



**National Assembly, New Assembly Building, Reginald Pye Lane,
Banjul, The Gambia**

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

[HANSARD]

**OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT
THIRD SESSION - THIRD MEETING**

MONDAY 15TH JUNE, 2020

SESSION – 2020



**National Assembly, New Assembly Building, Reginal Pye Lane, Banjul, The
Gambia**

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OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT

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Third Meeting of the session of the Fifth Assembly
Of the Second Republic of The Gambia.

Proceedings of the Sitting Monday 15th June of the House,
2020.

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Name of Transcriber:	Fatou Drammeh
Date of sitting:	15 th June 2020
Transcript Section:	morning
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PRAYERS

[The Speaker, Hon. Mariam Jack Denton, Reads the Prayers]

[The house met at 10:30 a.m. In the New Parliament Building, Reginald Pye Lane, Banjul].

[The Speaker, Hon. Mariam Jack Denton, in the Chair]

The House was called to Order

1. COMMUNICATION FROM THE CHAIR

THE SPEAKER: Good morning Honourable Members, Honourable Ministers here present with us and Members of the press.

Honourable Members welcome to the Second Ordinary Session of the National Assembly in the 2020 Legislative year. As we begin this Ordinary Session of the 2020 in very unusual times, we pray to Allah the Almighty to continue guiding us through the session and in all our deliberations.

I recognize the immense gratitude, the tremendous commitments of all Honourable Members in discharging their committee works since the Assembly was adjourned. Equally the same is extended to the Office of the Clerk for the usual support and guidance throughout the process. I therefore appeal and urge all of us to keep up the momentum even if not to do better.

Honourable Members by way of information, the Assembly Business Committee that is the [ABC] in accordance with the Standing Orders has considered and approved the agenda for this Ordinary Session scheduled for the period 15th June to July 16th 2020. This has already been deposited in your respective pigeon holes.

Honourable Members as published in the Order Paper for today, the Honourable Chairperson of the Standing Orders Committee will be tabling a Motion for the amendment to the Standing Orders 2019 Edition and thereafter the Honourable Minister for Finance and Economic Affairs will table a Motion regarding a Loan Agreement for Ratification. Once more, I wish to appeal to all Honourable Members to take note of the

relevant provisions of the Constitution and the Standing Orders of the National Assembly during the course of this session. Thank you for your kind attention.

2. Correction and Approval of Record of Votes and Proceedings of the National Assembly Sitting of Tuesday 19th May, 2020.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, the Record of Votes and Proceedings of the National Assembly Sitting of Tuesday the 19th of May, 2020 is before us for Correction and Approval. Can any Honourable Member please move that the said record of votes and proceedings be considered and approved?

HON. ALHAGIE H. SOWE [JIMARA]: I rise to move that the Record of Votes and Proceedings of the National Assembly Sitting of Tuesday 19th May, 2020 be considered and corrected.

THE SPEAKER: Any seconder?

HON. ALFUSAINY CEESAY [SAMI]: I rise to second the motion.

[Question Proposed]

THE SPEAKER: Any corrections or observations from Honourable Members. I think it is appropriate at this point in time before we proceed, we send our solidarity and support to the people of URR that we are with them in these trying times and our prayers continue to be with them. Thank you.

Any corrections on page 1, observation or amendments. Page 2, can we confirm the attendance on page 2 to make sure that everybody's name is captured? And on Page 3?

HON. OUSMAN TOURAY [SABACH SANJAL]: Page 3, the following National Assembly Member's seat was vacant, I do not think it is proper to mention the name of that individual member, it should be the constituency I believe. The member is not in existence so his name should not reflect in the records.

THE SPEAKER: Your point is noted, thank you. Any more on page 3?

HON. ASSAN TOURAY [BAKAU]: Sorry Madam Speaker, I have an observation, as I am referring to Honourable Member for Jarra Central. As long as the Member's tag is in place, I think it is necessary for the indication.

THE SPEAKER: Actually, I did indicate that it is being laid and the Office of the Clerk will take care of that. Page 4?

HON. SUWAIBOU TOURAY [WULI EAST]: Thank you Madam Speaker. The paragraph Where you have Honourable Kebba K. Barrow. It is saying; Honourable Speaker 'recalled', I would have thought that Honourable Speaker reminded the Assembly that and then it continues from there.

HON. OUSMAN TOURAY [SABACH SANJAL]: Yes, Madam Speaker page 4, the first paragraph after the "Ayes" have it. I observed that according to the Standing Order, it should be "correction of the records" but they are saying amendment which is not consistent. Take note of that.

THE SPEAKER: I am sure the English teachers will tell you exactly, when you add, when you delete is all amendments, when you correct it all amounts to amendments. I think it is okay and we try to be consistent. Thank you very much.

Any more on page 4? page 5?

HON. SUWAIBOU TOURAY [WULI EAST]: Page 5 under Ensuing Debate, the third paragraph where you have "wind up" you can put "wound up" in the past.

THE SPEAKER: Page 5, we proceed to page 6, page 7?

HON. SUWAIBOU TOURAY [WULI EAST]: Page 7 under Question 'Put and Agreed To' I think the first line, it has been moved and seconded that the "debate to be adjourn" I think you just remove the "to" and it just reads the "debate be adjourned" and when you go under the 'Ayes' have it, it says the debate was adjourned and the motion 'referred' it should read 'the motion was referred to the Public Accounts Committee. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: You want the word “was” to be inserted within the same sentence? There is already “was”, I think that word can serve the other motion thank you. Any more on page 7?

[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed to]

[The Record of Votes and Proceedings of the National Assembly Sitting of Tuesday 19th May, 2020 has been adopted with amendments]

Before I called on the Clerk, I just wish to inform the Honourable Members that as per of our Order Paper, the motion for amendment for the Standing Orders is number one on the Order Paper and then the other motion is for the Honourable Minister. I want to use certain issues that have come up in terms of emergency and the Honourable Minister needs to take care of those matters. So, we want clause 14 [3] on the order of business so that we allow the Honourable Minister to table his motion first and then we will proceed with other motions in respect of the Standing Orders. So, Clerk can we proceed then and call on the Honourable Minister.

3. MOTIONS:

“Be it RESOLVED that this august Assembly do consider and ratify: -

II. The Loan Agreement between the Republic of The Gambia and the Saudi Fund for Development for the Rehabilitation and Development of Banjul International Airport Project Phase ii [Additional loan], amounting to 45,000,000 [Forty-Five Million] Saudi Riyals. [By: Hon. Minister for Finance and Economic Affairs].

HON. MAMBURY NJIE [MINISTER FOR FINANCE AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS]:

Madam Speaker, I hereby present to this august Assembly the Financing Agreement signed by the Government of the Republic of The Gambia and Saudi Fund for Development for the financing of the completion of the ongoing rehabilitation works at the Banjul International Airport.

Madam Speaker, as the only International Airport in the country, the ongoing rehabilitation project will provide the airport with a facelift and usher in new

advancements to the safety and control systems in place. Moreover, the proposed "GIETAF" Project between Gambia Investment and Export Promotion Agency GIEPA and TAF Africa holding will further boost the socio-economic development in the area. These two endeavours combined will greatly lend credence to our development aspirations.

The project aims at completing the additional civil works and supply furniture and equipment for the Banjul International Airport, being the only port of entry for air travellers to The Gambia. Its upkeep is of utmost importance to the nation as it serves the first port of call for investors, diplomats, tourists and other travellers coming to The Gambia. The supplementary funds to continue the ongoing works at Banjul International Airport which include building of VIP lounge at the Airport, this would give the Airport a much-needed revamp and will ensure that Banjul International Airport meets certain requirements such as availability of X-ray and body scanning equipment including Explosive Detection System as per International Civil Aviation Organization [ICAO] standards.

Honourable Speaker, the scope of the project and focus- The additional financing seeks to cater for completion of the works at the Banjul International Airport. It will focus on the following parts of the remaining works as follows:

Part one: Civil works, supply and installation of furniture and equipment:

- Rehabilitation of service roads at the Airport including the roads surrounding the terminal
- Completion of all internal and external works of the Terminal
- Supply and installation of all necessary equipment and devices, including baggage detection devices, safety and control system and all necessary works
- Drilling water well, providing it with the necessary pumps, and establishing an upper water tank with water lines linking the well and the reservoir
- Replace the pipes between the water company and the Airport with diameters greater than the current one with the necessary works.

Part two: Consultancy service: This caters for visit of experts, preparation of designs, tender documents and supervision of implementation.

All the above-mentioned civil works are expected to be completed by the end of 2020.

- One of the key benefits of the project is the fact that capacity of the airport will be increased to handle up to half a million passengers [500,000] per annum which represents an increase of 43%. This will also increase the capacity to handle up to 500 thousand passengers in a peak hour. It is worth noting that more than 477,000 passengers were handled at Banjul International Airport in 2018 as a result of the increase in frequencies by Brussels Airlines and ASKY. Also, the operations at the airport by global carriers, Turkish Airlines and TAP Portugal have further boosted passenger traffic. Furthermore, the increase in capacity is critical as government continues to intensify efforts aimed at improving air access to the Gambia which will lead to higher passenger volumes.
- There would be enhanced security at the airport as equipment such as X-rays and body scanning machines including explosive detection systems will be installed. This will improve the airport's compliance with security requirements and the country's strive to counter evolving threats posted to aviation. These modern security apparatus and systems will reinforce the Gambia's much converted position as a Last Point of Departure [LPD] country to the United State of America. This is crucial considering the desire and need to connect Banjul to North America through air transport.
- Passenger processing and service delivery will also be further enhanced as state-of-the-art passenger processing systems such as a Common Use Passenger Processing System [CUPPS] will be installed at the airport once the project is completed.

- A new conveyor belt will be added whilst check-in counters will be increased from 8-14. This will enable five different airlines to be handled every three hours at the same time as enhancing and turnaround times for operations at the airport.
- In accordance with the terms of reference of the project, local engineers will be trained on the maintenance and operations of all new installations before they are fully handed over. This training and transfer of technology will build the capacity of local personnel for a successful operation of the system.
- Overall, Banjul international airport will be modernized. It will be able to attract and maintain more international carriers to operate in the Gambia, thereby realizing the national blueprint of transforming Banjul International Airport as the hub in the sub region. Consequently, this will pave the way for more job creation leading to even higher contributions to GDP.

Madam speaker, the additional financing of 45, 000, 000(Saudi Riyals) which is equivalent to USD\$12,000,000. The loan is priced at 1% per annum on the principal amount of the loan which can be outstanding from time to time as the principal amount reduces as amortization starts after the grace period, with a tenure of 30 years and a 10-year grace period.

Madam Speaker, **the Key financing information of the Agreement**

Amount: SAR 45,000,000 [USD\$12,000,000]

Interest: 1% per annum

Grace period: 10 years

Tenure: 30 years

It has a Grant element 49% [14% above the recommendation threshold IMF and the World Bank]

Conclusion, The National Assembly is hereby invited to humbly consider and ratify the Financing Agreement between the Republic of The Gambia and the Saudi Fund for Development to complete the ongoing rehabilitation works and development of the Banjul International Airport. Madam speaker, I beg to move.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. Any seconder?

HON. SAINÉY JAWARA [LOWER SALOUM]: I rise to second the motion by the Honourable Minister for Finance. I would throw my weight on the motion that good work has been carried out at the Banjul International Airport and I am part and parcel of the Joint Committee that is monitoring and trade. That was the first loan that was approved by the National Assembly Members and there is a good work that is taking place in this institution which is so impressive to Members. I urge members also to throw their weight to see that the standard of the Banjul airport can be improved. I beg to take my seat Madam Speaker.

[Question Proposed]

THE SPEAKER: Now Honourable Members who wish to take part in the debate may do so by raising the tags so that we can record the interventions.

HON. SIDIA S. JATTA [WULI WEST]: Motion! In standing order 53, that this motion be referred to the Project Monitoring Committee for proper scrutiny.

THE SPEAKER: Any seconder?

FATOUMATA NJAI [BANJUL SOUTH]: I second the Motion Madam Speaker, but then in addition to that, I would include the Public Accounts Committee so that we can look at not only the implementation but also the utilization of funds. Thank you.

