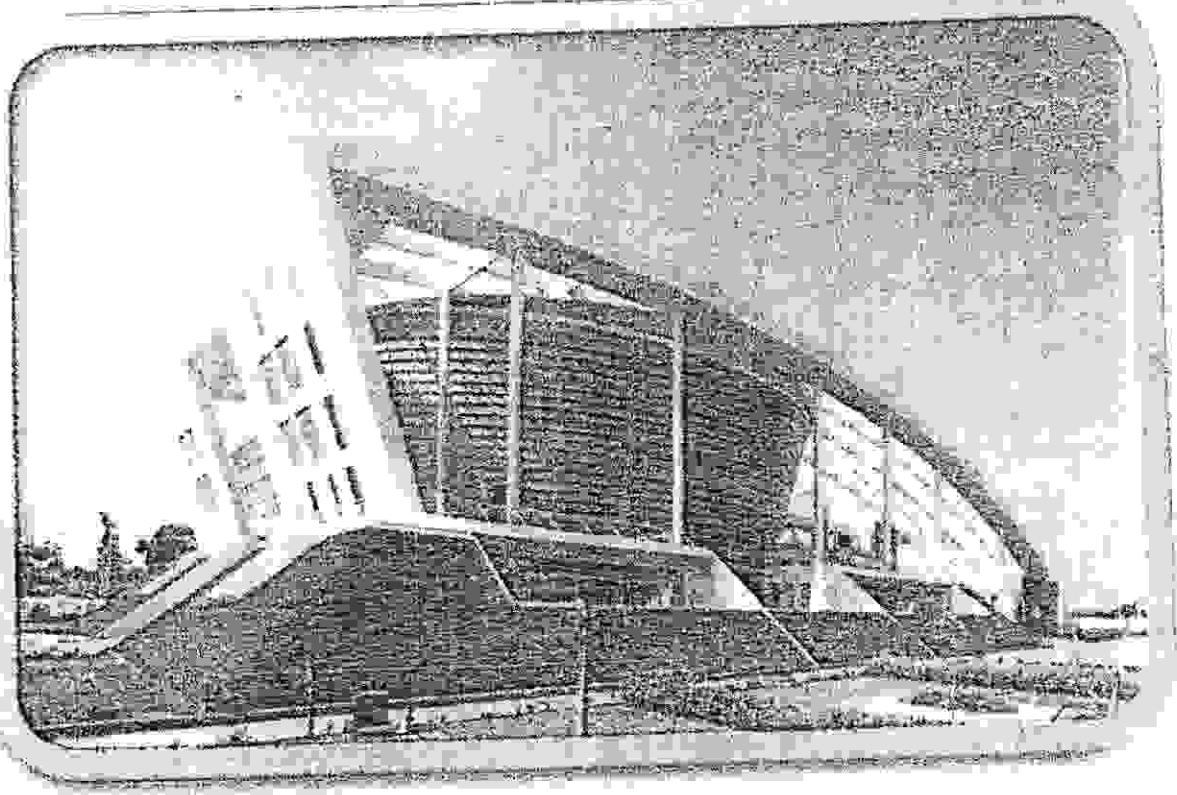




**National Assembly, New Assembly Building, Reverend Pyne
Lane, Banjul, The Gambia**

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

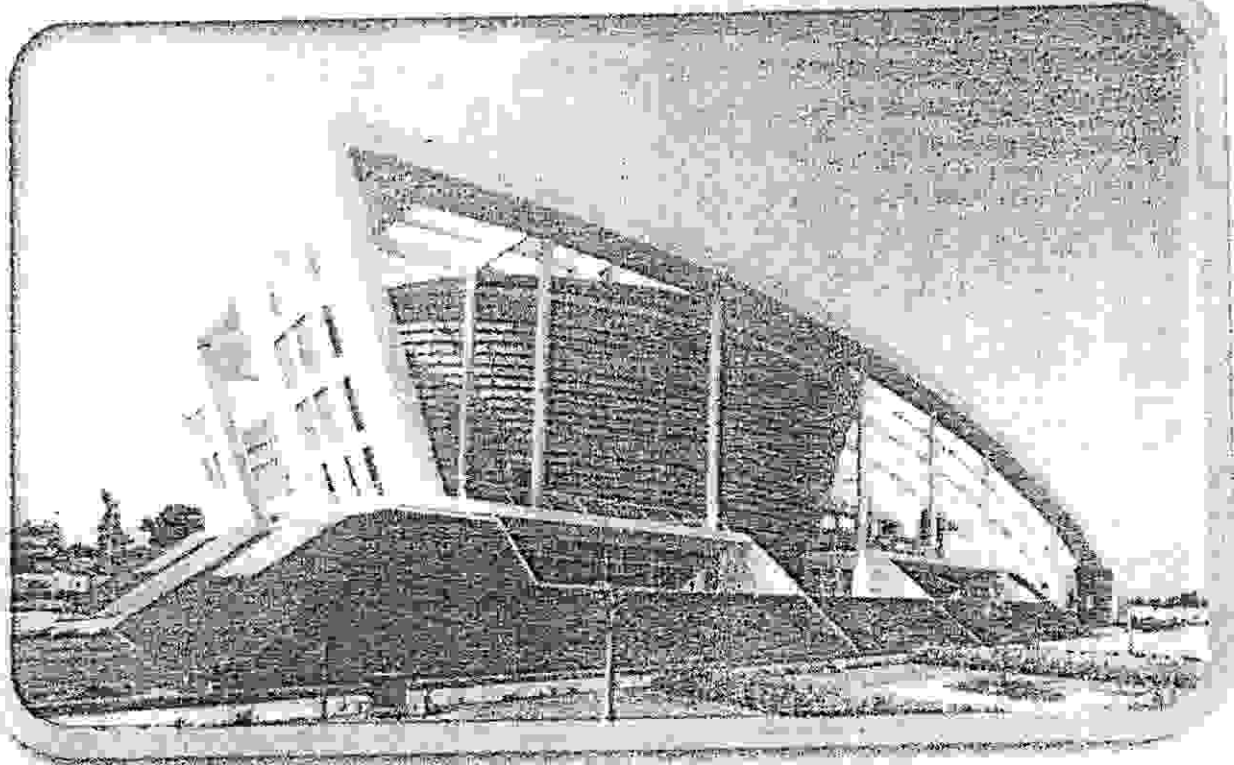
[HANSARD]

OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT

THIRD SITTING – FIRST ORDINARY SESSION

WEDNESDAY 14TH MARCH, 2018

SESSION – 2018



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

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

[HANSARD]

OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT

VOLUME: I

NUMBER: 3

First Meeting of the First Session of the Fifth Parliament
of the Second Republic of The Gambia.

Proceedings of the Sitting of the House
Held on Wednesday 14th March, 2018.

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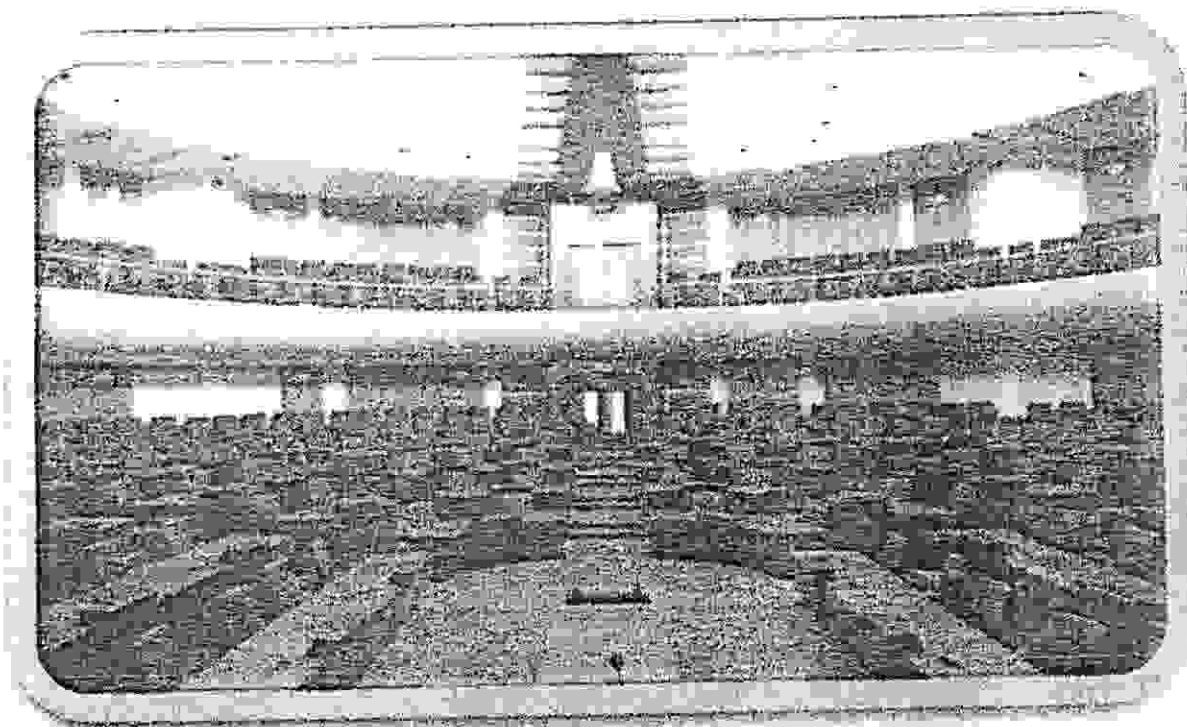
3. QUESTIONS FOR ORAL ANSWERS

- i. Hon. Minister for Foreign Affairs, International Cooperation and Gambians Abroad**
- ii. Hon. Minister for Higher Education, Research and Technology**

4. MOTIONS

Be it RESOLVED that this august Assembly do consider and ratify the;

- i. Amendment of the Charter of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation;**
- ii. Agreement between the Republic of The Gambia and the People's Republic of the China on Mutual Visa Exemption for Holders of Diplomatic, Service Passports and Passports for Public Affairs;**
- iii. Agreement on Visa-free between the Republic of The Gambia and the Russian Federation for Holders of Diplomatic and Service Passports [By Hon. Minister for Foreign Affairs, International Cooperation and Gambians Abroad]**



THE CHAMBERS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF THE GAMBIA

OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE HOUSE

**FIRST SESSION – FIRST MEETING
OF THE FIFTH PARLIAMENT
OF THE SECOND REPUBLIC**

WEDNESDAY 14TH MARCH 2018

1. PRAYERS:

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

[The House met at 10:30 a.m. in New Parliament Building, Reverend Pye Lane, Banjul].

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

The House was called to Order

THE SPEAKER: Good morning Honourable Members, the Order Paper had already been circulated but due to some circumstances, we want to rely on the various provisions of the Standing Orders to alter the Order Paper accordingly because of unforeseen circumstances. When we take the Record of Votes and Proceedings, instead of the Minister for Foreign Affairs we would have the Minister for Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology and then after his questions, we will suspend the sitting until 12 o'clock. We will reconvene to finish the day's business. Thank you.

2. Correction of Record of Votes and Proceedings of the National Assembly Sitting of Tuesday 13th March 2018.

THE SPEAKER: The Record of Votes and Proceedings of the National Assembly Sitting of Tuesday 13th March, 2018 is before us for consideration and adoption.

Can someone please move that the Record of Votes and Proceedings of the National Assembly Sittings of Tuesday 13th March, 2018 be consider and adopted.

HON. ALFUSAINY CEESAY [SAMI]: I so move, Madam Speaker

THE SPEAKER: I so Second, Madam Speaker

THE SPEAKER:

[Question proposed, Put and Agree To]

Any issues, observations, amendments of the Records from Honourable Members? This time around we will amend from page 1 to the last page.

THE SPEAKER: The Deputy Speaker was on the Chair and delegated the responsibility to Honourable Ousman Sillah to table the report and it was Honourable Ousman Sillah who actually tabled it. I think we are in order; I stand to be corrected.

