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2025 ANNUAL RESULTS REPORT

ACCELERATING RESILIENCE
INCLUSION AND OPPORTUNITY





UNITED NATIONS THE GAMBIA



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KARL-FRÉDÉRIC PAUL



FOREWORD BY THE RESIDENT COORDINATOR

Across The Gambia, progress toward sustainable development continued in 2025 despite a challenging global environment. Communities are strengthening their resilience to climate shocks, more children are returning to school, women and young people are gaining greater access to justice and economic opportunities, and local institutions are improving their ability to deliver essential services. These results reflect the combined efforts of the Government of The Gambia, communities, civil society and development partners working together to improve people's lives.

This report presents the collective contribution of the United Nations system in the second year of implementation of the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooper-

ation Framework (2024–2028). The Cooperation Framework aligns the work of the United Nations Country Team with national priorities and with the Sustainable Development Goals. It is grounded in the understanding that sustainable development requires more than individual projects: it requires strong institutions, inclusive participation and partnerships capable of addressing complex challenges.

During 2025, the United Nations system supported national efforts to strengthen resilience to climate and economic shocks, improve access to essential services, expand opportunities for women and youth, and advance inclusive governance. These efforts contributed to tangible improvements in areas such as education

access, maternal health services, climate-resilient WASH and agriculture, justice systems and local economic opportunities.

Our approach focuses on expanding opportunities for people, strengthening the institutions and systems that deliver essential services, and building partnerships capable of scaling development results. Through this combined focus—supporting resilient livelihoods and services, advancing inclusive governance, and mobilizing partnerships and financing—the United Nations works alongside national institutions and communities to ensure that development initiatives are locally owned and designed to deliver lasting results.

None of these achievements would be possible without strong partnerships. The Government of The Gambia continues to provide leadership and direction for national

development. Civil society organizations, community leaders and the private sector bring knowledge and innovation. Our development partners provide the trust and resources that allow programmes to expand and reach those who need them most.

Looking ahead, the United Nations Country Team will focus on accelerating progress in areas where collective action can generate the greatest impact. By concentrating efforts on priority development challenges and strengthening collaboration with partners, the United Nations system will continue to support inclusive and resilient development across The Gambia.

KARL-FRÉDÉRIC PAUL

UNITED NATIONS RESIDENT COORDINATOR FOR THE GAMBIA



THE UNITED NATIONS COUNTRY TEAM IN THE GAMBIA

The United Nations Country Team (UNCT) in The Gambia brings together the specialized agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations system working in support of national development priorities and the Sustainable Development Goals. Under the leadership of the United Nations Res-

ident Coordinator, the UNCT coordinates the strategic engagement of the United Nations system with the Government of The Gambia and development partners. Through the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF, 2024–2028), UN entities align their programmes

with national development priorities and work together to deliver integrated support across sectors.

The United Nations system in The Gambia includes the following resident and non-resident entities:



KEY DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS OF THE UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM IN THE GAMBIA

The achievements presented in this report are the result of strong collaboration between the Government of The Gambia, the United Nations system and a wide range of development partners.

The UNCT works closely with national institutions, civil society organizations and the private sector to support implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and the Recovery-Focused National Development Plan (RF-NDP) 2023–2027, also known as “Yiriwaa.”

Financial and technical support from development partners enables the United Nations system to implement programmes that strengthen resilience, expand economic opportunities, improve access to services and advance inclusive governance.

Key development partners supporting the work of the United Nations system in The Gambia include:



These collaborations provide financial resources, technical expertise and policy support that enable the United Nations

system to work with national institutions and communities to advance sustainable development across The Gambia.



01

KEY DEVELOPMENTS IN THE COUNTRY & REGIONAL CONTEXT

In 2025, The Gambia continued to experience moderate economic growth and gradual institutional reform while facing persistent structural challenges affecting inclusive and sustainable development. Real gross domestic product growth remained strong, estimated at about 5.9 percent, supported by recovery in tourism, services, and agriculture. Inflation eased during the year, and the trajectory of public debt improved with ongoing fiscal consolidation efforts. At the same time, poverty, inequality, and vulnerability to external shocks remained significant, particularly for women and girls, youth, persons with disabilities, and rural communities. The country's progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) continued but remained uneven, highlighting persistent gaps in food security, health, water and sanitation services, energy access, and decent work opportunities.

The political and governance environment also changed throughout the year. The government continued to pursue reforms aimed at enhancing transparency, accountability, and democratic institutions. Progress

was achieved in implementing several governance reforms, including anti-corruption measures and initiatives related to transitional justice and reparations. However, institutional reforms still faced implementation challenges, and political consensus on constitutional reform remained out of reach. In July 2025, the draft constitution failed to gain the necessary support in the National Assembly, further deepening uncertainty about the country's constitutional framework. As the country approaches the presidential elections scheduled for December 2026, these developments are likely to influence the political landscape and shape public debate on governance reforms and institutional accountability.

Human development indicators also showed mixed progress. Gains in child survival, immunization coverage, school participation, and access to renewable energy were observed, yet significant disparities remain in access to quality services and economic opportunities. The Human Development Index increased steadily to 0.524, but inequality persists, reducing overall human development gains. Youth exclusion

remains one of the most urgent development challenges. More than forty percent of young people are not in employment, education, or training, and labour underutilisation remains common. Women and girls continue to experience high levels of gender-based violence and harmful practices, while persons with disabilities face limited access to employment and social services. Stigma and economic barriers also continue to affect people living with Human Immunodeficiency Virus, constraining access to treatment and support services.

Environmental pressures and climate risks further influenced the national situation in 2025. The Gambia remains highly vulnerable to flooding, coastal erosion, salinity intrusion, and rainfall variability. These environmental challenges impact agriculture, infrastructure, livelihoods, and public health. Rural households are especially susceptible to climate-related shocks, which continue to threaten food security and local economic stability. Rapid population growth, urbanization, and ongoing infrastructure gaps also add to the pressures on service delivery systems. Simultaneously, the country continues to expand renewable energy generation and invest in climate resilience, reflecting a growing recognition of the importance of environmental sustainability for long-term development.

These national dynamics directly influenced the priorities of the UNCT in 2025. The United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework, which began implementation in 2024, provides the strategic framework guiding the collective contribution of the United Nations system to national development priorities. The results reported in this annual report reflect the second year of its implementation. During 2025, UN support focused on strengthening resilience to shocks, advancing inclusive

governance reforms, expanding access to essential services and economic opportunities, and reinforcing the partnerships and financing systems needed to accelerate progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals. These priorities both respond to the development challenges observed during the year and reflect the commitments made under the Cooperation Framework to support inclusive, resilient and sustainable development while ensuring that no one is left behind.

THE GAMBIA 2025: ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL LANDSCAPE





02

UNITED NATIONS SUPPORT TO NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES



2.1 OVERVIEW OF UNSDCF RESULTS IN 2025

Working in partnership with government institutions, civil society, the private sector and development partners, the United Nations system supported the Government of The Gambia in advancing national development priorities under the UNSDCF. The UNCT **focused on strengthening resilience, expanding inclusive governance, improving human development outcomes and reinforcing the partnerships and financing systems** needed to sustain progress toward the SDGs.

Across the four outcomes of the Cooperation Framework, the **UN's contribution combined service delivery, institutional strengthening and policy support**. This integrated approach helped address immediate development challenges while strengthening national systems needed to sustain long-term progress.

Under the resilience outcome, coordinated efforts strengthened the capacity of communities and institutions to anticipate and



UNCT, Donors and beneficiaries pose for a photo during a visit to Sterling Skills Training Centre

respond to climate-related, economic and health shocks. Health systems improved their ability to respond to emergencies and prevent disease outbreaks, while community-level interventions strengthened food security, climate-resilient livelihoods and environmental restoration. Investments in renewable energy, disaster preparedness and water infrastructure also contributed to improving the resilience of essential services and rural livelihoods.

Progress under the governance outcome focused on strengthen-

ing rule-of-law institutions, expanding access to justice and increasing citizen participation in public decision-making. Oversight institutions improved their ability to monitor human rights compliance, legal aid and mediation services expanded access to justice for vulnerable populations, and platforms for civic engagement—including constitutional reform dialogue and youth participation initiatives—helped strengthen democratic participation. Efforts to strengthen local governance institutions and civil society contributed to improving the responsiveness and accountability of public institutions.

The human development outcome continued to improve, with increased access to essential services and social protection mechanisms. Investments in maternal and newborn health services, HIV prevention and treatment, and immunization systems expanded access to health care across the country. Water and sanitation infrastructure improved living conditions and reduced health risks in vulnerable communities. At the same time, programmes supporting

migrant reintegration, birth registration and youth empowerment helped strengthen social inclusion and expand opportunities for participation in economic and civic life.

Efforts under the partnership and financing outcome focused on strengthening the enabling systems needed to mobilize resources and coordinate development action. Multi-stakeholder dialogue platforms expanded collaboration among government, civil society, private-sector actors, and development partners, while improvements in national data systems strengthened the evidence base for development planning. Work on the Integrated

National Financing Framework and other analytical initiatives also helped strengthen the policy and institutional foundations required to mobilize financing and align investments with national development priorities.

These results demonstrate the value of integrated United Nations support under the Cooperation Framework. **By combining sectoral programmes with policy dialogue, institutional strengthening and partnership development, the United Nations system helped reinforce national capacities to address complex development challenges.** These efforts also contributed to reducing risks identified in the Common Country Analysis, including vulnerability to climate shocks, governance challenges and persistent inequalities affecting vulnerable populations.

The results achieved in 2025 laid important groundwork for future progress. Strengthened data systems will improve evidence-based policymaking, expanded partnerships are expected to mobilize new development financing, and strengthened national institutions will help sustain improvements in governance and service delivery. These developments provide a strong foundation for continuing to implement the UNSDCF and accelerating progress toward the 2030 Agenda in The Gambia.



Aerial shot of a flood affected area in Brikama West Coast Region



2.2 STRENGTHENING RESILIENCE TO CLIMATE RELATED & SOCIO-ECONOMIC SHOCKS

In 2025, the Government of The Gambia, with support from the UNCT, strengthened national and community resilience to climate, health and socio-economic shocks. Progress was achieved through coordinated action across health security, food systems, environmental management and community preparedness. These efforts helped vulnerable populations cope with seasonal shocks while strengthening national systems that protect communities from future crises.

Across sectors, programmes combined service delivery with institutional strengthening. National surveillance systems for health emergencies were reinforced, community-based nutrition services expanded, climate-resilient livelihoods supported, ecosystems restored, and renewable energy infrastructure installed in public institutions.

A. STRENGTHENING HEALTH AND NUTRITION SYSTEMS FOR CRISIS RESILIENCE

UNCT support strengthened national capacity to anticipate and respond to health emergencies while protecting vulnerable populations from malnutrition and disease

outbreaks. During the 2025 mpox outbreak, the Ministry of Health contained the outbreak through coordinated incident management and strengthened surveillance systems.

Digital epidemic intelligence and emergency management platforms, including the Epidemic Intelligence from Open Sources (EIOS) platform and the electronic Public Health Emergency Management (ePHEM) system, improved real-time detection and response to health threats. Training for 35 health staff and One Health partners strengthened alert verification and coordination through the Public Health Emergency Operations Centre. In parallel, completion of the electronic State Party Self-Assessment Annual Reporting process under the International Health Regulations helped establish a national baseline of core capacities for future investments in health security.

Child survival and nutrition programmes were also reinforced. A nationwide immunization campaign integrating measles-rubella vaccination and vitamin A supplementation reached 386,422 children under five, significantly reducing the risk of disease transmission. Complementary water, sanitation and hygiene interventions expanded access to safe drinking water and strengthened community hygiene practices, helping prevent diarrhoeal diseases and improving health outcomes for children.

Community screening and treatment services strengthened the detection and treatment of severe acute malnutrition. In 2025, 3,584 children received treatment with an 81.4 percent cure rate, exceeding international standards. Training 1,585 caregivers and community health workers in mid-upper arm circumference screening improved early detection and referral of malnourished children.

DISTRIBUTION OF SUPPORT IN STRENGTHENING RESILIENCE TO CLIMATE RELATED & SOCIO-ECONOMIC SHOCKS



25% Strengthening Health and Nutrition Systems



25% Strengthening Resilience to Shocks



20% Supporting Vulnerable Populations



15% Enhancing Ecosystem Restoration



15% Installing Renewable Energy Infrastructure

Protection services for women and girls were also strengthened. Eight hundred dignity kits were distributed to vulnerable women and girls, and health workers were trained in the clinical management of rape. Reproductive health kits were pre-positioned in health facilities to ensure rapid response during emergencies.

