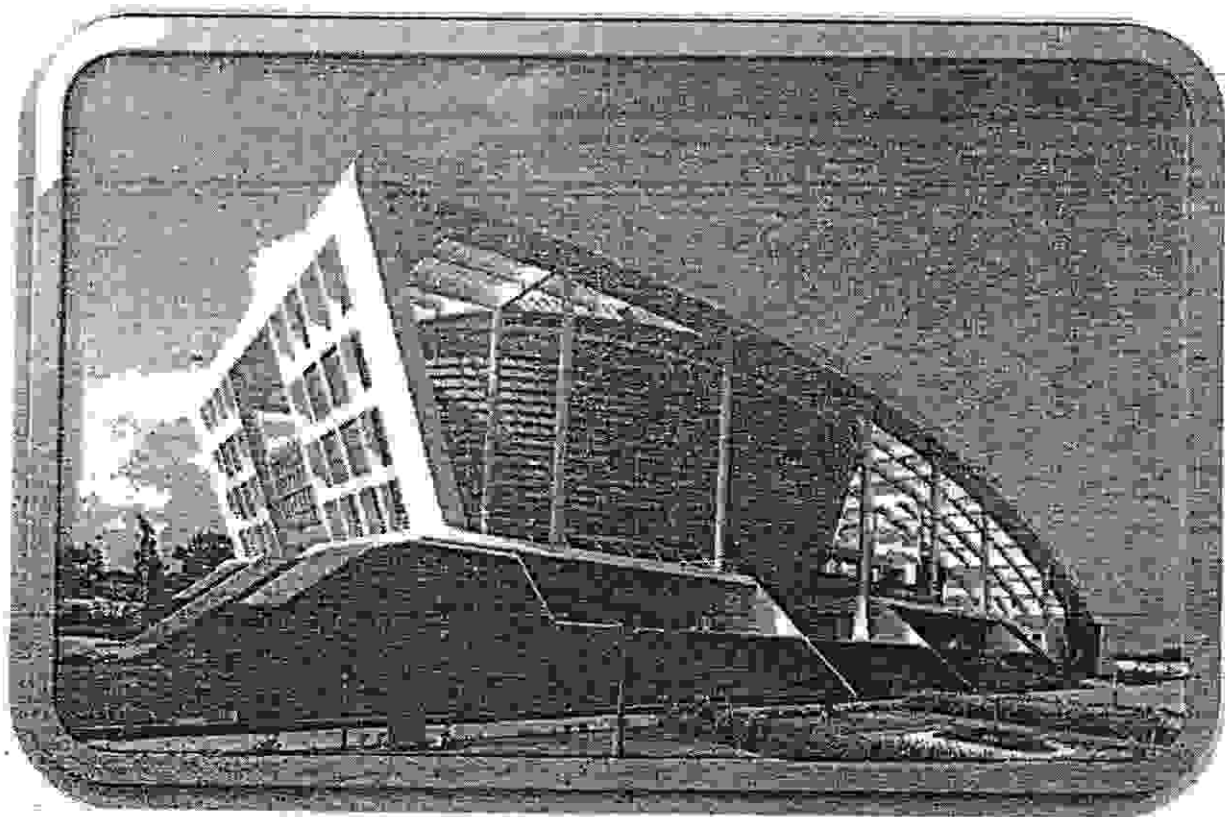




**National Assembly, New Assembly Building, Reverend Pyne
Lane, Banjul, The Gambia**

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

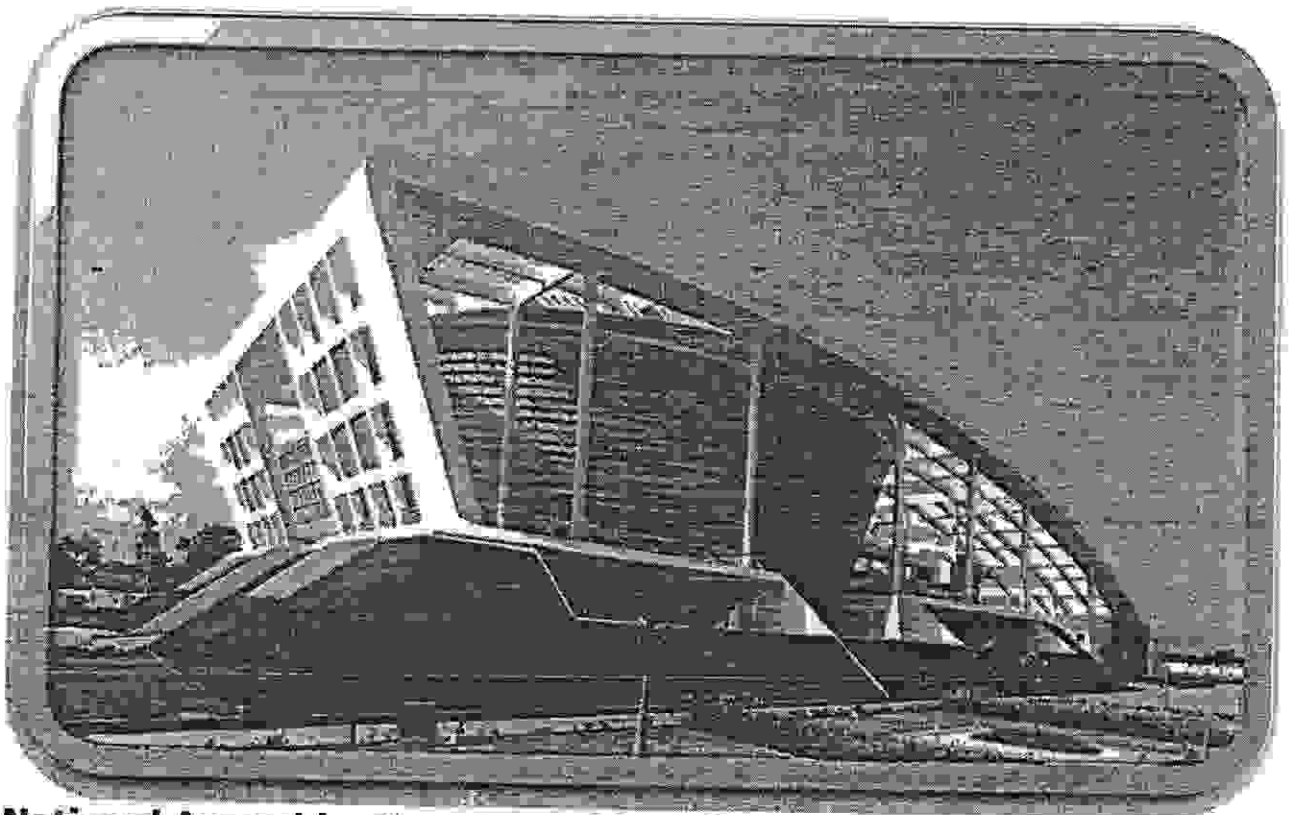
[HANSARD]

OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT

FIFTH SESSION – FIRST MEETING

MONDAY 19th MARCH, 2018

SESSION – 2018



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

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

[HANSARD]

OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT

VOLUME: I

NUMBER: 5

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

Proceedings of the Sitting Monday 05th March of the House,
2018.

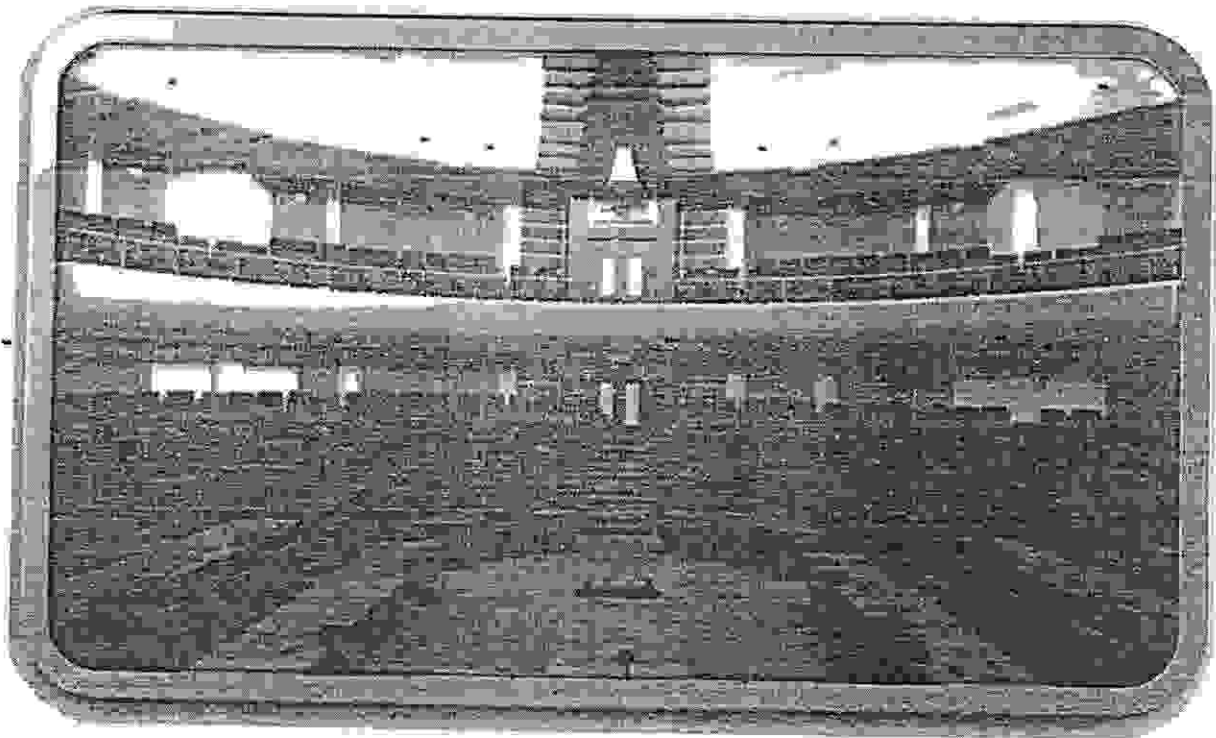
Content

- 1. Prayers**
- 2. Record of Votes and Proceedings of the National Assembly Sitting of Thursday 15th March, 2018**
- 3. Consideration of and Debate on, the Forest Bill, 2017**
 - i. Report of the National Assembly Select Committee on Environment Sustainable Development & NGOs Affairs [By Chairperson of the Committee]**
 - i. Debate, Committee Stage and Third Reading [Hon. Minister for Environment, Climate Change & Natural Resources]**

Afternoon Session – 3pm

5. M O T I O N

- i. Motion on the Adjournment Debate**
“Be it resolved that, this august Assembly do adjourn Sine-Die.
[By Hon. Minority Leader]



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**

MONDAY 19th MARCH 2018

1. PRAYERS:

[The Speaker, Hon. Mariam Jack Denton, Read 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

2. Correction of Record of Votes and Proceedings of the National Assembly Sitting of Thursday 15th March 2018.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, I welcome you back after the weekend break I hope you all had a good rest.

The Record of Votes and Proceedings of the National Assembly Sitting of Thursday 15th March, 2018 is before us for consideration and adoption. Can someone please move that the Record of Votes and Proceedings of the National Assembly Sitting of Thursday 15th March, 2018 be considered and adopted?

HON. ALHAGIE DARBOE [LOWER FULLADU WEST]: I so move, Madam Speaker

THE SPEAKER: Any Seconder?

HON. SUNKARY BADJIE [FONI BREFET]: I so Second, Madam Speaker

[Question proposed, Put and agree to]

Any issues, observations, amendments of the Records from Honourable Members? I believe the records have been circulated. Can we start with page one [1] please.

HON. SIDIA S. JATTA [WULI WEST]: page 1, I think there is an omission, the agreements are just stated without indicating the sums involved.

THE SPEAKER: can we check and see so that if the sum is indicated there so that it will be reflected here. Is there, and it will be amended and the sum will be included.

HON. ALHAGIE MBOW [UPPER SALOUM]: On the same page 1, I thought we also spoke about the agreement on visa free between the Republic of the Gambia and the Republic of China but I have not seen that one there.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you well noted. Then we move to page 2. Any issues? No. we move forward.

