

# NATIONAL UNITY PARTY(NUP)

## THE PEOPLE'S MANIFESTO 2021



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**UNITY FOR  
PEACE & DEVELOPMENT**

[www.nupgambia.com](http://www.nupgambia.com)



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## Foreword

Fellow Gambians and Friends of The Gambia

It is an honour to be chosen as the standard-bearer of the National Unity Party (NUP) and to introduce the Party's Manifesto, which is dubbed "**The People's Manifesto**". We call it the People's Manifesto because it was developed by the general membership through wide consultations with subject matter specialists and inputs from ordinary Gambians.

We are aware that The Gambia is in dire need of passionate and committed leadership to pull the country out of its current predicament. The Gambia needs a new bunch of capable, honest, and trustworthy leaders that will provide equal opportunities to all Gambians, irrespective of tribe, religion, gender, or political affiliation. The NUP is the party that can usher in the desired change and put the country on a pedestal of hope.

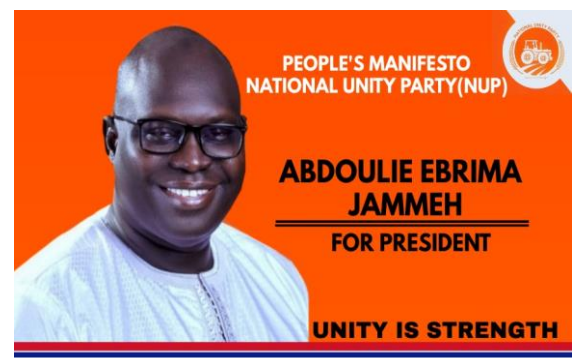
This manifesto provides the blueprint for the party's transformation agenda anchored in a revitalized economy upon which our development programme for our country depends for the benefits of our citizens; improved education system, upgraded health care delivery service to give you the best medical care, rejuvenated agricultural sector to include Agro-processing plants, strengthening of regional authorities to empower local communities, protecting our natural environment and providing clean water as a basic human right for our citizens, and a vibrant transportation system to include a revitalized river transport system. It also outlines strategies geared towards empowering and improving the livelihoods of women and the youth who are critical pillars of any development plan.

As the country prepares for one of the most consequential elections in its history, we are hopeful that Gambians will rally behind the NUP as we strive to unify the country, engender democratic development, and improve the socio-economic well-being of Gambians. The NUP drive for meaningful development will be guided by this progressive manifesto and the party's ideals as well as the leadership that will make it the natural choice to take The Gambia forward.

Long Live The Gambia! Long Live NUP!

*Abdoulie Ebrima Jammeh*

**NUP Presidential Candidate**



## Preamble

The Gambia's existence as a nation has undergone a full cycle of governance systems from at one time being a globally acclaimed democratic state of excellence to one of mediocre rule, and today as a nation in transition filled with hope and aspiration for the future. There is an exuberant aspiration for change in our system of governance and a future of progress which is underpinned by the ideals of upholding democratic values of promoting and protecting fundamental human rights, recognising the dignity of an individual, enhancing social cohesion as well as ensuring socio-economic development of the people. It is against this backdrop coupled with an unwavering conviction in these values that the National Unity Party (**NUP**) has emerged as a political party.

The **NUP** is a unique party that has a brand, which is unlike any operating conventional political party in The Gambia. The cardinal philosophy of the founders was to build a people's movement with a shared vision and interest in national development aimed at creating a merit-based government as opposed to party affiliation. To set the standards, a resolution was adopted from



the outset that none of the founders shall vie for the positions of Party Chairperson or Presidential candidate. Moreover, the founders also enshrined the issue of term limits in the party's governance structure where leaders will only serve two terms either in government or in opposition. The founders' decision not to lead the party is informed by their unequivocal commitment to creating a people-driven movement that will be owned and led by the ordinary members rather than the founding fathers or the main benefactors of the party.

Therefore, the governance framework of the party will be guided by democratic values and principles which will be vigorously upheld and practised at the organisational level of the party and this will be supported and sustained at the national level of government.

The **NUP** realizes that meaningful development of The Gambia requires the formulation of robust socio-economic transformational policies and programmes, the foundation and implementation of which must be based on invaluable concepts of transparency and accountability which are being weakened by corruption. The **NUP** strongly believes in the equitable distribution and judicious use of the national resources. Therefore, our party endeavours to drastically curb corruption through the establishment of systems that will uphold the transparency of process and procedures in the management of our national resources.

The need to unite all the people of The Gambia, irrespective of political, religious, and tribal affiliations, the need to curb the rise in corruption, and the need to improve the standard of living for all Gambians are of paramount importance. Consequently, ensuring the provision of these needs will be the cornerstone of the NUP's socio-economic development agenda. As a result, our development programme lays emphasis on decentralisation of power to the local level geared towards enhancing the business and investment environment of The Gambia to attract investments that will support the generation of income, creation of



employment opportunities particularly for Gambian youth, and to provide quality and affordable health care as well as a good education system.

The **NUP** recognises the indispensable role of women and youth in national development in view of their position as critical national assets. Considering that the foundation of any meaningful development is based on the empowerment of the generations of the future – the youth and women - the party places a high premium on formulating strategies for youth and womens' empowerment and this will be given distinctive priority in the national budget.

