Justice Jallow: CRC Satisfied with the Diaspora Consultations

#CRC220
#PARTICIPATION
#INCLUSIVENESS
#TRANSPARENCY
#OWNERSHIP

CCBT presents Position Paper to CRC on Fiscal Transparency

AU SECURITY COUNCIL VISITS CRC

CRC CONSULTS WITH STUDENTS

GID SHARES VIEWS WITH CRC

LAND COMMITTEE ENGAGES WOMEN IN LRR IN THE REVIEW PROCESS

CRC LOCAL LANGUAGE LINGUISTS IN PERSPECTIVE

PLUS: EULOGY TO SIR DAWDA KAIRABA JAWARA. CRC VS TRRC. CRC SIGN LANGUAGE EXPERT, ETC
The turnout and contributions during the public consultations were quite impressive and the external exercise went far enough in enabling Gambians abroad to have a strong sense of belonging in the constitutional review process. Some diaspora Gambians attended and participated in the consultation process, whilst others took their own initiative through social media and other platforms to encourage Gambians in the diaspora to attend and contribute their quota to the review of the current Constitution. They have expressed delight in being afforded the opportunity to be a part of developing the Constitution of their own country.

Five (5) Technical Committees have been established by the CRC and three have already submitted their draft reports after months of intense and painstaking research.

On Monday, 5th August, 2019, the remaining two technical committees, namely: Technical Committee of Experts on Constitutional Law, chaired by myself: Hawa Kuru Sisay-Sabally (Vice-Chairperson of the CRC) and the Technical Committee on Constitution Drafting and Report Writing, chaired by Commissioner Janet Ramatouli Sallah-Njie, were launched and members took their oath of office and have commenced work in earnest.

The role of the technical committees is to assist the Commission to identify constitutional related issues from an experts’ perspective and to make recommendations on what specific matters (referred to them) to be captured in the new Constitution and how key oversight institutions can be strengthened to promote good governance in The Gambia.

It’s our fervent hope that once the draft new Constitution is ready, it will be made available to the public for comment. The process of soliciting comments and feedback on the draft new Constitution from the public will also entail local public consultations. This will be followed by the finalization of the draft Constitution and a report which will include the processes adopted by the Commission in developing the new Constitution and the rationale for the provisions enshrined in the Constitution.
As the supreme law of the land, the Constitution is the most important policy document in any modern State. Gambians have amply demonstrated over the past twelve months that they understand the value of a Constitution and that to build The Gambia we want for now and posterity, we must contribute meaningfully towards and take ownership of the constitutional building process. They are right! Get the Constitution right; ensure that strong institutions manned by people of high integrity emerge and the necessary checks and balances are in place; with citizens ready to defend their Constitution through thick and thin, then, our country will be in a good place. Gambians are yearning for a country where good governance principles thrive.

The Constitutional Review Commission is thus faced with the mammoth task of combining cold reason (objective evidence) and warm feeling (desire, aspirations and expectations of citizens as expressed during the face-to-face public consultations) to deliver constitutional value to the Gambian people. The process is in good hands and is on track. Gambians, both at home and abroad have spoken passionately on the issues put before them and are already looking forward to the first draft to determine the extent to which their aspirations, hopes and desires have been taken on board. This third edition of the CRC newsletter shares some public consultation stories with readers to keep them abreast of the review process.

The approach adopted by the CRC has been bottom-up approach, starting with community meetings that created the space for ordinary citizens to participate to the stakeholder meetings held at the Secretariat or in hotels to deliberate on the pertinent subject matter areas in constitutional building. Through that process, the Gambian people have made representations to the Commission, taking cue from where we are coming from (our recent history); where we are at this time as a country (current issues, challenges and opportunities) and where we want to be in terms of political, economic, social and legislative governance. But one has to admit that constitutional building is a delicate balancing act and that the process is inherently political. The search for the best interest of citizens and the general good requires negotiations every step of the way to reach a consensus.

The Commission is working tirelessly to deliver a progressive Constitution that celebrates unity, peace, stability and national cohesion in line with the teachings and legacy of the first President of the Republic of The Gambia, Sir Dawda Kairaba Jawara; one that equally celebrates diversity and is anchored on solid good governance principles of transparency, equity, rule of law, accountability and inclusion.
GOOD WILL MESSAGE FROM THE HON. MINISTER OF JUSTICE, ABUBACARR BAA TAMBADOU

All organs and the three main branches of the State i.e. the executive, the judiciary and the legislature, derive their authority from the Constitution. All other laws are subordinate to it and must therefore conform to the letter and spirit of the Constitution. Naturally, the Constitution must be the departure point for any comprehensive law reform.

While proposals were floated to review and amend certain aspects of the Constitution, it was decided that overall, the strategic objective of a return to sustainable democracy, would require the drafting of a new Constitution. At a national conference on Justice and Human Rights held in The Gambia on 23 - 25 May, 2017 under the auspices of the Ministry of Justice, and following identification of numerous amendments proposed for the 1997 Constitution, there was general consensus by a cross-section of Gambian religious, political, civil society and other communities that a new constitution should be drafted as a review by amendments will be too numerous and may not address all the issues comprehensively.

Since its inception, my Ministry, like most Gambians have been very impressed with the work the Commission has done in soliciting the views and aspirations of Gambians at home and abroad. It is my fervent hope that the new Constitution shall be one that reflects faithfully and accurately, the views of the generality of Gambians both at home and abroad and of a cross-section of Gambian religious, political, civil society, professional and other communities. I look forward to the successful completion of the Commission’s work and wish you all the best of luck.

In a historic election on December 1, 2016, Gambians elected Adama Barrow as their third President, ending over two decades of autocratic rule under former president Yahya Jammeh. This change was not only a change of government, but it marked the beginning of a transition that seeks to move the country from an autocracy to a modern-day democratic state. The new Government under President Barrow is confronted with the challenges of dealing with past human rights abuses and laying the foundation for a better Gambia. As a result, the Government has committed itself to the task of restoring respect for the rule of law and good governance through constitutional, legal and institutional reforms, in order to consolidate democracy and align our entire governance architecture with international justice and human rights standards. Consequently, my Ministry formulated a transitional strategic plan and embarked on a program of constitutional and legal reforms focusing primarily on the following areas:

- Constitutional Review
- Criminal Justice & Media Law Reform
- Establishment of a Truth, Reconciliation and Reparations Commission
- Establishment of a National Human Rights Commission

It goes without saying that a new Gambia cannot be achieved without a new Constitution. The Constitution is the supreme law of the land.
EULOGY TO SIR DAWDA KAIRABA JAWARA

A man that many mourners credited for being a true embodiment and representation of humility, humanity; an architect for democracy, a unifier of the nation and the world at large has departed this world. Usually, when heroes and heroines fall, their legacies stand out for their selflessness and for championing the cause of humanity. The Gambia’s first President Sir Dawda Kairaba Jawara was a true democrat and Charismatic Leader. Some people regarded him as a ‘tribe less’ leader in his political journey.