HON. AMADOU CAMARA [NIANIJA]: Page 4, the last sentence that reads, Honourable Amadou Camara Member for Nianiija seconded the motion. I think it should not stop there because I seconded it and deliberated on it. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: I stand to be corrected, I just noticed on page 1, it "reads 15th March Order Paper Prayers, and then, as I said I stand to be corrected may be an explanation can offer. You go to page 4 again you still have prayers, the first 2 lines ...[Poor recording].

HON. BABA GALLEH JALLOW [SANIMENTERENG]: page 6, where it states at this juncture a motion moved by Honourable Sidia S. Jatta. The spelling there is wrong. And also the second to last paragraph, the Framework Agreement between the Government of the Republic of the Gambia and the People's Republic of China on the Provisional Concessional Loan?

HON. SIDIA S. JATTA [WULI WEST]: On the same page, the same where Sidia is corrected, the word Wuli, well that is correct spelling, the one with one L is not corrected.

HON. MAHTARR M. JENG [LOWER NUIMI]: The Framework Agreement as was read by the Member for Sanimentereng, I hope the attention has been drawn to the spelling of loan?

THE SPEAKER: Yes it was. It has been corrected.

HON. ALHAGIE DARBOE [LOWER FULLADU WEST]: page 7, first paragraph, prior to the question being put for consideration, Hon. Ousman Sillah Member for Banjul North moved a motion for the Assembly to move to the next agenda. "Not for the Assembly to the move to the next agenda".

THE SPEAKER: if I may suggest, prior to the question being put it says being put.

HON. ALHAGIE DARBOE [LOWER FULLADU WEST]: The same page, second to last paragraph at the bottom, where you have question put and agree to. It has been moved and seconded that this august Assembly do consider the agreement on visa free. There is a repetition. Thank you.

HON. SIDIA S. JATTA [WULI WEST]: I was saying that, what you said is what is correct. "Being" and not been.

HON. ALHAGIE DARBOE [LOWER FULLADU WEST]: where you have the undermentioned Honourable Members took the floor and spoke on the motion. Number 3, Hon. Ousman Sillah Banjul North, Banjul is spelt as Bnjul instead of "Banjul".

The same page, second to last paragraph again the framework agreement, the loan is spelt as lon instead of "loan".

HON. SUWABOU TOURAY [WULI EAST]: The last sentence on page 9, where you have Honourable Minister for Finance and Economic. The "Affairs" is not there.

HON. ALHAGIE DRAMMEH [JESHWANG]: The same page 9, first paragraph where you have question put and agreed to. There seems to a repetition of the agreement. It says it has been moved and seconded that this august Assembly do consider the agreement, the framework agreement.

HON. MUSA AMUL NYASSI [FONI KANSALA]: Ma, I just want to point out that what Hon. Member for Jeshwang is raising is on page 9. The one that was corrected was on previous page.

HON. MAHTARR M. JENG [LOWER NUIMI]: First line of first paragraph Point of Order, Hon. Halifa Sallah Member for Serekunda raised a point of order that the Honourable Minister is pressing accusation on Members and that or called on the Honourable Minister to observe the quorum "called on" instead of and that.

HON. BABA GALLEH JALLOW [SANIMENTERENG]: The same page 10, where you have at this juncture the Honourable Minority Leader and Member for Niamina Dankunku moved a motion for the Assembly to be "suspended". Not suspend.

HON. SIDIA S. JATTA [WULI WEST]: first paragraph where the first correction was done instead of where the Minister is pressing accusation it should be Minister "was" pressing accusation.

HON. SUWAIBOU TOURAY [WULI EAST]: After paragraph 3, where it says at this juncture, the Honourable Member for Serekunda furiously reacted that the Honourable

Minister was just doing that. There need to be an explanation of what the Honourable Minister was doing for the records.

Secondly, where you have the Honourable Speaker observed

THE SPEAKER: Am not getting your correction, and I want to get it down so that it will be adequately captured.

HON. SUWAIBOU TOURAY [WULI EAST]: No, where I am concerned, you have passed that page.

THE SPEAKER: What is your problem with the third paragraph?

HON. SUWAIBOU TOURAY [WULI EAST]: Third paragraph instead of saying that, he was saying that he was pressing accusation on the Members that was what the argument was. After that, for the records, Honourable Speaker told the Honourable Member to behave himself that is the next thing that should have been there because that was the reality on that day.

THE SPEAKER: I do not want to get into that debate with all due respect but the audio is very clear and let us please not try to make an issue out of this. For me I would have loved to invite may be some senior members to paraphrase in a neat and simple language. This is for prosperity, may be it can be neatly captured instead of going up and down which is un-necessary. Thank you.

HON. SIDIA S. JATTA [WULI WEST]: If you read paragraph 1, 2 and then the third one he is referring to, that word that is what we called an "anaphor" it is making reference to what has preceded and that there is making reference to accusation in paragraph 3. So it is not bad.

HON. MAJANKO SAMUSA [NOMINATED]: Madam Speaker please let us forget about this thing and not to make a debate out of it. Is not necessary to bring this topic again, let bygone be bygone.

HON. BILLAY G. TUNKARA [KANTORA]: After a brief exchanged of words between the Honourable Member for Serekunda and the Speaker, the Honourable

Speaker ordered sergeant at arms to take him out of the chambers and I think for the purposes of records that should be captured.

THE SPEAKER: If anyone wants the verbatim report, you will get it when the Hansard is ready and everyone would have a copy available if you want to at least for that proceeding so that you can attach it to the minutes and see.

HON. ALHAGIE S. DARBOE [BRIMAKA NORTH]: Am sorry to take you back to page 9, the last paragraph where it reads that the Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs made a statement after the vote on the framework agreement was rejected by the Assembly. I want to believe the bone of contention was that particular statement made by the Minister if it can be violated because the reference of the accusation and the reaction is referring to that statement. For the benefit of the record, we need to dilate what statement the Minister actually made.

THE SPEAKER: Yea that is what am saying that the Hansard record will capture every single word. These are just minutes, if you want amendments, we can do it but this is just minutes.

HON. MAHTARR M. JENG [LOWER NUIMI]: Am just observing on page 9, those in favour please say Aye, those not in favour say No. the "Noes" instead of Nos.

HON. SUWAIBOU TOURAY [WULI EAST]: page 10 where it says the apology was accepted, my memory was that even after he has made apology to the Assembly, the Speaker still insisted that he moves out of the chambers.

THE SPEAKER: please as I said, let us not make this thing an issue.

HON. SUWAIBOU TOURAY [WULI EAST]: Is an issue

THE SPEAKER: Is an issue? You go to Hansard records and listen to the audio.

HON. SAMBA JALLOW [NIAMINA DANKUNKU & MINORITY]: what the Honourable member is referring to was when I stood up and wanted to bring a motion that was the time the Speaker told me until my order is accomplished. But when the Honourable member brought up his apologies the Speaker accepted but when I

wanted to come up with a motion that was the time she was telling me until my order is accomplished but after the apology of the Honourable Member it was accepted.

THE SPEAKER: I think that is fair, let us not be emotional over these things and be very fair to everybody and also to make sure the records are right.

HON. SULAYMAN SAHO [CENTRAL BADIBU]: thank you Madam Speaker, if you should go by the record in fact it was not an apology at the -----

THE SPEAKER: Please can we just close this chapter and move on.

HON. MAHTARR JENG [LOWER NUIMI]: page 11, number 9 last paragraph, Minority is wrongly spelled.

HON. OMAR DARBOE [UPPER NUIMI]: page 12, second paragraph where it is stated the Honourable Minister responded to the issues raised and wind up the debate. Wind up is wrongly spelt.

HON. BABA GALLEH JALLOW [SANIMENTERENG]: The same page 12, where you have Bills, it reads the Honourable Minister of Finance and Economic moved that the Gambia Public Procurement Authority Amendment Bill 2018 be read a second. "Time" is not there.

HON. ALHAGIE DARBOE [LOWER FULLADU WEST]: page 12, below the first paragraph where you have Honourable Mahtarr M. Jeng Member for Lower Nuimi seconded the motion not the Bill.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Speaker adjourned the sitting until "19th" instead of 14th.

HON. FATOU K JAWARA [TALLINDING KUNJANG]: page 16 where you have those in favour say yes, those not in please say No. those is missing there.

Where it says the Minister of Lands and Regional Government reported that the Bill entitled the Local Government Amendment Bill. Am not comfortable with the word have, should it not be has.

[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed to]

[That the Record of Votes and Proceedings of the National Assembly Sitting of Thursday 15th March 2018 has been adopted with amendments]

Bill

Consideration of, and debate on the Forestry Bill, 2017.

Report of the National Assembly Select Committee on Environment, Sustainable Development and NGOs Affairs on the Forestry Bill 2018

[By the Chairperson of the Committee],

HON. SAINÉY TOURAY [JARRA EAST]: The Report of the Select Committee on Environment and Forestry Bill 2018.

Introduction and overview of 2018 Bill: The Forestry Bill 2017 was referred to Select Committee on Environment by the Assembly to review and report on its findings. During the period, the committee invited the Minister of Environment, Climate Change, Forestry with his technical team. The committee also invited two [2] Subject-Matter Specialist to better advise them on the Bill. During the deliberation the Committee was informed that the review of the current 1998 Forestry Act and Regulations was funded through a Technical Cooperation Program [ICP] support to the Department of Forestry through the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation [FAO] in 2010. Adequate consultations were conducted where views and concerns of all stakeholders were taken on board including the rural populace who are effectively involved in the implementation of participatory forest management approaches. During the process, International Conventions and Treaties to which Gambia is a signatory were taken into consideration and domesticated in the document to ensure comprehensiveness and maintaining the required standards.

The document was validated at national level involving policy makers. Legislators [former NAMs], and state and non-state actors.

The following new parts that were not captured in the current 1998 Act and Regulations are included in the Bill to address the gaps or challenges requiring legal back up/support for effective forest management practices based on the existing guidelines.

Hon. Speaker. I would like to refer the Members to page 4, during the interactions the committee raised concerns on the following sections of the Bill and the Ministry provided the following clarifications:

Section 31 of part v [Community Forestry Management]

- The concept of Community Forestry Management was introduced in the country during the early part of the 90s to involve beneficiary communities in the sustainable management of forest resources on their customary lands. This forms the decentralisation processes of the Administration of Forest Resource Management through empowering the rural farmers to take the lead, ownership and responsibility of Forest Resource Management for sustainable livelihood improvement ventures.
- This concept was adopted and ratified by the legislature since 1998 as the Legal Tool/Framework in the current 1998 Forestry Act and Regulations ensuring that communities qualified to be awarded the Community Forest Management Agreement [CFMA] are fully and legally empowered to own the forest resources through signing of the agreement by the Minister. The conclusion of the agreement indicates that the Department of forestry has no power to utilize resources from the designated forest reserves but only to technically guide the communities in the execution of sustainable management practices through the development of participatory community forest management plans.
- Stages of sensitization and capacity building are conducted during the implementation phases of the concept based on the Community Forest Implementation Guidelines and Field Manual. The process ensures that all stakeholders in the process are well informed of the phases and legal instruments involved as basis for observation by the parties. This approach is

not limited only to the implementing communities but all the parties involved in the process.

Section 39 of part V [Community Forest Management]

- This section empowers the implementing communities to be exclusively responsible of the management and utilization of the forest resources and products found in the reserve under their management from the intrusion of outsiders. This indicates that upon signing of the preliminary and the final management agreement with the involved communities, access for the utilization of forest products must be obtained from the Community Forest Management Committee, contrary to the consent of this, means illegal intrusion and utilization of resources.
- The community members on the other hand are privileged to access the products from the CF for domestic use during the preliminary phase and the commercialization of perishable products [NTPPs]. The same applies after the conclusion of the transfer of ownership to the communities. However, all utilization and commercialization of products must be based on approved Participatory Forest Management Plan developed by them through the support of forestry department staff just to ensure sustainable management and to curb over-exploitation of resources.

Section 87 of part xii [Forest Produce in State Land and Customary Land].

- The objective of this clause is to regulate the utilization of forest resources, to mitigate illegal exploitation and over exploitation of resources, without due consent of the directorate or representatives. The removal of products must be supported by legal documentations and the required tariff/tax paid to Government. As the department is promoting the involvement and legal transfer of these forest covers to the communities, it must be ensured that unproductive forest covers with limited benefits to the communities are handed over which is contrary to the overall objective of Participatory Forest Management Concept. In short, it is a control mechanism over the resources

or produce to avert forest degradation and to ensure sustainable supply to the citizenry especially the rural communities.

