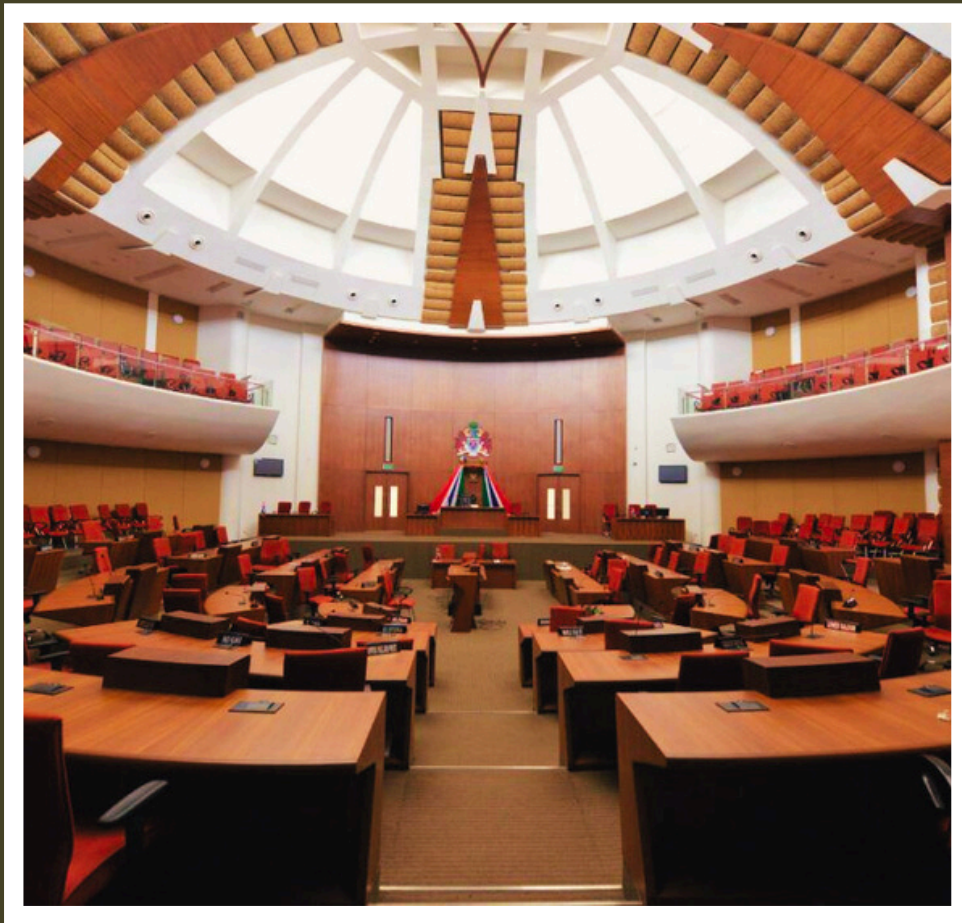




# NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

**SIXTH ASSEMBLY  
FIRST ORDINARY SESSION IN THE 2025  
LEGISLATIVE YEAR**



# PARLIAMENTARY ROUNDUP



The Gambia Assembly



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National Assembly of The Gambia



clerk@assembly.gm



www.assembly.gm

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Table of Contents	02
Introduction	03
Local Government (Amendment) Bill 2024	04
The consideration stage of the Election Bill, 2021	05
The Criminal Offences Bill seeks	06
The six bills carried over to the Sixth Legislature are:	07
Motion	08
The Speaker delivered a ruling on a Point of Order	09
Committee Reports	10
Committee Reports	11
Committee Reports	12
Ministerial Engagements and Adjournment	13



# Introduction

The Parliamentary Roundup Handbook provides a comprehensive account of all the legislative business conducted during the First Ordinary Session of the Sixth Legislature in the 2025 Legislative Year of the National Assembly of The Gambia. Convened from 3rd to 28th March 2025.

The handbook chronicles the bills passed, Motions adopted, resolutions made and Committee reports adopted by plenary.

Notable among the legislative business were the passage of five key bills, including the Legal Metrology Bill, Criminal Offences Bill, Criminal Procedure Bill, Tertiary and Higher Education Trust Fund Bill and The Research and Innovation Fund Bill.

This handbook also highlights the scrutiny of committee reports, debates surrounding issues of National Concern.



