

**THE GAMBIA  
HUMAN DEVELOPMENT REPORT  
2005**



*Building Capacity for the Attainment of the  
Millennium Development Goals  
in The Gambia*



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# Foreword

Over the years, the Government of The Gambia and its development partners have placed much emphasis on capacity development. In addition to the government's own training budget administered by the Personnel Management Office (PMO), there have been many donor capacity building projects and initiatives, all aimed at building or strengthening the capacity of government officials or institutions to formulate and implement development policies and programmes. Yet, despite past and ongoing efforts, the issue of capacity building is still at the forefront of government priorities, as there appears to be limited institutional capabilities not only to formulate but also to effectively implement policies and programmes.

The preparation of the National Human Development Report (NHDR) provides a useful opportunity to assess the impact of UNDP and other partners' interventions in the development process of the country. It affords both government and its partners an opportunity to realign their priorities and formulate new programmes to address any inherent deficiencies that may become apparent. Given the importance of capacity building for The Gambia's future, it was agreed that the issue of capacity building should be the focus of the 2005 NHDR. As such, the central theme is "Capacity Building for the Attainment of the Millennium Development Goals in The Gambia".

The preparation process of the 2005 NHDR started with an initial brainstorming session within the UNDP Country Office to identify a possible theme. Upon reaching some consensus on capacity building as a possible theme, a draft concept note was prepared and subjected to discussion within a larger technical group comprising government officials, private sector personnel and the academia. In presenting the concept note, the UNDP indicated that the theme being presented was only a suggestion and that it was up to the team to select a theme relevant to the country's development context.

It was evident from the discussion that unless an attempt was made to address the issue of capacity building in a more holistic manner, it would not be an over-statement to say that The Gambia would face significant difficulties in meeting its long-term development objectives as captured in the Mission Statement of Vision 2020:

To transform The Gambia into a financial centre, a tourist paradise, a trading, export-oriented agricultural and manufacturing nation, thriving on free market policies and a vibrant private sector, sustained by a well-educated, trained, skilled, healthy, self-reliant and enterprising population, and guaranteeing a well-balanced eco-system and a decent standard of living for one and all, under a system of government based on the consent of the citizenry.

The Vision 2020 Mission Statement pinpoints the paramount importance of human capital in the country's development goals. The Gambia needs a critical mass of well-trained and motivated men and women in the civil service, private sector, civil society and the informal sector who can move the country forward. The issue therefore is how to mobilise, encourage and harness the country's capacity, and ensure a conducive and secure environment that provides adequate incentives for people to stay and contribute to national development. Unless the issue of capacity is addressed in a multi-dimensional way, capacity will continue to be developed with little sustainable impact being felt on the ground.

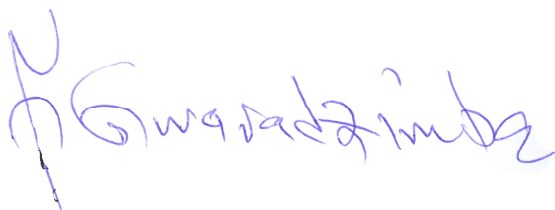
The holistic approach to capacity building adopted for the 2005 NHDR required addressing the question from multiple sectors, including the public and private sectors, the NGOs/CBOs and the traditional sector. Particular attention is paid to the interface and possible synergies with the civil

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service and other actors, and finally the traditional structures of chieftaincy, traditional birth attendants, etc, in order to strengthen these structures for greater impact, especially in a decentralised system of government.

The 2005 NHDR was researched and drafted using a team of four national consultants, each focusing on one of the four identified sectors: public, private, civil society and traditional.

This Report is the fourth in a series of National Human Development Reports commissioned by the UNDP. The first Report in 1997 focused on human development, the 2000 Report looked at governance, while the 2003 Report addressed HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria. Like the previous reports, the 2005 Report does not pretend to have all the answers; rather it aims to stimulate debate on an issue of national concern and to suggest possible action to help redress the situation. We hope that the issues raised and the recommendations contained in the Report will be useful to both Government and other stakeholders in their respective programming activities.



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*The analysis and policy recommendations highlighted in this Report are derived from extensive collaboration between independent consultants and numerous other contributors, and do not necessarily reflect the official views of the United Nations Development Programme, its Executive Board or its Member States.*

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## **Team of Consultants**

A team of four national consultants, under the overall supervision of the University of The Gambia (UTG), were identified by the UNDP on the basis of their individual expertise and tasked with the responsibility of producing the various sections of the Report. The team members are: Sulayman M B Fye, Senior Lecturer, UTG and team leader; A B S Taal, Senior Lecturer, UTG; Boro B Suso, Senior Lecturer, UTG; and Isatou Touray, Deputy Director-General, Management Development Institute (MDI).

## **Contributors**

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# Acronyms and Abbreviations

<b>AAITG</b>	ActionAid International – The Gambia
<b>ACBF</b>	African Capacity Building Foundation
<b>ACCNO</b>	Advisory Committee for the Coordination of NGOs
<b>ADRS</b>	Alternative Dispute Resolution System
<b>AGOA</b>	African Growth and Opportunity Act
<b>AIDS</b>	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
<b>BAFROW</b>	Foundation for Research on Women’s Health, Productivity and the Environment
<b>CBEMP</b>	Capacity Building for Economic Management Project
<b>CBO</b>	Community-Based Organisations
<b>CCF</b>	Christian Children’s Fund
<b>CSD</b>	Central Statistics Department
<b>CSOs</b>	Civil Society Organisations
<b>DFID</b>	Department for International Development (UK)
<b>DOSE</b>	Department of State for Education
<b>DOSFEA</b>	Department of State for Finance and Economic Affairs
<b>DOSTC</b>	Department of State for Tourism and Culture
<b>DOSTIE</b>	Department of State for Trade, Industry and Employment
<b>ECOWAS</b>	Economic Community of West African States
<b>EMCBP</b>	Economic Management and Capacity Building Project
<b>ERP</b>	Economic Recovery Programme
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>FASE</b>	Fight Against Social and Economic Exclusion
<b>FAWEGAM</b>	Forum for African Women Educationalists - Gambia
<b>FGM</b>	Female Genital Mutilation
<b>GAMTEL</b>	Gambia Telecommunications Limited Company
<b>GAWFA</b>	Gambia Women’s Finance Association
<b>GCCI</b>	Gambia Chamber of Commerce and Industry
<b>GDI</b>	Gender-related Development Index
<b>GDP</b>	Gross Domestic Product
<b>GEAP</b>	Gambia Environmental Action Plan
<b>GICAP</b>	Gambia Interface Capacity Building Project
<b>GIPFZA</b>	Gambia Investment Promotion and Free Zones Agency
<b>GNP</b>	Gross National Product
<b>GPPA</b>	Gambia Public Procurement Authority
<b>GTA</b>	Gambia Tourism Authority
<b>HDI</b>	Human Development Index
<b>HDR</b>	Human Development Report
<b>HIV</b>	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
<b>IBAS</b>	Indigenous Business Advisory Services
<b>IFMIS</b>	Integrated Financial Management Information System
<b>IMF</b>	International Monetary Fund
<b>JSSC</b>	Junior Secondary School Certificate
<b>LEAP</b>	Local Environmental Action Plan
<b>MDGs</b>	Millennium Development Goals
<b>MFI</b>	Micro-Finance Institutions
<b>MOU</b>	Memorandum of Understanding
<b>MTEF</b>	Medium-Term Expenditure Framework
<b>MTP</b>	Medium-Term Plan
<b>NAS</b>	National AIDS Secretariat

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<b>NASACA</b>	National Association of Savings and Credit Associations
<b>NAWFA</b>	National Association of Women Farmers
<b>NGO</b>	Non-Governmental Organisations
<b>NGOAA</b>	NGO Affairs Agency
<b>NHDRs</b>	National Human Development Reports
<b>NPM</b>	New Public Management
<b>NTA</b>	National Training Authority
<b>PERs</b>	Public Expenditure Reviews
<b>PMO</b>	Personnel Management Office
<b>PRSPs</b>	Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers
<b>PSD</b>	Programme for Sustained Development
<b>SDF</b>	Social Development Fund
<b>SME</b>	Small and Micro-Enterprises
<b>SPA II</b>	Strategy for Poverty Alleviation II
<b>SPACO</b>	Strategy for Poverty Alleviation Coordination Office
<b>TANGO</b>	The Association of Non-Governmental Organisations
<b>TARUD</b>	Trust Agency for Rural Development
<b>TBAs</b>	Traditional Birth Attendants
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations Children's Education Fund
<b>UTG</b>	University of The Gambia
<b>VDC</b>	Village Development Committee
<b>VISACA</b>	Village Savings and Credit Associations
<b>YMCA</b>	Young Men's Christian Association

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# Executive Summary

*Human development*, according to Fukuda-Parr, is concerned with the development of the capabilities of people to enable them to live long and healthy lives, to be knowledgeable, to have a decent standard of living and to participate actively in community life. In essence, it is “development of, for and by the people.”

The principal objective of the National Human Development Report is to raise public awareness and to trigger action on critical human development concerns.

The central theme of the 2005 Human Development Report for The Gambia is “Capacity Building for the Attainment of the Millennium Development Goals”. The eight MDGs are as follows:

- eradication of extreme poverty and hunger
- achieving universal primary education
- promoting gender equality and women’s empowerment
- reducing child (under-five) mortality
- improving maternal health
- combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases
- ensuring environmental sustainability
- developing a global partnership for development.

The Report addresses the issue of capacity building in a holistic manner - from the perspective of the public sector, the private sector, civil society (NGOs/CBOs) and the traditional sector. In analysing key interventions in each of the four identified sectors, careful attention is paid to the opportunities, challenges, achievements and limitations prevalent in each sector.

## **Capacity Building in the Public Sector for the Achievement of the MDGs**

Since the attainment of political independence in The Gambia in 1965, the public sector has played the role of a major catalyst of economic and social change and not that of a preserver of the status quo, as was the case in many African States. The public sector was the main vehicle for the implementation of all the major development programmes launched by Government since the 1980s. The achievements of these development programmes were largely attributable to the resilience and capacity of the public sector.

Since 1996, Government’s development efforts have been anchored in Vision 2020 (launched in 1996), the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper/SPA II and the MDGs, adopted by the UN Millennium Summit in September 2000.

## **Challenges Facing the Public Sector**

The capacity of the public sector to effectively contribute to the attainment of the MDGs is severely restricted by four major challenges:

- lack of commitment and motivation on the part of public servants as a result of instability in tenure of office, frequent dismissals and retirements, sometimes without resort to due procedures, poor incentives, low remuneration and lack of the tools to work with effectively and efficiently
- rising attrition rates, particularly at the professional and management levels, necessitated by the pursuit of better jobs elsewhere
- lack of resources and expertise, as a result of economic decline, dwindling budgetary resources and lack of opportunities for training or staff development
- poor governance systems and practices which undermine transparency and accountability.

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These constraints have gradually eroded efficiency and productivity in key government departments concerned with the realisation of PRSP and MDG objectives.

### **Recommended Policy Measures for Improving Capacity in the Public Sector**

The report recommends some measures aimed at addressing the constraints faced by the public sector. These are:

- the introduction of a performance-based remuneration and promotion scheme, which has proved effective in some African countries like Ghana and Uganda
- the introduction of performance agreements contracts to ensure that senior officials are output-oriented and can be held accountable for the delivery of measurable outputs within a mutually-determined time frame
- decentralisation of promotion systems
- the implementation of a career development programme
- effective management of the training function, including strict, systematic enforcement of bonding schemes
- effective monitoring of the impact of technical assistance
- the revival of civil service associations for the enhancement of productivity, resolution of grievances and improvement of conditions of service.

### **Capacity Building Projects for Private Sector Growth and Development**

Current national capacity building programmes are predominantly public sector activities while the private sector capacity needs remain incidental.

### **Challenges**

The decline in the growth of water and electricity supply and the high cost of energy continue to be a major constraint to private sector growth and development, and act as a disincentive to potential investors. This is further compounded by poor infrastructure, particularly in the rural areas.

Monetary and fiscal policies have resulted in restrictive lending policies being pursued by the country's commercial banks, characterised by high interest rates, which act as disincentives to borrowers and potential investors. The present tax regime is viewed by the private sector as burdensome and a disincentive to investors.

Similarly, the large increase in the national debt and debt servicing has been the most worrisome macro-economic issue. The burden imposed by servicing an external and domestic debt of US\$764 million as of 2004 diverts resources, which could otherwise be utilised for investment and development purposes, thereby contributing to the achievement of the MDGs.

Some programmes and projects currently being implemented are aimed at enhancing the capacity of government departments that deal directly with the private sector with the objective of promoting their effective participation in economic development.

These programmes and projects face considerable constraints that limit their impact and efficiency. The constraints include:

- the ever-growing cost of energy
- weak planning of activities
- poor governance
- unstable economic environment
- low competitiveness of the business environment
- poor infrastructure.

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Some of the projects have nevertheless significantly contributed to private sector growth and development. The Gambia Interface Capacity Building Project (GICAP) has improved institutional networking and strengthening of the Information and Documentation Unit at the Department of State for Trade, Industry and Employment (DOSTIE). GICAP provides a consultative forum for the participation of the private sector and the civil service in policy dialogue exercises. The participation of the private sector in policy formulation instils a sense of ownership of national policies and helps the sector in research and advocacy. Furthermore, private sector participation helps to promote transparency and accountability.

### **Capacity Building in the NGO/Civil Society Sector**

NGOs have forged strong partnerships with Government for implementation of the National Development Programme for the achievement of the targets of Vision 2020, the MDGs and the PRSP. Currently there are 104 NGOs registered in the country of which 71 account for approximately 90 per cent of the total budget spent by NGOs in The Gambia. These 71 NGOs are currently implementing 443 projects targeted at attaining the goals of Vision 2020, the MDGs and the PRSP.

According to the records of the Office of the Attorney General and Secretary of State for Justice, there are about 5000 community based organisations in The Gambia, which are typically formed by two to five individuals for the pursuit of a specific purpose.

### **Challenges**

The impact and effectiveness of both NGOs and CBOs have been restricted by many factors including:

- lack of effective coordination of activities, particularly at the field level leading to costly duplication of efforts and scarce resources
- inadequate funding
- poorly qualified staff, lacking competencies and expertise in areas vital for successful project management
- precarious dependence on the funds of external agencies, whose agenda and objectives are not always consistent with those of Government.

To alleviate the constraints faced by NGOs, The Association of Non-Governmental Organisations (TANGO), with funding from Action Aid International - The Gambia (AAITG), executed a project entitled "Civil Society Capacity Strengthening" in 2002. The objective of this intervention was to help TANGO members develop participatory action-oriented and people-oriented strategic plans. The overall goal was to ensure that TANGO members are more effective and dynamic in the fight against poverty and social injustice.

### **Capacity Building in the Traditional Sector**

Gambian traditional structures are rooted in the traditional forms of social organisations and groupings of the community, based on customary norms and values. They have been extensively and effectively utilised to mobilise communities for development activities, to popularise government policies and programmes and to promote sensitisation and advocacy programmes, eg on HIV/AIDS, immunisation, girls education and control of the environment.

In many communities, the *ngansingba* is the women's leader in the community who commands power and respect, serving as the intermediary between the women and the community of male elders. NGOs have used these leaders as change agents in matters relating to reproductive health. They have been trained to take on the role of traditional birth attendants (TBAs) and are currently responsible for most of the deliveries in the rural areas. They are also trained to transmit

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messages of reproductive health, such as family planning, nutritional taboos, and early marriages or teenage pregnancies.

### **Challenges**

While the traditional structures are a source of inspiration and strength, they are also fraught with challenges. They do not have the required skills to respond effectively to the challenges posed by the MDGs. They are usually poorly resourced and hardly have the financial ability to undertake development work efficiently. Besides, some of them are being politicised and, consequently, the values of trust, respect and common understanding in the pursuit of common goals are being eroded. Also, some of the traditional structures are not gender representative and, as such, decision-making is mainly male-dominated.

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# 1

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## Introduction

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### CHAPTER PREVIEW

*Role and Purposes of the NHDRs  
Conceptual and Analytical Framework: Definition of Capacity  
Capacity Development and Capacity Building*

The central theme of the National Human Development Report for The Gambia, 2005 is “Capacity Building for the Attainment of the Millennium Development Goals”.

Chapter 1 examines the role and objectives of NHDRs and then briefly discusses the concept of *capacity development*. The second, third, fourth and fifth chapters critically appraise and analyse ongoing interventions, policies, programmes and strategies in the public, private, NGO and traditional sectors designed to enhance and strengthen capacity for the purposes of achieving the MDGs. The sixth chapter presents a brief summary of the key findings and conclusions and recaps some of the recommendations that logically emerged from the findings. A summary of the human development situation in The Gambia and a calculation of the human development index are presented as appendices.

In analysing key interventions in each of the four identified sectors, careful attention is paid to opportunities, challenges and limitations or weaknesses from the perspectives of the political, economic, institutional and cultural realities of the country.

### 1.1 Role and Objectives of the NHDRs

*Human development* has been aptly defined by Sakiko Fukuda-Parr as “the process of enlarging people’s choices for expanding capabilities to live long and

healthy lives, to be knowledgeable, to have a decent standard of living and to participate actively in community life. This is truly development of, for and by the people.”<sup>1</sup>

The NHDRs bring this message alive. Their principal objective is to raise public awareness and trigger action on critical human development concerns. The NHDRs contribute significantly to strengthening national statistical and analytical capacity but, more importantly, they constitute important analytical and advocacy instruments for the human development approach at the country level.

The reports also serve as potentially important vehicles for reinforcing, with practical local experiences, the global debate on the human development paradigm, which was triggered by the publication by the UNDP of the first global Human Development Report in 1990 and the first national report published in Bangladesh in 1992.

NHDRs provide solid analyses of development issues and challenges from the perspective of people-centred development. They shape policies and programmes by providing options and broad recommendations on pertinent themes. Presently, they are increasingly used as important advocacy tools for the realisation of the development objectives of the MDGs.

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## 1.2 Conceptual and Analytical Framework

To put the issues raised in this report in proper perspective, it is important to be clear about the conceptual framework. What is capacity? What are the critical elements that constitute capacity? Why has capacity building aroused concern and interest in the development efforts of low-income countries?

The UNDP Report, 2003 defines *capacity* as “the ability of individuals and organisations to perform sets of functions effectively, efficiently and sustainably.”<sup>2</sup> This definition is premised on four fundamental pillars as follows:

- Capacity is a dynamic function and involves a continuous process of change. It is not static and does not form a one-time snapshot of an organisation’s ability to perform a particular task.
- Capacity focuses on the productive utilisation of human capital in the organisation.
- It relates to the overall internal and external environment with which organisations execute their functions. This environment encompasses the socio-economic, political, demographic and governance challenges.
- It is also task-specific and discussion of the concept is generally linked to a particular function.

The term *human capital* was coined by the University of Chicago around 1957 and has, until recently, been largely viewed from an economic perspective. In recent years, development and management scholars have increasingly analysed the concept from an organisational perspective. Many scholars have advocated that the long-term success of an organisation depends on its ability to attract, retain, enhance and effectively utilise the human capital of its employees.

Optimising the competitiveness, growth rate and cost-effectiveness of any organisation depends on its ability to apply its human capital to all aspects of its

operations. Building human capacity in the organisation is consequently the central challenge facing all organisations in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Brian Orr stated this view thus: “The successful 21<sup>st</sup> century organisation will not take the loyalty of talented people for granted. It will constantly try to recruit and keep them. The mutual commitment of an employer and an employee will be one of the most important factors for a 21<sup>st</sup> century organisation.”<sup>3</sup>

Traditionally, capacity building in development literature has focused on training and personnel development. In recent years, the limitations of such an approach have been recognised. Many institutional analysts have broadened the concept to include wider institutional factors, such as resource endowments, organisational systems, structures and practices, civil service rules and regulations, a macro-economic framework and a political and governance environment. Capacity is also task-specific; thus discussion of the concept needs to be clearly linked to a particular function.

## 1.3 Capacity Development and Capacity Building

The concepts *capacity development* and *capacity building* are often interchangeably used to convey identical meanings, but they are by no means synonymous. *Capacity development* is concerned with overall institutional or organisational development and generally focuses on the policy, governance and macro-economic environment.

*Capacity building*, on the other hand, is concerned with long-term development issues such as sustainability, innovation, development, utilisation and retention of capacity. In this respect, capacity building is much more relevant and appropriate, and the concept is consequently used in the analysis that follows. The ultimate goal of capacity building is to enable an organisation to grow stronger in achieving its purposes and its mission.



# Building Human Capacity in the Public Sector: Challenges and Opportunities for Achieving the MDGs

## CHAPTER PREVIEW

- Definition of the Public Sector*  
*The Public Sector in the Development Process of African Countries*  
*Development Strategies of Government*  
*The Challenges Facing the Gambia Public Service*  
*Evaluation of Capacity Building Interventions of Public Sector Programmes and Projects*
- *UNDP-Economic Management and Capacity Building Project*
  - *World Bank-Capacity Building for Economic Management Project*
  - *Recommended Policy Measures and Strategies for Improving Capacity Building in the Public Sector*
    - *Lack of Incentives, Motivation and Commitment*
    - *Effective Management of the Training Function*

This chapter examines ongoing interventions in the public sector, which seek to develop human capacity, and identifies the challenges and opportunities to be addressed for the achievement of the MDGs in The Gambia. It is important at the outset to be clear about the definition of the *public sector* and the role it plays in the development efforts of African countries in general and The Gambia in particular.

### 2.1 Definition of Public Sector

In his book entitled *Public Administration* Thornhill defines the *public sector* as “a group of institutions having in common some reliance on the power of the state, from which they can justify their activities and a political belief which accords greater merit to collective rather than to individual action.”<sup>4</sup> By extension, the public sector is composed of bodies, which rely for their

existence, or their powers (sometimes both) on the authority conferred on them by the state in varying degrees through some formal process. It is their ability to invoke, in a greater or lesser degree, the compulsive power of the state, which brings them within the public sector.

The endowment of state power varies from one institution to another, but generally three broad groups are identifiable, namely:

- **Governmental Bodies:** These exercise governmental functions that are readily recognisable, eg ministries (or departments of state), public agencies, government departments and local government authorities. These are clearly governmental bodies, created to perform functions directed at the public interest.
- **Legislative Bodies:** These are bodies such as state enterprises, boards and corporations (parastatals) whose governmental sanction lies in legislation, which determines their institutional

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structure, their finances and their powers and duties. Their jurisdiction may be limited to a particular area, as in the case of public utilities, or to particular services.

- **Professional Regulatory Bodies:** These are institutions whose activities concern citizens pursuing their individual personal interests, but which can enforce some of their decisions by sanction of governmental power conferred on them. The best examples of this group are the professional regulatory bodies, eg the Gambia Medical and Dental Association. In these bodies state power is usually conferred to enable the body to have an ultimate enrolment role, which is considered to be of benefit to the public.

Thus professional regulatory bodies are given the power to prescribe the training required for members, to regulate the conduct of members and to prohibit the unqualified from practising. Similarly, some bodies are endowed with compulsory power to regulate various kinds of activities in the public interest.

## 2.2 The Public Sector in the Development Process of African Countries

Since the attainment of political independence by many African countries, the role and purposes of the public sector have been dramatically revolutionalised.

The public sector is now expected to be the catalyst for economic and social change and no longer the preserver of the status quo. In its new role as the prime mover and stimulator of national development, the public sector is expected to spread the benefits of economic and social progress to everybody and not just to a privileged few.

Moreover, the sector is expected to achieve these purposes within the general framework of the consent of the people and with due regard to the rule of law and respect for human rights.

In an article entitled “Public Administration and Development”, Braibant gives a succinct

summary of four major roles played by the African public sector in the development process.

These roles are as follows:

- The public sector is responsible for the regulation of economic life. Contrary to widespread belief, the market economy regime does not reduce the need for regulation, but instead increases it. Regulation is essential, as it prevents competitive distortions, and the misuse of positions of authority and prominence, protects workers and consumers, and avoids markets becoming jungles ruled by the most powerful people in society.
- It also plays a unique part in ensuring social cohesion. It is only the public sector or the state which can guarantee equality of opportunity, combat social inequalities and protect the weak in the fields of education, health and housing.
- It safeguards law and order in complex multi-ethnic and multi-cultural societies and guarantees the protection of territorial integrity.
- It is also involved in the conservation of natural heritages and the environment in the pursuit of sustainable development. While sharing its responsibilities with civil society, the public sector safeguards the checks and balances, which are fundamental elements in complex societies.

