



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

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

[HANSARD]

**OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT OF
FOURTH SESSION**

**Monday 23rd November, Tuesday 24th November and the Morning Sitting of
Wednesday 25th November 2020**

SESSION – 2020



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

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

[HANSARD]

**OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT
FOURTH SESSION – SECOND MEETING
MONDAY 23RD NOVEMBER, 2020
*SESSION – 2020***



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

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

[HANSARD]

OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT

VOLUME: I

NUMBER: 1

Second Meeting of the Fourth Session of the Fifth Assembly
of the Second Republic of The Gambia.

Proceedings of the Sitting of Monday 23rd November, 2020

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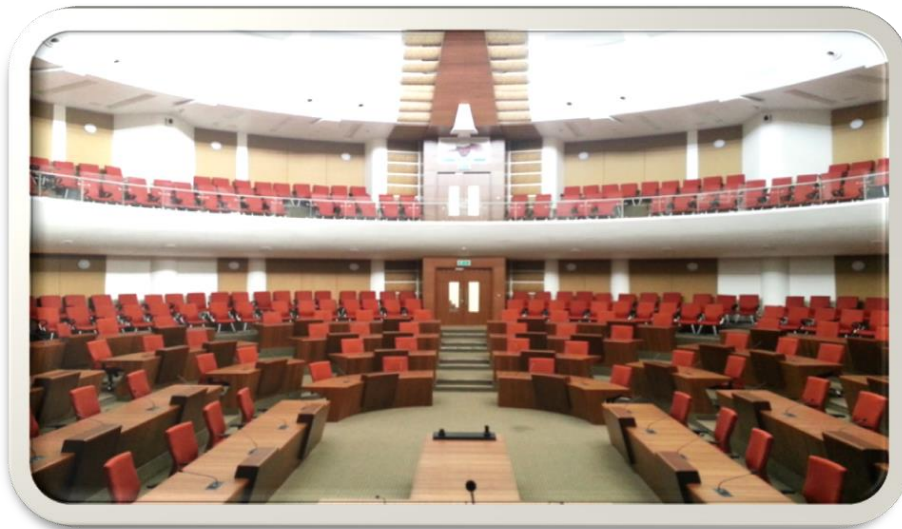
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THE CHAMBERS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF THE GAMBIA

OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE HOUSE

**FOURTH SESSION – SECOND MEETING
OF THE FIFTH ASSEMBLY
OF THE SECOND REPUBLIC**

MONDAY 23RD NOVEMBER, 2020

1. PRAYERS

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

[The House met at 11:00 a.m. ~~in~~ in the New Parliament Building, Reginald Pye Lane, Banjul].

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

The House was called to Order

THE SPEAKER: Good morning Honourable Ministers and Honourable Members. May I crave your indulgence to observe a minute of silence in honour of the late Honourable Lamin Dibba former Member of this august Assembly and former Minister of Local Government, Lands and Agriculture? Thank you, may the Almighty Allah have mercy on his soul and grant him Jannatul Firdausi, amen!

2. Communication from the Chair

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, you are welcome to today's sitting of Monday 23rd November, 2020. May I also welcome the Honourable Ministers here with us and their teams. Honourable Members, I know the Assembly during the past week was engaged in marathon activities which were indeed very hectic ones, right from the pre-budget training and consultations to the Committee bilateral with Sectors, Ministries and Agencies to consider and scrutinize one of the most important documents of the land; [the ~~2021~~ Draft Budget Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure], which was earlier tabled by the Honourable Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs on Thursday 12th November, 2020. I commend all Honourable Members for their steadfastness and commitment to national duties. I equally commend the efforts of the Staff through the Office of the Clerk of the National Assembly.

Honourable Members, as indicated on today's Order Paper, we will have the first reading of about six bills and thereupon, the Assembly will adjourn to allow Committees to finalise their reports including the consolidation and scrutiny by F/PAC before

consideration and proper debate on the Draft Estimates. Consideration will commence tomorrow 24th November, 2020.

3. Correction and Approval of Records of Votes and Proceedings of the National Assembly Sitting of Thursday 12th November, 2020.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, the Record of Votes and Proceedings of the National Assembly Sitting of Thursday 12th November, 2020 is before us for consideration and approval. Can any Honourable Member please move that the said record be considered and approved?

HON. SUWAIBOU TOURAY [WULI EAST]: I rise to move that the Record of Votes and proceedings of the National Assembly Sitting of Thursday 12th November, 2020 be corrected and approved.

THE SPEAKER: Any seconder?

HON. FODAY N. M. DRAMMEH [TUMANA]: I so, second.

[Question Proposed]

THE SPEAKER: Any issues or observations from Honourable Members? Can we start from page 1, any observation or corrections?

HON. BABA GALLEH JALLOW [SANIMENTERENG]: Madam Speaker, my name is not captured in the attendance register.

HON. MOMODOU CAMARA [FONI BINTANG KARANAI]: Madam Speaker, still now I am on the correction of the name of my constituency. Still, they are putting Foni Bintang and it should be Foni Bintang Karanai.

THE SPEAKER: Table Office, can we correct it once and for all, can you assist us with the number?

HON. MOMODOU CAMARA [FONI BINTANG]: Number 8.

THE SPEAKER: Please we will try to correct it in the system. ~~Thank you very much.~~
Any more on page 2?

HON. SAINÉY TOURAY [JARRA EAST]: ~~Thank you Madam Speaker.~~ Excuse me for taking you back, it is Just a clarification on the cover page which reads: "National Assembly New Assembly Building "Reverend Pye Lane" and if you come down it says Office of the Clerk National Assembly Service New Assembly Building "Reginald Pye Lane". Are they the same "Reverend Pye Lane" and "Reginald Pye Lane"? ~~Thank you.~~

THE SPEAKER: I have seen your observation but we will check it and confirm the correct one. Member for Banjul North may probably help us.

HON. OUSMAN SILLAH [BANJUL NORTH]: The official name is "Reverend Reginald Pye Lane". In fact, it should be "Reginald Passe Pye Lane" but put "Reverend Reginald Pye Lane"

HON. ASSAN TOURAY [BAKAU]: On page 3 where you have the following National Assembly "Members" instead of "Member"

HON. AMADOU CAMARA [NIANIJA]: Page 4, on the heading, the Honourable Member for Niamina West Constituency, the paragraph that follows it, with your permission can I read it? "At this juncture, Honourable Speaker congratulated and welcomed the newly elected Honourable Member for Niamina West Constituency to the National Assembly and assured him that Honourable Members and Staff of the "Assembly" "National" should be there. Then it continues "would provide him with the necessary support to execute his functions as a Member of the "Assembly" "National Assembly" again.

Another observation is Communication from the Chair on the last paragraph. "She opined that the Corona Virus [COVID-19] pandemic still exists in the country and thus, urged all to adhere to the relevant safety measures and regulations as stipulated". ~~by~~ WHO and Ministry of Health".

HON. MUHAMED MAGASSEY [BASSE]: ~~Thank you Madam Speaker.~~ I want to consult my colleagues on the first line under Administration of Oath. "Following the by-election of a new Member for Niamina West Constituency", I am not comfortable with the wording. Following the election of the new Member through the Niamina West Constituency by-election, I want to propose that but I want to consult my colleagues.

THE SPEAKER: It is the language that he is not comfortable with. We will look at it again and see.

HON. SAINÉY TOURAY [JARRA EAST]: I want to help my colleague with the language, it is in order.

THE SPEAKER: He indicated that it will be looked into. let us not belabour that point.

HON. MOMODOU CAMARA [FONI BINTANG]: Page 5, last paragraph on Question Proposed, Put and Agreed to: it was moved and seconded that "the" August Assembly do adopt... "this" august Assembly.

HON. ALHAGIE DARBOE [LOWER FULLADU WEST]: ~~Thank you very much.~~ Page 5, second paragraph, the fifth line [~~first 1st January~~ ~~to~~ 31st December 2021, both dates inclusive].

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HON. OUSMAN TOURAY [SABACH SANJAL]: Let me read the second paragraph with your permission Madam Speaker, "The record of Votes and Proceedings of the National Assembly Sitting of Thursday 24th September 2020 was therefore adopted with amendments as "the" true record of the proceedings. I want to believe that "the" should be looked at.

THE SPEAKER: I could not capture what you actually said.

HON. OUSMAN TOURAY [SABACH SANJAL]: The words "therefore" and "the" I am not comfortable with them in this sentence.

THE SPEAKER: You are not comfortable with the sentence.

HON. OUSMAN TOURAY [SABACH SANJAL]: Let me read this sentence again and please follow.

The Record of Votes and Proceedings of the National Assembly Sitting of Thursday 24th September 2020 was “therefore”, it should be “was adopted”. I do not think that the word “therefore” should be there. “...adopted with amendments as ~~the~~ true record of proceedings-” “the” should also be omitted.

THE SPEAKER: We will consult with the teachers. ~~Thank you.~~ Any more observations, amendments or proposals?

HON. SUWAIBOU TOURAY [WULI EAST]: If you go under where you have Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs, the paragraph under that which reads: “The Hon. Speaker called on the word: “on” is missing.

HON. AMADOU CAMARA [NIANIJA]: Still on Page 6, after the paragraph, the Honourable Member was reading, the next paragraph where you have the Honourable Minister for Finance and Economic Affairs moved his Motion. I think it should be read as “Honourable Minister for Finance and Economic Affairs moved the Motion”. Again “to table” ~~that~~ also- I think it is not very okay- You can just put “move the Motion for the Draft 2021 Estimates”, then you continue instead of putting “his” and “table”. That is my opinion.

HON BILLAY G. TUNKARA [KANTORA]: I think I am comfortable with this because the Motion belongs to his Ministry, so there is nothing wrong. We are reporting what really transpired in the Assembly. He did move the Motion before the Assembly.

THE SPEAKER: Any more on page 6, Page 7?

HON. ASSAN TOURAY [BAKAU]: When the question was put for those in favour to say ‘Aye’, the word “please” is left out.

THE SPEAKER: Anymore on page 6?

HON. OUSMAN TOURAY [SABACH SANJAL]: ~~Thank you Madam Speaker.~~
Paragraph 6, let me read with your permission.—: “Hon. Minister for Finance and Economic Affairs moved his motion to table the Draft 2021 Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure of the Government of The Gambia for “the” consideration and adoption. I believe “the” should go off.

HON. SUWAIBOU TOURAY [WULI EAST]: Page 7 the third paragraph on the last line.—Draft “Estimate”, we always say “Estimates”. ~~Thank you.~~

HON. LAMIN F.M. CONTA [KOMBO EAST]: The last line of the second paragraph. Hon. Speaker emphasized that the document would require “the” thorough scrutiny and consideration of the Assembly. I believe “the” should be removed.

THE SPEAKER: That is what you think, it is okay. Yes, any further observations on page 7. We then move over to page 8.

HON. SAINÉY TOURAY [JARRA EAST]: Page 8 under Adjournment. “BE IT RESOLVED THAT THIS august Assembly—: I am seeing that after capital letter [B], the rest are italics. It should be in lowercase as opposed to uppercase. Be it resolved that this— they are all in italics, capital letters. It should be in lowercase. ~~Thank you.~~

[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed to]

[That the Record of Votes and Proceedings of the National Assembly Sitting of Thursday 24th September, 2020 be approved with amendments]

4. BILLS:

Standing Orders 65.- First Reading of the Following Bills:

i. Public Private Partnership [PPP] Bill, 2020 [By: Hon. Minister for Finance and Economic Affairs]

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, in accordance with Clause ~~[65]~~, only the first reading of the bills will be done today. The Public Private Partnership [PPP] Bill, 2020. ~~[B]~~by the Honourable Minister for Finance and Economic Affairs. I would now call on the

Honourable Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs who is in charge of the Bill to handover the copy of the Bill to the Clerk of the National Assembly to read aloud the short title whereupon the Bill shall be deemed to have been read the first time. ~~Thank you,~~ Honourable Minister, kindly give us a minute to take the observations.

[POINT OF OBSERVATION]

HON. YA KUMBA JAITEH [NOMINATED]: Thank you Madam Speaker. It has just come to my notice that the said Bill is not accompanied by the objects and reasons and also the date of Gazette has not been indicated. I just want us to verify that before it is presented.

THE SPEAKER: Legally, I am not sure whether that can stop him. It is an observation that you can raise and it was raised many times that the objects were not adequate but I will invite views on that.

HON. MUHAMED MAGASSY [BASSE]: I think the observation is not bad but formally, at this point in time, we do not have the document in our hands. Observations will be raised on the document if it is officially submitted to the parliament. It is not yet submitted; therefore, it is not a document of parliament yet. I do not reject the observation but the time it comes is what I am talking about. ~~Thank you.~~

HON. BILLAY G. TUNKARA [KANTORA]: ~~Thank you very much Madam Speaker.~~ I respect the observations made. However, at this point in time, ~~hence since it~~ is the first reading, the Parliament is not going through the Bill proper and that observation might be relevant in the second reading of the Bill.

THE SPEAKER: ~~Yes,~~ We will take the bills and then the observations. We do not have to quarrel over it.

HON. HALIFA SALLAH [SERREKUNDA]: Madam Speaker, all you have to confirm is whether what is with us lacks the statement of objects and reasons and if that is the case, under Standing Order ~~[64]~~ it cannot be laid. *[Applause]*. Madam Speaker, I am

saying that you ought to confirm whether the copy of the Bill submitted to the Members lacks the statements of objects and reasons, if that is the case, it cannot be laid and should be sent back for the objects and reasons to be put.

THE SPEAKER: Can you give us the reasons if that is the case?

HON. HALIFA SALLAH [SERREKUNDA]: Standing Order [64] says: *"Every bill shall be accompanied by a memorandum signed by the person in charge of the Bill containing a statement of the objects and reasons of the Bill, including - the nature etc. 64.[2] says: "No bill shall be introduced unless accompanied by a memorandum".*

THE SPEAKER: Equally, it is correct that there is no objects and reasons; it is omitted. Yes, I have confirmed on the document that there are no objects and reasons. I was with the impression that there was something of the sort but there was nothing.

Can we just be guided? Honourable Member for Serrekunda raised two points for us to confirm regarding the difference between what has been submitted and what Honourable members possessed. Please Honourable Members, can you check your copies whether it is the same or not? Some have it and some do not. The rule is that everybody should have a correct copy and if everybody does not have a correct copy, then it means that the rules have not been followed. ~~So,~~ Probably we will put that aside and let him regularise it and then we come back tomorrow.

In fact, the one that I have does not have any. Let us allow them time to regularise, put their house in order. They can always do that. I do not have it and some Honourable Members are also saying that the copies circulated to them do not have it. So, there is something missing in the Bill, ~~I~~ I stand to be corrected. What I am suggesting is to keep this Bill, move forward and proceed. There is no need to argue over it and then they will put their house in order.

i. The Gambia Public Procurement Authority [GPPA] Bill, 2020 [By: Hon. Minister for Finance and Economic Affairs]

THE SPEAKER: Thank you very much Honourable Members, in accordance with Clause {65} -of the Standing Orders, only the first reading of the Bill entitled "The Gambia Public Procurement Bill, 2020" by the Honourable -Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs was done-~~7~~. May I now invite the Honourable Minister who is in charge of the Bill to handover ~~the~~ copies of the Bill to the Clerk of the National Assembly who will then read it aloud with the subtitle whereupon the Bill shall be deemed to have been read the first time. ~~Thank you.~~ I hope that one is in order.

CLERK: The Gambia Public Procurement Authority [GPPA] Bill, 2020.

THE SPEAKER: I was suggesting that we let the first reading ~~to~~ be done before we do the necessary stages under our Standing Orders. Or, do we do it one by one? It takes time though. The Bill entitled "The Gambia Public Procurement Bill, ~~2020~~-2020" has been read the first time. The next stage of the Bill is appointed for Monday 30th November 2020, for the person in charge of the Bill to move a motion for the second reading in accordance with Standing Order Clause 66 [2] which reads~~7~~: "*At the conclusion of the proceedings on the first reading or on any subsequent stage of a Bill, the next stage may be taken either forthwith or upon a day to be named, providing that the second reading shall be taken no sooner than one working day after the first reading*".

ii. The Capital Market Bill 2020 [By: Honourable Minister for Finance and Economic Affairs]

THE SPEAKER: May I now invite the Honourable Minister to hand over the copies of the Bill to the Clerk of the National Assembly who will read the subtitle aloud. I need to be guided because I have not seen your copies. If it is not there then, in that case we will skip it for regularisation so that everybody has a copy which has the reasons and objects. ~~Thank you.~~

[POINT OF OBSERVATION]

HON. MOMODOU S. CEESAY [JANJANBURREH]: The copy we have reads Capital Market and Security Bill... *[Interruption]*.

iii. National Accreditation and Quality Assurance Authority [NAQAA] Bill, 2020 [By: Honourable Minister for Higher Education, Research Science and Technology]:

THE SPEAKER: May I invite the Honourable Minister for Higher Education, Research Science and Technology to hand over the copies of the Bill to the Clerk to read aloud the subtitle~~to read aloud the subtitle~~ whereupon the Bill shall be deemed to have been read a first time.

CLERK: National Accreditation and Quality Assurance Authority [NAQAA] Bill, 2020.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, the Bill has been read a first time. The next stage of the Bill is appointed for Monday 30th November 2020 for the person in charge of the Bill to move a motion for the second reading in accordance with Standing Order Clause 66 [2] which reads; *"At the conclusion of the proceedings on the first reading or on any subsequent stage of a bill, the next stage may be taken either forthwith or upon a day to be named, providing that second reading shall be taken no sooner than one working day after the first reading"*.

[POINT OF OBSERVATION]

HON. ALAGIE JAWARA [LOWER BADDIBU]: Madam Speaker, I want to observe that the Honourable Minister for Health is around before we proceed.

iv. National Health Insurance Bill 2020 [By: Honourable Minister for Health]:

THE SPEAKER: May I invite the Honourable Minister of Health to hand over the copies of the Bill to the Clerk to read aloud the subtitle whereupon the Bill shall be deemed to have been read a first time.

CLERK: The National Health Insurance Bill 2020 [By: Honourable Minister for Health]:

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, the Bill has been read a first time. The next stage of the Bill is appointed for Monday 30th November 2020 for the person in charge of the Bill to move a motion for the second reading in accordance with Standing Order Clause 66_[2] which reads: "*At the conclusion of the proceedings on the first reading or on any subsequent stage of a bill, the next stage may be taken either forthwith or upon a day to be named, providing that second reading shall be taken no sooner than one working day after the first reading*".

