

	<p>Republic of The Gambia</p> <p>Ministry of Trade, Industry, Regional Integration and Employment</p> <p>Republic of The Gambia</p>	
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MIDTERM REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ISTANBUL PROGRAMME OF ACTION

2011 – 2020

May, 2016

Ministry of Trade, Industry, Regional Integration and Employment
Independence Drive
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List of Abbreviations

AAITG	-	ActionAid International The Gambia
ADRS	-	Alternate Dispute Resolution Secretariat
ANR	-	Agriculture and Natural Resources
CEDAW	-	Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CBG	-	Central Bank of The Gambia
CRC	-	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CRRD	-	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability
ECOWAS	-	Economic Community of West African States
ESSP	-	Educations Sector Strategic Plan
FDI	-	Foreign Direct Investment
FGM	-	Female Genital Mutilation
FLAG	-	Female Lawyers Association
GBV	-	Gender Based Violence
GEAP	-	Gambia Environment Action Plan
GIEPA	-	Gambia Investment and Export Promotion Authority
GCCI	-	Gambia Chamber of Commerce, Agriculture and Industry
GDP	-	Gross Domestic Product
GRA	-	Gambia revenue Authority
ICT	-	Information, Communication and Technology
IsPoA	-	Istanbul Programme of Action
IMF	-	International Monetary Fund
LAH	-	Lend A Hand Society
LDC	-	Least Developed Country
LGA	-	Local Government Authority
MOPP	-	Ministry of Programmes and Planning
MOFEA	-	Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs
MEPID	-	Ministry of Economic Planning and Industrial Development
MOA	-	Ministry of Agriculture
M & E	-	Monitoring and Evaluation
MTP	-	Medium Term Plan
MOTIE	-	Ministry of Trade, Industry, Regional Integration and Employment
MTEF	-	Medium Term Expenditure Framework
MDG	-	Millennium Development Goals
MOBSE	-	Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education
MOHSW	-	Ministry of Health and Social Welfare
MOJ	-	Ministry of Justice
NALA	-	National Agency for Legal Aid
NAMA	-	National Appropriate Mitigation Actions
NAPA	-	National Adaptation Programme of Action
NDMA	-	National Disaster Management Agency
NGO	-	Non-Governmental Organisation
NAQAA	-	National Accreditation and Quality Assurance Authority
NEMA	-	National Environment Management Act
NEA	-	National Environment Agency

NGPNE	-	National Gender Policy and Women Empowerment
NPAGW	-	National Policy for the Advancement of Gambian Women
ODA	-	Official Development Assistance
PAGE	-	Programme for Accelerated growth and Development
PAU	-	Policy Analysis Unit
PFM	-	Public Finance Management
PoPWA	-	Programme of Work in Protected Areas
PFM	-	Public Finance Management
PAC/PEC	-	Public Accounts Committee/Public Enterpriser Committee
PWD	-	People Living With Disability
SSHFC	-	Social security and Housing Finance Corporation
TVET	-	Technical Vocation and Education and Training
UN	-	United Nations
UNDP	-	United Nations Development Programme
VAT	-	Value Added Tax
WB	-	World Bank
WTO	-	World Trade Organisation

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Acknowledgment

This report, a review outcome of The Gambia Government’s fulfillment of its obligations under the Istanbul Programme of Action (IsPoA), is the result of combined efforts of various ministries and departments of government who each made contributions in terms of discussing aspects of the programme as relevant to them, and providing insights into the sector outputs of the implementation of the national programmes (the PAGE) in terms of coincidence with the IsPoA.

Special appreciation is being extended to the UNDP for having provided the finance to enable the consultants undertake this assignment. The UNDP were also extremely useful in providing invaluable support to the consultants in the form of providing data and information by which the review was made possible and for necessary critic/advice and value addition to the report at the technical level. Appreciation is also extended to all the institutions that took time to review the document and attended the validation exercise and after which they provided additional comments to finalize the report.

Executive Summary

The IsPoA, a UN programme commenced in 2011 and to last to 2020, aimed at isolating for needed assistance to achieve sustainable economic growth and development by LDCs (which together constitute a significant portion of the world community in population, land mass and other natural characteristics such as climate), so that they are able at the end of the programme to graduate from the LDC status to developing economies with internationally agreed and acceptable growth rates and resilience, was midway in implementation in 2015, and at which time and based on the agreement, both the LDC member states and the development partners had to undertake a midterm review. This report constitutes The Gambia's midterm review report in 2015.

The structure of this report and its detail was guided by the annotated report outline and requirements specified in that outline and sought amongst other things to assess the extent to which The Gambia since 2011 has mainstreamed the IsPoA in its national development planning framework and in implementation thereof achieved the goals of the commitments in it and the overall thrust of the programme. This programme was a follow-up of the Brussels Programme of Action, which ended in 2010 and part of the report sought to investigate and report on the consistency and alignment of the two programmes and eventually a recommendation of the way forward from both the national and global perspectives of the implementation of the IsPoA in The Gambia.

The IsPoA signed into by The Gambia was due to lack of institutional collaboration between the MOTIE, MOFEA and MOFA, inadvertently not implemented and this was only realized in 2015 when The Gambia was required to fulfill its commitments of a midterm review of its implementation of the programme. This report therefore whilst in keeping with the annotation in both outline and detail to the extent possible, undertook a review of The Gambia's medium term planning programme at the time of the IsPoA, the PAGE(2012 – 2015), which commenced a year after the IsPoA and could have technically and adequately mainstreamed the IsPoA. In spite of the lack of targeted mainstreaming and implementation, an assessment of convergence between the two programmes was undertaken at both the programming and results levels.

Chapters IV, V and VI of this report, namely Coherence and Linkages with the Post-2015 Development Agenda and Other Processes; Challenges, Obstacles and Constraints in the Implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action from the Decade 2011 – 2020; and Conclusions and Way Forward; respectively detail the outcomes of this report review in terms of progress made by The Gambia, challenges met and her suggested way forward in resolving them for the remaining period of the IsPoA and also the coherence and linkages between the Brussels Programme of Action and its follow-up programme being currently implemented.

Coherence and Linkages with the Post-2015 Development Agenda and Other Processes

The **Post-2015 Development Agenda** refers to a process led by the UN which aims to help define the future global development framework that will succeed the MDGs. The current UN development agenda centered on the MDGs officially established following the Millennium Summit of the UN in 2000, encapsulate eight globally agreed goals in the areas of poverty alleviation, education, gender equality and empowerment of women, child and maternal health, environmental sustainability, reducing HIV/AIDS and

communicable diseases, and building a global partnership for development. The MDG's overall target date is 2015.

However, at the 2010 High Level Plenary Meeting of the UN General Assembly to review progress towards the MDGs, governments called for accelerating progress and for thinking on ways to advance the development agenda beyond 2015 and after the 2010 High Level Plenary Meeting, the UN took several initiatives and established a UN System Task Team of Eminent Persons and appointed to think through and determine how best this could be achieved.

This team published the report “Realizing the Future We Want for All”, which serves as an input to the work of the High Level Panel. The panel generated a report on May 2013 on the Post-2015 Development Agenda - “**A New Global Partnership: Eradicate Poverty and Transform Economies through Sustainable Development**,”. This report sets out a universal agenda to eradicate extreme poverty from the face of the earth by 2030, and deliver on the promise of sustainable development. The report calls upon the world to rally around a new Global Partnership that offers hope and a role to every person in the world.

In the report, the Panel calls for the new post-2015 goals to drive five big transformation shifts:

1. **Leave No One Behind.** After 2015 we should move from reducing to ending extreme poverty, in all its forms. We should ensure that no person – regardless of ethnicity, gender, geography, disability, race or other status – is denied basic economic opportunities and human rights.
2. **Put Sustainable Development at the Core.** We have to integrate the social, economic and environmental dimensions of sustainability. We must act now to slow the alarming pace of climate change and environmental degradation, which pose unprecedented threats to humanity.
3. **Transform Economies for Jobs and Inclusive Growth.** A profound economic transformation can end extreme poverty and improve livelihoods, by harnessing innovation, technology, and the potential of business. More diversified economies, with equal opportunities for all, can drive social inclusion, especially for young people, and foster sustainable consumption and production patterns.
4. **Build Peace and Effective, Open and Accountable Institutions for All.** Freedom from conflict and violence is the most fundamental human entitlement, and the essential foundation for building peaceful and prosperous societies. At the same time, people the world over expect their governments to be honest, accountable, and responsive to their needs. We are calling for a fundamental shift – to recognize peace and good governance as a core element of well-being, not an optional extra.
5. **Forge a New Global Partnership.** A new spirit of solidarity, cooperation, and mutual accountability must underpin the post-2015 agenda. This new partnership should be based on a common understanding of our shared humanity, based on mutual respect and mutual benefit. It should be centered on people, including those affected by poverty and exclusion, women, youth, the aged, disabled persons, and indigenous peoples. It should include civil society organizations, multilateral institutions, local and national governments, the scientific and academic community, businesses, and private philanthropy.

After various regional and national consultations on the Post 2015 development agenda such as the one commissioned by the African Union, the “Delivering the Post 2015 Development Agenda” report was issued from these dialogues. The findings of this report derive from six Dialogues revealing several main principles in order to support the successful implementation of the new development agenda: **participation, inclusion, and the need for strengthened capacities and partnerships.**

- Localizing the agenda: From the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), one of the key lessons learned was the importance of national and local contexts. This idea of a localized agenda stresses the

critical role of local governments, diversity of local stakeholders, and the need to invest in capacities and resources at the local level for implementation, ownership, monitoring and accountability.

- Capacities and institutions: To achieve a transformation agenda, we need transformed institutions that highlight the importance of national-level actors. This new agenda takes into account a diversity of stakeholders with policies and actions derived from a specific national context. When strengthening capacities we should concentrate on existing institutions and national development plans.
- Participatory monitoring and accountability: We need to actively engage with individuals by embedding participation as a principle for the realization of a new post-2015 development agenda. This new development agenda will be aligned with a human rights approach that will improve the quality of and refine policies over time.
- Culture: Utilizing cultural values and culturally sensitive approaches can mediate and improve development outcomes by providing a space where opportunities for education, gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment, environmental sustainability, and durable urbanization can be realized.
- Private Sector: Partnerships with the private sector will prove to be useful due to its ability to create an environment favourable to social and environmental impacts. By reinforcing the nature of ethical business practices, businesses can move beyond financial contributions and move towards poverty eradication and sustainability.
- Civil Society: The diversity of civil society can create an enabling environment that will strengthen the impact and trust of multiple stakeholders. By partnering with civil society, a space will be created that is more inclusive and responsive towards the local and global voices of stakeholders. Civil society will also create strong accountability mechanisms that can be used to measure implementation.

Fragile and conflict affected states have been left behind and unchanged in the rapid decline in global poverty since 2000 says a February 2013 paper from the Overseas Development Institute. The researchers report that the outcome statement of the recent Monrovia meeting of the high level panel said - 'Economic growth alone is not sufficient to ensure social justice, equity and sustained prosperity for all people...The protection and empowerment of people was considered crucial. They explained that a global survey showed the extent that people see 'an honest and responsive government' as a top priority; and that this emerged as the second highest of a range of sixteen factors' ... 'second only to 'a good education' globally (and within the top five priorities for Low-Human Development Index countries).' Researchers found that areas gaining traction in the post 2015 conversation include:

- Building accountability for goals into the heart of a new framework,
- Ensuring there is transparency for how resources are used,
- Commitments on civil and political freedoms, and
- Supporting effective institutions of the state.

They warn against the polarization of the debate around the strength of the post-2015 goals and found that 'some political, governance and accountability features do seem to shape whether and how MDG commitments have been achieved (alongside important issues of resourcing, technical capacities and others)' and identified key factors:

- Credible political commitments between politicians and citizens are essential,
- More inclusive institutions matter, as well as the ability to work together, and
- States effectiveness is a determinant of development progress, so state capacities and functions do need more attention.

Their findings focus on national level governance because of the growing body of evidence relevant to development progress available at this level. Global governance is also important to the authors of the report. They recognised a strong interest in bringing on-board multilateral institutions, the private sector and non-governmental organisations in a future framework, based on the recognition that they can help or hinder future development outcomes. They called for more work on global governance, and for the identification of viable options for doing so effectively.

Immediately coming after the Brussels Programme of Action, which ended in 2010, leaving up to 2015 to finalize the probable achievement of the MDGs and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the IsPoA has a close convergence with the post 2015 development agenda both in principles, objectives and intended implementation arrangements:

1. It must however be stated that whilst the post 2015 development agenda was predicated on the universality of development and objective of ensuring that by 2030 the world must ensure that all human beings made poverty history and that all human beings must be able to live decent lives sustainably, the IsPoA in its objectives express the same except that it zeroed in on the LDCs, constituency of the global community. This happens to be the least developed constituency and the one for which development is harder to reach and which if can be developed to eradicate poverty by 2030 will mean that the world has finally gotten rid of poverty and that the post 2015 development agenda goal has been achieved.
2. In structure whilst the post 2015 development agenda aimed to achieve the total eradication of overtly through sustainable development and ensuring that the earth is taken care of by arresting the current trends of climate change so that the earth is able to continue to be a place that is livable and able to sustain human nature. In its priorities, under multiple crises and other emerging challenges, the IsPoA ensured that climate change and environmental sustainability was one of the priorities of investment and support to the LDCs. That all supports to the LDCs must be based on the context of climate and environmental sustainability so that development gains are sustainable such as is required under the 2015 development agenda.
3. The post 2015 development agenda has as its main principle to ensure that countries and communities are the architects of their development policies and plans, mindful of the requirements of such as sustainability; and they must be supported on the platform of mutual partnership for global development. This emphasizes the principle that no one should be left behind. This too was the basis of the IsPoA since for every commitment in the eight priority areas, all of which are in agreement with the post 2015 development agenda, there are at most three commitments possibilities – joint commitment, national commitment and commitment by the development partners. It is structured such that for each national and/or joint commitment, there is a corresponding support commitment by the development partners to render required support under mutual partnership, a main pillar of the IsPoA.
4. The last pillar of the post 2015 development agenda of governance as is also a main pillar of the IsPoA, and mindful of the need for overall governance (political and resources management).
5. Both the post 2015 development agenda and the IsPoA emphasize a basic principle of building the capacities of the developing countries in designing and implementing their development policies to ensure sustainable consistent growth and hopefully migration from under development to developed or developing countries and eradicate poverty and in the case of the IsPoA, move away from the category of LDC to growing economies.
6. In terms of time frame, the IsPoA stretched from 2011, immediately after the Brussels Programme of Action and within the time frame of the post 2015 to 2020. The post 2015 development agenda ends on 2013. Taken together, the IsPoA is structured as a means for the implementation of the post 2015 development agenda.

Challenges, Obstacles and Constraints in the Implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action from the Decade 2011 – 2020

The Gambia has not institutionally implemented the Istanbul Programme of Action except for the Ministry of the Environment on climate change commitments as envisaged ISPOA. However, a review of all the development reports at both the national and international levels of the progress of The Gambia as an economy and in its various sectors shows interesting phenomena:

1. There were significant communality between IsPoA interventions and The Gambia's medium term development programme for 2012 – 2015, the PAGE. This means, despite the absence of a concerted effort to mainstream the IsPoA into PAGE, it can be said that there was significant overlap and some level of mainstreaming of the interventions into the national plan. However, the PAGE itself was poorly implemented due to a variety of reasons and even though there was a significant overlap between PAGE and IsPoA, a significant proportion of these activities have not been achieved due to the PAGE's low level of investment.
2. The low level of mainstreaming was a result of the absence of policy coordination in The Gambia. The MOTIE was responsible for the IsPOA because they sat on the international panel that saw its development and signing by The Gambia's Vice President but was not responsible for ensuring that this programme was studied for internalisation into national economic and development programming. This was the responsibility of both the Ministry of Finance and of Planning and Programmes and due to poor inters sectoral coordination; the IsPoA was not transmitted to them. The role of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which was part of the process of enabling the signing of the agreement, was not clear and that it did not do much to facilitate the transference of the agreement to the ministries with responsibility for coordinating its implementation.
3. Through support from the Ministry of the Environment, two staffs from the Budget Directorate of the MOFEA were trained in climate economics so that they would develop the capacity to implement climate budgeting in government. However, in spite of this, when contacted by the consultants the MOFEA seemed not to have known anything about the IsPoA. All of this seemed to have been due to the poor visibility at policy level of the programme and for which reason even though one of the international experts in climate, The Gambia's Minister of Environment and Climate Change made so much effort to popularize the programme, it still could not achieve the desired goal.
4. The absence of institutional coordination in the implementation of the IsPoA provides a pointer to a more deep seated institutional problem – weak institutional capacity. The Gambia has in the three ministries of MOTIE, MOPP and MOF individuals with outstanding capacities and probably even in adequate numbers to do a good job of issues like this. However, poor inter-sectoral or institutional communication is systemic and this lack of capacity needs addressing for need of more effective overall development planning and implementation coordination.
5. In the absence of structured arrangements for the implementation of the IsPoA, The Gambia could not possibly monitor its implementation and probably isolate its impacts on national growth and development.
6. Judging from the budgetary difficulties of The Gambia in the period of the IsPoA, it would seem that resource constraints was one of the main reasons for the low implementation of the PAGE. It was evident from reviews that during this period, budget support almost dried out and grants which traditionally were a mainstay in development financing were on a descending trend. Part of the issue

leading to this descend trend in grants and access to concessionary financing was an unstable foreign policy and its impacts and other financial policy slippages by government. The IsPoA would have been useful in alleviating some of these difficulties.

7. It should also be noted that the support provided by the UN in terms of the implementation of the IsPoA was inadequate. The agreement has not obtained the desired level of visibility and support over the last five year period. Going forward, the UN support towards this should be encouraged. UN agencies working on the various aspects of the IsPoA should look at the relevant aspects and weave it into the SDGs agenda which will be the overarching international agreement. With no adequate mechanism for monitoring and implementation mere agreement alone could not achieve the desired objective. The experience from the Gambia shows a critical reflection on the part of the UN in streamlining all the international agreements in light of the comprehensive SDG agenda for guidance at country level. The continued fragmentation and duplicative nature of agendas into various agreement is hampering their full implementation.

Conclusions and Way Forward

The conclusions from this review may be addressed from three perspectives – mainstreaming of the IsPoA, impacts of the Implementation of the IsPoA, structural challenges and possibilities to address them.

I. Mainstreaming of the IsPoA

- a. Since the PAGE was issued a year after the IsPoA in 2011, ISPOA should have been mainstreamed into the PAGE. Mainstreaming should have been very efficient if there was a clear communication among various ministries and ownership of the agenda. Lack of institutional communication and capacity issues, this was not achieved and the IsPoA remained technically not fully integrated into the PAGE while there exists significant communality. As a result the IsPoA was only partially mainstreamed in terms of coincidental convergence between the two programmes.
- b. Mid-term review of the PAGE was conducted and it is extended upto end in 2016 and its follow-up plan is being discussed and designed and it is certain that mainstreaming the IsPoA is not centre stage in this process. The consistency or otherwise of the eight priorities in the IsPoA with Gambia development prioritization needs to have been discovered from mainstreamed implementation of the IsPoA in the PAGE from 2012 – 2015.
- c. Now that a follow – up programme of the PAGE is being discussed and designed, it is imperative that the IsPoA is taken on as a programme by all the sectoral consultations and deliberate effort is made at how the new national medium term programme aligns with it and how the IsPoA can be useful for resource attraction into policy design and implementation.

