

APPROVED COPY

REVISED NATIONAL YOUTH POLICY

NOVEMBER 2015

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FOREWORD

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ACRONYMS

AYSRH	Adolescent and Youth Sexual and Reproductive Health
CBO	Community-Based Organisation
CCM	Coordinating Committee Meeting
CEDAW	International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
DOPP	Department for Planning and Programming of the Ministry of Youth & Sports
DPOs	Disabled Persons Organisations
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FGM/C	Female Genital Mutilation and Cutting
FSW	Female Sex Workers
GAMJOBS	Gambia Priority Employment Project
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GFD	Gambia Federation of the Disabled
GNP	Gross National Product
GTTI	Gambia Technical Training Institute
ICC	Inter-Ministerial Coordinating Committee
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IHS	Integrated Household Survey
IMEP	Integrated Monitoring and Evaluation Plan
IMF	International Monetary Fund
KPIs	Key Persons Interviews
LDC	Least Developed Countries
LFS	Labour Force Survey

LGA	Local Government Authority
MDI	Management Development Institute
MICS	Multiple Integrated Cluster Survey
MOFEA	Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MOYS	Ministry of Youth and Sports
MTP	Medium-Term Perspective Planning Framework
MTR	Medium-Term Review
NEAP	National Employment Action Plan
NEDI	National Enterprise Development Initiative
NEP	National Employment Policy
NYC	National Youth Council
NYDA	National Youth Development Agency
NYSS	National Youth Service Scheme
PAGE	Programme for Accelerated Growth and Employment
PIA	Presidents International Award
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
PWD	Persons with Disabilities
RBA	Rights-Based Approach to Development
RYC	Regional Youth Committees
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SMT	Senior Management Team
STIs	Sexually-Transmitted Diseases
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UTG	University of The Gambia

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

With a population of 1,882,450 people at the 2013 Population and Housing Census, the youth constitute 36.7 per cent of the total population.

The growing youthful population of The Gambia raises many challenges for overall national development among them are employment and assuring a decent standard of living to all. This is indeed a major challenge in light of the results of the 2010 Integrated Household Survey (IHS), which shows that 48.4 per cent of the population lives below the poverty line of US\$ 1.25 per day.

The current National Policy (2009-2018) has facilitated the implementation of various youth development and empowerment programs and projects by a multitude of agencies which include skills training to provide required competences for economic empowerment through enterprise development and employment generation; promotion of good values, ethics and good conduct among the youth; youth participation and provisions of youth-friendly services by a multitude of agencies in the public sector, private sector and civil society organisations.

However a number of challenges have been registered mid-stream in the implementation of the policy framework which calls for the revision of the policy to accommodate a new focus on youth development and empowerment issues. The areas which justify the review of the policy are as follows:

- The challenges related to lack of an appropriate coordination environment for ensuring the judicious and rational utilisation of available resources were not clearly strategised;
- Lack of clarity in addressing the challenges relating to government approach and strategy in dealing with youth issues primarily from a cross-sectoral dimension and downplaying the sector-specificity of certain critical youth issues;
- Mechanisms and processes for mainstreaming youth development and empowerment issues in different sector policies and strategies were not clearly defined and executed;
- Institutional framework for youth participation and networking was not adequately addressed nor were the rights, responsibilities and obligations of rights holders and duty bearers clearly defined to guide policy interventions; and
- Emerging global issues of interest to the youth such as the social dimensions of globalization, regional and international cooperation were not adequately treated.

The revised National Youth Policy (2016-2018) focuses on two Key Areas, which are further broken down into policy issues or themes for the remaining period of policy implementation and these are:

- Coordination; and
- Youth development and empowerment

Coordination is treated at six different levels: system-wide, sector, structural, program, UN inter-agency and service providers levels respectively

Youth development and empowerment measures are designed to cover the following key areas: skills training, enterprise development and employment generation; youth and agriculture; education, awareness-raising and advocacy; Illegal migration; capacity development; and membership development and outreach.

A Strategic Plan and a Monitoring and Evaluation Framework shall be designed to facilitate implementation, monitoring an evaluation of the revised policy.

I. BACKGROUND, CONTEXT AND JUSTIFICATION

I.1. INTRODUCTION

The National Youth Policy (2009-2018) is the third ten year policy developed by the Government for the youth of the country.

The current policy under review was developed in 2009. The implementation of this policy has faced various national and global challenges. New national and global issues have emerged which include changing life styles; new cultures influenced by culture contact through ICT, Satellite TV and immigration from other countries in the region; new and emergent trends and values orientations. These have created the need for review of the policy and develop a set of goals, policy objectives and measures for youth development and empowerment.

In this millennium of science and technology to support knowledge and creative economy, young men and women are the country's greatest assets for the present and future. They represent the driving force behind social, economic and political reforms in the sphere of rapid global changes. Our society's progress is determined among other things by how much we involve them in building the future. It is important therefore to prepare these young people as leaders, decision-makers, entrepreneurs, parents and guardians because they have vital role to play in national development.

The review of the National youth Policy is necessary to improve the level of coordination among policies and sectors that affect youth in the country and raise the level of accountability for youth outcomes. In this respect, many sectors of the economy need to coordinate when designing responses to youth issues in order to influence positive outcomes, strengthen the voice of young people in monitoring and providing feedback on the quality of youth policy and service delivery in The Gambia.

The revision of the policy is also indicative of the readiness of the Government to meet the emerging needs, challenges and aspirations of the youth as well as seek solution to their problems. It sets guidelines and provides the framework for all stakeholders to empower the youth to realize their potentialities and take advantage of the opportunities available to make positive contributions to the well-being of their communities across the entire country.

The policy takes into account the range of challenges faced by the youth, anticipates the ones that they are likely to confront them and outlines appropriate goals, objectives, policy measures, instruments and implementation arrangements which will be put in place so as to empower the youth to take charge of their own destiny as well as make them active participants in the national development process.

The policy also recognizes that youth are not a homogeneous group and that differences exist among them. Therefore, the policy contains provisions that address the specific and special needs and challenges of each of several identified target groups.

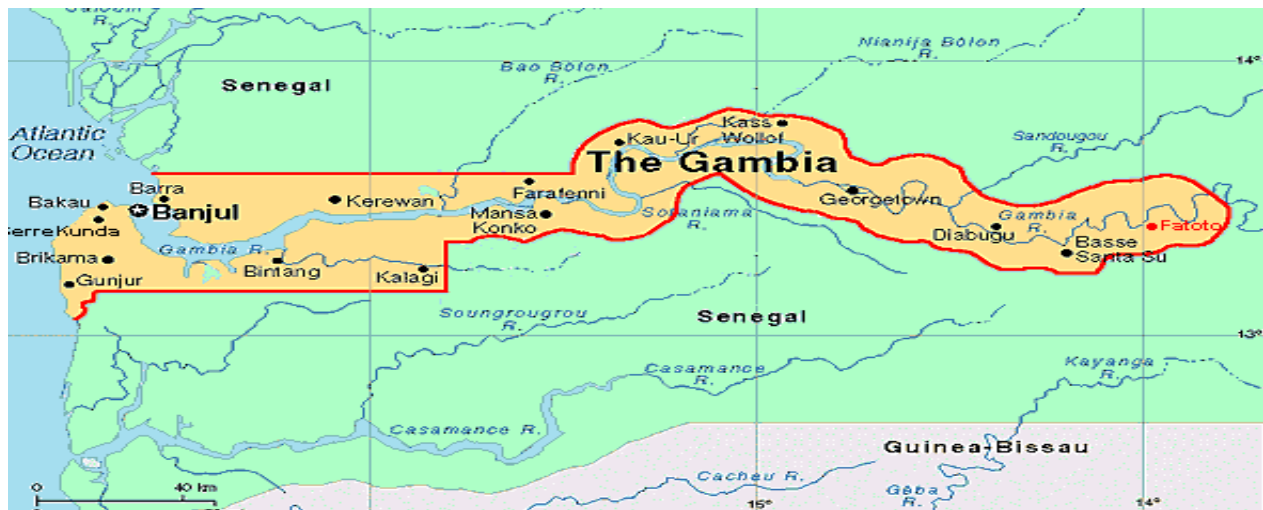
This revised policy shall therefore provide the overall national framework to coordinate and direct the youth, partners and other stakeholders on youth development and empowerment issues.

I.2. NATIONAL DEMOGRAPHIC, ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL CONTEXT

I.2.1. National Demographic Context

The Gambia extends about 400 km inland forming a narrow enclave in the Republic of Senegal except for a short seaboard on the Atlantic Coastline as shown in the map below. It has a land area of 10,689 km², with a population of 1,882,450 people. A population density of 176 persons per km² makes the country to be one of the highest densely populated countries in Africa, thus imposing extreme pressure

on productive land and the provision of social services. The population growth rate decreased from 4.2 per cent per annum in 1993 to 2.7 per cent in 2003 but increased to 3.3 per cent according to the provisional results of the 2013 Population and Housing Census. The population of the country is growing at a fast rate, reducing the benefits of fast economic growth from being converted into improvement in living standards for the population.



Map of The Gambia

The share of the youth aged 13-30 years continues to grow. It is 36.7 per cent of the total population; females represent 38.5 per cent and males 34.8 per cent. Banjul, Kanifing and Brikama seem to have higher youthful population than the national average in 2013. This means that youth are more concentrated in urban areas as opposed to rural areas. It is also vividly shown that the proportion of female youth is higher than the male in all the Local Governments Areas (LGAs). This should be factored in at the designing of strategies for youth development and empowerment.

The growing youthful population of The Gambia raises many questions among them are employment and assuring a decent standard of living to all. This is indeed a major challenge in light of the results of the 2010 Integrated Household Survey (IHS), which shows that 48.4 per cent of the population lives below the poverty line of US\$ 1.25 per day.

I.2.2. Macro-economic Context

The Gambia is amongst the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) with Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita of US\$ 560 (IMF Staff report 2011). Agriculture forms the backbone of the economy with nearly 70% of the working population involved in the agricultural sector. However it is the services sector that is the biggest contributor to GDP, at 60%, with agriculture contributing about 30%. The economy grew by 7.2% in 2007 over the preceding fiscal year; national revenue has been increasing progressively; inflation reducing to low single digit levels and was 2.3% as at end May 2007 (PRSP II, 2007).

According to MOFEA, the Gambia has been registering annual GDP growth rates of more than 5% (2008-2011) during the current global economic crisis, and has maintained a stable macroeconomic environment that is increasingly threatened by a mounting debt burden. The Gambia is ranked 172 out of 187 countries in the 2014 UN Human Development Index and the last Integrated Household Survey (2010) revealed that about 55% of the population lives below the poverty line.