Section 108 of part XVI [Import and Export of Forest Produce]

- This section was not thoroughly captured in the current forestry Act and Regulations of 1998 and of recent, movement of produce in volumes across the border from neighbouring countries are realized with virtually no legal documentations from place of origin notably Rose timber [Keno] for re-export through the Gambian seaport. In order to regulate and formalize the process it was deemed fit to include this section in the Bill to adequately and legally equip the department and the vendors involved in the trade of forest products.
- Sub-section 4 of section 108, requires the vendor to produce a certificate of origin of the products indicating the country where the produce is originating especially products that transited through a country where it is not obtained to the Gambia [e.g. Guinea Bissau through Senegal to the Gambia].

Section 125 of part XIX [Forest Offences, Penalties and Forfeitures]

- Charcoal production had been banned in the country since the coming into force of 1977 Banjul Declaration by the first regime. The current Forestry Act and Regulations of 1998 also followed the same trend by ensuring that production or carbonization is not conducted in the country but the importation and use is allowed. The negative environmental implication is definitely high and the Gambia being a signatory to various conventions and treaties focusing on the reduction of carbon emission, forest and biodiversity degradation.
- Referring to the figure below [GOBS, 2013], it is clear that majority [above 60%] of the households in the country are using firewood as domestic energy. This informs us that charcoal is only used in the urban areas where other sources of domestic energy are available and accessible.

Cooking Fuel in The Gambia.

The number of households using different types of fuel for cooking by Local Government Areas

Madam for your indulgence can I jump this table for the sake of time? And move to page 11,

Cooking fuel mix in each Local Government Area

- There are series of alternative domestic energy products or sources such as bio-charcoal, briquettes, liquid gas [LPG], solar and electricity that currently are accessible, affordable, produced and promoted in the country. In addition, simple, accessible and affordable improved cooking devices are produced in country currently promoted for adoption. There are prototypes in place that is also promoted that requires less wood consumption and cooking time.
- The Community Forest Management Agreement guarantees the legal ownership and transfer of both the land and forest cover backed by the Forestry Act and Regulations of 1998 and 2018 Bill.
- All trees that are found in forest parks, protected areas and outside forest lands are legally owned by the state and should not be utilized without obtaining legal documents or approval from authorities managing the forest resources of the country. Before the felling of any tree identified for utilization should be marked visibly [painting and numbering using chalk] by the concerned staff on the ground to ensure that the right tree species is felled since different tree species have different tariffs. Coding of tree species is a good idea and could be introduced in the management approaches.
- The interpretation of offences and conviction under Section 130 sub-section 2 indicates that the fine or imprisonment should not exceed three years and not less than 12 months or 1 year. There are different legal frameworks in the neighbouring countries with varying penalties depending on the threshold or

magnitude of the offence. However, there are impressions that the Gambian law is soft when it comes to forest offences.

- Individuals who have planted trees on farmlands belong to them legally and can utilize the trees but have to inform the concerned authorities to ensure that the required documents are obtained for the movement of the produce. However, trees naturally growing on farmlands belong to the state and access to them will require proper documentations upon payment of the required tariff.

CONCLUSION

The committee after conducting series of meeting and discussions with the relevant stakeholders is convinced that the Bill is good for the country and would seek for the blessing of the whole House to allow it be read a second time and pass.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee resolved on the following recommendations:

1. Measurement of endangered trees and coding be added to the Bill to better protect them.
2. The Ministry should put mechanisms in place for better enforcement on the ban on charcoal production in the country
3. Other alternative sources of energy should be made accessible, affordable and even be subsidized by Government.

Madam Speaker that does it for the report, thank you very much and I want to thank both sides of the political divide for their unparalleled attention.

Thank you very much.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you very much Chair and your committee Members together with your Subject Matter Specialist.

Honourable Members can recalled that the report was earlier on tabled and seconded before it was referred to the committee. So the procedure is to open the floor for debate.

It is fortunate that you did not have copies prior to this but am not sure whether you will be in a position as at now to discuss or contribute towards the debate. I would like to open the floor.

[Point of Procedure]

HON. SIDIA S. JATTA [WULI WEST]: What we have just heard is a report of a committee of this Assembly, I want to propose that the Honourable Minister now formally introduces his Bill to the Assembly so that we debate the 2 at the same time. He still has to introduce his Bill formally.

THE SPEAKER: But according to my report, the Bill was already tabled and seconded then referred to the committee but it was not debated. Am thinking now that we received the report of the committee, we open the floor then the Honourable Minister will response to issues raised during the debate. Is a question of procedure but it will mean that he is coming back to table it again is that what you are proposing?

HON. SIDIA S. JATTA [WULI WEST]: Is not tabling it again?

THE SPEAKER: The records indicated that it was tabled

HON. SIDIA S. JATTA [WULI WEST]: I know it was tabled but it was not table in a sense because it was not debated as it was referred to a particular committee.

THE SPEAKER: So what are you suggesting, for him to come back and table it again?

HON. SIDIA S. JATTA [WULI WEST]: For me that is my idea of it but if you want to proceed the way you how—

THE SPEAKER: Let us have other views before we arrive.

HON. ALAGIE S. DARBOE [BRIKAMA NORTH]: I think if you refer to the next agenda item where the debate, "committee stage" and the third reading that means there should be again that presentation and on the basis of which the room/house will be opened for debate and I think that is where I try to read from where the Honourable Member for Wuli West is trying to deduce.

Having heard that of the report represented by the Chairman of the Environment Committee, we should also know the stance in relation to that report with regard to what the Minister has presented once more then after the debate can be open and then the third reading can also follow suit.

THE SPEAKER: You are proposing that the Minister tables the Bill again.

HON. ALAGIE S. DARBOE [BRIKAMA NORTH]: Yes the Minister to table the Bill again.

THE SPEAKER: And then we debate it together with the report?

HON. ALAGIE S. DARBOE [BRIKAMA NORTH]: Yes.

THE SPEAKER: Very well let me hear from others too.

HON. FATOUMATA NJAI [BANJUL SOUTH]: Thank you very much Madam Speaker, the whole suppose of Select Standing Committee or any at hook committee is because we select people who would at least expertise in certain areas and the reasons we referred this Bill to the Committee was for them to look at it and then report to this august Assembly and from that report because they would have looked at all the recommendations and everything from the Honourable Minister and then report back to us and then we will base our debate on this report. I think that is how it should normally be, so I don't think it should be tabled again.

Thank you Madam Speaker that is my understanding and that is why we have committees.

HON. ALHAGIE MBOW [UPPER SALOUM]: Detail of the bill to be discussed in committee, it says 56 [1]; "any committee to which a Bill is committed shall not discuss the principle of the Bill but only the details". Section [2], any such committee shall have power to make amendments, there in as Institutionally fit provided that the amendments included new clauses and new schedule are relevant to the subject matter of the bill. But if such amendments are not within the tittle of the bill, it shall amend the title accordingly and shall report to the Assembly. So, in essence, if they have changed anything or at any clauses to the Bill that was provided early, I think

that should be the subject of discussion and perhaps this is what we need to change and then we continue, because the bill was already tabled early.

THE SPEAKER: That was my understanding, I think we can proceed with the debate. So, that we will not waste more time thank you very much. Any Honourable Member who wishes to take the floor and contribute to the debate may rise his or her constituency tag so that we can proceed.

HON. BAKARY NJIE [BUNDUNGKA KUNDA]: Thank you very much Madam Speaker for given me the floor. Madam speaker, having gone through the Bill as a committee and also inviting the Minister and Member of his Ministries, the committee has done justice to table every issues with the Minister and his team. Always the complaints and fears of the Honourable Members were raised with the Minister and his team and they came out with honest opinions. If you look at the bill, one of the contention was; for charcoal production to be prohibited. Now if you look at it, when we had a discussion with them, we realize that, charcoal prohibition, in fact was not an amendment, was part of the bill. So, you will realize that, that was not an issue, it was already there, which was the greatest fear of most of the Honourable Members. So, we realize that, it is other part which gives the communities or various part of the country to take ownership of their forest, so that people will not come from anywhere. Because we realized that, in fact people come from even outside the Gambia or other part of the country to other communities and intrude into their forest, get whatever they want and get away with it. And sometimes some of these forest products are commercialized by those individual, when in actual fact the locals that benefit from it. So, this bill is a good thing, that if we will benefit from the local people who can maximize protection and benefit from their forest and also, I think it will also arrest the situation of deforestation that is going on in the Gambia. If you look at the North Bank of this country almost, you could see that the desert is going. So, we need to protect our forest. So, I think this a good Bill that we should all try to adopt it thank you Madam Speaker for giving me the floor.

HON. SIDIA S. JATTA [WULI WEST]: I want to ask a question and I would want the Honourable Minister to clarify that. References have been made to the act, made in 1997. So my question is, is this an amendment to that act or what? Because we

already have an act, Forestry Act, which was passed in 1997. I was there when this was enacted and now there is another act. So, are we going to have two acts side by side or when you send amendment of the other that I want clarification?

The other thing is before I go make my comments in your report when you were talking about section [87], page [7] of your report, you stated that; the objective of this clause is "to regulate the utilisation of forestry resources, to mitigate legal expectation and over expectation of resources without due consent of the directory and all representatives. What you mean by representative? I want you to tell me what exactly you mean by representative? Are you referring to this Assembly or what?

And page 13, the last paragraph towards the end of the paragraph, the last sentence; which says, however trees naturally growing on farmlands belong to the state and access to their will required proper documentation open payment of the required tariff. My view is that here, what you are calling trees growing naturally on farmland, I put farmland in the same package as community forest or private forest, because farms are owned by people, unless of course you have a usual right and not ownership right. But those who own land, it is there private land, my farmland is my private land. So, trees growing there, belong to me, in the same package as when you talked about private forest it is referring to land owned by people. Trees grow on my land, they are my trees, so trees growing on my farm and the farm is mine these" trees are also my trees. So, I want you to clarify this two situations.

Madam Speaker, the Honourable Minister has a difficult task, because forest management is one of the most difficult enterprises in this country. Yesterday, when I was coming from Basses, fire was going around the village and almost entering a village in Foni, in fact, the fire was in the village I will say it. But nobody was concerned and fire was destroying everything. All the dry grass were being destroyed and this is what our animal depend on for feed, those who have cattle, those who have goat, those who have sheep and livestock in general. So, there must be strict measures taken against this practise in our country because they are destroying everything. And the only thing I have observed – I do not know what is happening in The Gambia, people are always trimming trees, even in the villages. **[Interruption]**

HON. SIDIA S. JATTA [WULI WEST]: I was saying that stringent measures should be taken to address those issues and I do not know if there are any more forest guides, because that forest, if there was guards, he or she should have been able to point out what I know to have been the practice in the past, when there is forest cover between two villages and we cannot decide as to who was responsible for the two villages to take the responsibility, I do not know whether – such measures should be stringently applied because otherwise this country would have become desert. And 2, tree for wood, this is very serious; there is indiscriminate cutting down of trees on the recalled licences, I do not know whether these licences were issued helter skelter or indiscriminate constriction should be given to when and why these licences are issued. Is not because I want to cut down and the TV must take into consideration whether there are any trees to be cut down. And when you were enacting the 1997 forestry Bill, I make the suggestion and I am going to repeat it to your Honourable Minister. Where a tree is cut, if I am given a license to cut a tree, I should be charged with responsibility to put a tree there. I think that should be a practice, otherwise we will end up having no trees in this country. Where it takes – you do not even have a license, where you cut down a tree, you must plant a tree, that the same type of tree and you must make sure that it grows if we do that, very soon will be able to manage our forest. And also those who have their community forests, they should not have a blank cheque to cut down trees[Poor recording]..

HON. SULAYMAN SAHO [CENTRAL BADDIBU]: So it is disappointing, I am not going to be part of making laws that I am not expectedas an institution, we are failing.

[Point of correction]

HON. SAMBA JALLOW [NIAMINA DANKUNKU]: Ma. The responsibility of Members of Parliament, is to enact laws but we do not enforce them and that does not mean that we fail.