This manifesto outlines the party's perspectives on key topical issues and the programmes it intends to embark on in the next five years.

## Section 1: Vision and Mission

### 1.1 Vision:

The vision of the **NUP** is to induce a sustained socio-economic transformation in The Gambia based on the principles of democracy, equality, justice, and the promotion of social cohesion to foster and maintain national unity.

### 1.2 Mission:

Our mission is to ensure an increased prosperous future for a healthy, well-educated, dignified people in peace, stability, economic growth, and development in a corrupt-free, unified society with equal opportunities for all whilst putting The Gambia first.

## Section 2: The Economy

The small economy of The Gambia relies mainly on rain-fed agriculture, tourism and, in recent years, on remittances from Gambians living abroad. Accordingly, this makes the country vulnerable to external shocks where agriculture and services sectors, which employ over 75% of the workforce, are the most vulnerable. The country faces a host of long-term developmental challenges such as an undiversified economy, a small internal market, fast rate of population growth and limited essential skills required for a change in the employment structure.



Similarly, the private sector is weak and there is a high rate of youth unemployment and illegal migration. Also, most government loans are used mainly for consumption rather than for income generation. It is apparent that the economy needs some structural transformation to shape a better future for the country. These involve inclusive economic growth, job creation, enhanced energy delivery, better transportation networks and infrastructure, poverty reduction and food security in an environmentally, economically, and socially sustainable way.

An NUP government will prioritize the following in a bid to resuscitate our crumbling economy:

### Our delivery plans

- a) Develop a road map for economic revival with the aim of running a budget surplus
- b) Enforce fiscal discipline to cut out wasteful government spending
- c) Pay down government debts
- d) Reduce corporate tax and enhancing compliance

- e) Pursue our ambition to introduce zero tax payment in respect of corporation tax for 10 years for businesses with capital investments of more than US\$250,000 or GMD12.5 million in designated areas
- f) Introduce micro-financing at Village Development Committee level to encourage entrepreneurship and poverty reduction
- g) Work with banks to help secure our economic recovery plans by backing businesses to create jobs and growth in our economy, thus benefiting all parts of the country
- h) Create a business enabling environment and supporting private-sector investment in setting up factories to create jobs and growth rate in all the regions of the country
- i) Engage with banks to create tools/mandates to actively support sustainable agricultural lending
- j) Allow banks to engage in joint-venture business with reputable Gambian entrepreneurs

## 2.1 Energy, petroleum, waste, and sanitation

There cannot be any meaningful development without reliable and affordable energy supply. However, the erratic nature of water and energy supply in The Gambia poses significant socio-economic challenges in the country. There is dire need to reduce energy imports and shift balance to greener and sustainable alternatives. An NUP government will urgently work on tackling this perennial problem through Public Private Partnership initiatives aimed at enhancing efficiency and affordability in the energy and water sectors. Similarly, the potential for the petroleum sector is not being fully realized. As a result, an NUP government will formulate strategies to unlock the vast potential of the industry. Also, the issue of sustainable waste management and sanitation will be prioritized by our government.

### Our delivery plans

- a) Conduct an independent review of the structure of the National Water and Electricity Company (NAWEC), with a view to unbundling electricity and water services
- b) Champion the shift towards “greener and sustainable” alternatives such as solar and wind and energy from waste plants through public-private partnership (PPP)
- c) Improve access to basic drinking pipe-borne water
- d) Provide access to at least basic sanitation for the residents of Banjul by 2025
- e) Create sovereign funds to invest 60 percent of the proceeds derived from exploration of oil and other minerals
- f) Create awareness on waste management with the aim of waste reduction
- g) Promote the establishment of waste recycling and processing plants across the country

## 2.2 Transportation

Transportation is a critical driver of economic advancement globally and The Gambia is no exception to this phenomenon. An NUP government will adopt and implement the recommendations of the National Road Transport Policy (NRTP) which aims to improve road transportation in the country.

The Port of Banjul has a strategic location at the mouth of the River Gambia and, as such, it is positioned as a major gateway for imports/exports for both The Gambia and – in theory – the West Africa sub-region. There are also numerous river crossing points serviced by ferries (managed by the Gambia Ports Authority) that cross the River Gambia and provide integral links of the primary road network, including the TransGambia Bridge linking the north and south of neighbouring Senegal. Despite these positives, the once-booming area of river transport in The Gambia is non-existent and needs urgent revitalization.

The Gambia's air transport system is relatively well developed, with regular flights by international carriers to and from destinations in Europe and elsewhere in Africa. However, the lack of a home-based carrier and the non-existence of direct flights to and from destinations to America are challenges that an NUP government will address.

