

THE LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRY (LDC) REPORT FOR THE GAMBIA

BRIEF FOCUSING ON POVERTY, AGRICULTURE, FOOD SECURITY AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The review was commissioned by the Ministry of Trade, Industry, Regional Integration and Employment (MoTIE) as the national Focal Point for Least Developed Countries (LDCs).

The periodic preparation of National Reports by LDCs is a requirement within the framework of the Istanbul Programme of Action on LDCs (IPoA). This international framework document has identified series of international standards and corresponding indicators against which LDCs use as a benchmark to review and assess national measures in economic, human and social development, good governance and development finance amongst others.

The review considers progress that LDCs have made in the different sectors of development, challenges encountered, lessons and best practices or innovative experiences and recommendations on actions needed to accelerate further progress in the performance of the sector indicators. The contributions of governments and development partners in supporting national development initiatives is taken into account with a view to identifying gaps or deficits and what strategies might be required to address those gaps in such ways that can facilitate the smooth graduation of the country from LDC status.

In that respect, in all the review solicited seventeen (17) sector reports to constitute the core of this present National Report in the following domains: energy; telecommunications; infrastructure; tourism development; science, technology and innovation; agriculture, food and nutritional security; trade and commodities; private sector; education and training; population and primary health; youth development; gender and women empowerment; climate change and environmental sustainability; disaster-risk reduction; resource mobilization (domestic resource mobilization, official development assistance, foreign direct investment, remittances and public debt); good governance; and social protection.

Drawing from the review of sector experiences, the report extracted highlights of some key recommendations proffered to accelerate further progress in the performance of the sector indicators, with a view to facilitating the smooth graduation of the country from LDC status. There is no doubt that the country has registered gains in certain specific domains as reflected in the sector submissions. However, considering the fragility of certain exogenous factors beyond the control of government, particularly in the mobilization of development finance, the report has

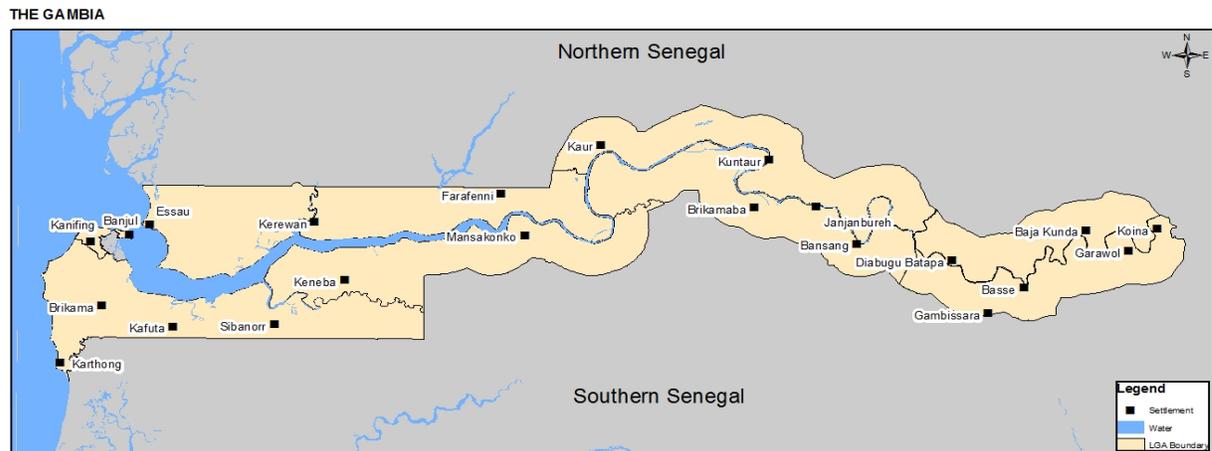
proposed certain sustainability strategies designed to ensure that gains registered are consolidated to avoid reversals or stagnation.

To what extent the National Development Plan (NDP) has been aligned to Agenda 2030 (Sustainable Development Goals), Agenda 2063 (African Union Development Framework) and other global development frameworks and processes, has also been reported on

I. INTRODUCTION

I.1. Country Context

Figure1: Map of the Gambia



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. Muslims represent 96 percent of the population in The Gambia.

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 3.1 percent in 2013. The population of the country is growing at a fast rate considering the youthful population (690,836 – 37.2 percent of the total population – 1,857,181) age structure and its potential effect on growth as well as the land area of the country.

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, and 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. This new Gambia is marked by a strong sense of promise and high expectations of the new political dispensation, matched by an increase in international goodwill. This presents opportunities for national reconciliation and economic growth, to help propel the country towards peace and sustainable development. To do so, it must confront a significant range of economic, social, environmental and political challenges.

Challenges in economic development

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. However, productivity is low and vulnerable to weather events and climate change. The impediments to structural transformation: absence of reliable and affordable energy (driven by significant inefficient use of finance and land; high taxes; cumbersome administrative requirements imports of heavy fuel oil); sub-optimal transport infrastructure; poor economic management resulting; low skills levels; and lack of incentives for emerging sectors such as ICT.

The country has suffered significant and persistent fiscal and balance-of-payments deficits and poor management of State Owned Enterprises (SOEs). Exponential growth of public expenditure, arising partly from extra budgetary spending and spending on liabilities of public enterprises, are the major factors for the widening fiscal deficit.

Credit to the private sector stood at 14.7 per cent of GDP (compared to the regional average of 58.7 per cent). Challenges include limited financial inclusion, a lack of diversity of financial services, and an underdeveloped and under-exploited financial infrastructure. The bulk of deposits and credits held by banks have short maturities in contrast to what is needed to support private sector investment. Interest rates in the Gambia have been amongst the highest in the world in recent years, with high public sector borrowing for recurrent expenditures crowding out public and private productive investments.

The formal sector accounts for less than 10 per cent of employment, concentrated in government institutions, parastatals 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.

