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FOREWORD


Prior to the submission of this report, The Gambia reviewed its plans of action for implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and submitted reports on her progress of implementation to the Beijing +5 and Beijing +10 Review Meetings in 2000 and 2005 respectively.

As the international community marks the 15th Anniversary of the adoption of the Beijing Platform for Action (Beijing + 15) in 2010, The Gambia has once again reviewed and apprised progress made in the implementation of the Platform for Action, over the past five years(2004-2009), in preparation for the Beijing +15 Review Meeting.

This report has been prepared in a participatory manner with the involvement of a cross section of stakeholders in gender and women’s work. The process which was led by the Women’s Bureau started with a critical review of an initial draft by a technical committee with membership from all sectors and also civil society. This was followed by stakeholder validation forums to solicit further input from a larger group. The draft report was then subjected to further scrutiny and final editing by Gender experts.

The report presents The Gambia’s 3rd Progress Report on her implementation of the 12 critical areas of concern as outlined in the Beijing Platform for Action. It provides an overview of the status of the implementation process in line with achievements in policy, legislative change, programmes and projects and outlines gaps, challenges encountered. It also makes recommendations on the areas requiring further actions and the way forward.

We take this opportunity to commend all persons, organisations and institutions especially members of the Technical Committee and the various sectors, the Security, CSOs and Development Partners without whose contribution this report would not been have been possible.

.................................................................
H.E The Vice President and Minster of Women’s Affairs

Dr. Isatou Njie Saidy

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The preparation of this document is an important milestone in the process of assessing the past five years (2005-2009) of The Gambia’s implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA). The assessment derives information from a wide range of national, regional and international sources and it has gone through a series of consultations and reviews.

The Women’s Bureau and National Women’s Council as well as the Ministry of Women’s Affairs wishes to commend everyone, especially the members of the Technical Committee, experts in gender and women’s work, Civil Society Organisations and representatives of development partners who contributed entire preparatory this report.

The National Women’s machinery is especially appreciative of the dedication with which the consultants handled the preparation of this report and highly applauds the technical input provided by representatives of relevant, sectors like the Ministries of Health, Education, CSIP, SDF and Civil Society Organizations; and also some individuals that made documents available for review: Fatou Kinteh, Maria Dacosta, Fatou Jobe, Bernadette Sambou and Ramou Cole

The Government of the Gambia acknowledges with appreciation the support of all development partners especially UNAIDS for providing technical input and UNDP for its technical, financial and administrative support.

Special thanks go to the consultant, Mrs. Adelaide Sosseh and her team who compiled the draft report as well as Mrs Joana Opare, UNDP Consultant, for her invaluable technical input. The efforts and contribution of the entire staff of the Women’s Bureau, led by Omar Kanteh, Kajali Sonko and remotely supported by Ajaratou Ida Fye Hydara who worked behind the scene to make the report a reality is worth commendation.

Finally, we wish to acclaim the untiring efforts of His Excellency the President Prof Dr. Sheikh Alhagi Yayha A.J.J. Jammeh for creating the enabling environment for women to progress and to realize their potentials. The impeccable contributions and guidance provided by Her Excellency, the Vice President and Minister of Women’s Affairs, Dr. Isatou Njie Saidy, are very much valued and appreciated.
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<tr>
<th>ACRONYMS &amp; ABBREVIATIONS</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AATG</td>
<td>Action Aid The Gambia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACDHRS</td>
<td>African Centre for Democracy and Human Rights Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACHPR</td>
<td>African Charter on Human &amp; People’s Rights</td>
</tr>
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<td>ADWAC</td>
<td>Association for Development of Women &amp; Children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AfDB</td>
<td>African Development Bank</td>
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<tr>
<td>AFP</td>
<td>Association of Food Processors</td>
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<td>AGSP</td>
<td>Ambassador’s Girl’s Scholarship Programme</td>
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<tr>
<td>AIDS</td>
<td>Acquired Immuno Deficiency Syndrome</td>
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<tr>
<td>APWGA</td>
<td>Association for the Promotion of Women and Girls</td>
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<td>AWE</td>
<td>Association of Women Entrepreneurs</td>
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<td>BAFROW</td>
<td>Foundation for Women’s Research and the Environment</td>
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<td>BPFA</td>
<td>Beijing Platform for Action</td>
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<td>CEDAW</td>
<td>Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Discrimination against Women</td>
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<tr>
<td>CDDP</td>
<td>Community Driven Development Project</td>
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<td>CIWS</td>
<td>Core Indicator Welfare Survey</td>
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<td>CPA</td>
<td>Child Protection Alliance</td>
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<td>CPAP</td>
<td>Country Programme Action Plan</td>
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<td>CPD</td>
<td>Country Programme Document</td>
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<td>Convention on the Rights of The Child</td>
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<td>CRR</td>
<td>Central River Region</td>
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<td>Community Skills Improvement Project</td>
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<td>CSO</td>
<td>Civil Society Organisation</td>
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<td>CST</td>
<td>Commercial Sex Tourism</td>
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<td>Acronym</td>
<td>Full Form</td>
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<td>DMC</td>
<td>Disaster Management Committee</td>
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<td>EBF</td>
<td>Exclusive Breast Feeding</td>
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<td>ECOWAS</td>
<td>Economic Commission of West African States</td>
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<td>ECD</td>
<td>Early Childhood Development</td>
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<td>ECOFEPA</td>
<td>ECOWAS Female Parliamentarians Association</td>
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<td>EDF</td>
<td>European Development Fund</td>
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<td>EFA/FTI</td>
<td>Education for All/Fast Track Initiative</td>
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<td>EMNCH</td>
<td>Emergency Maternal Newborn Child Health</td>
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<td>EMOC</td>
<td>Emergency Obstetric Care</td>
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<td>EMOP</td>
<td>Emergency Operations</td>
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<td>ESSP</td>
<td>Education Sector Strategic Plan</td>
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<td>EU</td>
<td>European Union</td>
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<td>FAWEGAM</td>
<td>Forum for African Educationalist-Gambia Chapter</td>
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<td>FIOH</td>
<td>Future in our Hands</td>
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<td>FLAG</td>
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<td>GAMCOTRAP</td>
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<td>Gambia Priority Employment Programme</td>
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<td>GAWFA</td>
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<td>GBoS</td>
<td>Gambia Bureau of Statistics</td>
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<td>GEM</td>
<td>Gender Empowerment Model</td>
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<td>GER</td>
<td>Gross Enrolment Rate</td>
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<td>GFPA</td>
<td>Gambia Family Planning Association</td>
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<td>GFSI</td>
<td>Girl Friendly School Initiative</td>
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<tr>
<td>Acronym</td>
<td>Full Form</td>
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<tr>
<td>GIG</td>
<td>The Gambia is Good</td>
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<td>GRTS</td>
<td>Gambia Radio &amp; Television Services</td>
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<td>GTU</td>
<td>Gambia Teacher’s Union</td>
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<td>HIPC</td>
<td>Highly Indebted Poor Countries</td>
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<td>HMIS</td>
<td>Health Management Information System</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Human Immuno Deficiency Virus</td>
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<td>ICPD</td>
<td>International Conference for Population &amp; Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>IDD</td>
<td>Iodine Deficiency Disorder</td>
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<tr>
<td>ITN</td>
<td>Insecticides Treated Bed nets</td>
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<tr>
<td>IMR</td>
<td>Infant Mortality Rate</td>
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<tr>
<td>IPT</td>
<td>Intermittent Preventive Treatment</td>
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<tr>
<td>ITN</td>
<td>Insecticide Treated Bednets</td>
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<tr>
<td>KAP</td>
<td>Knowledge, Attitudes &amp; Practices</td>
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<td>KFAED</td>
<td>Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development</td>
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<td>KM</td>
<td>Kilometre</td>
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<tr>
<td>KMA</td>
<td>Kanifing Municipal Authority</td>
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<tr>
<td>LGA</td>
<td>Local Government Authority</td>
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<td>LLIN</td>
<td>Long Lasting Insecticide Nets</td>
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<td>LRR</td>
<td>Lower River Region</td>
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<td>MDG</td>
<td>Millennium Development Goals</td>
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<td>MICS</td>
<td>Multiple Indicators Cluster Survey</td>
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<td>MMR</td>
<td>Maternal Mortality Rate</td>
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<td>MoBSE</td>
<td>Ministry for Basic and Secondary Education</td>
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<td>MTR</td>
<td>Mid Term Review</td>
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<td>NACCUG</td>
<td>National Association of Credit Unions of The Gambia</td>
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<tr>
<td>Abbreviation</td>
<td>Full Form</td>
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<tr>
<td>NaNA</td>
<td>National Nutrition Agency</td>
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<td>NAWFA</td>
<td>National Association of Women Farmers</td>
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<td>NBR</td>
<td>North Bank Region</td>
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<td>NEDI</td>
<td>National Enterprise Development Initiative</td>
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<td>NEPAD</td>
<td>New Partnership for Africa’s Development</td>
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<td>NERICA</td>
<td>New Rice for Africa</td>
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<td>NESPAWEP</td>
<td>NEPAD Spanish African Women’s Empowerment Project</td>
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<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non Governmental Organisation</td>
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<td>NOPSWECO</td>
<td>Network for Peace and Security of Women in the ECOWAS Space</td>
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<td>NPAGW</td>
<td>National Policy for Advancement of Gambian Women</td>
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<td>NSF</td>
<td>National Strategic Framework</td>
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<td>Nova Scotia Gambia Association</td>
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<td>OVP</td>
<td>Office of the Vice President</td>
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<td>PLHWHHA</td>
<td>People Living with HIV</td>
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<td>PPTCT</td>
<td>Prevention of Parent to Child Transmission</td>
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<td>ProPAG</td>
<td>Pro Poor Advocacy Group</td>
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<td>PRSP</td>
<td>Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper</td>
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<tr>
<td>PTA</td>
<td>Parent Teacher’s Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>RCH</td>
<td>Reproductive Child Health</td>
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<tr>
<td>SDF</td>
<td>Social Development Fund</td>
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<tr>
<td>SMC</td>
<td>School Management Committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>SWAGAM</td>
<td>Society for Women Against Aids in Africa-Gambia Chapter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TANGO</td>
<td>The Association of Non-Governmental Organisations</td>
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<tr>
<td>TARUD</td>
<td>The Trust Agency for Rural Development</td>
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INTRODUCTION:

This report presents a five-year assessment of the country’s implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA) from 2005 to 2009. The objective is to evaluate what The Gambia has achieved during this period so as to keep the country on track with respect to meeting the targets of the BPFA, the MDGs and other international commitments by the year 2015. The review focuses on the twelve critical areas of the BPFA, and provides analyses of the current development situation of the gender agenda. It also outlines the challenges encountered over the period and charts the way forward.

PART ONE: OVERVIEW OF ACHIEVEMENTS AND CHALLENGES IN PROMOTING GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN’S EMPOWERMENT
1.1 The Government of The Gambia, at the highest levels, has committed itself to attainment of the BPFA and other national, regional and international commitments related to gender equality and women’s empowerment. Concerted effort of the government has resulted in the development of policies and programmes that set clear targets for reducing poverty, hunger, illiteracy, disease, discrimination against women and environmental degradation as well as requisite national, regional and global partnerships in support of such efforts. In spite of these efforts progress towards achieving these targets is mixed. The 2003 and 2005 MDG Progress Reports show that targets for reducing hunger; attainment of universal basic education, provision of basic amenities (water and sanitation); reducing maternal mortality and environmental sustainability are achievable. The targets for the attainment of poverty reduction, child mortality, communicable diseases including HIV/AIDS and gender equality are less likely to be attained. The achievements and challenges will be examined in the following paragraphs.

1.2 HIGHLIGHTS OF MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS

1.2.1 The National Policy for The Advancement of Gambian Women (NPAGW) 1999-2009 continues to be the main reference point for addressing Gambia’s commitments to the Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA) as well as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC); the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa and other human rights instruments to which The Gambia is a signatory. It is also premised on the 1997 Constitution of The Gambia and Vision 2020. The NPAGW specifically targeted women and covered 18 thematic areas which were designed to ‘right the wrongs’ and to reduce the huge inequalities and inequities between men and women and between boys and girls due to the patriarchal nature of Gambian society.

1.2.2 Agriculture is the mainstay of the economy. Women constitute the majority (65.5%) of the agricultural sector workforce compared to their male counterparts (47.5%) out of a working population of 56% who are engaged in agriculture.\(^1\) Important structural changes for women in the agricultural sector during the period under review include diversification of agricultural production into sesame growing and the adoption of short cycle species such as the New Rice for Africa (NERICA); rearing of exotic breeds and use of animal traction. A boost in horticultural production has resulted in the growing of high value tropical and off season fresh fruits and vegetables for both the domestic/tourist and export markets. Most of this growth is due to greater private sector involvement and investment as well as organised communal village based women vegetable growing schemes supported by donor funds. (See Annex 1 Table 1 page 40).

