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FINAL REPORT

Report on the Terminal Evaluation of the Department of Strategic Policy and Delivery (DSPD) Support to the Office of the President

October 2020

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AUC	African Union Commission
CDA	Conflict and Development Analysis
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women
COVID-19	Corona Virus Disease 2019
CP	Country programme
CRC	Constitutional Review Commission
DDP	Directorate of Development Planning
DPSU	Strategic Policy Advisory Coordination Unit
DSPD	Department of Strategic Policy and Delivery
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
GCCA	Gambia Civil Aviation Authority
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GMS	General Management Service
GPA	Gambia Ports Authority
IHS	Integrated Household Survey
MOA	Ministry of Agriculture
MoFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MOFEA	Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs
MOWC&SW	Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare
NASS	National Agricultural Sample Survey
NATIP	National Agency against Trafficking in Persons
NAWEC	National Water and Electricity Company
NDP	National Development Plan
OIC	Organization of Islamic Cooperation
OP	Office of the President
OVP	Office of the Vice President
PACD	Program for Accelerated Community Development
PAU	Policy Analysis Unit
PBF	Peace Building Fund
PBSO	Peace Building Support Office
PMO	Personnel Management Office
PMT	Project Management Team
PRF	Poverty Reduction Fund
PUDC	Emergency Community Development Programme, Senegal
SG	Secretary General
SPDCU	Strategic Policy, Delivery and Coordination Unit
SSR	Security Sector Reform
SWG	Sectoral Working Group
TBI	Tony Blair Initiative
TOR	Terms of Reference
TRRC	Truth, Reconciliation and Reparation Commission
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution
VNR	Voluntary National Review

Executive Summary

With financial support from the PBF, UNDP in collaboration with the Office of the President implemented an 18-month project with 1-year extension entitled ‘‘DSPD, Project’’- Support to The Office of the President.

The overall objective of the project was to ensure that Government policies and strategies have greater synergy and coherence and are better coordinated based on in-depth analysis and research essential to effectively guide and oversee the implementation of political and development reforms in The Gambia.

An important milestone of the project is to create a well capacitated entity that will ensure efficient delivery of government services and coordinated strategy decision making at the highest level. Furthermore, the project was informed by human rights and gender inequalities which continue to undermine our development endeavors. Suffice to say, the project was necessitated against the background of weak policy formulation, insistent slippages and reversals, and economic reforms failed to gain the traction it requires for sustained economic growth and poverty reduction.

This evaluation has four key objectives: which include assessing the contributions of the project in the realization of its objectives and targets; identifying the factors that affected the project’s contribution to the attainment of objectives; and drawing conclusions and recommendations for improving the contribution of the project.

At the end of the project, a Terminal Evaluation is undertaken to measure the outcome of the project against its intended objectives. The evaluation used a combination of methods in collecting the requisite information which include desk review, key information interviews and mail questionnaires. The questions were drawn from the Evaluation Matrix and the findings for each of the Evaluation Criterion are detailed as follows:

Relevance

The DSPD project is relevant to national development needs given that its objectives are consistent with priorities of the transitional and peacebuilding process of the country through the leadership of the Office of the President following the change of government in 2017. The project was a follow-action to an earlier UN jointly funded study to assess the capacity and mandate of the Policy Analysis Unit under the Office of the President. The project was participatory in that during its design, consultative meetings were held with all UN Agencies and some Diplomatic Missions including the EU and the British Embassy to sensitize them about the project aims and objectives. To some extent the project was informed by human rights and gender inequalities considerations particularly following the political impasse that was prompted by the 2016 Presidential election. The project also supported the vulnerable population and increased their social inclusion through the support given to NAATIP which resulted in The Gambia’s alleviation to level 2 of the State Department’s Watch List among others.

Effectiveness

The findings from the evaluation show that albeit there have been some delays at the beginning of the project; the project outcomes and outputs were achieved with more units created that were not envisaged and there were no cost over-runs. For example, the policy unit which was earlier targeted has expanded to include a delivery and coordination unit which will enhance the capacity of the OP to follow up on the various government sectors to deliver towards the NDP aspirations. evaluation of the project is conducted on time, at the end of the project; there were no cost over-runs. The project was implemented within the budget; Stakeholders have shown satisfaction in the implementation of the project as well as its performance. Therefore, the project is effective. The factors that underpinned the effectiveness of the project include, Government commitment in having the entity established and recruiting a Director General who was paid by Government, logistic support including a vehicle purchased by Government as well as an enabling environment for the smooth operation of the Department.,

Efficiency

Project outputs have largely been achieved within the resources allocated. With regard to the management of the funds, UNDP managed and disbursed the funds upon request from the project. However, the Plan to set up an online policy data base as a one stop shop could not be done though all the necessary information was collected through the policy mapping. With regard to the economic use of resources, the Project initially agreed to recruit 8 staff but after further negotiations with Government, 15 staff were recruited with the same amount that was to fund the 8 staff. An M&E system was also in place to support the implementation of the project. In this regard, the project was effective in its operations. All the activities embodied in the project work plans were executed and all the project resources were utilized as per the project closure combined delivery report.

Sustainability

To ensure sustainability, Government has absorbed all the 15 DSPD staff who were paid under the project to ensure continuity. UNDP built the capacity of the DSPD staff during the implementation of the project. Clear roles and responsibilities of the Department staff were formulated and in use. The project supported the establishment of robust reporting system to the top echelon through the formation of the economic council that hold regular meetings with the President. During the implementation of the project capacity building of the DSPD staff has also been given top priority, these are two of the most important pre-requisites for the sustainability of projects. Systems and processes were established during the project that will continue to function and will strengthened the role of the Unit as an analytical and advisory Directorate. Additionally, DSPD with the already enhanced capacities is coordinating the implementation of the Governance and Leadership Project in partnership with UNDP. The project provides policy capacity and support to sectors as well as institutionalizing the delivery mechanisms to ensure accountability by sectors.

Impact

The DSPD project brought significant changes in the well-being of individuals, Households and Communities through support to government sectors and agencies in the implementation of the NDP. One of these is through the policy reviews and guidance given to cabinet before the endorsement to sectoral policies. Specifically, the DSPD initiated the Program for Accelerated

Community Development (PACD) and provided significant technical inputs in the Government Food relief for COVID-19 pandemic. These are a few of the interventions by the project among a plethora of programmes that have directly enhanced the well-being of individuals, households and communities. The project also created the environment through the formation of the Economic Council that inform the President of the prevailing socio-economic situation in the country for immediate actions. There are many others; including the revitalization of the Permanent Secretaries' forum to enable high level policy discussions and reporting on progress in the implementation of the NDP. This process will in the long run enhance accountability and service delivery by sectors to improve the lives of the individuals and communities.

Responsiveness

The project was responsive to national priorities, additional request by national counterparts or shifts caused by natural disasters or evolving country context. The project was in response to the urgent need for high quality analytical and advisory function at the Office of the President so as to facilitate progress and sustained growth and development of the country. It also response to the coordination frameworks outlined in the national development Plan 2018-2021. Following the impasse of 2017, the country's security was threatened and apprehension was rife in the minds of the Gambians, the formulation and implementation of DSPD was therefore apt and timely. The project also contributed to the peacebuilding efforts of the country by co-hosting the PBF Secretariat staff and through participation for the establishment of the peacebuilding infrastructure. The lack of technical analysis, quality advisory services and overall coordination and development delivery at the level of the President's Office was to be addressed by the project which was done to some extent. The DSPD project also among others responded to the COVID-19 by actively involving in the Food Relief programme process for the vulnerable population affected by the pandemic.

Governance and Management Structure.

The non-functionality of the technical Working Group which was to provide technical inputs in the implementation of the project has challenged delivery to some extent. Additionally, the project Technical Adviser doubled as a project manager and spent most of his time at UNDP which also challenged delivery. However, the steering committee provided the requisite oversight in the implementation of the project.

