



Ministry of Youth and Sports

# National Youth Policy of The Gambia

## (NYP 2019 – 2028)

Final Policy

September 2019

**‘We Cannot Always Create the World for Our Youths,  
But We Can Create Our Youthsforthe World’**

*NCIS -Naval Criminal Investigative Service, US TV Drama Series*



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## Foreword

This policy is one of four policies in a row from 1988 since The Gambia started documenting ten-year national youth policies to deliberately manage the development of the young people. The first three policies in general targeted creating employment for youths and concentrated efforts at generating and creating a diversity of skills development efforts to enable youths, mostly those who have not been able to progress to higher education to at least earn a skill and enable them have jobs, and avoid being social burdens to the country.

The current policy (2019 – 2028) is a shift in the youth development paradigm to emphasising the recognition of the youth who form more than two thirds of the national population as the single most important and valuable natural resource that TheGambia has. It also commits the state and nation to strategically making the best out of this resource by utilising necessary government machinery and other available national support to ensure that systemic frameworks in an institutionalised setting are established and used to create and build in all children born in The Gambia from age 0 – 14, the necessary cognitive and educational aptitudes and comportment that make them ready to enter the youth age with a holistic human competency that will enable them follow the educational and formation processes into a resource and energy source for development that will be adequate in numbers and value for national development input.

In this context, this policy aims “To establish a holistic and harmonious youth cohort imbued with adequate knowledge and competencies, strong professional ethics, spiritual and moral values; and a level of independence, patriotism and commitment that gives them life options to choose development and progress in alignment with the national vision”.

The overall mission is “To Empower and Render the Gambian Youth Capable and Willing to Make Well-Informed, Sustainable and Meaningful Life Choices”.

It is evident that the overwhelming youth number as a proportion of the national population can only be a meaningful dividend as referred to in the National Development Plan 2018 – 2021 if deliberate and appropriate investment is made in all children born and raised in The Gambia to render them as such. Government is aware that this task is huge and that it calls for greater public investment, utilising a more diverse network of public sector institutions, most of whom are the main suppliers of services to youth development and employment creation, as well as in the private and NGO and donor sectors of the economy; under the coordination of the Ministry of Youth and Sports (MOYS). This evidently requires a fresh look at the structural makeup of the MOYS and establishment of an inter-sectoral and inter-institutional framework of implementation of the policy that is driven from the Cabinet level.

It is only when this holistic and strategically ensured investment in this most important national resource that a formation system and processes for creating these youths will transform all of them into utilisable national resource inputs, and by extension the only time that The Gambia shall take its real first steps to sustained development.

The policy is therefore a national call to all for participation in a more strategically crafted development-enabling plan for sustained creation of The Gambia’s only development-assuring resource inputs (the youths)in which the nation must invest and monitor effectively.

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Honourable Hadrammeh Sidibeh

Minister of Youth and Sports

## Acronyms and Abbreviations

AU	African Union
CSO	Civil Society Organisations
DPP / DoPP	Department of Programmes and Planning, MOYS (formerly Dept. of Youth and Sports)
DYS	Department of Youths and Sports (defunct, and now known as DPP / DoPP)
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GFD	Gambia Federation for the Disabled
GPAY	Gambia Programme of Action on Youth
GTTI	Gambia Technical Training Institute
HDI	Human Development Index
HIV	Human Immuno-deficiency Virus
FGD	Focus Group Discussions
FSW	Female Sex Workers
IHS	Integrated Household Survey
ICT	Information Communication and Technology
IMF	International Monetary Fund
KPI	Key Performance Indicators
LGA	Local Government Authority
M & E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MoBSE	Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education
MoA	Ministry of Education
MoFEA	Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs
MoH	Ministry of Health
MoHERST	Ministry of Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology
MoTC	Ministry of Tourism and Culture
MoTIE	Ministry of Trade, Industry, Regional Integration and Employment
MoWACSW	Ministry of Women Affairs, Children and Social Welfare
MOYS	Ministry of Youth and Sports
NAQAA	National Accreditation and Quality Assurance Authority
NAYCONF	National Youth Conference and Festival
NEDI	National Enterprise Development Initiative
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NSC	National Sports Council
NYC	National Youth Council
NYSS	National Youth Service Scheme
PAC / PEC	Public Accounts Committee / Public Enterprises Committee
PAGE	Programme for Accelerated Growth and Employment
PIA	Presidents International Award
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
RBA	Rights Based Approach
RYC	Regional Youth Committee
STI	Sexually Transmitted Infections
STEM	Science Technology English and Maths
TVET	Technical Vocational and Education Training
UN Bodies	United Nations Bodies
YEP	Youth Empowerment Project

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## **POLICY FRAMEWORK**

### **National Youth Development Vision**

To Empower and Render the Gambian Youth Capable and Willing to Make Well-Informed, Sustainable and Meaningful Life Choices

### **National Youth Development Mission**

To establish a holistic and harmonious youth cohort imbued with adequate knowledge and competencies, strong professional ethics, spiritual and moral values; and a level of independence, patriotism and commitment that gives them life options to choose development and progress in alignment with the national vision.

### **Values**

- I. Knowledge and skill
- II. Integrity and Commitment
- III. Resourcefulness and Self-reliance
- IV. Diversity and Collaboration
- V. Health and Wellbeing
- VI. Respect and Tolerance
- VII. Equity and Equality
- VIII. Patriotism / Nationalism
- IX. Inclusiveness and affirmative action
- X. Resilience and Law Abiding



## BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

### 1.1 Introduction

The National Youth Policy (2019-2028) is the fourth ten-year policy by The Gambia Government to address the quest for developing and empowering the youth of The Gambia for employability and enterprise for optimal contribution to national growth and development.

The just elapsed policy was developed in 2009 and its implementation faced various national, regional, and global challenges. As part of the global competitive environment, The Gambian youth is affected by, and being responsive to emergent dynamics, which include changing life styles; new cultures influenced by cultural contact through ICT, Satellite TV and immigration from other countries in the region. New and emergent trends and value orientations have themselves undergone both deliberate and inadvertent transformation in the various dimensions of human nature. At the national level, the past 22 years of dictatorship (during which period most current youths were born and raised), the social structure of The Gambia underwent changes that made the youth a social being different from what they would have been if they were raised in more normal / typical times. In this social context, The Gambia needs a youth policy that reflects the realities of current youth, and how their make-up poses a challenge in the national drive to create and sustain a utilisable youth energy against a backdrop of most youths being generally poorly educated and motivated. This is not to ignore though that a lot of these youths constitute high value potency for knowledge, skills and reserve for utilisation in national development and need to be appropriately harnessed. This policy is partly informed by a terminal review of the 2009 – 2018 policy, and the lessons learnt from its design and implementation successes and challenges. It also looks at the general socioeconomic dynamism of youths in The Gambia, the ECOWAS sub-region, and the whole of Africa, and the world at large; as it relates to youths in how they are formed and utilised for national development in an appropriate manner.

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

The terminal evaluation of the elapsed policy (2009 – 2018) was necessary to take stock of how well-designed it was in terms of its outputs and outcomes, and to determine if its implementation was such that it took advantage of the probable appropriate structure to deliver a youth cohort that in its numbers have the suitable knowledge, skills and comportment to constitute a youth dividend that can be harnessed for national development; or one that we as a nation must continue to strive to contain if they are not adequately suitable for the type of energy that this nation currently needs for its development. It is certain that youth energy is indeed the energy dividend for development, but it does not happen by chance and must be deliberately developed, nurtured in terms of transforming children to youths that are capable and committed to national development over the years of their formation. In this sense it would require government to understand in totality its public investments in the sectors that contribute to the development of the child and youths, coordinate development programming, budgeting and implementation of these investments in their formation, so that when they do become youths from age 15, they would have from this age to 35 years developed the knowledge, skills and competencies that enable them to have life options, and to take their rightful places in national development.

This policy seeks amongst other things to ensure a common understanding of what a youth is, in terms of how that youth is formed and the role of government for ensuring adequate financial provision in this investment through a variety of ministries such of MOYS, MoBSE, MoHERST, MoWCASW, MoA, and MoTIE; including the private sector and donor contributors. It also includes undertaking an organised coordination of the implementation of the policy programme and its continuous reviews, such that

government is able to determine progress in its successful implementation and of generating a youth cohort that is well educated, knowledgeable, and skilful enough when they would be transiting into the world of work and enterprise.

