REPUBLIC OF THE GAMBIA
National Assembly, New Assembly Building, Reginald Pye Lane,
Banjul, The Gambia

REPORT OF THE SELECT COMMITTEE ON TRADE AND REGIONAL INTEGRATION

SITE VISIT TO SALAAM CEMENT PRODUCTION FACILITY AT THE DENTON BRIDGE

JUNE 2026

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CHAIRPERSON'S STATEMENT

On behalf of the Trade and Regional Integration Committee of the National Assembly, I am pleased to present this statement following the Committee's follow-up site visit to the Salaam Cement production facility at Denton Bridge on the 21st April 2026.

This visit was undertaken as part of the Committee's oversight mandate to assess developments at the company as a follow-up visit by the previous Trade Committee of the 5th Legislature in 2018. During that earlier engagement, it was observed that Salaam Cement Company was primarily involved in the importation and re-bagging of cement. The company had, however, indicated its intention to transition into full-scale cement production in The Gambia.

The objective of this recent visit was therefore to verify the progress made towards achieving this goal and to ascertain the extent to which the company has fulfilled its commitment to establish local cement manufacturing operations.

During the visit, the Committee toured the facility and received detailed briefings from the management of Salaam Cement regarding their operational activities, investments made, production processes, challenges encountered, and future expansion plans. The Committee observed significant developments in infrastructure, machinery installation, and production capacity, which demonstrate the company's efforts towards moving beyond re-bagging activities.

The Committee recognizes the importance of local cement production in supporting industrialization, creating employment opportunities, reducing import dependency, enhancing value addition, and contributing to the country's economic growth agenda. We therefore commend the management of Salaam Cement for the progress registered thus far.

Nevertheless, the Committee emphasizes the need for continuous investment in production capacity, quality assurance, environmental compliance, and workforce development to ensure that the company achieves sustainable and competitive cement production standards.

Therefore, the findings and recommendations arising from this visit are incorporated into this report for consideration. On behalf of the Committee, I thank the management and staff of Salaam Cement for their cooperation and hospitality during the visit.

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Honourable Kebba Jallow

Chairperson, Trade and Regional Integration Committee

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Trade and Regional Integration Committee is particularly grateful to the management and staff of Salaam Cement for providing comprehensive briefings on the company's operations, investments, production processes, achievements, and future plans. The openness and professionalism demonstrated during the engagement enabled the Committee to effectively assess the progress made since its predecessor's previous visit in 2018.

The Committee also extends its sincere gratitude to the Office of the Speaker and the Office of the Clerk of the National Assembly for the administrative and logistical support provided throughout the exercise. Their continued commitment to strengthening parliamentary oversight is highly appreciated.

Special recognition is accorded to the Members of the Committee for their dedication and active participation during the visit. Their commitment to fulfilling the Committee's oversight responsibilities ensured a productive and informative engagement.

The Committee further acknowledges the support of the staff of the National Assembly assigned to the Committee, whose technical and secretarial assistance greatly contributed to the successful planning and execution of the visit.

The Committee remains committed to its oversight mandate and to supporting initiatives that advance trade, industry, and regional integration in The Gambia.

INTRODUCTION

Pursuant to its oversight mandate under the 1997 Constitution of the Republic of The Gambia and the Standing Orders of the National Assembly, the Trade and Regional Integration Committee conducted a site visit to the Salaam Cement Production Facility at Denton Bridge on Tuesday, 21st April 2026.

The visit formed part of the Committee's efforts to gain firsthand knowledge of the operations of key industrial establishments involved in manufacturing, trade, investment, and industrial development within The Gambia. As cement remains a critical input in the construction sector, the Committee considered it necessary to assess the production capacity, operational challenges, regulatory compliance, and contribution of Salaam Cement to the national economy.

The delegation was received by the management team of Salaam Cement, who provided detailed briefings on the company's operations, investment profile, production processes, market performance, and future expansion plans.

OBJECTIVES OF THE VISIT

The specific objectives of the visit are to:

1. Examine the cement production processes and evaluate the operational capacity of Salaam Cement;
2. Assess the company’s compliance with applicable trade, environmental, and industrial regulatory frameworks;
3. Identify and analyze operational, logistical, and market-related challenges affecting cement production and distribution in The Gambia;

4. Evaluate the company's contribution to employment generation, local content development, and national economic growth;
5. Engage Management on pricing structures, cost drivers, and market competitiveness within the sector; and
6. Identify policy, legislative, and regulatory gaps requiring parliamentary attention and possible intervention.

METHODOLOGY

The Committee employed the following approaches during the visit:

- A briefing session with the Management of Salaam Cement.
- Guided inspection of the production facility and storage areas.
- Observation of operational processes and equipment.
- Interactive discussions and question-and-answer sessions with management and technical staff.

FINDINGS

The delegation was received by the Managing Director and his team and expressed appreciation for the visit. He recalled that during the 5th Legislature, the Trade and Regional Integration Committee visited the company in 2018, then it was engaged only in re-bagging of imported cement. Since then, Salam Cement has successfully transitioned to local manufacturing of cement in the Gambia.

