



Republic of the Gambia

THE GAMBIA
Voluntary National Review (VNR) 2025

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FOREWORD

The Gambia has demonstrated a commitment to Agenda 2030 implementation by mainstreaming the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into its national planning frameworks, including the Recovery-Focused National Development Plan (RF-NDP), sector and regional strategic plans, and other policies. The Government continues to engage the private sector, civil society, and development partners in Agenda 2030 implementation. While there is a need to increase awareness around the SDGs, the participation of stakeholders has increased ownership of Agenda 2030.

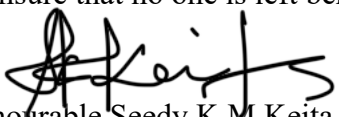
This is the Gambia's third VNR that comes on the heels of those presented in 2020 and 2022, with a strong focus on leaving no one behind and promoting a whole-of-society approach to SDG implementation at national, regional, and sectoral levels. This is evident in the 2022 Voluntary Local Review (VLR), which engages all relevant stakeholders. These reviews highlighted achievements and challenges in implementing the 2030 Agenda.

The 2025 VNR, like the previous ones, adopted a participatory approach, engaging all stakeholders across the country to enhance inclusivity and participation in the process. The stakeholder engagements have raised the need for further advocacy and sensitisations on the SDGs for effective implementation that is expected to enhance progress on Agenda 2030 implementation. The government will strengthen the institutional arrangements and engagements with stakeholders to accelerate innovation and implementation in line with the Decade of Action.

The 2025 High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) theme “Advancing sustainable, inclusive, science- and evidence-based solutions for the 2030 Agenda and its SDGs for leaving no one behind” emphasises the importance of scientific and evidence-based approaches to achieve the SDGs. This is in alignment with the 2023 and 2024 Annual Progress Reports (APRs) of the RF-NDP with renewed calls for strengthening the National Statistical System (NSS) through collaboration with development partners for the availability of reliable, accurate, and timely data to measure progress on some of the SDG targets and indicators.

The Government will continue to adopt policies and implement programmes to enhance inclusion and the needs of vulnerable groups through the Programme for Accelerated Community Development (PACD), the Social Protection Programme, the Women Enterprise Fund (WEF), the Youth Empowerment Fund (YEF), social protection schemes, and the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS). The implementation of the PACD will continue to register significant progress in the provision of potable water, labour-saving devices, and electrification of rural communities, construction of roads with a particular focus on the rural areas to bridge the rural-urban gap.

The Gambia remains steadfast in its commitment to Agenda 2030 and would enhance actions through the Integrated National Financing Framework and domestic resource mobilisation efforts to ensure that no one is left behind in this Decade of Action of SDG implementation.



Honourable Seedy K.M. Keita

Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs

ACKNOWLEDGMENT FROM THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

The Ministry wishes to express sincere appreciation to the VNR National Steering Committee whose commitment and dedication contributed to the successful completion of the VNR process. The zeal and commitment demonstrated by committee members throughout the process have been truly commendable.

We would especially like to appreciate and acknowledge the contributions from our development partners: United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), and World Food Programme (WFP), whose funding, technical assistance and unwavering commitment made this process possible. Special gratitude is extended to the UNRCO for the exemplary leadership in harnessing support from the UN agencies towards this endeavour. Their contribution not only enabled the implementation of key activities but also strengthened the overall capacity to deliver a comprehensive and inclusive national review.

Special thanks to the VNR Management Committee whose expertise, guidance, and technical support were invaluable in shaping the direction and quality of the VNR process. Your efforts, participation, and dedication are highly appreciated. To the Technical team, thank you so much for all you do towards the success of this whole process, from your technical support to all other contributions means a lot.

We are also deeply grateful to the Directorate of Development Planning (DDP) team for the coordination role, and the drafting team member, whose tireless efforts, coordination, and dedication played a central role in ensuring the timely and comprehensive delivery of the report.

Furthermore, we acknowledge the valuable input and active participation of representatives from various Ministries Departments, and Agencies (MDAs). Their openness to dialogue, willingness to share data and insights, and strong spirit of cooperation significantly enriched the content and outcomes of the review.

And finally, a big appreciation to all the stakeholders consulted, your contributions, participation, dedication, and undiluted efforts and support, definitely played a significant role in this whole process and we are grateful for that.

This achievement was made possible through the collective effort, shared vision, and unwavering support of everyone involved. We thank you all for your contributions.

List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

AfDB	African Development Bank
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Virus
AU	African Union
AYC	African Youth Charter
BPFA	Beijing Platform for Action
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CCA	Common Country Analysis
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CFSVA	Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Analysis
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CRR	Central River Region
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
DDP	Directorate of Development Planning
DFA	Development Finance Assessment
DPoA	Doha Programme of Action
EAF	Ecosystem Approach Fisheries
ECD	Early Childhood Development
ECF	Extended Credit Facility
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
eCRVS	Electronic Civil Registration and Vital Statistics
EFSTH	Edward Francis Small Teaching Hospital
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organisation
FGD	Focus Group Discussion

FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
FSP	Family Strengthening Programme
GamSR	The Gambia Social Registry
GBoS	Gambia Bureau of Statistics
GBV	Gender Based Violence
GDHS	Gambia Demographic and Health Survey
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GLFS	Gambia Labour Force Survey
GMD	Gambian Dalasi
GMIS	Gender Management Information System
GoTG	Government of The Gambia
GPHC	Gambia Population and Housing Census
GRA	Gambia Revenue Authority
HBB	Hemoglobin Subunit Beta
HCC	Hepatocellular Carcinoma
HIV	Human Immune Virus
HLPF	High Level Political Forum
HMIS	Health Management Information System
HR	Human Resources
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IDA	International Development Association
IHS	Integrated Household Survey
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INFF	Integrated National Financing Framework
INFS	Integrated National Financing Strategy

IPP	Independent Power Producer
IPRT	Integrated Planning and Reporting Toolkits
IRS	Indoor Residual Spraying
ITNs	Insecticide-Treated Nets
IWRM	Integrated Water Resource Management
LDCs	Least Developed Countries
LGA	Local Government Authority
LGA	Local Government Area
LNOB	Leaving No One Behind
LRR	Lower River Region
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MCC	Millennium Challenge Corporation
MCS	Monitoring Control Surveillance
MDAs	Ministries, Departments and Agencies
MDFT	Multi-Disciplinary Facilitation Team
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey
MMR	Maternal Mortality Rate
MoALFS	Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Food Security
MoBSE	Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education
MoFEA	Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs
MoFWR	Ministry of Fisheries and Water Resources
MoHERST	Ministry of Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology
MoI	Ministry of Interior
MoIMBS	Ministry of Information, Media and Broadcasting Services
MoLRGRA	Ministry of Lands, Regional Government and Religious Affairs

MoTIE	Ministry of Trade, Regional Integration, Industry and Employment
MoYS	Ministry of Youth and Sports
MRC	Medical Research Council
MTEF	Medium-Term Expenditure Framework
MW	Megawatt
NA	Not Available
NaNA	National Nutrition Agency
NAO	National Audit Office
NARI	National Agricultural Research Institute
NAS	National Aids Secretariat
NAWEC	National Water and Electricity Company
NBER	North Bank East Region
NBWR	North Bank West Region
NDC	Nationally Determined Contribution
NDMA	National Disaster Management Agency
NEDI	National Enterprise Development Initiative
NEEAP	National Energy Efficiency Action Plan
NEPA	National Employment Policy and Action
NHA	National Health Accounts
NHIS	National Health Insurance Scheme
NHSSP	National Health Sector Strategic Plan
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NMCP	National Malaria Control Programme
NLTP	National Leprosy and Tuberculosis Control Programme
NSDS	National Strategy for the Development of Statistics
OPD	Organisations of Persons with Disabilities

PACD	Programme for Accelerated Community Development
PFM	Public Finance Management
pH	Potential of Hydrogen
PPP	Public Private Partnership
PV	Photovoltaic
R&D	Research and Development
RF-NDP	Recovery Focused National Development Plan
RISE	Resilience, Inclusion, Skills and Equity
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SGBV	Sexual and Gender Based Violence
SMAB	Senegalo-Mauritanian Aquifer Basin
SP	Social Protection
SR	Social Registry
SSA	Sub-Saharan Africa
SSR	Service Statistics Report
TAC	Technical Advisory Committee
TB	Tuberculosis
UDHI	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UHC	Universal Health Care
UHC	Universal Health Coverage
UN	United Nations
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
UNECE	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund

UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
UNRCO	United Nations Resident Coordinator’s Office
UPR	Universal Periodic Review
URR	Upper River Region
UTG	University of The Gambia
VNR	Voluntary National Review
WB	World Bank
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organisation
WR	Western Region

CHAPTER 1: OPENING STATEMENT

The overall status of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) progress

The Gambia has undertaken two VNRs; first in 2020 and then in 2022. This VNR for 2025 therefore the third in the series. Since the last VNR, the country has been machining gradual progress especially on SDGs 1, 4 and 16. The Gambia is making significant efforts on climate action (SDG 13) with modest advancements, but many other SDGs still face formidable obstacles. Challenges were made worse by the COVID-19 pandemic which put a strain on financial resources and thus impeding further advancement toward SDG-focused spending. The pandemic severely impacted The Gambia's economy, particularly on the growth of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), which led to job losses and delays in labour-intensive projects. Although efforts have been made to expedite the implementation of the SDGs, obstacles still exist, especially closing the chasm relating to connecting national plans with the budget cycle, which continues to be a major bottleneck.

These shortcomings notwithstanding, The Gambia continues to make modest progress; it's rank on SDG progress was 122/163 in 2022 and 135/167 in 2024. Both rankings are above the regional averages; in 2022, the country's average score was 60.2, compared to a regional of 53.6, and in 2024 had an average of 57.6.

In terms of access to electricity, The Government of The Gambia (GoTG) has over 85 percent coverage pf access to electricity and intends to achieve 100 percent coverage by the end of 2025. This is being done through the implementation of several renewable energy projects, construction of a hydroelectric power plant, wind power generation, and solar PV farms. Additional actions include public awareness campaigns about renewable energy, capacity-building initiatives, and subsidies for power-saving appliances like upgraded cooking stoves.

Through an array of initiatives, including boosting public transportation systems, encouraging low-emission and hybrid vehicles, and improving vehicle fuel efficiency, The Gambia hopes to reduce emissions in the transportation sector by 95 per cent. To lower greenhouse gas emissions and move toward a more sustainable future, the government also intends to implement nationwide vehicle emission testing, upgrade road infrastructure, and bring back river transportation.

Related national development plans and strategies, sectoral policies and financing frameworks

The domestic policy framework in The Gambia supports the implementation of all three dimensions of sustainable development – economic, social, and environmental – through an integrated approach. The anchor for the development policy framework in The Gambia is the RF-NDP 2023-2027, which sets out a strategic vision for socioeconomic development and aligns

government priorities with SDGs, ensuring that economic, environmental, and social aspects are considered in policymaking.

The RF-NDP outlines strategic priorities which are aligned with budgetary allocations for various sectors, including health, education, infrastructure, and agriculture. To align the financing needs with national priorities and the SDGs, Government updated the Development Finance Assessment (DFA) 2024 and developed an Integrated National Financing Framework (INFF) and Integrated National Financing Strategy (INFS).

Major Policy Developments since the previous VNR

To operationalize the RF-NDP, several sector policies and strategies were developed as indicated below.

Figure 1.1: Policy Developments since the VNR 2022





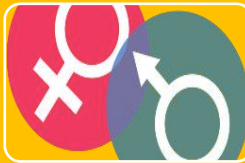
4. National Reproductive, Maternal, Neonatal, Child and Adolescent Health (RMNCAH) Strategic Plan - 2022-2026

Improve the quality of reproductive life and wellbeing of women, newborns, children and adolescents in The Gambia by reducing morbidity and mortality associated with sexual and reproductive ill-health..



5. Electronic Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (eCRVS) System – Launched 2022

The eCRVS system, launched in 2022, is a landmark digital health initiative that integrates civil registration with health service delivery and national health insurance enrolment systems. The platform supports real-time electronic birth and health insurance registration, essential for public health planning and health insurance enrollment.



6. National Gender policy - 2025-2034

The National Gender Policy seeks to advance gender equality and empower women and girls as vital components of sustainable development, peace, and prosperity. The policy builds on prior initiatives and is shaped through an inclusive consultative process involving policymakers, civil society organisations, and communities.



7. National Disaster Risk Management Policy - 2024-2033

The National Disaster Risk Management Policy is a comprehensive and forward-looking framework that serves as The Gambia's strategic response to the increasing challenges posed by natural disasters and climate-related events. Situated within the context of The Gambia's unique eco-climatic conditions, which include alternating periods of severe droughts and intense storms, this policy aims to address the pressing issue of disaster risk management.



8. The Gambia 2050 Climate Vision

The Gambia's long-term climate change vision, as outlined in its National Climate Change Policy, aims to achieve a climate-resilient society by 2025 through the integration of climate change, disaster risk reduction, gender, and environmental management into all national planning, budgeting, and decision-making. This vision focuses on sustainable social, political, and economic development while addressing climate threats.



9. National Malaria Policy - 2021–2025

The National Malaria Policy outlines The Gambia's strategy to eliminate malaria by 2025, building on decades of progress in reducing disease burden. The policy promotes universal access to malaria prevention methods such as insecticide-treated nets (ITNs), prompt diagnosis, and effective treatment using artemisinin-based therapies.



10. Mental Health Policy - 2025 - 2035

This mental health policy seeks to overhaul The Gambia's mental health framework by integrating services into the primary healthcare system and expanding access to care nationwide. It proposes the development of community-based mental health programmes, investment in training for specialized personnel, and the establishment of referral and crisis response systems.



11. National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS) - 2023

The NHIS is one of the most transformative health financing reforms in The Gambia, designed to reduce out-of-pocket health expenditures and improve financial protection for all citizens. Officially launched in 2023, it began with a pilot phase that enrolled members and contracted only public healthcare providers.

Measures taken to leave no one behind, with a focus on those identified as most vulnerable.

The Government of The Gambia has a strong commitment to address issues of lack of empowerment, social exclusion, discrimination and stigmatization for women, girls, children, persons with disabilities and older persons; recognizing that removing such barriers is a key to unleashing the potential of large segments of society and establishing a just and equitable society. Older persons have up to now not been a specific factor in the national planning agenda, despite representing **2.9 per cent¹ of the population of The Gambia**. They are a resource whose potential contribution to society remains untapped.

As such Pillar VI of the RF-NDP; Empowerment, Social Inclusion and Leaving No One Behind, seek to redouble government efforts to address issues and challenges faced by women, children, youth, persons with disabilities, and older persons (elderly) to achieve the following outcomes:

- Empowered Gambian women economically, socially, and politically
- Children are nurtured and enjoy their full rights and potentials in life

¹ Gambia Population and Housing Census 2024

- Enhanced economic opportunities and all-round social and cultural development for youth empowerment
- Inclusiveness and care for persons with disabilities and older persons improved
- Resilience of households and individuals strengthened, and safety nets put in place to address vulnerability through social protection in The Gambia

CHAPTER 2: HIGHLIGHTS

VNRs previously presented significant changes since the last review

The country prepared its third VNR to showcase progress, challenges, and the way forward. The VNR process was conducted in an open, inclusive, and multi-stakeholder manner with the active participation of state and non-state actors at both national and sub-national levels. The draft report was reviewed and validated in a series of workshops for stakeholder groups to ensure that there is synergy among the Goals as well as ensuring “Leaving No One Behind” (LNOB).

Status of SDG implementation; successes and challenges

The Gambia is making progress towards the SDGs and remains committed to implementing Agenda 2030 of the SDGs. This is evident, especially in the social services sector; mainly in health and education as well as in governance and peacebuilding. Improvements have been made in several legislative aspects including climate change governance, women’s empowerment and peace and security. This reflects the steadfast and unwavering commitment to legal and regulatory reforms that promote the sustainable use of the environment empower women and strive to recover from the 22 years of misrule experienced with the previous regime.

The country registered a real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) annual growth rate of 0.6 per cent in 2020, which increased to 4.9 per cent in 2023 and to 5.3 per cent in 2024 (provisional) - GBoS. Domestic revenue collection amounted to GMD22.6 billion (14.2% of GDP) in 2024. This impressive revenue performance was on account of higher-than-expected collections in corporate income tax and taxes on international trade. Similarly, non-tax revenue also increased over the years due to improved efficiency in revenue collection by the Gambia Revenue Authority (GRA) and some MDAs. Annual remittance flow significantly increased, reaching \$775.6 million, approximately 31.5 per cent of GDP.

In 2022–23, 79.4 per cent of total employment in the country was informal, with a higher prevalence among women (84.7%) compared to men (74.7%) whilst in 2025 the proportion of total employment in the informal sector is 81.0 per cent (76.7 per cent and for females it was 86.3 per cent) showing a slight increase in informal employment. This underscores the continued significance of informal employment but also highlights persistent gender disparities in employment. This also provides further critical insights into the need to support policy and programme interventions aimed at reducing informality and improving employment quality.

The RF-NDP outlined key priority interventions such as job creation, support of entrepreneurship, and improved labour market policies among others to promote economic diversification. The government is committed to the establishment of industrial tribunals across the country, as these currently only exist in only 3 of the 8 administrative areas. The government also plans to have in place legislation on collective bargaining between employers and employees. The country recorded steady progress in addressing high youth unemployment rates through the implementation of youth empowerment projects and initiatives such as the Youth Empowerment Project (YEP) and National Enterprise Development Initiative (NEDI). However, significant challenges remain in achieving decent work and economic growth.

In health care, the government is dedicated to implementing measures to improve the delivery of quality health services to lower maternal, newborn, infant, and child morbidity and mortality and improve the health of adolescents and young people. Additionally, the government pledges to enhance the nation's health services to improve the population's health status in the National Health Sector Strategic Plan (2021–2025). However, according to the UN World Population (2024) in The Gambia, SDG 3 remains in the category of “Stagnation”.

Despite these challenges, the Ministry of Health continues to demonstrate strong leadership and innovation in improving public health outcomes. Notable achievements include the rollout of the National Health Insurance Scheme to expand financial protection, the integration of the electronic Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (eCRVS) system to improve service delivery and data use, and the introduction of postgraduate medical training at Edward Francis Small Teaching Hospital (EFSTH) and specialized nursing and pharmacy programme at the University of The Gambia (UTG).

The country has also made improvements in gender equality and women and girls’ empowerment though the proportion of women's representation in the cabinet is still below the recommended 30 per cent gender representation quota agreed during the 1995 United Nations Beijing Conference. The government, in collaboration with partners, is making significant progress in combating Gender-Based Violence (GBV) in The Gambia through the introduction of initiatives which include the establishment of the Orange Centre in Bakoteh in 2023 to provide temporary housing for survivors and host the GBV and Child Protection Helpline (199), and a Gender Management Information System. Additionally, the government also introduced the Support to Victims Fund to offer essential support to survivors of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV). Recent efforts to overturn the anti-Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) law were sparked by a few religious leaders and National Assembly members following the introduction of a Private Member Bill advocating for repeal of the Women’s Amendment Act 2015 to remove the ban on FGM in The Gambia. However, the bill was defeated in the National Assembly, and proponents of the practice have filed a lawsuit requesting the Supreme Court to declare the prohibition of female circumcision unconstitutional.

The country has also made notable progress in the implementation of the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries (EAF). A National Fisheries MCS Plan was developed by the National Fisheries Acts and Regulations (MoFWR, 2024) reviewed. The country has also made progress in the degree of implementation of international instruments aiming to combat illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing. The average marine acidity (pH) remained high since 2017. After reaching 6.70 in 2019, there was a slight decrease to 6.65. By 2021, the latest data shows that the average marine acidity was reported at 6.67.

Good Practices and Lessons Learnt

The Gambia encountered political, economic, and socioeconomic development challenges in the drive toward the realisation of Agenda 2030. Despite these, the country remains committed to achieving a resilient and sustainable future. Through the Programme for Accelerated Community Development (PACD), the government is committed to addressing poverty, inequality, and vulnerability, most especially in rural communities. The Gambia, like all countries and all stakeholders, recognises the need for more collaborative efforts, and commitment actions to register more progress in the SDG.

Challenges

The implementation of the SDGs is constrained by a combination of factors. These challenges include the lack of updated data on some of the indicators. Lack of reliable and timely data at appropriate levels of disaggregation makes it difficult to measure progress on the indicators concerned.

The lingering effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and limited resources are another challenge affecting the implementation of the SDGs. The Gambia is a Least Developed Country (LDC) and heavily relies on donor funding to finance most of its development projects and programmes thus the changing development financing landscape poses a major challenge.

National Initiatives that need Support

The availability of valid and reliable data to measure progress on the SDG indicators is an important component of the implementation. Therefore, conducting an SDG survey was very timely to help provide the data needed for the 2025 VNR report. Considering this, it would be important for government and development partners to effectively provide the required resources to conduct timely and periodic surveys.

In addition, the formation of the VNR national steering committee comprising representatives from the government, Community-Based Organisations (CSOs), the Private sector, local councils, Persons with Disabilities (PWDs), Women, and Youth to coordinate the VNR process demonstrated the country's commitment to inclusivity and participation. This approach needs to be encouraged to ensure fair representation of people from all categories on issues of national interest. The VNR stakeholder consultations in all the regions of the country allowed divergent views and enriched the report.

CHAPTER 3: INTRODUCTION

Country context

Integration of Agenda 2030 into the development plans and strategies in the country:

Since the adoption of Agenda 2030 in 2015, The Gambia has remained unwavering in its commitment to implementing the SDGs – mainstreaming them into its national planning frameworks, including the RF-NDP, sector and regional strategic plans, and other policies. The RF-NDP articulates strategies and interventions that address SDG targets on poverty reduction, food, and nutrition security, universal health coverage, gender equality, universal access to affordable, reliable, and modern energy, and climate resilience, just to name a few. This was reaffirmed in the presentation of the first and second VNRs at the 2020 and 2022 HLPFs, as well as the alignment of the National Development Plan detailed in chapter 5 of this report

Despite these efforts, The Gambia’s performance declined between the last VNR in 2022 and 2024, according to Sustainable Development Reports 2022 and 2024. Indices in the reports indicate that the country’s ranking widened from 122/163 countries in 2022 to 135/167 in 2024, registering a decreased country score from 60.2 to 57.7 in 2022 and 2024, respectively, compared to regional averages of 53.6 and 53.7 in the same years. The reason for this decline could be attributed to economic challenges and the impact of COVID-19, which diverted much-needed investments for development (including SDG implementation) to address humanitarian and health issues, thus the need for sustained support and investments in SDG interventions.

Data collection systems

The Gambia has in place an NSDS led by GBoS, which serves as the country’s primary data collection and dissemination agency, producing national statistics across demographic, economic, and social sectors. It conducts periodically major national surveys, including the Demographic and Health Survey (DHS), Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS), Integrated Household Survey (IHS), and Labor Force Survey (LFS). Additionally, GBoS leads the Population and Housing Census, conducted every ten years, the most recent being in 2024. These surveys and censuses provide critical data on population size, distribution, and socio-economic conditions, serving as the foundation for government planning, resource allocation, and development strategy formulation.

In addition to GBoS, some MDAs have planning units that collect and collate administrative data relevant to their respective sectors. These include:

- The Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education (MoBSE) tracks school enrolment, completion rates, and literacy levels.
- The Ministry of Health (MoH) gathers healthcare metrics, including disease prevalence, maternal and child health indicators, and service delivery data.
- The Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Food Security (MoALFS) monitors crop production, conducts food security assessments, and collects data on livestock.

These administrative data sources complement national surveys, are an integral part of the NSDS, and enhance the comprehensiveness of the country’s statistical landscape.

Emerging Trends in Data Collection

Recent years witnessed increased shifts toward digital data collection methods, leveraging mobile technology and electronic data management systems to improve accuracy, efficiency, and accessibility. The transition to electronic data collection is expected to streamline data organisation, enhance real-time reporting, and reduce manual entry errors.

Challenges and Areas for Improvement

The Gambia's data collection systems face significant challenges, including:

- Limited human and financial resources, leading to gaps in data collection, analysis, and dissemination.
- Inadequate digital systems and technology (e.g. software) which hinder efficient data management.

To address these issues, stronger collaboration with development partners in capacity building for statisticians and data analysts, investment in modernised data collection infrastructure, and the adoption of innovative statistical methodologies are necessary. Strengthening The Gambia's data ecosystem will be crucial for achieving national development goals and improving SDG monitoring and reporting.

Research and innovation systems

The Gambia's research and innovation ecosystem is gradually evolving, with key institutions such as the University of The Gambia (UTG), the National Agricultural Research Institute (NARI), the Medical Research Council (MRC), and the Ministry of Higher Education, Research, Science, and Technology (MoHERST), all of which contribute to knowledge generation and technological advancements. MoHERST plays a central role in policy formulation and coordination while emerging innovation hubs and startups are driving digital transformation in sectors like agriculture and finance.

