

Civil Society Statement on The Gambia's 2025 Voluntary National Review (VNR)

CSOs commend the Government of The Gambia for its continued commitment to the SDGs and inclusive development. The 2025 VNR rightly underscores the principle of “leaving no one behind,” with focus on women, children, youth, persons with disabilities, and older persons.

In the health sector, notable progress has been made under the National Health Policy (2021–2030) and Strategic Plan (2021–2025). Nevertheless, persistent challenges—such as resource constraints, workforce shortages, and regional disparities—continue to hinder universal health coverage. Maternal and child health, communicable diseases, and non-communicable diseases remain priority areas for sustained investment.

The government's efforts in promoting gender equality through legislative reforms are commendable. However, greater public awareness and robust institutional mechanisms are needed to mainstream gender across all sectors effectively.

Economic diversification through youth empowerment, TVET expansion, and investments in technology, renewable energy, and the creative industries reflects progress. Still, the lack of disaggregated data limits the ability to uncover and address hidden discrimination.

In marine conservation, initiatives such as seasonal closures and community fisheries are encouraging. Yet, limited national data on SDG 14 targets constrain effective monitoring and planning.

CSOs reaffirm their commitment to supporting the government in achieving the SDGs, ensuring dignity, equity, and opportunity for all Gambians.

However, a major issue remains in The Gambia, which is descent-based and caste-like discrimination, which remains a structural barrier to equitable development. Accelerating the SDGs requires addressing such systemic inequalities through evidence-based, inclusive policies supported by disaggregated data.

QUESTIONS

1. What mechanisms are in place and strategies being done to strengthen already existing laws to prevent gender-based violence and end harmful traditions?
2. How is The Gambia implementing ACHPR Resolution 619 to eliminate discrimination based on work and descent and UPR 48th Recommendations castes discrimination?
3. How are youth, women, PWD's and other excluded groups being incorporated into education, leadership positions and livelihood development?