



**REPUBLIC OF THE GAMBIA**

National Assembly, New Assembly Building, Reg. Pye Lane,  
Banjul, The Gambia.

**THE SELECT COMMITTEE ON REGIONAL  
GOVERNMENT, LANDS, OMBUDSMAN AND THE  
INDEPENDENT ELECTORAL COMMISSION**

**REPORT ON THE OVERSIGHT TOUR TO OFFICES OF THE  
MINISTRY OF LANDS, REGIONAL GOVERNMENT &  
RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS, AND THE INDEPENDENT  
ELECTORAL COMMISSION.**

**16 - 26 OCTOBER, 2023**



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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Local Governments in every State, whether unitary or federal, are crucial in effective administration of the State. It is the most significant way of bringing people closer to the Government and taking national priorities down to the grassroots. Local Governments are also crucial in reechoing the will and wishes of a particular group of people in a region. It is therefore paramount that the National Assembly, which creates these local authorities through an Act, carry out oversight on their activities and operations.

It is against this backdrop that the Select Committee on Regional Government, Lands, Ombudsman, and IEC, accompanied by Mr. David Gomez, the Director of Governance at the Ministry of Lands and Regional Government, embarked on a nationwide tour to institutions and Agencies as well as elected Councils under the purview of the Ministry. The visit took the Committee to the offices of the Regional Governors of the North Bank Region (NBR), Central River Region (CRR), Upper River Region (URR), Lower River Region (LRR), West Coast Region (WCR), Kanifing Municipality (KM) and Banjul City Council (BCC), the Regional Offices of the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC), and the Ombudsman.

The tour also included visit to project sites to get updates on the status of the ongoing and completed projects of the Councils along with the challenges they faced. The interactions availed the Committee the opportunity to know the scope of their operations, plans to meet growing demands as well as the challenges faced.

### 1.1 OBJECTIVES OF THE OVERSIGHT VISIT

The objectives of the oversight visit include:

1. To interact with officials of the Ministry of Lands and Regional Government at the regions, as well as Traditional Leaders on the mode of operation of the Councils and Departments.
2. To assess the number and types of projects initiated and managed by the Ministry in each Region.
3. To receive updates and firsthand information on the ongoing projects of the Councils and their source of funding.
4. To identify the challenges and a possible way forward for effective service delivery.

## 1.2 METHODOLOGY

The methodology adopted by the committee to ensure coherence in the processes and accomplish the oversight exercise includes the following:

- 1) Briefing Session by officials, and Project Coordinators
- 2) Question and Answer sessions
- 3) Site Visits to ascertain the prior information given.

## 1.3 DELEGATION

1. Hon. Sulayman Jammeh	-	Chairperson
2. Hon. Omar Jobe	-	Member
3. Hon. Alieu Baldeh	-	Member
4. Hon. Alhagie Babou Ceesay	-	Member
5. Hon. Abdoulie Njai	-	Member
6. Hon. Essa Conteh	-	Member
7. Hon. Kemo Gassama	-	Member
8. Hon. Musa Badjie	-	Member
9. Mr David Gomez	-	Director of Governance, MoRGL
10. Ms. Fatou Gibba	-	Committee Clerk
11. Ms Fatoumata Keita	-	Committee Clerk
12. Mr. Chernob B. Jallow	-	Subject Matter Specialist
13. Mr. Abdoulie Bondi	-	Subject Matter Specialist
14. Ms. Ramou Secka	-	Communication Officer
15. Mr. Adama Sey	-	Driver

## 1.4 MANDATE OF THE COMMITTEE

1. Consider reports, scrutinize the actions of Ministries, Department and Agencies, and determine whether they are compliant and aligned with national priorities.
2. Determine whether the interventions of the projects under review are adequately and appropriately aligned with and focused on implementing the approved strategies.
3. Check and determine the level of compliance of the managements of these projects with the agreed and approved project operations and management mechanisms; work schedules; approved cost estimates, time frames, progress, and budgets.
4. To make appropriate recommendations to Government through the National Assembly to improve performance, mitigate challenges, and sanction mismanagement.

