



UNITED NATIONS

OFFICE OF THE RESIDENT CO-ORDINATOR
IN THE GAMBIA

**SYNTHESIS OF THE 2002
THE GAMBIA – UN COUNTRY TEAM
DEVELOPMENT FORUM**

February 2003

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¹ The views presented in this synthesis of Development Forum proceedings are those of contributors and participants. They are disseminated to raise awareness and stimulate discussion, and should not be attributed to the United Nations Development Programme, or any other member of the United Nations System, except where explicitly indicated.

PREFACE AND SUMMARY

The principal objectives of The Gambia–United Nations Country Team Development Forum were to: share experiences; examine the complexities of development; facilitate consensus; and disseminate best practices. Six meetings were held, spanning: regional integration; gender and development; data management for development; science and technology for development; partnership for development; and sustainable development.

The high calibre of attendance, including Cabinet Ministers, Permanent Secretaries, Government Directors, Diplomats and a wide range of non-governmental and civil society Representatives, encouraged extensive, interactive participation and highlighted specific development issues and problems affecting The Gambia, which have strengthened policy making, both within Government and the UN system.

Regional Integration

Initiatives intended to promote regional co-operation and integration in Africa have met with varying degrees of success. The Organisation of African Unity (OAU) was established in 1963 and was followed by the formation of various sub-regional groups, including the Economic Community of West African States in 1975; the Southern African Development Community in 1980; and the West African Economic and Monetary Union in 1994. Almost forty years after its foundation, the Organisation of African Unity became the African Union in 2002.

Full integration has been constrained by a variety of factors, including: Africa’s colonial legacy; structural bottlenecks of African economies; poor infrastructure; limited human and institutional capacity; political instability; sub-optimal regional trade; slow implementation of protocols; and a general lack of political will.

In spite of these constraints and relatively slow progress, regional integration is far from being a myth. With a shared vision and commitment, Africa could achieve much greater and more meaningful integration within the next twenty years. What is needed is a fusion of interests, a union of hearts and minds, underpinned by belief in a common destiny.

Gender and Development

Women constitute just over half the population and provide most of the unpaid farm labour in The Gambia. In addition to their traditional roles of child-bearing, cooking, cleaning, farming, feeding the family and household chores, women also contribute significantly to economic development through sesame and vegetable production, fish processing and numerous, small-scale entrepreneurial activities. Nevertheless, women are relegated socially, economically and politically because of the patriarchal nature of Gambian society.

Constraints on women’s advancement in The Gambia include: limited access to education; social and cultural bias; lack of access to land and credit facilities; weak entrepreneurial skills; exposure to health risks; and resistance to social change. Experience elsewhere has shown that investing in the education of girls and women contributes to: economic growth; improves child survival and overall family health; reduces fertility; and slows population growth.

Various initiatives have been undertaken to improve the status of women in The Gambia, including: constitutional provision for equal dignity and opportunity for women; reform of education policy to increase girls’ enrolment at school; inclusion of population and family life education in the curriculum; and introduction of scholarship trust funds for girls education.

Data Management for Development

Data management is a critical aspect of monitoring progress towards the Millennium Development Goals. Access to reliable, up-to-date information is essential for sound judgement and underpins good governance. Better use of information and communications technology for the electronic delivery of services and information for the benefit of the citizenry and the private sector is central to the modernisation of the country. Data have a wide range of uses in decision-making, monitoring and evaluation, and impact assessment.

Countries need a range of reliable statistics and quantitative data to assist in the design of appropriate public and private sector strategies; to inform policies and decisions; to act as a force for mobilising social change; as instruments of government accountability and transparency; and to underpin knowledge generation and research.

There is a general need for improvement in all aspects of data management in Sub-Saharan Africa. Training and quality control are essential for sound data management. The collection of national statistics should be standardised, in terms of both the data collected and methods used. Many more statisticians and analysts need to be trained and equipped to ensure meaningful progress.

Science and Technology for Development

Strengthening scientific and technological capacity is one of the surest ways of accelerating national development. No amount of economic, fiscal or any other policy reform can replace the efforts of a systematically planned development of science and technology. The “Internet Revolution” is dramatically changing both the internal political and socio-economic structures of most nations and the way in which they relate to each other. Information communications technology offers major benefits to developing countries in general and remote communities in particular, including: access to distance learning; communication with other communities, for pooling resources and technical expertise; use of web-sites for marketing local produce, nationally and internationally; community health education; tele-medicine; and communication with central and local governments.

New, long-term strategies are required to enable countries to sustain economic growth and compete in a world where development is increasingly dominated by science and technology. Much greater investment in education is required in The Gambia, especially in the development of scientific and technological capacity to utilise the country’s comparative advantages. Scientific and technological development requires careful planning to ensure the most effective use and appropriate application of limited resources. Keys to success are co-ordination and co-operation, with realistic, forward thinking policies, clearly defined objectives and carefully monitored activities.

Partnership for Development

Partnerships are needed now more than ever before because of globalisation and the interdependence of the world community that transcend geographical boundaries and political jurisdictions. Common problems faced by inhabitants of our “global village” include: pervasive poverty; inequality between developed and developing countries; the spread of HIV/AIDS; gender discrimination; conflicts between neighbouring states; cross-border ethnic tensions; drug trafficking and organised crime; the weapons trade; climate change; deforestation; air and water pollution; and the loss of biodiversity. There are, therefore, many very good reasons for working together to address common problems through genuine partnerships and international co-operation.

Within any relationship, however, there is a risk of domination, which the principles of partnership are intended to overcome, but in the inherently unequal donor-recipient relationship, the dangers of excessive influence remain and must be guarded against. Recipients of development assistance should be clear, articulate and assertive in what kind of support is required. Aid should never be the mainstay of development; it should only supplement and complement what is available locally and be geared towards self-reliance.

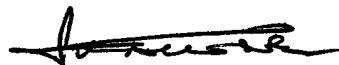
More effective use should be made of national institutions, organisations and indigenous expertise. National capacities should be strengthened. Countries need to define their own visions of the future, prepare their own agenda, identify their own priorities and initiate their own programmes to achieve their own aspirations. More effective partnerships between African countries must also be forged to overcome common problems, as envisaged by the African Union and the New Partnership for Africa's Development.

Post World Summit on Sustainable Development

Sustainable development has two dimensions: a) meeting needs; and b) protecting the natural resources and the environment upon which people's capacity to meet the social and economic developmental needs depend. Progress towards sustainable development over the past decade has been disappointing, with increasing poverty and environmental degradation.

The World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg in 2002 laid the groundwork and paved the way for further action, but provided no silver bullet solutions or miracle cures. Far-reaching reforms are required, both nationally and internationally, with concerted efforts to reduce poverty; build genuine partnerships; decentralise decision-making; address gender inequality; empower the underprivileged; slow population growth; manage renewable natural resources sustainably; minimise/mitigate environmental degradation; and promote peace and security.

We trust that this synthesis report will stimulate dialogue and encourage a working partnership between the UN system in The Gambia and all other stakeholders. We hope you find the report informative and useful.



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Development Forum was established by the Resident Co-ordinator of the UN System with the full support of the Government of The Gambia to share experiences and stimulate discussion in the development process. A series of meetings of the Forum was arranged by the Strategy and Policy Analysis Unit during 2001/02 to consider a range of development issues.

The organisers wish to express their most sincere appreciation to all Forum participants for their stimulating presentations, informative contributions and lively debate:

Regional Integration

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Post World Summit on Sustainable Development

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The organisers are also pleased to acknowledge the leadership and encouragement of Dr. John O. Kakonge, Resident Co-ordinator of the UN system in The Gambia, and all other Agency Heads and colleagues, especially Dr. James Mwanzia (WHO); Dr. Heimo Mikkola (FAO); Maria Teresa Hevia (UNICEF); and Mr. Pradip Dalal and Mrs. Alice Martin-Daihairou (WFP); for their enthusiastic support of the Forum.

Forum proceedings were compiled by Mr. Suwareh Darboe, UNDP Economist, and final editorial synthesis and desk-top-publishing was by Dr. David Bourn of the Environmental Research Group Oxford Limited.

