



NAMs at Induction © GPN

Sixth Legislature Conducts First Induction

The National Assembly Service conducted its maiden induction training for members of the Sixth Legislature in Banjul's New Parliament Building from Wednesday 11th to Friday 14th May 2022. The program aims to build the capacity of lawmakers in the execution of their Legislative, Oversight and Representative functions.

Designed by the office of the Clerk the induction provides knowledge and opportunities for discussion to optimize the performance of the National Assembly Members (NAMs) during their five-year tenure, 2022-2027.

The training accorded lawmakers the opportunity to explore the international workings of the National Assembly through hands-on information from the three Divisions under the Office of the Clerk – Legal and Procedural Matters; Administration and Finance, and Legislative Business and Program.

Majority Leader Challenges Sixth Legislature to Avoid Partisan Politics

The Majority Leader and National Assembly Member (NAM) for Kantora, Hon Billay G Tunkara, has challenged his fellow lawmakers of the Sixth Legislature to avert partisan politics in the National Assembly. Hon Tunkara of the National People's Party (NPP) challenged members of the Sixth Legislature during an exclusive interview with a GPN Reporter at the National Assembly in Banjul.

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The Clerk of the National Assembly, Momodou A. Sise noted that "parliamentary career is the most complex and challenging ventures on earth, as it entails competing demands from the house, Party and Constituency, making the works and lives of the legislators a challenging act to balance".

"It is obvious that Parliamentarians preside over the making of laws for the good of society and serve as the epic oversight institution of the Republic. Therefore, it is important that the capacity of incoming Hon. Members is built along technical and professional legal lines", added Clerk Sise.

The Clerk commended key development partners for their efforts to strengthen the capacity of the National Assembly without which the achievements would have not been possible. He recognized the support of the International

NAMs Object Deputy Speaker's Defense Committee Chairperson Nomination

Hon Seedy SK Njie's appointment as the Chairperson of the Defense and Security Committee was met with objections from a number of National Assembly Members (NAMs). At least four Parliamentarians questioned the former Minister of Information's nomination on 25th April 2022 when Parliament's Selection Committee tabled the report on the nomination of members to committees and parliamentary delegations.

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Republican Institute, Westminster Foundation for Democracy, the International IDEA and the UNDP.

Speaker of the House, Hon Fabakary Tombong Jatta told members that the training was the beginning of many more training programs to come. He informed NAMs of the heavy workload that lies ahead for the Sixth Legislature which all begins by structuring the Committee and all other institutional arrangements.

"We must also ensure that the program of the National Assembly is designed to effectively do the oversight, monitoring, and evaluation of government departments. We also need to give serious attention to the ways in which Members interact with the public and we must rededicate ourselves to the true meaning of keeping the doors of the Assembly open", he noted.

Inside this edition - This is the second edition of the Gambia Parliamentary Newsletter which focuses on the activities of the Gambian Parliament. Our team of reporters report from the National Assembly for Foroyaa Newspaper and Gainako Online Newspaper.

This edition focuses on the Committees of the National Assembly, an explainer on Bills and Acts and the activities in the month of May and first week of June. This Newsletter also includes a pictorial of the National Assembly Committees and more.

UNDP's Aissata De: Sixth Legislature Crucial to Achieving SDGs



UNDP Resident Rep & Deputy Speaker © GPN

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Resident Representative for The Gambia, Aissata De expressed delight in supporting the National Assembly's first induction training for the Sixth Legislature. The UNDP Representative highlighted that the training is one of the world's most comprehensive strengthening programs for Parliaments across the globe.

She highlighted that the UNDP has strengthened the capacities of numerous parliamentary administrations around the world to effectively legislate and provide oversight functions in representing citizens. She revealed that over the past years, UNDP has provided support to the National Assembly focusing on key areas such as professional development of Members of Parliament and staff of the Service.

She added that the office also furnished the Assembly Chamber with digital devices to provide transcripts of parliamentary debates and supported the initiation of the 2021 National Assembly Service Act.

The UNDP Resident Representative observed the need for societal

mobilization for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, to integrate into the Gambian National Development Plan. "The National Assembly is the core of representative democracy and is central to the realization of the social sustainable development", she said. She stressed that transparent and inclusive institutions are keys to the achievement of all seventeen Sustainable Development goals, and thus the attainment of the global agenda also requires local actions in every country with the National Assembly as a powerful agent for change.

"It is by ratifying international agreements, adopting laws that respond to the Gambia's development priorities and monitoring their implementation while keeping the government to account that the national assembly drives that change", she said.

She utilized the event as an opportunity to encourage the Members of the Sixth Legislature to play a crucial role in shaping the Gambia's national development policies and laws that advance human development and accelerate progress towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Parliamentary Calendar 2022

According to the National Assembly's 2022 Calendar Parliament will be having Committee Sessions and other meetings until the end of July. Parliament will be in Recess during August and the Third Ordinary Session of the year will run from the 3rd to 30th of September 2022.

The Fourth Ordinary Session should run from the 14th to 23rd December 2022.

FactCheck – Are NAMs Paid D100,000 Clothing Allowance?

It is true that NAMs are paid a one-off clothing allowance of D100,000 for the five-year term they will serve in office after being sworn in April 2022. This translates to D100,000 over 60 months resulting in D1,666.7 every month for Clothing Allowance. TRUE

Majority Leader Challenges Sixth Legislature to Avoid Partisan Politics



From front page Hon Billay Tunkara (NPP) Kantora © GPN

"I want to challenge the NAMs of the Sixth Legislature, to do their utmost and avert partisan politics when dealing with national matters in the Assembly. Let us nurture and utilize the slogan of 'see Country before self', and work in that spirit in the performance of our representative, legislative and oversight functions", said the member for Kantora.