## 2.0 FINDINGS

### 2.1 KEREWAN AREA COUNCIL

The Members of the Committee were received upon arrival in Barra by the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Mrs. Sainabou Martin-Sonko, and her team.

The Chief Executive Officer informed the Committee that the new development policies are geared towards supporting the communities within the region. She reported to the Committee about the lack of manpower within the administration such as Council Clerk, Administrative and IT Officers.

Mrs Martin-Sonko further reported on the support the Council is soliciting from Gambia Ports Authority through their Corporate Social Responsibility and National Environment Agency on waste management. The team was reliably informed that the Council had two tractors, one of which is not operational. They are also soliciting support from the UNDP. It is important to note that the Council is operating with six different bank accounts.

In Barra, the Committee undertook a conducted tour of the car park, the toilets, and the market. It was observed that these sites are badly kept and need serious and collaborative attention from both the Council and the community, particularly those within the vicinity of the car park and the market. During the meeting with the garage users, it was raised that there is a dire need for an outlet from the car park to ease the traffic congestion and they wanted the Council to lead the way. They also reported that there are no Rules and Regulations governing the car park administration, which makes it even more difficult to regulate the six (6) committees within the car park.

In Farafenni, the Select Committee met with the Governor, Chairman and the seven (7) District Chiefs. The Governor expressed his appreciation to the Committee and thanked them for making sure that his residence in Kerewan is completed and furnished.

In his deliberation, the Chairman of Kerewan Area Council informed the Committee that the revenue generated in both Farafenni and Barra market is minimal. However, during the tour of the Farafenni market, it was discovered that it has the potential of collecting more revenue by virtue of the number of stalls, side vendors, shops, and stores within the market.

The Select Committee visited the Area Council Guest House, which was built in 2018, and found it in a deplorable state due to the lack of cleanliness, leakages, unhygienic

toilets, insufficient supply of water and electricity. The Committee observed that with proper care, the guest house can generate a lot of funds for the Council, since Farafenni is a cosmopolitan town.

The newly built market in Farafenni was also visited. However, according to the Chairman, it is yet to be occupied due to the poor condition of the road connecting the market to the main highway. He reported that he has written to the National Roads Authority and copied both the Select Committee and the Ministry of Lands.

The Commissioner of Police updated the Committee on the security operations of his team in curtailing theft cases and animal rustling within the region. The population of the region is 220,080 (2013 Census), with a total number of 332 settlements.

### **2.1.1 CHALLENGES**

#### **Office of The Governor**

- 1). Inadequate fuel supply for their operational needs.
- 2). Insufficient funding for quarterly Technical Advisory Committee meetings (TAC)

### **2.1.2 CONSTRAINTS OF THE CHIEFS**

1. Lack of mobility for them and their Badge Messengers to effectively run their official errands.
2. Lack of mobile phones for ease of communication with “Alkalos” and other Government offices.
3. Lack of Uniforms for the Badge messengers.
4. Lack of District Authority Offices for court hearings and keeping of the judgement reports and documents for continuity.

### **2.2.1 RECENTLY COMPLETED PROJECT**

#### **1. Munyagen Market**

Munyagen Market is part of the series of markets that the Council constructed across the region for the women to be able to sell their produce in hygienic facilities. The market is also provided with a toilet facility. It was to be inaugurated on 17<sup>th</sup> October 2023.



## 2.2.2 ONGOING PROJECT

### **Sara Kunda market**

Sara Kunda Market is at the stage of roofing. The contract was awarded on 17<sup>th</sup> April 2023, for a period of 3 months. The market, according to the contract, should be completed by now but due to the changes of the management at the Council, the project got delayed. The new management has taken the responsibility of completing the project.