THE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLANNING PROCESS

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 the Office of the President, the Office of the Vice President, the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs, Personnel Management Office, Ministry of Higher Education and the Solicitor General.

Plan preparation and validation was through a rigorous and broad participatory process involving, among other steps:

- A Common Country Assessment conducted in 2015, involving consultations across all the administrative regions and districts of the country, in close collaboration with the United Nations system in The Gambia;
- Setting up of Thematic Working Groups, consultation with key stakeholders and elaboration of a draft plan. The TWGs comprised of government and key national stakeholders such as, Private sector, Civil Society, the Youth, National Assembly etc.;
- 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); and

- 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.

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

The Gambia ranks seventh among countries with the youngest populations; half of the 1.9 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).

Furthermore, 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; three in 100 have completed post-secondary education; and one in ten of the labour force (15-64 years) has benefited vocational training.

III.1.4. AGRICULTURE, FOOD & NUTRITIONAL SECURITY & RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Agriculture Production

Agriculture in The Gambia is characterized by subsistence food crop cultivation, livestock rearing and semi-commercial cash crop production. The main crops grown in the country are groundnuts (cash crop), rice (staple food), millet, sorghum and maize. However, crop cultivation is not limited to the main crops only. Other complementary crops such as 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.

Table 1: Agriculture (Crop) and Livestock Production ('000 Mt)

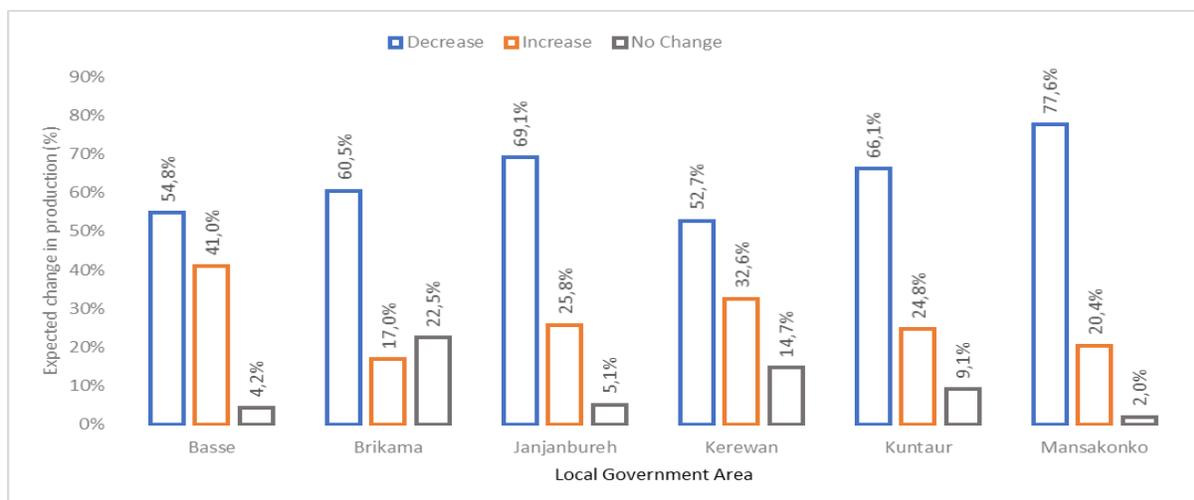
Indicator	Reporting Period			
	2018 (NDP Base Year)	2019	2020	2021 (NDP Target Year)
1. Increase production and productivity of basic agricultural commodities for enhanced food and nutrition security	Maize: 38 Groundnut: 89 Rice: 69 Onion: 6 Tomato: 4	18.070 22.170 45.753 NA NA	38 60 70 12 10.5	43 100 122 19 15
2. Increase production and productivity of basic agricultural commodities for enhanced food and nutrition security	Cattle: 4.931 Sheep: 0.449 Goats: 0.988 Pigs: 1166 Poultry: 0.100	3.180 0.2362 0.842 NA 0.040	4.5 0.5 1.1 1200 0.080	5.670 0.750 1.600 1400 0.100
3. Significantly increase the value addition in natural resource and agro-based industries paying attention to employment generation	Fruits: 127 Vegetables: 34 Diary: 0.811 Honey: 5	NA NA NA NA	150 45 5 4.5	162 50 6.5 6.5
4. Allocate at least 10 percent of Government budget to agriculture	8.8%	3.59%	4.56%	4.72%

Source: Agricultural Sample Survey (2019/2020)

During the pre-harvest assessment 2018/19, crop harvesting was on-going in several parts of the country, mainly for maize and early millet. Sorghum, late millet and groundnuts had reached maturity stage and harvesting was about to start. 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.

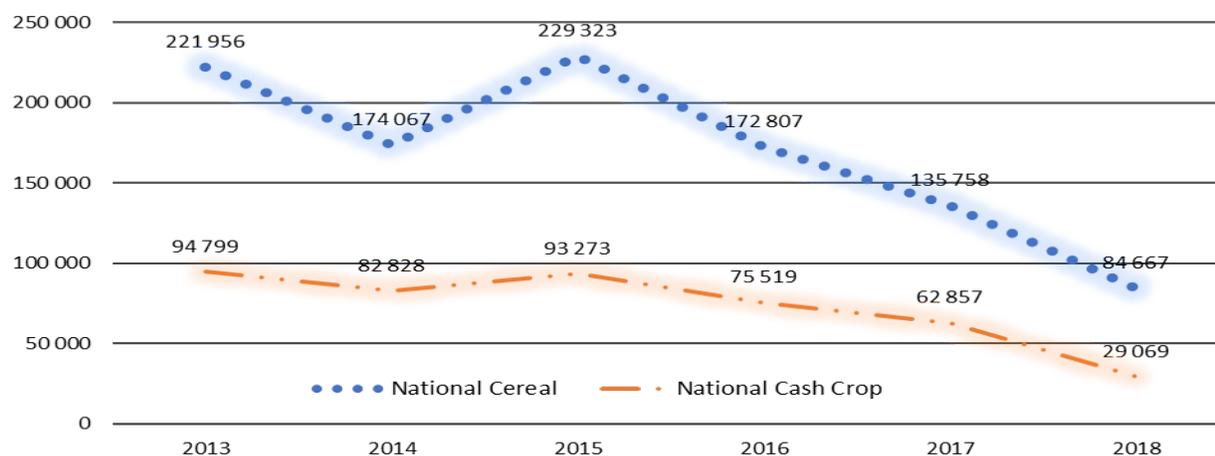
The results from the assessment indicated that more than 50 percent of households interviewed in Basse and Kerewan reported that they expected a decrease in output for major food crops, as compared to 2017. In the other 4 regions, the number of households expecting significant decline was between 60 percent and 77 percent as shown in graph 3 below. The 2019/20 pre-harvest assessment and National Agriculture Sample Survey (NASS) will give us a clear picture of the 2019/20 cropping season

