

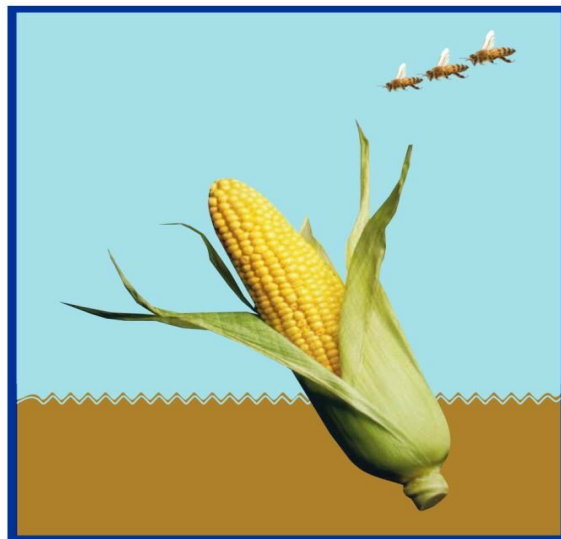
GFA

G A M B I A F O R A L L

A Different Gambia Is Possible

GFA's Vision for Change and Renewal

PARTY MANIFESTO 2026



GAMBIA FOR ALL (GFA)

Tesito Justice Discipline

FOUR PILLARS OF NATIONAL TRANSFORMATION

I Food Security	II Economic Transformation	III Human Capital	IV System Transformation
---------------------------	--------------------------------------	-----------------------------	------------------------------------

PREAMBLE



Nearly eight years after Gambians voted out former dictator Yahya Jammeh, our nation finds itself at a painful crossroads. The historical victory of December 2016 ignited hope across the country — hope for freedom, justice, and a new era of competent leadership. Gambians believed that the transition from autocracy to democracy would finally unlock the country's potential and restore dignity to our people. Instead, those hopes have been steadily eroded.

Since assuming office in January 2017, President Adama Barrow has failed to provide the leadership required to steer the country away from decades of misrule. Rather than ushering in a new chapter, his administration has reproduced many of the governance failures of the Jammeh era. The promise of democratic renewal has been replaced by stagnation, inconsistency, and a troubling drift toward the very practices Gambians fought to end.

Many Gambians continue to suffer from poverty and deteriorating standards of living as inflation remains high. The agricultural sector remains stagnant, characterised by low yields, limited access to essential inputs, delayed payments for farmers, and a lack of investment, e.g., irrigation. There is an unprecedented depletion of our fish stocks due to poor natural resource management. As a result, food insecurity is unacceptably high in the country. There is a continued lack of access to quality healthcare as citizens visit dilapidated health centres that lack basic medicines and adequate health services. Our educational standards are declining, and we lag behind peer countries. Land administration remains weak, which has adversely affected infrastructure implementation, housing planning and numerous others. Security sector reforms have not been undertaken, and as a result, crime has increased amid continued misallocation of resources among the security branches.

The quantity and quality of infrastructure, particularly for energy and communications, remain poor. Access to reliable energy is sporadic, and its cost is much higher than in other African countries. The limited number of roads that have been constructed is substandard. Legal sector reform has not taken place, and as a result, confidence in the administration of justice in the country is abysmally low. Obstacles to private sector growth remain entrenched, which has strangled entrepreneurship, job creation, and overall economic revitalization. Opportunities for youth are scarce, resulting in high unemployment rates and leading to an increasing number of our young people embarking on dangerous journeys to seek greener pastures abroad. This state of affairs is unacceptable and must be changed.

The lack of leadership and vision has led to the effective squandering of the outpouring of goodwill and international support for the government, derailing the transition to true democratic rule, good governance, and development in The Gambia. This is evident in the failure to implement key transitional programs, including the new Constitution, which received significant resources but has been abandoned and left to gather dust. It has since been replaced by a watered-down version that primarily seeks to entrench the incumbent's position. Furthermore, the Barrow government has also failed to implement the recommendations of the Truth, Reconciliation and Reparations Commission (TRRC) and the Jammeh Commission.

This manifesto presents the vision and programme of the Gambia For All (GFA) for the period 2026–2031. It is a blueprint for the transition The Gambia never truly had — a transition grounded in competence, integrity, and a clear plan to rebuild our nation. Our agenda focuses on four national priorities: Food Security, Economic Transformation, Human Capital Development, and System Transformation. Together, these pillars form a comprehensive pathway to restore hope, dignity and opportunity for every Gambian.

