



THE REPUBLIC OF THE GAMBIA

BUDGET SPEECH 2020

**INSTITUTIONAL REFORM FOR
ECONOMIC GROWTH**

DELIVERED ON FRIDAY 6TH DECEMBER 2019

**BY THE HONOURABLE MINISTER OF FINANCE
AND
ECONOMIC AFFAIRS**



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MINISTER OF FINANCE AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS**

ACRONYMS

AAD	Action Against Desertification
ADRFi	Africa Disaster Risk Financing
AfDB	African Development Bank
AML	Anti-Money Laundering
ANR	Agriculture and Natural Resources Policy
ARC	Africa Risk Capacity
AUC	African Union Commission
BFCI	Baby Friendly Community Initiative
CBMS	Centralized Budget Management Systems
CFT	Counter-Financing of Terrorism
CILSS	Permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
DTT	Digital Terrestrial Transmission
ECD	Early Childhood Development
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EFT	Electronic Funds Transfer
E-GP	Electronic Government Procurement
EMMMDA	ECOWAS Model Mining and Minerals Development Act
EMPRETEC	Entrepreneurs and Technology
EPI	Extended Program on Immunization
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FIU	Financial Intelligence Unit
FOCAC	Forum for China-Africa Cooperation
FSR	Foreign Service Regulations
GAMSR	Gambia Social Registry
GBA	Greater Banjul Area
GBOS	Gambia Bureau of Statistics
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GER	Gross Enrollment Ratio
GIABA	Inter-Governmental Action Group against Money Laundering in West Africa
GIEPA	Gambia Investments and Promotion Agency
GNPC	Gambia National Petroleum Company
GPF	Gambia Police Force
GPPA	Gambia Public Procurement Authority
GPPI	Gambia Public Procurement Institute
GRA	Gambia Revenue Authority

GRTS	Gambia Radio and Television Services
GTTI	Gambia Technical Training Institute
HR	Human Resources
IAD	Internal Audit Directorate
IBAS	Indigenous Business Advisory Services
ICT	Information, Communication and Technology
IEC	Independent Electoral Commission
IFMIS	Integrated Financial Management Information System
IHS.	Integrated Household Survey
IOM	International Organization for Migration
JFPM	Joint Forest Park Management
JTC	Joint Technical Committee
KNUST	Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology
LRR	Lower River Region
MCNHRP	Maternal and Child Nutrition and Health Results Project
MDAs	Ministries Departments and Agencies
MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey
MoTWI	Ministry of Transport, Works and Infrastructure
MSME	Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises
NAFA	National Farmers' Association
NBN	National Broadband Network
NDMA	National Disaster Management Agency
NDP	National Development Plan
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NGO	Non-Governmental Organizations
NHIS	National Health Insurance Scheme
NSPP	National Social Protection Policy
NSS	National Seed Secretariat
NYSS	National Youth Service Scheme
OIC	Organization of Islamic Countries
OSJBP	One Stop Joint Border Post
PFM	Public Financial Management
PHC	Primary Health Care
PMO	Personnel Management Office
RBF	Results-Based Financing
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SFD	Saudi Fund for Development
SNA	System of National Account
TADAT	Tax Administration Diagnostic Assessment Tool
TIN	Tax Identification Number
TRRC	Truth, Reconciliation & Reparations Commission

TSA	Treasury Single Account
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UHC	Universal Health Coverage
UNDESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNDRR	United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction
UNECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIDO	United Nations International Development Organizations
URR	Upper River Region
USET	University of Science, Engineering and Technology
VAT	Value Added Tax
VDC	Village Development Committees
WDC	Ward Development Committees
WEF	Women Entrepreneurship Fund
WFP	World Food Programme

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Honourable Speaker,

I beg to move that the bill entitled “An Act to provide for the services of the Government of The Gambia for the period 1st January 2020 to 31st December 2020 (both dates inclusive)” be read a second time.

INTRODUCTION

Honourable Speaker,

1. As we march to the end of the 2019 fiscal year, let me first begin with a brief run down on the achievements registered in the implementation of the National Development Plan (NDP), as per the Annual Progress Report (APR). The APR offers us the opportunity to take a mid-term review of the performance of Government in managing the economy and how we intend to accelerate the program of growing the economy on a sustainable path.
2. Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, this may sound modest, but it is a big achievement as far as development planning in the Gambian context is concerned, for the first time, a National Plan is holistically assessed on a sector by sector programme, aligned to the eight strategic priorities of the NDP. The Progress Report found that as at end December 2018, of the 61 outcomes, 48 percent of the outcomes were found to be on track, 49 percent registering constrained progress, and only 3 percent registering limited progress. As per the Report, the strongest progress was registered for tourism, governance, private sector as well as infrastructure and energy. Human capital and macro-economy made average progress with agriculture and fisheries and youth empowerment making limited progress.
3. All strategic priorities except for Tourism faced significant constraints in achieving more progress on their outcomes. The constraints faced were largely due to institutional and financial challenges.
4. Following the Donor Roundtable Conference for the NDP in May 2018 and subsequently, a total of US\$1.8 billion was pledged by various Development Partners. Of this, only US\$183 million (10 percent of the amount pledged) has been disbursed so

far. Government will continue to engage with its Partners to ensure that the pledges made materialize into actual resource disbursements for efficient implementation and substantial progress on the outcomes to be made.

5. The Government is determined to implement the reform agenda and development programmes as stipulated in the NDP. The Government is delivering on its promise in the areas of improved political and economic governance as well as infrastructure development.
6. Reforms in transitional justice are progressing very well with the establishment and continuous sitting of the Truth, Reconciliation and Reparations Commission (TRRC). The Constitutional Review Commission (CRC) has made impressive work in completing and sharing the First Draft of the Constitution with the public. Significant achievements have been registered in Gambianizing the Judiciary, as well as strengthening of existing and creating new governance institutions such as the Human Rights Commission. Similarly, the overall legal and policy frameworks of governance are also being improved. Electoral reforms continue to be a priority, and today our multiparty democracy boasts of the highest number of political parties registered in the history of this country. The Gambian civil society is much more emboldened as manifested in the proliferation of Newspapers, Private Radio and Television Stations which are all operating without fear of repression. Freedom of speech is indeed one of this Government's hallmark of success.
7. The Janneh Commission had submitted its report to Government and a White Paper was prepared and published with recommendations made on the findings of the Commission. These recommendations are currently being implemented. Furthermore, in order to rein in on corruption, the Government will establish an Anti-Corruption Commission.
8. Economic Governance is witnessing significant improvements. Prominent among these are the efforts to consolidate Government's fiscal position by implementing a Staff

Monitored Programme (SMP) and a potential transition to a full-blown Extended Credit Facility in 2020 with the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Furthermore, to achieve macroeconomic stability, the consolidation on the fiscal front will require bold reforms such as limiting Government borrowing, rationalizing Government Agencies and Embassies, continuous Civil Service and Security Sector reforms and debt sustainability.

9. To ensure debt sustainability, the Government has requested from its external creditors for debt restructuring to defer, for a period of 5 years, both interest and principal payments on loans owed by Government. These negotiations with creditors will soon be concluded. This debt relief will reduce the fiscal pressures and further create the necessary fiscal space for priority spending.
10. In improving the budget processes and enhancing fiscal consolidation, the Government is ensuring stricter budget implementation and is introducing a Treasury Single Account (TSA). Additionally, the 2018 Financial Statements have been finalized and sent to the Auditor General in the second half of 2019, which is a huge improvement from the backlog of Financial Statements and unaudited accounts of the recent past.
11. The fiscal risks posed by the State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs) is equally given the attention it deserves, and Government will be signing Performance Contracts with all the SOEs. The performance contracts will set targets for the SOEs and will be assessed based on deliverables of services and their financial viability.
12. The Government continues to deliver on its pledge of substantially boosting the infrastructure of this country. Key achievements have been made on this pledge including the completion and inauguration of the Senegambia Bridge which is open to 24 hours traffic. This bridge will greatly enhance sub regional integration through the free movement of people as well as goods and services. The International Conference Centre is ready and will soon be inaugurated. This edifice from our generous and benevolent People's Republic of China will open up our country to Conference Tourism

and very soon The Gambia will start bidding for and hosting these important conferences. The construction of Upper River Region roads and bridges and the Laminkoto-Passimus Road will soon be completed.

13. Honourable Speaker, whilst we recognize that current resources are inadequate to meet every need and every demand of every Gambian, there are no limits on our collective potentials to transforming The Gambia into a guiding light of hope.
14. In the course of the 2020 fiscal year, the Government will commit to making sure that no sector is left behind in achieving a more impressive and inclusive progress towards the attainment of NDP targets, especially in key sectors such as Agriculture, Health, Education and Infrastructure. The Government will make sure that in the coming year, giant strides will be taken to respond to the social and economic needs of all Gambians.

WORLD ECONOMIC OUTLOOK

15. The World Economic Outlook of the International Monetary Fund for October 2019 projects global growth at 3 percent, its lowest since the 2008/09 global financial crisis. This subdued growth is due to rising trade barriers, elevated uncertainty surrounding trade and geopolitics, idiosyncratic factors causing macroeconomic strain in several emerging market economies, and structural factors such as low productivity and aging population in advanced economies.
16. Trade tensions which had subsided earlier this year have risen again sharply, resulting in significant tariff increases between the United States and China, hurting business sentiment and global confidence. As the impact of US tariffs and retaliations by trading partners has steadily broadened since January, the cost of some intermediate inputs has risen, and uncertainty about future trade relations heightened.
17. Momentum in manufacturing activity in particular has weakened substantially to levels not seen since the global financial crisis. Rising trade and geopolitical tensions have increased uncertainty about the future of the global trading system and international cooperation, taking a toll on business confidence, investment decisions and global trade. A notable shift towards increased accommodative monetary policy has cushioned the impact of these tensions on financial market sentiment and activity while a resilient service sector has supported employment growth.
18. Food prices are projected to decrease by 3.4 percent in 2019, and then increase by 2.8 percent in 2020. Weather conditions have been unusual in recent months and additional weather disruptions remain an upside risk to the forecast. A resolution on the trade conflict between US and China, remains the largest source of upside for potential prices.
19. For advanced economies, growth is projected to soften to 1.7 percent in 2019 and 2020, with a modest pickup in the Euro area, offsetting a gradual decline in US growth. Over the medium term, growth in advanced economies is projected to remain subdued,

reflecting a moderate pace of productivity growth and slow labour force growth as population ages.