# FIRST ORDINARY SESSION IN THE 2025 LEGISLATIVE YEAR



**The First Ordinary Session of the National Assembly in the 2025 Legislative Year** commenced on the 03rd - 28th March 2025. This session highlighted the passage of bills, adoption of Motions, consideration of Committee Reports, taking of Parliamentary Questions and delivery of Ministerial Statements.

## BILLS

The first session witnessed the introduction (First Reading) and subsequent withdrawal of the **Local Government (Amendment) Bill 2024** by the Honourable Member for Latrikunda Sabiji.

The Bill sought to give nominated councillors the right to vote as opposed to the Local Government Act of 2002. In his withdrawal motion, Hon Sanyang stated that the bill had some technical issues that need to be resolved.

The Waste Management Bill 2024 gone through Second Reading and referred to the National Assembly Select Committee on Environment, Sustainable Development and NGO Affairs for further scrutiny and report back.

This bill was introduced (First Reading) by the Hon. Minister for Environment, Climate Change, Sustainable Development and Natural Resources in the First Ordinary Session of the 2025 Legislative Year with aim to provide guidance on the reduction of waste to the minimum level, re-use of reusable waste components for sustainable development and through protection of natural resources.

During the First Ordinary Session, NAMs commenced the consideration of the National Security Council Bill which was introduced (First Reading) by the Hon. Attorney General and Minister for Justice during the Third Ordinary Session of the 2024 Legislative Year. The bill was committed to the Standing Committee on Defence and Security after the second reading in the same session.

The National Security Council Bill 2024 seeks, among others, to promote the effective coordination of the security of The Gambia as an important factor for Security Sector Reforms. The Report of the bill was tabled and adopted during the First Ordinary Session of the 2025 Legislative Year. The report of the committee serves as a guide to the Consideration Stage during Committee of the whole Assembly.

# FIRST ORDINARY SESSION IN THE 2025 LEGISLATIVE YEAR

**The consideration stage of the Election Bill, 2021**, another bill carried over from the Fifth Legislature also continued during the session. The bill stimulated national debate over diaspora voting rights. Clause 14 (Registration of Gambians living abroad) of the bill which states: “(1) The Commission shall register a Gambian living outside The Gambia as a voter if he or she satisfies the requirements for registration prescribed under this Act.(2)

The Commission shall in consultation with the Inter-Party Committee and Cabinet, prescribe detailed Rules for the registration and voting of Gambians living outside The Gambia to vote in Presidential elections, Referenda or any other elections as determined by the Constitution or any other law. (3)

The Rules made by the Commission under sub-section (2) shall specify – (a) the criteria for the selection of foreign countries where elections are to be conducted; and (b) the appointment of election officers and the conduct of elections was removed after subjected to a vote.”

According to those on one side of the Assembly, the removal of the clause is consistent with section 39 of the constitution which states “Every citizen of The Gambia being eighteen years or older and of sound mind shall have the right to vote for the purpose of elections of a President and members of the National Assembly, and shall be entitled to be registered as a voter in a National Assembly constituency for that purpose”. Among issues, they argue, is the diaspora is not a demarcated constituency.

While the other side of the Assembly hold the view that section 39 does not stop the diaspora from registration that they can be registered on the constituency they came from and removing clause 14 of the election bill will infringe on section 26 (Political rights) of the constitution.

The Session also witnessed the passage of the Legal Metrology Bill 2024, that was first introduced in the Third Ordinary Session of the 2024 Legislative Year.

This bill seeks, among others, to establish a comprehensive framework for the regulation of measurements and measuring instruments to ensure that all measurements used in trade, health, law enforcement and the environment are based on internationally recognised standards. This bill was introduced by the Honourable Minister for Trade, Regional Integration and Employment.

# FIRST ORDINARY SESSION IN THE 2025 LEGISLATIVE YEAR

**The Criminal Offences Bill seeks**, among others, to close a long-standing legal gap by expanding the criminal jurisdictions of Gambian courts to offences committed by persons outside The Gambia and who thereafter enters the country.

The bill will help align criminal justice legislations with the current trends by removing all provisions contrary to freedom of speech such as criminal defamation and sedition this bill was tabled by the Honourable Attorney General and Minister for Justice.