HON. SULAYMAN SAHO [CENTRAL BADDIBU]: Thank you Madam Speaker, if we make laws, we expect those laws to be implemented. If the implementing agent is not

implementing that law, we as law makers we said it. All of us here, we need to work as partners, these are the three organs that govern a state. The Legislature, the Judiciary and the Executive, if one fails all of us fail. This is what I mean thank you.

Madam Speaker, I will also like to dwell on legal penalties, now the cooperates, because we have the traditional court, if somebody has fallen a tree and get Hundred Thousand pulse, you charge the people 10, thousand dalasi or five thousand Dalasi.

So, **[Poor recording]**

Madam Speaker, this is what I have for at the moment and I would like to thank the committee for the effort done, but these are my concerns and I want the Honourable Minister to make intervention.

HON. BILLAY G TUNKARA [KANTORA]: Thank you very much Madam Speaker, for giving me the opportunity. Similarly I also want to thank the Select Committee on Environment for a job well done. First of all Madam Speaker, I want this Assembly to understand that the world is moving and we are in the 21st century. When the world is moving Gambia cannot be in an isolation but to move with the entire world. Civilization has gone that far and I do not see the reason when policy makers are trying to compromise or trying to bring sentiments in terms of people's reaction. We understand every policy is meant to change their behaviour. And obviously when this policy is passed for real every other policy to change their particular behaviour. I was expecting Policy, because it really affects this grazing areas in our communities in the URR. I was really expecting that area to be captured. But never the less, both....and this local energies both have its negative and positive side. From research point of view, you will understand that, the charcoal production have some health implications and which one to understand. It also have soil organic implication, where you are burning those charcoal, you are killing a lot of our cell organisms in that particular area. Because the heat goes down to meet the soil. Those are the issues that we should put into our minds in terms of passing this particular Bill.

And also you are polluting our environment by the black smoke coming out from that particular exercise, you are not cognizant of those health implication. And also findings have shown us that this charcoal production, many a time bush fire is as a result of

this lack of control mechanism in trying to control the whole side.... Overnight when heavy wind blows, so the fire spread and that lead to many bush fires in many regions. So, these are some of the implications that this practise normally brings. The Ministry, is to advocate the proper use of this liquid gas, because in terms of this domestic house fire, because of people negligence in handling this gas, we have recorded number of cases of fire out break or fire incident in our homes. If a bill is passed in this August house, it should be a point of duty by the Ministry, to advocate and sensitize the general public on how to use this particular domestic and....in our environment. And that has to be either through TV program while you will be creating output, turn out this are the recommendations. But also, they should not stopped in doing that. They should also try to make sure that these things are affordable and also accessible as well.

If you are banning this thing now, make sure citizen should be able to buy gas tanks to do their own domestic jobs. The Minister should endeavour, to make sure that this commodities are affordable and accessible at the same time. So, to be honest, I do not think the policy that has been purposed, is about future solution vs current solution now. People are thinking about livelihood animal not actually protecting the future. What implication would it have in the environment now? And as a policy makers, we have policy to address the future generation because we have to protect our environment. And if we do not hold the "bull by the horn", to pass the particular law, it will depend on the emotion, sympathy and we will not move ahead. Definitely this policy will affect human behaviour, it will really affect some income generation, but they have to be dynamic in terms of revenue generation, they can be as suppliers of this energy. You go to Senegal or any other places you can buy bring it and sell it to the public again. Is a matter of sensitizing our people that, this has some health implications, this has some important implications, this has some negative implications and it is unpleasant until this is done as a nation, we cannot forge ahead. So, therefore I urge the Ministry to take action in terms of making this thing more affordable for sitting and also make it more accessible for citizens as well. So, this – some electorate's life is in jeopardy because it is actually affecting their income generation as a livelihood earning. We should try to look at the future and what kind of Gambia do we want to embrace and this has been practised in the Western world and forestry has a reserve

for this. So, China which is actually buying this timber, have reserve forest. If you cut a tree in that reserve forest, you are going to jail. So, when they are busy trying.... therefore, I am really being in support of the particular Bill to pass onto Parliament. Thank you for your indulgence.

HON. SAIKOUBA JARJU [BUSUMBALA]: Thank you Ma, may I also join my colleagues to thank the committee for the job done to the best of their ability. But also I want to refer them a portion that I believe have come bigger than ours, because they said fuel for cooking is affordable and accessible and if you look at the table that they got from G.BUS, which says; Gambia is about two hundred and seventeen thousand [217000] household in which only seven thousand [7000] used gases, less than 1% of the population of the house produce gases. So which means is not accessible and is not affordable.

Madam Speaker, this is a very important Bill and a very sensitive Bill for that matter. This is a Bill, which when we pass, we will feel it, will hear and see the consequences forth with. There is so many things the Bill is coming up with, it talks about of forest, which is wonderful. But is the Ministry doing their research to see whether the communities are well empowered and well sensitive to be able to own their own forest. They want to burn charcoal, yes I think charcoal is already banned as alluded to by the Member for Wuli West, because there was an act of 1977 and out of 1998 in all those act on charcoal was stopped. So, that means charcoal is already banned in The Gambia. So, what is the issue of bring it back again? And why the buying of charcoal was not implemented? Is the question that we need to ask ourselves and I think this what the researches have to do. A law that has been enacted in 1977 cannot be implemented. The problem is, I believe what the Minister should do, should have to give us a report on those that are producing charcoal, what are the reasons why they are producing charcoal and who are they?.....why can charcoal production be banned in the Gambia? Charcoal is being produced as others stated, the producers produced to make their livelihood, but charcoal is not used by them, it is used by us. If you look at **[Poor Recording]**

Deforested, there are no trees there and I asked myself it was because of the charcoal production. You see let us try to sensitize the people if they can use the trees wisely- because, they said no tree no life obviously that has so many connections because the oxygen we inhale, comes from trees that is true but also the source of fuel of our feeding, comes from food or forest. So, we need to sensitize our people in as much as you have the right to depend on the forest but is also your responsibility to make sure that the forest stays. So, I think those are some of the sensitizations the Ministry should have done to empower them. Show them some of the alternative ways whereby they can maintain the forest then you just bring us a Bill for us to ban charcoal like that. I went to this area, it was all deforested no trees and I asked myself a question, it is charcoal production obviously but I asked myself should we not go and banned it?. I never knew about this because I did not go through the order paper that you gave me so, is just coincident I said should we not ban charcoal production? The answer comes to your mind. Do we have alternative source of fuel for our people? So, the thing is here today. I think the Minister, you have to give us an alternative ways of fuel. Somebody was telling me that, gas bottle is expensive here it is better for them to pay fares to go to Senegal, buy it there come back and yet still it is cheaper. So, what is the problem? We have to look in to those things if people prefer and how many of us now? Somebody sells 5kilos of gas D375 to D400. You use it less than two weeks if you have bigger household so that means every month you need two of that and that is D800. Let us look at the earning capacity of ordinary Gambians and how many of us can sustain that?

Is never my intension and I know it will never be the intention of the producers of firewood and charcoal to spoil the forest. I think with this one the Minister has to give us what other collaborative engagements he has been doing with other Ministries and also what sort of sensitizations has he been doing in the community to know the forest

My suggestion to that, I believe forest personnel sometimes ago the Members for West Coast, we had a caucus, we went round and we were very lucky to go the forest department in Brikama and some other places. What we have seen there, they are ready to safeguard the forest and ready to do their work but they are not empowered-

They are not empowered to go round the forest. I think if those ones are done, you do not do the in-house empower, my friend the forest Act is there and the forest should be maintained.

Sensitize the people and know that they have the right to use the forest but also have the responsibility to maintain it. That means if you cut a tree and you should plant a tree or let there be a Bill, we accept every community, you do your assessment because as a recommendation made by the committee, you know a measurement endangered trees and coding. You go and assess in every community how many types of trees are there and what is the size of the forest? We enact a law that, every community should be responsible to make sure that, those forests are maintained though they can use it but wisely. So, what we will do as an assessment this year is, sensitize about 3,000 in that area, you come back again less than 1,000 trees, then you have the power now to go to the community to make sure that they replace the forest that has been lost. If that is done, I believe it will be the way to maintain our forests.

Madam Speaker, I want to come back again to community empowermentgo into the forest I was in Berefet and they have a community forest. When I was there the forest was fine but when I went back it was going down again. You see, you ask I am the owner of the forest and what sort of responsibility does that attach to? They will go, be given licenses and they will say they are the owner of the forest not even the community but a kabilo will own a forest and say this is our forest. What responsibility do they have there? Is just to order licenses or documentation for someone to come and cut a tree, go to the forest department pay an amount of money and go away with it but do they know that after issuing a license to somebody to go and cut down a tree in the forest because you are getting something from there is your responsibility to make sure that trees are being cultivated back so, these are some of the things I believe the Minister, should do. Because, I for one, the area to empower the community to own the forest I am in support of that but I do not think I will be convinced to be part of the people to ban the charcoal production unless the Minister, brings us and tell us that what are some of the alternative sources of fuel that they

are putting in place to make sure that, other sources of fuels is accessible and affordable to ordinary Gambian people. Thank you so much.

THE SPEAKER: Sorry but before I give you the floor can somebody move that we seat beyond 1:00pm.

HON.OMAR DARBOE [UPPER NIUMI]: Thank you Ma. I move the motion that this Assembly seat beyond 1:00pm.

HON. SAIKOUBA MARONG [LATRIKUNDA SABIJI]: I thank you Madam Speaker, for giving me the floor. I will also like to join my colleagues to thank the committee for environment for the job well done. I am not going to support any Bill pending on it; the charcoal has been banned since in 1977 and people are still producing it. I believe it was pending. Gone in 1998 also, the same Bill was passed and yet people are producing charcoal so, I believe there is still that Bill and that is why people are producing it. And if today, there is a Bill before me and here are some Members saying that if this and that are clear then I will support the Bill. You know it is not clear so why are you supporting the Bill?

Madam Speaker, I am in support of the Bill simply because, there are areas that I believe are not clear to me. The committee did a very wonderful job and they have some good recommendations but we have to think of something. Ma when this Bill, was passed here in 2017 last year, I stood and said, that there was a Bill passed in this august Assembly here on the plastic production yet people are producing it here in this country. Passing a Bill in this august Assembly is not a problem but implementing it is always a problem and I believe the Bills we passed, some of them are not good that is why we cannot implement them. If you tell me that you are going to ban a charcoal because, the gas is affordable and accessible. We all know that gas is very expensive not everybody can afford a gas. Honourable Member for Wuli West, have given us a very good suggestion he says where a tree is cut, you replace a tree.

Yes! We know The Gambia is turning in to a desert. We need to protect our environment and forest but if you say that, a charcoal production be banned Madam Speaker, I do not want my people from Kiang to suffer here. Madam Speaker, looking at their report on page 13 where it says, however, trees naturally growing on farm

lands belong to the state and access to them will require a proper documentation upon payments of the required tariff. Madam Speaker, we have a tree called roast timber locally called canoe and that canoe has been existing for 60 to 70 years and is in my farm land. The tree exists naturally but if you tell me that you want to do anything with this tree you have to take a permission from me or you have to give me a certificate or what so ever in order to cut that tree down. What is that tree telling me? A tree that has been existing for the past 60 to 70 years under the protection and care of my family and today you are telling me that if I want to cut down that tree I need to have clearance from you it is something funny to me.

Madam Speaker, I think what the forestry department should do is to empower people at the grass root level. The committee did a very wonderful job with that wonderful recommendations. Looking at the third recommendations that they said, other alternative source of energy should be made accessible, affordable and even be subsidies by the Government is this already in place before I said yes to the Bill because this is the recommendation that is given to the Minister for Environment. I think these are things that we need to put in to consideration before we pass some certain Bill- we look at the impact of the Bill in our community.

Some Honourable Members, said it here that we are now moving. Yes! We know that we are moving but looking at the nature of this country here, we know that some certain things are not possible here. If you tell me the whole household should start using gas now instead of charcoal what so ever. Ask yourself can they really afford it? And also Madam Speaker, the other part of the report, the Honourable Member for Busumbala has said it here. If you look at the table that they gave us is showing that, not everybody can even afford to use a gas. So, I am appealing to the Honourable Members, for us to look critically in to this issue before we pass this Bill.

