



2022 BUDGET SPEECH

**IMPROVING DOMESTIC PRODUCTIVE CAPACITY AND RESILIENCE FOR
INCLUSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH**

DELIVERED ON THURSDAY 28TH OCTOBER 2021

AT THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

BY THE HONOURABLE MINISTER OF FINANCE AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS



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MINISTER OF FINANCE AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

ACRONYMS

ACE	Africa Coast to Europe
AfCFTA	African Continental Free Trade Agreement
AfDB	African Development Bank
BADEA	Arab Bank for Economic Development
COVAX	Covid-19 Vaccine Global Access
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
DoL	Department of Labour
ECOMIG	ECOWAS Military Intervention in The Gambia
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EFT	Electronic Funds Transfer
EU	European Union
FLAG	Female Lawyers Association-Gambia
GAMSR	Gambia Social Registry
GAMWORKS	The Gambia Agency for Management of Public Works
GBA	Greater Banjul Area
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GFSC	The Gambia Ferry Services Company
GIA	Gambia International Airlines
GID	Gambia Immigration Department
GIEPA	Gambia Investment and Export Promotion Agency
GNPC	Gambia National Petroleum Company
GPA	Gambia Ports Authority
GPA	Gambia Ports Authority
GPF	Gambia Police Force
GTB	Gambia Tourism Board
ICT	Information Communication Technology
IFMIS	Integrated Financial Management Information System
IHS	Integrated Household Survey
IMF	International Monetary Fund
LIDCs	low-Income Developing Countries
LMIS	Logistics Management Information System
LoCAL	Local Climate Adaptive Living
MoFEA	Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs
MoTIRE	Ministry of Trade, Industry, Regional Integration and Employment
MSMEs	Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises
NAWEC	National Water and Electricity Company
NCAC	National Council for Arts and Culture
NDP	National Development Plan
NEA	National Environment Agency
NEHP	Nutrition Educators of Health Professionals
NHIS	National Health Insurance Scheme
NHSS	National Horticulture Sector Strategy
NRA	National Roads Authority
OFID	OPEC Fund For International Development

PE	Public Enterprises
PFM	Public Financial Management
PPE	Personal Protective Equipment
PPP	Public Private Partnerships
PSC	Public Service Commission
QGDP	Quarterly Gross Domestic Product
SDF	Social Development Fund
SDR	Special Drawing Rights
SOEs	State-Owned Enterprises
SPCR	Strategic Program on Climate Resilience
SSA	Sub-Saharan Africa
SSHFC	Social Security and Housing Finance Cooperation
SSR	Security Security Reform
TDA	Tourism Development Area
TSA	Treasury Single Account
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UNCDF	United Nations Capital Development Fund
UNECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Education Fund
URR	Upper River Region
US	United States
UTG	University of The Gambia
VDCs	Village Development Committees
VMS	Vessel Monitoring System
WDCs	Ward Development Committees
WEO	World Economic Outlook
YEP	Youth Empowerment Project

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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 2022 to 31st December 2022 (both dates inclusive)” be read a second time.

INTRODUCTION

1. More than a year after the coronavirus outbreak was declared a global pandemic, economies around the world continue to grapple with the multidimensional impact of the deadly virus. In the first half of 2021, the prospects for a return to normalcy was high, anchored mainly on the massive roll out of vaccinations and a significant decline in the number of cases and fatalities from the virus. However, the recent emergence of new strains, especially the more contagious delta variant, had diminished this prospect for normalcy, and in effect rendered the dream a shifting goalpost.
2. Mirroring regional trends, The Gambia experienced a third wave of COVID-19 infections in early July 2021. This new surge slowed down prospects for economic recovery, particularly within the tourism and hospitality industry.
3. After struggling with the closure of businesses and schools, the slowdown of economic activities and a halt in tourism during 2020, The Gambia had projected the start of economic recovery in 2021, as economic activity began showing early signs of recovery from the pandemic-induced contraction registered in 2020.

4. In March 2021, the Government launched a mass vaccination campaign supported by the COVAX initiative and the World Bank. However, vaccine hesitancy and supply side constraints affected this campaign.
5. The arrival of additional vaccines donated by the United States and French Governments, combined with enhanced public sensitization, has boosted the vaccination rate to reach 13 percent of the target population as at end October 2021. Meanwhile, Government will continue efforts to accelerate the vaccine roll-out and intensify communication to tackle vaccine hesitancy.
6. In the 2022 fiscal year, and over the medium-term, the Government is committed to continue its efforts to strengthen fiscal consolidation, improve domestic resource mobilization and promote economic growth which is not only sustainable but also inclusive.

MACROECONOMIC OVERVIEW

DEVELOPMENTS IN THE GLOBAL ECONOMY

7. Although at a weaker pace, global economic recovery is continuing even as the pandemic resurges. The October 2021 World Economic Outlook projects global growth at 5.9 percent.
8. Growth prospects for advanced economies in 2021 is forecasted at 5.2 percent. This reflects supply disruptions in the United States and Germany, as well as a 3-month state of emergency in Japan as infections hit a record level in the country.
9. The forecast of the emerging market and developing economies has improved to 6.4 percent as improved assessments for some commodity exporters outweighs drags from pandemic developments, including stronger than anticipated domestic demand in key regional economies.
10. The growth forecast for the low-income developing country group has been revised downwards to 3.0 percent, as the slow rollout of vaccines is the main factor weighing on their recovery.
11. Despite temporary disruptions, global trade volumes are expected to grow by 10 percent in 2021. The overall trade recovery conceals a bleak outlook for tourism-dependent economies and cross-border services. Countries where tourism and travel account for a larger share of GDP are expected to suffer larger declines in activity. Travel restrictions and lingering fears of contagion are likely to limit cross-border tourist activities unless virus transmission declines even further.

12. Global labour market recovery is underway but is uneven. Employment around the world remains below its pre-pandemic levels, reflecting a mix of negative output gaps, worker fears of on-the-job infection and labour demand changes. The employment recovery is expected to lag output for most economies.
13. Inflation has been on the rise amid uncertainty. The increase in inflation reflects a combination of pandemic-induced supply-demand mismatches, rising commodity prices and policy-related developments. Pandemic outbreaks in critical global supply chain links have resulted in longer than expected supply disruptions, further fuelling inflation in many countries.
14. Commodity prices have continued their upward trend as a result of a rebound in economic activities, with oil prices expected to increase close to 60 percent above their low base in 2020. Non-oil commodity prices are expected to rise almost 30 percent above their 2020 levels reflecting strong increases in the price of metals and food in recent months.
15. In some emerging and developing economies, price pressures are expected to persist due to elevated food prices, lagged effects of higher oil prices and exchange rate depreciation increasing the prices of imported goods. In some countries in Sub Saharan Africa, the Middle East and Central Asia, food prices have increased significantly amid shortages of imported goods further fuelling overall inflation.

16. Undeniably, great uncertainty surrounds inflation prospects, and this primarily stems from the pandemic, the duration of supply disruptions and how inflation expectations may evolve.
17. The pandemic and climate change threaten to exacerbate the economic divergence among the world's economies, further aggravated by the large disparities in vaccine access. While almost 60 percent of the population in advanced countries are fully vaccinated, about 96 percent of the population in low-income countries remain unvaccinated. It is hoped that some emerging market economies will gain broad vaccine access by end 2022.
18. Multilateral efforts to speed up global vaccine access remains the top policy priority that would help save millions of lives, prevent the emergence of new variants, and accelerate global economic recovery.
19. Recent developments have made it abundantly clear that we are all in this together and the pandemic is not over anywhere until it is over everywhere. The global community must step up efforts to ensure equitable vaccine access for every country, overcome vaccine hesitancy and secure better economic prospects for all.

IMPACT OF THE GLOBAL ECONOMY ON THE DOMESTIC ECONOMY

20. On the domestic front, similar to the global economy, economic recovery in The Gambia is underway, albeit at a slower pace due to the unexpected third wave of the coronavirus which emerged in July. Growth is expected to rebound from -0.2 percent in 2020 to 3.2 percent in 2021.
21. With global trade strengthening as a result of a rebound in merchandise volumes, The Gambia has realised a sharp increase in imports and re-export trade especially in basic and essential commodities such as rice, cooking oil, cement and sugar. This is however coupled with an increase in commodity prices, which will impact headline inflation as global commodity inflation feeds into domestic retail prices.
22. In addition to food price hikes, the increase in global fuel prices has negatively affected the domestic market.
23. With regards to tourism, the vaccine-driven recovery has aided the easing of travel restrictions and is gradually improving traveller confidence. Although tourist arrival projections for 2021 indicates a recovery in the tourism sector, The Gambia may still experience difficulties in meeting pre-pandemic numbers.

DOMESTIC ECONOMY DEVELOPMENTS

REAL SECTOR

24. The 2021 fiscal year was a challenging one for the Gambian economy, although an improvement from what was faced in 2020. The economy is expected to grow by 3.2 percent in 2021 in comparison to the -0.2 percent growth rate recorded in 2020. The improved growth rate is attributed to a rebound in the economy, especially in the service sector.
25. The Agricultural sector is projected to register a growth of 4.5 percent in 2021, a significant decline from the 11.7 percent recorded in the preceding year. This is due to late rains resulting to an estimated decline in all agricultural sub-components except for livestock which has an estimated growth rate of 4.2 percent in 2021.
26. In essence, rain dependent agriculture continues to make the sector highly vulnerable to climate change.
27. The Industry sector is expected to register the same growth rate of 9.9 percent in 2021 as it did in 2020. This is attributed to the lingering impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on construction projects including the OIC works.
28. In a nutshell, mining, and quarrying; electricity; water and construction sub-sectors are all projected to register a decline in 2021. Manufacturing is the only sub-sector projected to record an improved growth rate from -21.2 percent in 2020 to -1.7 percent in 2021.