The revision of the policy is indicative of the readiness of the Government to meet the emerging needs, challenges and aspirations of the youth in ensuring a well-formed youth, the greater majority (60%) of which can determine, at age 18 from their Senior Secondary School grades to either pursue technical and scientific education, or the normal academic route. The successful implementation of this policy should result in a low number of youths (or even none) being trapped in knowledge and skill ignorance that would have made them incapable to earn a good standard of living and significant contribution to society. It sets the guidelines and provides the framework for all stakeholders to empower the youth to realize their potentials and take advantage of the opportunities available to make positive contributions to the well-being of their communities nationwide.

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

The policy also recognizes that youths are not a homogeneous group and that differences exist among them. Therefore, the policy contains provisions that address the specific and special needs and challenges of the several identified target groups and it is hoped that the strategic plans to be utilised for programming the implementation of this policy shall take into account of these differences, including age ranges.

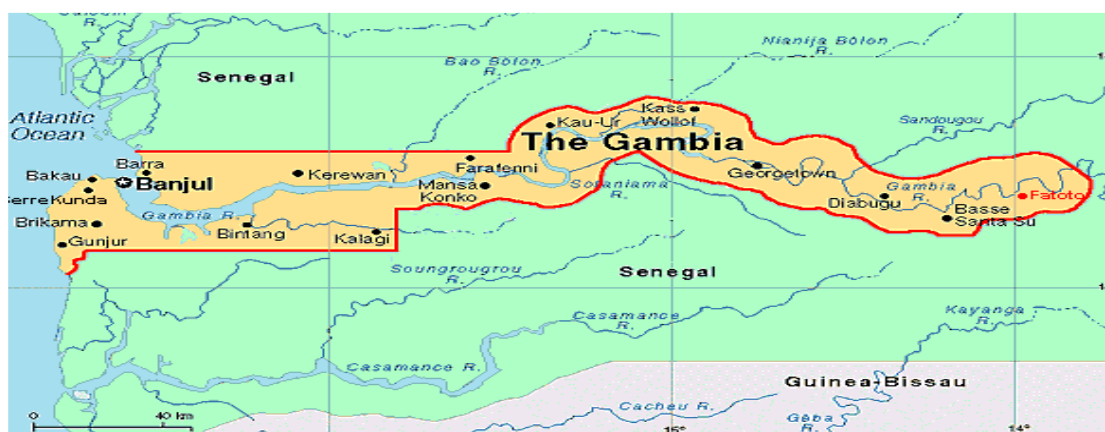
This new policy shall provide the overall national framework to coordinate and direct the youths, partners and other stakeholders on youth development and empowerment issues, bearing in mind respective national laws, sub-regional, regional and international treaties that The Gambia has subscribed to.

## 1.2 National Demographic, Economic and Political Context

### National Demographic Context

The Gambia extends about 400 km inland forming a narrow enclave in the Republic of Senegal except for a short seaboard on the Atlantic Coastline as shown in the map below. It has a land area of 10,689 Km<sup>2</sup>, with a population of 1,882,450 people (GBOS 2013 Census). A population density of 176 persons per Km<sup>2</sup> makes the country one of the highest densely populated countries in Africa, thus imposing extreme pressure on productive land and the provision of social services. The population growth rate decreased from 4.2 percent per annum in 1993 to 2.7 percent in 2003, but increased to 3.3 percent according to the 2013 Population and Housing Census. The population of the country is growing at a fast rate, reducing the benefits of fast economic growth from being converted into improvement in living standards.

Figure 1: Map of The Gambia



Map of The Gambia

The share of the youth aged 13-30<sup>1</sup> years continues to grow. It is 37.2 percent of the total population: females represent 52.8 percent and males, 47.2 percent. Banjul, Kanifing and Brikama seem to have higher youthful populations than the national average in 2013. This means that youths are more concentrated in urban areas as opposed to rural areas. It is also vividly shown that the proportion of female youths is higher than the male in all the Local Governments Areas (LGAs), which should be factored in the designing of strategies for youth development and empowerment.

The growing youthful population of The Gambia raises many questions, among them are employment and assuring a decent standard of living to all, but also (subject to good formation), how the nation can take advantage of this potential energy? These indeed are major challenges.

### Macro-economic Context

The Gambia is amongst the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) with Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita of US\$ 488 (IMF Article IV, 2017). Agriculture forms the backbone of the economy with nearly 70% of the working population involved in the agricultural sector during the rainy season. However, it is the services sector that is the biggest contributor to GDP, at 60%, with agriculture contributing about 30%. The economy grew by 3.5% in 2017 reflecting a rebound from 2016 and projected to grow by over 5% in the next few years. Headline inflation has peaked at 8.0% in 2017 and expected to slow down to 5% and then 4% over the next five years.

The prospect for the period from 2019 onwards is largely optimistic owing to the change in government, which has brought about significant improvements in democracy and socio-political institutional and economic reforms. Growth continues to be driven by the services sector. Whilst agriculture continues to be important, services such as construction, tourism and trade are taking away more proportional contributions to growth and employment. The contribution of the industry sector to GDP continues to be depressed even in 2017.

According to the Integrated Household Survey 2015/16 produced by the Gambia Bureau of Statistics, the proportion of the Gambian population living beneath the national poverty line has remained flat. National poverty increased slightly from 48.1 percent in 2010 to 48.6 percent in 2015. While this increase of the poverty rate was statistically insignificant, the number of poor increased substantially by

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<sup>1</sup>GBOS has not considered the new age bracket of 15 – 35 years in the 2013 census, and it is anticipated that in future research this will be considered for accurate reflection and reporting on the national youth cohort.

18.2 percent from 0.79 million in 2010, to 0.94 million in 2015. There are strong regional and rural urban dimensions of poverty that mask a striking difference, with both very poor and relatively well-off districts found in the same region. Banjul is the least poor, while Niamina West is the poorest.

Poverty still remains a rural phenomenon: the poverty rate of the rural areas increased from 64.2 percent in 2010 to 69.5 percent in 2015 – an 8.3 percent increase. The poor in rural areas account for about 64 percent of the total poor in the country. Conversely, urban poverty declined by 5.4 percent from 33.4 percent to 31.6 percent.

Food security is threatening the achievement of poverty eradication. With one rainy season and fertile soils, Gambia has favorable conditions for food production and can produce enough of the main staples to feed its population. Nonetheless, some areas experience significant food insecurity. Estimates based on the IHS 2015/16 suggest that close to 55 percent of the population cannot meet the daily required minimum calories of 2,400 per day per person. Brikama is the Local Government Area (LGA) with the largest food insecurity and accounts for close to half of the food poor population. Regional level estimates mask the district disparities. The district with largest food poverty is Foni Bintang at 85.5 percent.

Inequality has remained flat. The Gini index is the most commonly used measure of inequality. National Gini stands at 0.359 with inequality higher in urban areas. Brikama, which has the largest number of poor people has the largest inequality. Regional inequality persists and appears to be on the rise.

## Political Context

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

The structure of government under the 1997 Constitution makes provision for an Executive President, and a Cabinet appointed from outside the National Assembly. This constitution is being reviewed and a new one based on on-going consultations shall be in place by 2021. It is anticipated that a newly formatted constitution shall entrench and augment a more democratic dispensation, socioeconomic growth and overall security and stability at all levels.

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

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

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

There was democratic change of government in 2017 resulting from the removal from power through elections of 22 years of dictatorship. With the emergence of the new democratic dispensation, and willingness of the international community to support The Gambia, and its accompanying rise in national commitment and hope for better times, the government with the help of the UNDP generated the National Development Plan (NDP) as a basis for implementation of a transitional programme, which ends in 2021. The NDP accorded priority status in development programming out of eight others, to youths, **‘Reaping the demographic dividend through an empowered youth’**; in recognition of the overarching importance and need to harness the youth energy for national development.

### 1.3 The Situation of Youth in The Gambia

With a population of 1,882,450 people (2013 Population and Housing Survey), the share of the youth aged 13-30 years continues to grow. The youth population constituted 690,836 at the time of the 2013 Population and Housing Census representing 37.2 percent of the total population. The 2013 Census report continues to highlight the youth characteristic in the following revealing manner:

There were slightly more female youth than males—52.8 percent and 47.2 percent respectively. Of a total youth population of 690,836, 12.0 percent were aged between 13 and 14 years, 31.0 percent between 15 and 19 years, 26.6 percent between 20 and 24 years, 23.1 percent between 25 and 29 years and 7.3 percent aged 30 years. The age distribution by sex follows a similar pattern.

The youth are almost equally distributed between urban and rural areas—50.1 percent in the urban areas and 49.9 percent living in the rural areas. However, slightly more male youth lived in urban areas—63.0 percent, in contrast with 60.3 percent of females due partly to sex selectivity of migration with males more likely to migrate than females. Females out-numbered males across all ages and geographical location except for Banjul LGA where there were slightly more males than females.