20. The United Kingdom is set to expand at 1.2 percent in 2019 and 1.4 percent in 2020. The marginal growth projection reflects the combination of a negative impact from weaker global growth and ongoing Brexit uncertainty. The economy contracted in the second quarter and recent indicators point to weak growth in the third quarter. The forecast assumes an orderly exit from the EU followed by a gradual transition to the new regime. However, as of early September, the ultimate form of Brexit remains highly uncertain.
21. Emerging and developing Asia remains the main engine of the world economy, but growth is softening gradually with the structural slowdown in China. In China, the effects of escalating tariffs, trade tensions and weakening external demand have exacerbated the slowdown associated with needed regulatory strengthening to rein in the accumulation of debt.
22. Growth in the Middle East is expected to be 0.9 percent in 2019 and rising to 2.9 percent in 2020. While non-oil growth is expected to strengthen in 2019 on higher government spending and confidence, oil GDP in Saudi Arabia is expected to decline against the backdrop of the extension of the OPEC+ agreement and a generally weak global oil market. The impact on growth of the recent attacks on Saudi Arabia's oil facilities is difficult to gauge at this stage, but adds uncertainty to the near-term outlook. Growth is projected to pick up in 2020 as oil GDP stabilizes and solid momentum in the non-oil sector continues. Civil strife in some other economies weigh on the region's outlook.
23. In Sub-Saharan Africa, growth is expected at 3.2 percent in 2019 and 3.6 percent in 2020. Higher oil prices earlier in the year have supported the subdued outlook for Nigeria and some other oil-exporting countries in the region, but Angola's economy is expected to contract this year and recover only mildly next year. While the three largest economies

of the region are projected to continue their lackluster performance, many other economies are experiencing solid growth.

24. Globally, energy prices declined by 13 percent between April 2019 and October 2019, as high US crude oil production, together with soft demand, outweighed the influence of supply shortfalls related to US sanctions on Iran, producer cuts by OPEC and conflict in Venezuela and Libya. The September 14th attack on key oil refining facilities in Saudi Arabia threatened to severely disrupt supply, causing crude oil prices to spike by more than 10 percent in the immediate aftermath. Prices subsequently retreated somewhat on reports of lesser damage than initially feared.
25. Consistent with softening energy prices and moderation in growth, consumer price inflation is expected to average 1.5 percent this year in advanced economies, down from 2.0 percent in 2018. Overall, lower core inflation readings and subdued impulses from commodity prices to headline inflation have led to declines in market pricing of expected inflation especially in the US and Euro area.

IMPACT ON THE DOMESTIC ECONOMY

26. As a small, highly open economy, The Gambia is vulnerable to global macroeconomic shocks and international developments. A slowdown in global growth remains a concern for The Gambia in that it weakens the demand for Gambian exports and tourism. Weakening consumer and investor sentiment in Gambia's main export markets of Europe due to elevated risks from a no-deal Brexit and elevated sovereign spreads is perhaps more worrisome, and further exacerbated by the recent collapse of Thomas Cook.
27. Global commodity prices have a significant impact on the Gambian economy through key imports and exports which in part drive our baseline sectoral GDP forecasts for Agriculture and Energy sectors for 2019-2024 and their overall contribution to GDP. Global commodity prices have been trending lower albeit with increased volatility in 2018. Key food items such as groundnut and rice, and non-food items such as oil, are expected to remain subdued at these lower levels in 2019.

28. Lower oil prices together with stronger demand for energy as the world economy grows on average around 6 percent over the next few years are likely to support stronger oil imports and greater custom tax revenues from oil imports over this period. Oil prices have been relatively stable this year, trading within a narrow range despite heightened geopolitical uncertainty and supply outages. As domestic fuel prices are determined in part by international prices, these fluctuations have been reflected in the domestic pump prices.
29. On regional integration, The Gambia can take advantage of the opportunity created by the Africa Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), which The Gambia recently endorsed. This initiative has the potential to boost intra-African trade and growth across many dimensions. It can add jobs, foster competition, help increase investment, and spur the spread of knowledge and technology. This is likely to be an important driver of growth in The Gambia beyond 2020 and is one factor that underpins our medium-term growth projections.

Honourable Speaker,

DOMESTIC ECONOMY

REAL SECTOR

30. The Gambian economy is expected to grow by 6.0 per cent in 2019 compared to an actual real growth of 6.5 percent in 2018. The decline in growth is as a result of lower than anticipated agricultural productivity. The overall growth outlook for 2020 is projected at 6.2 percent on account of improved performance in the industry and service sectors. Gross Domestic Product at current prices is estimated at D86.6 billion in 2019 compared to D78.6 billion in 2018.

31. The agricultural sector is anticipated to experience a contraction in 2019 due to poor performance from the most important subsectors – crops and livestock, both of which are anticipated to decline to -6.2 and -10.0 percent in 2019, compared to 6.6 and -5.6 percent respectively the previous year. Forestry and fishing on the other hand are expected to grow by 1.1 and 5.9 percent respectively in 2019. The projected growth in the fishing sector is attributed to the recent opening of a new fish factory and the start of a new fishing agreement between the European Union and the Government of The Gambia.

32. Industry sector is anticipated to record the strongest growth in 2019, with a projected growth rate of 21.7 percent compared to 2.5 percent in 2018. The anticipated expansion is on account of strong growth in electricity, water and construction. These sub-sectors are projected to grow by 13.8 percent, 8.9 percent and 34.5 percent respectively. Reforms in NAWEC has been a major drive in the electricity sector, with the implementation of the energy sector roadmap which is aimed at increasing generation capacity and user coverage. Manufacturing is also estimated to grow from 0.3 percent in 2018 to 3.8 percent in 2019. On the other hand, mining and quarrying is expected to record a contraction of 7.7 percent from 21.6 percent growth in 2018. The overall growth forecast for the Industry sector in 2020 is estimated at 14.7 percent.

33. Growth in the service sector is expected to decline to 3.6 percent in 2019, from 9.9 percent recorded a year earlier. The major drivers of growth in the sector are anticipated from transport and storage, hotels and restaurants, communication as well as finance and insurance. Growth for the sector in 2020 is forecasted to grow to 4.9 percent, due mainly to wholesale and retail trade, transport and storage, hotels and restaurants, communication and finance and insurance
34. In terms of sector contribution to GDP, agriculture is forecasted to account for 18 percent, with industry accounting for 20 percent. This suggests a structural change in the economy from the previous years as agriculture is now overtaken by industry. The service sector is projected to maintain its lead share to GDP of 55 percent, whilst the remaining 7 percent is accounted for by others.

FISCAL SECTOR

35. On the fiscal front, government fiscal operations during the first nine months of 2019 indicate an improvement in the fiscal position. Revenue and grants increased by 20 percent from D9.9 billion in the first nine months of 2018 to D11.9 billion in the same period of 2019. This increase is due to improved domestic revenue collection this year which increased by 30 percent, surpassing monthly targets for the year so far. All sub-components of tax revenue increased between the two periods.
36. Total expenditure increased slightly by 1.3 percent from D13.6 billion in the first nine months of 2018 to D13.8 billion in the same period of 2019. Although some components of total expenditure recorded increases over the period, the decline in interest and capital expenditure sub-components were significant enough to limit the overall increase of total expenditure.
37. Current expenditure increased by 15.6 percent from D7.7 billion (126 percent of tax revenue) in the first nine months of 2018 to D8.9 billion (117 percent of tax revenue) in the same period of 2019. Personnel Emoluments (PEs) increased from D2.2 billion in the

first nine months of 2018 to D2.9 billion in 2019. The increase in PEs by D710 million (32 percent) is due to the 50 percent salary increment that was introduced in January 2019. Similarly, other charges increased by 17 percent from D3.5 billion in 2018 to D4.1 billion in 2019. Interest payments on the other hand declined by 6 percent from D2 billion in the first nine months of 2018 to D1.9 billion in the same period of 2019.

38. Capital expenditure decreased by 17 percent from D6 billion in the first nine months of 2018 to D5 billion in the same period of 2019. This is due to a slow down in the disbursement of the externally financed grant capital expenditure between the two periods.
39. The overall fiscal balance excluding grants improved by 27 percent from a deficit of D6.8 billion in the first nine months of 2018 to a deficit of D4.9 billion in the same period of 2019. The reduction in the deficit is due to a higher growth rate in domestic revenue as compared to the growth rate in expenditure.
40. The stock of public debt in the first three quarters of 2019 stood at D71.3 billion (81.5 percent of the GDP) compared to D65.9 billion (82.6 percent of the GDP) in the same period in 2018. Of the total public debt stock in 2019, domestic debt accounts for D32.9 billion (37.6 percent of the GDP) whilst external debt constitutes D38.4 billion (43.8 percent of the GDP) of the stock. Over the period under review, the stock of both domestic debt decreased by 5.2 percent while external debt increased by 23 percent.

MONETARY SECTOR

41. The Central Bank of The Gambia continues to pursue an accommodative monetary policy stance against the backdrop of stable prices, relative improvement of the external sector, with the objective of promoting private sector credit expansion to spur economic growth. The Monetary Policy Rate was maintained at 12.5 percent in the August 2019 Monetary Policy Committee meeting.

42. Money supply growth moderated to 21.8 percent as at end September 2019 from 22.4 percent in the corresponding period a year earlier. The slowdown in broad money growth is driven by the deceleration in the banking system's net domestic assets. The component of money supply, narrow money and quasi-money grew by 23.7 percent and 19.6 percent respectively over the review period.
43. The two factors affecting money supply – Net Foreign Assets (NFA) and Net Domestic Assets (NDA), both increased over the period. NFA of the banking system increased from D9.4 billion as at end September 2018, to D14.1 billion in the same period of 2019. NDA increased from D22.8 billion to D25.0 billion over the period under review. Credit to the private sector continued to build on the momentum from last year increasing by 28.6 percent as at end September 2019, building on the momentum from last year, supported by accommodative monetary policy and increased economic activity.
44. Reserve money increased by 18.6 percent from D10.1 billion in September 2018 to D13.0 billion in the same period of 2019. Both components of reserve money, currency in circulation and reserves of commercial banks increased over the period, by 16 percent and 22 percent respectively.
45. The stock of Treasury and Sukuk-Al Salaam (SAS) Bills increased by 15 percent from D15.8 billion in the first nine months of 2018 to D18.2 billion in the same period of 2019.
46. Yields on T-Bills and SAS declined from September 2018 to September 2019. The 3-month, 6-month and 12-month yields on T-Bills fell to 2.7 percent, 6.1 percent and 7.8 percent respectively. Yields on the SAS also declined to 3.4 percent, 6.7 percent and 8.2 percent respectively.
47. The microfinance sector continues to play a significant role in providing finance to low income earners and the active poor in order to ensure sustainable and inclusive growth, through the provision of funds to women through group lending thereby easing their access to finance. On aggregate, total assets grew from D1.1 billion as at end September

2018, to D1.4 billion as at end September 2019, and total loans increased by 33 percent to D283 million in September 2019. Total Deposits and capital recorded a growth of 25 percent and 14 percent respectively between the two review periods.