ACRONYMS

CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
DFID	Department for International Development (United Kingdom)
DOSE	Department of State for Education
DOSTIE	Department of State for Trade, Industry and Employment
DSTE	Directorate of Science and Technology Education
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations
GCCI	Gambia Chamber of Commerce and Industry
GIS	Geographical Information System
HDR	Human Development Report
HIV/AIDS	Human Immuno-deficiency Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ICPD	International Conference on Population and Development
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IT	Information Technology
ITC	International Trypanotolerance Centre
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OAU	Organisation of African Unity
OIC	Organisation of the Islamic Conference
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
RSA	Republic of South Africa
S & T	Science and Technology
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SADCC	Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference
SAERD	Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
USA	United States of America
UTG	University of The Gambia
VSAT	Very Small Aperture Terminal
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organisation
WSSD	World Summit for Sustainable Development
WTO	World Trade Organisation

1. REGIONAL INTEGRATION²

1.1 Genesis of Regional Integration

The genesis of regional integration in Africa can be traced back to the establishment of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) in 1963 by the Heads of State of 32 African countries. Subsequent landmark events included: the founding of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS/CEDEAO) in 1975; the Southern African Development Community in 1980; the Abuja Treaty in 1991, which formed the African Economic Community and set a timeframe for member states to complete integration by 2025; the West African Economic and Monetary Union in 1994; and the Extraordinary Summit of the OAU in Sirte (Libya) in 1999, which undertook to establish the African Union by 2001, inspired by the European model.

Some of the trials and tribulations of integration are outlined in the following sections.

1.1.1 Economic Community of West African States

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) is a regional group of fifteen countries, which was founded in 1975 with a mission to promote economic integration in “all fields of economic activity, particularly industry, transport, telecommunications, energy, agriculture, natural resources, commerce, monetary and financial matters, social and cultural issues” ([http:// www.ecowas.int/](http://www.ecowas.int/)).

ECOWAS has the following long-term, strategic objectives:

- Harmonisation of national economic policies;
- Unification of monetary and fiscal policies;
- Establishment of supranational institutions;
- Promotion of trade;
- Improvement of communications;
- Expansion of technical and educational exchanges;
- Exploitation of natural resources;
- Expansion of markets and trade;
- Creation of employment opportunities; and,
- Reduction of economic vulnerability and dependency on external support.

Specific measures include:

- Elimination of customs duties between member states;
- Abolition of restrictions on trade between member states;

² Based on presentations and comments by Abdoulie M. Touray, John O. Kakonge and Momodou Ceesay at The Gambia - UN Country Team Development Forum on Regional Integration, Banjul, November 2001.

- Abolition of a common customs tariff;
- Establishment of a common commercial policy towards third countries; and
- Abolition of obstacles to free movement of persons, services and capital between states.

Tariffs were expected to be liberalised gradually, with half of the member states operating a zero tariff for industrial trade by the end of 1998, but because of a general lack of political will the scheme has not been implemented, which poses serious difficulties for both intra-West African trade and the integration process. Progress towards integration is also slow because of the low volume of trade within ECOWAS and indeed between most African countries because of generally poor transportation and communication links.

1.1.2 East African Community

The East African Community was established in 1948 to foster sub-regional integration in three former British territories: Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania. The community focused on the delivery of common services in education, transport and agriculture. The British also believed that integration of such services would facilitate administration with limited personnel and be more cost-effective than supporting separate services in each territory.

The strategy in education was to provide an array of curricula and diplomas across the three countries, whilst at the same time capitalising on the strengths of subject specialisation and standardising the recognition of diplomas. The same educational system was introduced in each country, based on the state system in Britain. Each country specialised in specific disciplines. In Uganda, Makerere College focused on education, medicine and forestry. In Kenya, the Royal College focused on engineering, architecture, land and building, economics and other sciences. In Tanzania, Dar es Salaam College focused on law, public administration, history, geography and economics. Costs were shared through bursaries.

In transport, the strategy was to facilitate trade by linking major centres of population and gain from specialisation in specific modes of transport in each country. Extensive road, rail and air networks were established to link capital cities, major towns and ports. Kenya had responsibility for general management of the railways; Uganda, roads; and Tanzania, ports and harbours. Tariffs were harmonised and a standard East African currency, the East African Shilling, was introduced. Goods and services moved freely from one country to another.

In agriculture, the strategy was geared towards crop specialisation: Kenya focused on tea, pyrethrum, *arabica* coffee and passion fruit; Uganda focused on cotton and *robusta* coffee; whilst Tanzania specialised in the cultivation of sisal and cashew nuts.

The East African Community collapsed in 1977 because of political differences between member countries: Nyerere in Tanzania was a socialist, whilst Kenyatta in Kenya was a capitalist. In 1999, however, the three countries reactivated the community, which is strong testimony to the underlying need for regional co-operation.

1.1.3 Southern African Development Community

The Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference (SADCC), the forerunner to the Southern African Development Community (SADC), was established in April 1980 by the nine “frontline” states: Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe, to fight against apartheid in South Africa. Things have moved on apace since then and the objectives of SADC now are to:

- Achieve development and economic growth, alleviate poverty, enhance the standard and quality of life of the people of southern Africa and support the socially disadvantaged through regional integration;
- Evolve common political values, systems and institutions;
- Promote and defend peace and security;
- Promote self-sustaining development on the basis of collective self-reliance, and the interdependence of Member States;
- Achieve complementarity between national and regional strategies and programmes;
- Promote and maximise productive employment and utilisation of resources;
- Achieve sustainable utilisation of natural resources and effective protection of the environment; and
- Strengthen and consolidate the long-standing historical, social and cultural affinities and links among the people of the Region. (SADC website: <http://www.sadc.int/>).

The ultimate objective of SADC is, therefore, to build a sub-region in which there will be a high degree of harmonisation and rationalisation to enable the pooling of resources to achieve collective self-reliance in order to improve the living standards of the people of the region. There is also a need to shift the focus of the organisation from co-ordination of development projects to a more complex task of integrating the economies of Member States.

In terms of practical modalities, rigid criteria were established for allocating the co-ordination of economic sectors to specific countries. For example, Botswana was responsible for the secretariat and livestock; Lesotho focused on environment, land management and water issues; Malawi was responsible on fisheries and forestry; South Africa was in charge of financial information technology; and Zimbabwe focused on human development. The costs of sector secretariat's staffing and related costs being met by each state.

Regarding achievements, SADC has established a strong co-ordination and information network and the community as a whole has been able to attract substantial foreign capital to promote sub-regional integration.

1.1.4 Onchocerciasis Control Programme

The Onchocerciasis Control Programme is a good example of sub-regional integration to address a common problem: the control of river blindness in West Africa. The programme began in 1974 and has become one of the most successful disease control initiatives in the region, covering some two million square kilometres. Its major strengths include:

- Six-year rolling plan for consecutive phases;
- Clearly defined objectives and a realistic timetable;
- Viable institutional arrangements and national support;
- Well-managed project secretariat;
- Financial shares paid regularly by member states;
- Full-time, project staff counterparts from member states; and,
- Long-term commitment from donors and sponsors.

1.2 Constraints on Sub-Regional and Regional Integration

Various long-standing constraints on regional co-operation and integration were identified, and discussed, including:

- Africa's colonial legacy and artificial national boundaries;
- Structural bottlenecks of African economies;
- Poor infrastructure;
- Limited human and institutional capacity;
- Political instability;
- Sub-optimal regional trade;
- Slow implementation of protocols; and
- General lack of vision and of political will.

1.3 Critical Issues in Integration

A wide range of critical issues relating to the furtherance of regional co-operation and integration of development in Africa were considered, including:

- Need for a common currency (the "Afro") and a common market;
- Establishment of free and viable markets, and market economies;
- Stable institutions guaranteeing common values of democracy;
- Primacy of law and respect for human rights, peace and tolerance to overcome ethnic prejudice and hatred;
- Preserving diversity of cultures, languages and traditions;
- Consolidation of re-emerging democracies and rebuilding sound economic structures;
- Defending the economic and strategic interests of Africa;
- Casting out the spirit of domination and nationalism;
- Recognising institutional authorities;
- Guaranteeing the independence of community bodies;
- Reinforcing co-operation between countries and institutions;
- Reinforcing the virtues of the principle of equality; and
- Wiping out discrimination.