The economy suffered a contraction of GDP to 4.3% in 2011 due to drought. This was due to a fall in crop production of around 45 per cent in that year, despite several non-agricultural sectors of the economy, such as tourism, performing well during 2011. The figures for 2012 show a rebound in GDP growth of 5.3 per cent due to a recovery in crop production and strong growth in wholesale and retail trade, and construction. The services sector saw its total contribution drop 1.8 percentage points from 16.3 per cent in 2011 to 14.5 per cent in 2012 (PAGE 2012).

The Gambia's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) has been growing at an estimated rate of 5-6 per cent over the last four years. The GDP growth rate was 6.5 per cent in 2010 and for 2011 the growth rate was - 4.3 per cent which was attributable to the crop failure. At the back of agriculture sector recovery and tourism sector, The Gambian economy grew by 5.3 per cent and 6.4 per cent in 2012 and 2013, respectively. The prospect for 2014 is largely gloomy owing to the delayed and erratic rainfall patterns and the cancelation of flights arising from the Ebola outbreak in some West African countries. Growth was driven by services sector, largely distributive trade, resulting in a higher percentage share for the sector. The percentage share of agriculture has been fluctuating with a declining trend clearly emerging, ranging from 29 per cent in 2010 to 22 per cent in 2013. The contribution of the industry sector to GDP was 12 per cent in 2010 increasing to 15 per cent in 2013.

The Gambia is a low income country and according to the World Bank, the GNP per capita is USD 510 in 2012. In 2014 Human Development Report, the country's human development index (HDI) was 0.441. Between 1980 and 2013, The Gambia's HDI value increased from 0.300 to 0.441, an increase of 46.9 percent or an average annual increase of about 1.17 percent. However, The Gambia's HDI has persistently been below the average for low human development countries and Sub-Saharan Africa but the gap was substantially reduced.

I.2.3. Political Context

The Gambia operates a parliamentary system of government. The Constitution upholds the doctrine of separation of powers among the three distinct arms of government: the Executive, Legislative and Judiciary.

The structure of government under the 1997 Constitution makes provision for an Executive President and a Cabinet appointed from outside the National Assembly.

For administrative purposes the country is divided into five administrative regions headed by Regional Governors, appointed by the President. The other two regions; Banjul and Kanifing are municipalities which are headed by Mayors who are elected to office.

The five regions are further divided into 36 Districts headed by Chiefs. Chieftaincy posts, governed by customary law had hitherto been traditional appointments, which were hereditary. The 1997 Constitution however brought about changes in this situation to allow for the appointment of Chiefs by the President.

At the village level, eligibility for being Alkali (village head) was predicated on among other things on yard ownership, thus women were nominally excluded from elections as they generally do not qualify as yard owners under customary laws. However, this is changing as women Alkalis are emerging.

I.3. RATIONALE FOR THE REVISION AND SCOPE OF THE REVISED POLICY

I.3.1. Rationale

The National Policy (2009-2018) has facilitated the implementation of various youth development and empowerment programs and projects by a multitude of agencies which include skills training to provide required competences for economic empowerment through enterprise development and employment generation; promotion of good values, ethics and good conduct among the youth; youth participation and provisions of youth-friendly services by a multitude of agencies in the public sector, private sector and civil society organisations.

The National Youth Policy is intended to provide guidelines and direction for all stakeholders involved in the implementation of policies, programs and projects for the development of the youth. It is also intended to help the country demonstrate its commitment to all international conventions and charters it has signed affecting the youth.

However a number of challenges have been registered by the mid-term review of the policy framework which calls for the revision of the policy to accommodate a new focus on youth development and empowerment issues. The key areas which justify the review of the policy are as follows:

- The challenges related to lack of an appropriate coordination environment for ensuring the judicious and rational utilisation of available resources were not clearly strategised;
- Lack of clarity in addressing the challenges relating to government approach and strategy in dealing with youth issues primarily from a cross-sectoral dimension and downplaying the sector-specificity of certain critical youth issues;
- Mechanisms and processes for mainstreaming youth development and empowerment issues in different sector policies and strategies was not clearly articulated;
- Institutional framework for youth participation and networking was not adequately addressed nor were the rights, responsibilities and obligations of rights holders and duty bearers clearly defined to guide policy interventions;
- Emerging global issues of interest to the youth such as the social dimensions of globalization, regional and international cooperation, etc; and
- Policy issues and measures were not clearly articulated and strategised due to the incoherence in the structuring of the policy document.

I.3.2. Scope

The revised National Youth Policy (2016-2018) focuses on two Key Areas, which are further broken down into policy issues or themes for the remaining period of policy implementation and these are:

- Coordination; and
- Youth development and empowerment

Coordination is treated at six different levels: system-wide, sector, structural, program, UN inter-agency and service providers levels respectively

Youth development and empowerment cover the following areas: skills training, enterprise development and employment generation; youth and agriculture; education, awareness-raising and advocacy; Illegal migration; capacity development; and membership development and outreach.

I.4. PROCESS FOR THE REVISION OF THE POLICY

The formulation of the Policy benefitted from a lengthy process of consultation with different categories and levels of the stakeholder community.

A **review of the existing sources of secondary literature** relevant to the implementation of the policy and associated strategic plan, as well as various national and sector policies, strategies, programs and legal instruments relevant to the youth sub-sector was carried out by the Consultant with a view to determining the level of progress attained as a result of the program interventions made by the National Youth Council and its partners during the first half of the current policy (2009-2014).

Review of national, sector and sub-sector quantitative data and statistics was also consulted to determine the characteristics of trends in the performance of certain social and economic indicators relevant the youth sub-sector for the period under review (2009-2014) such as MICS IV (2010), Demographic and Health Survey (2013), the National Population and Housing Census (2013), review reports on the implementation of the PAGE, annual and activity reports of the NYC and partners.

This was supplemented by several **in-house meetings** with the senior staff of the National Youth Council for further consultations on the progress of the consultancy.

As part of the preparatory activities for the mid-term review, the Consultant also presented the data collection tools at a one-day **Inception Meeting with an inter-agency Technical Working Committee** with a view to establishing a common understanding on the exercise in respect of expectations, scope of the work and the Work Plan on the basis of the Inception Report developed purposely for the review exercise.

To facilitate the review, a **Policy Implementation Assessment Tool** was developed and administered through **Key Persons Interviews** (KPIs) to 27 Policy Makers and 30 Program Implementers from 37 agencies in the central government, local government councils, offices of the regional governors and civil society organisations in all the 5 regions and 2 municipalities of the country.

The Policy Implementation Assessment Tool comprises two interview guides: one for policymakers and one for program implementers and other stakeholders. “Policymakers” refers to individuals, usually in high-level government positions, who are responsible for setting policy priorities, formulating policies and program directives, and coordinating overall policy implementation. “Program Implementers” on the other hand refers to the groups engaged in carrying out activities outlined in policies and strategies. They also include groups, such as civil society organizations, that are involved in advocating for policy issues and monitoring program accountability.

The interview guides use the same or similar question items to enable comparisons of perspectives between the two groups—though the implementers’ version delves deeper into the dimensions, particularly regarding on-the-ground service delivery issues.

Youth from existing youth groups were recruited and trained in the administration of the interview guides and then arrangements made for them to interview policy makers and program implementers in central government, local governments, regional governments and civil society organisations.

The questions in the above-mentioned interview guides have also be used to inform the development of Focus Group Discussion guides to gather feedback at the community level from the youth groups and associations. Through the coordinative efforts of the Regional Youth Coordinators, **2 Focus Group Discussions** (FGD) were organised with a group of 13-18 youth at each of the 8 LGAs, to obtain their perceptions, experiences and opinions on pertinent issues affecting the youth in terms of their empowerment, development and mainstreaming into the wider society.

The Consultant also visited the premises of the Satellite Agencies of the Ministry of Youth and Sports and selected international development partners within the United Nations System based in The Gambia and held **Follow-Up Interviews** with the senior staff of these agencies with a view to obtaining their views, perceptions and suggestions on the issues emanating from the Key Persons Interviews and Focus Group Discussions.

With the data from all the above-mentioned sources assembled, interpreted and analysed, a **Medium-Term Review (MTR) Report** was produced. The MTR Report was then used as the basis to inform the formulation of the **Revised National Youth Policy**. A medium-term **Strategic Plan** will also be designed to operationalise the policy and facilitate its implementation.

The first draft of the review report and the up-dated policy document were subjected to a **Peer-Review process** through which the staff of NYC, members of its Governing Council, Ministry of Youth and Sports and satellite institutions, the **Technical Working Group** and other key Implementing Partners reviewed and commented on the draft.

Prior to the submission of the final report, the Consultant presented the draft report to a cross-section of the youth at a **National Youth Forum** with a view to soliciting the response of the youth to the findings of the draft MTR report, revised policy and draft Strategic Plan.

A **one-day Validation Workshop** was organised with the Key Implementing Partners and stakeholders to brainstorm and exchange ideas, experiences and perspectives on the findings, conclusions and recommendations for the Medium-Term Review Report, revised Youth Policy and Medium -Term Action Plan.

II. THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

As a National Youth Policy, it is important that conceptual clarity on key critical issues affecting the youth are clearly defined and articulated to enhance mutual understanding and acceptance, particularly when it comes to the interpretation of the policy prescriptions.

In this respect, the following three concepts are defined to form the conceptual basis and grounding for the policy instrument:

- Definition of Youth;
- Rights, responsibilities and obligations of rights holders and duty bearers; and
- Priority youth groups to be targeted by this Policy

II.1. Definition of Youth

The definition of youth varies from country to country. Generally, the period between childhood and adulthood is called “Youth.” During this period a person prepares himself/herself to be an active and fully responsible member of the society. It is also a period of transformation from family dependant childhood to independent adulthood and integration in the society as a responsible citizen.

Youth, as a concept varies from culture to culture and from society to society. In most Gambian societies the progression from childhood to youth involves some systematic rites of passage or initiation into adulthood. These rites have symbolic significance in that by participating in them, an individual achieves a new status and position of responsibility in society. Such new status gains validity through genuine community action and recognition. However, due to certain influences driven by science, technology and external culture contact, the boundaries defining the transition from childhood to youth and from youth to adolescence and adulthood are shifting these days, and the crossovers into

each new stage is now manifested in different ways. The changes that young people must negotiate do not occur as predictably as in the past, therefore, defining youth according to some exact age range can be a very difficult task.