1.2.3 Significant progress has been made in increasing enrolment and retention of girls in school. At the lower basic cycle, the Gross Enrolment Rate (GER) increased from 82% to 92% from 2001/2002 – 2007/2008 taking

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\(^1\) Light Poverty Study, Core Indicators Welfare Study, National Planning Commission, 2008
into account the Madrassa enrolment. During the same period, the GER for girls increased appreciably from 80%-92% and boys slightly increased from 85% to 87%. In the upper basic cycle the GER increased from 43% to 65%. This growth in enrolment represents an average annual growth rate of 15%, which exceeds the target of 12.7%. However, the period 2005/2006 – 2007/2008 witnessed a drop in NER for boys from 62% to 58% whilst that of the girls slightly increased from 56% to 60%. The gender parity index in 2006 was 1.03% at the lower basic level and at the upper basic cycle was 0.91%. The trend changes for adult literacy however, where the literacy rate is higher for men 60% than for women 42.5% and 46% nationally. (See Graph 1-3 below and Annexe 2 Table 2 page 41)

Graph 1: Gross Enrollments in Basic Education Cycle

![Graph 1: Gross Enrollments in Basic Education Cycle](image)

Graph 2: Net Enrolment Rates in Basic Education Cycle

![Graph 2: Net Enrolment Rates in Basic Education Cycle](image)

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2 This includes only the officially recognized Madrassa

3 MoBSE, EMIS in The Gambia’s Education Sector Medium Term Plan, 2008-2012

4 PRSP 11, Department of State for Finance and Economic Affairs, The Gambia, Nov. 2006
NET ENROLLMENT RATES IN BASIC EDUCATION CYCLE

Girls
Boys

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Boys</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2005/06</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2007/08</td>
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</table>
1.2.4 MDG 7 seeks to reduce halve the proportion of people without sustainable access to improved water supply by 2015. The World Fit for Children (WFFC) goal calls for a reduction in the proportion of households without access to safe affordable drinking and hygienic sanitation facilities by one third. According to the MICS 2005/2006, 85.1% of the population uses an improved source of drinking water (91.2% in the urban areas and 81.3% in the rural areas). Access to improved sanitation is a crucial stepping stone to better health as inappropriate disposal of human excreta is associated with a range of diseases including diarrhoea. It is fundamental to gender equity as it protects women’s dignity. Children bear the brunt of sanitation-related impacts – their health, nutrition, growth, education, self-respect and life opportunities suffers as a result of inadequate sanitation. In The Gambia, improved sanitation, in schools by providing separate toilet facilities for girls has contributed to increasing girl’s enrolment and retention in schools. The MICS 2005/2006 shows that the majority 93% of households in urban areas of The Gambia and 78% in the rural areas have access to improved sanitation facilities.\

1.2.5 The Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR), though still high, declined from 730/100,000 live births in 2001 to 556/100000 live births in 2006. The Neonatal Mortality Rate was 31.2 /1000 live births in 2001 down from 60/1000 live births. The Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) was 75/1000 live births, down from 97/1000 in 1993. The Under 5 Mortality Rate was 99/1000 live births down from 134/1000 live births in 2001. The Obstetric Fistula Prevalence is 0.5/1000 women of reproductive age. The gains in reducing the MMR can be attributed to the increased number of births attended by trained antenatal personnel which rose from 52% in 2001 to 67% in 2006. RCH has been made free to ensure improved access.

1.2.6 Antenatal care coverage country wide is as high as 96% as well as the RCH awareness of 96%. Micro-nutrient deficiencies which are a major cause of morbidity and mortality are being addressed through a nutrition supplementation programme. Insecticide treated bed-nets are provided free of charge to pregnant and lactating women.

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5 Revised Final PRSP, National Planning Commision, 2008

6 KAP Study on WASH, UNICEF, June 2009

7 Presentation on Maternal Mortality at the 1st Celebration of the Pan African Women’s Day, by Ramou Cole Ceesay

8 Paper presented by Ramou Cole Ceesay as the health contribution to the BPFA + 15 Report
mothers and children under five and IPT.

1.2.7 In 2004 The Gambia’s HIV prevalence was 2.1% for HIV1 and 0.8 for HIV2. It is higher amongst females (54%) than in males (46%). In 2007, the HIV prevalence dropped to 1.4% for HIV 1 and 0.8% for HIV 2.9 The National Strategic Framework (NSF), 2003-2008 laid the foundation for a gender responsive approach to HIV/AIDS. During the Multi Country AIDS Programme (MAP) and HIV/AIDS Rapid Implementation Programme (HARRP), women’s organisations were able to access financial resources to enable them carry out their promotional, preventive, protection and participation activities.

1.2.8 High political will and commitment has resulted in increased female representation at decision making levels. Women ministers including the Vice President, comprise 33.3% of the Cabinet. The strategic locating of the Women’s machinery under the office of the Vice President and Minister of Women’s Affairs has given it a high profile and high visibility. The Women’s Bureau and Council have benefited from a number of capacity building activities to enable them carry out their coordinating, monitoring and evaluating role effectively. The activities of the Bureau have been decentralised to all the regions in the country.

1.2.9 The Government supported by its partners is taking firm measures to mainstream gender in development and has formulated policies that are designed to contribute to the realisation of this goal. These include:

- The National Health Policy “Changing for Good” 2001-2006
- The National Health Policy “Health is Wealth” and Health Master Plan 2007- 2020
- National Reproductive Health Policy 2007-2014
- The National Nutrition Policy 2000-2004
- The National Education Policy 2004-2015 “Rethinking Education for Poverty Reduction” and
- The Education Sector Strategic Plan 2006-2015
- The National Youth Policy 1998-2008

1.3 Other achievements include:

1.3.1 The enactment of the:

- Trafficking in Persons Act, 2007 which is a comprehensive piece of legislation that seeks to prevent, suppress and punish those engaged in trafficking in persons, and to rehabilitate and reintegrate victims of trafficking.

- Children’s’ Act, 2005 is a major innovation in The Gambia’s stride towards curbing violence against children, including harmful traditional practices against them.

1.3.2 The Draft Women’s Bill 2007, which is yet to be enacted will serve as a powerful tool for accelerating progress towards the attainment of gender equality in The Gambia and the elimination of gender based violence.

1.3.3 The ratification of the African Charter on Human and People’s Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa.

1.3.4 The PRSP 11 which covers the period 2009-2011 and is built around the attainment of the MDGs

1.3.5 The UNDAF 2007-2011 jointly implemented by the UN Agencies in The Gambia addresses key priorities of the government in relation to the MDGs such as women’s empowerment, generation and utilisation of disaggregated data and gender information, safe motherhood and RCH rights at the national and sub-national.

1.3.6 Other partners such as the EU, AfDB, DFID, the IDB, and the World Bank have supported projects that contribute to the Advancement of women such as the Community Skills Improvement Project (CSIP), the Community Driven Development Project (CDDP), the Fight against Social Exclusion (FASE), Mainstreaming Poverty and Gender Project (MPGP), the consultative process for a gender policy and the launching of an Enterprise Development Fund in 2006.

1.3.7 The implementation of special projects for women to reduce drudgery through the provision of labour savings devices thus facilitating their participation in the overall development process; build their capacity through training and increase their business development opportunities.

1.3.8 The creation of an enabling environment for private sector and civil society participation at all levels has resulted in a harnessing of energies and resources to cut down on bifurcation of scarce resources and duplication of efforts and the building of strategic partnerships between government, The Gambia Chamber of Commerce and the Association of Non-Governmental Organisations (TANGO).

1.3.9 Enhanced CSO/Government collaboration through the creation of a conducive environment for civil society participation at all levels. An NGO Affairs Agency has been established to coordinate all CSO activities in the country to ensure that CSO are accountable and operate within the laws of the country.

1.4 CHALLENGES
1.4.1 The *NPAGW* ‘s focus only on women to the exclusion of men and not having any gender mainstreaming measures- “has created the impression that promoting gender equity and equality are not priorities in the policy”\(^{10}\). This was actually a gender mainstreaming policy that was reflected in its title. The first project funded for the policy was on the 5 key mainstreaming objectives

1.4.2 There is still a significant gender dimension to poverty as 63% of female-headed households fall below the poverty line compared to 48.2% for male-headed households\(^{11}\)(Can we use the recent 2009 figures from the World bank poverty study). The ‘Feminisation of poverty’ is due to the migration of males from the rural areas to the urban areas and abroad. Households with females as temporary heads constitute 50.3% (i.e. where their husbands migrated or live in urban areas or were in polygamous unions in their own households). Rural women face adverse poverty; thus making them vulnerable. The result is retarded development which is exacerbated by under representation in decision making.\(^{12}\)

1.4.3 There is an uneven gender distribution of labour in the public and private sector. Males dominate in the upper employment levels as managers, professionals and technicians whereas women predominate in the lower levels. As a result of their lower levels of literacy and skills they tend to take up lower paying, unstable poor quality employment such as casual, part-time and seasonal workers with little opportunity for upward mobility or for personal self development. Often social security benefits and protection are absent for these types of precarious employment thereby increasing the risk of poverty particularly in old age.

1.4.4 Quality considerations continue to serve as barriers to the effective performance of girls in schools. The adult and non-formal education sector continues to be faced with low level of facilitators and inadequate resources.

1.4.5 Factors contributing to the high MMR include: (a) poor quality of care in prenatal and delivery services; (b) inadequate high-risk referral system; (c) delayed and/or inappropriate treatment of life-threatening complications during pregnancy and delivery; (d) women’s heavy workload and lack of access to appropriate labour-saving devices, particularly during late pregnancy; and (e) low use of modern contraception methods. There is high attrition of staff from the health sector resulting in dissipation of scarce resources.

\(^{10}\) Draft Gender Policy, Women’s Bureau, 2009

\(^{11}\) PRSP 11

\(^{12}\) Report on Capacity Assessment of Women in Decision Making Positions, UNDP, Women’s Bureau, January 2008
1.4.6 Women’s participation in the public and private decision making spheres is limited. Women represent only 9.34% of the National Assembly Members. The increased participation of women in the Local Government Elections notwithstanding only 27 (18.37%) out of 147 councillors are women. The situation becomes even more exclusive at the level of traditional leadership as out of the 1938 villages only 5 (0.25%) are headed by women and there are no village Chiefs who are women in the Gambia and this is where the power lies.

PART 2: PROGRESS IN IMPLEMENTING CRITICAL AREAS OF THE BEIJING PLATFORM FOR ACTION & FURTHER INITIATIVES AND ACTIONS IDENTIFIED IN THE 23rd SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

2.1. WOMEN AND POVERTY

2.1.1 Policies and Programmes for Poverty Alleviation

2.1.1.1 The long term goal of PRSP 11(2007-2011) is to eradicate poverty by significantly increasing national income through sustained economic growth and reducing income and non-income inequalities through specific poverty reduction priority interventions. It also aims at “empowering local communities and women to influence and share control over priority setting, resource allocation and implementation towards achieving the PRSP goals and objectives.” Gender mainstreaming is one of the components of Pillar 5 of the PRSP

2.1.1.2 The Government recently developed a Poverty Reduction and Growth Strategy (PRGS) for 2007-2011 that merged the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) with the Medium Term Economic Framework (MTEF), 2007-2011. The new strategy seeks to accelerate economic growth and reduce poverty. Funds from the Highly Indebted Poor Country Initiative (HIPC) from which the country benefitted in 2004 and 2008 went directly to soft loans and subventions for women’s groups, training of farmers and provision of water facilities for communities. The social and economic gains derived from women’s access to savings and credit has clearly impacted on the quality of their lives and that of their families as it has promoted entrepreneurial development through investment in on and off farm activities as well as education of their children among other things.

13 Inter Parliamentary Union, www.whrnet.org/docs/issue-women-politics-html


15 Revised Final PRSP 11, National Planning Commission, 2008
2.1.1.3 The Participatory Poverty Assessments (PPAs), the Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS) and the Core Welfare Indicator Survey has greatly contributed to a greater understanding of the quantitative and qualitative dimensions of poverty. This has resulted in pro-poor policies, budgeting and programming which has translated into a reduction of poverty from 61% in 2003 to 58% in 2008

**2.1.2 Credit schemes for Women**

2.1.2.1 Access to productive resources including credit has been identified as a means of getting women out of the poverty trap. The Social Development Fund (SDF) has greatly facilitated women’s access to micro-credit by disbursing funds totalling 90 million dalasis (about US$ 3.4 million) to Intermediary Micro Finance Institutions (IMFI) consisting of NGOs and CBOs who are registered with the Central Bank of The Gambia. The Gambia Women’s Finance Association, (GAWFA), the National Association of Credit Unions of The Gambia (NACCUG), and the VISACAs have emerged as key players in the field of micro credit. CSIP support women groups with credit facility through the SDF from 2007 to 2008.

2.1.2.2 Most of their clients are the rural poor, and 70% of these are women with about 90% of the lending going to women owned small enterprises. The repayment rates for microfinance loans have been in the range of 80% to 90%, and in the case of CSIP 65.3% of indicating that loans to small borrowers with little collateral assets can still be successfully managed with the right institutional setting. Capacity building activities are provided to enhance service delivery.

2.1.2.3 The Women’s Bureau facilitates access to micro credit through revolving loan schemes supported by four separate initiatives (i) the Republic of China on Taiwan (ii) a Gambian philanthropist, (iii) the Aji Oley Jack Memorial Fund and (iii) the National Enterprise Development Initiative (NEDI) - a joint venture of the Women’s Bureau, National Youth Council and National Youth Service Scheme.

2.1.2.4 Under Phase 11 of the Fight against Social Exclusion (FASE) Project (2005-2006) approximately 16,109 (95% women) direct beneficiaries and 120,000 indirect beneficiaries received enhanced income derived from higher quality of products and better managed enterprises as a result of the skills and business training and credit. In addition about 2908 associations, trade organisations and SMEs also benefitted from the Project. Partnerships were developed with organisations involved in the fight against poverty such as the LGAs, SDF, CSIP, Government institutions and CSOs.

16 PRSP 11

2.1.3 CSO’s Involvement in Poverty Reduction

2.1.3.1 CSOs and LGAs involvement is critical to the successful implementation of the PRSP 11. The Pro-poor Advocacy Group (ProPAG) plays a unique role in ensuring effective and popular participation during the budget consultations as well as in facilitating the ward and village development plans that fit into the overall national strategy. A UNICEF funded study conducted in 2007, by ProPAG on gender budgeting in key government ministries, LGAs and selected CSOs, reveals that there is a major gap in this area as most of the institutions do not practice gender budgetting due to lack of knowledge, technical expertise and inadequate capacity.

2.1.3.2 AATG and CRS are leaders in women’s economic empowerment and poverty reduction. These NGOs facilitate access and ownership for women to productive resources such as grants, credit, land and machines by working in partnership with NAWFA, GAFNA, ADWAC, WASDA & Farmers Platform among others in poverty eradication programmes.

2.2 WOMEN EDUCATION & TRAINING

2.2.1 Policies and Programmes

2.2.1.1 The 1997 Constitution of The Gambia commits the government to providing basic education for all of its citizens. Within the expanded vision of basic education are early childhood development, (ECD), Grades 1-9 of the formal school system and adult and non-formal education. The values outlined in the National Education Policy, 2004-2015 are grounded on a non-discriminatory and all inclusive provision of education, underlining in particular, gender equity and targeting the poor and the disadvantaged.