48. Reflecting improved market conditions and stability in the economy, the Dalasi exchange rate against major currencies has remained relatively stable between September 2018 and September 2019. The Gambian Dalasi appreciated by 2.6 percent and 1.9 percent against the Pound Sterling and the EURO and depreciated against the US Dollar and CFA by 2.5 percent and 0.7 percent over the period under review.
49. With an adequate level of foreign reserve assets and improved current account deficit, supported by lower fiscal deficit, the domestic currency is expected to remain stable and inflationary pressures to dampen.

EXTERNAL SECTOR

50. Preliminary balance of payments estimates for the first nine months of 2019 indicated an overall balance of payments deficit of US\$12.4 million compared to a surplus of US\$13.9 million in the corresponding period of 2018, mainly due to the deterioration of the financial account.
51. The current account balance improved from a deficit of US\$55.6 million in the first nine months of 2018 to a deficit of US\$43.1 million, due to improvements in the services account and current transfers.
52. The goods account balance is estimated at a deficit of US\$286.7 million for the first nine months of 2019 compared to a deficit of US\$252.6 million in the corresponding period of 2018. The widening of the deficit in the goods account was due to higher -imports, reflecting rising economic activity. Although the volume of exports increased as well, it was not large enough to offset the increase in imports, hence the deficit.

53. The surplus in the services account balance surged to US\$74.4 million in the first nine months of 2019 from US\$52.2 million in the same period a year earlier. This reflects the growth in air-chartered tourist arrivals by 22.6 percent over the period.
54. Current transfers, mainly workers' remittances amounted to US\$182.5 million compared to US\$167.2 million in 2018.
55. The capital and financial account balance registered a higher surplus of US\$69.6 million in the first nine months of 2019, from a surplus of US\$40.2 million a year earlier, reflecting the improvement in official transfers and accumulation of reserves.
56. Gross official reserves as at end September 2019, stood at US\$221.8 million (5.5 months of prospective import cover).
57. With an adequate level of foreign reserve assets and improved current account deficit, supported by lower fiscal deficit, the domestic currency is expected to remain stable and inflationary pressures to dampen.

Honourable Speaker,

PRODUCTIVE SECTORS OF THE ECONOMY

AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES SECTOR

58. Annual analysis from National Agriculture Sector Strategy (NASS) estimates that area under cultivation for the six major cereals has been steadily declining from 206,300 hectares in 2018 to 170,130 hectares in 2019. A similar trend is also being observed for groundnut which is also expected to decline from 79,923 hectares in 2018 to 54,348 hectares in 2019.
59. To mitigate the effects of the late rains and poor crop performance in the 2018/2019 rainy season, the National Seed Secretariat (NSS) embarked on a dry season certified rice seed production using rice seed producer groups in the tidal irrigated parameters of Jahally-Pacharr and Niani Sukuta. With support from the Nema Project, 400 tons of certified rice seeds were produced. In the same vein, the matching grant supplied a total of 61 various farming items and 10 irrigation structures to the beneficiaries in the project intervention areas.
60. The Gambia Livestock Marketing Agency (GLMA) carried out construction and rehabilitation works of existing and new slaughter facilities and livestock markets in Gunjur and Janjangbureh to ensure that they meet national food safety and sanitary standards.

FISHERIES AND WATER RESOURCES

61. The Ministry of Fisheries and Water Resources, through support from Saudi Development Fund, has constructed and installed 27 solar-powered piped-water supply systems to serve over 70,000 people in rural communities. Furthermore, the Government of The Gambia in collaboration with United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) continues to provide safe and quality drinking water and basic sanitary facilities to Lower Basic Schools and health centres across the country.

62. Rehabilitation of the only fish hatchery in the country within the Jahaly-Pacharr layout is complete and now capable of producing quality fish. The availability of quality fish seed will open the avenue for aquaculture production in the country. The Ministry in collaboration with FAO is working on the establishment of two fish feed mills.

TOURISM AND CULTURE

63. Tourist arrival numbers for 2018 was quite remarkable, recording a total of 209,135 tourists. In 2019, tourist arrival is expected to grow by 12 percent to 234,231.

64. Conscious of the recent collapse of Thomas Cook and its conceivable negative impact on tourist arrivals for the rest of 2019, significant efforts have been put in place to soften the potential effect. Currently, there are positive developments in the engagements between the tourism stakeholders and other Tour Operators such as TUI UK, Gambia Experience, TAP Portugal, Royal Air Maroc and Brussels Airlines to explore ways of expanding their flights routes to the Gambia. Incentive packages in the form of reduction of landing, parking and ground handling fees has been provided to the tour operators that have increased their routes to Destination Gambia. In particular, Gambia Experience has introduced new flight routes to The Gambia including direct flights from Manchester and Birmingham. TAP Portugal has also confirmed flights to Gambia to three times a week, with a possibility of increasing the frequency in the near future.

65. With the current engagements resulting to new flight additions to bridge the gap left by Thomas Cook, the sector could make a breakthrough and will be on course towards achieving the arrival target of 289,267 tourists for 2020 as envisaged in the NDP.

TRADE, INDUSTRY, REGIONAL INTEGRATION AND EMPLOYMENT

66. At strategic policy and management level, the Ministry has successfully participated in Africa Continent Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) negotiations which has led to its signing and ratification in April 2019. In preparation for the implementation of the AfCFTA, the Ministry sought and obtained assistance from United Nations Economic Commission for

Africa (UNECA) to develop an AfCFTA National Implementation Strategy which is at an advanced stage. The Ministry is also working with United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) to provide support to MSMEs in order for them to benefit from the implementation of the AfCFTA. Additionally, the Ministry with support from Partners will carry out an assessment of the economic potential of the Senegambia Bridge and the subsequent development of trade and tourism hub and Special Economic Zones to optimize the country's benefits from the AfCFTA.

67. To increase trade activities, the Government of The Gambia has identified strategic locations for a Dry Port Facility to be linked to River Transportation, support the decongestion of the Port of Banjul and reduce the adverse impact on our roads.
68. As digitalization and data is increasingly becoming key in the international trade arena, the Government through the Ministry is working on the introduction of an Electronic Cargo Tracking System (ECTS) and a Road Cargo Tracking (RCT) system for transit trade. The tracking systems will enhance revenue mobilization as well as boost the re-export trade.
69. The introduction of these systems would also be beneficial for all operators in the international trade activities- GPA, Importers and GRA. The system will provide the Ports Authority the planning platform on berth management, as real time data is available and accessible on all imports to the Port of Banjul, helping to address some of the Port congestion. On the side of importers and GRA, the ECTS will provide a real time information on the status of their imports through electronic alert system, thus fast-tracking custom clearance time and processes.
70. With regards to the RCT system, it will provide revenue assurance for the GRA as the system ensures that all goods destined for transit exit the Gambian borders, thus

addressing the challenge where transit goods find their way back to Gambian markets without payment of the necessary duties.

71. The Ministry of Trade has collaborated with the Gambia Investments and Export Promotion Agency (GIEPA) and Gambia Chamber of Commerce and Industry (GCCCI) to set up a Business Incubation Centre, which will help enhance capacity in entrepreneurship and leadership skills and create an estimated 500 jobs for youths.
72. GIEPA continues to get support from the Entrepreneurship and Private sector Development Project being funded by United Nations Development Program (UNDP) to conduct entrepreneurship training. This programme has also helped settled returnees reintegrate into Gambian society through the International Organization for Migration (IOM) funded training programme. The trainings were conducted across all 7 regions in the country. Additionally, 245 returnees will be trained after which they will form groups that will be supported by IOM to start business ventures.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION INFRASTRUCTURE

73. The Ministry of Information and Communication Infrastructure (MOICI) is working on transforming The Gambia into a digital nation through the formulation of a National ICT Master-plan, which will serve as a blueprint to guide ICT implementation in the country. The Ministry will also strengthen, review and come up with legislations on Cyber-security and Electronic Evidence, Data Protection and Privacy as well as update the Information and Communication Act, 2009.
74. The infrastructure for the National Broadband Network (NBN) Project was completed in April 2019 and formally commissioned in June 2019. The Project provides an additional 400km of the national fiber optic infrastructure complimenting over 900km already in existence under the ECOWAN project. The NBN is designed to help address the last mile

connectivity and increase access in rural areas. As part of the project, a data center was also established for Gamtel and e-Government Services.

75. Following Cabinet's approval for the liberalization of the International Voice Gateway, the first International Voice Gateway Licenses were issued to Africell and Qcell in August 2019, while the application for Comium is currently being processed. As a requirement for the liberalization, the contract for the monitoring tool was signed in September 2019 and operational; providing revenue assurances and fraud detection systems.
76. MOICI is currently rolling out the Government Wide Area Network (GovNET) to interconnect Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs). The project is geared towards providing intra-government connectivity to facilitate efficient and secure electronic service delivery, as well as to reduce costs and duplications of resources by eliminating redundant internet connections.

TRANSPORT, WORKS & INFRASTRUCTURE

77. The Ministry of Transport, Works and Infrastructure (MoTWI) has secured financing to the tune of US\$50 million from Saudi Fund for Development (SFD) for the construction of 50km of urban roads within the Greater Banjul Area (GBA) in preparation for the forthcoming OIC meeting. The rehabilitation of the identified urban roads through this project will aid in improving traffic conditions through the creation of alternative routes for commuters and road users. The decongestion of the urban road network will enable other service providers to operate efficiently, reduce vehicle operating costs and accident rates.
78. Construction works at the Laminkoto-Passimus Road is at its final stages and expected to be completed in February 2020. This project will complement efforts to link the North and South Bank trunk roads through Basse and Fatoto Bridges which are being constructed under the China-Aid Project. This infrastructure will increase accessibility

to hospitals, schools and markets in the region.

