NOTHING IN THE DRAFT CONSTITUTION IS FINAL, SAYS CRC CHAIRPERSON

CRC TO SUBMIT FINAL DRAFT CONSTITUTION NOT LATER THAN MARCH

GAMBIA DISCUSS DRAFT CONSTITUTION

CRC EXTENDS DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION OF COMMENTS

PLUS: INTERFAITH GROUPS DIALOGUE WITH THE CRC, CRC STAFF IN PERSPECTIVE, ETC.
Dear Friends and Partners,

The last 20 months have been gruelling for the Constitutional Review Commission. Gruelling, because of the hard work and many sacrifices involved in the Constitution building process.

It is a period that we at the CRC like to qualify as another ‘Baptism of Fire’ even though we were conscious of the mountain of work that lay ahead. But it is a period that we look back on with satisfaction in spite of the challenges, and it is with increased optimism that we look forward to seeing this New Constitution owned and approved by Gambians from all walks of life. Its adoption will seal The Gambia’s political and judicial transformation process embarked upon since the advent of the new dispensation in 2016.

If December 2016 was a watershed moment for Gambians, the release of the Draft Constitution on 15th November 2019 was to rekindle and showcase popular interest in how this country is governed. The interest with which this publication was met was unimaginable. Since the publication of the Draft Constitution, the number, quality and variety of submissions received at our Headquarters surpassed by far the contributions previously received during the local and external consultations. Gambians realised the importance of this Draft Constitution and what it represents for them. We have also had face-to-face meetings with members of the three arms of Government and other stakeholders. Those sessions allowed all sides to better appreciate each other’s perspective on a number of provisions.

It is against this backdrop that we present on behalf of the CRC and my own behalf Issue number 7 of our Newsletter covering activities carried out by the CRC. The period under review was characterised by “Pragmatism” in the approach that the CRC adopted to ensure that it delivered a Constitution within the specified time frame.

As with the publication of previous Newsletters, the run-up to this publication also brought its share of challenges punctuated with very exciting moments. Such moments rendered the difficulties bearable and strengthened the team’s faith in the exercise of developing the Draft Constitution as well as its resolve to see the final Document embraced by all and sundry. Once adopted, such a progressive Constitution will become a permanent component in the country’s governance landscape.

To this end, much attention was given to clauses that provided for political and socio-economic rights that will protect all Gambians, especially women, youth and persons with disabilities. For instance, catering for this category of our population to access elective offices was met with commendation by many partners and contributors to the Constitution building process. For effective application of these provisions, the Government must ensure resources are provided, while political parties are required to field in candidates from within the ranks.

Provisions exist to cater to the protection and preservation of land, environment and natural resources for future generations of Gambians. In addition to existing laws and policies, the Government must formulate or update national policies with well-articulated strategies to take on animal genetic resources, animal health, and grazing land management and land commercialisation. Such measures will enhance production and productivity; they will also generate employment and investment opportunities for women and youth of this Country.

This new Constitution will serve as our roadmap in our drive to improve the quality of life for the Gambian population in general and for women, youth and other marginalised groups in particular.

As had been stated in previous publications, this Newsletter analyses progress made in our journey to develop our Constitution, the activities undertaken, as well as the successes, challenges and opportunities encountered by the CRC during the period. This analysis has enabled all of us to see what has worked, what has not worked and what can be replicated. It then proposes possible solutions and recommendations on how to deal with constitutional matters and what is termed the bread-and-butter issues that will be featured in the Report on the Constitution.

Given that this Newsletter technically brings us close to the end of our Constitution development period, I recognise, on behalf of the CRC, the invaluable friends and partners who have participated in the implementation of the Constitution Project. I have no doubt that we will in due course be in a position to publicly thank them for their laudable efforts in helping with the Constitution building process. Finally, on behalf of the CRC and my own behalf, I would like to wish all our friends and partners, a peaceful and purposeful 2020 and pray that our Constitution, once finalised and submitted, passes the test of time.
With the unveiling of the first draft of the Constitution, the Constitutional Review Commission has demonstrated that it has made deliberate efforts to strengthen political, social, economic and legislative governance in the country. And if the feedback received from the public is anything to go by, Gambians already consider the draft as a significant improvement when compared to the 1997 Constitution under reviewed. Gambians are negotiating a social contract to determine how they wish to be governed; the standards, the structures, the systems, the procedures and the policies to put in place to build a country that thrives of good governance principles. But as could be expected, the first draft, good as it were, is not yet the perfect consensual document and the onus was on stakeholder groups to provide the value-add. The numerous position papers received did just that and the views expressed obliged the Commission to go back to the drawing board to firm up on certain provisions or consider other policy options before finalization. This is democracy at its best characterized by mutual stimulation, sense-and-response and cross-fertilization of ideas to craft a good outcome document. In terms of process, there was direct participation by the people in the decision making process, thus conferring on the constitution building process a seal of inclusion and making the product evidence-based. Controversies around constitution building (which is a complex undertaking) are normal occurrences that can sometimes be emotionally charged. The CRC process is no exception to that rule. The passion that surrounded the review process is unprecedented and speaks to the level of political awareness of Gambians. It has had its fair share of misconceptions, misinformation, heated debates, palpable tensions and occasionally also, lent itself to extreme views. The concept of secularism for instance, polarized the country along religious lines with different schools of thought weighing into the debate on the inclusion/omission of the word ‘secular’ in the new draft Constitution. Thankfully, the inter-faith dialogue that has started will allow the tension to simmer down. We reckon that Gambians have a legitimate stake in the process and want to shape the governance framework of their country. But given the diversity of interests, it is practically impossible to have the wishes and aspirations of every Gambian satisfied in a Constitution. Delicate balancing involving deliberate efforts to maximize happiness whilst minimize frustrations from certain sections of society, particularly minority groups, is inevitable. It is understandable that Gambians are making frantic efforts to ensure that there is consensus when it comes to certain fundamental principles that foster national unity and social cohesion. The Commission continues to pay heed to every concern raised by the general public on every subject matter. As it stands, the hallmarks of secularism and all the outcomes that the word is meant to achieve are already embedded in certain provisions of the draft Constitution. For instance, the Constitution guarantees freedom of association and assembly (Section 48 and 49); freedom of worship (article 47); rule of law (Preamble) and has constrained the National Assembly not to declare any religion as State religion (Section 151). Undoubtedly, the constitutional review process offers Gambians the opportunity to influence the political and governance space by contributing in strengthening the instruments of governance. They now understand that the Constitution is the alpha and the omega of any modern State. To be relevant all other laws, statutes and policies must be consistent with it as the popular legal saying goes; ‘the Constitution is the supreme law of The Gambia. Any other law that is inconsistent with any provision of the Constitution shall to the extent of its inconsistency be void’. Enlightened Gambians know that this is the defining moment for the country, for themselves and for their families and have thus brought considerable pressure on the Commission to bear to make sure that the issues they feel strongly about are captured. Different stakeholder groups are jockeying to ensure that their issues, wishes and aspirations are constitutionalized. This penultimate edition will provide insights into the second round of consultations and will give you a taste of what Gambians are saying about the draft.
Dear readers,