II. Impacts of the Implementation of the IsPoA

- a. Direct impacts of the implementation of the IsPOA on national growth and development are not possible in the circumstances. However, implied impacts of the progress of The Gambia at both policy and ground levels in areas such as education and health provide some indications as to how the IsPoA could have been impactful on The Gambia's development.
- b. The levels of education achievements at the ECD, Basic and secondary and tertiary level as reported by the MDG Status report of 2014 is testimony to how projects can have big positive impact on the Gambia. The high levels of GER, gender and other educational achievements in all the regions and

the evolving tertiary educational management space and of STIs hold promise for building and harnessing this huge potential capacity for national growth and development. The opportunity now exists for the IsPoA to be made to assist in implementing and possible reviews of the new policies in STI, higher and tertiary education and TVET.

- c. There have been significant achievements in health infrastructure to provide a health facility for every 5km for every Gambia and almost a public hospital for every region in the country (5 hospitals distributed in 7 regions). The levels of access to basic primary health such as free medical care for all pregnant women and under-fives and plans to progress this to all the poor is testimony to progress made by the Gambia and in need of assistance from the IsPoA.
- d. The development capacity of The Gambia has been explained in the PAGE and Budget speech 2016 to be in agriculture, power, roads, telecommunication, tourism and culture and it is assumed that there needs to debate at better priority sectors and to be more specific in identifying sectors that hold investment return potential for the Gambia's growth. Unless the accuracy level of development sectors/capacity is enhanced, investments will continue to be misplaced and returns to help the Gambia migrate from LDC status and sustain growth resilience may not be achieved. This should be done within the framework of the next successor plan formulation process.
- e. It is evident that in the sectors where progress has been encouraging, significant donor support was provided. In areas lagging behind in implementation, there is a need to obtain recommitment by development partners to support Gambia. It also indicates the importance of domestic resources mobilization going forward for effective implementation of interventions.

III. structural challenges and possibilities to address them

- a. At the moment and under the current arrangements by which the PAGE was generated and the new medium term plan is being developed, it is important to reinforce the institutional mechanism of planning and programming such that The Gambia could honor its international obligations such as the IsPoA. It is also important to strengthen the coordination between planning system both at central and local level as well as at sectoral level to ensure that multi sectoral initiatives such as IsPOA could find a natural method of being integrated into the national planning and programming framework.
- b. In this case there is need to assist the Gambia in reviewing the number and institutional alignments of its ministries and a frame of inter-institutional communication to enable effective governmental resonance in its consistent rhythm.

There is need to have harmony and alignment of national policies for effective implementation of national plan and IsPoA. As shown in the mid term review of PAGE, the lack of favourable enabling environment with a well-defined and elaborated consistent policy framework predicated on seeking national interest is significantly reducing effectiveness of development in the Gambia. Unless a strong policy framework is put in place, all gains significant as they may be at the time they are made, would be unsustainable. The fragility of the institutions in the Gambia has led to the country to officially be included in the fragile states list of the World Bank in 2016. Institutional strengthening should be accorded highest importance going forward if Gambia is to honor its obligations.

IV. Actions and Measures Necessary to Further The Implementation Of The Istanbul Programme

In the remaining period to 2020, it is recommended:

Now that the PAGE is ending, the most important thing is to include the IsPoA in the new national medium term development plan. In view of the comprehensive SDG agenda, there is a need to identify the communality and differences between the ISPOA and SDGs to ensure clarity in the overlap as well as

specificity of the IsPoA. However, it important to better structure a planning mechanism that ensures that government commitments are able to be filtered into the national planning and implementation reporting mechanism irrespective of the sector it comes from.

Global support for IsPOA has to be mobilized to ensure that interventions at country level are supported financially and technically. Continuous support and monitoring mechanism at global level need to be put in place to ensure countries implementing the programme are receiving the required support.

Background and Mandate

According to the terms of reference to this report, the Istanbul Programme of Action (IPoA) was adopted at the Fourth UN Conference on Least Developed Countries (LDCs) in Istanbul, Turkey in May 2011, and constitutes an ambitious policy agenda agreed by the international community to address the challenges faced by the LDCs, based on the fundamental tenets of mutual accountability and enhanced international cooperation.

The overarching goal of the IPoA is to overcome the structural challenges faced by the LDCs in order to eradicate poverty, achieve internationally agreed development goals and enable them graduate from the LDC category, recognizing that the LDCs represent an enormous potential for world economic growth, stability and prosperity.

As the midpoint of the decade-long programme of action draws near, the UN General Assembly decided to hold the comprehensive high-level midterm review of the implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action in June 2016, in Antalya, Turkey, for a period of three days (see resolution 69/231 on the *“Follow-up to the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries”*).

The high-level midterm review shall result in an inter-governmentally negotiated and agreed outcome in the form of a political declaration. The review will undertake an assessment of the implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action by the LDCs and their development partners. It will share best practices and lessons learned and identify obstacles, constraints and actions and initiatives needed to overcome them, as well as new challenges and emerging issues. The midterm review will also serve to reaffirm the global commitment to address the special needs of the LDC countries made at the Fourth UN Conference on the Least Developed Countries and to further strengthen the global partnership for development for LDCs in all priority areas of the Istanbul Programme of Action in order to ensure its timely and effective implementation during the remainder of the Decade, while taking into account the post-2015 development agenda as it relates to the LDCs.

Country Level Preparations

The terms of reference further emphasize that as a critical input for the comprehensive high-level midterm review, broad-based and inclusive country-level preparations shall be undertaken by all LDCs with a view to assess progress, obstacles, constraints, actions and measures necessary to further the implementation of the Istanbul Programme.

To assist in the preparation of national reports, the General Assembly requested the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme, in her capacity as Chair of the United Nations Development Group, to ensure full involvement of the Resident Coordinator system and country teams in LDCs in the preparation for high-level midterm review, including in the preparation of national reports. Accordingly, the UNDP country office in the Gambia availed technical and financial support to the government of the Gambia to prepare the report.

National Focal Points from LDCs will be invited to present a draft of their national report at the Annual Workshop for LDC National Focal Points to be held at UN Headquarters in New York in early July.

This report constitutes The Gambia’s assessment of her progress in the implementation of the IPoA from 2011 - 2015, and highlighting the obstacles, constraints, actions and measures necessary to further the implementation of the Programme in the remaining period to 2020.

Methodology

This report was compiled based on the annotated template from data generated from a variety of reports and assessments of relevant issues in The Gambia and a consultation with relevant sector heads in commitment areas of the IsPoA by The Gambia. Upon compilation, the first draft of the report underwent a stakeholders validation in a workshop, during and after which they provided a variety of new insights and comments that were eventually incorporated into the draft to constitute this final report.

In the absence of programmed implementation of the IsPoA by The Gambia, the only other two ways of obtaining data on probable implementation due, among other reasons, to convergence between the national planning activities and the IsPoA, was to consult with sector heads about activities undertaken from 2011 to 2015 under their relevant commitment areas. The data from this process was corroborated by a variety of reports such as the PAGE, 2012 – 2015, mid-term review of the PAGE, The Gambia Common Country Assessment Report and other sector policies and strategic plans and constitute the basis of analysis in the various sections of this report.

It is however evident at the end of it all that in spite of non-direct implementation of the programme, The Gambia's national development programming for the same period (the PAGE) to some extent mainstreamed the IsPoA and the outcome of the activities also show that progress has been made on a number of fronts as would have been achieved under the IsPoA if implemented.

I. Introduction

The Istanbul Programme of Action (IsPoA) for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020 adopted by the Fourth UN Conference on Least Developed Countries in Turkey, May 2011 is an agreed policy agenda aimed at addressing the structural development challenges of LDCs, a commitment to implementing actions both by the LDCs and the development partners, the results of which through sustained economic growth of 7% per annum, for the period of the programme, should enable them graduate from the LDC category and achieve more internationally agreed goals and the eradication of poverty.

Based on the above goal commitments and country ownership, national policies of LDCs and international support measures during the decade will focus on achieving specific objectives with the aim of enabling half of the number of LDCs meet the criteria for graduation from LDC status by 2020.

The objectives to be achieved include:

1. **Sustained, equitable and inclusive economic growth** in least developed countries, to **at least the level of 7 per cent per annum**, by **strengthening their productive capacity** in all sectors **through structural transformation and overcoming their marginalization** through their **effective integration into the global economy**, including through regional integration;
2. **Build human capacities** by fostering sustained, equitable and inclusive human and social development, gender equality and the empowerment of women;
3. **Reduce the vulnerability** of least developed countries to economic, natural and environmental shocks and disasters, as well as climate change, and enhance their ability to meet these and other challenges **through strengthening their resilience**;
4. **Ensure enhanced financial resources** and their effective use for least developed countries' development, including through domestic resource mobilization, ODA, external debt relief, foreign direct investment and remittances; and
5. **Enhance good governance at all levels**, by strengthening democratic processes, institutions and the rule of law; increasing efficiency, coherence, transparency and participation; protecting and promoting human rights; and reducing corruption, and strengthen least developed country Governments' capacity to play an effective role in their economic and social development.

Based on a commitment to partnership, the LDCs and development partners will implement agreed actions within the period 2011 – 2020, either individually or jointly, across eight priority areas: productive capacity; agriculture, food security and rural development; trade; commodities; human and social development; multiple crises and other emerging challenges; mobilizing financial resources for development and capacity building; and good governance at all levels.

These priority areas are in line with the six areas of governance called the World Governance Indicators (WGI)¹ adopted since 1996 to assess through statistical methodology progress or otherwise in overall governance across countries and institutions. The intended implementation arrangements of the IsPoA was to be based on the principles of country ownership and leadership; an integrated approach; genuine partnership; result orientation; peace and security, development and human rights; equity; voice and representation; and a balanced role of the State and market considerations; where the Government in least developed countries commit to design policies and institutions with a view to achieving sustainable and inclusive economic growth that translates into full employment, decent work opportunities and sustainable

¹ Voice and Accountability, Political Stability and Absence of Violence/Terrorism, Government Effectiveness, Regulatory Quality, Rule of Law, and Control of Corruption

development (IsPoA Midterm review TORs 2015). The State's main role in all of this process will include stimulating the private sector towards the achievement of national development objectives and creating an appropriate enabling stable, transparent and rules-based economic environment for the effective functioning of markets.

In summary the LDCs must take ownership of the programme by integrating it into their national planning programmes and implementing agreed commitments by the development partners in the IsPoA and report progress. Implementation of programmed commitments by LDCs shall be supported by the development partners through a structured arrangement of requesting for and accessing the support.

This report is the outcome of a midterm review of the implementation progress of the programme of action in the eight priority areas² for action by The Gambia for the period 2011 - 2015.

II. The National Development Planning Process, Including Key Economic, Social, Political and Environmental Trends

Key National Development Planning Process

In The Gambia, the basis for long and medium term resources allocation to sectors, and identifying national priorities for public and private sector investment is The Gambia Incorporated Vision 2020; supported by medium term plans, in this case the Programme for Accelerated Growth and Employment (PAGE), 2012 – 2015; relevant for the period of this IsPoA review. These medium term plans are periodic (sometimes four-year) mechanisms to enable the mainstreaming and implementation of the more long-term Gambia Incorporated, Vision 2020, which lasts from 1996 to the year 2020. Down the planning continuum, sectoral policies such as the education sector strategic plans and the National Health Strategy cascade the mainstreaming and implementation of national programmes to the sectors.

The IsPoA coincidentally ends at the same time with The Gambia Incorporated Vision 2020. The PAGE on the other hand came into effect a year (2012) after the launch of the IsPoA. The development thrust of The Gambia Incorporated Vision 2020 is to transform The Gambia into a middle income country, and like the IsPoA aimed at graduating The Gambia from the category of LDCs, placing it on a formidable road to sustained development, making the two programmes similar in ultimate goals. The PAGE follows from the PRSP II focusing on the need to fight poverty in accordance with the MDGs such as to reduce the number of people living under US\$1 a day from 61% in 2007 to less than 40% in 2015, in which significant progress was reported by The Gambia (MDG Status Report 2014).

The Gambia adopted and implemented the MDGs by mainstreaming them into its National Development Plans over the period, namely Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) I (2003 – 2005), PRSP II (2007 – 2011) and eventually the Program for Accelerated Growth and Employment (PAGE). The Gambia made significant progress in the implementation of the MDGs as reported in the MDG Status Report 2014 in health and education, achieving MDGs goals 4 and 2 (MDG Status Report 2014 pp. 6-8).

Unlike the Brussels Programme of Action, The Gambia did not implement the IsPoA and therefore cannot specifically report on the progress of its implementation. It is not possible to directly link progress in the

² Productive capacities (infrastructure; energy; science; technology and innovation; and private sector development); agriculture, food security and rural development; trade; commodities; human and social development(education and training; population and primary health; youth development; shelter; water and sanitation; gender equality and empowerment of women; and social protection); multiple crises and other emerging challenges(economic shocks; climate change and environmental sustainability; and disaster risk reduction); mobilizing financial resources for development and capacity building; and good governance at all levels.

PAGE implementation to the ISPoA because it was not programmed and mainstreamed in the PAGE in the first place except where there has been convergence of programming between the two programmes. Based on goals/commitment convergence of the ISPoA and the PAGE, some mainstreaming overlap was achieved with the PAGE in the following areas:

- I. The ISPoA goal of *Sustained, equitable and inclusive economic growth in least developed countries, to at least the level of 7 per cent per annum, by strengthening their productive capacity in all sectors through structural transformation and overcoming their marginalization through their effective integration into the global economy, including through regional integration.* The PAGE through pillar I, which focused on accelerating and sustaining economic growth has similar objectives dealing with economic growth.
- II. The ISPoA goal *to build human capacities by fostering sustained, equitable and inclusive human and social development, gender equality and the empowerment of women* was convergent with the PAGE Pillar III - Strengthening human capital stock to enhance employment opportunities, where The Gambia significant progress from basic to tertiary education, including in TVET.
- III. The ISPoA goal *to Enhance good governance at all levels, by strengthening democratic processes, institutions and the rule of law; increasing efficiency, coherence, transparency and participation; protecting and promoting human rights; and reducing corruption, and strengthen least developed country Governments' capacity to play an effective role in their economic and social development;* was well reflected in pillar IV - Improving governance and fighting corruption.

The overall coordination of planning and of mainstreaming the ISPoA is the responsibility of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs (MOFEA) and the Ministry of Planning and Policy (MOPP). However, whilst the National Planning Commission was in existence at the time this programme was entered into, its life was short-lived, having been dissolved and subsumed into a new Ministry of Economic Planning and Industrial Development (MEPID), which in its self was after a short stint dissolved and its functions integrated into the MOFEA. Recently, the Ministry of Planning and Policy has been established although it is yet to have a sitting Minister. Meanwhile, the MOFEA in the absence of a Minister in the Ministry of Planning and Policy continues to provide policy guidance to that ministry.

The MOFEA increased and improved its institutional capacity to include a strong budget directorate, planning directorate and a directorate to support public finance management (PFM). Through improvements in PFM, The Gambia now has in place public budgetary and accounting frameworks achieved through an effective Integrated Financial Management Information System (IFMIS) to support planning and management information for more effective decision making. In addition, the MOPP has established a cadre of planning experts and distributed to them to various MDAs to assist with planning and its coordination. However, in spite of this this, The Gambia continues to face challenges of needed institutional realignment in sustaining an effective planning framework (Capacity Assessment Of The Policy Analysis Unit, Final Report; July 2015). These challenges led to the reason why the ISPoA missed being mainstreamed in the PAGE because of the absence of a lasting structured national public planning institution/process to coordinate the inclusion/absorption of commitments into national plans and programmes.

Key Economic, Social, Political and Environmental Trends

Overall the economic, social and political trends of The Gambia from 2011 – 2015 is a mixed bag. Studies including reports by the IMF from various annual Article IV consultations show a Gambia with reasonable policy resilience but waning macroeconomic stability and growth, due to uncontrolled fiscal expenditure and

unstable exchange rate policy decisions that have had negative impact on the overall economic growth and development of the country. Added to these man-made instabilities, were also the strains imposed by unstable climate conditions (drought of 2011 and erratic rains of 2014), which had major macroeconomic implications for the country. The Gambia has been reported in the 2014 MDG Status report to be one of the few African countries making steady progress towards the MDG targets related to hunger, primary schooling, and child immunization. However, despite these achievements, The Gambia remains one of the least-developed countries in the world, with high levels of extreme poverty and household food insecurity.

On the political front, in spite of her small size and accompanying narrow economic base, The Gambia has enjoyed relative macroeconomic growth, social and political stability under systems of democracy except between 1994 and 1996, when it was ruled under a military government. According to Transparency International The Gambia in 2015 was ranked 123 out of 167 countries in the corruption index and even though this is a small improvement over the period of this report, the actual location of the score at 28 requires efforts for improvement. However, the Government's comprehensive Civil Service Reform Strategy 2012-15 seeks to address these challenges by focusing on improving the enabling environment for civil servants through reforms in performance management, pay and career structures and the pension system. Moreover, the Local Government Act was enacted in 2002 to spearhead the decentralization agenda, devolving many functions from national to sub-national level (in economic and social domains) and engaging traditional/local governance structures.

On the economic front The Gambia has an open economy with limited natural resources, and remains a low-income country with an average per capita GDP of US\$505 in 2011 (World Bank, 2011), deteriorating consistently to US\$385 in 2015 (World Bank, 2015). The country's economy is predominantly agrarian, which makes it susceptible to variable growth, but in recent years significant progress has been made in diversifying the economy with regard to tourism and trade services transformation from agriculture even though it continues to be the main economic operation of the country. The GDP rate from 2011 is -4.3% to 4.4% in 2015 but showing serious fluctuations over the programme period. Indeed, the service sector's contribution to GDP is becoming increasingly dominant, having contributed 60 per cent of GDP in 2011 (African Economic Outlook, 2013).

Notwithstanding these achievements, The Gambia's economy and macroeconomic stability is vulnerable to various risks and structural constraints. Two critical channels of vulnerability include a heavy debt burden and susceptibility to macroeconomic shocks and environmental risks (African Economic Outlook, 2013), given the country's heavy reliance on rain-fed agriculture. These issues are discussed in detail in subsequent sections.

III. Assessment of Progress and Challenges in the Implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action from the Decade 2011 – 2020

In the absence of direct implementation of the IsPoA and given its significant convergence with the PAGE programme, progress has been made towards achieving some of the five goals³ of the IsPOA. The Gambia's

³ (i) sustained, equitable and inclusive economic growth at 7% per annum for the programme period;
(ii) building human capacities by fostering sustained, equitable and inclusive human and social development, gender equality and the empowerment of women;
(iii) reducing the vulnerability of The Gambia to economic, natural and environmental shocks and disasters, as well as climate change, and enhancing her ability to meet these and other challenges through strengthening resilience;
(iv) ensuring enhanced financial resources and their effective use for her development, including through domestic resource mobilization, ODA, external debt relief, foreign direct investment and remittances; and

progress in the goals of convergence between the two programmes cannot be specifically related to the program's impact due to the circumstances of its non-implementation.