**v. The Information and Communication [Amendment] Bill, 2002 [By:
Hon. Minister for Information and Communication Infrastructure].**

THE SPEAKER: I am just being informed on the Order Paper that, we have another Bill which is the Information and Communication [Amendment] Bill, 2002 but the Honourable Minister is not here. I am not sure whether he has delegated someone to oversee on his behalf to table it. Otherwise, we just have to proceed without it. In the absence of that, I wish to thank Honourable Members and Honourable Minister. I wish to adjourn the sitting to tomorrow Tuesday 24th November, 2020 at 10:00 a.m. to begin the consideration and debate proper on the 2021 Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure of the Republic of The Gambia for the period 1st January – 31st December 2021, both dates inclusive.

ADJOURNMENT

[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed to]

[The House now stand adjourned till Tuesday 24th November, 2020]



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

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

[HANSARD]

OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT

FOURTH SESSION – THIRD MEETING

**TUESDAY 24TH NOVEMBER, 2020
*SESSION – 2020***



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

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

[HANSARD]

OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT

VOLUME: I

NUMBER: 2

Third Meeting of the Fourth Session of the Fifth Assembly
of the Second Republic of The Gambia.
Proceedings of the Sitting Tuesday 24th November of the House,
2020

CONTENT:

1. PRAYERS

2. Communication from the Chair

3. Correction and Approval of Record of Votes and Proceedings of the National Assembly Sitting of Monday 23rd November, 2020.

4. BILL:

Standing Order 65 - First Reading of the Bill

The Information and Communication [Amendment] Bill, 2020 [By Hon. Minister for Information and Communication Infrastructure]

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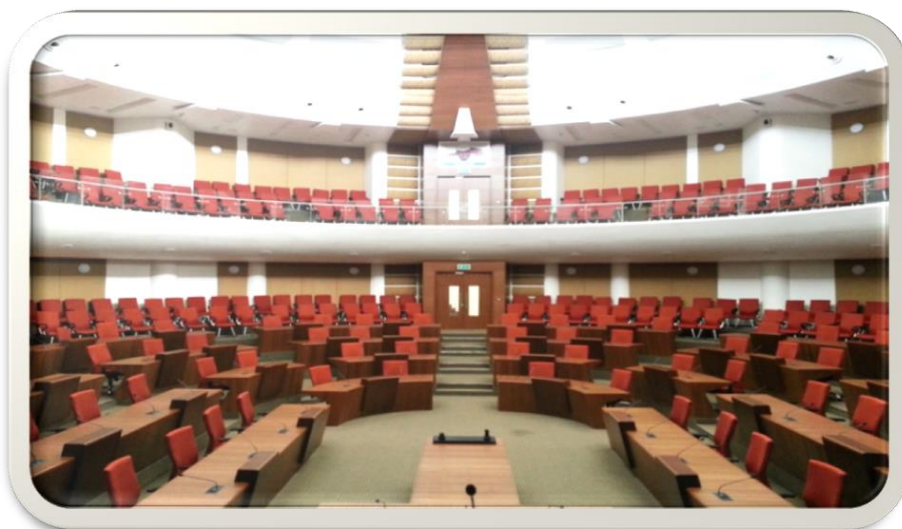
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5. MOTION:

Standing Order 86[7]

Debate on the draft 2021 Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure of the Republic of The Gambia, 01st January – 31st December, 2021 [both dates inclusive] [By: Hon. Minister for Finance and Economic Affairs]



THE CHAMBERS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF THE GAMBIA

OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE HOUSE

**FOURTH SESSION – THIRD MEETING
OF THE FIFTH ASSEMBLY
OF THE SECOND REPUBLIC**

Tuesday 24TH November, 2020

1. PRAYERS

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

[The House met at 11:00 a.m. in the New Parliament Building, Reginald Pye Lane, Banjul].

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

The House was called to Order

2. Communication from the Chair

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, today we shall begin the debate on the 2021 Draft Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure of the Republic of The Gambia [1st January to 31st December, 2021, both dates inclusive], which was tabled by the Honourable Minister for Finance and Economic Affairs on Thursday, 12th November 2020.

As you are all aware, the debate could not proceed yesterday, Monday 23rd November as initially scheduled because Committees were given time to conclude their bilateral with the Finance and Public Accounts Committee [FPAC] to consolidate the report as ~~for-per~~ the provisions of Clause [84] sub-clause 2 [b] of the Standing Orders which reads: "In addition to the activities provided for in paragraph [a] of Clause 84 [2], the Finance and Public Accounts Committee shall lay a consolidated report on the Assembly Committees' consideration of the draft budget, together with a motion for its debate".

Accordingly, the various Committees of the National Assembly went into bilaterals with Sector Ministries and Agencies from Monday 16th to Friday 20th November, 2020 in pursuance of the provisions of Clause 84 [2] [a] which reads: "Each Committee shall consider the relevant sections of the draft budget, making such enquiries and recommendations as each shall determine and shall so submit such report to Finance and Public Accounts Committee [F/PAC].

Honourable Members, today ~~{F/PAC}~~ shall lay its consolidated report in accordance with the said provisions of the Standing Orders. Finally, this august Assembly will commence business with the first reading of a bill and thereupon, proceed ~~on-with~~ the debate on ~~for~~ the motion ~~on-of~~ the 2021 Draft Estimates. Thank you very much.

Record of Votes and Proceedings of the National Assembly Sitting of Monday 23th November, 2020.

THE SPEAKER: ~~Thank you Honourable Members.~~ The records of Votes and Proceedings of the National Assembly Sitting of Monday 23rd November 2020 is before us for consideration and approval. Can any Honourable Member please move that the said records be considered and approved?

HON. LAMIN F.M. CONTA [KOMBO EAST]: I rise to move that ~~the corrections and approval of~~ the Records of Votes and Proceedings of the National Assembly Sitting of Monday 23rd November 2020 be considered and approved.

THE SPEAKER: Any seconder?

HON. SAINÉY TOURAY [JARRA EAST]: I so second, Madam Speaker.

[Question proposed]

THE SPEAKER: Any issues, observations or corrections from Honourable Members, starting from page ~~one~~1?

HON. OUSMAN TOURAY SABBACH [SANJAL]: Yes page 3 ~~no-number~~ 49, Honourable Member for Central Baddibu was not here.

HON. ALAHAJI SANKUNG JAMMEH [FONI JARROL]: ~~Yes!~~ On page 2 number 9, I was not present yesterday.

THE SPEAKER: Any more corrections on page 3?

HON. ALAHAJI SANKUNG JAMMEH [FONI JARROL]: Can I make more clarification? I did not attend the session but I was here in the afternoon. I was here before the closure of the Parliament.

THE SPEAKER: You were in Banjul but not in Parliament.

HON. ALAHAJI SANKUNG JAMMEH [FONI JARROL]: I was with you yesterday, could you remember?

HON. ALHAGIE DARBOE [LOWER FULLADU WEST]: In the statement 'Communication from the Chair', the first paragraph on the last line, The Assembly observes a minute silence "in honour" of the late Honourable Lamin Dibba.

THE SPEAKER: Yes, it will be corrected. ~~Thank you,~~ Any more on page 4?

HON. AMADOU CAMARA [NIANIJA]: Just a simple one, let them just take note of the correct names of Ministries that he served under, that is the ~~Ministry~~-~~Ministres~~ of Regional Government and Agriculture. I think the way it is indicated is not okay.

[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed to]

[The records of Votes and Proceedings of the National Assembly sitting of Monday 23rd November 2020 be approved with amendments]

3. BILL- Standing Order 65 - _First Reading of the Bill: The Information and Communication [Amendment] Bill, 2020 [By Hon. Minister for Information and Communication Infrastructure]

THE SPEAKER: Thank you very much Honourable Members. In accordance with Clause [65], only the first reading of the Bill entitled ~~"The~~ Information and Communication [Amendment] Bill, 2020" will be done today. Therefore, I will now invite the Honourable Minister, the person in charge of the Bill to hand over a copy of the Bill to the Clerk of the National Assembly who will read aloud the subtitle whereupon the Bill shall be deemed to have been read a first time. ~~Thank you very much.~~

BILL:

CLERK: ~~BILL-~~The Information and Communication Amendment Bill, 2020 by the Honourable Minister for Information and Communication Infrastructure.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, the Bill has been read the first time. The next stage of the said Bill is appointed for Monday the 30th of November 2020 for the person in charge of the Bill to move a motion for the second reading in accordance with Standing Orders 66 [2] which reads, "*At the conclusion of the proceedings on the first reading or on any subsequence stage of a bill, the next stage maybe taken either forthwith or upon a day to be named, providing that the second reading shall be taken no sooner than one working day after the first reading*".

Thank you very much Honourable Members, now we are to proceed with the other items on the agenda, but Honourable Members just to inform you that, as I indicated in the earlier communication, the Committees went into bilateral and some of them submitted their reports very late yesterday or even this morning- ~~so~~, F/PAC needs to consolidate them. I am suggesting that we suspend for an hour to allow F/PAC to consolidate the reports then we come back and continue. Do we agree?

HON. ALHAGIE MBOW [UPPER SALOUM]: Honourable Speaker, you are quite right, we just received some reports very late and we are compiling. ~~and~~ I do not think one hour will even be enough for us to do justice to these reports. Remember we are compiling and then clipping up the report. ~~So~~, I do not think we will be able to do that right within one hour, ~~so~~ My suggestion is actually to suspend until tomorrow morning when we present the report and then debate on these things.

THE SPEAKER: We may have a legal issue because of the [14 days] constitutional requirement to complete everything. ~~So~~, If we are of the opinion that maybe one hour is too short, let us extend it, but I think there is need for us to commence the debate today so that we will make some progress.

HON. ALAGIE JAWARA [LOWER BADDIBU]: Honourable Speaker, I concur with the Member for Upper Saloum. ~~because~~ If you look at the Standing Orders ~~page~~ 86 [7], with your permission, it says: "*The debate on the Motion shall be confined to the estimates and the explanatory statement together with the reported findings and recommendations of the Assembly Committees and the Finance and Public Accounts*

Committee ~~and~~ consolidated report of the Assembly Committees' consideration of the draft budget" ~~so,~~ we cannot debate without F/PAC's report. ~~So,~~ I concur with him and would want to move a Motion on Clause 53 [c] that we adjourn the debate ~~###until~~ tomorrow so that we can have a very good consolidated report.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member for Wuli West, Vice Chairperson ~~of~~ F/PAC, I would want to hear your views on this because we have a time-frame. In fact, I am aware of the Motion but let us be very careful with the timeframe. We need to take that into consideration.

HON. SIDIA S. JATTA [WULI WEST]: Can we listen please? ~~Yes,~~ If we want to do things efficiently and effectively, given that ~~the~~ budget is not a simple matter, we have to deal with it honestly in an effective and efficient way. If we want to play our role properly, I do not think one hour is enough for us to collate these reports. How many of them? ~~many?~~ It is not just putting them together and bringing them to you like that, no! We are going to reconsider them and see what is what. So, either we add two more hours or one more hour ~~or~~ as he proposed, we suspend the meeting until tomorrow for us to be able to do this more effectively and then present it tomorrow ~~,~~ That will be more in tune with Standing Order 86 [7] because the debate of the estimates go concurrently with the debate of the reports. So, I propose that we either increase the number of hours to look at them or we adjourn the meeting until tomorrow.

THE SPEAKER: I am not in disagreement with any Honourable Member ~~,~~ but may I just suggest ~~to that we~~ consider suspension until in the afternoon? That will give us more time.

HON. ALHAGIE DRAMMEH [JESHWANG]: Honourable Speaker, I think the debate was scheduled for today and tomorrow. We can still adjourn for tomorrow and set ourselves to come up with a motion to limit interventions ~~for to~~ five minutes. We can do the whole debate tomorrow, let us give priority to a good report if we want to do justice to our document. Since there are submissions today, as he said, it is not just a matter

of collation, ~~we~~ we need to revisit the document. ~~So, Please,~~ let us go with the suggestions and motions made by Honourable Members. We can still do it and it will not affect the timeline ~~please~~.

THE SPEAKER: I would ask for a ~~secondment~~ second but let me give other Honourable Members a chance as well.

HON. SUWAIBOU TOURAY [WULI EAST]: Honourable Speaker, in view of the fact that the work that is left with them which cannot be done in one or two hours, let us adjourn the Assembly until tomorrow and then, we will do the debate proactively to conclusion.

THE SPEAKER: Any seconder on the Motion?

ALHAGIE H. SOWE [JIMARA]: I rise to second the Motion.

ADJOURNMENT

[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed to]

[The House stands adjourned until Wednesday 25th November, 2020 @ 10:00am]



National Assembly, New Assembly Building, ~~Reverend Reginald~~ Pyne Lane,
Banjul, The Gambia

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

[HANSARD]

OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT

FOURTH SESSION – FIFTH MEETING

WEDNESDAY, 25th NOVEMBER, 2020

SESSION – 2020



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

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

[HANSARD]

OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT

VOLUME: I

NUMBER: 3

Fourth Meeting of the Fourth Session of the Fifth Assembly
of the Second Republic of The Gambia.

Proceedings of the Sitting of Wednesday 25th November,
2020.

CONTENT:

1.Prayers

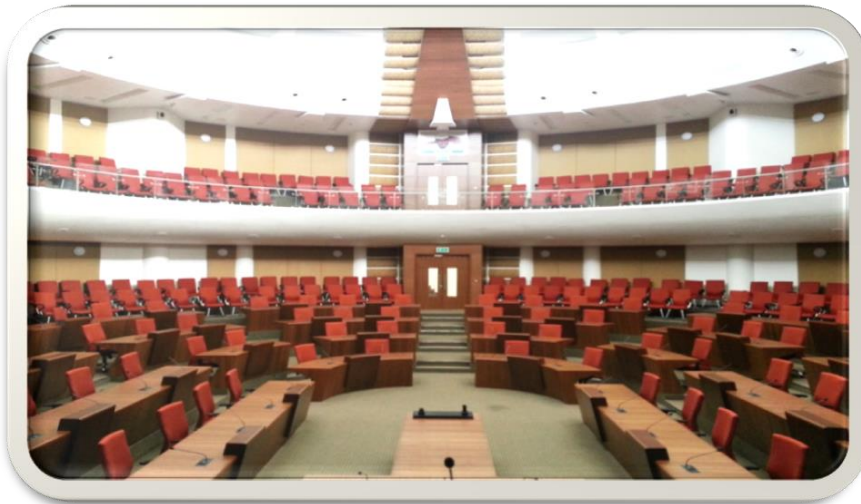
2.Communication from the Chair

3.Record of Votes and Proceedings of the National Assembly Sitting of Tuesday 24th November, 2020

4. MOTION

Standing Order [86]

Debate on the Draft 2021 Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure of the Republic of the Gambia, [01st January to 31st December, 2021, both dates inclusive] ~~By:-~~ by the Hon. Minister for Finance and Economic Affairs~~].~~



**THE CHAMBERS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF THE GAMBIA OFFICIAL
HANSARD REPORT OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE HOUSE**

**FOURTH SESSION – FOURTH MEETING
OF THE FIFTH ASSEMBLY
OF THE SECOND REPUBLIC**

WEDNESDAY 25th NOVEMBER, 2020

MORNING SITTING

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1. PRAYERS:

[The Speaker, Hon. Alh. Momodou L.K. Sanneh, Read the Prayers].

[The House met at 10:00 a.m. in New Assembly Building, Reginald Pye Lane, Banjul].

[The Speaker, Hon. Alh. Momodou L.K. Sanneh, in the Chair].

The House was called to Order

2. COMMUNICATION FROM THE CHAIR

THE SPEAKER: Good morning Honourable Members, Honourable Ministers and Members of the Press. Once more, you are all welcome to the sitting of today. We shall begin with the 2021 Draft Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure of the Republic of The Gambia, 1st January to 31st December 2021 both days inclusive. As we are all aware, ~~that the~~ 2021 Draft Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure ~~was-were~~ tabled by the Honourable Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs on Thursday, 12th November, 2020.

However, the debate could not proceed yesterday following a motion under Clause [53] [c] of the Standing Orders by the Honourable Member for Lower ~~Biddibu-Baddibu~~ and seconded by the Honourable Member for Jimmara to adjourn the Assembly until today 25th November 2020, to allow the committees and F/PAC in particular to finalize the consolidated report as per the provision of Clause [84] [2] [b] of the Standing Orders which reads: "In addition to the activities provided for in paragraph [A] of the Standing Orders, the Public Accounts Committee, shall lay a consolidated report on the Assembly committees' consolidation of the draft budget together with a motion for its debate". Accordingly, F/PAC shall today, lay a consolidated report in accordance with the said provision of the Standing Orders as indicated on the Order Paper ~~thank you~~.

3. Record of Votes and Proceedings of the National Assembly Sitting of Tuesday 24th November, 2020.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, the Record of Votes and Proceedings of the National Assembly Sitting of Tuesday 24th November, 2020 is before us for correction and approval. Can any Honourable Member please move that the said Record of Votes and Proceedings be corrected and approved?

HON. KEBBA JALLOW [JARRA CENTRAL]: I rise to move that the Record of Votes and Proceedings of the National Assembly Sitting of Tuesday 24th November, 2020 be approved.

THE SPEAKER: Any seconder?

HON. ALHAJI SANKUNG JAMMEH [FONI JARROL]: I so second the motion.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, it has been moved and seconded that the Record of Votes and Proceedings of the National Assembly Sitting of Tuesday 24th November, 2020 be approved. Any issue or observation from any Honourable Member, ~~s~~ starting from page ~~one~~1?

HON. ALHAGIE DARBOE [LOWER FULLADU WEST]: Number 4_[b] the second line, the Information and Communication Amendment Bill instead of Communications ~~s~~ Amendment Bill ~~s~~_. The "s" should be omitted in both Communications and Bills, ~~thank~~ ~~you~~.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member, the "s" will go but I understand this is how it is written on the Bill thank you. Any observation from any Honourable Member?

HON. SAINY TOURAY [JARRA EAST]: Page ~~one~~1, Fifth Assembly of the Second Republic 2020 Legislative Year, Third Ordinary Session, it should have been Fourth Ordinary Session as opposed to Third Ordinary Session. On the same page, the meeting yesterday did not commence at 10 o'clock, it was after 10. If you go to page 3, Record of votes and Proceedings of the National Assembly sitting of Monday 23rd, "it should be Tuesday 24th". On page 4 also, under Bill, it should be Standing Orders ~~thank you~~.

THE SPEAKER: Any other comment?

HON. BILLAY G. TUNKARA [KANTORA]: On page 1, I am just trying to give proposal, whatever it appears to be, Third Ordinary Session is being seen throughout in all the pages as well.

HON. OUSMAN TOURAY [SABACH SANJAL]: I just want to refer Members to page ~~one~~¹. I think he said it should be Tuesday 24th, we are considering the Monday Order Paper and that was on "Monday" 23rd not "Tuesday 24th".

THE SPEAKER: Okay. thank you. Any issues or observations on page ~~two~~², ~~three~~³, ~~four~~⁴?