It is always an immense pleasure and honour to introduce a new edition of the CRC newsletter to our valued partners. I submit this seventh Edition with mixed feelings. On the one hand, it was heart-pleasing to have successfully accomplished such an important national exercise as the constitution review process. On the other hand, knowing that this is the penultimate version of the newsletter, a feeling of nostalgia is already setting in as we would certainly miss our readership. The journey that we embarked upon, in all sincerity, has been one that is mutually rewarding, interactive and informative. It was also one that has enabled the Commission to deliver a progressive first draft Constitution informed by your wishes and aspirations much to the pleasure of most, if not, all Gambians. We thank you for your keen interest in the building of a new Constitution.

It is always my deepest pleasure to keep our readership abreast of every development at the Commission to ensure everything we do is transparent and participatory. All along the path, we have enjoyed the pleasure of your company, as well as the willingness you have demonstrated in taking ownership of the entire review process. Admittedly, this show of patriotism has been our source of motivation for reaching the very end of the journey. This Edition of the CRC Newsletter is accorded a special treatment, simply because it is the first publication after the launch of the First Draft Constitution. Therefore, it seeks to clarify and give substantive justifications of some unfounded claims in respect to certain provisions contained in the Draft Constitution. In your reading, you will come across a story wherein the CRC explains certain misconceptions in relation to specific provisions in the draft Constitution.

In addition, there is an array of interesting stories carried in this publication worth reading. You will find a story featuring the CRC Nationwide Radio Advocacy programme led by the Local Language Linguists. That among other captivating stories was meant to consolidate and reinforce the Commission’s message on the Draft Constitution. All the Community radio stations in the country were engaged to amplify the CRC voice and to ensure greater grassroots outreach.

At this point, I am glad to inform you that the overall review process will be finally brought to a close by end of January, 2020. However, the CRC Secretariat will be functional for a while for good reasons. We recognize the high expectations from Gambians both at home and abroad ahead of the final Draft Constitution. Without doubt, every Gambian is keen to lay hands on the final product. It is for this reason that the Commission spent quality time to deliberate on the numerous submissions sent to the CRC in the aftermath of the unveiling of the draft Constitution.

One thing that marvels me about the Commissioners of the CRC is their ability to patiently listen and take onboard every view for possible consideration. This is our strength as a body charged with the responsibility of developing an all-inclusive Constitution for Gambians.

Once again, I wish to thank you all for being supportive to the CRC all throughout the period. I would like to assure you that the Commission has been doing everything humanely possible to accommodate the wishes and aspirations of all Gambians irrespective of faith, ethnicity and location in line with our mandate.

In conclusion, this publication is more of clarification providing answers to certain misinterpreted provisions in the Draft Constitution in the public space. I am pretty much hopeful that you will find the content of the Edition much more enlightening. To know what happens after the Final Draft Constitution is sent to the Presidency, kindly stay tuned for the eighth and final Edition. We thank you very much for your company and support. We place high premium on you – Gambians. Until we finally come your way, do have a wonderful reading moments.
MEET THE EDITORIAL TEAM

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The press conference was primarily intended to bring members of the public up-to-date with respect to the ongoing work of the Commission. The CRC informed the Gambian public through the media houses represented that efforts are underway to deliver the final Constitution in March at the latest.

In his opening statement, the CRC Secretary, Omar Ousman Jobe welcomed and thanked the Media for accompanying the Commission throughout the entire national exercise, calling the relationship a win-win partnership for national development.

Speaking at the conference, the Chairman of the Constitutional Review Commission, Justice Sulayman Jallow, QC, commended the journalists for the coverage of the CRC activities and welcomed them to what he described as ‘the CRC-Media Dialogue.’ Chairman Jallow expressed gratitude and appreciation to Gambians at home and abroad for their support and participation in the review process. He also recognized the excellent work of the media in complementing the CRC by disseminating its messages to the public in a timely fashion.

The CRC boss said: ‘The Commission will submit the final Constitution to the Presidency no later than March, 2020.’ This, Chairman Jallow said, is necessitated by the volume of submissions the Commission received during the Second Phase of Public Consultation following the release of the First Draft Constitution on Friday 15th November, 2019. In this phase, he stated that the CRC engaged thousands of Gambians in the seven (7) administrative regions with thirteen (13) meetings altogether.

On the way forward, the CRC’s Chairman informed journalists that the Commission is in the process of finalizing its review of all the submissions received together with the final Draft Constitution and the accompanying Report, which will be submitted to the President of the Republic in accordance with the CRC Act, 2017. He said the views and opinions received on the Draft Constitution have been impressive.

“As with every constitutional development in any country, the final product will never satisfy every view and opinion canvassed. Constitutional development is effectively a negotiation process of give-and-take. It can never address all issues,” Chairman Jallow explained. He reiterated the point that the Commission remains independent of any interest group and has been duly guided by the principles of Participation, Inclusiveness, Representation, Transparency and National Ownership all throughout the process.

Pertinent questions were asked in relation to the Draft Constitution and the overall CRC process, and the Chairman took time to provide adequate answers to the journalists.

In her closing remarks, the Vice Chairperson of the CRC, Hawa Sisay-Sabally remarked that the CRC is committed as ever to submit the Final Constitution by March, 2020. She also thanked the Media for their continued support and partnership.
NOTHING IN THE DRAFT CONSTITUTION IS FINAL, SAYS CRC CHAIRPERSON

Justice Cherno Sulayman Jallow, Chairman of the Constitutional Review Commission (CRC) has said that there is nothing in the Draft Constitution that is finalised, calling on Gambians to take it upon themselves to read and contribute towards building the final draft Constitution.

Chairman Jallow was speaking in Banjul where the CRC held its first Public Consultations of the second phase of the national consultation process in Banjul at the foot of the Arch 22.

After releasing the first draft Constitution, the CRC seeks to afford the people the opportunity to propose recommendations for incorporation into the draft Constitution.

According to Justice Jallow, the draft Constitution is still a draft and it will be very helpful for Gambians to come out with their thoughts and comments in the drive towards helping the process, stressing that there is nothing in the draft Constitution that is final as of now.