Information on educational attainment of the youth is important for gauging the quality of the labour force. Educational attainment of the youth has been analysed considering three aspects namely—those who have never attended school, those currently going to school, and those who attended in the past. Overall, 32.1 percent of the youth have never attended school, while 33.0 percent were attending school at the time of the census, and 34.9 percent attended in the past.

It was further reported that the developing world is witnessing a youth bulge, especially in sub-Saharan Africa with its concomitant demand for education and employment. These two variables are closely linked as one's level of education largely determines their employability and employment status. Hence the need for greater opportunities to develop skills that are needed for participation in the labour market increases with increasing youth population. It is therefore important to have a clear idea about the educational attainment of the youth to determine the extent to which the supply of skills matches the demand. **Education is also an important factor shaping economic and labour market outcomes—productivity and competitiveness and provides insights for quality of a country's labour force and informs policy decisions.** Thirty-two percent of the youth have never been to school, 16.0 percent attained primary education, and 23.0 percent lower secondary while 24.0 percent reached upper secondary level. Only one percent had vocational education and three percent reached tertiary level. Except for primary education, female youth lagged behind males at all levels of education. A similar pattern was observed between rural and urban areas.

Economic activity is a key social variable that measures labour force participation that supports the personal quest to move out of poverty. It is even more critical for the economy to generate decent jobs to absorb the youth entering the labour market for them to have a sense of belonging. Out of the 690,836 youth, 43.1 percent were economically active and 56.9 percent inactive. Being economically active tends to grow with increasing age - for example, over 71 percent of youth aged 30 years were economically active, in contrast with about 14 percent of 13/14 year old youngsters. Among the female youth, 39.5 percent were economically active compared to 46.7 percent of their male counterparts. Nonetheless, the youth bear a disproportionate share of the unemployed probably due to lack of skills, or mismatch between the skills they possess and those demanded in the labour market. The share of youth unemployment in total unemployment was about 70 percent while the ratio of youth unemployment to adult unemployment was also high—2.3. This means that for every adult who was unemployed there were more than two youth in that situation.

The 2013 census report states that a youthful population could be an asset to a nation if the youth have the necessary education and employable skills to participate in national development processes. As stated earlier, a healthy and vibrant youth population is an asset for a nation not only for what it offers now, but also in the future. This is more so for a country like The Gambia with very few natural resource endowments. However, the prospects for numerous youths in The Gambia appears bleak, as they lack the pre-requisites for successful life outcomes— education and skills.

The proportion of youth not in employment, education or training (the NEET rate), is a broad measure of untapped potential of youth. According to the International Labour Organisation (ILO), the NEET group is ‘neither improving their future employability through investment in skills, nor gaining experience through employment. As such, they are particularly at risk of both labour market and social exclusion. ILO normally estimates the NEET rate for the population aged 15-24 years, which is the United Nations definition of youth. However, in The Gambia, the youth is defined as all persons aged between 15 and 35. The NEET rate is therefore estimated for this group as 27.5 percent. It is worth mentioning that the 2013 Census did not ask questions on participation in training. The NEET is thus estimated using two variables—not employed, and not in education (attending school). Interpretation of the estimated NEET rate should therefore be made with caution.

In order to tap into the potential of the youth, efforts at improving their education and skills should be intensified. It is a well-known fact that the economic success of ‘East Asian Tigers’— Hong Kong, Singapore, South Korea and Taiwan—was due mainly to investment in skills development and higher educational attainment for their youth.

In view of The Gambia’s youth situation, the growing youthful population of The Gambia raises many questions, and among them is employment, and assuring a decent standard of living, which are all major national challenges. According to the Labour Force Survey 2018, despite substantial improvements in access to basic education and steady economic growth, The Gambia still faces considerable challenges in respect to reducing poverty. Nearly 60 percent of the poor in The Gambia are under the age of 20 years. Youth face significant challenges with respect to employment outcomes, such as a very difficult transition from school to work, and very low levels of education and training.

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

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

Overall, young workers are employed in jobs of low quality, and high levels of informality. Female youth are also much more likely to be self-employed (46 percent, versus 32 percent for male youth). The agriculture sector is described as the key to investing in the youth and accounts for 41.5 percent of employed youth aged 13-30 years with 30.7 percent male and 52.2 percent female. More than half of

young workers are engaged in agriculture, which predominates in rural areas (66.3 percent, versus 7.5 percent in urban areas), and the services sector is the most important source of youth employment in cities and towns, accounting for almost 65 percent of employed youth. Female youth are less likely to be employed, or in education, and more likely to be inactive (31 percent, against 27 percent) than male youth. Low human capital is a particular concern in rural areas given that formal education is much more limited than in urban areas. This group of young people that never attend school or leave early is a grave policy concern.

To address the gaps in the quality of educational attainment, the government has placed emphasis on Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) through its sectoral policies on Higher Education and Science, Technology and Innovation. TVET provision consists of pre-employment training provided by government institutions, NGOs and private training bodies. Public institutions tend to offer postsecondary training, and are mainly concentrated in the Greater Banjul Area. The key public institution in TVET provision is the Gambia Technical Training Institute (GTTI) which delivers certificate and diploma courses at the postsecondary level and is mandated to train middle-level manpower in commerce, business, accounting, engineering, and construction. Enterprise-based training is a major source of skills acquisition for those in work, both paid employment and in the informal sector. Most private training institutions offer certificate and diploma courses in commerce, management, accounting, finance, and ICT. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs), community-based organizations (CBOs) and projects offer training to low-income individuals. The traditional apprenticeship system is also a main source of skills acquisition for those in employment, especially male youth in the informal sector. However, parents also often arrange for their male youth to be apprenticed to master craftsmen in roadside workshops (in carpentry, metalwork, auto mechanics, tailoring, etc.) where the quality of such training is usually low, informal and inconsistent.

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

The prioritisation of youth investment in the National Development Policy – **‘Reaping the demographic dividend through an empowered youth’** - is testimony to the recognition of the importance of the youth cohort for overall socioeconomic development and the need to mainstream them in development programming. It is hoped that this will continue in all future national medium term policies and plans by governments over the tenancy of this policy.

## 1.4 Reformulation and Scope of this Policy

The National Youth Policy is intended to provide guidelines and direction for all stakeholders involved in the implementation of policies, programs and projects for the development of youths in The Gambia. **Government shall lead the process and coordinate the creation of knowledgeable, skilful and properly comported youths who can contribute optimally to national development.** It also a national demonstration of Government’s commitment to all international conventions and charters it has signed affecting the youth.

Several challenges have been registered by the mid-term review and terminal evaluation of the 2009 – 2018 policy, which call for the revision of the policy to accommodate a new focus on youth development and empowerment – a paradigm shift to structurally address some of the following issues:

- The apparent lack of policy understanding of the network of government institutions/ministries that is responsible for ensuring youth development and ill-perception of the role of MOYS.

- The lack of clear differentiation of the roles for coordinating and monitoring the implementation of the policy and conducting research and/or impact evaluations between MOYS (DPP) and the NYC.
- The lack of clarity in addressing the challenges relating to government approach and strategy in dealing with youth issues, primarily from a cross-sectoral dimension and downplaying the sector-specificity of certain critical youth issues.
- The absence of an appropriate coordination environment and mechanisms for ensuring the judicious mobilisation and rational utilisation of resources by partner institutions (ministries of government, NGOs, donors and the private sector) in youth development.
- The lack of mechanisms and processes for mainstreaming youth development and empowerment issues in different sector policies and strategies.

The National Youth Policy (2019 - 2028) focuses on the following key areas:

- A common understanding in government of the scope of sectoral policy involvement in youth development, the accompanying ramifications for youth development programming, budgeting and partnership in the implementation of this policy;
- The coordination function of the MOYS in the implementation of this policy by a network of partner institutions and the restructuring, and funding of MOYS to suit the successful accomplishment of this task;
- The roles, rights and responsibilities of the categories of stakeholders in the business of youth formation and harnessing for national development;
- Arrangements for three-year rolling strategic plan implementation of this policy, its monitoring and evaluation to inform on-going progress and probable review.



## NATIONAL YOUTH POLICY

This policy recognises and puts in place the framework for ensuring youth development for national needs and by extension the need to create the knowledge, skills and attitudinal frames in these youths so that they are resourceful and respectful. This, therefore, considers not only what needs to be done for youths when they are 15 years and enter the youth age, but also even before they reach this critical age. It must be said that the type and quality of youths that the nation generates when they are 15 years depends on the formative years from childhood - how their aptitudes, resilience to learning, knowledge and skill building have been developed, to render them appropriate products for national development and good social order.