1.4 Conclusions and Recommendations

Various common features can be identified from the foregoing examples of regional co-operation, which provide useful lessons for the future:

- **Common purpose:** All member states should have a common purpose and feel the need for regional integration;
- **Enabling environment:** Countries created circumstances and established administrative links that facilitated communication and co-operation amongst themselves;

- **Peer pressure:** As demonstrated by SADC, it is important that countries should be able to exert collective influence on each other and mobilise public opinion for that purpose;
- **Political commitment:** Motivation from the highest level is absolutely essential;
- **Vision:** As in all great achievements of the world, a clear vision of a better future is vital. The river blindness control project and SADC have their own specific visions;
- **Good relationship between leaders:** Absolutely essential - the poor relations between East African leaders led to the collapse of East African Community in 1977;
- **Specialisation and sectoral approach:** Enables countries to share responsibilities and strengthen specific capacities for the common good;
- **Standardisation:** Harmonisation of procedures, qualifications and currency facilitates trade and the free movement of people and goods, key elements of integration.

Cross-border ethnic and family ties also exert pressure on member states to co-operate. In East Africa, for example, women's groups, ethnic affiliations and other trans-boundary networks prevailed over institutional and formal arrangements to revive the East African Community. Thus, the African Union, if modelled on an institutional structure such as the European Union, should be able to foster co-operation and integration across the continent.

The way ahead for Africa is to reduce and eventually eliminate barriers to trade and adopt compatible paradigms of economic development. Countries must be convinced of the potential gains of co-operation and integration, in terms of economic growth and social development that can be achieved through utilisation of the region's comparative advantages; greater competition; economies of scale; and increased capital flows.

Regional integration is far from being a myth. With a shared vision and commitment, Africa could achieve much greater and more meaningful integration within the next twenty years. What is needed is a fusion of interests and a union of hearts and minds, underpinned by belief in a common destiny. The Forum identified the following requirements for promoting regional integration:

- Inspiring leadership;
- Political motivation and willingness to surrender some aspects of national sovereignty;
- Capacity and awareness building;
- Stable institutions;
- Viable market economies;
- Dissemination of the principles of democracy;
- Peace and tolerance to overcome ethnic prejudice and reconcile differences; and
- Good governance.

2. GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT³

2.1 Definitions of Gender and Sex

Gender refers to the social differences between men and women, which are learned, may change over time and vary both within and between cultures. Gender is a socio-economic variable that analyses roles, responsibilities, constraints, opportunities and needs of men and women in any context. These roles and responsibilities differ from one society to another and even within a given society, there may be considerable differences depending on whether one is married, single, young or old, or whether one belongs to a certain religious, or ethnic group.

Sex is a biologically determined difference between men and women that is universal.

2.2 International Initiatives for Improving the Status of Women

In recognition of the importance of women in society and development, various international instruments relating to their status have been introduced in recent decades, including:

- a) The Beijing Platform of Action calls for the removal of all barriers to the economic empowerment of women to enable them to enjoy their rights and achieve equality in access to productive resources and participation in decision making;
- b) The International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) also calls for improved reproductive health and rights of women and girls, and affordable health services for all;
- c) The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) places great importance on the rights and welfare of the girl child; and
- d) The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) emphasises the importance of education for women.

2.3 Women in Society and National Development in The Gambia

Women constitute just over half the population and provide most of the unpaid farm labour in The Gambia. In addition to their traditional roles of child-bearing, cooking, cleaning, farming, feeding the family and household chores, women also contribute significantly to economic development through sesame and vegetable production, fish processing and numerous, small-scale entrepreneurial activities.

In the informal, urban sector, women play many important roles as traders, seamstresses, hairdressers, contractors, etc. and are actively involved in the distribution of produce and merchandise. In the modern, formal sector, where education is a prerequisite, women tend to be confined to occupations, such as teaching, nursing, clerical and secretarial work, although female lawyers, doctors, engineers and university teachers are becoming more numerous.

³ Based on presentations and comments by Fatou Bom Bensouda, Saim Kinteh, Siga Jagne and Fatoumatta Waggeh at The Gambia - UN Country Team Development Forum on Gender and Development, Banjul, January 2002.

Women's participation in politics has increased since 1994. The Vice President is a woman and there are three female cabinet ministers. High-level positions in public and private organisations are no longer reserved for men, but fewer women have won parliamentary seats. In the judiciary, the position of women is improving rapidly as they acquire educational qualification and experience, which qualify them for senior positions.

Nevertheless, despite their diverse and substantial contributions to society and development, women remain relegated socially, economically and politically because of the patriarchal nature of Gambian society. There is a general and deeply entrenched belief that women are inferior to men in The Gambia, especially in rural areas, where women are not entitled to credit, or land. Traditional practices, such as female circumcision and genital mutilation, which are both discriminatory and hazardous to health, continue to be practiced. It is also very common for girls to be forced into marriage whilst still attending school.

2.4 Women and Education in The Gambia

Lack of access to education is one of the main factors that has disadvantaged women in The Gambia. For example, the proportion of girls enrolled in Lower Basic Schools is 44%, compared with 56% for boys. Nationally, only 27% of adult women are literate, against 55% of adult men. These figures mask great differences between urban and rural populations: 40% of urban females are literate, compared with only 18% in rural areas. This low level of education and literacy amongst women translates into: higher mortality and morbidity; more malnutrition; fewer employment opportunities in the formal sector; inadequate access to information; and low level of political representation.

The underlying reasons for this educational disparity between the sexes are complex and relate to a variety of structural, socio-cultural and economic factors. Structural factors include: differential availability and accessibility of educational facilities; limited relevance of school curriculum; biased schooling and educational environment; and differential educational expectations and performance. Socio-cultural factors include: patriarchy/female seclusion; early marriage and motherhood; and fear of excessive emancipation. Economic factors include the costs of acquiring education; opportunity costs of formal education, including foregone earnings and foregone traditional learning; limited labour market opportunities; and time constraints.

2.5 Women and the Law in The Gambia

As a former colony of Britain, The Gambia has inherited the English legal system. The laws applicable to The Gambia consist of the Common Law, the doctrines of equity and statutes of general application prior to 1888. The Gambia, being predominantly a Muslim country, also has the Sharia law, which is applicable to about 90% of the population. As personal law, it is used to administer such matters as inheritance, marriage, divorce etc.. The Cadi and traditional courts also administer the personal law of Muslims.

Although the 1997 Gambian Constitution has adequate provisions for female equality, these are not applicable when used in conjunction with The Gambian Legal System due to the application of Customary Laws through the Law of England Application Act, The Mohammedan Law Recognition Act and The District Tribunal Act. An attempt has been made to rationalise the application of these acts, using the Mohammedan Marriage Formation and Dissolution Bill, but the matter has yet to be resolved.

The 1997 Constitution extends the definition of “discrimination” to include “gender.” However, the subsequent sub-provision qualifies the definition by making it inapplicable to laws relating to adoption, marriage, divorce, burial, devolution of property on death, or matters of personal law. The effect of this provision is that the National Assembly can pass discriminatory laws against women in these areas and an aggrieved person would be unable to seek redress in the courts.

2.6 Constraints on Women’s Advancement in The Gambia

The main constraints on women’s advancement in The Gambia are:

- Poor access to education and resulting ignorance;
- Social and cultural bias;
- Discriminatory customary law and traditions;
- Lack of access to land and credit facilities;
- Weak entrepreneurial skills;
- Exposure and susceptibility to health risks; and,
- Difficulties in changing entrenched attitudes and legislating for equality.

