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Towards improving lives and livelihood in the Gambia



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From the FAO Representative

Greetings to all Food Heroes and partners who are working tirelessly for food and nutrition security.

FAO Gambia is pleased to share a newsletter for the 1st Quarter. Please consider this our approach and contribution to making agriculture productive, our farmers more capable and households food secure, resilient and more healthy.

I am taking this opportunity to acknowledge support of all the stakeholders, in particular, the relevant Government Ministries, Departments and Agencies; civil society and importantly, the donors involved in this purposeful journey. Appreciation goes also to colleagues in FAO

Gambia's Country Office, and the One UN Family in the Gambia. The stories that you will read below are testimonies to the collective effort and significant contribution towards ending hunger and improving nutrition and food security in the Gambia.

Below you may read about the journey communities will be able to make henceforth towards greater productivity as FAO signed contracts to construct up to 40 km feeder/access roads. Our endeavour to *leave no one behind* is also reflected in our consultative deliberation of the country programming as we seek to find a clear pathway towards the new Country Programme Framework (2023-27). We will continue our efforts in improving the Agriculture and the Natural Resources Sectors for the next 5 years. We also plan to improve the mangrove oyster sector with the FISH4ACP Project being launched in the country.

These stories and many more that have been put together below, clearly show the efforts made by colleagues and partners in implementing all projects and programmes to change lives and livelihoods.

Enjoy reading!

Moshibudi Rampedi

FAO commences construction of roads connecting vegetable gardens to markets



Contractors signing documents for the construction of feeder roads

Access to markets is a major challenge for many vegetable producing communities in the Gambia. This is because the communities are situated off-road and do not get easy access to markets. This situation results in harvest losses for farmers.

To help mitigate this problem, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) on 17 February 2022, signed contracts to construct up to 40 km feeder/access roads connecting vegetable gardens and tidal schemes to markets. The construction of the roads is part of activities under the European Union-funded “Agriculture for Economic Growth” project. The activity aims to facilitate better market access for smallholders and improve value chain opportunities through infrastructure development for communities and associations.

“Construction of the roads has commenced and we are optimistic that they will be completed within the agreed terms”, said Ousman Touray, Senior Program Officer and Project Coordinator for Agriculture for Economic Growth Project.

He added that the roads are complementary to other “Feeder Roads” projects funded by the EU, all intended to support access to markets and socio-economic facilities.

The 40km long road is a combination of eleven roads in different communities. They include Medina Sering Mass, Jerikaw and Konteh Kunda in North Bank Region, Ngenji Wollof and Jamali Nyangadu in Central River Region North, Faraba in Central River Region, Kuwonkuba, Changhal Lang Kaddy 1 and Kerewan Nyakoi in Upper River Region, Jomari and Jolie in Lower River Region.

FAO Gambia commences formulation of new Country Programming Framework 2023-2027



Hassan Jallow, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture and key Government Stakeholders and partners pose for a picture

Representatives of The Government of the Gambia, Civil Society Organizations and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) have renewed their commitment to strengthen the partnership and accelerate actions to address challenges in Agriculture and the Natural Resources sectors for sustainable national socio-economic growth and development.

They made the pledge at a two-day review and planning meeting focusing on the 2018 - 2022 FAO-Gambia Country Programming Framework (CPF) and its successor framework for the period 2023 - 2027. The CPF sets out four government priority areas to guide FAO support and partnership with the Government of the Gambia. The CPF is informed by the nationally defined sector priorities and objectives expressed in the National Development Plan (2018 – 2022), UNDAF (2017 – 2022) as well as regional and global commitments including the Malabo Declaration, the African Union Agenda 2063 and the 2030 agenda (SDGs). The CPF takes cognizance of the Government’s prioritization of the SDGs, which ranked SDGs 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 16 as high priorities.

The annual event organized by FAO brought together over 40 people drawn from the government ministries responsible for Agriculture and the Natural Resources sectors and their technical departments, FAO Country Office and Civil Society Organizations involved in the implementation of the CPF to deliberate on the outcomes of 2021 programming cycle and to discuss and define the actions for 2022. The meeting also accorded stakeholders the opportunity to brainstorm on the key priorities to include in the next CPF cycle, which places a high premium on the transformation of the Agri-Food Systems for the achievement of the Agenda 2030.

“The Ministry of Agriculture and FAO has worked hand-in-hand to ensure that the priorities jointly set by government

and FAO in its CPF are achieved. It is worth noting that one remarkable achievement from the collaboration with FAO was the articulation of the Gambia's national pathways for food systems transformation in support of the agenda 2030. This is a big achievement," said, Hassan Jallow, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture

"This gathering marks a critical milestone for the strong partnership between the Government of the Gambia and the United Nations and by extension, our development and resource partners notably the European Union and the Global Environment Facility as we accelerate actions towards the implementation of the National Development Plan 2018 - 2022 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development," said Ms. Moshibudi Rampedi, FAO Country Representative.