2.2.1.2 Gender mainstreaming strategies contained in the ESSP 2006-2015 are:

i. Minimising educational costs, especially for girls

ii. Increasing the number of child-friendly school environments

iii. Equal gender participation at the PTAs, governing boards and management levels of schools.
2.2.1.3 **Minimising the costs of schooling:** Girls education is tuition-free in the public schools up to Grade 9. The scholarship Trust Fund and the President’s Empowerment of Girls Education Project (PEGEP) has expanded and is supplemented by regional initiatives and incentives of various types, including special scholarship packages that cover a wide range of costs from fees, uniforms, books to mentoring.

2.2.1.4 The **Child Friendly School Initiative** supported by UNICEF promotes gender equality in enrolment and achievement and eliminating gender stereotypes. It provides a healthy and protective environment for children through the provision of adequate water and sanitation facilities and discouraging corporal punishment and harassment. It promotes child-centred learning and encourages family and community-based local partnership in education. The CFSI is a powerful tool both for helping to fulfil the rights of children and providing them an education of good quality.\(^{18}\)

2.2.1.5 Equal **gender participation in school management** is being promoted through the School Management Structures (former PTAs). The SMC brings on board people who know the most about the learners and their educational needs, as well as about local values and realities and is the route to a more responsive system. It provides the space for community participation and is more equitable as poor households have a stronger and more effective voice in local community institutions in which they play a role in framing priorities and in holding school providers accountable.

2.2.2 **Access**

2.2.2.1 Tremendous success has been gained in expanding access to education across all levels. Schools have been brought nearer to home within 3km-5km from the community. Building schools closer to the homes of the students contributes to providing safety and security for the children especially the girls as they have to walk shorter distances to and from the school. In addition they do not have to leave their homes and communities with all the attendant risks. Under the Third Education Sector Project Phase 1, (1998-2006) and Phase 2, (2006-2011) the Ministry of Education was able to build classrooms throughout the country supported by different donors to improve access to good quality education for all Gambians. (See annexe 1 Table 3 page 43)

2.2.2.2 Awareness creation and sensitization activities through platforms such as the weekly televised Education Forum, radio programmes and community meetings have increased public interest and knowledge on girl’s education.

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\(^{18}\) UNGEI, 2006
2.2.2.3 Additional resources from the EFA/FTI have greatly contributed to the provision of additional classrooms and provided the impetus to accelerating access to basic education. It has helped to close the gender gap through the development of appropriate policy, provision of sex disaggregated data and gender information, capacity building of senior management and provided the needed finance to close the funding gap. Generally, resources are more equitably distributed and better utilized for programme implementation.

2.2.3 The School Curriculum

2.2.3.1 The reviews and updates of the curriculum have also resulted in a more relevant and, therefore, more responsive curriculum to stakeholder needs. The Life Skills Unit of the MoBSE developed a Life Skills Manual in 2008 for Grades 4 and 5 of the Lower Basic Cycle with the support of UNFPA and the World Bank. HIV/AIDS has been mainstreamed into the life skills programme.

2.2.4 Adult and Non Formal Education

CSIP continued to deliver training for women and out of school youths with the view to enhancing self employment ventures and entrepreneurship development. The project targeted 40,000 women and youth in 250 communities but was able to reach 32,377 (80.94%). The total number of participants who are now classified as literacy graduates is 12,678 representing 32% of the target.

2.2.5 Tertiary level

2.2.5.1 The gender and development course run by the Management Development Institute (MDI) contributes to the availability of a core of people with knowledge and skills in gender mainstreaming thus facilitating gender analysis and gender monitoring in the various sectors. The University of the Gambia (UTG) has introduced gender studies as a compulsory subject and has its own gender unit.

2.2.5.2 The UTG has contributed in no small measure to the participation of girls at the higher levels of education. In 2008, girls’ enrolment constituted 21.58% of the total as compared to 10% when the university was first established. To give girls and young women a fair chance to participate in education at the tertiary level, CSIP Contribution to the BPFA Report

19 PRSP 11, Department of State for Finance and Economic Affairs, 2006
programmes such as the ACCESS are run by the University of The Gambia, the RIFT (Remedial Instruction for Female Teachers) by The Gambia College and the extra mural classes by the GTU.

2.2.6: CSOs involved in Education

2.2.6.1 The MoBSE has expanded the space for CSO participation in education at all levels ranging from policy formulation, implementation, service delivery, infrastructure development and monitoring and evaluation. This has increased public interest and involvement in education leading to a broadening and deepening of participation at all levels by key players such as the Education for All Campaign Network (EFANet), ChildFund, VSO, Peace Corps, FIOH, GAMCOTRAP, SIMMA, APWGA, BAFROW, WISDOM, FAWEGAM, NAWFA, ProPAG, GTU, Girls Guide Association, Gambia Home Economics Association and Faith Based organizations.

2.2.6.2 The FAWEGAM- Mother’s Clubs play a role in closing the gap between boys and girls in schools by generating income to cover the indirect cost of school fees, give guidance and counseling to families and girls to promote the retention of girls in school and engage in environmental cleanliness of the school.

2.2.6.3 The American Girls Scholarship Programme (AGSP) is jointly implemented by Education for All Campaign Network, FAWEGAM and BAFROW. From its inception in 2005, 1600 girls in the Western region have benefitted from the programme which covers school fees, uniforms and books and mentors the girls to enhance their performance in schools. As a result of the declining enrolment of boys the scheme now covers 200 boys in the region.

2.2.6.4 The partnership between the MoBSE and the Madrassa proprietors, through the General Secretariat for Islamic/Arabic, has contributed to boosting enrolments and enhanced access particularly for Muslim girls.

2.2.6.5 The EFANet has implemented two projects (2006/2008) on inclusive education targeting girls and children with special needs and with support from Save the Children Sweden in collaboration with FAWEGAM, the CPA and the Specials Needs Education Unit. Under the 2008 project, A Child Friendly Version of the Sexual Harassment Policy has been developed by FAWEGAM with funding from Save the Children Sweden and disseminated to stakeholders.

2.2.6.6 The celebration of key events such as the Global Week of Action (GWA) in Education in April each year calls attention of the Government and donors to promises made in Dakar and the need to keep to those promises
to make EFA a reality by 2015. The GWA celebrations in 2005 focused on the gender parity goal and brought public attention to the fact that the country had missed the first target of the gender parity goal. It is clear that with sustained advocacy, the political will and the implementation of good plans the BPFA and other commitments will be realised.

2.3 WOMEN AND HEALTH

2.3.1 Policies and Programmes

2.3.1.1 The high importance accorded to women’s reproductive health is captured in the following statement: “every pregnancy is considered at risk”21. The single and most critical intervention for safe motherhood is to ensure that a competent and skilled health worker is present at every birth, and that transport is available to a referral facility for obstetric care in case of emergency. The indicators are the proportion of births with a skilled attendant and the proportion of institutional deliveries. The skilled attendant at delivery is also used to track progress towards the MDG target of reducing the MMR.

2.3.1.2 The number of births attended by trained personnel is 67% which compares favourably to the figure in Sub Saharan Africa.22 The MICS 2005/2006 indicates about 47% of the births in the year preceding the MICS were delivered with the assistance of a nurse/midwife. Doctors assisted with the delivery of 6% of births and auxiliary midwives with about 5% of deliveries.

Graph 4: Availability of Midwives by Region23

21 Revised PRSP Report, National Planning Commission, 2008

22 Paper presented by Ramou Cole Ceesay as health contribution to BPFA + 15 Report

23 Ditto 21

24
2.3.1.3 The Gambia Nutrition Policy, 2000-2004 aimed at mainstreaming nutrition into all aspects of development and at attaining the basic nutritional requirements of the Gambian population with emphasis on women and children. The Policy has been reviewed and a new Nutrition Policy 2009-2014 has been drafted to take on board emerging trends in nutrition related diseases. The new policy is yet to be adopted.

2.3.1.4 The National Nutrition Agency (NaNA) was established by an Act of the National Assembly in 2005. NaNA, which is located under the Office of the Vice President, is mandated and charged with the responsibility of coordinating all nutrition and nutrition related activities in the country. Since its establishment, NaNA has recorded the following achievements:

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The formulation and enactment of the Food Act 2005, leading to the enactment of the Breastfeeding Promotion Regulation and the Food Fortification and Salt Iodization Regulation, 2006.

- Revitalization of the National Codex Committee (NCC), which is made up of government and non-governmental organizations concerned with food production, quality, safety and trade.

- Coordination of the activities of the International Baby Food Action Network (IBFAN), The Gambia for the protection, promotion and support of optimal Infant and Young Child Feeding practices.

- Instituted mechanisms to reduce micro-nutrient deficiencies, namely the salt iodization and Vitamin A supplementation programme as well as the intensification of IEC promoting Iron Deficiency Anemia (IDA) control.

- The design and implementation of the Baby Friendly Hospital and Community Initiatives for the prevention and management of infant, young child and maternal malnutrition.

- Mainstreaming nutrition into many sectoral policies, including the PRSP.

2.3.1.5 A computerized Health Management Information System (HMIS) has been completed and the networking component is expected to be pursued soon. This is to ensure availability of reliable data.

2.3.2: Access

2.3.2.1 Physical access continues to improve with the upgrading and building of new facilities and staffing them with trained health personnel. This has increased the geographical access and has reduced the distance to the nearest health facility. The PRSP Progress Report 2007 indicates that over 85% and 97% of the population are within 3km and 5 Km of a basic health facility and primary health care post respectively.

2.3.5 Reduction of Child Mortality

2.3.5.1 Full coverage has been attained in the management of the six killer childhood diseases-Acute Respiratory Infections (ARI), Malaria, Neonatal Tetanus, Diarrhoea, Malnutrition and Meningitis. The Gambia attained over 90% immunization coverage for all antigens for children under one year of age and is the only country in Africa to introduce Pneumococcal Conjugate vaccine into its routine EPI services. A sustained sensitisation campaign on EBF has resulted in 48% of women who gave birth within the previous two years to initiate breastfeeding their
babies within one hour after birth and 90% within one day after birth\textsuperscript{24}.

2.3.5. 2 \textbf{Infant mortality rate}

\textit{Total:} 68.72 deaths/1,000 live births\textsuperscript{25}
\textit{Male:} 75.07 deaths/1,000 live births  
\textit{Female:} 62.18 deaths/1,000 live births (2008 est.)

Table 4: Infant Mortality Rate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>IMR</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>% Change</th>
<th>Date of Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>72.02</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>-3.88</td>
<td>2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>73.07</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>1.46</td>
<td>2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>71.58</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>-2.04</td>
<td>2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>70.14</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>-2.01</td>
<td>2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>68.72</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>-2.02</td>
<td>2008</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.3.6 \textbf{Communicable Diseases}

2.3.6.1 \textbf{Malaria:}

- The Gambia has taken strong and sustained action to fight malaria and this has yielded positive results. The National Malaria Control Programme has developed effective partnerships with WHO, UNICEF, the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria, the Medical Research Council (MRC), local and international NGOs and foundations, and various governments that have led to a reduction of the incidence of malaria.

- Interventions include insecticide-treated bed nets (ITNs) which are being used by 63\% of the population and are given free to pregnant women and children under 5 – including intermittent preventive treatment, and indoor residual spraying. The most substantial change in measures to prevent malaria has been the increase of coverage of ITNs, which increased threefold between 2000 and 2006. According to the MICS 2005/2006, 49\% of under 5s in Gambia are now reported to be sleeping under ITNs.

\textsuperscript{24} MICS 2005/2006

\textsuperscript{25} www.indexmundi.com/the_gambia/infant_mortality_rate.html
2.3.6.1 HIV/AIDS

- Some progress has been made in various aspects of addressing national capacity in gender, socio-cultural factors and human rights.

- UNAIDs supported NGOs and the National AID Secretariat, NAS. Advocacy programmes on HIV are supported countrywide and they equally support the provision of antiretroviral therapy, in all RCH centres country-wide.

- There has been an unprecedented increase in external resources and donor support to scale up and sustain the response to HIV. Notable key partners are the Global Fund and the UN Agencies.

- CSOs have also mobilized resources from their traditional partners to stem up the HIV/AIDS campaign.

- Various studies: sentinel surveillance, behavioural sentinel surveillance, socio-cultural, Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices (KAP) - have been undertaken to inform and strengthen the national response and have resulted in gender sensitive programming.

- Women’s groups are also represented on all key policy structures such as the National AIDS Council, Country Coordinating Mechanism and Divisional AIDS Committees. Thus enabling them to influence policy at these levels.

2.3.6.2 Tuberculosis

TB mostly affects the productive ages 15-45 years with a male to female ratio of 2:1. An increased number of TB patients are found to be infected by HIV. TB case detection rate rose from 64% in 2006 to 78% in 2008. The cure rate rose from 67% in 2003 to 78% in 2008 and treatment success rate rose from 67% (baseline) to 84% in 2008, respectively for both cases. The current burden of TB in the country is unknown but a nationwide TB prevalence survey is being planned for support in the next round of the Global Fund.

2.3.7 Access to Water and Sanitation:

2.3.7.1 Fetching water is primarily the responsibility of women and girls in The Gambia due to the gender division of labour. With 85.1% of the population having access to an improved source of water and only a 21

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minute average time taken to reach the water source (except for households with water)\textsuperscript{27}, the drudgery associated with this role has greatly reduced. Even though there are disparities in access between settlements, the ease of access to water has provided several benefits. The health benefits include prevention of diarrhoea and reduced absenteeism from the workplace. The time saved associated with closer location of the facilities translates into increased production, higher school attendance particularly for girls and women and more leisure time for women to participate in socio-political activities\textsuperscript{28}.

2.3.7.2 Increased access to improved sanitation by 93\% of households in urban areas of The Gambia and 78\% in the rural areas\textsuperscript{29} has also yielded benefits for women and girls. An improved sanitation facility is defined as one that hygienically separates human excreta from human contact\textsuperscript{30}. It is a crucial stepping stone to better health as inappropriate disposal of human excreta is associated with a range of diseases including diarrhoea. The risk of faecal contamination is reduced for women who have the responsibility of disposing of children’s excreta when they dispose of these safely and wash their hands with soap and water after disposal. Access to improved sanitation is fundamental to gender equity as it protects women’s dignity and security. There is evidence that improved sanitation in schools through the provision of separate toilet facilities for girls has contributed to increased enrolment and retention of girls in schools.