29. The Service sector which continues to be the main contributor to GDP is estimated to register a growth from -7.2 percent in 2020 to 0.2 percent in 2021. The growth in the sector is mainly driven by modest performance in most of its sub-components such as wholesale and retail trade; information and communication; financial and insurance activities; professional and technical activities and education which are all projected to grow by less than 10 percent over the review period.

30. As the most severely affected sector, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic is still taking its toll on the sector's growth performance. Accommodation and food services; arts, entertainment and recreation are both projected to increase by 60 percent as social activities continue to improve from a year ago.

FISCAL SECTOR

31. Revenue and Grants for the first nine months of the 2021 fiscal year declined from D15.5 billion in 2020, to D11.8 billion. The 24 percent decline between the two periods is mostly attributed to the decline in Project Grants by 48 percent and Program Grants by 73 percent.

32. The decline in grants disbursements is due to the fact that much of the grants that were to be received in 2021 were frontloaded in 2020 to help the country deal with the COVID-19 pandemic. And additional resources that were received as grants in 2020 for pandemic relief were not repeated in 2021.

33. Total expenditure decreased by 6 percent from D16.8 billion in the first nine months of 2020 to D15.9 billion in the corresponding period of 2021. The decline is attributed to a reduction in capital expenditure by 5 percent from D4.6 billion to D4.4 billion.
34. As part of efforts for fiscal consolidation, current expenditure declined by 6 percent from D12.2 billion in the first nine months of 2020, to D11.5 billion in the corresponding period of 2021. Over the review period, personnel emoluments increased by 11 percent to D3.3 billion; interest payments increased by 6 percent to D2.6 billion, while other charges declined by 18 percent due to the significant decline in COVID 19 related expenditure.
35. The overall fiscal deficit including grants increased from D1.3 billion as at end September 2020 to D4.1 billion in the corresponding period of 2021. This is due to the decline in total grants over the period.
36. Revenue loss due to exemptions, decreased significantly by 56 percent from D2.3 billion in the first eight months of 2020 to D1.4 billion in the same period of 2021. This significant decline is attributed to the establishment of the Tax Expenditure Committee under MoFEA as part of revenue administration reforms introduced in 2020.
37. The public debt stock amounted to D81.8 billion at the end of the second quarter of 2021 compared to D68.5 billion in the same period of 2020. Of the total debt stock in 2021, domestic debt constituted D46.3 billion, whilst external debt constitutes D35.5 billion.

MONETARY SECTOR

38. On the developments in monetary aggregates, broad money showed sustained growth reflecting an increase in the Net Foreign Assets (NFA) of the banking system. This is induced by the impacts of the Government fiscal stimulus program and complementary monetary policy measures implemented in 2020 to alleviate the negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the economy.
39. As at end June 2021, interest rates have generally trended downwards in line with the easing of the monetary policy stance and liquidity conditions.
40. Broad money grew faster at end June 2021 by 27.5 percent to D56.6 billion relative to the corresponding period a year earlier. This was mainly on account of significant growth in the banking system's NFA. The banking system's NFA grew by 48.9 percent at end June 2021, from a growth of 27.4 percent as at end June 2020.
41. The Net Domestic Assets (NDA) of the banking system grew at 13.8 percent to D30.9 billion as at end June 2021 from 10.4 percent a year earlier. The NDA is among the main sources of liquidity injection in the economy and is associated with the financing of Government fiscal deficits, private sector credit and credit to Public Enterprises.
42. Headline inflation has risen to 8.2 percent in July 2021, from 4.8 percent in July 2020. The acceleration in headline inflation is primarily attributed to the rise in constituent variables.

43. In the domestic foreign exchange (FX) market, the Gambian Dalasi has experienced modest pressure against major trading currencies between June 2020 and June 2021. Over this period, the Dalasi depreciated against all the major trading currencies except the US Dollar. It depreciated against the Euro, Pound Sterling and CFA by 8.2 percent, 11.1 percent, and 8.1 percent respectively. However, it appreciated against the US Dollar by 0.6 percent.
44. Remittance volumes in the domestic market have been on the increase and continues to be the main source of inflow in the domestic FX market. As of June 2021, remittances recorded US\$403.6 million, a 61.4 percent increase from total remittances recorded in the same period a year earlier.

EXTERNAL SECTOR

45. Preliminary balance of payments estimates shows that the current account balance improved from a deficit of US\$41.1 million in the second quarter of 2020 to a deficit of US\$5.6 million in the same period of 2021. The significant improvement is due to increased remittances.
46. The goods account recorded a deficit of US\$134.4 million in the second quarter of 2021, from a deficit of US\$122.4 million in the same period of 2020. This reflects the high importation of goods during the current period compared to a year earlier.

47. In the second quarter of 2021, the imports totalled US\$141.5 million, compared to US\$126.2 million in the same period of 2020. Export revenue increased to US\$ 7.0 million from US\$3.7 million over the review period.
48. The service account balance improved from a deficit of US\$10.9 million in the second quarter of 2020, to a deficit of US\$6.1 million in the same period of 2021. This reflects a slow recovery in tourism as air-chartered tourist arrivals has increased by 91 percent from 2020.
49. Current transfers (net), increased from US\$95.9 million in the second quarter of 2020 to US\$154.3 million in the same period of 2021. Workers' remittances over the review period amounted to US\$146.3 million compared to US\$95.9 million in the same period of 2020.
50. The capital and financial account recorded a deficit of US\$52.9 million in the second quarter of 2021, compared to a deficit of US\$28.8 million recorded a year earlier. The financial account balance increased to a deficit of US\$64.8 million from a deficit of US\$61.2 million reflecting the decline in direct and other investments.

KEY SECTORS

FINANCE AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

51. Government intends to promote the establishment of capital market as a means of mobilizing savings for long-term investments in the economy. This is in response to an increasing demand from government and private sector to finance productive assets that will spur growth. The current options to mobilize savings for investments are through the money market and direct commercial lending, and these are not the most desirable instruments to finance long-term investments.
52. Consequently, a new capital markets bill will be introduced before the National Assembly to establish the regulatory authority which is mandated to protect investors, as well as maintain a fair, efficient and transparent market.
53. In 2018 and 2019, the Government of The Gambia conducted audits of State-Owned Enterprises. The findings of the study revealed weaknesses of the internal control environment, weak governance system and lack of proper financial statements. These issues undermine the transparency, accountability, financial and operational performances of State-Owned Enterprises. Based on these findings, the Ministry of Finance felt obliged to enhance our oversight of SOEs and assist the SOEs to improve their financial and operational performance.
54. Achieving this would require a sound SOE legal framework that strengthens financial oversight, supports SOE transparency, reporting and disclosure while levelling the playing field between SOEs and private sector. For these reasons, the Ministry will present before this National Assembly a State-Owned Enterprise Bill that seeks to

establish a State-Owned Enterprise Commission, which will in turn make provisions for efficient and effective governance of SOEs and monitor their performances.

55. The demand for government services has significantly increased, particularly for the provision of large-scale government projects such as roads and bridges, communications and technology infrastructure, energy production as well as large scale commercial agriculture. These kinds of investments would require heavy private and public capital injections characteristic of Public Private Partnerships (PPPs). PPPs are innovative financing instruments that helps to reduce the fiscal burden on government and at the same time provide the infrastructure needs of the country through complementary private capital.

56. To this end, Government will submit a Public-Private Partnership Bill that seeks among others to establish the institutional arrangements for the governance of PPPs in The Gambia. The Bill will also feature provisions related to improving quality, cost, effectiveness, competitiveness and timely delivery of public infrastructure and services in The Gambia through the involvement of the private sector.

57. With support from the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), Government has undertaken an evaluation of the Vision 2020. The findings will help guide the coordination and formulation of a new long-term development plan.

58. The new vision will cover the period 2022 to 2050 and will provide a strategic framework for the comprehensive transformation of the country's economy and will also serve as an anchor for medium-term development plans.

59. The Ministry in collaboration with the COVID-19 Recovery Secretariat is also working on the development of a green recovery focused medium-term development plan to succeed the current NDP. The process of formulating both planning frameworks will be participatory and inclusive.
60. The Ministry continues to work towards enhancing the Government's PFM function. The upgraded, web-based Integrated Financial Management Information System (IFMIS) has been rolled out to all the sub-treasuries, LGAs and some Embassies. The IFMIS is currently being extended to donor funded projects and sub-vented agencies.
61. The Government payment process has significantly improved with the implementation of the Electronic Funds Transfer module which allows payments to be done electronically, directly into beneficiary bank accounts. This has eliminated cash payments and the associated risks.
62. The Implementation of the Treasury Single Account (TSA) is progressing well. A payment gateway platform to facilitate the automation and improvement of the revenue collection process is being implemented to further support the TSA process.
63. Internal Audit has been one of the key pillars of Government's PFM reform efforts. Significant gains have been registered in strengthening internal controls, risk management and governance processes. Internal audit functions have been rolled out to almost all Ministries, and by 2022, it will be extended to all remaining MDAs.

64. A new Internal Audit Committee has been inaugurated with competent members to continue the work of providing professional guidance to the Directorate in executing their duties.
65. The Government of The Gambia is committed to reduce the inequality gap between men and woman in accessing and benefitting from national development, equitable growth and poverty reduction. With support from the IMF, the Ministry is working closely with MDAs to implement gender responsive budgeting that aims to mainstream gender inequality in prioritization and resource allocation.
66. The Ministry has formulated a medium-term roadmap for the implementation of gender responsive budget reforms. In 2022, MDAs will identify gender issues and underlying causes of inequality, raise awareness of gender inequalities among policy makers, secure high-level political support for reforms, and strengthen the necessary systems for a smooth implementation. By 2025, gender responsive budget reforms will be rolled out to all MDAs.
67. As part of revenue reform initiatives, the Ministry set up a Tax Expenditure Committee which is responsible for the review, recommendation and monitoring of all duty waiver applications. As at end September 2021, revenue loss from duty remissions and exemptions stood at D1.1 billion. Compared to 2021, this means Government has reduced losses relating to duty exemptions by 56 percent meaning D1.4 billion is saved.

