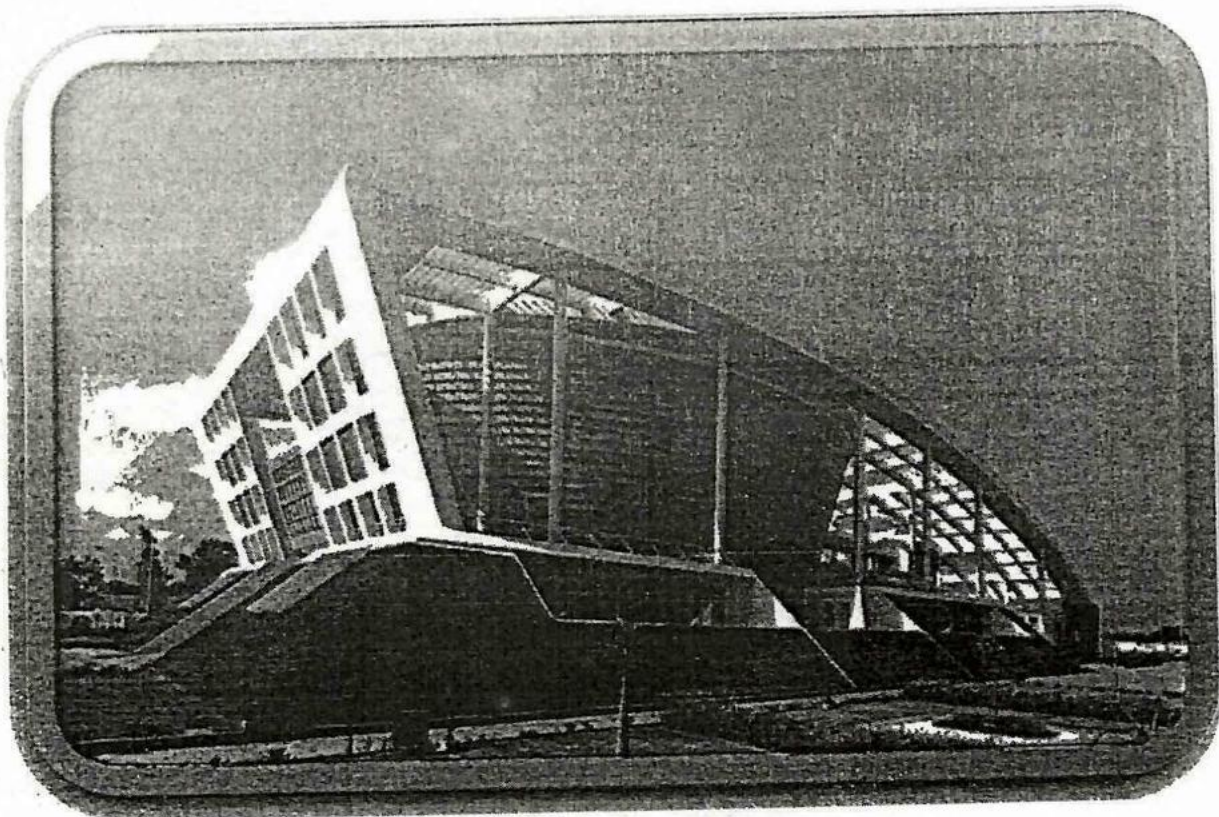




**National Assembly, New Assembly Building, Reverend Pye Lane,
Banjul, The Gambia**

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

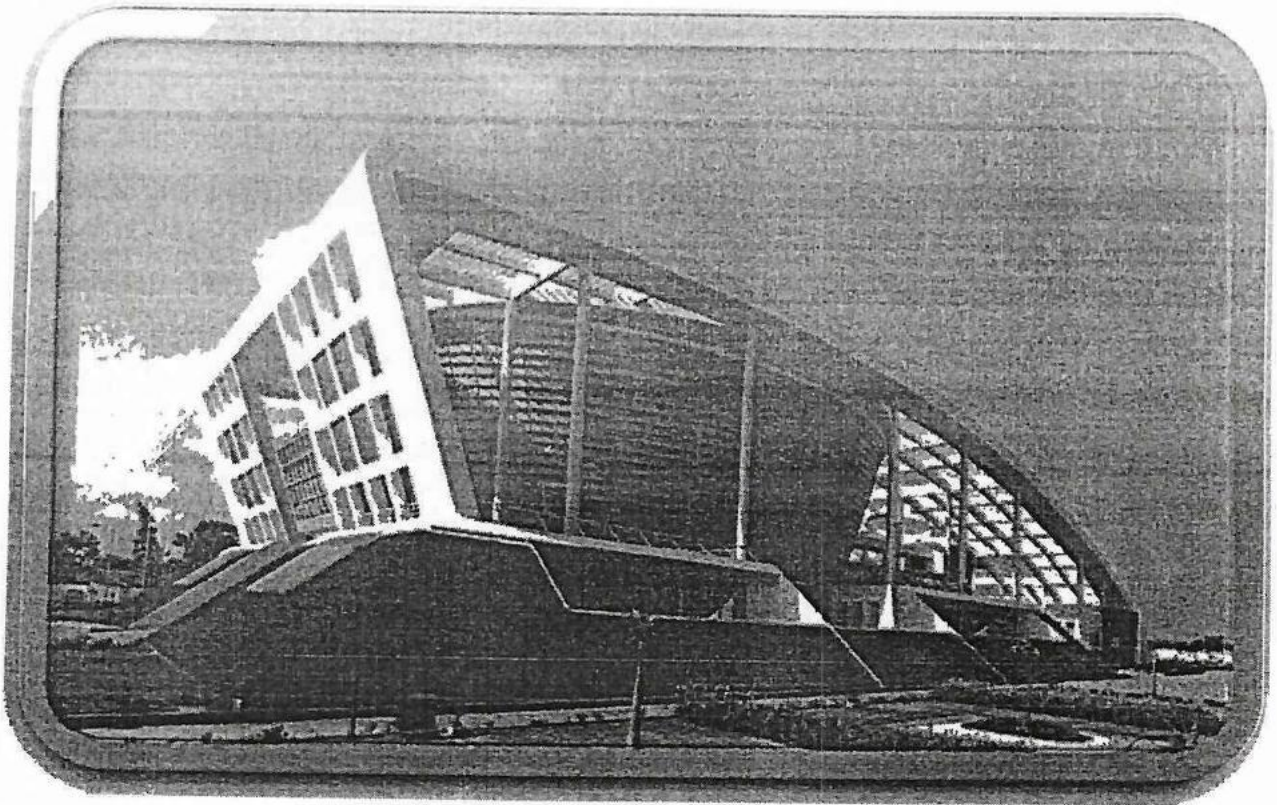
[HANSARD]

OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT

SIXTH SESSION— FIRST ORDINARY SESSION

TUESDAY 20th MARCH, 2018

SESSION – 2018



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

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

[HANSARD]

OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT

VOLUME: I

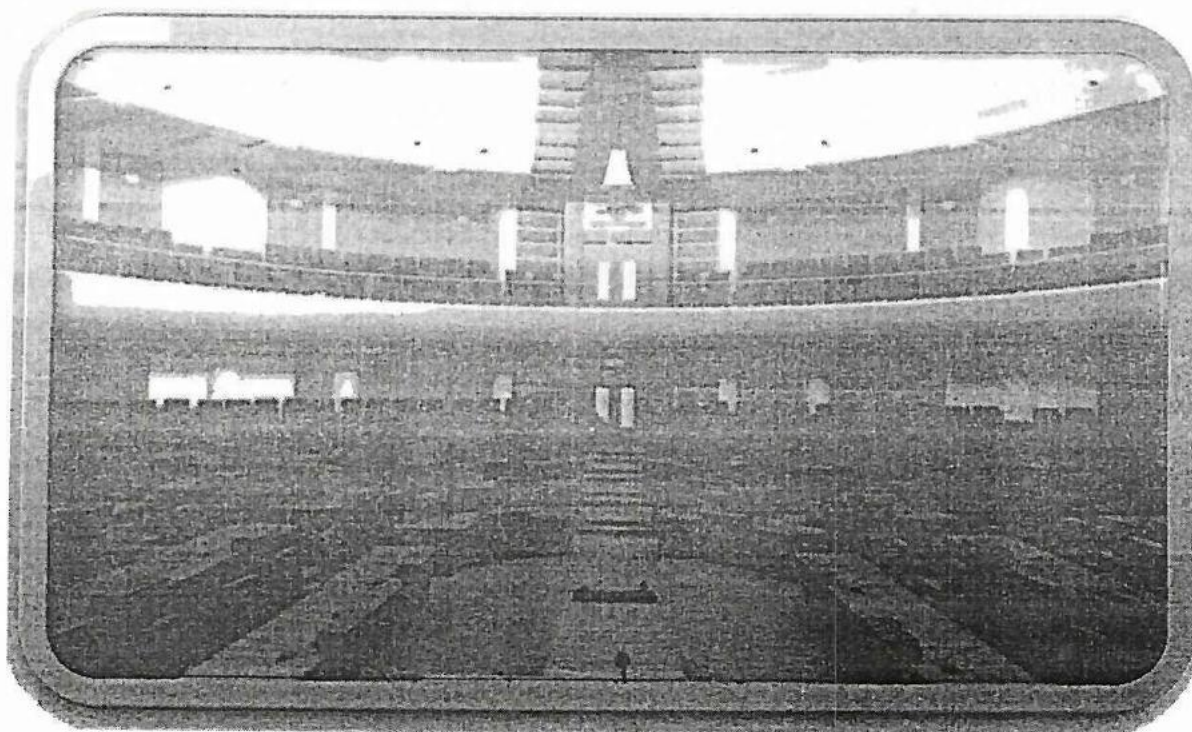
NUMBER: 6

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

Proceedings of the Sitting of the House for Tuesday 20th March, 2018

Contents

- 1. Prayers**
- 2. Record of Votes and Proceedings for the Parliament Sitzings of Monday 19th March, 2018.**
- 3. Continuation of motion on the adjournment Debate**



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 ASSEMBLY OF THE SECOND REPUBLIC

TUESDAY 20TH MARCH, 2018

1. PRAYERS:

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

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

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

The House was called to Order

2. Record of Votes and Proceedings for the National Assembly Sitting of Monday 19th March, 2018

HON. ALHAJI SANKUNG JAMMEH [FONI JARROL]: I move that the Record of Votes and Proceedings for the National Assembly Sitting of Monday 19th March, 2018 be considered and adopted.

THE SPEAKER: Any seconder?

HON. MUSA AMUL NYASSI [FONI KANSALA]: I so second, Honourable Speaker.

THE SPEAKER:

[Question proposed]

Any issues, observation or corrections from Honourable Members?

HON. SIDIA S. JATTA [WULI WEST]: Page [1] 4. Motion, be it resolved that this august Assembly "stand" adjourned.

HON. FATOU K. JAWARA [TALLINDING KUNJANG]:...on page [1] where you have the following National Assembly Members present: Hon. Kebba K. Barrow, the Majority Leader was not around and his name was captured.

HON. ALHAJI SANKUNG JAMMEH [FONI JARROL]: page [2] No. 32, Hon. Muhammed Magassy's name was captured and he was not with us yesterday.

HON. SIDIA S. JATTA [WULI WEST]: Hon. Halifa Sallah has travelled and his name is also captured.

HON. ALHAGI S.B SILLAH [NIANI]: on page [3] No. 53 Hon. Dembo Camara was also absent with apologies.

HON. YAYA GASSAMA [KIANG EAST]: on page [5] point of order Hon. Samba Jallow Minority leader and Member for Niamina Dankunku raised a point of order saying that as NAMs "they enact laws"

HON. SIDIA S. JATTA [WULI WEST]: At the end of the sentence " "parse".

HON. SUWAIBOU TOURAY [WULI EAST]: In the first paragraph were it says "the Minority Leader raised a point of order". The third sentence, the Honourable member on his feet continued his "intervention".

HON. SIDIA S. JATTA [WULI WEST]: Page [6] last paragraph, at this point, the Assembly dissolved into the committee of the whole House to consider the Bill part by part.

[Question proposed, put and agreed to]

[The Records of Votes and Proceedings for the National Assembly Sitting of Monday 19th March, 2018 adopted as amended]

3. MOTION:

I. Continuation of Motion on the Adjournment Debate

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, we are continuing from where we stopped yesterday and actually I did invite interventions on the debate and I would begin from where we stop yesterday and Honourable member for Upper Saloum is on top of the list today.

HON. ALHAGIE MBOW [UPPER SALOUM]: Thank you Madam Speaker for giving me the floor to add my voice on this adjournment debate. I also want to thank Honourable Ministers present today especially the Minister for energy because most of the issues are on the energy sector. As I mentioned here couple of times that there are certain areas in this country like Upper Saloum and Nianija that have not benefitted from electricity for more than 22 years. *[Inaudible]*

What happen if you want to learn a trade in Carpentry, Tailoring or Welding, what do you do? You have to go to areas that have electricity and this would create rural urban migration. Again we need to sort this thing out as soon as possible.

I urge the Honourable Minister and NAWEC that I do not mind going with NAWEC for them to see with their own eyes the plight of our people in Upper Saloum and Nianija. There is nothing absolutely.

We are part of Gambia and we are Gambians. We all pay tax and the first Government was biased on us and the second Government did the same. So am urging the current Government to actually consider us as part of the Gambia. I am urging the Honourable Minister that, since you are here to help us because we are all paying our taxes and we are all Gambians. I do not mind going there with you to see for yourself because the lack of electricity in Upper Saloum and Nianija is really affecting the younger generation.

My second intervention is the roads to the rice fields. I mentioned this sometime ago and I am going to keep monitoring it until something is done about it. We all agree that CRR can feed this country. The fundamental issues which we continue to experience are the road networks from the villages to the rice fields. Our people are requesting for the roads to rice fields to be fixed and they will produce food for the Gambian people. These roads are expensive to construct and they cannot do it because they are poor but if we are able to fix those roads to the rice field, we can produce enough rice to feed ourselves and others.

Madam Speaker, the last area I would like to touch on is the need to update some of the laws in this country. The laws that we have here are outdated and the world has changed and we must change our laws to meet the current realities of life. For example, if I could point to the Central Bank of the Gambia, 2005. The Gambia has signed those treaties yet still our *[inaudible]*.

As a new government, I am urging the Minister in collaboration with the Minister for Finance and the National Assembly to see how best we can wrap up this acts because of the laws in there are really outdated and questionable. The essence of having board of directors in any institution is to help guide that institution to move forward, but if you are going to put board of directors without qualification or experience, I am not sure whether that institution will move forward very quickly. *[Inaudible]*

HON. SIDIA S. JATTA [WULI WEST]: Thank you very much. For Minister to come to the National Assembly is not a question of volunteering it is an obligation. I would want to make reference to the constitution because it is clearly stated. Why is

it necessary? Because it provides opportunities for ministers, cabinet and the legislature to put their heads together with a view to strengthening policies instead of to "strengthen" policies. This is the fundamental reason why Ministers are obliged to come to parliament particularly when the House is on adjournment debate.

