



2022

ANNUAL REPORT

THE GAMBIA

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Acknowledgement

UNDP acknowledges the Government of The Gambia, our development partners, civil society, the private sector and implementing partners that play a key role in achieving the National Development Plan and accelerating the achievement of the SDGs by 2030. The support and collaborations made contribute towards the delivery of our programmatic interventions and the results captured in this report.

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FOREWARD

Partnerships for Progress

As we reflect on the accomplishments and progress made in the year 2022, we find ourselves at a critical juncture in the development trajectory of The Gambia. The global landscape remains challenging, with the lingering effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, the urgent need to address climate change, and the complex geopolitical dynamics unfolding around the world. In this context, the Government of The Gambia, in close collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), has charted a path forward through the formulation of key initiatives and strategic partnerships. One such initiative is the Green Recovery-Focused National Development Plan (NDP) for the period 2023-2027. This plan is designed to address the triple development challenges facing the country, namely, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change, and the risk of debt distress. Building upon the gains achieved by the previous NDP, the plan incorporates valuable lessons learned during its implementation.



Aissata DE, Resident Representative

It not only aims to meet the recovery needs of the country but also provides an avenue for Development Partners to align their support with The Gambia's medium-term development priorities. This forward-looking approach ensures that sustainable and inclusive development remains at the heart of the country's agenda.

The year 2022 witnessed significant strides in various pillars of the UNDP Country Programme Document (CPD) for The Gambia. Under the pillar of Environment and Resilience Development, the Government, demonstrated its strong commitment to addressing climate change through the implementation of the Long-Term Climate Change Strategic Plan. The Gambian delegation actively engaged with international partners during the 27th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP27) to garner support for their climate change initiatives.

Inclusive and sustainable growth and poverty eradication were also prioritised in 2022. UNDP provided support to strengthen national institutions responsible for evidence-based policy, planning, and budgeting. Key initiatives, such as job creation, entrepreneurship training, and vocational/technical development, were implemented to enhance livelihoods and generate employment opportunities, particularly for vulnerable and marginalised groups. Additionally, the Programme for Accelerated Community Development (PACD) made commendable strides in bridging the socio-economic infrastructure and services gap between rural and urban areas.

The role of innovation, digitisation, and technology in driving development was underscored through the UNDP Accelerator Lab's partnership with the Singapore Center for Technology, Innovation, and Sustainable Development. The Smart Cities Pilot Project, implemented in the capital city of Banjul, showcased the potential of digital solutions to improve governance and service delivery.

Furthermore, UNDP's commitment to leaving no one behind was evident in its initiatives to promote disability inclusion, refurbishment of healthcare facilities, and the establishment of a modern branch of the Edward Francis Small Teaching Hospital (EFSTH) in Bakau (Ndemban).

The procurement of The Gambia's first ever government-owned medical grade oxygen plant in Ndemban enables self-sufficiency in vital oxygen needs to surrounding hospitals. This initiative was done in collaboration with the World Bank and WHO. Two more oxygen plants were procured and funded by Global Fund. These will be installed at EFSTH Banjul and EFSTH Bansang demonstrating UNDP's commitment to improving healthcare access. We extend our gratitude to all partners for their collaborative efforts in this life-saving accomplishment.

Transitional justice and human rights received attention, with notable strides attained in the Truth, Reconciliation and Reparations Commission. Through partnerships with government institutions, civil society organizations, and the National Human Rights Commission, UNDP provided critical support in realising the TRRC's objectives including efforts to address gender based and sexual violence.

UNDP's support to peaceful elections and civic engagement played a vital role in the pursuit of democratic governance and enhancing the credibility of the electoral system in The Gambia.

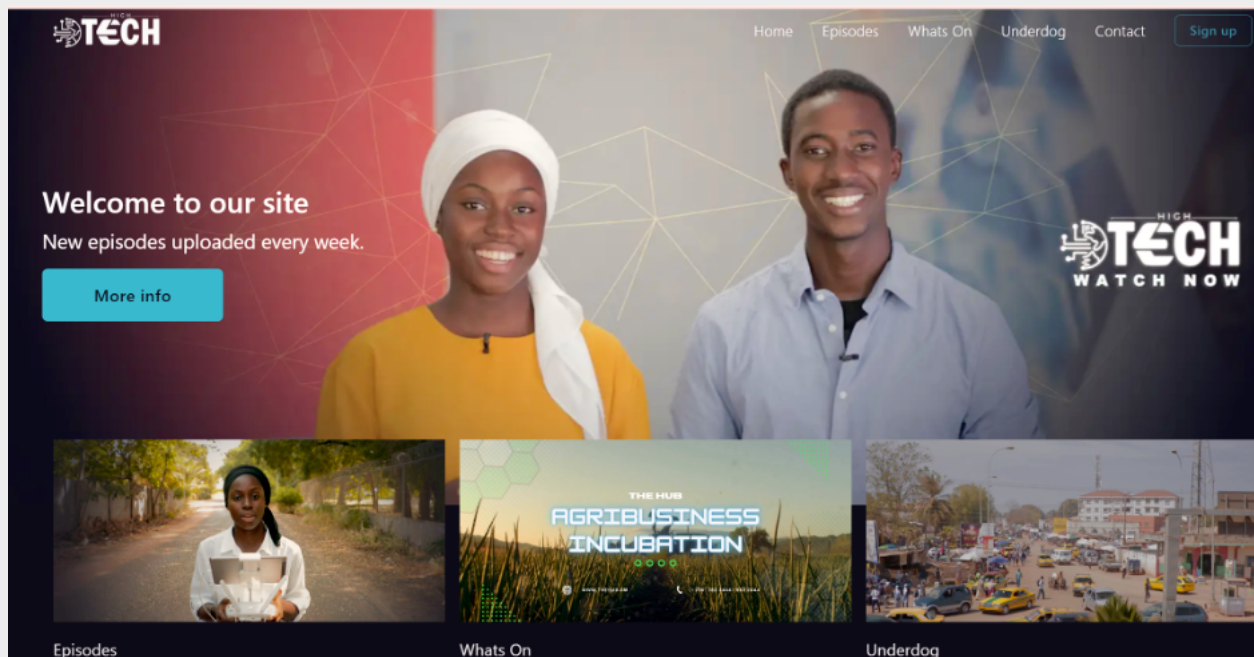
By empowering lawmakers and promoting citizen participation, UNDP contributed to building a more inclusive and accountable democratic framework. Furthermore, the organisation's efforts to promote the rule of law and access to justice resulted in transformative changes in the Gambian police force, shifting it towards a people-centered service through community policing and improved crime management.

Finally, in the spirit of collaboration and progress, the visit of the UNDP RBA Director to The Gambia from 21st to 23rd November 2022 served as a significant milestone. This visit provided a valuable opportunity to engage with key partners, including the government, UNDP beneficiaries, the UNCT, and staff, fostering stronger bonds and reinforcing our shared commitment to The Gambia's democratic transition.

As we continue on this journey together, we remain dedicated to empowering communities, promoting sustainable growth, and leaving no one behind. Through partnerships and collaborative efforts, we are confident in our ability to build a resilient and prosperous future for The Gambia.

We express our gratitude to all those who participated in the discussions and contributed to the fruitful outcomes of this visit. It is through our collective efforts and shared vision that we will forge ahead, unlocking new possibilities and creating lasting impact in The Gambia and beyond.”

Speaking out Loud – High Tech Show



The collaboration between the UNDP Accelerator Lab and the high-tech TV show, "Speaking Out Loud," has made significant contributions to The Gambia's tech ecosystem. The show focuses on the latest technology updates, ICT developments, and digital literacy while featuring underdog stories and providing solutions to everyday tech problems.