Sir Dawda Kairaba Jawara, a democrat, human rights defender, compassionate leader, fatherly figure, husband and father of a nation is gone. Gone physically, but his values of tolerance and respect for adherence to divergent views in the political trail shall forever be remembered.

A man many recollections and recounts allude to his commitment to duty and to the country he led for considerable years is remarkably overwhelming.

Adieu Sir Dawda Kairaba Jawara!
Sainey MK Marenah  
Head of Media and Communication  
Editor-in-Chief

Being cognizant of the need to hatch a new strategic communication medium to broadly complement other devised outreach channels, the Constitutional Review Commission (CRC) through its proactive Media and Communications Department initiated this publication called ‘CRC Newsletter.’ This medium is used to effectively inform the public about the mileage accomplished by the Commission and the extent to which it has solicited submissions from Gambians and relevant stakeholders in the drafting process. The publication is progressively galvanizing a wide readership and it comes out on a monthly basis. Since the publication of the maiden edition in June, 2019, the CRC Newsletter has increasingly occupied a unique niche of keeping the public and partners abreast of the Commission’s work. The impact of the Newsletter can be measured by a number of responses that the Commission has been receiving from the wide and growing readership of the Newsletter. The steady rise in readership could be attributed to the degree of ownership by the public of the constitution review process, as well as the content and the quality of the publication.

In each publication, the CRC Newsletter, in comprehensive way, looks at the overall CRC, and reliably informs the public of the progress registered thus far towards the fulfillment of its assigned mandate. It embodies relevant activities undertaken by the CRC, including the work undertaken by its decentralized centers in each region of the country. CRC Commissioners and staff of the Secretariat are featured in the publications to showcase the important role they are playing in the constitutional building process. This medium, from the Chief Editor’s lenses, has deep and far-reaching impacts that have undoubtedly resonated well with the growing readership. It appeals to the consciousness of the general public by quenching their thirst for a completely new Constitution that addresses current and future realities of our motherland, The Gambia. By far, the public’s perception of the CRC newsletter is phenomenal and is a source of encouragement to the editorial team.

In no uncertain terms, the August edition encapsulates the ongoing engagements of the CRC over the period and signals what really ensued for subsequent publications. We do hope that this edition, like its antecedents, will avail you the chance to know how much ground the Commission has covered in making the review process more inclusive and participatory. Whilst you are pleasantly looking forward to reading our future publications, let me take this opportunity to offer this one for your reading enjoyment. Be rest assured that we will always bring you up to speed in all that we do. Thank you and have a happy reading!
CRC LAUNCHES THE COMMITTEE OF EXPERTS ON CONSTITUTIONAL LAW AND THE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE ON CONSTITUTIONAL DRAFTING AND REPORT WRITING

The Constitutional Review Commission (CRC) on Monday August 5, 2019, launched two Technical committees: the Committee of Experts on Constitutional Law and the Technical Committee on Constitutional Drafting and Report Writing at the CRC Secretariat in Kotu. The former is headed by the CRC Vice Chairperson, Mrs. Hawa Sisay-Sabally and is ably assisted by Commissioner Gaye Sowe, whilst the latter is presided over by Commissioner Janet Sallah-Njie.

In a swearing-in ceremony presided over by the CRC Chairman, three prominent Gambians subscribed to the oath of secrecy. Justice Basiru V.P. Mahoney and Dr. Tijan Jallow will serve on the Committee of Experts on Constitutional Law whilst Dr. Katim Touray will join the Technical Committee on Constitutional Drafting and Report Writing.

Addressing the Committee members, the CRC Chairperson Justice Cherno Sulayman Jallow thanked them for graciously accepting the invitation to serve on the respective technical committees.

He said, ‘this is part of our mandate under the Constitutional Review Commission Act that we are at liberty to form Technical Committees where we see the need for it.’ Continuing, he added that, all the members of the Technical Committees have to swear to an oath of confidentiality and ‘for us as a Commission that is particularly very important.’ He said the review process of the 1997 Constitution that is underway, is of paramount importance for many reasons. Both the government and the public are expressing hope that, this is going to be the last Constitution that would be written for a very long time to come.

He said that constitutional building is a very expensive undertaking, arguing that the Commission is doing everything possible to work towards establishing an instrument that will not only be acceptable from a Constitutional Law perspective, but also one that Gambians will embrace.

Justice Jallow told the newly sworn-in members that: “Your coming in at this stage is deliberate because you formed the ultimate pinnacle of what we are about as a Constitutional Review Commission.”
He informed them that the findings of the Technical Committees such as Media, Public Education and Communication; Public Finance Management, and Environment, Land and Natural Resources will ultimately come to the Commission, but these will be filtered to each of the Technical Committees, particularly the Committee of experts on Constitutional Law. Justice Jallow further disclosed that two ‘external experts, in the persons of Justice Mutunga, the former Chief Justice of Kenya and professor Fiadjo, a Professor of public Law will be providing support to the two technical Committees. He indicated that the duo accumulated a wealth of experience and they will straddle both committees.

The CRC Vice Chairperson, Hawa Sisay-Sabally congratulated the newly sworn-in members and thanked them for accepting the invitation to serve. Justice Basiru V.P. Mahoney, who spoke on behalf of his colleagues said it is a privilege and honour to serve their country. He assured the Commission that they will do their best to give academic and practical advice to the Commission. He conceded that: “It will not be an easy exercise, but we will put our efforts and provide our honest opinions.”

The CRC Secretary, Omar Ousman Jobe chaired the ceremony and administered the Oath of secrecy.

JUSTICE JALLOW: CRC SATISFIED WITH THE DIAСSORA CONSULTATIONS

The Chairperson of the Constitutional Review Commission, Justice Cherno Sulayman Jallow has revealed that the public consultations with Gambians in the Diaspora was quite engaging and impressive. He made this disclosure at a Press Conference held at the CRC secretariat in Kotu, on August 7, 2019. He commended the diaspora Gambians who not only attended and participated in the consultation process, but also took initiative through social media platforms to encourage Gambians in the Diaspora to attend and contribute their quota to the review of the current Constitution.

Jallow said the diasporians had expressed delight for being accorded the ‘one-in-a-lifetime’ opportunity to be part of developing the Constitution of their own country.