2.7 National Initiatives for Improving the Status of Women

Various initiatives have been undertaken at national level with a view to improving the status of women in The Gambia, including:

- a) The Department of State for Education has set up a multi sectoral working group whose mandate is to identify policies and strategies for attracting and retaining girls in schools, but the working group has been virtually dormant for some time;
- b) The Education Policy 1988-2003 has been revised recently to include provision for the special needs and concerns of the girl child. The Education Master Plan emphasised the need to increase girls’ enrolment ratio at the lower basic level from 60% in 1996 to 73% by 2002, a target which was met in 2001;
- c) The Government of The Gambia, in collaboration with the UN System, has introduced the study of population and family life education into the formal school system. It is hoped that this will reorient the mind sets of both boys and girls on sexually stereotyped role behaviour and false concepts of inferiority and superiority of either sex;
- d) The 1997 Constitution for the first time provides for a child born outside The Gambia to a Gambian mother to be entitled to citizenship by descent, whether the father is a Gambian, or not. Section 27 of the constitution states that marriage shall be based on the full consent of both parties. Section 28 states that women shall be accorded equal dignity of the person with men, as well as equal opportunities in political, economic and social activities. However, customary laws, recognised by the constitution, continue to block enforcement of these provisions; and,

- e) The Government of The Gambia has introduced the Scholarship Trust Fund for Girls attending both public and private schools, which is complemented by the Jammeh Foundation Trust Fund for Girls Education. These initiatives will go a long way towards increasing girls enrolment in schools and lead eventually to greater participation in decision-making by women.

Government's efforts to improve the status of women in The Gambia have been complemented by various development partners, including: bilateral donors, UN agencies, international financial institutions and NGOs.

2.8 Conclusions and Recommendations

Gender equality is a process and not a mere technocratic goal. It requires a change of thinking and attitude. Achieving equality is a long-term process in which cultural, social, political and economic norms undergo fundamental change.

It is important to realise and accept that all people, irrespective of gender, are essential elements of change in any society. It is equally important to realise that gender stereotyping is ballast to the development agenda of any country and that gender equality is an essential aspect of human development.

Experience has shown that investing in the education of girls and women contributes to: economic growth; improves child survival and overall family health; reduces fertility; and slows population growth. In short, investing in women is central to sustainable development. To quote from the United Nations 1995 Human Development Report, it is important to recognise that: "human development, if not engendered, is endangered."

The Forum on Gender and Development made the following recommendations:

- Support training projects to promote the economic empowerment of women;
- Improve women's access to credit, land and other productive resources;
- Support literacy programmes to help women become functionally literate;
- Translate the key features of the CEDAW into local languages, so that they can be more widely understood in The Gambia;
- Educate men to understand and appreciate the problems and potential of women;
- Advocate inclusion of gender sensitivity, parenting skills, HIV/AIDS awareness, etc. in children's education;
- Motivate women to be willing and committed to improving their status;
- Promote and forge partnerships to achieve common objectives;
- Encourage policy makers to create an enabling environment to empower women; and
- Adapt international conventions on improving the status of women for local adoption.

3. DATA MANAGEMENT FOR DEVELOPMENT⁴

Data management is a critical aspect of monitoring progress towards the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which are an ambitious agenda for reducing poverty and improving lives agreed by world leaders at the Millennium Summit in September 2000.

Progress towards achieving these goals is being monitored by a set of numerical and time-bound targets that express key elements of human development:

- **Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger.** Target for 2015: halve the proportion of people living on less than a dollar a day and those who suffer from hunger;
- **Achieve universal primary education.** Target for 2015: ensure that all boys and girls complete primary school;
- **Promote gender equality and empower women.** Targets for 2005 and 2015: eliminate gender disparities in primary and secondary education preferably by 2005, and at all levels by 2015;
- **Reduce child mortality.** Target for 2015: reduce by two thirds the mortality rate among children under five;
- **Improve maternal health.** Target for 2015: reduce by three-quarters the ratio of women dying in childbirth;
- **Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases.** Target for 2015: halt and begin to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS and the incidence of malaria and other major diseases;
- **Ensure environmental sustainability.** Targets: integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes and reverse the loss of environmental resources; by 2015, reduce by half the proportion of people without access to safe drinking water; and by 2020, achieve significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers; and
- **Develop a global partnership for development.** Targets: develop further an open trading and financial system that includes a commitment to good governance, development and poverty reduction – nationally and internationally; address the least developed countries’ special needs, and the special needs of landlocked and small island developing States; deal comprehensively with developing countries’ debt problems; develop decent and productive work for youth; in cooperation with pharmaceutical companies, provide access to affordable essential drugs in developing countries; and in cooperation with the private sector, make available the benefits of new technologies – especially information and communications technologies.

(UNDP Website on MDGs: <http://www.undp.org/mdg/>).

3.1 What is Data Management?

Data management embracing a wide range of activities involving the planning, design, collection, checking, entry, validation, storage, retrieval, analysis and interpretation of data.

⁴ Based on presentations and comments by Victoria Diarra and Kwaku Agyemang at The Gambia - UN Country Team Development Forum on Data Management for Development, Banjul, March 2002.

3.2 Importance of Data and Data Management

Access to reliable, up-to-date information is essential for sound judgement, and underpins good governance. Better use of information and communications technology for the electronic delivery of services and information for the benefit of the citizenry and the private sector is central to the modernisation of Government. Data have a wide range of uses in decision-making, monitoring and evaluation, and impact assessment.

Countries need a range of reliable statistics and quantitative data to assist in the design of appropriate public and private sector strategies; to inform policies and decisions; to act as a force for mobilising social change; as instruments of government accountability and transparency; and to underpin knowledge generation and research.

Without reliable and accurate data, management and implementation of development projects is very difficult, if not impossible. Monitoring and evaluation has become an integral part of the development process. Data are needed for rational evidence-based, decision-making to ensure that available resources are used effectively and efficiently. Data provide a picture of society and help to hold governments accountable for their activities. Data are of fundamental importance to: economic analysis; policy formulation; impact assessment; and monitoring poverty reduction, good governance and human rights.

3.3 Principles of Data Management

- a) **Data Policy:** The first step for any organisation wishing to implement good data management procedures is to define a Data Policy. This is a set of broad, high level principles that form the guiding framework in which data management can operate.
- b) **Data Ownership:** A key aspect of good data management is the clear identification of the owner of the data. Normally, this is the organisation or group of organisations, which originally commissioned the data and has managerial and financial control of that data. The Data Owner has legal rights over the data, the Intellectual Property Rights and the Copyright. This is still the case, even where the data were collected, collated or disseminated by another party. Data ownership implies the right to exploit the data, and if continued maintenance becomes unnecessary, or uneconomical, the right to destroy them.
- c) **Data Documentation and Metadata Compilation:** All data sets should be recorded and documented to facilitate their subsequent identification, proper management and effective use and to avoid collecting or purchasing the same data more than once. The metadata should provide information about the content, currency and accessibility of the data, together with contact details for further information about the data.
- d) **Data Quality, Standardisation and Harmonisation:** Good data management also ensures that data sets are capable of meeting current needs successfully and are suitable for further exploitation. The ability to integrate data is likely to add value, encourage ongoing use of the data and recover the costs of collecting the data.
- e) **Data Life Cycle Control:** Good data management requires that the whole life cycle of data (collection, usage and ultimate destruction) be managed carefully.
- f) **Data Focal Points:** Focal points are located within government organisations where data are gathered, compiled and analysed as part of the normal course of business. These focal points have a particular role to play in managing the government's data over and above the responsibilities of data owners.

- g) **Data Steward, or Custodian:** An appointed individual with formal responsibility for looking after each major data set and accountable for the management and care of the data holdings assigned to them in line with the defined data policy.
- h) **Data Access and Dissemination:** Although this aspect will depend on the business and the financial policy of the organisation, it may be helpful to allow public access to data in line with the Open Government Code of Practice. Access to data should be granted to customers and commercial organisations when the request is in line with the organisation's business strategy and is not infringing the Copyright/Property Right of the data, or any statutory/departmental obligations. The right to use, or provide access to data can be passed to a third party, subject to agreed pricing and dissemination policies.
- i) **Data Audit:** Data management audits are recommended to assess the extent to which data management procedures are followed.

3.4 Need for Improved Data Management in Africa

In the context of Sub-Saharan Africa, there is a general need to improve all aspects of data management, if hard won data is to be put to good use for development. Training and quality control are essential for sound data management. The collection of national statistics should be standardised, in terms of both the data collected and methods used. There is a general shortage of statisticians and skilled technical staff familiar with information collection and analysis techniques.