The current National Youth Policy (2009-2018) defines youth as individuals within the age bracket of 13-30 years. The United Nations and World Bank has defined youth as young men and women between the ages of 15 and 24 while the Commonwealth Youth Program has adopted the age category of 16 to 29. A third definition that is relevant to The Gambia is provided for in the African Union's African Youth Charter which defines youth or young people as every person between the ages of 15 and 35 years.

The Charter, to which The Gambia is a signatory, is a legally-binding instrument that serves as a strategic framework of action for African youth. It was adopted on 2 July 2006 during the 7th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the African Union that took place in Banjul and went into force on 8 August 2009. As a signatory to the African Youth Charter, the Gambia is legally required to domesticate its provisions into national policies and legal instruments and hence the need to subscribe to the definition of youth as provided for in the Charter.

In line with the existing conditions and realities on the ground especially contemporary socio-economic and political conditions as it affects the youth, and for the purpose of the implementation of this revised National Youth Policy, the youth shall be defined as all young males and females aged 15-35 years, who are citizens of The Republic of The Gambia.

While it is true that this definition is broad, it is understood that this is a time in life when most young people are going through dramatic changes in their life circumstances as they move from childhood to adolescence and adulthood. Young people in this age group require social, economic and political support to realize their full potential and live a dignified living.

Young people as defined by this revised youth policy are characterized by energy, enthusiasm, ambition, curiosity, adventurism, creativity and promise but at the same time they are also confronted with high levels of socio-economic uncertainty, fragility, volatility and risks thereby becoming the most vulnerable segment of the population.

II.2. Rights, responsibilities and obligations of rights holders and duty bearers

This revised National Youth Policy recognizes the rights ascribed to every Gambian as enshrined in Chapter IV, Section 17(2) of the 1997 constitution of Republic of The Gambia. This stipulates that "every person in The Gambia shall be entitled to the fundamental human rights and freedoms of the individual but subject to respect for the rights and freedoms of others and for the public interest".

Thus the provisions of the Constitution are explicit on the issue of rights and obligations, in that while the youth are entitled to the enjoyment of certain rights but every right also come with attendant responsibilities and obligations. While the youth by right expect to receive and enjoy certain rights from society and government, but they also equally have a moral and constitutional responsibility and obligation to give back to society for their own good and for the greater public interest.

II.2.1. Rights of the Youth

This revised National Youth Policy recognizes the importance of youth, the right to enjoy their youthfulness and be given the opportunities to realise their full potential irrespective of their socio-economic status, ethnicity, religion and gender. Among the most important of these rights which the youth shall enjoy are the following: -

- Right to life, personal liberty and security;
- Right to protection from abuse and coercion, violence, exploitation, discrimination, harmful traditional practices, forced labour, inhuman and degrading punishment and deprivation of property through compulsory means;
- Right to freedom of peaceful assembly, form lawful associations which involve meaningful participation and decision-making;
- Right to be equal before the law and entitlement to equal protection of the law;
- Right to express their opinion and views freely, including open and reciprocal communication facilitated by parents and other elderly persons within the community;
- Right to a secure future through policies, strategies and practices ensuring sustainable development;
- Right to access all benefits such as proper education and training (including opportunities for life-long learning), employment, housing, legal services, health care (including sexual and reproductive health), recreation and other social services;
- In the case of Persons with Disabilities (PWDs), the right to be provided with the special treatment which his/her condition requires;
- Right to marriage at the legal age of consent; and
- Right to individual ownership and protection of property consistent with the Constitution and other relevant Laws of The Gambia;

II.2.2. Responsibilities and Obligations of the Youth

The rights of the Gambian youth come with attendant responsibilities and obligations. As citizens, the youth have a civic responsibility to subscribe to and respect the national, community and family values for the benefit of peace and peaceful co-existence.

In order to make the youth in the country tolerant, caring, responsible and productive citizens, the National Youth Policy outlines the following set of obligations and responsibilities for the Gambian youth:-

- To be patriotic and loyal to the Gambian nation and promote her wellbeing;
- To promote peace, security and development;
- The obligation to embrace positive value systems of respect and tolerance for authority and towards parents, extended family and the community;
- The responsibility to demonstrate assertiveness and self-worth in line with positive values and attributes of role modeling;
- The responsibility to promote socio-economic independence of youth by attaching more value to positive attitudes and self-motivation;
- The responsibility to cultivate leadership values and deliberate participation in policy development, development process and decision-making;

- The obligation to protect and account for the country's physical, natural and financial resources, demonstrating a high level of ownership for the benefit of themselves and future generations;
- To respect and protect public property and property of others and to use them wisely and effectively;
- To promote and advance the principles of gender equality and respect for the rights of Persons with Disabilities;
- To acquire skills which increase their capacity for self-help, self-respectability, cooperation and community development;
- To ensure a society free from violence, coercion, crime, devastation, exploitation, intimidation and other forms of social crime;
- To lead healthy and responsible lives by promoting physical and mental well-being, including the issues of drugs and substance abuse, sexual and reproductive health issues and HIV/AIDS;
- To promote work ethic, life-long learning and positive attitude towards work; and
- To be law abiding, respectable and enlightened citizens, knowledgeable about their rights as well as duties and obligations.

II.2.3. Obligations of Government to the Youth

Government has an obligation to ensure that youth are empowered to contribute to their own development as well as being able to discharge their obligations and responsibilities to society. The obligations of government to the youth include the following: -

- Create the enabling environment that can generate opportunities for the youth involvement in decision making that affects them, the environment and society;
- Encourage the participation of young men and women in community life and development;
- Respect and accept the contribution of young men and women to society through the use of their talents, resources, ideas;
- Assist young people in reaching their goals and full potential;
- Be sensitive to the needs and difficulties of young women and men;
- Provide adequate funding for sustainable development of youth-oriented projects;
- Provide adequate funding for educational programs and create equal opportunities to be educated; and
- Recognize their capabilities and individualities and allow whenever possible their choice of educational fields and careers with recourse to guidance and counselling

II.2.4. Obligations of Society to the Youth

Adults and parents and families have a responsibility to look after the youth. They need to provide a caring, nurturing and safe environment for their growth and development.

In this respect, The National Youth Policy defines the obligations of parents, guardians and society as follows: -

- Promote responsible parenthood;
- Act as positive role models to young people;
- Provide a favourable physical, emotional, mental, moral, cultural, spiritual and economic environment for youth development and well-being;
- Support and encourage young people to participate and perform according to their capabilities in education, training and employment;
- Provide equal access and opportunities to family resources to the youth regardless of gender;
- Understand and accept the youth and recognise their potential contribution to society;
- Provide counseling, support and guidance in accordance with the specific and peculiar needs of young people;
- Provide adolescent and youth sexual and reproductive health information including HIV/AIDS information and education to young people;
- Allow the youth to fully participate in development process and cooperate with them in this endeavour; and
- Recognize their capabilities and individualities and allow whenever possible their choice of educational fields and careers.

II.3. Priority target groups

III.3.1. The Target Groups

This revised National Youth Policy has defined youth as all young males and females between the age range of 15-35 and being citizens of The Gambia.

However, the transition from childhood to adulthood may occur at different ages and over different periods depending on the economic, social and cultural contexts. In addition to the age dimension, it is important to recognise that young people are not a homogenous group and they differ in terms of their needs, opportunities and circumstances. They differ in terms of gender, educational level, social status, urban/rural status and disability status.

Generally Gambian youth experience common problems, and also share similar aspirations and concerns. However, there are different categories of youth with different and peculiar sets of concerns and problems. Many youth may not require special assistance and may be able to develop themselves given the right family and policy environment. There are also some categories of vulnerable youth groups with special circumstances, which require concerted, focused, and well targeted attention.

Accordingly, and having regard to current socio-economic and political realities, the revised National Youth Policy identifies target groups for special attention due to their vulnerability and circumstances of living. They include the following: -

- Students in secondary, tertiary and higher educational institutions;
- Out of school Youth;
- Unemployed and under-employed Youth
- Female Youth;
- Rural youth;
- Youth with Disabilities;
- Youth engaged in social crimes and delinquency; and
- Female Sex Workers

III.3.2. Students in Secondary, Tertiary and Higher Educational Institutions

This group comprised of persons aged between 15 and 35 years. The policy seeks to prepare them for gainful employment and responsible leadership and citizenship roles.

The constraints being currently encountered in the provision of appropriate teaching and learning environment due to challenges in the funding of secondary and tertiary education is critical to the implementation of the revised National Youth Policy. Hence the policy focuses on improving the quality of education at these levels through the provision of appropriate teaching and learning environment.

Often, young people in their late teens are found in Senior Secondary Schools and need equitable access to relevant and qualitative education before attaining 18 years of age. Such an intervention would require increased enrollment, expanded access to resources be it physical, material, instructional and structural that could produce well-informed, enlightened, responsible, intellectually able, vocationally skilled, mentally sound and physically competent young citizens.

It also entails, in the short and medium term, universal access to compulsory and free educational opportunities at this level, to prepare them adequately for entry into tertiary and higher educational institutions and/or for gainful employment.

Additionally, there is recognition of the need to create an enabling environment to facilitate and enhance the learning process in the critical fields of humanities, science and technology and the environment.

Thus the revised National Youth Policy recommends the following policy measures by stakeholders: -

- Promotion of the teaching of science and technology, as well as the teaching of vocational skills in agriculture and technical trades;
- Revise the curricula to include life skills training, good citizenship and transformational leadership training;
- Promotion of the use of ICT (Information, and Communication Technology) in schools;
- Provision of financial assistance to needy students, particularly the female youth;
- Promotion of democratic student unionism to serve as a launching pad for the training of youth in leadership roles and democratic cultures;
- Encouragement and promotion of gender-sensitive curricula in schools;

- Introduction of sexual and reproductive health education in all schools, especially for female students who have to cope with problems peculiar to them;
- Enforcement of enrolment and retention of girls in schools and general reduction in school drop-outs particularly in the rural areas;
- Promotion of Career, Personal and Educational Guidance and Counselling in schools;
- Introduction of moral instructions, civics and civility in the curricula;
- Promotion of extra-curricular activities through voluntary associations and clubs, such as societies for Debating, literature, Current Affairs, Historical and Cultural Affairs and established organizations such as Scouts, Red cross and Red Crescents, Girls Guide, Boys Brigade in secondary schools etc; and
- Promotion of games and sports in the schools that is both recreational and competitive;

III.3.3. Out of school Youth

This group includes persons who are of school age but are not attending schools or have dropped out of school for some reasons. Others have concluded one level of education and are informally/formally employed and unskilled/skilled. The out of school youth is very mobile and resourceful, when their energy is not harnessed they become vulnerable to social vices either as perpetrators or victims and may experience ill-health due to poor and limited access to health services.

