

The Gambia ranks high because we have made some progress since Beijing in the area of women in top management positions. Out of 13 Cabinet positions women hold 4 of the portfolio's excluding that of the Vice Presidency. The Auditor-General, Accountant General, Secretary to the Cabinet. The National Policy for the Advancement of Gambian women, just passed through Cabinet

1.1 Gambian women presently constitute 49.93 % of The Gambian population in relation to 51.085% males (1993, population figures). The majority of Gambian women are rural based and engaged in agricultural production constituting the main food producers and also carrying out other activities such as processing and marketing fish, fish products and fresh produce, selling crafts in the tourism industry, and other informal sector activities.

1.2 In Gambian society today, the traditional roles of women are still recognised and inequality in the society is taken as given, having been reinforced by massive illiteracy (73%) and women's lack of self-worth due to the way they are socialised.

1.3 Available data indicates that women comprise about 50% of the agricultural labour force, 70% of the unskilled agricultural labour force and are responsible for about 40% of the total agricultural production. This data suggests that women are a labour force and not managers in the agricultural sector. In the area of crop production, women produce 3% of the maize, 6% of the millet, 2% of the sorghum, 3% of coarse grains, 99% of upland rice and 24% of groundnuts, (Population Data Bank, 1993). Horticultural production (vegetables) is predominantly a female activity and women livestock farmers raise and manage most of the small ruminants and rural poultry.

In fisheries, women form 80% of the fish off-loaders, 99% of the traditional fish processors, 50% of the processors in the major coastal areas (Saine and Williams, 1995) whereas in forestry women are engaged in planting seedlings and wood lots.

1.4 In the area of health, maternal mortality remains unacceptably high at 10.5 per thousand live births. In fact the maternal mortality rate may be as high as 16.6 per thousand live births in the rural area. The under 5 mortality (USMR) is 160.5 per 1000 (GCPFDS, 1990) and its amongst the highest in the region. However, data available from maternal mortality figures show a declining trend. Presently, 90% of women are provided with antenatal care and about 60% of all deliveries are attended by a trained health worker, whilst traditional birth attendants (TBAs) carry out 65% of deliveries in homes in the rural areas. In the area of childcare, 85% of children are fully immunised.

1.5 With an annual population growth rate of 4.1% (1993 Census) and a high total fertility level of 6.1, the implications on our socio-economic development are indeed profound. This is exacerbated by a youthful population that comprise 63% of people below the age of 24 years, 45% of those under 15 and 18% within the 15-17 age bracket.

Other population related issues affecting the welfare of women include but are not necessarily limited to, infertility, early marriage, boy-child preference, harmful traditional practices and inadequate representation of women in decision-making.

1.6 As regards education, women are equally less disadvantaged as in other sectors. The current primary gross enrolment rate is 56% of which young girls' enrolment represents 4.6%. Female enrolment at the Junior Secondary level is 37% and at the Senior Secondary level 31% (Education Statistics 1994/95). Preference is indicated for Madrassa education, particularly for girls because of the moral and religious education it offers.

Girls enrolment is constrained among other things by cost of schooling, distance from home to school, the offering of a non broad-based curriculum, gender biases on teaching/learning materials, stereotyping and other socio-cultural deterrents both at home and in the school.

In the non-formal education sector opportunities have been created for women and girls to become literate in their own languages. However, these efforts are limited

by factors such as heavy workload of women and the lack of labour saving devices, poor attitude of men towards women's literacy.

1.7 As a result of the foregoing, women's access to employment is limited in terms of getting employed in the first place, staying in employment and making it to the top. Women occupy 12.8% of managerial positions, 13.9% of the professional and technical 26.3% of clerical, 9.4% of the skilled labour force and 61.9% of the unskilled labour category (Population Data Bank, 1994).

While domestic workers fall within the informal sector employment category, they are excluded from the Labour Act of 1990, thus reinforcing society's perception of domestic activity as a female domain and not worthy of legislation or monetisation. Domestic workers are mainly young women and face problems of sexual harassment, long working hours and poor wages.

1.8 The gender nature of poverty has been well documented and continues to be a threat against human rights. It is integrally linked to other conditions which restrict human potential such as--hunger, poor sanitation and hygiene, illiteracy, lack of access to education, lack of access to health services, high fertility rates, prostitution and child labour. According to an ILO study, 3% of urban households and 33% of the urban population are food poor as compared to the rural areas where the figures are 37% and 54% respectively.

1.9 Women play a central role in the tourist industry, a major source of foreign exchange for the Gambia. They serve as food and craft vendors, but also provide labour for the hotel industry.

Women face a number of constraints in the industry such as: inadequate access to permanent employment, lack of access to senior level management positions, lack of access to training for senior level positions in the hotel industry, lack of access in the fine and creative arts, clothing and textiles and consistent exposure to sexual exploitation.

The absence of an organised structure for women and the inadequate linkage between the industry and production groups in horticulture and small ruminants has restricted the optimal realisation of the potential in the sector.

1.10 With 44% of the population being under age 15 (Population Data Bank, 1995), the need to maximise the potential of this group cannot be over-emphasised. In this regard a variety of schemes have been introduced to reduce the problems of youths and enhance their effective participation in national development. These include the National Youth Service and President Award Scheme, NGO training programmes in family life and various skill development and income generating programmes.

1.11 In realisation of the importance of sports to the development of one's body and mind, women have been introduced to various sports, although, with limited success.

1.12 The media constitute an important pillar of development by not only setting the agenda but playing a "gate-keeping" role as well, until recently women have been perceived receivers of messages. However, efforts have been initiated with the introduction of women theatre groups, local communicators, village video halls and similar initiatives to make women play a lead role in information, education and communication processes. At the professional level the formation of WAMNET - The Gambia Chapter of West Africa Media Network for Gender Development has the basic objective of ensuring the positive portrayal of women's success stories, achievements and challenges.

## HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

1.13 Institutionally women's groups existed at village level during the pre-colonial and colonial era. These groups provided financial, physical and psychological support to their respective members.

1.14 Following the attainment of independence an urban based Gambian Women's Federation emerged to provide focus and attention for women's groups and organizations.

1.15 Subsequently, more concrete opportunities to address women's issues emerged with the promulgation of the National Women's Council as the policy advisory body to government on women's issues supported by an executive arm, the National Women's Bureau. This provided the framework for addressing women's issues.

1.16 In the 1981-86 five year plan, government reaffirmed its commitment to the development of women by introducing policy measures both at the national and sectoral levels aimed at integrating women in the national development process, promoting equality, and improving services to and the productivity of women.

1.17 This commitment on the part of government reflected trends in the international community such as the declaration of 1975 as international women's year and decade, the call for the adoption of the Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies for the advancement of women, the UN Convention on The Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) which The Gambia ratified in 1992, the Women's Bill of Rights, and more recently the Beijing Platform for Action amongst others.

1.18 Regardless of the foregoing, the National Women's Council and Bureau continues to face limitations in addressing women's issues and empowering women due to weaknesses related to the legal framework in the setting up of these institutions and internal organizational constraints due to inadequate support.

## 2.0 JUSTIFICATION FOR NATIONAL POLICY ON WOMEN

2.1 The recognition of the important role of women in the development process was in 1980, when the first policy statement to this effect was made. This was however not complemented by the articulation of an overall national policy for women. This lack of articulation tended to weaken the way that women's issues are dealt with both at national and community level to the extent that there has not

been the necessary policy orientation to guide the coordination of the different strategies geared towards promoting the advancement of women. This policy initiative is thus an attempt to bridge the gaps in addressing the concerns of women, and offers a framework within which Gambian women can move out of inequality and deprivation, towards greater participation in national development processes.

2.2 In agriculture where women constitute 50% of the agricultural labour force, several interventions have been initiated to uplift women's productivity. This is as a result of constraints including: low level of education, inadequate labor saving devices, poor transport systems, the middle person phenomenon, marginalisation of women once mechanization is introduced, inadequate access to and control over production resources, inadequate female representation in top level agricultural management (2.6% for women as compared to 8.6% for men (Population Data Bank 1995).

The problem is further compounded by limited appropriate post harvest technologies and other factors such as maintenance, cost of spare parts and limited managerial capacity at community level.

2.3 In the health domain, evidence exists to show that the introduction of Primary Health Care (PHC) program in 1978 led to an improved health status for women and children, including: substantial decline in infant mortality from 213/1000 live births in 1960 to 19/1000 in 1980, and 126/1000 in 1995 (above the regional average of 106/1000) and in under five mortality from 375/1000 in 1960 to 250/1000 in 1980 and 110/1000 in 1995; a drop in the maternal mortality ratio from 2000/100,000 live births before the introduction of PHC, to 1,050/100,000 live births in 1993; an increase in the percentage of births attended by health staff from 54% in 1985 to 65% in 1990; a decline in low birth weight from 35% in 1980-82 to 10% in 1990; 88% of children being immunised against measles and 93% against DPT in 1995. Despite this progress, maternal and infant/child mortality and morbidity rates remain unacceptably high.

More substantial contributions to health status improvement has been due to the stagnating or declining public sector resources, low quality of health services, especially for women and children in rural areas.

2.4 In the area of population and development despite an increase in the contraceptive prevalence rate to 12% for all methods (modern and traditional) in 1995, and a decline in total fertility rate from 6.5% in 1980 to 6.1 in 1993, the situation remains precarious. The Gambia has both one of the highest population growth rates in Africa at 4.1% per annum (1993 census) as well as the highest population densities at 97 persons per square kilometre. This population trend has serious implications for our socio-economic development as well as for the uplifting of the status of women and needs thus be addressed.

2.5 In the field of education, significant improvements have been registered and the national education policy 1988-2003 attempts to further increase enrolment in grades 1-6 by 95% and transition rate from grades 6-7 by 100% by year 2003. However, the present trend is indicative of a need to focus attention on addressing issues of access, retention and performance as they impinge on the education of the girl child.

Efforts in this direction are consistent with the 1997 constitution (Section 30) which guarantees to all persons the right to equal educational opportunities and facilities, and compulsory basic education, as well as requires the state to provide free education to all Gambians.

2.6 While in the recent past significant achievements has been made in creating women's employment opportunities both in formal and informal sectors, the disparity between employed women and men continues to be unacceptably high and this requires to be bridged if significant strides are to be made particularly in economic empowerment of women.

Women's low education levels, absence of affirmative action policies in training institutions or work place, distance of formal sector employee from home of employee, the dual career role of women i.e. child care and family

responsibilities vis-à-vis career responsibility stifles women's employment opportunities or retard their progress while in employment.

2.7 As a result of the foregoing, there is need to address the issue of poverty. A recently completed analysis of the 1993 Household Survey found that 33% of the population are poor and women constitute the majority. It was also found that poverty is most prevalent in the rural areas. Women's poverty is accentuated by inappropriate gender relations particularly that of the sexual division of labour, women's lack of credit and production resources, and their relatively poor health among others. Unless these issues are addressed women will remain poor and voiceless.

2.8 In spite of the central role women play in the tourist industry, the benefits that accrue to them from the sector remains marginal. Women's low educational levels relegate them to lowly paid menial jobs and their upward mobility opportunities are restricted by several socio-cultural factors both in the work place and home. Perhaps more importantly is the absence of the necessary linkages to provide the market for women's horticultural and small ruminants' products.

2.9 Indeed significant and sustainable women's advancement can only be attained if the problems of the girl child are addressed. The problems of early marriage and unplanned pregnancies which inhibit their career development prospects and perpetuate high fertility rates, the lack of employable skills resulting to dependency and the inadequate attention to their other concerns would need to be appropriately addressed to enhance the optimum utilisation of our human resource base.

2.10 Ultimately women's empowerment is about making women and girls visible and their voices heard, and enable them to take full control of their lives. The role of the media in this regard is phenomenal. But to achieve the desired effect women must be able to set the pace and the agenda to their strategic advantage.

2.11 Furthermore, a strong national machinery for women's affairs is imperative if significant achievements are to be made in women's advancement efforts. The present institutional framework has demonstrated weaknesses due to several factors including inadequate mandate, poor staffing, lack of support and weak horizontal and vertical linkages. These must be addressed to enable this Bureau and council to provide the necessary co-ordination and directions that will steer women's empowerment on a career and well-designed path.

2.12 Hitherto, the non articulation of a policy not only meant that interventions were piece-meal and dissipated but ineffective resulting in little gain in the security, equality and economic empowerment of women.

This policy is thus expected to provide the coordination that will eliminate poverty, promote sustainable livelihood and ensure sustainable development for women. This is consistent with the country's recently formulated vision 2020 aimed at transforming The Gambia into a self-reliant and developed nation which naturally requires women's active part since they constitute nearly one half of the nation's population. The policy is also consistent with and complementary to international conventions such as Convention of Elimination of all Forms of Discriminations, (CEDAW) adopted in 1978, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, Nairobi forward looking strategies and the World Women's Conference in Beijing 1995 Global Platform for Action amongst others.

2.13 Furthermore, it is an attempt to maximize the full utilization of our available national human resources as well as facilitate its efficiency and rational development relative to our prevailing socio-economic trends.

2.14 Apart from the link between this policy and the fulfilment of Gambian commitments made at Beijing, the latter conference underscored that it is incumbent upon everyone, governments, international bodies, NGOs, individuals and groups to see that women are recognised as human beings with every right and privilege afforded human beings; that women have a voice in their own destiny; that

women are given equal access to jobs, education, finance, land ownership and so on and that women participate actively in the world economic and security order as equal partners in the development of the world. This can be more readily promoted where there is a clear policy statement to provide direction and guide interventions aimed at achieving this. The National Policy on Women is expected to provide this policy guidance.