2025 CURE RATE

3,584 children received malnutrition treatment

81.4%



CAREGIVERS & HEALTH WORKERS TRAINED ON EARLY MALNUTRITION DETECTION

1,585



A child recovering from severe malnutrition is proof that care, community support can save lives.

SMALL PACKET - BIG CHANGE

Community-based nutrition services proved equally effective. Of the 3,584 children treated for severe acute malnutrition in 2025, 81.4 percent recovered, a cure rate that exceeds international standards. Behind these numbers are 1,585 trained caregivers and community health workers, equipped with the skills to detect malnutrition early and connect families to care. "It is the community health worker who sees the child first who notices the signs before the family

even knows to be worried. That early action saves lives, shares Ebrima Jallow of The Bansang Hospital.

Alongside treatment, Ready-to-Use Therapeutic Food was provided directly to families, giving caregivers a practical and proven tool to nurse their children back to health at home.

For Jonfola Manneh, a mother from Cha Kunda, the support arrived at a critical moment.



My son was so weak he could not eat. When the health worker came and gave us the therapeutic food, I saw him change week by week. Today he runs and plays like any other child. I did not think that was possible.

B. PROTECTING FOOD SECURITY AND STRENGTHENING CLIMATE-RESILIENT LIVELIHOODS

UN support helped **protect vulnerable households from food insecurity while strengthening climate-resilient livelihoods.**

During the lean season, food assistance programmes supported 60,000 people, helping households maintain food consumption and avoid using negative coping strategies.

Agricultural programmes strengthened productivity and resilience among smallholder farmers. More than **3,000 farmers were trained in post-harvest management, and 600 households received equipment to improve productivity** under climate variability.

Community gardens and fisheries initiatives further strengthened local food systems. Infrastructure improvements increased production and incomes, with one community garden reporting approximately 500,000 dalasi in sales. Support also addressed crop diseases affecting key commodities, contributing to increased onion production in participating communities, while fisheries interventions expanded employment opportunities and strengthened local value chains. Clean energy livelihood initiatives supported the production of more than 1,000 improved cookstoves by trained local artisans, reducing reliance on firewood while generating income for participating households.

THE GARDEN THAT CHANGED EVERYTHING

In KwonkoBa, what was once a modest patch of land has been transformed into a thriving community garden packed with onions, cucumbers, carrots and tomatoes. For Fatou Ceesay, who has tended her plot in the KwonkoBa garden since the support arrived, the change has been felt not just in the harvest, but in her household.



Before, I struggled to provide for my children between seasons. Now I have vegetables to sell at the market, money to pay school fees and food on the table every day.

Agricultural interventions also addressed crop diseases affecting key food commodities, contributing to increased onion production in participating communities and helping safeguard the livelihoods of farmers who depend on a reliable harvest.

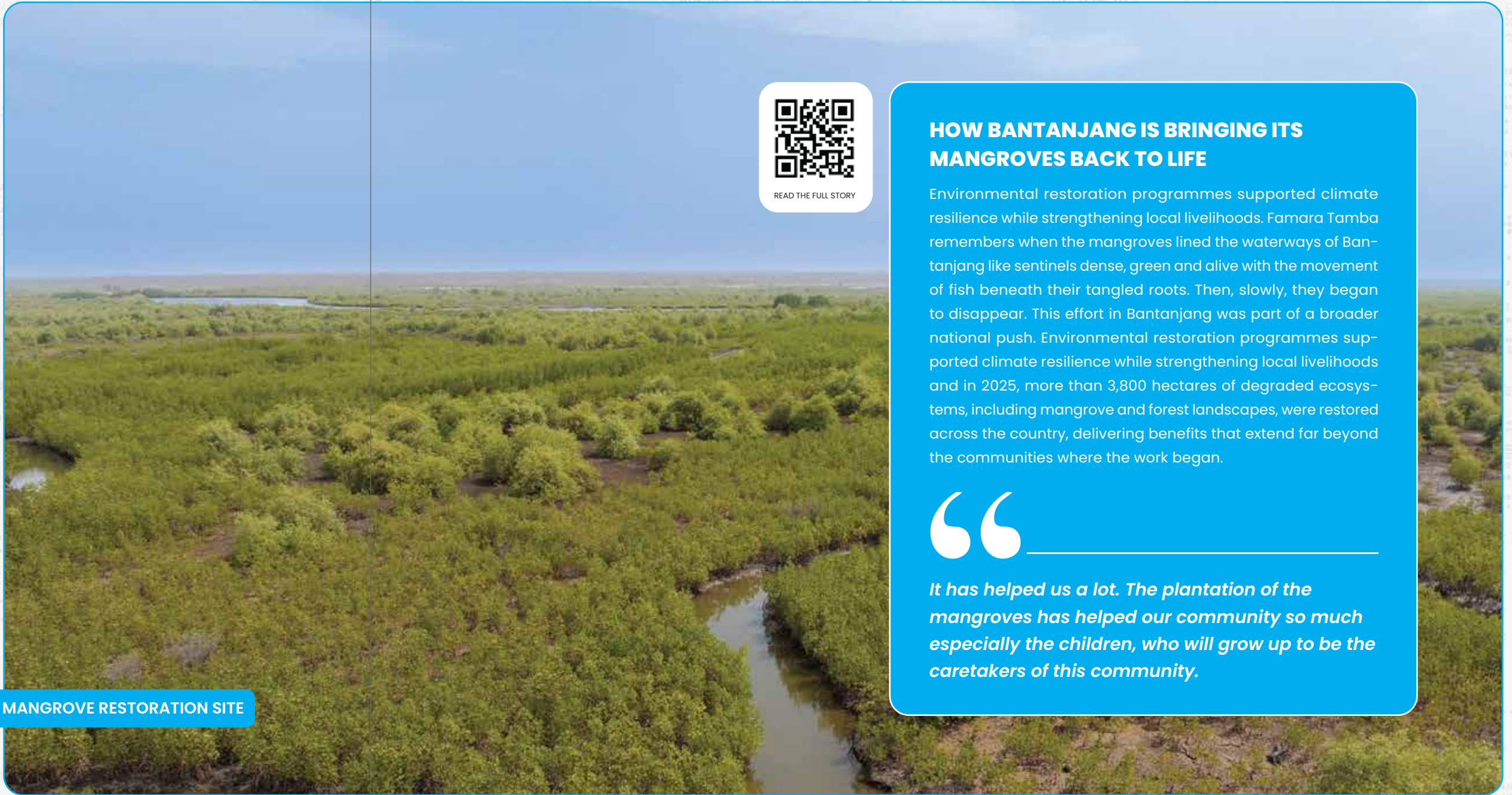
C. RESTORING ECOSYSTEMS AND PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE NATURAL RESOURCE GOVERNANCE

Environmental restoration programmes supported climate resilience while strengthening local livelihoods. In 2025, more than 3,800 hectares of degraded ecosystems, including mangrove and forest landscapes, were restored.

A major milestone was the transfer of approximately 2,825 hectares of state forest to community ownership, strengthening decentralized natural resource governance and enabling communities to manage and benefit from local ecosystems.

These conservation initiatives were linked to livelihoods based on sustainable natural resources, including oyster harvesting, honey production and cashew processing. In total, more than 21,200 people benefited from these value chains, improving rural incomes while promoting sustainable resource use.

AERIAL VIEW OF BANTANJANG MANGROVE RESTORATION SITE



READ THE FULL STORY

HOW BANTANJANG IS BRINGING ITS MANGROVES BACK TO LIFE

Environmental restoration programmes supported climate resilience while strengthening local livelihoods. Famara Tamba remembers when the mangroves lined the waterways of Bantanjang like sentinels dense, green and alive with the movement of fish beneath their tangled roots. Then, slowly, they began to disappear. This effort in Bantanjang was part of a broader national push. Environmental restoration programmes supported climate resilience while strengthening local livelihoods and in 2025, more than 3,800 hectares of degraded ecosystems, including mangrove and forest landscapes, were restored across the country, delivering benefits that extend far beyond the communities where the work began.



It has helped us a lot. The plantation of the mangroves has helped our community so much especially the children, who will grow up to be the caretakers of this community.



- 01 A flood-affected resident receives essential food support through UN assistance efforts.
- 02 A compound damaged by flooding and strong winds
- 03 A woman receiving timely cash support to vulnerable households.
- 04 A solar-powered borehole system is helping communities improve irrigation and strengthen livelihoods.

D. STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY PREPAREDNESS AND RESILIENT INFRASTRUCTURE

Community-level resilience was reinforced through disaster preparedness, infrastructure investments and green skills development.

Training programmes improved disaster risk reduction knowledge among community leaders and local government officials. More than 178 community representatives received training, strengthening their ability to interpret early warning information and coordinate local responses. These efforts translated into practical community-level actions, including the development of local drainage systems and tree planting initiatives to reduce flood risks.

Mapping of transhumance corridors and training of government officials on pastoral mobility helped identify areas where pastoralists and host communities interact,

supporting dialogue and reducing the risk of conflict.

Green livelihood initiatives trained 1,620 people, including 960 women, in climate-resilient enterprises such as recycling and renewable energy services. Youth entrepreneurship programmes supported 100 young people, with 40 establishing small businesses in emerging green sectors.

Access to essential services also improved. Solar-powered water systems now provide clean drinking water to 16,500 people, strengthening water security for communities and health facilities while reducing the burden on women and girls responsible for water collection. Renewable energy investments installed over 735 kWp of solar capacity across public institutions, providing clean energy access to approximately 6,900 people and improving the reliability of health, education and community services.

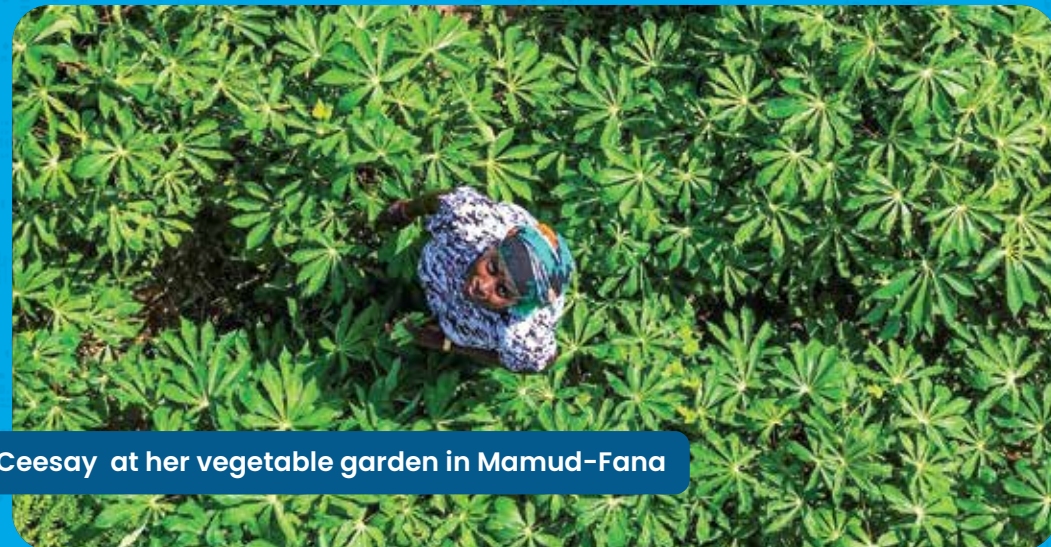


READ THE FULL STORY

HOW ONE YOUNG FARMER IS FEEDING MINDS AND HEALING LAND IN THE GAMBIA WITH THE HGSF NEW PROCUREMENT MODEL

She is not alone. Across The Gambia, over 1,000 smallholder farmers like Satou have become key players in the school feeding programme. Since the launch of the new procurement model in 2023, more than 1,395 metric tons of food have been sourced locally, injecting over USD 1.7 million into the rural economy.

But Satou’s story adds more value to those numbers, she employs four youth from her village, teaching them sustainable farming practices and giving them a reason to stay rooted in their land. Her groundnuts do not travel far, it’s harvested, processed, and delivered within a few kilometers of the schools it feeds.



Satou Ata Ceesay at her vegetable garden in Mamud-Fana

While Satou’s farm represents grassroots change, Maruo Farms shows how local enterprises can scale that impact. Located just kilometers from the schools it serves, Maruo harvests, mills, and packages fortified rice that replaces imported alternatives.

BRINGING WATER CLOSER TO COMMUNITY

In Sambel Dakka, a rural village in The Gambia’s Central River Region, fetching water used to be a gruelling daily chore and the burden often fell on their young ones.

Before a new water system was installed, young people especially children would pedal bicycles for miles to neighbouring villages like Touba or Sambel Kunda, balancing heavy 20-liter bottles just so their families could drink and cook. Today, those long, exhausting bike rides are a thing of the past. A strategic

partnership between the Government of The Gambia, UN, and the Government of Japan has brought a modern, solar-powered water system directly to the village. For 16-year-old Fatoumatta, the difference is measured in time and energy. she explains. With water stations now accessible within the community, Fatoumatta and her peers are no longer spending their days hauling heavy jerrycans.