He described the external consultations turnout and contributions as quite impressive that enabled Gambians abroad to have a strong sense of belonging by being part and parcel of the constitutional review process.

“The success of the CRC’s external consultations has largely been due to the commitment and leadership of the various Gambian associations in the countries we visited,” Justice Jallow stated.
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He pointed out that they went that extra mile to ensure that Gambians in their jurisdictions were properly notified and made sterling arrangements, with the CRC’s team of logisticians, for comfortable venues for the public consultations. Justice Jallow further commended the Gambian Ambassadors, High Commissioners, Chargé d’affaires and Consul Generals through the leadership of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for effectively leading the arrangement for the public consultations in their various places.

He also stated that officials from the Gambian embassies abroad attended the public consultations with Gambians in the Diaspora.

knowledge and skills of the participants on news writing for its monthly newsletter publication. Speaking at the opening of the training, the Head of Media and Communications, CRC, Sainey M.K. Marenah urged the participants to take the training seriously in order to improve the content of the CRC monthly newsletter.

For his part, the CRC Secretary, Omar Ousman Jobe said the training is timely as it will enable the participants to have a better understanding of the state of the art in terms of knowledge and skills set required to deliver effectively.

“These skills will help you to make a difference and I encourage you to learn them attentively. This will help you to be top notch professionals,” Secretary Jobe told participants.

Raymond Sarr, Head of Human Resources and Administration for his part, emphasised the importance of the training and urged the participants to take advantage of the opportunity and replicate the knowledge gained in their daily works in the Commission.

Essa Jallow, a participant at the training thanked the CRC Communications department for initiating the training.

“The knowledge gained will help us in improving the visibility aspect of the CRC, especially through the CRC monthly newsletter publication,” Jallow stated.

The training facilitators were Mr. Yaya B. Baldeh, Communications Assistant, who delivered a presentation on basic news writing skills: Headlines development, Body, Insertion of quotations and punctuation; Mr. Sainey MK Marenah, Head of Media and Communications deliberated on the basic tenets of photography, qualities and elements of good photography; whilst Mr. Saikou Suwareh Jabai, Communication Assistant discussed the significance of Interview Skills and Techniques.

CRC'S COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT BUILDS CAPACITY OF ITS MEMBERS

Staff of CRC Communications Department

On Friday July 26, 2019, the Communications department of the CRC under the able leadership of Mr. Sainey MK Marenah conducted a day-long capacity building workshop for its members on the theme: Improved Basic News Writing, Interview Skills and Techniques, and Photography.

The training was meant to equip and enhance the
CCBT PRESENTS POSITION PAPER ON FISCAL TRANSPARENCY TO CRC

Civil Society Coalition on Budget Transparency (CCBT) on July 12, 2019 presented a Position Paper to the Constitutional Review Commission (CRC) at a ceremony held at the CRC headquarters in Kotu. Speaking at the presentation, Yusef Taylor, one of the members of CCBT said the Position Paper was developed by a group of Civil Society advocates who underwent training on fiscal transparency and budget processes.

He added that during the training they gained awareness and understanding of The Gambia’s budget cycle, its pros and cons, noting that they also thought it wise to do a submission to the CRC. “Our objective is to institutionalise fiscal discipline and curb corruption in the country by ensuring that anti-corruption provisions are included in the Constitution,” Yusef Taylor, a member of the CCBT indicated.

He stated that the Position Paper made recommendations which when considered would improve the country’s public finance management, thereby benefiting Gambians.

Mrs. Hawa Sisay-Sabally, Vice Chairperson of the CRC, expressed appreciation to the group for submitting their position paper to the CRC. She hailed their efforts in generating such a valuable data for the Commission to look into during the drafting phase of a new Constitution of The Gambia.

She also assured the group that the Commission will review and analyse the recommendations contained in the Position Paper.
The Constitutional Review Commission (CRC) on Sunday August 4, 2019 played a friendly football match with their transitional justice counterpart, the Truth, Reconciliation, and Reparations Commission (TRRC).

The match played at the Qcity Football pitch was meant to further strengthen the already existing bond between the two transitional justice institutions through sports.

The kick-off of the friendly match that was taken at 6pm was graced by some commissioners and staff of both institutions.

Mr. Nyanika Manjang took advantage of the weakness in the CRC defense to deliver an incredible shot that went past the CRC goalkeeper, Mr. Sainey M.K. Marenah to make it one nil in the first half, in favour of TRRC.

When the action resumed in the second half of the match, the CRC fought back to take control of the game, as Sheikh Tijan Kuta, Karamo Jobarteh, Foday Mboob, and Captain Raymond Sarr upped their game in the midfield and Al fusainey Baldeh, Yaya B. Baldeh worked harder at the CRC's defense line. This could not save the CRC as TRRC's Lamin Cham extended the scores to two goal to nil to the TRRC's advantage in the 58 minutes of the match.

However, the CRC quickly responded with a goal through its performing player, Sheikh Tijan Kuta. This sends some glimmer of hope to the CRC team. As the score line narrowed to two-one. In the second half of the game,
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Commissioner Yankuba Manjang of the CRC and Commissioner Mustapha Kah of the TRRC respectively were introduced to the pitch following substitutions from both sides. The match ended two-one in favour of the TRRC.

In a post-match interview with the CRC Communications team, Imran Darboe, the assistant coach of the TRRC, expressed happiness over their victory. He said he knew his team would win the game.

“We are very happy, we knew we will win. It was a brilliant match and it was on the spirit of unity and friendship,” he stated.

For his part, the coach of the CRC Saikou Suwareh Jabai stated that the importance of the game was to build strong partnership and cohesion between the CRC and the TRRC as transitional justice institutions through sports.

However, Jabai attributed the CRC’s defeat to their lack of preparedness and team synergy of his players. That notwithstanding, he thanked his footballers for their performance.

Mr. Jabai also expressed optimism that the errors committed in the match will be addressed in their subsequent match.

“We will go back to the drawing board and correct our mistakes. That will surely bring victory for us in our next game,” the CRC coach stressed.

Mr. Alhagie Barrow, Director of Research and Investigation at the TRRC who also took part in the match emphasised the importance of the game.

“The game was for fun, it builds camaraderie, and it builds team work between the two Commissions. Our objectives are similar which is to deliver a better Gambia,” he remarked.

Sounding the viewpoint of Dr. Baba Galleh Jallow, the Executive Secretary of the TRRC about the game, he indicated that the encounter was indeed a crucial one between the two institutions.

Dr Jallow said, “I am happy that the TRRC won. I knew we will win. It is good we have this kind of match. It’s purpose was to further cement the relationship between the CRC and the TRRC. And that’s achieved already.”