2.15 From the point of view of where Gambian women are today, statistics show that women are still highly under-represented in the formal economic sector and dominate the informal sector as unskilled workers. Women generally have a higher unemployment rate (19%) than men (14%) (The Gambia National Report on Women: The Beijing Fourth World Conference on Women, 1995, p.30), and Gambian women in decision-making positions are few. For instance, in agriculture, which is the major occupational activity in the country, women account for 77.1% of the agricultural workers, but only 2.6% of the professional workers.

2.16 In the formal sector, the disadvantaged situation of women is also apparent as shown by the following statistics. Women occupy 12.8% of the managerial positions as compared to 87.2% male occupancy.

Similar comparisons can be made for the professional and technical occupations where females consist of 1.9% as opposed to 86.1% for males, and in the clerical positions where they are 26.2% compared to 73.7% for males. In the distribution of skilled and unskilled labour, women consist of 4.9% of the skilled labour force and 61.9% of the unskilled labour force, and males 90.6% of the skilled and 38.1% of the unskilled labour force, indicative of women's lesser educational qualification and access to training. In access to education, girls consist of 42.6% of the gross enrolment rate for the primary level, 37% of the Junior Secondary and 31% of the Senior Secondary levels (Population Data Bank 1995).

2.17 At the level of the household, girls and women still carry out the bulk of domestic chores as well as functioning as the main family caretakers which continues to constrain their full participation in other national development processes outside of

the home. The female illiteracy rate continues to be high at 73% (National Census, 1993). STRATEGY FOR POVERTY ALLEVIATION COORDINATING OFFICE

**SUBMISSION FOR THE NATIONAL REPORT ON THE ASSESSMENT OF  
THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DAKAR AND BEIJING  
PLATFORMS OF ACTION**

**THE POVERTY SITUATION-1992/93 TO DATE**

The most comprehensive and definitive studies of poverty in The Gambia are the 1992 International Labour Organisation Poverty Study (based on a 1989-90 UNICEF funded Household Survey) and the Central Statistics Department 1993 Household Economic Survey. The first National Human Development Report of 1997 also dwelt on the issue of poverty using United Nations system poverty indices such as the Human Poverty Index (HDI), the Capability Poverty Measure (CPM) and the Gender-related Development Index (GDI). Another National Household Poverty Survey is currently underway, the results of which should be available later this year. A national Participatory Poverty Assessment is also in the pipeline and it seeks to explore the qualitative causes and dynamics of poverty from the perspective of the poor themselves.

Both the ILO and CSD studies used the traditional consumption, expenditure; basic needs approach, which classifies individuals and households by poverty category using poverty lines. The NHR expanded this restrictive definition to consider elements of human capabilities in areas such as life expectancy, educational attainment and access to health services.

Two poverty lines have been constructed for The Gambia and these define three categories of households. The food poverty line is fixed as an amount in Dalasis per adult equivalent unit per year, enough to afford a minimum calorie requirement of 2700 per day per male equivalent (the food basket includes items such as rice, fish, groundnut, vegetables, sugar, milk and snacks). The non-food poverty line uses the same approach but focuses instead on items such as rent, clothing, firewood, transport,

education and health. Adult equivalent units are preferred over the conventional per capita approach, which does not take cognisance of sex and age differences in household composition. Thus, the three categories of households are:

- Extremely Poor - households below the food poverty line
- Poor - households above the food poverty line but below the overall poverty line
- Non Poor - households above the overall poverty line

Table 1 shows the food and non-food baskets by urban and rural location in Dalasis. Not surprisingly, prices in urban areas are consistently higher for both baskets, resulting in a higher overall poverty line for urban households.

Table 1: Poverty Baskets in Dalasis by Location

	Food Basket	Non Food Basket	Overall Poverty Line
Urban	138	48,5	186,5
Rural	100	25	125

Source: derived from 1993 Household Economic Survey Report

Table 2 shows the calculated poverty lines in Dalasis per year per Adult Equivalent Unit (AEU) from the CSD and ILO studies. Due to differences in the type of fish used in calculating the food basket, the ILO and CSD studies recorded very different poverty lines. Whereas the ILO study used a relatively expensive fish - barracuda - the CSD study used "bonga" which is the cheapest type of fish found in The Gambia and affordable to all income categories.

Table 2: 1992 Poverty Lines for The Gambia in Dalasis per year per AEU

	SDA Poverty Line	ILO line inflation adjusted

	Greater Banjul	Other Urban	Rural	
Food Poverty Line	1636	1597	1371	2614
Non Food Basket	807	807	407	807
Overall Poverty Line	2443	2404	1777	3421

Source: CSD 1993 Household Economic Survey Report

Table 3 shows the percentage distribution of persons in poverty categories by location according to the CSD study. Overall, more than one third (33 per cent) of Gambians are classified as poor with food poverty contributing quite significantly to that proportion. In other words, one out of seven Gambians cannot afford a nutritiously balanced diet - this is worse in rural areas where the proportion is one out of four.

Table 3: Percentage distribution of persons in poverty categories by location

	Greater Banjul	Other Urban	Rural	All Areas
Extremely Poor	5	9	23	15
Poor	12	31	18	18
Non Poor	83	60	59	67
Total	100	100	100	100

Source: CSD 1993 Household Economic Survey

A more dramatic picture of the poverty situation is observed in Table 4 from the ILO report which records a rural head count ratio of 76 per cent, with 44 per cent certified as food poor. It is, however, interesting to note that even when the urban incidence of poverty from the CSD study is calculated using the expensive fish from the ILO study, the situation is still less severe.

Table 4: Percentage of persons in poverty categories - comparison of CSD and ILO studies

	Urban		Rural	
	CSD	ILO	CSD	ILO
Extremely Poor	25	33	23	44
Poor	16	31	18	32
Non Poor	59	36	59	24
Total	100	100	100	100

Source: derived from 1993 Household Economic Survey Report

The aforementioned differences notwithstanding, both the ILO and CSD studies are unanimous in their observation of poverty being largely a rural phenomenon. Given the traditional development bias against the rural areas of the country, this is hardly surprising. Coupled with this is the fact that many rural households (as much as 70 per cent by some estimates) depend on agriculture as their main source of livelihood. Due to the heavy reliance on rain fed agriculture, a short rainy season and a long dry spell limit production when most rural dwellers are effectively underemployed. As a consequence, adult equivalent rural incomes are slightly over one third of incomes in urban areas (see Table 5).

Table 5: Mean annual incomes per adult equivalent unit by location

	Greater Banjul	Other Urban	Rural	Total
Income per AEU	5976	3694	2316	3726

Source: derived from 1993 Household Economic Survey Report

However, poverty can also be found in the urban parts of the country, particularly among operators in the informal sector. The CSD study observed that formal sector workers earn about twice as much as informal sector workers. On its part, the ILO report found that 38 per cent of the self-employed in semi skilled jobs

were poor. This can be attributed to the low level of skills found among this group, as well as limited access to resources such as credit and market information.

Both studies also found that large households (15 or more members according to the ILO report) tended to be poorer than households with a smaller size are. In terms of inequality, the CSD study computed a Gini coefficient of 0.42 for the country as a whole, showing that the gap between rich and poor is substantial. It is more considerable in rural than urban areas - 0.28 vs. 0.18 - but this may be due to the concentration of poor and middle income groups in the survey's sample.

The human dimension of poverty is captured in the first ever National Human Development Report published in 1997. The Human Development Index (HDI) is a composite measure that attempts to assess a country's development based on the characteristics of its citizenry in terms of life expectancy, educational attainment and income. According to the report, the HDI for The Gambia as a whole is 0.350, on a scale of 0 to 1. Divisional analysis reveals that the urban Local Government Areas (LGAs) of Banjul and Kanifing have higher HDIs than the national at 0.519 and 0.433 respectively. The rural LGAs rank lower in the following order: Brikama - 0.328; Kerewan - 0.287; Mansakonko - 0.274; Janjanbureh - 0.260; Kuntaur - 0.249; and Basse - 0.210. This index clearly shows that human development in The Gambia is low, and much worse in the rural areas of the country.

The most relevant poverty index is the Human Poverty Index which is defined in terms of vulnerability to death at a relatively early age; exclusion from the world of reading and communication; and overall economic provisioning - expressed as access to health services, access to safe water and proportion of malnourished children under five years of age. An overall HPI of 44.8 per cent was calculated which is decomposed as follows:

- 34 per cent of the population is likely to die before the age of 40
- 63 per cent of Gambian adults are illiterate
- 10 per cent of Gambians lack access to health services

- 50 per cent lack access to safe water
- 12 per cent of children under five are malnourished.

Additionally, the Capability Poverty Measure considers the lack of three basic capabilities - namely, the capability to be well nourished and healthy; the capability for healthy reproduction; and the capability to be educated and knowledgeable. A CPM of 36.1 per cent has been calculated for The Gambia, which is decomposed as follows:

- 12 per cent of children under five are malnourished
- 23 per cent of births are not attended by trained health personnel
- 73.6 of females aged 15 and above are illiterate.

The same report also computes two Gender-related Development Indices which are designed to facilitate the assessment of the status of women in a given society. One uses the conventional indicators of female life expectancy; educational attainment; and equally distributed income indices to yield an index of 0.341. Using school life expectancy index in place of educational attainment gives a slightly lower index of 0.334. Notwithstanding the measure used, it is evident that Gambian women continue to be marginalised in our society.

#### THE STRATEGY FOR POVERTY ALLEVIATION

Following the Economic Recovery Programme and Programme for Sustained Development, the Government of The Gambia formulated a comprehensive Strategy for Poverty Alleviation (SPA) in 1992 as a mechanism of mitigating the negative consequences of the adjustment process. It was, at that time, realised that the welfare of households and families, particularly vulnerable groups, had not necessarily improved through the macroeconomic adjustments that had been made.

As a consequence, the SPA adopts a two pronged approach that combines: a) macroeconomic and sectoral policies that are designed to accelerate growth, promote equity, provide new development opportunities for the population, and support comprehensive social sector and human resource development programmes; and b) the

promotion of new attitudes and the creation of an institutional environment favourable to the emergence of a people-centred participatory approach to community based development.

The Strategy has identified four objectives or pillars designed to achieve overall poverty alleviation in the short term, and eradication in the long term. The pillars are interrelated and mutually supportive given that poverty is both multidimensional and multisectoral:

Pillar One - Enhancing the productive capacity of the poor

Pillar Two - Increasing access to and performance of the social sectors

Pillar Three - Building capacity at the local level

Pillar Four - Promoting participatory communication processes.

In brief, Pillar One addresses the vital issues of household food security, skills and enterprise development most notably in the informal, micro and small sectors (IMSEs), increased agricultural and enterprise production and productivity, rural finance and credit. The main focus of attention of Pillar Two is the population, health, education, literacy, housing, water and sanitation sectors with a view to better management and more relevant and efficient service delivery responsive to the needs of a diverse population.

Given that the majority of the Gambian population reside in the rural, more disadvantaged areas of the country, capacities at that level must be built and strengthened if development efforts are to be meaningful and sustainable. Pillar Three therefore pays particular attention to the strengthening of local communities and community based organisations which are beginning to form a critical mass in the development process. Information, Education and Communication are crucial in the strive toward sustainable development as well as in the empowerment process. Consequently, Pillar Four seeks the development of appropriate and viable two-way communication processes at all levels through a process of national dialogue.

To achieve these strategic objectives in the area of poverty eradication/reduction, the Strategy for Poverty Alleviation Co-ordinating Office (SPACO) has been established to act as the focal point for all Government and other agencies involved in the implementation of the program for poverty alleviation. Fully staffed in 1997, SPACO comprises three professional staff - National Co-ordinator and two Programme Officers for Monitoring and Decentralisation respectively - and support staff. As enshrined in the operational principles of the National Poverty Alleviation Programme (NPAP), SPACO has four key result areas:

- Monitoring of government policy and programme implementation of the poverty situation in The Gambia
- Co-ordination of sectoral policies and programmes to create synergies and maximise efficiency in the use of poverty alleviation activities
- Capacity Building of vulnerable groups and also of actors involved in poverty alleviation
- Resource Mobilisation for all poverty alleviation intervention activities

## THE NATIONAL POVERTY ALLEVIATION PROGRAMME

The National Poverty Alleviation Programme details the various interventions and activities to be undertaken to achieve the objectives of the SPA. Emphasis is placed on developing the rural areas of the country, both in terms of physical and social infrastructure, as well as the capacitation of the local populace to take a more proactive role in the overall development process. The relatively low status of Gambian women - evidenced in gender disparities in key socio-economic indicators - is widely acknowledged and interventions to redress this situation are given prominence in the Programme.

Each Pillar has a number of components/interventions designed to achieve its set objectives. Components are executed by Departments of State of the relevant sector and implemented by Government departments, NGOs, CBOs and private sector operators as appropriate. This approach ensures that those institutions with the technical expertise and comparative advantage are brought into the process, and the chances of projects succeeding are greatly enhanced. The spirit of partnership is very much in evidence in the Programme.

#### Selected Components Of The NPAP

##### Household Food Security (Gam/97/200)

The Household Food Security component of the NPAP has as its major objective the empowerment of farmers' groups for sustainable household food security through improving productive capacities in horticulture/cereals, livestock and aqua-culture, food processing, storage and marketing. Women's groups have been singled out for particular attention given their predominance in the production and processing of food for the household. It is evident that land, the foremost factor in the equation, must be available and of a minimum level of quality if the component is to achieve its objectives.

The component is funded by UNDP and Government of The Gambia (GOTG) at a total cost of US\$999,892 and should last for three years. The targeted divisions are North Bank, Upper River (North) and Central River (North). The Department of State for Agriculture is the designated executing agency. The Departments of Livestock Services, Agricultural Services and the Department of Community Development are the key implementing agencies.