Hon Tunkara won his first term through the ticket of the United Democratic Party (UDP) and has now won his second term through the NPP. The Majority Leader believes that the Sixth Legislature should work hand in hand for the interest of the Gambian people, which would require more of consensus building in parliament.

In 2017 the UDP was the Majority Party with a total of 31 Parliamentarians while the NPP won the Majority seats in Parliament with a total of 18 seats. According to the Majority Leader both the Minority and Majority segments of Parliament are needed to build consensus and prioritise the supreme national interest above all.

"If [dialogue] is utilized through consultation and inclusion of both sides of the Assembly, the Assembly will really arrive at a consensus on pertinent national matters. The language of the Sixth Legislature should be consensus building in the performance of its legislative functions", said Hon Tunkara.

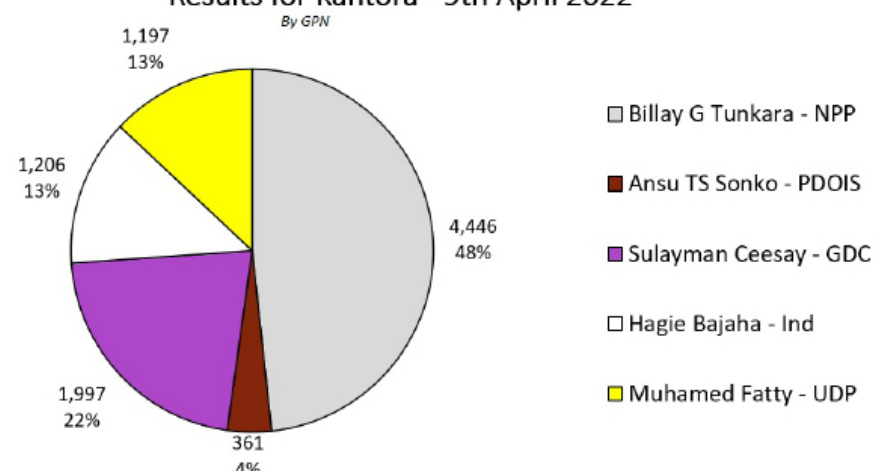
The NAM for Kantora pledged to surpass his efforts during his first term in the Fifth Legislature when he promised to go the extra mile to exceed the expectations of the electorate of Kantora, and the Gambia at large.

"Even though there is added responsibility, which is the position of the Majority Leader, notwithstanding this, I will make sure that that the added responsibility bestowed on me doesn't hinder or retard my performance in parliament. I will make sure that I participate effectively, to ensure that representation, legislation and oversight functions are upheld," he assured.

"I promise that I will work to the best of my ability to ensure that the position for the Majority Leader serves the purpose for which it was entrusted to me," vowed Majority Leader Tunkara. Hon Tunkara expressed gratitude to the electorate for the trust and confidence reposed in him by voting him into Parliament for his second term. He applauded President Adama Barrow and the entire NPP for nominating him as the Majority Leader.

"It is a very rare privilege and I am deeply honoured and grateful for them giving me that privilege for the second time in a row with an added responsibility of the position of the Majority Leader," said Hon Tunkara.

Results for Kantora - 9th April 2022



Parliamentarian Walks Bare feet in Tanbi Wetlands



Hon Modou Lamin B Bah © GPN

The Parliamentarian for Banjul North Hon Modou Lamin B. Bah by default hosts the New Parliament Building located in Banjul North, a stone's throw away from the Tanbi Wetlands. Tanbi Wetlands is a Ramsar Site, a designation reserved for important ecological sites. In this instance it's an important ecological site for the Gambia and West Africa by extension. The wetlands contain mangroves which serve as nurseries and key spawning grounds for fish, crabs and oysters.

We caught up with Hon Bah after he posted a video of himself walking bare feet in the Tanbi Wetlands to find out what motivated him to bring the wetlands to the public's attention. He started by recalling his childhood days spent fishing close to the mangroves with his friends and harvesting oysters.

Hon Bah believes Tanbi Wetlands can benefit the community which he says "is important to make good use of --- under my leadership and representation by going there to see myself what is really happening there". He explained that during his trip he "noticed an Island that [they] called Baobab Island because [they] saw Baobab Trees when [they] went deep inside the mangroves". Hon Bah believes that the crops and environment can benefit young people and women in Banjul North. Hon Bah is encouraging partners and investors to consider developing the area into an Ecological site which could serve as a prime bird watching site and attract tourists. Hon Bah

highlighted the existence of a Bee Hive which could be used to produce Honey together with the traditional Oyster Harvesting and fishing activities that already take place there. With regards to the challenges present Hon Bah revealed that there is a "Terminal Pump" located at the Wetlands in Banjul North which he says "has really butchered the wetland". In his view the Terminal which served as a pump but has since broken-down years back has altered the ecosystem of the wetlands.

Every rainy season the residents of Tobacco Road are inundated with floods from the mangroves and Tanbi Wetlands. The lock located at the Wetlands is supposed to drain all the water away from the compounds. However, additional construction roadworks completed recently in Banjul by Gai Construction has compounded the problem as drainage paths have become further blocked.

To fix the drainage problem in Tobacco Road the Lock and Pump will need to be fixed and remedial drainage construction works will need to be done in sync with the Terminal Pump. Hon Modou L B Bah is urging the authorities to fix the terminal and utilise the Wetlands to the benefit of the people in Banjul North and the rest of the Nation at large.

Hon Bah won his first term in Parliament after contesting for the second time. Mr Bah informed GPN that he has been appointed by his peers as the Vice Chair of the Select Committee on Health, Refugees, Disaster & Humanitarian Relief.

