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The Gambia

Fragility Risk and Resilience Assessment

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A Joint AfDB-WB Report



Acronyms

Acronym	Definition
AfDB	African Development Bank
APRC	Alliance for Patriotic Reorientation and Construction
CPIA	Country Policy and Institutional Assessment
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
ERP	Economic Reform Program
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FSI	Fragile States Index
GDP	gross domestic product
IMF	International Monetary Fund
HDI	Human Development Index
MFM-GP	Macroeconomics and Fiscal Management Global Practice (World Bank)
MPI	Multidimensional Poverty Index
NGO	nongovernmental organization
PHC	primary health care
UDP	United Democratic Party
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR	United Nation High Commission for Refugees
UNOCHA	United Nation Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
WB	World Bank

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Foreword

This report is the product of a collaboration between the World Bank Macroeconomics and Fiscal Management Global Practice (MFM-GP) and the African Development Bank (AfDB) Transition States Coordination Office. The World Bank and AfDB have longstanding relationships with The Gambia, and like many of the country's development partners, both institutions are reassessing their role following the tumultuous 2016 presidential election and subsequent landmark transfer of political power. This report is designed to inform the development of new AfDB and World Bank engagement strategies by identifying priority areas for policy support and by highlighting potential risks.

The report was prepared at a defining moment in The Gambia's history, as the 22-year rule of former President Yahya Jammeh has given way to the democratically elected administration of President Adama Barrow. The new government is striving to address the political, social, and economic turbulence generated by this momentous transition and to maintain a nonpartisan political consensus for reform following the legislative elections held in April 2017. Meanwhile, the country's beleaguered public administration has been tasked with implementing deep structural reforms while continuing to execute its core functions. In this difficult context, the authorities will need to maximize the strategic impact of external assistance while mitigating the associated risks. The following report is designed to provide a framework for engagement by AfDB and World Bank and the country's other development partners, leveraging their resources and experience to address the causes of fragility and reinforce resilience in a manner that reflects The Gambia's unique political, economic, and institutional circumstances.

In countries in fragile situations, carefully targeted engagement can have a transformational impact, and appropriate external assistance can mark the difference between the restoration of a functional public sector that supports economic growth and a descent into a vicious cycle of institutional failure and political dysfunction. However, external assistance also entails risks and challenges in fragile situations that are distinct from those involved in traditional development support. Given the pivotal importance of formulating an effective strategy for donor engagement in The Gambia, the AfDB and the World Bank's MFM-GP are striving to better understand the contextual factors that contribute to the country's fragility and identify socioeconomic assets that can be leveraged to bolster its resilience.

Due to the dynamic and volatile nature of countries in fragile situations, fragility analysis is an ongoing process. Political, social, and economic developments must be closely monitored, and findings that are not regularly updated can swiftly become obsolete. In The Gambia, the recent legislative elections are already realigning the political landscape; each week brings new revelations about the state of the public finances in the wake of the Jammeh regime; and an ongoing process of both rural-urban migration and large-scale emigration is altering the country's social and economic dynamics in complex ways. While the Barrow administration's efforts to consolidate and restructure the Gambian public sector appear to be gaining traction, the pace, scope, and impact of the reform process remain uncertain, and the civilian government's relationship with the military represents a particularly acute source of risk. Each of these dynamics is unique to The Gambia's current historical moment, and their evolution cannot be predicted on the basis of past experience.

While the country's rapidly changing circumstances require close monitoring, data constraints are especially binding in The Gambia, as they are in many countries in fragile situations. The international experience underscores the importance of leveraging innovative information-gathering techniques in cases where traditional information sources are inadequate. Multi-donor collaboration is especially vital in context where information is limited, and over the years many of The Gambia's external development partners have analyzed the country's economic, social, and political dynamics, providing a crucial

complement to the government's limited statistics. A collaborative approach can accommodate a broader range of perspectives, strengthen the validity of the analysis, and provide a common framework for engagement. Despite the Jammeh regime's repression of the domestic media, diaspora-based news organizations have flourished over the past two decades, and press reports are a richer source of information in The Gambia than in other fragile contexts.

This report is intended to provide the foundation for an ongoing process of fragility analysis in The Gambia. Both the AfDB and the World Bank have allocated resources to monitor and assess the country's transition to democratic rule, allowing the AfDB and World Bank teams to regularly update the analysis presented below, revising its conclusions and recommendations to reflect developments on the ground. While this analysis attempts to encompass a broad range of political, economic, and social dynamics, a number of important subjects, including (i) the impact of urbanization, (ii) the status of local governments, especially in rural areas, (iii) the ongoing low-intensity conflict in Senegal's Casamance region, (iv) the evolving role of women in Gambian society, and (v) large-scale emigration deserve additional study. The selection of subjects covered in this report reflects the country's current circumstances, the teams' analytical resources, and the need for careful prioritization in fragile contexts. Rather than a comprehensive exploration of all drivers of fragility and resilience in The Gambia, this report represents a starting point for a systematic, ongoing analytical process.

Several of The Gambia's other international development partners have expressed an interest in joining a productive dialogue on issues of fragility and resilience. The joint AfDB-World Bank team is developing a participatory forum to accommodate this dialogue. Additional priority areas for multi-stakeholder collaboration include creating a database of fragility indicators, establishing a harmonized monitoring framework, and strengthening the government's capacity to design policies and programs that effectively mitigate fragility. While this report strives to address a wide range of fragility-related issues, additional analysis will be necessary to inform a robust policy dialogue, and priority areas for further study—including those mentioned above—are identified in the report's conclusions.

Executive Summary

The Gambia is the smallest country in continental Sub-Saharan Africa, spanning just 11,300 square kilometers, and it shares a single 749-kilometer overland border with Senegal. A small, densely populated country with very limited natural resources, The Gambia relies heavily of its ties with the global economy. Agriculture is the country's largest economic sector, but underdeveloped irrigation networks leave food production highly vulnerable to unpredictable rainfall patterns and other weather-related shocks. The Gambia produces approximately 50 percent of its domestic food requirements, and many small farming households do not produce a marketable surplus. Tourism exports and remittances are the country's main sources of foreign exchange. The Gambia's principal tourism source markets are in Europe, which is also the country's primary source of remittance income.

A legacy of authoritarianism, weak public institutions, political instability, and the limited capacity of the public administration are the most salient causes of state fragility in The Gambia. While most countries in the West Africa region have become increasingly stable over the past decade, The Gambia's fragility indicators have steadily worsened. Years of authoritarian misrule under the regime of former President Yahya Jammeh have severely undermined the capacity of the public sector to execute its core functions, and a legacy of corruption and patronage has eroded popular confidence in the integrity of public institutions. In an effort to consolidate his base of support, Jammeh deliberately stoked ethnic and religious tensions, weakening the social norms that had long held them in check. Meanwhile, ancillary factors such as large-scale rural-urban migration and deteriorating environmental quality have destabilized an already tenuous social, political, and economic equilibrium.

The Jammeh regime held power for over two decades, and the new government elected in December 2016 has little political experience to bring to bear against a complex array of challenges. Few members of the current administration have previously held public office, and many of those that have did so before the 1994 coup that brought Yayha Jammeh to power. These policymakers must lead a public administration marked by a legacy of institutional dysfunction, as the Jammeh regime systematically weakened certain elements of the government, while warping others to suit its authoritarian purposes. The civil-service incentive structure does not encourage performance, and years of mismanagement have stripped public institutions of vital physical, financial, and human resources. An especially sharp deterioration in institutional quality has been observed since 2011, and data are not yet available on the state of the public administration in the wake of the political crisis.

The fragmentation of public-service delivery across a huge number of subvented agencies reduces expenditure efficiency, increases the administrative complexity of the public sector, limits the transparency of resource allocation, and obscures accountability for specific outcomes.¹ These issues are compounded by the overlapping mandates of various ministries and public agencies. Low salaries, frequent administrative reorganizations, political purges, ethnic favoritism, and other factors have spurred an exodus of qualified civil servants, and corruption is now endemic in the Gambian public sector as demonstrated by the CPIA score for Transparency, Accountability and Corruption in the Public Sector of 2.0 which is well below the Sub-Saharan Africa score of 2.7. Moreover, decades of undemocratic governance have weakened Gambian civil society, diminishing its capacity to advocate for good governance.

While improving the overall quality of the public administration will be essential to long-term stability and economic growth, the new government's most urgent priority will be to maintain public security

while consolidating civilian control over the military. The new Government of Adama Barrow has moved quickly to replace the leadership of the Armed Forces and the Prison System, which had been the pillars of his predecessor's regime. The government intends to carry out further in-depth systemic reforms in short order. This vacuum has presented an opportunity for groups and individuals seeking to further destabilize the country. The new government is keenly aware that a terrorist attack could have a disastrous impact on the recovery of the tourism industry, and the authorities are taking terrorist risks very seriously. Widespread corruption has also enabled the growth of organized crime, and international criminal syndicates have a strong stake in further undermining The Gambia's public institutions. ECOWAS peacekeepers were deployed to The Gambia to assist in resolving the political crisis, but only the country's domestic security services will be able to address its long-term challenges. Before substantial progress can be made, however, the government must normalize relations with the armed forces and the broader security sector. Providing justice for the victims of human rights abuses committed by the security services at the behest of the previous administration will be a difficult process, especially in the context of an ongoing political transition.

In the absence of preexisting democratic norms, the political environment is inherently unpredictable. Former President Jammeh was defeated by a seven-party coalition, which supported current President Adama Barrow as a nonpartisan unity candidate. The coalition's pre-election agreement called for the Barrow government to restore fair democratic processes, reestablish legislative and judicial checks on the authority of the executive branch, and hold new presidential elections within three years. However, the recent legislative elections have strained relationships between coalition partners, and the commanding victory of the United Democratic Party—the erstwhile party of President Barrow—could create a strong incentive for the party to approve constitutional reforms that protect incumbency rather than promoting democratic competition, or that maintain the supremacy of the executive branch rather than establishing a robust system of checks and balances. As The Gambia has not had a functional multiparty government since 1994, there is no basis for predicting how the political situation will evolve.

In this context of political uncertainty and institutional dysfunction, a combination of long-term structural vulnerabilities and short-term economic shocks is exacerbating food insecurity. The Gambia is on the verge of a nutrition emergency. Aggregate food production is far below aggregate demand, and poor rainfall has reduced the output of smallholder farmers. Inadequate household production and rising food prices are contributing to large-scale emigration, and the departure of tens of thousands of Gambians, including many of the country's most productive workers, will have complex social and economic ramifications for years to come.

A legacy of unsustainable macro-fiscal management has increased the Gambian economy's sensitivity to external shocks. Agriculture and tourism are the mainstays of the Gambian economy, and recent shocks to both sectors have underscored its vulnerability to exogenous circumstances. While adverse weather conditions have depressed agricultural production, a combination of spillover effects from the regional Ebola crisis and the disruptive impact of recent political instability has negatively affected the tourism sector. After rebounding to 4.1 percent in 2015, the GDP growth rate fell to an estimated 2.5 percent in 2016 and is projected to rise only slightly to 3 percent in 2017. Restoring macroeconomic stability, accelerating growth, and maintaining sustainable debt dynamics will require a well-calibrated policy response combined with substantial external support.

The Gambia is highly susceptible to multiple forms of environmental damage, and environmental degradation is a major source of fragility. Rapid population growth is intensifying environmental pressure, and the country's weak public institutions are incapable of enforcing environmental protections.

In the rural sector, deforestation and desertification are severely damaging local ecosystems while in urban Banjul and Kanifing, population pressures are straining the capacity of public institutions to manage the urban environment.

Rapid demographic changes are destabilizing the traditional social equilibrium. While The Gambia has long been regarded as a regional model of ethnic pluralism, ongoing demographic changes are weakening traditional social systems. Urbanization poses an especially significant challenge, as the arrival of large numbers of unemployed young people in Banjul and other cities further strains already inadequate urban infrastructure and overwhelms the capacity of municipal governments, leading to rising crime, drug abuse, and the general deterioration of the urban environment. Meanwhile, rural areas are losing important labor resources and experiencing a profound demographic shift. Women, girls, and members of female-headed households are especially vulnerable to crime, exploitation, and the loss of household labor. The gender dimensions of both rural-urban migration and large-scale emigration are a priority area for further research.

A combination of slow economic growth, limited employment prospects, political instability and food insecurity has driven a dramatic increase in emigration. Many Gambians emigrated to Europe during the Jammeh regime, but in recent years the country's increasing fragility has caused emigration to escalate so radically that Gambians are now Europe's second-largest diaspora as a share of the home-country population. The size of the Gambian diaspora has mixed implications for fragility and resilience. While the loss of skilled labor through emigration has long slowed the country's economic development, remittance income is an increasingly crucial component of household consumption. Moreover, the recent exodus has alleviated pressure on the labor market and eased the rising social discontent caused by the deteriorating economic situation. These factors may have helped The Gambia avoid violent conflict despite its increasing fragility. Going forward, the government should strive to fully leverage the potential of the Gambian diaspora to strengthen the country's global economic ties and rebuild its depleted social capital.

The Gambia has long had a complex and contentious relationship with neighboring Senegal. Diplomatic and trade relations deteriorated during the Jammeh regime, but the new administration is seeking a rapprochement. While stronger bilateral relations contribute to resilience in both countries, the ongoing low-level conflict in Senegal's Casamance region is a persistent driver of fragility. The Gambia's Foni Kanilai region, which borders on Casamance, appears to be especially vulnerable to instability and conflict. This area has long been isolated and insecure, and many local communities were closely aligned with the Jammeh regime. There are reports that Jammeh loyalists from the military and security forces have relocated to the Kanilai region, and it remains a stronghold of support for the former president's political party².

The political crisis that followed the presidential election in December exposed many of the factors driving the country's fragility, but it also underscored critical sources of resilience. While the crisis further strained an already delicate social, political and economic equilibrium, The Gambia's ability to sustain the momentous shock of regime change without falling into destructive conflict reflected the strength of the country's stabilizing forces. Five sources of resilience played an especially important role in avoiding a descent into conflict: the Gambian diaspora which directly supported financially, morally and politically the population of The Gambia, neighbor governments and regional institutions, which took a proactive role in defusing the political situation, women and youth who took a leadership position in the organization of the political response in the aftermath of the election, and large-scale emigration which in some ways alleviated the strong demographic, economic and political pressures confronting the

country. Going forward, the government and its development partners can reinforce these sources of resilience and attempt to maximize their contribution to social, political, and economic stability.

The government should integrate conflict prevention into its social and economic policies. Development programs should include activities designed to improve the welfare of young people, promote intercommunity dialogue, raise awareness of critical social issues, strengthen social cohesion, and build trust in public institutions. Gender equity and social protection should be mainstreamed into economic policy, and investment projects should be subject to rigorous environmental impact assessments. The government should incorporate fragility indicators into strategic policy documents, including the national development plan and the central government budget, as well as economic and social programs and public-investment projects. Given the importance of rigorous data collection, the authorities should consider establishing a statistical observatory dedicated to monitoring fragility.

Due to its heightened fragility, engagement in The Gambia poses important reputational risks for its development partners, yet external assistance will be essential to consolidate political and economic stability. The overarching objective of The Gambia's development partners should be to reestablish credible and impartial political institutions. Enhancing parliamentary rules and processes will be critical to the functioning of the legislature and should be regarded as a priority area for external engagement, and the importance of strengthening the judiciary is a matter of nonpartisan consensus among Gambian policymakers. Moreover, creating a diverse and inclusive public administration will be essential to restore social cohesion as the new government strives to overcome a legacy of ethnic favoritism. In light of the government's limited capacity for data-collection and analysis, the authorities will rely on their development partners to provide detailed information on evolving social and demographic dynamics as well as the distributional implications of proposed policies. Managing perceptions and expectations will be vital to the success of the political transition, and the government will need support to develop its capacity for communications and public outreach. The Gambia's development partners should draw on their extensive international experience to assist the government in constructing an analytical framework for assessing fragility and formulating policies to enhance the country's social, political, and economic resilience.

1. Introduction

1. This analysis explores the causes of state fragility in The Gambia and identifies priority policy actions to bolster macroeconomic stability and reinforce the resilience of public institutions. In countries in fragile situations, a carefully targeted engagement strategy can have a transformative impact, and appropriate external assistance can mark the difference between the restoration of a functional public sector and a descent into a vicious cycle of institutional failure and conflict. Given the pivotal importance of engagement in countries in fragile situations, the African Development Bank (AfDB) and the World Bank's Macroeconomics and Fiscal Management Global Practice (MFM-GP) are striving to better understand the factors driving fragility in The Gambia and formulate a strategic approach to policy support, development programming, and project design that reflects the country's unique political, economic, and institutional circumstances.

2. This report is the product of a collaboration between the MFM-GP and the AfDB's Transition Support Department. The analysis was undertaken at a particularly critical moment in The Gambia's history, as the 22-year rule of former President Yahya Jammeh gives way to the democratically elected administration of President Adama Barrow. The new government has struggled to address the political, social, and economic turbulence generated by the transition, by a legacy of mismanagement, and by climatic shocks.

3. The analysis was carried out over the course of six months, beginning in October 2016. The AfDB and the World Bank independently assessed the evolving situation in The Gambia ahead of the recent presidential election. The AfDB undertook an initial analysis of the country's political, economic, and social dynamics designed to identify drivers of fragility and conflict, as well as sources of stability and resilience. Meanwhile, the World Bank carried out a preliminary Risk and Reliability Assessment in line with its standard procedures. The AfDB also evaluated the period immediately preceding the election, and its turbulent aftermath which is known in The Gambia as "the Impasse."

4. The World Bank and AfDB teams conducted a joint Fragility and Resilience Mission in Banjul and Dakar between February 24 and March 9, 2017. The mission's objective was to evaluate the rapidly evolving political and economic situation in the aftermath of the presidential election and to discuss with government and civil-society stakeholders the issues identified in previous analyses. The mission findings formed the basis for a comprehensive assessment of political, social, and economic dynamics in The Gambia, including its external and domestic vulnerabilities, the capacity limitations of its public sector, potential sources of conflict, and priority areas for engagement by the international development community.