The time for excuses has passed. The Gambia deserves leadership that is serious, capable, and committed to the people. The GFA stands ready to deliver that leadership.

NATIONAL VISION

GFA envisions a self-reliant, productive and just Gambia — a nation where every citizen has access to food, opportunity, quality services and a government that works with competence, integrity and purpose. We seek to build a country that stands on its own feet, powered by a transformed economy, a skilled and healthy population, and modern systems that deliver dignity and prosperity for all.

1. A Food-Secure and Self-Sufficient Gambia

A Gambia where hunger is eliminated and food prices are stable — a Gambia that feeds itself, where:

- ▶ Rice and staple foods are produced locally.
- ▶ Farmers thrive through irrigation, inputs and modern technology.
- ▶ Women and youth lead a vibrant horticulture and agribusiness sector.
- ▶ Fish stocks are protected and serve Gambian households first.

2. A Modern, Diversified and Resilient Economy

A Gambia where jobs are created at scale and poverty is reduced sustainably — a Gambia that moves beyond subsistence agriculture and low-value tourism to become:

- ▶ A hub for agro-processing and light manufacturing.
- ▶ A country with reliable, affordable energy.
- ▶ A place where entrepreneurs can start and grow businesses without barriers.
- ▶ A destination for investment built on confidence, stability, and fairness.

3. A Healthy, Skilled and Empowered Population

A Gambia where human potential is unlocked, and no one is left behind.

- ▶ Teachers are respected and well-paid.
- ▶ UTG and other Tertiary and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) institutions are equipped to produce world-class talent.
- ▶ Healthcare facilities are well equipped, adequately staffed and accessible.
- ▶ Youth have real pathways to opportunity at home.

4. A Competent, Efficient, and Accountable State

A Gambia where systems work, rule of law matters and leadership is serious.

- ▶ Capable leadership at every level.
- ▶ Transparent systems that prevent corruption.
- ▶ Effective land administration, justice delivery and agile public services.
- ▶ Institutions that respond to the legitimate aspirations of the citizens, not political interests.



NATIONAL RENEWAL

For far too long, Gambians have carried the weight of unfulfilled promises. We have endured decades of misrule, watched opportunities slip through our fingers, and seen the hopes of 2016 fade into disappointment. Our farmers struggle to feed their families while our markets are saturated with imported food products that are not subject to rigorous quality assurance and

regulatory oversight. A significant proportion of the population heavily relies on diaspora remittances for daily sustenance, our youth — our adaptable labour force — search for opportunities that never come, and too many risk their lives on dangerous journeys because they no longer believe their country can offer them a future. Our schools, hospitals, and public institutions — once symbols of national pride — have been weakened by neglect, incompetence and a lack of vision.

Yet, despite everything, the spirit of the Gambian people has never been broken. We remain resilient, hardworking, and hopeful. We know that our country has the potential to rise. We know that our land can feed us, our youth can build for us, and our institutions can serve us — if only we have leadership that believes in the power of Gambians and the promise of The Gambia.

This manifesto is not just a list of policies. It is a call to rebuild our nation from the ground up — because everything is broken. It is a commitment to restore dignity to our people, competence to our government and hope to our future. It is a pledge to transform The Gambia into a country that stands on its own feet — a country that feeds itself, powers itself and develops itself. We can do it and so we must come together and do it.

Our renewal begins with food security, because no nation can be free if it cannot feed its people. It continues with economic transformation because our youth deserve jobs and opportunities at home. It advances through human capital development because a nation's greatest wealth is its people. And it is sustained by system transformation because without strong and agile institutions, no progress can last.

The Gambia's renewal will not come from foreign aid or empty slogans. It will come from the determination of our farmers, the creativity of our entrepreneurs, the brilliance of our students, the dedication of our teachers and health workers, and the courage of our youth. It will come from a government that leads with honesty, competence, integrity, and patriotism — a government that puts the legitimate aspirations of Gambians first.

This is the moment to turn the page.

This is the moment to reclaim our destiny.

This is the moment to build a Gambia for all — a Gambia that works for all of us.