The following constitute the report of progress, challenges, lessons learnt and plans for the future in the variety of areas committed to by The Gambia in the IsPoA.

a. Productive Capacities

Productive capacity of a country includes sets of multifaceted policy and legal instruments and programmes that constitute a systemic infrastructure around a chosen set of strategic sectors, which when implemented will enable effective transformation of the economy. This means placing it on an acceptable level of growth that generates acceptable levels of incomes and reduction in poverty.

What constitutes acceptable productive capacity would differ from country to country depending on the specific sectors and their accompanying activities and potential impacts on growth and employment. The IsPoA defines productive capacities as infrastructure, energy, science, technology and innovation, and private sector development. The Gambia in the PAGE and in the 2016 budget speech of the Finance Minister define productive capacity/sectors to include agriculture and natural resources; information and communication infrastructure; tourism and culture; trade, industry and employment; works, construction and infrastructure; energy and petroleum; and whilst there is some convergence between these two perceptions of productive capacities, there are significant variations even though each of them is worth its merit.

History shows that most underdeveloped countries are normally more grossly employed in agriculture or extraction, which contributes more than most other sectors to the country's GDP. Some countries that are endowed with high value commodities such as oil and gold also suffer from a given level of dependence on only the extraction and sale of these resources in their raw form without value addition, and their economies show signs of overdependence on them. The cardinal rule is that achieving increase in productive capacity and economic growth that increases employment and incomes include the identification of productive capacity sectors of priority, enhance public investment and productivity in them and sustainably transform your economy through an effective value addition strategy so that an industrial capacity is built to reduce the economy's depend on a single or narrow set of sectors. The rate of industrialization is directly responsive to the rate of value addition achieved and by extension the country's export value and overall growth is even much higher resulting in a ramification of benefits – improved current account balance, stronger domestic currency, increased incomes, increased employment and etc. *The economic structure of The Gambia, where services are the dominant sector, is atypical in the sense that the base (agriculture and industry) is not sufficiently developed to support and ensure a beneficial services sector. The services sector remains largely informal, predominantly low value distributive trade with low skilled workers and low paying jobs* (The NHDR report 2014). This type of service sector lacks the capacity to provide the requisite support to a strong productive sector(s).

A synopsis of The Gambia's productive capacity sector performance include:

- I. The Gambia over the reporting period has had limited structural transformation and the economy continued to be dominated by a low value service sector in particular, wholesale and retail trade. The factors responsible being high energy cost, poor and inadequate transport infrastructure and high
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- (v) enhancing good governance at all levels, by strengthening democratic processes, institutions and the rule of law; increasing efficiency, coherence, transparency and participation; protecting and promoting human rights; and reducing corruption, and strengthening her capacity to play an effective role in her economic and social development.

cost of financing. Access to energy has continued to increase in The Gambia reaching 40% in 2013 with only 43.7 MW of the 88.8 MW installed capacity being available. The current energy supply capacity does not allow current peak load to be met and it is argued that an additional 135 MW of capacity between 2014 and 2020 will be needed to avoid load shedding and make room for industrial demand. The potential of additional 37 MW from the ongoing Sambangalu Dam construction under the OMVG project exists. Progress in the energy sector includes finalization of a national energy policy, and enabling private investment in energy generation, including through alternative sources such as wind and solar, and improvements in the transmission network even into the rural areas.

- II. Progress in transport and communication are notable with the maintenance of the pace of road construction started prior to the current period leading to significant opening of the country for commerce and agriculture.
- III. In communication, increased private sector participation has led to access to communication services and mobile-cellular subscriptions and has reached 2, 283,691 higher than the total population number. This means mobile-cellular subscriptions per 100 inhabitants is around 119 while internet users per 100 inhabitants is around 15.56 in 2014. The completion of the ocean Internet cable, under the ACE project and establishment of a public-private equity management structure to run the investment and the erection of fibre optic lines along both banks of the river and linked by two fibre optic connections together have revolutionized telecommunication capability with huge catalytic effects on all other sectors of the economy.

In view of the just described productive capacity strength of The Gambia and challenges for positive economic transformation, a closer look at the structure of The Gambian economy over a long period shows that there is some structural transformation taking place but that the transformation is resulting in a prominence of the services sector of very low value and making poverty even more endemic. This is evident from the declining share of agriculture to the overall Gross Domestic Product (GDP), whilst the share of low value services is increasing steadily.

In this case even though on average the GDP growth is positive, this positive growth has not translated to poverty reduction. Instead both unemployment and poverty continue to grow and the ideals both of Vision 2020 and the IsPoA to transform The Gambia to a middle income country continue to be elusive. The required annual economic growth of 7% of the IsPoA has not been achieved with an average growth in the period of no more than 3.9% only.

To achieve and sustain effective economic transformation, there is need to emphasize three important factors – (i) public investment in science, technology and innovation (STI) to support high value addition by a well-trained and skilled labour force; (ii) a significant reduction in production cost, which include addressing current high energy cost, financing cost (high taxation, raw materials inputs) and (iii) poor physical infrastructure (roads).

The Ministry of Higher Education, Research Science and Technology (MOHERST) are at work in prioritizing investments in STI education. With national policies in both higher education and STI finalised and approved, MOHERST in a series of programmes has identified STI institutions such as the University of The Gambia and are at an advanced stage of deepening the abilities of these institutions to provide education in STI at that level and in large numbers.

b. Agriculture, Food Security and Rural Development

In The Gambia agriculture represents the main sector for overall socioeconomic sustenance since it accounts for over 25% of the economy and over 56% of employment in rural areas and 32% of the total employment in the country (World Bank, Gambia Policies to Foster Growth 2015 and LFS 2012). The agriculture sector comprising crop, livestock, fisheries and forestry production is one of the key drivers of economic growth in The Gambia. The growth rate of agriculture (-1.8% in 2013 to -7.2% in 2014) and correspondingly its contribution to GDP (23% of 2013 and 20% in 2014) in the period of this programme has not been steady and significantly volatile due to a host of reasons, including droughts and erratic rain patterns given its dependence on rain. In view of this continuing significance of agriculture in The Gambia's overall economic transformation and development as it affects other important productive sectors such as industry and services, government has made strong but challenging efforts to maintain a steady adherence to international public investment requirements during this programme period.

This sector holds great potential for increased production, productivity improvements and synergy with other sectors, notably tourism and industry. In recognition of these factors, the sector has been a focus and major plank of national development blue prints formulated by Government including the Vision 2020, Vision 2016 and Vision 2025, and several national medium-term development frameworks, sectoral policies, strategic plans, programmes and projects have been formulated for implementation in the bid to support agricultural development. Gambia's agriculture is mainly subsistence farming and highly dependent on erratic rains and subject to high infestation. It is reported that only 3% of arable land is cultivated, indicating a very low level of land usage, itself creating greater opportunities for agricultural investment.

In agriculture and for good reasons, a variety of policy instruments have been used to constitute what has and continues to be envisaged as the main trigger of development in The Gambia and the assurance of sustainable food security. These instruments include The Gambia Incorporated Vision 2020 and the PAGE at the national level and at the sectoral level, the GNAIP. At both levels significant recognition of the overarching importance of agriculture has been emphasized and agriculture continues to be tagged as priority due to its catalytic significance for agro processing and industrialization. As a result all sorts of projects such as the FASDEP, NEMA and GCAV projects, have been established and being implemented to help jumpstart comprehensive agricultural productivity in all aspects along the agriculture value chain.

The mission statement of The Gambia Vision 2020 specifically mentions industrialization as agricultural industrialization to illustrate the critical nature of agriculture to national industrialization, the building of national productive capacity and overall economic transformation. To achieve these ideals, policy development has included the need to give access to land to the very marginalised especially the women, who constitute a major proportion of the farming population in a production system that depends so much on the availability of rain. The current level of agricultural output given the structure it comes from does not sufficiently support industrial activity. However, current agricultural production strategies in other parts of the world have been able through effective coordination and farmer support to increase outputs significantly from subsistence smallholder agriculture to feed into industrial production. The Gambia has the opportunity both of enhancing subsistence agricultural output and productivity or take targeted crops and encourage medium to large commercial non-rain-dependent agricultural output and enhance production, which will permit investment in the agricultural value chain to include such as processing and marketing; less susceptible to the effects of climate change and variations in rain pattern.

To achieve this will require effective and well-funded agricultural policy, which in the Gambia is a challenge. Whilst with donor support, efforts at policy coherence in agriculture and with desired macroeconomic transformation and alignment with other sectors is being sought, actual agricultural policy depends for a great extent on unwritten top down perceptions that are not rooted in tested theory and are best non-existent. Agriculture is a tool both for fighting for food security, poverty reduction and employment creation and has significant potential on industrialization along its value chain.

c. Trade

The Gambia is a trading nation by history and land structure. It's two north and South banks, both extending long stretches into Senegal and towards the source of its very navigable river are the reasons for its genealogy as a nation and continues to define its livelihood. Its location on the foremost tip of the West African coast with easy air access to the American main land and Europe, also make it a choice location for trade.

The Gambia's only land neighbour is Senegal, which surrounds The Gambia except on the ocean front, stretching for about 75 kilo meters. The Gambia has historically been an entry point for commercial goods into the West African region, which could easily be transported into the interior of the sub-continent via the river and in recent times via the road networks across Senegal. However, Gambia's major trading partner continues to be Senegal with who she shares close ethnic, cultural and religious links. The European Union and Asia are The Gambia's main import and domestic export trading partners, whilst Senegal is its major re-export and throughput partner for re-exports to countries in the sub-region beyond Senegal such as Guinea Bissau, Sierra Leone and Mali.

	2007	2012	2013	2014	2,015 €	2016(p)	2017(p)
Trade Balance	-21.5	-22.1	-19.1	-28.6	-25 €	-23	-22.9
Export of goods(f.o.b)	11.4	13.8	14.7	15	14.4	12.6	11.5
imports of goods(f.o.b)	32.9	35.9	33.8	43.6	38.9	35.7	34.3
Services	8.3	8.6	7.4	4.5	1.1	4.7	7.7
Factors Income	-5.9	-3.2	-2.5	-2.9	-4	-3.6	-3.1
Current transfers	9	8.7	4	9.2	7.5	6.9	8.1
Current Account Balance	-10	-8	-10.2	-17.7	-20	-15	-10.2
Source: The Gambia Common Country Assessment 2015							

As of 2012, import of goods and services accounted for 79% of GDP and this importance of trade in the national economy is predominantly driven by imports, accounting for 47% of GDP, the composition of which is highly variable reflecting its importance on re-exports (The Gambia, Policies to Foster Growth Report 2015, Volume II). That *The Gambia is heavily reliant on imports (39% of GDP, 2014), mainly for food & agricultural products (33%) and as inputs into production (43%). The result of a fairly stagnant domestic exports and imports growth that shows no sign of slowing down is an ever-widening current account (CA) balance. The CA deficit stood at 12.7% of GDP in 2014. The current account deficit has persisted for the past 30 years, with the gap widening recently. This has led to a depreciation of the dalasi and a loss of reserves by the CBG in its bid to fill the gap and protect the dalasi. The latest projected results show that international reserves held by the CBG have fallen to 3.1 months of import cover in the first half of 2015 from 5.5 months in 2011⁴, the year before the implementation of the PAGE.*

The Gambia's trade balance (table 2.1) was generally and consistently negative from 2007 to 2015 and indicative of low export response capacity. The Gambia's main trading activities are around its agricultural activities (groundnuts, sesame, cashew nuts, and fish) and services (tourism) and together agriculture (60%) and tourism (19%) account for most of its foreign exchange. These two are important as sustenance to the

⁴ Minutes of the Monetary Policy Committee Meeting August 2015

balance of trade. The Gambia's re-exports account for 85-88 % of gross exports and are mainly directed to West African countries.

The Gambia's trade balance continues to be very weak and if it were not remittances accounting for more than 5% of GDP on average, The Gambia's exchange stability would have been extremely challenging and maintenance of adequate reserves, difficult.

As a per cent of GDP, unless stated						
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014*	2015**
Exports	10.0	11.4	13.8	14.7	13.8	14.2
<i>Of which: Re exports</i>	8.9	10.2	11.8	13.4	12.3	12.8
<i>Of which: Domestic goods</i>	1.1	1.2	2.0	1.3	1.5	1.4
Imports	-32.8	-32.6	-35.8	-34.3	-38.9	-37.5
Trade Balance	-22.8	-21.2	-22	-19.6	-25.2	-23.3
Remittances	4.7	3.0	6.8	5.4	6.1	6.8
Current Account Balance (excl. budget support)	-16.3	-12.3	-8.9	-10.7	-12.7	-18.0
Current Account Balance (incl. budget support)	-16.3	-12.3	-7.9	-10.7	-12.7	-13.5
	<i>Months of import cover</i>					
Gross International Reserves, (current year)	4.7	5.5	5.5	5.2	3.8	3.1

*Based on preliminary estimates

** Based on projections

Source: IMF Country Report15/104, April 2015

The comparative advantages for which The Gambia was a preferred re-export destination has begun losing ground in that as a result of policy developments and improvements in neighbouring Senegal and even the countries that depended on the Gambia for the supply of goods and commodities (Table 2.3). Another issue eroding The Gambia's competitiveness and resulting to slowdowns in re-exports is the relative cost of doing business in the Gambia, which is considered higher than its immediate neighbours (see table 2.3).

The Gambia	Senegal	Guinea	Liberia	Nigeria	ECOWAS	SSA
14.6	10.5	11.6	10.7	11.0	11.2	10.3

Source: World Integrated Trade Solutions (WITS)

Increase in tariffs due to the ECOWAS Common External Tariff (CET), limited investment in the Banjul ports and inability to dock large container vessels, longer offloading times than in Dakar (World Bank, 2015) due to lack of offloading equipment, the poor state of Gambian roads and lack of adequate standards to meet the required quality and packaging of goods are also reasons for loss of competitive advantage. Undertaken and on-going government efforts at resolving these competitiveness issues include significant progress at mainstreaming and integrating trade as priority into national development through development of an MTP for MOTIE and inclusion of MOTIE in the MTEF and designation as national priority, finalised and approved the National Energy Policy, and the launching of the Gambia National Trade, Industry, employment and export policies.

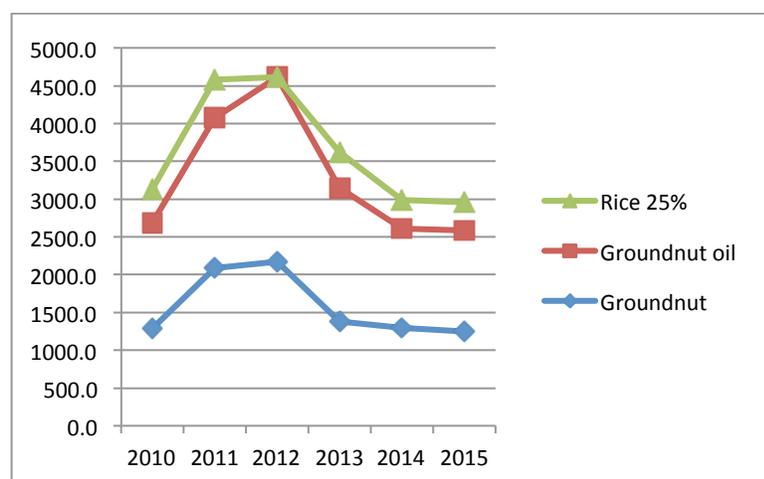
Even when accomplished, these policies need to be supported by a strong, stable and strategically focused foreign policy. Impacts of either an unstable or lack of a defined and predictable foreign policy on her relations with other countries, especially Senegal must be resolved. The Gambia needs to isolate political issues from economic relations with other countries so that whilst it might have political differences with them, these political difficulties should not be allowed to affect the economic relations with those countries, especially that it is technically landlocked and needs good relations with neighbours to carry on good sub-regional trade. For the re-export trade to triumph The Gambia needs to maintain very good diplomatic

relations with the sub-region. It is only through maintenance of such good diplomatic relations that the opportunities of ECOWAS integration of trade and investment can be exploited. Another major challenge is that of lack of quality and internationally recognised laboratories to assess and certify products in accordance with international trade standards even though the Standards Bureau and the Food and Nutrition agency have been established and in the process of building the necessary infrastructures.

d. Commodities

Commodities as meant in the IsPoA are natural resources such as oil, iron ore and other similar commodities. The Gambia is yet to identify such commercially viable commodities and therefore not in a position to comprehensively implement this commitment. However, The Gambia’s agriculture is basically on production and sale of groundnuts, sesame, cashew nuts and fish, which together constitute about 10% of total exports and 1.5% of GDP in 2014.

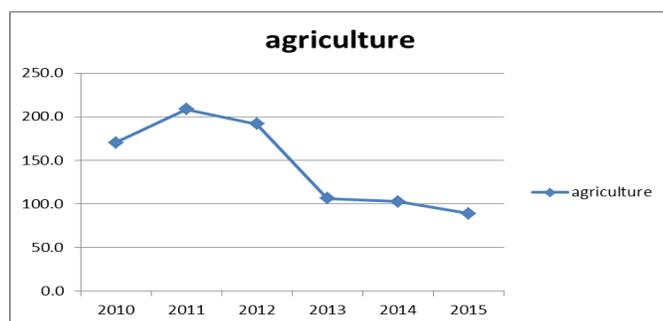
Figure 2.1: Comparative Commodities Price Fluctuations of Select Gambian Commodities 2010 - 2015



Vulnerabilities of these commodities as in all primary agricultural commodities are the shocks coming from extremely variable international prices. According to Angus Deaton and Ron Miller⁵, the export of SSA countries are concentrated in a relatively small number of primary commodities for which world prices are volatile and values of which have dropped to historically low levels by 1995. These fluctuations in commodity prices induce fluctuations in real national incomes and pose problems in macroeconomic management. It is further argued that during the boom years of commodity prices and when commodity prices rise faster than international loan interest, producers of commodities can borrow more and are able to invest in projects of high return and create macroeconomic momentum. However, when commodity prices slump, the reverse is real and macroeconomic management is difficult because revenues are lower and borrowing becomes hard and public investment is rendered difficult.

⁵ International Commodity Prices, Macroeconomic Performance and Politics in Sub-Saharan Africa,, 1995.

Figure 2.2: Commodity Price Indices for Agriculture, 2011- 2015



Further than downstream, given the level of international price volatility of commodities (Fig 2.1), the farmer is unable to maintain a certain level of real income even for the same quantities of outputs over the years and the same is for other traders and the country at large. In the case of The Gambia, its basic commodities, namely groundnuts, cashews and sesame are in the category of commodities subject to very frequent international market price fluctuations and in the case of groundnuts, this has been responsible for the perennial problem of stabilizing farmer prices. Stability in farm prices are the instruments of inducement of additional groundnuts production and because the farm price has not been certain over time due to international price instability, most farmers have moved or at best reduced their acreage of groundnut farms for other crops and this has rendered the economy constrained for reduced incomes, foreign exchange and employment from a crop that has always been the main employer in the agricultural sector.