The area of charcoal productions, Honourable Minister, we want you and your team to engage the local people to see if these recommendations are going to be available to them or not? Madam Speaker, until my doubts are cleared on that area, I am not in support of the Bill. I thank you.

MAHTARR M. JENG [LOWER NIUMI]: Madam Speaker, I thank you very much. 1977 -2018, is 41 years almost older than the Honourable Minister. Madam Speaker, the Member for Wuli West, told us here when he was coming from his trip around Foni, fire was raging and the people were sitting oblivious of what was going on because they are detached of the forest and that locality.

My contention about this forest Bill, has always been that if you pop up to say that this Bill is for this people, it should be the people's own thing that they bring to you not you taking it to them; sensitize them. If you sensitize people, they take ownership if you do not they sit and look at you disregard every move you do and this is the case and it is a contentious issue we have today. Expressing doubts whether it will be possible? It will never be possible because there are no alternatives. If you weaned a baby, you have to give that baby something else apart from the breast the baby has been feeding on otherwise the baby will result to disturbing you it is natural. We are part and parcel of our environment and the environment is part and parcel of our lives. If you want to detach my life from my environment, you will create problems and you can end up jailing all of us because we will not heed what are you telling us as you have not created or brought in any alternatives for us to live by. If the number of households in the urban area use more gas, charcoal than the rural area where the charcoal is purported to be produced from then the people in the rural area will not suffer but they will see the consequence of going to jail and these people will suffer. Are you hiding that?

This is the reality and if we bring laws, which are questionable then those laws are bad. What is the alternative if the Minister can stand here by telling us the alternative, then we will go with but if he does not and if he would not, definitely we will not be able to side with him. It was said by the Minority Leader, that if we make any law that goes to bounce on our people, we end up being blame for it because the Minister, will always say it is the House that, has passed it. Yes! The house has passed it.. The ball will be in our court for us to justify why we did that. Do we need that? We should be working together the policy makes and the legislature and these are areas like in Barra right now, if the ferry has a break down, the people use the Pirogues The pirogues one passenger pays D25 onward, D10 to go on board, and D10 to go out of board

that is D45. Twenty dalasi less than the price you pay on the ferry but the people will take because is an alternative no matter what. People might not be worried about using gas or buying gas because, it is the only thing available after charcoal is banned, they will buy it but would it be affordable, would it be accessible? If we take the trend in Senegal, will they say they are going to ban charcoal? They brought in alternatives and which was, gas is available and affordable. Gambians who goes to Senegal to buy gas instead of here because, if a Gambian buys gas from there and brings it here is not available and affordable to a Gambian, we need to look in to that. Let us not by virtue of or for the sake of beauties, sit in our offices make laws and then it bounces back on our people. We will have answered the consequences and it will be very evident that we are the cause of it. Let us see what is possible? What is not possible and we throw it out that is the situation. Thank you very much Madam Speaker, for giving me the floor.

HON. KEBBA JALLOW [JARRA CENTRAL]: I thank you very much for giving me the floor. May I refer this august Assembly to section '108' of part '16' page '8' of the report which says import and export of forest produce. Madam Speaker, in relation to this section, my particular concern about this section is in relation to a roast timber exportation which is commonly known as canoe.

Madam Speaker, I have once confronted the Honourable Minister for Forestry and Environment, Climate change and resources in respect to this roast timber business. Because, I am from Jarra Central and in the whole of this country now, I think the only place where we can have this canoe piled in heaps" is in my constituency. When I went there to confront him in his office, I asked him about this because there is one which is in Badumi just by the side of the highway when going to Basse, they were asked to stop buying the roast timber from customers or vendors and then they left that place and went far in a village call *Sari Omar* which is very close to the border and then still as I am talking to you, it seems like the buying and selling of these roast timbers in that area did not stop because is increasing by the day.

My first question relating to this canoe or roast timber to the Honourable Minister, is that what is he doing in order to see that this illegal roast timber is not entering in our country The Gambia?

The other question is can the Honourable Minister, explain to this august Assembly as to what conditions are the heaps lying in *Badumi* and *Sari Omar*? These are my major questions Madam Speaker and I thank you very much.

HON. DEMBA SOWE [NIAMINA WEST]: I thank you very much Madam Speaker, I am in a hurry because I am a member of the forestry Committee and also the vice chairman. When this Bill came before us, definitely this was the only section on the banned of charcoal production I was concern about and I told the Honourable Minister, that before we can ban charcoals provide us with something that we can be definitely using because, it is very difficult in the Gambia to ban charcoal production. Most of the women in our communities will like to embark on something else but they do not have the mandate and the resources because you cannot go for a gardening without a borehole. So, if you want to go to the garden and to use it to have something is always difficult because, is not everywhere that you have a borehole-water is our major problem in other areas at the same time.

The issue of gas is very dangerous. People like the Serere and the Jollas are not fond of using gas and it is always dangerous when you put it in the houses- It can easily catch fire. When I woke up this morning my wife told me that there is no charcoal and the gas is also finished and I asked her how much is a bottle of gas? She said D375 and a bag of charcoal? She said D250 and I asked her many pots of charcoal can help you cook today she said D20 then I gave her money to go and buy it and forget about the gas because, , is not everywhere and every time that you can get it. If you go to Niamina West, you do not see even a gas, in fact we do not use much charcoal is only when we want to cook "ataya" and other things- we are using firewood. Because, when I told the Honourable Minister, yes it is important to use firewood but it is also from the forest.

In Sabach Sanjal area, I have just visited the area and saw them using wet woods cut them, dry them and use them as firewood is almost the same thing because those who are producing charcoal also are doing the same thing. They are using the wet wood not the dry one so you see I do not think there is a big gap between the using of charcoal and firewood. At the same time Gambia, is a small community but we have

60% of people who have low earning and before you be in something that they can see and affordable.

The Honourable Member, for Janjanbureh has stated here, bush fire is our main problem is the biggest threat for our community forest and yet a big penalty for those who are offending. If you come from Banjul going towards Basse, as early as December, you will find out that the area of Foni, Kiang and Jarra is.... You will see cattle going for over 20kilometers without no access to anything is very dangerous and there are no animals now all our animals have run away to Cassamace and in other areas. Look at a skin of a lion, if you want to get a quarter of it in The Gambia, it will cost you D400 or D500.

All our animals have disappeared no bush meat and this is because of the bush fire please let the Minister do something about it, The committees who are being assigned for the management of these forests, let them utilize the responsibility given to them by the Government. It is not the shake of that, you are given the responsibility and you are not doing so, it is not important. Let, them not be corrupt by individuals and the problem with urban areas is the chiefs, they issue license in their own benefits in fact there was a time.....

Honourable Minister, ~~nowable~~ still now from January, she cannot find anything and what is the Honourable Minister doing about that? 200 bags is around D200, 000 that she invested and if you go from Soma, you find everywhere in the street bags of charcoals and those ones are not compensated. Why is it Fatoumata Jallow alone? We want the Honourable Minister to explain and put in the picture and where is the money? With these remarks Madam Speaker, I am saying a big thank you.

HON. SALIFU JAWO [JOKADU]: I thank you very much Madam Speaker, I am in support of the Bill for reasons.

1. I am going to start with our livestock. We are the owners of these livestock but believe me during the rainy season in my area, these livestock do not even have grazing area and I think we cannot put these livestock on our beds. They need to be free and go out to get their food because, we are benefiting from them and this is the reason why most of these livestock are going and

disappearing because most of them are starved to death during the rainy season and even in the dry season. Because, in the dry season where they were free to go out, we have bush fires, they will roam for the whole day and they will not be able to get their food so, I think it is better for us to do something because these are bad practices. Before, we were having forest and many animals were within our environments. Now believe me in my area even a... now kids do not know it because they cannot find it they have all disappeared because of the bad practices people are conducting within the environment.

2. Another thing people are talking about is charcoal. I am also in support of the Bill on that part for a simply. Because, if you do not take correct measures on this thing a day will come all the left over trees within our environments will disappear. We are talking about alternative measures, when that time arises, whether in our presence or in the next generation, who will be there to give them alternatives? And they are going to put the blame on us because we are running away from the blame now but it will come back to us whether we are here or not. So, I think it is better we take steps, very serious ones for that matter so that people desist from bad practices. I can remember in 1997, I bought a 4year old cow for D1, 200 [one thousand two hundred dalasi] but now if you want that type, you will spend nothing less than D30, 000 [thirty thousand]. Why? Because they are dying.

We are limited now you see their population is going. In my area all those who have house of cattle now they inherited from their parents or from their grandparents but now a days, you cannot own a herd of cattle at this time. You cannot have it why? Because of all these bad practices that people are conducting. So, I think it better for us to take great care of our environment, people are misusing it so, we should not support them definitely I do not support them- these are bad practices and it needs to stop. We can have options on our own because these trees are the ones that are helping us to have enough rain for our harvest but now a days, we are having a very bad or very poor rain falls because the desert is coming in and it is all done by ourselves. So, I think it is better we revise our ideas and try to take a great care of

our environment for the benefit of us and for those coming after us. So, on that note Madam Speaker, I thank you for giving me the floor.

HON. ALHAGIE MBOW [UPPER SALOUM]: I thank you very much Madam Speaker, for giving me the opportunity to talk on this Bill which is the forestry Bill. I will want to remind my Honourable colleagues that our forestry in this country is under an-attack. I will also like to remind them that, the flora and fauna is also under an attack. I will remind all of us in here that this Bill is not only about charcoal there are lot more that this Bill is actually talking about. If you live outside Banjul, Serrekunda area the greater kombos, you will definitely see the impact of the deforestation in our country but if you live in Banjul and Serrekunda, you may not know but go outside here in Barra and continue all the way to the Wulis, you will clearly see the impact, these things are actually making in our country. This Bill is not about preventing somebody from making money or preventing somebody from making things to sustain his family is not about that but is about the future of this country and the future of our families of this nation we must be very careful.

It was very clear here on the report and I must commend my team the committee on forestry. I think the report they have given us is very comprehensive and very clear. Now if you look at the table, we have been talking about this table that clearly shows the house oath in this country. Who is using firewood, charcoal and gas? You will realize that, 50% of them are using firewood, 24% plus are using charcoal and the rest 13% now this is very clear, I think this is very clear.

Now we must also remember the charcoal production actually they are using life trees and I think someone did, mention here that is dry trees but no maybe he has not actually seen them but they are actually cutting life trees and those are the one they use and they will call it these local ovens and generate charcoal. I use charcoal in my household but I am not detriment actually it has in our communities and it has in our country. So, we must look at this Bill in totality not to pick a particular potion of this Bill and start to indicate as if this is a bad Bill. I think is a good Bill and we need to carefully study it and to ensure that we protect this country in the near future.

Madam Speaker, I think there is big difference between enacting Bill and enforcing it and I must also commend Minority Leader, he was very clear. We can actually enact but we can also help in implementing some of these laws. We need to work together as Gambians regardless of whether you are in the executive, in the Judiciary or a law maker we can all work together just to ensure that we protect our environment and our law. I must also remind the people that, if you look at all the global agreements we have in the world now, trade is the number one global agreement. The second and the highest global agreements is environment this is not a coincidence. Let us thoroughly look at this Bill and let us been in line what actually happens internationally.

Now with all the global agreement we have, 500 plus countries and they are all agreeing that, something must be done and it must be now. Who are we as Gambians not to look at them or to hear the cries that people are making in the environment? We must look at that and protect our future and the future of the generations to come.

Madam Speaker, if you look at some of the issues that we actually highlighted globally or even here on the floor, is very clear because again in this country land, is actually own by the state. So, if somebody is given a land that you claim, I do not '*mama la banko*' whatever it is and you also have a responsibility on that land but the other thing I am also urging the Minister, just to ensure even if you give somebody a license to go and cut a tree on somebody's land, let the person be put on the loop, let that person understand that this is actually coming from the Government. When that happens, all this chaos between people that you will cut or you will not will be drastically reduced.

