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ACRONYMS

ACE Africa Coast to Europe

AML/CFT Anti Money Laundering/ Combating the Financing of Terrorism

BADEA Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa

CET Common External Tariff

CILIP Community Improvement Livelihood Infrastructure Project

CIRT Computer Incident Reporting Team

CMRF Crisis Management and Resolution Framework

DIS Deposit Insurance Scheme

EBID ECOWAS Bank for Investment and Development

ECF Extended Credit Facility

ECOWAN ECOWAS Wide Area Network

ECOWAS Economic Community of West African States

EIF Enhanced Integrated Framework

EMPRETEC Entrepreneurship and Technology

EVD Ebola Viral Disease

EXIM Export-Import

FIU Financial Intelligent Unit

GCP Growth and Competitive Project

GDP Gross Domestic Product

GEAP Gambia Environmental Action Plan

GEF Global Environmental Facility

GEF-UNIDO Global Environment Facility - UN Industrial Development Organization

GER Gross Enrollment Ratio

GIEPA Gambia Investment Export Promotion Agency

GOTG Government of The Gambia

GRTS Gambia Radio Television and Services

HFO Heavy Fuel Oil

ICT Information and Communications Technology

IDB Islamic Development Bank

IMF International Monetary Fund

IXP Internet Exchange Point

LDC List Developed Countries

M1 Narrow Money

MCNHRP Maternal and Child Nutrition and Health Results Project

MDGs Millennium Development Goals

MOICI Ministry of Information and Communications Infrastructure

NAPA National Adaptation Program of Action

NAWEC National Water and Electricity Company

NDB Net Domestic Borrowing

NEA National Environmental Agency

NGN Next Generation Networks

OFID OPEC Fund for International Development

OPEC Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries

PAGE Programme for Accelerated Growth and Employment

PE Public Enterprise

PMO Personnel Management Office

PPP Public Private Partnership

RCF Rapid Credit Facility

REP Rural Electrification Project

ROA Return on Assets

ROE Return on Equity

SDF Social Development Fund

SDGs Sustainable Development Goals

SOEs State Own Enterprise

SWBR Single Window Business Registration

TUI Touristik Union International

TVET Technical, Vocational Education and Training

UNDP United Nations Development Program

UNEP United Nations Environment Program

UNIDO United Nations Industrial Development Organization

VAT Value Added Tax

WAMZ West African Monetary Zone

WARCIP West Africa Regional Communications Infrastructure Project

WEO World Economic Outlook

WMO World Meteorological Organization

Honourable Speaker, Sir,

1. I beg to move that "The Bill entitled an Act to provide for the services of the Gambia for the period 1st January, 2015 to 31st December, 2015 (both dates inclusive) be read a second time.

INTRODUCTION

- 2. The year 2014 is just ending and we are today twelve months to the end of our Medium term development plan, the Program for Accelerated growth and Employment (PAGE), we are twelve months to the end of the MDGs, we are twenty four months to our target date for food self sufficiency (Vision 2016) and we are sixty months to our middle income status target (Vision 2020).
- 3. As we move forward into 2015 and beyond, we reflect on our achievements and challenges for the past period, to better inform new Financial and Economic Management policies and strategies. The Government under the distinguished leadership of His Excellency the President, Sheikh Professor Alhaji Dr. Yahya AJJ Jammeh remains committed and determined to build on its achievements and turn its challenges into opportunities.
- 4. In spite of all the external shocks and a narrow revenue base, The Gambia under His stewardship has registered impressive achievements in many sectors but more importantly in reducing

poverty and improving food security. The recent award in Rome by the FAO to His Excellency the President for meeting in advance the MDG targets of reducing hunger by half is a clear testimony of this assertion.

- 5. Whiles we were on track to achieving our growth forecast of 5.5% in 2014 as indicated by an evaluation report for the half year ended 30th June, The Gambia as part of the West Africa Region was hit by an external shock arising from the EBOLA epidemic in three West African Countries. Although The Gambia is EBOLA free, the negative economic impact of the epidemic has regional dimensions. The Gambian economy has not been spared with an estimated decline of 60 per cent in tourism arrivals for the 2014/2015-winter season.
- 6. Another external shock facing the economy is the effects of climate change, leading to delayed and erratic rain pattern in some parts of the country. This phenomenon has affected agriculture output and according to latest assessments, a decline of 15 per cent is expected compared to last year. Government will do everything in its power to ensure that the affected few are adequately supported and moving forward, Government policy in agriculture he will focus on investments in irrigation infrastructure and mechanization of the whole value chain.

Honourable Speaker,

7. The external shocks outlined above, coupled with spending pressures mainly in the Energy and health sectors diluted our growth prospects for 2014. The effects of this shocks necessitated the downward revision of our growth forecast to 2 per cent from 5.5 per cent.

- 8. Despite the challenges faced by the economy, Government is determined to fix the imbalances and restore macroeconomic stability through sound fiscal and monetary policies aimed at increasing efficiency in expenditures, revenue generation and service delivery. In this regard, Government is working to finalize a rapid credit facility (RCF) program with the IMF to succeed the Extended Credit Facility (ECF) which was due to end in May 2015.
- 9. In 2015, Government will adopt new policy measures including Public Enterprise reform, using frameworks such Performance contract, Management Contract, Public Private Partnerships, leasing etc. Government will also continue on Procurement reforms and in this regard, the Major Tender Board shall be reestablished as from 1st January 2015. This policy measure aims at greater efficiency and transparency in Public procurement.

Honourable Speaker,

10. Private sector development remains the policy objective of Government and in this regard, I wish to renew Government's call on the Private sector to take their critical role in economic development. One recent important policy measure adopted by Government in support of private sector development is the establishment of a Public Private Partnership Unit in the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs. A PPP policy has already been developed and it provides the framework for Government to partner with the Private Sector in National development. We can build on the strides made in initiatives such as the Africa Coast to Europe known as the (ACE) project.

Honourable Speaker,

11. The 2015 budget is anchored on limiting Net Domestic Borrowing to 1% of GDP at 31st December 2015. This policy objective will generate savings, create buffers, and support macroeconomic stability and growth. In this regard, we ones again call on our development partners including the private sector to support our economic development agenda. Government on its part will provide the necessary leadership to reach our desired goal. Programs in 2015 will focus on the attainment of vision 2016, whilst at the same time, ensuring fiscal discipline to narrow down the deficit and domestic borrowing.