## 2.2.3 PLANNED ACTIVITIES

1. Rehabilitation of Kerewan Area Council (KAC) office building
2. Rehabilitation of the Chairman's residence
3. Procurement of two official Vehicles
4. Public Private Partnership (PPP) on the construction of public toilets

## 2.2.4 STRATEGIC PRIORITY PILLAR ONE

Health, Education, Nutrition, Water and Sanitation

## 2.2.5 WATER

1. Borehole drilling for communities across the Region
2. Extension of NAWEC water pipes to people far from supply system

**Communities Borehole are as follows.**

Darusalam, Kerr Dekodeh, Medina Mannen, Palodi, Pallen Sanjal, Dobo, Maida, Kerr Biram, Galoya, Wallalan, Samba Musa, Jaiba Sable Satou and KAC offices at Farafenni and Kerewan

### 2.2.5.1 HAND PUMP WELL REPAIRS

Kani Kunda Suba, Samataba, Jajari, Conteh Kunda Niji, Sinchu Mutel, Lewna Njago, Mendy Kunda, Kerr Gallo, Daru Fodayba, Njie Kundaring, Tawakaltu

### **2.2.6 SANITATION AND HYGIENNE**

1. Kerewan Area Council constructed public toilets at markets, car parks and Lumos (weekly markets)
2. Barra Market and Car Park have a public toilet and a Caretaker.
3. Farafenni Market and Kaur Junction have toilets managed by the Council.
4. There are seven Lumos in the Region, which are provided with toilets and wash stations with a water tank capacity of 1000 liters.

### **2.2.7 WASTE COLLECTION AND DISPOSAL**

There are two (2) major growth centers, Farafenni and Barra. Due to the businesses operating in those centers, the Council collects a lot of waste daily from the markets and car parks and disposes them at the major dump sites. At Farafenni, the Council has two (2) tractors and two (2) tricycles, with seven (7) waste collectors. Farafenni has four (4) legal temporary dump sites and twenty-seven (27) other illegal sites where waste is indiscriminately dumped. At Barra, the Council has two (2) tractors currently operating. The Lumos at Kerr Pateh, Ndungu Kebbeh and Fass are provided with tricycles.

### **2.2.8 PROVISION OF DRAINAGE SYSTEM**

During the Visit at KAC, they informed the Committee that they provided a drainage system in 2020 at the Barra Fish market. The market always experiences flooding and generates a lot of liquid waste. Barra is also identified as a hotspot for flooding and the EU, through the National Disaster Management Agency (NDMA), intervened by constructing a drainage canal at Barra and trained waste management committees.

### **2.2.9 PROVISION OF TRASH BINS**

Kerewan Area Council has provided over 200 trash bins to the market operators, to help in the management of waste generated daily.

### **2.2.10 RESOURCE MOBILIZATION**

The Council this year as a resolution of the General Council decided to transfer the business registration for financial collectors to the Department of Planning. Therefore, the Planning Department is introducing a digital registration graduating from the manual registration that was done by revenue collectors. The process has started, and we hope to see an increment of council revenue come 2024.

### 2.2.11 CHALLENGES

1. Inadequate financial, technical, human, and material resources. Key relevant positions are not filled, Clerk of Council, IT officer, Council Engineer, Budget Officer, and Public Relations Officer.
2. Council lacks the resource to be able to tackle the issue of waste, especially at the two (2) growth centers, cost of waste truck is very expensive.
3. Attitudinal change, waste should be everybody's business and not looking at the Council alone as being responsible.
4. Sectorial coordination should be enhanced because other institutions do not work in accordance with the 2002 Local Government Act. Developments are not channeled through the Council.
5. The Senegambia Bridge generates lot of revenue, but Council is not benefiting from Royalties.
6. Traditional revenues such as sand mining, billboards and sign boards are eroded to other Institutions and Agencies such as GLMA.
7. The Council's main office building is dilapidated, and the rehabilitation is estimated to cost four million Dalasi.
8. The Council lacks an official vehicle; the Chairman, CEO and Department Heads have been using their private vehicles for more than three years to facilitate operations.
9. Support from central Government is not forthcoming and this continues to cripple its financial muscle.
10. Inadequate staff training and lack of capacity building opportunities.
11. Slow response from sectors to re-align with the call for decentralization.
12. Inadequate institutional collaboration i.e., lack of enforcement of the Anti-Littering regulations.
13. Rates and taxes have never been revised for the past 30 years despite the demand to Councils for the provision of services is on the increase.
14. Delay in disbursement of car park dues is hindering development.
15. Some Village Development Committees (VDC) are confronting the Council on open spaces within business environments in Sub-Urban settlements.

The Committee concluded its engagement with the Council at Munyagen village market. The Farafenni Guest House and market were also visited by the Committee.