I will also urge the Minister, to help the forest guards to empower them more, to give them mobility so that, they can do their work better. We have forest guard all over the country but yet still we are having issues on how to implement them why because they are very difficult time to move from point A to B. In as much as we support them to do their work but let us ensure that they are able to move from point A to B so that they can also do their job. On top of that, they must also be trained on how to talk to people in a very nice way because sometimes show act like they own the forest. No is not that we are all working together to protect what we actually own and I think it is very important for us to work on this Bill and personally, I will give my 100% support

just to ensure that, the future generation of this nation are protected. To me personally, I will say we need to reach war to stop deforestation because right now as we speak, there is a war right now in the forestry. Because, what is going out there for example I said this the last time when the Minister, came in here. Where I came from in Upper Saloum, there was a time when you stand there and look at Nianiya, I do not see anything outside green synergy. Right now you can stand in Upper Saloum, on the highway and look at almost 8 to 10 kilometers you will not see anything. Where has the forest gone to? And must also remind ourselves that, there is a direct correlation between forestry and rain. What is the reason why you do not have rains in the desert? So, all these things in totality is actually going to help our environment and again we need to ensure that, we do not have drought in our country because if it does, it is going to be very catastrophic. Again if you do not take a stand now, we are going on that part and may God forbid that.

Madam Speaker, I want to stop here because most of my other points actually have been highlighted by the other speakers. I thank you very much.

FAKEBBA N.L COLLEY [KINAG WEST]: I thank you very Madam Speaker. I thank the Chair of the committee for environment and the Minister and his team for a job well done. I think I am the very person who should benefit from Bill because, I am the only person here that it really affects Kiang West forest and I think we have the best forest cover in The Gambia but looking at the forest now, deforestation taken in that place is very serious. So, I will refer the Minister to point where deforestation takes place looking at section '7k' of this Act about given out license for people to cut trees.

I went to Kiang myself, I talked to many people who are engaged in this illegal logging and I was able to find out that, license holders in Kiang, are the very people involved in this illegal logging. They will transfer their incenses to somebody else to use it. You will use your license, give it to another person to use and as a result now Kiang West, the forest is seriously damaging I have even talked to the Minister about it and he promised to look in to the problem. From there, I will refer the Minister, to section '37' of the same Act. This year alone the Honourable Deputy Speaker, has got a long and serious problem with the people of Kiang concerning to disputes solution. This

Act is exempting the National Assembly Members, from participating in dispute solutions in our area. The Deputy Speaker, this year sat over 4 or 5 issues concerning disputes between two different communities in Kiang.

Therefore, I urge the Minister to look in to that portion so that, National Assembly Members, can be involved in disputes solutions in their areas. Apart from that, I will ask the Minister, to set lights on two other things for example section '4' categories of forest, forest bag, forest ..., community forest and private forest. These are forest that we are ... personally I cannot identify and I do not know how they interrelate so, I will like the Minister to set light on that.

Again joint forest park management, I am a bit confused about that and I think the Minister, will shed light on that whether this joint forest park management, is referring to two different forest communities or is referring to Government and other community forest? And I would like the Minister to look in to that. Apart from that, I have no problem, I really support the Bill, because he is a Baddibunka. I have been saying it here and I will repeat it despite he is a Baddibunka man. The problem we have in Kiang right now, is very serious, our farm community is threatening because of bush pigs, monkeys and baboons. I have said it here many times, today I will repeat it because the Minister, is here. Our people cannot farm effectively because of these animals and we are not allowed to kill them. I hope the Minister, will tell me something today that will solve the problem and on that base, I beg to resume my seat
Laughter.....

LAMIN F.M. CONTA [KOMBO EAST]: I thank you very much Madam Speaker, for giving me the floor. First of all, I have to commend the select committee on environment for a job well done.

Madam Speaker, with your indulgence, I want to refer this House to page 12, of the report on paragraph '1' the Community Forest Management Agreement guarantee the legality of ownership transfer of both the land and forest over by the
[Poor recording].

There is nothing recorded on this tape No. and there is nothing on the Digital recorder too.

HON. SUWAIBOU TOURAY [WULI EAST]: [Poor recording]

Madam speaker, bush fire, this particular Bill helps the communities to control the fire because if you are in control of your community forest as a community when there is fire you would have already safe enough....must know that the community must mobilize to go and kill the...because they would already know the benefit and the losses you are going to gain when the fire consumed yourselves so, your community will wait for the fire to consumed themselves. .

And because the community is benefiting only from the trees by passing their order...so on, but financially, they are gaining their resources and they are sharing those resources with government, it has to go to the community, the other part will go to the department and the community can use that to build the forest again and to also continue to build their community so, they will not allow the forest to die and they will not allow anybody coming from outside to come and cut their trees and take it across the border in anyway.

And if you don't control the movement of the trees some people can cut the forest materials from Senegal which is very rampant in my place, when I visited my constituency this time, I went to the border I found a log...packed, I went to Kantora as well and then I found a huge...kenun tree packed all over the place. But when I enquire they told me somebody from Kombo here who owns the kenun-tree and because they....lack the possibility to transport them, they are even using part of it to turn it into firewood and sell it because they couldn't sell it. I will urge the Ministry not to remove the embargo on this cutting of trees of the kenuns because once they lift it, for them they will go into Senegal again and bring more and the Senegalese are complaining.

I was there but 5 young people were called in my constituency some 3months ago and they were jailed for 1year in Senegal ,in fact one of them died. So, Gambians and Senegalese are confiding due to the Senegalese border and cutting these trees and what we are concerned about our forest is what the Senegalese also are concerned.

So, this is why we are struggling very hard with the Ministry so that there will be equal punishment whether you cause it in Senegal or in the Gambia you have the same punishment so, that you will fear to go into Senegal to do it.

Madam Speaker, the fact that we have signed treaties with the National treaties regarding Forest Management in terms of...creation in terms controlling....and so on and this is what is going to help us to actually implement those treaties, if we refuse this particular Bill will not go very well down with our International Partners in terms of controlling the pollution of the environment so, I raised my case.

Thank you very much Madam Speaker, am in support of this.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, I have executed my list I don't know if anybody else would want to make an intervention.

HON. BAKARY CAMARA [KIANG CENTRAL]: Thank you very much Madam Speaker, mine is just a short intervention. I want to look at the assessment of forest fires under page 43

I think the biggest problem the Forest Department is facing is the issue of bush fire, if you look at page 43 section (79a);

There are strategies that are put in place in terms of assessments as well as management plans, regional forestry officers are involved but my biggest worry is that these are measures already when there is fire disaster what can be done?.

In the event there happened to be fire disaster what should be put in place? This is the biggest problem that forestry department is facing. There should be straight measures in place to ban people from setting our covers on fire. we have to be honest we are the worst in kiang as early as December they set the entire forest on fire so, let us have strict measures in place to make sure that people are totally stopped from selling the forest cover. The issues of bush fire is even worse than charcoal production here when it comes to fire it consumes everything, the animals suffer a lot.

The other issue is hence the Government is finding it difficult to manage our forest cover because here we say the Government, who are the Government? We are the Government is like we are trying to shift the blame to the Government, we are the

government and the ministries so, our role here as National Assembly Members is that, let us engage our people and continue sensitizing so, that they know the benefit.

Already they know the benefit but for them to know more about the benefit of a forest let us also have public private partnership in terms of forest management, government should allow the investors to come, when you invest 1million dollars or even more than that in forest cover, the more you are willing to take care of that particular forest there will be total absence of bush fires here and there so, these are some of the things we should look at.

Madam Speaker, the last issue that I want to look at is the issue of bush pigs, sometimes, it appears very funny when you talk of the bush pigs that really cause harm to farmers and their crops, it went to a point that some people in my area decided that come next rainy season, they will not even go to farm I ask them why? They said because of bush pigs in fact I did involve my friend the Honourable Member for Central Baddibu to see how best we can mobilize the local hunters and then follow these bush pigs to kill them.

This is an animal that have the ability to develop and to multiply because at their birth one pig can give birth to 7 young ones at the same time so, is easier for the population to increase. The forestry department what happen was I didn't have order or an authority from the Forestry Department to go ahead with that killing but I hope the Honourable Minister will really help us, he will cooperate with that directives to make sure that we are not totally going to get rid of the population but at least to reduce, reasonable number of pigs that is what we need, we don't need the entire population even more than the human beings in the Gambia. Thank you very much Madam Speaker. *[Applause]*

HON. NDEY YASSIN SECK [NOMINATED]: Thank you ma, mine will be very short.

I think Department Declaration 1977 is where by now....because I used to hear my mother saying that charcoal is no more the quality it used to be because it is bad and at the end people are not adhering to that, they are doing whatever they want, even if you have one cup of charcoal you cannot boil rice because the charcoal is not good the moment you put it on fire it is burnt to ashes so, I think these are issues that we

really need to take, banning charcoal is what we are all supporting but let us put alternative mechanism where you know that if you ban charcoal we will be able to cook well for the Fulas and the Jolas.

I think these are all issues that we really need to think about because it was banned since 1977 up to this time but charcoal is still going on so, which means something is wrong, I think 1977 was the first Republic and then the second Republic it was banned again and still charcoal is going on. I remember in 1997 when it was banned, some people were buying it they struggle to bring it to the urban areas from the rural areas and still now they are not even hiding it and is getting more and more expensive, the bag of charcoal is expensive because those days it was not expensive but now I know a bag of charcoal will go up to D400 as we are saying that a bottle of Gas is expensive so these are all things we need to talk about and then we should try by all means to let people know through sensitization that is what we need in this country.

You cannot sit and say that let us do this and then you forget about it. Banning it is one issue but there are also other issues so, ma thank you very much.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you very much Honourable Member and all Honourable Members may I take this opportunity to thank everybody and of course the select committee for producing a report that we are all able to read through and make our contributions. Ordinarily, I will call on the Honourable Minister to respond and wind-up but in the view of the fact that is almost 2:30 actually is being a long morning at least I would suggest that we suspend the session for an hour to have a short break and then come back and allow the minister to respond and wind-up the debate. But in addition, please may I appeal to Honourable Members for all of us to come back because I see that people are leaving one by one and really that would handicapped the Assembly and would not be able to proceed so, let us all endeavour to come back at 3:30 please and on that note we adjourn the sitting till 3:30.

[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed to]

[That the House be suspended until 3:30]

The House Resumes

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members can you allow me first to recognize the presence of Honourable Ministers in our session today we miss our old friend Attorney General and Minister of Justice but he is here with us as usual for the adjournment debate and Honourable Minister for Energy is also here for the adjournment debate of course the Honourable Minister for Environment is going to respond to the issues raised but I think before we do that may I also take the opportunity to welcome our Turkey friends from Tika company His Excellency, the Ambassador am sure the Honourable Members would be happy to know that they are here purposely for the starting of the National Assembly Members offices and that is the reason why they are here. You all welcome thank you very much.

Honourable Minister you may now wish to respond to the issues raised and wind-up the debate before we move over to the committee stage. Thank you.

HON. LAMIN DIBBA [MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT CLIMATE CHANGE AND NATURAL RESOURCES]:

Thank you very much Madam Speaker and I want to thank you for the delicious lunch.

Madam Speaker, I have listen to interventions by Honourable Members and its seem all the intentions were focused on banning charcoal and I believe this is not a new notes these notes have been here, why you took reference from the 1977 Banjul declaration is for people to recall that our nature is very important for us and it played a very important role for our continuous survival as human species our existence changes on the existence of other animals species with our ecology therefore it is important for us to respect our con-existence with this species with our environment and protect it because as one environmental writer said James Lovelock "*you may not know one type of species in forest that is holding human kind*" so, therefore we should be able to protect every pieces within our environment.

Within the broader framework of the International Agreements that Gambia is a signatory to the United Nation Convention on Decertification, Members have alluded to the fact that the Northern Bank of our country not necessarily Baddibu but the Northern Bank of our country is devoid of trees and research has shown that these

parts of our country is being made desert and we all know what desertification means, it means that our very people who we are here to protect as other Members said, we must put in place measures and mechanisms to ensure that their livelihood support system continues and we all know 75% of this country depends on Agriculture.

And we have all seen the critical nature of rains in the past years and this year we have the driest September and the warmest October on record, what this is showing us is that climate change has already started setting in and how do we ensure that we mitigate the effect of climate changes is to come up with legislations and policies against deforestation.