FISH4ACP supports Gambian oyster sector to stimulate growth and rural development



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The Fish4ACP project was launched in the Gambia in February 2022

FISH4ACP, a global initiative supporting fisheries and aquaculture value chains in Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific, was launched in The Gambia on 10 March 2022 to help the West African nation unlock the potential of mangrove oyster production, and provide better food for rural communities, create jobs and stimulate economic growth.

"The programme is timely. FISH4ACP's objectives are very much in line with our National Development Plan's focus on improved fisheries and aquaculture value chains," James Furmos Gomez the Minister of Fisheries, Water Resources and National Assembly Matters, said.

Annual production of mangrove oysters is estimated at 1 720 tonnes and some 1 000 people are employed in mangrove oyster harvesting, the majority of which are women. The mangrove oyster is a commercially important

mollusk harvested from the mangroves along the West African coast.

"We support efforts to enhance the productivity and competitiveness of the mangrove oyster sector," said Stephane Meert, Head of Cooperation, EU Delegation to the Gambia, adding, "FISH4ACP will ensure that economic improvements go hand in hand with environmental sustainability and social inclusiveness."

The programme will start its activities with a comprehensive analysis of the mangrove oyster value chain, based on which priority action for the years to come will be determined in consultation with stakeholders from the sector.

"FISH4ACP is championing an innovative approach to value chain development," said Moshibudi Rampedi, FAO Representative in the Gambia, adding: "It will enable us to tackle the major challenges to a more sustainable oyster sector and improve it with all the parties involved."

FISH4ACP is an initiative of the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS) aimed at making fisheries and aquaculture value chains in Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific more sustainable. FAO and partners with funding from the European Union (EU) and the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) implement FISH4ACP.

Security personnel trained on border control strategy for monitoring Trans-Boundary Animal Disease



© FAO/Philip Gomez

The Department of Livestock Services in Collaboration with FAO conducted a 3-day training for security personnel on border control strategy for monitoring cross-border livestock (poultry) movement during Transboundary Animal Disease (TADs).

The training, which was conducted as part of activities of the Avian Influenza TCP (TCP/GAM/3803), introduced the security officers to existing veterinary laws in the Gambia as well as veterinary import/export certification and documentation for import/export of Livestock and livestock products. According to Philip Gomez, FAO Livestock Expert, the training will help support the implementation of regulations for controlling the transboundary spread of animal diseases during outbreaks.

“Furthermore, it will help the security personnel establish linkages and network with the veterinary services and other relevant stakeholders for timely reporting of suspected cases,” he said.

Avian influenza viruses are highly contagious and are widespread in birds. Although the viruses are found largely amongst wild birds in aquatic habitats, domesticated poultry and other birds can also be infected. HPAI viruses can kill up to 90-100 percent of the flock, and cause epidemics that may spread rapidly, devastate the poultry industry and result in severe trade restrictions. Avian influenza viruses can occasionally affect mammals, including humans, usually after close contact with infected poultry.

Policy Makers sensitized to Codex Alimentarius



Her Excellency the Vice President of the Gambia, Dr. Isatou Touray (4th on the row) with other panel members during the Codex Workshop

A high-level sensitization workshop on Codex Alimentarius, which is the international food standards, guidelines and codes of practice, was held on 2 March 2022 in Banjul. The objective of the workshop was to help raise awareness of Codex Alimentarius' work and its benefits to the country, among policymakers and key stakeholders at the national level.

Codex Alimentarius, reflecting the international consensus on food law issues, contributes to the safety, quality and fairness of the international food trade. Through Codex, consumers can trust the safety and quality of the food products they buy and importers can trust that the food

they order will be following their specifications and will be safe for consumption.

Public concerns about food safety issues often place Codex at the centre of global debates. The issue has also been a concern for the Gambia and hence the need for this awareness-raising activity spearheaded by the Food Safety and Quality Authority (FSQA) in partnership with the Office of the Vice President and the FAO.

Various members of the Codex stakeholders in the country talked about the importance of Codex Alimentarius in the country and the need to allocate resources for the country's participation in activities related to improving the awareness of food standards with the aim to improve the health and safety of the population.

Her Excellency the Vice President of the Gambia, Dr. Isatou Touray graced the occasion and gave the keynote address. Among other eminent members present were the Speaker of the National Assembly, Mariam Jack-Denton; Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Interior, Fanta Bojang Samateh Manneh; the Minister of Agriculture, Amie Faburay; Heads of key stakeholder institutions including a representative each from the World Health Organization, the National Codex Committee, FSQA and FAO.

An International expert on Codex shared a presentation on the topic and the event ended with a plenary discussion.

Local Consultation for Community-Shared Livestock Resources

As part of measures to ensure good management and sustainability of its projects, The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in collaboration with the Department of Livestock Services (DLS) conducted community consultations in ten communities.