“The draft Constitution as the name signifies, is simply a draft. At this stage, we have published it to seek public opinion on it, nothing in the draft constitution is final as yet. It will be very helpful if you can share your opinions, and your thoughts in terms of what you can share to help us finalise the draft Constitution,” he informed the people of Banjul.

“When we embarked on this process in November of last year (2018), we said we will take it upon ourselves to go out to Gambian communities and interact with
Continued from page 4

the people and hear from them in addition to matters that were raised in the Issues Document. The process was designed to ensure full participation and inclusiveness. We want to ensure that Gambians become part of this and to ensure that the ultimate product of the work of the CRC is called their own,” Justice Cherno Sulayman Jallow disclosed at the maiden meeting in Banjul.

He highlighted that, “one of the things we promised Gambians and those who attended our consultations can testify to this, is that once the draft Constitution is ready, we will publish it and we will come back and hear from you and here we are to do just that.”

The CRC Chairman called on the Gambian people “to read the Constitution carefully to understand it so that you can contribute constructively to the engagement we have embarked upon.”

“It is not every opinion that can be captured in the draft Constitution. Some opinions are either taken care of in some other laws or some are issues of enforcement and some may be issues for policy development on the part of the government,” he said.

CRC CLARIFIES CERTAIN PROVISIONS IN DRAFT CONSTITUTION

Following the publication by the CRC of the Draft Constitution, a large number of the Gambian population (including other stakeholders) have been actively engaged in various discussions concerning its provisions. The CRC welcomes the level of interest and debate on the provisions of the Draft Constitution and the CRC wishes to assure all persons concerned that the views they’ve expressed to the CRC, either through its public consultation process or through written submissions, will be duly considered in finalizing the Draft Constitution. The Draft Constitution, at this stage, has been published merely to solicit public opinion regarding its provisions. In that context, the CRC appreciates all the constructive criticisms and the suggestions made to help improve and finalize the Draft Constitution.

However, the CRC has discovered, through its public engagement process during the public consultations, that there are persons that have been spreading misinformation regarding certain provisions of the Draft Constitution. This might have been through inadvertence or a lack of understanding and appreciation of the true picture of the provisions concerned. It is therefore considered important that the CRC revisits the Gambian communities to better explain the provisions concerned so that citizens are aware of the true picture and to disabuse their minds of the misinformation that is being spread.

Citizens of The Gambia should take note that the assignment given to the CRC to review the current 1997 Constitution and to write a new one is designed purely for the interest and greater good of The Gambia. There is no hidden agenda in the execution of this assignment and the CRC is guided essentially by the provisions of the CRC Act of 2017. In that regard, the CRC has sought and considered opinions expressed by citizens and other stakeholders during the initial public consultation phase using different platforms to afford every Gambian the opportunity to contribute to the Constitution-building process.

Accordingly, in preparing the Draft Constitution, the CRC factored in opinions expressed by citizens and other stakeholders as considered appropriate. In addition, the CRC has considered the provisions of the current 1997 Constitution and has retained those provisions it considered legitimate and which aligned with overwhelming public opinion, while modifying some. Furthermore, the CRC has considered regional and international treaties to which The Gambia is a party in order to establish The Gambia’s legal obligations which require being enshrined in the Draft Constitution and those which may be dealt with by other means (such as statute and policy). The CRC has also looked carefully at matters that constitute international best practice to warrant inclusion in the Draft Constitution. Finally and pursuant to the CRC Act of 2017, the CRC has taken on board during the preparation of the Draft Constitution, the national values and ethos of The Gambia. The CRC Constitution-building process has been open and transparent; nothing was carried out in the dark. It has thus far kept citizens abreast of developments concerning the preparation of the Draft Constitution, partners in the media who have performed
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credibly well in informing the Gambian communities about the work of the CRC.

Areas to Note
The CRC would like the Gambian community to note the following matters:
1. The development of a new Constitution for The Gambia is a national effort and citizens should use their individual and collective endeavours to help with that development process;
2. The views and opinions canvassed with the CRC will be carefully considered and embraced as considered necessary;
3. It should be noted that it is not all opinions that can necessarily be included in the Draft Constitution; the ultimate aim of the Draft Constitution is to represent what is in the best interest of The Gambia – for peace, national unity, national cohesion and national development for today's generation and future generations;

Areas of Clarification
On the specific areas of clarification on the Draft Constitution, the public is advised to note the following:
(a) Section 1 (1) on the Republic: fierce debate is raging on whether or not the word "secular" should be included in the Draft Constitution. The CRC welcomes the opinions being canvassed in this regard, but cautions against the religious undertones and sometimes misleading statements designed to engender fear. All communities, especially leaders of all faiths, should exercise restraint and tolerance and respect other people's views without acrimony or vilification;
(b) Section 52 on the right to marry: this section does not in any way establish or advocate for marital relationships based on conduct that is considered to be unnatural between a man and a woman; the section does not make provision for homosexuality or other form of sexuality considered not to be in accordance with the values and ethos of Gambian society. It should also be noted that the Criminal Code criminalises homosexuality. Nonetheless, this section will be considered for any possible ambiguity to ensure better clarity;
(c) Section 209 (3) on the appointment of Alkalo: this section empowers the Minister who is assigned responsibility for Local Government matters to appoint an Alkalo in accordance with established traditional lines of inheritance. Considering that traditional lines of inheritance may differ from village to village with respect to the appointment of an Alkalo, it is obvious that a specific public functionary must be given the power to effect the appointment of an Alkalo. However, the Minister, in making any appointment of an Alkalo, must follow the tradition of the village concerned for succession to the office of Alkalo. The Minister cannot simply appoint whoever the Minister wants; the Minister is constrained by the relevant tradition that obtains in the village concerned. It is therefore inaccurate for any person to state that the Draft Constitution gives the Minister the power to select and appoint any person the Minister wants as an Alkalo. Any appointment has to be based on the traditional lines of inheritance; if, for example, the tradition is that a son or brother succeeds an Alkalo automatically, then that is the tradition that must be followed; if the tradition is that village elders or yard owners meet to decide or confirm who should be appointed as an Alkalo, then that is the tradition that must be followed; if there is another method of succession to the office of Alkalo, then it is that other method that must be followed. If there is a method to resolve within a family who should succeed as an Alkalo, then that method must be followed to select and appoint a new Alkalo. If a person succeeds or is selected to succeed in the office of Alkalo in accordance with any particular method of succession, the Minister is bound by that method and must, therefore, make the appointment in full compliance with that method.

