A PROPOSAL ON SUPPORTING NATIONAL CAPACITIES FOR CONFLICT PREVENTION AND SOCIAL COHESION IN THE GAMBIA 2018 -2021

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The legacy of a painful and divisive past requires of the new Gambia’s leaders to bring the country back together again, through a series of transformative processes. Processes that would promote the values of reconciliation, collaboration, trust and confidence building, and dialogue as responses to past and emerging conflicts

Contents

[A. INTRODUCTION 2](#_Toc480196447)

[B. SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS 2](#_Toc480196448)

[C. KEY CHALLENGES 4](#_Toc480196449)

[D. CURRENT CAPACITIES TO DEAL WITH CHALLENGES 7](#_Toc480196450)

[E. RATIONALE AND STRATEGY 8](#_Toc480196451)

[F. THEORY OF CHANGE 10](#_Toc480196452)

[G. PROGRAMME OUTPUTS 11](#_Toc480196453)

[H. KEY STAKEHOLDERS AND PARTNERS 12](#_Toc480196454)

[I. RISKS AND RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 12](#_Toc480196455)

[Risk Log 13](#_Toc480196456)

[J. MONITORING AND EVALUATION 14](#_Toc480196457)

[PROPOSED STRATEGIC RESULTS FRAMEWORK 15](#_Toc480196458)

## **INTRODUCTION**

1. Former President Yahya Jammeh’s 22-year repressive regime in Gambia came to an end in January 2017 with the inauguration of President Adama Barrow. Following the change of Government, a UN inter-agency assessment mission was conducted in the country in February to enhance common understanding of the needs of the new government, the role that the UN system could play and to develop a one coherent UN approach to post-transition support. A SURGE (Supporting UN Resources on the Ground with Experts) Team - Rule of Law, Peace and Development, and Human Rights Advisors – was subsequently deployed to support the Country Team conceptualize UN support to the Gambia in the areas of security sector reform, transitional justice and conflict prevention.

2. This proposal - Supporting National Capacities for Conflict Prevention and Social Cohesion in the Gambia – is the outcome of a two-month SURGE deployment of a Peace and Development Advisor in The Gambia. The proposal is informed by: i) Desk review of existing documents and consultative meetings with interlocutors from Government, Security Agencies, Development Partners and Civil society among others (See list of interlocutors in Annex A); ii) In-country Media Monitoring of conflict early warning indicators (see indicator table in Annex 2) and a basic conflict analysis conducted with UN Gambia Programme staff at a conflict-sensitive training facilitated by the PDA; and iii) report of the UN Inter-Agency Mission to the Gambia.

2. The main aim of this proposal is to serve as a resource mobilization tool for peacebuilding programming in the Gambia by drawing attention to the challenges to social cohesion and the need to proactively design interventions. It is designed to build on and complement the interventions of Peacebuilding Fund’s (PBF) Phase 1 Project Documents on Transitional Justice and Security Sector Reforms developed collaboratively by the SURGE Advisors.

3. The proposal presents a situational analysis; identifies challenges to social cohesion that can derail the Government’s reform agenda if left unaddressed; provides a rationale and strategy for the proposal and proposes medium-to-long-term interventions in the areas of conflict prevention and social cohesion. It is proposed that this proposal will be developed into a full-fledged project document, in consultation with key national stakeholders, and facilitated by a temporary PDA who is expected to be deployed through the first phase of Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) support to the Gambia, once assurance of funding for it is received.

## **SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS**

1. The Gambia has no history of violent conflict or war. It has remained relatively peaceful and stable since it attained independence in February 1965. The January 2017 alternation of power from former President Jammeh to President Adama Barrow was the second transition of power in the country’s post-independence history. Both transitions, including the 1994 coup that ushered in former President Jammeh’s twenty-two-year-old reign were ‘bloodless’.

2. The peace experienced for 22 years prior to January 2017 could be described as ‘negative peace.’ Peace was enforced through repression and autocratic rule. Freedoms to live in dignity and from fear and want – the three elements of human security – were greatly undermined. Consequently, the social fabric is fragmented and the country faces several daunting challenges to its longer-term stability and sustainable development. The country’s acting Vice President described it as “a fragile country which has come out of a complex political situation” in a meeting held with her on 17 March 2017. she referred to the population as ‘traumatized” and underscored the need for “dialogue to heal the wounds”.

3. The former president had a record of enacting policies and laws to stifle freedom of expression and association. Notable being the Information and Communications Act, the Newspaper Act and the amended Criminal Code, which increased sanctions on sedition, libel, public disorder, and false information*. “The entire social fabric significantly degenerated as a result of protracted repressive rule. Given the divisive tactics of Jammeh’s regime, ethnic and tribal divides crept into Gambian socio-political discourse, causing antagonistic relations between ethnic groups.”*[[1]](#endnote-1) Politics in The Gambia tended to revolve around the president rather than the country and issues. Dissent was met with heavy crackdowns resulting in torture, disappearances, imprisonment and exile. Dialogic spaces had completely shrunk with political and socio-economic spaces characterized by centralized power, control mechanisms and weak institutions.

4. A coalition government made up of seven political parties and an independent candidate was ushered in with the alternation. The new government is in the process of embarking on a series of reforms and programmes which would be critical for sustaining the country’s peace, stability and prosperity. These include: Security Sector, Judiciary, civil service; constitutional and legal reforms among others. Support for these reforms is expected to come from International, Regional and Developmental partners including the United Nations.

5. However, the country faces incipient and simmering tensions that could derail the reform process if unaddressed. Achievement of the reforms will require effective management of processes involving diverse actors and interests; broad consultation; dialogue; and consensus and partnership-building with a wide array of stakeholders. Building and sustaining consensus, commitment and inclusion of all of Gambia’s stakeholders right from the start will be critical to the success of the reform agenda.

6. Given the loose nature of the coalition, differences in ideologies and leadership styles will likely continue to present challenges to intra-Government cohesion. Coalition member’s public spats over modalities for contesting the National Assembly elections of 6 April exposed the coalition’s fragility. President of the Gambia Press Union expressed fears that the “coalition government would be indirectly empowering APRC (the party of former President Jammeh) if it does not put its house in order”.[[2]](#endnote-2)

7. The relative inexperience of the ruling coalition presents risks to the process of national reformation that is required. *The coalition had different manifestoes. It will therefore be necessary to ensure they are harmonized so as to present a common vision for the country (beyond getting Jammeh out of power).*[[3]](#endnote-3) Added to this is the high and growing unrealistic expectations of Gambians for immediate results. There is growing pressure on Government to meet the aspirations of the Gambian people for justice and an economic turn-around.