79. Furthermore, the SeneGambia Bridge was fully completed in July 2019 and is now open to all traffic 24 hours a day. Currently the installment of the streetlights is on-going and the construction of the tolling facilities between Jenoi and Beret is being done and expected to be completed by end December 2019 and commissioned in 2020.
80. The Joint Technical Committee (JTC) has agreed to have a One Stop Joint Border Post (OSJBP) built on either side of the border between Gambia and Senegal. The JTC has also agreed that the Gambia would construct the Post in the South at Senoba – Misera and Senegal the Post on the North at Keur Ayip – Keur Ali.
81. During the year under review, significant progress is made in terms of maintaining and rehabilitating some road sections, notably, Bansang Town Loop Road, Janjanbureh Town Road and sections of Essau – Kerewan Highway. Additionally, contracts have been awarded for the maintenance, rehabilitation and reconstruction of Bakoteh - Kotu Highway, Ice Man Road, Dankung Street in Bakau, Brusubi Phase II Access Road, Kanifing Estate and Kololi Gamtel Access Roads.
82. In the area of aviation, Banjul International Airport continues its facelift and capacity expansion in anticipation of the hosting of the Organization of Islamic Countries (OIC) summit in 2022. Ongoing works at the airport include the rehabilitation of the new passenger terminal building, overlay of asphalt pavement on the access road to the terminal building, introduction of common user passenger processing systems, air traffic control tower refurbishment and installation of ultramodern communication equipment in the tower. In February 2019, an ultra-modern cargo complex was commissioned and is fully functional. Upon completion of these works, the Airport will have the capacity to handle up to 500,000 passengers per annum.

PETROLEUM & ENERGY

83. Under the petroleum sector, the Government has successfully completed negotiations which resulted in the signing of a Petroleum Exploration Development and Production License with British Petroleum, increasing the number of licensing operators to three (FAR, PETRONAS and BP).

84. The Gambia, through the Geological Department, continues to collaborate with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) on the development of a legal and regulatory framework of the mining sector. Recently the ECOWAS Model Mining and Minerals Development Act (EMMMDA) has been adopted, with the recommendation that all ECOWAS Member States align their Mining Legislations to this Model Act.

Honourable Speaker,
SOCIAL SECTORS OF THE ECONOMY
BASIC EDUCATION

85. In the Basic Education sector, progress continues to be registered with a significant surge in enrollment at all levels. Lower Basic School enrollment increased from 350,323 in 2018 to 374,962 in 2019, representing an increase in Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) to 119 percent. Similarly, Upper Basic School enrollment increased from 98,108 to 104,554, translating into an increase in GER to 75 percent in 2019. GER at Senior Secondary School level also recorded a similar trend, increasing to 49.4 percent in 2019 as a result of the growth in school enrollment from 64,954 in 2018 to 69,315 in 2019.
86. To ensure improvement in quality education, the sector invested in training and has significantly increased the number of qualified teachers at all levels of schools. At the Lower Basic level, the number of trained and qualified teachers increased from 8,371 to 8,879 between 2018 and 2019. During the same period, Upper and Senior Secondary Schools registered an increase in the number of qualified teachers by 12 percent and 7 percent respectively.
87. As a result of investments in both access and quality of education, the number of students attaining 8 and 9 credits at the West African Senior Secondary Certificate Examinations rose by 33 percent between 2018 and 2019. Similarly, the number of students who achieved the government pass-mark for entry to Senior Secondary Schools at the Gambia Basic Education Certificate Examinations increased from 22,367 to 23,363 between 2018 and 2019.
88. With regards to school feeding, the home-grown school feeding program initiated by the Government is experiencing challenges as the sector is still unable to cover all schools that should benefit from the program, thus posing a threat to access, retention and performance in schools.

HIGHER EDUCATION

89. The Ministry continues its efforts in creating a University of Science, Engineering and Technology (USET), a grant funding to the tune of US\$12 Million, and US\$3.5 Million from the World Bank Regional Project and the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) respectively have been mobilized towards these efforts. These resources will be used to provide equipment, infrastructure and training for the new University. This is part of a regional initiative to be part of the Centres of Excellence identified for collaboration with USET. The Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST) of Ghana has been identified for mentorship to be assisted by De Montfort University of Leicester, UK, to give it international accreditation.
90. Under the programme of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) centre in each Administrative Region, the Ministry has refurbished Julangel Skills Centre in the Upper River Region through funding from Youth Empowerment Project (YEP) and the Government of The Gambia. In the Lower River Region, the Ministry has collaborated with German Development Agency (GIZ) to refurbish the Mansa-Konko Gambia Technical Training Institute (GTTI) Annex which has been inaugurated to run courses. In the West Coast Region, the Ndemban Skills Centre will be revitalized through the assistance of some development partners and the Government to run relevant TVET courses.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL WELFARE

91. The Ministry of Health is in the process of reforming the entire health system with the view to achieving Universal Health Coverage (UHC) as enshrined in the NDP and 2030 Sustainable Development Goals.
92. In 2020, the Government will introduce a National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS). Madam Speaker and Members of the National Assembly, you will agree with me that the most-hard working people in this country are always at risk of not being able to get the

needed medical attention when they or their family members fall sick. This is going to change with the introduction of this insurance scheme.

93. It is worth noting that by January 2020, this great initiative will be rolled out to the public. Currently, the NHIS Bill has been drafted and undergoing rigorous technical reviews by different stakeholders, including development partners. The Bill, when enacted will establish the NHIS Authority which will serve as a governing organ for the scheme. The Authority will further establish Regional Offices across the country to ensure easy access to the services. National Health Insurance Scheme Membership Cards will be prepared by the Authority to enroll beneficiaries into the scheme and this will target both the poor and the vulnerable members of the society.
94. To make the scheme amenable to the needy, it will pay for children under five years of age; persons in need of ante-natal, delivery and post-natal healthcare services; persons living with mental illnesses; differently abled persons; pensioners; the poor; etc.
95. Additionally, Government remains resolute in the provision of free immunization services to all children in The Gambia, and has contributed D32 million for towards immunization services. Currently, the Extended Program on Immunization (EPI) is vaccinating against twelve preventable diseases such as Hepatitis B, Measles, Yellow fever, etc.
96. As part of efforts to revitalize and implement the concept of Primary Health Care in the Gambia, the Ministry has established a Unit that coordinates and monitors all primary healthcare services in the country. Currently, PHC outreach to Villages increased from 634 to 722. This expansion is geared towards strengthening the provision of healthcare services at a basic level.
97. To improve nutrition in maternal and child health, the Ministry of Health in collaboration with Ministry of Agriculture is implementing a Maternal and Child Nutrition and Health

Results Project (MCNHRP). Furthermore, the Baby Friendly Community Initiative (BFCI), a comprehensive nutrition and health programme has expanded to 91 communities to now cover 1,032 communities. The Project has supported the Ministry to develop a Results Based Financing (RBF) Sustainable Plan and a Programme Operational Manual for moving the MCNHRP from a project to a programme in order to strengthen the health sector. The project has also supported 2,400 vulnerable households to build their resilience against food insecurity with an accompanying cash transfer for a period of 12 months.

98. In the area of social protection, the Government successfully negotiated a grant of US\$31 million from the World Bank for a Social Safety Net Project beginning September 2019. This project aims to specifically improve the coordination of social assistance activities as well as increasing inclusiveness of the extreme poor. A social registry will be established to facilitate the proper targeting of the extremely poor and vulnerable. Once established, cash transfers will be made to those identified vulnerable groups to ensure that the assistance reaches the most deserving groups in our society.
99. The National Farmers' Association (NAFA) Cash Project is an Unconditional Cash Transfer Scheme that will be implemented over a period of three years. The project seeks to reach a target population of 15,600 extreme poor households who will be selected by using a Proxi-Means Test and Community validation in the poorest 20 districts of The Gambia.

YOUTH & SPORTS

100. As our nation population continues to grow, an estimated 65 percent are considered as youth. The youth population is deemed as the most productive segment of society and are a critical stakeholder group in the national development process. The Ministry is working to promote youth empowerment and sports development by reorganizing and restructuring the sub-sector and reviewing some of the main sector policies. As a result, the sub-sector has witnessed increased priority from the Government.

101. With Support from the UN System, the National Youth Council (NYC) has established the Children National Assembly with various program session already been conducted. The Council has also conducted multiple sensitization fora across the country on the illegal and harmful practices of Female Genital Mutilation and Cutting (FGM/C).
102. As part of efforts to strengthen youth skills and entrepreneurship development, the National Youth Service Scheme (NYSS) has recruited over 600 youth for skills acquisition in various areas. To further support these efforts, the National Enterprise Development Initiative (NEDI) has established 14 youth agricultural centers, through which about 700 youth and women have been trained, mentored and supported to showcase their products during the GCCI Trade Fair earlier this year.
103. On sporting, significant achievements have been registered this year. The Gambia's very own Gina Bass won Gold Medal in the All African Games in Morocco. Our National Football Team, the Scorpions, won their game against Angola and are currently at the top of their Group in preparation for the Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON) in 2021. The Ministry will increase its efforts to help the Gambia Football Federation and other sporting bodies in the development of various activities and support to the athletes.

Honourable Speaker,
CROSS CUTTING SECTORS

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

104. The Gambia continues to expand its diplomatic cooperation with other friendly nations around the world, with a view towards re-establishing relations with our strategic partners. It is in this light, the country received two high profile dignitaries from the People's Republic of China and the Republic of India.
105. The People's Republic of China's Minister of Foreign Affairs, H.E State Councilor Wang Yi visited The Gambia as part of efforts to further strengthen bilateral cooperation and partnership between the two countries. The visit re-iterated the People's Republic of China's support for the Gambian Government in the development of priority areas such as Trade, Energy, Telecommunications, Health and Agriculture, which are within the framework of the Forum for China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC). In June of this year, the two countries signed an Agreement on Economic and Technical Cooperation, with the People's Republic of China providing the Government with a grant of US\$47 million for the implementation of NDP priority projects.
106. In August 2019, H.E Ram Nath Kovind, President of the Republic of India, visited The Gambia in a bid to boost bilateral relations between the two countries. As part of the visit, the Government of the Republic of India renewed its commitment to support our national development agenda. The Government of the Republic of India has agreed to provide short-term training programs and scholarships, capacity building for the civil service, and a grant pledge to the tune of US\$500,000 for NDP priority spending. Additionally, approval was given for the implementation of a solar project to cover 300 homes and 20 water pumps systems for rural villages in The Gambia.
107. The Government of Senegal continues to provide vital support to the Gambia's security sector through its participation with ECOMIG and capacity building provided to the Gambian Military.

108. Following the postponement of the hosting of the OIC Summit, our partners in the Middle East such as Saudi Arabia and Turkey have renewed their commitment to support The Gambia to host the Summit in 2022. Turkey and Kuwait continue to fund infrastructure projects and provide capacity building in key areas. The Government has recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Government of the United Arab Emirates in areas such as manpower development and the protection of investments. The Kingdom of Morocco continues to support the Government in various areas of capacity building and has almost completed the construction of the new office building for the Ministry.
109. With regards to the Gambian Diaspora, the Government is working to implement programs such as direct investment schemes and issuance of diaspora bonds which will enable them to successfully contribute to national development. I urge all Gambians in the Diaspora to actively part-take in the national development agenda.
110. Given the pressure foreign missions pose on the budget, the Ministry is reviewing the Foreign Service with a view to downsizing and rationalizing Foreign Missions. The exercise is expected to result in a leaner, more professional Foreign Service and make it more responsive to our geopolitical development needs.