1.1. A Brief Overview of The Gambia

5. The Gambia's small size and unusual shape are artifacts of its colonial history. Although it has access to international markets via the Port of Banjul, The Gambia borders only one other country, Senegal. Due to its location between the metropolitan hub of Dakar to the north and the national capitals of Bissau and Conakry to the south, The Gambia is a part of an important overland transit corridor, and it has close economic ties with its regional neighbors. Despite its small geographic size, The Gambia is culturally diverse, and a patchwork of ethnic groups transcends its political borders. While transnational cultures strengthen The Gambia's ties to its regional neighbors, they can also transmit instability and conflict across borders.

6. The Gambia is the smallest country in continental Sub-Saharan Africa, spanning just 11,300 square kilometers. It winds along a narrow strip of land that spans the Gambia River, and water covers 10 percent

of its total surface area. The river runs from east to west, dividing the country into two banks, each of which is 25 to 50 kilometers wide and about 300 kilometers long.³

Figure 1. Map of The Gambia



Source: Maps of the World, www.mapsofworld.com.

7. The Gambia shares its entire 749-kilometer overland border with Senegal. There is no natural division between the two countries and no physical landmark to distinguish the border. This situation presents both challenges and opportunities. On the one hand, The Gambia is able to take advantage of the geographic buffer that Senegal provides against regional instability, and Senegal is effectively responsible for The Gambia's external security. On the other hand, Gambia's political and economic interests are heavily intertwined with those of Senegal, and the latter exerts significant influence over the former.⁴

8. In addition to the challenges posed by its small size and atypical geography, The Gambia has very limited natural resources. Agriculture is the country's largest sector, accounting for 33 percent of gross domestic product (GDP).⁵ Irrigation networks and other forms of sectoral infrastructure are underdeveloped, and agricultural output is highly vulnerable to unpredictable rainfall patterns and weather-related shocks. The country produces approximately 50 percent of its domestic food requirements, and many small farming households do not produce a marketable surplus. Consequently, rice imports are crucial to The Gambia's food security.⁶

9. The Gambia relies heavily on its ties to the global economy. Tourism exports and remittances are its main sources of foreign exchange.⁷ The Gambia's diplomatic relationship with Senegal is vital to the economic success of both countries, as they share an integrated road network. The Gambia's principal tourism source markets are in Europe, which increases its sensitivity to economic conditions in the European Union (EU).

10. The Gambia is among the most densely populated countries in Africa. Its population is young and growing rapidly. The median age is just over 20. Almost three-fifths of the population is under the age of 24, and almost 40 percent is under the age of 15. The population is growing at an average rate of 2.11 percent per year, and the total population has quadrupled over the past 30 years.⁸

11. Not only is The Gambia ethnically diverse, but unlike other countries in West Africa, many individual Gambian communities are home to a wide range of ethnicities and languages.⁹ This is especially true in rural areas, where different ethnic groups often coexist within the same village. The Gambia has roughly nine distinct ethnic groups, of which the Mandinka/Jahanka are the largest, accounting for approximately 34 percent of the total population. The Fulani/Tukulur/Lorobo¹⁰ make up another 22 percent of the population, the Wolof 12.2 percent, the Jola approximately 11 percent, and the Serahuleh 7 percent. All

other Gambian ethnic groups compose about 8 percent of the population, and non-Gambians represent another 6 percent.¹¹

12. Despite its ethnic diversity, The Gambia has traditionally managed ethnic tensions peacefully within the context of its existing social structures. Most ethnic groups share similar class hierarchies, which are often inherited from ancient societies, and interethnic marriages are common and widely accepted. Almost 90 percent of the population is Sunni Muslim, and close to 9 percent is Christian, predominantly Roman Catholic. Inter-marriage between Muslims and Christians is common.¹² Shared social norms and frequent inter-marriage have helped to mitigate cross-cultural tensions and build a unified sense of national identity.^{13,14}

1.2. Historical Context

13. In the early 19th century, Great Britain established a military post on Banjul Island. In 1888, the British seized the river and the land on both sides of it, separating The Gambia from Senegal.¹⁵ Under British rule, a Gambian legislature was established, which gradually assumed greater political responsibility. Political parties emerged in the 1950s, reflecting a diverse mix of ethnic and regional interests.¹⁶ Great Britain began expanding the political autonomy of The Gambia in the early 1960s, and the country achieved full independence in 1965. Initially, urban-focused parties based in the capital dominated Gambian politics, but during the period of partial self-government in 1963, the balance of power began to tilt toward rural areas. In 1970, the People's Progressive Party successfully organized rural voters to win a decisive victory in the legislature and then leveraged its power to pass a new constitution, which formally integrated the country's traditional power structures by giving tribal chiefs a voice in the legislature. Prime Minister Dawda Jawara was elected president under the new constitution and subsequently reelected to five successive terms.¹⁷ While Gambians enjoyed constitutionally protected rights to free speech, freedom of religion, and freedom of the press, President Jawara and the People's Progressive Party remained the principal force in national politics for several decades.¹⁸

14. The Gambia emerged as a rare pluralistic society in post-independence Africa, and until 1994 it was one of only four functioning democracies in the region. Between 1960 and 1992, The Gambia held 11 legislative and five presidential elections, all of which were deemed free and fair by international observers. However, Gambian democracy was not immune to corruption or partisan dysfunction, and political patronage systems gradually began to take root. In 1981, a leftist military faction attempted to seize power, prompting President Jawara to appeal to Senegal for military assistance. Senegal deployed troops to The Gambia, and at least 500 people died during the resulting struggle. Pro-Jawara forces prevailed, and the coup was put down in a matter of days.¹⁹ In the wake of the coup attempt, The Gambia and Senegal formed the Senegambia Confederation, which lasted until 1989.

15. In July 1994, President Jawara was deposed in a second, bloodless coup by junior army officers.²⁰ The coup leaders enjoyed a measure of popular support, but the coup marked the end of democratic rule for over two decades. The new president, Yahya Jammeh, consolidated political power, repressed dissent, and used both state forces and paramilitary groups to quell political opposition.²¹ During his 22-year rule, President Jammeh created an extensive security apparatus that permeated every aspect of Gambian politics and society. Meanwhile, the quality of public institutions outside the security sector steadily deteriorated.

16. Multiple elections were held during the administration of President Jammeh, but participation was limited, and international observers consistently described these elections as neither free nor fair.²² The Jammeh administration openly used public resources to support the president's party, the Alliance for Patriotic Reorientation and Construction (APRC), and it employed both the state security services and vigilante groups to intimidate the opposition. The regime also attempted to exploit ethnic divisions to

consolidate its political base. President Jammeh favored his own tribal group, the Jola, and attempted to marginalize the Mandinka. The president attempted to consolidate power by pitting a coalition of ethnic and cultural minority groups against the Mandinka plurality.²³ Representatives of opposition parties have alleged that noncitizen Jola from Senegal were illegally added to voter rolls. Ethnicity was regarded as a key factor in determining senior appointments in both the security sector and the civil service, as the regime appeared to systematically favor the appointment of Jolas, Manjagos, Balantas, and Karonicas to mid-level and senior positions in the public administration.²⁴ The regime became increasingly anti-Mandinka in its rhetoric and its security policies, and the government attempted to limit the social, political, and economic participation of the Mandinka. Over time, these policies began to erode the social cohesion that the country had developed in the post-independence period.

17. The Gambia's economic performance during the Jammeh administration was generally weak and propped up by unsustainable macro-fiscal policies. The country's GDP growth rate averaged a modest 3.75 percent between 1994 and 2016, and macro-fiscal management during the Jammeh administration was consistently poor. The national poverty rate has declined slightly over time, but remains high by global standards. And while some social indicators have improved, inequality remains a major challenge, and The Gambia's Gini coefficient is one of the highest among members of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). Unemployment is widespread, and the country's business environment is not conducive to investment and diversification.²⁵ The Jammeh regime left the country in an extremely difficult fiscal position, with a large public debt burden, low public financial management capacity, insolvent state-owned enterprises, and severely depleted international reserves.

2. Drivers of Fragility

2.1. Political Instability

18. The Gambia has become increasingly fragile over the past decade, even as the region has become somewhat more stable overall. Since 2007, the country's fragility indicators have steadily worsened. Meanwhile, other countries in the region that have long suffered from fragility, such as Guinea, appear to be moving toward greater stability and resilience. The presence of multiple fragile and transitional states in its immediate vicinity presents challenges for The Gambia, just as the increased fragility of The Gambia presents challenges for its regional neighbors.

19. While the initial crisis that followed the end of the Jammeh administration has now passed, restoring political equilibrium will be a long-term process. President Barrow is supported by a coalition of seven political parties. These parties were united by their common interest in wresting power from former President Jammeh, and they are currently attempting to craft a shared political agenda. The recent legislative elections have clarified the political landscape. The United Democratic Party (UDP), the historical opposition to Jammeh's APRC, has emerged as the country's dominant political party, capturing 31 of the 53 seats in the legislature. The UDP is widely perceived as a Mandinka-dominated party, although it has tried to shed that perception by nominating a Fulani²⁶, Adama Barrow, as its standard-bearer in the presidential election. While the decisiveness of the UDP's victory has strengthened the government's ability to legislate, it may have also weakened the coalition's claim to represent a broad-based, multi-ethnic, multi-community consensus, which is important to the success of inter-ethnic dialogue and peaceful political collaboration.²⁷

20. Following the Jammeh regime's decades-long rule, relatively few members of the current administration have substantial governing experience, and many of those who do have not held office

since before the 1994 coup. The Jammeh regime's years of mismanagement and neglect have badly eroded the country's public institutions. A legacy of arbitrary and undemocratic governance, combined with pervasive political and petty corruption and low public administrative capacity, are causing state fragility indicators in The Gambia to deteriorate rapidly. Due to the opaque and insular nature of the previous regime, only a handful of high-level political figures have a working knowledge of the Gambian public administration. While this offers an opportunity to make a decisive break with the policies and values of the previous government, it also complicates reform efforts, as many of the political figures charged with implementing reforms have limited experience with the Gambian public sector and lack strong working relationships with career civil servants.

The new government's most urgent priority will be to maintain public security while consolidating civilian control over the military

21. Following a tumultuous political transition, the Barrow administration's most pressing challenge will be to reestablish public security and normalize relations between the government and the armed forces. The security services were extensively purged by the former regime, which prized personal loyalty over professional duty. While the new government must rely on the security sector's existing institutions, reforms will be necessary to ensure their allegiance to the democratically elected civilian government. President Barrow recently replaced the head of the armed forces, along with several other high-ranking officers, but consolidating civilian control over the military will be a long-term process. The new government has begun reorganizing the leadership of the security forces, the civil service, and key state-owned enterprises. This process will provide an early indication of the administration's commitment to eliminating the influence of ethnic, ideological, and religious factors in determining political appointments. There is a considerable risk that even an unbiased effort to rebalance the composition of the public administration may be regarded as an attempt to replace one form of ethnic patronage with another.²⁸ In this context, it will be essential to maximize the transparency of the appointment process and pursue a proactive public outreach effort.

22. The tense relationship between the new government and the security services has presented an opportunity for groups and individuals striving to further destabilize the country. International risk assessors have highlighted the "underlying threat of terrorism" in The Gambia following attacks targeting tourists and tourism-related infrastructure in Mali, Burkina Faso, and Côte d'Ivoire.²⁹

23. The new government is aware of the disastrous impact a terrorist attack could have on the recovery of the tourism industry, and the authorities are taking terrorist risks very seriously. ECOWAS peacekeepers were deployed to The Gambia to assist in resolving the political crisis, and the Barrow government has requested that they remain in the country indefinitely to help maintain security while the government reforms the security sector. The government has also agreed to a military cooperation framework with France, which will begin training the Gambian army and special forces.³⁰ While these steps may be sufficient to deter terrorist incidents or other security threats in the short-term, only The Gambia's own revamped military and law enforcement agencies will be able to effectively address the country's complex security challenges in the medium-to-long term. Consequently, although it faces urgent priorities across all sectors, the government is focusing its attention on security sector reform.

Weak governance has facilitated the rise of transnational criminal organizations

24. Endemic corruption has enabled the growth of organized crime, and international criminal syndicates have a strong stake in undermining The Gambia's political stability and weakening its public institutions. The Gambia is a hub for two major forms of international crime: narcotics trafficking and sexual exploitation. Due to its geographic position, The Gambia is a natural transshipment point for narcotics bound from Latin America to Europe. Meanwhile, the growth of the tourism industry in a climate

of limited and capricious law enforcement has spawned a domestic market for sexual exploitation catering primarily to Europeans. These illicit markets have given rise to extensive, well-financed criminal networks capable of wielding significant political influence. Unlike most national stakeholders, for whom continued fragility is an undesirable outcome, criminal organizations have a clear incentive to corrupt the public administration and degrade the quality of governance.

25. The Gambia is one of several West African transshipment points for narcotics traffic between Latin America and Europe. Traffickers use multiple transport routes, including the Gambia River, the road network, maritime shipping, and air travel. The tourism industry generates a large volume of passenger travel between The Gambia and Europe, which enables individual drug traffickers (“mules”) to pass undetected. During the Jammeh regime, several high-ranking government officials were identified as facilitating arms and drug trafficking,^{31,32} and allegations surfaced that Jammeh was directly involved. Over time, the government’s attitude toward the drug trade alternated between forceful prosecution and tacit endorsement.

26. Women, girls, and boys from The Gambia and its regional neighbors, including Benin, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Nigeria, Senegal, and Sierra Leone, are recruited for commercial sexual exploitation in The Gambia’s sex-tourism market. While sexual tourism is not the core driver of tourism in the Gambia and the previous government had made major efforts to reduce its impacts and effects, transnational sex trafficking remains an issue. The situation is difficult to counter. Transnational sex-trafficking networks use both European and Gambian travel agencies to promote child sex tourism. The superficial similarities between the country’s legitimate tourism industry and its criminal counterpart might make clearly differentiating between them difficult for law enforcement. Like drug traffickers, organizations involved in sexual exploitation leverage their financial resources to undermine public institutions and discourage the government from cracking down on their operations. While the sex-tourism industry requires a minimum degree of public security to attract sex tourists from Europe and other source markets, human trafficking is less vulnerable to instability. Gambian children have been identified as victims of forced labor in neighboring West African countries, including Ghana and Senegal. Gambian women and girls have also been subjected to forced labor and sex trafficking in Middle Eastern countries, including Lebanon, Kuwait, and the United Arab Emirates.³³

The seven-party coalition must now establish a stable democratic political equilibrium and collaborative policy processes

27. Following decades of authoritarian rule, the government lacks both strong institutional processes for deliberation and collaborative policymaking, as well as the shared political norms that underpin democratic governance. The seven-party coalition united an eclectic group of ideologies, personalities, and interest groups that share few commonalities beyond their desire to oust the previous regime. Having achieved their joint objective, these parties must now develop arrangements for sharing political power, including both formal political and policy institutions and informal norms, values, and expectations.

28. The coalition’s pre-election agreement called for the unity government led by President Barrow to hold new elections within three years. While the precise terms of the pre-election agreement have not been published, the seven coalition parties agreed to the three-year timeframe to allow the government to establish fair electoral policies and institutions. The agreement also bars President Barrow from running in the upcoming presidential election or holding any political office for five years thereafter. As the leader of a unity government, President Barrow was appointed as formally independent of any political party and his administration is expected to be largely technocratic and apolitical.³⁴ The extent to which the pre-election agreement will remain binding in the aftermath of the legislative election is an open question.

29. The legislative elections have strained relationships between coalition parties. The seven parties had originally agreed to run nonpartisan candidates for the National Assembly, but that agreement ultimately broke down. Five parties—the UDP, the Gambia Moral Congress, the People’s Progressive Party, the People’s Democratic Party for Independence and Socialism (PDOIS), and the National Reconciliation Party (NRP)—established a “tactical alliance,” but the nature and purpose of that alliance were poorly communicated to the public. The coalition is showing signs of strain. While the legislative majority leader was selected from the UDP, the position of minority leader was contested by the Gambia Democratic Congress, the APRC, and the NRP. Of these, the NRP is the only coalition partner, and the NRP candidate was elected minority leader.³⁵

30. As the UDP now has a large legislative majority, the dissolution of the seven-party coalition would not significantly weaken the government’s ability to pass legislation. However, because the Jammeh regime thoroughly destroyed popular confidence in the impartiality of public institutions, the unraveling of the coalition could pave the way for populist demagogues to portray the UDP as self-interested and out of touch with Gambian civil society. Political violence in the wake of the legislative election has been reported in APRC strongholds such as Foni, which could deepen ethnic and political factionalism.³⁶ Local elections scheduled for April 2018 will effectively extend the campaign cycle for another year, further straining the country’s nascent democratic institutions.

31. Reforming and strengthening democratic institutions in a context of shifting partisan power dynamics will pose a major challenge for the Barrow administration. The pre-election coalition agreement called for a fundamental overhaul of governance structures to accommodate a functioning multiparty democracy. However, the existing system was designed to favor a hegemonic ruling party, and there is a risk that the UDP may be tempted to assume the APRC’s former role.

32. A tense political climate could slow the implementation of the institutional reform agenda. Political stakeholders will remain committed to the establishment of democratic processes only so long as they perceive those processes to be effective means of pursuing their political and economic interests. Difficult economic and social reforms require expending scarce political capital, and a loss of confidence in the reform agenda could encourage political forces to embrace undemocratic means of securing power. Moreover, forces that have little prospect for electoral success—including Jammeh loyalists, ambitious military officers, or members of marginal political factions—could view a breakdown in the democratization process as an opportunity to assert their authority.

The current constitution is designed to empower the executive branch at the expense of the legislature and judiciary.