8. Despite long spells of relative stability and peace, albeit ‘negative peace’, prosperity eluded the country.  Gambia ranked 175 with a score of 0.44 in the Human Development Index (HDI) released on March 17, 2017. *“The ruling coalition government has inherited an economy in dire crisis with massive debt (110% of GDP), depressed reserves (0.8 months of importation), and a large fiscal deficit. Public debt is estimated at 48 billion Dalasi, of which 28 billion Dalasi is domestic debt and 20 million dollars is foreign debt mainly denominated in dollars”[[4]](#endnote-4)* The country’s fiscal situation is dire as a result.

9. The ‘new Gambia’ scenario is therefore likely to be characterized by public frustration, and perennial criticism resulting from unrealistically high expectations of quick results. The coalition government will also have to contend with weakened state institutions, a confidence-deficit security apparatus, and public service in need of significant upgrade and reform. Additional weak capacity because of nepotistic recruitment rather than on merit, as well as massive brain drain have left huge capacity gaps in both the public and private sectors.

## **KEY CHALLENGES**

**1. Challenge of** **Political and Social Cohesion**: Over 20 years of fear, repression, massive human rights violations and a culture of silence have scared the socio-political landscape with deep mistrust and suspicion. The politics of division and patronage practiced by the former president, and manifested in the appointment of friends and his tribes people to public office positions, and in recruitment into the security services left the country polarized along ethnopolitical lines. Voting patterns of the April 6 National Assembly elections laid bare these divisions. *“The United Democratic Party (UDP) won in Mandinka’s predominant settlements, while the Gambia Democratic Congress (GDC) won in areas where the Fullani, and wollof tribes are the majority. The Alliance for Patriotic Reorientation and Construction (APRC) recorded their victories in the Fonis, where former Gambian dictator Yahya Jammeh hail from.*[[5]](#endnote-5)

According to a newspaper columnist, the issue of tribe has become “evident in our mainstream political agenda. You can feel it. It is no longer something that is peripheral and lurking in the background. It is now tangible and visible and increasingly becoming even more divisive and sensitive. We cannot pretend this is not a reality and we cannot ignore its potential to destabilize the country. We must do something. We must acknowledge it, confront it”.[[6]](#endnote-6) Post National Assembly election violence was recorded in the Foni area between supporters of APRC (who are predominantly Fonis) and supporters of UDP (who are predominantly Mandinkas). Majority of the country’s ethnic population belong to eight indigenous tribes. These are the Mandinkas (about 41% of the population); the Wolof (15%); the Fula (19%); the Jola (10%); the Serahuli (8%); the Serer (2.5%); the Aku (0.8%); and the Manjago (1.7%)[[7]](#endnote-7)

In demonstrating Government’s concern, the Minister of Interior held a community dialogue in the Foni area of Brikama in the West Coast Region on 13 March 2017 to ‘maintain peace and stability’.”[[8]](#endnote-8) A key challenge therefore is to bring the country back together again, through a series of transformative processes around historical injustice and grievances, and to promote understanding about the values of trust and confidence building, dialogue and mediation as responses to conflict.

**2. Challenge of Reconciliation**: The new Government is under pressure to urgently meet the aspirations of the Gambian people for justice. The likelihood of vengeance is high if justice is perceived to be delayed. The fight that erupted on March 13, 2017 in front of the Banjul high court between families of an accused perpetrator and a victim is a clear indicator of the incipient and simmering divisions and tensions the country faces. At the same time, “*the immediate task of reconciling a much-divided country along party lines and ethnic cleavages; religious and parochial interests as well as divided loyalties among the ranks and file of the security forces”[[9]](#endnote-9)* is critical. The quest for justice needs to be delicately balanced with the need to repair the social fabric and restore relationships. Government has pledged to institute a Truth and Reconciliation Commission as part of a Transitional Justice Mechanism. However, the absence of a common understanding of what reconciliation means is likely to lead to its rejection and resentment. Some victims, their families and aggrieved parties perceive it as an effort to deny them of justice and restitution. There are also fears that it would deny them of their entitlement to victimhood. The need for greater advocacy to generate a common national understanding on this and other key reforms is critical. The engagement of identified civil society groups, including, faith-based, women and youth groups to implement outreach initiatives aimed at fostering reconciliation and social cohesion will go a long way in addressing this challenge.

**3. Challenge of Decision-making and a Fragile Coalition Government:** Despite it’s good intentions to re-unite the country, differences in ideologies and leadership styles of parties in the coalition Government is presenting challenges to intra-Government cohesion. Public disagreements by Government officials and Ministers, including during nomination of candidates for the National Assembly elections are pointers to the cohesion and decision-making gaps in Government. The ‘Standard Newspaper’ of 24 March highlighted the gaps with a headline that “Minister of Justice clashes with Minister of Interior” after the Minister of Justice publicly disassociated his Ministry from the arrest of alleged perpetrators of crimes during the Jammeh era, despite being the Ministry being responsible for prosecuting such crimes. Three months after inauguration of the President, there are reports that no cabinet meeting had yet been held. There are fears that “coalition government would be indirectly empowering APRC if it does not put its house in order”.[[10]](#endnote-10) Developing the necessary consensus to deliver meaningful reform, and the policies that would address the current challenges therefore requires conscious efforts at developing capacity for collaboration, inclusivity and joint problem-solving. Government approved a UN Concept note for a Collaborative Leadership and Dialogue session at a cabinet retreat on 5 to 7 May 2017. This needs to be followed up with a series of other sessions to make collaborative leadership a style of choice.