During its first season, the show aired on national television stations and showcased experts, businesses, and underdog stories in The Gambia's Tech and Business Ecosystem. It also mapped out key start-ups. The collaboration with the UNDP Accelerator Lab facilitated a mapping and assessment of the digital economy and digital financing ecosystem, identifying challenges faced by marginalised populations and providing recommendations for promoting inclusivity.

The show's impact includes establishing partnerships with companies and business support programs, creating employment opportunities for the production team, engaging a diverse audience, gaining international recognition, participating in various programs and events, receiving positive feedback, and fostering connections with tech communities worldwide.

Overall, "Speaking Out Loud" and the collaboration with the UNDP Accelerator Lab have contributed to the growth and inclusivity of The Gambia's digital economy, promoting job creation, raising awareness, attracting international interest, facilitating collaborations, and promoting digital literacy. The show's impact extends beyond national borders, sparking interest from diaspora Africans and fostering connections with tech communities worldwide. For more information, visit the High Tech TV Show website: [<https://bit.ly/3PIBv0A>].

The National Youth Council with funding from UNDP through the UN Peacebuilding Fund, and facilitated by the UNDP Accelerator Lab, organized a three-day YouthConnekt Summit for the young people of The Gambia on the theme, “Resilient Youth, Resilient Gambia.” The youth summit was held from the 16th-18th September 2022 at the Sir Dawda Kairaba International Conference Center. The Summit brought together a total of 300 national delegates from various regions of the country as well as young innovators and business entrepreneurs who showcased their ideas in a pitching context. The composition of the YouthConnekt participants was largely drawn from Civil Society Organisations, youth-led organizations, registered youth groups under the National Youth Council, Public Sector, Government Ministries and Agencies in charge of youth, Private Sector, national and international non-governmental organizations and development partners, among others. The rationale behind the YouthConnekt is to critically engage with young people in all spheres of nation building to discuss strategies on how to achieve YouthConnekt The Gambia goals and contribute towards the creation of an enabling environment for youth economic empowerment. The Youth Connekt Summit therefore created a platform to share information amongst young people and devise strategies/initiatives in building youth networks across the country.



YouthConnekt Gambia Summit

Accelerating Investment in Youth “Resilient Youth”

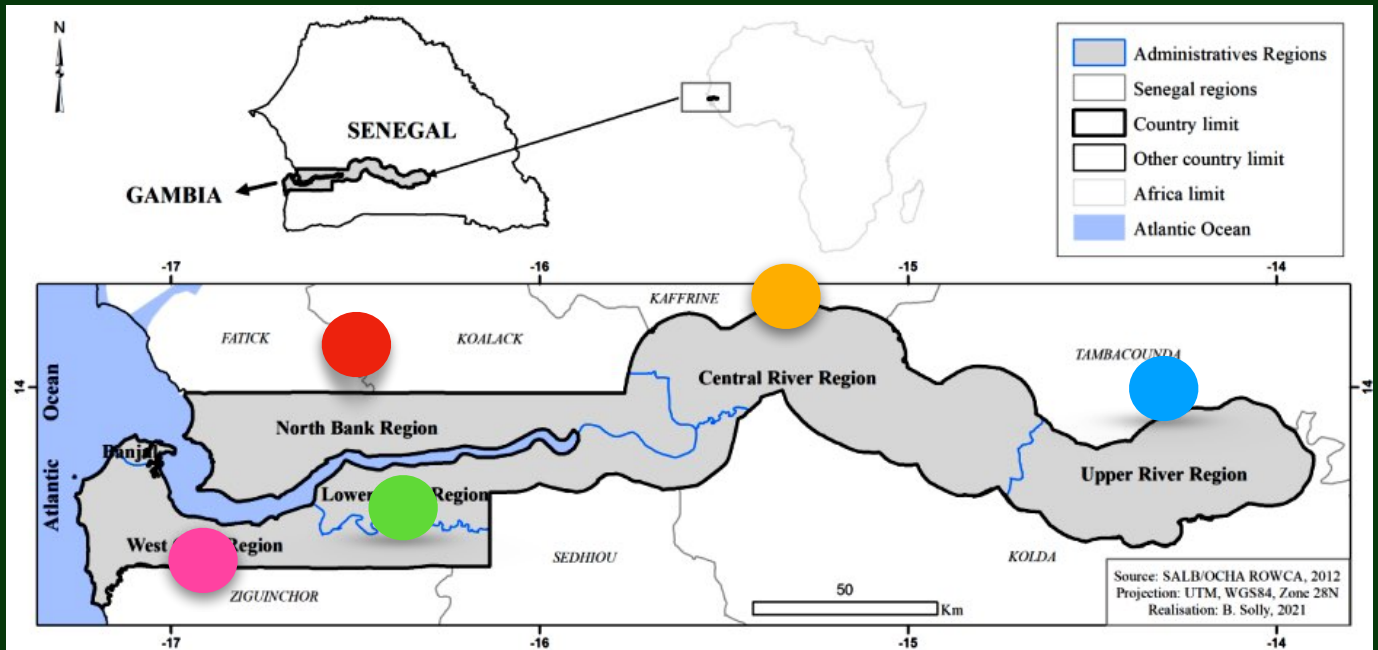


ummit 2022

th, Resilient Gambia"



unicef
for every child



THE GAMBIA AT A GLANCE

The Gambia, located on the west coast of Africa, is a country with a rich history and diverse cultural heritage. It is surrounded by Senegal on three sides and the Atlantic Ocean on the fourth.

With an estimated population of around 2.9 million people, The Gambia is known for its warm and welcoming people. The capital city is Banjul, situated at the mouth of the Gambia River. The country boasts of diverse ecosystems, including mangrove swamps, savannahs, and tropical rainforests. Its tourism sector thrives on beautiful beaches and wildlife reserves, attracting visitors from around the world.



Agriculture is a significant economic activity for many Gambians, along with fishing and tourism.

Politically, The Gambia is a republic with a multi-party system. It gained independence from British colonial rule in 1965 and has since witnessed various changes in government.

The country has made significant progress in recent years towards democratic governance and the protection of human rights.

While The Gambia faces challenges such as poverty and limited infrastructure, it has made strides in areas such as education and healthcare. Efforts are being made to promote sustainable development, gender equality, and social inclusion.