HON. OMAR CEESAY [NIAMINA EAST]: What I am saying is that the delegation has to reflect on the report so that those who are unfortunate to be here, because in the Order Paper it was indicated that Honourable Ousman Sillah lay the report on behalf of the Deputy Speaker who was occupying the seat of the Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: I don't think yesterday's Order Paper indicated that the--

HON. OMAR CEESAY [NIAMINA EAST]: That the Deputy Speaker was supposed to read report-----

THE SPEAKER: I don't think it should be an issue because they are all members of the delegation and since he was on the Chair, obviously he cannot sit on the Chair and table a report, it does not go to any fundamental issue. Thank you.

HON. MAHTARR M. JENG [LOWER NUIMI]: Let me refer this House to page 8, the first paragraph under Motion to withdraw the report until further notice. The last line, cannot be considered by the Assembly due to a missing document referred in the report. "To" is missing.

THE SPEAKER: I always warn the Table Office that we have teachers so they should be careful with their grammar. Thank you we will take note. Anymore?

HON. ALHAGIE DARBOE [LOWER FULLADU WEST]: Page 9, those in favour please say Aye, and -- not in favour say No. "Those" is missing there.

THE SPEAKER: Since there are no more corrections we move ahead

[Question Proposed, Put and Agree to]

[That the Record of Votes and Proceedings of the National Assembly Sitting of Tuesday 13th March 2018 has been adopted with amendments]

3. QUESTIONS FOR ORAL ANSWERS [By the Hon. Minister for Higher Education Research Science & Technology]

HON. BADARA JOOF [MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION, RESEARCH, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY]: Sorry, the numbers--

HON. YA KUMBA JAITEH [NOMINATED]: Yes, not those on scholarship, the general figure of the number of girls in the University presently and the number of --

HON. BADARA JOOF [MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION, RESEARCH, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY]: The total enrolment. I think that is a new element because that should take into consideration the people who are self-paying. The answer provided are only people on scholarship while others pay for themselves or their parents are paying for them. So those who are not on scholarships, I don't have the number with me because the question did not ask that. That is a new element and if you put it in as a question next time I would be able to answer it and give you the statistics. Thank you

HON. FATOUMATA NJAI [BANJUL SOUTH]: Thank you very much Madam Speaker. Can the Honourable Minister kindly tell us, because like the Honourable Members said the gap is really wide and we all know the performance of girls in this country way exceeds the performance of boys. What is the criteria for your section on the scholarship for this wide gap to exist? Thank you.

HON. BADARA JOOF [MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION, RESEARCH, and SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY]: The criteria for selection is one must have 5 credits including compulsory Mathematics and English and in the subject area in which you want to specialise, that is the selection criteria. As to why it is still low for girls, as I said there are many factors that could explain that. Thanks.

HON. SIDIA S. JATTA [WULI WEST]: Would it be correct to say science is also criteria? You are giving scholarship to those who are more scientifically better than those who are Arts. Is it not so?

HON. BADARA JOOF [MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION, RESEARCH, and SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY]: Yes, when I came into office, I said that I want to have 65% policy turn around in stem areas like science, technology, engineering,

comes to the appropriation Bill, the National Assembly will give us more money so that we can give students more scholarships. Thank you.

HON. MUHAMED MAGASSY [BASSE]: Madam Speaker, I want to ask the Honourable Minister about the status of students going for French, they are not covered by the government scholarship. If the Minister wants me to go into detail I can do so but I just want to know whether there is any plans to cover French students.

HON. BADARA JOOF [MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION, RESEARCH, and SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY]: Yes, we do give scholarships to students doing French but as I said the emphasis is on the stem areas.

HON. MUHAMED MAGASSY [BASSE]: Honourable Minister then for your information, at this point in time am talking to you, my batch doing masters in French are not covered by the scholarship and measures have been taken but we did not get any answer from the Ministry. Could you please inform me so that I can pass the information to others please?

HON. BADARA JOOF [MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION, RESEARCH, and SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY]: As far as I know, the University of the Gambia is not offering a Masters in French. What we have done is that those people who want to do French at a Masters level in the context of the Senegalese scholarships, we are giving some of them and the content of 50 scholarships we got from Senegal. Although is outside the context of the question but I will volunteer the answer. Thank you.

HON. OUSMAN SILLAH [BANJUL NORTH]: Madam Speaker, could the Honourable Minister inform this august Assembly whether you have any initiative in place or considering any initiative regarding the motivation of girls to improve their performance so as to improve their enrolment rate for scholarships?

HON. BADARA JOOF [MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION, RESEARCH, and SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY]: Well, the only incentive we have is that when we screen them in terms of the criteria and they are almost at the same level, we would give preference to the female applicants. But I think the motivation should start from the Basic and Secondary level to feed us.

HON. BAKARY CAMARA [KIANG CENTRAL]: Honourable Minister, you realized that you have certain number of students that are self-sponsored and then here and there they find it difficult to pay their tuition fee. Is there any arrangement between the University and the students because anytime they failed in paying their tuition fees they are denied their exams which is really a big setback to the student? Is there any arrangement to allow them to write their exams and then settle their bills after?

THE SPEAKER: I think that is way off tangent really.

HON. LAMIN J. SANNEH [BRIKAMA SOUTH]: Thank you Madam. Honourable Minister, I just want to enquire whether the statistics given in your response are all government sponsored and if not can you tell us how many are government sponsored and non-government sponsored?

HON. BADARA JOOF [MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION, RESEARCH, and SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY]: Ok I will just attempt the first part of the question, some are sponsored by the government through our normal scholarships and others are sponsored by different agencies like Social Security, NAWEC, GAMTEL, Humanity First, the Central Bank and others. But I cannot give you the exact statistics.

HON. MANJANKO SAMUSA [NOMINATED]: Madam Speaker, could the Honourable Minister outline the question of English and Mathematic been a compulsory subject regardless of having 5 credits without any of these you cannot be admitted into the University and what are the rationale behind?

HON. BADARA JOOF [MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION, RESEARCH, and SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY]: This is in line with international best practices. Almost in any University you go to in the world Maths and English are compulsory. In fact, we did only one exception and that those who are doing development studies that is where maths is not compulsory but English is compulsory because is the medium of instruction. So one should credit English because whatever you do whether is the sciences or the social sciences or arts you do it in English so the proficiency in English is very important for us.

HON. LAMIN M.F. CONTA [KOMBO EAST]: Madam, I just want to ask the Honourable Minister whether those credited to the scholarship package include Islamic students? Thank you

HON. BADARA JOOF [MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION, RESEARCH, and SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY]: If you mean those who are studying Islamic studies, yes but they are very few.

HON. DEMBA SOWE [NIAMINA WEST]: Thank you Madam but my question is been asked by the Honourable Member for Kombo East.

HON. ALHAGIE S.B. SILLAH [NIANI]: Thank you Madam, I want to ask the Honourable Minister whether he is aware of a student who came from my constituency, he went to Kenya for a competition of science and mathematics and he came out as the best student among the competitors and whether your Ministry has done any provision to award this student a scholarship? Thank you.

HON. BADARA JOOF [MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION, RESEARCH, and SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY]: No, I am not aware of that and Gambia government does not sponsor outside UTG even though he is from the same constituency as I am because am also from Niani.

HON. ALHAGIE S.B. SILLAH [NIANI]: Still to continue the same student was even taken to the President of the Republic and according to him the president has awarded him an amount of D35,000 [Thirty-Five Thousand Dalasis] of which he did not still receive, he is at Nustrat—

THE SPEAKER: Honourable please in all fairness I don't think that is a proper question. Thank you.

HON. ABDOULIE CEESAY [OLD YUNDUM]: Thank you Madam Speaker, my question has been addressed by the Minister, somebody asked and the answer was provided by the Minister.

HON. BABA GALLAN JALLOW [SANIMENTRENG]: Thank you Madam, my question has been addressed by the Honourable Member for Upper Saloum.

entrance in the University to be able to know what... Because if there is only 600 female in the University and 579 are given scholarship that is great.

But if there are 3000 female and 579 is given scholarship when it is the same criteria of entrance, the same criteria of scholarship then there is a problem. I think we really need to know this figure to understand this part. Thank you.

HON. BADARA JOOF [MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION, RESEARCH, and SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY]: Well the figure that you are talking about goes beyond the Gambians because the question is specific to Gambians on scholarship and as I said before we give you scholarship you must have admission, is admission base and the Ministry does not influence admission at the University. University has its own criteria and we know that Maths and English are compulsory except as I said for Development Studies. So if you got your admission you come to us then we look at the area of study and then on the bases of the priority set, we award the scholarships.

HON. SUWAIBOU TOURY [WULI EAST]: Thank you Madam Speaker, my question is, there are many students that are applying for scholarships outside the Gambia whether the Ministry of Higher Education have a role to play and what role you play in helping such students to acquire scholarships? Thank you

HON. BADARA JOOF [MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION, RESEARCH, and SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY]: Although is a new element but I will volunteer the answer.

If people have scholarships outside the jurisdiction of those whom we have bilateral relations with, we take the admission and write to the government of that country especially to their Embassies and say that, this is a student may be if it is in Ukraine, we normally have people in Ukraine for that kind of thing or Russia, we tell them that this is it and they are continuing students can you help them. If they are in government Universities of those countries the Embassies do help but if they are in private Universities of those countries then the Embassy would normally say that, this is a private University and is our government policy is, we don't fund foreign students to enrol in private universities.

HON. BADARA JOOF [MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION, RESEARCH, and SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY]: Yes, they are bonded given the numbers of years that they are train for particularly the PHD.

HON. MUHAMED MAGASSY [BASSE]: Thank you, Madam mine may be a statement and at the end it will be a question. Is a concern to all of us, we are talking about University Act 1999 and one of the principles of the university is to provide quality in content and delivery. Since 1999 up to 2016 if I can read meaning that this number 109 were on Bachelor's Degree and lecturers at the university- because if I understand from the answer the Minister says from 2016 to date 109 had been sent for training, 66 of whom are master's program and 43 are doing PHD. So prior to 2016 from 1999 to 2016 we can assume from the answer that lecturers or this number of lecturers who are now been updating are on Bachelor's Degree. So how can a Bachelor's Degree holder lecture at a University? I think this is something interesting. Thank you.

HON. BADARA JOOF [MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION, RESEARCH, and SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY]: I think the premise is a little bit suspect because there were people who have their master and PHD lecturing. We are just saying that from 2016 we sent people to do master's and PHDs but that those not preclude the fact before 2016 there were no PHD or Master's lecturers at the University. No it does not mean that.

HON. MUHAMED MAGASSY [BASSE]: Honourable Speaker may I clarify my concern please? Honourable Minister for your information, I did my Bachelor's and am currently doing my master's at the University. I know the history of University, am not saying what you said, I say from your answer, his concerned is about the lecturers, upgrading the lecturers and the answer you provided 109 to me you are receding fine to those lecturers meaning that 109 lecturers in the University of the Gambia were lecturing Bachelor's Degree that is my concern. I am not saying whether there is no PHD or Master's holders that is not my concern please.

HON. BADARA JOOF [MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION, RESEARCH, and SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY]: let me beg to defer. Those who are going to do or

THE SPEAKER: Any more supplementary? Thank you very much Honourable Minister for those answers provided to the questions. You are now released. Thank you.

As I indicated earlier on, I would like to suspend the sitting until 12 o'clock

SUSPENDED

[THE HOUSE NOW STANDS SUSPENDED UNTIL 12 O'CLOCK']

THE HOUSE RESUMES

QUESTIONS FOR ORAL ANSWERS

HON. MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS, INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AND GAMBIAANS ABROAD

THE SPEAKER: Questions for which due notices were given to Honourable Minister for Foreign Affairs International Cooperation and Gambians Abroad by Honourable Members for Oral reply.

QUESTION NO 210/2017 [BY THE HON. MEMBER FOR JARRA EAST]

HON. SAINY TOURAY [JARRA EAST]: Madam Speaker could the Honourable Minister of Foreign Affairs, International Cooperation and Gambians Abroad inform this august Assembly the delay responsible for the appointment of Ambassador to the United States.