[Inaudible]

Questions were posed and they were not answered. I posed five questions just before the retreat in Tendaba and only one question was answered up till now the others are not answered. Questions are asked not because we want to ask questions but we feel that when they are answered, they will help to scale certain matters but people do not take this seriously and they think that parliament is not important in anyway.

Madam Speaker, when decisions are made adequately by institutions, Ministries and cabinet, they are not just for the sake of making decisions. If decisions are not implemented is as good as not making them at all.

People are still asking the question when will the price of rice be reduce? This is a cause for concern and there are other matters related to that budget which was enacted here and are still in our breadths. These are very serious issues which we should take up very seriously. We fought to bring about change because we want to go forward. We fought to bring about change not because we want freedom but also we want prosperity. We should always bear that in mind. On the 7th of this month, when I was at the airport going to South Africa, a farmer phoned me and said Honourable, our groundnuts are still not purchased. I know all Honourable members know that is the fact but at the beginning it was reported that there was enough money to purchase nuts and I think there is better groundnut there now than the ones that have been bought. Why? And we all know that groundnut is one of the economic measures of this country. It is our main cash crop but for me is not being fulfilling this function. How do we expect to move this country forward without promoting Agriculture? And before the season, farmers were promised that they are going to be supplied fertilizers, at least fertilizers would be available for them to buy even though it was expensive, but the fertilizer that was sold to farmers was the

stock which was imported the year before. Is like the stock that was imported before this current season and the one imported during the past rainy season has not arrived [maybe it has arrived now] is the same stock that we are going to sell to farmers. It is not helpful; you cannot promote Agriculture and increase productivity in this country without increase in agricultural product.

When we fought for our independence, the idea was to assume responsibility of this state. We do not want any other person to control our rights anymore. We want to assume that responsibility and we can only do that if we do know what is required to make our existence. Any Gambian who wants to alleviate poverty in this country should take into account that poverty can never be eradicated in this country if we are not promoting Agriculture and Agricultural promotion cannot take place unless it is necessarily processed.

We produced, processed and determine the price that we sell and the rest can be exported. We have been talking about these matters and yet nothing is done about it.

After so many years, (50 years) a rich country and an agriculturally rich in that prospect cannot have food to eat. We rely solely on importation and 35 percent of what we eat are imported. Everything that we purchased is imported and we call ourselves an independent nation. This is a joke; it is a huge joke. This new dispensation is committed to putting an end to that. That must be our commitment and what we promised the people we must see to it that it is implemented, fulfilled and we can do it. People in this country are tired, they have been toiling and toiling. We must commit ourselves to end that. That is why we sacrificed to put an end to 22 years of dictatorship and mismanagement in this Republic.

This issue of deportees or returnees, we have already collected some money to help those who have been deported. Each time we asked a question there is always an answer and there are more people who have been deported. They are among us in this society, they are citizens of this Republic, they have the right to survive and live in dignity in this country. So, I think this issue should be addressed with urgency and more seriousness. If there is money that must be used to address the plight of those

who have been deported. If you do not do that well, those who are helping are doing it to help solve problems, but if the problem still persists and those monies are still with us in this country, then there is a problem. I made a suggestion to the Foreign Minister when he was here and I think that is very good. Because when they are deporting Gambians from outside, there should be a linkage. The Government of this country should be informed about the deportees and from where, so that they can do ground work to prepare for their reception and rehabilitation. But if people are just sent like that without giving them a notice, it will not be helpful. *[Inaudible]* I think Madam Speaker, we should address this issue more seriously because they are kind of rampant in our country.

In conclusion, I think the Executive should take this Assembly seriously because we are not here just for talking sake, for us to be talking among ourselves is not the essence of this Assembly. I have done that for 15 years and I am also again doing the same thing.

Notices have gone thousand times from the Speaker to the Executive, and there was some improvement at the beginning. At one time, we had ten Ministers at the same time and I am very grateful to the Minister for Justice who is always here and I hope he will continue to come. A time would come if I have a question to ask, I will say something relating to your ministry. We raised fundamental issues regarding Agriculture and where is the Minister for Agriculture? I have raised issues on foreign matters and where is the Foreign Minister? They sent Permanent Secretaries who have no place here because they cannot talk. Ministers should be here because they can respond to what we say. What we say is essential that they are here. This is where we build the Gambia, this is where we get what we think and strategically plan for the development of this country. That must be bound by the executive, they cannot do anything without us nor can we do anything without them. Together we make this country move to where we want to. Thank you.

HON. SALIFU JAWO [JOKADU]: Thank you very much Madam Speaker. Let me join my colleagues in this adjournment debate. It would have been better if Ministers

are here because all the things that we are saying here relates to their individual ministries.

As the Honourable Member for Upper Saloum said regarding electricity, it is 52 years and there is no single person in Jokadu that benefitted from electricity. Though the last regime started erecting poles which I mentioned in the last adjournment debate but still now nothing is being done. We are thinking that very soon we will be able to see lights but up to now it is just in vain. So I am urging the Minister for Energy to look into that because poles have been erected in Kuntaya, Kerr-Jarga, Munyagen Darsilami but nothing happened since then and I want the Minister to take steps and do something on that issue.

The Minister for Agriculture should have been here because Agriculture is the back bone of this country and I said it here in the last adjournment debate that this country can only be built if we all involve ourselves in Agriculture. The last rainy season, I can say there was a total failure. In North Bank people do farming but this year the crops do not do well. The yield of groundnut, coos, millet etc were all very poor. I think the Minister should try right now to provide some ways and means in order to be able to help the farmers. In helping them they need seeds [nuts] and fertilizer to store it for themselves. I think we should not wait until the rainy season starts when we began to find ways and means of getting this input. These inputs should be in this country and farmers should lay hands on them in the mid of the season so that they will know what to do. Believe me, farmers had suffered a lot this year. They don't have good yields and the little they have even to sell that to have revenue to help their family was a problem.

It is said that a "beggar does not have a choice". If you don't have anything in your coffers and you have been keeping your groundnut and a retailer comes any amount that is being offered, you will give it away. When you go to the cooperative seccos to weigh groundnut, it will be weighed and you go empty hand for months before you will be paid. So I think they are giving this groundnut to the dealers because they do not have any choice and that need to stop because this farmers are the one who elected us into office. So we have to give them due respect and to help them.

We will never alleviate poverty in this country if we do not put our hands in the Agriculture Sector.

The women normally embark on gardening but it is disheartening to see them paying local people to build local fences and dig wells for them and those wells will last for only one season; when the rain comes everything is destroyed. I think this women should be considered so that they can have permanent fences and enough water supply and gardening inputs so that they will be able to aid themselves. I know Government cannot do it all but the essential services that the people need I think Government need to do something on that. For Jokadu, we are just being left dead like that. The first Republic did not do anything, the second Republic the same and we are expecting this third republic to do something.

The Honourable Minister for Works, there are feeder roads in Jokadu that were built for more than three decades and those roads are completely destroyed and cannot be accessed by vehicles especially during the rainy season. We want the Minister to look for ways and means to help the people of Jokadu. Lights are in the northern part of the main highway from Barra to Kerewan. I can say 80% of the villages lie at the northern part at the interior which is very far from the highway. Those people find it difficult to come in and out of their communities especially villages like Kerr Alhagie Malick, kerr Ali Awell, Kissima joaw, Bintanding Toro, kerr Wali, they are extremely far.

Again, we have only one health centre and people find it very difficult to travel all the way from that interior to the highway. The last time, I said it here and the Minister was trying to defend telling me about policies which I think were made by us. If you made any policy and realise that it does not favour people why not you throw that policy deep into the sea. We do not need it because all Gambians are equal no matter where you come from or where you find yourself. I think what the urban area is feeling or benefitting the remote places should also be considered and have the same priority Places like Karantaba, Darsilami and Tambana their women engaged in rice cultivation [faros] but the sea water has got into the rice fields because they do not have barriers. All these things should be considered because

after suffering and sweating on your rice field and the salt water destroy everything and you are left with empty hand at the end of the rainy season. I think that is not good for those people. We need to help them uplift their living conditions because they are trying and need support.

Youth also need to be motivated since we are talking about the back way returnees and people from Europe deported is disheartening. Those people leave this country because they do not have any place to engage themselves in this country. They hassled and embarked on terrible journey to somewhere else and just overnight they are parked and sent over here. Government needs to take this very seriously to help these youths and open as many skill centres as possible as stated by the Honourable Member for Upper Saloum. Skill centres go with electricity and all the youths that come from the rural areas to the urban area can go back to their areas to learn skills. Thank you Madam Speaker.

HON. MUHAMMED NDOW [BANJUL CENTRAL]: The most important thing this Government should put into consideration is national security. Nowadays, arm robbery and murder is the order of the day. Stores and shops are robbed, people are attacked and some of them are murdered and others are seriously harmed. People don't have the freedom anymore to go to occasions during the night or to attend other events due to robbery. It is the responsibility of government to protect the rights and properties of its citizens but the effective security is only provided to the President, Vice President, Ministers, the Speaker of the National Assembly and other few which is very unfair to the Gambian citizens. If there is no effective security, the crime rate will be high and this will affect our economy because foreign investors will fear to invest in The Gambia. Tourism activities will be minimal and we all know that Tourism form almost 20 percent of our GDP. Tens of thousands of people benefit directly from tourism because it creates employment and generate revenue and foreign exchange for this Government annually. Therefore, security should be the first issue that this Government should consider.

Coming to my constituency, it should be given the first priority in terms of development because it is the heart of the capital city of The Gambia. It is where the

President lives; the resident of the President is in Banjul Central and there is no development in that area. I was complimenting this government during the last adjournment saying that they have started constructing roads in Banjul but it's just a start. I do not know the problem of government in disbursing funds for this project and the rainy season is fast approaching. It is only Primate Street that they have started constructing and it is almost coming to an end but the others nothing.

The drainage sewage are all poor and Banjulians do not take things for granted. If we do not see any meaningful development in Banjul, I am very sure next election no Banjulian will vote for any party that is part of this coalition. We voted for a change so I am appealing to this Government to consider Banjul because it is the capital city of The Gambia and it belongs to all Gambians not only Banjulians. With this intervention I beg to take my seat. Thank you.

HON. FATOUMATTA NJAI [BANJUL SOUTH]: Thank you very much Madam Speaker. I do not have much in terms of intervention but with your permission, I have a letter that I received by virtue of my sitting at the authority of this august body. If you can give me the permission, I want to share this letter with the Honourable members because it entails issues of National Interest as it relates to our ID cards, passports and voters cards. With your permission I wish to read this letter to the august Assembly.

THE SPEAKER: It is a private document?

HON. FATOUMATTA NJAI [BANJUL SOUTH]: It is a letter to Members of the Authority.

THE SPEAKER: I think the proper way is for the authority to deal with that and I think we have received a copy if my memory serves me right. I saw it in the mail folder yesterday. So it will be dealt with administratively. Thank you.

HON. FATOUMATTA NJAI [BANJUL SOUTH]: Thank you Madam Speaker but I still wish to share this with my Honourable colleagues of the Assembly. We all know that Gambia is a small country with less than two million people. If a country as small as The Gambia risked giving official documents namely ID cards, passports

and most importantly voters cards that allow us to elect our leaders is given to a foreigner to produce for us is a cause for concern. I am scared and I know my fellow Gambians will be scared too. We all have seen that the world is at risk and there is war everywhere and all we have is our nationality. If we should give that to foreigners it is indeed a cause for concern.

Madam Speaker, I know I am not allowed to read this letter but I will take few from it. We all know about SEMLEX and PRISTINE and personally, I can take you to the GPPA Act, a provision which states that if we had two contractors, preference should be given to a local contractor. Those voters' cards made it possible for us to secure today and remove a dictator in this country. Do you think we should give that privilege to a foreigner? What happen if they compromise with our ethics? They will just pack their suitcases and go and leave us in turmoil. We all have seen on that December what had happened. There was an impasse in this country and it was Gambians that stayed. We have seen British people sent aircraft to airlift their citizens. We do not have anywhere to go, we only have this dear nation and we must guard this country jealously. How can we guard it? Is not the soil but our passport, ID cards and voters' card? We carry them in our wallets but for me personally, I do not carry my voters' card because it is my most valued document so I keep it safe at home. So I would not entrust that to a foreigner and I would plead with my colleagues to make sure that we do not entrust that to foreigners.

Madam Speaker, the Honourable Minister sometime back came up with a press release at some point, unfortunately I am not allowed to read those points because they are in this letter. The Honourable Minister will clarify to us because we all know a restricted bid was called and he gave two companies PRESTINE and SEMLEX. Fortunately, PRESTINE submitted and SAMLEX did not submit. So I would want the Honourable Minister to justify to this august Assembly why a restricted bid was awarded to somebody who did not submit its bid.

This august Assembly sat here some time ago and went through the Constitution and there is no such thing as the Office of the First Lady. I would always emphasise on that. Why do we have the office of the First lady? We have all seen recently the

first lady's travel to the United Nations and was accompanied by a permanent secretary. If we do not have that in our Constitution how are we paying for the office of the first lady? It is unconstitutional and wrong.

I would also touch on the Office of the President. Recently we have seen so many things happening. Who am I to say that the President should not open a Foundation; but how is the President going to fund a Foundation. He is entrusted with the nation and everything that is being done in that Foundation should be done under his Office as the President. What worries me the most is when he states that His Excellency the President will be contributing financially. I am worried because we have all seen 22 years of dictatorship how one person took control of our finances as well as the Central Bank. We entrusted the president to take care of the country with our guidance and the guidance of the Executive.

It is the prerogative of His Excellency the President to appoint and dismiss ministers and that worries me too. We have all seen why people were like slaves under the previous President and why that was because he has the prerogative of appointing and dismissing. If my job is my sold bread I would guard it jealously and be a praise singer of His Excellency.

I appeal to this august body to make sure that appointments are subjected to approval by the Assembly. That way any cabinet Minister before appointment must come and answer and if they are not competent and efficient we would throw it back. We have seen Madam Speaker, this is a small country and we all know each other and what everybody has. I am not pointing at anybody but all I want is an efficient and effective machinery of government. We said we are in transition but we have not seen any changes? I have not, to be honest, it is business as usual. We just step on an old shoes and start working the work which is wrong. We owe it to those one million people who voted us into office to make sure that we give them good schools. I am going to take this personally. I have a sick child and I give her the best medical attention. Why is it because she is my child but can I afford to give every child in Banjul the best, no I cannot. So all I can do is to make sure that this country give them the best and how? By giving them the best schools and hospitals.

Do we have that? No, not yet and what is stopping us. You see people travelling and the Central Bank have just increased their per diem from two hundred and fifty pounds to six hundred pounds. Is that acceptable?, I would say no and I will make sure that they tell us why. Why should we give them that much as per-diem while they are being paid salary. I would make sure that they tell us why. Why not give them an incentive for them to retire upon return.

This is a small country and we are very poor when we compare ourselves to other countries. I have seen from experiences during my election monitoring in Sierra Leone. What I have learnt is that they needed 55 percent of the votes to assume Office. I call myself a melting pot, my mother is half Mandinka, my husband is a Sarahulli and I am a fula so we cannot say that there is one tribe. We need to make sure that we change our Constitution to make sure that one tribe will not control this country. We are all related with one blood and so it should be.