INTERIOR

111. On domestic security, the Government continues to implement the National Security Sector Reform Agenda to better respond to the needs of the citizens. Once completed, these reforms will provide the much-needed capacity and professionalism in our national security apparatus. It is in this light that Government has recently completed and launched both the National Security Sector Strategy and Policy, which will guide the implementation of the Security Sector Reform.

112. The Gambia Police is intensifying its efforts to expand community policing through the construction of stations in Salagi, Sukuta Nema and Gunjur. Additionally, the police will increase its collaboration with the communities in gathering timely intelligence data as well as expand regular patrols in crime hotspots.
113. In preparation of the hosting of the OIC conference, the Gambia Police Force (GPF) placed great importance in capacity building and through this commitment, partnerships with Germany, Turkey, France, Spain, Sweden and Egypt, trained more than 40 police officers in investigation techniques, public order management, statement taking and analysis, counter-terrorism, and protection of human rights.

LANDS, REGIONAL GOVERNMENT AND RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS

114. The Ministry of Lands, Regional Government and Religious Affairs continues to promote good governance and empowering citizens through decentralization and local governance. The Ministry, through the Department of Community Development and Directorate of Local Governance, has supported the assessment and establishment of decentralized structures. To this end, 516 Village Development Committees (VDCs) and 30 Ward Development Committees (WDCs) have been established in the LRR and URR in accordance with the Local Government Act. A Local Government Financial Advisory Committee has also been set up to advise the Minister on all matters concerning the distribution of revenue from the central government to the councils as per the Finance and Audit Act of 2004.
115. Major activities of the Department of Community Development in the coming fiscal year 2020 would be in the area of capacity building of decentralized structures, Local Climate Adaptive Living (LoCAL), Social Safety Net cash transfer program and Rural Development Institute training programs. These programmes will cover the development of functional monitoring and evaluation systems, conduct sensitization workshop on NGO/Government Policy Dialogue, and update physical development plans for the GBA, Brikama, Farafenni, and Basse. Additionally, the Department will

prepare physical development plans for the new identified growth centers in Barra, Essau, Soma, Brikamba, Kuntaur, Bansang and their respective environments.

MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE CHANGE AND NATURAL RESOURCES

116. Community-based forest management has emerged in the past decade as an effective approach for the management of tree and forest resources. It is in this endeavour that over 2,750 hectares of forest parks were transformed into a Joint Forest Park Management (JFPM) with the support of the Dry Land Forest Management Project. The Action Against Desertification (ADD) Project has also transformed an area of 3,154 hectares to JFPM and the Nema-Chosso Project has put over 863 hectares under community forest management. As at now, about 533 communities are into community forestry, managing over 50,000 hectares of forest land.

NATIONAL DISASTER MANAGEMENT AGENCY

117. The National Disaster Management Agency's (NDMA) mandate in the NDP is to ensure that by 2021 The Gambia should have a National Centralized Early Warning System in place, and this was achieved through support of the World Food Programme (WFP). The objective is to strengthen the National Early Warning Systems on multiple sectors such as Food Security, Trade, Economy, Health, Disasters, and Climate Services to reduce the impact of disasters in the country.

118. During the year under review, the NDMA has launched two very important projects to strengthen the capacity of the country in early warning and building the resilience capacity of the country. These projects are the Use of Drones and Early Warning System for Pre-and Post-Floods Disaster Management which is aimed at contributing to poverty alleviation and reducing flood risk and vulnerabilities as well as increasing flood disaster resilience of the population.

119. The second project, the Africa Disaster Risk Financing (ADRFi) program aims to contribute to the achievement of the NDP by promoting environmental sustainability, climate resilient communities with appropriate land use, capacity building on data collection and food security during drought season.
120. Outreach on Regional and National Sensitization on the Sendai Framework was conducted with the support from UNDP with a technical support from the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) and the African Union Commission DRR Unit. The activity was to measure the progress of the Implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 and the Programme of Action in the Implementation of Sendai by the African Union with stakeholders and to further help in the reporting mechanisms at the national level on the Sendai Framework.

WOMEN AND CHILDREN'S AFFAIRS

121. As part of efforts to alleviate some of the challenges facing women, the Government has established the Women Entrepreneurship Fund (WEF) – totaling D200 million of which D6 million is allocated from the domestic capital budget as counterpart contribution to the EU support. The fund will be used to increase the productivity potential of women entrepreneurs especially in rural regions. Furthermore, the fund will provide a platform for productive, sustainable and inclusive economic growth for women entrepreneurship, thus reducing the vulnerability of our women in society.

INSTITUTIONAL STRENGTHENING

JUSTICE

122. The Government continues to make good on its desire to lay a solid foundation for good governance, democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights. Accordingly, the Constitutional, Institutional and Legal reforms as well as the Transitional Justice Project are well underway in line with the NDP.
123. Since their appointment into office, the Constitutional Review Commission has commenced work in earnest with nationwide public consultations. This was followed by external consultations with Gambians in the Diaspora who have played and continue to play a very pivotal role in the socio-economic and political development of our nation. A draft of the Constitution has been circulated for reviews and comments by the general public. In 2020, the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) will conduct a referendum on the draft Constitution.
124. It is expected that at the end of the constitutional review exercise, Gambians will be presented with a Constitution that will inter alia, be founded on a republican system of governance, including its democratic values and respect and promotion of the rule of law and fundamental rights and freedoms of all persons as well as the introduction of term limits for the Office of the President.
125. The Truth, Reconciliation & Reparations Commission (TRRC) commenced its sittings in January 2019 to document an impartial historical record of violations and abuses of human rights from July 1994 to January 2017 and recommend reparations for the victims. The TRRC continues to make very good progress with a number of perpetrators and victims finally given the chance to give account of their stories and pave the way for national reconciliation.
126. The first ever National Human Rights Commission was established in 2018 and became operational in 2019. The Commission has started its work in earnest and

Gambians now have an alternative and affordable avenue to seek redress for human rights violations in the country.

127. In line with the aspiration to foster good governance and combat corruption, the Anti-Corruption Bill has been finalized and is expected to be tabled before this National Assembly by December 2019. The Bill seeks to establish an Anti-Corruption Commission and provide effective measures for the eradication, suppression and prevention of corruption and corrupt practices in The Gambia. With the expected passage of the bill, the Anti-Corruption Commission will be functional in 2020.
128. In line with the commitment of the Government to sanitize our criminal justice system and to ensure a conducive environment for the media, a comprehensive reform program has been initiated to review and redraft our criminal legislation and to repeal all draconian media laws in line with international best practices. It is expected that in December this year, the Criminal Code and Criminal Procedure Code Bills, Mutual Legal Assistance Bill, Media Services Bill, Freedom of Information Bill and the Information and Communications (amendment) Bill will also be tabled before this August Assembly.
129. As part of its obligation under the International Human Rights Treaty Bodies, The Gambia is expected to file periodic reports on the state of implementation of these treaties. Consequently, in April 2019, The Gambia submitted its human rights report on the African Charter on Human & People's Rights to the African Commission for the first time since 1994. The Gambia also submitted its national report under the Universal Periodic Review before the Human Rights Council in Geneva in November 2019.

PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT OFFICE

130. The Personnel Management Office (PMO) continues to actively pursue the implementation of the Civil Service Reform Programme 2018-2027 in collaboration with relevant stakeholders. One critical and compelling building block in the reform process is the provision of adequate and relevant capacity at all levels for necessary institutional strengthening in a bid to reposition the public service to better discharge its mandate.
131. To achieve the above, the Office has already conducted a comprehensive nationwide Staff Audit, launched a Capacity Needs Assessment and Capacity Development Strategy and developed a new performance appraisal tool for the public service.
132. Going forward in 2020 and beyond, PMO will introduce an Electronic Records Management System that is currently being piloted in certain MDAs.
133. In further pursuance of the Civil Service Reform Programme in 2020, a Staff Inspection Exercise will be conducted to address the proliferation of public sector entities with overlap of roles and functions, a job evaluation exercise will be concluded leading to a new pay and grading system. PMO will also finalise job descriptions in order to facilitate the implementation of the Performance Appraisal System.
134. To improve the living standards of pensioners and create a financially sustainable scheme for pensions, the 1950 Pensions Act will be finally repealed, and the implementation of the new Pensions Act is set to commence in 2020 leading to the establishment of a Pensions Directorate at the PMO for a more efficient Pensions Management and Administration System.
135. To further improve the Human Resource Management System in the Civil Service, the PMO is set to implement the Human Resources Management Module in the Integrated Financial Management Information System (IFMIS) to ensure a real-time data

on personnel is available at all times and improve planning on personnel management system.

OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN

136. In line with sections 1(2) and 3(b) of the Ombudsman Act 1997, the Office will continue to visit prisons and other places of detention to ensure that prisoners and detainees are kept in a conducive environment and report to Government its findings and make appropriate recommendations.

137. On Asset Declaration in line with section 223 of the 1997 Constitution, the Office will ensure that by 2020 all senior officers in the public sector and parastatals declare their assets in a bid to aid accountability, transparency and promote integrity within the public sector.

FINANCIAL INTELLIGENCE UNIT

138. In the course of 2019, the FIU in collaboration with Inter-Governmental Action Group against Money Laundering in West Africa (GIABA) and the EU organized a series of workshops aimed at harmonizing the implementation of preventive measures on Money Laundering for Real Estate companies, Financial Institutions, Lawyers, Accountants, other Legal practitioners, Notaries, and dealers in precious stones and metals.

139. In August 2019, the FIU also conducted a National Sensitization Seminar for high-level religious leaders and institutions on implementing Anti-Money Laundering and Counter-Financing of Terrorism (AML/CFT) measures and a workshop on Money Laundering and Terrorism Financing Risk Assessment for reporting entities.

140. To ensure compliance, the Central Bank of The Gambia and the FIU jointly conducted on-site examinations on nine commercial Banks in the country to assess their AML/CFT frameworks and ensure that preventive measures such as internal controls,

customer due diligence, record keeping and transaction monitoring are effectively implemented.

