proud of. It has restored The Gambia's position as a democratic country that fully accommodates all the freedoms enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights Treaty and other international conventions.

During the 22 years of dictatorship, The Gambia's human rights record did not fare well and stood at an all-time low. The human rights situation was underwhelming and deplorable as the dictatorial regime implemented draconian laws to restrict freedom of expression, movement and other human rights and entitlements. During this period, The Gambia was under mounting pressure from the international community. The repressive regime held power through abuse of public office and subjecting Gambians to numerous repressive laws and practices.

The establishment of the National Human Rights Commission was one of the first moves of President Barrow's Government and was a swift translation of an electoral promise into action. As an advocate for human rights, this move ushered in a new dawn that focused on protecting the human rights of Gambians and giving them full liberties to harness their potentials for socio-economic development.

With this new critical human rights structure in place and the Gambia's renewed commitment to international human rights protocols and instruments, the narrative started to shift, and the country gradually saw significant improvement in the global human rights rankings.

During a recent visit to the State House for the Commission's annual human rights briefing and a courtesy call on H.E. President Adama Barrow, the chairperson of the commission, Mr Emmanuel Daniel Joof, said Gambians should be proud of the country's current human rights record, especially compared to its recent history. ***"The Human Rights situation in the country, I must say, is good,"*** said Commissioner Joof, adding, ***"It's a much-improved situation compared to what we had before."*** Mr Joof said protecting the rights of people in a country is a ***"work in progress,"*** noting that there is still room for improvement.



H.E President Adama Barrow greets Mr Emmanuel Daniel Joof, Chairperson of the National Human Rights Commission

## President Barrow Assents to Seven New Acts to Guide Socio-Economic Development

In his bid to further ensure the legislature's independence, His Excellency the President of the Republic, President Adama Barrow, has assented to several Acts passed by the National Assembly. These include the following;

- **National Accreditation and Quality Assurance Authority Act, 2021**
- **Petroleum Commission Act, 2021**
- **Tourism Offences (Amendment) Act, 2021**
- **Persons with Disabilities Act, 2021**
- **National Assembly Service Act, 2021**
- **Supplementary Appropriation Act, 2021**
- **Access to Information Act, 2021.**

These new laws represent a wide range of critical socio-economic interests that the President has relentlessly pursued since assuming office. It was a significant move that the President has once again demonstrated commitment to the socio-economic transformation of the lives of Gambians through inclusive and sustainable growth.



# DIPLOMACY AND FOREIGN POLICY

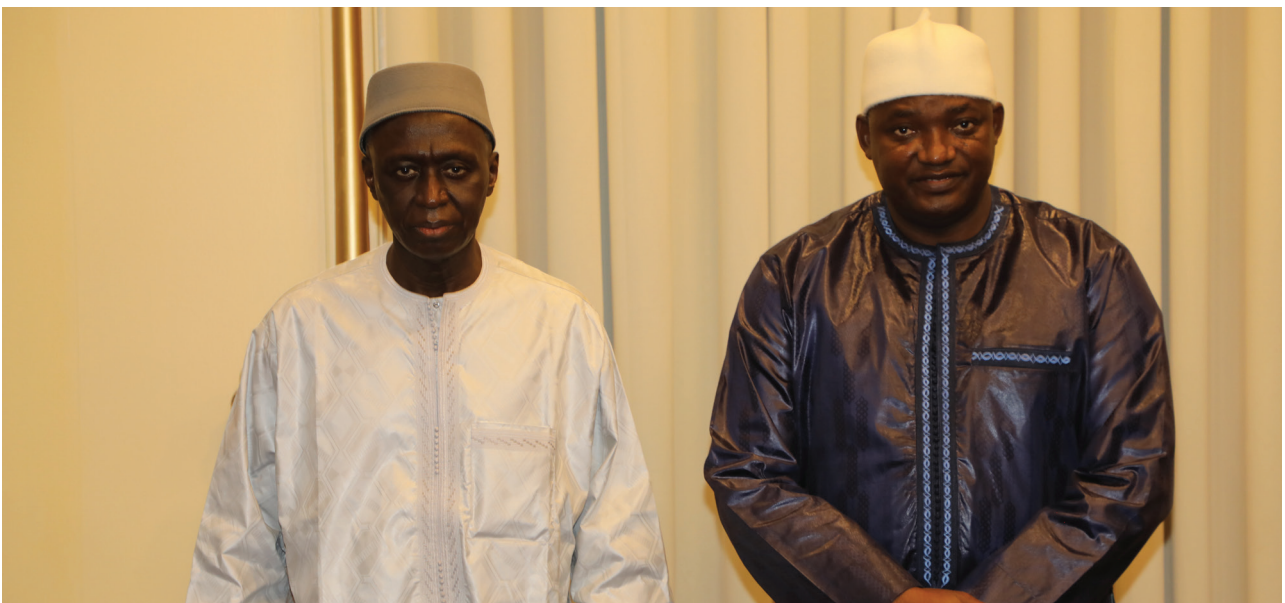
## *Reorientation of The Gambia's Foreign policy and International Relations*

On top of worrying about undemocratic practices and economic mismanagement, The Gambia was increasingly becoming an isolated country in the international arena as countries continued to frown upon the rather unfortunate status quo under the former Government.

As a globally renowned advocate of peace and democracy, President Adama Barrow's foreign policy premised on establishing fruitful bilateral and multilateral ties with the global community. Over the past five years, His Excellency's administration attracted much interest worldwide in establishing and forging mutually beneficial partnerships for development and socio-economic transformation. The new dawn of democracy in The Gambia inspired further bilateral and multilateral cooperation between The Gambia and her sister countries in the Sub-region.

President Barrow prioritised The Gambia's return to international organisations, including the International Criminal Court and the Commonwealth, to restore The Gambia's once-respected status in the international community.

The President also notably revived The Gambia's relationship with its neighbour Senegal solidified the cooperation during a special high-level meeting between officials of the two countries held on **11th-13th March 2018** at the Kairaba Beach Hotel. The Senegalo-Gambia Permanent Secretariat organised and coordinated this meeting to re-establish partnerships for development in various sectors.



H.E President Adama Barrow with former High Commissioner, Mr. Fodé Seck of Senegalo-Gambia Secretariat

President Barrow also actively led efforts to accelerate the attainment of the regional integration objectives of ECOWAS. His Excellency became a prominent member of the regional bloc by championing the cause for peace, stability and reconciliation in Mali. His Excellency also played a crucial role in international cross-border disputes. He successfully played a significant role in settling an international border dispute between the Republics of Guinea and Senegal. With the prominent part of The Gambia in **ECOWAS**, the country was deservedly honoured when it announced at the 60th ECOWAS Ordinary Session that The Gambia would take up the Presidency of the **ECOWAS Commission**.