I appeal to my colleagues to give us at least a proportion for no absolute Majority shall rule in this country. No one tribe must take the lead...-[*intervention*]

HON. MAJANKO SAMUSA [NOMINATED]: Madam Speaker, the Member for Banjul South should say which tribe is controlling the whole country?. Let her be specific on what she is saying.

THE SPEAKER: Every member has the right, so Honourable you can continue.

HON. FATOUMATTA NJAI [BANJUL SOUTH]: So that is my intervention for us to have a very strong Executive that we will be relying on. With all due respect, I think we should start thinking of that. It is an international best practice and most countries practice it. I think it will just show our sense of strong democratic principle if we follow it. Thank you very much.

HON. ALHAJIE SANKUNG JAMMEH [FONI JARRROL]: I am going to start with a saying that I have heard which is "

a new wine in an old bottle". If the new wine is trying to blame the old bottle then what kind of a new wine are you. You are talking of a dictatorship and you are open

to criticism but to me a dictator is someone who has objective plans for a country. At least we have done something for this country despite whatever has happened and is in record. You know, we have to be very careful and mindful of our words. You have come to make a change but still if some of you are saying that change is not taking place then what type of a government are you? You have come for a change so let us forge ahead to see that change happened to the interest of the whole nation.

I know some of us here will not cry of electricity as others. No government can do it alone, but you have to do a little and whosoever comes will also do his quota. This is the world but you cannot make it all in one day. As the saying goes "Rome was not built in a day". So my fellow colleagues, in the second Republic at least with all your criticism, we have done what is expected of us. We have seen a government before the second Republic for 30 good years they were unable to build good roads. The only good road they built was from Brikama to Soma. North Bank you are lucky you wake up very early in the morning without getting late to work, why? Is because of the good road. The road that the former government built for your people. So anyway we are happy and blessed with the little time Allah has given us. There are a lot more that we have done during our 22 years in power. In fact, a colleagues also spoke of the approach of Ramadan. You all know that in the past years during Ramadan everybody was happy. Why? Because the former President gives out sugar to people and they are very happy about it. Yes we may be afraid because this is not happening now. May we do another alternative to help you get those things that you need.

Thank God the Attorney General and Minister for Justice is here. I have two issues and one of them is, I stood here and raised a question about the death of one Harona Jatta*and the Minister for Justice said his Ministry will look into the case to find out so that justice can prevail but still I have not heard anything concerning that. This Harona Jatta has relatives who are very concerned of his death and we have always been asking what is the government doing about it? You have taken oath that you will stand by the Gambians to see to it that justice prevail and today

you are the justice Minister so whatever happens to any person here you are the one who has to stand for that individual to see to it that justice prevailed.

The second issue is, although it is very unfortunate that the right person who should responds to this issue is not around that is the Honourable Minister for Agriculture but nonetheless you are the Minister for Justice whatever happened round the country your office must be informed. So I would want to know if your office was informed about this issue of seizing tractors from farmers. Tractors are parked in police stations and why are they taken from the owners is not stated. We all know they were given to farmers in the rural areas. So I would be very happy if you know something about it. "What goes around comes around", we are given pickups and without knowing how they are given to us. So come another change of government are these pickups going to be seized from us. So if this is the case then news will go round so this has to be cleared. Thank you.

HON. KEBBA JALLOW [JARRA CENTRAL]: I want to give my input to this adjournment debate. I come from Jarra Central in Kabada Region, a Region which has been left out for three decades with no meaningful water facility, electricity and hospital. Jarra Central, Kabada Region has suffered for far too long. Thirty three years of PPP, no road was constructed, APRC government came there was also nothing in terms of development and now comes the new Government that we all have been yearning for. At least, the Minister for Energy should do something for us in terms of electricity. There are poles lying down there in Buiba for almost two years. A survey was done in the neighbouring villages but still now those poles are lying down there. We have been anticipating over and over and therefore, am appealing to the Minister for Energy to do something for us so that we can also benefit from the Barrow government. Thank you very much.

HON. DEMBA SOWE [NIAMINA WEST]: Thank you very much Madam Speaker. Once again, I will say that I am a happy man. First of all, I will say thanks to Gambians and the Government. This is a government that combines all sectors of the Gambian people and it is not consisting of only one tribe but a government that comprises several parties and different ethnic groups. In The Gambia we are one, I

either know you or you know my father or my relative. Let us not try to do something that will create problem in this country because we belong to one family. The Gambia is a very small country, so let us work in a manner that will help preserve peace and prevent trouble in the country. There is no ethnic group in The Gambia that can dominate a government here. If you are a Mandinka you marry a Fula or a Jola woman, if you are a Fula you marry a Sarahuli woman so how can you say one tribe is trying to dominate. No that will not happen, anybody who tries it will fail. The Government of Barrow is just one year and I am an opposition in this House but when I am in the chamber I represent the Gambian people. Anything that is good in the Constitution and the welfare of the people I am in support of it but anything that is not in favour of my people I am against it. The Coalition Government including GDC all fought very hard to destroy Jammeh. Why? Because he was not going in the right direction. He was here for 22 years but he did something. He constructed roads and hospitals and many things but he also did negative things in this country. I can remember how people were tied at 2.00am at night and taken away from their families without people knowing where they are. So there is positive and negative but the positive is very small so if our people are disappearing even if you bring diamond for us we will not need it. All we need is our people to live in peace and work for their survival. Nobody will say Adama Barrow is a bad man and if you said so then you don't know what you are saying and nobody will support you. I did not vote for him but I will not say that he is a bad man because since he came to power I am living in peace. I don't get scared in my house and I walk out till 2.00am and nobody will ask me a question. Let us not try to bring tribalism in this country it will never work.

Also, credit buying on groundnuts, I am not paid for my groundnut after selling it on credit. In Dalaba Secco there was over 65 tons of groundnut still pending which is over one million dalasi. I don't know when we shall be paid and it happened some time ago and those people are still not being paid. You collected my groundnut and sell it yet you cannot pay me. The Minister for Agriculture has said here that everything is intact, there will be no credit buying and that is what we are seeing now because we are not paid. At least if you paid us fifteen thousand that will help

us but still we have not seen our money. We give them till next month if they don't pay us we will summon them.

I am also appealing to Gambians that Local Government Election is just at the corner, let us maintain peace as it is the only thing that can help us. We go by the IEC laws and the constitution. If you are defeated you must accept and fight for the seat in the next election but let us not create problems because I am hearing lot of noise in town. I am urging all National Assembly Members to sensitise their electorates about the essence of Local Government Election. Politics is not to insult anybody and let us try not to jeopardise the peace and tranquillity of this country.

The other issue is about the drivers who knock down our animals and proceed without even caring whether the animal is death or not. We cannot compare ourselves with animals. I can remember some time ago a driver knocked eleven sheep and kill all of them and try to escape. Human beings can see a car coming and stand but animals cannot do that. There is a law that said, if your car hit an animal and get damaged the animal owner must pay which is very crazy. I think the Minister for Justice should do something about that.

Tractors were issued to Gambian farmers but were not issued to a single person to utilize it. They were issued to women groups, Seyfalo and other people to benefit certain areas but it was not correctly directed. They took all and put it in their pocket and in fact I am calling on more to be confiscated because there are still some that are left with others. If you are to confiscate please confiscate all without sparing anybody.

The Honourable Minister for Energy is here, I have stated here several times that electricity came up to Pakaliba and jump to Niamina West, Niamina Dankunku and to Niamina East. We do not have electricity as well as good roads, hospital and cannot have access to our rice fields. So we are appealing to the Government to come to our aid and to help us access our rice fields. We are appealing to Government to construct the road that link Choya and Kulaya. The former regime started construction but later it was abandoned and we are pleased appealing to The Gambia Public Transport Cooperation to consider us. Madam Speaker, on that note I

wish to say a big thank you to your Office and to the Office of the Clerk for the wonderful job you are doing. You are a woman but definitely an iron woman for the way and manner you are managing this Assembly. I am saying a big thank you without seeing anybody's eyes, but I don't care.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you and you welcome

HON. OUSMAN SILLAH [BANJUL NORTH]: I want to start with energy since the Minister for Energy is present here because there is concern all over regarding power outages which is affecting everywhere. It looks like the situation with electricity is from bad to worse affecting livelihoods. Operators in the informal sector are really being put out of work due to lack of consistent electricity supply. The situation is really getting worse and in fact as noted by the Member for Wuli West that we have a back log of questions for Ministers including a question. I request for an oral answer from the Minister for Energy regarding NAWEC. This concerns the loans they have contracted and any contingency, plan that they have for the people to know the problem that NAWEC is contending with and what is being done to address them. Of course, it is still on the pipeline because time does not permit us but we really want this question if the Honourable Speaker and the National Assembly services can help us so that we will be getting timely responses.

Honourable Minister, something needs to be done with this electricity problem. A country cannot develop without energy, the Government has a policy of enticing investors to come up with industries but industries cannot perform without consistent energy supply and it is cheaper if energies provided by the national grid. So it is a real disincentives for investors. My concern also is the operators in the informal sector like the tailors and welders it is really difficult for them nowadays and something has to be done.

On the issue of deportees, the Minister for Foreign Affairs was here before us during the session and that issues were raised regarding deportees and in fact he stated the position of Government regarding how we are supposed to handle young people who are being deported and the member for Serrekunda raised the issues of concealing. I believe that the Government needs to establish a taskforce comprising

Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Trade and Ministry of Health. Still people are coming and some of them are kept in concentration camps. I call them and the possibility of them contracting illnesses is high. So that is the reason why Health should be part of this taskforce. It is not a security situation but it maybe link to it. Somebody has mentioned that crime is on the increase but of course I don't link it to the deportees that are coming but the tendency is also there. They have no evidence that the rising in crime and its link to the deportees. I am not saying that there is no evidence. These are people who wanted to have a better life and cannot find it in this country. Their future is doomed so that was why they have taken the risk to go elsewhere. The horrendous experiences they normally suffer using this irregular migration route but they are doing it to have a better future. They have dreams that they want to realise. How do we handle them? We need to come up with a mechanism, establish a taskforce and reception centres that would be concealing them. I believe that the government is not taking maximum advantage of the opportunity provided to this country by the good will we had immediately after the impasse. The Government did not maximise in casual on that good will. I said to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs that I believe that this Government could have done more by impressing on those countries that our young people travel to, for example Europe and United States, that if they really care about democracy and stability, it is an issue of security. If they care about instability and really want to support the Gambia, they must really accommodate the Gambians over there and help them acquire livelihood skills. They can be brought back but accompanied them with support to establish enterprises. The Government could have done that and I don't want to say much in that area but there should be a real concern on the deportees because it is a volatile situation and we have to handle it with care. Our concern is not that they are from war torn areas and there could be security threat. These are people who need to be supported so the government really need comprehensive approach to tackle this issue of deportation.

Again to the Honourable Ministers, what we are asking from them is nothing more but to allocate two days out of their schedule to attend the adjournment debate. It

is important to come up with that calendar and for them to commit themselves to ensure that they come to the Assembly to listen to our concerns.

THE SPEAKER: The calendar is always provided. Last year and this year we provided them with the calendar. There are tentative dates so that they will be able to arrange their programmes.

HON. SILLAH: that is what I am saying for them to commit themselves to this and give us two days and we are not asking more.

The Honourable Minister for Justice, there was an issue I raised and you also responded regarding the appropriation of land and the demolition of properties. There are victims around and they want justices and compensation. I don't know what is happening to section 192 concerning the establishment of land commission. Section 192 of the Constitution on Land Commission which states "there shall be established a Land Commission whose composition, functions and powers shall be prescribed by an Act of the National Assembly". This has not yet been brought before us and there is need for us to have this as a matter of urgency to address the concerns of this victims that I talked about. Also we have seen the scale of crises regarding land particularly in the West Coast Region. You have communities where strangers will come and will be given free land and as development approaches those areas will become prime land and this communities are claiming those lands. Either government setup a commission of enquiry as the Minister promised us or they involve this and then establish this land commission. If you have too much on your plate, I as National Assembly member would not mind to pioneer a private members Bill for the establishment of this land commission. I am just indicating the urgency that there is need for this commission either the commission of inquiry or land commission Bill to look into issues affecting legal appropriation of land and demolition of properties.

On the issue of Education, some teachers came to my office telling me that they are on the process of retiring and there is the issue of shortages or teachers not willing to go on postings. I wish the Minister for Basic and Secondary Education was around to tell her that whether Government can come up with something. If Government

can consider having a package for the teachers who are in the process of retiring to keep them in the service as some of them are really willing to go to the provincial areas where some teachers would not be willing to go to. So I think this was an issue that was raised and I want the Minister to consider how to extend their services.

I cannot resume my sit without speaking about Banjul. We are yet to see a comprehensive programme in terms of infrastructure and I believe that the Minister for Works and Infrastructure should do something about that for Government to come up with a comprehensive infrastructure plan for Banjul that will address the problem of drainage, roads and other basic infrastructure that will make the place habitable. Banjul is not only unattractive but it's been rendered inhabitable and that is why the place is depopulating. I believe there is need for more efforts, so that it will encourage people who have left not out of their wish, but because of the situation in Banjul to come back. Having the necessary infrastructure in place will really make a difference and make some people to come back and even others.....**[Poor recording]**....

HON. ALH. MOMODOU L.K SANNEH [DEPUTY SPEAKER]: Gambians, we all work together to bring about the new Gambia for the betterment of this country. Madam Speaker, the Gambians in diaspora have also done a lot to bring about this change. They have not only sent in their money but also prepared audios and sent it to their people to sensitize them on the realities on the ground. That also contributed a lot to bringing about this change.

So, as a result Honourable Speaker, those Gambians lack constitutional rights that is the voter's card. This Government should seriously look into that so that in the next general election, opportunity could be given to those Gambians in the Diaspora to register and exercise their constitutional right.

Madam Speaker, I want to also talk about the Planners. The Planners have not done a good work for The Gambia since the First Republic coming down to the Second Republic. If you go to Serrekunda, Westfield and Churchills Town during the rainy season, those areas are just terrible, and if the current Government wants to do

some developments on the road infrastructure it is going to be very difficult. I think our planners, especially the Ministry of Local Government and Physical Planning should be empowered to make sure that they do their job properly as this country needs proper planning. Some of these remind me of Banjul which was not properly planned, the roads are very small and if you want to bring development in this city it means a lot of money is required. So, our planners really, I think they need to do a lot of good job for this country and of course the Ministry of Regional Government should make sure that Physical Planning is properly empowered, and financed, so that they can do their job correctly.

Madam Speaker, I am happy that our Honourable friend of the Assembly the Minister for Justice is here. Madam Speaker my point of view is that; the mile 2 Prison, especially the remand wing is in a terrible condition. I am urging the Honourable Minister for Justice and of course the Minister for interior to look into the issue of Central Prison especially the remand wing. People living there are human beings and they have rights as other citizens. The congestion in that area Madam Speaker, is really a problem and not only that, the Interior Minister is not here but the staff quarters for the prison officers at mile 2 should also be renovated. Madam Speaker, during our last visit we cannot just imagine because the place is in a very bad state.