Graph 1: Households expectations on crop production 2018/19



The National forecasts indicated a decline of 57 percent as compared to 2017 cropping season and 67 percent compared to the five-year average. This is attributed to low rainfall and pest infestation experienced in most regions. Production of coarse grains is forecasted to decline by 32 percent, rice production by 12 percent and total cereals by one third of last year. Groundnuts the main cash crop is expected to decline significantly i.e. by more than two thirds (62 percent). The only crop that is expected to register significant increase in production is cowpea which could be attributed to the provision of 40 tons of seed with fertilizer to the farming communities by FAO. Graph 4 below further demonstrates the declining trend of staple food and cash crop production in the last 5 years.

Graph 2: National Cereal and Cash crop production trend (2013-2018)

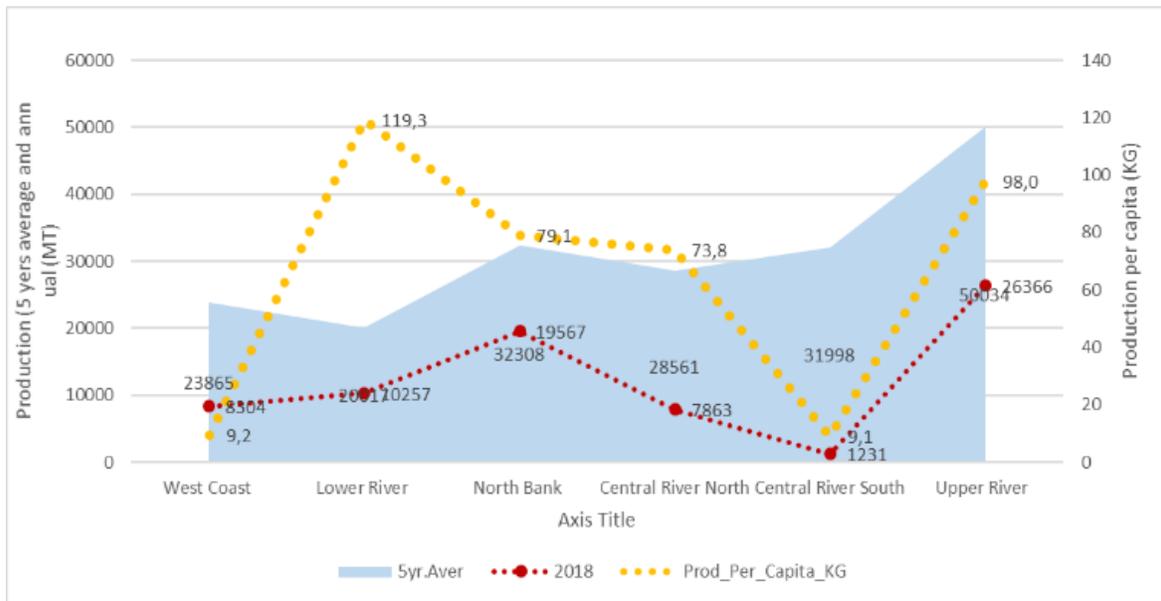


As shown in Graph 5 below, cereal production is estimated at 89,964mt, consisting 26,413mt of rice and 63,551mt of coarse grains. Applying the per capita consumption of 58kgs for coarse grains and 117kgs for rice as the bases, total grain requirement for rural populations is estimated

at 74,905.4mt and 151,102.2mt respectively for coarse grains and rice. This represents a deficit of 11,254.4mt (15%) for coarse grains and 124,689mt (85%) of rice.