HON. OUSAINOU DARBOE [MINISTER FOREIGN AFFAIRS, INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION & GAMBIAANS ABROAD]: Madam Speaker, the question posed by the Honourable Member for Jarra East has been over taken by events. An Ambassador has been appointed to United States and has assumed his duties.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you but Honourable Minister but for purposes of the Hansard record, you may just read the answer as provided and then give an update. Thank

HON. OUSAINOU DARBOE [MINISTER FOREIGN AFFAIRS, INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION & GAMBIAANS ABROAD]: Madam Speaker Ma, the government of the Gambia has engaged to post the appointment of an Ambassador Extra Ordinary

networks. It will also seek to help countries of origin and transit for migrants to tackle the root causes of migration via development opportunities and stability.

Madam Speaker, pursuant to the above mentioned goal, my Ministry, the primary institution responsible for the welfare of Gambians Abroad, is re-engaging relevant international organisations and friendly countries in not only reversing the situation but also ensuring that the welfare of Gambians wherever they are, is adequately addressed.

The Government of the Gambia, EU and ICM have recently launched a joint initiative for migrant protection and reintegration project the three year project is funded by the European Union Emergency Trust Fund for Africa [EUTF] for a total of EUR 3.9 million and was signed on 3rd November 2017.

My Ministry is working very closely with other Ministries concerned particularly the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Trade Integration and Employment which have the mandate to lead on migration, governance, implementation and management in the country.

[SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION[S]]

HON. FATOU K. JAWARA [TALLINDING KUNJANG]: Thank you Madam. Honourable Minister apart from engaging international organisation and friendly countries for reversing the situation, is there any plan in place to conduct inter-generational dialogue to discourage the youth on irregular?

HON. OUSAINOU DARBOE [MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS, INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION & GAMBIAANS ABROAD]: Madam Speaker, obviously the government will not only be relying on external partners in dealing with this problem. We as Gambians also have a responsibility and this responsibility I think we will execute by way of holding regular contacts with the Gambians already at home so as to ensure that their desires to travel abroad is really lessen. Travel abroad through the irregular way is certainly lessen and we also within the scope of the national development plan ensure that those people who returned are integrated into society and they are engage in useful ventures and I believe that the agricultural

what has not been spend you could probably contact the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Employment.

HON. HALIFA SALLAH [SEREKUNDA]: Honourable Speaker, the Minister talks about integration of the migrants, wouldn't he concur that integration has a psychological, social and economic component. If that is agreed, is there a reception centre when these migrants come, are they accompanied into the community to give them the type of psychological civility necessary and is there a concrete program to provide them with an economy when return so that they can continue their lives.

HON. OUSAINOU DARBOE [MINISTER FOREIGN AFFAIRS, INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION & GAMBIANS ABROAD]: Honourable Speaker Ma, obviously when we talk of integration to society it takes into account all factors that are necessary to have a proper integration. And these factors include but not limited to psychological, social and economic issues so really we cannot have relief integration without addressing all other factors that are necessary to have proper integration and these we certainly and necessarily do have.

The Honourable Member for Serekunda, we want to let you know that we are making it known to the Europeans or the other partners in this matter that Gambia is developing its capacity to receive the returnees and we just cannot having them in a whole multitude, thousands of people just push on us without finding us prepared and these are some of the factors that we are taking into consideration were you see them and get the appropriate people.

We know that as of now, we make sure they return to their families, I know some probably will have some emotional and psychological trouma that is, probably that happens but then we also believe that this formal counselling that we have been catered for my our extending family because of social practise, how we leave together, could really help get people integrated, you don't have to do it in a European way of getting a psychologist, an emotional side of this, our set up am sure Honourable Member for Serekunda as a sociologist and ———

HON. HALIFA SALLAH [SEREKUNDA]: Thank you very much, as you have rightly said Honourable Minister Gambia is caught unprepared because is on transition

in the Gambia and that we are helpless in the situation because am clearly telling you and if you wish am meeting a group of them this evening, I can direct them to your office -the community that you mentioned the family cannot address this problem, it does not have the capacity to address this problem and what we need is corporation with our partners. Are you telling us that we are helpless that our international partners are not listening, that they will continue to dump our citizens on us and create tension in our own country when we have a transition to manage to move towards genuine democratic constitutionalism. Are you telling us that or are you saying that we should expect immediate results from your offices to handle this problem?

HON. OUSAINOU DARBOE [MINISTER FOREIGN AFFAIRS, INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION & GAMBIAANS ABROAD]: I do not think my response indicate that the international community does not recognise the Gambia's democracy. It has recognised Gambian democracy to the extent that it extols it internationally and tells everyone everywhere that Gambia is a model of democracy and that is why we are having corporation with them, when they felt that it was not a democratic state they abandoned us, we were treated as a pariah state but now that is not the case so is not an issue of showing that the Gambia is not democratic dispensation now that is why these actions are been taken. And indeed is in an account of our situation that we not accepted their best practice document, if we have accepted that then they would just be dumping on us but we have said that we are not accepting that document without taking into account our own concerns.

So we are addressing the situation and indeed as I had said that these problems are not just matters that is for the Executive I think is a problem of the government of the Gambia which the Honourable knows that and this august Assembly is part off and anything that will as which. The problems are open to anything and we believe that it should a question of all the institutions working together not really trying to say picking hole that it might be confine to this particular institution to that extend any member of the National Assembly and indeed any other Gambian who really has access to anything that will help in solving this national problem I think is welcome. Thank you.

HON. ALHAGIE DRAMMEH [JESHWANG]: Honourable Minister, you stated in your responses to the question that around 3, 800 [Three Thousand and Eight Hundred]

harm strong in really seeing our own national. But these 3800 is not Gambians alone but African migrants which should be known to all.

THE SPEAKER: Can someone please move that we sit beyond 1 O'clock.

HON. OMAR DARBOE [UPPER NUIMI]: Thank you Madam. I so move, Madam Speaker.

HON. DEMBA SOWE [NIAMINA WEST]: I so second, Madam Speaker.

THE SPEAKER:

[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed to]

[That the House sits beyond 1:00 pm]

HON. SULAYMAN SAHO [BADDIBU CENTRAL]: Thank you Madam Speaker, migration has been an issue internationally and lot of Gambians left Gambia into sub-Saharan African and Europe. Most of our youth left because of a reason and those reasons are still prevailing in the Gambia. So I want the Honourable Minister to tell us how best they [the government] engage the international world and the countries were they are now about the conditions of those migrants. The right that they deserve and how prepared are they to give them skills before sending them back to the Gambia because if they come back to Gambia without been skilled still the situation continuous.

The other question is, countries where Gambians are in detention camps or where their rights are being violated, is the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Gambians Abroad ready to up it as a case to defend the rights of those migrants in any part of the world? Thank you.

HON. OUSAINOU DARBOE [MINISTER FOREIGN AFFAIRS, INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION & GAMBIANS ABROAD]: Thank you Madam Speaker, well the push factor that impels this irregular migration, I agreed is still with us and it is for all of us to ensure that we eliminate it completely and as I have indicated in a response that we expect these returnees to be engaged in agriculture.

HON. MAHTARR JENG [LOWER NUIMI]: Madam Speaker, I want to rest my question because it has been part of the answer the Honourable Minister made recently regarding the move to involve the Libyan consulate in the Gambia. Thank you

HON. ALAGIE S. DARBOE [BRIKAMA NORTH]: Thank you very much Madam Speaker pertaining to the said AU submit highlighted in the response. I would like the Honourable Minister to inform how recent was that particular submit and since then has there been any returnees from Libyan to Gambia and if so how many were involved to be precise and specific. Can the Honourable Minister do inform this august Assembly the necessary step that the government intends to reintegrate those returnees?

HON. OUSAINOU DARBOE [MINISTER FOREIGN AFFAIRS, INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION & GAMBIANS ABROAD]: Thank you Madam Speaker. The EU-AU submit took place in November last year and of course since then there has been returnees and of course we have been working and still continue to work with IOM to deal with the situation. We have indicated the figure in the reading answer and the efforts to reintegrate these people into society I think the written answer gives part of it and in response to supplementary questions also we have given answers to this and of course one of the means to have them reintegrated is this provision the M3.9 and of course we are very aware that there is the youth employment program within the Ministry of Trade and Employment all gears towards the reintegration of these returnees. We hope that, although the process may be slow but we hope that we will be able to have them fully integrated for the benefit of the returnees themselves as well as for the benefit of the society.

If I may just add that we are engage with the IOM to provide assistance to the Gambia to ensure that we have some presence in Libyan and we are told that they want to see the proposal because we do not want to open up a mission in a country and then subsequently close it down because of some financial implication that is why we want their proposals so that we can look at it critical and see whether an ad hoc missions, there would be more beneficiary than the permanent one.

agreement with the European Union for them to be deported into this country and this issue has been brought up in the media and now we have the opportunity to have the Honourable Minister for Foreign Affairs who is responsible of any transaction of such to clear the air in this august House. Because the National Assembly is where the representatives of the nation are. And by clearing it here is more authenticated and the message will reach the Gambian people and they would also know what actually happened.

In addition to that, other supplementary question, in this august House here Honourable Minister, we are informed here that eleven point something million has been given by EU to the Ministry of Trade and M3.9 that you have already said that has been given to the Ministry of Interior. Honourable Speaker this money has been given to the state since 2017 but till now nothing has been done. The Minister of Trade came to this august House, the statement she made here and the statement made by then Minister of Interior [Honourable Mai Fatty] are far different.

Could the Honourable Minister please help this august House to tell us if he has any knowledge of the M11 Dollars that has been given to Trade Ministry because we believe a thing of that cannot come to this country without the knowledge of Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Thank you Madam.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you Honourable Member. With regards to the first intervention, I don't know if you people can direct question so that things will be clear because for me it was a statement, I did not get a sense of what the question is. And the second one, to be candid is really not relevant but is an urgent question and based on that I would use my discretion to allow the second question although is not related. But the first one I would appreciate if it can be reframed so that it will be in the form of a question. It was more of a statement. Thank you.

HON. MAJANKO SAMUSA [NOMINATED]: Honourable Speaker, I think if you can remember I said with your permission I would lay the foundation for the question. I seek your permission that is why I made the statement.

THE SPEAKER: Ok that was with reference to the second question –

but what I signed with the EU was in the full view of not only the Gambia media including electoral media and television but also in the full view of international media personalities and that was in February when EU delegation visited the Gambia and gave us a grant of seventy-five million Dollars [M75\$] to help us in our budget support. And also they made an undertaking that they will continue to support us. And the long and short of it is that these speculations are just malicious and of course it does not take us any further. What I wanted to say is that, I have not signed any agreement and if I have to sign you can be sure that I will not compromise the interest of the Gambia and whatever agreement we sign you know it will have to be brought before this Assembly and you will have the opportunity to scrutinize it, to see whether in fact what we have done is in the interest of the Gambia. So we will be very conscious of what we sign.

The issue of M3 euro, it is a fund provided by the European Union and it is implemented by the IOM and the IOM of course works with the Ministry of Interior on these issues, works with the Ministry of Trade and Employment in order to help settle our people in other words also to help equip our young people with the means of earning themselves with livelihood.

The M11.5, am sure you have heard about YEP youth employment program, those who are minded can go to the Ministry of Works and Employment with a business plan, if you are a plumber, carpenter etc. whatever vocation you want to get you can get present your business plan and it will be securitized and this is what I think we should be looking forward to making best use of.

I also want to say that the M11.5 euro to some of course may be self looks to be on the low side so we are thinking that we should engage our partners to having it increase so that those people who come back home will be properly catered and those people who want to go will be restricted from going. Thank you.