On the issue of charcoal, charcoal has been banned in this country, but it appears that people are not respecting the ban. Madam Speaker, The Law Enforcement Officers I think should do their duty. Charcoal has been banned in this country since the first Republic but the law enforcement agencies are not enforcing this laws and this Assembly can only legislate laws but we cannot enforce laws. So, the enforcement agency in this country should do their job properly.

Madam Speaker on the issue of Agriculture, I think Agriculture is the back bone of this country and I am appealing to the Coalition Government, the President of the Republic of The Gambia to look into Agriculture very seriously, especially in CRR, where we have the opportunity of fresh water. I think with the establishment of the diplomatic relation with the Republic of China, this Government can use that

opportunity to make sure that rice production in this country takes centre stage. This is what will move this country forward.

Madam Speaker, on the issue of security, as the Chairman of the Standing Committee on Defence and Security, we recently went out to visit security institutions, and what we saw really, impressed us. Security should not be compromised, because there will be no development without security. So, those institutions that have been given the responsibility to secure our country, should stand firm to make sure that Gambians are secured. We do not want a situation whereby there are security lapses, security failures, that is not in the interest of any Gambian and as a result I will urge the institution or the authorities concerned, to make sure that security is considered as paramount in this country and to ensure that Gambians are secured at all times.

Madam Speaker, having said that, I think I almost exhausted my concerns and let me seize the opportunity to thank the Honourable Minister for Justice, the friend of this Parliament and of course recognize the presence of the Minister for Energy and also to thank you and your office and the entire staff of the National Assembly, in the way and manner you are administering this Assembly. With this few remarks Honourable Speaker I thank you very much and I beg to take my seat.

HON. BILLAY G. TUNKARA [KANTORA]: Thank you very much Madam Speaker for giving me the opportunity. I also want to recognize the presence of the Honourable Ministers sitting at the cabinet chair over there. I would not say much but rather to show appreciation and gratitude to the Coalition Government under the leadership of our President Adama Barrow, for the recent grants been allocated to URR in terms of bridges and road construction. My doubts are getting clear that URR is not a forgotten region by this regime. So, on that note I really want to thank him so much for that foresight.

I want to draw the attention of this Parliament to the way and manner in which these Estate Agencies are operating in this country. They are sky rocketing price of land every day and making it very high for civil servants to even obtain a land. I do not even know when the Department of Physical Planning ever conducted evaluation

in this country? That gives Estate Agencies the prerogative to escalate price of land within the west coast region. I understand that there are some policy gaps, which I was informed in our visit as a Member and rapporteur of the Select Committee on Regional Government and Lands, that they have no regulation guiding all these Estate Agency which means a serious failure by the Ministry of Land and Survey, in terms of remedying the situation of this sky rocketing prices of land selling.

I will also add my voice to the issue concerning the recent behaviour of our electorates – the misconception of democracy in this country. It is not absolutely a concept that give you a free will to abuse and disrespect people in authority. I would have loved Africa to have its own concept of leadership or a particular ideology different from the so-called democracy, because we are getting some word of misconception of the entire democracy. **I wish to be honest, I don't think Gambians has fought for that change to be disloyal citizens in the country.** We should try to make sure that citizens of this country change their attitude so that, this coalition government can achieve success in terms of governance.

I want to throw more light on the issue of NAWEC. It has been said by previous speakers whether NAWEC, like it or not, NAWEC is not really servicing or rendering services to the general public as promised. We said December and December has passed, January has also passed and now we are in March. So, I do not know where we are heading to. I have seen that there is need for NAWEC to regulate its operations, especially in terms of awarding contracts. There are lots of politics going on and until we differentiate operational matters in NAWEC and detach politics from administration, they can never achieved effectiveness and efficiency in power distribution. But the Minister for Energy is here, whether you like it or not, NAWEC is seriously affected and there is a need for them to focus as civil servants in the country and detach themselves from politics. But even if you go there, previous contracts awarded you will see line of politics there, which would not tell well on the side of Government. So, there is need for them to readjust themselves in terms of that conduct.

Secondly, we want to inform the Minister for Trade, whether she actually liaised with the GUC, [GCCPC] Gambia Competition and Consumer Protection Commission and to

give them more hints in terms of the current prices in the market. If her Ministry do not have that ample time let her liaise with The Gambia Competition and Consumer Protection Commission to update her on current status of prices of basic commodity in this country. That will also informed her policy action in terms of how we try to remedy the situation now.

Without wasting much time, I would not like to talk much, because I am with the belief that the 25 million we receive from the Coalition Government in terms of grants is enough for someone to be silent. So I will also want to know after having approved and ratified this grant in this August House, when will the Project be ready for proper implementation?

On that note, I thank you Hon. Speaker for a wonderful job done in terms of your composure and also the way and manner you handle the Parliaments for this session and the previous sessions. I thank you for your indulgence

HON. FATOU K JAWARA [TALLINDING KUNJANG]: Thank you very much Madam Speaker for giving me the floor. Madam Speaker as a member of the Select Committee on Health, Children, Women, Disaster and Humanitarian Relief, we just concluded a site seeing, and according to results, 36.7 million are living with HIV and AIDS, since it was discovered in 1984. In The Gambia, we have about 28.8% living with HIV and AIDS and all are young ones, only 2% are old age.

Madam Speaker, this patients are funded by global fund. But during the past years, they have a very limited fund and they cannot cater for their transportation allowance. I think the Ministry of Health should venture into a public private partnership and join hands with UN-AID, WHO and Hands on Care to have an adolescent clinic for these young ones, because large numbers of the affected persons are young.

Madam Speaker, the major concern of the people of my constituency, is the poor road network, and water supply. I really commend the government for constructing the road linking from the main highway to the river side, but there are still outcry from my electorates about the shortage of water supply and the cutting of street

taps which I want the council to explain why, because they are the main body, whom my electorate are paying tax to.

Madam Speaker with regards to mass deportation, I think the Minister for Foreign Affairs, International Cooperation and Gambians Aboard, should pay serious attention to migration either legal or illegal, because migration is unavoidable.

Madam Speaker, Europe is developed by migrants who came to Africa to look for raw materials, when sister countries became independent and they lack intellectuals, they depend on migrants to assist them. So, I think serious attention should be given to migration. In a nutshell Madam Speaker, I think there is need for us to pay attention to migration. On that note Madam Speaker, I beg to take my seat.

THE SPEAKER: Please may I appeal to Honourable Members because I have observed that once an Honourable Member is given the floor and make their interventions, they just leave. I noticed that the seats are getting more and more vacant. May I please appeal to Honourable Members to just stay and let us continue with our business, because we raised concerns about the presence of Ministers and I always say that, we should lead by example when it comes to the affairs of the National Assembly one way of doing that, is to ensure that we all stay throughout the session. Thank you.

HON. SAIKOU MARONG [LATRIKUNDA SABIJI]: Thank you Honourable Speaker for giving me the floor. I also like to join my colleague to thank the Honourable Ministers that are with us here today. Honourable Speaker, it is high time for us to stop playing games on others. We all understand that this is a Government that inherited a bad governance system. So, how we want things to happen cannot happen that way.

Honourable Speaker, coming to the issue of deportees, I can see many people are looking for cheap popularity by putting all the blame on the government. You go all over now and everybody is talking about; Gambians being deported here and there. Yes! We all understand, Gambians are deported and it is a concern for everybody and it is a concern for the Government of this country as well. People are using this issue to look for cheap popularity, which I think is very wrong. As a member of this

National Assembly, if anybody is waiting for any cheap popularity by standing before us, trying to create some certain people or try to go against others – we are too mature for that. If you want cheap popularity, is very simple, go to your Facebook account or your twitter account or whatsoever app, write what you want to write and you will have cheap popularity. But not by standing in this House and looking for cheap popularity because you will not have it here.

Honourable Speaker, with all due respect, the President of the Republic have all rights to have the foundation, if you have anything against it why don't you go and build your own foundation. Is Government not under payroll? Ask him where is the President getting his money to form a foundation? Is he not under a payroll, in as much as we want cheap popularity, do it in a way and manner that, will at least favour you.

The President of this country have all the rights like I have the rights as an Honourable Member of Latrikunda to form my foundation. Why should you stand here in the Assembly and say the President has a foundation, we are concerned about it, because of where is he going to get the money to fund his foundation?

Honourable Speaker, coming to the office of the first lady, it is clearly stated in the constitution that the President has the right to create any office. I am 100% in support of the Office of the first lady and I will be forever in support of it.

Honourable Speaker, coming to the issue of groundnut. I was in Baddibu on Friday and Saturday, this is not something I heard on social media or whatsoever. But I have been to some farms and had dialogues with some farmers and all what they told me was that they could not sell their groundnuts. I want the Minister for Agriculture to tell us what is wrong with the trade season and there was a fertilizer issue here through the Minister for Agriculture and everybody is silent about it. There is the issue of groundnut here and yet people are silent about it and you stand before us telling us you are creating a foundation or Office of the First Lady. We are National Assembly Members, we should put our Executive under pressure, let them tell us what exactly is happening in various departments. So, we want the Minister for Agriculture to tell us, what is wrong with that department?

Honourable Speaker coming to youth employment, everybody is talking about youth and employment, but there is lot of issues going around, our youths are being hired and fired every now and then. Some of our youth will even be hired without any employment letters and they are fired at any time they want. Which I think is unfair to our youths. If you look at all these conferences that are happening here, everybody is talking about Youth and Women Empowerment but how are they empowering the youth? This is something that we should put a stop to, as the Government of this country. Gambians need to be protected, you cannot hire me today and fire me tomorrow, that is not encouraging, and this is the reason why most of us the youths are embarking on this back way journey and we all know this is very dangerous. When you get to the other end without no proper document, if you are deported and then those who are looking for cheap popularity will just go to the social media or whatsoever write everything, the Government is doing X, Y and Z.

Honourable Speaker, I would also like the Executive, the Office of the President or the Secretary General, to inform people on issues affecting us on time. Honourable Member for Nianija has said it here, if such are happening there are some other things that are going around, would not have happened today.

Honourable Speaker, we have some Gambians here and we have some organizations like International Republican Institute, this NGO's.....**[Poor recording].....**

HON. SAIKOUBA JARJU [BUSUMBALA]:Authority have to do that strategic plan of the Region. Madam Speaker I was impressed during our trip to China. In their Offices they show us succession plan for ten years or so, if you go to Physical Planning today, water ways are blocked in my constituency. In the village of Lamin, everyday children die, because water will take children away in the gutters. When they were constructing the roads they did not care about the gutters. Every year there are floods, and the village of Busumbala is discouraged. The village of Busumbala is 7km wide and 5km away and very densely populated but the road condition is a problem. 7km not even a single clinic there, in my own consistency. I have over **[36,000]** thirty-six thousand people.....

The women in my constituency and Kombo are ready to work and if you go to Serrekunda, all the women selling in Serrekunda Market are from the Kombo area. Every day they will travel. If they have the opportunity, to have their own garden in their villages they will never go, because that is what they know. There are no women gardens now. When you go to Agriculture, the condition for.....they know Kombo the land is in high demand, we cannot have....I told them if you have a policy and the policy is not in the best interest of your people, why can't you reverse it. It is always said they are going to sponsor five hectares, you know that the majority of your people cannot provide five hectares of land why don't you appeal to the donor to reverse it.***

Madam Speaker, the women in my Constituency are really in need of garden. Land has been allocated in Lamin for a second stadium, but guess what, the first regime fenced this land, up to today the land is there as a white elephant and nobody is using it. Yesterday, I saw a camera man from [GRTS], who comes from my village Busumbala. The boy was a very good football player and when I look at him and I cried in my heart because if the opportunity was given to the youth of my own constituency, the boy would have been a millionaire today. So, what is the GFA and the sport Ministries doing? There is only one stadium in the whole of Gambia. If you go to other regions, there are recreational with no sport facility for youths. **The youth are just lazy. If you talk of space, I want them to come and take me – to my constituency.** Busumbala have a very big reserve land and if that of Lamin has been taken by the former government and fenced, the land at Busumbala can be used for recreational purposes. They lock into it, lock all doors. My people, my youths will need recreational - they said, they know and believe that the Government cannot do it all or employed all of them and not all of them are academically intelligent to be in schools, but they are talented skilful in football and other sports. So, they believed that if the government give them the opportunity and the avenue, they will excel and can represent the Gambia anywhere. **And that lead us to our national team, is football where is Gambia going to?** You can never succeed in the national team if your grandson is not supported. So, we want

this new Gambia government to come down to grassroots and support grassroots football in The Gambian.

Madam Speaker, this is always a problem, basic needs; I talked about water issue here and not to mentioned electricity. In my own house where am living, I do not have electricity as a National Assembly Member. **Madam Speaker, if we talk about prices, we say ok because they are important. Gravel and Sand are being mined in the Gambia are very expensive. A trip of it – and only Gambia - that is why when you go many of the civil servant house, they do not live in a standard houses.** We go to our own forest here and mine sand and sell it to people for D6,000 a trip which is very expensive and not to talk about gravel. Many of the National Assembly Members, are struggling to build their houses, but if you ask them they will say "*belie heri bi dafa serr or suff bi dafa serr*". Where are we getting it because we are not importing them? **Please this is a crime against Gambian people, the price of gravel and sand are our problem.**

Madam Speaker, I was very happy when I saw in the National Development Plan that the government is trying to look into the financial activities, so that the interest rate of Banks can be minimized from 23% to 18% respectively. I did my research, because I want to let everybody know that I did my research, and that's why I want to talk about it today. Some of the banks up till now charge interest rate of 22% for loans. So, someone has to look into it, because that is the way Gambians can develop themselves and do other things. The interest rate of banks should be looked into.

Madam Speaker, law for one is law for all. We have debated over the budget here and approved increment on allowance for grades 1 to grade 8. However, there are still some civil servants that are yet to benefit from the increment.

There was a time teachers were complaining, but I think they've got theirs, but that of the catholic mission, up to now they are on sit down strike because they do not receive their allowances. They do receive subventions from the Government but they

are yet to receive their allowances. GAMPOST also did not receive their allowances, because I have done my research whether they have all receive their allowance.

Madam Speaker, the last issue that I want to talk about is when we came here newly, we all gave a pledge that we are National Assembly Members and we are going to represent the Gambia; but what we are now witnessing here is some political statement or conspiracy in the Execution of our function. There was a post on Facebook, which I was very much disappointed, even if it is under a National Assembly Member or somebody is sitting in the Chambers will be very much disappointed. A session should start by 10:00am, you do not see some group of National Assembly Members and you wrote that UDP Members are nowhere to be seen and the UDP leader is having a meeting with the Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable when you have your caucus maybe you can discuss this issue.

HON. SAIKOUBA JARJU [BUSUMBALA]: No, that is going to be a party caucus. I am talking to everybody because I will fight for myself and for everybody. When there are issues let there be no political conspiracy. We all pledged that we are going to represent regardless of party affiliation but to represent the Gambia. So, if you do not see a group of political parties do not say a group of National Assembly Members, do not say UDP, PDOIS or NRP. Try to find out the fact before you post it on Facebook. Thank you very much.