FAO Staff member leading a community consultation process

The consultations seek to address the challenges related to the sustainability of agricultural intervention projects in the Gambia. The community consultations were held under the Adapting Agriculture to Climate Change Project

(AACCP) funded by Global Environment Facility (GEF). The project aims to promote sustainable and diversified livelihood strategies for reducing the impacts of climate variability and change in the agriculture and livestock sector.

“This extensive consultation process has helped us learn important lessons while also providing guidance and solutions to the main challenges faced by beneficiaries,” FAO Representative, Moshibudi Rampedi said. *“It has also helped us take the right actions to ensure continuity of interventions and improve management of projects so that our beneficiaries continue to reap the benefits of healthy livestock and agricultural resources.”*

Participants in the consultation expressed delight at taking part in the process and thanked FAO for intervening to improve the welfare of their animals.

“The community consultation for the development of a local convention on how to manage our shared natural resource and livestock infrastructure is very beneficial. We have a responsibility to care for animals and conventions of this kind help ensure that animals are adequately cared for within our communities. I commend FAO and the government for this good initiative and for involving us to promote local ownership”, Mamalang Jammeh of Sittanunku said.

Assessing Climate Change Impacts on Agriculture



The Minister of the Environment and Climate Change inspects an equipment

FAO through the Global Environment Facility-funded project, “Adapting Agriculture to Climate Change in the Gambia” procured modern equipment for the Gambia’s National Environment Agency (NEA) to assess Climate Change impacts on agriculture. A three-day training was also conducted where six NEA staff members learnt the art of using these tools.

The Honorable Minister of the Environment and Climate Change, Mr. Lamin B Dibba, graced the occasion. This intervention aims to build national capacity to collect in-depth assessments of climate change, and identify and develop measures to adapt to climate variability and change.

Workshop on Commercialisation of Aflasafe



The workshop discussed the problem of aflatoxin and its effects on the production, trade and economy

In partnership with the Department of Agriculture, The FAO in January held a two-day workshop on the commercialisation of Aflasafe, a substance used to mitigate the effects of aflatoxin.

The seminar attended by business enterprise representatives, government officials, FAO officials and others, aimed to create awareness of the efficacy of Aflasafe in aflatoxin mitigation and to encourage the involvement of the private input dealers in the importation of the product.

“The purpose of this workshop is to sensitise key stakeholders on the problem of aflatoxin and its effects on the production, trade and economy of this country and also to encourage them to indulge in the importation or commercialisation of the product in the country,” Dr. Faye Manneh, National Crop Protection Consultant for FAO said.

Upon completion, private agriculture input dealers were expected to have substantial knowledge of Aflatoxin and the importance of Aflasafe application. It was also expected that the importation of Aflasafe products into the country would be well-coordinated and maintained and the availability and accessibility of Aflasafe by farmers in the country is increased.

Nutrition Week to Raise Awareness on Healthy Eating

On January 12, the UN Nutrition Working Group in partnership with relevant Nutrition Stakeholders launched the Nutrition Week, which aimed to raise awareness on healthy eating practices to ensure healthy diets, healthy families and healthy life. This was part of the EU-funded “Improving Food Security and Nutrition in the Gambia through Food Fortification” which aims to improve the nutrition and health status of vulnerable populations from micronutrient deficiencies in the Gambia, and especially targets women, girls and children.



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Stakeholders pose at the launch of the Nutrition Week

A number of live TV and radio programmes were organized to inform audiences about the ongoing activities in improving the nutrition and health of the population and generally on healthy diets. In partnership with cellular mobile companies, key messages on nutrition were dissemination through mass SMS broadcasts while an inter-agency social media campaign among FAO, WFP and UNICEF sought to raise awareness about the importance of iodine and seafood, and the significance of folic acid for pregnant women and baby.

FAO Gambia’s Successes Showcased in the World Water Forum

The FAO-Gambia participated in awareness creation during the technical and thematic sessions and at both the FAO and the UN stands during the World Water Forum in Dakar, Senegal in March.



FAO Gambia’s Project Coordinator Mr. Lamin Saine (right) distributes communication materials during the World Water Forum in Dakar in March

FAO in the Gambia took the opportunity to share their experiences and contributions with global partners and participants on land and water resources management.

A number of communication products including a 5-minute video on solar-powered irrigation systems were also showcased during the forum. Through funding from the European Union and the Global Environment Facility FAO has established 50 Solar-Powered Irrigation systems across the country.

These solar-powered irrigation systems contribute toward sustainable agricultural development and promote women and youth empowerment. Mr Lamim Saine, project coordinator for the Adapting Agriculture participated in the forum.

“I was honoured to represent FAO Gambia at the World Water Forum, as it allowed us to foster great partnership with eminent global personalities on the field while also giving us the chance to inform them of some of the successes we have achieved over the years towards Zero Hunger and agriculture/nutrition security in the country,” Mr Saine said.

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