68. The Ministry is currently working with a World Bank funded Technical Assistant to finalize the Tax Expenditure Policy which will be the framework for granting and monitoring tax and duty exemptions and remissions.
69. On public procurement, the Ministry has reconstituted the Complaints Review Board (CRB) under the Public Procurement Act Section 54(1) to deal with complains submitted by bidders arising from the processing of tenders of public sector contract.
70. The CRB is established to promote and uphold fairness in the public procurement process through a judicious and impartial adjudication of matters arising from disputes in procurement proceedings, and as such serves as a quick alternative to the court system.
71. MoFEA has recently reviewed the 2021-2025 Medium Term Debt Management Strategy (MTDS) that seeks to achieve the debt management objective of ensuring Government's financing needs are met at the lowest possible cost and are consistent with a prudent degree of risk. To achieve this objective, the Ministry has started publishing an Annual Borrowing Plan which is geared towards enhancing transparency in public debt management and will give the investor community guidance on investment planning. The Ministry will continue to prepare and publish a detailed monthly issuance calendar on both the MoFEA and Central Bank of The Gambia (CBG) websites.
72. Additionally, MoFEA in collaboration with the CBG have introduced a regular bond issuance program allowing the Government to issue medium and longer dated domestic

instruments that provides financing and address refinancing risk in the domestic debt portfolio, whilst ensuring a sustainable path for the public and publicly guaranteed debt.

73. The Ministry is implementing the Public Finance Management (PFM) Reform Strategy 2021-2025. This Strategy aims to create transparent and accountable systems for the management of public resources. In addition to improving budget preparation and execution, the strategy will also promote informed decision making and effective provision of public services, thus making infrastructure investment a more integral part of the overall budget process as evident in the 2021 and 2022 budget estimates.

74. The Ministry is also implementing necessary reforms for our Local Government Authorities (LGAs). Following the establishment of all eight LGAs on the IFMIS platform for enhanced financial management, the budget module would be extended in 2022 to support their implementation of structured program-based budgeting effective in 2023.

75. To ensure value for money in the area of procurement and to increase revenue collections, the implementation of a digital tax system has already been done for three of the LGAs and will be rolled out to the remaining five Authorities by 2022.

76. In line with Government's commitment to support Local Government Authorities, the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs entered into a loan agreement with OPEC Fund for International Development to support urban and rural infrastructure development across the LGAs. This loan agreement was necessitated because

Government recognizes that the councils do not have adequate resources to finance major infrastructure programs in their administrative regions/municipalities given their limited financial capacities.

77. Therefore, the loan amount of US\$13 million was contracted with OFID to finance mainly the construction of office buildings for Mayors, CEOs and their staff, roads and bridges, markets, car parks, water supply systems, multipurpose halls, guest houses, conference centres and staff quarters for Local Government Authorities.
78. OFID has fully disbursed the entire loan amount of US\$13 million. Beneficiary institutions particularly LGAs also made some counterpart contributions. Some of the interventions include the constructions of the new Banjul City Council Administration building, Kanifing Municipal Council main administration building, construction of concrete and tar roads in Banjul and KMC and feeder roads in other LGAs.
79. The fund also covered solar lights at Jiroff, extension of water supply systems in Kiaif and Janneh Kunda of LRR and 7 villages in Kerewan Area Council, construction of Latrikunda Sabiji market and multipurpose hall in Kwinela. Furthermore, we will continue to support Councils in the areas of policy and institutional reforms. It is worth mentioning that this support to the LGAs is being managed by the highly reputable GAMWORKS.
80. Both the African Development Bank (AfDB) and the French Development Agency (AFD) are supporting the Government in improving domestic resource mobilization efforts and enhancing the Revenue Authority's capacity for revenue generation.

81. With support from the African Development Bank, the Government is planning to undertake a second PEFA Assessment in November 2021. The assessment which is anchored on the 2016 framework provides a yardstick for assessing and reporting on the country's PFM strengths and weaknesses. The Assessment will cover all MDAs, SOEs and LGAs and will substantially improve performance of the country's PFM systems.
82. Plans are at an advanced stage to review and update the Public Finance Act 2014 and Financial Regulations 2016. This is aimed at amending the existing laws and developing a manual that takes into consideration the fundamental principles and best practices of PFM. The new legislations will address the gaps, overlaps and inconsistencies in the public finance legislations. Training of staff at various MDAs to improve the public sector understanding on the management and use of public funds will also be conducted.
83. The Ministry with assistance from the European Union (EU) under the 11th European Development Fund (EDF) continues to work on improving gender inclusiveness and empowerment, strengthen and institutionalize credible electoral processes, reinforce security sector reform and generally improve the PFM processes and procedures.
84. To ensure effective aid management, The Gambia Aid Policy 2015 – 2020, coupled with the National Development Plan (NDP) and the Development Finance Assessment (DFA) 2018, acts as a guide on how aid to The Gambia should be provided and managed. The Ministry is currently working on drafting a new aid policy to ensure the alignment of aid resources and effective resource mobilization.

85. The Gambia Strategic Review Board (GSRB) was created to enhance efficiency of public investments. The Board is responsible for the appraisal and approval of all programs and projects, and to ensure their compliance and alignment to national development strategies and priority action plans. During the course of the year, the Board, with the use of a Project Appraisal Guideline (PAG) was able to appraise numerous projects in areas of health and education.

86. As one of the policy actions under Sustainable Development Finance Policy (SDFP), the Public Investment Program (PIP) will be implemented in 2022. The rationale for the PIP initiative is to ensure that macroeconomic sector strategies are translated into programs and projects. This is a five-year medium term investment resource envelope that would be available to the Government of The Gambia during the period 2022-2026 for the implementation of the prioritised projects and programmes of MDAs. The overarching objective of the PIP is to further strengthen public investment management that outlines the priority programs and projects of the Government. It is also expected to address the challenging debt situation and the required fiscal space for the achievement of the National Development Plan.

PRODUCTIVE SECTORS

AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES

87. The Ministry of Agriculture has developed a National Agricultural Extension Policy to promote sustainable agricultural production, value chain development, strengthen the human and institutional capacities of extension service providers, and the governance of extension systems.
88. The Ministry is working with farmers to develop their capacities in new farming techniques and approaches to reduce drudgery and boost production and productivity. The Department has also been sensitizing farmers on climate change mitigation and coping strategies through the adoption of climate smart agriculture.
89. In the agriculture sector, The Gambia's bilateral relations with several Asian countries continues to thrive. Japan has donated D125 million worth of rice including fifty (50) tractors and farming accessories. An additional six hundred (600) metric tons of fertilizer and fifty (50) metric tons of groundnuts were also provided to the farming community through the support of the Japanese Government. The two countries will deepen cooperation in areas such as agriculture, health and technology
90. The Government of the People's Republic of China through their Embassy has supported the Ministry of Agriculture in highly significant measures. Within the framework of our bilateral cooperation, the Chinese Government has supported The Gambia with power tillers, mini threshers, irrigation pumps, rice mills and ten metric tons of urea fertilizer.

FISHERIES AND WATER RESOURCES

91. Like all other sectors, the Fisheries sector has also been negatively impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. A number of land-based fish processing and export companies have closed due to low fishing and processing activities, high cost of preservation and low exports of fish products.
92. In addition to the pandemic, the sector continues to face challenges that are hindering its development. These include limited technologies on the production of good quality fingerlings for coastal and offshore aquaculture production, illegal and unregulated fishing and the lack of Gambian owned industrial fishing vessels.
93. In early 2021, the Fisheries Monitoring Centre of the Department was equipped with a Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) through funding from the EU-Gambia Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Programme. The VMS will help with the monitoring of fishing activities, particularly of industrial fishing vessels operating in Gambian waters, and thus curb illegal, unregulated, and unreported fishing.
94. The Fisheries sector is part of The Gambia Pilot Project implemented by GAMWORKS through funding from the ECOWAS Stabilization Fund. The Project has constructed a fish smoking oven for women at the Burfut Community Fisheries Centre, with similar structures to be constructed in other fish landing sites. The Project is also supporting aquaculture development with youth organizations in URR through the provision of mini grants.

95. The Department of Water Resources is implementing the Climate Smart Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Development Project through funding from the African Development Bank (AfDB). The Project will construct 144 solar-powered piped-water supply systems that will provide safe drinking water to over 400,000 rural settlers.
96. Through support from the Japanese Government, additional solar-powered piped-water supply systems are to be constructed in 2022 to benefit 80,000 people in our rural communities.

INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION INFRASTRUCTURE

97. In order to ensure high speed internet access for all citizens, the Broadband Policy and Strategy 2020-2024 has been formulated to help ensure Last Mile Access for affordable and quality ICT services in The Gambia. The attainment of this objective will provide a robust basis for government to fully roll out programs and projects aimed at digitally transforming the country's economy.
98. The Ministry will prioritize the upgrade of the e-government data centre to effectively manage national data systems, enhance public service delivery and the expansion of communication channels that promote participatory governance.
99. The Ministry is currently spearheading endeavours for the establishment of a technology hub at the University of The Gambia, and regional information and innovation hubs across the country. These efforts will help with promoting economic growth, job creation, human development, and poverty reduction. The establishment of

the tech hubs is in line with the NDP priority of spurring research and development in ICT for employment and employability, as well as for the upscaling of productivity across sectors through the exploitation of ICT.