2.3.8 CSO’s Participation in Realisation of these Goals

2.3.8.1 The Gambia Family Planning Association (GFPA)- runs an MCH at its Headquarters in Kanifing that offers quality services to pregnant women, child delivery and immunization and BARFROW -runs the Well Woman clinics and provides counselling and reproductive health services for women.

2.3.8.2 The Sheik Abdullah Jah Foundation has trained TBAs and community health nurses in RCH and provided them with equipment to carry out their work effectively. Technical support is provided through a mobile ambulance service as a result the capacity of the TBAs and Community Health Nurses is strengthened through supervision of their work and observation of clinical services that are being carried out by the team of medical experts.

\textsuperscript{27} The MICS 2005/2006, UNICEF/The Government of The Gambia

\textsuperscript{28} The Gambia’s Water and Sanitation Study, NAWEC, SNC Lanvin, 2005

\textsuperscript{29} Ditto \textsuperscript{27}

\textsuperscript{30} The WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme (JMP) for Water Supply and Sanitation
2.3.8.3 In the BFCI communities, the Village Support Groups play a key role in transmitting messages and providing support to mothers on practices of infant feeding. In these communities there is early initiation of breastfeeding within the first hour. Most of the communities demonstrate “a cleaner environment, healthier children, healthier pregnant women and above all, unity as a result of shared involvement and commitment of the initiative.”

2.3.8.4 Home based care services support feeding, clothing and scholarship awards through CSOs such as Hands on Care, GRCS and organisations supporting PLWHIV. Mutapola, an organisation of Women LWHIV has built capacity of their members by providing them with life and livelihood skills. The following organisations are engaged in advocacy, peer education, awareness creation and HIV/AIDS prevention activities at all levels - Society for Women against AIDS in Africa, Nova Scotia Gambia Association (NSGA), Youth in Development and Change (YIDAC), Worldview, GAMCOTRAP, BAFROW, Network for AIDS Services Organisations (NASO) Youth against AIDS Network and the Girl’s Guides Association among others.

2.3.8.5 Operation Save a Baby spearheaded by the First Lady of The Gambia has mobilised support from the private sector and the public. It provides support to the paediatric ward by providing equipment and other essentials for at risk babies. It also provides incentives to mothers.

2.3.8.6 Shelter Gambia in collaboration with the Department of Social Welfare is providing surgery to women with VVF. In addition to the medical support the women are provided in house training on life skills and livelihood skills during the three months of their admission to enable them to lead independent lives after they are discharged from the Shelter Gambia Home. Even though the numbers are small this is a significant contribution to uplifting the dignity and self esteem of women who were being stigmatised as a result of a health condition and reintegrating them into society.


32 GRTS interview with Orla Klppe, Coordinator of Programme, September 2009
2.3.8.7 The Centre for Innovation against Malaria (CIAM) works towards reducing the burden of malaria and improving the health and well being of Gambians. The key areas of interest for CIAM are research and behaviour change communication. Under the Programme of Collaboration with the Institute for Health, Research and Development of Denmark (DBL), 2006-2008, CIAM has conducted a number of activities which include:

- An Evaluation of a Pilot Programme to Deliver Intermittent Preventive Treatment (IPT) of Malaria in Pregnancy in the Two Health Divisions in The Gambia.
- A review of access to and coverage of the programme to prevent PTCT of HIV/AIDS, followed by a national survey of antenatal care delivery, coverage and access in The Gambia.
- Trained health professionals in monitoring and research skills

2.4 WOMEN AND VIOLENCE

2.4.1 Policies and Programmes

2.4.1.1 The Gambia Government, through the Department of Social Welfare and the law enforcement authorities, have continued efforts to support victims enforce existing laws and actively involve traditional institutions in the fight against all forms of violence. Due to their consistent follow-up on cases of violence there have been convictions on gender based violence.

2.4.1.2 A national plan of action has been developed as a follow up to the study on the Commercial and Sexual Exploitation of Children in 2004 to address the issues raised and increase sensitisation campaigns regarding early marriage, sexual exploitation and related issues (see 2.7.1.2). The Social Welfare Department in collaboration with the Child Protection Alliance (CPA), University of The Gambia and SOS Herman Gmeiner has conducted training up to diploma level for Social Workers. Sensitisation and awareness creation workshops are conducted for teachers, law enforcement agents, nurses, social workers, religious and community leaders as well as children.\(^{33}\)

2.4.1.3 The Trafficking in Persons Act, 2007 established a National Agency against Trafficking in Persons. The Act criminalises the practice, the use of victims of trafficking, concealment of trafficking and the exportation and importation of persons from and into The Gambia. Its extensive provisions include the right of a victim of

\(^{33}\) CEDAW 4th Report, Draft, Office of the Vice President (2008)
trafficking, “irrespective of his or her immigration status”, to bring civil action and to compensation, restitution and recovery; the provision by Government of temporary care and counselling of victims and their rehabilitation.

2.4.1.4 A Women’s Bill (2007) has been drafted for enactment by the National Assembly. The main aim is to domesticate regional and international conventions to make them enforceable before the Courts in The Gambia.

2.4.1.5 UNFPA/UNICEF are supporting development of a National Plan of Action to Accelerate the Abandonment of FGM/C. A Committee has been set up by the Vice President to develop a plan of action on the elimination of the practice.

2.4.2 CSO activities and achievements in the area of women and violence include:

2.4.2.1 The Study on “the relationship between Violence against Women and Girls and HIV/AIDS” commissioned by AATG and undertaken by Worldview in 2006 ascertained the extent to which this phenomenon exists in The Gambia; The study examined policies that took cognizance of the inter-relationship between the two pandemics and also programmes aimed at mitigating them; as well as the challenges & obstacles related to the problem. The Study Report and the accompanying video documentary have been widely disseminated to create awareness of the problem and to advocate for the involvement of more stakeholders to come together to harness resources and synergies to address the problem of VAWGs.

2.4.2.2 A Consortium of CSOs consisting of AATG, Worldview, TARUD, GFPA, GRCS and Mutapola was set up in 2006 to fight against VAWGs and to advocate additional resources and partnerships to address the problem.

2.4.2.3 The championing of the fight against FGM/C by BAFROW, GAMCOTRAP and APGWA has yielded appreciable results. In a spectacular “Dropping the Knife” ceremony organized by GAMCOTRAP on the 6th May 2007, at the Independence Stadium in Bakau, 18 circumcisers from 63 communities publicly dropped their knives and gave testimonies against the practice.

2.4.2.4 The Female Lawyers Association (FLAG) provides legal aid to victims of violence. FLAG plays an advocacy role and carries out community based sensitization activities to inform and educate members of the public of its roles and functions so that people know where to go and what to do to seek redress. FLAG has also
conducted a Capacity building workshop for law enforcement agencies.

2.5 WOMEN AND ARMED CONFLICT

2.5.1 Policies and Programmes

2.5.1.1 The Gambia is a relatively peaceful country but its location makes it vulnerable to conflict overtures from other countries. Recognising the adverse effects that conflict can have in nearby countries the Government of The Gambia has brokered peace talks in countries in conflict such as Guinea Bissau and Senegal.

2.5.1.2 Gambian women soldiers, police and immigration personnel have participated in a number of peace-keeping missions both in and outside the region. This is an import requirement for UNSCR 1325 and UNSCR 1820 which calls on peace keeping operations to incorporate a gender perspective in all their work and the maintenance of gender equality at all levels of the entire mission. Though The Gambian peace keeping missions have not been able to attain the UN’s target for 50% female representation at managerial and decision making levels of the peace support operations, some senior women personnel (one at the rank of Colonel) have participated and in these missions.

2.5.1.3 The Gambia is a party to the 1969 Convention governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa, there is no law on refugees in The Gambia, but the Ministry of Interior has a unit dedicated to screening refugees. UNHCR supports the Government’s screening and monitors the process. The PRSP 11 takes cognisance of the challenges posed by conflict and natural disasters particularly for refugee women and children and proposes interventions for their redress34.

2.5.1.4 With the return of refugees from Liberia, Cote D’Ivoire and Sierra Leone to their countries of origin, there are currently no refugee camps in Banjul. The Western region of the country is however host to 6900 refugees from the Casamance region, the majority of whom are women. More females (2865) than males (2795) registered for the food aid in July 200935. Host communities are provided with support under Emergency Operations provided by UNHCR and WFP in the form of food and non-food items which is distributed by the GRCS. The


35 Ditto/ibid? 33
Graph below indicates the number and ages of persons who benefited from food aid in July 2009.

**Graph 5: Percentage of Refugees Benefitting From Food Aid, July 2009**

2.5.1.5 A survey by NaNA on the “Nutrition and Health Status of Refugee Children from Casamance “ undertaken for the WFP in November 2008 reveals that there is an improvement in the health and nutritional status of the children since the first assessment was conducted in November 2007. The report recommends that the food aid, vaccinations, Vitamin A supplementation and deworming should be continued and efforts made to ensure that all the beneficiaries have access to such services and facilities”.

2.5.2 **CSO activity in women and conflict**

2.5.2.1 The Gambia is a member of the newly established Network on Peace and Security for Women in the ECOWAS Region (NOPSWECO). The Gambia played a key role in the setting up of the Network and currently WANEP - The Gambia serves on the newly elected NOPSWECo executive.

36 Gambia Red Cross Data, Lamin Gassama, September 2009.

37 NaNA Annual Report, December 2008
2.5.2.2 WANEP- The Gambia, works actively towards the ratification of international instruments on peace; it has reviewed the National Firearms Act of 1924 on arms. The ratification of the ECOWAS Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons has passed the level of the Cabinet and is awaiting presentation and approval at the level of the National Assembly. The Cluster Munitions Convention is at the level of the cabinet. Training of the NAMS Select Committee on Defence and Security and women in the URR on peace building and peace processes for the prevention of armed conflicts has yielded positive outcomes. Women of URR have played an influential role in the laying down of arms operations (59 illicit weapons were surrendered) and in carrying out community based sensitisation programmes on the impact of illicit arms trafficking and the proliferation of violence.

Concern Universal also supports two major projects on disaster mitigation and Disaster management in the Western Region for refugee families from Casamance and their hosts. The projects provide health services, adult education, gardening, conflict resolution and conflict prevention for the women and education and health services for their children.

2.5.2.3 The Health Promotion & Development Organization, former Association of Youth against Malaria, have donated nearly 392,000 insecticide-treated nets to Gambian pregnant women and children in Banjul, Kanifing Municipality, and the Western region, as well as to refugees. GRCS provides relief assistance and GAFNA also provides microcredit loans, material assistance for funerals and childbirth, health services, and recreational equipment.

2.6 WOMEN AND DECISION MAKING

2.6.1 Policies and Programmes

2.6.1.1 Objective 5 of the NPAGW proposed a 30% quota system for the allocation of jobs and positions in all spheres of public life including decision making positions. This recommendation is in line with the UNDP Gender Empowerment Model (GEM), the CEDAW and the ACHPR on the Rights of Women in Africa.

2.6.1.2 In line with this principle, Affirmative Action by the top leadership has resulted in a Cabinet with 33%...
female representation. The 2nd and 3rd highest positions in the government are held by women: the Vice President and Minister of Women’s Affairs and the speaker of the National Assembly which has been held by women in the current and last legislative councils.

2.6.1.3 With respect to the National Assembly, there is provision for 5 nominated members and the President has mostly nominated women to these positions. Currently there are two women nominated members, one of whom is the speaker, while the other is a member of the ECOWAS Parliament.

*Fig 1: Percentage of Women in the National Assembly*:

[Figure showing percentage of women in the National Assembly]
2.6.1.4 At the level of the judiciary there are currently 8 (72%) female high court judges out of eleven. The recent appointments made in September 2009 have contributed to a remarkable achievement which far exceeds the recommended 50%. The Child Unit is also headed by a female state counsel who is also the gender focal person at the Ministry of Justice. The fact that the current Minister of Justice and Attorney General is a woman makes the judiciary one of the most gender sensitive institutions in The Gambia in terms of women holding leadership positions. In 2008 the figures were far less for female judges.

2.6.1.5 Within the framework of decentralisation, the Local Government Act 2002 provides for female representation in Village Development Committees (VDCs) and Ward Development Committees (WDCs) and calls for equal male and female representation on these committees. The Women’s Bureau has decentralised its activities and the staff and women councillors work with these structures including others on the ground such as the Multidisciplinary Task Forces (MDFTs) the Population Task Forces (PTF) and the Technical Advisory Committees (TACs) and CSOs, to mainstream gender into their activities. In spite of these provisions women’s participation in local government is very limited. There are no women governors, no female chiefs with only one female deputy governor. (See table 5 page 43)

2.6.2 Women’s participation in Elections:

2.6.2.1 Remarkable improvement has also been made in LGA elections. For the first time in the political development of the country, 20 women contested the elections and out of this 15 won their seats. For women to participate in politics they need to have the confidence, the resources and the backing of their party and the support of the electorate. The women who were awarded party symbols contested and won the elections and had all taken part in the Capacity Enhancement Training workshops 2007/2008 organised by the Women’s Bureau and supported by UNDP.42 (See Annexe 1 Table 6 page 43)

2.6.2.2 In building women’s leadership capacity it is important to look at what is working for the community and is sustainable and can be built upon. The Capacity Needs Assessment of Women in Decision Making which was an integral component of the UNDP support to the Gambian Government to achieve MDG3 Gender Equality and the Advancement of Women for poverty reduction was successful in this respect.43 The interventions include:


43 Evaluation of the Capacity Enhancement of Women in Decision Making Project, Fatou Kinteh, UNDP July 2009
• Development of a short term action plan for capacity building
• Sensitization and awareness creation on the social benefits of women’s effective participation in decision making;
• Training of selected women in community leadership, networking and advocacy skills and
• Establishment of the regional information centers established in all the regions to facilitate access to gender related information and materials for the women and all other stakeholders within the region.

2.6.2.3 The Follow-up Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment and Women in Decision Making Project (2008) focuses on building on the gains made in the previous project. This is based on lessons learnt as well as strengthening the gender mainstreaming process and enhancing and supporting a well coordinated programme on gender based violence prevention. This promotes sustainability and is a good example of aid effectiveness as it is line with the principles of the Paris Declaration.