**4. Weak Democratic Institutions**: Whereas the strengthening of democratic institutions – including political parties - should always be the primary objective of all those who seek to enhance a society’s capacity to deal effectively with internal tensions and conflict, the existing public institutions do not, at the moment, have the ability to facilitate the type of dialogue that is necessary to address underlying conflict driving factors. The Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Finance, Justice and Women’s Affairs all lamented this challenge during separate meetings. There is need for a sustained, multi-party, multi-sectoral and multi-level dialogue that is not only focused on how to find productive solutions to the most immediate pressing problems, but also on the best ways to shape and stimulate a general political culture that would best serve the needs of the nation. Interventions in this proposal will complement UNDP and UNOWAS ongoing and planned support to the Interparty Committee for interparty dialogue and enhancing intra-party democratic culture.

**5. Limited Youth Engagement:** Another significant challenge facing The Gambia at this juncture is the limited space for the youth to meaningfully participate in social, economic, development, and political processes, although 64% of the population is below 25 year. Economic hardships, high unemployment rates and no prospects of a better future led to many Gambian youth fleeing the country. In the first quarter of 2015, one in seven of the 10,000 migrants who crossed the Mediterranean were from Gambia.[[11]](#endnote-11) With the opportunities offered by the new dispensation, expectations are high, particularly among the restless youth of the country, for the new government to deliver basic services and create employment opportunities. Failure to do so will increase the prospects of instability.[[12]](#endnote-12)

Analysis from contexts where the youth have been actively involved in acts of violence points to the grave dangers posed by the situation described above. While this may be true, there is also the reality that the youth are a potential resource for social cohesion if they are recognized as such, are meaningfully engaged and opportunities are availed them to make positive contributions to the country. The challenge is to engage the youth meaningfully in processes of political dialogue and provide opportunities for livelihood.

Gambian youth played an important role in the democratic transition by mobilizing and using social media to create awareness on the need for change. Prior to the April 2017 National Assembly elections, they mobilized themselves into a “not too young to run” movement that ensured increased participation of youth as candidates and as part of civil society groups that monitored and observed the elections. This momentum has to be sustained to channel the energies of this important resource towards Gambia’s development.

**4. Situation of Women**: Women are a great social cohesion resource that cannot be ignored. Evidence from contexts such as Liberia and Sierra Leone demonstrates the capacity of women to bring peace to their communities. Gambia has made some progress with women’s empowerment legislative frameworks. The former Government adopted progressive policies and laws including the Women’s Act 2010; Sextual Violence Act 2013; Domestic Violence Act 2013: Gender and Women Empowerment Policy 2010 and the Anti-FGM Act 2015. The Network against Gender Base Violence and the establishment of One Stop Center for women victims, the integration of Gender issues into the Gambia Police Force training curriculum as well as the development of an Action Plan on UNSCR 1325 are all measures taken to protect the rights of women. Despite the progress made, women’s political participation and participation in the field of peace and security has been minimal. Out of 238 candidates who contested the National Assembly Elections on 6 April 2017, only 16 were female, of whom three got elected. An additional 3 women were nominated by the President of Gambia in line with the constitutional requirement for the President to nominate 5 persons. One of the three – Mrs. Mariam Jack Denton, a lawyer and long-time activist of UDP – has been selected as the Speaker of the New National Assembly.

Women are often active at the lower levels of party political structures. It is they who often campaign and vote for party candidates. Women can thus leverage their power over political actors through effective lobby for candidates that will be pro- peace and development. What this requires though, is for the various women’s organizations led by the Women’s Bureau (the Government Agency responsible for Gender issues under the Office of the Vice President) to rally together and form a strong women’s movement which can effectively articulate issues that have to do with the pursuit of collaborative approaches in dealing with issues that affect them and society in general. The challenge is to strengthen women’s capacity to play a critical role in healing the country through facilitating dialogue in their communities, advocating for policies that ensure greater participation of women in the political process at all levels, prevention of violence and protection of women from violence. This would involve giving women the skills with which to transform conflicts non-violently.

**5. Media:** The media, especially social media played a critical role in bringing about the change of government in the Gambia. It is the primary source of information for most Gambians. It has the power to shape attitudes, and influence behavior in ways that have lasting impact on people. Emil Touray, President of the Gambia Press Union (GPU) in sharing insights with the UN SURGE Team on 8 March, 2017, lamented the negative impact of the repressive regime of Jammeh on quality of journalism in the country. Many Journalists fled the country while those who did not completely stayed clear of politics and news. Draconian laws and anti-media policies completely shrunk media space. The new dispensation has seen a flourishing of the media, with both the print and broadcast media focusing on human rights and governance issues, especially on the performance of the new government. However, a casual scan of media content indicates that the type of responsibility and professionalism in reporting that contributes towards a well-informed public seems lacking in the media reportage. The GPU President is worried with the lack of capacity to match the proliferation of news media channels that would ensure quality and responsible journalism. He emphasized an urgent need for what he described as ‘peace journalism’ to reduce the likelihood of the media inciting vengeance against members of the former regime. The Rwanda experience shows how the media was used to incite violence that eventually led to the Rwandan genocide. The same media can be a powerful resource in the building of social cohesion. The challenge is to work with the media by providing reflective exercises and training in conflict sensitive journalism to media practitioners, and funding the production of civic and peace education programs that focus on conflict prevention and social cohesion.

## **D. CURRENT CAPACITIES TO DEAL WITH CHALLENGES**

1. **West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP), Gambia** has a strong presence in the Gambia and currently chairs the civil society coalition on elections. WANEP is the lead peacebuilding organization in the Gambia. It is a recipient of UN (UNDP/DPA) funding for election-related conflict prevention. In its Policy brief of January 26, 2017 on Gambia, WANEP recommends that “Gambia is ripe for an infrastructure for peace that takes into cognizance its history and cultural nuances …”[[13]](#endnote-13) This is an opportunity and entry point for UN peacebuilding support in the Gambia. Additionally, **the actual numbers of individuals involved** in monitoring conflict indicators, mediating and sustaining a viable consensus, or in resolving conflicts, is low with limited capacities.

2. The **Alternative Dispute Resolution Secretariat** is part of the formal justice system but independent in its operations. It has three centres in the country – Banjul, Farafenni and Basse – and trains and uses community mediators to resolve disputes. The ADRS is charged with administering the resolution of disputes as an alternative to full court litigation, inclusive of conciliation, mediation and arbitration. In a meeting with SURGE Advisors, its Executive Director called for UN’s support to establish Early Warning structures in the country to proactively monitor and report on conflict early warning indicators. A replication of their structures in all the 7 regions of the country will contribute to conflict prevention.