However, the sector faces challenges, including limited funding for Research and Development (R&D), weak linkages between academia and industry, and inadequate research infrastructure. The commercialization of research output remains low, and innovation is yet to be fully integrated into national development strategies.

To address these gaps, the country is strengthening university-industry collaborations, promoting digital innovation, and enhancing research infrastructure as well as increasing investment in R&D, policy reforms, and capacity-building initiatives which are essential for fostering a knowledge-driven economy and accelerating progress toward the SDGs.

Financing and budgetary frameworks

The Gambia's budgetary processes are closely aligned with national development planning processes. The current RF-NDP outlines strategic priorities that are aligned with budgetary allocations for various sectors, including health, education, infrastructure, and agriculture.

To align its financing needs with national priorities and the SDGs, the Government updated the DFA 2024 and developed an Integrated INFF and INFS. While the DFA establishes a baseline to provide for a comprehensive picture of financing needs, trends, and opportunities across all

financial resources that are within The Gambia's reach; the INFS aims to enhance financial resources coordination, mobilization, and alignment with national development priorities and the SDGs by leveraging, public, private, domestic, and international financing sources cohesively.

The Public Finance Management (PFM) Act 2014 provides the legal framework for budget preparation, execution, and oversight in The Gambia. While PFM reforms are designed to improve transparency, accountability, and efficiency in public expenditures, PFM frameworks facilitate public funds tracking to ensure that they are used appropriately for development goals.

In the quest to align budgetary processes with policy priorities and fiscal responsibilities, ensuring better forecasting and resource allocation, The Gambia administers a Medium-Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF), which allows for planning over three years. The budget process includes consultations with various stakeholders, including ministries, civil society, and the private sector, to align priorities and gather feedback.

Table 3.1: Financing and budgetary frameworks

Financing and Budgetary frameworks	Actions	Responsible Entity
Source of Revenue	1. Domestic Tax 2. Tax Revenue 3. Customs Duties	Gambia Revenue Authority (GRA)
	1. Grants	Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs (MoFEA)
Improving Tax Revenue Collection	Migrating from ASYCUDA++ to ASYCUDA World in 2022 •Digital Tax Stamp on excisable goods •Fuel marking system to avert adulteration and smuggling of fuel products •Rental Tax Compliance system to expand the rental tax base and ease collection •ITAS implementation •E-invoicing for VAT and other taxes •Revenue Assurance System for Mobile Network Operators	GRA
Fiscal Front Public Expenditure	Essentials Services 1. Healthcare 2. Education 3. Infrastructural Development 4. Social Protection	MoFEA
Government Priority	Focuses ongoing Operation Cost	MoFEA
Capital Expenditures	Focuses on Long-term investments, infrastructure, and development projects	MoFEA
Multilateral and Bilateral Partners	1. World Bank (WB) 2. International Monetary Funds (IMF) 3. Regional Partners 4. European Union (EU)	MoFEA
Accountability		Accountant General's Department/National Audit Office

Actions taken to achieve progress since the previous VNR and follow up on the recommendations

The Gambia engaged in various initiatives and programmes to achieve progress on the SDGs after its 2022 VNR. Some of these include:

Acknowledging the fact that SDG progress cannot be assessed without data and the realization that the country was able to report on only 52 per cent of SDG indicators during the 2020 VNR, the Gambia initiated an SDG survey system to collect and update SDG indicators. The first was conducted in 2021 and the second one in 2025. After the 2022 VNR, deliberate efforts were made to develop indicators aligned with the SDGs as in the RF-NDP and databases are being built to facilitate monitoring and progress reporting.

As part of initiatives and programmes to achieve progress on the SDGs after the 2022 VNR, the country prepared an Integrated SDG Insights Report 2023 which highlighted the following pathways with the most potential to accelerate the SDGs for The Gambia, thus requiring policy investments:

- SDG 1.5: Build resilience to environmental, economic and social disasters
- SDG 8.5: Full employment and decent work with equal pay
- SDG 16.6: Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions

In addition, the 2023 UN Gambia Common Country Analysis (CCA) provided a comprehensive assessment of The Gambia's sustainable development landscape and a strategic roadmap for achieving the SDGs and identified key areas to accelerate progress

The country has made investments in key sectors in sync with re-prioritised RF-NDP flagships, critical to SDG achievement, such as human capital development (health, education, social protection), agriculture, and infrastructure (roads, energy and ICT). Specific projects addressing nutrition, climate resilience, and access to clean water have also been prioritised due to their urgency. In response to climate challenges, initiatives focused on environmental sustainability, building resilience to climate change, and enhancing food security are prioritised.

Recognising CSOs efforts in promoting awareness and participation in the SDGs, the Government continues to engage Non-Governmental Organisation (NGOs), Community-Based Organisations (CBOs), and the private sector to enhance multistakeholder dialogues that gather input and feedback on development policies and strategies under collaborative efforts toward achieving the goals.

To leverage additional resources for development and facilitate achieving the SDGs, public-private partnerships were leveraged in the delivery of essential services and infrastructure development, such as in transportation infrastructure, energy sector, water supply and sanitation, to name a few.

Following up on the recommendations of the 2022 VNR

- **Improve gender equality and women and girls' empowerment**

The Women's Amendment and Domestic Violence Acts are being enforced. A National Gender Policy 2025-2034 has been developed and provides a framework for mainstreaming gender in all areas of development, focusing on equitable access to resources, participation in decision-making,

and protection against gender-based violence. The RF-NDP has a specific focus on reducing inequalities and includes objectives and strategies to promote gender equality and women's empowerment across various sectors, including health, education, and economic development. In addition, there are ongoing campaigns to raise awareness about Gender Based Violence (GBV) with support systems established for survivors, including shelters and counselling services.

- **Enhance access to quality education**

The Education Sector Policy 2016–2030, emphasises quality improvement, universal and inclusive access to education, gender equity, and health and nutrition etc. The RF-NDP prioritizes education as a key sector for national development, with specific strategies to enhance educational access and improve the quality of education through investment in infrastructure, teacher training, and curriculum development. Recognizing the role of teachers in quality education, the government has implemented programmes for teacher training and professional development, as well as initiatives to attract and retain qualified teachers, particularly in rural areas. Ongoing efforts to improve educational facilities include constructing new classrooms and staff quarters, renovating existing schools, providing necessary learning materials, and ensuring that schools are adequately equipped with resources.

- **Improve revenue collection and simplify and expand the tax base**

Comprehensive tax policy reforms have been undertaken to simplify the tax regime, making it more efficient, and increasing compliance including reviewing existing taxes to eliminate redundancy and identify new revenue sources. Efforts to expand the tax base included identifying and bringing informal businesses into the tax net. The government has focused on strategies to register informal traders and small businesses, which are vital for economic growth but often operate outside the formal tax system. On strengthening tax administration to streamline operations and enhance the efficiency of tax collection processes, enhanced training programmes are conducted for GRA tax officials, complemented by improved technology for tax collection and upgraded data management systems.

Domestic policy framework support for the implementation of all three dimensions of sustainable development and policies and mechanisms that have enabled it

The domestic policy framework in The Gambia supports the implementation of all three dimensions of sustainable development – economic, social, and environmental – through an integrated approach. Some key elements of the policy framework, along with specific policies and mechanisms that facilitate this integration, include:

The anchor for the development policy framework in The Gambia, is the Medium-Term Plans, which sets out a strategic vision for socioeconomic development and aligns government priorities with SDGs, ensuring that economic, environmental, and social aspects are considered in policy making.

Economic: Under the ambit of PFM Reforms, public resources are ensured to be allocated to sectors that promote sustainable development. This includes increased budgetary allocations for social sectors such as health and education while promoting sustainable resource management. The MTEF is implemented to facilitate the prioritisation of investments in line with sustainable development strategies.

Environmental Policy: Frameworks, such as the National Environment Management Act (NEMA) of 1994, advocate for sustainable resource management and the protection of ecosystems,

emphasising the interdependence of environmental health and economic development. The Gambia has adopted climate change policies to build resilience and promote sustainable environmental practices, including the National Climate Change Policy, which aligns development goals with climate sustainability. There are also existing mechanisms, such as the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) under the Paris Agreement, that commit to reducing greenhouse gas emissions while promoting social and economic development.

Social Protection Policies: The government has implemented social protection programmes to reduce poverty and enhance resilience among vulnerable populations. These programmes integrate social objectives with economic strategies by supporting livelihoods, education, and health. The Gambia Social Safety Net Project provides cash transfers to vulnerable households, thus addressing social equity and economic stability. For the first time, the government has allocated GMD105 million in the 2025 budget as its contribution to the setting up of a social protection Fund. Another policy aimed at empowering youth and promoting gender equality, supporting social development and driving economic growth is the National Youth Policy 2019-2028, which encourages skills development, employment opportunities, and active participation in decision-making.

Synergies with other international agreements or regional frameworks

The Gambia Government recognises the importance of synergies for SDGs attainment, hence establishing synergies between its national frameworks and various international agreements and frameworks (regional, human rights, and health), as in the following:

Regional Frameworks

The Gambia aligns its national development strategies with the African Union's Agenda 2063, which is anchored on sustainable development, economic growth, and social inclusion across the continent. On Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) policies, member states, including The Gambia, are guided by ECOWAS frameworks such as the ECOWAS Policy for the Development of Rural Areas and the ECOWAS Regional Action Plan for Disaster Risk Reduction. Aspects of these regional policies have been in The Gambia's national agricultural and environmental strategies.

Relating to Human Rights Frameworks such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, The Gambia's commitment to human rights informs its policies on education, health, and gender equality. This alignment ensures that social development efforts are grounded in human rights principles.

On Global Health Initiatives, The Gambia has aligned its health policies with international health frameworks, including the World Health Organisation (WHO) guidelines, the Global Health Security Agenda, and the SDGs related to health (SDG 3).

International Agreements

The Gambia's commitment to the Paris Agreement on climate change is reflected in national policies and its NDCs, as the goals set in the NDCs are integrated into the broader sustainable development frameworks. On the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the country has taken steps to conserve biodiversity and natural resources, as per the objectives of the CBD. This is linked to national policies focusing on environmental sustainability and ecosystem management.

The country participates in various international and regional reporting mechanisms, such as the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) on human rights, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), and the SDG VNRs. Reports produced are often synthesized and incorporated into the VNR process.

On data and research, the integration of data collected for international reports (e.g., SDGs, and regional frameworks) enhances the evidence base for the VNR. Statistical data from national reports informs the analysis and descriptions of progress towards the SDGs, promoting accountability.

Adduced from the above, The Gambia's VNR manifests concerted efforts to harmonise national development with international and regional frameworks. Leveraging synergies across various agreements, The Gambia not only addresses its challenges more effectively but also fulfil its obligations on both domestic and international fronts. Collaboration to strengthen these synergies is key for The Gambia.

CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY AND PROCESS OF THE REVIEW

4.1 Introduction

The preparation of The Gambia's VNR adopted a participatory and all-inclusive process and availed the country, the opportunity to review the progress made towards the implementation of Agenda 2030 in a manner that creates national ownership and a better understanding of the SDGs. The report presents the country's achievements towards the implementation of the SDGs from both the perspective of available data as well as perceptions and perspectives of the citizens

The process of undertaking the VNR started in the last quarter of 2024 with the development of a concept note followed by the setting up of various committees such as a National Steering Committee, Technical Committee, and Outreach Committee to coordinate the VNR process.

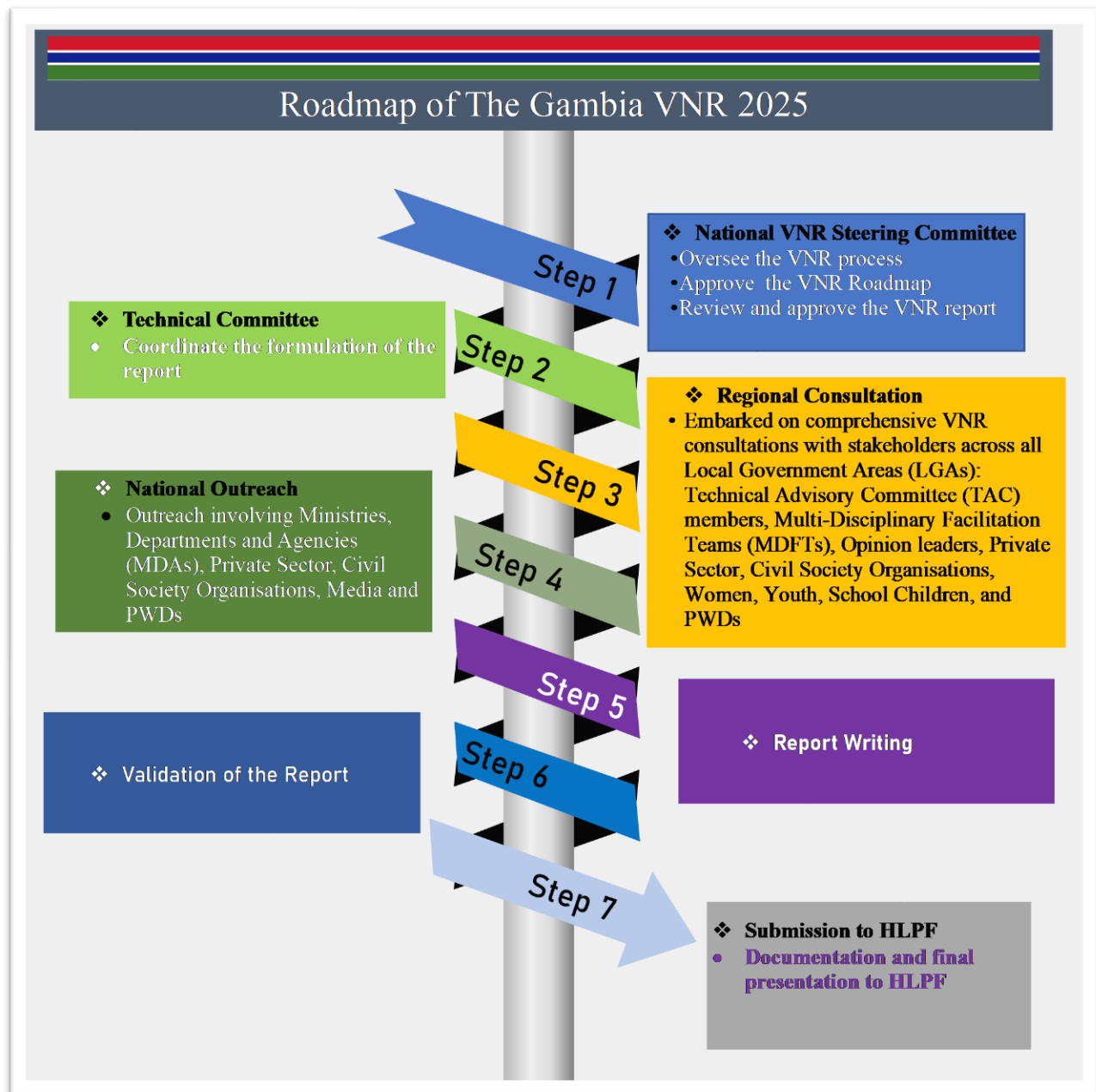
4.2 The Gambia's VNR Roadmap

The VNR preparation process followed a timeline that detailed the activities needed for the preparation and submission of the report including consultations with community members, data collection to update SDG indicators as well as a collection of human-interest stories that depict the successes of programmes and initiatives undertaken.

4.3. The VNR Process

Upon receiving approval to present its VNR, The Gambia set up a national steering committee comprising the Government, private sector, academia, CSOs/ NGOs, Development Partners, youth, and women. The committee coordinated the entire VNR process, including drafting the VNR Roadmap, data collection, regional and national level consultations, drafting the report, and overseeing its implementation. In addition, a team was constituted from GBoS to provide and verify the data in the report. MoFEA through DDP served as the secretariat and the overall coordination of the VNR process and activities. The UN system provided both technical and financial support for the process. The drafting team consisted of representatives from different sectors.

Figure 4.1: The Gambia's VNR Roadmap Process



4.2.2 VNR Outreach, Information and Communication

A Communication and Outreach sub-committee co-chaired by the MoLRGRA and the Ministry of Information, Media and Broadcasting Services (MoIMBS) were constituted to take responsibility for the VNR multi-stakeholder engagement process. The sub-committee was responsible for: a) the development and dissemination of communication and information materials and messages for the VNR process, and b) stakeholder outreach and engagement of the VNR. Specifically, the committee designed and implemented a multi-stakeholder engagement platform that ensured continuous engagement of all stakeholders throughout the VNR process.

4.2.3 Stakeholder Consultations

Various stakeholders were engaged and consulted to obtain views on the roles and responsibilities among stakeholders in the implementation of the SDGs. Stakeholder engagements were held to ensure that the VNR report reflected a true reflection of the perceptions of communities on the status of the implementation of the SDGs in The Gambia.

4.2.4 Regional and National Consultations

Comprehensive consultations were held with stakeholders across all Local Government Areas (LGAs) of the country. The consultations sought the opinions and perspectives of key stakeholders across the country on the progress in implementation of the SDGs, challenges encountered, development initiatives at community levels, and the way forward.

To ensure greater outreach, community radio stations were used to deepen community understanding of Agenda 2030 and the VNR process, in particular. Consultations followed a qualitative approach with Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) held in each LGA and national-level institutions.

The consultations included the conduct of FGDs with different categories of stakeholders, opinion leaders, MDFTs, TACs, women, youth, PWDs, etc. which provided an opportunity for in-depth discussions on various issues relating to the SDGs. The aim is to sensitize stakeholders about the SDGs and the VNR process to enhance inclusiveness and participation.

4.2.5 Limitations of the 2025 VNR Process

Despite the gains registered, the VNR process encountered some challenges that in one way or the other affected the outcome of the report. This includes:

Data on some of the SDGs were not available to measure progress on the performance of the indicators.

Inadequate financial resources to conduct a broad-based stakeholder consultation: Stakeholder consultation was an essential component of the VNR process. Due to inadequate funding, the consultations could not be held in every ward in the LGAs but were limited to regional and national levels.

CHAPTER 5: POLICY AND ENABLING ENVIRONMENT

Integration of the Sustainable Development Goals in national frameworks to drive transformative actions

The Government of The Gambia has formulated the RF-NDP to spearhead the recovery of the Gambia from COVID-19, climate change, and other shocks. The Plan is a successor to the 2018-2021/22 NDP. The development landscape of The Gambia is a complex and intertwined web of challenges and opportunities spanning many areas. The analysis of the national development context resulted in the identification of the following areas/clusters for the RF-NDP: (i) Building Community Resilience to Shocks and Crisis (ii) Governance and democratic reforms; (iii) Macroeconomic stability, growth, and private sector development; (iv) Human capital development; (v) Agriculture, Natural Resources, Environment, and Climate Change; (vi) Social development; and (vii) Energy, infrastructure, and digital connectivity. Given the recent shocks and crises driven by global and regional factors, issues relating to fragility and vulnerability were analysed to improve understanding of how the country can build and/or strengthen resilience and better prepare the nation for future shocks. The overall goal of RF-NDP is “to consolidate gains in democratic governance, accelerate green economic and social transformation and build resilience to shocks and crises”.

Premised on the above, the government made an explicit commitment to integrating the SDGs and Agenda 2063, as well as the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and the Doha Programme of Action into its RF-NDP and use these as conduits for the realisation of the goals of the National Development Plan. Sector and Local Government Strategic Plans were formulated and aligned with the RF-NDP and, by extension, the SDGs. To assess the degree of alignment with the SDGs, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) supported the government on the use of the Integrated Planning and Reporting Toolkit (IPRT).

Table 5.1: RF-NDP and SDG Alignment

RF-NDP AND SDG ALIGNMENT							
RF - NDP PILLAR	SDG 1 SDG 9 SDG 14 SDG 15	SDG 5 SDG 13 SDG 14 SDG 16 SDG 17	SDG 1 SDG 8 SDG 17	SDG 3 SDG 4 SDG 5 SDG 6 SDG 8 SDG 10 SDG 11	SDG 2 SDG 8 SDG 12 SDG 13 SDG 14 SDG 15	SDG 1 SDG 5 SDG 8 SDG 10	SDG 7 SDG 9 SDG 11
P1-Building Community Resilience to Address Shocks and Crises	★						
P2-Governance Reform		★					
P3-Macroeconomic Stability and Inclusive Growth			★				
P4-Human Capital Development				★			
P5-Agriculture, Environment, Natural Resources and Climate Change					★		
P6-Empowerment, Social Inclusion and Leaving No One Behind						★	
P7-Energy, Infrastructure and Connectivity							★

The RF-NDP is strongly aligned with the SDGs as shown above and the concept of Leaving No One Behind (LNOB) is a core Pillar of the RF-NDP. Building on past efforts, the government has a strong commitment to addressing issues of inadequate empowerment, social exclusion, discrimination, and stigmatization of women, children, persons with disabilities, and older persons. It recognises that removing such barriers is key to unleashing the potential of large segments of society and establishing a just and equitable society.

Institutional Mechanisms

As shown in Figure 5.1 below, the government adopted a robust institutional framework for National Development Plan implementation that enabled all stakeholders to play active roles and ensure there is strong accountability for results. This holistic approach to coordinating the implementation and monitoring of the SDGs and the RF-NDP is facilitated by the mainstreaming of the SDGs in the RF-NDP. The SDG targets are inclusive of the identified sector targets incorporated into the current RF-NDP. Considering the resource constraints faced by the government, coordinating the implementation of the 17 goals of the SDGs and 169 targets was a daunting challenge.

Figure 5.1: RF-NDP Institutional Arrangements



Leaving No One Behind (LNOB)

The principle of LNOB is central to the RF-NDP and by extension the SDGs. In addition to the theme being one of the pillars of the Plan, the government institutionalized LNOB through robust policies, improved data-driven targeting, and concrete actions aimed at tackling inequalities and fostering inclusive participation in national development.

To demonstrate the importance attached to social protection as well as enhance coordination of social protection, government committed a total of GMD 89 million in the 2025 budget to operationalize the Social Protection Fund, as established in Section 40(1) of the National Social Protection Act, 2024. In support of the coordination role in the sector, the Act also established the National Social Protection Agency transforming the National Social Protection Secretariat into an Agency under the Office of the Vice President. Regional and central-level structures have also been established across the country's five administrative regions to improve coordination and outreach. The enactment of the Act was a significant milestone in strengthening the legal and regulatory frameworks of social protection and provides a direct legislation on social assistance, and sets standards and guidelines for social service delivery to the poor and vulnerable. Overall, the law addresses long-standing gaps and inefficiencies in social protection, and ensures that economic, discriminatory, and social vulnerabilities related to poverty and deprivation are effectively tackled.

The Family Strengthening Programme (FSP) has recently been initiated by the Government aimed at creating synergies between the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA) and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This transformative programme targets vulnerable populations, as defined in the National Social Protection Policy 2015-2025 with the goal of increasing their short-term access to essential goods and services while enabling longer-term investments in human and productive capital.

The FSP, coordinated by the National Social Protection Agency and implemented in a multi-institutional approach, with Ministry of Gender responsible for enrolment and field work and the Accountant General's Department responsible on payment modalities, is meant to address the donor dependency on social assistance and lack of a fixed and regular programme for the vulnerable. The government is committed moving towards a more resilience building social protection with this programme and a dedicated SP Fund for a sustainable financing. This shift is essential for ensuring the long-term sustainability and political viability of social protection initiatives in the country.

The programme offers cash assistance of GMD 1,000 to individuals on a monthly basis starting with at least 2000 beneficiaries in 2024 to be scaled up to 3000 in 2025, and 10, 0000 in 2026.

