



# **NATIONAL GENDER POLICY 2025- 2034**

## **MINISTRY OF GENDER, CHILDREN, AND SOCIAL WELFARE**

**June 2024**

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## LIST OF ACRONYMS

AAITG:	Action Aid International the Gambia
AIDS:	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ARV:	Anti-Retroviral
AU:	African Union
BCC:	Behavioral Change Communication
CBOs:	Community Based Organizations
CEDAW:	Convention on the elimination of all forms of Discrimination
CSW:	Commission on the Status of Women
DGWE:	Directorate of Gender Equality and Women Empowerment
DHS:	Demographic and Health Survey
ECOWAS:	Economic Community of West African States
EID:	Early Infant Diagnosis
FGM/C:	Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting
FLAG:	Female Lawyers Association Gambia
GAF:	Gambia Armed Forces
GAMNASS:	Gambia Network of AIDS Support Societies
GBoS:	Gambia Bureau of Statistics
GBV:	Gender Based Violence
GDP:	Gross Domestic Product
GFPA:	Gambia Family Planning Association
GII:	Gender Inequality Index
GMD:	Gambian Dalasi
HDI:	Human Development Index
HIV:	Human Immune Deficiency Virus
HoC:	Hands on Care
HTP:	Harmful Traditional Practices
HTS:	HIV Testing Services
ICCPR:	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ICESER:	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
IEC:	Independent Electoral Commission
IEC:	Information, Education and Communication
IHS:	Integrated Household Survey
IMF:	International Monetary Fund
IMR:	Infant Mortality Rate
IOM:	International Organization of Migration
IPV:	Intimate Partner Violence
KAP:	Knowledge, Attitude and Practice
LGAs:	Local Government Areas

ME&R:	Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting
MGDs:	Millennium Development Goals
MICS:	Multiple Indicators Cluster Survey
MMR:	Maternal Mortality Rate
MoBSE:	Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education
MoFEA:	Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs
MoGCSW:	Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Welfare
MoH:	Ministry of Health
MoHERST:	Ministry of Higher Education Research Science and Technology
MoJ:	Ministry of Justice
MoLGL:	Ministry of Local Government and Lands
MOU:	Memorandum of Understanding
MUTAPOLA:	Network of Women and Girls
N/A:	Not available
NACP:	National AIDS Control Programme
NAMS:	National Assembly Members
NAS:	National AIDS Secretariat
NCCE:	National Centre for Civic Education
NDP:	National Development Plan
NGBV:	Network Against Gender Based Violence
NGBV:	Network Against Gender-Based Violence
NGO:	Non-Governmental Organization
NGOs:	Non- Governmental Organizations
NGP:	National Gender Plan
NSGA:	Nova-Scotia Gambia Association
NSP:	National Strategic Plan
NWC:	National Women Council
OIs:	Opportunistic Infections
PFA:	Plan for Action
PFI:	Paradise Foundation Initiative
PFM:	Public Financial Management system
PMO:	Personnel Management Office
PMTCT:	Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission
RBF:	Results Based Financing
RMNCAH:	Reproductive, Maternal Neonatal Child and Adolescent Health Unit
SBCC:	Sexual Behavioral Change Communication
SGBV:	Sexual and Gender Based Violence
SGVB:	Sexual and Gender Based Violence
STIs:	Sexually Transmissible Infections
TAC:	Technical Advisory Committee

UDHR:	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UN:	United Nations
UNFPA:	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF:	United Nations Children's Fund
UPi:	Ultimate Partners Company
URR:	Upper River Region
USD:	United States Dollars
VAW:	Violence Against Women
VCT:	Voluntary Counselling and Testing
WB:	World Bank
WHO:	World Health Organization
WILL:	Women in Liberation and Leadership
WTG:	World View the Gambia

## **FORWARD**

This National Gender Policy (2025-2034) is being implemented at a time when The Gambia ushered in a new political dispensation with renewed commitment to gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, which are important pre-requisites for sustainable development, peace and prosperity. Hitherto, The Gambia implemented two important policies namely: National Policy for the Advancement of Gambian Women (1999-2009) and the Gender and Women Empowerment Policy (2010-2020).

The formulation of the Policy was quite participatory with extensive consultations with Policy Makers, CSOs, Communities in the Regions and Municipalities as well as Special interest groups which constitute an important segment of the vulnerable population.

Needless to mention, as a show of commitment, The Gambia over the years has ratified and domesticated a myriad of international instruments including Protocols and Conventions on Gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. These include the Beijing Platform for Action, the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of discrimination against women and girls, African Union Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality, the AU Protocol on Human and People's Rights and on the rights of women in Africa as well as the African Charter on Human and People's Rights among others.

Whilst acknowledging that significant progress has been registered in gender equality and the empowerment of women particularly in the areas of Education, Employment, Income, Human Rights among others; inequalities still persist in some areas. Nonetheless, this time around, it is our fervent hope that a more robust and comprehensive approach will be adopted by this Policy which will not only ensure greater women's empowerment, but a sustainable development for the country through gender equality. These policy initiatives would help balance power relations between men and women, and transform the institutions which continue to perpetrate gender injustice, poverty, and underdevelopment.

I therefore urge all stakeholders including ministries, departments and agencies, Regional and Municipal Authorities, Local Government Structures, NGOs, CSOs and the Private Sector to support the implementation of this Policy in whatever way they can for the realization of its intended objectives.

**Mrs Fatou kinteh (Hon)**

**Minister of Gender, Children and Social Welfare**



## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

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We are also grateful to the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs for facilitating the partnership between the AfDB and MoGCSW.

## 1.0 BACKGROUND

### 1.1 Demographic Situation

With a total land area of 10,689 square kilometers. and surrounded by Senegal on all sides except the west; The Gambia's population is currently estimated at 2.5 million people (2.5 million) growing at 3.1 percent per annum (GBOS, 2013) with a population density of over 260 persons per sq. km, fourth most densely populated country on mainland Africa, surpassed only by Rwanda, Burundi and Nigeria (GBoS, 2016). The Gambia is one of the poorest countries in the world with a human development index (HDI) of 0.496 and a ranking of 172 out of 189 countries (UN, 2019). The country has a young population with an overall median age of 18.2 years; 17.8 years and 18.5 years respectively for males and females and a high dependency ratio (GBoS, 2016). In 2013, males constitute 49.2 per cent of the total population compared to 50.8 per cent for females. With the exception of Banjul and Kanifing LGAs, the other LGAs have relatively more females than males. Brikama LGA is the only LGA which had equal proportion of both sexes.

Overall, life expectancy at birth is estimated at 63.4 years; males 60.8 years and females 65.9 years (GBoS, 2016). Between 2013 and 2019-20, the under-5 mortality rate increased from 54 to 56 deaths per 1,000 live births. Similarly, the infant mortality rate rose from 34 to 42 deaths per 1,000 live births, and the neonatal mortality rate increased from 22 to 29 deaths per 1,000 live births. However, child mortality decreased from 20 to 15 deaths per 1,000 live births over the same period (GBoS and ICF, 2020).

### 1.2 Macro-Economic Environment

According to the Gambia Poverty and Gender Assessment, 2022 by the World Bank, the national poverty rate declined at a slow pace, before the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic from 48.6 percent in 2015 to an estimated 45.8 percent in 2019, due to low and variable economic growth trajectory. However, data collected in 2020 showed that national poverty rate increased to 53.4 percent, a level last seen in 2008, instead of declining to a projected 44.9 percent based on pre-covid growth rates. The report further highlighted that Poverty rates in 2020 were highest in the Northeast part of the country but the number of poor people is higher in the more populous southwest, mainly in Brikama. Moreover, poverty rates were also reported much higher in rural areas, with some Local Government Areas (LGAs) experiencing an increase in the number of poor.

Regarding wealth quantiles, the report showed that wealthier households generally fared better than middle class and poorer households between 2015 and 2020 reflecting both patterns of growth prior to the crisis and crisis impacts. As a mitigating strategy, some rural household members migrated to urban areas and larger households split into smaller households during the second and

third quarter of 2020. In addition, large numbers of workers entered the agricultural sector, which experienced rapid growth driven by aquaculture and fisheries.

Preliminary estimates indicate that per-capita GDP increased from -2.4 to 1.2% in 2020 and 2021. Forecast predicted that the increase could result to a reduction in the rate of poverty by 1%. As indicated, the recovery done in 2021 was partial and the recovery was due to the rebound in Agriculture and constant flow of remittance, Tourism, as it is known is a very vital source for jobs in The Gambia. Before the pandemic, its contribution to GDP was estimated to be between 12 and 16 percent. Tourism supported over 42,000 jobs directly and another 40,000 jobs indirectly (UNDP, 2020). It generated an annual US\$ 85 million in foreign exchange earnings, making it the country's number one foreign exchange earner. The sector had attracted US\$ 45 million in foreign investment over 5 years prior to the pandemic. Tourist arrivals grew significantly over the past 2 decades, particularly since the Ebola crisis of 2014 and the political impasse of 2016. Between 2018 and 2019, arrivals grew by 15.7 percent year-on-year. A flourishing tourism sector will require long-run political stability, an expansion of tourism-related infrastructure, reduced crime rates, and the introduction of new products and initiatives to complement the 3s (sun, sea, and sand) such as festivals, national park tours, and combined packages with its neighbor Senegal.

The Gambian economy is not well-diversified, relying mainly on agriculture and services. It also relies substantially on remittances and international aid. Remittance inflows to the country amounted to US\$181 million in 2015 (Africa Economic Outlook, 2017). Therefore, the Gambia remains prone to external economic shocks as its primary sources of foreign exchange. Agriculture, tourism, and re-export trade activities heavily depend on exogenous factors. This challenge is recognized and addressed by the Country's National Development Plan (2018-2021), which described a stalled economy arising from several shocks, including a poor 2016-2017 agricultural season as a result of the Climate Change, which reduced groundnut crop production; a severe reduction of tourism receipts, volatile oil and commodity prices ascribed to the COVID-19 Pandemic in 2020, Ukraine –Russia War, further affected the tourism sector and global supply chains.

In 2020, 12.5% of the male-headed households reported experiencing natural disasters, compared to 8.2% for female-headed households. The gender gap between male and female-headed households in shock exposure is smaller in the primarily urban coastal regions where livelihoods depend less on agriculture. The perception and reporting of actual shock experience likely depend on the magnitude of the impact of the shock respondents' livelihoods, which may explain the finding that female-headed households are less vulnerable to shocks than their male counterparts. Over the last few decades, the participation of women in high-value commercial agriculture such as horticulture has increased (IFAD 2020), and they dominate upland and swamp rice production, which are unlikely to be affected by ongoing climate change induced rises in precipitation.

Table 1. Poverty by Gender of Household Head

Poverty Index	Gender	Estimates based on the lower poverty line
Headcount	Male	34.8
	Female	53.5
Poverty Gap	Male	11.6
	Female	22.2
Poverty Severity	Male	5.3
	Female	11.9

Source: *Integrated Household Survey, 2018*

Women who are the major driving force for development, especially in rural communities, face adverse poverty, thus making them vulnerable. The result is retarded development which is exacerbated by under-representation in decision-making and customary practices that disfavor the agency and empowerment of women and girls. Finally, the NDP's Annual Progress Report (2018) reported substantial progress registered by major strategic priorities, with Tourism registering a 100% on track record as of 2018, while Human Capital was just 45% on track; and agriculture and youth empowerment were constrained by 67% and 75%.

The Gambia SDG Status Report (2019) highlighted research, innovation and creative industry, education and youths, and human capital as sectors requiring significant sustainable development improvement. Despite the sluggish progress in these sectors, they are also the first to be affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Thus, it is foreseen that the pandemic might further strangulate development in these sectors, and tourism is likely to fall off its track.

Given that some of the resources had been diverted to fighting the COVID-19 pandemic, there was a shortfall in the implementation and expected outcomes/achievements of the Gender and Women's Empowerment Policy in years following the COVID19 pandemic. Not only did the vulnerability of women increase, they were particularly at risk due to a convergence of several stressors such as reduced income (of a petty trader), increased burden of childcare (due to school closings), reduced quality of healthcare and increased level of gender-based violence (GBV) due to the pandemic. Increased stress due to lower income and the inconvenience of being locked indoors, are among the causation of increased level in Gender-Based Violence (GBV) suffered, particularly by women and girls in many countries worldwide, not excluding The Gambia. The institutions with the mandate and expertise in psychosocial support in the Gambia such as

Directorate of Social Welfare is yet to identify the characteristics of the households experiencing elevated stress in relation to GBV during this trying period.

## **2: NATIONAL RESPONSE TO GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT**

### **2.1 National Response to Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment**

There has been significant advancement in the status of Gambian women most importantly following the introduction of the Women's Amendment Act (2015) on the prohibition of Female Genital Mutilation and the Children's Amendment Act (2016) on the prohibition of Child Marriage. These two legislations complement the Constitution (1997), the Women's Act (2010), the Children's Act (2005), the Trafficking in Persons Act (2007), the Tourism Offences Act (2003), the Domestic Violence Act (2013), the Sexual Offences Act (2013), and the Labour Act (2007) which have all been promulgated to address the rights of women and children and to combat discrimination in all its forms.

In 2018, a specialized government Sexual and Gender-Based Violence unit was established in the Ministry of Justice, to monitor, investigate, prosecute and provide counselling for survivors of sexual and gender-based violence most especially as it relates to women and children.

Similarly, a Network Against Gender- Based Violence (NGBV) made up of relevant Government Ministries and Civil Society organizations has been established through which the One-Stop-Centers are supported and maintained in Hospitals for the provision of medical, legal aid &counselling and psychosocial support to victims/survivors of sexual and gender-based violence.

The Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Welfare in 2019, in partnership with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) established a sexual gender-based violence victim center. The center provides temporal accommodation, medical legal and counselling support to victims of sexual and domestic violence. To complement the work of the victim centre, a 24 hour call centre for reporting cases of GBV was established with support from UNFPA and UNICEF. In 2021, a center for the production of reusable sanitary pad was constructed in Basse, Upper River Region with support from the UN Secretary General's Peace Building Fund. So far, capacities of 14 girls have been enhanced to produce reusable sanitary pad; another batch of 15 girls are currently undergoing the same training.

In 2017, out of 12 new judicial appointments to the Superior Courts of The Gambia, 5 of the judges are women, 4 out of the 7 judges of the newly constituted Gambia Court of Appeal are now women including the President of the Court of Appeal. For the first time in the history of The Gambia, we now have a Gambian female judge of the Supreme Court which is also now fully indigenized. Out

of a total number of 20 judges in the superior courts, 10 are women; in like manner, 22 out of the 42 magistrates in the subordinate courts are women.

### **2.1.1 Establishment of the Gender Ministry**

In January 2019, a new Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare was established by the government and mandated to coordinate the affairs of Women, Children and Social Welfare. To be in line with international best practice, the nomenclature was later changed to the Ministry of Gender Children and Social Welfare. The current structure of the Ministry strengthens coordination, capacity building and enhances the resources of the national machinery for the advancement of women and girls. To speed up the process and attain greater achievements in the implementation of gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE), the ministry developed a revised Gender Policy 2025-2034.

In the process of establishing the new ministry, the services of a team of consultants was secured to conduct capacity need assessment of the Ministry and its line Departments, and also developed a comprehensive strategic plan that defines the capacity needs and institutional mandate with definite roles and responsibilities.

## **2.2 Constitutional and Legislative provisions on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment**

### **2.2.1 Constitution of The Gambia**

The 1997 Constitution is the basic law of the land. The Preamble states that “the fundamental rights and freedoms enshrined in this constitution will ensure for all time respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, without distinction as to ethnic consideration, gender, language or religion”. Section 33(1) provides for the equality of all persons before the law and that no person shall be discriminated based on different grounds including gender. Even so, Section 33(5) (c) and (d) of that same Constitution provide exceptions for the non-application of the non-discriminatory clause in matters of personal law as it relates to adoption, marriage, divorce, burial and devolution of property on death or other matters as well as customary law in respect of any matter for persons to whom personal and customary law are applicable in so far as it relates to discrimination. Section 28 states that women shall *be accorded full and equal dignity of person with men* and shall be treated equally with men including *equal opportunities in political, economic and social activities*. This constitutional provision recognizes the equality of men and women and the right to equal opportunities in all spheres. It is also in line with the CEDAW, the African Protocol and its declaration, as it seeks to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women. Due to the patriarchal nature of the Gambian society, women are not treated equally with men in all areas of their lives. A lot of efforts have been made on trainings and advocacy by the National Gender Machinery and various civil society organisations. Section 26 states that every Gambian citizen of full age and capacity has the right to take part in the conduct

of public affairs, to vote and be voted for in public office and to have equal access to public service without unreasonable restrictions. Though the phrase "unreasonable restrictions" have not been defined by the Constitution, it should be construed in such a way that will be discriminatory and discouraging to women. A person who alleges that any of these provisions has been, is being, or is likely to be contravened in relation to himself or herself by any person; he or she may file to the High Court for redress.

A directive principle under section 214(4) states “in the composition of Government, women shall be fairly represented”. This section is under the chapter relating to the directive principles of state policy which only serves as policy guidelines and is not enforceable. However, more needs to be done considering the low number of women in Cabinet, Parliament, Local Government and other public offices.

### **2.2.2 The Women’s Act 2010**

Government formulated and enacted the Women’s Act in 2010 and its amendment in 2015 to include sections 32A and 32B. The Act incorporated and domesticated both the CEDAW and the Protocol and provides the legal basis for the realization of the critical areas of concern outlined in the Beijing Platform for Action (1995). The passage of the Act went through a very wide and comprehensive consultative process that involved all stakeholders including the legal profession, the judiciary, parliamentarians, senior government officials and policy makers, religious and traditional leaders, grass roots women, community leaders, and civil society organizations.

### **2.2.3 Access to justice and equal protection before the law**

Section 7 of the Women’s Act provides that every woman is entitled to equality and justice before the law and to equal protection of the law. Government is obligated to provide legal aid support; ensure law enforcement organs are equip to effectively interpret and enforce gender equality rights; ensure that women are equitably represented in the judiciary; and take adequate steps for reform discriminatory laws.

### **2.2.4 Elimination all forms of discrimination**

Section 14 of the Women’s Act obligates government to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women.

Section 15 of the Women’s Act deals with temporary special measures to be adopted by every organ, body, public institution, authority or private enterprise aimed at accelerating *de facto* equality between men and women.

### **2.2.5 The Local Government Amendment Act 2007**

The Local Government Act (2007), provides for Municipalities and Area Councils, which complement the central government authorities including the Ministry of Local Government and

Regional Governors. Section 193 provides the legal basis for decentralization of power through the establishment of local government administration. The Local Government Authorities which are made up of City Councils, Municipalities and Area Councils are determined by the IEC. Members of the LGAs are elected every four years. The residents of the area within the LGA elect the members of the councils and Mayors. Additional representation is through nomination of representatives of different sections of the society namely women, youth, private/business sector, as well as the district chiefs. The LGAs Chairpersons are now elected. There are no specific provisions in the Act to promote affirmative action for women political participation and representation.

### **2.2.6 The Election Act 2015**

*The Election Act*, Cap: 3:01 laws of *The Gambia* 2009 established an Independent Electoral Commission which was provided for under Article. On 28 February 2017, the National Assembly passed the Elections (Amendment) Act 2017 “to encourage the widespread participation of the ordinary citizenry in the new democratization dispensation.” The President assented to the Act on 8 March, 2017. The amendment was a response to the major shrinking of the political space during the time of the previous government.

## **2.3 Key Global and Regional Legal Instruments and Institutional Frameworks Ratified**

### **2.3.1 Global Legal Instruments and Institutional Frameworks**

#### **2.3.1.1 Universal Declaration on Human Rights (UDHR)**

The participation of women in political decision-making positions/processes was recognized as a political right after the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) in 1948. UDHR Articles 2 and 21 stipulate equal enjoyment of political rights without discrimination based on one’s sex or any other ground. In 1966, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) reaffirmed the UDHR principle of the right to partake in public and political life without discrimination. The Universal Declaration on Human Rights (UDHR) of 1948 recognizes the right of all persons to equality and non-discrimination. It also recognizes the right of all persons to life, access to information, education and to an adequate standard of living for its part, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) of 1966 recognizes the right of all persons to equality and non-discrimination.

#### **2.3.1.2 The Covenant on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)**

The road to CEDAW was set in motion by the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW)<sup>54</sup> which begun work on the draft Convention in 1976 and culminated with the adoption by the UN General Assembly of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in 1979. The Convention entered into force on September 3, 1981 and constituted the climax of the United Nations efforts to comprehensively codify the body of international legal



norms applicable for the full promotion and protection of the rights of women. It goes on to urge state parties to take appropriate measures to remove obstacles in the way of women's participation. Article 8 also further states that legislative instruments and temporary special measures should be instituted for its realization. CEDAW was ratified by The Gambia in 1992 and calls for equality between men and women in politics and at all levels of government.

### **2.3.1.3 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)**

The ICCPR contains a number of important safeguards relevant to the women's political participation. Like the UDHR, it guarantees the rights to non-discrimination, 49 equality, 50 life51 and privacy; 52 as well as the freedom of thought, conscience and religion. Article 25 provides for the right of every citizen without reasonable restrictions to take part in the conduct of public affairs, directly or through freely chosen representatives; to vote and to be elected at genuine periodic elections; and to have access, on general terms of equality, to public service.

### **2.3.1.4 The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (PFA)**

The Beijing Declaration and Plan for Action (PfA) were developed by consensus at the end of a UN convened Conference on Women that took place in Beijing, China in 1995. A total of 185 governments and more than 5,000 representatives from 2,100 non-governmental organizations participated in the conference. Following upon the consensus generated at the ICPD, states reiterated the equal and inherent dignity of women and committed themselves to and uphold the full implementation of the human rights of women and girls as an integral part of universal human rights. The declaration noted the explicit recognition and reaffirmation of women's right to political participation. It recommended the full and equal participation of women in political, civil, economic, social and cultural life at the national level. It also recommended the adoption of Gender Mainstreaming as a strategy to reduce gender inequality at all levels of development.

## **2.3.2 Regional Legal Instruments and Institutional Frameworks**

### **2.3.2.1 African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR)**

The African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights on the Rights of Women also focused on the equal participation of women and men in decision-making processes to achieve sustainable development. It states that initially 30% female representation should be aimed at by states who should work towards equal representation. The Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing calls for "Measures to ensure women's equal access to, and full participation in, power structures and decision – making and increase women's capacity to participate in decision making and leadership."

### **2.3.2.2 Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa**

The African Women's Protocol was adopted in July 2003 and came into force on 25 November 2005. This the 10th anniversary since it came into force. As of September 2013, the Protocol has been ratified by 36 of the 54 Member States of the AU with South Sudan yet to sign and ratify the Protocol. The Protocol's emergence was largely to bridge the gap in the African Charter which did not have elaborate provisions for the women's rights. Article 18(3) of the African Charter requires state parties to 'ensure the elimination of discrimination against.

Article 9 provides for the right to participation in political and decision- making process. It obliges State Parties to take specific positive actions to promote participative governance and equal participation of women in the political life of their countries, through an affirmative action, enabling national legislation and other measures to ensure that: Women participate without any discrimination in all elections; Women are represented equally at all levels with men in all electoral processes; Women are equal partners with men at all levels of development and implementation of State policies and development programmes. States Parties shall ensure increased and effective representation and participation of women at all levels of decision- making.

### **2.3.2.3 The African Youth Charter**

The African Youth Charter was adopted at the seventh Ordinary Session of the African Union on July 2, 2006 in Banjul, The Gambia and entered into force on August 8, 2009. Under the Charter, states undertake to guarantee to all youth the enjoyment of rights and freedoms recognized in the Charter without discrimination on any ground, including sex. States also recognize and guarantee the rights of young people to privacy and to free consent to marriage as well as their freedoms of expression including the right to receive 'information and ideas of all kinds, through any medium of the young person's choice'; and thought, conscience and religion.

### **2.3.2.4 African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (ACDEG)**

The ACDEG is an overt commitment of the AU to promote universal values and principles of democracy, good governance, human rights and development. It further seeks to entrench in the Continent a culture of change of power based on the holding of regular, free, fair and transparent elections conducted by competent, independent and impartial national electoral bodies. It is an instrument aimed at promoting both human rights and democracy, which are a sine qua non for development.

### **2.3.2.5 The African Union Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality**

The Gambia is signatory to the African Union (AU) Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa, adopted by the heads of states of the AU in July 2004. In the Declaration, the Heads of

States reaffirmed their commitment to gender equality as enshrined in Article 4(1) of the Constitutive Act of the African Union as well as other existing commitments, principles and obligations set out in the various regional, continental and international human rights instruments, particularly those addressing women’s rights. The Heads of State made eight solemn commitments in the Declaration. Commitment 5 of the Declaration specifically calls for the promotion of ‘The Gender Parity Principle at National and local Levels’. This commitment calls for concerted effort to promote gender parity at all levels. The essence of this commitment is that there must be a deliberate and concerted effort to promote the parity principle on an incremental basis.

### **2.3.2.6 ECOWAS Protocol on Good Governance and Democracy**

The Protocol contains eight constitutional convergence principles shared by all 15 member states including independence of the judiciary, zero tolerance of power obtained by unconstitutional means and strengthening of national parliaments. The Protocol in its preamble recalled that women’s rights have been recognized and guaranteed in all international human rights instruments and regional human rights instruments. It further provides that ECOWAS states party to the protocol shall ensure popular participation in decision making, strict adherence to democratic principles and decentralization of power at all levels of governance’.

## **2.4 Key National Development Frameworks**

### **2.4.1 Sustainable Development Goals**

The Gambia, like many other countries demonstrated its commitment to the implementation of Agenda 2030 by mainstreaming the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into its National Development Plan (NDP 2018 – 2021) as well as the Gambia Recovery Focused National Development Plan 2023 - 2027; providing an opportunity to align and address its development priorities with SDG targets and indicators.

The Gambia launched the SDGs nationally in November 2015 with support from the UNDP. The launching was preceded by stakeholders’ consultations grouped into Economic, Social, and Environment clusters and tasked to critically look at the SDGs and recommend options for mainstreaming in the NDP. Recognizing the challenges of implementing all the 17 Goals and 169 targets; the time horizon of the National Development Plans; the country’s context; the data constraints; and the financial requirements, stakeholders provided the initial prioritization which resulted in all Goals and around 111 targets identified as high priority.

### **2.4.2 National Development Plans and frameworks for Promoting Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment**

The Government recognized gender equality and women’s empowerment as a key enabler to the attainment of sustainable development. It has aligned the institutional arrangements for the SDGs

and the NDP to enhance effective and efficient coordination for sustained gender equity and women empowerment.

A new draft constitution is being reviewed which espouses respect for fundamental human rights and freedoms, and the rule of law. The constitution also advocates for gender balance and fair representation of women, youth and persons with disabilities in parliament, other statutory bodies as well as in the State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs).