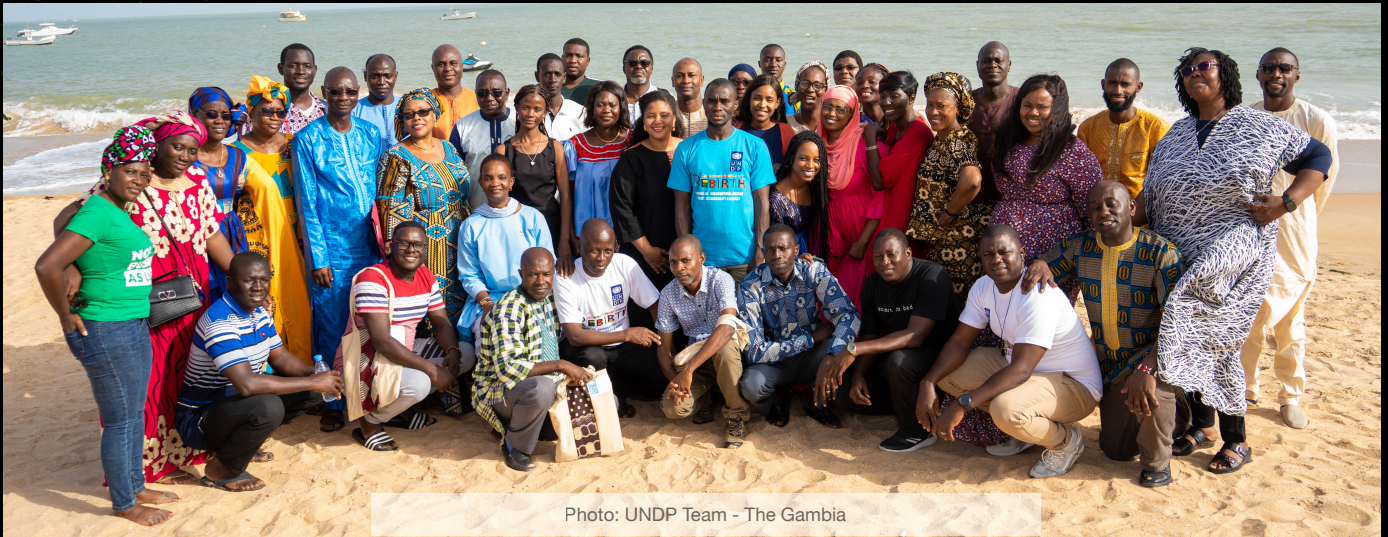


Photo: UNDP Team - The Gambia

NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES

UNDP's dynamic team continues to play a crucial role in supporting the Government of The Gambia in the development of a national development plan.



UNDP facilitated country-wide consultations on the NDP involving:



UNDP provided technical expertise and financial support to assist The Gambia in formulating a comprehensive plan that integrates environmental concerns with social and economic development priorities.

The new plan seeks to address the triple development challenges such as the impact of COVID-19 pandemic, climate change, and the risk of debt distress.

UNDP facilitated country-wide ward (120 wards), regional (8 regions) and national level consultations and engagements with key stakeholders, including government officials, civil society organizations, and local communities, to ensure inclusive and participatory decision-making processes. With over 5,000 participants, this was the most inclusive planning process to date for the country.

UNDP also supported the validation process of the NDP as well as the work of 12 Sector Working Group (SWG) which constituted of over 200 participants from Ministries, Departments, Agencies, Private sector, Civil society and other key institutions. Their work culminated in the identification of the priorities for the NDP (3 strategic objectives and 7 pillars). Through continual capacity building initiatives, UNDP supports to equip Gambian institutions with the necessary tools and expertise to effectively implement and monitor the national development plan, fostering long-term sustainability and resilience.

The priorities of the NDP are critical in the development of UNDP's next Country Programme Document, which will be aligned to the UNSDCF and anchored on the NDP.

OUR FOCUS

The UNDP Country Programme Document (CPD) provides the framework with which programmes and projects are formulated in coordination with national and global partners. Its three major pillars are:

01 Environment and Resilience Development

02 Inclusive and Sustainable Growth

03 Peacebuilding and Democratic Governance

Currently, UNDP is implementing 16 projects under the Country Programme Document:

6

Under the Peacebuilding and Democratic Governance

5

Under the Inclusive and Sustainable Growth

5

Under the Environment and Resilience Development

Environment and Resilience Development

Support for mitigation and adaptation of climate change impacts.

The Government of The Gambia, in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme has demonstrated its strong commitment to addressing climate change through the implementation of the Government's Long-Term Climate Change Strategic Plan (LTCS). These comprehensive commitments are designed to effectively mitigate and adapt to the adverse effects of climate change. During the 27th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP27) held in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt, in November 2022, the Gambian delegation actively engaged in bilateral meetings to garner support for their climate change initiatives.

Post-COP27 Dialogue

In collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Ministry of Environment, Climate Change, and Natural Resources organized a post-COP27 dialogue aimed at evaluating the outcomes of the COP27 negotiations and formulating a strategic plan for the future. This dialogue served as a platform for meaningful discussions on key issues related to climate change.

The Government of The Gambia is actively engaged in seeking support from international donors, such as the International Development Bank (IDB), to secure funding for climate mitigation initiatives. Additionally, efforts are underway to position The Gambia as a qualified recipient of the loss and damage fund once it becomes operational. UNDP is playing a pivotal role by providing technical expertise and strategic guidance, enabling progress in these areas.

Together, these collaborative endeavors demonstrate the commitment of The Gambia and UNDP to address climate change effectively and work towards a sustainable and resilient future.

Renewable Energy

UNDP is working to replace heavy fuel-based generators with solar plants, providing sustainable and clean energy to rural areas in The Gambia as part of the regional "Sustainable Energy for the Sahel" Programme. This transition helps reduce greenhouse gas emissions associated with traditional generators. Furthermore, off-grid communities are being equipped with solar energy solutions, reducing their reliance on high-emission energy sources.



Photo: Engineer at Mbolu Association, UNDP The Gambia 2022

Mbolu Association in partnership with UNDP The Gambia, has demonstrated that energy solutions are sustainable answers to power productive uses of rural off-grid communities under the Solar Multifunctional Platform (SMFPs) model. Moreover, it complements the Government's Long-Term Climate Change Strategic Plan (LTS) of decarbonizing the fish and oysters value chain with the Kartong SMFP and ice plant. UNDP initiated the Multifunctional Platforms (MFP) in West Africa over 25 years ago, and Mbolu has developed a model of technological, business, and social innovation that overcomes some of the barriers associated with MFP.

Since June 2022, the Kartong SMFP and ice plant has been operational following a year-long technical trial as an innovative solution for the fisheries sector, proving to be a game changer within a comprehensive, multi-stakeholder framework involving committed local authorities aiming to revitalize business activities at these sites. This 20.25 kWp SMFP and solar ice plant, with a solar water potabilizer/desalinator to ensure quality and safety ice for food purposes, provides significant benefits to the local community by supporting various economic activities, ensuring reliable access to clean water, and improving the storage and preservation of fish and other perishable goods. Other benefits include:

- * Regular electricity generation of 33615kWh/year
- * 250kg/day of ice
- * 3 young female green jobs related
- * Freezing capacity of fish and oyster preservation
- * Complementary activities like washing, milling and tap water.

The project's inclusive governance structure ensures the active participation of relevant stakeholders, allowing for effective management, sustainability, community ownership and business/entrepreneurship mind-set.

It is noteworthy that the young female operators were trained under this scheme for 18-months on solar installation, maintenance and operations imparting the business component of the project. This is closely aligned with one of The Gambia's key national development priorities, which is to empower women and enhance their livelihoods by strengthening their productive capacities and entrepreneurial skills through training.

Several communities benefited from numerous capacity building activities to promote sustainable use of their natural resources in order to uplift their livelihoods. These include business training, food preservation and climate change mitigation/adaptation.

One of the major obstacles faced by this fish landing site identified in the baseline survey in 2018, was transport, this joint partnership ventures on piloting:

- * Electric tricycle to transport customers with their purchase from the SMFP/fish landing site to the closest garage/house
- * Test electric outboard engine for fishermen; oysters and tourist boats.



Photos: Courtesy of Mbolo Association, UNDP The Gambia 2022

Reforestation Efforts

Collaborating with volunteers in the North Bank Region of The Gambia, UNDP has facilitated the planting of 26,000 seedlings and 2,000,000 mangrove propagules. These reforestation initiatives contribute to increasing national carbon sinks and help mitigate the effects of deforestation and desertification. Similar efforts are planned for areas heavily impacted by these environmental challenges in 2023.