##### Community Based Rural Development (Gam/2729)

The Community Based Rural Development Project consists of four separate sub-components, namely, support to small-scale water control, rural infrastructure, grassroots self-help initiatives and institutional feeding. Immediate project objectives include the prevention of salinisation of rice fields; increased access to clean drinking water; and increased agricultural production and productivity.

The Project operates nationally and is funded by the World Food Programme and GOTG at a total cost of US\$3.2 million. The Department of State for Local Government, in collaboration with WFP, is responsible for project execution and implementation. Other implementing agencies include Divisional Commissioners offices, CARITAS and Future In Our Hands (FIOH).

#### Enhancing Sustainable Livelihoods (Gam/97/100)

As a strategy to provide supplementary means of livelihood and income sources, the Enhancing Sustainable Livelihoods Component aims at improving the services and capacities of small scale enterprises to create employment, particularly for women and youth. The focus is on informal, micro and small-scale enterprises which in The Gambia, as in many other developing countries, are dominated by women and youth with limited education and low skills. Such enterprises are particularly relevant in the urban context where formal establishments are unable to absorb the large work force. They are also on the increase in rural areas where agriculture is the main source of employment albeit on a seasonal basis.

The Component targets Community Based Organisations in Greater Banjul and Upper River Division. It is funded by UNDP and GOTG at a total cost of US\$1.9 million and should last three years. The Department of State for Trade, Industry and Employment is the designated executing agency. Key implementing agencies include Gambia Women's Finance Association (GAWFA), Gambia Chamber of Commerce and Industry (GCCCI), Indigenous Business Advisory Services (IBAS) and the Department of Community Development.

#### Integrated Functional Literacy (Gam/96/002)

It is widely acknowledged that education and literacy are key to sustainable human development. Women's education in particular is known to reap immeasurable individual and social benefits. The Integrated Functional Literacy component targets mainly women and girls - men are not excluded - in the acquisition of functional literacy and numeracy skills. The component also encourages the development and

practice of income generating activities as a means of diversifying the income base of its beneficiaries.

This component is also funded by UNDP and GOTG at a total cost of US\$980,000, and is to run for three years. The Department of State for Education, through the Adult and Non Formal Education Department, is the designated executing agency. The component's implementation strategy is to work through pre-registered CBOs and NGOs with well defined project proposals - the major ones being Fang Dema Kafo in the URD, Foundation For The Socio-economic Advancement of Women (FOWSEA) in CRD and LRD, Wuli and Sandu Development Association (WASDA) in URD and the Association of Farmers, Educators and Trainers (AFET) (a local NGO). Project operations are nation wide and cover both urban and rural areas.

#### Rural Water Supply And Sanitation (Gam/93/003/01/99)

Another component of the NPAP relevant to the natural resource sector is the Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Project, which is designed to improve and increase access to adequate water and sanitation facilities in rural Gambia. The Project is providing a number of new wells and rehabilitating existing ones with the full participation of target communities through Village Water and Sanitation Committees. The Project has a strong social development component given the realisation that water is a collective responsibility and must be collectively managed if sustainability is to be ensured. Considerable emphasis is also placed on the linkages between clean water and good health and the need to ensure hygiene from collection point to utilisation.

The component is funded by UNCDF, GOTG and UNDP to the tune of US\$6 million and is for four years. The Department of Water Resources is the designated executing agency. The project operates in Central River, Western and Lower River Divisions and is implemented through pre-qualified and registered well construction contractors.

#### The Gambia Social Development Fund (SDF)

The Gambia Social Development Fund aims at supporting greater access to social services and infrastructure as well as strengthening grassroots institutions and local public services. The SDF is a permanent funding mechanism which is designed to facilitate access of the poor to basic social services through investment in basic social infrastructure and services; facilitate access to basic job and literacy skills to enhance the employability and productivity of the poor; enhance the financial capacity of the poor through micro-credit and other forms of financial support as appropriate; and strengthen NGOs, grassroots institutions, Community Based Organisations, indigenous financial institutions and local administrations in support of the overall goal of poverty reduction in the country.

Seed financing has been provided by a GMD50 million loans from the African Development Fund for the four-year project. The Department of State for Finance and Economic Affairs, through SPACO, is the designated executing agency. The project is currently operating in Greater Banjul and Upper River Division in the first year and will be phased nation wide by year two. Its implementation strategy is similar to other NPAP components in that it works through pre-qualified and registered NGOs and CBOs.

#### Poverty Alleviation Project

The Agency Francaise de Development (AFD) has provided a 5.3 million French Francs grant over a period of three years to The Government Of The Gambia to fund a project in support of the National Poverty Alleviation Programme (NPAP). The Grant is to be provided to three NGOs for poverty alleviation activities in the areas of Food security - to be implemented by Action Aid The Gambia; Micro finance - to be implemented by Gambia Women's Finance Association; and Environmental Conservation to be implemented by Agency For The Development Of Women And Children. The Project will target communities in URD, CRD and NBD. Urban poverty activities in support of poor women will be considered.

The Grant Agreement between the Government and AFD has been signed, as have the agreements between the Government and the respective NGOs. The first

disbursements are being awaited from AFD and implementation is scheduled to begin in April 1999. The Department of State for Finance and Economic Affairs, through SPACO, is the designated executing agency.

#### Reform Of The Local Government System And Decentralisation Programme

Both the First and Second Five Year Development Plans had emphasised the importance of decentralisation and enhancing the administrative capacity of local administration and local councils for planning and implementation of development projects. This nation-wide programme is expected to extend the process of democratisation to the local level by promoting the direct participation of the population in the management of their own affairs. A secondary objective is to promote a spatially integrated approach to development which starts from the people themselves.

Key activities include, among others, the revision and enactment of legislation relating to all levels of local government administration; review and adoption of financial instructions and memoranda in line with proposed local government reforms; restructuring of the Department of Community Development in consonance with the reformed local government system. The programme will be operationalised through the establishment of a Programme Co-ordinating Committee and Programme Monitoring Unit under the Department of State for Local Government, Lands and Religious Affairs.

#### Support To Decentralised Rural Development (SDRD)

The programme is designed in support of Government's Reform Of The Local Government System And Decentralisation Programme, with emphasis on increasing rural incomes, improving rural social infrastructure and Local Government Reforms. It is also envisaged that the programme will result in enhanced community organisations implementing sustainable development actions, and increased and diversified income generating activities. Gender and environmental issues will be addressed within the

context of the programme. The programme will seek to consolidate the achievements of previous EDF financed programmes.

Communities in the North Bank, Upper River and Western Divisions will be targeted during the programme's five-year life span. The European Development Fund and GOTG will provide funding for the programme at a total cost of 17.8 million ECU. A Programme Management Unit will be set up in the Department of State for Finance and Economic Affairs to plan, manage, monitor and evaluate project activities. The implementation strategy of this component focuses on community structures at the local level, principally Divisional Co-ordinating Committees, Ward Committees and Village Development Committees.

#### Lowland Agricultural Development Programme (LADEP)

The overall sector objective of the programme is the sustainable improvement of traditional rice production as a means of enhancing food security for impoverished rural households. The development objective is to increase total production in the traditional rice production systems of the lowlands by about 12,000 tons per annum in Programme Year 8 on a sustainable basis using a community based demand driven developmental approach. The two major components of the programme are soil and water management schemes, and tidal access schemes. The main target group is women, the traditional rice growers in The Gambia.

LADEP is a twenty-year nation-wide programme in three phases of 8, 8 and 4 years respectively - phase I is currently being implemented. The GOTG, International Fund jointly provides funding for Agricultural Development and African Development Bank at a total cost of GMD131,714,360.

Overall programme management responsibility is vested in a Programme Management Unit within the Programme and Projects Co-ordinating Office of the Department of State for Agriculture. Soil and Water Management Unit (SWMU), Department of Community Development, National Agricultural Research Institute (NARI) and the Department of Planning in DOSA implement programme activities, among others. The

Programme has also established a small fund for local NGOs to implement related activities. Criteria for qualification include a good track record and a minimum of two years registration with TANGO.

### **Mainstreaming Gender And Poverty**

SPACO and the Women's Bureau have negotiated the above named component for financing by the British Department For International Development (DFID) at a total cost of GB£909,000 over three years. Unlike the other components of the NPAP, this project seeks to address gender equity and poverty reduction from a macro perspective. In essence, the project will assist planning units to better develop effective poverty and gender focused plans and programmes at macro and sectoral levels by building skills for poverty and gender analysis and budgeting, sensitising planners to poverty and gender issues, and providing relevant and timely gender and poverty data.

The project comprises three main elements:

- Collation, production and appropriate dissemination of high quality poverty and gender information
- Production of high quality poverty and gender advocacy material and initiatives
- Development of systems and skills in selected Planning Units to enable staff to formulate, analyse and monitor policy, plans and budgets from a poverty and gender perspective.

Expected outputs include a Poverty Monitoring System, Women's Bureau Resource Centre and Gender/Poverty Focal Points Network. The project will be managed by a Project Manager under the overall supervision and guidance of a Projects Co-ordinating Committee comprising SPACO, Women's Bureau and sectoral planning units.

## CONSTRAINTS

Although the SPA was designed with an integrated programme approach in mind, it was preceded by a notable sectoral approach to development planning and has been forced to integrate these projects into a National Programme. This difficult task has had to be executed at the same time as co-ordination and monitoring of poverty alleviation components took off. At the end of the first cycle of three-year programs, a self-assessment has led to more focus being given to the identification of linkages among on-going components as a first step towards implementing an integrated programme.

At the same time, the provision of funds for operational expenses and some programmes such as the National Dialogue Process will strengthen SPACO as it institutionalises these vital functions of its Terms of Reference. SPACO is, however, still not self-sustaining and this may be due to a lack of recognition from the key owners of the Strategy for Poverty Alleviation. Financial constraints have dogged SPACO ever since its inception, and have become particularly acute when more co-ordination and monitoring is required to manage a broader array of interventions.

## THE WAY FORWARD

- Integration of ongoing components and interventions into mainstream sectoral programmes for added impact and sustainability
- Stronger and more enhanced partnerships between Government, NGOs and civil society to enhance sustainability
- Increased funding for components and interventions to expand coverage and activities
- More intersectoral collaboration, co-ordination and linkages between various actors to maximise synergism and programme impact

**GAMBIA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (GCCCI)**

## CONSTRAINTS

1. Lack of access to funding which puts a restraint on the Chamber's efforts in membership recruitment.
2. Lack of information about services (and benefits therein) GCCI offers to its members.
3. Public's impression that the organisation is for "big business men"
4. High interest rates which discourage business growth.

## ACHIEVEMENTS

1. In changing the misconception that GCCI was for big business men, we sponsored a TV programme showing successful businesswomen who are members of the Chamber. These businesswomen started as small business enterprises and their businesses have grown over a period of time. Some of the opportunities that contributed to their success came from information the Chamber availed to them. The enquires we received after the program showed that this was a successful means of overcoming the misconception that Chamber was for big business men thereby encouraging women and Informal Micro and Small Enterprises (IMSEs) to join the Chambers.
2. In our last general elections two women were elected as board members.
3. The Chamber hosted an ILO workshop that trained 830 IMSE operators of which one third are women.
4. A UNDP sponsored program enabled the Chamber to send two women to Cairo, Egypt for training on textile and food processing which enabled them to expand their business.

## RECOMMENDATION

1. Overcome the impression that GCCI is for big businesses and men only by lowering membership fee to enable IMSE (most of which are ran by women) to join.
2. Find ways to assist IMSE in their businesses.

## VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN POLICE PRESPECTIVE

Violence against women is in the increase although statistic at the level of the Police indicates the lack of official reports on cases of such. The factors responsible for this can be attributed to the following:-

### 1. TRADITIONAL BARRIERS

Some of our traditions have reduced women to childbearing tools with no decisions making authority. Hence subjected to abuse and violence.

### 2. RELIGIOUS BARRIERS

Religion has placed an undue suppression on the female gender thus contributing to the belief that any woman who is subjected to any form of harassment or violence from or by the male gender should be accepted.

### 3. LOW LEVEL OF EDUCATION

The high rate of illiteracy and the Low level of education especially on the side of women have equally contributed to the increase of violence against women. Poorly educated men and women tend to have the belief that husband and wife are not deemed to be one and the same in the perspective of the law. Therefore, a wife has no right to report or sue her husband for any act or form of violence.

This concept has placed an undue restriction on the social and moral advancement of the women folk. Hence a break up of marriage and family.

## FORMS OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN THE GAMBIA

The following are the forms of violence normally perpetuated against women:-

- a. Sexual Assault
- b. Indecent Assault
- c. Common Assault

Sexual and Indecent assault are hardly reported either to the Police or competent authorities. The factor responsible for this is mainly due to undue human pride and the lack of awareness.

Common assault is only reported in extreme cases such as previous bodily harm or were pressure is applied on the female victim whether by peers or family members.

### RECOMMENDATION

Even though The Gambia constitution guarantees the fundamental right and freedom of every person, it falls short of giving special protection to women.

Consequently, there is a need for additional constitutional framework on the following issues to give respite to women:-

- Forms of sexual harassment
- Domestic disputes
- Child Abuse

Although, these issues are mentioned in the Criminal Code Laws of The Gambia, adequate authority is not given to the Law Enforcement agencies to enforce such provision as required.

## CONCLUSION

The issue of gender equality has been a top agenda in the day to day discussions of the Police Department. Despite efforts being made to address this matter, the missing link is co-opting institutions like the Police saddled with such responsibilities conferred by the laws of The Gambia.

Therefore, the call is for additional constitutional framework as earlier mentioned requires immediate attention. The legislation of such would surely enhance and ameliorate the current efforts of the Police as evident in trying to reduce the rate of violence against women in our society (s).