### **3.0 THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

In the NBR, this Department has an overall staff number of close to two hundred and fifteen (215) personnel, spread in all parts of the country. This is an initiative-taking integrated approach to development, coupled with building the capacities of decentralized structures on project planning, implementation, coordination, monitoring, and supervision at the community level. The regional office accommodation leaves much to be desired in term of a conducive working environment.

Like the Kerewan Regional Office, the office has three rooms with a leaking roof, which has been accommodated by the Regional Agriculture Directorate for than four decades. In Kuntaur, the Regional Office is within the Council with small apartments because of limited space. In the URR, the regional office is equally within the Area Council with two small rooms, and the same scenario obtains in Janjanbureh.

The few exceptions are Mansakonko and Brikama, where there is a designated land for office. The challenge is not refurbishment of the existing offices, but construction of an office complex in these areas. This will go a long way in creating a conducive working environment with a view to maximizing output.

#### **3.1 OBJECTIVE**

1. Reduce burden and congestion on the operating staff.
2. Create availability and long-term infrastructure worth for the Department.
3. Promote the possibility of expansion of services area such as appropriate technology.

### **4.0 KUNTAUR AREA COUNCIL**

The Chairman welcomed the Hon. Members and express delight in receiving the Select Committee on behalf of the Council and the Governor of Central River Region (CRR). The Select Committee informed the Council about the purpose of the visit, which is in relation to the Committee's mandate.

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) informed the Committee that the Council is one of the eight Councils that has 10 Wards namely, Ballangharr, Kaur, Panchang, Nyanga Bantang, Chamen, Niani, Banni, Karantaba, Njau, Pachonki. He further informed the committee that there were no projects implemented in 2023, due to lack of funds.

## **4.1 CHALLENGES**

1. Non-compliance by the Central Government to pay 25% subvention as established by the Local Government Act, 2002.
2. The Council not informed about projects implemented by Office of The Governor.
3. Lack of proper valuation and revaluation of properties.
4. Collection of rates and taxes being very low for a long period of time.
5. Inadequate financial, technical, human, and material resources.
6. Lack of official vehicles to carry out activities.
7. Inadequate staff training and lack of capacity-building opportunities.

## **5.0 OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR**

The Governor of Central River Region (CRR), resident in Janjanbureh, welcomed the Honorable Members to his office and expressed gratitude to the Committee for exercising its constitutional mandate. He further informed the Committee that CRR is the biggest region with a total of 11 districts and 635 villages.

The Select Committee informed the Governor and his team that the purpose of the visit is to gather first-hand information regarding their way of operations, achievements, challenges, award of contracts and selection of project sites.

During the interaction, the Governor mentioned that the development of this nation lies in the hands of the National Assembly. He pointed out that it is equally important for the Council and all partners in development to work together for the benefit of the people living within the Region.

## **5.1 CHALLENGES OF THE GOVERNOR**

1. Inadequate funding to execute some of the activities within the region.
2. Implementation of projects in the region without notifying the Governor's Office.
3. Insufficient fuel supply for execution of the activities within the region.
4. Lack of mobility for security patrols.
5. Insufficient funds for the quarterly Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) meeting

## 5.2 CONSTRAINTS OF CHIEFS

1. Lack of mobility to conduct tours in the Districts and attend meetings in Banjul.
2. Lack of Court Rooms and offices in each district for proceedings and recordkeeping.
3. Lack of uniforms and mobility (motorcycles or bicycles) for the badge messengers.
4. Unpaid allowances for certain Alkalos and the new Chiefs.

## 6.0 JANJANBUREH AREA COUNCIL

Members of the Committee were received by the Chairman, CEO and Councilors. In their welcoming remarks, they first and foremost apologized for their unruly behavior displayed during the last visit of the Select Committee of the 6th Legislature. The Chairperson of the Select Committee informed the Chairman, CEO, and the Councilors about the purpose of the visit, which is to gather first-hand information regarding their way of operations, achievements, challenges. He also accepted their apologies on behalf of the 6<sup>th</sup> Legislature and reminded them of the authority vested on the National Assembly Select Committee, which is equivalent to that of a High Court. Therefore, he advised them to refrain from such behaviors in the future.