The quality of data collection in many cases leaves much to be desired. Large-scale surveys and complex questionnaires are prone to error and should have built-in error-checking procedures. Sub-samples of collected data should be validated independently by different enumerators returning to survey sites to confirm that recorded information is correct. Data entry should be carefully monitored and cross-checked, using double data entry where appropriate. Data storage and retrieval systems (computers, diskettes, etc.) should be upgraded periodically as technology develops, so that data does not become inaccessible over time. Statistical advice should be sought before initiating field surveys to ensure that methods are sound and sample sizes are adequate.

Sharing and exchanging data should be encouraged to extend their use for development. Centres with regional and global mandates can add value to data collected at local or national levels through analysis and comparison with similar data from other countries. Data networking is an effective way of ensuring higher-level aggregation and wider application benefits of powerful analytical tools, such as Geographical Information Systems (GIS).

Much potentially valuable historical information remains buried in offices and laboratories across Sub-Saharan Africa. Strenuous efforts are required to conserve this data and grey literature for future reference. National and international research institutes have an important role to play in this regard, as well as capacity building in all aspects of data management from design and collection to analysis, interpretation and dissemination.

3.5 Conclusions and Recommendations

Data management, including collection, processing, analysis, interpretation and dissemination, is problematic in the developing world, especially in countries where expertise is limited. Many more statisticians and analysts need to be trained and equipped with the materials necessary to enable them to enhance the data collection process and fully exploit and use data in ways that will ensure meaningful progress.

Major development benefits would accrue, if greater attention was paid to using objective, statistical information in policy formulation, decision-making, monitoring and evaluation. Civil society does not generally have access to the body of statistics needed for effective participation in and commentary on government policy and performance. But times are changing.

The introduction of Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs), for example, presents a challenge to established approaches to poverty monitoring. First, PRSPs shift the basis for lending agreements from indicators of macro-economic stability to indicators of “good performance” in reducing poverty. Second, PRSPs emphasise process as much as content, and include the requirement for some form of engagement between government and civil society in the process of poverty diagnosis, policy formulation, monitoring and impact assessment.

The Forum on Data Management for Development made the following recommendations:

- Governments should formulate national policies on data and data management;
- Greater investments are required in training of nationals and the infrastructure necessary to support all aspects of data management;
- Data collection, storage, analysis and dissemination procedures should be harmonised;
- Networking within and between countries should be encouraged to share information, maximise data use and promote best practice; and
- Computers and data storage and retrieval systems need to be upgraded periodically to enhance data management and avoid data loss.

4. SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY FOR DEVELOPMENT⁵

4.1 Definitions

Science is the formal study of a particular aspect of the natural world through observation and experiment. A scientific society is one in which science dominates its worldview.

Technology is the use of science that has a practical value. The technological competence of any society depends on the number of engineers and technicians produced by and in that society. To become technologically competent, a country has to invest heavily in education and emphasise science education. In every human society including ours, science is the force that drives development.

Technology is the application of scientific knowledge to solve a problem and usually results in a device that makes life easier or provides convenience to individuals or groups in society, or to the society as a whole. Strengthening scientific and technological capacity is one of the surest ways of accelerating national development. No amount of economic, fiscal or any other policy reform can replace the efforts of a systematically planned development of science and technology.

Information Technology (IT) is the broad subject concerned with all aspects of managing and processing information. In today's world of global communications, information technology is more frequently referred to as *Information and Communications Technology* (ICT).

Central to the change in nature of IT to ICT has been the ongoing "Internet Revolution," which is dramatically changing both the internal political and socio-economic structures of most nations and the way in which they relate to each other. The Internet has promoted a process of "information democratisation" by allowing easy publication and access to information by individual citizens, organisations and institutions.

4.2 The Importance of ICT in Developing Countries

There are many potential gains from access to ICT by remote communities, including:

- Access to distance learning for all sectors of the community, from basic literacy to higher degrees;
- Communication with other communities for pooling resources and technical expertise;
- Use of web sites for marketing local produce, both nationally and internationally;
- Community health education;
- Tele-medicine;
- Emergency communications at times of disaster; and
- Community communication with central and local government.

⁵ Based on presentations and comments by Christine Tacchi, Kah Ibrahima and Etien Essien at The Gambia - UN Country Team Development Forum on The Role of Science and Technology in Development, Banjul, May 2002.

4.3 Factors Affecting the Overall Use of ICT

A variety of factors affect the successful introduction of ICT and its associated development potential, including infrastructure, accessibility, education policy and planning.

4.3.1 Infrastructure

Perhaps the most crucial issue in relation to ICT expansion in developing countries is one of infrastructure. The prime infrastructural issue is one of sustainable and reliable power. This is a major problem for many developing countries, including The Gambia. It is also an issue that exacerbates the “4th world” gap. Power tends to be more reliable in the cities and lacking in rural areas, and it is in the cities where many of the “haves” tend to be found. ICT training is available in the cities and those who are trained tend to stay in the city and work in jobs that require the new technology that they have learned.

Although new innovations, such as computers using wind up power, may mean that conventional power is not needed for computers in the future, at present computers require power. Laptops still need charging. Even if Internet and e-mail were available through televisions as in the UK and US, televisions still need power. Many carefully planned development schemes, for example ICT in education, have been held up because of lack of power in rural communities.

The second infrastructure area of concern in relation to ICT management is that of telecommunications. Countrywide access to telephone lines in developing countries is often problematic and access via satellite links, such as Very Small Aperture Terminals (VSATs) which can provide high quality digital links where telephone services are poor, can be prohibitively expensive. Lack of telephone links mean that even if there is power, usage of e-mail, one of the most easily learned and accessible ICTs is impossible, as is access to older ICTs, such as fax machines.

4.3.2 Accessibility

Access to ICT is inextricably linked to the availability and management of power and telecommunications. If telecommunications and power facilities are restricted, access to ICT for sustainable development is bound to be problematic, especially when start-up costs are high and cost recovery possibilities are limited. This means that private companies are unlikely to invest in the installation of ICT facilities in remote areas.

4.3.3 Education Policy and Planning

Accessibility is also bound to policy making in other areas, in particular education. For example, does national education policy allow for community involvement in education and the share of limited ICT resources available?

When the basic infrastructure is in place, education is the key to harnessing ICT for development. Education programmes need to concentrate on the links between problems and situations and how the outcome can be improved or solved using ICT, not just how ICT works or how to use it *per se*. ICT education, both in schools and communities, must be realistic, so that people can appreciate its relevance, and not regard it as a technological barrier. Technology should be the servant, not the master. General usage of ICT facilities also needs to be monitored carefully. Where systems have been installed, are they used effectively and to their full potential?

The school should be a hub of a “wired-community”, with school ICT facilities shared with community organisations and each “wired-community” linked with others regionally, nationally and internationally. This is especially important in the developing world, where individual access in the home to ICT is limited. In the developing world, the “**Information for All**” movement must be community-centred, first and foremost, to maximise the benefits gained from limited resources.

4.4 Capacity Development in Science and Technology

Experience from around the world indicates that those developing countries, which have achieved rapid economic growth, share various common characteristics, including:

- Endogenous (=internal) capacity building, and tiered human resource development;
- Introduction of advanced technologies from abroad; and
- Stimulation of research and development through institutional support.

Several ingredients are required to build up technological capacities, including:

- Research and development policies for science and technology;
- Manpower planning exercises that give priority to science and technology;
- Education in science and technology;
- Large pool of scientifically and technically trained personnel from the education system (or other sources, such as immigration from other countries); and,
- Active involvement of the private sector in all of the above activities.

Without developing the prerequisite capacities and the science and technology infrastructure, it is impossible to engage research and development, or import technology. The best starting point for The Gambia, is for the further development of basic infrastructure and initial capacity identified above.

For realistic policy formulation and sensible planning towards achievable goals, it is important to recognise that the development of scientific and technological capacity is constrained by a variety of factors. It is not advisable to draw direct comparisons with industrial and post-industrial economies, because they are at different stages on the development pathway. Development of sophisticated technologies, such as aero-space, electronics, nuclear power, pharmaceuticals or biotechnology, to name but a few, is a very capital intensive process, which The Gambia cannot afford.

Development of scientific and technological capacities requires sustained, long-term commitment to quality education and scientific training from primary to tertiary level. Priorities need to be established relating to natural endowments and competitive advantage, and incentives are required for the promotion of enterprise functions in specific technological fields. One of the most effective ways of doing this is to promote closer links between the private sector, universities and research institutes.

