



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

[OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT]

4TH SITTING OF THE 1ST ORDINARY SESSION OF THE 6TH LEGISLATURE OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF THE GAMBIA

The Proceedings of Thursday [**Morning**] 7th March, 2024 –
LAYING OF PAPERS & REPORTS

NUMBER: 1
VOLUMES: 3

2024 LEGISLATIVE YEAR

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Prayers

2. Corrections and Approval of Record of Votes and Proceedings of the National Assembly Sitting of Wednesday 6th March, 2024

3. Laying of Papers and Reports

- i. Report of Public Enterprises Standing Committee on the Activities and the Audited Financial Statements of the State-Owned Enterprises for the Year ended 31st December 2020

[By the Honourable Chairperson of the Committee]

- ii. Report of the Select Committee on Trade and Regional Integration on its Nation-Wide Tour to Selected Markets

[By the Honourable Chairperson of the Committee]

- iii. Report of the Select Committee on Regional Government, Lands, Ombudsman & IEC on its Oversight Visits to Offices of the Regional Governors, Area and Municipal Councils, Ombudsman and IEC

[By the Honourable Chairperson of the Committee]

PRAYERS

*[The Assembly met at 10:30 a.m. in the New National Assembly Building,
Reginald Pye Lane, Banjul.]*

[The Speaker, Hon. Fabakary Tombong Jatta, read the Prayers]

[The Speaker in the Chair]

The Assembly was called to Order.

CORRECTIONS AND APPROVAL OF RECORDS OF VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY SITTING OF WEDNESDAY, 6TH MARCH 2024

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, the Record of Votes and Proceedings of the National Assembly Sitting of Wednesday, 6th March 2024, 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? Honourable Member for Jarra West.

HON ALIEU BALDEH [JARRA WEST]: Thank you, Honourable Speaker. I so move.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you very much. Any seconder, Honourable Members? Honourable Member for Foni Bondali.

HON PA DEMBO SANNEH [FONI BONDALI]: Thank you, Honourable Speaker. I so second.

THE SPEAKER:

[Question Proposed]

Honourable Members, we all have copies of the said Record of Votes and Proceedings. As usual, we will look through page by page, inviting comments and observations, beginning with Page 1.

Honourable Members, any comments on Page 2? Okay, we can move to Page 3. Yes, Honourable Member for Sami.

HON ALFUSAINY CEESAY [SAMI]: Thank you very much, Honourable Speaker. On Page 3, number 58, Honourable Saikou Bah of Basse was present yesterday.

THE SPEAKER: Okay, on the record of those who are late, we only have present and absent. I think we should begin to look at it and also indicate those who were late. So, Honourable Members, we will move number 58, Honourable Saikou Bah, Member for Basse, from those absent with permission to those present. Am I right? Yes, Honourable Saikou Bah. Any more comments on Page 3, Honourable Members?

HON SUWAIBOU TOURAY [WULI EAST]: If you go to Page 3, under 'Questions for Oral Answers,' the first line, before "His Excellency," the article "the" should be removed. Have you seen it? The following questions were asked and answered by "the His." That article "the" should be removed.

THE SPEAKER: We have removed "the," so it now reads: "answered by His Excellency, the Vice President." Okay, any more comments on Pages 3, 4, and 5, Honourable Members? We now move to the last page, Honourable Member for Wuli East.

HON SUWAIBOU TOURAY [WULI EAST]: Thank you very much. On Page 6, if you go to point 5, which reads: "The number of supplementary questions were asked and answered by the Honourable Lands." So, the "Minister for" is missing. Can we add that there? "Minister for Lands."

THE SPEAKER: Last page, number 5; the second line, "answered by the Honourable Lands and Regional Government," it should be "by the Honourable Minister for Lands."

HON SUWAIBOU TOURAY [WULI EAST]: Yes, question number 087, the second line, I would prefer where they say "at his seat," if we do not mind, we put "in his seat."

THE SPEAKER: The Member was not present, and he gave authority to ask on his behalf. You are suggesting that "the Member authorized to ask on his behalf was not in his seat." Still, there are some saying on, in, at. What do we take, Honourable Members? I am waiting for your responses. In, At, On. Which one? Who are the language experts? You can come out and help us.

HON BILLAY G. TUNKARA [KANTORA & MAJORITY LEADER]: Honourable Speaker, let us leave it as "in the seat." Yes.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, question number 087, second line, "And the Honourable Member authorized to ask on his behalf was not in his seat." Any more comments, Honourable Members, on Page 6? Yes, can you just use your microphone?

HON FATOU CHAM [SAMIMENTERENG]: Yes, on Page 6, in the same sentence which reads: "at the end of it, the question was therefore, 'comma'."

THE SPEAKER: Sorry. You make reference to the question number.

HON FATOU CHAM [SANIMENTERENG]: This is question number 087, 2024, where the sentence continues and states: "The question was therefore, 'comma' untreated." There should be a "comma" between "therefore" and "untreated." Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Any disagreement? She said, on the same line, "The question was therefore untreated," and it should now be: "The question was, therefore, untreated," with a comma. Honourable Member, is that the last observation or comment? Sami.

HON ALFUSAINY CEESAY [SAMI]: Thank you very much, Honourable Speaker. On the last page, number 090, the Honourable Member for Sami was not present, and the question was therefore untreated. Honourable Speaker, I want it to be stated like this: "The Honourable Member was not in his seat, and the question was therefore untreated," but not "he was not present." I wanted it that way.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member, cool it down! At the time of the question, you were not present. But I will share your view that it be stated that "the Honourable Member for Sami was not on his seat at the time." That is the best way to capture it.

HON SULAYMAN SAHO [CENTRAL BADDIBU]: Honourable Member for Sami was not present at the time. "At the time," yes.

THE SPEAKER: All that happened was, at the time the question was being asked, he was not on his seat. Am I right? Yes, he was present in the Assembly, but he waited until the question was to be asked and then went out.

HON ALFUSAINY CEESAY [SAMI]: That is the right way it should be. "The Honourable Member was not on his seat, and the question was untreated."

THE SPEAKER: "The Honourable Member was not in his seat." That would clear all the ambiguities and show that he was around, but at the time of the question, he was not available.

HON KEBBA LANG FOFANA [NOMINATED]: I think the minutes are accurate as they are, Honourable Speaker. If you look at the list of the Members who are present, you will realize that Sami is there. So, the minutes are just reflecting what happened. He was not present by the time the question was being asked, and that does not mean he was absent because he is among the Members who are present as per the attendance register. So, I think we can leave it as it is. He was not present by the time the question was being asked.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member, I think you can explain it that way because it will be clearer, even without his name appearing there, as it reflects that at the time of the questioning, he was not on his seat. All we are interested in is that he was not available to pose his question. I know he will tell you, "I went to pray," but I went to see somebody. What we are saying is, at the time, he was not available.

HON KEBBA T. SANNEH [FONI JARROL]: Yesterday, I knew I would be late. So, I took permission and then I came late, but I was marked absent, so I do not know.

THE SPEAKER: I do not understand you. Did you come late?

HON KEBBA T. SANNEH [FONI JARROL]: I took permission that I would be late.

THE SPEAKER: Yes, I am trying to find out whether you were here at any time yesterday.

HON KEBBA T. SANNEH [FONI JARROL]: Yes, I was here.

THE SPEAKER: Yes, then it means you were not absent.

HON KEBBA T. SANNEH [FONI JARROL]: Yes, but they marked me absent.

THE SPEAKER: But what were you doing until we passed that?

HON KEBBA T. SANNEH [FONI JARROL]: I was answering a phone call. I told you I am bereaved.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, I think the Table Office will correct that. Yes, just let us correct this one.

THE SPEAKER: Which number are you, Honourable Member? Number 44.

HON KEBBA T. SANNEH [FONI JARROL]: Yes, Number 44. The following Members were absent with permission.

THE SPEAKER: Okay, Foni Kansala, any comments?

HON ALMAMEH GIBBA [FONI KANSALA]: The same question 0090, I want to suggest that the "Honourable Member was not present in the Chamber." I suggest we put it that way, which will help us.

THE SPEAKER: Yes, but you know he was not present in the Chamber. He was not on his seat. We all talked about almost the same thing, but what was clear to us was that, at the time he was supposed to pose a question, he was not on his seat.

HON KEBBA JALLOW [JARRA CENTRAL]: Honourable Speaker, if you may allow me, with your permission, I just want to make some clarification here regarding the two prepositions we are talking about, that is, "in" and "on." Just to help the Assembly, we use the word 'in' for comfort. If the seat you are sitting in is comfortable, it has arms and a backrest, then in that instance, you use "in," and "on" if there is no comfort on that particular thing you are sitting on.

THE SPEAKER: We have language experts. We will be making reference to them as and when necessary.

[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed to]

[That the Record of Votes and Proceedings of the National Assembly Sitting of Wednesday, 6th March 2024, be Approved with Amendments.]

THE SPEAKER: Clerk, we may proceed.

LAYING OF PAPERS AND REPORTS:

i. **REPORT OF PUBLIC ENTERPRISES STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE ACTIVITIES AND AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS OF THE STATE-OWNED ENTERPRISES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2020**

[By the Honourable Chairperson of the Committee].

THE SPEAKER: May I now invite the Honourable Chairperson of the Committee to table his report.

HON. LAMIN J. SANNEH [BRIKAMA SOUTH]: Thank you very much, Honourable Speaker. The document is a bit bulky, up to 79 Pages, but I will try as much as possible to compress and summarize it to save time. First, I will go straight to the chapter.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member, I think you are right. Please help us summarize it.

HON LAMIN J. SANNEH [BRIKAMA SOUTH]: Thank you, Honourable Speaker. I will go straight to Page 5 of 79, which is the Chairperson's Forward Message.

As the Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Public Enterprises, I hereby, on behalf of the Committee, publish the outcome of the public hearing on the activity reports and audited financial statements of the 14 SOEs for the years 2019 and 2020. The objective of the hearing is to enhance transparency and accountability of the SOEs to the taxpayers through their elected representatives.

The Committee is determined to hold the board and management of the SOEs accountable by upholding the principles of good governance, transparency, accountability, and probity in their operations. During the exercise, the Committee received reports from all 14 SOEs, and these

reports were thoroughly scrutinized and considered with the principal objective of enhancing the public service delivery system to ensure that the Executive and the public service institutions, including SOEs, are all financially, socially, and politically accountable to the people of The Gambia. The Committee shall continue to engage all relevant stakeholders, particularly the board and management of SOEs and the SOE Commission, to enhance the reliability of financial reporting, including the preparation of public financial information, effectiveness, efficiency of operations, compliance with laws and regulations, and safeguarding of national assets.

In conclusion, the Committee is aware of the indispensability of the constitutional and statutory obligations of the SOEs to present timely, annual, audited accounts and activity reports.

It is only through the availability of such reports that the true and fair assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of SOEs can be determined. This will help the Committee to make recommendations requisite for the development of SOEs as viable institutions capable of making meaningful contributions to the socio-economic development of the country. Therefore, the Committee resolved that all pending reports for 2021, 2022, and 2023 must be submitted by the end of December 2024 at the latest by the Honourable Chairperson. Honourable Speaker, I also want to give a rundown of the acknowledgements, which reads: The Public Enterprise Committee [PEC] of the National Assembly wishes to acknowledge and appreciate the invaluable support of the National Assembly Authority during its first session in the Sixth Legislature. The Committee is grateful to all the board and management of the commercial state-owned enterprises for their cooperation in making

submissions, presentations, and provision of all the other supporting documents that the Committee requested during the period. In addition, the Committee is also indebted to the Office of the Clerk, the Auditor General, the Director General of GPPA, and the Directorate of State-Owned Enterprises at the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs for all the services they provided to us during the period. Similarly, the Committee appreciates both the print and electronic media for providing coverage and keeping the public up-to-date on the activities and proceedings of the Committee during the period.

Finally, the Committee wishes to commend all the Honourable Members of PEC, support staff, and SMS for demonstrating a high sense of commitment and dedication throughout the session despite their other engagements.

To begin with the introduction, which reads: In fulfilment of the provisions of Sections 102, 109, 110, and 175 of the 1997 Constitution of the Republic of The Gambia, and Orders 95 and 122 of the Revised Standing Orders of the National Assembly, the Public Enterprise Committee [PEC] of the National Assembly convened its first session in the Sixth Legislature from the 6th of June to the 25th of July. During the period, the Committee scrutinized and considered the annual activity reports, audited financial statements, and management letters of all the SOEs for the year ended 31st December 2020, including the 2019 Report of NAWEC, which was also submitted to the Committee. These exercises, provided for by the Constitution, aim to ensure accountability, transparency, and probity in all public enterprises and agencies for efficient service delivery. During the period, all 14 SOEs were summoned to appear before the Committee for a briefing session, and it was during

this meeting that the board and management of the commercial SOEs were informed of the date they were scheduled for the presentation and consideration of the 2020 reports.