In short, the public sector has an enormous impact on the lives of all citizens and significantly contributes to the achievement of the goals of sustainable development.

Like many African countries that experienced colonial rule, the legacy of colonialism created fundamental problems for poor small counties like The Gambia. Two major challenges which confronted the Gambian public service after the attainment of political independence in 1965 were the need for the creation of viable state institutions capable of satisfying “the revolution of rising expectations” and the need for addressing the myriad of challenges of growth and structural transformation in an economy heavily

dependent on the vagaries of the weather, fluctuations in world commodity prices and uncertainties over the level and quality of external assistance.

The public sector has an enormous impact on the lives of all citizens and significantly contributes to the achievement of the goals of sustainable development.

While the colonial power exercised stable rule and provided some basic public goods, the public institutions created were essentially preoccupied with maintenance of the status quo. They were by no means agents of change and grassroots development.

Fortunately, the public service of post-independent Gambia was relatively resilient and had a distinctive culture and mission for the achievement of growth, the eradication of poverty and the improvement of the socio-economic welfare of the average Gambian.

During the first decade after the attainment of political independence in 1965, The Gambia achieved relatively high levels of economic growth and performance. Unfortunately, the combined effects of expansionary fiscal policies, inadequate pricing policies (including an over-valued exchange rate), adverse weather and a serious deterioration of the country's terms of trade resulted in a period of serious economic crises and stagnation in the mid-1980s.

The public sector expanded considerably during this period, with the civil service doubling in size within a period of 10 years (ie from 1975 to 1985). The uncontrolled expansion of the civil service was prompted by several factors including:

- political pressure to meet the demands of the poor and vulnerable groups that resulted in the government's commitment to address the problems of gender inequality and provide essential services for the poor, particularly in the fields of education, health and rural infrastructure
- the need to reduce visible urban unemployment

- limited expansion of private sector employment
- lack of fiscal discipline, reflected in the over-spending of recurrent resources and the proliferation of below-the-line accounts, which lacked monitoring and transparency.

In 1984/1985, the annual inflation rate reached 22 per cent and fiscal and external current account deficits (excluding grants) reached critical proportions of 12 per cent and 18 per cent of GDP respectively. Substantial foreign borrowing led to an external debt that peaked at 119 per cent of GDP, and arrears of external payments escalated to 30 per cent of GDP. The borrowing was largely focused on capital investment in infrastructure and in the development of education and health services.

In 1985, in order to reverse the economic deterioration, the Economic Reform Programme (ERP) was launched, with the support of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Reforms carried out in the context of the ERP and its successor programme, the Programme for Sustained Development (PSD), launched in 1990, focused on:

- a market-determined exchange rate
- liberalisation of the exchange and trade regimes
- lifting of price controls
- scaling down of the public sector by over 35 per cent (including divestiture of about 20 public enterprises).

Structural adjustment reforms implemented (including the re-organisation of key ministries) supplemented by strengthened fiscal and monetary policies contributed to the:

- reduction of macro-economic imbalances
- reduction of the inflation rate to single digit levels
- augmentation of Government savings
- restoration of external reserves to about five months of imports by 1991/92 (as opposed to one week in 1985).

Since 1992, Government has accorded high priority to poverty alleviation as the central thrust of its development agenda, resulting in the launch of a multi-sectoral Strategy for Poverty Alleviation (SPA I) in 1994.

However, between 1994 and 1996, adverse external and domestic shocks disrupted economic performance. The sharp devaluation of the CFA franc in January 1994 as well as the reinforced border and transit controls introduced by Senegal and the July 1994 military coup d'état exacerbated the economic problems of the country.

Political uncertainty, coupled with reduced earnings from tourism, dwindling confidence of private sector operators and the suspension of development assistance from traditional donors, further aggravated the socio-economic problems of the country.

The two-year transition period (1994-1996), preceding the return to constitutional rule, was a period of turbulence in the civil service. The results of commissions of enquiry led to massive dismissals and the retirement of a large number of high-ranking public officials, many of whom occupied senior management positions. A further consequence was the exodus of talented staff, and reduced capacity and morale in the affected institutions.

With the return to democratic constitutional rule in 1996, preceded by presidential and parliamentary elections in 1996 and 1997 respectively, the economic situation started to improve, as political isolation was reduced and donor support resumed.

### **2.3 Development Strategies of the Gambia Government**

Currently, there are several development planning instruments operating in The Gambia but the major ones are Vision 2020, the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper/Strategy for Poverty Alleviation (PRSP/SPA). The third major planning instrument is the Medium Term Plan (MTP) which has been formulated, but is yet to be implemented.

Given the prevailing capacity constraints in the civil service, the current government strategy is to merge the PRSP and MTP documents to forge one medium-term planning instrument, poverty reduction and growth strategy.

**Vision 2020:** The Gambia Incorporated Vision 2020 was launched in May 1996 by the President of The Gambia, Yahya Jammeh. It was coordinated and prepared by a National Think-Tank which was specifically set up for the purpose. The long-term vision of this nationally endorsed development blueprint is to raise “the standard of living of the Gambian population by transforming The Gambia into a dynamic middle-income country by the year 2020.” Vision 2020 captures the country’s long-term aspirations and embraces the broadest spectrum of socio-economic development.

Given the prevailing capacity constraints in the civil service, the current government strategy is to merge the PRSP and MTP documents to forge one medium-term planning instrument, poverty reduction and strategy.

**Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper/SPA II:** The PRSP was prepared in 2002 by the Strategy for Poverty Alleviation Coordination Office (SPACO), a specialised unit in the Department of State for Finance and Economic Affairs (DOSFEA). It constitutes the current medium-term development strategy of Government. It is the primary vehicle through which Government and its development partners hope to achieve the MDGs.

The military take-over of July 1994 and its effects compromised the implementation of the first poverty reduction strategy. As a result the poverty situation worsened. A review of SPA I, undertaken in 1999, established that the social, demographic, gender and geographic dimensions of poverty had worsened and food poverty in particular was acute. Table 1 illustrates the magnitude of poverty between 1989 and 1998 in both the rural and urban areas.

**Table 1: Poverty in The Gambia**

Year	Food poverty line			Overall poverty line		
	Banjul	Urban	Rural	Banjul	Urban	Rural
1989	-	33%	44%	-	64%	76%
1998	21%	42%	71%	54%	62%	80%

Source: *The Gambia, Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper*

In September 2002, the Strategy for Poverty Alleviation II (SPA II) was approved at a donors' roundtable conference and US\$118 million was pledged by development partners to support five key pillars of the programme for the period 2003 to 2005. These pillars are:

- Improving the enabling policy environment to promote economic growth and poverty reduction
- Enhancing the productive capacity and social protection of the poor and the vulnerable
- Improving the coverage of the unmet basic needs of the poor
- Building the capacity for local people-centred development through decentralisation
- Mainstreaming gender equity, environmental issues, nutrition, governance and HIV/AIDS awareness into all development programmes.

Progress in the achievement of the objectives of SPA II and in the implementation of the five pillars has been very slow and the root causes

revolve around the following:

- weak institutional capacity
- over-estimation of the implementation capacity of the sectoral agencies
- inadequate reflection of PRSP priorities in the national budget
- capacity gaps at policy, sector and local government area levels due to the inadequacy of skills, weak systems and processes and the high attrition rate in the civil service
- slow pace of implementation of the decentralisation and local government reform process, lack of broad-based stakeholder participation in the implementation and monitoring of SPA II.

These bottlenecks constitute the main capacity challenges facing the Gambian public service as far as the implementation of the PRSP is concerned. The PRSP pillars correspond closely to the strategic development areas of Vision 2020 (See Table 2).

**Table 2: The relation between Vision 2020 and SPA II**

Vision 2020 strategic development areas	SPA II pillars
Accelerate private sector development	Create the enabling policy environment for economic growth and poverty reduction.
Restructuring economic management Develop the human capital base	Enhance the productive capacity and social protection of the poor and vulnerable Improve coverage of the basic social needs of the poor and vulnerable
Institutionalise decentralised and democratic participatory government structures, processes and systems	Build the capacity of local communities and civil society organisations to play an active role in the development process Mainstream poverty-related cross-cutting issues, such as gender, environment, HIV/AIDS, nutrition, population, and governance into the PRSP

Source: *Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper/SPA II 2002*

**The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs):** In September 2000, at the UN Millennium Summit, held in New York, world leaders agreed to a set of time-bound and measurable goals and targets for combating poverty, hunger, disease, illiteracy, environmental degradation and discrimination against women.

In 2002, leaders from both the developed and developing countries reached an agreement on their various roles towards the implementation of the MDGs.

Table 3 shows the eight general and The Gambia's specific MDGs and the progress in implementation achieved up to date. The

MDGs measure the specific targets and outputs that the goals of the PRSP seek to achieve. The base year against which to measure progress in achieving the MDGs is 1990 and the year 2015 is the target year for meeting the goals. According to The

Gambia's first National Millennium Development Goals Report 2003, goals 2, 6 and 7 have already been met or are likely to be, while goals 1, 4, 5 and 8 are unlikely to be met (given the current trends).

**Table 3: Progress in the attainment of the MDGs in The Gambia**

Millennium Development Goals	MDG Targets	Progress to date
1 Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger	1 Halve the proportion of people living below the national poverty line by 2015	Lagging
	2 Halve the proportion of people who suffer from hunger	
2 Achieve universal primary education	3 Achieve universal primary education by 2014	Met or on track
3 Promote gender equality and empower women	4 Achieve equal access to primary and secondary schooling for boys and girls by 2005	Lagging
4 Reduce child mortality	5 Reduce under-five mortality by two-thirds by 2015.	Lagging
	6 Halve the proportion of underweight children below five years old by 2015	Lagging
5 Improve maternal health	7 Reduce maternal mortality ratio by three -quarters by 2015	Met or on track
6 Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases.	8 Halt and reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS by 2015	Lagging
7 Ensure environmental sustainability	9 Reverse loss of environmental resources by 2015	Lagging
	10 Halve, by 2015, the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation	Met or on track
8 Develop a global partnership for development		Lagging

Although the overall linkage and objectives of the PRSP and the MDGs are very close, achievements of the former have been very limited. To put it bluntly, poverty reduction in The Gambia since 2002 has been disappointing. An evaluation of the progress and implementation level of the PRSP conducted in November 2004 reached the following conclusions: "There is general agreement on the part of both the Gambia Government and her development partners that the operating environment does not yet exist for making a sustained attack on poverty, and that macro-economic performance has fallen well short of the desired targets needed to significantly reduce poverty."<sup>5</sup> Consequently, the level of poverty has worsened and the goals of the PRSP have

not been met mainly as a result of internal structural bottlenecks, namely:

- poor macro-economic performance
- public spending inconsistent with commitments in the PRSP
- weak central coordination of sectoral interventions
- weak capacity at central and local levels
- inadequate ownership of the PRSP at the grassroots level
- lack of resources to implement the PRSP, aggravated by a decline in donor assistance and the IMF's suspension of the Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility (PRGF).

**Table 4: PRSP and MDG status and comparison**

MDG Targets	PRSP Targets	MDG Indicators	Targets		Actual	Status
			2005	2015		
<b>MDG 1 Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger.</b> Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people whose income is less than one dollar a day.	A reduction by 66% of the number of women living in poverty by 2015. No specific target for population at large.	MDG 1: proportion of population. Below the poverty line (US\$ 1 per day).	38	27	59% in 1998, and results from 2003 household survey will provide more recent data.	Severely off track
<b>MDG 1 Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger.</b> Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger.	A reduction by 50% of the number of malnourished people by 2015.	MDG 1: proportion of population below minimum dietary energy consumption.	n/a	7.5	15% in 1990, 21% in 2000.	Off track
<b>MDG 2 Achieve universal primary education.</b> Ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete full course of primary schooling.	Universal primary education by 2015, with 80% completion in primary education by 2005.	MDG 2: net enrolment ratio in primary education.	78	100	60% in 2000.	Slightly off track
<b>MDG 3 Promote gender equality and empower women.</b> Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and at all levels of education not later than 2015.	Attaining gender equity in primary and secondary enrolments by 2005.	MDG 3: ratio of girls to boys in primary education.	100	100	96% in 2002	On track
		MDG 3: ratio of girls to boys in secondary. Education	100	100	79% in 2002	Off track
<b>MDG 4 Reduce child mortality.</b> Reduce by two-thirds, between 1990 and 2015, the under-five mortality rate.	A reduction of the 1990 infant and child mortality rates by 33% by the year 2015.	MDG 4: under five child mortality (per 1,000 live births).	82	45	135 deaths per thousand live births	Severely off track
<b>MDG 5 Improve maternal health.</b> Reduce by three quarters, between 1990 and 2015, the maternal mortality ratio.	A 50% reduction of the maternal mortality rate of 1990 and a further 50% by 2015.	MDG 5: maternal mortality ratio (per 100, 000 live births).	577	262	730 deaths per 100, 000 live births.	On track
<b>MDG 6 Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases.</b> Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS.	No comparable PSRP target.	MDG 6: spread of HIV/AIDS.	n/a	n/a	HIV-1 prevalence rate among 15 to 49 year old pregnant women increased from 0.7% in 1995 to 2.1% in 2004.	Low but off track
<b>MDG 6 Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases.</b> Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS.	No comparable PSRP target.	MDG 6: spread of malaria and other major diseases.	n/a	n/a	Tuberculosis 1, 212 cases in 1990 increased to 1, 561 cases in 2000.	Insufficient data
<b>MDG 7 Ensure environmental sustainability.</b> Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes and reverse the losses of environmental resources.	No comparable PSRP target.	MDG 7: loss of environmental resources	n/a	n/a	Proportion of land covered by forests 40.7% in 1993 and 41.5% in 1999.	Insufficient data
		MDG 7: access to safe drinking water.	66	76	84% in 1996	On track
<b>MDG 7 Ensure environmental sustainability.</b> By 2020, to have achieved a significant improvement in the lives of 100 million slum dwellers.	No comparable PSRP target	MDG 7: % of population. having access to improved sanitation.	n/a	n/a	84% in 1990, 88% in 2000, figure in urban areas is 96%.	On track

Table 4 above illustrates the progress achieved in the implementation of both the PRSP and the MDG targets.

Although The Gambia has achieved significant improvements in expanded school enrolment over the past decade(1994 – 2004), particularly girls’ enrolment in primary education, the sector’s capacity to achieve PRSP targets is severely restricted by the following:

- poor delivery of quality education
- declining administrative capacity in sector management
- high attrition rates of personnel
- mounting costs of education for the poor.

**Poor Quality of Education:** At present, the only available comparative measurement of teaching outcomes is the Gambia Basic Education Certificate Examination (formerly the Junior Secondary School Certificate Examination - JSSCE. The extremely high rates of failure indicate poor quality of education, as confirmed in Table 5. The Medium-Term Plan for Development in the context of Vision 2020 emphasises that “the most serious problem affecting the education sector is poor quality of instruction that is brought about by poorly trained and absentee teachers.”

*Table 5: Results of 2001 JSSC examinations (percentages)*

Core Subject		Passing levels	Passing levels	Passing levels	Fail
		1-3	4-6	7-8	
<b>English</b>	All	7	19	12	62
	Female	8	15	10	67
<b>Mathematics</b>	All	1	2	14	84
	Female	1	1	11	86
<b>Science</b>	All	3	13	23	62
	Female	2	9	19	71
<b>Social Studies</b>	All	10	14	36	40
	Female	6	10	30	54
<b>Islamic Studies</b>	All	10	12	7	71
	Female	6	7	5	82
<b>Agriculture</b>	All	11	25	12	52
	Female	8	19	10	63
<b>Art</b>	All	11	43	25	21
	Female	8	49	27	17

**Weak Institutional Capacity:** This is a major problem for the schools and the departments, and is largely due to the shortage of trained human resources, frequent changes of supervisory staff both at the levels of donor agencies and policy management, low levels of remuneration and hostile working conditions, especially in the rural areas. The school system continues to suffer from the erosion of experienced and qualified staff, and school boards very often do not have experienced and competent members capable of taking sound decisions on critical issues on school management. Finally, the operational manuals of donor agencies, which govern the disbursement of funds, are often complex

and the procedures required are cumbersome and sometimes not fully understood by project staff. The frequent exodus of personnel trained in the modalities and procedures exacerbates the problems of weak institutional capacity.

**Declining Administrative Capacity:** There is a high degree of instability in positions occupied by senior managers. Two directors of planning left in 2003 and nearly every staff member trained in the operation of the Education Management Information System between 2000 and 2002 either left or was re-assigned. Similarly within two years, from 2003 to 2005, three permanent secretaries were changed. The reduction of project staff salaries by 40 per cent to 60 per cent has



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recently resulted in serious staff attrition at the Project Management Unit of DOSE. The unit lost the services of key trained personnel like the deputy project manager, procurement officer and construction manager. These senior staff received extensive professional training, and their immediate replacement has not been easy and has had adverse effects on project management in the sector. Currently, there are too few teachers especially in the rural areas, and because of hostile conditions, many teachers are often reluctant to serve in these areas.

The success of any education policy largely depends on the effectiveness of the management and organisational structures that are in place. The decentralisation programme is not fully resourced and the regional directorates are not fully functional. The high attrition rates of well-trained staff both at management and school levels undermine the degree of professionalism and efficiency of the management of the education system, resulting in low implementation rates, poor supervision of activities (especially the management of teacher supply) and issues of quality in the schools. Other weaknesses in the management of the sector include regional disparities in resources, staffing, implementation rate and supervision and monitoring. These challenges affect performance, especially at the school levels. The low disbursement rate of project funds has often resulted in the under-utilisation of allocated resources.

#### **Decline in Budgeted Expenditure:**

Expenditures on education relative to the GDP declined from 4.3 per cent of the GDP to less than 3 per cent. Because of rising debt commitments, the share of the budget for education as a percentage of total recurrent funds has fallen from 17.1 per cent in 1999 to 10.5 per cent in 2004.

Thus education appears to have fallen as a government priority, meaning that the ambitious policy priorities set out in the National Policy for Education are unlikely to be achieved. Similarly, the PRSP objectives

to improve the quality of education, increase the transition rate from upper basic to senior secondary school to 50 per cent, and increase the supply of teaching and learning materials are not likely to be met with falling budgetary resources.

The Public Expenditure Report for the health sector (June 2004) reveals that the health system suffers from three major problems: lack of funding, severe shortage of health personnel and problems of access to services. The emergence of the HIV/AIDS epidemic further complicates the situation, as it requires additional resources and attention.

The May 2002 Report on “Health and Poverty in The Gambia” established that although significant progress has been achieved in the development of the sector, considerable challenges need to be addressed to meet the MDG targets. Malnutrition, maternal and reproductive health, family planning, HIV/AIDS and malaria remain key priority areas for action.

Also, access to quality services should be drastically improved in the rural areas for the benefit of the poor.

Human resource management presents major challenges. Limited pay, and an inadequate management framework have undermined staff motivation, leading to acute human resource shortages in the rural areas.

Furthermore, inter-sectoral public spending is not aligned with stated policy priorities, and the efficiency of spending in the sector leaves a lot to be desired. Intra-sectoral allocations of recurrent expenditures, mainly funded from domestic resources, reflect uneven efforts to implement the stated priority that is supposed to be accorded to primary health care. Between 1998 and 2002 the share of the sector’s resources spent on primary health care fell from about 40 per cent to approximately 30 per cent as a substantial portion of the department’s resource allocation was spent on tertiary services.

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## 2.4 Challenges Facing the Gambian Public Service

**Lack of Commitment and Motivation:** One of the major challenges facing the civil service is lack of motivation and commitment, caused by an unattractive reward and incentive system. Employee compensation is an effective tool to improve employee performance, motivation and satisfaction. Unattractive compensation leads to high staff turnover, high absenteeism, poor performance and job dissatisfaction.

Employees are attracted to an organisation through the reward packages and the status and potential value of being associated with the organisation. In well-managed organisations, the reward package supports the overall vision and mission and derives the organisation's status and respect from the community at large. The consequences of an unattractive or "out-of-equilibrium" reward package on the key attributes of dedication, motivation, productivity, commitment and performance are briefly summarised below.

### Consequences of "Out-of-Equilibrium" Reward Packages

**Dedication:** Employees will not maintain their sustained levels of customer service.

**Motivation:** Employees will not display positive behaviour, creativity or resourcefulness but will simply go "through physical notions."

**Productivity:** Output will drop below expected levels.

**Commitment:** Employees' association with the organisation will be at risk, often resulting in higher attrition rates.

**Performance:** Overall performance in meeting objectives will decrease.

There is widespread belief that the reward and compensation package in the civil service is significantly below that of the market level - the market being parastatal organisations, NGOs and the private industry within The Gambia. The Report of the Salaries

Commission on the civil service of The Gambia 2002/2003 established that the difference between civil service pay and that of the market was 20 per cent to 25 per cent at the time. A 20 per cent increase in pay levels was recommended but only a 10 per cent increase was accepted and implemented in 2003/2004.

The current salary structure in the civil service was at least 13% below market levels as of 1 January 2004. Disparity in pay levels would not have been a major disincentive if employees received compensation in non-financial ways through the security of tenure, access to training opportunities, availability of career progression and job satisfaction. Unfortunately, these benefits have been substantially eroded largely because of political interference and an acute decline in resources.

It is evident that unless definitive measures are taken to increase civil servants' pay by at least 30 per cent, lack of commitment and motivation will persist and the problems of slow implementation of the PRSP/SPA pillars, limited absorptive capacity, poor policy programmes and project implementation and institutional inefficiency will escalate.

It has been estimated that the elimination of vacant positions would save 15 per cent of the total wage budget, yielding approximately D44.5 million. The interview results of the Attrition Study in 2004 revealed that 30 per cent of the current staff of the civil service are doing redundant work and at least 1 per cent of the present workforce may be identified as poor performers. Thus the elimination of vacant posts and a reduction of revenue wastage would generate a level of income that could readily accommodate the cost of a 30 per cent pay increase.

**Rising Attrition Levels:** Taking into consideration the outlook of the economy, current inflation rates, employees' other choices for alternative employment opportunities and the interview results of the Attrition Study, "a perception exists that a

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significant number of employees are actively searching for employment outside of the civil service, and if a quantitative review of the issue were to be conducted now, this perception would be a reality.”

The reasons for attrition, as identified by some civil servants who recently resigned and some currently serving include:

- poor salary and incentives
- poor working conditions
- lack of recognition
- limited job security
- politicisation of the civil service
- lack of resources
- lack of career development prospects
- search for better jobs.

The following interview statement as reflected in the Attrition Study attempts to sum up the above. “Tenure of office is a problem in the civil service. In the old order, things would move in an orderly manner. It was difficult to hire and fire. Now it happens easily. The civil service has become very unstable and job security is absent.”

***Lack of Resources and Expertise:*** The PER process has proved to be a very valuable tool for bringing into focus the budgeting and spending patterns of government agencies and for monitoring progress in the implementation of the PRSP and MDGs. The preparation of a PER requires specific skills-sets that only a few Gambians possess. This is a major capacity constraint that has retarded the completion of the full range of sectoral PERs.

Similarly, as a result of local capacity constraints, there have been lengthy delays in the development of the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) and the Integrated Financial Management Information System (IFMIS). These tools are designed to improve financial planning and budgeting, budget execution, accounting and monitoring and reporting public expenditure reform in order to improve the quality and sustainability of service delivery for a greater impact on poverty reduction.

Unfortunately, the public service has limited capacity to tackle these challenges. Studies on public expenditure management have confirmed that allocative and productive efficiency of expenditures has not been achieved as a result of:

- limited fiscal discipline due to lack of transparency and accountability
- unpredictability in the budget process
- reliance on inadequate and often outdated computer hardware
- lack of strategic prioritisation – inter-and intra-sectoral allocations do not reflect strategic priorities.

The quality of The Gambia’s budget system is very poor. Departments submit proposals which are generally not well costed and which grossly exceed available resources. In the end, recurrent budget allocations are largely incremental. Similarly, the development budget is not well structured on the basis of programmes developed in line with national policy priorities aimed at improving productivity and sustainability of public expenditures.

These problems stem from scarce human capacity in line departments of state to formulate policies and to link them with the planning and budgeting of public resources, and inadequate information on disbursements provided to line departments of state during budget execution. Problems in government accounting, accentuated by a lack of a reliable, computerised financial management system, are also pervasive. These include:

- long delays in producing the general ledger and reconciling bank data with cash books
- incomplete coverage of the general ledger
- proliferation of below-the-line accounts and lack of information on these accounts.

Government recently received technical assistance from the Department for International Development (DfID) to close government accounts for the period 1990-2001. As a result of the delays in finalising and auditing government accounts, reliable,

comprehensive and timely fiscal reports are not available to policy makers to plan, implement and monitor the annual budget.