This policy recognises the varied and distinctive roles of families, communities, the education system, and other supporting social and economic policies impacting the outcome of the nature of the youth that a nation looks forward to. In this respect, this policy considers sustained youth development as the most critical public investment that cuts across many sectors. Whilst MOYS is primarily responsible for being the voice of the youths, it shall be empowered institutionally to ensure effective coordination of the overall national development efforts for youths. Other sectors and ministries such as MoBSE, MoHESRT, MoWCASW& NAQAA must play critical roles in the formation of the nature of the youth. In addition, the MoTIE, MoT&C, MoH and MoA, the private sector and some NGOs shall be responsible for providing the framework by which the youths shall be employable and given opportunities for productivity in the world of work.

In this respect the MOYS must ensure an institutional partnership arrangement in the programming, budgeting for, and investment in youth development by forming a **coalition of institutional partners to implement and report on the outcomes of this policy, based on a cross-cutting rolling three-year strategic plan.**

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

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

- Youth;
- Formation of youths;
- Coordination of the implementation of the National Youth Policy;
- Rights, responsibilities and obligations of right holders and duty bearers; and
- Priority youth groups to be targeted by this Policy.

### 2.1 Definition of Youth

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

Youth, as a concept varies from culture to culture and from society to society. In most Gambian societies the progression from childhood to youth involves some systematic rites of passage or initiation into adulthood. These rites have symbolic significance in that by participating in them, an individual achieves a

new status and position of responsibility in society. Such a new status gains validity through genuine community action and recognition. However, due to certain influences driven by science, technology and external culture contact, the boundaries defining the transition from childhood to youth and from youth to adolescence and adulthood are shifting, and the crossovers into each new stage is now manifested in different ways. The challenges, and changes that young people must negotiate do not occur as predictably as in the past, therefore, defining youth according to some exact age range can be a very difficult task.

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

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

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

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

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

## 2.2 Formation of Youths

There are many contextual meanings of the word formation, but those relevant for the purpose of finding and generating a youth disposition / character, include the process of influencing or guiding a person to a deeper understanding of a particular vocation; or the process during which something comes into being and gains its characteristics.

Youths are children born into our society, who have entered adolescence, at an age where the human being is most curious, and at the same time awfully vulnerable. This is the age of adventure when the individual examines his/her instincts and takes risks in proving them. In this period good / positive lifelong decisions can be taken, but very poor decisions may also be reached - both decisions have an impact on the child, and eventual transition from youth to adulthood. Given this vulnerability of the youth, the youths in turn look up to society for guidance for a deeper understanding of being a youth, or adolescent. This is the time that youths are expected to adhere to social norms, derived expectations and acceptability into society, and hence exhibit the characteristics by which society defines that individual (the youth) either of great promise, or a potential problem.

The youth therefore cannot be made only on the day that they are either 13 or 15 years, depending on what age is defined as of being youth. What constitutes the person and the requisite characteristics of being so, include a sustained societal process of social creation from birth - by the family, immediate community and culture, and formal and informal educational systems that the child goes through in his/her lifetime. This, therefore, apporitions society an obligation for the distinct systems that create the youth, defined by the characteristics that society view as acceptable, and this is done through a variety of social norms (family, religious, cultural, etc.), policies and educational practices. The child is therefore formed by family and community, but principally by school; and this is where the MoBSE, MoHERST, MoWACSW and NAQAA have the principal roles of creating the child and the youth. These institutions are principal partners of MOYS in the process of enabling youth development, and must create systems that ensure that all the children born to a community, or our nation are raised and formed in such a manner that by the time they become youths and must transit to the world of work, they are equipped with all the necessary knowledge, skills and comporment that enables life options to determine career pathways and informed choices. Civic education may be used to plan and support character formation.

In this way youths will not necessarily depend on society alone to create employability for them, but will as a result of the way they have excelled through the educational systems, pursue any profession of their choice and at any level, because they have the qualifications and competence to show for and commit to it. This is the type of formation of the youth that is imperative and implied in this policy as to be of essence and that which must be given to The Gambian child and youth. It is only when youths are appropriately and successfully moulded from an early age, that given their high proportion to the national population, they can be harnessed. It is their derived knowledge, skills and comporment that The Gambia can and must harness for national development.

### 2.2.1 Critical Partner Institutions in Investment on Youth Formation and Development

The following institutions shall be the primary targets in the partnership for the implementation of this policy and of overall youth development:

**Table 1: Critical Partnership Institutions in the Implementation of the National Youth Policy**

Ref.	Institution	Role	Comments
1	Ministry of Youth and Sports (MOYS) and its satellite Institutions	Coordination of the Implementation of National Youth Policy.	
2	I. Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education II. Ministry of Higher Education Research, Science & technology. III. NAQAA	Formation through the educational system and building the character of the youths for national development.	At least 60% of the youths at the end of every level of the education continuum must achieve qualification and competence to proceed to the next.
3	I. Ministry of Agriculture II. Ministry of Tourism and Culture III. Ministry of Trade, Industry, Regional Integration and Employment IV. Ministry of Information and Communication Infrastructure (MoICI) V. Ministry of Women Affairs, Children and Social Welfare VI. Ministry of Health VII. Ministry of Fisheries	Implementing Partners Provision of opportunities for employment and protection of youth health and other rights.  -do-  -do-	Provision of direct employment and catalysts of employment creation industries and activities. Also sustaining the healthy wellbeing of children and youth, and protecting their respective rights.
4	I. NGOs and Youth Organisations/Associations II. Donors / Projects / development partners	-do-	Support Government with projects to enhance financing and entrepreneurial training for youths.
5	Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs	Economic programming and budgeting on youth development.	Economic planning and public development planning for high and relevant economic growth and distribution.

6	Private Sector	Voice of the Private sector for increased private sector investment, expansion and efficiency to create greater employment opportunities.	
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The institutions stated in the table above are not exhaustive but are considered the most critical to initiate this endeavour, and may be recreated going forward. A monitoring and evaluation framework generated and implemented under the coordination of the MOYS shall guide the internal mechanisms within MOYS and between the partner institutions for the coordination of the implementation of this policy.

### 2.3 Coordination of the Implementation of the Youth Policy

The process of formation of the youth as establishes an institutional obligation for the creation of the youth. The MoBSE, MoHERST, NAQAA and the newly formed MoWCAS have been mentioned as having special roles in this process but there are also other public institutions whose roles are significant. These include MoTIE, MoA, MoH, MoT&C and the Ministry of Fisheries, and Water Resources. It must therefore be emphasized that public expenditure on youths is not just the budget allocation to the MOYS but including the other partner ministries as mentioned here above.

Outside the public domain, the bilateral and multilateral donors, NGOs and the private sector all have similar significant roles in forming or empowering the youth.

**Therefore, the range of institutions in and outside of government engaged in servicing the youth must be coordinated in their programming, budgeting and execution of their roles, which are by default components of the National Youth Policy.** The task of effectively forming and mainstreaming youths in national development is by default a partnership task between institutions, and must be coordinated effectively. This coordination task forms the core task and responsibility of the Ministry of Youth and Sports and its satellite institutions especially the National Youth Council.

### 2.4 Rights, Responsibilities and Obligations of Rights Holders and Duty Bearers

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

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

#### Rights of the Youth

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

- I. Right to life, personal liberty and security;

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

### **Responsibilities and Obligations of the Youth**

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

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

- I. To be patriotic and loyal to the Gambian nation and promote her wellbeing;
- II. To promote peace, security and development;
- III. The obligation to embrace positive value systems of respect and tolerance for authority and towards parents, extended family and the community;
- IV. To demonstrate assertiveness and self-worth in line with positive values and attributes of role modelling;
- V. To promote socio-economic independence of youth by attaching more value to positive attitudes and self-motivation;
- VI. To cultivate leadership values and deliberate participation in policy development, process and decision-making;
- VII. To protect and account for the country's physical, natural and financial resources, demonstrating a high level of ownership for the benefit of themselves and future generations;
- VIII. To respect and protect public property and property of others and to use them wisely and effectively.

