

STATEMENT DELIVERED BY H. E. MR. LAMIN DIBBA, AMBASSADOR AND PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE GAMBIA AT THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD OF THE UNITED NATIONS CHILDREN'S FUND (UNICEF) ON THE ADOPTION OF THE GAMBIA COUNTRY PROGRAMME DOCUMENT (CPD) 2024 – 2028, IN FEBRUARY 2024

Mr. President,
Madam Executive Director,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the outset, allow me to congratulate you and members of your bureau on your election to steer the affairs of the Executive Board of UNICEF for the next one year. You can count on the unwavering support of my delegation throughout your tenure. We also take this opportunity to sincerely thank the leadership of UNICEF at the headquarters, regional and country levels for their steadfast support and strategic guidance in putting together the new Gambia Country Programme Document 2024 – 2028. Its lucid presentation here today is very much appreciated. This important CPD is the result of inclusive and extensive consultations at the national level and with all relevant stakeholders who have the welfare of children as their domain. We particularly thank UNICEF country team for the sincere efforts they deployed in making the process a success by leveraging the principle of national ownership at all stages of the document's elaboration and finalization.

Mr. President,

The Gambia is a small developing country that continues to improve its democracy and good governance as we also continue to undertake significant efforts to improve the social and economic

well-being of our people. The government has made significant strides towards the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through poverty reduction strategies, addressing irregular migration, climate change, improving the well-being of children and consolidating our nascent democracy. Despite our efforts we are still facing enormous challenges in the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic and the adverse global economic challenges that followed. In view of these challenges, we adopted our new Green Recovery-Focused National Development Plan 2023 -2027, which was built on the SDGs and anchored in the new United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSCDF) to build a resilient economy as well recover from the adverse socio-economic impact of the pandemic.

Mr. President,

Most of our people are children and adolescents under the age of seventeen. With such a young population, we view UNICEF as a key and trusted development partner. Improving the health, nutrition, education and the general well-being of our children and adolescents is a major concern of the Government. The priorities embodied in this CPD truly reflect our national priorities and aspirations as outlined in our new NDP, including many of its pillars. We are of the strong conviction that the steadfast implementation of this new CPD will have a catalytic effect on improving rights and well-being of children and adolescents in The Gambia. We therefore endorse the CPD as we look forward to its favorable consideration and approval by the Board.

Mr. President,

Let me highlight the key priorities of this document that mirror our own priorities in our quest for greater international solidarity and partnership towards their attainment:

1. Every child survives and thrives.
2. Every child learns and develops.
3. Every child is protected from violence, exploitation and harmful practices and has a legal identity.
4. Every child lives free from poverty.

We look forward to working collaboratively with UNICEF toward the successful implementation of the CPD and its priorities, including more advocacy and resource mobilization in the coming years. UNICEF is a trusted development partner that plays a key role in our national development efforts. This new CPD will, therefore, make a significant contribution to the promotion of children's rights and general well-being during the programme period and beyond. We are confident that the lessons learnt from the implementation of the previous CPD will be put to good use. The Gambia views the approval of the document as a unique opportunity to enhance global partnership and solidarity towards a world fit for children.