The Committee scrutinized the presented reports, testimonies, and evidence from key witnesses, including board members, management, external auditors, short clarifications, and proof of supporting documents from the various institutions. It is worth noting that the appearance before the PEC is a process by which the highest oversight authority of the Republic holds the board and management of public enterprises accountable for their actions and decisions taken in the management of public resources. The reports of these SOEs are then adopted, and in some instances with reservations by the Committee, which is communicated to management or best practices are recognized and rewarded, while bad management practices are appropriately sanctioned. At this point, it is important to clarify that the adoption of reports and financial statements means meeting a minimum submission requirement and does not indicate that the report is flawless.

Honourable Speaker, with your permission, I will go to the findings and recommendations, starting from Page 9 of 79, with the National Water and Electricity Company [NAWEC] 2019 Report. After the presentation and consideration of NAWEC's 2019 Report, the Committee made the following observations and recommendations:

1. Internal Audit Minutes: The Internal Audit Unit recommends that the Audit Committee meets at least four times a year to deliberate on critical areas relating to the Committee's oversight functions. The auditor

indicates that the minutes of the Audit Committee meetings for the year were not provided for review.

The Committee recommends that the board should ensure that the Audit Committee meets at least once every quarter.

2. Control on Expenses: From the test of control on procurement, the auditor requested evidence to confirm that transactions were procured in line with the company's procurement policies, which was not provided. The Committee recommends that the board and management should adhere to the GPPA procurement guidelines.

3. Fixed Asset Verification: The auditor noted that the assets recorded in the fixed asset register were not coded for ease of reference and identification. As a result, they could not physically verify the existence and condition of some fixed assets. The Committee recommends that the verification of fixed assets should be done in line with the company's policy. Furthermore, the management should also ensure that all assets are coded and periodic fixed asset verification is carried out.

4. Trade Payables: According to the auditor, monthly reconciliation between the normal ledger balance and individual creditor listings were not conducted as stated in the policy. This has resulted in a significant adjustment in the financial statements during the year under review. The Committee recommends that management should ensure monthly reconciliation between the normal ledger and individual creditor listings to minimize errors and ensure compliance with the policy.

5. Cash and Bank Reconciliation: Where you have long reconciling items, cash and bank items, supporting documents, and overdraft accounts.

The Committee recommends that:

- i. Management should continuously monitor the reconciliation process to ensure that long reconciling items in the cash book are cleared and adjusted regularly to minimize the risk of fraud and errors.
- ii. The unreconciled differences, particularly deposits made to the bank and not seen on the bank statements, must be investigated and corrected as soon as possible. Supporting documents for transactions posted into the general ledger should be filed and referenced for easy retrieval.
- iii. Management should cancel the overdraft, considering the company has a huge cash balance that can be used for its operations.

Findings:

6. Trade Receivables: The auditor noted a credit balance of ***D76.9 million*** adjusted into the trade receivables general ledger account from their work functions and inquiries with the management. These were direct payments made into the company's bank accounts by customers. However, there were limitations in identifying customers to update individual accounts in the billing system, as there are no references to identify the relevant customers.

I. Customer Statements: During the audit test of the trade receivables account balance, they requested customer statements for a sample

totalling D159.8 million. However, they encountered limitations as the system could not generate the statements.

II. Ageing Analysis: We recommend that management ensure that the relevant transactions with customers are posted on the individual customer accounts and that customer statements are generated from the system at any given time. Also, the board and management should ensure that any software implemented should have the possibility of adding functionality to enable the system to generate an aged-debtor analysis going forward.

7. Trade Payables: The auditors sent confirmation to sample suppliers and noted a difference between the balances recorded in the general ledger and the replies received from the suppliers. They noted a residual difference between the trade payable listing and the general ledger amounting to ***D34.7 million***, which could not be explained by the management. The table below shows the transactions.

In reconciling the Trade Payable Account, the management and the auditors noted a manual journal posting made into the account totalling ***D569,895,320***, with no supporting evidence of samples of these postings provided to the auditors for review. The Committee recommends that the board and management should investigate and reconcile the differences noted between the listing and the general ledger. Furthermore, suppliers' statements are to be regularly reconciled to the account payable listing to ensure that the account payable listing is updated and completed. The board and management should ensure the following: The net variance of ***D34.7 million*** is investigated and adjusted to the books and made accordingly if necessary.

The board should investigate the manual journal posting made into the account totalling ***D569 million, D895,320***, and provide supporting documents for those adjustments for verification.

8. Long-Term Loan: During a test, the auditors noted a difference between the loan balance recorded in the general ledger and the amount stated in the MOU, which was signed between the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs, representing the government of The Gambia, and NAWEC on the 9th of March 2018.

Upon further review and inquiry, the auditors were informed by the management that the balance recorded in the books of NAWEC is the actual disbursed amount, while the MOU records the total loan amount, with the differences noted detailed below in the table.

The Committee recommends that, going forward, the management should ensure that regular reconciliations are performed between the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs and NAWEC for loans guaranteed by the government of The Gambia and disbursed through the Ministry of Finance to NAWEC. Additionally, the management should ensure that loan schedules are prepared for all existing loans to guide the management on the overall obligations and commitments of the company and how repayments are planned and monitored.

9. Share Capital: An amount of ***D2.6 billion*** was included as an addition to share capital during the period under review, as per the signed MOU. However, evidence of the updated memorandum of association highlighting the share increment and notification to the register of companies was not provided for the auditors' review, as required by the Companies Act 2013. Additionally, converting the debt

relief of **D2.6 billion** could result in the company recognizing shares more than the authorized limit of **D50 million** at D10 per share.

The Committee recommends that the memorandum of association of NAWEC be updated to reflect the debt conversion to equity of **D2.6 billion** by the government and to make the necessary adjustments in the authorized share capital structure, and to notify the register of companies as required by Section 81 of the Companies Act.

10. Revenue: During the auditors' test of revenue, specifically electricity sales, they developed an expectation by obtaining monthly sales from the billing system, multiplied by the approved tariff, adding sales from cash power, suprema, and deducting NAWEC consumption to arrive at their expectation. A difference of **D199 million** was noted between their expectation and the amount recorded in the general ledger.

Additionally, they encountered limitations in testing the completeness and accuracy of revenue, as the meter logbook was not provided, and supporting evidence for revenue recorded for AGIB-NAWEC service connections amounting to **D10,651,986** was not provided for their review.

The Committee recommends that the board should ensure that the difference noted between the expected revenue and the general ledger amount is investigated, reconciled, and adjusted accordingly. The meter logbook should be filed and made accessible to review all transactions posted into the AGIB-NAWEC service account and should be adequately supported, and all documents are properly kept and readily available for

review. The Committee further recommends a detailed investigation into the root causes of the revenue understatement.

11. Cost of Sales: The auditor noted an overstatement of ***D4.8 million*** for a transaction posted in the cost of sales account balance. The invoice recorded an amount of ***D534,000***, while ***D5,384,000*** was posted into the general ledger. They were not provided with supporting documents for some transactions totalling ***D29 million*** from a sample.

The auditor further noted a journal posting of ***D134.8 million*** in the cost of sales in the general ledger, which was not supported. The Committee recommends that the reasons for the overstatement of ***D4.8 million*** be investigated, and the details furnished to the Auditor General and the Committee for confirmation.

12. Imprest: The Committee noted with concern that an amount of ***D960,000*** relating to unretired imprest was written off in the income statement. The Committee recommends that the management should ensure that the unretired imprest is fully refunded by the imprest holders.

13. Balances Confirmed by the Bank: During the auditor's review of the bank confirmation replies, they noted a balance confirmed by the bank but not recorded in NAWEC's books. Upon discussion with the management, the balances were adjusted accordingly. However, these were not reconciled by the year-end.

The Committee recommends that the management ensure periodic reconciliation of all bank accounts.

I will begin with the 2019 Report of NAWEC, then proceed to the 2020 Report. After the presentation and consideration of NAWEC's 2019 and 2020 reports, the Committee made the following observations and recommendations on Page 16 of 79.

Governance Issues and Declaration of Interest: There is a declaration of interest policy and guidelines in place, captured in the board charter. However, there was no evidence obtained to show that those serving on the NAWEC board and staff made a declaration of any potential conflict of interest with the company.

Staff Trading with the Company: Evidence gathered by the auditor shows that a current full-time staff member was trading with NAWEC and was awarded a contract totalling ***D1.36 million*** in 2020. The member of staff concerned is a registered owner of the company Kutehjumbule Electrical Engineering Service. The Committee recommends that NAWEC ensure the policy on conflict of interest is reviewed and that declarations are made and signed annually by board members and staff. Awarding staff private contracts for work that they are employed to do is grossly unethical and must cease immediately.

The Internal Audit Department of NAWEC must be proactive to be able to detect such irregular practices. The Committee further recommends that the IGP investigate this matter and report to the Committee by the end of June 2024, as this is a violation of the provisions of Section 222 of the Constitution of the Republic of The Gambia and the Public Service Act 1991.

Internal Audits: The auditor noted that the effectiveness or impact of the Internal Audit Unit is not felt on the operations of NAWEC due to the following reasons:

1. Assurance was not provided on the latest business priorities.
2. Audit work on high-risk areas was not carried out. The Committee recommends that the board, through the Audit Committee, ensure the Internal Audit Department performs its functions according to international standards on auditing and adopts a risk-based approach. Furthermore, the Internal Audit Charter and the Manual should be updated by the end of June 2024.
3. Health and Safety Variants: The auditor observed that there was a policy guideline on how avoidable incidents can be mitigated in NAWEC. They noted during a visit to Brikama Power Plant 1 and 3, and Kotu Power Station, that there was a lack of protective gear such as helmets, overalls, electric insulated voltage gloves, dust masks, eye protection, and so on. Despite these items being included in the budget of NAWEC for 2020, they also noted a few fire extinguishers scattered around the administrative building. However, those extinguishers are not regularly tested or refilled for effective use. The date of the last test is not even known. Evidence of fire drills being conducted was also not provided to the auditors.

The Committee recommends that:

- i. NAWEC should ensure that a health and safety policy is developed, approved, and rolled out to all staff as soon as possible.

ii. NAWEC should also carry out safety drills regularly, and the observations on the lapses should be documented for improvement.

4. Understated Revenue: The auditor did a re-computation of sales bills, collecting figures using sourced data such as the suprema report for the entire year, which captures all prepaid cash power sold, and the gelatine report, which captures the post-paid bills generated. The expected total sales were compared to the amount reported in NAWEC's general ledger. A difference of ***D236,479,109*** understatement was noted. The expected sales figure was compared to the sales figure recognized by NAWEC in its accounting records, and the trial balance amount recorded was lower.

5. The Committee recommends that NAWEC ascertain and reconcile the understated amount by the latest end of April 2024; otherwise, the IGP will have to investigate the matter.

6. Unretired Imprest: According to the auditors, there was money paid to individuals and institutions as imprest, but supporting documents to show that the amount disbursed was fully retired were not provided, and the outstanding amount is ***D1.5 million***.

7. The Committee recommends that the board ensure NAWEC management retires the imprest by the end of March 2024 at the latest; otherwise, those who authorized the payment will pay back the money immediately. Failure to do so will result in the matter being reported to the IGP for investigation and recovery.

8. Contract Management: Auditors observed that 100% of payments by NAWEC to suppliers before the delivery of goods or services are not protected by an advance payment guarantee.

9. The Committee recommends that all procurements should be done in accordance with GPPA rules and regulations.

10. Control Environment: An assessment of the control environment was carried out through expenditure vouching on a sample of payment vouchers, and below are some of the lapses highlighted, A, B, C, and so forth.

11. The Committee recommends that all procurements should be in line with GPPA procurement guidelines with immediate effect, and supporting documents highlighted in Appendices 1, 2, 3, and 4 should be made available to the auditors for verification.

12. The Committee recommends that NAWEC ensure no payment is made without adequate supporting documents for future reference.

13. Human Resource Lapses: The following observations were made on Human Resource Management as part of the audit's holistic review:

14. The Committee recommends that the board further cascade the performance contract with the management and staff to ensure that a performance management system is in place, including an appraisal policy, and ensure that headcount is conducted annually.

15. Property, Plant, and Equipment: A significant difference was noticed between the trial balance and fixed assets scheduled in the following categories. That is, category A and B.

