

OPENING STATEMENT BY HONORABLE MINISTER OF FINANCE AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS ON THE OCCASION OF THE MINI COUNTRY PORTFOLIO PERFORMANCE REVIEW FOR THE WORLD BANK PROJECTS HELD 15-16TH MARCH 2022 AT TAMALA CONFERENCE HALL

Colleague Ministers
Permanent Secretaries
Senior Government Officers
Project Coordinators
Staff
Media
Distinguish Ladies and Gentlemen
All Protocols Duly Observed

I am pleased to welcome you all to this **Mini Country Portfolio Performance Review (CPPR)** of the World Bank Projects in order to discuss the achievements and those important issues confronting the implementation of the projects.

As you are aware, the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs (MoFEA) through the Aid Coordination Directorate has conducted several Country Portfolio Performance Reviews (CPPR) for all donor funded projects in the country. The purpose of these CPPRs are geared towards helping us to be informed about: the achievements of the PIUs during the implementation of their various projects, Challenges that they face during the implementations and the way forward to solving the issues.

This would help us at the highest level to make decision on issues inhibiting the implementation processes for example issues relating to disbursements delays, procurement processes and procedures and so on.

As a reminder three days (June 5 -7th, 2021) joint virtual portfolio review was organized for projects funded by our development partners including

World Bank to discuss and gauge the financial prudence and the effective and efficient utilization of aid resources and daunting challenges encountered by the PIUs during the implementation of the respective projects. During that particular review meeting, issues affecting project and portfolio implementations and performance respectively were presented and discussed. Among the series of issues highlighted during the forum were as follows:

- Weak Financial management System
- Accountability in procurement and Quality of procurement documents
- Unavailability of real-time financial information
- The monitoring of the project directors/coordinators to curtail under performance –
- Under utilisation of the IFMIS during project coordinators
- Inadequate accounts clerks in the rural facilities
- Projects not factoring nutritional aspects in their project
- Procurement and disbursement delays

It will interest to note that these issues are multifaceted i.e., policy, social, strategic, and operational, and to resolve them need concerted and collaborative efforts with high-level involvement in decision-making.

Considering the issues identified, I would like to remind all of you present, PSs, and heads of Departments and Agencies that the Gambia Strategy Review Board (GSRB) was approved by the Cabinet in 2018. The Directorate of Aid Coordination under the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs is mandated by the Gambia Aid Policy and the GSRB to do a preliminary review of all project proposals before sending it to the GSRB for final review, appraisal and endorsement of all development project proposals consistent with the National Development Plan for possible financing in the country. Therefore, all projects ranging from their

conceptualization stage must be communicated to the ACD to assess their alignment with the NDP priorities.

These two days (March 15 -16th, 2022) CPPR is organized only for projects funded by **World Bank**. During this review session, issues affecting project and portfolio implementations and performance respectively are expected to be presented by the project coordinators after which possible solutions / recommendations would be put forward as redresses to the setbacks such as policy, social, strategic, and operational issues that impinges on the implementation of the said projects.

As a result, I am always passionate to see that CPPR is conducted for all donor funded projects quarterly.

This I humbly believe will allow adapting common understanding and approach in resolving bottlenecks regarding project implementation challenges as some may require critical policy and strategy shift to eradicate the problems.

I would therefore like to urge all stakeholders here present to actively participate in this CPPR session.

On this note, I am pleased to declare this special session of CPPR for World bank projects open and hope that it would be interactive and educative as well as creating an avenue to help remedy some of the bottlenecks affecting project implementation of the World Bank projects in the country.

Finally, I would implore the representatives of the various institutions or departments to effectively communicate the action points to your head of institutions or departments for quick actions.

I thank you all for your continuous collaboration and support in our drive to attain the development aspirations of our dear country The Gambia.