2.6.2.4 A National Study on Gender and Women Empowerment at the household level was also commissioned in 2005 funded by UNFPA. The study is in its final stage and will provide empirical evidence on the situation of Gambian Women and girls and gender equality. This is in line with the implementation of the recommendation of the CEDAW committee which observed that the last report did not provide data to back the report.

2.6.3 CSO activities

2.6.3.1 A Gender Network spearheaded by the ACDHR consisting of women and child rights CSOs has been set up to advance the cause of women and advocate for women’s political participation and representation in top decision-making positions. The “Women of Courage” awards presented to two women members of the network by the USA Ambassador in The Gambia serves as a source of encouragement and motivation to other women.

2.6.3.2 WANEP leads the consortium of CSOs on election monitoring. This consortium has monitored the Presidential (2006), the National Assembly and the Local Government Authority (2007) elections and presented their reports to the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC). Free and fair elections are important aspects of democracy and contribute to maintaining peaceful societies.

2.7 WOMEN AND THE ECONOMY
2.7.1 Policies and Programmes

2.7.1.1 Women constitute 45% of the economically active population and comprise 16.40% of employees in the Fisheries Sector, 22.07% in the Manufacturing Sector, 41.33% in Hotels and Restaurants, 2.66% in Financial Services, 6.95% in Storage and Communication, 39.97%, Commercial, Social and Personnel Services and 43.49% Wholesale and Retail. The government's focus is on the agricultural sector which is regarded as "the prime sector for investments to raise income, improve food security and reduce poverty and, therefore, meet the Vision 2020 objectives and MDG1 targets." It aims to do this among other objectives by "reducing disparities between rural and urban incomes and between men and women, curbing rural-urban drift and accelerating the pace of development of the rural sector."

2.7.1.2 The introduction and adoption of short-cycled varieties of groundnut, rice and millet by women has contributed to household food security. The potential impact of NERICA on boosting production, reducing poverty and increasing food security is acknowledged by FAO. Sesame growing has greatly enhanced women's economic empowerment. In addition to crop production, women play an important role in livestock and in horticultural production. The large women’s gardens in Bakau, Banjulnding and Sukuta and other women’s gardens cater for the local market and a thriving tourism industry.

2.7.1.3 The Peri Urban Small Scale Improvement Project covers small holder production credit schemes for mixed farming systems with low input for fattening of small ruminants, poultry and rabbits and egg and diary production. The Banjulnding Women’s Garden in the Western Region practices intensive breeding of exotic cattle in peri-urban areas. The scheme was promoted by the ITC under the PROCODEL Project which ended in 2005.

2.7.1.4 The tourism industry in The Gambia contributes 16% of the GDP supporting over 10,000 direct and indirect jobs. The absence of gender dis-aggregated data makes it difficult to assess the number of women working in the sector. The Tourism Master Plan (2005) provides the basis for improvement and orderly expansion of tourism in order to increase employment and economic benefit derived from the sector and proposes strategies, some of which have a direct bearing on women. These include:

44 Population and Housing Census 2003
45 PRSP 11
47 PRSP 11 page 66
• Improving Gambian handicraft and its marketing through training.
• Building the capacity of small and large professional associations in the industry to enable them to provide higher quality service to the industry.
• Fostering public/private partnership for the development of the sector.
• Improving access to investment finance through the establishment of an investment bank.
• Encourage responsible tourism through awareness building and education programmes.
• Improving the infrastructure and utilities at the TDA and the airport.

2.7.1.5 Some of the successes within the tourism sector in relation to the strategy include:

• The training and other capacity building activities undertaken during the FASE 11 and the CSIP have led to the production of an improved quality of products.

• Partnerships between women and the sector are also felt in the provision of accommodation, transportation and cleansing services of high profile business women who own and manage hotels, tour operator-businesses and travel agencies.

• A number of women also run their SMEs in and outside the bengdula's such as hairdressing salons, juice pressing, tailoring, manicure and pedicure businesses that cater for a wide range of tourist needs and interests.

• Some women have senior level jobs such as managers, “sous chefs”, accountants in the industry.

2.7.1.6 Recognizing the negative impacts that tourism can also have on people, the Responsible Tourism Partnership which is a national partnership between government, CSOs and the private sector has developed a Responsible Tourism Policy for The Gambia. A Commercial Sexual Exploitation Plan of Action has been developed as an outcome of a Study on Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Children. The setting up of a Child Sex Tourism (CST) Task Force under the Gambia Tourism Authority to address the problems associated with child sex tourism as well as the development of a Tourism Code of Conduct and a brochure on the Tourism Offences Act are other outcomes of the study. Training has been provided for workers in the Tourism sector on Child Sex Tourism.

2.7.2 Special Projects for Women

48 “Bengdula” Mandinka word literal meaning “meeting place” which has been applied to the Crafts Markets

49 “Sous Chef “ French expression meaning the chef who is second in authority in the kitchen or restaurant, ranking below the head.
2.7.2.1 The NEPAD Spanish African Women Empowerment Project (NEPAD SPAWEP) implemented by the Women’s Bureau seeks to enhance the capacity of the Bureau to give support to 25 women gardens all over the country, provide 40 labour saving devices as well as building of a storage and processing plant, training and IEC. The aim of the project is to eradicate poverty amongst women (target 100,000) by supporting them to improve and increase production capacity both in terms of quantity and quality, and to enable them through time saved by using labour savings devices to participate in self development and other social and economic activities.

2.7.2.2 Plans to build a national women’s multi-purpose complex that will provide Gambian women with skills, enterprises and micro-finance to improve their economic wellbeing are well underway. A Feasibility Study of the Project was undertaken in 2006 and the Report validated in April 2007, and disseminated later to all stakeholders. The GCCI and the Gambia Tourism Authority have indicated interest in supporting the project.

2.7.2.3 The trade fairs organised by the EU National Authorising Office and The GCCI provide a platform not only for the private sector and CSOs to showcase their work but also a market for them to sell their produce and to network and build partnerships with people in a similar trade or with similar interests. In addition to participating in the local trade fairs, some individuals/organisations also participate at the regional and international levels.

2.7.2.4 GAMJOBS, a presidential initiative with purpose of job creation, is supporting a project on micro finance, training in food production, processing and enterprise development for women with funding from UNDP.

2.7.2.5 CSIP provided 21 multi-purpose centres were constructed country wide, equipped and handed over to their communities. Reports show that 72303 have learnt various types of skills over the period out of which 31,990 (44.24%) mastered the skills whilst 72.6% are utilising the skills.

2.7.3 CSOs and Women’s Economic Empowerment

2.7.3.1 At the community level, international and national NGOs and CBOs are involved in various aspects of agricultural production to promote support for a ‘go back to the land’.

2.3.7.2 AATG and VSO spearheaded a campaign on the food crisis of 2008 and engaged the Gambia Government to develop an action plan to mitigate the adverse consequences of the food crisis. As women were the hardest hit by the crisis participatory approaches ensured that the poorest rural communities including the

50 Beneficiary Impact Assessment of CSIP, December, 2008
women were involved in the consultations that led to the development of the plan. Awareness raising was used to lobby and mobilize the NAMS on hunger and poverty and its link to the food crisis. World Food Day is used as a major event for awareness raising and advocacy at all levels and efforts are made to support fair trade, respect local food production and contribute to the elimination of hunger. Special attention is paid to the issue of local consumption which is critical to poverty eradication as it saves money, provides healthier foods and promotes sustainable development in a country where the majority of the population is engaged in farming.

2.3.7.3 Concern Universal through its Small Holder Irrigation for Livelihood Enhancement (SMILE) and The Gambia is Good (GIG) projects have greatly increased women’s access to low cost technologies for drawing water and markets. The LIFE project implemented in 2004-2009 with 80% female participation promoted the development of new gardens, rainy season vegetable production, compost manure making, planting of live fencing tress for gardens, orchards and woodlots and provided training in gender awareness, bush fire control and use of bio-pesticides.

2.3.7.4 Umbrella organizations such as NAWFA and the Women’s Nako 51Organization play a key role in advocating for women’s access, ownership and control of productive resources including land. The Gambian Horticultural Producers and Exporters Association (GAMHOPE) and the Kotu Fruit Sellars Society are examples of initiatives that promote women’s participation in the horticultural sector.

2.3.7.5 The Association of Food Processors (AFP) adds value to Gambian products by processing or preserving them into a variety of cereals and preservatives for adult consumption and for complimentary feeds for infants. The products are now sold in supermarkets and shops and are packaged and labelled to monitor their shelf life. Support has been provided to the AFP through SCAPE under the capacity building component of the NEPAD SPAWEP.

2.3.7.6. The Association of Women Entrepreneurs (AWE) plays a proactive role in entrepreneurial development and in supporting women owned small and medium sized businesses to play a visible and active role in the activities of the Association. In August 2009 the AWE intervened during escalating food prices and scarcity to import essential food items and sell them at affordable prices.

2.3.7.7. ASSET- the Association of Small Scale Entrepreneurs in Tourism has a membership of 80 small scale responsible tourism organisations in The Gambia. Females comprise 44.7% of the membership (649 females and 800 males)52. ASSET provides assistance to its members in product development, marketing, training, access to finance, coordination of member activities and representation of the member organisation to government. Its

51 Mandinka word meaning vegetable garden.
awards ceremonies particularly to its female members has lifted their profile and promoted standard-setting among the members.

2.8 WOMEN AND HUMAN RIGHTS

2.8.1 Policies and Laws

2.8.1.1 The African Charter on Human and People Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa was ratified by the National Assembly in 2006 without reservation. The advocacy role played by H.E the President of the Republic of The Gambia and the Vice President and Minister of Women’s Affairs as well as the sustained advocacy, lobbying and sensitisation and awareness creation activities of CSOs spearheaded by the ACDHRs led to its passing without reservation in 2006.

2.8.1.2 The Optional Protocol to CEDAW was also ratified in 2006.

2.8.1.3 A Women’s Bill was drafted in 2007. The process was highly participatory and went through a series of consultations with all stakeholders to ensure that all views were captured. The bill is an attempt to domesticate the regional and international human rights conventions on women’s rights.

2.8.2 Community Initiatives

2.8.2.1 The “Community Led Development in The Gambia” Project (May 2006-2011) implemented by TOSTAN through the Women’s Bureau and funded by UNICEF targets 4,400 adults 40 communities in the URR. The programme is designed to equip primarily female adults and adolescents with knowledge and livelihood skills to become self-sufficient and self reliant. The expected outcomes of the project include:

- Increased knowledge and application of human rights and responsibilities
- The abandonment of harmful traditional practices such as FGM/C and child marriage
- Reduced infant and maternal mortality rates
• Increased pre- and post-natal visits
• Increased use of vaccination resources
• Systematic registration of children at birth
• Increased enrolment of children in school, particularly girls
• Empowerment of women and emergence of female leadership
• Increased income and livelihood.

2.9 WOMEN AND THE MEDIA

2.9.1 Policies and Laws

2.9.1.1 The Gambia does not have a media policy. A national ICT Policy has been formulated and the government development blue print aims at making the country into a ‘Silicon Valley’ by 2020. The Information and Communications Act, 2009, provides the policy framework for the restructuring, development, and regulation of the information and communications sectors in the Gambia and for issues of connectivity. It covers the technical aspects of broadcasting such as allocation of frequency and issuing of licenses.

2.9.1.2 Sections 25, 207, 208 and 211 of the 1997 Constitution of The Gambia has the following provisions which are pertinent to the BPFA. These provisions guarantee freedom of speech and expression of the individual, the press and other media. freedom and independence of the press and other information media; It also instructs state authorities to take positive measures to promote diversity in the state owned media and to afford fair opportunities and facilities for the presentation of divergent views and dissenting opinions.

2.9.1.3 With the exception of state owned media, all newspapers, journals, magazines, radio and broadcasting stations are required to be registered in order to operate.

2.9.2 Situation of the Media in The Gambia
2.9.2.1 The Gambia media is in three categories—the public, the private and the community. This can be further categorised as the print, electronic and traditional media.

- The public media consists of Gambia Radio and Television Services (GRTS) and The Gambia Info is the state owned newspaper.
- There are currently six private FM stations in operation and 6 newspaper outfits as well as a number of multi media communications outfits.
- At the level of the community there are nine (9) community radios, traditional communicators, participatory theatre groups and participatory video camera women groups.

2.9.3 Coverage and Outreach:

2.9.3.1 At the level of the public media, The Gambia Radio and Television Services (GRTS) is the main avenue for the people to access information from official sources. The Gambia info is the state owned newspaper. It is the most important source of information on EBF for 49.57% of respondents in the KAP WASH, 53.15% of respondents get their information on ITN over GRTS and 59.15% get their information on iodised salt from this source. This indicates that GRTS stands out prominently as the leading source of information on important health issues. Access to information helps people to make informed choices and brings about positive health seeking behaviours and behaviour change as evidenced by the weekly Education Forum mentioned in 2.2.2.6 above. The radio and television services are therefore a powerful media that can be used to bring about desired behaviour changes in the way people perceive gender and greater acceptance of gender equality and equity.

2.9.3.2 The other sources of information quoted by respondents in a survey are the private and community radio, RCH, community meetings, traditional media and the print media were ranked the lowest in getting information on these important health issues which have a direct impact on maternal and child mortality and morbidity. The high illiteracy rates are responsible for the low preference of the print media which is an important source for the literate readers.

2.9.3.3 CIAM initiated a 26 episode radio drama series called “Bolongodala”. The drama complimented by radio phone in programmes and listeners groups was designed to disseminate key messages on malaria control and prevention, in particular the use of ITN.

53 KAP study on WASH, UNICEF, June 2009

54 “Bolongodala” is a Mandinka word that means “Besides the River”
2.9.3.4 The multi media outfits offer a range of services from production of BCC materials, to development of websites, training on media, production of video documentaries, drama, advertisements and programming. Two of these multi-media units are owned by women.

2.9.4 Programming and Content

2.9.4.1 In terms of programming and content, women’s issues are adequately covered by GRTS. The weekly women’s forum and Baati Jiguemi55 over the television, and the three times a week women’s magazine over the radio and other programmes provide a platform for airing key development issues and events. These have given women the visibility and the voice not only to be seen but to be heard as well. While some of the programmes may be gender insensitive this can be attributed to the lack of knowledge of the programmes in gender analysis and gender sensitive programming.