GFA offers a new beginning — a renewal rooted in self-reliance, powered by our people, and acutely guided by a clear vision for a prosperous, dignified, and just nation. Together, we can transform The Gambia into the country we know it can be.

Mission and Values

Our mission is to secure food sovereignty, transform the economy, invest in people and rebuild the system that allows every Gambian to live with dignity and opportunity. At a time when our nation demands strong and serious leadership, we are ready to offer a government that is grounded in:

- ▶ **Self-reliance**
- ▶ **Competence**
- ▶ **Integrity**
- ▶ **Improved productivity**
- ▶ **Equity**
- ▶ **Patriotism**
- ▶ **Opportunity for all**

THE FOUR PILLARS

PILLAR 1: A FOOD-SECURE AND SELF-RELIANT NATION

INTRODUCTION

Food security is the foundation of national dignity and economic independence. No country can prosper when its people cannot afford basic food or when its farmers remain trapped in low-productivity subsistence systems with limited opportunities for value addition and growth. GFA is committed to ending The Gambia's dependence on imported food and building a modern agricultural economy that feeds our people, empowers our farmers, and stabilises the cost of living. An agriculture that does not harm the environment and builds on the natural resource base for production. This pillar is about restoring sovereignty, driving value addition and economic growth, creating jobs, and ensuring that every Gambian household has access to affordable, nutritious food, and an environment that is protected.

GOAL

Every Gambian must have access to adequate, nutritious, diverse, and affordable food that is locally produced, and is reliably available at all times.

CURRENT REALITIES

About 1 in 3 people in The Gambia are considered food insecure, and at least a quarter of households do not consume adequate amounts of food. The costs of basic food items have increased significantly over the past five years. The average inflation rate of food commodities over this period is 15%, and it recently exceeded 20%. During this period, average incomes in the country increased by less than 2%. The price of rice has doubled since the current government took office.

- ▶ **Increasing poverty rate:** The poverty rate has been increasing in The Gambia over the past five years. One of its main drivers has been food insecurity as the cost-of-living increases across the country.
- ▶ **Importation of food commodities:** The Gambia still imports most of the food items we consume. Approximately 90% of the staple rice is imported, despite the country having all the necessary agro-ecological conditions to be self-sufficient in rice production.
- ▶ **High income inequality:** The Gambia has one of the highest income inequalities in West Africa. This is manifested in flamboyant lifestyle among a few elites while the rest of the population is barely surviving. Because of the neglect of agriculture, rural communities remain particularly deprived given that this sector dominates their livelihoods.
- ▶ **Depreciating currency:** The country's currency has been in freefall for decades. Part of the reason for this has been the widening trade deficit. As the country's imports grow while exports remain stagnant, there is constant downward pressure on the value of the currency. Given that most food items are imported, this leads to inflationary pressures, with adverse consequence for standards of living.
- ▶ **Low agricultural productivity:** The Gambia has been on a low agricultural productivity trajectory for decades due to the following factors:

- ▶ **Lack of irrigation:** Gambian agriculture is still predominantly rain-fed, which means both the level of production and productivity are determined by rainfall, which is becoming increasingly erratic.
- ▶ **Lack of inputs:** Our farmers are lacking basic inputs. The fertilizer use per hectare of arable land in The Gambia is 3 kg. This is significantly lower than not only the world average of 137 kg, but also the African average of 18 kg. Government-supplied fertilisers are insufficient, arrive late, and lack accompanying sensitization programs on proper application. Farmers have dismally limited access to improved seeds for vegetables, rice, groundnuts, and many other crops.
- ▶ **Poor land administration:** Land administration in agriculture is lacking. As a result, there are willing investors who cannot access land, which has constrained needed private sector investment in this sector. This is particularly a major constraint for the much-needed large-scale private sector investment in rice production.
- ▶ **Post-harvest losses:** Our farmers experience significant post-harvest losses due to a lack of modern storage facilities and limited access to improved processing techniques and technologies. This is particularly true for horticultural farmers, such as vegetable growers. More than 50% of some vegetables, such as tomatoes, are lost each year.
- ▶ **Inadequate disease control:** Our farmers currently suffer from considerable production losses because of the absence of measures to control both plant and animal diseases that affect the productivity of crops and livestock.