President Barrow's progressive regional integration and international cooperation ideals led to the signing of very significant and mutually beneficial partnerships. The most notable agreements include waivers on visa and residential permits with countries like India and Sierra Leone.



President Barrow at the 60th ECOWAS Ordinary Summit held in Abuja, Nigeria

President Barrow at the 2018 UN General Assembly

President Barrow went further to strengthen the Gambia's relationship with the international community by building on the country's strong ties with Turkey, Saudi Arabia and others.



1. **President Barrow with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan during a State visit to The Gambia**
- 2/3. **President Barrow at a meeting with officials from the Turkish Ministry of Economics**
- 4,5,6. **President Barrow and Delegation meeting with OIC secretariat in Saudi Arabia**

# WORKS AND INFRASTRUCTURE

## *Building Our Infrastructure and Restoring Energy Services to Power Our Economy; Banjul Rehabilitation Project*

His Excellency Adama Barrow prioritised the implementation of the **Banjul Rehabilitation Project** in a bid to harness the economic potentials of the city. The President's will to ensure the completion of this critical project manifested the dedication of **Government Local Funds (GLF)** to support its implementation. This commitment was a historic undertaking as it marked the first attempt to utilise the scarce GLF to support the construction of a major infrastructural project.

The Banjul Rehabilitation project is the first of an ambitious plan by the government to transform the city's infrastructural landscape and support the socio-economic activities of Banjulians for improved livelihood provision. For the first time, good roads and drainage will help the flow of socio-economic activities and strengthen the city's position as a business hub for the region. The completion of the Banjul Rehabilitation project is a remarkable achievement that further cements His Excellency's status as a leader par excellence and a President committed to elevating the lives of all Gambians.



Construction work on the Banjul Rehabilitation Project

## Basse - Fatoto - Koina - Roads and Bridges Projects (Ring Road)

Recognising the enormous socio-economic benefits of quality road networks, His Excellency Adama Barrow championed the **Basse Roads and Bridges** project dubbed the **Ring Road** to a tune of **\$82million** funding from the People's Republic of China. The inauguration of the new Ring Road marked the beginning of a promising era for the people of the Upper River Region (URR) as the initiative massively boosted socio-economic activities in the region. The Ring Road stretches from the West Coast to the Eastern Region and runs along the country's entire North and South Banks.

The historic inauguration of the landmark **Samba Juma Bridge** in Basse on 9th October 2021 also ushered in a new era of hope for the people of URR, transforming the region into a vibrant business hub. The Project is President Barrow's flagship project and one that is close to his heart due to his historical association with the region. Having lived and witnessed the hardship of commuting on these roads throughout his adult life, President Barrow held the project with special significance. The inauguration of the Samba Juma Bridge was, a proud moment for the President.

The occasion also marked the realisation of a people's dream and massive achievement on the national infrastructure development front. It was also a significant milestone in the implementation process of the **2018-2021 National Development Plan**.

During his keynote address at the inauguration ceremony, President Barrow stated that *'our road network is the backbone of the country's transportation system. There is no doubt that this achievement will promote and facilitate the free movement of people, goods, and services within the country and in the sub-region'*.

The President also noted that the completion of the URR Project implies improvement of living standards. It also signifies increased economic activities and broader access to social services, such as health and education.



The Fatoto Bridge



The Basse Samba Juma Bridge



Yerobawol road





A road in the URR before construction



Basse bridge



Fatoto bridge after Construction



New Yerobawol Road



The new Basse Road



The new Basse bridge

Conscious of the significance of the decentralisation of infrastructure in The Gambia and ensuring access for the rural populace, His Excellency Adama Barrow also identified the enhancement of the Kiang and Hakalang road network. The Kiang West and the Hakalang Road in North Bank are critical to the socio-economic transformation of people's lives in the rural Gambia. This project is in phases and includes two carriageways and provisions for sidewalks, accessibility for the physically challenged and drainage facilities. The road will be double sealed surface dressing with a width of 7m, and 1.5 m paved shoulders on both sides and 1.5m sidewalks where applicable. At the time of writing, the overall progress of works stands at 80%.



**President Barrow Lays the Foundation for the Kiang West Roads Project**



**Hakalang Road during Construction**

**Progress on Hakalang Road Construction**

## Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Road Project

In preparation for hosting of the third biggest gathering of world leaders, President Barrow continues to strive for the successful implementation of the **OIC Roads Projects**. The expansion of the Bertil Harding Highway is critical as it aims to decongest traffic on the Bertil Harding Highway by constructing a 6-lane dual carriageway in each direction with service lanes, roundabouts and overpasses at critical intersections. After laying the foundation stone on 17th November 2021 by Her Excellency the Vice President Dr Isatou Touray, the contractor Areski SA has commenced works on the Bertil Highway expansion.



Vice President Dr Isatouray Laying the foundation stone for the expansion of the Bertil Harding Highway

Also, as part of the OIC Road network enhancement projects, His Excellency the President laid the foundation stones for the urban roads project on **28th October 2021** in Brufut and Latrikunda Sabiji respectively. This project which is to be implemented in two lots includes the upgrading of up to **20 urban roads** to 2-lane, single-carriageways with shoulders and sidewalks where applicable. The upgrade is also expected to be accompanied by lighting and drainage facilities.

## Infrastructure Improvement at Banjul International Airport (BIA)

As part of preparatory efforts for the hosting of the **OIC Summit**, the passenger terminal at the Banjul International Airport was rehabilitated and upgraded. The upgrade now allows the building to accommodate up to 500 passengers in a peak periods. This development is in line with the government's aim to increase operational capacity at the airport in line with the National Development Plan.

Similarly, other critical airport support systems will be deployed to support operations. These include the **Common User Passenger Processing Systems (CUPPS)** and other modern operational tools that will enhance service delivery in accordance with international standards and best practices.

With the OIC Summit set to welcome high-level dignitaries from member countries, a **New VVIP Lounge** is under construction at the Banjul International Airport. The construction of the lounge will ensure the provision of top-notch reception services. The new VVIP lounge will be constructed in accordance with international and OIC standards.

The new VVIP lounge will also be vital to the efforts aimed at making the **Sir Dawada Kairaba Jawara International Conference** facility an active regional and international conference destination. The facility will also help in the improvement of reception services for tourist and reinforce The Gambia's competitive advantage for tourism and the hosting of international events.