In the area of public resource or revenue management, there are glaring weaknesses resulting from inadequate capacity. A recent study on the current revenue administration system of the two major revenue generating departments, Customs and Excise and Income Tax, identified major weaknesses in the following:

- database management
- delayed tax assessments
- inadequate tax payment services
- inadequate audit and investigation procedures
- failure to recover tax arrears
- policy constraints on tax administration
- highly centralised Central Revenue Department
- weak human resource management
- antiquated information technology.<sup>6</sup>

As regards data collection, capacity is equally seriously limited. Data collected do not cover the entire economy and arrive late. Data collection in the past fifteen years has been limited to the Greater Banjul Area, with estimates for the rest of the country being imputed. The response rates of formal sector enterprises are extremely low (approximately 20 per cent) and there is an under-coverage of the informal sector, the social sectors and the environment.

***Inadequate Capacity as a Result of Resource Constraints:*** The Gambia's recent economic performance has been below expectation and impaired efforts to reduce poverty. Poor policy implementation, slippages in fiscal and monetary policies and internal governance issues resulted in reduced macro-economic performance. The large domestic debt and high interest rates have substantially increased the service of the public debt. The increased debt service has effectively hampered increased public spending in the priority social sectors.

One of the most disturbing macro-economic trends has been the huge increase of the debt

service since 2001. As a percentage of total recurrent revenue, interest payments on domestic and foreign debt increased from 23.7 per cent in 2001 to 28.1 per cent in 2002, 36.4 per cent in 2003 and 43.2 per cent in 2004. Over the past three years, macro-economic performance was substantially below PRSP targets. The PRSP targeted an annual GDP growth rate of 6 per cent up to 2005.

After steadily growing at an average rate of 5.7 per cent from 1998 to 2001, the economy shrank by 3.2 per cent in 2002, reflecting a reduced agricultural output as a result of low rainfall. In 2003, the economy significantly recovered and registered a growth rate of 6.7 per cent and 7.7 per cent in 2004.

***Lack of Good Governance Systems:*** The absence of good governance practices is the cause of many of the problems of the public service – problems impeding efficiency, productivity and progress. Although there is no single blueprint for good governance, there are certain fundamental principles, which the practice must accommodate. These are:

**1 *Good governance is accountable.*** It ensures that those who are responsible for making decisions and delivering public services can be identified and held accountable for their actions. Unfortunately, many public service agencies and departments lack work plans and performance targets, and mechanisms for monitoring and enforcing accountability are often non-existent.

**2 *Good governance practices ensure that service delivery is efficient and there is value for money, or public money is spent wisely.*** Efficient revenue management and effective expenditure control in the public sector are currently seriously hampered by:

- limited fiscal discipline due to lack of transparency and accountability
- unpredictability in the budget process - revenue forecasts are generally excessively optimistic and are in reality never generated

- inadequate information on disbursements provided to line departments of state during budget execution
- proliferation of below-the-line accounts, which are generally not transparent, not accounted for or monitored by the Directorate of the Treasury
- ineffectiveness of the Auditor-General's Department.

Public reporting on government effectiveness and efficiency is fundamental to good governance and accountability and sound public sector management. Allegations of fraud, embezzlement, theft, tampering of cheques and receipt books have on many occasions been established by the Auditor-General's Department, leading to prosecution and dismissals.

Unfortunately, the office currently faces severe constraints, which seriously reduce its impact and effectiveness. These constraints include:

- acute shortage of qualified professional staff
- lack of material resources and equipment
- late completion of audited accounts.

The absence of good governance practices is the cause of many of the problems of the public service – problems impeding efficiency, productivity and progress.

For the past ten years reports, on the audited accounts of the public service have not been presented to the National Assembly, which violates the provisions of the Constitution.

**3 Good governance is open.** The business of Government should be open to scrutiny by the public and by the elected representatives. Public officials should explain their decisions and actions to the public and information about government business should be readily available. In the public service of The Gambia, information sharing with the public on the activities and business of Government is very limited; this has been a persistent complaint, even at the level of the National Assembly.

To address the weaknesses identified in the public service, The Gambia may seek to emulate recent measures adopted in the public services of Ghana and Uganda. In these countries, it is generally accepted that public services, like those in the private sector, are products to be tested against the needs of service users. This shift in emphasis has been encouraged by a conscious reshaping of the work culture to achieve customer orientation. Customer care training in comprehensive complaint procedures ensures that service users are seen as active, freely choosing customers rather than passive recipients of monopolistically provided state services.

Civil service agencies in Ghana and Uganda no longer behave as self-serving bureaucrats who treat their customers, clients and stakeholders as secondary priorities. Public complaints units have been established in these countries since 1995 to ensure that services are customer-friendly and transparent.

To address the weaknesses identified in the public service, The Gambia may seek to emulate recent measures adopted in the public services of Ghana and Uganda. In these countries, it is generally accepted that public services, like those in the private sector, are products to be tested against the needs of service users.

In 1998, nine important Ghanaian service delivery institutions (including the Passport Office, Land Title Registry, Registrar General's Department) were assisted by the Office of the Head of the Civil Service (OHCS) of Ghana to develop standards for service delivery and printing brochures which explain their services to the public. The brochures contain information about:

- services provided by the institutions
- procedures for making use of the services
- standards of service to be expected by the public, eg procedures, costs and time scales for processing, registering and issuing various documents
- procedures for making complaints.

In practice, the process of getting institutions to commit themselves by publishing standards of service delivery and benchmarks is a major step forward. Many developed countries, eg the United Kingdom, Canada and New Zealand, have launched a Citizens Charter as a core component of the New Public Management (NPM). The Citizens Charter has brought the issue of consumers to prominence.

The challenges outlined above become even more evident with a brief analysis of capacity deficiencies in key government departments. Table 6 provides a summary of identified bottlenecks impeding the capacities of PRSP implementing agencies.

**Judiciary Department:** The judiciary generally requires capacity building in all aspects. A functioning legal system is essential to the protection of private property, and thus private sector development. As the private sector is viewed as the engine of economic growth and development, a dysfunctional legal system may have an adverse effect on the enforcement of contracts and reduce the viability of domestic and foreign private investment in the country. Currently, there are vacancies in all the three tiers in the superior courts. Out of seven judges in the High Court, only two are Gambians, two are on technical assistance and the rest are on contract. In the Court of Appeal, there are only two judges. In order to constitute a panel, the most senior judges of the High Court are co-opted routinely. This means that the co-opted judge has to suspend all his or her High Court matters to sit in the Court of Appeal.

The remuneration package offered to judges at all levels is very unattractive and undermines their independence and integrity. It also discourages Gambians with the appropriate levels of experience and qualifications to accept judicial office. The result is that the judiciary heavily depends on short-term technical assistance and foreign contract judges. These foreign judges are paid

with external resources (Commonwealth, DFID), thereby threatening the viability of providing such services in the long run.

As the private sector is viewed as the engine of economic growth and development, a dysfunctional legal system may have an adverse effect on the enforcement of contracts and reduce the viability of domestic and foreign private investment in the country.

**Department of Agricultural Services:** The Department of Agricultural Services forms the largest single department in the Department of State for Agriculture, and provides extension and support services to farmers. The agricultural sector is still characterised by an emphasis on subsistence rain-fed crop production, traditional livestock rearing, semi-commercial groundnut and horticultural production and a small cotton sub-sector. The necessary transformations to shift from a subsistence-based to a commercially-oriented agriculture are constrained by a range of factors including:

- insufficient human resources largely due to the composition of the human resource base (most of the agricultural workforce are female; however the majority of agricultural extension officers are male)
- low farmer productivity
- inefficient agricultural marketing and standards systems, especially for food products
- inadequate rural infrastructure development
- lack of access to financial capital.

**Department of State for Finance and Economic Affairs (DOSFEA):** The mandate of DOSFEA entails a range of key functions including fiscal and financial management to support economic growth and economic management and improving public sector financial management and accountability by reviewing budget preparation, execution and monitoring. In addition to performing the routine activities of economic and financial management, DOSFEA is involved in the implementation of a number of donor-funded projects. The key capacity constraints faced

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by the Department are similar to those prevalent in many other public agencies and departments, namely staff attrition, inadequate human resources, poor coordination of activities and poor conditions of service. Private sector, donor agencies and international institutions recently recruited several trained economists from that Department. The Department has a number of unfilled positions as a result of difficulties of recruiting qualified and experienced personnel. This constraint aggravates the problems of inadequate institutional capacity.

**Strategy for Poverty Alleviation Coordination Office (SPACO):** The Strategy for Poverty Alleviation Coordination Office, a unit under DOSFEA, is primarily responsible for coordinating the implementation of the PRSP. The current government development strategy views the PRSP as the primary vehicle for attaining the MDGs. Its functions include:

- steering the re-alignment of sector policies and programmes
- advising and assisting in building capacities at central government, divisional and grass-roots levels for pro-poor planning
- monitoring the implementation of the SPA II
- facilitating the increased use of participatory methods
- mobilising resources for poverty alleviation
- commissioning research and research-related activities into poverty issues.

Since its establishment, SPACO has had four different coordinators who have worked with

three directors of planning at DOSE, while heads of departmental focal points have consistently left for greener pastures with NGO, private sector companies or international organisations. This attrition has disrupted continuity and diminished institutional memory. It has also jeopardised the preparation of sectoral public expenditure reviews. In addition to these weaknesses, SPACO also shares the pervasive problems of:

- weak institutional capacity
- poor working conditions
- rigid and cumbersome bureaucratic systems and practices.

**The Central Statistics Department (CSD):** The official statistics system in The Gambia has declined to a stage where it no longer provides an effective service to Government and other users of statistics. The principal causes of the problem have been the reduction of government funding to low levels and the difficulties of the CSD to attract and retain qualified personnel.

As a result of these limitations, reliable data for the formulation of sound socio-economic policies are acutely inadequate; thus poverty diagnostics and impact monitoring of the PRSP cannot be effectively conducted. The data collection procedures used for the preparation of national accounts, employment analyses, household expenditure and social statistics are cumbersome. The quality and credibility of the data leaves a lot to be desired.

*Table 6: Identified impediments affecting PRSP implementing agencies*

No	Impediments	Government institutions						NGOs
		SPACO	DOSFEA	DOSE	DOSHSW	DOSA	DOSFNRE	Pro-PAG
1	Staff attrition	XXX	XXX	XXX	XXX	XX	X	
2	Inexperienced project staff		X	XX			XX	
3	Weak institutional capacity	XX			XX	XX	XX	
4	Inadequate human resources	XXX	XXX	XXX	XXX	X	XX	X
5	Poor planning			XX	XX			
6	Interference in project mgmt.			XX	XX	XX	XX	
7	Supervision staff changes					XXX	XX	
8	Inadequate project design					XX		
9	Communication difficulties	XX		XX	XX	XX	X	XXX
10	Overloaded project managers			XX		XXX		
11	Complexity of project					XX		
12	Cumbersome/ rigid bureaucracy	X		X	XXX	X	X	
13	Inadequate (financial and material) Res. and				XXX	XX	XX	X
14	Weak coordination	XXX	X		XX	XX	XX	
15	Lack of M & E			XX	X	X	XX	
16	Poor work conditions	XXX	XXX	XXX	XXX	XX	XX	

Source: Compiled from Interview Responses with Sectoral and Project Staff

Legend: (X = Impact) X + Low; XX = High; XXX = Very High; Blank = Not applicable

## 2.5 Evaluation of Capacity Building Interventions of Public Sector Programmes and Projects

Several ongoing programmes and projects designed to enhance capacity building in the public sector have been sponsored by a host of development partners in collaboration with Government.

The most notable examples include:

- The Economic Management and Capacity Building Project (EMCBP III) funded by the UNDP
- The Capacity Building for Economic Management Project (CBEMP) funded by the World Bank
- African Development Bank (ADB)
- Debt Relief International
- Department for International Development (DFID)
- European Commission.



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## 2.5.1 UNDP - Economic Management and Capacity Building Project

This programme was launched on 20 May 2003 and has three major goals:

- to facilitate improvements in long-term planning so as to make public investment more efficient and useful.
- to supplement the efforts of development partners in the enhancement of economic management capacity building
- to develop business culture and practices in private sector institutions and companies.

In addition to providing training for personnel involved in economic management in key sectors, the project recruited eleven consultants to conduct sectoral studies for the preparation of the Medium-Term Plan document, to prepare guidelines for the three-year rolling Public Investment Programme and to review progress in the implementation of the PRSP. To enhance institutional capacity building, the project funded a study on the establishment of a National Planning Commission.

The National Planning Commission will act as an integrating force to ensure that national development plans are consistent with national aspirations and in conformity with the national vision. It will have the authority to coordinate the national development agenda, prioritise development programmes, monitor programme implementation and assess post-implementation impact.

While achievements have been impressive, the project equally faced major challenges and constraints, including the following:

- late sensitisation of policy makers, namely: the High Level Economic Committee and technical staff to facilitate broad ownership of the programme
- National counterpart arrangements were very unsatisfactory
- Administrative bottlenecks and protracted bureaucracy within Government and the UNDP delayed project activities

- lack of comprehensive training plans by beneficiaries to facilitate prioritisation of training requests.

## 2.5.2 World Bank - Capacity Building for Economic Management Project

This project, which commenced in January 2002, is essentially designed to develop capacity in key government agencies for economic policy formulation and execution. It specifically focuses on improving the capacities of the revenue-generating departments and the Central Statistics Department. Unfortunately, the implementation of the different components of the project has been extremely slow and many of the performance indicators have not been met. As a result, at the mid-term review in 2005, the World Bank rated the project “Unsatisfactory”.

Progress on the CSD’s strategy, revision of the Statistics Act, the household survey and the economic census are all substantially behind schedule. Little progress has been made on securing technical assistance for developing macro-economic models to improve revenue forecasting. A detailed plan for integrating the two revenue-generating departments - Income Tax and Customs and Excise, including new organisation, procedures and human resource policy – has yet to be prepared.

The National Planning Commission will act as an integrating force to ensure that national development plans are consistent with national aspirations and in conformity with the national vision. It will have the authority to coordinate the national development agenda, prioritise development programmes, monitor programme implementation and assess post-implementation impact.

The Automated System of Customs Data (ASYCUD) in the Department of Customs and Excise is not yet fully operational, partly as a result of lack of information technology support, staff attrition and inadequate trained human resources. The project seeks to build the capacity of the judicial and financial systems to facilitate private sector

development. Little progress has been made in developing a legal sector strategy, in developing an implementable and sustainable court case management system and in implementing the Alternative Dispute Resolution System (ADRS).

The major reason for the ‘unsatisfactory’ rating appears to be the slow implementation rate of the project. The delays of the Integrated Financial Management Information System (IFMIS) have been the most disturbing problem, given its complexity and importance to the project. The submission of regular timely reports by some of the project beneficiaries has been most unsatisfactory, particularly by the IFMIS team and by the Project Coordinating Unit. However, positive measures have recently been taken to expedite the implementation of the IFMIS component of the project.

Little progress has been made on securing technical assistance for developing macro-economic models to improve revenue forecasting.

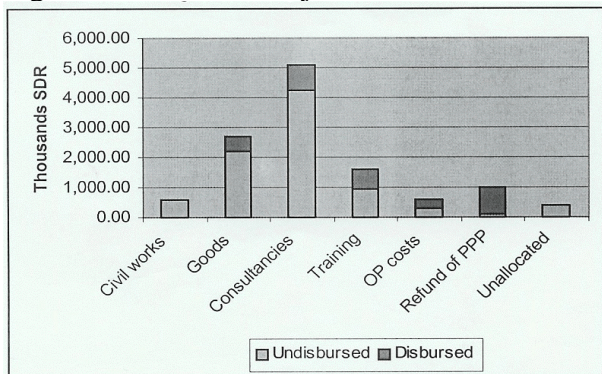
Disbursement of funds has been particularly slow. Almost 27 per cent of the credit had been disbursed as of June 2004, resulting in an original disbursement lag of 19 months. Since the project started,

consultancies have had the highest disbursement rate at 42 per cent and civil works have the lowest disbursement rate at 4 per cent. Project disbursement as of June 2004 is illustrated in Figure I.

In spite of these bottlenecks, the project has achieved successes in some important areas. SPACO has successfully conducted the first cycle of participatory poverty assessments. The Gambia Public Procurement Authority (GPPA) has been one of the most successful beneficiaries under the project, resulting in concrete reforms. New procurement procedures have been established and the procurement officers are being trained.

Progress in the implementation of this component of the project has been highly commended by the World Bank. Similarly, the Revenue Authority Bill has been passed and interim accommodation has been obtained for the office. The contract for the construction of the new Revenue Authority Building has been finalised and building construction should be completed by January 2007. A macro-economic adviser for DOSFEA has been recruited and the MTEF work programme designed to develop the main building blocks has been significantly restructured.

Figure I: Project disbursement



## 2.6 Recommended Policy Measures and Strategies to Improve Capacity Building in the Public Sector

- It is evident from an analysis of the challenges facing the public sector and an evaluation of the impact of ongoing donor-supported capacity building interventions that lack of capacity is pervasive and if improvements are to occur, the root causes must be addressed. The analysis reveals that the fundamental causes may be grouped into seven major clusters, namely:

- lack of incentives, motivation and commitment resulting in increasing attrition levels
- lack of resources
- poor utilisation of technical assistance personnel
- lack of effective coordination of policy and programmes
- institutional bottlenecks and rigidities
- non-adherence to strict governance practices
- absence of result-based management which relates pay and incentives to performance and output.

The erosion of the earning power of the average public servant, coupled with an acute sense of insecurity of tenure, seriously undermines commitment, motivation, productivity and adherence to an ethical code of conduct. An examination of “Civil Service Pay Scale”, ie total remuneration package (pay and allowances) reveals that for many years the level of increase has been well below the mounting cost of living index. Table 7 establishes a comparison of the first four grades of the structures of the public enterprises and the civil service.

### 2.6.1 Lack of Incentives, Motivation and Commitment

*Table 7: Comparison of civil service and parastatal pay scales*

Grade Civil Service		Salary after 20% Award	Grade Public Enterprises	Public Enterprises Structure	Salary	Differential
		D	D			D
1	base point	6804 p.a	SS III	base point	10, 200	3396
	top of grade	8232 p.a		top of grade	12, 900	4668
2	base point	8388 p.a	SS III	base point	10, 200	1812
	top of grade	9816 p.a		top of grade	12, 900	3084
3	base point	9960 p.a	SS II	base point	13, 200	3240
	top of grade	11,640 p.a		top of grade	18, 200	6960
4	base point	11808 p.a	SS II	base point	13, 200	1392
	top of grade	14832 p.a		top of grade	18, 600	3768

*Note: PA means salary per annum*

Table 7 shows wide disparities between parastatal and civil service pay, with the third grade in the latter almost corresponding to the lowest grade in the former. The disparities at the remaining grades are even wider. When compared to salary levels in the private and NGO sectors, the disparities become even much wider.

Apart from increasing salary levels substantially through a reduction of vacancies, wastage and redundant labour, Government needs to introduce measures to enhance productivity, instil security in tenure and promote career development.

The erosion of the earning power of the average public servant, coupled with an acute sense of insecurity of tenure, seriously undermines commitment, motivation, productivity and adherence to an ethical code of conduct.

Several African countries have increasingly adopted the “New Public Management” (NPM) approach to stimulate productivity and high quality performance. The NPM is seen as a body of managerial thought based on ideas generated from the private sector and imported into the public sector. The

components of the NPM which have been evaluated since 1990 include:

- a belief in the superiority of private sector management approaches
- a shift from process-oriented to results-oriented governments
- widespread empowerment, teamwork and participation in decision-making.
- encouragement of visionary leadership at all levels in the organisation,
- a strong utilisation of incentives to enhance performance at both institutional and individual levels, eg short-term employment contracts, performance

based remuneration and a performance-based promotion system.

Several African countries have increasingly adopted the “New Public Management” (NPM) approach to stimulate productivity and high quality performance.

### *1 Performance-based Remuneration and Promotion*

Some African countries have achieved success in reducing civil service personnel through retrenchment and other methods, as shown in Table 8. Savings obtained were utilised to increase levels of pay and wages.

**Table 8: Comparative experiences**

Country	Removal of “ghost” employees	Enforced/early retirement	Voluntary retirement	Regular Staff	Temporary Staff	Other mechanisms	Total (a)
Cameroon	10, 840	10, 000	-	-	-	-	20, 840
Central African Republic	4, 950	-	2, 200	700-800	-	-	8, 550
Congo	-	-	-	-	-	4, 848	4, 848
<b>Gambia</b>	-	-	-	<b>1919</b>	<b>4, 871</b>	-	<b>6, 790</b>
Ghana	35, 000	57, 235	-	100, 375	-	-	192, 610
Guinea	2, 091	20, 236	2, 744	-	-	50, 793	76, 863
Guinea Bissau	1, 800	2, 945	2, 960	2, 921	-	-	5, 226
Mali	400	-	2, 600	-	-	-	3, 000
Senegal	1, 497	2, 747	3, 283	-	-	-	7, 527
Uganda	20, 000	50, 000	-	80, 000	-	-	150, 000

Source: *The Performance of Selected African Civil Service*, A. Ademolokun, *World Bank Occasional Papers*, December 2004

A second example is the promotion of meritocracy. This was undertaken in the Ghanaian civil service in October 1997, which has based promotion primarily on merit and not on length of service or seniority. The shift in emphasis from high security careers towards shorter performance-related policies has generated a cadre of responsive, resourceful and visionary managers.

### *2 Performance Agreement Contracts*

Performance agreements have been introduced in Ghana, Uganda and several African countries as a means of assessing and measuring the performance of senior civil servants. The objective of the performance agreement is to ensure that senior officials are

output oriented and that they can be held accountable by Government for the delivery of specific measurable outputs and deliverables within mutually stipulated periods. The components were first introduced in Ghana in January 1997 for chief directors.

Following the evaluation of the scheme in 1998, it was extended to cover 250 other senior officials in 1999 including directors, heads of department and heads of municipal and district authorities. The scheme has proved successful in many respects and merits emulation in The Gambia as part of a strategy of enhancing capacity building.

### *3 Promotion of Career Development*

An initiative aimed at building the capacity of civil servants and injecting new blood into the

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higher echelons was introduced in Ghana and Uganda, through a “high-flyer scheme.” Under this scheme, young officers who are deemed to have the potential are being given specialised training to enable them to maximise their potential and strengthen the capacity of the civil service through accelerated promotion, if they are able to demonstrate their worth.

In Ghana, in 2001, 50 officers were attached to private organisations such as Unilever Mobil Ghana Limited, Social Security and National Insurance Trust and Home Finance Company to expose them to the way jobs are executed and programmes managed in the private sector.

The adoption of a high-flyer scheme in the Gambian public service will enhance career development, performance and productivity.

#### ***4 Decentralisation of Promotion Systems***

Like many other African civil service commissions, the Public Service Commission in The Gambia lacks the capacity to substantially improve efficiency and discipline in the public service through sanctions and rewards. The commission does not have the managers, equipment and other resources essential for maintaining records and for monitoring the activities of personnel, with the result that:

- promotions and appointments are delayed due to protracted bureaucratic processes
- bonding requirements of trainees are not generally fulfilled and enforced
- performance of technical assistance personnel is not generally monitored
- counterpart staff are seldom provided on a sustained basis
- remuneration and staff development policies are not streamlined and coordinated, and ad-hoc measures become the order of the day.

To minimise these problems, several African countries have delegated recruitment and promotion to departmental/ministerial/civil service councils, thereby reducing delays in promotions and recruitment, and facilitating

the monitoring of training, study leave, retirement, end of contractual obligations and enforcement of bonding.

#### **2.6.2 Effective Management of the Training Function**

In spite of the existence of several instruments and organs, including Personnel Policy, Training Policy, Training Advisory Council and Training committees, the training function in the civil service continues to be disjointed, ad-hoc, and un-coordinated. Training is generally not preceded by a systematic identification of specific and clear training needs, and the completion of training is not followed by an evaluation of training benefits.

The result is that training does not guarantee value for money and very often is perceived as an opportunity for facilitating the pursuit of greener pastures. This is why technical assistants provided to government agencies do not usually have any regular counterparts. Also the investment of resources in training by development partners has not significantly enhanced capacity in the civil service.

Some of the local training institutions are under-utilised. There is also a pressing need for institutional renewal and revamping of programmes to ensure relevance, cost-effectiveness and sustainability.