HON. YA KUMBA JAITEH [NOMINATED]: Thank you Ma. Honourable Minister part of my question has been answered. You made it very clear that your Ministry has not signed any agreement to facilitate deportation for migrants abroad. My question is specific on the situation of the deportees coming from United States.

again we have to listen to them and hear what they say and of course we will not just brush aside any statement but we will also not take any statement as been evidence of really the true fact. We will do our investigations and of course we know that there are people amongst them who have no cause to mislead, am not too sure how true it is but I understand there is a particular gentleman who volunteered to come and someone who volunteered to come I think would really tell us the true story. And again after meeting with them on Friday, that will inform our decision at what cause of action we should take, we cannot say we are going to do this or that but then that we will inform you.

Again in the provision of documents, yes the government did provide travel documents for them to be brought back to the Gambia and that is done because of considerations of in position of any sanction on the government but it was done, at least my Ministry's concerned was that they should not continue to languishing in detention centres under conditions that people claimed to be horrible conditions. So if we can get them out of that place to their country better and that has been very motivating cause for me so with these and we could not leave them in such a situation, undocumented and in fact I have in the past even in the Unites States, another countries I have appealed to Gambians that they make sure their migration status are been regularise so that there would be an occasion for any of them to be deported.

Not only to regularise their migration status but also to respect the laws of the country and keep away from activities that will make them crash with the law. But then for my Ministry, the important is to know what assets they have left behind and what treatment have been meted to them so that we could deal with those. Thank you.

HON. NDEY YASSIN SECKA [NOMINATED]: Thank you Ma, could the Honourable Minister please inform this august gathering because some of these migrants even want to go back and at the present moment now some people are going due to the problems and challenges known to us all. But still people are going, some are coming with their problems. What are the mechanisms that the government is taking, what are we prioritizing to make sure that people are not going again and when they come back we put them into rehabilitation centres. If you can remembered you promised

I think this is what we have to educate our people on and of course provide them may be the means if you have that between the other side of Wuli to Sutukoba that will help in addressing the unemployment situation and is a very useful way of earning for us and I think we have to educate our ourselves that we really can make it without going to Europe. When I calculated D16,000 for 2 weeks D32,000 and a month D64,000 I said to myself oh my God, what a huge amount.

I want all of us to embark on these national sensitisations of our youth so they don't go away and those who are coming back can use these types of means of making useful and decent living. Thank you Ma.

HON. ALFUSAINY CESSAY [SAMI]: Thank you Madam Speaker, the Honourable Minister did mention that there are 1,657 returnees. Honourable Minister among these people how many of them benefited from the M3.9? Thank you.

HON. OUSAINOU DARBOE [MINISTER FOREIGN AFFAIRS, INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION & GAMBIANS ABROAD]: Honourable Speaker let say that am embarrassed that I cannot provide an answer because my Ministry does not administer these funds so I think the appropriate authority I think would be the Minister of Interior, Trade and Employment or IOM. Am really sorry I cannot answer that.

HON. DEMBO CAMARA [ILLIASSA]: Thank you Madam, my question has been answered.

HON. SUWAIBOU TOURAY [WULI EAST]: Thank you Honourable Speaker. The Honourable Minister for Foreign Affairs and Gambians abroad has stated that the government has made tackling irregular migration a top priority. I believe that if that is the situation, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is very crucial in the reintegration process. Am just urging your Ministry to proactively engage the stakeholders the institutions that are crucial in this so that the reintegration process can be quick. Will your Ministry be willing to proactively engage these ministries? Because this thing has been signed since 2017 and yet still the returnees are not benefiting directly from the fund. Thank you.

notification of the deportation from Germany and as well as that of United States. Previously we were given notification of arrivals from Libya and what we did, we make sure that our officer who is in charge of migration matters in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was at the airport as well as officers of the immigration department not only to perform their duties as immigration officers but also as people there to receive our compatriots who have been airlifted from Libya. But for United States we were not notify and for Germany also we are not notify because if we are notified, we will ensure that the appropriate officer in our Ministry is at the airport to receive them and other government agencies that also have anything to do with these migrants they will be at the airport.

HON. SIDIA JATTA [WULI WEST]: Honourable Minister, I think there is a need for your Ministry to get in touch with all countries where there are depending deportees or eminent deportees to be notify as to when they are to be deported so that the necessary measures can be taking for their arrival.

HON. OUSAINOU DARBOE [MINISTER FOREIGN AFFAIRS, INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION & GAMBIANS ABROAD]: Honourable Member for Wuli West, in fact that is what I alluded to in an earlier response that we want to make sure that we have the capacity to receive and settle these returnees. We have the capacity to settle them and not as you suggested, not for them to be dump on us and we find ourselves in a state of chaos. That is why on the best practice document, we also are putting our own concerns that should buttress and these are issues that should be taking care of that we know what number is been sent home and when and even to segregate them, those who are purely violators of the immigration law and those who have been converted and have served their sentence and are been deported so that we have them segregated. I think this is what we would want. Thank you.

HON. MOMODOU S. CESSAY [JANJANBUREH]: Thank you Madam Speaker for giving me the floor. Part of my question was asked by Nominated Member Ya Kumba but since we are talking about deportees and migrants, I want to be very specific. Honourable Minister, can you tell us whether our Embassies in these countries that the deportees are coming from are assisting the deportee countries in providing the deportees with any document particularly emergency passports. Thank you.

we have here, the YEP and M3. 9 we are talking about, for these migrants to becoming migrants, to access them takes time because some of them have training components. It really takes time, so why don't we engage them, support them, get training there then when they come back, they will be accompany with skills and will be giving start-ups to start something. That is my question I want to ask whether the government is exploring that.

HON. OUSAINOU DARBOE [MINISTER FOREIGN AFFAIRS, INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION & GAMBIAANS ABROAD]: Thank you very much Honourable Member, if my memory serves me well, I think I have addressed this particular issue and I did say that I think at least 2 states which are working with the government to ensure that these irregular migrants receive training in skills, I even mentioned that mechanical engineer, plumbing electrical engineer I did say so and that is what we are pursuing, and we are intensifying contract with them so that as you say this will also be as a way of scholarship to those who are in the countries were the host country are not willing to have their continuous presences there but then to help train them so that they can come back to the Gambia and apply their skills in the areas in which they are train. I think I did say so and I want to reiterate that, that is our position and that is why this document I referred to the Best Practice Document that is why we have not told European Union that we are accepting it without really taking into consideration our concerns.

HON. MUHAMED MAGASSY [BASSE]: Thank you Madam Speaker, availability of accurate and reliable data helps to plan better. My preoccupation here is on statistic. The Honourable Minister has provided a statistic as of December 2017, equivalent to 1,657 returnees registered.

Honourable Speaker, the employment directorate under the Ministry of Trade, Industry, Regional Integration and Employment also embarked on fact findings and the facts that they brought before the public as of December 2017, is 1,444 returnees. So if one compares the 2 statistics, you will see a difference of 213 returnees. So I want the Honourable Minister to help us to understand the sources of these difference whether there is no collaboration between his Ministry and Ministry of Trade, Industry, Regional Integration and Employment.

figure that you have, you want to extrapolated to the future and see what could happen in the future. If you just confine yourself to the figure in this particular case 2 or 3 months later you may find it wrong.

Dialogue with the parents, well is a proposal that we will not brush aside with the wave of the hand, but really, as we have the figures here, more than 1000 returnees, how do we engage the parents individually? We don't have the logistics and that is why I say we all have the responsibility of sensitization and I think really the radio remains the electronic median, to be sensitizing the parents of the returnees as well as the parents of those who might want to be going away. But then really to go out to engage each of the parents individually I think is going to be very costly unless you want to increase our budget.

HON. MUHAMED MAGASSY [BASSE]: Honourable Minister, am not saying to engage the parents individually, there is a mechanism and we can also help your Ministry to do that. I just want to know whether there is a dialogue between your ministry and the parents. But we can help you to do that, is not to meet them one after the other.

Honourable Speaker my last question, I want to go back to the original question and the concerned of the questionnaire. In her question, she made mentioned, could the Honourable Minister tell this august Assembly if there is any plan to engage these youth into any meaningful development initiative so they can reintegrate into the society. The focus here is reintegration into the society but the challenge that the Ministry can use to development initiatives. As people's representatives and as layman for that matter, what concrete initiatives it is in place that is touchable and tangible so that we can show to our people to tell them, this is effort that the Ministry or the government is doing in order to reintegrate the returnees into the society.

HON. OUSAINOU DARBOE [MINISTER FOREIGN AFFAIRS, INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION & GAMBIAANS ABROAD]: Honourable Speaker Ma, I think the Honourable Member for Basse really as if you are dissecting the question and putting in what specifics. But the specific that I have, I can tell you is the YEP project. That is the specific and of course every applicant, any person who wants to utilise that YEP

What we can do and which we are doing in collaboration with the IOM is to get our people out of Libya. But then the criminal activities that are been undertaken there we really as a government from the Gambia here I don't think we can do anything. If it was happening in the Gambia here, then we should be held responsible for letting it continue without taking appropriate measures against them and again what I have said earlier that we have engaged Sa De' Affairs here as far as it concerns Gambians and that is how much we can do from here but we cannot really send any police or any other person to Libya.

The other question was, we have given statistic figures as to returnees from Libya you have 45 and you have others coming from United States, obviously the issue of deportees that have come from the United States is for something that I have said we are quite unprepared for so it is not something that any plan, any specific plan have been made for.

The funds that are available are funds that been provided by the European Union in order to catered for those people who are being send out of Europe as well as those who are been airlifted from Libya. And we certainly as a government, we would have to look into the issues of these deportees from United States.

The issue of reintegration, I think I have to the best of my ability try to say what can done in fact the Honourable Member for Serekunda East, categorizing that there is a psychological, social factors and I had in my responses show what we have been doing to have these people properly reintegrated into society. And certainly am not sure, if I have any further information order than what I have provided.

HON. FATOUMATA NJAI [BANJUL SOUTH]: The Honourable Minister said that they are unprepared for the returnees from United States. Yes, we all understand that it was unprepared but since they started coming, have they also started negotiating with the United States to make sure that they give them something at least to help when they are back home here. Because we all know that some time back, we don't know what happened but we knew that United States restricted visas to officials and probably it was said that once the Gambia accept the returnees they would uplift that ban. So what is the update on that and why have they started returning? That is what

HON. MUHAMED MAGASSY [BASSE]: I mean the document that was signed on 3rd November in relation to the Trust Fund for Africa for a total of M3.9 euro. Hence the document is signed and is a national document whether the Ministry will be willing to share that document with the parliament.

THE SPEAKER: To share the document with the National Assembly?

HON. MUHAMED MAGASSY [BASSE]: Exactly.

HON. OUSAINOU DARBOE [MINISTER FOREIGN AFFAIRS, INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION & GAMBIAANS ABROAD]: Very well Honourable Speaker, we live in an era of transparency, so nothing will be hidden particularly from an institution like the National Assembly we will provide it and that will be probably a more authentic information that might answer.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you very much Honourable Minister. Honourable Members we have 3 motions, on today's order paper to be tabled by the Honourable Minister of Foreign Affairs. I don't know whether you want us to proceed or we take a short break and come back at 3'clock? Is left to us to decide. We want to continue? May I have some suggestion please?

MOTION: FOR THE SUSPENSION OF THE HOUSE UNTIL 3'CLOCK.

HON. MUHAMED MAGASSY [BASSE]: I move the Motion that this House stand suspended for 45 minutes.

THE SPEAKER: I think that is ok, we come back at quarter to 3. There is a motion on floor any seconder? Oh you have a counter motion.

HON. SAIKOUBA JARJU [BUSUMBALLA]: My suggestion is, we come back at 3'clock.

THE SPEAKER: The essence is that, we suspend and come back.

HON. SAIKOUBA JARJU [BUSUMBALLA]: Yes.

HON. KUMBA JAITEH [NOMINATED]: I rise to second the second motion.

platform which would serve to propagate progressive policies that are geared towards the advancement of OIC and its Member States. Furthermore, narrowing the gap between summit meetings, will ensure the facilitation of active communication between the Muslim Ummah, its leaders and the rest of the world.

Honourable Speaker, the OIC has played a significant role in The Gambia's development agenda which is evidently manifested in the various OIC sponsored projects. The Gambian's voice in the OIC platform is highly placed and this is conspicuously demonstrated in the nomination of The Gambia to host the General Assembly Meeting of the OIC in 2019.

