



**REPUBLIC OF THE GAMBIA
DEPARTMENT OF STATE
FOR EDUCATION**

**EDUCATION POLICY
2004 – 2015**

MAY 2004

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Foreword

The Gambian education system has over the years undergone a series of significant configurations, ranging from partial structural reforms to a radical transposition of many of its aspects. These stemmed from attempts aimed at responding to changing needs and circumstances, guided by perspectives and experiences derived from both national and international contexts. Noting that education is change-driven and change-oriented, amidst the research findings that inform practice, the mutation of the system has neither been fortuitous nor dictated by mere natural tendencies. The implication is that the interventions made have transformed the system according to national priorities and visions.

While the first ten-year policy (1976-86) was limited in scope in several aspects, it provided the praxis to unearth the underlying elements that needed to be overhauled or improved upon, hence the lessons were fed into the succeeding fifteen-year policy (1988-2003). Mindful of national guidelines, policies and plans, such as Vision 2020 and the PRSP, the 1988-2003 policy, through regular review, update and adaptation, resulted in significant achievements vis-à-vis access to relevant basic education. Thus, the last decade principally witnessed an unparalleled expansion of the system at all levels, from early childhood education to tertiary and higher education. The intensification of efforts directed at eliminating gender and regional disparities paid dividends tremendously. Gender parity, for instance, has almost been achieved at the lower basic (primary) level and enrolment, retention and performance in the regions are improving substantially.

As we enter a new era, there is an urgent need to judiciously redirect education in the country according to the dreams and aspirations of the people and to equitably scale up participation rates and performance across groups and regions in order to meet the educational aims, objectives and targets. In consequence, the 2004-2015 policy period focuses on ensuring that the right to quality education for all is upheld and that Education for All, with its ramifications, and the Millennium Development Goals are achieved. The ultimate object of eliminating poverty, enhancing quality living and nurturing a learning society forms the cornerstone of this policy.

In view of the intensity and extent of the consultative and validation process, in which a broad spectrum of the Gambian community participated, and the meticulous scrutiny that attended the development of this policy, the indication is that the pronouncements made in this document are meant to reflect the collective aspirations and development needs of the Gambian citizenry. That the targets and precepts are linked to national policy frameworks as well as relevant internationally acceptable principles and practice, make the document realistic, apt and amenable.

Education, however, is a collective endeavour. The concerted effort that culminated into the formulation of this policy continues to be the presumed sine qua non for its implementation. Therefore, the education system will generally continue to evolve with the Gambian people as members of the world community and will revolve around them and their environment, with sight on global trends.

Mrs Ann Therese Ndong-Jatta
Hon. Secretary of State for Education

LIST OF ACRONYMS

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ANFEU	Adult and Non-Formal Education Unit
CCM	Co-ordinating Committee Meeting
CREDU	Curriculum Research, Evaluation and Development Unit
DoSE	Department of State for Education
DoSLGL	Department of State for Local Government and Lands
EBS	Educational Broadcasting Service
EBU	Educational Broadcasting Unit
ECD	Early Childhood Development
EFA	Education For All
EMIS	Education Management and Information System
FAWE-GAM	Forum for African Women Educationalists - The Gambia
FTI	Fast Track Initiative
GABECE	The Gambia Basic Education Certificate Examination
GC	Guidance and Counselling
GER	Gross Enrolment Ratio
GRTS	Gambia Radio and Television Services
GTTI	Gambia Technical Training Institute
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
INSET	In-Service Education for Teachers
LAN	Local Area Network
LAT	Learning Achievement Targets
LFE	Life Skills Education
LGA	Local Government Authority
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MDI	Management Development Institute
MTEF	Medium Term Expenditure Framework
NAT	National Assessment Test
NEPAD	New Partnerships for African Development
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NTA	National Training Authority
NTL	National Training Levy
ODL	Open and Distance Learning
PDCU	Programme and Donor Co-ordination Unit
PEGEP	President's Empowerment of Girls' Education Project
PER	Public Expenditure Review
PIP	Public Investment Programme
PMO	Personnel Management Office
POP/FLE	Population and Family Life Education
PPM	Participatory Performance Monitoring
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
PSB	Professional Standard Board
PSLCE	Primary School Leaving Certificate Examination
PTA	Parent Teacher Association
SAFMU	School Agriculture and Food Management Unit
SFG	School Farms and Gardens
SFP	School Feeding Programme

SMT	Senior Management Team
SOS	Secretary of State
SPAM	School Performance Appraisal Monitoring
SPAS	Staff Performance Appraisal System
SQAD	Standards and Quality Assurance Directorate
SSS	Senior Secondary School
STE	Science and Technology Education
TSC	Teaching Service Commission
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UEP	University Extension Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
USPC	United States Peace Corps
UTG	University of The Gambia
WAEC	West African Examinations Council
WAN	Wide Area Network
WASSCE	West African Senior Secondary Certificate Examinations
WFP	World Food Programme

OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

Key Terms

Adult Education

Bantaba

Capital Investment

Completion Rate

Gross Domestic Product

Gross Enrolment Rate

Literacy

Madrassa

Net Enrolment Rate

Numeracy

Recurrent Spending

Quintile

Operational Definitions

Functional numeracy and literacy programme or continuing education for adult learners.

An informal gathering where issues of common interest are discussed

Monies spent on capital assets such as equipment, furniture and construction

Total number of graduating students as a proportion of the official graduating age population

Total amount of goods and services produced by the economy in a given year.

Total enrolment as a proportion of relevant school age population

Ability to read and write in any language

Derived from the Arabic word “madras” – a school where the medium of instruction is Arabic with emphasis on Islamic education

Total enrolment of relevant school age as a proportion of the relevant school age population

Ability to recognise numerals, interpret and use numbers

Total recurrent spending in a given period (one year).

One-fifth of a population

AN EDUCATION POLICY FOR THE GAMBIA: 2004 - 2015

1 NATIONAL EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT: A POLICY FRAMEWORK

1.1 INTRODUCTION

1.1.1 The main thrust of this document is to provide a policy framework that sets out the national agenda for education in The Gambia for the period 2004-2015.

1.1.2 The document outlines the aims and objectives of education in this country which are synchronised with the education-related Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), Education for All (EFA) goals, the New Partnerships for African Development (NEPAD) education-related goals and the country's Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP). Policy priorities are identified to allow for the growth of educational opportunity and improve the effectiveness of education at all levels, from early childhood development (ECD) to tertiary and higher education.

1.1.3 The document is set out in the following chapters:

- i.** National Educational Development – A Policy Framework
- ii.** Background to the Education Policy
- iii.** Guiding Principles and Aims of Education in The Gambia
- iv.** Policy Priorities and Objectives
- v.** Expanded Vision of Basic Education
 - Early Childhood Development
 - Lower and Upper Basic
 - Adult and Non-Formal Education
- vi.** Secondary Education
- vii.** Gender Mainstreaming
- viii.** School Agriculture and Food Management
- ix.** Life Skills Education
- x.** Science and Technology Education
- xi.** Improvement of Quality and Relevance of Education
- xii.** Vocational Education and Training
- xiii.** Tertiary and Higher Education
- xiv.** Management of Education
- xv.** Teacher Welfare and Development
- xvi.** Financing of Education

2 BACKGROUND TO THE EDUCATION POLICY

2.1 Rethinking education

2.1.1 The development of the Education Policy 2004 – 2015 is premised on both The Gambia’s Vision 2020 and PRSP, both of which are the development agenda of government, which seek to improve the human capital of the country by reducing the number of people living below the poverty line. Thus the theme of the policy consultations was “**Rethinking Education for Poverty Reduction**”.

2.2 Policy Dialogue

2.2.1 The participation of all stakeholders in education was central in the policy dialogue process. The process attempted, in a variety of ways, to include children as well as adults; illiterate as well as literate members of the society; government departments; civil society and private sector representatives.

2.2.2 Fora were organised that brought together school children, teachers and parents from both the rural and urban parts of the country to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the Education Policy 1988 – 2003 for the development of a new education policy for the next twelve years. These fora included a television 'bantaba', children’s forum and regional conferences supported by a series of television and radio programmes.

2.2.3 Feedback from these consultations provided the basis for the debates of the third national conference on education, for this policy framework. Concerns raised included:

- i.** Improving access to quality education for all, particularly girls, for greater gender equity
- ii.** The re-defining of basic education to embrace Madrassas, non-formal, early childhood and special needs education
- iii.** The expansion of secondary education to absorb a minimum of 50% of the basic cycle graduates
- iv.** Development of life skills and creation of awareness of killer diseases such as HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis
- v.** Provision of relevant vocational education and technical training based on labour market intelligence
- vi.** Further re-organisation of the Department of State for Education (DoSE) within the context of the local government decentralisation reforms
- vii.** Better management capacity and professional development at all levels
- viii.** Increased access to higher education, especially of girls and women.

2.2.4. The National Conference generated recommendations and resolutions aimed at addressing the above concerns. Having been guided by these recommendations and resolutions, the drafters developed the policy write-up into various drafts, the fourth of which was presented to the stakeholders for validation. Regional validation workshops were held across all regions of the country to ensure, among other things, that:

- i. The document captures the priority needs and challenges of education in this country
- ii. The policy objectives are pertinent to the country's needs and aspirations
- iii. The policy statements are realistic and implementable
- iv. The document takes into account factors that are likely to enhance the sustainability of expected results
- v. The document addresses the concerns raised during the consultations
- vi. The stakeholders are ready to take ownership of the policy
- vii. The policy objectives are harmonised with Vision 2020, the country's PRSP, Education for All and the MDG education-related goals.

2.3 Public Expenditure Review

2.3.1 Realising the benefits derived from the first Education Sector Public Expenditure Review (PER) in 1997, the DoSE in 2001 conducted another expenditure review as part of an ongoing process of monitoring the education system. The progress made and shortfalls in the system are described and analysed in the PER (2001) the findings of which are summarised in the ensuing paragraphs.

2.4 Education expenditure

2.4.1 Since the more affluent households in society both enrol more of their children in school and retain them for longer periods, the rich benefit disproportionately more from government spending on education than do poor households. The rich 20% of households receive D460 per primary school-age child,¹ 29% more than those in the poor 20% (quintile), who receive D325. This follows from the skewed nature of the share of school-aged population per household, 2.49 compared to 0.54 respectively for quintiles 1 and 5. Household expenditure on education shows the extent to which the burden of paying for education weighs more heavily on the poor. It could be observed that even though the rich (quintile 5) spend 3 times more on primary education than the poor (quintile 1), the burden on household expenditure is almost five times heavier on the poorest households income than the rich. The expenditure burden on both the first and second quintiles (7.77% and 9.68% respectively) is more than double the national average of 3.05% per household. It becomes evident therefore, that targeting of subsidies will be critical for the attainment of equitable access to education.

