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JOINT EDITORIAL

Dear readers,

We would like to take this opportunity to present to you our first edition under the 11th European Development Fund (EDF) Programme Cycle. During the last programme cycle, the newsletter has proven to be a significant medium of communication with the general public, particularly in building a better understanding of the various interventions of the European Union (EU) in The Islamic Republic of The Gambia. We envisage a continuous exchange of information on the EU activities in The Gambia and would like to thank you for your support and encouraging messages.

Under the 10th EDF, we were able to accomplish many successful projects and programmes in some key development priority areas of the Government of The Gambia (TGOTG), notably in Agriculture and Food Security, Climate Change and the Environment, Governance, Access to Justice, Infrastructure, School Feeding, Children and Women's Rights. The Support to Gambia's National Plan (Roads Project) has been completed and handed over to the Government, whilst projects such as the EU MDG1c project, GCCA Support Project to The Gambia, Drainage, Sanitation and Waste Management, Access to Justice and Support to Public Procurement Reforms have all achieved significant milestones and are nearing completion. We strongly believe that these projects will positively impact the lives of Gambians.



Mr Malang Nyass
Director, NAO Support Unit



H.E Attila LAJOS
European Union Ambassador
& Head of Delegation to
The Republic of the Gambia

The 11th EDF is underway and its first batch intends to focus on two sectors, namely: Agriculture for Economic Growth and Food Security/Nutrition and Exit to the Transport Sector. The identification of these sectors was jointly done by the EU and TGOTG, through constructive consultation process which was anchored on the Programme for Accelerated Growth and Employment (PAGE), Vision 2016 and 2020 respectively. This Cooperation encompasses close collaboration with all possible stakeholders, including UN Agencies, Civil Society Organisations and Non-Governmental Organisations, Private Sector and the local authorities and communities throughout the implementation of these projects.

We are optimistic that the partnership between The Gambia and the European Union will steadily expand further during the 11th EDF Programme cycle and beyond.

We look forward to providing you with more information on EU interventions and activities undertaken during the upcoming period.

Long live The Gambia-EU Cooperation.



EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT SUBCOMMITTEE ON HUMAN RIGHTS MISSION TO THE GAMBIA

A delegation composed of four Members of the European Parliament's Subcommittee on Human Rights (DROI), David Martin (S&D, UK), Richard Howitt (S&D, UK), Judith Sargentini (Greens/EFA, NL) and Karol Karski (ECR, PL) visited The Gambia in September.

The Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) were on a fact-finding mission which included visiting two EU-funded projects.

The MEPs were welcomed in Soma by the local Governor who explained how Action Aid, the National Women Farmers Association of The Gambia (NaWFA) and the Female Lawyers Association - Gambia (FLAG) work towards empowering child-focused organizations to promote children's rights. The MEPs then met with a Mother's Clubs where a lively discussion took place about the importance of protecting children's right to an education.

The MEPs travelled to Kalagi to meet with SOS Children's Villages to discuss the project "Women's Empowerment for Change" which partners with ChildFund The Gambia and The Gambia Foundation for Research on Women's Health, Productivity and the Environment (BAFROW). The Members of the European Parliament met with two beneficiaries who presented their commendable work in setting up their own businesses.

In Sintet the MEPs met a Women Cooperative Group which the EU is providing support to. Finally the delegation met with three ex-circumcisers in Kan Mamadou who explained the help they have received to transition to another profession to support their families.

The Members of the European Parliament were delighted with their visit and would like to extend their gratitude to all who helped making it a success.

The remaining days of the mission were spent meeting the MEPs' counterparts at the National Assembly, Government ministers, the Independent Electoral Commission, the Ombudsman, civil society organisations and the opposition parties.



EU FUNDED SOS WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT FOR CHANGE PROJECT, PROVIDES RIGHTS EDUCATION AND ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT FOR WOMEN IN FONI JARROL DISTRICT



A three year Women's Empowerment for Change project supported by the EU is currently providing women rights education

and economic empowerment for 100 vulnerable single women and their children in the communities of Kalagi, Sintet, Kan Mamadou, Kampassa and Jarrol in the Foni Jarrol District with the aim of empowering 100 vulnerable single women to take charge of their life in their family and in their community and to reduce the violation of their rights in Sintet, Kalagi, Kan Mamadou, Jarrol and Kampassa by 2017. Beneficiaries are nurtured on creating gender sensitive communities while correspondingly strengthened the economic power of these women to care for themselves and their children. The project is being implemented by SOS Children's Villages The Gambia, Childfund The Gambia and BAFROW.

The tripartite project implementation strategy draws on the comparative advantage of the three implementing partners in addressing both practical and strategic gender needs of women through provision of direct material support, empowering women with information on their human rights which they use to engage in economic activities predominantly run by men and uplifting the status of women in the process.

The project currently adopts a rights based approach that tackles some of the root causes of human rights violation of women and their low socio-economic status which ushered the principles of empowerment, targeting vulnerable groups.

SOS Children's Villages The Gambia, BAFROW and Child fund has improved the welfare of women and their children by providing economic empowerment. Statements by the beneficiaries, children and community members revealed the appreciation of the economic intervention which has been witnessed by a significant improvement in the wellbeing of the target groups and their children.



Women demonstrating the empowerment for change project



Mrs Jewo Jallow being interviewed

EU AND ACTIONAID IMPROVES THE LIVES OF WOMEN IN CENTRAL RIVER REGION

The women of Niamina East, Niamina West and Dankunku Districts are no exception to the problems of access and ownership of land, farm implements, credit, technology and involvement in decision making. The majority of them mainly grow food crops (rice and millet) for home consumption which limit their ability to engage in cash crop production usually dominated by men. Like many other districts in The Gambia gender disparities continue to exist in all spheres of life in CRR.

In an attempt to address the issues above, ActionAid signed an agreement with the European Union in the Gambia for the implementation of a project to the tune of €492,599.78 (almost twenty six million dalasi). The 3 year project which began in 2014 is called **Promoting women's socio-economic rights in Niamina East, Niamina West and Niamina Dankunku Districts**. Its overall objective is to contribute to gender equity in the Gambia, by promoting women's access to socio-economic rights and economic empowerment in the CRR. The project is being implemented in partnership with the National Association of Women Farmers (NaWFA) and the Female Lawyers Association of The Gambia (FLAG). Today, the project has positively contributed to the socio-economic advancement of women in CRR.

“I benefitted from the EC training on business management and will live with that benefit for the rest of my life. Before the training, I used my own way to manage the business and made a lot of losses. After the training I can now separate the business from my personal expenses and I was able to open a savings bank account for the first time. I have started realizing benefits from my saving money and sometimes I withdraw some money to make cement blocks for the house I am building in Kombo. Before the training I was unable to do that. I use to spend whatever sales I made, but thanks to the EU and ActionAid training I now save.” Mrs Jewo Jallow , a poultry farmer in CRR.”

Mrs Jewo Jallow , a poultry farmer in CRR

The project also works with women groups on campaigns for land ownership and violence against women.