The Policy seeks to promote multi-sectoral efforts targeting them through the provision of counselling and guidance services, rehabilitation programs, re-inclusion into the school system or drafted into targeted skills training and entrepreneurship development programs, promotion of self-employment and other wealth creation programmes amongst others

III.3.4. Unemployed and under-employed Youth

The increasing joblessness and under-employment among many young people in The Gambia is providing a fertile ground for the involvement of the youth in a whole series of social vices, including involvement in crime, drug and alcohol abuse, prostitution, illegal migration and a general loss of confidence in the system and the larger society to mention just a few.

The Policy recognizes the feeling of desperation of unemployed youth and the fact that they require special attention by all stake holders to deal with the wide range of problems they experience.

In this respect, the revised Policy recommends the following policy measures to meet the challenges of youth unemployment or under-employment:

- All tiers of government and the private sector should redouble effort at job creation;
- Establishment of community-based centers for skills acquisition to promote apprenticeship and vocational training across the country; and
- Facilitate access to productive resources for the youth such as land, micro-credit, technology and information through business or technical advisory services

III.3.5. Female Youth

In The Gambia an increasing number young women experience unemployment more frequently than their young male counterparts and tend to have fewer occupational opportunities. The 2012 Gambia

Labour Force Survey has shown that female youth are less likely to be employed or in education, and more likely to be inactive (31 percent, against 27 percent for male youth). The increasingly high number of school drop-outs, forced and early marriages and teenage pregnancies recorded across the country is also an indication that young women require specific support measures in this regard.

The right of the female youth has long been a major cause for concern and deserves priority attention. Many young women have been victims of sexual harassment, physical violence and abuse, labour exploitation, gender discrimination, harmful traditional practices such as Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C) as well as negative societal attitudes and practices such as stereotyping.

In this respect, the revised National Youth Policy therefore seeks to protect and promote the interests and aspirations of young women so as to restore their dignity and motivate them to contribute as equal partners in nation building.

Specifically the policy seeks to promote the following measures: -

- Promotion of skills and leadership training aimed at empowering female youth for self and gainful employment as well as greater participation in, and contribution to community and national development;
- Elimination of all forms of discriminatory practices against the employment of females in all sectors of the national economy;
- Provision of special packages of financial and/or material assistance to female youth, who have undergone training and have acquired skills for self-employment;
- Encouragement of female enrolment and retention in the schools system;
- Establishment, improvement and promotion of both in-school and out-of school programs aimed at ending gender-based discrimination and promoting the rights and dignity of the female youth;
- Promotion of specific programs that address the peculiar social, educational, health and reproductive problems of women in general and those in difficult circumstances;
- Elimination of harmful traditional and current practices that affect women generally and in particular the female youth

III.3.6. Rural Youth

Youth in rural areas are generally more disadvantaged than those who live in urban settings due to limited access to services and facilities such as the uneven distribution of skills training centers and youth centers. The opportunities for formal employment are also far less than in urban areas.

However, the Labour Force Survey (2012) shows that Young people living in cities and towns are much more likely to be unemployed than their rural counterparts. This again underscores the different nature of urban and rural economies, and in particular the important role that the agriculture sector plays in absorbing young rural workers

In the light of this situation, the revised Policy recognizes this and proposes:

- An even geographical spread of services and facilities for the youth such as skills training and enterprise development centers, youth centers and development programs;

- Government to intensify efforts to reverse the under-development of rural areas by implementing the program for decentralisation and local development; and
- Deliberate and concerted effort must be made to ensure that programs and services which address the needs of young men and women reach the rural areas

III.3.7. Youth with Disability

All Persons with Disability (PWDs) have fundamental rights that need to be protected by the Government and the Gambian society. The revised National Youth Policy adopts a rights-based developmental approach (RBA) to disability, through which the human rights, participation and inclusiveness of PWDs are recognised and promoted. Young women and men with one form of disability or the other require specific strategies of support and assistance to ensure adequate access and opportunity to participate fully in society.

Thus the National Youth Policy seeks to promote the following measures for promoting and protecting the rights of Persons with Disabilities: -

- Government to expedite the adoption and enactment into law of the National Disability Policy and the National Disability Bill;
- Promote more public awareness of disability issues, the rights of the disabled and society's responsibilities towards the disabled;
- Enhance accessibility for the disabled to the physical and built environment and at institutions and public facilities by providing special facilities, services and care for the disabled such as ramps for the physically-challenged, Braille machines for the visually-impaired, listening devices for the deaf and hard of hearing, etc;
- Promote the empowerment of Disabled Persons Organisations (DPOs) and the Gambia Federation for the Disabled (GFD) to enable them better further the interests of the disabled community in The Gambia; and
- Provide programs and projects that can enhance the development and empowerment of Persons with Disabilities.

III.3.8. Youth in Crime and Violence-Related Problems

The increasing involvement of young people across the country in violent crimes is a worrisome development. To reverse this trend, the policy provides opportunities and incentives to discourage and dissuade the young people from social vices, anti-social and criminal conduct and; motivate them to be law-abiding and responsible.

In this respect, the revised Policy provides for the following measures:-

- Promotion of community-based preventive measures to youth engaged in crime and delinquency;
- Promote programs designed to enlighten the youth at risk on the dangers of drug and substance abuse and other forms of crime and delinquency;
- Provision of personal, career and educational guidance and counselling for the youth in and out-of-school youth;

- Sensitize the police and the judicial system on the specific concerns of young people involved in crime;
- Create avenues to monitor young people in contact with police, and develop ways to improve the way they are dealt with by the police;
- Ensure speedy trials of youth offenders;
- Search for and promote alternatives to incarceration where ever possible by strengthening community policing and alternative dispute resolution mechanisms;
- Promote the establishment of rehabilitation centres for drug addicts, juvenile offenders and ex-convicts;
- Provision of educational, skill-training and gainful employment opportunities for youth in juvenile correctional institutions;
- Provision of after care facilities for ex-inmates of correctional institutions; and
- Observe UN minimum standard rules for the treatment of young offenders

III.3.9. Female Sex Workers

In many societies, sex work is illegal, resulting in clandestine practices. As a result, sex workers, brothel operators, implementing partners, and even policy makers are uncertain of the legal status of sex work.

Female Sex Workers (FSWs) in The Gambia are characteristically poor, marginalized, and stigmatized. They lack both formal education and empowerment. Frequency of sex with multiple partners and a high burden of Sexually-Transmitted Infections (STIs) place them at high risk of HIV infection. They often engage in unprotected sex and other risky behaviors, such as drugs and substance abuse. Surveys have consistently shown a high and rising HIV prevalence rate among sex workers, who are said to be the major reservoir of HIV infection.

The illegality of sex work makes legal protection of sex workers impracticable and HIV interventions for them difficult. The daunting challenges contribute to the vulnerability, risk, and rising trend of infection among FSWs.

The revised National Youth Policy believes that targeting FSWs for interventions remains an effective way to reduce the spread of HIV and also create the opportunity to rehabilitate the increasing number of young people who have been driven into commercial sex work as a result of poverty and unemployment.

III. THE SITUATION OF YOUTH IN THE GAMBIA

With a population of 1,882,450 people (2013 Population and Housing Survey), the share of the youth aged 13-30 years continues to grow. It is 36.7 per cent of the total population; females represent 38.5 per cent and males 34.8 per cent. Banjul, Kanifing and Brikama seem to have higher youthful population than the national average in 2013. This means that youth are more concentrated in urban areas as opposed to rural areas. It is also vividly shown that the proportion of female youth is higher than the male in all the Local Governments Areas (LGAs). This growing youth population poses serious challenges to a resource-strapped country like The Gambia, but at the same time if it is properly and effectively harnessed and managed well; The Gambia's young population has the potential to provide

labour to all sectors and could ultimately lead to equitable growth. This trend should be factored in at the designing of strategies for youth development and empowerment.

The growing youthful population of The Gambia raises many questions among them are employment and assuring a decent standard of living to all. This is indeed a major challenge in light of the results of the 2010 Integrated Household Survey (IHS), which shows that 48.4 per cent of the population lives below the poverty line of US\$ 1.25 per day.

Despite substantial improvements in access to basic education and steady economic growth, The Gambia still faces considerable challenges in respect to reducing poverty. Nearly 60 percent of the poor in The Gambia are under the age of 20 years. Youth face significant challenges with respect to employment outcomes, such as a very difficult transition from school to work and very low levels of education and training.

In terms of education levels, a significant proportion of young people (especially in rural areas) leave school early, in part due to what are perceived to be low returns on education. School attendance decreases substantially between 15 and 19 years, but reduced retention rates is not accompanied by a similar increase in employment, meaning that many students drop out of school to become inactive. Young people in rural areas leave school earlier than young people in urban areas. Some 73 percent of the 15 to 17 years age group in urban areas is still in school, against 61 percent in rural areas. Many of those who do receive high quality education and training choose to migrate to the Greater Banjul Area or sometimes overseas. In a country where more than half the population is under the age of 20 years, these trends are worrisome.

Young people living in cities and towns are much more likely to be unemployed than their rural counterparts. This again underscores the different nature of urban and rural economies, and in particular the important role that the agriculture sector plays in absorbing young rural workers. Young people are more likely than adults to be unemployed or jobless. The picture does however vary according to the area of residence. Rural unemployment is low and varies little across the whole age spectrum, predominantly as a result of these workers being absorbed into the agricultural sector. Urban unemployment peaks for young adults, aged 20 to 24 years.

Overall, young workers are employed in jobs of low quality and high levels of informality. Female youth are also much more likely to be self-employed (46 percent, versus 32 percent for male youth). The agriculture sector is described as the key to investing in the youth and accounts for 41.5 per cent of employed youth aged 13-30 years with 30.7 per cent male and 52.2 per cent female. More than half of young workers are engaged in agriculture, which predominates in rural areas (66.3 percent, versus 7.5 percent in urban areas), and the services sector is the most important source of youth employment in cities and towns, accounting for almost 65 percent of employed youth. Female youth are less likely to be employed or in education, and more likely to be inactive (31 percent, against 27 percent for male youth). Low human capital is a particular concern in rural areas given that formal education is much more limited than in urban areas. This group of young people that never reach school or leave early is a particular policy concern.