2.5 Access and enrolment

2.5.1 Increased public expenditure on education has led to significant progress in expanding access and enrolment at all levels of the formal system. Throughout the 1990s, significant progress was made in expanding access to primary education. Enrolment grew at an average annual growth rate of 8% between 1990/91 and 1996/97 (compared with the

¹ Based on children aged 7-12 inclusive.

target of 5%). During the period 1996/97 to 2000/03, however, enrolment grew at 4% per annum compared to the targeted 7% annual growth for the period.

2.5.2 Depending on the estimate chosen for population growth, enrolment ratios either increased substantially over the period, or remained roughly constant. If the revised population growth estimates from the Central Statistics Department of approximately 2.8% per annum were used, the gross enrolment ratio (GER) increased from 70% in 1996 to 91% in 2003 (after reaching 76% in 1998). Madrassa enrolment added about 10% of the age group to the enrolment ratios in both years.

2.6 Female enrolment

2.6.1 There is almost encouraging trend in girls' enrolment. Over the period, it grew at an annual rate of 6% while that of boys grew by only 2%. This trend resulted in the growth of girls' GER from 61% to 71% in 2000, with growth continuing from 1998 to 2000 unlike the male GER. The GER for boys increased from 79% in 1996 to reach 82% in 1998, but then declined to 77% in 2000. One result of the change is that in formal lower basic schools, girls now represent just under 50% of enrolment. In Madrassas, boys are 54% of total. The upper basic and senior secondary levels still have fewer girls, though this is gradually changing.

2.7 The private costs and benefits of education

2.7.1 Increasing enrolment will continue to depend on attracting children from the lower income groups for whom the private cost of education is seen as a barrier to attending school. The household expenditure and benefit incidence analysis in the PER continues to demonstrate that government subsidy to education is still in favour of the higher income groups, and will have to be reallocated in favour of the poorer groups. The burden of cost is highest on the poorest households who spend a higher proportion of their per capita income on education, even though they spend much less than the rich and have a smaller share of enrolment at all levels. When efficiency is still a concern in the utilisation of resources and a commitment to poverty reduction as clearly articulated in the PRSP, a reallocation of resources targeted towards the poor cannot be more appropriate.

2.8 Efficiency of the education system

2.8.1 In addition to attracting children to school in the first instance, greater efficiencies continue to be required in order to retain a larger proportion of children in basic education, particularly in regions 3- 6 where dropout rates continue to be highest. Even though repetition rates have dropped significantly as a result of the abolition of the Primary School Leaving Certificate Examinations (PSLCE), the cost per student at the lower basic level has increased from D515 in 1996/97 to D565 in 1999/00. With this increase in cost per pupil and the average number of years taken by a student to reach the first six years, which stood at 7.29 years, the efficiency of the system is still not quite satisfactory. Cost efficiencies are also needed in terms of the pupil teacher ratio

(PTR), especially at the upper basic and secondary levels, the amount of pupil learning time, and the planning and management of the education system.

2.9 Quality and Relevance of Education

2.9.1 One of the biggest challenges of The Gambia's education system is the quality and relevance of education. During the first half of the policy period (1988-2003), there were no targets set for learning outcomes and the only available measure of achievement was the success rate of individual schools and candidates at selective entrance examinations at the end of grades 6 and 9. As a result, benchmarks were set to clearly define learning outcomes at the lower basic for quality assessment while the annual National Assessment Test (NAT) using a sample size of 25% of pupils in grades 3 and 5 is institutionalised to inform the system on pupils' performance at the lower basic level.

2.9.2 The issue of quality and relevance of the curriculum and learning materials has been a concern for teachers and parents alike. Hence the curriculum at the level of basic education has been revised with emphasis on the strengthening of school-based assessment system and making it more relevant to the learning needs of children.

2.9.3 There is growing demand for the need to improve the learning achievements of children, which were met by only 10% and 6.7% of a sample size of 25% of Grade 4 students in the areas of English and Mathematics respectively (The Gambia MLA Study 2000). Such alarming low achievement levels mostly affect the rural schools, which continue to attract fewer trained teachers. In addition, poor housing conditions and inadequate incentives for teachers are factors responsible for the poor retention of trained and qualified teachers in rural areas. Considerations will have to be given to the status and welfare of teachers to improve teaching and learning outcomes.

3 GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND AIMS OF EDUCATION

3.1 Guiding Principles

3.1.1 The Gambia as a Nation remains highly committed to developing its human resource base with priority given to free basic education for all. It is for this reason that this policy will be used as a means for the attainment of a high level of economic growth to alleviate poverty with emphasis on the critical areas for the realisation of the MDGs, EFA and NEPAD. Hence, the guiding principle for education is premised on:

- i.** Non-discriminatory and all-inclusive provision of education underlining in particular, gender equity and targeting of the poor and the disadvantaged groups;
- ii.** Respect for the rights of the individual, cultural diversity, indigenous languages and knowledge;
- iii.** Promotion of ethical norms and values and a culture of peace;
- iv.** Development of science and technology competencies for the desired quantum leap;

3.1.2 These guiding principles are in conformity with the national development agenda of The Gambia as articulated in Vision 2020 statement:

“to transform The Gambia into a financial centre, a tourist paradise, a trading, export-oriented, agricultural and manufacturing nation, thriving on free market policies and a vibrant private sector, sustained by a well-educated, trained, skilled, healthy, self-reliant and enterprising population, and guaranteeing a well-balanced eco-system and a decent standard of living for one and all, under a system of government based on the consent of the citizenry.”

3.1.3 In order to translate the above vision into reality, the sector will be guided by a Mission Statement embodied in the following statement: “A Provision of Responsive, Relevant and Quality Education for All Gambians for Poverty Reduction”

3.2 Aims of Education

3.2.1 Based on the principles above and the economic development prospects of the country, the basic aims of the education policy are to:

- i.** Promote a broad-based education at the basic level for life long learning and training
- ii.** Mainstream gender in the creation of opportunities for all to acquire literacy, livelihood skills and the utilisation of these skills in order to earn a living and become economically self-reliant members of the community
- iii.** Develop the physical and mental skills which will contribute to nation building – economically, socially and culturally in a sustainable environment;
- iv.** Encourage creativity and the development of a critical and analytical mind

- v.** Further an understanding and appreciation of the contribution of science and technology to development
- vi.** Cultivate sound moral and ethical values in the development of life skills
- vii.** Develop a healthy body and an appreciation of the value of a healthy mind in response to life threatening diseases like HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis
- viii.** Create an awareness of the importance of peace, democracy and human rights, duties and responsibilities of the individual in fostering these qualities
- ix.** Foster an appreciation of and respect for the cultural heritage of The Gambia
- x.** Promote a sense of patriotism: service, loyalty, integrity and dedication to the nation and humanity.

4 POLICY PRIORITIES AND OBJECTIVES

4.1 Policy Priorities

4.1.1 The policy priorities and objectives are set against the background of the high population growth rate, the cost of education in relation to the poor and the current education share of the government budget. Taking into account these considerations, the policy will be prioritised in the following five components aimed at providing equitable access to high quality education to all Gambians:

4.1.1.1. *Access to Education:*

Equitable access to basic, senior secondary, tertiary and higher education will be increased. Access to ECD centres and literacy programmes will be enhanced with specific emphasis on under-served regions, girls and other disadvantaged groups of the population:

- i.** School and classroom construction and rehabilitation – the number of school places will be expanded by building the required number of classrooms and related school facilities such as sanitary and water facilities
- ii.** Gender equity initiatives – the direct costs of girls’ education will continue to be addressed at the level of senior secondary and the tertiary and higher education levels by providing scholarships or bursaries especially to girls. A more gender sensitive curriculum and environment will be created and a continuous promotion on the community awareness on the benefits of both boys and girls’ education will continue to be mounted. Performance and completion will also be promoted
- iii.** Adult and non-formal education and literacy programmes – a strategy for expanding non-formal education to cater for out-of-school youth and non-lettered adults will be implemented
- iv.** Special education – training programmes and teaching materials for special education teachers will be developed and special facilities extended into rural areas where mainstreaming does not satisfy the needs of severe cases
- v.** Life skills education – HIV/AIDS prevention, the reduction of gender based violence in and around schools and the inculcation of peace building, tolerance and patriotism will be introduced using Life skills education through population and family life education and guidance and counselling
- vi.** The integrated approach of addressing the nutritional needs of the learner through school feeding/ canteen schemes will be enhanced and the provision of a conducive environment that takes cognisance of the importance of hygiene, water and sanitation promoted.

4.1.1.2. *Quality Education*

The learning outcomes at all levels will be improved through:

- i.** Provision of an adequate supply of trained teachers through cost effective pre-Service teacher education and in-service training programmes

- ii. Curriculum improvement – there will be on-going review and upgrading of the curricula across basic and secondary levels based on explicit learning objectives upon which assessments will be more reliably based. Significant focus will be placed on school agriculture, which adequately responds to the “Back To The Land” Philosophy
- iii. The national language pilot programme will be expanded to form the basis of a smooth transition from the home to the school to enhance performance and the appreciation of indigenous languages and knowledge
- iv. Study technology will become institutionalised across all levels of education to increase the output of students
- v. Instructional materials – Children will have access to a set of textbooks and the provision of instructional materials will be enhanced
- vi. Assessments and examinations – classroom assessment practices will be improved and continuous assessment strengthened to monitor student performance and learning achievements
- vii. ECD – the growth and development of children between the ages of three and six through an integrated approach will be promoted
- viii. Information and communication technology – Computer literacy and ICT education will be introduced and expanded across all levels and the use of open and distance learning (ODL) will be strengthened. Educational broadcasting service (EBS) will be provided to support teaching/learning processes.

4.1.1.3. Vocational and Technical Education

Programmes of technical and vocational education and training (TVET) will be strengthened, expanded and diversified to meet the emerging needs of a growing labour market. Efforts will be made to ensure that the quality and relevance of training and skills development match the demands of the market. There will be increased private sector participation in the provision and financing of training and skills development especially of the rural youth.

4.1.1.4. Tertiary and Higher Education

The tertiary and higher education system will strive to provide relevant, sustainable and high quality education and research to support the human resource needs for national development. The system will endeavour to support the socio-economic, scientific and technological advancement of the nation; and it will constantly pursue the quest for excellence by maintaining high standards, empowering students with the opportunity to realise their full potential. Guidelines and strategies will be developed to ensure that tertiary and higher education institutions will be committed to providing a high quality service to clients. It will also ensure the existence of a policy for quality and statement of institutional processes and procedures in pursuit of that policy.