### Our delivery plans

- a) Ensure efficient maintenance and rehabilitation of the existing public assets in all transport sub-sectors whilst new infrastructure development in the area will be based on socio-economic considerations only
- b) Carry out assessment and prioritization of feeder road improvement needs
- c) Prioritize the improvement and modernization of the Banjul Port to make it a competitive port of choice in the Africa region; thus, creating employment opportunities for the youths
- d) Improve driver training/testing, vehicle testing and licensing, and targeted enforcement to be introduced
- e) Ensure that traffic police focus on enforcement on road user behaviour that causes traffic accidents to enforce axle load limits of heavy trucks
- f) Invite and incentivize private sector companies to invest in improved vehicle testing facilities
- g) Develop mechanisms to ensure public transport services are available for both the urban and rural areas
- h) Incentivize private sector entrepreneurs to develop river transport from Banjul to Koina to ease the burden of heavy goods vehicles on the roads and reduce the maintenance of the highways
- i) Prioritize the establishment of a home-based airline through PPP
- j) Encourage the establishment of air links between The Gambia and North America
- k) Create the enabling environment to attract private sector investment in setting-up maintenance facilities for aircrafts at Banjul International Airport to create jobs and training opportunities in mechanical engineering for our youth
- l) Create an Independent Vehicle Licencing Authority operational across the country
- m) Support inward investment in the operation of train and tram networks respectively

### 2.3 Infrastructure development

Public infrastructure in The Gambia is in a dilapidated condition and in some areas the lack of infrastructure is a hindrance to economic growth. It goes without saying that if we are to meet our ambition to turn The Gambia into an economic hub within the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the availability of modern infrastructure is key as infrastructure development will accelerate



job creation and help reduce the country's 44 per cent youth unemployment. Therefore, an NUP government will encourage a PPP Initiative to attract inward investments in meeting the party's ambitious development agenda. However, our government will conduct needs assessment exercises to ensure that decisions on any new infrastructure are informed by socio-economic development criteria and not any political considerations.

## Our delivery plans

- a) Build new health facilities to promote primary health care across the country that supports rural communities
- b) Rebuild some primary and feeder road networks
- c) Construct a modern prison/correction facility with educational amenities to train inmates new technical skills and entrepreneurship
- d) Support the upgrade of the national grid with alternative sources of energy such as solar and wind
- e) Commission the University of The Gambia to develop terms of reference to inform the public consultation process required for a proposed new capital city

## Section 3: Education

Providing quality and accessible education will be one of the key priorities for an NUP government. As a country we cannot attain sustainable development if our education system is sub-standard. Despite progress being registered in the education sector in terms of infrastructure, there is a greater desire for a quality, affordable and relevant education system that reflects the felt needs of the people.



## Our delivery plans

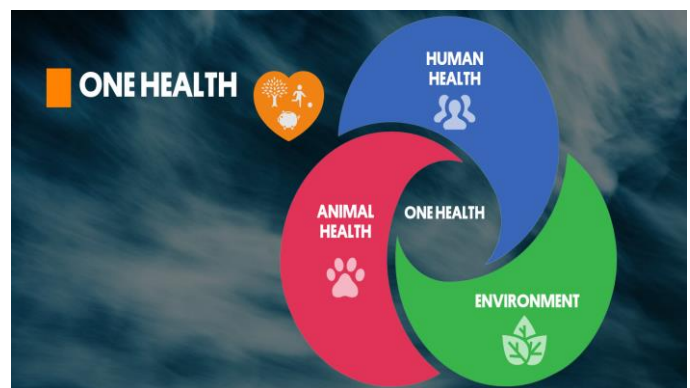
- a) Provide free, compulsory quality education to all children. We will ensure that Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM subjects) free at tertiary level
- b) Improve standards in primary schools. We will introduce tough new standards for literacy and numeracy to enable schoolchildren to write a short story with accurate punctuation, spelling and grammar
- c) Review the secondary school curriculum to create pathways for students with technical skills
- d) Pursue the creation of a technologically driven society to cope with the increasing demands of the 21st century
- e) Boost the morale of teachers by instituting regular and constant staff training to ensure high professional standards, remuneration and working conditions
- f) Establish a Teachers' Service Commission principally designed for the protection of teachers' welfare and making recommendations for their remuneration
- g) Create an independent schools' inspectorate consisting of seasoned educationists, responsible for schools' inspection to ensure that high-quality performance standards are met
- h) Prioritize science, arts technology, engineering, and mathematics in the education system
- i) Equip schools with affordable and relevant learning materials
- j) Provide capital funding for the refurbishing of school buildings, furniture, and equipment
- k) Build high schools across the country based on actual demand evidenced by population data
- l) Increase the number of vocational trainings centres where the youth will be trained to be self-employed in carpentry, metalwork, woodwork, auto-mechanics, soap-making, plumbing, electrical work, hairdressing amongst others regardless of educational level and language of instruction in local languages for the technical skills especially



- m) Encourage and financially support the decentralization of the University of The Gambia across all the regions, with emphasis on agriculture, mechanical, electrical engineering, medical science, entrepreneurship, and other technical skills
- n) Review the University of The Gambia student fees structure with emphasis on science, technology, engineering, and maths, with a view to making them affordable to students from low-income households
- o) Review the award of government scholarships at home and abroad to make transparent with clear criteria and the award body independent of government
- p) Consult with providers of madrassas and other faith schools with a view to supporting and integrating them into the government education system
- q) Encourage the establishment of internationally recognized private universities in The Gambia, supported by Gambian partners and keeping with quality standards

## Section 4: Health

An NUP government will ensure universal health coverage with the aim of providing good quality health care services in our hospitals and health centres for all Gambians at the point of need seven days a week. A good health care system contributes to economic productivity and, consequently, the NUP will put great emphasis on improving the health service delivery system in The Gambia.