HON. SAINÉY TOURAY [JARRA EAST]: For the purpose of consistency on page 4, FPAC should be written as F slash PAC [~~F~~^F/PAC^F]

THE SPEAKER: Any other issue? We move to page 5?

HON. SUWAIBOU TOURAY [WULI EAST]: Honourable Speaker, if you go to Bills, where you have information and communications, it should be "information and communication" not the plural "communications".

THE SPEAKER: I understand this is how it is written on the Bill with "s" that is the ~~tit~~^{le} of the Bill. Any more on Page 6?

HON. SUWAIBOU TOURAY [WULIE EAST]: On page 6, where it says "motion Without Notice", I want us to look at that very carefully, and where it also says, "~~..~~^{..}to allow F/PAC to compile its consolidated report of the committees". I do not think there will be any consolidated report at that time~~..~~^{..}. They are going to compile the report of committees into a consolidated report~~..~~^{..} so~~..~~^{..} let us adjust that a little bit. "Question put and agreed to", should be adjusted in the same format.

THE SPEAKER: It will be noted~~..~~^{..} any other concern?

HON. BILLAY G. TUNKARA [KANTORA]: Where it says that when the question was put for those in favour to say "Aye", those not in favour to say "No". The word please should be inserted to read please say "Aye" or "No"

THE SPEAKER: Any other Honourable Member? page 7?

HON. SUWAIBOU TOURAY [WULIE EAST]: Page 7 under the "Ayes have it" and the "Assembly stand s adjourned", we are now reporting what happened on Monday, so it should be the "Assembly stood adjourned" not "stand s adjourned".

HON. SAINIEY TOURAY [JARRA EAST]: Under "Question put and Agreed to" which reads: "Be it resolved that this Assembly""...". It should not be in italics and not in capital letter, only the letter "B" should be in a capital letter ~~thank you~~.

HON. SIDIA .S. JATTA [WULI WEST]: On the same page, the word "august", the letter "A" should be made capital instead of small letter.

THE SPEAKER:

[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed to]

[That the Record of Votes and Proceedings of the National Assembly Sitting of Tuesday 24th, November, 2020 be approved with amendments]

MOTION:

Standing Order [86]

Debate on the Draft 2021 Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure of the Republic of the Gambia, 01st January to 31st December, 2021 [both dates inclusive] ~~[By: by~~ Hon. Minister for Finance and Economic Affairs].

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, the 2021 Draft Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure was tabled by the Honourable Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs and seconded by the Honourable Member for Nianija, on Thursday 12th November, 2020. Therefore, we are to commence the debate on the said Draft Estimates. In view of that,

may I now call on the Honourable Member for Wuli West Constituency, Member of F/PAC to move a motion in accordance with Clause 84 [2] [b], for consideration on the debate proper of the 2021 Draft Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure of the Republic of The Gambia, thank you.

HON. SIDIA .S. JATTA [WULI WEST]: In compliance with Standing Orders [86] [7], I beg the indulgence of this august Assembly to lay before you the consolidated report of the committees of the National Assembly on the Draft Estimates.

Honourable Speaker, I will give an introduction and then allow my colleagues to give the technical details of what we did yesterday. I think it is important to state as a start that the essence of what we did as committees on the Draft Estimates, was essentially to cut down the deficit of the budget. So, in the view of F/PAC, any saving that has been made in that process should not be ploughed back into the same budget because we will be defeating the purpose for which we did the cut. But I have seen in some committee reports even where they have made no cut, they are making suggestions for monumental increase of sudden budget lines. I wonder where the money is going to come from, whether from the sky or somewhere else. So, let me just read the introduction and then I leave my colleagues to go into the technical details of the work of the committees and F/PAC.

Honourable Speaker, pursuant to Section 81 [1] and 84 [1] and [2] of the Standing Orders, committees of the National Assembly are mandated to make such enquiries and make recommendations to the Draft Estimates of Revenue and Expenditures and submit their reports to the Finance and Public Accounts Committee F/PAC to lay a consolidated report which we are now doing before you.

The Finance and Public Accounts Committee [F/PAC] hardly receives report of the various committees and having also invited the supreme and other institutions under its purview to scrutinise their respective draft Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure for the fiscal year 2021 from Tuesday 17th to Friday 21st November 2020, herein submit this consolidated report on the 2021 draft Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure for

consideration by the National Assembly. The report incorporates the recommendations of F/PAC and the various committees following the review of the draft Estimates. Detailed ~~reports~~ and recommendations of various draft lists are provided as addendum to this consolidated report. Recommendation of the 2021 Draft Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure, estimates of supreme and other oversight institutions. Finance and Public Accounts Committee met with senior officers from the following institutions as mandated by the National Assembly to scrutinize their respective draft Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure for the fiscal year 2021. When they ~~said~~ say supreme institutions, the Constitution recognizes the National Audit Office, the Judiciary and the Independent Electoral Commission. This does not mean that they are the only supreme institutions, ~~;-~~ this is a lacuna in the Constitution. The most supreme of supreme institutions of oversight in this country is this National Assembly, ~~;-~~ Even though the Constitution has not said so, ~~but~~ that is the fact. Ombudsman also is another oversight institution but it is not indicated as such, ~~;-~~ Independent Electoral Commission, the National Assembly and then Ombudsman.

I will just do the last bit and allow my colleagues to go into the technical details. Considering the limited resource envelope coupled with [Six Billion Dalasi] deficit, the Committee resolved and recommended ~~for to~~ the National Assembly that the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure of the Gambia for the fiscal year 2021 ~~to~~ be amended as follows. ~~Yes~~, Honourable Mbow, I now hand over to you.

HON. ALHAGIE MBOW [UPPER SALOUM]: ~~Thank you very much Honourable Chair,~~ I would just like to remind the Members about Section ~~[44]~~ of the 1997 Constitution and Section 144] ~~Subsection~~ [1] of the same Constitution and Section [159] ~~Subsection~~ [4], which clearly indicates that these institutions should prepare their budget and submit it to the President who cannot change anything but to forward it to the National Assembly and if he so desires, ~~will~~ send it with an explanatory memorandum of concerns about the budget of those institutions and that of the IEC, the Judiciary and the National Audit Office. I can confirm that what was submitted by those supreme institutions through the Minister of Finance is exactly what was submitted to us by the

President and he has also submitted that with a memo to explain his concerns about certain institutions that was actually done but they have not changed anything along the line of those budgetary items of those institutions. Now, I think we are all aware that when you look at the 2021 Estimates, it is clear that we have a deficit of about {D6 billion}. Even though people are saying {7 billion}, I have no idea where they are getting their figures from but the deficit is about {D6 billion} and it was our resolve at the level of F/PAC that we ~~try~~tried to reduce this deficit to a manageable amount. The fact being that, there are institutions that the Minister of Finance cannot do anything about it. So, it was up to us as Parliament to help him reduce the deficit further because this is outside his control. Now, the first one we are going to deal with is the National Audit Office, what was approved for the National Audit Office by us last year was {D112 million} and they are requesting {D208 million} for the 2021 budget estimates ~~that was what they requested for~~. In our conversation with them, we asked them to reduce their budget by {D80 million}, which they have agreed to and they have also done that. ~~So, really~~ There was no push and pull between us and they understood the economic situation of the country and they have agreed to reduce their budget by {D80 million}. Essentially, what we recommended was {D128 million}. Now, we have not cut any particular area, we have asked them to do the cutting themselves, we gave the knife back to them to cut and they were able to cut and gave us a report which we are going to submit to the Minister of Finance so that, they can do the reallocation, but they have actually agreed to cut {D80 million}. Then to the judiciary, last year, we approved {D170 million} and this year they requested for {D261 million} in the estimates. In our discussion also, we explained the same situation about the economic condition of the country and knowing fully well that Covid is still around, it has not gone away yet and we do not know what is going to come next and they also agreed to reduce their budget by {D80 million} as well, that is the judiciary. Again, we have not asked them to cut any particular area, they went back on their own and do the cutting themselves and we are going to give the Minister of Finance the area that they want to cut so that, they can actually update the estimates. Then we go on to the Independent Electoral Commission, the Independent Electoral Commission last year, their approved

budget was {D52 million}. This year, they requested for {D581 million} and their request basically is almost about 6000% and they have indicated why? ~~But~~ During the conversation also, we asked them to go back and revise their budget and when they came back, it was not satisfactory to us as members of F/PAC and we managed to cut {D265 000million} from the budget and we will give the information to the Minister of Finance to show exactly the area that we cut.

~~Now,~~ Coming back to the National Assembly, like the Honourable Member for Wuli West has mentioned, we are the supreme institution and our responsibility is oversight. We therefore, need to move, have meetings and lot of consultations. ~~Now,~~ What we approved last year on the travel expenses for the National Assembly was {D18 million}. The submission to the ~~Minister~~ Ministry of Finance was {D14 million} and they decided to reduce it. I do not know where they ~~get~~ got the power from but anyway, we agreed at the level of F/PAC to put it back because they cannot reduce our budget.

Now on training, last year we approved Three Million Five Hundred Thousand Dalasi [D3, 500,000] for the National Assembly and the submission also was Three Million Five Hundred Thousand Dalasi. ~~and,~~ In the estimates, we saw {D1.5 million} but we restored back what we requested for. On committee expenses, last year we approved {D33,500,000 million five hundred thousand dalasi}. This year's submission also was the same figure ~~andbut,~~ in the estimates, we have seen {D24 million} and there was a reduction which I do not know the reason ~~for,~~ ~~but~~ We have also restored that back in the National Assembly budget.

On the special incentive allowance and maintenance of building, I think this one we all know how or what happened during the rainy season. I think the building leaks, we all know that the cooling system also is a problem and we submitted {D25 million} but they put in the estimates about {D10 million}. We decided to add another ~~five-D5 million~~ to make it {D15 million dalasi}. ~~So,~~ Instead of our original submission which was {D25 million}, we have reduced that one by {D10 million} to make it {D15 million} for the maintenance of the National Assembly building.

The special incentive allowance, last year we approved {D4.6 million} and we submitted the same amount this year and the estimates also maintained the same. However, we realized that what we agreed on the floor last year about those special allowances for the staff that work with us throughout the day and night was not actually captured in the budget and there was a deficit of {D5 million} which we have to add this year to ensure that it is properly captured so that the staff that support us in our various missions in the country and outside the country can be paid accordingly.

We now go to ~~the~~ Office of the President, we told them that since they are the number one office, they should show example by cutting their own budget. ~~But~~ We must also remember that, when we talk about ~~the~~ Office of the President, there are a lot of offices that are under ~~the~~ Office of the President such as ~~the~~ Office of the Vice President, the National Disaster Management, the ~~National State~~ Intelligent Service, the Population Secretariat and NaNA ~~are all there~~. ~~So~~, There are a lot of other offices that are under ~~the~~ Office of the President. ~~So~~, It is not ~~the~~ Office of the President per se because if you look at the actual expenditure for ~~the~~ Office of the President alone, it is about half of what we are seeing in here. ~~So~~, The rest was with the other offices that are sub-vented. We gave them an amount to cut, which is about {D20 million}, They decided to come back to us with {D12 million}. Then we took the knife on our own and ~~then~~ cut {D21 million}.

Office of the Vice President, we also gave them the knife to cut from themselves {D50 million} and they complied. ~~So~~, In total, we have cut {D36 million} from the Office of the President which comprises ~~the OP, the~~ Office of the President itself and ~~the~~ Office of the Vice President, We managed to reduce their budget by {D36 million}.

Then we go to the Ministry of Finance, With ~~the Minister~~ Ministry of Finance also, we asked them the same thing because we do not want to do anything that will impact on the operation of any Ministry and that is all the more reason why we asked them to look at their own budget and actually reduce it. We have done that with the Ministry of Finance but for them, they also gave a lot of excuses that they are doing this and that. So, they handed over the knife back to us and effectively, we cut them very well, we

cut ₦47, 805. 000 and we gave them the information to update the estimates because as you know, they handed the knife back to us which made it very easy for us.

The Ombudsman also, their approved budget was ₦20 million in 2020. ~~So,~~ The draft estimates indicate ₦21 million as a slight increase but during the conversation or ~~during the~~ meeting with them, we felt so sorry especially for the conditions of their offices and vehicles. So, we agreed in principle to increase the budget of the Ombudsman ~~by to~~ ₦25 million because we were clearly told that they have started to lose their employees to other institutions because of salaries and other benefits that they do not have, ~~and~~ That was all the more reasons why we agreed unilaterally at the level of F/PAC to increase theirs to ₦25 million which is exactly what they were asking for.

For the Centralized Services, the report I gave was from F/PAC ~~and then~~ After that, I went to other committees. ~~So,~~ What I said so far is from F/PAC. You know the Centralized Services is under the Ministry of Finance ~~and if you may say,~~ The first item they have is the total estimates for the Centralized Service which is about ₦1.9 billion. ~~Now~~ Going through the lines, the first item we saw was the contingency payroll. ~~For~~ the contingency payroll last year, we approved ₦10 million in the estimates and this year, they have ₦200 million. ~~But~~ The Committee is of the view that ~~any~~ payroll issues have to be handled by PMO and that must be reflected clearly in the man-power budgets. That is what the Committee resolved and the Committee also decided to remove that from the centralized service which is ₦200 million. Maybe when the Minister of Finance comes in, he can give more if he so desires.

On input subsidy, last year we approved ₦150 million and this year's estimate is ₦200 million ~~and~~ The input subsidy is in relation to Agriculture that is the subsidy under fertilizers etc. What we resolved to do is to remove it from the Centralized Services since this is relating to Agriculture. We sent it back to the ~~Minister~~ Ministry of Agriculture for them to manage it themselves. ~~But~~ We must understand that it is meant to subsidize fertilizers for the farmers and nothing else. They must not vire anything from that budget line to any other area.

~~Now~~ Subvention to non-financial corporation and other charges, ~~—~~ last year we approved {D500 million} and the estimate was {D780 million}. The breakdown is this, ~~—~~ from the {D780 million}, {D180 million} is for the recapitalization of Central Bank and if you look at the audit report for Central Bank, the Auditor~~s~~ actually have highlighted it year by year that the capital requirements for Central Bank is not up to what it supposed to be. So, what the Ministry ~~actually~~ or ~~what the~~ government is doing now is that, every year they give money until they meet the capital requirement of the Central Bank. ~~For~~ the {D180 million}, we are going to leave it in the Centralized Services. ~~but~~ ~~From~~ the balance of {D600 million}, ~~the~~ {D300 million} is in relation to Agriculture which is about the ITFC loan ~~I believed~~. ~~So~~—We want the Minister to reallocate that to the Minister of Agriculture because ~~this it~~ is for Agriculture, so let it go to that Ministry. The other {D300 million} is in relation to NAWEC. ~~So~~—We also ~~say-said~~ that {D300 million} must be reallocated to the ~~Minister~~ Ministry of Energy. Since that is their portfolio, let them also handle it. ~~But~~—We also ~~say-said~~ that those amounts must not be vired for anything else other than what they are meant for, that is our resolve. Then we go to contingency and other charges, ~~—~~ Last year we approved {D30 million} and the estimate was {D300 million}. This year, we are the ones to remove that completely from the centralized service and that is going to be reduced from the budget.

On vehicles, in the centralized services, there is a budget line of vehicles for {D10 million} and we do not know what that is for, ~~and~~—Since all the Ministries are responsible for their own vehicles, we have agreed unilaterally to remove that from the centralized services. ~~Now~~—In total, ~~the~~ F/PAC was able to reduce {D36 million} from the Office of the President, {D267 million} from ~~the~~ Independent Electoral Commission, {D80 million} from the Judiciary, {D80 million} from ~~the~~ National Audit Office, {D47, 825, _000} ~~thousand~~ from ~~the~~ Ministry of Finance and {D510 million} from the Centralized Services, ~~—~~ ~~All together~~ Altogether, it is over {D900 million} that we think we should reduce from the deficit unless the Ministry of Finance is able to convince us otherwise.

Let me go to the Ministry of Health, the Committee agreed with the conclusion that attractive allowances for Doctors and PhD holders of the Ministry can be a form of

motivation that serves as a retention mechanism for quality service delivery. The actual estimated amount to be added or redirected for the year 2021 is {D2, 946, 349} and this was what the Committee actually recommended to be added as allowances to those special people that work in the Ministry.

In addition, the Ministry is expecting two of its staff to complete their PhD programs in the year 2021 which means that {D4, 332, 000} would have to be redirected from the hospitals to the Central Ministry. The total for 2021 being requested for allowances to be increased by {D7, 278, 349} is from the Health Committee.

[POINT OF OBSERVATION]

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member for Busumbala, I have not given you the floor yet. Honourable Member for Upper Saloum do you allow him?

HON. SAIKOUBA JARJU [BUSUMBALA]: ~~Thank you very much.~~ We want clarity, the presenter mentioned the total saving of {D900 million}, if I heard it correctly. ~~But~~ On the document, we did not see anything, ~~we~~ we have seen only {D510 million}. ~~So,~~ That is the clarity we want for record proposes.

HON. ALHAGIE MBOW [UPPER SALOUM]: ~~I think~~ I did mention what we have saved from ~~the~~ Office of the President which is {D36 million}. We have also reduced ~~the~~ Independent Electoral Commission [IEC] by {D267 million} and we have ~~also~~ reduced ~~the~~ National Audit Office by {D80 million}, ~~the~~ the Ministry of Finance about {D47 million} and ~~the~~ Centralized Services themselves {D510 million}. ~~So,~~ If you add that to ~~the~~ Office of the President, ~~the~~ Independent Electoral Commission and the rest, that is where you get the {D900 million} plus.

HON. SAIKOUBA JARJU [BUSUMBALA]: If I am allowed, my issue is, it has not been indicated in the report.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member for Busumbala, you said if you are allowed and you are not allowed, you are taking the floor on your own. Please sit down. Honourable Member for Upper Saloum do you allow him?

HON. ALHAGIE MBOW [UPPER SALOUM]: Let him go ahead.

HON. SAIKOUBA JARJU [BUSUMBALA]: There is no argument on what he is presenting. I want it to be clear and be-put on record. The {D900 million} as savings have not been totaled in the report, he was just announcing it orally. ~~So,~~ That is my issue.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member for Busumbala, please allow him to go ahead with his presentation and when he is done, then you can come in with your questions.

HON. ALHAGIE MBOW [UPPER SALOUM]: ~~Thank you very much.~~ The Office of the Clerk is going to make a photocopy of the summary of those amounts cut so that you have better understanding.

Now on drugs and dressing materials, still on the Ministry of Health, the Committee is also of the view that our health facilities need to be well stocked~~ed~~ with drugs and dressing materials at all times and would support any increment in this budget line item in addition to the request by the Ministry for an amount of {D200 million} for drugs and dressing. ~~So,~~ The Committee is asking for another {D200 million} to be added to the Ministry of Health for drugs and dressing.