33. The Gambian Constitution grants broad discretionary authority to the executive branch, while deliberately marginalizing the legislature. The current constitution was adopted in 1996, and its primary purpose was to legitimize the autocratic rule of the Jammeh regime. Contrary to ECOWAS directives, the constitution does not limit presidential terms, and it grants the executive branch hegemonic power over the other branches of government. While the National Assembly is democratically elected, the president nominates its speaker and deputy speaker, who dictate legislative activity.³⁷ The National Assembly cannot impose new taxes, it has no authority over the Consolidated Revenue Fund, and it cannot incur debt on behalf of the government.³⁸

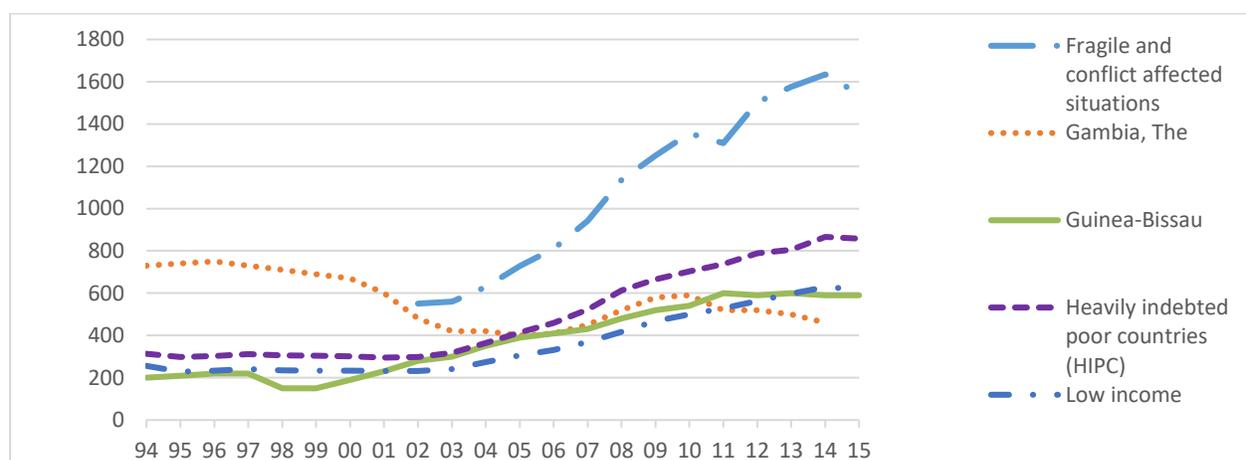
34. The executive branch also dominates the judiciary. The president appoints the nation’s chief justice, as well as half of all superior court judges, and both the executive and legislative branches may remove judges effectively at will. The Jammeh administration repeatedly used its discretion over judicial hiring and firing decisions to bend the judiciary to its political purposes.³⁹ Rebalancing the constitutional

authority of the executive, legislative, and judicial branches will be vital to the success of the democratization process.

2.2. Slow Growth, High Inequality, and Unsustainable Fiscal Balances

35. After rebounding to 4.1 percent in 2015, the GDP growth rate fell to an estimated 2.2 percent in 2016 and is projected to rise slightly to 3 percent in 2017. A weak agricultural season, the slow recovery of the tourism sector, low rates of private investment, and a turbulent political situation have all hindered growth (**Error! Reference source not found.**). Agricultural output remains dependent on favorable weather patterns, and any further reputational shocks—either domestic or regional—could cause a renewed drop in tourism activity.

Figure 2: Gross National Income per Capita, 1994–2015, (Current US\$)⁴⁰



Source: The World Bank

36. Unequal access to public goods and productive factors narrows the distribution of returns to growth. The Gambia is among the most economically unequal countries in the world. In 2012, its Gini coefficient was 0.594, ranking it 128th out of the 148 countries included in the Human Development Index. Education, healthcare, public infrastructure, and social services are heavily concentrated in Banjul and other major urban centers. Access to land is limited by the inability of public institutions to efficiently protect and adjudicate property rights, while shallow financial markets restrict access to capital. The unemployment rate is high at 29.8 percent, and both unemployment and underemployment are especially pervasive among younger workers. Though social norms regarding gender equality are slowly changing, discriminatory cultural practices continue to restrict women’s access to land, productive resources, healthcare and education. The uneven distribution of economic opportunity is a key source of fragility.

37. The new government faces enormous challenges as it strives to accelerate growth, restore fiscal stability, and maintain sustainable debt dynamics. The Barrow administration inherited an economy on the verge of crisis. The public debt-to-GDP ratio is estimated at 119.5 percent, and interest payments absorb almost half of domestic revenue. The preliminary results of a 2017 joint World Bank-IMF Debt Sustainability Analysis indicate that The Gambia’s risk of external debt distress has risen from moderate to high. The government lacks access to international financial markets and relies on costly domestic borrowing to finance a large structural fiscal deficit. With net domestic borrowing exceeding 10 percent of GDP, the domestic financial sector is highly exposed to sovereign risk. Several key state-owned enterprises regularly generate large contingent liabilities and extra-budgetary spending, further

weakening the government's fiscal position. By end-February 2017, international reserves had fallen to 0.7 months of imports, including foreign-exchange swaps with commercial banks. In this context, the new government must remain firmly committed to fiscal responsibility and structural reforms, as any substantial policy slippages could severely destabilize an already volatile macroeconomic environment.⁴¹

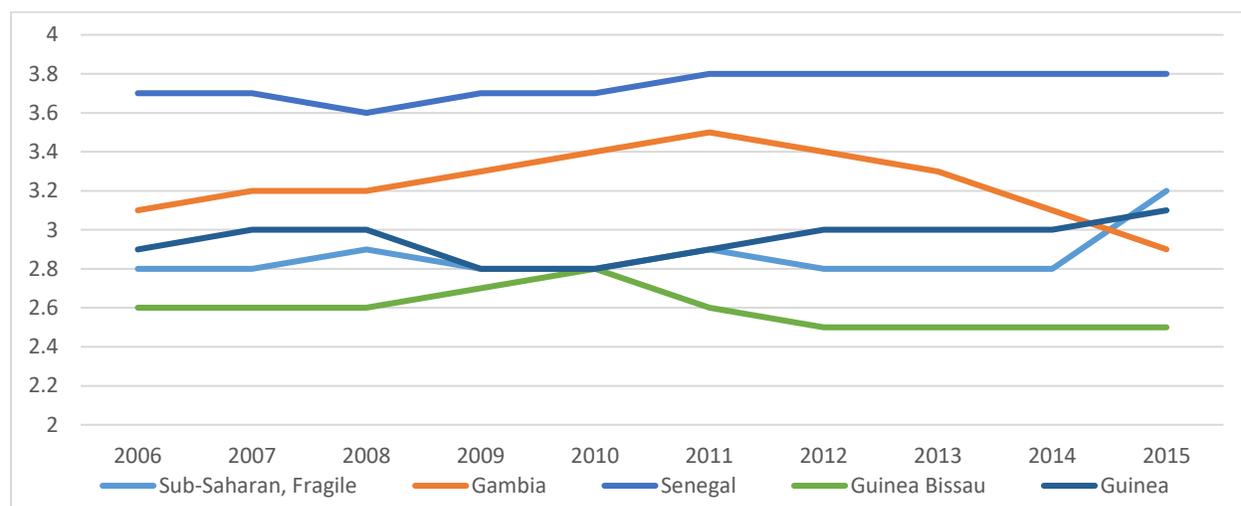
38. Restoring macroeconomic stability will require a well-calibrated policy response combined with substantial external support. The government has stated its commitment to fiscal consolidation and structural reform, but the authorities are still developing their macroeconomic strategy. Several multilateral organizations, including the AfDB, the IMF, and the World Bank, have initiated discussions with the new administration for budget support operations designed to strengthen the fiscal position, address the debt overhang situation and rebuild reserve buffers. A failure to engage the support of international financial institutions would threaten the stability of the new government, as the alternative would be a forced fiscal and external adjustment with deeply negative implications for the Gambian economy. In this context, while the World Bank is currently preparing an emergency development policy financing operation to support the new government as it strives to restore macroeconomic and fiscal stability, AfDB is working at addressing, through an emergency budget support operation, the dire fiscal, debt and balance of payment situation in the wake of the recent political transition with the aim to restore fiscal stability and improve budget management for inclusive growth in the Gambia.

2.3. The Limited Capacity of the Public Administration

The public administration lacks the capacity to efficiently deliver essential services, and its institutional deficiencies are a major obstacle to reform

39. The misplaced priorities of an autocratic government steadily eroded the capacity of the Gambian public sector. The government has committed to focusing on civil-service reform in year two of the transition period, but its expectations are largely unrealistic. The civil-service incentive structure does not encourage performance, and years of mismanagement have stripped public institutions of vital physical, financial, and human resources. An especially sharp deterioration in institutional quality has been observed since 2011 (Figure 3), and data are not yet available on the state of the public administration in the wake of the political crisis. In this difficult context, reforming the civil service and rebuilding the government's overall institutional capacity will require a long-term political commitment supported by sustained external financial and technical assistance (Annex 1).

Figure 3. World Bank Country Policy and Institutional Assessment Scores, The Gambia and Regional Comparators, 2006–15



Source: The World Bank

40. Under the current set of institutional relationships, power over the public administration is highly centralized in the Office of the President and the Vice President. The central government consists of 18 line ministries and six ministerial offices, close to the global average. However, the Gambian government relies on a huge number of subvented agencies to execute a wide range of functions. The resulting fragmentation of public services reduces the financial resources available to each agency, increases the administrative complexity of the public sector, and obscures both the transparency of resource allocation and accountability for specific outcomes.⁴² These issues are compounded by the overlapping mandates of certain ministries and other public agencies.

41. Low salaries, administrative reorganizations, political purges, governmental instability, and other factors have spurred an exodus of qualified civil servants. Civil-service salaries in The Gambia are low by the standards of comparable countries. While the average civil-service salary is three times the country's per capita income, compensation in the civil service is far below the equivalent rates for the private sector, and professional civil servants can often increase their earnings 10 to 20 times over by leaving the government. Remuneration rates for skilled professionals are especially inadequate, which contributes to their high attrition rate.⁴³ The Jammeh regime frequently and arbitrarily reshuffled staff at all levels of the public administration to disrupt institutional relationships and maintain the absolute authority of the chief executive. The regime also attempted to suppress dissent through periodic purges of the civil service.⁴⁴ While the new government is in the process of reinstating hundreds of improperly terminated civil servants, rebuilding the public sector's human capital stock will require comprehensive remuneration reform and extensive professional training.

Corruption pervades the Gambian public sector

42. Widespread corruption further erodes the already weak credibility of public institutions. Due to the country's deliberately complex and opaque regulatory structure, bribery is a feature of almost all interactions between citizens and the state. Bribes are paid to obtain basic services such as water and electric connections, as well as business permits, import licenses, land titles, and other legal documents.⁴⁵ The Jammeh administration used corruption to enrich allies and placate important constituencies, and corruption remains a core element of intragovernmental financial flows and administrative relationships.⁴⁶

43. The new administration has made combating corruption a top priority, but a detailed anticorruption strategy has yet to be developed. Under the previous regime, civil servants were rarely convicted of corruption, sanctions tended to be lenient, and corrupt officials were sometimes redeployed to other government positions.⁴⁷ While the new government is striving to reestablish respect for ethical standards and strengthen oversight mechanisms, the weak institutions it has inherited will likely undermine its ability to combat corruption. Without credible institutions and consistent investigation and enforcement processes, corruption prosecutions may appear politically motivated. Rebuilding confidence in the effectiveness and impartiality of public oversight will require time, extensive capacity-building, and an enduring political commitment to reform. In the meanwhile, however, the persistence of corruption could weaken the new government. The risk that a failure to meaningfully combat corruption could frustrate high public expectations for the integrity of the new government represents a source of acute political fragility. Under similar circumstances, governments in other countries have created ad hoc courts or anticorruption commissions outside the standard legal system. This type of intervention could be effective in The Gambia, provided it is transparent and temporary.

Decades of undemocratic governance have weakened civil society

44. Gambian civil society was marginalized under the Jammeh administration, but is showing signs of recovery in the wake of the recent elections. About 180 nongovernmental and community-based organizations are registered in The Gambia, and they focus on a wide range of intervention areas.⁴⁸ However, the Jammeh administration suppressed any expression of civil society that it perceived as a challenge to the authority of the regime, and most Gambian civil society groups lack experience in democratic political advocacy. Domestic nongovernmental and civil society organizations have limited managerial and technical capacity and face severe resource constraints that inhibit their ability to operate effectively.

45. Under the Jammeh administration, The Gambia's political environment was hostile to journalists and privately owned media. There were numerous reports of disappearances and murders of journalists perceived as critical of the regime.⁴⁹ The Information and Communications Act was amended in 2013 to introduce a 15-year prison term and a US\$70,000 fine for anyone convicted of using the internet to spread false news, make derogatory statements, incite dissention, or instigate violence against the government or public officials, granting the government broad discretion to crack down on independent media. Journalists were routinely arrested and detained. Restrictive laws continue to limit freedom of expression,⁵⁰ though the new government has pledged to reverse undemocratic and coercive limitations of freedom of the press. However, years of intimidation by the state have produced a culture of journalistic self-censorship, and it may take time for the press to adapt to their new role in a democratic society.⁵¹ Media coverage of the legislative elections has been encouraging, with a range of outlets producing critical and investigative journalism. However, there have been instances of media intimidation under the new administration, the most notable of which occurred on March 5, when a reporter for the newspaper Foroyaa was assaulted during a press conference attended by government ministers and key figures in the coalition.

2.4. Structural Vulnerabilities and Exogenous Shocks

A combination of long-term structural vulnerabilities and short-term economic shocks is exacerbating food insecurity

46. The Gambia is on the verge of a nutrition emergency.⁵² As of August 2016, an estimated 551,000 people were food insecure, with 60,726 suffering from extreme food insecurity.⁵³ The acute malnutrition rate rose from 9.5 percent in 2010 to 9.9 percent in 2015. An estimated one-fourth of children under the age of five are stunted, and one-fifth of pregnant women are undernourished.⁵⁴

47. The Gambia’s largely rain-fed agricultural sector is heavily exposed to weather-related shocks, and aggregate food production is far below aggregate demand. The Gambia relies on imports for nearly half of its cereal consumption, and global food prices and exchange-rate dynamics strongly influence domestic prices. The substantial depreciation of the Gambian dalasi in recent years has increased domestic food prices, contributing to food insecurity and malnutrition.

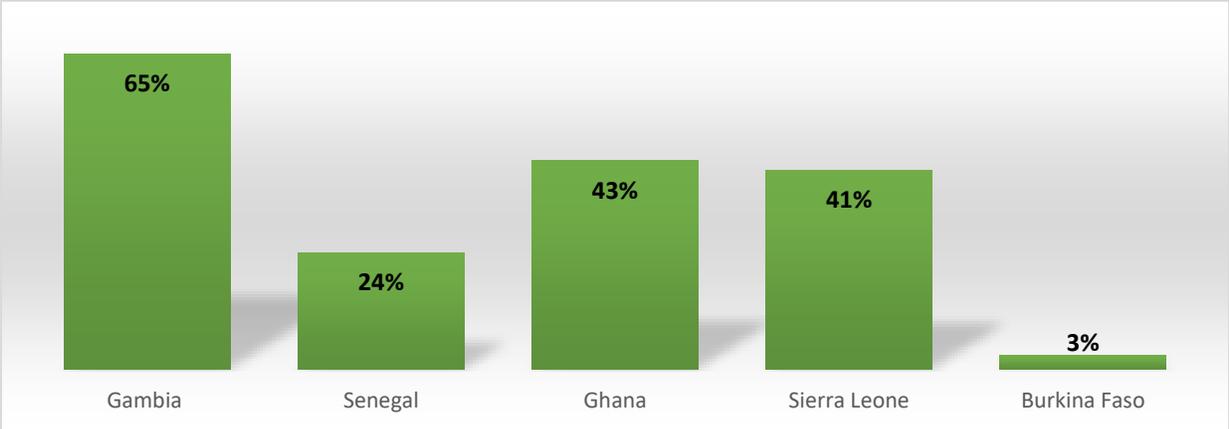
4. Food insecurity is contributing to large-scale emigration from The Gambia. Though relatively small in absolute terms, the number of Gambian migrants in Europe is second only to the number of Syrians as a share of the total home-country population. Interviews with Gambian migrants underscore the key role of food security in driving emigration, as migrants frequently cite the need to generate remittances to support household food consumption as a key motivation behind their decision to emigrate.⁵⁵

Large-scale emigration is draining the country of its most educated and productive workers

48. The combination of poverty, unemployment, food insecurity, and political instability has driven tens of thousands of Gambians out of the country. The overwhelming majority of Gambian migrants are bound for Europe. Despite the country’s small size, Gambians represent the second-largest number of African migrants arriving in Italy by sea. In recent months, as the political situation became increasingly volatile outmigration exponentially increased.⁵⁶ The Italian government claims that 8,454 migrants from The Gambia arrived in Italy in 2015 alone. However, high levels of emigration are not a recent phenomenon. Between 2000 and 2010 the number of Gambians residing abroad roughly doubled to between 65,000 and 90,000, or over 4 percent of the country’s total population.⁵⁷ By 2013, The Gambia had the tenth-highest net migration rate in Africa, at 2.34 migrants per thousand people.⁵⁸ An estimated 135,000 Gambians, or 7 percent of the country’s total population, currently reside abroad.⁵⁹

49. Weak economic growth and widespread unemployment have driven recent migration flows, but political instability is also a major factor. More than 11,000 Gambian migrants sought asylum in Europe in 2015.⁶⁰ Moreover, the emigration rate among skilled workers from The Gambia is far higher than those of comparable countries in the subregion. Almost 65 percent of Gambians who complete higher education eventually emigrate, compared to just 24 percent in Senegal, 43 percent in Ghana, 41 percent in Sierra Leone, and 3.3 percent in Burkina Faso (Figure 4).⁶¹ In 2000, the emigration rate of skilled workers from The Gambia was among the 15 highest worldwide, with deeply negative implications for the local economy. For example, 53 percent of all physicians and 66 percent of all professional nurses born in The Gambia were practicing outside the country.⁶² Moreover, total remittances rose from an average of 19 percent of GDP in the 1980s to over 21 percent in 2014.