A. That is talking about **D345 million** being understated, primarily affecting the plants, machinery, and electricity network category. The transfer from capitalized work in progress to this asset category failed to be reconciled by this amount.

B. A depreciation and amortization charge of **D400 million** was recognized in the financial statements. *[Interrupted]*

THE SPEAKER: Sorry, Honourable Member for Sanimentereng, what is the problem?

HON FATOU CHAM [SANIMENTERENG]: Yes, Honourable Speaker, I just want to summarize the layer of the report at least because this is a very bulky document. Otherwise, we will spend the rest of the day here. Thank you.

HON LAMIN J. SANNEH [BRIKAMA SOUTH]: Honourable Speaker, I think these are very important findings that we need to highlight to everybody. Probably, Members do not have enough time to go through this document. So, I am talking about the findings and the recommendations we proffered, after that, I will just close it finally. So, it is important for us to deal with all of them.

THE SPEAKER: Probably, Honourable Member, you are dealing with two consecutive years, 2019 and 2020.

HON LAMIN J. SANNEH [BRIKAMA SOUTH]: 2019 is only one institution, that is why NAWEC has two reports. After NAWEC, we are having all the... *[Inaudible]*

THE SPEAKER: Alright. I was going to say that if it were two years, you would deal with the latest one, but you can continue.

HON LAMIN J. SANNEH [BRIKAMA SOUTH]: The depreciation and amortization charges amounting to ***D400 million*** were recognized in the financial statements as opposed to ***D387 million*** calculated on NAWEC's policy, and the policy of calculating such costs from the month of purchase using the applicable rate. The higher depreciation amount recognized by NAWEC creates an unexplained overstatement amount of ***D13.3 million***.

NAWEC, being a heavily asset-based company, has no history of fixed asset impairment review exercises, and has never undertaken a required accounting regulation. Assets are neither tagged nor linked to the fixed asset register for control and tracking purposes. A fixed asset verification exercise was also not carried out during the year under review.

The Committee recommends the following:

A. NAWEC should routinely reconcile the accounting schedule for each category of assets with the financial statements for further reliance to be placed on the figures presented.

B. NAWEC must carry out a fixed asset impairment review exercise, not beyond every two years, annually according to the accounting guidelines.

All assets of the company must be tagged and linked with a comprehensive register. A fixed asset verification register is to be carried out before the end of September 2024.

C. Receivable Recovery Policy: Auditors observed that there is no coherent or systematic debt recovery policy in place at NAWEC. Most of the outstanding balances are overdue. Average monthly consumption receipts stand at **D120 million**, while the arrears report shows an average gross monthly balance of **D650 million** and **D510 million**, net of provisions when provisioning is applied.

Over **D220 millions** of unpaid debt due to NAWEC is outstanding from corporate, central, and local government customers who are in arrears with their payments. It has also been noted that ex-staff loan balances are not rigorously followed for recovery. The Committee recommended that NAWEC utilize its in-house and external lawyers to recover debt.

Furthermore, a debt recovery policy will be put in place, and the current corporate service policy should be amended to indicate that before staff leave NAWEC, all outstanding debt should be fully liquidated.

A. Bank Accounts and Mandates: The auditor noted that there were some bank accounts confirmed by the commercial banks, but their existence was not known to NAWEC.

The Committee recommends that NAWEC liaise with all the commercial banks operating in the country to determine accounts held in their name and those managed by the project under its authority.

NAWEC should further liaise with the Ministry of Finance and the Accountant General's Department to reconcile all these accounts.

B. Bank Reconciliation Statement: The auditor noted the following on the bank reconciliation statement, which is bullet point A1 up to E. The Committee recommends that NAWEC streamline its bank accounts and

ensure that reconciliation of bank accounts is performed with adequate segregation of duties.

E. Long-Term Loans: The auditor observed that there was a liability understatement of D88.8 million on an agreement between the government of The Gambia and the International Islamic Trade Financing Cooperation [ITFC] to finance NAWEC's purchasing of heavy fuel. The reason for the understatement was caused by NAWEC not doing a quarterly or bi-annual account reconciliation with ITFC.

The committee recommends that NAWEC adopt a culture of periodic reconciliation with creditors.

A. Payables: Based on the independent supplier confirmation received, the payable balance was understated by ***D113,195,101.4***, which is mainly from the response received from GNPC regarding NAWEC's debt. The difference of ***D113,195,101.4*** identified with GNPC's balance was higher and became the accurate figure. Out of the 15 suppliers calculated, responses have only been received from 6 of them, who are local suppliers, and most confirmed higher balances compared to the amount recorded in NAWEC's books. Internal reconciliation of the payment account has proven to be unreliable, citing highly material differences observed.

B. The Committee recommends that NAWEC perform a detailed reconciliation for its payable balances with major suppliers to ensure they agree to the general ledger balance.

Honourable Speaker, we now go to the Gambia Printing and Publishing Corporation [GPPC] 2020 reports. After the presentation and

consideration of GPPC's 2020 reports, the Committee made the following observations and recommendations:

1. Insurance: The auditors observed that the insurance cover for fixed assets is not adequate, excluding motor vehicles. This will expose the corporation to high financial loss, as they could be liable for the full cost of recovery in the event of burglary, fire, or other disasters.

The Committee recommends that GPPC adequately insure all fixed assets to mitigate risk and report back to the Committee by May 2024.

2. Statutory Deductions: Social security payments were not made during the period under review. Also, all income tax payments during the period were not made on time.

The Committee recommends that management ensure that all statutory deductions are made on time to avoid the risk of penalties being imposed on the corporation.

3. Receivables: Regarding ex-staff loans, the auditors noted that some former employees have outstanding loan balances with the corporation, and no payments were made during the period. The table shows the names and the amounts they owe.

The trade receivables after debt payments were not received from some of the debtors' balances, as shown below. The Committee recommends that the board ensure these loans are followed up, recovered, and the Committee is furnished with evidence of follow-up by management and repayment of those servicing their outstanding loan balances.

The Committee further recommends that management resort to enforcing collateral and personal guarantees for those in default. The Committee recommends that the board put in place a receivable management policy to help ensure the recovery of receivables on time and to make provisions for those that are irrecoverable.

4. Payables: After debt payments, the auditors noted that there were no after-debt payments for some trade and other payable balances after the end of the year. The Committee recommends that management ensure suppliers are paid on time going forward.

5. Internal Audit: It is noted that the 2020 audit work plan prepared by the Internal Audit was not approved by the board audit committee, and the internal auditors are not involved in the pre-auditing of payment vouchers. Based on the review of the board minutes and discussions with the internal auditors, it is noted that the Internal Audit reports were presented to only one board meeting in 2020. The Committee recommends that the board ensure the Internal Audit work plan is approved on time by the Audit Committee. The board should also ensure that the Internal Audit is adequately resourced to perform a risk-based post-audit and to present its reports quarterly to the board through the Audit Committee.

6. Governance Issues: There was no Terms of Reference [TOR] for the board covering all aspects of their work beyond those reflected in the GPPC Act. The Audit Committee met only once during the year, as opposed to quarterly board meetings.

The auditor stated that only one Senior Management and Finance Admin Committee meeting minute was presented for their review. The Production Committee has not met throughout the year.

The Committee recommends that the board ensure it has a comprehensive board charter specifying how it should conduct its business in line with the SOE Act 2023. The Committee further recommends that the board ensure its subcommittees, such as the Audit, Risk, and Production Committees, are active to deliver on issues such as control, risk management, governance, and report back.

7. Insurance of Cash Held in House: During the auditor's review, they noted that GPPC has no insurance for their cash in hand. The Committee recommends that the cash held in-house be adequately insured against avoidable risks. The Committee recommends that the Minister of Finance and Accountant General enforce the provision of the Act to use GPPC for the exclusive printing of revenue-earning materials. The Committee recommends that the Ministry ring-fence the budget line for printing in all the MDAs.

The Gambia Civil Aviation Authority [GCAA] Report 2020: After the presentation and consideration of GCAA's 2020 report, the Committee made the following observations:

1. Air Service Licensing, Non-Scheduled Airline, and Approval of Air Service License: According to Section 5.2.11[A] of the Authority's Accounting Procedure Manual, on the arrival of non-scheduled airlines, the commercial assistant on duty bills and the pilot pays cash before departure.

However, it is noted that some airlines did not make such payments before departure. The auditor also noted that some air services were approved and issued licenses by the GCAA and not by the Minister of Transport, Works, and Infrastructure, which is contrary to Section 76 of the GCAA Act 2018.

The Committee recommends that the board ensure the corporation always complies with all relevant provisions of the GCAA Act 2018.

2. Trade Receivables: The auditor noted that some receivable balances, for which there were no payments to the authority for over 12 months, amounted to over **D20 million**. Furthermore, they requested evidence or documentation of follow-up for these receivables, but none was provided. The Committee recommends that the board adopt a receivable management policy to improve follow-up on outstanding receivables, which will further improve the cash situation of the authority. The board should furnish the Committee with detailed debts that are not recovered and the detailed amount paid by Atlantic Express Air to the Gambia Police Force.

3. Fuel Management: The auditors noted that there is no fuel allocation policy and fuel allocation report. The Committee recommends that management develop a fuel allocation and distribution policy to further improve the management and control of the fuel procured for the operation of the authority.

4. Cash and Cash Equivalents: The auditor noted that there is no facility letter for Mega Bank, Gambia Limited's overdraft, which has a balance of over **D68 million** as of 31st December 2020.

In addition, the amount stated on the Zenith Bank Gambia Limited facility letter indicates a **D13 million** financing facility for the review of the banking records and confirmations. The period indicates that the authority had an overdrawn amount of over **D70 million** as the year ended. The Committee recommends that the board provide an update for the Committee on the details of the loan agreement, consultancy, and contract that have been paid before these facilities. The Committee further recommends that the Auditor General conduct a special audit on this issue.

5. Property, Plant, and Equipment: It is noted that the location of fixed assets is not stated in the fixed asset register.

Furthermore, a building insurance policy to cover fire and burglary for the airport was requested, but this was not provided to the auditors. The committee recommends that the board and management ensure that the authority keeps an updated fixed asset register and that these assets are adequately insured to minimize the risk of financial losses in the event of unforeseen circumstances.

6. Going Concern and Liquidity Status: After computing the current ratio, that is, current assets divided by current liabilities of the authority, it is noted that the current liabilities exceed the current assets by **D1.33 billion**, implying that the current assets only account for 10% of the current liabilities, which indicates a very poor liquidity situation.

Regarding the Authority, the auditors noted that as of 31st December 2019 and 2020, a net loss of **D38.042 million** and **D241.98 million**, respectively, was incurred by the authority, which is a 533.7% loss increase from 2019 to 2020.

The Committee recommends that the board and the government, through the Ministry of Finance, comprehensively review the authority's liquidity position and take steps to improve the authority's financing structure to minimize the current going concern risks.

7. Human Resource Management: Statutory deductions: The auditors reviewed compliance with the payroll structure deductions and noted that there were late payments of payroll income tax and social security pension contributions for some months during the year. The auditors reviewed the ex-staff loan balance and requested evidence of follow-up on certain outstanding balances, but no evidence was provided. The Committee recommends that the board adopt immediate measures to ensure that all statutory payments are made on time to avoid penalties. Furthermore, the board should take all necessary measures to recover ex-staff loans. The Committee recommends that the board and management of the authority be proactive and take the necessary steps in restoring the viability of the institution. The Committee recommends that the board and management ensure that travel agencies are registered with GCCA and enforce actions against those that fail to register by June 2024.

Gamtel Gamcel: After the presentation and consideration of Gamtel Gamcel's 2020 report, the Committee made the following observations and recommendations:

Gamtel Report 2020:

1. Non-Coding of Laptops: The following laptops selected as part of the auditor's samples were not tagged, which creates difficulties and ambiguities in verifying them. The code assigned to the laptops on

the fixed asset register varies with those held at the IT Department. Locations and descriptions of many assets also have some deficiencies. The Committee recommends that the board and management ensure that an update is made on the record of laptops that are with the regional managers because the fixed asset register is not properly labelled or updated according to the physical location. The serial number of the laptops should be as they are with the IT Unit and must be entered on the fixed asset register or use unique reference codes for each laptop.