On Medicines Control Agency, the Committee noted the request for an increase in its subvention for 2021 to an amount of {D16, 154 433} as other charges for the Medicines Control Agency as a ~~satisfactory-statutorily subvention-subvented~~ agency under the Ministry of Health. However, the agency was only allocated {D2 million} for the whole year 2021, which may indicate adverse effect of its services in terms of monitoring ~~for~~ the availability of quality, safe and efficacious medicines. The Committee therefore, decided to present it to plenary for consideration.

~~Minister-Ministry~~ of Agriculture, ~~:-~~ in view of the challenges of the Agricultural Sector in the country, the Select Committee on Agriculture recommends for additional funds

allocation of {D300 million} to the ~~Minister~~-Ministry of Agriculture to better prepare for the technical arms of the Ministry namely NARI, WALIC, GLMA, ~~which is~~ [Gambia Livestock Marketing Agency], National Seed Secretariat, Plowing Service Unit, Agricultural Business Service Unit, Food Technology Service Unit, etc. ~~So~~—The Committee on Agriculture requested for additional {D300 million} to be added to the budget of the Ministry for Agriculture so that they can be more effective in their operations.

On the ~~Minister~~-Ministry of Tourism and Culture, the Select Committee on Tourism, Culture, Arts, Youths and Sports, having reviewed the draft estimates of recurrent and development expenditure of the ~~Minister~~-Ministry of Tourism and Culture, recommended as follows: That the total allocation of the ~~Minister~~-Ministry of Tourism and Culture in 2021 estimate is {D43, 568,000} and the proposed estimate is {D52, 668, 000} which means that they need an additional {D9.1 million} to be added. On the recurrent budget, the request is {D32, 609,000} in the 2021 budget estimates but the proposed estimate is {D32 million} which means it exceeded the estimates because they are given {D100, 000} more than what they requested for.

In 2021, the Development Budget for the Ministry of Tourism is {D10, 958, 486} and they requested for {D20, 058, 486} and an additional {D9, 100,000} to be added to that budget line item. The recurrent budget is {D32, 609, 589} and for the proposed estimate, there is a reduction of {D100, 000} on General Administration. They also deducted a total of Hundred Thousand Dalasi from Telecommunication Service and also {D50, 000} for maintenance of equipment.

~~Now~~—On the development budget itself, the Ministry's estimate is {D10, 958, 000} and the proposed estimate is {D20 million}. ~~Now~~—This {D9, 100,000} they asked us to add to the Ministry of Tourism, {D6, 800, 000} is for development and rehabilitation, {D1.8 million} for the dilapidated Mungo Park Memorial Obelisk, {D2 million} is for the rehabilitation of Musa Molloh mausoleum, {D3 million} is for the replacement of the old equipment at the GTHI. ~~Then~~—the Initiative for Heritage Conservation, the estimate is {D5.6 million}. What they want, is {D7.9 million} and they also want us to add {D2.3

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million} on the Initiative Heritage Conservation and that is to operationalize the collecting society of the Gambia. The total amount needed is {D9, 100, 000} and for the recommended source, ~~from~~ the Committee is saying {D100,000} from the money saved. ~~because you know~~ They have already saved {D100,000} and the source of additional fund, they said {D9 million} for F/PAC consideration.

~~For~~ then Ministry of Youths and Sports, the following recommendations were made~~:-~~ on travel expenses in 2019, the actual was {D3.8 million}. In 2020, we approved {D2 million} and the estimate is {D2 million} and what the Committee proposed is to make it {D3 million} with an addition of {D1million} for the travel expenses ~~of the Youths and Sports Ministry~~.

On the maintenance of building and facilities, the actual estimates in 2019 was {D293, 000}. In 2020 ~~it~~ was {D100, 000} and the estimate right now is zero and the Committee recommended {D100, 000} to be given to them for the maintenance of buildings and facilities. With regards to the maintenance of equipment, the actual estimates in 2019 was {D29, 450}. The 2020 approved estimate was {D150, 000} and the current estimates ~~for~~ 2021 is zero. ~~and~~ The Committee recommended that {D150, 000} be added to that budget line.

On Conferences, Workshops and Seminars, the actual estimates in 2019 was {D150,000} but in 2020, the approved estimate was {D300 million}. ~~The~~ 2021 estimate is {D150,000} and the Committee asked for an additional {D150,000} to make it {D300,000} for the Minister of Youths and Sports to take care of Conferences, Workshops and Seminars.

On vehicles, the 2019 actual estimate was {D2.5 million} and the 2020 approved estimate was zero whereas the estimate for this year is {D1.5 million}. The Committee proposed it to be {D3 million} which means that they want another {D1.5 million} to be added to make it {D3 million}. Justifications on the travel expenses, Statutory International Meetings and International Sports Competitions, ~~the justification~~ is to facilitate the Ministry's participation in the International Statutory Meetings and sport

fora at UN, AU, Commonwealth and ECOWAS and to attend African Cup of Nations and Olympic Games in Japan. That is why they asked F/PAC to consider that.

On the Maintenance of Building, they want to upgrade and maintain the regional offices and staff quarters, most of which are not fit for human habitation. On the maintenance of equipment, the purpose is to carryout major maintenance on its equipment. ~~and~~ For conference and workshop, it is earmarked to build the capacity of staff, youths and sports organizations, facilitate senior management meetings and annual ministerial retreat for planning and coordination. They asked F/PAC to consider {D150,000} to be added to their budget.

On vehicles, provision of vehicles for the Honourable Minister and Director of Planning and Programs, they also asked F/PAC to consider an additional {D1.5 million} to be added to that budget line. ~~so,~~ the total amount is {D2, 900,000}. On the Sport Development Levy, {D27, 33,763} is projected to be collected by GRA. Under administration fees, the Committee has recommended the said sum to be allocated to the Ministry of Youths and Sports.

For the Minister of Lands and Regional Government, the budget of the Ministry is increased from {D145 million} in 2020 to {D155 million} in 2021. ~~So,~~ There is an increment of almost {D10 million}. The following budget lines were recommended for increment: ~~such as, the~~ support for local human resource development, the estimate is {D2 million} and the Committee recommended {D5 million} which means additional {D3 million} to be added.

on Lands Commission, the estimate is {D4 million} and the Committee recommended that to be increased to {D7 million} to allow the Lands Commission to be more effective in their duties and responsibilities.

subvention to Area Councils, the estimate on their report is zero but I believe the estimate is {D10 million}. I am not sure maybe they missed it but it is {D10 million}. However, the Committee recommended {D16 million} meaning that they need to add another {D6 million} on the subvention for the Area Councils to make it {D16 million}.

~~Now~~ Number ~~{4}~~ which is cadastral mapping, the Committee recommended for the Minister of Finance to consider the partnership of the Lands Ministry to form a cadastral mapping. On the compensation for land acquisition, the state should provide ~~{D2 million}~~ compensation packages and they also asked in their report that, they needed ~~{D1.6 million}~~ to buy motorbikes so that the Planning Department can go round to do their work. However, during the conversation here, they have told us that it was a typo, what they requested was ~~{D650, 000}~~. Mr. Chairperson, is that correct? Then, instead of the ~~{D1.6 million}~~ they indicated here in the report, it is supposed to be ~~{D650, 000}~~ and that is to buy motorbikes for the Planning Unit of the Ministry.

Ministry of Transport Works and Infrastructure, from the reading of the budget estimates of the Ministry, the following budget line items were recommended for adjustment by the Committee on Monitoring of Government Projects. Greater Banjul Area Roads Project, the estimate is ~~{D423 million}~~ and the Committee recommended an additional ~~{D77 million}~~ to be added. On the OIC Conference Center, I guess it should be OIC roads, the estimate on the development budget is almost ~~{D1.8 billion}~~ and the Committee recommended another ~~{D100 million}~~ to be added. On the Niumi "Hakalang" Road Project, the estimate is two hundred and sixty-five million five hundred thousand Dalasi [~~D265, 500, 000~~]-~~two hundred and sixty-five thousand million five hundred thousand dalasi~~, the Committee recommended an additional ~~{D234, 500, 000}~~ to be added.

On the Saloum Nianija, the estimate shows ~~{D210 million}~~ for the road construction~~72~~. The Committee recommended an additional ~~{D290 million}~~ to be added to that particular budget line item. However, the Committee actually has not also shown us where we are going to get this funding from~~72~~. They have not indicated that as opposed to other committees that would tell us that~~72~~ we want this to be added but you can do this or that. ~~So~~7-The Committee made a recommendation for this to be increased but they have not given us any area where we can actually get the money from.

The Ministry of Trade, Industry, Regional Integration and Employment, the Committee on Trade, recommended the following budget lines for the Ministry of Trade~~72~~: ~~travel~~

expenses, the estimate currently shows {D2 million} and they recommended {D1. million five hundred thousand 500, 000}.

Support Operation of existing Jobs, the committee recommended {D1.5 million} operational cost, the estimate shows {D5.3 million} and the Committee recommended an additional {D1 million} to be added on the operational cost and they too have not shown us where we are going to get that from.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation and Gambians Abroad, in view of the immense financial burden diplomatic missions placed on the coffers of our country, especially given that if what is accrued to the country as a result of their existence is not commensurate with what is expended on them, The Committee recommended as follows:

- (1) That the government takes measures to gradually close down some of the missions particularly those which are not strategically rewarding.
- (2) That in the interim, efforts are being made to downsize some of them especially those that are not strategically located.

Again, our understanding is that when you downsize, it means that the number of staff that are there should be reduced gradually before you totally close them because I think there is cost involved in the closure of some of these embassies. That consideration should be given to ~~practice-practise~~ one mission which is strategically located to be accredited to two or more countries.

~~Now~~ On the Telecommunication budget line item, the estimate was {D4 million}, the amended submission is {D3.5 million} and they have agreed to reduce that budget line item by {D500, 000}. Then they have listed the various missions, the Abuja Mission, they want the travel budget to be reduced by {D200, 000}. On the maintenance of buildings in Abuja also, they want that to be reduced by {D200, 000}.

In Brussels, they want the travel expenses to be cut by {D200, 000}, and welfare for Gambians {D200, 000}. Telecommunications in Brussels is also to be reduced by {D300,

000}. In Jidda, they recommended ~~that~~ the travel to be reduced by {D200, 000}. The Maintenance of Vehicles in Jidda, they also recommended that to be reduced by {D200 000} and the purchase of fuel and lubricants also, they want that to be reduced by {D200, 000}.

In Addis Ababa, they have recommended the purchase of fuel to be reduced by {D200, 000}. In New Delhi, it is recommended that the travel expenses be reduced by {D200, 000}, purchase of fuel and lubricant also to be cut by {D200, 000}, official entertainment should also to be reduced by {D150, 000} and in Ankara, the furniture and fittings to be also cut by {D500, 000}. Then to Doha, the welfare of Gambians should also to be reduced by {D200, 000}. ~~So,~~ In total, they were able to cut almost {D3, -950, _000} in those embassies. Then we go to the missions, ~~;~~ Nouakchott approved budget was Six Million and Fifty Thousand Dalasi [D6, 050,000]. In Freetown, it was Five Million Dalasi [D5, 000000] and the total was {D11, 050, _000}. ~~-So,~~ The overall savings from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, is Fifteen Million Dalasi [D15, 000, 000] that is the cuts they have made in that particular Ministry.

Ministry of Justice, the Committee recommended the following ~~;~~ on the electricity, water and sewage under general administration, they want that to be cut by {D1million}. Under Conferences, Workshops and Seminars, they want that to be cut by Five Hundred Thousand Dalasi [D500, 000], under Stationery and General Administration, they want that to be cut by Four Hundred Thousand Dalasi [D400, 000] and on miscellaneous expenses, still under the Ministry of Justice, they want a cut of Two Hundred Thousand Dalasi [D200, 000].

On the purchase of Fuel and Lubricants, the Committee recommended a cut of Fifty Thousand Dalasi [D50, 000], and the Maintenance of Vehicles still under Civil Litigation and International Law, they want a cut of One Hundred Thousand Dalasi [D100, _000]. On the Conferences, Workshops and Seminars under Civil Litigation still, they want that to be cut by Two Hundred Thousand Dalasi [D200, 000]. On the Furniture and Fittings under Civil Litigation, they want that to be cut by Fifty Thousand Dalasi [D50, 000] and

on the printing expenses, they also want that to be increased by Hundred Thousand Dalasi [D100, 000].

On the travel expenses, business registration service, they want that to be cut by One Hundred Thousand Dalasi [D100, 000]. On electricity and water sewage, they want that to be cut by {D250, 000} and on the miscellaneous expenses and provision of interstate services, they want that cut by {D225, 000}. In total, they have cut Two Million, Eight Hundred and Seventy-Five Thousand Dalasi [D2, 875, 000] from the Ministry of Justice.

However, ~~that~~ {D100, 000} to be reallocated to printing expenses, legislative drafting and {D1.5 million} allocated to vehicles specifically for the National Agency for Legal Aid [NALA]. ~~So,~~ Effectively they were able to cut {D2, 875, 000} but they have reallocated {D1.5 million} out of the amount within the same institution. Now the total savings they have made is {D1, 275, 000} and we will give the information to the Minister of Finance for compilation after we have agreed.

On Human Rights, the purchase of fuel and lubricants under generation administration, they want that to be cut by Two Hundred And Fifty Thousand Dalasi [D250,000,~~00~~]. On the Maintenance of Vehicles, they want that to be cut by {D150, 000}. On the maintenance of equipment, they want that also to be cut by {D50, 000}. On the General Administration and Stationery, they want that cut by {D150, 000}. Under office entertainment and hotel accommodation, they want that cut by {D350, 000}. On Consultancy, they want that cut by {D750, 000}. Postage, Stamps and ~~curial~~-courier services they want that cut by {D30, 000}, on the training and administration, they want that cut by {D750, 000}. The bank charges and bank-related cost they want that cut by {D30, 000}. Expenses of committees, which is under General Administration, the committee recommended a cut of {D200,000} and on furniture and fittings, they want that cut by {D150,000}~~},.~~ On office equipment, the committee recommended a cut of {D50, 000} and the stationery under Program and Resource Mobilization, they want that cut by {D50, 000}. On the Conferences, Workshops and Seminar, the committee recommended a cut of {D500, 000} and on the stationery for legal and investigations, they want that cut by {D150, 000}. Under training on the legal and investigations, they

want that cut by {D150, 000}. Research Development under Legal and Investigation, they want that cut by {D300, 000} and Advertisement and Publications they want that cut by {D300, 000}.

On the Maintenance of Website, they want that cut by {D50, 000}, travel expenses, they want that cut by {D200, 000}, Stationery, the same thing {D200, 000}, training, they want that cut by {D150, 000}. So, In total, they managed to cut {D4, 960, 000} from the National Human Rights Commission. A further recommendations from the committee, is that a budget line be created for vehicles intended for the fifth incoming Commissioner. The Committee recommended the allocation of {D2 million} to this budget line, that the {D2 million} be allocated to the Gambia Police Force for the purchase of patrol vehicles to be used specifically for Police Stations without vehicles and that {D960,000} be also allocated to the Gambia Police Force for the sustenance of detainees in Police Stations.

[POINT OBSERVATION]

THE SPEAKER: What is your point of observation?

HON. SULAYMAN SAHO [CENTRAL BADDIBU]: ~~Thank you Honourable Speaker,~~ My apology for coming late but by looking at the report under the Ministry of Transport, Works and Infrastructure, I have just read that the Committee recommended the following increments and I want to put it to the House that, this was not our recommendations because by looking at the budget, these were not the recommendations made by the Committee, I want to make that clarification to the House.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you Honourable Member for the clarity but I think you are reading from the F/PAC report.

HON. ALHAGIE MBOW UPPER SALOUM]: Honourable Speaker, I think our responsibility was clearly stated by the Chair of the Committee and what we did was we made a compilation of what was submitted to us and that is exactly what we gave you.

We have not added a dot ~~neither a or~~ comma. We have not removed anything that came from the Committee and that is what we have presented here. Now to continue still under ~~the National~~ Human Rights Commission, effectively the Committee on Human Rights saved {D4.960 million} and they have actually reallocated the same sum within the institution and to the Minister of Interior; ~~so~~, they have not saved anything.

On Ministry of Environment, Climate Change and Wildlife, the amount projected for its travel expenses was {D2.5 million}, the amount deducted is {D500, 000} and the proposed amount to be maintained is {D200, 000}.

On miscellaneous expenses under the Minister of Environment, the projected amount was {D500, 000}, the amount deducted is {D100, 000}, the proposed amount is {D400, 000}. On the office entertainment and hotel accommodation, the projected amount was {D75, 000} and the amount deducted is {D75, 000}; ~~so~~, it looks like they have cut {D75, 000} from it. ~~So~~, From the above, the Committee was able to cut a total of {D675, 000} from the Ministry of Environment and its affiliated institutions for further reallocations.

On the Ministry of Fisheries and Water Resources, the Conferences, Workshops and Seminars, the projected amount was {D500, 000} and the amount deducted is {D200, 000} and the proposed amount is {D300, 000}. On the maintenance of buildings and facilities, the projected amount was {D200, 000} and the amount deducted is {D50, 000} which left them with a balance of {D150, 000}.

On Conferences, Workshops and Seminars, the projected amount was {D200, 000} and they managed to cut {D50, 000}. ~~So~~, A total of {D300, 000} is deducted and reallocated as per the following recommendations; ~~∴~~ {D75,000} reallocated to the Fisheries budget line item for rent and rates arrears which will ~~cater-cater~~ for the payment of houses for the Ministry's Staff on postings. {D100, 000} was also allocated to specialized and technical materials which ~~was-were~~ required by the Ministry but removed by the Ministry of Finance. This will finance procurement ~~for-of~~ fishing gears. The amount of {D75, 000} is to be allocated also for fuel and lubricants to support the Navy in terms of fuel and logistics for the Fisheries Development Management. The amount of {D50,

000} is for stationery under the item. ~~So~~ Essentially, they were able to manage a cut of {D675, 000} but they also managed to reallocate within the same Ministry as well.

For Ministry of Petroleum and Energy, the projected amount on fuel and lubricants was {D1.590 Million}, the amount deducted is {D90, 000} and on maintenance of vehicles, the Committee cut {D300, 000}, the amount allocated for office equipment is {D300, 000} and they cut {D100, 000}. For maintenance of building and facilities, the amount allocated is {D80, 000} but moved and saved to be reallocated. On laboratory equipment and instruments, the Committee enquired the reason for the two different allocations for this budget line. The Ministry responded that the laboratory equipment and its instruments used to be under the Geology Unit but now moved to Mining and Quarrying, from the responses given, the Committee resolved to save the {D100,000} projection under Geology and maintain the {D3, 179,999} under Mining and Quarrying. The Committee cut a total of {D670, 000} from the Ministry's overall projection and this is summarized below:

{D500, 000} to be reallocated to the budget line for the off-grid electrification program and {D170, 000} to be reallocated to Geology for geological survey to purchase specialized and technical materials. They were able to cut {D670, 000} but they managed to reallocate it within the Ministry itself.