GFA'S SOLUTIONS

Food security is a basic human necessity. GFA will treat achieving food security for the Gambian people as an immediate national priority. Addressing this urgent need requires boosting local food production. Greater local production will increase supply and control prices. In the process, jobs and other economic opportunities will be created for our fellow citizens. The net foreign exchange outflows that depreciate our currency will be reduced, thereby controlling inflation and elevating standards of living.

As part of its goal of achieving food security, the GFA-led government aims for rice self-sufficiency. The country has the climate, land, water, and can assess the technical know-how. What has been missing is the will and leadership.

Agricultural Productivity Boost and Transformation

The first precondition for food security is a significant transformation in agricultural productivity. Such a transformational goal requires addressing all sub-sectors of agriculture.

Cereals

- ▶ **Large-scale irrigation:** The GFA-led government will invest in large-scale irrigation projects that span the entire country. For the first time in our history, the country will utilize its abundant water resources to sustain the nation. We will strive for an ambitious agenda to ensure enough irrigation not only for rice cultivation but also for other cereals and horticulture.
- ▶ **Rice self-sufficiency:** The GFA government aims to achieve rice self-sufficiency for The Gambia within five years. The dependence on low-quality imported rice will be a thing of the past.
- ▶ **Boosting cereal consumption:** The GFA government will also promote the consumption of other local cereals such as maize, millet, findi, and sorghum, given their high nutritional value. Promoting their consumption will result in affordable prices for the population and increase food diversity. Entrepreneurs will be encouraged to process these cereals into

products that will add value and variety, thereby making them more likely to be consumed locally as well as create opportunities for export to outside markets. Furthermore, GFA will also re-introduce sorghum and millet farming in the West Coast and North Bank Regions to boost cereal production.

Horticulture

- ▶ **Horticultural expansion:** The GFA-led government will empower entrepreneurs, particularly youths and women, in horticultural production. The energy and adaptability of these dynamic groups have been held back due to poor leadership. Our government will target national self-sufficiency in vegetables such as onions, peppers, tomatoes, okra, and eggplant, among others. Trained and well-compensated agriculture extension personnel will be provided to propel the adoption of appropriate methodologies to enhance horticulture.
- ▶ **Agricultural finance:** The GFA-led government will direct the Social Development Fund (SDF) to provide financing for youth entrepreneurs who are ready to go into horticulture.
- ▶ **Women's horticultural gardens:** The GFA-led government will target support to all women-led village gardens and assist them with their main problems of irrigation, quality vegetable seeds, cold storage, and reliable access to the markets and fair prices for their produce. The days of Gambia's importation of vegetables will be history.
- ▶ **Pest Control:** GFA government will revitalize the national pest control services in order to control and eradicate diseases affecting vegetables and other crops.

Proteins

- ▶ **Fish supply:** Our main protein is fish. The GFA-led government will ensure adequate local supply of fish by renegotiating any unfavourable fisheries agreements that adversely impact our fish supply. It will ensure that local food demand is satisfied before any fish is sold to foreign fishmeal and fish oil companies.
- ▶ **Preserving fish stocks:** The GFA-led government will protect the country's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) by strictly monitoring illegal fishing activities. Our government will put an end to the depletion of fish stocks. This will start with re-examining and renegotiating all existing fisheries agreements that are unfair to the nation, limit the industrial fishing licences and protection of artisanal fishing zones. Improve stock recovery by having closed seasons and restricting access to at least one nautical mile from the shore for any form of fishing.
- ▶ **Aquaculture:** Our government will invest in the development of the aquaculture industry by providing financing and training to youth and other entrepreneurs across the country. The growth of the aquaculture sub-sector depends critically on the availability of affordable feed, which will also stimulate further cereal production.
- ▶ **Poultry:** Poultry is the second most important source of protein in The Gambia. The GFA-led government will remove obstacles, particularly those related to affordable poultry feed, for our struggling poultry businesses. Our government will consider the whole value chain and prioritize the production of maize and other key ingredients of animal feed by facilitating access to key inputs and financing the necessary infrastructure.
- ▶ **Livestock:** The GFA-led government will address the constraints in the livestock sector by addressing water shortages and feed supply. Our government's plans to address this sub-sector will focus on both traditional rural herders and emerging modern livestock farmers. Disease control will be strengthened through the deployment of properly trained livestock extension staff and the provision of drugs and vaccines.