Clean Cooking Initiative

UNDP has distributed thousands of energy-efficient cookstoves, enabling cleaner cooking practices. This initiative has resulted in estimated monthly emissions reductions of approximately 11.98 tons of CO₂. By promoting the adoption of clean cooking technologies, UNDP aims to reduce emissions and improve indoor air quality.

Waste Management:

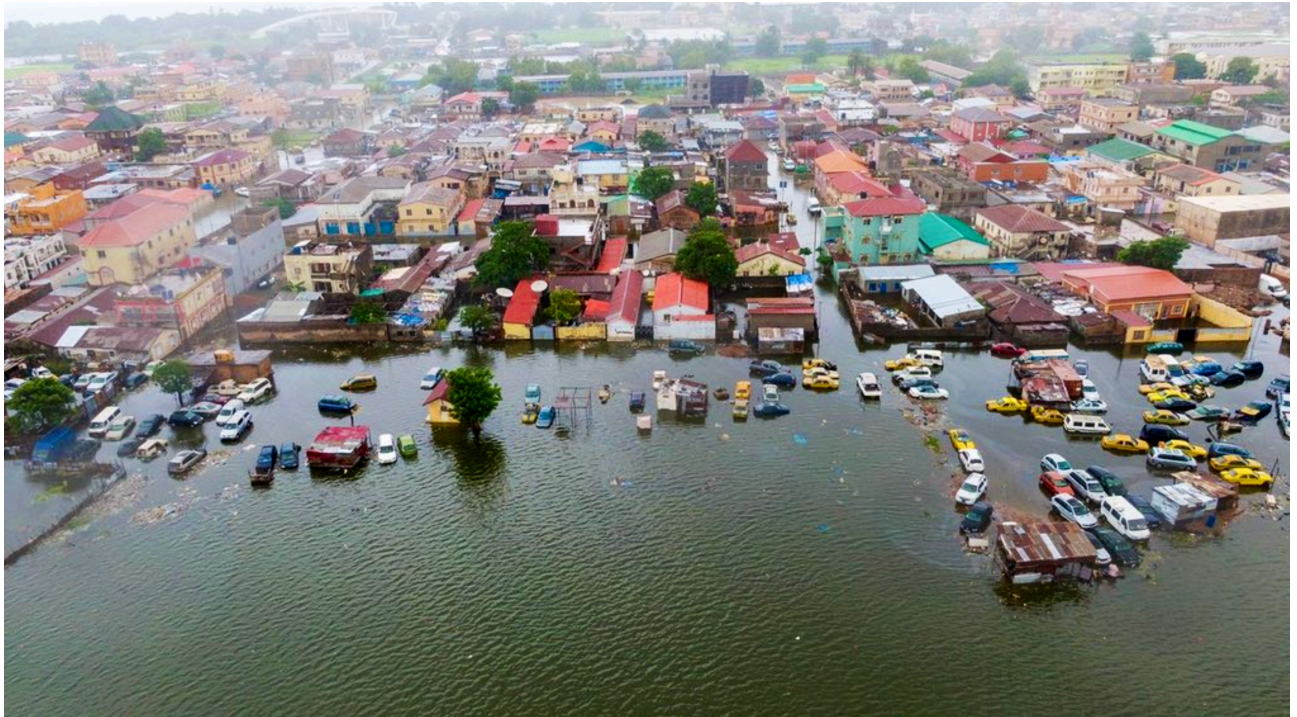
UNDP supports municipalities in improving waste management practices, including recycling and composting activities. Given the prevalence of open burning of waste in The Gambia, improper waste disposal is a significant contributor to national emissions. Through these interventions, UNDP aims to minimize the environmental impact of waste and encourage sustainable waste management practices.

Moving forward, UNDP will continue its support to the Government of The Gambia in translating plans into concrete actions. By addressing climate change through these various initiatives, the UNDP is actively contributing to the country's sustainable development goals and helping to build a resilient and low-carbon future.





Support to Flood Recovery and Resilience: UNDP's Crucial role



The Flash Floods that occurred on July 30th and 31st 2022 in The Gambia have been described as the worst in nearly half a century. The Department of Water Resources recorded a significant amount of rainfall during this period, with 276 mm recorded at Banjul International Airport, Yundum. Furthermore, additional flooding took place on August 5th and 6th 2022, in both The Gambia and the Gambia River basin. Assessments revealed that at least 47,104 individuals were directly affected by the floods with the suburbs in urban settlements experiencing the most severe impact. There were 11 reported fatalities with about 5,000 affected households, the most heavily affected residing in the Kanifing Municipality.

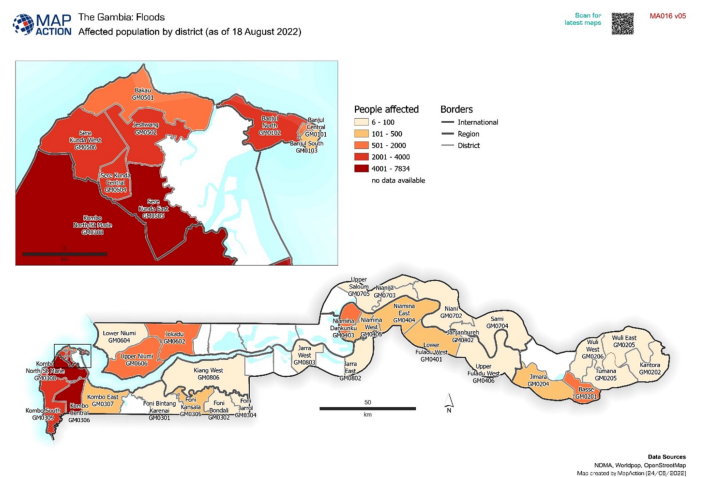
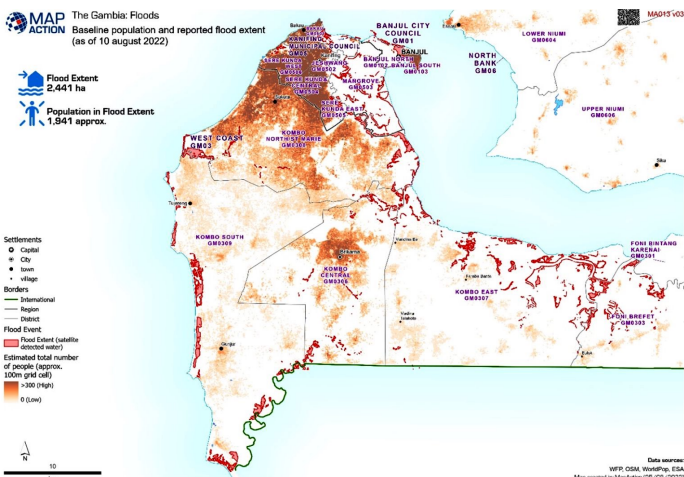




In the aftermath of the devastating floods in The Gambia, UNDP's support played a vital role in addressing the immediate aftermath and building long-term resilience. A team of experts from UNDAC and OCHA collaborated with the National Disaster Management Agency (NDMA) to assess the impact of the floods and determine the urgent humanitarian needs. While awaiting the final report, UNDP recognized the necessity of shifting from a response-focused approach to a long-term resilience-building strategy. To achieve this, UNDP advocated for a Post-Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA) and initiated discussions with the World Bank, who expressed keen interest in conducting the assessment pending further guidance.

In the meantime, UNDP provided essential logistical support to the ongoing assessment conducted by NDMA, with the assistance of UNDAC and OCHA. Furthermore, UNDP actively engaged with the UNDAC team and UNEP to provide technical assistance in testing water for hydrocarbons in areas affected by the NAWEC oil spill, which occurred during the floods. The lack of equipped laboratories in the country necessitated immediate action to ensure the safety of water sources.