To address the gaps in the quality of educational attainment, the government is placing emphasis on Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) through its sector policies on Higher Education and Science, Technology and Innovation. TVET provision consists of pre-employment training provided by government institutions, NGOs and private training bodies. Public institutions tend to offer postsecondary training, and are mainly concentrated in Banjul. The key public institution in TVET provision is the Gambia Technical Training Institute (GTTI) which provides certificate and diploma courses at the postsecondary level and is mandated to train middle-level manpower in commerce, business, accounting, engineering, and construction. Enterprise-based training is a major source of skills acquisition for those in work, both paid employment and in the informal sector. The majority of private training institutions offer certificate and diploma courses in commerce, management, accounting, finance, and IT. Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), community-based organizations

(CBOs) and projects provide training to low-income individuals. The traditional apprenticeship system is also a major source of skills acquisition for those in employments, especially male youth in the informal sector. However parents also often arrange for their male youth to be apprenticed to master craftsmen in roadside workshops where the quality of this training is usually low. Training tends to cover traditional productions such as metalwork, vehicle maintenance, carpentry, furniture making.

The quality of education also has an impact on the ability of the youth to adequately respond to and responsibly manage some of the societal challenges confronting most youth at critical stages of their life cycle such as issues relating to sexual and reproductive health, HIV/AIDS, drugs and substance abuse, illegal migration and harmful cultural practices. The policy should respond to these issues.

The Gambia's major development blueprints; Vision 2020 and the Programme for Accelerated Growth and Employment (PAGE) recognize the need to focus on the challenges of youth unemployment in particular through various strategies including supporting private sector investments that create jobs for the youth, increasing access to productive assets particularly credit by the youth, and retooling and training the youth to increase their employability.

IV. GUIDING PRINCIPLES, GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

IV.1. Guiding Principles and Core Values

The National Youth Policy is structured on guiding principles and core values which influenced its design and direction. Guiding principles are fundamental values and beliefs that determine organisational and group character and behaviours. The key principles and values are stated as: -

- The guiding principle and core values of the revised National Youth Policy are consistent with the provision of other existing national and sector policies such as The Programme for Accelerated Growth and Employment (PAGE)(2012-2015), National Employment Policy(NEP)(2010-2014), National Health Policy (2012-2020), National Reproductive Health Policy, National Education Policy (2004-2015), National Tertiary and Higher Education Policy, (2014-2023), Draft National Science, Technology and Innovation Policy (2015-2024), National Agricultural Policy (2009-2015) and the National Gender Policy and Women's advancement(2010);
- Youth are the most important and valuable resource of the nation. Government shall recognize, discover and understand their conditions, needs, interests, issues, aspirations and capacities and make appropriate provision for their development;
- Effective and result-focused policy implementation demands coordination, collaborative partnership and cooperative interaction among all stake holders including the different tiers of government, private sector organisations, nongovernmental organisations, traditional and religious leaders, community based organisations and development partners at all levels;
- Commitment to mainstreaming youth issues both as a cross-sectoral as well as a sector-specific issue, shall be adopted by Government as a development approach to inform the economic reform agenda and medium and long term development planning;
- The National Youth Policy is based on the fact that all youth development programs must be youth-driven and youth centered;
- Commitment to youth participation in the democratic process, as well as in community and civic decision making and development process;

- Creation of opportunities and strategies for addressing the challenges facing the youth should be the concern of the whole society;
- The National Youth Policy recognises the diversity in the youth category and is therefore mindful of the gender implications and strategies as contained in the gender policy as well as the challenges facing Persons with Disabilities as enshrined in the draft National Disability Policy and Bill;
- This Policy recognises the contributions of Non-Governmental Organisations to the continued life-long development of the youth and their skills and capacities and therefore empowering them should be supported and encouraged by government; and
- The National Youth Policy promotes a wide range of participatory methodologies to ensure maximum participation and contribution to youth development

IV.2. Policy Goal

The principal goal of this Policy is to provide an appropriate framework for promoting the enjoyment of fundamental rights by the youth and the protection of their social, economic and political well being in order to enhance their active participation in national development process.

IV.3. Broad Policy Objectives

- Establish a general policy framework which will provide guidelines on youth issues;
- Approach youth problems from a holistic perspective so as to ensure the coverage of the most critical elements and promote a comprehensive multi-sectoral response;
- Promote youth participation in the democratic process as well as in leadership, community and civic decision making process and other local development programs;
- Ensure that all youth programmes are youth-driven and youth centered;
- Reduce youth unemployment through the promotion of skills training and self-employment enterprises;
- Mobilize resources for youth programs and projects at all levels;
- Promote coordination in the interventions of the different tiers of government, civil society organisations and private sector agencies on youth development programs;
- Improve organisational capacity performance and ensure country-wide coverage in the execution of youth programs; and
- Address the social, economic and health problems that confront the youth;

V. POLICY MEASURES

V.1. Areas of Policy Action

The successful implementation of the revised National Youth Policy is largely predicated upon the identification of priority policy issues that affect young people in The Gambia, and the definition of appropriate policy measures to address these identified priority policy issues.

The identification of priority policy issues affecting the youth was largely informed by the findings of the medium-term review of the current Policy framework. The identified issues happen to be those that were generally recognised by the youth as priority areas for their development and empowerment. They also happen to be the key areas currently receiving much support from the development partners.

Based on the socio-economic and political realities existing in the country, international best practices for youth empowerment and development and the findings of the medium-term review of the existing policy, the priority policy issues and critical concerns facing the Gambian youth are identified as follows:-

- Strengthening the coordination environment for policy implementation;
- Skills training, enterprise development and employment generation;
- Youth and Agriculture;
- Education, awareness-raising and advocacy;
- Illegal migration
- Capacity development; and
- Membership development and outreach

V.2. Strengthening the coordination environment for policy implementation

V.2.1. Introduction

Coordination has been identified by the medium-term review of the current policy as the single biggest challenge to the implementation of the Policy. The review noted that currently there is no shortage of resources devoted to youth issues in the country moving around among several agencies. The challenge is how to coordinate the different support sources and harness them for a common goal within a well-coordinated environment. Because the current overall national coordination framework in dealing with youth issues is generally weak, it has resulted in an uncontrollable terrain whereby any agency can just intervene and do whatever it likes without coordinating with the appropriate youth structures.

The terrain has to be properly defined and coordinated to ensure a disciplined and orderly approach to inter-agency interventions. Failing that the tendency is that the youth are merely being used as “instruments” by other development agencies to further their own developmental aspirations, rather than being engaged as “actors” to proactively contribute to their own development.

Coordination among the multiple stakeholders has always been critical to the effective implementation of the policy. The mid-term review noted that coordination challenges occur at six different levels

V.2.2. System-Wide Coordination

V.2.2.1. Policy Issues and Challenges

The existing government approach and strategy conceives youth as a purely cross-cutting issue. This perspective therefore calls in the need for a system-wide coordination framework and mechanism to monitor the progress of implementation of the Policy at the cross-sectoral level. In the past an Inter-Ministerial Coordinating Committee (ICC) was established drawing membership from senior staff of key Ministries with mandates that have implications for the implementation of the policy.

However, the drawback with this response has been that emphasis was placed on the creation of a coordination structure or body even before the framework and process for facilitating the work of the body was developed. This shortcoming has affected the effectiveness and efficiency of the coordinating body and made it almost redundant and short-lived

V.2.2.2. Policy Objective

To improve the environment for the effective coordination of policy implementation and efficiency of program interventions

V.2.2.3. Policy Measures

- i. Commission a Policy Audit and Institutional Mapping to determine the key players and actors in youth issues in terms of the policy support, institutional/agency response, budgetary allocation over a period,etc;
- ii. Ensure the development of a comprehensive framework and process for coordinating and monitoring the inter-agency responses to youth empowerment and development; and
- iii. Ensure the constitution of a broad-based Inter-Agency and Multi-Disciplinary Coordination Committee with clearly-defined and articulated Terms of reference.

V.2.3. Sector Coordination

V.2.3.1. Policy Issues and Challenges

Coordination at the level of the Ministry of Youth and Sports and its Satellite Agencies was also critical to the effective implementation of the Policy. The coordination challenge here has been in terms of overlaps and conflicts in institutional mandates between key Departments and Agencies of the Ministry.

V.2.3.2. Policy Objective

To improve coordination among the departments and agencies of the Ministry of Youth and Sports by streamlining the institutional mandates of the agencies to avoid overlaps and conflicts in youth issues

V.2.3.3. Policy Measures

- i. Review the institutional mandates of departments and agencies of the Ministry dealing with youth matters to determine the overlaps and conflicts in their institutional mandates; and
- ii. Ensure the development of an institutional restructuring plan to implement the recommendation of the review

V.2.4. Structural Coordination

V.2.4.1. Policy Issues and Challenges

It emerged from the medium-term review that structural relations among the youth structures at the national, regional and local levels is not as fluid as it should be for ensuring that the presence and influence of the National Youth Council is adequately felt at all levels of interaction. This is manifested through the low registration levels for local youth groups, the non-involvement of NYC/RYC in certain activities of the local groups directly funded by some development partners and the weak networking relations among the regional youth structures

V.2.4.2. Policy Objective

To strengthen coordination and collaborative partnership among the various youth structures with a view to maximising the impact of the interventions

V.2.4.3. Policy Measures

- i. Review the existing coordination mechanism among the various youth structures to determine the challenges and possibilities for effective coordination and collaboration
- ii. Ensure the design of strategies for enhancing coordination among the youth structures

V.2.5. Program Coordination

V.2.5.1. Policy Issues and Challenges

The current Policy assumes that a Strategic Plan equipped with appropriate tracking tools shall be developed to facilitate the operationalisation, coordination, monitoring and evaluation of the Policy.

The absence of a Strategic Plan and tracking tools meant that NYC Secretariat had to adopt an Annual Work Plan approach which is informed by the resolutions of the biennial National Youth Conference.

The lack of a suitable planning framework has made it difficult for the NYC to effectively coordinate, guide and monitor policy implementation through program interventions in youth issues by the multitude of agencies currently engaged in this sector.