THE WORLD ECONOMIC OUTLOOK

- 12. The latest World Economic Outlook (WEO October 2014), by the International Monetary Fund, indicates that global economic recovery continues to be uneven, with the pace becoming more country specific. Overall global growth for 2014 is projected at 3.3 per cent and 3.8 per cent for 2015. These projections are based on the assumptions that there will be moderation of fiscal consolidation, continuation of accommodative monetary policy, and an easing of geo political tensions.
- 13.In the United States, conditions remain in place for continued recovery stemming from an accommodative monetary policy stance, favorable financial conditions, reduced fiscal drag, strengthened household balance sheets, and a healthier household market, resulting in a growth projection of about 3 per cent in the second half of 2014 into 2015.
- 14.In the euro zone, a weak recovery is projected, aided by a reduction in fiscal drag, accommodative monetary policy, and improved lending conditions. Growth is projected at 0.8 percent in 2014 and 1.3 per cent in 2015.
- 15. Growth in emerging and developing economies is projected to increase modestly in the second half of 2014 into 2015. This is supported by stronger domestic demand as well as recovery in external demand associated with faster growth in advanced

economies. Emerging and developing economies continue to account for the lion's share of global growth. While the effects of falling fuel prices are having adverse effects on oil exporting countries, it is supporting the growth of oil importing countries.

16. Economic activity in Sub-Saharan Africa has continued to grow robustly, on the back of supportive external conditions including falling fuel prices, and strong growth in public and private investment. Beyond the severe humanitarian implications, the Ebola virus is exacting a heavy economic toll on both the countries affected and the region at large. The region's growth was projected at 5.1 per cent in 2014 before increasing to 5.8 per cent in 2015. However this growth forecast will taper down given the negative economic impact of the epidemic.

HONOURABLE SPEAKER, LET ME NOW DISCUSS DEVELOPMENTS ON THE DOMESTIC ECONOMY

THE REAL SECTOR

17. The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) at constant market prices for 2014 is estimated to grow at 2% per cent compared to the 4.6 per cent recorded for the previous year. The 2014 revised growth estimate is mainly as a result of the decline in tourism and agriculture which are two leading drivers of economic growth.

- 18. The Agricultural sector contribution to GDP is projected at 19 per cent in 2014, compared to 21 per cent in 2013. Livestock, forestry and fisheries registered growth rates of about 1.9, 3.0 and 4.6 per cent respectively compared to the previous year, which showed growth rate of 3.3, 3.4 and 4.0 per cent respectively.
- 19. The Industry sector is estimated to grow by 5.2 per cent in 2014 compared to a growth of 4.5 per cent in 2013. The estimated increase in growth in the Industry sector for 2014 can be attributed to increases in the construction and energy sectors, which are estimated to grow at 6.6 and 5.3 per cent respectively compared to 4.5 and 2.2 per cent recorded in 2013. Mining & Quarrying activity is expected to register a growth rate of 7.0 per cent compared to the 7.4 per cent recorded in 2013; whiles the Manufacturing industry is expected to decline to 2.8 per cent compared to a growth of 3.2 per cent recorded in 2013.
- 20. The Services sector is estimated to decline to 5.3 per cent in 2014 against a higher growth of 7.8 per cent recorded in 2013. The negative impact of the Ebola outbreak has caused a drop of about 18 per cent in the Hotels & Restaurant industry compared to the 9 per cent increase that was recorded in 2013. Activities of Wholesale & Retail Trade, Transport, Storage & Communication, Financial Intermediation, Health, Education and other Business Services continues to grow by 3.0, 9.7, 7.6, 13.9, 10.3, and 3.1 per cent respectively.

21. With regards to sector contribution to Gross Domestic Product, the Services sector continues to be the major contributor with 61 per cent followed by the Agricultural sector with 19 per cent and Industry with 14 per cent.

FISCAL DEVELOPMENTS

- 22. Preliminary estimates of government fiscal position during the first nine months of 2014 indicate an improvement compared to the same period last year. The overall deficit has decline from 5.7 per cent of GDP for the nine months to 30th September, 2013 to 3.8 per cent for the nine months to 30th September, 2014.
- 23. Total revenue and grants as at end September 2014 amounted to D6.0 billion (16.1 per cent of GDP) in compared to D4.7 billion (14.5 per cent of GDP) in the corresponding period of 2013. Domestic revenue as at end September 2014 amounted to D4.9 billion (13.1 per cent of GDP) compared to D4.1 billion (12.6 per cent of GDP) in 2013.
- 24. Total expenditure and net lending for the first nine months of 2014 amounted to D7.5 billion (20.1 per cent of GDP) compared to D6.5 billion (20.2 per cent of GDP) in 2013. Recurrent expenditure in 2014 constitutes 71 per cent of total expenditure

and net lending whilst capital expenditure constitutes 29 per cent.

25. Expenditure on interest payments for the first nine months of the fiscal year 2014 amounted to D1.4 billion compared to D1.0 billion in the corresponding period a year earlier.

MONETARY DEVELOPMENTS

- 26. The monetary policy stance of the Central Bank of the Gambia continues to be restrictive in 2014 to contain the exchange rate and inflationary pressures emanating from the weak external sector and the expansionary fiscal policy. The Monetary Policy Committee increased the Policy Rate three times in 2013 from 12 to 20 per cent and once in 2014 to 22 per cent. In addition, the reserve requirement was raised from 10 per cent to 12 per cent in May 2013, and then to 15 per cent in August 2013. The foreign exchange exposure to be maintained by commercial banks was as well lowered to 15 per cent from 25 per cent. This was in a bid to stabilize supply conditions in the foreign exchange market.
- 27. Annual money supply growth increased to 10.9 percent in September 2014 compared to 11.3 per cent in the corresponding period a year earlier. Growth over the 12-month period was

influenced largely by the expansion in the net domestic assets of the banking system mainly in the form of claim on government.