This collaborative effort between UNDP, WFP, NDMA, UNDAC, OCHA, NEA, and NAWEC reflected a collective commitment to address the impacts of the floods and work towards sustainable solutions for the affected communities in The Gambia. Together, they strived to facilitate the recovery process and build resilience in the face of future challenges.

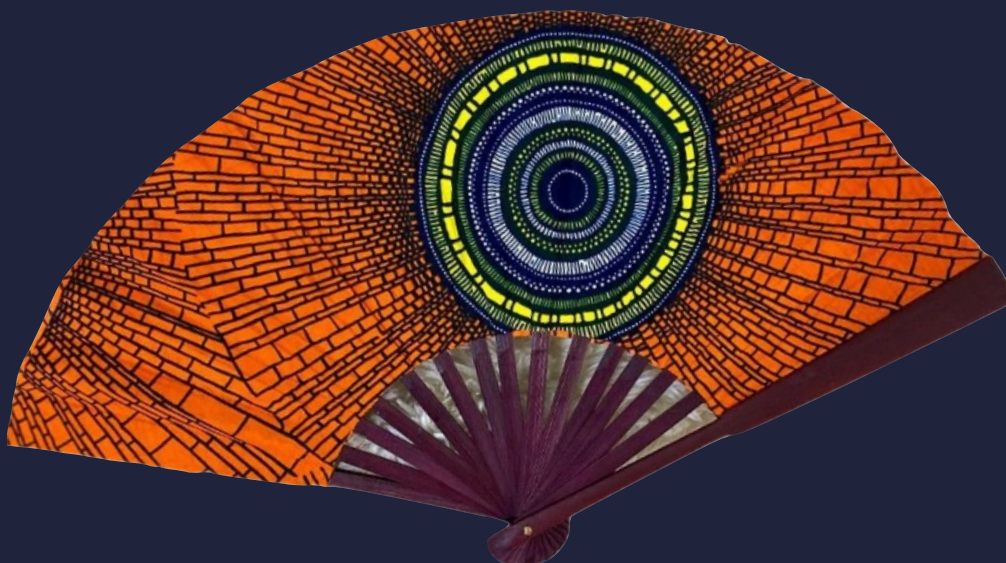


Inclusive and Sustainable Growth and Poverty Eradication

Economic Management

In 2022, with the support of UNDP, a set of policies, plans, and strategies were formulated with the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs (MOFEA) taking the lead to strengthen national institutions responsible for evidence-based policy, planning, and budgeting. The following initiatives were supported to enhance effective development planning, monitoring, and evaluation within the Government and Local Government councils:

- * Development of Aid Policy
- * Formulation of Recovery Focus National Development Plan (NDP) 2023 – 2027
- * Voluntary National Review on Gambia's performance on the SDGs
- * Feasibility studies to establish UTG Center for Sustainable Development & Policy studies.
- * Support to the development of National Policy database
- * Support to the formulation of Asset Management Policy
- * Annual Review and Publication of Medium-Term Debt Strategy



Entrepreneurship and Private Sector Development (EPSPD) for Inclusive Growth and Poverty Eradication

UNDP supported the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Employment (MOTIE) to work with public and private institutions to implement interventions for job creation and growth. The Gambia Investment & Export Promotion Agency (GIEPA) was supported in training participants on entrepreneurship and providing business development advisory services. The training reached 60 participants in the Greater Banjul Area (GBA) and Central River Region (CRR) North, with 75% of the trainees being women. Demand-driven advisory services were also given to 17 MSMEs in GBA and 18 in CRR North. Mentor-mentee meetings were held to address challenges. Overall, 95 beneficiaries were trained, leading to enhanced livelihoods.

Similarly, capacity building for the Gambia Songhai Initiative (GSI) trained youth in climate-friendly agriculture, including poultry management. As part of the Agroforestry program, 500 seedlings were planted, creating a cleaner, greener, and environmentally friendly garden. The project also supported GSI with new incubators for the poultry sector to enhance hatchery capacity. Ongoing improvements in plumbing, carpentry, and electrical services are being made to create a conducive living environment for the trainees.

Vocational/technical skills training was prioritised to generate employment opportunities for vulnerable and marginalized groups. Through existing training institutions, the Ministry of Trade, Industry, and Employment (MOTIE) was supported in training and building the capacities of youth in various skill areas.



Women constituted 75% of participants trained on entrepreneurship and business development advisory services by GIEPA



500 fruit seedlings planted as part of youth agro-forestry programme thru Gambia Songhai Initiative



25 physically challenged women trained on Packaging, Food Processing, Branding and Labelling by Gambia Women Chamber of Commerce




Digital Jula 2.0 Training, on boarding of 100 Entrepreneurs on online marketing, brandings, market access and export (65 Women, 35 men trained)



718 individuals (505 women and 213 men) supported with community-based social protection schemes under RFF



1.5km dike constructed at 2 villages in NBR to tackle land degradation. 20 hectares of land reclaimed for rice cultivation by 150 women as a result .



These include hairdressing and cosmetology, digital literacy and freelancing, detergent and soap making, automotive diagnostics, solar and satellite installation, and local gastronomy. A total of 165 individuals, including women and PLHIV/AIDS, were trained, resulting in the creation of 388 employment opportunities. In addition to training, livelihood enhancement initiatives were implemented to improve the well-being of marginalized communities. This included providing a solar-powered cool storage facility for women fisherfolks in Kemoto and surrounding villages, supporting three communities with boreholes for community gardens, assisting Siffoe Community Bakery with equipment to increase production and employment, supporting a female-owned bakery with marketing kiosks, and providing tricycles and equipment for two youth-owned bakeries and two tailoring workshops. These initiatives collectively benefited 136 female and 29 male individuals, with 23 of them being PLHIV/AIDS.

Reduction of Economic and Social Vulnerability of the Poor and Marginalised populations in Protected Areas affected by COVID-19 (RFF)

Support to communities in Protected Areas affected by COVID-19, including social protection schemes, entrepreneurship training, trainings on digitisation, soap making and financial literacy, small ruminant and sheep bank schemes, community-managed seeds/cereal banks, and construction of infrastructure such as a dike and vegetable gardens were completed in 2022 through the RFF Project funded by UNDP.



The community of Juffureh/Albreda received support in the form of a poultry farm, while the community of Iliassa was provided with a poultry farm, bakery, and a nursery farm. Additionally, 45 entrepreneurs, including groups, gained access to funding and business partnership opportunities. Six women's vegetable gardens were supported to provide an alternative source of livelihood and build resilience for them.

Programme for Accelerated Community Development (PACD)

The Programme for Accelerated Community Development (PACD) , is a flagship model funded by the Government of The Gambia and initiated by the President of The Republic of The Gambia under the coordination of the Department of Strategic Policy and Delivery (Office of the President). The PACD Model aims to bridge the gap in socio-economic infrastructure and services for marginalised and remote communities, ultimately reducing disparities and inequalities between rural and urban areas.

Since its inception, PACD has been making commendable strides towards fulfilling its objectives. In 2022, it effectively provided vital socio-economic infrastructure and services to 79 communities. This included granting access to water, electricity, labor-saving equipment, and dairy livestock, surpassing the expected target of 73 communities by 8%. Moreover, 19 Tractors provided to 19 communities in 4 regions of The Gambia minimized drudgery labour. More than 20,000 people benefitted from the tractors with a total collectively generated income of GMD3,960,201.97 (Euro 76,157.73) as of end December 2022. Furthermore, 19 assorted labour-saving devices has been installed in 19 communities and operators has been trained on their usage.