The establishment of the University of The Gambia in 1999 and the Directorate of Science and Technology Education (DSTE) demonstrate the Government’s firm commitment to addressing the challenges of tertiary education and development of scientific and technological capacity in the twenty-first century

Identification of priority areas for technological development very much depends on the resources available (skills, infrastructure, finance etc.) and comparative advantages, relative to potential competitors. Experts from the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) have indicated that The Gambia should start with basic research and technological innovations relating to agricultural production and maximising the use of information technologies for access to information on potential markets, production techniques and marketing.

A country need not necessarily be an innovator and producer of advanced high technologies to achieve economic growth. It may develop initiatives and infrastructures that permit it to acquire technologies and apply them appropriately in its own way, even before developing production and innovation capabilities. For example, The Gambia may not be able to produce computers and software, but its craftsmen may be enabled to produce more and better products aided by access to the Internet and information about market requirements and production techniques.

A critical requirement is the strengthening of investment related capabilities. Even when technologies are to be acquired from abroad, the country must possess, or invest in developing, investment related capacities. For example, there should be local experts able to evaluate technical recommendations, select the right type of equipment, participate in process design to ensure that specific needs are met and understand details of plant operation. These cannot be developed without a vibrant, quality-oriented education system that provides scientific training, creates technical awareness and forms a body of local expertise able to make informed decisions about the most appropriate technologies to be adopted.

4.5 Conclusions and Recommendations

The Forum on the Role of Science and Technology in Development concluded that new, long-term strategies are required to enable countries to sustain economic growth and compete in a world where development is dominated increasingly by science and technology. Much greater investment in education is required in The Gambia, especially in the development of scientific and technological capacity.

The country's comparative advantages should be identified and utilised on a sustainable basis, particularly with regard to agricultural production and food security. Scientific and technological development requires careful planning to ensure the most effective use and appropriate application of limited resources. Keys to success are co-ordination and co-operation, with realistic, forward thinking policies, clearly defined objectives and carefully monitored activities. The Forum made the following specific recommendations:

- Establish and strengthen partnerships between the private sector (industry) and government to promote science and technology;
- Accelerate the promotion of science and indigenous technologies, especially for food production and attainment of food security;
- Improve incentives for people to become scientists and technologists;
- Mobilise additional resources to develop scientific and technological capacities;
- Encourage female children to take up science subjects and improve facilities;
- Create an enabling environment for the promotion of science and technology; and
- Formulate a national science and technology policy to enhance local capacities, and ensure that it is adequately funded and effectively implemented.

5. PARTNERSHIP FOR DEVELOPMENT⁶

5.1 Definition and Evolution of Partnership

Partnership means pursuance on the part of two or more parties of common interests and goals, and working together for their mutual benefit. It is entered into voluntarily in a relationship of openness to dialogue and exchange of views. The essential ingredients of partnership include: respect, trust, and transparency, rights and obligations. Its essential elements include: commitment, willingness, trust, ownership, transparency and business culture.

The relationship between Africa and the West immediately after independence was essentially characterised by the concept of “aid”, which then evolved into “assistance”, “co-operation” and finally to “partnership”. The advantages of this new paradigm are that it is innovative, egalitarian and responsive to the needs, mandates and priorities of all partners. It also seeks to empower all partners by raising their awareness and vision of development issues, as well as endowing them with greater technical and participatory skills to enable them to own and control their own destinies.

5.2 Importance of Partnership

All countries, including developed ones, share common problems that can best be solved through partnership. Partnerships are needed now more than ever before because of globalisation and the interdependence of the world community that transcend geographical boundaries and political jurisdictions.

Common problems faced by inhabitants of our “global village” include: pervasive poverty; inequality between developed and developing countries; the spread of HIV/AIDS; gender discrimination; conflicts between neighbouring states; cross-border ethnic tensions; drug trafficking and organised crime; the weapons trade; climate change; deforestation; air and water pollution; and loss of biodiversity.

5.3 Prerequisites for Effective Partnership

For partnerships to be effective, the following issues need to be clarified and resolved:

- Parties should establish clear and distinct identities;
- Respective rationales, missions and mandates should be clearly understood;
- *Modus operandi* and delivery systems should be clearly articulated;
- Resource implications of partnership arrangements should be assessed and respective financial and in-kind contributions of each partner should be quantified;
- A contractual agreement should be prepared, clearly setting out the responsibilities of both parties and the principles to be followed in management of the partnership; and
- Activities and resources should be carefully monitored and regularly accounted for.

⁶ Based on presentations and comments by Biram Joof and John O. Kakonge at The Gambia - UN Country Team Development Forum on the Role of Partnership in Development, Banjul, June 2002.

Other more general considerations relating to the balance of partnership include: the extent to which relations are based on a clear and coherent vision of the future; the extent to which the recipient partner, or parties have ownership and are “in the driving seat;” the extent to which initiatives supported by the donor partner are in consonance with the development priorities set by the beneficiary; and the extent to which aid programmes are determined on the basis of the recipient partner needs and not the donor’s priorities and procedures.

5.4 Constraints on Africa’s Partnership with the West

There are many potential constraints to the formation of genuine partnership, including: burdensome debt; persistence of the colonial legacy of lop-sided development; political instability; mismanagement; myopic policies and misplaced priorities; lack of transparency and accountability; politics of exclusion and marginalisation; absence of, or inappropriate, work ethos/ethics, such as thrift, discipline and industry; considerations that do not transcend personalities, ethnicities and self-interests; lack of innovativeness and resourcefulness; illiteracy, poverty and disease; and, the slow pace of economic reform and development.

Apart from this wide range of potential constraints, which tend to weaken Africa’s position in partnerships, it is arguable that the motivating interests of developed and third-world countries are incompatible. Indeed, some authors, such as Gunder Frank, Samir Amin and Michael Todaro advocate breaking off entirely with the north. Their views, however, remain very much in the minority and the broad census remains that the best course of action for the future is to strive to overcome constraints and establish more effective forms of partnership.

5.5 Promoting Development Partnerships

Forum participants highlighted the following factors contributing to the promotion of genuine development partnerships:

- Creation of an enabling environment of openness and trust;
- Stakeholder consultation and support;
- Ownership and commitment, through:
 - Co-funding, e.g. “in-kind” contributions;
 - Shared management responsibilities, e.g. counterpart staffing;
 - Joint target setting, monitoring and evaluation;
- Networking to share information and best practices, through:
 - Workshops, both in Banjul and the Provinces;
 - Use of Internet resources;
 - Media dissemination;

Within any relationship, however, there is a risk of domination, which the principles of partnership are intended to overcome, but in the inherently unequal, donor-recipient relationship, the dangers of excessive influence remain and must be guarded against. Recipients of development assistance should be clear, articulate and assertive in what kind of support is required. Aid should never be the mainstay of development; it should only supplement and complement what is available locally and be geared towards self-reliance.

More effective use should be made of national institutions, organisations and indigenous expertise. **National capacities should be strengthened.** Countries need to define their own visions of the future, prepare their own agenda, identify their own priorities and initiate their own programmes to achieve their own aspirations. More effective partnerships between African countries must also be forged to overcome common problems, as envisaged by the African Union and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) (<http://www.nepad.org/>).

5.6 Examples of Successful Partnership

Partnerships take many forms and can be established at various levels: local, national and international, and also between levels. Partnership building is a process that can generate important development impacts, including programmes with greater scope and increased sustainability. Effective partnering is a long-term process requiring long-term commitment to build the operational capacities of individual organisations and their ability to collaborate.

Building support for local development often requires strengthening partnerships at the national and international levels. Criteria for success obviously depend on specific circumstances, but relate to the identification and achievement, or at least progress towards, mutually agreed common objectives.

Many successful partnerships have been established: between governments; between businesses; between government and business; between governments and NGOs; between local community organisations; and between individuals within a community. An indicative selection of the range of successful partnerships is presented in the following examples.