Construction of a new VVIP Lounge at the Banjul International Airport

# GENDER, CHILDREN AND SOCIAL WELFARE

## *Empowering Women and Children*

Empowering Gambian women and ensuring decent futures for Gambian Children is a priority for the Presidency. His Excellency President Adama Barrow has inspired reforms and interventions geared towards improving the lives of women and children in The Gambia. His Excellency made perhaps the most important strategic policy move to empower women in the Gambia through the establishment of a dedicated Ministry to take charge of women's affairs and other gender-related issues.

The **Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Welfare** as it is known nowadays, provides an adequate institutional framework for The Gambia government to formulate and implement progressive strategies, policies, legal and regulatory instruments for the empowerment of women and protection of their rights to a decent living and equal opportunities in all spheres of life.

President Barrow further demonstrated his willingness to women empowerment by appointing Gambian women to take up important and critical positions in his Government. As it stands, the Vice Presidency and three (3) Ministerial positions are occupied by women.



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1. President Barrow with the Minister for Gender, Children and Social Welfare, Hon Fatou Kinteh
2. President Barrow with the Minister for Agriculture, Hon Amie Fabureh
3. Minister for Basic and Secondary Education, Hon Cluadiana A. Cole

President Barrow's inclusive governance system has also generated increased interest and participation by women in Gambian politics. The President nominated three out of five women, to serve as law makers in his first term of Office and also significantly nominated Mrs Mariam Jack-Denton to serve as the Speaker of the National Assembly.

President Barrow reinforced his commitment to increase women participation in the governance institutions by appointing four (4) women who currently serve as Ambassadors and Heads of Missions in Malaysia, Ethiopia, Morocco and Brussels



**President Barrow and the Hon Speaker of the National Assembly, Mrs Mariam Jack-Denton during his 2021 SONA Address at the National Assembly**

## Women Enterprise Fund (WEF) Project

This is an **NDP** flagship project with the objective of strengthening capacities of **10,000** women and girls in micro, small and medium enterprises. This project was rolled out with a 3million Euro grant from the European Union. The project was launched by the Vice President Dr Isatou Touray on 13th September 2019 at the Kairaba Beach Hotel. The overarching goal of this important project is to reduce poverty and promote socio-economic development through women empowerment. In order to ensure project sustainability and continuity, the Government of The Gambia through the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Welfare, tabled the **Women Enterprise Fund Bill 2020** before the National Assembly for enactment. This process will guarantee the inclusion of dedicated funds for this project.

During her keynote address at the launching ceremony, the Vice President described the women enterprise fund as a *'step towards helping Gambian women achieve the Sustainable Development Goals on gender equality and women empowerment'*.



President Barrow with Women Entrepreneurs after presenting them with checks through the Women Enterprise Fund

The Government of The Gambia and **UNICEF** through its *Children on the Move* Program also started the implementation of a 2 million Euro project in April 2019. This project is the Government's reinforced efforts geared towards protecting and safeguarding the precious lives of Gambian Children. The program is a key intervention that targets undocumented children moving within or outside the countries of The Gambia, Senegal and Guinea Bissau. This is to protect children on the move from violence, exploitation and abuse through systematic support to protection mechanisms in The Gambia as well as to promote prevention of movement with at-risk groups.

## Gender Mainstreaming and Advocacy for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment

With His Excellency President Barrow's unflinching commitment to the uplifting of Gambian women, the Government of The Gambia and UNFPA launched a \$9.4 million dollar project in 2017. This project aims to accelerate gender mainstreaming and drive advocacy efforts to ensure gender equality and women's empowerment in The Gambia. The initiative focuses on mainstreaming gender into development programs, putting in place the requisite legislation to protect the rights of women and ensuring equal opportunities. The advocacy efforts are also centred on ending Gender-Based Violence, Female Genital Mutilation and Child Marriage. This intervention is in line with His Excellency's commitment towards the empowerment and protection of the rights of women in The Gambia.

## Inclusive Growth Promotion Institutional Support Project (IGPISP)

The Inclusive **Growth Promotion Institutional Support Project (IGPISP)** in The Gambia was launched in January 2017 and focuses on strengthening the capacities of key private and public institutions engaged in private sector development promotion. This initiative is expected to contribute to improved capacity and institutional development through a range of interventions including specialised technical skills transfer from technical advisors through robust training programs.

The project also intends to contribute to the elimination of key medium-term constraints and challenges related to the lack of diversification of the economy. The project has three (3) components: *(i) Export and Investment Promotion; (ii) Entrepreneurship Development; and (iii) Project Management*. Importantly, the project also focused on gender as a cross-cutting issue critical to inclusive growth. The project dedicated resources for the economic empowerment of women through support for wealth generation activities. This project will therefore contribute significantly to poverty reduction by promoting women economic empowerment and ensuring wealth creation.

## Strengthening Social Protection Mechanisms

Under His Excellency's Presidency, the Government of The Gambia and its development partners also rolled out several initiatives that are geared towards strengthening social protection mechanisms in The Gambia. The Government is implementing The Gambia Social Safety Net Project with support from the World Bank.



This project focuses on improving the coordination of social assistance activities, provision of temporary social assistance support to rural households and inclusion of the extreme poor in the **NAFA** program.



**NAFA Quick Payment Session in Progress - Photo - The Point Newspaper**

The stakeholders of this project include the Department of Community Development, National Nutrition Agency (NaNA) and Directorate of Social Welfare. Other notable social protection interventions include the Building Resilience through Social Transfers (**BRST**) project. This project aims at improving the nutritional value of lactating mothers with children that are 2 years and below. It is in a form a cash transfer of D600 per month to help lactating mothers to provide a healthy diet to their babies and at the same time invest on sustainable livelihoods where possible- The project was launched in 2017 with a fund of up to **3,000,000** euros and is expected to contribute to efforts geared towards mitigating food insecurity and malnutrition in The Gambia.

In similar developments, the Government of The Gambia under the leadership of His Excellency the President, in partnership with **UNCDF**, recently launched a project at the tune of **\$80,000**, as part of ongoing endeavors to enhance the capacity of women on the implementation of innovative financial solutions to empower their businesses. This intervention is expected to strengthen capacities on resource mobilisation and utilisation for improved productivity.

# HEALTH AND WELLBEING

The development of the health sector has always been a priority for President Barrow's government. His Excellency has championed the cause of providing affordable access to quality health care services for all Gambians since coming into office. The interventions in the health sector were focused on upgrading and expanding medical facilities countrywide and scaling up technical capacities to ensure improved provision of health care services.

The upgrade and expansion initiatives include 18 health post across The Gambia which were commissioned by President Barrow during his 2021 Meet The people Tour. These new health care delivery stations are expected to complement the work of the major health centres across the country. In response to Covid-19, The Ndemban Clinic was refurbished to serve as a dedicated referral centre for covid-19 patients in The Gambia.