V.2.5.2. Policy Objective

Promote medium to long-term perspective planning as an approach to determine the long term impact of interventions on youth development and empowerment

V.2.5.3. Policy Measures

- i. Encourage the National Youth Council to adopt a paradigm shift from the Annual Work Plan (AWP) approach to a rolling Medium-Term Perspective (MTP) planning approach;
- ii. Promote an Integrated Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (IMEP) for effectively tracking the performance of policy implementation and program interventions; and
- iii. Institutionalise the conduct of surveys and studies on a regular and systematic basis to assess the impact of policy implementation and program interventions on youth issues

V.2.6. Inter-Agency Coordination among Development Partners

V.2.6.1. Policy Issues and Challenges

The medium-term review noted cases of overlaps and duplications in the support provided by development partners particularly the UN System Agencies, to youth-related interventions and this can lead to waste of meager donor resources on youth issues.

V.2.6.2. Policy Objective

To strengthen grant coordination among development partners with a view to maximising the impact of their contributions to youth development and empowerment

V.2.6.3. Policy Measures

- i. Promote a more coordinated framework for the support provided by development partners to issues of youth development and empowerment;
- ii. Encourage the United Nations System Agencies to coordinate their support to youth development and empowerment more closely within the framework of UNDAF-The Gambia to avoid overlaps and conflicts in their interventions; and
- iii. Promote the convening of biennial bilateral technical review meetings between government and development partners on the performance of the National Youth Policy implementation and program interventions on youth issues

V.2.7. Coordination among Service Providers

V.2.7.1. Policy Issues and Challenges

The review noted that Service Providers providing training in “hard skills”, entrepreneurship development and start-up funding to some extent duplicate each other’s interventions, targeting the same youth participants to their programs and delivering the same types of training and services.

V.2.7.2. Policy Objective

To strengthen coordination among service providers in youth issues to maximise the impact of their interventions

V.2.7.3. Policy Measures

- i. Encourage all Service Providers in youth issues to properly coordinate their interventions with the National Youth Council by using the Strategic Plan for the revised National Youth Policy as their main reference instrument and point of entry; and
- ii. Promote the participation of all Service Providers in youth issues in the biennial bilateral technical review meetings to be conducted by Government in collaboration with the development partners on the performance of the National Youth Policy implementation and program interventions.

V.3. Youth Empowerment and Development

To promote youth empowerment and development, concrete actions would have to be undertaken in key priority areas with the direct or active participation of the youth themselves. In that respect, six key priority areas have been identified drawing from the findings of the medium-term review:

- Skills training, enterprise development and employment generation;
- Youth and Agriculture;
- Education, awareness-raising and advocacy;
- Illegal migration;
- Capacity development; and
- Membership development and outreach

V.3.1. Skills Training, Enterprise Development and Employment Generation

V.3.1.1. Policy Issues and Challenges

Intense agency activity in the area of training, skills development and employment generation has also been noted in this area during the course of the mid-term review, which if not properly managed could produce dampening effects for youth empowerment and development. There is evidence of overlaps and duplication in the interventions of the agencies intervening in youth issues, which could also be attributed to the failure of effective coordination.

V.3.1.2. Policy Objective

To provide the opportunities for skills acquisition and access to productive resources for the youth with a view to enhancing the prospects of employment or self-employment

V.3.1.3. Policy Measures

- i. Ensure a coordinated response to skills training, enterprise development and employment generation interventions targeting the youth;
- ii. Ensure that skills training centers are evenly distributed across the country and made easily accessible to the youth, particularly in deprived regions such as Central River Region;
- iii. Promote Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) programs and projects that is based on real labour market demands with particular focus on increasing the overall employability of youth trainees rather than training them for narrow occupational categories;
- iv. Ensure regulatory oversight to project-based and CSO skills training programs for ensuring the provision of uniform standards in skills training across the country;

- v. Ensure the development of standards for all the key skills areas demanded by the industry and labour market within the framework of the Gambia Skills Qualification Framework;
- vi. Ensure that NEDI and other micro-finance schemes targeting the youth are efficiently capacitated and managed to enable them to provide seed money that can support enterprise and self-employment programs for youth; and
- vii. Establish programs to promote youth employment among young women, young people with disabilities, young migrants or returnees, refugee and displaced youth, and street youth

V.3.2. Youth and Agriculture

V.3.2.1. Policy Issues and Challenges

The medium-term review noted a multiplicity of agency interventions in youth participation in agriculture, sometimes resulting in overlaps and duplications or even oversight and underfunding of certain areas in their interventions. It has also been noted that some of the interventions are largely supply-driven, being implemented because they are part of the strategies and activities of the supporting agencies, rather than constituting a real demand generating from the youth.

For the fact that the interventions are largely supply-driven, there is a noticeable over-emphasis on training and the supply of agricultural inputs. Not much attention is being given to other important elements in the agricultural value chain such as start-up capital, market, storage, extension advice, transportation and agro-processing facilities.

Furthermore, most communities in The Gambia are traditionally agrarian societies. Many young people who are working in this sector unfortunately lack the necessary support to improve their productive capacity. Very often they do not have access to land, credit as well as extension services. Therefore, their involvement and full participation in the agriculture sector will certainly make all the difference.

V.3.2.2. Policy Objective

To promote the involvement and full participation of the youth in the agricultural sector of the country

V.3.2.3. Policy Measures

- i. Ensure a coordinated response to agricultural skills development and access to productive resources for effective youth participation in agriculture;
- ii. Promote the active involvement of young men and women in the agricultural sector, and initiate experimental farming programs directed towards young people;
- iii. Ensure that agricultural skills development is incorporated in the curricula of all skills training centers;
- iv. Make efforts to encourage the teaching of agricultural science at all levels of the educational system in the country;
- v. Encourage research in the agricultural sector in order to improve methods of agricultural production and marketing with special attention to youth in distressed circumstances;

- vi. Facilitate access to productive resources for the youth to enhance their active involvement in agriculture through the provision of land grants supported by financial and technical assistance such as credit, farming inputs, extension services and information; and
- vii. Facilitate the creation of facilities that add value to the agricultural produce of the youth such as reliable market, storage, farmer cooperatives, transportation and agro-processing plants

V.3.3. Education, Awareness-raising and Advocacy

V.3.3.1. Policy Issues and Challenges

Ensuring that all children are enrolled and stay in school has been a leading priority in The Gambia with an emphasis on universal access to basic education among 7-15 year olds. This commitment is now being fulfilled through the gradual phasing out of school fees and other charges from primary through to senior secondary school

Following the articulation of Vision 2020, The Gambia prioritized both access to and quality of basic education. However, in the beginning, access has received far greater attention and the key indicators of progress in the education sector in successive national medium term plans have related mainly to access rather than performance.

With access no longer a major challenge, the education sector has, since 2000, turned attention to addressing the issue of quality and relevance with different interventions supported by partners. However, The Gambia still records very high number of children leaving school before completion.

In addition to concerns about the quality of education, other areas of concern include access to knowledge and information on critical youth issues that can assist them in the transition to full adulthood, active citizenship and productive and gainful employment. The youth have limited access to appropriate information and education which could give them self confidence and understanding of the world around them.

There is also shortage of education, information and services available to adolescents and youth to help them understand the implications of these issues for their own wellbeing and development

V.3.3.2. Policy Objective

To promote equal access to quality education, educational opportunities and information for all youth in the Gambia irrespective of sex, geographical location and socio-economic circumstances.

V.3.3.3. Policy Measures

- i. Make development and delivery of education and skills training more responsive to the labour market through the constant review of the Training and Education curricula;
- ii. Increase access to post basic education skills training;
- iii. Arrest the issue of school dropouts by developing programs that will keep pupils and students in school until they complete relevant levels of education;
- iv. Improve the knowledge of the youth about preventive health care and assist them avoid risky social practices that can expose them to ill-health and other social vices;

- v. Develop and implement rehabilitation programs for drug, alcohol and substance abuse;
- vi. Mainstream AYSRH issues and HIV/AIDS prevention into youth life skills programs and peer health education;
- vii. Promote the Strengthening of the policy and legal enforcement regime to enhance youth access to AYSRH , HIV/AIDS and other health information and services; and
- viii. Promote the Strengthening of the policy and legal environment to protect young women against harmful traditional practices such as early and forced marriage, female genital mutilation and other forms of gender-based violence and abuse

V.3.4. Illegal Migration

V.3.4.1. Policy Issues and Challenges

Illegal migration is beginning to have a destabilizing effect on community and household solidarity, resource capacity, income and stability, exacerbated by weak policy and legal environment, lack of a coordinated strategy at the macro and sector levels to address the issue and lack of empirical evidence to enable evidence-based policy and strategy formulation.

V.3.4.2. Policy Objective

Promote a well coordinated and orderly response to addressing the issue of illegal migration

V.3.4.3. Policy Measures

- i. Ensure the availability of baseline data to provide empirical evidence on the character, scope, magnitude and socio-economic effects of illegal migration on society and the national economy;
- ii. Ensure an enabling policy and legal environment for effectively responding to the issues of illegal migration;
- iii. Ensure a comprehensive coordination and partnership framework to facilitate the effective coordination of the inter-agency responses; and
- iv. Ensure a comprehensive Integrated Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (IMEP) to track progress in the implementation of the policy, legal and strategic frameworks.

V.3.5. Capacity Development

V.3.5.1. Policy Issues and Challenges

Providing infrastructural support is very essential to the ability of the youth to create the space for social interaction, socialisation and networking, tapping their creative and productive capacity and enhancing the provision of facilities and services to their members and the local communities in which they are located, which in turn could strengthen their income-generating capacity and sustainability.

During the medium-term review, the youth lamented the inadequacy or apparent lack of Youth Centers in most regions and districts to provide the space for youth interaction and socialisation.

In the same way the National Youth Council lacks appropriate Secretariat to efficiently coordinate and facilitate the implementation of the National Youth Policy.

V.3.5.2. Policy Objective

Provide infrastructural and related capacity support to the youth structures at the national, regional and district levels in order to create the space for social interaction, socialisation and networking among the youth

V.3.5.3. Policy Measures

- i. Provide a purpose-built Secretariat equipped with modern appropriate facilities for the National Youth Council to enhance its coordinating, facilitating and monitoring role;
- ii. Promote the construction of multi-purpose youth centers at the regional level and supported by a chain of modest youth centers with basic facilities at the district level, particularly for regions and districts not currently benefitting from such facilities;
- iii. Ensure the provision of resource support in the form of IT equipment, well-equipped resource centers, audio-visual equipment, relevant literature, etc that can enable the facilities to provide services to the youth in the given localities; and
- iv. Ensure the capacity development of the Regional and District Youth Committees in the management and maintenance of the Youth Centers as well as in the delivery of community-based programs for the youth and local community members

V.3.6. Membership Development and Outreach

V.3.6.1. Policy Issues and Challenges

For any association to ensure the steadfastness of its members to its organisational mandate and goals, it must develop strategies for active membership development and outreach.