HON. HALIFA SALLAH [SEREKUNDA]: I will also include that you add the PEC.

THE SPEAKER: Can you amend the motion so that...

HON. SIDIA S. JATTA [WULI WEST]: Taking into consideration the suggestions that have just been made, I would like to amend my motion to include Monitoring, Public Enterprise Committee and Public Accounts Committee.

THE SPEAKER: Any seconder?

HON. DAWDA KAWSU JAWARA [UPPER FULLADU WEST]: I so second, Madam Speaker. I just want to beg the indulgence of the Honourable Members to consider tourism as well because airport is hugely tourism - related so if it can also be factored in.

THE SPEAKER: As and when the need arises, I am sure they will be coopted and all other relevant committees for that matter so, let us make some progress otherwise the whole House will have to sit on it.

HON. ALHAGIE MBOW [UPPER SALOUM]: I rise to second the amending motion from the Member for Wuli West. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: It has been moved and seconded that this Loan Agreement be refer to the Project and Monitoring Committee, FPAC and PEC Committees of the National Assembly for proper scrutiny and for them to report back to the plenary and as some Honourable Members would wish any other committee that as the committee works, the scrutiny goes on, any committee they feel should be coopted will be brought in on board. Thank you.

[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed to]

[The Motion be referred to the Project Monitoring Committee scrutiny and report back to the plenary].

THE SPEAKER: Can we move over the next item but again we use the relevant clause of the standing Order to change the other of business so, that the Honourable Minister can give his statement.

4. Statements by Ministers:

Oral Ministerial Statement on the Implementation and Monitoring of the Annual Budget-standing order 94 [By: Hon. Minister for Finance and Economic Affairs]:

HON. MAMBURY NJIE [MINISTER FOR FINANCE AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS]:

Thank you very much. Madam Speaker, I would like to update this August Assembly on recent development pertaining to Government Budget execution as at end April 2020. We want to do it in May but we are not yet very comfortable with the figures so we will do it another time.

Total government local fund (GLF) expenditure as of end April 2020 reached D5.08 billion-dalasi, 29% more than the same period last year, when government expenditure reached D39.95 billion Dalasi.

Out of the total [GLF] expenditure, 24% was spent on other recurrent, 26% on personnel Emoluments, 24% on subvention, 12% on Debt Service and 14% on Capital Development.

Other Recurrent expenditure increased from 994 million in 2019 to 1.2 billion in 2020, registering a growth of 22%, whilst 22% of its approved budget was spent during the period under review. Government did allocate an additional D500 million to the Ministry of Health under other recurrent, which was obtained reallocating budget votes from various budget entities and channelled...*[Interruption]*

THE SPEAKER: Sorry we cannot interrupt the minister this is oral statement and after the delivery it will be circulated, we cannot be interrupting him.

HON. MAMBURY NJIE [MINISTER FOR FINANCE AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS]:

Government did allocate an additional D500 million to the Ministry of Health under other recurrent, which was obtained reallocating budget votes from various budget entities and channelled towards combating the Covid-19 pandemic. The bulk of reallocations came from Travel expenses, Training and other non-essential budget line items.

As at end April 2020, Personnel Emolument [PE] increased from D1.02 billion in 2019 to D1.34 billion in 2020, recording a 31% year on year growth.

Debt service has decreased by 51%, from D1.2 billion in April 2019 to D607 million in April 2020.

Meanwhile, the capital expenditure Development has increased by 348% relative to last year, from D153 million in 2019 to D687 million in 2020. This is primarily attributed to the first instalment payment made towards the Banjul Rehabilitation Project.

Madam speaker, the top three spending Ministries during the period under review are: Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education [D916 million dalasi], Ministry of Works and Infrastructure [D478 million dalasi], and the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare [D472 million dalasi].

In terms of absorption capacity, the Ministry of Works and Infrastructure has absorbed 73% of its approved budget as of end of April 2020. This is due to the payment made towards the Banjul Rehabilitation Project. The Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs budget absorption rate reached 36%, mainly due to the increased subvention given to its satellite agencies.

The top spending budget line items are: Roads and bridges [D428 million], Operating Costs [D172 million], Rents and Rates [D124 million], Food and Food Services [97 million], Travel Expenses [D83 million], and the School Improvement Grant [D82 million]. D436 million was approved for the Roads and Bridges budget line, and as at end April 2020, D428 million was absorbed, representing 98 percent absorption rate. In addition to payments being made towards the Banjul Rehabilitation project, payments were also made towards the Laminkoto-Passimus road project.

Food and Food services budget line item increase from D50 million in May 2019 to D115 million in May 2020 due to the expansion of the School Feeding Programme under the Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education, and the feeding provided to the security section.

Travel expenses also register as a major expenditure item despite the recent bans on travel. One of the reasons why travel expenses recorded an increment when compared to the same period last year is due to the fact that the security sector [Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Defence] night/trekking allowance is currently being charged as Travel expense, unlike previous years, when it was classified as Allowances.

Madam speaker, given recent developments pertaining to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs intends to reprioritize the objectives of the 2020 budget and place additional emphasis on combating this pandemic by availing more resources to critical sectors, such as Health. We will nonetheless take all necessary steps to ascertain budget execution is conducted in a prudent and discipline manner and avoid major fiscal slippage from now until the end of 2020. I thank you for your kind attention Madam Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you very much Honourable Minister. Honourable Members the Standing Orders of clause 95 [1] makes it requirement for the Honourable Minister for Finance and Economic Affairs at least during it Session of the Assembly to make an Oral Ministerial Statement to the Assembly on the Implementation and Monitoring of the Annual Budget. This is what the Honourable Minister has just done.

However, I wish to draw the attention of Honourable Members to standing order clause 48 [6] that after a statement has been delivered by the Honourable Minister to the Assembly few questions on the statement will be allow but in any event the question period shall not last more than 1hour. After the statement has been delivered the procedure is for the statement to be now distributed to the Honourable member after which we will allow question on the statement relating for an hour so, I will just urge Honourable members to bear that in mind so that the tie allocated can be evenly distributed to anybody who want to ask a question, not statement but a question the Honourable Minister is here with his team, we just allow 2 or 3 minutes for the statement to be circulated and then we proceed with the questions.

The procedure that has been approved by the Honourable Members as for the Standing orders is not my procedure.

HON. OUSMAN TOURAY [SABACH SANJAL]: Madam Speaker I want to observe? My observation is in relation to Standing Order 48 [2]. I think the copies that has been circulated 30 minutes before the Minister make his statement and, in any event, where that is not possible, he should explain the reason why.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you very much. I have seen the relevant clause it says; at least 30 minutes before delivering the statement but I am being informed by the table office that they have some printing issues that was why it could not have been delivered. They were in the process of printing it. Honourable Members will observe that we even started our session a little bit late and I was with the impression that everything was on but this is information that I just received and I am not at the admin section so I just have to accept what admit has told us. If Honourable Members wish to take some times we can allow 10 minutes to go through the document and then we come back with the questions. Very well let take the questions then.

HON. BAKARY CAMARA [KIANG CENTRAL]: Thank you very much Madam Speaker. On the ministerial statement delivered by the Honourable Minister, I would certainly like to know if you look at the expenditure of the minister of Basic and Secondary Education is certainly a huge amount so, what exactly cause this huge expenditure. If you can be specific in term of what has been done.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Minister is now 11:11 so the question time should end at 11: 12 so let us be mindful. Please ask the question on the statement.

HON. MAMBURY NJIE [MINISTER FOR FINANCE AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS]: Madam Speaker, thank you very much. I just wanted to point out that we have all the information the detail ones in our website from January to April we have all the information the details ones just to make sure.

[Point of observation]

HON. FATOUMATA NJAI [BANJUL SOUTH]: Madam Speaker point of order I think the time should start now because he is taking some of our time so it starts now.

THE SPEAKER: Member for Upper Saloum you were not given the floor, just follow the procedure because nobody is stopping anybody from taking the floor but if you want the floor raise your tag you will be given the floor and you make your statement but you cannot just get up. If everybody gets up to make a statement or an observation without being given the floor, we have to exercise decorum. We have our rules and procedures to follow.

HON. ALHAGIE MBOW [UPPER SALOUM]: Thank you very much Madam Speaker.

I have two (2) questions. 1. Is relating to debt service, I have seen here is actually decreased and I want to find out.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable would suggest that you take one so that somebody else can take another.

HON. ALHAGIE MBOW [UPPER SALOUM]: Is okay. The question actually relates to debt service. Because when you look at our debt is both domestic and international so I want to find out exactly which one as goes down drastically, is it the domestic debts or it is the international? Thank you.

HON. FATOUMATA NJAI [BANJUL SOUTH]: Thank you very much Madam Speaker. My question to the Honourable Minister is what is stopping the Honourable Minister from bringing back budget because we all know that the budget approved cannot be exercise as normal because our budget the government raises money through taxes, none taxes and donor support and we all know that due to the Covid-19 everything would have change. And also, my other question is the expenditure so far why is.....

[Interruption]

THE SPEAKER: I just drawn the attention of Honourable Member for Upper Saloum that lets be fair to everybody let take one question please.

HON. HALIFA SALLAH [SEREKUNDA]: Honourable Speaker if you look at the Minister's budget presentation in the past, we were informed that in term of debts servicing is about 44% of the budget and now we are told that in term of the current expenditure it amounts to 14%, what is the anticipation? It is that we expecting that relief to that level or what is the real reason for this?

HON. MAMBURY NJIE [MINISTER FOR FINANCE AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS]: Madam Speaker for basic education expenses majority of it is mostly on personnel emolument but then they also there is an increase in the school improvement grants and also the school feeding these are all cost that as really escalated.

For the debts servicing, some of debts deferrals has already started kicking in. So most of the payment that were making last year as now decrease significantly and is mostly on international debts.

Yes! We have already done the calculation and I will be coming back to this august Assembly to explain, giving the impact on Covid-19, the revenue that we have lost and the areas that we have cutting to be able to meet, because revenue is going down that is a fact. We have made a revision and we will be coming to the National Assembly to present it for your approval.

[Point of Observation]

HON. OMAR CEESAY [NIAMINA EAST]: Madam Speaker I have an observation. I am saying madam speaker, for members to... *[Interruption]*

THE SPEAKER: I have a discretion but I just want to remind you that this is question time on the statement as for the Standing Orders that this Honourable august has decided so, can we just allow the....

HON. OMAR CEESAY [NIAMINA EAST]: It is all pertaining to this. I was saying it would will be earlier to the Honourable Minister to maintain remain standing here every question throws to him then he will respond immediately to that person so, that some of the questions will not be mix up.

THE SPEAKER: Please can we save time on that.

HON. FATOU K. JAWARA [TALLINDING KUNJANG]: Thank you very much madam Speaker. Honourable Minister you mention in your statement that the reason why travel expenses are kept increase because you reallocated some amount for Interior Minister for night patrol team. So, I want to know as a member of standing committee on Defence and Security during our oversight engagement they explained some challenges that they went through like lack of fuelling and so on and I don't know how true is it?

HON. SULAYMAN SAHO [CENTRAL BADDIBU]: Thank you Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, can the Honourable Minister tell us when shall be graduate spending lot of millions on rents and rates?

HON. YAYA GASSAMA [KIANG EAST]: Thank you madam speaker, can the Honourable Minister for Finance and Economic Affairs provide to this august House with clear justifications why the school improvement grant and school feeding programme should be listed among the top budget spending along the line since school have closed since March?

THE SPEAKER: Can we allow the Honourable Minister to respond to those three [3] questions before we proceed.

HON. MAMBURY NJIE [MINISTER FOR FINANCE AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS]: Thank you very much. Madam Speaker, the question from our Honourable Member from Tallinding. What we are saying is that previously we were charging the trekking and night allowances under allowances now we have now decided to put it under budget line item traveling but if you are within the area, we cannot pay you but you have to go outside.

With respect to the allocation of fuel and other logistic yes! Is based on their request and when they make the request before we release the other funds the activity must be justify that they have spent this amount base on their request then you will be able to release the others. Some of them we cannot do it 100% but we try by all means to

make sure that the request from the security sector is honour but we don't honour 100% of it but they have to justify.