***Utilisation of Other Trainees Through Bonding and Schemes:*** Although a bonding scheme exists in the civil service administered by the PMO, effective enforcement has remained a major problem. In theory, civil servants whose training programmes lead to professional or degree qualifications and funded by Government are required to sign a bond and to provide two guarantors who are required to meet certain eligibility criteria.

Cases of violations of bonds are abundant in the civil service, and there have been very few cases when the Attorney General’s Chambers resorted to legal action to enforce the requirements of a bond. As a result, many civil servants who have been trained by

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Government have abandoned their positions in pursuit of better jobs in the NGOs, private sectors or abroad, while the government does not directly benefit from the training.

***Evaluation of Technical Assistance and Its Effectiveness:*** Although many departments are major beneficiaries of the services of technical assistance personnel provided by development partners, particularly the UNDP, the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Cooperation, the World Bank, DFID and several UN agencies, the regular transfer of skills and competencies to local indigenous staff has yet to be evaluated to ensure cost-effectiveness.

### **Revival of Civil Service Associations**

During the colonial period, vibrant civil service associations for different categories of public servants provided valuable input for

the discussion and resolution of grievances, the determination of policies and strategies for stimulating productivity, enhancing morale, motivation and commitment and reviewing conditions of service through constructive dialogue with senior management and the Head of the Public Service.

After independence, the role and activities of these associations greatly diminished. The current civil service laws prevent certain categories of public officers from joining such associations. The result is that a forum for dialogue and constructive debate on issues pertaining to the service is now non-existent; this has seriously undermined loyalty, commitment and morale. A revival of such associations, as has been done in several African countries, is long overdue and would help to alleviate some of the weaknesses identified in this chapter.

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# 3

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## Capacity Building Challenges and Opportunities in the Private Sector

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### CHAPTER PREVIEW

- *Capacity Building in Africa: The Regional Context*
- *The National Context: The Contributions of the Private Sector to the Attainment of the MDGs and the Objectives of the PRSP*
  - *Millennium Development Goals*
  - *Macro-Economic Performance and the Private Sector*
- *Contributions of Selected Private Sector Projects to the MDGs*
  - *Capacity Building at the Department of State for Trade, Industry and Employment*
  - *Capacity Building at the Department of State for Tourism and Culture*
  - *Capacity Building at the Department of State for Fisheries and the Environment*

This chapter examines how building capacity in the private sector could contribute towards the achievement of the MDGs. It also identifies the opportunities, constraints, challenges and issues that the private sector will have to deal with in order to contribute effectively towards the achievement of the MDGs.

Capacity building is essentially a public domain function and the private sector is purely seen as a beneficiary. If therefore the latter is purely a recipient of public policy, what role can the private sector effectively play in human development? What are the capacity areas that the public sector should address to capacitate the private sector?

### 3.1 Capacity Building in Africa: The Regional Context

Between 1995 and 2004, the World Bank provided some US\$9 billion in lending and about US\$900 million in grants and administrative budget to support capacity

building in Africa. The bulk of the support however went to public sector capacity building and not to the private sector. Traditional donor support and efforts in building capacity in the public sector in Africa were primarily focused on creating or re-organising government units and building individual skills through training. But persistent weak public sector capacity signalled that these strategies were not producing the expected results.

The World Bank, in particular, has now broadened its support for capacity building in Africa to include:

- strengthening public institutions that can facilitate and enhance the performance of the public and the private sectors
- supporting the creation of an economic, political and institutional environment conducive to private sector development.

Globalisation is also widening the gaps within Africa and between Africa and other regions.

While it has enhanced Africa's capacity through access to global knowledge, it is also helping to widen the income gaps in the domestic economies and is contributing to the brain drain. It is estimated that about 70,000 highly educated and qualified professionals leave the continent every year (World Bank, 2005). While this migration brings in remittances, which help reduce poverty, it depresses public sector performance in crucial areas such as health, science, technology and economic management, all of which are relevant to capacity building and private sector growth and development. In a nutshell, the poor performance of the public sector in Africa has dismal effects on the progress and development of the private sector.

### **3.2 The National Context: The Contributions of the Private Sector to the Attainment of the MDGs and the Objectives of the PRSP**

The human development agenda is premised on the MDGs and the PRSP. An examination of the goals highlights the issues, challenges, constraints and opportunities that the private sector faces to effectively participate and contribute towards the achievement of the MDGs and the PRSP.

#### **3.2.1 Millennium Development Goals**

The MDGs form an integral part of the national goals and are designed to attain sustainable human development. They describe the human development challenges that the country faces and identify priority areas for intervention by Government and its development partners to attain the goals by 2015.

**Poverty Reduction:** If the goal of reducing the number of people in extreme poverty is to be achieved, the private sector must play a pivotal role by expanding investment in areas where opportunities exist, eg commercial farming and agro-based industries. This would increase employment and income generation and contribute towards food self-sufficiency.

The opportunities for expansion in the production of rice, sesame, groundnuts, fruits and vegetables, livestock, poultry, fisheries and fish processing for both the domestic and export markets will have to be substantially exploited by the private sector. Private sector expansion in these areas will earn the country foreign exchange, and reduce the heavy dependence on food imports and minimise the foreign exchange leakage, which impact negatively on the economy and the private sector.

**Achievement of Universal Primary Education:** Current government policy is to encourage the growth of private participation in the delivery of primary, secondary and tertiary education in the country. Consequently, there has been a substantial growth in private schools, from early childhood education, which is entirely privately run, to primary, secondary and senior secondary schools.

There is increasing private sector participation in post-secondary school education, particularly in the areas of vocational skills training, and mainly in business studies, accountancy, auditing, information technology and communications. These are however largely concentrated in the Greater Banjul Area, which means that they are limited and not all the institutions are accredited to the National Training Authority (NTA).

**Promoting Gender Equality and Empowering Women:** This goal is targeted at eliminating gender disparities. Although the enrolment ratio of girls is increasing at all levels of the education delivery system and is supported by pro-gender equity programmes from Government and development partners, the gender disparity in access to socio-economic participation and access to opportunities still remains daunting. However, some substantial improvements have been achieved in the public sector in the form of the appointment of women to high-profile jobs, such as to the position of the Vice President, Secretaries of State, Heads of Department and Heads of Public Corporations.



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In the private sector however, there are very few women with high-profile positions except in the banking sector. There is, unfortunately, not a single woman who heads a bank or a large private company in this country, although several are found at the top and middle management levels. There is a dire need to increase the empowerment and participation of women at senior management cadres.

***Reduction of Child Mortality, Improvement of Maternal Health and Combating against HIV/AIDS, Malaria and other Diseases:*** If the MDGs on health are to be achieved, the private sector must be encouraged to invest more in health infrastructure, especially in the provision of hospitals, health clinics and the training of health personnel. This should also include the promotion of the use of traditional medicine and traditional healers, and the establishment of traditional healing clinics, such as the centre set up in Berending in the North Bank Division, which offers facilities to outpatients.

Other opportunities that exist in the health sector for private sector participation include the provision of health insurance schemes, catering and food services, laundry and cleansing services.

Both HIV/AIDS and malaria are killer-diseases that threaten the Gambian population. Both are depleting the already limited human resource base of the country and if the current rates of infection of both diseases are not reversed, the labour supply and the domestic market of the economy will be adversely affected. This is a threat to the survival of the private sector.

A reduced mortality rate however assures the survival of the population, a sustainable pool of human resources and a domestic consumer market, which are vital for the development of the private sector.

Without doubt, private sector participation in the health sector, as suggested above and within the context of the opportunities and challenges offered, would greatly contribute to the achievement of the MDGs. It is in the

interest of the private sector to promote the development of a healthy human resource base for the economy, as an ill population is a threat to the very survival and viability of a vibrant private sector or private sector-led economic development.

***Environmental Sustainability:*** There are several issues, challenges, opportunities and constraints in the relationship between environmental sustainability and private sector development. First, water supply in The Gambia is almost entirely in the hands of the public domain and, until recently, there was very little private sector participation. This situation has changed with the emergence of Gamwater, a local company established by a private entrepreneur to bottle water for the export and domestic markets.

Environmental sustainability also includes environmental protection and conservation. The private sector is the largest producer of industrial solid and non-solid wastes, some of which are highly toxic. These include those emitted by cement, plastics and soap factories, breweries, hotels and restaurants, wholesalers and retailers.

Solid waste disposal, which is yet to be quantified in terms of daily tonnage disposed, continues to pose the biggest challenge to local authorities like the Banjul City Council and the Kanifing Municipal Council. The limited number of dumping sites in the urban areas and the overflow of garbage in the neighbourhoods around the dumping sites continue to be a major threat to the population located in these areas, such as in the Bakoteh area and around Banjul.

The conflict between private sector land use and environmental conservation and preservation is also a threat to the maintenance of enhanced environmental sustainability. For example, the current practice of sand mining along the South Atlantic coast of the country for the building and construction industry has caused severe coastal erosion. It also continues to threaten the survival of the tourist industry as beaches and the seaside are the major attraction and resources of the tourist industry.

Similarly, the development of the tourist industry poses several environmental challenges. Past hotel investment and construction of hotels along the shorelines have had the effect of promoting massive beach erosion around the Kololi, Senegambia, Fajara, Cape Point, Wadner, and Banjul beaches. These beaches were only reclaimed through a massive public investment rehabilitation programme to save the beaches on which the hotels are built. However it is not known how long the beaches that have been rehabilitated will last.

Future investment in the hotel industry would require a dialogue between the public sector and the private sector, as destruction of the tourist industry through improper land use would consequently lead to unemployment, a decline in income and increases in poverty; it is also counter-productive to the achievement of the MDGS.

Ecotourism is gradually developing in The Gambia and this environment-friendly form of tourism investment should be vigorously promoted as it provides employment, generates income, reduces poverty and at the same time preserves the natural environment as its primary resource and product.

The Makasutu Ecotourism Camp and Sindola Tourist Camp in Western Division, Tendaba Camp in Lower River Division and Baobolong and Janjangbureh camps in Central River Division (which are all developed by private entrepreneurs) are now internationally known and continue to attract up-market tourists such as bird watchers and others interested in nature tourism.

**Concluding Remarks:** From the information and analysis presented, it is apparent that there are several issues, constraints and challenges for the development of capacity building strategies that would place the private sector as the lead agent in building capacity for human development or making the private sector the lead agent for the PRSP to achieve the MDGs. This is because despite national and international declarations for private sector-led economic growth and development, almost all funds for national

capacity building programmes are directed to the public sector and little or none goes to, or can be accessed by, the private sector.

The lack of direct funding for private sector growth and development in the capacity building programmes is a major issue and is a constraint to the development of the private sector.

Most capacity building programmes in Africa, including The Gambia, remain fragmented and fail to address the capacity constraints that limit the effectiveness of the private sector. To be effective, the capacity building needs of the private sector must be made core objectives in government and donor-funded capacity building programmes or projects. Current national capacity building programmes are predominantly public sector activities while the private sector capacity needs remain incidental.

As a stakeholder in national human development however, the private sector should be interested in capacity building issues, such as the capacity of the public sector to formulate and implement policies that support private sector growth and development. The private sector should also be aware of the government's human development programmes. In this regard, it is ironic that the private sector in The Gambia is not fully aware of the existing MDGs and the PRSP.

This lack of knowledge of the MDGs and the PRSP by the private sector also probably reflects a lack of interest in these goals, as the private sector may see the goals as socially oriented goals, with very little direct and immediate effects on the development of the sector. Private entrepreneurs are generally interested in ventures that bring them quick financial results rather than investing in social or public goods.

### **3.2.2 Macro-Economic Performance and the Private Sector**

The nature, structure and performance of the national economy, to a large extent, determine the growth and development of the

private sector (See Table 9 for the contribution of the private sector to the GDP). This section seeks to address how economic performance affects private sector growth and development, and what challenges, constraints and opportunities the private

sector faces on the basis of economic performance and how these can be tackled. The section examines issues such as monetary policy, fiscal policy and the national debt, and how these impact on private sector growth and development.

*Table 9: Participation of the private sector in the GDP (in percentages)*

Industry	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
1 Agriculture	84.4	84.5	84.4	84.5	84.5
2 Mining and quarrying	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0
3 Manufacturing	88.9	88.9	88.5	88.5	88.1
3.1 Large and medium manufacturing	85.0	85.0	85.0	85.0	85.0
3.2 Small-scale manufacturing	95.0	95.0	95.0	95.0	95.0
4 Electricity and water	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
5 Building and construction	35.0	35.0	35.0	35.0	35.0
<b>Total industry</b>	<b>79.4</b>	<b>79.7</b>	<b>79.1</b>	<b>79.7</b>	<b>80.5</b>
6 Trade	8.6	8.1	35.7	35.7	35.7
7 Hotels and restaurants	65.0	65.0	65.0	65.0	65.0
8 Transport	55.0	55.0	55.0	55.0	55.0
9 Communications	15.0	15.0	15.0	15.0	15.0
10 Real estate and bus services	85.0	85.0	85.0	85.0	85.0
11 Public administration	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
<b>Total services</b>	<b>27.7</b>	<b>26.7</b>	<b>38.1</b>	<b>38.5</b>	<b>39.2</b>
<b>Total industry and services</b>	<b>54.4</b>	<b>54.6</b>	<b>56.8</b>	<b>58.6</b>	<b>60.8</b>

*Source: Central Statistics Department quoted in Situation Analysis of the contribution of the Private Sector Towards the Millennium Development Goals in The Gambia Report 2005*

**Monetary Policy:** Monetary and fiscal policies are strategies, adopted by Government to influence the direction of the economy, regulate the financial sector and conduct government business respectively. Consequently, these policies have profound effects on private sector growth and development in the economy.

The current lending policies of commercial banks, characterised by high interest rates of up to 27 per cent for commercial loans, act as disincentives to borrowers and potential investors. Furthermore, the attractive yields from the purchase or investment in treasury bills, which are government bonds with high interest rates, are attracting available finance from the banks and individuals who find returns on treasury bills more attractive than

investing in alternative private sector ventures.

Consequently, the commercial banks are reluctant to lend money to businesspeople for long repayment periods; instead they invest their excess liquidity in treasury bills. This trend and practice is inimical to private sector growth and development as funds for investment get absorbed by the treasury bills, and thus inhibit growth and diversification in investment.

Current monetary policy has however led to the control of inflation. The Consumer Price Index shows that the inflation rate declined from 17 per cent in September 2003 to 12.3 per cent in September 2004. This is good for the economy and for business, as a low inflation rate helps to stabilise the value of the

local currency vis-à-vis other trading currencies and helps protect the purchasing power of domestic consumers.

**Fiscal Policy:** Government's fiscal policy is guided by the need to reduce public expenditure and to maximise revenue collection. The generation of domestic funds to finance general public administration and the provision of public services is largely derived from both direct and indirect taxes. It is estimated that tax revenue from imports and sales tax accounts for over 80 per cent of the government's domestically generated revenue.

The following are tax regimes that are currently applied in the country:

- Import tax
- Export tax
- Sales tax
- Company tax
- Payroll tax
- Capital gains tax

Added to these taxes are local government levies, business registration and company incorporation fees and the national education levy. These taxes and levies are viewed by the private sector as burdensome and act as disincentives to investors. Consequently, they hinder the growth and development of the private sector as they divert funds which otherwise could have been used for business expansion or investment in new ventures.

One practical way to address the tax issue is to introduce a uniform and simple tax system. Tax on exports can rightly be abolished as export activities are foreign exchange earners and ought to be encouraged through export promotion, market expansion and tax incentives rather than a seemingly punitive export tax.

A liberal tax system that is designed to promote private sector growth and development is a necessary capacity building strategy for national human development. This will allow the private sector to accumulate earnings that could be directed at the development of the sector rather than

funding public programmes and the administration of these programmes.

This suggests that taxes should be reduced and that the private sector should be allowed to keep this income for re-investment, profits, etc.

**The National Debt:** The large increases of debt and debt services, particularly domestic debt services, have been the most worrisome macro-economic issues. The national debt, external and domestic, stood at US\$ 666.06 million at the end of 2003 and increased to US\$764 million at the end of 2004, of which domestic debt accounted for US\$142.0 million.

The country's domestic debts are largely in the form of treasury bills constituting 72 per cent of the total domestic debt. Interest payments for both domestic and external payments increased from 36.4 per cent of recurrent government expenditure in 2003 to 40 per cent in 2004 (PER, December 2004).

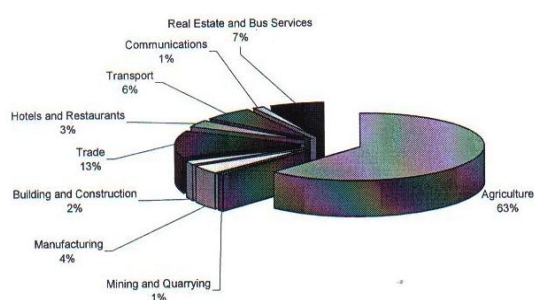
These increases in debt and debt services pose serious challenges to the national development drive, and remain a major obstacle to sustainable development and private sector growth and development. Increasing debt servicing would inevitably lead to the diversion of public funds to pay debts instead of ploughing them back into the economy in the form of infrastructure and human resource development for private sector development and national economic growth.

The decline in the growth of water and electricity supply and the high cost of energy in the country continue to be a major handicap to private sector growth and development and act as a disincentive to potential investors. The poor growth in the transport sector is due primarily to the poor road infrastructure, which the government is currently addressing in its infrastructure development projects. Poor road networks and infrastructure do not enhance private sector growth and development as they restrict the movement and distribution of goods and services.

The growth and development of the manufacturing and processing sector is also handicapped by the limited nature of the domestic market, shortage of skills and trained professionals, restricted and competitive foreign markets for locally produced goods and weak support structures for the development of a manufacturing and processing sector. Figure 2 shows the breakdown of private sector activity by industry ( from *Situation Analysis of the Contribution of the Private Sector Towards the Millennium Development Goals in The Gambia, 2005*)

This concentration of private sector enterprises has the further pull-effect of the population from the rural areas, thus contributing to the depletion of the rural population and accentuating rural-urban migration and rural poverty. This is because people are forced to move to areas where they can get jobs. Since the major private sector enterprises, which are major employers, are not located in the rural areas, able-bodied people in these areas are forced to migrate to the urban centres where jobs, goods and services are more readily available than in the rural settings.

**Figure 2: Breakdown of the Private Sector by Industry**



The rural areas are experiencing increases in poverty due to unemployment, lack of opportunities for income generation and lack of purchasing power for goods and services. Sadly, the concentration and development of the private sector in the urban areas run counter to the efforts towards achieving the goals of the MDGs on poverty reduction.

Although the private sector is supposed to be the engine of growth, its development is currently retarded by three major factors:

- low investment resulting from high-risk perception
- poor legal environment and regulatory framework with poor economic governance
- weak financial services.

**Low Investment as a Result of High-risk Perception:** The level of risk perception is a major determinant of investment in a country. In The Gambia, two risk factors are of concern to potential investors: political risks and economic risks. The political risk relates to political uncertainty in the country and to developments in the sub-region – the effects of protracted wars and civil unrest in neighbouring countries. The expropriation in 1999 of the Gambia Groundnut Corporation (GGC), a groundnut processing company, has lingered as a source of potential concern to investors.

Economic risks are associated with factors such as chronic balance of payments deficit that make foreign exchange scarce, high public indebtedness and governance issues such as a weak judicial and slow resolution of commercial disputes and lack of transparent “rules of the game” exacerbated by the problems and delays associated with administrative “red-tape”. Risk ratings by two well-known international rating services help to gauge the country’s standing in terms of investors’ perceptions.

According to the WDI 2002 Euromoney and the *International Country Risk Guide*, the creditworthiness ratings for The Gambia in 2001 are reported at a level of 27 and 69 respectively. These ratings rank the risk of investing in an economy in a range of 1 (high) to 100 (low) to create opportunities for long-term investments. Similarly, Fitch ratings show deterioration in the country’s credit rating (which declined from B- in 2002 to CCC+ in 2005). These low ratings have adverse effects on the country’s ability to mobilise external resources, attract foreign

direct investment and retain its eligibility for debt forgiveness.

**Legal and Regulatory Framework and Governance:** The judicial system is weak, with a backlog of cases that extend for more than one year. Enforcement of judgements on commercial transactions is slow and deficient in many respects. An antiquated commercial law grants protection to borrowers to the disadvantage of property rights. Thus, entrepreneurs are keen to minimise their reliance on the need to enforce contracts or the law. Banks are reluctant to increase their volume of lending in the absence of improvements in the legal and judicial system to facilitate the recovery of bad debts.

Considerable efforts are needed to strengthen the legal and judicial system, especially in terms of collateral recovery, in order to enhance private sector confidence. The frequent arrest and detention of journalists and the dismissal of public servants without due adherence to established legal processes have raised much concern in respect of governance, which equally undermines private sector confidence.

**Financial Sector Services:** Persistently high interest rates are viewed as an obstacle to the development of the private sector and the diversification of the economy. Building an environment conducive for private sector development requires the pursuit of sound macro-economic and fiscal policies and the provision of efficient financial services. The transaction costs of the financial system are high and lending rates are usually a mark-up from the treasury bill rate. The margin between treasury bill rates and private sector lending is usually around 7-10 per cent.

According to the latest *Financial Sector Review* of the World Bank (2004), lending is mostly short-term and largely related to the re-export trade. The short-term nature of lending by the commercial banks, coupled with high interest rates, discourages investment and commercial undertakings by the private sector.

The corporate tax system is also not business-friendly. Corporate taxes are 35 per cent of profits or 3 per cent of turnover, whichever amount is higher, and the procedures for tax assessment and collection are generally archaic and un-coordinated, which frustrates private investment.

In brief, private sector development in The Gambia is hindered by:

- lack of a legal, regulatory and incentive framework to support investment
- inadequate enforcement of laws for economic processes
- a weak financial sector offering few financial instruments and services, resulting in the high cost of credit
- delays in the privatisation of public enterprises that could provide opportunities to the private sector
- poor economic governance.

### **3.3 Contributions of Selected Private Sector Projects to the MDGs**

#### **3.3.1 Capacity Building at the Department of State for Trade, Industry and Employment**

The primary function of the Department of State for Trade, Industry and Employment (DOSTIE) is to promote the development of trade and industry, including manufacturing and processing, and to promote investment and private sector development for employment and income generation. The achievement of these goals will not only help develop the capacity of the private sector but also help it contribute substantially towards the achievement of the MDGs.

It is however doubtful whether the current limited institutional capacity at DOSTIE can ensure that the private sector can be developed at the level that it can be the lead agency in the achievement of the MDGs.

The capacity building initiative at DOSTIE is limited to information gathering and dissemination so that the business community can exploit the opportunities that exist, and how to access these opportunities as a result

of the country's membership of the World Trade Organisation and the country's eligibility under AGOA.

DOSTIE is also being developed as a central information base for the private sector, especially for small producers like horticultural producers who need to be linked with consumers in the tourist industry, such as hotels and restaurants, and to overseas markets. It should be noted at this point that although some degree of success has been achieved in creating links between local producers and the hotel industry, this is largely limited to fresh vegetable and fresh fish supplies. Most other foodstuffs, such as meat, poultry and dairy products, are imported. Besides, these supplies to hotels are not always regular or consistent in the quality and quantity required by the tourist industry. In effect, the linkage between local producers and consumers in the tourist industry is still very weak.

DOSTIE still lacks policy focus and the institutional capacity to effectively promote foreign investment for the growth and development of the manufacturing and processing industries, which are essential to expand the economic base of the country, for the creation of jobs, generation of income and, consequently, the reduction of poverty and the achievement of the other MDGs.

### **3.3.2 Capacity Building at the Department of State for Tourism and Culture**

The tourist industry in The Gambia, although small in international terms (with annual visitor arrivals of some 100,000), is substantial as it averages a 12 percent share of the GDP and provides direct employment, including self-employment, to some 10,000 people.

Tourism is a substantial foreign exchange earner for the economy and therefore should be categorised as an export sector. It is also a substantial tax revenue earner for the government, and uses local agricultural produce.

There are several constraints that inhibit the growth and development of the tourist industry in The Gambia, namely:

- inadequate market expansion strategies
- over-dependence on foreign tour operators for the promotion and marketing of The Gambia as a tourist destination
- weak linkage between the tourist industry and local producers.

The development of the tourist industry is hampered by the constraints of lack of adequate public institutional support, lack of effective policy support for growth in tourist arrivals and the burden of the multiple-tax regime and duties imposed on the private sector in the tourist industry, which act as a disincentive to the growth and sustainability of the industry.

The seasonal nature of the tourist trade is also a major constraint to the growth and development of the industry. The tourist season is limited to five months of the year, namely, November to March.