Figure 4. Emigration Rates among Workers with Higher Education, Gambia and Comparators



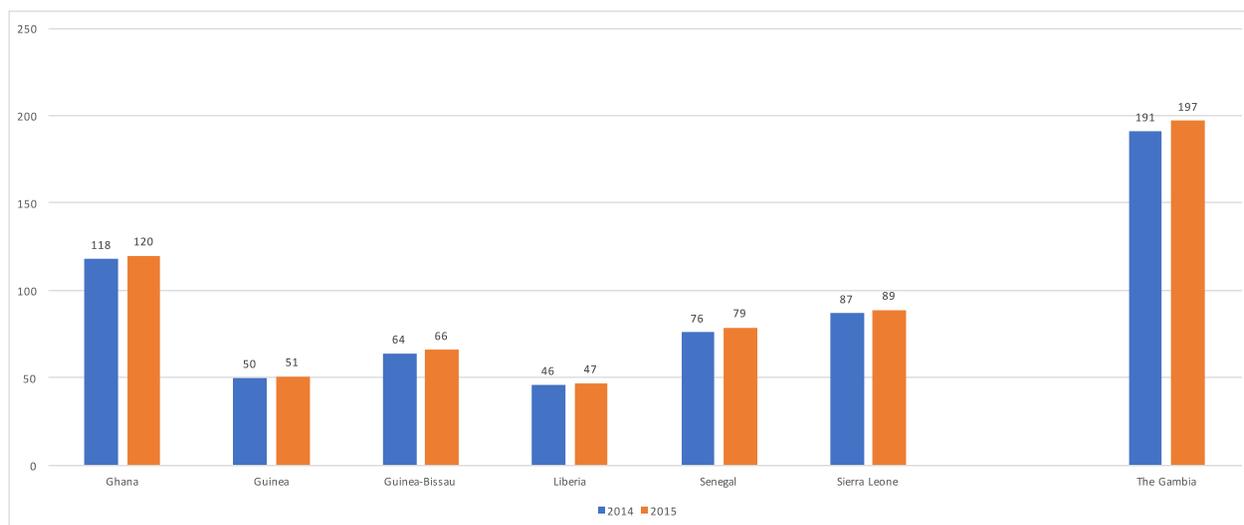
Source: Kebbeh (2013) and Docquier and Marfouk (2006)^{63,64}

50. Agriculture and tourism are the mainstays of the Gambian economy, and in recent years exogenous shocks to both sectors have underscored the country’s persistent economic vulnerability.⁶⁵ Agriculture employs approximately 70 percent of the labor force.⁶⁶ The Sahelian drought of 2011–12 inflicted massive crop losses, causing GDP to contract by 4.1 percent in 2011 alone. Moreover, in 2014 and 2015, the Ebola crisis severely weakened the tourism sector. Although The Gambia has had no recorded cases of Ebola, the number of visitors dropped by 60 percent, year-on-year, in 2014 and remained depressed through 2015.⁶⁷ The threat of Islamist terrorism, and the rise of regional militant groups such as Boko Haram, have also negatively affected the Gambian tourism sector.⁶⁸ Shocks to agriculture and tourism have steadily undermined food security. In 2014, one-third of the country was food insecure, and many households resorted to negative coping mechanisms such as selling productive assets or withdrawing children from school to contribute to household labor.⁶⁹ Food insecurity is also intensifying pressure on the country’s environmental resources.

Environmental degradation is a major source of fragility

51. The Gambia is highly vulnerable to multiple forms of environmental damage. A combination of short-term weather-related shocks and long-term climate change is reducing agricultural output. Agriculture in turn is putting considerable strain on forests and water resources, as the sector struggles to meet the demands of a growing urban economy. The Gambia is the most densely populated country in the subregion. Rapid population growth is intensifying environmental pressure, and the country’s weak public institutions are incapable of enforcing environmental protections.

Figure 5. Population Density per Square Kilometer, Gambia and Regional Comparators, 2014/15



Source: The World Bank World Development Indicators

52. In the rural sector, deforestation and desertification are severely damaging local ecosystems. A combination of slash-and-burn agriculture and the harvesting of wood for fuel has decimated the country’s forests. Cleared areas quickly turn barren, depriving local communities of forest products and ecosystem services. Unsustainable agricultural practices are exacerbating economic vulnerability and food insecurity among rural communities, with negative implications for overall fragility (see Annex 4).

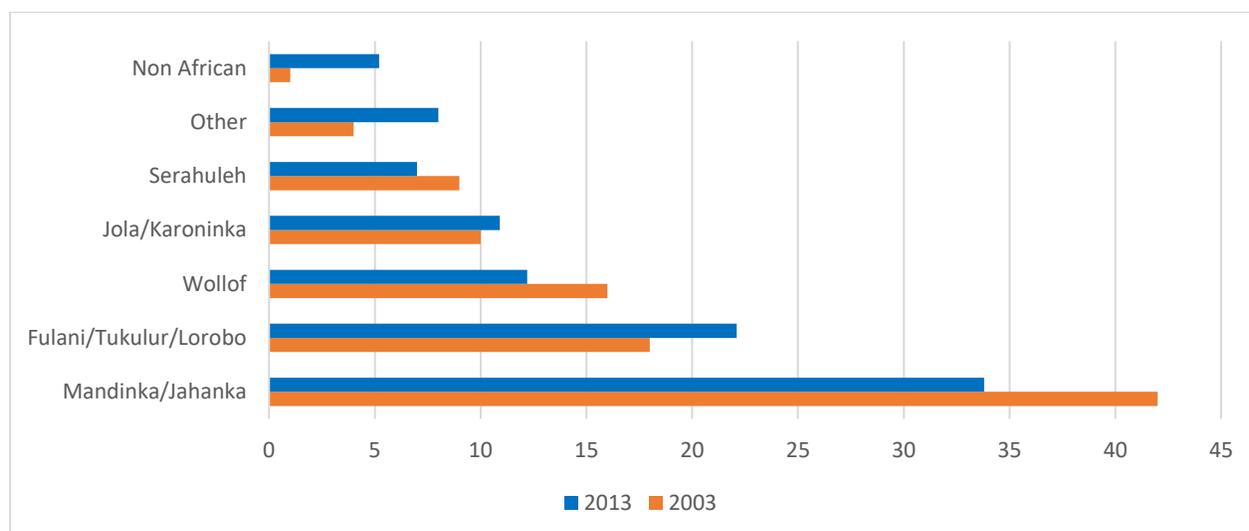
53. In urban Banjul and Kanifing, population pressures are straining the capacity of public institutions to manage the urban environment. The municipal government is struggling to control pollution, dispose of solid waste, and provide sanitation services to a burgeoning urban population. Poor infrastructure, inadequate financial and administrative resources, and inefficient public investment management

compound Banjul’s natural vulnerability as a low-lying island.⁷⁰ Without adequate solid waste disposal, the population has resorted to open burning and indiscriminate dumping, which are contaminating the soil and groundwater and increasing the risk of flooding.⁷¹ Environmental damage contributes to an already tense urban environment, increasing the risk of popular unrest.

Rapid demographic changes are destabilizing the traditional social equilibrium

54. While The Gambia has long been regarded as a model of ethnic pluralism, ongoing demographic changes may lead to social instability. The Mandinka and associated ethnicities continue to constitute the largest ethnic group, but their share in the total population is declining. Meanwhile, the population share of the second-largest group, the Fulani and related ethnicities, is rising (Figure 6). The urbanization process has made the social impact of demographic change increasingly uncertain, as the Gambian model of ethnic pluralism is based around small traditional villages rather than densely packed urban centers. Rapid urbanization and uneven economic growth have also increased rural-urban wealth inequality, with potentially negative social consequences.

Figure 6. The Ethnic Composition of the Gambian Population, 2003–2013 (%)



Source: The Gambia Population Census 2003, CIA World Factbook, 2013

2.5. Regional Instability and External Relations

55. The Gambia’s colonial history continues to influence its relationship with Senegal. Since independence, Senegal has remained aligned with the community of Francophone West African nations, and it uses the CFA franc as its currency. Like many former British colonies, The Gambia became a Commonwealth country after independence, until former President Jammeh eschewed the country’s ties to the UK and attempted to develop a new framework of international relations. However, the regime’s erratic foreign policies ultimately deepened The Gambia’s economic and diplomatic isolation, and its relationship with Senegal became increasingly strained, especially during the final years of the Jammeh administration.

56. Over the years, The Gambia and Senegal have had a complex and contentious relationship. Even during periods when The Gambia sought closer economic, political, and military ties with Senegal, both countries remained competitive and occasionally antagonistic, even resorting to hostile policy actions designed to thwart each other’s interests. The Gambia has refused to allow Senegal to build a bridge across Gambian territory to link Senegal’s northern and southern coastal regions.⁷² Bypassing The Gambia

through inland Senegal is a significant hardship, transforming a journey of 40 miles into a 750-mile trip.⁷³ In 2014, the AfDB approved a US\$ 96 M (equivalent to UA 67.36 million) to build a trans-Gambia bridge. However, the Gambian government objected to the bridge's design, which it claimed would prevent the navigation of the river. The bridge is perceived to increase the Senegalese government's negotiating leverage by facilitating a potential embargo. The previous Minister of Foreign Affairs raised these objections in 2016, after the Jammeh administration had closed the border with Senegal and just as work on the bridge was slated to commence. This was the latest in a series of bridge-project postponements and work stoppages by the Jammeh government.

57. During Yahya Jammeh's term, relations between the two countries were marred by recurring tensions over cross-border traffic. Between 1994 and 2016, the border between The Gambia and Senegal was closed at least 10 times, sometimes for extended periods, hampering regional trade in Senegal and inflicting significant economic hardship in The Gambia. However, the new government has taken steps to rebuild relations with Senegal, and the Senegalese government has expressed its openness to a rapprochement.

58. More than 5,000 Senegalese refugees, primarily from the Casamance region, have entered The Gambia since mid-August 2016.⁷⁴ Aid agencies in Ziguinchor estimate there may be an additional 10,000 internally displaced persons in Casamance.⁷⁵ The Gambia also hosts a relatively small refugee population, numbering just under 10,000 in 2013, from Liberia, Senegal, and Sierra Leone. Senegalese refugees are concentrated in villages along the Senegal-Gambia border, while Liberians and Sierra Leoneans tend to live in Banjul and other urban areas. While the Gambian government allows Casamance refugees to live and work in the country, they and their host families often suffer from food insecurity, poor health, and inadequate housing.

59. The Gambian region of Foni, which borders on Casamance, appears to be especially vulnerable to instability and conflict. This area has long been isolated and insecure, and many local communities were closely aligned with the previous regime. There are reports that Jammeh loyalists from the military and security forces have relocated to the Kanilai region, and it remains a stronghold of support for the APRC. For these reasons, the Kanilai region should be a priority for public outreach and engagement by both the government and its development partners.

3. Sources of Resilience

60. The political crisis that followed the presidential election in December exposed many of the factors driving the country's fragility, but it also underscored critical sources of resilience. While the crisis further strained an already delicate social, political and economic equilibrium, The Gambia's ability to sustain the momentous shock of regime change without falling into destructive conflict reflected the strength of the country's stabilizing forces. Five sources of resilience played an especially important role in avoiding a descent into conflict: the Gambian diaspora, neighbor governments and regional institutions, women and youth, and large-scale emigration. Going forward, the government and its development partners can reinforce these sources of resilience and attempt to maximize their contribution to social, political, and economic stability.

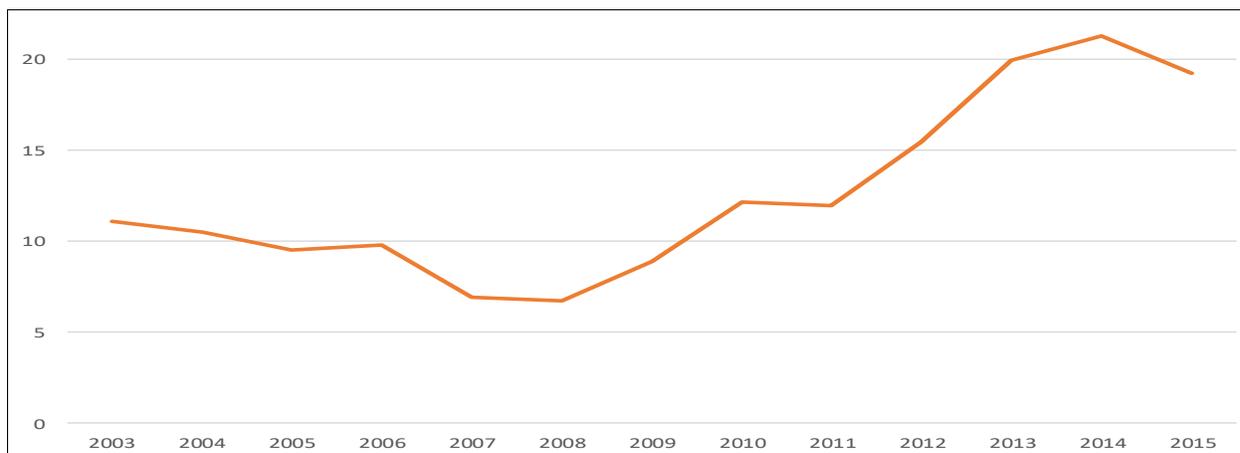
4.1 The Diaspora

61. Decades of slow economic growth, political repression, and ethnic favoritism have encouraged the formation of a large Gambian diaspora, which has swelled in recent years as socioeconomic conditions have deteriorated.⁷⁶ In 2010, an estimated 4 percent of the country's population resided abroad. Many Gambian emigrants are skilled workers seeking better wages elsewhere in the sub-region, in Europe, or in the United States.

62. In recent years, remittances from the diaspora have become an increasingly important component of household consumption. Remittance income has averaged 12.5 percent of GDP since 2003, and by 2015 it had risen to 19.24 percent, or US\$181.7 million.⁷⁷ This level of remittance income is over 20 times the global average of 0.62 percent of GDP. Remittances sustained many households through the protracted economic downturn that followed the 2008 global financial crisis, and they bolstered consumption during subsequent economic shocks such as the regional Ebola crisis and multiple poor agricultural seasons.

63. Throughout the Jammeh administration, the Gambian diaspora remained engaged in the country's economic, political and social life. Diaspora organizations assumed many of the functions of a beleaguered domestic civil society. Diaspora-based charities and nongovernmental organizations implemented development programs, while diaspora-based news sources provided a counterpoint to the state-run domestic media. Members of the diaspora also financed opposition parties, and their support played a key role in facilitating the country's transition to democracy. The diaspora also leveraged social media platforms to organize political activities without interference from the state. Social media connectivity allowed information to flow both ways, and the diaspora served as a link to international media outlets, offering vital insight into events on the ground in The Gambia.

Figure 7: Remittances as a Share of GDP, 2003-2013 (%)



4.2 The Role of ECOWAS and Its Member States

64. While regional conflict and instability contribute to fragility in The Gambia, neighboring governments and multilateral institutions have exerted a vital stabilizing force. Most countries in the region are now led by democratically elected governments, several of which have experienced peaceful transfers of power in recent election cycles. Nigeria completed its first successful transfer of power from an incumbent to an opposition candidate in 2015, while Cape Verde has a well-established track record

of democratic transitions. Senegal has never suffered a coup or other violent political transition, and its public institutions are becoming increasingly democratic. In 2016, Freedom House ranked Nigeria, Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire among the countries that had made the greatest improvements in securing political rights and civil liberties.⁷⁸

65. The policies and activities of ECOWAS increasingly reflect the expression of democratic values common among member governments.⁷⁹ West African leaders worked through ECOWAS institutions to support a peaceful resolution to The Gambia's recent political crisis. ECOWAS enabled regional governments to swiftly organize a united response. Within days of the election, an ECOWAS mission comprising the heads of state of Liberia, Nigeria, and Ghana conveyed its support for a peaceful political transition that respected the election results. A few days later, in Abuja, the ECOWAS member stated declared that they would take all measures necessary to enforce the results of the election. ECOWAS sustained its engagement throughout the transition period, issuing press statements congratulating President Barrow and reaffirming its support for democratic processes. Another 10 heads of state from elsewhere in Sub-Saharan Africa also supported the mediation of the crisis.

66. ECOWAS peacekeepers continue to bolster public security in the wake of the political transition. As the political crisis unfolded, the ECOWAS Security Council unanimously expressed its "commitment to ensure, by political means first, the respect of the will of the people" and deployed a military force on the Senegalese border to intervene in the event of a violent conflict. This peacekeeping force remains a key component of public security as the new administration strives to normalize relations with the security services and begin a long-term process of security-sector reform, reorganization, and reconciliation with the victims of the previous regime.

4.3 Women and Youth

67. As Gambian men have moved to the cities or emigrated abroad in ever-larger numbers, women and youth have assumed a more prominent social and economic role, especially in rural areas. Although they face considerable challenges in accessing land and capital, women have traditionally participated in economic activity in rural areas. In recent years, as demographic shifts have reduced the male population in rural areas, women have taken on more responsibilities in agricultural and livestock production, as well as local decision-making. Greater economic participation by women has been shown to increase community resilience. Moreover, women's organizations are involved in civic education and outreach activities, and they serve as local partners for international development agencies.

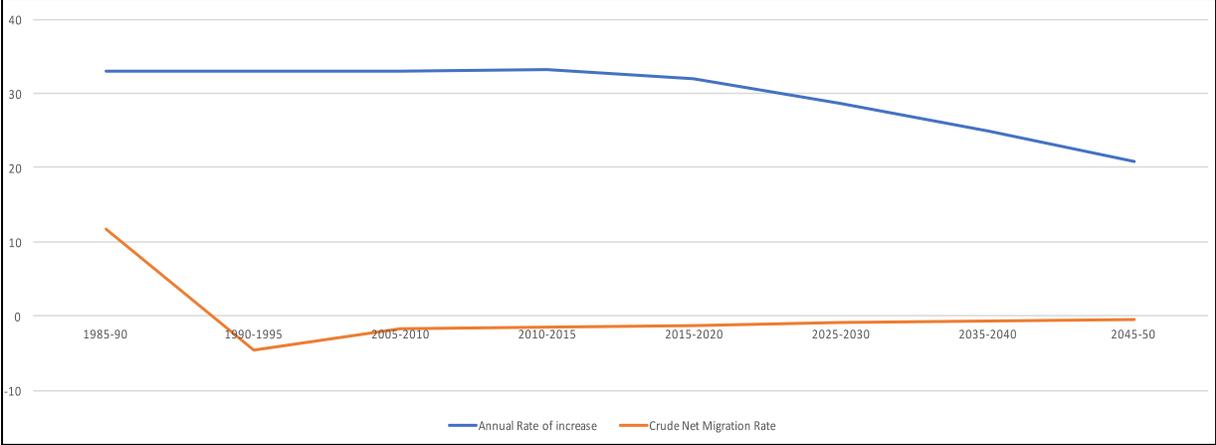
68. Young people and youth organizations played an important role in the recent political transition. Whereas 18- to 24-year-olds had previously eschewed political participation, large numbers of young people voted in the presidential election and organized peaceful demonstrations in support of the democratic transfer of power. Youth organizations constructively channeled the political activism of young people,⁸⁰ enabling them to express their ambitions and ideals without resorting to conflict. Social media posts tagged with "[#GambiaHasDecided](#)" encouraged young people to participate in the elections and helped thwart voter-suppression efforts by the previous regime.⁸¹ Youth organizations continue to strengthen civil society and create space for productive political debate.