Similarly, the Criminal Procedure Bill, 2020 which seeks, among others, to comprehensively review the Gambia Criminal Procedure Code for the first time since 1933 was passed during the Session. The bill aims at aligning the provisions to currents trends and practices.

The bill includes provisions for Probation, Parole, Plea-agreements, Police supervision, alternative sentencing, corporate trials, private prosecutions, witness protection, bail administration and fair trails.

The said Bills were initially 'written-off' from the Agenda of the (Fourth Ordinary Session in the 2022 Legislative Year) in a landmark ruling of the former Speaker, Hon. Mariam Jack Denton.

The landmark ruling of the former Speaker, Hon. Mariam Jack Denton stated that "As a sanction, the ABC decided that all the pending businesses of the Hon Attorney General dealing with Bills be written off from the current Agenda of the First Ordinary Session, 2022."



**Hon. Mariam Jack Denton  
Former Speaker**



**Hon. Fabakery Tombong Jatta  
Speaker**

# FIRST ORDINARY SESSION IN THE 2025 LEGISLATIVE YEAR

## **The six bills carried over to the Sixth Legislature are:**

1. The Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters Bill, 2019. (Passed and Accented)
2. The Gambia Anti-Corruption Bill, 2019. (Passed and Accented)
3. The Prevention and Prohibition of Torture Bill, 2020. (Passed and Accented)
4. The Criminal Procedure Bill, 2020. (Completed all parliamentary proceedings)
5. The Criminal Offences Bill, 2020. (Completed all parliamentary proceedings)
6. The Elections Bill, 202. (Consideration Stage)

Each of these bills are considered crucial in the transitional justice process encouraged in the TRRC recommendations.

The National Research & Innovation Fund Bill 2024 and The Gambia Tertiary and Higher Education Trust Fund Bill 2024 were also passed following the adoption of the reports presented by the Select Committee on Education, Training, and ICT as a guide to the consideration stage.

These two bills were first introduced (First Reading) during the Third Ordinary Session of the 2024 Legislative Year and read a second time (Second Reading) during the same session by the Hon. Minister of Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology.

The National Research and Innovation Fund Bill 2024 seeks to provide funding options for scientific research, technology development, innovation and entrepreneurship projects in The Gambia. The aim is to enhance the country's international competitiveness in science, technology and innovation.

The Gambia Tertiary and Higher Education Trust Fund Bill 2024 seeks to create sustainable pathways for public tertiary and higher education institutions in The Gambia to access funds to deliver on their mandate of education and training.

This will ensure equal opportunities for accredited institutions and support the development of the country's human capital stock.

In total, five bills were passed during the First Ordinary Session of the 2025 Legislative Year.

# FIRST ORDINARY SESSION IN THE 2025 LEGISLATIVE YEAR

## MOTION



**The motion to consider and ratify the Agreement for Visa exemption** of Diplomatic and Service Passport Holders between the Republic of The Gambia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) was tabled by the Hon. Minister for Foreign Affairs, International Cooperation and Gambianss Abroad, considered and ratified by the National Assembly.



**A motion was adopted to summon the Janjanbureh Area Council** for questioning by a Special Committee to be decided by the Committee of Selection, following repeated instances of non-compliance by Council officials with National Assembly oversight engagements.

The Assembly noted with concern the Council's continued failure to cooperate with the Select Committee on Regional Government, Lands, Ombudsman, and IEC.

This motion was moved by Hon. Lamin Ceesay, member for Kiang West Constituency following the presentation of a report on Thursday 13th March 2025 by the Chairperson of the committee Hon. Sulayman Jammeh.



**A motion was adopted for the extension of the Parliamentary Inquiry** into the Petroleum Product consignment of 36,953.614 metric tons, valued at \$30,000,000 (Thirty Million Dollars).

A joint Committee of FPAC and PEC was formed in the plenary during the Third Ordinary session of the 2024 Legislative Year after a motion was raised by the member for Lower Saloum Hon. Sainey Jawara to investigate the allegations surrounding the sale of 36,953.614 metric tons of petroleum products valued at \$30,000,000.00.

The Joint Committees mandate was derived from section 109(2)(a)(b) of the 1997 Constitution and Standing Orders 103 and 109.

The joint committee submitted its preliminary report on Monday 17th March 2025 after which the Assembly approved the need for additional time for the Committee to continue with the investigation.

