



Check Against Delivery

STATEMENT

BY

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Mr. President,

**Statement by H.E. Alhaji Dr. Yahya A.J.J. Jammeh,
President of the Republic of The Gambia,**
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need to confront the evil of terrorism, or to quell the insurgency in

creation of a directorate to help give effect to resolution 1373, and looks forward to a speedy commencement of its operations, especially with regard to the assistance needs of member states.

Mr. President,

It is our collective responsibility to ensure respect for the principles and purposes of the United Nations Charter and a strict adherence to the rule of international law. My delegation therefore reiterates its support for the various Courts – including the International Criminal Court - that have been set up to try persons suspected of serious infringements of human rights and humanitarian law. We call on all member states to show strong support for these initiatives to promote the observance of international standards of justice throughout the world. We commend the International Court of Justice on its recent Advisory Opinion on the Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including in and around East Jerusalem, and call upon all concerned to observe the ruling of the Court. We should all avoid actions that worsen an already bad situation in the Middle-East. Instead, we should encourage the Israeli and the Palestinian people to work in good faith with the Quartet to implement the Road Map endorsed by the Security Council in its Resolution 1515 (2003), so that the vision of the two states living side-by-side in peace and harmony can soon be realised.

We take note with satisfaction, the developments leading to an

My Government commends ECOSOC and the Security Council for their joint efforts to stand by the sisterly-Republic of Guinea-Bissau, as it strives to consolidate its democratic and political transition under trying post-conflict conditions characterized mainly by a lack of resources and a drying up of donor assistance. The ECOSOC Ad-hoc Advisory Group on Guinea-Bissau in which The Gambia serves in our capacity as Chair of the Group of Friends of Guinea-Bissau, has performed admirably in the discharge of its duties. It has engaged Guinea-Bissau i

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We must, however, not forget the commitments made in the Millennium Consensus. Evidence so far is that implementation continues to be weak. If our development partners are yet to meet the agreed minimum target of 0.7% of their GDP, which they should contribute as Overseas Development Assistance to developing countries, will we be able to realize our goals if we continue to do business as usual?

There is also a need to assess the quantitative and qualitative contents of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and those of the Brussels Programme of Action for Least Developed Countries (BPoA). More importantly, we must ascertain beyond doubt that these are not designed in such a manner as to unwittingly constrain progress, and reduce our development endeavours to a mere business case in the management of poverty.

Mr. President,

My Government has always assigned topmost priority to the empowerment of the Gambian people and to building their capacities to bring about rapid transformations in their lives. Our primary focus has been on education, health and agriculture, although we have also paid attention to the contiguous sectors of communications – telecommunications in particular – and the expansion and strengthening of our physical infrastructure.

We recently took stock of the performance of my Government since my administration assumed the mantle of leadership ten years ago. I am proud to say that our achievements have not been insignificant. An examination of the performance of the indicators in the UNDP's Human Development Reports from 1994 to 2004 in The Gambia, as well as UNDP's assessment of The Gambia's rate of implementation of the MDGs, shows that despite a serious shortage of resources, my Government has, by and large, delivered on the promises it made to the Gambian people and the international community.

We have intensified our fight against HIV/AIDS. Although infection rates in the Gambia are far below those registered in certain parts of the continent, and even though the rate of increase has been decelerating, the percentage of adults living with the disease has grown from less than 1% in 1994 to 1.4% in 2000 and 1.6% today. My Government is determined to arrest and reverse the trend.

Our health manpower-to-population ratio has increased by a factor of ten, while our health infrastructure has undergone dramatic expansions throughout the country. Numerous health centers, clinics and hospitals, including a University teaching hospital have been built.

We have been able to provide clean and safe drinking water to almost 90% of our people up from about 70% ten years ago. We have thus already met the target of the Millennium Development Goals to “halve, by 2015, the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water”, more than a decade ahead of schedule. Similarly, the entire population has access to essential drugs, and almost each and every Gambian has access to improved sanitation.

Although The Gambia is still a least developed country, we have been able to increase per capita GDP to some US\$390.00 in the last ten years. Poverty levels have been brought down from 69% in 1998 to 45.8% today. Life expectancy at birth increased dramatically in just a decade, from 44 years in 1994 to 50.2222 years today, we have

upliftment of the Gambian people. We shall

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