4.4 Migration

69. While the exodus of skilled workers presents a challenge to The Gambia's long-term growth and development, emigration is also a major source of social, political and economic resilience. Emigration mitigates the social and economic impact of high population growth rates. It eases pressure on land and other resources, as well as the domestic labor market. Emigration can also diffuse political tensions by providing an alternative to the status quo.

70. The Gambia’s net migration rate stands at 2 emigrants per thousand people. The Gambia has the 57th highest net emigration rate of the 222 countries and territories included in the CIA World Factbook.⁸² For decades, The Gambia’s high net emigration rate has helped alleviate social tensions. While emigration may have reduced opposition to the Jammeh regime in the short term, it also reduced the likelihood of violent unrest, and over the long term, emigration contributed to the development of a large and politically engaged diaspora.

Figure 8: Population Growth and Emigration, Actual and Projected, 1985-2050



Source: UNICEF Migration Profiles, the Gambia 2015

71. Net emigration is expected continue over the next ten years, but the scale of emigration is expected to diminish over time. Meanwhile, population growth is expected to slow substantially over the next few decades (Figure 8). These trends should continue to ease demographic pressures.

4. External Assistance: Risks and Benefits

72. International cooperation plays a crucial role in The Gambia’s development. As in most countries in fragile situations, the government’s capacity for domestic resource mobilization is limited, and the country relies heavily on external assistance to finance essential public spending. Historically, support from The Gambia’s development partners has covered about two-thirds of total spending.⁸³ The volume of external assistance received by The Gambia remained broadly stable until the past five years, when aid inflows have significantly exceeded their historical average (Figure 9).⁸⁴

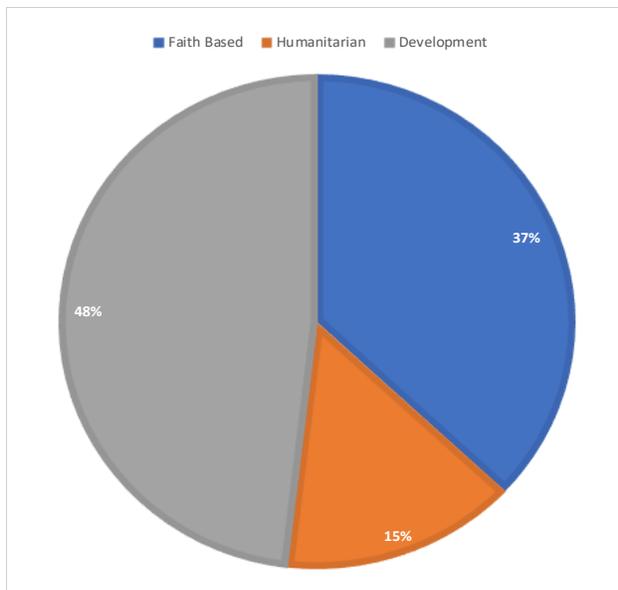
Figure 9: Official Development Assistance to The Gambia, US\$ Millions, 1970-2015



Source: OECD

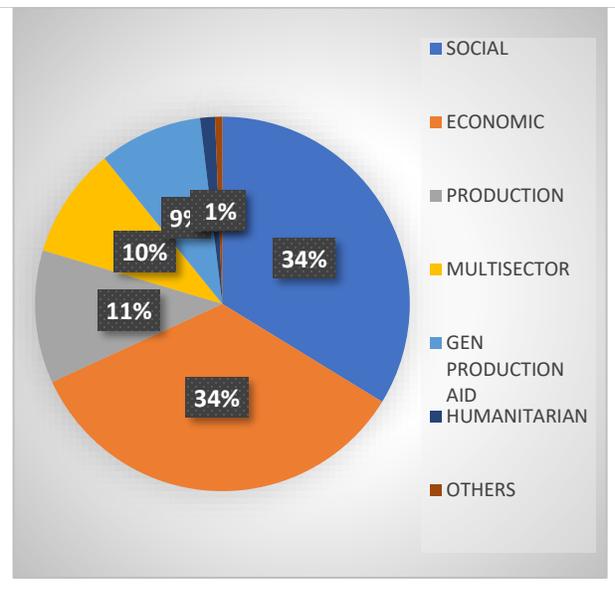
73. The bulk of this assistance comes from a relatively small group of donors. These include the African Development Bank, the European Union, Islamic Development Bank, the UN agencies, and the World Bank. Numerous international NGOs work in the Gambia, and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria has an especially important presence. Several major bilateral aid agencies, especially from Gulf Countries, such as the Kuwait Fund, and to a lesser extent the United Kingdom’s Department for International Development and the US Agency for International Development also are active in the Gambia. Finally, the country hosts a number of international faith-based organizations, most of which provide humanitarian assistance and social services, especially in rural areas (Figure 10).

Figure 10: NGOs in The Gambia by Type



Source: OECD

Figure 11: Official Development Assistance by Sector



Source: OECD

74. In 2015, aid to the Gambia focused on emergency social and economic support due to the country's deteriorating fragility indicators. Several donors are supporting enhanced public financial management and stronger judicial capacity. However, few donors have been willing to address the political drivers of fragility, due in part to the reputational risks associated with reforming political systems.⁸⁵ However, many donors were willing to work with the Jammeh regime despite serious concerns regarding its legitimacy and human-rights record. Relations between the Jammeh regime and its development partners deteriorated between 2013 and 2016, prompting some donors to reduce or curtail their support. Following the inauguration of the new government, the international community swiftly reengaged with The Gambia, and many development partners have pledged substantial support.⁸⁶

75. While many donors regard domestic political systems as outside their purview, those systems are vital determinants of both fragility and resilience. The new government has pledged to pursue an extensive program of constitutional reforms, including measures to secure the independence of the judiciary and empower the legislature. However, most Gambian policymakers have limited governing experience and face numerous competing demands on their attention. The authorities are striving to restore fiscal stability, reform the security sector, and reestablish an effective public administration. Meanwhile, successive election cycles continue to realign political relationships and shift partisan incentives. Without robust technical assistance from the donor community, it is unlikely that the new government will be able to accomplish its goal of creating a fully functioning democratic government supported by appropriate checks and balances.

76. Electoral support is a priority area for donor engagement. A strong international presence can help ensure the integrity of the electoral system. Donors can cover election-related costs, support independent electoral commissions, and provide technical input to policymakers drafting election laws. In the Gambia, where democratic norms are not yet entrenched, electoral transparency is vital to the government's credibility. Donors must pay special attention to the threat of ethnic balkanization and assist the government in designing campaign-finance regulations and election laws that mitigate the potential for political parties to cultivate constituencies based on ethnicity or religious affiliation.

77. Press freedom is vital to democracy, and the donor community can assist The Gambia in overcoming the biased and repressive media environment created by the previous regime. The Jammeh administration attempted to entrench its power by using the state-run media as a propaganda tool while persecuting journalists deemed friendly to the opposition. While the new government has stated its commitment to press freedom, dismantling the apparatus that spread propaganda and facilitated persecution will be a long-term process. Fostering a culture of open information is essential to civil political debate and effective popular oversight of government power, and The Gambia's development partners can provide valuable technical assistance to design a legal framework for protecting press freedom.

78. Although donors are often reluctant to involve themselves in matters of constitutional law, the international community is well-positioned to assist the government **in reestablishing the legislature's power to act as a check on the executive branch.** The Jammeh regime systematically marginalized the legislature, and restoring its independent authority will require amending the constitution. In addition, the legislative process itself must be reformed to establish fair and transparent parliamentary processes. Both the constitutional separation of powers and the reform of legislative procedures should be included in the policy dialogue that underpins external budget support.

79. Decentralized decision-making can bolster the government's popular legitimacy at the local level. Leveraging community knowledge of local socioeconomic conditions and political stakeholders can help prevent elite capture and promote a more inclusive approach to public policy. Donors and NGOs can assist the government by creating mechanisms to promote community outreach, engagement, and feedback.

80. NGOs can play a vital role in promoting transparency and accountability among both the government and donor agencies. NGOs can draw on their local networks to observe the implementation of public policies and donor-financed programs and draw attention to cases of corruption, patronage or other forms of mismanagement. NGOs can also help sustain a healthy dialogue on political and economic issues and mitigate tensions between and among communities.

81. To further minimize the risk that donor support will exacerbate fragility, external assistance should reflect principles of equity, vulnerability, and conflict-mitigation. A focus on equity implies that benefits should be distributed based on clear programmatic objectives and without undue bias toward any region, polity, social class, or ethnic group. A focus on vulnerability implies that development policies should target the poorest households and groups with special needs, such as people with disabilities, unemployed youth, the elderly, displaced persons, and women and children who head households. Finally, a focus on conflict mitigation implies that development programs and policies should actively strive to reduce the risk of social unrest. While the application of these principles will reflect the specifics of each policy and program, in all cases a participatory approach to beneficiary selection that engages community leaders and local civil society can help ensure that external assistance effectively reinforces social and economic resilience.

82. Donors can monitor public perceptions to identify emerging drivers of fragility. Donors can evaluate changing attitudes toward the government, the reform process, and pressing social, economic or political

issues, highlighting areas of frustration or potential conflict. This type of monitoring should be based on participatory principles where possible, with communities designing feedback mechanisms themselves. However, donors can also draw on the international experience to design surveys and other assessment tools. Efforts to gauge public opinion must account for the trauma inflicted by the previous regime and the potential reluctance of survey participants to express honest opinions.

83. Donor coordination is especially complicated in fragile environments, and the large influx of international support in the wake of the political transition will increase both the complexity and the importance of harmonizing external assistance. While donor support will be crucial to strengthen the country's resilience, the Gambian government has neither the experience nor the administrative resources to manage numerous donor relationships. In this context, there is a high risk that uncoordinated external assistance will overwhelm the government's limited capacity to comply with donor conditions or implement supported reforms. Creating a forum for donor collaboration, in line with the *Busan New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States*, could enable the international community to develop a unified engagement strategy backed by a coherent outreach effort.

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

84. In the aftermath of its momentous political transition, The Gambia remains critically fragile due to the extreme weakness of its public institutions. Like many countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, The Gambia struggled to build a strong public sector in the early years of its independence, and the limited progress achieved by the Jawara administration was systematically dismantled by the Jammeh regime, which undermined the integrity of the public administration, exacerbated social cleavages, and used force and intimidation to maintain political control. Following the transformative 2016 election, the ruling coalition's delicate political equilibrium and limited governing experience will likely compound the capacity limitations of the public sector, inhibiting the new government's ability to execute a diverse array of critical reforms. While the recent elections have secured the UDP's legislative majority, rising tensions within the seven-party coalition underscore the importance of building a broad-based national political consensus.

85. The dire macroeconomic situation will require the government to carefully manage expectations. Policymakers face numerous conflicting demands for political and economic action, both by the public and by the country's external development partners. The government's ability to satisfy these demands and amicably resolve competition between interest groups will greatly influence its perceived legitimacy and effectiveness. The Gambia's development partners expect the government to implement sound macro-fiscal policies, which will require expenditure consolidation, improved revenue administration and public sector reform. Meanwhile, the public is calling for economic relief after years of hardship, which would entail both greater social spending and increased public investment. The government will be unable to fully satisfy both demands simultaneously. While elements of the public may recognize that the government will need time to adjust, the new administration will need to swiftly generate broad improvements in living standards. In this context, managing expectations will be among the most crucial challenges facing the new government.

86. Public administrative capacity is limited, and enhancing the quality of public institutions will require careful, well-coordinated engagement by development partners. The final ministerial appointments in late February 2017 completed the formation of the central government. However, the quality and quantity of the public sector's physical, financial, and human resources have been depleted by years of mismanagement and neglect. The government's limited capacity underscores the importance of donor

coordination, as competing donor requests have overwhelmed the authorities' ability to manage external assistance.

87. To ensure a continuous process of institutional strengthening, the government and its cooperating partners must foster the development of a competent technocratic cadre tasked with implementing administrative and policy reforms while sustaining core departmental functions. Technocratic officials operating below the ministerial level should be isolated from partisan political interference. Since the previous government had a history of moving key personnel quickly and sometimes erratically, the new government must demonstrate its willingness to employ key technical staff in fixed positions according to reasonable terms of service and to remove them only for cause. The establishment of a human-resources policy that reflects these principles should be a key element of the policy dialogue between the government and its cooperating partners. It will be especially important to limit political appointments to a small number of advisors with no ministerial line responsibilities.

88. Strengthening the legitimacy of public institutions will require both substantive reform and a concerted effort to rebuild the image of the public sector. During the previous administration, widespread corruption, patronage, and ethnic favoritism badly degraded the reputation of government agencies and institutions. Consequently, the new government now faces the dual challenge of both comprehensively reforming the public sector and reestablishing popular confidence in its efficacy, impartiality, and alignment with the national interest.

89. Over the next three years, a near-perpetual electoral cycle will present a pivotal test of the Gambia's fledgling democracy. Following the recent presidential and legislative elections, local council elections are slated for April 12, 2018. Gambian political parties are expected to further differentiate their unique ideological identities and assert their influence among various constituencies. This process may inhibit compromise, and it will likely intensify pressure on the already strained coalition.

90. Now that it has achieved its objective of ousting former President Jammeh, the seven-party coalition will become increasingly susceptible to ideological conflicts and personal rivalries. The Gambian diaspora financed and supported the coalition parties during the elections, and it remains a major force for multiparty cohesion and cooperation. Continuing to foster an environment of pragmatic collaboration will be the new government's most important cross-cutting political objective over the medium term.

91. The political transition is far from over. The end of the Jammeh administration has ushered in a new set of complex political challenges. The UDP's large majority in the National Assembly will enable it to pass legislation without the support of minority parties. While the dominant position of the UDP could allow for the expedient passage of urgent reforms, it also creates a substantial risk that the UDP will come to rely on party-line votes to pass legislation unilaterally, potentially alienating minority parties rather than governing by consensus. The perception of an inclusive legislative process will be vital to rebuild public trust in political institutions. Only 42 percent of eligible voters cast a vote in the most recent legislative elections, the lowest rate in The Gambia's history. Low voter turnout may be an early indication of disillusionment with the political process.

92. The government must normalize relations with the armed forces and the broader security sector. The military and security agencies have an ambiguous role in Gambian politics. While the security sector was critical to the authority of the Jammeh regime, both the military and police now appear broadly supportive of the new democratic government. However, the security sector has had difficulty

surmounting its institutional legacy as an instrument of repression. Recent reports have suggested that military and law enforcement agencies have harassed and even incarcerated critics of the current president. Although there is no evidence that these actions were taken at the president's behest, the security sector's culture of authoritarianism and minimal respect for civil rights threaten to undermine the popular legitimacy of the new administration. Allegations of predatory and corrupt police behavior remain common despite changes in the leadership of key security-sector agencies.

93. Providing justice for the victims of human rights abuses committed by the previous administration will be challenging, especially in the context of an ongoing political transition. The seven-party coalition has stated its intention to establish a truth and reconciliation process to address the numerous murders and disappearances that occurred under the Jammeh regime. However, it is unlikely that any individual party would be able to manage this process without appearing to further its own interests. Multiparty collaboration and external support—including technical assistance from African countries that have undertaken similar processes—will be essential to the success of truth and reconciliation in The Gambia.

94. The Gambian diaspora continues to play a pivotal role in the country's political, economic, and social stability. The Gambian government and its cooperating partners should actively engage with the diaspora to strengthen civil society, rebuild public institutions, and expand economic opportunities. Remittances are a critical component of household income, and the diaspora finances many nongovernmental and community-based organizations in key sectors such as health, education, and poverty alleviation. The diaspora is also a major force for democratization and the advancement of human rights, including women's rights. During the Jammeh administration, the diaspora acted as a key source of news for the Gambian public. Online newspapers, blogs, and streaming video provided an antidote to the systematic bias of the state-run media. Recognizing the diaspora's importance to The Gambia's future, the new government has prioritized the return of prominent exiles.

5.1. Recommendations

95. While external assistance will play an important role in supporting the government's efforts to reduce fragility, active engagement poses significant reputational risks for international institutions. The country's fragility greatly complicates its relationship with its development partners, whose optimism regarding the country's nascent democracy is tempered by the risk that external efforts will inadvertently promote—or be publicly linked to—a future political, economic, or security crisis. An effective strategy for external assistance must reflect a keen awareness of the internal complexity of the Gambian government, and the pace and sequencing of actions must recognize that decisions by the multiparty coalition will be subject to lengthy and potentially contentious internal negotiations. In this context, the country's development partners must focus their support on policies that enjoy a broad-based consensus and that have been subjected to a credible and transparent impact analysis. Even then, compensatory measures to offset the cost of policy changes may be necessary to secure the necessary political and popular consent.

96. Reforming the security sector is among the government's most urgent priorities. The Jammeh administration's use of the country's military, intelligence, and law-enforcement agencies as instruments of repression alienated much of the population from the national security sector. Rebuilding public trust will require both a comprehensive reorganization of the security sector's administrative structure and a fundamental reorientation of its institutional culture. Under the Jammeh regime, the security sector expanded to an unsustainable size, and the World Bank is currently conducting a security sector expenditure review designed to underpin the administrative reform process. However, rebuilding public trust in the military and security services, and normalizing relations between the security sector and the

civilian government, will be long-term processes that extend beyond the scope of the World Bank's engagement.

97. The new government has inherited an unsustainable macro-fiscal policy framework that threatens to derail the economic recovery. During the final years of its rule, the Jammeh regime pursued increasingly dysfunctional macroeconomic policies, which resulted in a wide structural deficit, a large and costly debt burden, and depleted international reserves. Moreover, the extent of the damage to the Gambian public finances is not yet fully understood, as the chaotic final weeks of the administration created numerous opportunities for corruption and theft. Recognizing the dire state of the public finances, the government has prepared an Accelerated National Response Plan (ANRP) for the second half of 2017, and the authorities are currently finalizing a Second Program for Accelerated Growth and Employment (PAGE II) for 2017-2020. Both the African Development Bank and World Bank are preparing a budget-support operation designed to support the implementation ANRP and PAGE II.