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Groundnut	1283.9	2086.2	2174.5	1378	1296	1248
Groundnut oil	1403.9	1986.2	2436.7	1773	1313	1337
Rice 25%	441.5	506		473	382.2	372.6
World Bank Price Indices for low and middle income countries (2010 = 100)						
Agriculture	170.4	209	191.7	106.3	102.7	89.3
Source: Worldbank.org World Bank Price Data (The Pink Sheet)						

Other vulnerability factors come from either low (2011) or erratic(2014) rainfall and because its production depends on rain, this leads to low production and therefore output and low incomes, poverty and other balance of payments ramifications.

e. Private Sector Development

Government has an overarching influence in both investment and consumption even though the role of the private sector has evolved over time and as a result it too has grown in significance over the last 30 years. The Gambia's private sector is dominated by micro enterprises, with 97% of businesses having less than 5 employees (formal or informal sector). Small firms, those with 5 to 9 employees, make up 2.2% of the private sector whilst medium and large firms, together, make up less than 1% of firms. The sectors in which these firms operate is also highly concentrated as 61% of businesses operate in the distributive trade whilst 16% are

in manufacturing, 4% in the repair (automotive repairs), with the remaining 19% spread across 13 different sectors (The Gambia PSDS 2015 – 2019).

The MSMEs Mapping study, conducted in 2013, showed that personal savings (60.9%) were the most common primary ways entrepreneurs raised capital in The Gambia. Remittances and money from friends were the second (6.5%) and third (3.7%), most common after personal savings and that there is a significant untapped market for micro finance institutions.

The 2015 Ease of Doing Business report ranked The Gambia 138 out 189 for doing business in Sub Saharan Africa. A closer look at the doing business index shows that The Gambia is making progress in some aspects of creating a conducive environment for businesses to grow while it is still facing some challenges in most areas - getting credit, paying taxes and protection of minority investors seem to be the greatest challenges for SMEs. The Gambia registered higher scores in security, institution and government efficiency and lower scores in market size, macroeconomic environment and technological readiness. Labour market efficiency and good market efficiency were above mid-point in the scale of 1-7. However, electricity, access to finance, labour skill level (higher education and training) and tax rates were considered the major constraints.

In summary, The Gambia needs to resolve some of the following challenges if the private sector will be grown to be able to undertake significant production activity and optimally contribute to the economy:

- I. There is need for establishing a realistic set of priority investment areas and identification of productive capacity with sufficient catalytic effect on production, income and employment generation and direct significant public and private sector supported investment to them.
- II. There is need for inter-sectoral or institutional collaboration such as between the ministries of MOFEA, MOTIE, MOPP, MOA, MOJ and GIEPA and the GCCI and to establish a realistic understanding of the arrangements for implementation of the private sector support policies such as the export, trade, investment and even the private sector strategy that The Gambia already has but unable to implement.
- III. In this new found inter-sectoral working arrangements, the Gambia should establish the relations between agriculture, industry and services so that a production strategy in agriculture throughout the value chain will be enabled, an education system to provide skills and competencies to support a strong agriculture based industrial structure and for high value services to support the accompanying financial and leisure products such as tourism created.
- IV. Agricultural investment and the strategy either of measured commercial or subsistence production, capable of providing commodity inputs for reasonable industrial production should be established.
- V. The current single window for registering new businesses is good and the reduced process of end of year business renewal well supportive of private sector efficiency, but the general effectiveness of the judiciary needs to be accelerated.
- VI. In view of the new redefinition of productive capacity and priorities for public investment, needed infrastructure (roads, energy, ports and tec.) should be constructed and put to use and accompanying this should be a stable foreign policy to ensure sustained cordial relations with neighbouring countries so that the export market will be accessible.

f. Human and Social development

Human development include all platforms for inculcating through education, training and mentorship the requisite skills, knowledge and behavior changes that will make a person a complete whole and capable of taking advantage of the opportunities in his environment and become economically self-reliant and by extension significantly contribute to national development. Studies show that countries that have a highly educated and skilled labour force have better capacity to develop and be resilient to withstand any form of

shocks in its external environment. The following highlights the major achievements of the Gambia in this aspect.

1. Education and Training

This section focuses on the assessment of policy measures on education and training as well as factors contributing to progress or lack of it in achieving significant policy successes in increases in the enrollment and retention rates at secondary, tertiary and vocational education, skills development and training and the increase in quality education and training and in science and technology and innovation.

A summary of the various achievements in providing access to education from ECD to the tertiary and higher levels and at ensuring quality along the continuum include:

- I. The Gambia has achieved 97.1% access to primary education (lower basic cycle). This has gone hand in hand with significant closing the gender gap at the primary level, with a gross enrolment of 98.7% for boys and 95.4% for girls. Primary completion rates almost doubled between 1990 and 2013 in the process (from 44% to 74%).
- II. Similar headway is being made at the ECD level, as enrolment has steadily increased over the past 3 years from 36.5% to 45.4%. It is important to note the balance in admissions in terms of gender with more girls (46.1) attending ECD than boys (44.6); a small margin but one that echoes the progress that has been made at the lower basic cycle with the closing of the gender gap.

	Male	Female	Total
2013	35.4	37.5	36.5
2014	40.1	42.1	41.2
2015	44.6	46.1	45.4

Source: Presentation by MoBSE at the Joint Donor Review and Supervision Meeting, July 2015

All figures in percent			
Education Indicators	2000	2011	2013
School enrolment, primary, female (% gross)	84.2	87.3	98.7
School enrolment, primary, male (% gross)	96.8	85.6	95.4
School enrolment, primary, total (% gross)	N/A	86.5	97.1
Primary completion rate, female (% of relevant age group)	64.0	70.3	73.6
Primary completion rate, male (% of relevant age group)	79.8	71.2	73.3
Primary completion rate, total (% of relevant age group)	71.9	70.9	73.4
5 credits in WASSCE (including Math and English)	N/A	4.5	5.0
School enrolment, tertiary (% gross)	1.1	3.4	N/A

Source: Study on Multidimensional Poverty and Inclusive Growth in The Gambia, UNDP, 2015

1. In spite of these access achievements at the primary levels, completion rates at the primary are still too low (73%) and so are pass rates at the senior secondary school level as only 5% of students

taking the WASSCE (West African Senior Secondary Certificate Examinations) pass; which translates to an efficiency of 2%. Therefore it is no surprise that a large proportion of the labour force has little or no formal education. Results of the 2012 Labour Force Survey show that 31% of the labour force is engaged in retail/wholesale trade, with average income of D 1,500 (\$38⁶) per month. This is marginally higher than the 32% of the labour force engaged in farming with an average income of D 1,000 (\$25) per month.

2. Unfortunately, the lack of education and vocational skills limits the opportunities available to these workers preventing them from moving into more lucrative sectors such as industry (manufacturing), telecommunications and Banking & Insurance (the three sectors with the highest value added per worker). Only 11% of the labour force (15-64 years) has had vocational training (LFS, 2012), which is extremely low for a country that aims to achieve middle-income status within a decade.

Age Range	Urban			Rural			The Gambia		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
15-64	19.0	7.5	13.1	11.8	6.6	8.8	15.7	7.0	11.0
13-30	17.6	7.0	11.9	10.2	7.4	8.5	14.3	7.2	10.3
15-24	15.6	6.0	10.5	7.3	6.9	7.1	11.8	6.4	8.9
25-34	23.1	9.8	16.3	16.2	8.5	11.3	20.3	9.1	13.9
35-54	19.5	7.4	13.7	14.0	4.9	9.1	16.9	6.0	11.3
55-64	17.2	7.9	13.0	11.1	2.8	7.2	13.8	5.0	9.7
Total	19.0	7.4	13.1	11.3	6.4	8.6	15.4	6.9	10.9

Source: Labour Force Survey, GBOS, 2012

Note: Vocational training can be formal training, informal training or work experience in an occupation requiring vocational training.

The challenges faced in education quality delivery are twofold, short term (immediate) and long term:

- ✓ The short term pertains to the current stock of uneducated workers in the labour force. The Gambia cannot progress in the medium term without significant structural change. This requires the labour force changes to match the needs of the economy.
- ✓ In the long term a TVET policy that emphasizes the training of skills needed by the economy shifting from retail trade to industry sectors such as tailoring, carpentry and construction is vital if structural transformation is to occur.
- ✓ On increasing retention at all levels of the education continuum and improving quality MoBSE looks to be on the right track by offering in-service training to teachers during the summer vacation in mathematics and English and encouraging teachers to enroll at the University of The Gambia. Both of these steps are geared towards addressing the issue of quality. When education quality is assessed using the results of the GABECE results for 2012, 2013 and 2014, there has been general improvements in the pass rate across the regions and gender. A review of the results further showed that most of the gains have been made in English language and science, but a drop in the pass rate was observed for mathematics.
- ✓ All of the above gains were made possible by sustained increased budgetary allocation to the education sector: overall average increase in recurrent and development budgetary allocation of up to

⁶Exchange rate at D40/\$1

71% and average cumulative total public budget allocation over the period of 13.08% to basic and secondary education and 7.46% to tertiary and higher education.

3. Population and Primary Health

The Gambia health system comprise of three levels: primary, secondary and tertiary. The primary level comprised of the village health posts and primary health care services. Basic primary health services are offered by village health workers, and a community health nurse. The most common illnesses and injuries for men, women and children can be treated at this level, thus reducing the need to visit the secondary level (major and minor health centres). Illnesses that cannot be treated at the primary level are referred to the secondary level. There is a total number of 634 primary health care villages in the country.

The final level is the tertiary level, which comprise of hospitals. There are currently 7 hospitals in the country, existing in all Health regions except LRR and URR. Tertiary level facilities have significantly more autonomy than lower level facilities given that they have a management board of their own and are not supervised by the Regional Health Team within the region. These facilities offer more specialized care, with larger number of beds and the ability to treat a wider range of health conditions than primary and secondary level facilities.

As in the education sector, the Health sector is divided into regions, with each region is overseen by a Regional Health Team (RHT). There are 7 health regions, roughly demarcated according to regions with the exception of NBR, which has been divided into NBR West and NBR East; and WCR, which is now WCR 1 and WCR 2. The RHTs are responsible for supervising the facilities within their health region. Supplies of drugs and equipment to facilities are coordinated by the RHT, and they inform the Ministry and Central Medical Stores of the needs of facilities in their health region. The RHTs also collect data prepared by each facility under their purview, compile and share with the Health Management Information System Directorate in Kotu.

Table 2.8: Number of Health facilities (Primary, Secondary and Tertiary) by Health region 2012

	HEALTH	WHR1	WHR2	NBWR	NBER	LRR	CRR	URR	Total
Tertiary	Hospitals	4	1	0	1	0	1	0	7
Secondary	Major Health Centre	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	6
	Minor Health Centre	5	4	4	6	5	7	10	41
	NGO Facilities and Clinics	5	4	2	1	2	0	4	18
	Private Health Facilities	6	9	0	0	1	2	5	23
	Community Managed Facilities	7	9	6	5	4	8	1	40
Primary	Specialized RCH Clinics	2	0	0	1	0	1	0	4
	RCH Outreach Clinics	13	24	32	31	34	62	61	257
	RCH base Clinics	18	6	6	7	5	9	7	58
	Total RCH Clinic sites	31	30	38	38	39	71	68	315
	Total PHC Villages	26	92	100	95	92	159	70	634
	Service Clinics	4	0	0	1	1	1	1	8

Source: Health Facility Database, HMIS Unit 2012

Table 2.8 gives a more complete picture of the total number of facilities in the country, including both facilities owned and operated by the private sector, communities and NGOs. As can be seen, the health sector is dominated by the public sector with 94% of facilities in the country owned by government. Private health facilities (23) largely concentrate in the urban areas, with a few operating in rural areas. There are 18

NGO clinics, spread evenly across the health regions. As can be seen, the bulk of the facilities in the country are the PHC (634) followed by the Reproductive and Child Health (RCH) clinics (315).

Between 2010 and 2013 the share of the budget allocated to health as a percent of GDP by the government of The Gambia ranged from 7.56% (2011) to 12.18 (2012). The government of The Gambia is not the only provider of health services, as it provides only 28% of the total amount of money spent on health services in the country. The major source of funds for health service provision comes from donors (38%). Out of Pocket (OOP) expenditures are especially high at 21%, meaning that households are responsible for one fifth of the purchases of health services. This has the consequence of adversely affecting households that find themselves in a position where they have to purchase health care. OOP can seriously dent the savings of households, and can push vulnerable households into poverty or wipe out household savings.

Between 2004 and 2013, the share of money spent on health services by households (OOP) has increased from 9% to 21%. This is a significant rise and one that puts households under more pressure as they have to reallocate spending from other needs (such as education, utilities and food) to pay for health services .

Year	2010	2011	2012	2013
Health Budget, as percent of GDP	7.58	7.56	12.18	8.66

Source: Gambia National Health Accounts 2013, WHO& MoHSW

The MDG Status Report 2014, show that The Gambia MDG goal 4A has been achieved ahead of time but the maternal health goal is yet to be achieved. The greatest improvements made are in the areas of prolonging life (increased life expectancy) and reducing preventable deaths (declining mortality rates). Studies have shown that malnutrition indicators (stunting, wasting and underweight) have been on the rise in the past 8 years. This has been mainly due to successive years of erratic rains and a drought in 2011, which adversely affected farming communities in the rural areas.

Another area where significant improvements are seen is in the reduction in the prevalence of Malaria and tuberculosis. Preliminary results of the Malaria Indicator Survey (MIS), 2014 show that there has been a 90% reduction in malaria cases over a 4-year period across all the health regions. Similar results have been observed for TB, whilst the HIV/AIDs has stagnated recently. The virtual elimination of Mother to Child Transmission (eMTCT) of HIV/AIDs by 2015, though not achieved, is not far from becoming a reality.

The challenges of healthcare provision are numerous:

- I. The challenges faced at the Primary Health Care level have exacerbated the problems of health service delivery, leading to pressures on the secondary and tertiary levels of the health care system, given that these two levels were not built to handle such high demand. The PHC system is plagued with lack of equipment and supplies for both the Village Health System and the Health Posts, which make up the primary level of the PHC.
- II. Similar challenges can also be seen at the secondary level, with Health centres not equipped with the necessary equipment to provide basic health services.
- III. Numerous studies have shown that Human resource capacity is a major challenge at all levels. It has been found that only 30% of villages have a Village Health Worker, a necessary cadre of the PHC and the first points of contact with the health system for most people in rural areas. In relation to

human resource constraints, the Health Strategic Plan (2014-2020) lists 3 issues that need to be addressed:

- High attrition of skilled health and social workers,
- Inadequate skilled and competent health workers, and
- Low staff production from health training institutions.

IV. **In relation to Maternal and Child Health and Nutrition**, coverage of the antenatal care services is high in The Gambia. The proportion of pregnant women who received antenatal care is about 99% according to the 2013 DHS. Notwithstanding the high antenatal care coverage, a major challenge is access to comprehensive emergency obstetric care, a major determinant of maternal survival. The distribution of facilities providing emergency obstetric care services is inadequate.

V. Government's spending on social protection services have had a positive effect in health, where it was observed that an improvement is in the maternal, infant and child mortality rates over the past 15 years. From Table 2.10, between 2005 and 2010, there was a general trend of improving health indicators related women and children followed by a deterioration of some of these indicators between 2010 and 2013. Although the rates for immunization (all basic vaccinations) (87%), contraceptive prevalence (13%) and vitamin A supplementation (80%) improved in 2005, they subsequently fell in 2013 to 76%, 9% and 69% respectively. ANC 4+ visits and skilled delivery are two indicators that have continually improved over the past 15 years.

Table 2.10: Indicators for ANC, FP, Child health and Under 5 Anthropometry

All figures in Percent			
	2005	2010	2013
ANC 1st trimester	N/A	N/A	37.7
ANC 1 visit	99.0	98.1	99.0
ANC 4+ visits	N/A	72.0	77.6
Skilled delivery	56.8	55.6	57.2
Contraceptive prevalence rate	N/A	13.3	9.0
Vitamin A supplementation	80.1	72.8	68.7
Immunization (all basic)	74.5	87.4	76.0
Low Birth Weight	19.9	10.2	11.7
Wasting (Moderate to Severe)	6.4	9.5	11.5
Wasting (Severe)	1.0	2.1	4.2
Stunting (Moderate to Severe)	22.4	23.4	24.5
Stunting (Severe)	8.3	6.8	8.3
Underweight (Severe)	3.9	4.2	3.9

Source: Data collected from multiple sources, 2005 from MICS 3, 2010 from MICS 4 and 2013 from DHS 2013

VI. Results of the child anthropometry measures show a different statistic from the other indicators with a growing increase in the incidences of wasting, stunting and underweight children over the past 8 years. It can be observed that wasting and stunting have increased to 2.1% and 6.8% in 2010, from 1% and 8.3% in 2005 respectively. This was the case for underweight (severe) for children under 5 (from 3.9% in 2005 to 4.2% in 2010). Where the fall in underweight children has decreased in 2013, wasting and stunting have continued to regress a bit, increasing to 4.2% and 8.3% respectively in

2013. The National Survey of School Children (2013), focusing on North Bank Region and Central River Region, found that school children between the ages of 3 and 5 had wasting, stunting and underweight prevalence rates of 10.7%, 13.3% and 11.7% respectively, falling under the “*serious category*” of the WHO classification of malnutrition in populations⁷. The report recommended a continuation of the school feeding programme at the ECD and Lower Basic cycle levels.

- VII. The country continues to experience the highest maternal mortality rates in the sub-region although some progress has been registered in the reduction of maternal mortality. Over the period 1999-2003 the MMR was estimated at 730 dropping to 556 (2004-2008) and then further dropping to 433 over the period 2009-2013. These improvements can largely be attributed to improvements in maternal health services. These relative high maternal mortality rates calls for concerted efforts to further improve maternal survival.

