



Project Board Meeting Minutes  
Strengthening Rule of Law and Enhancing Justice and Security Service Delivery in The Gambia  
Wednesday, 20 January 2021

### Participants

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### Agenda

1. Review and adoption of last Project Board meeting minutes
2. Matters Arising /Highlights 2020 Key Achievements
3. Presentation of the Draft Annual Work Plan (AWP) 2021
4. Discussion
5. Adoption of the 2021 AWP
6. AOB



## 1. Opening Remarks

The Project Board was opened by the Senior State Counsel Ms. Bafou Jeng (Chair), representing the Solicitor General at the Ministry of Justice. She extended word of appreciation and apologies on behalf of the Solicitor general who had an urgent engagement and could not be present. She welcomed the members of the Project Board and thanked them for their participation. She highlighted the Project Board's importance and its role in governing the project's strategy and implementation.

In her opening remarks, The UNDP DDR highlighted on key achievements of the Projects in 2020 and called on the Implementing Partners to capitalize on the gains made in the previous year. She noted the reduction of UNDP core resources for 2021 due to, among other things, low delivery for 2020 and ECOWAS's request for UNDP's support to COVID to address urgent needs. She commended the partners and UNDP as they re-strategize to start early implementation to ensure timely delivery.

## 2. Review of the Previous Board Minutes and Highlighting Key Achievements for 2020

The UNDP Acting CTA led the review of the previous board meeting minutes that the board adopted without amendments. The Project's key achievements for 2020 highlighted included:

- Establishment 3 remote Mobile Legal Aid Clinics. As a result, 26 males and 7 females received Legal Mediation and Social support. Through the existing Prison Legal Aid Desks, 45 bail applications were filed. Out of which 36 bails were granted, 1 case was dismissed. This has contributed towards the decongestion of the facilities.
- 2 Virtual Courts established at the High Court level. Resulting in 131 matters heard virtually, reducing case backlog.
- The Quarterly Crime statistics Template (QCST) is incorporated into the existing Case Management System (CMS) for the Police. A data collection Mobile App (MA) was developed. 25 Police personnel trained on the CSM and the MA.
- Prison Case Management Implementation Plan developed, and 20 personnel trained on the CMS to input, store, and use crime data to facilitate reporting and evidence-based strategy design.
- Developed the ICT Strategies and established the official email and website's operationalization to enable effective communication and public access to information for the Judiciary and Prisons.
- Installed a Cell Tower to provide much-needed internet access to the Mile 2 Prison and the Prison Service Headquarters and facilitate inmate's participation in the Virtual Courts.
- 25 Judges trained on the prosecution of SGBV related offenses that will arise from the TRRC recommendation. 23 personnel from the Judiciary, MOJ-SGBV Unit, and NALA provided access to online legal catalogs to increase technical capacity and improve access to justice and service delivery.
- Revised and developed as applicable the
  - a. Evidence Act to improve cases' prosecution
  - b. the Legal Practitioners Act to enable more free legal services
  - c. Judicial Service Commission Regulation to strengthen the institutions' structure and operation system



- d. MOJ and the Judicial Strategic Plan to strengthen the institutions' structure and operation system.
- Refurbished the sanitation facilities at Mile 2 to improve hygiene and sanitation. Completed two dormitories and raised the perimeter wall at Jeshwang Prison to address the urgent congestion and security to allow detainees more freedom of movement.

### 3. Annual Work Plan 2020

All five outcomes, outputs, activities, and budget allocations were presented before the Project Board for approval. The CTA stated that all activities highlighted had been repurposed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Minor suggestions were made on some of the activities.

### 4. Discussions and Adoption of the AWP 2021

NALA commended the team for the success recorded on the free legal support, particularly at Mile 2 Prison under outcome 1. However, NALA raised concerns about the challenges in providing free legal supports to inmates at the Janjanbureh Prison, noting that the lack of a Legal Aid Desk and a separate room for confidential consultations, no official vehicle for mobility at NALA is hindering equal access to justice. NALA also recommended using young graduate lawyers to support free legal aid services through internship programs, establish a legal aid desk at Janjanbureh, and allocate transport allowances to address the challenges raised to improve free legal aid. In response to NALA, the Ministry of Interior (MOI) noted the infrastructural challenges stating that steps have been taken to address the issues, noticing an assessment was conducted at Janjanbureh Prison, but due to lack of funding, very little has been done. MOI emphasized that there is a need for more support towards infrastructure development.