Conclusion
Citizens are cautioned against falling prey to misinformation. The CRC implores Gambians to remain steadfast and focused, and united in purpose, in building a new Constitution that well serves the current generations of citizens and those yet unborn.
GAMBANS DISCUSS DRAFT CONSTITUTION AND MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS


The principal objective of the second round consultations was to avail Gambians the opportunity to review the draft and then propose recommendations for incorporation into the final draft Constitution.

In each of the regions and meeting venues visited, citizens took turns to discussed the pertinent issues outlined in the document and made valid recommendations for the Commission to consider before coming up with an improved version that will be submitted to the President. Gambians have, since the unveiling of the draft Constitution, been passionately debating the issues they felt were critical for inclusion in a budding democratic society like The Gambia’s.

Similar consultative meetings were held in Fass Njaga Choi, Kerewan, Basse, Diabugu Batapa, Janjanbureh, Jareng, Soma, Kwinella, Bwiam, Brikama and Serekunda.

**NBR Meeting**

The Commission held meetings in Fass Njaga Choi and Badibou Kerewan on Monday 2nd and Tuesday 3rd December, 2019 respectively - both meetings taking place in the North Bank Region (NBR).

The purpose of the public engagement was to inform people of the contents of the Draft Constitution and solicit their reactions to the document. This was in fulfilment of the pledge made by the CRC during the first round consultation when eliciting views,
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opinions and aspirations of Gambians to inform the decision-making process.

Welcoming the CRC to North Bank Region (NBR), the host Alkalis of Fass and Kerewan, District Chiefs and the Governor’s representative thanked the CRC for a job well done. They challenged the people in the region to participate in the review process, taking due cognizance of the fact that the Constitution once approved in a referendum will govern everybody.

In his opening remarks in both Fass Njaga Choi and Badibou Kerewan, the Chairperson of the CRC, Justice Cherno Sulayman Jallow commended the regional authorities for their incessant support and collaboration throughout the process.

Continuing, Justice Jallow underscored the significance of the Second Phase Public Consultative meetings and how the recommendations received from the public will inform the Commission’s choices and decisions going into the final Draft Constitution.

He maintained that the Draft Constitution is the product of submissions made by Gambians both at home and abroad. Justice Jallow enjoined the people of NBR to make recommendations on any provision or seek clarifications on provisions they are not clear about. The CRC boss also gave an outline of how the meetings would unfold whiles commending the media for the great partnership since the inception of the Commission.

Issues discussed in NBR revolved mainly around Republic and Sovereignty, Leadership and Integrity, Fundamental Human Rights and Freedoms, Local Governments, Citizenship, Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission, the Executive, the Legislature and the Judiciary.

Recommendations were received for issues related to Citizenship, Leadership, Integrity and Local Governments. All the comments proffered by the different speakers were duly noted by the Commission for consideration during their deliberations.

The meetings in the region were well attended. The session in Fass Njaga Choi attracted participants from villages in Lower Niumi, Upper Nuimi and Jokadou Districts whereas the one held in Kerewan drew participants from Lower Badibou, Central Badibou, Upper Badibou and Sabach Sanjal Districts led by Chiefs.

**URR Meeting**

On the 5th and 7th December, 2019, the Commission held meetings in Diabugu Batapa and Basse respectively. The meetings attracted participants from all the Districts in the Upper River Region such as Sandu, Wulli East, Wulli West, Basse, Jimara, Tumana and Kantora.

The Diabugu meeting was held at the Diabugu Batapa Senior Secondary School in the Sandu District of the Upper River Region.

The Chairperson of the CRC, Justice Cherno Sulayman Jallow reminded the participants about the previous consultations held in their communities, saying that the Draft Constitution is based partly on the information gathered from these meetings. Justice Jallow also informed the participants of the objectives of phase two public consultations. He asked them to give the CRC their opinion/recommendations on the provisions contained in the Draft Constitution.

Commissioners were assigned topics to discuss, following which, the participants gave their feedback/recommendations on the provisions in the Draft Constitution. This included the Commencement Provisions, Citizenship, Leadership and Integrity and Fundamental Human Rights and Freedoms captured in Chapters I, II, III, IV, V and VI and other Chapters such as Representation of the People and Miscellaneous Provisions.

Anna Manga, a teacher indicated that the Constitution states that all persons in The Gambia are equal. In her view, adding the word ‘secular’ to the provisions of the Constitution will not harm anybody and if anything can only strengthen the Constitution.

On the issue of free and compulsory basic and secondary education, Mr. Kemo Janko also a teacher said that education should be free for all children. He underscored the fact
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that teachers under training at the Gambia College are paying for their education and these are people who are supposed to teach our children. He said that the majority of Gambians are poor and the new imposition of fees at the Gambia College is stopping many people from undergoing training. He recommended that free education should be introduced at the tertiary level.

Tassirou Camara also noted that there is a provision in the Constitution for Presidents to declare gifts received on official trips. He asked whether the same rule would apply to Ministers since they also travel to represent The Gambia. Famsu Sanneh emphasised that the Draft Constitution reflect the views and aspirations of the people and should be there forever. He also appealed to the Commission to ensure that no President or government agency should be empowered to change this Constitution.

Neneh Mbalow, a student told the CRC that the lower age limit should be reduced to 28 years because she wants young people to rule the country, noting that young people have fresher minds than older people. She also said that the Constitution should guarantee free education for Gambian children and empower women and girls adequately.

During the Basse meeting, one Modou Lamin Ceesay expressed happiness that persons who are hard of hearing have been mentioned in the Draft Constitution. He urged parents to enroll their children in schools as their disabilities should not be a reason for them to be denied education.

Omar Drammeh disagreed with the provision which empowers the President to appoint the IBEC Chairperson and Commissioners. He said that even though the appointment would be subject to approval by the National Assembly, the President should not be involved in the appointment process.

Hajjah Sillah Chairperson of (GADHOH), Basse Branch suggested that hard-of-hearing persons encounter communications difficulties in hospitals. She added they don’t have people to interpret for them even though it is their fundamental right to get treatment. She added that since Access to Information is guaranteed by the Draft Constitution, there should be sign language interpreters in hospitals and TVs stations.

Other participants raised the issue of the cast system which they said is prevalent in the Upper River Region, saying that if stringent measures are not taken it could affects social cohesion.

The Commission clarified all the issues raised by participants and promised to consider recommendations made by Gambians on matters relating to the Draft Constitution before finalising the Draft.
The origin of the Gambia National Flag currently in use could be traced to as far back as 18th February, 1965. It is a symbol marking the end of colonial domination and heralded at the time, the dawn of independence and self-governance. The Flag was designed by Louis Thiamisi. It consists of horizontal stripes of red, blue, and green separated by two thinner stripes of white. Each of these colours bears a meaning distinctive of the other. However, today, this national symbol is hardly seen except in state functions. Would it have any relevance to hoist the National Flag in every State Department, Agency and Ministry as a mark of national pride and identity?