2. Unauthorized Disposal: Out of the list of assets disposed of during the period, the auditors noted that some of the disposal transactions were not authorized. The Committee recommends that the board and management ensure all disposals of fixed assets are done in line with the GPPA Act 2022 and other relevant laws.
3. Transactions Without Supporting Documents: Auditors selected the following transactions from the subsequent bank statement 2021 as part of their samples for testing payables and actuals, but no supporting documents have been provided to them relating to these transactions, as shown in the table below. The Committee recommends that the board ensure management produces relevant supporting documents and that the responsible authorizing officer be so charged.
4. VAT Output Issue: During the auditor's review of the payable balance, they noticed that an amount of **D46,219,215** was recognized from the sales of VAT output, out of which **D6,677,492** was paid to GRA during the year under review, and the closing liability now rises to **D167,226,672**. The Committee recommends

that the board and management ensure all tax publications are reported and paid on time to avoid penalties.

5. Revenue Reconciliation Issues: The auditor observed that Gamtel acquired 15G internet backup from capacity requested by the operator from Sonatel and provided it to the operator. ISPs and invoices were based on the capacity requested by the operators. This was done at the time they anticipated repair work to take place on the ISPs Banjul station.

However, the amount recognized as revenue in the year 2022 is ***D4,652,198***, which is far less than the total invoice amount sent to the operators, as the table in the report indicated.

The Committee recommends that the board and management ensure all revenue transactions of the company are recorded through the approval-based procedure as per the accounting policy manual. The board should ensure that the invoice amount is reconciled against the cash recognized in the books of accounts and update the Committee accordingly.

6. Non-Existing and Unidentified Revenue: The revenue balance below is grouped among the court and narration of GTMI. The auditor's inquiry to establish its authenticity was directed to the accountant at GTMI, who is responsible for all the revenue lines of GTMI. However, the accountant informed them that she did not have any revenue code with that ledger balance. The table below shows it. The Committee recommends that the board ensure all account balances within the list of trial balances have an authentic breakdown that

could be used to test the relevant assertion to check the authenticity of the account balances.

7. Fraudulent Acts: During the audit, it was noted that a government staff member with employment number 3292 was involved in a fraudulent act, causing the company to lose **D102,000**. Upon termination, she was contracted for a period of one year, dated 1st July 2020 to 31st June 2021. The Committee recommends that the board ensure a fraud policy is put in place as a deterrent for violations, and anyone found committing a fraudulent act should face disciplinary action. The board should desist from reinstating staff who have committed fraud within a short period without being put through a disciplinary process by those charged with authority.
8. Training Allowance and Withholding Tax: In March and July 2020, Tax Crown Consultant conducted training for Gamtel at a cost of **D900,000**. Out of the fee paid to Tax Crown Consultant, each participant received **D10,000** as transport refund. Again, allowances were claimed and paid to the same participants by Gamtel, totalling **D240,000**. This is a double payment of allowances to participants. The auditor also observed that during the interview, Gamtel made a payment of **D900,000** to Tax Crown Consultant for training it rendered to its staff.

However, Gamtel was expected to collect and withhold 10% from such amount as withholding tax for the Gambia Revenue Authority, which was not done. The Committee recommends that the board and management ensure that training allowances for staff are paid only once

for each person from Gamtel or the training providers to avoid payment of unjustifiable allowances.

The Committee further recommends that the money be paid back by participants who received double payments, as no staff should be paid double allowances for a single training. The board and management should also ensure Gamtel deducts the 10% withholding tax on time before any payment is made to suppliers and keeps a well-organized filing of all certificates for future reference.

Gamcel Report:

1. Financial Manual Not Updated: The auditor noted that the company's financial policies and procedural manual has not been updated since 2013. The outdated policy and procedural manual are also not detailed enough to cover all business cycles of the company. The Committee recommends that management ensure the financial manual is timely reviewed and updated in line with all the revenue lines and services that the company provides.
2. Account Receivables: The auditor noted that the uncollected account receivables at the year-end were still high. There was only minimal movement, which means the collection effort throughout the year has not been successful. Also, the request for an aged debtor analysis during the audit was not provided to them. The Committee recommends that management put in place a receivable management policy and engage the Legal Department to institute recovery actions.
3. Property, Plant, and Equipment: The auditor noted that some assets were not coded on the physical asset as well as on the asset register,

while for others, the coding was different. The auditor observed that a laptop described as a computer carriage case system, purchased in 2019 for ***D60,000***, was found to be faulty and not in use. The Committee recommends that management ensure fixed assets purchased are coded physically prior to handing them over to the units that made the requisition. This will minimize the possibility of omitting asset coding from both the physical assets and fixed assets register.

4. Stock Keeping: During the audit of the inventory, the auditor selected a fibre model as part of their sample for verification. They noted that the store where these items are kept was not under the care of the storekeeper. They further observed that record-keeping was weak, as there was no record of quantity received, amount used, and the balance. The Committee recommends that the board comply with the guidelines for store regulations.
5. Billing System Issues: During the auditor's review of revenue, they observed that there is an issue with the client billing system. The bills are not produced within the period in which the transaction occurred; instead, they are produced later. The Committee recommends that the board and management ensure a new billing system is in place to avoid such issues. Timely processing and delivery of client bills will improve the liquidity position of the entity and reduce short-term borrowing costs.
6. Contract with Space Wine: The auditor noted that Gamtel has signed a contract with a company called Space Wine for upgrading the old network. However, it was noted that the contract did not go through the GPPA-approved process and competitive bidding as

required. Furthermore, the implementation of the contract is behind schedule, as there is no significant delay in getting the anticipated funding and upgrading of the old network. The Committee recommends that the board ensure all contracts are in accordance with GPPA rules and regulations.

Social Security and Housing Finance Corporation, 2020 Reports: After the presentation and consideration of the Social Security Report 2020, the Committee made the following observations and recommendations:

1. Contribution Arrears: As part of the auditor's test on contributions, they selected a sample of employers in the contribution arrears, scheduled, and computed the total outstanding contribution. However, they noted a difference in the selected sample, as tabulated below. The Committee recommends that management enforce a regular review and reconciliation of the contribution arrears schedule. Most importantly, management should ensure that information recorded in the arrears schedule corresponds to the debt recorded by the Operations Department.
2. Investment Properties: During the review of the investment property, the auditors indicated that they were not provided with title deeds of properties listed below, as the table shows. The Committee recommends that the board ensure title deeds for all these properties are obtained with immediate effect.
3. Fixed Assets: During the review of the fixed assets, the auditors selected a sample of assets for verification. However, these assets were not provided for verification, as stated by the auditors. The table shows the transaction. The Committee recommends that the

board ensure the corporation keeps an up-to-date fixed asset register that is regularly reconciled with the physical assets.

4. Mortgage Deposits, Site Visits: As part of the auditor's procedure to confirm the existence and accuracy of mortgage customers' balances, the auditors visited a sample of homes to interview the homeowners. However, they had a limitation in confirming the outstanding receivable balances due to various reasons, as follows: Some of the plots were reallocated, but the records were not updated in the corporation's books. Furthermore, some of the landowners had either sold the land or rented the land but did not settle the corporation. It was also noted with concern that some of the landowners already had their title deeds, even though they still owe the corporation. The Committee recommends that the board and management ensure that the Housing Corporation is updated and that follow-up of all outstanding mortgage balances is done so that these assets are settled by June 2024, or necessary measures will be taken immediately.

The Gambia International Airline (GIA): After the presentation and consideration of GIA's 2020 reports, the Committee made the following observations and recommendations:

1. Imprest Reconciliation Variance: During the auditor's review of the imprest, it was observed that the imprest balance in the general ledger (GL) differs from the unretired imprest balance maintained by the Internal Audit Unit. The GL balance was **D903,074**, while the Internal Audit report shows an unretired imprest balance of **D61,000**, resulting in a difference of **D842,074**. The Committee recommends that management ensure the differences of D842,074

be investigated and that the Committee be furnished with details of the investigation.

2. Procurement Department Approval: The auditors observed that the transactions listed below did not pass through the procurement system as required, as the transactions in the table below show. The Committee recommends that the board and management ensure that the money be recovered by June 2024.
3. Written Contract Requests: The auditors requested the following transactions and contract documents, but they were not provided. It was also noted that the GPPA Approval Attachment Form was not provided for review. The Committee recommends that management ensure contract documents and GPPA forms are completed and maintained for future reference.
4. Motor Vehicle Acquisition: During the audit of the additional fixed assets, the auditors observed that a motor vehicle (Mitsubishi Pajero), GXBJL5570, bought for the Management Director at a cost of ***D3,495,333*** from TK Motors Limited, did not pass through the Procurement Department and was not done in accordance with GPPA guidelines. The receipts and delivery notes from the supplier were not attached to the payment voucher as well. It was also noticed that the new vehicle was acquired in a part-exchange transaction with the Management Director's existing car with registration number BJL0573N. However, there was no independent valuator to report in order to determine the fair value of the old vehicle. The value used in the exchange was based on the recorded net book value, which was ***D1,493,333***.

The Committee recommends that the board ensure all acquisitions of assets are in accordance with the relevant laws and regulations guiding such transactions. Lack of compliance with GPPA guidelines is a violation of the Act, and lack of involvement of the Procurement Unit indicates a weakness in the application of the company's internal controls.

5. Retired Imprest: The auditors observed that there were outstanding imprests amounting to D835,185. The Committee recommends that management ensure all imprests are retired by 1st May 2024 and that the details of such retirements be furnished to the Auditor General for verification.
6. Bank Reconciliation: During the audit of cash and bank accounts, it was observed by the auditors that no reconciliation statements were prepared for the below bank accounts, as they are said to be dormant. The Committee recommends that management ensure dormant accounts are regularly reconciled. Furthermore, regular bank reconciliation statements should be prepared and reviewed to ensure that unauthorized transactions are detected and corrected on time, and dormant accounts should be closed if no longer needed.
7. Hajj Deposit Account: During the review of the Hajj deposit account, the auditors compared the Hajj deposit account in the general ledger to the GIA Hajj current account balance from the Ecobank statement and noted that the general ledger balance amount was **D29,916,83.54**, while the Hajj current account statement held at Ecobank is showing a balance of **D17,576,268.58** as of 31st December 2020, resulting in a negative variance of **D11,515,414.96**. The auditor further noted that management has

been using the funds in the Hajj current bank account for some of their other operations. The Committee recommends that the board ensure all funds in the Hajj current bank account are strictly monitored and that management must desist from using it for other operational activities.

8. Long Outstanding Payable Balance Recognized as Revenue: During the review of revenue, auditors observed that there is a long-held payable balance amounting to ***D26,709,147.40*** written off as sundry income. According to the information provided to them, it was the board that decided to write down this long-standing payable balance. However, there was no evidence that these respective creditors are no longer in business or a written document as evidence that they will no longer pursue their balance. The Committee recommends that stakeholders need to be consulted before taking unilateral action to cancel out this payable. Management should also seek legal advice on the matter immediately.

Gambia Radio and Television Service [GRTS]: After the presentation and consideration of GRTS's 2020 reports, the Committee made the following observations and recommendations:

1. Absence of Risk Management Framework and Department: The auditors observed that GRTS does not have a business risk management framework and a risk management department, which is relevant to financial reporting and business operations.

The Committee recommends that the board ensure the development of a risk management framework and the establishment of a risk management department by December 2024.

2. Receivables: During the audit of the receivable account balance, a difference of **D2,263,568.82** between the expected receivable balance of **D25,095,387.19** and a general balance of **D27,358,947.1** was noted because of non-reversal and accrual revenue. The Committee recommends that the board ensure receivable accounts are reviewed and updated after every transaction.
3. Non-Movement of Receivables: From the auditor's review of the non-movement of the receivable balance, it was observed that the credit control and impairment policy and procedures were not maintained.

Moreover, an aged debtor report was not provided for audit review. The list of receivable balances presented below were not moving and unlikely to be settled as of the year-end.

However, impairment was not recognized on these balances as of the year-end, as the table below shows. The Committee recommends that management develop a credit control and impairment policy to improve cash flow and minimize the risk of unpaid invoices and bad debts.

4. Social Security Confirmation: The auditors sent confirmation to the corporation's supplier and noted a difference in the confirmation reply received from Social Security. The confirmation includes a payable balance of **\$1,845,500** and the equivalent in dalasi is **D37,792,100** from Social Security, which was omitted from the

GRTS payable record. This was recognized as a capital grant and is fully amortized in the books of the corporation.

However, evidence to support that this is a grant or a loan was not provided to the auditors. The Committee recommends that the Auditor General investigate the status of this **\$1,845,500** from Social Security, which was omitted from the GRTS payable records, and report back to the Committee.

5. Payable Confirmation: The auditor sent confirmation to the corporation's supplier. However, they did not receive a response from them. The Committee recommends that management follow up on this payable confirmation for their review. Furthermore, management should investigate and reconcile the noted differences.