- 28. Narrow money (M1), which comprises currency outside banks and demand deposits, rose to D9.4 billion, or 15.1 percent in September 2014 compared to 23.2 percent the same period a year ago. Quasi money increased to D9.3 billion, or 6.9 percent compared to 2.0 percent in September 2013.
- 29. The net foreign assets of the banking system rose to D4.6 billion, or 13.2 per cent in September 2014 compared to a contraction of 5.6 per cent in the corresponding period a year earlier. The increase in the net foreign assets of the banking system was due to the large increase in the net foreign assets of commercial banks. The net foreign assets of commercial banks rose markedly to D2.1 billion or 57.6 per cent from a marginal increase of 4.5 per cent a year earlier. In contrast, the net foreign assets of the Central Bank contracted to D2.5 billion, or 8.8 per cent compared to a decline of 9.9 per cent a year earlier.
- 30. Similarly, the net domestic assets of the banking system increased to D14.1 billion, or 10.1 per cent in September 2014 compared to 21.0 per cent in the corresponding period a year earlier. The banking system's net lending to government rose to D10.2 billion or by 21.1 per cent, lower than 33.6 per cent in September 2013. Government's share of overall credit in the economy is at 60.6 per cent compared to 59.9 per cent a year earlier. Reserve money the operating target of the Bank grew on an annualized basis by 27.4

per cent in September 2014 relative to 27.7 per cent in the corresponding period in 2013.

FOREIGN EXCHANGE MARKET

31. As at end-September 2014, the Dalasi depreciated against major trading currencies in the following proportions: 23.8 per cent against the dollar, 17.8 per cent against the euro, and 22.1 per cent against the pound sterling.

FINANCIAL SECTOR DEVELOPMENTS

BANKING INDUSTRY

Honourable Speaker,

32. The banking sector in The Gambia continues to be safe and sound with sufficient capital and liquidity to meet their commitments. The industry consists of twelve banks including one Islamic bank. The average capital adequacy ratio was 31.1 percent in June 2014, higher than the minimum requirement of 10.0 percent. Two banks were recapitalized in 2014 after they were put under proper scrutiny by the Central Bank for failing to meet the minimum capital requirement of D200 million by the end of December 2013.

- 33. The asset base of the industry expanded by D0.96 billion (3.8 percent) to D25.6billion in the year to end-June 2014. Gross loans and advances amounted to D6.0 billion and accounted for 23.4 per cent of the industry's total assets and 39.4 per cent of deposit liabilities as at end-June 2014. Non-performing loan ratio, which stood at 20 per cent in December 2013, declined to 18.1 per cent in March 2014 and to 16.1 percent in June 2014.
- 34. The industry is generally profitable as evident by the registered increase in returns on assets and equity. The industry registered a net income of D197 million in the second quarter of 2014, an increase of D60.9 million from the previous quarter. Profitability indicators, ROA and ROE rose by 1.5 and 8.6 percentage points to stand at 3.3 percent and 21.3 percent compared to 1.8 percent and 12.7 percent in the previous quarter.

PAYMENT SYSTEMS INFRASTRUCTURE

35. The Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU) started operating as an independent entity in December 2013 with the appointment of a new Director. The Unit is temporary housed in the Central Bank of the Gambia and was provided with adequate funding and staffing to enable it effectively carry out its mandate. The staff also took part in series of training and capacity building programs in 2014. The national Anti-Money Laundering/Combative Financing Terrorism strategy, action and implementation plan

was finalized in August 2014 in a bid to enhance efforts in combating money laundering and terrorist financing.

- 36.In January 2014 the establishment of Deposit Insurance Scheme (DIS) was approved. The scheme is meant to protect less financially sophisticated depositors and in a broader sense to contribute to financial stability. It will shift the burden of bank failures from Government to the private sector.
- 37. Furthermore, the Central Bank of The Gambia is in the process of developing a National Crisis Resolution Framework. The development of the Crisis Management and Resolution Framework (CMRF) was prompted by the decision of the Committee of Governors of the West African Monetary Zone (WAMZ) at its Convergence Meeting held on July 16, 2014 that the College of Supervisors of the Zone should develop a harmonized framework for financial resolution in the sub-region.

BALANCE OF PAYMENTS

Honourable Speaker,

38.At the end of the first Quarter of 2014, the overall Balance of payment was a surplus of US\$10.12million as opposed to a deficit of 4.7million in 2013. The trade deficit is expected to decrease by US\$ 3 million in 2014 to US\$250.2 million from US\$ 253.3 million in 2013. Transactions in the current account resulted in a deficit

of US\$19.4 million in first quarter of 2014 up from US\$16.7 million in first quarter of 2013 representing an increase of 16.5 per cent. The deterioration in the current account was attributable to increased net payments in the income and services account and the widening deficit in the trade balance, largely as a result of higher pace of growth in imports than exports.

REVENUE ADMINISTRATION

- 39. With regards to reforms and modernization of tax administration the business start-up process and new business registrations is now handled by the Single Window Business Registration (SWBR), housed at the Ministry of Justice. This will help ease doing business and is also in line with international best practices. It is worth mentioning that the Gambia has been cited as one of the countries that worked on making it easier to start business in the 2015 Doing Business Report of the World Bank, which is a noticeable improvement from the previous years.
- 40. Furthermore, to minimize the cost of compliance on taxpayers, GRA is expanding the use commercial banks for tax collection purposes. Currently the Authority is piloting with Guaranty Trust Bank, but plans are underway to extend this facility to all other commercial banks once they meet all the requirements for the partnership.

HONOURABLE SPEAKER, LET ME NOW DISCUSS DEVELOPMENTS IN THE PRODUCTIVE SECTORS OF THE ECONOMY

PRODUCTIVE SECTOR

AGRICULTURE

- 41. Agriculture continues to be a priority sector in the allocation of government resources. In 2015 programs and projects will focus on the attainment of food self sufficiency as clearly articulated in the vision 2016. His Excellency the president has been providing and continues to provide inspiration, leadership and action towards the attainment of vision 2016.
- 42. The 2014-2015 rainy season was characterized by delay at the start, poor distribution and low density in some parts of the country.
- 43. In spite of earlier fears of a drought, the season ended with better results than anticipated. The decline in output is now estimated at 15 per cent compared to last year.

- 44. The total cultivated area in 2014 is estimated to be 322,711 hectares. This is an estimated decline of 4 per cent over last year and 6 per cent drop over the five-year average. Area cultivated under cereals showed an estimated slight decrease of 1 per cent over last year, declining to a total of 232,251 hectares, while the cultivated area for groundnut dropped by 12 per cent compared to last year.
- 45. Total crop production is estimated to be 292,581 metric tons out of this Cereal production accounts for an estimated 201,805 metric tons representing 11 per cent drop over last year. Compared to the five year average, total crop production has showed a decrease of 6 per cent, while production of cereals dropped by 3 per cent. These 2014 figures are based on preliminary assessment but now that the harvesting period is near complete there are strong indications of a better yield than was anticipated. Honourable Speaker, attainment of food self sufficiency and value addition remain the medium term priority in agriculture and in a bid to strengthen governance in agriculture, a Seed Act has recently been passed by Parliament and accented to by the President. This new law will ensure the timely availability of improved Quality and high yielding seeds of all crops which is a prerequisite for increased production and productivity.