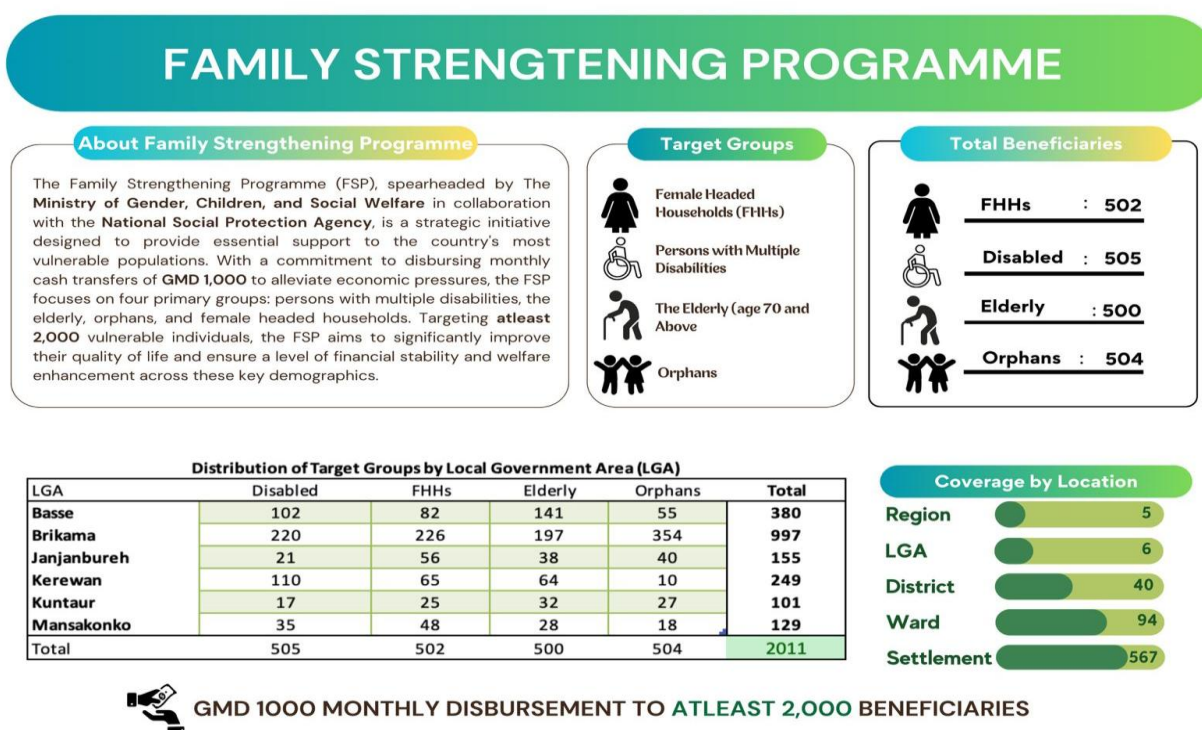
Access to finance has been a challenge for many women in developing countries including The Gambia. The Women Enterprise Fund (WEF) established in 2020 by the Women Enterprise Act is designed to promote financial inclusion for women through economic empowerment. The WEF provides loans for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) for women groups. For the past three years, WEF has provided soft loans to women-owned businesses, including start-ups and financial literacy programmes for women entrepreneurs. In 2024, MoGCSW through WEF has made a

disbursement to 8,400 women across West Coast, North Bank, and Central River Regions to 4,200, 2,700 and 1,500 respectively.

This brings the total amount of disbursement to GMD66, 320,000 and a recovery of GMD46, 105,751 amounting to 69.5 per cent as of 31st March 2024. The World Bank in 2023 supported the WEF with strategic plan, loan manual and a gender-sensitive monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework. As outlined in the WEF strategic plan (2023-2032), by 2032, the goal of the WEF is to become a fully-fledged financial institution, endowed with adequate capacities and resources to provide financial services which support Gambian women's access to finance.

'NAFA'² is a cash transfer programme designed to address extreme poverty and improve the livelihoods of vulnerable households. It provides monthly cash payments to beneficiaries, who use the funds for a variety of needs, including food, education, healthcare, and small business investments.

Figure 5.2: Distribution of beneficiaries of the FSP in 2024



GMD 1000 MONTHLY DISBURSEMENT TO ATLEAST 2,000 BENEFICIARIES

With the gradual approach, the government is progressively building an inclusive social protection system with the introduction of categorical targeting, moving towards a right-based approach and universal coverage, given the fiscal space. The government in the next social protection policy

² 'Nafa' is a Mandinka word meaning benefit. The 'Nafa' programme is a component of The **Gambia** Social Safety Net **Project** (SSNP)

starting in 2026, will articulate a sustainable financing mechanism for the social protection fund in order to establish a social protection floor.

Women and Girls

The MoGCSW has taken several steps to empower women and girls and ensure they are not left behind. The Ministry has developed and implemented a National Gender Policy to address gender inequality and promote the empowerment of women and girls. This policy is a comprehensive framework for ensuring equal rights and opportunities for women and men in various sectors, such as education, health, employment, and decision-making. The Ministry also established the GBV fund to provide financial support for victims of GBV. This fund helps cover immediate needs, such as medical treatment, legal aid, and psychological support, as well as longer-term recovery and rehabilitation. The Ministry also operationalises the Orange Centre for victims of GBV, which is a dedicated space for victims of GBV, providing a comprehensive support system, including medical care, legal assistance, counselling, and safe shelter.

Children and the Elderly

The government of the Gambia has made significant strides in advancing children's rights and welfare. This includes the development of legal frameworks such as the Children Act of 2005 amended in 2016 which criminalises child marriage and other harmful practices. The Gambia has also ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) in August 1990, and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child in March 2001. These frameworks aim to protect children's rights and protect them from abuse.

In June 2024, The Gambia took an important step by ratifying the African Union Protocol on the Rights of Older Persons. Full ratification and implementation of this Protocol could significantly enhance efforts to establish robust legal and institutional frameworks to support the aging population.

While The Gambia does not yet have a dedicated National Social Protection Policy specifically focused on the elderly, its broader social protection initiatives address some of their needs. These efforts fall under the National Social Protection Policy (NSPP) 2015–2025, which aims to promote resilience, equity, and inclusion for vulnerable groups, including the elderly.

To support vulnerable individuals, the Department of Social Welfare under the MoGCSW rolled out a family strengthening programme in 2024 in which vulnerable people/families will be identified through the Social Registry across the regions and provided social assistance in the form of cash transfers. The total target beneficiary population will be at least 2,000 for an initial pilot but will gradually increase to cover all vulnerable populations. The family strengthening programme for these identified vulnerable individuals is aimed at both increasing short-term consumption of essential goods and services as well as enabling longer-term investments in human and productive capital. The programme which comprises cash transfers, monitoring, and family-based social and behavioural change activities, will support the building of family resilience and coping mechanisms of the target beneficiary individuals and groups. This is expected to contribute to the Government's goal of increasing social assistance coverage in The Gambia. This programme is expected to indirectly promote inclusion and enable participation of vulnerable groups in the

socio-economic activities of their lives, which will also ultimately help families minimize their expenses in the upkeep of the vulnerable members of their families or communities.

Youth

The government, through the National Enterprise Development Initiative (NEDI), provided financial support, in the form of loans and grants, to 438 youth (male and female) in 2022 and 844 in 2023. This aims to ensure access to finance for youth-owned businesses, foster innovations, encourage economic independence and promote economic growth. NEDI provided support for training in entrepreneurship, enterprise development, coaching, business plan development to 667 youth in 2022 and 934 in 2023. This training developed livelihood skills, addressed unemployment, empowered youth in economic participation and cultivated a growth mindset among the youth. However, the gender aspect remains a challenge, with more efforts are needed to ensure equal participation and benefits for young women in these training programmes.

Persons With Disabilities (PWDs)

The Gambia has ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) since July 2015 and made significant strides in promoting the rights of PWDs. Section 31 of the 1997 constitution of The Gambia has a provision for the protection and rights of PWDs. For the first time in The Gambia, there exists a Disability Act which was passed by National Assembly in July 2021, which has since been assented to by the President. The Act provides for “the health care, social support, accessibility, rehabilitation, education and vocational training, communication, employment and work protection and promotion of basic rights for persons with disabilities and related matters.” With the implementation of this Act, it could lead to the improvement of the livelihoods of PWDs. The Gambia has also ratified the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People’s Rights for PWDs in June 2024 further affirming its commitment to disabilities rights. Under the RF-NDP (2023-2027), the government, in collaboration with development partners priorities three key areas to improve the livelihoods of PWDs:

1. Strengthening data collection and research on PWDs including e-learning and other learning platforms.
2. Improving access to buildings, healthcare and other physical structures.
3. Ensuring PWDs representation in the National Assembly and decision-making positions.

a) Ensuring ownership of the SDGs and the VNRs

The institutional framework for the RF-NDP provides a broad-based consultative mechanism. The framework adopts a whole-society approach to national development planning and implementation (which mainstream the SDGs and Agenda 2063) at national, regional, and sectoral levels, including the private sector, local government representatives, youth, children, women, development partners, persons with disabilities, human rights institutions, and academia. This enhances inclusiveness and ensures that no one is left behind in SDG reporting.

The consultative nature of the formulation of the VNR Report and the post VNR consultations ensures that citizen opinions and perspectives on implementation of development plans are reflected, and their recommendations taken into consideration in subsequent plans.

CHAPTER 6: PROGRESS ON GOALS AND TARGETS AND EVALUATION OF POLICIES AND MEASURES TAKEN SO FAR

Introduction

Since the SDGs were adopted, The Gambia has worked to enhance ownership and expedite their implementation. The RF-NDP, sector strategies, regional strategic plans, and other national policies contributed to successfully mainstreaming the SDGs into the framework for national development planning—this improved ownership and reporting of SDG progress.

Progress on the five focused SDGs for VNR 2025



6.1.1 Goal 3: Good Health and Well-Being

The government is dedicated to implementing measures to improve the delivery of quality health services to lower maternal, newborn, infant, and child morbidity and mortality and improve the health of adolescents and young people. This is a strategic priority in the NDP. Additionally, the government pledges to enhance the nation's health services to improve the population's health status in the National Health Sector Strategic Plan (2021–2025). However, according to the UN World Population (2024), SDG 3 remains stagnation for The Gambia.

Despite these challenges, the Ministry of Health continues demonstrating strong leadership and innovation in improving public health outcomes. Notable achievements include the rollout of the National Health Insurance Scheme to expand financial protection, the integration of the electronic Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (eCRVS) system to improve service delivery and data use, and the introduction of postgraduate medical training at EFSTH and specialized nursing and pharmacy programmes at the University of The Gambia. The Ministry has also prioritized Community-Based Health Initiatives such as “Kaabilo Baama”³, the training and deployment of over 1,500 community health workers. Findings of the GDHS 2019-20 shows that the proportion of children aged 12-23 months who received all basic vaccinations increased from 76 per cent in 2013 to 85 per cent in 2019-20. The GDHS 2019-20 shows that 77 per cent of children have been fully immunized.

These interventions reflect a proactive and inclusive approach to strengthening the health system and demonstrate a firm commitment to LNOB.

³ Kaabilo Baama: A Mandinka word meaning mother of the community

Key Trends in Health

Indicator 3.1.1: Maternal mortality ratio

According to the GDHS 2019-20, the Maternal Mortality Rate (MMR) has significantly reduced from 433/100,000 in 2013 to 289/100,000 live births in 2019-20 and is expected to reduce to 70/100,000 live births by 2030 (Gambia National Health Sector Policy, 2021-2030).

6.1.1.3 Proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel

Indicator 3.1.2: Proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel

The government of The Gambia has promoted the presence of a skilled attendant at every delivery in every healthcare centre. Regardless of the level of the health facility (Primary, Secondary, and Tertiary), the country has made significant progress in the proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel over time. Ensuring institutional deliveries increases the likelihood of skilled birth attendance while also ensuring that many of the interventions known to save women's lives are properly implemented.

Increasing the proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel is an important factor in reducing the health risks to both the mother and the baby. Skilled health personnel, as referenced by SDG indicator 3.1.2, refer to (doctors, nurses, or midwives) who are professionals educated, trained, and regulated to national and international standards.

Nationally, the proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel was 82.7 per cent according to the MICS 2018 findings which have increased slightly to 83.8 per cent based on the findings of the GDHS 2019-20.

By place of residence, the proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel in the urban areas was 87.2 per cent in MICS 2018 compared to the GDHS 2019-20, which was 88.3 per cent. In the rural areas, birth attended by health personnel was 75.4 per cent according to the results of both MICS 2018 and GDHS 2019-20.

Indicator 3.2.1: Under-5 mortality rate

The under-five mortality rate refers to the probability a newborn would die before reaching exactly 5 years of age, expressed per 1,000 live births.

Between 2013 and 2019-20, under 5 mortality rates has been fluctuating. In 2013 the child mortality rate was 54 per 1,000 live birth which increased to 57 per 1,000 live births and declined to 56 per 1,000 live births in 2019-20.

6.1.1.4 Neonatal mortality rate

Indicator 3.2.2: Neonatal mortality rate

MICS 2018 has shown that the neonatal mortality rate was 31 per 1,000 live births. This has decreased to 22 per 1000 live births in 2013 and increased to 29 per 1000 live births in 2019-2020. Considering the most recent available data (2019-20) on neonatal mortality, which is considered

high, there remains significant work to be done to address the neonatal mortality rate in the country. As there is no up to date data, progress on this indicator cannot be measured.

6.1.1.5 Number of new HIV infections

Indicator 3.3.1: Number of new HIV infections per 1,000 uninfected population, by sex, age, and key populations

It is estimated that 25,247 people in The Gambia are infected with the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV), with 64 per cent of them aware of their condition. Of these, 70 per cent receive treatment and 79 per cent are virally suppressed in 2024, according to the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) Estimates, while efforts have been made to improve access to testing and treatment. Most people avoid getting tested for HIV because of the potential "stigma and discrimination." The health sector has significantly reduced the transmission of HIV/AIDS.

Presented in Table 6.1 is the number of new HIV infections per 1,000 uninfected population by sex and age. It is important to note that data on key populations is not available. The data has shown a declining trend from 2017 to 2019 for males aged less than 15 years. In 2020, the number increased to 0.69. But from 2021 to 2024, a declining trend has been observed. For the male population 15 years and above, a declining trend has been observed. For the female population less than 15 years old, a declining trend has been observed from 0.72 to 0.43. While for females 15 years and above, a similar pattern has been observed.

Table 6.1: Number of new HIV infections per 1,000 uninfected population, by sex, age, and key populations

Disaggregation	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Male < 15 years	0.73	0.68	0.63	0.69	0.53	0.50	0.48	0.44
Male > 15 years	1.03	0.92	0.88	0.83	0.75	0.67	0.62	0.54
Female < 15 years	0.72	0.68	0.62	0.68	0.52	0.50	0.48	0.43
Female > 15 years	1.14	1.01	0.97	0.91	0.83	0.74	0.68	0.60
Key populations	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA

Source: National Aids Secretariat (NAS) Spectrum Modelling

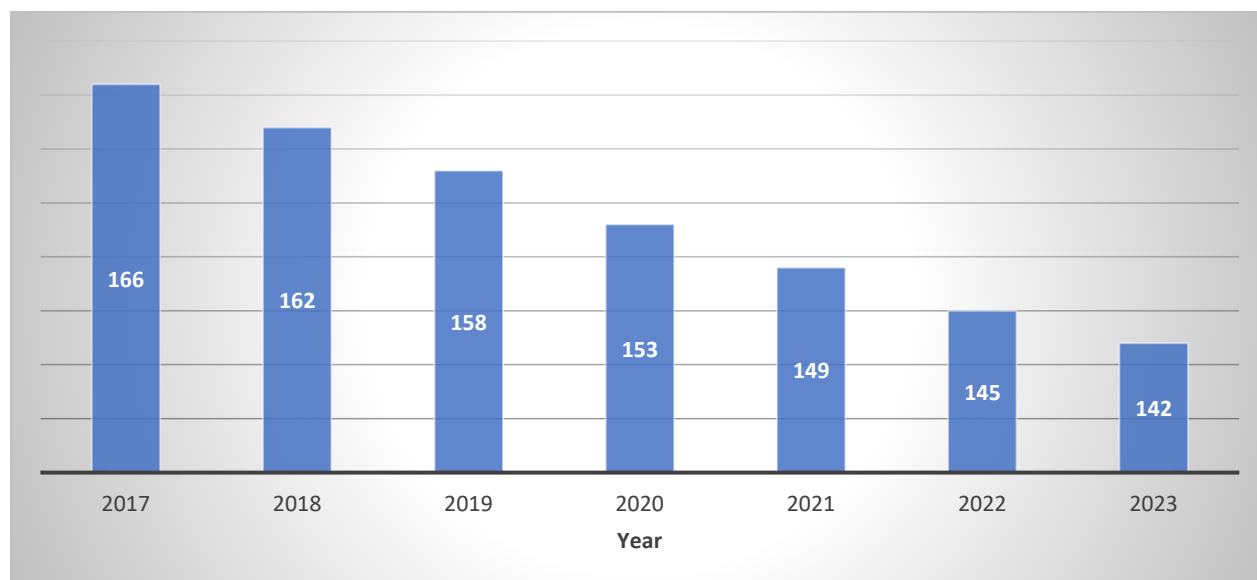
NA means Not Available

6.1.1.6 Tuberculosis Incidence (TB)

The Gambia has made significant progress in TB control, as evident by the decline in TB incidence from 166 per 100,000 in 2017 to 153 per 100,000 in 2020. All TB patients in the country are eligible for free diagnosis and treatment, guaranteeing fair access to care. The Ministry of Health's commitment to expanding diagnostic and treatment facilities nationwide has resulted in improved

access to TB services. The progress in combating TB in The Gambia has been reflected in a further reduction in the incidence of the disease from 149 per 100,000 in 2021 to 142 in 2023 (see Figure 6.2).

Figure 6.2: TB Incidence per 100,000 population



Source: *The National Leprosy and Tuberculosis Control Programme (NLTP)*

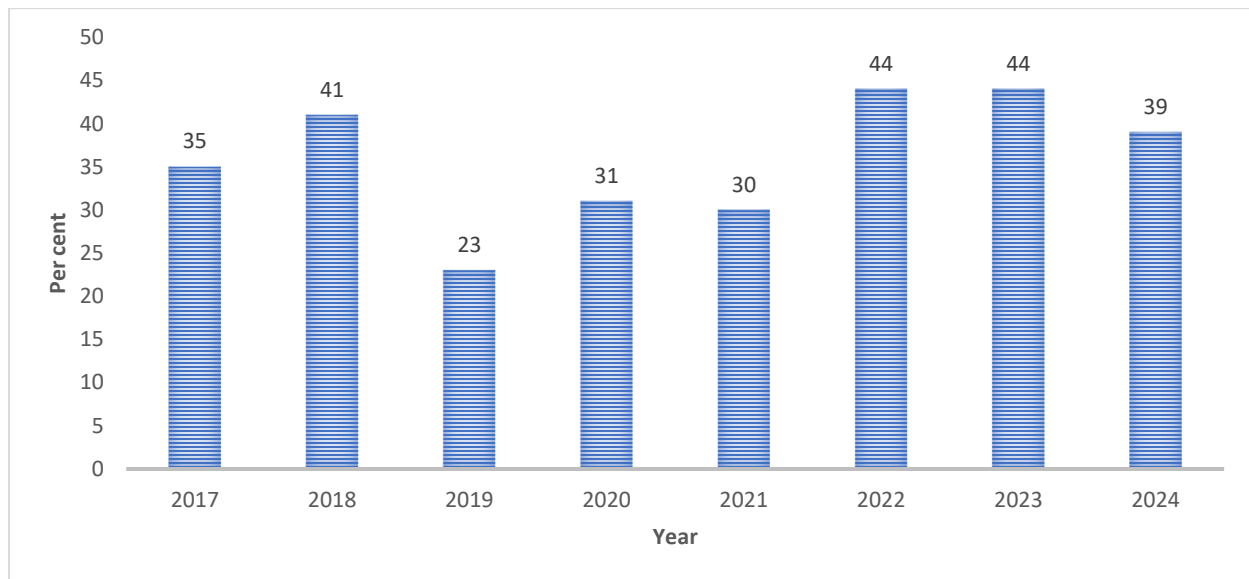
6.1.1.7 Malaria incidence

Indicator 3.3.3: Malaria incidence per 1,000 population

Malaria, a communicable disease, is one of the main causes of morbidity in The Gambia and a serious public health concern. Insecticide-Treated Nets (ITNs) have been widely distributed as part of the government's substantial investment in malaria prevention and control through the National Malaria Control Programme (NMCP). Additionally, regular Indoor Residual Spraying (IRS) was conducted in areas with a high malaria case prevalence (only in URR and CRR for the past six years), and the most recent campaign was in 2024. Community sensitisation campaigns, malaria case management, and associated initiatives were expanded to further control the disease.

Figure 6.3 shows fluctuations in malaria incidence for the past eight years. The incidence was 35 per 1000 population in 2017 which increased to 41 in 2018 but dropped in 2019. It picked up again in 2020 (31) which dropped slightly to 30 in 2021. The incidence again increased in both 2022 and 2023 to 44 and declined again to 39 in 2024 per 1000 population.

Figure 6.3: Malaria incidence per 1,000 population



Source: District Health Information System 2 (DHIS2) and Health Management Information System (HMIS)

6.1.1.8 Hepatitis B Virus (HBV) incidence

Indicator 3.3.4: Hepatitis B incidence per 100,000 population

Data on this indicator is not available therefore progress cannot be measured.

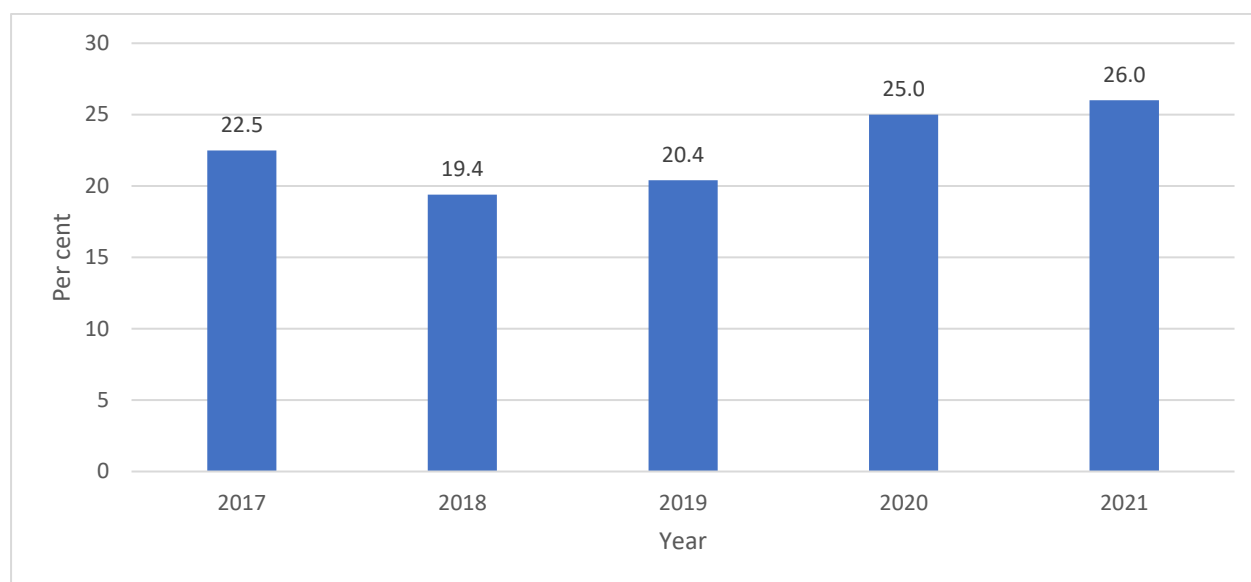
Indicator 3.6.1: Death rate due to road traffic injuries

The number of road accidents reported increased from 683 (2023) to 1053 (2024) indicating improvement during the year under review. However, the number of fatal accidents instead increased from 78 (2023) to 105 (2024) indicating more efforts required to curb fatal accidents – MoI and GBoS.

Indicator 3.8.2: Proportion of population with large household expenditures on health as a share of total household expenditure or income

It is observed from Figure 6.4 that household expenditures on health as a share of total household expenditure or income was 22.5 per cent in 2017 which decreased to 19.4 per cent in 2018 and increased slightly to 20.4 per cent in 2019. The expenditure further increased in 2020 to 25 per cent and increased to 26 per cent in 2021.

Figure 6.4: Population with large household expenditure on health as a share of total household expenditure or income



Source: Ministry of Health, National Health Accounts (NHA), 2021

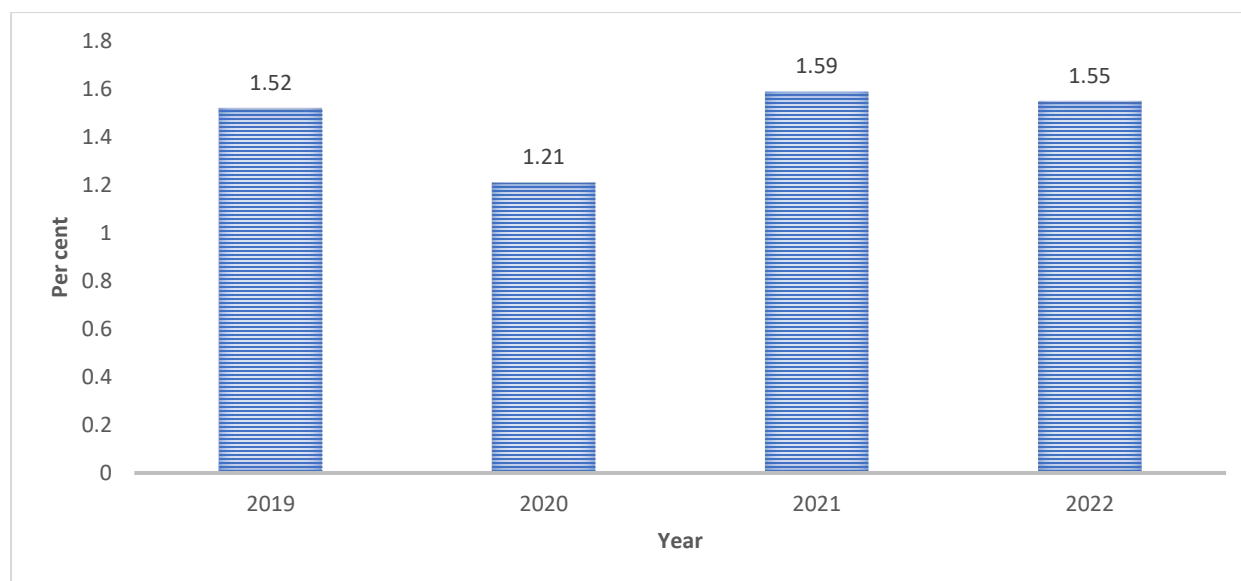
In response to the health expenditure challenges, the government of The Gambia launched the National Health Insurance Scheme in 2021 to provide financial risk protection to the population. However, the scheme is yet to start.