Hon Halifa Sallah Critical of Constituency Development Fund



Hon Halifa Sallah (center) by GPN

During a Press Conference held on May 24th 2022 the Leader of the People's Democratic Organisation for Independence and Socialism (PDOIS), Hon Halifa Sallah highlighted that "there was a debate as to resources given to NAMs to bring about development. Which Minister will in fact propose such a thing in the first place? To come to a National Budget for appropriation. NAMs are not part of the Executive," noted the former Parliamentarian who decided not to run for re-election.

Hon Sallah opined that "any NAM who told you that he/ she has brought about development in your community by been given money is not telling you the truth. National Assembly members are not given money. They cannot be given money". Hon Sallah explained that the Budgetary System places the Clerk as the Vote Controller of Parliament and controls the funds appropriated to the National Assembly.

This prompted a GPN Reporter to question the former member for Serekunda about the existence of the Constituency Development Fund (CDF). In response Hon Sallah revealed that "it was introduced during our time. There is nothing wrong in taking it if it is there," said

the PDOIS Leader.

"It is there and you should find out who took it and how they utilised it. That's what the media should do. --- Personally, I refused to take it," he said. Hon Sallah believes "that the [CDF] fund should be scrapped because it promotes self-perpetuating rule of National Assembly members. Put that [CDF] fund into the Council's Local development committee".

The GPN Reporter went further to question if the arrangement involving the Clerk who is in charge of Finance Administration of the project is not sufficient to avert any perceived corruption and to allow accountability.

In response Hon Sallah agreed that D300,000 over 5 years, "that's D1.5 million," a significant amount to invest into Serrekunda. However, he insists that the money should be paid "to the Councils, to the Wards because it is their duty to bring development in my community. For me for my salary I can take something and say I need to pay back. That's me, giving back to my community".

Hon Sallah stressed that since the NAM identifies the project and it's financed by the Clerk's Office, then "who determines the quality of the project? Who monitors the project afterwards for 1 year, 2 years, for 5 years to see that it is fit for purpose, who does that?"

About the Constituency Development Fund (CDF)

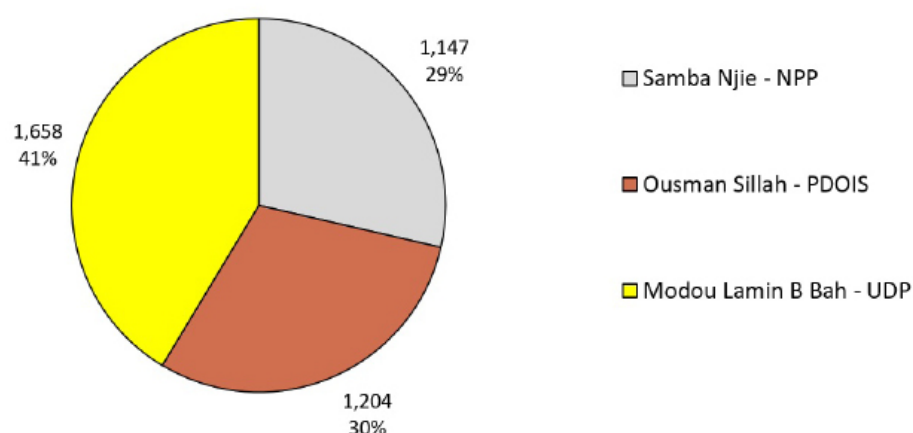
The Constituency Development Fund (CDF) is allocated to members of the National Assembly. The financial administration of the project is handled and managed by the Office of the Clerk which is responsible for awarding contracts. Meanwhile, it is anticipated that the NAM will consult their Constituency to identify the areas of intervention.

The amount of the funds allocated to each NAM is D300,000 each year. This means that within a five-year term, a

NAM can spend up to D1.5 million on developing their constituency. Below are some of the bullet points around the usage of the CDF.


- NAM identifies the project they wish to implement in the Constituency and develop a proposal,
- The Clerk then handles the awarding of contracts for the project to be implemented,
- NAM works with the identified contractor(s) for project implementation.


Results for Banjul North - 9th April 2022





National Assembly Standing Committee


After the swearing of National Assembly members, the National Assembly Select Committee prepares a selection of National Assembly members into Standing Committees, Select Committee and other International Parliamentary Delegations and Memberships. There are a total of 14 Standing Committees including the National Assembly Authority which operates under the National Assembly Service Authority (Board). National Assembly Committees are mandated by provision 109 (2) of the 1997 Constitution with the powers “to investigate or inquire into the activities of administration of ministries or departments of the Government” and to “investigate any matter of Public Importance”. Provision 109 (3) of the 1997 Constitution further empowers the National Assembly with “all the powers, rights and privileges as are vested in the High Court at a trial in respect of enforcing the attendance of witnesses, compelling the production of documents and the issue of a commission or request to examine witnesses abroad”. The National Assembly’s Revised Standing Order number 97 contains additional details on the Remit of All Committees defining their role broadly. All Standing Committees are defined from Standing Orders 111 – 125. The next episode will feature the National Assembly Select Committees.