TRRC was established to investigate and establish an impartial historical record of the nature, causes and extent of violations and abuses of human rights committed during the period July 1994 to January 2017. Likewise, the CRC was established to review the 1997 Constitution of The Gambia, write a new Constitution, and prepare a report.

AU SECURITY COUNCIL VISITS CONSTITUTIONAL REVIEW COMMISSION (CRC)


The visiting delegation was led by H.E Sebade Toba, the Togolese Ambassador to Ethiopia and Permanent Representative at the African Union.

The AU field visit to The Gambia was meant to showcase the Union’s support and solidarity towards the government of The Gambia’s implementation of both political and security sector reform agenda.

Welcoming the delegation at the CRC’s premises, the CRC Secretary Omar Ousman Jobe took them through the mandate and work of the Commission from inception, chronicling the approaches, methodologies and strategies used by the Commission to ensure that the review process was transparent, participatory, equitable and rooted in solid Gambian values but also taking into consideration that The Gambia is a member of the community of nations.

The AU is in the process of actualizing the AU Center for Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development (AU-PCRD) in Cairo, Egypt, and the Gambian experience will be a crucial case study to help other AU Member States to better improve their governance (political) systems towards security, stability and sustainable peace.

The AU delegation was escorted by General Adewale Awotoye, AU Senior Defense Reform Advisor to The Gambia.
The Constitutional Review Commission (CRC) in its drive to craft a new Constitution for The Gambia that is reflective of the wishes and aspirations of people conducted consultations in more than thirty schools across the country.

The school consultations which were held alongside the internal public consultations from November 5, 2018 to January 26, 2019 was meant to give students, teachers and school administrators the chance to participate in deciding the future governance of their country.

School administrators in all the schools visited by the CRC, expressed delight for the opportunity accorded to them, their staff, and students by the CRC to solicit their opinions as to what the new Constitution should address in a direct face-to-face consultation for the first-time in the history of The Gambia.

CRC Commissioners involved in the schools consultations stressed the importance of the school consultations and youth participation in the constitutional building process before raising issues from the CRC’s’ Issues Document containing over 300 issues for possible constitutional reform and sought students’ opinion on them.

Schools were also encouraged by the commissioners to raise any other issue of constitutional and governance significance not mentioned in the Issues Document.

Commissioner Lamin S. Camara, one among the CRC commissioners involved in the school consultations whilst addressing students at Masroor Senior Secondary School in Old Yundum on January 10, 2019, asserted that the CRC was established by an Act of Parliament (2017) to draft a new Constitution through consultation with the Gambian people. He remarked that the Commissioners could have sat in their offices and sought the opinions of Gambia, but that would not have been enough; and that is why the CRC thought it fitting to tour the entire country to hold conversations with Gambians and seek their opinions.

Commissioner Camara further said that the Commission also deemed it fitting to visit schools to have an interface with the
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students to seek their opinions considering that in a few years’ time, the students will be part of the decision-making process of the country such as voting in elections.

Commissioner Camara also encouraged students to have the zeal and determination for success regardless of the school they are in and never allow anyone to draw the line on where they should stop.

All schools consulted by the Commission gave divergent submissions to the CRC on fundamental rights, elections, the executive, judiciary, public finance and other constitutional matters.

Manyima Ceersay, a student of Mastroor Senior Secondary school, stated to the CRC that the new Constitution should not only provide for free education, but more importantly quality education, especially in public schools.

“There should be free and quality education from primary to university level. Despite the free education introduced by the government from primary to secondary, elites take their children to very expensive schools. This is because quality education is compromised in the public schools. The new Constitution should not only provide for free education, but quality education as well,” Manyima recommended.

Naffie Gaye, a grade 12 student of the same school recommended the protection of teenage girls from early marriage.

“The new Constitution should ban early marriage. At a young age, girls would not be able to manage their family in their matrimonial homes and hardship of child bearing will automatically result in complications,” she passionately echoed.

Mr. Ensai Gibba, principal of Diabugu Batapa Senior Secondary school in the Upper River Region, submitted that education should not only be free, but also mandatory.

Alhassan S. Bah, a student of Charles Jow Senior Secondary School in the Kanifing Municipality, calls for the new Constitution to provide for free education from primary to university level for the country to be able to produce more professionals like doctors and nurses.

Zainab A. Conteh also a student of Charles Jow, wants the new Constitution to come up with provisions that will consider the development of girls and the prohibition of early marriage.

Jumaiya Mondo, a teacher at Fass Njagga Choi Senior Secondary School in the North Bank Region called for the increase of paternity leave, saying that the paternal leave given to teachers should be increased from ten days to a month.

“It will be extremely difficult for a teacher to take care of his wife for only ten days, especially if they are living alone,” Ms. Mondo stated.

Mr. Ebrima O. Bah, a teacher at Kerewan Senior Secondary School in the North Bank Region and John Mendy, a teacher at St. Joseph Senior Secondary School in Banjul recommended the establishment of a Teaching Service Commission.

CRC TCPFM DIALOGUES WITH MoFEA

The CRC Technical Committee on Public Finance Management on Wednesday August 7, 2019 held a meeting with officials of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs (MoFEA) at the Quadrangle in Banjul. The dialogue was geared towards assisting the CRC Technical Committee on Public Finance Management to better comprehend The Gambia’s public finance management system and to better guide the CRC in the constitutional drafting process.

Commissioner Fatoumatta Jallow
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This dialogue was highly welcomed by the officials of MoFEA and they regarded the deliberations as a ‘fruitful’ engagement.

Speaking at the opening ceremony, the CRC Public Finance Management Committee member, Mr. Mamour Malick Jagne called for a transparent dialogue process with the MoFEA executives.

Mr. Abdoulie Tambedou, Director of The Gambia Public Procurement Authority was also in attendance to help in the deliberations relating to Public Procurement processes and procedures within state owned enterprises.

The delegation was led by the Chairperson of the CRC Technical Committee on Public Finance Management, Commissioner Fatoumatta Jallow. The CRC instituted technical committees such as the Public Finance Management to help identify constitutional related issues from an experts’ perspective so that they could make recommendations on specific matters relating to the new Constitution.

CRC PRESENTS A PAPER ON PERSPECTIVES ON THE CONSTITUTIONAL REVIEW PROCESS

As a key stakeholder, the Constitutional Review Commission was invited by the UN Women in partnership with the Ministry of Justice and the National Assembly of The Gambia to present a paper on the Constitutional Review processes at a day long high level consultative meeting aimed at addressing discriminatory laws in The Gambia.

The CRC Youth Commissioner, Yankuba Manjang presenting on behalf of the CRC said the CRC was created by an Act of the National Assembly and the act provides for the establishment of a Constitutional Review Commission to draft and guide the process of promulgating a new Constitution for The Gambia and for matters connected therein.