He further highlighted that Salaam Cement is one of the few African-owned producers in the subregion, competing against foreign-owned companies despite industrial rivalry. Production began in 2022, with a capacity of 300,000 tons and gradually aiming to produce 1,000,000 tons annually. Raw materials include gypsum, clinker, and limestone sourced from Senegal and Spain. The company remains committed to quality and expansion despite challenges.

Production Operations

Salaam Cement operates a modern cement processing and packaging facility designed to meet growing domestic demand for cement products. The facility undertakes the blending, processing, packaging, storage, and distribution of cement for the local market.

On electricity supply, the MD stated that power supply remains unreliable and costly. Salam relies on 2-megawatt generators. Current tariffs are charged at commercial rates instead of industrial rates, unlike neighboring countries.

Currently, raw materials are sourced internationally, ensuring compliance with standards. Production is automated and computerized, producing cement grades of 42.5. Bags consistently weigh 50kg, verified by Central weight and Measures.

Employment Creation

The company provides direct employment opportunities for Gambians in various technical, administrative, and operational roles. The Committee was informed that efforts are being made to increase local participation through skills development and on-the-job training.

The current staff enrolled by Salaam is approximately 75–90 employees. Expansion of the company will increase staff to 275–290.

Investment and Industrial Development

The facility represents a significant private-sector investment in The Gambia's manufacturing sector. Its operations contribute to industrial growth, revenue generation, and the reduction of supply disruptions within the construction industry.

The MD informed the delegation that expansion of the Company requires approximately $110–120 million financing. The International Finance Corporation and Afreximbank were approached by the Government, but no support has materialized yet.

Ha also indicated that raw materials are discovered in Kombo Sotokoi and Kumuleh, but it remains inaccessible due to land disputes. Thus, the company is appealing for government assistance in securing these raw materials.

Product Distribution

Management informed the Committee that the company supplies cement products across the country through an established distribution network. The facility maintains storage capacity to support market demand and ensure continuity of supply.

Health and Safety Measures

The Committee observed the presence of safety signage, personal protective equipment, and basic occupational safety procedures. Management indicated that employees receive periodic safety training.

Operational Challenges

The company highlighted several operational challenges, including:

- High energy and utility costs.
- Rising transportation and logistics expenses.
- Fluctuations in international raw material prices.
- Port and supply chain constraints affecting the timely arrival of inputs.
- Competition from imported cement products.

OBSERVATIONS

The Committee observed that:

1. Salaam Cement has established itself as an important player in the local cement industry and contributes significantly to the availability of cement products in The Gambia.
2. The facility demonstrates a commitment to industrial development and private-sector investment.
3. There is potential for further expansion of production capacity to meet increasing demand associated with national infrastructure and housing projects.
4. Continued investment in technology and equipment modernization would enhance operational efficiency and competitiveness.
5. The company appears committed to maintaining workplace safety standards; however, continuous improvement and monitoring remain necessary.
6. Greater collaboration between government institutions and manufacturing industries could help address challenges relating to energy costs, logistics, and industrial competitiveness.
7. Increased local value addition and industrial production remain essential for reducing dependence on imports and promoting economic diversification.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommends that:

1. The Government should continue to create an enabling environment for local manufacturing industries through supportive industrial and trade policies.
2. Relevant authorities should explore measures to reduce energy and utility costs for productive sectors of the economy.
3. Greater investment should be made in transport and logistics infrastructure to facilitate efficient movement of raw materials and finished products.
4. Salaam Cement should continue investing in modern technology and production equipment to improve efficiency and product quality.
5. The company should strengthen occupational health and safety measures through regular staff training and compliance monitoring.
6. Government agencies and the private sector should collaborate to promote local industrial production and value addition.
7. Salaam Cement should expand skills development programmes aimed at building the capacity of its personnel.
8. The company should continue to strengthen its environmental management practices to ensure sustainable industrial operations.
9. The Ministry responsible for Trade and Industry should maintain regular engagement with local manufacturers to identify and address sector-specific challenges.
10. The Government should encourage increased private-sector investment in manufacturing industries to support employment creation and economic transformation.

CONCLUSION

The Committee concludes that Salaam Cement is making a valuable contribution to The Gambia's industrial sector through cement production, employment creation, and support for the construction industry. The facility demonstrates the positive impact of private-sector investment on national development and economic growth.

Notwithstanding these achievements, the company continues to face operational challenges relating to energy costs, logistics, and market competition. Addressing these constraints will be essential to enhancing productivity, ensuring affordability of cement products, and strengthening the competitiveness of local manufacturing industries.

The Committee commends the management and staff of Salaam Cement for their efforts and commitment to supporting The Gambia's industrialization agenda.

DELEGATION

Honourable Members

1. Hon. Kebba Jallow - Chairperson
2. Hon. Modou Lamin B. Bah - Member
3. Hon. Sulayman Saho - Member
4. Hon. Nfamara Sabally - Member
5. Hon. Dawda Jeng - Co-opted Member

Support staff

1. Ms. Fatoumata Keita - Committee Clerk
2. Ms. Ramatoulie Jawo - Communication Officer
3. Mr. Molifa Colley - Driver

Witnesses

1. Mr. Muhammadu Sillah - Managing Director, Salaam
2. Mr. Ebrima Sinera - Manager, Salaam
3. Mr. Muhammed Sillah - Operations head, Salaam