## DEPARTMENT OF STATE FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND LANDS

### WOMEN AND LAND TENURE SYSTEM IN THE GAMBIA

In many developing countries like the Gambia Land Comes to be the principal source of livelihood, security and status. Land Tenure in this context refers to ownership of land by women, the relationships among individuals, groups and institutions that determine the appropriation and use of land resources in the Gambia. Land tenure arrangements are complex and sometimes political. Despite the numerous attempts made to reform and simplify the land tenure system, it is still gendered. The complexity of land administration in the Gambia stems from the two Acts in existence i.e. Banjul and Kombo St. Mary Act Cap 57.02 and the provincial Act Cap 57.03.

The administration of land under Cap 57.02 is vested in the Secretary of State responsible for the administration of the Act. Cap 57.03 vested the administration of lands in the provinces on the District Authority drawn from customary law. Cap 57.02 which is administration using the statutory law may take account of gender, but as observed by the authors of women and law in

West Africa – Legal Issues Affecting Women, this will only count if the Secretary of State is gender sensitive. The authors also observed that the law in itself is written in a context which considers the interpretation as male even though Cap 4, laws of the Gambia 1990 define masculine gender to include females. Act, Cap 57.03, which vested provincial land administration on the District Authorities, fails to consider its composition. District Authorities by all standards are male dominated, thus women are deliberately discriminated by this Cap. Land ownership in the Gambia can be from inheritance, transfers by state or individual (s) or from other tenancy arrangement such as purchase and so on. This ownership rights is not gender biased by principle, but in practice, women in most cases enjoy user rights as a common practice in the rural Gambia.

The main types of land tenure system in the Gambia are traditional, private and state. Therefore, this paper will attempt to look at how each of them affects the Gambian women.

The 1993 census has shown that women constitute 51% of the Gambia's population. It further indicated that majority of them are illiterates living in the rural area and are mainly engage in Agricultural production as primary or secondary income earners. Those in the urban area are mainly involved in the informal sector businesses located either in their homes or at the neighbourhood level. Therefore the role of women in development is another important aspect to look at because their role may be defined to be included as equal partners in development. This demands that women be treated as an entity with full rights in decision making. Unfortunately, Gambian women have not made a major headway in this direction due to barriers which limit their full participation in development process.

It is not evident for women to have equal opportunities as their male counterparts, to own land and to effectively participate in the development process. Radical policy adjustments need to be made in order to remove those barriers required in the traditional land tenure system.

## TRADITIONAL SYSTEM OF LAND TENURE

The above system is based on custom and usage, and is applied through traditional forms of organisation. It is therefore imperative to look at the rural organisation with a view bring to light how this type of land tenure impedes women's access or acquisition of land.

The administration, planning and development of customary land holdings are closely related to the rural organisation and/or social organisation. Here in the Gambia, the hierarchy of rural organisation starts at the most dispersed level with the house hold or family compounds which are grouped into 'Kabilo (wards) within a village. The villages are formed into district and these districts form a division.

The Gambia follows a patrilineal system where the male members gain more control of the community property than their female counterparts. Usually, a new settlement is established when male members of the family move to establish their own village with their families. When they settle, they acquire the neighbourhood as farm lands enough for the extension of the settlement. New settlers later join in and are settled by male head of the original family in the clan farm.

As more clans move into the settlement, it extends to form a village. In a lot of cases women are not allowed to plant perennial crops like tress on commercial land. This to the rural community is a sign of permanent ownership or occupancy, and this right is limited to the male founders of the village. The head of the village is always from the male members of original settlers. This position used to be hereditary either by the next oldest brother or the eldest son of the late head. However, in recent times, we have witnessed late settlers and even women in some isolated cases heading the village. Wives of the family members and later settlers do not own land. They are allocated land and the daughter has no inheritance rights over their mother's fields. These are

usually passed to the wife's field, which is usually sub-divided, or the husband claimed as other communal land by the husband's additional spouse(s). This system usually grants only land use rights to women which are not sufficient guarantees for those of them wishing to make major investments. In cases of divorce, the women have no claim or user right over ex-husband's land.

## PRIVATE OR INDIVIDUAL LAND TENURE

This type of land tenure dates back to early part of the nineteenth century when individuals and corporation purchased land. It accounts for only a small percentage of agricultural and lands settlement in the country. It has become important to establish individual rights on a legal basis by survey and registration of ownership.

The pride of ownership and the security of tenure offered to the individual or group are thought to encourage improvement and conservation of the land resource.

Individual free hold tenure is well established in the Gambia as an official policy directed towards the establishment and registration of individual rights in land. These types of land tenure system are not gender bias in principle but in practice women are disadvantage mainly due to their low income and other societal barriers.

A case study of a 'Kafo' in Brikama (Bombiri) comprising of 50 women and 35 men showed that out of the women only 4 women own settlement land and none own agricultural land. Of the 35 men 25 own settlement land and 15 own agriculture land. The 1993 household census also shows a similarity. At the national level, 84.1 percentage of the households are headed by male while only 19.4 women in urban areas and 12.8 women in rural areas respectively are household heads. The 1993 Household census shows a great disparity among male and female household heads per local government area as shown in table 1.

## Household Distribution by gender per LGA

Local Government Area	Male	Sex	Female
Banjul	74.9		25.1
KMC	82.0		18.0
Brikama	84.9		15.1
Mansakonko	77.9		22.1
Kerewan	84.8		15.2
Kuntaur	90.4		9.6
George Town	87.8		12.2
Basse	90.8		9.2

Source: 1993 House census.

### 3. STATE/TRUST LAND TENURE SYSTEM

This type of land tenure system is mostly applied to lands in Banjul and Kombo St. Mary area and also in some growth centres around the country. It falls under Act Cap 52.02 as previously noted.

In principle, the intention was for a unitary title system of equality which injects tenure security in land holding for a specified period of time, usually 99 years. This tenorial system is largely drawn from the English type tenure through the introduction of a superior interest held by the state, from which all other titles derive. However, it is widely observed that in practices, there exist gender inequalities in favour of men who are considered as household head and for the household unit providers.

These ideologies and associated practices restrict women's ability both to exercise their existing land claim and to successfully challenge existing gender

inequalities in law, policy and practice in relation to such claims. Gender ideologies can obstruct women from getting land rights. For example, ideological assumptions about women's needs, work, roles and capabilities and social expectations infringes on what type of property they inherit in the Gambia society. These gender ideologies negatively affect the Gambian women especially when it comes to implementation of public policies and laws relating to land rights for example, among the criteria for allocation of state own lands (e.g., Kanifing, Bakoteh and Bursubi estate) are the issue of marital status, income level and responsibility. In the urban area where above estates are located, women were disadvantage because their land rights were restricted by cultural factor. They are being considered as the weaker sex and therefore they are systematically refused to own land rights on the basis.

#### LAND ALLOCATION BY GENDER IN THE SSHFC ESTATES

ESTATES	NUMBER OF PILOTS	MALE	FEMALE	PERCENT
Kanifing	739	539	200	27
Bakoteh	204	139	65	31
Bursubi	508	320	188	37

Source - SSHFC - Housing Department

This discrimination in land allocation affects both the urban and rural Gambia women for example, the Jahally Pacharr Rice Project land distribution was based on the notion of house hold headship which is patrilineal Gambia is always considered to be male.

#### CONSTRAINTS

- a. Lack of security of tenure for women land users because the male land owners can take back their land whenever they like especially in case of divorce or death
- b. Women do not have direct access to land as their male counterparts but despite this, they make considerable contribution to agriculture and other national development activities.
- c. Poor application of customary/traditional rules in distribution and use of land resources.
- d. After several attempts of reforms, amendments and adaptation of the law, it can be said that legislation on land is difficult to be enforced correctly. Land legislation fails to bring about the desired gender equality.
- e. Lack of education among traditional land a demonstrator as most of them cannot read legal texts.
- f. Lack of gender equality in the constitution of land administration Boards. (These are mostly male).

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- a. Inclusion of women in land administration at all levels.
- b. Gender quota system in land allocation in state lands.
- c. Women land ownership rights be raised and documented in all women for a.

## CONCLUSION

Going through the country document presented at Beijing in 1995 it was observed that although women's role on Agriculture production cannot be overemphasised yet the women's issue on land tenure rights was not discussed.

It was therefore imperative to fill in the gap in this document in order to draw attention on some of the constraints women face in relation to lands ownership. This will also remind policy makers to adjust or enforce those policies/laws (partial by the customary law) which are deterrent to women's ownership of land in the Gambia.

### **MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE POST-BEIJING REPORT**

Management Development Institute (MDI) is the main government institute for management training, research and consultancy in The Gambia. It spearheads the implementation of the major activities of the human resources development component of The Gambia's administrative reform and economic management capacity building programmes.

As contained in the MDI act, its general objectives are:

1. To train Gambian citizens to develop managerial skills in the planning and implementation of development programmes;
2. Promote management consciousness of the public service by encouraging its orientation to development tasks and skills;
3. Organise and conduct courses, seminars, workshops and conferences for the purpose of improving performance, efficiency and exchanging ideas in the fields of administration and management.

The General and Management Unit (GMU) of the MDI was established in 1991 with the objective of creating gender awareness and sensitisation and mainstreaming gender

in its economic management and capacity building programmes. Since then, the GMU has sought to:

- develop gender-sensitivity in the public and private sectors to respond to the needs of different target groups in the development process and society.
- enable development planners to develop gender-responsive planning, programming and implementation skills;
- develop gender-sensitive policies and administrators;
- work closely with NGOs and other development agents;
- achieve gender equality.

Over the years, the GMU has been active in gender awareness raising in a range of activities such as training, research and consultancy, and in providing gender-sensitive information at both the institutional and national levels.

Seminars, workshops and conferences have been effective conduits for translating gender-sensitive research findings into concrete plans and actions for wider developmental goals and for effective strategic changes taking gender into account. The GMU has also been providing consultancy services to organisations and institutions that have made mainstreaming gender in their development programmes and projects propriety. Since its inception, the GMU has made tremendous strides in the area of women and gender through the preparation of technical papers and also the design and organisation of training programmes.

MDI's GMU played a prominent and facilitating role in the preparations to Beijing, in close collaboration with the Women's Bureau and TANGO. It was involved in the preparation and finalisation of the country document presented to the Fourth World Conference held in Beijing in 1995. The country report produced for the Beijing Conference highlighted the

gender disparities in The Gambia's different contexts. It is with this in mind that MDI has devoted the last two years to the implementation of post-Beijing strategies, taking a proactive stance in activities geared to ensuring the empowerment of women in The Gambia. It has done so by effecting strategic targeting of its programmes at various groups in the public sector and the NGO community. In this regard specific training programmes have been designed in response to the country paper's recommendations and the Mansakonko Declaration. Among these are gender sensitisation and awareness training seminars for the following:

- Female Ministers and Permanent Secretaries
- Judiciary and the legal profession
- Media personnel
- Fisheries personnel
- Police and immigration officers
- NGO decision-makers and project implementers.

The Institute successfully implemented these.

As well as creating public awareness about gender and Working to put gender issues at the centre of government and NGO programmes, The GMU has been mainstreaming gender concerns in other MDI programmes. It is pertinent to underscore the role of the UNDP in providing funds under the EMCBP, for the realisation of the objectives of the GMU programme in the first phase of its post-Beijing strategy during 1996-97.

During 1997-98 the GMU has focussed its attention on research and programme development. The following activities were the focus of its post-Beijing mandate:

- Research on "Women in top management in The Gambia" (See annex for details)
- Collaboration with TANGO on a gender audit exercise of NGOs
- Collaboration with the UNICEF-sponsored programme with the Department of State for Education to engender its primary school curriculum

- . Gender training of civil servants
- . Consultancy to develop a new "Youth Policy" (Completed)
- . Participation in the Department of State for Health, Social Welfare, and Women's Affairs Technical Committee for the development of the "Policy for the Advancement of Gambia Women" (ongoing into 1999).

In the first half of 1999, the GMU has completed the following:

- . Workshop with prominent women managers from all sectors to discuss findings from "Women in top management in The Gambia" research
- . Work with Action Aid and the UN system in engendering programmes and projects.

Forecast activities for the remainder of 1999-2000 include:

- . Preparation of an internationally accredited Gender and Development diploma programme
- . Preparation of a gender training manual suitable for use in the entire sub-region
- . Further development of a gender-responsible research programme and capacity
- . Training programmes especially designed for statisticians, women managers, and leadership training for women.

Nonetheless, despite its many successes, much remains to be done in order to fully implement MDI's post-Beijing strategy. It is envisaged that the UNDP, under its EMCBP, will continue to support the Institute in its training, capacity-building and research programmes. However, it will require increased government and donor support to attain the full realisation of its post-Beijing strategy. A proposal to build the capacity of the GMU has been completed with the intent to cover the second phase of post-Beijing.

## CONSTRAINTS, CHALLENGES, AND OPPORTUNITIES

The GMU has few resources with which to pursue its mandate. The Institute's facilities and other resources are pooled and shared with other departments/programmes. The ideal situation would be for the Gender in Management Programme to be provided with more resources to enable it forge ahead. Consequently, for it to effectively implement its post-Beijing strategies of financial and material support, in the form of a discrete budget and computer and printer equipment must be provided. The GMU is aware that it needs to work out a strategy to sustain its activities in the long run. However, there is need to provide the support necessary to build the unit's capacity for sustainability.

One such way to build the GMU's capacity would be through collaboration with the Women's Bureau. The GMU, in tandem with the Women's Bureau, is well placed to ensure gender concerns are given top priority in government bodies expected to be part of the implementation of post-Beijing strategies. Joint training and research programmes, as well as collaboration in policy, programme, and project assessment and planning could be embarked on, potentially building The Gambia government into a regional and continental model for post-Beijing action and development. This type of collaboration with the Women's Bureau is envisaged in The Governance Programme which will be considered at the donors conference scheduled for September 1999.