HON. ALAGIE JAWARA [LOWER BADDIBU]: Thank you very much Ma for giving me the floor. I will start my intervention with the Minister for Energy and also to thank him and the Minister for Justice for coming.

Honourable Minister, the people of my constituency, Lower Baddibu particularly the North, do not have access to electricity and good drinking water since independence to date and I would like you to tell this august body, how soon the people of Lower Baddibu particularly the North will have social amenities?.

Madam Speaker, I will turn to you yourself and this Honourable house whether you have come up with a committee called Public Appointment Standing Committee. This

is a very important committee in order for us to know those who are going to handle public office, particularly the Ministerial positions. We are elected by the people through ballot box and they are appointed by a mere signature and one may say the saga that is going around in the country, some people opined that, some of the Ministers are incapable. But had it been that, we have this public appointment standing committee in this house, that committee can scrutinize the appointment of person to handle positions of responsibility.

I will also pick up where the Honourable Member for Busumbala has stopped. I think as National Assembly Members, we should have the concept of nationality in ourselves. This is what we should inculcate in ourselves to disseminate to our people. But I am very much disappointed when I came to know that some UDP NAMS are having meeting downstairs with the Honourable Speaker and their party leader. I said to myself what a lie, my party leader is not here, he was not here that very day and the Honourable Member for Wuli West, has said this several times, let's put the party tag outside of this chambers and if people are trying to invite that, meaning that they want this chamber to be a battle ground. This is the reality and we do not want that. The whole Gambia and her people are praising this Assembly that it is one of the best. But if you are trying to invite partisan interest into this house, what are we insinuating Ma? This is a question that we should all ask ourselves and by saying that, this Coalition Government, no one has seen change in this Coalition Government; that is not true. During Jammeh's time, who is lunatic enough to stand and say your mind here Honourable Members.

Applause

But we are all free now, and we can all speak our minds. This is the democracy we all fought for. Jammeh's time, I do come to this Assembly, there are specific people that will stand up and talk on behalf of the Government and others will be silent as a doormat. So, let us stop this type of attitude, we are leaders, we should know what to do and what to say.

Coming back to the issue of land commission, as highlighted by the Member for Banjul North, I have a lot to say but as far as the Honourable Minister for Justices is here, most of my questions will go to him and the Honourable Minister for Energy.

Section 192 states that; there shall be established a Land Commission, whose composition function and power to be prescribed by an act of the National Assembly. So, you may get private Member bills for you to support us in this session, because most of the lands in this country before were forcefully taken by the so-called dictator the "jack of all trade" as he knows everything. Funnily enough, when he took this land from their owners, two or three weeks later, you will see Kanilai Family Farm. That is the reality, we all know it. So, get ready, you may receive me at any time in your office.

Ma, regarding youths, we are so unfortunate the Minister for youths and Sport is not a friend of the National Assembly. I have never witnessed his presence in this Assembly here and he is the luckiest Minister so far, because 60% of this Assembly is all youths and we stood for our youths here to make sure their budget line has been increased but he never came here to tell us his plans, the plan that he has for the youths of this country. This is very disappointing. That is why I say the Public Appointment Committee should be in effect in this National Assembly so that we can know what to do. We are not here to joke, we are here for our people.

The Member for Latrikunda Sabiji, has mentioned a very important issue here and that is the issue of ferries. I think it is high time now for us to get a sea ambulance. We the people of North Bank have been saying this over and over here that we need a sea ambulance, because no one is prepared for an emergency. So, if that happens, most of the time, what they will tell you is, there is low tide so Kunta Kinteh cannot go, Kanilai is coming etc. I think the Deputy Speaker is a witness to that, the day of Honourable Darboe's victory celebration at upper Nuimi. So, I think it is high time now for us to get sea ambulance for our people.

Honourable Speaker, the Honourable Minister for Justice, it is true that the beauty of democracy is criticism and what we need is constructive criticism and thank God that there are criticism and I accept them as far as democracy is concerned. Some

Members requested to know the faith or the death of Haruna Jatta. I also have a concern which I would like your Ministry to fast track. I know the Lawyers and Judges do normally say that justice delay, is justice denied, but what we want now is, fast tracking of the truth, Reconciliation and Reparation Committee [TRRC]. The TRRC should come to effect, because the family of the few people I am going to name, have been waiting for justice for quite a long time now and we do not know what is holding you and your Ministry in this regard. Haruna Jatta has died and he is a Gambian and we all mourned it and we all respect it and we do not want things to happen in that way. We would also like to know particularly who killed my uncle Deyda Hydara, Solo Kuruma, Solo Sandeng and Lang Marong, because we realized that some of these people have been poison particularly Lang Marong and we will like to know their fate, why is it that still nothing is explained about the cause of their death. So, I will like you to take note of this, as far as we have you and the energy Minister here. I have lot of questions to ask here, but unfortunately the other Ministers are not here. If one should say that, there is no changes, I will prove the person wrong that Gambia have achieved a lot. As somebody mentioned here; freedom is the greatest assets one can ever find. So, if we are free, we are free at least. We can say whatever we want to say. At Jammeh's time, I, Alagie Jawara, I am not mad enough to stand here and speak as I wish. So, if today am saying that in this chambers, I think there is big changes and President Barrow is the humble President I have ever seen in Africa I will called it, so humble, so respectful and he has human feelings.

Madam Speaker, I do not have much to say again only that I would like to highlight the zero percent of import duties on rice. However, the Ministers are not here and we would like the Ministers to be here so that we will not be talking to ourselves during adjournment debates and other sittings. They should be here to answer to our questions.

I would also like you to speed up the aspect that I request from you, which is the standing order committee as mentioned by the standing order [82]. The Minister of Agriculture should be here, because there is public outcry and farmers are crying day in day out, that their farm produce are still not sold. Agriculture is among the

Ministries that have the lion share of the national budget. People are crying over there, while others are sitting under the air condition enjoying. I cannot even imagine.

I also have lot of questions for the Minister for Foreign Affairs, but unfortunately he is not here. We would like to know the fate of our deportees and what is the relationship between his Ministry, the deportees and the Ministry of the Interior. The Minister for the Interior too, should have been here, I have a question for him regarding arm robberies in The Gambia, despite whatever, I think the Ministers should be here no matter how busy they are to listen to us so that they can take note in order to respond to the concerns of The Gambian people. So I rest my case here thank you.

HON. OMAR DARBOE [UPPER NUIMI]: Thank you very much Madam Speaker, for giving me the floor. Madam Speaker, let me also seize this opportunity to thank the Honourable Ministers here present, especially that of our own friend, the Honourable Minister for Justice. Honourable Minister we thank you very much once again.

Madam Speaker, there is a company at Gunjur beach side called Golden Lead owned by Chinese and the people of Gunjur are crying and complaining about the environmental degradation that is going around the beach of Gunjur. The company has been taken to the National Environment Agency and it is all over in the newspapers, social Media but to no avail.

Madam Speaker, we know that the Honourable Majority Leader is doing a lot behind the curtain to solve the problem, but like somebody who was brought up in that particular village though born in Nuimi but brought-up in Gunjur. I can feel with the people of Gunjur and the cry they are making regarding this company located at the beach.

Madam Speaker, we are not against the establishment of the company neither are we against the job creation for the youths of this country. However, we are kindly requesting the government to tell the company owners to manage their waste in a manner that it will not pollute the environment and destroy our environment that

has been there for years and for generations. I am tasking the Chairman of the Select Committee on environment and the Committee to do everything within their utmost best to visit this place and then put the authorities under their knees to solve the problem. I do not know whether they are aware or not, but I was just discussing with him now, sharing the feeling of the people of Gunjur.

The other issue Madam Speaker, is that I would like to seize this opportunity to thank the people of Upper Nuimi especially those in the Nuimi, Kombos and Diaspora for the immense contribution they have done towards our last week victory celebration. I thank each and every Member of this National Assembly who were there with me to witness the occasion as well. I also thank the committee and the Executive for the way and manner they handled the program.

Madam Speaker, another issue is about the groundnut season. The last season farmers are disappointed because of the way and manner the whole issue was handled in totality. As a farmer myself, our expectation are not fulfilled as we envisaged on this new Government, because when you tell the authority that the groundnut of farmers are not purchased, what they said is that the farmers hold their groundnuts thinking that the price of groundnut will be increased and now the Senegalese bring in their groundnuts to sell to the GGC. To me it is not something factual, instead what is happening is; the GGC is conniving with the middle men, going to Senegal to buy the Senegal groundnut and bring them into the country, leaving our farmers down there because the Senegalese groundnut in ton is cheaper than that of Gambia that is the fact. So, they will leave our farmers in "*lumd*" they have nowhere to sell their groundnut and now the money allocated for the purchase of groundnut is exhausted that is the fact. But when asked, they say, you know farmers hold their groundnuts thinking that the price will increase, who is there dealing with the middle men? Going to Senegal to purchase the Senegalese groundnut and bring them into the country. So, I think the authority has to look into that.

On the issue of Agriculture, we are not happy as a farmer, because I am part of them. We are not happy at all as far as this past crisis is concerned. So, the Minister

for Agriculture needs to answer some question as my colleagues has said to clarify what happened.

Madam Speaker, the other issue is about my constituency, I wish to also thank the Minister for Works for concentrating on our roads which is a tribute constituency road, from Upper Nuimi to Jokadu. I learn that they have gone far with the process, but I am still appealing to them to fast track it because we have been suffering for a long time now. When that road is completed, tourism will be improved and Agriculture production will also improve. It will enhance goods and services within the area. So, it is a very important road and it will also improve the development of that particular area. So we appeal to the government to fast track the construction of Hakalan Road and that of Albreda to Mankali as soon as possible. That is an appeal, though unfortunately, the Minister for works is not around.

The other thing is about the electricity, but unfortunately the Minister for Energy is not around. I have been talking about it. We have never benefited from electricity as far as Upper Nuimi is concerned for 53 years, no single village in Upper Nuimi has electricity supply and also only some villages are benefitting from clean drinking water. So, we are appealing to the Minister for Energy to consider the People of Upper Nuimi and to tell us how soon we are going to benefit from this particular important social amenity. That is a question to the Minister for Energy.

The other issue Madam Speaker is that, this Assembly since inception, we assumed that we are one and that unity has been prevailing up to this stage. But I cannot understand why some are trying to insinuate, thinking that one tribe is in control of the governance or the country, which is not true.

Applause

One thing is certain, the composition of this particular society The Gambia, nobody can kill it because it's something natural and if you do not like it kill yourself that is simple. That is how Allah has created the Gambia. Whether you like it or not that is how this particular society, compose of you and I cannot change. It is better we embrace it otherwise we die easily because that will give you heart attack.

Madam Speaker that will be my last statement. Let's start to cherish that unity and foster the relationship that has been here since inception to date. Let us not try to compromise it. Thank you very much Honourable Speaker for giving me the floor.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you very much, Honourable Member, at this point I will like to suspend the sitting for us to take a break and we will resume at 3 O'clock. The session is suspended till 3 O'clock for a break. Thank you.

House Suspended!

House now resumed!

HON. ALHAGIE DARBOE [LOWER FULLADU WEST]: Thank you very much Honourable Speaker, I want to seize this opportunity to join my colleagues and add my voice in the debate. Honourable Speaker, farmers in my constituency are suffering and complaining bitterly as far as rice cultivation is concerned in the Jahali Pacharr rice fields.

Honourable Speaker, as I used to say Jahali Pacharr is the food basket of this country in terms of rice production. We used to harvest rice in every three months, but this time around, that time table has been seriously affected due to lack of tractors to plough on time so that, farmers can start transplanting. This situation has compelled some farmers to travel all the way to Casamance to hire tractors to plough their fields. How many farmers Honourable Speaker can afford this? It is a big shame for me and the Department of Agriculture. Honourable Speaker, I would like to urge the Minister of Agriculture to look into this matter seriously. Having said that Honourable Speaker, my people in Lower Fulladu West would like to know from the Minister for Energy, thank God he is here and I congratulate him for that. The status of electrification in my area, as it is a necessity. Since I raised this issue in this very August Assembly, I have not seen any progress taking place. Clean drinking water is still a major challenge in some villages in my constituency, notably Sareh Neibeh, Sareh Abou, Sareh Malang and Wally kunda to name a few. Some of the villages, in fact use wells as drinking water with Animals, which I think is not hygienic at all and I would like to urge the Executive to take up this matter seriously, because this people are also tax payers of this country. Honourable Speaker, rainy

season is fast approaching and feeder roads network in my constituency is in a very terrible condition and I will appreciate if the Minister of Works and Communication give an update of when to start road works, is a big concern to my people in Lower Fulladu.

In conclusion Honourable Speaker, I concur with the Deputy Speaker and Chair of the Defence and Security Committee that the status of the remand wing in Mile 2. When we conducted an oversight visit, the remand wing is over congested and there are people who are there for more than seven (7) years without a trial. Honourable Speaker, I would like to urge the Minister of Justice who is present here to take all the necessary steps, so that people in the remand wing of mile 2, are taken to court for trial.

On that note Honourable Speaker, I would like to thank the Ministers who have come to attend this session. I think is very important as mentioned by the Honourable Member for Wuli West that all what we are talking here, concerned Ministries, departments etc., but if they are not present at all what we are saying maybe will just be talking, because all what we have been dilating since in the morning, we have dilated it here before, but still there is no progress. Honourable Speaker, I beg to take my seat. Thank you.

HON. SULAYMAN SAHO [CENTRAL BADDIBU]: Thank you Honourable Speaker for giving me the floor. Honourable Speaker, before I go further, I would like to thank the Ministers that we have in our midst and some of the Permanent Secretaries.

Honourable Speaker, I would like to thank the Minister for Energy, for the efforts done. If you look at Energy, at least they made a giant step in addressing energy issues in this country by connecting some parts of The Gambia to Senegal. Notwithstanding, we still have a long way to go and we still have more areas to be connected. I believe with the support of the National Assembly, and more loan or grants from our well-wishers and partners; the energy issue would be addressed. Energy is a fundamental right, which every citizen of The Gambia needs to enjoy. I will not talk of Central Baddibu, but rather I will talk of the whole country because it

is a problem. Almost all the Speakers before me dwelled on the Energy issue whether rural or urban area. So, I believe the Minister and his team will try to do well so that every Gambian, every part of Gambia has access to electricity as a fundamental right.

Honourable Speaker, I would like to thank Ministry of Interior, though the Minister was not present during the last adjournment debate. I spoke on my area, where children are frequently knock down by cars, particularly school going children. The Ministry has made lot of efforts to address this situation by putting in place lot of check points on the highway to check and limit the speed of the drivers. So, I want to say a big thank you for the effort done. This is what we need in the new Gambia, when issues and concerns arise, the various Ministries take it as a challenge and find solution for it. When issues are raised in adjournment debate, we see the same issues raised again and there are no significant step taken to address them. That is why I said our work is useless because it means we are just talking. So, our talking need to go with action and we cannot achieved our goal or our mission will never be fulfilled if the Executive is not ready to work hand in glove with the Legislature.