	Maternal mortality	Infant mortality	Child mortality	Under 5
2009-2013	433	34	20	54
2004-2008	556	46	27	72
1999-2003	730	50	41	89

Source: The Gambia Demography and Health Survey, 2013 estimates

- VIII. **In relation to Non-communicable and Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTD)**, Non-communicable diseases (NCDs) – mainly cardiovascular diseases, cancers, chronic respiratory diseases and diabetes – are now a major public health challenge undermining socio-economic development globally. The major NCDs share four common modifiable risk factors, which are tobacco use, unhealthy diet, harmful use of alcohol and physical inactivity. Although morbidity and mortality from non-communicable diseases mainly occur in adulthood, exposure to risk factors begins in early life⁸. A population based situation analysis⁹ conducted in 2001 revealed that 8.6% of the adult urban population and 1.4% of the rural adult population had diabetes mellitus. The same study revealed that between 10 to 20% of the population was chronically infected with hepatitis B. Anecdotal evidence also suggests that Gambians are not spared from the changing global lifestyle phenomenon. With the proliferation of modern supermarkets, fast food outlets, increases in motor vehicle ownership, there is an increasing trend for people to abandon their traditional diets and lifestyles and engage in risky lifestyles¹⁰.
- IX. **In relation to HIV and AIDS Response in the Gambi**, The Gambia championed a politically led and nationally driven, multi-sectoral response to the HIV epidemic in Sub-Saharan Africa since 1986. Initially it was health focused, with the setting up of a National AIDS Control Programme in 1987 under the Ministry of Health. The first national policy and guidelines on HIV and AIDS was developed in 1995. In July 2001, the Gambian government signed a credit agreement for over US\$15 million with the World Bank to implement an HIV and AIDS Rapid Response Project (HARRP). The HARRP triggered the establishment of a National AIDS Council under the Office of The President and chaired by The President and a secretariat responsible for co-coordinating the national

⁷ Assessment of the Nutritional Status of School children in the North Bank and Central River Regions of The Gambia, NaNA, 2013

⁸ WHO Briefing on key and critical areas of public health importance, July 2014

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ A recent survey (Cowan 2011) records that in the Gambia, being overweight or obese is seen as a sign of wealth and there is a belief amongst people that if one is not overweight or obese, one is not in happy matrimony.

response, the National AIDS Secretariat. The HARRP witnessed the decentralization of HIV and AIDS programmes and activities to regional, district and community levels, with funds being provided to community based organizations (CBOs) and non-governmental organizations. The Gambia has made tremendous progress in reducing morbidity and mortality related to HIV and AIDS¹¹. The UNAIDS estimates¹² that the Joint Programme has established that the AIDS epidemic can be ended as a public health threat by 2030. However, for the Gambia, additional efforts are required for the country to achieve universal access to a comprehensive prevention, treatment and care package. To that effect, the Gambia has developed a comprehensive HIV and AIDS Policy (2014) that provides the framework for the delivery of a nationwide response to the reduction of HIV and AIDS. HIV and AIDS is still one of the major public health and development challenges of The Gambia. The estimated number of people living with HIV (PLHIV) in the country according to the 2012 sentinel surveillance is projected at 32,380; the age groups 15-49 accounting for 11,030 People Living with HIV (PLHIV)¹³. The socio-economic burden of HIV/AIDS on individuals, families and the state is not sustainable because funding in this area is all covered by donor support.

- X. Overall mortality due to AIDS is projected to decrease by almost 70% from 688 in 2014 to 208 by end of 2019¹⁴. The recent TB prevalence study conducted in 2012 in The Gambia showed a prevalence of rate of 128 per 100 000 population which is 3.8 times less than the WHO estimate of 490 per 100 000 population for The Gambia. The incidence of TB in the same study is 130 per 100 000 and the prevalence of smear positive. The national HIV prevalence in The Gambia is estimated at 1.9% among 15-49 of the general population. The country has a generalized low HIV epidemic characterized by disparities in prevalence levels among the regions and pockets of high HIV prevalence concentrated among key populations¹⁵. The government has determined that although the HIV epidemic is low, the national response needs to be scaled up and sustained to ensure that gains made are not reversed and the impact of the epidemic is reduced to the minimum¹⁶. HIV remains as a public health problem and remains high among our national development agenda priorities through a multi-sectoral approach, all government sectors should continue to mainstream and scale-up HIV and AIDS programmes in their respective constituencies.

4. Youth development

In the strategic plan of the Ministry of Youths and Sports 2015 – 2019, it is stated that “*The youths are the main clients of this strategic plan since it was for their overall development, including in sports that the MOYS was established and has since been funded by Government*”. In the same strategic plan it was further stated that “*The National Youth Profile Report of the Gambia 2010*” ...it was discovered that “*according to the 2003¹⁷ Population Census the total*

¹¹ Recent DHS data shows that 1.9 percent of adults age 15-49 were infected. Prevalence rate is 2.1 percent among women and 1.7 percent among men. HIV prevalence peaked at 5.9 percent in the 35-39 age groups for both sexes. Banjul is lowest (1.1 percent) and highest is Mansakonko (2.9 percent).

¹² Piot P, Abdool Karim SS, Hecht R, Legido-Quigley H, Buse K, Stover J, Resch S et al. Defeating AIDS – advancing global health. *The Lancet*. 2015; 386(9989):171-218.

¹³ 2012 National Sentinel Surveillance Report

¹³ Country Classification July 2012 World Bank

¹³ Programme for Accelerated Growth and Employment

¹³ The Gambia GARP Report 2012

¹³ The Gambia 2010 Behavioural Surveillance Survey on HIV and AIDS Report

¹³ Treatment Care and Support Situation Report (Ousman Nyan), October 2013

¹⁴ The Global Fund Standard Concept Note, p6.

¹⁵ IBBS 2011

¹⁶ The National Strategic Plan for HIV and AIDS 2015-2019.

¹⁷ 64% as per the 2013 national population census

population of the youths (segment 13-30 years) is 47% of the country's population and more than half of the workforce. As a result it argues that the key to a more prosperous Gambia is in the hands of the younger generation since youths constitute a major component of the country's human capital and if they are empowered and effectively utilised through gainful employment, they will be the dynamic drivers of poverty reduction through long term economic growth that create more employment. It is estimated that halving the rate of youth unemployment in The Gambia could add up to 20% of GDP".

The national youth population is made up of 38.4% youth of which 43.2% are between 15-35 years. The literacy levels among these age groups is low and they have one type of skill or another, with the majority having skills in agriculture, fishing, and livestock rearing 4.3%, repair and maintenance 3.3%, sewing and tailoring 3.1%, construction 2.5% and business skills 2.4%. Unemployment rate for this age group is high with the majority of the unemployed in the urban area, and 91.5% are employed mainly in subsistence agriculture.

This size of a youth population presents significant opportunity into the future of this country and also an obligation in the interest of future peace and stability to ensure investment in them that will make them optimal contributors to the economy. Most of these youths are poorly educated and have very rudimentary skills in such as fishing, mechanical, farming and/or retail at levels that are such that add very little value. As a result these youth cannot enjoy high incomes and are retained in poverty. Their skill levels do not have what it takes to effectively support a growth economy.

Augmenting the skills problem, the transition from school to work is particularly difficult for the youth in The Gambia as they seek to enter the labour market facing two critical challenges. The Government has long recognized these challenges and taken steps to address the shortage of jobs and the skills deficit among the youth. However, these efforts, particularly at creating jobs, have not been as effective as hoped. An investment incentive programme set up to attract investments in the private sector and create jobs for the working age population did not yield the desired results as some constraints still affect the development and growth of the private sector.

Furthermore, enduring challenges in the productivity of the priority sectors identified in Vision 2020 have constrained what can be invested in education and job creation. Furthermore, lack of backward and forward linkages between agriculture and other productive sectors restricts youth opportunity to engage in high productivity non-agricultural activities. Tourism, the third sector expected to drive growth in employment, has only just recovered from a large drop in performance from 2007 to 2010; and in 2014 it has faced an expected challenge from the Ebola outbreak in the West Africa region. As a result of high unemployment levels, The Gambia is losing the most productive segment of the population to illegal migration. According to the EUROSTAT data, close to 12,000 Gambian youth have requested asylum in 2014 alone. If this illegal migration continues in the same pace, it will break the social fabric of the rural Gambia.

The government of the Gambia has undertaken several steps to harness this youth energy amidst a host of challenges such as through:

- b. A national youth council has been established within the Ministry of Youth and Sports (MOYS) with responsibility for advocating for youth investment and empowerment and coordinating actions to achieve the same. What needs to be done now is for policies of youth development and empowerment to be properly aligned with overall human capacity building through such as education

and literacy in conjunction with investment and growth in the sectors that the Gambia identify as its growth drivers, such as the in the being reviewed youth policy.

- c. Programmes such as GAMJOBS and EMPRETEC, which sought to address job creation through training and support in enterprise, have made significant attempts to utilize youth energy to create employment and hopefully decent incomes.
- d. There has need to mainstream youth development in the PAGE and hopefully in the follow-up national plan. However, the education and skills development system must be revised in line with development activities relevance and quality considerations to make it possible for youths to effectively support a robust economy and in the productive sector.
- e. The MOYS need to resolve its lack of institutional capacity to manage youth development.

5. Water and Sanitation

According to The Gambia Common Assessment Report, 2015 significant achievements in access to clean drinking water have been made. As one of the MDG indicators that the country has achieved, the proportion of the population with access to safe drinking water reached 91% in 2013 (DHS, 2013). This has occurred despite relatively limited spending by government in the area of water supply, as spending on the water subsector was equivalent to 2.6% of social spending (0.01% of GDP). The achievement of this MDG indicator is due mainly to donor funding in projects such as the Gunjur Water Scheme, Rural Water Supply Project, the Kotu Ring and the 100 Water Points.

Indicators for Water and Sanitation	2010	2013
Access to improved water source	85.8	91.0
Proportion living with water on premises	32.0	46.1
Proportion living within 30 minutes (round trip)	35.8	42.3
Proportion living more than 30 minutes (round trip)	17.0	10.9
Living with improved sanitation	N/A*	39.8

* Figures from the MICS 4 do not distinguish between shared and not shared improved facilities. As a result, could not be compared with the DHS figures of 2013.

Table 2.13: Target 7D: By2020, to have achieved a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers

	1990	2000	2005	2010	2013	2015
Percentage of people having access to improved sanitation (%)	84%	87.9%	84.2%	76.3%	37%	92%
Percentage of people with access to secure tenure of accommodation	NA	NA	65%	NA	NA	

Source: MICS 2000, 20005/6, 2010, DHS 2013

Despite achieving the MDG target of 86% of the population with access to safe drinking water, work still needs to be done in the area of sanitation. Results of the 2013 DHS show that less than 40% of the population has access to improved sanitation, although there is a caveat. The definition for improved sanitation requires a household to have met the requirements of an improved sanitary facility whilst not sharing with other households. The preponderance of sharing is a major contributor to low improved sanitation figures. Although progress has been made since 1990, the “...*fragmentation of the sanitation sector, giving rise to a weak and confusing institutional framework for sanitation and hygiene coordination*”¹⁸ has slowed progress

¹⁸ The Gambia National Policy for Sanitation and Hygiene, 2011

towards achieving the MDGs related to sanitation. Significant human capacity constraints also exist, leading to a need for training (short and long term) at the senior & middle management levels in government and civil society. Vocational training for artisans and technicians of sanitary facilities should also be considered.

Noting the progress achieved in improving access to safe drinking water and sanitation, concerns remain that access by the population in rural areas to safe drinking water and sanitation remains inadequate. The National Policy for Hygiene and Sanitation (2011) laments the lack of coordination between the different stakeholders in the area and recommends “*improving inter-sectoral and inter-agency coordination and management of sanitation and hygiene issues in the country*”¹⁹. An area where coordination can have a lasting effect is in the area of nutrition, health and sanitation at the school level. Statistics from MoBSE show that in 2015, 13% of schools in the country lack access to safe drinking water. Although the majority of schools have access to safe drinking water lack of adequate sanitation more still needs to be done in order to achieve universal coverage for schools. An area where progress is being made is in sanitation, with 82% of schools having separate toilets for boys and girls. Increasing efforts to achieve 100% for school is crucial that a lack of sanitation and hygiene facilities that cater to the gender needs of adolescents can contribute to a reduced willingness for girls to attend school (at the upper basic and secondary levels). The implementation of programmes such as the school feeding programme can be integrated with issues of hygiene and sanitation, allowing UN agencies to tackle multiple child related issues within the same setting.

6. Gender and Empowerment of Women

Empowerment is a cross cutting issue and for The Gambia where women constitute more than half the population, underutilizing the socioeconomic potency of women is tantamount to setting aside or ignoring an important accelerator of economic development. For this and other reasons, women’s rights and gender equity are given prominent positions in the national development agenda of The Gambia. As such, both Vision 2020 and the PAGE explicitly state the resolve of the GoTG to ensure that women and girls play a central role in national development efforts. Vision 2020, for example, states that government shall focus on eradicating all forms of discrimination against women and children, especially the girl child.

The Gambia is signatory to many international conventions, agreements and declarations that directly affect women’s rights. Among these are the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, The AU Solemn Declaration On Gender Equity in Africa, and other human rights instruments.

In recognition of the important role of women in national development and the sheer population proportion of women 50.5% (2013 National Provisional census Report of The Gambia) in The Gambia, government has over the past 30 years established institutions, passed various laws, and prepared various policies to harness this potency in this section of the population. In 1980, government established the National Women’s Council and Bureau by an Act of Parliament. This was followed by the establishment of the Ministry of Women’s Affairs in 1996, and the creation of the Federation of Gambian Women in 2010. In the same vein, government developed and implemented the first National Policy for the Advancement of Gambian Women

¹⁹ *ibid.*

(NPAGW 1999-2009), and updated it to the National Gender and Women Empowerment Policy (2010-2020) in 2010.²⁰

Government also developed and implemented the gender empowerment plan from 2007 to 2011, and prepared a Gender Mainstreaming and Women Empowerment Strategic Plan (2010-2015) in 2010. A Trafficking in Children's and Persons Bill was enacted in 2005 (amended in 2007), followed by the enactment of the Women's Act in 2010. Recently, government enacted the Domestic Violence Act 2013, and the Sexual Violence Act 2013 to further strengthen the protection of women's rights, and protect women from sexual and gender-based violence.

Under the coordination of the Women's Bureau, Government Ministries and other stakeholders through their Gender Focal Points are responsible for operationalizing and implementing specific areas of the National Gender and Women Empowerment Policy as it pertains to them. In addition, CSOs, development partners, The Gambia Women's Federation, and the Gender Policy Implementation Committee all play vital roles in the development and empowerment of women, and the implementation of women and gender policies and programmes. Furthermore, women and gender issues are addressed in many if not all sectoral policies, plans and development strategies prepared by the GoTG in collaboration with CSOs and development partners.

The Gambia has made considerable progress in empowering women, and mainstreaming gender issues in development. For example, at the Early Childhood Development (ECD) level, the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) for girls was 42.1 percent in 2014; 2 percent more than the GER for boys. The Gross Enrolment Rate (GER) for girls at the lower basic cycle increased from 80 percent in 2001/2002 to 92 percent in 2007/2008²¹, and 98.7 percent in 2014, taking into account the Madrassa enrolment. In contrast GER for boys increased from 85 percent to 87 percent between 2001/2002 and 2007/2008, and reached 95.4 percent in 2014. Similar efforts have been made at the secondary and tertiary levels. At the secondary the girls scholarship fund, which enables girls to remain in school as soon as they enter up to Grade 12 has led to significant improvements in transition rates of girls from primary to the secondary. However, studies show that in spite of the retention gains of girls, quality education attainment of girls continue to be a challenge. Similarly, the Net Enrolment Ratio (NER) for girls increased from 56 percent in 2005/2006 to 60 percent in 2007/2008, and reached 68 percent in 2014. In contrast, the NER for boys increased from 62 percent in 2001/2002 to 68.2 percent in 2014. The reasons for the increase in the enrolment of girls are varied and include reducing the cost of schooling through scholarships, the UNICEF-support Child Friendly School Initiative, CSO involvement in education, and the partnership between MOBSE and Madrassa proprietors.²¹

Significant gains have also been made with regards to the protection of women against violence. Thus, two innovative legislations, the Sexual Offences Act 2013 and the Domestic Violence Act 2013 have been enacted to combat domestic and sexual violence against women and children. In addition, the Gambia National Plan of Action (NPOA) on gender-based violence (GBV) (2013-2017), which was supported and adopted under the Joint UNFPA/UNICEF Program for the accelerated abandonment of FGM/C.² The women's act 2010 has been amended in 2015 to include the abolition of FGM and a detailed regulation is being formulated to support the implementation of the ACT.

²⁰GoTG. Gender and Women Empowerment Policy

²¹GoTG. 2011. Country Report on The Gambia: African Gender and Development Index Survey 2000-2011

Women have also made significant strides in the economic and political sphere. For example, female representation at the National Assembly increased slightly from 6.5 percent in 2006 to 7.5% in 2012 and 9.4 in 2014. Similarly, in regional and local administration women are making inroads with a regional governor, deputy regional governor and a deputy mayor in place. Female labour force participation rate ranged from is much higher at ages 15 to 34 years (Gambia LFS 2012, p59).

UNFPA, UNDP, UNICEF and UNAIDS provided technical support in the establishment of the One Stop Centre on GBV. In addition UNFPA also provided financial support for the operations of the centre as well as in the implementation of the sensitization activities of the National Steering Committee on GBV which is responsible for the One Stop Centre.

The social mobilisation and training programmes supported under the Joint UNFPA/UNICEF Programme for the accelerated abandonment of FGM/C resulted in 481 communities in URR and CRR north making public declarations to abandon FGM/C and 109 more in CRR south were ready for such declaration in 2015. FGM/C has been successfully integrated into the curricular of all the health professional schools and about 600 nurses and midwives trained on FGM/C and the management of FGM/C complications.

The implementation of various policies and programs for women’s development and gender equity has not been without challenges. Among the many challenges are:

1. Limited awareness of gender issues.
2. Weak support, advocacy, awareness raising, coordination and monitoring by other stakeholders.
3. Cultural patterns, traditional roles, and stereotypes which continue to prevent women from exercising their rights.
4. Inadequate resources and lack of ownership of the GWEP which hampers its implementation.
5. Low representation of females in decision-making positions.
6. The highly patriarchal nature of Gambian society characterized by male hegemony
7. Inadequate capacity at all levels to mainstream gender and apply gender analysis skills.

7. Social Protection

The Ministry of Health and Social Welfare (MOHSW) is responsible for coordinating the protection and improvement of the health of the population. A social protection system is “the key structures and mechanisms facilitating the addressing of multiple vulnerabilities and poverty in a holistic and integrated manner” (UNICEF, 2011). The Gambia conducted the first diagnostic analysis of the country’s social protection system in 2012/13, as well as a comprehensive mapping of various social protection programmes. These studies provided important insight into existing social protection policy and programming initiatives and were precursors to the development of the country’s first Social Protection Policy. The Gambia’s first National Social Protection Policy 2015-2025 (NSPP)²² based on the country’s national development and poverty reduction frameworks was designed to contribute towards the alleviation of poverty and vulnerability in the country, in line with the GoTG’s Vision 2020 and the PAGE (2012-2015).

²² The NSPP defines social protection as: transformative policies and programmes designed to reduce poverty and population vulnerability by promoting efficient labour markets, diminishing individuals’ exposure to risk, and equipping people with the means to protect themselves from hazards and the interruption or loss of income.