Additionally, closer collaboration with the NGO community is already underway. This link is strategic for MDI because of its direct relations with the grassroots communities and organisations. The Institute is interested in this sector because of its potential ability to build a progressive gender agenda from the ground up. The need for a clear cut Women's Policy to facilitate these efforts cannot be over-emphasised.

Finally, The Gambia is a signatory to many international conventions and protocols protecting human rights, including the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). However, it remains non-signatory to several important conventions relating to the rights of women. These conventions include:

- . Convention Against Discrimination in Education
- . Equal Remuneration Convention
- . Maternity Protection Convention
- . Discrimination, Employment and Occupation Convention

International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the Optional Protocol to International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (OPICCPR), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), and the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees-Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees (CRSR).

- . Works with Family Responsibilities Convention
- . Home Work Convention
- . Convention on the Nationality of Married Women

. Convention on Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age for Marriage, and Registration of Marriage

. Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in persons and the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Orders

. Supplementary Convention on the Abolition of Slavery, the Slave Trade, and Institutions and Practices Similar to Slavery

. Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

The signature and ratification of these Conventions – all aimed at protecting the rights of women and children – will no doubt create a conducive enabling environment and would ease constraints encountered by institutions working for the improvement and upliftment of the Gambian society. As a matter of fact The Gambia has fulfilled its responsibilities enshrined in most of these Conventions. What remains is for the legal formality to be regularised.

## ANNEX

The report will take the opportunity to elaborate on some of the critical findings of the Unit's recent research on "Women in Top Management".

The majority of Gambian women managers are new in their managerial position, less than five years. They are highly educated, with over half possessing university degrees, far exceeding their own mothers' educational attainment where almost half had no education at all. The majority is married and Muslim, and most claim no political involvement.

These women mostly work in male-dominated workplaces. However, they are sometimes the only women working in their positions in their organisations or departments. It in upper management or heading a division, they are likely to be the first woman in their workplaces to hold that position. Women are most likely to be found in top management positions if they work in female-dominated or gender-balanced workplaces, whereas women divisional heads are most likely to have male superordinates.

Education makes some difference to career realisation, although not as much as we expected, given the common belief that women are not to be found in high positions in The Gambia because of their relatively low academic attainment or lack of qualifications. We found that although all of the university graduates we surveyed were in assistant managerial, middle or top management, or professional positions, the women holding advanced university degrees were more often to be found in middle rather than in top management. Further, only slightly more than half of all middle managers we surveyed had a university education.

Problems women face in their careers and workplaces were a major focus of the study. Depending on how the question was phrased, between 20-30% of women reported problems with their co-workers, whether colleagues, subordinates, or superordinates. However, when the respondents were asked to identify which type of co-worker they had problems with by gender, the proportion rose to almost 50% for problems with male and/or with female co-workers. These problems ranged from co-workers feeling threatened by their positions, refusing to acknowledge or respect their authority or expertise, active blocking of information or opportunity by colleagues and superordinates, male paternalistic attitudes towards their professional abilities, and male co-workers' comments about their personal lives or their feminine demeanour (or supposed lack of it).

Yet, almost all of the respondents also reported having cordial or friendly relations with their subordinates and superordinates, suggesting that hostile relations in the workplace are played out subtly and under the surface, or perhaps even through jokes. Gambian culture is such that open conflict is usually avoided and unacceptable, thus driving problems in the workplace between men and women and between women managers and professionals and their superordinates, subordinates, and colleagues is even higher than reported in the study.

Indicative of an unsupportive workplace milieu may be the fact that almost all of the respondents claimed to make executive decisions consultatively. Put in a position where their professional confidence is challenged and undermined regularly, or even openly put into question, women managers' reluctance to undertake any action or decision without checking it through her colleagues and superordinates is understandable. In other cases, where women have already reported that their superordinates doubt their competence, may be that they are blocked from making independent managerial decisions. It is also realistic to expect that in a professional environment where their allegiances are insecure, women managers would attempt to curry favour amongst their subordinates and colleagues by taking a consultative or consensus-building approach.

Another coping mechanism frequently mentioned was the need to over-perform. Several women reported feeling pressure to perform at a level higher than their male colleagues in order to justify their current positions, or to gain any reward, recognition, or acknowledgement of their professional capability.

Just under half of the respondents raised gender concerns about their workplaces, policies and practices, such as encountering sexist remarks and attitudes in the workplace, inadequate policies having to do with childcare and confinement leave, and lack of access to training, promotions and increased decision-making roles for women. It is significant that half of our respondents acknowledge that the cultural stereotype of women prevalent in The Gambia posed an actual or potential barrier to their career advancement.

More severe barriers were also explored. Almost one-third of the women we surveyed believed that they had been by-passed for a promotion that they had deserved, and well over one-tenth reported that they had experienced sexual harassment in the workplace.

Perhaps the most significant barrier to our respondents' general happiness and accomplishment in their careers was the experience of dual-role stress (the conflict between their roles as professionals and as mothers/wives/daughters). Over half of our respondents claimed to experience negative management of their dual responsibilities in the workplace and in the home as the primary caregivers. Most of these women felt over-burdened by their dual workloads, if not even torn or conflicted between their two sets of responsibilities. Yet, over three-quarters of married women reported their husbands were supportive of their careers. Unfortunately, husbands support does not seem to translate into an easing of women's domestic burden.

Husbands' role at home seems to be an issue as the incidence of negative dual-role stress was positively related to women's marital and parental status. Married women were over-represented in the category of women who experienced dual-role stress negatively. Women with children under the age of 12 particularly tended to experience dual-role stress negatively, but the larger category of married women with children under age 25 also tended to suffer negative dual role stress. Conversely, divorced women with children under age 25 experienced dual-role stress positively or not at all.

As has already been mentioned, the Gender and Management Unit was motivated to undertake this study in order to improve our ability to deliver gender training in the workplace. What is most striking for us is the large proportion of our respondents who offered contradictory responses to similar questions having to do with workplace relations and gender. Some claimed that cultural stereotypes of women had no impact on their careers. Others neglected to mention problematic gender-specific policies, practices, and challenges at work. Our respondents' relatively high claims of gender-sensitivity, particularly when this observation flew in the face of evidence suggesting the contrary. It is obvious to us that women managers and professionals are in need of gender awareness training that will improve their ability to identify gender-based problems in the workplace and empower them to effectively counter and overcome such problems.

Our respondents repeatedly mentioned women's lack of access to training, promotion, decision-making roles and responsibilities, and other career opportunities was a problem and a barrier to their advancement. Equal opportunities, legislation and workplace policies would support women's efforts at securing these opportunities, but gender training of workplace supervisors and decision-makers is also called for. Other actions should include training of women in methods and strategies to improve their capacities. Additionally, research on how workplace decisions are made would be useful.

Relations in the workplace seem particularly fraught, and this not only includes those between men and women, but also between women subordinates and superordinates. This again points to the need for more general gender awareness training, not only for women managers and professionals and workplace superordinates and decision-makers, but also for women who occupy the lower ranks of the workplace. Several women mentioned that their female subordinates were reluctant to accept their authority or refused to believe that they could be as effective as supervising as their male counterparts. This sort of divisiveness sets up counterproductive dynamics in the workplace between women, where ideally they should be supporting each other in professional attainment. Only one-quarter of the respondents reported that women's networking had anything to do with women's career realisation and none mentioned it as a factor in their own career success. This finding calls for the need to develop women's career development and support networks and organizations where women can share information, encouragement, and experiences. While this may exist informally in some milieus, women who are "unconnected" or newly breaking into their careers may fall out of the net of such support.

Further research obviously needs to be conducted in order to uncover the exact gender dynamics at play in the Gambia workplace, with the understanding that these may widely vary according to workplace, sector, gender constitution and hierarchy of the workplace, and workplace locale. In addition, a close examination of policies and practices in the workplace may add further insight as to how these relations are institutionally supported and produced. Findings from this type of research could complement or be a part of the suggested investigation into workplace decision-making over access to training, promotions and responsibilities, mentioned above.

Finally, women's experience of negative dual-role stress must be addressed before it becomes a matter of major physical, psychological, and social health concern. Again, further research needs to be conducted, both to examine how workplace policies perpetuate such stress and to examine family and marriage dynamics and how they play role in women's experience of negative stress. It is significant, we think, that divorced women

with young children report no negative dual role stress, while married women, especially with young children, are over-represented when it comes to negative dual-role stress. The obvious assumption to make is that, married women live with responsible adult partners who share family responsibilities, just as these women do by bringing home paycheques – traditionally a male responsibility, might not actually be the case, if our findings are any indication. Legislation supporting working mothers by extending allowable confinement leave and providing adequate childcare facilities – perhaps even in the workplace itself for lactating mothers – could go some way to easing the burden such women carry. Women also need support for sensitive approaches to in-laws, including public awareness campaigns and support to men who are willing to make positive family changes in their homes that include their assumption of a fair share of domestic, including childcare, labour.

We hope that responses to this study will user in a new era of professional development for Gambian women, and will prompt fresh thinking about domestic arrangements and responsibilities in households where both spouses work outside the home. While findings from the research perhaps pose more questions about women managers and women in the workplace than they answer, this situation can serve as an impetus to new learning about women and work and experimentation with solutions to stubborn professional and domestic problems facing Gambian career women. It is our belief at MDI that Gambian public, private, and NGO institutions are not making maximal use of valuable human resources by not being aware of the problems of professional women. Solutions should be found for these problems. As a least developed country, the Gambia cannot afford to waste any of its resources.

#### **DEPARTMENT OF STATE FOR AGRICULTURE**

In recognition of the fact that women are the major food producers for the family, the Department of State for Agriculture has as one of its objectives to help rural women to

provide sufficient food for members of their household. This has been achieved through the technical advice and services provided to the women.

#### ACHIEVEMENTS:

The following achievements are registered in strengthening women's capacity as producers and processors so as to enhance household food security:-

- . The National Agricultural Policy has been reviewed to take on board women's Production issues such as access to productive land and other production inputs and support services among others.
- . Promotion of sustainable diversified food production programmes with emphasis On cereal production such as rice, maize and millet in order to contain the growth of Rice importation.
- . Promote the growing of vegetables during the wet season to ensure year round Supply for both household consumption and income.
- . Establishment of a market oriented sprinkler irrigation scheme in Banjulunding Village have greatly help to cater for the urban and semi-urban consumers Vegetable demand.
- . Improving women's access to rice fields.
- . Assistance has been rendered to reclaim women's rice fields affected by salinity Alkalinity.
- . Increase access to agricultural information and extension services. Mobilisation Training of women at village level has been promoted to reach as many women as possible.

- . Emphasis on women's key role in processing/ preservation as an extension Strategy to ensure food security.
- . Promotion of small ruminants and poultry production in order to better meet the Nutritional requirements of families and also increase rural incomes.

#### CONSTRAINTS:

Challenges and constraints limiting women's agriculture production geared toward reducing (alleviating) rural poverty and improve household food security are many. Such problems can be attributed in one way or another to several production factors such as:-

- . Lack of proper marketing arrangements/market information system for the Agricultural sector.
- . Limited access to credit facilities for women in the rural villages.
- . Accessing (labour saving) farm implements by women is another major production constraint.
- . Inadequate input supplies such as seeds, fertiliser etc.
- . Unavailability of storage and processing facilities
- . Inadequate water supply in many vegetable gardens
- . Unavailability of water lifting devices for irrigation garden schemes.
- . Unsatisfactory land tenure system making productive land inaccessible to some Women group users.
- . Infrequent farmer to agricultural personnel contact due to the limited extension

staff.

- . Incidence of **disease outbreaks** in small ruminants and poultry production.
- . **Inadequate vaccine and drug supplies** in the rural areas
- . **Inadequate feed supplements** for small ruminants more especially during the dry season.
- . **Inadequate knowledge** in feed conservation techniques.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS:

Household Food Security can be attained through strengthening women's capacity in food production and processing. This can be achieved when all production factors are in place, coupled with strong institutional support from both public and private sectors engaged in agricultural production. This calls for more concerted efforts from all stakeholders involved in agricultural development.

In order to achieve the objective of improving women's capacity in food production and processing, the following recommendations should be looked into:-

- . **Provision of a marketing arrangement and information system** for women producers. This will greatly increase their income earning capacity.
- . **Establishing of storage and processing plants** for their vegetables will reduce and control seasonal gluts, and enhance their availability during scarce periods.
- . **Accessing financial support through credit provision.**
- . **Availability and accessing productive land and other production inputs.** This calls for Government's support for a review of the Local Government Act on land

tenure.

- . Ensuring adequate water facilities to increase production and productivity of vegetables. Also providing water-lifting devices in vegetable gardens.
- . DOSA to provide adequate incentives to staff so as to maintain personnel in the services.
- . Ensure adequate knowledge and management skills in the small ruminants and poultry production.
- . The Cockerel Exchange Programme of the Household Food Security Project to be replicated in other parts of the country.
- . Access and availability of vaccines and drugs at village level.

## **DEPARTMENT OF WATER AND SANITATION RESOURCES**

### **WATER SUPPLY**

Prior to the 'International Drinking Water and Sanitation Decade' (IDWSSD), the rural Population in the Gambia depended mainly on traditional wells and some water points provided by area councils. These hand-dug wells frequently ran dry and the quality usually poor. The evolution of the sub-sector was influenced by the country's drought conditions of the mid-seventies. This laid greater emphasis on rural water supply. By the beginning of the IDWSSD, considerable achievement had been made over the years in the construction of protected wells equipped with hand pumps, in villages with more than 150 people. However during this period, the fragmentation of activities had proven to be a major handicap for the development of the sub-sector. Thus in 1979, the Government enacted a National Water Resources Council Act as the framework for the orderly development, exploitation, conservation and preservation of the nation's water resources.