As children, we used to get very exhausted going all the way to Touba or Sambel Kunda to get water. Today, we can focus on studying and playing when we close from school.



A girl drinking from the newly installed water borehole



H.E President Barrow and UN RC during a site visit at the UN funded Essau Model Police Station

PARTNERSHIPS AND NATIONAL LEADERSHIP

These results were achieved through strong government leadership and partnerships across multiple institutions, including the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Environment, Climate Change and Natural Resources and the National Disaster Management Agency.

Integrated programming across FAO, IOM, UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA, WHO and WFP enabled coordinated support combining service delivery, institutional strengthening and community engagement.

CHALLENGES AND LESSONS LEARNED

Integrated service delivery proved highly effective. Combining vaccination with nutrition interventions increased coverage and efficiency, while linking ecosystem restoration with community ownership strengthened participation and sustainability.

However, challenges remain. Maintenance of decentralized infrastructure such as solar and water systems requires

stronger local financing mechanisms. In the health sector, transport constraints for vaccination teams, delays in data reporting and vaccine hesitancy slowed implementation.

Gender disparities also persist. Although many programmes prioritized women’s participation, women remain under-represented in some local disaster management structures, and cultural barriers still limit access to gender-based violence services in some rural areas.

CONTRIBUTION TO RESILIENCE

These initiatives strengthened resilience at multiple levels. Households were supported to maintain food security and livelihoods during seasonal shocks, communities improved their capacity to anticipate and respond to disasters, and national systems for health security, environmental management and energy access were reinforced.

By linking humanitarian support, development programmes and environmental management, the United Nations helped communities better withstand climate, economic and health-related shocks.



2.3 STRENGTHENING INCLUSIVE GOVERNANCE, THE RULE OF LAW & CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

In 2025, the Government of The Gambia, supported by the United Nations system and national partners, advanced reforms aimed at strengthening accountable institutions, expanding civic participation and improving access to justice for marginalized and vulnerable populations. Progress was achieved through support to legal and policy reforms, strengthened institutional capacity, and expanded opportunities for participation at the community level. These initiatives contributed to governance systems that are more transparent, participatory and responsive to citizens’ needs.

Across sectors, programmes combined institutional strengthening with citizen engagement. Oversight institutions were reinforced, legal frameworks protecting vulnerable populations were improved, civil society capacities expanded, and community-level mechanisms for dispute resolution and participation strengthened. These efforts helped consolidate democratic governance during the country’s ongoing institutional transition.

A. STRENGTHENING THE RULE OF LAW, HUMAN RIGHTS AND ACCESS TO JUSTICE

Support to justice and human rights institutions contributed to strengthening oversight mechanisms and expanding access to justice. Training initiatives strengthened the ability of key national actors—including members of the National Assembly, the National Human Rights Commission and justice sector institutions—to better understand and apply human rights standards in governance and legislative oversight processes.

Legal reform processes advanced during the year. A review of detention legislation helped identify ways to strengthen safeguards for individuals in detention and better incorporate gender-sensitive provisions. In parallel, a comprehensive legal gap analysis of the Children’s Act (2005) was completed, providing the technical foundation for drafting updated legislation aligned with international child rights standards and emerging protection challenges.

Access to justice was expanded through community-based legal aid and mediation initiatives. Legal services reached **1,560 individuals, more than half of them women,**

while 166 disputes were resolved through mediation and legal assistance. In addition, **50 community paralegals—54 percent of them women—were trained,** helping bring legal services closer to communities and strengthening local dispute resolution mechanisms.

Efforts also strengthened national responses to gender-based violence and harmful practices. Training initiatives reached 248 police officers and community actors, improving the ability of justice and security institutions to respond to cases involving gender-based violence, female genital mutilation and child marriage. These efforts helped reinforce survivor-centred approaches within justice institutions and strengthened protection frameworks for women and girls.

Efforts also helped advance transitional justice processes. Support to civic engagement and monitoring of the implementation of the Truth, Reconciliation and Reparations Commission (TRRC) recommendations strengthened public awareness and accountability. Improved coordination between the Post-TRRC Unit and the National Human Rights Commission, including the use of digital monitoring tools, enhanced tracking of progress and helped amplify the voices of victims in national dialogue.

A MODEL POLICE STATION TRANSFORMING POLICING IN ESSAU

For many Gambians, a police station has historically been a place of apprehension, a space associated more with fear than with safety. In Essau, that relationship is being deliberately, and architecturally, reimagined.

The Essau Model Police Station, the first of its kind in The Gambia was officially launched as a state-of-the-art facility designed to bring policing closer to the people and strengthen community trust, justice delivery and gender-responsive security services. Built through a partnership between the UN, the Government of The Gambia and the wider community with land generously donated by the community of Essau itself, the station is as much a symbol of collective ownership as it is a milestone in reform.

Inside, the design speaks a different language from the stations that came before. Inclusive design elements including ramps, accessible counters and dedicated spaces for gender and child protection signal clearly that this is a facility built not just for policing, but for people.

For Deputy Commissioner Essa Ndow, the station represents the embodiment of a broader transformation that the Gambia Police Force has been working toward for years. "What we have built in Essau is more than a police station it is a message to every woman, every child and every community member that they are safe here, that they will be treated with dignity and that the law exists to protect them, not to intimidate them. This is the standard we must now set for policing across the entire country," said Commissioner Essa Ndow, Deputy Commissioner of Police, Gambia Police Force.

The newly constructed Essau Model Police Station



B. STRENGTHENING GOVERNANCE INSTITUTIONS AND INSTITUTIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY

Several initiatives focused on strengthening institutions responsible for governance oversight, policy implementation and protection systems.

Institutional monitoring mechanisms were reinforced through the establishment of a Child Rights Monitoring Unit within the National Human Rights Commission, strengthening national capacity to track and report on child rights. Complementing these efforts, the first Child Rights Centre was established at the University of The Gambia to support research, training and knowledge generation on child protection issues.

Efforts to strengthen public administration systems also promoted gender-responsive governance practices. A Gender Equality Seal initiative was launched in three pilot institutions—the Ministry of Gender, the Ministry of Public Service and the National Audit Office—while 30 institutional gender committee members were trained to strengthen internal accountability for gender equality objectives.

Institutional collaboration among civil society actors was strengthened by establishing a Civil Society Organization House in Basse, which provides a shared space for organizations to coordinate advocacy and community

engagement efforts. Capacity-building initiatives also supported 20 civil society organizations working on gender equality, community advocacy and peacebuilding, strengthening their governance structures and operational capacity.

Integrated services for survivors of gender-based violence were expanded through 13 one-stop centres providing coordinated legal, psychosocial and protection support. These centres strengthened the national response architecture by linking prevention, survivor services, and improved data systems to support evidence-based policy responses.

Institutional capacity was further strengthened in border governance and migration management. Support to the Gambia Immigration Department contributed to structured cross-border coordination with Senegalese counterparts, involving 60 law enforcement officials across two border crossing points and the establishment of regular communication channels. In parallel, three border posts were modernized and operationalized with the Migration Information and Data Analysis System, improving service delivery, data availability, document verification and institutional readiness at key points of entry. These efforts contributed to more coordinated, transparent and efficient border management, strengthening institutional accountability and service delivery.

A NEW CHAPTER FOR CIVIL SOCIETY IN THE GAMBIA

For years, civil society organizations working in URR especially in Basse operated in isolation sharing the same concerns, serving the same communities, but rarely the same room. Coordinating advocacy efforts meant navigating logistical barriers that drained time and resources that small organizations could ill afford. That changed in 2025.

The CSO House is a hub for coordinated advocacy, community engagement and collective action, bringing together organizations working across gender equality, peacebuilding and community development under one roof.

For The Association of Non-Governmental Organizations (TANGO), the significance of the CSO House goes beyond a physical structure.



For CSOs operating in the Upper River Region, distance and isolation have always been barriers to effective coordination. This space changes that. It gives organizations a safe and dedicated home to come together, align their efforts and advance their mandates with greater impact. When CSOs are connected, the communities they serve are stronger for it.

highlights Ndey Bakurin, Executive Director, TANGO.



C. EXPANDING CIVIC PARTICIPATION AND INCLUSIVE GOVERNANCE

Promoting citizen participation in governance processes remained central to efforts to strengthen inclusive governance in The Gambia. Civic engagement initiatives supporting the constitutional reform process reached more than 300,000 citizens, including 45 percent women, strengthening public awareness of constitutional issues and encouraging participation in national dialogue.

Community mediation and local governance initiatives strengthened citizen engagement and contributed to local peacebuilding. One hundred and twenty community mediators were trained, contributing to the resolution of more than 50 community disputes, while 195 women leaders participated in governance and mediation initiatives that expanded opportunities for women's leadership in local decision-making structures. Civil society organizations supported through small grants and capacity-building initiatives conducted outreach activities addressing gender equality, child protection and harmful practices. These initiatives helped strengthen community dialogue and social cohesion while amplifying women's and youth voices in governance discussions.

Cross-border dialogue initiatives also promoted cooperation among communities and institutions in The Gambia, Senegal and Guinea-Bissau to address female genital mutilation, culminating in a regional action plan to strengthen prevention efforts across borders.



I used to feel like decisions were made without people like me in the room. Now I am the one helping others find common ground. I am part of something bigger than myself and I want every person in this community, no matter their situation, to know that their voice matters and that they too can contribute.

A VOICE OF PEACE AND INCLUSION

Disagreements or misunderstandings left unresolved, can fracture the fabric of a community. For Fatoumatta, becoming a trained community mediator in 2025 meant becoming something her community had long needed: a trusted bridge between opposing sides.

What makes Fatou's story particularly powerful is not just what she does, but who she is. As a woman living with a disability in the Upper River Region, she has navigated her own share of barriers that once made meaningful participation in community life feel out of reach. Today, she sits at the centre of it.



FATOU, INSIDER MEDIATOR, BASSE

D. STRENGTHENING LOCAL GOVERNANCE AND PEACEBUILDING SYSTEMS

Efforts to strengthen governance systems also focused on local institutions and development planning processes.

Local authorities received training in integrated development planning approaches designed to help translate strategic plans into operational programmes. Twenty-one representatives from Brikama Area Council and Kuntaur Area Council were trained in the Human Security Model for development planning, thereby strengthening local governments’ capacity to design initiatives that address community priorities.

Support was also provided to the Foni Development Agency, which designed its first strategic development plan, enabling the agency to mobilize partnerships and implement initiatives in agriculture, vocational training and cultural programmes that promote social cohesion.

Local ownership of development programmes increased as local authorities committed resources to support school feeding initiatives within municipal budgets. These steps helped strengthen coordination between local governments and national development programmes.

Efforts to strengthen local governance systems also contributed to improving territorial planning capacities. A national spatial analysis process supported the development of a harmonised dataset on infrastructure, services and economic functions across regions, enabling the identification of service gaps and develop-

ment clusters. This strengthened the ability of government institutions to plan and prioritise investments at sub-national level and provides a foundation for more integrated, area-based approaches to development, including the implementation of joint flagship programmes.

Local governance reforms further advanced during the year. The review of the Local Government Act and the Local Government Finance Act helped identify measures to strengthen decentralization, improve accountability frameworks and enhance the efficiency of local service delivery. In parallel, the Gambia Association of Local Government Authorities (GALGA) strengthened its coordination and advocacy role, contributing to improved alignment across councils and more responsive local governance systems.

Peacebuilding systems were reinforced through support to community dialogue and national frameworks for social cohesion. The National Action Plan on Youth, Peace and Security strengthened the role of young people in peacebuilding processes, while community mediation mechanisms and dialogue platforms contributed to conflict prevention and strengthened trust between communities and public institutions.

At the national and regional levels, governance dialogue was reinforced through the first Sahel Governance Forum, hosted in The Gambia, which brought together more than 100 regional stakeholders, including political leaders, civil society representatives, and youth actors. The forum strengthened regional dialogue on inclusive governance and positioned The Gambia as a platform for governance innovation and cooperation.



“
I also learned the production cycle, when to plant so that you can sell at a good price.”

HOW MARIE FOUND HER MARKET

In the quiet farming community of Njawara, Marie Jobe spends most of her mornings tending to her small plot at the Njawara Women’s Community Garden. Since 2021, she has been growing tomatoes, green pepper, cauliflower and other vegetables, produce that supports both herself and her family. Like many women producers across rural Gambia, Marie worked hard but faced challenges that limited her income and growth.