## 6.1 CHALLENGES OF THE COUNCIL

1. Noncompliance of the Central Government to pay 25% subvention as established by the Local Government Act, 2002.
2. Lack of information about projects being implemented by the Office of The Governor.
3. Lack of proper valuation and revaluation of properties.
4. Rates and taxes were very low for a long period of time.
5. Inadequate financial and material resources.
6. Lack of official vehicles to carry out their activities.
7. Inadequate staff training and lack of capacity building opportunities.
8. Shortage of manpower: no Auditor, Council Clerk and Procurement Officer.
9. Lack of authority to hire or fire any member of Council Staff at regional level.
10. Having difficulties recovering their annual rentals from these institutions:

Gamcel Company	D320, 000.00
Gamtel Company	D400, 519.14
SSHFC	D283, 425.74
NAWEC	D1, 236, 778.60
NFSPMC (former GGC)	D594, 217.00
Africell Mobile Company	D448, 000.00
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>D2, 879, 740.48</b>

## **6.2 CONSTRAINTS AT OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN**

1. Lack of toilets, cleaners, and mobility
2. Inadequate office space without enough ventilation.
3. Lack of air conditioners
4. Insufficient fuel allocation.
5. Inadequate staff

## **6.3 THE INDEPENDENCE ELECTORAL COMMISSION**

The Chairperson of the Select Committee informed the officers about the purpose of the visit. The IEC officials made a PowerPoint presentation on the statistics of the region. It is important to note that only 5 staff cover the entire region. The Commission assured the Committee of their continued efforts in conducting free and fair elections in the region.

## **6.4 CONSTRAINTS**

1. Lack of accommodation for the staff
2. Lack of vehicles to run their operations.
3. Inadequate storage facilities across the regions; election kits and drums are left lying outside in the open and exposed to both heat and moisture.
4. Low voter turnout during Parliamentary and Local Government elections
5. Limited civic education to the electorate in the region.
6. Insufficient capacity building for the Staff
7. Stagnant growth in IEC (human growth in terms of expansion)
8. Insufficient budgetary constraints.

## **7.0 THE GOVERNOR OF UPPER RIVER REGION**

Hon. Members were welcomed by the Governor and his team in Basse. The Select Committee informed the Governor and his team that the purpose of the Committee's visit is to gather firsthand information from institutions, departments, and agencies under its purview regarding their operations, achievements, and challenges.

The Governor took the floor and gave a synopsis of their activities, achievements, and the challenges they are encountering within the region. He also expressed the cordial relationship that exists between the Council and Governor's Office.

## **7.1 CHALLENGES OF THE GOVERNOR**

1. Inadequate funding to carry out the activities within the region.
2. Implementation of projects in the region without notifying the Governor's Office.
3. Insufficient fuel for execution of activities within the region and security patrols.
4. Insufficient funding for the quarterly Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) meetings
5. Difficulties of Civil Servants accepting posting within URR because of the heat.

## **7.2 CONSTRAINTS OF CHIEFS**

Lack of entertainment funds for them, in case of official activities.

## **8.0 BASSE AREA COUNCIL**

The Chairperson of the Select Committee informed the Chairman, Chief Executive Offices, Councilors, and team that the purpose of the committee's visit is to gather firsthand information from institutions, departments, and agencies under its purview regarding their operations, achievements, and challenges.

The Acting Chief Executive Officer, Bai Gibbie Sallah, gave an update of the Financial and Operational situations of the Council and said, upon his arrival, 14<sup>th</sup> July 2023, the Council were operating 7 different bank accounts of which four of them were on negative balances with a huge overdraft of D12,573,845.40 with the GTBank. He further informed the Select Committee that most of the owing has been settled and other bank accounts closed upon clearing the outstanding balances.