Honourable Speaker, I beg to move.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you very much, but before I ask for the seconder, I will suggest that, if you can make the statement available so that it can be copied and distributed.

HON. OUSAINOU DARBOE [MINISTER FOREIGN AFFAIRS, INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION & GAMBIANS ABROAD]: Very well, Honourable Speaker I thought the statement has been made available to the –

THE SPEAKER: Thank you very much, any seconder?

HON. ALHAGIE DARBOE [LOWER FULLADU WEST]: Thank you Madame Speaker I raised to second the motion.

THE SPEAKER: It has been move and seconder that this Honourable Assembly do consider the amendment to the charter of Islamic cooperation.

[Question Proposed, Put and agreed to]

Now, any Honourable Member who wishes to take part in the debate may do so. You may raise your constituency tag so that I can just record thank you.

HON. HALIFA SALLAH [SERREKUNDA]: Thank you very much Honourable Speaker. The explanatory memorandum, convey the details of the amendment, explicitly indicate, that the purpose of the amendment is to address a change in the world. The change were rapid development necessitates the leaders of the

session, but then is a point that is really worth considering, particularly having regard to the fact that, apart from the UN, the OIC has the largest number of the Member states

THE SPEAKER: Thank so much Honourable. I will now at this point wish to put the question that the proposal is that;

"Be it resolved that, this Honourable Assembly do ratify the amendment to the charter of the organization of Islamic cooperation.

[Question Proposed, Put and agreed to]

2. MOTION:

Agreement between the Republic of Gambia and the Republic of China on Mutual Visa Exemption for Holders of Diplomatic, Service Passports and passports for public Affairs.

HON. OUSAINOU DARBOE [MINISTER FOREIGN AFFAIRS, INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION & GAMBIANS ABROAD]: Madame Speaker, I beg to move that this August Assembly do consider and ratify the motion for the agreement between the government of the republic of The Gambia and the government of people Republic of China on Mutual visa exemption for holders of diplomatic, services passports and passport for public affairs.

Madam Honourable Speaker, the mutual visa exemption for holders of diplomatic, service and passport for public affairs is a pertinent one and will further advanced the already established vibrant relations between the government of The Gambia and that of the people's Republic of China. This matter was proposed by his Excellency Mr. Adama Barrow, President of the Republic The Gambia. During his state visit to china, where he met and had fruitful discussions with his Chinese counterpart, His Excellency Xi Jinping, President of the people's Republic of China, on various areas of mutual interest between the two countries.

Any Honourable Member who wishes to take part in the debate may do so.

HON. ALHAGIE MBOW [UPPER SALOUM]: Thank you very much Honourable Speaker, and thank you for giving me the opportunity to say few things about this agreement. I think this is a good agreement and I think this are good start. However, I was wondering if the Honourable Minister can take this further; that has been an issues and still an issue, you have to travel all the way to Senegal to apply for visa to visit China. Now, another area I also wanted him to help us on, because in this country SMEs, which are the small and the medium enterprises, basically are the movers of this economy. Now, if we going to make this kind of agreement, I think it is also advisable to take them into consideration as well, because there is a lot of business going on between our country, the Gambia and the Peoples Republic of China. So, I was thinking and suggesting if they can take this agreement further, where in particular business men from this country, who have an annual turnover of around 200 thousand dollars, 500,000 dollars, up to one million. They could also have access to this free movement between The Gambia and China, because that will go a long way in actually helping the small business in this country to be able to do their transaction faster. Otherwise, the house that you go through to be issues a visa to China take very long time.

I am sure the Gambia Chamber of Commerce and industry would be willing to help in that regard, in knowing exactly the values of the business for example to trade in China as well as the Gambia Revenue Authority.

Now, on the last intervention here, on this agreement if I am not mistaking, I have not seen any date on this agreement, I am not sure if am reading right but I have check here but I having seen any particular date on this agreement. So, I wander if it is possible to have a date inside this agreement at least for somebody to understand when this agreement came into effect and etc. Thank you very much Honourable Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you very much and I am sure the Honourable Minister is taking note and will responded when its time.

"either contracting party may temporally suspend this agreement partially or holy on grant of national security, public order, public health and etc". And it continue, obviously, we know that the Chinese may be interested in our natural resources. But with this part of it included, I think my doubt are been clearer so that, if there is any way they may either over use our natural resources or try to bring in some public health hazer into country, our executive can terminate the agreement so, overall I think this is a very good agreement. And I once again, I will like to thank Honourable Minister for Foreign Affairs and the President to come up with this – at this crucial time when we need the China the most. I thank you very much Madame Speaker.

HON. DEMBA SOWE [NIAMINA WEST]: Thank you very much Madame Speaker for giving me the floor. I also say a big thank to the Minister of foreign Affair and Gambian in abroad. It is defiantly good move, in fact this is what we are expecting from the new government, to make more friends and also to wave between us and the other countries. The Minister of foreign affairs, I am thanking him very much for coming up with this bill, I know him, he is statesman, someone who is well experience and I expect him with this position to deliver now and we have seen that coming up. Gambia is a small community in which we do not have lot of resources and we need to make friends with people like China and other countries. China had been here, I can remember we had one doctor from China during the first republic in Bansang, we called him action man, because he was very fast and doing his job accurately without any problem. So, defiantly coming up with this, will defiantly help the Gambian business community and also the people who hold diplomatic passport. China is very far from here, vases transaction took so many days, before it completes. But now a day you can do your job easily without no waste of time. China also, they were with the agricultural sector, they were helping the Gambia in CRR, and they develop the area. So, it was until that time when the former regime tries to go with Taiwan and that is why they move away. So, coming up with this is important and it is on the right direction. Thank you very much Madame Speaker.

HON. FATOUMATTA NJAI [BANJUL SOUTH]: Thank you very much Madame Speaker, I think I will applaud this gesture. But we should be aware that certain things

diplomatic passport, we all know who are the people who handle it but with regard to the public affair passport, who are the people who normally handle this passport. Actually the exemption is perfect, the reaction of the Members can actually tell what we have in hand is perfect. The 30 days is important but can't it be extended to 90 days. The 30 days to me, it seem to be small. But it is possible to negotiate a duration of 90 days. Thank you.

HON. HALIFA SALLAH [SERREKUNDA]: Thank you very much Honourable Speaker. Section 79 of the constitution does not ban us from entering into any international agreement, which does not course any lost to our sovereignty and that is what we are here to get in term of this agreement. If we look at the object, is to facilitate the movement of people who are holders of diplomatic and service passport. A question has been raise in term of passport for public affairs, but one will assume that all the passports are related to the function of the government. But the reality is also many people may hold diplomatic passport who have nothing to do with government function. And I think this is where clarity is necessary, under the circumstance, because this is not the agreement, promoting free movement of people good and services as a whole, it is not a trade agreement. Essentially it is facilitating cooperation between the two governments. I would by extension, say that we in the African union should move ahead with agreement of this nature so that at least officials who move around the continent will be able to move with greater ease. And I will emphasize that in looking at the agreement, there is a possibility of remonstrations under article 8; so, it means that our hands are not bounded. There is also possibility of settlement of disputes through cooperation. Under article 10; and also amendments to the provisions, still indicating that, wherever we become dissatisfied, there is room for negotiation. There is also emphasis of respect, for the laws of the countries by those who are giving this privileges and it is a privilege, and it means that no article under article 6 can actually step on any decision they have made before, if they see that it is not under the interest of the country in particular.

So in this sense really, the agreement appears not to cause any lost to our sovereignty. But we must also bear in mind that we are not only building relation with China, we

However, I would like the Government of the Gambia to extent this to the general citizen, because like most people say, there is a lot of Gambians who go to Senegal for visas and it is not something that is impossible. There were times that Gambia and UK had no visa between the two countries. So, I do not think it is impossible to extent this privilege categories of passport holders to the general citizen. It is all up to discussion and not only limited to China, but there are few countries that Gambians frequency visit, it will do a great help to our economy. We lose a lot of money so, the effort that you will gain by extending this to other countries and also including others that are not only this privilege passport holder thank you very much.

HON. MAHTARR M. JENG [LOWER NIUMI]: Madame Speaker thank so much for giving me the floor. I wish to congratulate the Minister for Foreign Affair and Gambia aboard in bringing this thoughtful move to this house. I would adverse the execution of the offer of this exemption to be very judicious, a good number of people had had diplomatic passports and the reputation and the integrity of the country would be at stake if the passport are giving to individuals who would post to be citizens or by virtues of their investments are giving this passport exemption, only to be floated that will go teeniest the image of the government and thereby, has been highlighted by article 6, it could bring about the revoke kind short of this. The Government needs to be or the issues, the authority needs to be very careful about who to give the passport to and why, not everybody could be giving this, because that individual will be standing between the Gambia and that country which ever it maybe. If it is China, if it is whichever country, we need to be very mindful, let's be very judicious, it should not be giving to musician, it should not be giving to wrestlers and so on. We need to very mindful, because our image is going to be there. It is very loadable and I have my old hearted support with no qualms and I thank the Minister and all the parties that are or might have had the time to engage the Chines for the establishment of this exemption thank you very much Honourable speaker.

HON. SULAYMAN SAHO [CENTRAL BADDIBU]: Thank you Honourable Speaker, I think the agreement is in the right step in the right directions and it is timely for Gambian to try to promote her image with other countries, based on mutuality not base on parasitize. Care must be taking, because if you look at history, Gambia had

abuse this privilege and make sure we did not over stay our welcomed, which is very important thank you very much.

HON. YA KUMBA JAITEH [NOMINATED]: Thank you, mind is just a short one, reference has been made to holder of diplomatic passport who are not public officers, who has nothing to do with public function, I just wanted clarity on this issues, are this only family members of those on diplomatic mission or Parliamentary Family Member entitle to diplomatic passport or Minister Family Members entitle to diplomatic passport. What is the criteria for the entitlement to diplomatic passport thank you?

HON. SIDIA S. JATTA [WULI WEST]: This is an interesting agreement, but my concerns is, I think I known there are people who hold diplomatic passport who are not necessary Gambia citizen. So, my worry is what do we do with such people, because you see, like the Minority Leader was saying, they are three type of passport; but the one you refer to does not concern the Gambia, is referring to people republic of China not Gambia. They are the one who have public affairs passport not Gambia. But the ordinary passport, the service passport and the diplomatic passport; this are the three we have in this country. Diplomatic and service passport are particular passport heal by particular people, particular citizen. Generally, people who are in – service passport is heal by people who are in public function, diplomatic passport can be heal by diplomatas and non-diplomatas, but highly place people in the governmental Ministration or in Parliament. So, holders of such passport are ambassadors in a sense. So, if a Gambia diplomatic passport is heal by a non-Gambia citizen, that is a worry, because you do not in any way have control of such a person, he might not even be leaving in the Gambia, because I know that has happen under the first republic on the second republic, people had been giving passport who are not necessary Gambian and probably even now they are people who are holding Gambian passport who are not necessary Gambian, what is going to be the position of the Ministry with such people, don't you think there is a need to have an inventory of all those people who are holding diplomatic passport from this country. So that, one can have a means of controlling, at list be sure who and who are holding this diplomatic passport and where they are.