The Act defines some basic rights and obligations in the design, construction, abstraction and use of water. It provides regulations for the implementation of the provisions of the Act and defines the responsibilities of the Department of Water Resources as executor and enforcer of laws and regulations governing the water resources. The National Water Resources Council (NWRC) chaired by the then Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources was also established, together with its technical arm the Water Resources Committee and the Multi-sectoral Water and Sanitation Working group (WATSAN). This improved the country level co-ordination in implementation of activities up to the mid-eighties. Cabinet approved operational Policy Issues for National Water Resources Development, a policy document in 1989. This laid out directions related to water resource development and supply management. Rural water supply is the responsibility of the Department of Water Resources. Whilst in the Greater Banjul Area, Divisional towns and urban growth centres, the National Water and Electricity Corporation (NAWEC) is responsible.

The WATSAN group became dormant until 1992 when it was reactivated through the assistance of UNICEF. It serves as a forum for co-ordination and collaboration with other actors. Co-ordination of activities has since increased and improved amongst actors, especially in the standardisation of technical designs and approaches, thus facilitating maintenance and maximising resource use. However there is still need to further improvement. In addition to provision of Hand pumps, Villages with more than 1000 people are currently being provided with a reticulation system of water supply (Solar/Motorised driven pumps). This has reduced the time and energy spent by Women and Children in collecting water.

The Water Resources Council Act has been found to be deficient in many ways. However, the department is in the process of developing a National Water Resources Strategy for the Gambia under the UNCDF/ RWSSP programme, that will address the inadequacies of the act and lead to the development of a comprehensive water Policy.

Sources of Water: The Gambia is blessed with relatively abundant water resources comprising of seasonal rainfall, groundwater and the River Gambia and its tributaries. However, fresh water for most uses is derived mainly from groundwater and to a limited extent the river water. According to the Department of Water Resources

(DWR), more than 80% of all water used in The Gambia comes from ground water. Ground water occurs in two aquifers; the shallow sand aquifer and the deep sandstone aquifer.

The shallow sand aquifer, which extends throughout the country and is divided into 2 units, being the upper phreatic aquifer occurs at depths 10-30 below ground level and mainly tapped by hand, dug wells. The lower semi-confined sand aquifer is at depths of 40-120m below ground level and normally exploited by the sinking of boreholes.

Recharge of the aquifers is mainly by infiltration from rainfall at 8% lateral flow and a volume of 630 million cubic metres per annum was estimated (GITEC 1991). An estimated total annual abstraction rate of 25 million cubic meters, indicating only 4%, is low compared to the recommended exploitation of 70%. As the aquifers are still grossly under-utilised, over-exploitation issue does not arise in the foreseeable future in most parts of the country. However, according to DWR records about 60% of the total ground water abstraction is from a 500km sq. area in the Kombo District where increased demand for drinking water for the Greater Banjul Area and for irrigation of cash crops may put the delicate supply system equilibrium at risk and increase threat to saline intrusion. A seasonal movement of saline water in the river Gambia up to 250km (at Kuntaur) upstream in the dry season further limits the quantity and quality of river water use for domestic, agricultural and livestock purposes. In view of the foregoing and given current high rates of population growth combined with planned accelerated economic development, there could be increased pressure on the utilisation of water resources in the coming decades thus requiring proper policy formulation and planning.

### 1.1 Availability and Access

The earliest and most widespread mode of water supply in The Gambia is the shallow traditional, unlined wells. Government first introduced cement-lined wells equipped with hand pumps back in 1951. Later, bore holes with motorised water lifting devices were installed. According to the Central Statistics records of 1995, there were 1369 wells and 257 boreholes serving a population of 554,515. The data further indicated that about 22.3% of households depended on open compound wells and an additional 20.2% on open public wells.

Overall, 48% of the population did not have access to any safe reliable drinking water. Taking into account the broken down pumps, the percentage without access could be much higher. The data also indicated that only 31% of the population had piped water supply, the bulk of which was in the Banjul and Kanifing Area. The Department of Water Resources records of 1996 survey revealed that, there were 7,707 unlined open wells, 683 Open lined wells, 1455 lined wells fitted with pumps and 71 reticulation systems out of 1606 Villages visited nation-wide (see table 7.5)

The MICS in 1996 estimated that overall, 69% (Urban 80%; Rural 65% of the households) had access to safe drinking water supply. Coverage ranged from 99% access in Banjul to 49% in Western Division. 7,876 households had taps installed in their compounds and 845 public taps were in use in (1994 National Human Development Report, 1997). The table below shows data obtained from a recent survey carried out by The Department of Water Resources (DWR) in 1996 and figure 7.4 shows overall and regional disparities of access to safe water supply.

Table 1

RURAL WATER SUPPLIES

DIVISION	VILLAGE S VISITED	UNLINED WELLS (traditional)	OPEN LINED WELLS	COVERED WELL WITH H/PUMPS	RETICULATIO N SYSTEM
Lower River	143	279	59	213	5
Western	266	3479	135	215	19
North Bank	291	1372	126	306	19
Central River	420	256	121	434	6
Upper River	486	2321	242	287	22
TOTAL	1606	7707	683	1455	71

\* Not all villages were covered in this survey. Source: DWR, 1996

#### RWS coverage

Assumption 150 persons/hand pump  $(1455 \times 1.154) \times 150 + 71 \times 2000 = 393,860$   
= 60%

250 persons/hand pump  $(1455 \times 1.154) \times 150 + 71 \times 2000 = 393,860 = 86\%$

Public tap, own tap and pumped well were defined as "safe" while on premises or less than 100m and less than 30 minutes or 30 minutes to 1 hour were defined as "convenient". According to the NPA, it is recommended that each water point (hand pump) serve about 250 people and each reticulation system serve 2,000 persons. But, most water points serve more than the recommended number of users.

#### 1.2 Quality and Affordability

There has been marked improvements in the area of provision of improved water supply in the Gambia, especially in the rural areas. However water quality problems still persists in rural water supplies where the traditional wells are the main source of supply.

In spite of these efforts, water quality surveys conducted so far, have indicated contamination of even the seemingly protected sources. The Water quality survey conducted by The Baptist Mission in Farafenni area in 1994 showed that 7 out of the 9 pump wells included in the survey were either chemically or bacteriologically (Hydrogen Sulphide) and 37 out of 44 household jars were contaminated with bacteria. A similar study by Action Aid in LRD and CRD in 1996 also recorded that 88% of the wells were contaminated; 71% of the water points including pump wells had Hydrogen sulphide and 17% had nitrate. An inventory of WATSAN facilities in 392 educational institutions in 1997 reported that 24% of the institutions were without safe water; 64% of the sources had coliforms, 19% had high traces of Phosphate and

Nitrate; and 36% of the sources were both chemically and bacteriologically contaminated.

A recent water quality survey of 100 Primary schools and their consumption points by DWR (Water Quality Division in 1997) using the membrane filtration technique, found 39% of the water points contaminated with Faecal bacteria (FC) at source (49%, above 100 cfu /100ml). The survey also indicated poor water handling practice and as a result increased level of bacteriological contamination at consumption point (52 % above 100cfu/100 ml) as shown in figure 7.5. An earlier survey carried out by the Department of Community Development in the Lower River Division, observed that although 80% of the women knew that water could cause disease, they did not know how this occurs. Thus about half of them (52%) chose the well water they would drink on the basis of its taste and proximity rather than on hygienic reasons.

Other studies have shown that the shallow traditional open wells are more susceptible to bacteriological contamination than the deeper hand pump covered wells (see graph below), which are also much more expensive and beyond the reach of an average rural household. Therefore, most rural households, as well as some in the Banjul and Kanifing Area, still obtain their water from the traditional shallow wells.

Water quality in the Gambia a major issue in rural water supplies where initial and continuous treatment is not usually carried out. The tasks of fetching water are traditionally the responsibility of women. They wash clothes, bath their children and water their animals at the well sites. These domestic activities result in pools of dirty water which eventually contaminate the wells through seepage. In the absence of an Improved Water Supply System, the traditional rope and bucket water retrieval method in open well surroundings is another contributing factor to contamination at source. Lack of knowledge of water and disease relationship is a major contributing factor to water point contamination. This underscores the importance of health education particularly for women, in water sanitation and the connection between water and disease.

Water Treatment has recently been incorporated in ongoing projects implemented by DWR. Through the WATSAN working group Provision of Adequate and Safe Supplies is being advocated. Water Quality problems particularly in rural areas can be naturally occurring (Iron), but can be aggravated by human activity (indiscriminate/excessive use of pesticide/fertiliser). In Baqul, Kauifing and coastal villages, saline intrusion is a potential problem. Whilst chemical contamination is a function of composition of rocks bordering the aquifer and constituency of the pump, bacteriological contamination can be controlled or even avoided by communities, were improved water supply systems are in place.

Under the National Plan of Action, a policy of decentralisation is being pursued which involves the communities in all aspects of planning, implementation and management of water supply facilities. This new initiative was for ensuring sustainability of the provision of pump wells to the communities. The 'Private Hand pump Maintenance System' (PHMS) was introduced which shifted the burden of well maintenance to the communities, through an annual maintenance fee of D800 per pump well. Water committees and area maintenance teams were also instituted for sanitation and repair purposes, respectively. However there is evidence that Village water committee members did not have sufficient training and thus are not clear of their roles and responsibilities. Resource mobilisation for maintenance fund is therefore still difficult. Generally, proper management of water resources is less than what is desired. There is a general lack of a feeling of ownership, which results in a lack of interest in these wells. In addition, low level of commitment and to a certain extent poverty, threatens this initiative. Some communities have not been able to meet the cost of maintaining these systems (15% broken down); as a result some wells with broken pumps have been partly or completely removed to become open wells again there by making them susceptible to contamination. Recent programmes have incorporated community participation in their planning, implementation and management phases.

### 1.3 Area of Intervention by NGOs, UN Agencies and Donors

The 1979 National Water Resources Council act provides the Legal framework for Public sector interventions in the Water sub-sector coupled with the redefinition of the functions and mandate of the established DWR. Although Government has attached high priority to development of the sub sector during the last two decades, major economic constraints would have negated the efficient operational performance, had it not been for the timely intervention of Bi-lateral, Multilateral agencies and NGO's.

Over the inter-censal period 1983 to 1993, marked improvements were observed in the number of households with access to protected water source. In 1983, 23% of households had access to protected water points compared to 50% in 1993. A major contributing factor to this increase is attributed to a number of intervention programmes over the period. Among these was the "Rural Water Supply Project" GAM/74/007 sinking of 228 well. This project was funded by UNDP and executed by UNCTD from 1976 to 1982. The "Rural Water Supply and Groundwater Development" project Co-financed by UNDP, UNCDF and UNICEF from 1982-1987. Other donors began to show interest including UNSO and the Saudi Arabian and German Governments.

The Gambian-German hand-dug well programme, funded by KFW, introduced the private hand pump maintenance system in 1989. This system promotes the transfer of repairs and maintenance of hand pumps to village-based, trained area mechanics. In addition, new wells were constructed under phase 4, which came to an end in January 1995. Continuation of its planned programme under a new phase is now uncertain. Activities of the Major donor agencies and few NGOs in this sector were suspended following the change of Government in 1994. Donor support was uncertain during subsequent years.

However, since the re-establishment of the civilian Government, the European Union (EU) which has been working on the integrated approach in combining water supply and sanitation has pledged to continue its support. UNICEF has been instrumental in reactivating the multi-sectoral Water and Sanitation Working Group and is also contributing to the improvement of water supply and sanitation in schools and primary school health education. The UNCDF project is helping in the development of the private sector in well construction aiming at broad institutional strengthening. It

phased out its activities in early 1995 but has completed preparatory work for its next phase. JICA assisted-project providing solar powered reticulation systems, has been suspended since 1994. A number of NGOs notably, Caritas and Action Aid, are engaged in water supply and sanitation, implementing small scale constructions and disseminating basic ideas on hygiene at the community level on a smaller scale.

#### 1.4 Gaps

In spite of reasonable achievements in provision of safe water supply in the past decade, bacteriological contamination of drinking water is still apparent and incidence of diarrhoea, which is one of the leading causes of morbidity and deaths among children, is still high. Access gap is still a cause for concern. Figure 7.4 shows that despite overall estimated national access of 69% by the MICS survey, regional disparities still persist. Banjul and Kanifing Municipality have more than 80% access while Western Division has an estimated access of 49%. The WATSAN working group has been particularly concerned with co-ordination of activities thereby maximising resources and narrowing this gap.

More safe water points are needed to improve access and coverage. The economic conditions resulted in a decline in expenditure on social services including the provision of safe water supply. In addition to the economic problems, the decline in the external aid flow also contributed to the slow attainment of the IDWSSD goal. Although a lot of improvements have been noted in the sector as mentioned earlier, the target of safe water for all seems ambitious. Thus a National Plan of Action was developed and the goal of attainment of Safe Water Supply for All re-targeted to the year 2003. However, in view of the uncertainty and continued donor funding to the sub-sector, the problem and its consequences are likely to remain for sometime.

#### 1.5 Constraints & Weaknesses

- Physical- The overall deterioration of the climatic pattern, coupled with the persistent Sahelian drought of the past two decades, has reduced infiltration rate into the aquifer. The increasing demand on these resources aggravated by low recharge rate of the groundwater and surface water system leads to rapid recession of the water in the Upper aquifer and reduced irrigation potentials.

The difficult geological character of the deep sandstone aquifer on the other hand precludes its exploitation in the near future.