Vegetable Oil

Through our industrialization policy, the GFA-led government will target local production of vegetable oil through value addition. Vegetable oil derived from groundnuts is considered premium in most parts of the world, and our country is a major producer of groundnuts. This will

further increase the return to groundnut cultivation — a crop whose production and returns have been declining over the past couple of decades. Other sources of vegetable oils can also be grown in the country.

Apiculture / Beekeeping

An emerging but underexploited sub-sector in agriculture is honey production. The GFA-led government will boost this sector by identifying impediments to investments at all segments of the value chain, ranging from beehive production to honey production, processing and marketing.

- ▶ **Boosting the private sector in agriculture:** In addition to small-scale farmers, the GFA-led government will encourage and support local agribusiness firms' participation in agricultural production and processing. This support will include access to land, land preparation, infrastructure, access to financing, and market access. This support will be extended to all agribusinesses involved in cereal production, horticulture, livestock, aquaculture, apiculture, and other related areas.

EXPECTED IMPACT

- ▶ *Adequate supply of locally produced quality food for Gambian consumers and exports through higher productivity.*
- ▶ *Affordable food prices for Gambian consumers.*
- ▶ *The transformation of Gambian agriculture into a productive and innovative sector that attracts entrepreneurs and drives economic growth.*
- ▶ *The creation of employment and entrepreneurial opportunities for Gambian citizens.*
- ▶ *Lowering the cost of living for Gambians and reducing poverty.*
- ▶ *Sustained rural development.*

PILLAR 2: A MODERN, DIVERSIFIED, AND RESILIENT ECONOMY

INTRODUCTION

The Gambia's economy cannot continue to rely on rain-fed agriculture and seasonal tourism. To create real opportunity for our youth and lift families out of poverty, we must transform the foundations of our economy. GFA is committed to building a dynamic, diversified economy powered by industry, innovations and reliable energy. This pillar focuses on unlocking investment, supporting entrepreneurs and innovators, and creating quality jobs that allow Gambians to thrive at home.

GOAL

For the GFA government, the ultimate goal of economic transformation is to enhance the welfare of the Gambian population by creating quality employment and investment opportunities, eradicating poverty and raising living standards.

CURRENT REALITY

- ▶ **Undiversified economy:** The Gambia has an economy that is largely undiversified, driven primarily by rain-fed agriculture and tourism. This means that the economy is highly exposed to rainfall and external shocks. Small-scale processing is occurring in The Gambia, but it primarily involves backyard cottage industries that lack the necessary sophistication and scale.
- ▶ **Import dependence:** The Gambia imports almost all the food it consumes, and nearly all of the imported food can be produced locally. This over-reliance on imports also extends to a large number of consumer goods.
- ▶ **Exposure to external shocks:** As a small country, we are highly vulnerable to international price fluctuations. Our continued importation, low foreign direct investment, and low productive agriculture constantly depreciate our currency, increasing our cost of living.
- ▶ **Energy deficiency:** The manufacturing sector requires an affordable and reliable energy supply. This is lacking in The Gambia, where every region of the country experiences multiple power outages daily.
- ▶ **Low confidence:** FDI in the country is low because investors lack confidence in the country's economic management.
- ▶ **Poor business-enabling environment:** Access to land for factory location involves complicated processes, which discourage local entrepreneurs. Access to finance for local entrepreneurs is non-existent, which is problematic given the incubation required by the manufacturing sector, including any value-added activities. Cumbersome bureaucratic processes stifle local entrepreneurs.

GFA'S SOLUTIONS

Economic transformation demands greater efficiency and deliberate diversification from agriculture and tourism toward industrial development, boosting resilience and generating sustainable economic opportunities for growth and employment.

- ▶ **Value addition and agro-processing:** The GFA-led government will provide the necessary support to the private sector to kick-start the value addition and agro-processing of food crops, including groundnuts, rice, tomatoes, citrus, mangoes, cashews, papayas, cereals, and many others. The processed products will include milled rice, vegetable oil, fruit juice, dried fruits, fruit paste, and other processed products such as bread and pastries.

Light manufacturing: The garment and textile manufacturing industries, which have boosted the growth of Southeast Asian countries over the past couple of decades, are now looking to other economies for expansion. The GFA-led government will launch a special initiative to attract these light industries to The Gambia, creating employment opportunities for our youths, encouraging technology adoption, and generating exports.