The current capacity building strategies at DOSTC, which are directed at assisting the growth and development of the tourist industry, are restricted in scope and will inevitably have a limited impact on the growth and development of the industry.

Capacity building components consist of strengthening the capacity of the Gambia Tourism Authority (GTA) to market The Gambia as a tourist destination in the international market, particularly in Europe. It also includes strengthening linkages between tourist industry consumers and local producers.

It is evident from the multiplicity and complex nature of the constraints that beset the tourist industry that the above-cited strategies hardly address the needs of the sector. The GTA still lacks the institutional capacity and financial resources to afford a presence in the tourist emitting countries to promote the country as a competitive tourist destination. Its budget is inadequate to allow

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for significant marketing in these countries or to develop the tourist products of the country. Without increases in visitor arrivals, the growth of the hotel industry will inevitably decline, which will eventually lead to unemployment, lack of earnings and, consequently, increases in poverty and failure in the achievement of the MDGs.

It is doubtful whether hoteliers are committed to buying locally produced food, as the primary source of supply comes through imports, which sometimes is cheaper, and supplies are more reliable than locally produced items. There are several reasons for the dependence on imported food supplies. These include:

- comparative low cost of imported foodstuffs
- unreliability of local food suppliers
- lack of international quality of local produce for acceptance by tourist consumers
- seasonality of local products
- lack of fish and food processing that could provide value-added activities
- inadequate transport infrastructure to allow for the timely delivery of local products.

### **3.3.3 Capacity Building at the Department of State for Fisheries and the Environment**

Like the tourist industry, the fisheries industry offers good opportunities and challenges for expansion, growth and development. Yet it has not been able to attract substantial investment to achieve the growth levels that would make it an effective private sector activity that could contribute to the achievement of poverty reduction, generate income, provide employment and contribute to public health.

The low level of development in the fisheries sector is due to several factors, including:

- lack of investment for industrial fishing
- lack of markets and limited capacity of fish processing plants
- lack of technical expertise and institutional capacity for policy formulation and implementation

- weak and limited private sector participation in the industry.

Although government regulations provide that fish catches should be landed in The Gambia, the regulation is regularly violated as catches could be landed in factory boats outside the national territorial waters or in Senegal and Mauritania, which have better fish processing facilities. This problem still persists because of the inability of the country to protect its territorial waters.

Consequently, poaching has become a common occurrence as several foreign-owned vessels have been caught and subjected to very heavy fines and penalties. In effect, a substantial amount of fish caught in Gambian waters does not reach Gambian shores; as a result, this constitutes a large loss of revenue to the national economy. This is a major constraint that needs to be addressed in any capacity building exercise for the fisheries sector.

One strategy Government has proclaimed is that fishing licences can only be issued to investors with fish processing plants in the country. But this provision seems to be ignored as exemptions to the rule are being made and as most licence owners have not met these criteria.

The fish-processing sector is also faced with several constraints. Most processing plants are not functioning due to the following factors:

- technical breakdowns
- lack of capital to rehabilitate and maintain processing plants
- limited catches landed in the country
- limited access to markets
- poor packaging and marketing strategy
- a small and limited industrial fishing sector.

These constraints hinder the potential development of the sector as a principal export earner, a high-income employment generator, and to contribute substantially to the improvement of the health of the citizenry.



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### 3.4 Interface Capacity Building Projects

The existing capacity building projects designed to stimulate private sector growth and development include:

- UNDP-funded support mechanisms at the GCCI
- The Gambia Interface Capacity Building Project (GICAP) funded by the Africa Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF)
- The Gambia Investment Promotion and Free Zones Agency (GIPFZA) funded under the Trade Gateway Project
- The Fight Against Social and Economic Exclusion (FASE) Project funded by the UNDP, and focused on micro-enterprises

Besides capacity building in government departments for private sector growth and development, Government also supports the sector through capacity building in interface organisations and programmes.

Interface organisations are either public or private sector organisations specifically set up to promote the growth and development of the private sector. These are the Gambia Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Gambia Investment Promotion and Free Zones Agency, and the Gambia Public/Private Sector and Civil Society Interface Capacity Building Project. There are also interface capacity projects targeted at micro-enterprises that are administered by UN agencies, such as the FASE Project.

#### 3.4.1 Capacity Building Projects at the GCCI

The GCCI represents the interest of the private sector. It consists of about 175 members, most of whom are mainly small operators. The GCCI is faced with many constraints as a private sector interest articulation and advocacy institution that affects its role and function to promote private sector growth and development. It has been acting neither as an effective advocacy

institution nor as an adequate information resource centre for the private sector.

The GCCI is a beneficiary institution for capacity building under the UNDP-EMCBP III and the ACBF to develop capacity as an institution that can provide valuable information and training to its members and personnel, respectively. It is hoped that these new capacity building projects will boost the membership of the organisation and make its services relevant, as both inactive membership and an image of lack of relevance have been the major constraint and challenge to the effective functioning of the chamber.

#### *EMCBP pilot studies in developing commercial relations for increase in air cargo:*

A capacity building component of the GCCI is aimed at increasing air-cargo facilities, which has the potential to stimulate the development and export of high-value products such as fish, fruits and vegetables, flowers, meat and poultry products and handicrafts to overseas markets. But the current volume of these products is negligible; their production and marketing are not organised to ensure regular supply and allow for a viable regular air-cargo export business in these products.

#### *Reduction in the commercial cost of energy to the private sector:*

The development of the private sector is constrained by the high cost of energy charged to private enterprises, which constitutes up to 6 per cent of their operational cost. Increasing international prices of oil continue to influence the upward trend in energy charges. Government is also largely dependent on tax revenue derived from oil imports and oil sales tax to fund the recurrent expenditure. It is doubtful whether Government is willing to forego or reduce this important tax revenue source.

#### *Securing of long-term financing facilities for investors and businesspeople:*

Another capacity building component at the GCCI enables the institution to play an interface role of securing long-term financing facilities for investors and businesspeople. However, the viability of this scheme is open to

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question, as the GCCI neither possesses the assets nor the resources to obtain loans for its members.

The successful outcome of these initiatives will certainly increase the GCCI's capacity and facilitate private sector growth and development, and will prove whether the GCCI can function as an effective institution that brokers for private sector development.

### **3.4.2 Capacity Building at GIPFZA**

GIPFZA is the latest public institution set up by the government to promote investment in the country and private sector development through the implementation of the Gambia Free Zone Development Strategy. The main reasons for establishing GIPFZA by the government are mainly to increase the competitiveness of the country's economy through reforms and reducing the cost of operating business in the country.

The government seeks to attract foreign direct investment through a competitive private sector development strategy. This includes developing the country into a centre for foreign trade and the import/export business for the region through the development of a free trade zone within the Gambia Ports Authority and Banjul International Airport.

The key constraints that hinder the GIPFZA project from attracting heavy investments include the following:

- weak planning of activities
- weak governance and economic environment
- instability in the sub-region, population growth trends and low competitiveness of the business environment
- weak infrastructure, except for the airport
- limited port facilities
- poor work culture.

The home market is small and the regional market is not readily accessible and is relatively unattractive in value terms.

The Teleport Project is however one of the star investment portfolios of GIPFZA. The

project has not yet taken off because of several constraints. A *teleport* is a modern digital network within a business park or trade zone that provides telecommunication services to meet the potential needs of the free zone occupiers. A dedicated satellite usually connects the network internationally and it is interconnected to the local network operator for the provision of local services.

The advantage of a teleport is that high-quality telecommunication services can be offered, irrespective of the shortcomings of the local telecommunications network. A teleport may even provide services that are more cost-effective than the normal communications tariff through a pricing system that can be put in place in favour of heavy users. Special offers can also be made to industries with a propensity to generate employment.

If the Teleport Investment Project is successfully realised, it would offer the country the opportunity to attract industries that require high labour content and increases in auxiliary spin-off service industries that would contribute to employment generation, income generation, an increment in the buying power of the domestic market, and, consequently, to poverty reduction and the achievement of the MDGs.

There are however technical constraints that need to be addressed before the teleport can be a successful and sustainable venture. These include the availability of professional staff. The current low level of educational development, in particular secondary and tertiary level education of the country, hinders its capacity to provide trained and skilled human resources to such a venture.

Up to 75 per cent of the country's labour force have only attained primary-level education, and they are mainly engaged in farming. A teleport investment-based industrial development requires high technical quality telecommunications personnel, who are currently in short supply in the country.

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A teleport project that is independent would pose competition to the national telecommunications provider, Gamtel, and if offers are more efficient and better service-oriented than the national operator, it would attract its clients and pose a threat to the survival of the national telecommunications operator, especially if the teleport can supply services to the domestic market.

Current thinking however is to operate the teleport through Gamtel, but this has the potential to discourage private sector participation, especially foreign investors who find public control or participation in private sector activities a high-risk venture.

### **3.4.3 The Gambia Public/Private Sector Civil Society Interface Capacity Building Project**

The *raison d'être* for the establishment of GICAP as an interface institution is the realisation that the private sector and civil society are weak and incapable of effective participation in policy dialogue. They also lack the capacity to influence the policy formulation and implementation processes of Government on a regular and continuous basis.

The major capacity building components at GICAP are: institutional development, training, institutional networking and strengthening of the Information and Documentation Unit at DOSTIE. The project is funded by the ACBF and is designed to address the challenges faced by Government in instituting new approaches which require human and institutional strengthening, integration and networking within and between sectors, institutions and the citizenry equipped with the skills needed by the diverse economy. This project also includes capacity building at DOSTIE (by strengthening its policy analysis capacity) and promoting the interest of the private sector.

GICAP therefore provides a consultative forum for the participation of the private sector and civil society in policy dialogue exercises. In addition to DOSTIE, the primary beneficiaries are the GCCI and TANGO. One

platform for institutionalised dialogue is the Annual Economic Summit, which serves as a forum for public/private/civil society dialogue. It is a formal consultative gathering where mechanisms for private sector growth and development are discussed.

In addition to the Economic Summit, several initiatives have been undertaken, including a public-private consultative meeting on the economy, an interface policy dialogue workshop with civil society organisations, the private sector and the public sector and economic policy and policy analysis training workshops for private sector and civil society organisations.

The participation of the private sector in policy formulation:

- instils a sense of ownership of national policies
- helps to involve the private sector in research and advocacy
- assists in promoting transparency and accountability, which are essential to good governance
- allows programmes to accommodate the concerns and needs of the private sector
- helps to identify constraints, limitations and hindrances to business growth and development.

Since the establishment of GICAP, some 100 senior private sector and NGO officials have attended training seminars on policy analysis. The project has provided equipment and training worth over D3 million to the GCCI as part of the institutional capacity building support for the private sector. It has also conducted seminars on international trade and accords such as AGOA, ECOWAS protocols and The Gambia's responsibilities, opportunities and obligations as a member of the World Trade Organisation, to enable the private sector to avail itself of these opportunities.

Although these capacity building initiatives will aid the growth and development of the private sector in some ways, it is doubtful whether they offer solutions to most of the constraints identified in this report.

It is even doubtful that these capacity building initiatives will make the private sector the lead agency in national development, or in contributing substantially in the near future to the achievement of the MDGs, considering the magnitude of the tasks and constraints the sector faces. This is reflected in the fact that most private sector operators are not even aware of these ongoing capacity building projects and also that the private sector in The Gambia is not fully aware of the MDGs or the role the sector is expected to play.

### 3.5 Small or Micro-Enterprises

Private sector enterprises are generally categorised into big business, medium and small enterprises. This section deals specifically with small / micro-enterprises (SMEs).

Micro-enterprise development is made one of the important objectives for poverty reduction, as micro-enterprises improve livelihoods, create employment and generate income to the owners. Micro-enterprise development is however dependent on the capacitation of micro-entrepreneurs, with the appropriate technical and management competence for micro-enterprise operations.

It is in pursuit of these goals that the FASE Project was launched as part of the national poverty alleviation programme in 2003. This project, funded by the UNDP, is executed by the International Labour Organisation. It is focused on strengthening community responses to poverty, and promotes the participation of the poor in their own development and the development of pro-poor national policies.

The targeted beneficiaries of FASE are: traditional women's *kafoo*, individual registered micro-enterprises, unemployed youths, smallholder women farmers and members of small business associations. In fact, FASE does not encourage or support individually owned micro-enterprises. These business executives are encouraged to form themselves into groups or join small business associations before they can become

beneficiaries of the project and receive assistance or support.

The UNDP/Government Mid-Term Review of The Gambia Country Cooperation Framework, held in July 2004, considered the FASE Project as the best UNDP project in that it has fulfilled all its objectives. Government endorsed the recommendations of the review team that the project should be continued for an additional two years.

Capacity building for SMEs, as reflected in the FASE Project, is largely focused on training and enhancing linkages between SMEs and micro-financing institutions. These activities are meant to empower women, the youth and other traditionally marginalised groups.

In 2004, some 363 individuals belonging to 23 groups including women's associations and *kafoo* attended FASE refresher courses in improved tie and dye and batik totalling 107 days. These training programmes have also led to the establishment of trainers' associations in tie and dye and batik and soap making in the Greater Banjul Area, Western Division, Upper River Division and Central River Division. The training programmes are conducted in collaboration with other agencies, such as the Community Skills Improvement Project and the Department of Community Development.

The FASE Project provides technical assistance to local salt producers in the Foni District, brick construction in Busumbala, in the Western Division, and a bakery for the Kaur Janneh Kunda Women's Group. Under the Community Development Enhancement Initiative Pilot Project, a fish processing plant has been constructed at Jeshwang in the Greater Banjul Area.

#### 3.5.1 Linking Micro-Enterprises with Micro-Financing Institutions

The most important capacity building activity for SMEs is linking them with micro-financing institutions where they can access funds and capital to operate their businesses. There are several micro-financing institutions

that are solely focused on providing finance to SMEs. These include the Gambia Women's Finance Association (GAWFA), the National Association of Savings and Credit Associations (NASACA), the Social Development Fund (SDF), the Indigenous Business Advisory Services (IBAS) and the Rural Finance and Community Initiative Project. These micro-finance institutions offer loans to trained and registered women's groups.

Through the FASE Project, some twenty women's groups have received loans totalling D506 million from NASACA and GAWFA to fund their activities. FASE also collaborates with the SDF through joint programmes to enhance SMEs' access to loans.

Micro-finance institutions have been identified as a key element of the PRSP. There are currently about 140 Village Savings and Credit Associations (VISACAs) that offer services to the poor and vulnerable groups in society. There are 67 credit unions in the country worth D42.7 million. In 2004, these associations mobilised funds totalling D53.4 million, mobilised savings of up to D10 million and extended loans amounting to D11 million. During the same period, GAWFA mobilised savings of D11.4 million and granted loans to the tune of D15.6 million. The SDF Micro-financing Unit disbursed D17.9 million as loans to micro-financing institutions.

These pro-poor micro-financing institutions, as the figures above show, have achieved significant successes in recent years. A substantial number of them are able to satisfy the prudential requirements of the Central Bank. In 2004, 29 VISACAs were fully registered while 32 gained provisional registration. A rating exercise conducted by the government in 2004 showed that 88 per cent of VISACAs were considered to be performing satisfactorily and 12 recorded maintaining capital in excess of the Central Bank's minimum requirement.

The Indigenous Business Advisory Services has also been providing financial and

technical assistance to indigenous small-scale enterprises. In 2004, IBAS received D1 million from the SDF to disburse to 60 women's groups who are currently engaged in animal husbandry and horticulture. IBAS also provides finance and guidance to graduates from the President's Award Youth Service Scheme, FASE and YMCA training programmes.

### **3.5.2 Small/ Micro-Enterprise Development: Challenges, Constraints and Opportunities**

Lack of managerial skills, limited outreach programmes, poor linkages with the formal financial sector and the low level of functional literacy currently hamper the development of SMEs.

The limited amount of monies given to SMEs as loans is also not sufficient to have any significant impact on the transformation of the micro-enterprises. Access to these funds is cumbersome due to the inflexible bureaucratic procedures which non-literate women find difficult to deal with.

Besides, interest rates on loans from micro-financing institutions range from 16 per cent to 60 per cent. This prohibitive interest rate also limits the ability of SMEs to access these loan facilities. These constraints continue to hamper the effective development of SMEs and MFIs and, consequently, limit their effective contributions to poverty reduction and women's economic empowerment.

The analysis and conclusions of this chapter establish that the growth of the private sector and its contribution to building capacity for the achievement of the MDG and PRSP targets are severely constrained by many complex factors. The dominant ones include:

- lack of direct funding
- weak state structures
- concentration of the population in urban centres
- non-involvement of private sector operators in the policy planning, formulation and implementation processes

- the dearth of technical and professional skills required by manufacturing and industrial enterprises
- the burden of a high national debt
- poor macro-economic performance
- an unfavourable governance environment.

Current capacity building programmes are predominantly public sector activities while the private sector capacity needs remain incidental.

Ongoing capacity building projects in government departments that target the private sector are fragmented and are not coordinated in any strategic manner to address existing constraints. The private sector lacks sufficient knowledge and information in the capacity building policies and programmes of Government. Consequently, it is an ineffective partner in the pursuit of the MDG and PRSP targets.

Ongoing capacity development projects pursued by the GCCI, GICAP and GIPFZA have a limited impact because the resources provided are not substantial and the activities are not coordinated or integrated.

The analysis further shows that SMEs and MFIs have the potential to reach vulnerable groups and that they can play a role in the pursuit of poverty alleviation and the MDGs. To have maximum impact, the constraints of limited financial resources, limited managerial and technical capacity, limited access to credit and poor linkages with the formal sector have to be addressed in a comprehensive and integrated manner.

## Recommendations

To enhance the capacity of the private sector to substantially contribute to the achievement of the MDGs, the following measures and strategies are recommended:

- 1 The capacity building needs of the private sector should be taken care of in the programmes and projects of the government and its development partners. The sector should be made fully aware of the role and objectives of the MDGs and the PRSP.
- 2 Commercial farming and commercial agriculture, which could reduce the high food import bill, should be promoted vigorously.
- 3 Incentive packages should be provided to decentralise businesses and industries to the rural areas.
- 4 Capacity building projects at the interface organisations and micro-financing institutions tend to carry out similar functions and activities leading to a duplication of efforts and scarce resources. Some of the activities of IBAS, GICAP, GAWFA, SDF and the FASE Project should be consolidated, integrated and coordinated by one agency.
- 5 The weaknesses in the SMEs and MFIs should be addressed through training, outreach programmes, increased funding and credit facilities and the improvement of the functional literacy of micro-enterprise owners. These improvements could lead to the establishment of the first People's Bank financed from locally generated funds.

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# 4

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## Capacity Building Challenges and Opportunities in NGOs/CBOs for the Achievement of the MDGs

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### CHAPTER PREVIEW

*Non-Governmental Organisations*

*Community Based Organisations*

*National Development Policy Goals and Objectives that NGOs/CBOS Must Address*

- ◆ *NGOs and CBOs in an African Context*
- ◆ *NGOs Activities in The Gambia*
- ◆ *CBOs in The Gambia*
- ◆ *Capacity Building Role of TANGO and Donors*
- ◆ *TANGO's Training on Strategy Formulation and Planning*
- ◆ *TANGO and FASE Joint Training*

To put the issues and challenges in proper perspective, it is important to be explicit about the meaning and role of non-governmental organisations and community-based organisations.

### 4.1 Non-Governmental Organisations

A *non-governmental organisation* (NGO) is a non-state actor involved in development work. In a developing country where a significant proportion of the population lacks basic social services and where disparities are large, an NGO can play a significant role in the socio-economic development process. NGOs working in partnership with Government can help alleviate poverty, reduce disparities, create opportunities and protect human rights.

There is much controversy surrounding the definition of an NGO, often resulting in confusion and misunderstanding. Looking at the “extremes” of the debate here, there are both broad and narrow definitions. The broad definition suggests that every organisation outside the parameters of Government

operating in civil society is a non-governmental organisation. Under this definition trades unions, political groups, sports clubs and a multitude of other organisations and associations could all be termed *non-governmental*.

The problem with this approach is that it encompasses an enormous diversity of organisations and because of this it tells us little about their common features. A narrow definition however suggests a specific type of organisation that concentrates on development work, which assists people to improve their social and economic prospects.

The definition used for the purpose of this study is that outlined in the Commonwealth Foundation document, *Non-Governmental Organisations Guidelines for Good Policy and Practice*, 1995. Briefly, this specifies NGOs as having four defining characteristics that set them apart from other organisations in the civil service. They are voluntary, independent, not for profit, and not self-service.

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The above definition of NGOs cannot be complete without differentiating between Northern NGOs (NNGOs) and Southern NGOs (SNGOs). The former refer to those NGOs that originate from the developed world but operate in the developing world while the latter refer to those NGOs that originate from and operate in the developing world.

## **4.2 Community-Based Organisations**

A *community-based organisation* (CBO), in its broadest sense, represents a grassroots or community organisation that belongs to the members and is managed and directed by the members themselves. It is an organisation in which the rights, concerns, interests and dignity of the individual are accorded a high priority and are pursued and preserved vigorously.

Conceptually and in practice, both NGOs and CBOs may be classified as civil society organisations that share three fundamental features as follows:

- They are created to serve the public good and the interest of the community, and not to pursue private gain.
- They are concerned with influencing the state more as a “pressure group” than as political parties with designs and ambitions for state power for themselves.
- They must essentially be democratic in their internal organisation.

Cleobury and Morgan (2000) describe *civil society* as “that part of society which consists of groups, organisations and associations intermediate between the individual and the institution of the state.” From the perspectives of capacity, resources and management, these organisations face similar, if not identical, challenges and problems. Consequently, in the interest of simplicity and realism, both NGOs and CBOs are viewed as civil society organisations in this report, and the two terms are virtually used interchangeably, since they share common characteristics, objectives and challenges.

There are still serious capacity gaps among NGOs and CBOs operating in The Gambia. What is vital for a vibrant community-based organisation and for efficient working practices is the presence of multiple and cross-cutting interest groups and community associations with effective collaborative and communication processes between them. A perspective study undertaken on the activities of NGOs in The Gambia by Cleobury and Morgan (in *Non-Governmental Organisations: Civil society, democratisation and the case for linkages*, June 2000) reach the following conclusion: “NGOs and grassroots organisations do not fulfil the role in civil society that is potentially available to them and because of the lack of coordination and collaboration, more often than not they do not operate in the most effective manner. Most of the organisations reviewed were often self-contained and anonymous – a situation hardly conducive to a meaningful input into civil society and certainly not the most effective means to enhance the rate of development.”

Similarly, most CBOs lack organisational and management skills and suffer from the problems of proliferation, fragmentation, duplication and lack of coordination of activities. NGOs have played a very important role in raising awareness, advocacy campaigns and information dissemination in promoting integrated rural development.

## **4.3 National Development Policy Goals and Objectives That NGOs/CBOs Must Address**

The national development policy goals and objectives of The Gambia are adequately reflected in Vision 2020, the MDGs and the PRSP(SPA II). These documents contain policy guidelines, policy objectives and implementation strategies, which all target human development through reducing poverty.



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### 4.3.1 NGOs and CBOs in an African Context

According to the 1995 statistics of the Commission on Global Governance, there were, in 1993, 28,900 international NGOs, a phenomenal increase from the 176 recorded in 1909 (Huline & Edwards: *NGOs, States and Donors: An Overview*, 1997). With regard to NGOs whose home location is in the South, their proliferation is not in doubt; estimates are tentative, but the UNDP suggests that in 1993, the figure was close to 50,000 (HDR 1993), rising to hundreds of thousands when the multiplicities and grassroots organisations are included.

Several factors lie behind these trends in the proliferation of NGOs. These are:

- There is the sense that NGOs are popular, not just with the media and the public, although that is certainly the case in the North, but also with Northern Governments and official aid agencies. This popularity seems to stem from the results of a strongly amplified image in recent years and the belief in their effectiveness and “comparative advantage” over other actors.
- Related to the first point is the neo-liberal emphasis on the importance of markets and private initiative in the quest for economic growth - the belief that development and aid provision are more effective through the private sector. In this respect, NGOs are seen as part of the private sector.
- NGOs are seen as having an important role in the democratisation process and, in particular, as contributors towards a thriving civil society.

The World Bank’s 1989 Report on sub-Saharan Africa outlines the prospective function of NGOs as follows: “They can create links both upward and downward in society and voice local concerns...this (will) bring a broader spectrum of ideas and values to bear on policy making. They can also exert pressure on public officials for better performance and accountability.”