## **NATIONAL RESPONSE TO GENDER EQUALITY AND THE EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN**

As a response to the attainment of gender equality and the empowerment of women, The Gambia had made significant gains over the years, most importantly, the Women's Amendment Act (2010) on the prohibition of Female Genital Mutilation in 2015 and the Children's Amendment Act on the prohibition of Child Marriage in 2016. These two legislations complement the Constitution (1997), the Women's Amendment Act (2015), the Children's Act (2005), the Trafficking in Persons Act (2007), the Tourism Offences Act (2003), the Domestic Violence Act (2013), the Sexual Offences Act (2013), and the Labor Act (2007) which have all been promulgated to address the rights of women and children and to combat discrimination in all its forms. Additionally, a Network Against Gender-Based Violence made up of relevant Government Ministries and Civil Society organizations has been established which supported and maintained Nine One-Stop-Centers in Major and District Hospitals for the provision of medical, legal, and counselling support to victims of sexual and Gender Based violence.

The Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Welfare in partnership with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) established a sexual gender-based violence victim center.

Moreover, in 2017, out of 12 new judicial appointments to the Superior Courts of The Gambia, 5 of the judges are women, and 4 out of the 7 judges of the newly constituted Gambia Court of Appeal are now women including the President of the Court of Appeal. For the first time in the history of The Gambia, we now have a Gambian female judge of the Supreme Court which is also now fully indigenized. Out of a total number of 20 judges in the superior courts, 10 are women; in like manner, 22 out of the 42 magistrates in the subordinate courts are women.

The Gambia as part of the global community also domesticated and ratified key global and Regional Instruments including the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, CEDAW, International Convention on Human and Peoples Rights, The Beijing Declaration and platform for action, African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights among others. The response also aligned and formed an integral part of the key national Development Frameworks including the NDPs and SDGs.

However, despite the concerted efforts by government and partners in mainstreaming gender into the development agenda, gender inequalities remain pervasive in the Gambia. Hence, the

current push for a different approach would not only ensure women's empowerment, but a sustainable development for the country through gender equality policy initiatives that could help balance power relations between men and women, and transform the institutions which continue to perpetrate gender injustice, poverty, and underdevelopment. New development imperatives continue to support the goal of gender equality and women's empowerment, including the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Broad and systematic changes are therefore required to transform the institutional policy processes in such a way that they become gender sensitive and responsive. A new National Gender Policy is therefore required to chart the way for this institutional change, and social transformation amenable to the principles of gender equality and women's empowerment.

A gender situational analysis on themes such as Gender and Education and Training, Gender and Governance, Gender and Nutrition, Gender and Reproductive Health, Gender and HIV/AIDS among others highlighted a wide disparity between women and men in each of the thematic areas.

## **POLICY FORMULATION PROCESS**

The following activities were carried out during the policy formulation process:

**Inception meeting:** A meeting with key stakeholders was conducted in a bid to detail a proposed approach for the process, including a work program with a list of periodic deliverables and a corresponding time frame and methodology. A list of potential risks to the completion of the assignment and mitigation measures incorporated into the inception report.

The next set of activities after the adoption of the inception report was stakeholder mapping and analysis. A review of achievements, challenges, and gaps of the gender policy (2010 – 2020), as a basis for evaluating positive outcomes of the policy, as well as aspects of the policy that did not produce positive outcomes. The methods include desktop review, key informant interviews, focus group discussions, and National Consultation Meetings, which lasted for 18 days in all the Regions and Municipalities of The Gambia.

A midterm review of the Policy (2010 – 2020) was conducted in 2017 which entailed analysis of the institutional mechanisms for gender mainstreaming, a presentation of institutional arrangements for promoting gender equality in the country, including the socioeconomic and political empowerment of Gambian women.

For instance, the various institutions and their mandates for the implementation of the gender policy were identified. Furthermore, a gender analysis of The Gambian context was also conducted. This analysis provided a gender perspective on key sectors of society, including education, health, livelihoods, governance, human rights, sexual and reproductive health, and poverty reduction. The information derived from the institutional mechanism of The Gambia gender machinery and gender analysis was useful for the formulation of the new National Gender Policy 2025 – 2034).

Having completed the above-mentioned processes, a draft National Gender Policy (2025 – 2034) was developed. This was followed by a validation workshop attended by 40 participants from government ministries and departments, the CSOs and NGOs international organisations and some private sector institutions . Among these were members of the National Gender Focal Point Network representing all the sectoral ministries, the UN system and key NGOs and CSOs, who actively participated in the policy formulation. Comments received from the workshop were incorporated.

### **Policy Implementation**

The Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Welfare is the custodian of the National Gender Policy. However, the Policy will be implemented by a Gender Machinery which was created as a national mechanism to mainstream gender in the development process., The membership of the Machinery includes, the National Women’s Council, the Directorate of Gender Equality and Women Empowerment, National Assembly committee on Gender Children and Refugees, Line Ministries, Departments and agencies, NGO`s, and CSOs among others.

The Implementation Plan of the Policy details the priority areas and related, objectives. For each action, the following information is provided: Outcome Indicators, responsibility and timeframe.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

The National Gender Policy implementation requires an integrated and effective monitoring and evaluation system with appropriate and efficient feedback mechanisms. This requires undertaking monitoring and evaluation functions at all levels including gathering information at the macro, meso and micro levels. The National Gender Monitoring Framework and the Gender Management Information System (GMIS) will be strengthened. Gender units at organizations or institutions shall provide quarterly reports on activities, which will be fed into a data-base. The Directorate of Gender Equality and Women Empowerment and key institutions and at different levels will also be strengthened to support the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the policy. The Directorate of Policy Development and Strategic Planning and Reporting shall identify key performance indicators to monitor progress. The Policy shall be subjected to a mid-term review and a terminal evaluation.

## **2.5 The Problem Statement**

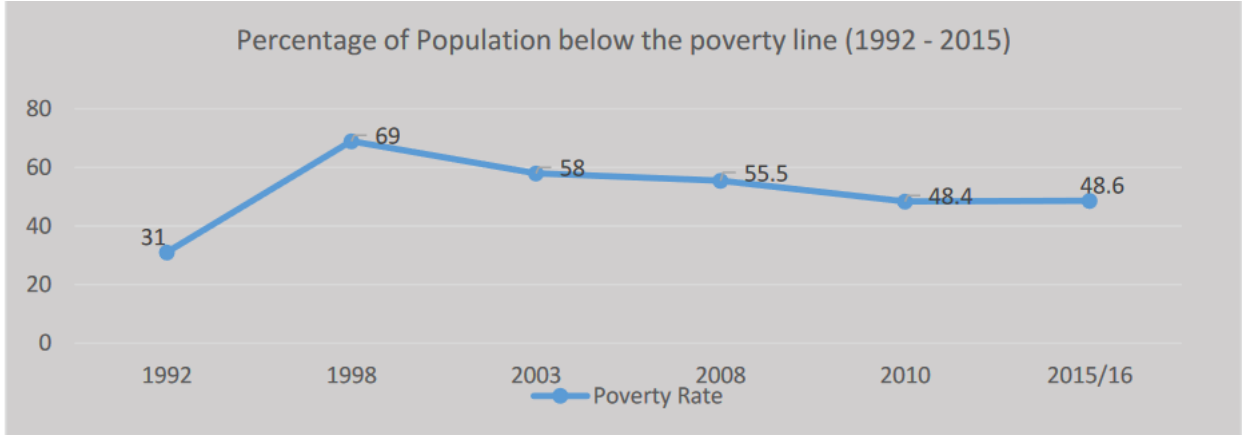
Despite efforts by government at integrating women gender and development into the development agenda, gender inequalities remain pervasive in The Gambia. Hence, the current push for a different approach which would not only ensure women’s empowerment, but a sustainable development for the country through gender equality policy initiatives that could help balance power relations between men and women, and transform the institutions which continue to perpetrate gender injustice, poverty, and underdevelopment. New development imperatives continue to support the goal of gender equality and women’s empowerment, including the

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Broad and systematic changes are therefore required to transform the institutional policy processes in such a way that they become gender sensitive and responsive. A new National Gender Policy is therefore required to chart the way for this institutional change, and social transformation amenable to the principles of gender equality.

**3: SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS**

**3.1 Gender and Economic Development, Poverty Reduction and Resilience Building**

The 2015/16 Integrated Household Survey indicated overall poverty slightly increased from 48.4% in 2010 to 48.6 % in 2015/16. In spite of a relatively high level of domestic inflation, the macro-economic situation is generally stable. The Economic Policy Framework enable a more effective productive sector and private investment gain significant payoffs resulting from major public investments in education and health. Education at all levels account for 22% of the national consolidated expenditure budget whilst health accounts for 7.1%.



**Source: The National Report on the Implementation of Beijing Platform for Action**

About 48.6% of the population lived below the international poverty line in 2015/16. There is hope for improvement in the living conditions of the Gambian, as the percentage trend of poverty is going down. In that vein the Government of The Gambia renews its commitment to reducing poverty. Respondents were asked a question on how often in the last 12 months did their household experience difficulties satisfying the following needs: food, school fees, health care, house rent, utility. Issues relating to house rent received the highest proportion of households (86.3%) that did not experience difficulties paying for it, followed by utility (73.4%), school fees (70.4%), health

care 63.5%) and food (57.4%). With reference to the above graph the 2015 perception rate has dropped significantly for both male and female compared to the 2010 reports.

### **3.2 Sexual and Gender Based Violence**

Sexual and Gender Based Violence Gender-Based Violence continues to be an issue of concern. The major forms of violence perpetuated on women are domestic and sexual violence, child marriage, forced marriage, and female genital mutilation/cutting. The GDHS 2019/20 indicates that 2 out of 3 women experience some form of sexual and gender based violence in their lifetime. 46% of women age 15-49 have experienced physical violence, 41% spousal violence, FGM/C 72.6%, (aged 0-14, 45.9%), while 0-4 is 25.1% According to the MICS 2018 , 3 out of 10 girls are married before their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday which is 34.2%, marriage before the age of 15 is 10.9%, girls from poor households are 4 times more likely to marry than those from rich households which is 11.4% for the richest compared to 44% for the poorest, 29.2% for the urban areas compared to 46.8% for girls in the rural areas.

### **3.3 Gender, Education and Training**

The Gambia made significant advances in realizing the Gender and Women's Empowerment Policy objectives in education notably in the field of education and training of women and girls in the fields of Vocational Skills, Science and technology but significant challenges still remain. The National development Plan prioritises investments in: (I) enhancing access to early childhood education, (ii) improving quality learning, with special emphasis on Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM),

In all the public schools in The Gambia, education is free for both boys and girls up to Grade 12. Further support through scholarship packages is provided through the Girls' Scholarship Trust Fund (school improvement grant), the ECOWAS Gender Development Centre Scholarship for Girls and other scholarship packages provided by development and bilateral partners. The Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education also provides donkeys and donkey carts to feeder villages within two to three kilometers to schools in their communities. This is done for easy access and safety for students especially the girls. Over the past eight years, about one thousand, seven hundred girls and five hundred boys were re-entered back to school. Most of them are now in tertiary institutions.

The School Improvement Grant (SIG) initiated in 2018, covers school fees, book rental and the development fee up to senior secondary level for both boys and girls in school. This programme is being implemented to improve re-entering of students out of school due to pregnancy. This re-entry program had provided educational opportunities for out-of-school children and youths to attain basic education, lifelong learning and livelihood skills. The Ministry also established tutorial centers which are evenly spread across the country, from regions 1 to 6.



### Table 3: School completion rate

Table 1 Percentage of children in the population who completed Grades 6, 9 and 12 by gender

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Grade 6								
M	73.3%	71.2%	73.8%	73.3%	73.3%	72.8%	74.7%	77.4%
F	73.9%	70.5%	71.1%	73.4%	73.6%	74.4%	76.0%	80.0%
Both	73.6%	70.9%	72.4%	73.4%	73.4%	73.6%	75.4%	78.7%
Grade 9								
M	62.7%	64.7%	65.1%	66.3%	66.0%	66.0%	60.8%	57.5%
F	56.3%	62.0%	64.2%	63.2%	63.3%	63.5%	61.2%	60.2%
Both	59.5%	63.3%	64.7%	64.8%	64.6%	64.7%	61.0%	58.9%
Grade 12								
M	31.4%	32.1%	34.1%	33.9%	37.0%	36.4%	37.1%	37.7%
F	56.3%	62.0%	64.2%	63.2%	63.3%	63.5%	61.2%	60.2%
Both	59.5%	63.3%	64.7%	64.8%	64.6%	64.7%	61.0%	58.9%

Percentage of children in the population who completed Grades 6, 9 and 12 by gender

### 3.4 Gender Environment and Climate Change

The Gambia is ranked as the 10th most vulnerable country to Climate Change by the University of Notre Dame Global Adaptation Index (ND-GAIN) with a vulnerability rating of 0.4357. The report classifying the country among the top 44 most vulnerable LDCs. The need for the Gambia to invest in measures and innovations that builds resilience and adaptation capacity to climate vulnerability is imperative; as its population and context must be protected. Vulnerability to climate change in The Gambia is linked to the country’s widespread poverty and limited adaptive capacity to deal with the effects of changes. Limited access to fiscal and technological resources to make quick changes to lifestyles, especially with respect to food supplies, and low access to risk-spreading mechanisms, render many people very susceptible to the current variability and future climatic changes. Highly-vulnerable groups include women and youth,[1] but women’s voices in decision making at all levels are very limited and often entirely absent. Yet real progress

on climate change and broader community development cannot be achieved without the full participation and inputs of women and youth.

### **3.5 Gender and Sexual and Reproductive Health**

The median age at first sexual intercourse for women age 25-49 is 18.5 years, compared with 21.4 years among men 25-49. Women with secondary or higher education begin sexual activity 4.2 years later than women with no education (21.2 years versus 17.0 years). Ten percent of women begin sexual activity before age 15, while 44% begin sexual activity before age 18. In The Gambia, women marry about 10 years earlier than men. The median age at first marriage for women age 25-49 years is 19.4 years. The median age at first marriage for men age 30-59 is 29.1 years. Women in rural areas marry 2.3 years earlier than women in urban areas (17.9 years versus 20.2 years).