Asset Management and Recovery Corporation [AMRC]: After the presentation, the auditors observed that the entity does not have any disaster recovery plan in place for maintaining the going concern and operations of the corporation in case of a disaster. The Committee recommends that the board and management put in place an adequate disaster recovery plan to ascertain a swift restoration of systems and operations.

1. Insurance Cover for Property, Plant, and Equipment: The auditors observed that AMRC has no updated insurance policy in place covering the value of the building and its equipment from 24th July 2020 to 24th July 2021.

In addition, the policy that covers the value of the building and the equipment from 24th July 2019 to 24th December 2020 amounted to a

total value of **D2,424,400**, rather than the net book value of **D3,705,568**. The Committee recommends that the board ensure all values of the assets of the corporation are adequately insured.

2. Ex-Staff Loans: The auditors observed that the loan of **D1,729,756** for ex-staff has not been moving, and none of them made a payment in the subsequent year period. The Committee recommends that the board and management put in place an effective payment plan to recover the loans.

The Gambia Postal Service Corporation [Gampost] 2020: After the presentation and consideration of the report, the following observations and recommendations are attached.

1. Management Information System: The auditors noted that there is no IT security policy document to set out the rules and procedures for all employees accessing Gampost IT assets and systems.

It was also noted that the physical access control of the IT office, which hosts the server, is weak. It was also observed by the auditors that the password control for the system mentioned above is found to be weak, and users are not required to change their passwords at set intervals. The payroll, postal money transfer, and savings bank software were built and continue to be supported by different IT firms without the involvement of the IT staff regarding the administration of the system.

The Committee recommends that the board and management develop an integrated enterprise resource planning and a comprehensive IT policy that will set out the rules and procedures for all employees. The

board and management should review physical access and physical access control and put in place appropriate measures.

The board and management should have a concrete document of agreement regarding escalation procedures with various system providers and using staff of the institution, especially the IT unit, which should be the first level of support to enhance skill transfer and reduce reliance on the supplier for this system.

2. Box Rental: The auditors observed that the boxes rented out to individuals who are not invoiced on an annual basis for having subscribed to these boxes. However, the system has not been in use, and information on these boxes can only be extracted manually from the individual card maintained for each subscriber. As a result, it is difficult to determine unpaid annual box rentals on a timely basis, and it is not possible to make timely recovery of money.

Moreover, accurately determining the number of boxes to be reallocated during the year has proven difficult due to a lack of clear document procedures and set timelines for the reallocation of the boxes. The Committee recommends that a proper box management system be put in place to assist in the timely retrieval of information, notably outstanding rentals.

3. Inventory Violation of Stamped Stock: The auditor observed that no official stock count was conducted as of the year-end, which could affect the completeness and violation of stock, risking misstatement in the financial document. The Committee recommends that a joint stock count should be conducted annually by the storekeepers and the Internal Audit Unit. Stock count sheets should also be signed

and filed. There should be periodic reconciliation of the general ledger to the store record.

4. Management of Bank Accounts: The auditors observed that two stale cheques dated 2nd October 2019 and 13th February 2020, for **D10,000** and **D7,951** respectively, are still appearing in the December 2020 bank account reconciliation report on presented cheques.

Also, a long outstanding credit lodgement amounting to **D100,415** is outstanding from 2014 to the end of the fiscal year 2020.

Report lodgement of D6,000 by GCCI for box rental is outstanding from October 2020, and no evidence of follow-up with the bank is indicated. The Committee recommends that the board and management ensure the said long outstanding lodgement be followed up, resolved, and cleared from the bank reconciliation.

5. Verification Expenses: The auditors observed the following payments relating to various expenditures such as utility bills as well as bills from other service providers, namely: telephone bills and invoices from DHL, which were not captured as liabilities in the system when such bills were received. However, the unpaid bills and invoices were posted as one of the journals as the year ends, thus potentially understating the related in-year expense and liabilities.

Payroll journals were not raised and posted on a monthly basis as part of the recognition of the payroll liability immediately after the approval of the monthly payroll summary. However, they were only raised and posted at the time of payment.

There were a number of journal vouchers with material amounts raised and posted into the accounting system. It was observed that individual service providers and other creditors were not set up as subledgers, making it impossible to track the outstanding unpaid bills and invoices by the service provider and supplier. The Committee recommends that supplier invoice bills should be captured through the accounts payable to the subledger once they are received and approved, as indicated by the auditor.

Furthermore, all journals should be printed and filed with the related supporting schedules, and their use should be mainly restricted to the correction of errors on transactions posted into the general ledger.

National Food Security, Processing, and Marketing Corporation (Formerly GGC): After the presentation and consideration, the following observations and recommendations were made:

1. Receivables: The auditors noted that during the audit of the receivables account balance, there was a difference of ***D1,843,815.45*** between the debtor listing provided and the balance in the general ledger. The auditor also noted that a customer with a credit balance amounting to ***D80,400*** was also included in the receivable listing. The Committee recommends that the board and management ensure the difference is reconciled accordingly.
2. Trial Balance and Differences: The auditors noted that the trial balance has a different amount of ***D126,344***, as detailed below. The Committee recommends that the board and management investigate the difference and reconcile accordingly.

3. Going Concern: As of 30th September 2020, the corporation recorded an accumulated loss of **D222,830,534**, and a loss for the year ended amounted to **D139,777,478** during the period under review. This casts significant doubt on the ability of the corporation to continue as a going concern. The Committee recommends that the government and management strategize and consider improving its financial performance to continue business as a going concern.
4. Significant Reduction in Farmer's Stock: The auditors noted that during the review of the inventory, the farmer's stock had dropped significantly during the period under review, and this was because only **2,232 tonnes** were purchased from the farmers, compared to **27,000 tonnes** in the previous year. The Committee recommends that the board and management put up a strategy and ensure that there is always adequate farmer's stock to maintain consistency with the core business of wholesale buying and exporting of the country's groundnuts annually.
5. Bank Overdraft Facility: Despite the liquid closing cash and bank balances of **D51.8 million**, the auditors noted that the corporation had an overdraft facility of **D1,109,667**, which is expensive to maintain. The Committee recommends that the board and management put up a strategy to avoid taking overdrafts where possible to improve the financial performance of the corporation and ensure a documented policy is in place to make it possible.
6. Under the Cost of Sales: The Committee raised concern about the cost of hiring trucks and tractors, which sharply increased from the previous year. The Committee recommends that the corporation consider other alternative sources of transportation, such as river

floaters. There is a concern about the reason for the sharp increase in the corporation's bad debt expenses.

The Committee recommends that the corporation devise a way to recover the amount, as they are huge, and provide a list of debtors that are unable to recover by June 2024. The Committee raised a concern as the corporation is expecting a lot of risk, considering the fixed assets they owe. The Committee recommends that the corporation should have a Risk Management Unit to help mitigate and manage risk.

The Gambia Ports Authority [GPA] and Ferries: We first start with the GPA report 2020 regarding the remuneration of dockworkers.

From the review of dockworkers' remuneration and as noted in the previous year's report, it was observed by the auditors that payments were made through cash, and there is no documented policy or procedure on dockworkers' loans.

During the review of the GPA staff and other loans, the auditors noted that there was no documented policy on granting loans to dockworkers.

There is also no collateral on dockworkers' loans. The auditors noted that the dockworkers make loan applications to the Authority through their union. According to management, loans are granted after evaluation, but no collateral is provided by the members of the union.

The Committee recommends that management should prepare a formalized policy and procedure on loans granted to dockworkers to minimize the inherent associated risk resulting from default and potential abuse. Furthermore, management should also ensure that the supporting documentation on loans granted to dockworkers, including

evidence of evaluation, collateral, and agreed terms and conditions of the file, are readily available for reference and review.

1. Staff Loan Payment: During the review of the GPA staff loans, the auditors observed that the Authority has a nine-month recovery period in its loan policy guidelines. However, it was noted that the loans granted to the staff were recovered for only five months during the year instead of nine months.

The Committee recommends that management ensure staff loans are recovered through monthly payroll deductions in line with the policy and loan agreement.

2. Procurement Issues: During the period under review, there was a purchase of mobile phones for management amounting to ***D1.9 million***, as shown in the table below.

The Committee observed that the use of donation votes, as stated in the management's response to the auditor's observation, was inappropriate.

Furthermore, the procurement method was not justified as part of the GPPA rules. The argument of being conducted under urgency does not justify the violation of the procurement guidelines.

The committee is recommending that management desist from using donation votes as incentives to staff. Furthermore, they should ensure that GPPA procurement guidelines are strictly adhered to.

3. Confirmed Payables: The auditor noted a difference between the amount confirmed by the supplier and the amount recorded in the general ledger for the payable, as indicated in the below

transactions. The Committee recommends that the difference noted between the payable balance and the confirmed balance should be investigated and reconciled with the relevant supplier.

4. Loans: The following were noted during the review of the auditors:
 - a. AFDB loans.
 - b. Damien Kunkujeri loans.
 - c. Damien Kunta Kinteh loans.

The Committee recommends that management should provide the revised agreement and the difference noted between the payable balance and the confirmed balance, which should be investigated and reconciled with the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs, and report back to the Committee by May 2024.

5. Revenue Accounting for Rebates: During a review of the Authority's revenue general ledger for 2020, the auditor noted a debit amount of **D5 million** relating to rebates granted to customers throughout the year, which were deducted from the revenue instead of being separately accounted for as discounts allowed. Furthermore, auditors were not provided with the list of customers that benefited from this discount or the evidence of approval for the discount.
6. Waivers: The auditors observed that the debit transaction in the revenue ledger amounting to **D129 million** relates to a waiver granted on various cargo handling charges for the period under review.

The Committee recommends that waivers and rebates granted to customers should be appropriately and completely accounted for in a relevant general ledger account and reported in the financial statements of the Authority in compliance with generally accepted accounting principles.

7. Impaired Assets: The Committee recommends that management should account for the impairment of these assets to reflect their appropriate value in the financial statements.
8. Equity Investment: The following exception was noted during the review of the Authority's equity investment by the auditors, which is the Trust Bank investment. The Committee recommends that the difference noted by the auditors should be investigated and reconciled accordingly.
9. Outstanding Confirmation Payables: As part of the audit procedure, the auditors sent confirmation to a sample of the Authority's creditors to confirm the balance due to them as of 31st December 2020. However, they are yet to receive such confirmation.
10. Receivable Confirmation: As part of the auditor's procedure, the auditors also sent confirmation to samples of the Authority's receivables to confirm the value of these balances as of the period under review, but they are yet to receive receivable confirmation for the list. The Committee recommends that management should follow up on this confirmation for the auditor's review without undue delay.

Ferries: After the presentation and consideration of the report, the following observations were made:

1. Overdraft Facility Letter from Standard Chartered Bank Account Not Seen: The Committee recommends that the board and management ensure all overdrafts are supported with an agreement or facility letter, which is in line with the recommended cash management practice. Furthermore, the bank account in the name of GPA should be regularized to bear the correct name.
2. Trade and Other Receivables, Ex-Staff Loans: From the test of control procedures performed on the credit control relating to the ex-staff loan balance, the auditors noticed no evidence of follow-up to recover the balance of ex-staff loans, as shown in the table.
3. Non-Moving Receivables, Companies No Longer Existing: This is also shown in the table. The Committee recommends that the board and management should follow up on the ex-staff loans and restore a guarantor for recovery. Furthermore, the board should ensure the process is documented and seek legal advice.
4. Fuel Management: Timesheet forms were not attached during the auditor's review of the fuel delivery into the ferries. They noted the following deliveries received in which there was no form attached to indicate key information for fuel replacement, such as running hours and trips incurred from the last supply. Timesheets were also attached but not completed.

The following deliveries were noted in which timesheets were attached but were blank and not filled in. The presence of internal audits: Upon

the auditor's review of the control and processes in place with regards to fuel received, they observed that the internal audits were not present in some of the supply received. The Committee recommends that the board and management ensure timesheets are complete and attached to the fuel delivery form, thus making it available for audit verification requirements. Management should also ensure that at any point in time, personnel from the Internal Audit Unit witness the fuel delivery and sign the fuel delivery form.

5. Headcount and Inconsistency in Signatories: The auditors reviewed the headcount exercise conducted by the Internal Audit, but there was inconsistency in the signatures during the count. They noted the same signatures being used within the department to represent different personnel. The Committee recommends that the board ensure management conducts another headcount to make sure that the personnel are present and working for the company as per the payroll.
6. Bonus Policy: During the period under review, the auditors noted that an amount of **D17,594,000** was paid to the employees of the company as a bonus. Upon their discussion with management, they requested the bonus policy to be reviewed, especially the eligibility and company target for bonus payment procedures and allocation for employers. However, it was confirmed that the bonus policy was not maintained. The Committee recommends that the Management of Gambia Ferry Service should come up with a bonus payment policy to link it to a policy with the performance contract.