Then the spending on rents and rates yes! We have plans, the ministry of works and infrastructure are aware that the amount that we are paying definitely is too much and we thinking about building like quadrangle or something like that to reduce rents, it's a fact and it is affecting us seriously. So we have plans that we will definitely do that exercise.

For the spending on basic education, school improvement grants, regardless of whether schools are close or not the improvement must be done. So it's on their request, I think the oversight responsibility or the Committee in the National Assembly should pay a visit to all of these schools that are targeted for the improvements. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Whether you have covered Kiang East?

HON. SUWAIBOU TOURAY [WULI EAST]: Thank you Madam Speaker. The Minister made mention of additional emphasise on combating this pandemic by availing resources to critical sectors and mentioned Health. I am just wondering exactly which area of Health is giving more emphasise because I am very concern about the energy situation in some of this health centres especially in my constituency Wuli East. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Can we have direct questions so we have as many as possible.

HON. LAMIN F.M. CONTA [KOMBO EAST]: Thank you Madam Speaker, apart from the 500million allocated to the Ministry of Health under the recurrent wit has been indicated by the Honourable Minister those your ministry intends to make any additional allocation with regard to Covid-19? Thank you.

HON. OUSMAN TOURAY [SABACH SANJAL]: Thank you very much Madam Speaker, my first concern was address by the Honourable Member for Central Baddibu. The other one I have in relation to the energy sector because I see in the national development plan energy is prioritize as one of the key infrastructures that to be consider but in the

execution in this period, I don't see any significant amount or anything mention about energy. Is it that you don't have any programme for energy sector?

HON. MAMBURY NJIE [MINISTER FOR FINANCE AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS]:

Thank you Madam Speaker, I forgot to answer the question on school feeding programme and thank you for reminding me Honourable Majority Leader. Yes! There are new schools that we are now covering before we were not, when we started the programme some of them were covered by donors. Now we are taking over all of those schools that were being funded by the donors.

The other question about which area of Health, what we do, we just do the general allocation as I said there is a committee comprising of Permanent Secretary of Health, Permanent Secretary of Finance, GPPA Director General, Director of Internal Audit and the Accountant General. What they normally do is when the request is submitted to Health just for proper scrutiny and one stop service the Permanent Secretary and the Minister will scrutiny it and submit it to the committee and the committee as a whole from procurement to internal audit just for verification will now scrutinize it and then release the amount to whoever but it must go through to proper procurement process.

As to with area, if you go to the website now there is a breakdown show exactly which area the expenses is being made. Whether the 500 million we intend to of course if you give me permission am more than happy to spend more but I think for the time being, I think even delay in disbursement I think one most appreciate the fact that since we give out that money, we make sure every butut every cent spend is accounted for. So for the time being we have not received any new additional new request from them.

The energy sector yes! The giving the fact that the Covid-19 really, now we have to revisit our whole National Development Plan. Energy and infrastructure where the top but now giving the Covid-19 pandemic there is need to reprioritize and revisit the National Development Plan. Does that mean that we are going to reduce discord any other project no. I think what I have reported today is just for the GFL component there is a solarization project of one thousand one-hundred [1100] schools and clinic

that is on. NAWEC also there are major reforms that are going on there including increasing the capacity the transmission and distribution. A whole lot of things will be going and that the sectorial minister will come and make a report on that.

HON. SAIKOUBA JARJU [BUSUMBALA]: Madam Speaker, still I am not clear about the school feeding programme and the SIG. there will any problem if schools are in progress because schools closed in the second term in March. Through experience SIG patient School are operational, school feeding programme are pay when children are going to school so, from that time of closing up to now we expect reduction rather than increase in that aspect.

So, I want you to clarify or will you agree that if monitoring them to report their previous allocation before you allocate them another, there are lapses. You might be fool that it is spend this way but in reality, it's not. Because with this intention schools are in progress, we expect less spending on school feeding programme and SIG allocation. Thank you.

HON. DAWDA KAWSU JAWARA [UPPER FULLADU WEST]: Thank you Madam speaker. Although the Minister has informed/directing us to the official website where we can get more information. However, he indicated to us here that there is being major increase in travel expenditure as alluded to Honourable Member for Tallinding but the Minister fails to give us actual figures and percentages on this for whatever reason. Which I think should be part this report so, I just want to know from the minister's perspective. Like he said despite the the recent travel banned outside the Gambia which in cause quite a lot of money in term of dollars and per-diem and stuff like that. There is still an increase by internal trekking of the security sector, I just want the minister to elaborate a little bit more why such significant increase even though is from allowances to travel but still they are all internal night allowances and trekking allowances. Can he please elaborate little more on that?

HON. ALHAGI S.B. SILLAH [NIANI]: Thank you very much Madam Speaker. Looking through the expenditure of Ministry of Works and Infrastructure they have already absorbed 73% their budget by end of April. So would there be any other infrastructure like roads and other structures for the minister of works in another future because already 73% has been spend from their budget. Thank you.

HON. MAMBURY NJIE [MINISTER FOR FINANCE AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS]:

Thank you very much Madam Speaker. The allocation for the school feeding, this is a report just for first quarter, definitely the second quarter we do not expect any significant expenditure on the school feeding programme. People were still, if the kids are still going to school so I think April, May, June I am sure we will see decrease in that area.

For Honourable Member of Upper Fulladu West, travels I think what we normally do is based on request from the Ministry both Interior and Defence. I can tell you that we have rejected quite a few because it has to be justified.

But when it comes to augment for security, we are the civilians when they tell us that there is something going on in CRR or LRR there is no way for us to counter that what we do normally we try to explain to the security minister that yes! If you are telling us to pay maybe you have 20 of them and I can tell you that they do cooperate on that. Why don't you send 10 or 15 at least used that regional security apparatus there to be able to compliment them.

So, these are issues that am telling you Honourable Member it has not been easy but we been battling a very tough battle in term of making sure that we control and contain that expenditure and up today we are confronted with that because if they make request we cannot just say no, what we can is to reduce the amount but in the event of any have that we did not approve and something happen there, security wise then we will be blame but we are still doing it within the budgetary allocation.

So, basely these are the issues I believe that definitely for the travels we are doing everything possible to contain it especially the local travel because the trekking before

people were paid only D600 if you go just for one night just to go a hostel it might cost D750, now they have also increase their cost so the increment was done to make sure that at least they can meet their room at least once or two meal a day and that was the bases and the justification but up today we are still trying to contain and they been cooperating. But when information reaching headquarters that there is need to really address certain security matter in a region, they will be the request and we do comply sometime but not most the time. Did I miss any question?

Road yes! they have absorbed 73% whether they have any other additional request, they will have to put it and then we have to come for SAP without that we cannot give them anything that is not in the budget.

HON. ABDOULIE CEESAY [OLD YUNDUM]: Honourable Minister, I think this is just a clarification, you made mention of 117million been paid for rents and rates. Are you reporting to the National Assembly that include the rent and rate for embassies outside the Gambia or it is within the country? Thank you.

HON. OMAR DARBOE [UPPER NIUMI]: Thank you very much Madam Speaker for giving me the floor. Madam Speaker if you would allow me, I just want to read the last sentence of Honourable Minister on the statement he has just made.

THE SPEAKER: Can you ask the question because reading will be taking time.

HON. OMAR DARBOE [UPPER NIUMI]: We will nonetheless take all necessary steps to ascertain budget execution is conducted in a prudent and discipline manner and avoid major fiscal slippage from now until the end of 2020. Honourable minister I am asking you this question what mechanism or parameters are you putting in place to make sure that your statement is fully executed in term of spending the budget. Thank you.

HON. BAKARY NJIE [BUNDUNGKA KUNDA]: Thank you very much Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, I want the minister to clarify what actually is responsible for

the 51% decrease of debt service which is very significant considering the fact that the time you are taking about is at end April 2020.Thank you very much.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Minister we had three questions.

HON. MAMBURY NJIE [MINISTER FOR FINANCE AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS]:

Thank you very much madam speaker.

On rents and rate yes! It includes both the embassies and local rents actually 80% of the amount here is basically for our overseas Embassies. The other one in term of the how do we scrutinize and maintain the fiscal discipline. Normally during this time of the year the budgetary expenditure average about 36%, right now in the budget execution we have less than 30% and what we do currently is instead of doing quarterly allocation we are very tied to make sure every month ministries, department and agencies will submit their activity report and their request then we scrutinize and allocate what is in the revenue, what is collected that is very important. This way we believe we are cutting our court according to our size and also making sure that whatever you say in your activity report we are going to execute is executed and we are not only sitting down in the office, we have a project and all of this activity monitoring committee that do take a day or two to fiscally go and make sure they verify.

In addition to that only daily bases our Directorate of Internal Audit even if you ask us that you are doing a painting at a school, they will fiscal make sure they will go and do the site visit so a lot of things are happening of course this is why the monthly cash allocation is so important that we cannot guarantee what you requested whether we will give you that total amount and before we release that your previous month activity report justify to make sure what we give you is well spend.

For the debt service yes! With debt referral we believe that we will be seen debt service reduction from now till end of December but we cannot guarantee we live a very dynamic world now things can change anytime but we hope that the figure will be going down. Sometime some of them are due at it time that the period is not within the first two quarters. Yes! we have debt deferrals but most of them will also tell you, yes, I

have given you debt deferral but it commences in January 1st 2021 or 2022. So, it depends on the programme that we have with our debtors. Thank you.

HON. MOMODOU L.K. SANNEH [DEPUTY SPEAKER]: Thank you very much Honourable Speaker. Honourable Speaker let me find out from the Honourable Minister

Musa Ceesay	
Date of sitting:	15 th June, 2020
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Oral Statement present to this August body is indeed a very good document but when is the Minister thinking of bringing in a revised budget because all these things should have been captured in the revised budget. When is the minister thinking of bringing the revised budget to the National Assembly? Thank you.

HON. BILLAY G. TUNKARA [KANTORA]: Thank you very much Honourable Speaker for giving me the floor. Honourable Speaker I want to Honourable Minister, because he is the one that disbursed these funds to the Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of Interior, to give a statistical analysis updates on how much has been given to each ministry? Parliament might be interested in the figures how much did they spend on the trekking and allowances if you can find out from the technocrats over there to give you the actual figures not only theories or explanations but actual figures that has been spent by this Ministry. Thank you.

HON. OUSMAN SILLAH [BANJUL NORTH]: Thank you very much Honourable Speaker. Honourable Speaker in the minister's oral statement he did indicate that the

Ministry of Finance and Economics Affairs Budget Absorption did reach 36% mainly due to the increase subvention given to each specialist agencies. Would the Minister explain to this Assembly what this entails?

HON. MAMBUREY NJIE [MINISTER FOR FINANCE AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS]:

Thank you very much Honourable Speaker, Deputy Speaker yes, we intend to come in fact I have made an appeal, because we have been working on the on the figures and if that is possible even during the session where we will be able to fit in.

This is just the updates and it will be completely different from revised because this is just to tell you actually this is what happen from January to April. I have made request informally to the clerk that we are also requesting that we are now ready with our figures wherever we can appeal respectfully to be fit in during the session so that we will make the presentation.

Member for Kantora, the actual figures for travel yes, we will try to expunge, whether we will submit it to the Clerk, we can do that in fact today. The IFMIS data is there so we should be able to do that.

Banjul North question yes, the subvention mostly is GRA and we have this performance and agreement with GRA that we paid on bonuses the more collect the more there is a 4.5 percentage bonus that takes care of their operational cause and everything. That's how they are able to self-sustained. So, every month based on whatever they collect we dispose the actual amount after the calculation. So is under the ministry that is why we said the satellite agency.

THE SPEAKER: I am sure if the figures are provided to the office of the Clerk, we will make enough copies because I am sure every Honourable Member will be interested in those figures.

HON. ALHAGIE SANKUNG JAMMEH [FONI JARROL]: Thank you very much Honourable Speaker. I would want the Honourable Minister to you help me to know going to the last paragraph of his statement where he mentioned of their intention to

reprioritize the objectives of the 2020 budget and he went further to give sample of a sector which more resources are expected to go to. If you can help us to know how many sectors and if possible, if you can give us the names of the sectors so that when somebody's trying to make your findings will know actually were to hit the head. Thank you.