6.1.1.10 Health worker density and distribution

Indicator 3.c.1: Health worker density and distribution

The current state of Human Resources for Health, including the threshold for the population density nationally, is 1.55 per 1,000 population, which remains a challenge in all regions of the Gambia. The data shows in Western Region I (WRI) 2.22 (2190), Western Region II (WRII) 0.86 (469), Lower River Region (LRR) 1.54 (137), Central River Region (CRR) 1.29 (338), Upper River Region (URR) 0.73 (214), North Bank East Region (NBER) 1.90 (252), and North Bank West Region (NBWR) 1.07 (142), are the sub-national thresholds for the skilled health worker density, which is 1.55 per 1,000 population (3742). According to the MoH, in 2019, the national density was 1.52 and significantly decreased to 1.21 in 2020. Subsequently, there was again a marked improvement in 2021 to 1.59. However, up to the latest data in 2022, the density was 1.55 which was also the same reported in 2023. Furthermore, no health professional cadre has met the 4.45 per 1,000 population recommended density threshold of the WHO (see Figure 6.5).

Figure 6.5: Health worker density and distribution per 1,000 population



Source: Ministry of Health, Human Resource (HR) Annual Profiles

The introduction of the postgraduate medical training programme at the EFSTH marks a significant milestone in strengthening the national health workforce, enabling the in-country training of specialist doctors in various fields. Additionally, the UTG has expanded its health sciences education with the launch of specialized nursing and pharmacy programmes aimed at addressing critical skills gaps and improving the quality of healthcare delivery.



6.1.2. SDG5 Gender Equality

Indicator 5.1.1: Combating Gender Based Violence

Significant progress has been made in combating GBV in The Gambia. Key initiatives include the establishment of shelters, such as the Orange Centre in Bakoteh in 2023, which provides temporary housing for survivors and hosts the GBV and Child Protection Helpline (199), linked to the Gender Management Information System (GMIS). Additionally, the government introduced the Support to Victims Fund, allocating GMD3,300,000 to offer essential support to survivors of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV). This fund covers rescue, rehabilitation, and reintegration efforts, as outlined in the Sexual Offences Act of 2013. In 2023, the Orange Centre received 24 survivors of GBV. The cases included 7 physical assaults, 6 forced marriages, 4 instances of economic violence, 3 sexual assaults, 2 cases of psychological violence, and 2 rape cases. All survivors were provided with psychosocial and medical support. Furthermore, in 2024, the Gambia developed the National Gender Policy and Strategic Plan and along with the Sexual Harassment Policy and Action Plan.

Indicator 5.2.1: Proportion of ever-partnered women and girls aged 15 years and older subjected to physical, sexual, or psychological violence by a current or former intimate partner in the previous 12 months, by a form of violence, and by age

This indicator was first measured in The Gambia during the 2021 SDG Monitoring Survey. The findings of the survey show that 17.3 per cent of women and girls aged 15 years and older were subjected to physical, sexual, or psychological violence by a current or former intimate partner in the previous 12 months. There is no up to date data on this indicator therefore progress cannot be measured.

The Gambia has long acknowledged the need to address GBV. Women and girls in the country endure physical, emotional, and sexual abuse, which negatively impacts their health, economic opportunities, and social relationships. There are various laws in the country to combat GBV and these include the following; the Constitution of The Gambia (1997), the Sexual Offenses Act (2013), the Domestic Violence Act (2013), the Women's Act (2010), amended in 2015, the Trafficking in Persons Act (2007), and the Children's Act (2005) amended in 2016, among others. These laws prohibit various forms of violence and abuse against women, girls, and children, and offer protection for victims. While the Government of The Gambia addresses several types of violence, it focuses its efforts, particularly on domestic violence, sexual violence, FGM, and child marriage.

Indicator 5.2.2: Proportion of women and girls aged 15 years and older subjected to sexual violence by persons other than an intimate partner in the previous 12 months, by age and place of occurrence:

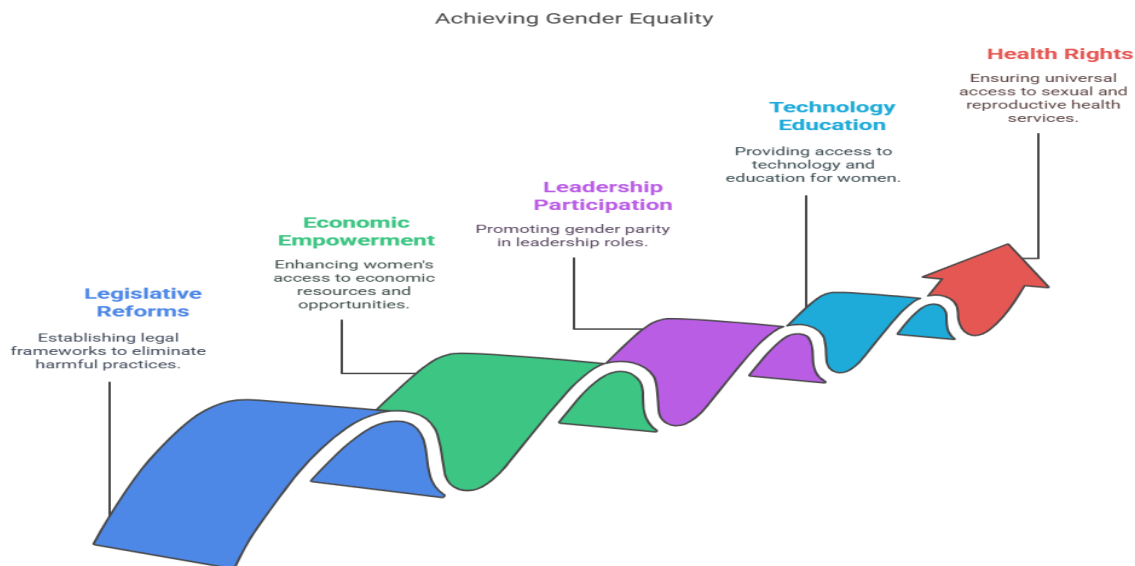
Data for this indicator is not available; therefore, it cannot be measured.

Although there is no data for this indicator, in 2023, the GMIS platform recorded a total of 653 cases of GBV. Most of the cases were from the West Coast Region (WCR) and the Greater Banjul Area where almost all the One Stop Centres (a centralized location or service that provides a range of support and assistance to individuals who have experienced SGBV, in a coordinated and integrated manner) are concentrated.

The fund also supported the rehabilitation of the Shelter for Children. The rehabilitation of the Shelter for Children is a significant initiative aimed at improving the living conditions and support services for vulnerable children in The Gambia. This project focuses on upgrading the shelter's facilities to provide a safe and supportive environment for children who have been victims of abuse, neglect, or exploitation.

The Gambia has implemented several initiatives to advance SDG 5 on gender equality as shown in figure 6.6.

Figure 6.6: Achieving Gender Equality



Indicator 5.3.1: Proportion of women aged 20–24 years who were married or in a union before age 15 and before age 18

Child Marriage

Marriage before the age of 18 constitutes a human rights violation, yet it remains a reality for many children. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights upholds the principle of free and informed consent to marriage, acknowledging that true consent cannot be given by individuals who are not mature enough to make an informed choice about a life partner. The SDGs recognise child marriage as a harmful practice that should be eradicated by 2030. Specifically, Goal 5 of the SDGs emphasizes gender equality and includes a target to end child marriage by 2030. According to MICS 2018 findings, children married before the age of 15 were 9.5 per cent, and those who married before the age of 18 were 34.2 per cent. In 2010, the proportion of children who married before age 15 increased slightly (8.6%) whilst for those who married before age 18 (46.5%).

Indicator 5.3.2: Proportion of girls and women aged 15–49 years who have undergone female genital mutilation, by age.

Female Genital Mutilation

Recent efforts to overturn the anti-FGM law were sparked by a few religious leaders and National Assembly members following the first prosecutions and convictions of practitioners under the Women's Act. In August 2023, the Kaur/Kuntaur Magistrates' Court convicted three women for performing FGM on eight adolescent girls. This landmark ruling was the first conviction of its kind since the law banning FGM was introduced eight years earlier. On 15 July 2024, the National Assembly rejected the Women's (Amendment) Bill 2024 and all of its related clauses. In

September 2023, a Private Member Bill introduced by the National Assembly member for Foni Kansala proposed repealing the Women’s Amendment Act 2015 to remove the ban on FGM in The Gambia. After the National Assembly Select Committee on Health and Gender conducted extensive consultations with MDAs, CSO coalitions, and other stakeholders, the Committee presented its findings to the National Assembly. The Assembly’s decision has put an end to the prolonged debate across various sectors of society regarding the fate of the Bill. However, after a bill to lift the ban on FGM was defeated in the Assembly, proponents of the practice have filed a lawsuit against the Attorney General in the Supreme Court. They are requesting that the court declare the prohibition of female circumcision unconstitutional. According to the findings of the MICS 2018, the proportion of women aged 15-49 who have undergone an FGM was 75.7 per cent. In 2010, the proportion was 76.3 per cent.

Indicator 5.5.1: Proportion of seats held by women in (a) national parliaments and (b) local governments

Currently, there are significant gender disparities in the governance structure, with women being substantially underrepresented across these three levels (Cabinet, Parliament, and Local Councils). Only 12.5% female representation (3 out of 24 members) in the cabinet, 8.6% female (5 out of 58) in parliament, and 14.1% (18 out of 128) in the local councils.

Table 6.1: Proportion of seats held by women in Cabinet, national parliament and local governments

Levels	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Cabinet	21	3	24	87.5	12.5	100.0
Parliament	53	5	58	91.4	8.6	100.0
Local Councils	110	18	128	85.9	14.1	100.0

Source: Cabinet (www.op.gov.gm/cabinet), Parliament (www.assembly.gm), and Local Councils (Gambia Association of Local Government Authorities-GALGA)

The existing legislative framework lacks gender quotas, which many view as a hindrance to enhancing women's representation. The Gambia has shown moderate improvement in quality gender equality. These achievements reflect efforts to promote the empowerment of women and girls and protect their rights. However, major challenges persist in SDG 5 and therefore, growth is stagnant.

The lack of legal quotas and weaknesses in the Women’s Act hinder gender representation. Additionally, fear, high costs of electioneering, and cultural norms impede women from running for office. Limited female role models contribute to the underrepresentation of women in leadership positions. The Gambia faces significant challenges in political empowerment and leadership for women, ranking in the 132nd position in the Global Gender Gap Report 2023 in the political empowerment indicator (score 0.073). In 2024, The Gambia’s ranking has improved slightly to 130th position with the same score as in 2023.

Ownership and security of land for agricultural purposes

Indicator 5.a.1: (a) Proportion of total agricultural population with ownership or secure rights over agricultural land, by sex; and (b) share of women among owners or rights-bearers of agricultural land, by type of tenure

Presented in Table 6.2 are the findings from the SDG surveys in 2021 and 2025. In 2025, 69.2 per cent of males, have an ownership or secure rights over agricultural land, compared to 51.5 per cent of females. Similarly, 64.6 per cent of urban populations have ownership or secure rights over agricultural land, as opposed to 59.4 per cent of the rural population. Nationally, the total land ownership decreased from 64 per cent in 2021 to 61.1 per cent in 2025.

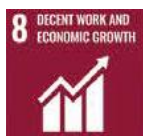
The proportion of women who reported ownership or secure rights to agricultural land has decreased, from 65.2 per cent in 2021 to 53.6 per cent in 2025.

Table 6.2: (a) Proportion of total agricultural population with ownership or secure rights over agricultural land, by sex; and (b) share of women among owners or rights-bearers of agricultural land, by type of tenure

Indicator	2021					2025				
	Male (%)	Female (%)	Urban (%)	Rural (%)	Total (%)	Male (%)	Female (%)	Urban (%)	Rural (%)	Total (%)
Indicator 5.a.1 (a): Proportion of total agricultural population with ownership or secure rights over agricultural land	NA	NA	NA	NA	64	69.2	51.5	64.6	59.4	61.1
Indicator 5.a.1 (b): Share of women among owners or rights-bearers of agricultural land	NA	NA	NA	NA	65.2	NA	NA	NA	NA	53.6

Source: SDG Surveys, 2021 and 2025, GBoS

NA means Not Available



6.1.3 SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth)

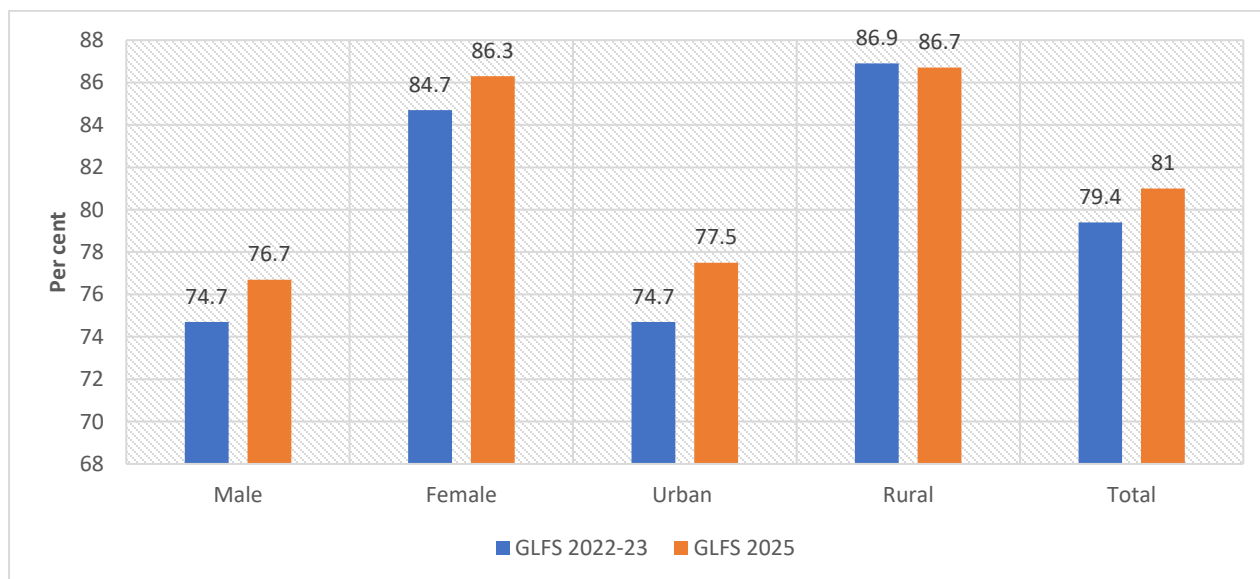
Indicator 8.1.1: Annual growth rate of real GDP per capita

On this indicator, the country registered a growth rate of -0.7 per cent in 2017 and increased in 2018 to 4.8 per cent, and further increased to 6.6 per cent in 2019. In 2020 the proportion decreased to a growth rate of -0.6 per cent but in 2021 a significant increase was observed (8.7%). But in 2022, the proportion decreased to 3.7 per cent and further decreased to 2.1 per cent in 2023 and rose to 5.4 per cent in 2024⁴ - GBoS.

Indicator 8.3.1: Proportion of informal employment in total employment, by sector and sex

Figure 6.7 presents trends in informal employment by sex and residence between 2022-23 and 2025. Informality remained high and even increased slightly among most groups. Among males, the share in informal employment rose from 74.7 per cent to 76.7 per cent, while for females, it increased from 84.7 per cent to 86.3 per cent. In urban areas, informality rose from 74.7 per cent to 77.5 per cent, and in rural areas it remained largely unchanged, moving from 86.9 per cent to 86.7 per cent. Overall, total informal employment increased from 79.4 per cent in 2022-23 to 81.0 per cent in 2025, underscoring the persistent dominance of informal work arrangements in the labour market.

Figure 6.7: Informal employment by sex and residence (%) GLFS 2022-23 vs. 2025



Source: GLFS 2022-2023 and 2025 - GBoS

⁴ The 2024 figures are provisional

Indicator 8.5.2: Unemployment rate, by sex, age, and persons with disabilities

Going by the current conventional definition of unemployment by the International Labour Organisation (ILO), the unemployment rate for the Gambia was 10.5 per cent in 2022-23 to 11.5 per cent in 2025, but this does not reflect the reality in the situation of The Gambia.

Although SDG Indicator LU1 (the standard unemployment rate) remains a widely used labour market measure, it does not adequately capture the true extent of the unmet need for employment in The Gambia. By design, LU1 excludes individuals who are available for work but are not actively seeking employment, such as discouraged job seekers and the marginally attached. These groups are particularly relevant in The Gambia's labour market, where structural barriers often deter active job searches.

To address this limitation, The Gambia adopted Indicator LU3 in 2023, the combined rate of unemployment and potential labour force as a more inclusive and realistic measure of labour underutilisation. This indicator has been formally integrated into the Recovery-Focused National Development Plan (RF-NDP) 2023-2027. LU3 encompasses both the unemployed and those who are available for work but not currently searching, offering a more complete picture of unmet employment needs and labour market slack.

According to the 2025 GLFS, the national LU3 rate stands at 26.7 per cent, reflecting a moderate decline from 31.6 per cent recorded in 2022-23 to 26.7 per cent in 2025. However, the data reveal persistent disparities. Women experienced a significantly higher LU3 rate (34.3%) than men (19.1%) in 2025, highlighting gender-based constraints in accessing decent employment. Similarly, rural areas faced markedly higher labour underutilisation (33.8%) compared to urban areas (21.7%), suggesting spatial inequalities in labour market opportunities.

Indicator 8.6.1: Proportion of youth (aged 15–24 years) not in education, employment or training

The youth not in education, employment, or training (NEET) rate declined by 4.0 percentage points. The rate was 45.3 per cent in 2022-23 but declined to 41.3 per cent in 2025. Despite this drop, the rate is still very high. Although there are policies and programmes to address the issue of the youth still a lot needs to be done to engage them in school, employment, or training.

Indicator 8.8.2: Level of national compliance of labour rights (freedom of association and collective bargaining) based on International Labour Organisation (ILO) textual sources and national legislation, by sex and migrant status.

In 2022, The Gambia registered considerable compliance in labour rights by making periodical inspections and sensitisations at workplaces. In 2023, the country continued to make progress with the establishment of industrial tribunals in Kanifing, Brikama, and Basse. In 2024, the Gambia continued to make progress with the signing of a collective agreement between employers and employees (MoTIE, 2024).

Indicator 8.b.1: Existence of a developed and operationalised National Strategy for Youth Employment, as a distinct strategy or as part of a national employment strategy

Following the enactment of the National Youth Policy (NYP) of The Gambia 2019-2028, the Ministry of Youth and Sports (MoYS) developed a Strategic Plan 2024-2029 to implement the

policy. There is also the National Employment Policy and Implementation Plan (2019-2024) which also addresses the issue of youth employment.

The government through the RF-NDP seeks to address youth unemployment by promoting industry, intensive commercial agriculture, and improved and adequate skills training for the youthful population. Actions will be taken to make the agro-food sector more climate-smart and attractive to young people by enhancing access to farmland, with accompanying investments; encouraging and enhancing youth involvement in artisanal fishing and its related value chains; operationalising the National Youth Service Scheme for university graduates and the UTG graduate schemes are opportunities to enhance youth employment.

It is important to note that youth in The Gambia is defined as the population aged 15-35 years as in the NYP and African Youth Charter (AYC).



6.1.4 SDG 14 Life Below Water

Indicator 14.2.1: Use of ecosystem-based approaches to managing marine areas

The Gambia is notable for progressively implementing the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries, through the FAO EAF- Nansen Programme (MoFWR, 2024).

14.6.1: Progress by countries in the degree of implementation of international instruments aiming to combat illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing: In 2024, the Gambia developed the National Fisheries Monitoring Control Surveillance (MCS) Plan which began in the same year, 2024, and also reviewed the National Fisheries Act (2007) and Regulations (MoFWR, 2024).

Indicator 14.b.1: Progress on the degree of application of a legal/regulatory/policy/institutional framework that recognises and protects access rights for small-scale fisheries:

Following the development of the Fisheries and Aquaculture Strategic Plan (2022-2026), and the Fisheries and Aquaculture Policy (2022-2031), The Gambia developed Fisheries Amended Regulations 2024, Tanbi Co-Management Plan 2024, and Sardinella Management Plan (MoFWR).

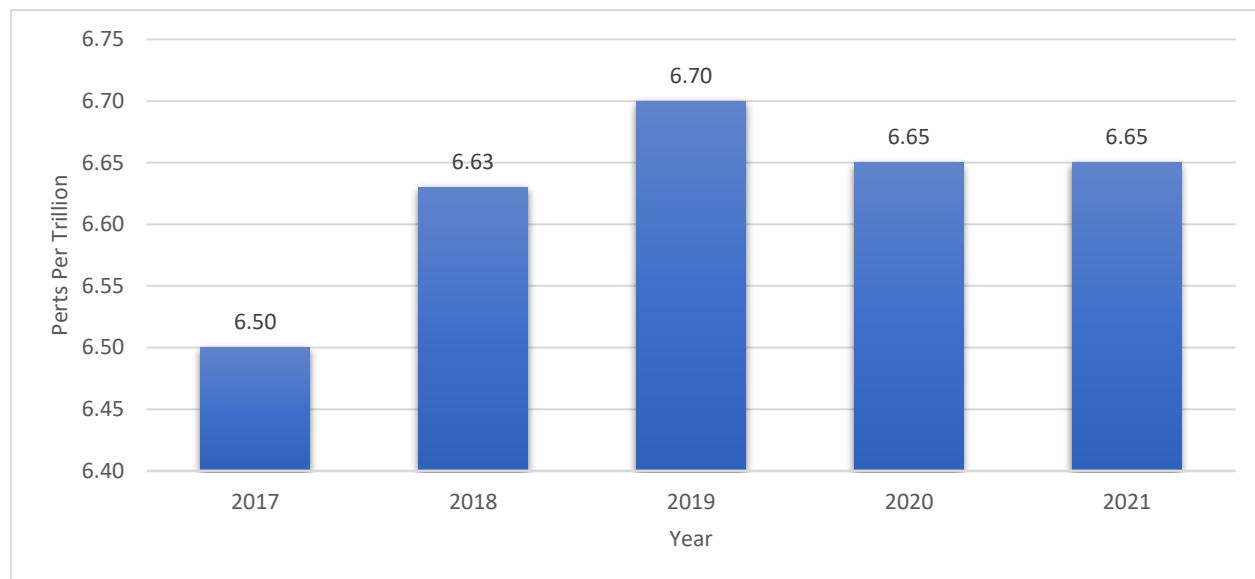
Indicator 14.3.1: Average marine acidity (pH) measured at the agreed suite of representative sampling stations

The Gambia is among the countries using ecosystem-based approaches to managing marine areas. Since VNR 2020, Gambia has continued implementing the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries, through the FAO EAF- Nansen Programme (MoFWR). The Gambia has also made progress in

2024 in the degree of implementation of international instruments aiming to combat illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing.

The average marine acidity (pH) data shows that acidity (pH) has remained high over the period. After reaching 6.70 in 2019 there was a slight decrease to 6.65 in 2020 and slightly increased to 6.67 in 2021 (see Figure 6.8).