4.1.1.5. Capacity Building

Prominence will be given to capacity building for sector management to enhance the performance of the education sector through:

- i. Organisational structure and decentralisation – the organisational structure of the DoSE will be improved to enable the leadership to better co-ordinate and manage the programmes at all levels

- ii. Policy and planning – the central and regional directorates will be strengthened in terms of formulation, planning and monitoring and evaluation of education policy implementation
- iii. Financial management – a financial and procurement management system through training and computerised record keeping at all levels will be established and improved upon
- iv. Monitoring and evaluation – the EMIS and processes used for the monitoring and evaluation of the education system will be strengthened.
- v. Staff performance appraisal system (SPAS) – will continue to be reviewed and fine-tuned for careful targeting of resources for training, promotions and other rewards.

4.2 Policy Objectives

With these priority areas and key strategies in mind, the policy seeks to attain the following objectives:

- i. Increase the basic education GER to 100% by 2015, taking into account enrolment in Madrassas
- ii. Increase the completion rates in basic education to 100% by 2015
- iii. Increase the supply of trained teachers and make more efficient use of the teaching force by maintaining the pupil/teacher ratio at 45:1 at the basic level
- iv. Increase double-shift classes from 25% to 32% by 2015 across all levels
- v. Phase-out double-shift teachers by 2015
- vi. Maintain multi-grade teaching in a combined class size not exceeding 40
- vii. Increase the share of enrolment of girls to 50% of total enrolment at the levels of basic and secondary education by 2005
- viii. Improve the quality of teaching and learning at all levels
- ix. Improve learning outcomes at all levels - at least 80% of students will attain minimum grade competencies/mastery levels by 2015
- x. Increase the enrolment ratio of Early Childhood by 50% especially in the rural areas by 2015
- xi. Increase access, for adults and out-of-school youth, to functional literacy and numeracy programmes in order to half the illiterate population by 2015
- xii. Provide marketable and social skills to enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life
- xiii. Introduce the teaching of the five most commonly used languages – Wollof, Pulaar, Mandinka, Jola and Sarahule to be taught at the basic, senior secondary, tertiary and higher education levels as subjects
- xiv. Increase the transition rate from grade 9 to 10 to a minimum of 50%
- xv. Increase the quota of graduate teachers of Gambian nationality at the level of senior secondary from 26% to 100% by 2015
- xvi. Strengthen the institutional and management capacity of the TVET system
- xvii. Establish a sound financial basis for the long term development and sustainability of TVET
- xviii. Increase cost sharing and cost recovery at post-secondary training institutions
- xix. Develop and strengthen public-private partnership in the financing of higher education

- xx.** Institutionalise access programmes for higher education especially for girls, particularly in science, maths and technology
- xxi.** Improve organisational structure of the sector for efficient and effective service delivery.

5 BASIC EDUCATION

5.1 Basic Education for All

5.1.1. The Gambia Government is committed to upholding the right of every person to basic education, regardless of gender, age, religion or disability. Accordingly, basic education will be open to all. Learning at this level will be geared towards the holistic development of the individual for the positive realisation of every person's full potential and aspirations.

5.2 Early Childhood Development

5.2.1. Government acknowledges the importance of the early years of development for children. The capacities with which children are born enable them to communicate, learn and develop but these need to be supported and guided to ascertain that children develop holistically and positively. Government will therefore take a more active role in the provision of facilities and services for ECD, especially in communities where such services are not available. Early development centres will become part of lower basic schools in 'deprived' communities.

5.2.2. Guidelines will be clearly articulated for the training of polyvalent ECD teachers and facilitators to staff the centres and, in addition, support will be provided for the review and improvement of the ECD curriculum in the country. Resource mobilisation strategies will be designed for the successful implementation of the ECD programme. The medium of instruction at this level will be in the child's mother tongue/area language.

5.2.3. In the main, however, the DoSE will continue to co-ordinate, support and facilitate the early years' education, care and development of children through monitoring, assessing and developing guidelines for the establishment and management of nursery schools.

5.2.4. The DoSE has developed strong linkages with other government departments, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and committees to promote an integrated approach to ECD. Through these linkages, the DoSE will participate in the implementation of the National Policy on Integrated Early Childhood Development and strengthen its ties and collaboration with parties interested in this area. Through the multi-sectoral working group and the committees set up for the promotion of ECD, partnerships and alliances with civil society and international agencies will be promoted and sustained.

5.2.5. Communities will be mobilised, sensitised and motivated to initiate and maintain ECD centres. They will be expected to complement government's efforts by providing the necessary inputs and participate in programme design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. The DoSE will promote parenting education and develop indigenous knowledge for better results educationally, socially and economically.

5.3 Lower and Upper Basic

- 5.3.1. By the year 2002/03, the GER for the whole country was 91% for grades 1-6 whilst the GER for the upper level of basic education was 72 %. These ratios have taken into account the enrolment of the Madrassa.
- 5.3.2. In order to build on the gains made over the last policy period, efforts will be sustained to reach the EFA targets and the education-related MDGs from the pre-school stage through to grade 9 to enable every child have a minimum school career of nine uninterrupted years. An enrolment rate of 100%, matched by a completion rate of 100%, will be targeted for children aged 7 to 15 years.
- 5.3.3. Basic education will be free and compulsory in all government and grant-aided schools. Parents will meet the cost of uniforms and stationery. User fees will be abolished at this level. The bursary scheme for girls will cover uniforms and stationery of needy girls, especially, rural girls.
- 5.3.4. To achieve and sustain compulsory basic education, a strong and genuine partnership will be imperative for the mobilisation of the requisite funds.
- 5.3.5. To avert a situation where those who complete their school career would not be adequately equipped for adult life, a minimum of 50% transition from grade 9 to secondary level (grade 10) will be targeted. In particular, cognisance will be taken of children in difficult circumstances, especially children in the following categories:
- i.** Those displaced by war, conflict and/or natural calamities
 - ii.** The ‘unreached’, including street children, refugee children and victims of HIV/AIDS
 - iii.** Children with disability and those in custody.
- 5.3.6. Access to education will consequently focus on gender mainstreaming and ‘inclusion’ of all children residing in the country. In this respect, measures will be taken to ensure that no individual or section of any community is ‘excluded’ from reaping the benefits of education provided in the country on condition that the prevailing circumstances so permit.

5.4 Madrassa

- 5.4.1. The attainment of these targets will require the employment of a combination of strategies. Primarily, expansion at the lower basic level will necessitate the creation of places for the estimated 9% of out-of-school children of school going age. The Madrassas will be supported and strengthened to cater for children whose parents opt for instruction in these institutions. Such support will include provision of teachers of English language, instructional materials, upgrading and training of Madrassa teachers for quality assurance.

5.5 Facilities

5.5.1. Government will continue to finance the construction and maintenance of school facilities together with NGOs, Local Government Authorities (LGAs), the private sector intergovernmental organisations and multilateral donor agencies. The LGAs will have to build the necessary capacities to co-finance educational programmes and facilities. The establishment of new schools, construction of additional classrooms and the improvement, rehabilitation and maintenance of existing facilities will depend on a set of criteria that take into account the following:

- i.** An even distribution or spread of educational institutions and learning facilities in the country
- ii.** The demand for education and needs of local communities and the intended beneficiaries
- iii.** Ensuring that access to such facilities by learners does not exceed the range of three kilometres
- iv.** Ensuring that facilities will be appropriate and adequate for the delivery of the curriculum
- v.** Ensuring that the physical facilities are user-friendly for the physically challenged
- vi.** Ensuring that schools are established in accordance with the guidelines for the opening of schools and the Education Act currently in force.

5.6 Special Needs Education

5.6.1. Special needs education is not only an issue for schools and teachers who look after children with disabilities, but also a whole system approach that touches the whole nation in its drive to include all inhabitants in every aspect of responsible civic life. It therefore calls for a radical and holistic change of attitudes and misconceptions about persons with disabilities to ensure that they too have access to quality education. In this regard, the adoption of complementary and mutually supportive approaches that are based on the principles of inclusiveness, integration and participation of children with special needs will be encouraged and school-friendly environments will be promoted.

5.6.2. Inclusion of children with mild disabilities in mainstream schools will therefore be a necessity. Since effective mainstreaming requires a great deal of support and adaptation of existing educational practices, curriculum, classroom structures, etc, to the realities of every child's needs, regional education directorates will be strengthened and equipped with adequate resources and support teachers in the mainstream schools to attain a successful mainstreaming programme. Further, the existing special schools will be strengthened to enable them fulfil their functions as centres for outreach services for those with severe disabilities and staff in the mainstream schools.

5.6.3. Teachers are a costly but powerful resource. Expansion of the training of teachers at both levels, pre-service and in-service will be organised in order to support an inclusive teaching system. Thus the training of teachers will be broadened to cover relevant aspects of disabilities. There will be closer collaboration between medical and

educational personnel for early identification of children with disabilities and appropriate responses to their circumstances; this is beneficial to human dignity and a cost-effective way of developing human capital. To this end, vocational and skills training will be expanded to cater for people with disabilities.

5.6.4. The involvement of schools in inclusion projects is a powerful way of translating policy into the realities of practice. Hence, government will support projects that build on the schools' own initiatives as well as those to which schools are recruited. Evidently, a keener focus on special needs education would contribute to the participation of all in education, especially the disadvantaged groups.

5.7 Adult and Non-Formal Education

5.7.1. Adult and non-formal education programmes will be designed in accordance with the ecological, social, economic and cultural characteristics of the various geographical regions of the country. Thus in the rural areas, they will take account of the way of life and the techniques employed by those engaged in agriculture, animal husbandry, fishing, health, environment, income generating activities and awareness creation on matters pertaining to local governance. In the urban areas, the focus will be on the critical issues of urban life such as income generation and environmental sanitation and protection. Literacy, numeracy, civic education and indigenous language will feature across.

5.7.2. The programmes will target the 15+ age group, which will differ partially according to target groups, whose needs vary according to age, sex, occupations and other needs. The programmes will provide an educational minimum. Clearly, the definition of an educational minimum will depend on the needs of the human groups concerned and the resources available to the programmes. It will include the following:

- i.** Learning of skills in reading and writing in the indigenous languages
- ii.** Learning of basic numeracy and mathematical concepts
- iii.** Acquisition of knowledge and functional skills useful in family life (HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis, prevention, household budget, health, childcare, nutrition, and occupational skills etc.)
- iv.** Initiation into the natural sciences to the extent necessary to comprehend natural phenomena occurring in the environment and to accept changes in living conditions and to participate effectively in transforming the environment
- v.** Appreciation of notions and development of practical skills that will facilitate remunerative activities (agriculture, fishing, animal husbandry, crafts and other income generation activities)
- vi.** Initiation into civic life in order to foster participation of the population in the social, economic and political activities of the community
- vii.** Teaching of English as a subject for the basis of communication in the official language for advanced learners
- viii.** Learning related to particular felt needs of the community not covered above.