### Our delivery plans

- a) Upgrade health facilities and infrastructure in the country to make them more effective and efficient to support primary care services delivery
- b) Increase spending on health services and make drugs easily available
- c) Reduce maternal and infant mortality
- d) Put in place a planned cyclical maintenance regime for all facilities to ensure durability and continuous efficient service delivery
- e) Review remuneration for health care workers with a view to augmenting their low salaries
- f) Provide continuous capacity building and training for health care workers
- g) Support and create the enabling environment for private sector investment in a Medical Health Insurance Schemes which aims to provide accessible healthcare for Gambians, that will supplement government health care system
- h) Promote the establishment of specialist health facilities in the country through PPP
- i) Develop a Mental Health Policy by ensuring that both mental health and physical health conditions are given equal priority
- j) Develop policies in consultation with physically challenged groups to ensure that all forms of discrimination against this important group in society is eliminated.

## Section 5: Agriculture

Agricultural production is the main economic activity of the country comprising subsistence farming and cash crop production. There is little diversification in the sector, and it is mainly subsistence and rain-fed. Agricultural output only meets 50% or less of the food requirements of the country and crop yields are generally low. Nonetheless, it is a major driver of economic growth in the country. The NUP is aware of the



importance and challenges of this sector and gives it a central role in the pursuit of economic development. Therefore, the NUP recognizes that, for an effective transformation of the sector, agricultural policy formulations need to transcend the traditional realm of agriculture sector institutions which primarily deal with on-farm production. Our approach to the transformation of the sector includes the coordination and implementation of agricultural and non-agricultural policies to induce the desired structural changes in ways that will contribute meaningfully to our main objectives of economic growth, poverty reduction, job creation, food security, high productivity, and sustainable resources management. The agriculture and natural resources sector consist of four sub-sectors:

- i. Agriculture – crops, livestock, poultry, research and development, and service providers
- ii. Fisheries
- iii. Forestry
- iv. Wildlife

The Gambia is endowed with a great river as well as substantial underground water resources. According to the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), only six per cent of cultivated land in Africa, on average, is irrigated. The Gambia is no exception to this appalling level of agricultural production through irrigation. The NUP will therefore put emphasis on irrigation agriculture to maximize agricultural production and productivity and to ensure that agricultural activity is undertaken throughout the whole country on an all-year-round basis. To achieve this, the NUP will include Programme of Action for Agricultural Development specific projects that will address the key areas of intervention that will include the following actions:

### Our delivery plans

#### 5.1 Agriculture sector

- a) Provide farmers the necessary financial and technical support
- b) Put in place policies that promote equality of land tenure for women as well as their access to other resources, including financial resources
- c) Actively promote youth self-employment in all forms of agricultural activity, especially in horticulture (through the revival and strengthening of the Young Farmers Clubs
- d) Prioritize Agro-processing to enhance value addition in agriculture as well as reducing post-harvest losses
- e) Establish a line of credit for those engaged in Agro-processing and need financial support
- f) Establish a credible National Development Programme to support sustainable and Independent Agricultural Finance Credit Unions and activities at regional and district levels

- g) Create a Farmers' Bank with access to agricultural lending at the regional level. In the same vein, engage local banks to create tools/mandates to actively support agricultural lending
- h) Actively promote private sector investment and participation in agricultural activities ranging from production to commercialization
- i) Encourage Gambians in the diaspora to venture into specific areas of investment/need in commercial agriculture
- j) Provide matching grant funding together with arable land to serious investors in Gambian agriculture

## 5.2 Livestock

- a) Improve animal health care delivery services through the strengthening of laboratory diagnostic capacities, disease surveillance and monitoring
- b) Actively promote the production of short cycle species of livestock such as poultry and small ruminants (sheep, goats etc.)
- c) Support financial, technical, and organizational capacities of input delivery providers
- d) Establish high-standard abattoirs or slaughterhouses with proper management mechanisms through PPP
- e) Provide watering facilities in consultations with the livestock owners' associations
- f) Provide cattle tracts and grazing areas to minimize conflicts with crop farmers



## 5.3 Fisheries

- a) Review all fisheries agreements and licences issued to foreign entities
- b) Rationalize the exploitation of this vital resource and ensure maximum participation of and benefits to the Gambian people
- c) Establish a Fisheries Technical and Training Institute to provide training for fisheries technicians and extension staff on key aspects of fisheries development, including fishing techniques (without language restrictions)
- d) Strengthen The Gambia Navy to effectively patrol our territorial waters and protect our coastal fisheries resources from rampant illegal fishing
- e) Strengthen the capacity of the Fisheries Department to enable it to effectively manage, monitor and coordinate The Gambia's fishing industry
- f) Prohibit the use of indiscriminate fishing methods and practices in coastal and inland waters
- g) Motivate the youth to actively participate in artisanal fisheries through training, provision of fishing gear and other necessary measures
- h) Organise the fisher folk to become strong organizations or cooperative societies to be managed and controlled by the fisher folk themselves. The establishment of such





societies will facilitate the channelling of credit and other forms of support to individual members