Figure 6.8: Average marine acidity (pH) measured at the agreed suite of representative sampling stations

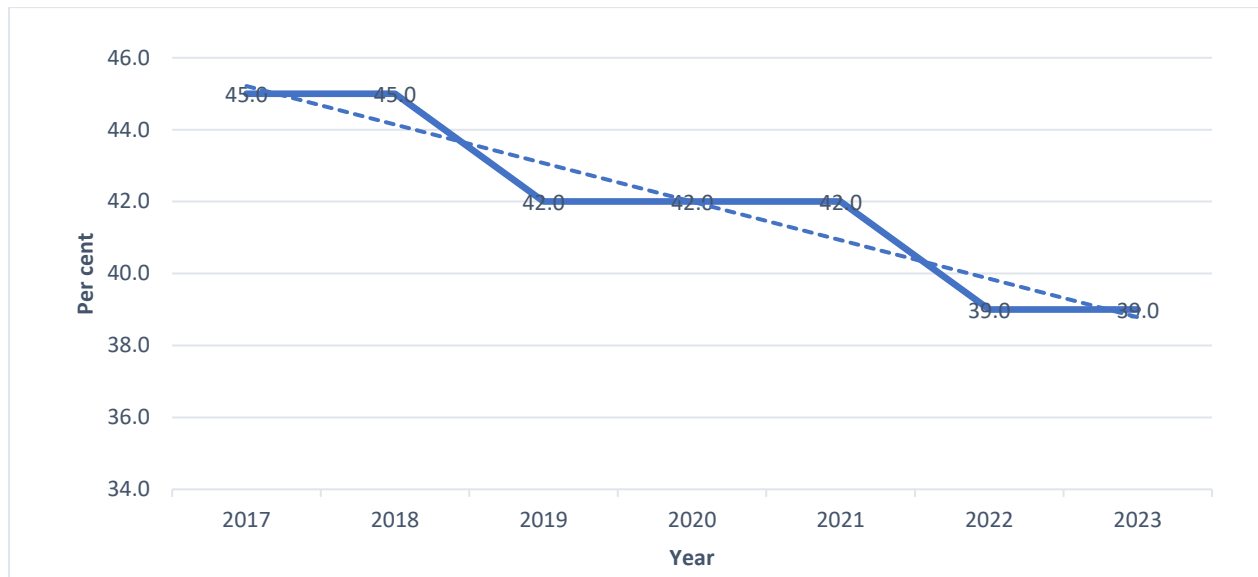


Source: MoFWR

Indicator 14.4.1: Proportion of fish stocks within biologically sustainable levels

According to the SDGs, a fish stock of which abundance is at or greater than the level, that can produce the Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY) is classified as biologically sustainable. In contrast, when abundance falls below the MSY level, the stock is considered biologically unsustainable. It can be seen in Figure 6.9 that the fish stock in The Gambia reported to be biologically sustainable has been declining since 2017. The proportion ranged from 45.0 per cent in 2017 to 39.0 per cent in 2023 (see Figure 6.14).

Figure 6.9: Fish stocks within biologically sustainable levels

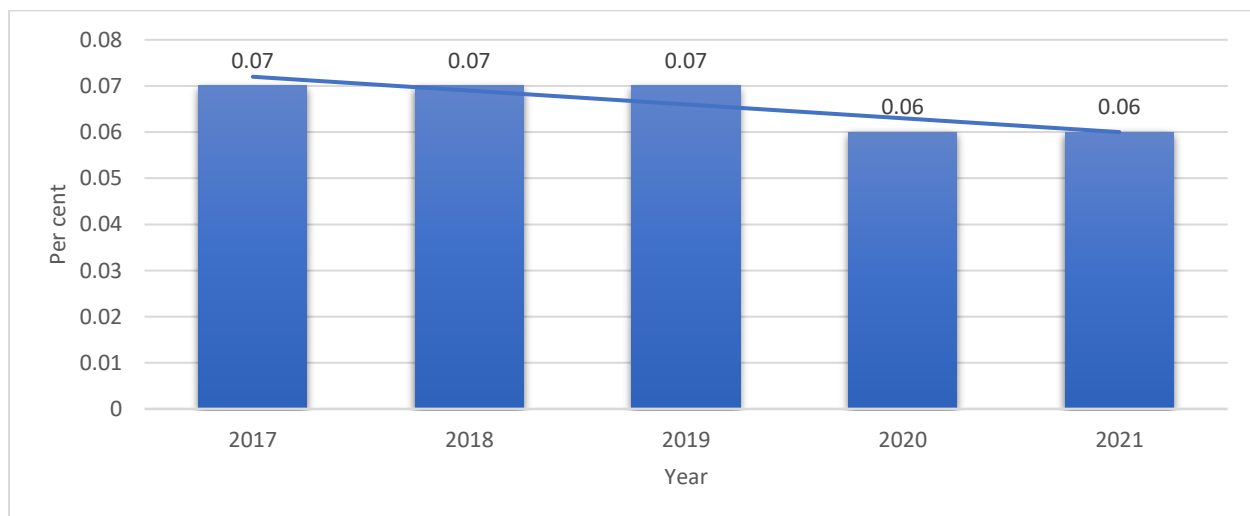


Source: MoFWR

Indicator 14.5.1: Coverage of protected areas in relation to marine areas

The Gambia has implemented an ecosystem-based approach through the management of protected areas and other area-based conservation measures such as Nuimi Biosphere Reserve 131,000 ha. In terms of coverage of the protected area, the country has a total of 94, 975.1 ha of which 92,199.1 ha is coastal and marine. However, since the last VNR, the sector continued to face financial and technical capacity challenges to carry out scientific research to address the problem of data for the sector and enforcement of the Fisheries Act. The only data available spans the period 2017 to 2021 therefore progress cannot be measured (see Figure 6.10).

Figure 6.10: Coverage of protected areas in relation to marine areas



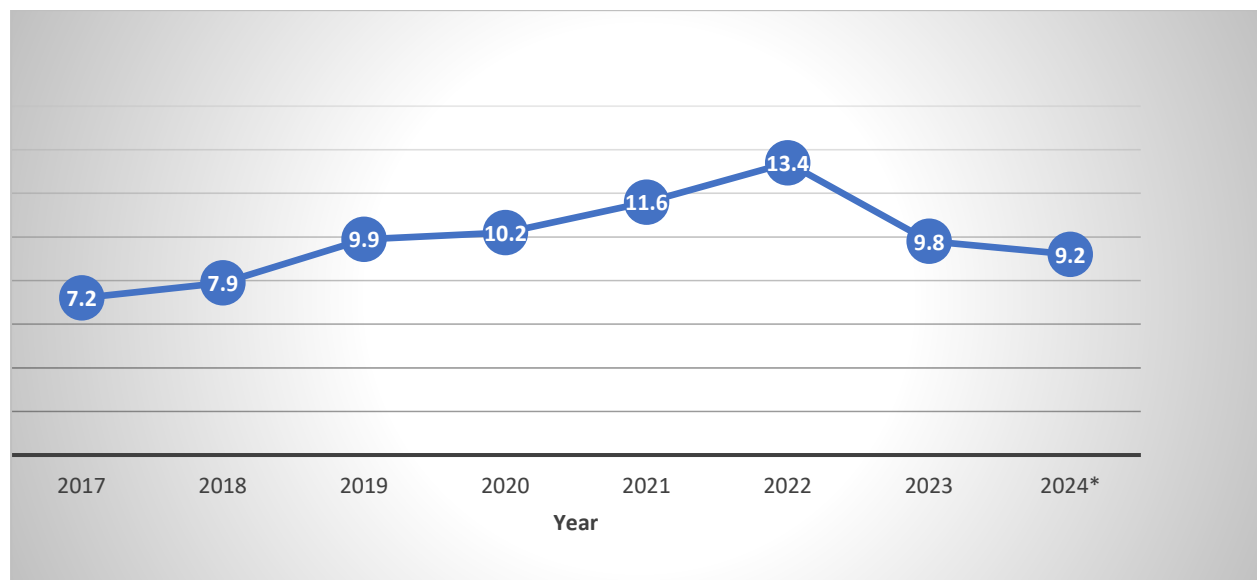
Source: MoFWR

Indicator 14.7.1: Sustainable fisheries as a proportion of GDP in Small Island developing States, least developed countries, and all countries

The Gambia does not measure sustainable fisheries as a proportion of GDP but it measures the contribution of fisheries and aquaculture to GDP.

Over the years the contribution of fisheries and aquaculture to GDP has increased from 7.2 per cent in 2017 to 13.4 per cent in 2022 but declined to 9.8 per cent and 9.2 per cent in 2023 and 2024 respectively (see Figure 6.11).

Figure 6.11: Contribution of Fisheries and Aquaculture to GDP



Source: GBoS

* Provisional



6.1.5 SDG 17 Partnership for the Goals

The Gambia is committed to partnerships in the implementation of the SDGs. The interconnections between the SDGs are highlighted in the 2023 SDG Insights report which also identifies priority investments that could hasten the achievement of several goals. These include fostering full employment and decent work (SDG 8.5), creating transparent institutions (SDG 16.6), and increasing disaster resilience (SDG 1.5). The report highlights the necessity of improved financial flows that are in line with the Paris Agreement and the SDGs, especially by implementing an Integrated National Financing Framework (INFF) that supports these priorities.

Indicator 17.1: Total government revenue as a proportion of GDP, by source

The Gambia's domestic revenue (Tax and non-tax excluding grants) as a proportion of GDP was 11.6 per cent in 2017, it then increased to 12.7 per cent, 13.1 per cent, 14.7 per cent in 2018, 2019, and 2020, respectively. However, it slightly declined to 14.5 per cent and 12.4 per cent in 2021 and 2022, respectively, before increasing to 12.7 per cent and 14.2 per cent in 2023 and 2024, respectively - MoFEA.⁵

Indicator 17.8.1: Proportion of individuals using the Internet

Findings of MICS 2018 show that the proportion of women aged 15-49 who have used the internet during the last three months preceding the survey was 42.1 per cent whilst for their male counterparts in the same age group, the proportion was higher with 59.6 per cent. The DHS 2019-20 results compared to MICS 2018 show that the proportion of women aged 15-49 has increased to 62 per cent while for males the proportion was 73.0 per cent. This is an indication that still women are lagging behind men using the internet. Updated data is not available on this indicator; therefore, progress cannot be measured.

Indicator 17.8.2: Number of countries that have national statistical legislation that complies with the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics

The Gambia has a Statistics Act 2005 which complies with the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics

Indicator 17.18.3: Number of countries with a national statistical plan that is fully funded and under implementation, by source of funding

The Gambia has a National Strategy for the Development of Statistics (NSDS III) 2024-2028 but not fully funded. Currently, funding for statistical operations other than the government, funding for statistical activities is mainly from development partners (Harmonizing and Improving Statistics in West and Central Africa – HISWACA, UNICEF, UNFPA, UNDP, FAO, IOM, EU, AfDB, WB, ECOWAS, UNECA, and others).

Indicator 17.19.2: Proportion of countries that (a) have conducted at least one population and housing census in the last 10 years; and (b) have achieved 100 per cent birth registration and 80 per cent death registration

The Gambia conducted the Population and Housing Census 2024. There is no available data for 17.19.2 (b), therefore, progress cannot be measured.

⁵ The data provided does not cover the Total government revenue.

6.1. Progress on Other SDGs (SDG 1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15, 16)



6.2.1 SDG 1 No Poverty

Indicator 1.1.1: Proportion of the population living below the international poverty line by sex, age, employment status, and geographic location (urban/rural)

The proportion of the population living below the international poverty line was 17.2 per cent (WB 2020).

Indicator 1.2.1: Proportion of population living below the national poverty line, by sex and age

Poverty rates in The Gambia, according to the Integrated Household Surveys (IHS) fell from 58 per cent in 2003 to 48.1 per cent in 2010 before slightly increasing to 48.6 per cent in 2015/16. However, the findings of the 2020 IHS show that due to the impact of COVID-19, poverty increased to 53.4 per cent.

The RF-NDP is built on seven pillars, each representing a specific area of focus with poverty anchored on pillar three among others, i.e. Macroeconomic Stability and Growth, and Maintaining and enhancing the stability and growth of Gambia's economy.

Indicator 1.4.1: Proportion of the population living in households with access to basic services

In 2025, only 0.2 per cent of households met the full criteria for access to basic services, compared to 1.2 per cent in 2021. While this appears to be a decline, it reflects a stricter and more comprehensive measurement framework adopted in the 2025 SDGs Survey.

The updated 2025 definition requires households to simultaneously meet multiple conditions, including access to: basic drinking water, improved sanitation, handwashing facilities, clean cooking fuel, waste disposal systems, healthcare services, road or transport infrastructure, education services (at least one household member attaining basic education—a new criterion introduced in 2025), information services, including broadband internet.

This expanded and multidimensional definition presents a more holistic view of what constitutes access to basic services. The significantly lower figure for 2025 therefore reflects the higher bar set for service adequacy, rather than a deterioration in conditions. It highlights critical service gaps and underscores the importance of integrated approaches to infrastructure and human development.

Indicator 1.5.1: Number of deaths, missing persons, and directly affected persons attributed to disasters per 100,000 population

The number of deaths per 100,000 was 0.1 (2016), 0.3 (2017), 14.5 (2018), and 13.0 (2019). The number of affected persons per 100,000 was 1569.2, 3023.3, 4090.1, and 4115.8 over the same period. The number of missing persons per 100,000 was not computed during the said period. There is no up to date data for this indicator, therefore progress cannot be measured

Indicator 1.5.3: Number of countries that adopt and implement national disaster risk reduction strategies in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030

The Gambia has a strategy that is in line with the Sendai framework. The National Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) strategy is being implemented in all local government areas

Indicator 1.a.2: Proportion of total government spending on essential services (education, health and social protection)

It is evident from the table below that the proportion of government spending on essential services has steadily increased over the years. Ranging from 19.0 per cent in 2018 to 26.0 per cent in 2023. In 2020, the government increased expenditure on health due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but it subsequently decreased in 2021 but picked up again in 2022 and 2023.

Table 6.3 Proportion of total government spending on essential services (education, health, and social protection)

Sector	2018 (GMD '000)	2019 (GMD '000)	2020 (GMD '000)	2021 (GMD '000)	2022 (GMD '000)	2023 (GMD '000)
<i>Education</i>	1,658,518	2,255,205	2,449,050	2,838,473	3,278,660	3,713,632
<i>Health</i>	857955	1,064,282	2,013,580	1,699,086	1,868,312	1,884,661
<i>Social protection</i>	0.0756	8.8205	11.3470	15.1575	8.1653	8.2663
<i>Total</i>	2,516,483. 08	3,319,495. 82	4,462,641. 35	4,537,574. 157	5,146,980. 165	5,598,301. 266
Total Budget	13,270,967	15,635,652	19,189,930	20,774,604	20,594,751	21,684,075
Proportion	19.0	21.0	23.0	22.0	25.0	26.0

Source: MoFEA Approved Budgets



6.2.2 SDG2 Zero Hunger

Limited agricultural productivity and vulnerability to climate change threaten food security. Improving agricultural practices and mitigating the effects of climate change are critical to ensuring access to enough nutritious food.

Indicator 2.2.1: Prevalence of stunting (height for age <-2 standard deviations from the median of the World Health Organization (WHO) Child Growth Standards) among children under 5 years of age

The MICS 2018 findings revealed that the percentage of children under the age of 5 who fall below (a) minus two standard deviations (moderate and severe), and (b) minus three standard deviations (severe) of the median height for age of the WHO standard was 13.9 per cent and 2.7 per cent respectively. There is no up to date data for this indicator, therefore progress cannot be measured

Indicator 2.2.2: Prevalence of malnutrition (weight for height $>+2$ or <-2 standard deviations from the median of the WHO Child Growth Standards) among children under 5 years of age, by type (wasting and overweight)

The 2019-20 findings of The Gambia Demographic and Health Survey Key Indicator Report revealed that the percentage of children, with the prevalence of malnutrition, under the age of 5 who fall below minus two standard deviations (moderate and severe), and those who fall below minus three standard deviations (severe) of the median weight for the height of the WHO standard were 9.1 per cent and 0.6 per cent respectively. There is no up to date data for this indicator; therefore, progress cannot be measured.

Indicator 2.2.3: Prevalence of anaemia in women aged 15 to 49 years, by pregnancy status (percentage)

The prevalence of anaemia among women of childbearing age was reported at 44.3 per cent in 2019-20, compared to 60 per cent in 2013 (GDHS 2019-20).



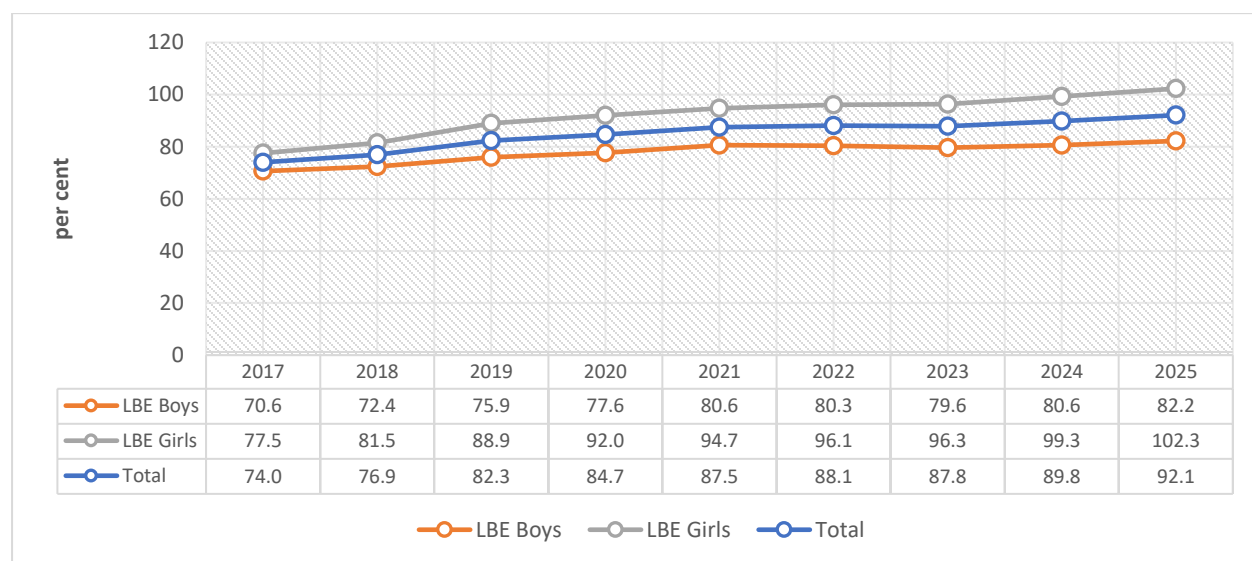
6.2.3 SDG 4 Quality Education

Indicator 4.1.2: Completion rate (primary education, lower secondary education, upper secondary education)

Completion rate Lower Basic Education (LBE) – Primary

The completion rate at the primary level, although higher among girls compared to boys, shows an increasing trend. The increase has been consistent over the years, increasing from 77.5 per cent in 2017 to 102.3 per cent for girls as of 2025. A similar trend was observed for boys with completion increasing from 70.6 per cent in 2017 to 82.2 per cent in 2025 (see Figure 6.12).

Figure 6.12 Completion rate Lower Basic Education (LBE) – Primary

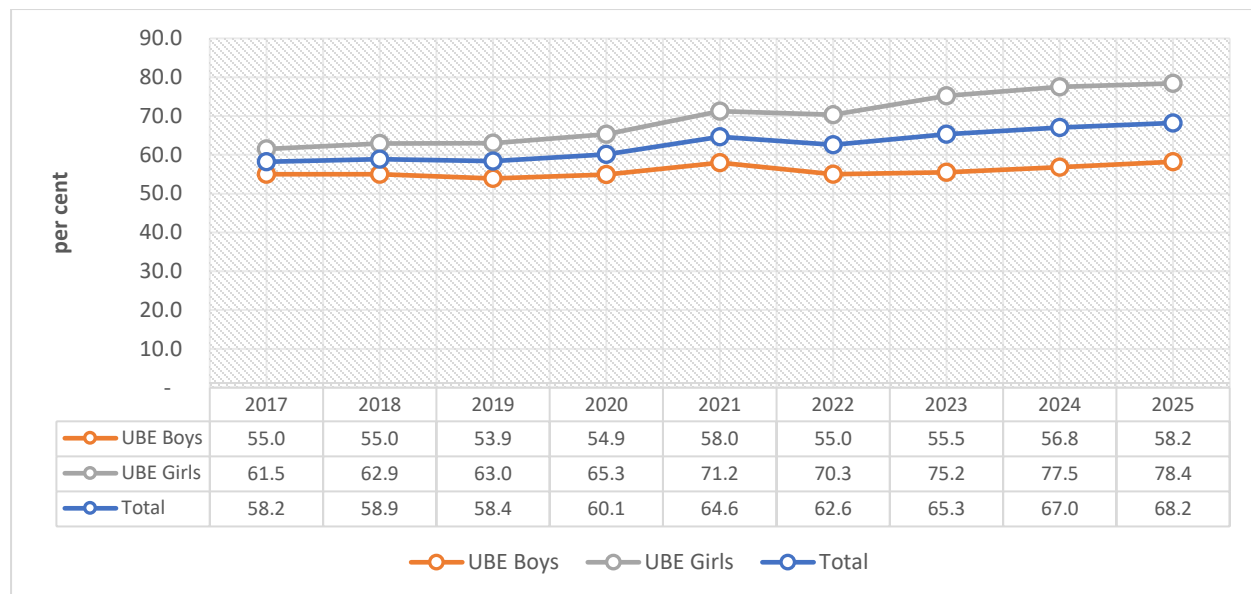


Source: Education Management Information System (EMIS) – MoBSE

Completion rate Upper Basic Education (UBE) – Lower Secondary Education

At the lower basic level, higher completion rates were also observed for both girls and boys. The completion rates were lower at this level compared to the primary level completion rates. The trend revealed a consistent increase, i.e. 61.5 per cent in 2017 to 78.4 in 2025 for girls and from 55.0 per cent in 2017 to 58.2 per cent (marginal increase) in 2025. The data revealed an overall declining trend in school completion rates as students transition to higher grades (see Figure 6.13).

Figure 6.13 Completion rate Upper Basic Education (UBE) – Lower Secondary Education

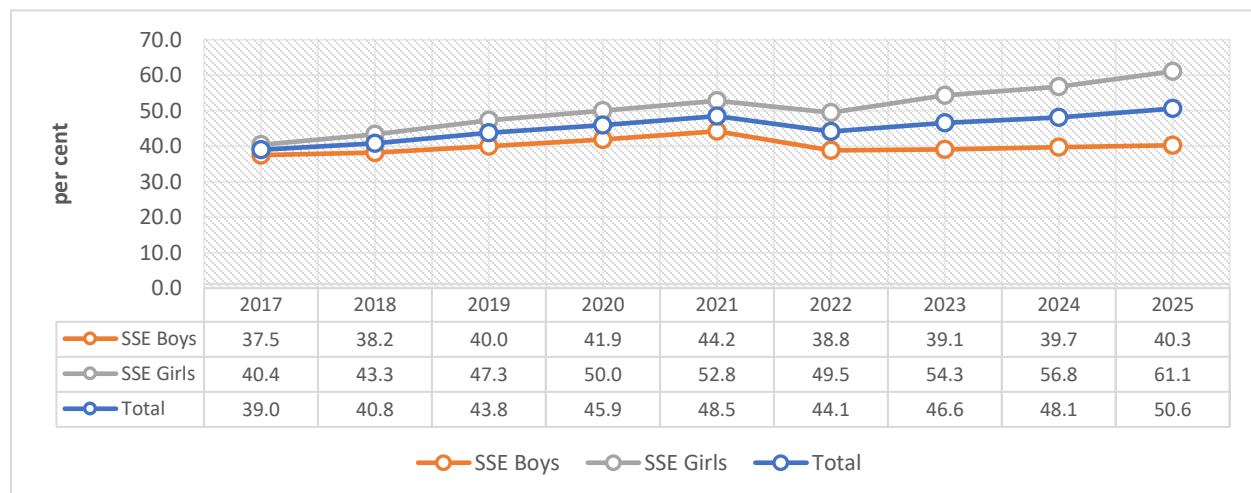


Source: Education Management Information System (EMIS) - MoBSE

Completion rate Senior Secondary Education (SSE) – Upper Secondary Education

At the senior secondary level, completion rates are much lower compared to the primary and upper basic levels. Even though completion rates showed an increasing trend for both girls (i.e. from 40.4 per cent in 2017 to 61.1 per cent in 2025) and boys (from 37.5 per cent in 2017 to 40.3 per cent in 2025) (see Figure 6.14).

Figure 6.14: Completion rate Senior Secondary Education (SSE) – Upper Secondary Education



Source: Education Management Information System (EMIS) - MoBSE

Overall (from Figure 6.12 to 6.14), the data revealed an interesting trend for policy making, where completion rates drop significantly as students transition from one level of education to another, among boys than girls, who complete at higher rates than boys.

Indicator 4.7.1: Extent to which (i) global citizenship education and (ii) education for sustainable development are mainstreamed in (a) national education policies; (b) curricula; (c) teacher education; and (d) student

Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education (MoBSE) accepted Global citizenship education as an ethos that aims to empower learners to engage and assume active roles both locally and globally to face and resolve global challenges to become proactive contributors to a sustainable world. Education for global citizenship helps and enables young people to develop the core competencies, which allow them to actively engage with the world, and help make it a more just and sustainable place. The ministry is implemented through a whole-school approach, involving everyone from learners themselves to the wider community. This will include the promotion of social justice and a culture of peace as well as the appreciation of diversity and the importance of sustainable development. Global citizenship will therefore be mainstreamed throughout the education process.

Currently, all schools are mandated to develop comprehensive Mission and Vision Statements that will guide the institution as a unified national bound to develop learners to the common purpose of complementing a sense of duty and loyalty to the nation and awareness of patriotism as well as elements that foster societal cohesion.