5.7.3. Within the above framework, the adult and non-formal education programme will be divided into three interrelated levels e.g. foundation, intermediate and advance levels. In providing functional knowledge, skills, attitude and values, the educational minimum outlined above will be the sine qua non for access to other forms of

education. This will enable adult and non-formal education participants proceed to post-literacy and continuing education through the provision of facilities such as rural libraries and press and the creation of skill centres.

5.7.4. The Adult and Non-Formal Education Unit (ANFEU) will widen participation opportunities by strengthening the capacities of civil society groups to permit outsourcing to community based organisations and NGOs. The benefit will be the advantage of mobilising indigenous talents and resources. Leadership skills will also be developed, thus ensuring that programmes are relevant and sustainable. The capacities of the (ANFEU) will be built to co-ordinate, supervise, monitor and evaluate this component of basic education.

6 SECONDARY EDUCATION

6.1 Access

- 6.1.1. In view of the envisaged expansion at the basic education level, it is imperative to further increase the number of senior secondary school (SSS) places for the three-year programme from grade 10 - 12. Therefore, to complement efforts aimed at attaining quality education for all at the basic level, SSS education will be expanded correspondingly. In this direction, a minimum transition rate of 50% by 2015 will be targeted. In principle, transition of the basic education graduates to SSS will be determined by satisfactory performance at the Gambia Basic Education Certificate Examination (GABECE), and measures will be taken to curb dropout rates and grade repetition whilst increasing completion rates.
- 6.1.2. Equity in the geographical distribution of schools and community needs will continue to guide the opening of new SSS. In particular, focus will be on the elimination of gender disparities. Therefore, local councils, religious missions, NGOs and private individuals will be encouraged to participate more in the establishment and operation of SSS. However, adherence to the guidelines for opening and running of SSS will be strictly enforced. These guidelines will be reviewed as and when the need arises.

6.2 Curriculum

- 6.2.1. The SSS curriculum will continue to prepare students for higher education and for the world of work. Appropriately, it will be reviewed and made more relevant through a teaching syllabus that will be harmonised with the syllabus of the upper basic schools. Subjects offered at this level will include:
- i.** Foreign languages (including English, French and Arabic)
 - ii.** Mathematics
 - iii.** Science and Technology
 - iv.** Commercial subjects
 - v.** Religious Knowledge and moral education
 - vi.** Arts subjects
 - vii.** Physical and Health Education
 - viii.** Life Skills Education
 - ix.** Technical subjects
 - x.** Agricultural Science
 - xi.** National languages

6.3 Examinations

- 6.3.1. Entry to SSS will depend on performance in the GABECE. Thereafter, following a three-year course, students in grade 12 will be required to sit for the West African Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (WASSCE), which the WAEC will continue

to conduct annually. 30% of this examination will constitute continuous assessment marks in accordance with guidelines agreed with WAEC.

6.4 Staffing

6.4.1. Achieving the desired enrolment targets set for increased access to senior secondary education and the enhancement of quality education required, there will be a proportionate increase in the number of graduate teachers. To this end, recruitment and training of more Gambian teachers will be strengthened to meet the expanding staffing needs. Furthermore, sustained efforts will be made to attract SSS graduates to pursue subject based courses at the University of The Gambia (UTG) to enable them serve as graduate teachers at this level.

6.5 Governance

6.5.1. Each SSS will be governed by a gender-balanced board of governors in accordance with the Education Act. All SSS principals will also be obligated to register with the Conference of Principals, which will serve as a link between the DoSE and heads of schools at this level. While there will be commitment on the side of government to continue providing support, SSS will have to draw on their capacities to raise funds instead of depending on user charges to supplement government's effort.

7 GENDER MAINSTREAMING

7.1 Enrolment Trends

7.1.1. Girls' enrolment in school took a positive trend over the years, especially for the period 1996 – 2003. However, there are disparities in enrolment, retention and performance engendered by traditional beliefs and practices coupled with other factors.

7.1.2. In view of the unfavourable disparities, government will mainstream gender concerns at every stage of the education process for the realisation of the EFA gender parity and equity goals by the end of the policy period. These will include:

- i.** Creating equal opportunities for all
- ii.** Reduction of illiteracy rates, especially for females
- iii.** Attaining gender equity in education by 2005 and sustaining it
- iv.** Equitable supply of quality teachers of both sexes
- v.** Reduction of gender disparities in teacher recruitment, training, promotion and posting
- vi.** Establish high retention, performance and completion rates, especially of girls
- vii.** Improved performance and participation in all subjects, particularly in mathematics and science.

7.1.3. From 2004 to 2015, there will be a revitalisation of gender mainstreaming through various interventions and inputs. These interventions will include:

- i.** Minimising educational cost, especially for girls
- ii.** Increase in the number of child-friendly school environments
- iii.** Equal gender participation at the PTAs, governing boards and management levels of schools.

7.1.4. The need to intensify efforts in order to neutralise the factors that militate against girls' education is crucial, and so is the need to raise the confidence and performance levels of girls. Measures will be instituted to curb girls' dropping out of school before the end of grade 12. The 'Sexual Harassment Policy' will be enforced to address gender-based violence in and around schools. A re-entry policy for girls who dropped out as a result of pregnancy will be developed and introduced.

7.1.5. The regional directorates and other structures, such as the village development committees, the district and divisional committees, will be sensitised adequately and held responsible for facilitating and mainstreaming gender in their respective areas. School mapping exercises will equally take special consideration of communities in where access to school for girls is not facilitated. The Girls' Education Unit of the DoSE will be renamed "Gender Education Unit" and strengthened to work with its main collaborators like UNICEF, FAWE-GAM and United States PEACE CORPS (USPC), together with other partners to ensure that programmes are co-ordinated,

documented and monitored for effectiveness and efficiency. A gender equity committee will be set up to monitor the progress and the EFA and gender-related MDGs.

7.1.6. Girls' participation in ECD activities will be vigorously pursued. The scholarship Trust Fund and the President's Empowerment Girls Education Project (PEGEP) will continue to be expanded and supplemented by regional initiatives and incentives of various types, including special scholarship packages for girls who excel in mathematics and the sciences. The annual mathematics and science clinics, FAWE girls clubs and community-based interventions will be strengthened and popularised.

8 SCHOOL AGRICULTURE AND FOOD MANAGEMENT

8.1 School Agriculture for Poverty Reduction

- 8.1.1. The School Agriculture and Food Management Programme will support government's efforts towards achieving the EFA goals and the national objectives of poverty reduction through the fostering of an appreciation of agriculture as a sustainable livelihood skill.
- 8.1.2. Government with other stakeholders, will support the expansion of school feeding and strengthen the establishment of school canteens for improving the nutritional standards of school children and literacy participants.
- 8.1.3. To promote agricultural livelihood skills, and desired attitude to farming and the environment, agriculture will be given more prominence in both the conventional schools and Madrassas with emphasis on practical work. To this end, efforts will be strengthened to improve the productivity of diversified agricultural programmes to supplement and complement the World Food Programme (WFP) supported School Feeding Programme (SFP) in the short and medium terms, paving the way for sustainability. The special community agricultural schools will be expanded while the schools farms and gardens (SFG) in the regular schools will be enhanced for use as learning resource.
- 8.1.4. Agriculturally biased schools at the level of senior secondary and agro-vocational institutions in deprived communities will be gradually established. A special agro-vocational syllabus will be developed for these schools and institutions and 50% of assessment derived from practical work will also be introduced.
- 8.1.5. In collaboration with School Agriculture and Food Management Unit (SAFMU), Curriculum Research, Evaluation and Development Unit (CREDU) will develop a relevant agricultural curriculum and appropriate learning materials for basic schools and Madrassas with a view to improving the quality of agricultural education for self-reliance. The curriculum will be continually reviewed and improved to incorporate latest scientific and cross-curricula competencies as they emerge.
- 8.1.6. WAEC, in collaboration with SAFMU and Standards and Quality Assurance Directorate (SQAD), will also develop a proactive, practically biased assessment system using the SFGs to assess students' acquired skills and knowledge in agriculture.

9 LIFE SKILLS EDUCATION

9.1 Life Skills

9.1.1. In keeping with government's commitment to the Millennium Development Agenda and the World Forum on Education, Life Skills Education (LSE) will be given prominence in this policy. LSE will help learners acquire not only knowledge and skills but also behaviours (adaptive and positive) relevant to their self-fulfilment in a changing environment. The main focus of LSE will be attitude development towards the following psychosocial issues:

- i.** HIV/AIDS prevention
- ii.** Gender responsiveness and perspectives in dealing with gender-based violence and discipline in and around schools
- iii.** Peace building and tolerance
- iv.** Population and family life and the environment
- v.** Guidance and counselling
- vi.** Patriotism.

9.2 HIV/AIDS Prevention

9.2.1. As HIV/AIDS is becoming more of a development problem rather than an exclusive health issue, children, youth, teachers and education sector personnel (vulnerable groups) will be targeted to slow down the spread and progression of the pandemic. HIV/AIDS issues will be taught in all learning institutions to ensure that these institutions are used as effective vehicles to intensify the HIV/AIDS sensitisation in communities.

9.3 Gender Responsiveness and Perspectives

9.3.1. Apart from poverty, which mitigates the participation of girls and women in education, other factors that also relegate women in general to a disadvantaged and disempowered position include the value, attitudes and practices that consider girls and women as objects of sex, thus leading to early and forced marriage, sexual harassment and abuse. Women are also largely prevented from participating in decision-making, leading to a socialisation process that produces girls who adequately lack assertiveness, self-confidence or self-esteem. All these factors in turn lead to gender inequity and inequality and seriously affect girls' access, retention and performance in education at all levels. To this end, the policy on sexual harassment will be institutionalised and implemented. Schools will be encouraged and supported to establish disciplinary committees, which will include teachers, parents and students. Gender responsiveness will usher in gender perspectives in the decision-making processes and leadership. This policy will promote equity in all facets of management at the school level; teacher recruitment; promotion; and student enrolment and completion across all levels of the education system.