When do we take our forest environment's goods and services that this eco-system provide for us and will be there for us, I would have been happy if the Member for Banjul is here, this has some very negative implication for our communities for instance Banjul being a low lying state, it has been proofed that with 1meter sea level rise the entire Banjul and this National Assembly would have gone in 15 years' time, this is what these Government is converning and this is why we come up with this Bill to ensure that this carbon sink that are our forest that exist in our communities are maintained by communities for the benefit of the communities but at the same time serve the entire humanity.

This is the trust of this Bill, this is why you see in the community forest management and we have learned our lessons. When it was under state control forest management approach, it was all cat and dog game chasing people out of the forest trying to protect the forest and that has lot of negatives consequences for our people.

The Department of Forestry under the Ministry of Environment came up with this strategy to say if we do not allow the people to have sink in the management of the forest resources and the utilization of the resources it would be like we are just doing a foot and exercise so, the concept of community forest management came into being, this is why today some Members raised this how many communities about 450 communities in this country are aware of this concept.

When I went round the whole country I have seen examples that I would want to give you, communities like **Bakindike** in Niumi because they protect their forest and I

would want the Members to understand that it's not only wood that you can get from the forest, we have what we called non-wood products that we can use for our local consumption but equally we can also use to monetize them.

This particular community **Bakindike** was able to purchase 2 motor bicycles to give to their patrols to be patrolling any noise at any time of the day and night they are patrolling the forest, I think this is an example worthy of a nation that the entire country should emulate *[Applause]*

Another community in CRR Toubakuta and Toubakoto they share the resource, another Member for Kiang West was asking about join forest management, this community share these resources and the way it works is like this, the management committee is drawn from the entire community including youths, women and men and these people took care of this forest resources and out of non-wood products, they were able to purchase power tiller to support the women in the farros. That is just economic, the social provision and the economic empowerment that these resources give to these communities is the...

So, this is why one Member express concerns that we are banning charcoal what are the alternatives?, We have alternative that we are currently looking and as I am speaking to you I have engaged the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) to look at the charcoal value change and the terms of references for the consultant has been drawn and the consultant has started work since last week not only that we are also in consultation with these women group. There is a women group in Brikama just to affirm what some of the Members just said here that we can use waste for our benefit, waste to the economic.

They use waste to produce charcoal but the method of production is what we need to improve on just 2 weeks ago this group approach me for a support to go round all the protected defecated areas to consult these women group and giving them vehicle and fuel to support that process and I was informed by the Executive Indirect that this is completed and I still have some of those sample in my office.

When it comes to biscuit Honourable Members have said it here, this country is a groundnut producing country and Biscuits comes from groundnut cells, the issue here

is most people because they are used to the culture that we need to work on to change from one use to the other because when you produce biscuits most of the people will say isn't efficient but is the most efficient one.

Looking at charcoal research has shown that when you burn charcoal especially the method employ in the Gambia here were they use the oven to produce charcoal, 60% of the energy in the wood what you are left with is 40%, mathematically, what that implies is this you may need small quantity of wood to cook a particular meal, you need maybe 1, 2 type of bags to cook the same quantity of food, what does that look like, it means that we are cutting more trees to cook the same quantity of meal So, these are the issues.

I want to respond to issues individually but that will take a long time, this is why I want to put it in this framework that we are part of the International Agreement that we have signed , under the...women we have already submitted our MBCs to the...secretariat that is the National...contribution that the Gambia is contributing to climate change but have we live in this global world Gambia cannot be alone and what happened in the world environmentally can affect the Gambia so, therefore, it requires global regional and bilateral efforts to embark to the environmental issues.

This is why we sign the Paris Agreement, we signed the (UNFCCC) the United Nation Framework Convention on Climate Change, this is why we signed the (UNCCD) United Convention to embark on Desertification of the (UNCDD) United Nation Convention on Diversity so, within this broader framework and also looking at the long term vision of this Government of having all year tourism around in this country, to create employment for the young people.

We must have integrated approach to teach state management which is including all stakeholders and also all the powers in the landscape management to ensure that every interest is taking care of from the management perspective.

This is why we have submitted to cabinet to consider and approve our proposal to go into PPP [Public Private Partnership] with Gambian's entrepreneurs with foreign entrepreneurs to see how best we can partner with them as a Government and

Ministry by gaining some of the parts that we have to attract to serve as resource of attraction.

If you look at our only tourism product which is the beach that we have right now coastal erosion is taking effect and is even threatening our national investments and private individuals investment though we have also taken some steps against those - under the coastal resilience project support by the global environment fertility and right now they are constructing a protection world for 2.5 Euro around the Senegambia area which will be completed by November this year.

Honourable Speaker, as a Ministry we also have just got \$21million project to support the natural resource base of this country and the objective of this project is to restore 10,000 hectares of forest land in this country. In the regions of LRR, CRR and URR and also to restore 3000,000 hectares of the greatest agricultural land in this country with this Bill it would have been difficult for us, it will really be difficult for us to achieve those objectives. With the current way of following deforestation.

We also have the action against this desertification project that is supported by the Great Green world of the African union initiative that was the head....

Fellow Ministers in other sub-region in other countries, embark on natural resource capital market and not only natural resources, will we have it we need to value it so that we know what we want as a country.

This is important because we need to know what we have to be able to manage and putting measures strategies to work on them for the benefit of our people. And the other thing that we also have is the....project and is about \$15million, this is also supported by them all these efforts is to support the resilience in accordance with the forest policy in accordance with the National Climate Policy which is out to promote resilience communities, how do we mitigate the effects and adopt the effect of climate change within our communities?

When we have spare room for them obviously production is low what other strategies are there for us to be able to attract resources to support those farming communities, now when you read this resilience.....I forget one important aspect of the EBA project which is to go natural resource entrepreneur in this country.

When we talk about sustainable development is utilizing the presence and not encouraging the future and I think lot of speakers alluded to that when Honourable Samusa said in those days in the 60s you dare not pass around areas in....forest because those people protected that areas for us to see it. What have we protected for our natural heritage for our children and grandchildren? This is important.

Now alternative I must come back to, we have solar power-stores that has been used, is being promoted by Gambian Women Finance Association, they have...in North Bank and CRR and this women is very healthy because we all have seen that the issue associated with use of charcoal.

- It could be carcinogenic, you may not know the materials that these people come to use in the burning of this which can contribute to the health of....but this particular one you can even sit in your sitting room and cook with solar lighting on, you can charge mobile with all those alternatives are available. But if we don't try we may not know and already we are trying.

We are trying the Briquette we have seen Honourable Sidia the member of the department of community development has produced here...but people refused to use them these are some of the things that we need to come back on and see how best we can promote within our communities because they are efficient in cooking but as well as is good to protect our remaining forest resources.

On the issues of licenses, I want to make this clarification, licenses and permits are different, permit is given for you to harvest a specified quantity of forest product within a given time that is it but a license is on annual bases this is the difference.

Recently, when I observed the threat of deforestation and massive movement of forest products by youth particularly;

Section 88g of the 1998 forestry Act

Give power to the Ministers to make regulation and am happy to make this regulation to centralize the issue of permit not license because issues of permit is in the hand of the chiefs the RFs Regional Forest Officers, the Governors, I have seen that is being admitted so, that answers some of the issues raised. What are we doing about this?

And recently with the support of the Gambia Police Intervention Unit, we have deployed Para Military Officers along the borders of CRR, LRR, URR to man those entry points to ensure that those woods that are coming do not come but when they come also they confiscate them .

Just as the officers are on the ground verifying the quantity of this number of wood that are in the various landing sides, somebody mentioned this, this is what we are doing right now and I can assure you for now we do not have any intention to lift that ban on this re-export trade of forest products because the danger is environmental problem do not know boundaries, if we oppose they import all the wood from Senegal and Guinea Bissau the geography of Guinea Bissau, Gambia and Senegal is one nation when there is drought in Guinea Bissau, it can affect Gambia, when there is drought in Gambia it can affect Senegal and Gambia and part of Guinea Bissau.

So, the strategy here is we have already entered into agreements with the Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Senegal to man this Natural Resources and Wildlife and half of the last week....the presidential...the 2 technical teams are exchanged notes and we have developed action plans and these action plans will be concluded by end of April, 2018.

To see how best we can support but also we need to develop joint programmes with our sister countries to ensure that we work on having this product protected.

The other thing which I don't like to talk about things that are not yet approved, there was an explanatory mission from the World Bank Senegal, Gambia and Guinea Bissau on the use of domestic fuel, domestic wood fuel in the 3 countries and already a proposal has already been developed and World Bank is looking at it so, there are lot of alternatives that we are working on and I believe that with the passing of this Bill we will be able to enforce....as Honourable Jatta said ,this is not new in this Bill it has been there and why I am drawing your attention to 1977 Declaration is that time the population of the Gambia is not exerting much pressure on the natural resources then if the Government is aware of the dangers, that when the 1977 Declaration is more relevant than 1977 when we have a population short and rapid organization.

53% of the population of this country is living in urban area so, we need to look at it and do some simply analysis and come to conclusion that we as a country, looking at ourselves we can go into a green economic and blue economic all these things are possibilities and are the basic 3 steps that we need to stand on to promote .

Honourable Speaker, I believe Members the concern raised by Honourable Members are already taken care of and we will make sure that the Bill when it is passed we explore other avenues with our partners to ensure that energy use in this country is available to our communities but let us not forget that there are livelihood that depends on these resources, this is why we are promoting the concept of community forest management and we have said it very clearly because our goal here is to give 2000,000 hectares of forestland back to the communities an right now we are at 36,746 hectares that is already given to the communities. Just few months ago I have handover 39 community's forest and I am just told that 11 of them are ready from the Ministry of Justice so, this is why they approached that we are taken to ensure that the communities take charge and let me also explain the benefits that the community drags from this.

When they sell their resources be it wood or non-wood resources, D15 goes to the national forest fund now the remaining balance you scale it up to 100%, 60% of that goes to community imitative developments projects and 40% will ensure that you plough it back to the forest as Honourable Jatta said when you cut a tree you plant a tree and I believe am going to adopt this policy Honourable Jatta for your information, wherever a tree is fallen a tree is planted.

With regard to animals and farms, I always said this when you are living in a community we must leave space for one another, if you encroach on....it says...to get it back. Right now to respond to that my Ministry has recently work on National Resource Policy which will be among the Agriculture policy we call it Agriculture and Natural Resource Policy and we have a working group that is working on this already, when the policy is validated by stakeholders and subsequently it will be approved by cabinet. but within that we have made provisions for animals to be able to grace during the rainy season because we all know if you don't provide them they will go into the farms and sometimes this can be catastrophic because I have seen were 2

communities, it was just terrible because this guy said the cattle has invalidated his farm and they have eaten and this one is saying no my cattle have not gone there it is another cattle and fight break up this was serious.

So, this Natural Resources is something that we all as Members of the National Assembly and I as said, this anywhere now I am handing over forest to the communities I must invite the National Assembly Members if he/she is available so, that we can all work together. Raise our concern to the communities and the importance of these resources to them as a means of supporting their livelihood and as I always say, we can always use this to liberate the economic development, local economic development and that would have wider repetition for our National Economy.

On that note Madam Speaker, bush fire was mentioned by several speakers particularly Janjanbureh and bush fire is mentioned in the Bill but I remember when I initially introduce this bill here Honourable Members raised some concerns that the penalties were too much yes! Some members raise this and somebody mentioned it in a truck load of wood cost D1000,000 and you ask me to pay D5000, 000, I will just drop the D5000, 000 for you and go with my D95, 000 but when we say 30, 000, 35,000 somebody say wow this is too much so, the person will contemplate whether you pay 35, 000 on all the cost that he has been caught, do it or go to prison for 12months I think all these are there in the penalty schedule.

So, bush fire have a strategy we have what we call the Regional Fire Management Plan...you can even refer it to the bill is already indicated, all the forest offices in URR, CRR particularly URR have gone very far to this Regional Fire Management Plan. Where communities are sensitized as what to do if there is fire outbreak? And what gadgets should be available to them to be able to control fire outbreak.

If you go to section 39, 40, 54 it talks about bush fire, one Honourable Member was saying the bill did not talk about bush fire but there are various areas and different types of forest that this talks about.