‘In order to fulfill its mandate, the CRC is required to seek public opinion by consulting widely with citizens and stakeholder groups both at home and abroad. This is to afford the people of The Gambia the opportunity to freely express their opinions and make suggestions on matters they feel should be considered in the new Constitution,’ he said.

He told the audience that the CRC embarked on national and international public consultations. During these consultations, he said, ‘the CRC made sure it captured the views of people from different walks of life. The Meetings, he stated, took the form of a plenary [in the first half] and Focus Group Discussions [in the second half].’

‘The CRC had fruitful discussions with women during which the plight of women was highlighted by women themselves. They shared their stories and experiences – lack of adequate health facilities more so for pregnant women, lack of potable and adequate water supply, access to land/farms to grow their produce, girls’ education, denial of inheritance, protection of women’s rights in divorce and related matters, and presence in decision making bodies. We collected a lot of data. That data is being processed and will be disaggregated by geographical region, sex, etc,’

Commissioner Manjang informed the

CRC PARTICIPATES IN IEC NATIONAL VALIDATION ON REFORM

The Constitutional Review Commission was invited by the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) to participate in the validation of the Report on Electoral Reforms.

The CRC was represented at the validation workshop by Omar Ousman Jobe, the CRC Secretary and Mr. Sainey MK Marenah, Head of Communications. The draft report will be submitted to the CRC for inclusion in the draft Constitution.

Participants at the event
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The Constitutional Review Commission as one of the country’s transitional justice institution was invited by the Ministry of Justice in collaboration with the United Nations Office in Banjul to a one-day forum on governance, sustaining peace and development. The CRC present on the progress made so far as well as highlight challenges and opportunities.

The event dubbed Private Sector Briefing on: ‘Promoting National Development through the reform of the governance sector’ brought together key stakeholders from the Truth, Reconciliation and Reparations Commission, the National Human Rights Commission, the Security Sector Reform Program, the Ministry of Finance, the Independent Electoral Commission, the Ministry of Interior and the Office of the Secretary General and Head of Civil Service.

The objective of the forum was to update the private sector and the NGO community on the Transitional Justice Programme, the challenges encountered and the opportunities for building a better Gambia.

The Secretary of the Constitutional Review Commission Mr. Omar Ousman Jobe presenting on behalf of the CRC gave an overview of the work and mandate of the Commission, opportunities and challenges.

Mr. Jobe informed the gathering of the significant grounds covered by the Commission in consulting with Gambians to write a new Constitution for The Gambia. He said the Commission in order to realize its mandate embarked on an internal and external public consultations with Gambians with a view to eliciting their opinions on how they want to be governed in the Third Republic.

‘The CRC provided different Avenues for individuals and organizations to contribute to the decision making process. Special platforms were created to interface with the CRC and to seek audience with the Commission,’ He said. The event graced by the Hon. Minister of Justice, Abubacarr Baa Tambadou and UN deputy Country Representative to The Gambia, Nessie Golakai- Gould.

Mr. Jobe addressing the Forum

The Gambia Immigration Department (GID) following the footsteps of other institutions, on Wednesday August 14, 2019 called on the Constitutional Review Commission (CRC), with a view to sharing its views and opinions on the drafting of the new Constitution. In his welcoming remarks, the Chairperson of the CRC, Justice Cherno Sulayman Jallow thanked the GID’s leadership for recognising the need to take part in the constitutional building process. While allowing them to divulge the purpose of their visit, Mr. Seedy M. Touray, the Director General of GID thanked the CRC...
for giving them the opportunity to contribute to the review process. DG Touray said their visit was necessitated by certain challenges that the department is grappling with and the desire to have them addressed within the framework of the new Constitution. Continuing, he outlined the following issues: Inclusion of GID in the National Security Council (NSC); establishment of National Security Service Commission; changing Gambia Immigration Department to Gambia Immigration Service; Registration of certain class of persons; and naturalisation of locally integrated refugees.

Issues such as citizenship, status of certain persons including refugees were highlighted and discussed in details by GID officials. Substantial reasons were advanced in favour of children born in The Gambia to non-Gambian parents; alteration of the nomenclature; protracted cases for certain refugees, and the establishment of National Security Commission.

Upon hearing the invaluable submissions from the GID, the CRC Chairperson Justice Jallow asked the GID to urgently submit a position paper articulating all the above mentioned issues to help the Commission to properly digest issues raised during discussion. The CRC Chairman assured the GID delegation that the Commission will certainly review their submissions and align them with other views expressed by Gambians to produce a good Constitution. The GID delegation comprised of Mr. Seedy M. Touray, the Director General; Sheriff Ceesay, Officer-In-Command – Planning Unit; Foday Gassama, Commander – Migration Unit; Lamin Sanyang, GID Counsel to Attorney General Chambers; and Jawara Cham, Officer Commanding – the Citizenship and Naturalization Unit.

Below: CRC listening to presentation by the GID Officials
On Wednesday July 24, 2019, the Constitutional Review Commission (CRC) received a delegation from the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) through its representative, Anne Marlborough, a legal reforms specialist. IFES is an American NGO promoting electoral integrity. Speaking with the officials of the CRC in Kotu, Ms Marlborough explained the purpose of her visit, saying that IFES is committed to supporting citizens’ rights to participate in free and fair elections. “My visit today is in line with IFES resolve to implement a two-year USAID-funded project to support constitutional review and electoral reform processes,” she explained. Anne maintained that IFES has been awarded the implementation of this project owing to the good work and partnerships it had in The Gambia over the years. It could be vividly recalled that IFES visited the Gambia in 2017 and 2018 to conduct a technical observation of the legislative elections and to produce a targeted assessment of election processes related to: (1) Legal and regulatory framework for elections; (2) Counting; (3) aggregation and certification of final results; and (4) electoral dispute resolution. It also supported a workshop with the Independent Electoral Commission on electoral reform in The Gambia. Responding on behalf of the Commission, Commissioners Yankuba Dibba and Lamin S. Camara showed appreciation and thanked IFES through Anne Marlborough for the visit. The pair took time to give a detailed rundown of the number of methods and strategies employed by the CRC in eliciting the views of Gambians to develop a new Constitution. They expressed satisfaction at the level of participation from Gambians both home and abroad, as well as hopes that the new Constitution will reflect the wishes and aspirations of Gambians.
The Constitutional Review Commission (CRC) on Monday June 10, 2019, engaged the ‘Right 2 Know’ group on the ongoing Constitutional reform process in The Gambia. The ‘Right 2 Know’ group is driven by some Gambians from different professional backgrounds whose focus is to champion the course of democracy and human rights in the country. The two-day engagement held at Kotu brought together the CRC Commissioners and members of the ‘Right 2 Know’ team to deliberate on a wide range of issues relating to Constitutional Reform.