Assembly Standing Committee	
Chairperson	Member
	Hon Fatoumatta Njai (Ind) Vice Chair
	Hon Yaya Gassama (UDP)
	Hon Omar Darboe (NPP)
	Hon Amie Colley (Ind)
	Hon Alfusainey Ceesay (UDP)
	Hon Kebba K Barrow (UDP)
	Hon Kebba Lang Fofana (Nom)
Hon Fabakary Tombong Jatta (Nom)	Mr Momodou A. Sise (Secretary)


Subsidiary Legislation Committee	
Chairperson	Member
	Hon Dawda Jeng (NPP) Vice Chair
	Hon Sankung Dampha (NPP)
	Hon Tamsir Cham (NPP)
	Hon Omar Jobe (Ind)
	Hon Essa Conteh (NPP)
	Hon Alhagie Babou Ceesay (Ind)
Hon Yaya Sanyang (UDP)	Hon Pa Dembo Sanneh (Ind)
	Hon Assan Touray (UDP)


Foreign Affairs Standing Committee	
Chairperson	Member
	Hon Sainey Jawara (NRP) Vice Chair
	Hon Madi MK Ceesay (UDP)
	Hon Musa Cham (PDOIS)
	Hon Alhagie Babou Ceesay (Ind)
	Hon Tamsir Cham (NPP)
	Hon Sulayman Saho (UDP)
	Hon Maimuna Ceesay (Nom)
Hon Billay G. Tunkara (NPP)	Hon Lamin J. Sanneh (UDP)

Assembly Business Committee	
Chairperson	Member
	Hon Suwaibou Touray (PDOIS)
	Hon Sulayman Saho (UDP)
	Hon Sulayman Jammeh (APRC)
	Hon Sainey Jawara (NRP)
	Hon Kebba Jallow (NPP)
Hon Fabakary Tombong Jatta (Nom)	Hon Almameh Gibba (Ind)


Public Appointments Standing Committee	
Chairperson	Member
	Hon Omar Darboe (NPP) Vice Chair
	Hon Suwaibou Touray (PDOIS)
	Hon Fatou Cham (UDP)
	Hon Alhagie Mbow (NRP)
Hon Sulayman Jammeh (APRC)	Hon Kebba T. Sanneh (Ind)

Standing Orders Committee	
Chairperson	Member
	Hon Alagie S. Darboe (UDP) Vice Chair
	Hon Muhammed Kanteh (Ind)
	Hon Suwaibou Touray (PDOIS)
	Hon Samba Jallow (NRP)
	Hon Fatou K Jawara (Nom)
	Hon Sheriff S. Sarr (APRC)
	Hon Salifu Jawo (NPP)
Hon Abdoulie Ceesay (NPP)	


Standing Committee on Privileges and Ethics	
Chairperson	Member
	Hon Madi MK Ceesay (UDP) Vice Chair
	Hon Billay G. Tunkara (NPP)
	Hon Amadou Camara (NRP)
	Hon Musa Cham (PDOIS)
	Hon Sankung Dampha (NPP)
	Hon Yunusa N. Bah (Ind)
	Hon Omar Jammeh (Ind)
	Hon Modou Lamin B. Bah (UDP)
Hon Salifu Jawo (NPP)	

Standing Committee on Defence & Security	
Chairperson	Member
	Hon Samba Jallow (NRP) Vice Chair
	Hon Sankung Dampha (NPP)
	Hon Muhammed Kanteh (Ind)
	Hon Almameh Gibba (Ind)
	Hon Musa Badjie (UDP)
	Hon Sheriff S. Sarr (APRC)
	Hon Fatou K Jawara (Nom)
	Hon Abdou Sowe (UDP)
Hon Seedy SK Njie (Nom)	


Finance and Public Accounts Committee (FPAC)

<i>Chairperson</i>	<i>Member</i>
	Hon Alhagie Mbow (NRP) Vice Chair
	Hon Kebba T. Sanneh (Ind)
	Hon Fatoumatta Njai (Ind)
	Hon Kebba Lang Fofana (Nom)
	Hon Fatou Cham (UDP)
	Hon Musa Cham (PDOIS)
Hon Alagie S. Darboe (UDP)	Hon Sulayman Jammeh (APRC)
	Hon Seedy SK Njie (Nom)


Public Enterprises Committee (PEC)

<i>Chairperson</i>	<i>Member</i>
	Hon Billay G. Tunkara (NPP) Vice Chair
	Hon Samba Jallow (NRP)
	Hon Almameh Gibba (Ind)
	Hon Lamin Ceesay (UDP)
	Hon Sheriff S. Sarr (APRC)
	Hon Abdoulie Njai (Ind)
	Hon Salifu Jawo (NPP)
Hon Lamin J. Sanneh (UDP)	Hon Ebrima Jaiteh (NPP)


Committee of Selection

<i>Chairperson</i>	<i>Member</i>
	Hon Billay G. Tunkara (NPP)
	Hon Alagie S. Darboe (UDP)
	Hon Abdoulie Ceesay (NPP)
	Hon Salifu Jawo (NPP)
Hon Fabakary Tombong Jatta (Nom)	Hon Madi MK Ceesay (UDP)

Public Petitions Committee

<i>Chairperson</i>	<i>Member</i>
	Hon Fatou K Jawara (Nom) Vice Chair
	Hon Lamin J. Sanneh (UDP)
	Hon Amadou Camara (NRP)
	Hon Kemo Gasama (UDP)
	Hon Sulayman Saho (UDP)
	Hon Haruna Barry (NPP)
	Hon Gibbi Mballow (NPP)
Hon Suwaibou Touray (PDOIS)	Hon Kebba Lang Fofana (Nom)

Standing Committee on Human Rights and Constitutional Matters

<i>Chairperson</i>	<i>Member</i>
	Hon Seedy SK Njie (Nom) Vice Chair
	Hon Fatou K Jawara (Nom)
	Hon Suwaibou Touray (PDOIS)
	Hon Yaya Sanyang (UDP)
	Hon Abdoulie Ceesay (NPP)
	Hon Muhammed Kanteh (Ind)
	Hon Bakary K. Badjie (Ind)
Hon Madi MK Ceesay (UDP)	Hon Birom J. S. Sowe (NPP)

FPAC Tells VP and Co “It’s No More Business as Usual”

Parliament’s Finance and Public Accounts Committee (FPAC) held a briefing session with representatives of Ministries, Public Enterprises and Agencies on Tuesday 7th June 2022 warning them to submit their report or face sanctions and contempt of Parliament.