The Government recognises²³ that its social protection system requires modernisation and expansion in order to provide more reliable and effective protection from multifaceted shocks and stresses and to build people’s resilience to adversity and hardship. The National Social Protection Policy comprises five priority policy areas that seek to: (1) safeguard the welfare of the poorest and most vulnerable populations; (2) protect vulnerable populations from transitory shocks; (3) promote the livelihoods and incomes of the poorest and most vulnerable economically active populations; (4) reduce people’s exposure to social risks and vulnerabilities, including discrimination and exclusion; and (5) strengthen leadership, governance and social protection systems in order to design and deliver effective and efficient programmes. Included in the Gambia Social Protection Policy is the Social Protection Floor (SPF), which is a basic guarantee of social protection for the entire population, addressing key vulnerabilities that occur throughout the life-cycle for children, pregnant women and mothers, youth, the working-age population and the elderly. The SPF is comprised of universal access to essential services (such as health; education; housing; and water and sanitation, as nationally defined); and cash or in-kind social transfers (meant to ensure income security, food security, adequate nutrition and access to essential services). The Gambia Social Protection interventions include social assistance, social insurance, labour market policies, productive safety nets, social welfare services and legal and social equity measures – all of which aim to protect people from exploitation and discrimination.

The Gambia perceives poverty and vulnerability²⁴ and risk²⁵ as multidimensional and dynamic, based on the recognition that each of these concepts has both economic and social dimensions. Therefore poverty is not only a material (income-related) aspect of wellbeing; it is also experienced through a range of non-income dimensions such as food and nutrition security, education, psycho-social welfare, social equality, and physical security and protection. While people living under or near the poverty line tend to be more vulnerable to the negative outcomes of shocks by some social groups – irrespective of their income status – are particularly vulnerable to certain risks due to social exclusionary drivers such as social identity and power structures (e.g. gender, ethnicity, HIV status, poverty status, dependency status, disability) and spatial exclusion (e.g. variations between and within urban/rural areas and disparate regions), among other structural factors. The Gambian population is impacted by various and mutually reinforcing risks. Environmental shocks and stresses (such as droughts, floods, and over-exploitation of natural resources, particularly in the form of deforestation) have been increasing in frequency, with important consequences for people’s incomes, food and nutritional security, health status, and general wellbeing (Jaffa, 2011; WFP, 2012). These natural hazards are likely to become even more commonplace in the future, as expected effects of climate change.

The Gambia has made some progress towards reducing poverty since 2010 even though in an extremely constraining environment. GDP averaging 2.85% from 2010-2015(IMF Country Report, No. 15/272, p28) and a decade-long commitment to its comprehensive poverty reduction strategy, poverty rates in The Gambia continue to be high. Poverty continues to be widespread in all its dimensions.

The majority of interventions in poverty alleviation is short-term, emergency-oriented, and has limited reach and challenges exist in three main dimensions – coverage, delivery, and capacity:

²³Consultations with Ministry of Health and Social Welfare.

²⁴ The Gambia adopted the World Bank’s definition of risk as “a potentially dangerous event (or set of circumstances), which if, and when, they occur negatively impact people who are vulnerable to that risk” (World Bank, 2012). When a risk event occurs, it becomes a shock. Risks can be natural and environmental (e.g. droughts, floods, failed harvests), economic (e.g. cessation of employment, the global food price crisis), health (e.g. HIV, malnutrition) and social (e.g. violence, discrimination). Shocks can be individual (e.g. loss of employment, health shock) or economy/community-wide (e.g. macroeconomic shock, natural disasters).

²⁵ The Gambia Social Protection Policy (2015-2025), p10

- I. In terms of coverage major gaps and challenges persist include social security being only accessible to a tiny minority of formal sector employees; exclusion of unemployment insurance and paid maternity benefits; no national health insurance programme; no state-led crop insurance programme for farmers, despite the prevalence of weather-related risks; social services remain weak and under-resourced; the legislative framework has notable gaps, including the absence of a national minimum wage or disability bill; support is inadequate in peri-urban locations where the extreme poor and migrant families reside; the coverage and level of support to particularly vulnerable groups (the elderly, People Living with Disability (PWD)²⁶, PLHIV) is inadequate and sporadic; and migrants, refugee families, single parents, widows, and child-headed households rarely feature in social protection programming.
- In terms of delivery, coordination and knowledge systems the Gambia Social Protection system is characterized by the lack of coordination among implementing agencies and untimely funding and delivery of benefits; social welfare programme delivery, case management and referral processes remain weak; adequate budgets and human resources leading to less-than-optimal enforcement of the laws; high degree of fragmentation between various programmes and an absence of effective mechanisms to coordinate different types of initiatives and streamline the activities of various actors working in the field; projects and services often run in isolation, causing considerable overlaps in targeting; and existence of a weak horizontal coordination among multiple actors involved in managing (and financing) programmes.
 - In the areas of Capacity Development and Financing, the Social Protection system is characterized by weak technical and administrative capacity with regard to policy formulation, design of integrated social protection projects and programme delivery; key actors face basic problems with regard to staffing and resources (e.g. transportation, work space, equipment, IT facilities); social welfare agencies suffer severe capacity deficits in staff, planning and budgeting, inter-agency coordination and supply of social workers; beneficiary knowledge of rights and social protection entitlements is weak; programmes suffer from resource shortfalls, resulting in inadequate coverage and provision of benefits; and limited fiscal space to expand schemes and services.

M. Multiple Crises and Other Emerging Challenges

In delivering his budget speech to the National Assembly of the Republic of The Gambia, the Minister of Finance hallowed the stress to which the economy of The Gambia has been put as a result of two main external shocks and for which reasons the economy contracted to such slow pace of growth of 0.9% from an estimated 5.0% in 2014. This was reinforced by the Governor of the Central Bank of The Gambia in a Monetary Policy Committee meeting two months later. In his take the Governor of the Central Bank ascribed difficult economic times to two main shocks, namely the effect of the Ebola in the neighborhood on tourism (which is a major contributor to foreign exchange, employment and GDP) and the erratic rains of 2014. However, prior to the erratic rains of 2014, the drought of 2011 was also another major shock for which reason the GDP growth of The Gambia slumped and rendered food security questionable. According to the Governor, the decline in agricultural production due to erratic weather did not only slow down growth, but also threatened food security.

He further explained that the external shock of the Ebola epidemic from some sub-regional countries hit hard on The Gambia's tourism sector because it led to the decline in tourism and related activities, as well as in cross-border trade and that economic growth slowed to 0.9 per cent from 4.8 per cent and 5.6 per cent in 2013 and 2012 respectively.

²⁶ In the 2003 census it was reported that 2.4% of the population was disabled.

I. Economic shocks

There is really no specified national risk mitigation strategies aimed at vulnerabilities to economic shocks. There are mitigation strategies for all other shocks that may have economic ramifications and these include such as Ebola or health, natural disasters and climatic shocks. The Gambia with the cooperation of donors took very good practical measures to ensure that the Ebola was contained and kept away from the Gambia and intensified a media campaign to explain to tourists that The Gambia was safe as a destination to ease its negative economic consequences. In spite of these laudable efforts, most tourists remained cautious and the hotel industry was seriously affected and thus the economy. A forecast by the IMF for the industry expects a rebound in 2016, assuming the epidemic is under control by late 2015.

One major challenge of the Gambia in this direction is the lack or absence of economic shocks risk mitigation measures, which the new national medium term planning framework being reviewed should address.

II. Climate change and environmental Sustainability

The Gambia remains committed to sound environmental and natural resources management in keeping with the Vision 2020. Although a lot of measures have been taken in the past, major environmental challenges still remain, which include land degradation, loss of forest cover, coastal degradation, loss of biodiversity and habitat loss, improper disposal of solid wastes and increasing effects of climate variability and change. Environmental vulnerabilities range from the fragility of the land, high population pressure coupled with adverse impacts of natural hazards such as flooding and extreme temperature. These national challenges are mirrored in the global development agenda, SDG 6 on sustainable management of water and sanitation for all; Goal 13 combatting climate change and its impacts and Goal 15 on the protection, restoration and promotion of sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests and combat desertification, halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss.

The Government developed a strategic plan (The Gambia Environmental Action Plan 2009 – 2018) to guide and develop the environment and the natural resources sector. The overall objective of the Plan is to ensure that the environment and natural resources (including water, forest and wildlife) are managed and utilized sustainably in partnership with all relevant stakeholders so as to contribute to the attainment of Vision 2020 and other national development blueprints while mitigating and adapting to the impacts of climate change. Disaster risk reduction policy and strategy as well as national climate change policy were formulated in 2013 and 2015. Within this broad strategic framework the various sectors have been allocated specific responsibilities in keeping with their mandates.

Overall environmental management is guided by several policy instruments such as Forestry Act 1968, Wildlife Act 2003, Fisheries Act, Water Resources Act and the National Environment Management Act (NEMA) (1994) and a draft national change policy. The NEMA enable the establishment of National Environment Agency (NEA), which mandate is to ensure an environmentally sustainable economic and social development in The Gambia through coordination, consultation advice and oversight. Under the NEMA, 1994, NEA is empowered to take direct implementation action in matters dealing with environmental impact assessment, establishing environmental quality and monitoring standards, and controlling the importation and use of pesticides and hazardous chemicals. In the area of environmental quality (mainly pollution control), the NEA has the mandate to enforce compliance with national standards and has the legal authority to seek redress whenever there is non-compliance under the guidance of the Polluter Pays Principle.

Environmental Management

The Government is currently implementing the Gambia Environment Action Plan (GEAP) Phase II which has the overall goal of ensuring sustainable development by developing a fully effective and financially self-sustaining environmental and natural resource management system for The Gambia. Areas of particular interest to the GEAP Phase II Programme include agriculture and livestock, natural resources, trade and industry, tourism and infrastructure; environmental quality monitoring and waste management; coastal zone management and environmental health.

The GEAP specifically promotes increased adoption of environmentally friendly practices in the economy as a viable long-term solution to the problem of achieving sustainable development in The Gambia. Accelerated incorporation of environmental considerations into economic decisions will constitute the ultimate measure of goal achievement under the proposed programme.

The major challenges of achieving the GEAP objectives include: (i) Improved and strengthened institutional framework for environmental management in place; (ii) Effectively mainstream environmental considerations into the policy and planning processes; (iii) Strengthened environmental regulatory framework and enforce the regulatory codes, and environmental regulations fully; (iv) Ensure functioning institutional and legal framework for sustainable management and protection of the coastal zone and its resource; (v) Strengthen advocacy and sensitization for sustainable development; (vi) Ensure the participation of the private sector, CSOs, parastatals, women's groups etc. in sustainable natural resource management and use; (vii) Support decentralization and Local Government Reform for community based natural resource management and sustainable development planning; (viii) Improve environmental quality monitoring and enforcement and solid waste management.

The most urgent environmental challenges for The Gambia at the moment include coastal zone erosion and disaster risk reduction when they do occur. The coastal region of The Gambia provides valuable natural resources and supports a rich variety of biological diversity as well as the tourism industry which is estimated to contribute about 12% to the GDP. The overall responsibility for the management of the coastal zone falls within the purview of the NEA which has set a multidisciplinary working group comprising the various stakeholders in the sector.

In response to the environmental challenges mentioned above, the Government has formulated and implemented several sectoral policies, developed action plans and ratified international conventions and treaties to support national efforts in environmental management. The Government is currently, implementing projects to address coastal zone management by developing a framework for an integrated coastal zone management.

The main challenges in the sector include:

- i. Understanding of climate change and its coastal impacts amongst decision-makers remains limited. Although there is general perception of the links between weather, climate, climate change and coastal erosion, this limited understanding is a barrier to identifying, to planning and to initiating measures.
- ii. There are presently numerous user conflicts between different stakeholders with respect to the management of coastal resources such as fisheries, mining of minerals (sand, ilmenite), agriculture and forestry;

- iii. High costs of coastal protection which the national budget is not large enough to cover entirely.

Climate change and variation place a major burden on national development because the productive base of the economy thrives on climate-sensitive activities such as crop production, livestock rearing, fisheries, energy, and water resources. These climate sensitive sectors have already started to experience some of the adverse effects of climate change and variability characterized by changing seasonal rainfall patterns, higher temperatures, increase frequency of droughts and flooding.

The challenges of climate change include:

- I. With regard to human settlements include the potential losses due to sea level rise. A 1-meter sea level rise (expected by ~2090, Brown et al 2011) is projected to drown over 8.7% of the total land area of the country including the port and capital city, many infrastructural facilities including buildings and a 26km of paved roadway linking Banjul and the Kombos, all the harbors and ferry landing sites along the Gambia River (Jaiteh and Sarr 2011).
- II. In the agricultural sector the decline in rainfall, shorter growing season and increased inter-annual variability are likely to be the most important climate risks to farmers. Changes in rainfall and temperature are expected to constrain productivity of some crops. It is estimated that there will be a 40 per cent drop in groundnut yields due to rising temperatures (Cole *et al.* (2005). The projected disappearance of freshwater swamps and soil salinization in lowland areas resulting from sea level rise are likely to reduce rice production which would adversely affect the lives of vulnerable groups including women farmers in these areas.
- III. Other climate sensitive sectors are also expected to suffer similar negative impacts from climate change. Forest regeneration rates are expected to suffer a decline under the combined effects of rising temperature and more erratic rainfall patterns. The degeneration in forest cover would also affect the wildlife habitat and biodiversity.
- IV. In the fisheries sector changes in seasonal rainfall patterns combined with sea level rise and global warming could also change the mangrove system significantly which are very important ecosystems for the artisanal coastal fisheries industry, serving as spawning grounds for juvenile fish species. It is estimated that 51% of the fish caught in the artisanal fisheries benefit from the food chain related to mangroves. A one meter sea level rise could inundate over 61% of the current mangrove area and over one-third of swampland (Jaiteh and Sarr 2011). Sea level rise would also have a serious effect on lowland agricultural production through the destruction of rice fields and vegetable gardens.
- V. Tourism, one of the driving forces of the country's economy, depends to a large extent on the coastal zone where many ecologically sensitive areas can be found and where most of the tourism development infrastructure such as hotels and resorts are located. Shoreline retreat due to inundation is projected to vary, depending on topography, between 6.8 m in cliff areas to about 880m in flatter and sandier areas (Jallow et al. 1996). This would have catastrophic impact on the hotels most of which are sited along the beach and it would also destroy the trade mark of Gambian tourism known for the sun and the beach.

III. Disaster Risk Reduction

By virtue of its geographical position, The Gambia is exposed to frequent occurrence of several hazards, particularly drought, flood, windstorms, domestic and forest fires, and locust invasion which have, in some cases, caused large-scale destruction. The causes are both anthropogenic and nature induced and they have significantly disrupted lives and livelihoods of the affected populations resulting in loss of lives and destruction of vital economic assets (infrastructure, housing etc.) thereby increasing the level of poverty and human suffering. Although drought is considered as coming **divine phenomenon**, the floods, especially in the urban areas, are considered to be the result of poor planning including poor drainage systems.

To address these challenges the Government has put in place an institutional framework with a legal, policy and programme to manage disaster. The new approach marked a shift of emphasis from response to reduction of natural hazard risks, in line with the Sendai Framework for Action SFA 2015 – 2035 and its successor, the Sendai Framework for Action 2015-2035; the African Union Programme of Action for the Implementation of The African Regional Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction (2006 – 2015); and the ECOWAS Policy for Disaster Risk Reduction and the Humanitarian Policy and Plan of Action. The measures instituted by the Government include the enactment of the National Disaster Management Act 2008, the establishment of a National Disaster Management Agency and Disaster Management Committees at regional and local levels and the development of a National Disaster Management Programme 2008-2011 which provided a strategic framework for national disaster management in the country. In addition, the Government also prepared the NAPA in response to the projected negative impacts of climate change which is in line with SDG 13 which requires that nations “Strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards and natural disasters in all countries.”

The existing National Disaster Risk Reduction & Management Policy and the Action Plan, “The Gambia Strategic National Action Plan (2014 – 2017)”, which await final approval seek to enhance the effectiveness of disaster preparedness and risk reduction, as well as humanitarian response to disasters identifies five contingencies for which preparedness /risk reduction activities were prepared and these include floods, forest fires, oil spill, disease outbreak, and population movement. Other proposed priority intervention areas include the promotion of risk conscious and resilience development; building capacities of communities and other actors; evidence based decision making through the conduct of risk assessment and mapping; adequate regulatory frameworks to promote and enforce DRR measures in land use planning and building regulations.

The revised national policy has brought out key overarching challenges relating to the effective implementation of risk reduction measures in the country. These include:

1. Low capacity levels to undertake Risk assessments to establish the probability and possible impact of hazard events on people, livelihoods and sectors. This is particularly acute in conducting multi-hazard risk or vulnerability analysis;
2. Inadequate integration of DRR into development planning and national policies;
3. Hazard-data is spread out over several institutions at national level. Similarly, data on disaster losses and damages are not yet systematically brought together and analyzed to monitor vulnerability and hazard trends. Accessing data from various sources relevant to predict and monitor vulnerability and hazard trends is currently a major challenge
4. Low levels of risk awareness especially among communities in disaster-prone areas but who have not been previously affected by disaster.
5. Inadequate capacity especially at the decentralized levels-district that are closest to high-risk area

6. In the face of these challenges the CSOs, have played an important role in promoting DRR at the community level but these efforts have largely depended upon external funding and are not adequate to address the critical national capacity gaps in DRR. The involvement of the private sector in this domain is also negligible.

The Gambia has policy, legal and institutional structures in disaster risk management. These have been mainstreamed and integrated through the PAGE into national development planning. For the first time, the new medium term national development plan has mentioned climate change and disaster risk reduction.

N. Mobilizing Financial Resources for Development and Capacity-Building

I. Domestic Resource Mobilisation

According to The Gambia CCM Report 2015, the increase in debt over the past 4 years has been due to fiscal spending outpacing domestic revenue collection. The GoTG, through its main revenue collecting agency, the Gambia Revenue Authority (GRA) has made great strides in increasing revenue collected through taxes and non-taxes. Domestic revenue collection has grown every year between 2011 and 2014 by a total of 37% and registered on average 17.02% of GDP over 2010 to 2015 (IMF Country Report No. 15/272). Although revenue has grown, it has not been able to keep pace with the expenditures (including budget support from donors) and as a result, the need to finance the gap with debt.

The GRA targeted a 20% annual growth in revenue over the period of the PAGE. This has been largely achieved through the implementation of the VAT (to replace the sales tax) in 2012, a broadening of the tax base and investment in information technology and systems for better tracking and monitoring of processes and revenue flows. The institution has increased compliance by increasing the number of audits and increased revenue collected from D5.1 billion in 2013 to D6.2 billion in 2014 with D4.6 billion collected in the first half of 2015²⁷. Though GRA has registered a number of successes, there are still challenges faced by the institution with regards increasing revenues for government.²⁸ However, if significant sustainable effect must be made in enhancing domestic tax contribution to revenue, there is need to streamline the high and uncontrollable local taxes with national taxes to lead to net overall reduction in tax payout and keep the Gambia competitive in this perspective.

The GoTG recognizes the importance of Official Development Assistance (ODA) in its bid to eradicate poverty, achieve inclusive growth and ultimately turn The Gambia into a middle income country as outlined in Vision 2020. The PRSP II (the national development plan prior to the PAGE) needed \$752 million with 13% from domestic resources mobilized whilst the remaining 87% from grants and loans. For the PAGE with budget of \$651 million, the expected government's contribution was higher at 35%, with development partners expected to contribute the remaining 65%.