The Maternal Mortality Ratio has improved over the years but it still remains unacceptably high at 289 per 100,000 live births (DHS, 2019-20) down from 433/100,000 livebirths in 2013. Low birth weight (LBW) is also reported to be 11.0% (DHS, 2019-20) down from 12% (DHS, 2013). The proportion of women 15 – 49 years Literate is reported to be 48.1% and this is much lesser than that of their male counterparts (63.4%) who are within the same age range (MICS, 2018).

Thirty-four percent of married women age 15-49 are in a polygamous union, meaning they have at least one co-wife. Fourteen percent of men age 15-49 have more than one wife. The use of family planning has increased from 9% in 2013 to 19% in 2019-20. Additionally, modern methods use among married women increased from 8% in 2013 to 17% in 2019-2020. Unmet need for family planning is defined as the proportion of married women who want to delay or stop childbearing but are not using any family planning method. In The Gambia, 24% of married women age 15-49 have an unmet need for family planning—19% want to delay, while 6% want to stop childbearing. Demand satisfied by modern method measures the extent to which women who want to delay or stop childbearing are actually using modern family planning methods. Forty percent of the demand for family planning is satisfied by modern methods. The demand for family planning that is satisfied by modern methods is higher among currently married women with a secondary education or higher (43%) than among women with a primary education (34%) or no education (39%). The total demand for family planning in The Gambia among married women increased from 34% in 2013 to 43% in 2019-20. Similarly, the demand satisfied by modern methods has increased from 24% to 40% during the same time period. Unmet need has remained unchanged during the same period.

### **3.6 Gender and HIV/ AIDS**

In 2013, the first Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) was conducted in The Gambia. Findings from the DHS estimated the prevalence of HIV to be 1.9% among the 15-49 years of age (both males and females); 2.1% among females and 1.7% among males. Basse recorded the highest HIV prevalence among males, 3.0%; and the lowest for females, 0.2%. Among males, Mansakonko recorded the highest HIV prevalence in 2020, according to the National HIV Sentinel Surveillance (NSS) study, results from 12 sites showed that HIV1 is 1.5% and HIV2 0.02%. According to the

Joint United Nations Programme on HIV and AIDS (UNAIDS, 2020), there were approximately 27,000 people living with HIV (PLHIV), 2,100 new HIV infections, and 1,300 AIDS-related deaths in the country in 2020. With respect to progress towards 90-90-90, 43% of PLHIV know their status, 68% are on treatment and 19% are virally suppressed.

According to the most recent National Sentinel Surveillance (NSS) study conducted among 6120 antenatal women in 12 health facilities (3 hospitals and 9 health centres) in 2017, the prevalence of HIV-1 is estimated at 1.67% and HIV-2 at 0.07%.<sup>8</sup> The National AIDS Secretariat promulgated the HIV/AIDS Act 2015 which has mandated the agency to coordinate and provide policy adviser the Government on issues relating to HIV/AIDS and other critical health matters. The agency also provides Voluntary Counseling and Testing (VCT), Anti-retroviral therapy (ART), services for prevention of parent to child (PPTCT), and treatment for infections are offered free of charge. As of 2017, the number of HIV counseling and testing has increased in the year 20—from 52 and 48 PMTCT (in the year-- sites from --- and ---respectively. 78,267 people were tested and all received their results in 2017 and 86% of HIV. Positive pregnant women received ARV prophylaxis for PMTCT by 2017. In addition, there has been a scaling up of the ART centers from 8 in 2015 to 15 in 2017 established at least one in each District Health Centers, Hospitals and Community Reproductive Health Clinics to increase access.

### **3.7 Gender and Nutrition**

There is evidence that in The Gambia, malnutrition still continues to be a major public health problem with the most vulnerable groups being women and children. It is evident that the majority of Gambian women, especially those living in rural areas are in a constant state of energy deficit due to poor dietary habits, heavy workload and frequent infections. According to the Demographic Health Survey (DHS, 2019-20), 13.6% of nonpregnant women of child bearing ages were underweight, while 22.2% and 14.2% were overweight and obese, respectively. While the percentage of underweight had improved i.e., decreased from 16.7%, overweight and obesity increased from 15.3% and 7.3% respectively (DHS, 2013). Amongst pregnant women, 7.5% were reported to be wasted. The DHS (2019-20) also reported that 44.3% of women 15 – 49 years were anemic (54.8% for pregnant women, 46.6% for breastfeeding mothers and 42.4% for non-pregnant, non-lactating women) down from 60.3% in 2013. This is an indication that both under-nutrition and over-nutrition as well as micronutrient deficiency are prevalent amongst women.

Also, women who are wasted are at a greater risk of delivering LBW babies, which leads to the intergenerational effect of malnutrition, as LBW babies are likely to become small as adults. Addressing maternal nutrition requires the life cycle approach since the problem tends to start in the utero and continues into infancy, childhood, adulthood and old age. Over the years, efforts put in place by the government to address maternal malnutrition in The Gambia, including training of health workers on basic nutrition, using the life cycle approach, promotion of dietary diversification, with the support to establishing communal or backyard gardens, iron/folate supplementation of pregnant women, the provision of labor-saving devices, targeted

supplementary feeding of pregnant women and the promotion of optimal infant and young child feeding practices.

### **3.8 Gender and Access to Justice**

In 2010, the Women's Act was assented to by the President 28<sup>th</sup> May to incorporate and enforce UN CEDAW and the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa.

Section 7 of the Act provides that every woman is entitled to equality and justice before the law and to equal protection of the law. Government is obligated to provide legal aid support; ensure law enforcement organs are equipped to effectively interpret and enforce gender equity and equality; ensure that women are equitably represented in the judiciary; and take adequate steps for reform discriminatory laws. Other national legislations such as the Domestic Violence Act 2013, Sexual Offence Act 2013, Local Government Act 2002, Children's Act 2005 and its amendment of 2016 etc., all call for nondiscrimination and improved protection for women and children.

The 1997 Constitution section 33(1) provides for the equality of all persons before the law and that no person shall be discriminated based on different grounds including gender.

In spite of this Constitutional provision, Section 33(5) (c) and (d) provide exceptions for the non-application of the non-discriminatory clause in matters of personal law as it relates to adoption, marriage, divorce, burial and devolution of property on death or other matters as well as customary law in respect of any matter for persons to whom personal and customary laws are applicable in so far as it relates to discrimination. Section 28 states that women shall be accorded full and equal dignity of person with men and shall be treated equally with men including equal opportunities in political, economic and social activities.

### **3.9 Gender and Governance**

Women's political participation and representation have gained momentum over the years. However, the issue has been inadequately considered by state parties as stipulated in different international instruments such as the Beijing Platform of Action, the CEDAW, and the AU Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa and the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325, and related resolutions on women, peace and security etc.

According to the Mo Ibrahim Index of African Governance, The Gambia ranks 24 out of 53 African States. The UNDP Human Development Index 2020 ranks The Gambia 172 out of 186 countries. It further ranks The Gambia on the Gender Inequalities Index at 0.846. Anecdotal evidence revealed that political participation had been male-dominated for centuries. However, recent decades have seen improvements.

The extent of women's participation and representation in politics is a vital indicator of the Recovery Focused National Development Plan (2023-2027) locally branded “YIRIWA”, under the critical enablers, i.e., ensuring gender and women’s empowerment for sustainable development. Gender parity in politics is to be seen in whether women are in the place to make or influence public decision on the same level as men. The Beijing Platform for action on gender equality and women’s empowerment (1995) posits that fairness in decision-making is integral to advancing women's rights. Women's balanced participation in decision-making is a question of simple justice or democracy, an essential condition for women's interests to be considered.

In the cabinet, out of the 21 Ministers, only 3 are women as of June 2024 compared to 4 Ministers, including the Vice President in 2016. This means there is a significant percentage reduction in cabinet portfolio occupied by women from 21.0% to 10.5%. This means The Gambia is far below the prescribe 30 % target of the CEDAW on women's representation at the cabinet level. This same performance of the Gambia is also noted in other top management positions like in the top hierarchy of the civil service, where for the first time a woman has occupied the position of secretary-general; until recent (2024) 7 out of 30 Permanent Secretaries are female ( Female: 23.33% and Male 76.66%), while 15 out of the 54 Deputy Permanent Secretaries are female ( 28% DPS Female and 72% of DPSs are male). Currently, among the CEOs of Parastatals there is only one female.

The 2023 local council elections report shows that there were 365 contestants, of which 56 were women 17 of whom won. This represents 4.7% of the total number of contestants and 30% female councilors. Women's involvement in governance structures and their participation in public decision-making at the regional level is negligible. This could be attributed in part to the high illiteracy rates amongst women. Additional factors contributing to the limited participation and representation women in decision-making processes are cultural and traditional.

## 4: CHALLENGES TO GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

### 4.0 Introduction

Challenges facing the Gambia in achieving gender equality and women's empowerment are diverse. As indicated above, successive governments have made several efforts to ensure that gender equality and women's empowerment provisions in the 1997 Constitution, as well as provisions of national, regional and global legal instruments, policies and actions listed in the various policies are implemented successfully to the benefit of all Gambians. Unfortunately, there are systemic challenges and implementation gaps that obstruct the achievements of intended results. These gaps and systemic challenges are discussed below.

### 4.1 Challenges Identified

The following are the challenges to achieving targets for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Gambia.

#### 4.1.1 Limited gender mainstreaming and coordinating role of the Ministry

The Ministry of Gender as the highest authority in the gender machinery. As a new ministry, it is limited in providing the required effective and inclusive national coordination role for mainstreaming gender in The Gambia, in the absence of a gender mainstreaming strategy; budgetary and capacity constraints.

#### 4.1.2 Conceptual clarification of gender equality in the public sector

There is enough evidence that government and public sector structures/institutions, some development partners and CSOs still demonstrate insufficient understanding and knowledge on gender equality and gender mainstreaming. Inadequate professional/technical knowledge and skills on the use of gender as a unit of analysis in conducting gender analysis, gender mainstreaming strategy and frameworks.

#### 4.1.3 Feminization of poverty

Poverty is a major problem for women and girls in The Gambia especially for rural women. Female-headed households more than male-headed households are performing better in poverty ratings as compared with males<sup>1</sup>. This notwithstanding, the incidence of poverty is much more

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<sup>1</sup> Integrated Household Survey, 2003

among females than males with women earning an average of \$700 less than men per annum(UNCDF,2019, PoWER Assessment of Women’s Economic Empowerment in the Gambia).

#### **4.1.4 Socio-cultural, traditional beliefs and socialization**

Due to the patriarchal structure of most societies in The Gambia, systemic male domination and female subordination, socio-cultural and discriminatory institutions and structures restrict women (including the marginalized and the vulnerable) from access to equal opportunities, control over productive resources, such as land, credit, innovations, labor-saving devices, and equipment. Social cultural and traditional beliefs also affect women's access to information, education, and training opportunities among other support systems.

#### **4.1.5 Inadequate basic social services**

There exist inadequate basic social services such as education, health, water and sanitation in a number of communities to enable the majority of ordinary citizens to have decent livelihood.

#### **4.1.6 Violence against women**

Violence against women and human trafficking is a major problem in the Gambia that needs more aggressive and a quicker policy response. The high incidence of rape and other sexual offences from records is alarming. Even though reported cases have been legally dealt with, there is the need for national policy action to curb the prevalence of rape, sexual abuse and wife battering.

#### **4.1.7 Lack of effective monitoring and evaluation systems and practice within the gender machinery**

The absence of developing effective gender responsive M&E system and ensuring its operationalization results in several problems including ‘limited or no tracking of implementation and results’, ‘poor learning and direction for success’, ‘outright failure of projects’. It is necessary to develop and operationalize an M&E system that is gender responsive in a results-oriented manner to promote regular tracking of progress and sector policies, programmes and actions for effective transformation of lives of the citizenry.

#### **4.1.8 Low representation of women in politics**

This is still a challenge because the required 30% female representation has not been achieved at either Cabinet or the National Assembly and Local Governance. Women are still underrepresented in all the major sectors of both public and private life in the Gambia.

#### **4.1.9 Discriminatory Customary Practices**

Systemic gender inequalities, social biases and cultural practices predisposes the girl child to varying forms of abuse including child and forced marriages, FGM/C, and denial of education.

#### **4.1.10 Limited access to land and other productive resources by women for agricultural purposes**

Customary law predominantly governs the land tenure system in The Gambia. Customary law considers property as a family asset to be administered by the family head, who is usually a man. As a result, women's access, ownership and control over land and agricultural inputs is relatively poor. This partly has roots in inheritance systems that are largely patrilineal which is known to favour mostly males. Irrespective of this, to some extent, women in matrilineal communities do inherit land from either their female ancestors or fathers. Generally, women need credit or finance to prepare the land if they access it. This is due to the fact that they do not have collateral, they are unable to access formal credit from the financial institutions and they depend on the informal ones which are expensive.

#### **4.1.11 Maternal mortality and reproductive health**

Over the years several efforts and interventions were made by government and development partners in the area of Sexual and Reproductive Health, resulting in the reduction of maternal mortality from 433/ 100,000 live births (DHS 2013) to 289 / 100,000 live births (DHS 2019 – 2020). Despite this achievement however, efforts will be further intensified to improve maternal health.

#### **4.1.12 Limited Financial resource allocation to the Gender Machinery**

Despite the progress registered in the creation of the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social welfare, government allocations and support to the gender policy implementation is still inadequate.