Speaking on the occasion, the Chairperson of the CRC Justice Cherno Sulayman Jallow, said the CRC recognized that constitution building is a national endeavor and the CRC believed that to have a Constitution that is representative of the citizens, would require that every Gambian to be consulted.

Jallow explained that, the CRC devised various strategies to consult Gambians both home and abroad and these includes: the Internal Public consultations, where the public made submissions on how they want the future governance of The Gambia to be.

He added: “The CRC want a Constitution that will serve The Gambia today and in the future.” Dr. Momodou Tangara, Minister for Foreign Affairs, International Cooperation and Gambians Abroad said consulting with diaspora Gambians in the Constitutional reform process is crucial, noting that the Diasporas’ contributes significantly in the socio-economic development of the country.

“I’m quite convinced that the Diaspora will play a key role in the constitutional reform process. They are always ready to bring different skills and ideas that they believed could add value to the development of the country,” Foreign Affairs Minister told the CRC.

Mr. Jeggan Grey-Johnson, who spoke on behalf of the “Right 2 Know” group indicated that the “Right 2 Know” does not represent the entire Gambian Diaspora, but a section of Gambians in the Diaspora that work on democracy and human rights. Mr. Grey-Johnson indicated that his organization is committed to supporting...
what he described as the birth of the new era in good governance, good democratic practice and empowered citizenry in observance of accountability and transparency.

The CRC vice chairperson, Hawa K. Sisay-Sabally in delivering the vote of thanks thanked ‘Right 2 Know’ and commended them for creating time to engage with the officials from the CRC on how they aspire to see The Gambia governed. She further assured them that the CRC will take their opinions into consideration when drafting the Constitution.
STATISTICIAN EXPRESSES OPTIMISM ON DATA ENTRY COMPLETION

Following the successful public consultations with Gambians at home and abroad, the CRC had conducted a nationwide household survey as part of its ongoing efforts to solicit more public opinions to draft a new Constitution for The Gambia. The household survey which complements the public consultations was aimed at generating viewpoints from the grassroots. Currently, the Commission is working hard to process the collected data, and will collate and synthesize them to generate reliable and accurate information that reflects the views and aspirations of the general public.

In an interview with Mr. Edrissa Ceesay, the Head of the Statistics Department, he expressed delight at the speed at which the data entry exercise was carried out. He said the process was fast tracked when the Commission took the decision to hire competent students from the University of The Gambia to support the process.

“As of now, I can say 75% of the first phase of the work has been completed and the remaining 25% is expected to be completed within one week,” Ceesay said.

Mr. Ceesay added that the exercise is progressing with the verification of the recorded data. This he said will be rolled out for a whole week and they will ensure that errors in terms of the correctness of the information are minimized to the extent possible. He confidently asserted that by Friday 30th August, 2019, the whole exercise will be completed, and that they will be providing the commissioners with a preliminary result of the data keyed.

For his part, Mr. Jonkunda S. Barrow, the CRC regional coordinator for North Bank Region and supervisor of the data entry explained that the critical role play by the supervisors in fast-tracking the data entry process paid off.

He described the whole exercise as a success, mainly by virtue of their excellent supervisory role in ensuring effective and efficient data entry process was guaranteed.

“We have entered about three quarter of over 400 batches of data, and by tomorrow we will begin the verification phase. Throughout the process, we have been moving from one desk to another as supervisors to check, answer questions and proffer assistance where necessary,” Mr. Barrow explained.

Momodou Katim Touray, also a CRC regional coordinator for Central River Region and data entry supervisor echoed similar sentiments in relation to the supervision process of the data entry.

Mr. Touray seized the moment to recognise the invaluable efforts of the Statistics and Programme Units for developing a tracking form to aid their work.

“I must applaud the various strategies put in place by both the Statistics and Programme Units which have contributed immensely to this success story,” Touray commended.

Ajie Touray, one of the UTG students serving in the capacity of a data entry clerk said she is opportunely to be part of the history making process.

“The data entry process will help me to have more experience and knowledge. I am glad to know the kinds of issues that will be featured in the new Constitution “ she explained.

For Foday Kebbeh, a staff and data entry clerk described the data entry process as a 'learning point' for him and his colleagues. Foday underscored the significance of accurate and reliable data to the work of the Commission, and thus enjoined his colleagues to be focused and attentive to the task at hand.

“Personally, I am very optimistic that the outcome of the CRC process will definitely reflect the wishes and aspirations of Gambians, looking at the caliber of commissioners and staff of the Secretariat entrusted with this work,” Mr. Kebbeh asserted.
Sowe was called to the Nigerian and Gambian Bars in October and November 2000 respectively. He worked with the Gambian Judiciary as a Principal Magistrate and Acting Judicial Secretary prior to joining the IHRDA. He was a member of the steering committee that set up the Law Faculty of the University of The Gambia and has been an Adjunct Lecturer at the Faculty of Law at the University of The Gambia since it was established. He was also a lecturer of Criminal Procedure at The Gambia Law School until 2015.

Commissioner Sowe studied at the University of Essex's International Human Rights Law programme (LLM), and at Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife (LLB Honours), as well as at the Nigerian Law School (BL).

"I am always moved by the dedication of the CRC members every time I join a meeting of the CRC. I find the quality of deliberations and professionalism of members really impressive," Commissioner Sowe shared his impression about the review process.

Gaye Sowe is the Executive Director of the Institute for Human Rights and Development in Africa (IHRDA), a Pan-African human rights organisation that works on strengthening the African Human Rights System. He has risen from the ranks of Legal Officer, Senior Legal Officer to Director of Programs, and has spent more than twelve years at IHRDA.

Commissioner Sowe has litigated human rights cases particularly at the regional level and has done trainings and presentations on different areas of international human rights law with the judiciary and law enforcement officials in The Gambia, as well as lawyers and human rights activists in Africa and beyond.

He is an expert member of the ECOSOC Working Group of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, and has made significant contributions in developing the jurisprudence of various African human rights mechanisms.
INTRODUCING CRC COMMISSIONERS

With vast experience and expertise on good governance, and providing strategic guidance through membership of boards of several Public Enterprises, national, regional and international Non-Governmental Organisations, Commissioner Sallah-Njie was the first Chairperson, ActionAid International-The Gambia; International Board Member of ActionAid International; Chairperson The Institute For Human Rights and Development in Africa; Vice President Gambia Bar Association; Vice Chairperson of both The Gambia Telecommunication Company and The Gambia Revenue Authority, and Chairperson of The Gambia Competition and Consumer Protection Commission.