FISHERIES AND WATER RESOURCES

- 46. The fisheries sectors continue to be a huge source of employment for Gambian.
- 47. The Ministry of Fisheries in collaboration with its development partners has provided fisheries infrastructural facilities for improved fish handling, processing and distribution within the country. Of recent, the Government of the Gambia, the African Development Bank (ADB) and the Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa (BADEA) co-funded the Artisanal Fisheries Development Project (AFDP) from 2003 to 2013.
- 48. In efforts to enhance fish quality and fishery products exported to international markets, the food Microbiology Laboratory at the Fisheries Department is going through the process of acquiring accreditation. When accredited, it will enhance the competitiveness of our fishery products by ensuring the placing of safe, wholesome and high quality products in both domestic and international markets.

49. During the 2015 fiscal year, the Ministry will start the implementation of a three-year €225, 492 project on monitoring, environment and Security in Africa (MESA). The Project will assist the fisheries sector to have better access to Earth Observation

data and services related to managing the coastal and marine environment and its resources.

50. The Ministry's role in revenue generation has also been significant, contributing D20, 821,540.25 for the period January to October 2014.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION INFRASTRUCTURE

- 51. The Ministry of Information and Communication Infrastructure (MOICI) continues to implement its e-government strategy for increasing ICT integration and utilization in public service delivery. Emphasis has been given to the security and integrity of ICT systems and networks thus the planned creation of a Computer Incident Reporting Team (CIRT) to monitor illicit activities online and act as a deterrent to cyber security threats.
- 52. The submarine cable is now fully operational and providing high bandwidth connectivity to the outside world through the WARCIP Project. The midterm review of the project identified some savings, which are reprogrammed for other activities such as the establishment of Rural Community ICT centres and a Computer Incident Reporting Team (CIRT).
- 53. The first ever Internet Exchange Point (IXP) has been established and launched in July 2014 through the support 1 eliminating

unnecessary burden on our international bandwidth. Following the signing of the contract with HUAWEI, the ECOWAN project that will involve the replacement of the South Bank fibre cable and the installation of a new fibre cable on the North Bank creating a complete link around the country has commenced and expected to be completed by end 2015. This backbone powered by the Next Generation Networks (NGN) will extend the reach of the ACE throughout the country.

54. Further, MOICI is working closely with GRTS to implement the Digital Terrestrial Transition by migrating from analogue broadcasting to digital transmission. This transition is anticipated to be completed before the globally agreed deadline of 17th June 2015.

HONOURABLE SPEAKER ON TOURISM&TRADE POLICIES

TOURISM

- 55. The Tourism sector experienced robust growth in 2013/2014 with record arrivals of 171,200 Tourists compared to 157,323 Tourists in 2012/2013 representing 9 percent growth.
- 56. The impressive growth in tourism in 2013 is being eclipsed the negative International Media Publicity on the Ebola epidemic in

some of the West African Countries, resulting in some flight cancellations and low sales for the 2014/2015 winter season.

- 57. Indicative statistics from one of the biggest tour operators, Thomas Cook reported a 51 per cent decline in seat sales and a 52 per cent drop in Package Sales. As a result, they had to cancel three of their six flights to Banjul. Gambia Experience on the other hand, recorded over 200 cancellations while sales for TUI and correndon in the Dutch markets are down by 20 per cent and 15 per cent respectively.
- 58. World Health Organization predicts that it could take up to the middle of 2015 before the epidemic is under control. This requires aggressive positive campaign to turn around the industry for the 2015/16 season.

TRADE

- 59. The Ministry of trade secured a funding of US\$2.5 million Trade Facilitation Project under the EIF for the building of a modern cargo complex and the installation of a baggage scanner at the Banjul International Airport. When completed this facility will boost exports and increase competitiveness.
- 60.On the ECOWAS Common External Tariff (CET), preparation for the implementation of the CET in January 2015 is ongoing.

61.To support SMEs development, the Ministry under the Matching Grant Scheme with Gambia growth and Competitiveness Project is supporting enterprise development in the country, and as at August 2014, the GCP approved seventy projects with a total grant support of US\$2.88 million for various enterprises in The Gambia.

WORKS, CONSTRUCTION & INFRASTRUCTURE

Honourable Speaker,

62. In the last two decades the government has implemented several transport infrastructure development projects and programs. The Brikama – Darsilami – Dimbaya Road has recently been completed and the Basse – Vellingara is nearing completion. It is envisaged that work on the Trans- Gambia Bridge Project will commence early in the New Year. Funds have already been mobilized for the construction of the long outstanding Laminkoto-Passymass road project. We must extend thanks and appreciation to His Excellency the president for making this dream come true. This project when completed will close the loop of road network in the country. I am happy to report that road works in the urban area is progressing satisfactorily while development of the feeder network is also expanding.

ENERGY

Honourable Speaker,

63. In a bid to stabilize the energy sector and improve service delivery, government secured a grant of USD 31.9 Million and it is anticipated that this grant will assist in stabilization process of the sector. In order to reduce high energy cost, government is currently pursuing a policy of renewable energy mix whilst supporting regional initiatives under the OMVG. Furthermore the technical, financial and Management reform agenda for the energy sector will continue into 2015. An energy reform study funded by the World Bank has just been completed and presented to Government.

PETROLEUM

Honourable Speaker

64. Following the liberalization of fuel importation in May this year, the Ministry of Petroleum has issued 7 (seven) import licenses to oil importing companies. The company's expansion stabilized in 2015 as they focus on the completion of their land mark head quarter building at Bijilo.

HONOURABLE SPEAKER, I WILL NOW MOVE ON TO THE HUMAN CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT

HUMAN CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT

BASIC EDUCATION

- 65. There has been significant surge in enrollment at all levels from 2013 to 2014. Lower Basic schools' gross enrollment increased by 7.4 per cent, from 255,957 in 2013 to 274,939 in 2014.
- 66. Similar trend has also been observed in upper basic and senior secondary schools enrollment, which increased from 84,825 to 87,391 and 45,041 to 49,113 respectively. Correspondingly, the gross enrollment ratio (GER) remained constant for the upper basic at 68.1 per cent but increased for senior secondary schools from 39.0 per cent to 41.2 per cent.
- 67. The number of qualified teachers and graduate teachers increased from 5574 to 6278 and from 608 to 719 over the period 2013-2014. The Gambia is on track to achieving MDG target on enrollment

HIGHER EDUCATION

68. For the 2013/2014-award season, the Scholarship Advisory Board awarded 63 overseas scholarships, mainly in the sciences. To respond to the need for increased access to tertiary and higher education, 140 students were awarded Gambia Government

scholarship in the 2013/14 academic year. In the first half of 2014/15 academic year the Government has increased the number to 261 at bachelor's degree level.