The meeting featured heads of Government Ministries such as the newly appointed Vice President Hon Alieu Badara Joof, the Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs (MoFEA) Hon Seedy Keita and the Minister of Interior Hon Seyaka Sonko to name a few. The main purpose of the briefing was to highlight the new policy direction of Parliament’s FPAC in relation to their operation and supervising role over Public Institutions.

Speaking to the Head of Government Institutions Vice-Chair Hon Alhagie Mbowe called on all institutions that have not submitted reports from 2016 to 2020 to make sure they “do whatever it takes to ensure that they are compliant because we [FPAC] cannot wait anymore”.

Making reference to their briefing document for the meeting, FPAC Chairperson Hon Alhagie S. Darboe highlighted that “institution/officers shall submit both hard and soft copies of their annual activity reports and audited financial statements to the Office of the Clerk two weeks before the date set for scrutiny. Failure to do so will be considered to be in contempt of the committee and shall call for a reprimand whose nature will be defined by the committee”.

The Chairperson continued to warn all Heads of Institutions present that “all permanent Secretaries and Vote Controllers at Ministries and Departments

should be present during the presentation and consideration, to answer questions and make clarifications”.

During the question-and-answer session, FPAC Chairperson Hon Darboe “indicated this time around at the end of the committee session that is June to July [2022], the committee will be compiling its report and report to the plenary”.

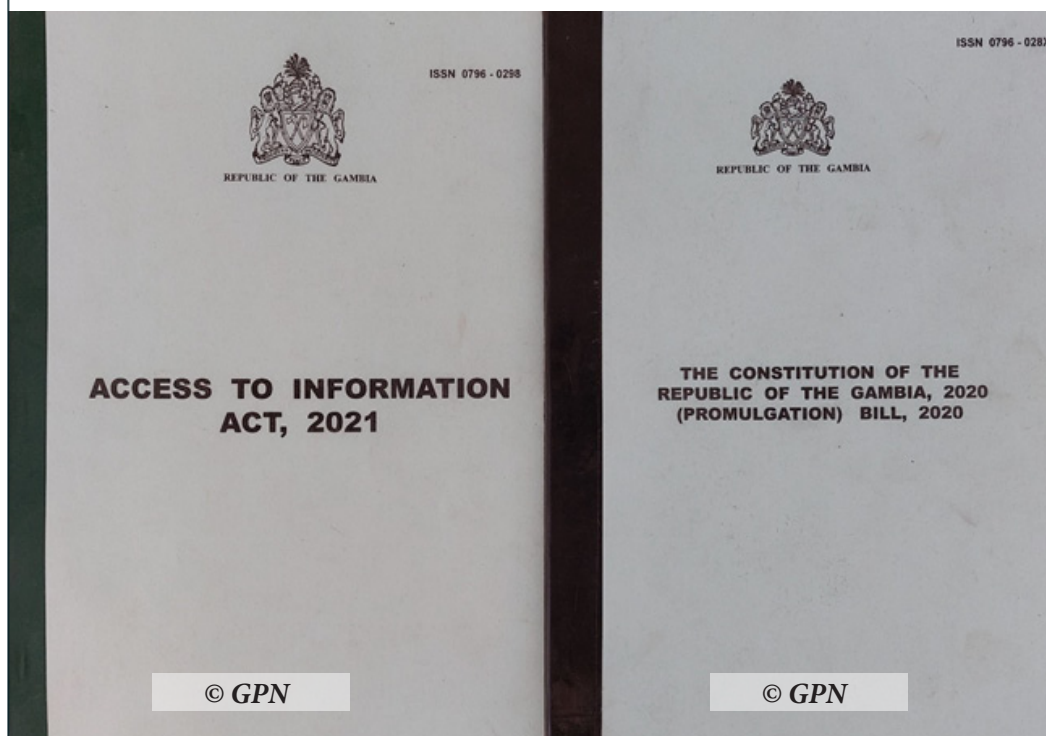
Unlike other years “it will not be like accumulating our reports, anytime we end any session we are expected to report to the plenary, whatever has been reported from the respective institutions, exactly this is what we are going to report to the plenary” noted the Chair.

The FPAC Chair concluded by warning Heads of Institutions that “if you are found wanting, well your respective select committee and standing committees will be implementing duly the recommendations that are going to be made by the FPAC Committee”.

A follow-up meeting was held on Friday 10th June 2022 for 13 Institutions which did not attend the FPAC meeting held on 7th June 2022. The FPAC Vice Chair warned Ministers and Heads of Institutions that it will no longer be business as usual. They warned Officials present that if you are summoned to attend you must attend or face contempt. NAMs also urged Institutions to ensure that they have qualified Accountants to keep their books in order.

Institutions submit their Annual Report for scrutiny and in some instances, Institutions have not submitted their documents as required by law. This is leading to a backlog of reports that Parliament should review.

Bills and Acts



A Bill is a proposed legislation which is under consideration by the National Assembly. Bills which have gone through the process of tabling in Parliament, considered at the required stages, approved by the National Assembly, and assented to by the President become an Act of the National Assembly. There are various forms of Bills and there are limited authorities which can table Bills. Section 101 of the 1997 Constitution and Provision 62 of the National Assembly's Revised Standing Order stipulates who can table Bills at the National Assembly. Most Bills are introduced by Ministers and Cabinet Secretaries. However, Bills can also be introduced by National Assembly members via a Private Members Bill. At the moment NAMs cannot table Bills which have will cause charges to the Consolidated Revenue Fund (CRF). The President may also certify that the enactment of a Bill is required in the public interest as a matter of urgency. This provision is guided by provision 101 of the 1997 Constitution.