- i) Actively encourage indigenous private sector participation in industrial fishing and reduce to the minimum the involvement of foreign fishing companies
- j) Provide better incentive packages for industrial fishing companies that are committed to job creation for Gambians
- k) Ensure that all investors, both local and foreign, operating fishing trawlers in our waters land and process their catches at on-land facilities and to ensure that all fish exports are channelled through our seaport

## Section 6: Governance: The Institutions

Over the past twenty-seven years, The Gambia has witnessed the politicization of the civil and public service leading to very high attrition rates for many Gambian experts. The governance framework will be reviewed to pave the way for a much more efficient, accountable, transparent, and professional system.



### Our delivery plans

#### 6.1 Refresh Implementation of Anti-Corruption Commission

Corruption is a malaise that threatens the peace, stability, and prosperity of The Gambia. As a result, an NUP government will seriously prioritize the fight against corruption and will institute stringent measures to curb this menace.

- a) Establish an independent permanent Anti-Corruption Commission independent of government interference
- b) Support the Commission in capacity building and financially
- c) Prosecute those persons found wanting without fear, favour, or ill will and with mandatory jail terms
- d) Establish electronic tender processing and digitalisation services
- e) Introduce whistle-blowing legislation

#### 6.2 Civil Service Reform and Institutional Improvements

In view of the urgent need to revive the civil and public service, an NUP government will initiate programs aimed at ensuring tangible reforms in the sector. Our government will reform the civil service into a merit-based and depoliticized cadre of professionals where the right officer will be assigned to the right job.

- a) Review the ministries with a view to rationalizing the number geared towards reducing costs and reinvesting any savings in other critical areas
- b) Set annual targets for ministries based on Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) with achievement targets of more than 75 per cent
- c) Appraise ministries annually to determine their performance
- d) Any ministry that performs below this target without strong mitigations will have its minister replaced
- e) Establish an Audit Commission whose recommendations will be submitted to the President for action



- f) Abolish the President's right to nominate the Speaker and four members to the National Assembly
- g) Establish a Project Management Office (PMO) under the purview of the Office of the President tasked with programme management of all manifesto commitments and improvement plans across all the ministries, parastatals, and the private sector
- h) Establish an independent and self-funding Passport Office independent of the Immigration Department
- i) Undertake service review of our public enterprises to ensure that they are fit for purpose, strengthen their management, operational efficiency, and financial position
- j) Review of board member appointments to public enterprises to ensure that competent and subject matter experts are appointed and to recommend competency-based appointment criteria
- k) Rationalize the use of government vehicles by setting up a new team headed by a technically competent fleet controller to manage the procurement, allocations, maintenance, and disposal of government vehicles
- l) Relocate some government offices to other parts of the country to decongest the Greater Banjul Area (GBA)

### 6.3 Decentralisation

An NUP government will embark on local government reforms as we strive to devolve greater power and decision-making to the people through an empowered local government. Our aim is to reform the local government system to make it more efficient and responsive to the needs of the people.

- a) Review the United Nations local government decentralization project with the aim of introducing a city/regional government model with devolved powers in the seven regions in phases, by bringing in new legislation to effect the changes
- b) Introduce a city/regional government model in the seven regions where directly elected governors will be responsible for delivering on all interrelated urban matters
- c) Devolve small infrastructure initiatives to village levels by transferring resources and decision-making power to the people

### 6.4 Communications and E-government

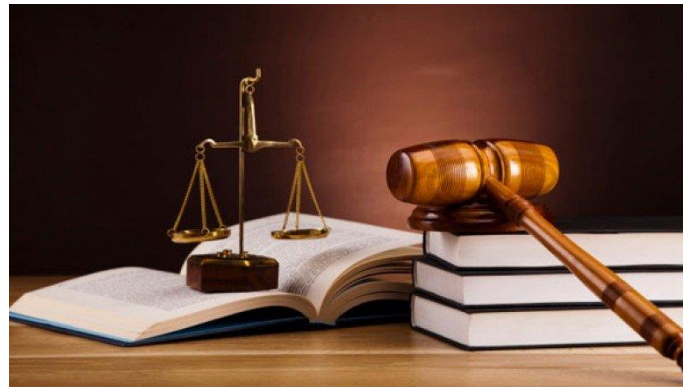
Governance in The Gambia continues to rely almost entirely on obsolete record-keeping practices that are not reliable, transparent, and efficient to work with. There are multiple issues affecting the smooth running of government such as inefficient data, record-keeping, collection systems, and intra-coordination between various departments, black economy, tax evasion, and bureaucratic hurdles in solving public issues at all the levels of government. Therefore, an NUP government will champion the journey towards a knowledge-based economy, digitization and boosting Information, Communication and Technology (ICT) exports with a cross-cutting strategy driven from the centre, improving infrastructure, uplifting our human capital, supportive tax policies, incentivizing innovation and encouraging entrepreneurship.