69. Technical, Vocational Education and Training (TVET), is a top priority in the country's drive to empower the youthful population with skills. It is in recognition of this that Government is decentralizing the provision of TVET across the country and there are plans to build at least one skills centre in each region. The revitalization of the Julangel Skills Centre through funding from the Social Development Fund (SDF), which will become operational in January 2015 and the Ndemban Skills Centre currently under construction, all attest to the decentralization drive. The University of The Gambia continues to grow in quality and scope. Government has recently secured \$53 million financing for the first phase of the permanent campus of the University of the Gambia at Faraba Banta Construction will start in 2015. Resource mobilization for the second phase which includes an ultra modern campus for the medical school, an ultra modern teaching hospital, additional faculties etc. will be launched in 2015. I am happy to report that the delay in execution of the project has been resolved and the tender documents have been approved and launched. The university continues to successfully respond to the development needs of the country.

HEALTH

Honourable Speaker,

70. The Health sector continues to be a priority of the Government. The sector has recently been confronted with challenges associated with the deadly Ebola disease. Even though The Gambia has not registered a single case of Ebola, the fact that some of our neighbors are affected, the sector has embarked on sensitization and prevention programs. Improved national and sub-national capacity for implementation of community and health facility –based interventions. Surveillance and disease prevention, including the notification of possible cases of Meningitis, Cholera, HIV, TB, Malaria etc. for effective containment and control is strengthen.

Honourable Speaker,

71. Maternal mortality has been reduced to 433/1000 in 2013 (DHS 2013), Infant mortality reduced to 34/1000 live births in 2013(DHS 2013), under five Mortality rate reduced to 54/1000 in 2013 and reduce neonatal mortality rate 22/1000 live births. With regards to Social Welfare, a Social Protection mapping exercise has been conducted to map the poverty and vulnerability situation in The Gambia with a practical focus on vulnerable groups. Also a national policy has been developed and an implementation plan to promote resilience and equity for the vulnerable members of society in order to promotion of Social

cohesion in line with vision 2016, PAGE (2012 - 2015) and Vision 2020.

HONOURABLE SPEAKER, LET ME NOW DISCUSS DEVELOPMENTS IN CROSS-CUTTING SECTORS OF THE ECONOMY

CROSS-CUTTING SECTOR

LOCAL GOVERNMENT & LANDS

- 72. In collaboration with the Islamic Development Bank (IDB) an 18 million USD Project will be implemented Countrywide through the Community Improvement Livelihood Infrastructure Project. (CILIP). At least 78,000 households with an estimated population of 468,000 will benefit in terms of basic services and infrastructure at community and cross community levels through GAMWORKS. Contracts have already been awarded for cross community projects.
- 73. The past ten years of implementation of the Decentralization Program had brought significant gains amongst which are: the creation of Local Authorities, the regular conduct of local government elections through Universal Adult Suffrage, the formulation and enactment of legal and policy instruments, some awareness raising, infrastructural development and increased collaboration between localities and development partners.

The new Policy is envisaged to be implemented over a period of ten years from 2015 - 2024 and will be in two phases through two five-year implementation plans.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

- 74. The Gambia's foreign policy stance remain will remain on the path of deepening and expanding bilateral and multilateral cooperation, friendship and concord based on mutual respect, National Interest and reciprocity. In this regard deployment of National resources for physical presence will be determined by these principles. Government will continue to pursue its rationalization of foreign mission in 2015. Efforts to deepen political, economic and cultural ties with friendly Governments led recently to the second Joint Ministerial Commission between The Gambia and Turkey.
- 76. Further, with the help of the Indian Government's financial and technical support, the government constructed an ultra-modern national assembly edifice which was officially opened by H.E., the President on the auspicious occasion of the 20th Anniversary of the July 22nd revolution revulsion. Today we all proud to be in this world class facility where the legislative arm of Government is housed. There is no clearer is demonstration commitment in developing the institutions of democracy.

ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE CHANGE & WILDLIFE

- -Phase I (GEAP) followed by the second phase of GEAP. The overall goal of the GEAP is to ensure sustainable development through an effective financially self-sustaining environmental and natural resources management system.
- 77. Further, the National Environment Agency (NEA) with the help of its development partners has begun the implementation of various projects one of which is the GEF/LDCF "Enhancing Resilience of Vulnerable Coastal Areas and Communities to Climate Change in The Republic of Gambia." The aim of the project is to help address the challenging coastal erosion issue along the coastal strip at the Kololi /Senegambia coastal area.
- 78. In this era of enhanced climate change, extreme weather phenomena have continued to pose serious threats to the social stability and economic development of The Gambia, and more than ever, requires a complete early warning system. Towards this end, the Project for "Strengthening of The Gambia's Climate Change Early Warning Systems" has undertaken the capacity building of local communities on climate change early warning systems, in the North Bank Region, Banjul, Kanifing Municipality

and West Coast Region. Since climate hazards are unalterable, the most effective tool to safeguard life and property is the provision of information on the impending weather, through an early warning system.

- 79. With the financial support from the Global Environment Facility (GEF), and technical support from UNDP and UNEP, The Gambia will implement a 2nd Phase of the GOTG/UNEP Least Developed Country Fund, NAPA early warning project in early 2015.
- 80. Through the support of World Meteorological Organization (WMO), farmers and fishermen have been trained on the uptake and interpretation of weather and climate information for decision-making. In addition, some of these farmers have been provided with rain gauges to measure rainfall in their settlements. In 2015, 200 farmers and fishermen will be trained on the uptake and interpretation of weather and climate information for decision-making.

Honourable Speaker,

81. In the area of Parks and Wildlife, the recent ratification of the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing of genetic resources is a clear testimony of Government's commitment to conserve and promote the rational use of the nation's natural resources and environment for the benefit of present and future

generations in a manner that is consistent with the overall goal of sustainable development.

PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT OFFICE (PMO)

Honourable Speaker,

82. In the fiscal year 2015 the PMO will continue to consolidate on the gains made so far and come up with measures to address emerging issues. The key focus will be building the capacities of ministries. In this regard PMO is working on introducing client charters in the public service which would require service providers to set clear standards – and to inform the public how far those standards are met. This is in line with good governance as it encourages greater performance accountability, citizen engagement and responsiveness to government programs.

YOUTH & SPORTS

83.On youth empowerment and employment, the ministry continues to support youths across the country in the youth owned farming ventures by providing in inputs and training. The Youths are now living by the slogan "eat what we growth and growth what we eat" which is being promoted through NEDI and NYSS. The Youths have this year cultivated farms that cumulatively total to 118 hectares. These activities, in addition to the aquaculture project being implemented in close collaboration with the ministry of fisheries, seeking to provide immediate employment whilst at the

same time contributing to the country's food self-sufficiency objectives.

- 84. The Benin Songai agriculture training model has just been launched in partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture and UNDP, as a means to facilitating youth employment as well as improving the food security and sustainability.
- 85. The National commission of UNESCO under the purview of the ministry of Basic Education is also supporting the ministry of youths and sports and the National youth council in its drive to "Accelerate Governance of Youth matters'. An MOU was signed on the 11th September 2014.
- 86. Despite the positive outlook, some challenges still remain. among them the phenomena of illegal migration commonly referred to as "Back way" Efforts are therefore vigorously being pursued by Government to curb or mitigate the causes of migration. Forums such as summer camps and national Youth conference and festival (NAYCONF) are deemed to be useful for bringing more awareness for the positive development of youths.

WOMEN'S BUREAU

87. The role of women in socio economic development cannot be overemphasized, and it is in recognition of this that the Government has developed several policies, program and

strategies to improve and empower women. As such huge investments have been made in the agricultural sector targeting women. Gambia is on course to achieving the MDGs targets on promoting gender equality and women empowerment.

NATIONAL NUTRITION AGENCY

88. The Agency in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare has recently launched an US\$8.68 million Maternal and Child Nutrition and Health Results Project (MCNHRP). The project was launched this year and will be implemented in North Bank, Central River and Upper River Regions, to improve the quality and utilization of health and nutrition services. The MCNHRP will provide a minimum package of services that includes antenatal care, breastfeeding promotion, vitamin A supplementation, family planning, delivery services and environmental sanitation.

NATIONAL FOOD SAFETY AUTHORITY

89. Under the office of the president, NFSA continues to be strengthened as government fully commits to ensuring that the food we eat is of desired quality and standard, especially imported foodstuffs. The government will not relent in its efforts to ensure that the Gambia does not become a dumping ground for expired and poor quality foodstuffs. One sure way of turning this challenge into opportunity is to grow what we eat and eat what we grow.

HONOURABLE SPEAKER, LET ME NOW BRIEFLY HIGHLIGHT THE FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE OF PUBLIC ENTERPRISES AND AGENCIES

PUBLIC ENTERPRISE

NATIONAL WATER AND ELECTRICITY COMPANY (NAWEC)

- 93. NAWEC's Gross profit for 2013 declined to D20.6 million from D265.7 million in 2012. The company's total assets at end 2013 increased by 5.5 per cent from end 2012. By end 2014, the Company's net assets are projected to increase by 35 per cent to 7.6 billion from 2013. These figures indicate that NAWEC is expanding its asset base and therefore technical capacity.
- 94. In light of increasing demand in both electricity and water, NAWEC has embarked on a series of expansion projects, among which is the Kotu power plant expansion project at the tune of US\$22.3million funded by BADEA and OFID to provide 11MW engines at Kotu power station, with completion expected in 2015.
- 95. The Rural Electrification Project (REP) expansion funded by EBID through a loan secured from the EXIM Bank of India for the provision of HFO generator sets of 4x2MW supplying electricity to 44 rural settlements. Still on expansion, the Kotu Ring Rural

project at the tune of US\$10million financed by IDB for the expansion, treatment and distribution in the Great Banjul Area. The energy development and access expansion project funded at the tune of US\$6.0million loan from OPEC fund for international development to construct install and commission a 33KW line covering Bafuloto, Makumbaya, Galoya, Kubune, Jattaya, Mandinari, Kerewan, Darusalam and Daranka.

96. The Kaur solar hybrid system finance at the sum of US\$444,000 by the GOTG/NAWEC and GEF-UNIDO on the basis of 70 per cent GOTG/NAWEC and 30 per cent GEF-UNIDO. The project comprising the installation of a 60KW solar hybrid system and expected to be completed in 2015, will ensure the steady supply of electricity to the community of Kaur. Furthermore in a bid to further upgrade energy infrastructure, the government recently signed a financing agreement with the EXIM bank of India to the tune of US\$45million for the electricity expansion project and rehabilitation of the water pipes in greater Banjul area.

GAMBIA PORTS AUTHORITY

97. The financial performance of the Gambia Ports Authority in 2013 has been satisfactory. With Gross profit rising from D441 million for the year 2012 to D551 million for the year ended 31 December 2013. The Authority's net income has grown by 19.7 per cent in 2013 compared to the level recorded a year earlier. Total assets as at end December also rose to D2.9 billion, slightly up from the D2.8 billion recorded in 2012, indicating a 5.3 per cent growth in

asset during the period under review. Overall, the Corporation recorded a profit of D68 million for the 2013 financial year compared to D56 million recorded in 2012.

ASSET MANAGEMENT AND RECOVERY CORPORATION

98. During the fiscal year 2013, the Corporation generated a total income of D17.7 million compared to D9.7million registered in 2012 showing a significant increase in total income of 82.5 per cent over the period under review.

GAMBIA CIVIL AVIATION AUTHORITY

99. During the fiscal year 2013, the Gambia Civil Aviation Authority registered gross income of D284.8million, up from D228.3million recorded in 2012. In addition, Net income also rose from D51.5million in 2012 to D98.6million in 2013 showing a growth of 91 per cent over the period. The Authority's total assets also increased from D1.0billion in 2012 to D1.1billion in 2013.

GAMBIA NATIONAL PETROLEUM COMPANY

income of D234.7 million during the fiscal year 2012, compared to D698.3 million in 2013; representing 197 per cent increase during the period under review. Total assets of the company as at end December 2013 was D 1.04 billion above the 2012 level of D774.6million, representing an increase of 33.8 per cent.

