



Bringing you the latest  
news and updates from PACD



Hello all,  
Welcome to the fourth edition of the PACD newsletter. PACD is a community development programme initiated by the Government of The Gambia to address some of the development challenges faced by rural communities. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is the implementing agency. Phase I, also called the Pilot Phase, ended in December 2021. The results achieved are being used to transition to Phase II.

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# PACD UPDATES



## Improving Access to Electricity: The Government of The Gambia invests D28M to extend rural electrification in the North Bank Region

The Government of The Gambia under the leadership of the Secretary General and Head of Civil Service, Ms. Salimata Touray, representatives from UNDP, headed by the Resident Representative, Ms. Aissata De, and the Managing Director of the National Water and Electricity Company, Nani Juwara, met at State House on November 11, 2022. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss how to fast track implementation of electricity expansion in 7 additional villages in the North Bank Region, namely Medina Serigne Mass, Berending, Ndungu Kebbeh, Buniadou, Albreda and Kuntaya as part of the Programme for Accelerated Community Development. Following this meeting, the Government of The Gambia on November 30, 2022, provided funding to the tune of GMD 28 Million to PACD to extend electricity to the communities to bridge the uneven access, enhance the economic opportunities of the population in these areas and improve their social well being thereby assisting in the reduction of poverty in the country. *(See pg. 9 Challenges in rural energy sector)*

# Ms. Ahunna Eziakonwa, UN Assistant Secretary General, UNDP Assistant Administrator and Regional Director for Africa Visits Bonsa



Bonsa is a small rural palm wine tapping, cattle rearing and groundnut farming community that lies between Taibatou and Gunjur Kunkujang in the West, and Kassa Kunda and Nyofelleh Mandina in the East of Kombo. Located 2 ½ kilometres from the urban community of Jambanjelly; this village with a population of less than 1000 people have for more than 50 years been deprived of access to basic socio-economic infrastructure such water, electricity, access to roads, market, health facility, primary and secondary school. The inhabitants walked between 2-3km to acquire these basic facilities.



In 2020, the Government of The Gambia through its flagship Programme for Accelerated Community Development (PACD) supported by UNDP, constructed 16 boreholes, including the drilling, installation of overhead steel structures and solar power panels, and water reticulation system. These boreholes provide water to identified strategic locations across 31 rural communities throughout the 5 regions of The Gambia. One of these identified communities is Bonsa. Prior to the PACD intervention, the people of Bonsa relied on neighbouring villages for their household water needs. Community members traveled an average of 35 minutes to surrounding villages with taps and queued for almost 45 minutes to have access to potable water.



To address the need for safe drinking water in Bansa, the Programme for Accelerated Community Development with funding from The Government of The Gambia has constructed a borehole with 12 tap heads that supplies 94% of the population of Bansa with potable water source. The strategic location of the taps across the village ensures easy public access and has reduced travel time to access water to 3 minutes for its residents. “Today, everyone can fill up their water containers at any time of the day,” posited Betty, a resident of the village. ‘The borehole has really helped the community. We’re very appreciative of the Government of The Gambia and UNDP,’ added Paul Mendy, another resident.

**The uniqueness of the PACD is its integrated and systemic approach to combining economic development of infrastructure and equipment throughout The Gambia. Such an approach treats the causes of poverty and inequality in rural areas with a comprehensive and integrated response. This integrated approach has been to combine development interventions into a package and encourage sectoral and holistic response to a development problem.**

**👉 As per the rural poverty indices available, as many as 39 districts of the country have poverty rates over 50%, with 15 of them having over 75%.**

**👉 The water supply in rural areas is not up to expectations. As per MICS2018 data, 85% of households have access to basic drinking water services, however only 34% (one third) of households are using safely managed drinking water services.**

**👉 To enhance the speed in the execution of the programme, the approach of conducting a simultaneous implementation of activities through a UNDP procurement vehicle means that the programme can rapidly meeting the urgent needs of rural populations with socio-economic infrastructure and basic facilities.**