## **5: GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND OBJECTIVES**

### **5.1 Introduction**

The policy framework emphasizes an all-embracing (holistic) approach, one that includes ensuring gender equality in access/control over productive resources such as land in line with the existing policy laws and constitutional provisions, labour, technology, capital/finance, and information. Also, the framework establishes efforts towards embarking on affirmative action to rectify errors of the past particularly, as they relate to discrimination against women and reducing gender and geographical disparities in the distribution of national resources. Attention is given to gender mainstreaming strategy, in creating a new order of social justice and equity premised on the inclusion of all hitherto excluded.



## 5.2. Purpose of the National Gender Policy

The purpose of the policy is to establish a clear framework for the identification, implementation and coordination of interventions designed to achieve gender equality and women's empowerment in the Gambia. The policy will serve as a guide to all stakeholders involved in planning, resource allocation, implementation and monitoring and evaluation of programmes at all levels to ensure the effective mainstreaming of gender in policy formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

## 5.3. Vision, Mission and Goal

### *Vision*

Women and men, boys and girls can realize their full potential as economic, social and political actors, free from all gender discrimination and gender-based violence in peace and security.

### *Mission*

To accelerate gender equality and women's empowerment with the support of Government and development partners to ensure sustainable gender parity in all spheres of life.

### *Goal*

The overall goal of this policy is to mainstream gender in all national and sectoral policies, programmes, plans and budgets to achieve gender, equity, equality and women's empowerment in the development process.

## **Broad Policy Objectives**

To ensure that gender concerns are mainstreamed in all sectoral policies and programmes national development frameworks such as Recovery Focused National Development Plan (RF NDP) , and that men and women participate as equal partners and beneficiaries in the economic development process for sustainable livelihood development. The policy aims:

1. To ensure equal access by girls and women, boys and men to quality formal and non-formal education at all levels.
2. To provide and make accessible quality health care services including sexual and reproductive health, information and related services to women, men and adolescents.;
3. To ensure equitable access to quality comprehensive and combination of. HIV Prevention Care and Support;
4. Take measures to ensure women's equal access to and full participation in governance structures, leadership, and decision-making;
5. Promote and protect the human rights of women, men, girls and boys through the effective /full implementation of all human rights (national and international) instruments;

6. To provide direction for the development of effective programmes on awareness creation on the causes and consequences of Gender-Based Violence and other human rights violation.
7. To protect women and girls from all forms of discriminatory practice through advocacy and legislative measures.
8. To set guidelines/standards and ensure the production of harmonized appropriate messages for public awareness creation and promotion of understanding of the link between gender equality and development through the media, community meetings etc.
9. To guide the allocation of adequate resources and public expenditure through the institutionalization of gender responsive budgeting in all sectors and at all levels; and
10. Ensure the effective mainstreaming of gender perspectives in emerging / crises issues such as climate change, food, fuel and economic crises, environmental, humanitarian emergencies and disaster management.

## **5.5 Guiding Principles**

Implementation of this policy is guided by the following principles.

### **5.5.1 Gender equality and Equity**

Gender equality and equity is an integral part of national development processes and reinforces the overall development objectives in the country. This policy emphasizes government's commitment to eliminating gender inequalities and promote the equal and full empowerment of women in the national development process.

### **5.5.2 Gender mainstreaming**

The main guiding principle is to mainstream gender in all sectoral policies, strategies, budgets and planning to ensure equal distribution of resources.

### **5.5.3 Affirmative Action**

Bridging existing gender gaps in the various development sectors requires preferential attention for the disadvantaged. Affirmative action will be adopted address to address the existing gender gaps political representation as well as in the economic and social spheres.

### **5.4.5 Political Will**

There is enough “political will” from government and all players at all levels, in the economy particularly officials from the Executive, Legislature, Judiciary, Civil Society, the Media, Private

Sector, Youth and Faith Based Organizations (FBOs) to mainstream gender.

#### **5.4.6 Resource Availability**

The Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Welfare be well resourced and positioned with the capabilities to mainstream gender into all aspects of good and accountable governance practices

#### **5.4.7 Human Rights**

Women's rights are human rights and must be upheld, promoted and protected at all times.

#### **CORE VALUES**

The core values of this policy will anchor on Fairness, Inclusiveness, Integrity, Teamwork / Partnership and Networking Transparency Accountability, and right based approach to development.

## 6: POLICY PRIORITIES AREAS, OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS

### 6.1 Introduction

The priority interventions and action areas are arranged into 15 thematic areas. The key priorities to address are:

1. Gender, and Economic Development, Poverty Reduction and Resilience Building
2. Gender Mainstreaming and Machinery
3. Gender, Education and Training
4. Gender and Health
5. Rural Women and Development
6. Women and Men in Special Circumstances
7. Sexual and Gender-based violence
8. Gender and Governance
9. Gender and the Media
10. Gender and Climate Change
11. Gender, and Human Rights
12. Women, Peace and Security
13. Gender, Fisheries and Water Resources
14. Gender, Technology and Digitalization
15. Gender and Migration

### 6.2 Gender, and Economic Development, Poverty Reduction and Resilience Building

**Thematic Policy Statement:** The Government shall take measures to promote economic development, reduce the incidence of poverty, and build resilience amongst the poor particularly women, youth and the person's with disability.

**Objective 1:** To accelerate efforts and commitments of government in empowering women (including women with disability) to have safe and secure livelihoods, access to economic opportunities, decent work to improve earnings and reduce poverty.

**Objective 2:** To reduce extreme poverty among men and women

#### Actions

- Provision of livelihood skills to women and men through vocational training
- Strengthen and expand the National Social protection programme to cover all vulnerable groups.

**Objective 3:** Enhance Agricultural value chain to address poverty and build resilience of women

## **Actions**

1. Eradicate cultural and traditional barriers including land tenure systems that prevent women from owning land and other economic resources.
2. Establish an Agriculture Investment Bank to ensure access to affordable financing and investment in the agricultural sector.
3. Establishment of a pilot regional processing plants, which could serve as incubators training and promoting value addition to agricultural products.
4. Conduct feasibility study to mitigate the perennial problems women face in marketing their produce.
5. Enhance the capacity of the Gender Unit of the Ministry of Agriculture to serve as a technical adviser on gender mainstreaming in projects and departments within the Ministry of Agriculture.
6. Create broad and effective partnerships among government, humanitarian organizations, and other partners to engage in disaster risk reduction activities and address the underlying factors in the urban safety and disaster management.
7. Develop an efficient response mechanism to disaster management and make available the necessary resources.
8. Develop institutional frameworks and structures capable of preventing, preparing, and responding to disasters at national, regional, and local levels.
9. Create a body of knowledge that is useful in supporting the government, humanitarian organizations, and other partners to anticipate, plan for, and manage disasters effectively.
10. Integrate disaster risk reduction into sustainable policies and plans
11. Establish a agricultural value chain to support in the preservation of goods;

**Objective 4:** To enhance Business ownership and entrepreneurship for women in The Gambia

### **Actions:**

- Develop more programmes and expand Women Enterprise Fund (WEF) to further ensure women's access to finance to start a micro enterprise and for existing ones to scale up and expand.
- Training of WEF beneficiaries on Financial literacy, business management, Entrepreneurship, amongst others
- Provision of low interest credit facilities/grants for business start-ups and improvement purposes.
- Introduction of new digital products targeting women entrepreneurs such as the Women's Entrepreneurs App
- Advocate for the establishment of a Trade Investment Bank
- Establish a Women development bank

- Develop and implement appropriate strategies to enable Women Entrepreneurs grow and expand their Businesses
- Scaling-up of the She-trade, business advisory group programme
- Create employment for women in the informal sector, thus reducing poverty.
- Study visit for exchange of experience for the Women Enterprise Fund
- 

### 6.3 Gender Mainstreaming and Machinery

**Thematic Policy Statement:** Government of the Gambia is committed to institutionalize Gender Mainstreaming in sectoral policies, programmes and strategies as well as implementation of an inclusive gender mainstreaming governance strategy.

#### Specific Objectives

**Objective I:** To ensure gender concerns are adequately addressed at conceptualization, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

#### Actions

1. Assess, and set -up Gender management structures such as the Cabinet subcommittee on Gender, technical Gender Committee, Gender focal points network, parliamentary caucus on Gender for effective gender mainstreaming.
2. Strengthen / build capacity of the structure for effective gender mainstreaming
3. Capacity building of the Gender machinery including training of policy makers, local authorities, civil society organizations
4. Enhance coordination, monitoring and evaluation of Gender mainstreaming and programming efforts
5. Intensify advocacy efforts to ensure Gender mainstreaming at all levels

**Objective 2:** To mainstream Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) into the Public Sector Budget Expenditure

#### Actions:

1. Create awareness on the importance of GRB among key stakeholders
2. Assess and integrate GRB into the Public Financial Management system (PFM)
3. Sectoral performance monitoring and evaluation of PFM
4. Submit Annual sectoral Reports following the establishment of an independent Panel for certification.

## 6.4 Gender, Education and Training

**Thematic Policy Statement:** The Government shall provide equal opportunities for access to quality education for all boys and girls to complete the education system and also ensure that men and women have equal access to training opportunities.

### Specific Objectives

**Objective I:** To advocate for the provision of equal access, retention and quality education to all school age children at all levels of education.

### Actions

1. Provide scholarship packages for girls in other tertiary institutions.
2. Provide scholarship and another incentives for girls and boys to specialize in STEM subjects
3. Recruit and maintain qualified teachers, particularly female teachers, who can act as role models for young girls
4. Provide Labour saving devices to parents to reduce drudgery, thus reducing domestic work on school-going children
5. Encourage the provision of formal and non-formal education to girls and boys who are dropouts and illiterate female and male adults
6. Elimination of all forms of harmful and cultural practices that hinder girls' and boys' participation in education
7. Promote the use of gender-responsive curriculum and educational materials at all levels
8. Construct more skills centres and promote STEM subjects at all levels of education and in each region
9. Mobilize and sensitize parents and communities on the importance of educating the girl child and ensuring that she completes her education at all levels
10. Provision of wash facilities for Sanitation to cater for Menstrual Hygiene Management.
11. Provision of Sick Bay for school health to accelerate attendance and retention.
12. Conduct Mathematics and Science clinics to promote STEM in schools.
13. Conduct Life skills training to empower boys and girls on adolescence life stages.
14. The provision and training on sanitary towels and its usage in schools.

**Objective 2:** To achieve quality, relevant and affordable education for all Gambians at all levels of education and in all disciplines.

### Actions

1. Increased financial resource mobilization and advocate for increased budget allocation for effective implementation of internal policies and strategic plans.
2. Strengthen and support MOBSE Gender Unit to monitor, evaluate & research to identify lapses in interventions and for effective assessment of outcomes of the Gender Policy objectives.
3. Ensure the full incorporation of gender perspective and implementation of the Education Policy 2016-2030 and availability of adequate teaching and learning materials.
4. Advocate for Legislation for Compulsory Free Universal Basic Education for all.
5. Sensitize for increased enrolment and retention of girls and boys at all levels of the educational system.
6. Encouraging girls and boys to study mathematics, science and technical subjects.
7. Providing scholarship and career guidance in order to motivate girls and boys to take up non-traditional fields of learning.
8. Advocate for the establishment of user-friendly educational structures and facilities to cater for the differently able and re-entry programmes for boys and girls at all levels to reduce the percentage of dropouts.
9. Advocate for the provision of adequate incentives for the retention of all teachers, equal opportunities for training and promotion of male and female teachers to managerial positions at all levels.

### **Objective 3:**

To mainstream Madarassa's education to the formal education system through the provision of adequate teaching and learning environment

#### **Actions**

1. Support and strengthen the "Madarassa's" "Daara" adult female Islamic literacy programmes and Qur'anic memorization schools across the Country
2. Expand and strengthen the non-formal education programmes for male and female adults and out of school boys and girls to ensure quality assurance.
3. Link and strengthen National Adult Literacy programmes to the formal education system to ensure complementarily.
4. Mobilize and sensitize parents and communities on the importance of educating the girl Child and ensuring that she completes her education at all levels.
5. Government should continue to provide subvention for teacher's salary in recognized Madarassa's institution.
6. Accommodate Madarassa's graduation in tertiary and higher education institutions in The Gambia



## 6.5 Gender and Health

Gender and Health have been divided into two sub-sections: Gender, Sexual and Reproductive Health and Family Planning.

**Thematic Policy Statement:** Government shall ensure the availability and accessibility of quality and functional health services and facilities including services for SRH and rights, the management of cases of GBV, and HIV/AIDS for women, men, adolescents, children and Persons with disability, PLWHIV at all levels and prevention.

### 6.5.1 Sexual and Reproductive Health

**Thematic Policy Statement:** Strengthen Reproductive, Maternal, Neonatal, Child and Adolescent Health (RMNCAH) services to improve general health standards and reduce maternal, infant and child morbidity and mortality.

**Objective:** To reduce maternal and infant morbidity, mortality, increase access to quality health care including Family Planning and to improve Reproductive and Child Health Services.

#### Actions

1. Provide quality Antenatal Care (ANC) by improving access, quality and utilization of services.
2. Provide quality skilled delivery and Postnatal Care (PNC) by improving access, quality and utilization.
3. Provide comprehensive package for perinatal and neonatal care.
4. Provide quality Post Abortion Care (PAC) services for the prevention and treatment of complications as per the country's law.
5. Strengthen the implementation of Safe Motherhood programmes to help reduce the incidence of high-risk pregnancies and births.
6. Strengthen the Integrated Management of Neonatal and Childhood Illnesses (IMNCI), strategies, namely, immunisation, oral re-hydration therapy, birth spacing, breastfeeding and other child survival strategies in collaboration with the private sector, NGOs and donor agencies.
7. Increase awareness on sexual reproductive and child health issues of women to enabling them to make informed choices.
8. Improve the economic status of women through viable schemes and integrated programmes.
9. Implement RCH policies and programmes as integral parts of a broad-based strategy of promoting sexual and reproductive health of all, including adolescents.
10. Implement SBCC programmes targeting men and encouraging them to support and practise family planning.
11. Provide quality services for the prevention and treatment of obstetric fistula

12. Provide nutrition information and counselling for pregnant women
13. Provide quality services for menopausal women
14. Sensitization targeting the religious leaders and the community elders and women's groups.
15. Educate Circumcisers to drop their knives with emphasis on the health consequences of FGM/C especially during labour, delivery and post-partum period.
16. Advocate for Government to allocate adequate resources to the health sector
17. Recruit, retain and motivate qualified doctors, nurses, technicians, etc. at all levels of the health sector

### 6.5.2 Adolescent Reproductive Health

Adolescents constitute a significant proportion of The Gambia's population. They experience early sexual activity usually unprotected, teenage pregnancies, unsafe abortions, sexually transmitted infections including HIV/AIDS and drug abuse. Limited access to life skills training further aggravates the situation of the adolescents.