## **8.1 CHALLENGES OF THE AREA COUNCIL**

1. There was no data available on financial activities, e.g. Payroll register, Human resource statistics as they don't even know the number of staff employed by the institution, loans and purchases, qualified auditors, Council clerk and data collectors and entry staff.
2. Lack of internet connection, due lack of payments to service provider.
3. Unrevised local government legal instruments



## **8.4 CONSTRAINTS OF INDEPENDENT ELECTORAL COMMISSION (BASSE)**

- 1 Lack of accommodation for the staff.
- 2 Lack of vehicles to carry out their operations.
- 3 Inadequate storage facilities across the regions (election kit boxes, drums)
- 4 Low voter turnout during parliamentary elections
- 5 Limited civic education to the electorate in the region.
- 6 Re-demarcation of large constituencies
- 7 The issue of Attestation (interference by Governors, Politicians, Chiefs and Alkalis)
- 8 Stagnant growth in IEC (human growth in terms of expansion)
- 9 Budgetary constraints.
- 10 Infrastructure, in terms of expansion, had land for development but no funds to build on them.
- 11 The IEC Bill which covers some of these issues is still in the National Assembly for consideration.

## **8.5 OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN CONSTRAINTS**

1. Lack of mobility and insufficient fuel supply.
2. Lack of accommodation for Staff.

## **9.0 OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR OF LOWER RIVER REGION (MANSAKONKO)**

In his welcoming remarks, the Chief Executive Officer expressed delight in receiving the members of the Select Committee in the Region and commended them for their tremendous efforts in meeting the people at the grass root level.

The Select Committee informed the CEO and his team that the purpose of the Committee's visit is to gather firsthand information from institutions, departments, and agencies under its purview regarding their operations, achievements, challenges, award of contracts etc.

### **9.1 MANSAKONKO AREA COUNCIL**

The Council informed the Select Committee that they have registered remarkable successes as well as some challenges along the way. It is evident that local solutions to local problems can only be effectively solved through stakeholder participation.

Projects planned for implementation in 2022 were geared towards enhancing the development of communities through participatory approaches. The CEO stated that it is within the Council's mandate to fulfil the development aspirations of the people of the Lower River Region, through the provision of services and social amenities.

### **1.1.1 ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE COUNCIL**

1. Capacity and institutional development of decentralized structures through a bottom-top facilitation process aimed at empowering the people.
2. Provision of infrastructural facilities such as water projects and solar lighting facilities.
3. Communities' collaboration with partner institutions like Government, Non-Governmental Organizations, and bilateral donors, such as the Morocco training package of D17 Million.
4. Provision of support for women and youth development in training on food processing and other self-help activities in the Region.
5. Provision of professional training opportunities for Council staff up to university level.
6. Support to environmental activities e.g., waste collection and disposal sites, and provision of sanitary facilities.
7. The strategic goal of the Council is to encourage and promote good governance, especially at the grassroots level.

### **1.1.2 CHALLENGES OF THE MANSAKONKO AREA COUNCIL**

1. Mobility and fuel constraints.
2. Lack of proper valuation and revaluation of properties taxes and rates.
3. Inadequate financial and material resources.

### **9.1.3 CONSTRAINTS OF THE INDEPENDENT ELECTORAL COMMISSION (MANSAKONKO)**

1. Lack of Accommodation.
2. Lack of vehicles to carry out their operations.
3. Inadequate storage facilities across the regions (election kit boxes, drums)
4. Low voter turnout during parliamentary elections
5. Limited civic education to the electorate in the region

6. Insufficient budgetary allocation.

## **10.0 MEETING WITH THE GOVERNOR AND CHIEFS**

The Chairperson of the Select Committee informed the Governor and the Chiefs that the purpose of the Committee's visit is to gather firsthand information from institutions, departments, and agencies under its purview regarding their operations, achievements, and challenges.

### **10.1. OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR WCR**

1. The Governor stressed the obligation to frequently supervise and monitor all Department Projects under his purview.
2. The Governor called on the National Assembly to support the process of linking the Chiefs' functions on settling cases with the Judiciary.

#### **10.1.1 MAIN CHALLENGES**

1. The need for full decentralization and logistical support to other Departments within Governor's offices.
2. Regional funding is not allocated according to regional sizes.
3. A need for staff Audit and Capacity building.
4. TAC meetings are seldom due to funding gaps.

### **10.2 OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN OF BRIKAMA AREA COUNCIL**

The Chairman informed the Select Committee that they have registered remarkable successes as well as some challenges along the way. It is evident that local solutions to local problems can only be effectively solved through stakeholder participation.