The Governments of Malaysia and Singapore have established highly effective partnerships with the private sector and development partners over the past few decades. With regard to public-private sector partnerships, both countries have created enabling environments through regulatory frameworks geared towards assisting both light and heavy industries. This encouraged the private sector to invest and build the requisite technological capacity to compete in world markets. Proposals are prepared by the two governments and widely discussed before prioritisation of activities to be implemented. The responsibilities and modalities of implementation are clearly defined and shared amongst partners. Contributions from each partner promotes ownership. Both countries have made significant economic progress over the past few decades by establishing highly effective and mutually beneficial partnerships.

The Urban Renewal of San Luis-Alameda de Hercules in Seville, the historic centre of southern Spain, is a fine example of partnership between local communities, municipal authorities, national government and the European Union. The strategy adopted included: (i) an action plan for urban rehabilitation, including water supply and drainage; re-urbanization of 50 streets, the creation of new streets and redesigning new public spaces; (ii) the promotion of social and economic activities and special training programmes including social support and health services for targeted populations with a major focus on women, the elderly and youth at risk; (iii) the empowerment of citizens and community groups through the establishment of the Urban Social Council, integrating 64 citizen groups and organisations, which meets on a regular basis to inform, determine priorities and fine-tune policies.

Five years after approval in 1994, the three targeted neighbourhoods have witnessed considerable improvements. More than 50 new small and mid-sized companies and over 200 new jobs have been created. Health, education, employment, social safety and other indicators are all on the rise,

demonstrating the value of partnership in an integrated vision and comprehensive approach to urban revitalisation, social inclusion, economic development and cultural heritage.

The Socialized and Incremental Housing Initiative in the Philippines established a very effective partnerships between NGOs, local authorities and international organisations. During the 80s, the Island of Negro was a simmering social volcano, with 60% of the population below the poverty line and no access to housing support for disadvantaged families. The project started in 1993 to alleviate poverty through job and income generation and to improve capacities of community workers on the use of alternative housing construction technology using earth-based materials. It has served 2,630 households directly and about 15,780 individuals indirectly. It has constructed 650 socialized housing units and helped out 445 disadvantaged families through an incremental housing scheme, which enabled families to obtain credit assistance for home improvements.

In partnership with the European Union, the local government unit of San Carlos City, Negros Occidental, various NGOs and the private sector, the project constructed a post-harvest complex for some 1,500 upland agrarian reform beneficiaries that includes a warehouse, mechanical dryer and multi-purpose centre. It also facilitated the formation and strengthening of workers' co-operatives with some 305 members. These members, as well as the housing beneficiaries, were trained in the production of micro-concrete roof tiles and compressed earth-block products, and in the construction of housing units. This created employment in the community and facilitated the placement of some 3,000 workers in jobs in the Philippines and overseas.

From the foregoing examples it can be seen that partnerships can take many forms and be established at various levels. The formation of effective partnerships is a long-term process, requiring perseverance and commitment to work together to achieve a common goal.

5.7 Conclusions and Recommendations

The Forum on the Role of Partnerships in Development made the following recommendations to promote more effective and genuine partnerships:

- Enhance the capacity and negotiating skills of government officials;
- Review the concept of partnership, as envisaged in NEPAD;
- Mobilise indigenous talent and improve literacy to facilitate communications;
- Promote ownership of the development process;
- Nurture partnership at the local level and summon confidence to negate dependence;
- Nurture team work, discipline and tolerance to find common ground;
- Set high standards; establish consensus on a desired vision of the future;
- Define priorities, focusing on specific targets; and, above all else, maintain objectivity;
- Disseminate Forum proceedings and best practice guidelines to enlighten citizenry; and
- Make use of Africa's and The Gambia's comparative advantages, including an abundance of professional expertise and natural resources.

6. POST WORLD SUMMIT ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT⁷

6.1 What is Sustainable Development?

According to the Brundtland Commission Report in 1987 entitled “*Our Common Future*,” “sustainable development” means meeting the needs of present generations without compromising those of future generations. The concept is intentionally ambiguous and open to various interpretations, including being pro-people, pro-jobs, pro-nature and pro-women.

As originally envisaged, sustainable development had two primary dimensions: a) meeting needs; and b) protecting the natural resources and the environment upon which people’s capacity to meet the social and economic developmental needs depend.

6.2 From Rio to Jo’burg and Beyond

When the United Nations General Assembly authorized holding the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in Johannesburg from 26 August to 4 September 2003, it was hardly a secret - or even a point in dispute - that progress in implementing sustainable development has been extremely disappointing since the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, with poverty deepening and environmental degradation worsening. What the world wanted, the General Assembly said, was not a new philosophical or political debate but rather, a summit of actions and results.

By any account, the Johannesburg Summit has laid the groundwork and paved the way for action. Yet among all the targets, timetables and commitments that were agreed upon at Johannesburg, there were no silver bullet solutions to aid the fight against poverty and a continually deteriorating natural environment. In fact, there was no magic and no miracle—only the realization that practical and sustained steps were needed to address many of the world’s most pressing problems.

As an implementation-focused summit, Johannesburg did not produce a particularly dramatic outcome - there were no agreements that will lead to new treaties and many of the agreed targets were derived from a panoply of assorted lower profile meetings. But some important new targets were established, such as: to halve the proportion of people without access to basic sanitation by 2015; to use and produce chemicals by 2020 in ways that do not lead to significant adverse effects on human health and the environment; to maintain or restore depleted fish stocks to levels that can produce the maximum sustainable yield on an urgent basis and where possible by 2015; and to achieve by 2010 a significant reduction in the current rate of loss of biological diversity (United Nations Department of Social and Economic Affairs Website: <http://www.johannesburgsummit.org/>).

6.3 Key Issues for The Gambia

Five key issues of critical importance to the furtherance of sustainable development in The Gambia were considered by the Forum: agriculture; environment and natural resource management; capacity building; gender; and participation.

⁷ Based on presentations and comments by John O. Kakonge, Satang Jobarteh, Omar Touray, Juka Jabang and Momodou Cham at The Gambia - UN Country Team Development Forum on Sustainable Development, Banjul, October 2002.

6.3.1 Agriculture

The Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) defines Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development (SARD) as a process that meets the following criteria:

- Ensures that the basic nutritional requirements of present and future generations, qualitatively and quantitatively, are met as well as providing other agricultural products;
- Provides durable employment, sufficient income, and decent living and working conditions for all those engaged in agricultural production;
- Maintains and, where possible, enhances the productive capacity of the natural resource base as a whole, and the regenerative capacity of renewable resources, without disrupting the functioning of basic ecological cycles and natural balances, destroying the socio-cultural attributes of rural communities, or contaminating the environment;
- Reduces the vulnerability of the agricultural sector to adverse natural and socio-economic factors and other risks, and strengthens self-reliance.

(<http://www.fao.org/wssd/SARD/index-en.htm>)

World agriculture operates in an increasingly complex and competitive setting, involving: market liberalisation; privatisation; globalisation; regionalisation; decentralisation; urbanisation; structural adjustment; debt relief; and concern for the environment. Continuing major challenges for the future include: achieving sustainable use of renewable natural resources; expansion of rural infrastructure and services; strengthening knowledge systems; improving access to finance in rural areas; completion of policy and institutional reforms; and strengthening rural agricultural markets, with links to national, regional and global markets.

The challenges can be addressed, at least in part, through the harmonisation of food and agricultural policies, including: food safety and quality control; management of shared natural resources; organisation of markets; preparation and participation in international trade negotiations (WTO); development of statistics and information systems (collection, analysis and dissemination); and supporting the organisation and training of professional associations including farmers' associations.

6.3.2 Environment and Natural Resource Management

Development in The Gambia cannot be maintained unless renewable natural resources are managed on a sustainable basis and the environment is protected from the excesses of uncontrolled exploitation and human occupancy. In this respect, The Gambia National Environment Action Plan provides a good guide and a firm foundation upon which to build. The National Environment Agency has succeeded in creating awareness of the importance of sound natural resource management and has been instrumental in environmental policy formulation, but much remains to be accomplished.

6.3.3 Capacity Building

One of the many reasons for the slow pace of sustainable development in Africa is inadequate capacities in many spheres of activity and a resultant dependency on technical assistance. This general lack of capacity has been compounded by a "brain drain" of qualified and experienced people, and an exodus of youth to greener pastures abroad. The movement of people and skills is not entirely deleterious, however, because those that leave may repatriate at least some of their earnings to their families who remain behind, and many will return home eventually, with new skills and experience to benefit their country of origin.