7. High Employment Costs: Upon the auditors' review of the various cost centres against the revenue of the company, they noted that the HR expenses of the company as of 31st December 2020 account for 55% of the total revenue, which is on the high side. The Committee recommends that the board and management should strategize and ensure that personnel costs are managed at an acceptable level, considering other key operational expenditures.
8. Allowances and Compliance with Service Rules: Car allowances of ***D11,344,000*** are paid annually to employers maintaining a car that is roadworthy.

The auditors also observed that there have been payroll allowances that are not in the service rule book.

9. Compliance with the Approved Service Rules: The auditors conducted a review of the service rules to ensure management is compliant with the requirements of the service rules. However, it was noted that there exists non-compliance with the job description, staff appraisal, and certificate of health. The Committee recommends that management should ensure control is in place to make sure personnel receiving car allowances are entitled to them. All allowances should be captured in the service rules of the company, and management must ensure compliance with the service rule policy.
10. Company Performance: During the auditors' trade analysis review of the performance of the company, they noted a sharp decline in the performance of the company over a three-year period, which raised questions about the long-term sustainability of the company.

In 2018, the turnover was ***D393.5 million***, and by 2020, it had declined to ***D200 million***, making a decline of ***D193 million*** within three years.

The Committee recommends that the board and management ensure the company's revenue-generating capacity is strengthened to improve its performance and position going forward.

11. Internal Audit: The auditor noted that both the Internal Audit work plan and the report are addressed to the General Manager instead of the board subcommittee, in line with the recommendation of corporate governance and practice. Furthermore, the auditors requested the board or subcommittee meeting minutes, but none was provided for their review.

The Committee recommends that the board should ensure the Internal Audit is reporting to the board audit subcommittee in line with the recommended corporation.

12. Corporate Governance Practice: The board must ensure that the audit subcommittee meets on a regular basis to further improve the oversight functions of management. Furthermore, the Committee recommends that the board reviews options for a single-share Internal Audit for GPA and Ferries.

The Gambia National Petroleum Corporation (GNPC): The following were noted by the auditors during their review of the property, plant, and equipment of the corporation:

1. Fixed Asset Register: It was noted that the fixed asset register is not maintained by management. The Committee recommends that

the board and management should ensure that the fixed asset register is maintained.

2. Land Ownership Document: It was noted that the land ownership document shows that the legal ownership of the following properties has not been completed, as the corporation has only an allocation letter from the Department of Lands and Survey.

The auditors indicated that the documents for the following properties acquired were not provided, especially Brufut Garden and so forth.

Furthermore, the auditors highlighted that one of the requirements, as per the allocation letter, is that a lease will only be executed after substantial completion of the proposed project, bearing in mind that the above stations are completed and in operation. It would have been expected that the legal paperwork for the title deeds is completed, but this was not done by management.

The Committee recommends that management should complete the legal paperwork of the stations stated above and ensure title deeds are obtained to complete the legal process.

Furthermore, management should also process the ownership documents of the properties and ensure that the tenancy agreement is maintained.

3. Payable Breakdown Listings: Auditors noted the following payable listings relating to statutory payments. GRA income tax, as the table in the report indicates, the auditors observed that the post-year-end review was done. However, there was no payment in the

following year, which raised concern about the validity of the payable balance.

4. Supplier COSETAM: The auditors noted that the supplier COSETAM had a balance of ***D3,292,672***, and the explanation received is that this balance is not owed to this institution. Upon further inquiry as to why, after a year's payment was made to this supplier, it was brought to the attention of the auditors that the balance is not owed to the supplier. However, no explanation was given as to what this balance is related to.
5. Independent Confirmation Pending: The auditors also noted that the request for independent confirmation was shared with the suppliers, but nothing was received.

Recommendations: The Committee recommends that management should look into the balance and provide a breakdown of the payable balance for adequate monitoring. The Committee further recommends that the COSETAM balance should be looked into, and in the event, there is no obligation to settle the balance, it has to be written off to ensure the payable balance report as of 31st December 2020 is not misstated.

Finally, management should follow up on the third party selected to respond to the independent confirmation for further verification and reconciliation.

6. Inventories: The auditors noted the following during the review of the inventory:
 - a. Station tank dipping logbook, Bundung station.

- b. Difference between the delivery note from storage and the amount as per the logbook.
- c. Stock loss of oil and lubricant.

The Committee recommends that management should adopt strict policies on stock laws and ensure that surcharges are levied instantly to recover any loss from individuals found wanting.

7. Upstream Fund: As of 31st December 2020, the auditors observed the following payable balance in relation to the upstream funds. Upon further discussion with management, it was confirmed that the Ministry of Petroleum and Energy has the right to use the fund, which is under the custody of GNPC. However, the following were noted during the review of the upstream fund for the period under review.

a. Approval of the Utilization of the Fund: During the year under review, an amount of **D51 million** and **D21 million** was recognized as grant income and upstream revenue from the upstream fund. However, the auditor noted inconsistency in the approval process of the said amount. It was also noted that the approval of **D21 million** came from the Minister of Petroleum, while **D51 million** was approved via the board resolution.

b. Policy of the Upstream Fund: Upon discussion with management on the utilization of the upstream fund, a request for an approved policy to determine the approval process of the fund utilization, which is the basis of revenue allocation. It was confirmed that an approved policy was not maintained by the corporation, considering the material amount involved in the upstream fund and the lack of a well-documented policy exposed

management to a risk of inconsistency. It further led to poor management of the fund, considering the Ministry of Petroleum and Energy and the affected government ministries have approved budgets on a yearly basis.

The Committee recommends that the Ministry of Finance and the line Ministry [the Minister of Petroleum and Energy] should immediately decide to determine the share mechanism for the upstream fund and to separately account for what belongs to the government and to GNPC.

Furthermore, the determination of the government share arrangement should be made by the Minister of Petroleum and the Accountant General for the immediate transfer of all government revenues to the Consolidated Revenue Fund, as dictated by the Constitution.

Honourable Speaker, with your permission, I will give you the rundown of the general recommendations in a few bullet points. We have divided them into three groups: A. Issues of governance, B. Human resource, and C. Accounting.

General Observations:

A. Governance:

Most of the boards do not have functional and effective subcommittees to aid the board in the discharge of its governance and oversight functions. There are legal and administrative challenges surrounding the governance and institutional setup of the SOEs.

There is also a challenge in the line of authority and functions of the key stakeholders, board management, line ministries, and OP. Some of the board members lack expertise in the line of business of the SOE they are

performing oversight on. Most of the SOEs do not have a functioning Internal Audit Department and functioning Audit and Risk Management Committee.

B. Human Resource Issues:

Most of the SOEs do not have important policy and procedure manuals on scores of issues affecting them. This includes board charter, allowance bonus policy, staff loan, internal audit charters, risk management and risk management policies, service rules, performance appraisal, etc. Most SOEs lack staff with the requisite knowledge and capacity to man key positions such as finance, procurement, and internal audit, etc.

C. Accounting Issues:

Until recently, most of the SOEs did not adopt a recognized accounting framework in the preparation of financial statements and other relevant reports. Most of the SOEs are not financially viable and have significant going concern issues.

Some of the key SOEs do not have a clean audit opinion. Some are highly indebted to each other and the government as well. They have repeated perennial unresolved audit issues.

General Recommendations:

1. The government must ensure the effective functioning and implementation of the SOE Commission as per the Act.
2. The Commission, with other relevant stakeholders, must ensure that both exercise effective oversight functions, and management must also ensure transparency and prudence in the day-to-day running of the corporation.

3. The Executive must ensure the avoidance of interference in the priorities of SOEs, and there must be exclusive and complete financial independence in the execution of their mandate.
4. The board and management must align strategic investments with the strategic plan of SOEs.
5. The board and management of SOEs must ensure that all prior year audit issues are resolved and reported to the Committee on the status of the implementation.

In conclusion, Honourable Speaker, a thorough assessment of the report presented has enabled the Committee to identify the accurate correlation between the weak Executive, Legislature, and independent oversight. This has led to an increase in liability and losses of SOEs. There is a high level of indebtedness, liquidity, and solvency challenges. Erosion of net and sector worthiness, increased arrears in the payment of statutory obligations, such as income tax, social security contributions, and a demonstrated incapacity in the payment of dividends to the state by the SOEs. It is evident that the SOE governance, legal, and regulatory framework were systematically and persistently ignored, thus creating a disequilibrium between the statutory functions and operations, thereby undermining accountability, transparency, and service delivery objectives. Executive Directives give rise to insufficient compensation for public service rendered by SOEs and a gross disregard of the dictates of Section 25 of the State-Owned Enterprise Act 2023.

It is in this spirit of good governance, transparency, accountability, and probity that the Committee resolved to engage all relevant stakeholders, particularly the SOEs and the SOE Commission, to enhance the following:

Reliability of financial reporting, including the preparation of all published financial information, effectiveness and efficiency of operations, compliance with laws and regulations, and safeguarding of national assets. These are fundamental to the successful operations and day-to-day running of the corporation, and it will assist the entity or organization in achieving its business objectives.

Finally, the SOEs constitute a significant percentage, about 50% of the GDP, which should not be underestimated. It is high time for this noble house to be extra vigilant and take its oversight role seriously in improving the status quo of the SOEs. Notwithstanding, Honourable Speaker, I also want us to consider these assets of the country, and we have to be very vigilant in making sure that we avoid privatization as much as possible because it is going to put pressure on the citizenry. When a private individual comes into play, their absolute interest is to maximize profit, and this goes down to the electorate and the citizens of the country. On that note, I beg to move, Honourable Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you very much, Chairperson. Honourable Members, any seconder? Honourable Member for Foni Bintang.

HON BAKARY K. BADJIE [FONI BINTANG KARANAI]: Honourable Speaker, thank you very much. These scammers have succeeded in taking over a government. Honourable Speaker, I rise to second the motion and

I also want to participate in the debate. Honourable Speaker, this is the report by the Public Enterprise Committee [PEC], and it is sad for us to be laying this report at this point in time. Who are we reporting to? Where are they? You said it here many times that whenever we are

laying a report, the concerned Ministry or institution should be here in attendance. Where are they? Who are we reporting to? Are we reporting to the chairs? It is sad that they are not taking us seriously as they continue to ignore the fact that when the National Assembly fails, the nation fails. It is time for action, and I believe we should take action on these matters.

HON. SULAYMAN SAHO [CENTRAL BADDIBU]: Honourable Member for Foni Bintang Karanai, I think that if any Committee wants to lay a report, it is their responsibility to invite the institution under its purview to attend it. However, if the invitation is not extended to them, they cannot be present. Unless we establish that they were invited and they failed to attend, then we can make such statements against them.

HON BAKARY K. BADJIE [FONI BINTANG KARANAI]: Are you defending? You want to be their lawyer. Okay! Thank you. The report is a bulky one because it has revealed the realities on the ground. Some of us are thinking that we want to privatize the SOEs, which is not actually a good idea, as the chairperson rightly said. If we are committed as a nation and want to defend the interests of our people, we must not compromise in any way. For he who misuses public funds should be taken into account, and if found wanting, should immediately serve a jail term without mercy. But as much as we are bent on compromising, then there is no good that will come to our nation, and it is time for us to take action on these matters and all the people that fail to comply with GPPA should be brought to justice, and then investigations should be made and taken to court immediately.

I am not sure we should bother ourselves with many talks; we have seen enough evidence, and with this evidence, we can use and take actions. I believe they are not taken as seriously as the National Assembly, and it is time for the National Assembly to be taken seriously. Honourable Speaker, with my emotions, I cannot continue to debate. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you, Honourable Member Foni Bintang. Honourable Members, I now put the question.

[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed to]

[That the National Assembly to consider the report of the Public Enterprises Committee of the National Assembly on the Activities and Audited Financial Statements of State-Owned Enterprises for the year ended 31st December 2020]

Honourable Members, any Honourable Member who may wish to take part in the debate may now do so, beginning with the list I have is the Honourable Nominated Member Kebba Lang Fofana.