- **Technical-** Despite the improvement in drilling of wells and boreholes, the technical constraints in terms of equipment and adequate maintenance and repair facilities still remain.
- **Economical -**Inadequate operational and development funds due to Low budgetary allocation, adversely affects staff mobility, training and staff retention thereby negating the efficient operational performance of the sub-sector. The high foreign exchange required for motorised/solar driven water supply systems under a difficult economic situation has led to low capital investment in the sub-sector. The inconsistency of donor support also makes it practically impossible to attain set targets.
- **Social -** The high population growth rate of 4.2% (1993 CSD) and livestock numbers with a growth rate of 3.5% per annum (1994 National Livestock census) have naturally put increased pressure on the available water resources. This has led to an imbalance in the water supply/demand situation, in both the rural and urban areas. The apparent lack of sense of ownership of community (public) water supplies makes management of facilities and supplies, difficult, expensive and wasteful. Appropriate user charges cannot therefore be effectively levied because of the collective nature of the supply system.
- **Institutional-** There has been an increased number of actors over the years with the lack of a clear sense of direction. The level of co-ordination has improved through the WATSAN working group but it still remains weak on the ground due to lack of sufficient personnel for monitoring. Non adherence to design and facilities as well as overlap and duplication of efforts is still a cause for concern. There needs to be in place a master plan , a community based monitoring system and a comprehensive water law for effective co-ordination

- Political -Another constraint is the poor location of communal wells, which are sometimes sited near sources of pollution. Such sittings are sometimes more influenced by political factors than technical considerations. This is an important factor to consider if the access gap is to be narrowed and access to all achieved by set target.

## WATER SANITATION

Rural Environmental Sanitation was first given attention during 'The International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade' (IDWSSD), it formed the basis of the country's national sanitation programme. Projects were initiated during the IDWSSD by Government, through the Department of Community Development (DCD) AND NGO'S such as the Baptist Mission in order to improve Sanitation in the Rural areas. Donor intervention was negligible compared to the Water Sector. Projects mainly concentrated on safe excreta disposal at the household /compound level.

The Pilot Rural Sanitation project was initiated in 1992 in 18 Primary Health Care Villages (PHC) in three Divisions jointly by DCD assisted by UNICEF, other Government institutions and NGO'S. It has now extended its operations in all Divisions in 28 PHC villages. The success of this project provided a strong foundation for the development of the Sub-sector. Rural Environmental Sanitation is the joint responsibility of the DCD, Department of state for Health, the Municipal and Local Area Councils and other important actors. The WATSAN Sub-committee on Environmental Sanitation is an important forum for co-ordination of activities within the sanitation sub-sector. Polluted water, which is the cause of many water-borne diseases such as diarrhoea (the third most important cause child morbidity and mortality), is exacerbated by poor sanitation. Thus emphasis on sanitary disposal of waste, particularly human waste, is given high priority in sanitation programmes.

### 2.1 Availability and Access

Since the adoption of IDWSSD in 1981, some improvements have been made in the sanitation sector but not comparable to the attainments in the water sector. Compared

to water supply, the problem of Sanitation particularly in the rural areas did not receive much attention in the past.

Nation-wide sanitation surveys are rare, but the most recent study (MICS, 1996) estimated that only 7-10% of household had access to sanitary toilet facilities most of which were in Banjul areas. Although the study had a definition problem for a 'Sanitary' toilet facility, it still gives an indication of the situation. Another survey (Inventory of WATSAN in Educational Institution, 1997) also indicated that 16% of the 392 institutions were either using insanitary toilet facilities or had no facilities at all. A study conducted in 25 communities by GITEC in 1992 recorded that 49% of compounds had latrines, majority of, which are poorly constructed and insanitary. Another localised investigation in villages around Farafenni reported that although most people are aware of latrines yet 74% of the compounds did not have one.

The MICS 1996 indicated a huge disparity between the Rural and Urban access to safe sanitation. Modern sewage and drainage systems were commissioned in 1991 to serve the city. This was geared towards improving the sanitary situation in Banjul. The present system serves about 95% of the compounds in Banjul and the wastewater is disposed through a 900m sea outfall pipe offshore. This has eliminated flush toilet system in Banjul relying on septic tanks and soakaways, which results in frequent overflow due to the high water table leading to potential health hazard.

In the rural areas, human excreta disposal facilities are scarce and are mostly pit latrines. These facilities are usually shallow, constructed with less durable materials, and are mostly used by a large number of people. The facilities are usually filled up within a short time and yet quite a number collapse during the rainy season. There are still other groups of households in the rural areas who do not have toilet facilities and a large number of them use the 'bush' as a substitute.

Table 2 RURAL SANITATION STATISTICS

Location(Divisio	Villages visited	Unlined	Modern Latrines
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n)		Latrines	
Lower River	143	3279	
Western	266	17,100	
North Bank	291	17,020	
Central River	420	7020	
Upper River	486	4437	
TOTAL	1606	38,653	

SOURCE :DWR, 1996

## 2.2 Quality and Affordability

As is indicated in the MICS 1996, most households (70%) in the rural areas have pit latrines. Despite their insanitary conditions, it is a recognition of the importance a toilet facility in the home. Improved pit latrine innovation was initiated in the country in 1990. Evaluation of the pilot in 1996 confirmed its technical suitability and its acceptance from a traditional viewpoint. Further indications were that it is affordable at its subsidised price as evident in the request for it and its wide use in the North Bank, Lower River and Western Divisions. As communities seem willing to accede to cost sharing to enhance sustainability, it is hoped that the intervention will greatly improve sanitation throughout the country particularly in rural peri-urban and urban growth centres.

In a typical Gambian rural household, children under five years of age do not normally use the latrine. Sometimes they use plastic chamber pots, which are later emptied into the latrine. In most cases, such children defecate anywhere in the yard, which is then brushed off with a broom onto a piece of cardboard and thrown into the latrine or pit in the compound. The careless handling of human waste is a concern and a conducive

way of spreading diseases. Further study to determine the underlying reasons for poor attitudes towards human refuse disposal, is necessary for more effective planning.

### 3.3 Area of Intervention by UN Agencies, NGOs and Donors

Rural Sanitation has not received much attention in the past. Only NGOs such as Gambia Baptist Mission in Farafenni, Action Aid The Gambia, CARITAS, FIOH have been active to a limited extent in rural sanitation. In 1992, a pilot Rural Sanitation project was launched in three Divisions of the country (LRD, NBD, and WD) by the Department of Community Development (DCD) with assistance from UNICEF. In total, more than 6000 latrine units have been constructed in North Bank, Lower River and Western Divisions. An earlier Project (Gambia Baptist Mission) had constructed 1500 sanitary units in North Bank and Lower River Divisions. The pilot was complemented by a project, which supports provision of improved Pit Latrines in selected schools. According to the WATSAN Inventory in 1997, improved pit latrine units were constructed in 330 of the 392 targeted institutions. Owing to the success manifested by the project, the activities are now extended to cover the remaining two divisions (CRD & URD) as part of the bridging programme.

Sanitary units put in place by participating NGOs cannot be determined due to lack of information sharing among the different actors. This situation is not healthy and therefore calls for collaborative efforts in data collection and utilisation. However, it is envisaged that with reactivation of the WSWG Sub-committees and the Environmental Sanitation sub-committee would eradicate the situation the possible shortest time. In fact, the WSWG has already succeeded in achieving a better sectoral co-ordination and collaboration, and facilitated the standardisation of approach and technical designs in the sanitation sub-sector.

### 3.4 Gaps

Despite the low estimated national sanitation coverage 7-10 % of households, disparity between regions is evident and can be attributed to the lack of overall sub-sector policy

and strategy on one hand, lack of effective co-ordination between the different sectors. Efforts have been made in the sanitation sector, but there are still a lot more to be done. In general terms, peoples attitude towards improved sanitation is believed to be positively changing though at a very slow pace. This could be attributed to the varying awareness creation efforts using a multi-media approach. Standardisation of the approach can offset this:

Reliable and Timely data for effective assessment of sanitation was not possible. Thus a KAP study in the sanitation sector may be necessary. Absence of an effective monitoring system has made it difficult to accurately assess sanitation project needs, which in turn affects planning and management. It is imperative that community participation is broadened to include a role in planning, implementation and management. This calls for the involvement of Community Based Organisations in all spheres of sanitation projects/programmes.

### 3.5- Constraints

- Lack of adequate professionals in the sanitation sector has adversely affected the institutional capacity of the Government. This calls for the development of human resources as an important element to strengthen the already existing weak area.
- Lack of targeting Men in addition to women in health education and involving them in all stages of sanitation projects is a serious gap, which constrains good sanitation practice.
- Funding remains the major constraint in reaching sectoral goals. Given the uncertain funding situation and the seemingly lack of interest of major donors in rural sanitation, attainment of even the re-targeted goal to the year 2003 is unlikely. It therefore becomes imperative that resource allocation to the sanitation sector is given attention, otherwise all the achievements in the water sector will be overshadowed by the comparatively low achievements in the sanitation sector.

- Socio-Cultural beliefs and practices in some ethnic groups regarding sanitation practices tend to hamper sub-sector development.

### DEPARTMENT OF STATE FOR INTERIOR

Violence in any form whether sexual harassment or physical abuse perpetrated against women is a violation of human rights. Gambian women since time immemorial have been subjected to these kinds of abuses and despite the signing and ratification of several conventions, the Gambian woman still continues to be a victim in the hands of a male-dominated society. It should be noted that under the Laws of the Gambia, violence against women is covered under assault. This shows that there is no separate provision set-aside for the maltreatment of a woman. A husband manhandling his wife is a case of violence against a human being not a woman. Consequently, such cases are regarded as family problems and forwarded to the Department of Social Welfare.

However despite these shortcomings of the law, the law enforcement bodies have made significant strides in trying to limit violence against women. In the case of rape for instance, it is important to note that a lot of it goes unreported. However, some victims who muster the courage to report instances of rape for legal action to be taken against the perpetrators. It is important to note also that rape cases attract penalties of a term of up to ten years imprisonment. The offence is considered so serious that people accused of rape are not considered qualified to be granted Presidential Prerogative of Mercy.

Below are the reported cases of violence against women and the decision of the courts after the hearings:

YEAR	NATURE OF OFFENCE	NUMBER OF CASES	CONVICTED	YEAR	NATURE OF OFFENCE
1988	RAPE	1	CONVICTED (1)	1991	RAPE
	ABDUCTION				IND/AST O

- DO -	OF A GIRL UNDER (16)	2	2 CONVICTED		FEMALE
- DO -	DEFILEMENT (16)	5	4 CONVICTED 1 INSUFFICIENT EVEDENCE A/D	1992	RAPE  INDECEN ASSULT FEMALE
- DO -	INDENT ASSAULT ON FEMALE	8	8 CONVICTED	1993	INDECEN ASSAULT FEMALE
1989	RAPE	2	2 CONVICTED	1994	IND/ASST FEMALE
	INDECENT ASST ON FEMALE	7	7 CONVICTED	1994	RAPE
1990	RAPE	1	1 CONVICTED	1995	IND/ASSS
					IND/AST/F
1990	DEFILEMENT INDECENT	1	1 CONVICTED	1995	
		5	5 CONVICTED	1995	DEFILEME GIRL UND
1996	DEFILEMENT OF A GIRL UNDER (16)	4	4 CONVICTED	1998	RAPE
1996	ABDUCTION OF A GIRL UNDER (16)	3	3 CONVICTED	1998	DEFILEME GIRL

## GAMBIA RADIO AND TELEVISION SERVICES (GRTS)-RADIO SINCE BEIJING 95 WORLD CONFERENCE ON WOMEN

This section will focus on the role the radio section is playing in the grand task of the post Beijing activities. The Gambia Radio and Television Services continues to play its role of educating and informing the general public about the role of women in Nation building. After the 1995 Beijing Conference, programmes related to the twelve critical areas of the global platform of action were dealt with in programmes broadcast in English, Mandinka and Wollof on a weekly basis on the national radio. These programmes were generated through the initiative of Producers through interviews and from workshop presentations. The National media has not done much by itself to promote gender as a commitment to the Beijing Platform for Action because of the unclear line of responsibility for its implementation. Its role as a tool was more emphasised rather than scrutinised as an institution taking up the implementation.

### STRENGTHENING THE MEDIA FOR INFORMATION COMMUNICATION AND EDUCATION (IEC) ACTIVITIES

The responsibility of strengthening the media on activities related to IEC such as Health Education Campaigns, Radio Programmes, Vaccination Campaigns and support to extension work as indicated in the Gambia's National Report on Women for the Beijing Conference (p94) are not clearly stated. However, under the Radio's broad commitment to inform, educate and entertain the Gambian population, similar activities have been going on. Since the Beijing Conference the Health Education Unit of the Department of Health continues to have access to the weekly health programme slot on radio and decides on topics relevant to the Unit. Issues such as AIDS, Malaria, Water and Sanitation, Breast feeding, Respiratory diseases, etc are mostly featured. Campaigns related to Polio Vaccination, bed net dipping and use have been promoted through the radio. Reproductive health issues related to cultural practices such as birth spacing and female genital mutilation (FGM) are left to the NGOs such as Gambia Family Planning Association (GFPA). In addition to, "Fankanta" a local family planning initiative under the Gambia German Family Planning Project (GGFPP), and

the Gambia Committee on Traditional Practices affecting the health of women and children (GAMCOTRAP). The so called sensitive issues such as the ability for women to decide on matters affecting their reproductive health, their bodily rights and integrity, are handled in the Women's programmes in English, Mandinka and Wolof. This has contributed a lot to the nation-wide debate on these issues. Other empowerment issues raised include women move from accessing land through user right to ownership of land as citizens. There is need to critically analyse the Gambian context of the empowerment and equal access concepts in national development.