Programme for Accelerated Community Development

Key Results:



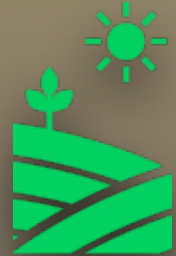
Solar Powered Portable Drinking Water Supply System



12 Dairy Saneen Goats for WALIC for multiplication & value addition



19 tractors distributed to 19 communities



16 Boreholes, 329 taps in 31 communities



Village Development Committee's trained **583** beneficiaries in **31** communities on their roles

19 tractors provided to 19 communities in 18 districts across 4 regions of The Gambia



1,000,000 mangrove propagules planted for wetland



On grid electricity supplied to **10** communities

Vital socio-economic infrastructure and services have been provided to **79** communities.



Accelerator Lab (AccLabGM)

Innovation and Digitisation

The Country Office was chosen as an implementing partner for the Smart Cities Pilot Project, in collaboration with the Singapore Center for Technology, Innovation, and Sustainable Development. The UNDP Accelerator Lab quickly mobilized resources and collaborated with a local vendor to design and implement the pilot project in Banjul, the capital city. Researchers from the University of The Gambia were hired to collect data and survey Banjul City Council staff. After formalising the partnership with the city council, a detailed scope of work was developed, and a suitable local implementing partner firm was recruited.



Photo: Aissata DE, UNDP Resident Representative hands over map of Banjul to the Mayor of Banjul, Rohey Malick Lowe, UNDP The Gambia 2022

In June 2022, the Smart Cities project was officially launched and handed over to the Banjul City Council. This launch was a significant milestone in the country's national development, focusing on innovation and digitisation to accelerate digital transformation in The Gambia. The project received positive feedback from the Mayor of BCC, market vendors, and the Ministry of Digital Economy and Communications. It enhanced efficiency in revenue tax collection and market stall registrations and management through the use of QR codes accessible via a digital dashboard. The project showcased the potential for digital solutions to improve governance and service delivery in the city.

Leaving No One Behind

In line with UNDP's commitment to disability inclusion, the Accelerator Lab partnered with the Association of Sign Language Interpreters of The Gambia to involve sign language interpretation during the prime-time news hour. This initiative was commenced prior to the 2021 presidential election when tensions were high and continued through to the parliamentary elections of May 2022 to allow for informed and engaged participation by all in political discussions.

In addition, the AccLab collaborated with the Gambia Federation of the Disabled to develop a communication package aimed at raising awareness and highlighting the achievements of persons with disabilities. This package sold stories of persons with disabilities through various media platforms. By amplifying their messages and showcasing our common humanity, it helped to enhance public understanding of the challenges faced by PWDs and how they navigate their daily lives in their communities.

The UNDP Accelerator Lab supported many other Country Office's projects., one of which was the RFF to improve internet connectivity in rural areas. The lab also partnered with the GamTech Project to launch the country's first National Gaming festival.

Other support area include youth entrepreneurship, provision of IT equipment to a training facility for visually impaired individuals, and participation in stakeholder consultations for the Voluntary National Review.

Additionally, the lab has supported the launch of a high-tech TV show and conducted a mapping and assessment of the level of development and inclusivity of the digital economy and digital financing ecosystem in The Gambia. The report highlights the challenges faced by marginalised populations in accessing and using technological services and provides recommendations for creating more effective policies to eliminate barriers to the digital economy.



#ACC



A B G M

UNDP Support to Covid-19 Response and Recovery



Photo: Ndemban Clinic before and after its refurbishment, UNDP The Gambia 2022

Adapting to respond to the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic has had far-reaching consequences in The Gambia, causing significant disruptions that have negatively impacted communities. These impacts have disproportionately affected marginalised and vulnerable individuals, highlighting evident inequalities. In response, the UNDP Country Office has played a crucial role in providing comprehensive support in line with UNDP's Corporate offer. The focus of this support has been on Health System Support, Inclusive and Integrated Crisis Management and Response, as well as conducting assessments to address the social and economic impact of the crisis.

Refurbishment of Ndemban Clinic

One significant aspect of UNDP's support has been the refurbishment of the former Ndemban Healthcare Centre in Bakau into a modern branch of the Edward Francis Small Teaching Hospital (EFSTH) in Banjul. This transformation was made possible through joint advocacy & fund-raising aimed at renovating the Ndemban Medical Clinic grounds, increasing the number of available hospital beds, and providing respiratory isolation during and between pandemics.

Through a Public-Private Partnership (PPP) involving the Ministry of Health (MOH), UNDP, the World Bank, FAR Gambia Ltd, TAF Africa Global, and SSHFC, with technical advisory support from UNOPS. The newly established center serves as the primary COVID-19 treatment facility and also helps decongest the EFSTH in Banjul, improving access to healthcare. Additionally, WHO collaborated with UNDP and the World Bank to procure and install an oxygen plant at the renovated health center, further enhancing its capabilities. This PPP initiative is part of ongoing efforts to support the improvement of the healthcare system in The Gambia.

Oxygen Plant Initiative

UNDP played a key role in facilitating the purchase of the first-ever government-owned oxygen plant in The Gambia in partnership with the World Bank and WHO. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, public hospitals in the country faced a lack of access to medical oxygen, relying heavily on imports from Senegal and Banjul Oxygen to meet the demand. Supported by UNDP, the installation of an oxygen plant in 2022 at the Ndemban Clinic, helped to address this critical deficit, allowing the the clinic to produce its own oxygen. The plant has a production capacity of 50 cubic meters per hour with two containerized PSA units.



Photo: Oxygen Plant at EFSTH_Bakau (Ndemban), UNDP The Gambia

This achievement not only strengthens the capacity of the healthcare system but also reduces dependence on external sources, significantly improving healthcare accessibility for the people of The Gambia. According to Dr. Jagne, a kidney specialist and general medical practitioner at Ndemban clinic,

“During the height of the pandemic, we faced a critical shortage in our oxygen supply, prompting us to depend on the emergency support provided by the Banjul Oxygen facility. The overwhelming demand for oxygen from patients surpassed our existing capacity, presenting us with a formidable challenge. However, with the installation of the new oxygen machine, our situation has significantly improved, and we are now better equipped than ever before.”



Photo: Dr. Jagne, EFSTH_Bakau (Ndemban), UNDP The Gambia

Peacebuilding and Democratic Governance



Transitional Justice and Human Rights

In May 2022, UNDP supported the Truth, Reconciliation and Reparations Commission (TRRC) proceedings. As a result, The Gambia recorded yet another milestone achievement in the history of truth commissions more specifically when Government, through the White Paper, publicly accepted to implement 99% of all 265 TRRC recommendations. Ever since the publication of the White Paper, key stakeholders worked closely to develop an Implementation Plan aimed at enforcing TRRC's accepted recommendations.

With a victim-centred perspective and approach, the White Paper reflects the government's commitment towards reconciliation, justice and reparations. The White Paper ensures non-reoccurrence, as well as respect for the victims and survivors of the past regime. It also provided for some symbolic measures to be taken, such as renaming Arch 22 as "Never Again Memorial Arch" in honour of the victims.

"It is our hope that this memorial may be repurposed as a fitting reminder that Never Again shall we allow such heinous abuses and violations in our beloved country," said the Minister of Justice, Mr Dawda Jallow.



UNDP, through its Post TRRC Project offers a framework for partnerships among institutions to create laws and policies in the interest of transitional justice.