HON KEBBA LANG FOFANA [NOMINATED]: Thank you very much, Honourable Speaker. To begin with, I would like to sincerely thank the Public Enterprise Committee [PEC] being ably represented by their chairperson in laying a very comprehensive report. Honourable Speaker, the report before us would generate salient questions. As narrated by the chairperson in the general observations, you would realize that across all the Public Enterprises, which are now being called the State-owned Enterprises, we do have fundamental issues. However, to do

justice to the debate, I would just like to highlight some few areas that were touched by the chairperson, starting with NAWEC.

Honourable Speaker, the report indicates, on note 10 and 4 of Pages 14 and 18, that there were understatements with regards to revenue amounting to **D199 million** and **D236 million** for the year ended 2019 and 2020, respectively, as highlighted by the audited financial statements of NAWEC.

Honourable Speaker, revenue is the backbone of every institution, and as such, if the auditors are reporting that there were gross misstatements in the revenue reported by NAWEC, the House should not take that lightly. The recommendations being made by the Committee are apt in that,

NAWEC should reconcile, but it is my fervent belief that they have passed that stage. Audit opinion does not change, and they are not subject to revision because this is cast in stone. The next step should be investigation, given that **D199 million** plus **D236 million**, now we are talking in excess of **D400 million**, being understated from the revenue of a state-owned enterprise, that calls for an investigation.

So, I will call on this Honourable House to take bold decisions on that because without the required revenue, how do you expect NAWEC to work on the much-needed advancement or improvement with regards to the provision of their core mandates.

Honourable Speaker, another thing that caught my attention in the report is the unretired imprest, and I think this is a general challenge in the Government of The Gambia, as we have seen unretired imprests all

the way from 2006, 2007 to 2019. The fortunate aspect with these imprests is that they are very recent. If you look at note 12 and 5 of pages 15 and 18, you realize that in 2019, which should be on note 5, there is unretired imprest of **D960,000**, and in 2020, which should be on page 18, there is unretired imprest of **D1.5 million**. Imprests are activity-based, which are given for specific assignments. They are not loans; therefore, at the end of that assignment, everything is expected to be reported. So, I think we have to change the status quo where we prorate the value of these imprests and try to recover it over time. Once the activity ends, the total value of the imprest must be retired, and whatever stands unretired should be recovered in full.

The Committee has done very well because they have given the board and management of NAWEC up to the end of April to reconcile. I think we have to make it stronger so that if they fail to reconcile and bring forth the necessary evidence, recovery must be done in full because this is not a loan. If it were a loan, you can tell them to go back and recover it. But these imprests were given for specific assignments, and at the end, there must be tangible evidence to indicate how those funds were utilized. So, we can enhance the recommendation of the Committee on that particular one, and after the end of the reconciliation, we come up with actionable points which will enforce recovery to be the main priority.

Honourable Speaker, on note 1B of Page 16, we have governance issues where a staff of NAWEC was awarded contracts to the tune of over **D1.3 billion**. This is serious. There is an in-house policy with regards to the declaration of interest, but the auditors have realized that those conditions were never fulfilled. So, we are not saying it is fraud or what,

but this is a suspicious activity. The Committee is saying that the IGP should investigate, and I stand with that recommendation.

Honourable Speaker, from NAWEC, I will move to GCAA. I would like to refer the Committee to note 2 of Page 27, where they have receivables amounting to over ***D20 million***, which have exceeded 12 months. When we talk about receivables, these are individuals who have enjoyed the services of the entity, and they are obliged to pay the entity. And those amounts stand outstanding for more than 12 months, and all businessmen will tell you, the more the debt ages, then the recovery becomes very slim. So, there is a high probability that the Gambia Civil Aviation Authority would not be able to recover these debts.

The main reason behind it is they do not have a recovery policy. So, I would encourage the Committee to not only tell them to recover these debts but also provide us with an ageing analysis. And after receiving that ageing analysis, do not be surprised to realize that some of these debts might have been owing to the entity for more than 5, 6, 7, or 8 years. But the primary objective now should be to make sure that a recovery policy is formulated and that there is a sound and robust implementation strategy. This will ensure that all services provided by the entity, the amounts due will be received, and those values are what they are going to use and reinvest again. Honourable Speaker, if you look at note 5 of Page 28, which is also an issue noticed in NAWEC, you will realize that both NAWEC and the Gambia Civil Aviation Authority are not providing their fixed assets register. They are not maintaining it. When you talk about a fixed asset register, this is where you record the assets of the entity that have a capital nature that will stay in the business for more than 12 months. We all know these two institutions

are dependent on heavy machinery, meaning that they will be making very big capital investments. So, if at all, nothing is known about the location of these key ingredients or items and are not maintained properly with regard to when they were bought and how much they were bought to serve as safeguards, such assets are always open for gaps.

So, I strongly believe, as the Committee has recommended, maintaining the fixed assets register is a must and will ensure that there is always a fixed assets verification. The issue now is both these two institutions are not maintaining their fixed assets register, which is a cause for concern. I believe it is an area which the National Assembly also needs to pay attention to.

Honourable Speaker, note 6 of Page 28 is again telling you that the Gambia Civil Aviation Authority is having a liquidity problem, and liquidity in accounting means cash. If you look at their current assets value and compare it to their current liabilities, you will realize that the current liabilities exceed the current assets by 533.7%, which indicates an excess.

Honourable Speaker, this is serious. It means today, if all those entities and businesses that the Civil Aviation Authority are owing should go to their doors and ask for payment, they will close down because they do not have the money. What they owe is more than what is owed to them by over 500%. Moreover, the auditors are equally expressing worry about their losses, which are cumulative. In 2019, it was around **D38 million**, and now you are talking about **D241 million**.

Honourable Speaker, as private citizens, if I open my business today and at the end of the year, I make losses, in the subsequent year, I also make losses. Will I continue doing it? Of course, no. But what is more worrying is that these are ventures where if undertaken by private citizens, they end up making profits. So, why is it that the state continues to make losses in such ventures when those institutions are run by our own brothers and sisters. I strongly believe GCAA could have fared better if at all it was a private entity, and it should even fare better today given that it is a public entity under the responsibility of Gambians. So, the cumulative losses that are being reported by the auditors are a cause for concern, and part of our recommendations should be to look at their internal control weaknesses, revenue generation capacity, and then come up with strategies that are going to change both their income-generating capacity and make the entity more viable.

Honourable Speaker, with that, I will move to Gamtel. On Page 33, note 18, Gamtel stated that in 2020, they had a training workshop during which their staff were paid **D10,000** each as transport allowance. But worryingly enough, the same staff came back and asked for allowances amounting to **D240,000**, constituting a double payment. However, the Committee did justice on that because they are asking the staff to refund the money. I would like to encourage the National Assembly to attach a timeline to it because this is not a loan, and it should not have been done in the first place. Recovering it is one aspect, but if we leave it open, it will become another thing, and at the end of the day, the ultimate result or desires of the Assembly will not be achieved. So, let us come up with a recovery mechanism.

Honourable Speaker, I now move to GIA, where I would not say much about because, as I said earlier on, the issue of unretired imprest is being reported there to the tune of over **D831,000**. I am bringing the issue to tell the Assembly that imprest is becoming a problem in the country, and it is high time we come up with solutions and alternatives. Imprests are activity-bound and are very simple to retire them at the end. The amount of money given for an activity should be retired to indicate that the objective of that particular activity is achieved. If it is so, why is it that millions or thousands of dalasi are outstanding at the end of activities.

Honourable Speaker, I strongly believe we have to start looking outside the box, and our actions with regards to the imprest should not only stop at trying to recover them in full but also to see how best we can discourage the idea of imprest itself.

Honourable Speaker, regarding GPA, I just have some questions for the Honourable Chairperson. On Page 53, note 2, it is realized that GPA has a staff loan policy which indicates that staff loans should be recovered during a period of 9 months, but the auditors discovered that recoveries were only done within 5 months. So, are the entire loans recovered within the five months? If yes, that is ok. If no, what happened to the balance of the outstanding loan after the 5-month recovery exercise? On Page 56, which is about GPA again, the auditors indicated that there were rebates, which are discounts deducted from the revenue amounting to D5 million, and waivers that were issued amounting to **D129 million**.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member, which page? This should be on page 56, note 6. Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

Again, with regards to waivers, I have a question for the Honourable Chairperson of the Committee. What does the authority rely on in approving waivers? On Page 59, note 9[b], it indicates that GPA is having huge outstanding receivables, and there is a list provided. So, my suggestion is that the Assembly be provided with an up-to-date ageing analysis instead of providing us with cumulative figures.

Honourable Speaker, let us now move to the Gambia National Petroleum Corporation [GNPC]. On Page 69, note 4 [b], the auditors discovered that the fuel quantity that is issued from the main storage depot in Mandinari always differs from the fuel quantity discharged at the petrol stations. However, they also failed to attach value to such quantities. So, I strongly regard this move to be very weak as the auditors could have gone further than that.

I want the Committee to challenge the auditors in their future audit exercises to ensure that their findings should not be based on weak opinions. They should give us strong recommendations so that we can come up with actionable points. Had it been that the auditors have quantified the discharged fuel and attached a value to it, we would have gone ahead to ensure that it is recovered. We all know the inherent risk there is the loss of value. For example, the depot issues 10 litres, and at the discharge point, there were 7 litres. Obviously, 3 litres are missing, making everything doubtful. So, I would encourage the Public Accounts Committee to challenge the auditors on that particular issue to make sure that next time they give us strong recommendations so that we can

come up with actionable points. Honourable Speaker, I want to conclude by saying that the Public Enterprises or the State-owned Enterprises have been constituted out of good intent, and I fervently believe that capacity is not the problem. All the inefficiencies we are having there are out of deliberate actions. I strongly recommend or suggest to this august Assembly that this report lays a good foundation for us to start a new leaf with regards to the improvements we are all yearning for in the State-owned Enterprises. On that note, Honourable Speaker, I want to say thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you very much, Honourable Nominated Member Kebba Lang Fofana, the mover of the motion. Honourable Members, I think it is important and critical for your Committee Clerks to be noting down some of the salient issues being raised in the debate to enrich your report. The Honourable Members may adopt the report as it is, but some very good contributions are being made, especially if you look at the contributions of Honourable Members on NAWEC bordering on misstatement, investigation, imprest issues which have been an ongoing thing over the period, and this Assembly cannot lament over it because we are the oversight institution. So, we should be finding solutions to these problems and how to tackle them on behalf of the people. He also talked about the award of contracts to staff, so these are things that I think should be captured in probable recommendations that will come out at the end of the debate to carve a way forward for all of us. I think there were critical issues mentioned by the Honourable Nominated Member, such as double allowance issues, waivers, receivables, and the age of those receivables, be they one year, two years, five years, or ten years.

I think it is our responsibility to try to crack down and find out so that we are better informed to make final decisions. I think the chairperson or a committee clerk may be assigned to be noting some of these critical inputs. Thank you very much, Honourable Nominated Member. I now invite the Honourable Member for Banjul South.

HON FATOUMATA NJAI [BANJUL SOUTH]: Thank you very much, Honourable Speaker. I applaud the Committee for a very thorough report and commend the Chair for having the perseverance to read it all through. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Honourable Speaker, SOEs are very important in developing a nation because they serve as alternatives to what the public sector cannot do. They should be able to fill that gap, which is important in every country, and The Gambia is no different. The report shows that there is a gap that needs to be filled in the promotion of economic development through these Public Enterprises to safeguard the interest of the nation.

Mr. Speaker, I cannot agree more with the mover of the motion that it should no longer be business as usual because the number of resources being lost through these SOEs cannot be ignored. Everybody in the country would love to work in the SOEs because of the high rate of salaries that they attract. However, are the fat salaries being reflected on what they are giving to societies? I do not think so. They should be addressing market failures. We blame the government for failing to provide certain services, but I think we should look into the SOEs in the failure of these services most of the time.

I would like to talk about the ferry service because it directly affects the people. We have seen what happened recently regarding the failure of

the ferry services in the country in terms of not only the failures but also the risk in possible loss of lives if it is not rectified. Honourable Speaker, the report is bulky, therefore, I will not go into everything. I will focus more on the ferry services because the ferry is in my constituency, and if lives are lost, it will be closer to home.

When I look at the recommendations made by the Committee, especially on the management of fuel, headcount, and inconsistencies of signatures, Mr. Speaker, the ferry ferries thousands of people every day, and if it is not in good condition, the chances of losing lives are very high. Honourable Speaker, the management of the ferries would spend a lot of money buying vehicles for themselves. Mr. Speaker, I would recommend that those funds be diverted into the ferry services to invest in new ferries. We have been maintaining those old ferries. Sometimes last year, the ferry stranded in the middle of the sea for a complete 18 hours during which a life was lost. I personally know someone who spent the night in the ferry until eight o'clock in the morning. They had to be pushed back to dock. Therefore, funds should not be spent on compensating workers who are not delivering the services as expected; instead, it should be rediverted to buying new ferries because we are tired of maintenance and should now invest in new ferries.