HON. OUSAINOU DARBOE [MINISTER FOREIGN AFFAIRS, INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION & GAMBIANS ABROAD]: Madame Speaker, I thank the

of diplomatic passport should come to the office and surrender them or after the expiring date will have them cancel, because we wanted to know those who had diplomatic passport, I mean for what purpose? When they never turn up or when some of them came among them I mean prominent Gambians examine their cases and after that they deserve to continue with it, those who didn't come we cancel them, issues the permit notices and add information in circulated in all airports so, that no one would use the passport. There are others we had to ask them, in fact when did you come, we had to cancel the passport, because it carriage a title they did not have eg, someone who was managing director of a parastatal he is issues to facilitate his travel or some of who are a Minister who use his diplomatic travel to facilitate his travels, he sizes to hold such an office. I think it will be out of place for such a person to travel with that passport and present himself in the capacity indicated on that passport. So, we did that and that is what we are doing right now. If your capacity changes, is no longer in what is said in the diplomatic passports, you will surrender it in a respectable way and if anything else that has to be done maybe as a body, we cannot allow such person to go on with the passport, because the process of the diplomatic passport carry with it, certain diplomatic privileges; you are emit of arrest, you are emit from judiciary process and someone could use that document and commit crime in a country unless there is a waiver of his humanity, the state cannot do anything about it. We felt in to that where Gambian who originally some part of the world and we know everybody in the Gambia, if he told you his name, everybody in The Gambia will say look, that man should not have a passport he should be brought back. The country in which he was wanted him arrest, but they could not, because he has a diplomatic passport and he is taking humanity. We have to take in step to revoke, to wave his diplomatic humanity first and then – So, this is why the caviar that has been drown over here, will be very mindful of it and we will have it on top of our concentration when we issues a diplomatic passport. This where the Honourable Member concerning question that are the small businesses, this is why we have to be very careful that we do not open a plethora so that everybody who is in a small business you have a diplomatic passport no, we cannot do that; because if you do, you do not know where the line will drown, you know. Is it my small brother in Bansang who had a small shop there would he be entitle to diplomatic passport or Is

then am wondering how anybody, in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs would go to China for a mission that will last up to 30 days, I wonder whether you can have such a situation, even United Nations, you cannot stay there for more than 30 days. But then since there is a provision for amendment that could take care of bottleneck if any comes up.

Now suspension of agreement, yes I am sure, if the situation arises that could make one of the party to suspend the agreement. That would have called for greater scrutiny of our relationship between us, because it will be such a serious issue that really would warrant the two countries to review their entire relationship, because when an agreement that is supposed to facilitate, to ease travelling into each other's country by official or holders of diplomatic passport of the two countries. What would happen to warrant the suspension must be a really serious thing and I do not envisage such a thing happens and I wish no such thing happened. It is a concern for all of us about the non-availability of consular officers in The Gambia, to issue visas to applicants or to attend to applicants for visas. Apart from the United States of America, I do not think there is any embassy on the ground to issue visas. Schengen visas for any of the EU countries you have to go to Dakar, for Britain, it used to be Ghana one time, and I must say that one time to get a visa on an emergency, because I wanted to go to England and if I had to travel to Ghana that would be too expensive. But now I think is Sheffield; the applications are treated in Sheffield in England and then we certainly want to – I had engaged the former British ambassador on this issue and they place it on their own policy on reducing their output services for visas. But then am not sure whether our Membership of Commonwealth had anything to do with that, but again we will raise it, not only with the British but also with the European Union ambassadors may have consul general here; because after all it is a decision by the government

(Remainder of the Session not recorded due to equipment failure).

to help electrify the grave yard because most of the time we find it very difficult to bury the dead more so at night.

Hon. Speaker, again, Manduar Suruwa Kunda, it is a well-populated place and the people there have a problem of accessing drinking water. They move from Manduar to Brikama to access clean drinking water.

Also the issue of the ferry is in question - it was said that the machine was changed, but still, the same problem is there. I think it will be better if the government of the day could consider buying new ferries, which is more sustainable, than always buying new engines to rebuild the old ferries which is costly.

On that note Hon. Speaker, I thank you.

Hon. Bora B. Mass (Kiang East):
Thank you Hon. Speaker for giving me space to contribute, my quota to this very important adjournment debate.

First and foremost, I would not do justice without congratulating and thanking the Head of state for his wonderful conduct of the 50th independence anniversary celebrations, and, the State Opening of the National Assembly, for the 2015 Legislative Year. My prayers are for him and his family, for protection, good health and long life.

Hon. Speaker, if only patriotic Gambians would understand, we would not argue, but rather boast of numerous developments in all sectors that have taken place at the aftermath of July 22nd. At the advent of July 22nd, the increased development that we have seen in sectors like health, agriculture and education is worth commendation.

The education status of this country in the 1st Republic, although, no one can dispute the fact that in the 1st Republic they have tried, but the developments undertaken by the current Head of State for the citizenry is worth commending.

We the people from the provinces could attest to this. Now, one can travel the length and breadth of this country; the youth also have been enjoying, attending senior secondary schools at the comfort of their homes. In the past, what we realized was, you may pass to go to high school but, the process of your high school will disturb you why, because of having a very bad guardian. In fact you may be very intelligent, but the type of guardian that one may have is a discouraging factor to intelligence.

The Head of State has also developed the health sector, because in those days accessibility to health was a problem. All the cases that people died of in the

First Republic, are now history, because there are numerous health centers, lots of hospitals that people could be referred to, and their problems will be taken care of.

Hon. Speaker, if you talk of agriculture, in the Kiangs, during the early part of the 1st Republic there was only one tractor serving the people of Kiang, and that tractor was given to them by a philanthropist called Tom. Now, go to a less populated village in Kiang East you would hardly believe that there are about nine tractors in Kiang. So, automatically, President Jammeh's government need commendation and prayers. With such a leader, we should all join hands and pray for him to be protected from enemies; so that where he want to take us we would be able to reach there.

Hon. Speaker Ma, if you talk of transport, the Jammeh regime has done tremendously in that area. Not long ago – six years ago, if you want to travel to Jarra Soma, you will spend about 5 hours on the road, but now that is history. Going to Jarra Soma or Basse could now take even a very slow driver only 2 hours or less.

So, we the Gambians, I mean patriotic Gambians, should be very much proud and keep on our daily prayers so that this man is protected.

Hon. Speaker, Ma, I may buttress a little bit on the concerns being raised by my people, in Kiang. Although President Jammeh's regime has done tremendously in the Kiangs in terms of agriculture, education, and health. To this end, I may reflect my mind on the upgrading of Kaif primary school to senior secondary school. It has been 5 years now since both the primary school and the senior secondary school are being conducted in the same vicinity. I will not say that is a discouragement to the people, but *(break in recording)* ... I want to appeal to the Minister for Education, together with her good ministry to help us to construct a new structure for this facility.

Also, in our quest for the realization of the Vision 2016 goals, I have been complaining and appealing to the concerned ministry, that the road from Kolior passing through Jomar to Jasobo leading to the riverside needs urgent attention. If we should have a very good road network in this area; to my understanding, one day, the President may visit the area and once he steps in that area, he may question the governor or the chief, 'why, for so long you have never told me that this is a very good place for rice cultivation?'

All those who know the history of that area, will tell you there is a vast area of

fertile uncultivated land. The only problem there is the road network, sometimes, during the rainy season, when it rains heavily, it is a problem for the people of that area to use the road to the riverside. Three villages combined together work in that area; and with good road network, we can bluff the Baddibunkas that Kiang would be able to feed itself, and that of Baddibou.

Hon. Speaker, Ma, I will like to congratulate the Head of State and the Ministry of Energy for their wonderful work in the Lower River Region (LRR) in terms of energy. Yet, I will continue to appeal for more electricity coverage.

Hon. Speaker (Deputy Speaker Deputizing): Thank you very much Hon. Member, but before you resume your seat, may I ask a question please? Are students of the primary and the secondary schools sharing the same structure?

Hon. Bora B. Mass (Kiang East): Yes, they are sharing the same compound.

Hon. Speaker (Deputy Speaker Deputising): I do not mean the compound, I mean the structures, the buildings. Are the buildings different for the primary and the secondary?

Hon. Mass (Kiang East): No, the only difference there is, this is a primary

school and this is a secondary school, but that is since colonial days.

Hon. Speaker (Deputy Speaker Deputising): I cannot understand why you people would want the secondary school removed from the same vicinity. I think that is more of an advantage than a disadvantage - sharing the same place.

Anyway, I refer that to the Select Committee on Education for further action.

Hon. Mass (Kiang East): The reason why I say that, is because it is overcrowded for one to have effective learning in that congested compound when we have enough land to build a secondary school. Also, Kiang could also bluff the Baddibunkas that now we have a high school.

Thank you very much.

Laughter!

Hon. Speaker (Deputy Speaker Deputising): Thank you very much Hon. Member for Kiang East. Hon. Member for Kombo South!

Hon. Abdou Colley (Kombo South): Thank you very much Hon. Speaker, Ma. My intervention will be short and precise; probably, I would just want to talk on four areas. Before I go further, let me use this opportunity to welcome our newly elected Hon. Member for

Janjanbureh. I say welcome and congratulations.

Hon. Speaker, my intervention will be on (this) National Accreditation and Quality Assurance Authority Bill, 2014. Hon. Speaker, yes, the number of established and registered institutions and accredited programmes in this country are proliferating. Everywhere you go, there are new institutions coming up. That is good for us as a country, but for it is good for the Government to come up with this institutional framework, to serve as a regulatory tool, to ensure that the rapid increase and access to tertiary and higher education, will not be compromised in terms of quality. I would want to congratulate the Hon. Minister for coming up with this Bill.

Similarly, I would want to talk on the AIDS Council and Secretariat Bill, 2015; the Bill is addressing the issue of disclosure of interest, treatment, care and support for people living with HIV/AIDS. It enables them to live a dignified and productive life free of discrimination and stigma. Enabling them to become very productive in the community, I think it is a laudable initiative. The Gambia has been on the forefront fighting against HIV/AIDS, and, coming up with these kind of instruments, to regulate, is a crucial headway in our fight against HIV/AIDS.

I also want to use this opportunity to thank Gambian women for having the courage to fight HIV/AIDS in this country; and to encourage my male folks to really change their attitude towards voluntary counselling and testing, because it is the only way that we can fight and eradicate AIDS in this country. Denial will never help us, and I want to thank the women of The Gambia for their courageous stand.

Hon. Speaker, I would want to re-echo the statement made by His Excellency, the President during the State Opening of Parliament, in which he told the Gambian people that, it is the intention of his Government to provide accessible and quality healthcare service to the doorstep of every Gambian. This has been manifested because he told us that, they were able to train one hundred and thirty-nine (139) doctors locally, at the University of The Gambia. Furthermore, they have already posted twenty-two (22) doctors in the major and minor health centres, throughout this country, and that all the remaining doctors are working in referral hospitals in this country.

He also told us that, it is his intention that, by 2016, 80% of the positions in the various hospitals would be manned by Gambians; meaning, he is putting The Gambia on the right footing and on course to attain, what I call, the

want the Government or the President to intervene to make sure that device does not operate in Brikamaba again, so that they can have access to the national radio – GRTS and also the community radio.

Thank you.

Hon. Speaker: The Chairman of ICT Select Committee, I think you need to sermon a meeting to find out, because whatever is there cannot be more important than the country, particularly, when it has to do with information.

(Break down in recording)

Hon. Ebrima Sarjo (Janjanbureh): In making this dream a success. Hon. Speaker, I want to thank - the Ministers – members of Cabinet, the Parliamentarians who were on the ground - Sainey Mbye, Babou Gaye and the group, the youth groups who were on the ground. These people worked tirelessly to make sure this APRC seat is out, and Hon. Sainey Mbye is number one among those people together with Babou Gaye Sonko.

Knocking on tables!

I also want to thank the entire membership of this Parliament - the first day I stepped into this House, I was somehow scared because I thought I was in a place where I do not

know anyone. Fortunately, all what I found in this House is collaboration, unity and dignity amongst members.

Knocking on tables!

I am amazed by the reception I received, making me feel like having spent ten years in this House. So, I thank you all very much for that warm welcome.

Hon. Speaker, I will not do justice if I do not thank the electorate, and the council of elders in Janjanbureh. There is a big cooperation among the elders this time, this is why Janjanbureh came out with a difference in all the elections that took place in Janjanbureh. I know the whole Gambia will talk about it, because it is history. Elections are always difficult in Janjanbureh but now we have changed completely - there is complete change in Janjanbureh. All this is possible because of the good leadership that we have.

I think if Gambians should be happy with President Jammeh, I can say Janjanbureh is number one, because President Jammeh is the alkalo of our district. All what he is doing for Janjanbureh, I don't think I am the right person to say that, as there are people who are witness to what he is doing - he is doing everything possible for Janjanbureh.