HON. SAINÉY JAWARA [LOWER SALOUM]: Thank you Honourable Speaker. Honourable Minister as you know that this pandemic makes a serious impact on the economy. Are you still there to maintain the reserve budget?

HON. LAMIN J. SANNEH [BRIKAMA SOUTH]: Thank you very much Honourable Speaker, Honourable minister in your report the top three spending Ministries were the ministry of works and infrastructure is rank second consuming 478 million, I just want to enquire whether this 478 million is all allocated to Banjul rehabilitation project? if not what other projects does it affect and at what percentage does the Banjul rehabilitation consume. Thank you

HON. MAMBUREY NJIE [MINISTER FOR FINANCE AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS]: Thank you very much Honourable Speaker. Yes, the Honourable Member from Foni Jarrol, the Health in particular, specifically that is what we said, we are now in the pandemic and we don't know how long will it take. We don't know whether the resources that we have already allocated will be sufficient to be able to Addressed our problems in the Health sector. But for the time being, really Health is focus. We just want to make sure other sectors to will understand that we will not be able to meet all their demands because whatever happens the Health sector right now is the priority.

That's key, that is why we want to make sure that we make it very clear that the resources that have already been moved we are making sure it scrutinizes every expenditure and procurement aspect of it. So, Health is the priority right now.

The Member for Lower Saloum, yes for the time being we are still maintaining we haven't hit; we haven't busted ceiling that the National Assembly provided for us the appropriated amount. We are hoping that we will come back to request for additional

resources to be able to address the health the Covid-19 pandemic and other infrastructural projects.

Yes, the top spending ministries, majority of the amount allocated disbursed to the ministry of works. Yes, almost 400 million is for the Banjul rehabilitation project and the other consultancy services are pay to towards the ongoing works that are going on. So basically, that's it is about 400 million. Thank you.

HON. LAMIN K. SANNEH [BRIKAMA SOUTH]: The question was the top three Ministries, the top three spending ministries were the Ministry of works and infrastructure is rank as second, I just want to enquire whether this 478 million that it has consumed whether it is all allocated to Banjul rehabilitation project if not, which other project does it affect and what percentage does Banjul rehabilitation consumed?

HON. MAMBUREY NJIE [MINISTER FOR FINANCE AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS]: think I have just answered. I said out of the 478 million almost 420 about 400 million to be more specific is for the Banjul rehabilitation project. Let's say about 428 million or something like that yes. There are other works that have been going on consultancies and contain retainers fees that we are supposed to pay on project that were already completed. That consumes the other but we can be more specific and give you the fact.

HON. SAIKOU MARONG [LATRIKUNDA SABIJI]: Thank you very much Honourable Speaker. Honourable Minister looking at the beginning of your statement you are talking about the January to April the expenditure made by the ministry of Finance from January to April. Now what I want to know is that what is your general overview about that spending, this including monitoring and evaluation of the budget that you spent, from January right down to April. I want to know your general overview as the state minister. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: I don't know that appears to be an opinion. I stand to be corrected, I thought you will ask direct question as oppose what is your view or what is your opinion. I don't know I stand to be corrected Honourable Members, is that a question or asking for an opinion can somebody help please assist?

HON. BILLAY G. TUNKARA [KANTORA]: I think the member is asking the minister the general overview of the budget.

HON. ALHAGIE S. DARBOE [BRIKAMA NORTH]: Thank you very much Madam Speaker. I think I have more of a similar question posed by the Honourable Member for Brikama South. However, from the answer deduced by the minister, that is to say out of the 428 million consumed by the Ministry on roads which represents 73% of the approved budget, 400 million is paid on the Banjul project that means the remaining 28 million to other projects. I would like the minister to inform which roads or bridges benefited from the remaining 28 million and why that specific attention was given to the Banjul project alone out of the 428, 400 million went to the Banjul project alone.

HON. SIDIA JATTA [WULI WEST]: Honourable Speaker, Honourable Minister when and why do you have nonessential budget lines? Psychologically Speaking something that is not nonessential does not exist. So why do you have allocation to nonessential budget lines why?

HON. MAMBURY NJIE [MINISTER FOR FINANCE AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS]: Thank you very much Madam Speaker. I think I have already made a statement that normally during this time of the year the expenditure for the budget, the cumulative in terms of the looking at trend analysis is always about within the range of 36%. So right now, the actual we have is 30%. Going to the making any forecast or anything for the end of the year, I think though with the Revised Budget we will be able to explain those details, because if we have a model that will fit in the figures based on the revenue and the committed Expenses that we have in the budget. In terms of my opinion, no I don't have any opinion on this. My opinion is always based on facts and data but my technical staff present to me, based on that we will be able to make the decision.

For Member for Brikama North, the remaining amount varies and it also includes compensation. Compensations when the URR projects, some of the houses and compounds that they lost when the project was on. So is a lot of activities and we will be able to give you that breakdown but everything has it now is already in our website,

all the breakdowns are there. The consultancy, some of the works that were already going on; the Lamin Koto-Passimus and different projects unless and until it is completed, we cannot make the payment because is after the consultancy, the project is done then they will do their evaluation and submit it to us that's the time that it is eligible to pay.

There is always retention fee most of the time that you don't release all the amounts paid. Normally is between 1% and 5% that we always retain maybe for a year or two. These are amount that you cannot keep as a government you always need money to spend. So when is time to really release the funds that's the time that they will allocate. So the balance that you are talking about in addition to the 400 million spend on Banjul rehabilitation project was spend on those things. Why specifically, is based on the request from the sector. That's the figure, that's the amount and the activities that the ministry of works and communication presented.

Coming to the question for Honourable Member for Wuli west, I think is more of a classification. This is the classification that most of the time but the accountant general will classify on activities. Sometimes If there are a lot of them you cannot create every budget line item for that. It is just for more of definition and classification and to be able to fit into the system, the international chattered of account. These are the issues that we are confronted but is still being improved. I know last year you asked and very relevant how to break it down to make sure that every activity is reported.

Right now what we have is a technological issues that is aggregated and when it is aggregated we have to follow that, but we are still struggling to see what we can do to make sure that there will be foot notes to make sure when you will say nonessential will be able to have a footnote to have an explanatory statement to say that this contains that.

HON. MOMODOU S. CEESAY [JANJANBUREH]: Thank you Madam Speaker. Honourable Minister in your statement you mentioned that major expenditures increase particularly within only two ministries; Defence and Interior. Maybe this is due to

renaming their taken allowance as travel expenses. Does this mean that you are paying them par dium? Because I cannot see the increase so exorbitant within the short period
Thank you.

HON. NDEY YASSIN SECKA [NOMINATED]: Thank you very much Ma. Could the Honourable Minister elaborate more on food because he saying that food is increased but the amount that is put in to food and you know that if you don't increase food you know people like you the Njie's will like to eat more. Then why is it that agriculture is not prioritize in those areas that has already stated that they prioritize because without food do you know we will not work. So thank you very much.

HON. YAKUMBA JAITEH [NOMINATED MEMBER]: Honourable Minister I think we miss the starting point of the statement, because the most important thing is missing and is the revenue aspect. I was expecting to see that there will be how much revenue was received during this period, how much allocated to what ministry, how much revenue was expected and why that wasn't received, what will be the impact and this information is missing. I think next time that should be the starting point, if you can give us how much revenue we have received from tax non-taxed and other sources please.

HON. MAMBURY NJIE [MINISTER FOR FINANCE AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS]:
Thank you Honourable Speaker, please allow me just to start with the last question. I said We have a budget execution and we have a website, we will do everything possible to bring it to the website. The website is there and all the information you asking for is right there. I think if you ask me yes, I will be coming back to giving you that but that is why in the interest of transparency and accountability every month the website is updated. I am hoping that the next time I come here with the reverse budget and all of this information; the revenue, the expenditure, additional resources and all of them will be there. But in terms of the continuous adjustment, I think it just takes a click of a button to zoom into the website but if you asked for it yes, I can deliver another budget speech next time come in just to make sure all the information is there. With respect I will definitely do that.

The question of member for Janjanbureh, personal emoluments, most of it [expenditures] is on the personal. Then if you look at it, I mention here, that the allowance they were having were only 600 and even the 600 is unable to pay their hotel or motel. So that is why it increases from 650 to 2000. This is why we are also cutting down on the number of texts, on the composition of the team to make sure we contained the budget.

The Nominated Member Ndey Yassin Secka, yes agriculture will still be a priority and it will continue to be a priority. I think I came here to ratify some loans and grants. What we were embarking on is trying to move away from subsistence to commercial agriculture. We are doing everything possible to encourage especially the private sectors to ensure whatever we are coming in has a government partnership is complementary. So agriculture will still be a priority, but as at now as we said we are now reprioritising the NDP to make sure we have to factor in the pandemic and other unpredictable emergencies that are confronting all of us now. Thank you.

HON. ALAGIE JAWARA [LOWER BADDIBU]: Thank you very much Honourable Speaker, Honourable Minister you have given us the accounts of the operational budget that is the recurrent. Going through your documents, I would like to know the account of the nonrecurrent budget that is to say the cost one of a kind expensive that occurs at in regular intervals and sometimes difficult to accounts from a budgeting perspective. could you give us the accounts of the nonrecurrent?

HON. DEMBO K.M. CAMARA [ILLIASSA]: Thank you very much Honourable Speaker. Honourable Minister according to the report 73% of approved budget about Works and Communication that we spend, can the Honourable Minister give us statistical data on how the 73% have been spent.

HON. ALFUSAINY CEESAY [SAMI]: Thank you very much Madam Speaker for giving me the floor. Honourable Minister the question that I would like to ask is that as we know that mobility is an issue in the security sector, what is your ministry's plan towards that.

HON. MAMBURY NJIE [MINISTER FOR FINANCE AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS]:

Honourable Speaker, I think let me just go back to just the statement about other recurrent expenditure. I said other recurrent expenditure has increased from 994million in 2019 to 1.2 billion in 2020 registering a growth of 22% while 22% of it approved budget was spend during the period over under review. Government did allocate additional 500 million to the Ministry of Health under other recurrent which was obtained by allocation budget votes from various budget entities and channel towards converting Covid-19 pandemic. The bulk of the reallocation came from travel expensive trading another nonessential budget. That's for the non-recurrent.

in terms of the data for Ministry of works yes, we will make sure my tomorrow morning the actual expenditure and the breakdown we will submit it to the clerk. I will request it and is already with the IFMIS but just for verification I also request the Ministry of works to give it to us.

Mobility for security, yes lot of requests lots of claims, but now with the limited resource envelops we have there are competing demands if the ministry of health is requesting for mobility to transport patients, the Ministry of education is requesting mobility to transport the food and food services for the school feeding program, the ministry of Defence and interior will come and tell us they need the vehicle for surveillance and others. I think in as much we respect and we value security, we can only provide what is in the budget. So far, I think we have been trying to meet them half way and sometimes if there are other major travels or trekking, we request vehicles mobility from Central government and also parastatal. That's how we are managing for the time being. Just remember that is a developing country and the resources are very limited and every sector is requesting for Attention and we just have to make sure that whatever we have is distributed. Thank you.

HON. HALIFA SALLAH [SERREKUNDA]: Thank you very much. Honourable Speaker, taking the Banjul experience, Is the Minister considering a review of prefinance induce budgetary expenditure as a treat so the budget itself in terms of meeting all these obligations. Is there any change of heart?

HON. FATOUMATA NJAI [BANJUL SOUTH]: Thank you very much Madam Speaker, for giving me a second chance. The Honourable Minister in his report mentioned that so far, the Ministry of Health has have spent 372 million and we were told that in the Covid-19 they were also giving 500 million so where does that add up? Is that the on top of the 500 million. Can the Honourable Minister clarify that please? Thank you.

HON. ALHAGIE SB. SILLAH [NIANI]: Thank you. If I was aware Honourable Minister, the Minister of agriculture has requested for some money from you for them to buy some produces from the farmers which they have already been kept under their purview. So is that money being approved for them. At one time the Ministry of agriculture were telling farmers for them to keep their produce so that they can buy it from them for this pandemic because, they were not able to take their produce to the lumos and we were aware that they have requested some money to the ministry of finance whether you were aware of that?