I implore the Committee to make sure that wasting resources on maintaining those ferries should be discouraged. Moreover, what was spent on fuel alone is **D6 million** paid to George Banna, I do not know, it maybe for cars because I am not sure what they sell, Jah Oil, **D20 million**, NAWEC **D4.9 million**, Syben A. Madi **D4.4 million**, and I guess that was for car purchase. Mr. Speaker, if all that is put together, it would give the country a brand-new ferry. We expect that to be done

by the ferry service very soon; otherwise, people will be exposed to risk. Therefore, I appeal to the Ferry Service Management to commit resources to prevention rather than compensating workers.

Honourable Speaker, if you go to page 60, I do not know why that Honourable Member is raising a tag, but I would not accept any observation, so focus on the report.

Honourable Speaker, for a country to develop, it must have a consistent source of electricity. We have seen roads being built that open up and ease the movement of goods and services, but if you transport these goods to communities and keep them there without NAWEC providing electricity, preserving them would be an issue. I would appeal to NAWEC to consider alternative energy sources because God has given us ample sunshine. I do not know why we are still focusing on thermal power rather than alternative sources such as renewable energy because we use a lot of fuel. It was also said that NAWEC is owed; I am not sure how NAWEC can be owed when 80 or 90% of meters are now prepaid. Is it the government that is owing? I think if the government is owing, they should help pay this organization so that they can invest in their services.

Once again, I thank the mover of the motion and the Committee for a great report and urge FPAC to look into the financial issues. I can see that the Chairperson of FPAC is noting all the financial discrepancies revealed so that we can look into it at the level of the FPAC Committee. Thank you very much.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you very much, Honourable Member for Banjul South. I now invite the Honourable Member for Wuli East.

HON SUWAIBOU TOURAY [WULI EAST]: Thank you very much, Honourable Speaker. We have the ministries and departments that are supposed to provide services to the public, but they may not provide profit. We created the SOEs so that they will also provide services that are much needed by the general public. They are also very much expected to create profit so that they will be able to pay dividends to the government, which is the main reason why SOEs are created.

Honourable Speaker, since the 5th Legislature, this Committee worked very hard to assess what happened in the SOEs to be able to inform us adequately. We have to thank the Committee for fulfilling that objective. This is a thorough report which has definitely informed us of all that we need to know so that we will be able to take the necessary action to put things in the right place.

Honourable Speaker, on Page 9, which deals with control on expenses, we have seen that there is no transparency in the procurement process, and if that is the case, there cannot be value for money, and the auditors cannot see things and verify them. This is something that must be stopped. We must insist that whatever the auditors want to see should be made available to them. Moreover, failure to adhere to GPPA guidelines is a grave concern because, according to the report, most of the SOEs are not adhering to GPPA guidelines, meaning that they follow their own guidelines contrary to the GPPA, which we must take very seriously.

Honourable Speaker, Page 9 talks about control on expenses, which reads: "From the test of controls on procurement, the auditors requested evidence to confirm that transactions were procured in line

with the company's procurement policies, but these were not provided." They said verbally that it was done properly; however, when you insist on knowing how it was done, they will not be able to provide evidence.

On Page 14, which deals with share capital, it also reads: "Evidence of the updated memorandum of association highlighting the share increment and notification to the register of companies was not provided for auditors' review as required by the Companies Act 2013. Additionally, converting the debt relief of **D2.6 billion** could result in the company recognizing shares more than the authorized limit of **D50 million** at 10% share." This requires some explanation from the chair to explain to us exactly what that means.

Honourable Speaker, on Page 14, regarding NAWEC, it is said that the meter logbook was not provided, and supporting evidence for revenue recorded for the AGIB-NAWEC service connection amounting to **D10,651,986** was also not provided for their review. So, that is what I am saying. So many things are not provided for the review of the auditors, and this significant amount of money, when properly accounted for, could really solve a lot of problems for the country. We need to ensure that they are provided for review; otherwise, we will not know what to do.

Honourable Speaker, if you go to Page 15, on point 11, which deals with the cost of sales, the invoice recorded an amount of **D534,000**, while **D5,384,000** was posted into the general ledger. However, they did not provide supporting documents for some transactions totalling **D29 million** from the sample. The auditors further noted a journal posting of **D138.8 million** in costs of sales in the general ledger, not supported,

which means that there is a discrepancy in this area. What do we do with that discrepancy? Are we going to leave it there or come up with strong recommendations that will actually solve the problem? If we do not deal with this problem, they will keep repeating them, thinking that we are ignorant of what is happening there.

Honourable Speaker, if you also go to Page 18, point 4, regarding understated revenue, a difference of **D236,479,109** understatement was noted. The expected sales figure was compared to the sales figure recognized by NAWEC in its accounting records, and the trial balance amount recorded was lower. So, what is the implication for that as well? Maybe we will need an explanation for that because there is a big difference there.

Honourable Speaker, on Page 19, point 8, concerning human resource lapses, it is mentioned that a monthly headcount was not conducted by the Human Resources Department.

Honourable Speaker, this is a serious anomaly where a State-owned Enterprise cannot even give its accurate headcount figures, which is a serious matter that should not be left standing idly by.

Honourable Speaker, Page 20, point 10, regarding receivable recovery policy, over **D220 millions** of unpaid debt due to NAWEC is outstanding from corporate, central, and local government customers as arrears in their payments. This means that the arrears are far more than the average gross monthly balance of **D615 million**, which is not a small amount of money. You must take specific recommendations for each of these anomalies to know the discrepancies or the losses for the state so that it will help us as to what to do.

Honourable Speaker, page 22, on payables, should be looked at very seriously and needs to be investigated because the amount stated: ***D113,195,101.04***, which is mainly the response received from GNPC regarding NAWEC's debt, the difference of this amount compared with the GNPC balance was higher and became the accurate figure. Out of the 15 suppliers calculated, responses have only been received from 6 local suppliers, most of whom confirmed higher balances compared to the amount recorded in the NAWEC book of internal payment reconciliation. Payable account has proven to be unreliable, citing the highly material differences observed. So, Honourable Chair, we really need to take note and ensure that we come up with proper recommendations.

Honourable Speaker, like I said, we will try to do things quickly. Page 32 talks about fraud as a criminal act. So, if something is a criminal act, we should recommend that action to be investigated to let the law take its course. We cannot allow people to do fraud and then they are released shortly after and recalled to continue their work in that same institution where they committed the fraud. That constitutes a serious anomaly.

Honourable Speaker, it is suggested that when a person commits fraud, and all of a sudden, the person is called back to come to work, they should be investigated even if they allow that. Honourable Speaker, on Pages 33, 34, and 36, under the recommendation, no deadline was given, and that is my observation.

I believe it is the Committee that should make a follow-up in this matter or assign another institution to do it. When a committee cannot do

certain things, they can assign it to another committee or institution to do it on their behalf because it cannot be left to hang in the balance.

The Committee recommends that management enforce regular review and reconciliation of the contribution arrears schedules. Most importantly, they should also ensure that information recorded in the arrears' schedules should be reconciled to the data recorded by the Operations Department. However, if we make recommendations and do not follow them up, they will forget about everything. So, let me remind you of that.

[Point of Observation]

HON BILLAY G. TUNKARA [KANTORA AND MAJORITY LEADER]: I want to emphasize that all recommendations, after being passed in the chamber, will be in our working documents, and we will be engaging the SOEs and other entities on a quarterly basis. Thank you.

HON SUWAIBOU TOURAY [WULI EAST]: But they are in order, and that is what I am also saying so that we do not just make recommendations and forget about it.

Honourable Speaker, on page 39, there is an amount of ***D842,074***, which is an issue here, and the Committee recommends investigation. It also recommends that the board ensure all the funds in the Hajj Current Bank Account are strictly monitored and that management must desist from using it for other operations, as it is noticed that they used the deposit to carry out their operations. So, they should not just be told, but there should be a follow-up to ensure that they desist from it.

Honourable Speaker, page 50 is a big problem, and you could remember that it was an issue I raised yesterday with the Ministry on the buying of groundnuts, and now they are coming into it.

As of 30th September 2020, the corporation recorded an accumulated loss of **D229,830,534**, and a loss for the year ended amounted to **D139,777,479** during the period under review. This casts significant doubt on the corporation's ability to continue as a... *[Inaudible]*

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member, which institution is that?

HON SUWAIBOU TOURAY [WULI EAST]: National Food Security Processing and Marketing Corporation.

THE SPEAKER: Exactly, I want you to make reference to the relevant institution.

HON SUWAIBOU TOURAY [WULI EAST]: Okay, that is the institution, and the government has also granted them a license to buy groundnuts. If you remember yesterday, the Minister was saying **D1.5 billion** is being granted for this company to go and buy groundnuts from the farmers. So, if they continue to make losses as much as **D220 million**, it is a concern that we must take very seriously. Perhaps, I should not talk about the Gambia Ferry Service since my honourable sister has already spoken about that.

Honourable Speaker, page 68, which is my last one, is a concern, given that we must take the SOEs very seriously because they are definitely paying dividends to the government, which goes a long way towards reducing the deficit in the budget. However, if the SOEs are not paying anything and operating at a loss while the government continues to

invest money in them, that will not bring about economic development in the country. So, if SOEs are established, they should be well managed so that they will make a profit and pay dividends to the government. I think the Committee should take note and check very well as to how much the government has lost through this audit exercise in order to gauge what we should do for the recovery of all the losses incurred.

On that note, Honourable Speaker, I thank the Committee for a very good job done.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you, Honourable Member for Wuli East. We now invite the Honourable Member for Sanimentereng.

HON FATOU CHAM [SANIMENTERENG]: Thank you very much, Honourable Speaker. I would like to thank the Committee, the SMS, committee clerks, and the presenter of the report.

Honourable Speaker, I do not think I have to talk much about this report since most of the areas I wanted to deliberate on have been addressed by the Honourable Nominated Member and Honourable Member for Banjul South, which has to do with imprests, NAWEC, and Ferries. Notwithstanding, I stand by the Committee's recommendations. However, I am suggesting to the Committee that they put more effort to make sure that such deceptive actions be completely stopped in the country because one cannot imagine someone being granted a loan due for repayment within nine months and at the same time try to recover that very loan within 5 months, which is no less than deception. So, the Committee has to put more effort to make sure that deceptive actions of this nature be stopped in the country. We need to encourage and support our staff but not to deceive them in this manner.

Honourable Speaker, I stand by the Committee's recommendations concerning the equity confirmation on page 60. I would also like the Committee to add the time frame with regard to the submission of any document that the auditors need to get in hand. So, on that note, Honourable Speaker, I urge all Members of this august Assembly to adopt this comprehensive report. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you very much, Honourable Member for Sanimentereng. I think Honourable Nominated Member Kebba Lang Fofana also asked about this recovery of loans meant for 9 months and done within 5 months. Does this mean that all the amount was recovered in five months instead of 9 months, or is it only the five-month allocation recovered and the balance remained? I think that should be made clear. So, until we have an answer to that, we do not know what is meant in the report. I think the mover of the motion will clear the air. I now invite the Honourable Member for Jarra West.

HON BILLAY G. TUNKARA [KANTORA & MAJORITY LEADER]: Those that you called are out, and it is now some minutes to 3 p.m. Should we break for prayers, lunch, and come back if agreed?

THE SPEAKER: We are almost halfway on the list, and it is just about 12 minutes to 3. I cannot deny Honourable Majority Leader's comments if I had no other ones. So, it will make me adjourn until after lunch.

HON SULAYMAN SAHO [CENTRAL BADDIBU]: Honourable Speaker, you always give priority to your leaders in the House.

THE SPEAKER: They are also your Leaders.

HON SULAYMAN SAHO [CENTRAL BADDIBU]: They your Leader too.

THE SPEAKER: Yes, they are mine but yours also.

HON SULAYMAN SAHO [CENTRAL BADDIBU]: Yes, but people make suggestions, but you said you will take that of Majority Leader.

THE SPEAKER: Yes, leaders carry weight, and they carry your weight.

HON SULAYMAN SAHO [CENTRAL BADDIBU]: But Leadership should not be abused too.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, when do we come back? We have two more motions, and we have not yet dealt with one yet, and we have to complete all of them. So, when do we come back? If we agree on a specific time, let us come back at that time.

[Assembly is suspended until 3:45pm.]

[Editorial Comment]: The afternoon proceedings will be in the next Hansard production.