The most common form of Bills are laws and acts which institute legislative policy changes. For example, the National Human Rights Commission Act enacted in 2019 was as a response to the Government's decision to promote the human rights of Citizens. This Act established the National Human Rights Commission and defines the powers and the manner in which the Commission conducts its work. Bills can also be introduced such as Supplementary Appropriation, the National Budget, Agreements with Foreign and Local Entities, Amendments to the Constitution, Acts, Loans and Grants etc.

Below are the steps which a regular Bill must pass through to be passed

and become an Act of the National Assembly. Please note that this summary is not a comprehensive list of all the provisions relating to the tabling of Bills in Parliament.

(NASO – National Assembly Standing Orders 65 and 66 outlines the overall processes a Bill should pass to become an Act. NASO 67 to 75 contains more detailed explanations on the proceedings of a Bill to become an Act.)

1. The Bill is tabled for the First Reading. This is usually a formality conducted by the Minister or the Member of Parliament. No arguments or counter statements are heard at the First Reading. (NASO 65)

2. The Bill is tabled for the Second Reading in which the aims and objects are discussed. A vote is usually conducted for the Bill to be subject to the relevant Committee who will prepare a Report in collaboration with subject matter specialists. If the required number of votes are not achieved the Bill is rejected. (NASO 66 & 67)

3. The relevant Committee tables a report on the Bill at the Plenary and the Report is adopted either with or without amendments. The Plenary may give the Committee more work to conduct on the Bill. (NASO 68 to 71)

4. The Bill is tabled for the Consideration stage and amended clause by clause. (NASO 72 to 74)

5. The Bill is passed at the Third and Final reading by the required number of members. This number varies depending on the type of Bill considered by the National Assembly. (NASO 75)

6. The Final Stage is for the President to assent to the Bill within 30 days to become an Act of the National Assembly. Provision 226 (2) and (3) of the 1997 Constitution.

Bills Pending at the National Assembly and Stages

A GPN reporter made enquiries in the National Assembly to get hold of a list of bills which are currently expected to be dealt with by the Sixth Legislature. These are Bills which have already been tabled during the term of the Fifth Legislature and to be adopted or rejected by the Sixth Legislature.

Our findings have indicated that there are a total of twelve pending bills. The below stated bills, are expected to be dealt with by the Sixth Legislature.

1. Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters Bill 2019, Consideration Stage Pending

2. Gambia Anti-Corruption Bill 2019 (Committee Stage), Second Reading and Committed to Finance and Public Accounts Committee

3. Prevention and Prohibition of Torture Bill 2020, Second Recording Committed to Standing Committee on Human Rights and Constitutional Matters

4. International Crimes Bill 2020, Second Recording Committed to Standing Committee on Human Rights and Constitutional Matters

5. Criminal Procedure Bill 2020, Second Reading Committed to Standing Committee on Human Rights and Constitutional Matters

6. Labor (Amendment) Bill 2020, Second Reading Committed to a Joint Committee on Trade & Committee on Health

7. Force Labor (Amendment) Bill 2020, Second Reading Committed to a Joint Committee on Trade & Committee on Health

8. Criminal Offences Bill 2020, Second Reading Committed to Standing Committee on Human Rights and Constitutional Matters

9. Criminal Offences Bill 2020, Second Reading Committed to Standing Committee on Human Rights and Constitutional Matters

10. Tourism Offences (Amendment) Bill 2020, Second Reading Committed to A Joint Committee on Trade & Committee on Health

11. The Gambia Nationality and Citizenship Bill 2020, Second Reading Committed to a Joint Committee on Trade & Committee on Health

12. The Gambia Public Procurement Authority Bill 2020, Committed to FPAC/PEC

Some notable Bills brought before the Fifth Legislature and failed to pass are the Constitution of The Republic Gambia (Promulgation) 2020 which failed due to receiving less than the required number of votes on its Second Reading. Another failed Bill is the Skin Bleaching (Prohibition) Repeal Bill 2020 which failed on its Third Reading. The Constitution Amendment Bill which proposed to enlarge the number of Parliamentary seats also faced difficulties to pass in the latter months of the Fifth Legislature.

Gambia Participates Advocates for Anti-Corruption Bill



#OBS2021 Campaign © Gambia Participates

The Anti-Corruption Bill 2021 was scheduled to be tabled at the National Assembly for its considerations stage on February 2022 however the Bill was suspended because the Minister failed to appear before the Assembly. On the day that Bill was to be tabled Gambia Participates was scheduled to hold a "solidarity march" in support of National Assembly members passing the Bill. The Organisation was denied a Protest Permit and the Bill was suspended.

However, that did not discourage the group from launching a campaign to advocate for the Anti-Corruption Bill. Gambia Participates continues to advocate for the passing of Anti-Corruption Bill via a series of videos on Facebook.

One such video is captioned "Corruption erodes democracy, resulting in a vicious cycle in which corrupt systems undermine democratic institutions, and weak institutions are less equipped to control corruption."

NAMs Object Deputy Speaker's Defense Committee Chairperson Nomination



From front page Deputy Speaker Hon Seedy SK Njie © GPN

Hon Njie was nominated by President Adama Barrow as the Deputy Speaker of Parliament much to the disapproval of Civil Society. President Barrow's National People's Party (NPP) currently holds the majority seat in Parliament with a total 18 seats. When an additional 5 nominated members are added to this the President's total influence in Parliament goes up to 23 out of 58 National Assembly seats.

First to question the Defense and Security Committee Chairperson nomination of Hon Njie was UDP's Hon Assan Touray of Bakau. Hon Touray revealed that his research indicates that the Deputy Speaker did not have any security background. Hon Touray nominated Independent Parliamentarian Hon Muhammed Kante of Busumbala instead. According to Hon Touray the member for Busumbala was a former Security Officer and better suited to Chair Parliament's Defense and Security Committee. Fellow nominated member Hon Fatou K Jawara spoke in defence of Deputy Speaker Hon Njie's nomination as Chairperson when she highlighted that she is also a member of the Defense Committee without any Security background and the same was true for the Vice Chair. "I think [being] having a security background and not a security background is not the matter. The matter is who can do it," said Hon Jawara.