Her biggest struggle was access to bigger and better markets. “We only depended on the local market,” she recalled. “The prices there are not good for us. We always sell at a low price.” Marie also lacked information on quality control, basic food safety and production planning, knowledge that would help her grow the right crops at the right time to meet demand. Efforts are underway to connect small producers like Marie with hotels, restaurants and other businesses in the tourism sector. Marie was among the farmers trained in production calendars, market access and food safety. The training gave her a new perspective. “We learned basic food safety in production and quality control,” she said.

PARTNERSHIPS AND NATIONAL LEADERSHIP

These results were achieved through national leadership and collaboration across government institutions, civil society organizations, local authorities and community actors. Key national partners included the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Welfare, the National Human Rights Commission, the National Assembly, and local government authorities.

Integrated support from multiple UN agencies—including UNDP, UNODC, OHCHR, UNICEF, UNFPA and ITC—enabled coordinated programming across governance reform, justice systems strengthening and citizen participation initiatives.

CHALLENGES AND LESSONS LEARNED

While progress was made, several challenges slowed the pace of reform. Legislative processes for key governance reforms remain lengthy, delaying the adoption of important legal frameworks. Capacity constraints within institutions also affected the implementation of new policies and oversight mechanisms.

Coordination between civil society and government actors required sustained effort to align priorities and avoid duplication, while logistical constraints in rural areas continued to limit access to justice services.

Gender disparities remain an important challenge. Women are still underrepresented in senior positions within security and governance institutions, and addressing gender-based violence within institutions themselves remains an ongoing priority.

Despite these challenges, the experience of 2025 confirmed the importance of integrated approaches that combine institutional reform, civic engagement, and community-based participation mechanisms.

CONTRIBUTION TO STRENGTHENING INCLUSIVE AND ACCOUNTABLE GOVERNANCE

These initiatives strengthened governance systems by reinforcing rule-of-law institutions, expanding access to justice, and creating new opportunities for citizen participation. Oversight institutions improved their ability to monitor compliance with human rights standards; communities benefited from greater access to justice

and mediation services; and women and youth engaged more actively in public decision-making processes.

By linking institutional reform with citizen engagement and community-level participation, the UNCT supported The Gambia in advancing governance systems that are more accountable, inclusive and responsive to the needs of marginalized populations.



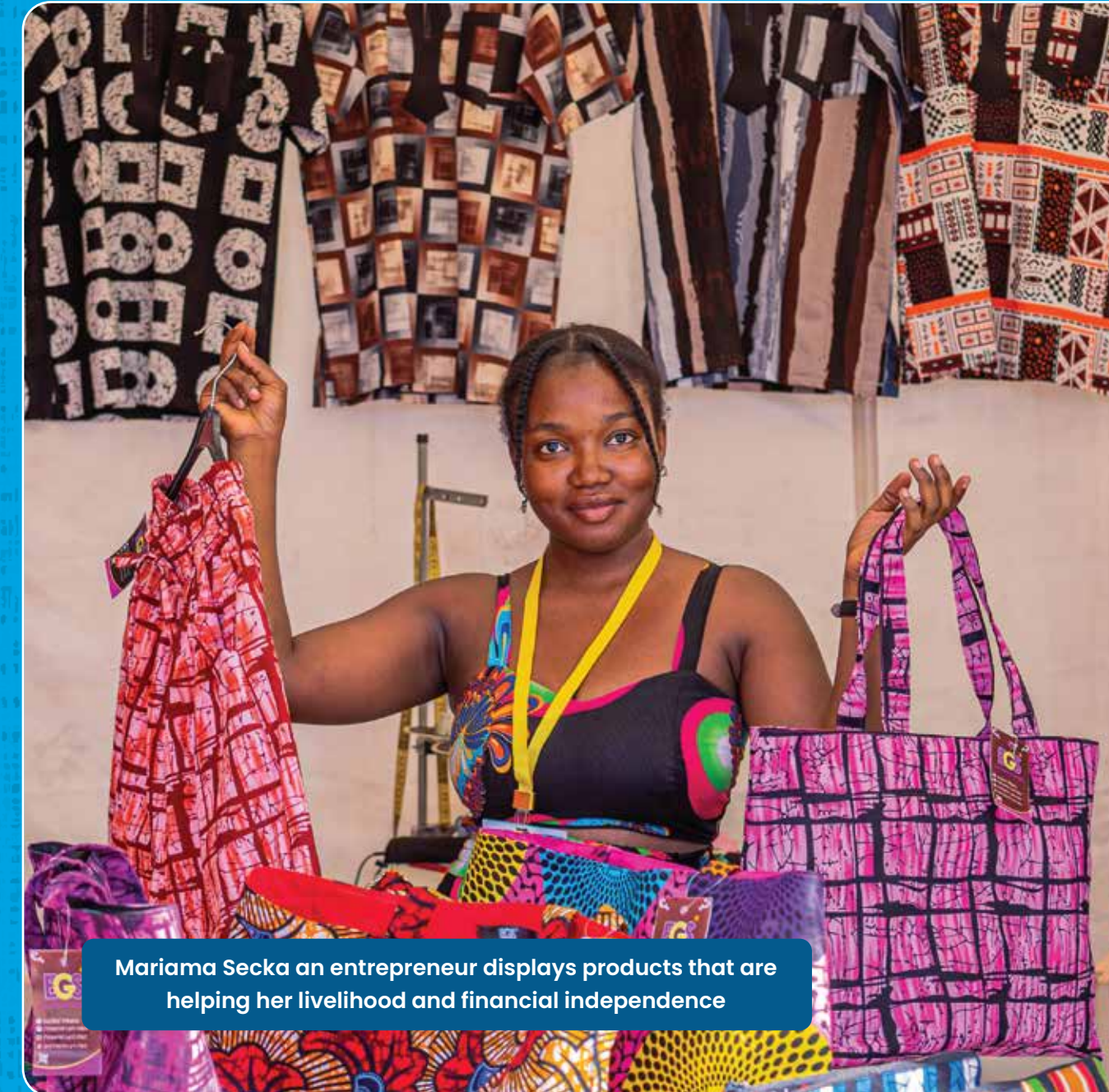
H.E President Barrow and UN DSG during a state visit in The Gambia.



2.4 STRENGTHENING HUMAN DEVELOPMENT, SOCIAL INCLUSION AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES

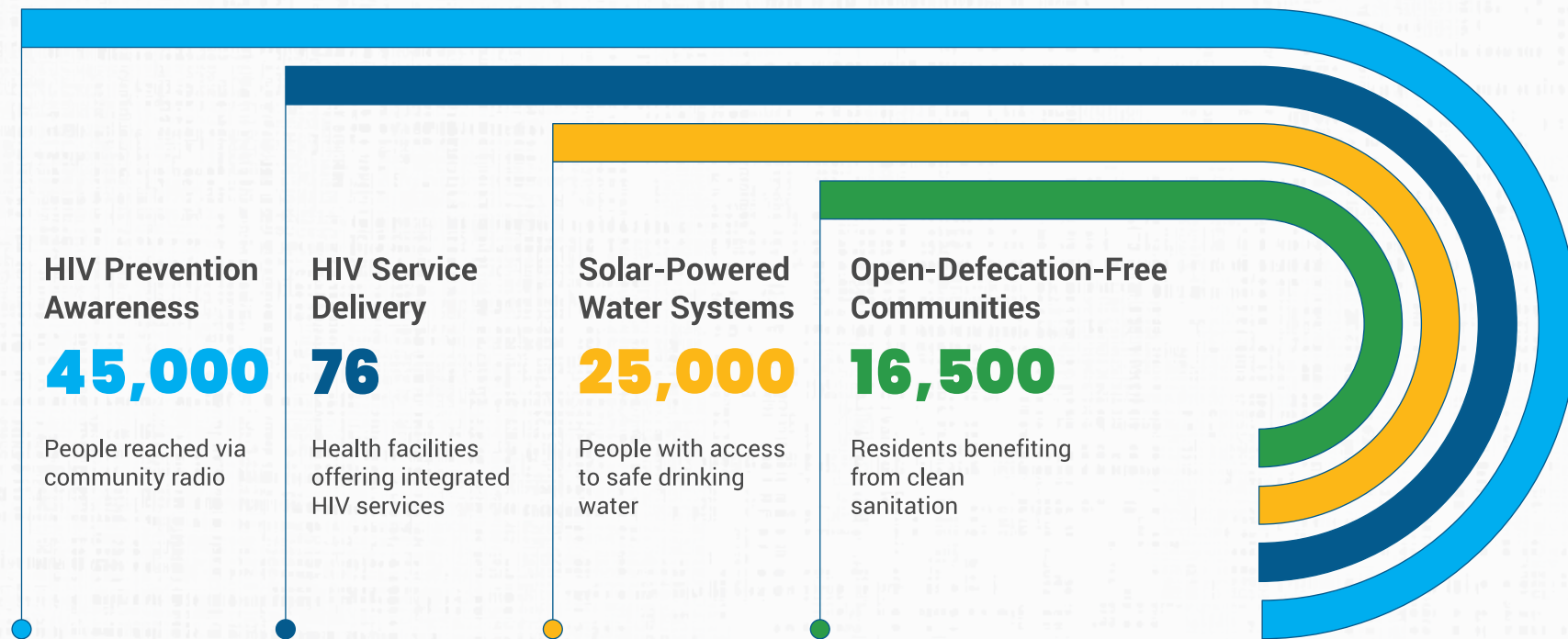
In 2025, the Government of The Gambia, with support from the UNCT and national partners, strengthened human development systems and expanded social and economic inclusion for vulnerable populations. Efforts focused on improving access to basic social services, strengthening protection systems, expanding livelihood opportunities and empowering young people with skills and leadership opportunities.

Across sectors, coordinated interventions strengthened national systems in health, education, social protection and economic inclusion. Investments in health infrastructure and workforce capacity improved maternal and child health outcomes. Education reforms and infrastructure upgrades expanded access to inclusive learning environments. Reintegration programmes strengthened social protection mechanisms for returning migrants, while livelihood initiatives expanded opportunities for youth and small enterprises. These efforts contributed to reducing barriers to inclusion and improving the well-being of women, children, youth, migrants and other marginalized populations.



Mariama Secka an entrepreneur displays products that are helping her livelihood and financial independence

A. STRENGTHENING ACCESS TO BASIC SOCIAL SERVICES



Efforts to strengthen access to basic social services focused on improving education, maternal and child health systems, expanding HIV prevention and treatment services and strengthening water and sanitation infrastructure.

In education, targeted support strengthened both quality and inclusiveness. An updated life skills curriculum, combined with teacher

training and school-based initiatives, helped students—especially girls—develop skills to stay in school and make informed decisions. Inclusive learning environments were improved by providing assistive devices to 300 children with disabilities and constructing disability-friendly sanitation facilities in 38 schools and early childhood centres, thereby supporting attendance and participation. Digital learning initiatives were

expanded to 122 schools in Central River and Lower River Regions, helping bolster learning outcomes and 21st-century skills. Efforts to address the needs of children in Quranic schools (Majalis) advanced through a national assessment and a multisectoral coordination mechanism, supporting their progressive integration into the education system. At the system level, support to sector coordination, data systems and

policy dialogue helped align stakeholders around priorities to address the learning crisis.

Investments in maternal and newborn health improved service delivery in health facilities nationwide. A neonatal intensive care unit was renovated and stocked at Bansang Hospital, and 40 health workers received training in neonatal care practices. Maternal health services were further enhanced by training 19 midwives in competency-based maternal care and distributing 60 delivery beds across 50 health facilities, boosting service readiness in maternity wards. Community engagement and capacity building of health workers helped increase skilled birth attendance to 83.6 percent, showing progress in access to safe childbirth services.

UNCT support helped strengthen national health systems and policy frameworks. This included developing a Patient Safety and Quality of Care Policy and Strategy, supporting the institutionalization of Traditional, Complementary, and Alternative Medicine, and conducting a Health Labour Market Analysis to guide workforce planning. These initiatives bolstered regulatory frameworks, enhanced service standards, and promoted more effective planning of health workforce needs.

Integrated HIV services were also significantly expanded. The number of health facilities offering integrated HIV, prevention of mother-to-child transmission, and antiretroviral therapy services grew from 36 to 76 nationwide, marking a 111 percent increase in service delivery points. Complementary initiatives enhanced HIV prevention awareness, reaching over 600 adolescents through school-based activities and about 45,000 people via community radio platforms. Support groups established in 12 locations further improved treatment literacy and psychosocial support for people living with HIV.

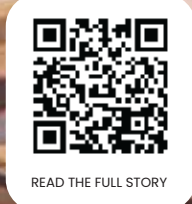
Child health services benefited from stronger immunization systems. National vaccination campaigns reached 92 percent coverage for the Measles Rubella campaign and 99 percent for the Novel Oral Polio Vaccine campaign, with 225,173 catch-up vaccine doses given to children who missed routine immunization. Innovations in last-mile delivery, such as tricycles used to transport vaccines and supplies in remote areas, helped reach underserved communities.