Energy: A GFA-led government will strive for energy sovereignty, as there can be no economic transformation without addressing our energy challenges. This will begin with increasing the country's energy generation capacity through investments in new power sources and independent power producers. Once sufficient base load is reached, our government will launch an ambitious push toward solar and wind energy. With our new and modern generation plants, the cost of electricity will be reduced, and end-user tariffs will reflect this lower cost.

- ▶ **Business regulations:** The GFA-led government will streamline registration, taxation, and other business regulations to facilitate the creation and operation of businesses. Our government will remove the unnecessary burden of annual business registration renewal at the Attorney General's Chambers.

- ▶ **Tax reforms:** The Gambia tax system is long overdue for reforms. The GFA-led government will immediately initiate a major overhaul of the existing GRA Act. Our government will work with The Gambia Chamber of Commerce and Industry (GCCI), the Association of Gambian Manufacturers (AGM), and other business groups to ensure that the new GRA bill meets their concerns and unshackles businesses.
- ▶ **Financial services:** The GFA-led government will address the issue of access to finance for businesses and entrepreneurs. Our government will establish a national development bank to address the financing needs of companies that are currently not being met by existing financial institutions. Any government-created financial institutions under the GFA regime will complement, rather than displace, private financial institutions. Our party leadership understands that the public sector has no comparative advantage in operating a business.
- ▶ **Local content:** FDI should contribute to regional economic development, including the generation of employment for our workers. The GFA-led government will strengthen local content regulations to ensure that foreign investors allocate a majority of jobs to Gambian employees except in cases where expertise is lacking locally.
- ▶ **Legal Reforms:** The country requires legal reforms, particularly in the areas of contract disputes and fraud cases. The GFA-led government will ensure that commercial courts adjudicate cases quickly, fairly, and that judgments are enforced.
- ▶ **Land reforms and urban planning:** The GFA-led government will undertake urban planning, zoning spaces for industrial production appropriately. These areas will have dedicated power lines to reflect the importance of a reliable energy supply for industries. A GFA-led government will also seriously look at decentralizing industries to other parts of the country where land and other infrastructure are readily available. This will reduce the congestion in urban areas and will help remove the constraints on limited resources such as water, electricity and land.

EXPECTED IMPACT

- ▶ *A resilient and diversified economy that promotes robust and sustainable growth.*
- ▶ *The creation of quality employment opportunities for Gambian workers.*
- ▶ *Increasing the affordability of food and other consumer goods.*
- ▶ *The generation of foreign exchange through a revitalised tourism sector, greater exports and lower imports.*
- ▶ *Improving the business environment for Gambians and foreign investors.*
- ▶ *Expansion of the tax base of the country to enable sustainable development finance.*

PILLAR 3: A HEALTHY, SKILLED AND EMPOWERED PEOPLE

INTRODUCTION

A nation's greatest wealth is its people. For The Gambia to rise, our citizens must be healthy, educated and equipped with the skills needed in a modern economy. Today, too many Gambians are held back by poor healthcare, low-quality education, and limited opportunities. GFA is committed to investing in human capital so that every Gambian — regardless of gender, region or background — can live with dignity, in good health and contribute to national development.

GOAL

A healthy, skilled, productive, and educated population of all genders, ages, ethnicities, and regions that can contribute to national development and enable people to live with dignity.

CURRENT REALITY

With regards to human capital, The Gambia is currently characterized by the following:

- ▶ **Low-quality education:** While enrolment rates are improving at all levels, the quality of education remains low in the country. This is reflected in poor performance on the National Assessment Test (NAT), West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE), and other assessments.
- ▶ **Poor remuneration of teachers:** A significant part of the problem with low educational quality is the inadequate remuneration of teachers. The teaching field is now being used by many teachers as a temporary means of employment while they seek better opportunities.
- ▶ **High cost of education:** The out-of-pocket education expenditures are too high for the average Gambian household. At the tertiary level, the tuition cost is simply too high for most Gambians. As a result, the average level of education attained is adversely affected.
- ▶ **Low infrastructural investments in education:** A depressingly large number of schools in The Gambia have dilapidated facilities. This problem is not limited to the primary and secondary levels of education. Numerous tertiary institutions, including the GTTI, face this problem. Teachers' quarters in rural areas are often lacking, which significantly reduces the attractiveness of those locations for teachers.
- ▶ **Inadequate TVET:** There is also insufficient financing of vocational and other technical training institutions for youths. Skilled training in various technical professions is often lacking.
- ▶ **Poor quality healthcare:** Even though we are training doctors, people's health is not improving. Gambians have extremely limited access to quality and affordable healthcare. Investments in health facilities are low, resulting in inadequate number of hospital beds, a lack of modern equipment, a shortage of doctors, and a limited supply of essential medications. Without affordable and quality healthcare, the population cannot be healthy, which implies a lower life expectancy and reduced level of human capital.
- ▶ **High disease burden:** The burden of both infectious and non-communicable diseases remains high. One of the contributors to this has been the decline in immunization rates and a lack of appreciation for the rising rates of non-communicable diseases, such as cardiovascular diseases — a direct result of poorly regulated importation of saturated cooking oils and other fat-laden foods. When people face a high disease burden, it reduces productivity by taking them out of the labour force.

GFA'S SOLUTIONS

- ▶ **Increasing teacher remuneration:** To improve the quality of education, we must attract qualified Gambians to the teaching field. This can be achieved by increasing the compensation of teachers. The GFA-led government will ensure that the remuneration of teachers is consistent with their value addition to society — education increases our self-reliance and resilience. Because our government is committed to improving the lives of the teachers, it will also invest in quality accommodation and other amenities for teachers, particularly in rural areas.
- ▶ **Investment in UTG:** UTG is our flagship university. Before opening another institution of tertiary education, we must ensure that this current one is well-funded. The GFA-led government will prioritise transformative investment in UTG by upgrading infrastructure, advancing scholarships, research and innovation and encouraging the formation of spin-out companies to contribute to the creation of jobs and national development.
- ▶ **Increasing scholarships at the UTG:** Each year, a large number of bright students are prevented from entering university or completing on time due to a lack of funding. For a developing country like The Gambia, with a human capital deficit, this is unacceptable. The GFA-led government will significantly increase the scholarships to students with good results. The GFA leadership understands that such scholarships are investments worth making — they will improve lives which will drive national development.
- ▶ **Investment in TVET (reforms of USET):** Even if our regular formal educational systems are functioning well, a country still needs technical and vocational institutions to ensure that the skill set of workers matches the needs of the economy. The GFA-led government will not only invest in a greater number of TVET institutions but will also upgrade their quality. Furthermore, the GFA-led government will ensure that each region of the country has at least one well-funded TVET institution.
- ▶ **Investment in exceptionally talented and gifted students:** No nation can compete effectively in the modern world without the requisite talent pool of home-grown individuals to draw from. It is therefore important and necessary for our country to identify and nurture talented and gifted students from all types of development-relevant fields for our context, to form this pool of individuals who will spearhead our country's long-term development.
- ▶ **Investment in health facilities:** A prerequisite for a healthy population is having a country with health facilities where citizens receive quality care at an affordable cost. The GFA-led government is committed to improving the lives of every Gambian and will ensure that every Gambian has access to good quality healthcare. Our government will invest in facilities, ensuring that their locations correspond well with the country's population distribution. Health facilities without equipment, medicine, and personnel are ineffective. Therefore, the GFA-led government will complement the addition of facilities with the required soft infrastructure investments.
- ▶ **Medicine control and administration:** The medicine control and administration system in The Gambia is currently broken. The GFA-led government will make reforming this system a priority. The procurement and logistics system for distribution will be overhauled, ensuring the timely allocation of funds and transparent purchases by competitive bidding following WHO protocols, so that Gambian patients have access to the required medicines at health facilities across the country. Without adequate medication, mortality and morbidity would be high, leading to a less healthy population. Our government will implement comprehensive quality assurance systems, anchored by accredited in-country laboratory analysis, requiring all imported medicine and medical devices to undergo rigorous testing to safeguard patient safety.
- ▶ **National prevention strategy that complements pharmacological interventions:** Our government is committed to shifting toward prevention-centred care to address the growing burden of diabetic complications, including amputations and blindness, and cardiovascular complications such as stroke. The rise in these conditions over the past two decades demands stronger early intervention strategies. We will prioritise early education and routine screening to promote behaviour change, correct misconceptions

about chronic disease progression, and reduce disability, mortality, and healthcare costs. In partnership with the University of The Gambia, patient education will be embedded in medical training. We believe that emphasizing non-drug interventions and public awareness will complement drug therapy and support sustainable healthcare financing.