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

Graph 3: Cereal production by Local Government Area

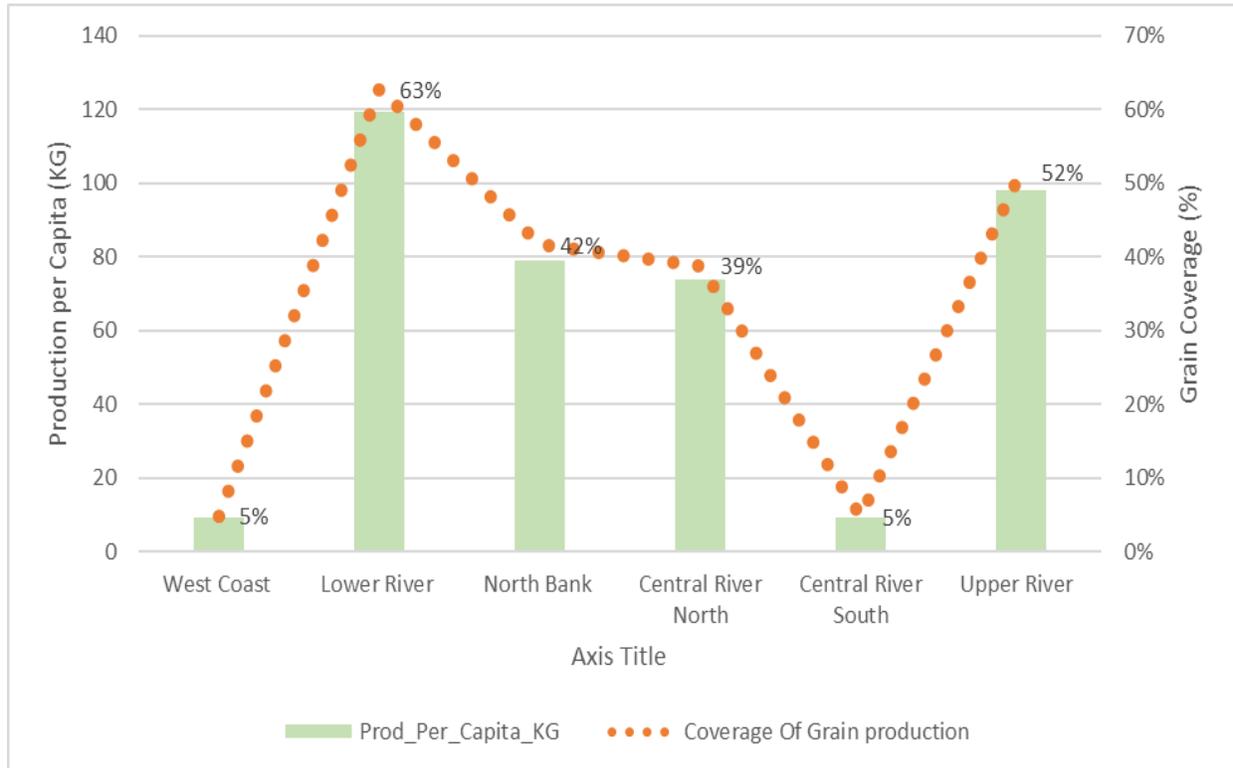


At the LGA level, per capita production was below the threshold by 80percent. In fact, per capita production at LGA level remains very low; at the level of the Brikama and Janjabureh per capita production covers 5 percent of the need as well as the Kerewan and Kuntaur does not reach 50 percent of the need.

Phytosanitary Situation

The fall armyworms (*Spodoptera frugiperda*) were reported in all the agricultural regions of the country. However, the damage caused on maize was insignificant. The rice grasshoppers or rice locusts (*Hieroglyphus daganensis*) caused significant damage to rice in Kuntaur. Hippopotamus were also found to have devastated the rice production belt.

Graph 4: Production per capita and Coverage of grain Production by



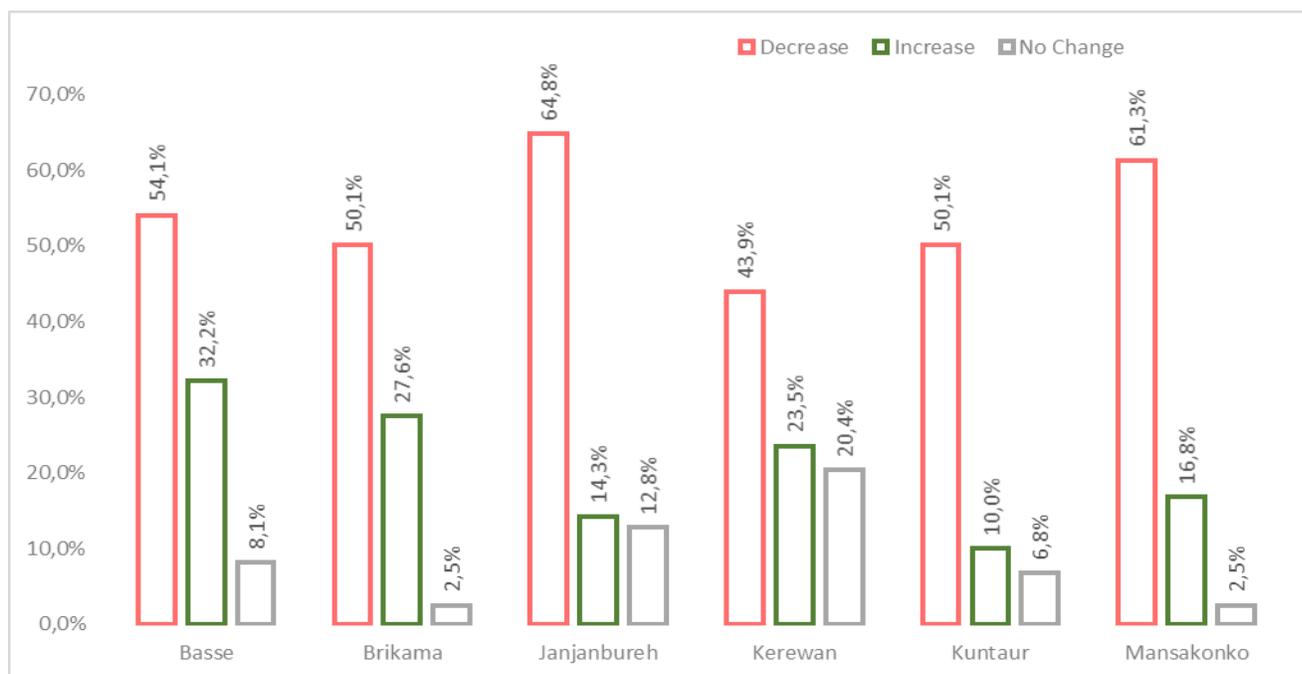
Livestock Production

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. As shown in the graph below, majority of households interviewed expected a decrease owing to prevailing conditions, with the highest in Janjanbureh at 64 percent, followed by Kuntaur at 54 percent and Mansakonko 61 percent.

Graph 5: Households expectations on Livestock numbers in 2018



Food Security Analysis

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.

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 percent, it remains moderate in Janjanbureh and Mansakonko at 15 percent and low in Kerewan and Brikama at 5 percent.

Who are the food insecure people?

Food insecurity was found to be higher among household heads with a lower level of formal education. About 29 percent 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. However, it was 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%).

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. Brikama contains the highest number (276,864) of affected people, which is an average of 34,608 households. The Basse is second most vulnerable in terms of population; about 75,250 people are affected; the lowest population affected is located in Mansakonko (about 35,000 people).