**Above: President Barrow (in White) handing Ambulances to the Hon Minister of Health Dr. Samateh**

**Right: A health Post. 18 of which has been inaugurated in remote villages throughout the Country.**



## COVID-19 Preventive Measures

With confirmation of The Gambia's index Covid-19 case on the 17th of March 2020, President Barrow's government swiftly devised strategic measures to help curb the spread of the virus. These include the reprioritization of the national budget and subsequent provision of up to GMD500 million as dedicated funds to support the fight against covid-19. The government of The Gambia, through the Ministry of Health and relevant stakeholders also put in place an aggressive sensitization campaign that helped raise awareness of covid-19 across the country. These efforts were coordinated by a special taskforce headed by the Office of the Vice President.

On the policy front, the introduction of the National Health Insurance Scheme is expected to immensely contribute to the provision of affordable quality health services for all Gambians. The government of The Gambia also recently validated the new National Health Policy 2021-2030. The policy is expected to provide guidance for health care service delivery in The Gambia going forward.

## Launch of Vaccination Campaign

His Excellency demonstrated his exemplary leadership by championing the covid-19 vaccination campaign in The Gambia. The President launched the vaccination campaign at the State House in Banjul on March 10th 2021. President Barrow received his first dose of the AstraZeneca along with members of Cabinet and other senior government officials.

President Barrow stressed the importance of the vaccination program as The Gambia and the rest of the world continues to fight against the deadly pandemic that has devastated the socio and economic lives of people all over the world. He reassured the general public that the vaccines are safe and that all should work together to support the government and the public health system in order to ensure a successful vaccination campaign.

## Laying of Foundation Stone for the New National Emergency Treatment Centre

President Barrow continues to prioritize the expansion of health care facilities amidst the covid-19 pandemic. The laying of the foundation stone for the National Emergency Treatment Centre in Farato, was another remarkable feat in the development of the health sector. The new facility of 1500 beds, will contribute immensely to improving health care delivery in The Gambia.

During the launching ceremony, President Barrow expressed optimism in the potentials of the new facility, stating that;

*“We expect that it will reduce morbidity and mortality related to infectious diseases, which means saving human lives. In addition, the Centre will contribute to reducing the economic burden on the Government and development partners”.*

The construction of the facility is expected to last for sixteen months, the President further stated.



**President Barrow Laying the Foundation for the New National Emergency Treatment Centre in Farato**

# ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE

As The Gambia continues to register impressive gains in the quest to mitigate climate change effects, His Excellency President Adama Barrow remains a proponent of a climate-smart development agenda. According to the Climate Action Tracker, as of September 2021, The Gambia was the only nation taking steps in line with the Paris Agreement. Under His Excellency President Adama Barrow, the Government and its partners implemented positive measures anchored on climate-smart policy and project interventions.

## Falling short



Source: *Climate Action Tracker*

Climate Action Tracker Listed the Gambia as the Only Country whose Climate Plans are deemed Compatible with the Paris Climate Agreement

## Building Climate Resilience

To build environmental resilience, The Government of The Gambia and UNDP launched the environment and resilience development project 2017-2021. The main thrust of this project is to strengthen national capacities and resilience to Climate Change related disasters, environmental protection and enhanced livelihoods through effective and efficient climate-smart actions. The project also aims to increase access to energy services and improve disaster management and sustainable natural resources.

The project intends to protect development gains and takes meaningful, practical steps towards zero hunger, zero poverty and zero carbon and also goes a long way in building lasting peace and prosperity for The Gambia as a highly vulnerable country to the impacts of climate change.

The Government is also devising interventions to build resilience and accelerate adaptation processes to climate change. **The Large-Scale Ecosystem-Based Adaptation project (EBA) 2017-2021** aims to make rural communities climate-resilient and develop a sustainable natural resource-based (green) economy in line with the country's National Development priorities. Efforts are also ongoing at the grassroots level through initiatives like the Community-Based Sustainable Dry-Land Forest Management 2016-2021. This initiative aims to reduce forest degradation and promote afforestation in the northern part of The Gambia. The Food Agriculture Organization supports the initiative. This initiative presents an opportunity for The Gambia to strengthen and expand community-forestry and integrate the implementation of **Sustainable Forest Management (SFM)** practices to improve our forest cover.



President Barrow with the Hon Minister for Agriculture during a Tree Planting exercise in the URR

## Global Climate Change Alliance Plus (GCCA+) and Green Climate Fund (GCF) Projects

The Government continues to promote the implementation of the Paris Agreement through multilateral mechanisms such as **GCCA+** and **GCF**. The Gambia benefited from the funds mentioned above and stepped-up implementation aligned with the sustainable development objectives outlined in the **NDP 2018-2021**. The goals of these interventions include supporting the implementation of recommendations set out in the Integrated Coastal Zone Management, which include formulation of Strategic Plans and the development and implementation of the **National Climate Change Policy (NCCP)**. The interventions also seek to enhance institutional governance, strengthen planning and execution of improved climate resilience, adaptation and mitigation measures in the Coastal and Marine Zones of the Gambia.

The **GEF6 Land** and **Seascape Restoration project 2020-2024** also focuses on scaling up national capacities to lead reform processes on issues including land use. The intervention also supports the development of marine spatial planning policies and land and seascape level management that will help conserve our ecosystem. The **GCF** also supports The Gambia through capacity building for national stakeholders on managing **Polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs)**. This four-year initiative started in 2019, and implementation is expected to be completed in 2023. This vital intervention also seeks to address contamination of sites in an environmentally sound manner and reduce Unintentional **Persistent Organic Pollutants (UPOPs)** from open burning, as identified as a national priority in The Gambia's National Implementation Plan and the Stockholm Convention.

## Strategic Program for Climate Resilient (SPCR) - 2017-2020

The Government of The Gambia has taken the onus to develop a comprehensive strategic investment plan that needs to mobilise more resources to ensure adequate financing of climate change mitigation driven interventions. This investment plan will help fund efforts geared towards building resilience to the impacts of climate change.

In September 2018, the first phase of the **Pilot Program for Climate Resilience (PPCR)** was completed with the development of The Gambia's **SPCR** validated nationally and endorsed by the CIF's PPCR Subcommittee in December 2018.

# EDUCATION SECTOR

His Excellency President Adama Barrow's Government intensified efforts to raise the standard of education in The Gambia and ensure universal access to education. The Gambia attained the primary education targets set out in the SDGs and has met the national education target on access as enshrined in the **National Development Plan 2018-2021**. The NDP interventions in the sector focused on; Enhancing access to early childhood education, Improving quality learning, with particular emphasis on **Science, Technology, Engineering And Mathematics (STEM)**, health, agriculture and special needs at the basic, post-secondary/tertiary and higher education levels. The NDP also earmarked interventions to promote technical, vocational, education and training and other skills enhancing initiatives to match the job market and Enhanced access to non-formal education to build a more skilled and productive workforce.