Although ODA forms a major part of the government's total expenditure during the implementation of the PAGE, ODA flows have not been stable over the course of the PAGE (2012-2015). The volatility of flows, especially grant, has led to a dependence on loans from commercial banks and Treasury bills. ODA has been extremely volatile; with 2013 ODA receiving only 30% of 2012. ODA doubled from 2013 to 2014, but was less than the 2012 value by almost D3 billion (nearly 40% of government revenue in 2014).

²⁷ Data collected from GRA presentation of 2015-202 Strategic Plan to donors and partners.

²⁸ UNDP Policy Brief 2015, (pp. 5)

To avert the negative effects of corruption on the national ability to enhance domestic revenue off take, it is important that corruption is resolved and done so effectively. The Gambia has in 2013 been assessed perceived as publicly corrupt at a ranking of 127 out of 200 countries and territories and scored 28 and placed in the category of seriously corrupt countries. The institutional actions taken by The Gambia to avert corruption include increasing institutional effectiveness in all of the sectors such major improvements in public financial management and the rule of law.

II. Official Development Assistance

According to The Gambia (one of the least donor recipient countries), Common Assessment 2015, although ODA forms a major part of the government’s total expenditure during the implementation of the PAGE, ODA flows have not been stable over the course of the PAGE (2012-2015). The volatility of flows, especially grants has led to a dependence on loans from commercial banks and Treasury bills. Table 2.14 shows that ODA (including grants and loans from development partners) have been extremely volatile, with 2013 ODA received only 30% of 2012. Although assistance double from 2013 to 2014, it was still less than the 2012 value by almost D3 billion (nearly 40% of government revenue in 2014).

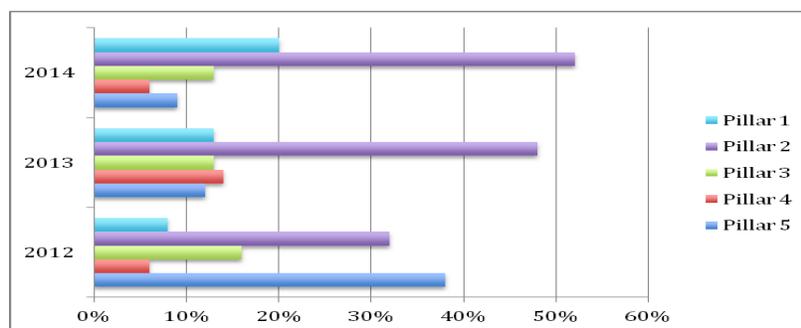
	2012	2013	2014
Loans	19%	63%	31%
Grants	81%	37%	69%
Total (D, millions)	7,804	2,366	5,047

Source: Aid Bulletin of The Gambia, MoFEA, July 2015

The amount of funds disbursed by donors among the pillars of PAGE, between 2012 and 2014, has been extremely volatile. The relative spending proportion on a pillar varies wildly from one year to the next. For example, Pillar 5 (*Re enforcing social cohesion and cross cutting interventions*) received the most funding of all 5 pillars in 2012 (38%) but had dropped to third and fourth (2013 and 2014 respectively) on terms of proportional allocation to the other 4 pillars²⁹. This can be seen with other pillars’ allocation varying wildly. This gives the impression that funding might not be dictated by the development goals but rather the preferences of the donors.

Figure 2.3: Allocation of ODA funds by Pillar of PAGE

²⁹ Pillar 1: Accelerating and sustaining economic growth.
Pillar 2: Improving and modernizing infrastructure.
Pillar 3: Strengthening human capital stock to enhance employment opportunities.
Pillar 4: Improve governance and fighting corruption.
Pillar 5: Reinforcing social cohesion and cross cutting interventions.



Source: Aid Bulletin of The Gambia, MoFEA, July 2015

If ODA is to be effectively used as a tool for achieving the Next Development Plans and Vision 2020, a number of issues will need to be addressed, which include addressing the human and resource capacity constraints faced by the Aid Coordination Department at MoFEA and other key stakeholders within and outside Government; unpredictability of Development Assistance; coordination of Programmes and Missions by development partners; and enticing the major development partners (WB, AfDB, ISDB and IFAD) to have permanent country offices that would help increased coordination of programmes and missions to the country. There is a country donor coordination meeting a mechanism that helps in redressing lack of donor coordination and already the European Union has elevated its presence to ambassadorial status.

III. External Debt

The level of public debt rose from 77% of GDP in 2012 to 101% in 2014. It is projected to increase to 108% in 2015. Domestic debt was estimated at 47% of GDP in 2014, up from 33.3% in 2012. Around 75% of the domestic debt is held in treasury bills with maturity periods of 3, 6 and 12 months.

The government has been relying heavily on a thin domestic debt market to finance deficits. Due to deterioration in market confidence, there has been an increase of more than 10 percentage points in the government borrowing interest rate since mid-2013. For example, the rate reached 21.9% in November 2015 for one-year treasuries (the longest dated maturity issued). Consequently, interest payments on public sector debt have risen to absorb 40% of revenues in 2015, up from 25% in 2013, and are projected to absorb close to 50% of revenues in 2016.

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Domestic debt	28.10	25.40	25.00	29.40	33.20	33.30	37.10	47.00	48.60	46.40
External Debt	46.00	40.00	45.00	40.20	44.10	43.70	46.20	54.20	59.00	56.00
Total Public debt (% of GDP)	74.10	65.40	70.00	69.60	77.30	77.00	83.30	101.20	107.60	102.40

Source: 2016 Budget Speech.

This heavy domestic debt burden negatively impacts the economy, particularly by crowding out private sector lending, given that financial institutions invest heavily in the risk-free treasury instruments as opposed to lending to the productive sectors. Treasury bill rates have also dramatically increased to 19% for the 12-month bill.

Of this level of public debt, external debt accounts³⁰ for 46% in 2011, to 48% in 2012 and 50% of GDP in 2013. With these levels of both total public and external debt, the IMF reckons that this level of debt sustainability for a low income country confirms a moderate risk of external debt distress for The Gambia, and while public debt continues to pose significant risks, with one exception, Gambia's debt indicators remain below the established thresholds in baseline and historical projections. However, the debt to export ratio breaches the established threshold for only one year, 2015, driven by temporary exogenous shock to exports. The report further argues that the present value of debt to GDP breach their thresholds under a one-time depreciation shock before subsidizing. The stock of total public debt is significantly above the indicative threshold and is a major source of concern and that considering the elevated level and recent rapid growth of public debt, The Gambia faces a heightened overall risk of debt distress.

IV. Foreign Direct Investment

Foreign direct investments (FDI), the net inflows of investments to acquire a lasting management interest (10% or more of voting stock) in an enterprise operating in an economy other than that of the investor has become a strong contributor to growth in the development of various countries especially the developing countries. Africa has had its share of FDI inflows since 2012 despite the slowdown in the global economy. Due to still high commodity prices and relatively robust growth prospects in some African countries, net capital flows to Africa increased by 3.3% in 2012 to a high of \$54.5 billion. The Gambia's share of FDI in the same period was \$33.5 million from a high of \$82.2 million in 2006. The story of the Gambia is reminiscent of steadily high FDI flows between 2006 and 2008, which weakened as from 2009 to 2014, when it was only at \$28.4 million. As a proportion of total Sub-Saharan African FDI, this was a very tiny and insignificant amount.

The consistent fall in FDI to The Gambia has been due to a variety of reasons – a more constrained landscape in the global financial markets, greater competitiveness in the other SSA countries, especially the immediate neighbors such as Senegal, Guinea Bissau and Mali and recently a combination of Gambian domestic policy slippages such as pegging the domestic currency and an unstable foreign policy with adverse effects on relations with other countries, multilateral organizations, has negative impacts on the perceptions of the investment climate in the Gambia. That the position will change for the better will depend not only on the existence on paper of the required policy instruments for a good investment climate/environment but also the political maturity and will to fairly enforce the laws and maintain a cordial and investment friendly foreign policy; since any significant FDI investment in The Gambia looking for a major destination, will eye the sub-region, which is accessible only through its neighbors since The Gambia is technically landlocked.

The Gambia has undertaken steps to address these situations, one of which is that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with the assistance of the UNDP are working on generating a foreign affairs strategic plan, which might enable the development, elaboration and implementation of a defined stable foreign policy. It is hoped that generated in this consultative manner, a well-structured foreign policy will usher in much better predictability in its foreign relations and therefore divorce to some extent the impacts of international political differences from economic relations; so that in spite of the nature of political differences, The Gambia will still be able to maintain respectable trade and investment relations with its neighbors and other nations and multinational institutions.

³⁰ IMF March 4, 2015

Like in most least developed countries, FDI inflows to The Gambia continue to be a challenge. This is because to LDCs, FDI tends to be attracted by commodities in the form of natural resource deposits of high value such as petrochemicals and iron ore, and The Gambia is yet to make commercially viable finds in these areas.

FDI into such as tourism and other sectors is significant in The Gambia and institutional structures to attract and retain FDI have been established. The Gambia has established GIEPA and made it institutionally responsible for developing an investment environment that will attract FDI into the productive sector and some progress has been made in this direction. The GIEPA with the assistance of the World Bank has been able to put in place a significantly good policy framework to attract FDI such as generating the Gambia's Private Sector Development Strategy and of structures for assessing and supporting qualified and approved private investments in critical sectors. The establishment of a one-stop shop at the Judiciary for the registration of business which can take even as short as a day for new businesses, and the reduction of the process frame for business renewal, the establishment of an alternate dispute resolution mechanism and of a dedicated commercial court are efforts of major importance that The Gambia has been able to establish and are appealing to private investments.

Whilst all of these efforts are laudable actions at attracting FDI, the absence of a proper match between major macroeconomic decisions and other foreign relations policies with the objective to provide adequate confidence to foreign investors is still illusive. Attainment of a mechanism for channeling FDI into growth and employment catalytic sectors continues to be illusive.

V. Remittances

The Gambia, like many West African countries, is a nation with migrants leaving to Europe and North America. The Gambia (22.4% of GDP) is one of the top two largest recipients of remittances in Africa, only second to Liberia (26.06% of GDP) in 2014 as a percentage of GDP. While remittances to The Gambia are small in absolute terms when compared to other sub-Saharan African countries, total remittances as a percentage of GDP is the second highest in Africa. Nigeria tops Sub Saharan Africa for inward volumes of remittances.

		Remittances as a share of GDP in 2014 (%)
1	Tajikistan	41.7%
2	Kyrgyz Republic	30.3%
3	Nepal	29.9%
4	Tonga	26.3%
5	Moldova	26.11%
6	Liberia	26.06%
7	Bermuda	23.8%
8	Gambia, The	22.4%
9	Haiti	22.4%
10	Lesotho	19.1%
11	Armenia	19.1%
12	Comoros	18.6%
13	Honduras	17.8%
14	Samoa	17.5%
15	El Salvador	16.8%
16	Lebanon	16.3%
17	Kosovo	15.9%
18	Jamaica	15.7%

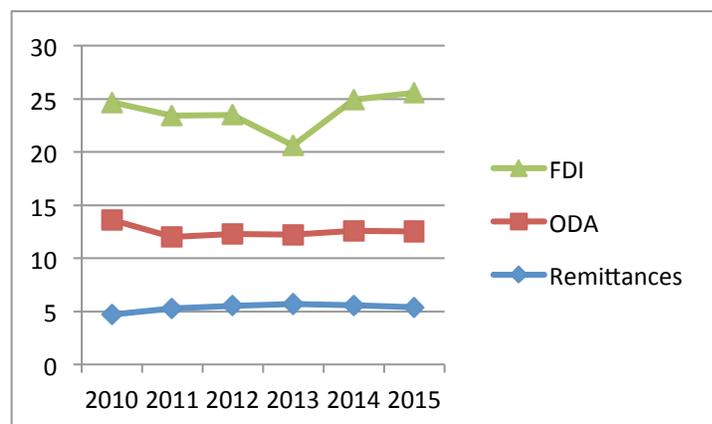
Comprehensive High-Level Midterm Review of the Implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action for the LDCs for the Decade 2011 -2020 – The Gambia

19	West Bank and Gaza	15.6%
20	Marshall Islands	12.3%
21	Georgia	12.0%
22	Bosnia and Herzegovina	11.2%
23	Tuvalu	10.6%
24	Senegal	10.4%
25	Guyana	10.2%
26	Cabo Verde	10.1%
27	Philippines	10.0%

Source: World Bank staff calculation based on data from IMF Balance of Payments Statistics database and data releases from central banks, national statistical agencies, and World Bank country desks. Definition of remittances (Dilip Ratha, 2003) - "Workers' Remittances: An Important and Stable Source of External Development Finance", Global Development Finance 2003, World Bank. <http://www.worldbank.org/migration>
Date: October 2015

Remittances are an important source of financing for The Gambia and The Gambia Government should rethink its relationship with Gambians in the Diaspora by maintaining a good relationship with them. Gambians in the Diaspora can provide financial resources and other capital in a sustainable manner, which when properly channeled into investments in the growth sectors can help promote economic growth and employment.

Figure 2.4: Remittances and other Transfer's to The Gambia 2010 - 2015(% of GDP)



Source: IMF Article IV Report for The Gambia 2013

The chart above shows that as contributions to GDP, FDI outperform both ODA (even though in absolute terms The Gambia has suffered drastic drop in FDI flows) and remittances. Whilst all the flows are significant for economic growth, the overarching importance of FDI is illustrative from a policy perspective.

The policy relevance of these flows can be stressed within the context of an environment that is competitive and price efficient, legally and financially accessible to intermediaries and remittance recipients. Empirical evidence suggests that inflows of remittances increase when competition is free and open to a large sector. Inflows and savings in the households also increase when these transfers go into financial institutions.

Central to remittance transfers is the extent to which there exists an environment that facilitates the flow without restrictions while protecting against risk. Regulations on international money transfers guarantee the movement of funds across borders and through licensed agencies. When regulations are well-written and supportive of market needs, they represent an integral part of a well-functioning payment system for worker remittances. Poorly formed regulations can inhibit market growth; raise prices for migrants sending remittances, and increase access costs for remittance-receiving families.

The Central Bank of the Gambia is mandated under the provisions of the Financial Institutions Act (FIA) 2003 and the Central Bank Act (CBA) 2006 to license and regulate all financial institutions in The Gambia. The Gambia has a small financial system that is relatively sound. There are 12 banks, most of which are foreign-owned. Together these banks hold US\$500 million in assets. There are 63 Village Savings and Credit Associations (SACAs) as well as microfinance institutions such as Reliance and GAWFA in the microfinance sector. The Banking Act was last revised in 2009, on Banks and Financial Institutions governs commercial banks and all other financial institutions that carry out financial services. The microfinance sector of the Gambia works primarily with SACAs who are authorized to provide a limited financial service to a rural community or peri-urban community or to urban micro-entrepreneurs in a defined locality. In doing so, SACAs may: mobilize savings and/or time deposits from its members, the community it serves and the general public on commercial basis and accordingly pay market and competitive interests on such deposits except in cases where depositors refuse to accept interests on religious grounds. As a thrift organization, deposit mobilization must be its primary objective. All of the banks and registered microfinance and money transfer institutions appropriately registered can undertake remittance processing, making the remittances market very competitive.

It is obvious that remittances already play a significant role in generating significant financial inflows into The Gambia with major positive implications for balance of payments, poverty, national liquidity and private investments in a variety of sectors; and properly planned, remittances can even play a much better role in transforming the Gambian economy. This will however require policy with legal support to redirect remittances into the development sectors with greater socioeconomic catalytic impact.

VI. Good Governance at All Levels

Good governance, justice and respect for human rights principles are important national objectives set out in the Constitution of The Gambia (1997) to guide the work of the State and all citizens, institutions and agencies. As stated in the “Transitional and consequential provisions” section: “For this Constitution contains our will and resolve for good governance and a just, secure and prosperous society.” and “The fundamental rights and freedoms enshrined in this Constitution will ensure for all time respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, without distinction as to ethnic considerations, gender, language or religion”. Chapter IV – Protection of Fundamental Rights and Freedom - of the Constitution fully elaborates the rights and freedoms of citizens.

To forestall and provide greater good governance in accordance with the provisions of the constitution of The Gambia and in keeping with international commitments vis a vis the prevailing variety of challenges, The Gambia has undertaken several reforms measures, which include:

- I. To raise the accessibility and quality of legal services, the judicial system is faced with major constraints which include insufficient human and institutional capacities coupled with inadequate financial resources to consolidate and sustain the reforms initiated, which constraints have resulted in court delays and difficulties in accessing justice especially for the poor. Over the years the Government developed policies with programmes to address these constraints. From the Doing Business report in The Gambia 2016, The Gambia on how efficient the process of resolving commercial disputes through the courts is, stands at 110 in the ranking of 189 economies on the ease of enforcing contracts outperforming all its neighbours and the SSA average of 47.67.

- II. Significant efforts undertaken over the years to address these constraints include: reinforcing the Department of State for Justice’s administrative and management capacity; elaborating a human resources strategy for the legal sector which takes account of the University’s Law Department; enhancing the capacity of the Attorney General’s Chambers to coordinate and supervise the unified criminal justice system; improving the Registrar General’s and Curator of Intestate Estates’ operations; establishment of an alternative dispute resolution (ADR) system to increase access to justice (particularly of the disadvantaged), decongesting the courts, reducing delays, supporting and complementing court reform and reducing the cost of litigation.
- III. Establishment of the anti-corruption commission amongst others.
- IV. In 2002, the Government enacted the Local Government Act after a broad consultative process seeking to decentralize access to legal services. The Act seeks to bring government nearer to the people and provide them with an opportunity to participate fully in the development process at the local and community level as a way of promoting good governance at that local level, seen as a cornerstone for maintaining peace and attaining the development objectives of the PAGE and Vision 2020.

Table 2.17: Selected Good Governance Indices from the Mo Ibrahim Index on The Gambia 2011 – 2015: 100 = best

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
SAFETY & RULE OF LAW					
Rule of law	43.7	43.4	42.7	41	41.2
Judicial Process	25	25	25	25	25
Judicial Independence	36.3	34.9	33.3	28.9	33.6
ACCOUNTABILITY					
Corruption and bureaucracy	42.9	42.9	42.9	42.9	42.9
Corruption in Government & Public Officials	20	20	20	20	20
PERSONAL SAFETY					
Safety of the person	50	50	25	50	50
Police services	55.4	53.1	54.1	50.3	50
Political Violence	75	75	75	75	75
NATIONAL SECURITY					
Domestic armed conflict	75	75	75	75	75

Source: 2015 Ibrahim Index of African Governance, Mo Ibrahim Foundation.

However, the reform initiatives continue to be affected by many constraints which include human, institutional, financial, and organisational and logistics inadequacies. The attrition rate for lawyers at the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) is quite high due to inadequate remuneration when compared with the private sector even though the judiciary is better paid than their civil service counterparts.

The Ibrahim Index of Governance in Africa elaborates a very long set of indices disaggregated into a variety of categories and even though The Gambia has performed relatively well in a few of them that are not in this table, the selection of indices which most investors are sensitive to (Table 2.17) renders her as an investment destination perceived rather needing caution.