There exist guiding principles for education in response to global citizenry embedded in the (2016-2030) education policy. In terms of curriculum, the section through the Curriculum Directorate has embarked on a review, upgrading, and harmonization of the curricula across all levels based on explicit learning objectives upon which assessments will be more reliably based on a school garden, Life skills education – HIV/AIDS, National language, gender-sensitive curriculum, and special education

Indicator 4.c.1: Proportion of teachers with the minimum required qualifications, by education level

The Gambia has experienced an increase in the proportion of teachers meeting the minimum qualification in Lower Basic School (LBS), Upper Basic School (UBS), and Senior Secondary School (SSS) over the period. For LBS, although the proportions have been fluctuating at least 87 per cent of teachers have the minimum required qualifications. For UBS, a similar pattern has been observed; the lowest proportion was 82.6 per cent in 2017. For SSS, the proportion was at least 96 per cent over the period.

Table 6.4 Proportion of teachers with the minimum required qualifications (% Qualified Teachers)

Year	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
LBS	88.0	87.0	88.0	88.0	88.0	88.0	90.0	90.0	89.0
UBS	82.6	94.2	95.3	94.9	95.1	94.7	95.2	95.6	94.9
SSS	96.2	96.7	97.0	97.2	96.5	97.4	97.8	97.9	97.1

Indicator 4.1.1: Proportion of children and young people (a) in grades 2/3; (b) at the end of primary; and (c) at the end of lower secondary achieving at least a minimum proficiency level in (i) reading and (ii) mathematics, by sex

The indicator measures the proportion of children and young people achieving at least a minimum proficiency level in reading and mathematics at three stages of education: early grades (grades 2/3), end of primary, and end of lower secondary

Children with foundational reading and number skills

According to the 2018 MICS report, the percentage of children who completed three foundational reading tasks in the ages 7-14 years was 12.4 per cent compared to 2.7 per cent on age for grade 2/3. Children attending grade 2/3 was 5.2 per cent. The proportion of children who completed four foundational number tasks for children aged 7-14 was 8.6 per cent, while for those aged grade 2/3 and attending grade 2/3 was 1.7 and 3.7 respectively.

Indicator 4.2.1: Proportion of children aged 24–59 months who are developmentally on track in health, learning, and psychosocial well-being, by sex

In the MICS 2018, the percentage of children aged 36-59 months who are developmentally on track in at least three of the following four domains: literacy numeracy, physical, social-emotional, and learning was 67.0 per cent. There is no up to date data for this indicator, therefore progress cannot be measured.

Indicator 4.2.2: Participation rate in organized learning (one year before the official primary entry age), by sex

The percentage of children in the relevant age group (one year before the official primary school entry age) who are attending an early childhood education programme or primary school according to MICS 2018 was 74.6 per cent. There is no up to date data for this indicator, therefore progress cannot be measured.

Indicator 4.3.1: Participation rate of youth and adults in formal and non-formal education and training in the previous 12 months, by sex

The indicator helps assess access to lifelong learning opportunities, with data disaggregated by age group (youth aged 15–24 and adults aged 25–64), sex, and residence.

From the findings of the 2025 SDGs Monitoring Survey, data on youth (15-24) participation in education or training in the past 12 months was 32.5 per cent. Comparing the 2025 and the 2021 SDGs survey results, participation declined slightly overall. Male youth participation decreased from 36.7 per cent to 34.1 per cent, and female youth participation declined from 32.5 per cent to 31.3 per cent.

Indicator 4.4.1 Proportion of youth and adults with information and communications technology (ICT) skills, by type of skill

The proportion of women aged 15-24 with ICT skills was 7.3 per cent while for males the proportion was 17.4 per cent. For men aged 15-49, the proportion was 17.3 per cent, and for females was 6.0 per cent (MICS 2018). There is no up to date data for this indicator, therefore progress cannot be measured.



6.2.4 SDG-6 (Clean Water and Sanitation)

Indicator 6.1.1: Proportion of population using safely managed drinking water services

The (GDHS 2019-20) shows that significant progress has been made on access to safe drinking water. Overall, 95 per cent of the population has access to improved water sources, of which 96 per cent is urban and 92 per cent rural. Despite this significant gain, the challenge with regard to water is the proportion of households using safely managed drinking water.

In 2018, the proportion of the population using safely managed drinking water was 33.8 per cent (MICS 2018). The rural-urban disparity shows significant gaps, with 49.8 per cent of the population in the Urban areas and only about 2 per cent of the rural population consuming safely managed drinking water. This was the first time data was collected on this indicator and has not been updated since then. Currently, the process of conducting MICS7 has started and the indicator will be measured again.

Indicator 6.2.1: Proportion of population using (a) safely managed sanitation services and (b) a hand-washing facility with soap and water

According to MICS 2018, the percentage of households using a safely managed sanitation facility was 61.8 per cent. However, the percentage of household members with a handwashing facility where water and soap or detergent are present was 30 per cent.

Indicator 6.5.1: Degree of integrated water resources management

The Gambia has registered increasing gains from 30.0 per cent in 2017 to 37.0 per cent in 2023. The most notable improvements were recorded in the enabling environment (from 34.0% to 42.0%) and institutions and participation (36.0% to 43.0%), reflecting ongoing efforts to enhance policy frameworks and coordination. However, financing remains the weakest dimension (25.0%), highlighting the need for dedicated national budget allocation and innovative funding mechanisms. Despite this progress, The Gambia remains below the African average of 49.0 per cent and the global average of 57.0 per cent in 2023.

Meanwhile, a major achievement in 2023 was the advancement of transboundary water cooperation through the Senegalo-Mauritanian Aquifer Basin (SMAB) initiative, culminating in a draft agreement between The Gambia, Guinea Bissau, Mauritania and Senegal aimed at establishing joint governance of the shared basin. Additionally, The Gambia acceded to both the UN Watercourses Convention and the UNECE Water Convention in July 2023, signaling a strong political commitment to regional cooperation and international water law. These milestones are expected to significantly enhance IWRM implementation and support the attainment of SDG 6 targets.

Indicator 6.5.2: Proportion of transboundary basin area with an operational arrangement for water cooperation

The SDG indicator 6.5.2 measures the percentage of a country's transboundary basin area covered by operational arrangements for water cooperation which is a key indicator for assessing progress. The country has registered notable progress in improving cooperation over its transboundary water resources across three reporting cycles (2017, 2020, and 2023) with 49.0 per cent, 46.9 per cent, and 95.3 per cent respectively. The high score in 2023 reflects a strong commitment to transboundary water cooperation. Continued implementation of the SMAB framework and the two UN Water Conventions will be essential to sustaining this momentum and ensuring equitable and sustainable water resource management across borders.



6.2.5 SDG 7 Affordable and Clean Energy

Policies in the Energy Sector such as the National Energy Efficiency Action Plan (NEEAP) of The Gambia (2015-2030) and the Renewable Energy Act 2013 are geared towards increasing access to energy but also promoting Low Carbon Development and reducing Carbon Emissions for sustainable development. The government prioritizes and continues to carry out national and regional renewable energy projects such as the 150MW Regional Solar PV power plant in Soma (IPP); the 20MW Jambur solar PV project; and the 10.5MW NAMA solar PV project to meet the anticipated goal of increasing renewable energy:

Indicator 7.1.1: Proportion of the population with access to electricity

According to the Malaria Indicator Survey (MIS), 2017, 59 per cent of the population has access to electricity. This has increased to 60.3 per cent in 2018, with rural areas accounting for 26.8 per cent and urban areas 76.4 per cent MICS (2018). At the national level, access to electricity is 62.1

cent in 2019-20 (GDHS) with rural and urban areas accounting for 24.7 per cent and 78.6 per cent respectively. The government is implementing the PACD project to bridge this gap between rural and urban areas in terms of access to electricity and with the NAWEC rural electrification project, this gap could be further enhanced.

Indicator 7.1.2: Proportion of population with primary reliance on clean fuels and technology

On the proportion of the population with primary reliance on clean fuels and technology, the MICS 2018 recorded 2.6 per cent at the national level and by place of residence the proportions are urban (3.7%) and rural (0.4%). However, the GDHS 2019-20 recorded 2.5 per cent national, 0.1 per cent rural, and 3.5 per cent urban. There is no updated data to assess progress on this indicator.

Indicator 7.2.1: Renewable energy share in the total final energy consumption

On indicator 7.2.1, renewable energy share in the total final energy consumption is at 2.0 per cent in 2019 - Ministry of Petroleum and Energy (MoPE). There is no updated data to assess progress on this indicator.

Indicator 7.3.1: Energy intensity measured in terms of primary energy and GDP

On indicator 7.3.1, energy intensity measured in terms of primary energy and GDP, the energy intensity according to Sustainable Energy for All (SE4ALL) (2012), is 0.5 per cent. There is no updated data to assess progress on this indicator.



6.2.6 SDG 9: Industries, Innovation and Infrastructure

Promoting innovation, and attracting investments are crucial for advancing SDG 9. The government seeks to achieve this objective as a strategic priority in the RF-NDP by constructing or updating infrastructure to support a thriving private sector and improve access to social services. To enhance air travel and road accessibility, efforts have been made to modernize airport infrastructure and build high-quality roads. According to the 2022 VNR, significant challenges remained in improving SDG 9.

Indicator 9.1.1: Proportion of the rural population who live within 2 km of an all-season road

According to the SDG monitoring survey, the proportion of the rural population who live on 2 km on all-season roads is 63.4 per cent in 2021 which rose to 72.4 per cent in 2025. An increase has been observed with regards to the proportion of the rural population who live on 2 km on all-season roads between 2021 and 2025 with 9.0 per cent.

Indicator 9.1.2: Passenger and freight volumes, by mode of transport

On Passenger and freight volumes, by mode of transport in 2016, air passenger stood at 171,055 while freight was 1,766,127 kg. This decreased to 163,337 and 1,395,575 kg for air and passenger respectively. In 2018, it slightly increased to 209,343 (air passenger) and 1,451,465 kg (freight). In 2019, air passengers doubled to 474,033 with freight accounting for 1,676,356 kg. In 2020, both

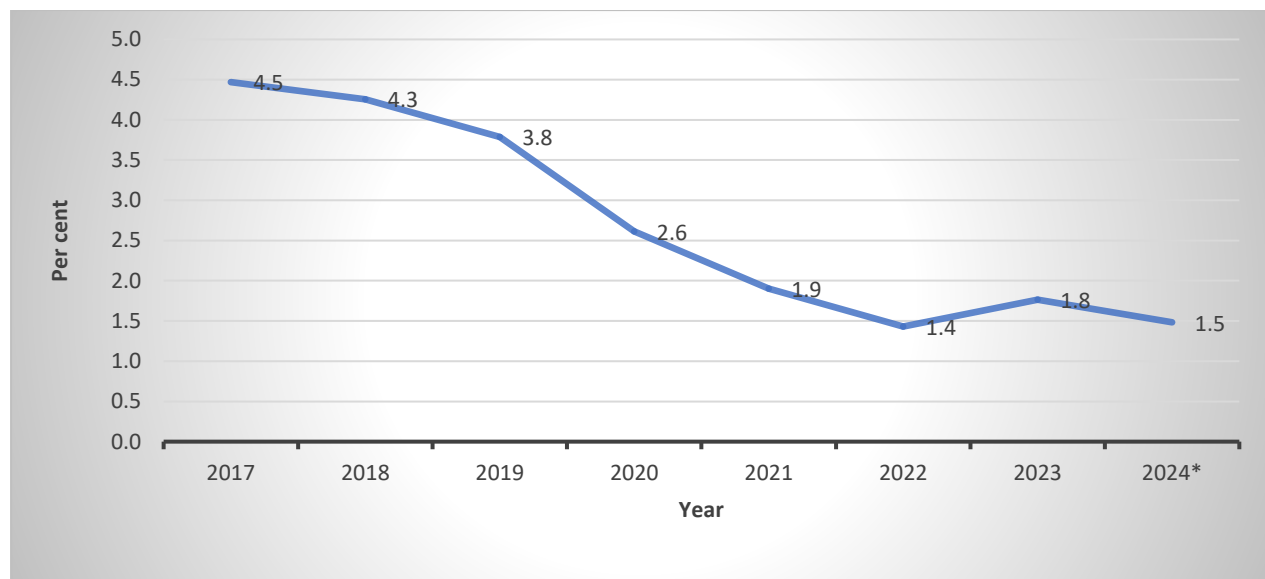
air passenger and freight dropped to 196,033 and 1,145,901 kg respectively. In 2021, 2022 and 2023 air passengers consistently rose from 199,939, 356,865, and 418,807 respectively. However, freight in the same period rose to 1,502,444 kg (2021), dropping to 1,441,438 kg (2022) and rising again to 1,630,986 kg (2023) (Transport Statistics Summary Report 2023, GBoS).

Indicator 9.2.1: Manufacturing value added as a proportion of GDP and per capita

This indicator has three sub-indicators and they are:

1. Manufacturing value added as a proportion of GDP

Figure 6.12 Manufacturing gross value added as a proportion of GDP to be declining. The proportion ranged from 4.5 per cent to 1.5 per cent in 2024.



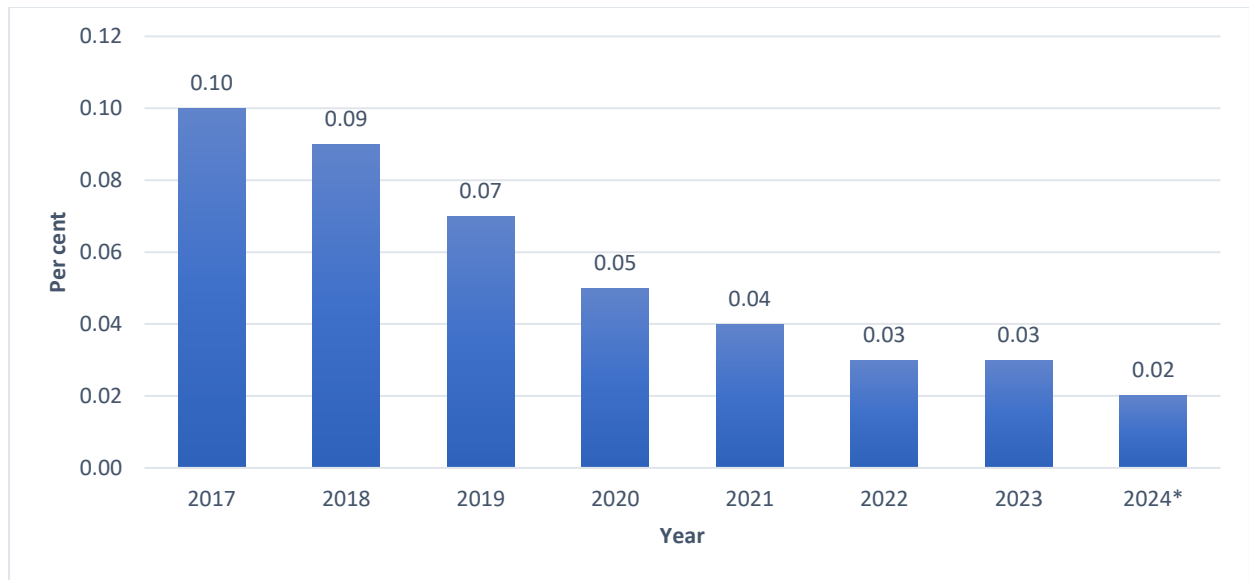
Source: GBoS

* Provisional

2. Manufacturing value added (current United States dollars) as a proportion of GDP

Presented in Figure is manufacturing value added (USD) as a proportion of GDP. It is observed that the proportion has been declining over the period ranging from 0.10 per cent in 2017

Figure 6.13: Manufacturing value added (USD) as a proportion of GDP



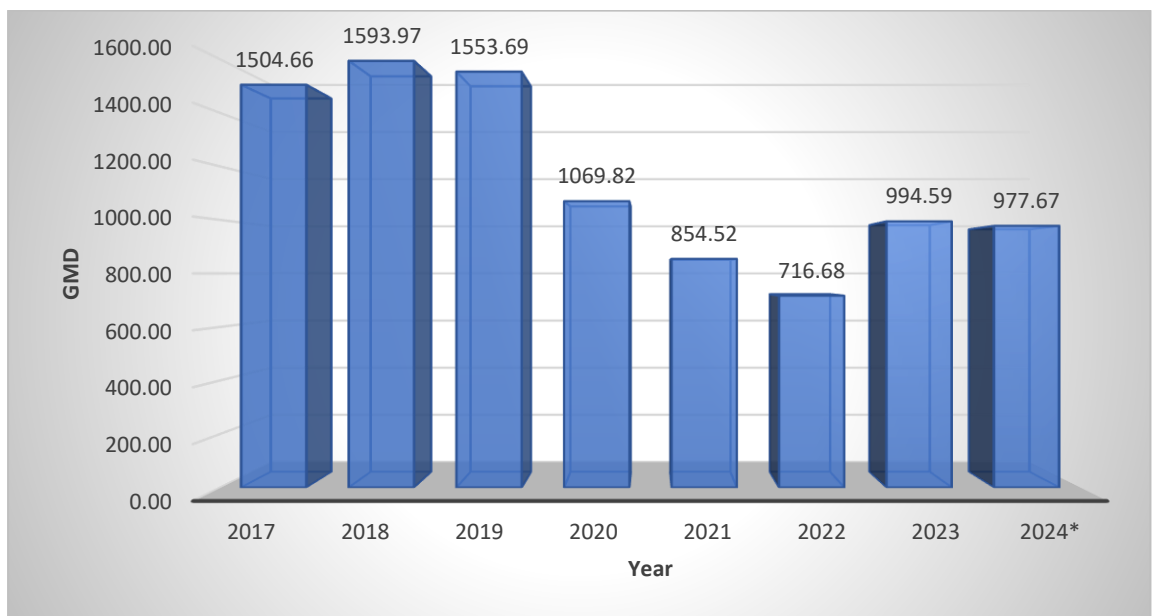
Source: GBoS

* Provisional

3. Manufacturing value added per capita

The manufacturing value added per capita is presented in Figure xx. In 2017, the figure was GMD1,504.66 which increased to GMD1,593.97 in 2018 and declined to GMD716.68 in 2022 then rose to GMD994.59 in 2023 then dropped to GMD977.67 in 2024.

Figure 6.14 Manufacturing value added per capita (GMD)



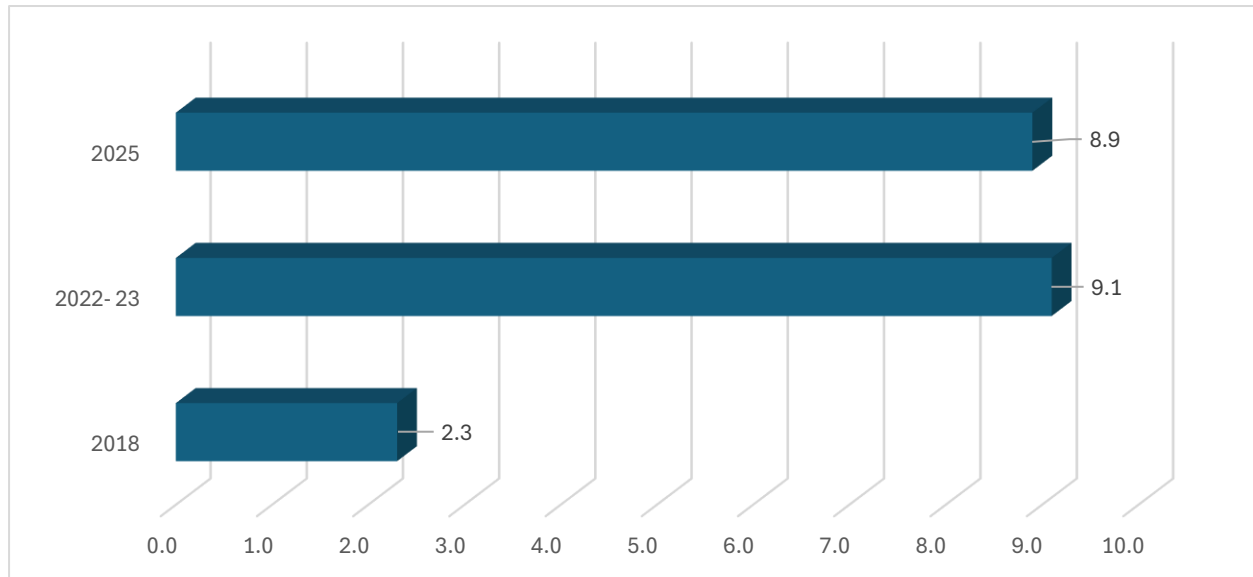
Source: GBoS

* Provisional

Indicator 9.2.2: Manufacturing employment as a proportion of total employment

Manufacturing employment as a proportion of total employment in 2018 was 2.3 which has increased to 9.1 per cent in 2022-23 and dropped slightly to 8.9 per cent in 2025 (see Figure 6.15).

Figure 6.15 Manufacturing Employment as a Proportion of Total Employment



Source: Gambia Labour Force Survey (GLFS- 2018, 2022-23, 2025)

Indicator 9.c.1: Proportion of population covered by a mobile network, by technology

On indicator 9.c.1, the Proportion of the population covered by a mobile network, by technology 2G (98%) 3G (88%), and 4G (7.5%) – (World Bank, 2018). There is no up to date data for this indicator, therefore progress cannot be measured.



6.2.7 SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities

Reducing inequalities (SDG 10) is an important priority, particularly regarding income inequality and disparities in access to basic services. Empowering marginalized groups, implementing social protection measures, and reducing inequalities in service access are essential steps.

Indicator 10.3.1: Proportion of population reporting having personally felt discriminated against or harassed in the previous 12 months based on a ground of discrimination prohibited under international human rights law

The proportion of the population reporting having personally felt discriminated against or harassed in the previous 12 months based on a ground of discrimination prohibited under international human rights law was 23.6 per cent (2021) declining to 15.7 per cent (2025). Males accounted for 15.3 per cent, females 16.0 per cent, with urban 12.0 per cent and rural 22.4 per cent.

Indicator 10.5.1: Financial Soundness Indicators

On indicator 10.5.1, according to the Open Data for Africa, financial soundness has been on a downward trend from 37.3 per cent (2016), 36.4 per cent (2017) and 32 per cent (2018).

Indicator 10.7.3: Number of people who died or disappeared in the process of migration towards an international destination

On indicator 10.7.3, according to data received from the Ministry of Interior (MoI), the number of people who died or disappeared in the process of migration towards an international destination was 200 (2021), 95 (2022), 150 (2023), 350 provisional estimate (2024).



6.2.8 SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities

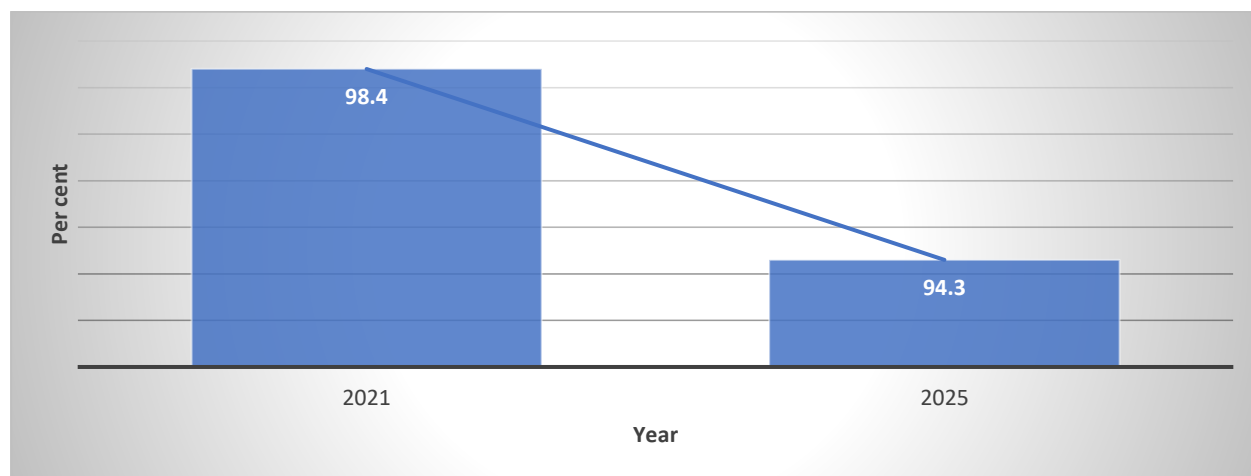
This goal focuses on making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable. It aims to improve urban planning, provide affordable housing, enhance public transportation, and reduce environmental impacts such as water and air pollution and climate change. The goal also emphasizes disaster risk reduction, and stronger community participation to create thriving, liveable spaces for all. According to the results of The Gambia Population and Housing Census (GPHC) 2013, the proportion of the population living in the urban areas was 57.8 per cent. Considering the rate of urbanization in the country, the urban population is expected to increase when the GPHC 2024 results are finalized. As a result, access to essential services such as housing, water and sanitation, waste disposal, and transportation will be under increasing strain.

Indicator 11.1.1: Proportion of urban population living in slums, informal settlements, or inadequate housing

In 2025, 94.3 per cent of the urban population in The Gambia was classified as living in slums, informal settlements, or inadequate housing has reduced slightly from 98.4 per cent in 2021.