Water, sanitation, and hygiene systems were expanded to enhance living conditions and health outcomes. Solar-powered water systems increased access to safe drinking water for about 25,000 people

across various communities, supplementing resilience-focused water facilities installed in health centres and remote settlements. These efforts were supported by government-led initiatives, including the Programme for Accelerated Community Development, which widened access to clean water in underserved areas. Meanwhile, 33 communities were certified as open-defecation-free, benefiting over 16,500 residents. These improvements contributed to healthier environments in communities and schools while lowering the risk of waterborne diseases.



Midwives interact with a mother and her newborn baby



READ THE FULL STORY

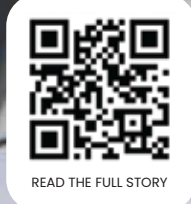
SEVENTEEN MIDWIVES IN CRR GAIN LIFE-SAVING SKILLS

In The Gambia, the Central River Region (CRR) continues to contend with one of the highest maternal mortality rates. Twenty maternal deaths were reported from Quarter 1 to Quarter 3 in 2025 out of an estimated 7,497 registered live births in the region. To strengthen maternal and newborn health services, the United Nations, in collaboration with the Ministry of Health (MoH), organized a pilot competency-based training for midwives. Midwives from various facilities across CRR participated in the five-day training. The curriculum focused on the new WHO Labour Care Guidelines and included a three-day practical session in labor and postnatal wards.



The training is very important for the people of CRR. It has improved our knowledge on how to prevent maternal deaths in the region. Maternal deaths here are mainly caused by eclampsia, so with the training we have received, we are now better equipped to manage maternal health and respond effectively to such cases, shares Nurse Maimuna Bojang.

Vaccines stored and ready for distribution from the cold chain centre



READ THE FULL STORY

THE CHAIN THAT CANNOT BREAK

A vaccine is only as good as the journey it takes to reach a child. From manufacturing to the moment, it is administered to the child in a village health post, it must stay within a precise temperature range. Too warm and it loses its potency.

Ebrima Nyimanta, the EPI Regional Operations Officer for the Upper River Region, has spent his career navigating those challenges. Thanks to a sustained UN investment in cold chain infrastructure across The Gambia, he now has the tools to mitigate the challenges.



A vaccine that has lost its potency cannot protect a child. When the cold chain fails, we don't always know if it has failed and that is the most dangerous situation of all. Investing in the cold chain is investing directly in the health of our children.

Ebrima Nyimanta, the EPI Regional Operations Officer, URR.



Returnees arrived safely in The Gambia marking the start of their reintegration journey

B. EXPANDING PROTECTION AND INCLUSION FOR VULNERABLE POPULATIONS

Protection systems were strengthened to ensure that vulnerable groups—including migrants, children and people living with HIV—could access services and rebuild their lives.

Support was provided to facilitate the safe and dignified return of Gambian migrants stranded abroad. In 2025, 2,482 migrants returned safely to The Gambia, receiving immediate assistance including medical screening, temporary accommodation and basic needs support. Reintegration programmes provided longer-term economic assistance to 1,597 returnees, including business start-up support, equipment and mentorship. In addition, 2,257 returnees were enrolled in technical and vocational training programmes, while 981 migrants received psychosocial support, integrating mental health services into reintegration pathways.

Migration-related interventions also addressed the broader social and policy dimensions of

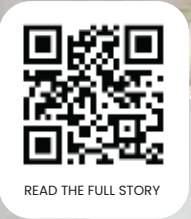
mobility. An analysis of the situation of families staying behind highlighted gender-specific vulnerabilities and gaps in access to protection and support services, helping inform more inclusive and gender-responsive policy discussions. In parallel, a National Dialogue on Migration brought together government institutions, civil society and development partners to discuss safe, orderly and regular migration pathways. This process strengthened coordination among stakeholders and contributed to a more comprehensive and rights-based approach to migration governance.

Legal identity systems were strengthened through improvements in birth registration services. Training for 160 birth registration officers across all seven regions and community outreach campaigns involving local leaders and birth registration ambassadors strengthened the civil registration system. Community engagement initiatives generated 3,535 birth registration referrals, leading to 1,438 completed registrations, helping ensure that more children gain legal identity and access to public services.

These initiatives strengthened national systems for social protection and legal identity, helping vulnerable populations access services and exercise their rights.



Fatou at home sewing outfits for a client using equipment provided by the UN to kickstart her entrepreneurial journey



STITCHING A BRIGHTER FUTURE: THE TRANSFORMATIVE JOURNEY OF A TRAFFICKING SURVIVOR

In Serrekunda, 19-year-old Fatou Jobe* once dreamed of gracing runways with her fashion designs. “I love fashion. I wanted to become a fashion designer,” she recalls, her voice tinged with both nostalgia and newfound determination. What she didn’t foresee, however, was that her path to this dream would pass through one of the darkest experiences a young woman could endure: surviving human trafficking. Fatou’s journey began like that of many others. Coming from a modest background and

forced to leave school due to financial hardship, her opportunities for employment were nearly nonexistent. Lured by the promise of a “good job” abroad, she was instead trafficked, mistreated and abused, and became pregnant as a result. Isolated and frightened, Fatou made the courageous decision to return home.

In October, she returned to The Gambia. Beyond the journey home, the programme provided Fatou with trauma counselling, medical care during and after her pregnancy, and a tailored reintegration plan built around her passion. She enrolled in a tailoring and fashion design course and received a start-up kit, including a sewing machine and fabrics, to launch her own small business.

THE BAJENS LEAVING NO CHILD BEHIND

Birth certificates are critically important for a child because they serve as a child’s first legal proof of identity and unlock access to essential rights and services. In The Gambia, Section 7 of the Children’s Act 2005 explicitly establishes birth registration a right ensuring that the fundamental rights to a name and nationality as enshrined in the Constitution of The Gambia, are guaranteed for every child. Despite a significant increase in birth registration rates nationally (now 59% of children under five), many more Gambian children remain legally invisible.

However, hope is growing for children in rural Gambia. In the Central River Region (North), a group of women called Bajens (meaning Aunts) are championing the advocacy for an attitudinal shift toward birth registration. Together, they have helped register over one hundred children within just three months of community engagement. Trained by the Paradise Foundation with technical and financial support from UN, these women are making a lasting change in their communities.



Birth certificates are the most important documents in the world. If you do not have one, no one can ascertain your identity or provide relief services, especially those dedicated specifically to nationals.



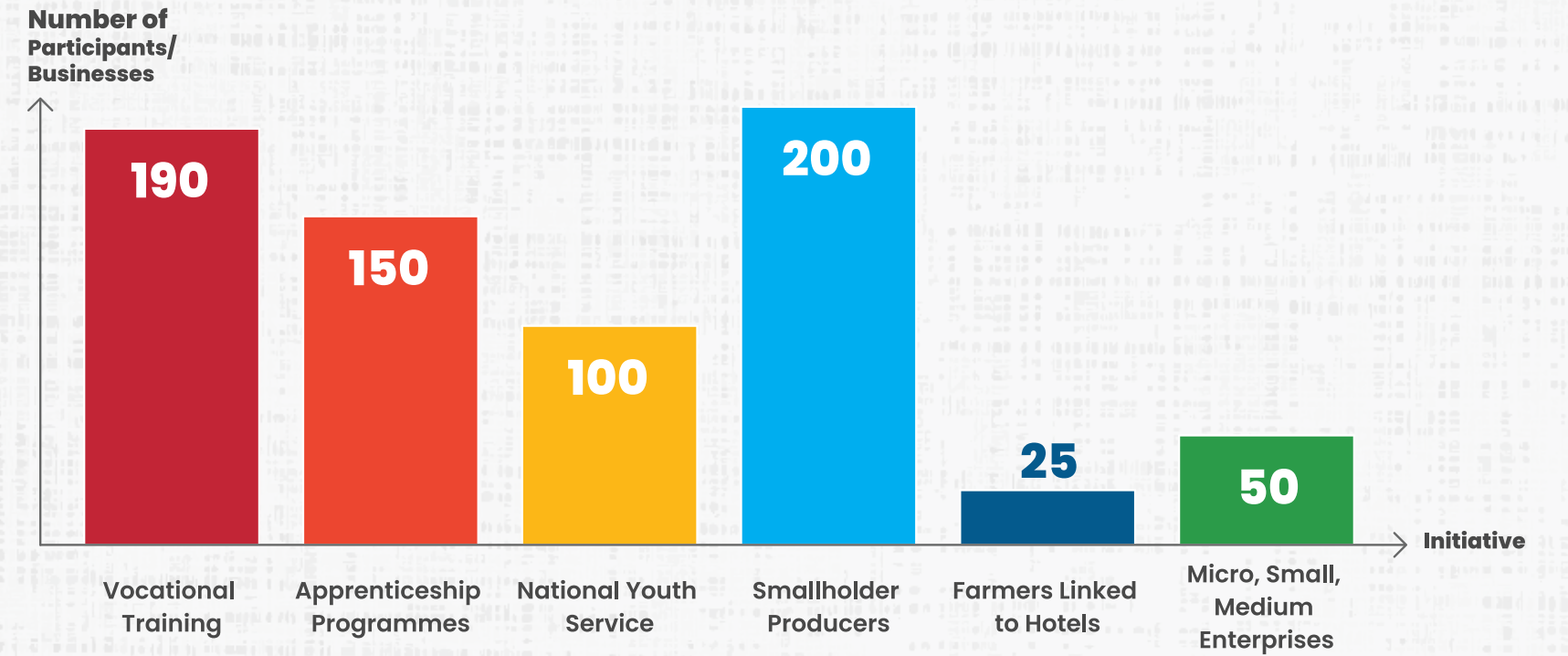
A mother receives her child’s birth certificate

C. EXPANDING ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES AND LIVELIHOODS

Efforts to strengthen economic inclusion focused on expanding skills development opportunities, improving market access for small businesses and strengthening climate-resilient rural livelihoods.

Skills training programmes supported young people in developing employability skills and accessing work opportunities. In 2025, 190 youth received vocational training, with all participants placed in internships to gain practical work experience. Complementing these efforts, 150 young people participated in apprenticeship programmes, while 100 grad-

YOUTH EMPLOYMENT AND LIVELIHOOD INITIATIVES IN 2025



uates were trained and deployed through the National Youth Service Programme, helping bridge the gap between education and employment. As a result, approximately 85 percent of participants transitioned into employment or self-employment.

Livelihood initiatives also strengthened rural economic opportunities. Infrastructure investments—including water reservoirs, boreholes and fencing—improved agricultural produc-

tivity in five community gardens, while 200 smallholder producers received training in market readiness and product quality. Partnerships between rural producers and the tourism sector linked 25 farmers to 10 hotels, improving income opportunities and promoting local sourcing, with sales transactions reaching approximately 1.2 million dalasis.

Cultural and creative industries were strengthened as drivers of local economic

development. Expanded festivals in Banjul and Janjanbureh attracted larger audiences and created new opportunities for small businesses. Attendance at these festivals increased by 40 percent, and 50 micro, small and medium enterprises were able to market their products, demonstrating the economic potential of cultural tourism.

FROM SMALL BEGINNINGS TO HOTEL PARTNERSHIPS

The story of Smiling Coast Agro Processing is one of vision, resilience and belief in what Gambians can build for themselves. It did not begin with machinery or a factory, it began with a conversation. Moses Sonko still remembers the words that shaped his life's work. His late father, Malamin O. Sonko, looked at him and said:



If you want to make a real impact, build something that creates value here.