**3. The** **Civil Society Coalition on Elections** was established prior to the December Presidential elections to support election-related violence prevention. It established an election ‘Situation Room” during the Presidential and Parliamentary elections in December and April respectively. It conducted a hotspots mapping in the run up to the elections for targeted conflict prevention interventions. Its role in the elections was highly commended by all election observer missions. Its advocacy role for good governance and conflict prevention around elections could be enhanced and sustained. Generally, civil society, normally the fuel that drives change— was ‘decapitated’ during the former regime **and are yet to find their voices, at least on issues related to peace and collaboration**

**4.** **Inter-Party Committee (IPC):** *“The political parties agree that, if the country is to successfully implement constitutional, security sector and institutional reforms, an inter-party dialogue provides a safe space for agreeing on the broad contours of the reform, therefore enabling the development of political will to pursue them. There is consensus that the Inter-Party Committee should continue to play an important role even after the next presidential election*.”[[14]](#endnote-14) The UN in Gambia supported the establishment of the IPC, but it is limited in its capacity to resolve inter-party disputes and conduct political dialogues. Its members, comprising leaders of the political parties, are currently **less able to mentor and “accompany” actors** in acquiring and applying new methods, skills and behaviors conducive to collaboration and inclusive governance. Moreover, its current mandate and Memorandum of Understanding is limited to the elections period. It is therefore likely to die off after the elections if not sustained through conscious technical and financial support.

**5. Legal Aid Services:** There is a Legal Aid Act of 2008 which established the National agency for Legal Aid in The Gambia. The mandate of the Agency is to be responsible for the administration of the grant of Legal Aid in proceedings where persons in conflict with the law and cannot afford the services of a legal representation as enshrined in the constitution. The Agency embarks on Regional Mobile Aid Clinics which brings justice to all and sundry particularly to the indigent parts of the country, who because being financially disadvantaged cannot afford legal services.

**6. Female Lawyers Association of Gambia (FLAG):** The Female Lawyers Association of the Gambia (FLAG) provides probono legal services to disadvantaged women and embarks on various trainings, advocacy, sensitization on various laws, legal clinics and awareness campaigns on different issues relating to women and their legal rights.

**7. Network Against Gender Based Violence** works to empower women and girls to actively participate in their own socio-economic and political development and advancement. They are also helping to eradicate Gender Based Violence.

4. **Religious/Traditional Leaders:** These are possibly the most important social institutions with the capacity to strengthen social cohesion currently in Gambia. When they speak and act in unison, they can prove to be a powerful moral voice that politicians could not disregard. However, the abuse and misuse of these institutions by the former government has compromised their neutrality and credibility. Some work needs to be done to redeem their place and credibility within the Gambian society.

**5. Working Group on Women Peace and Security in West Africa and the Sahel, Gambia Chapter:** Though not having a strong presence and structure in the Gambia, when supported with capacity building and advocacy skills, they will be a strong voice and advocate to ‘revive’ the Gambia National Action Plan on UNSCR 1325, monitor and advocate its implementation by stakeholders.

**6. ‘KAL’ or ‘Cousin” Culture:** This is a cultural system in which certain tribes perceive others as their ‘cousins’. A member of a ‘cousin’ tribe is culturally empowered to call another ‘cousin’ to order, as well as pronounce on a difficult or sensitive issue that affects the other, with the other culturally obliged to respect the ‘cousins’ intervention and counsel. Kals play important third party roles in resolving interpersonal and intra-community disputes. Gambia has a tripartite law system which formally recognizes customary law in addition to Traditional and Sharia laws.

7. **‘Alkalolous’**: These are Community Heads who usually come from the families that founded a community. They are well respected within society and mediate community conflicts. They are also responsible for certifying sale and transfer of community lands. However, their influence has waned with politicization of the position by former President Jammeh when he started appointing Alkalolous. They are however still perceived as credible resources for conflict prevention and social cohesion.

8. **Given their limited capacity, reactive nature and low numbers, these various actors need to be supported to coalesce into a national infrastructure for peace or a system of mutually reinforcing institutions and forums where capacities for peacebuilding, mediation and violence prevention are developed, sustained, and applied.**

## **E. RATIONALE AND STRATEGY**

1. The above **challenges and the gaps in existing mechanisms point to the need for a pro-active strategy** to defuse tensions and potentially violent conflict in the immediate term, and, in the longer-term, to strengthen systems and structures for the constructive resolutions of all types of disputes at all levels of society. **The absence of functioning local and national platforms in The Gambia for open and respectful debate and decision-making severely constrains the State’s ability to achieve sustainable development**. And therefore, the use of dialogue and negotiations to reach inclusive solutions to problems is of importance considering weak institutions and an immature democratic political culture.

2. To address **deficits in political collaboration and social cohesion** that heighten the risk of violent conflict around highly contested and divisive societal issues, Gambia and its citizens would benefit significantly from the establishment and strengthening of platforms and venues for inclusive, sustained, multi-sectoral and multi-level engagement and problem-solving to enhance a culture of respectful dialogue, inclusive participation, and tolerance. A wide range of stakeholders— including political party leaders, elected and appointed officials, civil society, faith-based organizations, woman and youth representatives, traditional leaders, the private sector and media— **will develop the skills, attitudes, aptitudes, and behaviors for collaborative dialogue and decision-making** which would vitally contribute to the short-term challenge of conducting responsible and peaceful electoral processes during the 2018 local government elections, **and help to stimulate and shape a more constructive political culture that would assist Gambians to attain their development goals, reduce poverty and enhance democratic processes.** The next round of elections in 2018 is forecasted to be highly contested because of the new freedoms. One of the immediate objective of this proposal is therefore to help secure violence-free elections; but the longer-term objective is to strengthen the culture of inclusive decision-making and collaborative problem-solving.