GAMBIA PUBLIC PROCUREMENT AUTHORITY

141. The Government of The Gambia spends about D5 billion on the procurement of public goods, works and services per annum in recent years, of which between 10-25 percent is prone to corruption due to human interference. The Government is working to put in place a procurement system that will ensure more transparent and efficient acquisition of public goods, works and services.
142. The introduction of an Electronic Government Procurement (E-GP) system will be done in all MDAs with a view to ensuring transparency, competitiveness, reduce human interference, and allow for easier detection of irregularities and corruption in the public procurement processes. The capacity of GPPA staff will be enhanced and the laws governing procurement will be modernized to make the Authority a one stop shop for procurement.
143. The Authority, with the support of the AfDB is working on having an integrated platform with the IFMIS in order to ensure improvement in data analytics, enforcement of tax rules in public procurement, and assist in general Know Your Customer of suppliers and contractors.
144. The Commodity Price Reference Index which is to be finalized with the support of GBoS, will require a Government Policy document giving effect to operationalize the database. This price referencing document for all commonly consumed goods and services will be available on the GPPA Web Site and will guide GPPA staff, procurement officers and approving Accounting Officers to determine the range of prices available in the market. In addition, the database will be of interest to international suppliers, especially those interested in exploring business opportunities in The Gambia.

145. The Authority will continue to engage relevant stakeholders in policy dialogue for procurement strategies that will empower SMEs including women, youth and persons with disability by giving them more opportunities to do business with Government.

GAMBIA BUREAU OF STATISTICS

146. The Gambia Bureau of Statistics (GBoS) has conducted a Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS), which was launched in September 2019, has become the largest source of international statistically comparable data essential for developing evidence-based policies and programmes for monitoring progress towards national goals and global commitments.
147. The MICS contains several key indicators relating to maternal, new-born and adolescent morbidity and mortality, access to safe and improved water, sanitation, nutritional status, education and disability which are very useful in tracking progress in the implementation of the NDP.
148. The Integrated Household Survey (IHS) is one of the most important sources of statistical data on household expenditure and income, housing status, individual and household characteristics, and living conditions. Not only does it provide indicators to measure specific economic and social issues, the IHS is the only source of data on monetary poverty in The Gambia and also provides estimates for indicators at district level.
149. GBoS is planning to conduct another Economic Census and Integrated Business Establishment Survey in 2020 with 2019 as the new-base year, replacing the current 2013 base year. The information obtained from this exercise will be relevant for the development of the business register that will be used as a sampling frame for further economic surveys, as well as update and facilitate the industrial coding of the taxpayers' database. Furthermore, it will serve as a new benchmark for the compilation and production of both the annual and quarterly GDP.

150. The implementation of these activities has been motivated by the need to address comprehensive data requirements for constructing the Supply and Use Table which is also one of the milestones required to comply with the 2008 System of National Account (SNA).

PUBLIC FINANCE MANAGEMENT

151. The Internal Audit Directorate (IAD) continues to strengthen the internal audit function and Public Financial Management (PFM) reforms. There has been a considerable increase in the number of internal audit staff, and MDAs have an internal audit post or coverage by the IAD. Internal Audit quarterly reports are reviewed by the Audit Committee which has independent membership and oversight.

152. As part of the on-going PFM reforms, the Government has embarked on implementing the upgrade of the IFMIS to EPICOR 10. The implementation of EPICOR 10 is expected to be completed by end of December 2019 and will be operational in January 2020. The upgrade comes with additional modules that are designed to further improve the operational efficiency and comprehensiveness of government.

153. The new system is fully web-based and will be rolled out to all donor-funded projects, Sub-Treasuries and Embassies. This would enable the Accountant General to consolidate all donor-funded operations into the Government Financial Statements, thus enhancing its comprehensiveness and allow for the timely preparation and production of government financial statements.

154. The Government has started the process of implementing a Treasury Single Account (TSA) which requires that all government bank accounts to be consolidated at the Central Bank of The Gambia. This would allow Government to have access to public funds for budget execution while at the same time safeguarding third party funds and reduce the need to resort to expensive borrowing, as on a real-time basis, Government

knows the full account of its resource envelope for better expenditure planning and borrowing.

155. As part of Government's initiative to digitalize the economy, MoFEA has initiated the process towards automating the revenue collection process. Discussions on the establishment of a Government payment switch are currently on-going. Various options for revenue collection would be explored, including online payments, direct bank transfers and Mobile Money. The objective is to ensure that all Government revenue is collected electronically, which would greatly enhance collections and eliminate possible leakages.
156. As a measure to curtail leakages in revenue collection and digitalize our economy, the payment of all government services and collection of revenue will take place only at commercial banks or by use of other approved payment platforms and services which will only be granted on the production of proof of payment. This measure which requires full operationalization of the TSA will enter into force in 2020.
157. On other PFM Reforms, Cash Management, MDAs' Budget and Audit Implementation Committees have all been formed and operational. These systems tasks Ministries to reflect carefully on their priorities before submitting their Cash Plans to the MoFEA and ensure timely implementation of audit recommendations.
158. In order to help rationalize taxes, a Tax Advisory Committee (TAC) will be established in 2020, comprising of professionals in tax and economic policy and a solid background in finance. The TAC will henceforth be advising the Government on tax policy issues.

Honourable Speaker,

SOE REFORM

159. On the State-Owned Enterprise (SOE) reform agenda, the Government embarked on a holistic approach of assessing the financial viability and corporate governance of SOEs. The audit is structured into two phases, with the seven most vulnerable SOEs (NAWEC, GAMTEL, GAMCEL, SSHFC, GPA, GNPC and GCAA) audited in the first phase, whilst the second phase will cover the remaining seven (GIA, AMRC, GAMPOST, NFSMC, GRTS and GPPC).
160. With the support of the World Bank, the first phase of the audit has been completed and the report revealed significant corporate and financial vulnerabilities of the audited SOEs. Poor governance, weak financial management and frequent state interventions has contributed to the wider financial issues faced by these SOEs.
161. The audits have assessed the historic, current control and governance environments, the strength of current operational practices, and the robustness of the reported financial position. The work also aimed to identify the magnitude, frequency and channels of historic fund diversions or leakages. The exercise has revealed significant gaps in the availability of underlying source documents across SOEs on governance, debt issuances and contractual agreements caused by a combination of human and system weaknesses.
162. The above challenges have led to a breakdown in the accounting cycle, assets overstatement, fundamental accounting errors and incorrect accounting treatments distorting SOEs balance sheets.
163. The Government is taking steps to examine the historic issues, assess the current situation and build a structure that will ensure the viability and efficiency of these SOEs. In order to address these challenges, the Government has defined five strategic reform actions:

- Limit government interference;
- Ensure SOEs have complete and exclusive control of their financial resources and bank accounts;
- Monitor large procurement contracts and ensure compliance with GPPA regulations
- Encourage open comments on SOEs performance; and
- Create a clean opening balance sheet relevant to the SOEs and consistent with corporate governance and financial viability framework.

164. In complementing the above actions, Government will also provide SOEs with a success factor matrix that seeks to address the lapses and challenges highlighted in the audit exercise. This matrix will cover the following:

- Clearly defining the commercial and socio-economic objective of each SOE;
- Establish effective governance and leadership structure;
- Embark on financial restructuring of SOEs;
- Establish effective accounting functions and clear accounting policies; and
- Implement an integrated information system across SOEs.

Honourable Speaker,

FISCAL OUTLOOK FOR 2020

REVENUE

165. Total Revenue and Grants for 2020 is estimated at D24.5 billion (25 percent of GDP), a 3.2 percent fall from D25.3 billion (29 percent of the GDP) budgeted in 2019. Tax revenue is projected to grow in nominal terms to D11.6 billion (11.8 percent of GDP) in 2020, compared to D10.4 billion (11.9 percent of GDP) budgeted in 2019. Non-tax revenue is anticipated to increase to a budget of D2.0 billion in 2020, compared to a budget of D1.5 billion in 2019.
166. Grant inflows is expected to decline during the 2020 fiscal year to D10.8 billion (11 percent of the GDP) in 2020 compared to D13.4 billion (15.3 percent of the GDP) in 2019. In 2020, project grants and budget support are budgeted at D8.1 billion and D2.7 billion respectively.

EXPENDITURE

167. Total expenditure is expected to decline by 1.7 percent from D28.8 billion in 2019 (33 percent of GDP) to D28.3 billion (28.8 percent of GDP) in 2020. This drop is due to the 9.3 percent decline in the other current expenditure sub-component which was large enough to offset the increases in other expenditure sub-components. Other current expenditure is budgeted at D18.2 billion in 2020 compared to D20.1 billion in 2019.
168. Personnel expenditure will increase slightly from D4.2 billion in 2019 to D4.5 billion budgeted in 2020. Interest expenditure is also projected to record an increase from D2.7 billion in 2019 to D2.9 billion in 2020. Domestic interest payments is expected to fall slightly from D2.3 billion in 2019 to D2.2 billion in 2020. On the other hand, external interest payment is projected to increase to D0.69 billion in 2020 from D0.42 billion in 2019. Capital expenditure is projected to increase significantly from D1.9 billion in 2019 to D2.8 billion in 2020. This is due to the need for Government to embark on capital development to further increase progress on the NDP.

169. Governments' fiscal deficit is projected to increase slightly from a deficit of D3.5 billion (4 percent of GDP) in 2019 to a budgeted deficit of D3.9 billion (3.9 percent of GDP) in 2020.

REVENUE ADMINISTRATION

170. The Gambia Revenue Authority (GRA) is committed to improving its service delivery at all levels in order to make compliance easy and cost effective. In this drive, GRA continues to use strategic planning as an important tool to guide its reforms and modernization agenda, leveraging on available ICT infrastructure in the country to simplify its business processes and procedures for better compliance management and revenue maximization.
171. Over the course of the year, the Authority embarked on a reform action plan to address the weaknesses identified in the 2018 Tax Administration Diagnostic Assessment Tool (TADAT) Report by the IMF. Some of the key recommendations were the enhancement of the GAMTAXNET, the cleaning of the taxpayer register, the reconstruction of the taxpayer ledgers, and issuance of Tax Identification Number (TIN) Certificates for free among others. So far, significant progress has been registered in the implementation of these reforms.
172. The Authority also embarked on the review and update of a number of its revenue laws to modernize and strengthen them for improved compliance management and reduced compliance costs.
173. In the area of custom valuation, the GRA is at an advanced stage of upgrading the current ASYCUDA++ to ASYCUDA World which allows for a web based system that ensures remote access to the platform by all custom stations across the country, but more importantly enhance the clearance times of clearing agents as they may not need to come to GRA to perform their declaration which can be done anywhere with the availability of internet. This will go a long way in reducing the time required to clear goods from the Port of Banjul, thus improving our competitiveness.