98. Reestablishing a sustainable fiscal stance will enable the government to address longstanding constraints on the growth of the private sector, which will be vital to expanding economic opportunity and attenuating the risks posed by high rates of unemployment. Expansionary fiscal policies and burgeoning state-owned enterprises crowd out private investment. Rationalizing public expenditures and reforming state-owned enterprises will help restore fiscal sustainability while also expanding the scope for private-sector activity. With support from the World Bank, the government is currently implementing a set of reforms designed to improve public financial management and enhance the efficiency of state-owned enterprises. Complementary measures to improve the business climate would accelerate growth, while efforts to facilitate access to land and capital would expand the distribution of returns.

99. Encouraging the development of effective and impartial public-sector institutions should be the priority objective of external development assistance. The Gambia's political transformation is occurring in a context of rapid social and demographic change, including an ongoing urbanization process. Meanwhile, regional integration, renewed openness to trade and investment, and denser ties with the diaspora are driving the evolution of the Gambian economy. Managing these volatile dynamics will require strong and sophisticated public institutions, and the first step in building a competent and resilient public sector will be to restore the equilibrium between the different branches of government. The dominance of the executive branch over the other branches of government encourages the arbitrary and capricious exercise of political power. Development partners are ready to support institutional change. For example, The African Development Bank has approved an Institutional Support Project to assist the Government carry out fundamental reforms. But unless political reforms to allow a stronger role for the legislature and the judiciary are carried out, it will be hard to balance the authority of the executive and promote collaborative democratic governance grounded in the rule of law.

100. Enhancing parliamentary rules and processes will be critical to the functioning of the legislature. Following the recent legislative elections, the National Assembly has struggled to resume operations due to a lack of procedural norms. The Gambia's other development partners can draw on a wealth of international experience to assist the legislature in establishing a sound procedural framework and building its capacity for policy analysis and implementation. The former will require a combination of technical assistance and sufficient resources to facilitate the legislature's core operations, while the latter will require the development of professional nonpartisan technical staff capable of carrying out independent research and providing objective policy advice.

101. The importance of strengthening the judiciary is a matter of widespread nonpartisan consensus among Gambian policymakers. In recent years, for reasons of expediency and political convenience, the Gambian government has relied on foreign judges to staff its judiciary. Although The Gambia's reintegration into the Commonwealth will expand its access to foreign judges, strengthening the judiciary

will require bolstering the supply of domestic judges. Key external partners, including the EU and the AfDB, have demonstrated their willingness to support the professional development of Gambian judges.

102. The government and its development partners must commit to promoting a diverse and inclusive state. Inclusiveness will be essential to the legitimacy of the new government. If the Barrow administration is perceived to represent the interests of a specific ethnic, social, religious, or geographic constituency at the expense of other groups, Gambian democracy will become increasingly vulnerable to zero-sum factionalism. Moreover, the perception that the political process is not equally receptive to the input of all citizens, or that public institutions are not designed to serve the national interest, could lead to renewed instability or even conflict. By contrast, a diverse and inclusive public sector would strengthen social cohesiveness, promote the equitable treatment of individuals and interest groups, reinforce the impartiality of the public administration, and encourage political participation.

103. As the new government strives to overcome a legacy of ethnic favoritism, the authorities will require detailed information on evolving social and demographic dynamics as well as the distributional implications of proposed policies. The Jammeh administration not only attempted to support the interests of the Jola and other ethnic minorities at the expense of the Mandinka, it also favored rural areas over urban areas and portrayed itself as a champion of less-educated youth. Policies that disrupt this political pattern—especially if they appear retributive—could lead to political strife. To engage effectively, The Gambia’s development partners must thoroughly understand the social and cultural dimensions of Gambian political economy. Even seemingly mundane government functions, such as defining a methodology for estimating poverty or establishing a system for evaluating public investment projects, are susceptible to actual political interference or to the mere perception of favoritism if they ultimately influence the distribution of economic resources.

104. Public employment should be regarded as a priority area for promoting inclusiveness and building confidence in government institutions. The Jammeh administration used high-level administrative appointments as part of its system of ethnic patronage. Fostering the development of a civil service that reflects the diversity of Gambian society will provide a strong and highly visible indication of the new government’s commitment to inclusiveness. However, inclusiveness is not merely a matter of proportional representation. Whenever possible, decentralized institutions should be staffed by members of the local community, both to take advantage of local knowledge and to convey a sense of community ownership over the public administration.

105. As managing perceptions and expectations will be vital to the success of the transition, the government will need support to develop its capacity for communications and public outreach. From the earliest stages of the policy process, the government must clearly convey the purpose, objective, and expected impact of each action—effectively utilizing official communications channels while also cultivating strong relationships with an independent media. At the central level, the government must maintain a coherent and consistent policy message, while at the community level, the authorities must explain the benefits and tradeoffs that each measure entails to promote local ownership and diffuse potential opposition. Development partners also have a duty to ensure that the nature, objectives, and expected results of their engagement is understood by the general public. An effective communications strategy also requires mechanisms to gather feedback and incorporate it into public policy. Finally, credible monitoring and evaluation systems are necessary to hold the government and its development partners accountable for results.

106. Building conflict-prevention components into public policies could reinforce resilience. Complementing development programs with activities designed to improve the welfare of young people, promote intercommunity dialogue, raise awareness of critical social issues, strengthen social cohesion,

and build trust in public institutions would help restore social cohesion. Mainstreaming gender equity and social protection into economic policies could shield vulnerable groups from the negative impacts of socioeconomic change, and subjecting investment projects to rigorous environmental-impact assessments could ease pressure on the country's fragile ecosystems.

107. The government's development partners should carefully analyze evolving demographic trends, especially the ongoing urbanization process, and advise policymakers on their political and economic implications. Urbanization is transforming Gambian society. The country's village-based social structures, while allowing for a remarkable degree of ethnic harmony, tend to be rigidly hierarchical, and an informal caste system inhibits social mobility. While urbanization offers an expanded range of economic opportunities, it also disrupts traditional norms and social arrangements. A dynamic urban environment can be a positive force for economic development, but the uncontrolled expansion of cities can strain both their physical and social infrastructure, potentially leading to social instability. Urbanization has especially complex political implications in The Gambia, where rural-urban power dynamics have long played a key role in the national political economy.

108. The government should fully leverage the potential of the Gambian diaspora. The diaspora represents a critical source of social capital. Encouraging closer ties with diaspora communities in Africa, Europe, and elsewhere could catalyze the reconstruction of Gambian civil society. The government should actively collaborate with diaspora-based media and community organizations to strengthen public trust and augment its limited capacity to implement social and economic development programs. The authorities should also strive to rebuild the country's human-capital stock by encouraging the return of investors, entrepreneurs, and skilled professionals.

109. The government should incorporate fragility indicators into the policy process. Indicators of fragility and resilience should inform the national development plan, the central government budget, economic and social programs, and public investment projects. The government should systematically collect information on fragility, potentially through a dedicated statistical observatory, and it should establish a forum for multi-stakeholder collaboration on a national fragility-reduction strategy. The Gambia's development partners should draw on their extensive international experience to assist the government in constructing an analytical framework for assessing fragility and formulating policies to enhance the country's social, political, and economic resilience.

Annex 1. International Indicators of Fragility

Statistical indicators are no substitute for in-depth analysis, but they can help to identify trends and situate the experience of individual countries within a broader international context.⁸⁷ The following annex reviews three commonly used fragility indicators: the Fragile States Index (FSI) prepared by the US-based Fund for Peace; the Human Development Index (HDI) prepared by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); and the World Bank's Country Policy and Institutional Assessment (CPIA).

The Gambia's Fragility Indicators Are Worsening

Although the HD, FSI, and CPIA differ in their emphasis, methodology, and data sources, The Gambia's fragility indicators have clearly deteriorated over the past several years. Other regional countries such as Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone, which had long been sources of regional instability, appear to have become less fragile over time, while fragility indicators have worsened substantially in Senegal and Guinea-Bissau. While much of the region is becoming more resilient, the worsening trend in Senegal magnifies the risk posed by increasing fragility in The Gambia.

The Fragile States Index (FSI)

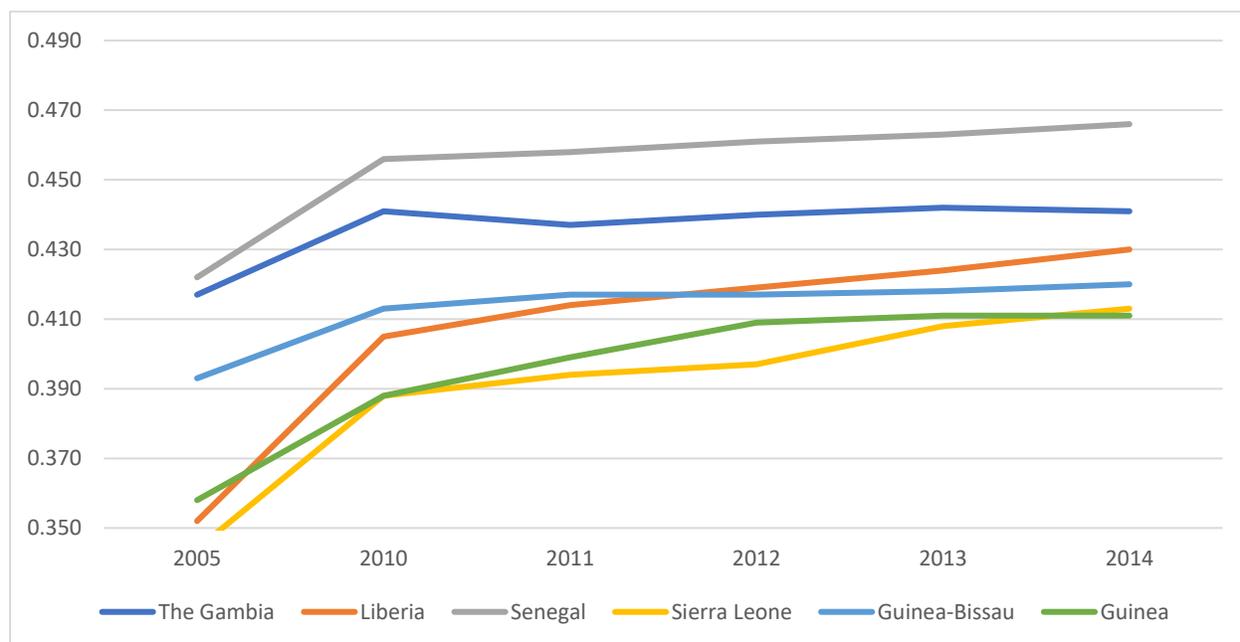
The FSI comprises 12 indicators reflecting different dimensions of fragility.⁸⁸ Based on these indicators, states are scored on a scale from 0 (fully sustainable) to 120 (very high alert). The Gambia's FSI score has deteriorated substantially over the past seven years, and it is now considered a state on high alert. Year-on-year trends show almost all indicators worsening steadily, led by indicators of human-capital depletion and followed by public security, economic development, human rights, and state legitimacy.

In 2016, The Gambia, along with Djibouti, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, and Senegal, registered the largest increase in fragility in Sub-Saharan Africa. In 2015, it experienced the tenth most significant deterioration among all countries surveyed, including African countries such as Liberia, Libya, and Nigeria as well as increasingly countries in fragile situations in other regions such as Iraq, Syria, Ukraine, and Yemen. Most countries with FSI scores similar to those of The Gambia have experienced violent conflicts. While The Gambia has performed somewhat better than Senegal, the unique relationship between the two counties intensifies spillover risks.

The Human Development Index and Multidimensional Poverty Index

The HDI is an aggregate of health, education and quality-of-life indicators.⁸⁹ The Gambia's HDI score has remained broadly unchanged since 2010, while all other countries in the subregion have experienced a general improvement.⁹⁰ The Gambia's 2014 HDI score was 0.441, which puts the country in the low-human-development category. It ranked 175 out of 188 countries and territories included in the survey. The Gambia's score is below the average of 0.505 for countries in the low-human-development group and below the average of 0.518 for countries in Sub-Saharan Africa. Within Sub-Saharan Africa, one of The Gambia's most comparable peer countries in terms of population size and geography is Lesotho, which has an HDIs rank of 161.⁹¹

Figure A1.1. Human Development Index



The Gambia’s most recent Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI)⁹² data date from 2013. They show that 57.2 percent of the population (1,058,000 people) experience multiple dimensions of poverty, while an additional 21.3 percent (394,000 people) are near multidimensional poverty. The intensity of multidimensional poverty in The Gambia, estimated as the average of the deprivation scores experienced by people in multidimensional poverty, is high at 50.5 percent. The Gambia’s intensity-adjusted MPI score is 0.289, compared to 0.227 for Lesotho.⁹³

The Country Policy and Institutional Assessment

The CPIA estimates the quality of a country’s and institutional arrangements and policy framework, which determines the government’s ability to effectively leverage development assistance to support sustainable growth and poverty reduction.⁹⁴ The CPIA consists of 16 criteria grouped into four equally weighed clusters: economic management, structural policies, policies for social inclusion and equity, and public sector management and institutions.

The Gambia’s CPIA score has deteriorated sharply over the past five years, even as many other countries in the region improved the quality of their public policies and institutional arrangements.⁹⁵ Human capital flight and weak public institution have persistently undermined The Gambia’s ability to implement effective development policies. During the Jammeh administration, the absence of appropriate checks and balances and the entrenched nature of the regime severely weakened the public administration, and it remains to be seen whether the new government will be able to reverse the decline in institutional quality.

Demographic Change and Divisive Politics Threaten Social Stability

The Gambia is small but ethnically diverse. Like neighboring Senegal, it is populated by multiple ethnic groups, primarily the Mandinka, Jola, and Manjago.⁹⁶ While The Gambia has long enjoyed a reputation for ethnic pluralism, there are signs that tensions are beginning to rise. Demographic pressure and competition for land are compounding rural-urban migration, the immigration of people from outside the

region, and the emigration of educated Gambians. The Jammeh administration suppressed the expression of grievances and deliberately deepened ethnic divisions in an effort to retain power. While the former government publicly declared its intention to secure freedom of association and worship, promote gender parity, and strengthen the protection of children and other vulnerable groups, in reality it continually repressed the population, employing disappearances, arbitrary detentions, and torture to maintain control. The Jammeh government routinely targeted journalists, political opponents, and anyone perceived as critical of the regime.⁹⁷

Weak Human Development Indicators Contribute to Fragility

While the country has made some progress toward the Millennium Development Goals, living standards for most Gambians remain very low. Malnutrition is a major problem, and the quality and availability of basic health services are very limited, especially in poor and remote rural areas. Chronic malnutrition rates range from 13.9 percent to 30.7 percent, with the North Bank region and the Central River region surpassing the “critical” threshold of 30 percent. As of June 2016, approximately 59,000 Gambian children were malnourished, and 10,000 were severely malnourished. Dire humanitarian conditions exacerbate other dimensions of fragility.

The Gambian population is highly vulnerable to epidemic disease. Outbreaks of meningitis and cholera continue to occur regularly, though they have been largely contained. The entire population of The Gambia is exposed to meningitis, while approximately 65 percent is at risk of cholera. Malaria is endemic, and 90 percent of infections occur during the rainy season. Access to safe drinking water is inadequate across much of the country.

Poor and vulnerable households have very limited access to basic health services. Some villages lack a functioning primary health center, while others lack adequately trained staff. Vital medical supplies are scarce nationwide. Many rural areas are far from health centers, and some lose access entirely during the rainy season from June to October. An estimated 143,000 people (or 7 percent of the population) are currently in need of medical care. Uneven access to healthcare deepens ethnic and class divisions.

Despite significant investment in health and education, the country’s human capital stock remains limited. Average life expectancy nearly doubled between 1960 and 1995, but little progress has been made since then. Life expectancy in The Gambia is comparable to the regional average, but well below the average for Sub-Saharan Africa. The adult literacy rate is just 52 percent and only 24.3 percent of Gambians over the age of 25 have any amount of secondary education. High rates of emigration among educated adults is further eroding the human capital stock.

The Gambia suffers from severe gender inequality. Although women play an important role in Gambian society, their access to land, productive resources, healthcare, and education remains very limited.

Regional fragility compounds The Gambia’s internal challenges

During the 1990s and 2000s, instability and conflict in neighboring countries caused an influx of immigrants into The Gambia.⁹⁸ In 2014, the regional Ebola crisis drastically reduced tourism, which cut the GDP growth rate significantly, even though no cases of Ebola were reported in the country.⁹⁹ Moreover, like many West African countries, The Gambia has been targeted by international criminal organizations, including drug cartels, arms dealers, and human traffickers. Organized crime further erodes national institutions and inhibits The Gambia’s development.

Annex 2. The Political Situation

The Gambia's legacy of undemocratic rule has severely undermined the credibility of the state, and restoring confidence in public institutions will be a major challenge for the new administration. The Jammeh regime consolidated power in the executive branch, stocked the legislature with political allies, and curbed the independence of the judiciary. The public administration was often capricious, even predatory, and the allocation of public services was distorted by patronage and the placation of favored constituencies.

The December 2016 presidential election broke a decades-long cycle of *pro forma* democracy. Although the Jammeh regime regularly held national elections, international observers and internal opposition groups described them as neither free nor fair.¹⁰⁰ The Jammeh administration used both the national security agencies and paramilitary groups to suppress dissent. Crackdowns on opposition parties, media outlets, and groups deemed critical of the administration steadily undermined Gambian civil society.

The Jammeh regime attempted to retain a measure of popular support by pitting ethnic groups against one another. The increasing prominence of ethnicity-based politics in The Gambia, a country formerly known for inter-ethnic harmony, became a source of resentment against the administration. Moreover, a growing share of the population felt excluded from the political process.

Between 2011 and 2016, the regime grew more authoritarian and violent, and its policies became increasingly erratic. There were persistent, credible reports of widespread human-rights abuses. The international community forcefully condemned these abuses, but calls for the regime to desist were met with defiance. The government became more insular, relying on a shrinking pool of domestic allies and isolating itself from the rest of the world. President Jammeh broke off relations with the Commonwealth in 2013 and with the European Union in 2014. The Gambia also withdrew from the International Criminal Court, which the Jammeh regime accused of racism even though the High Judge herself was from The Gambia.¹⁰¹

In its two final years, the Jammeh regime resorted to increasingly repressive measures, which ultimately backfired. Although the December elections occurred in a climate of widespread fear, with low expectations for fairness. Adama Barrow's victory, and Yahya Jammeh's initial acceptance of the result, caught stakeholders by surprise. Both the incumbent regime and the incoming regime faced new and unpredictable circumstances, further complicating a difficult transition.