The Area Council is currently concerned with the following:

1. Performance enhancement, building community markets and sheds, solar streetlights, road constructions and women gardens etc.
2. Land Banking, drainage system construction and waste management are also within the initiatives.
3. Valuation and revaluation of properties as the Council has no mandate and capacity to do so.
4. Bill and sign board's taxes are paid to GRA.

5. The lodges in the Fonis are far from the TDA but still pay taxes to Ministry of Tourism.
6. Councilors want to be allocated mobility.

### **10.2.1 MAIN CHALLENGES**

1. Insufficient livestock promotion within the region.
2. Poorly constructed new Council Office Complex is seriously pruned to water leakages.

### **10.3 OFFICE OF INDEPENDENT ELECTORAL COMMISSION (IEC)**

#### **10.3.1 MAIN CHALLENGES**

1. The advocacy to split IEC West Coast Office in to three (3) with the head office in Brikama.
2. Lack of IEC owned independent office with storage facilities.

### **10.4.1 MAIN CHALLENGES OF THE CHIEFS (WEST COAST REGION)**

1. Lack of Mobility for the Chiefs.
2. Lack of orientation and capacity building for Chiefs especially the newly appointed ones.
3. Unavailability of district Court Houses for the Chiefs.
4. Low allowances for Court Members and badge Messengers.
5. Lack of enforcement of the Chiefs' court verdicts Police.
6. The alarming rate of land grabbing in the "Fonis."
7. The need to re- demarcate some districts and payment of 15% tax collection to the "Alkalolu".
8. The need to include the Chiefs and "Alkalolu" in GALGA Committee.

### **11.0 MEETING WITH MAYOR, COUNCILLORS, IEC, AND OMBUDSMAN - KMC**

#### **11.1 OFFICE OF THE MAYOR KANIFING MUNICIPAL COUNCIL**

The Select Committee informed the Mayor and his team that the purpose of the committee's visit is to gather firsthand information from institutions, departments, and

agencies under its purview regarding their operations, achievements, challenges, award of contracts.

1. Mayor KMC highlighted improved performances in the following domain: sanitary services for vendors, women and youth empowerment and waste management e. g. the “Mbalit” Project.
2. The Council targeted the following: road construction, exploration of sewage system, municipal bus services.
3. The need for Title Deeds or documentation and separation of Council owned lands from that of Government.
4. Some Councillors highlighted a lot of communication barriers between Council and Local Government Service Commission.

### **11.1.1 MAIN CHALLENGES**

1. Recycling at the Bakoteh Dump site is a big challenge.
2. Inadequate Government Subvention.
3. The truck garage between Bakoteh and Kololi is a danger to the community.
4. Lack of regulations around land ownership as Council is not aware of changes that happened on some land ownerships.
5. GRA is collecting revenue for Council, but collection database is unknown to council.
6. The Bakoteh Dump Site is increasingly inaccessible to vehicle for disposal of waste.

### **11.2 OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN, INDEPENDENT ELECTORAL COMMISSION**

1. The IEC Regional office complex is a forfeited building still under AMRC.
2. The office is challenged with disposal of the old voters’ cards and is waiting on the final decision of the Committee responsible for disposal.
3. Mobility at IEC is a challenge as so vehicles are more than 12 years old.
4. Some IEC Offices throughout the country are not in IEC own premises.
5. IEC has the intention to redemarcate KM and WCR constituencies into more Electoral Divisions.
6. IEC intend to construct on its own land in Brikama so that it can be used as central storage for both WCR and KM.
7. IEC resolved to move from ballot drums to ballot papers.
8. IEC planned to increase constituencies and intend to create five constituencies for the diaspora population.
9. IEC planned to have two more commissioners and to have Gender Committee that will include: women, People with Disability, and youths.

### 11.2.1 MAIN CHALLENGES

1. The IEC Regional Officer has only four staff, and office building needs total rehabilitation. However, water supply, mobility and fuel are a challenge.
2. The IEC Regional office complex is a forfeited building still under AMRC.
3. The office is challenged with disposal of the old voters' cards.
4. Inadequate mobility at IEC.
5. Some IEC Offices throughout the country are not in IEC own premises.
6. IEC needs: Electoral Service code, more human resources, Election policy and setting a Legal Unit.