On State-Owned Enterprises, the Public Enterprises Committee [PEC] recommended that Government and the National Assembly ~~to~~ give careful consideration of the revenue side of the estimates, it is becoming evident that figures estimated as revenue may not be realistic, thus resulting to zero recording or deficit recording for actual and approved estimates. Proper assessment of revenue is crucial for meeting expenditures and lowering deficits which determine the level of domestic and external borrowing. The Committee also calls for close monitoring of public enterprises which, if properly managed, could pay dividend to government.

For the Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education [MoBSE], the estimate of its travel expenses was {D1 million} and the amount deducted is {D600, 000}. The travel

expenses, provision for Upper Basic Education, the estimate was {D500, 000} and the Committee cut {D100, 000}. Provision of Non-Formal Education, which was {D764, 000} the Committee cut the whole amount. Training which is under Administration of Finance, the budget was {D1 million} and the Committee cut {D200, 000}. ~~So~~ The total deduction from MoBSE by the Committee on Education was {D1, 764,000}. The Committee also recommended that the amount of {D1, 764,000} that has been deducted and saved be added to the furniture and fittings budget line item under the provision of Lower Basic Education to ensure that enough furniture is provided to schools. This will take the amount under that vote from {D5 million to D6, 674,000}.

Henceforth, all allocations for electricity, sewage, travel, furniture and fittings, stationery, uniform, protective clothing, rent and rates, maintenance of buildings, maintenance of vehicles, telecommunications and miscellaneous must not be vired that is the recommendation of the Committee on Education.

Ministry of Higher Education Research Science and Technology, ~~on~~ on the review of the estimates and concerns of the Ministry, the Education Committee recommended that open scholarships be increased from {D40 Million to D90 Million}, ~~the~~ the reason being that, the actual for open scholarships in 2019 was about {D89 Million} and then the Ministry actually cut it. The issue they have now is that, with those people that are on scholarships, they may not be able to have enough funds to pay for them and that is the reason why the Committee is recommending an addition of {D50 Million} so that, those already ~~have~~ having scholarships can continue to have their scholarships as recommended by the Committee.

Ministry of Information and Communication Infrastructure [MoICI] - subvention to non-financial institutions, MoICI's submission was {D12 Million} and the estimates indicated that to be reduced by {D6 million}. On Vehicles, ~~the~~ the budget line item, MoICI submitted {D2.9 Million} and the estimates show zero ~~and~~ but they recommended {D2.9 million} to be given as vehicles. Contributions to International Organizations, the MoICI submission was {D5 Million} and the Committee recommended {D4 Million} to be added back to MoICI to give them the {D5 Million} they requested ~~for~~. On Consultancy, MoICI's

submission was {D3 Million} and the estimates was {D1 Million}, the Committee recommended that {D2 Million} be added to make it {D3 Million}.

On operational cost, on the implementation of the master plan, MoICI's submission was {D9 million} and the estimate was {D5 Million}. The Committee recommended that to be put back, so in total, the Committee recommended that the subvention to the non-financial institutions which is ~~GICTA~~ [The Gambia Information and Communication Technology Agency GICTA]. The allocation was {D6 million} and the belief is that, it is not enough to get that agency to start^{up} running.

In Conclusion, the Ministry of Information has a total deficit of {D20, 400,000} on the allocated budget in the draft estimates compared to what they submitted during their bilateral. The spectrum fees, ~~which~~ is no longer paid to MoICI. ~~and~~ It is now being paid to the central government. MoICI wants at least a percentage to be given to them to help in taking care of some of its running expenses.

The recommendation from the Committee is that, the Minister for Information Communication and Infrastructure [MoICI] be provided with a new vehicle as his vehicle is old, the Committee is also of the belief that this is going to save a lot of money for the Ministry on the cost of maintenance. Henceforth, MoICI's claim for a percentage of spectrum fees to be granted as this will help the Ministry to take care of some of the running cost.

On the Ministry of Defense, for rent and rates, a sum of {D4 Million} is to be allocated ~~to the Ministry of Defense~~ for the obligatory payment of rents in accordance with the terms and conditions of service of GAF officers' regulation 1993 part 9 [40].

Travel expenses under the Ministry of Defense, ~~that~~ the previous travel expenses allocated in 2020 is to be maintained at {D2, 791,487} for the 2021 fiscal year. Armed Forces operational allowances ~~be will~~ also be maintained which is {D295, 374, 976} and travel expenses be maintained at {D12 million} for the 2021 fiscal year as it was in the 2020 fiscal year. ~~So~~ They want to maintain the same amount for that to be shown in

2021. The Committee strongly recommended the implementation of the Ministry of Defense's revenue generation policy to sustain Army operations.

Recommendations for the Ministry of Interior, ~~is~~ a sum of ~~{D2, 800, 800}~~ ~~to~~ be allocated for the procurement of a vehicle for the Minister. A sum of ~~{D700, 000}~~ ~~to~~ be allocated for the procurement of small arms and light weapons and also an amount of ~~{D1 million}~~ be allocated as an obligatory contribution to the international organizations ~~that~~ ~~isi.e.~~ Interpol and IOM instead of ~~{D200, 000}~~. On the proposed funding for development, ~~the~~ rent for both the office building of the Ministry and Semlex ~~should~~ be maintained at ~~{D3 million-Dalasi}~~.

[POINT OF CORRECTION]

HON. HALIFA SALLAH [SERREKUNDA]: In terms of recommendations number ~~two~~², it says a sum of ~~{D700, 000}~~ to be allocated for the procurement of small arms and light weapons. Certainly that is an error. It should be allocated to the establishment of a commission to monitor small arms and light weapons; it is the establishment of a commission.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member for Serrekunda, thank you for that correction.

HON. ALHAGIE MBOW [UPPER SALOUM]: The F/PAC made a request from ~~the~~ Office of the Vice President to be provided with all the rental properties by government and what they are paying, ~~and~~ We were able to see that one of the properties that they ~~asked~~ is already catered for under ~~the~~ Office of the Vice President. ~~So~~ We thought that may be a duplication. I said let me bring that to the attention of the Committee. Number ~~five~~⁵ which is ~~{D9 million}~~ is allocated as required by the Ministry to construct the main office complex. This is expected to effectively nullify rent for the Ministry in subsequent fiscal allocations. If you look at the rental amount for the Ministry of the Interior, according to the report, what we have is about ~~{D1, 500, 000}~~ every year. ~~So~~ Perhaps that could further substantiate that particular point.

On the discrepancies of the Immigration Department's Budget, an increased amount of {D3, 500,000} is to be allocated for the cost of travel in anticipation of the election in 2021. Number ~~seven~~7, is an increased amount of {D3 million} to be allocated for training to effectively complement the Security Sector Reform. Number ~~eight~~8, the Committee, ~~however~~, could not allocate any amount for the procurement of a vehicle for the Deputy Director because there was no submission to the Ministry of Finance.

On the Gambia Prison Services, discrepancies in its budget line items, the amount allocated for the fuel is to be increased to {D4 million}. This is factored under the monthly fuel consumption of {D400, 000} which is insufficient. The amount of {D500, 000} is to be allocated for drugs and dressing for inmates in conformity with the Human Rights obligation.

On the Gambia Police Force, discrepancies in the budget line items, the amount allocated for travel expenses is to be raised to {D8, 500, _000} mainly in anticipation of the 2021 elections. An amount of {D6, 500, _000} is to be also allocated for the maintenance of vehicles. The fact that the police have over {150} operational vehicles and {177} motor-cycles, the initial allocation for fuel is to be increased to {D30 million}. Number 14, to complement the Security Sector Reform Process, {D2 million} is to be allocated for training. The amount allocated for Food and Food services is to be increased to {D30, 673, _564} for the feeding of PIU, Anti-Crime Unit, Tourist Security Unit and detainees under police custody.

The Gambia Police Force's proposed funding for development, the amount required by the institution for other buildings and structures could not be recommended by the Committee because there was no initial submission to the Ministry of Finance for the bilateral.

The Gambia Fire and Rescue Service, the discrepancies in its budget line items, ~~the~~ the Committee could not recommend any further allocations to the institution because the amount submitted is equal to the draft budget for Finance. Similarly, by virtue of the fact that nothing has been indicated under the proposed funding for development, the

Committee could not recommend further. Number 18, ~~however,~~ the Committee strongly recommended for the generation of revenue by various institutions or agencies under the Ministry to sustain their operations.

[POINT OF CORRECTION]

HON. OUSMAN SILLAH [BANJUL NORTH]: Before he proceeds, I want to bring the attention of the Assembly ~~to~~ two points. This first one is on Health, on page ~~{3}~~ under drugs and dressing, the Committee did not recommend for the additional allocation of ~~{D200 million}~~. What we stated in our report is that, the officials that came before us, ~~we~~ requested for anything not less than ~~{D200 million}~~. They said what has been allocated was around the region of ~~{135 million}, or {138 million}~~ but they did not provide us as to where these additional amounts should be put. The Committee, therefore, ~~said that well, we~~ agreed that anything should be well stocked ed in terms of drugs and dressing but where are we going to put those amounts is the position of the Committee regarding that. Also, there are some missing recommendations on family planning commodities, ~~—~~ The UNFPA that is supporting the Gambia by providing 100% funding for this line item and has been requesting for government to provide a budget line item for family planning products.

They said that they can even continue increasing the funding but government must at least commit itself, that is a request. The Committee is really concerned with overseas treatment that we need to improve our facilities so that there will be less need for overseas treatment.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member for Banjul North, the opportunity is given to you but I think we will allow you when coming up with your debate, but you can put this challenge on paper.

HON. OUSMAN SILLAH [BANJUL NORTH]: Honourable Speaker, but the ~~precedent~~ precedence has been set by the other speakers when they stood to make rectifications. I am just making this rectification for them to take note.

THE SPEAKER: Please Honourable Member, let us allow the Honourable Member for Upper Saloum.

HON. OUSMAN SILLAH [BANJUL NORTH]: One Ministry is missing, ~~Minister~~ Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member, to be honest, I think when we want to go ~~by-on~~ interrupting the Member for Upper Saloum, it is going to take a very long time. In your debate you can come up with these things, ~~-~~ You can take note of them and then come up with them for response later.

HON. ALHAGIE MBOW [UPPER SALOUM]: To continue on the general recommendations, the purpose of Committees interfacing with MDAs, is to see how best to adjust their budgets upwards or downwards, whichever case applies. In fact, Honourable Speaker, with your indulgence, before I get to that one, this morning after the printing of our reports, we learned that we have not received anything for the Ministry of Women Affairs that is why we have not included it. So, I want to seek your indulgence just to ensure that everyone gets a copy of it. So, we can add it as an addendum to our report because we have not received it. ~~So-~~ I want to read the recommendations from the Ministry of Women Affairs before I get to what F/PAC finally recommended.

Recommendations of the Select Committee on Health, Women, Children, Disaster, Humanitarian Relief and Refugees on the 2021 draft estimates of the Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare: the Ministry submitted that the total allocation for vehicles should be ~~{D10 million}~~ according to their bilateral with the Ministry of Finance, instead of the ~~{D7 Million}~~ allocated to them in 2021 draft estimates, ~~- This, it is noted would be able to get them.~~ Number ~~two~~², the Ministry also submitted that there should be a specific ~~line~~-budget line for allowances to women councilors. This, according to them, should stand alone from the general allowance for the Ministry. Number ~~three~~³, the total GLF commitment of ~~{D6 million}~~ to the Women Enterprise Fund is slim noting that the expectation of women across the regions may not be met.

Number ~~four~~4, the Ministry also requested for a total of five motor bikes and bicycles covering all the provincial regions. Number ~~Five~~5, the Ministry also submitted to the Ministry of Finance a request for an increase in the allocation for construction of a new office building as well as the rehabilitation of a technical workshop at the Department of Social Welfare. It is observed that the allocation to these two items seemed to be very low. Note from the Committee on the issue of the Women Enterprise Fund⁷²; it was resolved that a strategic regional disbursement plan be developed to measure the level of allocations and disbursements per region. It will equally avail the Ministry the opportunity to advocate for the considerable increase in the GLF commitment thus widening the national coverage and access to the fund.

The committee concluded that the request made by the Ministry are all necessary and legitimate and therefore recommended the following:

1. The ~~{D6million}~~ allocated to the Women Enterprise Fund as government counterpart funding is small and should be increased. Although⁷³ the Ministry requested for ~~{D25 million}~~ in addition to the three million Euros from the EU to increase potential beneficiaries of the revolving fund during post-Covid, the Committee recommended for an amount around the region of ~~{D10 million}~~.
2. The Committee is in support of creating allowances for the Women Councilors to motivate them to continue serving the women-folk in the country.
3. The Committee would want the plenary to consider increasing the budget line for the welfare of Gambians under the Department of Social Welfare by 10% to benefit more vulnerable families and the elderly.
4. The ~~{D7 million}~~ allocated for vehicles to be increased to the ~~{D10 million}~~ initially requested by the Ministry since this particular budget line item was zero in 2020. The same applies to the budget line for motor cycles and bicycles which instead of ~~{D375, 000}~~, we requested to have at least ~~{5}~~ one for each of the regions excluding the Greater Banjul Area.
5. The Committee recommended for allocations to be made to the funds that have already been created by Acts of Parliament such as Disability Funds, Children Funds

and the Victims of Domestic Violence Fund with the respective amounts being requested.

6. In a bid to achieve gender equality, equity, women empowerment and protecting the rights and welfare of children, persons living with disability and other vulnerable groups and considering the percentage allocated, 0.39% of the overall budget is insignificant and this will definitely continue to constrain the Ministry in terms of implementation and attainment of its objectives.
7. The Committee concluded that this ~~is one~~ is of the most critical as it served not only more than half of the population, the women, the differently able persons and the vulnerable but also everybody else and as such, it is ironical for it to be allocated with less than 1% of the national budget. In this respect, the Committee recommended for the budget of the Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare to be increased significantly to commensurate with its responsibilities.

In conclusion, Honourable Speaker, the general recommendations of the Finance and Public Accounts Committee [~~F~~/PAC] read thus:

1. The purpose of the Committee for interfacing with the MDAs which is the Ministries, Department and Agencies is to see how best to adjust their budgets upwards or downwards which ever case applies. However, given the fact that 2021 estimates have a deficit of over [D6 billion], adjusting it can be made only downwards which means that each sector budget has to be adjusted downwards with a view to reducing the deficit to a manageable size. In that regard, savings made by the various committees must not be ploughed back into the budget.
2. Henceforth, all allocations for electricity and sewage, travel, furniture, fittings stationeries, uniforms and protective clothing, rent and rates, maintenance of building, maintenance of vehicles, telecommunication and miscellaneous must not be vired. ~~Thank you.~~

THE SPEAKER: Thank you very much Honourable Member for Upper Saloum. Any seconder?

HON. SUNKARY BADJIE [FONI BREFET]: Thank you Honourable Speaker. I rise to second the motion.

THE SPEAKER: ~~Thank you.~~ It has been moved and seconded that this august Assembly do consider and adopt the consolidated report of the Finance and Public Accounts Committee, the recommendations of the Committees of the National Assembly on the ~~draft estimates~~ 2021 Draft Estimates ~~on~~ of Revenue and Expenditure of the Republic of The Gambia.

[Question Proposed]

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HON. SUNKARY BADJIE [FONI BREFET]: Thank you Honourable Speaker, in accordance with Clauses ~~{53}~~ and 61 [2] of the Standing Orders, I rise to move a motion for the Assembly to allow ten minutes ~~limited period of time~~ for each Member intending to debate on the motion ~~for~~ of the Draft Estimates s 2021 of Revenue and Expenditure for the Republic of The Gambia [1st January to 31st December, 2021 both dates inclusive].

THE SPEAKER: Any seconder?

HON. BILLAY G. TUNKARA [KANTORA]: Thank you very much Honourable Speaker I rise to second the motion ~~as well~~.

The SPEAKER: ~~Honourable Members, one meeting please.~~ It has been moved and seconded that this august Assembly s in accordance with Clause ~~{53}~~ and 61 [2] of the Standing Orders s a ~~{10 ten minute}~~ time limit is allotted for each member intending to debate on the motion ~~for~~ of the Draft 2021 Estimates s of Recurrent Expenditure of the Republic of The Gambia from 1st January to 31st December 2021 s both dates inclusive. Any Honourable Member who wishes to take part may raise his / or her constituency tag.

HON. FATOUMATTA NJAI [BANJUL SOUTH]: Honourable Speaker, motion for division, I think there is a division Honourable Speaker. Let us do a count.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member, a decision has already been taken. I want to refer you to Standing Order Clause 8_[3]. Any Honourable Member who wishes to take part in the debate may raise his or her constituency tag to be recorded and you will be given the floor to speak. In the meantime, before allowing any Honourable Member to take the floor, I want to remind the Honourable Members that the scope of the debate under Clause [30] [1] of the Standing Orders which reads; "Debate upon any motion or amendment to a motion upon any Bill, part of the Bill, amendment to a Bill shall be relevant there-to except in the case of a motion for debate on adjournment of the Assembly". In addition, Clause 86_[7] of the Standing Orders do guide us ~~to-on how~~ the debate of the Annual Estimates and it reads; "The debate of the motion on annual estimates and expenditure should confine to the statement made by the Honourable Minister and the recommendations of the Public Finance Committee and on the consolidated report of the Assembly. The Committee considered the draft budget; ~~;-~~. Therefore, I want to appeal to the Honourable Members to respect and observe the provision of the Standing Orders. ~~I thank you all.~~

Now the floor is open, may I now call Honorable Member for Jarra East, please the floor is yours.

HON. SAINÉY TOURAY [JARRA EAST]: ~~Thank you very much Honourable Speaker for giving me the floor.~~ Honourable Speaker, grant me permission to register my heartfelt thanks to Honourable Member for Wuli West and ~~that of~~ Honourable Member for Upper Saloum, for a detailed explanation of their report.

Honourable Speaker, I must admit at this juncture, at the level of our committee ~~that~~ ~~is i.e.~~ the Environment Committee, we are very much pleased with the report of ~~the~~ F/PAC for the simple fact that, all our justifications were left intact and to that end, I want to express our profound satisfaction to the F/PAC team.

Honourable Speaker, having said that, I just want to do some fine-tuning here; could you please go to the cover page? It reads "Fifth Parliament", it should have read "Fifth Assembly" as opposed to the "Fifth Parliament" for the sake of consistency.

