

**STATEMENT BY MRS TENENG MBA JAITEH, SECRETARY GENERAL &
HEAD OF CIVIL SERVICE AT THE UNDP-GOTG 2007 END YEAR
PROGRAMME REVIEW MEETING ON WEDNESDAY APRIL 24TH 2008
AT THE CORINTHIA ATLANTIC HOTEL**

Chairman, National Planning Commission

Resident Representative UNDP, a.i

Permanent Secretaries here present

**Directors, Chief Executive from Government, Private Sector, CSOs
and NGOs**

Vice Chancellor, University of The Gambia

Chairman, Office of the Ombudsman

**Project/Programme Staff from UNDP and Implementing Partner
Institutions**

Members of Media

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen

It is with great honour and personal delight that I join you this morning to give the opening statement at this very important meeting. The meeting is, by default rather than by design, my very first formal appearance since my appointment, at a gathering of this type and magnitude in which partners in a country programme implementation have gathered to review their strategies geared towards bringing about improvement in implementation approaches.

Before I proceed, let me take this opportunity to assure you all of my commitment to support vital processes such as the one we are witnessing that are pertinent to our development as a nation. Let me at the outset express government's profound gratitude and appreciation to the UNDP Country Team and through you, all the UN Agencies here in The Gambia for your continuous collaboration in diverse areas pertinent to The Gambia's immediate, medium, and long-term development needs.

Mr Chairman

It was with a high sense of expectation due to our confidence in UNDP as a trusted partner, that the Government embraced the current programme cycle with UNDP, which as you all know is based on relevant programmatic framework documents notably, "the Country Programme Document (or the CPD)" the Country Programme Action Plan (or simply called the CPAP), and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (the UNDAF).

Signed in December 2006, the CPAP has become the reference for joint programming by UNDP and the Government covering a 5-year cycle from 2007 to 2011. The CPAP reflects the priorities of The Gambia, which hinge around poverty reduction and the achievement of MDGs, as well as the deepening of human rights and good governance. The implementation period of the CPAP is also consistent

with that of the country's second PRSP which runs for the same period dovetailing all the critical areas addressed in the CPAP.

Through the CPAP, UNDP has committed resources for the implementation of activities under the two main PILLARS of poverty reduction and the MDGs on the one hand, and Human Rights and Governance on the other.

Support has been lined up in the following areas, many of which are in the form of projects at different stages of implementation:

- MDG-based Poverty Reduction strategy
- National Planning Commission and Aid Coordination Management
- Establishment of an Independent Think-Tank
- Implementation of the National Employment Action Plan
- Rapid Advisory and Capacity Building
- Women Policy Development, Empowerment and Involvement in Sustainable Environmental Management
- Disaster Preparedness
- Local Government Strengthening
- Public-Civil Society Participation
- Civil Service Reform
- Mass Media Capacity Development
- HIV/AIDS and Networking
- Elections Administration, and

- **Legislative Support through the National Assembly**

Mr. Chairman

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

This meeting is indeed therefore very important in not only bringing partners from each of the above areas at a common forum, but also providing a unique opportunity to re-positioning ourselves to improve implementation performance.

It is gratifying to note that through the collaboration of UNDP, an independent assessment study of the first year of implementation of the 2007-2011 CPD/CPAP was commissioned. This report, which was aimed at identifying early lessons and making recommendations to improve implementation performance, would serve as the basis for the ensuing discussions in this meeting. I have been reliably informed that the study report is indeed borne out of an independent assessment that had captured the views expressed by the implementing partners of projects under the CPAP programme. I therefore register my thanks and appreciation to the Consultant that did the study for a job well done. To those that have provided the inputs, including all the views about diverse elements of our collaboration, I offer similar words of gratitude. Fundamentally, I trust that all of us in this room and in our respective functions would renew our individual and collective commitments to the cooperation

programme. Without commitment, we would be overtly doing a disservice not only to the providers of the hard-earned funds, but more importantly to the intended beneficiaries, mostly the poor and the vulnerable whose welfare and sustainable livelihoods these resources and services are ultimately meant to support and enhance.

Mr. Chairman

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

For its part, the Government of The Gambia would continue to deepen its collaboration with UNDP in achieving concrete programme results and outcomes. As a Government, we are committed to do all we possibly can to achieve the Vision 2020, and the MDGs. For this to happen, we would continue to maintain an open-door policy for dialogue and consultation. UNDP is no exemption to this; as alluded to already, UNDP has earned the respect and commendation of the Government as a partner that is always ready to assist. This has been demonstrated by the organisation's continued commitment to help us successfully mainstream the MDGs into national and sector plans, and assisting in our application of a rights-based approach to development. The Gambia is today one of the countries that has a PRSP which is MDG-focused and where all sector plans including the crucial social sectors of education, health and agriculture are made to reflect realistic period targets and indicators—thanks to UNDP's stewardship and the partnership of other UN agencies and donors.

Also Mr Chairman, Government would not relent in its efforts to improve the broad macro-economic conditions, which constitute first and foremost, the most critical pre-requisite to setting the stage for sustained partnership, and enhanced prospects for gainful economic growth and development.

Mr. Chairman

Let me again reiterate my trust and confidence that as technicians in whose hands we have entrusted the CPAP implementation, you would all take full advantage of this meeting to exchange views objectively. I trust that come the next review, most of the stumbling blocks that we would have identified and thoroughly discuss today would be successfully overcome. This is the challenge, but a challenge we definitely should be able to tackle head-on and overcome. I challenge you also to adopt, as rightfully mentioned in the remarks of the UNDP Resident Representative, a programme rather than purely project perspective to achieving results.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, it is my honour to declare this meeting opened .I wish you success in your deliberations.

I thank you all for your attention and may Allah bless us all.