100. With the successful deployment of the Google Plus Codes in Banjul and Kanifing Municipalities by the Ministry in partnership with Google LLC, the next phase of implementation in 2022 will expand this initiative to other regions. This initiative has positive implications for ensuring digital inclusiveness.

101. To avert the unfortunate internet shut down experienced on three occasions this year, the Government is working with stakeholders in a bid to land an additional submarine cable that will complement the ACE and crucially serve as a reliable back up capacity.

102. By the same token, some of the strategic interventions for the 2022 will be anchored on improving cybersecurity coordination. This will be achieved through a number of initiatives including establishing a National Cybersecurity Coordination Committee; adopting a Critical Information Infrastructure Protection Policy and Regulatory Framework; and raising awareness on cybersecurity issues across all sectors.

TOURISM AND CULTURE

103. Global tourism suffered its worst year on record in 2020, with global international arrivals dropping by 74 percent according to the World Tourism Organization. In The Gambia, the tourism sector was the most affected, with tourist arrival numbers by air in 2020 declining by 62 percent to 89,232. The target to reach 350,000 in 2021 is likely to be a daunting task as the world has only recently begun international travels.
104. With the re-opening of the tourism sector for the upcoming tourist season the Gambia Tourism Board (GTB) has developed rigorous health and safety protocols and guidelines.
105. Furthermore, the Tourism Board in collaboration with the National Roads Authority (NRA) has finalized the bidding process for the construction of three strip roads within the Tourism Development Area (TDA) leading to major hotels.
106. The Board has also completed the mapping of the TDA demarcation from Kotu to Kartong which will guide the Board on the available land, the type of development needed and the level of encroachment within the TDA.
107. Similarly, the arts and culture sector has continued to make tremendous growth despite the negative impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. The sector has been hard hit by the closure of venues, restrictions in movements and measures implemented as precautions to protect the population. These challenges however have not totally paralyzed the sector.

108. Artists have been at the forefront of the fight against the pandemic through many activities funded by donors such as UNESCO to use the arts to create awareness on the pandemic and how to minimize infection rates and enhance acceptance of the vaccine. The UNESCO/ECOWAS partnership has supported the National Council for Arts and Culture (NCAC) to engage Gambian writers, actors, filmmakers and dancers to take part in COVID-19 advocacy campaigns.
109. NCAC has signed an agreement with Africell Mobile Company who have pledged to refurbish The Gambia National Museum in Banjul in the coming year. The refurbishment will give a new and completely revamped look to our National Museum. This means there will be more exhibition space, space for performances, and office space for the staff. This project will no doubt boost our tourism attractions and attract more visitors to the National Museum.
110. The rehabilitation works for Kerr Batch Stone Circles, a UNESCO World Heritage Site in Niani has been completed, with the dilapidated museum structures and perimeter fences refurbished and ready to receive paying visitors. Other refurbishments done include the extension of electricity to Jufureh/Albreda sites and Fort Bullen in Barra, which are also World Heritage Sites.
111. In 2022, with the support of the Government, more heritage sites will be refurbished, and value added. These include the Mungo Park Memorial Obelisk and the Berending Sacred Crocodile Pool. The rural communities located in these areas are expected to benefit from tourist visitations.

112. The Gambia Tourism and Hospitality Institute has provided skills training in various hospitality disciplines for more than 5000 young people both from within and outside the country. This includes rural outreach programmes carried out in annexes in Farafenni and Janjangbureh.
113. Capacity development is increasingly becoming a priority of the Institute. Through Government and development partners support, the institute is better positioned as the sub-regional centre of reference in tourism and hospitality education, attracting students from within the sub-region and beyond.
114. In a bid to decentralize tourism and to enhance tourism activities nationwide, a program on tourism and hospitality training in rural Gambia has been extended to Basse and Bintang in partnership with Youth Enterprise Project. Over 120 young Gambians have been enrolled in a scheme that will build capacity and create employment opportunities.
115. Given tourism's role as a catalyst for inclusive economic growth and development, which aligns with the overarching goal of the NDP, the Ministry seeks to mobilize resources to promote inclusive, resilient and culture-centred tourism for sustainable growth.
116. In partnership with the World Bank, the Ministry has developed a Public-Private Dialogue (PPD) mechanism which will help deepen coordination, facilitate stakeholder engagement in the sector and prioritize the sequencing of COVID 19 recovery actions. The PPD mechanism will determine a series of top priorities for tourism recovery,

including diversifying source markets; developing and enhancing tourism products; increasing and improving marketing, and building core capacity.

117. As a result of these recent engagements with the World Bank and pursuant to the interest of the Government of The Gambia to underpin tourism development as a contributor to the recovery efforts, employment generation and economic growth; the government has requested for financing to support the tourism recovery efforts. This financing will implement the recommendations from the PPD mechanism, strengthen the institutional capacity of the tourism value chain, improve the tourism enabling environment, increase the participation and value addition of tourism related MSMEs, and diversify the tourism product offers of the country.

TRADE, INDUSTRY, REGIONAL INTEGRATION & EMPLOYMENT

118. Through the Ministry of Trade, Industry, Regional Integration and Employment (MoTRIE), the Government is strengthening its collaboration with trading partners to support trade, integration and employment. As part of these efforts, at a bilateral level, MoTRIE signed Trade and Transit Cooperation Agreement with Senegal, Guinea Bissau and Guinea Conakry. A Joint Trade Committee will be established to monitor the implementation of the agreement.

119. At the continental level, The Gambia continues to be fully committed to the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA) and the Government is working with stakeholders to ensure The Gambia benefits from this Agreement. The Ministry has completed work on the country's tariff schedules for both trade in goods and trade

in services and is currently engaging with other State Parties to finalize negotiations on the outstanding issues. It is hoped that the AfCFTA will enhance market access and make The Gambia access the 1.2 billion continental market.

120. With support of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), the Ministry has developed a National AfCFTA Implementation Strategy identifying priority actions that will be undertaken by the Government over a 10-year period to effectively leverage the potential benefits of the AfCFTA.

121. On Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) and Entrepreneurship Development, the Ministry supported capacity building and policy reforms using the EMPRETEC Model, particularly for youth and women. The Ministry provided training on entrepreneurship and revenue generating skills to enhance access to local and international markets.

122. Under the Youth Empowerment Project (YEP), over D25 million was disbursed to young entrepreneurs through small business grants. In addition, 255 individuals have benefitted from financial emergency support to ensure their business survival during the coronavirus pandemic.

123. The She Trades Gambia Project launched a mini-grant scheme for qualified companies to improve their access to finance and expand the capacities of their businesses. The Ministry through the Project has successfully linked the major importers of onions to local producers and communities to source onions locally.

124. To strengthen the country's quality infrastructure, a draft Legal Metrology Bill has been developed for submission to the National Assembly. The Bill will strengthen the current Weights and Measures Act, especially on charges and penalties in order to deter offenders.
125. During the course of the year, the Weights and Measures Bureau has been able to verify over three thousand five hundred (3,500) commercial weighing and measuring devices throughout the country. The Bureau also verified the accuracy of fuel dispensers at all petrol stations across the country. Verification of measuring instruments serves as a consumer protection mechanism to protect both businesses and consumers from unfair trade practices through the use of measuring devices.
126. Regarding employment creation and the strengthening of the labour administration, the Ministry had revised the Labour Act 2010, and the Injuries Compensation and Factories Act. These Bills shall be submitted to the National Assembly for enactment.
127. The Ministry of Trade, as part of the implementation of the revised Employment Policy 2020-2025, has established an Employment Service Centre at the Department of Labour (DoL) to facilitate the linkage between job seekers and employers, and plans are underway to create regional job centers in 2022.

WORKS, CONSTRUCTION & INFRASTRUCTURE

128. On the Rural Roads Expansion Programme, Lot 1 which includes the following roads- Sabach Sukoto – Bambali – Sara Kunda - Ngayen Sanjal, with a total length of approximately 38 km, is close to 40 percent complete. Similarly, Lot 2 of the road constructions at Kaur-Jimbala, Kaur-Kerr Chaindu, Kerr Gibbi-Nyaga Bantang is also under way.
129. The Numi Hakalang road network which stretches 85km is also in progress with close to 30 percent of the work having been completed as at end August 2021.
130. In July 2021, the Kiang West Project, a total of almost 80km road project was launched. The Project will include two carriage ways and provisions for sidewalks; accessibility for the physically challenged and drainage facilities.
131. As part of the OIC Road's Project for the upcoming Conference, the procurement and contracting process for the 24km Bertil Harding Highway and adjoining 50km routes is completed. Works are expected to be completed within a period of 16 months.
132. Contracts have been signed through funding from the national fuel levy, for the maintenance of roads in the villages of Bamba Kolong and Kudang; Kombo Coastal Highway; the construction of Soma-Mansakonko Road, Pakilinding-Mansakonko, Farato-Jambur, Tujereng-Kunkujang Mariama and Kerewan-Njawara. These roads have been subjected to serious depressions, causing accidents and adding to traffic congestion.

133. The new electronic tolling facilities for the Senegambia Bridge will be in operation before the end of the year. The National Roads Authority (NRA) is currently proceeding with the procurement of a contractor for the fencing of the toll and installation of sanitary facilities for the security.
134. Following the design and supervision of the Trans-Gambia Feeder Roads and the Farafenni and Soma Markets, the Markets were completed and handed over to the respective Councils.
135. The Banjul City Rehabilitation Project continues to make steady progress in the construction of the concrete road pavement with 86 percent of the total length of the streets covered and 31 percent of additional works completed. Works on the footpaths, sewage and drains are also steadily progressing.
136. The People's Republic of China will be constructing roads under the URR Roads and Bridges Project and will be providing lighting facilities for the Basse and Fatoto Bridges.
137. In 2021, the ferry services at the Banjul – Barra crossing has improved as a result of the implementation of additional operational measures and the installation of new landing platforms at both Banjul and Barra. The improved service had enabled the GPA/Ferries to extend the daily operating time and increase the maximum allowable tonnage to 60 tons. This has accommodated crossing of interstate and transit vehicles on the same route.