The Prison affirmed that very little can be done by the Prison Service on the infrastructural challenges due to lack of funding, noting that 33 million Dalasi is the annual budget for the Prison Service out of which 24 million is allocated for inmates feeding and 9 million for administrative and operationalization of the Prison Service. Requesting more support for the Prisons. The UNDP CTA said to attract more funding for the Prisons, there is a need to launch the Rapid Prison Assessment Report, Photo book, and Documentary within the first quarter as a way of raising awareness on the State of Gambia's prisons.

Following a proposal to dedicate some space from the Female Wing as room for lawyer-client consultations, it was agreed that the Prison Service would identify a structure apart from that which has been assigned to house female detainees for the establishment of the Prison Legal Aid Desk at Janjanbureh Prison since female detainees already have limited space in prisons.

Under Outcome 1, under the repurpose activity 1.1.4 on the SGBV Documentary, UNDP will collaborate with UNFPA to avoid overlapping. Under activity 1.1.9, on the training of prosecutors, CLS will work in partnership with NALA since they have more experience in prosecutions. The Project, together with ADRS, will collaborate with the Judiciary under activity 1.1.11 on the ADRS

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Act's **review** as the Judiciary noted that a High Court Judge had already been identified by the Chief Justice to review the ADR Act.

To ensure that detainees released from Prisons do not become re-offenders, NALA suggested that the government and the project should consider the possibility of external rehabilitation programs for inmates to enable proper reintegration into the communities. Indicating that internal rehabilitation programs have not been very effective when the inmates are released, especially for the juveniles considering the short sentences. UNICEF noted that the team is considering external rehabilitation programs for the juvenile. However, no funding has been allocated for the activity under the PBF project so other funding sources will be considered.

After discussion, the AWP2021 was adopted by the project board, subject to amendments. The revised version will be shared with the MOJ (chair) and UNDP RR for signature.

### **AOB**

FLAG suggested that more should be done to ensure that the female inmates, particularly women with children, have the necessary facilities to improve their living conditions. UNICEF will look into the possibility of supporting the segregation of female inmates. NALA requested a Case Management System that will be linked to other institutions for real-time reporting.

The board suggested that all legislation and guidelines of the law should be developed and published for easy access to information to the public. It was agreed that MOJ would simplify and publish all legislation and develop the guidelines to be published on its website.

MOJ recommended that the project should consider the Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare and the Drug Law Enforcement Agency (DLEAG) as an implementing partner under the RoL project. Seconded by the Judiciary considering that one of the mandates of DLEAG is on the prosecution of drug-related offenses.

The Judiciary raised concern on the need for support towards Court Automated Transcript System (CATS) as cases delay because judges record proceedings manually. The UNDP CTA acknowledged the concern and highlighted the project's budgetary limitations to support the CATS system for the judiciary. She recommended that the Project Board resolutions should be used to lobby for more Government support towards the institutions in order to have sustainable interventions. Donor resources should be to supplement Government efforts.

Concern was raised about hiring international consultants instead of national consultants. Some of the IPs noted that the national staff does most of the consultants' job. The project stated that international consultants are hired due to the lack of qualified national after several advertisements. However, to ensure that more national capacity is strengthened to take up future consultancies, the project introduced new recruitment criteria to enable national consultancies' capacity development that ensures the international consultants work with national consultants.

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### Action Points

S/N	Action Points	Responsible Institution/Agency
1	Develop guidelines on various laws, simplify all the legislation and published on the website.	MOJ
2	Allocate a structure at Janjanbureh Prison for the establishment of the Legal Aid Desk	Prison Service
3	Develop a reporting template for the IPs to enable real-time reporting of data	UNDP-RoL
4	Reach out to the Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare and DLEAG for partnership	UNDP-RoL

### Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for July, and the date will be communicated at least 2 weeks in advance.

### Signatures

Ms. Shella Ngwa

*Shella Ngwa*

Ms. Fatuma Silungwe

*Fatuma Silungwe*

Ms. Bafou Jeng