## **Actions**

1. Increasing awareness on adolescent and youth sexual and reproductive health (AYSRH) issues.
2. Intensifying the use of radio, television and other media channels to address Adolescent (10-19) /youth (13-35) Sexual Reproductive Health (AYSRH) issues.
3. Training and supporting traditional communicators in message dissemination on adolescent health issues.
4. Training and supporting peer-health educators in the promotion of life skills for young people.
5. Increasing the level of awareness on AYSRH issues in all communities.
6. Training and supporting service providers in the management of AYSRH services at all levels.
7. Strengthening the Monitoring and supervision of AYSRH services.
8. Empowering adolescents/youth through providing services in a youth-friendly environment
9. Promoting Parent-Child dialogue on AYSRH issues.
10. Increase and improve the number of Community Youth Centres and encouraging their use  
Improving services provided at Youth safe spaces
11. Sensitisation on the modes of transmission and prevention services for HIV/AIDS and other STIs through Social Behavioural Change Communication (SBCC)
12. Awareness creation on the consequence of drugs and substance abuse through Social Behavioural Change Communication (SBCC).
13. Enforce laws for a minimum age of marriage for girls.
14. Implementing the National RMNCAH Policy and the strategic plan of action addressing the reproductive health and rights of adolescent/youth.
15. Conduct Operational Research on Adolescent Reproductive Health issues.
16. Carry out advocacy among policy makers, youths, religious and opinion leaders to address adolescent/youth SRH issues/concerns.
17. Design mechanisms to improve access and reach people with special needs (persons with disability and in fragile emergency situations) with a package of RMNCAH services
18. Monitoring and evaluating AYSRH projects to enhance programme quality.

### **6.5.3 Family Planning**

Family planning services will be promoted through comprehensive IEC/SBCC strategies and initiatives as follows.

## **Actions**

1. Rolling out the Kaabilo Baama initiative to other parts of the country.

2. Enforcement of the laws for a minimum age for marriage, particularly among girls, to be 18 years and above.
3. Improving Family Planning services to include investigation and treatment of infertility and subfertility.
4. Making available a variety of modern methods of family planning to ensure free and informed choice
5. Educating and motivating the population at community level on the health, social and demographic values of family planning
6. Incorporating family life education in both formal and informal training programmes
7. Intensifying IEC/SBCC programmes to reach the male population and other target audiences.
8. Making Family Planning programmes more responsive to local cultural values and individual couples' preferences.
9. Enhancing the capacity of agencies involved in family planning service delivery.
10. Provide quality FP information and services to reduce unwanted pregnancies and unmet need for contraceptives

#### 6.5.4 NON-COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

**Thematic Policy Statement:** The Government shall strive to reduce the risk and burden of non-communicable disease through the promotion of healthy behaviour, lifestyle and appropriate care.

**Objective 1:** To reduce the burden of non-communicable risk factors among women through the prevention, promotion and care

**Action:**

1. Sensitization of women on the risk and prevention of non-communicable disease(NCDs)
2. Creating supportive programs in addressing the issues of NCDs
3. Promote evidence based approach to safeguarding women's health and tackling NCDs
4. Advocate for gender based approach NCDs care
5. Organise walk for health and free screening for vulnerable groups.

### 6.5.5 HIV/AIDS

**Thematic Policy Statement:** Government shall strive to ensure that there are no new HIV infections, and people can make empowered sexual health choices, and those living with HIV/AIDS can do so with dignity, good health and equality.

**Objective 1:** Ensure equitable access to quality comprehensive HIV/AIDS treatment, care and support services

#### **Actions**

1. Advocate for the acceleration of implementation of the National AIDS Policy and Strategy on HIV/AIDS
2. Advocate for the continuous availability and accessibility of RH commodities including male and female condoms throughout the country
3. Promote programmes for PMTCT and the use of family planning methods for child spacing and for protection from STIs and HIV and AIDS (dual protection).
4. Expansion of HIV Counselling and Testing(HCT) services across all centres
5. Increase knowledge and information on HIV/AIDS prevention among women, girls, men and boys in the fight against the pandemic.
6. Mitigate against impacts of harmful cultural practices and violence against women and girls, especially those that predispose them to HIV/AIDS.
7. Empower girls and women through continued education and innovative approaches to enable them to take control over their own sexual and reproductive health life.
8. Conduct studies on HIV/AIDS prevalence and female vulnerability to the disease.
9. Improve access to quality HIV prevention and testing services for vulnerable population populations.
10. Make voluntary testing and linkage to care widely available, including self-testing for vulnerable populations, pregnant women, adolescents and other women.
11. Facilitate targeted populations and school SBCC interventions.
12. Design programme interventions for women and girls that addresses socio-economic issues that make them vulnerable to HIV.

**Objective 2:** Increase equitable access to HIV Treatment, Care and Support

#### **Actions**

Ensure equitable access by all vulnerable populations to integrated non-discriminatory services (differentiated HIV testing strategies, integrated service delivery)

1. Prevent vertical transmission of HIV and paediatric HIV

2. Increase the availability of treatment, care and support services in all public and private facilities.
3. Improve on treatment using differentiated strategies for different target groups

**Objective 3:** Ensure Gender and Human rights are upheld in HIV care

#### **Actions**

1. Increase interventions to reduce stigma and discrimination in healthcare, employment, education, justice, humanitarian and community settings
2. Expand access to legal support on human rights for vulnerable populations and PLHIV to reduce gender-based violence and violence against vulnerable groups and PLHIV

### **6.5.6 Gender and Nutrition**

**Thematic Policy Statement:** Government shall improve the nutritional status and quality of life in particular, the socio-economically deprived and nutritionally vulnerable groups.

**Objective 1:** To improve the care and nutritional status of the socio-economically deprived and nutritionally vulnerable groups.

**Objectives 2:** To improve the nutritional status of the population particularly children under five years, adolescents, pregnant women and lactating mothers.

#### **Actions**

1. Continuous promotion of optimal infant and young child feeding practices at all levels.
2. Strengthen the screening and management of moderately and severely malnourished children at community and health facility levels.
3. Advocate for standards and the enforcement of legislations and regulations related to environmental sanitation.
4. Promote quality water, hygiene and sanitation at all levels including in schools.
5. Advocate for the establishment of nutrition support teams in Paediatric Units of Hospitals.
6. Advocate for the strengthening of the immunization services and the implementation of the IMNCI, IDSR, IMAM and Maternity Care Guidelines.
7. Advocate for the strengthening of the collection, management and timely reporting of health and nutrition information
8. Advocate for the inclusion of a module on Nutrition in institutions of higher learning.
9. Advocate for effective implementation of national policy/strategy on Nutrition.
10. Promote the consumption of food rich in Iron, Vitamins and proteins among men and women particularly pregnant /lactating women.

11. Ensure continued increase in food production and consumption, diversification of livestock and crop production so as to improve food sufficiency.
12. Advocate for the effective implementation of food standards and guidelines for processing, preservation, storage, food hygiene, safety and sanitation.
13. Advocate for the enforcement of quality assurance and safety standards in foods produced locally and imported foods.
14. Promote appropriate nutrition education programmes at all levels.

## 6.6 Rural Women and Development

**Thematic Policy Statement:** Government shall continue its commitment to create an enabling environment for community participation in all spheres of development particularly those in the rural area. Ensure equal proportion of women as well as men in the management and decision-making structure in community participation in rural development

**Objective 1:** To empower community members, especially women to actively participate and take ownership of development projects and programmes at grassroots level.

### Actions

1. Conduct capacity needs assessment particularly for rural women
2. Strengthen the equal participation of rural women and girls in decision making at grass roots level.
3. Increase rural women's access to formal and non-formal education, agricultural information, financial literacy, extension services, technology and crediting and banking services.
4. Formalize rural women's agricultural work by establishing a scheme to ensure their fair remuneration access to benefits Address attitude and assumption around customary laws that impedes rural women's access to land and control.
5. Organize self-help groups and corporative in order to obtain access to opportunities through employment
6. Involve rural women and girls in the conceptualisation and design of projects.
7. Increase financial resource mobilization and advocate for increased budget allocation for effective implementation of internal policies and strategic plan.
8. Support women's leadership in rural areas through representation on the national land commission and land board and as village heads in order to ensure that rural women are meaningfully involved in community decision making.
9. Advocate for the improvement of the socio-economic status of vulnerable groups such as women, children, youth and the physically challenged particularly those in the rural areas.
10. Promote the effective implementation of the Local Government Act.

11. Advocate for the expansion of rural electrification, improve access to transportation, water, ICT, housing, and market facilities in rural areas.
12. Advocate for the formulation of a gender sensitive rural development policy and its effective implementation.
13. Train leaders at grassroots level to understand and address gender issues that hinder community development.
14. Promote community policing and other grass root mobilization initiatives.
15. Ensure the full participation of religious and traditional leaders in local and decentralised governance
16. Advocate for women's participation in all project/ programme cycles.
17. Provide leadership training for women and girls in particular

## 6.7 Women and Men in Special Circumstances

**Thematic Policy Statement:** In pursuance to the Constitutional Provisions and laws of the country, government shall take all measures to protect the rights of all Gambians including the vulnerable and marginalized in society

**Objectives:** To provide support to vulnerable and marginalized groups including people with disabilities, drug addicts, people with special needs, convicts, ex-convicts and refugees to minimize risks and their vulnerabilities.

### Actions

1. Strengthening the capacity of National Social Protection Secretariat and the Directorate of Social Welfare to ensure effective implementation of the National Social Protection Policy and its Implementation Plan.
2. Establish and support more rehabilitation centres and resource mobilization to maintain existing centres.
3. Advocate for more legal aid to women particularly those in the rural communities.
4. Recruitment of rehabilitation specialist or therapists in the rehabilitation centres and Department of Social Welfare.
5. Provide support to persons with disabilities and other vulnerable groups and individuals.
6. Advocate for the strengthening and formulation of social protection policies for the elderly and disadvantaged or vulnerable groups.
7. Develop and implement programmes for the rehabilitation of drug addicts and support to ex-convicts, mentally retarded etc.
8. Provide additional resources for the implementation of the National Disaster Management Policy in the context of Disaster Risk Reduction.



9. Strengthen capacity of the home for the elderly

## 6.8 Sexual and Gender-Based Violence

**Thematic Policy Statement:** The Government shall take all measures to ensure the elimination of all forms of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence against women, men, girls, and boys so that their rights and dignity are fully protected.

**Objectives:** To advocate for the full implementation of the legal provisions for the elimination of all forms of Sexual and gender-based violence.

To lobby for the elimination of all forms of gender discriminatory practices and the prohibition of all forms of gender-based violence (GBV).

### Actions

1. Advocate for the enforcement of the Domestic Violence Act 2013, Sexual Offences Act of 2013, Women Amendment Act 2015, and the Children's Amendment Act of 2016 and subsequent legislations.
2. Raising awareness of the population through various mediums including schools, social media, TV and radio on sexual and gender-based violence with the active involvement of men and boys.
3. Take measures to eliminate discrimination and eradicate harmful traditional practices against the Girl-child.
4. Enhance the capacity of One Stop Centers to improve access, care and support to survivors of sexual and gender based violence to provide comprehensive Sexual and Gender-based Violence Services to support victims of SGBV
5. Strengthen the capacity of the One Stop Centres to provide counselling services to newly weds for further prevention of GBV.
6. Strengthen and popularize the National GBV Hot Line (199) for counselling and provision of services for survivors of SGBV
7. Expand the establishment of One Stop Centers and Shelters across the country for survivors of SGBV throughout The Gambia.
8. Strengthen the Gender Management Information System (GMIS) for the collection and monitoring of gender-based violence data.
9. Engagement with gate keepers, parents, families, traditional and religious leaders in preventing and responding to SGBV and gender-based inequalities
10. Train the police forces, justice, health, social services, education, media etc., who are responsible for the prevention, protection and prosecution of domestic and sexual violence crimes on women and girls.
11. Increase regional, accountability mechanisms to strengthen national and regional commitments to end SGBV

12. Create and support a culture of respect and accountability for any form of discrimination, harassment, including sexual harassment and abuse of authority
13. Integrate gender and gender based violence into the training curricular of the army, immigration and other security forces; develop gender and GBV training manual and train trainers on the use of the manual
14. Establish and equip gender units at the training schools of all security forces.
15. Further strengthen capacity of the police training academy on gender and gender based violence
16. Further strengthen capacity at the shelter for victims of gender based violence as well as the call centre for SGBV
17. Establish similar shelters and call centres in the rural areas and strengthen them.
18. Establish and support special courts on Gender Based Violence in all the regions
19. Conduct research on gender biases and gender-related violence to determine types, magnitude, pattern and nature, with a view to eliminate them.
20. Provide technical and financial support to organisations that promote human rights education, prevention and management of cases of gender-based violence.
21. Conduct an intensive national sensitization programme on the causes and effects of GBV
22. Provide support for the development of a comprehensive national programme of action on the prevention of gender-based violence and the management of cases of GBV
23. Strengthen institutions on GBV records management and training on prevention and management.
24. Create and sustain an enabling and conducive environment through advocacy and sensitization to ensure continued political commitment for the elimination of gender base violence and other forms of social taboos that are harmful to the wellbeing of women and girls.

