

**STATEMENT BY HONORABLE. MAMBURY NJIE, MINISTER OF FINANCE
AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS
ON THE OCCASION OF THE WORLD BANK/GOVERNMENT OF THE
GAMBIA 2021 PORTFOLIO COUNTRY PERFORMANCE REVIEW,
HELD ON 20th JANUARY 2021**

On behalf of the Government of the Republic of The Gambia, I wish to welcome Nathan Belete, Country Director, Cabo Verde, The Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Mauritania, Senegal, Feyi Boroffice, Country Representative for the Gambia, Luc Lecuit, including the Operations Manager, TTLs and Program Leaders to the Republic of The Gambia. In the same vein, I also want to welcome Senior Government Officials, Project Managers, and project staff, as well as Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen here present.

As we know, a Country Portfolio Performance Review is an important exercise that creates a forum where Government and its development partners have the opportunity to review projects and programmes implementation as well as discuss issues and challenges affecting portfolio performance.

Chairperson

However, prior to the discourse of these technical matters, please allow me to express The Gambia's sincere delight and appreciation to the World Bank Group for the continuous support rendered to the Government of the Gambia in various facets of our national development. Most importantly, we are very appreciative of the tremendous support received since the coming of Government of His Excellency President Adama Barrow in 2017 – when the Gambia was dealing with economic fragility related to among others, low economic growth and high poverty. The World Bank portfolio to the Gambia

has increased by US\$57 Million from US\$141million in January 2017 to US\$198.0 Million in December 2020. This portfolio currently consists of seven (7) National projects and Three (3) regional projects in sectors such as Education, Energy, and Health. These projects are all geared towards improving the livelihood of every citizen in the Gambia. Thus, their smooth and effective implementation is a key priority to the Government and my ministry as we continue providing a supportive environment in meeting our National Development Plan objectives within the medium term.

Mr Chairperson, we would also like to express our sincere appreciation to the Bank since the COVID-19 pandemic hits the World. The Gambia like many other countries has experienced the negative impact of COVID-19 taking toll of our economy in a very devastating way. Thanks to the quick intervention of the Bank through emergency budget support of US\$ 10.00 million for the COVID-19 preparedness project, Gambia First Fiscal Management, Energy and Telecom Reform Development Policy Financing US\$ 30.00, Gambia Fiscal Management Development Project US\$ 35.00 and The Gambia Essential Health Services Strengthening Project US\$ 30.00, the social safety net among others. all amounting to US\$105 million. All these supports have given the government the much-needed fiscal space to focus on other programmes that are geared towards the attainment of the socio-economic development of The Gambia as enshrined in the National Development Plan.

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, it is worth sharing with you some key reforms that the Government has embarked on toward a stable and sustainable economic development. These reforms have improved the Gambia rating on the policy front as manifested on the recently concluded Country Policy and

Institutional Assessment (CPIA) 2019 review, which the Gambia has an average score of 3.0 out of 6 mainly driven by our improvement in structural policies and policies for social inclusion/equity from 2017 to 2019. We want to take this opportunity to assure the citizens and our development partners of the government's continuous commitment to policy reforms and programs for inclusive socioeconomic development of the country.

Mr Chairperson, Ladies, and Gentlemen, to ensure that aid delivery is effective as enshrined in the Paris Declaration for Aid Effectiveness, the government through the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs shall ensure the following:

- Improvement of compliance with protocols of Financing Agreements (loan and Grants) and general conditions to ensure compliance with approved implementation schedules. These include ensuring the timely and regular provision of adequate counterpart funds to projects for smooth implementation.
- MOFEA through the Aid Coordination Directorate will play a central role in portfolio management and conduct regular portfolio reviews.
- The organization of donor coordination forums that will bring together our development partners and the government to discuss policy and strategic issues for the effectiveness of development assistance in support of our NDP.
- A scheduled calendar for project supervision missions both for donors and the government to enable effective monitoring and evaluation of project implementation.
- The government through Gambia Strategy Review Board (GSRB) will review and appraise all development projects and programmes before

- approval for implementation. This will ensure that all endorsed programmes and projects are consistent with our national, sectoral development strategies and priority action plans as well as avoid duplication of intervention and resources by our development partners.
- Streamlining of project implementation at the level of the line Ministries by having centralized Project Coordinating Units. This we believed will also help greatly in reducing the fragmentation of resources allocation and duplication of donor interventions to sectors.
 - Revitalize the Aid Management Platform (AMP) to ensure that sharing of information by our development partners on project commitments, and disbursements in real-time for accountability to public and also making information available to all stakeholders.

On this note, Mr chairperson distinguish ladies and gentlemen, in effort to overcome some key issues and challenges as we deliberated on the portfolio review, I trust that the outcome of this year's CPPR will serve a useful purpose for on-going and pipeline projects to adopt good project management strategies to overcome obstacles during implementation.

To conclude, I would want to bring to the attention of our development partners including the Bank our efforts in developing Covid recovery and resilient plan for sustainability 2021. To which we are soliciting support from all partners to provide support in social sectors and in particular Agricultural and Health sector to allow the Government to provide much needed support to the most vulnerable. To this effect I wish you a successful deliberation and declare this session open.