9.4 Peace Building and Tolerance

- 9.4.1. LSE will equally focus on the promotion of peace education, conflict resolution. It will critically look at factors militating against peace and peaceful co-existence (e.g. xenophobia, religious intolerance, and ethnicity); and then build on strategies to make positive impact at the inter-personal, community and national levels.
- 9.4.2. To meet the objectives and focus for a peace education programme, learners will be exposed to skills in conflict resolution and management (grievance handling, negotiations, arbitration). Schools will be encouraged to establish clubs and societies through which such skills can be practised and promoted or integrate the program within the existing ones.
- 9.4.3. LSE will be developed and integrated into the curriculum using Population and Family Life Education (POP/FLE) as an entry point. In order to meet the needs of both in-school and out-of-school youth, the DoSE will collaborate with relevant stakeholders through a multi-sectoral working group.

9.5 Population, Family Life Education and the Environment

- 9.5.1. Statistics have shown that over 66% of the population of The Gambia fall within the age cohort of 15-24, which is the most vulnerable group. The growing need for awareness within this group is enough justification for the sensitisation of POP/FLE issues as inherent in the development programmes of UNFPA.
- 9.5.2. As a result, the following programmes will be implemented as part of the framework of LSE:
- i.** Adolescent reproductive health
 - ii.** Integrated reproductive health
 - iii.** Advocacy

9.6 Guidance and Counselling

- 9.6.1. Guidance and Counselling (GC) will continue to be one of the support services intended to augment education programmes and the delivery of quality education in The Gambia. There is empirical evidence that GC is contributing to the enhancement of access, retention and performance of both boys and girls in the upper basic and SSS where such services are provided.
- 9.6.2. GC will therefore be expanded and extended to the lower basic schools. Thus, teachers and counsellors will be trained and equipped with the requisite knowledge, skills and attitudes to effectively provide the required services.

9.7 Patriotism

9.7.1. The objective of preparing learners for integration into society as responsible, creative and active citizens will be pursued. Academic outcomes specific to the acquisition, development and application of knowledge, skills and competencies will be given due recognition as affective outcomes that contribute to good citizenship.

9.7.2. For the creation of a united nation bound by a 'unity of purpose complemented by a sense of duty and loyalty to the nation, awareness of patriotism in all learners will be introduced and developed. Attitudes and values guided by patriotism and democratic principles and practice, as well as elements that foster societal cohesion, will feature conspicuously on the curriculum.

9.7.3. Civic education and interpersonal relationships informed by such basic tenets as love for self, family, peers, fellow compatriots, country, and others will be projected and taught through relevant subject areas, such as social and environmental studies, LSE and religious instructions. Respect for national symbols including the flag and the coat of arms will be promoted. Schools will therefore be required to recite the national pledge and sing the national anthem at assemblies and school/public functions to inculcate the spirit of oneness and national pride.

9.7.4. The curriculum will seek to promote the:

- i.** maintenance of a culture of peace marked by tolerance for one another
- ii.** preservation of the Gambian identity and dignity
- iii.** upholding the supremacy of the constitution
- iv.** respect for the rule of law and for authority
- v.** selfless service

10 SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION

10.1 Science and Technology Policy

10.1.1 The Science and Technology Education (STE) policy will be pursued to ensure that there is development of a strong science and technology commencing at the basic level to the development of an in-country based research scientists and engineers at tertiary and higher education level.

10.1.2 In order to realise the above vision, the following priorities and objectives will be pursued:

- i.** Raising the status of STE
- ii.** Constant renewal and improvement of the quality and relevance of STE curricula, teaching/learning methodologies and methods of assessment
- iii.** Capacity building for STE providers, administrators and policy-makers
- iv.** Curriculum emphasis on key societal issues such as environment, food production and security, gender, health, and renewable energy
- v.** Training and retraining of science teachers in the light of new demands
- vi.** Integration of Information Communication Technology (ICT) in the training of science teachers, in subject teaching/learning, in management/administration of the education sector
- vii.** Use of ICT and distant learning methods and technology to improve access, equity and quality of STE at all levels of the system
- viii.** Introduction of EBS to support teaching/learning processes in both in and out of school setting
- ix.** Provision of adequate and appropriate laboratory apparatus and other teaching/learning materials for science
- x.** Greater involvement in girls and women in STE
- xi.** Greater involvement of the private sector as well as the local community in STE.

10.2 Information and Communications Technology

10.2.1. The importance of ICTs is recognised as essential tools to better facilitate effective and efficient management of the sector. This policy will ensure, through the use of ICTs that quality education is accessible to one and all.

10.2.2. An integrated ICT strategy, within a sound ICT infrastructure, vital for the successful achievement of the DoSE's main priorities will be developed. This ICT strategy will be driven by the need to invest in ICTs in a way that will achieve the greatest benefit at the lowest cost for the good of the greater majority of society. The key elements of the strategy will:

- i.** provide an integrated system to meet the needs of employees
- ii.** promote computer and information literacy

- iii. create and nurture an ICT culture
- iv. plan ICT human resource development
- v. provide the necessary ICT resources (hardware, software and peopleware) to ensure efficient and effective administration of the sector
- vi. build strategic and rewarding partnerships nationally and internationally, with a view to involving more private sector participation in ICT in education.

10.2.3. In addition to the local area network (LAN) set up in the two DoSE buildings in Banjul, additional networking facilities will be provided for the regional offices, given their anticipated responsibilities under the decentralisation process. A wide area network (WAN) linking all the directorates and units of DoSE and schools will also be set up.

10.2.4. All DoSE staff, including the ancillary, will be facilitated to have varying degrees of computer literacy. At least, every staff member will be able to send and receive e-mail in a timely manner. E-mail accounts provided by DoSE will be easily identifiable from private accounts. Appropriate ICT training will continue to be provided to all staff depending on rank and need.

10.2.5. Strategic and rewarding partnerships will be built with all stakeholders, including the private sector and donor organisations. The DoSE will co-ordinate the implementation of all such interventions while taking into account the need to build local capacity and sustainability.

10.2.6. All government and grant-aided basic and SSSs will progressively be provided through public-private partnership ventures, with networked computers, computer peripherals and Internet access during the policy period. Private schools will be required to include ICT as part of the school curriculum.

10.2.7. Training workshops and other professional development activities will continue to be conducted for school heads, teachers and students to ensure that every teacher and student in the country is computer and information literate. A website and school-net programmes will be set up for every school and both students and teachers will be encouraged to participate in projects and other educational activities.

10.2.8. In collaboration with other stakeholders, such as WAEC and USPC, a national ICT policy for basic and SSS will be developed. ICT will be offered at the GABECE and WASSCE and will include programming, database design, website and administration, maintenance and repair and network and systems administration.

10.2.9. Access to ICT resources and facilities in schools will be made available to out-of-school youth and other members of the community. Communities in which schools are located will be encouraged to use the ICT resources and facilities in the schools in order to communicate and also improve their numeracy and literacy skills. Cyber café and computer resource centres will be established in every region to enhance the ODL programmes of both the University and the Gambia College.

10.3 Educational Broadcasting

- 10.3.1. EBS will be provided to support teaching/learning processes both in and out of the school setting. The Educational Broadcasting Unit (EBU) will therefore be strengthened and schools broadcasting of the overall EBS will be reactivated in order to design and develop educational programmes for transmission to the schools and communities.
- 10.3.2. These programmes will be based on the school curriculum, not only to complement instruction provided by teachers but also, improve on teacher effectiveness. The broadcasts will also be used, in tandem, for advocacy and sensitisation of the wider community on educational and relevant topical issues. In this endeavour, the DoSE will collaborate with the Gambia Radio and Television Services (GRTS), NGOs, international agencies and other partners to produce and broadcast documentaries and other education-related programmes for children and adults.
- 10.3.3. The services will be expanded to incorporate broadcasts for adult learners and out-of-school youth. Thus, EBS will gradually cover all components of the sector programmes for effective implementation of all activities at the basic and post-basic levels. Closer co-operation and collaboration will be established to better produce the forum devoted to educational issues on GRTS: Education Forum.

11 IMPROVEMENT OF QUALITY AND RELEVANCE

11.1 Curriculum

- 11.1.1. The curriculum will emphasise the development of the understanding of the application of knowledge, problem solving skills, manipulative skills, good citizenship and environmental education across all levels.
- 11.1.2. The teaching of pre-vocational and technology subjects will be reinforced at the basic cycle level to build competencies for a good foundation for labour market and industry for Gambian youths.
- 11.1.3. Taking into consideration the geographical nature of the country and the prominence given to school agriculture and food management, SFGs will form part of the process of building greater appreciation of agriculture on the one hand while strengthening school/community partnership and collaboration on the other.
- 11.1.4. The pre-school curriculum will aim at developing the child through play and prepare the child for the formal education system. The medium of instruction at this level will be in the child's mother tongue/area language.
- 11.1.5. At the lower basic level the thematic approach to teaching will be used. English, Mathematics, Science, Social and Environmental Studies/Integrated Studies and French will be the core subjects. The introduction of the teaching of French as a core subject will be vigorously pursued. French will be introduced during the course of the policy period.
- 11.1.6. During the first three years of basic education (grades 1-3), the medium of instruction will be in the predominant Gambian language of the area in which the child lives. English will be taught as a subject from grade one and will be used as a medium of instruction from grade 4. Gambian languages will be taught as subjects from grade 4.
- 11.1.7. The upper basic curriculum will continue to provide a variety of basic skills, knowledge and capabilities in science, technology, agriculture and general subjects. It will also provide opportunities to acquire pre-technical knowledge, pre-vocational, agriculture and basic scientific knowledge and skills to enable pupils to become self-reliant. The use of ICT as a teaching and learning tool, which commenced in the SSS, will be expanded progressively across all levels before the end of the policy period. The pursuit of excellence in the teaching and learning process of the education system for the transformation of the Gambian economy will be emphasised.
- 11.1.8. Regarding special needs education, the main policy objective will emphasise inclusiveness. Support and equipment will be provided to enable pupils with mild disabilities to participate effectively in mainstream education. The curriculum will be the same as the mainstream schools but spiral in nature. Vocational and technical subjects will be given priority.

11.2 Teaching and Learning Materials

11.2.1. A literate environment can only be created through provision of relevant literature. Cognisant of the inability of most parents to provide textbooks for their children, the textbook rental scheme introduced in 1988 will be phased out at the upper basic level in favour of the recycling scheme, which will be free. The existing textbook policy will be reviewed to better define the role and function of government and the private sector. In keeping with the spirit of decentralisation, the regional offices will be adequately capacitated to enable them handle procedural procurement of textbooks.