## 6.9 Gender and Governance

**Thematic Policy Statement:** The Government of The Gambia shall promote democratic governance by ensuring the equitable representation and participation of women and men in all decision-making positions, structures, and processes and ensure the implementation of increased capacity for leadership particularly for women and persons with disability.

**Objective 1:** Advocate for a constitutional provision that guarantees at least 30 percent representation and participation of women in all decision-making institutions and bodies.

**Objective 2:** To enhance the participation of women in Leadership, Governance, and Decision-making at all levels of public life.

## **Actions**

1. Increase the participation of women in decision-making and conflict resolution e.g. District Tribunals, Parliament, Cabinet etc.
2. Advocate for transparent selection processes that will ensure non-discrimination based on one's gender.
3. Sensitize the traditional and religious leaders on the need to involve women in the decision-making processes.
4. Advocate for the enactment of the draft Constitution, or any separate legislation introducing a 30 percent minimum quota system and other forms of affirmative actions to increase women's participation in governance and public decision-making processes.
5. Conduct/ intensify awareness raising campaigns on the significance of women's involvement in politics and decision making.
6. Identify mentorship and coaching services for potential young women leaders
7. Women's wings of political parties should lobby and advocate political party leadership to nominate women candidates to run for elections.
8. Provide timely financial support for women contestants both in capacity building and during campaigning to address women candidates' relative lack of access to resources due to their low economic status.
9. Review party political manifestos and the internal organization of political parties for gender mainstreaming.
10. Develop and maintain a database of viable potential female leaders and provide them with mentors consisting of past and present women politicians.
11. Awareness creation on the significance of women's participation in decision-making
12. Study tour to other countries learn best practices on the increased number of women in politics and other governance structures.
13. To make a diagnosis study on why women have low participation in politics, develop an appropriate strategy based on the findings for implementation.
14. Training of National Assembly Members on the inclusion of women in political participation
15. Sensitization of political parties to increase women's participation at decision-making position in their respective parties
16. In country training for aspiring women candidates before next election
17. Meetings with political parties to encourage them to select women leaders
18. Community sensitization on the importance of women political participation
19. Consultation with Inter-party committees

## 6.10

## 6.11

## 6.12 Gender and the Media

**Thematic Policy Statement:** The Government shall promote Women's Participation in the media

**Objective:** To increase the participation and visibility of women in media and communications sector.

### Actions

1. Encourage more women participation in media.
2. Promote capacity building and training in leadership, management and gender sensitive reporting within the media and enforce gender responsive approach in the relevant educational curricula
3. Ensure enhanced access to media information through local media channels to eliminate gender stereotyping.
4. Support media houses to integrate a gender perspective in programme content development and reporting.
5. Work with the media to voice women's views and perspectives on matters such as economic, health, politics, security and terrorism.
6. Build the capacity of women to work in the technical production aspects of media.
7. Strengthen adult education programmes to increase literacy levels for access to varied media content.
8. Create awareness on the national frameworks and standards on gender equality and women empowerment.
9. Establish an awards and recognition system for individuals and institutions that have attained high gender equality standards and best practices in the media.
10. Advocate for more conducive work environment for women journalist and communicators.
11. Advocate for women leadership in the media outlet.

## 6.13 Gender and Climate Change

**Thematic Policy Statement:** The Government is committed to mainstreaming gender into all climate change programmes and interventions and recognize the vulnerability of women to climate change.

**Objective 1:** To mainstream gender into all climate change programmes and interventions and recognize the vulnerability of women to climate change.

**Objective 2:** Building resilient on the vulnerable communities particularly women and children, and mitigate the impact of climate change on vulnerable communities and individuals.

### Action

1. Conduct thorough gender dimension study for all key sectors such as Fisheries, forestry, biodiversity, water resources, Agriculture, NDMA, Ministry of Environment, Early Warning, NEA etc.
2. **Allocate stand-alone grants for women in the coastal zone communities and vulnerable ecologies**
3. All future environment and climate change-related projects to integrate, advocacy and critical awareness-raising on Climate Change issues
4. Promote the use of Multifunctional platforms that are energy efficient.
5. Promote the use of improved cooking stoves and Liquefied petroleum gas (LPG).
6. Conduct a National Sensitization campaign on energy efficiency and conservation.
7. Establish a gender Unit at the Ministry of Environment, Climate Change and natural Resources to appropriately mainstream gender in the ministry's policies and programs.
8. Empower women on forest products enterprising
9. Awareness raising on the effect of Climate Change on horticultural production

## 6.12 Gender and Human's Rights

**Thematic Policy Statement:** Government shall promote women's human rights through, the harmonization of customary laws and traditional belief systems and practices with modern laws, amongst other actions, in order to eliminate the existing conflicts which, undermine gender equality, and the enforcement of laws protecting people living with HIV and AIDS and persons with disability.

### *Specific Objectives*

**Objective 1:** To ensure the effective implementation of the Women's Act 2010 and all other gender related laws including the Children's Amendment Act 2016, Domestic Violence Act 2013 and Sexual Offences Act 2013, women's Amendment Act 2015 and children's Amendment Act of 2015 in order to promote and protect women's human rights

### **Action**

1. Increase the capacity and awareness raising of Law Enforcement and security Officers in handling cases of Gender Based Violence
2. Administration Officials in GBV and gender related laws in order to promote and protect women's human rights.
3. Amendment of the Women's Act 2010 to reflect the current institutional changes in the Ministry of Gender Children and Social Welfare and all other gender related laws
4. Lobby for the establishment of appropriate mechanism to monitor and report on the implementation of legal provisions in the Women's Act 2010 and other gender responsive legislation including the Children's Act 2005, Domestic Violence Act 2013 and Sexual Offences Act 2013.

5. Mobilization of the general public, and targeted groups with a view to creating awareness and understanding of their human rights; enabling them to identify cases of violation and to seek redress
6. Provide technical and financial support to organisations that promote human rights education,
7. Ensure that the poor and the disadvantage have access to legal services through the provision of free legal aid.
8. Advocate for the incorporation of gender studies and human rights education in tertiary institutions.
9. Ensure the codification of customary and Shariah Laws and procedures applicable in the District Tribunal and Cadi Courts.
10. Advocate for the translation and dissemination of the relevant laws of the Gambia that affect the lives of women and men.
11. Ensure the enforcement and protection of the rights of women and girls as prescribed in the laws of The Gambia.

**Objective 2:** To advocate for the domestication of all International Conventions and Declarations addressing gender specific rights and human rights.

### **Actions**

1. Advocate for an in-depth review of the national laws so that they are in line with international and regional obligations of the Gambia
2. Advocate for the adoption and application of uniform procedures and laws in all district tribunals and Cadi courts.
3. Advocate for the equitable representation of women in the district tribunals.

## 6.13 Women, Peace and Security

**Thematic Policy Statement:** The Government shall commit to the implementation of the UNSCR 1325(2000) and subsequent resolution on women, peace and security.

**Objective 1:** To promote women's participation and contribution in all peace and conflict resolution processes at all levels.

### Action

1. Collaborate with the National Disaster Management Organization and the UN system / organizations (e.g., the UNHCR) to implement emergency response actions to benefit women, girls, boys, people with disability and other vulnerable groups.
2. Support the implementation of the Human Trafficking Act and Plan of action
3. Monitor current trends in human trafficking in Gambia
4. Engender all national processes in accelerating, enforcement and implementation of the National Plan of Action for Human and Drug Trafficking.
5. Develop national programs that promote the implementation of the Gambian National Action Plan on UNSCR 1325(2001/2025)
6. Develop a baseline study on women, peace and security
7. Adapt affirmative measures to ensure women participation in peace initiative and indigenous conflict resolution processes.
8. Develop early warning mechanism for conflict prevention
9. Ratify, disseminate and implement fully all regional and international, humanitarian and human right instruments on women, peace and security
10. Advocate for the inclusion of peace study in the national curriculum in the senior secondary and tertiary level
11. Provide technical and financial support to women peace initiatives
12. Enhance capacities of women mediators

## 6.14 Gender, Fisheries and Water Resources

**Thematic Policy Statement:** Government is committed to providing sustainable access to safe drinking water, weather and climate services, to conserve fisheries resources, maintain an equitable balance between universal access to water supplies and individual users, enhance weather and climate information utilization.

Specific Gender Objective

**Objective 1.** To promote and enhance universal and sustainable access to water supplies.

### Actions:

1. Promote participation of women in water management committees in both rural and peri-urban communities

2. Expand the implementation of solar-powered borehole projects to the rural communities
3. Mobilize Resources for the expansion of the Rural Water Supply
4. Enhance water supply for women vegetable growers
5. Build requisite infrastructure and capacities and promote water harvesting

Objective 2: To strengthen and promote climate and weather services

### **Actions**

1. Daily weather forecasting
2. Accelerate the water sector reform process
3. Compilation of a 10 days decadal bulletin
4. Seasonal predictions on weather and climate

### **Gender and Sustainable Fisheries Management**

Thematic Policy Statement: Government of the Gambia is committed to developing a sustainable fisheries ecosystem through small scale fishing that will enhance employment and increase income, improve the Institutional capacity for the management of the fisheries sector, regulate industrial fishing with a view to making output consistent with a rationale and sustainable approach to production.

#### **Specific Objective**

**Objective 1.** To develop capacities of women fisher-folks in the fisheries value chain

#### **Actions:**

1. Mainstreaming of gender into the fisheries sector
2. Development of fisheries infrastructure and the adoption of appropriate technologies
3. Establishment of micro finance scheme for women in the fishery industry
4. Training of women in the fishery industries on financial literacy
5. Data collection on stock size, capacity, harvest cost, catch size, revenue and ecosystem health will be strengthened to conduct sound fisheries research
6. Promotion of equitable resource allocation at all levels of these sector for enhanced social stability
7. Advocacy on the safety of fish products and give early warning information for women fisher-folks
8. Enhance the handling, packaging, processing and marketing of fish and fishery products
9. Provide the necessary structures to ensure safe, healthy and hygienic ways of processing fish at the fish landing sites across the country.
10. Support women to explore external markets for the selling of fish and fish products.



## 6.15 Gender, Technology and Digitalization

**Thematic Policy Statement:** The Government is committed to make digitalization a catalyst for economic growth.

### Specific objective:

To make digitalization a catalyst for accelerating economic growth improving efficacy in both public and private sector and strengthening competitiveness in all sectors of the economy

### Actions:

1. Conduct training on digital literacy and cross border trade requirements for women entrepreneurs
2. Conduct training and awareness creation on the need for laws on cyber crimes
3. Study tour to neighboring countries that have cybercrime laws and learn best practices
4. Advocate for measures to address gender digital divide

## 6.16 Gender and Migration

**Thematic Policy Statement:** The Gambia Government shall commit to ensure that migrant enjoy their fundamental human, social and economic rights and leveraging diaspora remittances and investment.

**Objective:** Eliminate all forms of discrimination and promote evidence-based public discourse to shape the perception of migration.

### Actions

1. Collect and utilize accurate and disaggregated data as a basis for evidence-based policies
2. Provide access to basic services for migrants
3. Minimize the adverse drivers and structural factors that compel people to leave their country of origin
4. Conduct an assessment of the impact of migration on families left behind with a special focus on the situations and needs of families as well as enabling conditions and best practices.
5. Support the implementation of migrant family Action Plan