Achievements, Challenges and Lessons learned

The achievements of the project include: the establishment of the Department of Strategic Policy and Delivery Unit ; a policy mapping exercise; conducting quarterly policy meetings in the form of a retreat for Permanent Secretaries to discuss key government policy issues; support to Cabinet office which included the institutionalization of the review of Cabinet Papers to ensure coherence and synergy; follow-up on implementation of Cabinet Decisions; providing expert advice and follow up of implementation of executive decision; development and implementation of the PUDC model; and hosting the Peace-building Secretariat. The DSPD, effectively integrated peacebuilding within the work of the unit; the Department's support to the President including advisory notes and briefs has led to the successful negotiation for a significant extension of the timeline for debt payment to the Government of India which has freed up resources for local

development.; and establishment of an Economic Council that meets regularly to advise the President on economic matters among others.

Challenges

The challenges include the following:

- There was an institutional wrangling as to the location of the project either in the Office of the Vice President (OVP) or at the President's Office (OP). It was eventually located at the OP causing a 6 months delay for project take off
- Security of tenure of office may affect the sustainability of DSPD, albeit the project staff have now been absorbed into Government for continuity and sustainability. By the same token keeping these staff on a lower salary (Special salary scale supported by UNDP vs government salary), may pose challenges to sustainability.
- Buy-in from other sectors: some sectors see the establishment of the unit as a threat rather than an entity that supports their work. This misconception had led to tension and lack of cooperation among some sectors

Lessons Learned

The lessons learned which details the positive and negative knowledge gained in the implementation of the DSPD aims at replicating the positives aspects and avoiding the negatives in future implementation of the project to enhance effectiveness, efficiency as well as build on the experience gained.

During the course of implementation of the project, the administration at OP changed frequently. A total of 4 Secretary Generals were appointed and each of them had a different perception and understanding of the project. A useful lesson learned in this regard was, staff turnover particularly at the executive can affect delivery. There has to be adequate and perennial briefing, sensitization and dialogue with top executives at every stage of project implementation to ensure that they all buy in the project implementation modalities and strategies.

One of the key functions of the DSPD is delivery which has an element of accountability, in the dispensation of their duties, some institutions reportedly united against the Department calling it names. This to some extent made DSPD unpopular and constrained to discharge its mandate. A lesson learned in this respect was some institutions accountable and not transparent for their actions. Therefore, political will has to be strong in ensuring transparency and accountability

The DSPD was asked to follow-up on all Presidential priorities including the review of business proposals. Most of the time, these proposals were not up to standard and by not recommending them for approval, the institutions concerned were terming the DSPD as a stumbling block to development. A useful lesson learned in this regard is, many institutions do not respect quality, transparency or lack capacities in the design of projects. Therefore, capacity building should be rolled out by DSPD in project design, implementation monitoring and evaluation for the benefit of the sectors among other.

Conclusions and recommendations

A key milestone of the DSPD project was to establish a well -capacitated entity that will ensure effective delivery of Government services and coordinated strategic decision making at the highest level. This milestone has largely been achieved. A considerable level of momentum has been generated and work is progressing diligently at the DSPD with some level of success in ensuring that Government policies and strategies have greater synergy, coherence and are better coordinated. Other achievements : include provision of support to the office of the President to ensure that the national development agenda is properly articulated, planned and implemented by relevant Ministries and government; bodies, technical Support to the Department of Planning, Ministry of Agriculture in the development and analysis of the assessment instruments for the National Agricultural Sample Survey (NASS) and Preharvest, preparation of summary of the 2019/2020 preharvest assessment report on the state of food Insecurity, support the Vice president office in the resuscitation of the National Food Security Council, supported the preparation of the Vice President for the launching of the Biennial Report of Disaster Risk Reduction during the next AUC head of State Submit in February 2020 in Addis Ababa, among others

Despite the afore-mentioned achievements, the project faced some challenges and important lessons have also been learned as follows: The challenges include institutional wrangling as to the location of the project either in the Office of the Vice President (OVP) or at the President’s Office (OP). It was eventually located at the OP causing a 6 months delay for project take off; and the delay in the recruitment of DPSD staff led to the extension of the project for a year among others.

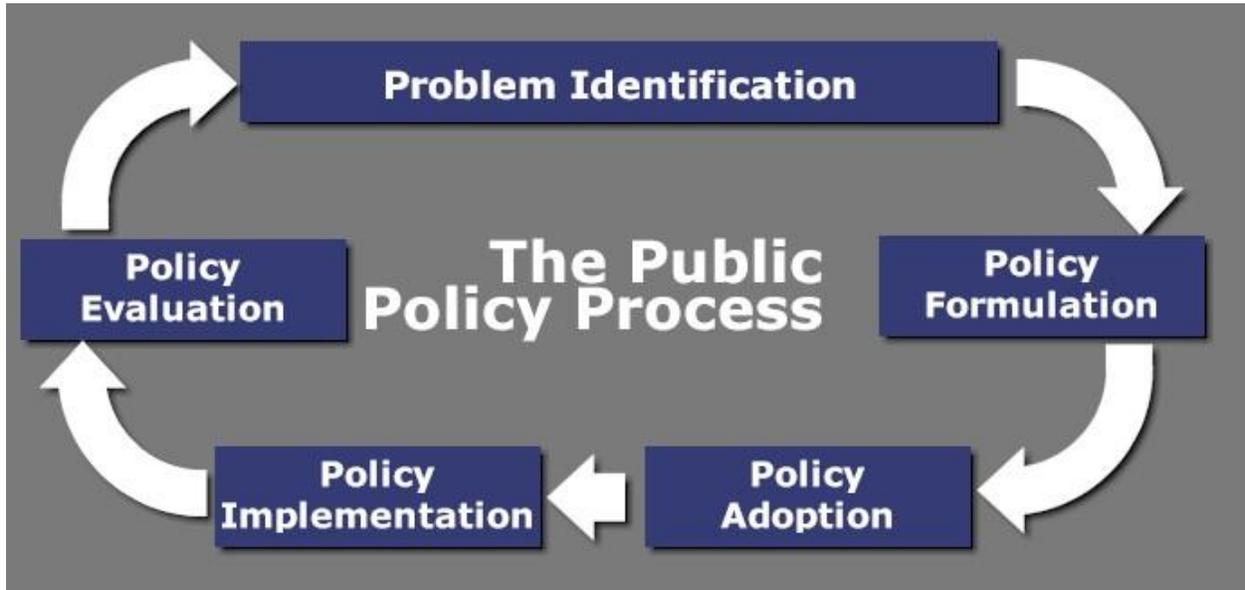
Recommendations

The recommendations which were informed by the evaluation findings include the following:

- There is a need for capacity building of the DSPD Staff and their full integration into normal OP activities. This will widen their learning experience and boost staff morale.
- UNDP funds were used as catalyst for support during the project and henceforth, Government should put in requisite capacity and funding to ensure sustainability of the project
- There is a need for government incentives to DSPD staff particularly training, capacity building and opportunities to participate in Statutory meetings which are relevant to their mandate such as the General Assembly, Committee on the Status of Women, Population Conferences etc which would enhance their exposure and give them the opportunity to create partnerships as the project phases out
- Consultation with all stakeholders to continue with a view to having more institutions buying in to facilitate the institutionalization of the project objectives
- The Department should continue to provide quality analytical work and advisory capacity in order to continue to command respect and value from all stakeholders including the President.
- there is a need for exhaustive consultation and consensus building within the Office of the President and relevant institutions for the smooth sustainability of the project

- Government needs to ensure that the mechanisms and systems out in place for policy support to sectors, as well as delivery and coordination mechanisms initiated are maintained and supported.
- There is need for continuous political will and support to the Department to continue the good work they are doing and for the staff to be motivated and encouraged in their work.
- DSP to continually strategize on effective collaboration with sectors to build synergies and complementarity, with support from the SG Office, where needed
- For smooth coordination with other sectors of government there is need to revisit the TOR of the Coordination Unit where necessary to see what work and what is not working or what is a duplicate.