11.2.2. While the textbook will continue to be a basic teaching/learning tool, it is now becoming obvious that there will be an urgent need to acquire, develop and make available other teaching/learning tools and technologies which are more likely to shift methodology from chalk and talk/lecture, rote memorisation to active engaged and collaborative learning. Such a shift will provide opportunities for learners to develop their own concepts. To this end, the use of new technologies such as computers, Internet and associated multimedia products as well as old technologies like radio, video, television and calculators will continue to be promoted. Special initiatives to produce locally manufactured teaching/learning materials and appropriate technologies through partnership with professional organisations, the local industry/entrepreneurs and vocational and technical institutions will be given priority.

11.2.3. The following measures will be adopted to address the issue of quality in relation to teaching/learning resources:

- i.** Textbook-student ratio will continue to be 1:1
- ii.** Additional reading materials will be provided through schools libraries
- iii.** INSET Unit of the Gambia College will continue to conduct in-service training to upgrade the skills of teachers to make their own teaching materials and improve their output
- iv.** Textbooks written by Gambian authors will be encouraged and utilised where appropriate and relevant
- v.** Production and publishing of books and teaching/learning materials.

11.2.4. Efficient management of resources is of paramount importance in the effective operation of any learning institution. The proper management of school resources and their maximal and optimal use will be emphasised and ensured.

11.3 Assessment of Student Achievement and Examinations

11.3.1. Assessment will include formal examinations, continuous assessment, routine and ad hoc diagnostic tests, and other forms of assessments will be based on the curriculum. Benchmarks will be established also to determine and monitor the standard of education across the basic and senior secondary levels in pursuit of excellence.

11.3.2. The National Assessment Test (NAT) will continue to be conducted every two years using 25% of all students in grades 3 and 5 in all categories of schools (government, private and mission) to inform the system on pupils' achievement at the lower basic

level in the core subject areas. This will be used to inform curriculum revision and to signal weaknesses in the system. SQAD, CREДУ and WAEC will collaborate in this venture.

- 11.3.3. In order to address the concerns of parents in the delivery of quality education and to encourage active participation of parents in education, a Participatory Performance Monitoring, (PPM), which will involve active participation of parents and communities in monitoring, participating, supporting and collaborating with schools in all aspects of school life will be introduced. School Performance Appraisal Monitoring (SPAM), which is a component of the PPM, will be conducted annually in all schools.
- 11.3.4. Continuous assessment of pupils from grades 1-12 in all categories of schools using the learning achievement targets (LAT) will be put in place to ensure better teaching and to enable assessment of the value added as student's progress through basic education. Boards of governors at SSS and PTA committees at the basic level will be empowered to assume monitoring roles to enhance school management.
- 11.3.5. The GABECE and the WASSCE will continue to have continuous assessment component and the set guidelines designed by WAEC and CREДУ will be reviewed from time to time. During the course of the policy period, learning achievement targets will be designed for grades 7 - 9.

11.4 Teacher Supply and Quality

- 11.4.1. For the improvement of learning achievement, the provision of competent teachers and the improvement of serving teachers are crucial. To this end, teacher training will aim at providing teachers with better knowledge and skills. The INSET Unit will continue to provide continuous professional development at decentralised levels for all categories of teachers.
- 11.4.2. Pre-service and in-service training will focus on the training of polyvalent teachers in the areas of ECD, adult and non-formal and special needs using study technology as a method to equip students and teachers in developing study skills and becoming autonomous learners.

11.5 Monitoring and Supervision

- 11.5.1. Monitoring and supervision are key to the improvement of quality. The SQAD will link with the relevant directorates of DoSE, In-Service Unit, CREДУ and School of Education of the Gambia College to supervise, support and monitor the quality of teaching and learning at school level. To enable SQAD to work efficiently and effectively, the capacity of SQAD will be increased to accommodate two officers per school cluster. Every school in a cluster will be monitored and supervised at least once a year.
- 11.5.2. Internal supervision under the responsibilities of the head teacher will be reinforced to improve the performance output of both teachers and students. Schools will internally set objectives, targets and strategies for quality improvement.

11.6 School Organisation and Development

11.6.1. It is of paramount importance that in a bid to improve quality and ensuring relevance, school organisation and development will have to be addressed. Thus the main areas of attention will include school leadership, teacher quality and motivation and internal school efficiency measures.

11.6.2. Skills enhancement for school managers will be given emphasis. Management training will be provided for school heads at all levels and they will further be equipped with knowledge of the Education Act, the General Orders and help put them into practice. The current management training programme offered to heads of lower and upper basic schools will be strengthened and tailor-made to cater for the needs of the heads.

11.6.3. Schools will be encouraged and supported to develop policies on admission, discipline, dress codes and codes of ethics for teachers. Schools will therefore be expected to set clear goals and high expectations for students but in consonance with the education policy framework.

11.6.4. In order to engender community participation in all aspects of school management, Parent Teacher Association (PTA) committees will be formed at school and regional levels and their composition will include teachers, parents, students and community members with emphasis on gender equity in their composition.

11.7 Flexible School Calendar

11.7.1. Quality educational processes do not only require well-trained teachers able to use learner-centred teaching and learning methods and life skills approaches, but equally strategies that will enhance the attainment of sufficient hours of instructions and regular attendance of students. It is for this reason that the DoSE is committed to achieving a minimum of 880 quality hours of student-teacher contact time and at the same time creating the enabling environment for the enhancement of regular attendance of students.

11.7.2. In facilitating such attainment, the DoSE, in consultation with the regional education directorates, will introduce a flexible school calendar to be effectively and efficiently implemented at the decentralised level. The regional education directorates will be empowered to manage and implement their own school calendars but guided by well-thought out strategies for the attainment of regular attendance of students in school and the target number of instructional hours.

12 VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

12.1 Governance

12.1.1. Beyond basic education provision, The Gambia has well articulated programmes for continuing education on the basis of merit for students with potential to pursue university level education at the UTG or other middle level courses at some of the tertiary level institutions or vocational and training centres.

12.1.2. The Government has set up a National Training Authority (NTA) through a public-private partnership in response to the need for a highly trained professional workforce. The establishment of the NTA offers the opportunity and the platform to launch a major initiative in the expansion of the TVET provision in The Gambia. Through this instrumentality, efforts will be made to design and develop a variety of national diploma and higher national diploma programmes to meet the existing shortages of trained manpower in the country. The NTA will be responsible for the validation of the qualifications obtained on completion of these programmes.

12.1.3. This is based on the belief that there is no terminal point in education, hence life long learning and training is crucial to the development of self-reliant individuals, communities and a free market economy.

12.2 Financing

12.2.1. With a policy on TVET already in place, Government will:

- i. enforce a legislative framework to support the implementation and sustainability of the TVET policy and management systems for TVET
- ii. strengthen the institutional and management capacity of the TVET system and establish a sound financial basis for its long-term development and sustainability.

12.2.2. During the policy period government will institutionalise accredited post-basic education programmes such as apprenticeship or on/off the job vocational and technical training. The existing vocational skills centres at the district level and in the rural areas will be further developed to deliver such knowledge and skill up-gradation programmes.

12.2.3. The National Training Levy (NTL) which will be based on a minimum of 0.25% of gross annual revenue of registered companies/corporations to be determined by the Commissioner of Income Tax will be pursued to enhance the financing of TVET. In addition, government will also provide subvention, the amount of which will be determined through the Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) and Public Investment Programme (PIP).

13 TERTIARY AND HIGHER EDUCATION

13.1 Tertiary Education

13.1.1. Tertiary education will cover all post-secondary programmes in The Gambia, and will, in particular, include the following:

- i.** Technical education
- ii.** Teacher education
- iii.** University education
- iv.** Research.

13.2 Overview of Tertiary and Higher Education

13.2.1. Government will ensure that the tertiary education sector provides a flexible and dynamic system of education and training. Flexibility will be provided by adopting a combination of methods and processes that will ensure the demands of access and equity, on the one hand, and the need for quality and standards (excellence), on the other. Full-time institutional programmes will be complemented by a variety of ODL education and part time courses. Flexible entry and exit admission arrangements will be ensured to suit the pace of learning, learning needs, and the convenience of different groups of learners.

13.2.2. Provision of continuing education programmes to upgrade and update the knowledge and skills of people at work, those who missed their opportunities to pursue programmes of education and training of their choice early in life, and those who are looking for opportunities to acquire new knowledge and skills through a diversity of means will be a significant element of this policy.

13.2.3. ODL education approaches and methods will be important components of this endeavour. During the last two decades or so, it has been established that distance education methods and use of modern ICT can provide a cost-effective, efficient and viable system of education and training that can respond to the varying needs and aspirations of the people, especially in the developing countries. It can also provide the means to address the concerns of access and equity. Government will explore all avenues of securing co-operation and collaboration at the regional and international levels, including the support and assistance from international organisations and agencies in developing a dynamic ODL education system in The Gambia.

13.2.4. There are at present three institutions in The Gambia that together provide a variety of programmes at the post-secondary level; the Gambia College in education, the Gambia Technical Training Institute (GTTI) in technical and vocational education and the Management Development Institute (MDI) in the area of management studies provide the trained and skilled manpower at the middle levels of services and industry. All

these institutions will be strengthened and expanded to offer better opportunities to the people of The Gambia in their respective fields.

13.2.5. The Gambian tertiary and higher education system will evolve during the period of this policy around the development of the UTG at the apex, with the existing three tertiary institutions constituting the nucleus of the system.

13.2.6. The major objectives of the tertiary and higher education programmes are:

- i. To enhance the human resource development capacity of The Gambia in response to labour market needs
- ii. To provide relevant, sustainable and high quality tertiary education and research to support socio-economic, scientific and technological advances and development, and promotion of excellence in the creation and dissemination of knowledge
- iii. To produce men and women who can provide intellectual leadership to the emergence of a nation wedded to the ideals of democracy and a socially, politically and economically self-reliant country in a globalised and interdependent world.

13.3 Technical Education

13.3.1. Efforts will be made to expand the opportunities for technical and vocational education programmes for a large number of SSS leavers in different branches of engineering, technology and other professional fields at the diploma and higher diploma levels.

13.3.2. The GTTI will be strengthened to introduce higher diploma courses in various branches of engineering and to diversify its programmes.

13.3.3. Facilities will be created for upgrading the knowledge and skills of those at the workplace through specially designed programmes using ICT and distance education methods.

13.3.4. The NTA will be strengthened and further developed to regulate, set standards and certify the qualifications of those completing the programmes of study in the technical and vocational training Institutions at the post-secondary level, both through full-time as well as through various continuing education programmes.

13.3.5. The NTA's role as a link representing the transition from secondary to higher levels of education through a variety of programmes and courses that could be the building blocks for higher professional degree programmes in the future will be strengthened and developed.