One young patriotic Gambian named Ousainou Colley alias Ousainou Gambia sees value in hoisting the national flag on every public building. He thus initiated the idea of hoisting the Gambia National Flag in all Government Departments and Agencies in the country.

In an interview during the installation ceremony at the Constitutional Review Commission’s Secretariat, Ousainou Colley highlighted the reasons that motivated him to initiate what many now describe and indeed embrace as a ‘worthy cause.’

He said his National Flag crusade is borne out of his inordinate desire, love and compassion for The Gambia, nothing else.

“The importance of the National Flag goes without saying. It is a national symbol that represents all of us irrespective of the tribe and religion we hail from or embrace and that is why I decided to use it to inspire young Gambians to emulate the spirit of patriotism,” he explained.

In raising awareness on the inviolability of the National Flag among the young minds, Mr. Colley has been conducting a massive school sensitisation campaigns. He indicated that the ultimate goal of engaging school children is to instill a sense of nationalism in students with special emphasis on the value of the Gambian Flag, especially in public institutions.

“At the initial, all expenditures were singlehandedly borne by me, but gradually some institutions have started coming forth...
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to support the initiative. Progressively, I have hoisted the National Flag in so many public institutions and strategic places including Banjul Ferry Terminal,” Mr. Colley said.
Ousainou commended the CRC for including the promotion of national values, principles and patriotism as indicated in Chapter three of the Draft Constitution.
“I have submitted a position paper to the CRC recommending for the National Flag to be hoisted in all state-owned institutions,” he added.
Continuing, Mr. Colley described the National Flag as a symbol of unity that nurtures peace, tolerance and co-existence among the people, simply because it transcends tribe, religion and political affiliations.
He also remarked that the National Flag is an emblem of national unity and therefore enjoined on young people to support the initiative aimed at promoting national values and principles.
“Presidents and governments come and go, but the Gambia National Flag remains for good,” Mr. Colley argued.
CRC ATTENDS WOMEN PEACE TALKS

Participants at the Women Peace Talks


The theme of the event was “The Perspective Actions of the Peace and Security Forum in the Senegal-Gambia-Guinea Bissau Zone”.

The main objective of the peace talk was to make recommendations aimed at reinforcing women’s contribution to the peace building process, and conflict monitoring in the sub-region.

In his opening remarks, the Minister of defense, Sheikh Omar Faye said: “The women peace talk in The Gambia is geared towards finding a lasting solution in Cassamance in a quest to reinforce the contribution of women, notably the women’s forum to peace and security issues, and decision-making processes through advocacy.”

He pointed out that considering the proximity of The Gambia, Senegal and Bissau, it is important that The Gambia takes its rightful position in the drive toward the maintenance of peace in the sub-region. He said that women play a critical role in their communities for nurturing and building peace initiatives. Minister Faye also urged the participants to always work towards promoting tolerance and harmony in their respective regions as a way of safeguarding peaceful co-existence and development.

Ndéy Mariam Thiam, President of the Women Political Platform for Peace in Senegal, said The Gambia and Senegal are geographical interlinked, noting that the two countries have cultural ties that binds them together.

She said: “During our first peace talk in Ziguinchor the recommendation was to tackle the conflict in Cassamance and Guinea Bissau through dialogue and proactive action, it is the responsibility of our leaders to respect the electoral policies of their respective countries.”

Mrs Maria Da Conceição Ferreira, representative from Guinea Bissau Women Political Platform (PPMGG) noted that it is through this kind of initiatives and forums that women will able to champion tangible proposals and collaborations in attracting lasting peace in the sub-region.
The Constitutional Review Commission of the Law Students’ Association (LSACRC) of the University of The Gambia on Tuesday October 29, 2019 consulted with the Constitutional Review Commission on the processes and procedures in developing a new constitution. The students were received by the CRC staff at the CRC Secretariat in Kotu.

In his welcoming address, Mr Raymond Sarr, the CRC Head of Human Resources and Administration welcomed the students to the CRC, saying that the Commission has a very transparent process. He also briefed the students on the mandate of the Commission to draft a new Constitution for the Gambia.

For his part, Mr Sainey M.K. Marenah, the CRC Head of Communications informed the visiting law students that the CRC process is a national undertaking that is transparent and inclusive.

“The CRC process so far has been smooth and inclusive. In spite of the fact that, building a new Constitution is always a daunting task to carry out. The CRC has continuously received tremendous support amongst Gambians,” Marenah told the visiting Law Students’ Association’s Constitutional Review Commission.

Also speaking, LSACRC Chairperson, Ms Carolina said they drew inspiration from the Gambia’s Constitutional Review Commission work.

“We wanted to know how the CRC operates so as to learn from them how to review our student Constitution at the Faculty of Law,” she indicated.

The LSACRC mandate includes reviewing the Law Students 2016 Constitution, particularly "vague" sections and to come up with a new Constitution. They are expected to come up with a new Constitution within one-year.
CRC EXTENDS DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION OF COMMENTS ON DRAFT CONSTITUTION

The Constitutional Review Commission (CRC) wishes to thank all those who demonstrated keen interest in the Draft Constitution of the Republic of The Gambia by either attending and participating in the CRC’s direct face-to-face public consultations around the country or submitting written contributions. The CRC is equally grateful to those persons who have arranged and/or participated in other forms of public discussion to create awareness regarding the provisions of the Draft Constitution. The CRC also recognises the expressions of support for the Draft Constitution from the general public. In addition, the CRC is enormously grateful to the media houses and their practitioners for keeping the spirit of the Media-CRC partnership active and true to form.

The CRC assures the general public that the opinions received will be properly reviewed and factored, as appropriate, in finalising the Draft Constitution. Furthermore, the CRC wishes to announce that due to the numerous requests it has received to extend the period of public consultation on the Draft Constitution, it has extended the public consultation period to Tuesday, 31st December, 2019. Persons wishing to make written contributions to the CRC are encouraged to do so no later than 2:00 pm on the stated deadline.

No further written contributions will be received beyond the stated deadline.
A team of Local Language Linguists from the Communications Department of the Constitutional Review Commission (CRC) successfully completed a seven-day nationwide tour aimed at reinforcing the CRC’s message. Also, it resolved to clarify misinformation causing debate in the public domain in respect to certain provisions contained in the Draft Constitution of The Gambia.

