



**Statement by His Excellency, Mr. Adama Barrow
President of the Republic of The Gambia
at the**

Second Stake in the Nation Forum (SNF2)

(Delivered by the Vice President, H.E. Mr. Ousainu A.M.N. Darboe)

Theme:

Improving Implementation, Delivery and Impact

Date: 12th January 2019

Coco Ocean Resort & Spa, The Gambia

Honourable Speaker of the National Assembly,
Honourable Cabinet Ministers,
Secretary General and Head of The Civil Service,
Honourable Members of the National Assembly,
Members of the Diplomatic and Consular Corps,
Religious Leaders here present,
Chairman of the Public Service Commission
Chairman of the Independence Electoral Commission,
Members of the Media Fraternity,
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

His Excellency the president has asked me to extend to you his warmest greetings. He has also asked me to convey to you that he has a great passion for the ‘Stake in the Nation Forum’, and that the thematic subjects that are being discussed here today are very central to his policy, in his bid to create a better Gambia; because of circumstances that are beyond his control he could not personally be present here, which he really regrets. He has nonetheless asked me to deputise for him and to deliver on his behalf, the keynote address, and I now proceed to do so.

It is with great pleasure for me to be part of this Second Stake in the Nation Forum, which is adopted by my government as a platform for engagement with the diaspora on matters of national development. You all may have noticed that these days, I do not speak for long without mentioning the National Development Plan. And this I do because it is this plan that embodies our collective aspirations as Gambians. It is a truism that those who fail to plan are planning to fail. And by this therefore, our formulation of the National Development Plan is to express our desire that in post-dictatorship Gambia, we do not want to fail; we must not fail;

we cannot fail; we will not fail. We cannot because it is my expectation that we as a people will do it well and we will deliver.

This forum, SNF2, provides us the opportunity to promote conversation not only among ministries, departments and agencies, but also with the diaspora around the elements that are vital and crucial to the socioeconomic development of our beloved country The Gambia. The forum is an extension of my government's communication strategy to inform ourselves what has been done and achieved and how we can accelerate action towards achieving our developmental goals.

I note with appreciation the plans to make the SNF2 as interactive as possible through the various workshops that will be facilitated by subjects or thematic area specialists and practitioners. I am confident of the very useful or rich outcomes that will emerge from the exchanges. I would like to encourage all of you to focus on producing practical suggestions and recommendations for action. In time the NDP website will have a dashboard summarising progress, achievements and outstanding actions. Your views and recommendation will undoubtedly be useful to what the dashboard would say about the quality of our collective endeavour.

Your Excellences, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, for me I am encouraged that progress has been steady and good since the launch of the NDP in May 2018. And thanks to the collaboration of our partners, including notably the European Union, we have now raised a substantial percentage of the 2.4 Billion US Dollars needed for the NDP. Of this amount, over 50 percent is in the form of grants, 46 percent concessional loans and 4% technical assistance. We are grateful to the partners, donors and friends of The Gambia and we would like to assure them that through the NDP implementation, one of the achievement outcomes will

be to be become less donor reliant. By this I mean, in the future, we will be able to generate our own resources, financial and/or technical, to meet our own demands for new roads and bridges, and be able to provide more scholarships for medical training and engineering; or supporting the vulnerable, including distressed migrants in the diaspora.

At all times my government will persevere at enabling the operational environment to make everyone feel good, assured and measured. My government will speed up the required public sector reform, so that the civil service is fit for the purpose of national developmental transformation. We aim to reverse the maladministration and dysfunction caused by two decades of dictatorship. This is one of the different ways through which we can ensure that NDP implementation will be efficient, productive and impactful.

Infrastructure-led development is an enabling strategy which includes the construction of roads, ports and drainage facilities; electricity, water and irrigation installations; cold stores, silos and mills; fast and reliable telephone and internet connections. As a country on a road to developmental transformation, we need every enabling facility to become readily available and affordable.

Another enabler of our development is diaspora-development. As a matter of fact the NDP recognises the Gambian diaspora as one of the critical enablers of national development. It is in recognition of this, that we refer the diaspora as the Eighth non-resident region or estate. As Professor Gibril Faal once said *"the diaspora as the Eighth region makes up 7 to 8 percent of the population but they are responsible for 20 to 30 percent of the GDP, representing a very high level of productivity."* If the rest of the economy has the same level of productivity then

GDP of the Gambia will be worth more than double in its current value. In mathematical terms, diaspora productivity is a function of strong work culture and smart work attitude amongst others. This is something we need to emulate here in the Gambia.

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen before I conclude I want to again recognise the ‘Migration and Sustainable Development in The Gambia’ (MSDG) project, which is the first formal Diaspora Technical Cooperation Programme between the Government of The Gambia and our diaspora development experts. I look forward to many more similar formations through which diaspora technical support and cooperation could be channelled to The Gambia. I take this opportunity to thank the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation and GK Partners for co-financing the pilot MSDG project that I was reliably informed was successfully implemented.

I would like to repeat our thanks and gratitude to the government of Switzerland and also to Professor Faal and his team at GK partners. It is my honour and pleasure to launch MSDG2, a 4-year Technical Cooperation Programme, which focuses on a wholesale implementation of the diaspora strategy commitments.

GK Partners, Gambia Government and the Swiss Government have renewed their commitments and we look forward to the successful completion of discussions for co-financing from the European Union and other agencies and institutions.

It is now my privilege to open the Second Stake in the Nation Forum, and to announce that the Third Stake in the Nation Forum (SNF3) will be on Saturday, 11 January 2020. I wish you well in your discussions today, and I thank you all.