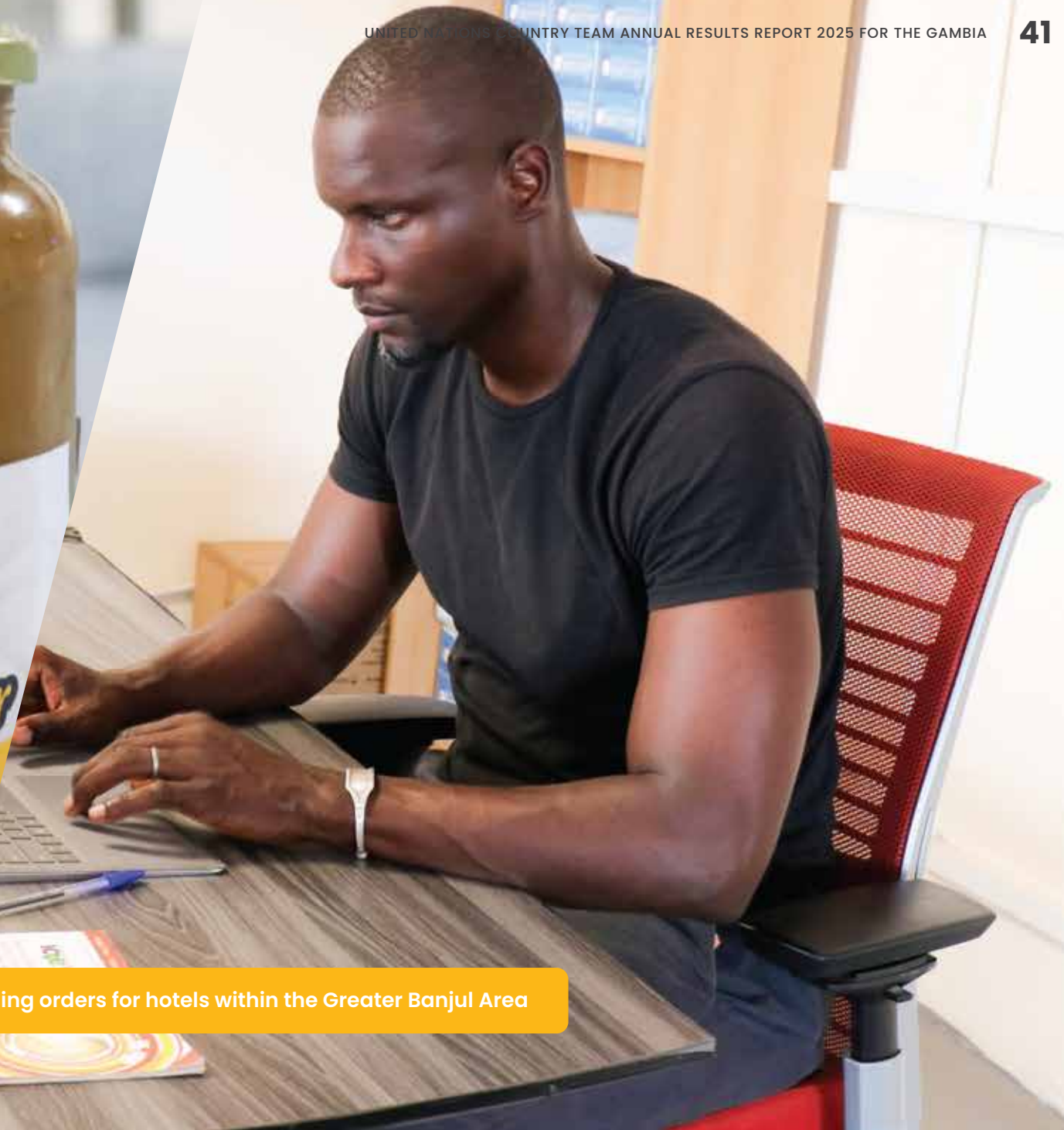
Those words became the foundation of the company he leads today. Moses was supported to participate at regional and international trade events such as the Africa Food Sys-

tems Forum in Dakar and the China International Import.

These events increased our visibility. Moses said.

Through these expos, we have secured purchasing contracts, built relationships with international buyers and connected with key industry players, including hotels and distributors. They opened doors to new sales and partnerships and helped position.

Today, smiling Coast Agro Processing secured a supply agreement with Bakadaji Hotel and entered negotiations with Ocean Bay Hotel, Djelibai Leisure Group, Africa Princess Hotel and Metzy Residence Hotel. These engagements have strengthened local market presence and created ongoing commercial interest in Gambian produced cashew paste and kernels.



Moses Sonko processing orders for hotels within the Greater Banjul Area



READ THE FULL STORY

HOW YOUNG GAMBIAN ADVOCATES HELPED SHAPE A NATIONAL VISION FOR PEACE

When officials declared The Gambia's first-ever National Action Plan on Youth, Peace and Security officially launched, Bakary allowed himself a small smile. For a young man who had spent years arguing that his generation deserved a seat at the table, this was the table being rebuilt.

"For too long, young people in The Gambia have been spoken about, but rarely spoken with," says Bakary, co-founder of Peace Hub The Gambia, a youth-led peacebuilding organization.

"We grew up hearing that we were the future. But the future is a long way off when you are twenty-three and unemployed, and no one asks your opinion about the country you will inherit."



Bakary facilitates a session on the implementation of the NAP - YPS



For too long, young people in The Gambia have been spoken about, but rarely spoken with," says Bakary, co-founder of Peace Hub The Gambia, a youth-led peacebuilding organization. "We grew up hearing that we were the future. But the future is a long way off when you are twenty-three and unemployed, and no one asks your opinion about the country you will inherit.

D. EMPOWERING YOUTH THROUGH SKILLS, LEADERSHIP AND PARTICIPATION

Youth empowerment initiatives strengthened leadership platforms, civic engagement and participation in governance processes.

Youth participation in governance was strengthened through platforms that amplify young people's voices in national dialogue. The Children's National Assembly engaged 105 youth representatives, while national consultations with adolescents and youth contributed to policy discussions on child protection and youth development. These consultations culminated in a National Adolescent Girls Summit, which produced a national call to action endorsed by senior government leadership.

Youth civic engagement was further strengthened through the election of the 10th National Youth Parliament, in which 23,110 young people registered to vote, and 58 youth representatives were elected to represent young people nationwide. In parallel, the National Action Plan on Youth, Peace and Security

was launched to strengthen the role of young people in peacebuilding and governance.

Complementing these initiatives, youth development programmes also provided leadership training, mentoring and practical opportunities for young people to build skills and participate more actively in community and national initiatives.

These initiatives helped institutionalize youth participation in national governance processes while strengthening leadership skills among young people.



The launch of the National Action Plan on Youth, Peace and Security gave institutional shape to what young people embody every day, the conviction that youth are not merely beneficiaries of peace, but its most essential architects.

Bakary Sonko, a youth peace advocate.



PARTNERSHIPS AND NATIONAL LEADERSHIP

These results were achieved through national leadership and collaboration among government institutions, civil society organizations and development partners. Key partners included the Ministry of Health, the Ministries of Basic and Secondary Education and of Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology, civil registration authorities, youth institutions and local governments.

Coordinated support from multiple UNCT members—including IOM, WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA, UNAIDS and ITC—enabled integrated interventions that combined service delivery, economic inclusion and youth empowerment, while strengthening national systems for sustainable development.



CHALLENGES AND LESSONS LEARNED

Despite significant progress, several challenges remain. Health and education systems continue to face resource constraints, particularly in rural areas where infrastructure and staffing shortages persist. Expanding service coverage while maintaining quality will require sustained investment and stronger coordination among national institutions.

Economic inclusion initiatives also face challenges in scaling successful pilots to reach larger populations. Strengthening market systems and expanding access to finance remain essential for sustaining livelihoods.

Finally, youth unemployment remains a structural challenge requiring continued investment in skills development, employment pathways and entrepreneurship support.



CONTRIBUTION TO HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND SOCIAL INCLUSION

These initiatives strengthened human development systems by expanding access to essential services, improving social protection mechanisms and creating new opportunities for economic participation. Vulnerable populations gained improved access to health care, water and sanitation services, legal identity and livelihood opportunities, while youth and rural communities benefited from expanded skills development and employment pathways.

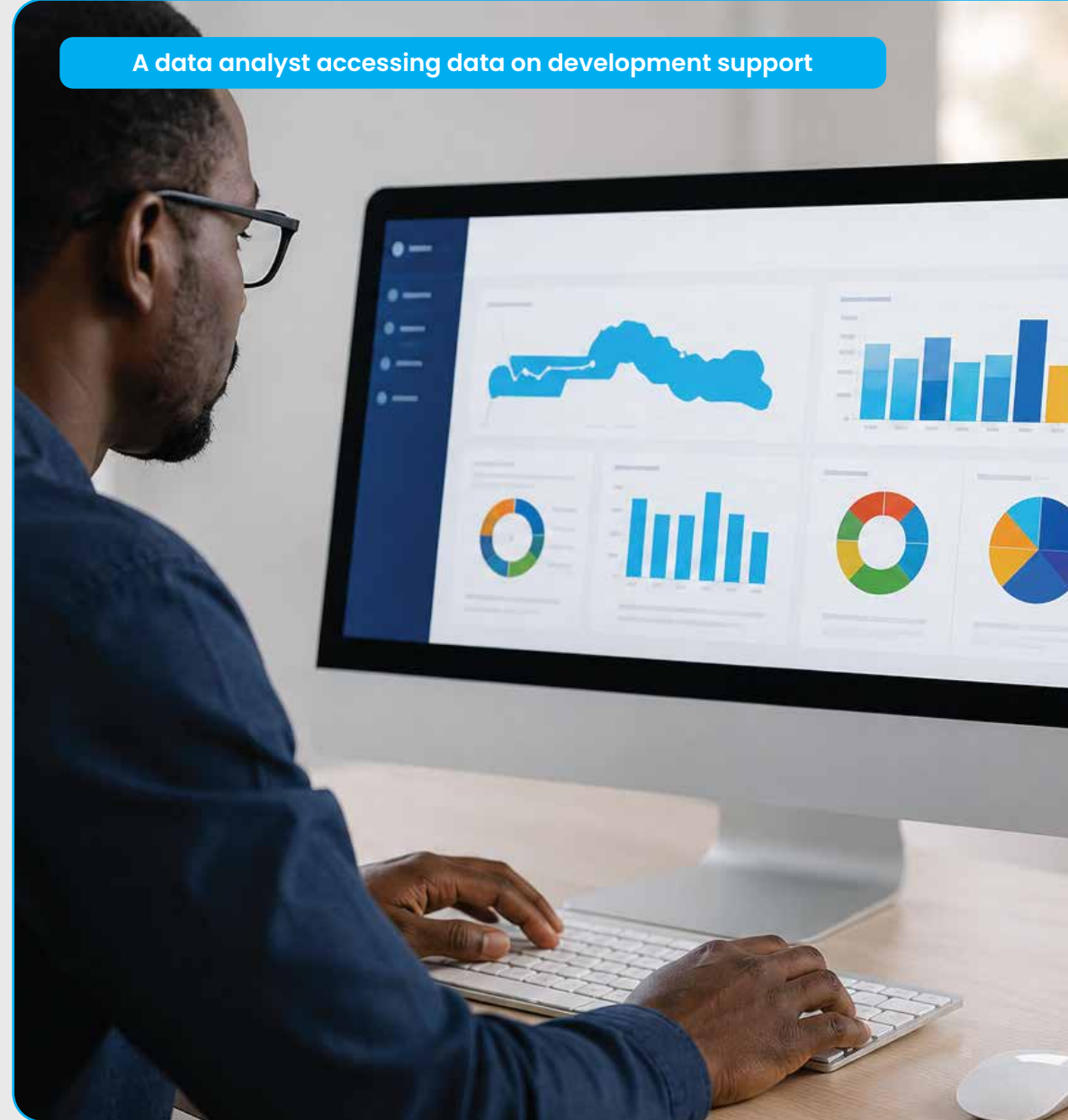
By linking service delivery, economic inclusion and youth empowerment, the United Nations system supported The Gambia in advancing more inclusive human development and reducing barriers to social and economic participation.

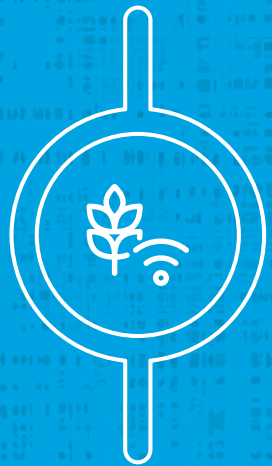


2.5 STRENGTHENING DEVELOPMENT FINANCING AND STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

In 2025, the Government of The Gambia, with support from the UNCT and development partners, strengthened the policy, financing and partnership foundations needed to mobilize and coordinate development action more effectively. Progress focused on expanding inclusive policy dialogue, improving national data systems for evidence-based planning, strengthening development financing frameworks and improving the ecosystem supporting small businesses and entrepreneurship.

Across these areas, initiatives primarily focused on strengthening systems, institutions and partnerships that enable more effective development financing and coordination. These efforts laid important groundwork for scaling investments and improving the alignment of public, private and international financing with national development priorities.





Implementation of the National Agricultural Sample Survey (NASS)



Preparatory work for the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS 7)



Formulation of the Industrialization and Diversification Policy



Completion of the Voluntary National Review process



Mobilization of GMD 3 million for family planning

A. STRENGTHENING INCLUSIVE POLICY AND PARTNERSHIP FRAMEWORKS

Efforts during the year strengthened platforms for dialogue and collaboration among government institutions, development partners, civil society and the private sector.

Consultations and policy dialogue initiatives expanded opportunities for stakeholders to contribute to national development strategies. New multi-stake-

holder platforms brought together government institutions, financial actors, sector representatives and community groups to identify barriers to investment and strengthen the enabling environment for inclusive economic development. In the fisheries sector, for example, dialogue among policymakers, financial institutions and fisherfolk representatives helped identify investment needs and regulatory challenges affecting artisanal fisheries,

laying the groundwork for improved sector governance and financing opportunities.