PUBLIC POLICY PROCESS AT A GLANCE



Public Policies of any democratic Government are the building blocks for the preservation of security, social harmony, the legal system and sustained economic growth in the context of sustainable development among others. Strengthening these Policies will solve problems, effectively and efficiently serve and support Government institutions and encourage active citizenship.

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Demographic profile

The Gambia is a small West African with an estimated population of 2,335,507; (GBOS, 2018) with females constituting 51.2% of the total population. With a land size of about 11,000 square kilometers, the population density of the country is 212 persons per square kilometer, one of the highest in the sub-region. Although the majority of the population resides in the urban areas (54%), females constitute the majority of the rural population who have limited opportunities and access to finance for entrepreneurship development, political decision making and information services. About 59.6% of the population lived in urban cities and secondary towns in 2015, which was a substantial increase from the 28.4% recorded in 1980 (Economic Commission for Africa, 2017). The annual rate of urbanization is 3.7% (MOFEA, 2011), and with this pace, if unabated, 71.5% of the population will be city and town dwellers by 2025. The demographic changes are enormous, and it is estimated that by 2025 there will be significant increase in population. Also, about 45% shall be youth (15 to 30 years old) that will be living in the Greater Banjul Area (GBA) and secondary urban centers. This will naturally change policy focus and developmental efforts towards urban programming in The Gambia. It will also create new poverty and welfare challenges, widening gender inequality gaps including growing demands on reproductive care in both urban and rural localities and pressure on basic service in urban areas. Consequently, these issues have important implications for social protection policy and programming; and the Ministry should be geared to match-up.

1.2 Political, Legal and Economic profile

1.2.1 Political and legal context:

The Gambia's constitution of 1997 provides for participatory democracy, separation of powers, judicial independence and fundamental human rights. The country has a unicameral legislature with the National Assembly (Parliament) consisting of 58 members for a five-year term. The Gambia's laws include Acts of the National Assembly and subsidiary legislation made under said Acts, the common law and principles of equity, Customary law so far as concerns members of the communities to which it applies, the Sharia (which is applicable to over 95% of the population) as regards matters of marriage, divorce and inheritance among members of the communities to which it applies. The practice of Sharia in matters of inheritance among male and female siblings (and matters of marriages) are issues of concern, to some gender activist and not in sync with the principles of equity. The Ministry must recognize and operate within the trajectories of these legislations with caution to mitigate the negative aspects of culture in order to promote equality of women and men, girls and boys, to sustain stability and co-existence. The Gambian legal system is modelled on the English Legal system as it incorporates the Common Law, doctrines of equity and statute of General Application.

The 2016 Presidential Election ushered in Adama Barrow, an Independent candidate who led a coalition of seven political parties, won the December 2016 Presidential Election that removed former President Jammeh from power. The political impasse that followed led to former Gambian President, Yahya Jammeh, going into exile on 21 January 2017 but leaving behind a legacy of human rights abuses, serious economic and institutional challenges.

Notwithstanding the impasse that ensued after the Presidential Election, there was a peaceful transfer of power from former President Jammeh to President Adama Barrow. The country's dismal governance system in the Second Republic call for an urgent need for reforms to promote democratic governance, respect for the rule of law and human rights, socio-economic recovery, sustainable development and peace.

1.2.2 The Economy

The Gambia is among the Low-Income, Food Deficit Countries (LIFDC) of the world, and has a Human Development Index (HDI) estimated at 0.466 ranking the country 174 out of 189 countries in 2018. Gambia's value of the HDI is below the average of 0.507 for countries in the low human development group and below the average of 0.541 for countries in Sub-Saharan Africa. The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is estimated at US\$780 in 2019 (GBOS.) The main drivers of growth are services, contributing 58 percent to 61 percent of the GDP from 2013 to 2017 respectively; followed by the Agriculture Sector, which is the main source of livelihood for the majority of the population¹ contributing 24 to 27 percent to GDP within the same period; but predominantly subsistence with rice being the main staple food and groundnuts being the main cash crop. The tourism sector has contributed approximately 20 percent of GDP in 2016, and has been the largest foreign exchange earner. However, over the years remittances and international aid have played an important role in sustaining the economy. The main features of the economy are its small size and narrow market; and is little diversified relying mainly on agriculture, tourism, re-export trade. The country has a small export base, with groundnuts, cashew and fish as the main export commodities.

1.2.3 Employment

The number of smallholder farmers in The Gambia is estimated to comprise 43.1% of the population and 22.6% of the economy.² Smallholders in rural regions lack suitable access and integration to (local) markets making them vulnerable to recurring shocks, especially during lean seasons. Total employment in the agriculture sector is predicted to grow at a rate of 12.67% per annum by measured of structural adjustment in the sector through expansion of agro-based industrial development and appropriate mechanization of crop production to enable industrial development to absorb larger portion of available youthful Labour force³. The women are mostly involved in the informal sector of the economy.

The number of unemployed people in The Gambia is 234,725 (35.2 %), of which 129,792 are females (57.1 %) and 104,933 are males (42.9 %). More unemployed persons are living in the rural areas (76.6%) compared to the urban areas (23.4 %). There are 377,326 youths who are actively participating in the Labour force, of which 54.4% are males and 45.6% females. Youth unemployment rate is 41.5% (GLFS, 2018); and irregular migration to Europe is an undesirable phenomenon that The Gambia is grappling with. According to the European Union (EU), at least 14,735⁴ Gambians in 2016 have sought asylum in EU member countries, with 75% classified as economic migrants.

¹ 2016 Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Analysis.

² Vision 2016, Government of The Gambia.

³ Draft Agriculture and Natural Resource Policy, 2017

⁴ Eurostat: <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/news/themes-in-the-spotlight/asylum2016>

1.3 Poverty, Vulnerability and Inequality

1.3.1 Poverty Profile

Poverty levels remain quite high in The Gambia. It is estimated that 48% of the Gambian population live in poverty, that is the percentage of households living below the poverty line of \$US1.25 /day (WFP, 2018). An important feature of poverty in The Gambia is the female face that it wears as women constitute the majority of the poor and extremely poor, exacerbated by the fact they occupy a low socio-economic status. Poverty differentials among men and women are largely the result of women's limited access to productive assets such as land, credit and other support services. In the absence of laws or policies that explicitly redress these, women find themselves at a great disadvantage and will continue in a cycle of poverty.

1.3.2 Vulnerability

Forty per cent of people in The Gambia are considered 'working poor', meaning that their earning capacity and standard of living is inadequate even for meeting basic needs and the persons living with disabilities are more vulnerable to poverty. Literature showed that rural poverty is on the rise; and about 60% of the rural population were considered poor in 2003. This increased to 62.1% in 2010⁵ and 69% in 2016 (IHS report 2017); while 17.6 per cent were vulnerable to multiple deprivations in education, health, and broader standard of living (HDI 2013). Food insecurity disproportionately affects households residing in rural areas. Central River Region (CRR) is one of the regions found to have the highest number of food-insecure households in the country. The 2016 Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Analysis (CFSVA) report recorded 12 – 18% food insecure households in this region.

1.3.3 Inequality

Inequality is a prominent feature in Gambia's poverty profile. A measure of inequality within a country is calculated by the Gini index. The Gambia's assessment in 2015 showed a Gini coefficient of 35.9 points⁶, indicating a prevalence of income inequality. It further revealed that a greater proportion of the national income is eluding the poor. The poverty gap in The Gambia is widening, and a greater proportion of the nation's wealth is being concentrated in the hands of few. There is noticeable income inequality, which can be attributed to levels of education, employment and overseas remittances. Many households heavily rely on remittances from workers overseas. About 25 per cent of children between 5 and 17 years (mainly from poorer families) are involved in child labour⁷.