138. Following the infrastructure improvement at Banjul International Airport, works on the rehabilitation of the passenger terminal building are completed and the building is now equipped to handle up to 500 passengers in a peak hour. This development is in line with Government's aim to increase operational capacity and efficiency at the airport in line with the National Development Plan.
139. Systems including self-service kiosks amongst others will be introduced in the terminal to enhance service delivery in accordance with international standards and best practices.

PETROLEUM & ENERGY

140. The Ministry of Petroleum and Energy continues to pursue the utilization of petroleum, energy and mineral resources as a stimulus for economic growth, employment and sustainable development.
141. In particular, Government seeks to promote the diversification of energy sources, particularly the use of renewable energy for increased access to sustainable and affordable energy. These efforts are supported by initiatives to implement Green Mini-Grids to supply electricity to off-grid rural communities, encouraging use of energy efficient appliances and promoting the use of alternative energy.
142. Following the successful stabilization of the A2 and A5 licenses operated by FAR/PETRONAS, plans are at an advanced stage for drilling another offshore well by the end of 2021.

143. Due to their global policy shift on carbon emissions, British Petroleum has exited the A1 license. With the Block now available for licensing, the Ministry has developed a strategy to immediately market and initiate a new licensing round for the Block.

ELECTRICITY AND WATER GENERATION

144. The National Water and Electricity Company (NAWEC) has registered improvements in their production capacity of electricity, with its available generation capacity meeting the peak load demand in the GBA.

145. The partnership with SENELEC has enabled the increased supply of electricity to the North Bank Region and parts of LRR and CRR. This partnership is being extended to the Basse subsystem to meet the growing demand in the area.

146. As part of the final phase of the Rural Electricity Expansion Project (REEP), NAWEC has linked the Basse and Bansang subsystems to reduce the operative cost and improve the flexibility of operations.

147. In June 2021, the foundation stone for the Greater Banjul Area Transmission and Distribution Modernization Project was laid. The Project will address the current power shortage problems by significantly improving the power supply and access rate in the GBA.

148. With support from the World Bank, European Union and European Investment Bank, The Gambia is poised to become first country in the world to ensure all of its

1,100 rural schools and health centers will benefit from a reliable energy supply using solar and battery technology. This will happen through a 20-MW solar energy and 400 km distribution project as well as installation of PV off-grid systems, to transform energy access and reduce costs.

149. Once operational, this will increase energy supply considerably and transform electricity access in rural communities through the construction of a new photovoltaic plant at Jambur. The project will increase access to energy, ensure that education and health services benefit from reliable power and help to address current power shortages in the country.

150. Given the Company's current challenges in transmission and distribution, efforts are underway to upgrade the Brikama to Kotu transmission line and will be fitted with a modern Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition System.

151. As part of Government's reforms for SOEs, NAWEC is going through an organizational restructuring aimed at enhancing performance and efficiency in its operations.

SOCIAL SECTORS

BASIC EDUCATION

152. A significant surge in enrolment has been registered at all levels, with the number of trained and qualified teachers also increased.
153. Over one thousand classrooms and toilets are constructed in Madrassas and conventional schools, ready for use during the 2021/2022 academic year.
154. The sector's development partners, notably UNICEF, World Food Programme, World Bank, Islamic Development Bank, BADEA/OFID, MRC Holland Foundation, The Kuwaiti Fund and EIB/EU, continues to support the education sector to make quality education affordable and accessible to all in The Gambia.
155. When the COVID 19 pandemic forced the closure of schools for six months during the 2021 academic year, it was realised that there was no specified timeline for the complete eradication of COVID-19 and that the continuous closure of schools was detrimental for the students' cognitive and socio-emotional development.
156. As a result, a strategic framework to guide the process of reopening schools was developed. Schools were fumigated, and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) such as face masks, hand sanitisers, forehead thermometers, were supplied to all schools to ensure that students were protected from possible infection.
157. Additionally, class sizes were reduced and divided into shifts, with teachers assuming double shifts to ensure physical distancing among students. The schools'

flexible calendar has been greatly improved across all regions to meet the stipulated 880 instructional hours and recover part of the 252 contact hours that were lost last year when schools were closed due to the surge of COVID-19.

HIGHER EDUCATION

158. In addressing access to higher education, The Ministry continues its effort with the donors of the University of The Gambia (UTG) Faraba Banta Campus Project for the completion of the first phase of the Project. This phase which consists of five faculties is expected to be completed in early 2022. Government has received commitments for the additional funding of the second phase of the Project, which comprises of the remaining facilities.

159. The Ministry is finalising arrangements for the completion and operationalisation of two new Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) centres in Ndemban and Kanilai.

160. To further provide more opportunities for rural youth to access skills training and gainful employment for enhanced livelihood, skills centers in Mansakonko and Julangel are earmarked for expansion in 2022.

161. In promoting research and encouraging a culture of research, the Ministry has developed the first ever National Research Policy, that is in the process of being validated.

162. In order to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic which has caused a delay in the implementation of the sector's activities and projects, the Ministry has developed a Business Continuity Plan to ensure the existence of online platforms and management systems that facilitate online interactive learning and an e-library service for students to continue their learning without hindrance.

HEALTH and SOCIAL WELFARE

163. The COVID-19 crisis has shown how vital it is to have a strong supply chain management system that can continue to guarantee the delivery of essential health commodities. The Government of The Gambia has secured funding from development partners to upgrade the current Logistics Management Information System (LMIS) to an electronic system. This will ensure that stock data is available, delivery is expedited planning and decision making are timely and accountability is ensured.
164. In the fight against COVID-19 pandemic, the Ministry through the National Immunization Program has successfully launched and implemented the national COVID-19 vaccination nationwide.
165. The construction of eight permanent treatment Centers across the country is in progress, and refurbishment work on isolation Centers has been signed with contractors.
166. With support from the World Bank, the Government is in the process of building new Healthcare facilities to better respond to future emergencies.

167. The Gambia has recently signed a grant financing of US\$50 million with the World Bank for the Additional Financing of Essential Health Services Strengthening Project. This financing will go towards improving the quality of essential Primary Health Care health services delivery using a Results- based Financing Approach; community engagement to improve utilization of quality health services; and building resilient and sustainable health systems to support the delivery of quality health services.
168. On eye care services, The Gambia has successfully eliminated Trachoma as a public health problem, being the second country in SSA and the 11th country globally to do so. The Nutrition Educators of Health Professionals (NEHP) in collaboration with partners from Turkey conducted 200 free cataract operations in our hospitals.
169. The Ministry is drafting the Health Policy 2021-2030 and the Strategic Plan 2021-2025. The Policy will guide the Ministry in its efforts to strengthen health services. It will also make them more affordable, accessible to all, without compromising quality. The Plan will direct the implementation of the Policy.
170. The sector has accelerated the training of health professional through the HSS Project under the Global Fund. This supported the Ministry's efforts towards achieving the required health worker density threshold. However, high attrition rate of skilled health workers remains a major challenge.
171. Significant progress has been registered in the process of developing a National Health Research Policy to facilitate the promotion, coordination, and conduct of

research for evidence-based decision making to improve health outcomes that meet the developmental needs of the population.

172. The health sector is at an advanced stage to introduce the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS) for the first time in the history of this country. This scheme will serve as a sustainable health financing mechanism in the country. It is expected to improve access to safe and quality health care services, affordable medication and serve as a social safety net for the poor and vulnerable. To this end, a Bill to establish the NHIS Authority has been tabled before the National Assembly and has undergone its first and second readings.

173. As part of COVID-19 relief support, the country received medical supplies worth over D31 million through the South-South Cooperation Assistance Fund set up by the People's Republic of China.

WOMEN and CHILDRENS AFFAIRS

174. The Ministry will continue to work with UNFPA and the Ministry of Health to rollout the KABILO Bama Initiative currently operating in the Lower River Region. The aim of the initiative is to improve clinic attendance by women and children as well as enhance income of women and families through small business. Fifty-eight communities in Kiang East and West have so far benefitted from this initiative and 174 women and men have been trained on livelihood skills.

175. Following the enactment of the Women Enterprise Fund to strengthen the capacities of women and girls in MSMEs, over 96 women groups across the country have benefitted, and more than 2000 women trained on entrepreneurship and business management skills, while a total of D7.4 million was disbursed as loans.
176. With support from the AfDB and UN Agencies in The Gambia, the Women's Act 2010; Sexual Offences Act 2013; Domestic Violence Act 2013 and the Children Act 2005 are currently being reviewed.
177. For effective implementation of these policy and legislative frameworks, the Ministry has established the Shelter for Victims of Domestic Violence at Bakoteh with support from UNFPA.
178. The Gender Based-Violence helpline (1313) and the Children's helpline (199) are both fully established and operational for the reporting of cases. With support from UNFPA, a facility at the Shelter for Children was refurbished and is currently serving as a Women and Girls Empowerment Centre for temporary accommodation and counselling of victims of SGBV.
179. With additional support from UNFPA, a girls centre for the production of sanitary towels in Basse is being established as well as a Fistula Rehabilitation Centre in LRR funded by the ECOWAS Gender Development Centre.
180. The Ministry has facilitated the reintegration of 159 children from Senegal and re-united them with their families. In partnership with Child Protection Alliance, thirty

(30) child protection actors were trained on advocacy for increased investment on children.