UNDP and OHCHR partnered with the Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Interior, TRRC, National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), Judiciary and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) to support the transitional justice process with a special focus on the recommendations of the TRRC. Together, they provided interventions to ensure the promotion of the rule of law. In November 2022, a review of the Draft Victims Reparations Bill was initiated by CSOs and other relevant stakeholders. The Victims Reparations Bill if passed into law aims to establish an independent commission, which will, among other things, ensure non-recurrence of human rights violations, promote institutional, legal and policy reform as well as manage a Reparations Fund. UNDP also supported the drafting of several Bills such as the Criminal Offences Bill and Criminal Procedure Bill. These Bills are still under consideration and have not yet been passed into legislation.

In the new phase of transitional justice in The Gambia, UNDP notes the importance of building the capacities of the Government, NHRC, CSOs and the other relevant stakeholders to ensure that the White Paper is implemented in a fair and transparent manner.

Support to the National Human Rights Commission to monitor and report on the TRRC recommendations

To raise awareness and promote the TRRC recommendations, UNDP has worked closely with the NHRC to implement various initiatives. These efforts included stakeholder training programs, partnerships with CSOs and victims' associations, and advocacy for justice and accountability.

Furthermore, UNDP has played a crucial role in advising and assisting the government in formulating appropriate policies and strategies to effectively implement the TRRC recommendations. These policies and strategies encompass immediate, medium, and long-term actions, aiming to ensure the comprehensive realization of the TRRC's objectives.

The efforts of the NHRC, have been recognized on a global scale. In March 2022, the NHRC was granted "A" Status by the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions' Sub-Committee. This prestigious designation confirms that the NHRC is fully compliant with the United Nations Paris Principles, which outline the standards for effective national human rights institutions. It is noteworthy that the NHRC achieved this status within just three years of its establishment, highlighting its commitment to upholding human rights and promoting accountability.

Through collaborative efforts between UNDP, the NHRC, and other stakeholders, the TRRC recommendations are being popularised and pursued with determination. By advocating for justice, providing guidance, and facilitating partnerships, these initiatives are instrumental in promoting a culture of human rights and ensuring the long-term realization of the TRRC's recommendations.

Academic sectors also engaged in providing support to victims

In collaboration with the University of The Gambia, research was conducted to inform decision-making on the implementation of TRRC recommendations surrounding persons and communities directly affected by the 2009 witch-hunt campaigns. The University of The Gambia's Report identified areas for national reconciliation, whilst enhancing the capacity of the National Human Right Commission and Civil Society Organisations to monitor, report and support the overall implementation of TRRC recommendations in this regard.

Regional Cooperation on Transitional Justice

UNDP supported the NHRC to organise the 3rd edition of the Sir Dawda Kairaba Jawara International Human Rights Moot Court Competition which was held from 5th to 10th December 2022. The theme of this edition was "The State Must Guarantee the Right to Remedy, Reparations and Accountability for Atrocity Crimes."

The competition included participants from universities from five African countries: Ghana, Gambia, Nigeria, Sierra Leone and Uganda, setting up a platform for youth to argue critical human rights issues using African human rights mechanisms.



Photo: Ahunna Eziakonwa, UN Assistant Secretary General during her visit to the Victims' Centre in Banjul, UNDP The Gambia, 2022

Gender-based and sexual violence in relation to transitional justice

UNDP focused on gender and sexual based violence (SGBV) throughout the transitional justice process ensuring the effective participation and the participatory procedures necessary to address the different needs and opportunities of females, males and children, guaranteeing justice, reparation and non-recurrence of SGBV.

2022 saw an increase in the number of SGBV cases that were reported and resolved. In total, 90 cases were filed and 21 were resolved by the National Human Rights Commission, with support from UNDP.

UNDP in partnership with NGBV (Network Against Gender Based Violence) ensured an improvement in access to justice for GBV survivors in The Gambia by refurbishing three centres and a shelter, developing Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and referral pathways, training social workers and stakeholders, and supporting survivor advocacy groups.

As part of post-TRRC efforts for reparation, Mental Health and Psychosocial, as well as Livelihood Support Services were also provided to SGBV survivors, reaching 24 communities by engaging communities, knowledge sharing and strengthening the capacities of local and national institutions to continuously address SGBV and promote mental health in The Gambia.

In partnership with the NGBV, UNDP facilitated the implementation of the livelihood support programme for GBV survivors in connection with the TRRC, by providing specialised counselling sessions within communities and conducting trainings for local peace structures.

Peaceful Elections and Civic Engagement in The Gambia

UNDP's support to elections in The Gambia has had a significant impact on promoting peaceful and inclusive democratic processes. Through a range of initiatives, UNDP has contributed to strengthening democratic governance and enhancing the credibility of the electoral system in the country.

In the National Assembly Elections held in April 2022, the UNDP contributed largely to building trust and confidence among the electorate and enhancing the legitimacy of the electoral process. The 2022 elections were conducted post the COVID-19 global pandemic nonetheless, under a joint support program with the UNDP, the Independent Electoral Commission proved well-prepared for the elections with voting processes generally well-managed and transparent. The Gambia's unique marble and drum voting system facilitated a quick, orderly, and transparent vote count in the presence of party agents and observers with polling officials demonstrating professionalism and dedication in delivering the elections.

One of the key pre-election areas of support by the UNDP was in capacity building for lawmakers to enhance their oversight and representative functions. By strengthening the skills and knowledge of lawmakers, UNDP helped to improve their effectiveness in promoting accountability and ensuring that the voices of the citizens were heard in the legislative process.

UNDP continued to play a crucial role in supporting the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) following the 2021 Presidential elections in a bid to consolidate on the gains made. Through technical support, the IEC successfully conducted the National Assembly Elections. Polling processes were enhanced through support by the UNDP on capacity building programmes for staff and deliberate initiatives aimed at improving voter education by use of Information Education Content through printing T-shirts and election handbooks and sensitization initiatives by use of Billboards, Jingles and media appearances on Radio & TV panels.

Furthermore, Civil Society Organizations (CSO's) and Government Agencies with support from the UNDP have been able to occupy an important space in efforts aimed to increase the participation and inclusion of traditionally marginalised groups such as Women, Youth and PWDs. The Coalition of Civil Society Organizations in The Gambia (TANGO), The West African Network for Peace Building (WANEP), National Youth Council (NYC), The Women's Bureau and the National Council for Civic Education (NCCE) supplemented the IEC's voter education drive with like-minded programmes, rolling out advocacy, sensitization raising awareness and providing information about the electoral process and messaging imparted to the public through both print and electronic media.

Support by the UNDP to the police also contributed largely to ensuring a secure electoral environment. For the first time in the country's history, candidates have been provided with security throughout the campaigns. Police have been visible throughout the elections in response to measures introduced under the election support security arrangement programme that has enabled citizens to exercise their voting rights without fear or intimidation. To enhance election security, UNDP further partnered with the Gambia Police Force (GPF) and the UN Standing Police Capacity Brindisi to conduct training programs for the Police. These programs focused on various aspects, including electoral laws, code of conduct for police officers, public order management, oversight and accountability, and conflict management.



UNDP's facilitation of meetings and engagements through the Inter-Party Committee (IPC) was instrumental in fostering a commitment to maintaining peace throughout the electoral process. By bringing together leaders from different political parties, UNDP promoted dialogue, collaboration, and a peaceful atmosphere during and after the elections. This collaborative approach helped to build trust, reduce tensions, and foster a sense of unity and cooperation among political stakeholders.