Honourable Speaker, I would like to talk on foreigners given licence to operate hunting camps because, we have lot of camps in The Gambia. I do not know whether they are tourist or whether they are from France or wherever they may came from. They kill our birds and yesterday we are all talking about how to protect our Fauna and Flora. If those people are allowed to come and kill our birds, where will we get tourist who are interested in bird watching. I think the money that we look from the license that they are paying to the Government, that is another aspect but how are you going to maintain our ecosystem? I think Honourable Speaker, this issue should be really addressed as we cannot just take ten step forward and take 20 step backward.

Honourable Speaker, if you look at our historical monument or rates, last time I talk about it here in the Parliament and I asked the Minister for Tourism and his response was that they are building a Five Star Hotel in Bakadaji. Are we interested in promoting Ecotourism by building a Five Star Hotel in Bakadaji? I wish he was here, I would have asked him how far they have gone with the building of the Five

Star Hotel in Bakadaji. Let us be honest with each other and be ready to address issues and create employment for young people. If all the Ministries factors in youth issues in their programs and policies, that will create employment for young people and then we will not have these problems that we all talk about.

Honourable Speaker, the stone circles, located in Kerr Batch in Wassu, is an historical monument that needs to be preserved for us to realise something. These are things that are very rear in other countries. I think it is high time the Minister for Tourism look at this sectors with the National Council for Arts and Culture on how to maintained and develop it so that it can create employment for the people around that area.

Honourable Speaker, I have another recommendation for the government of The Gambia, and that is to create a new Ministry on Gender, Social Protection, Women and Children. Honourable Speaker, by creating such a Ministry, it will lift the burden on the Office of the Vice President and make coordination easy as well as timely reporting. So, I am recommending to the government even though things are very hard and resources are meagre, but it is high time we create Ministry of Gender, Social Protection, Women and Children to deal with specific issues affecting women and children.

Honourable Speaker coming to the councillors, if you look at the selection criteria for Ward Councillors. There is no academic criteria stated. The only criteria is if you can read and write. I think it is high time that at least we have a Minimum Educational Standard for councillors. Everybody cannot be a councillor because we want people to participate in debates to be able to convince the right partners for project to be implemented in their various wards.

Honourable Speaker, I would like to refer the house to page 29 of the constitution, section (30) on education. If you look at subsection (B), secondary education including technical vocational education shall made generally available and accessible to all by every appropriate means and in particular by the progressive introduction of free education. Honourable Speaker, I think it is high time, vocational and technical education is decentralize. Imagine a child that graduated from a Senior

Secondary School in Basse wants to do vocational or technical will have to move from Basse to GTTI. I think it is high time the Ministry revisits the curriculum and come up with ideas or educational programs that will promote technical and vocational education.

Honourable Speaker, I would like to refer the house to page 40, Section (58), appointment of a district Seyfo which states that, "*The President shall appoint a district Seyfo in consultation with the Ministry responsible for local government*". I think the Minister for Justice is here with us, we need to look at this portion very well, whether you have any plans for amendment or you come up with a bill to elect our Seyfolus, because this is a very important position. We have been waiting for this and it is long overdue now. We want people to choose their own leaders, because if you give the President the mandate to choose, he might choose his own favourite, which might not be the choice of the people. So, we want the choice of the people to prevail. Therefore this portion of our Constitution, really needs to be amended. I know and I have no doubt in my mind that your office will do something about that.

I want to refer my Honourable Member for Banjul South, unfortunately he is not here, were he made mention that, we need to have a bill on ethnic groups.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member, you have 3 minutes to go.

HON. SULAYMAN SAHO [CENTRAL BADDIBU]: Thank you, if I may refer the house to section (60), where it states that;

1. "*Political parties, no association other than political parties registered under or pursuant to an act of the National Assembly, shall sponsor candidate in public election*".
2. "*No association shall be registered or rename, register as a political party, if it is formed or organise on an ethnic sectional religion and regional basis.*"

So, what do you need again? We already have it in our Constitution. Let us familiarise ourselves with the Constitution and the Standing Orders. I want to appeal to my colleagues because there are lot of things happening in this chambers but, if

we make reference to the Standing Orders, those things will not happen. Page 17, section (33), subsection (2); when the Speaker or Chairperson intervene during the proceedings in the Assembly or in Committee of the whole Assembly, every other Member shall be seated. That is not happening here. Sometimes we witness such instances and it is unfortunate that the right Honourable who should teach us, good morals of the National Assembly, are the very ones not respecting those rules. We need to learn from these people. So, we need to make ourselves current with these two books, if we want to perform well in this National Assembly.

Honourable Speaker, I would like to thank the International Republic Institute (IRI), for offering capacity building trainings to committees on Educational and Health Committees to develop work plans.

Honourable Speaker, last but not the least, payment of tax. If we want Area Councils to perform well, we must pay our tax. How can they perform when taxes are not paid? How can they provide water and services that we need? The other issue is the subventions to the Councils. The Central Government should give subvention to the Councils but this is not happening. This issue needs to be addressed for them to be functional. Thank you and I beg to take my seat.

HON. ALHAGIE DRAMMEH [JESHWANG]: Thank you Sir, I have withdrawn. I have appointment with relevant authorities which I think is more efficient in addressing my concerns. So I withdraw.

HON. ALHAGI S.B SILLAH [NIANI]: Thank you very much Honourable Speaker. I have recognized the two Ministers present here. First of all, I would like to show my concern. I have a village called Gutter Anglaise and Gutter Francais. These two villages share everything in common and attend each other's ceremonies, burials and other activities, but unfortunately Gutter Anglaise has no electricity, while Gutter Francais has electricity. It is such an embarrassing situation because they share fences and even bushes. So, I would like to inform the Honourable Minister that this problem is an embarrassing situation to the Gambians living in Gutter Angalais. When the Honourable Minister have the opportunity and time, we can go together for him to see. They are just a working distance, and they do not need any pole.

The only thing they cannot prevent them is the light, because the moment the streetlights are on, it also reflects in the Gambian compounds. Honourable Minister for your information, even water, they benefit from Senegal, because they do not even have a well. The well they have is functioning. So, they fetch drinking water from Senegal because you cannot even know the demarcation lines as it is just a narrow road or a fence that separates them.

So on that note Honourable Minister, I would like the Hon. Minister to visit the place to know what is happening there.

The other issue in my area as my other colleagues highlighted is rice. We mostly depend on rice and we have started preparing our nurseries but fertilizer is a problem. It is now available at the Depot, but anytime the farmers went there they are told it is not yet priced. The other part of my constituency in fact depend on vegetable, their second cash crop is pepper and this pepper also needs fertilizer but they could not get access to fertilizer. It is unfortunate the Honourable Minister is not here but I have been talking to him all the time about this fertilizer issue, though available but not accessible, because if you go to the Depot you cannot get it as it is not yet priced.

Implementation also is a problem. I wish to extend my gratitude to Darboe, who has even given me the gesture just two weeks which has eased some problems I was facing in terms of water and power-tiller. Just two weeks ago, he issued bore-holes to Fullah kunda, Tuba and Barajally, power-tiller to Wassu and threshing machine to Wassu and Fullakunda. Please extend my gratitude to Darboe for the laudable gesture he has done for my people.

The other issue is the floods. As we all know we had flood some time ago and normally bureaucracy is always a problem as it delays things. The gesture we received in kind and cash especially rice and other food items we are making best use of them and we are benefiting from it. The cash also which is given to us, anybody who goes there will see the impact. But our problem now is the \$4.5 million donated by the Chinese through the Disaster Management at the Vice President's Office. Anytime I raise the issue or go to the Executive Director, he will

tell me that we have send a report to the Vice President, but the Vice President has travelled. The next day when I go there they will tell me that he has travelled so the delay is our concern now and we want to address the situation before the rain comes. The first intervention we may need is dyke construction, so that the water problem will be addressed anytime it rains. Our first priority and problem is to construct dykes. So, as far as the two Honourable Ministers are here, they can please extend that message to the Vice President's Office, because the disaster Office is attached to the Vice President's Office. The money is for us, if it has been handled by us, it would have been implemented. Nonetheless, all what we want, is for the problem to be solved and let the dyke be constructed along the villages so that, they can get rid of water before the next rainy season.

The next point is, I am an elderly somebody and a good listener which is a characteristic of a good leader. You can be a listener and talk very small, but what I can gather from the deliberation is, we have a first Republic and they laid a good foundation, and the Second Republic have also done their development. It is finished. The Third Republic, what it is supposed to do is, to put many furniture and wipe the houses it may need, and at the end of the day all the houses fall down. As the Mandinga proverbs says ***"If you leave your Cat, it will go to the mother"*** So, what I am trying to emphasise here is that Government should be transparent and accountable. So, if good structures have been put in place with qualities, we would not have any problem. Previously there were few schools and few hospitals and those few hospitals are qualitative. The schools even a primary six student can write a letter, but schools and hospitals are many and you cannot get drugs in the hospitals.....

HON. SAIKOUBA JARJU [BUSUMBALA]: now deforested. There are no trees there and I asked myself is it because of the charcoal production? Let us try to sensitize the people how to use and manage our forest because, there is a saying "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 for our feeding also 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 they also have responsibility to make sure

that the forest cover stays. 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 before you bring a Bill to ban charcoal. I went to this area, it was all deforested no trees and I asked myself a question is it charcoal production obviously but I asked myself should we not ban it. I never knew about this because I did not go through the other 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 bill is here today. I think the Minister should have given us an alternative ways of fuel. Somebody was telling me that, gas bottle is expensive here it is better for them to pay fare and buy it from Senegal, which is still cheaper. So, what is the problem? We have to look into those things which people prefer and can afford it? Somebody sells 5kilos of gas for D375 to D400. You used it less than two weeks if you have bigger household it means every month you need two of that which will cost you D800. Let's look at the earning capacity of ordinary Gambians and how many of us can sustain that?

Is never my intention 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 engagement he has been doing with other Ministries and also what sort of sensitization he has been doing in the community regarding forest protection and management.

My suggestion to that, I believe forest personnel some time ago with Members for West Coast, had a caucus, and went round and we were very lucky to go the forest department in Brikama and some other places. What we have seen there was they are ready to safeguard the forest and to do their work but they are not empowered to go round the forest. I think if those ones are done, you do not do the in-house empowerment because the forest Act is there and the forest should be maintained.

Sensitize the people to know that they have the right to use the forest but they also have a responsibility to maintain it. That means if you cut a tree, you should plant a tree or let there be a Bill, we accept every community, you do your assessment

because as the recommendation made by the committee, you know a measurement endangers 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, when we do an assessment this year and discover about 3,000 trees in that area and when we come back again and there are less than 1,000 trees then you have the power now to go the community to make sure that they replace the forest that has been lost. If that is done, I believe that will be a way to maintain our forests.

Madam Speaker, I want to come back again to community empowerment. 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 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 for somebody to go and cut down a tree in the forest, because you are getting something out of it. It's your responsibility to make sure that trees are being cultivated back so, these are some of the things I believe the Ministry should do. I am in support of the idea to empower the community to own forest but I do not think I will be convinced to be part of the people to ban charcoal production unless the Minister, tell us some of the alternative source of fuel that they are putting in place to make sure that, other source 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 sit beyond 1 0' clock.

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

THE SPEAKER:

[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed to]

[That the House sits beyond 1:00 pm]

HON. SAIKOU 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 on environment for a job well done. I am not going to support any Bill when charcoal has been banned since 1977 and people are still producing it. In 1998 also, the same Bill was passed and yet people are producing charcoal. I believe there is still a problem that is why people are producing it and if today, there is a Bill before us and some Members saying that if this and that are clear then they will support the Bill. You know it is not clear so why are you supporting the Bill?

Madam Speaker, I am not 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 on the ban on plastic production but 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 going to ban charcoal because gas is affordable and accessible, we all know that gas is very expensive and not everybody can afford it. Honourable Member for Wuli West have given us a very good suggestion when he said where a tree is cut, a tree is replaced. Yes! We know The Gambia is turning in to a desert. We need to protect our environment and the forest but if you say ban on charcoal production Madam Speaker, I do not want my people from Kiang to suffer.

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 call roast timber locally call canoe and that has been existing for 60 to 70years in my farm land. The tree exists naturally but if you tell me that if you want to do anything with this tree you have to take 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 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 telling me that if I want to cut down that tree I need to have clearance from you.

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 recommendation where it states, other alternative source of energy should be made accessible, affordable and even be subsidized 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 into consideration before we pass certain Bills. We should 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, we know that certain things are not possible here. If you tell me the whole household should start using gas now instead of charcoal we should ask ourselves whether is really affordable? Madam Speaker, the other part of the report, the Honourable Member for Busumbala have said it here and if you look at the table that was given to us, it shows that not everybody can even afford to use gas. So, I am appealing to the Honourable Members to critically look into this issue before passing this Bill.

Honourable Minister, in the area of charcoal production, 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.

HON. 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 not even 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. Please sensitize the people because if you sensitize the people, they take ownership but if you do not do that they sit and look at you and disregard every move you do and this is the case we have today right now. Expressing doubts whether it will be possible? It will never be possible because there are no alternatives. If you weaned the baby, you have to give that baby something else apart from the breast milk 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 hide to do what you telling us as you have not created or brought in any alternatives. If the number of households in the urban area use more charcoal than the rural area where charcoal is purported to be produced, then the people in the rural area will not suffer but they will see the consequence of going to jail and the urban area will suffer. Are you hiding that?

This is the reality and if we are to bring laws which are questionable then those laws are bad. What is the alternative? If the Minister can tell us the alternative then we will support the bill but if he does 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 will bounce on our people, we end up being blamed because the Minister, will always say that it was passed by the House. Yes! The house has passed it so they are exonerated completely. 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 makers and the legislature and these are areas where like in Barra right now if the ferry has a break down, the people use the pirogues. The pirogues charge one passenger for 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 join it because it is an alternative no matter what. People might not be worried about using gas or buying it because, it is the only thing available after charcoal is banned. They will buy it but would it be affordable and accessible? If we take the trend in Senegal, before they banned

charcoal, they brought in alternative which was gas and it is made available and affordable. Gambians go to Senegal to buy gas instead of here because, if a Gambian buys gas from there and brings it here it is not available and affordable. We need to look into that. Let us not by virtue of or for the sake of beauties, sit in our Offices and make laws that will come out to bounce on our people. We will have to answer for the consequences and it will be very evident that we are the cause of it. Let us see what is possible and what is not 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 on 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. 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 and 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 is ongoing and is increasing by the day.

My first question to the Honourable Minister relating to this canoe or roast timber, 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 charcoal provide us with something that we can be definitely using because, it will be 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 gardening without a borehole. So, if you want to go to the gardens to earn a living is always difficult because, is not everywhere that you have a borehole-water. This is our major problem in other areas at the same time.

The issue of gas is very dangerous. People like the Sereres and the Jollas are not fond of using gas and it is always dangerous when you put it in the houses because 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 how 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 every time you can get it in fact gas, is not available everywhere. 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 brew "ataya" and other things. We use firewood. Because, when I told the Honourable Minister, he said yes it is important to use firewood but it is also from the forest.