### 11.3 HEADQUARTERS OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN KMC

The Select Committee informed the Ombudsman and his team that the purpose of the committee's visit is to gather firsthand information from institutions, departments, and agencies under its purview regarding their operations, achievements, and challenges.

1. All Regional Offices are hosted by Government offices, and this has challenged its impartiality.
2. Ombudsman services help to decongest the courts.
3. Ombudsman funds should be given upfront; Ministry of Finance is still being followed to approve six million dalasi for the purchase of some more vehicles.
4. Advocated for National Human Right Commission be amalgamated with Ombudsman since they are all doing similar functions.

#### 11.3.1 MAIN CHALLENGES

- 1 Ombudsman recommendations on the management of prison offices and personnel are not yet implemented.
- 2 Ombudsman lacks the financial and material muscles to conduct verification declared assets of Government Officers.
- 3 The corrosive impact of sea breeze on Ombudsman facilities at the main Headquarters.
- 4 Ninety (90) million dalasi needed to construct the new Ombudsman National Headquarters.
- 5 The need to amend Ombudsman Act.

- 6 Ombudsman recommendations on the management of prison offices and personnel are not yet implemented.
- 7 Asset declaration of Government Officers is done, but the Ombudsman lacks the financial and material muscles to conduct verification.
- 8 At Ombudsman Headquarters, office materials and gadgets cannot serve longer due to the corrosive nature of sea breeze.

## **12.0 MEETING WITH THE MAYOR AND COUNCILORS- BCC:**

The Committee final visit was at the Banjul City Council where the team met officials of the Council.

### **12.1 KEY FINDINGS**

Upon consultation with the officials on the ground, the Committee observed that;

1. BCC is initiating projects with their twin partners.
2. Engaged in tree planting exercise to minimize coastal erosion and medicinal tree planting for the cure of bones.
3. TVET Centre work at the former Crab Island School is near completion and there is a plan to install Community Radio station.
4. The Council has tasked itself to conduct the following: sensitization of Ward Development Committees on financial management, provision of vehicles for cleansing services and the need to fence the dump site and recycling.
5. Council has registered the following achievements: Headquarters complex is newly completed, youth centre at Kampama and toilets at the Albert Market.
6. The Council is not informed about the initiation of certain projects in the Municipality e.g. the construction of a Petrol Station, sand dredging and the proposed building of a Terminal around the former Radio Sidi.

### **12.2 MAIN CHALLENGES**

1. The human resource base is very minimal and needs capacity building.
2. The Council is not informed about the initiation of certain projects in the Municipality e.g. the construction of a Petrol Station, sand dredging and the proposed building of a Terminal around the former Radio Sid.

## 13.0 CONCLUSION

The need to monitor, assess and support the Councils in their operation is important in the modern governance system. Devolution of powers allows for local government authorities to assume powers to support people at the grassroots level.

## 14.0 GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommends the following to address the cross-cutting issues highlighted by the Institutions visited:

1. There should be awareness creation through vigorous sensitisation on the existence of the office of the Ombudsman and their services.
2. Government should provide salaries for the Court members and the Badge messengers, instead of allowances.
3. Provide uniforms and mobility for the Badge messengers.
4. Train Chiefs and court members for better decision-making during proceedings.
5. Provide vehicles for the Chiefs to visit their respective areas and run other official errands.
6. The Police should enforce the verdicts of the Chiefs.
7. More capacity building for IEC Staff
8. The government should reevaluate property taxes and rates.
9. The Central Government to pay 25% subvention as established by the Local Government Act.
10. Valuation and revaluation of properties for the maximization of revenue for Councils.
11. The government through the Ministry, should revisit the obsolete Land Acts and Land Banking.
12. Government should produce a vibrant Vehicle Policy.
13. The District Tribunal System should be revisited to suit the modern situation.
14. The Ministry should conduct Staff audit for all Councils.
15. Councils should benefit from the activities of Sand / Gravel mining and sign and Billboard within their respective regions.
16. The Ministry should investigate the management and operation of Real Estates.