



Republic of The Gambia
Zero Hunger Strategic Review
2018

A National Guide to Achieving Sustainable Development
Goal 2 by 2030



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1. Foreword

In September 2015, the Government of the Republic of The Gambia along with the rest of the world united and made history when world leaders pledged themselves to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, through its 17 Global Goals. The new goals within the broader sustainability agenda, address the interconnected root causes of poverty and the universal need for sustainable development that leaves no one behind. Sustainable Development Goal 2 (SDG 2) which is the focus of this Zero Hunger Initiative calls upon member States to “End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture” by 2030.

In line with this universal call to action and the requirement for all Governments to take ownership and establish national frameworks for the implementation and achievement of the 17 Goals, the Government of The Gambia with technical and financial support from the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP), the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), undertook a Strategic Review of SDG2. The Zero Hunger Strategic Review (ZHSR) which was independently led by a lead convener, Mr. Musa Mbenga and a research team, adopted a cross country participatory approach aimed at analysing the situation of hunger, food and nutrition security and agriculture in the country and the extent to which current policies and programmes address the challenges being faced, the factors contributing to these challenges and the changes/reforms required to meet the global SDG 2 targets.

Since coming into power in 2017, His Excellency Adama Barrow and Government have been committed to the development priorities of the “New Gambia” clearly outlined in its National Development Plan 2018 – 2021 (NDP). Efforts have been made to align the NDP with the SDGs demonstrating Government’s commitment to the realization of the goals and targets enshrined in the Agenda 2030. Therefore, the recommendations and road map from this Zero Hunger Report will be integrated into the country’s development plan of action.

Furthermore, ending hunger in The Gambia by 2030 will undoubtedly require the active participation of the youth population who are the future of this nation. In a country where a disproportionate number of young people risk their lives to cross the Mediterranean in search for a better life, addressing the issue of migration cannot be overemphasized. The youth population played a crucial role in the choice of a peaceful path away from authoritarian rule a year ago.

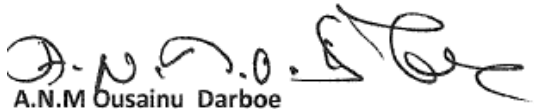
The Agenda 2030 and the SDGs also offers an opportunity for ground-breaking reforms in gender equality and women’s empowerment and addressing the challenges faced by women and girls. The SDGs cannot be achieved if the tangible and intangible challenges faced by so many women around the world are not addressed. Keeping gender equality and women’s empowerment at the forefront of development efforts is therefore crucial towards the sustainable development path.

I am therefore, pleased to present this report which provides Gambia’s status on the above and demonstrates its readiness and commitment to localize the Agenda 2030. The government acknowledges the priority actions identified and welcomes the useful recommendations of this strategic review.

I want to seize this opportunity to thank all Government departments, development partners, academia, civil society and the private sector whose participation in this initiative was highly appreciated. I look forward to strengthened collaboration and partnerships as we move from this planning phase towards full implementation.

Specifically, I would like to appreciate the United Nations World Food Programme for its generous technical, strategic and financial support throughout the review process, and in the production of this report.

I, as chair of the ZHSR Advisory Board, call upon you all, to embrace the recommendations highlighted in this report and support the Gambia towards the realization of Zero Hunger by 2030.



A.N.M Ousainu Darboe

Vice President & Minister for Women's Affairs
The Republic of The Gambia

2. Acknowledgement

I would like to express my most sincere thanks to Her Excellency Fatoumatta Jallow Tambajang, Vice President and Minister of Women's Affairs for her leadership during the Zero Hunger Strategic Review. Without her devotion and dedication to the process, we would not have achieved the objectives. Her leadership helped the research team to have access to a wide range of information while receiving acceptance among ministries and the development sector. The Directorate of Development Planning at the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs also provided tremendous support during this process.

Our gratitude and appreciation go to members of the Advisory Board who, despite their busy schedules, found time to support the Vice President in her capacity as the Chair of the Strategic Review, and to provide constructive observations and feedback on the findings of the Review. In particular, we would like to mention the Ambassadors of the United States and the Emirate of Qatar, the Vice Chancellor of the University of the Gambia, the Country Directors of international Civil Societies, and the President of the Gambia Chamber of Commerce and Industry

This review would not have been possible without the financial and operational support that we received from the World Food Programme, and for the guidance we received from the organization throughout the process. The UN Resident Coordinator demonstrated leadership and commitment throughout the review, and she backed this up by enabling her staff to provide valuable technical support each step of the way, including information and documentation relevant to the Sustainable Development Goals, in general, and SDG 2 specifically. We are grateful for this assistance, and for the active participation of UN staff in all the instances of the review process. Finally, our appreciation also goes to the Country Directors/Representatives of WFP, FAO, UNICEF and UNDP for contributing valuable time and resources to the review.