I have somebody who earns D120 (one hundred and twenty dalasi) as a pension benefit every month. In comparison to the price of a bag of rice, one hundred and twenty against one thousand, two hundred and fifty (in my area) and this particular person is living all the way in Kantora. He is a retired staff of Agriculture; receiving one hundred and twenty. I am therefore, appealing to the Ministry of Finance and the PMO to solve the matter quickly, so that they can initiate a better pay for civil servants as well as introduce a better pension scheme.

Hon. Speaker, from there, I heard the President talk about the Laminkoto-Passamas Road. It is a welcome idea, and I am glad, but I am also saddened that the second most controversial road that is Basse-Fatoto road was not mentioned. I am very much saddened about this, and I am still appealing to the Office of the President and the Ministry of Works, Construction and Infrastructure to consider this particular road. The First Republic served The Gambia for a good thirty years; that road was not constructed. Now, we are in the Second Republic, and we are still encountering that dilemma. If you travel from Basse to Fatoto and vice versa, on your arrival home you have to take a bath. So, for over fifty years now, we are struggling. It is a nightmare. I am therefore

appealing to the authorities to consider the Basse-Fatoto road also.

From there, I still have other concerns; one, on the side of agriculture, that is the price of fertilizer. As at now, the price of fertilizer stands at one thousand two hundred and fifty dalasis; which is very expensive for an ordinary farmer. We always say, 'fertilizer that is affordable and accessible to farmers'. If an ordinary farmer cannot buy a bag of fertilizer how do we expect that farmer to be productive? He or she cannot be productive. As we all know, where I come from, it is a sandy area; without fertilizer, there cannot be any produce.

So, the price of fertilizer needs to be reduced, so that the farming community can be better positioned to farm and achieve the desired Vision 2016 goals. We appreciate the Vision 2016 goals and are working hard on it, so, I am also appealing to the Ministry of Agriculture to consider and revisit the price of fertilizer.

On the Ministry of Interior, my concern is about the Biometric ID card. This is a concern in my area especially URR, they lack of mobility. I think this particular sector should be provided with mobility, because of the demand of their job. They have a mobile team that travel up to the villages to issue ID cards; especially in the URR, they

travel from Basse to Koina, Baja Kunda, Sandu and other areas to issue ID cards. They alleviate the sufferings of the people, but the main constraint they have is mobility, especially the team in the URR. So, I am appealing to the Ministry of the Interior to look into that situation properly.

My other concern is the foreign exchange rate in this country, today. The foreign exchange rate of the various international currencies like Dollar, Euro and Pound Sterling is too high. I think it is high time for the Government especially, the Ministry of Finance and the Central Bank, to consider the dalasi against major foreign currencies; because right now, the dollar has rose to forty-nine point something, while the Pound has gone to seventy-two point something, and the Euro has gone to fifty-nine point something. This is even making business very difficult for the private sector.

According to the businessmen, when the international currency goes up, everything goes up. So, I am appealing to the Government to consider this point very well.

With these few remarks, I beg to resume my seat.

Hon. Speaker: Thank you very much Hon. Member for Kantora. Thank God

your remarks were brief, otherwise, we would have been here for a long time.

Nominated Member, Hon. Rtd. Captain Lamin Saine!

Hon. Rtd. Captain Lamin Saine (Nominated Member): Thank you very much Hon. Speaker for the opportunity. First, I will start by thanking God, Almighty, the Omnipotent, the Omnipresent and the Omniscient, He who knows all, and He who has endowed this country with a visionary leader, who came to deliver his brilliant speech in celebration of the 50th Anniversary of our Independence calling it the Golden Jubilee. (?)

We witnessed the Silver Jubilee on which occasion, the then President of the Republic, made some pronouncements and gave some statistics about the school population – you cannot compare the figures, they are miles apart from each other, really.

In his speech, he read thirty-nine pages, treated twenty-one departments and ministries; talking about policies – policies that are to support the implementing of the future. Policies are not laws, that are enforceable immediately, but they are aspirations and plans of a government. He delivered the speech with a lot of humour; stopping here, cracking jokes, but beneath those jokes, was great

suavity with which he showed his commitment to do things, relating it to section 215 of our Constitution, where we have the directing principles of State – portable water, electricity and good roads. Wishes are not horses, if they were, beggars would ride. Yet, we still know there are plans and people are committed.

When policies are planned, they are prioritised, and when they are being implemented, it is done according to the available resources – financial resources, and, human capacity are fundamental to really carry out whatever we want to do. This is why, it takes time to move from one step to another – it is common.

The Hon. Member for Serrekunda West is here, in 1952, we used to have those coins depicting George VI, Queen Elisabeth's father. He was then the King of the Empire and of The Gambia. What was The Gambia like and, how were the rules like?

We celebrated the coronation of the Queen in 1952, we celebrated Independence in 1965, Silver Jubilee in 1990 and now the Golden Jubilee; compare the times, look at what happened within the last twenty years. Even the wilful blind can perceive – definitely – the improvements that have been brought in by the July 22nd Revolution. It has come with

challenges, yes, we must say and admit – development comes with challenges.

Hon. Seedy Njie mentioned payment of taxes. Where the economy of a country hinges partly on taxation, tax payers feel the pinch. In our own situation, it is transient. We have the domestic borrowing issue to resolve, we must forbear, share the pinch; feel it a bit for the short period, and then we will overcome it, rather than paying low taxes and have the problem been perennial.

Even Gambians who have taken the back way, or the legal way, whichever we want to call it and do send support to their parents; parents who are recipient of these monies – Dollars and Euros – they know that the amount that used to come has reduced drastically, because the economic conjecture of the world is felt at all levels. So, we really must forbear.

When a Member speaks, he/she pulls towards his/her constituency. His Excellency, the President, the Speaker, Deputy Speaker and other nominated members, we pull – as they say in Latin “Pro-Patria” (*meaning: for country*) – to our motherland; because we are members representing the entire country; the entire Gambia is our constituency. So, we generalise and we are in for all.

With that, I croon Hon. Sulayman Joof's intervention, saying that they are twining the constituencies of Banjul South and Serrekunda West. I think that is a solution, because otherwise, the resources that are available may bring in some little pulling and pushing here and there. Why not quadruplet – if we can – so that the constituencies of Kombo South Kombo Central and Kombo North can come together and really share projects, pull resources from common areas or from different areas and then bring them together so that we can really carry it out.

Talking about the back way, Hon. Speaker, I think we have problems here – our young energetic men are leaving, because they are told stories and they want to go. At least, if they use the legal way; it is safer and cheaper. The Europeans also feel the pinch there, they have people they call unwanted people. They have problems of saving lives and burying our dead as they do not want to send the dead bodies back here.

I would rather suggest that, from the level of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and, the ACP-EU members of the National Assembly, to really start talking to our partners out there, about facilitating visas for at least a certain percentage of workers. Issue them visas to go and work there; to get

something. It would serve the people here and it will save those Europeans the burden of having to employ more immigration officers – flying helicopters etc., just to track immigrants down. It is cheaper and safer for them to really accommodate our people there. Let us have unskilled labourers and then have skilled labourers, we learn and then exchange. If such a thing could be undertaken, I think it will be a very good idea.

Coming to the matter of linguistic independence, of our country, it is good, and I embrace the noble idea of translating the Constitution – which contains fundamental rights and laws. If you want to be law abiding, you must know the law. A law that you do not know it is difficult to abide by – although they say, ignorance of the law is not an excuse, but we need to know the laws. So, to know the mother of all laws – the Constitution, is fundamental. People need to know, so, translating it into different languages is important.

However, having to use the local languages here (Parliament) poses a whole lot of problems. Any student of contrastive and comparative phonetics, will tell you that, every language has its phonology and its phonetics. For every phoneme that is pronounced; if it is to be graphically represented, then it poses a problem. How many years

would it take to do that? And then this brings in some petty jealousy as to whose language are we going to use? How many translators do we need in Parliament to translate almost nine different languages? Even the greatest polyglot, the man who speaks the greater number of languages here in the National Assembly, will not really claim that he/she speaks six of our languages, perfectly. Who will be favoured and who will not be favoured? It will pose a problem.

There is a solution to it, however, people may consider it as a modicum of satisfaction, we have The Gambia TV, where they broadcast in English, and it is translated in all the languages across the board, and the radio also does the same thing. Now that we have the proliferation of community radios, speaking all languages - I think the essence of communication is transmission of message. And then the English version is translated in all other local languages.

So, let the people at the Curriculum Development, really continue, but if they have to work on this thing it would be difficult. We can see when it started in Senegal the last time, you must have read this '*Xala*'. '*Xala*' is a Wolof word - we know what happens to men when they marry a woman who does not love them, what they do to them, so that their manhood does not

function, we call it '*Xala*'. How is '*Xala*' spelled? '*XALA*?' Write it for any Gambian here, how many of us have the '*Xa*' in our languages?

The realization of sounds is a problem. How do you represent it graphically on paper and want students to learn it, or bring it here?

The process at the schools level, it will only be enriched when people have a choice but using it as a Parliamentary language, I think poses more difficulties than the present vehicle we are using to transmit and communicate our messages.

With those few remarks, I want to end by thanking the President for his gracious speech to Parliament, and, also welcome the new National Assembly Member, who seems to be a bit more comfortable and much bolder than I was, when I first spoke.

So, welcome with that spirit, firebrand, aren't you? You are most welcome, but as we welcome and congratulate him, then sad memories also come, because then, we think about the missing faces. The Borry Colley, Yaya Dibba and the others who have been replaced. We still miss their faces and then those who have taken the journey from which one never returns. That destination we reach from birth, because life is all about inexorable journey to death. Those who have gone

and would not come back, because they have been so good in this world that they are enjoying there, they do not want to come back, or they have been so evil that nobody will allow them to come back to influence others.

Hon. Speaker: (Deputy Speaker Deputizing): Thank you very much, Hon. Rt. Capt. Lamin Saine. Hon. Member for Foni Jarrol you have the floor.

Hon. Alhaji Sankung Jammeh (Foni Jarrol): Thank you Ma for giving me the floor, to join my colleagues to share whatever thoughts I have.

I will like to begin by welcoming the new Member for Janjanbureh – who is now my junior – in this august house.

When I first came here, my colleagues whom I found here, the first thing they told me was, this august House is an institution different from where you came from. Meaning, it is a new life that I have come into, but thank God with their collaboration, support and the enabling environment, *'Alhamdulillah'*, today, I am also proud to stand in their midst to make my contribution. So, for you, it is the same thing, I wish you success and happy stay with us. May God the Almighty guide all of us to achieve our purpose of coming here – Ameen!

From there, I would like to thank the able Government of the day. We

cannot list the numerous developments that we have seen within ten minutes, but thank God the interventions of other members on those achievements at least saved my limited time to highlight mine.

To start with, the Yellitenda/Babatenda Bridge that is the bridge from Farafenni to Soma, which has been a long story and plans of the First Republic, thank God when the July 22nd Revolution came, and with help of the Almighty Allah, at least, it is being constructed. Even the people who are not within The Gambia, were sending in congratulatory messages to His Excellency, Sheikh Prof. Dr. Alh. Yahya A.J.J Jammeh, for his government's capabilities to make the dream a reality.

On the side of energy, a press release was issued that some communities in the West Coast Region, will also be benefiting from this rural electrification programme. This is another immense plus in the development of this nation, because if you think of the past, we were not even thinking of when we are going to get electricity, but thank God as the saying goes, Rome was not built in a day.

So, I will urge my colleagues to exercise patience – I know as time goes on – sooner rather than later the

concerns of their respective constituencies will be addressed, and, become a thing of the past. Imagine where we are right now, we never thought we will reach such status, but thank God, today, everybody in this House is comfortable. Even the passer-by, by viewing the structure outside, talk about it. I know things will come to reality; let us just be faithful and give support to the Government, so that whatever we are aspiring for, we would get by the power of the Almighty Allah.