2.9.4.2 The private and community radio stations do celebrate some events that are women related. The community radios are closer to the people and broadcast in the local languages thus they have the opportunity to reach out to audiences on gender and other related issues. The print media covers women issues and most of them have a dedicated women’s column. The journalists that run these columns are well intentioned but lack the necessary competence and skills in gender analysis and mainstreaming.

2.9.4.3 The traditional media such as the Kanyeleng56 and women’s theatre groups are employed by development agencies to disseminate important development messages in the communities through song, dance and theatre. As they work closely with development agencies and partners, the issues raised are focused and targeted and their capacity is built to deliver the content in the agreed media format.

2.9.4.4 The participation of women media persons at local, national, regional and international events has not only broadened their participation in these events but has provided them with the opportunity to be members of important networks and associations. The media is seen as a strategic partner in the development process and a vehicle for social mobilization, behaviour change and knowledge generation. Media events are held at most major events thus enabling the journalists to have first hand and in-depth knowledge of issues that are being discussed.

55 Wolof phrase meaning “Women’s Voices”

56 Literal meaning “childless woman” In The Gambia these women have formed themselves into groups and have developed a unique art form of entertainment and IEC. They are well recognized by development institutions who have worked with them to transmit important development information.
2.9.5 Women Media Practitioners in Decision Making Positions

2.9.5.1 In the public media there are few women in decision making positions (see table 7 below).

Table 7: Women in the Public Media

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positions</th>
<th>Total # of men and women</th>
<th>Number of women</th>
<th>Number of men</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Managing Director</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managers</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal Producers TV</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal Producers Radio</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Technical Committee Internal Validation Meeting, September 2009

In implementing a diversity policy, GRTS has appointed a visually impaired to the position of a producer.

2.9.5.2 Outside the public sphere The Gambia Press union has two women as President and Vice President respectively. This is the first time in the history of the Gambian media that women were elected to this position. The on-going study on Women in the Media by the GPU will greatly add to the knowledge on the status of women in The Gambian media.

2.9.6 CSOs in the Media

2.9.6.1 GAMCOTRAP, GFPA, TARUD and Worldview specialize in communications targeting women and youth. GAMCOTRAP’s training with Traditional Communicators empowered the women to develop messages on FGM/C, early marriage, violence against women, etc. This is in line with the Beijing Platform for Action, Strategic Objective J.2 under Women and the Media. WTG and GFPA have media units that produce video documentaries on important issues affecting women’ lives which are used to create awareness, mobilise support
and resources and influence policy. WTG has also trained video camera women in the CRR and NBRs. The Participatory Video Camera Women initiative was supported by AATG and the Women’s Bureau and was designed to enable women interact with technology, document on camera issues that they wanted to be addressed in their communities such as early marriage, VAWGs, girl’s education and environmental degradation to name a find and to find joint solutions to addressing these problems at the community level. The TARUD puppet shows are not only educative but enable sensitive discussions and dissemination through the puppets.

2.9.6.2 A number of media associations and networks exist that provide an entry point for mainstreaming gender in the media. The Gambia Press union continues to build capacity of its members through short term training activities on gender reporting. The Network of Traditional Communicators, an umbrella organisation of traditional media practitioners, is a member of the population and development task force and the capacity of its members is constantly being built to deliver specific development messages. Associations such as the Association of Health Journalists also play a role in creating awareness on women and girl child issues.

2.9.6.3 Young people in the Media is a dynamic and growing organisation of child advocates whose voices are heard not only on the national scene, but also have some of its female members participating in the UN Forums for children and in the UN Summit on the MDGs. They organise National Child Friendly Awards to recognise the work of adults who promote and protect the rights and welfare of children and young people in The Gambia.

2.9.7 ICTS for Development

2.9.7.1 The Government promotes women in ICT through the provision of an enabling environment for private sector development. The period under review has witnessed the emergence of a wide range of the new communication technologies such as Internet and the GSM companies. Women form a significant number in this area and are employed in senior management positions. Face-book, twitter and Skype are widely used by the younger generation particularly young girls.

2.9.7.2 The mobile phone companies as a marketing strategy have organised pageants such as the Face of AFRICELL to promote their product. The contestants are talented young girls who vie for trophies and other awards including scholarships for further education.

2.9.7.3 The Women’s Bureau opened information centres for women in the regions. The women received computer training so that they could access information on a timely basis. Mobile phones have also greatly improved communication and are a good tool for providing market information. The EU also provided information centres to the LGAs.
2.10 THE GIRL CHILD

2.10.1 Policies and Laws

2.10.1.1 Issues affecting the girl child are addressed in earlier paragraphs of this document under the women and education section, in 2.2.1.3; 2.2.1.4 and 2.2.1.5, Women and Violence (2.4.1.2 and 2.4.1.5); Women and Human Rights (2.8.2.1) Women and the Economy (2.7.4.1), Women and the Media 2.9.7.1 and 2.9.7.2.

2.10.1.2 The Children’s Act of 2005 signified a major milestone in providing the legal basis for protection of child rights and ensuring their survival, development and participation. Section 18 (a) of the Act seeks to protect young girls from all harmful practices and (b) discrimination on the grounds of sex or other status. Sections 24 and 25 prohibit child marriages and child betrothals. The Act also provides for various sexual offences against the child particularly the girl child such as: defilement of girls; abduction of girls under 16; indecent assault and detention of girls against her will with intent to carnally know her.

2.10.1.3 Other measures undertaken by the Government to ensure a child friendly environment include: the establishment of a Child Welfare Unit at the Police Headquarters and the provision of Child Welfare Officers in all Police Stations; the establishment of seven Community Child Protection Committees and the Children’s Court in the Kanifing Municipality; the creation of a Juvenile Detention Centre; and the provision of the Social Welfare hotline and the Shelter for Women and Children.

2.10.1.4 The National Youth Policy 1999-2008 was reviewed by the National Youth Council at the National Youth Conference and Festival held in Farafenni, in November 2008 and gender has been mainstreamed into the draft Youth Policy 2010-2019. Emerging issues such as the recommendations of the African Youth Charter, and recommendations from the 2006 NAYCOF and lessons learnt in implementing the previous policy have been incorporated as well.

2.10.2 CSOs involvement:
2.10.2.1 CPA, NAYCO, Soul Talk, the Nova Scotia Gambia peer groups and other youth groups advocate for child rights including the girl child and have built capacity of young girls through training, symposia and counselling to know their rights responsibilities. The capacity of 250 peer health educators and 10 peer counsellors were enhanced in information dissemination under the 5th UNFPA, CPAP. The foundation of youth advocacy groups like the National Youth Parliament and the Network of Adolescents and Youth on Population and Development have increased the participation of young people in the planning and implementation of youth-focused initiatives, including the prevention and management of sexually transmitted infections (STIs), HIV/AIDS.

2.10.2.2 ADWAC and Child-Fund play key roles in child development, protection and participation. Career development of the girl child is promoted though the ‘Take-your-daughters-to-school’ programme facilitated by FAWEGAM and Peace Corps. Professional women host rural girls for a week and take them to their workplace to offer them the opportunity to experience at first hand what life on the other side is like.

2.11 WOMEN AND THE ENVIRONMENT

2.11.1 Policies and Programmes

2.11.1.1. The Gambia Environmental Plan has been revised with support from the EC (2008). This provides the framework under which women’s role and participation in environmental management can be built.

2.11.1.1 Under the leadership of the Office of the Vice President of The Gambia, a National Disaster Management Policy, Act and Action Plan were developed. Regional Disaster Management Committees (DMC) were formed under the various LGAs to coordinate and manage disaster relief in their regions among other things. These DMCs have played a critical role in supporting families during the floods occasioned by heavy rainfall in 2009,

2.11.1.3 Salt water intrusion into the rice fields and wells affects women’s farming activities. The Ministry of Agriculture has constructed dykes in many communities aimed at reducing the impact of salt intrusion in the rice fields.
2.11.1.4 The national setal days have created awareness and served as a vehicle for social mobilization to encourage people to take ownership of cleaning their environment. This strategy has contributed to reducing the incidents of malaria and other diseases by controlling the breeding of mosquitoes and other vectors. Women’s groups participate proactively in the national cleaning days and need to be supported in their endeavours.

2.11.2 Narratives of women in recycling activities

2.11.2.1 The women of Njau and Njameli Ganyando in CRR and Kerr Jarga in the NBR make a variety of items such as purses, bags and key holders from discarded plastic bags which they sell. This activity has double benefits. It earns the women money and enables them to keep the environment clean and safe from hazardous materials. The women are supported by CSIP and FIOH. The airing of these initiatives over GRTS has served a very useful sensitisation role for other women in other communities to emulate.

2.11.2.2 In some areas women also engage in composting. Household waste is composted into manure for farms and rice fields. Of all the methods of disposal of waste, this is nearest to the ideal. The Life and PROCODEL Projects have enhanced capacity of women in composting.

2.12 DIFFERNTLY ABLED WOMEN

2.12.1 Policies and Programmes

2.12.1.1 The Department of Social Welfare works in partnership with the Royal Victoria Teaching Hospital, Bansang Hospital, VSO and various Disabled Peoples Organisations (DPOs) including their Federation to support activities implemented by the organisations to improve and expand the services provided to their members and beneficiaries. The female wings of these DPOs focus on capacity building activities of their female membership by providing them with live skills and livelihood skills training.

2.12.1.2 The VSO Disability Programme is currently supporting research to identify issues affecting Women with Disabilities which will be used to develop a Women’s Charter to be implemented by the DPOs. VSO also
supports the Royal Victoria Teaching Hospital. Paediatricians and a Biomedical engineer have been attached to the Maternity, Pre-Natal, and Maintenance units of RVTH. Paediatrics services are key to women’s reproductive lives as they are responsible for the care of children. This service is being utilised by all women including those with disabilities to reduce the chances of disabilities from birth and the burden of care for children with disabilities.

2.12.1.3 The Paediatricians focus on the identification, screening and referrals of babies born at the hospital with signs and symptoms of disabilities for necessary referrals to specialists either locally or internationally. The ultimate aim of this placement is to reduce or eliminate the incidence of disability by supporting women to access services that will reduce the incidence of neo-natal mortality and children with disabilities.

2.12.2 Inclusive Policies of TANGO

2.12.2.1 At its AGM in 2008, a visually impaired woman was elected to serve on the TANGO executive board. This move has enormous significance as it demonstrates that differently-able persons are able to stand for elections and be elected to hold a leadership position in an organisation that is not a DPO and breaks the stereotypes towards disability.

2.13 CONSTRAINTS & LESSONS Learnt

2.13.1 Even though there is high political will and commitment to women’s advancement in The Gambia, there are still a number of constraints to making this a reality. These issues if not addressed will affect the implementation of the Gender Policy.

2.13.2 Women and Poverty

2.13.2 The following serve as barriers to the effective implementation of the PRSP:

- Lack of adequate sex disaggregated data and information on gender in some of the sectors limits effective gender mainstreaming in the PRSP documents.
• The low literacy levels, lack of skills, capital, access to market opportunities and ownership of land due to deeply inherent socio-cultural and traditional barriers continue to serve as barriers to getting women out of the poverty trap.

• High interest rates ranging from 8% to 35% de-motivate some women from accessing these loans.

• Male attitudes—some men have disallowed their wives from taking credit for fear that they would be unable to re-pay and this might bring shame to the family.

• The micro credit schemes are unable to provide upward mobility for women as they have to continue taking loans for different purposes. In the words of one chief: “micro credit is like slippers. It protects the feet but it does not lift your height.”

2.13.3 Women and Education and Training

• In education, the huge investments in girls has now led to the situation where boys are beginning to feel left out and if the trend continues could lead to a backlash. Socio-cultural beliefs still impact on retention rates as girls schooling gets interrupted for marriage purposes. The world economic situation can also impact negatively on the availability of resources to sustain the programmes.

• Sustainability is still a concern in ANFE, as limited capacity in service delivery. The literacy graduates lapse back into illiteracy due to a lack of continuity.

• The quantitative gains have not been matched by quality. Girls still under perform as indicated in the Monitoring Learning Achievement Tests.

• The EFA/FTI demonstrates that with adequate resources and with a good plan it is possible to attain the objectives of the BPFA and other frameworks.

• Strategic alliances and partnerships among CSOs working in education such as the EFA campaign Network ensure positive outcomes and lead to results.

2.13.4 Women and Health

• Physical well being goes beyond their child bearing function as there are women who fall outside this age range who have health needs that need to be addressed. These include the emerging non-
communicable diseases—diabetes, hypertension, obesity and cancer.

- The Gambia still has a long way to go as regards reaching the MDG on maternal health. Factors that threaten the attainment of these goals are:
  
  i. The high attrition of professionally trained health workers (40%-60%) from the health services
  
  ii. Inadequate supply of essential and obstetric emergency drugs and basic equipment.
  
  iii. Weak referral systems and poorly functioning major health centres.

- Male involvement in the implementation of programmes to reduce PPTCT of HIV is limited

- HIV related stigma and discrimination is manifested in many settings with long term negative impacts on the women living with HIV. Disclosure of their HIV status has resulted in blame, abuse, divorce, homelessness and increased poverty.

- Expertise in gender, socio-cultural factors and human rights analysis in policy and programmes is still limited.

- Gender and socio-cultural factors have major implications for male health seeking medical care, behaviour, risks and vulnerabilities to infection and access to treatment. Programme interventions for boys and men are few and adhoc and generally focus on awareness creation.

- The provision of adolescent friendly clinics is limited.

- There is an over-concentration of programmes of girl’s vulnerabilities in the Western Region and there is need for scale up to cover a wider geographic coverage.

- The SRH of youth will not be improved unless programmes for adolescent health incorporate access to information and services on sexual and reproductive health.

- There is need to scale up on BCC activities in relation to EBF and use of iodised salts to improve on the uptake rates of these life saving practices.

- The HIV epidemic in The Gambia is characterised by low prevalence with concentrated areas of infection. Trends in HIV prevalence have generally been uneven, showing sharp fluctuations during this period.

- HIV is still a major problem that affects women as most of them are not economically empowered. Women who are vulnerable to HIV continue to bear the burden of care and support

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58 Ramou Cole Ceesay, Contribution of Health Sector to BPFA + 15 Report

59 UNAIDS, 2008
to their sick spouses and children and other family members.

- Early marriage, teenage pregnancy, sexual abuse and exploitation of children are major threats that can further exacerbate the vulnerability of women to HIV infection.