Honorable Speaker,
REVENUE MEASURES 2020

174. Commencing 1st January 2020, the following revenue measures will be implemented:
175. All beneficiaries of tax exemptions or waivers **MUST** pay custom processing fees.
176. In addition to the current sports levy of US\$0.02 (two cents) per minute on all international incoming calls into the country, government will allocate its share of 30 percent from the receipts of the international gateway resources to youth and sports development.
177. Tax exemption for diplomats will **ONLY** be granted to internationally accredited missions in The Gambia (covered by Vienna Convention 1961) and Gambian Government officials returning from diplomatic postings from Gambian Missions Abroad (covered by the FSR 2001).
178. Customs processing fees will be charged at the rate of 1.5 percent, whilst the ECOWAS Levy will be reduced to 0.5 percent.
179. MoFEA will **NOT HONOUR** any tax exemption agreements entered into between MDAs and other parties without the prior review and written approval by the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs.
180. Duty exemption forms are revised as follow:
- Diplomatic missions from D1,000 to D2,000
 - Returning diplomats from D1,000 to D2,500
 - Government Projects from D1,500 to D5,000
 - NGO's and Religious Institutions from D1,000 to D5,000

181. In the case of excise regime on tobacco products, we will:
- a. Increase the specific excise tax on cigarettes from D20/pack in 2019 to D25/pack in 2020
 - b. Increase the environmental tax on cigarettes from D2.66/pack in 2019 to D2.93/pack in 2020
 - c. Increase the excise tax on other tobacco products from D330/kg in 2019 to D363/kg in 2020, and
 - d. Increase the environmental tax on other tobacco products from D165/kg in 2019 to D175/kg in 2020.
182. Value Added Tax (VAT) registration threshold will be increased from D1 million to D2 million beginning January 2020. The current threshold of D1 million was set in 2012 when the VAT was introduced. However, due partly to the impact of inflation, the real value of the threshold has significantly reduced over the years which has necessitated the adjustment in order to ensure that only taxpayers whose business turnover are sufficiently large to absorb the cost of compliance are registered for VAT.
183. The Government will adjust and re-align some of the stamp duty rates, especially those relating to real assets and financial instruments and securities. The adjustments will help reduce the cost of transacting and documenting real and financial assets and reduce the cost of doing business and the cost of borrowing, whilst also reducing the incentives to misclassify instruments purposely to evade the applicable duty rates.

DOCUMENT	CURRENT RATE	NEW RATE
Memorandum of Deposit	D100.00	0.5%
Lease Agreement	20%	2%
Tenancy Agreement	20%	2%
Assignment / Conveyance	5%	2%
Bill of Sale	5%	2%
Transfer of Shares	5%	2%
Debenture	5%	2%
Mortgage	1.5%	0.5%
Further Charges	1.5%	0.5%
Surrender and Release	1.5%	D500.00
Under lease	2.1%	2%
Guarantee	0	0.75%

Honourable Speaker,

CONCLUSION

184. The current fiscal year has been prioritized on strengthening fiscal consolidation, restoring macroeconomic stability and implementing institutional reforms. Great strides have been made in improving resource mobilization, achieving progress on the priority areas set out in the NDP and making the business environment more conducive for the private sector to thrive.
185. As stated in my introductory remarks, the Government is renewing its commitment to improving the living conditions of all Gambians. Freedom and political space is enlarged for Gambians to conduct their lives and businesses within the existing laws of the land. The reforms in governance are being executed and infrastructure development is being greatly boosted. Additionally, other investments are being made to further spur economic growth and provide the necessary jobs and income needed to alleviate poverty. Farmers are given the attention they deserve with the provision of inputs like fertilizer, and their produce, in particular groundnuts will be purchased on time. In fact, both fertilizers and groundnut producer prices are being subsidized to encourage higher output and incomes from farming.
186. Furthermore, Government is aware of the sufferings of the vulnerable groups in our society and has designed appropriate intervention programmes to help improve their lives and livelihoods. These include the Social Protection Project and the National Health Insurance Scheme to name a few.
187. Although Government's efforts to reduce our public debt levels have brought about some positive results, it still remains on an unsustainable path at 81.5 percent of GDP. Government will continue its on-going efforts of debt relief with its Development Partners to help further reign in our debt level in 2020 and will in the medium-term work to ensure that debt levels are further reduced to a sustainable path.

188. In 2020, we will continue to build on the gains and efforts made in 2019, and further strengthen our institutional reforms to ensure that our public institutions and SOEs are able to run efficiently and deliver quality services.
189. The Government will continue to build on the momentum achieved this year and ensure that efforts to meet the targets in the NDP are further strengthened. In fact, Government has decided to pilot the Emergency Community Development Programme to ensure that NDP programmes that relate to rural development is put on a fast track mode.
190. We call on the private sector and our Development Partners to join in on these efforts to ensure that even greater achievements are made in the coming year. I would like to use this opportunity to thank all our Development Partners who have accompanied The Gambia over the years. It is in this regard that I extend special gratitude to the European Union, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the United Nations Development Program, the African Development Bank, the Islamic Development Bank, the Arab Bank for Economic Development, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Saudi Fund, the State of Kuwait and Kuwaiti Fund, the Republic of France, Germany, Turkey, the People's Republic of China, the Republic of India, Qatar, the United States of America, the United Kingdom and the Holland Foundation.
191. The Gambia continues to receive support from its multilateral partners such at the United Nations, the African Union, ECOWAS, the European Union and others to compliment Government's effort in implementing its economic reform and security sector agenda; and the on-going transitional justice.
192. The Gambia Government wishes to also thank the Government and the people of the Republics of Nigeria, Ghana and Senegal who contributed troops and logistical support to ECOMIG. The Government will continue to strengthen bilateral cooperation with all the countries in the sub-region, multilaterally through ECOWAS, and also regionally with the other African countries through the African Union.

193. With continued determination, I am hopeful that we will continue to move this country on a path of poverty reduction and sustained economic growth and prosperity which will be inclusive and impact the lives of every Gambian.

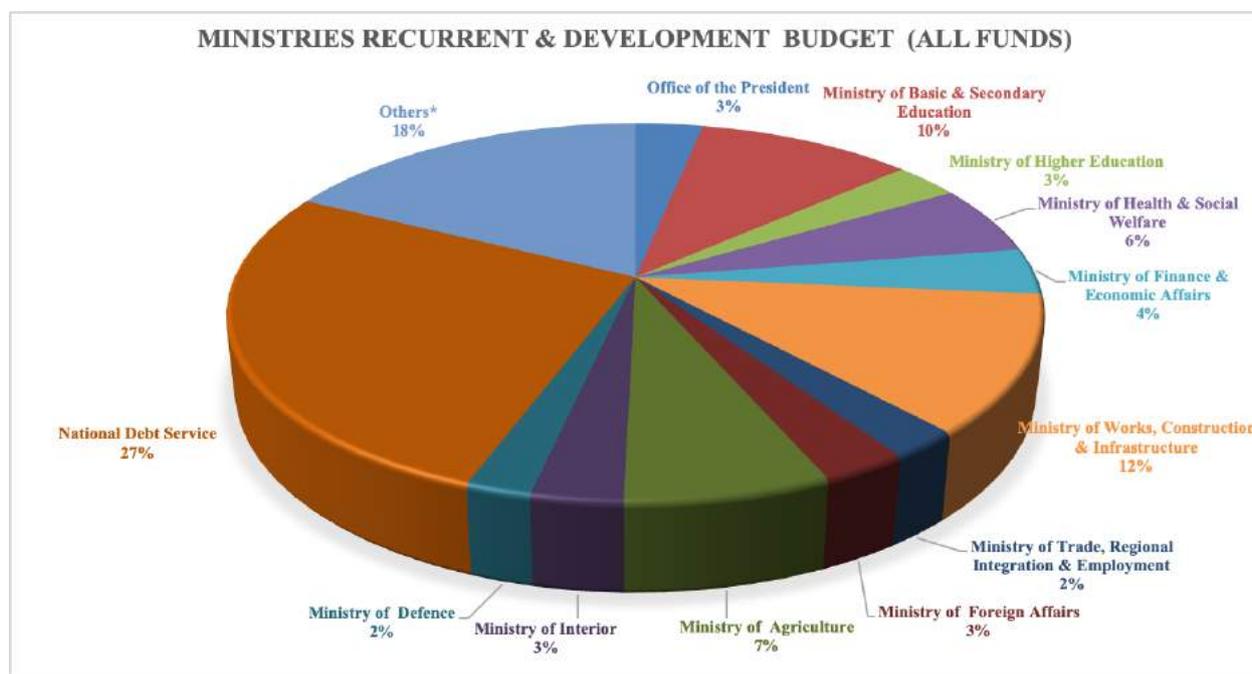
On this note, Honourable Speaker, I beg to move.

ANNEX¹

SECTOR ALLOCATION FOR 2020 BUDGET

	D' Millions	% of Total
Office of the President	1,124.37	3.20
Ministry of Basic & Secondary Education	3,602.14	10.24
Ministry of Higher Education	1,097.76	3.12
Ministry of Health & Social Welfare	2,095.44	5.96
Ministry of Finance & Economic Affairs	1,380.65	3.92
Ministry of Works, Construction & Infrastructure	4,134.15	11.75
Ministry of Trade, Regional Integration & Employment	842.17	2.39
Ministry of Foreign Affairs	1,015.63	2.89
Ministry of Agriculture	2,431.55	6.91
Ministry of Interior	1,084.98	3.08
Ministry of Defence	773.60	2.20
National Debt Service	9,431.40	26.81
Others*	6,167.94	17.53
Total	35,181.78	100.00