His Excellency the President pursued attaining these targets by building schools in unserved and underserved areas to bring education facilities to their doorsteps. Under President Barrow's leadership, more than one thousand classrooms were constructed, in addition to hundreds of staff quarters and other incentives to improve the quality of education.



**New Classroom Block constructed to expand Koba Kunda Lower Basic into a Senior Secondary School**



## Strengthening Quality Education Delivery Through The Use of Digital Learning Tools

Even before the advent of the **COVID-19 Pandemic**, The Gambia government's education policy 2016-2030 made provisions to utilise ICTs in schools for improved outcomes. Through the Ministry of Information and Communication Infrastructure (MOICI), the Government piloted the '**one child one tablet**' initiative in the rural Gambia, an experiment to gauge the adoption of digital learning tools at the lower basic school level. The tablets improved exchanges between teachers and pupils and provided firsthand knowledge of basic IT to students in the rural Gambia. The pilot initiative produced favourable reviews that reinforced the need to expand and fast track the mainstreaming of ICTs for better outcomes in the sector.

With these favourable reviews, the sector used **ICTs** as a viable alternative for the continuity of learning at all levels during the pandemic induced lockdown period. The Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education (MOBSE) scaled up its **E-learning** program to include radio and television platforms. MOBSE set up a dedicated television station with support from the MRC Holland Foundation and partnered with The Gambia Radio and Television Services (GRTS) to conduct live lessons electronically for students across the country from primary to senior secondary level.



Pupils in a Computer Lab at a School in CRR, under Government's Early ICT Literacy project (connect-a-school-connect-a-community)

Also, as part of the integration of digital tools in the education sector for improved productivity, the Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education piloted the PSI/PMI project in the rural Gambia. This project similarly deployed smart boards to schools to simplify teaching and broaden understanding through a better interface between teachers and students. MOBSE also prudently moved to digitise curriculum content to ensure optimal utilisation of digital learning platforms to support the integration of digital learning tools in schools. MOBSE also introduced mobile devices to strengthen research processes in schools. The use of mobile devices helped enhance data collection and enhance research-driven learning in The Gambia.

Conscious of the importance of scaling up the capacities of teachers on the use of digital learning tools and platforms, MOBSE intensified capacity building initiatives for education technical focal points in all regions. The tailor-made program focused on enhancing their practical and theoretical know-how on ICTs to ensure the quality delivery of digitally anchored programmes.

The Government of The Gambia, through **MOHERST**, prioritised the expansion of higher education opportunities for Gambians. The World Bank-supported **\$12million** African Centers of Excellence (ACE) for Development Impact- 2020-2024- project provided access to reputable Universities in Africa for outstanding Gambian scholars. A three million dollar grant from the South Korean Government through its development agency **KOICA** also boosted the Government's strategic move to strengthen vocational education.



President Barrow laid the Foundation stone for the Expansion of the Ndemban (TVET) Vocational Training Center in Foni Berefet

# AGRICULTURE SECTOR

*Stabilising Our Economy, Stimulating Growth, and Transforming the Economy*

## SOE Reform Project

Through the **SOE Reform Project**, the President prioritised interventions to revitalise a pool of economically inefficient State-Owned Enterprises inherited from the former Government. The project aims to make our **SOEs** economically viable again and ensure they contribute their quota to national development by paying dividends to the state. The Fiscal Management project, supported by the World Bank and implemented by the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs through its Directorate of Public-Private Partnerships, focuses on providing institutional support to critical **SOEs**, including **GAMTEL** and **GRA**. The project supports the digitisation efforts of government systems at Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs (MOFEA) and Ministry of Information and Communication Infrastructure (MOICI).

## ROOTS Project

The **Resilience of Organizations for Transformative Smallholder Agriculture (ROOTS)** project was one of the critical interventions of President Barrow's Government in the Agriculture sector. The objectives of the **\$80million** project funded by the International Fund for Agricultural Development include improving food security, nutrition and smallholder farmers' resilience to climate change in The Gambia. Additionally, the project seeks to increase agricultural productivity and access to markets for enhanced food security, nutrition and resilience of family farms and farmer organisations.

During the launching of this important project at the Sir Dawda Kairaba Conference Centre on 9th February 2021, President Barrow challenged the youth and women farmers to take full advantage of the opportunities offered by the project to upgrade their economic status.

The President stated; *"Ladies and gentlemen, we should remind ourselves that the ROOTS project specifically targets women and youths for effective and profitable participation in rice and vegetable value chains,"* he noted.



President Barrow at the Launching of the 80M Dollars ROOTS Project to Support Youths in Agriculture



President Barrow speaking at the event



Hon Minister of Agriculture, Amie Fabureh speaking at the Event

To boost employability opportunities for Gambian youth, the Government also rolled out 14 Youth Agricultural Service Centres in 2017. The rationale behind establishing these centres was to enable youths to process their farm products into consumable goods. The Government also initiated training on General Entrepreneurship to build the capacities of young people on entrepreneurship and business management.

The initiative trained seven hundred and twenty-five youths and women on general entrepreneurship, including 30 migrant returnees. Similarly, it supported 60 youths with already established enterprises with Grants amounting to D50, 000, each. The Government also supported the rollout of a training programme in Agribusiness and value addition for Gambian youths in 2017. This programme focused on building the capacities of youths in integrated farming with a pure organic application system. The **265** youths trained were successfully employed or became self-employed at the end of the program.

# TRADE INDUSTRY AND EMPLOYMENT

Through its Emergency Trust Fund for Africa, the European Union supported the Government's first five-year project, the **Youth Empowerment Project (YEP)**. The **YEP** project focuses on empowering the youth through a market-led approach to improving the skills and employability of potential and returning migrants according to job market demands and simultaneously creating employment opportunities along Gambian value chains.

The rationale behind the rollout was to put in place mechanisms that offer viable alternatives to irregular migration in The Gambia. The project was a timely intervention that rolled out when irregular migration was at its peak. The project provided alternative livelihood routes by intensifying vocational training for Gambian Youth and supporting micro and small-sized enterprises set up by Gambian youths.



Young Women Farmers benefiting from EU and UN support through the Youth Empowerment Project

## Entrepreneurship and Private Sector Development Project - 2017-2021

The **UNDP** supported Entrepreneurship and Private sector development project is another important intervention that is focused on reducing the bottlenecks to enterprise development in The Gambia. The project also prioritizes harnessing entrepreneurial skills and opportunities in The Gambia for inclusive sustainable growth and poverty reduction in The Gambia. The intervention is centred on providing the requisite entrepreneurial skills to vulnerable youth and women living in the poorest regions of The Gambia.

