



Progress Towards Environmental Sustainability

MDG7

Overall, 84% of Gambians live in households with sanitary means of excreta disposal, including pit latrines. In urban areas, access is 96%, whilst in rural areas it is 83%. Across wealth categories, 98.5% of the richest category has access to sanitation, compared with 71.5% for the poorest category. With regard to secure tenure of accommodation, the percentage is highest in rural areas where it ranges between 70-89%. In Banjul and Kanifing Municipal Area, secure tenure is 27% and 42%, respectively. Most of the people in urban areas live in rented premises. High rental rates reflect the fact that the procedure for accessing and owning land is relatively easier in the rural areas.

Access to improved water supply has increased rapidly over the past two decades, and national coverage is estimated to be 84% of the total population. This indicates that Gambia is on track to achieving this MDG target ahead of schedule. There are, however, some disparities between urban and rural areas. In urban areas, the figure is 94.6%, whilst in rural areas it is 77.1%. The lowest coverage is registered in the central part of the country (Janjanbureh), where coverage is 70.9%. There are, nevertheless, programmes in place aiming to lessen this disparity.

Moreover, a few major settlements of over 5,000 people do not have access to safe drinking water because they are too big for small-scale reticulation systems and have not been linked to the commercial distribution network. Human population growth has resulted in increasing demand, which has outstripped supply in some villages with improved water systems. There is also increasing risk of contamination from livestock using the same water source, especially during the dry season.

QUICK FACTS

CURRENT PORTFOLIO BUDGET

Total UNDP-GEF and Co-Finance:	\$237,900
Total UNDP and Co-Finance:	\$7,159,621
Total:	\$7,397,521

Cumulative Total ODS Phased-Out: 11.0 ODP tonnes

Persistent droughts and water shortages have drawn both national and international attention to the need to provide adequate supplies of safe drinking water in The Gambia. This has generated considerable donor interest and support, which has facilitated efforts to attain MDG 7 targets.¹

SPOTLIGHT

Youth Employment Promotes Environmental Sustainability²

In industrialized nations as in transition economies, young people must be embraced and given key roles in growing, sustaining or revitalizing an economy. The high rate of youth unemployment in the Gambia provided the nation a unique opportunity to harness the energy and enthusiasm of its young people to assist in advancing environmental initiatives.

The National Environmental Youth Corps is a 5-year project which began in February 2002 and addresses environmental concerns and promotes general public awareness of environmental issues. With funding of over US\$ 1.5 million from UNDP regular resources, it is anticipated that 2,000 young people will be trained and equipped in environmental management techniques under the project. Other beneficiaries include selected villages that will profit from the availability of locally-produced goods and increased income-generation and expenditure. During the course of implementation, the project's main goal is to transfer knowledge and ownership. By involving local communities, NGOs and the Government, benefits become intertwined and reinforcing; the greater the number of participants, the greater the success of the project.

The project has so far recorded many benefits. To date, over 21 km of firebreaks have been established to reduce damage from bush fires; over 300 cashew seedlings, 60 banana plants and 50 Gmelina seedlings have been transported; 2 hectares of vegetable gardens have been established and over 4 hectares have been prepared for orchard development; 8 wells have been rehabilitated for horticultural activities; and 60 beehives have been distributed. The projects are not only about quantifiable, economic measures of success, but also the immeasurable. By preserving their cultural way of life, the venture provides employment and income for the local populace, and has managed to keep family members together who would otherwise have had to migrate in search of better economic opportunities.

UNDP in the Gambia supports government development initiatives consistent with the MDGs to promote sustainable development. In partnership with the Gambian government, civil society including the local communities, NGOs and the private sector, UNDP assists in enhancing the capacity of the Government and people of the Gambia to manage their development process.³ There is increasing awareness and concern for the environment and the high rate of youth unemployment in the Gambia. The National Environment Youth Corps project harnesses the energy of youth to generate income in solid waste management, environmental rehabilitation and sustainable use of natural resources.

John O. Kakonge, Resident Representative

PORTFOLIO

FSSD* UNDP is supporting the Gambia to achieve the MDGs, through a project to build national capacity for sustainable development, funded by UNDP's Capacity 2015 initiative. The project focuses on strengthening partnerships, improving local-level planning in sustainable development, and information dissemination. The project operates in 5 out of the 8 local government areas and is financed through UNDP and Capacity 2015.

WATER UNDP is assisting the country's efforts to increase access to safe drinking water and sanitation – one of the targets of the MDGs. For example, the rural water supply and sanitation project successfully promoted education on sanitation, health and hygiene, as well as constructing of water-supply facilities and developing a National Water Resource Management strategy. The joint-funded UNDP-UNCDF project financed the installation of solar-powered water supply systems, hand wells, and improved sanitation facilities in 3 out of 5 administrative divisions.

ENERGY To support the Gambia to respond to climate change, UNDP is assisting the preparation of the country's First National Communication to the UNFCCC, with funding from GEF. The process involves an inventory of GHGs, an assessment of potential impacts of climate change, potential measures to abate GHG emissions, and capacity-building activities.

LAND UNDP supports the Gambia to respond to and prevent natural disasters through sustainable land management practices. For example, the project "Emergency Assistance to Averse Locust Invasion" assisted the Department of State for Agriculture to coordinate extension teams in their efforts to reverse the current increase in locust invasion. A locust control campaign established field-based teams in all the regions of the Gambia, and supported bilateral collaboration for joint locust control measures with neighbouring countries.

BIODIVERSITY UNDP is promoting the conservation and sustainable development of biodiversity in the Gambia. For example, the National Environment Youth Corps (see Spotlight) is working to enable young people to earn a living, while conserving the country's natural resources and environment. Participants have established local eco-tourism ventures and other environmentally-friendly, income-generating activities, such as beekeeping, rabbitry and floriculture. In addition, a GEF regional project aims to preserve indigenous ruminant livestock, under increasing threat of genetic dilution and extinction, through a 12-year project to identify habitats, increase awareness and develop links with the private sector in the Gambia, Guinea, Mali and Senegal.

CHEMICALS As part of its capacity development and technical assistance work, UNDP focused its support to the Gambia in the foams sector. The MLF-funded programme provided assistance in the installation of safety systems, enhanced ventilation, methylene chloride metering system, trials, technology transfer and training. CFC-11 consumption phased-out by the project represented the entire consumption for the foam sector in the country. The Gambia is now participating in a regional methyl bromide (Me. Br.) phase-out project, implemented by UNDP, for low-volume consumers in Africa. This project provides policy strengthening assistance to prevent the introduction of Me. Br. use in the country.

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PARTNERS

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¹Gambia MDGR 2003 http://www.undg.org/documents/3349-Gambia_MDG_Report.pdf; ²UNDP Gambia Questionnaire; ³<http://www.un.org/undp/index.html>; *Frameworks and Strategies for Sustainable Development