The team comprising of the following CRC Local Language Linguists: Sainey Dibba, Sainey Jallow and Haggie Sumbundu covered Kerewan and Farafenni Community Radios in the North Bank Region, Basang and Brikama-Ba Community Radios in the Central River Region and Radio Gambia in Basse, Upper River Region to ensure that the position of the CRC resonates across the country to debunk the generally accepted misinformations and misconceptions in relation to the first draft Constitution. Similarly, the team also covered Soma Community Radio in Lower River Region; Bwiam, Kuloro and Brikama FMB Community Radios in the West Coast Region.

“THE nationwide radio tour came at a right time. Lot of misconceptions and doubts were cleared. Certainly, I can say that it was indeed a very successful trip for us as the aim was to maintain calm and further dispel unfounded rumour in the public space pertaining to the Draft Constitution,” Sainey Dibba, a Local Language Linguist said in an interview.
Representatives from both the Supreme Islamic Council (SIC) of The Gambia and The Gambia Christian Council (GCC) separately called on the Commissioners of Constitutional Review Commission at its Secretariat in Kotu.

The meetings came barely few days after the Commission concluded its Second Phase Public Consultations with Gambians on the issues contained in the Draft Constitution after it was released on November 15, 2019. The bone of contention was the inclusion or the non-inclusion/omission of the word secular in the draft Constitution. Attributing different meanings to the concept, it is apparent that the SIC and the GCC were coming from different schools of thought that were hard to reconcile.

The impromptu meetings were triggered by a request from the two apex religious bodies to have an audience with the Commission to make their positions officially known. The tension provoked as a result of the omission of the word secular had created an unprecedented malaise with religious overtones in the country.

The SIC held the view that ‘Secular’ must not be included in the Draft Constitution whereas the GCC appealed for the possible inclusion of the word.
PERSONAL IMPRESSION ABOUT THE GAMBIA’S CONSTITUTIONAL REVIEW PROCESS

YANKUBA MANNEH - CRC COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER

Constitutional building process in any jurisdiction includes both the process of making a new constitution or amending an existing constitution as well as the substantive decisions about the design, form and content of the new or amended constitution. In that spirit, the Constitutional Review Commission (CRC) of The Gambia adopted the method of engaging Gambians from all walks of life in the architecture of the third Republican Constitution after an elaborate comparative study of processes employed in other jurisdictions.

With adequate reference to history, The Gambia has had a fairly good number of Constitutional building processes. The three most notable processes were the 1965, 1970 and 1997 Constitutions. The former was known as the Independence Constitution marking an end to colonial hegemony and heralding the beginning of independence and self-rule. The 1970 was the First Republican Constitution while the 1997 Constitution marked the dawn of the Second Republic. Upon completion, this new Constitution will become the Third Republican Constitution for The Gambia.

As an insider, having a close gaze at the staff, I realized that 45% of the employees is youthful with the requisite knowledge to undertake such an important assignment. This has demonstrated the extent to which the Commission values the participation and inclusion of young people in accomplishing this national duty. The energy and exuberance exuded by the young staff has positively translated into the CRC’s ability to deliver a youth-friendly Draft Constitution, a document that takes onboard a quota system that accommodates a 14% women representation.

The distinction between a successful and failed organisation is often determined by the feasibility and genuineness of their strategic frameworks or a roadmap through which the institution will actualize its goals. It is critical to know that the CRC had five distinct Departments and each of these Units had their own blueprint culminating into the Commission’s strategic document. Evidently, there was no shortage of sound strategic plans and methodologies that enticed Gambians in the review process.

The media was engaged right from the initiation to the ‘finalisation’ (completion) stage in a countless number of outreach programmes facilitated by the Communications Department of the Commission. The unprecedented level of publicity of the Commission and its invaluable engagements on both the traditional and conventional media was acclaimed by the general public. Social media was adequately used to increase the Commission’s visibility and public participation in the process. Through this strategic approach, the public’s participation was impressive and the volume of submissions received was equally overwhelming. Aggressive media campaigns were done using Arts and other public outreach platforms including radios and TV stations.
Being wary of the diversity in The Gambia’s teeming population, the CRC gave due consideration to the marginalized sections in an unprecedented manner in our entire constitutional development journey or history. Women, Children and Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) were part and parcel of this crusade. The CRC’s resolve to situate the PwDs at the heart of this process was evident in employing three Physically Challenged Persons. This strengthened their confidence and enabled them to nurture a high sense of inclusion, self-esteem and fulflliment. In entrenching The Gambia’s future, the CRC operates on the principles of Participation, Transparency, Inclusiveness and Ownership.

It was apparent during the Second Phase of Public Consultations that women and the PwDs expressed approval of the Draft Constitution. Words of commendation were showered on the CRC for delivering what many termed as ‘an all-inclusive Constitution’ that will stand the test of time as it embodies the wishes and aspirations of the ordinary Gambian.

One thing that is worth giving prominence is the fact that the CRC held two Nationwide Public Consultations with Gambians. The first leg was meant to canvass and garner the views and aspirations of Gambians in the country and abroad. Gambians in diaspora were accorded special attention as they constitute an important constituency in this most crucial national exercise.

On the home front, the Commission held meetings in 106 communities across the country. In each district of a region, two meetings were convened. While engaging and consulting with Gambians, the CRC had held five distinct meetings in Europe (Germany, the UK, Sweden, France and Spain), six in America (Seattle, New York, Atlanta, Minneapolis, Raleigh and Washington), two in Africa (Senegal, Mauritania) and one in Asia (Saudi Arabia). After carefully collating and synthesizing the unprecedented amount of submissions from Gambians from all walks of life, the CRC delivered what many described as ‘an incredible Republican Constitution’.

Precisely, it was on Friday, the 15th November, 2019, that the Commission released its First Draft Constitution to the public domain. The introduction of the draft document was to avail the public the opportunity to scrutinize the document and offer recommendations for possible consideration. Effective Thursday 28th November, 2019, the CRC has begun yet another phase of nationwide public engagement on the substance of the Draft Constitution. Generally, the majority of Gambians hailed the Draft Constitution as ‘progressive and all-inclusive in nature.’ A close scrutiny of all the issues contained in the Draft Constitution revealed that Gambians were predominantly more inclined towards discussing issues around the Executive, Fundamental Human Rights, Elections, Local Government, Land Ownership and Citizenship. These issues were raised as genuine concerns in all regions of The Gambia, although at different degrees in terms of importance.

The inclusion or exclusion of the word “Secular” in the Draft Constitution pervaded the public discourse all throughout the country. But the CRC has offered a justifiable explanation in relation to this discourse mainly peddled to an unreasonable level by certain interest groups. What was amazing amidst the escalating discussions on Secularism was the astuteness, maturity and sense of responsibility exhibited by the Commission in dealing with conflicting views from the public to dissipate the unwarranted tension.