The six-week period between the announcement of the election result and the inauguration of the new government have come to be known as "the Impasse," as former President Jammeh reversed his earlier decision to accept the result and instead refused to step down. The events of this brief but consequential period continue to affect The Gambia's public finances and institutions. The Impasse placed enormous strain on an already fragile political and economic situation.

Under the Jammeh Regime, a Strong Executive Branch Manipulated the Public Administration to Enforce Political Control

The Gambian executive branch continues to dominate the institutional landscape, but 22 years of erratic policies and unpredictable implementation has undermined both its domestic and external credibility. Despite exercising effectively autocratic control over the functions of government, the Jammeh administration was not able to maintain a predictable policy stance. Overcoming this legacy will present a particularly formidable challenge for the new government, as it strives to maintain the political

coherence of its multi-party coalition. The new government contains diverse ideologies and personalities, and it remains to be seen whether the new president will be able to maintain policy discipline. This is especially important in the face of the daunting economic and social situation that the new regime has inherited.

The civil service and government institutions were repeatedly purged of individuals perceived to be sympathetic to the opposition.¹⁰² Loyalty to the Jammeh regime was treated as a “prerequisite for professional good standing or advancement.”¹⁰³ Promotions, demotions, and were firings were determined by each individual’s perceived loyalty to the ruling government. The regime strove to ensure that the military and the civil service remained in a constant state of uncertainty—particularly the military, in which punishments for perceived disloyalty included torture and execution.¹⁰⁴

The security apparatus, including the National Intelligence Agency and the state police, were used to restrict political activity. Arbitrary arrests, detentions, and the deaths of key opposition figures became especially common in the latter years of the regime. On April 14, 2016, a handful of opposition activists, including United Democratic Party (UDP) national organizing secretary Solo Sandeng, marched in Serrekunda, a suburb of Banjul, to call for electoral reform. Gambian police officers broke up the protest and arrested Sandeng and several bystanders. Sandeng died in police custody. On April 16, UDP leader Ousainou Darboe was also arrested, and over the next two months, more than 90 largely peaceful protesters were detained by police and security forces. Forty-two opposition leaders were convicted of crimes and sentenced to inordinately long prison terms; their trials did not meet international standards of jurisprudence.¹⁰⁵ Protesters who were not arrested were harassed by the security services at their homes, along with their families, prompting some to flee the country. Throughout 2016, President Jammeh threatened opposition groups with retribution for protesting his government, rhetoric which emboldened the security forces to take aggressive action against opposition leaders.

The Jammeh government severely limited freedom of expression and the freedom of the press. Freedom House has ranked The Gambia among the worst countries in the world in terms of freedom of the press.¹⁰⁶ Gambian authorities stifle media freedom through a combination of criminal prosecutions, physical intimidation, censorship, and the promotion of government views in state-run or regime-friendly private outlets. The government has ignored regional court decisions ordering it to end impunity for past crimes against journalists.¹⁰⁷ In addition, the 2013 Information and Communications Act was amended to introduce a 15-year jail term and a fine of 3 million dalasi (US\$77,000) for “anyone using the internet to spread false news or make derogatory statements, incite dissatisfaction, or instigate violence against the government or public officials.”¹⁰⁸

The government restricted the ability of opposition parties to participate in elections. The UDP, the largest opposition party, was the most restricted in terms of its financing, organization, and activities. However, several smaller parties were not threatened by security forces and were not refused permits for public events, indicating either government favoritism or efforts to divide the opposition. The regime limited the ability of most opposition parties to organize, conduct outreach operations, and raise resources. Financial and residency requirements became especially stringent in recent elections. In July 2015, the National Assembly amended the country’s election laws to require that parties register with the Independent Electoral Commission, pay a deposit of 500,000 dalasi (approximately \$11,830), be led by executive members that reside in The Gambia, and maintain a secretariat in each of The Gambia’s five regions. The commission had registered nine parties by May 2016.¹⁰⁹ The authorized campaign period before the election was reduced to 11 days, and during the campaign, opposition political party members were harassed, beaten, arrested, and even killed by the authorities or vigilante groups. Political organizers were frequently denied permits, and political rallies were held under heavy police supervision.

However, two key factors favored the opposition: the popularity of the unity candidate and the integrity of the Independent Electoral Commission. The opposition successfully organized a united front around Adama Barrow's candidacy, enabling them to mobilize an electorate that was predisposed to vote against the incumbent. Meanwhile, the government barred most international scrutiny of the elections, leading to a widespread belief by both international observers and the Gambian public that the election results would be rigged. However, the institutions responsible for managing the election were apparently allowed to exercise appropriate oversight and ensure an accurate result.

The Government's Increasingly Divisive Rhetoric and Violent Political Repression Galvanized the Opposition

President Jammeh's strategy of anti-Mandinka propaganda and the bloody repression of peaceful opposition groups may have backfired. During the campaign, Jammeh repeatedly argued that members of the Mandinka ethnic group were not Gambians,¹¹⁰ referring to them as "enemies" and "foreigners," blaming them for the country's political and economic troubles,¹¹¹ and threatening violence against them.¹¹² His remarks were condemned by the United Nations special adviser on the prevention of genocide.¹¹³ The Mandinka constitute about 30 percent of the Gambian population, and Jammeh's anti-Mandinka rhetoric alienated a powerful voting bloc.¹¹⁴ Meanwhile, there was evidence of a general backlash against the violent repression of peaceful protests, including the death of Solo Sandeng and the imprisonment Ousainou Darboe, a Mandinka opposition figure.

The violent repression of peaceful protests motivated the opposition parties to form a coalition. Previous coalition attempts had been limited to a small number of minor parties.¹¹⁵ However, faced with an increasingly hostile government and sensing a groundswell of popular support, the major opposition parties began to organize into a unified front.

In November 2016, seven opposition parties signed a memorandum of understanding outlining their cooperation framework and objectives. The memorandum of understanding stated that the coalition would hold a national convention to which each party would send an equal number of delegates. At the convention, the parties would agree to support an independent unity candidate for president.

The memorandum defined the coalition's common goals. These included changes to the electoral laws to ensure free and fair elections, the establishment of statutory term limits; and stronger oversight of the executive through constitutional reform and measures to protect the freedom of civil society. The memorandum also included goals for restoring social harmony by promoting tolerance of ethnic, linguistic, political and religious diversity, advancing gender equality, and reestablishing a secular state.

The manifesto also highlighted the regime's human rights abuses and called for redress. The parties declared their intention to set up a truth and reconciliation commission with the power to recommend remedies for past injustices, including the payment of compensation by the state. A separate commission of inquiry would consider claims involving property. Finally, a general amnesty for Gambians in exile would allow their unconditional return.

The memorandum included a set of economic policy measures and institutional reforms. The coalition committed to reintegrating The Gambia into ECOWAS and the Commonwealth and reestablishing compliance with all conventions on human rights and other international commitments. The memorandum called for safeguarding freedom of representation and expression by repealing laws criminalizing speech, protecting the right to a fair and speedy trial by respecting the independence of courts and judges, and establishing a Judicial Service Commission to oversee the enforcement of legal rights. The memorandum also called for the creation of a National Human Rights Institution to review convictions, release persons detained unlawfully, and inspect all places of detention to stop torture and

other unlawful practices. The memorandum's overarching objective was to develop a new Gambia free from extreme poverty, persecution, and impunity, where democracy and the rule of law would thrive, and where dissent and free expression would be tolerated.

The Gambian diaspora strongly supported the opposition. The diaspora was a major source of financing for the opposition, and it spread information about opposition political activity through internet publications beyond the control of the Jammeh regime. Diaspora organizations publicly and consistently insisted on a united opposition,¹¹⁶ even threatening to withhold financial support for any candidate or party attempting to run against the coalition.¹¹⁷ The diaspora leveraged social networks to encourage the participation of an ever-growing group of expatriates, and it used innovative internet-based fundraising instruments to finance the opposition.¹¹⁸ Online fundraising site GoFundMe indicated that US\$71,107 was raised from 686 donors, mostly part of the US-based diaspora, on behalf of the coalition. A large majority of these gifts were under US\$100, pointing to significant grassroots participation.¹¹⁹

The Independent Electoral Commission Proved Credible and Effective

Since 2006, the regime had repeatedly amended the electoral laws to entrench its advantages. The second round of voting was eliminated, the official campaign period was shortened to 11 days, the deposit required from each was increased, and greater restrictions had been placed on political organizing and fundraising. In this context, and especially given the violence and repression that preceded the elections, many observers believed that the Independent Electoral Commission would not serve as an autonomous arbiter of a fair process. The president appointed the commission members, in consultation with the Judicial Service Commission and the Public Service Commission,¹²⁰ and could remove them with judicial approval. This cemented the perception that the Independent Electoral Commission, like most other organs of the state, was beholden to the incumbent and his party and that it would not allow for a free and fair election. However, this assessment proved inaccurate.

The Independent Electoral Commission has a high degree of technical capacity, which it demonstrated in previous elections.¹²¹ International observers had refused to certify the 2011 election because the existing political environment was not conducive to a fair campaign.¹²² The observers, however, complemented the Independent Electoral Commission on its conduct of the elections (see Box A2.1). Since the 2011 election, the electoral commission had implemented technical changes that improved the process of vote counting.¹²³ These changes included improved biometric voter identification, a redrawn electoral map that created more manageable voting districts, and on-the-spot vote counting. Prior to the elections, the chairman of the commission launched a nationwide outreach effort designed to promote public confidence in the integrity of the electoral process.

Box A2.1. The Independent Commission History of Competent Election Management: Evidence from 2011

The Commonwealth Election Observer team gave glowing marks to the Gambia's Independent Electoral Commission, despite the fact that most international observers considered that the elections were not free and fair. Below, we provide the assessment of the behavior of the electoral commission in 2011, pointing to the fact that this agency has a history of carrying out its functions efficiently.

According to the report, the election day was managed in accordance with the Constitution and Electoral Act of 2009. All elements of the conduct of elections, from a technical standpoint, were handled with professionalism. For example, observers noted that most polling stations opened on time, that they were generally well laid out, and that polling officials and party agents present appeared to discharge their duties effectively. The secrecy of the vote was guaranteed as ballot drums were placed behind dark screens away from voters, polling staff, party agents, and observers. Transparent and broken windows of school classrooms where ballot boxes had been placed were covered with improvised opaque materials. Voter register appeared robust; there were only a few instances in which individuals were denied the opportunity to vote. Polling officials observed the closing procedures appropriately: they sealed the mouth of the ballot drums with diligence and then transported the drums to designated counting centers across the country with adequate security and within view of polling agents and observers.

The rules of counting were closely followed. Presiding officers publicly announced ballot tokens supplied and those remaining, as well as any invalid votes. The seals of the ballot drums were broken in full view of those present, emptied into a sieve, and the marbles arranged into special counting trays holding 200 to 500 marbles at a time. Each candidate's result was publicly announced and the trays holding their tokens shown around before the result was certified. After this, the results were collated and declared by the assistant returning officer before being transmitted to the regional electoral commission office, and then to the electoral commission headquarters.

The team was impressed by the general atmosphere of transparency and in some cases collegiality in which the closing and counting processes were conducted. It also commended the swift announcement of results on 25 November, the day after the election.

Source: A. Bolaji Akinyemi, "The Gambia Presidential Election 2011: Preliminary Statement 28 November 2011," The Commonwealth, November 28, 2011.

The Jammeh Administration Overestimated the Magnitude of Its Own Entrenched Advantages

Following the surprise victory of Adama Barrow and the seven-party coalition, it appears that the Jammeh administration mistakenly believed that its campaign of intimidation, voter suppression, and the restriction of opposition activity would be sufficiently effective that the actual election did not need to be rigged. However, the credibility of the election process empowered the opposition, encouraging coalition parties to mobilize their supporters despite a climate of fear and repression. The UDP had boycotted previous elections, but the coalition determined that in this case a boycott would be an ineffective strategy, and that placing their trust in the electoral process could yield a major political victory.

Box A2.2. The Gambian Voting System

The Gambia has an unorthodox voting system where glass marble ballots and colored drums are used to count votes. Marbles represent ballot papers and ballot drums are voting boxes. Each of the presidential candidates gets a metal drum painted in a specific color, with their photograph and symbol pasted on it. Voters, once their identity has been verified, are handed a glass marble; they are then sent to an enclosed space private space to vote by slipping the marble into the drum of their choice. Polling officials listen carefully for the sound of a bicycle bell which is attached to the end of a tube inside the drum. The sound signal is intended to prevent individuals from inappropriately handling the drum. Sawdust or sand is sprinkled on the bottom of the barrel so that no inadvertent sound is heard. Afterwards, voters have a finger dipped in indelible ink.

To count the vote, polling station personnel pours the marbles into a wooden tray with 200 or 500 holes. The candidate with the greatest number of votes is declared the winner. In this election, the counting of the vote will take place directly at the polling stations and the winner will be declared at the polling stations.

The advantage of this voting system is that it is simple, affordable and locally owned. The system has been in use since 1965, to account for the population's illiteracy. Accordingly, Gambian voters are well acquainted with the system, and it is reputedly difficult to rig.

There are three main disadvantages. First, it does not allow voters to express a blank vote in secrecy. The absence of ringing clearly indicates to the audience in the polling station that a vote was not cast in one of the drums. Also, slight (but clearly noticeable) tone-ringing differences between drums may produce unacceptable breaches in the secrecy of the vote and may lead to potential intimidation or undue influence on voters. Second, despite its reputation for probity, the system could be manipulated. Drums are usually placed behind the polling booth and, thus, they are not visible to polling officers and electoral observers. It could be relatively easy under these circumstances to tamper with the security seals of any of the drums. Furthermore, in case of election-related disputes, the absence of ballot papers (and consequently, of a paper trail with clearly marked ballots) makes an eventual postelection vote recount an exercise that may prove more difficult to dispel or rebut any allegations of electoral fraud. In an environment where the credibility and the capacity of the state is limited, claims of fraud and corruption that cannot be transparently contradicted take on a factual dimension which further diminishes the credibility of the system.

Source: ACE Election Practitioner's Guide 2006, updated to reflect current understanding from various available newspaper sources, 2017

Election day brought a mix of anticipation and fear, as both foreign and domestic media reported that the election was likely to be closely contested. The Gambia's election had received significant global media attention, and the regime's inability to control the media narrative may have further discouraged it from attempting to manipulate the results. After the polls closed, precinct-by-precinct vote tallies were reported on national radio and television.¹²⁴

On December 2, the chairman of the Independent Electoral Commission announced that Adama Barrow had won the election by a nine-point margin, and President Jammeh shocked the nation by conceding defeat the same day. Early results indicated that Barrow had received 263,515 votes (45.5%), while President Jammeh took 212,099 (36.7%), and a third-party candidate, Mama Kandeh, won 102,969 (17.8%).¹²⁵ Several days after the election, the Independent Electoral Commission amended the tally to correct a mathematical error, which narrowed Barrow's margin of victory from 9 percent to 4 percent.¹²⁶ However, the commission made it clear that the correction did not affect the election result.

The regime may have been too complacent to energize its base. The Independent Electoral Commission indicates that voter turnout was moderate at approximately 59.3 percent, broadly in line with the historical average for freely contested democratic elections in The Gambia and slightly below the average for Sub-Saharan Africa.¹²⁷ The number of nonvoters exceeded the margin of victory ten times over, leading some analysts to conclude that Jammeh focused too heavily on intimidating the opposition rather than energizing his own base. Ultimately, his loss may have been caused as much by the apathy of his supporters as by the passion of the opposition.

The fact that the coalition candidate did not win a clear majority has important implications for the new government. Although the coalition has a compelling electoral mandate, it will need to reach an accord with the former ruling party and its supporters. The new government has made encouraging public statements to this effect. However, implementing much-needed political and economic reforms will inevitably alter the distribution of resources and political authority, and the new government must be extremely careful to build consensus regarding the necessity of these reforms to avoid creating the impression that their intent is to penalize former regime supporters. Even in the best-case scenario, the new government may be vulnerable to demagogues attempting to capitalize on the perceived disenfranchisement of the Jammeh regime's core constituencies.

The ARPC will remain active regardless of whether Jammeh is leading it, and its supporters remain politically powerful. Moreover, former President Jammeh himself is not prohibited from returning to The Gambia or continuing to engage in national politics. It is likely that Jammeh has amassed significant resources that would allow him to continue to influence the political system, should he choose to do so.

The Barrow Administration Faces Complex Political Challenges

Though recently elected and generally popular, the Barrow administration already faces important threats to its credibility. While the overall results of the election are not in doubt, significant irregularities were reported at the local level. Supporters of the former regime have attempted to cast doubt on the results, eroding the credibility of democratic institutions at a pivotal moment. Moreover, although President Barrow indicated that ministers in his government would be compelled to declare their assets before assuming office, detailed rules for asset declaration were not provided. A failure to honor this promise would be a major blow to the new regime's efforts to restore confidence in public sector transparency.¹²⁸ In addition, Barrow's appointment of Fatoumata Tambajang as vice president was sharply criticized and ultimately rescinded.¹²⁹ Although Tambajang is a former minister and United Nations Development Programme staffer, and is considered a key architect of the seven-party coalition, at age 67 she did not meet the constitutional criteria for the vice presidency, which imposes an age limit of 65.

During Barrow's first press conference in Banjul on January 28, he indicated that while he was reviewing comprehensive changes to all aspects of the public sector, he would maintain the secret police, which has long been responsible for the torture and intimidation of Gambian citizens. He indicated that the agency's name would be changed and that its staff would be retrained. However, these assurances have failed to mollify concerns about its past abuses. Barrow has also stated that he will reform the armed forces with the assistance of The Gambia's development partners, but much of the Jammeh-era command structure remains in place.¹³⁰

The opacity of the Jammeh regime, the turbulence of the transition, and a limited pool of experienced public administrators have hindered the new government's ability to implement its agenda. The new administration must assume the burden of governing despite having virtually no knowledge of the inner workings of the previous regime. The president has indicated that he would use his administration's first hundred days to carry out a comprehensive review of all aspects of government activity. While this review will be necessary, the length of time required to complete it will slow the implementation of the reform agenda. Finally, the government will consist of a completely new set of ministers who will have to rely on a depleted cadre of senior civil servants, some of whom may be regarded as untrustworthy due to their past association with the Jammeh regime.