The project has supported the training of up to 200 young entrepreneurs through **GIEPA** with the use of the **EMPRETEC Model**. The project has also provided institutional support to The Gambia Chamber of Commerce and Industry as well as some private institutions.

In a bid to empower female entrepreneurs, the government of The Gambia continues to put in place mechanisms that would help ensure equal access to opportunities. The **ITC** supported *'She trades in The Gambia'* initiative is a tailor-made intervention focused on supporting women Entrepreneurs in the fashion industry and Horticulture Sector. The initiative aims to facilitate the integration of Gambian women-owned businesses in the economy and increase their participation in trade. The initiative represents an opportunity for women to build, expand, expose and market their products to the local and international markets.

## Preparatory Activities for the Africa Continental Free Trade Area (ACFTA)

The Ministry of Trade, Industry and Employment (MOTIE) has stepped up capacity building initiatives for local entities on the provisions and requirements for the implementation of the **ACFTA** continental pact. The trainings are geared towards ensuring improved national technical capacities to support the successful implementation of the **ACFTA**. The Ministry of Trade has also established Technical Working Groups to spearhead implementation of the various provisions of the agreement.

As e-trade and e-commerce continue to gain prominence in the business sector, the Ministry of Trade has been working with relevant stakeholders to ensure the requisite strategies and policies are in place to support the uptake of e-trade and e-commerce in The Gambia. The Ministry has commissioned an e-commerce and Digital Economy Assessment with support from **EIF**. This assessment is expected to gauge the level of readiness in terms of infrastructure, policy and strategy. The findings will help inform the next steps in the promotion of e-trade and e-commerce in The Gambia. As part of efforts to promote local content development, MOTIE also recently validated the *'Made in The Gambia Strategy'*, which aims to promote the country's industrial competitiveness by enhancing the production and consumption of locally made goods and services.

# YOUTH AND SPORTS

## *Reaping the Demographic Dividend Through an Empowered Youth*

Since the Barrow Government came to office in 2017, the youth sub-sector has witnessed increased prioritisation. Besides constituting about 65% of the Gambian populace, youth are potentially the most productive segment of society and thus represent a critical stakeholder group in the national development process. Accordingly, to effectively and efficiently promote youth and sports development, the Ministry of Youth and Sports is highly on course to strengthen and restructure its satellite institutions by reviewing some of its policies and implementing development-oriented initiatives that can benefit Gambian youths.

## **The Establishment of a Pipe Borne Water System in Chamen Agricultural**

Bringing services to the doorsteps of every Gambian was a campaign promise that His Excellency President Adama Barrow and his Government are working tirelessly to attain. Conscious of the socio-economic potential in rural Gambia and the opportunities for our youth, particularly in the provinces, President Barrow's Government established a pipe borne water system in the strategic location of Chamen Agricultural Centre situated in Upper Badibu, North Bank Region.

This project aims to support trainees at the centre with additional land and agricultural production facilities to empower them and create employment and employability opportunities at the end of their programmes.

The project includes a 25 hectares pipe network system with 60,000 litres concrete overhead tank in the Gambia Songhai Initiative (GSI) project site.

## **Construction of Mini Stadia to Boost Countrywide Access to Sports Facilities**

His Excellency, the President's Government championed the strategic establishment of sports stadia across The Gambia to decentralise sports and increase countrywide access to sports facilities for all Gambian youths.

The beneficiary communities for this vital initiative include Construction of Mini-stadias in; Julafarr (Manduar village), Kiang West, Lower River Region; Kafuta, Kombo East, West Coast Region; Fula-Batang, Central River Region; Janjanbureh, Central River Region; Diabugou Baatapa, Sandu, Upper River Region; Bwiam, Foni Kansala, West Coast Region.





President Barrow at the “YOUTH CONNEKT” Gambia Summit in 2019. Photo Credit: Ministry of Youth & Sports

## The Establishment of the Youth Revolving Loan Scheme

Empowering Gambian youth and reaping the demographic dividends is critical under the **NDP 2018-2021**. Recognising the enormous potential in Gambian youth and the need to plough in significant resources to support their socio-economic undertakings, President Barrow’s Government launched the Youth Revolving Loan Scheme in 2019. The overriding objective of this scheme is to ensure access to capital for Gambian youths to enable them to fund business startups.

As part of the implementation of this game-changing scheme, the Ministry of Youth and Sports (MOYS), the **National Enterprise Development Initiative (NEDI)** and the **Social Development Fund (SDF)** signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on the implementation of the **Youth Revolving Loan Fund Scheme (YRLF)**.

## Revision and Update of the National Youth Policy 2009-2018

Creating a conducive policy environment for Gambian youths to thrive is a priority for President Barrow's Government. The Ministry of Youth and Sports embarked on a review of the **National Youth Policy 2009-2018**. This review process took stock of the gains registered through the policy, identified gaps, and developed solutions to enhance this sector's critical policy and strategic orientation.

The review process also allowed the Government and stakeholders to make the youth policy vibrant and commensurate with the present-day realities affecting the Gambian Youths. The activity also included updating the policy and led to the update and validation of the **4th National Youth Policy 2019-2028**.

The Government also launched an ambitious drive to recruit and train Gambia youths in 2017. This initiative was a tailor-made training program focused on enhancing the technical skills of the youth. This initiative centred on young people who have not completed the basic learning cycle for one reason or the other. The project facilitated the recruitment and training of up to **752** Youths. The project also provided placement opportunities for the youth to ensure that they have the right environment to hone and apply their newly acquired skills.

**The President's International Award (PIA)** initiative also rolled out a training and mentoring programme for 2,422 Gambian youths. This programme aims to teach the culture of discipline and hard work in the minds of Gambian youths.

Six hundred ninety-nine of the enrolled youths completed the award program and were duly certified.

## Sports and Sporting for Wellbeing and Glory

Sports in The Gambia flourished to unprecedented heights during President Barrow's first term in office. The Gambia recorded impressive achievements in various sports, including winning Gold Medals during the All-Africa Games; Africa Junior Athletics Championships; in Athletics Championships; in Judo; Wrestling Championship and Silver Medals in Taekwondo as well as Bronze Medal in Wrestling. The Gambia also fared well during the Tokyo Olympics, with Miss Gina Bass setting new national records. To cap off a successful sporting period, the Scorpions of The Gambia secured their first qualification to the **African Cup of Nations (AFCON)**.

It is worthy to note that President Barrow's Government contributed to the success registered by ensuring that the requisite funds are available to support all national teams and sports development in general. The introduction of the youths and sports development levy, which took effect on June 10th 2019, was an important step that ensured the availability of dedicated resources for youth and sports development in The Gambia.