2.13.5 Women and Violence

- The culture of silence constrains the law enforcement agencies from carrying out their work thus allowing perpetrators of violence to go with impunity.

- FGM/C is still acceptable. Overall 72.9% of women interviewed in the MICS 2005/2006 that they would like their daughters to be circumcised.

- Women and girls continue to suffer gender-based violence (GBV) in the household, community and workplace due to discriminatory practices backed by socio-cultural norms. Data on GBV is poorly recorded, cases are rarely monitored adequately and law enforcement agents are not sensitized in the proper handling of those affected by GBV. The limited availability and utilization of gender-disaggregated data in all sectors has also prevented development planners from adequately addressing the needs of women.

- The high incidence of rape and murder of women in the past two years need to be curbed for women to feel safe in society.

- CSOs that work in this area are constrained by a lack of resources to carry out their work effectively.

2.13.6 Women and Armed Conflict

- Even though The Gambia is a peaceful country it is however vulnerable to conflict due to its location as it is easily accessible to people from other countries who have experienced conflict and come to The Gambia to seek refuge. The overflow into the border towns from the Casamance conflict should be of grave concern to the Gambia. Recent incidents of mine explosions in one of the border villages where a boy and a girl were killed attest to this threat.

- Displaced women and children are vulnerable to sexual exploitation and abuse with its consequences for HIV/AIDS.

- The recruitment of women for peace support operations fall below the UNSCR 1325 and 1820 recommendations.
2.13.7 Women and Decision Making

- Numbers of women in decision making is still small and fall far short of the international standards. The few women who find themselves in either national or local decision making processes find it difficult to effectively contribute and influence decision making in a male dominated system, mainly due to illiteracy and cultural and traditional barriers”.

- The delay in presentation of the Women’s Bill to the National Assembly is not encouraging and there is need for a strong lobby to influence the passing of this legislation.

- When their capacity is built women do participate in decision making processes.

2.13.8 Women and the Economy

- A number of special projects have been implemented for women. Yet women still form the majority of the poor. This could be attributed to their limited decision making even on resources that they own.

- The seasonal nature of tourism and its vulnerability to exogenous shocks such as the world economic crisis translates into periods of unemployment and low level of wages of non-professional staff and low skilled hotel workers.

- There is a need for continuous research and monitoring on the instruments related to child sex and responsible tourism to ascertain the extent to which the problem is being addressed.

- The impact of the global economic crisis is mostly felt in the tourism sector, foreign direct investments and remittances. There is also a significant drop in international trade resulting in a drop in tax revenues which adversely affects income levels.

- Government interventions to mitigate the adverse effects of the financial crisis include the provision of subsidies and maintaining a prudent financial regulation.
2.13.9 Women and Human Rights

- Only a minority of the women are familiar with the human rights instruments. These need to be disseminated as widely as possible so that women know when their rights are being violated and what to do under such circumstances.

- Women would rather use informal forms of mediation so the Alternate Dispute Courts and the Office of the Ombudsman are institutions that improve women’s access to justice.

- The absence of a specific legislation addressing GBV remains a constraint. Efforts to formulate and adopt a policy and legislation on the subject must be speeded up.

- The Constitutional provision sanctioning the application of customary laws continues to provide justification for proponents and practitioners of harmful traditional practices.

2.13.10 Women and the Media

- All the private media outfits (print and electronic) are owned and managed by men

- Both the public and private media do not provide space for divergent and alternative view points due to the self censorship that operates. Generally the stereotypes of wider society are maintained in the way women and women’s issues are portrayed.

- There is no female editor in chief in any of the present newspapers

- Commercialization of public media has threatened women’s adequate access to the electronic media as they cannot afford the costs of production.

- The high license fee acts as a deterrent for any female who would want to start a newspaper or a radio station.

- The new ICTs have opened a new world for women and girls in terms of access to information on a timely basis and the ability to communicate. However, they also make them vulnerable to abuse and sexual exploitation. The free phone calls offered by the GSM companies throughout the night acts as a source of distraction to young people especially girls. Marketing strategies employed by the GSM companies that use young girls to market their products should be closely monitored as they have the potential of exposing them to abuse.
• Equal opportunities do not exist for women in decision making levels in the media

• The proposed media course at the UTG is yet to materialize and needs to be started as soon as possible.

2.13.11. The Girl Child

• There is a grey area in defining a child in the context of The Gambia. The international definition of a child is anyone below the age of 18 years, yet the definition of youth in the youth policy is any person between the ages of 13-30 years. There is a need to harmonize the definition in all policies and laws.

• Empowered communities participate effectively in the promotion and protection child rights

• Children NGOs and associations need to be strengthened (financially, technically, and institutionally) so that they play a role in their own development.

• Child rights is still a misunderstood concept and needs to be put within the context of rights and responsibilities

• The retention of girls at the upper levels of education and the tertiary levels still remains a challenge due to factors associated with early marriage, teenage pregnancy, poverty and preference of the boy child.

2.13.12 Women and the Environment

• The concept of carbon emissions and climate change is generally out of the scope of many women and capacity building activities need to be put in place to address environmental issues.

• Women bear the brunt of natural disasters as they still have to carry out their reproductive roles under very harsh conditions. They need to be supported during such trying times.

2.13.13 Differently-Abled Women

• The limited knowledge on disability issues and the exclusion or limited participation of women
with disabilities in the design of development programmes for women reduces their benefits or use of services either because they are inaccessible or irrelevant to them. For example there is a lot of sensitization on RCH in the electronic media, but deaf women do not benefit from these programmes because they cannot hear the speakers and there are no provisions for sign language to interpret the information to them.

• Very few organizations have inclusive recruitment policies. TANGO and GRTS have set the pace and need to be emulated.

• There are gaps in the provision of services for differently able persons—the absence of ramps, special toilet facilities, equipment and resources makes it difficult for them to realize their full potential.
PART 3: INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK AND MECHANISM

3.1 National Machinery

3.1.1. The Women’s Bureau and National Women’s Council (NWC) was established in 1980 by an Act of Parliament in The Gambia. The Bureau serves as Secretariat to the NWC.

3.1.2 A Ministry for Women’s Affairs responsible for providing policy guidance to Government and stakeholders on gender and women’ issues was created in 1996 under the Office of the Vice President, who is the Minister of Women’s Affairs.

3.1.3 Focal Points have been established in all line Ministries, key Funding Agencies, NGOs and the private sector with the objective of ensuring effective mainstreaming of gender perspectives at all levels.

3.1.4 The National Policy for the Advancement of Gambian Women, \(NPAGW\) 1999-2009 was formulated to serve as a point of reference for all stakeholders in addressing the needs and interests of Gambian women with respect to participation, access, ownership and rights for the attainment of sustainable development.

3.1.5 The National Assembly has a Select Committee on Women and Children and although it has no formal linkages with the institutional structure, there is synergy between the Bureau and the Select Committee as they participate in each others activities, network and share information and best practices. The female members of the Select Committee are members of the ECOWAS Female Parliamentarians Association (ECOFEPA) thus broadening their scope of participation and networking to bring about positive developments in the women’s agenda.

3.1.6 Women’s Federation: An umbrella organisation of women’s organisations in The Gambia has recently been set up to serve as the entry point for interventions on women related activities.

3.1.7 A network of gender Focal Points in government departments, ministries and CSOs working in the area of advocacy for women was created. The network which was not effective was reactivated in 2005.
3.2. Mandates

3.2.1 The NWC is the national assembly for women and advises government on all matters concerning women and gender. The Bureau serves as the secretariat to the NWC and Gender Focal Points and is mandated to gather and disseminate information, and ensure that gender is mainstreamed and institutionalized at all levels by way of training, sensitization and advocacy and technical support. The Women’s Bureau assists council in the monitoring, evaluation and reviewing of policies, programmes, projects, bills, legislations and new technologies and in identifying capacity building needs of all those affected, including: the marginalized, the vulnerable, the disabled, and the extremely poor. It also monitors the implementation of internationally agreed treaties/conventions. In addition to this the Bureau serves as focal point to regional, continental and international organisations that have a gender mandate such as ECOWAS, AU and the UN system.

3.2.2 The strategic positioning of Women’s Affairs Ministry under the portfolio of the OVP provides a unique opportunity for political leverage at the highest level and has given the Ministry a high profile and visibility and clout. Putting the portfolio also under a woman with exceptionally high knowledge of the women’s agenda, having been one of the architects of the Bureau is an added advantage. It facilitates in-depth understanding of issues and sensitivity to some of the concerns that may otherwise have been missing or overlooked.

3.2.3 The Bureau is housed in its own headquarters away from the OVP. This has not impacted on interconnectivity in anyway as there are daily interactions between the Ministry and the Bureau. The OVP also ensures that all issues related to gender and women are immediately communicated to the Bureau for their action. The Women’s Bureau has decentralised its work, but limited resources prevent the capacity-building of local authorities including Ward Development Committees (WDCs), Village Development Committees (VDCs) and Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) to mainstream gender and promote the empowerment of women and girls. (this was done under the MPGP project)

3.2.4 The National Women’s Councillors are selected from the regions based on their demonstrated contributions to development activities. The Chairperson and –others are professional experts who provide technical input into the councils operations.

3.2.5 The Government of The Gambia is a member of regional and international bodies such as ECOWAS, the AU and the UN. In line with regional and continental obligations for regional integration, the Women’s Bureau serves as focal person to the gender units of these organisations. The Bureau under the OVP has facilitated the holding of the following workshops and meetings which have contributed to mainstreaming gender in the regional
integration process. They include:

- Sub-Regional Seminar for the Adoption of an Advocacy Strategy for Women’s Rights, Banjul 6th-8th December 2007
- Meeting of ECOWAS Ministers of Women’s Affairs, Banjul, The Gambia, 12th May 2008
- Launching of the Study on ECOWAS Trade Liberalisation Scheme and Cross Border Trade: Experiences of Women Traders and Entrepreneurs March 2009
- AU Experts Meeting on Reporting on the Solemn Declaration for Women, 6-8 May 2009
- The Gambia will also host the Beijing + 15 Africa Review Meeting 16th 20th November 2009

3.3 Resources

3.3.1 In the absence of a properly costed strategic plan, it is difficult to make an assessment of the level of resources that are available to enable the institutional machinery carry out its mandate effectively.

3.3.2 In 2006 the UN system in The Gambia launched the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) for the period 2007-2011. UNDP, under the Country Programme Document (CPD), will support the achievement of the MDGs within the context of the PRSP and Vision 2020. Under its Governance and Human Rights Programme it supported the implementation of a Capacity Enhancement of Women in Decision making project in 2007 and is supporting a follow-up project.

3.3.3 UNFPA has helped to strengthen the institutionalization of gender through mainstreaming of gender perspectives into key policies and programmes. In the area of women’s empowerment, the programme provided milling machines (labour-saving devices) to women’s groups which reduce the time spent by women on such labour. UNFPA also funded a national study on gender and women’s empowerment, conducted by the Women’s Bureau, to gather sex-disaggregated data and gender information at the household level. Outcomes of this study were disseminated to a wide audience and it informed decision-making in planning and monitoring of gender activities at the decentralised levels.

3.3.4 Global Fund and UN agencies contribution to scaling up HIV prevention, treatment, care and support is very encouraging. The provision of 36 million Euros by Global Fund for HIV interventions for the next five years is one example for such support.
3.3.5 UNICEF is supporting Women’s Bureau through TOSTAN to implement the Community Led Development Project in the URR. In 2005/06 the Government of The Gambia collaborated with UNICEF and the World Bank conducted the third MICS to monitor progress made at end decade as articulated in the Plan of Action. The survey was conducted through inter-agency collaboration with Gambia Bureau of Statistics (GBoS). UNICEF also provides institutional capacity building for FAWEGAM.

3.3.6 Resource Mobilisation: Funding is acquired for specific programmes and projects from bilateral arrangements such as the NEPAD Spanish African Women Empowerment Project which provided 518,993.75 Euro in 2008 for strengthening the capacity of the Women’s Bureau to give support to 25 women gardens all over the country, provide 40 labour saving devices as well as building of a storage and processing plant, training and IEC. The aim of the project is to eradicate poverty amongst women by supporting them to improve and increase production capacity both in terms of quantity and quality, in order to economically empower them and for self and community development.

3.3.7 The ECOWAS Gender Development Centre has also provided institutional capacity strengthening through the provision of computers and related equipment. CSIP have facilitated training for two staff from the Women’s Bureau to undergo a nine month Diploma training programme from the Pan African Institute for Development in Cameroon.

3.3.8 A gender training manual has been developed to serve as a guide and to level the playing field in terms of gender mainstreaming.

3.4 Monitoring Mechanisms

3.4.1 The main instruments for monitoring progress have been the CEDAW reports, the MDG Progress Reports, the PRSP Reports, the MICS and the Sector Reports. The Gambia is working towards completion and submission of the 4th, 5th and 6th CEDAW reports. The Gambia will also be submitting its initial report on the implementation of the AU Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa this year. The 2nd MDG Progress Report has been completed and submitted and the PRSP II is undergoing its mid term review.

3.4.2 The Women’s Bureau is responsible for monitoring and evaluation of all projects and programmes related to gender. As a result a data base and website have been created for women’s programmes and organisations. Equally the government solicited for funding from ECA to develop the national gender machineries’ ICT capacities. A
Gender Monitoring and Evaluation Framework has been developed in 2008 and nearly all ministries and departments have gender focal points. The Gender Focal Persons network plan of action is being supported within the Women in Decision-Making Project.

3.4.3 Inadequate resources for the NWC and Bureau to carry out regular monitoring meetings with focal persons at all levels has been a major constraint. The effective implementation of the Strategic plan developed by the Women’s Bureau in 2005 still continues to be challenged by adequate funding.

3.4.4 Unavailability of comprehensive sex disaggregated data that is properly maintained and published is a challenge to effective gender mainstreaming. To address this gap, UNFPA funded a national study on Gender and Women Empowerment in 2007 and it is expected that this study and other relevant data relating to all sectors of the PRSP and an information management system will be developed and maintained well for use by all stakeholders. Thhe MICS, the CWIS and the PPA, and numerous gender studies all provide useful data that can inform policy, planning and programming for effective gender mainstreaming.

