

THE LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRY (LDC) REPORT FOR THE GAMBIA

**MEETING OF NATIONAL FOCAL POINTS OF
THE LDS ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF IPOA
13-14th November, 2019, New York, USA
MR. Omar Badjie- Principal Economist**

1. Introduction

- **The review was commissioned by the Ministry of Trade, Industry, Regional Integration and Employment (MoTIE) as the national Focal Point for Least Developed Countries for The Gambia**
- **The review considers progress that The Gambia made in the different sectors of development, challenges encountered, lessons learned or innovative experiences and recommendations on actions needed to accelerate further progress in the performance of the sector indicators. For this Presentation-poverty, agriculture, food security and rural development.**

1. Introduction- The Gambia Country Context

- **With a total area of 10, 690 sq km, the Republic of The Gambia is the smallest country on mainland Africa. It is located in West Africa, bordered on the West by the Atlantic Ocean and on the other three sides by Senegal.**
-
- **The country is divided into 5 regions (the West Coast Region, Lower River Region, Central River Region, Upper River Region and North Bank Region), and two municipalities (the City of Banjul and Kanifing Municipality) which constitute the Greater Banjul Area.**
-
- **The Gambia had a population of 1,360,681 in 2003 and the result of the 2013 population and Housing Census shows the population to be 1, 857,181 The population growth rate has decreased from 4.2 percent per annum in 1993 to 2.7 percent in 2003 and has increased to 3.1percent in 2013. The population of the country is growing at a fast rate- youthful population (690,836 – 37.2 percent of the total population – 1,857,181)**

1. Introduction- The Gambia Country Context

- It is a Least Developed Country (LDC) and classified as 'low human development' (173 of 188 countries).
- Despite significant poverty reduction gains during the early 2000s progress has stalled since 2010.
- The Gambia is still one of the poorest countries in the world, with a per capita GNI of USD 440. In fact, due to rapid population growth, the absolute number of the poor has grown by 150,000 over the past years and today 48.6 per cent of the population lives in poverty.
- The Gambia opened a new chapter in its political history with the formation of a new coalition government by President Adama Barrow in February 2017, marking a peaceful transition to democracy after 22 years of dictatorship- new hope.

2. Economic Challenges

- The service sector accounts for about 65 per cent of GDP, driven by the wholesale and retail subsectors (25 per cent), followed by transportation, storage, communications and tourism; industry contributed less than 20 per cent of GDP for the last decade.
- Agriculture generates about 75 per cent of household income and provides livelihoods for 70 per cent of the labour force.
- productivity is low and vulnerable to weather events and climate change.
- Limited structural transformation due to absence of reliable and affordable energy , sub-optimal transport infrastructure; low Human Capital; and lack of incentives for emerging sectors such as ICT

Cont.

- The formal sector accounts for less than 10 per cent of employment, concentrated in government institutions and a limited number of registered private enterprises.
- The nonagricultural informal sector employs 62.8 per cent, including a majority of working-age women (73.8 per cent compared to 55.3 per cent for men).
- About a third work in (mostly low skilled) wholesale and retail trade; 31.5 per cent in agriculture, forestry and fishing; 8.3 per cent in manufacturing and 5.2 per cent in construction.
- The private sector space is currently dominated by micro enterprises; 97 per cent of all businesses have fewer than five employees. The lack of affordable credit and services and of skilled labour adds to these systemic challenges.

3. Need for a National Development Plan

- In the development of the current National Development Plan (2018-2021), Thematic Working Groups (TWGs) were established and provided with guidelines to ensure that the plan was reflective of the “New Gambia”.
- To oversee the plan preparation process, a National Development Plan Policy Steering Committee was set up and comprised of Permanent Secretaries in key Ministries
- Plan preparation and validation was through a rigorous and broad participatory process involving, among other steps:

3. Need for National Development Plan

- A Common Country Assessment conducted in 2015
- Setting up of Thematic Working Groups, consultation with key stakeholders and elaboration of a draft plan.
- A donor consultation forum
- A national validation workshop with a broad spectrum of the stakeholder community;
- Briefing/consultations with the National Assembly members (NAMs), Permanent Secretaries and development partners prior to plan finalization;
- Contributions from the Gambia National Think Tank (GAMNATT)
- A UN MAPS mission that visited the country during the formulation process made suggestions on the Plan's alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the First Ten Year Implementation Plan of Agenda 2063 of the African Union.

4. Poverty Reduction

- Poverty reduction has been most significant in the urban Greater Banjul Area. While less than half the population lives in rural areas, they account for 60 per cent of the total poor. Rural poverty went up from 64.2% to 69.5% from 2010-2015/2016
- Rainfall variability, exacerbated by climate change leads to production shortfalls that must be complemented by imports. The combined effect of high and fluctuating international food prices and low national production leads to high inflationary pressure on the domestic food market, eroding purchasing power of rural poor

4. Poverty cont.

- The Gambia ranks seventh among countries with the youngest populations; half of the 1.8 million population is below 17. Those between 15-24 years account for 19.5 per cent.
- To aggravate the situation, youth unemployment is at 38 per cent (13-30 years), with higher unemployment rates for females than males (44.7 per cent versus 29.5 per cent).
- Despite the MDG gains in access to basic education, the IHS (2015) estimates presents a gloomy picture: only four in ten people can read and write; only one in ten (15 years and above) has completed primary education; 3 in 100 have completed post-secondary education; and one in ten of the labour force (15-64 years) has benefited vocational training.