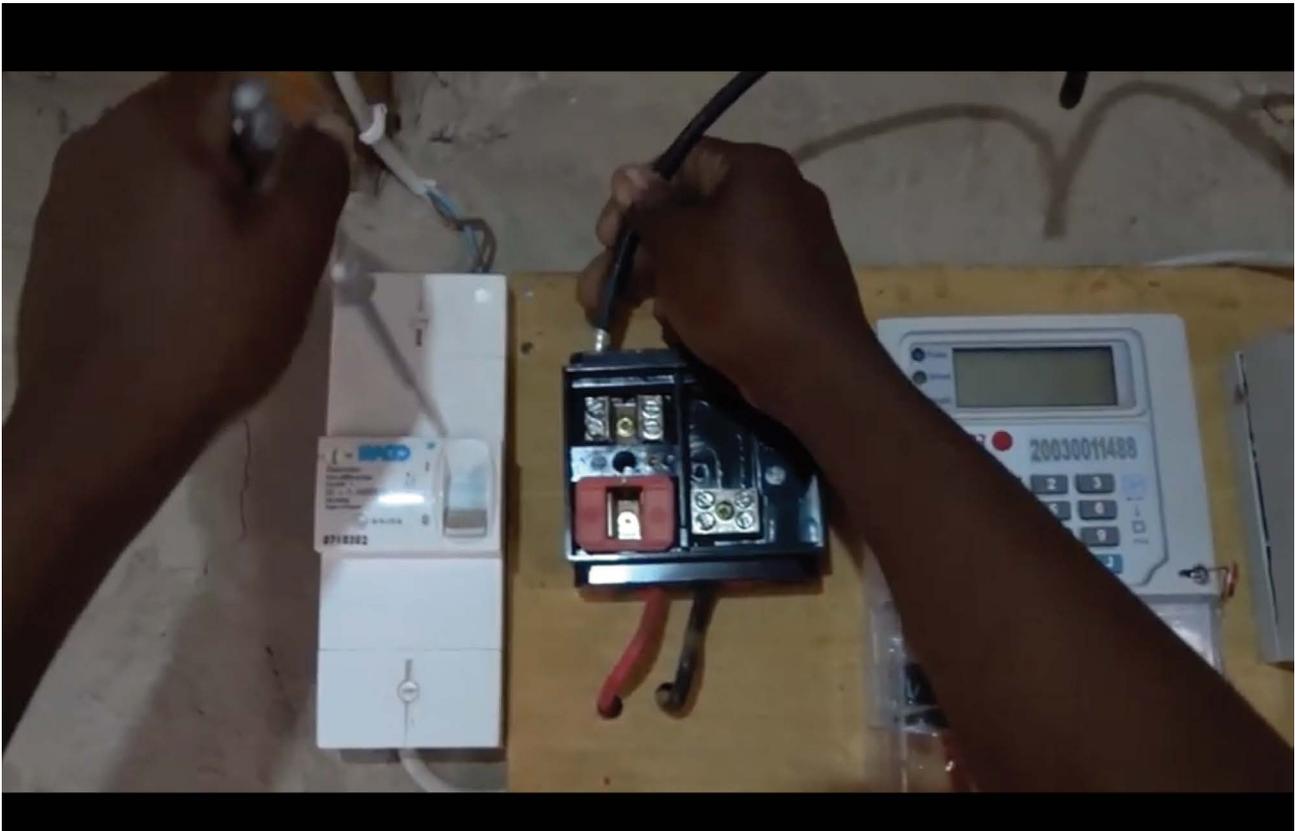


On Monday, 21st November 2022, the UN Assistant Secretary General, UNDP Assistant Administrator and Regional Director for Africa, Ms. Ahunna Eziakonwa, as part of her tour of UNDP project sites in The Gambia, was warmly received in a colourful and symbolic ceremony by beneficiaries of the village of Bonsa who presented her with a calabash of palm kernels to express their appreciation for her visit. Giving the welcoming remarks, the Alkalo of Bonsa, Mr. Louie Mendy reflected on how the village, for more than half a century, did not have access to safe and potable water. He expressed the community's appreciation and gratitude for the drilled borehole, citing that apart from occasional minor disruptions of the water supply system due to ruptured pipes, which are restored eventually, the borehole has boosted water supply, helped to mitigate water-borne diseases and strengthened resilience in the community. He seized the opportunity to call for support in acquiring facilities such as schools, health centres and roads to accelerate progress



towards inclusion and Leaving No-one Behind. Another member of the community explained how before the PACD intervention, access to water was difficult and unsustainable due to the depths and unhygienic conditions of the local wells. Every speaker in their own way, buttressed the distinction of the PACD in uniquely adapting solutions to overcome and address their challenges. The Resident Representative of UNDP Gambia on her part, thanked the community of Bonsa for their warm welcome and re-affirmed UNDP's support and continued forward-looking to strengthened partnership and development with the Government of The Gambia. The UN Assistant Secretary General, UNDP Assistant Administrator and Regional Director for Africa, Ms. Ahunna Eziakonwa, also expressed gratitude in partnering with the Government of The Gambia on such an important initiative like the PACD. She emphasised that the more successes gained because of the Programme, the more resources will be brought in for other projects. She thanked the people of Bonsa for the successful management of the borehole. The visit ended with a tour of the water supply system.

# Challenges in Rural Energy Sector



The Gambia is facing a severe challenge for quality and access to electricity especially in its rural areas. Existing power infrastructure has undergone some modernization and system rehabilitation but a lot more action is required. In short, the energy system in The Gambia has become a burden on its economy and hence other areas of development. As economic development is closely related to electricity, it is quite unavoidable to address this problem. In addition, the level of skills in The Gambia is not sufficient for the magnitude of the energy challenge in the country. The Government will need to revitalise its technical arm (Gambia Renewable Energy Centre) to provide scaled-up support in technology development, finance, regulation, and management.





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As of January 2019, the total installed capacity in the country was around 139 MW. Keeping with the targets in the electricity roadmap, The Gambia seeks to scale up its generation capacity to 300 MW by 2025 as indicated in the West African Power Pool Report, September 2019. As per the data available with NAWEC, almost 88% of rural villages in The Gambia are not electrified as of 2019. Region-specific electrification status is given below. Only 4% of villages in the Central River Region are electrified.

**Some other issues affecting the electricity sector as per the Gambia National Development Plan (2018-2021) are as follows:**

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 Low access to electricity: electricity coverage in The Gambia is estimated at 35 percent of the urban population and 6 percent of the rural population.

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 Inadequate supply: Out of the capacities installed, NAWEC has only 54 MW power available for consumption. During the peak demand of 70 MW, NAWEC is obliged to ration the available power leading to a total blackout in some parts of the country.

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 Inability to collect revenues: NAWEC is unable to collect revenues accrued from the usage of the electricity by its customers which has plunged the company into serious financial constraints and has incapacitated the company to fund its operation costs and improve upon both the existing and the new services.

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 High transmission and distribution losses: lack of investment is the major cause of transmission and distribution losses.

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However, all is not bleak. The Government of The Gambia with support from UNDP is implementing the NAMA Support Project in collaboration with the National Electricity and Water Company (NAWEC). The project aims to replace heavy fuel generated electricity in rural Gambia with 10.5 MW of solar generated power. There are also renewable energy projects being implemented by The Government of The Gambia with support from the World Bank and European Union.

# Meet your PACD Team



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