3.4.5 Inadequate donor coordination in spite of the existence of the UNDAF has made it extremely difficult particularly for CSOs to access funding to properly monitor progress.

3.4.6 An Aid Profile Study was conducted by ProPAG with funding from AATG in 2005. The reluctance of some CSOs to give information on their funding is also another barrier to effectively monitor progress in terms of availability and utilization of resources.

3.4.7 With regards to M & E, the Women’s Bureau supported by the Community Skills Improvement Project is developing a national gender and women’s empowerment monitoring and evaluation system. This will ensure proper monitoring of stakeholders intervention and the availability of timely information. The system will be made accessible to partners through the internet via the Gambian Women Website to be set-up and funded by UNDP. A database will also be set up as part of this M & E system and training provided to members of the Gender Focal Point networks and staff of the Women’s Bureau. In 2007 a monitoring and evaluation coordinator and an assistant were recruited by Government. They are currently being trained to improve their skills. These posts have been vacant for almost 6 years.
PART 4: REMAINING CHALLENGES

4.1 Further Actions and Initiatives: Within the framework of the proposed Gender Policy 2010 - 2020, interventions to be undertaken to mainstream gender and ensure empowerment of women are:

1. Establish Gender Units at key ministries to ensure and strengthen capacity of stakeholders to effectively mainstream gender (training, material and human resources).

2. Creating awareness on challenges to gender equality and its impact to both men and women.

3. Advocate for the formulation of favourable gender polices and development of gender sensitive strategies and provision of adequate budget and human capital.

4. Establish and build capacity of gender units and use best practices from the gender unit at the MoBSE. Can 1 and 4 be merged?

5. Strengthen partnerships and networks at the national, regional and continental levels for information sharing, knowledge generation and pooling of scarce resources.

6. Expand the market outlets for women’s produce.

7. Facilitate access to credit and other productive resources for women.

8. Lobby and advocate for the enactment of the Women’s Bill.

9. Strengthen the National Women’s Federation to enhance coordination of women’s groups.


11. Access to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support and stigma and discrimination continue to affect women.

12. The public media should open up to divergent views so that alternatives are presented so people can make informed choices; particularly, on issues such as FGM, other reproductive health issues and politics.

4.2 PRIORITY AREAS

4.2.1 Gender sensitisation and awareness creation:

At the mid term review of National Women’s Policy 1999-2009 in 2006; consensus was reached that the present NPAGW should be retained to the end of the current life span of the Policy 2009, owing to the persisting
patriarchal and economic disabilities, which continue to constrain Gambian women’s empowerment and access to full equality with men. However, there is still a resistance to the term gender. There is need to level the playing field by carrying out a sustained campaign to create better understanding of the term gender and greater acceptance of gender mainstreaming strategies.

4.2.2 Poverty Eradication:

The poverty of the nation and the poverty of households all impact on attainment of the BPFA, the MDGs, EFA goals. In the case of a poor country like The Gambia this is measured in their ability to provide the resources for basic social services. The success of the gender mainstreaming strategy will very much depend on the availability of resources to fund programmes.

4.2.3 Provide Credit and Other Productive Resources for Women

Approximately 30% of the rural population currently receives credit, and it is estimated that the rural credit supply would have to increase by up to 60 percent to cover unmet demand. The challenge is how to facilitate access for these women who are currently not able to access loans. Also the type of women entrepreneurs that are emerging will need access to loans that go beyond micro credit. Strengthening the MFIs so that they provide credit to women is a priority issue.

4.2.4 Integrated Functional Literacy Programmes

Low literacy levels of women continue to serve as barriers to their attaining higher paid jobs and income, as well as their lack of access to and ownership of land and productive resources. There is need to expand the adult and non-formal education programme so that all women who are unable to read or write or who want to upgrade their literacy skills have access to functional literacy programmes.

4.2.5 Expand access to RCH Services

The implementation of the health financing policy should assess which areas need to be addressed to make health care truly free of charge for children under five and pregnant women with equitable access for all who are vulnerable, the areas to be considered are budget allocation, financing and insurance schemes, changes in financial management of the sector, human resource requirements, supply and other health infrastructure system as well putting in place a legal framework for implementation of the health policy61.

4.2.6 Develop and Strengthen Strategic Partnerships:

61 UNICEF MTR Report, September 2009
Socio-cultural values and norms continue to serve as barriers to effective gender mainstreaming. Strategic partnerships will be built between the Government, CSOs, the private sector, parliamentarians, youths, the media and faith-based organizations (FBOs) to create awareness on gender issues, develop programmes and projects to bring about the desired behaviour change.

4.2.7 Capacity Building of Implementing Agencies in Gender Budgeting: Lack of adequate technical capacity in gender analysis and gender budgeting has affected the effective incorporation of gender concerns in national policies and programmes that promote gender equality and poverty reduction. Training will be conducted to provide staff with the necessary skills and competencies in gender budgeting.

4.2.8 Strengthened capacity to implement and programmes against VAW&Gs:
The majority of Gambian women are not familiar with the Constitution and other Laws that protect them from violence; access to legal aid is limited; most law enforcement agents do not have the necessary capacity to handle gender-based violence. Data on VAW&Gs is also not adequately kept and shared among stakeholders for necessary interventions. The capacity of CSOs and CBOs will be built to advocate and implement laws and policies to promote gender equity and equality and combat VAW&Gs in all its forms.

4.2.8 Expand Markets for Women’s Produce
The inadequacy of markets for women’s produce continues to serve as a barrier to earning an income for sustainable livelihoods. The construction of the multi purpose market complex will provide the women with a market that will also be used to strengthen their business and management skills.

4.3 Targets and Time Frames for Specific Measures

Table 8: Targets and Time Frames for Specific Measures
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Time Frame</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Construction of a multi purpose market complex for women</td>
<td>Feasibility has been done &amp; Part of the funds are available for the construction</td>
<td>2009-2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduction of maternal mortality</td>
<td>Health Policy is being implemented to reduce maternal mortality by 15% from 730/1000000 to 556/100000</td>
<td>2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender Communication &amp; Advocacy Strategy</td>
<td>ICTS have been built in the various regions &amp;</td>
<td>2008-2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capacity building activities</td>
<td>Train women’s councillors, staff of the Bureau, Gender Focal Persons to do step down training country wide &amp; provide technical back stopping to women groups</td>
<td>2008 onwards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide agricultural support</td>
<td>UNFPA &amp; NEPAD Spanish Project are supporting this programme</td>
<td>2008 onwards</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.4 New Commitments:

- Develop a checklist for implementation of the BPFA, CEDAW, MDGs and Gender Policy and use this to monitor progress
- Incorporate poverty reduction strategies in all policy statements, plans and strategies that are complimentary to the PRSP and that address gender issues.
- Strengthen the decentralised structures of the Women’s Bureau and Council through institutional capacity support
- Strengthen the focal persons through continuous training, alignment of focal points programmes with that of women’s bureau, provide technical backstopping and ensure regular meetings and reporting to ensure that all focal persons are on the same level.
- Develop strategic partnerships with Government, CSOs, the private sector, parliamentarians,
youths, the media and faith-based organizations (FBOs), Regional Economic Committees and international bodies to

(i) clearly articulate issues to be addressed through collaboration and defining a mutual agenda of implementation

(ii) review how each institution works at gender mainstreaming

(iii) take stock of the successes and challenges of mainstreaming gender, with a view to improving on these

(iv) assess strengths of the different tools used by different entities in the work on gender;

(v) build consensus on the best possible ways of responding to national requests for support of gender mainstreaming efforts;

- Promote peace and security as well as build the capacity of the law enforcement agents to properly manage and prevent gender based violence and administer women related cases efficiently.

- Advocate for and take measures to ensure that gender budgeting is instituted in all national sectors and development agencies to procure services and resources for gender mainstreaming

- Generate, update and disseminate sex dis-aggregated data to promote effective planning & resource allocation for gender mainstreaming

- Mobilize resources for gender and women empowerment interventions.

- Conduct an assessment of suitable services and products of the financial sector and the creation of a women’s fund.

- Translate the National Gender Policy (NGP) into institutional specific policies, strategies and programmes.

- Support the gender units and focal persons by building their capacity in gender analysis, planning and provide budget lines for their operations

- Institute and implement affirmative actions on short term basis to bridge the existing gender gaps

- Advocate for mainstreaming HIV in all interventions related to the empowerment of women; advocate for stigma reduction and access to treatment, care and support for women and girls

- Advocate for scaling up PMCT services and strengthen quality treatment, care and support to babies affected by HIV.
Annexe 1: TABLES

Table 1: On Going & Completed Projects that have Benefited Women

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Title</th>
<th>Funding Partners</th>
<th>Life Line</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rural Finance &amp; Community Initiative Project</td>
<td>IFAD</td>
<td>1999-2006</td>
<td>Increase Food Security through rural finance &amp; local initiative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lowland Agricultural Development Project</td>
<td>AfDB/IFA D</td>
<td>2001-2006</td>
<td>Expand Rice Production to Improve Food Security &amp; Welfare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mainstreaming Poverty and Gender Project</td>
<td>DFiD</td>
<td>2000-2003</td>
<td>Mainstream gender and poverty issues into all national policies and programmes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peri-urban Small Holder Project</td>
<td>AfDB</td>
<td>2002-2007</td>
<td>Increase on a sustainable basis the production of marketing of livestock &amp; horticultural production in West and North Bank Regions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programme for the Increase of Food Production</td>
<td>JICA</td>
<td>1997-2007</td>
<td>Improve food security through increased area &amp; productivity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managing Water &amp; Energy Services for Poverty Reduction to Rural Gambia</td>
<td>UNDESA</td>
<td>2004-2006</td>
<td>Construction of boreholes in 5 villages for water supply and establishing vegetable gardens with the distribution network for irrigation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Programme for Food Security</td>
<td>FAO Italy/IDB</td>
<td>1999-2009</td>
<td>Increase food security through production of short cycled species of crop and live stock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multinational NERICA Dissemination Project</td>
<td>AfDB</td>
<td>2004-2009</td>
<td>Improve food security through increased rice production</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Rural Finance Project

**IFAD**

**2006-2012**

*Strengthen micro-finance institutions to enable them deliver financial services to economically active poor people*

## Farmer Managed Rice Irrigation Project

**AfDB**

**2005-2008**

*Facilitate sustainable income improvement and increase rice production.*

## Participatory Integrated Watershed Management Project

**AfDB**

**IFAD**

**2006-2013**

*Reduce rural poverty by increasing total land productivity on a sustainable basis through sound environmental and natural resources management*

## Irrigated Rice Development Project

**KFAED**

**2002-2008**

*Increase rice production and productivity in CRR North through the development of 1206 hectares of swampland for irrigated rice production.*

## The Gambia Lowland Government Project

**IDB**

**2007-2011**

*Develop rural infrastructure in Western Region*

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### Annexe 1: Table 2 Data on Female Participation in Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Access &amp; Completion</th>
<th>Baseline 2006 (Female)</th>
<th>Target 2011 (Female)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Intake Rates</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECD</td>
<td>39.4 %</td>
<td>45 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>LBS</td>
<td>UBS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>101 % (51%</td>
<td>125 % (51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Gross Enrolment Ratio</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>88 % (51%</td>
<td>90 % (55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECD</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LBS</td>
<td>91.4% (93%</td>
<td>101.9% (103%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UBS</td>
<td>60% (58%</td>
<td>69% (71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Net Enrolment Ratio</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECD</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LBS</td>
<td>75% (77%</td>
<td>85% (87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UBS</td>
<td>38% (37%</td>
<td>48% (47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Gender Parity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECD</td>
<td>1.03</td>
<td>1.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LBS</td>
<td>1.03</td>
<td>1.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UBS</td>
<td>0.91</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Completion Rate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LBS</td>
<td>65% (67%</td>
<td>80% (80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UBS</td>
<td>56% (52%</td>
<td>63% (63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Literacy Rate</td>
<td>42.55% (30.6%</td>
<td>50% (43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education Quality and Efficiency</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Pupil-Teacher Ratio</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LBS</td>
<td>1:39</td>
<td>1:45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UBS</td>
<td>1:22</td>
<td>1:45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. % Qualified Teachers (LBS)</td>
<td>70% (27%)</td>
<td>80% (37%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3: Projects & Programmes that Have Contributed to Increased Access to Education for Girls

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Title</th>
<th>Funding Partner</th>
<th>Life Line</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Third Education Sector Project Phase 2</td>
<td>World Bank IDA</td>
<td>Sept. 2006-March 2011</td>
<td>Improve conditions for teaching and learning in basic education by a) improving performance of students, teachers and schools; b) strengthening capacity building and performance management, and enhancing monitoring and evaluation and c) continuing expansion of effective access to under-served communities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Gambia AfDB Education 111 Project</td>
<td>AfDB</td>
<td>May 2003-2009</td>
<td>Increase access to quality education and skills development of the poor, particularly girls in remote regions of The Gambia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Gambia Third Education Programme Project</td>
<td>BADEA</td>
<td>15th June 2003-30th Dec. 2009</td>
<td>Improve education buildings in the Southern Western Region of The Gambia where there is high population density.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Increased and sustained enrolment rates in lower and secondary schools for boys and girls, gender parity sustained and retention and performance increased. Strengthened national capacity to develop quality assurance/ performance monitoring system and relevant curriculum including life skills, increased enrolments in pre-schools and reduce HIV risks and vulnerability.

Table 5. Local Government 2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positions</th>
<th>Total # of men and women</th>
<th>Number of women</th>
<th>Number of men</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Governors</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deputy Governors</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chairpersons of councils</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mayors</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chiefs</td>
<td>48</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ward Councilors (elected)</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alkalolu</td>
<td>1873</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1869</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Areas</th>
<th>No of Males</th>
<th>No of Females</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Banjul City Council</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KMC</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MansaKonko Council</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kuntaur Council</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brikama Council</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Janjangbureh Council</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kerewan Council</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basse Council</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>99</strong></td>
<td><strong>15</strong></td>
<td><strong>114</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: UNDP Governance and Gender in Development, The Gambia, Medium Term Plan, 2005-2009*

(Source 2008 LG Elections)
Annexe 2: References:


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