

PROJECT APPROVAL COMMITTEE (PAC) MEETING

CONSOLIDATING DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE FOR DEVELOPMENT IN THE GAMBIA, 2018-2021.

18TH JANUARY, 2018

UNDP CONFERENCE ROOM

MINUTES.

ATTENDANCE:

- 1) Sulayman Joof Inter Party Committee
- 2) Joseph Colley Independent Electoral Commission
- 3) Sambujang Njie Independent Electoral Commission
- 4) Nessie Golokai-Gould, United Nations Development Programme
- 5) Matilda Mendy, Ministry of Justice
- 6) Daniel Cardos, National Assembly
- 7) Madi Jobarteh, The Association of Non-Governmental Organisation
- 8) Becky Adda-Dontoh, United Nations Development Programme
- 9) Kajali Sonko, Womens' Bureau
- 10) Anna Jones, West African Network for Peace Building-The Gambia
- 11) Emile Touray, Gambia Press Union
- 12) Ebrima Sisawo, Office of the President (Chair)
- 13) Bashirou Garba-Jahumpa, United Nations Development Programme (Recorder)

ABSENT:

- 1) Buba Sanyang, Ministry of Local Government and Lands
- 2) Bully Dibba, Ministry of Interior

I) OPENING:

The Chair declared the meeting opened and said he was delighted to be part of this consultation meeting. He emphasized the need for more consultations to identify avenues for further cooperation. He lauded UNDP's advisory and capacity building roles.

The Deputy Resident Representative of UNDP, in her response thanked the Chair for his presence and urged for fast implementation of the project. She made reference to ongoing UNDP-supported projects on Transitional Justice and Security Sector Reform and said, issues of peace and reconciliation have been integrated into this project to respond and mitigate issues of conflict in the country.

II) PROJECT OVERVIEW

The project is derived from the UNDP Country Programme Document, 2017-2021 and the United Nations Development Framework, 2017-2021 which seeks to ensure that by 2021, institutional reforms are implemented to ensure the rule of law and guarantee the protection of the human rights of all including access to justice, gender equality, access to basic services and democratic

participation in decision-making processes. Reference was made to the difficult and challenging 22 years of authoritarian and repressive rule and the new government's reform measures to address the structures and culture for democratic consolidation, whilst making efforts to strengthen key governance institutions such as the Election Management Body, the National Assembly, Political Parties, Engagement with Civil Society and the Media.

It was explained that the main aim of the project is to strengthen the democratic character of the Gambia's political processes and promote outcomes that would consolidate and advance democratic governance and accountability to achieve the Gambia's medium term planning framework, the National Development Plan (2018-2021) and Sustainable Development Goal 16. To achieve these outcomes, the project will consist of the following 6 components:

- Promoting credible, transparent and sustainable electoral processes and Improving political engagement
- Strengthening the new National Assembly
- Promoting social cohesion and peace
- Engagement with civil society and enhancing participation by women, youths and other marginalized groups
- Supporting constitutional reforms and
- Strengthening institutional frameworks for accountability and citizen's participation.

In terms of strategy, the project will adopt the Elections Cycle Approach and is expected to support broad-based institutional reforms, whilst conducting capacity enhancement through training and professional development for key governance institutions and processes identified. The Direct Implementation Modality (DIM) is proposed for project to effectively work with a range of partners participating in project implementation. It was further explained that the project will work with relevant agencies, development partners, government agencies and civil society organisations to address gaps in building capacities for dialogue and facilitation as well as strengthening democratic development.

III) OBSERVATIONS & DISCUSSIONS BY PAC MEMBERS

The IEC commended the project and added that it is in line with the IEC's strategy for the future. The IEC further proposed that the re-demarcation of electoral boundaries, a continuous voter education campaign, migration from marble voting to ballot paper, inclusion of Gambians abroad to vote and a new voter registration exercise be included in the project. These issues will be conducted within the context of strengthening the electoral systems and processes.

The National Assembly also supported the draft, but would want to include information and communication support to the National Assembly. It was felt that the National Assembly should make a proposal to be submitted for funding by the Innovation Fund.

The representative of the Women's Bureau advocated for party quota system and for political parties' manifestos to be more gender-sensitive. These suggestions are ideally taken care off in the project document on supporting political party internal mechanisms for promoting affirmative actions and support to women, youths and marginalized groups.

The Inter Party Committee informed the PAC that they are currently being hosted by the IEC and is keen to have its own office and recruit staff. It was recommended that political parties be responsible for this through contributions. The Inter Party Committee is working on a Strategic Plan and its implementation will be supported by the project.

The Ministry of Justice made references to the review of the criminal justice system, but it was agreed that this will be supported by another project on Strengthening Rule of Law and Enhancing Justice and Security Services Delivery in the Gambia. This project, however will focus mainly on supporting the constitutional review process and the operations of the Constitutional Review Commission.

The Association of Non-Governmental Organisation (TANGO) reiterated the role of the CSO community in all areas of intervention in the project, but admitted to the CSOs severe lack of capacity. He regarded the National Assembly as the leading governance institution and looked forward to the establishment of a parliamentary score card and the introduction of a private members bill as a means of strengthening the independence and credibility of the national Assembly.

It was clarified that the Office of the President would sit on the Project Steering Committee to play its coordinating role whilst activities for CSO monitoring and observation of elections will be included in output 1 on promoting credible, transparent and sustainable electoral processes.

PAC members also recommended the establishment of a Project Management Unit as a way for increasing national ownership.

IV) CONCLUSION

The PAC approved the draft project with the understanding that minor adjustments mentioned above will be incorporated in the final document.

V) SIGNATURES













Mr Ebrima Sisawo
Permanent Secretary
Office of the President



Ms Nessie Golakai-Gould
Deputy Resident Representative
United Nations Development Programme

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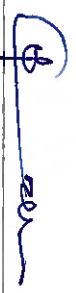

January 18th 2018

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January 18th 2018

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