This impression has a far-reaching effect on my experience going forward into the future. The Gambian citizens and international partners have affirmed that such a constitution building process has never been witnessed in The Gambia. Eventually, it is my firm conviction that Gambians at home and abroad will unconditionally vote for the final Draft Constitution at Referendum, because it is a progressive document that can stand the test of time.

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**CRC PARTICIPATES IN THE THIRD STAKE IN THE NATION FORUM**

The Constitutional Review Commission on Saturday, January 18, 2020 participated in the third Stake in the Nation Forum (SNF) which is an annual consultative event in the Gambian Diaspora Strategy and The Gambia National Development Plan (NDP 2018-2021). The theme of the event: ‘Development Practice and Institution Building’ was aimed at bringing together Gambians from diverse socio-economic and political backgrounds to engage in substantive policy discourse.

The focus was on practical ways of implementing policies and achieving different aspects of the Sustainable Development Goals and the National Development Plan (NDP 2018-2021). The forum also gave update on the NDP implementation and action points. It also availed the participants the rare opportunity to dialogue between diaspora
development practitioners, The Gambia government officials, academics and non-state actors also featured prominently in the discussions.

A number of parallel thematic workshops were organized and among them, a session on Diaspora in the Draft Constitution and Policy Development. Participants from the diaspora took turns to argue that there should be a provision in the Constitution that afford Diaspora Gambians the possibility to have a representative in the National Assembly. On the executive section, speakers suggested that dual nationals should be able to contest for the Presidency as opposed to what is contained in the First Draft Constitution. Individuals also asked how the CRC arrived at developing the Draft Constitution and interrogated the next after the final Draft Constitution is released.

In response, the representatives of the Constitutional Review Commission (CRC) at the forum, Mr. Sainey M.K. Marenah and Mr. Yaya B. Baldeh responded adequately on the concerns raised by some participants. They further emphasized the democratic nature of the CRC public consultations and other processes employed in generating public views prior to the drafting phase.

‘The CRC recognizes the important role the diaspora play in the socio economic development of The Gambia and therefore consider them as critical stakeholders in the entire CRC review process,’ Mr. Sainey MK Marenah, CRC Head of Media and Communications told the session. Speaking earlier during the opening of the forum, Fatou Jagne-Seneghore, the Regional Director of ARTICLE 19 commended the organizers of the event for a job well done. She said that public institutions must be held accountable in whatever they do, citing that the culture of injustice and impunity should be eradicated in The Gambia.

“Effective leadership and management are imperative in achieving the development trajectory of the country,” the ARTICLE 19 boss stated.

For his part, Mr Aliou Momar Njai, Chairman of the IEC, stated that the need for the inclusion of Gambians living abroad in the electoral process has taken centre stage in the electoral reform consultations across the country.

He said: “The anticipated challenges out-of-country voting would be the legal framework to clearly spell out the mode of registration for Gambians abroad, the countries with a large number of Gambians, the documentations required to be registered to vote such as birth certificate, passport, identity card and the possession of these documents for identifications remain issues to be addressed by the laws.”
MEET THE SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAM

RAYMOND SARR
HEAD OF HUMAN RESOURCES

SAM ALI ASHCROFT
HEAD OF FINANCE

OMAR OUSMAN JOBE
SECRETARY

SAINEY M.K. MARENAH
HEAD OF COMMUNICATIONS

KARAFYA MANNEH
HEAD OF PROGRAMMES
CRC STAFF IN PERSPECTIVE

The Constitutional Review Commission (CRC) engaged in the constitutional building process since its establishment. The process is guided by core values of participation, transparency, inclusiveness and ownership aimed at delivering to the Gambian people a Constitution that reflects the collective values and aspirations of all. The Secretariat staff is constituted of people with diverse experience from different disciplines. Additionally, they exude enormous intellect and energy in driving the Commission’s work to reality.

In this special edition of the CRC Newsletter ‘In perspective’, we sound the opinions of these industrious, passionate and enthusiastic Secretariat staff featured herein with regard to their experience working with the CRC.

Siaka F. T. Camara, an Accounts Clerk at the CRC stated that it has been a wonderful experience for him working with the CRC. He stressed the fact that he will be forever be grateful to the CRC for giving him the opportunity to contribute his quota towards nation building, saying that working with the finance team gives him an in-depth knowledge of the practical applications of accountancy, a field he like the most.

“The Constitutional Review Commission (CRC) has nurtured and unlocked me to the world,” he said.

Yankuba Manneh, a Note Taker and Transcriber expressed gratification of being central to this history making project of national importance. He said the CRC has further honed his multi-talented competence as he executed variety of Communication-related tasks in addition to his job description.

“Working with CRC made me realize and believe that we have loads of intellectuals: lawyers and technocrats of international standing. I now know that Gambians have great potential and can write our Constitution and laws without the assistance of foreign national. The thing I like most about working at the CRC is working with young Gambians and Commissioners contributing toward the drafting and development of the new Constitution. The interaction with colleagues that I never knew enriched my life and taught me to always remain humble and respectful.”

Alpha Sanyang, CRC Procurement Officer, said

“The CRC is a whole learning institution for me. I have learned adequately with and through colleagues a lot of things in respect to my job,” Mr. Manneh stated.

He described the work relations with his colleagues in the Communications Unit and other Departments as ‘very rich and healthy.’ He remained hopeful that the CRC will deliver a quality and progressive national document eventually.

Alasan Sowe, said as a Note Taker and Transcriber at the CRC he undertook numerous tasks ranging from listening to speeches and audios to report writing. According to him, this has helped him improved his language, listening, comprehension, research competence and typing skills.

“The Constitutional Review Commission (CRC) has nurtured and unlocked me to the world,” he said.

Haggie Sumbundu, a Local Language Linguist at the CRC expressed the view that working with the CRC has availed him of the rare opportunity to learn, interact and build human relationships that are meaningful to his professional career as a linguist. He also hailed the degree of teamwork at the CRC, saying that is one of the key aspects that drives the Commission’s work.

Samsiden Ceasay, a Notes Take and Transcriber said he is thrilled and excited to be part of the CRC. He recounts that during his stint with the CRC, he was able to interact with diverse personalities who all manifested great ideas and expertise. He added that the bond was based on professionalism and team spirit.

Ceasay said: “I have gained a lot of experience from working with diverse people. This I believe will undoubtedly help me and it will serve as a stepping stone for me to become a better person. It will also boost my confidence toward the journey of becoming self-reliant.”
new Constitution for our country. We deeply appreciate the partnership we have forged together since the inception of the CRC and we assure you of our continued collaboration and cooperation.