Why are these people food insecure and vulnerable?

The main causes of household food insecurity are the shortfall in cereal production and the deterioration of livelihoods. Also, the rise in prices of inputs and agricultural commodities, the decline in prices of products sold by households, including a deterioration of the terms of trade, thus exposing them to food insecurity. 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.

How will the situation evolve?

The adoption of crisis and emergency coping strategies by food-insecure households suggests a difficult situation during the lean season, and which will appear much sooner than usual. These behaviors analyzed through the coping strategy index show a deterioration of the food situation in most parts of the country. This will increase during the lean season due to the depletion of grain stocks, the disappearance of the herbaceous carpet and rising prices of staple foods. Even if the most used commodity will remain rice, the dietary diversity will be very poor.

The combination of these factors provides a grim picture of the current situation and also a poor prognosis for the 2019/20 cropping season. If assistance is not quickly forthcoming, the populations' situation will deteriorate, and with potentially dire consequences on health and nutritional status. Timely assistance will cushion households from hunger, adoption of adverse coping mechanisms, and depletion of livelihood assets and erosion of resilience.

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 was important to investigate the sources of the main food consumed by households. 79.6 percent of households reported agriculture as their main source of food and 20.4 percent from markets.

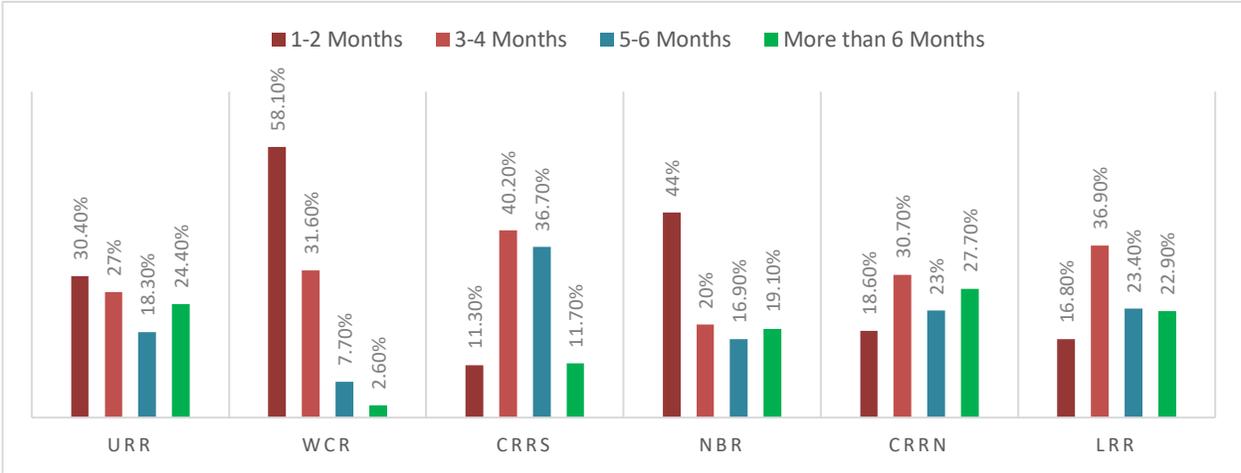
Brikama reported that 59 percent of the households’ main source of food was from imports, while in Mansakonko it was 34 percent. Except for Brikama, all the other regions stated the main source of the food they consumed was coming from agriculture. In Kuntaur, 96 percent of the households said they consumed food from agriculture with Basse (93.1%), Janjanbureh (90.4 %) and Brikama (41%).

Table 1: Food sources at household level

	Agriculture (%)	Imports (%)
The Gambia	79.6	20.4
West Coast Region	41	59
Lower River Region	66	34
North Bank Region	85	15
Central River North Region	95.7	4.3
Central River South Region	90.4	9.6
Upper River Region	93.1	6.9

Food Stock Duration

At the national level, 45 percent reported that the food produced from their farms would last 1-2 months while 30 percent said the food would last 3-4 months; with only 11percent indicating it would last for more than 6 months. At the regional levels, almost 60 percent of households in Brikama reported that the locally produced food would last 1-2 months, followed by Kerewan and Basse at 44 percent and 30 percent respectively, as shown in graph below.



Graph 6: Food Stock Duration

Prevalence of food insecurity

Household food insecurity prevalence

In Gambia, about 8 percent of households are food insecure (about 1 percent in a severe situation and 7 percent in a moderate situation). About 60 percent of households are in marginal food security and 31 percent in food security. Only 27 percent of women are food secure in comparison to 32 percent of men.

Table 2: CARI Reporting

Domain		Indicator	Food Secure	Marginally Food Insecurity	Moderately Food Insecurity	Severely Food Insecurity
CBasseeent Status	Food Consumption	Food Consumption Score	<i>Acceptable</i>		<i>Borderline</i>	<i>Poor</i>
			96.8percent		2.5percent	0.6percent
Coping Capacity	Economic Vulnerability	Food Expenditure Share	% <50percent	50percent - 65percent	65percent - 75percent	% >75percent
			18.0percent	14.6percent	22.6percent	44.7percent
Coping Capacity	Asset depletion	Livelihood Coping Strategy Categories	<i>No CS</i>	<i>Stress</i>	<i>Crisis</i>	<i>Emergency</i>
			31.3percent	44.3percent	1.6percent	22percent
Food Insecurity			31 percent	60 percent	6 percent	1percent

Characteristics of households with severe food insecurity (1 percent):

These households had poor food consumption or they experienced a very significant loss of their livelihoods thus leading to significant deficits in their food consumption. Of these households, 75 percent used emergency coping strategies in the last 30 days prior to data collection, and 85 percent spent a large part of their income on food.

Characteristics of households with moderate food insecurity (6 percent):

These households had inadequate food consumption or could not meet their minimum food needs without resorting to coping strategies. About 86 percent of these households use emergency coping strategies. More than 70 % spend 75 percent or more of their budget on food.