# FIRST ORDINARY SESSION IN THE 2025 LEGISLATIVE YEAR



**The Speaker delivered a ruling on a Point of Order raised by the Honourable Member for Upper Saloum.** The point of order challenged a motion moved by the Honourable Member for Central Baddibu to rescind a previous Assembly decision.

Hon. Saho moved a motion for the National Assembly committees on Agriculture; Environment, and Defence and Security to investigate the intrusion, security, and forest land threats caused by foreign herders who cross into the Gambia.

This motion was adopted before the mover of the motion realised the need to amend the motion to include a time frame for the work of the joint committee. In the process of reframing the motion to include a 90-day deadline, the Hon. Member for Upper Saloum rose to Order 29(3) and challenged a fresh motion made by the **Honourable Member for Central Baddibu** for the assembly to rescind its earlier decision on his original motion.



Order 29(3) states that “It shall be out of order to attempt to reconsider any specific question upon which the assembly has taken a decision during the current session except upon a motion to rescind that decision for which notice must be given.”

In his ruling, the Honourable Speaker clarified that: A Substantive Motion requires prior notice but an Incidental Motion, which arises in connection with a substantive motion, does not require notice as it pertains to the handling or procedural matters of the motion.

He stated that “I am convinced that Order 29(3) of the standing orders does not require the mover of an incidental motion to give notice of the motion before moving in the Assembly. Therefore, in accordance with order 8 of the Standing Orders, I rule that a Substantive Motion requires prior notice to be given whilst an Incidental Motion does not necessarily require a notice.”

# FIRST ORDINARY SESSION IN THE 2025 LEGISLATIVE YEAR

## COMMITTEE REPORTS



A good number of Committee Reports were tabled and adopted during this session. These included: **The Select Committee on Trade and Regional Integration** report on their tour of selected local producers across the country from 10th - 16th February 2025 was presented by the **Hon. Modou Lamin B Bah**, a member of the Committee.

The tour aimed to engage local producers and consumers to verify the different products that are locally produced in the country and receive firsthand information on its market shares as well as know its potential in meeting local demands at affordable and competitive prices.

The Committee recommended that: (1) Ministry of Trade to create markets for local producers and reduce the importation of products that are produced locally. (2) the Ministry of Trade and Agriculture engaged the Ministry of Energy to ensure that NAWEC comes up with special tariffs that support local agricultural production. (3) Local producers should be assisted with proper packaging for smooth access in Domestic and International markets.



**The Select Committee on Regional Government, Lands, Ombudsman, and IEC** presented a report following their oversight visit to various local Government Councils across the country from the 29th January to 06th February 2025 by the Chairperson of the Committee **Hon. Sulayman Jammeh**.

The aim of the visit is to assess council projects and receive firsthand information on its sources of funding as well as identify challenges and provide possible solutions for effective service delivery.

The committee recommended that: (1) Real Estate bills should be enacted to give mandate for the Ministry of Lands to effectively check the operations of Real Estate Companies. (2) the 25% of Government subvention to councils should be fully paid. (3) The Ministry of Justice to collaborate with the office of NGO affairs to effectively scrutinize applications before the registration of NGOs.

Following the tabling of the report, a motion was introduced to summon the Janjanbureh Area Council due to their repeated failure in disrupting parliamentary oversights.



**The Select Committee on Education, Training, and ICT** tabled the Reports on the National Research and Innovation Fund Bill 2024 and the Gambia Tertiary and Higher Education Trust Fund Bill 2024 after consultations with various stakeholders by **Hon. Alamameh Gibba** member of the Committee. These reports facilitated the consideration of the two bills leading to their passage during the session.

# FIRST ORDINARY SESSION IN THE 2025 LEGISLATIVE YEAR

## COMMITTEE REPORTS



**The Joint Committee on Defence and Environment** tabled the report on the Early Warning and Control Mechanisms Bill, 2024 by **Hon. Samba Jallow**, member of the Joint Committee.

The mandate of the committee is to hold consultations with stakeholders to seek opinions, review position papers presented by the stakeholders and hold a validation meeting for further scrutiny and input from the committee.

In this report, the various invited stakeholders made recommendations on the bill that will help guide the consideration stage of the bill.



**The Standing Committee on Human Rights and Constitutional Matters** tabled the Report on The Interpretation (Amendment) Bill, 2023 by the Chairperson of the Committee **Hon. Madi Ceesay**.