The 2025 definition applied for this indicator is comprehensive (same criteria used in 2021). A household is classified as living in slums, informal settlements, or inadequate housing if any of the following conditions apply: Lack of access to improved water, lack of access to improved sanitation, insufficient living area (more than three people per habitable room), non-durable construction or location in a hazardous area, insecure tenure (risk of eviction or lack of legal ownership), housing is unaffordable (costs exceed affordability thresholds), dwelling is inaccessible to marginalized groups and housing is culturally inadequate.

Figure 6.16: Urban population in slums (2021 vs 2025)



Source: 2021 and 2025 SDGs Monitoring Surveys Reports

Indicator 11.5.1: Number of deaths, missing persons, and directly affected persons attributed to disasters per 100,000 population

The number of deaths per 100,000 was 0.1 (2016), 0.3 (2017), 14.5 (2018) and 13.0 (2019). The number of affected persons per 100,000 was 1569.2, 3023.3, 4090.1, and 4115.8 over the same period. The number of missing persons per 100,000 was not computed during the said period.

Indicator 11.6.1: Proportion of municipal solid waste collected and managed in controlled facilities out of total municipal waste generated, by cities

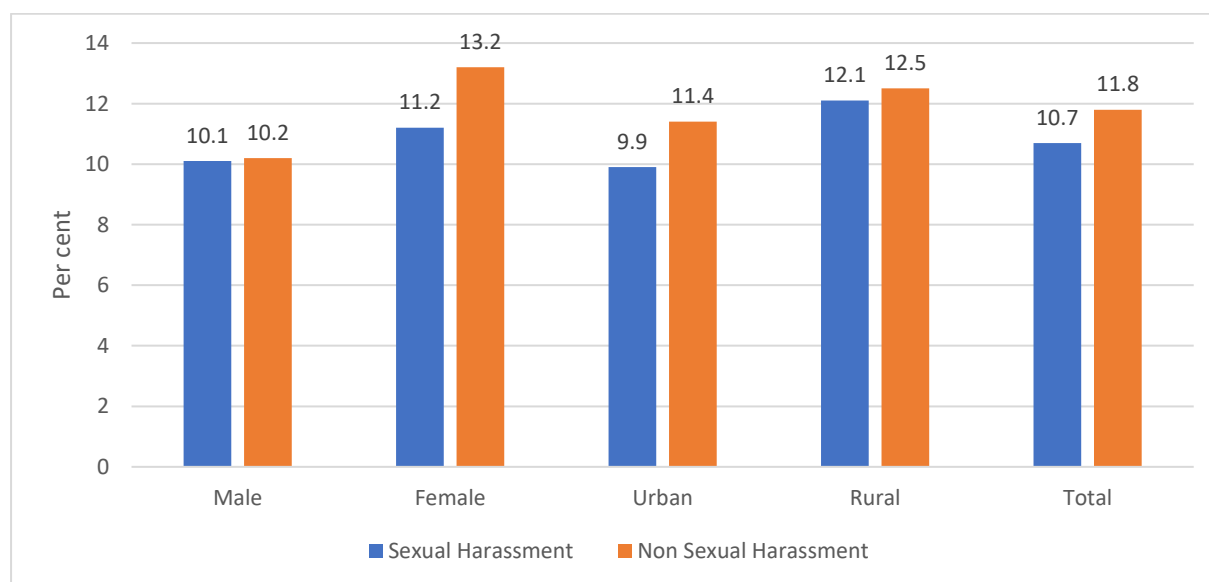
According to the SDG Monitoring Survey (2021), the proportion of the population with access to basic municipal waste collection services was 25.7 per cent (2021). There is no updated data to measure progress on the indicator.

Indicator 11.7.2: Proportion of persons victim of non-sexual or sexual harassment, by sex, age, disability status, and place of occurrence, in the previous 12 months

Figure 6.17 presents the prevalence of non-sexual and sexual harassment in 2025. Rates of harassment are relatively similar between men and women for non-sexual harassment (10.1% vs. 11.2%) but more unequal for sexual harassment, which disproportionately affects women (13.2%) compared to men (10.2%).

Rural residents (12.5%) also report slightly higher levels of sexual harassment than urban residents (11.4%). These patterns suggest persistent gender and geographic disparities in exposure to harassment.

Figure 6.17 Harassment by type, sex and residence (2025)



Source: 2025 SDGs Monitoring Survey Report



6.2.9 SDG 12 Responsible Consumption and Production

Out of the thirteen indicators under goal 12, The Gambia is only able to report indicator 12.7.1

Indicator 12.7.1: Number of countries implementing sustainable public procurement policies and action plans

Recent developments in The Gambia's Public Procurement Authority (GPPA) architecture include a push towards modernisation and digitalisation of public procurement processes, with the implementation of an e-GP Regulations system and the development of a procurement portal. The GPPA is also actively involved in ensuring compliance with public procurement laws and promoting best practices among procuring organisations.



6.2.10. SDG 13 Climate Action

The Gambia continues to demonstrate strong leadership in tackling the climate crisis, despite having made the least contribution to it. The Gambia's second Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) is the only one with goals that align with the Paris Agreement's goal of limiting global warming to less than 1.5 degrees Celsius, according to the Climate Action Tracker 2021 rating. Significant mitigation potential through sectoral approaches using the circular economy is indicated by the second NDC's goal to increase the target for reducing emissions from 45.4 percent to 49.7 percent by 2030.

Indicator 13.1.1: Number of deaths, missing persons, and directly affected persons attributed to disasters per 100,000 population

On indicator 13.3.1, Number of deaths per 100,000 was 0.1 (2016), 0.3 (2017), 14.5 (2018) and 13.0 (2019). The number of affected persons per 100,000 was 1569.2, 3023.3, 4090.1, and 4115.8 over the same period. The number of missing persons per 100,000 was not computed during the said period.



6.2.11. SDG 15 Life on Land

Indicator 15.1.1: Forest area as a proportion of total land area

On indicator 15.1.1, According to the National Forest Assessment Report (2010), the total forest area was reduced by 19.5 per cent (from 525000 ha in 1998 to 423000 ha in 2010). There is no updated data to measure progress on this indicator.

Indicator 15.1.2: Proportion of important sites for terrestrial and freshwater biodiversity that are covered by protected areas, by ecosystem type

On **indicator 15.1.2**, The Department of Parks and Wildlife: Coastal and Marine Report (2017) estimates terrestrial and freshwater as a percentage of total land area at 2.3 per cent (26,150 ha). There is no updated data to measure progress on this indicator.

Indicator 15.2.1: Progress towards sustainable forest management

On **indicator 15.2.1**, The National Forestry Assessment Report (2010) highlighted forest management initiatives such as participatory forestry management, community forestry management, joint forestry park management, private forest management, and forest communication. The report indicated that 550 community forests with 50,000 ha (2010) had already been transferred to communities for their management. There is no updated data/information to measure progress on this indicator.

Indicator 15.3.1: Proportion of land that is degraded over total land area

On indicator 15.3.1, Proportion of land that is degraded over the total land area. The National Forestry Assessment Report (2010) reported that 97,000 ha (8.8%) of land has been lost due to different land uses between 1998 and 2010. There is no updated data to measure progress on the indicator.

On all the indicators of this goal, The Gambia can only report four of the indicators. Of the four indicators, the data was far back in 2010 for the forestry-related indicators while for livestock, the only indicator reported dates back to 2017.



6.2.12 SDG16 Peace Justice and Strong Institutions

Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all, and build effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions at all levels.

Experience of Physical/Psychological/Sexual Violence

Indicator 16.1.3: Proportion of population subjected to (a) physical violence, (b) psychological violence, and/or (c) sexual violence in the previous 12 months

Experience of Violence

Table 6.4 presents disaggregated experiences of physical, psychological, and sexual violence in The Gambia (2025). The results show that women (19.9%) are far more likely to experience psychological violence than men (10.5%), while men experience slightly more physical violence (14.1%) compared to women (11.8%). Although sexual violence is less frequently experienced than other types, it affects women (3.3%) more than men (1.4%), with an overall prevalence of 2.4 per cent.

Urban and rural comparisons also show gaps. Rural residents experience more physical (15.2%) and psychological violence (17.6%) than urban residents (11.6% and 14.4%, respectively). The data suggest that while violence affects both sexes and places of residence, women and rural populations remain more vulnerable across all types.

Table 6.4 Proportion of population subjected to (a) physical violence, (b) psychological violence, and/or (c) sexual violence in the previous 12 months

Experience of Violence

INDICATOR	2025				
	Male (%)	Female (%)	Urban (%)	Rural (%)	Total (%)
Indicator 16.1.3: Proportion of population subjected to (a) physical violence, (b) psychological violence and/or (c) sexual violence in the previous 12 months	21	27.3	22.4	27.9	24.4
Indicator 16.1.3 (a): Proportion of population subjected to physical violence in the past 12 months	14.1	11.8	11.6	15.2	12.9

Indicator 16.1.3 (b): Proportion of population subjected to psychological violence in the past 12 months	10.5	19.9	14.4	17.6	15.5
Indicator 16.1.3 (c): Proportion of population subjected to sexual violence in the past 12 months	1.4	3.3	2.1	3.1	2.4

Source: The 2025 Gambia SDGs Monitoring Survey

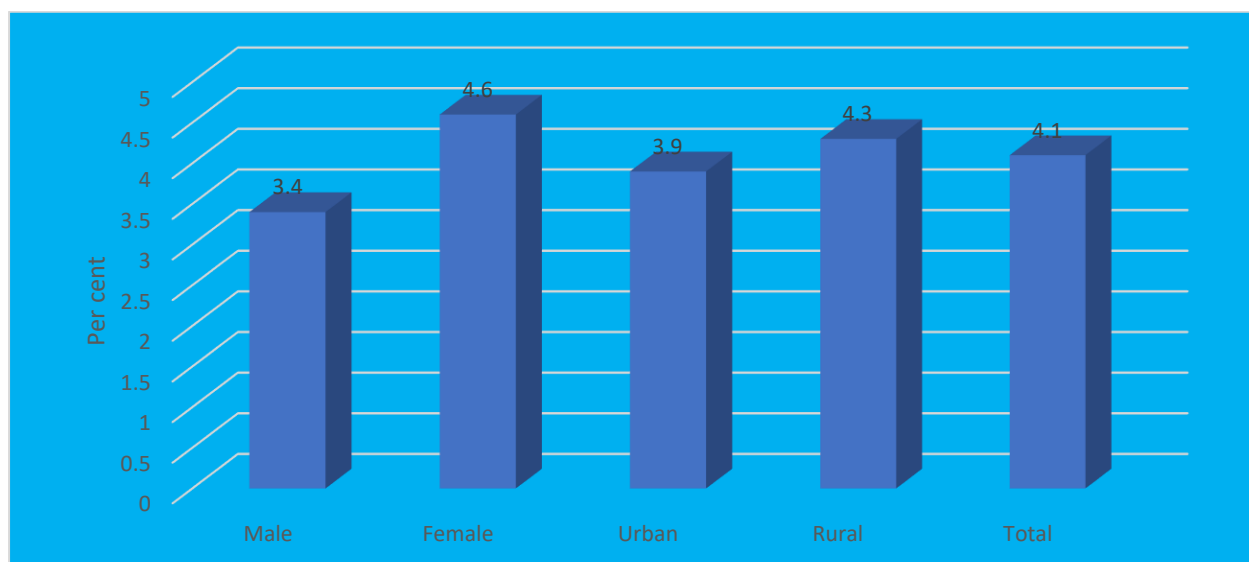
Reporting Violence to Competent Authorities

Indicator 16.3.1: Proportion of victims of (a) physical, (b) psychological, and/or (c) sexual violence in the previous 12 months who reported their victimisation to competent authorities or other officially recognised conflict resolution mechanisms

Figure 6.18 shows the proportion of victims who reported experiences of violence to competent authorities. Reporting remains low overall, with only 4.1 per cent of victims reporting their cases. Women were slightly more likely to report (4.7%) than men (3.4%). Similarly, rural residents (4.3%) were marginally more likely to report than urban dwellers (3.9%).

These findings reflect possible barriers to justice, such as stigma, fear of reporting, or lack of trust in institutions, and highlight the need to improve awareness, protection services, and legal support, particularly for women and vulnerable groups.

Figure 6.18 Reporting of violence to the competent authority (2025)



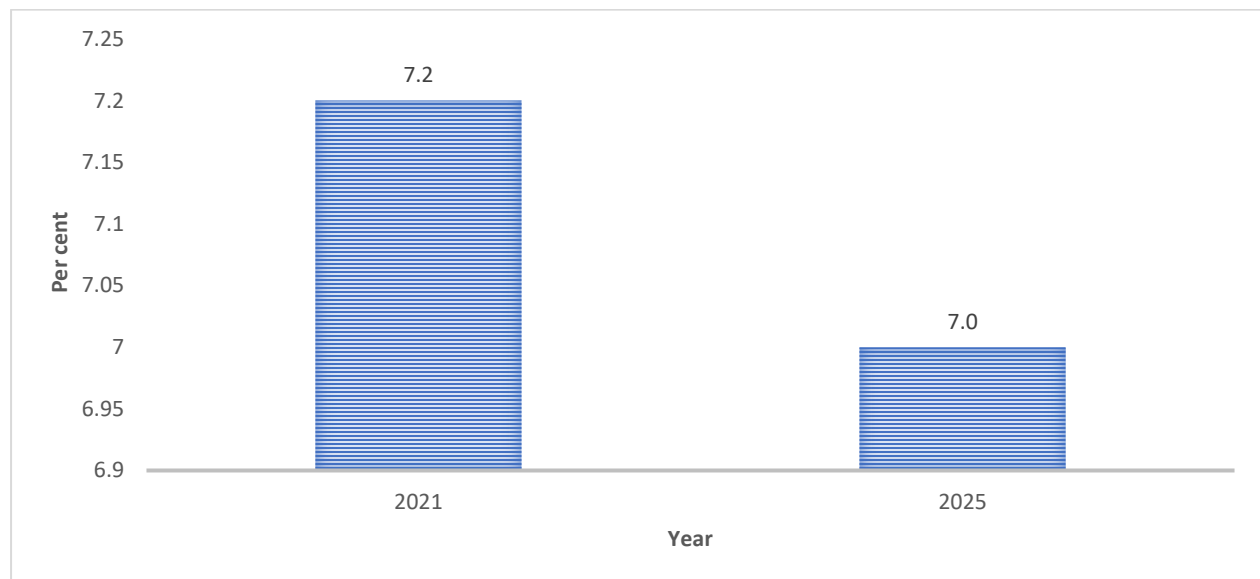
Source: The 2025 Gambia SDGs Monitoring Survey Report

Bribery and Corruption

Indicator 16.5.1: Proportion of persons who had at least one contact with a public official and who paid a bribe to a public official, or were asked for a bribe by those public officials, during the previous 12 months

During the survey, all eligible respondents 15 years and above were asked questions on bribery from public officials in the last 12 months preceding the survey and the findings are presented in Figure 6.19. The data compares the total prevalence of bribery between 2021 and 2025 and shows a marginal decline from 7.2 per cent in 2021 to 7.0 per cent in 2025. While the difference is small, it suggests that bribery continues to be a challenge in public service delivery, with little change over time.

Figure 6.19 Proportion of persons who had at least one contact with a public official and who paid a bribe to a public official, or were asked for a bribe by those public officials, during the previous 12 months



Source: The 2021 and 2025 Gambia SDGs Monitoring Survey Reports

Decision-Making

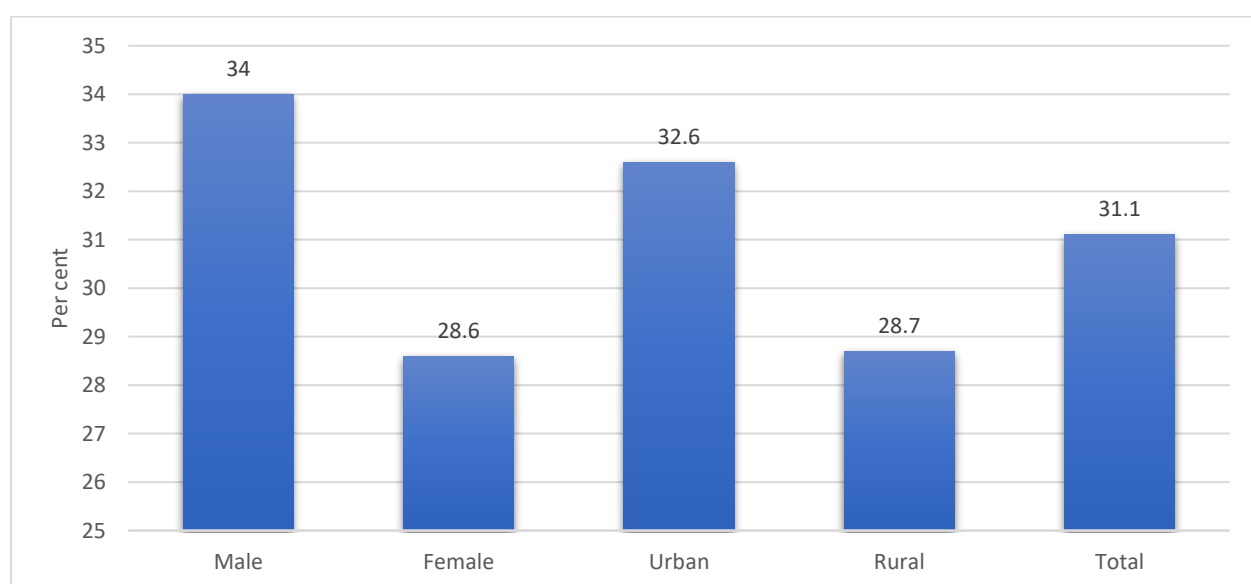
Indicator 16.7.2: Proportion of population who believe decision-making is inclusive and responsive, by sex, age, disability, and population group

The 2025 SDGs Survey collected data on people's perceptions of public decision-making in The Gambia. This reflects the level of external political efficacy – whether individuals feel that their views are heard and that institutions are accountable to citizens. The data help assess trust in public institutions and the perceived fairness of governance, which are essential for promoting participation, transparency, and social cohesion.

The results from the 2025 survey show that 31.1 per cent of the population aged 15 and above believe that decision-making in the country is inclusive and responsive. While this indicates that a portion of the population recognises efforts toward participatory governance, there remains room to enhance engagement and responsiveness across the board.

Disaggregated findings reveal that men (34.0%) are more likely than women (28.6%) to view decision-making as inclusive. Similarly, perceptions are slightly higher in urban areas (32.6%) than in rural areas (28.7%), suggesting the need to strengthen outreach and engagement mechanisms in rural communities and among underrepresented groups.

Figure 6.20 Proportion of population who believe decision-making is inclusive and responsive



Source: The 2025 Gambia SDGs Monitoring Survey Report

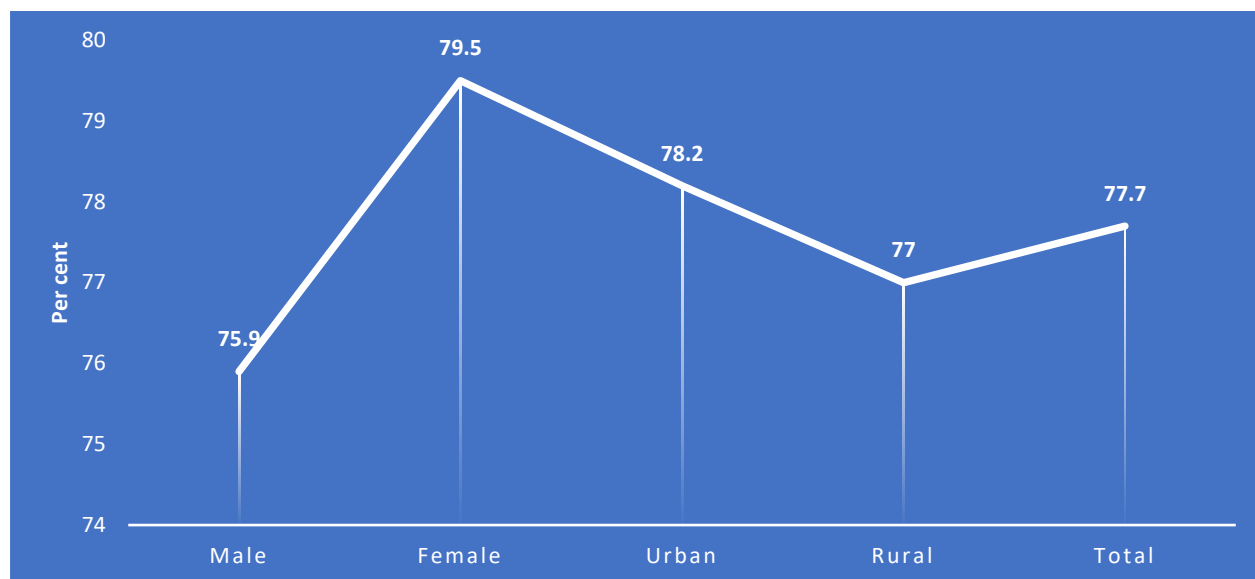
Satisfaction with Public Services

Indicator 16.6.2: Proportion of population satisfied with their last experience of public services

The data captures experiences with general public services, education (primary and secondary), health, and government administrative services. Disaggregation by sex and place of residence reveals important patterns that can inform targeted improvements in public service delivery.

In 2025, 77.7 per cent of the population reported being satisfied with their last experience of public services. Satisfaction was slightly higher among females (79.5%) compared to males (75.9%). Urban residents (78.2%) were slightly more satisfied than their rural counterparts (77.0%).

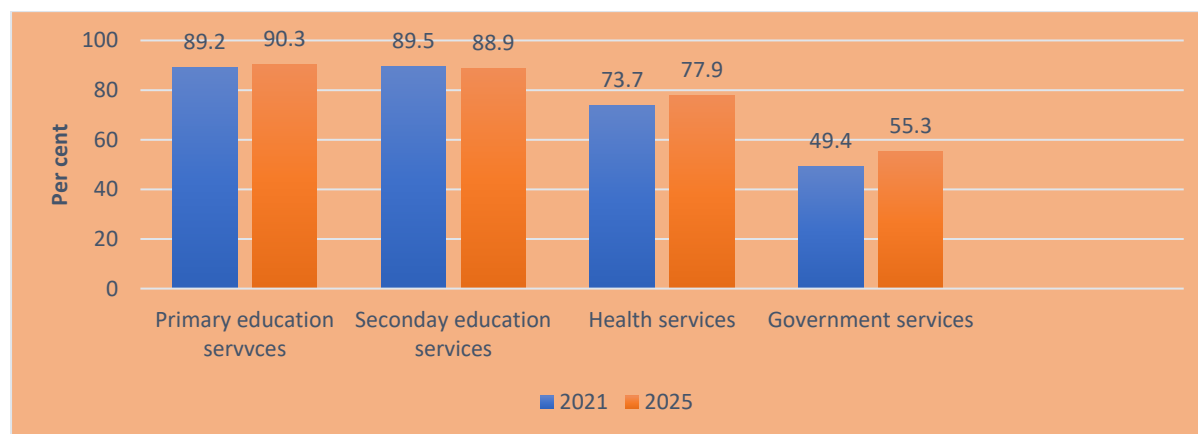
Figure 6.21 Proportion of the population satisfied with their last experience of public services (Disaggregation by sex and place of residence, 2025)



Source: The 2025 Gambia SDGs Monitoring Survey Report

Presented in Figure 6.22 are the services the population was satisfied with during their last experiences of public services between 2021 and 2025. It is observed from the table that satisfaction with primary education services has increased from 89.2 per cent in 2021 to 90.3 per cent in 2025. While for secondary education services, a slight decrease has been observed from 89.5 per cent in 2021 to 88.9 per cent in 2025. For health services, an increase has been observed from 73.7 per cent to 77.9 per cent. While for government services also, an increase has been observed from 49.4 per cent in 2021 to 55.3 per cent in 2025.