HON. MAMBURY NJIE [MINISTER FOR FINANCE AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS]: Thank you very much, Member for Serrekunda, yes prefinancing is actually almost becoming a taboo, we will not entertain it and we have no intention to encourage it. We also we have been coming here for amendment to the GPP Act, we are also doing everything possible to discourage single sourcing.

This are issue that were we highlighted. I think we all educate ourselves after sometimes that we have learned and we say it was an emergency, it was treated but there was no excuse or any other we will repeat suggesting when it was an emergency and the technical detect that we received from the Health, from the Infrastructure and then also it was also done by Gambians; Gambian money, Gambian engineers but definitely we have no intention of going for prefinance anymore including single sourcing.

It will be in the Act and I will become very soon for rectification. I don't think that will take an hour to for the Honourable to help me rectify that. Clarification, 500 million is are you specifically located for the Ministry of Health. This 370 you are talking about is

within 500 million. I hope that is clear. The produce you were talking about, let me just share with National Assembly Members that during the Covid-19 pandemic, lot of women has produced potatoes, onions and it when to the tune of about six tons and because they perishables items so we were approach and we have all in good intention to buy it but what we are saying it is just because is government we cannot buy it above market prices. In addition to that we intended to buy it, store it at the GIA cold storage facilities until maybe when the onion session is out then we will come out not to sell it at a higher price. So we contacted the Social Development Fund for financing, we also have the Agric business unit division. They are the expects that are responsible. But fortunately, because the ministry of trade were the ones that were making all the arrangements, we just make so that we were guiding them on the financing so fortunately I think the last information I got was that a private sector has now made the offer to buy the produce not below market prices, because we are still protect the woman but the ones that are parish that are not good, those are the ones that that had to handpicked. But the Ministry of Trade with the woman including the Minister who was here for Children and Women Affair they were all coordinated just to make sure the women hard labour will not go in vain.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you very much Honourable Minister for Finance and Economic affairs for the statement and the answers provided to this August Assembly. I think we have exhausted your business for the day so you are now release and once more thank you very much.

Motion:

Be it resolves that this August Assembly do consider and approve the Motion to Amend the Standing Orders of the National Assembly 2019 Edition [by Honourable Sidia S. Jatta Chairperson Standing Orders Committee].

HON. SIDIA S JATTA [WULI WEST]: Thank you very much Honourable Speaker Honourable Speaker in according standing order 110[2] I beg to move that this August

Assembly do consider and approve the motion to Amend the Standing Orders of the National Assembly 2019 Edition.

Madam speaker, Rules regulations and even law itself, the essence of it is for them to stand the test of time and that is why when we are implementing them, we assess and we evaluate. Where there are gaps, we try to fill them up. So the essence of the current proposal for motion for amendment precisely to deal with such gaps, some of Which were raise during seasons of this Assembly. We took them into consideration and we found it necessary that's some amendments I needed to be made. The amendment seeks to provide more clarity and procedure relation to members powers or authority in electing or removing like we are talking about vote of confidence in chairperson and vice chairpersons of committees and probably even of head of delegation. It plays the responsibility of Honourable ministers to provide updates to the assembly on any report or a resolution adopted by the Assembly.

Honourable Speaker, the amendments are needed to take into account of our proposals for amendments and that is why we had decided to bring this motion. You have a list of them on another paper you have before you. I think we have all got copies of this Propose amendment and we just want to update and improve upon the Standing Orders that we have now. There are more probably coming, there is one which is critical which is contentious. It was in the current one but it is moved but it has to come because this parliament should be a model of uprightness, a model of honesty, a model of sincerity, a model of lack of what people call corruption. So that amendment will certainly come but meanwhile I move that this Assembly do give consideration approval to the amendment that have been proposed here. Madam Speaker I beg to move. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Any Seconder?

HON. BAKARY CAMARA [KIANG CENTRAL]: Thank you very much Honourable Speaker. I rise to second the motion. Honourable Speaker you will all agree with me that since 2018, there has been lots of effort that the Standing Orders Committee has

being making to make sure we have a standard Standing Orders. The Essence of revising is to improve on a document to have a better document. I think all what we are doing is to make sure that to have a standard standing Order. I want to believe if you go through the proposed amendment we have before us is certainly going to help this Assembly in terms of saving time and even that of the resource, because there is a particular provision that is trying to talk in terms of controlling the debate. Sometimes we spend lot of time on certain issues when in actual sense if you look at them properly, we should not have been spending such times. Then also if you look at the instances where the commission requires a fixed majority, I think it is important that when we are taking decisions, decisions are normally taken by the majority. So the amendment here are certainly meant to help us to put our House in order, to do things accordingly and then save even resources. Honourable Speaker with those remarks. I beg to take my seat.

[Question proposed]

THE SPEAKER: Now any Honourable member who wishes to take part in the debate may do so you can kindly raise your constituency tag and will record please.

HON. ALHAGIE H. SOWE [JIMARA]: Thank you very much madam. I wanted to thank the standing Orders committee for the good work. But then Madam Speaker in the first stage, where they are talking about voting and it read in any instance where the constitution requires a fix majority to decide on a question, the Assembly shall not proceed to a vote on that question unless and until a number of members is equivalent to such fix majority is present at the time for voting. Now what of if members are absent are you going to cancel the voting at that very day or we are going to continue with it. That is my question, I wanted the mover to clarify.

THE SPEAKER: Sorry I should have called Honourable member for Jarra East because his name was next on the list. My apology?

HON. SAINÉY TOURAY [JARRA EAST]: Madam Speaker thank you very much. Apology accepted.

I rise to contribute on the motion that is table by the Mover. Madam Speaker as a parliament we need a mechanism to regulate ourselves and this standing order is one of the regulatory mechanisms that is used by parliament to regulate itself.

Madam Speaker, in any Parliament, there are two important instruments that are there to be used when it comes to regulation and control, and these two instruments are the constitution and the Standing Order. These are widely considered to be the Bible or the Holy Quran if you like it of any Parliament.

Madam speaker, I have qualms with some of the amendment especially when it comes to removal of chair persons or their understudies. The person of vote of nonconfidence Madam speaker when I saw it, I said wow! I have not seen any measure taken against members of committees. For example, I am part of the environment committee, I leave my own committee and there are certain members whom you know they are perpetual late comers, they hardly attend meetings but here is the Vice Chairperson or chairperson is giving room for his removal and there is nothing absolutely mentioned about members who are always coming late or members who hardly attend meetings. I think this must be considered, a rule for one must be a rule for all. If not as the chairperson of the environment committee I will say is a witch hunt and know for that, because if any of the Members can conspire who are in the habit of coming to meeting very late all the time to the point of earning themselves perpetual latecomers and they can conspired for chairperson or his understudy to be removed Madam Speaker there is no moral authority for those people to conspire or to hatch any plan for the removal of the chairperson or his understudy. I think that may be thought.

Madam speaker rules and regulations are meant to be obeyed. I as a chairperson of the environment committee by God's grace I will not be found one thing but it is not only me there are other Chairpersons and there are other vice-chairpersons whom you know if care is not taken, they might fall victims to these amendments. I think if Chairpersons and their understudies are targeted by this new Amendment Madam Speaker how about ordinary members. So it has given them a cater- blanch for them to behave any how they like because there is no mechanism that is there to regulate the

attendance or otherwise and I think the mover will take this into account and help clarify.

Madam Speaker the essence of amendment is not just for the sake of amending but once a provision or a clause is amended it must be respected in totality that is the essence if the amendments are not respected, they are as futile as a non-existent and the purpose of amendment is going to be defeated.

Madam Speaker many a times members of this august Assembly will abuse Standing Order clause 26[2] that is when you are speaking or when you are addressing the august Assembly you have to rise up but many of times people abuse it. I know for some they do it in advertently because no man is perfect but we also have some people who are perpetual when it comes to abusing as well and I think we should put a stop to it. Because when we make our laws our own internal regulations or mechanism if you like it, they must be respected by us because if we fail to respect them it is going to send a very bad signal. It goes without saying you cannot complain of a person who has a spec in his eye when you who is complaining you have a lot in your eye, you have no moral justification. So charity must always begin at home. I have no problem with this amendment but I have the chairperson of the Environment Committee I must start fighting my fight before anyone does it for me and I think this fight will go on to help my opposite numbers in other committees. Madam with these draconic remarks I beg to take my seat. Thank you very much.

HON. FATOUMATA NJAI [BANJUL SOUTH]: Thank you very much Madam chair and I will just pick up from where my Honourable Colleague has stopped. I think clause 98 is really a strong message, because rightly said we are all Honourable members but when you are given a chairperson or vice chairperson or a head of delegation you only first amongst equals and that there is a reason why it is given. There is a status attached to it, and status must be shown and if it is not seen by the members of the committee or of the delegation, I think there must be a reason why they should ask but it just shouldn't be for one reason. That person must be given enough notice to be able to look at their failures or their floors, but to say that

members also need to be because there are privileges attached to be vice-chair or chairperson or heads of delegations, so I support the amendment to retro vote of no confidence to such persons it will give them that leverage to work extra hard and deliver some chairperson are very diligent in what they do. When we came here, we did not know who would do what, we just allocated chairpersonship to whom we thought but then some of them are delivering I am not going to name names but there are certain committees that are working diligently and delivering but some committees to be honest they might as well be said that they are dormant. Some delegations for example, I am a member of the ECOWAS delegation, we have never presented a report, we will all take the fault and also the Parliament can also take the fault we never go with any secretary and how are we expected to lay report in that case. I am not going to blame the head of Delegation; I am going to blame this parliament and the secretariat of this parliament for failing to give us a secretary and I think the head of delegation will also say that as well. But also, I will go to clause 143, it says that all information submitted under the standing order shall be kept in a register which the clerk shall maintain for the purpose and shall not be disclosed to any person without the permission of the Speaker.

Why only the speaker? before any information is disclosed, they must ask the person concerned. I think we should add with the permission of the Speaker and the Member concerned, because no information must be disclosed without the member giving the permission. So Honourable speaker I think I will support this motion to amend this clause with these additions and the member concern and also clause 19 plus the head of delegation. Thank you very much.

THE SPEAKER: I think we should all bear in mind the rules of natural justice so that everyone will be given a chance once you are in quotes accused of something you should know your accusation and be giving a chance.

HON. HALIFA SALLAH [SERREKUNDA]: Thank you very much Honourable Speaker, it shows that we are independent as a National Assembly and under section 108 of the constitution, we should put our own rules in place. "It stays that subject to the

provision to the National Assembly may regulate its own procedure and in particular may make Standing Orders for the conduct of its own procedure”.

Honourable Speaker, it goes as far as per say, that these standing orders shall not be enquired into by any court. under subsection 2, which means that this asserts the separation of powers.

Honourable Speaker, the amendments seeks to provide remedy for the gaps and as the chairperson has said we must increasingly look at the gaps as we perform our duties and fill them not for ourselves but for those coming after us.

Honourable Speaker, we are not making rules for ourselves, we are making rules for prosperity. So that those who come after us will look at what we have made and would concur that they are fit for purpose. Looking at the amendment dealing with standing order 16, we have experienced this already and we were unprepared. This will be helping us to be more prepared because we should not have assumed that what we do here will never be questioned on a court, it could be questioned in a court by virtue of what is established by the constitution. In my mind that the constitution says that three quarter of all the members of the National Assembly, it means that all the members even those who are absent and those who abstain. We vote without taking into consideration those who abstain and it is important that we are voting procedures that would reflect those who vote for, against and abstain. As it had been rightly said supposed out of the 57 members you end up having twelve, thirteen, fourteen. let's say I am not calculating do your mathematics, essentially, we have more than one quarter absent, the voting is useless. Because even if we vote and all concord something will be missing, three quarte of all the members and apparently this is what this particular amendment seeks to address, that before we vote let us determine whether that three quarter actually is present. If it is not present then that voting is meaningless, it is in contravention of the dictates of the constitution. I believe this is what that the amendment seeks to address.