During Hon Sulayman Saho of Central Baddibu's intervention he explained that "maybe it's the culture that we found, that the

former Deputy Speaker was the Chair and this time you" did the same. He asked the Speaker to consider "if there is somebody in that committee who has Security background, I think that person will do well. Let's all speak with honesty and sincerity. This is about Nation Building," said the UDP Parliamentarian.

Member for Latrikunda Sabijie, Hon Yaya Sanyang started his deliberation by concurring with the member for Banjul South, Hon Fatoumata Njai's call for a complete review of the list of Committee and the selection process. According to Hon Sanyang, Deputy Speaker Hon "Seedy Njie is a Security threat to this country".

This prompted Speaker Jatta to demand that the UDP NAM withdrew his statement. After withdrawing his statement Hon Sanyang proceeded to recommend the member for Busumbala, a one-time head of Intelligence at State House and former Police Commissioner to Chair the Committee on Defense and Security. In his view Hon Seedy Njie's affiliation to the government will not permit him to perform oversight on the Security Institutions and hold them accountable.

Former Majority Leader Hon Kebba K Barrow noted that Security is a concern for his constituency Kombo South. The UDP Leader and former Civil Society Advocate noted that "over the last five years six people were killed in Kombo South and nothing happened. The Standing Committee on Defense, the work had not been completed

and nothing is done".

Hon Barrow proceeded to explain an incident where a young person was killed in broad daylight "the Minister promised that they are going to look into that and that report is not out". As Hon Barrow began to present his objections "for the Security Committee to be led by Hon Seedy SK Njie," Hon Omar Darboe raised a point of objection claiming that the former Majority Leader was deviating.

In response to the back-and-forth between the two members, Speaker Hon Jatta interjected to rule for the member for Kombo South to proceed with his submission.

Hon Barrow suggested that "the Defense and Security Committee should be headed by somebody who has a background on Security and will not be a threat to the Gambian people" he re-echoed his conviction that "it is not only Kombo South, so many people died over the Fifth Legislature and nothing has been done," said the former UDP Majority Leader.

Nominated member Hon Lang Fofana and NPP's Hon Abdoulie Ceesay of Old Yundum spoke in defence of Hon Seedy SK Njie's nomination as Chairperson of the Defense and Security Committee while a large majority of UDP members argued against his

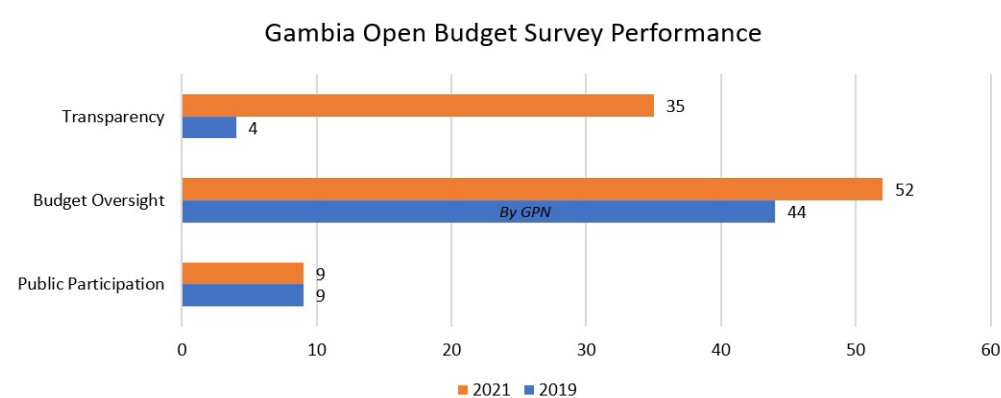
nomination.

Although he was the main topic of discussion the Deputy Speaker Hon Njie, opted to reserve his comments. However, Hon Muhammed Kante who was also a subject of discussion decided to speak on the Leadership of the Defense and Security Committee. Hon Kante, Independent member for Busumbala noted that "we must do selection to various committees with what we have laid down as rules and regulations". The Candidate who was endorsed by UDP Supporters questioned "if there is some form of biasness in terms of selecting from this house that's the Institutions, we having oversight functions from".

"There are methodologies in term of selecting members, one of those methodology is by looking at the background information of that individual. It would not be fair enough for someone with a security background with a Masters and with LLB to be answerable to someone who doesn't have a security background. We can work with him [Hon Seedy Njie] provided there is no sense of biasness that has been played within the selection process," he concluded.

Gambia Participates Presents Gambia Performance Report on Open Budget

From back page



According to Statistics available from the International Budget Partnership the Gambia was ranked 110 out of 117 in 2019. This was improved upon in 2021 when the Gambia was ranked 81 out of 120 moving up over 30 places. However, in 2020 there was no record of the Gambia's performance making it difficult to plot a trend of the Gambia's performance.

The scores provided are calculated on a scale of 0-100 and an example of a good score is 61 and above for transparency. This indicates that a country is likely publishing enough material to support informed public debate on the budget. As can be

seen the Gambia is still below the 61 mark for a good level of transparency, budget oversight and public participation.

Other topics discussed during the meeting include the role of Parliament to improve Gambia's performance in public participation, oversight and transparency of the budget.

It can be recalled that Gambia Participates challenged the National Assembly's decision to allocate its members a D54 Million loan. The loan was rejected by the courts and struck out of the Budget after Gambia Participates won the court case.