I have just visited an area in Sabach Sanjal and saw them cutting wet woods, dry them and use them as firewood. This is almost the same thing as producing charcoal because they are also 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 difference between the using of charcoal and firewood. At the same time Gambia, is a small community but we have 60% of people who are low income earners and before they go into something they have to see whether it is affordable.

The Honourable Member for Janjanbureh has mentioned it here, bush fire is our main problem and 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 already burnt. You will see cattles roaming for over 20kilometres without access to anything and is very dangerous. There are no animals now because all our animals have run away to the Cassamance and 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. There are no bush meat now and is all because of bush fire. I urge the Minister to please do something about it. The committees that have been assigned the management of these forests, should carry out the responsibility given to them by the Government. Let them not be corrupted 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, there is a lady whose 200 bags of charcoal was seized and 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? If you go from Soma, you find everywhere in the street bags of charcoals and those ones are not compensated. Why Fatoumata Jallow alone? We want the Honourable Minister to explain where the money is as he was put in the picture? With these remarks Madam Speaker, I am saying a big thank you.

HON. SALIFU JAWO [JAKADU]: I thank you very much Madam Speaker, I am in support of the Bill. I am going to start with our livestock. We are the owners of these live stocks but believe me during the rainy season in my area, these live stocks do not even have grazing areas and I think we cannot put these live stocks on our beds. They need to be free and go out and get food because we are benefiting from them. This is the reason why most of these live stocks are disappearing because most of them are starved to death during the rainy season and even in the dry season. During the dry season 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. 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 hyena kids do not know it now because they cannot find as they have all disappeared due to bad practices people are conducting within the environment.

Another issue people are talking about is charcoal. I am also in support of the Bill on that part simply because, if you do not take correct measures on this issue and 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 generations, who will be there to give them alternatives? 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 have very limited now and you can see their population is going down. In my area all those who have herds of cattle now inherited it from their parents or from their grandparents but now a days, you cannot own herds of cattle at this time. You cannot have it why? Because of all these bad practices that people are conducting. So, I think it is better for us to take great care of our environment as people are misusing it. We should not support them and I do not support them because 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 nowadays, we are having a very bad or very poor rainfalls because the desert is coming in and it is all done by ourselves. So, I think it is better we revise our plans to take great care of our environment for the benefit of all 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

would want to remind my Honourable colleagues that our forestry in this country is under attack. I will also like to remind them that, the flora and fauna is also under 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 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 impacts these things are actually making in our country. This Bill is not about preventing somebody from making money or somebody from making things to sustain his family. This 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 household in this country that are using firewood, charcoal and gas? You will realize that, 50% of them are using firewood, 24% plus are using charcoal and the rest 13%. I think this is very clear.

Now we must also remember that in charcoal production they are actually using life trees and I think someone did mention here that they are dry trees maybe he has not actually seen them but they are actually cutting life trees and those are the one they use in these local ovens and generate charcoal. I use charcoal in my household but it is detrimental to our communities and our country. So, we must look at this Bill in totality not to pick a particular portion of this Bill and start to indicate as if this is a bad Bill. I think it 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 a Bill and enforcing it. I must commend the Minority Leader for being 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, 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 and this is not a coincidence. Let us thoroughly look at this Bill and let us base it in line with what actually happens internationally. Now with all the global agreements we have, 500 plus countries and they all agreed that, something must be done and 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 don't know '*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 to 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 empower the forest guards by giving them mobility so that they can do their work better. We have forest guards all over the country but yet we are having issues on how to implement laws simply because they find it very difficult to move from point A to B. In as much as we support them to do their work let us ensure that they are mobile from point A to B so that they can 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 they act like they own the forest. 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. We need to declare war to stop deforestation because right now as we speak, there is a war in the forestry. What is going out there for example, I said this the last time when the Minister came here that in Upper Saloum, there was a time when you stand there and look at

Nianija, all you see was green synergy. Right now you can stand in Upper Saloum, on the highway and look at almost 8 to 10 kilometers and you will not see anything green. Where has the forest gone to? We must also remind ourselves that, there is a direct correlation between the forest 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 happens, 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.

HON. FAKEBBA N.L COLLEY [KINAG WEST]: I thank you very much 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 this Bill because I am the only person here that it really affects, Kiang West forest. I think we have the best forest cover in The Gambia but looking at the forest now, the deforestation that is taking place is very serious. So, I will refer the Minister to point where deforestation takes place looking at section (7k) of this Act about giving 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 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 forest is seriously affected. 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 was involved in a disputes resolution concerning a serious problem between the people of Kiang. This Act is exempting National Assembly Members from participating in dispute resolutions in our area. The Deputy Speaker, this year sat over 4 to 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 shed lights on two other things for example section '4' categories of forest, forest parks, community forest and private forest. These are forest that we have but I personally cannot identify and I do not know how they interrelate. I will like the Minister to shed light on that.

Again I am a bit confused about the joint forest park management. I think the Minister should 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? I would like the Minister to look in to that. Apart from that, I have no problem and I really support the Bill because the Minister 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 farming community is threatened 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 note, I beg to resume my seat ***Laughter.....***

HON. 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 just want to refer you to page 12 of the report on paragraph '1'; the community forest management agreements guarantee the legal ownership transfer of both the land and forest over by the**[Poor recording]**.

MOTION:

Continuation of the Motion on the Adjournment Debate.

HON. ALHAGIE SB. SILLAH [NIANI]:....At the end of the day he knows that the money was his. So you do not have any blessings out of that. We have seen the

social security though doctors have been..... things have done but the pensioners are crying because they do not have their dues so, these are issues our people gathering.... So one that, I think I have exhausted my patience but once again I said a big thank you to Turo Darboe because he has done a big gesture in my constituency. On that note, I thank you Madam Speaker and I take my seat

HON. YAYA GASSAMA [KIANG EAST]: Thank you Madam Speaker, for giving me the floor and I do not intend to make a very long deliberation. However,.....**[Poor recording]**

HON. ALFUSAINY CEESAY [SAMI]:for the Minister for education to please..... and I think that is the only place there that the... start .. so, please help us with a staff quarter in Bayaba so that the teachers there will stay and enjoy because, if you do not have good house it will be very difficult for you to go and teach effectively. So, on that note Madam Speaker, I thank you very much. **(Poor recording)**

HON. MAHTARR M. JENG [LOWER NIUMI]: I thank you very much Madam Speaker. My first contention is, when are we going to graduate from that roaming mike to a permanent mike which will not be rotating around from one speaker to another?

I am happy to see the Minister for Energy that is very relative. Minister for Energy do you know the people of Kiang do not have any energy because they do not drink any water? Anyway what the people of Ginak drinks comes from Barra not from Ginak. I had said it here over and over again until when I go out afterwards people call me Mr. Ginak and I am very proud to be associated with the difficulties of those people trying to alleviate the problem. The people of Ginak are living in a community of about 4 settlements; you have Ginak Nigi, GinakKajata these are in The Gambia. You also have Ginak Barra and Ginak Jatacol in Senegal. Ginak Barra and Ginak Jatacol have these amenities, water and electricity. Drugs from outside to their communities to the great enticement of the people of Ginak Nigi and Ginak Kajata. There was a shallow that is no dug or dig throw 3meters in that water but it is undrinkable because the water is saline. Honourable Minister, I do not know when

will you have time for me to invite you we will not go the Island but we can go very close to it and I will point the place to you, we can have the people coming over? You will find a day if possible.

The other intervention I want to talk about is the office of the First Lady. It is not a public office but an office of a privilege because other First Ladies, in other countries have their offices and the First Lady is privileged by virtue of her association and contacts to bring a lot of assistance. We have been informed of many assistance that have been given to the hospital by the office of the First Lady and it is one of the serious place where one can request for assistance. A very serious emergencies and then it will be addressed because there is no bureaucracy first come first served sometimes emergencies are given priority. So, if we as National Assembly or if a National Assembly Member can stand here to question the office of the First lady, we will definitely defend it because of the amount of help the office of the First Lady has been offering. Sometimes the President goes to the extent of subsidizing the office of the First Lady. I hope we are not going to ask where is the President getting that money to subsidize that? Because we have reached to a point where even the salary that we have given to the President, we are beginning to question where he is getting that salary from.

Honourable colleagues, if I can have it through the Ministers to convey this communication to the Minister of works to speed up the road construction works for Hakalang. I would be very pleased and grateful. I am still concern about the pride of those people. If you are talking of time, those people were living in that place since time immemorial and in suffering. They still continue to suffer in this time we call our independent, our third Republic.

The Member for Foni Jarrol has talked about the constructions of roads, hospitals and schools thank you very much but the roads were constructed so as to speed up the kidnapping of people. The hospitals were constructed so that the prisoners in mile2 will be treated after they have been tortured for every reason. That man was not working for nothing he was always working for something and we have seen it this is what we have gone through. If your body could be identified as a thing lying

there, then there was absolute inhuman treatment. Good for constructing but then presently we were questioning how the resources were used and the resources for which they were used for? And it continues when we talk of the returnees or the deportees. I worked with the Minister for Foreign Affairs Gambians abroad international cooperation to always look into the possibility of discussing the conditions under which these people are brought in very inhumane, and touch a white man here the international papers will pick you up they could do that but our papers are not saying anything. Their hands, chest, legs are chained and they are dumped in the plane and deported. What crime has those people committed? Even if they have committed a crime you could be very human in the way you returning them.

I also wanted to ask the Minister for Foreign Affairs, so that if the National Assembly Members can match to the offices of the nearest consul, we have a commissioner here where our people are dying and we are not talking about that and yet this one is sitting in our air conditioned office doing nothing about it. Our children and women are dying there. Our people are being treated like slaves we should not even have any relationship with Libya because nothing good is coming out from that place for the benefit of our children who are on transit with international cooperation-transit, has privileges and no consideration is given to that. Where do we stand? We open the privileges for the commission to be here and then our privileges.... Anything. We are always in night mares and how long would that last? We have to move to show them that we are concerned so, that something could be done.

I want to ask the Minister for Energy how did NAWEC board was appointed, selected or elected and what is the criteria? We understand that a good number of the members of the board has some vested interest. They are engaged in some similar works that NAWEC would need from time to time. If I am the director of an electrical company, I will also make sure that a member from my company is add on so that they will come and buy something from me. Let us appoint people who do not have any vested interest in the positions that we are going to give them. With the attitude of the Ministers attending, if we can make pressure, if we can work with the Speaker or with the Attorney General and Minister for Justice, I will refer you to page '63'

section '109A', the public appointment standing committee to be created. You know people are not answerable to you, they do not respect you but when people are answerable to you, they will respect you. If this house, had the hand in the appointments of the Ministers, you think we will call them and they will not come? We use section '77'; '109' empowers us that and then they will come. They will come because we will be helping the President, in trying to scrutinise their capabilities, efficiency and the commitment of the individual who is nominated for that position but if the President, appoints anybody well they are obliged to the President if he calls them right now, they scream to the office.

Here is an obligation no policy can work without the involvement of the house and no policy can work without the approval of the house because the funding is approved here. When we call you to come and witness, what we talk about the pride of the people, you disregard us because you do not respect our office that is the bottom line. That Minister, who is call the friend of the National Assembly, why? Because he... us responsibilities always which present to come and answer to us even if we did not call him, he comes here. Why cannot the others do the same thing? I will make an analysis, all the Ministers who do not come to the house, are not interested in politics. Those who do not know any political responsibility are does who come to the house most of the time. *Applause ...*

Yes! Does who have interest in politics are does who stay away because they use the resources to do real politicking- these ones are not and they do not have time for politics. Politics is appointing these ones only to disturb them but they are committed and thank you very much. We thank you and we are very proud of you because, at any time you can come and answer to the queries of the Honourable Members. With that, I wish to add my voice to the demand that was made by the Member for Lower Baddibu. I am sure Madam Speaker, will guarantee and justify why I need a sea ambulance at Barra. These gentlemen and Honourable Members, were held in Barra for 6 good hours without a ferry crossing. I prepared lunch only to give it out as charity because, the time lunch was ready the ferry was there and they could not wait. We need a sea ambulance to bring the people who are referred from the North Bank to Edward Francis Small Teaching Hospital. Three days ago, a

car hit somebody at Bunyadu and we had to arrange a taxi to come and cross the person. I wish to add my voice to the inaptitude and the inefficient way the Agriculture Ministry is being operated. Preferential disbursement of materials on political side line. Thank you very much Madam Speaker.

HON. MUSA AMUL NYASSI [FONI KANSALA]: I thank you very much Madam Speaker. To begin my intervention, I want to completely refer you to the remark made by the Honorable Speaker when he assumes his seat as the Deputy Speaker in which he appealed that business in the house should be nonpartisan and 100% I concur with him but going further to identify by saying, particularly those members of the Coalition Government. I believe once we are here regardless of your political affiliation, your interest is the common interest that is what is the best to the nation and her people. So, it does not single out which political party you belong to but you should always be focused on serving the purpose and interest of the people we represent.

Madam Speaker, a lot of interventions and remarks have been made as far as Agriculture is concern and if I want to dilate on it, I am going to talk about the same thing that the others have said but I am pleased that my brother, the Permanent Secretary, the Ministry of Interior is before me. There is an issue which is the national interest and national concern. That is the issue of the national identity card and passports, it is a big challenge particularly to those Gambians in the Diaspora who want to renew or regularize their status. Honourable Permanent Secretary, I urge you to engage your Minister and see how the issue of the national identity card and passports can be resolved in the soonest possible time.

Honourable Minister for Energy, I know even where as we are given a bigger suitcase base on issues that arise here, I do not think we can compile them all but notwithstanding, we still have to touch on them because they are concerns. The contract agreement between SEMLEX and NAWEC particularly in the electrification of the North Bank of the Gambia where we have a generator at Farafenni which is underutilized and I believe we have villages along the border in the Senegal area at that deal electrification. So, I was thinking that the deal could have gone although I

am not au fait with the agreement but my belief is that the electrification of the villages within border land and Senegal, could have been exchanged for the electrification of the villages within the border line in Gambia around Karan where we do not have the capacity but we have the capacity at Farafenni which is underutilized. So, I just want to know what then the agreement is between SEMLEX and NAWEC but I will be interested if you check up to then clarify and shed light as far as that agreement is concern. Again on the issue of the electricity, talking about the... and.... Honourable Minister, I think the Select Committee which is entirely responsible for electricity, as far as the house is concerned is the PEC. I will urge or challenge Members of PEC to have interest in revisiting these proposals of these power plans be it the SEMLEX, the Cap.... And the Agrico.

Madam Speaker, you may be aware that I walked in late and I do not want to be labour or delay the time of Members on issues that might have been touched on in my absences. So, I will do justice to this house by saying that business in the house, must be completely be different from business one addressing our political gatherings. When we are here, we are representing the people of the Gambia Yes! Come from different political parties that is inevitable. I believe the Honourable Member for Busumbala, should have congratulated the people of Foni for not wasting electricity but instead he is accusing them for underutilizing it. Because, I see no reason why I should be coming to the house and I know I do not need to put my fan and television on, why should I not switch off everything come to National Assembly go back to the house and utilize electricity. Why do I put it on when I do not need it come here....? I do not think we are fair to people of Foni.