The Honourable Member for Foni Kansala did talk about putting up strong committees, this is already in place Honourable, before we handover any committee a forest there

must be a by-law that is designed by the communities themselves like in the case of Toubakuta and Toubakoto have to agree that this is what is going to govern us and when that is done, then and there, we help them to develop a work plan and this work plan somebody mentioned can come to community forest no! Even the committee themselves they have rules and regulations that guide the harvesting of this resources.

Anything outside that working period you cannot implement it, so, that is why it takes 2 weeks for them to seat over that plan to see all they need to include in terms of infrastructural improvement in terms of harvesting methods and the like.

The Member for Central Baddibu talked about data card I think that is a challenge for us. The 2013 data that you have seen is the latest data that is available from the Gambia Bureau of Statistic so, I think that is what it is and you said was rampant cutting of trees in NBR but not only NBR in Foni as well, to that I have constituted a task force outside of the forestry department because some of the forest according to the information, some of the forest officers are gladly implicated so, I have to setup task force that went round to all these areas and they are to submit their report perhaps towards the end of this week and I can assure you that the recommendation that task force will be implemented.

The Member for Busumbala talks about committee sensitization, already these communities are sensitized and the issue of mobility I was a bit surprised when you said Brikama office, do not have enough mobility yes! it maybe recently, just last year we have purchased some Motor bicycles for them to be able to patrol the area also in addition that each of the regional offices is equipped with a motor Vehicle at least each of them.

Honourable Member for Jarra Central, I think my previous response has already answered your queries. I think basically Madam Speaker, the issues were almost the same and I believe I have executed some of the salient issues raised with regard to this Bill, with that I beg to move. Thank you. *[Applause]*

HON. DEMBA SOWE [NIAMINA WEST]: In connection of that woman who was detected with 200 bags of charcoals and the Minister was aware.

HON. LAMIN DIBBA [MINISTER FOR LAND AND REGIONAL GOVERNMENT]:

I am aware of this and as you said we empower our forest officers to be able to do their work. In this kind of issues I do not intervene, I allow the process, the process is according to the Act when you confiscate something, a forest product you must obtain an order from either a governor or from a chief court order so that can allow you to sell that product and put it in the NFM and this is what I believe, I have believed that this is what has happened. This is my information.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you very much, the Honourable Minister responds very well.

HON. KEBBA JALLOW [JARRA CENTRAL]: Honourable Minister in connection to question number 2 that I asked, am not very much convinced with your answers. Because my question was the heap of rose timbers that are lying in....at Sarreh Omar...my constituency under what condition are they lying down there?

HON. LAMIN DIBBA [MINISTER FOR LAND AND REGIONAL GOVERNMENT]:

I believed the Honourable Member was not very much listening to what I was saying. I said all those timbers that are along those borders are confiscated and very soon we are arranging transportation to transport them to a central location where Government will take position on this, this is what I said.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you very much, I thank the Honourable Minister.

Honourable Member for Fonl Jarrol I cannot even remember having your intervention during the course of the debate and that was the time. Thank you.

I take the opportunity to thank everybody I think that was very good debate by Honourable Members and I told some of them that I was highly impressed by the level of understanding of the technical issues, even myself I don't understand but am really impressed by Honourable Members contributions. I think these are very useful and the Honourable Minister also thank you very much for your response so, now the Assembly resolved into the committee of the whole Assembly to consider the Bill.

[Committee of the whole House/ committee stage]

House resumes

The Forestry Bill 2018

THE SPEAKER: Thank you, may I call on the Honourable Minister to report to the whole House what transpires at the committee stage.

HON. LAMIN B. DIBBA [MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE CHANGE AND NATURAL RESOURCES]: Honourable Speaker, I report that the Bill entitled Forest Bill 2018 have gone through the committee of the whole House with amendments been read the third time and passed. I wish to thank Members for their frank discussions and opinion. Thank you

THE SPEAKER:

[Question proposed, Put and Agreed to]

[That the Bill entitled the Forest Bill 2018 having gone through the committee of the whole Assembly with amendments be read a third time and passed].

MOTION

"Be it RESOLVED" that this august Assembly do adjourn sine-die by the Honourable Minority Leader and Member for Niamina Dankunku.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you Honourable Members as we move closer to the end of the business for this ordinary session in the 2018 legislative year that is the Motion on the adjournment debate. I wish to draw Honourable Members attention to the relevant provisions of the Standing Orders No.9 for specifically and section 9. Which reads on the completion of business at the last sitting of each meeting, the Majority or the Minority Leader as the case may be and at this instance the Minority Leader because the Majority Leader is in disposed or in their absents any other member shall move a motion for the adjournment of the Assembly sine die.

Clause 9[6] reads, during the debate on the motion on the adjournment of the Assembly, member shall speech for more than 15 minutes except that the Speaker may at his/her discretion allow the mover of the motion and emphasis is mind, allow the mover of the motion extra time for his/her reply. So I appeal once more to Honourable Members to kindly take note of all the relevant provisions regarding the

debates on the adjournment and on that note I will call on the Honourable Minority Leader and Member for Niamina Dankunku to move the motion for this Assembly to adjourn sine die.

HON. SAMBA JALLOW [MINORITY LEADER & NIAMINA DANKUNKU]: Thank you Honourable Speaker for giving me the floor. I rise to move that "Be It Resolved that this august Assembly do stand adjourned sine die".

I would like to give a summary of what transpires in this august Assembly during its First Ordinary Session from the period 12 – 19th March 2018. During the course of our deliberations, we considered and adopted the following:

QUESTIONS

1. Record of Vote and Proceeding of the daily sitting of the National Assembly
2. Questions for Oral answers sessions with Honourable Ministers as it regard their various departments and portfolios. The Honourable Ministers came to answer oral questions posed by Honourable Members and the Honourable Ministers that came before this august Assembly were as follows:

- I. Hon. Minister for Finance and Economic Affairs
- II. Hon. Minister for Foreign Affairs, International Corporation & Gambians abroad

Madam Speaker Ma, the following undermentioned reports of the parliamentary delegation were considered and adopted.

REPORTS

- I. Report of the Gambia delegation to the 2017 Westminster Seminar on Parliamentary practice and Procedure from the period 13th-17th November 2017
[By Hon. Bakary Camara, Member for Kiang Central]

- II. Report of the Gambia delegation to the 2017 Westminster Workshop for Public Accounts Committee for the period 4th -6th December 2017 [By Hon. Alhagie Drammeh, Member for Jeshwang]
- III. The Report of the Gambia's delegation to the 13th Session of the Parliamentary Union of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference [OIC] for the period 13th - 17th January 2018 [By Hon. Ousman Sillah Member for Banjul North] was withdrawn until further notice.

MOTIONS

We witnessed the tabling, consideration and adoption of the following motions:

- I. Adoption to the Charter of the Organisation of the Islamic Corporation [By the Minister of Foreign Affairs, International Corporation and Gambians Abroad]
- II. Agreement between the Republic of the Gambia and the People's Republic of China on mutual visa exemption for holders of diplomatic service passport and passport for public Affairs [By Hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs, International Corporation and Gambians Abroad]
- III. Agreement on Economic and Technical Corporation in the form --- assistance between the Government of the Republic of China and the Government of the Republic of the Gambia [By Hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs, International Corporation and Gambians Abroad]
- IV. Agreement on Visa free between the Republic of the Gambia and Russian Federation for Holders of diplomatic and service passport [By Hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs, International Corporation and Gambians Abroad]

LOAN

- I. Concessional Loan Agreement between the government of the Gambia and the Export and Import Bank of China on the Gambia Broadband national network project [By Hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs].

- II. The Framework Agreement between the government of the people's Republic of China and Government of the Republic of the Gambia on provision of Concessional Loan by China to the Gambia [By Hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs on behalf of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, International Corporation and Gambians Abroad] was earlier rejected by the Assembly.

Madam Speaker, we considered and passed the following Bills during this session:

- I. Local Government Amendment Bill 2018 [By the Minister of Local Government]
- II. Forestry Bill 2018 [By the Minister of Environment, Climate change and Natural Resources]

Madam Speaker, the undermentioned Bills were referred to the Finance and Public Accounts Committee for consideration by the National Assembly.

- I. The Gambia Public Procurement Authority Amendment Bill 2018 [By the Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs]
- II. Income and Value Added Tax Amendment Bill 2018 [By the Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs]

Finally Madam Speaker, this august Assembly is here today to start the Motion on the Adjournment Debate for the Assembly to stand adjourn Sine-Die. With this few remarks I would therefore seize this opportunity to once again thank our electorates for the trust and confidence they in us for by electing us to this Assembly. We assure them that we shall live up to expectation by serving the supreme interest of the Gambian people without fear or favour, affection or ill-will.

Also I would like to thank you Madam Speaker for the way and manner in which you handle the affairs of this August Assembly and pray that the Almighty Allah grant you the strength and wisdom to continue to steer to the affairs of this Assembly.

Madam Speaker, the media also since we started the sitting of this Assembly, they are always here, what we discuss here is being discriminated by the media I also recommend them.

For my Honourable colleagues, I will thank them for their foresight and dedication to duty during the course of the sitting. I will also like to thank the Clerk and Staff of the National Assembly service for all the support and service rendered to the Honourable Members of this House.

Madam Speaker, before I finally resume my sit, I have some issues that I wanted to contribute during the adjournment debate which I would like to bring in before finally moving the motion.

Madam Speaker I have two issues that I would want to address as we have Justice Minister here and I believe this matter will be very important since he is the legal adviser to government.

The issue of national Identity Card is a nightmare to the Gambian citizens, citizens are moving in and out every day without carrying National ID, valid ID card while some did not even have and traveling with ID card is not only about identification along may God forbid if an accident occur when traveling and you don't have an ID card it will be very difficult to trace you out. We have also seen a lot of issues surrounding the issue of national ID card in this country we have seen it in newspapers whether it is real or not.

The issue of SEMLEX, is surrounding our national ID card in term of production, we have seen SEMLEX been put all over the internet so I don't know what is our position with our government and SEMLEX because if you ask others they will tell you SEMLEX was given this contract by the previous government and now if you revoke their contract there will be some implications this is why I said it will be very important for me to mention it here since the Justice Minister who is a legal adviser to the government is here he can tell us what is lingering with the production of ID Card.

Definitely this is not good for the Coalition Government when a new government came in place for one year you cannot issue national ID card or a document for your citizens,

for me I think the then government are not delivering to the expectation of the Gambian people because these are minor issues that government should be able to do for its citizens. It is one year now Gambians are lingering with the issue of ID Card.

Madam Speaker, the issue of groundnut season, I am made to understand government bought a lot of groundnut but until today there are a lot of groundnut with farmers which government did not buy. I don't know what has happened until today people are calling from the constituency level asking us "what is your government doing, we are still having our groundnut unsold". I don't know what the problem is, I would have love the Minister of Agriculture to be here this is why it is very important for Ministers to here during adjournment debate however busy they are let them be here because the Minister of Agriculture could definitely inform us why until today farmers are lingering with their groundnut.

What most of the farmers are doing now especially those close to Senegal, around the border will take their produce to the boarder and sell it to middlemen at a very low price hence government did not buy it from them and that is their only means of survival.

Madam Speaker since the energy Minister is here I would not do justice if I don't inform the minister of energy issues affecting the people of my constituency and Niamina Dankunku we also need electricity. I don't know how it happens but if you follow the high tension it is following the highway to Basse they don't want to go in. honourable Minister of Energy for your information we also need electricity by now either you connect us from Kaur or Soma but we need electricity.

On that note Madam Speaker I beg to move.

THE SPEAKER: Any seconder?

HON. OUSMAN TOURAY [SABACH SANJAL]: Madam Speaker, I so second the Motion

[Question proposed]

[That this August Assembly do Adjourn Sin-Die]

Any Honourable Member who wishes to take part in the debate may do so by rising his or her constituency tag.

HON. ALHAGIE MBOWE [UPPER SALOUM]: Thank you Madam Speaker for giving me the opportunity. I would like to rise a motion to adjourn the adjournment debate until tomorrow considering that the time----- end of recording but the Motion was seconded.

HON. SANKUNG JAMMEH: [FONI JARROL]: I so second, Madam Speaker

[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed to]

[That the House be adjourn until Tuesday 20th March, 2018]

ADJOURNMENT

[The House was adjourned to Tuesday 20th March, 2018]