Institution	ROLES and responsibilities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Ministry of Gender</li> <li>• , Children and Social Welfare</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responsible for the overall coordination and harmonization of programs by all stakeholders.</li> <li>• Establish appropriate mechanism for coordinating Gender Mainstreaming at all levels.</li> <li>• Lobby, advocate and mobilize resource for the implementation of the Gender policy.</li> <li>• Provide support to gender units and gender focal points.</li> <li>• Monitoring and evaluation of the activities and programs</li> <li>• Coordinate the implementation of the Gender Policy</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Gender Equality Opportunity Commission (EOC)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Equal Opportunities Commission shall be established and mandated to eliminate discrimination and inequalities against any individual or group of persons on the ground of sex, age, race, color, ethnic origin, tribe, birth, creed or religion, health status, social or economic standing, political opinion or disability.</li> <li>• Take affirmative action in favor of groups marginalized based on gender, age, disability or any other reason created by history, tradition or custom for the purpose of redressing imbalances which exist against them, and to provide for other related matters.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Directorate of Gender Equality and Women Empowerment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide technical support on gender mainstreaming to ministries, institutions, organizations, local governments bodies, civil society organizations and the private sector.</li> <li>• Mobilize resources for the implementation of the gender policy</li> <li>• Responsible for the implementation. of the Gender Policy and the Strategic Plan.</li> <li>• Provide back stopping support in critical areas.</li> <li>• Lobby, advocate and coordinate the sensitization process of all stakeholders on gender and development.</li> <li>• Act as the Secretariat for the National Women’s Council.</li> <li>• Set standards, develop guidelines and discriminate and monitor their operationalization.</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>National Women's Council</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Advise the Minister on gender equality and women's empowerment issues.</li> <li>Work closely with the Regional Gender Officers in the implementation of the Gender Policy at decentralized levels.</li> <li>Lobby and advocate for policy reviews and enactment of laws.</li> <li>Sensitize and advocate on gender issues at grassroots level</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ministries, Departments, Agencies and Public Enterprises</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Translate the National Gender Policy (NGP) into institutional specific policies, strategies and programmes.</li> <li>Assess the needs of their respective ministries in the field of gender responsive planning, programming, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation and make appropriate recommendations for capacity building.</li> <li>Support the gender units and focal persons by building their capacity in gender analysis, gender mainstreaming, gender sensitive planning, monitoring, evaluation and reporting and provide budget lines for the implementation of operational plans, and gender budgeting</li> <li>Monitor, evaluate and report, using sex disaggregated data on sector programmes and their impact on gender equality.</li> <li>Institute and implement affirmative action(s) on short term basis to bridge existing gender gaps.</li> <li>Partner with the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Welfare on matters of gender equality and the empowerment of women; and any other in the business of DGEWE.</li> <li>Mobilize, allocate and deploy resources for gender mainstreaming.</li> <li>Ensure institutional policies and programmes are gender sensitive, implicate and benefit women and men.</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CSOs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Translate the National Gender Policy (NGP) into institutional specific policies, strategies and programmes.</li> <li>• Develop and implement programmes that address key NGP intervention areas.</li> <li>• Participate in the policy management and implementation committee.</li> <li>• Monitor the implementation of NGP.</li> <li>• Share information on institutional programmes with Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Welfare through the women and gender focal points network.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development Partners</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognize and use The National Gender Policy in development cooperation and partnerships.</li> <li>• Collaborate with Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Welfare, DGEWE and National Women’s Council on matters of gender mainstreaming.</li> <li>• Establish mechanisms for engendering development cooperation.</li> <li>• Provide financial and technical support for promoting Gender Equality and Women Empowerment in Development Cooperation.</li> <li>• Develop/ set-up capacity building incentives for advancing gender equity and women’s empowerment in development cooperation.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mobilize women and men to advocate for and promote gender equality and women’s empowerment in aspects of national and public life.</li> <li>• Serve as platform for networking and sharing of information among women and female youth.</li> <li>• Advocate for the design and effective implementation of projects/programmes that ensures women’s the advancement of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls</li> <li>• Implement key economic empowerment project and support capacity enhancement of women’s organizations, groups and associations (particularly in</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Gambia’s Women’s Federation</li> </ul>	<p>training, provision of credit and financing, appropriate technology for labour saving, value addition, storage and preservation; market opportunities and infrastructure, housing, land and property, water facilities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support women’s participation in decision-making.</li> <li>• Lobby and advocate for the ratification, domestication and implementation of international instruments related to gender equality, women and children’s rights.</li> <li>• Sensitize, educate and train civil society organisations on human/women and legal rights, particularly women’s rights, in order to address and change gender stereotypes.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gender Policy Implementation Committee</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify priority gender issues.</li> <li>• Plan for relevant sector interventions.</li> <li>• Review progress in the implementation of the policy.</li> <li>• Advise women’s national machineries on key issues and devise strategies to attain Policy objectives.</li> <li>• Support of the implementation monitoring, evaluation and reporting of the policy.</li> <li>• Ensure the promotion and adoption of gender responsive budgeting across ministries.</li> </ul>

## 6.17 INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS FOR GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN’S EMPOWERMENT

Thematic Policy Statement : The Government is committed to strengthen the capacity and capability of the National Gender Machinery.

**Objective 1:** To strengthen the capacity and capability of the National Gender Machinery to effectively deliver on its mandate by providing adequate financial, institutional and human resources for advancing GEWE in the Gambia.

### Actions

1. Advocate for and increase budgetary allocations to women issues and the National Gender Machinery.

- Improve the capacity of the Gender Focal Points to enable effective mainstreaming of gender into their institutional policies and programmes as well as the generation and dissemination of gender disaggregated data.
- 2. Utilize Planning Units at various Ministries to mainstream gender into sectoral policies.
- 3. Advocate and support the systematic collection and analysis and production of gender -disaggregated data and statistics on a sustained basis
- 4. Encourage collaboration with and between civil society groups so as to effectively address any gaps in the implementation of gender equality agenda
- 5. Strengthen the capacity of the Gender and Women Empowerment Directorate in Programming, Monitoring, Evaluation, and reporting.
- 6. Re-activate the African Gender Development Index (AGDI)

## 7: INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

In the context of the institutional arrangement for the implementation of the Policy, each of the sectors had terms of reference against which their operations are measured.

Table 4: Institutional Framework

## 8.RESOURCE MOBILIZATION

The Policy implementation plan will define the required resources for the implementation of the Policy. Resource mobilization will be a continuous process with the Government of the Gambia by taking the lead to commit resources through Government Local Funds (GLF), annual budget allocations. Partnership with international donor, Grants, loan, social corporate responsibility from the private sector, Public enterprise and philanthropies will be pursued and engage other partners in mobilizing resources for the implementation of the Policy.

## 9: MONITORING AND EVALUATION

### 9.1 Introduction

Implementation of the National Gender Policy and strategy will be monitored by the ministry of Gender, Children AND Social Welfare to ensure that the strategy and policy is achieving projected milestones and remains on target. If these milestones and targets are not being met then the implementing agencies will need to be notified through the National Gender Machinery so that remedial actions can be taken to get the programme back on target.

### 9.2 Monitoring and Evaluation

The National Gender Policy implementation requires an integrated and effective monitoring and evaluation system with appropriate and efficient feedback mechanisms. This requires undertaking monitoring and evaluation functions at all levels including gathering information at the macro, sectoral and grassroots levels. The National Gender Monitoring Framework and the Gender Management Information System (GMIS) shall be strengthened. Gender units at organizations or institutions shall provide quarterly reports on activities, which will be fed into a data-base. The Directorate of Gender Equality and Women Empowerment and key institutions and at different levels will also be strengthened to support the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the policy. The Directorate of Policy Development and Strategic Planning and Reporting shall identify key performance indicators to monitor progress. The Policy shall be subjected to mid-term review and a terminal evaluation.

#### **Objective: To establish a robust Monitoring and Evaluation system for the implementation of the Policy**

- Enhanced the capacity of gender focal points and units together with the Directorates of Gender Equality women and gender bureau to produce quarterly report and ensure they are published and informed planning, policy, legislation, programme, projects and action points' formulation.
- Ensure that quarterly monitoring visit/treks are under taken by the Directorates of Planning and Gender Equality, the women councilors, the Regional Gender Officers and members of the gender focal point network.
- Periodic field visits by the Minister, PS and DPS Technical will be conducted.
- Quarterly meeting to review progress in the implementation of the Gender Policy.

- Evaluate relevant programmes, projects and legislation from a gender perspective.
- Enhancement of gender planning and gender analysis skills, and in gender responsive budgeting
- Enhancement and strengthening partnership with key development Partners on gender sensitive policy analysis, implementation, monitoring and evaluation skills.
- Equip key actors with skills to enable them determine and formulate gender sensitive monitoring and evaluation indicators at planning stages of national development frameworks such as the, National Development Plan, SDG Reporting, and sectoral plans, programmes and activities.



### 9.3 Research and Documentation

**Objective:** To enhance the collection, collation, analysis and reporting of sex disaggregated data to inform policies, planning and decision-making policy actions.

- Researching on issues of Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment.
- Establish a gender management database (AGDI) to be updated regularly and to include disaggregated data as a minimum standard.
- Develop and implement National Guidelines on Collection, Collation and Analysis of Sex Disaggregated Data.
- Strengthen capacity at national level to develop and use guidelines on the collection, collation and analysis of sex disaggregated data
- Assess all programs to ascertain whether they meet the policy targets and aspirations of Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment.
- Evaluate whether implemented programs have had positive impacts on target beneficiaries.



## ANNEX 2: GLOSSARY

**Table 7: Glossary**

<b>TERMINOLOGIES</b>	<b>OPERATIONAL MEANINGS</b>
<b>Access to Justice</b>	The ability of any person, regardless of gender, income or status etc. to use the legal system to advocate for themselves and their interests or opportunity to seek and obtain justice when one's rights have been violated.
<b>Capacity Building</b>	A conceptual approach to social or personal development that focuses on understanding the obstacles that inhibit people, Governments, international organizations and nongovernmental organizations from realizing their development goals while enhancing the abilities that will allow them to achieve measurable and sustainable results. It involves the creation of an enabling environment with appropriate policy and legal frameworks; institutional development, including community participation (of women in particular); and human resources development.
<b>Climate Change</b>	A change in global or regional climate patterns, in particular a change apparent from the mid to late 20th century onwards and attributed largely to the increased levels of atmospheric carbon dioxide produced by the use of fossil fuels.
<b>Empowerment</b>	The process of "conscientization" which builds critical analytical skills for an individual to gain self-confidence in order to take control of her or his life. Empowerment of women is an essential process in the transformation of gender relations because it addresses the structural and underlying causes of subordination and discrimination.

<p><b>Equality of Opportunity of The Gambia</b></p>	<p>A fundamental human right embedded in the 1997 Constitution. This Gender Policy Framework aims towards the achievement of equality of opportunity, in access to and sharing of employment opportunities, services and resources as well as in equality of treatment by employers and service providers.</p>
<p><b>Equality of Treatment</b></p>	<p>Meeting the specific and distinct needs of different social categories of women and men. This can often involve special programmes and the commitment of additional resources, for example in the case of women and men with disabilities. Equality of treatment does not mean treating all men and all women in exactly the same way (i.e., in a gender-blind fashion) as this would only serve to perpetuate existing disparities.</p>
<p><b>Gender and Development (GAD)</b></p>	<p>A planning process which is based on an analysis of the different situations and needs of women and men. It aims at creating gender equity and equality between women and men. A gender and development perspective recognizes the importance of the relations between women and men.</p>
<p><b>Gender Awareness</b></p>	<p>Refers to a state of knowledge of the differences in roles and relations of women and men and how this results in differences in power relations, status, privileges and needs.</p>
<p><b>Gender Roles/Dynamics</b></p>	<p>These are sets of societal norms dictating the types of behaviours which are generally considered acceptable, appropriate, or desirable for people based on their actual or perceived sex or sexuality and are usually centered on conceptions of femininity and masculinity.</p>

<p><b>Gender Sensitive</b></p>	<p>Refers to the state of knowledge of the socially constructed differences between women and men, including differences in their needs, as well as to the use of such knowledge to identify and understand the problems arising from such differences and to act purposefully to address them.</p>
<p><b>Gender Stereotypes</b></p>	<p>These are widely accepted judgment or bias regarding a person or group even though it is overly simplified. They include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Domestic behaviours — For example, caring for children is often considered best done by women and girls, while household repairs are often considered best done by men.</li> <li>b. Occupations - For example, until very recently most nurses and secretaries were usually women, and most doctors and construction workers were usually men.</li> <li>c. Personality traits - For example, women are often expected to be passive and submissive, while men are usually expected to be self-confident and aggressive.</li> <li>d. Physical appearance - For example, women are expected to be petite and graceful, while men are expected to be tall and broad-shouldered.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Gender</b></p>	<p>The social roles allocated respectively to women and to men in particular societies and at particular times. Such roles, and the differences between them, are conditioned by a variety of political, economic, ideological and cultural factors and are characterized in most societies by unequal power relations. Gender is distinguished from sex which is biologically determined.</p>

<b>Governance</b>	<p>This is the exercise of political, economic and administrative authority to manage a nation’s affairs.</p> <p>It is the complex mechanisms, processes, relationships and institutions through which citizens and groups articulate their interests, exercise their rights and obligations and mediate their differences.</p>
<b>Human Rights Based Approach</b>	<p>It is an approach that focuses on the promotion and protection of human rights. It identifies right-holders and their entitlements and corresponding duty bearers and their obligations and works towards strengthening the capacities of rights-holders to make their claims of duty bearers to meet their obligations.</p>
<b>Intersectionality</b>	<p>The interconnected nature of social categorizations such as race, class, and gender as they apply to a given individual or group, regarded as creating overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage.</p>
<b>Reproductive Health Care</b>	<p>This refers to medical services that enable men and women to be informed of and to have access to safe, effective, affordable and acceptable methods of birth control; also access to appropriate health care services of sexual, reproductive medicine and implementation of health education programs related to child-birth or birth control.</p>
<b>Women Empowerment</b>	<p>This is the enhancement of women’s state and stature in the society by integrating gender equality and equity into poverty reduction, democratic governance, crisis prevention and recovery, and environment and sustainable development.</p>

<b>Poverty</b>	Is defined as deprivation of wellbeing or welfare. Poverty has many dimensions ranging from material wellbeing (basic needs of life like nutrition, good health, shelter and education to lack of human rights, citizenship or social networks). In addition, cultural values, beliefs or attitude may place some people at disadvantaged position while lack of political voice or physical insecurity can impoverish others. Economic factors such as low income, lack of assets, access to markets or public services can lead into poverty.
<b>Practical Gender Needs</b>	The needs identified to help women and men cope better in their existing subordinate positions. Practical needs are related largely to issues of welfare and do not challenge the existing gender division of labour or to women's subordinate positions in society.
<b>Project</b>	The design of an implementation strategy of a plan of action geared towards achieving a particular goal.
<b>Programme</b>	A systematic action-oriented design of a plan of action towards achieving a particular goal.
<b>Sexual and Gender Based Violence</b>	Any harmful act that is perpetrated against a person against their will and that is based on socially ascribed differences between males and females and that results in, or is likely in physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering for women, girls, boys and men including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life and include the economic and social harmful caused by such violence, both long term and short term.
<b>Social inclusion</b>	The process of improving the conditions of disadvantaged individuals and most vulnerable groups - such as women, youth, minorities among others.

<b>Strategic Gender Needs</b>	The needs which are identified as necessary to transform the existing unequal relations between women and men. Addressing women's strategic gender needs expedites women's empowerment and facilitates the fundamental social transformation necessary for establishment of gender equality.
<b>Substantive Equality</b>	Refers to a stage of real equality underpinned by equality of opportunity, access and treatment between women and men strengthening of managerial systems.



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