The country as a patriarchal society is characterized by gender inequality. Though slowly changing, gender inequality is still pervasive: The Gambia has a GII⁸ value of 0.594, ranking it 128 out of 148 countries in the 2012 index (HDI, 2013). The widespread inequality prompted the Government to focus more attention on women's empowerment through the gender policy and Women's Act, 2010. Although women play an active role in agriculture and the overall socio-economic development, their access to land and productive assets remains very limited due to discriminatory gender practices. Women and youth do access family lands for agricultural production, but they often do not own land. However, the

⁵ MDG Accelerated Framework MAF, 2010

⁶ GNAIP, 2019 to 2026

⁷ 2018 Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey Report

⁸ The Gender Inequality Index (GII) reflects gender-based inequalities in three dimensions: reproductive health, empowerment and economic activity.

government is highly committed to promoting gender equality and empowerment of women and girls, among its development goals. Gender-responsive budgeting was introduced as a tool for strengthening gender equality in development financing in The Gambia. A number of development partners, including the UN agencies are supporting these efforts.

1.4 Gender and Status of Women

Like the previous Administration, the current Government recognizes that sustainable economic and social development of the country requires full participation of women, men, girls and boys. However, studies including the Gender and Development Index of The Gambia and other anecdotal evidence show that in gender comparison, women continue to be economically marginalized as they are over-represented in the informal sector, are involved in unpaid care work and under-represented in economic decision making positions, and have limited or no access to productive resources such as land, credit, technology and information. They are also, subjected to sexual and gender based violence, harmful traditional practices such as female genital mutilation/excision (FGM), forced and early marriages that mostly go unreported; occupy only 10.3 percent of the parliamentary seats, are not represented among chiefs, constitute only 5.9% of elected councilors, and 21% of cabinet Ministers; and have lower literacy levels⁹. Women and girls continue to be disadvantaged due to socio-cultural norms and practices, as well as by discriminatory provisions in customary law. Girls aged 15-19 years are most at risk of practices such as early marriage (23.8 %). Although since 2015 a ban on FGM is in place, its incidence remains high (76% of female aged over 15), generating adverse effects on women's and girls' sexual and reproductive health¹⁰, among others. Cultural practices militate against women's control of cash income, thereby exacerbating household food insecurity.

With traditionally gender roles, women are generally involved in tasks that require dexterity and attention to detail as well as those closely associated with household responsibilities such as food preparation, cleaning and sorting, household water collection, use and management, sanitation and hygiene services (WASH), processing and storage, taking care of children of all ages, the sick and elderly, while men are involved in tasks that require physical strength. Social exclusion resulting to inequitable access to quality WASH is a concern, and affecting the lives of women and children (especially girls in learning institutions) and communities in hard-to-reach areas; and denying the populations of their rights to quality WASH. It is women's responsibility to process the local staple, which is a labour intensive process lasting for hours, in the absence of milling machines. Men primarily grow upland crops (cereals and legumes), while women predominate in growing low-land rice and vegetables.

For all value chains, women provide most of the labour needed such as planting, weeding, harvesting and post-harvest handling although they do not own the productive assets used and do not have decision making powers over the produce. Although some value chain activities are seen on the basis of gender, due to tradition, there is blurring of such roles owing to labour migration. Due to labour migration, women have assumed certain tasks that were traditionally considered to belong to men. In male headed households, both men and women have access productive resources but men control certain resources, particularly those belonging to them. Men in general are regarded highly as heads of households and they are traditionally considered as the breadwinners. As heads of households and as bread winners, men own high value assets such as land and cattle. Females are more disadvantaged than their male counterparts

⁹ The Gambia National Gender policy 2010 to 2020

¹⁰ The Gambia National Gender Policy 2010 to 2020

in terms of land ownership, access to equipment, markets and credit because of their social position. The position of females is aggravated as they increasingly become heads of households.

Women's participation in public decision making is limited. They are not represented among chiefs, all 44 of whom are men. Out of the total of 118 elected councilors, only 7 are women, constituting 5.9%. At the National Assembly level, the total number of elected representatives is 53, out of which 3 are female representing 6%. In cabinet, out of the 19 members, only 4 are women including the Vice President. Out of a total number of 20 judges in the superior courts, 10 are women and 22 out of the 42 magistrates in the subordinate courts are women (Women's Bureau 2019). Similarly, 6 out of the 11 Commissioners of the Constitutional Review Commission are women including the Vice President; and 2 out of the 5 Commissioners of the National Human Rights Commission are women including the Vice President and 4 out of the 11 Commissioners of the Truth, Reconciliation and Reparations Commission are women including the Vice President.

1.5. Policy Context

There are two types of Policies viz: Explicit and Implicit Policies which governs the administrative framework of countries and The Gambia is no exception. Explicit policies are principles, rules and guidelines formulated or adopted by an institution to reach its long-term goal typically produced in a booklet form (Maritza, 2011).

By and large, most policies promulgated in The Gambia are Explicit Policies and have been and continue to be used in guiding the implementation of sectoral and national programmes and strategies. Notwithstanding, the formulation and implementation of these policies have been fraught with challenges which tended to undermine their effectiveness and credibility. Among the challenges are: lack of up-to-date and reliable data, conflicting data on indicators among institutions pursuing the similar objective during policy formulation; sector or sub-sector policies are not always aligned to macro-level policies or sector-wide policies given rise to overlaps, gaps, conflicts and inconsistencies in policy formulation and implementation.

Policy development has also suffered from a fragmented policy-making process due partly to the wide array of Government Ministries that formulate policies that are neither central to, nor touch on, overall development of the country, and partly due to the absence of a rigorous model around which activities revolve inadequate policy harmonization particularly in objective setting leading to duplication of efforts; very few policies have been evaluated effectively; An awful lot of policies have also expired and yet to be renewed; policies sometimes developed without analysis of gaps, synergies and submitted for approval without consultation or peer review;;policy coordination lacking and drafts sometimes submitted for approval with overlaps in content, function and implementation arrangements among others.

Conversely, implicit policies which have largely been pronounced through Executive directives, have proliferated in The Gambia during the Second Republic. Arguably this type of policy is sometimes made out of sentiments, emotions or for political expedience. Typically, their pronouncements are not based on research findings and sound judgement. Suffice to say, they hardly go through any policy formulation continuum including Cabinet approval. There have been instances where public pressures have led to the revocation of these policies.

1.6 Project Description

This DSPD Support to the President's Office is a US\$ 500,000 Project funded by the Peace Building Fund and implemented by UNDP. The Project was meant to address gaps in the policy development continuum, and ensure long term timely formulation and momentum on policy development efforts. It was to help create a well capacitated and strategically placed entity that will ensure momentum on the reform and policy efforts as well as ensure efficient delivery of government services and coordinated strategic decision making at the highest levels. Such an entity will help to reinforce national leadership and ownership of the formulation and implementation of development policies.

Additionally, the project was to build the capacities of many different players across many sectors. The policy development process, (formulation, approval, strategy development, review and revision), will be strengthened. A key component of the project was to provide technical support to Cabinet sub-committees on policy review needs, as well as the need to strengthen technical advisory support to the Office of the President to enhance its management of the cabinet and Government apparatus. Also, capacity was to be strengthened to proactively and constantly scan the horizon of development to identify opportunities and risks necessitating new or modified policies, identify gaps and ensure policy coherence and alignment across policies and sectors. Line Ministries will be primarily supported with day-to-day issues regarding implementation of their respective sectoral policies and programmes thus overall coordination to ensure coherence and synergy will be the main function of the DSPD.