Describing how international financial institutions and donors can encourage a greater involvement of organisations outside government circles, Landell-Mills outlines the role of NGOs in the scheme of things. Some NGOs have particular expertise in working with their counterparts in Africa as well as directly with community associations. Official donors that wish to support grassroots organisations should do so as “whole sellers”, using the intermediary NGOs as the “retailers of assistance”.

There is much evidence to suggest that in many African states the prospects are bleak for the emergence of a community-based organisation sufficiently empowered to bring about significant political change for the majority of the citizens. There are reasons to believe that the different ways in which Western and African societies have evolved prevent what many see as a “Western model” being imposed successfully in an African context.

Whether one believes Ake, who suggests that Africans are driven to depend on their own communities because of the failure of the state, or Mohiddin’s view that African societies are basically communal, the end-product is the same. The intricate family and ethnic associations as well as the deep cultural, religious and linguistic rifts identified by Bayart, are seen as major obstacles to a pluralistic civil society (Cleobury and Morgan, 2000).

### 4.3.2 Activities of NGOs in The Gambia

In The Gambia, NGOs and CBOs have emerged to fill the gap left by the government and private sector in terms of ensuring that the basic needs of the citizenry are met. In their operations, NGOs have forged a strong partnership with the Government of The Gambia in the implementation of national development programmes towards achieving the targets of Vision 2020, the MDGs and PRSP targets. Currently, there are 104 NGOs registered in the country, which have signed the protocols of accord.

There is also a code of conduct to regulate the conditions under which NGOs operate in The Gambia. As the number and complexities of NGOs in the country grew, problems of coordination and duplication became serious. In April 1983, the government responded by establishing the National Executive Council to coordinate the NGO sector and advise Government. This was later renamed the Advisory Committee for the Co-ordination of NGOs (ACCNO) to emphasise the advisory nature of the committee. In addition to coordination, Government was concerned about the issue of registration, accountability and operation of the NGOs.

However, ACCNO lacked the necessary capabilities to perform these functions on behalf of the government. In 1996, the government established the NGO Affairs Agency (NGOAA) under the Department of State for Local Government and Lands.

The role of the agency is to facilitate coordination and monitor activities in the country and to advise the government on matters relating to the sector. NGO Decree 81 of 1996 and the Associated Protocols of Accord outline the guidelines for the establishment and operation of NGOs and their relationship with Government.

NGOAA has developed criteria for processing NGO applications for registration. Essentially, the application must show that the NGO in question exists as a separate legal entity with a functioning structure and with aims to promote socio-

economic development in the country. Since the introduction of Decree 81, registered NGOs have been operating in both the rural and urban areas in sectors such as the environment, education, health, women's affairs, and social welfare.

Most of the NGOs are members of the Association of Non-Governmental Organisations (TANGO), which is the umbrella organisation for NGOs in The Gambia. There are 29 international NGOs with external sources of funds, and they tend to dominate NGO activities in the country.

Most of the local NGOs (totalling 42) lack capacity and are generally short lived. In fact, both local and international NGOs are dependent on foreign funding. Collaboration with government agencies includes joint workshops and seminars, particularly sensitisation programmes.

According to the database maintained by NGOAA, 71 NGOs out of 104 registered with the agency provided their contact details, financial and organisational structure and projects on the ground. These 71 NGOs hold 89.4 per cent of the total budget spent by NGOs in The Gambia and are currently working on 443 projects, which seek to contribute to the achievement of the goals of Vision 2020, the MDGs and the PRSP. Information collected from NGOs and development partners established the following features of NGO interventions, shown in Table 10.

*Table 10: Features of NGO interventions*

<b>Number of projects</b>	<b>Type of beneficiaries*</b>
2 -	Islamic communities
3 -	Refugees
3 -	Members of staff
8 -	Farmers
20 -	Students or schools
30 -	Blind, deaf or disabled
31 -	Children
82 -	Women
225 -	Community

The main sectors of activity of these NGOs include education, agriculture, health, enterprise development, the environment, institutional capacity building and human rights. With regard to the primary sources of funding, 10 out of the 71 NGOs rely on membership schemes and income-generating activities to support their projects. However, all the NGOs depend heavily on donations, particularly from abroad, for sustaining their projects.

NGOs are normally much more structured than CBOs. To be registered as an NGO, there are a set of criteria established by NGOAA that must be fulfilled. These include having an explicit constitution, maintaining an efficient accounting and auditing system and signing an agreement through an MOU with the relevant line departments.

### 4.3.3 CBOs in The Gambia

According to the Attorney General's Chambers, there are about 5000 CBOs in The Gambia. Unfortunately, the registrations of these organisations are not computerised and until that happens it is not possible to provide precise statistics about CBOs, which are normally formed by two to five individuals with a specific purpose. For registration, the only requirement a CBO has to fulfil is to pay a fee and to establish its purpose and objectives as well as name its members.

Based on interviews conducted with 12 NGOs located in different parts of the country, the following results were obtained:

#### Strengths

- All organisations studied are involved in some form of capacity building for their staff and beneficiaries.
- Staff are capacitated for effective and efficient delivery of services.
- Beneficiaries are capacitated to be responsive and responsible, thus creating a sense of ownership to ensure sustainability.
- Competent staff with knowledge and skills in advocacy/lobbying, proposal development, resource mobilisation and

report writing – competencies in sourcing funds for organisational activities.

- International organisations have adequate financial resources to carry out capacity building activities.
- Operations are either countrywide or limited to a region or cluster of regions.

#### Weaknesses

- Inadequate funds (local NGOs) for the conduct of capacity building exercises.
- Poor qualified staff working for local NGOs.
- Lack of expertise in certain competencies required for meeting the MDGs, eg in reducing maternal mortality.
- Unwillingness by donors to support training proposals forwarded by local NGOs.
- Dependence on volunteers to execute programmes.
- Dependence on donor support.

#### Opportunities

- Preparation of inclusive budget proposals
- Have donors engage in dialogue (using local partners/beneficiaries) in order to identify capacity gaps that hinder performance and could otherwise be achieved through capacity building.
- Trained staff and stakeholders/partners could be used in organisational strengthening rather than contracting out when such services are needed.
- Possibility for partners/beneficiaries to be self-sustainable if capacities are built.
- Strengthening of networking and alliance building are reinforced between institutions.

#### Threats

- Male dominance in decision-making with regard to gender-related activities.
- Much dependence on donor support.
- Poorly qualified staff with national NGOs.
- Reliability on volunteers for the implementation of some national NGO programmes.

- Donors' reluctance to support the payment of staff and their training.
- Inadequate finance for national NGOs.

#### **4.4 Capacity Building Role of TANGO and Donors**

Based on the capacity constraints and weaknesses identified above, TANGO and donors have assigned themselves roles to fill some of the capacity gaps that exist.

##### **4.4.1 TANGO's Training Workshops on Strategy Formulation and Planning**

TANGO carried out a capacity assessment exercise on 30 member NGOs and CBOs between March and April 2001 in order to gather information about the capacity gaps of its members so as to determine measures to address the shortfalls. Among the issues identified were:

- inadequate knowledge and skills of staff on strategic planning because most NGO/CBO members either do not have, or have outdated, strategic plans
- participatory monitoring and evaluation.
- resource mobilisation and accounting
- report writing.

The specific objectives of the project for civil society capacity strengthening were to:

- facilitate the preparation and development of organisational strategic plans for 20 NGO/CBO TANGO members by December 2004
- improve the skills of 20 TANGO members on resource mobilisation and utilisation, financial planning and report writing by December 2004
- To improve the participatory practices of 20 TANGO members by December 2004.

In order to address these prominent gaps and enable TANGO and its members to achieve their goals and objectives, TANGO carried out a project on "Civil Society Capacity Strengthening", which aimed at enhancing poverty alleviation at all levels of society through a programme (one six-day workshop, three-month fieldwork on strategy development and a five-day wrap-up

workshop). ActionAid International - The Gambia (AAITG) funded the project. The aim was to enable staff of TANGO members to develop participatory, action-oriented and people-centred strategic plans focusing on the respective current situations (local and international).

The project was centred on training in strategy formulation/development, and the development of monitoring and evaluation frameworks. The overall goal was to ensure that TANGO members are more effective and dynamic in the fight against poverty and social injustices. Thirty-five participants from 19 NGOs/CBOs (all members of TANGO) attended the six-day workshop at the TransGambia Lodge, Pakalinding, to share ideas on civil society capacity strengthening.

The main issues identified by the trainees were that the missions, goals and objectives of most NGO/CBO TANGO members are very similar in that they are geared towards poverty alleviation, socio-economic development, empowerment and protection of the rights of the vulnerable- women, youth, the handicapped, PLWHA and children - gender in development issues and the development of human resources. This can cause potential duplications, waste of resources and overlaps in the development and implementation of the strategic plans of the NGOs/CBOs in the country.

#### **Recommendations**

The following conclusions and recommendations came out from the participants of the workshop. Capacity gaps that exist after this intervention can be filled by:

- a longer duration for similar training in the future
- a need for training in basic accounting and financial management for senior staff of NGOs
- the extension of the training on strategy development to all NGO/CBO members of TANGO
- more female participants from NGOs/CBOs for such training to maintain gender balance
- NGOs/CBOs to send competent and senior staff to attend such workshops in

the future, rather than junior or middle-level staff who may not stay long with the organisation for one reason or another

- TANGO to do effective monitoring of all the participants so that they can put into good use the knowledge and skills learnt
- TANGO to provide each participant of the workshop with a “Certificate of Attendance” signed by the TANGO Director, Chairperson of TANGO and the Lead Facilitator.

#### 4.4.2 TANGO and FASE Joint Training

The above intervention was complemented by other interventions such as the contract between TANGO and FASE for a one-year capacity building project for NGOs. Capacity building in the following critical areas is of paramount importance: participatory planning, programme design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, economic and financial analysis, organisational development and management, research, information, advocacy and lobbying (and strengthening), networking and exchange of expertise and experience among organisations. The building of social capital and the emergence of a strong civil society are essential ingredients in achieving long-term sustainable development at the national level.

Enhancing the capacity of indigenous NGOs through operational collaboration and networking may generate a development

impact, which surpasses immediate project goals. Development is the process by which vulnerabilities are reduced and capacities are increased. It is against this background that this intervention was made.

The project targeted 60 member organisations but training was conducted in batches of 25-30 participants to ensure that the facilitator had a manageable size of participants at any given time for better delivery and overall management of training sessions.

All the four training components targeted for 2001 and 2002 were successfully implemented. The training sessions were on participatory planning process/strategic planning, organisation development and management, participatory monitoring and evaluation, advocacy and lobbying. To ensure the delivery of quality knowledge and skills to participants, appropriate professional consultants were hired.

About 21 participants from 60 member organisations were targeted for this project over a one-year period (September 2001 - August 2002). Some 186 participants attended the various components, representing about 88 per cent of the targeted participants. Some of the NGOs targeted could not attend as expected due to tight work and programme schedules. However, overall, a high turnout rate was realised. Table 11 shows the number of NGOs and participants that attended the various components for 2001 and 2002.

*Table 11: Training in various areas of relevance to NGOs*

Training components	No. of attendees	International	National	No. of NGO attendees
Participatory planning	47	6	41	30
Participatory monitoring and evaluation	45	3	42	14
Advocacy and lobbying	48	9	39	20
Organisational	46	3	43	18
TOTAL	186	21	165	

Generally, participants indicated that the training workshops conducted were greatly successful and relevant. A two-day impact-assessment training workshop was conducted

for each of the training components to wind up the TANGO/FASE partnership on the NGO capacity building project. This was not part of the initial training package, but it was

an additional exercise from the recommendations of the training evaluation by the participants, who thought it necessary to bring them back together for a two-day impact-assessment workshop. Attendees at the four training components at various times were targeted to participate. The idea was for participants to come back and give feedback on the impact the training had achieved in their day-to-day programme activities in the form of case-study presentations and group exercises.

Facilitators for each of the training components guided the participants while they themselves led the whole process. In this way, it was possible to assess whether the training conducted had any impact on their overall development process. Indications show that nearly all of them gained substantial knowledge and new skills. All of them indicated that the ideas/knowledge and skills would help improve many aspects of their work.

A training follow-up monitoring exercise took place from 29 August to 8 September 2002; this will be an ongoing exercise.

The four training components conducted were graded by participants to be effective and a worthwhile partnership between TANGO and FASE and it was hoped that this partnership on NGO capacity building would continue for the next two years. This would help close the gap of NGOs' capacity problems in other areas and also conduct more advanced training of the ones mentioned above.

Other training conducted for NGO members includes programmes on proposal writing to improve their knowledge and skills in writing good project proposals to attract funding for project implementation, and workshops on participatory monitoring and evaluation.

### Recommendations

There are still gaps that need to be addressed. Therefore, participants recommended that FASE should continue to work with TANGO so as to improve the capacities of member organisations of TANGO through training in areas such as:

- strategic planning (a serious capacity gap for most NGOs)
- project proposal development and write-ups
- facilitation techniques and analysis and report writing
- exposure to IT training for NGO staff
- communication/networking
- financial management/budgeting
- how to conduct proper case-studies

In conclusion, participants generally indicated that the knowledge and skills learnt would greatly help increase their output and efficiency both at office and field levels. If participants utilise the knowledge and skills learnt, they should be able to attract funding from a variety of funding agencies to implement projects and programmes in the sectors affecting the lives of the communities they work with.

It is evident that all the NGOs and CBOs in the country deal with one or more of the MDGs or pillars of the PRSP. The PRSP is seen as the means to achieving the MDGs. The NGOs and CBOs operate in specific areas like gender equality and empowering women (eg. GAWFA and NAWFA), poverty reduction (eg AAITG), enhancing citizen participation in development issues (eg ProPAG, AAITG and GREEN Foundation), combating HIV/AIDS (eg CCF and BAFROW) and promoting education (eg CCF).

Considering that NGOs and CBOs are closer to the people and are organisations where more people have access to resources and power over choice, developing their capacities to intervene more effectively in carrying out their activities will no doubt have more effect on the lives of the ordinary person.

In addition, the increased rolling back of the state in economic activities means that NGOs/CBOs and the private sector must be in a position to fill outstanding gaps if the MDGs are to be met. Besides, pillar of PRSP/SPA II and also pillar four (improve coverage of basic social services) can only be achieved if the capacities of civil society

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organisations are built upon to expand their intervention.

# 5

## The Role of Traditional Structures and Actors in the Pursuit of the MDGs

### CHAPTER PREVIEW

*Overview of the Traditional Structures and Their Roles*

- ◆ *Gambian Traditional Structures*  
*Traditional Structures and Implementation of the National Development Strategies within the Context of the Millennium Development Goals*
- ◆ *Reduction of Poverty : Challenges*
- ◆ *Achievement of Universal Primary Education and Gender Equality Challenges*
- ◆ *Reduction of Child Mortality and Improvement of Maternal Health Challenges*
- ◆ *Combating HIV/AIDS: Challenges*
- ◆ *Ensuring Environmental Sustainability – Challenges*  
*Challenges of the Traditional System*
- ◆ *The Policy Context*
- ◆ *Institutional Frameworks*
- ◆ *Gender and Local Structures*  
*Conclusions and Recommendations*

It is becoming increasingly evident that the challenges of improving economic and human development, reducing poverty and the achievement of the MDG targets require strengthening local government structures, grassroots organisations and community-based organisations. These interventions will need to be accompanied by a strong emphasis on decentralisation or de-concentration for sustainable development.

The specific objectives of this chapter are to:

- assess the impact of traditional structures on capacity building for the achievement of the MDGs.
- expose to Government and its development partners the advantages and potentials inherent in these traditional structures.
- address the constraints that impede the effectiveness and efficiency of these structures in capacity building for the achievement of the MDGs.

### 5.1 Overview of the Traditional Structures and Their Roles

#### 5.1.1 Introduction

Human development is inextricably linked to sustainable human resource development. To facilitate the attainment of the MDG targets, The Gambia has to use the existing traditional structures that guarantee the necessary support and to strengthen them through a process of decentralisation. This requires the involvement of the local communities from the start of policy planning at the local level to ensure the development of an effective delivery system that is supported by the local population. Traditional structures that have been historically and traditionally known to contribute to effective management and governance of the Gambia will be critical players in this process.

To facilitate the attainment of the MDG targets, The Gambia has to use the existing traditional structures that guarantee the



necessary support and to strengthen them through a process of decentralisation. This requires the involvement of the local communities from the start of policy planning at the local level to ensure the development of an effective delivery system that is supported by the local population.

Several studies have shown that African social and material development is influenced by a complex composition of groupings, associations and structures that have evolved from time immemorial in response to changing circumstances. These structures have served various interests, have been utilised in many ways and have altered substantially over time.

The structures have consistently formed the normal framework on which both colonial and post-colonial development policies and politics have relied to achieve their development aims and objectives. They also serve as the entry point for the social, political and economic communication of social interactions, thus forming the cultural, social and material context.

During the colonial period, the colonial masters in most parts of the continent viewed such groups as conduits and opportunities to enhance their colonial policy. These traditional structures facilitated control, hence the persistence of existing social structures and traditional political systems, which play crucial roles in current development initiatives in Africa. In most cases, these frameworks were allowed to maintain their separate identity as in the past but were incorporated simultaneously into the colonial structures.

The colonialists did not have to reinvent the wheel to entrench their policies, but rather worked closely with the existing structures by enhancing their capacity to suit their objectives. Through this process, the British used the Indirect Rule principle to access those that would facilitate the process for them. Similarly, the French principle of assimilation was based on their objectives.

In Africa, traditional structures have been used effectively to bargain for development, such as the Council of Chiefs in Ghana and the emirate and caliphate in northern Nigeria. In The Gambia, similar traditional structures exist, which form the basis of the country's traditional systems.

### 5.1.2 Gambian Traditional Structures

Generally, Gambian traditional structures have their roots in the country's traditional forms of social organisations and groupings, with development initiatives conducted through a complex web of social and institutional settings, and interpersonal relationships.

Traditionally, the political set-ups are based on founding families who were considered king-makers. Succession was based on seniority and concession among the elders in a particular district comprising a number of villages ruled by a chief with each village headed by an *alkalo*.

The traditional structures at the community/municipal levels have always been development partners of the government. It is the state that provides the context for official interactions (of traditional authorities) in the public domain. The structures constitute the fundamental building blocks of the interchanges and actions to fulfil development; they have been reshaped or new ones formed.

Through these structures various interests obtain access to resources and enhance cultural and social meaning. Among them are the Council of Elders, the chieftaincy, *alkaloshi*, *imamship*, *kabilo* (clan organisations), *kafoo* and gendered groups, which exist in almost all Gambian communities.

**The *Kabilo* Systems:** Gambian kingdoms were ruled by a single lineage or *kabilo* (Sonko-Godwin, 1994). Thus settlements in The Gambia are divided into wards: *kabilo/kabiloolu* in Mandinka, *sare* or *sinchu* in Fula, *sancha* in Wolof etc, each of which traces its origins to a particular lineage or

founding family. For example, in the Manding dynasty, like in all other ethnic dynasties, the *kabilo* is an expression of kinship lineage, with the head of the *kabilo* called *kabila tio* or *kabila keeba*. Resources for productive activity are centred on the *kabilo* production system.

The core of the *kabilo* is a patrilineal kin group, but the *kabilo* frequently accommodate temporary residents and permanent compounds not related to the patrilineage, based on a history of longstanding patronage between founders (*jatiyolu*) and newcomers (*luntangolu*).

The ward of the founding patrilineage has a central position of authority and prestige in the village. Men and women and other productive resources are mobilised through the patrilineal extended family group for community participation.

**The Chieftaincy:** The chieftaincy is the highest traditional political structure in The Gambia. It was of prime importance during the colonial era. The chieftaincy was introduced by the colonial administration, which improved on the existing social arrangements of which the village heads were the highest decision-makers. The structure can be compared to the Ghanaian House of Chiefs, the emirate and caliphate in northern Nigeria.

The chief, as earlier mentioned, is responsible for a district, which consists of several villages constituting a constituency. He or she oversees the administration of such villages, through the *alkaloolu*, who are responsible for the day-to-day administration of their communities and report back to the chief.

Since the colonial period, the chieftaincy has played crucial roles in the governance and administration of communities and has always been the point of reference for community development in the rural areas. The structure is the highest decision-

making body at the district level which filters through *alkaloolu* in the villages and also commands respect, power and authority.

Apart from being the point of reference, chiefs mediate in the implementation of justice and peace. Their role includes litigation, arbitration, mediation and conflict resolution. During the colonial period, these roles were further enhanced to suit the colonialist projects. Chiefs were considered to be intermediaries between the colonial masters and their subjects. They also form the hegemony within the community and families and kin groups refer to them for all family issues related to the kinship. The missionaries used the chiefs to achieve their objectives; the results can be seen throughout the continent.

For instance, in The Gambia, the chiefs were used to collect hut taxes and levy charges on the polity. In this way, they were paid salaries and engaged in wage labour. These new responsibilities enhanced the status of the chiefs. They were mandated to appoint court clerks and *konsingbalo*<sup>6</sup> (badge messengers), thus enhancing their status economically and socially.<sup>7</sup>

**Council of Elders:** Similarly, the Council of Elders is part of the traditional structure and constitutes another decision-making body in the community. The elders are usually drawn from the heads of the *kabilo*. In other words, all the heads of the *kabilo* (*kabila keeba*) are members of the Council of Elders including the *alkalo*. They take decisions on the management of resources within the community.

The positions of *alkaloship* and Council of Elders are highly patrimonial and tend to take women's concerns for granted. However, gender disparity can be an obstacle to the achievement of The Gambia's development goals as stated in the MDGs, Vision 2020 and SPA II. Table 12 is an indication of the gender disparity in the structure.

*Table 12: Male and female representation in alkaloship positions in The Gambia*

Total villages	No of male <i>alkalo</i>	No of female <i>alkalo</i>	% of females
1873	1868	5	0.2%

Source: UNDP Governance and Gender in Development, The Gambia, 2005

**Imams:** The imam is a member of the Council of Elders. Imams are mostly considered as role models within their communities as well as a point of reference when it comes to issues of religion. There is a great potential in utilising them when they are well trained in development issues with religious implications. Their role as traditional leaders could be a focus for sustainable development. However, their capacity to take on the new role envisaged for them should be geared towards a more progressive thinking on development if The Gambia is achieve the target set for the MDGs and other development policies.

**Ngansingba:** In most Mandinka communities the *ngansingba* is the women's leader who wields a lot of power and respect. She has a group of elderly women whom she consults on women's affairs in the community. She has decision-making powers among women and she is the intermediary between the women and the community of male elders. The *ngansingba* negotiates on behalf of women on issues such as *kafoo* interest, on matters of land for communal work and mobilises women for the implementation of development activities. In most of the communities, the *ngansingba* is the wife of the *alkalo*.

Traditionally, the *ngansingba* is associated with female genital mutilation, arranging marriages and wedding ceremonies and being an emissary between women of different villages. She symbolises the cultural heritage in most Gambian communities, which accords her great respect. Her role in the community ranges from providing delivery services at the local level to the circumcision of women and girls as well as organising development work on behalf of women.

In the current development paradigm, the role of the *ngansingba* is not a very positive one

in regard to the practice of FGM on young girls and women, which has negative health effects on female sexuality. The women's leaders were also the conduits through which gender discriminatory practices were reinforced in the community and, as a result, they contributed to female subordination. This negative role has been re-routed towards a positive direction by building their capacity to take on roles that contribute to the improvement of the health of women and children in their respective communities.

NGOs have used the *ngansingba* as change agents in matters relating to reproductive health. They have been trained to take on the role of TBAs. Currently, they are responsible for most of the home deliveries in the rural communities. In the health sector, without the TBAs, the number of maternal deaths would have increased, because the required capacity in response to the demand is not available in this sector. They are also trained to transmit messages of reproductive health, such as family planning, nutritional taboos, early marriages and teenage or early pregnancies.

NGOs have been able to convert some of the *ngansingba* to stop the practice of female genital mutilation by building their capacity and giving them all the required skills to be effective in their advocacy to stop harmful traditional practices. For example, they have been trained as midwives and have undergone attachments and practical work. They have also been provided with the necessary skills to make them confident and effective in bringing positive change to women's health.

In addition to performing this role, the *ngansingba* still maintain their leadership positions in their various communities without involving themselves in the practice of FGM and other socio-cultural practices inimical to the health and well-being of women and children. Most of the data

collected in the field regarding the reproductive health of women are stories of TBAs who are confronted with the daily scourge of some of the traditional practices in their communities. Raising their consciousness about such issues has made some positive changes on women's health and well-being.