13.3.6. Efforts will continue to be made to secure learning materials for technical and vocational education programmes from different sources through bilateral or other arrangements and use them for delivering programmes at this level in The Gambia. Simultaneously, it will also be ensured that learning materials are internally developed through a process of adaptation or getting them prepared within the country. Co-

operation from business, industry, the professions and other institutions will be sought for this purpose.

13.3.7. Diversification of TEVT programmes will receive high priority. Programmes of diversification will involve both additions of programmes in new fields as well as the introduction of higher levels of programmes in the existing areas. The NTA's role in this initiative as a catalyst in programme development as well as the validating authority will be crucial. It will be encouraged and supported to establish partnerships with employing organisations and various professional bodies for this purpose.

13.4 Teacher Education

13.4.1. The schooling system in The Gambia is projected to grow significantly during the period covered by this policy. It would follow that a corresponding growth in the availability of qualified and trained teachers will be ensured to meet the objectives of this policy.

13.4.2. In addition to meeting the demands of the expansion for new teachers through pre-service training programmes, the continuing need for upgrading the knowledge and skills of serving teachers will be equally essential. Through sustained efforts during the past few years, it has been possible to address the critical issue of shortage of trained and qualified teachers in The Gambia. Nonetheless, the need for continuing education for serving teachers will receive attention.

13.4.3. The programmes of training of teachers for the basic level will continue to use a mix of one year face-to-face (college-based training), two years of apprenticeship with a combined ODL following which, qualifying examinations will be written for certificate requirement.

13.4.4. Along with pedagogic training, efforts will be made to launch programmes of training in such areas as curriculum planning and design, instructional design, learning materials preparation, school management and other relevant areas of significance for improving the overall efficiency of the school system and teacher effectiveness.

13.4.5. With the increasing applications of ICT in education, the role of the teacher is undergoing a fundamental change. At the core of this change is the fact that the teacher is no more the only source of knowledge. Knowledge can be accessed, assimilated and used from a variety of sources, and the teacher has increasingly to adapt himself/herself to the role of a facilitator of knowledge acquisition and assimilation. In order to perform this role effectively, teachers will be made acquainted with the use of these technologies in education. The teacher training programmes will have to take this aspect into consideration.

13.4.6. The problem of an adequate supply of teachers, who have the requisite qualifications and training to teach at the senior secondary level, is a matter of continuing concern. The solution to this problem lies in the availability of an adequate number of graduates in the relevant subject areas and who also have the necessary pedagogic training within The Gambia. With the establishment of the UTG, this problem can be addressed to some extent.

13.5 University Education

13.5.1. The establishment of the UTG in 1999 was a major landmark in the educational development of The Gambia. This fledgling institution will be nurtured to full growth with sensitivity and understanding. It is too much to expect too rapid a development within a short time.

13.5.2. The most important problem before the university is putting together the necessary physical and intellectual resources. While the government can make some efforts to provide the physical infrastructure, concerted efforts from a variety of sources will be needed to ensure that the university can assemble competent faculty strength.

13.5.3. To begin with, the university will be encouraged to offer, on a limited scale, graduate programmes of study in the faculties it has already established, in co-operation with universities outside the country. These programmes in the initial stages should provide the nucleus of the faculty strength for the university. It is important that urgent steps are taken to reduce the dependency of the university on expatriate staff for teaching and research.

13.5.4. Simultaneously, the university will be encouraged to enter into collaborative arrangements with universities outside the country under which programmes and materials can be secured in fields that are relevant to the country's immediate development needs. This collaborative initiative will encompass programmes delivered through the traditional face-to-face as well as distance education methods. The UTG will continue to build and establish working relationships with existing tertiary level institutions in the country to strengthen its infrastructure as well as to develop the nucleus for an enduring and sustainable higher education system in the country.

13.5.5. Through such efforts, the UTG will be encouraged to occupy a strategic position within the national development strategy. The development of the UTG is critical for the success of the national education system. It is not just the graduates alone, but more importantly, the system of accreditation and validation of qualifications awarded within the country, that only the university can establish, that will ultimately reduce the nation's dependence on external support in so vital a field of national importance. Some major areas of focus during the policy period will include:

- i.** Increase share of enrolment particularly of girls to match the gender equality goals of EFA by 2015
- ii.** Institutionalise access programmes in favour of girls particularly in science, mathematics and technology-related disciplines
- iii.** Build on modalities on increased cost sharing through a mix of student support schemes i.e. bursaries, student loan schemes, parental support. Government scholarship will not exceed 50% of the enrolled students and will cover only two thirds of the total cost
- iv.** Development and strengthening of public-private partnership in the financing will be explored and pursued
- v.** Development of a corporate plan to cover the policy period should inform the growth and development of the university vis-à-vis programmes, curriculum and capacity building)
- vi.** Construction of an ultra-modern campus complex during the policy period to

- meet the growing demand of university places
- vii.** Establish new faculties including education, law and technology
- viii.** The finalisation of the higher education observatory act and the setting up of the observatory.

13.6 Research

13.6.1. Establishment of research capacity is imperative and will be given a high priority. Research in the critical fields of development in the Gambia, mainly health, agriculture, basic sciences and human resource development and management will be promoted. To attract and retain academic talent, availability of research facilities is a pre-requisite. To this effect, the proposed higher education observatory and the quality assurance council on education as an instrumentality will ensure that investment in the tertiary education sector will be integrated into institutional strategies that give explicit priority to improving the quality of teaching and research. Higher education and tertiary institutions will therefore need to articulate precisely the following:

- i.** Institutional central policy for research:
 - ❖ The role of research as a component of the activities of the institution
 - ❖ The type of research activities that individual institutions may wish to promote
- ii.** Resources for research:
 - ❖ Provision of plans for human resources development for research
 - ❖ Provision of resources for promoting the development of existing research units
- iii.** Research quality:
 - ❖ Review of policies and procedures for ensuring research quality
- iv.** Strategic policy for institutional research activities:
 - ❖ Research committee structures, membership and responsibilities
 - ❖ Research plans
 - ❖ Procedures for monitoring research performance
 - ❖ Project quality.

14 MANAGEMENT OF EDUCATION

14.1 Organisational Structure

14.1.1. The DoSE will continue to be responsible for policy development, management and co-ordination in The Gambia. The department will guide the development of the education sector during the policy period and beyond and further reinforce its management capacities to cope with the decentralisation process.

14.1.2. The Secretary of State (SOS) for Education will be responsible for leadership in the sector and policy oversight. The Permanent Secretary is the chief executive and adviser to the SOS and will provide oversight for the activities of the sector. There will be two deputy permanent secretaries one of whom will assist the Permanent Secretary in the administrative and financial management functions of the department while the second will assist in the co-ordination of policy implementation at both headquarters and the regions.

14.1.3. There will continue to exist, two management committees for the effective management and co-ordination of policy implementation. One will be the senior management team (SMT) comprising the directors of the sector, the Permanent Secretary and two deputy permanent secretaries to be chaired by the SOS.

14.1.4. The second will be the co-ordinating committee meeting (CCM) to be made up of all directors, principal education officers, managers/deputy managers and deputy permanent secretaries to be chaired by the Permanent Secretary. These two committees will meet bi-monthly by rotation at each of the six regions.

14.2 Directorates

14.2.1. The DoSE will maintain professional directorates, each of which is headed by a director. The director will advise the Permanent Secretary on technical and professional matters relating to the area of expertise and responsibility, which are:

- i.** Planning and budgeting
- ii.** Human resource development
- iii.** Basic and secondary education
- iv.** Standards and quality assurance
- v.** Science, information and communication technology
- vi.** Tertiary/higher education and research

I. Planning and Budgeting Directorate

This directorate will have four integrated components: planning, budgeting, information and statistical analysis. Its primary function will continue to incorporate advice on and analysis of policy issues; collection, compilation, analysis and dissemination of education statistics; analysis and evaluation of recurrent and development expenditures from both government and external sources. EMIS will be accorded a priority status in

the quest for an effective tool in the rational planning of the education system. School mapping exercises will be mounted every year to ensure equitable distribution of educational facilities, institutions and resources.

II. Human Resource Directorate

The directorate will be responsible for human resource development and management. Its work will incorporate teacher posting assessment; teacher recruitment through Gambia College and the UTG, and co-ordination of all aspects of the department's training needs. With the development of the SPAS, all training and promotion will be determined by, among other things, SPAS scores. The department will continue to improve the system to enhance transparency and accountability.

III. Basic and Secondary Education Directorate

This directorate will be responsible for guiding and advising on policy directives within the context of basic and senior secondary education programming; co-ordinating and monitoring its effective functioning with programme linkages to include ECD, girls education, special education, Madrassa education, non-formal education, life skills education and for poverty reduction, school agriculture and food management. The directorate will establish a clear and effective management structure for increased autonomy of delegated management boards and school committees.

IV. Science, Information and Communication Technology Directorate

This directorate will be responsible for advising on and co-ordinating all aspects relating to the design, programme development, training and capacity building in the area of science and ICT in schools and the sector as a whole. It will also be responsible for the further development and enhancement of science and technology education at all levels. In addition, the directorate will also co-ordinate EBS in support of teaching/learning processes both in and out of school setting.

V. Standards and Quality Assurance Directorate

This directorate will be responsible for monitoring compliance of the education policy and its associated acts and regulations in all institutions operating in The Gambia. It will maintain its primary function of monitoring and supervision of curriculum at all levels of the school system (including pre-schools and the Madrassa); learning achievement targets, teacher quality and performance, PTA involvement. It will popularise the use of study technologies to improve the performance of both teachers and students. The directorate will work closely with WAEC in the production and implementation of effective assessment, measurement and evaluation tools of the teaching and learning process in the school system.

VI. Tertiary / Higher Education and Research Directorate

This directorate will be a new creation in response to the growing demands for expansion at this level. It will be responsible for the co-ordination of all aspects of tertiary and higher education programmes, facilities and resources. In promoting the culture of research, the directorate will co-ordinate the review of the strategic policy of all research activities to ensure that they are in accordance with the quality assurance systems that are to be set up by tertiary and higher education institutions. It will supervise the establishment of the higher education observatory for quality assurance.

VII. Regional Education Directorates

Regional education directorates will now be headed regional directors. They will be engaged in education policy dialogue and take full responsibility for the planning and implementation of educational programmes in the regions. The directors at this level will, in the interim, be answerable to the Permanent Secretary pending the handover of the education service to the municipal/area councils. Given the anticipated responsibilities of the regional directorates in relation to the decentralisation process, the directorates will continue to be strengthened within the context of government's decentralisation programme and will become absorbed into the local government structure at the divisional levels. The role of the DoSE Headquarters will become largely to monitor and evaluate policy implementation across the system in the regions for quality assurance.