On the other hand, the peace building nexus of the project and the need for the DSPD was informed by a) recognizing that imperfect policy formulation process compounded by a plethora of Executive Directives was leading to inadequate and chaotic policies which were recipes for tension and conflict b) Lack of coordination and oversight aggravated by limited participation in the policy formulation process, was having unintended negative consequences within the governance structure and the Governed and c) all reforms required a mechanism that could provide strategic and analytical advice to the Presidency to inform policy decisions .As a result of the weak policy formulation, inconsistency, slippages and reversals, economic reforms have failed to gain the traction required for sustained economic growth.

1.7 Outcome of the Project

The overall outcome of the project was to ensure that Government policies and strategies have greater synergy and coherence and are better coordinated based on in-depth analysis and research essential to effectively guide and oversee the implementation of political and development reforms in The Gambia.

Moreover, based on the needs at the time of commencement of the project, the Government of The Gambia strategy was to have a strengthened strategic policy unit under the Office of the President, responsible for not only overall policy development, but also monitoring of implementation of government projects and programmes as well as coordination. Thus, the proposed Strategy Policy Unit was transformed into a Strategic Policy, Delivery and Coordination Unit (SPDCU) to provide policy advice to the government as well as help oversee the overall implementation of the National Development Plan (2018 – 2021).

1.8 Theory of change

The broad outcome of this project is: Government policies and strategies with greater synergy and coherence, and better coordinated based on in-depth analysis and research that is essential to effectively guide and oversee the implementation of political and development reforms in The Gambia.

The following is the theory of change for the project:

If the Office of the President's DSPD is provided with the appropriate capacity, policy research capabilities and resources for policy coordination, monitoring and evaluation and delivery to undertake political and economic reforms to support the political transition in The Gambia, and IF such an entity has the right authority and position to coordinate and guide the rest of Government Ministries and Departments on policy reforms and delivery; THEN the Government will be better placed to articulate consistent and coherent policies and strategies and to deliver on its national and development reform programme that is effectively coordinated to respond to public needs and that can be executed with proper delegation of responsibility and accountability.

It is anticipated that this Theory of change will be transformational so that policy formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation as well as delivery will continue to occupy center stage with eternal political will for the good of all Gambians The change will also ensure that the marginalized and right holders will have their rights fulfilled.

1.9 Results Framework

Specifically, the support to the Office of the President (SOP) Project has two outcomes namely, Strategy and Policy Unit set up in the office of the President and SPU structure clearly defines policy design and coordination, tasks and functions established within the Office of the President with a view to ensuring that policies have greater synergy and coherence and are better coordinated based on in-depth analysis and research. The Project has 4 outputs with a series of activities as well as a logical framework. However, baselines and targets for Outcome, Output and Processes indicators have not been fully identified due to lack of a baseline data. The non-conduct of a Baseline Survey prior to the implementation of the Project has thus constrained the indicator performance assessment.

1.10 Methodological Approach

This is a summative evaluation which documented delivery and achievement of results across objectives and targets. In the conduct of this evaluation, the following methodology was used in collecting requisite information.

1.10.1 Tools and Analysis Method

A number of tools have been used in collecting the requisite data for the evaluation and they are as follows:

1.10.1.1 Questionnaire for in-depth interview with the Project Management Team (PMT)

After a review of existing documentation on the results of the project against the set objectives and targets, an in-depth interview of the Key Informants, the Project Management Team and the PBF team at UNDP was undertaken.., Specifically, the interview solicited information on the performance of the indicators and the Evaluation criteria- relevance, effectiveness, efficiency sustainability etc.

The evaluation used the documentation on including, progress reports, activity reports, mission reports etc to solicited information on the achievements, challenges and way forward vis-à-vis the activity implementation, outputs and outcomes specified in the results framework. The findings of the Desk review and the information obtained from the interview have been triangulated to ensure consistency in the reporting the performance of the project

1.10.1.2 Semi-structured Questionnaire for the Stakeholders

The Stakeholders /Beneficiaries of the project which include Office of the President, Senior officials of the PBF, NATIP, GPA, Cabinet Office, Department of Strategy Policy and Delivery (DSPD), Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs, Personnel Management Office, Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare, Tony Blair Initiative (TBI) and Ministry of Interior among others. The questionnaire which was drawn largely from the Evaluation Matrix was mailed to these Stakeholders for completion. Overwhelming majority of the key respondents has completed the questionnaire.

1.10.2 Analysis Method

The type of data analysis method predicated on the type of information collected. Given that this evaluation is primarily collecting qualitative data, the data was analyzed using the 5-Steps Approach which is a manual way of analyzing qualitative data. The approach includes reviewing, organizing and tabulating data into themes which are based on responses to individual questions. The themes are used in the analysis of the questions.

1.11 Purpose of the Evaluation

Now that the DSPD Project has ended, an evaluation is being undertaken at the terminal end. Since the support project was designed for a duration of two years but started late and had to be extended for a year, a terminal evaluation is undertaken to assess project effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact on beneficiaries directly or indirectly. The evaluation ensured an all-inclusive approach involving stakeholder representation in key decision-making processes. This has helped in making sure that the evaluation is nationally owned, encompasses topics of national interest and has application in the wider national sphere. The evaluation is conducted purposely to:

- i) **To support greater accountability of the UNDP to stakeholders** the evaluation will enable the various stakeholders in the support project process, including PBSO and national counterparts and other partners, to hold the PMT and other parties accountable for fulfilling the aims and objectives.
- ii) **To support learning** – the evaluation must provide clear recommendations for strengthening project management and results at the country level, specifically informing the decision-making for the next UNDP project / programme cycle and subsequent PBSO projects. The UNDP, PBSO and the Government of The Gambia stakeholders should be able to learn from

the process of documenting good practices and lessons learned which can then be shared within and for the benefit of other countries.

This evaluation which reviewed delivery and achievement of results across project objectives has four-man objectives as follows:

1.12 Objectives

1. To assess the contribution project in the realization of project objectives and set targets;
2. To identify the factors that have affected the project's contribution, identifying, understanding and explaining the enabling factors and bottlenecks that influenced this contribution (learning).
3. To reach conclusions concerning the project's contribution across the scope being examined.
4. To provide actionable recommendations for improving the project's contribution, especially for incorporation into the new UNDP programming on promoting credible, transparent and sustainable electoral processes and management as well as inform the design and implementation of subsequent PBSO projects. These recommendations should be logically linked to the conclusions and draw upon lessons learned identified through the evaluation

1.13 Scope of the evaluation

The evaluation lasted for 30 working days. With regard to geographic coverage, even though the subject matter being evaluated affects the entire Gambian population, the evaluation is institutional and thus concentrated in the urban areas. Of the country. The evaluation also assessed the results framework of the project and by and large all the outcome indicators have been achieved.

1.14 Evaluation Criteria

A set of evaluation criteria for 1 UNDP project evaluations was used namely: Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Sustainability, Impact, Governance and Management Structures. Each of these criteria has specific questions which formed the basis of the data collection for the evaluation. During assessment, using the above criteria, the various factors that explain performance have been identified and instances where these factors have been identified as project outcomes they were considered as both results and enabling factors. The evaluation also made reference to: UNDP project designing principles, including gender, and responsiveness of the project.

1.15 Structure of the Evaluation Report

This evaluation report consists of 4 Chapters viz: Chapter one is an introductory Chapter; Chapter Two discusses the findings; Chapter Three highlights the Achievements, Challenges and Lessons learned and Chapter 4 is the final Chapter with Conclusions and Recommendations for the project.

A wealth of requisite information has been collected for this evaluation which we hope will meet the purpose of the evaluation and meet the information needs of the intended users.

Chapter 2: Findings

Below are detailed findings of the data collection based on the Evaluation Criteria viz: Relevance, Efficiency, Effectiveness, Impact and Sustainability among others.