#### FREEDOM OF THE MEDIA TO STRENGTHEN THE INFORMATION SERVICE

High illiteracy affects both Gambian women and men, in both urban and rural areas. The need for information is important for any effective enlightenment towards social change and development. Conscious that the provisions of Chapter XIX of The Gambian Constitution 1997 guarantee freedom and responsibility of the media. It is important to educate the masses, particularly women using the mass media. The production of programmes in local languages facilitates feedback and dialogue on the sensitive issues affecting the audience. It is a learning process for listeners and producers alike to continue dialogue on the radio in particular. When media are restricted, it does not only deny the advocates the opportunity to express their views but also denies the beneficiaries the right to access information to make informed decisions. This has affected the effort by media practitioners to broadcast information on some practices.

#### CREATIVE USE OF PROGRAMMES IN THE NATIONAL MEDIA TO DISSEMINATE INFORMATION.

Creative programming was part of the production of the women's programmes at the National radio. These included

- Phone-In programmes
- Panel discussions
- Interviews with those affected by the issues; e.g. women at market places share experiences on their economic activities. Circumcisions and women who have

been convinced of the harmful effects of FGM on the women and children, Gynaecologists who have studied the effects, rural women on their land tenure system and how it affects their timely and effective production amongst others are quoted.

- Involvement of the woman of tomorrow on the Rights of the Child.
- Rural Women discuss their rights and empowerment.

One of the most educating and democratic forums on GRTS radio at the moment includes Enter-educate, and its local language versions "Silinka Katcha and Yorr Yorr". They are broadcast each once a week. They give the opportunity for the listeners to call in and share their views on socio-economic, cultural and political issues. They encourage listeners to accept divergent opinions, promote unity and co-existence in the country and amicably discuss development issues in a light-hearted manner.

#### NATIONAL COMMUNICATION POLICY

There exist a draft National Communication and Information Policy which will enable media practitioners to have a clear official policy on how to promote government policies as they relate to health, population, Politics, amongst other development issues. It will also give confidence to Media Practitioners to maintain professionalism and eradicate unnecessary self-censorship.

#### TRAINING OF JOURNALISTS TO RAISE AWARENESS ON THE GLOBAL PLATFORM FOR ACTION

There was no special training organised by the authorities in the National media to train journalist on the out come of the Fourth World Conference On Women. However individuals who have the interest to pursue such training opportunities both nationally and abroad were allowed to do so. Such an opportunity was when a number of the GRTS staff were amongst media practitioners trained on Gender and the Media by GAMCOTRAP, the Management Development Institute (MDI) and The West Africa Media Network Gambia Chapter (WAMNET). There is need for the National

Media to organise its own gender training as a commitment to Post Beijing activities which will help most of the staff to appreciate the gender issues as a government commitment.

## MAJOR CONSTRAINTS

- Lack of a clear communication policy for broadcast of development issues.
- Limited co-ordination of programming between the different interest groups to cater for different target groups. An example is the case where the messages on development issues raised by the Women's programmes and the Muslim Religious programmes are conflicting. In other words conflicting messages are coming from the same National Radio but the dissemination process should be co-ordinated with the objective to educate the masses and not to confuse them.
- Limited female staff who are multi-lingual in local languages to reinforce the efforts to promote the development agenda.
- Limited professional training opportunities for staff.
- Staff not sure when they should be professionals or politicians

## ACHEIVEMENTS

Despite the constraints, the National Radio has contributed to raising the consciousness of both men and women, young and old to gender issues in nation building. It has been noted that women, religious scholars, politicians, young males and females, and professionals are speaking out on the gender agenda.

## ACTION POINTS

- The final Communication Policy should be harmonised with the Constitutional provisions, the National Policy for the Advancement of Gambian Women, other existing government policies such as the national Vision 2020.
- The Gambia Radio and Television Services should organise in-house training for staff on government development policies
- Training on modern broadcasting skills

- Promote and encourage women issues for them to enjoy their full democratic space in the National media.
- Other government departments should budget for the IEC programmes for broadcast on the national radio because presently it is partly commercialised and under a parastatal i.e. the Gambia
- Telecommunications Company Limited (GAMTEL).

## CONCLUSION

It will be important to note that some initiatives have been taken to have empowerment programmes for women on national television in the local languages. However, some of the women's programmes have been stopped because the topics were said to be sensitive. It should be noted that Dr. El Badawi of the University of Halifax, Canada, broadcast the same issues in English in a series of programmes and these were not objected to.

## POST BEIJING ACTIVITIES ON GRTS – TELEVISION

Following the inception of the National Television three months after the Beijing 95' World Conference on Women, Gambia Television like other national TV in its role in informing, educating and entertaining the Gambian public has created different units including Women's Affairs, Education and Health, Entertainment, Youth and Children's Units. A Principal or a Senior Producer heads each Unit to take care of the production of the above programmes. Among the activities are Women's programmes on issues affecting women's life in The Gambia, the Role of Women in national development, Women's Empowerment, Women and Health, Women in Agriculture, the Reproductive Health of Women and Girls.

These are weekly programmes done in English, Wolof and Mandinka and focused more on the two main local languages due to the high illiteracy rate of the target audience. These programmes are produced in a form of panel discussions and interviews with women in these areas to talk about achievements, constraints and

perspectives on these issues in order to bring about change or to improve the status of women in The Gambia.

The Television in collaboration with the Department of State for Education (DOSE) does organise panel discussions with women Heads of sections/units responsible for the promotion of girls and women's education.

These are sensitisation programmes, where the importance and the relevance of girls and women's education are discussed and emphasis put on adult literacy/non formal education.

#### ACTIONS FOR THE STRENGTHENING OF THE MEDIA FOR IEC ACTIVITIES

There is still room for creative use of the media for IEC activities as stated in the National Report on Women for Beijing 95. Apart from the weekly health programme particularly on primary health issues in Wolof and Mandinka in addition to phone-in "Tele-clinic" programme hosts by the Educational Unit of the Television. In the Phone-in programmes where a specific topic is discussed with health experts in that area, it is followed by viewers' calls to contribute or ask specific questions in that particular area.

In addition, time slots are given to health workers or experts for panel discussion on special days (i.e. World AIDS Day, World Tuberculosis Day, World no Tobacco Day), which is insufficient in IEC activities in the media. Most of these programmes are done in collaboration with the Department of Health services.

#### ESTABLISHMENT OF A NATIONAL COMMUNICATIONS POLICY

The National Consultative workshop on the formulation of a National Communication and Information Policy (NACIP) was held from 23-25 February 1999 where all stakeholders and other interested parties took part.

The National Communication and Information Policy (NACIP) aimed at setting out the regulatory framework required to ensure a coherent and orderly development of

broadcasting (i.e. Radio-TV), Telecommunications, Print Media and Post & Courier Services in The Gambia. In addition, it elaborates on the policies and strategies required for an effective Information Technology (IT) Policy.

Considering the recommendations of the participants during the workshop, a draft policy document was finalised for adoption by the Government of the Gambia. Therefore another one-day workshop was proposed 15<sup>th</sup> July 1999 for final amendments/recommendations of the policy document before its submission for implementation.

#### TRAINING OF STAFF OR JOURNALISTS TO DEVELOP SPECIFIC PROGRAMMES TO RAISE AWARENESS ON THE GLOBAL PLATFORM OF ACTION.

There was no specific training for journalists on programme developed in awareness creation on the Global Platform of Action. However some local Human Rights NGOs and other similar organisations do organise Seminars/Workshops to sensitise media practitioners on some of the issues raised in the Global Platform of Action.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

- Priority should be given to women's programmes at the TV and broadcast time be reviewed if the target audience is to be reached
- More actions need to be taken for the strengthening of the media for IEC activities
- More gender programmes should be considered at the Television

- There should be a proper collaboration between the women's affairs unit of the Television and other related organisations for a better co-ordination and planning of Women's programmes.
- The freedom of the media should be guaranteed to strengthen the information services
- Media practitioners should be more trained locally or internationally on gender issues at all levels
- More female journalists should be trained to fill the gender gap
- There should be incentive for the creative use of programmes in the national media for the dissemination of information
- A special training should be organised to develop specific programmes to raise awareness on the Global Platform of Action
- The National Communication Policy (NACIP) should be gender balanced and the implementation should be in line with its Mission Statement and be done as soon as possible.

## **DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTION** **REPORT**

The Department of Community Development established by government in 1976 is located within the Department of State for Local Government, Lands and Religious Affairs. It has as its mandate/objectives the following.

- To promote the development of rural/urban communities in the basic need areas through implementation and evaluation.
- To improve rural/urban poor income, through the promotion of income generating activities such as micro – enterprises, handicrafts, building materials production using appropriate technology skills.
- To strengthen and promote local institution development at village and community levels so as to better facilitate their access to services and decision making and sharing of benefits that concern them.
- To plan, organise, implement and evaluate inter-sectoral programmes of particular benefits to rural and peri-urban communities.
- To assist conceive and design proposals based on identified pressing community needs and play advocacy role in favour of such proposals as well as attract government, NGOs, bilateral and multi lateral donor funding for satisfying these needs.

In order to effectively operationalise the above mandates/objectives, specialised operational programme units were established viz:

1. Research, Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Division
2. Programmes/Extension Division which comprised of the following units.
  - Women's Programme Units
  - Appropriate Technology and Environmental Sanitation Unit.
  - Rural Engineering and Construction unit.
  - Development Communication Support Unit,
  - Rural health and Day Care Centres Programme, and
3. Training Division
  - Rural Development Institute (RDI)

## ACHIEVEMENTS

The Department of Community Development received like all government departments, yearly budgetary allocations for the execution of its programmes, which are complemented by Development partners, NGOs, Multilateral and bilateral agencies.

Of the programmes mentioned above, the Women's Programme Unit deals entirely with women's issues ranging from Kafo/group organisation, mobilisation, sensitisation and training among other things.

The Women's Programme Unit has over the years trained and maintained 20 female extension workers namely Home Craft Assistants (HCAs) who work primarily with women and their Kafos, supported by their colleagues Community Development Assistants (CDAs) and the divisional supervisors the Community Development officers and Women's Programme Supervisors. The unit in collaboration with the phased out ADB funded Skills Development Component of the Women in Development Project, was able to train the female extension staff on improved income generating skills ranging from handicrafts to food processing and preservation, improved extension techniques, gender and Development tools, and related fields.

A number of village women identified by their Kafos were trained in various income generation skills and business management who in turn served as village-based trainers in their villages and beyond depending on the demand from neighbouring villages. From 1994 to December 1998 a total of 223 women have been trained as village-based skill trainers' country wide one per village as per the distribution below:

North Bank Division	-	48 village based skill trainers
Upper River Division	-	45 village based skill trainers
Central River Division-		44 village based skill trainers
Lower River Division-		38 village based skill trainers
Western Division	-	45 village based skill trainers
Kanifing Municipality	-	2 village based skill trainers
Banjul City Council	-	1 village based skill trainers

Logistical and material support were provided to the groups in the form of working materials/equipments after their training to enable Kafo members learn and make maximum use of the skills acquired by the trainers, to generate additional income for themselves and their families.

A team of five women skills trainers from the five divisions and two Women's Programme Supervisors were sent to Ghana in September 1998 on a ten days study tour as guests of the 31<sup>st</sup> December Women's Movement, as an exposure to similar experiences and new techniques/ideas/skills in income generating activities and handicrafts. Such innovations are currently being utilised by the women though on a smaller scale.

In addition to the skills training and income generation activities, a total of 175 literacy centres/classes were established in 125 villages/communities exclusively for women. In addition to this, a total of over seven thousand (7000) women were registered and retained in the classes, some of whom can now read, write and do calculations in the local languages.

A third component to the Literacy and skills training is the provision of micro finance to the same group of women to invest in various off-farm income-generating activities ranging from petty trading, soap making to purchasing of milling machines. These activities are all geared towards improving the earnings of the poor women who depend on farming as a main source of income. Between April 1997 to May 1999 a total of 154 groups in 125 villages country wide benefited from this facility and the amount disbursed during the said period amounts to D1, 315,445.28. The loans repayments are impressive and stands at 96%, whilst the groups are simultaneously saving their profit with either commercial banks, VISACA or GAWFA and use such funds for re-investment and or on-lending to members. The demand for the micro-finance facility is in the increase.

In collaboration with the Household Food Security Component of the National Poverty Alleviation Programme, women's groups in North Bank Division, Central River Division and Upper River Division have been trained in management concepts, sustainable project planning, implementation and the identification of viable income generating activities.

Similarly, through collaboration with the Enhancing Sustainable Livelihood Component women's groups in Upper River Division, Kanifing Municipal Council and Western Division are being trained on business management and income generation skills.

The Day Care Centres under the auspices of the Rural health and Day Care Centres units, provide child care facilities during the day to allow women the much needed time to embark on both domestic, income generating and other developmental activities within their communities. The Appropriate Technology unit designs prototypes and disseminate devices especially, labour savings devices appropriate for women's use. It goes along with training of women in the development and use of such devices e.g. Pottery/Kumba Gaye Cooking Stoves and candle stands.

In the area of man power development, two female staff pursued further training and successfully obtained a Diploma in Integrated Rural Development from Pan African Institute for Development (PAID-WA) in Cameroon and a Master's Degree in Rural Social Development (RSD) from Reading University United Kingdom respectively

## CONSTRAINTS

Though the department in meeting some of the Post Beijing Recommendation has registered some achievements, with difficulties which still affects the department's outputs. Among the various constraints, the following are of great concern.

- Inadequate financial resources due to the limited budgetary allocations that cannot serve the various felt needs of the vulnerable groups (women) especially in order to provide the required training in micro enterprise and income-generating skills.
- Very limited female extension workers to meet the ever growing demand for their services by the rural /urban poor women. This is partly due to the department's inability to recruit additional Home Craft Assistants for the positions are not available.
- The absence of mobility and logistical support to facilitate the movement of the staff especially those in the field limits individual staff out reach activities.