Madam Speaker, to wine up I want to commend each and every Member of this National Assembly for the manner in which the deliberations are been made. One thing I will say and I will keep saying if we think that, we should come to this house and each time we meet, clapping at each other. Each time we will be expecting that the words coming from each Member should be words that are strict then we are not representing the interest of the Gambian populace. We must disagree to agree, we must quarrel at the end of the day when we see the way out, we accept this is the best way regardless of who came up with an agenda and then we follow it then

we are representing the interest of the people of The Gambia. I keep saying it and some that I associate with can bear me witness. There is no single political party Member here that, I do not associate with and my association with you does not necessarily mean that I am trying to gain your confidence through just popularity that is not it. Because, I believe in politics we have different arguments is up to me and is up to you how we utilize your political ideology to influence my decision, to follow your decision and accept your ideas or how I do it the other round but at the end of the day, what is important is regardless of where the idea came from our general agreement should be to the interest of the people that we represent. Once it is to the interest of the people we represent we must accept it and when can we accept it is when the majority accept it because they are telling the truth. I mean you stay on your own

So, to conclude I concur with the Honourable Member for Lower Niumi. We were enslaved by the Whites, they came here and enslaved us. We cannot go back there and again they want to enslave us I do not think is fair. We are all privileged to information as in the manner in which the people that return from United States were been treated and I quite agreed with the Honourable Member for Lower Niumi that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Cooperation and Gambians Abroad and many others can come together and see how this issue can be addressed. Even if they are to be returned, it should be done in a very decent manner rather than in the manner which it occurred. Honourable Minister for Justice, everybody who spoke about you is not praise singing you, you did it and this is why people are talking about you. If you have done what your colleagues did, nobody would have talked about the good things been said about you.

So, I want to implore on you that I said it during the last adjournment debate please engage your cabinet colleagues we are not rivals but we are in it together. So, as I am a National Assembly Member, I am part and parcel of this Government regardless of the party I represent because the policy of this Government is what I stand for and I will give all that I can. When I stand on the political platform, there I am talking to concern Gambians to come and be on board to the party that I belong

to. That is completely different from the language I use at the National Assembly. On that note Madam Speaker, I beg to resume my seat. *Applause....*

HON. FODAY N. DRAMMEH [TUMANA]: I thank you Madam Speaker, for giving me the floor. I do not have much to say. I want to thank President of The Republic of the Gambia Adama Barrow for considering to construct the road from Basse via to ... to Kantora the two bridges and for the past 52 years this what we were crying for and within a short period, they are at last able to wipe our tears. So, on that note I thank you Mr. President, for considering URR most particularly Basse via Kantora.

So, the next point I want to elaborate on is, we as National Assembly Members of the Gambia and we are here to represent the people of this country so, in whatever we are doing we have to be professionals and ethical. So, we cannot be just National Assembly Members, sitting in the Chambers and we are doing things that are not in line with the law or the constitutions that one is very bad and we cannot also just sit and start tampering with goodness of this country. If you do not support the Government, you support the Government, if you support the Government – you support the Government there is no way, if you do not support the Government, we convince you to support the Government and there is no way. If you support the Government, to convince not to support the Government.

My next point is on the mining sector of this country. There has been a kind of mining in constituency in Badali as a village for quite some time during the last regime but I am a native of Tumana but I do not know what exactly are they mining on that site? It is some prestigious that they are mining from that site but up till date no one can tell me that this is the type mineral that they extracting from that site. I have it as question but it did not appear this time around may be it will come next time. I want to know the type of mineral that they are extracting from the site and also if the Minister can quantify the amount of minerals or returns that has been extracting from that site and the benefit it has to the people of that constituency but most particularly the people of this country call The Gambia?

The other side is the Ministry of Agriculture. The Minister made it clear here the last time that they want diversify agriculture from crop production to livestock production

which is a very good move and which I am really supporting but in other round, it is very interesting. Because Gambia as a country, if you want to diversify agriculture from crop production to livestock production you need to tighten your belt as a Government and as a Ministry.

We are all seeing what is happening in this country. When it comes Tobaski, lots of millions of Gambian dalasi are spent in buying rams especially for the Muslims but the interesting part is, most of these rams that we are buying are not coming from this country but coming from the southern part Senegal which sometimes for them to have well water is a problem some of them are coming from Mauritania. A well water in Mauritania is a problem but here in The Gambia, we are blessed with water, rain and fresh water but yet still we cannot produce our own livestock or even if we can, we are trying in their large numbers. So, what of if he was here in the Chambers, I would want him to at least give me some of the steps that he is taking towards addressing some of those issues because you cannot just diversify agriculture from crop production to livestock production if you do not put certain things in order. So, thank God that he was not here otherwise he would have at least give me some of the things he is trying to put in place in order some those problems.

Electricity, is a national problem and the Minister of Energy is here. I think is enough now if you go through the social medias, a lot of insults are being given to National Assembly Members because many people think that we failed in our responsibilities in putting the Government in to account. I think... acknowledge come December, the problem of this switching on and off of light will be a nightmare but yet we are still experiencing the same thing and Gambia cannot move forward as a country if the electricity situation in the country is not being addressed.

The other investors are hanging around, they want to come in and if they do they are going to create a lot of employment for the youth and 60% of our population are youth. Are we not trying to tighten our belts to create an employment for the youth so that if investors come, the youth will have the opportunity to work and earn their living? This Government, is a tax based economy and at least if those youth are also

working, they will pay tax to the Government at the end of the day The Government will use that money back on the people in a form service. I think the Energy Minister, is here he need to at least work hand in close with NAWEC to see to it that they put their house in order so that we can do away with all these murmuring. I think Madam Speaker, if takes it 52years to plan a cutting stick tree at a bantaba, it is never possible to uproot that overnight therefore, Gambian people need to exercise patience. I for one and the people that I am representing that is the people of Tumana, we are saying a big thanks to this Government especially to Mr President Adama Barrow, for the past 52years we have never benefited from road construction and we are now promised that they are going to construct our roads with two filter roads. Something that is not possible in the past 52years since we had our independence we are at least able to have it within a year, we are saying a big thanks to the President.

Gambian people let us exercise patience please. We are not exercising patience what has been damaged for the past 22years cannot be solved in a day, year or 5 to 10years and give time to the President, to work. We are not giving any time to the President, let us give time to this Government to lay down the foundation stone for this country please. On that note Madam Speaker, I thank you. *Applause....*

HON. OUSMAN TOURAY [SABACH SANJAL]: I thank you Madam Speaker. I want to acknowledge the presence of the two Ministers here especially the Minister for Justice. I also want to make a recommendation that the Assembly offer him a certificate for at least attending sessions all the time we are really pleased with you.

Madam Speaker, in fact I have a lot a to talk about but now I have less to say because those who speaks before me have already highlighted all the areas that I wanted to talk about. However, I will make reinforcement or I will add my voice to some of the points already raised. If you look at The Gambia, agriculture as many have said is the backbone of the country and Agriculture is the most materialistic sector also agriculture have the largest project in the country. The Minister came here and told us that the cotdinian of US dollars or Euros to purchase groundnuts for this season unfortunately and ... for that matter. Some farmers, their nuts where

bought two months ago and they did not see a penny. Imagine if all of us are not paid for one month what will happen? And these people get these annually and the Government is not even talking they still remain a close ... I think even if they have challenges or problem, they can talk to them and tell them what are the problems so that they can at least have a peace of mind but they are keeping quite farmers do not know what to do- they do not know what is the problem and people always confront us. I think the Minister should have been here today.

The other issue I want to talk about is the forest. Definitely we enacted a Bill here and I saw in section '80' 'A to I' is talking about fire issue. My problem there is there are business that are already established with regards to taping of the forest resource especially in North Bank more especially in Sabach Sanjal. ... from Gunjata to Bambali is a verse area and there is a thick forest but now if you go there, it is almost turn to desert. I was going on a tour with the Minister, works together with three Chiefs and all the works departments. We found a hip of ... been harvested from that forest and when I ask the Chiefs, they said they do not know when the whole they were behind this so, this is serious. In most part of North Bank, what people say isand they will find it through the forest. They will get license from the forest department and.....in fact it is not proper to license a tree on the bases religious practices is not proper and this is the practice in North Bank and this is why the forest is gone so, if you go to ...now you can even drive a car in to the forest. It could have been a very good resource for The Gambians. I think the department with all the ... is still a problem and if you look at the people that most involve or engage in this are the local authorities so ...there you cannot go and talk about it.

I had a similar reason so, I think during that experience and what I saw was, it was a.... and the old lady was allowed to tap the forest when I was there, I want to ... and to the extent of ...this is happening So, the time he was there I will explain this thoroughly but really we need to do something about the forest.

To the Health Sector; as many people have said it here health is the general problem of the Gambia. I do not take information from the street like that... the media, social media and so on. Let us be patience Gambia, is now experiencing

democracy and people are enjoying it so, let us allow people to express themselves. When you talk, your grievances are gone but if you deprive people from talking it will bring a lot of issues let them talk. As somebody said it here when you are talking, talk with objectives do not talk for the shake of talking. So, these are some of the things and most of the youth in the social media, are just misleading and I think we should sensitize our people about that.

In the Health Sector as I said in Sabach Sanjal, in particular we have two minor health centers and these are located at Ginesanjai and Sara Kunda but ... is the essential drugs that are lacking and I do not know what is responsible for this. What is the essence of building a hospital or a minor health center without giving them essential medicines or drugs? Essential drugs are very key because they are the primary drugs that you give to the patients that are visiting the health centre and I think the Health Ministry should also look in to that. She stood here and said they have a plan of revitalizing these primary health cares and still now nothing is being said about that and primary health cares are the number one ... in these communities. Before apply if you are attacked with a fever, it is difficult to get to those minor health centres so to priorities those health cares are equipped and fertilized so, that people can easily get access to health service there. I think is important to work on this and I know the development of the Gambia is dictated by the development plan so this is why I do not use to talk of Sabach Sanjal or my ... because I know whatever the problem is, they should focus on that development plan. Whatever that development plan has for Sabach Sanjal, I expect things to happen at the time frame so that is how I am going to put this Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, coming to illegal migration. Illegal migration, I said it to the Ministers there that they cannot stop migration because this world is a global village now. You come to Africa if you have interest in Africa and if you have interest in Europe you will go there too. So, you cannot stop migration though illegal migration you can but you are the people who are encouraging this illegal migration so,...for people to access a visa to Europe is a problem. So, if you cannot get a visa to Europe and you want to go there, you will take the illegal way. This is what is causing our people to go to Europe in an illegal way.

Regarding those returnees from Libya and some part of Africa...migration, I think some millions of dollars were given to that organization. They registered them, they got their tickets and still now nothing is being said about them –I do not know what is responsible for this. I think the concern Ministry, should really tell The Gambia what is the problem because you cannot just fun for a particular program, you did not give out the fund and you do not inform the people this is serious.

On Energy sector; I am very happy that the Minister for Energy is here with us. Honourable Minister, I do not know whether you know Sabach Sanjal? It is a constituency of 56 villages and divided by Farafenni Lamin koto to highway on both sides North and South and the villages are allocated in the North and South of the road. Now but if you look at the electricity poling, they started from Farafenni they are coming to Farafenni, Sara Ndiyin, Sara Kunda then Bambali which is the last village in the far South. There are villages on the highway where the wire pass through but those villages are not connected and some of the villages that are not connected especially in Bambali, I went there the last time and I counted up to ten compounds which are not still connected. I went to the Director, he told me that he was not aware of that because all the pole where allocated and everything was- but some of the poles where returned but I do not know the reason. So, these are the issues... proper I really want you add your support to that.

In Bambali, some communities are still not connected let them connect them and we do not need poles, we just need a cable to stretch from the pole to the building is very simple. So, I do not think pole is required there in some of those villages I can even name a few of them, you have then you go to the other side you have Sinchu which is Balo-omar, Njayan, Ndowen and Kerr Bamba those are the villages where the wiring has to be there is no requirement of poling in that area. So, I think we need urgent attention when it comes to Energy.

So, before I take my leave My Madam Speaker, I want to still appeal on the Health sector. As I said before if you look at Bambali, it is the last village in the South of Sabach Sanjal it is very close to Niamina Jareng they are just divided by the sea. Now, there is a health post which is initiated by the villagers-this is very big, they did

this structure in a very good way and they need a nurse plus an ambulance because from Bambali to Sara Kunda is 8kilometers. That is what I am appealing to the Minister for health though he is not here, I have said it and I am repeating it again may be I will find time to visit her and see what will happen regarding to that issue. With that Madam Speaker, I beg to take my seat and I thank you.

HON BAKARY NJIE [BUNDUNGKA KUNDA]: I thank you very much Madam Speaker, for giving me the floor. Madam Speaker, I will start my intervention with the new Gambia we are all talking about. Madam Speaker, business cannot be as usual as we all said now we have a new Gambia obviously we should all try and make a difference.

Madam Speaker, we had a Budget Session and there was a zero tax on rice. Obviously, every Gambia is watching and expecting to see what would happen in the near future because, we all know that Gambians depend on rice every day. So, rice is something that is very important as long as our survival is concern. This is why I think every Gambian is looking towards the day the price will come down as expected when the tax on rice have been made. From December, to now it is almost three months and every week or month you have seen rice coming in to this country and we were told obviously that it cannot just go down like that. The stock it has here or the stock that was here must be exhausted first but even after January, we have been seen most of rice coming in to this country and still now there no change of price of a bag of rice. I think it important sometimes the Government brief her citizens through the Minister of Information and Tourism because, people need the information and people need to know what is going on.

Questions have been asked, Gambians are asking questions after one to two. When are we expecting the price of rice to go down and it is still not going down? So, the people owe it to the Government, to make sure that at any crucial time, to come out and talk to the people so that, the people will know what is going on. Because, if the people do not know what is going on, sometimes it brings tensions or sometimes it brings mare speculations which sometimes are unfounded and bring crises.

Madam Speaker, haven said that, I think it is very important this new Gambia we are all calling for and yearning for, we know that things change for the better not for the worse. Madam Speaker, 2years ago, we realized that gasoil from other petrol stations are clean and clear that you can understand fuel gasoil but that is not happening in this country anymore now. Gasoil is being diluted so that, these companies can maximize profit by adding oil which are definitely good for the energy oil of our cars. The Government, is buying new cars and we expect them to stay longer and even the individuals are buying new cars and they expect the lives of their vehicles to stay long. Actually I do not know whether the Minister, of Petroleum is aware of this? Then it was only Gam Petrol that was selling that type of diesel and most people go there because of that. Because, that gasoil is the best for motor engines that use gasoil and if people are doing this in our country without even telling the public that this is what they are doing. People are relying on us that we are making sure things are going well with everything when actually there are things that are going on which are not correct at all and this is a serious issue which needed to be looked in to seriously. If you are doing really, I think people need to know that this is what they are doing and if they want to buy it find they buy it but I do not think in fact we should.....**[Poor recording]**.

House Adjourned Sine-Die