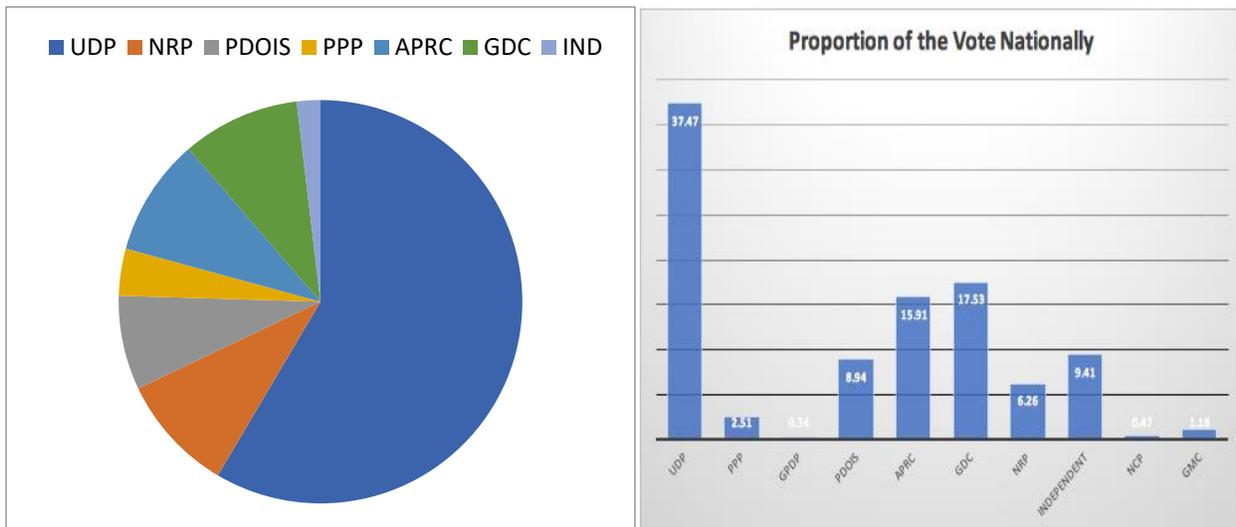
The new administration is dependent on ECOWAS peacekeepers, foreign military assistance, and deeply unpopular domestic security agencies. Over 7,000 ECOWAS soldiers were deployed to The Gambia during the crisis, and their withdrawal has been delayed at the behest of the Barrow administration. These forces will likely remain responsible for the security of the state while the military and law-enforcement agencies are being reformed. However, keeping ECOWAS forces in the country may require concessions, which could include guarantees regarding Senegalese overland commercial transport through The Gambia, the long-discussed construction of a trans-Gambia bridge, or measures to suppress separatist activity in the Casamance region.

Cracks have already emerged in the seven-party coalition. Almost immediately after the election, the parties became deeply divided over the question of whether former President Jammeh would face prosecution. While that conflict was ultimately resolved with the support of the international community, it underscored the challenge of maintaining a broad-based consensus. This episode was followed by an ongoing controversy over the choice of vice president. The legislative elections further strained the coalition, and the impact of the UDP's success in those elections remains to be seen. One coalition party, the NRP, has already moved to distance itself from the coalition by assuming the minority leadership in the National Assembly.

The Legislative Elections Intensified Political Partisanship

On April 6, 2017, elections were held for the National Assembly. The coalition parties won an overwhelming majority, while the APRC lost 38 seats. The UDP dominated the election, claiming 31 seats of 53 seats in the legislature. Meanwhile, the other coalition parties received a combined 12 seats. Only three of the nine registered parties—the UDP, GDC, and PDOIS—appear to have a broad national following, while support for the other six parties was concentrated in specific regions.

Figure A2.1: The Composition of the National Assembly and Share of the Popular Vote by Political Party



The UDP's legislative majority carries both advantages and risks. The UDP's ability to pass legislation unilaterally could expedite the reform process. However, less powerful coalition parties could become alienated if they feel the UDP is ignoring their input. Beyond its political implications, this situation could intensify social tensions, as many smaller parties have relatively narrow ethnic and regional constituencies. Whether the coalition can maintain its solidity will have important consequences for the success of the new government.

The new administration's adherence to the memorandum of understanding between the coalition parties will be vital to maintain its standing as a unity government. Honoring its commitments under the memorandum will require the Barrow government to focus on four key priorities. The first will be to review the national constitution and propose specific amendments designed to achieve the objectives set forth in the memorandum. The second will be to reform the electoral system to enhance its transparency and integrity. The third will be to review and reform the judiciary and civil service to improve their effectiveness and impartiality. And the fourth will be to review and reform the nation's foreign policy. Achieving meaningful progress in each of these areas while also carrying out a comprehensive analysis of the public sector will be among the most crucial challenges facing the Barrow administration.

Annex 3. Lessons from The Gambia's 1985 Fiscal Crisis¹³¹

In 1985, The Gambia experienced an acute debt crisis. External arrears exceeded 50 percent of GDP, foreign debt was approaching 250 percent of GDP, the current-account deficit was over 30 percent, and the public-sector budget deficit was around 25 percent. The Gambia also faced a host of other economic challenges, including high inflation, declining real per capita income, large-scale capital flight, pervasive dollarization, weak agricultural production, dwindling real investment, deteriorating physical infrastructure, shortages of basic commodities, low business confidence, poor public-sector creditworthiness, and the suspension of all donor aid except for humanitarian assistance.

The government responded to this dire economic situation by embarking on one of the most comprehensive structural-adjustment programs of any country in Sub-Saharan Africa. Known as the Economic Reform Program (ERP), the strategy's objectives were to halt the deterioration of the economy and to lay the foundation for sustained growth. The government swiftly and comprehensively implemented the ERP, and an economic revival began almost immediately. After contracting for three consecutive years, the GDP growth rate rose to an annual average of 4.3 percent over the following five years.

The reforms were dramatic in both their speed and scope. Within 18 months, the government had floated the dalasi and made it fully convertible, raised interest rates and established a treasury-bill tender system to determine market interest rates, raised taxes on petroleum and rice while lowering many import duties, cracked down on customs fraud, rescheduled external debt, reduced the civil service by almost 20 percent, adopted stricter public investment criteria, sharply increased the producer price of groundnuts, raised prices for water and electricity, public transportation and petroleum, liberalized the fertilizer market, and privatized one government bank and one trading company.

Managing the political unpopularity of many vital reform measures required sharing the burden of difficult tradeoffs. The ERP imposed costs on virtually all political constituencies. The devaluation of the dalasi eroded the incomes of civil servants and pensioners; high interest rates raised financing costs for individuals and enterprises; reduced public-sector employment and the retargeting of public spending forced the reallocation of labor and capital, particularly among the urban population; the reform of the parastatal sector increased the cost of basic services; and higher user fees and commodity prices, particularly for gasoline, raised costs for business and individuals.

The pace of the ERF's implementation also helped the government overcome the political challenges of a difficult reform effort. There are advantages and drawbacks to a rapid implementation timetable. In a highly unbalanced or distorted economy, gradual or partial reforms can worsen economic problems, because improved efficiency in one market can increase the relative cost of the remaining distortions in other markets. For example, if controls on foreign capital flows are removed, but trade protections are not, more investment is likely to flow into inefficient industries. Moreover, the benefits of a gradual approach take longer to materialize, allowing more time for negatively affected interest groups to organize opposition. However, implementing comprehensive reforms in a short period require substantial institutional capacity and a highly selective reform agenda. ERP reforms focused on "stroke-of-the-pen" measures, such as changes in administratively set prices (e.g. exchange rates and electricity tariffs) or the suspension of regulatory controls (e.g. on currency flows and fertilizer marketing). These reforms did not require extended institutional action or coordinated implementation. Two crucial reforms that were sustained for several years—monetary restraint and reduced budget deficits—were backed by the

concerted efforts of donors, particularly the International Monetary Fund. Other reforms that required more sustained implementation, including the crackdown on customs fraud, improved public investment criteria, the use of performance contracts for public enterprises, and tax reform, were less successful.

The urgency of the crisis also facilitated the reform process. The problems of The Gambia's economy were evident as early as 1979, and they would have been more easily resolved had policymakers responded earlier. By 1985, the economy was experiencing a major crisis, which was exacerbated by the widespread perception that an economic collapse might lead to The Gambia's annexation by Senegal. The obvious severity of the crisis encouraged policymakers to adopt drastic measures that they might otherwise have resisted, and encouraged the public to overcome risk aversion and self-interest and embrace radical change and shared sacrifice.¹³²

The Gambia's strong political leadership was vital to the implementation of the ERP. Many countries in Sub-Saharan Africa have experienced economic crises, but few countries have been able to execute a comprehensive reform program as swiftly and thoroughly The Gambia. The Gambia's political leadership was crucial to the success of the ERP. President Dawda Jawara clearly identified the sources of the country's economic crisis and advocated decisive action. He charged the Minister of Finance, Sheriff Sisay, with championing the reform effort; Sisay showed strong leadership in convincing his Cabinet colleagues to support the necessary measures and proactively engaged with donor agencies to solicit advice and economic support. Though less common in Sub-Saharan Africa, political leaders in East and Southeast Asia have frequently entrusted macroeconomic policies to technocratic senior officials, insulating them from political pressure. This strategy has contributed to the economic success of many of these countries.

President Jawara's political popularity encouraged public confidence in the reform program, and the ruling People's Progressive Party maintained a strong base of support across the country. The government adopted an effective communications strategy and encouraged open debate about policy reforms, which helped build consensus and provided an opportunity for citizens to assess the costs and benefits of proposed policy changes. The decisiveness and commitment of the political leadership also encouraged robust and constructive donor support.

The ERP offers a prime example of well-designed donor support encouraging stabilization and reform. Rather than attempt to ease the political pressure generated by the crisis with assurances of emergency aid, the donor community made it clear that unless the government launched a far-reaching reform effort, international agencies might let events take their course. The small size of the Gambian economy greatly increased the relative value of external support, further increasing the leverage wielded by the donor community. When the government demonstrated a credible commitment to reform, donors responded with both financial support and technical assistance. External technical assistance enhanced The Gambia's capacity to design and implement reforms, allowing the authorities to take a more active role in designing the ERP and increasing local ownership over the reform program.

The least-successful elements of the ERP shared a common feature: they involved institutional reorganization and changes in the attitudes and behaviors of public officials. These reforms required extensive, sustained attention to institutional characteristics and incentive systems. While high-level commitment is a necessary condition for bureaucratic change, it is not sufficient to ensure success. The Gambian public sector lacked the managerial capacity to build consensus within affected institutions, to appoint reform proponents to key positions, restructure institutional incentives, or implement training activities to facilitate the reform process. Effective managers could have created a greater sense of ownership among subordinates by encouraging a more participatory reform process, they could have built a consensus for reform within public institutions, and they could have enlisted high-level support to overcome institutional resistance to change. Greater technical capacity among public-sector managers could have enabled them to better distribute the costs of reorganization across administrative units,

evaluate the impact of reforms on institutional structures, and predict problems that would delay the implementation of the reform agenda.

The Gambia's experience with the ERP demonstrates that a democratic government can provide the strong leadership necessary to rapidly implement a deep and expansive reform program. President Jawara's elected government conferred popular legitimacy on the reform agenda. It distributed the costs of the reforms across a wide range of constituencies and interest groups, and it focused the benefits on poor households. Designating a technically qualified official with a meaningful degree of autonomy to lead the reform program strengthened confidence in the political impartiality of the reform effort.

Elections have served as precursors to important reform efforts elsewhere in Sub-Saharan Africa. For example, the strong electoral mandate enjoyed by the Chiluba government in Zambia enabled it to implement economic reforms that had long eluded its predecessors. Moreover, a successful economic reform program can enhance the popularity and legitimacy of the government. In Ghana, the military government of Jerry John Rawlings implemented a multiyear austerity and economic recovery plan, after which Rawlings's was elected president.

The Gambia's experience also offers lessons for the donor community. While standing by to provide humanitarian aid may appear to be a responsible approach, it can also diminish the sense of urgency necessary to effect deep reforms. However, providing targeted assistance to poor and vulnerable households and/or politically important groups during the reform process can help eliminate potential sources of resistance and maintain popular consensus. Finally, extensive technical assistance can enhance the government's capacity to participate in the design of the reform program, helping to build local ownership and enabling donors to leverage on-the-ground knowledge of the country's institutional and policy framework.

Annex 4. The Environment

Environmental degradation presents a serious challenge to The Gambia's long-term economic development. The country's vulnerability to windstorms, rainstorms, droughts, and coastal erosion present major challenges to an agriculture sector that is mainly rain-fed, with negative implications for poverty and food security. As the agriculture sector employs about 79 percent of the workforce and contributes about 30 percent of gross domestic product, any environmental risk that affects croplands and crop yields will also impact household income and food security.

The Gambia is one of the most vulnerable countries in Africa to the adverse impacts of climate change. Roughly half of its total land area is fewer than 20 meters above sea level, and about a third is fewer than 10 meters above sea level. Any significant rise in sea levels could submerge much of the country. Currently, about 20 percent of The Gambia's land area is flooded annually, and its mangrove ecosystems are already affected by saline intrusion as well as flooding. Linear trends indicate that total rainfall during the wet season fell by an average of 8.8 mm per month per decade between 1960 and 2006. While destructive flooding is an annual risk, other hazards such as drought are rare but potentially devastating events.

The effects of climate change—including increasing temperatures, rising sea levels, and an uptick in extreme weather events—compound The Gambia's already substantial development challenges. The country's first national communication to the United Nations framework convention on climate change projected that a 1-meter sea-level rise will inundate about 92 square kilometers of land in the coastal zone, including the entire capital city of Banjul. Projected climate change will also have a deeply negative impact on crop production, biodiversity and wildlife, coastal resources, and forestry. Climate-change mitigation and adaptation is not only a precondition for sustainable development, it is essential to maintain social and economic stability in The Gambia.

Agricultural Practices and Population Pressures are Causing Serious Environmental Damage

The Gambia's rapidly growing and urbanizing population and its heavy reliance on rain-fed subsistence agriculture are putting enormous strain on environmental resources. Unplanned growth has contributed to urban sprawl, and the inadequacy of waste management and sanitation services intensifies the environmental impact of a growing population. Environmental degradation in urban and peri-urban areas is compounding the social instability associated with urbanization. Meanwhile, the country's farmers are clearing more and more land to feed a growing urban population.

Desertification caused the loss of nearly 100,000 hectares of forested area in The Gambia between 1998 and 2009.¹³³ Slash-and-burn agriculture is the principal cause of desertification,¹³⁴ combined with the population's overwhelming reliance on charcoal (14.3%) and wood (83.4%) to meet its energy needs and the continued encroachment of human settlements into protected areas.¹³⁵ Forests cover approximately 41 percent of The Gambia's total land area of 1,130,000 hectares.¹³⁶ In the 1950s, 34,000 hectares were set aside for forest and parks, but by 2001, only 2 percent of this area remained protected. Forest fires, which directly result from slash-and-burn crop agriculture, hunting, wild honey harvesting, and charcoal burning negatively impact the country's economy and biodiversity. In the Lower River Region, about 70 percent of community forests and 95 percent of forest parks were destroyed in 2016.¹³⁷ The impact of deforestation is clear both in environmental terms and in economic terms. The erosion of The Gambia's natural resources will reduce its desirability to tourists.

The government recognizes the danger posed by deforestation and has established a legal and administrative framework to improve forest management, but lack of resources undermines the government's capacity to implement the necessary policies and programs.¹³⁸ With support from

international organizations, such as the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization, The Gambia has introduced innovative forest-management systems, which provided local populations with secure and permanent forest ownership rights. Transferring forest tenure from state ownership to management by local communities has enabled them to reduce illegal logging and forest fires.¹³⁹

Environmental degradation poses especially serious risks to countries with weak institutions, which have a limited capacity to absorb the social, economic, and political shocks associated with environmental disasters. Deteriorating environmental quality leads to competition for land resources, encourages unplanned rural-urban migration, worsens health outcomes, and reduces the economic potential of rural areas. Environmental degradation multiplies the risks posed by other dimensions of fragility. It aggravates already challenging socioeconomic conditions and intensifies the risk of instability and conflict. The Gambia's rapid population growth, underdeveloped agricultural sector, and disorganized urbanization process are damaging critical ecosystems and increasing the multidimensional vulnerability of the population. Reversing these trends will require building the capacity of institutions to provide public services in rural areas, including agricultural extension, the prevention of illegal logging, environmental protection, and sustainable water and sanitation systems.

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- ¹³¹ McPherson and Radelet: Economic Recovery in The Gambia – Insights for adjustment in Sub-Saharan Africa (1996).
- ¹³² (Grindle and Thomas, 1991).
- ¹³³ Tackling Land Degradation and Diversification in The Gambia, FAO - June 5, 2016, <http://www.fao.org/in-action/action-against-desertification/news-and-multimedia/detail/en/c/422939/>
- ¹³⁴ "Deforestation a Major Environmental Challenge Confronting The Gambia," *The Point*, April 08, 2014, <http://thepoint.gm/africa/gambia/article/deforestation-a-major-environmental-challenge-confronting-the-gambia>.
- ¹³⁵ According to the World Bank, The Gambia's greenhouse gas emission levels stood at 0.30 per capita in 2010, up from 0.18 in 2007. According to the country's official 2014 Millennium Development Goals status report, vehicles remain the main source of greenhouse gas emissions into the atmosphere.
- ¹³⁶ Mongabay.com Forestry statistics, <http://rainforests.mongabay.com/deforestation/archive/Gambia.htm>
- ¹³⁷ *IFRC International Disaster Response Law (IDRL) in The Gambia: A Study on Legal Preparedness for Facilitating and Regulating International Disaster Assistance* (Geneva: International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, 2016).
- ¹³⁸ Source: FAO-supported Forest Policy in Gambia Wins Award," FAO, September 21, 2011
- ¹³⁹ "FAO-supported Forest Policy in Gambia Wins Award," FAO, September 21, 2011. Community forestry has also been successful in reducing the impact of the Casamance conflict, an additional positive externality to improved management of forest resources in the subregion. See Louise Hunt, "Community Forestry Is Defusing Africa's Longest-Running Conflict," *Ecologist*, May 5, 2014.