181. As part of the Government's response to the negative economic effects resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic and with the assistance of the World Bank, the National Nutrition Agency put in place a mechanism to assist over 78,000 households in 30 of the poorest districts in the country. This was implemented through a four-month, cash transfer program, the "Nafa Quick". The support helped families meet their basic needs during the lean season, which was made worse by the economic hardship caused by the COVID-19 crisis

YOUTH & SPORTS

182. The Government through the Ministry of Youth and Sports continues to prioritize youth empowerment and sports development. This is evident in the introduction of the sports development fund and youth enterprise revolving loan scheme to support the sector's activities.
183. The National Enterprise Development Initiative with funding from GIZ has trained close to 200 youth and women in agro-entrepreneurship, horticulture and food processing in LRR.
184. Through the ongoing rehabilitation of the Independence Stadium, it is hoped that once completed, the Stadium will be of international standards and qualified to host international football matches.

185. The Gambia participated in the Tokyo, Japan Olympic Games with new national records established. The Paralympic Committee recently returned from Tunisia and England where they won gold, silver and bronze medals in various games. The Gambia National Football Team has for the first time qualified to the AFCON 2022.
186. The National Sports Council (NYC) plans to organize local youth sports summer camps refurbish sporting facilities, send athletes to high performance training centres abroad and to compete in more international competitions.
187. The National Youth Council has rehabilitated youth centres across the country, improving their access to skills training and livelihood development initiatives, thus encouraging the youth that it is possible to “make it” in The Gambia.
188. With support from partners, NYC has organized a number of capacity assessments and training for youth and migrant returnees and also facilitated access to financing.

CROSS CUTTING SECTORS

LANDS & REGIONAL GOVERNMENT

189. The Department of Lands currently runs its activities using non-digital methods. This has caused slow service delivery, including difficulty in tracing out old files, maintaining old maps, etc. As such, the department has started the process of digitizing maps.

190. In addition to the above, the government is working towards having a cadastral survey and registration of legal rights. This system will give a true and exact description of the legal rights related to land at any moment. With a cadastral map in place, issues of land disputes will be extensively reduced as it provides the means of accurate identification.

191. The Local Climate Adaptive Living (LoCAL) Project funded by United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) is partnering with the Department of Community Development to support the needed capacity at local level in implementing the LoCAL mechanisms. The Project aims to strengthen Ward Development Committees (WDCs) & Village Development Committees (VDCs) in order to support activity implementation and increase participation in beneficiary communities. It will also identify village development action plans; implement community projects; skills development and employment.

192. Having assessed the valuable service offered by village and community heads to local communities, particularly in their efforts to maintain social cohesion and other traditional roles, this Government has deemed it appropriate to provide monthly salary

to Alkalos and Chiefs. In this regard, a budgetary provision has been made in the 2022 budget to meet this commitment.

DATA and STATISTICS

193. The Gambia Bureau of Statistics (GBoS) has continued with its mandate of routine data collection, processing, analysis and dissemination.
194. The Demographic and Health Surveys conducted in 2020 was launched in May 2021. The Report provides critical indicators in tracking progress on a wide range of indicators in the areas of population, health, and nutrition.
195. Data collection for the Integrated Household Survey (IHS) was completed in early 2021 and a report will be produced by the end of the year. The IHS provides valuable information on poverty dynamics and vulnerability status of households and individuals as well as information on other socio-economic variables of the household members.
196. The Gambia Social Registry (GAMSR) is a consolidated database containing key information about current and potential beneficiaries of social protection programmes. The exercise has so far been completed in thirty (30) districts. The field data collection for the remaining six (6) districts will be completed and included in the social registry before the end of the year.

197. With support from the UNDP, GBoS has conducted the Access to Justice Survey which provided information on the impact of judicial delivery systems in The Gambia.

198. In 2022, the Bureau plans to embark on the development and compilation of Quarterly Gross Domestic Product (QGDP) for the first time in The Gambia. This exercise began in March 2021 and the preliminary estimates is expected to be published by the end of the first quarter of 2022. The objective of this exercise is to provide a comprehensive assessment on the performance of The Gambia's economy on a short-term basis, as well as to establish comparability of economic statistics across the sub-region.

199. Also, in 2022, the Bureau plans to conduct preparatory activities for the 2023 Population and Housing Census. This will include the mapping of the country for the demarcation and rebasing of the Consumer Price Index from January 2019 to January 2021.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

200. The Government through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs continues to promote The Gambia's foreign policy objectives at both the bilateral and multilateral levels. In what is evidently a testimony of The Gambia's return to the world stage as a respected member, and thanks to the sterling leadership of His Excellency President Adama Barrow, the country's representative has been identified to serve as President of

ECOWAS for the first time in history. This is in addition to other roles the Gambia has assumed in the United Nations (UN Human Rights Council) and other global bodies.

201. Furthermore, the Ministry has continued to foster economic, political and people to people diplomatic relations with the rest of the world; and has supported The Gambia forge significant partnerships with the rest of the world including those related to the OIC, Agriculture, Health (COVID 19), Security, Food Security and Education.

202. In a significant move, the Ministry recently launched its maiden website and data portal in aid of enhanced support to migrants and the diaspora.

203. In 2022, the Government will build on these gains by renewing its commitment to multilateralism, global peace, mutual understanding, shared prosperity, respect for national sovereignty and the rules based global order.

204. This will be done in tandem with representing The Gambia's interest abroad while providing effective services to Gambians and the Gambian Diaspora.

Honorable Speaker

205. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all our development partners for always being there for us in times of need particularly during these challenging periods.

206. It is in this regard that I extend special thanks to the International Monetary Fund, the European Union, the World Bank, the United Nations in The Gambia, the

United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, the African Development Bank, the ECOWAS, the African Union, the Islamic Development Bank, the United Arab Emirates and Abu Dhabi Fund, 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, South Korea, Qatar, the United States of America, the United Kingdom, Australia, Spain, Italy, Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, Russia, Japan, the Republics of Nigeria, Ghana, Senegal and the MRC Holland Foundation.

JUSTICE

207. In 2021, the National Assembly passed 10 legislative Bills including those which address the protection of Women's and Children's rights.

208. As part of plans for 2022, the Government intends to invest in more ICT infrastructure to introduce online application for intellectual property rights, the registration of deeds and marriages. Benefits of this measure includes the reduction of the costs associated with starting a business and a competitive edge within the sub-region.

INTERIOR

209. On prisons reform, the new Prisons Act has already been validated. The Act will guide the reform of operations and infrastructure of prisons across the country and ensure that the human rights of prisoners are respected.

210. An initiative to help prison inmates with the development of income generating skills before their release is underway. This will help facilitate their reintegration into society and promote their employability after release thereby reducing their likelihood of reoffending.
211. It is evident that the trend of drug abuse is consistently on the increase resulting in many of our youth experiencing mental illness that are drug induced. To address this, the Drug Law Enforcement Agency intend to implement a rehabilitation program for victims of drug abuse. This strategic move will trigger a national shift from approaching drug abuse as a criminal justice issue to a public health problem.
212. The Gambia Police Force (GPF) has over the past year registered laudable achievements in the fight against crimes despite resource constraints and the impact of COVID-19 pandemic. The Zero Crime Operation launched early this year has proven effective in combating the increase in criminal activities as several criminals were arrested, criminal hideouts demolished. Those arrested are going through the due process of the law. The Government is committed to providing the requisite resources to combat all criminal activities.
213. In line with the Government Security Sector Reform (SSR) agenda, and in a bid to invest in training and capacity building of officers, the GPF in collaboration with national and international partners have conducted training for about 600 police officers in different areas of policing.

214. On fire and rescue services, the renovation of Tanji, Sanyang and Gunjur Fire and Rescue Stations has greatly improved service delivery in the area.

215. Meanwhile plans are underway for the construction of staff quarters in Basse, Farafenni, Barra, Bakau and Banjul. This will also include general renovation of all Fire and Rescue Stations and staff quarters country wide; and the construction of a Fire and Rescue Training Academy at Mandinary Village.

ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE CHANGE & WILDLIFE

216. To strengthen national resilience and adaptive capacities of communities, The Government of the Gambia through the Ministry of Environment, Climate and Natural Resources has developed and submitted to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), The Gambia's 2050 Climate Change Vision for achieving a low-carbon climate resilient economy and society.

217. To build resilience and adapt to the impacts of climate change requires significant financial resources. The Ministry has since started the process to mobilize funding from donors. Using one of the four concept notes identified in the Strategic Program on Climate Resilience (SPCR) a full project proposal was recently developed and validated. The full project proposal has a funding target of US\$28.9 million and several donor agencies have been approached for possible funding.

218. Following a request by the Government of The Gambia to the World Bank to support the country's objective to build urban and coastal resilience against natural

disasters, the country has been successfully included in the second phase of the Regional West Africa Coastal Areas Resilience Project II (WACA ResIP II).

219. The Regional WACA Program provides financial and technical assistance to countries and regional institutions to address coastal resilience, using coastal erosion, flooding, and pollution as entry points. Kotu has been identified as a possible intervention area.

220. Government through the National Environment Agency (NEA) is working on a Waste Management Bill, which when enacted will, together with the existing Anti-Littering Regulation of 2007 and the Ban on Plastic Bags Order of 2015, will significantly assist the country in dealing with plastic waste. The European Union is providing funding to NEA to conduct a comprehensive study on waste management to better understand waste management issues in the country.

221. Government through the Department of Forestry is promoting participatory forest management programs where local communities undertake agroforestry programs on farmland and other degraded natural forests. This allows the Forestry Department supply seedlings for annual tree planting across the country and also gives farmers the opportunity to grow desirable plants on their farms, further increasing forest cover.

222. As a country highly vulnerable to the impact of climate change, the country has an Environmental Resilience and Development Project which aims to stimulate transformational change towards zero hunger, poverty, and carbon emissions. In early

2021, the Project trained the Jalo Koto women garden on post-harvest management and processing; and constructed an ice making plant at Kartong.

PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

223. In a bid to create a merit-based system for promotion, training, and development and to strengthen effective service delivery within the Civil Service, the Personnel Management Office (PMO) and the Public Service Commission (PSC) are working to implement a robust Performance Management System within the Civil Service. The effective implementation of the System will form the basis for the promotion and training of civil servants.

224. PMO is currently working with stakeholders to conduct some functional reviews of the civil service. This is necessary to streamline and rationalize mandates of MDAs with a view to reducing overlap and duplication of roles. It will also improve efficiency of coordination of Government institutions.

225. A new Pension Bill is currently before the National Assembly for consideration and enactment. This Bill seeks to repeal the 1950 Pension Act and will facilitate enhanced pension for civil servants and a more efficient pension administration.

OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN

226. The Office of the Ombudsman has conducted visits to all prisons and detention centers in the country. These visits are premised on the need to provide detainees with access to the services of the Ombudsman. The visits also entail looking at their conditions and to make recommendations with the objective of ensuring that they are not kept in inhumane or degrading conditions.

227. In line with the Ombudsman's decentralization objectives, set out under the NDP, the office is poised to open an office in the Central River Region next year to boost the regional efforts of the ombudsman in providing administrative justice services to rural Gambians. This will no doubt contribute to consolidating the gains registered by our country in the area of good governance, democracy and human rights.

REVENUE ADMINISTRATION

228. To enhance revenue administration, key reforms implemented during the year include the enhancement of the GAMTAXNET which is in its final stage. The enhanced system has been deployed in the seven main offices and will be rolled out to the provincial tax offices.

229. As part of efforts to modernise and automate all revenue administration processes as well as address challenges with current IT systems, the Gambia Revenue Authority (GRA) continues to work on the implementation of the Integrated Tax Administration System (ITAS) and the ASYCUDA World system.

MEDIUM TERM GROWTH OUTLOOK

230. With the country having gone past the third wave of the COVID-19 outbreak, it is hoped that the rest of the year along with the 2022 fiscal year will significantly improve the economy. As efforts to increase vaccination rates are intensified across the world, travel restrictions are eased and economies return to normal, it is hoped that the 2021/2022 tourist season will improve the country's economic outlook.
231. Real GDP growth in 2022 is projected at 6.8 percent with all sectors of the economy expected to register increased growth rates when compared to the 2021 fiscal year.
232. On sectoral growth, the Agricultural sector is estimated to grow from 4.5 percent in 2021 to 6.3 percent in 2022. This increase is on account of the largest sub-component of agriculture – crops and forestry which are projected to record improved growth rates.
233. The Industry sector is projected to grow from 9.9 percent in 2021 to 11.1 percent in 2022. Apart from a slight decline of less than one percent in mining and quarrying, all its other sub-components – manufacturing, electricity, water and construction are projected to register an increase between the two review periods.
234. As the sector is showing clear signs of rebounding, growth in the Service sector is expected to increase from 0.2 percent in 2021 to 5.4 percent in 2022. All major sub-components of the sector, namely wholesale and retail trade; accommodation and food

services; human health and real estate activities are expected to increase in the coming year.

235. On the fiscal front, domestic revenue in 2022 is projected to increase to D17.6 billion compared to D13.7 billion estimated in 2021. This is a 16 percent increase which is equivalent to D4.1 billion. Both tax and non-tax revenues are the source of the increase as Government is improving efficiency of revenue collections and limiting the revenue loss through the granting of duty waivers.

236. Total grants are projected to increase slightly by 2.3 percent from D12.0 billion in 2021 to D12.3 billion in 2022. The slight increase is due to a decline in program grants as support that was received in 2021 for the COVID-19 pandemic would not be forthcoming in the coming year. This was however offset by a greater increase in project grants.

237. As part of Governments efforts for fiscal consolidation, total expenditure is expected to increase slightly by less than 2 percent from D31.8 billion in 2021 to D32.2 billion in 2022. This is due to a significant decline in other current expenditure as much of the COVID related health expenditure made in 2021 are not factored in the 2022 budget estimates.

CONCLUSION

238. In these prevailing circumstances, it is worth noting that adversity and opportunity are two sides of the same coin.

239. Indeed, under the stewardship of His Excellency President Adama Barrow, The Gambia has over the years had its fair share of adversities. In fact, while COVID 19 is the most recent and lingering adversity we face as a nation, we must remember that prior to this global pandemic, the country had faced a wide range of political, social, economic, and environmental challenges.

240. Yet throughout these challenges, the Barrow Government continued to open the door of opportunities and launched much needed reforms across all sectors of the economy. This includes reforms in our macroeconomic frame, reforms in economic governance, reforms in the way we manage our natural resources, and develop our human capital. We also undertook reforms in our security sector while striving to harness the potentials of digitalization, multilateralism, global trade, and data for development.

241. Moreover, to ensure inclusive development, Government has over the years adopted innovative financing measures to reduce the rural and urban disparities. This is exemplified by the Programme for Accelerated Community Development (PACD) and other numerous infrastructural projects launched by His Excellency President Adama Barrow. These were aimed at not only transforming rural Gambia but to catalyze economic growth and social development.

242. It is therefore evident, that we have come a long way as a Country. This 2022 Budget is thus a testament that we will not only consolidate the significant gains registered in the past, but it reaffirms our commitment to the medium-term framework. The 2022 Budget also signals consistency in our policies and once again sends a strong signal of the Gambia We Want in the 21st Century.

243. In essence, this 2022 budget signals that in The Gambia We Want, we are committed to strengthening our productivity, enhancing competitiveness and promoting the private sector as the engine of growth in the economy.

244. This budget also signals our commitment to a green and resilient recovery that leaves no one behind.

245. Meanwhile, we also affirm through this 2022 budget that in The Gambia We Want, we will leverage digitalization, foster innovation and leapfrog The Gambia into the next frontier of its development.

246. Furthermore, we also commit to strengthen our human capital stock and sustainably manage our natural resources.

247. Finally, it is the intent of this 2022 budget to signal that in addition to nurturing strong institutions, we will exercise utmost fiscal prudence. Also, we wish to signal in this 2022 budget that it cannot be business as usual and that going forward, national investments will not be for consumptions but rather we will convert them into assets.

248. Riding on this positive wave, this august assembly is invited to note that The Gambia is the ONLY country in the world that has submitted plans that are deemed compatible with the goals of the Paris Climate Agreement. Several countries and development partners have expressed interest to partner with The Gambia towards this sustainable journey following the publication of the report of the Global Climate Action Tracker.

249. The Gambia is standing tall.

Honorable Speaker

250. I would like to also take this opportunity to thank His Excellency President Adama Barrow for his courageous and supportive leadership stance during these challenging times. I also thank my colleagues in the cabinet and the team of hardworking staff at the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs. I am equally thankful to this august assembly and the staff of the National Assembly under the leadership of the Speaker and the Clerk for working tirelessly to approve the 2022 budget estimates.

On this note Honourable Speaker, I beg to move.

ANNEXES

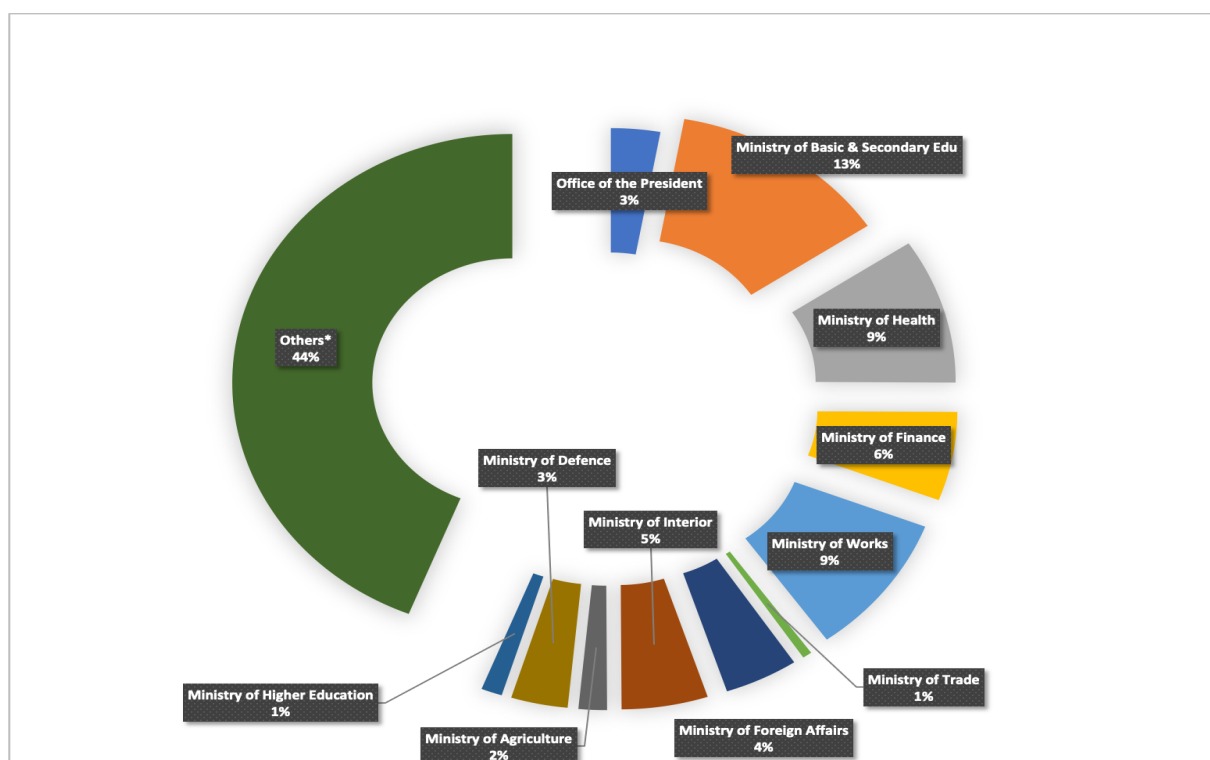
ANNEX 1

Sector Allocation For 2022 Budget

Ministries Recurrent & Development Budget (All Funds)