I also want to thank – as some of the previous speakers did – some NGOs. Some NGOs are definitely trying. I have one NGO in my area called Child Fund, this NGO is trying very hard within my area, and not long ago, Child Fund in collaboration with a Germany company launched a programme at Bajakara to provide safe drinking water for the communities that do not have access to water.

This project is ongoing in the Fonis; that too is something that I am very happy and pleased with. The NGOs are doing good jobs in my area, in helping to bring basic necessities to the doorsteps of my people.

Hon. Speaker, I thank you for giving me the floor. I also thank the Government and pray for it to stay to a

time that we all want it to. May Allah answer our prayers; thank you.

Hon. Speaker (Deputy Speaker Deputizing): Ameen! Thank you very much, Hon. Member for Foni Jarrol; that brings us to the end of a very interesting and healthy debate. Numerous interventions have been made on various issues of concern and interest; and I now invite the mover of the Motion, to wind up the debate.

Hon. Member for Serrekunda West!

Hon. Sulayman Joof (Serrekunda West): Thank you Hon. Speaker. Let me first of all thank Members for their valuable contributions. I must say however, that most of the contributions are commendation to the Government, the leadership and I think they are in order; because we have a Government that is actually delivering. Thus, it is only right that we express and show gratitude for what the Government is doing. So, I thank you all very much.

I must re-echo some of the points raised. Hon. Seedy Njie talked about the payment of taxes. Yes, this country is a tax based economy, he is right. It is important that we urge the people of this country to pay their taxes and on time.

I must also thank the Member for Kiang Central, Hon. Fadera, for his commendation to the security outfit for the good work they are doing, because

security is paramount. Without security, we cannot have meaningful development.

Hon. Magassy talked about the use of the local languages, yes, this may be desirable, but is it achievable now? That is the question; it would not be easy to introduce the use of local languages in Parliament now, because we have so many languages in this country. And if Hon. Magassy could remember, (because he is a teacher in the field) we started this some time ago, we had to stop because there were problems, but I am sure they are not going to stop. I am sure, the Curriculum Development Centre will continue to pursue this. May be in the future, we may get there but for now, it is very difficult.

The Member for Banjul South, Hon. Nyang, we sympathise with you, for some bad elements hiding in those trucks that are parked in Banjul South. I would want to advice that you link with the Ports (GPA) and the Police for assistance.

Hon. Hydera, you see, personal contact is very important. You talked about the problem in one of your communities regarding the extension of electricity. So, I would like you to make personal contacts with NAWEC; it is more effective. If you go to NAWEC and

make personal contacts, I am sure they will be able to respond to your request.

The Member for Jimara, yes, I remember, since we came to Parliament, we have been making this appeal for people to come to Parliament to listen to our debates more so during the adjournment debate. We have been doing this since 1997 without success, but we will continue to talk about it; may be one day they will decide to come. It is very important that they come and listen to the concerns of Members as it affect their Ministries – it is a very important point.

The Member for Wuli West has asked for our intervention, to bring back RDI, yes, we will do our best; we will try to engage the relevant authorities to reactivate the RDI.

Fulladu West, yes, we remember, you made this complaint and we engaged the technicians from Gamcel. Remember, we had a meeting here and they promised that they were going to look into the issue. Like the Speaker has suggested, we will still engage them, so that this issue of coverage in your area is addressed.

We talked about two things when we met them, that is the synchronisation of the FM stations to the main radio station, especially during news time, and I think that has been achieved now

according to what I got from Hon. Magassy.

Inaudible interventions on the side lines?

Hon. Magassy: *(Inaudible)*

Hon. Joof: Pardon! The other FM stations are not complying? We will continue to engage them.

Hon. Bora Mass, we will also look into your problem whenever we convene a meeting of the committee. Like I said, most of these issues are commendations.

Kantora, you talked about the Basse/Fatoto road. Yes, the Minister has stepped out, otherwise he will intervene, but he will still get the message; we will make sure that we extend this; so that in future they will look into this. It is a very important stretch.

Yes, the hippos. This is from Niani; that is a problem, the hippos destroying the nursery beds in your constituency. I think you should report this also to the security – have you tried that? Hon. Sambou, have you reported this to the relevant authorities to assist?

Hon. Demba Sambou: I reported it and they said the villages should write to the chief, governor and to them (Security), that has been done, but still the problem is there.

Hon. Joof (Serrekunda West): Now Kombo Central, I remember when we went on tour, you remember, the Vice Chairman of Brikama Area Council challenged you in our presence that you were/are not visiting. I have to say this because, most of these problems like the electrification of the cemetery, if you have been going to the council it would have been addressed, because the Vice Chairperson said so. They said they expect you to be visiting the Council, but you do not seem to be doing that.

They are just asking you to make sure you make frequent visits to the Council. This is not a very serious problem, if you go to the Council; make a request, I am sure they will respond.

Hon. Speaker, I think I have responded to some of the concerns. Like I said, the concerns are not many. So, I wish to thank the Members for their contributions and pray that they travel home safely.

Hon. Speaker, I thank you very much.

Hon. Speaker (Deputy Speaker Deputizing): Thank you very much Hon. Member for Serrekunda West, for ably moving the Motion for this Honourable House to adjourn sine die.

Felicitations

Before I put the question, let me on behalf of both sides of the House, thank His Excellency, the President for properly setting the tone for the 2015 Legislative Year, and for his brilliant statement marking the beginning of the 2015 Legislative Year.

I would also want to thank our line Ministry, and by extension thank all honourable Cabinet Ministers for tabling business before this Honourable House.

Let me also thank you, my colleagues, Hon. Members for your invaluable contributions, and also the Clerk and staff for their support during this period. I would also want to thank the press corps, both print and electronic, especially, GRTS for the Television coverage.

Announcement!

Before we adjourn sine-die, I have an announcement inviting all Hon. Members of the PAC/PEC, Subject Matter Specialist, Aides, and Committee Clerks to attend a five day training workshop for the Public Accounts and Public Enterprises Committee, scheduled from Monday 23rd to Friday 27th March, 2015 at the auditorium of the new National Assembly Building.

The Workshop is being organised, under support from the Institutional Support for Economic and Financial Governance Project, of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs.

Hon. Members, may I once more thank you very much and wish you well, as we go about our Committee work and other related Parliamentary matters?

House Adjourned Sine Die!

I now put the question, be it resolved that this Honourable Assembly stands adjourned sine die.

Those in favour please say "Aye", not in favour say "No.". The "Ayes" have it.

Gambianisation of our health sector. This is key, if we are to move as a country, and I want to thank the President for this move.

Applause!

Hon. Speaker, Government cannot do it all, and I want to thank some of the partners in my constituency who are also in the forefront complementing the efforts of the Government. As we all know, when His Excellency, the President was addressing this august Assembly, he told us that, Gambia might be among the few African countries who will achieve the United Nations Millennium Development Goal (MDG) on health. For this to happen, Government alone cannot do it all. As I said earlier, we need partners in that endeavour.

Therefore, I would seize this opportunity to thank the following associations which are operating in my constituency: Gamrupa which has already constructed a state-of-the-art maternity ward in Siffoe, Dewberry Foundation which has also built a similar structure in another village called Nyofelleh, another philanthropic organization called the Spanish Gambian Friends who are also based in Sanyang, recently donated a state-of-the-art ambulance. I do not mean this coffin-carrying ambulance, but, an ambulance with all the

necessary gadgets for life saving – you can move the patient from Sanyang to Banjul without any problem.

Hon. Speaker, I also want to use this opportunity to thank another association, called the Friends of Sambuya. This association is also based in a small village called Sambuya, they have already built a health centre, a maternity ward for the community and they have equipped them with an ambulance; I think they are also working on the school.

In addition, I would like to thank another association called The Gambia Partners, who are coming up with a vocational training school in my village. So, it is important that we acknowledge their contributions, and thank them for a job well done.

Hon. Speaker, I want to lament again and I will keep on lamenting that we are changing from peri-urban to urban; which means few of our villages which are locked, needs to be opened and connected to growth centres. I want to make this appeal to the Ministry of Works, Construction and Infrastructure, that the road between Brufut, Madiana, Baniaka all the way to Kunkujang through Sanyang to be constructed. Also, the road linking Brikama, Cassakunda, and Nyofelleh to Kachumeh needs to be constructed, so that these villages can be connected

to the growth centres, as it will facilitate the movement of both agricultural produce and people accessing referral hospitals.

It will also contribute to what we call eco-tourism; because it will allow tourists to be able to move in and out in those areas, and they will be able to do excursions or bird watching, and having interaction with the community.

Hon. Speaker, on that note, I would want to use this opportunity to thank you, the National Assembly Authority and by extension the Clerk and the staff of the National Assembly Service for the manner in which this State Opening of Parliament was conducted.

With these few remarks, I want to resume my seat. Thank you.

Hon. Saikou Susso (Kantora): Thank you very much Hon. Speaker, for giving me the floor to contribute my quota to this very important debate.

First of all, I would like to register my profound gratitude to the Office of the Speaker, the Deputy Speaker; by extension, the Clerk and the support staff for the manner and way the State Opening of Parliament was conducted. My profound gratitude also go to the media fraternity because they make our voices to be heard by our electorate. I would like to thank them very much for their presence here.

Quiet knocking on tables!

From there, allow me to extend special vote of thanks to His Excellency, the President of the Republic of The Gambia, for the brilliant speech that he made during the State Opening of Parliament.

Hon. Speaker, I am very much impressed with the speech. I am not only impressed, his speech carries weight because as we all know, any word uttered or any pronouncement made by the President becomes a policy, and I am very much glad that the pronouncements he made during his speech are all suitable to the will and aspirations of Gambians.

Hon. Speaker, from the speech of the President, I would want to make emphasis on certain aspects; one of which is the civil service reform process – it has been going on for quite some time. This civil service reform process should now be speeded up, by the Ministry of Finance and the PMO. They should speed up their efforts to finalise the process.

Hon. Speaker, if you look at the civil service today, well, the earnings of civil servants in comparison to the price level of present day, there is a very wide margin, and the most important aspect of this civil service reform, is to initiate better pay for civil servants and the pensioners as well.

So, on behalf of the people of Janjanbureh, I wish to thank the President for all what he is doing for us, and we pray for him to have long life, to take The Gambia to where he desires.

Hon. Speaker, can I also use this opportunity to pray for the late Hon. Faday Jibani Manka, for all what he did for Janjanbureh? His death is a great loss to our constituency. The late Foday was a man with a difference, a very hardworking man, his death like I said is a great loss, but, it is God who determines. God's time when it comes no one can avoid it. I pray for his soul to rest in perfect peace. May Allah the Almighty grant him '*Jannatul Firdausi*'!

I want to close my speech by saying long live the APRC party, long live President Jammeh, and long live The Gambia, I thank you very much.

Applause!

Hon. Speaker: (Deputy Speaker Deputizing): Thank you very much Hon. Member for Janjanbureh. Thank you for returning thanks to God, your constituency members and to all those who supported you in one way or the other. We also warmly welcome you, and accept you with open arms, be assured of our support and feel free to call on any of us, for advice on any issue or matter of interest to you.

The debate continues, Hon. Member for Kombo Central.

Hon. Buba Ayi Sanneh (Kombo Central): Thank you very much Hon. Speaker for giving me the floor to contribute. First of all, let me congratulate the new NAM for being elected by his people in Janjanbureh. I am also thanking the whole House, the security and the Indians who are helping us to maintain this mighty building.

Hon. Speaker, I have a concern which the people of my constituency are always asking - the issue of electricity, the street lights of Brikama which was removed by NAWEC my people want to know where the poles are kept. Also if NAWEC and the Brikama Area Council can work in collaboration to bring back the street lights in Brikama. This is because Brikama is increasing immensely every day. When there is lack of electricity, criminals will start doing their daily business during the night, and, it is really worrying the people of Kombo Central. Also the security agents, they find it very difficult to track some of these criminals.

Therefore, I call on NAWEC and the Brikama Area Council to settle their differences, so that the street lights can be back again in Brikama. Also, if possible, for the Brikama Area Council