*Others: Ministries not listed above

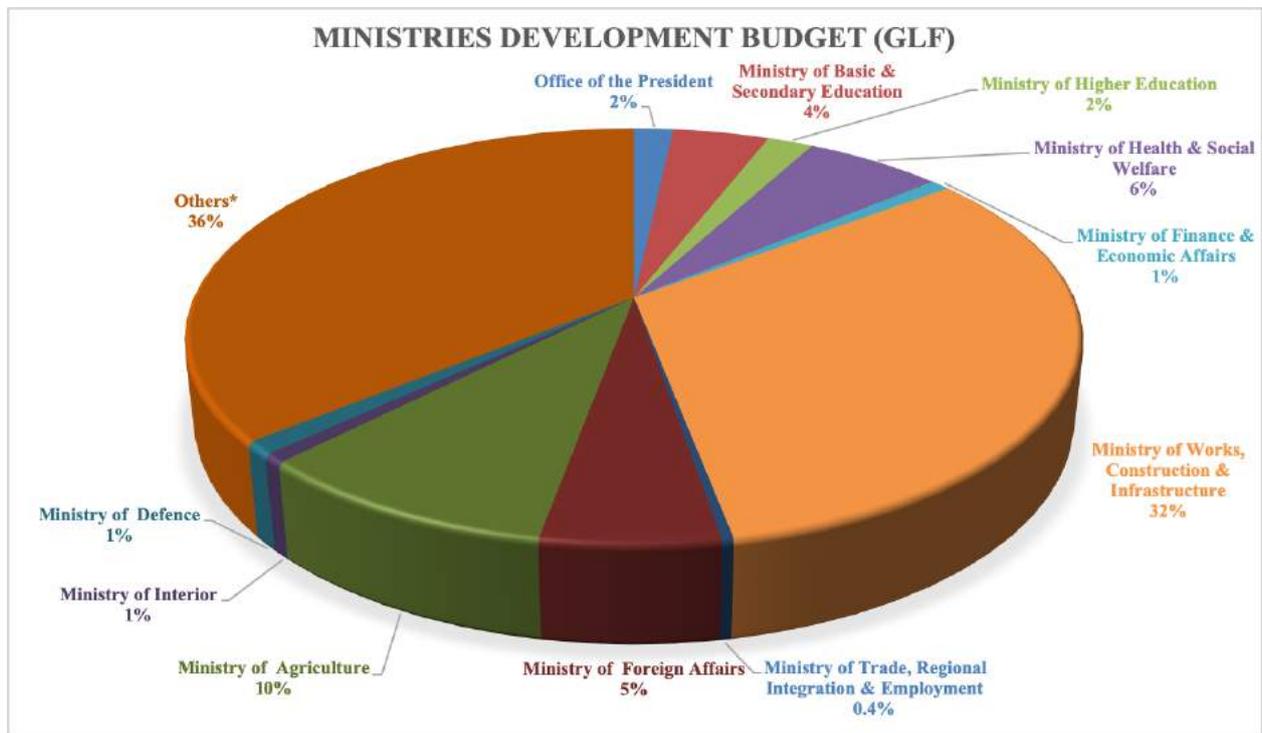


¹ Figures in Tables & Pie Charts are based on the 2020 National Assembly Draft Budget Estimates

MINISTRIES DEVELOPMENT BUDGET ALLOCATION FOR 2019 (GLF)

	D' Millions	% of Total
Office of the President	30.10	1.7
Ministry of Basic & Secondary Education	73.99	4.2
Ministry of Higher Education	34.90	2.0
Ministry of Health & Social Welfare	106.00	6.0
Ministry of Finance & Economic Affairs	15.04	0.8
Ministry of Works, Construction & Infrastructure	576.44	32.4
Ministry of Trade, Regional Integration & Employment	6.42	0.4
Ministry of Foreign Affairs	97.00	5.5
Ministry of Agriculture	168.49	9.5
Ministry of Interior	12.53	0.7
Ministry of Defence	17.80	1.0
Others*	640.00	36.0
Total	1,778.69	100.0

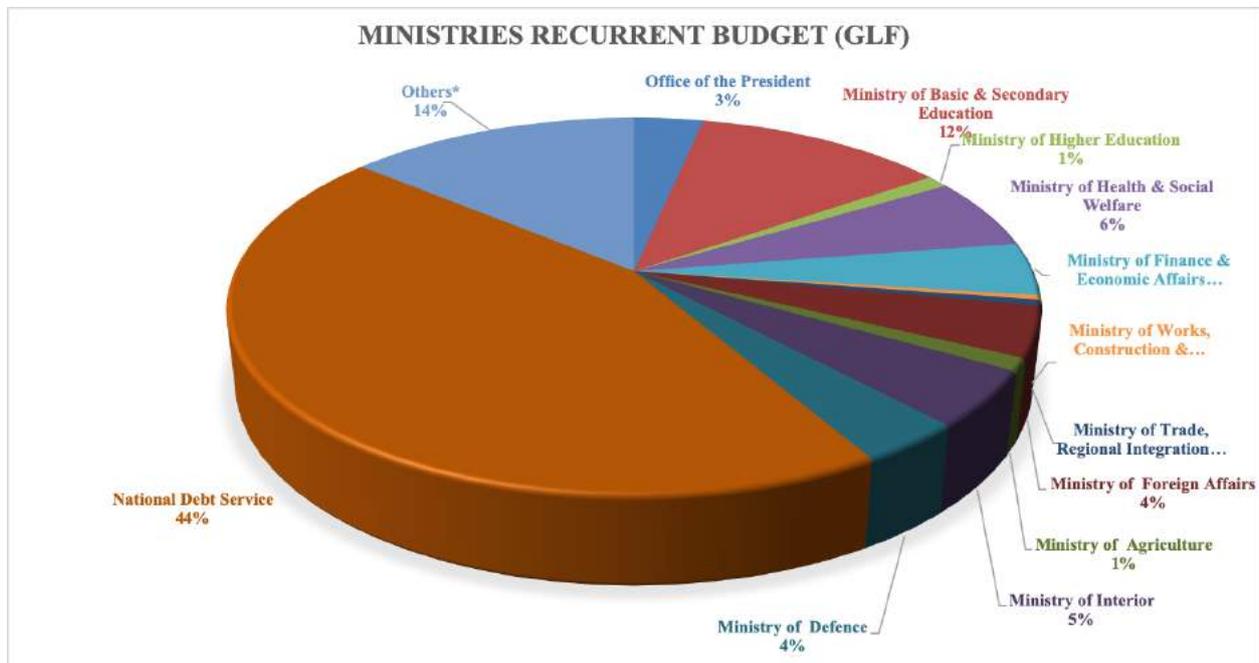
*Ministries not listed above



MINISTRIES RECURRENT BUDGET ALLOCATION FOR 2020 (GLF)

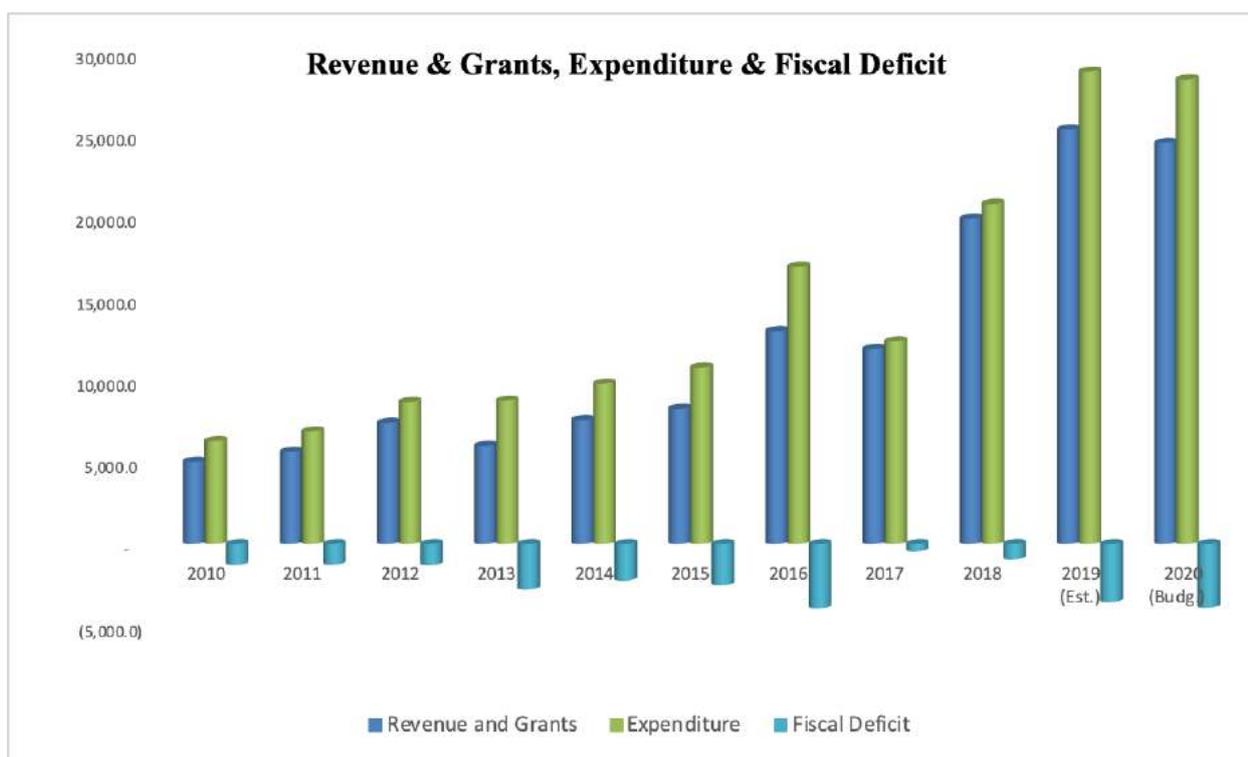
	D Million	% of Total
Office of the President	701.19	3.3
Ministry of Basic & Secondary Education	2,549.68	12.0
Ministry of Higher Education	226.48	1.1
Ministry of Health & Social Welfare	1,301.48	6.1
Ministry of Finance & Economic Affairs	965.00	4.5
Ministry of Works, Construction & Infrastructure	79.31	0.4
Ministry of Trade, Regional Integration & Employment	101.98	0.5
Ministry of Foreign Affairs	918.63	4.3
Ministry of Agriculture	226.50	1.1
Ministry of Interior	1,016.11	4.8
Ministry of Defence	755.80	3.6
National Debt Service	9,431.40	44.4
Others*	2,945.21	13.9
Total	21,218.75	100.0

*Ministries not listed above



Revenue & Grants, Expenditure and Net Lending and Fiscal Deficit 2010 - 2020

D' Millions	Revenue and Grants	Expenditure	Fiscal Deficit
2010	5,026.0	6,292.0	(1,266.0)
2011	5,619.0	6,871.0	(1,252.0)
2012	7,397.0	8,675.0	(1,278.0)
2013	5,992.0	8,753.0	(2,761.0)
2014	7,566.4	9,785.6	(2,219.2)
2015	8,257.3	10,770.4	(2,513.1)
2016	12,994.2	16,911.1	(3,916.9)
2017	11,909.5	12,359.9	(450.5)
2018	19,844.86	20,766.83	(922.0)
2019 (Est.)	25,284.45	28,825.94	(3,541.49)
2020 (Budg.)	24,472.62	28,348.70	(3,876.09)



PUBLIC DEBT (PERCENTAGE OF GDP)

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020 (budg.)
Domestic	29.4	33.2	33.3	37.1	46.4	53.9	61.9	60.2	57.3	37.6	33.7
External	40.2	44.1	43.7	46.2	58.4	51.4	56.6	59.9	68.6	43.8	42.2

Note: All figures are as per the old GDP