- a) Establish a Digital Transformation Authority with cross-sectorial powers across government departments with strong cybersecurity
- b) Launch the Digital Transformation Initiative Programme for digital infrastructure, citizen services and other e-government programmes
- c) Work and support mobile phone network operators to continue to invest in mobile infrastructure
- d) Invest in the upgrade and delivery of faster internet/superfast broadband across the country to help citizens and businesses to establish The Gambia as a competitive hub internationally to do business
- e) Establish a National Outreach Scholarship Programme to identify our best brains and fully fund their placement in the top institutions
- f) Boost start-up development with an empowered ecosystem offering access to venture capital and tax benefits
- g) Help people get online and promoting a 24/7 “fast” web service on devices
- h) Digitize monitoring and evaluation of socio-economic indicators with performance management capabilities at all levels of government

## 6.5 The judicial system reform

An independent judiciary is sacrosanct to the democratic development of The Gambia. However, it is common knowledge that this important branch of government was anything but independent during the past two decades. Therefore, an NUP government will ensure full autonomy of our country's judicial system that works for all Gambians in the dispensation of justice. We will work towards ensuring an efficient and swift dispensation of justice as this will go a long way towards restoring ordinary Gambians' faith in the institution.



- a) Separate the functions of Minister of Justice and Attorney General
- b) Ensure asset declaration by the President, Vice President, Ministers, and other senior government officials before assuming office and regular yearly monitoring and compliance to be undertaken by the Audit Office
- c) Promulgate legislation for an Independent Electoral Commission under the purview of the Chief Justice's Office and whose chairperson and members shall be appointed by the Chief Justice
- d) Ensure that there is level playing field in the registration of independent presidential candidates and political parties
- e) Work collaboratively with The Gambia Bar Association to improve the quality of the justice system
- f) Ensure speedy dispensation of justice and enhancing digital technology
- g) Support reform initiatives to improve the operational performance of the courts
- h) Work with the judiciary and legislature to abolish all laws in the statute books not fit for a modern democracy, human rights and press freedom
- i) Strengthen human rights, people trafficking and sex exploitation laws
- j) Support Amnesty International Human Rights Manifesto

## 6.6 Prison service reform

The prison system in The Gambia is archaic and not fit for purpose with prisoners living in dilapidated colonial-era infrastructure. Our prisons are synonymous with overcrowding and gross human rights abuses in the past. Despite some progress being made with regards to prison reforms there is still room for improvement. Consequently, our government will prioritize decongesting the prisons and improving conditions in the facilities.



- a) Upgrade the existing prison infrastructure
- b) Boost the moral of prison officers by instituting regular and constant staff training to ensure high professional standards, remuneration, and working conditions
- c) Secure funding to build new prison facilities aimed at decongesting the existing ones by 2025; and encourage building new prison facilities through PPP
- d) Ensure human rights of prisoners are not violated
- e) Create technical/vocational training facilities, including entrepreneurship for inmates to enable them to learn new skills
- f) Ensure that prisons serve as correctional centres
- g) Promote community service sentencing on very low-level offences

## Section 7: The Media and Personal Freedom

The media is the main means of mass communication through broadcasting, publishing and online. An NUP government will be committed to maintaining a vibrant free media as we believe that the rights of citizens are sacrosanct and must never be infringed upon. Our government will create an enabling environment to "self-regulate" the industry instead of government-sanctioned regulations. The NUP considers the media as partners in national development and an essential tool in the drive to transform The Gambia.



### Our delivery plans

- a) Abolish all obnoxious media laws in The Gambia
- b) Review all fees and charges relating to the media to make them affordable
- c) Being fully committed to the implementation of the Freedom of Information Law and will ensure that:
  - SMART targets are set for responses to Freedom of Information requests by government institutions

- Financial penalties are levied for late responses to Freedom of Information requests
- d) Make the Gambia Radio and Television Services (GRTS) more autonomous independent of government
- e) Encourage and support the Gambia Press Union to inspire its members to study and conduct investigative journalism on key issues affecting our country through scholarship schemes etc.

## Section 8: Women and Youth Empowerment

Women and youth are the backbone of the Gambian economy. The key to meaningful development is the empowerment of these important groups in our society. Consequently, an NUP government will effectively implement policies and initiatives aimed at increasing access to education, proper health care services, economic opportunities and legal protections for women and the youth.



### Our delivery plans

- a) Establish a National Enterprise Fund to support innovation and SMEs for these groups
- b) Increase funding for the Indigenous Business Advisory Services (IBAS) to provide micro finance to women and the youth across the country
- c) Provide leadership and entrepreneurship training programmes for women and the youth
- d) Provide more vocational skills training opportunities
- e) Prioritize girls' education and provide stipends for girls and women with top grades to continue their higher education
- f) Increase female participation in the public and parastatal sectors by establishing "quotas" for women in local government and boards of public institutions
- g) Increase women's representation in the National Assembly and cabinet
- h) Improve investigative and prosecutorial processes for gender-based violence
- i) Adopt zero-tolerance on the trafficking of women, children, and youth



## Section 9: External Relations and Diaspora Affairs

An NUP government's foreign policy will seek to redefine and re-align The Gambia's position on the international stage. While maintaining a policy of mutually beneficial relationships across all realms of its engagements on the international stage, our government will be an active player in global affairs. Within the scope of a Gambia-first external relations policy agenda, our government will take deliberate positions to ensure that diplomatic relations are not only mutually beneficial but have a corresponding positive economic impact on the lives and livelihoods of ordinary Gambians. A robust, proactive, and specialized Foreign Service will prioritize politico-economic diplomacy to revitalize the Gambian economy through foreign direct investment (FDI) and trade.