Characteristics of households with marginal food security (60 percent): These households had adequate minimum food consumption, without resorting to emergency coping strategies. However an

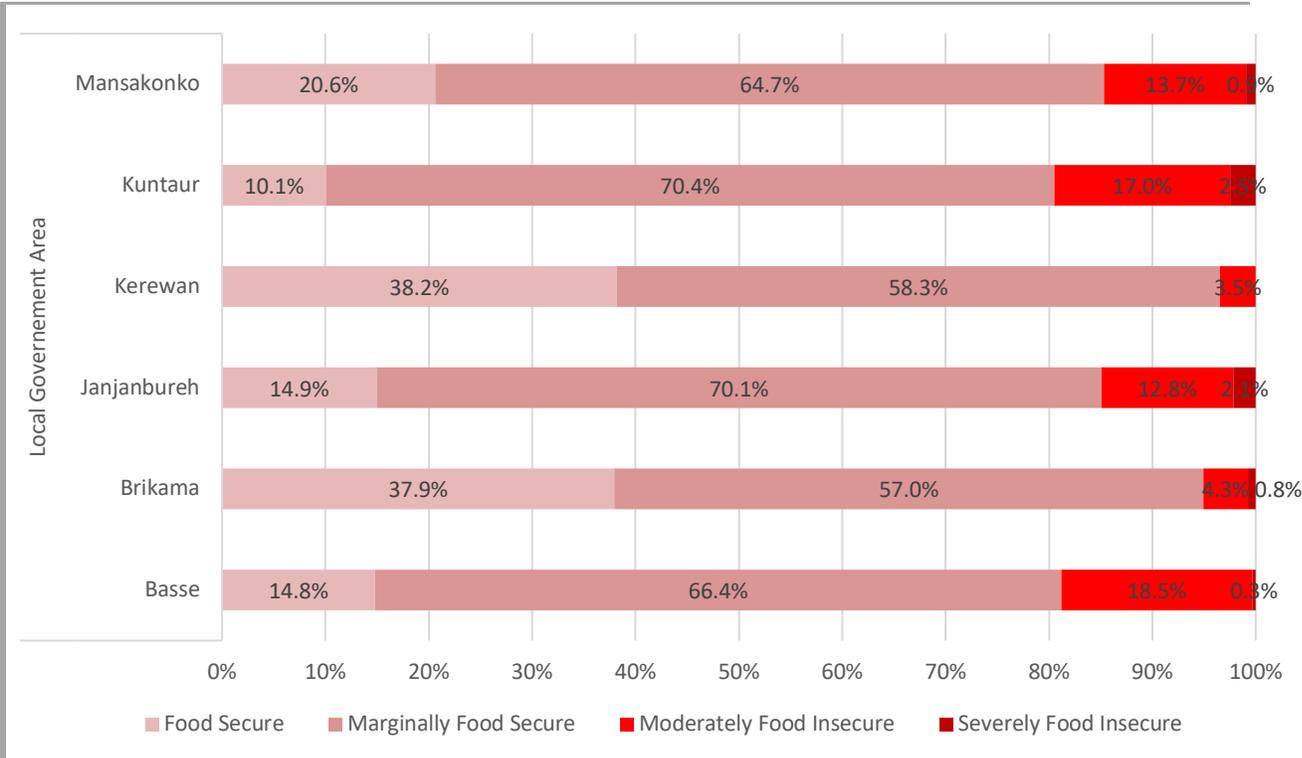
important part of these households (40 percent) use stress strategies. In addition, these households could not afford some essential non-food expenditures.

Household characteristics in food security (31 percent):

These households were able to meet their food and non-food needs without resorting to atypical coping strategies. Their food consumption was generally acceptable and they did not use coping strategies.

Otherwise, the low level of food insecurity at the national level hides disparities at the LGA level. In fact, food insecurity is highest in Basse (18%) and Kuntaur (19%); Kerewan is the region with the least proportion of household with food insecurity.

Graph 7: Proportion of Food Insecurity by LGA



Food insecure and vulnerable population

Further analysis was done to assess the food security and vulnerability situation. A Risk variable was composed by cross tabulating the duration of food stock with coping strategies. The risk variable was further cross tabulated with the CARI in order to identify the population who are vulnerable to food insecurity. The composite analysis was thus used to determine the population in need of immediate assistance and resilience building.

Table 3: Food Insecure and Vulnerable Population

	LGA						Total
	Basse	Brikama	Janjanbur	Kerewan	Kuntaur	Mansakonko	
N° People	23664	24728	11304	6064	9552	8560	83872
% within LGA	17,70%	3,50%	11,80%	3,20%	13,80%	9,90%	6,50%
N° People	51616	252136	36936	51728	37368	26352	456136
% within LGA	38,60%	35,30%	38,50%	26,90%	54,00%	30,60%	35,30%
N° People	58328	437576	47760	134168	22296	51336	751464
% within LGA	43,70%	61,20%	49,80%	69,90%	32,20%	59,50%	58,20%

II.1. Factors contributing to the progress in the performance of the Agriculture Sector

- Increase production and productivity of basic agricultural commodities: crops and horticulture for enhanced food and nutrition security through provision of power tillers, pumping machines, farm inputs and other machinery
- Increase livestock production for food self-sufficiency in animal and animal products through provision of drugs, vaccines and strengthen disease surveillance system and control; improve rangeland development and pastoral infrastructure.
- Develop the value chains and commercialization: crops, livestock (poultry) and horticulture
- 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 donors 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.