### **Obligations of Society to the Youth**

- I. To promote and advance the principles of gender equality and respect for the rights of Persons with Disabilities;
- II. To acquire skills, which increase their capacity for self-help, self-respectability, cooperation and community development;
- III. To ensure a society free from violence, coercion, crime, devastation, exploitation, intimidation and other forms of social crime;

- IV. To lead healthy and responsible lives by promoting physical and mental well-being, including the issues of drugs and substance abuse, sexual and reproductive health issues and HIV/AIDS;
- V. To promote work ethic, life-long learning and positive attitude towards work; and
- VI. To be law abiding, respectable, respectful and enlightened citizens, knowledgeable about their rights as well as duties and obligations.

### **Obligations of Government to the Youth**

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

- I. Create the enabling environment and infrastructure that can form and generate youths with requisite knowledge, skills, competence and comportment necessary for success in life;
- II. Create the enabling environment and infrastructure that can generate opportunities for youth involvement in decision making that affects them, the environment and society;
- III. Encourage the participation of young men and women in community life and development;
- IV. Respect and accept the contribution of young men and women to society through their talents, resources and ideas;
- V. Assist young people in reaching their goals and full potential;
- VI. Be sensitive to the needs and difficulties of young women and men;
- VII. Provide adequate funding for sustainable development of youth-oriented projects;
- VIII. Provide adequate funding for educational programs and create equal opportunities to be educated; and
- IX. Recognize their capabilities and individualities and allow whenever possible their choice of educational fields and careers with recourse to guidance and counselling.

### **Obligations of Adults and Parents to the Youth**

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

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

- I. Promote responsible parenthood;
- II. Act as positive role models to young people;
- III. Provide a favourable physical, emotional, mental, moral, cultural, spiritual and economic environment for youth development and well-being;
- IV. Support and encourage young people to participate and perform according to their capabilities in education, training and employment;
- V. Provide equal access and opportunities to family resources to the youth regardless of gender and ability (differently abled), children from different mothers, children in alternative care and etc.);
- VI. Understand and accept the youth and recognise their potential contribution to society;
- VII. Provide counselling, support and guidance in accordance with the specific and peculiar needs of young people;
- VIII. Provide adolescent and youth sexual and reproductive health information including HIV/AIDS information and education to young people;
- IX. Allow the youth to fully participate in development process and cooperate with them in this endeavour; and
- X. Recognize their capabilities and individualities and allow whenever possible their choice of educational fields and careers.

## 2.5 Priority Target Youth Groups

This National Youth Policy has defined youth as **all young males and females**(irrespective of ability, creed, tribe, religion, status, colour, etc.) between the **age range of 15-35** and being citizens of The Gambia or just living in the Gambia.

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

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

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

- I. Potential youths – those from ages 0 – 14 and undergoing various types and stages of formation;
- II. Students in secondary, tertiary and higher educational institutions;
- III. Out-of-school Youth;
- IV. Unemployed and under-employed Youth;
- V. Female Youth;
- VI. Rural Youth;
- VII. Youth that are differently abled;
- VIII. Youth engaged in social crimes and delinquency;
- IX. Commercial Sex Workers; and
- X. Fully Employed youth.

### Potential Youths – Ages 0 – 14 and Undergoing Various Types and Stages of Formation

This group of youths are legally outside of the youth definition but is the supply source of the legal youth cohort of 15 – 35 years. The policy seeks to ensure that investment in this class who are children by legal definition is important because they will eventually transit into the youth cohort and they must be suitably formed in their character, comportsment, educational dispositions and career orientations:

In this respect, this policy recommends the following policy measures to meet the challenges of potential youths:

- I. Assurance that all children born, or living in The Gambia go to and remain in school throughout their school careers;
- II. That the school system shall provide requisite systemic and physical infrastructure that deliver quality education and character formation; and
- III. That at the termination of each level of education (Grades 6 & 9) all children shall pass the necessary tests or assessments to qualify them into the next level of the national educational continuum.

### Students in Secondary, Tertiary and Higher Educational Institutions

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

The constraints currently encountered in the provision of an appropriate teaching and learning environment is due to challenges in the funding of secondary and tertiary education that is critical to the implementation of this National Youth Policy. Hence, the policy focuses on improving the quality of

education at these levels through the provision of appropriate functional teaching and learning environments.

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

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

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

This National Youth Policy recommends the following policy measures by stakeholders:

- I. Promotion of the teaching of science and technology, as well as the teaching of vocational skills in agriculture and technical trades;
- II. Revise the curricula to include life skills training, good citizenship and transformational leadership training;
- III. Promotion of the use of ICT (Information, and Communication Technology) in schools
- IV. Provision of financial assistance to needy students, particularly the female youth;
- V. Promotion of democratic student unionism to serve as a launching pad for the training of youth in leadership roles and democratic cultures;
- VI. Encouragement and promotion of gender-sensitive curricula in schools;
- VII. Introduction of sexual and reproductive health education in all schools, especially for female students who have to cope with problems peculiar to them;
- VIII. Enforcement of enrolment and retention of girls in schools and general reduction in school drop-outs particularly in the rural areas;
- IX. Promotion of Career, Personal and Educational Guidance and Counselling in schools
- X. Introduction of moral instructions, civics and civility in the curricula;
- XI. Promotion of extra-curricular activities through structured with voluntary associations and clubs, such as societies for Debating, Literature, Current Affairs, Historical and Cultural Affairs and established organizations such as Scouts, Red Cross, Girls Guide, Boys Brigade in secondary schools etc.;
- XII. Establishment of a system that ensures that at least 60% of children at the end of every level of the education continuum achieve qualification and acceptance to the next level(s);
- XIII. Promotion of games and sports in the schools (**as mandatory**) that is both recreational and competitive in collaboration with the National Sports Council.

### Out-of-school Youth

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

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



## Unemployed and under-employed Youth

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

This policy recognizes the feeling of desperation of unemployed youth and the fact that they require special attention by all stakeholders to deal with the wide range of problems they experience.

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

- I. All tiers of government and the private sector should redouble efforts at job creation;
- II. Establishment of community-based centres for skills acquisition to promote apprenticeship and vocational training across the country;
- III. Facilitate access to productive resources for the youth such as land, micro-credit, technology and information through business or technical advisory services; and
- IV. Labour laws to mitigate youth under-employment – through minimum legislation and enforcement of a minimum wage.

## Female Youth

In The Gambia, an increasing number of young women experience unemployment more frequently than their young male counterparts and tend to have fewer occupational opportunities. The 2018 Gambia Labour Force Survey confirms that female youth are less likely to be employed, or in education, and more likely to be inactive than their male counterparts. The increasingly high number of school drop-outs, forced and early marriages and teenage pregnancies recorded across the country is also an indication that young women require specific support measures in this regard.

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

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

Specifically the policy seeks to promote the following measures:

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

## Rural Youth

Youth in rural areas are generally more disadvantaged than those who live in urban settings due to limited access to services and facilities such as the uneven distribution of skills training centres, youth centres and employment opportunities.

However, the Labour Force Survey 2018 shows that Young people living in cities and towns are much more likely to be unemployed than their rural counterparts. This again underscores the different nature of urban and rural economies, and in particular the important role that the agriculture sector plays in absorbing young rural workers.

In the light of this situation, this policy recognizes this and proposes:

- I. An even-geographical spread of services and facilities for the youth such as skills training and enterprise development centres, youth centres and development programs;
- II. Government to intensify efforts to reverse the under-development of rural areas by implementing the program for decentralisation and local development;
- III. Deliberate and concerted effort must be made to ensure that programs and services, which address the needs of young men and women, reach the rural areas.

## Differently abled youth

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

Thus, the National Youth Policy seeks to ensure the following measures for promoting and protecting the rights of differently abled youths:

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

## Youth in Crime and Violence-Related Problems

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

In this respect, this policy provides for the following measures:

- I. Promotion of community-based preventive measures to youth engaged in crime and delinquency;
- II. Promote programs designed to enlighten the youth at risk on the dangers of drug and substance abuse and other forms of crime and delinquency;
- III. Provision of personal career and educational guidance and counselling for the youth in and out-of-school;
- IV. Sensitize the police and the judicial system on the specific concerns of young people involved in crime;

- V. Create avenues to monitor young people in contact with police, and develop ways to improve the way they are dealt with by the police;
- VI. Ensure speedy trials of youth offenders;
- VII. Search for and promote alternatives to incarceration wherever possible by strengthening community policing and alternative dispute resolution mechanisms;
- VIII. Promote the establishment of rehabilitation centres for drug addicts, juvenile offenders and ex-convicts;
- IX. Provision of educational, skill-training and gainful employment opportunities for youth in juvenile correctional institutions;
- X. Provision of after care facilities for ex-inmates of correctional institutions;
- XI. Observe UN minimum standard rules for the treatment of young offenders.