Civil society organisations have used these existing structures as their entry points for the development of the local communities. Notable among the local NGOs are GAMCOTRAP, BAFROW and the Gambia Family Planning Association. These NGOs have projects working with circumcisers and their assistants in improving women's health. Systematic and effective engagement with the TBAs and herbalists will contribute to achieving the set target for the MDGs in a sustainable manner.

**Griots:** Griots are historically regarded as custodians of the country's oral traditions. Over the years, they have nurtured a highly retentive memory to narrate events and stories to people. They are outstanding in giving eyewitness accounts of events, and are able to do this through oral narrations, songs/music and poetry. They have also lived through generations of families whose history they are specialised in. Thus they form the repository of knowledge of the oral history of the villages, towns and districts throughout the country.

Some griots have been able to record events in the local language and have been reference points to community leaders regarding some important events. Foreign anthropologists have referred to them on many occasions. They contribute to both the traditional and colonial history in the communities despite the low social status accorded them culturally.

Currently, the Department of State for Education, under its girls' education programme, uses griots to promote girls' education in the various languages. Some of them constitute themselves into theatre

groups to promote some of the development issues through popular theatre.

The Jammeh Foundation for Peace, under its Girls' Education Scheme, used the skills of the griots to sensitise communities to the education of girls. However, the creative use of this critical group will require developing their capacity to move from retention to documenting events accurately without being influenced by the subjectivities of individuals, regimes and self-interest.

**Kanyelengo:** The *kanyelengo* are generally a group of women who symbolically identify themselves in various forms. Culturally, they believe that after several stillbirths or loss of their babies at infancy, they are 'unlucky', and that a supernatural being is in control. As such, they are always pleading for support through their songs and drama, which carry powerful messages that are didactic in nature.

It is also a cult which tries to respond to their infertility by engaging themselves in prayers in order to attain their desire to bear children. As a result, they are very good at creating songs and metonymic expressions that carry sensitive and powerful messages about their plight. This groups of people can be very useful agents of change if effectively engaged to take part in creating awareness about reproductive health and other development activities.

The *kanyelengo* are important development targets in the fight against HIV/AIDS programmes currently being run by the NGOs and CBOs at the community level. The National Aids Secretariat has been supporting programmes geared towards this group. Women's rights organisations have always used them in their empowerment programmes to come up with songs regarding family planning, early marriages, teenage pregnancies and other gender-specific issues in the local languages.

In a highly illiterate society such as The Gambia, the *kanyelengo* can be very effective in the rural areas as they are culturally relevant and acceptable because the issues

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they identify with resonate with the realities affecting many men and women in the communities.

***Kafoolu and Kuroolu:*** *Kafoolu* (singular *kafoo*) is a general term for a social of people who have common interests, network objectives or professions in the community. It can be a single or mixed sex grouping. The term derived from the word *kafuu* (meaning to come together or to unite); it also connotes strength. Put in a metonymic form, people usually say “*Kafoo lemu semboti*” meaning “In unity lies strength.”

In most Gambian communities and in a variety of ways these both provide a dynamic network of kinship and social organisation in which gender, generation and descent intersect to shape patterns of development in the traditional/rural communities. These systems have been the source of cheap or free labour to achieve development targets.

The *kafoo* dynamic is fluid and one can belong to as many *kafoolu* as possible. For example, some *kafoolu* are known for providing services such as labour and community support, such as the *saate kafoo*, which mobilises every member of the community for collective endeavours such as the clearing of footpaths in the village, or protecting the forest from bush fires through collective labour, irrespective of one’s religious inclination, age, economic or political affiliation.

Historically, the *saate kafoo* was a basis for the organisation of unpaid labour to manage environmental resources in the colonial period. Other *kafoolu* come together to provide support to members of their *kabilo* (*kabila kafoo*). There are also *kafoolu* based on personalities and named after them, such as the Karamo Daffeh and Nyonko Daffeh *kafoo*. Others are based on ethnicity such as the mixed Jola *kafoo*. *Kafoolu* are sometimes based on tasks to be achieved for a common interest.

Some *kafoolu* are temporary in nature, for example, based on food for work or in

response to an emergency situation, while others remain as a more enduring part of the community’s social set-up, such as the *saate kafoo* and *kabila kafoolu*.

There are also *kafoolu* based on gender. Women’s *kafoolu* perhaps deriving names from the area of landscape, eg *Badala kafoo*, *Nyodema kafoo* (self-support), *Kangbeng kafoo* (consensus); *Dabanani kafoo* and *sKanyeleng kafoo*. The *kafoolu* provide social mechanisms through which the community or certain social groups derive strength and support, and which assist to mobilise labour and resources at both the *kabilo* and individual levels. Thus people draw from each social network to provide social and economic support, for instance, in farm work or festive occasions as well as during difficult times, within a sustainable and reciprocal relationship. These *kafoolu* are managed by the traditional structure, which is responsible for executing development plans.

Today, the term *kafoo* is also applied to groupings responding to international initiatives, introduced through development projects by Government and NGOs. Such groups are part of development initiatives. Achieving the targets of the MDGs and PRSP can be met by working with these structures. They are readily available and permanent, culturally relevant and the issues affect them directly.

Being part of the planning to the implementation process ensures sustainability as well as creates opportunities for both the state and those for whom development is meant for to share experiences and learn from each other. Some international development discourses are channelled through these structures to realise development objectives as described below.

The National Environment Agency (NEA) has several groups in the communities which act as links between the community and the agency to promote discourses around environmental protection and conservation and to implement the Local Environmental Action Plan (LEAP) derived from the

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Gambian Environmental Action Plan (GEAP). The *Jaatakendeya kafoo* (health and well-being) links community residents with the health programme of the Department of State for Health and Social Welfare. The Trust Agency for Rural Development (TARUD) is a local development agency whose activities are directed at empowering Gunjur and the neighbouring communities to embark on development on a sustainable basis.

Thus the longstanding institution of the *kafoo* is being invoked in current contexts to mobilise people around externally motivated causes, and those that link communities to national and international processes. This confirms Carney's point that "*kafoolu* are quite versatile and engage in a range of activities that belie their singular classification in rural development as traditional reciprocal labour networks into work groups for hire during peak farming operations like weeding and transplanting" (Carney, 1992:76). International NGOs are able to work effectively at the community level through the links they have with these structures.

While the *kafoo* is constituted by reciprocal relationships centred on labour relations and support, the *kuroo* (plural *kuroolu*) is a further decision-making structure based largely on age-grade dynamics, where different groups succeed each other in the community through seniority.

A fundamental feature of the *kuroo* is that membership is based on age. At the same time, founding family members are given key positions of leadership, power and control. It is the *kuroolu* that succeed each other as members of the Council of Elders in many Gambian communities and they take part in important development decisions that affect the village. The existing *kuroo*, which presides over the community's current issues, always works closely with the next *kuroo* that is to succeed it.

Total succession is based on the death of most of the current members, which takes a very

long time. Thus negotiations over leadership and succession are common features of *kuroo* dynamics. This has led to sustainable leadership in many communities.

Recent trends indicate that both *kuroo* and *kafoo* dynamics are changing in the context of the numerous social, political and economic changes, which seem to be weakening the importance of the supportive social dynamics provided by these institutions. These include education and the mobility it offers to people in the community. Migration and economic change have also brought other forms of social network based on the multiple economic activities that people are now engaged in.

The *kuroo* and *kafoo* seem to be responding flexibly to new circumstances and dynamics, sometimes giving way to new professional and political groupings, but also being re-activated in new roles, such as in linking village residents with external development activities. For example, there are several initiatives under DOSE that link communities with European institutions to support each other on relevant issues, such as education, health and networking for development.

***Village Development Committee (VDC):*** The village development committee consists of the *alkalo*, *saate kafoo*, the women's leader, youth

representative and all the government development agencies within the community. It is the superstructure and the conduit through which all the traditional systems within the communities organise development initiatives. The VDC represents the entire traditional political structure and leadership. It is also the intermediary between the government and the people.

Within this structure, government development policies are introduced through various departments that work with the community. Most development work is implemented through the village development committee. If well managed, the VDCs can be an effective body to achieve the targets of

the country's development goals such as the MDGs. However, currently although they lack the institutional capacity to deliver effectively, they can be strengthened to work effectively if empowered.

Within the framework of the decentralisation process, these structures can guarantee the capacity necessary at the community level to effect sustainable development. Also, the dwindling financial support from the international community calls for concerted efforts to reactivate or revisit these structures to tap from the energies of such existing social structures.

In the context of The Gambia's development policy framework, the VDCs are created within the context of the enabling environment for the role of traditional structures and actors. Thus the realisation of Vision 2020 is being fulfilled through this mechanism in the community.

However, it is important to note that some of these structures are politicised. Some VDCs exist as formalised links with government and development agents with little impact on the community, while the individual *kafoo* work as alternatives to the VDCs.

## **5.2 Traditional Structures and the Implementation of the National Development Strategies within the Context of the MDGs**

The Gambia's national development is embedded in Vision 2020, which also resonates with the current programmes within the framework of the MDGs. Currently, the MDGs and the PRSP are yearning for community participation in fulfilling the objectives of these programmes.

### **5.2.1 Reduction of Poverty: Challenges**

The biggest challenge facing The Gambia is that poverty is on the increase and household food security is becoming more and more uncertain, given the high inequality of income and the feminisation of poverty. To avert the

increasing trends in poverty, the country's poverty reduction strategy should emphasise the important role that traditional structures can play in reversing this situation.

To reduce the population that is food poor, it is important to create an enabling environment to allow the citizenry to engage in taking responsibility. Lack of resources to achieve this is a challenge, even though there is an explicit policy commitment to fighting poverty.

In agriculture, for example, on which the rural communities at the moment greatly depend, the burning issues related to ownership of land have to be addressed if food poverty is to be alleviated. Similarly, low agricultural productivity due to subsistence agriculture, lack of improved agricultural inputs and the premature marketing of produce to earn a reasonable income are issues have to be addressed.

The current policy environment seems to be directed at creating an enabling environment to facilitate the privatisation of land resources. This process is targeted at the private individual entrepreneur. The land is removed from the traditional landowners who need the resources to produce food or use them as collateral for their other socio-economic activities. Current conflicts over land resources are a result of Government's insensitivity to the circumstances of the poor communities who could have been empowered to make effective use of the land.

### **5.2.2 Achievement of Universal Primary Education and Gender Equality Challenges**

While the policy context has been enabling in this area there are still some challenges faced in this sector. The enrolment ratio in the country has increased but there is still a gender gap and significant geographical disparities. At the same time the resources necessary to address them are not readily available to the communities.

While expenditure in education is increasing, socio-cultural beliefs and practices still affect

the enrolment ratio by gender, thus reversing the gain made to negative indicators. Girls are still discriminated against and cultural practices such as early marriages, male preference and female genital mutilation still affect them. These factors have contributed to the perpetuation of the gender gap. The role of parents and social mobilisation with citizen participation in the communities are necessary to achieve the stated target.

### 5.2.3 Reduction of Child Mortality and Improvement of Maternal Health Challenges

The Gambia is on track in its efforts to reduce maternal mortality. However, access to good antenatal care and specialised health facilities and referral systems have been challenges for many women of reproductive age. Poor infrastructure and communication facilities mean that most deliveries are done at home. Therefore, safe and healthy delivery procedures are needed to prevent women from infection and other related complications. Where skilled health personnel are available, the urban areas are always at an advantage.

The challenges to meeting this target in the rural areas will always be at a disadvantage due to poverty. People in the rural areas lack the opportunity to access the services of skilled health personnel. TBAs are available to these communities.

Most TBAs have been trained to improve their delivery practices by both the NGOs and the Department of State for Health and Social Welfare. They provide 25 per cent of births (MIC, 2000), and 42 per cent in some rural areas, compared to only 4 per cent in the urban areas (MDG Report, 2003:20). The biggest challenge is to improve the role of these traditional structures in contributing effectively to the achievement of the stated target.

Similarly, timely evacuation systems to prevent maternal and infant deaths in cases of complications are a threat to achieving the set targets. Lack of adequate facilities and drugs

within the health facilities poses many problems for women of reproductive age.

### 5.2.4 Combating HIV/AIDS: Challenges

Meeting the target of combating HIV/AIDS is very remote, given the fact that Gambian women have no control over their sexuality. Most of what happens to them is determined by cultural dictates influenced by religious conservatism. Many women, particularly those from the rural communities, are married off at a very early age.

As a result, they assume their reproductive roles as early as fifteen years old. They can hardly negotiate 'safe sex' nor make decisions about their sexual life. Cross-generational marriages also put young girls in a vulnerable situation of contracting HIV/AIDS.

Being sexually active at a very early age without protective sex and other risky behaviour of young people could also be a challenge to meeting the target. The use of hard drugs among drug users may contribute to the risk of increasing the disease.

According to NAS, the prevalence of HIV-1 and HIV-2 is estimated at 2.1 per cent and 0.8 per cent respectively. In statistical terms it means approximately 97 per cent of the population are free from the disease. However, knowledge of transmission and prevention of the disease is very limited. At the same time, stigma and discrimination are factors which could facilitate the increase of HIV/AIDS in The Gambia.

Other influencing factors are the people's social and cultural practices such as cross-generational/early marriages, wife inheritance, polygamy and female genital mutilation. The culture of silence and refusal to recognise the gender dimensions of HIV/AIDS pose a formidable challenge.



### 5.2.5 Ensuring Environmental Sustainability: Challenges

The rural communities have always had traditional practices of environmental conservation and protection of the ecosystems. It would be necessary to work closely with them to share the best practices in the light of the competing interests. For example, the communities are seen to be responsible for the degradation of the forest resources, and contestations have arisen between state actors and the communities.

The challenges are that even though the policies are put in place, the environment is still vulnerable to deforestation. Working closely with the traditional structures would bring out the best practices they have adopted in preserving the environment such as *tongo*.

The past protection of rhun palm is an example within a more general set of practices known as *tongo*, or local sanctions concerning the use of environmental resources over a period of time, as agreed upon by the whole community or Council of Elders.

Such rules and sanctions were used to protect plants and animals in the forest until they reached maturity and the maximum capacity for harvesting. When the fruit was ripe, it would be announced to the community that people could begin harvesting it. In this way, fruits, trees, fish and animals were protected and there was no need to compete over resources.

The challenge of meeting the targets of goal seven of the MDGs is the increasing loss of biodiversity due to the over-exploitation of the ecosystem. The Gambia depends a lot on trees for firewood as well as land for other development purposes and, as such, people normally fell trees without putting in replacements. The policies put in place to protect the environment are not implemented effectively.

### 5.3 Challenges of the Traditional System

While the traditional structures are a source of inspiration and strength, they are also fraught with challenges. They do not have the required skills to respond to the localised MDGs effectively. They are usually poorly resourced and hardly have the financial ability to undertake development work efficiently.

Also, some of them are being politicised and, as a result, the traditional sense of belonging that these systems used to provide to their members is waning. They used to be built on respect and common understanding to achieve the common good of all in the community. For example, the *kafoo* were a ready source of labour to the community both at the village and the household level. When, for example, Karamo fell ill, his *kafoo* members supported him on his farm and he would never be short of labour as a result of his sickness.

Similarly, the *kafoo* guarantees the labour force for communal work. Roads, seed stores, schools, hospitals and other social amenities are provided in many communities with the utilisation of the *kafoolu*. Both men's and women's *kafoo* are a ready source of support to achieve the development goals. The rural development projects of the early 1990s relied on traditional structures.

Some of the traditional structures are not gender representative and, as such, decision-making is predominantly male dominated. Women are hardly involved in the discussions and where they are available they are only tokens. For example, the VDC is gender blind and gender biased. It has been noted that the women who are normally chosen to be part of the VDC are either wives of the *alkalo* or important community members who are normally not true representatives of the women.

The social hierarchy within these structures could be an impeding factor among the various castes in the communities. Among the Serahule, the caste system is very strong, and lack of understanding of this fact could affect any development initiative that require social mobilisation.

The politicisation of the traditional structures could affect the level of engagement of all the critical parties in the community. There are instances where individuals are removed from the structure because of their partisan political affiliation. This could affect the effectiveness of the structure.

Lack of a clear sense of direction can derail the development target, hence the need to enhance the capacity of these structures to respond to the new roles and responsibilities they will be required to assume.

### 5.3.1 Policy Context

The Gambia is committed to the policy of decentralisation and it has undertaken several steps to put its policy in line with this process. However, formal commitment to decentralisation is yet to be translated into substantive commitment.

Currently, all the measures needed to empower the communities are non-existent. The infrastructure, resources and traditional structures needed to achieve commitment to the decentralisation process are lacking. Incentives to motivate people to remain in the rural areas have to be in place. For sustainable development to take place, the rural communities must play a crucial role in the process.

The current centralised approach of the government will not adequately address the problems. Capacity will always be elusive if it does not commit itself to empower the non-state actors to be effectively part of the development process. Therefore, this approach may not achieve the fulfilment of the targets it has set for itself.

### 5.3.2 Institutional Frameworks

The Gambia is divided into seven administrative divisions, which are well established. These administrative divisions have historically been the frame of reference for colonial development. They are well defined with local government structures. However, these institutions are poorly resourced, and their budgets are very low. Rates collected do not address all the issues of the communities and where such rates are available they are sometimes insufficient to cover the expenditures of such divisions.

The government needs to provide sufficient budget allocation to build capacity at this level. Also the existence of Divisional Development Committees vis-à-vis the multidisciplinary facilitation teams can be effective in providing technical support in the rural communities. These structures need to be strengthened to respond to the demands. They can be channels to develop the skills of the rural people.

### 5.3.3 Gender and Local Structures

While the local structures have been the point of reference for many development agents, they have not been able to address all the development concerns of the people. The existing structures in The Gambia have always been known to be patrimonial and gender blind. In all the existing structures, women and men have unequal power relations in terms of decision-making, which, as a result, affects the outcomes of projects on the different genders.

Involving these structures in the context of the country's current development initiatives would require making use of gender analysis and analytical frameworks that would address the gender imbalances that are entrenched and taken for granted at all levels. Taking account of gender equality in the process is crucial to the attainment of sustainable development.

The local institutional structures such as the *alkaloshi* and other traditional forms of decision-making bodies do not allow the effective involvement of women and the youth as strategic decision-makers. Yet these are the critical actors whose support and contributions are sought when it comes to realising development objectives at the community level.

At the same time, the gender representation of VDCs within the mainstream development framework at the community level is not impressive. The absence of women in the decision-making process will make the outcomes of the development plans not gender responsive and will thus contribute to the non-attainment the MDGs.

However, mainstreaming gender into all the existing structures should be a priority to strategically place gender issues within them

in order to achieve the targets. This is necessary because both women and men are critical actors in achieving the targets of the MDGs. Thus gender equality is viewed not only as a goal in its own right but also as a key factor in enhancing development-eradicating poverty, and stamping out violence against women, ensuring education for all, improving maternal health, reducing child mortality and combating HIV/AIDS. Gender equality in such structures will address the gaps, as they are interrelated.

It is observed that the MDGs cannot be fully attained while women and girls, men and boys do not enjoy equal rights, treatment and access to resources in a climate of freedom from discrimination (Commonwealth POA for Gender Equality, 2005-2015). Table 13 shows the gender gaps in area councils in The Gambia. This pattern seems to be the same in all the other local structures.

**Table 13: Comparison between women and men area councillors in The Gambia**

Council	No of males	No of females	Total	% of females
Banjul City	8	4	12	33
KMC	20	1	21	4.7
Mansakonko	19	1	20	5
Kuntaur	11	2	13	15
Brikama	29	2	31	6
Janjangbureh	15	1	16	6
Kerewan	19	1	20	5
Basse	15	2	17	12
Total	136	14	150	9

Source: UNDP Governance and Gender in Development, The Gambia, Medium-Term Plan, 2005-2009

## 5.4 Conclusions and Recommendations

This chapter critically examined the Gambian traditional structures that can play important roles in the development landscape and, in particular, the rural communities. It looked at the structures by describing their roles in the past and present, and what they can be in the current development of The Gambia in ensuring sustainable development.

It also looked at the challenges and opportunities facing these structures, and provided suggestions on how they could be

empowered to respond to the roles and responsibilities they are expected to play to ensure the implementation of development activities in The Gambia.

It is clear from the above analysis that The Gambia should embrace a development paradigm that will allow for citizen participation to effect the necessary change for its population. It will also have to provide an enabling environment to allow the citizens to take charge of their own development. The majority of Africa's population lives in the

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rural areas and the traditional structures discussed in this chapter have been the building blocks of development.

Traditional leaders have also been directing development plans by working closely with their *kabilo* and other relevant actors. However, this critical mass of local leaders need capacity building to effectively respond to the new role the government may envisage for them in the future.

In The Gambia's development records, particularly in the areas of agriculture and the environment, rural women have always played a dominant role in promoting progress. They have been the targets for development practitioners who work closely with development agents on a voluntary basis. They have also been the pool of labour which the traditional structures rely on for most community development initiatives. The decentralisation process should provide opportunities to them. They should be trained to be more efficient and effective, since they have a proven record of performing effectively in achieving project objectives.

Emphasis on building women's capacity to be effective in tackling development problems should be a high priority, particularly at the rural level. Human resources have always been problematic, especially in the rural areas. Women have always been the critical mass on which development initiatives have rested for sustainable development.

Women are part of the traditional structure and they form a formidable group in the local communities. They assume power and have been taking leadership positions on behalf of women. They are the point of reference for development agents and have been the corollary to male leadership structures in the rural areas. However, when women's only strategies are utilised, they should only act as interim measures to close the gender gaps and not to see their role as being separate from the mainstream development plan.

The role of these structures cannot be overemphasised, although they have

undergone substantive economic influences and changes, in response to new development and a policy paradigm in the context of the political economy they operate in. It is observed that there is much of the old in the new, although the social bases of African life have been altered.

Traditional structures usually cover broader frameworks than official, public and formal structures. Over time, they have accumulated wide-ranging amounts and types of resources, and, consequently, power, independent of government institutions. Thus state agencies may, in many cases, exercise a degree of autonomy and monopoly over power and their areas of jurisdiction. They also have a high degree of authority and legitimacy and their existence resonates with the cultural milieu in which they exist and operate. To a great extent, power is concentrated in such structures, depending on the context. The current decentralisation process of The Gambia allows such initiatives for the country to really achieve its objectives of attaining sustainable development where citizen participation is central.

Decentralisation helps to ensure that globalisation, as well as the national and local development processes, truly benefits poor women and men and does not further marginalise them. But this requires that decision-making power be shifted closer to the people by devolving authority and resources from national and regional government to local government and helping particularly poor communities to organise themselves to actively participate in advancing their interests. It is only through strong and capable local authorities and civil society organisations and empowered citizens that globalisation and localisation processes can be managed in a way that would be in the interest of the local population and of benefit to all.

It is important to mainstream gender in all the existing structures/institutions for the effective planning, formulation, implementation and evaluation of the MDGs. Gender budgets should be part of the overall

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development plans to resource the activities in order to attain the MDGs and other development plans, to promote popular participation and empowerment of the poor through policy directives that will provide the enabling environment to improve their status and to support the MTP/PRSP with special funds geared towards the communities.

### **Recommendations**

#### ***Eradicating extreme poverty and hunger:***

All local government areas and municipalities, especially the rural communities, experienced significant increases in poverty between 1992 and 1998. It is noted that The Gambia needs an annual reduction of 2 per cent in overall poverty and 1.1 per cent reduction in food poverty between the years 2000 and 2015. To reduce the level of poverty, the supportive environment should be available and specific attention should be paid to the vulnerable groups, namely the rural poor, the youth and women in particular.

#### ***Achieving universal primary education and promoting gender equality and empowerment of women:***

The problems associated with education are not necessarily financial but cultural. If one takes the efforts made by the government, achievements in increases in enrolment in primary education are due to increased investments in both human and financial resources. The underlying factors are due to people's attitudes, among other things.

The education system should involve the VDCs from the planning stage to the implementation of the programme. Communities should have a say on how they want the system to respond to their needs and those of their children. Government should provide the infrastructure needed for all the children to access schools within a reasonable distance. It should also sensitise the communities to the need to contribute to the sustainable development of the schools by creating awareness about the importance of education.

A girl-friendly schools initiative is currently being encouraged by the Forum for African Women Educationalists - Gambia (FAWEGAM) and the UNICEF education project to create awareness about girls' education and the returns by using role models in the community, protecting girls from sexual harassment and preventing girls of school-going age from marrying too early.

#### ***Reducing child mortality and improving maternal health:***

To strategically address maternal mortality, more support and attention should be given to the existing traditional actors in the community, eg TBAs, traditional healers and herbalists, whose role is to care for the sick. To provide the support needed on a sustainable basis, a philosophy of health care that will remain with the community when the resources from donors are waning should be developed. This requires full commitment from the government to support the decentralisation process.