Key factors challenging progress in the performance of the indicators

- Funding Constraints (financial and administrative)
- Inadequate human and technical capacity
- Lack of adequate mobility for the sector
- Weak Planning Service Unit of the Ministry
- Inadequate mechanization- land preparation, harvesting, post-harvest operations
- Recurrent emergence of livestock diseases and feed scarcity
- Poor marketing and processing infrastructure

- Underdeveloped market information system
- Inadequate research infrastructure (laboratories, equipment, personnel etc.)
- Absence of land use policy
- Climate Change/Variability and its associated risks
- Interference in the sector

Best Practice Case in providing resilience options to rural farmers

Nema project: provides effective resilience options and income generation for rural poor women through small ruminant production:

- 11 communities benefitted, 13 Group Associations and 62 individuals in 4 Regions of the project intervention;
- 500 sheep and goats distributed to 2 batches, 180 off-springs realized and 59 re-distributed to additional beneficiaries;
- 117 tons of certified rice seed distributed to farmers, for 2,000ha land coverage;
- 4,500 farmers and farm households has benefitted, increased yields from 2.5mts/ha to 5.5 mts/ha on average.
- 250,000 animals were vaccinated during the CBPP Vaccination Campaign
- 42 Gambian youths trained in: Plant propagation techniques; Livestock production, backyard fish pond construction and management; and certified seed production
- Annual sector retreat on the development of MDAs work plan and cash plan
- Farmer field schools capacity building on the utilisation of new technologies for improved production and productivity
- Farmer user groups using WhatsApp application to transfer and share knowledge on new agricultural technologies.
- TROPINGO FOODS (2018): 13mt of dehydrated mango processed and amounting to GMD4,950,000.00.

Recommendations for actions needed to accelerate further progress in the development of the sector

The outcome of the pre-harvest assessment for 2018/19 cropping season has revealed a number of concerns which are highly critical to the general social welfare of the farming communities. To this end, several recommendations are proposed below for redress:

1. A quick response plan should be developed by Government of the Gambia (GoTG) and its partners for immediate assistance to the 83,872 (7 percent) people that are currently under severe food insecurity and to build resilience for 456,136 (35percent) who are moderately food insecure.

2. 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;
3. Promotion of early maturing and high yielding variety of crops (particularly salt tolerant rice varieties) to boost food security;
4. Intensification of livestock production and breeding of drought tolerant breeds to conform with climate smart/sustainable agriculture technologies;
5. GOTG find means to close the deficit of 11,254.4mt (15 percent) for coarse grains and 124,689mt (85 percent) of rice as a measure to fill the rural annual requirement for grains in 2019 and beyond;
6. Promotion of early maturing and high yielding variety of crops (particularly salt tolerant rice varieties) to boost food security;
7. Timely implementation of mass vaccination campaign against endemic diseases such as Peste Petit de Ruminant (PPR), CBPP, Black Quarter (BQ), HS and Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD);
8. Rehabilitation of all non-functional livestock watering points to ensure uninterrupted supply of water to livestock particularly during the dry season;
9. 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.

Review progress in the contributions of government towards the development of agriculture, food and nutritional security and 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.

In the 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.

All the aforementioned cooperatives have immensely contributed to the socio-economic development of the country until the liquidation of Gambia Cooperative Union (GCU) and de-

functioning of the Federation of Agricultural Cooperative Societies (FACS) which consequently led to the formation of Apex bodies such as National Association of Co-operative Credit Union Gambia (NACCUG) that manage the affairs of all the Credit Union in the country. The CPMS and 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 currently.

However, such transformation of agriculture cannot be done without effective participation of farmers who form the primary pillar as value chain actors in all agricultural commodities, hence the need for effective and efficient organisations of farmers into strong viable and vibrant cooperatives. To achieve this, the Ministry of Agriculture through the World Bank, Agriculture Value Chain Development Project, Food and Agriculture Organization, 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’. The former has been completed and document validated while the latter is yet to be validated.

In addition, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nation The Gambia has contracted an International Consultant to develop a Comprehensive National Cooperative Policy Document. The consultancy is in progress and expected to end in November, 2019.

The National Seed Secretariat (NSS) organized two seed fairs in Brikama-ba and Farafenni, so as to create and facilitate access to good quality seeds by farmers for the 2019 cropping season with the support from FAO “Agriculture for Economic Growth to Mitigate Food and Nutrition Insecurity and Migration Flows to Europe” known as Envelop A and in close collaboration with key stakeholder institutions. Seeds were procured from registered certified seed producers in the country and distributed to vulnerable farmers during the seed fairs: Groundnut **276 MT**, Maize **33MT**, Rice **26 MT** Cowpea **6MT** and Findi **0.68**.

In the mitigation of any shortcoming of poor crop performance in the 2018/2019 rainy season, the National Seed Secretariat (NSS) embarked on dry season certified rice seed production using the rice seed producer groups in the tidal irrigated perimeters of Jahally-Pacharr in CRR, South and Niani Sukuta, CRR, and produced **400** tons of certified rice seeds with the support from Nema project (P2RS).

The annual analysis from NASS estimates revealed that area put to the production of the 6 major cereals has been steadily declining from 234,062 ha in 2014 to 206,300 ha in 2018 and now in 2019 projected at 170,129.91ha. Similar scenario is being reported for groundnut which has also decline from 100,305 ha in 2014 to 79,923 ha in 2018 and expecting to nose dive to 54,347.64ha in the current year. These decreases in area corresponds to decreases in production since previous analyses have generally revealed 1 or just above 1 ton per hectare for all crops which suggests that any production increase came about as a result of area expansion which compensates for

poor yield performance. This general decline in area and production over the five-year period as already explained, is attributed mainly to the late start of rains aggravated by protracted long dry spell and the erratic nature occurring on annual bases which discourages early planting of major crops particularly groundnuts.

Besides the aforesaid, the assessment also simulated the 2019 production through scenarios based on the past 5 years' average yield per hectare (early millet 1.3, late millet 1.2, sorghum 1.1, maize 1.2, upland rice 1.7, lowland rice .99 and groundnuts 1.1) to determine the magnitude of the food deficit. The results further show that 41,275 metric tons of rice and 93,579 metric tons of coarse grains will be produced. Using the 180kg and 58kg per capital consumption of paddy rice and coarse grains respectively, national food requirement for the 2.14 million Gambians in 2020 will be 385,200 metric tons for rice and 124,120 metric tons for coarse grains. This will therefore leave a deficit of about 343,925 metric tons of rice and 30,541 metric tons of coarse grains in 2020. In a nut shell the rice production forecast would meet only 11% of the national requirement. However, due to the changes in the rainfall, the pre-harvest report for 2019/20 and the NASS 2019/2020 will give us a clear picture of this year's cropping season.