Also, Gambian diasporas are among the country's biggest assets in the country. Therefore, our government aims to nurture this important segment, which contributes meaningfully to the socio-economic advancement of The Gambia.

### Our delivery plans

- a) Establish an independent review of the embassies with a view to reducing their numbers and establishing The Gambia's presence in strategically critical locations
- b) Ensure voting rights for Gambians living overseas through technological innovations
- c) Create virtual investment desks in key embassies, which will service as conduits for opportunities with Gambians, local businesses, chambers of commerce and key government institutions
- d) Champion the development of financial instruments to create attractive investment opportunities for Gambians living abroad
- e) Strengthen the country's embassies to provide emergency relief and other support to citizens facing hardships in case of any tragedy
- f) Raise awareness for registration of Gambians with embassies in their locations
- g) Make the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Trade collaborate with the Gambia Chamber of Commerce and Industry prepare a roadmap for foreign direct investment and trade, by eliminating all administrative red tape in business start-ups

## Section 10: National Security Reform (and Personal Safety)

Security is the most fundamental organ of every government or institution globally. It is a key sector in the pursuit for sustainable development.

The security agencies in The Gambia have for the past 25 years been politicized to the detriment of national security and personal safety of the citizens. This deplorable situation is compounded by the fact that most of the forces are ill equipped and poorly trained. Therefore, an NUP



government will strengthen and depoliticize our security forces and will aim to transform them into an independent body whose loyalty is to the state and not any president or political leader. We will embark on rigorous security sector reforms aimed at making the forces more professional. It is lamentable that successive governments neglected critical reforms in this sector to be able to continue using the security agencies as a political tool.

### Our delivery plans

- a) Undertake an urgent independent service review of the army, police, immigration, security intelligence service, drug enforcement agency, fire, and prison services within 12 months in office
- b) Make the security services fit for purpose with clear career paths such as electrical, mechanical engineering, information technology, agriculture, and entrepreneurship to name a few, that can support them when they leave the service.
- c) Ensure greater devolution of policing authority; reinforce greater power at the regional level
- d) Set up a transparent recruitment and personnel management system based purely on a professional and merit-based structure
- e) Provide good remuneration for the security forces and support to Ex-Service Personnel Associations
- f) Ensure continuous capacity building and learning of new technical skills for security forces
- g) Invest in our border immigrations patrol service to keep our borders secure
- h) Establish public call centres and police assistance lines, supported by digital transformation with adequate operational vehicles
- i) Invest in new policing systems and processes by tracking performance, equipping regional forces with modern surveillance / command and control centres
- j) Promote more of community policing with emphasis on crime prevention, public outreach to the police easier through new and enhanced policing apps, SMS systems, online and call centres
- k) Increase representation of female police officers at senior level at police stations that will, among other things, support better reporting and investigation of complaints about gender-based crimes
- l) Provide motivation schemes for intelligence officers who close high-value cases in the form of promotions, remuneration etc
- m) Make an independent service review of our drug enforcement agency and laws to ensure that they are fit for purpose

## Section 11: Tourism

The tourism industry is the second-highest earner of foreign currency. Notwithstanding this immense contribution, the sector has even greater undoubted potential given the country's diverse culture and natural endowment, "The Smiling Coast of West Africa" which remains largely untapped. This is a missed opportunity owing to multiple reasons, including poor service and infrastructure, high cost of energy as well as lack of diversity for high-quality hotels and customers. An NUP government will work closely with key stakeholders in the industry to turn the industry around with a view to improving The Gambia's international image by attracting high-value tourists while also increasing tourism's direct contribution to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP).



### Our delivery plans

- a) Promote all-year-round tourism
- b) Aggressively encourage entrepreneurship, especially by SMEs, to boost economic value and job creation in the tourism industry
- c) Introduce a minimum wage in consultation with the tourism industry
- d) Actively promote and provide incentives to support the development of eco-resorts along the River Gambia from Kartong to Koina through PPP initiatives
- e) Support the upgrading of the standard of hotels by providing duty waivers for capital purchase and development of roads to sea sides and tourist attraction sites
- f) Diversify tourist source markets specifically targeting American and African tourists
- g) Support the establishment of more training schools in the hospitality industry to continue enhancing the quality of service in the industry
- h) Introduce tour-guide curricula and customer care training in the hotel training schools to reduce "busters" menace
- i) Institute zero tolerance on "sex tourism," especially on child exploitation

## Section 12: Housing, Environment and Land Administration

### Our delivery plans

#### 12.1 Housing

As a developing country faced with the enormous challenge of providing shelter for all, an NUP government will put the provision of affordable housing for rent and homeowners among its priorities. Our policy on housing will seek to provide a viable low-cost housing scheme, which is in tune with the disposable income and purchasing power of ordinary Gambians. Our government will partner with the Social Security and Housing Finance Corporation (SSHFC) and private sector providers to ensure the success of these projects and every year, we will be committed to providing affordable houses for public employees of the state and other Gambians.