Honourable Speaker, it is important that therefore that another amendment also comes in terms of the roll call so that we know exactly what goes, but that's another matter is not before us.

Honourable Speaker, we are told by standing order 108 that the committee of selection will propose under subsection [2] it says that the committee of selection shall report its decision to this assembly for approval. So essentially the committee of selection is not an overload that does what they wish to do independent of the will of the National Assembly. Whatever it does whoever is appointed one must come back to the National Assembly for approval.

I fully agree that he or she who leads a delegation or committee and does not earn the confidence of the members should in fact retire or resign before one is removed because what is the basis of leadership.

What we must also bear in mind is that we are making rules not only for ourselves. So something should be there that the person maybe vote of no confidence by virtue of incompetence, by virtue of infirmity, by virtue of corruption or whatever there should be something that the members will rely on and say that this is why we are removing this particular person otherwise why are you removing the person the future will ask and you will say well base on my sentiments I don't like this person's face. I don't think that is the type of rule that we would want to make, the rule must be based on something substantive and then that will be on record of why we in a group decide to change the leadership of the group and I will also concur that it should include the head of delegation not only the actual chairpersons; heads of delegation, chairperson and vice chairperson in terms of delegations or deputies. Honourable Speaker it is also important that when we look at the vote of no confidence it is not also to give the committee of selection unilateral absolute power just because something is said and immediately goes to elect other chairpersons or cause the elections of other chairpersons. I believe that the matter should be brought to the National Assembly for approval again and the National Assembly will instruct the committee of selection to make another selection or the committee to actually vote.

I believe that with those inputs, I would fully support the spirit of accountability in this National Assembly when we work at committee level, we are no longer working in our person nor are we also considering partisan issues but we are looking at competence and what will enable the National Assembly to carry out its work and be fit for purpose. Thank you, very much Honourable speaker.

HON. SAMBA JALLOW [MINORITY LEADER/NIAMINA DANKUNKU]: Thank you Honourable Speaker, for giving me the floor. let me thank the mover of the motion for presenting this wonderful amendment.

Honourable Speaker, I will start with an amendment 143 members that travels outside The Gambia. I think it is excellent and it is wonderful but why not we limit it if only you are to travel in private because once a member is traveling on official duties actually that one normally emanated from the office and office of the Clerk since it is the spirit of information but when the member is traveling on private duties that time, he can write to your office. Once a member is traveling on official duties your office, I believe should be in the position of knowing this member is traveling to this particular and so on and so forth. Then the other issue is on the vote of no confidence. The member for Serrekunda already check in my point but nonetheless I would just want to make a little emphasis. The conditions must be clearly spelt out why a chairperson can be removed from his position but rather than just leaving it in that way. What about if three or five or six members have something against a chairperson and they just got the member and then take the decision of impeaching that chairperson.

I believe we must spell out clearly that the member might commit this and that and that before somebody can Institute a vote of no confidence against that individual but as it is if you just leave it open like these your office will have a lot of crisis. I believe that. So, these are the issues that I have earlier on that I just wanted to put a cross. Thank you very much.

HON. SUNKARY BADJIE [FONI BREFET]: Thank you Honourable Speaker, the Minority Leader has addressed the issue I wanted to raised, the issue of members

traveling officially, hence the traveling have been facilitated by office of the clerk that the further give the information to your office. I think we need to restrict the issue to those traveling in private capacity that's my suggestion. But although I thank the mover of the motion for a job well done.



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HON. ALHAGIE MBOW [UPPER SALOUM]: Thank you very much Madam Speaker. I want to thank the chairperson of the Committee for the Standing Order. I think some of the amendment that he wants us to do I think it makes a lot of sense. I think is important that we really look at way we work and then change when there is need for change to happen. However, Honourable Speaker, under the vote of no confidence in the chairperson, I not repeat what the other members actually have said about the reasons most be brought forward for us to understand why you want to remove a particular chairperson.

However, if you look at the current Standing Order which is 96[4] the committee of selection may nominate the chairperson of a Committee but if no chairperson is nominated, the Committee shall elect its own chairperson. Now I have an issue with that one, because if the committee of selection has already nominated somebody to be the chairperson. So to me I think we need to also look at that aspect as well maybe perhaps we need to even though is not mandatory for them to do but we have seen that it actually has be done that the committee of selection nominates the chairperson of the committee and then the vice chair is nominated by the actual committee itself. So, I think there is a need also to critical look at that aspect. So for me I think is better for the nomination of the chairperson to be left in the hands of the committee themselves and not the committee of selection to nominate anybody, even though the standing order is not mandatory. I think is essential that the left it in the hands of the committee itself.

Now on section [99] page 3 they saying that the report of the committee shall be signed by the chairperson on behave of the committee provided that if the chairperson is absent or is not available the vice chairperson shall sign and on in the absent of both

the chairperson and the vice chairperson of the committee shall nominate another member.

For me, I have a question about the rapporteur, what is the essence of having rapporteur in the committees and I have not seen anywhere the position of the rapporteur been recognize in our standing orders or maybe if I am missing something.

So this is something that we really need to look at. If we are going to have that particular position, I think in the absent of both the vice Chairperson and the Chairperson I think the selected rapporteur should be in a better position to be able to sign because he has a direct corelation with the reports that been the reason. So, I want the chair of the committee also to really take a look at that one because were both are absent, I think rapporteur should be in a good position to sign the report on behave of the committee. Or better still maybe we need to define the role of the rapporteur in our committees because is still not really very clear what really their roles are. So I think there is the need to clearly indicate what the role of the rapporteurs are in our standing orders and on that note I want to thank you.

HON. OUSMAN SILLAH [BANJUL NORTH]: Honourable Speaker thank you very much. Well In fact what I wanted to say have been elaborated by the member for Serrekunda that is we need to establish the basses for passing a vote of no confidence. I think that is what is absent and also this private visit. I will also want to ask the is that if you go to number 5 amendment of standing order 61, it is saying that], "debate of motions and amendment is amended by [A] inserting after paragraph [1] the following new paragraph 2 and 3. So what I want to know is if you look at the Standing Order you will see that you have 1 ,2 and 6 what is that 6 about and then you have 2,6 on that particular Standing Order and then the amendments. I think is important for the amendments to indicate to us what is being replaced that these things are coming to replace these two. So, I think that is my point of contention, that we need clarity on that. What is this 6 about, are we still maintaining it and what will be its numbering, I hope the Honourable chairperson is getting me. Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

HON. ALAGIE S. DARBOE [BRIKAMA NORTH]: Madam Speaker, I think I have few observations. Amendment 4 to standing order 53 under B replacing number 9 with number 13 in paragraph I. If you go to standing order 53 there is nothing of such in 53, we only have letters from A up to R but there is no numbering that can be up to 9. I don't know where the number comes from that supposed to be replace by number 13. maybe is referring to a particular standing Order but not 53.

Then they go to amendment 5 standing order 61, the follow new paragraphs 2 and 3, I think the numbering are technically, we should not have 2 and 3 we can't represent those figures with perhaps numbers A and B because in the current existing standing Order we have 2 and 3 been represented. If for correction and numbering then the other can now fall, otherwise if you are saying that new paragraph 2 and 3 it will indicate as if 2 and 3 are new Standing Orders.

And then amendment 6 the amendment of clause heading or other orders, inserting immediately before standing 43 visiting dignitaries, the following new standing orders. I think this should be immediately after instead of immediately before, immediately after 43 then you can have the new amendment or standing orders that are coming instead of before then that mean it will look as if it is coming after 42 that is before 53 just like how it happening amendment 7 were there would be new insertion immediately after 97 to read as 98. So, this one I think it should be immediately after 43 then it should read as 144 instead of 143.

Finally, report of the committee as the Honourable member for Upper Saloum indicated we have the burro of committees, the leadership the chairperson and the vice chairperson and member plus the two rapporteurs. I think in the absents of the chair and the vice chairperson. That chain of command should still be observed instead of nominating somebody outside the bureau of committees, it should be either of the rapporteurs who should be replacing the chairperson or the vice chairperson in the event their absent to sign the report. Thank you.

HON. ALHAGI S.B. SILLAH [NIANI]: Thank you Madam Speaker. Looking at Standing Order 99 report of committee section 2, a committee shall adopt its reports in a meeting attended by a majority of its members before it is table at the Assembly.

So, for me I think this can consider at list a number because in most cases you will attend a Committee meeting you will not get a quorum of three members, and here you are saying the majority can be more than half of the members.

So, I think it will be always difficult sometimes to get a majority of all the members in a particular committee meeting. So, am suggesting if you can minimize it or we suggest a number like three or four, for adoption. Thank you.

HON. ABDOULIE CEESAY [OLD YUNDUM]: Thank you so much Madam Speaker. I want to say a lot but then I have found what was missing in the provision on section [143] I think is well capture because is indicating "shall" is mandatory.

However, I wanted to go to section [98] Honourable Speaker, by resolution supported by a majority of members a committee may resolve that it has no confidence in the chairperson or vice chairperson and such a resolution shall report to the of selection which shall soon as it is participle arrange for the election of a new chairperson.

I think chairperson should not be threaten by this provision or this clause in the Standing Order. I know most of them will want to talk about certain issues when we operate as committees' members. The chairpersons are only there to represent the head of the committee. Do not be threaten by the provision we will help you to work diligently. *[laughing]*. I most made this very clear because I know we work together. We are doing a wonderful job, most of the committee chairpersons are doing good, but only understand that this is meant to guide us to be able to operate within the convene of the National Assembly and then prove to the external word that we can do it better for our people. That is the only provision. I have not seen no wrong in the provision no chairperson should be threaten by the clause and we will work together. Honourable Speaker that is what I wanted to make clear. Thank you.

HON. AMADOU CAMARA [NIANIJA]: Thank you very much Madam Speaker. I just want to emphasis on one or two things; that is the voting procedure, definitely the amendment that the committee came with it is very good and is definitely timely, but I think one fundamental thing that is missing is like how we vote here in parliament. Most often critical issues or sometimes sensitive issues are brought before parliament and when doing our voting we wait for a week or sure you see names been circulated in social media. Whatever is done here, it is a decision from parliament not my decision, not any bodies decision but the decision of parliament. I think it is important that we capture this and probably if my memory can serve me how we do it during the voting of the minority leaders, we continue doing that, that is rollcall, where as a member will be call you go and vote nobody knows whether you vote for yes or no then what so ever comes out, it become a decision of the parliament not mind or anybody else. Thank you very much.

HON. SAIKOU MARONG [LATRIKUNDA SABIJI]: Thank you Honourable Speaker, I think it will be very short. Let me just refer you straight to section 143 where you talk about members travelling outside The Gambia. If you look at [1] it says member intending to travel outside The Gambia whether in official or a private capacity. Now we all know that only is an official capacity usually we supported by the Clerk of the National Assembly, but how about when you travelling as a private capacity. Because if you look at what you wanted to do, if you are traveling as an official or a private capacity you went further to say: the destination intended to be visited should be put down, the date or the intended travel and period of absence from the Gambia, the telephone contact, the postal or physical address of their staying during the period of absence from The Gambia. If you highlight all these things, yes, we know is important. Now when you are travelling in a private mission, we expect the National Assembly also to support you, because if I am travelling on a private mission as a member of National Assembly, I expect the office of the Clerk to give me all the necessary support that is required if you want these things. I think that is important and we need to put that also.

It should be compulsory open the office of the Clerk to give us all the support that we needed from them. So thank you.

HON. MUSA AMUL NYASSI [FONI KANSALA]: Thank you very much Madam Speaker, I want to refer the Assembly to page 31 particularly the chair of the standing committee. If you look at page 31 [61] debate of motions and amendments is number 1, 2, 6, 3, 4, 5, 6 again. I need some clarification because 6 have appear twice.

THE SPEAKER. Honourable Members, please can we just respect the engagement so that will not be, we need to manage the time. So I bet as it appears as if Foni Kansala was the last only for me to notice that somebody else had raise his or her tag. Is ok I just want to make sure. Any more interventions for the last time. No ok then this will be the final thank you.