The committee is mandated to list out witnesses, hold proceedings and take evidence from witnesses as well present a report incorporating the summary of evidence from witnesses and the opinion of the committee on the clauses.

The report recommends maintaining the current structure where subsidiary legislation is regulated by the executive with judicial review as and when necessary, as the proposed amendments could create procedural hurdles that compromise government efficiency and responsiveness.



**The Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs** tabled the Report on their oversight visit to the Gambian Mission in Bissau from the 24th - 27th April 2024. This tabling was done by the Chairperson of the Committee, **Hon. Billay G Tunkara**.

The objective of the visit was to assess the challenges, strategic plans and achievements of the embassy and review documents related to the chancery building project. The visit will also aim to serve as a case study to understand the operations of Gambian Foreign missions.

The report indicated that the available records shown show that the chancery construction was completed in 2016 and since then there has been no records to show the official completion of the project and the building has not been occupied since then. The report also indicated that there is no readily available data of Gambians living in Bissau.

During the debate, it was highlighted that an investigation should be made on the whereabouts of the contractor and swift action be taken on the mode of operation of the Embassy.

# FIRST ORDINARY SESSION IN THE 2025 LEGISLATIVE YEAR

## COMMITTEE REPORTS



**The Joint Committee on FPAC, and Education** also tabled the Report on the Students Revolving Loan Scheme 2024 by the Co-chairperson of the Committee **Hon. Alhagie Mbow.**

This report was developed from thorough scrutiny with relevant stakeholders including tertiary institutions. The bill seeks to establish a sustainable student loan scheme that will ensure that students who do not benefit from government scholarship have an alternative source of funding to pursue their academic aspirations.

In its recommendations the report highlighted that; (a) a simplified loan application process. (2) Strong oversight to prevent corruption and (3) good governance structure with experienced leadership.

This sums up to 7 Reports tabled and adopted by the plenary in the First Ordinary Session of the 2025 Legislative Year.





**HON. MUHAMMAD BS JALLOW**  
Vice President



**HON. SEEDY KM KEITA**  
Minister of Finance and  
Economic Affairs



**HON. ROHEY JOHN MANJANG**  
Minister of Environment,  
Climate Change and Natural  
Resources

## Ministerial Engagements

1. His Excellency the Vice President of the Republic
2. Hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs
3. Hon. Attorney General and Minister of Justice
4. Hon. Minister of interior
5. Hon, Minister of Trade, Industry, Regional Integration and Employment
6. Hon. Ministry of Works, Transport and Infrastructure
7. Hon. Minister of Defence
8. Hon. Minister of Information and broadcasting services
9. Hon. Minister of Environment, Climate Change and Natural Resources
10. Hon. Minister of Gender, Children and Social Welfare
11. Hon. Minister of Basic and Secondary Education
12. Hon. Minister of Communications and Digital Economy

Ministerial Replies to the reports of the Parliamentary Committee Oversight.

The Hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs replied to the Report of the Public Enterprises Committee on the performance audit report of GAMTEL's service delivery by the National Audit Office.

Hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs replied to the report of the Public Enterprises Committee's tour to NAWEC, SSHFC and GRTS.

Hon. Minister of Environment, Climate Change and Natural Resources replied to the report of the Environment Committee's tour to selected Forest, Parks and Borehole Projects across the country.

During this session Oral Questions and Answers Sessions with Hon. Ministers with respect to their various portfolios of responsibilities, the following Hon. Ministers appeared before the Assembly to orally answer questions from the Honourable members in which they were notified before appearance.



## Adjournment

The Adjournment Debate of the First Ordinary Session began on Friday 28th March through the early hours of Saturday 29th March 2025. Moving the motion for the Assembly to adjourn Sine Die in accordance with Order 54(1) of the Standing Orders, the Majority Leader and Member for Kantora, Hon. Billay G Tunkara highlighted the extensive work undertaken by the Assembly during the session.

The adjournment debate generated interesting debate from all Honourable Members, highlighting critical national and constituency issues.

# FIRST ORDINARY SESSION OF THE 2025 LEGISLATIVE YEAR



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Contact: +220 3982287/ 7069089/ 994 1188

Email: [nationalassembly32@gmail.com](mailto:nationalassembly32@gmail.com)/ [clerk@assembly.gm](mailto:clerk@assembly.gm)



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