The upgrade of sporting infrastructure and facilities also included the rehabilitation and refurbishment of the Independence Stadium, aimed at upgrading the facility to international standards. The upgrading included procurement of a new Score Board, Public Address (P.A.) system, CCTV, Mowing Machines, Alternative Sprinklers, the numbering of the pavilions seats, Fibre Goal Posts (Football field), improvement of the piping systems of the toilet facilities; football pitch and painting the interior of the Stadium.



President Barrow with Gambian Olympian Gina Bass

## ENERGY SECTOR

During his first term in office, President Barrow's main priority was the Energy sector. The President relentlessly pursued the attainment of what some people referred to as the 'unsolvable energy' problem in The Gambia. President Barrow championed the provision of uninterrupted electricity to all Gambians to support their socio-economic activities as enshrined in the National Development Plan. In February 2018, the Government attained a breakthrough in this process when **NAWEC** signed a contract with Turkish Energy Supplier, Karpowership. The agreement enabled the deployment of a Powership of **35MW** to The Gambia for two years. Karadeniz Powership Koray Bey started operation in Banjul in May 2018. The Karpowership has been supplying **60% of Gambia's total electricity needs**. As of May 2020, the Government extended the contract for another two years.

### OMVG Energy Project in The Gambia

To ensure inclusive access to electricity, President Barrow showed great interest in accelerating the implementation of The **Gambia River Basin Development Organisation's (OMVG)** Energy Project. The Interconnection Component included building and operating a Substation in Jarra Soma, Lower River Region. Laying of the foundation stone to mark the commencement of construction works of the substation was held on Saturday, February 23rd 2019. During the ceremony, President Barrow said, *'the project marks a turning point' when addressing the country's energy crisis.*

The **OMVG** is a sub-regional organisation co-founded by former Senegalese Poet-President Leopold Senghor, and The Gambia's first President **Dawda K Jawara**, on June 30th 1978. The organisation consists of The Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau and Senegal.

The **OMVG** Energy project aims to reinforce regional integration and cooperation by exploiting the shared hydroelectric resources in The Gambia, **Kayanga-Geba** and **Koliba-Corubal** river basins.

In his statement, President Barrow added that the Soma substation would increase the current **40%** electricity access to **60%** when completed, expanding the generation capacity from **102 to 250 Mega Watts**. The President highlighted that his Government is closing the gap between energy demand and supply using renewable energy solutions.



OMVG Substation in Jarra Soma



## Launching of the OMVG Substation in Jarra Soma

His Excellency, the President, on October 23rd 2021, inaugurated the **OMVG** substation in Jarra Soma. Excellencies **Macky Sall**, President of The Republic of Senegal, and **Umaru Sissoco Embalo**, President of the Republic of Guinea Bissau, graced the historic occasion.

The OMVG designed the Soma substation to link the Eastern and Northern parts of The Gambia through the NAWEC interconnection networks revitalising relations and strengthening regional solidarity. During his inauguration speech, President Barrow stated;

*'In pursuing our target of providing energy for all by 2025, The Gambia Government continues to pay special attention to those in the rural area. This guided the selection of Soma for the location of the sub-station. The Soma substation has an overall generation capacity of 225/30 V.K. It is one of the fifteen (15) substations in a loop of OMVG Energy Projects. Its power supply will be generated from the Kaléta and Souapiti hydroelectric plants in Guinea.'*



Launching of the OMVG Substation by President Barrow



This **OMVG** arrangement is the outcome of the electricity procurement contracts negotiated in 2019 between the National Electricity Company of Guinea (**EDG**) and the National Electricity Companies of the three other Member States, namely: **NAWEC** of The Gambia, **EAGB** of Guinea-Bissau and **SENELEC** of Senegal. Pending work on the interconnection line from Kaléta and Souapiti, The Gambia will negotiate a contract with Senegal for electricity supply to the Soma substation.

President Barrow acknowledged the role of The Gambia's development partners in the realisation of this project. He thanked the African Development Bank, the World Bank, the Islamic Development Bank, the European Investment Bank, the French Development Agency, the German Development Bank, the West African Development Bank, and the Kuwait Fund for Development for mobilising **seven hundred and twenty-two (722) million U.S. Dollars** of project funds.

Other notable interventions in the energy sector during the past five years include the **UNIDO/GEF6 2018 - 2021**, which focuses on supporting the operationalisation of the Sustainable Energy for All Action Agenda in The Gambia by catalysing investment in improved cookstoves and energy-efficient appliances. The **GMGs 2016-2020** AfDB also rolled out the project to provide the enabling environment for a market-driven development of GMGs in The Gambia. The Government also commissioned the **RAP 2018-2030** to enable expanded access for 50 - 100 thousand households in the Gambia. ECOWAS supported the **ROGEP 2018-2030** to provide liquidity for private sector off-grid solar projects solar systems in public facilities (schools and health facilities).

Electricity Support Project (Electricity Expansion and Rehabilitation Project in the GBA) 2017-2019, funded through the Indian line of credit, extended the electricity grid to the Kiangs for the first time. It is part of the Government's social inclusive measures and integrates the GBA network with the Farafenni sub-station.

# OFFICE OF THE FIRST LADY

## First Lady Receives African Woman of The Year Award

First Lady Madam Fatoumata Bah-Barrow received the Voice Magazine's Achievers Awardees for 2021 in honour of her contribution to the country's development. Through the Fatoumatta Bah-Barrow Foundation (FABB), she addresses health care and other issues that affect the population.

The citation read: *"Through her office and foundation, several health care workers received overseas training and treated patients ...free of charge. She spearheads the campaign to fight the menace of plastics on the continent, through advocacy and awareness creation across West Africa...It is in this regard that the award committee of The Voice Achievers Award for 2021 has agreed to recognise and confer to the First Lady of the Republic of The Gambia as the African Woman of the year 2021".*

First Lady Madam Fatoumata Bah-Barrow received African woman of the year Award category of The Voice Magazine's Achievers Award for the year 2021. The award is in honor of her extraordinary contribution to the country's development through her foundation the **Fatoumatta Bah-Barrow (FABB)**, which has been involved in activities aimed at addressing issues that affect the majority of the population, particularly health care for women, children, the elderly, and that are differently abled.