3. While **existing peacebuilding initiatives** are being provided by the National Office of the West Africa Network of Peacebuilding (WANEP) and other government and civil society initiatives in managing conflicts and tensions in the Gambia, these have been limited, ad-hoc and uncoordinated. They are however important foundation for a peace architecture. The strategy of support to this proposal will seek to build on this foundation by seeking to build capacities of national partners and institutions and to harmonize national peacebuilding efforts through the establishment of an Infrastructure for peace. **The Infrastructure for Peace (I4P), therefore, does not aim at establishing new or alternative institutions; it rather seeks to provide inclusive platforms or forums at different levels of society that involve existing institutions and organizations and create spaces for dialogue and joint-problem-solving**. In one of the first formulations of the concept of a peace infrastructure the well-known scholar-practitioner John Paul Lederach called for a *“… long-term commitment to establishing an infrastructure across the levels of society, an infrastructure that empowers the resources for reconciliation from within that society and maximizes the contribution from outside. These platforms include not only the primary parties in conflict, but also those within society that represent the “resources for reconciliation.”[[15]](#endnote-15)*

4. Most proposed activities will have elements for establishing or supporting existing mechanisms for dialogue, participation, and collaboration. This includes: assisting the Inter-party Committee as a sustainable (not only at election time) committee and to provide skills-building in mediation and negotiation for Community Mediators to apply these skills to significant societal disputes; offering training in collaborative leadership to assist political party and civil society leadership in creating alliances for problem-solving; strengthening the capacity of print and electronic media for more effective, responsible and conflict-sensitive journalism; and empowering women’s and youth NGOs in political processes related to civic education, political campaigning, office-bearing; and prevention of elections-related violence.

5. While it is important to invest attention and resources in building legislative frameworks and mechanisms for addressing past injustices and providing restitution for the damage inflicted, **it is equally important that much effort is put in developing capacity and proper structures for collaborative leadership, and managing tensions and conflicts that the new arrangements will produce, in order not to deepen mistrust and widen existing social cracks.** The stability, accountability, prosperity and the ‘new Gambia that the Coalition promised could remain a dream otherwise.

6. It has been over a decade since the AU adopted the key performance indicator in the area of security to *“****Establish by 2004****, national institutions or mechanisms for prevention, management and resolution of conflicts at community and national levels with active involvement of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and Community Based Organizations (CBOs)”.* Such ‘Infrastructures for Peace’, currently being established in a number of African and other countries, are described as ‘a dynamic network of interdependent structures, mechanisms, resources, values and skills which, through dialogue and consultation, contribute to preventing violence and building peace in a society”[[16]](#endnote-16) The **changed political context in The Gambia**, coupled with high International goodwill and political will present opportunities for achieving this dream. It will also help create the enabling environment for realizing SDG 16 on peaceful, just and inclusive societies

8. In summary, supporting national capacities for conflict prevention and social cohesion in the Gambia would mean deliberate efforts to:

* Achieve consensus among political players on the need for and the structuring of inclusive platforms for dialogue and problem-solving at the different levels of society.
* Ensure inclusive national conversations on issues of national concern
* Ensure that dialogue processes are facilitated by persons who have capacity and enjoy respect across the political divide at both national and local levels.
* Strengthen the capacity of civil society and other institutions to provide specialist support to peacebuilding and dialogue processes.
* Ensure that values of reconciliation, tolerance, trust and confidence building, mediation and dialogue as responses to conflicts are inculcated in Gambians.
* Ensure that the functioning of the support is guided by persons with the requisite facilitation skill and the capacity to ensure effective linkage.
* Ensure that interventions are based on evidence generated through analysis and research.
* Ensure reduction of gender based violence particularly women and girls, and the proportionate inclusion of women in peace and security interventions
* Ensure development of a gender-sensitive Infrastructure for Peace
* Deployment of Peace and Development Advisor and other technical staff

9. **UN’s approach towards these initiatives will be characterized by the gentle accompaniment of key actors, a consistent emphasis on national and local ownership, and a focus on the steady absorption of capacity by counterparts rather than one-off trainings**. UN will work closely, with relevant parts of the UN Country Team to address the need for building community capacities for dialogue and facilitation and develop joint actionable responses to promote reform, inclusive and dialogue processes.

## **F. THEORY OF CHANGE**

1. A systemic transformation of Gambia’s political culture will require the efforts of multiple actors and is a generational project. However, catalytic initiatives in the short-to-medium-term should help create and sustain sufficient momentum such that this transformation is precipitated. These initiatives should center on developing, applying and sustaining, at both the national and local levels, credible and autonomous capacities for early warning and response and for mediation and facilitation, such that consensus is built and disputes resolved in a timely and effective manner. They should also help build the collaborative capacity of leaders at all levels.

2. The strategy is predicated on a Theory of Change that, if capacity of key national and political actors are strengthened; and they are ‘accompanied’ and facilitated through reflective exercises to build enough trust and confidence, to engage in collaborative and inclusive processes, It will result in collaborative leadership; peaceful resolution of disputes; and progressive policy reforms that will contribute to good governance; enhanced social cohesion; and thereby reduce the likelihood of conflicts over contested local and national issues.

2. The strategy is also predicated on a theory of change that providing access and imparting dispute resolution and joint-problem solving skills to women, youth, and other marginalized stakeholders will contribute to addressing the underlying causes of poverty and social exclusion and to harnessing the full potential of society toward economic, social and political progress. Thus, this project aims at multiple levels to channel the energies of communities, particularly youth and women, relevant public institutions, and civil society groups towards peace-promoting and social cohesion activities to help address and mitigate the existing and emerging conflicts. The UN will work together to address the need for building community capacities for dialogue and facilitation and develop joint actionable responses to promote reform and dialogue processes.

## **G. PROGRAMME OUTPUTS**

Understanding the extent and depth of the above challenges is necessary for the formulation of appropriate interventions to address them. An investment in analyzing the root causes and emerging trends of conflicts and social tensions in the Gambia, as a precursor to developing appropriate strategies and interventions to address the situation is key. Phases 1 of the Peacebuilding Fund support will conduct a comprehensive conflict analysis of Gambia, which will inform detailed outputs and activities of this proposal.