	D'Millions	% of Total
Office of the President	672,650	2.84
Ministry of Basic & Secondary Education	3,033,469	12.80
Ministry of Health	2,235,724	9.44
Ministry of Finance & Economic Affairs	1,367,082	5.77
Ministry of Works, Construction & Infrastructure	2,196,008	9.27
Ministry of Trade, Regional Integration & Employment	128,770	0.54
Ministry of Foreign Affairs	1,009,436	4.26
Ministry of Interior	1,180,324	4.98
Ministry of Agriculture	387,793	1.64
Ministry of Defence	776,604	3.28
Ministry of Higher Education	287,684	1.21
Others*	10,416,683	43.97
TOTAL	23,692,227	100

*Others: Ministries not listed above



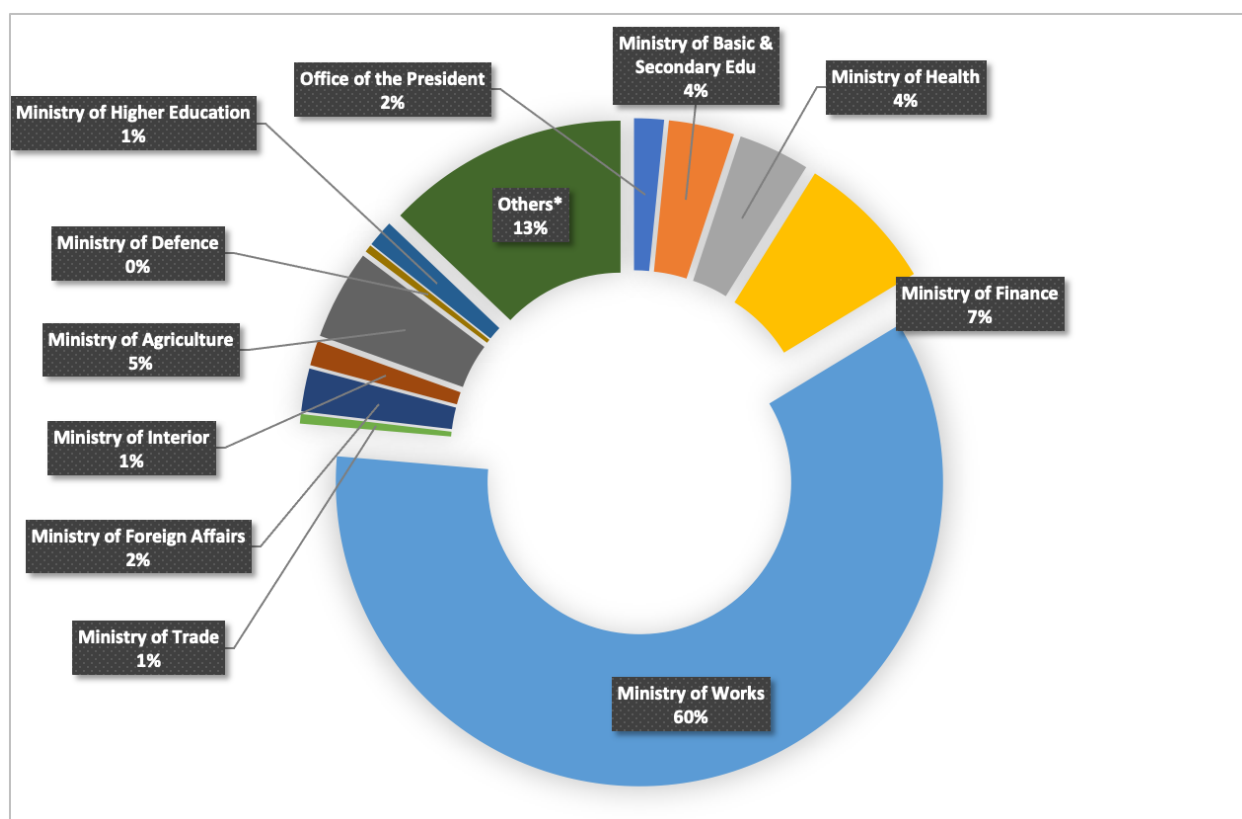
ANNEX 2

Ministries Development Budget Allocation For 2022 (GLF)

Ministries Development Budget (GLF)

	D'Million	% of Total
Office of the President	55,500	1.59
Ministry of Basic & Secondary Education	122,350	3.50
Ministry of Health	133,082	3.80
Ministry of Finance & Economic Affairs	261,036	7.46
Ministry of Works, Construction & Infrastructure	2,100,600	60.02
Ministry of Trade, Regional Integration & Employment	17,662	0.50
Ministry of Foreign Affairs	80,000	2.29
Ministry of Interior	46,027	1.32
Ministry of Agriculture	167,405	4.78
Ministry of Defence	13,800	0.39
Ministry of Higher Education	50,000	1.43
Others*	452,328	12.92
TOTAL	3,499,790	100

*Others: Ministries not listed above



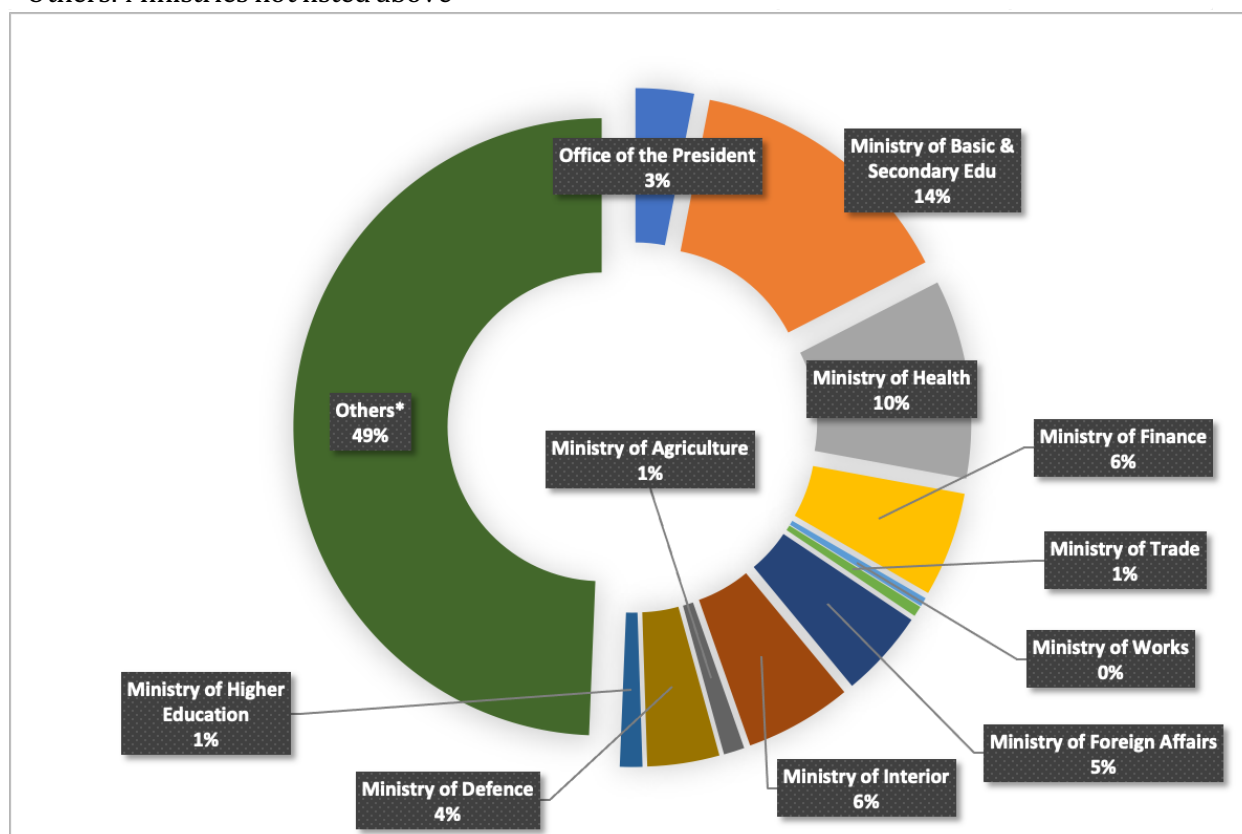
ANNEX 3

Ministries Recurrent Budget Allocation For 2022 (GLF)

Ministries Recurrent Budget (GLF)

	D' Million	% of Total
Office of the President	617,150	3.06
Ministry of Basic & Secondary Education	2,911,119	14.42
Ministry of Health	2,102,643	10.41
Ministry of Finance & Economic Affairs	1,106,046	5.48
Ministry of Works, Construction & Infrastructure	95,408	0.47
Ministry of Trade, Regional Integration & Employment	111,108	0.55
Ministry of Foreign Affairs	929,436	4.60
Ministry of Interior	1,134,297	5.62
Ministry of Agriculture	220,388	1.09
Ministry of Defence	762,804	3.78
Ministry of Higher Education	237,684	1.18
Others*	9,964,355	49.35
TOTAL	20,192,438	100

*Others: Ministries not listed above



ANNEX 4
Governments Fiscal Operations
D'Millions

Year	Revenue and Grants	Expenditure & Net Lending	Fiscal Deficit
2017	13,711	16,997	(3,286.35)
2018	14,905	19,693	(4,788.22)
2019	16,683	19,320	(2,637.01)
2020	21,584	23,636	(2,051.25)
2021 (Budget)	25,760	31,756	(5,996.00)
2022 (Estimated)	29,873	32,155	(2,282.00)