Honourable Speaker, if you come to the introduction it reads: "Pursuant to Section 81 [1] and 84 [2] of the Standing Orders...", that always should have read "Pursuant to clauses 81 [1] and 84 [1] and ~~two~~ [2] of the Standing Orders".

Having said that Honourable Speaker, if you come down you have "Finance and Public Account", it should have read "Finance and Public Accounts".

Honourable Speaker, if you come to F/PAC, ~~this which~~ is Finance and Public Accounts Committee, it should be F/PAC. Now to come to the extant issue at hand, ~~that is i.e.~~ the 2021 estimates. Honourable Speaker, the ~~F/PAC~~ committee has done a tremendously good job and I want to admit ~~for~~ the fact that they have done a wonderful job on our behalf. If you look at the budget estimates for 2021, they have told us in no uncertain terms that we are running a deficit budget in the neighborhood of ~~{D6 billion}~~.

Honourable Speaker, there are lessons to be learned in their report. ~~and what The~~ kind of lessons ~~that~~ are going to be learned is very simple. It is telling us that as a country, we will have what it takes to finance some of our development priorities and as a result, we must learn to cut our ~~cloth-coat~~ according to our ~~coat-cloth~~. That is what the estimate is telling us and that is what the report of the F/PAC is also telling us. I believe fervently that the coming of this Bill will help us learn to cut our ~~coat-cloth~~ according to our ~~coat-cloth~~, given the limited budget that we have at our disposal.

Honourable Speaker, I will be laconic in my interventions, let me quickly take the House to page ~~{18}~~ of the F/PAC report. The last paragraph, number two reads: "Henceforth, all allocations for electricity and sewages, travel, furniture and fittings, stationary, ~~etc...~~" Honourable Speaker, I know it must be an oversight, the spelling for stationary should have been "stationery" as opposed to "stationary".

Honourable Speaker, you come to telecommunication that also should have "S" and is supposed to be telecommunications. Honourable Speaker, as I said earlier on, this budget is full of lessons in the sense that; we do not have what it takes to finance some of our development priorities. I think we must know when to spend and how to spend. That is very key and if you are going to spend, we must spend in priority areas that are very key and dear to our economy; that will be very important Honourable Speaker. With these few remarks, I beg to take my seat. I want to thank F/PAC for having done a tremendously good job.

HON. DEMBO K.M. CAMARA [ILLIASSA]: ~~Thank you very much Honourable Speaker for giving me the floor.~~ I have gone through the 2021 Draft Estimates and also listened very carefully to the presentation of F/PAC.

~~Honourable Speaker,~~ To make things short, as far as I am concerned, I totally reject this 2021 Estimates and I was very disappointed by the increment of another extra money amounting to {D77 million} to rehabilitate Banjul Airport Project.

Honourable Speaker, to be quite honest, if we want this country to move, I think we should try and empower Agriculture but the most disappointing part is ~~that, if when~~ you go through the estimates and see the money allocated to Agriculture compared with other Ministries. Definitely, I suggest that things are not going fine and I am not against any development in terms of infrastructure but at least if you want this country to be productive, then we should try to invest more money in Agriculture.

Honourable Speaker, if you go to Heading {01} [OP], I was very much sad and disappointed because if you go through the headlines, the salaries for drivers, nurse ~~attendance attendants~~ and ~~the~~ gardeners, they cannot even buy two bags of rice at the end of the month. Honourable Speaker, definitely if we want this country to be productive, then we should try to sympathize and consider the needy people. ~~So for~~ That being the case, Honourable Speaker, the reason why I am emphasizing Agriculture is because I can say the farmers are the most important part or the key players in terms of development. ~~and~~ If the government did not consider the welfare of

farmers, I now declare that all the farmers whether you are a groundnut grower or gardener, livestock, ~~etc.~~; I will say if the Government refuses to consider your welfare, I am here-by declaring that let them boycott the 2021 elections so that, they will know whether the government ~~is more powerful~~ or the farmers are more powerful.

HON. MUHAMMED MAHANERA [SANDU]: ~~Thank you very much Honourable Speaker for giving me the floor.~~ I just want to start by thanking the F/PAC Members for the wonderful job that they have done on the budget.

Honourable Speaker, if you look at the budget as alluded to by the Chairperson of the Committee, the purpose of scrutinizing the budget is to reduce the deficits ~~and that is i.e.~~ looking at the budget lines which are not productive to the economy and we try to reduce some of those lines to save the money for another purpose.

~~First,~~ When you look at the 2020 budget, which witnessed the Corona Pandemic, ~~it~~ has come to teach us a lesson that, there are unnecessary travels that we are putting money into ~~and~~ When Corona came, Honourable Speaker, those meetings that we are traveling to attend were successful through virtual meetings. ~~So,~~ When you look at the budget, most of these Ministries, especially our line Ministry ~~that is i.e.~~ Trade, ~~the way~~ The Trade Committee has looked at the budget and decided that we have to reduce their travel budgets because there are other productive sectors in the Trade Ministry where monies are not put into. Last year, we discussed with them, Honourable Speaker, that the Government is losing a lot of revenue but it is only left to the Ministry to come with a justification to the Finance Minister that this program is something that when you put money there, it will generate revenue for the country. One of it is laboratory for the Ministry, we need accredited food laboratory for the Ministry but when we looked through the budget, the reason was not justified and this is something that definitely retarded business in this country. We have processing companies here but they will not be able to connect what they are producing ~~both~~ in the sub-regional market ~~and~~ talk less of international market because they do not have a lab here and Government is losing lot of revenue through that. Example, ~~GACH Company~~ when GACH Company ~~they~~ are producing tomatoes, you have to take the sample through

DHL either to Senegal, Holland or any other country and that is money. So, we are expecting the Ministry to come with a proposal to the Finance Minister at least to start something, because the Private Enterprise Bill, is on the way to the Assembly so that, even if government cannot sponsor this particular project, ~~but~~ we have partners who will be able to establish this lab here in this country so that, our business also would be empowered.

Honourable Speaker, left to me alone, some of ~~this~~ these unnecessary travels, we will put embargo on them so that we save money and reduce the deficit in our budget. Honourable Speaker, still on the Ministry of Trade, we have FSQA, ~~;~~ they need to work and operate and these are the institutions that are definitely in need both in terms of Trade and Health because of the kind of food that is consumed in this country, ~~;~~ The FSQA are not empowered to monitor properly what kind of food we are eating. I do not think, Honourable Speaker, that we will have the health that we are all expecting.

Honourable Speaker, the Ministry of Interior, the committee has done a great job by allocating ~~{D2.9 million}~~ to this particular Ministry so that they can buy vehicles and I am definitely in support of that. Honourable Speaker, when you go ~~to the~~ up ~~countries~~ country, this is a big challenge under this Ministry particularly if you go to our areas, ~~;~~ The Police Officers will be in their stations and sometimes crime occurs in a particular place and they will not be able to move because there is no mobility. ~~So~~, I thank the F/PAC Committee but the only thing is, I have to register my dissatisfaction about this estimate because it is not Sandu--friendly because if you look at the budget through, there is no single project that is going into my constituency ~~Honourable Speaker~~.

HON. KEBBA JALLOW [JARRA CENTRAL]: Honourable Speaker, I would also like to join my Honourable colleagues to at least say a big thanks to F/PAC for the job that they have done yesterday and produced a report which somebody can at least be guided by ~~it~~.

Honourable Speaker during the Third Ordinary Session, we ~~de~~did consider a Supplementary Appropriation Bill which of course contained Rural Road Project, specifically Niumi Hakalang, which covers ~~[88 kilometers]~~ and just last week, we have seen the foundation stone laying of Saloum Nianija ~~laying the foundation stone~~ which is also a Rural Road Project of ~~[86 kilometers]~~ and in the estimates. Honourable Speaker, I have also seen that Saloum Nianija is being mentioned and Niumi Hakalang. If I could remember vividly Honourable Speaker, during the Supplementary Appropriation Bill, I did mention here that any form of budget that comes into this Parliament needs to be equitably distributed and I will still stand by that. I am not calling for equal distribution of the national cake. Honourable Speaker, there should be equitable distribution of the national cake. I stand here today as an Honourable Member of the National Assembly who hailed from the Kabada corridor.

Honourable Speaker, it is high time governments that come in and go out ~~to~~ start thinking about the Kabada corridor. In this 2021 budget estimates, we are talking about Honourable Speaker, I have not seen any rural road project in the estimates that covered the Kabada corridor. Honourable Speaker, in this 2021 budget estimates, I have not seen under the Ministry of Health any project proposal and the Minister of Health stood here during the Third Ordinary Session and told me that the Kabada Corridor will benefit from ~~two the~~ construction of two health centers and I have not seen it in the Development Budget of the Health Ministry.

You go into the Ministry of Energy, I have looked very carefully into the Development Budget of the Ministry of Energy, just to check whether under the Rural Electrification Project Kabada corridor will benefit or not, ~~;~~ I have not seen it there Honourable Speaker. On the 20th of November we went to Kiang to inaugurate the Electricity Project and only one community of the Kabada corridor benefitted from that project, no single pole run through Kabada area, only one community benefitted.

Honourable Speaker, I keep on mentioning about the Kabada corridor in terms of development and as far as I am concerned, Honourable Members, it ~~concerned~~ concerns me because over 50 something years, still now Kabada is left behind and we

are talking about equitable distribution of the national cake, where it is? I am asking you Honourable Speaker and the Minister for Finance ~~that-why~~ anytime you bring a budget here, the Kabada corridor is left behind ~~Honourable Speaker I have to stop here.~~

HON. MUHAMED MAGASSY [BASSE]: Honourable Speaker, let me also join my colleagues who have spoken before me to recognize the job well-done by all the committees in general and F/PAC in particular.

Honourable Speaker, the exercise that we have before us is the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure 2021. Honourable Speaker, what I have in mind is that, I want to ask a question: can you expend if you do not make a revenue? Whether expenditure can happen without revenue? My expectation of the exercise to all Members of the Parliament at the committee stages was not only on downsizing the deficit by {D6 billion} but also to discuss the revenue where money is coming from especially committees which recommended an increment to budget lines. If you want to add to a budget line more than what is being estimated, where is the money coming from? It must be generated. ~~So,~~ That was my expectation from the F/PAC committee but that was not discussed. The report is on expenditure. Going by the report now, if you look at page ~~two~~2, you will see a savings of {D500 million} allocated for the Ministry of Agriculture specifically under centralized services on their report on page ~~two~~2, where you have input subsidiary for fertilizers only. You have {D200 million} saved for the Ministry of Agriculture and if you go further, subvention to Non-Finance Public Cooperation ~~institution~~ on [c], you have also another savings of {D300 million} to Agriculture but if you turn the page, you go on page 3 under the Ministry of Agriculture, the recommendation of the committee with your permission if I can read is that: *"In view of the challenges of the Agricultural sector in the country, the Select Committee on Agriculture recommends for additional funds of {D300 million} to the Ministry of Agriculture to better prepare for the technical arms of the Ministry."*

I really appreciate that but I do not know whether the Committee is aware that they have a saving of {500 million} saved for the Ministry of Agriculture, but out of that

{D500 million} I do understand from the document that the Select Committee on Agriculture is recommending {D300 million} out of that {D500 million} to go to the Agriculture sector. ~~So,~~ The remaining {D200 million} will ask for a question. ~~So,~~ I do not know who will answer ~~to~~ that question? Whether the mover or the Chairperson of the Select Committee on Agriculture.

Moving on page 7, the Member for Jarra Central got it right. This is the right moment to see whether our questions are answered or not. Could you remember that parliamentary questions were asked here to Honourable Ministers whether there are plans to bring water in my constituency and to build this road in my constituency? The budget is here now, — We have seen the detailed ed expenditure. It is now that we know whether those questions have been answered or they are not answered, and if you want to ask further questions s to that, this is the right moment. I use this chance to ask whether the issue of dry port for Basse could be a reality? — This is something that has been discussed for a longtime. It appeared in plans, policies but in essence, it may be embedded in the document. I may not see but it is an opportunity to ask whether the issue of dry ports for Basse could be a reality? — It was discussed also to have extra sand port at Basse and that cannot be done without expenditure and we are at the real moment to know whether there could a possibility.

The issue of decentralization, you have seen that still we cannot see it in the budget whether ~~the de~~centralization will occur especially towards the second capital Basse. At the beginning of this regime, it was clearly mentioned by the Minister for Tourism and Culture that Basse will have a regional museum and two years ago, when I took the floor here, I did mention it here whether it is going to be a possibility. The answer was positive but the work is not on the ground and again the chance has come. May I ask whether Basse will have regional museum or not? Regarding the rehabilitation of Basse Mini Stadium, this also has been discussed between myself and the Ministry and the then Minister. and What he said was that come 2021 budget, Basse Mini Stadium will be up to standard. ~~But~~ However, going through the book, I did not see it. It might be too technical for me, if it is embedded let me know whether that will be there because

tomorrow, you are not only passing the budget but again, it will be our responsibility to monitor the implementation of the budget to ensure that ~~weather~~ what has been said is being implemented. How can you know if you do not know the plan? It is important that we know the plan, what is imbedded in this document exactly? in detail, it will guide us. The issue of ~~Kabada~~ corridors, the Member for Jarra Central mentioned and this is the ~~early-right~~ moment to talk about it.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member for Basse you are left with two minutes.

MUHAMED MAGASSY [BASSE]: Thank you. let me finish with Education. Could you please help me explain why Adult and Non-Formal Education has no allocation? If you look at salary, they put zero. If you put zero there, that means there is no staff. That means the unit does not exist meaning that all the activities now under that unit will not happen. ~~So~~ The allocation too and that unit is reduced to zero. Can you explain why that happened? ~~Because~~ Non-Formal Education Unit, we know it is significant as far as we are looking for education for all. and Finally, Honourable Speaker, it is always mentioned by the Member for Wuli West that this issue of blood bank, all major centres should have a blood bank, all major health facilities should have a blood bank but if you look at the record, the recommendations is drug, medicine etc. but blood bank is not mentioned. ~~So~~ Do we not also think that can be considered in order to help the health facilities to minimise the challenges that they are facing. On this note, I want to thank you and again thank the committees especially the F/PAC Committee.

HON. FATOUMATTA NJAI [BANJUL SOUTH]: ~~Thank you very much Honourable Speaker.~~ First of all, I will thank my colleagues at the F/PAC but more so the other committee members for coming up with their reports promptly. Honourable Speaker, I will remind this august Assembly that the key role of a legislature, is to do an oversight of the budget process and to ensure that appropriation is fiscally done and sound appropriation for that matter. ~~So~~ Whatever time it might take Honourable Speaker, we must give it that due time to ensure a thorough review of the budget because that is the main function of this august Assembly and this budget is

the most important thing that will ever be laid in this Parliament, and the appropriation and assessment of this budget is one of the key mandates that we can ever do for our constituencies. I feel sad hearing my Honourable Colleagues begging the beggars. The beggars should be begging us for appropriation, Honourable Speaker. It is sad that we sit here and claim that our constituencies are not given enough when we can give them what they need and what they deserve, Honourable Speaker. ~~So,~~ I am appealing to my Honourable Colleagues to give this budget its due and to respect the time that the Constitution has given us because it has given us no allocated time. We can take as much time to look at this budget, Honourable Speaker. It gives us a framework and today, it is within that framework. We should not limit ourselves to ten minutes. If I do not have enough to contribute, I can ~~work-walk~~ out and excuse my honourable colleagues to give it their dues, Honourable Speaker.

I will go to the report Honourable Speaker, ~~;~~ looking at page ~~three~~ [3] of the report under the ~~Minister~~ Ministry of Health, since our Standing Orders Clause [84] specifically states the role of the Assembly Committee with regards to the budget. It states that ~~"~~"In preparations of the annual estimates and the Appropriation Bill, the Vice President and the Minister shall have due regard to be reporting findings and recommendations and I think that is all the more reasons why we should give enough time to look at the report and the recommendations because it is in the Standing Orders that the Minister responsible shall take due regard to the recommendations and for that reason, we need to give it as much time as possible.

Honourable Speaker, going back to ~~page~~ [3], under the Ministry of Health, the first paragraph, it says that [D4.3 million] will have to be redirected from hospitals to the Central Ministry. I do not think any sane person would redirect any resources from a hospital to a Ministry. We are in the pandemic and I think if Covid ~~have~~ has not thought us a lesson, we need to be awakened —and learn because we see how this pandemic has attacked the world and every corner. ~~and~~—Now the world is looking up to strengthening their health services, strengthening the hospitals, so for this august

Assembly to recommend a redirection from the hospital to the central Ministry. Honourable Speaker, I think we should look at that.

It further ~~goes-went~~ and said that we need another amount of Two Hundred Million ~~Dalasi~~ [D200, 000,000] for drugs and dressing. If we are going to recommend for that and then redirect allocations to the Ministry, is that not contradicting itself? Honourable Speaker? I think we need to look before we leap- we need to strengthen our hospitals and make sure that we have facilities. I heard one of our Honourable Colleagues mentioning about overseas treatment, I was glad to hear an Honourable Member saying that we need to strengthen our hospitals to avoid people going to seek medical help abroad. I am a victim of that- I spent millions of Dalasi treating myself abroad. If we had strengthened our medical facilities here to a certain level, that would not have happened. Honourable Speaker.

Going to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, where we are claiming that we saved Fifteen Million ~~Dalasi~~ [D15, 000, 000]-. What is Fifteen Million ~~Dalasi~~ with what we have given them? Honourable Speaker, if we look at the budget of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, I have seen school fees for the officers in the foreign mission, most of whom are in European countries. For example, it says ~~five- [D5 million]~~ boarding and ~~[D8 million]~~ tuition fees. How are we going to monitor and ensure that it goes to school fees? I think we should thoroughly look at this budget and I applaud the initiative of the F/PAC, to look into reducing the deficit. How are we going to reduce the deficit if we keep on increasing our recurrent budget? A good budget is geared towards development but our budget is geared towards recurrent expenses. When we look at the development budget. Honourable Speaker, it is next to nothing. For example- Health, we signed the Abuja protocol which says that every budget must allocate 15% towards its health and what we have done is, we allocated only 8% and that 8% most of it goes to recurrent, it does not go to any development- How do we expect to have a healthy nation if we are not prepared to invest in developing our health facilities?

Regarding the Ministry of Woman Affairs, Honourable Speaker, we have recently established a Ministry of Woman Affairs and you know ~~how much~~ what is allocated to this Ministry only 0.39%, when we have over 60% of woman in this country. I am glad to see that the Committee have mentioned the inadequacy of what is given to them and I appeal to this august House to look into it and give them more. The women are the builders of this country, when you build and strengthen them, you strengthen this nation.