Developing and maintaining an active registration programme to augment the membership of an association or group and provide services to affiliated members is crucial to an organisation's ability to justify its existence.

V.3.6.2. Policy Objective

To promote the expansion and retention of the youth membership base of the National Youth Council through the implementation of an active registration and outreach strategy

V.3.5.3. Policy Measures

- i. Ensure the development of clearly-defined and well-articulated strategy for membership development and outreach services;
- ii. Ensure the Creation of space through which the National Youth Council can assemble and reach out to the youth fraternity to discuss critical issues of importance to youth development and empowerment.

VI. POLICY INSTRUMENTS

VI.1. International and National Instruments for Youth Development

The revised National Youth Policy recognizes the broader policy context in which it has been formulated and shall operate. This policy context is guided largely by other national policy initiatives and it is also reflective of international conventions, agenda and programs on youth empowerment and development that the Gambia is a State Party to.

In particular the following instruments are relevant to contextualising this revised National Youth Policy:

- i. **Charter of the United Nations** - The Gambia, as a member of the United Nations agrees to the attainment of the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations which enables young men and women to enjoy full participation in the life of society.

In addition to the Charter, The Gambia is also a State Party to other International Instruments of the United Nations dealing with the rights of individuals and society such as:

- Universal Declaration on Human Rights (1948);
 - International Covenant on Civic and Political Rights (1976);
 - International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1976);
 - International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) (1979); and
 - Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)
- ii. **United Nations World Programme of Action for Youth** - The principles and purposes of the United Nations World Programme of Action for the Youth for the Year 2000 and beyond has helped to inform the revision of the National Youth Policy at many levels. The ten priority areas identified and suggested by the World Programme of Action and the five newly identified priority areas adopted at the 2005 United Nations General Assembly were largely taken into consideration in the revised National Youth Policy;
 - iii. **The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)**-The revised National Youth Policy acknowledges and reaffirms the commitment of the United Nations Millennium Goals and its subsequent program, **The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**, to the advancement and well being of the Youth;
 - iv. **African Union** - The African Union has adopted several regional instruments related to the development and empowerment of the African youth. As a member of the African Union and State Party to these regional instruments, The Gambia is legally required to domesticate them into her national policies and legal instruments. Consequently, the revised policy has taken into account the provisions of these instruments to the extent possible. These instruments include:
 - African Youth Charter adopted in Banjul in July 2006;
 - African Youth Decade Plan of Action (2009-2018) (Road Map for the Charter)
 - African Charter on Human and People's Rights (1986);
 - Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights relating to the Rights of Women in Africa (2003); and
 - African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (1999);
 - v. **The ECOWAS Youth Policy** - The revised National Youth Policy recognizes the ECOWAS Youth Policy as the basis for the overall development of all young people in the sub-region.

- vi. **Constitution of the Republic of The Gambia (1997)** - As the basic law of the country, the Constitution sets the broad policy and legal context for the revised National Youth Policy;
- vii. National Health Policy (2012-2020);
- viii. National Policy on Education (2004-2015);
- ix. Agriculture and Natural Resources Policy (2009-2015);
- x. National Employment Policy (NEP) and National Employment Action Plan (NEAP) (2010-2014);
- xi. National Gender Policy and Women's advancement (2010);
- xii. Children's Act (2005);
- xiii. Domestic Violence and Sexual Offences Act (2013);
- xiv. Vision 2020 (The Gambia Incorporated); and
- xv. The Programme for Accelerated Growth and Employment (PAGE) (2012-2015)

VI.2. Financing Framework

Progress in the implementation of the revised National Youth Policy and the achievement of set policy objectives and measures will depend on the ability and willingness of all tiers of government (central, local and public enterprises), private sector, civil society and development partners to mobilize sufficient resources from internal and external sources.

For adequate support and successful management of youth development and empowerment programs, critical resources requirement will include **human, material and technical, and financial resources** at national and Local Government Levels respectively.

VI.2.1. Human Resources

To improve the human resource base for the implementation of the revised National Youth Policy, the following should be undertaken: -

- i. Comprehensive manpower development plan for youth development and empowerment programs across the country shall be formulated and implemented;
- ii. The University of The Gambia (UTG), The Gambia Technical Training Institute (GTTI), Management Development Institute (MDI); National Youth Service Scheme Skills Training Centers, Presidents International Award (PIA) Skills Training Centers, Ndemban Skills Center, Insight Skills Training Centers, Future In Our hands Skill Training Center, Fajara Skills Center and a host of NGO and project-related skills trainings should promote leadership training and survival skills training programs for young people;
- iii. Short-term in-service-trainings through workshops and seminars at local and international levels to build the capacity of youth organisations, NGOs, CBOs and private sector agencies working with young people should be encouraged; and
- iv. Medium-to-long-term specialised training for staff of the National Youth Council Secretariat, Youth Groups and Staff of the Ministry and Satellite Agencies.

VI.2.2. Material and Technical Resources

Material and technical resources will be essential in the process of implementing the revised National Youth Policy.

- i. Government in collaboration with participating development partners shall procure and provide technical equipment for the provision of quality reproductive health services, educational training, vocational and skills training, leisure activities and rehabilitation of young people in the country;
- ii. Government, in collaboration with participating development partners shall ensure the availability of technical expertise and support in the implementation of the key policy measures covering all the priority areas of youth development and empowerment as identified in the revised National Youth Policy; and
- iii. Government in collaboration with participating development partners shall ensure the availability of technical resource materials, including instructional, advocacy and IEC materials relevant for the achievement of some of the goals in the policy

VI.2.3. Financial Resources

Funding for the implementation of the revised National Youth Policy shall come from the following internal and external sources:

- i. Government shall strive to increase internal funding from the public budget for youth development and empowerment programs;
- ii. Central Government and the Local Government Authorities (LGAs) shall provide annual budgetary allocations to the National Youth Council, Regional Youth Committees and the Satellite Youth Agencies of the Ministry of Youth and Sports (NYSS, NEDI and PIA) and such allocations should be released on time for the implementation of the revised policy;
- iii. The Ministry of Youth and Sports and its Satellite Youth Agencies shall be permitted to mobilize resources from other sources at the internal and international levels;
- iv. Government shall promote and encourage private sector initiatives aimed at supporting the implementation of the revised youth policy;
- v. Public Enterprises and Private Sector Agencies shall be required to support youth development and empowerment programs within the framework of the Public-Private-Partnership(PPP) and the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) funding windows as a way of giving back to society part of their profits;
- vi. The Central Government shall mobilize external funds from development partners for the implementation of the revised youth policy;
- vii. Central Government and the Local Government Authorities (LGAs) shall provide necessary counterpart funding and contributions for the implementation of donor-assisted youth development and empowerment programs and activities; and
- viii. Government at all levels and development partners shall ensure transparency and accountability in the disbursement of funds for youth development and empowerment programs to enhance expenditure tracking for the funding of policy implementation.

VI.3. Institutional Framework, Roles and Responsibilities

As youth matters is a cross-sectoral and multi-dimensional issue, its effective policy coordination and implementation requires multi-agency participation. In addition to involvement in actual implementation, a wide range of stakeholders and partners will be expected to generate policy insights, provide policy advice and direction.

The following actors are however expected to have a direct role and responsibility in the implementation of the policy and the associated implementation plan:

VI.3.1. Ministry of Youth and Sports

The Ministry of Youth and Sports is charged with responsibility for the development, promotion and regulation of youth matters throughout the country. As a result, it is responsible for overseeing and coordinating the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and associated programs and projects. It also has an overseeing and/or supervisory responsibility for the Satellite Agencies of the Ministry dealing with youth matters such as the National Youth Council (NYC), National Youth Service Scheme (NYS), National Enterprise Development Initiative (NEDI) and the Presidents International Award (PIA) as well as the proposed National Youth Development Agency.

The Gambia National Youth Policy 2009-2018 is the main policy document that guides the work of the Ministry on youth issues. The ultimate goal of the policy is to function as a guide for the MOYS and its partners to ensure that investments in youth issues take place across sectors.

While the Ministry is responsible for policy development and overall coordination of the activities of the youth sector, implementation is carried out through its satellite institutions (NYC, NYSS, PIA and NEDI). The Ministry is headed by the Minister who is supported by the Permanent Secretary (PS) and two Deputy Permanent Secretaries (DPSs). (DPS Technical; and DPS Administration and Finance). The newly established Department of Planning and Programmes (DOPP) is the technical arm of the Ministry. It is directly under the PS even though the two DPSs.

Management structures in the Ministry include the Senior Management Team (SMT), which is constituted by the Minister, Permanent Secretary, two Deputy Permanent Secretaries, Principal Assistant Secretary and the Executive Directors of the satellite institutions dealing with youth issues. Its functions include among others policy planning, supervision and monitoring, coordination of sector strategy implementation and mobilisation of resources to enable the realisation of its vision and goals.

However, planning, resource mobilisation, coordination of policy and strategy implementation and its monitoring is relatively weak. In order to help remedy these current challenges, the DOPP will be strengthened to enable it effectively deliver the planning function including the coordination of resource mobilisation. The Coordinating Committee Meetings (CCM) structure has been established and it is expected that the current Monitoring and Evaluation framework will be strengthened to enable effective coordination, monitoring and reporting of policy and strategy implementation. By so doing, the SMT will now be more effective as it will concentrate on only policy development and supervision of the CCM.

VI.3.2. National Youth Council

National Youth Council (NYC) was established by an Act of Parliament in 2000 and is currently headed by an Executive Director, who is appointed by the Hon. Minister of Youth and Sports in consultation with members of the Council. It is a semi autonomous and non-partisan specialised agency of

government designed to be the voice and the umbrella organization for youth organizations in the country. In this respect it is a representation of the interests of all young men and women irrespective of their ethnic, political or religious affiliation in all facets of development. Its main goal is to strive for the empowerment and development of young Gambian men and women.

Governments at all levels should endeavour to provide subvention for the NYC annually without necessarily controlling or interfering in the running of the organization. All voluntary and charitable youth organizations, youth NGOs and CBOs should be encouraged to be affiliated to the National Youth Council of The Gambia to ensure proper coordination of youth issues at the national, regional and sector levels respectively.

As an umbrella organization for youth NGOs and youth organizations across the country, the NYC shall pursue democratic norms at all times, embrace the principles of accountability and transparency in all its conduct, and initiate and execute activities that are in consonance with the goals of the revised National Youth Policy.