2.1 Relevance

2.1.1 Project Objective consistency with Country Needs and National Priorities

The DSPD project is relevant to national development needs given that its objectives are consistent with priorities of the transitional and peacebuilding process of the country through the leadership of the Office of the President following the change of government in 2017. The Project was a follow-action to an earlier UN joint funded study to assess the capacity and mandate of the Policy Analysis Unit under the Office of the President. The Gambia has gone through a difficult authoritarian regime with severe repercussions in policy formulation, coordination and monitoring of development program and policies. This was aggregated by a long history of political interference in policy formulation and implementation. Therefore, ensuring coherence between the vision and the agenda for change through the implementation of effective policies, strategies, coordination, effective monitoring of implementation of programs which is a key milestone of the DSPD project, is vital to sustain the needed reforms for the new Government.

With regard to a national strategy on gender, the DSPD's objectives are consistent with the Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare's Gender and Women Empowerment Strategic plan (2021-2025) and the Gender and the Empowerment of Women Policy, 2010-2020. Both instruments provide strategic direction in the promotion of gender and the empowerment of women and girls. The former aims to promote gender justice and secure gender equality in all spheres of our society; respect for human rights, social justice and women empowerment. All programmes (including those of the state) are able to meet the needs and concerns of women, girls, boys and men in an equal manner. Also, populations are enabled to exercise equal rights to achieve equal well-being, influence and status.

Cognizance of gender mainstreaming as an important pre-requisite in achieving sustainable development. DSPD continue to provide support to the Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare on the formulation of gender and women empowerment policies and strategies to enhance gender development. The Department has also continued to advocate for gender sensitive policies to advance the course of development. There was no specific goal for gender mainstreaming in the project. However, in the recruitment of staff for the Project, efforts were made to have a gender balance. Subsequently, 5 out of the 15 staff were women holding the following positions: Director of Coordination; Senior Coordinator; Principal Policy Analyst; Senior Policy Analyst; and Delivery Analyst.

2.1.2 Human Rights and Gender

The project to some extent was informed by Human rights and gender analysis, even though the focus was to address the gaps in policy development continuum. Given that the project was a PBF intervention, human rights, peace and security consideration were made during project formulation particularly against the background of the political impasse in the wake of the 2016 Presidential Election. Nonetheless the project was also meant to create capacity at the center so as to adequately provide support to the PBF projects being implemented by the various government agencies, support and advise the SG who signs off on all projects as well as provide oversight during implementation. Hence the PBF secretariat was located within DSPD

2.1.3 Support to the Vulnerable for increased social inclusion

Among other, the Policy Analysis Unit of DSPD, is working with the Ministry of Women, Children and Social welfare to review the Persons with Disability Bill as well as the development of their Strategic Plan on Gender and the Empowerment of Women They held sessions with the Ministry towards the presentation of the Cabinet Paper after the relevant stakeholder consultation for submission to the committee for onward transmission to Cabinet to seek its approval. Additionally, the DSPD worked closely with the National Agency for Trafficking in Persons (NATIP) and other stakeholders including the Police Immigration etc. to formulate strategies and actions in order to address trafficking in persons. Over time several of the key issues were addressed and the State Department elevated The Gambia to level 2 on the US State Department's Watchlist. These efforts have undoubtedly helped the vulnerable and the often left behind section of the society by ensuring they are included in the society and given their rightful places within the necessary legal and policy framework

2.1.4 Project Contribution to Peace-building and social Cohesion

The Coordination Unit of DSPD is supporting the implementation of activities under Output 3 of the UNDP Consolidating Democratic Governance for Development Project (2019-2021). Output 3 focuses mainly on activities relating to Peace, Justice and Social cohesion. All activities under this Output are towards peace building and social cohesion. The Coordination Unit took part in the Conflict & Development Analysis (CDA) and its dissemination and played an important role in averting the planned demonstration by the students of the University of The Gambia DSPD is also working with the PBF Secretariat to coordinate the implementation of all PBF supported Projects in The Gambia.

2.2 Effectiveness

2.2.1 Project contribution to the UNDP Country Programme

The DSPD Project objectives are clear, practical and feasible. However, the effectiveness of the DSPD is premised on Schedule, quality, stakeholder satisfaction, cost and performance. The findings from the evaluation show that there have been some delays at the beginning of the project; the evaluation of the project is conducted at the end of the project; there were no cost over-runs. The project was implemented within the budget; Stakeholders have shown satisfaction in the implementation of the project as well as its performance. Therefore, the project is effective and also contributing to outcome 3 of the CPD which Consolidating Democratic Governance. The factors that underpinned the effectiveness of the project include, Government commitment in having the entity established and recruiting a Director General who was paid by Government, logistic support including a vehicle purchased by Government as well as an enabling environment for the smooth operation of the Department. The DSPD continued to coordinate the projects under the CPD including the PBF projects.

2.2.2 Effect of Unintended Results on development

The project did not encounter any major unintended results during the implementation that may negatively affect development. However, it should be noted that originally both the delivery and coordination components were not part of it but based on the Presidents need for oversight of government programmes and the fact that TBI was already supporting in this area, it was decided to have delivery as a component of the project. Coordination came in as a result of the Secretary General seeing the need for high level coordination to support the coordination role of MOFEA. Given their significance, these components which were considered as good avenues for conflict resolution, peace building and social cohesion, became an integral part of DSPD hence positively affecting the outcome of the project

2.3 Efficiency

The Project was efficient given that outputs were achieved within the allocated resources. Transaction cost on this project related mainly to UNDP GMS besides salaries and purchase of equipment. However, the Plan to set up an online policy data base as a one stop shop could not be accomplished albeit all the necessary information was collected through the policy mapping. For the management of the funds, UNDP managed and disburse the funds based on request from the Project. This mechanism was effective in making sure that procurement process was done adequately and on time. The Project was also extended by one year at no cost to Government or UNDP. Regarding the economic use of resources, the Project initially planned to recruit 7 Advisors and 1 Monitoring and Evaluation officer which was not accepted by Government. A new structure was created to support Policy Analysis with 8 staff. When the Coordination and Delivery were added to the functions of the project, the staff complement increased from 8 to 15 staff.at no additional cost. Moreover, all the activities embodied in the project workplans were executed and all the project resources were utilized as per the project closure combined delivery report Therefore, the project was efficient in its operations

With regard to M&E, the project has a Monitoring and Evaluation System which was marred by a lack of baseline data. However, the System was operational and executed by the M&E Specialist under the Office of the Resident Coordinator who is housed at the DSPD Office to monitor and ensure synergy between PBF Project as well as ensuring timely submission of reports.

The total funding for the project was US\$500,000 supported by the PBF The distribution of the budget include the following:: Expenditure on Output 1.1 relates to staff recruitment and salaries, purchase of office equipment, vehicle etc amounted to (US\$198,103); Output 1.2 expenditure include , Stakeholders Workshop on Policy mapping outcomes, creation of an online data base , policy documentation centre and Study Tour to learn Best Practices; and the budget for Output 1.3 include, the development of an M&E Framework, Setting up Sector Performance Delivery Indicator, Setting up and operationalizing the Sector Performance Dashboard etc (US\$67,290).

2.4 Sustainability-Continuation of the Project benefits

Given that the new dispensation has committed itself to results which is also underpinned by effective coordination of policies and programmes, a key function of the DSPD, one can surmise that an enabling environment has been created to ensure the sustainability of the DSPD. To this end, Government has absorbed the 15 Project staff who were paid by UNDP to ensure financial sustainability. Systems and processes were established during the project that will continue to function and strengthened the role of the Unit as an analytical and advisory Directorate Nonetheless, there has to be political commitment at the highest level. This could be done through legal and policy frameworks to ensure sustainability in the role, staffing and funding and programme framework. During the implementation of the project capacity building of the DSPD staff has also been given top priority, these are two of the most important pre-requisites for the sustainability of projects. Additionally, DSPD with the already enhanced capacities is coordinating the implementation of the Governance and Leadership Project under UNDP. The project provides policy capacity and support to sectors as well as institutionalizing the delivery mechanisms to ensure accountability by sectors, moreover the Project supports. However, the expressed concern of staff who enjoyed higher salaries under UNDP contract are now being paid less by Government and this may affect the security of tenure.