The last time we held this kind of forum was on the historic occasion when the CRC published the draft Constitution in November 2019. Let me state that immediately after the publication of the draft Constitution, the CRC dispatched copies of the draft Constitution to all the Regional Headquarters to enable the people to have access to the document and to have adequate time to review it and submit their feedback. Copies were also made available to stakeholders and private individuals. Soft copies were also posted on the CRC website and shared on all our social media platforms.

The Commission then undertook a series of consultations informing the public about the provisions in the draft Constitution and soliciting feedback that would help the Commission prepare a final draft for The Republic of The Gambia.

**Second round of countrywide public consultation**

The CRC embarked on a second round of countrywide public consultations from the 31st of November to the 16th of December 2019 to share and inform on the provisions in the draft Constitution, hear the citizens’ perceptions on the proposed provisions and recommendations proffered by citizens.

The second round of public consultative meetings were held in **13 (thirteen) communities** from the **7 (seven) Administrative Areas** of The Gambia in the following venues: Banjul, Fass Njaga Choi, Kerewan, Kaur, Diabugu, Basse, Jangjanbureh, Jareng, Soma, Kwinella, Bwiam, Brikama and Kanifing Municipality (KMC).

In all these communities, the CRC ensured that the Local Government Authorities, Seyflos, Alkalos, School Administrators and Community Based
Organisations (CBOs) were availed with adequate advance copies of the Draft Constitution in order to facilitate public access and to allow Gambians to familiarise themselves with the proposed provisions and subsequently provide feedback to the Commission. By the end of the two week public consultation in the communities, the Commission had met 3,011 (three thousand and eleven) Gambians in the 13 (thirteen) communities visited.

Written submissions
Apart from the public consultations, the Commission also received written submissions on different provisions in the draft Constitution. A total of 198 (one hundred and ninety eight) submissions were received from Government institutions, Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), Religious bodies, individuals, Associations, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), International Organisations and the private sector. The submissions addressed different aspects of the draft Constitution that the different stakeholders were interested in.

Face-to-Face meetings
The Commission also held face to face meetings with the 3 (three) Arms of Government, namely, The Executive, The Judiciary and The Legislature to bring them up-to-date on public opinions relative to the Draft Constitution and also to discuss specific issues connected to their areas of responsibility. The Commission also met with The Gambia Christian Council and the Supreme Islamic Council to discuss their submissions on the draft Constitution and to encourage dialogue between the leaders representing both communities in the wake of the intense debate on secularism.

The Way Forward
The Commission is in the process of finalising its review of all the submissions received as well as the preparation of the final Draft Constitution and the accompanying Report on the processes adopted by the Commission, which will be submitted to the President of The Republic of The
Gambia in accordance with the CRC Act, 2017.

On our part as the CRC, we are grateful for the overwhelming support and encouragement that we continue to receive from all Gambians, both at home and abroad, as well as our national and international partners. The views and opinions received on the Draft Constitution since its publication have been overwhelming and very invigorating. We want to ensure that each submission is carefully and fully considered as we near the end of our assignment.

As with every constitutional development in any country, the final product will never satisfy every view and opinion canvassed. Constitutional development is effectively a negotiation process of give-and-take. It can never address all issues. In our case here in The Gambia, we had put in place a very robust transparent, inclusive and participatory public consultation process whereby every citizen and other stakeholders had the opportunity to make a contribution. This has not only enriched our constitutional review process; it has also helpfully guided us in framing the Draft Constitution in a manner and in the depth that we feel truly and honestly represents the generality of public opinion. We have given credence to public opinion, and an overwhelming number of our citizens, during our second round of public consultations, had expressed satisfaction with the initially drafted Constitution. We continue to aim for making the Draft Constitution better.

CONCLUSION

Let me conclude by reiterating once again the following to the Gambian public on behalf of the Commission:

(a) The Commission remains independent and does not represent any particular interest group.

(b) The constitutional review process continues to be guided by the principles of Participation, Inclusiveness, Representation, Transparency and National Ownership to ensure that the final draft Constitution reflects the collective values, beliefs and aspirations of all Gambians.

Finally, the Commission is working hard to finalise its assignment and, all things being equal, it hopes to finalise the Draft Constitution and the accompanying Report to formally submit to His Excellency the President of the Republic no later than March 2020.

Ladies and Gentlemen of the Media, I thank you sincerely for honouring this invitation and for your continued support and commitment not only to the CRC process, but even more importantly, to your country.
PICTORIAL: PHASE 2 CONSULTATIONS
PICTORIAL: PHASE 2 CONSULTATIONS
PICTORIAL: PHASE 2 CONSULTATIONS
ABOUT THE CRC

The Commission
The Constitutional Review Commission (CRC) is established by an Act of the National Assembly in June, 2018. The Commission’s main functions are to review and analyze the current Constitution, draft a new Constitution for the Republic of The Gambia and prepare a report in relation to the new Constitution. The Commission’s report will outline the processes engaged in reviewing and drafting the new Constitution and provide the rationale for the provisions contained in the new Constitution.

The Members of the CRC were appointed on the 1st June, 2018 and they were sworn into office by the President on the 4th June, 2018.

The Commissioners
The Constitutional Review Commission (CRC) comprises 11 Members made up of a Chairperson designated by the Chief Justice, Vice Chairperson nominated by the Minister of Justice and 9 other Members nominated by the President. All of them were appointed by the President.

Our Mandate
The main functions of the CRC are to review and analyze the current Constitution, draft a new Constitution for the Republic of The Gambia and prepare a report in relation to the new Constitution. The report will outline the processes engaged in reviewing and drafting the new Constitution and provide the rationale for the provisions contained in the new Constitution.

Our Core Values
The CRC is an independent body. Pursuant to the Constitutional Review Commission Act, 2017, the CRC, in carrying out its work, is not subject to the direction or control of any person or authority. As an Institution, it is guided by the following core values:

▲ Inclusiveness
▲ Independence
▲ Integrity
▲ Participation

Our Guiding Principles
In carrying out its work, the CRC is required by the Constitutional Review Commission Act, 2017, to have regard to national values and ethos and safeguard and promote the following:

★ The existence of The Gambia as a sovereign independent State;
★ The Gambia’s Republican systems of governance, including democratic values and respect for and promotion of the rule of law and fundamental rights and freedoms;
★ The separation of powers;
★ National unity, cohesion and peace;
★ The importance of ensuring periodic democratic elections based on universal adult suffrage, including the introduction of term limits for serving in the office of President; and
★ The Gambia’s continued existence as a secular State.