HON. DAWDA KAWSU JAWARA [UPPER FULLADU WEST]: Thank Madam Speaker, my attention is been brought to section 143 the amendment on section 143 that members intending to travel outside the country. To me this is a little bit complicated than just normal procedure some of us tend to travel outside the Gambia very frequently especially to the neighbouring country Senegal. And it could be within weekends and stuff like that. So I am just thinking if this is made a rule and we violate that rule, it could actually affect our conduct which might not have be our intention.

So, if it could relax or be specific on what kind of travels outside the Gambia is what is important, would be necessary. It just came to my attention now and I tough I view my concerns.

THE SPEAKER. Thank you very much, at this pointing in time may I now call on the Honourable Chairperson [mover] to respond to the issues raise and then wine up the debate.

HON. SIDIA S. JATTA [WULI WEST]: Thank you Honourable Speaker. I think some of the points have been lucidly explained already, on the issue of voting for example. The Honourable Member for Serrekunda has said it very clearly, why this is necessary

because if the law provide that you have to have three quarter of members voting and you have such an issue in parliament you have only 20 members present. Does it make sense to vote? it doesn't make sense because if you vote you will fail and the report will be that parliament voted and fail and is not true, because members are not there. There are other rules in the standing Orders where it will be necessary sometimes. Madam Speaker I think you should start buying a bell. When there is voting and some members ploughing in the restaurant or the lobby, a bell person should go and ring the bell. There are two types of bell one bell to come and vote and then the other bell is for something else. So, but we don't have that we have not started practicing this but we should begin to practices them because otherwise sometimes people go out and call for people to come for quorum. You know all these things are very unnecessary I don't want to rude but we are here to work. Is not necessary for anybody to go out to call me to come and vote or to make sure that I am in the chamber because there is voting take in place. I think it is a question of we assuming our responsibilities. Some of these rules will be there just to guide but they are unnecessary as long as we act according to section 112 of the constitution there is no need for such rules because your conscience will always dictate you what to do, but that's what is missing partly in our activities here.

I agree with Honourable Member for Jarra East, there are notorious members here who are always late for meetings or they don't come or they come at the end of the meeting. But one of the committees i belong to we established our own rule there I don't know whether it will be respected but we established that if you come late you are not going to sign the attendance list. I think education committee was practicing that if you come late you don't sign the attendance list. I think that's should be a practice in all the committees if people fail to come early because they know that a meeting is going to be held, if you are going to be preventing from coming take your phone and telephone the chairperson or the secretary and say I am unable to come. I will be coming late whatever, but again, be impact, FPAC established in which Madam, I think we should publish it.

Engagement with parliament takes presidents over everything else. If you have a commitment parliament takes president over that. It is number one, because of what I don't need to go in to this you know why it is so important. So, if you fail to come don't say that because my wife is sick or my child is sick or something else there is always somebody who can always assign to take such responsibilities. So, I think this is very important.

So, if members fail to come particularly chairperson which does happen sometimes too, chairperson comes late meeting is suspended until the chairperson arrives, you know that is not also good so, in all these situations I think the rules should be maybe we will think about it, will take in to consideration some of the suggestion that we are making, it will become a rule that if you come late in the standing Orders no signing of the attending list. That should be a rule so that we know why. you know allusion to something, we sign the presents, the attendance registers here every day we are sitting. Maybe some people don't know why we signed. We are no in a school but why do we sign attendance register essentially this is missing in our standing orders and it will have to come there, because as I said this institution must be a symbol of uprightness, a symbol of honesty, and a symbol of sincerity.

I signed that to indicate that am in parliament and therefore am entitled to a sitting allowance that is what it means nothing else. but we know that, it is not serving the Significance in our contexts, but I will come to that, that will be another contentious amendment that we are going to bring here but it will have to come because people are talking about us. I have heard somebody talked about this on a radio and I said he is right. Of course, am guilty it is right but we will correct. let me move.

Yes I agree with you too that if somebody who does not come to meetings or comes late always, should such a person decides that somebody should have cast a vote of no confidence in a chairperson? Is a question. So, there should be a rule for those who are coming late or those who are nothing coming at all. In fact, there is a rule in the constitution, rule for the Speaker to be absent from the chambers you have to have the permission of the Speaker; you have to write and seek the permission of the Speaker.

I don't know whether the Speaker have been receiving letters from people but that is the practices, you must seek permission that I am not going to be able to come for this particular meeting can you please allow me and that must be a very urgent and important matter maybe it has to do with your own life, it has to do with you going to the hospital, it has to do something like that. You have to Seek the permission of the Speaker but if you absent yourself deliberately for three times, we can send you out. That's the practices.

That is what this Assembly historically used to get rid of Honourable PS Njie, because he was not coming to parliament three times deliberately and they voted against him and he went out of parliament.

So, the same law still exists, but you must begin to respect the, like the Honourable Member for Jarra East said we can't just make these laws and take them as they are photographs to look at them, no, we must obey them because they are guiding our footsteps so that we do not miss our steps. That is what they are meant about.

So there should be I think will elaborate this, why somebody is voted against or vote of no confidence is voted against, why? what are the reasons? There must be something substantive to determine that and for somebody to miss her sitting allowance there must be a reason we must indicate that. I promise you we will bring it back for you to look at it again when we draft them.

Yes many people talk about vote of no-confidence. You see when I saw these things on traveling it attracted my attention. it makes sense whether you are travelling officially or private.

you are traveling private but you are a public figure. A member of parliament, a member of National Assembly travelling out of his or her country somewhere else, fundamentally important. The institution should know where you are going not because they want to monitor you but for your own sake anything could have happen to you outside, then parliament comes in as an institution, one of its members is outside there something is happening to him or her. Parliament has something to do whether you

are there privately or officially that's the essence of it. of course, if somebody want to engage you as a member of parliament, they will contact the Clerk if the Clerk does not know where you are what is he or she going to tell the person concern. You know we have to think of all these that's why it is necessary for us when we are travelling the Clerk's office knows where we are going so that whenever somebody seeks to have contact with us the Clerk is in a position to tell him or her this is where the person is, the person is not available but you can contact him or her here. That's possible the world is so small now you can be united state and then if somebody comes you can be in touched with him or her. So that's the reason why. So, I think the amendment is very important.

Well, I raised this once here and I am sad Somebody is saying it again member for Upper Saloum. Of course, there are some people who are and the constitution itself said you are this chairperson for example. The Speakers position is already established the constitution but the best practice must be and should be and it is committees should appoint their own chairpersons. I think that will be a very good practice because they know each other. For example, let me take the education committee, when we meet, to select a chairperson, every mind went on to education who is an educationist here. First, they asked, I said no I am already a chairperson somewhere I don't want to be chairperson here let us select somebody else and everybody went to him because this man was looking in the colleagues, our chairperson. So, it is on that bases that it should be the committee to select because they know each other and they know who is who among them, and then they take ownership. They do not see him or her as being imposed on them. It is them who decided to take him or her. So they will respect him and work with him very amicably. So I think is good, is happening in some of the committees but I think it should be practiced.

Yes those are details that we have to look at. The Honourable member for Brikama North, the only numbering that the Honourable member for Foni Kansala is just a typographical mistake. They said 1, 2 and then 6 after 6, 3, 4, 5 and then 6 again that's just a mistake we will correct that.

The Honourable Member for Upper Saloum talked about rapporteur, I have a problem with rapporteur. I am sorry to say that but I also know why it is deficient in our situation. Where rapporteur perform adequately and efficiently, they are paid. In Parliamentary institution rapporteurs are given allowance, special allowance because they work. When they go to meetings everything is not left to the Clerks, the rapporteur take notes and they compare their notes the secretaries and then compile a note. That's why they are given allowance. In other circumstances chairpersons are given allowance different from what we are talking about here, in Senegal a chairperson is giving a fuel coupon and also allowance [special person]. You know that circumstances are not the same but we have to do certain things in other the render these institutions effective and efficient. I have had a rapporteur saying I am not given anything so am not going to do anything.

[Point of Observation]

HON. FATOUMATA NJAI [BANJUL SOUTH]: He said that they are given special allowances but even at this parliament chairpersons are paid more than normal members. So, that is a privilege so it means that they have to held accountable for the extra amount that they are paid.

HON. SIDIA S. JATTA [WULI WEST]: I know that is a novelty that just starting here. I know some members are very much against that, I know people here who against it. I know that you are not but I know people who against it because somebody attacked me here. I said, I didn't know. I don't know who decided, I have just seen it like you have seen it. So why you attaching me? If it was me alone no allowance I don't mine but this is something that somebody signed that I chairperson should have. Well, maybe what should have happened, this matter should be referred to the chambers for approval maybe that be a better practiced. There will be no question, there will be no argument about it, so we may do that later.

Somewhere the Honourable Member for Brikama North you are saying that this numbers do not exist. Replacing number 9 with number 13. I know Standing Order 61

where it is saying, "insert after paragraph two" instead of paragraph two it should be immediately after paragraph one. That is what it should be, there should be correction. And this one is not replacing anything it is an addition. Of course, the one above 16 there is no A, so there should be no B. So you delete it that is what it says there. I do not need to go on 15 because it has eloquently been explained by somebody.

Well essentially, and I agree that we have not stated anything substantive to warrant a vote of no-confidence in a chairperson or now we add head of delegations there. That has to be put there so it will always rely on something to do something. So that something substantively we will think about it and you will put it together and then will bring it too for approval.

Well, the Honourable member for Upper Fulladu West, is afraid that if it is made a rule that when you are travelling you give information to the Clerk's office and if you fail it what will be the consequences of that? Well, you failing your own interest in the first place, because it is in your own interest that you report so that we know your whereabouts So that we can be of help to you when you need us when you are outside. So I do not think your fear warrants the elimination of this particular Standing Order because I think it is going to be very helpful. I think it is just a question of people want, like disrespecting the rules.

[Point of Observation]

HON. DAWDA KAWSU JAWARA. [UPPER FULLADU WEST]: Yes basically I am saying no, I think it is a good provision to have. However, I am just thinking once it is made a rule without being specific, like for example sometimes you have an emergency you want to travel during the weekend and the Clerk's office is closed. So if you travel without giving notice you are in violation of these rules. So, to be more specific, are we talking about during sessions or outside sessions. That is what I want to know.

HON. SIDIA S. JATTA [WULI WEST]: Well, my mind went exactly to that when we can specify when parliament is in session, you know generally when parliament is in session you can really travel official.

Yes, let me tell you why, even if you are recruited by somebody to go and take part in a conference that person has to come here and seeks permission from the Clerk. The Clerk has to be in that picture and you have to decide to forego your sitting here and go for that conference. So it is not going to be unilateral, parliament is going to be involved. The Clerk has to be contacted when parliament is in session, we need Honourable Jawara to help us with a particular matter in a particular conference outside this country then the Clerk is in the picture. Fundamentally you have to decide whether that is more important than here and I am saying this takes precedence over everything else. So, I don't think that's....

[Point of Observation]

THE SPEAKER. I did caution Member for Banjul South that there is nothing wrong in observation and asking the Honourable member on his for permission but I think is equally proper for the chair to be asked that I want to make observation.

HON. YAKUMBA JAITEH [NOMINATED]: No, you ask the chair, then I refer you to the member. There is a procedure to be followed.

HON. YAKUMBA JAITEH [NOMINATED]: ok just to help, I think it is written notices could be in any form in case you have an emergency you can send a text message to the Clerk, is written notice. It could be via WhatsApp message or an email.

It should not be strict. This is just to give information for us to know where your whereabouts are in case of any emergencies. So, I think that would help we will accept writing messages in any form it doesn't have to be writing and deliver to the office of the Clerk.

HON. SIDIA S. JATTA [WULI WEST]: The standing orders always take their inspiration from the constitution. You read your section 91 [g] of your constitution it is clearly stipulated there. Writing to the Speaker for permission is there. So, Standing Orders can never say anything which is outside this constitution. It will not be a rule.

Madam I think unless of course somebody feels that I have not treated yours you tell me.

THE SPEAKER: Your issues has not been delt with?

HON. ALHAGIE S. DARBOE [BRIKAMA NORTH]: No is delt with I think now is just a matter of, since we cannot find number 9 under Standing order 53 where is supposed to be replace by 13. I think the best we can do is to delete that propose amendment that is 4[b]. I think it should be deleted.