2.5 Impact

Changes in the well-being of Individuals, Households and Communities

The DSPD brought changes in the well-being of Individuals, households and communities through support in the implementation of the NDP which the project continues to support in the areas of Policy formulation, Monitoring implementation delivery as well coordinating the intervention of development partners. Through the Permanent Secretaries' Retreat. Specifically, the DSPD initiated the Program for Accelerated Community Development (PACD) and provided significant technical inputs in the Government Food Relief for the COVID-19 pandemic. The project also created the environment through the formation of the Economic Council that inform the President of the prevailing socio-economic situation in the country for immediate actions. There are many more including: revitalization of the PS's forum to enable high level policy discussions and reporting on progress in the implementation of the NDP, and supporting the MOFEA in the operationalization of the Sector Working Group. Also, the DSPD conducted a retreat of sub-vented institutions with a view to aligning them to national priorities; briefs for the President; review of budget process and provision of opinion on the budget for the President, initiation of the Economic Forum, Support to the cabinet office etc. Overall, the DSPD brought about increased synergy, coherence and consistency in policies and reduce overlaps among the various Ministries, Agencies and Department. It also created an enabling environment for access to the President, SG and Cabinet which is important in the execution of their duties

2.6 Responsiveness

Project Response to national priorities

The DSPD project was in response to the urgent need for high quality analytical and advisory function at the Office of the President so as to facilitate progress and sustained growth and development of the country. It also response to the coordination frameworks outlined in the national development Plan 2018-2021. In this respect, the project responded to national priorities and to additional request by Government institutions or shifts caused by national disasters and evolving national context which have always taken center-stage during the implementation of the project. For, example, the project contributed to the peace building efforts in the wake of the impasse that followed the 2016 Presidential Election in which the country was threatened with lots of apprehension in the minds of Gambians, therefore the DSPD which was informed by peace and security was apt and timely. The Department also responded to the Food Relief Programme for the vulnerable population affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. Other initiatives undertaken include technical Support to the Department of Planning, Ministry of Agriculture in the development and analysis of the assessment instruments for the National Agricultural Sample Survey (NASS) and Pre-harvest, preparation of summary of the 2019/2020 preharvest assessment report on the state of food Insecurity, support the Vice president office in the resuscitation of the National Food Security Council, supported the preparation of the Vice President for the launching of the Biennial Report of Disaster Risk Reduction during the next AUC head of Sate Submit in February 2020 in Addis Ababa, technical support to NAWEC planning department by training staff on the use of GIS to design Electricity Network of NAWEC, liaison with FAO to support government on the provision of Postharvest equipment's to be implemented through the PACD programme, coordinating preparations for the international investment forum on the NDP in Spain.

2.5.6 Governance and Management Structures

The absence of a technical working group to provide technical inputs for the project affected delivery. The provision of the necessary management support e.g. Project Manager a project vehicle and driver as well as equipment and furniture promoted delivery. However, the project Technical Adviser at a point in time was doubling as a Manager who spent part of his time supporting the Ministry of finance on other UNDP funded projects.

Also consistently there had been misunderstanding from the management of DSPD on the project implementation modality. The project was DIM meaning UNDP was the implementing institution and not NIM national implementation. Demands from DSPD to do things by themselves at times led to tensions. Government officials need to understand the different implementation modalities and abide by them.

Chapter 3: Achievements, Challenges, and Lessons Learned

During the implementation of the DSPD project, the following achievements, challenges and recommendations have been registered:

3.1 Achievements

This Terminal Evaluation assesses the DSPD outcomes against its intended objective. Below are the achievements registered during the implementation of the project.

The Department of Strategic Policy and Delivery (DPSD) has been set with a clear Concept Note and Terms of Reference delineating the tasks and functions of the Unit and outlining the unit's organizational structure within the Office of the President; the new unit; its mandate and objectives has been presented to and approved by the President, and Cabinet. The Staff of the Department are providing support to the office of the President to ensure that the national development agenda is properly articulated, planned and implemented, by relevant ministries and government bodies. The department is working closely with Ministries to agree on timelines and key milestones for delivering on priority projects and/or reforms while working closely to ensure that these are implemented. Implementation is mainly through coordinating across government and partner agencies if necessary and unblocking any obstacles through using the authority of the Office of the President. Furthermore, the unit has formed a National Economic Council that meets with the President fortnightly to brief him on economic policy issues as well as discuss strategic economic policy.

Furthermore, DSPD accomplished the following: technical Support to the Department of Planning, Ministry of Agriculture in the development and analysis of the assessment instruments for the National Agricultural Sample Survey (NASS) and Preharvest, preparation of summary of the 2019/2020 preharvest assessment report on the state of food Insecurity, support the Vice President office in the resuscitation of the National Food Security Council, supported the preparation of the Vice President for the launching of the Biennial Report of Disaster Risk Reduction during the next AUC head of State Submit in February 2020 in Addis Ababa, technical support to NAWEC planning department by training staff on the use of GIS to design Electricity Network of NAWEC, liaison with FAO to support government on the provision of Postharvest equipment's to be implemented through the PACD programme, coordinating preparations for the international investment forum on the NDP in Spain.

More than 9 cabinet papers have been reviewed by PAU this year before the meeting with the Cabinet Paper Review Committee, e.g.: National Public Buildings and Facilities Policy (Ministry of Transport, Work and Infrastructure), Gambia Maritime Administration Fees and Charges (Ministry Transport, Work and Infrastructure), Levy on Freight for Ship-owners (Ministry of Transport, Work and Infrastructure), Persons with Disabilities Bill (Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare).

Regarding Coordination of policy development and implementation, the Unit is actively engaged in the committees of the following Ministries: Ministry of Trade, Industry, Regional Integration & Employment (Trade Facilitation Committee and Industrial Support Committee); Ministry of Health (Health Financing Committee and National Health Insurance Committee), Ministry of Women, Children & Social Welfare (Women's Enterprise Development Fund). The unit did two policy papers on the COVID 19; the first being a policy analysis and scenario building on the potential impact on COVID-19 and the other being

a policy paper on the impact of the lockdown, particularly the impact of the closure of the weekly markets called Luomos¹¹.

Support to the Presidency including the following: Brief for the Indian President Visit (October 2019), Presidential Speech for the Russia Africa Summit (October 2019), Brief on the Meeting with the Turkish President (January 2020), Brief for Vice President for Tokyo International Conference for African Development (August 2019), Presidential Budget Statement for the Supreme Institutions (November 2019). Also, the unit facilitates and act as secretariat to high-level meetings of Permanent Secretaries, chaired by the Secretary General including the PS Retreat and the Senegalo-Gambia Presidential Council Technical Committee.

The DSPD provided strategic support to Statutory meeting including providing support to the Office of the Vice President during the United Nations General Assembly and on the Commission on the Status of Women. The unit also provided support to the newly created Ministry for Women, Children and Social Welfare in the formulation of their strategic plan.

The Policy Unit provided advise on the production of a budget policy statement in line with the President's priorities to begin the budget process; indicating priorities for the budget for the following year to guide the work of MoFEA and Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) in the budget drafting process. The unit represents the Office of the President in the budgetary process, including MDA bilateral meetings, so that the Presidential priorities and Cabinet resolutions are factored in the budget.

A donor mapping exercise and partnerships with MoFA and MoFEA: is on-going, the unit is embarking on a donor mapping exercise to set strategic alignment of donor programs/interventions and government priorities to prevent duplication and under funding in sectors across Government. During the consultation, we also engaged partners to identify funding opportunities that are available for the country and follow up on pledges and promises made to support Gambia's development aspirations.