In a variety of governance indices the following were the assessments of the Common Country Report for 2015:

- I. Civil Society actors, comprising NGOs and CBOS have been very active in the socio-economic development of The Gambia. Within the overall policy framework and priorities defined by the Government, they have supported the Government to achieve its policy objectives.
- II. Human rights cover many areas. Improving humans is already responding to SDG 16 which requires countries to promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels. Improving capacities of non-state actors and communities for participation in governance, national dialogue, decision making, human rights and the rule of law. Achievements have been made in this area and include: (1) the provisioning of information to non-state actors on how to contribute to the Universal Periodic Review process and to use Special Procedures mechanisms, which resulted in a relatively large number of submissions from civil society; (2) the organization of an awareness-raising campaign with civil society actors on access to justice for women; and (3) training sessions organized on governance and human rights issues for non-state actors.
- III. In terms of the Capacity to promote accountability, transparency, the rule of law and to protect and report on international instruments (CRC, CEDAW, ACRWC, etc.) for human rights, achievement cited by government agencies in this area thus far include: (1) preparation and submission of overdue reports to the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (May 2012), the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (October 2012), and the Committee on the Rights of the Child (October 2011), following a training on UN treaty body reporting provided by OHCHR in 2011; (2) a strengthened National Assembly to perform public accountability oversight functions; and (3) a draft Bill exists for the establishment of a National Human Rights Institute.

In view of this scenario and the need to be up to date, the following are issues that Government need to work on:

1. A permanent national coordination mechanism in charge of monitoring the implementation of recommendations of international and regional mechanisms should be established and provided with the necessary resources to function;
2. Ratification: A significant number of core human rights instruments have not yet been ratified, or the instrument of ratification still needs to be deposited. These include: OPICESCR, OP-CEDAW, ICMW, CED, CAT, OP-CAT, OPICCPR-2, OP-CRC-AC;
3. Domestication: The ratified treaties are not fully domesticated in the national legal framework (see annex on recommendations from UN human rights mechanisms);
4. Establishment of the National Human Rights Institution. NHRIs that fully comply with the international principles (Paris Principles) play a crucial role in promoting and monitoring the effective implementation of international human rights standards at the national level. The NHRI draft law should be revised to ensure its conformity with the Paris Principles and enacted by the National Assembly. It is crucial to safeguard the independent function of the NHRI with adequate resources and proper election/appointment procedures of its members.

A fully functioning and effective justice delivery sector is the foundation for the rule of law. Key stakeholders in the justice delivery system, including the judiciary, the prosecuting authority, prisons and correctional services, law enforcement agencies and legal practitioners, are critical for effective access and delivery of justice. A major challenge in The Gambia's justice system is the limited access to justice and inadequate access

to government legal aid services. Although the ADRS and NALA facilitate improved access to justice, particularly for the marginalized, the services are limited. The poor and vulnerable population, particularly women, children, youth, unemployed, landless and people living with disability remain disadvantaged in terms of their access justice due to the prohibitive costs.

The Gambia has passed and enforcing the Children’s Act 2005 providing for the establishment of five children’s courts, alternative measures to detention, raising the age of criminal responsibility, and the abolition of the use of corporal punishment in the juvenile justice system. The adoption of the Legal Aid Act 2008 and its implementation is another act of government supportive to access to justice especially for the poor.

IV. Coherence and Linkages with the Post-2015 Development Agenda and Other Processes

The **Post-2015 Development Agenda** refers to a process led by the UN which aims to help define the future global development framework that will succeed the MDGs. The current UN development agenda centered on the MDGs officially established following the Millennium Summit of the UN in 2000, encapsulate eight globally agreed goals in the areas of poverty alleviation, education, gender equality and empowerment of women, child and maternal health, environmental sustainability, reducing HIV/AIDS and communicable diseases, and building a global partnership for development. The MDG’s overall target date is 2015.

However, at the 2010 High Level Plenary Meeting of the UN General Assembly to review progress towards the MDGs, governments called for accelerating progress and for thinking on ways to advance the development agenda beyond 2015 and after the 2010 High Level Plenary Meeting, the UN took several initiatives and established a UN System Task Team of Eminent Persons and appointed it to think through and determine how best this could be achieved.

This team published the report “Realizing the Future We Want for All”, which serves as an input to the work of the High Level Panel. The panel generated a report on May 2013 on the Post-2015 Development Agenda - **“A New Global Partnership: Eradicate Poverty and Transform Economies through Sustainable Development.”** This report sets out a universal agenda to eradicate extreme poverty from the face of the earth by 2030, and deliver on the promise of sustainable development. The report calls upon the world to rally around a new Global Partnership that offers hope and a role to every person in the world. In the report, the Panel calls for the new post-2015 goals to drive five big transformation shifts: Leave No One Behind; Put Sustainable Development at the Core; Transform Economies for Jobs and Inclusive Growth; Build Peace and Effectiveness, Open and Accountable Institutions for All; and Forge a New Global Partnership.

After various regional and national consultations on the Post 2015 development agenda such as the one commissioned by the African Union, the “Delivering the Post 2015 Development Agenda” report was issued from these dialogues. The findings of this report derive from six Dialogues (localizing the agenda, capacities and institutions, participatory monitoring, culture, private sector and civil society) revealing several main principles in order to support the successful implementation of the new development agenda: **participation, inclusion, and the need for strengthened capacities and partnerships.**

Fragile and conflict affected states have been left behind and unchanged in the rapid decline in global poverty since 2000 says a February 2013 paper from the Overseas Development Institute. The researchers report that the outcome statement of the Monrovia meeting of the high level panel said - **'Economic growth alone is not sufficient to ensure social justice, equity and sustained prosperity for all people. The protection**

and empowerment of people was considered crucial. They explained that a global survey showed the extent that people see ‘an honest and responsive government’ as a top priority; and that this emerged as the second highest of a range of sixteen factors’ ... ‘second only to ‘a good education’ globally (and within the top five priorities for Low-Human Development Index countries).’ Researchers found that areas gaining traction in the post 2015 conversation include: Building accountability for goals into the heart of a new framework, Ensuring there is transparency for how resources are used, Commitments on civil and political freedoms, and Supporting effective institutions of the state and warned against the polarization of the debate around the strength of the post-2015 goals and found that 'some political, governance and accountability features do seem to shape whether and how MDG commitments have been achieved (alongside important issues of resourcing, technical capacities and others)' and identified key factors (Credible political commitments between politicians and citizens are essential, more inclusive institutions matter, as well as the ability to work together, and states effectiveness is a determinant of development progress, so state capacities and functions do need more attention).

Their findings focused on national level governance because of the growing body of evidence relevant to development progress available at this level. Global governance is also important to the authors of the report. They recognised a strong interest in bringing on-board multilateral institutions, the private sector and non-governmental organisations in a future framework, based on the recognition that they can help or hinder future development outcomes. They called for more work on global governance, and for the identification of viable options for doing so effectively.

Immediately coming after the Brussels Programme of Action, which ended in 2010, leaving up to 2015 to finalize the probable achievement of the MDGs and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the IsPoA has a close convergence with the post 2015 development agenda both in principles, objectives and intended implementation arrangements:

V. Challenges, Obstacles and Constraints in the Implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action from the Decade 2011 – 2020

The Gambia has not institutionally implemented the Istanbul Programme of Action except for the Ministry of the Environment on climate change commitments. However, a review of all the development reports at both the national and international levels of the progress of The Gambia as an economy and in its various sectors shows interesting phenomena:

- a. There were significant communality between the IsPoA interventions and The Gambia’s medium term development programme for 2012 – 2015, the PAGE. This means, despite the absence of a concerted effort to mainstream the IsPoA into PAGE, it can be said that there was significant overlap and some level of mainstreaming of the interventions into the national plan. However, the PAGE itself was poorly implemented due to a variety of reasons and even though there was a significant overlap between PAGE and IsPoA, a significant proportion of these activities have not been achieved due to the PAGE’s low level of investment.
- b. The low level of mainstreaming was a result of the absence of policy coordination in The Gambia. The MOTIE was responsible for the IsPOA because they sat on the international panel that saw its development and signing by The Gambia’s Vice President but were not responsible for ensuring that this programme was studied for internalisation into national economic and development programming. This was the responsibility instead of both the Ministries of Finance and of Planning and Programmes and due to poor inter-sectoral coordination, the IsPoA was not transmitted to them. The role of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which was part of the

- process of enabling the signing of the agreement, was not clear and that it did not do much to facilitate the transference of the agreement to the ministries with responsibility for coordinating its implementation.
- c. Through support from the Ministry of the Environment, two staffs from the Budget Directorate of the MOFEA were trained in climate economics so that they would develop the capacity to implement climate budgeting in government. However, in spite of this, when contacted by the consultants the MOFEA seemed not to have known anything about the IsPoA. All of this seemed to have been due to the poor visibility at policy level of the programme and for which reason even though one of the international experts in climate, The Gambia's Minister of Environment and Climate Change made so much effort to popularize the programme, it still could not achieve the desired goal.
 - d. The absence of institutional coordination in the implementation of the IsPoA provides a pointer to a more deep seated institutional problem – weak institutional capacity. The Gambia has in the three ministries of MOTIE, MOPP and MOF individuals with outstanding capacities and probably even in adequate numbers to do a good job of issues like this. However, poor inter-sectoral or institutional communication is systemic and this lack of capacity needs addressing for need of more effective overall development planning and implementation coordination.
 - e. In the absence of structured arrangements for the implementation of the IsPoA, The Gambia could not possibly monitor its implementation and probably isolate its impacts on national growth and development.
 - f. Judging from the budgetary difficulties of The Gambia in the period of the IsPoA, it would seem that resource constraints was one of the main reasons for the low implementation of the PAGE. It was evident from reviews that during this period, budget support almost dried out and grants which traditionally were a mainstay in development financing were on a descending trend. Part of the issue leading to this descend trend in grants and access to concessionary financing was an unstable foreign policy and its impacts and other financial policy slippages by government. The IsPoA would have been useful in addressing some of these difficulties.
 - g. It should also be noted that the support provided by the UN in terms of the implementation of the IsPoA was inadequate. The agreement has not obtained the desired level of visibility and support over the last five year period. Going forward, the UN support towards this should be encouraged. UN agencies working on the various aspects of the IsPoA should look at the relevant aspects and weave it into the SDGs agenda which will be the overarching international agreement. With no adequate mechanism for monitoring and implementation mere agreement alone could not achieve the desired objective. The experience from the Gambia shows a critical reflection on the part of the UN in streamlining all the international agreements in light of the comprehensive SDG agenda for guidance at country level. The continued fragmentation and duplicative nature of agendas into various agreements is hampering their full implementation.

VI. Conclusions and Way Forward

The conclusions from this review may be addressed from three perspectives – mainstreaming of the IsPoA, impacts of the Implementation of the IsPoA, structural challenges and possibilities to address them.

V. Mainstreaming of the IsPoA

- a. Since the PAGE was issued a year after the IsPoA in 2011, the IsPoA should have been mainstreamed into the PAGE. Mainstreaming should have been very efficient if there was clear communication among various ministries and ownership of the agenda. Due to lack of institutional communication and capacity issues, this was not achieved and the IsPoA remained technically not fully integrated into the PAGE while there exist significant communality between the two programmes. As a result the IsPoA was only partially mainstreamed in terms of coincidental convergence between the two programmes.
- b. Mid-term review of the PAGE was conducted and it is extended up to end 2016 and its follow-up plan is being discussed and designed and it is certain that mainstreaming the IsPoA is not centre-stage in this process. The consistency or otherwise of the eight priorities in the IsPoA with Gambia development prioritization needs to have been discovered from mainstreamed implementation of the IsPoA in the PAGE from 2012 – 2015.
- c. Now that a follow – up programme of the PAGE is being discussed and designed, it is imperative that the IsPoA is taken on as a programme by all the sectoral consultations and deliberate effort is made at how the new national medium term programme aligns with it and how the IsPoA can be useful for resource attraction into policy design and implementation.

VI. Impacts of the Implementation of the IsPoA

- a. Direct impacts of the implementation of the IsPoA on national growth and development are not possible in the circumstances. However, implied impacts of the progress on The Gambia at both policy and ground levels in areas such as education and health provide some indications as to how the IsPoA could have been impactful on The Gambia's development.
- b. The levels of education achievements at the ECD, Basic and secondary and tertiary levels as reported by the MDG Status report of 2014 is testimony to how projects can have big positive impact on the Gambia. The high levels of GER, gender and other educational achievements in all the regions and the evolving tertiary educational management space and of STIs, hold promise for building and harnessing this huge potential capacity for national growth and development. The opportunity now exists for the IsPoA to be made to assist in implementing and possible reviews of the new policies in STI, higher and tertiary education and TVET.
- c. There have been significant achievements in health infrastructure to provide a health facility for every 5km for every Gambian and almost a public hospital for every region in the country (5 hospitals distributed in 7 regions). The levels of access to basic primary health such as free medical care for all pregnant women and under-fives and plans to progress this to all the poor is testimony to progress made by the Gambia and is in need of assistance from the IsPoA.
- d. The development capacity of The Gambia has been explained in the PAGE and Budget speech 2016 to be in agriculture, power, roads, telecommunication, tourism and culture and it is assumed that there needs to debates at better prioritization of sectors and more specificity in identifying sectors that hold investment return potential for the Gambia's growth. Unless the accuracy level of development sectors/capacity is enhanced, investments will continue to be misplaced and returns to help the Gambia migrate from LDC status and sustain growth resilience may not be achieved. This should be done within the framework of the next successor plan formulation process, which must be designed and implemented in an environment of democratic governance at all levels of decision making.
- e. It is evident that in the sectors where progress has been encouraging, significant donor support was provided. In areas lagging behind in implementation, there is a need to obtain recommitment by development partners to support Gambia. It also indicates the importance of domestic resources mobilization going forward for effective implementation of interventions.

VII. Structural Challenges and Possibilities to Address Them

- a. At the moment and under the current arrangements by which the PAGE was generated and the new medium term plan is being developed, it is important to reinforce the institutional mechanism of planning and programming such that The Gambia could honor its international obligations such as the IsPoA. It is also important to strengthen the coordination between planning systems both at central and local levels as well as at the sectoral level to ensure that multi sectoral initiatives such as the IsPoA could find a natural method of being integrated into the national planning and programming framework.
- b. In this case there is need to assist the Gambia in reviewing the number and institutional alignments of its ministries and a frame of inter-institutional communication to enable effective governmental resonance and rhythm.

There is need to have harmony and alignment of national policies for effective implementation of national plans and the IsPoA. As shown in the midterm review of the PAGE, the lack of a favourable enabling environment with a well-defined and elaborated consistent policy framework predicated on seeking the national interest is significantly reducing effectiveness of development in the Gambia. Unless a strong policy framework is put in place, all gains significant as they may be at the time they are made, would be unsustainable. The fragility of the institutions in the Gambia has led to the country to officially be included in the fragile states list of the World Bank in 2016. Institutional strengthening should be accorded highest importance going forward if Gambia is to honor its obligations.

Actions and Measures Necessary to Further the Implementation Of The Istanbul Programme

In the remaining period to 2020, it is recommended that:

Now that the PAGE is ending, the most important thing is to include the IsPoA in the new national medium term development plan. In view of the comprehensive SDG agenda, there is a need to identify the communality and differences between the IsPoA and SDGs to ensure clarity in the overlap as well as specificity of the IsPoA. However, it is important to better structure a planning mechanism that ensures that government commitments are able to be filtered into the national planning and implementation reporting mechanism irrespective of the sector it/they come from.

Global support for the IsPoA has to be mobilized to ensure that interventions at country level are supported financially and technically. Continuous support and monitoring mechanisms at global levels need to be put in place to ensure countries implementing the programme are receiving the required support.

VII Appendices and References

6.1 Appendices

6.1.2 List of Institutions Visited and Interviewed

Ref.	Institution Visited and Interviewed
1	Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs – MOFEA
2	Ministry of Planning and Programmes – MOPP
3	Ministry of Trade, Industry, Regional Integration and Employment – MOTIE
4	Ministry of Agriculture
5	Gambia of Chamber of Commerce and Industry
6	Ministry of Information and Communication Infrastructure
7	National Roads Authority
8	Ministry of Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology & NAQA.
9	Gambia Ports Authority
10	Central Bank of The Gambia
11	Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education
12	Gambia Civil Aviation Authority
13	Ministry of Energy & NAWEC & GNPC
14	The Gambia Bankers Association
15	Women’s Bureau & Gambia Women’s federation
16	Fisheries and Natural Resources
17	Ministry of Health and Social Welfare
18	Ministry of Land and Regional Government
19	Social Security and Housing Finance Cooperation – Housing Directorate
21	Personnel management Office - PMO
22	Gambia Immigration Department
23	Ministry of the Environment, National Disaster Management Agency & National Environment Agency
24	Director General, GIEPA
25	Ministry of Youth and Sports and NEDI – preferably a joint meeting at the Ministry.
26	Department of Water Resources
27	The Clerk, National Assembly of the Republic of The Gambia, Banjul
28	The Director General, Gambia Bureau of Statistics, Bakau
29	Department of Agribusiness Technical Services Unit, Ministry of Agriculture

6.2 References

- 6.2.1 All materials contained in this document have been adapted, with permission of the authorities/owners from the following works/publications:
- I. Budget Speech 2016, Republic of The Gambia.
 - II. Capacity assessment of the Policy Analysis Unit, Office of the President, Final Report.
 - III. Education Policy 2004 – 2015.
 - IV. Gambia NAMA 2011.
 - V. GEAP 2.
 - VI. GO WAMER Project Gambia Report.
 - VII. Human Development Report 2015. Briefing Note for Countries on the 2015 - Human Development Report, The Gambia.
 - VIII. IMF Country Report No. 15/272, The Gambia.
 - IX. Level of Achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). MDG Status Report 2015, The Gambia.
 - X. MOBSE Year Book 2015.
 - XI. Ministerial Conference Tenth Session, Nairobi, 15-18 December 2015. Export Competition, Ministerial Decision of 19 December 2015. WT/MIN(15)/45WT/L/980; 21 December 2015.
 - XII. NCCP Draft for Validation 08Jan16.
 - XIII. NICI Policy – Final.
 - XIV. NATIONAL SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION POLICY of The Gambia, (2015 – 2024)
 - XV. Report on the Development Forum 2015. Theme: The Post 2015 Agenda and its Financing at Local Level; Government of the Gambia and UNDP.
 - XVI. Revised Response Plans – The Gambia; 2014 – 2016.
 - XVII. Sustainable Development (Support to Energy and Environment UNDP Project).
 - XVIII. Study on Multidimensional Poverty and Inclusive Growth in The Gambia; April 2015.
 - XIX. The Gambia ICT4D-2012 Plan Final – original.
 - XX. The Gambia: policies to Foster Growth (Volumes I – III).
 - XXI. The Gambia Common Country Assessment, September 2015.
 - XXII. The Gambia National Human Development Report, 2014 – Employment.
 - XXIII. The Gambia National Human Development Report, 2014 – Youth Employment..