Furthermore, she also served in various positions within the public service of The Gambia from 1990 to 2002, prior to her establishing private practice. Ministry of Justice, from 1990 to 2000. These include offices of Solicitor General and Legal Secretary, from 1998 to 2000; Parliamentary Counsel (1996 to 1998); and Legal Adviser to Governor of the Central Bank of The Gambia- (2000-2002).

Commissioner Sallah-Njie holds a LLB (Hons) degree from the University of Sierra Leone; BL Hons from Nigerian Law School; LLM (Hons) from the London School of Economics and Political Science and a Post Graduate Diploma in Legislative Drafting from the University of West Indies.

She also benefitted from several training programmes and professional development courses including training programmes on Gender and Development, Competition Law and Policy, Intellectual Property Rights, Alternative Dispute Resolution, Environmental Law and Policy and Sharia Personal Law.

Reacting to her work with the CRC, Commissioner Sallah-Njie said: “I have had the privilege and honour to participate in several initiatives in the service of my country. However, I consider my membership of the Constitutional Review Commission to review the 1997 Constitution of the Republic of The Gambia and to draft a new Constitution for The Gambia, as the singular and highest call to duty in the service of my nation. The review process is highly participatory and inclusive, and I am greatly humbled and encouraged by the participation, enthusiasm, resolve, and sense of ownership of Gambians, throughout the length and breadth of The Gambia, including Gambians in the diaspora. Gambians have through their participation, exhibited their will and desire to guide the review process and to ensure that the new Constitution truly reflects their views and aspirations, and provides a ray of hope for present and future generation of Gambians. I pray that the Almighty Allah SWT guides the Commission, and prevails on its deliberations and strives to build a new Constitution based on the rule of law, with very strong institutions grounded on the fundamental principles of good governance.”

COMMISSIONER JANET RAMATOULIE SALLAH-NJIE

Married with four children, Janet Ramatoulie Sallah-Njie, is a private Legal Practitioner and Managing Partner at TORODO Chambers. She generally focuses on commercial law and practice. She is a trained and experienced Legislative Draftsperson; and carried out Consultancy on various subjects; including drafting legislation and policy formulation on environmental laws and policies, Intellectual Property Rights, Children and Women’s rights, Migration, Utilities Regulation and Competition law and policy, Banking and Financial Institutions, Local Government; Access to justice and Good Governance.

As a Women’s Rights Advocate, she has volunteered significantly on advocacy for litigating and the promotion of the rights of women and children. Additionally, Commissioner Sallah-Njie is also a founder president and current adviser of the Female Lawyers Association-The Gambia (FLAG).
MEET THE COMMISSIONERS

JUSTICE CHERNO SULAYMAN JALLOW
CHAIRPERSON

HAWA K. SISAY-SABALLY
VICE CHAIRPERSON

COMMISSIONER
SALIMATTA TOURAY

COMMISSIONER
AMIE JOOF-COLE

COMMISSIONER
FATOUAMATTA JALLOW

COMMISSIONER
GAYE SOWE

COMMISSIONER
JANET R. SALLAH-NJIE

COMMISSIONER
LAMIN S. CAMARA

COMMISSIONER
YANKUBA DIBBA

COMMISSIONER
YANKUBA MANJANG

COMMISSIONER
Dr. MELVILLE GEORGE
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

MOHAMMED HASSAN LOUM
HEAD OF PROGRAMMES
PICTORIAL: CRC220 AT WORK
INTRODUCING CRC’s SIGN LANGUAGE EXPERT, LAMIN SONKO

On account of his role in the Commission’s drive to come up with a new Constitution for The Gambia that is durable and inclusive, we are pleased to place the spotlight on Mr. Lamin D. Sonko, the sign language interpreter at the Commission, highlighting his immense contributions towards the review process.

Mr. Sonko’s role in the Commission is to provide Sign Language Interpretation services during the CRC public and special groups consultations to cater for the deaf and the hard-of-hearing people in the constitutional building process. That in itself is a measure of the CRC’s commitment to have a process that is all-embracing and inclusive.

In an exclusive interview, Sonko said the establishment of the Constitutional Review Commission (CRC) under the new dispensation is actually a deliverance for Persons with Disability (PWDs), a section of the population who have suffered from a longstanding exclusion and discrimination.

“The CRC is seen as a savior that has accorded this marginalised group the opportunity to voice out their plight and the issues affecting them,” he said.

When asked to what extent did the CRC engage the people with disability (PWDs) in the review process, Sonko said the PWDs have been engaged right from the outset and this has been done in a number of ways. He said one of the ways the CRC used was to include the PWDs Sign Language Interpreter to communicate the messages of the Commission.

Secondly, Sonko recognised the building of a ramp at the CRC’s Secretariat to allow the PWDs to access the building. He further stressed the CRC’s foresight in translating the ‘Issues Document’ of over 350 questions to braille.

“One thing that really made me proud is the Commission’s decision to appoint two persons of disability. This move has raised my hope and confidence for an all-inclusive Constitution to be crafted,” he echoed with optimism.

On some of the expectations of the PWDs, Mr. Sonko explained a number of pressing issues confronting this category of the population. He emphasised how the PWDs long for the pending Disability Bill to be enacted. Sonko went further to say free education up to tertiary level is a great concern for the PWDs. As part of the broader inclusive approach, Sonko maintained all the television stations in The Gambia should have a sign language interpreter to inform the hard-of-hearing on national and international issues.

He said the voices of the PWDs have been amplified for government to improve accessibility to public workplaces for physically challenged persons.

“Very little has been done for the physically challenged persons to get access to public buildings,” Lamin lamented. He however, added that there is common call by PWDs for unconditional recognition of Gambian Sign Language (GSL) to be made official. Consequently, Mr. Sonko expressed great hope and optimism that the new Constitution will be a far-cry from the 1997 Constitution, in terms of including the PWDs on all fronts.

“My source of confidence stems from the CRC’s willingness to consult and engage the PWDs in all forms and hopes are that the issues will be prominently reflected as other sections of the society,” Sonko stated.
Arguably language is one of the most relevant instruments of human life. Unity and tolerance prevail when people are able to communicate with one another through diverse languages with a common understanding. Language becomes an essential tool in the transmission of common goals, shared ideas and societal values. More importantly, it is sacrosanct in fostering basic understanding in communication. In the context of the Constitutional Review Commission (CRC), language is undoubtedly a unique element that keeps the Commission’s messages more engaging, relevant and thoughtful to those on the receiving side.