Policy consultations also advanced efforts to strengthen gender-responsive economic systems. National discussions on gender-responsive public procurement examined barriers facing women-owned enterprises in accessing government contracts and contributed to the development and validation of approaches to strengthen

the participation of women-led businesses in public supply chains. In parallel, dialogue between the public and private sectors explored new partnerships to advance child-focused development priorities, including ways to leverage private-sector engagement to support social programmes.

These initiatives strengthened participatory policy processes and expanded the partnership landscape supporting national development priorities.

B. MODERNIZING NATIONAL DATA AND EVIDENCE SYSTEMS

Reliable data systems are essential for effective planning, resource allocation and monitoring of development progress. In 2025, several initiatives strengthened national data systems and expanded the evidence base for development policy.

A major milestone was the implementation of the **National Agricultural Sample Survey (NASS)**, the first large-scale agricultural data collection exercise conducted in more than two decades. The survey trained more than 100 supervisors, enumerators and coordinators and collected new information on

crop production, livestock and agricultural practices. The updated data will provide an essential foundation for agricultural policy planning, food security monitoring and climate-resilient farming strategies.

Preparatory work also advanced the implementation of the **Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS 7)**. In 2025, national technical teams were trained, survey tools were prepared and institutional arrangements were established to support full-scale data collection. Once completed, the survey will provide updated national indicators on child wellbeing, health, education and gender equality, strengthening the country's ability to monitor progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals.

Additional analytical work supported evidence-based policy development. These included studies examining structural barriers to industrial development and strategies to reduce import dependence, as well as research initiatives to inform a forthcoming youth-focused Human Development Report 2025. These studies aim to strengthen the analytical basis for national economic and social policy decisions.

Through these efforts, national institutions gained improved tools and information to guide development planning and monitor progress.

C. ADVANCING INNOVATIVE FINANCING AND COORDINATED DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

Strengthening development financing frameworks was a central focus in 2025.

Several initiatives contributed to improving coordination of financing flows, strengthening public financial management systems and expanding opportunities to mobilize resources for national development priorities. National coordination was also reinforced by introducing a centralized reporting dashboard to track implementation of national development priorities across the government.

Progress was made in advancing the Integrated National Financing Framework (INFF), **which provides a structured approach to aligning public finance, private investment and international development assistance with national development goals.** Analytical work undertaken as part of the INFF helped identify financing priorities and strengthen coordination between key institutions,

including the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs. This work also **informed The Gambia's engagement in international financing discussions**, including the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development.

Efforts to strengthen public financial management and accountability systems also contributed to improving the effectiveness of public spending. **Capacity-building support to the National Audit Office strengthened budget oversight and reporting across government institutions**, while the development of standardized Internal Audit Charters and Manuals for ministries, departments and agencies—including local government authorities—**provided a foundation for stronger internal controls, improved risk management and enhanced transparency**.

Complementary analytical work supported national policy development and economic transformation. This **included contributions to formulating the Industrialization and Diversification Policy, which aims to reduce dependence on imports** and promote domestic production and value addition. In parallel, a participatory Voluntary National Review process was completed and presented at the High-Level Political

Forum in 2025, reinforcing The Gambia's commitment to the 2030 Agenda and **strengthening national reporting on progress on the SDGs**.

Additional **analysis examined financing options for priority sectors and supported efforts to integrate climate considerations into national development planning**. Advocacy efforts also helped mobilize approximately GMD 3 million in domestic resources from the Government to support family planning and reproductive health commodities, thereby **strengthening national ownership of health financing**. Work on climate finance, embedded within the broader financing strategy, **helped identify opportunities to align climate-related investments with national priorities**. Efforts also **strengthened economic diplomacy** and coordination with development partners, contributing to a more structured approach to mobilizing external financing for national development priorities.

Together, these initiatives strengthened the policy, institutional and analytical foundations required to mobilize and coordinate development financing, while improving the effectiveness, transparency and strategic alignment of public and external resources.



Aerial view of a community water supply facility supported through coordinated partner financing under the Peacebuilding Fund

D. STRENGTHENING THE MSME SUPPORT ECOSYSTEM

Inclusive economic growth depends not only on the performance of individual businesses but also on the broader ecosystem that supports them—the network of institutions, financing mechanisms, policies and market linkages that enable micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) to start, grow and compete.

In 2025, several initiatives focused on strengthening this enabling ecosystem for entrepreneurship. Capacity-building programmes improved coordination among 15 business support organizations, including government agencies, business associations and enterprise support institutions. By aligning these actors under a common support framework, collaboration among institutions that provide services to entrepreneurs improved, and duplication of support programmes was reduced.

Dialogue platforms also brought together financial institutions, enterprise support actors and government agencies to address barriers to finance and improve

the availability of services for small businesses. These efforts helped strengthen coordination across the MSME ecosystem and improve the overall environment for entrepreneurship.

Improved coordination among support institutions and private-sector actors also facilitated new market linkages between rural producers and tourism businesses, connecting 25 smallholder producers with hotel buyers. Strengthened promotion and organization of cultural festivals increased visitor attendance by approximately 40 percent, enabling 50 micro- and small enterprises to access new market opportunities.

Additional analytical work examined structural barriers affecting MSME development and supported a national ecosystem mapping and dialogue process, which informed the Industrialization and Diversification Policy and helped strengthen coordination among public and private actors.

These initiatives helped strengthen the institutional foundations that support entrepreneurship and inclusive economic growth.

PARTNERSHIPS AND NATIONAL LEADERSHIP

These results were achieved through strong collaboration among government institutions, development partners, private-sector actors, and civil society organizations. Key national partners included the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs, the Ministry of Trade, Industry, Regional Integration and Employment, the National Statistics Office, sector ministries, and private-sector representatives.

Coordinated support from FAO, ITC, UNDP, UNFPA, and UNICEF helped strengthen partnerships, expand the evidence base for development policy and improve alignment between national development priorities and available financing.

CHALLENGES AND LESSONS LEARNED

Several challenges remain in strengthening development financing and partnerships. Data gaps continue to limit evidence-based policy-making in some sectors, and the implementation of large-scale national surveys requires sustained technical and financial support.

Coordination among multiple actors also requires continued investment in institutional capacity and information-sharing mechanisms. In addition, while policy frameworks for financing and partnership coordination have been strengthened, translating these frameworks into large-scale investments will require sustained engagement with development partners, the private sector and financial institutions.

The experience of 2025 demonstrates the importance of combining policy dialogue, analytical work and institutional capacity-building to create the

enabling conditions for sustainable development financing.

CONTRIBUTION TO STRENGTHENED DEVELOPMENT FINANCING AND PARTNERSHIPS

These initiatives strengthened the policy and institutional foundations needed to mobilize development financing and broaden partnerships for sustainable development. Improved data systems enhanced evidence-based decision-making, financing frameworks strengthened resource coordination, and expanded partnerships created new opportunities for investment and collaboration. By strengthening these enabling systems, the United Nations system supported The Gambia in building a more coordinated and diversified partnership landscape capable of mobilizing resources and accelerating progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals.

Through strategic and financing partnerships, we are able to scale up production to boost agriculture



2.6 SUPPORT TO PARTNERSHIPS AND FINANCING THE 2030 AGENDA

Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals requires not only effective programmes but also strong partnerships and well-coordinated financing. In 2025, the UNCT supported the Government of The Gambia in strengthening the alignment of public, private and external financing with national development priorities, while expanding collaboration with development partners, international financial institutions and the private sector.

A key area of progress was the strengthening of development cooperation coordination. The UNCT continued to convene and support the Development Partners Group, facilitating regular, structured engagement between the Government, parliamentarians and development partners. This contributed to improved alignment of external support with national priorities and reduced fragmentation across sectors.

The UNCT also supported efforts to strengthen public financial management and financing coordination, including advancing the Integrated National Financing Framework through analytical work and institutional coordination. This helped reinforce coherence between national planning and financing and supported

The Gambia’s engagement in international financing discussions. High-level engagement further strengthened the partnership environment. The visit of the United Nations Deputy Secretary-General in 2025 elevated the visibility of national priorities and deepened dialogue among the government, parliamentarians, development partners and the private sector on reforms, partnerships and investment for sustainable development. A Peacebuilding Fund technical partner mission also facilitated direct engagement among donors, the Government, and implementing partners, strengthening transparency, alignment, and trust, and identifying opportunities to sustain and scale ongoing investments in governance and social cohesion.

Joint programming continued to be used as a key modality for mobilizing and aligning resources across the United Nations system. In 2025, joint initiatives enabled integrated, multi-sectoral programmes across governance, social sectors, and resilience, helping to reduce fragmentation and strengthen the coherence of UN support.

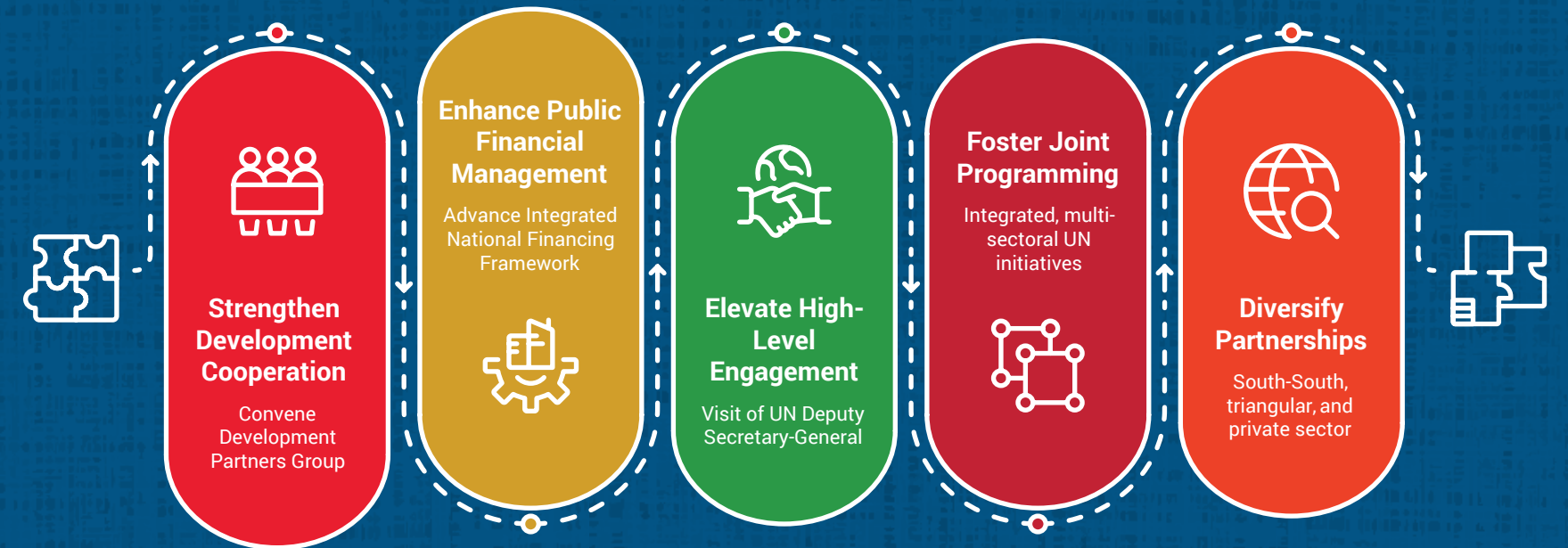
Partnerships were further diversified through South–South, triangular and private sector engagement. The UNCT supported collaboration between the Government of The Gambia and international partners—including China, the Arab Bank and the Italian Agency—to strengthen human capital and productive

sectors. South–South cooperation with China contributed to agricultural productivity through technical assistance and technology exchange, while complementary initiatives supported skills development and youth participation in technical, vocational and STEM fields. These efforts were informed by skills mapping and labour market assessments, helping align training and employment opportunities with national needs. In parallel, engagement with private-sector actors and bilateral partners expanded, including through the first Public–Private Partnership Forum, which brought together the Government, development partners, and businesses to explore opportunities for collaboration and innovative financing approaches.

Support for integrated territorial planning has advanced through UN engagement on spatial analysis and urbanization dynamics. Work on a national spatial development framework and cross-border planning with Senegal has strengthened the evidence base for territorial development, improved technical coordination across institutions, and helped identify priority areas for investment and future partnerships.

These efforts strengthened the enabling environment for development financing and investment by improving coordination among partners, expanding the range of partnerships and reinforcing the alignment of financing with national priorities. They also contributed to positioning the United Nations as a key convener of partners and supporting more coherent and catalytic development financing.