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 Central Abattoir in Abuko has been refurbished and is fully functional and sanitized.

With assistance from FAO Gambia and CILSS, Livestock Market information system was created to provide real time information on the livestock number on sales alongside prices in the country.

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 while 4 hectares was allocated to youth groups.

During GCAV project's life cycle up to date a total of 2,500 Ha of tidal irrigated rice scheme has been rehabilitated thus representing 100% achievement as far as project target i.e. 2,500 Ha is concerned. 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. Rice productivity has also

improved over the 5 years of project implementation, yields/Ha of targeted crops (Rice & Vegetables).

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. Equally, yield/Ha of key vegetables has also been improving when compared to their baselines. During the period under review, GCAV through the Public Private Partnership promoted by the government have succeeded in linking the women gardens to RADVILLE FARMS to get into contract farming. As a result contractual arrangements, a total of 431, 225 metric tons of baby corn was produced and marketed.

The Project Direct beneficiaries including household members have reached 28,532 out of a target of 30,000. This achievement has represents 95%. By gender, 56% of the total reached through project interventions and resources are females. A total of 21 km of access roads within the tidal irrigated rice fields and between villages has been constructed.

The Ministry of Agriculture's transformation process will continue to pursue its goal of mechanization and will seek the support of development partners to secure the required machinery and expertise to establish a fully functional Agricultural mechanization unit. In addition, Agriculture will also continue to be a major player in employment and job creation and the ministry will in partnership with donor and development partners pursue the poultry broiler self-sufficiency project that seeks to create jobs for more than 10,000 youths..

In order to enhance private participation across the value chain, a number of initiatives have already commenced through the matching grants in three projects and this will be further accelerated and expanded to include access to agricultural land and agro-industry processing equipment through a multi-stakeholder consultative process.

In the quest to improve livestock production and productivity, the Department of livestock Services will continue to work with her development partners such as FAO in the control of the most deadly disease like CBPP countrywide. Therefore, this will increase her efforts for the creation of small ruminant production and productivity and its fattening schemes; targeting youth hence reduce unemployment among the youth cohort in the country.

Furthermore, NARI has been conducting research on nutritive sensitive agriculture on bio-fortified pearl millet sourced from ICRISAT and are being screened; 8 orange flesh sweet potato varieties sourced from Senegal, Ghana and United States, screened and 5 are set for release; 12 bio-fortified cassava varieties screened and 2 are set for release; 3 African leafy vegetables breeder seeds (Amaranthus, Rossel and Cowpea) sourced from Senegal and Tanzania and being multiplied for supply to farmers; and 1 vitamin A enriched, bio-fortified maize variety sourced from IITA and being multiplied for the 2019/20 cropping season.

In conclusion, the Ministry of Agriculture was also able to mobilize funds through African Development Bank to carry out various studies under the conceived Agricultural Transformation Programme. Similarly, the Ministry of Agriculture has completed the review of the first Gambia National Investment Programme (GNAIP) 1.0 and currently validated the second generation GNAIP 2.0. In the same vein, the Ministry of Agriculture is working on hiring a consultant to develop the new National Agriculture Sector Strategy (NASS) and the Horticulture Sector Strategy (HSS) to support the sector in fulfilling her mandate.

Review progress in the contributions of development partners towards the development of science, technology and innovation

The Nema project matching grants supplied a total of 61 items and 10 irrigation structures to the beneficiaries in the project intervention areas. The items include: Irrigation structures, power tillers, tractors, refrigerated trucks, processing equipment, storage, transportation and packaging equipment, value addition-processing equipment, rice and coos milling machines, oil pressing machine and millet threshers, rice processing machines, multipurpose milling machine, rice threshers, multi-purpose milling with de-husking.

In Basse, Upper River Region, similar handing over of equipment purchased by Agriculture Value Chain Development Project (AVCDP) where the Hon. Minister handed over agricultural equipment to the communities of Mama Sutu, Sotoma Samba Koi, Dampha Kunda, Chagally Lang Kaddy and Limbambul Bambo. In total 17 power tillers, 20 rice threshers, 8 rice trans-planters and 4 tractors were handed over to the beneficiaries.

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. For the conservation practices: 50,716m dykes constructed; 28,830m contour bunds constructed, 182 spillways constructed; 139 bridges constructed; 158km access roads constructed; mangrove restoration and agroforestry: 400ha & 72ha respectively. In addition, 1,000 energy efficient cooking stoves for target beneficiaries under Nema-Chosso were constructed. There was also an introduction of state-of-the-earth drip line irrigation in 21 women vegetable gardens (11 and 10 gardens in WCR and NBR respectively) to mitigate climate change.

Recently, the KR2 project distributed the following items to the beneficiaries: 50 power tillers; 10 pumping machines; 50 coose milling machines; 50 rice milling machines; 100 rice threshers aimed at addressing the post-harvest losses incurred in rice production; 100 tarpaulins of various sizes also aimed at addressing the post-harvest losses incurred in rice production; 600 metric tons of fertilizers; assorted vegetables seeds; 50 metric tons of groundnut seeds certified by the National Seed Secretariat (NSS) has been distributed by the Department of Agriculture (DOA) to farmers in the regions during the 2019 cropping season; 300,000 doses of vaccine CBPP;

300,000 doses of vaccine PPR; 375,000 doses of vaccine NCD; 100 ml 1,320 bottles of Acaricide; 2,500 mg bolus 55,000 de-wormer; 250 mg bolus 130,000 de-wormer; and 5 blast freezers 20ft container.