5. Agriculture

- Agriculture in The Gambia is characterized by subsistence food crop cultivation, livestock rearing and semi-commercial cash crop production. The main crops are groundnuts (cash crop), rice (staple food), millet, sorghum and maize and other complementary crops are hungry rice (findi), cassava, sesame, vegetables, water melon, pumpkin, and beans are also grown.
- Agriculture in the Gambia is rain-fed, although small areas of irrigation exist for rice and horticultural crops.
- Livestock production also represents an important activity in the country's economy and livelihood of the population. Cattle, sheep, goats, swine and different species of poultry are raised to generate income, to supplement diet of rural families and for socio – cultural reasons.

5. Agriculture cont;

- During the pre-harvest assessment 2018/19, crop harvesting was on-going in several parts of the country, However, as a result of the long dry spell, crop production was expected to decline in most regions. The same situation was experienced during the 2019/20 cropping season.
- The results from the assessment indicated that more than 50 % of households Basse and Kerewan reported that they expected a decrease in output for major food crops, as compared to 2017.
- In the other 4 regions, the number of households expecting significant decline was between 60% and 77%.
- The National forecasts indicated a decline of 57% as compared to 2017 cropping season and 67% compared to the five-year average. This is attributed to low rainfall and pest infestation experienced. Production of coarse grains is forecasted to decline by 32%, rice production by 12% and total cereals by one third of last year.

5. Agriculture cont;

- In summary 2018/19 total grain production can meet only 50% of the national requirement with severity observed for rice meeting only 15%. This is a very pertinent food security issue in consideration that 80 percent of the main sources of the food consumed by rural households is obtained from their farm produce and only 20 percent is obtained from imports.

5. Agriculture- Livestock

- The rearing of cattle and small ruminants represents an important role in the livelihoods of our rural economy. The extensive ruminant production systems are predominantly dependent on marginal grazing areas as their main source of feed.
- The Gambia faces multiple stressors such as climate change variability, prolonged dry season, and decreased access to quality forage resources, bushfires and encroachment by crop cultivation. These have far-reaching consequences for animal production and productivity such as loss of weight, reproductive wastage and mortality.
- In all surveyed areas, more than 50 percent of households indicated a decrease in livestock productivity. The delay in start of rains and reduced amounts negatively impacted on the biomass yields of pastures and quantity of water in the natural water catchment points

6. Food Security

- The 2018/19 pre-harvest assessment revealed that the prevalence of food insecurity was 42 percent, of which 35 percent are moderately food insecure and 7 percent are severely food insecure.
- This translates to 83,872 people with high vulnerability to food insecurity and 456,136 with moderate vulnerability.

6. Food Security cont.

- **Where are the food insecure people?** The level of food insecurity in Gambia varies by region. While Basse and Kuntaur remains the LGAs with the highest rate of food insecurity at about 19%, it remains moderate in Janjanbureh and Mansakonko at 15% and low in Kerewan and Brikama at 5%.
- **Who are the food insecure people?** - higher among household heads with a lower level of formal education.
- About 29% of households with household heads without formal education were severely food insecure. Added to this are households that rely heavily on credit, petty trade and borrowing.
- Food insecurity was also higher (20%) in households headed by persons over 65 years old.
- lower (5%) in households headed by adults between 42 to 50 years.
- Households with sizes ranging from 10 to 12 were more affected by food insecurity; at 16% for households exceeding 12 people.
- Female-headed households are less vulnerable (3%) than male-headed households (8%).

6. Food Security Cont.

- **How many people are food insecure?** At the regional level, the analysis of food insecurity using CARI method and vulnerability shows a prevalence of food insecurity of 42 percent or 540,008 people, which is an average of 67,501 households.
- **Why are these people food insecure and vulnerable?** The main causes of household food insecurity are the shortfall in cereal production . Also, the rise in prices of inputs for agriculture, the decline in prices of products sold by households, including a deterioration of the terms of trade.
- A recurrence of shocks was also observed which weakened the households in the eastern part of the country, mainly flash floods and windstorms.
- Weakness of the productive assets (few livestock and the small area of owned land, inadequate agricultural equipment) maintains a vicious cycle of poverty that induces food insecurity

Food security cont;

- **Food Sources?** As a result of the continued decline in food production due to the poor rainfall pattern over the last three to four years.
- It is important to investigate the sources of the main food consumed by households. 79.6% of households reported agriculture as their main source of food and 20.4% from markets.
- Brikama reported that 59% of the households' main source of food was from imports, while in Mansakonko it was 34%. Except for Brikama, all the other regions stated the main source of the food they consumed was coming from agriculture. In Kuntaur, 96% of the households said they consumed food from agriculture with Basse (93.1%), Janjanbureh (90.4 %) and Brikama (41%).