### **Commercial Sex Workers**

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

Sex Workers – male and female, in The Gambia are characteristically poor, marginalized, and stigmatized. This youth category is nominally hidden within society, and generally unknown, or even acknowledged – some may view such practice as normal and acceptable for the male sex worker. They lack both formal education and empowerment. Frequency of sex with multiple partners and a high burden of Sexually-Transmitted Infections (STIs) place them at high risk of HIV infection. They often engage in unprotected sex and other risky behaviours, such as drugs and substance abuse. Surveys have consistently shown a high and rising HIV prevalence rate among sex workers, who are said to be the major reservoir of HIV infection.

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

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

## POLICY PRINCIPLES, GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

### 3.1 Basis of Guiding Principles and Core Values

The National Youth Policy is based on a common understanding of the need for deliberate formation of desirable quality youths, mainstreaming their empowerment in national development through formal and informal formation, and imbuing them with a set of core fundamental values and beliefs that determine how aptitude and character can be created in them for given societal purpose, based on the following principles:

- I. Recognising the need for **potential youth (0 – 14 years) formation** - coordinated governmental and non-governmental support systems that shall ensure that the backward linkage to the youth cohort from age 15 is dependent on the good quality that the age 14s and below bring with them.
- II. **That youths are the most important and valuable resource of the nation.** Government must recognize, discover and understand their conditions, needs, interests, issues, aspirations and capacities and make appropriate provision for their development;
- III. That The Gambia shall commit to mainstreaming **youth issues both as a cross-sectoral as well as sector-specific**, and shall be adopted by Government as a development approach to inform the economic reform agenda and medium, and long-term development planning;
- IV. That this National Youth Policy is based on the fact, that **all youth development programs shall be youth-driven, and youth-centred**;
- V. That The Gambia shall commit to **youth participation in the democratic process**, as well as in community and civic decision making and development process;
- VI. That effective and result-focused policy **implementation demands coordination, collaborative partnership and cooperative interaction among all stakeholders**—including the different tiers of government, private sector organisations, non-governmental organisations, traditional and religious leaders, community-based organisations and development partners at all levels;
- VII. **That on-going, this policy shall ensure consistency with the provisions of other existing national and sector policies** such as The National Development Plan (NDP, 2018-2021), National Employment Policy (NEP, 2010-2014), National Health Policy (2012-2020), National Reproductive Health Policy (2007 – 2014), National Education Policy (2004-2015), National Tertiary and Higher Education Policy (2014-2023), Draft National Science, Technology and Innovation Policy (2015-2024), National Agricultural Policy (2009-2015) and the National Gender Policy and Women’s Advancement (2010), National Enterprise Policy and Act;
- VIII. That this National Youth Policy recognises the **diversity in the youth category** and is therefore mindful of the gender and age range implications and strategies as contained in the gender policy as well as the challenges facing differently abled persons as enshrined in the draft National Disability Policy and Bill;
- IX. **That this policy is anchored on the creation of opportunities and strategies for addressing the challenges** facing the youth and should be the concern of the whole society;
- X. That this Policy **recognises the contributions of Non-Governmental Organisations and other donor partners** to the continued life-long development of the youth and their skills and capacities and therefore empowering them should be supported and encouraged by government;
- XI. That this policy promotes a wide range of participatory methodologies to **ensure maximum participation, engagement and contribution to youth development.**
- XII. **This policy shall be a guide for all youth development institutions and actors in The Gambia** and they shall by default use it in designing their interventions.

### 3.2 Policy Goal

The principal goal of this policy is to establish a holistic and harmonious youth cohort imbued with adequate knowledge and competencies, strong professional ethics, spiritual and moral values; and a level of independence, patriotism and commitment that gives them life options to choose development and progress in alignment with the national vision.

### 3.3 Policy objectives

The main objectives of this policy include:

- I. To establish a framework, and/or guidelines for **youth formation from ages 0 – 35 (including potential youths (0 – 14))**, to meet projected national labour and skill needs;
- II. To approach youth development as a **comprehensive cross-cutting and multi-sectoral partnership programme of institutions in the public, private, NGO and donor sectors** through an institutional partnership framework;
- III. To **promote youth participation in the democratic process at all levels** as well as in leadership at individual, family, community and the national level;
- IV. To ensure that **all youth programmes are youth-driven, and youth centred**;
- V. To establish through the MOYS an effective **coordination mechanism of interventions in the implementation of this policy by its stakeholders**;
- VI. To **improve organisational capacity performance** and ensure country-wide coverage in the execution of youth programs by providing requisite coordination leadership of the implementation of this policy, through a three-year rolling strategic planning framework;
- VII. To advocate for greater economic inclusion and **reduce youth unemployment through enhanced economic growth** and more equitable distribution of the national wealth;
- VIII. To mobilize resources for youth programs and projects at all levels; and
- IX. In a special way to **address the social, economic and health problems that confront the youth**.

## PRIORITY POLICY AREAS

The vision of this policy is –to **Empower and Render The Gambian Youth Capable and Willing to Make Sustainable Life Choices**. Its accompanying mission is to **establish a holistic and harmonious youth cohort imbued with adequate knowledge and competencies, strong professional ethics, spiritual and moral values; and a level of independence, patriotism and commitment that give them life options to choose development and progress in keeping-up with the national vision**.

The main goal and its accompanying objectives shall constitute the basis for investment and programming for the achievement of the vision by 2028.

In cognisance of the socio-economic and political realities of this country, complemented by international best practices and commitments for youth empowerment and development, the priority policy issues and critical concerns facing The Gambia include:

- I. Rethinking and redefining youth development as a deliberate formation process;
- II. Advocating for the rethinking and realignment of the national educational system to meet the quality and numerical knowledge and skill needs for national development;
- III. Institutional Partnership Collaboration in Youth Development Programming and Investment;
- IV. Institutionalising and strengthening coordination of policy implementation;
- V. Establishing coequality between STEM, and general academic education and availing it to all youths of various aptitudes;
- VI. Advocate for mainstreaming youth in economic planning and programming as prerequisites to growth and employment creation;
- VII. Identification and taking advantage of high employment potency sectors such as agriculture, fisheries & technology related services;
- VIII. Curbing migration through formidable alternatives;
- IX. Assuring all youths access to quality health and education;
- X. Promoting sustained diversified and viable entrepreneurship development schemes and opportunities for youths.

Based on a three-year rolling strategic plan and under the coordination of the MOYS, the partnership framework of institutions for the implementation of this policy shall generate, implement, and revise a plan every three years over the life span of this policy. A permanent item on the National Cabinet Agenda shall be the Status of Implementation of the National Youth Policy and this status report shall be prepared jointly by the partner institutions responsible for its implementation – and submitted by the MOYS for cabinet consideration every quarter.

### 4.1 Rethinking and redefining youth development as a deliberate formation process

The young people area direct result of the natural process of human and national perpetuity assurance, and they must be deliberately formed to pursue such perpetuity. Whilst age 15 is the beginning of the youth age, it must be said that the sociocultural moulding of the youth commences from 0 to 14 years within families, schools and the community at large – this policy refers to this **age group 0 – 14 as ‘potential youth’**.

In this process, social and economic policy shall take into account at all levels, the specific role and probable outcomes of all policy programs on the evolving nature of children from birth, to entry into the youth age. The type of health provision, education, socialisation (religious, cultural and etc.) and character formation, must reflect and be pursuant to transforming our children into educated, skilled and properly comported young men and women.

## 4.2 Advocating for the rethinking and realigning of the national educational systems to meet the quality and numerical knowledge and skill needs for national development

By this policy, the education system would need to be transformed to ensure that all along the continuum of the education system from primary to tertiary (i.e. university), that at the end of each level and based on the selected assessment criteria for transition to the next, at least 60% of all the children/young men and women who are assessed, qualify; and have access to the next level.

## 4.3 Institutional Partnership Collaboration in Youth Development Programming and Investment

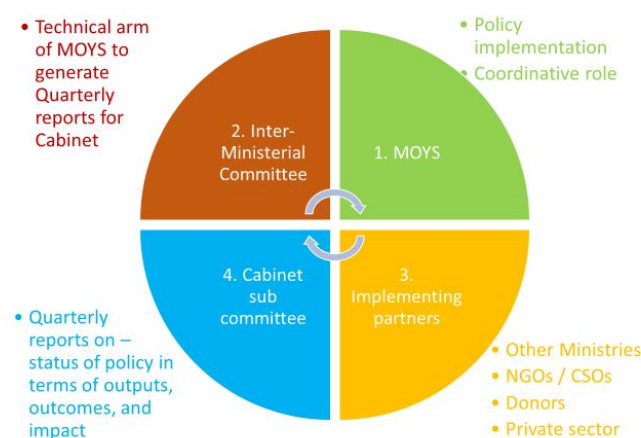
That since youths are the greatest investment that The Gambia can make in its citizens and that it is one investment, which when successful has the greatest opportunity of transforming the nation from underdevelopment to prosperity and security, the task of forming, empowering and putting the youth energy to national use shall be an institutional partnership process cutting across government, the private sector and NGO and donor sectors.