**The proposal will contribute directly to five key outputs, namely:**

1. **Enhanced skills for collaborative leadership among executive and legislative leadership** for key national and political actors developed and applied for the formation of productive alliances and problem-solving: Drawing on similar initiatives in Kenya, Nepal, Lesotho and other countries, the initiative will focus on the capacity and attributes required to compete and collaborate at the same time. Support will be provided to political actors; leaders in Government, Parliamentary and civil society to develop skills and attitudes for collaboration.
2. **A gender-sensitive national infrastructure for peace framework** integrating key stakeholders developed and implemented, and capacities built for its effective functioning at national and local levels. Nation-wide consultations will be conducted on the design and structure of a tailor-made I4P. This will coordinate efforts of existing conflict prevention mechanisms and ensure proactivity.
3. **Women’s capacities to participate in peace and security strengthened**: Women will be capacitated to participate actively in mediation and conflict early warning and early response mechanisms; and to contribute to peaceful elections and further empowerment of women in governance processes. The working Group on Women, Peace and Security and the Women’s Bureau will be key partners in mobilizing women for advocacy and capacity building.
4. **Youth effectively mobilized towards the promotion of peaceful resolution of conflicts**; a **violence-free election; and civic rights and responsibilities**: Youth will be trained to establish and manage early-warning and response centers at the local level, and employ especially acquired skills (including mediation and advocacy) to provide an early deterrent response and to ensure young people’s representation and participation in governance and civic education.
5. **The capacities and influence of Interparty Committee and civil society coalition on elections** and other networks strengthened to deliver on their mandates effectively; to contribute to dispute resolution and consensus-building leading to credible and peaceful elections in 2018 and 2021
6. **Resources mobilized and capacities built** **for the effective implementation of the Proposal**

## **H. KEY STAKEHOLDERS AND PARTNERS**

The project will seek active partnerships with key Ministries, UN agencies, NGOs, faith-based groups, CBOs, and other relevant stakeholders at the national and local level (e.g. representatives of the respective Regions and Districts) as part of its implementation strategy. It is anticipated that the following stakeholders will be involved in implementation:

* Ministry of Interior
* West Africa Network for Peacebuilding National Chapter
* Interparty Committee (IEC)
* Gambia Press Union
* Women’s Bureau
* The Association of Non-Governmental Organizations in Gambia
* Youth Council
* Gender Action Team
* Working Group on Women, Peace and Security in West Africa and Sahel
* Relevant UN agencies in Gambia (e.g. UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA)

## **RISKS AND RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY**

1. The current fragile political, socio-economic environment in the Gambia, as well as the upcoming rollout of transitional justice mechanisms adds to the sensitive context in which the project will be implemented. Challenges in harnessing resources and cooperation from major stakeholders and actors are anticipated, given seeming priority towards criminal justice mechanisms. Additionally, the country’s current political and financial mismanagement context may impact efforts to build partnerships for funding of the project. To mitigate the identified risks, UN will work with national and development partners, leveraging resources at national, regional, and global levels, and UN Secretary General’s emphasis on prioritizing prevention in support of the programme.

2. Specifically UN will use a Project Steering Committee as a central element in its risk management strategy. Meetings of the Committee will not just cover technical reviews of project implementation, but also provide a forum for sustaining consensus among members on the overall rationale and direction of the programme. Should political circumstances lead to significant divergence among government and civil society, for instance, the meetings could provide an opportunity to facilitate consensus, at least as far the content of the programme is concerned.

3. Sustained outreach and communication with all relevant stakeholders will also be conducted by the programme team and the Resident Coordinator, clarifying issues as they arise, and developing innovative solutions to any resource-related and operational challenges that might develop during the programme’s implementation. Support from UN headquarters, UNOWAS and Regional service Centre may be sought as necessary and appropriate.

## **Risk Log**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **No.** | **Risk** | **Likelihood (L**ow**, M**edium**, H**igh**)** | **Mitigation Action** |
| 1. | Failure to gain buy-in and support from Government on implementation of project. | Low | - All key Government stakeholders engaged with prior to development of the proposal highlighted a need for it. However continuous engagement and information sharing to enhance and sustain understanding and buy-in. |
| 2. | Failure to secure funding for the project | Medium | Project may not be deemed priority by donors given relative peace in the Gambia and prioritization of security sector and transitional justice projects. Donors and Development Partners to be engaged on need for preventive action. Conflict analysis report to be developed in Phase 1 of PBF project to be shared as rationale for this project.  Develop and implement a sustainable Financial Resource Mobilization Strategy |
| 3. | Civil unrest | Low | Peace education planned as part of project to reduce likelihood of civil unrest. Ongoing Shuttle diplomacy and good offices by RC and SRSG UNOWAS as a proactive tool. |
| 4. | Inadequate capacity to optimally implement the determined outputs targets within the project period. | Medium | CO currently has inadequate capacity. Implementation will be sequenced per available capacity.  Project staff to be recruited |
| 5. | Government disinterest in collaborating with Civil Society in implementation | Medium | Continuous engagement with Government partners on global and continental commitments to collaborate with civil society on implementation of infrastructures for peace |
| 6. | Lack of integrity in use of funds due to corruption | Low | Fiduciary framework to be circulated to all implementers of the project. |

## **J. MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

1. UN, in close collaboration with other partners, will be responsible for monitoring the implementation of the proposed project. Partners will be responsible for producing regular performance reports in accordance with UN reporting requirements. The reports will comprise of a quarterly financial report, a monthly update on project issues and progress, a quarterly technical report and an annual progress and financial report, to be presented to UN. The reports will contain a summary of activities supported by the project, their contribution to desired outcomes/outputs; information on progress achieved, constraints encountered and action taken to address them.

2. Annual project reviews shall be conducted during the fourth quarter of each year of the project to assess the performance of the project and propose the Annual Work Plan (AWP) for the following year. A mid-year and mid-term review will be undertaken with a view to monitoring progress and the strategic direction of the project, as well as ensuring alignment of project outputs and outcomes with the priorities outlined in the project strategy. Within the annual cycle of the programme, its programme manager shall ensure the creation of an issues log, a risk log, lessons learnt, and a monitoring schedule plan to track key management actions and events.