14.3 Support Structures

14.3.1. In order to effectively and efficiently manage subvented institutions at the level of tertiary and higher education, the following support structures (i-v) whose composition will continue to be determined by SOS for Education, will continue to operate with a great deal of autonomy and accountability while the PDCU (vi) will be restructured and integrated into the mainstream:

- i.** National Training Authority
- ii.** Gambia College Council
- iii.** University Governing Council
- iv.** The Higher Education Observatory
- v.** Advisory Council on Education
- vi.** Programme and Donor Co-ordination Unit

I. National Training Authority

The National Training Authority (NTA) shall be the regulatory body responsible for the award of national vocational qualifications (NVQ) in association with education and training establishments and employers in The Gambia. The NTA will be strengthened and further developed to regulate, set standards and certify the qualifications of graduates of programmes of study in the technical and vocational training institutions at the post-secondary level. It will also serve as a catalyst in programme development and validating authority.

II. Gambia College Council

Apart from its traditional role of human resource management and mobilisation of resources, the council has mandate to direct, regulate the instruction and teaching within the college and the examinations held.

III. University Governing Council

This council shall be responsible for the management and administration of the whole of the revenue and property of the university. It shall have general control over the university and all its affairs, purposes and functions and all such other powers and duties as may be conferred upon it by Statute or Ordinance.

IV. The Higher Education Observatory

The Observatory will be established to promote and maintain academic standards in education, learning and knowledge associated with the UTG by acting as an advisory body to the DoSE or any other national institution of higher education.

V. Advisory Council on Education

This council will be renamed Quality Assurance Council on Education with the task of ensuring that a high quality education service is delivered at all levels of the education system. The council will introduce standardised procedures and mechanisms to control the assured quality of such service.

VI. Programme and Donor Co-ordination Unit (PDCU)

The Programme and Donor Co-ordination Unit will continue its role of donor mobilisation and co-ordination. The PDCU will continue to manage and co-ordinate the classroom construction programme through a partnership arrangement and undertake the overall contracts management for the procurement of goods, works and services, arrange for the disbursement and replenishment of funds for project-supported activities, co-ordination of programme reviews and supervision, facilitate training activities and technical assistance requirements under the external support programme. It will support the DoSE in the procurement of all goods and services but will be gradually phased out and integrated into a directorate within the DoSE with the very same functions by the end of the current master plan 2007. In recognition of the contribution of The Gambia's development partners to the education enterprise, effective co-operation will continue to be promoted with the donor community in this regard. To this end, efforts will be intensified to mobilise resources for the sector through bi-lateral and multi-lateral grant financing.

14.4 Decentralisation and Governance

14.4.1. In pursuance of government's decentralisation programme, the area and municipal councils will, over time manage all basic and SSS within their jurisdiction as they build the capacity to take over the functions. The regional education directorates will monitor the decentralisation process and evaluate the readiness of the area and municipal councils to take over the schools as planned.

15 TEACHER WELFARE AND DEVELOPMENT

15.1 Teacher welfare

- 15.1.1. Within the context of the emerging knowledge-based society, the roles, responsibilities and professional development of teachers will undergo significant changes. From exclusive classroom engagement, teachers will have to move towards becoming facilitators of learning, guiding students in accessing knowledge and applying it. Therefore, continuing professional development of teachers will be critical to the growth of the system.
- 15.1.2. Hence the training of teachers through short-term in-service programmes in such fields like ICT applications, curriculum design and development, educational planning and management, and similar other areas will receive priority. To this end, the UTG will be commissioned to provide degree level training, diploma and certificate courses for short and long term duration. Simultaneously, steps will be initiated to ensure greater accountability on the part of teachers through the SPAS. The SPAS will also continue to evaluate teacher quality and performance that will help to determine promotion and training prospects.
- 15.1.3. Given the importance of the teacher factor in the provision of quality education, strategies to motivate and retain teachers will be put in place. This will include, among other things, better remuneration and recognition for teachers.
- 15.1.4. A Teaching Service Commission (TSC) will be set up along with a Professional Standard Board (PSB) both of which will facilitate the employment and assessment processes of teachers. A database of personnel will continue to be developed, in collaboration with the Personnel Management Office (PMO), to track more efficiently, the human capacity of the nation and attendant training needs.
- 15.1.5. The circumstances in which teachers find themselves are crucial to their performance and hence, the situation of teachers in relation to postings continues to preoccupy the priority of the DoSE. Teachers in difficult regions will, therefore, be given varying levels of hardship allowances depending on the classification of the regions. Promotion will take into account the length of period served in the classified areas.
- 15.1.6. In order to attract teachers to work in difficult regions, a special incentive package will be designed and introduced for teachers in regions 3 - 6. Coupled with this incentive package, will be the introduction of teachers' housing scheme for serving teachers in difficult areas. In addition to these support schemes, the area councils/communities will be encouraged to sponsor dedicated serving teachers in very deprived communities. This will go a long in eliminating the disparity in the regional distribution of qualified teachers.

16 FINANCING OF EDUCATION

16.1. Resource Allocation and Utilisation

16.1.1. Insufficient teaching and learning materials and financial resources have a severe impact on efforts to improve basic education. Inefficient use of existing resources is more of a problem than an absolute shortage of funds and hence this policy will lay emphasis on efficiency in resource utilisation and accountability.

16.1.2. In pursuance of the policy pronouncements, resources will be targeted to identify activities based on the priorities for each programme; and within programmes, to priority target groups and regions. Such allocation of resources will be predicated on the most cost-effective utilisation of available resources. In this regard the following efficiency measures will be employed to guide resource allocation and utilisation:

- i.** Increase the GER in basic education to 100% by 2015, taking into account enrolment in Madrassa
- ii.** Increase the completion rates in basic education to 100% by 2015
- iii.** Increase the supply of trained teachers and make more efficient use of the teaching force by maintaining the pupil/teacher ratio 45:1 at the basic level
- iv.** Increase double-shift classes from 25% to 32% by 2015 across all levels
- v.** Phase out double-shift teachers by 2015
- vi.** Maintain multi-grade teaching in a combined class size not exceeding 40
- vii.** Increase the share of girls' enrolment to 50% of total enrolment at the levels of basic and senior secondary education by 2005
- viii.** Reduce repetition rate to 3.6% by 2015
- ix.** Reduce drop out rate to 0% by grade and gender by 2015
- x.** Increase the number of trained teachers from 500 to 540 annually
- xi.** Increase instructional hours to 880 hours
- xii.** Increase expenditure on teaching and learning materials from 6.7% to 15% of recurrent expenditures by 2015
- xiii.** Increase student classroom ratio 53:1 by 2015
- xiv.** Improve learning outcomes at all levels - at least 80% of students will attain minimum grade competencies/mastery levels by 2015
- xv.** Increase the enrolment ratio of early childhood by 50% especially in the rural areas by 2015
- xvi.** Increase access, for adults, to functional literacy and numeracy programmes in order to half the illiterate population by 2015
- xvii.** Provide marketable and social skills to enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life
- xviii.** Increase the transition rate from grade 9 to 10 to a minimum of 50%
- xix.** Increase the quota of graduate teachers of Gambian nationality at the level of senior secondary from 26% to 100% by 2015
- xx.** Strengthen the institutional and management capacity of the TVET system
- xxi.** Establish a sound financial basis for the long term development and sustainability of TVET

- xxii.** Increase cost sharing and cost recovery at post-secondary training institutions
- xxiii.** Develop and strengthen public-private partnership in the financing of higher education
- xxiv.** Institutionalise access programmes for higher education especially for girls, particularly in science, maths and technology.

16.2. Resource Requirement and Mobilisation

16.2.1. Much as the needs are enormous, it is apparent that the funding gap will not be entirely met by external partners hence resources must be sought from within. Budgetary allocation will reflect policy priorities both at national level and by programme area at the sectoral level. At the macroeconomic level, better performance and management of the economy will generate much needed resources for financing education from the national budget and supplemented by external resources. It is with this expectation that the sector will endeavour during the policy period to wean itself from heavy donor lending and credit and work more on mobilising grants financing.

16.2.2. The attainment of EFA and particularly quality education for poverty reduction, and to effectively use education and training as a catalyst for sustained economic growth and development, adequate resources will be allocated for the following priority areas:

- i.** Increasing access to and equity in basic education
- ii.** Increasing participation, performance and retention rates for girls
- iii.** Improving the quality of teaching and learning
- iv.** Strengthening early childhood educational services
- v.** Increasing access to adult and non-formal education
- vi.** Meeting appropriate learning and life skills for young people
- vii.** Secondary and higher/tertiary education with emphasis on meeting gender equality at these levels, as well as, ICT in schools by 2015
- viii.** Technical and vocational education and training
- ix.** Sector management, staff motivation and training.

16.2.3. The abolition of user charges will require a major increase in financing as well as coherent strategies to improve the quality of education while effectively managing the increasing demand. The implementation of this strategy will require both financial resources and technical assistance where the capacity is inadequate. The DoSE is cognisant of the constraints that beset the sector. These constraints for future financing and educational services will include among others:

- i.** insufficient resource allocation
- ii.** skewed distribution of resources – inequitable access to educational services
- iii.** population growth and migration, creating excess demand and demands from disadvantaged groups and people
- iv.** expansion of public provision to meet EFA goals posing strain on government efforts
- v.** inappropriate and over subsidised tertiary education at the expense of basic and

secondary education and other priority areas.

16.2.4. In the face of increasing challenges that affect government's ability to meet differentiated educational requirements, the DoSE will mobilise resources from the following sources for the financing of the competing educational demands:

- i.** Government budgetary allocation to be increased to meet the new targets of 100% transition from grade 6 to 7
a completion rate of 100% at the basic education level; expansion at the senior secondary and tertiary levels; and other recurrent expenditures
- ii.** Local Government Councils from the funds received from the Consolidated Revenue Fund (general grants, conditional grant-in-aid, and subsidy) for educational facilities devolved to their authority (under the decentralisation system) and to increase their traditional allocation/support to education as a welfare service
- iii.** A well co-ordinated donor aid flow, stronger partnership with parents, civil society, teachers union, and NGOs to build support for education
- iv.** Reapportioning the input mix and improving efficient utilisation of existing resources
- v.** Encouraging greater private sector participation in service delivery particularly at the levels where private benefits outweigh social benefits
- vi.** Cost sharing and cost recovery at post-secondary training institutions.