Nevertheless, greater attention needs to be given not only to developing local capacities, but also to ensuring that those capacities are retained. This can be achieved through establishment of transparent, merit-based recruitment procedures and competitive remuneration packages.

6.3.4 Gender

In considering the extensive ramifications of gender in sustainable development, it is important to recall and recognise the fundamental principle that: *"Men and women have the right to live their lives and raise their children in dignity, free from hunger and from the fear of violence, oppression or injustice"* (UN Millennium Declaration). Sustainable development requires the full and equal participation of women at all levels. Women's rights are universal human rights and are protected by international human rights conventions.

Gender issues are not the same as women's issues. Understanding gender means understanding opportunities, constraints and the impacts of change as they affect both men and women. Partnerships and equality between men and women are the basis of strong families and viable societies in a rapidly changing world.

(World Summit on Sustainable Development Paper No. 10: Gender and Sustainable Development: http://www.boell.de/en/04_thema/1313.html).

6.3.5 Participation and Sustainable Development

Whilst the past decade has been dominated by efforts to promote a more participatory approach, the concept of participation in development is not entirely new. By the late 1940s, the early initiatives of development assistance and of planned interventions in underdeveloped countries to promote development and change had commenced. However, it was in the 1950s, and particularly in the 1960s, that these initiatives, via the actions of processes of community development, sought to involve local people in efforts to improve their communities.

Community development in the 1960s built the infrastructure of rural and urban communities; it also developed local skills and abilities and encouraged local people to play a part in, and to take some responsibility for, supporting and implementing a range of physical infrastructure works. Community development at this time also sought to build community-based organisations to serve as vehicles through which local people could get actively involved. It promoted literacy campaigns to enable people to better understand and relate to existing administrative bodies and it sought to generate a sense of cohesiveness and solidarity among community members.

The 1950s and 1960s saw the community development movement flourish and, particularly in Africa and Asia, national programmes sought to build community infrastructure and to break down communities' exclusion from development activities. The style was quite generalised (although in West Africa *Animation Rurale* was seen as more didactic), and the community development worker was seen as a government official working at the interface between the outside forces of modernisation and the natural conservatism and suspicion of rural communities. Community development did promote communities' involvement, but it was for an already agreed purpose. Control was usually exercised externally and communities were seen as contributing to and supporting the national development agenda and not necessarily as being instrumental in determining its content or direction.

While community development as a basic strategy of community involvement persisted into the 1970s, it has largely lost its predominance. Changing analyses and examinations of

underdevelopment in the late 1970s and 1980s began to offer different explanations of the causes of people's poverty and to suggest different forms of project design. Poor people were seen as excluded and marginalised both from broader societal participation and also from direct involvement in development initiatives.

Simultaneously, development policy makers and planners began to argue for societal level political participation and also to devise strategies whereby poor people could become more directly involved in development efforts. In development terms the last decade or so has been largely dominated by efforts to promote people's participation in development, which would involve a fundamental shift - both in attitudes and in methodology - if it was to break decades of top-down, non-participatory practice. Since the early 1990s, the major donor development agencies have put their weight behind and committed resources to promoting participatory development, recognising the problems caused by earlier non-participatory development.

(*Empowering People - A Guide to Participation*; UNDP Civil Society Organisations and Participation Programme: <http://www.undp.org/csopp/CSO/NewFiles/docemppeople.html>).

6.4 Conclusions and Recommendations

Far-reaching reforms are required to achieve sustainable development, both nationally and internationally. On the political front, concerted action is needed to reduce poverty; build genuine partnerships; address gender inequality; decentralise decision-making; empower the underprivileged; slow population growth; manage renewable natural resources sustainably; minimise/mitigate environmental degradation; and promote peace and security.

In the economic arena, a steady growth of production is necessary to reduce poverty. A healthy balance of payments, a stable exchange rate and appropriate taxation and employment policies are also required. On the social front, people need to be empowered and livelihoods and lifestyles must adapt to changing circumstances. Developing countries also need to strive to keep pace with new technological innovations in order to compete in world markets.

The course of future development in The Gambia depends on the collective will of the people and their leaders; their vision of the future; and their ability to attract further international investment and support. The Forum made the following recommendations for promoting sustainable development in The Gambia:

- Adopt an integrated approach to reducing the rate of human population growth;
- Prioritise access to information communication technology;
- Create an enabling environment to develop and harness the potential of youth;
- Disseminate World Summit on Sustainable Development and Agenda 21 documents;
- Emphasise linkages between sustainable development and environment;
- Calls for economic diversification to discourage urban drift;
- Build on the lessons of past experience and consolidate previous gains; and
- Adopt a sustainable livelihoods approach to poverty alleviation and future development.

7. OVERALL CONCLUSIONS

• Regional Integration

Initiatives intended to promote regional co-operation and integration in Africa have met with varying degrees of success. The Organisation of African Unity was established in 1963 and was followed by the formation of various sub-regional groupings, including the Economic Community of West African States in 1975; the Southern African Development Community in 1980; and the West African Economic and Monetary Union in 1994. Almost forty years after its foundation, the Organisation of African Unity became the African Union in 2002.

In spite of many constraints and relatively slow progress, regional integration is far from being a myth. With a shared vision and commitment, Africa could achieve much greater and more meaningful integration within the next twenty years. What is needed is a fusion of interests, a union of hearts and minds, underpinned by belief in a common destiny.

• Gender and Development

Gambian women are marginalised by socio-cultural factors and, as a result, are under-represented in economic and political life. This situation can only be addressed by their empowerment through: education and training; improved access to credit, land and other productive resources; legislation; and establishment of appropriate partnerships.

Gender equality is a process and not a mere technocratic goal. It requires a change of thinking and attitude. Achieving equality is a long-term process in which cultural, social, political and economic norms undergo fundamental change. It is important to realise and accept that all people, irrespective of gender, are essential elements of change in any society. It is equally important to realise that gender stereotyping is ballast to the development agenda of any country and that gender equality is an essential aspect of human development.

Experience has shown that investing in the education of girls and women; contributes to economic growth; improves child survival and overall family health; reduces fertility; and slows population growth. In short, investing in women is central to sustainable development.

• Data Management for Development

Data management is a critical aspect of monitoring progress towards the Millennium Development Goals. Major development benefits would accrue, if greater attention was paid to using objective, statistical information in policy formulation, decision-making, monitoring and evaluation.

Data management, including acquisition, processing, analysis, interpretation and dissemination, is problematic in the developing world, especially in countries, such as The Gambia, where expertise is limited. Many more statisticians and analysts need to be trained and equipped with the materials necessary to enable them to enhance the data collection process and fully exploit and use data in ways that will ensure meaningful progress.

- **Science and Technology for Development**

New, long-term strategies are required to enable countries to sustain economic growth and compete in a world where development is increasingly dominated by science and technology. Much greater investment in education is required in The Gambia, especially in the development of scientific and technological capacity. Scientific and technological development requires careful planning to ensure the most effective use and appropriate application of limited resources. Keys to success are co-ordination and co-operation, with realistic, forward thinking policies, clearly defined objectives and carefully monitored activities.

- **Partnership for Development**

Partnerships are needed now more than ever before because of globalisation and the interdependence of the world community that transcend geographical boundaries and political jurisdictions. Common problems faced by inhabitants of our “global village” include: pervasive poverty; inequality between developed and developing countries; the spread of HIV/AIDS; gender discrimination; conflicts between neighbouring states; cross-border ethnic tensions; drug trafficking and organised crime; the weapons trade; climate change; deforestation; air and water pollution; and the loss of biodiversity. There are, therefore, many very good reasons for working together to address common problems through genuine partnerships and international co-operation.

- **Sustainable Development**

Far-reaching reforms are required to achieve sustainable development, both nationally and internationally. Concerted action is needed to reduce poverty; build genuine partnerships; decentralise decision-making; address gender inequality; empower the underprivileged; slow population growth; manage renewable natural resources sustainably; minimise/mitigate environmental degradation; and promote peace and security.

The course of future development in The Gambia depends on the collective will of the people and their leaders; the conceptualisation of a realistic and shared vision of the future; and the further strengthening of international partnerships to bring that vision to reality.

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