THE SPEAKER. Member for Central Baddibu; you did not make any intervention and we have passed the stage of intervention where he had responded. Now is for clarification Honourable members who raise issues and issues are not very clear. Am I right? But to bring up new substantive issues now, we have passed that stage.

HON. SULAYMAN SAHO [CENTRAL BADDIBU]: I want to make an observation.

THE SPEAKER: Everybody hide under observation now. *[laughing]*

HON. SULAYMAN SAHO [CENTRAL BADDIBU]: Yes the mover referred us to section 91[g] of the constitution. With your permission I can read; "if without the permission in writing of the Speaker or reasonable Couse he or she is absent from ten or more sittings of the National Assembly during any period that the National Assembly is in session and continues to permit".

Honourable Speaker, I would also want to suggest that this issue of permission should be flexible. It should be flexible in a way that as Honourable nominated rightly said it could be in a form of text but we should not put a stringent measure to it with conditions. I think should be flexible to the interest of the person who is going out or travelling. That is my concern. If you look at [g] it talks about permission and if you go with permission the conditions that are there it talks about the sittings in an event that you fail to observe those ones there is penalty for that. I believed that is my understanding.

HON. SIDIA S. JATTA [WULI WEST]: Precisely sure Honourable Member, we are not here as Mr Saho. You are here representing the people of your constituency and you decide to refuse to come and represent them for your own private thing and go away. That is exactly what you are alluding to. Why the flexibility the flexibility is to make you possible for you to just sleep out anytime you want. No I think honestly speaking let's be very honest with ourselves. This is absolutely what it should be, if it is anything sort of the delete it is useless, it is just correct as it is.

I commit myself to the people of Wuli West, that I will faithfully come here each time there is a meeting. Why should I refuse to come here because I have interest in going to Dakar? That is why the Speaker's involvement is fundamental because Speaker will determine whether or not it is necessary for you to go. Speaker will not just tell yes go; the Speaker will also weigh you up. So for me, the rule is good since it is only in the Constitution. In fact, it is more stringent in the Constitution because there is even dismissal there.

THE SPEAKER: Office of the clerk, please can you allow the Honourable Member to finish his intervention, please?

HON. SIDIA JATTA [WULI WEST]: The amendment that we are just suggesting is not falling from the sky we are ticking it almost directly from the constitution itself. I just failed to quote the constitution somebody call my attention to it. *[intervention]*

HON. DAWDA KAWSU JAWARA [UPPER FULLADU WEST]: The particular provision in the constitution you quoting now section 91[g] is very specific. Is talking about during sessions. Some of us comes from the provinces where we sometimes have **boray's** outside the country just across the border and it means am talking about the rule here if it means I have to get the permission or written permission of the Speaker on that occasion, I might not be able to do that. Especially I am talking about when we are not in session, I am very okay with every time we are in session that parliamentary sittings take precedence.

However, part of our mandate is to represent, we have occasions where we will be forced to live the country just to the next door in the Casamance area or in the other part of the Gambia and by this rule it means we are violating these rules. So, that's why I am saying that this provision is very good as long as it is categorically saying during sessions or during committee functions, but if we are off sessions and we have to comply by this rule we may be putting ourselves in a position whereby you will be compromising that same integrity that we are trying to save guard.

HON. SIDIA JATTA [WULI WEST]: We will not, the entry Standing Orders will take two forms. There will be two far paragraphs; the first paragraph will be obligatory; the second paragraph will just be for your own self. Let's say you are in Bansang, there is no session you want to travel you want to go to Bamako. Well, I think if you think about it with yourself is good for you to inform parliament through the Clerk that you are travelling but is not obligatory. You just give them information that I am travelling. The first entry in the standing order will be obligatory because parliament will be in session. When we are not in session it will be optional.

HON. MAHTARR M. JENG [LOWER NUIMI]: I want to contribute here as a member of the Standing Orders committee in support of my chairman. He might have left something else.

THE SPEAKER: How proper that is, but in the meantime can we just allow him to clarify the issues raised by Honourable Members first and then he can call in I think members of his committee to come on board.

HON. HALIFA SALLAH [SERREKUNDA]: I have observation Honourable Speaker, and I was going to propose to the mover since many proposals came from the floor which is likely to impact on what is being proposed. Maybe the ideal thing to do is for the mover to withdraw the motion and then proceed with the amendments and bring it back. Because just now in terms of this issue there is a constitution provision which requires permission from the Speaker that nobody can question whiles we are in

session. There is proposal that even if you are travelling on officially you should notify the office of the Clerk.

So, we are talking about as he has rightly said two elements here; one is mandatory the other is optional, but that should be reflected in the provision itself of the Standing Orders.

In that regards Honourable Speaker that is what I would have proposed that taking in to consideration after the closure of the discussion, that we make that proposal if the mover sure wish so that one can make amendments... *[Interruption]*

THE SPEAKER: I think is a good proposal but before we do that, I would suggest again that we allow the debate to be exhausted. Let us get as many suggestions as possible and then will take them in to consideration. Based on what the Honourable Member for Serrekunda has just suggested in which case I would then call on Honourable member for Brikama North.

HON. ALHAGIE S. DARBOE [BRIKAMA NORTH]: That is a good suggestion then there I may draw the attention of the mover of the motion on this particular section that is amendment of Standing Order 53 [b].

I think the error instead of that particular [b)] falling under 53, I want to believe it should be 61.

Then if you go to 61 that's where you have 9. So, the 9 and 13 I think you are trying to replace the hold aspect of 9 with 13 below. So, I think it should fall under 53, it should 61 where 13 should be replacing 9. They seem to speak almost the same language. Thank you.

HON. ALHAGIE BS SILLAH [NIANI]: The mover did not answer my question that is the meeting has to have a majority before the lay their report on the plenary. So, this is what I am saying; I said why not we just give a favour at list three or five members to addend the meeting so that the report can be adopted.

Here you said before they lay the report it should be approved by the majority of the members, and the majority will assume that it will be more than half of the members and is always difficult to get the hold members in a particular meeting. A times we normally find even three members so that we can be able to have a quorum for a meeting. That is Standing Order 99 report of Committee section 2.

HON. MAHTARR M JENG [LOWER NUIMI]: I thought you said Madam Speaker that chairperson to make the clarifications. My contention here and the interpretation here is as a member of the National Assembly be it you are on or off you still a member of the National Assembly. And informing the Clerk is just that safe and mandatory. We understand it that way. Thank you very much this is what I wanted to say, be you in Bansang or be you in Barra wherever you want to travel just inform the Clerk simple. Thank you.

HON. YAKUMBA JAITEH [NOMINATED]: I just wanted to clarify the issue based on what's in the constitution. What is in the constitution is specifically dealing with when we are in session. You need seek a permission; you need authority to go but that is just to notify you are just telling them am going to be here at this address during this period of time period. Is just a notice. So this is not way assuming this not going to be the case when we are in session there is a specific provision governing that. This is when we are not in session and you want to travel you just have to send a notice is just a notice you are not requesting for permission to go.

THE SPEAKER: In fact, we used to receive that, just by information.

HON. FATOUMATTA NJAI [BANJUL SOUTH]: Thank you very much Madam Speaker. I think I agree with what the Honourable nominated member YaKumba said. It is only in August when we are not in session because normally when we travel even if it is private or official, we still communicate because we are paid salary as members of parliament. And a times we can be asked for extraordinary sessions so they need to know where we are and at what time. We do not have to tell them specifically but I think it says in a section on the constitution that for more than 10 days. So we are not

saying like the Honourable Member for Upper Fulladu West said, if you are going to Senegal let's say for the a day or two, you can just go in and out but at least communicate to the office of the Clerk so that he will know.

Also when we talk about some official travels as well are not directly facilitated by the parliament. for example, some of us are members of international delegations and they send and facilitate the travel directly and a times they send us the information directly. So, I think it must be emphasized that we must inform the office of the Clerk so that they will know at any point in time where we are because we are serving. We are under the purview of the office of the Clerk. So, I think I support this. Thank you.

HON. HALIFA SALLAH [SERREKUNDA]: Honourable Speaker I think is just point of clarification this should be very clear.

Well section 43 is not optional as it is put here, is not optional. It is saying "shall" which is mandatory and both official and unofficial that's what is here at the moment. That is why we are saying that the two must be separated, because the observation is correct. Here he is talking about Bansang and it says absence from the Gambia. It means outside travel that's my understanding. Is absent from the Gambia absent, which is outside of the country and meaning that what we want now is to make unofficial travel optional whiles the other one is already obvious is a constitutional provision, is mandatory, that whiles we are in session and continued to said one most get permission before travelling. That is there and our standing orders cannot question that.

HON. SIDIA S. JATTA [WULI WEST]: I think it is very clear that's why I was saying that there will be two entries in the Standings Orders; one will be mandatory, the other one will be optional. Is simple as that. If you are traveling you can take phone and say Clerk, I want to travel please be informed that I will not be in the country for these days that's your private thing. If you want to travel when this parliament is in session it is mandatory, and you when you are going to ECOWAS meeting is mandatory because you are representing parliament whether this parliament is in session or not you are

going to ECOWAS you are still representing this parliament because we elected you to go there, so Clerk must know. It should not be optional and there is no optional, it is mandatory. If I am going to PAP [Pan African Parliament] when this session is not on it is mandatory because I am still MP acting for this parliament. So I must tell the Clerk. In fact, the Clerk is in charge, he arranges everything about my departure to South Africa just as much as they do with you even though they don't pay for you but they arrange. So that's as far as I can say Madam Speaker.

And for you Honourable Member for Niani, at Committee level quorum is three and they can also do what we are asking them to do here.

What we wondered if your committee makes a report is not just enough for the Clerk and the Chairperson to look at it and they send it to the Table Office. No, the committee must see the report again and agree that this is really our report and it must be signed by the chairperson, in the absence of the chairperson the Vice chairperson, in the absence of the Vice Chairperson you take anybody among you to sign as long as it is with the mandate of the committee. That is what we are saying. They are not talking about numbers there. *[Interruption]*

HON. SIDIA S. JATTA [WULI WEST]: You know we say that because you are now looking at your committee report, it should not review to only three people to look at it because others would come and say I have not seen it, nobody had never told me about this report, who mandated you to do this. But if the majority of the members are there to review the report fine, there is no problem with that, that is what we are saying. It must be dealt with the way we are suggesting here because that makes it more authentic.

THE SPEAKER: I think we have to stop at one pointing time in time and I think I just want to ask question, but is your decision, are you going to go by the suggestion by the Honourable Member for Serrekunda that we withdraw the motion taking in to consideration the issues that has been raised or what.

HON. SIDIA JATTA [WULI WEST]: I thought Kalipha Mbye was there taking notes. What I was going to say is that we dealt with it as we have done it. We are taking notes and we go with those notes with all that you are saying and then will work it out again and we bring it here for approval. That is what I was thinking in my head so there is no need for us to adjourn.

THE SPEAKER: Isn't the same as coming back with a fresh Motion capturing everything with Table office not just Kalipha but everything that Table Office has, taking into consideration comparing it with your notes to ensure that everything is captured before coming to the plenary.

HON. SIDIA S. JATTA [WULI WEST]: There will no more debate like this after, if you promise me that I will withdraw my Motion.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable member, I always tell people that the decision is not mine. I preside but then at the end of the day is carried by the votes of Honourable Members. So now the decision is exclusively yours. What do you decide with your colleagues?

HON. SIDIA S. JATTA [WULI WEST]: Okay can I just finish it by saying I withdraw my Motion only to come back again with the same Motion. The objective of withdrawing is to take into consideration all that you have said here. Any seconder?

HON. ALHAGIE H SOWE [JIMARA]: Thank you very much. I raise to second it.

THE SPEAKER: The Motion to amend the standing orders have been withdrawn. There is another Motion withdrawing the previous motion and equally seconded.

[Question Proposed Put and Agree to]

[To withdraw the Motion and subsequently come back to incorporate all the inputs]

ADJOURNMENT

[Question Proposed Put and Agreed to]

[The august Assembly do stand adjourned till Tuesday 16th June, 2020].