With elections dominating most of the media establishments, UNDP through its Accelerator lab partnered with the Association of Sign Language Interpretation (ASLI) of the Gambia to promote inclusivity through Sign Language Interpretation in coverage of elections. This initiative was a positive step in ensuring that all people despite their disability could be included in the developmental process and are also aware of the evolving issues and ensures their participation in the political discourse.

Additionally, UNDP's partnership with WANEP-The Gambia resulted in the review and harmonization of early warning indicators with the UNDP Crisis Risk Dashboard. This collaboration enabled the timely provision of early warning data to UNDP before, during, and after the elections. The deployment of community monitors, supported by UNDP, further strengthened the early warning system, enabling swift responses to potential conflicts or risks. This proactive approach to conflict prevention and response contributed to maintaining stability and ensuring peaceful electoral processes. This was equally supplemented through the establishment of Situation Rooms both by WANEP and the CSO's Coalition (TANGO) to co-ordinate feedback and reporting on the election process from monitors deployed at the polling stations on election day.

Overall, UNDP's support to elections in The Gambia demonstrates its commitment to promoting democratic values and principles. Through capacity building, voter education, election security measures, inter-party engagements, and early warning systems, UNDP has played a vital role in fostering an inclusive, transparent, and peaceful electoral environment. These efforts have not only had a positive impact on individual elections but have also contributed to the overall democratic development of The Gambia.



Photo: Members of the security sector meeting with communities in the Upper River Region, UNDP The Gambia, 2022

Rule of Law and Access to Justice

Building a Just and Secure Gambia

The Gambia Police Force, like the society within which it operates, is experiencing slow but fundamental change. With UNDP supporting large scale reforms such as the Security Sector reform process, policing is slowly but steadily shifting from suppression to a people-centered service. Following the successful piloting of Community Policing in three districts, namely, Kerewan, Bakadjie and Kunkujang, UNDP and UNICEF supported the phase-approach rollout of community policing in four regions within 7 districts in Janjanbureh, Barra, Basse, Mansakonko and Kerewan in line with the government’s decentralisation policy. The successes registered in the three districts precipitated a foundation for modern proactive policing, premised on local security structures that have been set up in a participatory manner. Nowhere is this more evident than at Garawol, a small town in eastern Gambia close to the border with Senegal. Located in Kantora District in the Upper River Division, some 177 miles or (284 km) East of Banjul , the country's capital city, the community of Garawol has structures set up, comprising community members from all ages, sexes, and demographics, including Persons with Disabilities and children. Since the establishment of the community policing initiative, crime rates have decreased significantly in its border towns.

Approximately 300 police officers, 30% of whom were female, were capacitated with knowledge in the administration of criminal cases relating to children and gender issues. This has resulted in an effective, efficient, child-friendly and gender-responsive policing approach in line with international human rights principles. In addition, the capacities of 161 community members, 79 female and 82 male were upscaled to be advocates for community policing at community levels. 200 Community Policing Volunteers were also selected and trained in all the 5 districts. These community volunteers provide direct support to trained specialist policing teams to help these teams reduce crime and disorder.

“Specifically, people understand now that policing is the business of all,” the Chief Superintendent of the GPF Community Policing Unit, Lamin Jaiteh, said in reference to the Gambia Police Force’s famous catchphrase.



Photo: Chief Superintendent Lamin Jaiteh and Corporal Mai Jeffang

The shift in practice specifically from conventional crime control to police modernisation, has led to more visible policing through patrols. This shift is particularly important from a gender perspective, according to Corporal Mai Jeffang, a trained Community Police specialist,

“The culture of silence is breaking in the rural communities, due to numerous sensitisation campaigns and because of proactive policing. People no longer regard police officers as strangers in their midst. Police officers patrolling the streets actively engage with the communities to mitigate criminalities, including SGBV offences, low-level crimes and violations, before there is a call for their service. This helps in preventing more serious crimes in the communities from occurring,” Corporal Jeffang added.

“Community Policing cannot work without members of the community being part of the initiative for sustainable peace and development of their communities and the country as a whole,” emphasized CPS Lamin Jaiteh. “As a result, police officers are no longer focusing their practice on responding to specific requests and/or calls for service from individuals or groups only. Instead, proactive policing specific to every district helps in deterring crime and addressing the citizens’ fear of crime before it occurs. This requires a lot of resources to implement full scale,” he intimated.

In March 2022, UNDP supported the Police with 150 medal bicycles to enhance interactive patrols intended for short range surveillance. This assisted police officers who were struggling to strike the balance between the police staff on the ground and the community population.



Photo: Handing over bicycles to GPF for community policing, UNDP 2022

With no existing structures in place to determine the ratio of police staff to the population in each of the communities in order to reduce crime, this initiative means that police officers are now effectively communicating with the communities they serve to increase levels of trust between citizens and officers in these areas thereby combating crime.

Maintaining a visible and proactive police presence in neighbourhoods will deter crime and criminal behaviour, as well as increase the public's observance of the law. Both goals are equally important and contribute to enhancing trust between citizens and police. By proactive policing, officers are helping communities to believe the idea that crime will not be tolerated.

“Instead of sitting in their offices, and waiting for crime to occur, the police officers are now coming to the people to ease their fears and avert crimes before they occur. This has brought us a sense of peace and safety in our community,”

said Haddy Jallow, a resident of Niumi, North Bank Region.

To further the community policing initiative, UNDP facilitated the development and piloting of a data collection mobile App for four of the most reported crimes incorporated in the existing case management system.

Due to the successful implementation of the piloted app, UNDP is supporting the upgrading of the mobile App to incorporate all other reported crimes for real-time reporting.

Coordination on data collection between the GPF, Office of the President, Security Sector Reform stakeholders and other relevant parties for evidence-based decision-making to enhance police response in crime management is key.

Moreover, a GIS mapping of all Police posts, stations, district, and regional offices was completed to aid in critical decision making for staff deployment.

AHUNNA EZIAKONWA

UN Assistant Secretary General, UNDP Assistant Administrator and Regional Director for Africa Visit The Gambia

20-23 NOVEMBER 2022



Photo: Ahunna poses with the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) in The Gambia, UNDP The Gambia 2022

The visit of the UNDP RBA Director to The Gambia from 21st to 23rd November 2022 presented a valuable opportunity to engage with key partners, including the government, UNDP beneficiaries, the UNCT, and staff. The visit provided updates on ongoing reforms while reinforcing UNDP's commitment to supporting The Gambia's democratic transition.

During the visit, discussions centred around the future of development in The Gambia within the context of global shocks, such as health crises, climate change, and regional conflicts. Leveraging the Sahel Offer, the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), and the continent's abundant resources, including its youth dividend, various avenues were explored as means to drive Africa's development. The RD's mission facilitated an open dialogue on strategies to harness these opportunities and overcome challenges.



Photo: Ahunna poses with the President and other engagements with youth and women during her visit to The Gambia, UNDP The Gambia 2022

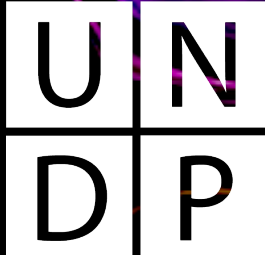
The RD met with the President Adama barrow and engaged with senior government officials as well as donors to explore how The Gambia's democratic dividends can be leveraged for regional integration, peace, stability, and accelerated progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). By fostering collaboration and strategic partnerships, the RD reiterated UNDP's aim to facilitate the realization of these shared goals.

The visit of the UNDP RBA Director to The Gambia reaffirmed UNDP's dedication to partnering with the country on its development journey. Through discussions on future development strategies, progress reviews, and staff empowerment, UNDP aims to strengthen its collaboration with The Gambia and contribute to sustainable



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