Figure 6.22 Proportion of the population satisfied with their last experience with public services (Types of public services, 2021 vs 2025)



Source: The 2025 Gambia SDGs Monitoring Survey Report

Safety

Indicator 16.1.4: Proportion of population that feel safe walking alone around the area they live after dark

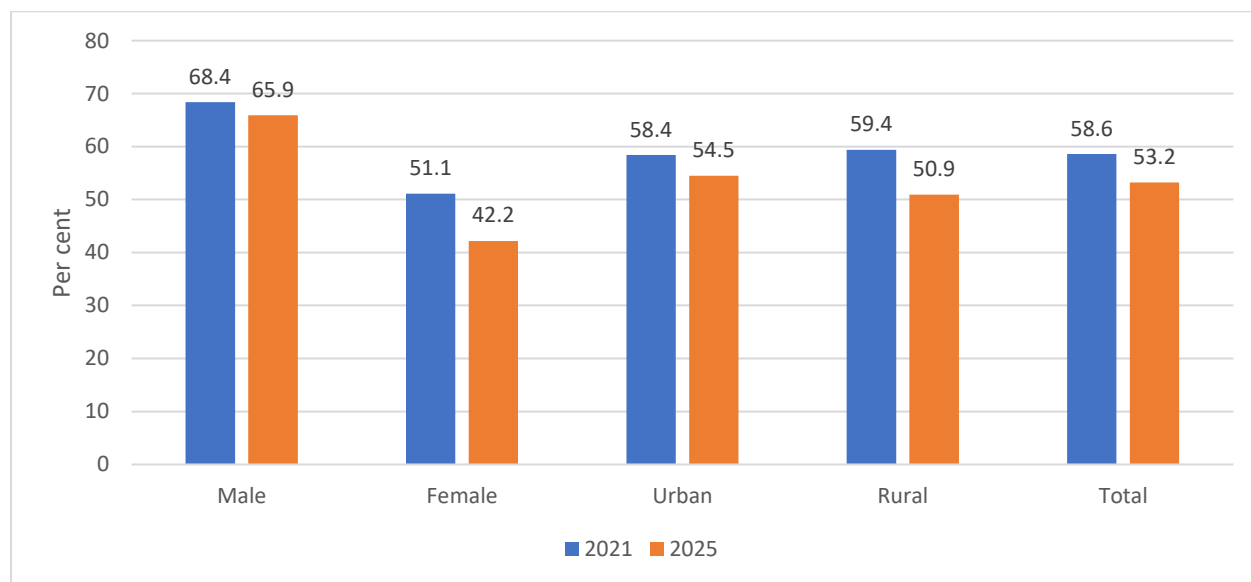
The indicator provides insight into how secure individuals feel in their everyday environment and helps identify population groups at greater risk of fear or insecurity. As such, it contributes to monitoring progress under SDG 16 toward promoting peaceful and inclusive societies.

In 2021, over half of the population aged 15 and above (58.6%) reported feeling safe walking alone in their neighbourhood after dark and the proportion declined to 53.2 per cent in 2025. However, the data show wide variations across sex and place of residence in both surveys.

Figure 6.23 shows that from both surveys, men have higher proportions than females who feel safe walking alone after dark. The proportions were at least 65 per cent highlighting a substantial gender gap in perceived safety. In 2021, 58.4 per cent of urban residents feel safe walking alone in the dark while in 2025 the proportion was 54.5 per cent. While in the rural areas, the proportion was at least 50 per cent but was higher in 2021 (59.4%)

These findings point to the need for targeted interventions to improve community safety, especially for women and those living in rural areas.

Figure 6.23 Proportion of population that feel safe walking alone around the area they live after dark



Source: The 2025 Gambia SDGs Monitoring Survey Report

Dispute

Indicator 16.3.3: Proportion of the population who have experienced a dispute in the past two years and who accessed a formal or informal dispute resolution mechanism, by type of mechanism

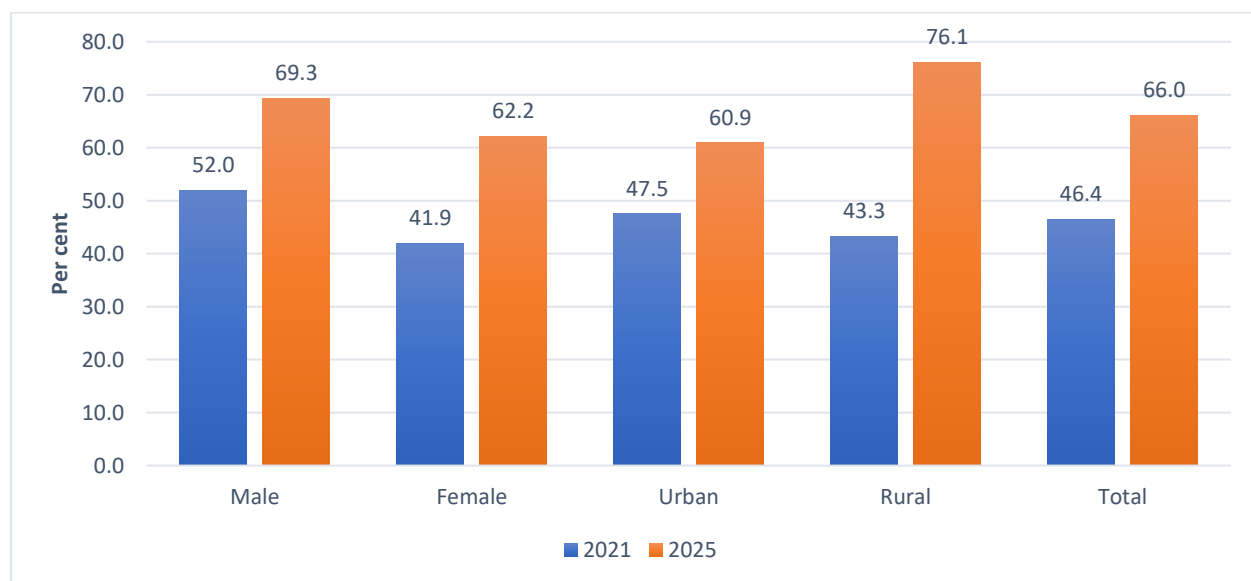
Figure 6.24 presents the trends in access to dispute resolution mechanisms by sex and residence. The results show that 66.0 per cent of the population who experienced a dispute accessed a resolution mechanism, up from 46.4 per cent in 2021—a 20 percentage point improvement. This upward trend is consistent across all subgroups.

Rural residents recorded the most dramatic increase in access, rising from 43.3 per cent in 2021 to 76.1 per cent in 2025. This suggests a significant expansion of services or improved awareness in remote areas.

Urban residents saw a smaller but notable rise, from 47.5 per cent to 60.9 per cent.

Male respondents reported higher access than females in both years. However, female access improved markedly from 41.9 per cent in 2021 to 62.2 per cent in 2025, narrowing the gender gap.

Figure 6.24 Access to dispute resolution mechanisms by sex and residence



Source: The 2021 and 2025 Gambia SDGs Monitoring Survey Reports

Indicator 16.2.1: Proportion of children aged 1–17 years who experienced any physical punishment and/or psychological aggression by caregivers in the past month

The available data for this indicator is for children 1-14 years (not 1-17 years) and the proportion was 89.2 per cent (MICS 2018). Currently, there is no up to date data to measure progress on this indicator.

Indicator 16.3.2: Unsented detainees as a proportion of overall prison population

This indicator reflects the share of individuals in prison who have not yet been formally sentenced. It serves as an important measure of the functioning of the justice system, particularly in ensuring timely and fair legal processes for all. In The Gambia, the most recent data (2024) show that 52 per cent of the total prison population, just over half, were unsentenced at the time of reporting. This shows an increase from the 2023 level (49%)-MoI To address the issue of unsentenced detainees the government should:

- Expedite pre-trial cases
- Encourage sparing use of custodial sentences.

Indicator 16.9.1: Proportion of children under 5 years of age whose births have been registered with a civil authority, by age

Results of MICS 2018 have shown that children under five years whose birth has been registered with a civil authority was 57.9 per cent which has increased to 59 per cent in 2019-20 (GDHS).

Indicator 16.10.2: Number of countries that adopt and implement constitutional, statutory, and/or policy guarantees for public access to information

The National Assembly passed the Access to Information Bill which was assented by the President in August 2021. In this Act, every public body shall create, keep, organize, and maintain its information in a manner that facilitates access to information thereby promoting accountability and transparency.

Indicator 16.a.1: Existence of independent national human rights institutions in compliance with the Paris Principles

The Gambia since 2018 has established the National Human Rights Commission authorized to investigate and consider complaints of human rights including violations by private persons and entities and is in compliance with the Paris Principles.

CHAPTER 7: MEANS OF IMPLEMENTATION

7.1. Accelerating Economic Recovery and Resource Mobilization.

Achieving the SDGs requires substantial financial resources, which are being mobilized through various financing sources, including domestic sources, bilateral and multilateral development partners, development finance institutions, the private sector, and other available financing mechanisms. The country's means of implementing the 2030 Agenda is within the context of recovery from the lingering effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic and the ongoing Ukraine-Russia war, with a focus on financial resource mobilization, data provision, and capacity building.

Costing and Financing

The financing strategy for the RF-NDP considered the challenging external environment triggered by the global economic, climatic, and other shocks, developments in the international development financing landscape, as well as the domestic financing context. Despite these challenges, the Government has, in the first two years of the Plan, been relentless in its efforts to mobilise committed and anticipated resources at both domestic and international levels. As shown below, at the end of 2024, a total of US\$637.5 million (91%) was mobilised and invested in the implementation of the RF-NDP, predominantly in the ongoing projects.

On its part, the Government also made substantial investments during the period, investing close to sixty million US dollars during the first two years of implementation of the Plan. Overall, government investment constituted about eight per cent of the total investments in development,

Table 7.1 Investments into the RF-NDP in 2023 and 2024

	<i>Disbursement US\$</i> 2023	<i>Disbursement US\$</i> 2024	<i>Total US\$</i>	<i>%</i>
<i>Development partners</i>	351,202,516.28	286,350,976.31	637,553,492.59	92.0
<i>Government (GLF)</i>	32,722,461.77	25,993,467.58	58,715,929.35	8.0
<i>Grand Total</i>	383,924,978.05	312,344,443.88	696,269,421.93	100.0

Source: 2024 Annual Progress Report (APR)

Development Finance Assessment (DFA)

The DFA undertaken in 2024 provided a comprehensive overview of The Gambia's development finance landscape, encompassing both public and private financial flows. It evaluated existing institutions and policies to determine how effectively they align with the country's National Development Plan (RF-NDP 2023-2027) and Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development. The

assessment showed various financing options that the Gambia can pursue to finance the RF-NDP and the SDGs. A key outcome of the DFA was the formulation of actionable recommendations to enhance coherence between planning, budgeting, and financing processes which included the development of a roadmap to establish an INFF, thereby improving the mobilisation and management of resources necessary for achieving the SDGs.

Integrated National Financing Framework (INFF)

Building upon the insights from the DFA, The Gambia developed an INFF in 2024. The INFF is a strategic framework designed to finance sustainable development by integrating various financing sources; domestic and international, public and private. It aims to create a cohesive approach to resource mobilization, ensuring that all financial flows are effectively aligned with the RF-NDP and the SDGs. The INFF encompasses several key components:

Through the INFF, The Gambia seeks to enhance policy coherence, foster multi-stakeholder partnerships, and create an enabling environment for sustainable development financing. This integrated approach is expected to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of resource utilisation, thereby accelerating progress toward national and global development goals.

The INFF will ensure the coordinated mobilization of resources for the financing of the SDGs and the African Union Agenda 2063 and guide access to a wide range of government and other potential private financing options. The INFF will further outline a strategic approach for the government and its development partners in mobilizing resources.

Multilateral and Bilateral Support

The Gambia continues to make progress in implementing reforms on macroeconomic stability, despite protracted delays from official bilateral creditors in finalizing debt treatment under the G20 Common Framework. However, the 2024 Debt Sustainability Analysis conducted by the Government indicated that the country was in debt distress, although sustainable in the medium term. The debt-service-to-revenue ratio highlighted a high risk of repayment in external debt obligation which means that the Government of the Gambia is exposed to liquidity risks, which should be mitigated by enhancing domestic revenue mobilization. In this regard, the government established the Directorate of Revenue and Tax Policy under the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs to help streamline policies geared towards improving domestic revenue mobilisation.

In 2024, the IMF Board completed a second review under The Gambia's Extended Credit Facility (ECF) arrangement, which resulted in a 38-month ECF extension approval. This facilitated a receipt of IMF financial support equivalent to US\$ 97.3 billion to help the Gambia better prepare for external shocks, pursue inclusive growth, and lessen debt vulnerability.

The ECF will restore macroeconomic stability, meet financing needs, and bolster inclusive, sustainable growth. The programme aligns with the 2023-2027 RF-NDP's most pressing macroeconomic challenges, namely enhanced fiscal and monetary policies, public financial management, inclusive growth, and poverty reduction.

In addition to the IMF programme and engagements, The Gambia received bilateral and multilateral support from bilateral institutions and partners to address its development challenges and support socio-economic development.

Since the previous VNR, the World Bank has been actively supporting The Gambia through concessional financing, primarily via the International Development Association (IDA). A US\$47.7 million grant was approved to improve domestic resource mobilization and financial reporting in the education and health sectors. A US\$60 million grant was sanctioned for The Gambia's "Boosting Resilience and Unlocking Productive Potential Development Policy Finance" programme, which aimed to enhance macro-fiscal stability, governance, and climate change adaptation. A US\$35 million IDA financing to augment the quality and accessibility of essential health services and to strengthen the national public health preparedness system. A US\$92.71 million for the Gambia Resilience, Inclusion, Skills, and Equity (RISE) Project. This financing, which includes US\$80.45 million from the IDA and an additional US\$12.26 million from the Global Partnership for Education, aims to enhance economic and educational outcomes in the country.

Additionally, with support from the American Government, The Gambia secured a US\$25 million programme from the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) in 2021. This Threshold programme focuses on two key projects:

1. **The Power Sector Governance Project** – This initiative aims to enhance governance within The Gambia's power sector by promoting transparency, accountability, and efficiency.
2. **The Power Sector Operations Project** – This project supports the National Water and Electricity Company (NAWEC) in reducing the frequency and duration of power outages, and improving overall service reliability.

In March 2024, the AfDB provided an additional US\$16.08 million to bolster the Agriculture and Food Security Project, initially launched in 2021. The supplementary funding is intended to enhance agricultural production and food security, contributing to the country's goal of producing 200,000 additional tons of paddy rice by 2028 and reducing reliance on imports.

Public-Private Partnership

To reduce the fiscal burden, the government is promoting and implementing public-private partnerships (PPPs) as an alternative financing mechanism for key development projects, particularly in infrastructure. To facilitate PPP financing, the government developed and validated a PPP bill in collaboration with key local and international stakeholders. The bill was presented to the Ministry of Justice for legal drafting and subsequently submitted to the Cabinet for approval. Following a preliminary review, the bill is expected to be passed and tabled at the National Assembly. This legal framework will support the delivery of cost-effective, high-value, and sustainable infrastructure projects, through PPP.

The government is adopting a proactive approach to managing risks associated with PPPs to minimize contingent liabilities. To further strengthen public-private collaboration, the government launched the Public-Private Dialogue Forum in 2022 with support from development partners. The Forum serves as a platform for engaging with the private sector and addressing challenges that hinder its growth. This initiative highlights the government's commitment to fostering private sector participation in national development and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Improving Data & Evidence

One of the key development challenges in The Gambia is the lack of reliable, consistent, and up-to-date data. This is particularly true for certain SDG indicators, especially those related to poverty, hunger, and inequality. In many cases, the data that is available is outdated, incomplete, or inconsistent, making it difficult to measure progress on time.

To address these challenges, it is important to invest in data collection and analysis. To enhance measurement of progress in realizing the development aspirations of the country as well as progress on the SDGs. New technologies and innovations need to be integrated to improve administrative data systems for the provision of alternative data sources. This includes geospatial and big data technologies to improve the reporting of the SDGs. Updating the Statistics Act of 2005 to ensure an integrated national statistical system for increased coverage and use of quality updated data and information on the SDGs and other national, regional, and international frameworks is of paramount importance.

Improving Capacity Building

To strengthen both human and institutional capabilities aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), significant focus is being placed on investments and programmes that support capacity development. In 2024, Planners, M&E officers, and representatives from similar positions were trained on the use of the Integrated Planning and Reporting Toolkit – a web-based platform supported by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa. This toolkit helps African nations align and integrate their national, sub-national (regional), and sectoral development plans with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the African Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want, the Doha Programme of Action (DPoA) for Least Developed Countries (LDCs), and other global agendas. The training focused on integrating national budgets with development plans through the IPRT's Integrated National Financing Framework (INFF) module and enhancing harmonized monitoring, tracking, and reporting on progress toward global development targets.

Furthermore, plans are in place to expand this capacity-building through the training of civil society organisations (CSOs), NGOs, and other key groups. These initiatives are designed to support the integration of the Africa Agenda 2063 and SDGs into national development strategies, promote the exchange of best practices and lessons learned, and raise awareness of global, regional, and continental development agendas. Additionally, the training will improve technical skills for data collection and analysis, enabling officials to produce more accurate and reliable reports as well as enhance participants' capacity for data-driven decision-making through improved Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) capabilities.

CHAPTER 8: NEW AND EMERGING CHALLENGES

The economy of the Gambia showed remarkable resilience in the face of global economic challenges that threatened to slow down the gradual recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. The challenges include the lingering effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, the spillover effects of the Russia-Ukraine War, and the growing impacts of climate change and adverse weather events.

The combination of these multiple and overlapping exogenous shocks led to disruptions in global supply chains, high volatility in global financial markets, high inflationary pressures fuelled by rising food and energy prices, tightening of global financial conditions, and increasing cost of capital and debt servicing.

The impact of these shocks was reflected in the decline of the country's real GDP growth. Although the GDP growth rate is lower than the country's pre-pandemic level of 6.2 percent in 2019, it is stronger than the world average of 3.4 percent and surpassed the regional performance of 3.6 percent in West Africa, underscoring the country's resilience despite the extraordinary challenges in navigating these adverse shocks.

Notwithstanding, tighter global financial conditions in response to multi-decade highs in global inflation rate are adversely affecting the country's macroeconomic fundamentals, generating foreign exchange shortages, weighing on forex reserves, and exerting pressure on the Dalasi. To aggravate the situation, the balance of payments was negatively affected by high food and fuel import bills, disruptions of cashews, and elevated freight costs.

Added to high global food and energy prices, strong domestic demand strengthened inflationary pressures in the country. This macroeconomic environment made fiscal policy management and consolidation efforts more difficult as the Central Bank of the Government had to increase its policy rate to curb inflationary pressures.

Thus, it has been a challenging task to strike a balance between fighting the downside effects of recent global economic developments and keeping the economy on a sustained growth path. In the face of uncertainties on global economic developments, prudent policy response is essential to strengthen the country's economic fundamentals that served as the main input to Consolidating Recovery and Accelerating Reforms Towards Building Economic Resilience and Improving the Wellbeing of The Population. Reforms in key sectors remain critical to strengthening resilience and growth in the medium term.

The Government recently finalized the formulation of a Green Recovery-Focused National Development Plan (RF-NDP) for the period 2023-2027, the main goal of which is to address the country's recovery needs in the short and medium term, underpinned by the concepts of green recovery and resilience as guiding themes.

In the face of limited fiscal space, three financing mechanisms have been proposed to meet the funding needs of the RF NDP 2023-2027; including the development of a domestic resource mobilization strategy to enhance domestic revenue generation capabilities; the utilisation of innovative financing mechanisms for critical development projects; and the utilisation of concessional funds to attract private capital – blended finance. Under constrained fiscal situations characterized by a high risk of debt distress and challenges imposed by tightened global financial

conditions and increasing cost of capital and debt servicing, financing the Plan would require complementing government and concessional resources with greater private sector investment in the country.

In this context, carbon finance and green finance hold considerable potential in supporting resource mobilization efforts in the country. These mechanisms encompass instruments like carbon pricing, green bonds, and green investment funds, which can create new revenue streams. Some of the development challenges that remain include the following

Economic Diversification: The country relies heavily on agriculture and tourism, which limits job creation and economic opportunities, making it vulnerable to external shocks like climate change and global economic downturns.

Private Sector Growth: Business development is hindered by governance weaknesses, a challenging investment climate, and the dominance of state-owned enterprises.

Debt and Fiscal Stability: While the Gambia exited debt distress in 2020, rising debt service costs from 2025 pose a financial risk.

Food Security and Inflation: High food prices and inflation disproportionately affect poor households, making poverty reduction difficult.

Infrastructure and Human Capital: Investments in education, healthcare, and infrastructure are needed to support sustainable development.

Climate Change and Environmental Degradation: Climate change significantly affects The Gambia's development challenges in several ways. Food Security & Agriculture is negatively affected by rising temperatures, unpredictable rainfall, and droughts threatening crop yields, making food security a growing concern. The country's coastline is vulnerable to rising sea levels, which could lead to flooding and damage to key infrastructure, including roads and ports whilst Changing rainfall patterns and increased evaporation rates reduce freshwater availability, affecting both agriculture and daily life.

Vulnerability to climate change, deforestation, and soil degradation threaten the long-term sustainability of development initiatives in the country. In addition, unpredictable rainfall patterns threaten agricultural productivity and food security.

Also, economic stability can be negatively impacted by climate-related disasters that disrupt tourism and agriculture; two major economic sectors, leading to financial instability whilst extreme weather events and rising temperatures contribute to the spread of diseases, including malaria and respiratory illnesses. Thus, the Gambia has developed strategies such as to mitigate these risks and build resilience.

These challenges highlight the need for strategic reforms and investments to ensure sustainable development. Despite the challenges, however, The Gambia has growth opportunities, particularly through improved agricultural practices, tourism diversification, and economic reforms.

CHAPTER 9: CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS FOR POST-VNR ACTION

VNRs provided countries the opportunity to assess the status of implementation of Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development. In The Gambia, the VNR process has created an interface between government and stakeholders to review progress, challenges, and the way forward in terms of implementation of the SDGs. The process has significantly increased people's level of knowledge and understanding of the SDGs and renewed further commitments towards the actualization of the desired targets. Lessons from the VNR process engagements revealed that the country needs to be more proactive and dynamic in the implementation of the SDGs including the introduction of innovative approaches to encourage private sector-led growth. As part of its efforts to accelerate the implementation of the SDGs in line with the 'decade of action', Government will continue to encourage private sector participation through sustained engagement using the existing SDG institutional arrangements and partnerships. This will help to mobilize private sector resources, both technical and financial, and accelerate the rate of implementation as we approach the last five years of implementation. Coordination with Civil Society and NGOs will be further strengthened to leverage their capacities as well as enhance the alignment of their interventions with Agenda 2030.

In addition, the VNR process also discovered the contribution of the PACD programme towards the realization of some of the SDGs, and the initiative can be adopted by the CSOs, private sector, and other development partners and replicated to accelerate the implementation of Agenda 2030. This will help in addressing SDG 6; reducing inequalities, especially between urban and rural areas, and vulnerable groups such as women and PWDs. Apart from addressing SDG 10 on inequalities, the PACD will strengthen its interventions to address poverty and all other SDGs. The country has a young and youthful population that requires the introduction of innovative strategies to implement the SDGs. The introduction of skills training opportunities to youths especially on waste recycling will have positive consequences in addressing inadequate jobs, low income, environmental pollution, and poverty. The government will continue to collaborate with partners to provide more development interventions thus improving socio-economic growth and development.

Next Steps

The VNR process provided detailed information on the status of implementation of the SDGs with respect to the achievements, challenges, and opportunities. As we are about to enter the last five years of the Decade of Action, it is imperative to provide possible measures that the government intends to pursue in advancing the global agenda for sustainable development. These include the following:

1. Government in collaboration with stakeholders will continue engagement, advocacy, and sensitization at all levels on the SDGs including the post-VNR consultations to disseminate the VNR report and the recommendations received during its presentation at the HLPF. This will help to ensure the inclusivity and participation of all thus ensuring ownership and responsibility which enhances sustainability.
2. Government will continue to strengthen its resource mobilisation strategies to mobilise both domestic and external resources to accelerate the implementation of the SDGs, particularly in

those goals that are not progressing well. The government will leverage on Public public-private partnership arrangements to encourage private-sector participation in the country's development crusade.

3. The government will enhance the mainstreaming of the SDGs into national, regional, and sectoral development plans, policies, and strategies. In light of this, the Government will continue to support the formulation and review of regional development plans and their implementation to enhance alignments with the SDGs as well as measure the performance of the progress of implementation.
4. The government through the VNR National Steering Committee will review and update the VNR roadmap, to incorporate feedback received from the HLPF. This will help in the country's effort to fast-track the implementation of the SDGs during the remaining five years of the Decade of Action.
5. Data availability to assess the trend and measure progress of the SDGs remains a challenge. To ameliorate this, the Government will also continue to invest in data generation, monitoring, evaluation, and reporting capacities to strengthen the national statistical system.
6. The institutionalisation of data/information needs for SDG monitoring that defines roles and responsibilities for collection, analysis, storage, and retrieval, creating a repository of data/information will be strengthened. This means having in place a ONE-STOP-SHOP and enhanced data capacity development at institutional and technical levels as well as ensuring the availability of financial resources as part of a national system of consistent collection and retrieval of SDG-related data to facilitate SDG reporting.
7. The country continues to be vulnerable to the effects of climate change thus threatening food security and biodiversity. The government will introduce climate-smart varieties and technologies as well as introduce appropriate measures to mitigate land degradation, deforestation, and climate change to ensure food security and promote eco-tourism, the Green economic growth.
8. Government in collaboration with UNDP will implement the Integrated National Financing Framework (INFF) to streamline and push financing toward the SDGs. The INFF ensures that available financing resources are leveraged towards the full range of the RF-NDP outcomes, but also creates a solid foundation for the financing and implementation of subsequent medium-term development plans, the country's Nationally Determined Contribution, and the full scope of the SDGs and beyond.

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