Voice of the Nation

The Voice of the Nation is a new column which features views and perspectives of the public on the National Assembly. The various stakeholders featured in this column will come from CSOs, Private Sector, People and other relevant bodies requesting action from Parliament. The first edition of this column features an introduction of the National Youth Parliament and two CSOs engagements with Parliament.

CRPD Engages National Assembly Staff



CRPD Reps meet National Assembly Staff © CRPD

The Center for Research and Policy Development (CRPD) a Civil Society Organisation (CSO) focusing on research and policy development met with staff of the National Assembly. After the meeting held in early June 2022, they posted this message noting that “strengthening partnerships is key to our work”.

According to the organisation known for their Afrobarometer Surveys the “discussions focused on enhancing partnerships between the legislature and the CSOs on the functions of parliament”. CRPD strongly believes “in the need to enhance partnerships for national development” and remains “committed to civil engagements to bring parliament to the people”.

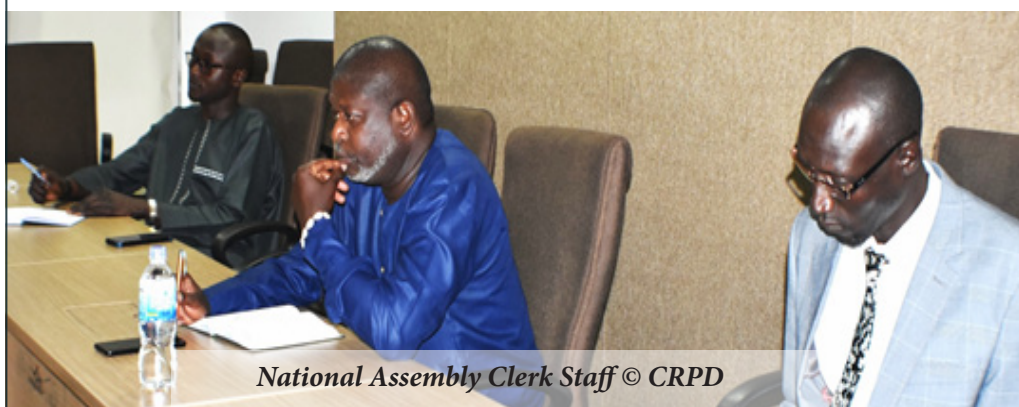
“We believe in engaging key stakeholders and actors for the development of the country &

bringing policy makers closer to the people for meaningful development & Democracy,” concluded the Facebook post.

The National Assembly also posted a message on social media noting the “courtesy call on the Office of the Clerk to explore the National Assembly open-door policy with CSOs on the functions of Parliament”.

Present at the meeting were the “Deputy Clerk Legislative Business and Programmes, Danial Cardos who hosted the meeting together with Deputy Clerk Legal and Procedural Matters, Kalipha MM Mbaye [who] described partnership with CSOs as a necessary value addition to the Assembly”.

“As CRPD looks towards a more engaging partnership, the National Assembly assures full commitment to bring Parliament closer to the people” concluded the Facebook post.



National Assembly Clerk Staff © CRPD

Introducing the National Youth Parliament



NYP Speaker Hon Cham & Deputy Speaker Hon Jobe © NYP

The National Youth Parliament-The Gambia (NYP) is a non-partisan, non-profit youth organization established as an advocacy, development oriented and youth empowerment institution to contribute towards the development of the youth. The CSO also advocates for the proper management of the welfare of youth through their active participation and involvement in decision making and implementation of programs.

NYP connects young people with policy makers, government, private sector, civil society organizations, the media and numerous stakeholders to discuss issues affecting the youth to identify the appropriate solutions to address their concerns.

Some of the thematic area that NYP focuses on are; Good Governance and Democracy, Reproductive Health, Environmental Protection, Gender Mainstreaming, Migration, Peace-building, Interfaith and Road Safety. NYP Speaker Hon Omar Cham notes that “the Organisation has implemented series of events on these areas through capacity building programs, sensitization tours, Radio and TV Programs, Inter-Party dialogues, seminars, election observation and voter education, just to name a few”.

According to NYP Speaker Hon Cham the NYP was not established by an Act

of Parliament and is a Civil Society Organisation. NYP Speaker Cham explained that they are not subvented by the National Youth Council, however it serves as the NYP's parent body as they are registered with them and “they sometimes support our events or hold funds on our behalf.

The NYP's National Executive Committee (NEC) was instituted in January 2021 after an election spearheaded by the Independent Electoral Commission. The elected positions are; Hon. Omar Cham-Speaker, Hon. Ndegen Jobe- Deputy Speaker, Hon. Tijan Kuyateh- Clerk, Hon. Omar Nyang- Deputy Clerk and Hon. Ada Bojang- Finance Officer.

The NEC in turn appoints members of the Secretariat who are Alhasan Drammeh a Communications Officer and Sophie Manneh a Programmes Assistant. All the regions are represented by 30 parliamentarians who are headed by Regional Executives in each region, containing the same positions as the National Executive Committee.

The Regional Speakers and regional clerks from these regions alongside the NEC form the National Council that meets every quarter to give updates to the NYP and discuss the way forward.

The next edition will feature the Children's National Assembly of the Gambia.

Gambia Participates Presents Gambia Performance Report on Open Budget

Civil Society Organisation Gambia Participates held a meeting with the National Assembly's Finance and Public Accounts Committee in which the Gambia's Open Budget Survey 2021 was discussed. The Open

Budget Survey is pioneered by the International Budget Partnership and their results places the Gambia among the top improvers in Budget Transparency.

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This Newsletter is written & produced by three journalists namely; Yusef Taylor & Edrissa Jallow of Gainako Online News & Kebba AF Touray of Foroyaa Newspaper. Designed by Aliou Bobb and printed by R&A Designs. Please send any feedback to yusef.taylor@gmail.com or 7724140.