Honourable Speaker, Youths and Sports was given 0.51% and from that, it keeps saying that it has not seen anything of substance. Vehicle for the Minister, travelling for international meetings, I have the belief that before we think of travelling to participate internationally, we must enhance our youths to make sure they are good in what they do and invest in them domestically. We have KG5 in Banjul, thanks to good citizens it has been refurbished, Honourable Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member you have two minutes.

HON. FATOUMATTA NJAI [BANJUL SOUTH]: ~~Thank you very much.~~ We need to look within and strengthen ourselves within before thinking outside.

Honourable Speaker, all I see ~~is~~ vehicle, travelling, vehicle, travelling, why? Covid has ~~thought-taught~~ us that we can work in this country without moving an inch, let us ~~safe~~ save our money and invest in this country, strengthen ourselves, engage our youths, enhance their capability, make sure that they are the future of tomorrow and prepare them to take over ~~thank you very much Honourable Speaker.~~

HON. SAINY JAWARA [LOWER SALOUM]: Honourable Speaker, first of all, I wish to thank the Honourable Minister of Finance for financing this appropriation bill for this fiscal year 1st of January to December 2021.

Honourable Speaker, as a committee monitoring government projects, we mandated F/PAC to make adjustment and to see those developments that we intended to construct in Sandu, Kaur, Sabach Sanjal and Hakalang. We proposed this proclamation

to the F/PAC Committee, ~~so~~ If the Chairman is ~~here~~ telling us that, they are not the one, I will say no to that.

Though, we investigate the increment that is on the high side, we are in a deficit and we are going to reduce the deficit whereby we allow the Minister to implement the budget but when he said, it is the Committee that made this adjustment, ~~and~~ I stand to disagree with him because the Vice Chair was there, ~~the Clerk~~. We gave the document to the Clerk to do so and then he was not around. He later joined us and I said no to that. We did it and gave it to F/PAC Members to see the identification.

Furthermore, Honourable Speaker, the estimates show the deficit of {D6 billion} and I was eager to see on the report the amount of money that they save for the increment of feeder roads and the total deficit.

Honourable Speaker, we were advocating for the increment of the road projects in Saloum, Sabach Sanjal and Nianija but Honourable Speaker to be frank with you, the deficit side is rising up which we do not want to put the burden on the Minister as it will be very difficult for implementation. Though, I want my road to be built in Saloum but to be realistic Honourable Speaker, I do not want to put burden on the Minister since we have the knife to cut anywhere we want to cut. We need to understand that we are not the technocrats, we are here for the Minister to advise us to this effect.

~~here~~ What I see here in the deficit, what I just calculated for three Ministries is that they are going for {D10 billion} ~~I am seeing in in which is on~~ the high side, Honourable Speaker. Although, we are here for development because we are yearning for it, ~~but~~ each parliamentarian ~~here, you want~~ your his/her constituency to rise as big as possible. The only thing I am not seeing in the Ministry of Water Resources is the Borehole that we intend to build in early 2018. It was not mentioned because there were projects that should be implemented but by virtue of the Covid-19, these projects are pending. I have not seen it on the F/PAC report neither on the Bill. So, I am ~~here~~ asking the Minister whether those projects will be implemented because already they asked the beneficiary villages to gather an amount of {D25, 000} deposit for a period of

five years. I want to ask whether it will be implemented this year or not? I have not seen it written anywhere in these projects.

Again, Honourable Speaker, we are here to safeguard the country, let us brainstorm and put positive calculations whereby we will put the budget across and check those Ministries that are with high allocations and we cut and reallocate to development because we need to develop this country. We should know that high allocations will not help the country. What I am trying to say is that Honourable Speaker, we want the country to be developed and let us also cross-check the budget. Although, I want the Saloums to be built but we are going to be on the high side of the deficit. If the F/PAC can also help us on how to reduce the deficit, I will be happy about it. ~~Thank you very much~~

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HON. SUNKARY BADJIE [FONI BREFET]: ~~Thank you Honourable Speaker,~~ I want to begin by thanking the F/PAC for doing a great job. Hon. Speaker, I have few issues that I want to raise and bring to the attention of this august Assembly regarding the ~~Minister~~ Ministry of Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology with reference to the TVET Development in the West Coast Region particularly Foni Brefet and Ndemban. The issue of the Multipurpose Skill Training Centre which was recently undergoing construction has ceased and I have not seen any significant recommendation or allocation for the completion of the said project.

The National Assembly Committee responsible for monitoring government projects ~~have~~ has visited the institution and they were of the view that there is need for government to allocate funds to ensure that the magnificent building is completed. I think it will be in the interest of the youths because it is just meant to empower them. How do we empower the youth? It is by creating the enabling environment for them to pick up skills and become self-reliant and employed in the future, but this magnificent building has been lying there over the years. I do appreciate what the Government is doing but there is more to be done because the more time taken to complete the structure, the more dilapidated it becomes and the more expenditure that will be incurred. ~~So,~~ It is

wise actually to put in the appropriate forms to make sure that this building is completed to allow the youths to go in for skills training.

The other issue, Honourable Speaker, is the issue of rural development. Let me go to the Ministry of Lands and Regional Government; there were some recommendations which were made by the Committee with particular emphasis on the same TVET. Under Rural Development Institute [RDI], there was a minimal sum that was allocated for RDI but we were informed that the Ministry of Health was opportuned to visit the structure itself and with the current nature of the institution, it was also very devastated. This is a very important institution that adds to the human capital development of community development workers who do participate a lot in empowering women during gardening seasons. So, This institution actually needs to be assisted to make sure at least, the necessary works are done to make it very functional. I am also amazed by the elimination of the subventions to the Area Councils, which is a constitutional requirement. You go to Sections {1, 2, 3} of the Local Government Act, 2002 which states that, the Central Government shall... and I was made to understand that "shall" here is mandatory, that the government shall take responsibility to sub-vent local councils. The current budget, {eight-D8 million-dalasi} was allocated meaning each Council will be given {one-D1 million-dalasi}. This time around-actually, it was actually omitted but the Committee recommended that {D16 million} -be given which is important this time and the reason why it is important is that, some of ~~this-these~~ capital development projects for Councils involve Village Plans and Ward Plans and these Village Plans and Ward Plans include gardening and other infrastructural developments which affect the rural poor directly. So, it is important that these areas be looked into, although F/PAC did go by the recommendations, maintained and retained it in their report.

The other issue is the Lands Commission; we are all aware that the crooked nature of land disputes in this country, over and over, there is this land dispute and some of them go to the stage of being fatal. So, It is important that the Land Commission that was recently established be empowered to be able to do its work effectively, to mitigate the

numerous land conflicts in the country most of which ~~most of them~~ end up in violence and lives are lost sometimes. Physical Planning should connect to cadastral mapping. I understand the allocation for cadastral mapping is more than the Ministry's allocation. ~~and that Actually,~~ I understand ~~actually,~~ they have a good intention but the financial resources to be budgeted to make sure the cadastral measure starts is the issue, but we made the recommendations. Actually, ~~Health-it~~ is very important, we are informed that when we have that project kick-started, it will enable councils to increase their revenue base. It will also help and minimise the numerous land disputes which is becoming a major problem in this country.

To conclude Honourable Speaker, Physical Planning is really under-resourced. We are all aware that the numerous illegal constructions that are going on in this country will eventually become a burden especially anytime the government intends to build a road. Because of the non-~~supervision-supervisory~~ nature of construction in our country, a lot of residences s will request for compensation which becomes a big burden on the government. ~~So,~~ We have the opinion that if ~~the~~ Physical Planning is resourced and empowered ~~actually,~~ they will actually be able to embark on constant monitoring to ensure that people who build structures comply with the regulations to minimise the instances of compensations in the near future.

Honourable Speaker, on that note, I want to thank F/PAC once again and I beg to take my seat.

HON. SUWAIBOU TOURAY [WULI EAST]: ~~Thank you very much Honourable Speaker.~~ The first thing I would want to ask and seek clarification on is that, I would like to know exactly what strategy we are adopting in relation to this budget? We are told that the centre-piece of the 2021 budget, is to build forward better while maintaining Gambia's commitment to the ongoing NDP as well as the SDG 2030. ~~So,~~ I believe it is our responsibility to see whether the budget that we are approving is in line with the NDP and SDG. I believe that ~~the~~ F/PAC should have helped us to know what our position is in relation to ~~this-these~~ two.

Honourable Speaker, we are also told that the budget will be having inclusive growth as the Member for Jarra Central alluded to. I believe it is our responsibility also to find out and to ensure that the phrase "inclusive growth" is not only enlightened but also well planned and implemented to the letter to see that nobody is left behind.

Hon. Speaker, I asked for the strategy because without explaining the strategy of the Ministry, it will be very difficult for us to know whether what we agree is in line or not. We are told by the Minister that, the situation is worrisome if the spread of the virus continues to worsen and from my own analysis, I believe that the strategy should have taken care of such an eventuality. I have looked through all the writings and figures trying to find out what has been put in place in case the situation worsens.

Honourable Speaker, if you really look at the budget, you will come to see that expenditure and net-lending for 2020, which was {D28 billion}, is now {D31 billion} which means that there is an increment of expenditure creating a deficit of {D3 billion}. Also, there is a significant slowdown in the GDP growth. We are informed that there is a decline in tax revenues and an increase in health expenditure on the 2020 budget according to the Minister, such as relief support to the various individuals. All these are expenditures which are increasing the deficit. There is also information in the budget that domestic growth rates have also been revised downwards from 6.3% to 1.5% with anticipated 3% of GDP loss in tax revenue for 2021. Now, if you also look at it, you will say that there is a significant decline from 6.2% GDP growth rate in 2019. These are all things that are working against us according to the Minister's analysis. This is the state of affairs, Honourable Speaker, that we actually find ourselves in, and as far as I am concerned, it is a crisis and the budget should seek to look for solutions to address this crisis.

Honourable Speaker, there is an increase in government expenditure as well as decrease in revenue and by my own analysis, it means that both are responsible for the deficit which is in the tune of {D6 billion-Dalasi} plus. How do we address this deficit? I know that the Minister did not have facts, at point 33 of his speech, in terms of

financing and deficit, he said: “Domestic borrowing is projected to reach {D3.45 billion} compared to {D2.26 billion} in 2020. ~~So,~~ The answer, as far as the Minister is concerned, is not to do borrowing. So, it is clear, Honourable Speaker, ~~as far as I am concerned~~ that ~~the deviation from the path to growth~~ by issuing more bonds ~~and~~ we know that it will raise interest rates and also reduce net exports. If you read his statement, it is already there. ~~So,~~ I think fiscal deficit, Honourable Speaker, is impacting negatively on the economy and this will definitely affect private borrowing and we are told by the Minister that these can even manipulate capital structures and manipulate interest rate as well as decrease net export, which if operated will lead to higher taxes and of course higher inflation by my own calculation. ~~So,~~ The trend, Honourable Speaker, eventually we will be left with no option but to create more money with a view to covering deficits and ~~these there are is~~ the tendency of creating inflation, meaning that prices may go up and sometimes through the roof.

Honourable Speaker, with all the increases that we will expect, the answer is always increase in taxation because we said we are a tax-based economy. So, it is always increasing taxation which will defeat the strategy of reducing poverty. We say we want to reduce poverty but we continue to increase tax and the more we increase tax, the more we are increasing poverty. So, we must be very careful as law makers, ~~Whatever~~ we approve here, we must own it, we cannot approve something here and ~~went-go to~~ the people and say this is not good. We must make sure what we approve here is good for the people.

~~So~~ Honourable Speaker, on the debt situation, ~~because we are increasing debt and~~ we are clearly told that we are in debt distress at page 19 of the Minister’s speech. According to debt sustainability analysis conducted by the Ministry and the IMF, The Gambia ~~remained~~ remains in debt distress as its current debt level becomes unsustainable.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member for Wuli East you have two minutes.

HON.SUWAIBOU TOURAY [WULI EAST]: We cannot sustain the debt, but we think that the strategy is not reducing the debt, in fact, we are taking more debts. ~~So,~~ That is why I am asking what ~~is~~ the strategy ~~is?~~. It must be clear to us that prudent fiscal measures ~~therefore~~ need to be taken by the government to ensure that both ~~levels~~ are reduced to sustainable levels. ~~That-Those is-are~~ the words of the Minister himself. So, we must do something to reduce the debt, we cannot be dependent on borrowing. ~~So,~~ Despite prudent measures, Honourable Speaker, we are on an ~~an unending spending~~ spree; all these expenditures we are talking about is spending and some of us are even asking where these monies are coming from. ~~So,~~ I would have thought that the debt relief that we are getting for low-income countries on official bilateral debt services mentioned by the Minister should be combined with prudent spending to be able to address more proactively, the debt distress, but I have not seen that strategy. Let us not say that since there is debt deferral, we should now put aside prudent spending. We must use this to ensure that our debt levels are sustainable.

Finally, Honourable Speaker, the widening of the deficit in the goods reflects the increase in imports that is what the Minister told us. The rise in economic activities and export are forecast to decline from ~~{~~\$124.5 million~~}~~ in 2020 to ~~{~~\$202.5 million~~}~~. We are having a reduction in exports as well instead of having a strategy to increase the export; we are in fact going down. Our groundnut is already with us, Agriculture have done well according to the Minister but what is the plan to ensure that all the groundnut that is produced is bought in The Gambia? What is the strategy? The information I got is that, 40% of the groundnut will be bought then the rest of the ~~4060~~% will go outside. According to them, their expectation will be like ~~{~~80 thousand tonnes~~}~~. So, 40% will be bought here and ~~4060~~% will go outside and they are making restrictions for people to go outside to sell their groundnuts.

~~Honourable Speaker, so my final word on that is as law makers.....~~

THE SPEAKER: ~~Your time is up Honourable Member, thank you.~~

HON. SAIKOU MARONG [LATRIKUNDA SABIJI]: ~~Thank you very much Honourable Speaker for giving me the opportunity to take part in this very important debate. Despite the fact that we reduced the time to 10 minutes but I think it is still a very important debate.~~ Let me seize this opportunity to also thank the Honourable Minister for Finance for a job well done because it is really not easy to prepare a budget of a household talk less of a country.

Honourable Speaker, looking at the document before us right now, it is talking about the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure for 2021. If you look at it, Honourable Speaker, you look at the total revenue that we are expecting, both the tax, non-tax and then the budget support is ~~{D25.7 billion}~~; that is what we are expecting.

~~But~~ Out of that, Honourable Speaker, if you look at our expenditure, it is ~~{D31.9 billion}~~. This is why F/PAC told us that there is a deficit of ~~{SixD6 million-billion Dalasi}~~; ~~but now,~~ The question that we should be asking ourselves and the Minister is ~~that~~, how do we finance this deficit? I think that is a very important question we should always ask ourselves as a country and as a Minister of Finance, ~~that~~ How ~~did-do~~ we finance this deficit? If you look at it, we have two areas that we are looking at, ~~we~~ we are looking at the domestic borrowings and also the international borrowings, ~~Those~~ Those are the two areas that we are looking at to finance this deficit ~~at least~~.

Honourable Speaker, if you just go to the Minister's speech that he made on paragraph 5, when he presented the budget, we were told by the Minister of Finance that the central premises of the 2021 budget is to build forward better in the area of Covid-19. ~~While~~ reaffirming The Gambia's commitment to the ongoing National Development Plan [NDP] ~~that is i.e.~~ [2018 to 2021] as well as the Global Sustainable Development Goal that is [SDG 2030]. These are our guiding tools towards this 2021 budget. These are the two tools that we have to look at very well.

Honourable Speaker, if you look at the National Development Plan [NDP], we look at our priority areas and look at our budget and see if they are really communicating. Let us see ~~that~~ what we are approving is our priority as a country. Our priority areas of the

National Development Plan. Honourable Speaker, the vision and the overall goal of the NDP would be realised through strategic priorities namely: restoring good governance, respect for human rights, the rule of law, empowering citizens through decentralisation and local governance.

stabilising our economy, stimulating growth and transforming the economy, modernizing our Agriculture Sector, fisheries for sustained economic growth and also investing in our people through improving education and health services. We talk about building infrastructure; we talk about promoting an inclusive and culture-centred Tourism and sustainable growth. We talk about reaping the democratic dividend through the empowerment of the youths. We also talk about making the private sector the engine of growth to transform the country and create good jobs. If you look at this one, we talk about Health, we talk about Agriculture, we talk about Education, we talk about youths, we talk about Tourism, these are our priorities and then our budget should be looking at these areas because looking at the economy, these are the productive areas of the economy, these are the areas that we can invest and at the end of the day, we gain something out of it.

Honourable Speaker, if you look at what happened in the 2020 budget, I think sometimes it is always important that we look at the statistics. Let us look at the areas that we were spending more, it is important before we talk about this 2021 budget. If we look at the report of the Minister of Finance, their website is clear, you look at it on their table two, it talks about the approved budget from January to August 2020, though, from August to this month is not yet uploaded but the ones that are uploaded are the ones that I have as of now.

Honourable Speaker, we talk about personal emolument, from January to August, we spent 60% on it. We talk about recurrent, we spent 60%, we talk about subvention to public corporation, we spent about 65% and you talk about the capital development, we spent 54% and the total that we spent is like 56%. But—It does not stop there Honourable Speaker. If you go further. Honourable Speaker and look at the budget in

its entirety as at end August 2020, we look at the areas that we are spending more ~~revenues on~~.

~~Minister-Ministry~~ of Finance 6%. Now this is what we are doing, this is the statistics of 2020 budget that is available. ~~Now~~, We ask ourselves, ~~that~~ how are we spending our budget? Are we really spending as it should be? Looking at this budget, we should be very cautious and we should be very careful. ~~But~~ Honourable Speaker, if you look at the budget, you also look at the debt service, ~~I~~ think what matters here most is that the debt service here ~~which~~ stood at [D5.9 billion]. We ask ourselves, where are we? If you look at this Section, page 201 on the National Budget, it will tell you where these monies are going to be spent. What matters to me ~~here~~ most, Honourable Speaker, is not just a matter of giving various Ministries an amount of money, ~~I~~ what matters here is the programs that they are running. Let us look at the ~~Minister-Ministry~~ of Youths and Sports, ~~I~~ It is not just a matter of the money that we give to the ~~Minister-Ministry~~ of Youths and Sports is small or is ~~at on the~~ high side, ~~no~~, but Let us look at the programs run by the ~~Minister-Ministry~~ of Youths and Sports at least to effect changes in the Gambian people ~~here~~. For instance, ~~the Minister of Health~~ Honourable Speaker, let us look at the ~~Minister-Ministry~~ of Health. Not a long time ago, there was a march pass here and every Gambian ~~is was~~ interested saying that ~~the~~ "Lives of Gambian women matter ~~something like that~~". Now we had the opportunity to make sure that their lives matter and the opportunity that we have today is this budget, this is the budget that can make that changes, it is not a matter of going to Facebook or whatsoever making those statements. We have ~~the ball~~, the ball is in our court as ~~a~~ Members of Parliament. Let us make sure that women's lives matter, let us look at the main budget, let us look at the budget of the ~~Minister-Ministry~~ of Women and Social Welfare, ~~I~~ We see the allocation given to the women, let us see how best we can increase it, ~~I~~ This is going to help them, this is going to change their lives. If not, Honourable Speaker, we will still find things very difficult.