A curriculum by which the health sector will engage the local citizenry to identify ways of addressing maternal health problems in the community needs to be created, including a primary health care system that promotes the environmental sanitation and well-being of the citizenry.

Women of reproductive age should be part of the decision-making process regarding their reproductive health, and taking responsibility for their reproductive life. Also, more TBAs need to be trained to take charge of deliveries in the communities, with adequate resources provided for the management of the system.

#### ***Combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases:***

Various groups should be engaged on a social mobilisation campaign with the right messages about the disease. Contradictory messages that reinforce scepticism around HIV/AIDS among the population should be avoided. Making use of the local theatre groups in the community should be very helpful in this sensitisation process.

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Awareness, through various channels, about the reality of HIV/AIDS and traditional practices that can contribute to its increase should be created. The use of condoms for safe sex should be encouraged.

***Ensuring environmental sustainability:***

There is a need to work closely with the communities and study the traditional systems of sustainable environmental management and use them to achieve the targets. A systems approach to achieving sustainable environmental management should be used. In this way, popular participation is encouraged and communities are allowed to regulate, manage and control the process.

This should be complemented with building the capacity of the existing traditional

structures based on identified needs relevant to the context in which they are expected to operate. Women's knowledge of environmental conservation should also be studied and documented.

The decision-making structures should be depoliticised to allow them to be the true representative of the people not on a partisan political basis but development politics that will motivate everybody to be part of the process. The structures should be truly autonomous under a decentralised local government system in order to allow for checks and balances. Furthermore, there is a need to strengthen the economic base of the rural areas by providing good infrastructure to allow for effective communication and development.

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# 6

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## Conclusion and Recommendations

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### CHAPTER REVIEW

*The Public Sector*  
*The Private Sector*  
*Civil Society*  
*The Traditional Sector*

**C**apacity is defined in this Report as the ability of individuals and organisations to perform sets of functions effectively, efficiently and in a sustainable manner. This definition implies that capacity:

- is a dynamic function and involves a continuous process of change
- focuses on the productive utilisation of human capital in the organisation
- relates to the overall internal and external environment with which organisations execute their functions
- is task-specific, and discussion of the concept is generally linked to a particular function.

The issues of capacity development have been assessed from the perspective of the public sector, the private sector, civil society (NGOs/CBOs) and traditional structures, each having its own peculiarities. It is evident from the information and analysis presented in this report that human, technical resources, institutional and management capacity are acutely inadequate in all the sectors considered.

### 6.1 Public Sector

The analysis of the challenges facing the Gambian public sector and an evaluation of the impact of ongoing donor-supported capacity building interventions shows that lack of capacity is pervasive, and if improvements are to occur, the root causes must be addressed.

A number of root causes have been identified, but one of the major challenges facing the civil service is lack of motivation and commitment, caused by an unattractive reward and incentive system. Employee compensation is an effective tool to improve employee performance, motivation and satisfaction. Unattractive compensation leads to high staff turnover, high absenteeism, poor performance and job dissatisfaction.

The analysis of the public sector incentive system further revealed that the disparity in pay levels between public sector and non-public sector employees would not have been a major disincentive if employees received compensation in non-financial ways through security of tenure, access to training opportunities, availability of career progression and job satisfaction. Unfortunately, these benefits have been substantially eroded, largely because of political interference and an acute decline in resources.

The analysis on the public sector concludes that unless definitive measures are taken to increase civil servants' pay by at least 30 per cent, lack of commitment and motivation will persist and the problems of slow implementation of the PRSP pillars, limited absorptive capacity, poor policy programmes and project implementation and institutional inefficiency will escalate.

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Furthermore, to effectively address the challenges in the public sector, the following measures should be employed:

- A performance-based remuneration and promotion scheme (which has proved effective in some African countries, particularly Ghana and Uganda) should be introduced to enhance productivity and motivation.
- To improve accountability, performance agreement contracts should be offered to selected senior officials to ensure efficient delivery of measurable outputs, within mutually determined periods.
- A career development programme must be developed for all cadres to encourage development and the reward of acquired skills and competence.
- The training function, which is largely uncoordinated and haphazard, should be more effectively planned and managed to ensure value for money. This process should be supported by strict and systematic enforcement of bonding schemes.
- A comprehensive policy must be developed to ensure the effective utilisation of technical assistance personnel and the transfer of skills and competencies to national counterparts within a specific time frame.
- Steps should be taken to ensure the revival of civil service associations for the enhancement of productivity, the resolution of grievances and the improvement of conditions of service.
- The independence of the Public Service Commission should be safeguarded and unilateral dismissal of public servants, without adherence to established procedures and processes should be avoided. The civil service faces severe recruitment problems and a high turnover rate, resulting in a large number of unfilled positions, particularly at the middle management and professional levels. To address the problems of skill deficiencies and attrition, a comprehensive civil service assessment and reform study should be undertaken to, among other things determine skills shortages in the key areas, and to

implement measures to minimise attrition.

- The Personnel Management Office should conduct staff audits more regularly to ensure the full utilisation of existing workforce.

## 6.2 Private Sector

The analysis on the private sector presented several issues, constraints and challenges that need to be addressed so that this sector can take a lead role in achieving the MDG and PRSP objectives to enhance human development. Despite national and international declarations for private sector-led economic growth and development, almost all funds for national capacity building programmes are directed to the public sector and little or none goes to, or can be accessed by, the private sector.

The lack of direct funding for capacity building programmes in the private sector to stimulate growth and development is seen as a major issue and a constraint to the development of this important sector.

The Report finds it ironic that the private sector in The Gambia is not fully aware of the existing MDGs and the PRSP, and therefore stresses the need for this sector to be aware of Government's human development programmes. This lack of awareness by the private sector also probably reflects a lack of interest, as the sector may see the goals as socially oriented, with very little direct and immediate effects on its development. Private entrepreneurs are generally interested in ventures that bring quick financial results rather than investing in social goods.

The analysis cites the low level of infrastructure development, including a decline in the growth of water and electricity supply, high cost of energy and poor road networks as major obstacles to private sector growth and development; these act as disincentives to potential investors. The growth and development of the manufacturing and processing sector is also handicapped by the limited nature of the domestic market, shortage of skilled and



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trained professionals, and weak support structures for the development of a manufacturing and processing sector.

To address some of the constraints faced by the private sector, the following measures should be adopted:

- Areas of private sector interventions, not only in terms of core business activities and social investment but also on policy initiatives and dialogue should be clearly defined. The dialogue should include the possibility of strategising the social investment of private sector companies to avoid randomness and to encourage concentration in priority areas identified by Government as critical for MDG attainment, as highlighted in the localised MDG Report. To promote the dialogue, the formation of task forces should be encouraged for the identification of intervention areas, and for the definition of measurable objectives.
- The capacity building needs of the private sector should be made core objectives in government and donor-funded capacity building programmes. The sector should be made much more aware of the roles and objectives of the MDGs and the PRSP in Government's development agenda. GICAP should play a more proactive role in implementing economic consultation summits and policy interface seminars.
- The analysis in the Report reveals that SMEs and MFIs have the potential to reach vulnerable groups and can thus play a major role in the pursuit of poverty alleviation programmes. To enhance their impact on the MDGs, concrete steps should be taken to remove the bottlenecks which presently restrict their growth and development namely: limited financial resources, limited managerial and technical capacity, limited access to credit facilities and poor linkages with the formal sector.

### 6.3 Civil Society

The Report links the emergence of NGOs and CBOs in The Gambia to the existence of a gap left by the government and the private sector in terms of ensuring that the basic needs of the people are met. In filling this gap, NGOs have forged a strong partnership with the Government of The Gambia in the implementation of programmes towards achieving the targets of Vision 2020, the MDGs and PRSP goals.

Considering that NGOs and CBOs are closer to the people and are organisations where more people have access to resources and power over choice, then developing their capacities to intervene more effectively in carrying out their activities will no doubt have more effect on the life of the average person. In addition, with the increased rolling back of the state in economic activities, NGOs/ CBOs and the private sector should be in a position to fill this gap. Besides, some of the PRSP objectives can only be achieved if the capacities of civil society organisations are built upon to expand their intervention.

Capacity building efforts in the civil society sector have been severely restricted by the combined effects of the following:

- lack of effective coordination at grass-root level
- inadequate funding
- poorly qualified staff
- skewed investment in administrative infrastructure, at the expense of programme activities that are advantageous to beneficiaries.

To address these deficiencies, the following measures should be implemented:

- The capacity of NGOAA should be strengthened to enable the institution to effectively monitor the progress and activities of NGOs, to monitor their adherence to the established Code of Conduct, to evaluate the impact of NGO interventions on the lives of project beneficiaries and to develop the institutional capacities of less endowed national and local NGOs.

- Government should play a more proactive role to exploit the potentials and advantages of NGOs and CBOs. There are many development activities, which Government is not equipped to initiate or implement, because of financial, staff and institutional constraints. To substantially benefit from the advantages of NGOs, Government should initiate consultations with NGO agencies during the planning and designing of projects, to ensure that the harmonisation of efforts and objectives is achieved.
- An effective mechanism at the field level should be established to ensure that the burning issue of coordination is effectively addressed. Coordination through the Divisional Development Committees has proved ineffective. TANGO and NGOAA should mount more training workshops to develop staff competencies particularly in the areas of project management, financial management, planning and human resource management.
- One of the deficiencies of NGO and CBO interventions is the concentration on the Project Approach to Development Activities. Studies have established that the Process Intervention Approach, because of its linkage and multiplier effects, is more beneficial and self-sustaining in the long term. The modalities of this “process approach” should be developed and popularised through workshops and seminars.

#### 6.4 Traditional Sector

The analysis on the traditional sector shows that African social and material development is influenced by a complex composition of groupings, associations and structures that have evolved over the centuries in response to changing circumstances. These structures have served various interests, have been used in many ways and have altered substantially over time. They have consistently formed the normal framework on which both colonial and post-colonial development policies and politics have relied in order to achieve their development aims and objectives.

While the traditional structures are a source of inspiration and strength, they are also fraught with challenges. They do not have the required skills to respond to the localised MDGs effectively. They are usually poorly resourced and hardly have the financial ability to undertake development work efficiently.

Also, some traditional structures are being politicised and, as a result, the traditional sense of belonging that they used to provide to members is waning. They used to be built on trust, respect and common understanding to achieve the common good of all in the community. Both men’s and women’s *kafoo* were a ready source of support to achieve development goals, and many rural development projects of the early 1990s relied on the traditional structures.

Some of the traditional structures are not gender representative and, as such, decision-making is mainly male dominated. Women are hardly involved in the discussions and where they are available, they are only tokens. In addition, the politicisation of such structures could affect the level of engagement of all the critical parties in the community. There are instances where individuals are removed from the structures because of their partisan political affiliation. This could affect the effectiveness of the structures.

Furthermore, lack of a clear sense of direction can derail the development target, hence the need to enhance the capacity of these structures to respond to the new roles and responsibilities they are required to assume.

The Report clearly shows the need for The Gambia to embrace a development paradigm that will allow for citizen participation to effect the necessary change for its population. It will also have to provide the enabling environment to allow the citizens to take charge of their own development. However, this critical mass of local leaders need capacity building to effectively respond to the new role that may be envisaged for them.

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The traditional sector, as demonstrated in the Report, has advantages, which are currently not adequately exploited. The leaders of the traditional structures should be capacitated through training and sensitisation to harness the skills and resources that are necessary for the enhancement of the MDGs. Steps should be taken to intensify their role in the combat against HIV/AIDS and in the implementation of poverty alleviation programmes.

Measures should also be taken to ensure that these structures are not politicised and that they are essentially used for national development activities and for the promotion of cultural values and traditions.

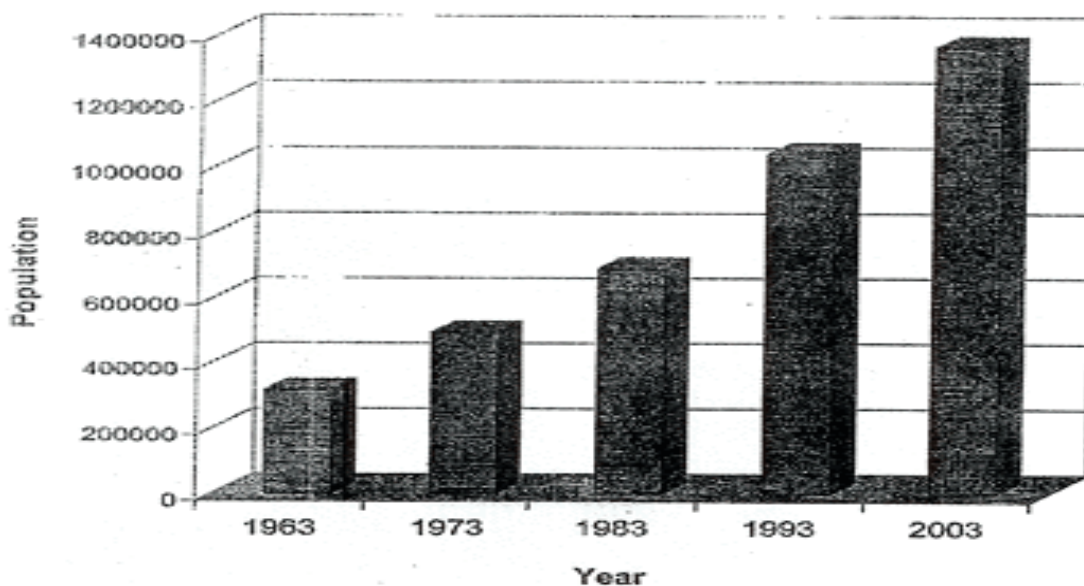
Finally, positive steps should be taken through training, sensitisation and advocacy to increase the participation of women in decision-making and to enhance gender equality.

## Appendix 1: Human Development in The Gambia

According to the provisional results of the 2003 Population and Housing Census, the population of The Gambia is estimated at 1,364,507 persons compared to 1,038,145 persons in April 1993. This represents 31.4 per cent increase over the previous decade and an average annual growth rate of 2.77 per cent per annum compared to the 4.2 per cent over the period 1983 to 1993. The observed drop in the annual growth rate is the accumulated effect of various socio-economic factors including the massive outward movement of refugees from neighbouring countries as a result of return to peace in Sierra Leone, Liberia, and Guinea Bissau and recent decline in economic activity coupled with an increase in the cost of living.

Figure 3 illustrates the levels of growth of the population of The Gambia from 1963 to 2003.

*Figure 3: Population of The Gambia, 1963-2003*



The provisional figures also show that The Gambia has a population density of 128 persons per square kilometre. This indicates an increase of 31 persons per square kilometre over the 1993 population density of 97 persons per square kilometre. The highest population density is in the Greater Banjul A-Area.

The provisional figures further indicate an overall sex ratio of 98, slightly lower than the 1993 Population and Housing Census figure of 100, which indicated parity in terms of male and female population sizes. High population growths, high population density, a decline in economic activities and increasing evidence of growing poverty have had a combined adverse impact on the Human Development Index.

### **Human Development Index for the Gambia 2005**

The Human Development Index (HDI) is a composite index that measures the average achievements in a country in three basic dimensions of human development:

- a long and healthy life as measured by life expectancy at birth
- knowledge as measured by the adult literacy rate and the combined gross enrolment ratio for primary, secondary and tertiary schools
- a decent standard of living as measured by GDP per capita.

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The Gambia's HDI value, according to the global Human Development Reports, has improved over time from 0.215 in 1994 to 0.452 in 2004 and 0.470 in 2005. A calculation of the HDI for 2005 using locally available data for 2004 produced an HDI value of 0.496 (see appendix 2). Similarly, the HDI ranking has improved from 166 in 1994 to 155 in both 2004 and 2005. However, the country is still within the category of "Low Human Development Countries" and has not been able to move from the basic threshold of human development. An analysis of each of the three components of the HDI sheds more light on this phenomenon.

### **Longevity or Life Expectancy**

The average life expectancy rate (2000-2005) stands at 54.1. The factors which are essentially responsible for low life expectancy at birth, and which impede the attainment of the MDGs for the health sector, mainly comprise malnutrition, prevalence of malaria, poor maternal and reproductive health facilities, inadequately trained human resources and perpetual shortage of critical drugs due to limited resource allocations.

### **Low Level of Literacy and Educational Enrolment**

Figures for the literacy rate (15 to 24-year olds) for males and females stood at 58.3 per cent and 37.1 per cent respectively in 1998 (Localised MDG Report 2005). In the area of enrolment for primary and secondary education, remarkable progress has been achieved, particularly when compared to performance in countries in the sub-region. In 2003 out of a total net enrolment rate of 60 per cent, 57 per cent were females. In spite of this impressive record and significant improvements in total school enrolment, the quality of education has deteriorated because of the combined effects of capacity constraints, environment and low motivation and remuneration.

### **Standard of Living**

Recent economic performance has been below expectation. This has impaired efforts to achieve the MDG and PRSP targets. The decline in economic performance, coupled with rising inflation in 2003, largely due to a shortage of foreign exchange, seriously eroded the purchasing power of the consumer and exacerbated the problem of poverty. In fact, deterioration in living standards has seriously eroded the MDG goal of poverty alleviation.

The 2004 World Bank-supported Public Expenditure Reviews for key sectors; coupled with the 2004 Annual Progress Report on PRSP/SPA II, undertaken by SPACO, established that at the current pace the attainment of the MDG targets on poverty reduction is no longer feasible. The macro-economic targets set for the period are behind schedule at the moment. Implementation of the PRSP has been considerably showed down by many institutional and external constraints.

At the macro-level, the country suffered from low growth and high inflation rates in recent years, culminating in negative growth in 2002. There was a recovery period for 2003 when the economy grew by 7 per cent largely on account of major recovery in Agriculture. Overall, the PRSP macro-economic targets have not been met, as the economic situation further deteriorated under the emerging fiscal, monetary and debt pressures.

Opportunities for increasing investments for poverty reduction programmes were drastically curtailed thereby hitting the poor in a number of ways. Under these circumstances, the MDG target of reducing to 38 per cent the proportion of people living below the international poverty line of US\$1 a day is severely off track. The annual increment of public IT investments in basic infrastructure cannot be met as a result of the debt servicing difficulties, coupled with dwindling external flows. These problems were compounded by declining recurrent domestic spending in education and health, which also had an adverse impact on the lot of the poor and the vulnerable.

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### **Gender-Related Development Index (GDI)**

The Gender-related Development (GDI) Index is used to reflect the gender disparity within the Human Development Index looking at the same indicators used to measure the HDI from a gender perspective. As noted, the disparities that exist between men and women in almost all the socio-economic indicators are always in favour of men. The fact that men are involved in almost all the decision-making processes regarding development as well as in the household, the contributions that women bring to development are taken for granted and therefore not recognised in the country's national statistics. There is still a dearth of information to accurately measure the gender development index in many countries. The response to gender disaggregated statistics began in the last decade.

The benchmark against which the GDI is measured is derived from industrial or developing countries. This masks the extent to which disparities exist in the African countries that are still within the low human development index. The traditional structures are not the focus of mainstream development and therefore the gender discrimination that exists within such structures is not captured in the context of many African countries. The statistical indicators still in use are not gender responsive and where they take account of gender it is in the traditional stereotype activities like the agricultural sector, which only partially reveals the disparities.

It is noted for example that in the 43 countries (24 industrialised and 19 developing) with data, no country improves its HDI value after it is adjusted for gender disparities. The same report noted that all countries treat women worse than men (HDR, 1994:97).

Gender discrimination is more broad-based in the developing countries and cuts across a wide spectrum of development issues. Although these attempts are towards the right direction, there is a pressing need to develop some gender responsive indicators that will take account of the real context of women in Africa. For example in The Gambia an indicator that may be used is "polygamy", "female headed households/hearth holds", "marital status", "domestic violence", rural-urban and other relevant cultural indicators that can be used in the analysis of the outcomes of the GDI and HDI. Also the target for development should start looking at the participation level of women and youth who are the pool of resources for the development initiatives in Gambian society.

Some improvements have been registered with some of the human development indicators in the areas of health, access to safe drinking water, infant and maternal mortality, formal and adult literacy. However a look at the GDI and gender equality measure (GEM) does not give an impressive result for The Gambia. It therefore implies that more attention should be directed at the factors influencing gender relations at both household and institutional levels.

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## Appendix 2: Calculating the Human Development Index, 2005

The Human Development Index, as already explained in the report, is a summary measure of human development. It measures the average achievements in a country in three basic dimensions of human development, namely:

- a long and healthy life, as measured by life expectations at birth
- knowledge, as measured by the adult literacy rate (with two-thirds weight) and the combined primary, secondary and tertiary gross enrolment ratio (with one-third weight)
- decent standard of living, as measured by GDP per capita.

Before the HDI itself is calculated, an index needs to be created for each of these dimension indices – the life expectancy, education and GDP indices. Minimum and maximum values (goalposts) are chosen for each underlying indicator.

Performance in each dimension is expressed as a value between 0 and 1 by applying the following general formula:

$$\text{Dimension index} = \frac{\text{Actual value} - \text{Minimum value}}{\text{Maximum value} - \text{Minimum value}}$$

The HDI is then calculated as a simple average of the dimension indices.

### *Goalposts for calculating HDI*

Indicator	Maximum value	Minimum value
1 Life expectancy at birth (years)	85	25
2 Adult literacy rate (per cent)	100	0
3 Combined gross enrolment ratio (per cent)	100	0
4 GDP per capita (PPP US\$)	40,000	100

### Calculating the HDI for The Gambia for 2005

#### **Life Expectancy Index**

The life expectancy index measures the relative achievement of a country's life expectancy at birth. For The Gambia, with a life expectancy of 54.1 in 2005, the life expectancy index is **0.485**.

Life expectancy index:  $(54.1 - 25)/(85 - 25) = 0.485$

#### **Education Index**

The education index measures a country's relative achievement in both adult literacy and the combined primary, secondary and tertiary gross enrolment. An index for adult literacy and one for combined gross enrolment are calculated to create the education index. These two indices are combined to establish this index, with two-thirds weight given to adult literacy and one-third weight given to the combined gross enrolment.

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For The Gambia with an adult literacy rate of 47 per cent in 2005 and a combined gross enrolment ratio of 76 per cent (excluding madrasas) in the school year 2004/2005, the education index is **0.566**

1 Adult literacy index:  $(47 - 0)/(100 - 0) = 0.47$

2 Gross enrolment index:  $(76 - 0)/(100 - 0) = 0.76$

Thus the education index is:  $?(0.47) + ?(0.76) = 0.566$

### **Gross Domestic Product Index**

The GDP index is calculated using adjusted GDP per capita (PPP US\$). In the HDI, income serves as a surrogate for all the dimensions of human development not reflected in a long and healthy life and in knowledge. Income is adjusted because achieving a respectable level of human development does not require unlimited incomes. For The Gambia with a GDP per capita of 1362 (PPP US\$), the GDP index is calculated thus:

GDP Index:  $\text{Log}(1362) - \text{log}(100) = 0.436$

$\text{Log}(40,000) - \text{log}(100)$

### **Human Development Index**

Once the dimension indices have been calculated, determining the HDI of The Gambia in 2005 requires taking a simple average of the three dimension indices:

HDI =  $?( \text{life expectancy index} ) + ?( \text{Education index} ) + ?( \text{GDP index} )$

=  $?(0.485) + ?(0.566) + ?(0.436)$

=  $0.162 + 0.189 + 0.145 = 0.496$

Thus the HDI for The Gambia for 2005 = **0.496**



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## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Director, Human Development Report Office UNDP – “UNDP Corporate Policy on NHDRs - 2001”

<sup>2</sup> *The UNDP Human Development Report, 2003*

<sup>3</sup> Source – Brian Orr, “Human Capital: Hard to Grow, Vital to sow” – Canadian HR – August 1997

<sup>4</sup> *Public Administration* by W. Thornhill

<sup>5</sup> Source: *Accelerating Implementation of The Gambia’s PRSP* – Discussion document – 4 November 2004.

<sup>6</sup> *Project Appraisal Document for a Capacity Building for Economic Management Project*, July 2001

<sup>7</sup> *Kitidingo* or *konsingbalo* is a Mandinka term that connotes someone in the traditional structure associated with the application of law and justice. They are emissaries to the traditional rulers who execute the directives from the chief or the *alkalo* in a given community. During the colonial period such people were used by the colonialists to execute their colonial projects. Some of them rose to the positions of chiefs when there was conflict between the ruling class and the colonialists.