The coordination unit is also embarking on a stakeholder consultation with MDAs mandated to mobilize resources for the NDP and to that end, met with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Gambians Abroad, to discuss strategies and agreed on a framework to follow-up on promises and pledges made to the Gambia during the Brussels conference. The unit also coordinated the National Business Council for the Business Environment Reform and scheduled a donor mapping engagement with all bilateral partners, but it is currently postponed due to the Coronavirus. The unit made a courtesy visit to the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs and introduced DSPD and Coordination Unit in particular. The team was headed by the Director General, who gave a brief introduction about the department. The Permanent Secretary of Finance welcomed the DSPD team and assured the team that his office is ready to work with the department to realize the NDP. He further requested that the Directors of the two institutions meet regularly, at least once a month to exchange ideas and establish areas of collaboration. The Unit produced the first Business Bulletin on the implementation of the NDP.

The coordination Unit is also a member of the VNR (Voluntary National Review) Steering Committee together with Ministry of Finance to coordinate the reporting of VNR process (stock-taking on the implementation status of the SDGs in The Gambia). The unit has been part of the regional consultation team together with other stakeholders to assess the stock of achievements made on the SDGs/NDP, level of awareness on these development agendas and will be playing a leading role together with Directorate of Development Plan under the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs

¹¹ Weekly Local Open market

Lessons drawn from the successful implementation of the Emergency Community Development Programme (PUDC) in Senegal have helped the DSPD in identifying four Presidential priorities (drawn from NDP) which have been developed and are being implemented using the PUDC model. This will undoubtedly help to improve access to basic social services for the rural population by building socio-economic infrastructure, promote the involvement of local actors in the economic and social development in collaboration with the United Nations Development Program.

The Peace-building Secretariat is integrated within the DSPD, effectively integrating peace building within the work of the unit. In its role the unit works with the Office of National Security to facilitate the Security Sector Reform (SSR) process supporting the formulation of the SSR policy and supporting the different security establishments and develop their respective strategic plans derived from the SSR Policy. The unit also participated in the Conflict and Development Analysis (CDA) in which social inequality and lack of access to basic social amenities and services were identified as key drivers of conflict. The Unit has coordinated the development of new projects based on the outcome of the CDA. The DSPD also mediated a consensus between the Faculty Staff and Administration Staff of the University of the Gambia which prevented a possible demonstration and disturbance in the educational system.

3.2 Challenge and Lessons Learned

3.2.1 Challenges

- Timeliness: Project started without staff resulting in all the project activities condensed and implemented within 12 months leaving little time for capacity building.
- There was an institutional wrangling as to the location of the project either in the Office of the Vice President (OVP) or at the President's Office (OP). It was eventually located at the OP causing a 6 months delay for project take off.
- The number of project staff set at 8 was increased to 15 initially posed a challenge to sustainability.
- Security of tenure of office may affect the sustainability of DSPD. The project staff have now been absorbed into Government to ensure financial sustainability. By the same token keeping these staff on a lower salary (UNDP supported salary scale vs government salary). may pose challenges
- The delay in the recruitment DSPD staff led to the extension of the project for a year this was compounded by the late start of the project
- Frequent changes in leadership within the SG Offices bringing with it changes in vision that delayed implementation at the start of the project. Typically, the new leadership needed to familiarize, understand and buy in to the project.
- Difficulties experienced in appointment of the staff immediately as the project is about to end and an extension has not been secured yet.
- Some respondents felt that the Project duration is too short to fully accomplish its intended objectives.

3.2.2 Lessons Learned

The lessons learned which details the positive and negative knowledge gained in the implementation of the DSPD aims at replicating the positives aspects and avoiding the negatives in future implementation of the project to enhance effectiveness, efficiency as well as build on the experience gained.

DSPD as an entity located within the corridors of power with direct access to the top executive amply demonstrate high level political commitment to the institution and its mandate. Additionally, the role of the Department which includes, reviewing s documents such as Cabinet Papers, policies, programmes and strategies has created an enabling environment for greater transparency, accountability and probity in the policy and programme environment of the new Government. The positive lesson learned in this regard is high-level political commitment to interventions like DSPD can also improve Governance through transparency and accountability.

During the course of implementation of the project, the administration at OP changed frequently. A total of 4 Secretary Generals were appointed and each of them had a different perception and understanding of the project. A useful lesson learned in this regard is, staff turnover particularly at the executive level can affect delivery. There has to be adequate and perennial briefing, sensitization and dialogue with top executives on every stage of project implementation to ensure that they all buy in the project implementation modalities and strategies.

One of the key functions of the DSPD is delivery which has an element of accountability some institutions reportedly united against the Department calling it names. This to some extent made DSPD unpopular and constrained to discharge its mandate. A lesson learned in this respect is some institutions despise being accountable for their actions its only strong political commitment that would ensure success in these endeavors.

The DSPD was asked to follow-up on all Presidential priorities including the review of business proposals. Most of the time, these proposals were not up to standard and by not recommending them for approval, the institutions concerned were terming the DSPD as a stumbling block to development. A useful lesson learned in this regard is, many institutions do not respect quality, transparency or lack capacities in the design of projects. Therefore, capacity building should be intensified by DSPD in project design.

4.0 Conclusions and Recommendations

4.1 Conclusions

A key milestone of the DSPD project was to establish a well -capacitated entity that will ensure effective delivery of Government services and coordinated strategic decision making at the highest level. This milestone has largely been achieved. A considerable level of momentum has been generated and work is progressing diligently at the DSPD with some level of success in ensuring that Government policies and strategies have greater synergy, coherence and are better coordinated. Other achievements : include provision of support to the office of the President to ensure that the national development agenda is properly articulated, planned and implemented, by relevant Ministries and government; bodies, technical Support to the Department of Planning, Ministry of Agriculture in the development and analysis of the assessment instruments for the National Agricultural Sample Survey (NASS) and Preharvest, preparation of summary of the 2019/2020 preharvest assessment report on the state of food Insecurity, support the Vice president office in the resuscitation of the National Food Security Council, supported the preparation of the Vice President for the launching of the Biennial Report of Disaster Risk Reduction during the next AUC head of State Submit in February 2020 in Addis Ababa, among others Despite the afore-mentioned achievements, the project faced some challenges and important lessons have also been learned

4.2 Recommendations

- There is a need for capacity building of the DSPD Staff and their full integration into normal OP activities. This will widen their learning experience and boost staff morale.
- UNDP funds were used as catalyst for support during the project and henceforth Government to put in requisite capacity and funding to ensure sustainability of the project
- There is a need for Government to provide training and other travel opportunity to maintain staff as the project phases out. Leadership matters and Political will is important in this regard
- The directorate should continue to provide quality analytical work and advisory capacity in order to continue to command respect and value from all stakeholders including the President.
- Consultation with all stakeholders to continue with a view to having more institutions buying in to facilitate the institutionalization of the project objectives
- there is a need for exhaustive consultation and consensus building within the Office of the President and relevant institutions for the smooth sustainability of the project
- Government needs to ensure that the mechanisms and systems out in place for policy support to sectors, as well as delivery and coordination mechanisms initiated are maintained and supported.
- There is need for continuous political will and support to the Department to continue the good work they are doing and for the staff to be motivated and encouraged in their work.
- Government should maintain the qualified staff recruited
- Activities like the PS forums and consultative dialogue with the President through the Economic Council should be given top priority
- Coordination Unit TOR to be re-defined to ensure clarity and avoid duplication of efforts within Government sectors

- Now that the project has ended, Government needs to keep the momentum on the gains made by DSPD and with political will to sustain and enhance the impact of the project particularly the Reform process
- As indicated in the introductory chapter, so many policy decisions were not evidenced-based, or even the explicit policies, some have limited or no data for their objectives and targets. In this regard, Sectors should fully institutionalize the use of data in their policies.
- DSPD to define the key operational modalities and develops a realistic capacity develop plan that will enable the Department to be sustained
- DSP to continually strategize on effective collaboration with sectors to build synergies and complementarity, with support from the SG Office, where needed

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