**PROPOSED STRATEGIC RESULTS** **FRAMEWORK** - Enhanced national capacity for conflict Prevention and Social Cohesion by 2021.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Intended Outputs | Output Targets | Indicative Activities | Budget Description | Responsible Parties |
| Output 1:  Increased momentum developed at national level among Executive and Legislative leadership towards collaborative leadership and dialogue for national good  Baseline:  Significant risk of leadership polarization due to fragility of coalition government and mistrust from legacy of repression | Enhanced capacity of capacity of cabinet for Consensus on national issues  Leadership of National Assembly trained in collaborative leadership and dialogue and consensus on legislations reached  Selected Leaders of TANGO trained as trainers in collaborative Leadership and Dialogue | **Year 1:**  a. Strategic consultations with leaderships of Government and National Assembly to identify challenges  b. One facilitated skills building and training exercises on collaborative leadership and dialogue for cabinet Ministers.  c. One facilitated skills building and training exercises on collaborative leadership and dialogue for leadership of national assembly.  d. Two facilitated exercises with leaders of legislative committees to reach consensus on elements of policy reforms  e. One training of trainers in collaborative leadership and dialogue for selected leaders of TANGO  **Year 2:**  a. Two cabinet retreats on collaborative leadership and dialogue  b. One facilitated skills building and training exercises on collaborative leadership and dialogue for civil society leadership.  c. Three facilitated exercises with leaders of legislative committees to reach consensus on elements of policy reforms  **Year 3:**  a. Two cabinet retreats on collaborative leadership and dialogue  b. Two facilitated exercises with leaders of legislative committees to reach consensus on elements of policy reforms | 2 International Consultants  2 National Consultants  Trainings  International and Domestic Travel  Cabinet Retreats  Year 1 – 350,000  Year 2 – 200,000  Year 3 - 150,000  **Sub Total: 700,000** | Office of President  National Assembly  Interparty Committee  TANGO  UNDP/DPA/PBSO |
| Output 2:  A gender-sensitive national infrastructure for peace framework developed and implemented  Baseline: 0 | Road map for the establishment of the I4P developed  National faith-based leadership organized to assist dialogue and mediation efforts among political parties and political leaders at the national level.  I4P structures piloted in 7 regions | **Year 1:**  a. Seven regional consultations on establishment of infrastructure for peace  b. Two facilitated workshops conducted for leaders of national faith-based organizations to identify elements of their collective contributions towards conflict prevention and I4P  c. Seven public consultations in different regions of the country to identify elements of consensus on draft I4P policy  d. Commemoration of International day of peace  **Year 2**  a. Two facilitated exercises, led by chairs of the relevant parliamentary committees and including their membership, to develop consensus around central elements of draft national infrastructure for peace policy.  b. Technical consultations on NPA draft policy  c. I4P advocacy and public awareness campaign  d. Piloting of I4P structures in 3 selected Districts  e. Commemoration of International day of peace  **Year 3**  a. Validation of I4P Policy  b. Two facilitated exercises, led by chairs of the relevant parliamentary committees and including their membership, to develop consensus around central elements of draft national infrastructure for peace policy bill.  c. Commemoration of **International day of peace**  d. Piloting of I4P structures in selected districts in 3 Regions | 4 International consultants  4 National consultants  Trainings and workshops  International day of peace  Year 1: 500,000  Year 2: 350,000  Year 3: 350,000  **Sub Total: 1,200,000** | Ministry of Interior  TANGO  WANEP  UNDP/DPA/PBSO |
| Output 3:  Women’s capacities to participate in peace and security strengthened  **Baseline:**  While some women’s organizations are engaged in ad hoc efforts to promote peace and UNSCR 1325, a systematic national platform for such organizations to play a conflict management or mediation role, or to acquire the expertise for this purpose, does not currently exist. | National Action Plan on UNSCR 1325 reviewed and updated  A grass-roots peace campaign through working group on women peace and security providing study guides and informational material for women to conduct sensitization on UNSCR 1325  Women actively engaged in violence prevention initiatives and mediating conflicts | **Year 1:**  a. Seven regional review consultations on National Action Plan (NAP) on UNSCR 1325  b. NAP on 1325 updated, printed and copies used for sensitization and advocacy  c. Women organized at the region-level in three regions and trained to form regional working Groups on WPS  d. 6 working group members participate in regional experience sharing exercises  **Year 2:**  a. Women organized at the region-level in four regions and trained to form regional working Groups on WPS  b. Regional Groups conducting district-level sensitization on 1325 and conflict prevention advocacy.  c. Annual Gambia women in peacebuilding Forum  Year 3:  a. Selected Women trained as mediators  b. Regional Groups conducting district-level sensitization on 1325 and conflict prevention advocacy.  c. Annual Gambia women in peacebuilding Forum | 2 International consultants  Domestic travel  International travel  Workshops and training  Year 1 – 300,000  Year 2 – 300,000  Year 3 – 300,000  **Sub Total: 900,000** | Women’s Bureau  Gender Action Team  Working Group on Women Peace and Security in West Africa and Sahel – Gambia  UNFPA/UNDP/DPA |
| **Output 4:**  Youth effectively mobilized towards the promotion of peaceful resolution of conflicts; a violence-free election; and civic rights and responsibilities.  **Baseline:**  Youth currently stand the high risk of being mobilized towards political or inter-community violence in conflict-prone areas. | a. Youth in semi-urban and rural areas especially prone to violence, and select groups such as ‘not too young to run’, trained in leadership and conflict management skills.  b. More Youth in hotspot areas trained and deployed as election observers.  c. A ‘peace through sports programme’ organized and youth mobilized to organize sports matches to allow a natural venting of competition through organized sporting events  d. Youth Peace Forums established in seven regions | **Year 1:**  a. Three regional-level training exercises in leadership and conflict management for youth in select areas, with a third of the participants as women, in collaboration with the Youth Council  b. “Peace through sports” programmes—at least five soccer  or football matches per district— organized in eight-ten districts in violence prone areas.  **Year 2:**  a. Four regional-level training exercises in leadership and conflict management for youth in select areas, with a third of the participants as women.  b. Seven regional-level training exercises for youth in select areas for deployment as election observers, with a third of the participants as women.  **Year 3:**  a. Seven follow-up regional-level refresher training exercises in leadership and conflict management for youth in select areas, with a third of the participants as women.  b. Formation and launching of seven regional Youth Peace Forums | 3 International Consultants  3 National Consultants  Domestic Travel  Trainings and workshops  Year 1 – 200,000  Year 2 – 150,000  Year 3 – 250,000  **Sub Total: 600,000** | National Youth Council  UNFPA/UNDP/DPA |
| Output 5:  Capacities and influence of Interparty Committee and civil society coalition on elections strengthened for interparty dialogue  **Baseline:**  Significant risk of violence in select areas due to political tensions | a. Code of conduct established among political parties.  b. Joint party dispute resolution mechanism established.  c. Aspirants to elected office trained in peaceful settlement of disputes.  d. “Early response mechanism” of CSO coalition on election/WANEP Gambia responding preemptively to, emerging violent tensions.  e. Members of newly elected national assembly supported in acquiring, following national elections in 2007, skills for the peaceful settlement of disputes.  f. Members of newly elected national parliament supported, following national elections in 2007, in developing consensus on draft national strategies on peace and on land  Media Council, including owners and publishers of media, brought together with the assistance of the Commonwealth Secretariat and Partnership for Peace to develop a media code of conduct adhered to by all media houses will commit to adhere, and with measures for monitoring and sanctioning improper professional behavior. | **Year 1:**  a. Two Strategic consultation among IPC and political leaders to identify processes for establishing and implementing political party code of conduct, and joint party dispute resolution mechanism  b. Three facilitated exercises to reach consensus on elements of political party code of conduct.  d. Two facilitated training exercises for members of new national assembly on constructive negotiation and the peaceful settlement of disputes.  a. Four quarterly retreats of IPC on inter-party dialogue and issue of four joint public statements on joint action  **Year 2:**  a. Three facilitated skills building and training exercises on peaceful settlement of disputes for aspirants to local council elections.  b. Four quarterly retreats of IPC on inter-party dialogue and issue of four joint public statements on joint action  c. Two workshops on reviewing conflict early warning indicators for National Election Early Warning Response Group / Election Situation Room (especially on indicators relating to the behaviour and actions of party members)  d. Two sensitization meetings with Gambia Press Union and Senior Editors on conflict sensitive reporting  e. Two training exercises for media on conflict sensitive reporting  **Year 3**  a. Four quarterly retreats of IPC on inter-party dialogue and issue of four joint public statements on joint action    b. Two briefings on the outputs of the CSO Coalition on Elections - the Gambia / WANEP - The Gambia  c. Two facilitated meetings of the IPC for monitoring of adherence with political party code of conduct.  d. Media code of conduct (including a common protocol on the reporting of elections publicized and disseminated | Year 1 – 150,000  Year 2 – 200,000  Year 3 – 120,000  **Sub Total: 470,000** | Interparty Committee (IPC)  WANEP  Gambia Press Union  UNDP/DPA |
| Output 6:  Resources mobilized and capacities built for the effective implementation of the Proposal  **Baseline:**  The UNCT will need specific capacity to enable the implementation of this strategic initiative. | International Peace and Development Advisor, and national programme analyst and project officer, recruited.  Equipment and logistics for the programme effectively procured.  Periodic assessments and adjustments of programme implementation carried out by the UNHQ and Regional-based Governance and Peacebuilding Teams | a. International Peace and Development Advisor (P-5) and national programme analyst and project officer recruited.  b. Vehicles and equipment procured.  c. Four meetings of national steering committee conducted.  d. One “review” and “assessment missions conducted.  **Year 2:**  a. International Peace and Development Advisor and national programme analyst and project officer continued.  b. Vehicles and equipment maintained.  c. Four meetings of national steering committee conducted.    **Year 2:**  a. International Peace and Development Advisor and national programme analyst and project officer continued.  b. Vehicles and equipment maintained.  c. Four meetings of national steering committee conducted.  d. One “review” and “assessment mission conducted by the UNHQ-based core group | Salaries:  PDA 900,000  Project Officer – 150,000  Prog Analyst – 200,00  Project Vehicle – 90,000  Office equipment – 50,000  Assessment Missions and steering committee meetings – 50,000  **Sub Total: 1,440,000** | UNCT/DPA/PBSO |
| **GRAND TOTAL** | | | **4,014,000** |  |