SOCIAL SECURITY AND HOUSING FINANCE CORPORATION

101. Gross Income for the Social Security and Housing Finance Corporation for the fiscal year 2013 amounted to D242 million compared to D334 million in 2012. Net Income for 2013 was a surplus of D45.2 million compared to D22.1 million in 2012, an increase of 105 per cent. The Corporations' total assets at end 2013 were D4.7 billion.

GAMBIA INTERNATIONAL AIRLINES

fiscal year 2013 amounted to D372.8 million in comparison to D284.6 million in 2012. Net Income for 2013 was a surplus of D65 million in comparisons to D16 million in 2012. The company's assets increased by 33 per cent in 2013 to D215.7 million from 162 million in 2012.

GAMBIA PRINTING AND PUBLISHING COOPERATION

amounted to D43.1 million compared to D27.5 million in 2012. Net Income for 2013 was a surplus of D1.5 million compared to D1.8 million in 2012, a decrease of 14 per cent. The Cooperation total assets stood at D12 million at end 2013.

GAMBIA POSTAL SERVICES

million in comparison to D22.3 million in 2012. Net Income for 2013 was a surplus of D2.8 million in comparison to D1.7 million in 2012, an increase of 66 per cent. The company's total assets stood at D70.1 million in 2013.

GAMBIA PUBLIC UTILITIES REGULATORY AUTHORITY

amounted to D51.1 million compared to D47.5 million in 2012. Net Income for 2013 was a surplus of D8.3 million compared to a deficit of D 464, 677 in 2012. The total assets of PURA increased to D61.1 million in 2013 in comparison to D52.8 million in 2012 reflecting an increase of 15.6 per cent.

GAMTEL

107. Gross Income for the Telecommunications Company for the fiscal year 2013 amounted to D1.0 billion compared to D1.2 billion in 2012. Net Income for 2013 amounted to D131 million compared to D93.5 million recorded in the previous year. The total assets of the telecommunication company stood at D1.1 billion in 2013.

GAMCEL

amounted to D1.2 billion compared to D701 million in 2012. Net Income for 2013 was D233 million compared to D168 million recorded in 2012. Gamcel's total assets stood at D676.2 million in 2013. The company's market share as at end second quarter of 2014 was 9.4 per cent representing 204,609 subscribers.

FISCAL OUTLOOK FOR THE YEAR 2015

REVENUE

Honourable Speaker,

109. Total Revenue and grants for the fiscal year 2015 is projected at D11.2 billion (29.4% of GDP) an increase of 31% over 2014. This increase is principally due to elimination of fuel subsidies; increase in grants, projected increase in efficiency and compliance and to a lesser extent the effect of new measures.

EXPENDITURE

110. Total Expenditure and Net Lending for the fiscal year 2015 is projected at D11.7 billion, (30.7 per cent of GDP). Current Expenditure, which is, composed of personnel emoluments, other charges and interest, is expected to consume 71.7 per cent of total expenditure in

2015, in comparison to 70 per cent in 2014. Capital Expenditure is projected to consume almost the same share as in 2014, from 30 per cent of total expenditure in 2014 to a projected 29.3per cent in 2015.

111. The fiscal deficit for the upcoming fiscal year is projected at D504 million or 1.3 per cent of GDP, in comparison to an expected deficit of D3.4 billion in 2014 or 10 per cent of GDP.Net Domestic Borrowing for the upcoming fiscal year 2015 is projected at 1 per cent of GDP, a significant decrease from 10 per cent of GDP expected at the end of 2014.

REVENUE MEASURES

Honourable Speaker,

Consistent with the policy of tax for development, Government will introduce the following tax measures from 1st January 2015

- 1) Raise the GSM levy from 1.25% to 2.5% This will generate additional revenues estimated at **D33 million**.
- **2**) Fuel levy of D1 per liter for the Road fund. This measure will generate additional revenues estimated at **D88 million**
- **3)** Introduce 35% levy on imported poultry products. This measure will generate additional revenue estimated at **D15 million**.
- **4)** Increase import levies on premix oil from D4.76/L to D11.42/L. This measure will generate additional revenues estimated at **D60 million.**

5) Tobacco products – Increase excise tax on cigarettes from D9 per pack to D12 per pack; increase the environment tax on cigarettes from D2/pack to D2.20/pack; increase excise tax on other tobacco products from D150/kg to D200/kg; Increase environment tax on other tobacco products from D100/kg to D110/kg. These measures will generate additional revenues estimated at **D25 million**

CONCLUSION

Honourable Speaker, Sir

In conclusion,

112. Despite external challenges, including the EBOLA epidemic in West Africa, the effects of climate change, the spillover effects of sluggish global growth, coupled with domestic expenditure pressures, the Government of the Gambia under the distinguished Leadership of His Excellency the President, Sheikh Professor Alhagie Dr. Yahya A. J.J. Iammeh will ensure the realization of vision 2016 and vision 2020.

The Government will continue on the path of sound macroeconomic policies guided by effective monitoring and adaptation mechanisms for the realization of inclusive growth and development. To generate savings, create buffers and a friendly investment climate, the 2015 budget is anchored on limiting net domestic borrowing to 1% of GDP from 10% at end December 2014. Achieving this requires

strong adjustment measures to which the Government is fully committed.

114. As I said at outset, we are twelve months to the end of the MDGs, twelve months to the end of PAGE, twenty four months to the target date for food self sufficiency and sixty months to vision 2020. We must all therefore redouble and unite our efforts for together we surely can

all therefore redouble and unite our efforts for together we surely can

realize our goals.

115. In this regard, let me again call on our development partners

including the private sector to continue to provide genuine partnership

with Government in socio economic development.

116. Let me again say that on its part, Government will provide the

necessary leadership and direction.