## 4.4 Institutionalising and strengthening coordination of policy implementation

Given the special importance of investment on youths, this process shall be in accordance with the partnership framework of this policy. The following structures shall be established to enable this partnership framework:

- V. MOYS shall be responsible and capacitated to be able to coordinate the implementation and review of this policy.
- VI. This will require a restructuring of the MOYS in determining the suitability of its departmental structures for the task and clearly defining the roles in the process of each of its satellite institutions – NYC, NSC, NYSS, PIA, and NEDI.
- VII. An M & E framework for the implementation of this policy, carrying out impact evaluations and studies on youths and the economy and society shall be generated and implemented by the partner institutions.
- VIII. Cabinet shall require the partner institutions under the leadership of the MOYS to report on the outcomes of the implementation to Cabinet every quarter.

Figure 2: Institutional Framework of the Multi-sector Approach to Youth Development



#### **4.5 Establishing coequality between STEM and general academic education and availing it to all youths of various aptitudes**

This policy requires that skills training shall not be subordinate to general education and it shall no more be considered appropriate only for people who are not competent in general education. It shall no more be perceived as addressing employability for sustenance only, but an informed choice for a better life by children and the young. It must be said that since skills are predicated on science and technology, entry into skills and technology and science training schools / institutions should be for the smart and committed. This policy perceives an education system which considers the two educational streams equal and that all children shall be given equal quality training and competence to enable them at some point choose a senior secondary career either in STEM or general education, and outputs of both systems must have equal access to tertiary and higher education.

#### **4.6 Advocate for mainstreaming youth in economic planning and programming as prerequisites to growth and employment creation**

Economic growth and equitable distribution, which result to socioeconomic development, are not accidental. They are a result of the quality of efforts at deliberate planning and implementation, and a sustained commitment to transforming one's country in a resource constrained and competitive world. Nations that have grown even without much natural resource endowments are many, and all have done so through hard-thought out and implemented planning. This Policy advocates that this is the progressive development route for The Gambia.

The Gambia can only provide employment and security to its citizens if she grows her economy. The economy must expand and its value stable, so that jobs are available and incomes are able to provide quality of life for its citizens. This policy envisages national economic planning that is realistic and well-thought out to grow the economy, generate wealth and equitably distribute it. In this process the youth dividend that would have been created in numbers and quality, would serve as the main catalyst for the successful implementation of these plans and ensure transformation of the economy to generate opportunities for employment and quality life for themselves and society.

#### **4.7 Identification and taking advantage of high employment potency sectors such as agriculture, fisheries & technology related services**

This policy envisages that going forward the national planning system and the youth development partnership arrangements shall utilise the potentials of high potency sectors such as agriculture, fisheries, tourism, financial and consulting and technological (ICT) services to accelerate its successful implementation.

#### **4.8 Curbing migration through formidable alternatives**

This policy whilst recognising all the interventions at curbing migration continues to encourage effective economic planning and the growing of wealth. The policy-directed task of creating a resourceful and well-comported youth, as being to offer alternative quality livelihood to youths in The Gambia, so as to dissuade them from trying to travel abroad for economic reasons at all cost.

#### **4.9 Assuring all youths access to quality health and education**

The Gambia has made major inroads towards achieving physical access to education. However, access to quality education is still illusive. The current senior secondary results at which only 3.6 percent of students who sat the examinations qualified to access higher and tertiary education in 2018, is a national challenge especially to youth empowerment and must be reversed. The big question is – what happens to the 96.4 percent of students (about 12,000) in 2019, who are not engaged in tertiary education – are there adequate jobs in the current job market, how many can be absorbed into meaningful jobs, would some of these



youths be underemployed, how many will remain inactive and complacent, or would some be affected by the ‘back-way syndrome’?. It is understandable that TVET institutions shall absorb some of these students.

This policy envisages an education system that assures quality and successful transition of all children at all stages of the education continuum. It also assures all children and youths requisite health education and service access that maintains their overall health in a manner that is consistent with desired growth.

#### **4.10 Promoting Sustained Diversified and Viable Entrepreneurship Development Schemes and Opportunities for Youths.**

This policy envisages the review of all education curricula from primary to senior school and to embed in it accompanying educational materials, sufficient entrepreneurship cognitive development in the child, so that upon graduation even for people who have not specialised in entrepreneurship would have internalised sufficient entrepreneurship skills and competencies to make sustainable livelihood possible.

This policy shall support the mainstreaming of entrepreneurship in all tertiary and higher education systems for all disciplines so that it enables opportunities for graduates in all disciplines.

## MONITORING AND EVALUATION FRAMEWORK OF POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

This policy shall be implemented, monitored and evaluated in accordance with the following institutional arrangements:

- I. The MOYS shall be the nerve centre for coordinating the programming and implementing of public investments and evaluation of the impact/outcomes of public service delivery envisaged in this policy.
- II. MOYS shall be the custodian for ensuring adherence by all participants in all youth matters within the context of this policy and shall support the private sector, the public sector, donor and development partners and all other interventions in youth development matters.
- III. The following structures shall be established:
  - a. A **Cabinet Sub-committee** of the Ministers designated by this policy as service deliverers to youth development and chaired by the Minister of Youth and Sport.
  - b. To support this Cabinet sub-committee, an **Inter-Ministerial Committee** of high level technical staff from these designated ministries shall be established and chaired by the Permanent Secretary of MOYS.
  - c. An **Implementing Partners Platform** shall be established to whom quarterly reports shall be distributed and discussed for improvement of policy redesign, programming and investments. This platform shall be the general consultative council for the implementation and review of this policy.
- IV. Reporting mechanisms shall include quarterly technical reports on the status of implementation of the policy from the Inter-Ministerial Committee to the Cabinet Sub-committee.
- V. In response, a reporting framework from organisations investing in youth matters shall be established and enabled to compile data for generating the quarterly reports.
- VI. The NYC shall be the technical arm of the MOYS responsible for policing adherence to the reporting.
- VII. The DoPP shall together with the NYC be responsible for compiling the quarterly reports, adoption by MOYS and submission to the Inter Ministerial Committee for discussion, endorsement and submission through MOYS to Cabinet. A permanent item shall be introduced in the agenda and designated **Status of Implementation of the National Youth Policy and its impacts**.
- VIII. The strategic planning, midterm and final evaluations of the policy and impact studies (as may be determined) and in accordance with the timetable in Table 2 shall be the responsibility of MOYS, with the support both of the Cabinet Committee and the Inter Ministerial Committee.
- IX. Once every quarter the quarterly report submitted to cabinet amongst other issues that impinge on the adequacy or otherwise of the policy and its implementation challenges shall be laid before the Partners Implementation Platform for discussion to provide advice to the main stream implementation framework.

### 5.1 Monitoring and Evaluation Framework for Implementation of this Policy

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

- I. Coordinate interventions by all stakeholders in youth development;

- II. Ensure compliance with the guidelines, principles, goals and objectives outlined in this National Youth Policy;
- III. Assess the extent of achievement of the set goal, policy objectives, and policy measures with a view to ensuring successful implementation of this youth policy;
- IV. Assist stakeholders to operationalize the policy as it relates to their specific sectors and/or organisations and generate indicators for assessing performance and progress towards policy goals;
- V. Assess the efficient and judicious utilization of resources and youth development programs;
- VI. Measure the long-term impact of the policy on youth development and empowerment in the country;
- VII. Develop a national youth index and data bank on youth activities and development trends and regularly update the situational analysis of youth development and empowerment in the country;
- VIII. Undertake research on youth development issues on a regular and systematic basis;
- IX. Support and strengthen M & E systems on youth issues in the different sectors, regions and districts; and
- X. Conduct periodic M & E reviews on youth development and empowerment.

The main monitoring and evaluation shall be carried out in accordance with the framework established by the partnership arrangements under the leadership of the MOYS and under the policy oversight by Cabinet.