The citation for the award stated: *"Through her office and foundation, several health care workers received overseas training as well as treating patients with delicate cases free of charge. The First Lady is spearheading efforts - to see a continent free of the menace of plastics through advocacy and awareness across the Sub-West African region in the global fight against the rating parts of plastic - as Chair of the Region for West Africa by the African Union Commission to lead efforts in ensuring a pollution-free Africa. It is in this regard the award committee of The Voice Achievers Award for 2021 has agreed to recognize and confer ton the First Lady of the Republic of The Gambia as the African Woman of the year 2021".*



Her Excellency at the Achievers Award Night in Dubai 2021

## First lady Presented with Merck Foundation Award

The First Lady, Madam Fatoumatta Bah-Barrow, an Ambassador of Merck Foundation More Than a Mother, was awarded by Merck Foundation for her excellent contribution as their long term partner (since 2017) in building healthcare capacity empowering infertile women and supporting girls' education.

Upon receipt of the award, the First Lady thanked the Foundation. Also, she discussed new programmes to support the physically challenged in The Gambia through Merck Foundation's Social Development Programme for West Africa.

The CEO of Merck Foundation, **Dr Rasah**, welcomed the initiative and pledged to support FaBB working in partnership with the Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Welfare.



Her Excellency and delegation in Dubai with Dr. Rasah of MERCK Foundations



## Supporting Women and Girls Empowerment

Her Excellency, the First Lady Madam Fatoumatta Bah-Barrow, inaugurated a Women Empowerment and Peacebuilding Initiative in Mansajang Kunda, Basse. The centre is the first to train and equip women with skills to enhance their capacities to produce quality, re-usable climate-friendly sanitary pads for women and young girls.



Women Empowerment Centre in Mansajang, BasseURR

## FaBB Foundation Facilitates Free Eye Surgeries

The King Salman Humanitarian and Al Balsam, in collaboration with the **Fatoumatta Bah-Barrow Foundation (FaBB)**, successfully conducted more than three hundred (300) eye operations and one hundred and ninety-eight (198) pediatric surgeries at three hospitals, namely, Edward Francis Small Teaching Hospital, Serrekunda General Hospital and Farafenni General Hospital.

The initiatives further support the First Lady's commitment to President Barrow's quest to provide quality health care to all Gambians.

Upon completing their mission, The Fatoumata Bah-Barrow Foundation (FaBB) bid farewell to the medical mission at a ceremony held at the State House in Banjul, where the team received a certificate of appreciation from His Excellency President Adama Barrow.



Team of Doctors from Saudi under the King Salman Foundations and Albaslam

## First Lady Launches National Polio Immunization Campaign

The National Polio Immunizations Campaign, launched by the First Lady Madam Fatoumatta Bah-Barrow, took place from November 20th - 23rd, 2021. The country-wide campaign targeted children ages 0 to 5 years.

In August 2021, The Gambia joined the polio-free Africa celebration. However, the Minister of Health, Dr Ahmadou Samateh, revealed that the country and other regions identified the poliovirus.

## First Lady Attends WISE Doha Summit 2021

A high powered delegation under the leadership of her Excellency, the Vice President of the Republic of The Gambia, Dr Isatou Touray, travelled to Doha, Qatar, and joined thousands of Education Stakeholders and Innovators to attend one of the most influential gatherings to shape the future of education, **WISE 2021**.

The Gambian delegation included the First Lady, Ministers of Basic and Secondary Education, Gender, Children and Social Welfare and several other dignitaries.

## FaBB Foundation Signs MOU with Albalsam International

Albalsam International, a non-governmental, nonprofit organisation registered in Geneva, signed an MoU on cooperation for medical care with the Fatoumata Bah-Barrow Foundation (FaBB). The purpose is to formalise and enhance the existing collaboration to support humanitarian action, particularly in medical surgery and different specialities of health care.

The signing ceremony in Geneva, Switzerland, was graced by the Saudi Arabia African Ambassadors and permanent representatives to the United Nations from more than fifteen (15) countries.

The areas of cooperation include the development and strengthening of obstetrics and paediatrics capacities, structures and training, from hospitals to public healthcare and community support. The partnership will Projects and programmes will be developed in full cooperation with the needs and priorities of the vulnerable population.

Albalsam International seeks to cure and care for people through humanitarian action and collaborates with those in need irrespective of creed, race or colour. It is involved in medical projects that serve the development of individuals anywhere. This partnership between FaBB and Albalsam International will serve as a medium to attaining their common objectives for the benefit of Gambians.



Her Excellency with the Gambian Delegations at the WISE DOHA 2021 Summit in Qatar

# Media and Communications Unit-MCU

With obvious testimony shown on various media platforms, the media and communications unit has risen significantly from strength to strength. The strategies used to close the communication gap between the Presidency and the public are showing positive results.

Our journey on social media started in April 2017. In July the same year, the official Facebook Page is **10K** followers and **9943** likes. The President's official Twitter handle **@BarrowPresident** had **1286** followers at the time.

Within the short span of existence on both Facebook (@PresidencyGambia) and Twitter (@Presidency\_GMB), the **State House of The Gambia** page in the first quarter of 2018, the page garnered 20,000 followers (Facebook) and quickly becoming the first point of reference for news and update about the presidency.

Almost five years on, both the number of followers and likes on our social media channels, particularly Facebook, have increased substantially, reaching **79,919** and **69,052** respectively. This is a **22** percent increase over the previous figure from a few months earlier. Similarly, Twitter has grown from **18k** to **24.2k** followers. Meanwhile, the President's personal page grew from **33k** to **41.5k** followers. The Statehouse's YouTube channel now has **7.4** thousand subscribers, an increase of **400**.

In July 2017, the Media and Communication's Unit initiated the publication of a bi-annual newsletter, The State House Newsletter and is proud to have published this ninth edition of the Newsletter within five years.

The Unit continues to experiment with creative ways of engaging the public, which has shifted the narrative and steered debates around the Presidency for the better. This includes the use of audiovisuals to maintain the monthly television Programme, The **President's Diary**, which has equally developed a steady viewership both on TV and on our YouTube Channel complementing the **Short Video productions** on specific events and programme published on the social media platforms.

Our Office of the First Lady crew also made significant contributions towards making our 2017-2021 journey an exciting one. To capture the context of our excitement, watch **The Journey** on our **State House YouTube Channel**. Drawing the line between policy and politics, we initiated a **political platform** to take care of President's political engagements on social media.

The refurbishment of the MCU office block with a new look adds to the legacy of the five years of His Excellency's presidency. As we embark on yet another fascinating journey, we anticipate additional initiatives that will further enhance the provision of timely and accurate information on issues and activities of the Presidency. An example is the publication of a booklet entitled ***A Brief History of the State House - The Occupants***. This is part of the creation of an ***Exhibition Room*** that provides a public relations stunt for students in particular to visit the State House on special days such as International Day of The Youth, Girl Child, etc.

**WITH RENEWED COMMITMENT AND  
DEDICATION FROM OUR TEAM,  
WE ARE READY TO SERVE THE GAMBIA  
NOW MORE THAN EVER!**





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