Honourable Speaker,

I beg to move

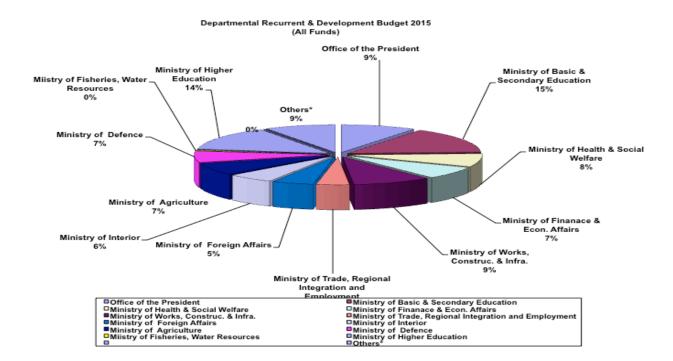
ANNEXES

ANNEX 1

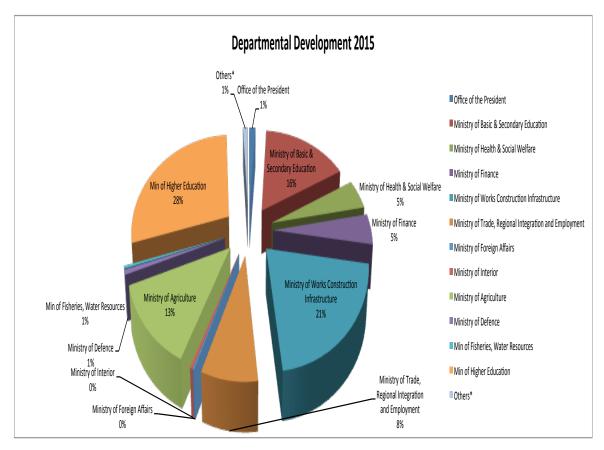
SECTORAL ALLOCATION FOR 2015 BUDGET

Departmental Recurrent & Development Budget (All Funds)	D' Millions	% of Total
Office of the President	823.43	9.16
Ministry of Basic & Secondary Education	1,354.56	15.07
Ministry of Health & Social Welfare	684.76	7.62
Ministry of Finanace & Econ. Affairs	647.04	7.20
Ministry of Works, Construc. & Infra.	858.17	9.55
Ministry of Trade, Regional Integration and Employment	360.61	4.01
Ministry of Foreign Affairs	454.76	5.06
Ministry of Interior	506.16	5.63
Ministry of Agriculture	651.72	7.25
Ministry of Defence	591.03	6.58
Miistry of Fisheries, Water Resources	32.19	0.36
Ministry of Higher Education	1,245.39	13.86
Others*	777.42	8.65
Total	8,987.24	100.00

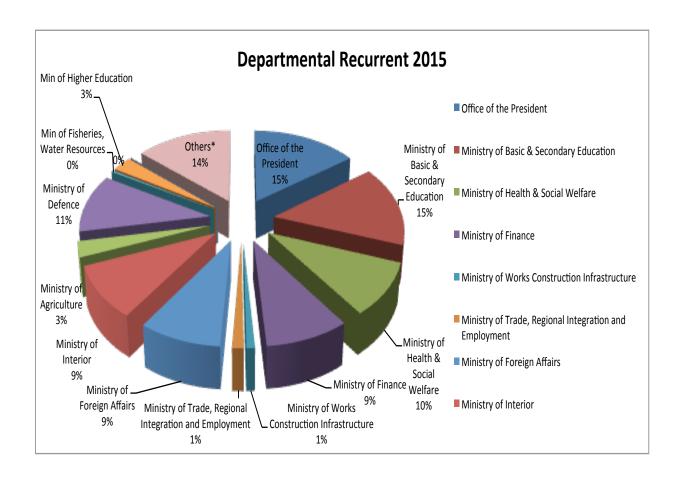
*Others: Ministries not listed above



SECTORAL ALLOCATION FOR 2015					
Departmental Development Budget(GLF)	D Million	% of Total			
Office of the President	46,550	1.2			
Ministry of Basic & Secondary Education	631,811	16.3			
Ministry of Health & Social Welfare	188,556	4.9			
Ministry of Finance	191,236	4.9			
Ministry of Works Construction Infrastructure	812,400	20.9			
Ministry of Trade, Regional Integration and Emp	loyn 299,234	7.7			
Ministry of Foreign Affairs	7,241	0.2			
Ministry of Interior	13,100	0.3			
Ministry of Agriculture	503,414	13.0			
Ministry of Defence	30,000	0.8			
Min of Fisheries, Water Resources	17,140	0.4			
Min of Higher Education	1,102,613	28.4			
Others*	36,777	0.9			
Total	3,880,072	100.00			
*Ministries not listed above					

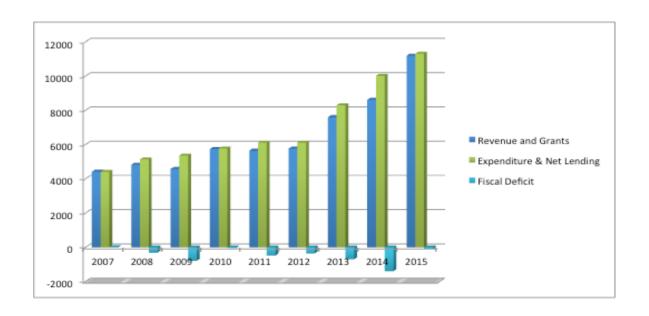


SECTORAL ALLOCATION FOR 2015					
Departmental Recurrent Budget(GLF)	D Million	% of Total			
Office of the President	776,888	15.2			
Ministry of Basic & Secondary Education	772,754	15.1			
Ministry of Health & Social Welfare	496,213	9.7			
Ministry of Finance	455,813	8.9			
Ministry of Works Construction Infrastructure	45,771	0.9			
Ministry of Trade, Regional Integration and Employment	61,381	1.2			
Ministry of Foreign Affairs	447,523	8.7			
Ministry of Interior	493,046	9.6			
Ministry of Agriculture	148,312	2.9			
Ministry of Defence	561,032	10.9			
Min of Fisheries, Water Resources	15,052	0.3			
Min of Higher Education	142,784	2.8			
Others*	707,181	13.80			
Total	5,123,750 F	100.00			



ANNEX 4
Government Resources, Expenditure and Net Lending and Fiscal deficit 2007-2015
Values D' Millions

	Revenue and Grants	Expenditure & Net Lending	Fiscal Deficit		
2007	4422.7	4408.3	14.4		
2008	4831.6	5134.3	-302.8		
2009	4582.2	5362.8	-780.6		
2010	5747.1	5772.8	-25.7		
2011	5650.2	6116.5	-466.3		
2012	5771.3	6116.5	-345.2		
2013	7608.8	8301.5	-692.7		
2014	8629.7	10020	-1390.3		
2015	11197.40	11312.80	-115.4		



ANNEX 5
PUBLIC DEBT (PERCENTAGE OF GDP)

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Domestic Public Debt	28.1	25.4	25	29.4	33.2	33.4	35.7	34.2	31.5
External Public Debt	46	40	45	40.2	44.1	44.1	47	44.2	42