### **Outputs Coordination**

The periodic strategic plans for the implementation of this policy shall establish the expected outputs from the three-year implementation cycles of the policy objectives in all priority areas. The NYC shall be reorganised to be able to establish and operate mechanisms and instruments for coordinating the stakeholders' generation of the varieties and quantum of outputs indicated as KPIs in the strategic plans by the partner stakeholder institutions forum established for implementing this policy. A reporting mechanism shall be established by which these outputs are documented and reported to the MOYS through the DoPP for the purpose of reviewing the implementation status, effectiveness and efficiency and continuing relevance of this policy.

### **Outcomes Coordination**

Whilst the outputs reports are being coordinated and generated under the leadership of the NYC, the Ministry under the direct responsibility of the DoPP shall be responsible for leading the coordination of the outcomes of implementation of this policy. This means that the DoPP shall be reorganised and restructured to establish mechanisms, processes and procedures to assess the outcomes of the implementation of this policy, namely, overall impact on youth development in numbers and quality, impact of the youth on national economic growth and development, impact of the policy outputs on the quality of life for youths and the ramifications on national employment and socioeconomic stability, sectoral policy impacts, etc.

This will involve an organised system of studies, surveys and assessments of the desired outcomes from implementation of this policy and to determine if there is need to realign or continue its strategic thrust. The DoPP shall be the link between the MOYS and the Inter Ministerial Committee, whilst the Permanent Secretary (who sits on the Inter Ministerial Committee) and Minister (who sits in Cabinet Subcommittee) shall be the links of MOYS to Cabinet subcommittee on youth development.

The Implementing Partners Committee shall be responsible for discussing all issues relating to the implementation of this policy – design, effectiveness, continuing relevance, challenges and improvements in arrangements and coordination between partners for an effective policy. (See figure 2)

To meet the above implementation arrangements and achieve the monitoring and evaluation objectives, the following institutional framework shall be necessary:

## 5.2 The Special Role of the MOYS

### 5.2.1 The Ministry and Its Satellite Institutions

The MOYS and its satellite institutions are responsible for providing leadership to the implementation of the National Youth Policy. The crosscutting nature of this policy has implications for its implementation, and needs a partnership framework that requires a leadership organisation responsible for its coordination to be suitably structured, adequately funded and resourced.

This policy shall advocate for and support the restructuring of the MOYS and its satellite institutions to make it suitable to the task / fit-for-purpose and build sustained capacity for its new mandate. As part of the restructuring and capacity redevelopment, the continuing relevance of its satellite institutions shall be reviewed and if need be, reaffirmed and restructured. Their interagency relationships and a clarification of their roles within the mandate of this policy will be reviewed.

### 5.2.2 The National Youth Council

The NYC has a special role in the process of youth development and was ably described in the terminal evaluation of the last policy, as the voice of the youth. The NYC needs to have its role in the implementation of the policy clearly defined in the implementation coordination of this policy to avoid any interagency ambiguities within MOYS.

## 5.3 National Sports Council

The MOYS is responsible for two main youth issues, youth development and sports development. The National Youth Policy is being developed to provide a guideline framework for bringing about youth development for national socioeconomic needs.

It must be said that of all the sectors in which only youths can really show significant achievement because of the suitability of their age, and the sector that has huge financial and economic potential for youths and the nation, is Sports.

Sports is one of the most financially and economically potent businesses in the world and to render one's country a sporting destination because its utilisation is considered as such by either sub-regionals or the international world, assures that country of significant financial flows that can translate into invaluable economic benefits with diverse positive ramifications. In this case, it may be said that sports is for youths and the National Sports Policy must be aligned with the National Youth Policy in such a manner that the potency of sports for youth empowerment, employment and national economic growth is made the cornerstone of both youth, and sports development. This policy envisages a Sports Policy that will result to developing youth talents from a formidable sports industry in The Gambia, such that sports talents from The Gambia shall permeate the top of all major international sports. This policy envisages that **The Gambia shall be recognised as a sporting paradise and attract major sporting events** to render it a significant contributor to national economic growth.

## 5.4 Financing Framework for Implementation of this Policy

Progress in the implementation of the National Youth Policy and the achievement of set policy objectives and measures will depend on the ability and willingness of all tiers of government (central, local and public enterprises), private sector, civil society and development partners to mobilize sufficient resources from internal and external sources. However, this policy recognises that the primary responsibility for funding the full and successful implementation is that of the Government of The Gambia.

For adequate support and successful management of youth development and empowerment programs, critical resources requirement will include **human, material, technical, and financial resources** at

national and Local Government Levels, which could be generated from a resource mobilisation strategy as part of the three-year rolling strategic planning for the implementation of this policy.

## 5.5 The Institutional Partnership Framework for Implementation of this Policy

Table 1 enumerates the critical institutional involvement in the implementation of this policy. Given the strategic outlook for forming and rendering the youth energy as a critical necessary resource for socioeconomic development, these institutions amongst others shall be involved in and coordinated by MOYS in the implementation and review of this policy over time.

## 5.6 Strategic Planning for Implementation of Youth Policy

The strategic planning framework shall be the instrument for the implementation of this policy. The following scheduled shall be the guide for the time for the three-year rolling strategic planning process:

**Table 2: Policy Implementation and Review Schedule**

<b>Ref.</b>	<b>Strategic Plans over ten-year period (2019 to 2028)</b>	<b>Time for generating Follow-up Strategic Plan, Midterm, and/or Terminal Evaluation of this policy and new national Youth Policy at the end of this policy period.</b>
1	Develop National Youth Policy 3- year Strategic Plan	30 November 2019
2	National Youth Policy 3-year Strategic Plan 01.01.2019 – 31.12.2021	30 June 2021
3	National Youth Policy – Mid Term Review	30 June 2023/4
4	National Youth Policy 3-year Strategic Plan 01.01.2022 – 31.12.2024	30 June 2024
5	National Youth Policy 3-year Strategic Plan 01.01.2025 – 31.12.2028	30 June 2027
6	Terminal Evaluation of the National Youth Policy 2019 – 2028	January 2028
7	Production and launch of the next National Youth Policy -2029 to 2038	June 2028

The strategic plans at any point in time shall determine and craft the costed strategy framework for the achievement of the objectives of this policy. The strategic plans shall be the basis for strategy choice and funding mechanisms for the implementation of this policy and all partner institutions shall be involved in the generation, implementation and measurements of these plans across the life span of this policy.

## 5.7 Action Plan

## POLICY LINKAGES

### National and International Policy Frameworks for Youth Development

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

In particular the following instruments are relevant to contextualising this policy:

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

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

- Universal Declaration on Human Rights (1948);
- International Covenant on Civic and Political Rights (1976);
- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1976);
- International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) (1979); and
- Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989).

- II. United Nations World Programme of Action for Youth - The principles and purposes of the United Nations World Programme of Action for the Youth for the Year 2000 and beyond has helped to inform the revision of the National Youth Policy at many levels. The ten priority areas identified and suggested by the World Programme of Action and the five newly identified priority areas adopted at the 2005 United Nations General Assembly were largely taken into consideration in the revised National Youth Policy;

- III. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)–The National Youth Policy acknowledges and reaffirms the commitment of the United Nations Millennium Goals and its subsequent program, The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), to the advancement and wellbeing of the Youth;

- IV. African Union - The African Union has adopted several regional instruments related to the development and empowerment of the African youth. As a member of the African Union and State Party to these regional instruments, The Gambia is legally required to domesticate them into her national policies and legal instruments. Consequently, this policy has taken into account the provisions of these instruments to the extent possible. These instruments include:

- African Youth Charter adopted in Banjul in July 2006;
- African Youth Decade Plan of Action (2009-2018) (Road Map for the Charter);
- African Charter on Human and People’ Rights (1986);
- Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights relating to the Rights of Women in Africa (2003); and
- African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (1999).

- V. The ECOWAS Youth Policy – This National Youth Policy recognizes the ECOWAS Youth Policy as the basis for the overall development of all young people in the sub-region;

VI. Constitution of the Republic of The Gambia (1997) – As the basic law of the country, the Constitution sets the broad policy and legal context for the revised National Youth Policy and envisages the ushering in of a new constitution being developed currently;

VII. National Health Policy (2012-2020);

VIII. National Policy on Education (2004-2015);

IX. Agriculture and Natural Resources Policy (2009-2015);

X. National Employment Policy (NEP) and National Employment Action Plan (NEAP) (2010-2014);

XI. National Gender Policy and Women's Advancement (2010);

XII. Children's Act (2005);

XIII. Domestic Violence and Sexual Offences Act (2013);

XIV. Vision 2020 (The Gambia Incorporated);

XV. The Programme for Accelerated Growth and Employment (PAGE) (2012-2015); and

XVI. The National Development Plan (NDP) 2018 – 2021.