Its principal functions include: conducting research on youth development; monitoring the implementation of the National Youth Policy and decisions of the National Youth Conference; mobilising resources for youth development; working closely with charitable organisations involved in youth related work or activities; organising youth conferences and festivals; promoting networking with other national youth bodies and youth organisations abroad; planning and implementing national youth programs; maintaining a databank on youth organisations and activities in the country; registering national youth organisations and determining the registration fees; and carrying out such other functions that may be desired in furtherance of the objectives of the Council and Supervising the operations of the Regional Youth Committees.

VI.3.3 National Youth Service Scheme (NYSS)

The National Youth Service Scheme (NYSS) was established in 1996 with the aim of providing the youth with the requisite skills to address the acute problem of unemployment. It was supported by the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) of Nigeria during its first eight years of establishment.

The primary objective of NYSS is to inculcate discipline in youth; develop ethical and moral conduct and positive attitude acquired through shared experience; and to promote national development. The programme is laudable, and should be strengthened and refocused so that it can achieve greater results in the implementation of the revised National Youth Policy.

The NYSS specifically seeks to train the youth to appreciate the dignity of labour, instill in them the spirit of self-reliance and encourage them to create rather than seek jobs. This is in recognition of the fact that the youth are the future leaders and as such must be equipped with the necessary skills to enable them contribute effectively to national development while ensuring sustainable development.

Although the Government of The Gambia is its main sponsor, it generates income from its youth farms and other agricultural ventures. In partnership with GAMJOBS, credit facilities are provided to successful corp members to pursue business ventures of their choice.

The scheme will operate in line with the objectives and policy measures outlined in the revised National Youth Policy and Strategic Plan. Specifically, it will now have a mandatory period of at least six months of intensive citizenship and leadership training, in addition to active participation in community development activities during the service year. This is to ensure that at the end of the service year, NYSS participants are better prepared for challenges and leadership roles expected by the job market.

VI.3.4. President International Award (PIA)

The President's International Award started operations in the Gambia in 1979 first at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and then at the Ministry of Education. After the separation of education portfolio from the youth and sports portfolios it came under the auspices of the Ministry of Youth and Sports. It is also a member of the International Award Association within the framework of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award in the UK.

Since its inception, it has challenged young people aged 14 -25 years to discover hidden potentials and transform them into productive life and livelihood skills. It provides a balanced progressive program of extracurricular activities for young people throughout the world. It has four mandatory sections namely; Service, Skills and interest, physical recreation and adventurous journeys divided into three different levels of Awards namely; Bronze, Silver and Gold.

In The Gambia, the Award program has an added value by providing livelihood skills training to young people in carpentry, welding, electrical installation, home management, secretarial duties, computer technology and business studies and basic Maths and English to enhance their writing skills.

There is also an apprentice training program for out-of-school young people, which run for three years.

However, the Award is still not able to cover the length and breathe of The Gambia. It has started its decentralisation program by establishing a regional and skills training center in Kerewan North Bank Region. It is hoped that similar programs will be established in other regions within The Gambia.

VI.3.5. The National Enterprise Development Initiative (NEDI)

The National Enterprise Development Initiative (NEDI) was established in 2004, under the Office of the Vice President but operationally supervised by the Ministry of Youth and Sports (MoYS) and receives funding from the Government of The Gambia, the defunct GAMJOBS and other private organisations such as the banks. The main purpose of its establishment is to empower the Gambian youth and women through the provision of training in business entrepreneurship, start-up capital to operate businesses in the informal sector and business advisory services to ensure sustainability. Business advice provided is geared towards ensuring sustainability and expansion.

Even though it was set up in 2004, it was not until 2013 that it was fully institutionalised through the enactment of the National Enterprise Development Initiative Act (2013). This has enabled clearer Terms of Reference and management structures and systems. Some of these systems include among others the HR Policy, Loans Policy and Service Scheme.

NEDI operates in all the seven regions of The Gambia and is involved in the provision of support to retail shopping, bakery, fishing and fish selling, catering, tailoring and butchery. Its establishment is aimed at not only the empowerment of Gambian youth and women, but also the availability and affordability of basic food items and services to the Gambian populace.

VI.3.6. National Youth Development Agency (NYDA)

An executive agency to be called the National Youth Development Agency will be established to help administer the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the revised policy. In effect NYDA will become the technical are of the National Youth Council.

VI.3.7. Local Government Authorities

In order to ensure effective mass participation and the active involvement of the youth in decision making processes at the local level, the implementation of the programs in the revised policy and Strategic Plan will involve the grassroots youth groups. This underscores the relevance and significance of the Local Governments in the implementation of youth development and empowerment programs. The LGAs have a responsibility to create the enabling environment for the growth and development of youth associations at various levels of the community, provide advice, materials and other logistics support to youth NGOs and ensure the success of youth development programs in their areas of jurisdiction.

VI.3.8. Youth Groups

The Youth themselves have a crucial role to play in their development and the development of the society in which they live. They are the major stakeholders in the implementation of the revised National Youth Policy. They are expected to be prepared to join hands and collaborate with other stakeholders in pursuit of the objectives of the revised policy. Not only are they expected to forge unity, they must also be well organized to tap the potential benefits of the policy for their own empowerment and development. They will be expected to form voluntary youth associations and NGOs that are important vehicles through which they can actively participate in the implementation of the policy. Through these, both the private sector, CSOs and the government will additionally reach out to them and integrate them in the efforts to promote and concretize youth development objectives.

VI.3.9. The Private Sector

The revised policy takes due cognizance of the role of the private sector as the engine for growth and national development. It is therefore anticipated that the private sector will provide the following support towards the implementation of the revised policy:

- Create opportunities for gainful employment and proper work ethics;
- Provide training and apprenticeship and/or internship opportunities;
- Promotion of entrepreneurial development among the youth; and
- Provision of the environment for making youth entrepreneurial development a key part of their corporate social responsibility.

VI.3.10. Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)

The revised policy recognizes the facilitation role of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) in helping the youth obtain exposure to leadership and decision making situations, as well as transit smoothly into adulthood. In their present role the policy expects Civil Society Organisations to support the implementation of the revised policy in the following ways:

- Strengthen the social support systems for the youth especially for the vulnerable to find safety nets in their communities;
- Create opportunities for the youth to take part in leadership roles; and
- Create a healthy society which is free from violence to enable the youth enjoy physical, intellectual, social and economic well-being.

VI.3.11. Religious Bodies, Traditional Authorities and Local Opinion Leaders

For the youth to grow within a proper cultural context and become responsible citizens, it is imperative that they are provided with the appropriate ethical and moral guidance. In this respect, the policy envisages that Religious Bodies, Traditional Authorities and local Opinion Leaders will act individually or in concert to provide moral guidance to the youth through the following means:

- Provide religious and moral upbringing to the youth in the best traditions of Gambian culture;
- lead the youth to understand, appreciate and adopt our Gambian beliefs, values and cultural heritage; and
- Promote the sanctity of the family unit through the strengthening of both the nuclear and extended families values and principles of solidarity, compassion and magnanimity.

VI.3.12. Development Partners

This revised policy acknowledges the support and partnership enjoyed in the past from International Development Partners in national development and youth development and empowerment programs. In this respect, it is anticipated that the following responsibilities will be assumed by them:

- Providing investment funding for youth development and empowerment programs;
- Improving access to information and communication technology for the youth;
- Providing an open platform for consulting and communicating with the youth;
- Providing technical support;
- Offering financial and logistical support to youth groups; and
- Supporting study visits and international exchange programs for the youth to learn from international best practices and facilitate networking with youths from other regions

VI.3.13. Students' Unions

Students' Unions, particularly in senior secondary, tertiary and higher educational institutions are voluntary youth associations which provide leadership training grounds for the youth. The unions empower and enable their members to actively participate in decision-making processes about matters that affect them. Students' unions also empower the youth to contribute positively to institution-building and national development.

VI.3.14. The Mass Media

The prints and electronic media are recognized as important partners in the implementation of the revised policy. It is expected that they will educate, inform and enlighten the citizenry on all matters concerning the challenges, the desires and the aspirations of the Youth. It is also expected that they will publicize the objectives of the revised National Youth Policy and Strategic Plan and review and report on the progress of their implementation.

VI.4. Monitoring and Evaluation Framework

In collaboration with the National Youth Council, the Department of Planning and Programming (DOPP) of the Ministry of Youth and Sports shall be responsible for coordinating the monitoring and evaluation of the performance of implementation of the revised National Youth Policy to ensure that it responds to the developmental needs and aspirations of the youth, and their contribution to the broader developmental agenda of the country.

The aims and objectives of the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework shall be to:

- ensuring compliance with the guidelines, principles, goals and objectives outlined in the revised National Youth Policy;
- assessing the extent of achievement of the set goals, targets and policy measures with a view to ensuring successful implementation of the revised youth policy;
- assisting stake holders to operationalise the policy as it relates to their specific sectors and/or organisations and generate indicators for assessing performance and progress towards policy goals;
- assessing the efficient and judicious utilization of resources and youth development programs;
- measuring the long-term impact of the policy on youth development and empowerment in the country;
- developing a national youth index and data bank on youth activities and development trends and regularly update the situational analysis of youth development and empowerment in the country;
- undertaking research on youth development issues on a regular and systematic basis;
- support and strengthen M & E systems on youth issues in the different sectors, regions and districts; and
- conduct periodic M & E reviews on youth development and empowerment.

Monitoring and evaluation shall be carried out on a national, regional and district levels respectively. Baseline assessment will be carried out at the commencement of implementation, and will be followed by subsequent assessments with a view to collecting and analysing disaggregated data on age, gender, location, socio-economic status as well as special circumstances of youth to assess progress in specific areas of the revised youth Policy.

For the fact that monitoring and evaluation shall be an essential strategy for the effective and efficient implementation of the revised National Youth Policy, appropriate tracking tools, templates and modalities shall be developed to facilitate annual and mid-term reviews, and terminal evaluation of the performance of implementation of the revised policy.

VI.5. The Strategic Plan

The National Youth Policy will be implemented through a Medium-Term Strategic Plan, which will outline comprehensive strategies, interventions, performance indicators and means of verification of the responses, indicative budget that will achieve the intended objectives, time frame with respect to immediate, short, medium and long term and an analysis of the assumptions and risks for the proposed responses. The Plan will be developed and periodically reviewed in collaboration with stakeholders.