7. Rural Development

- Given the opportunities in the agricultural sector for greater employment creation, increase incomes, greater export earnings, and food security and on the overall rise in the socio-economic welfare of the population, the government of The Gambia has renewed its commitment in developing the agricultural sector by transforming it from its present subsistence level to a commercial oriented one. This is demonstrated in the National Development Plan where agriculture is a priority sector, as well as plans to develop agricultural development program in collaboration with its development partners.

7 Rural Development Cont.

- In rural Gambia, Cooperatives are found to be the largest organization, an autonomous association of persons united voluntarily to meet their common economic, social and cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly owned and democratically controlled enterprise. Primarily, there are four main types of cooperatives in the country namely: Cooperative Produce Marketing Societies (CPMS) that deals mainly groundnut marketing; Cooperative Credit Union deals with Savings mobilization and issuing credit to members, Agricultural Cooperatives which deals with Horticulture and Livestock; and Workers Cooperative mainly skill workers.
- The Agricultural Cooperatives are run by the committees of individual societies which are regulated by the Office of the Registrar of Cooperatives who also doubles as the Director of Agribusiness Service Unit.

7. Rural Development Cont.

- Transformation of agriculture for rural development cannot be done without effective participation of farmers who form the primary pillar as value chain actors- hence the need for farmer led strong viable and vibrant cooperatives.
- The Ministry of Agriculture through the World Bank's Agriculture Value Chain Development Project, Food and Agriculture Organization's Agriculture for Economic Growth Project decided to commission studies on the revitalization of cooperatives to enhance production and marketing of agricultural produce. The studies include 'Policy Framework for Revitalization of Cooperatives – The Road to Commercialization of Agriculture' and 'Institutional Assessment of Agricultural Cooperatives in The Gambia'.

Rural Dev. Cont.

- The Gambia Livestock Marketing Agency (GLMA) carried out construction and rehabilitation works of existing and new slaughter facilities and livestock markets to ensure that they meet National food safety and Zoo-sanitary standards such as the construction and rehabilitation of two and four slaughter houses in Gunjur and Janjanbureh
- The Ministry, through Food and Agriculture Sector Development Project (FASDEP) developed additional 200km feeder roads to enhance access to markets for agricultural produce.
- The Gambia Land and Water Management Project (*Nema*) also develop additional 12,400 hectares for lowland rice production and 2,000 hectares of tidal irrigation for rice production. On top of this, *Nema's* Resilience project had developed a total of 1,000 hectares of tidal irrigation and 6 schemes of land on water harvesting systems (WHS). In this WHS, women groups cultivated 60 hectares whiles 4 hectares was allocated to youth groups.

7. Rural Dev Cont.

- During GCAV project's life cycle up to date a total of 2,500 Ha of tidal irrigated rice scheme has been rehabilitated. In addition to the 2,500 Ha rehabilitated to improve irrigation and drainage services planned by the project, accumulative production of 30,424 metric tons of paddy has been produced during 2018/2019 cropping season.
- This cumulative total i.e. 30,424 metric tons produced during the period under review, represents 25% of the total 122,000 metric tons targeted in the NDP for rice.
- With regard to vegetable production improvement, a total of 105 Ha of community gardens has been developed, i.e. provided with a perimeter fence, boreholepowered with solar system and equipped with drip irrigation systems and all are operational.

7. Rural Dev. cont

- Under Climate Smart Agriculture Initiatives, NARI released the following climate smart seed varieties for the 2018/19 cropping season: 21 new rice varieties to farmers; 15 lines of groundnut at final screening stage; 4 varieties of Findi released to farmers; 8 varieties of cassava released to farmers; and 8 orange flesh varieties of sweet potatoes released to women vegetable growers.

8. Recommendation.

- Develop the value chains and commercialization: crops, livestock (poultry) and horticulture targeting rural Gambia for employment creation.
- Facilitate the formulation of Sector Strategy Plans
- Develop the Agriculture Transformation Programme
- Build 10 cold storage facilities nationwide to reduce post-harvest losses
- Procure and distribute milling machines, threshers, freezers
- Strengthening the Market information system for the sector
- Rehabilitation of the Mixed Farming Centers
- Improved institutional and research management capacity through higher training (PhD, M.Sc., and B.Sc.) supported by relevant partners and Ministry of Agriculture.
- To renew and update Cataloguing to improve varieties of rice, maize, groundnut, millet, sorghum, cassava, sweet potato, fruit trees and cowpeas and several others for consolidation into regional plant material catalogue

Recommendation cont.

- GoTG and its partners to increase support for the Early Warning System (EWS) Technical Working Group (TWG) for timely planning, implementation and advise on agricultural/natural resource related activities
- Promotion of early maturing and high yielding variety of crops (particularly salt tolerant rice varieties) to boost food security;
- Intensification of livestock production and breeding of drought tolerant breeds to conform with climate smart/sustainable agriculture technologies
- Promotion of range land development, reseeding grazing lands and propagation of the fodder trees; Aid farmers with feed concentrates, multi-nutrient blocks; and doses of anthelmintic for both small and large ruminants.
-