STRENGTHENING DEVELOPMENT FINANCING IN THE GAMBIA



2.7 RESULTS OF THE UN WORKING TOGETHER: UN COHERENCE, EFFECTIVENESS AND EFFICIENCY

In 2025, the UNCT strengthened its collective approach to supporting national development priorities under the UNSDCF. Progress was made in translating the “One UN” commitment into more coordinated planning, stronger engagement with government counterparts and development partners,

and clearer alignment of UN programmes with national systems and priorities.

The governance architecture of the Cooperation Framework became more operational over the course of the year. Coordination platforms—including the Results Groups, the Programme Coordination Group and the Joint Steering Committee with government—were used more systematically to review progress and align UN support with national priorities. These mechanisms provided structured opportunities for dialogue with

government counterparts and strengthened mutual accountability in implementing the Cooperation Framework. Joint planning and monitoring systems also improved. The UN Information Management System (UNINFO) was increasingly used as the common platform for tracking progress under the UNSDCF, enabling the Results Groups and the Resident Coordinator’s Office to consolidate information on programme implementation and results. The UNCT also strengthened collaboration on partnerships and development financing.

A partnership and resource mobilization strategy was finalized, and a partnerships officer joined the Resident Coordinator's Office to support coordinated engagement with development partners and IFIs. Dialogue with government and partners increasingly focused on aligning financing with national priorities and identifying opportunities to mobilize more diverse sources of development financing.

Progress was also made toward stronger joint programming. The UNCT began to shift from a project-based approach toward more integrated programme initiatives addressing shared priorities. Discussions during 2025 converged around three areas with strong potential for collective impact: education, health and nutrition, and climate-resilient food systems and livelihoods. Preparatory work within the Results Groups helped lay the foundation for joint initiatives in these areas.

At the same time, the experience of 2025 highlighted areas where coordination can be further strengthened. Participation across Results Groups remained uneven, and translating improved coordination into large-scale joint programme delivery remains a work in progress. Evidence from national planning processes and analytical work—including the Population and Housing Census, the Voluntary National Review and the updated Common Country Analysis—also underscored the need for stronger geographic targeting and clearer mapping of UN activities across the country.

Overall, the experience of 2025 demonstrated that the UNSDCF is helping the United Nations system work more coherently in support of national priorities. Strengthened coordination mechanisms, improved information sharing, and more strategic engagement with partners laid the foundations for more integrated and scalable development support in the coming years.



2.8 LESSONS LEARNED AND EVALUATIONS

The implementation of the UNSDCF in 2025 generated several lessons to strengthen the effectiveness and sustainability of UN support in The Gambia.

First, the year confirmed the value of integrated approaches to complex development challenges. Many of the most visible results were achieved through coordinated interventions across sectors. For example, programmes that combined climate-resilient agriculture, nutrition services and disaster preparedness proved more effective in strengthening community resilience than isolated interventions. Similarly, governance initiatives that linked institutional reform to civic participation—such as youth assemblies and community mediation mechanisms—strengthened both public accountability and citizen engagement.

Second, progress depended not only on expanding services but also on strengthening national systems. While programme support improved access to health care, water services and livelihood opportunities, long-term sustainability required improvements in institutional

capacity, policy frameworks and coordination mechanisms. Investments in national data systems, including agricultural surveys and household surveys, as well as work on development financing frameworks and planning processes, helped strengthen the evidence and institutional foundations needed to guide national policy decisions.

Third, inclusive participation proved essential for effective development programming. Initiatives that engaged women, youth, civil society organizations and community leaders helped ensure that programmes responded to local priorities and strengthened national ownership. Youth participation platforms, public-private dialogue initiatives and community-based consultation processes all contributed to more inclusive governance and more responsive policy discussions.

Finally, the experience of 2025 highlighted the continued importance of expanding economic opportunities, particularly for young people. Skills training, entrepreneurship support and market-linkage initiatives helped create new pathways to employment and self-employment. Yet, as


high levels of youth unemployment remain a structural challenge, strengthening the connection between education, skills development and labour market opportunities will remain a key priority in the coming years.

No formal evaluation of the UNSDCF was conducted in 2025. However, lessons emerging from programme monitoring, joint reviews and stakeholder consultations informed ongoing adjustments to programme design and implementation. These insights will continue to guide the United Nations Country Team in strengthening the effectiveness and coherence of its support in the years ahead.

2.9 FINANCIAL OVERVIEW AND RESOURCE MOBILIZATION

The implementation of the Cooperation Framework during the reporting period required an estimated USD 55 million in total resources. Of this, USD 42.2 million was mobilized, representing a 76.7 per cent funding coverage. This reflects strong progress in resource mobilization despite a constrained global financing environment. However, a residual funding gap remains, underscoring the continued need to strengthen partnerships, diversify financing sources—including through innovative financing mechanisms—and enhance joint resource mobilization efforts to ensure full delivery of planned results.

USD 42.2 MILLION WAS MOBILIZED



A FUNDING COVERAGE OF 76.7 %




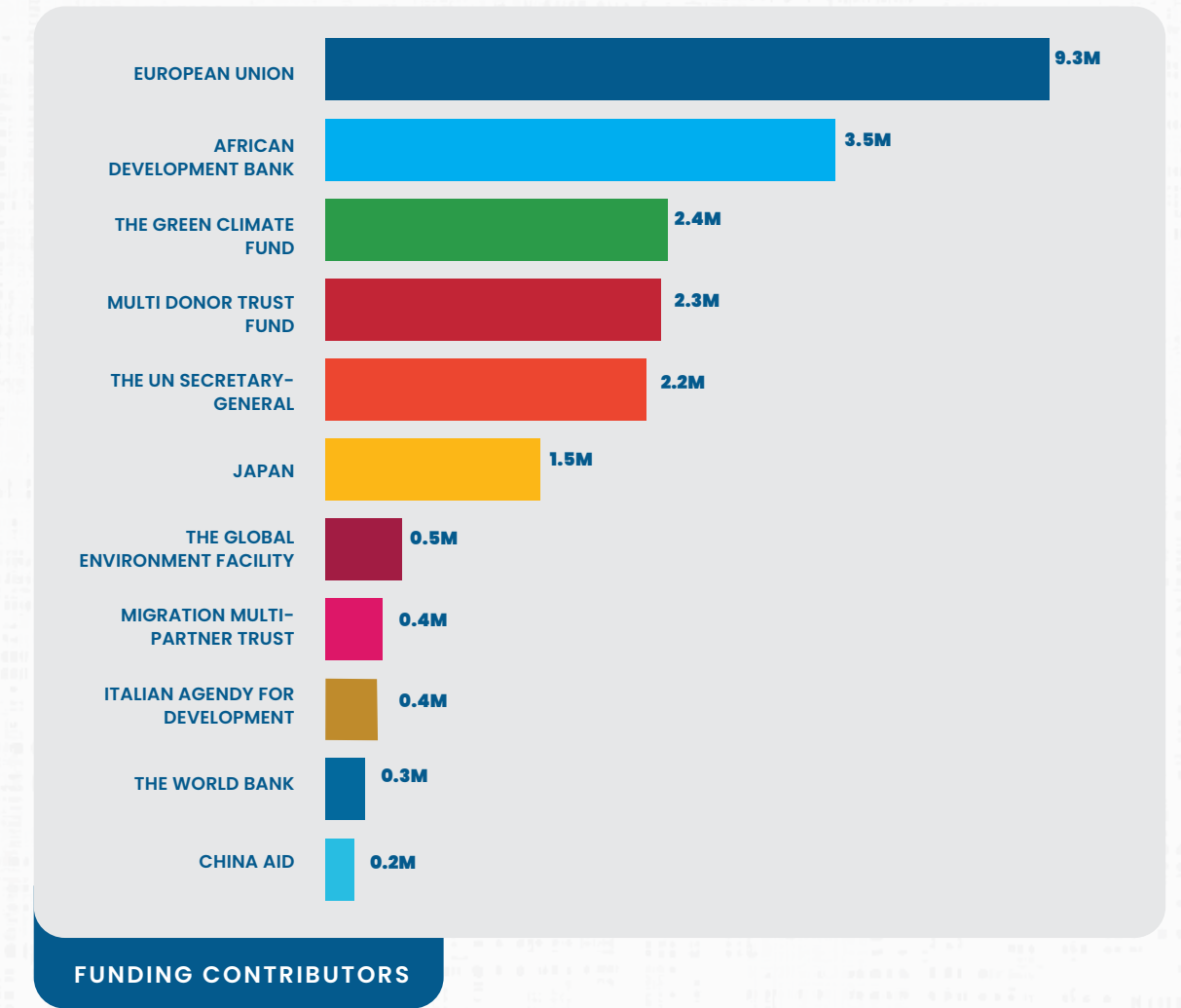
TABLE 1: FINANCING THE UNSDCF IN 2025

OUTCOME	FOCUS AREA	REQUIRED	AVAILABLE	GAP	GAP%	ACTIVITIES
1.1	Green, Resilient Livelihoods	\$22.5M	\$16.2M	\$6.3M	27.55%	47
2.1	Governance & Public Service	\$6.9M	\$6.3M	\$0.637M	9.23%	84
2.2	Health Educaton & Socal protecton	\$22.2M	\$16.0M	\$6.2M	28.00%	115
3.1	Dev. Financing & Partnerships	\$1.3M	\$0.89M	\$0.42M	37.20%	17

In 2025, funding coverage across outcomes remained strong, ranging from 68% to 91%, with Outcome 2.1 nearly fully funded (91%), while Outcome 3.1 recorded the largest gap (32% unfunded), highlighting areas for targeted resource mobilization.

Funding partner contributions reflect a diverse financing landscape, with major external partners such as the European Union, African Development Bank, Green Climate Fund, Japan, and other bilateral and multilateral actors providing the largest resource flows. These investments align strongly with priority SDGs—especially No Poverty, Zero Hunger, Good Health and Well-being, and Decent Work and Economic Growth—demonstrating sustained partner commitment to national development objectives. Simultaneously, the distribution highlights opportunities to diversify partnerships further and increase support for less-funded SDGs, promoting more balanced and integrated financing across the Cooperation Framework.

FIGURE 1: AVAILABLE RESOURCES BY FUNDING CONTRIBUTORS IN 2025





03

INTO THE FUTURE – UNCT KEY FOCUS FOR 2026

The year 2026 marks the midpoint of implementation of the UNSDCF 2024–2028. Building on progress made in the first two years of implementation, the UNCT will focus on accelerating progress toward the most important development priorities in The Gambia. This next phase will aim to translate stronger coherence, partnerships and joint planning into faster and larger improvements in people’s lives, particularly for the most vulnerable populations.

Efforts to accelerate development results in 2026 will focus on three strategic priorities where coordinated action can make the greatest contribution to national progress: education, maternal and newborn health, and climate-resilient food systems and livelihoods. These priorities reflect the development challenges identified through the 2024 Population and Housing Census, the Government’s 2025 Voluntary National Review on the SDG, and the updated 2025 Common Country Analysis. Together, these assessments highlight persistent gaps in learning outcomes and skills, maternal and child health, food security, rural livelihoods and resilience to climate and economic shocks. By concentrating collective effort in these areas, the UNCT will seek to support faster progress

toward national development goals and the Sustainable Development Goals.

Acceleration will be guided by a shared approach across the three flagship initiatives. First, programmes will aim to achieve measurable development gains at scale in priority districts, with particular attention to populations facing the greatest vulnerability and exclusion. Second, joint programming will be organized around shared results, with participating entities contributing according to their comparative advantage and mandates. Third, initiatives will be designed with a catalytic logic, testing approaches that can influence larger national programmes or investments supported by development partners and IFIs. Fourth, geographic concentration will help strengthen impact by aligning support in a limited number of regions—most likely the Central River Region and the Upper River Region—where coordinated action can demonstrate visible improvements in development outcomes. In this way, the flagships are intended to act as accelerators within the Cooperation Framework, helping the United Nations system concentrate its efforts and support the country in advancing its most pressing development priorities.

The national context will continue to shape UN support in 2026. Preparations for the presidential election scheduled for December 2026 are expected to influence the political environment, while fiscal constraints and global economic uncertainty may affect development financing. Climate variability and environmental pressures will also continue to affect agricultural production and rural livelihoods. These dynamics reinforce the importance of maintaining risk-informed and adaptive programming while ensuring that support remains aligned with national priorities and responsive to emerging challenges.

Resource mobilization will remain central to these efforts. The UNCT will continue to strengthen engagement with development partners, IFIs, and the private sector to mobilize financing to scale successful initiatives and support national priorities. By aligning partnerships and financing with the strategic priorities identified under the Cooperation Framework and by focusing collective efforts where they can generate the greatest development impact, the United Nations system will seek to accelerate progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals and support inclusive and resilient development in The Gambia.



A Young person at the UN funded Kuntaur Community Radio shares her vision for the future