Mr. Musa Saihou Mbenga.
Lead Convener of the Zero Hunger Strategic Review

Executive Summary

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), also known as the Global Goals, are a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure global citizens enjoy peace and prosperity. SDG 2 aims to end all forms of hunger and malnutrition by 2030, making sure all people have access to sufficient and nutritious food all year round and promote sustainable agriculture. In this effort, the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP), FAO, UNICEF and UNDP prioritized support to the Gambia Government through the National Zero Hunger Strategic Review (ZHSR). This is an initial step aimed at identifying actions needed to achieve the SDG 2 targets.

The main objective of the review is to identify the challenges required to achieve the "zero hunger" goal in The Gambia by 2030. More specifically, it:

- Provides a comprehensive understanding of the programmes and policies that impact food security, nutrition, social protection and gender in The Gambia.
- Identifies actions and gaps in relation to food security and nutrition in The Gambia;
- Proposes actionable recommendations for government and development partners and provide a National Zero Hunger Roadmap to help the country meet its goals by 2030.

The review was undertaken from April to December 2017 by a team of researchers in the fields of gender, agriculture, food security, nutrition, social protection and macroeconomic policy framework and was led by Mr. Musa Saihou Mbenga, the lead Convener. The methodology involved a desk review of literature, country-wide consultations with a diverse set of stakeholders, including public institutions/ministries, NGOs and UN agencies.

While there have been reviews conducted in the country on the thematic areas, this review is the first of its kind to focus on assessing how the country can reach the targets under the new global framework. It encompasses a cross-dimensional analysis of the relevant thematic areas, ranging from food security, nutrition and social protection, to gender equality. The review also develops a Zero Hunger Roadmap that highlights key targets to be achieved in priority sectors; recommends the establishment of a National Zero Hunger Committee which will monitor and evaluate progress in achieving the specific targets; and highlights the importance of mainstreaming gender in all national policies and strategies.

What has been the progress to date within food security and nutrition indicators?

With its commitment to reducing food insecurity, malnutrition and poverty levels, amongst others, under the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), The Gambia made great strides in reducing child mortality rate and maternal mortality ratios, improving access to rural water supply and gender parity at primary and secondary education levels by 2015.¹

What are some relevant SDG 2 concerns?

Levels of food insecurity vary within the regions, with areas in Central River North showing levels as high as 23 percent.² About one tenth of the people are food insecure and almost one in three

1 Infant mortality: 93 per 1000 births in 2005 to 34 per 1000 in 2014 (exceeded target - 43). Maternal mortality ratio: 730 per 100,000 births in 2001 to 433 in 2013 (target of 263 not achieved). percent improved drinking water Source: 69percent in 1990 to 91percent in 2013 (exceed target of 85percent). Source: MDG Status Report, 2014, Ministry of Finance, Economic Affairs.

2 2013 Demographic Health Survey (GDHS+)

Gambians are vulnerable to food insecurity. The Gambia is only able to meet half of the population's food needs and depends largely on food imports. The agricultural sector is predominantly labour intensive, rain-fed with limited access to quality inputs and financial resources. ³According to the SMART Survey (2015), The Gambia has a high stunting prevalence among children under five years, estimated at 22.9percent. The prevalence of acute malnutrition, with Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM) levels estimated at 10.3 percent.⁴ Nationally, micronutrient deficiencies are also highly prevalent in children and women. Similarly, 17.7 percent of non-pregnant women of child bearing ages were underweight, while 14.9 percent and 9.2 percent were overweight and obese respectively (SMART, 2015). This is an indication that The Gambia is facing the double burden of malnutrition with both, undernutrition and over-nutrition.

What are the overall policy gaps?

The Gambia has designed a wide range of policies and programmes, with a focus on addressing the challenges of the food and nutrition situation, which in many instances have led to effective outcomes.⁵ However, some policies, whilst well-written and articulated, have not adequately addressed the issues underpinning the root causes of poverty, food insecurity and malnutrition in the country.

The major gaps include poor alignment of policies to national strategic plans for poverty reduction, most notably to the National Development Plan (NDP), which provides a comprehensive blueprint. The more specific sector policy gaps include the absence of a stand-alone food and nutrition security policy, insufficient targeting of women by the National Social Protection Policy (NSSP) and alignment to policies of the Women's Bureau, and the limited cross-sectoral ownership of the School Meals Programme (SMP).

Effective Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) mechanisms for policies and implementation strategies also play a critical role in improving and sustaining zero hunger.

Recommendations

The Gambia is committed to achieving the SDG 2 target of ensuring food and nutrition security by 2030. It is therefore crucial to align efforts and resources towards key drivers of growth in the economy in collaboration with development partners and the private sector. The proposed policy recommendations and actionable options highlight key reforms and interventions to be undertaken in programmes and policies.

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