Honourable Speaker, if you also look at this budget, I think sometimes it is important when we are investing in a budget, we look at the development aspect of it. If we look

at the ~~Minister~~Ministry of Works, Transport, Communication and Infrastructure, we have seen that this year, they have really been doing a tremendously good job~~,~~. They are almost spending part of their budget on development and this is what we are looking forward to. Construction of Niumi Hakalang road is a milestone and a key development in this country because it is at least going to impact on the lives and livelihoods of the Gambian people living in the North Bank areas, especially around Niumi Hakalang.

THE SPEAKER: ~~Honourable Member you have 2 minutes, thank you.~~

HON. SAIKOU MARONG [LATRIKUNDA SABIJI]: ~~Ok thank you very much Honourable Speaker,~~ If you look at that one and then look at the OIC roads, especially the expansion of the Bertil Harding High-way, I think it is a key achievement of the Government. If that road is expanded, it is going to be very good. We all know that how the traffic congestion has always been from Brikama right down to Banjul ~~how the traffic congestion has always been~~. We always talk about those things here but what matters here is that, when are they going to commence these projects? I think it is important because we have been given the money. If you look at the surplus budget, we gave them some money for some of these roads and until now some of the projects did not even start and it has to be started. Once the National Assembly approved a budget for a Ministry or Department for a particular work to commence, they should immediately start those jobs or if they have any problem, they should come back to us and say this is our problem, this is the reason why we are unable to start the work.

Honourable Speaker, my last intervention will be that, let us be mindful~~,~~. We the National Assembly Members~~,we~~ approve the budget but after approving the budget, what do we do next? That is important. We need to monitor, we need to make sure that money given to Ministry of Agriculture is spent as we agreed on, but if we are not doing that here, it will be very difficult to make a difference. We will keep giving them money at the end of the day~~,~~ nothing will come out of it. I am appealing to this august Assembly~~please~~.

~~**THE SPEAKER:** Your time is up Honourable Member for Latrikunda Sabiji, may I now call Honourable Member for Serrekunda.~~

~~**HON. HALIFA SALLAH [SERREKUNDA]:** Thank you very much Honourable Speaker.~~

I do not know what we can do in ten minutes. Standing Order [84] paragraph [3] states: *"In the preparations of the Annual Estimates and the Appropriation Bill, the Vice President or the Minister shall have due regard to be reporting findings of recommendations of the Assembly Committees and the Finance and Public Accounts Committee's consolidated report of the consideration of the Assembly Committees regarding the draft budget"*. We have put the cart before the horse. Honourable Speaker. The budgetary exercise, I cannot quote, [we will check it for you], starts with a review of a draft budget, first negotiated within the Ministry and the Finance and Public Accounts Committee on a timetable, and you will see in our Standing Orders that the timetable should include review of a draft budget for no less than eight weeks. Honourable Speaker, six weeks for the committees and it starts during the Third Ordinary Session. So, Before the submission of an Annual Estimates, that is where what we are doing now should have happened. Then we would have had every time to review in detail what the government intends to do, not only for one year but also two or three years ahead. So, Let us go back and read our Standing Orders, we have failed this time and we must not fail next year.

Honourable Speaker, the whole essence of the exercise is that under Section [26] of the Constitution, every Gambian has a right, equal right to Public Service, Civil Service, Security Service but we must provide the funds. Section [149] says that we must have taxation, it is a law. Section [50] also states that we establish the consolidated fund into which all monies of the Government must be paid but nothing must be withdrawn until we rely on Section [151] for the withdrawal and there must be an Appropriation Act and that is why the Minister has started the process. Section [152] to present the estimates. Section [21] of the Public Finance Act indicates what should be provided, the sources of revenue, the taxation, the grants, the loans, etc. They have done that and it is what we need to review. We are asking where is the money going to come

from ~~2~~; that is precisely where the money should come from. Look at the details that ~~has~~ have been given on the collecting agencies; [Public Enterprises, ~~]~~. They say last year it should have been {D50 million}, now it is a deficit. What happened to that {D50 million}? It has never been paid in 2020. In 2021, we are estimating {D15 million}. We need to find out why they are not paying dividend. You look at Fisheries, go to the details and see how much are they contributing? How much, in terms of the fines? We need to find out how many vessels were captured in 2020? How much did they pay that should feature, that is where the money is going to come from? You look at passports ~~s~~ and ID Cards, all these are revenue earning fees that are being paid and everywhere you look at the details, you will not see anything in detail and those are the details we need to know about; our wealth and where that wealth is going to come from.

Honourable Speaker, the Honourable Minister must concentrate on that now. That is ~~incoming income~~ to us, the detailed estimations, the actuals, the approved budget must be clear so that we know each budgetary agency, and what ~~can~~ they can produce? Honourable Speaker, if that is done, we will be able to say that, this is the departmental self-raised revenue which would be balanced against the demand of a department to know what they can provide by their own collection and making those collections to become more efficient. That should be the starting point, so that you have self-reliant financing of our institutions. Each of those institutions for example, the Army, the Navy, what percentage should it have from arrest of those vessels that should be computed and weighed against their demands?

Honourable Speaker, we look at the budgetary policy that the Minister had told us, it is very clear that the Minister is charged with the responsibility of being the person exercising direction and control over Macroeconomic Policy and Macro Financial Policy, the two are linked. The National Development Plan, {D2.4 billion} was supposed to be raised, {D1.8 billion} pledged, ~~The Minister told us,~~ only [D1. 83 million] has been provided by the last budget when he told us. How much do you have now? We need those details, then he said only 10% ~~%~~. Has it increased and this is the final phase of the National Development Plan [NDP]. The Minister had told us very clearly what Covid

has done in terms of impact, negative impact on our GDP to ~~minus [-1.5%]~~. We are not going to talk about growth, he talked about services that had been locked down, industries locked down, Agriculture is the hopeful, so, essentially, these are the facts about the microeconomic failure that the Minister is telling us, that we are in there straight, that we are engaging in balancing in terms of debates and Honourable Speaker, it is very clear that if we look at what should impact on those who are actually providing the services, you look at the workforce budgets. Honourable Speaker, if you are in Grade ~~one~~¹, what do you anticipate to get? You will see that what you will be anticipating to get. Honourable Speaker, is that you will get {D16, ~~thousand000~~} per annum and Grade ~~2~~², {D20, ~~000thousand~~} per annum; Grade 3, {D24, ~~000thousand~~} per annum, Grade ~~4~~⁴, {D29, ~~000thousand~~} per annum, Grade ~~5~~⁵, {D36, ~~000thousand~~}, Grade ~~6~~⁶, {D42, ~~000thousand~~}, and it goes on. We know then what the workforce budget is all about, it is not really being-going to eradicate poverty. Now, we are faced with Covid-19 extra situation, how do we handle it? There are stimulus packages and if you look at the whole program in the budget of the stimulus package to deal with those people who have definitely been disadvantaged and are the most vulnerable, you will see it there. ~~But-However~~, that is not the stimulus package that will be-lead to economic recovery. What is the stimulus package production for economic recovery? So, we needed policy for vulnerability but also policy for economic recovery and that should guide the direction of the budgeting.

Honourable Speaker, if you look at the budget as a whole, you will see that clearly, unless we take advantage of Covid-19 and build up the revenue base, we are not really going to address the problems that we have highlighted here, the problems of poverty and infrastructural development. It is important, for example, to have all these estimates but as we come to look at the details, just look at the actuals and then eventually we will compare what was estimated and what is the actual? Just look at the approved budget and then we start estimating again. So, the assessment of the implementation of budgets become the key thing to know whether the estimates are realistic or are not realistic, and whether you should continue to make that or not.

Honourable Speaker, if we look at the detailed receipt of estimates of revenue, we are told that in 2019, it was minus {13}, in 2020 minus {33} and the estimate is {D35 billion}. When you look at the detailed estimates of expenditure, we are saying that 2019, it was {10.4}, 2020 11.7 and the estimate now is {13.2}. So, if we look at it Honourable Speaker, the development budget for 2019, we are talking about {799}, 2020 {13 billion} and 2021 {16 billion}. If you look at the debt service Honourable Speaker, we are talking about 2019 {4.4 billion}, 2020 {7.1} and 2021 {5.9} and the Minister has said that, we are not forgiven, it is not debt relief; the news is just to relieve a bit so that, we survive but we will be paying it again. So, we must be preparing for the future in terms of debt services.

Honourable Speaker, it is also very clear that if we look at the budget as a whole and we look at the different departments, we will begin to see really that debt servicing is 17% and we are seeing that what comes after the debt servicing is actually 5.4% being allocated to another institution but then comes in Basic Education 11%, but I am sorry I missed one institution, Health 15%. Going down to centralised services 5.6%, then you move into Finance, Interior up to Defence 2.2 %. So, we are seeing that an institution, which have become very vital, that is the Minister ryer of Energy, is elevating in terms of development budget and these are the institutions. When we say stimulus package for development, we need to identify those institutions that need to be strengthened ed in order to be able to increase the capacity to generate income. 38 vessels from the European Union, to fish in our waters, we are told that we will get {D500,000} Euro per annum for six years, we need to look at that, we need to examine whether we do not need to revisit such an arrangement. How do we ensure that there are more Gambians in this fishing licensing that we introduced? We must guarantee employment for our citizens either 20% or 30% of those people who are going to be on board should be Gambians. How do we ensure there is guarantee that we learn the nature of the fish? How do we ensure that they provide a sum so that, our Navy will be able to get the vessel that they need? So, to round it up Honourable Speaker, what is essential in

handling the direction that we ought to take, is to plan in such a way that we plan to move out of dependence and poverty.

THE SPEAKER: You have two minutes Honourable Member.

HON. HALIFA SALLAH [SERREKUNDA]: It means that for the Navy, even to have a development budget that will buy two vessels for them. Even if you are going to take it as a loan, it is worthy of it because it will enable us to increase our capacity to capture more vessels that will be stealing in our waters. It is better to have a whole strategy of ensuring that all the rents that we are paying, even when you take a loan to build the buildings, we will save ourselves from the rents under continuous basis. This is how we got to plan Honourable Speaker; we plan to move out of dependency.

Honourable Speaker, finally it is significant that the Honourable Minister and this Parliament understand that when we add, we must also have somewhere else to cut, that is the Parliament. We have no authority to add anything to any appropriation but it is the Minister who can add, not instruct the Minister ~~from adding to add~~, read the Standing Orders. So, it is for us to demand to cut and then add but it is also to request for the Minister to rethink and see the possible sources of income and see how we can move forward in approving the budget. Maybe, this time we are running late but that is why the budgetary process must start in the Third Ordinary Session and in doing so, we could substantively contribute to the budgetary law, you can see the contradictions in the law which I want to highlight from the Constitution, from the Public Finance Act, going to our Standing Orders so that; we see how we can synchronise all the laws to be able to work together to produce a budget that is truly reflective of the need and aspirations of our people.

HON. ABDOULIE CEESAY [OLD YUNDUM]: Thank you so much Honourable Speaker, for giving me the floor. First of all, I want to thank the F/PAC ~~Committee~~ for doing a wonderful job because they are mandated by this National Assembly to take care of what we submit to them. For me, the ~~intention~~ of the bilateral conducted in the National Assembly by various committees, was to check or scrutinize the budget

allocation for each Ministry and to downsize the budget. If there is need to increase, then you can recommend for an increment?

The problem we have in our hand Honourable Speaker, with your permission, is that is the recommendation from the F/PAC Committee; which says the purpose of committees interfacing with MDAs, is to see how best to adjust their budget upward and downward whichever case applies. However, given the fact that the 2021 estimates indicate a detailed deficit of [D6 billion], adjusting it can rationally be made only downward, which means that each sector budget has to be adjusted downward with a view to reducing a deficit to a manageable size.

Honourable Speaker, during the bilateral, you will understand that most of these committees were only concentrating more on how to cut from particular budget lines and at the same time reallocate the same amount of money to another budget line within the same Ministry. For me, I was thinking that, the reason why F/PAC has taken up this job, is to go and look at all that is submitted to them and tell us the deficit which is [D6 billion]. Given the report we have in our hand, is there any decrease in the deficit as at now or do we have an increment in the deficit? This is what I expect to see in the report to be able to guide yourself-myself more to debate on the budget, that is the job. If I know that the deficit is going down based on the report from F/PAC, then I will know exactly how to deal with this budget but I cannot see that in the report and that does not convince me and that is the reason why I have to commented about that.

Honourable Speaker, going further, a lot have been said, most of my colleagues have mentioned a lot in the 2021 estimates and of course, we cannot go back to that but what we see in detail is the total expenditure or a revenue that the government wanted to collect this year compared to what they want to spend and that is why we have that huge deposit that everybody is talking about, and how do you reduce that? That should be the work of the National Assembly and that was why I think from all the cuts that we have made from various Ministries, as a National Assembly at this plenary, we should be able to have a pool of reduction that is lying down for us to decide and say,

we have about [D2 billion] in the pool right now that has been cut from the budget, what do we do next during the committee stage? That is what I expect F/PAC to do for us to be able to deal with this budget adequately so that, we do not go in detail to talk about certain issues that are not necessary in the budget for me.

Honourable Speaker, I have also realized as Honourable Saho indicated as the Chairperson of the Select Committee on Government Monitoring that the report that we have in our hand, we were made to understand that the recommended amount of [D77 million] was an additional fund to the Greater Banjul Area project and that is not the recommendation of the Committee.

However, I just wanted to say that the amount that is already allocated for the infrastructural development project of this country, I think those are important for us to maintain, after spending more on the productive sectors in the country, we have been doing that for a number of years without saying much about what is happening at the Ministry of Agriculture or Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education. We have given them enough money and still now, we have not realized what they have been doing. Concentrating more on infrastructural development also is another way that the people can realize the development of their own country. For me, I am supporting the amount of money that is allocated for infrastructural development of the country, whether it is increased or not but the amount that is there, I think that has to be maintained for the development of this country.

Honourable Speaker, I also have to mention it because for me in the budget, this is the third or fourth time that we have been scrutinizing the budget here from my constituency that I am representing, which is the second largest population in this country and if you look at the budget, all the time when it comes, Honourable Colleague from Jarra Central said, you cannot see what they are catering for our people and then we are always here to say, we are going to vote for the budget to be passed when our people are not benefiting and we are paying tax as well. I have allocated a land for the Minister of Interior to build a Fire and Rescue Station in our Constituency,

this has been reported to them when the last Minister was there and up till now, if you go to their development budget, you cannot even see what they are allocating for us. We need that because our people on yearly basis suffer from fire incidents and before you call Fire Service from Serrekunda, all the houses would have gone into ashes. So, I think they need to consider that for the sake of the people. These are some of the things that people want, when we have that of course, we will be part of this country. If we do not have that, it is going to be a problem, you look at the police station in my Constituency, you have about two major police stations and three police post without a vehicle. When you look at the crime rate in the Constituency, it is too high. I have heard from the report that they are saving extra ~~two million dalasi~~ to buy vehicle for patrol and I am suggesting that vehicle should go to ~~go to~~ my Constituency with the support of the people because patrol in that Constituency is important. You have huge crime rate in those areas. The police station did not have vehicle to go around and check what is happening within the surroundings. Honourable Speaker, with this few remark I beg to take my seat.

HON. SALIFU JAWO [JOKADU]: Thank you very much Honourable Speaker for giving me the floor. Let me also register my appreciation to the F/PAC Committee and all other committees within the National Assembly for taking up the task in looking into this budget and then coming up with a consolidated report.

Honourable Speaker, I am appealing to Honourable Members for us to approve this budget

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member, just a minute. I ~~saw~~ the tag of Brikama North. Honourable Member for Jokadu continue.

HON. SALIFU JAWO [JOKADU]: Thank you very much. Honourable Speaker, I am just appealing to my colleagues to endorse this budget because rejecting this budget means we want to hold this country to ransom and that is not going to tell well. We have been passing budgets here since we came to the Parliament, every year Parliamentarians pass budget in this National Assembly and we came here since 2017

to date and we have been passing budgets. So, I cannot understand why some of my Honourable Colleagues are saying that they are rejecting this whole budget outright. I cannot understand that. Maybe you can just say that some of the sectors need to be adjusted and then you give out your inputs and the ones that you want to maintain also you can tell people.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member for Jokadu, please go straight to the draft estimates. The Honourable Member who said that is his opinion, please go straight to the draft estimates.

HON. SALIFU JAWO [JOKADU]: What I want to say is, we have to approve this budget because the life and the livelihood of ~~the~~ Gambians, depend on the budget because all the sectors in this country have been catered for in this budget. Now, I think we need to approve it.

Now the other thing is, when it comes to the development aspect of the Minister of Works and Infrastructure, in my constituency that is Jokadu, although they talked about the Hakalang Road, yes that is fine, Hakalang connects with Jokadu at Kuntaya. But I used to say here that, the entire Jokadu Constituency, almost 85% of the entire population of Jokadu lies in the Northern part of the main road that is Barra-Kerewan Highway, they are right in the Interior and then we got roads that were built since 1985 and those roads are completely dilapidated and I can remember, three years ago, I even went up to the Minister's Office with a sketch map of all the feeder roads in Jokadu but up till now, I really do not know what happened, none of these roads have been mentioned. Look at the road that connects Fass Njaga Choi via Kerr Jane then to Balimandinka and then to Dasilameh where the main road is. In those days, we used to have bus service on that road but since this road was destroyed, that bus service stopped and it is very difficult for those people to be coming in and out. I have seen them starting a project and that project covers only Lower Nuimi that is, it starts from Fass Njaga Choi and then ends at Kerr Jane at the border that is where the road stopped, and I do not know why? I just want to ask the Minister why that happened.

because the road does not stop there, it connects Lower Nuimi and the whole of Jokadu, then connects the main highway at Dasilameh but I can see that what they are constructing stops at Kerr Jane and I want it to continue.

Honourable Speaker, I think development is very important. In any budget, we should at least look at the developmental side of the budget very much, because we cannot build today and then we build tomorrow, we can only build for today. a- Although we can start for tomorrow. What I mean is, let us take care of today and when tomorrow comes, it will take care of itself. Whatever you do here in life, it must have some advantages and disadvantages. So, I think we should try and then pass this budget and then we make follow up, because as an oversight institution, anything in this budget that we passed, we have to follow it and see it happens.

So, on that note Honourable Speaker, I beg to take my seat.

[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed to]

[The House stands suspended till 4:30 for lunch break]