- a) Incentivize private sector involvement in providing affordable housing for both home ownership and rentals across the country
- b) Establish eco-friendly neighbourhoods in the country through PPP initiatives
- c) Promote the building of housing units in rural Gambia aimed at mitigating the rural-urban drift

#### 12.2 Environmental Quality and Climate Change

The world is currently witnessing unprecedented devastations resulting from the sheer disregard of the environment. The NUP recognizes climate change and the increasing environmental pollution prevalent in The Gambia and the damage it is causing as well as the threat it poses to our future. Our government will take action to manage climate change and make The Gambia cleaner, greener, and safer by investing in long-term adaptation to climate change while addressing the root causes of environmental pollution and strengthening our institutions at the same time.

- a) Educate our people to be the custodians of nature and guardians of our sustainable future
- b) Committed to becoming a carbon neutral country by 2050 to help slow global warming.
- c) Produce a revised zero carbon Roadmap which will set The Gambia on the trajectory to achieve 'net zero' carbon (i.e., not adding to the amount of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere)
- d) Expand and restore the fractured forests of The Gambia by planting a minimum of "one million trees" across the seven regions in the first year in government for carbon sequestration
- e) Increase the number of forest parks across the country
- f) Strengthen disaster management, especially our response capability and capacity
- g) Reduce disaster risks



- h) Internalize and integrate true environmental costs in all economic decisions
- i) Deliver affordable and sustainable clean energy
- j) Promote clean transport and champion green infrastructure
- k) Encourage better waste management
- l) Promote efficient agriculture and preserve our wetlands, wildlife, and biodiversity
- m) Promote and support private sector investments in the Environmental and Renewable Energy sectors through attractive tax incentives
- n) Improve existing Environmental Policies, Powers and enhance the National Environment Agency's compliance regime
- o) Enforce the ban on single use of plastics in the economy

## 12.3 Land Administration

The issue of land administration continues to be of great significance considering the economic value of land and its potential for conflict. An NUP government will work towards ensuring an efficient and effective land administration mechanism in the country.

- a) Establish an autonomous self-funding Lands, Building Control and Physical Planning Institution decoupled from the Ministry of Local Government and Lands
- b) Set realistic performance targets for processing all types of applications
- c) Ensure digital transformation of land administration and automate processes
- d) Digitize land records to prevent revenue leakage and court orders linked to property case to reduce fiduciary risks to investors
- e) Institute regular and constant staff training to ensure high professional standards
- f) Reduce red tape culture through online filing of documents, especially to improve turnaround time for routine and permit approvals

## Section 13: Sport, Arts and Culture

Sports are fast growing industry whose development an NUP government will promote and support. It is an indisputable fact that sports are one of the most marketable sources of living for the youth in the 21st century. It is a means that can be utilized to help reduce illegal migration, drug abuse, and unemployment among others.

Unlike sports, culture is steadily losing prominence in contemporary Gambia due to the influence of foreign values in our society. Gambian culture is rich and diverse with immense potential to create additional employment and contribute more to the GDP.



### Our delivery plans

#### 13.1 Sports

- a) Invest in sports infrastructure (stadia etc) around the seven regions of the country to supplement the efforts of the various sports federations
- b) Decentralize and promote grassroots sports

- c) Establish capacity- building facilities for the various sporting discipline in The Gambia through PPP initiatives
- d) Increase government funding for sporting activities
- e) Ensure transparency in sports finance administration and management

### 13.2 Arts and Culture

- a) Promote the country's diverse and rich arts and cultural heritage
- b) Re-establish the Gambia National Troupe and other performing arts to embark on a promotion drive
- c) Support Gambian musicians/artistes to come up with a new national strategy and implementation plan to preserve and promote Gambian music/arts and culture at home and abroad
- d) Plan to build theatres in all the administrative regions of The Gambia, through PPP

## Conclusion

This document, which is dubbed “the people’s Manifesto”, was developed by the general membership through extensive consultations with subject matter specialists and inputs from ordinary Gambians working in these sectors. The bottom-up approach, which was utilized during the development process, was a deliberate but unique strategy meant to ensure that all relevant stakeholders take part in this important activity. In so doing, the party is promoting a participatory approach in key activities, which will be a hallmark of a future NUP administration.

The **NUP** would like to sincerely thank all the subject matter specialists and citizens who contributed invaluable with ideas in developing this manifesto. We hope that they will be part of the journey to see through the implementation of the manifesto commitments.

In summary, when Gambians fully realize the ideals and programmes of the NUP as envisaged in this document and anchored in honest, trustworthy, responsible, and visionary leadership, they would appreciate that it is the party that can put the country on the pedestal of hope and usher in meaningful development.

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