1. Report of United Nations Inter-Agency Mission to The Gambia, 12-21 February, 2017 [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. This sentiment was shared by Executive Director of West Africa Network of Peacebuilding (WANEP) in a meeting held at the WANEP office on March 2, 2017 [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. Report of United Nations Inter-Agency Mission to The Gambia, 12-21 February, 2017 [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. Report of United Nations Inter-Agency Mission to The Gambia, 12-21 February, 2017 [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. <http://www.freedomnewspaper.com/gambia-as-major-voter-apathy-greets-gambias-legislative-elections-main-opposition-udp-had-a-comfortable-lead-in-the-polls-ppp-pdois-and-gdc-win-big/> [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. Gambia’s Tribal Undercurrent, The Standard Newspaper, 31 March 2017 [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. http://www.rootsgambia.gm/ethnic-groups.php [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
8. http://standard.gm/site/2017/03/14/interior-minister-vows-maintain-internal-security/ [↑](#endnote-ref-8)
9. West Africa Network for Peacebuilding WARN POLICY BRIEF, GAMBIA Managing President Yahya Jammeh’s Exit, January 26, 2017 [↑](#endnote-ref-9)
10. This sentiment was shared by Executive Director of West Africa Network of Peacebuilding (WANEP) in a meeting held at the WANEP office on March 2, 2017 [↑](#endnote-ref-10)
11. http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/africaandindianocean/gambia/11979547/Inside-the-west-African-village-where-every-young-man-is-trying-to-migrate-to-Europe.html [↑](#endnote-ref-11)
12. Concept Paper on Next Steps for UN Engagement, UN DPA [↑](#endnote-ref-12)
13. West Africa Network for Peacebuilding WARN POLICY BRIEF, GAMBIA Managing President Yahya Jammeh’s Exit, January 26, 2017 [↑](#endnote-ref-13)
14. Report of United Nations Inter-Agency Mission to The Gambia, 12-21 February, 2017 [↑](#endnote-ref-14)
15. Lederach, J. P. (1997). Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies. Washington DC, U.S. Institute of Peace, xvi. [↑](#endnote-ref-15)
16. Report of the UNDP Experience-Sharing Seminar on Building Infrastructures for Peace, Naivasha, Kenya 2-4 February 2010. [↑](#endnote-ref-16)