



International Conference for The Gambia, Brussels 22nd May, 2018

Communique by the co-Chairs

A gathering to renew international support for the new Gambia

1. Today, 22 May 2018, the Republic of The Gambia, represented by President Adama Barrow, and the European Union, represented by Federica Mogherini, High Representative/Vice President of the European Commission, and Neven Mimica, Member of the European Commission in charge of International Cooperation and Development, have convened the International Conference for The Gambia. The Conference was held at ministerial level in the headquarters of the European Commission in Brussels with the participation of delegations from 43 countries and 10 International organisations. The list of delegations is attached.

2. In January 2017, the world witnessed the first democratic change of leadership in The Gambia since independence. This ended 22 years of dictatorship, proving to the international community that peacefully transition is possible. Such a change would not have been possible but for the resolve of the people of The Gambia and the strong support of the international community, with ECOWAS playing a significant role, in particular with the setting-up of ECOMIG standby force, financially supported by the EU.

3. During the conference, the Government of The Gambia confirmed its commitment to transforming the country into a new Gambia: a country with strong democratic institutions that respects and protects human rights, and enjoys economic growth and sustainable development. Laws establishing a Human Rights Commission, a Constitutional Reform Commission and a Truth, Reconciliation and Reparations Commission have been passed; a thorough security sector reform is being prepared as well. The new government, true to its commitments, took decisive steps including in reaffirming its membership of the ICC.

4. The conference provided an excellent opportunity to the international community to express its support, both at political level and in financial terms, to The Gambia that is undergoing a historic democratic transition. The commitment of the Gambian government to transform the country to a "new Gambia" and a beacon of democracy was saluted by all. Today's gathering also reconfirmed the important role of joint efforts by domestic, regional and international actors in supporting the country in its journey towards democracy, stability and sustainable development. Together with other international organisations, the EU has stood by the side of The Gambia through political and financial support and remains committed to continuing this support.

5. The current government has inherited an unsustainable debt situation, which severely limits the funding of the Country's National Development Plan, the launching of necessary reform initiatives and the swift achievement of tangible improvements in the living conditions of the population. This situation implies the need for raising grants or highly concessional borrowing to contribute to the funding of the National Development Plan while reducing debt vulnerabilities. The Conference confirmed that it is crucial for the country to have the necessary means to further pursue reforms and investments in services and infrastructures that will allow tangible improvements, in particular concerning job creation.

The pledge announced

6. The international community stated their support to The Gambia's National Development Plan (NDP) for the period 2018-2021, an ambitious blueprint for reforms and development approved by the Government in January 2018. Numerous important pledges were announced for the NDP's implementation. The total amount of pledges is: EUR 1.45 billion, for the next 3 years of which the EU is contributing with an announcement of EUR 140 million in grants, which comes on top of the EUR 225 million already committed.

The Gambia's strategic vision: The National Development Plan

7. The EU fully supports the 8 priorities highlighted in the National Development Plan that aim to ensure sustainable and inclusive growth in the country. Further actions will focus on supporting the government priorities notably in the sectors of governance through the support of democratic reforms; in agriculture, promoting job creation for the youth and, in energy sector, granting access to renewable and sustainable energy for the population.

Follow-up and coordination

8. As the Conference has been instrumental in mobilising renewed political and important financial support to The Gambia, it is crucial that this momentum be maintained and translated in terms of action on the ground. A close coordination mechanism between the national administration and partners will be maintained in that regard.

Motion of gratitude

9. Finally, the Government of The Gambia and the European Union would like to extend our gratitude to the participants of this conference for their important political and financial contribution in support of the democratic and economic transition in The Gambia.

Brussels, 22 May 2018

ANNEX: List of participants

EU Member states

Austria
Belgium
Bulgaria
Croatia
Cyprus
Czech Republic
Estonia
Finland
France
Germany
Greece
Hungary
Ireland
Italy
Latvia
Lithuania
Luxembourg
Malta
The Netherlands
Poland
Portugal
Romania
Slovakia
Spain
Sweden
The United Kingdom

Bilateral Partner Countries

Canada
The People's Republic of China
The Republic of Ghana
Japan
The State of Kuwait
The Kingdom of Morocco
The Federal Republic of Nigeria
The Kingdom of Norway
The State of Qatar
The Russian Federation
The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
The Republic of Senegal
The Republic of Korea
The Swiss Confederation
The Republic of Turkey
The United Arab Emirates
The United States of America

International Organisations

The Economic Community of West African States
The United Nations
The European Investment Bank
The International Monetary Fund
The World Bank
The African Development Bank
The Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa
The Islamic Development Bank
The OPEC Fund for International Development
The International Trade Centre