The Local Language Linguists who are part and parcel of the CRC Communications Department have been helpful in the transmission of strategic communication messages of the CRC to the general public. The personalities below are among the Commission’s Local Language Linguists whose versatility in the art of communicating with the Gambian populace is firmly established. The CRC Communications Department had sounded their thoughts during the recently concluded public consultations. And these are their thoughts on their individual experiences.

Omar Bah, a Local Language Linguist said that the CRC public consultations was a huge experience for him for the fact that it added value to his public speaking skills and interaction with the people.

“My interaction with the people has changed significantly. In the past, it wasn’t easy for me to stand before a crowd to interpret. Now, it is very easy and I consider that to be a major achievement,” he stated. He stressed the role played by the Local Language Linguists during the just concluded CRC public consultations, describing it as very critical as they interpreted the messages distilled by the Commissioners into various local languages for easy understanding by the public. This, he said enabled the public to understand the issue being discussed by CRC Commissioners.

Sainey Dibba, a Local Language Linguist referred to the CRC public consultations as an important exercise and a great experience for him.

“The public consultations was important because the CRC wanted all Gambians to participate in the constitutional building process. To that end, the CRC ensured that the public first understood the present constitutional arrangements before soliciting their opinions on what the new Constitution should address. That way, their contributions will be a true reflection of the wishes and aspirations of Gambians,” he asserted. Continuing, he said that the most interesting part for him in the CRC’s build up to delivering an all-inclusive Constitution to the Gambian people was the household survey conducted across the length and breadth of The Gambia to further consult Gambians on issues of possible constitutional reforms.

Musa Keita, also a Local Language Linguist, highlighted that the CRC public consultations was a very good experience.

“It was a great experience for me. I learned a lot from the public,” he said. He further said that after the conclusion of public consultations, the local language linguists were involved in the CRC household survey and the data entry exercises which augurs well for their career development.

Sainey Jallow, also a Local Language Linguist stated that the CRC public consultations was a good experience for him as he learned a lot from the submissions people gave to the Commission as to what they want the new draft Constitution to include. He explained that what stood out for him in the entire consultations was when the CRC Chairman asked whether the new Constitution should provide for the establishment of a Teaching, a Health and a Security Service Commissions in a consultative meeting in the provinces. When he did, a farmer raised his hand and said an Agricultural Service Commission had been left out in the list of commissions mentioned by the CRC chairman and indicated that it was important to establish one to addressed the plight of farmers.
FOCUS on CRC’s REGIONAL ACTIVITIES

LAND COMMITTEE ENGAGES WOMEN IN LRR IN THE REVIEW PROCESS

The CRC Technical team holding discussions with LRR Women representatives

On June 14, 2019, the CRC Regional Coordinators responsible for the Lower River Region (LRR) with the CRC Technical Committee on Land, Environment and Natural Resources convened a day stakeholders meeting with the Lower River Region Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) at the Governor’s Office in Mansakonko.

The convergence brought together forty Technical Advisory Committee members to synergise and discuss the environmental problems confronting the region. Various TAC members, the Governor, the Deputy Governor and the CEO of Mansakonko Area Council spoke at length the problems affecting their environment and the issue of waste disposal and unlicensed sand mining activities.

In his deliberations, Mr Kawsu Jadama, the secretary to the CRC Technical Committee on Lands, Environment and Natural Resources said that the technical committee have noted their various concerns and he promised that their concerns will be communicated to the CRC for further discussions and necessary action.

For her part, the Governor of LRR, Mrs Fatou Jammeh-Touray thanked the CRC and the technical committee members for organizing such an interactive synergy and she assured the technical committee members that her office will always be ready to partner with the CRC to deliver a viable Constitution that will represent the wishes and aspirations of Gambians, irrespective of their social background.

Governor Jammeh-Touray also expressed her happiness with the level of co-operation her office enjoys with the CRC LRR Regional Coordinators.

On a similar engagement, on Thursday 27th June, 2019 the Constitutional Review Commission (CRC) Technical Committee on Lands, Environment and Natural Resources scheduled another follow up meeting at the Governor’s office in
Focus on CRC’s Regional Activities

Continued from page 28

Mansakonko. The delegation of the CRC Technical Committee on Lands, Environment and Natural Resources was led by Madam Bakurin. Team members included Mr. Yahya Bajo and Mr. Kawsu Jadama. The Regional Coordinators for the Lower River Region attended and facilitated the meeting.

The one-day meeting brought together 28 women leaders drawn from all the six districts of the region. Madam Bakurin in her keynote speech, welcomed and applauded the women for answering the call by the Regional Coordinators within short notice. Continuing, she said that this is a clear demonstration that women are always at the forefront of nation building. In addition, Madam Bakurin informed the women that their mission in the region is to find out some of the problems confronting them in relation to land, the environment and natural resources.

Various women leaders spoke of the need for women to be entitled to land and manage natural resources. Some of the women participants decried the non-availability of farm implements; the destruction of farmlands by cattle; the infiltration of snakes and the threat posed by other wild life in the rice fields and their discrimination with regards to inheritance and land ownership.

Finally, at the close of the meeting, the Governor of the Region Mrs. Fatoumeh-Touray thanked the CRC and all the participants for honoring the invitation to attend the meeting. She pledged her office’s unconditional support to empower women in her region and described the meeting as fruitful and educative.

NBR COORDINATORS SOUND CHIEFS’ VIEWS ON THE REVIEW PROCESS

On Thursday, the 2nd of May, 2019, Mr. Jonkunda S. Barrow, one of the Regional Coordinators for the North Bank Region conducted an exclusive interview with certain chiefs in his region. The interview was an extension of the Constitutional Review Commission’s efforts and strategies to bring on board every Gambian in the process of drafting a new Constitution for The Gambia.

In his written report, Mr. Barrow said his interview with the chiefs was aimed at getting the facts about the genesis of chieflyancy in The Gambia and how it has evolved over time. The other line of enquiry was aimed at having a general understanding of the roles and functions of traditional rulers in the past and relating them with the present. The regional coordinator sounded the views of the chiefs on what should be captured in the new draft Constitution. Barrow explained that: “The interview was aimed at establishing the facts about the evolution of chieflyancy from the colonial era to modern day Gambia and the various changes that happened along the way in relation to the selection and appointment of chiefs.”

The retired chief of Jokadou District, Jim Fatima Jobe and Fabala Masire Janko Kintehe, Chief of Lower Badibou District both in the North Bank Region were interviewed. From the analysis of the opinions of these traditional rulers, Barrow could infer a huge difference in terms of what and how they perceive the modalities of ascension to the chieflyancy. Despite the difference in viewpoints, the chiefs made vital contributions to the CRC that will help commissioners in the drafting process.
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.