EXPECTED IMPACT

- ▶ *A highly trained and educated workforce that will increase economic productivity.*
- ▶ *A highly remunerated workforce where compensation matches training.*
- ▶ *A healthy population where compassionate healthcare is accessible and people live with dignity.*
- ▶ *Increased pathways out of poverty by increasing opportunities irrespective of socio-economic background.*
- ▶ *A trained workforce where skills training is in line with labour demand.*
- ▶ *A reinvigorated youth population that seeks and finds opportunities at home rather than emigrating.*

PILLAR 4: A COMPETENT, EFFICIENT, AND ACCOUNTABLE STATE

INTRODUCTION

Progress is impossible without strong systems and capable leadership. The Gambia's current governance failures — from weak institutions to poor service delivery — are the root cause of many of our national challenges. The weak civil service is a reflection of this leadership failure. GFA is committed to rebuilding the state, so that it becomes a driver of development rather than an obstacle to it. This pillar focuses on restoring competence, strengthening institutions, enforcing accountability and ensuring that public systems work for the people.

GOAL

To bring about real systemic change, the social and institutional environment must be aligned to achieve national advancement.

CURRENT REALITY

- ▶ **Lack of capable and serious leadership:** One of the most striking features of the current leadership is the lack of competence, first and foremost at the top, but particularly in key government positions. This feature is reflected in most areas of the administration. When competence is not the most important factor, goals other than national ones become a priority.
- ▶ **Lack of patriotism:** Patriotism entails devotion and loyalty to one's country. This means that its people, culture, and history all evoke a deep sense of love, pride, and attachment. Given this deep connection, a patriotic individual is willing to make significant sacrifices for their country. The situation with our current leadership is the opposite. We have leaders today who prioritize their own interests over those of the country and its people.
- ▶ **Unresponsive government:** Listening and addressing the needs and concerns of citizens seem to be an after-thought for this government. It takes drastic actions beyond what is normal to get the current government to act. A case in point is the recent GALA protests over blatant corruption and the prioritization of special interests over national ones. Belated — though ultimately insufficient actions — were only taken due to pressures from those protests.
- ▶ **Disrespect of expertise:** Key appointments in ministerial and other important posts are often made on criteria other than expertise. This has resulted in a weak civil service — not because of the inadequacies of the average civil servant but because of the faulty leadership appointments made by the government using wrong criteria. This has weakened our civil service and has created an environment where there is little respect for expertise. As a result, key ministries, sectors, and agencies have been failing to deliver for the Gambian people.
- ▶ **Bad norms:** Numerous bad practices have unfortunately become the norm in the country. It is now almost commonplace to establish a commission when there is nothing unique about a crime that can be adjudicated by the relevant laws in place. It is also standard practice to award contracts to politically connected patrons. There is almost no accountability for failure to do one's job.
- ▶ **Pervasive corruption:** The level and depth of corruption in the current Gambian regime is unprecedented. Individuals who have been clearly implicated in major wrongdoings are appointed to important positions. Not surprisingly, the tone for such behaviour is set by the top leadership of the government. After all, the president, Adama Barrow himself, has called damning audit reports mere opinions. There is blatant state capture where a connected few are flagrantly benefiting from state resources at the expense of the public.

- ▶ **Excessive partisanship:** The current government elevates partisanship to an unprecedented level. One of the pernicious ways this is visible is the constant undermining of local governments simply because they are headed by leaders from the opposition parties. As a result, citizens are deprived of services simply because the central government wants to score political points against the opposition.

GFA'S SOLUTIONS

"Once a political system has been corrupted right from the very top leaders to the lowest rung of the bureaucracy, the problem is very complicated. The cleansing and disinfecting have to start from the top and go downwards in a thorough and systematic way." — Lee Kuan Yew of Singapore

The first principle that will guide the thinking and behaviour of the GFA-led government is the following: What is in the best interest of the country in the long term? To create a new governance environment, the GFA-led government will prioritize the following:

- ▶ **Leadership:** A leader must be animated by a vision centred on national development. This sense of purpose must permeate all decision-making processes of the country's leadership at all times. A leader must be genuine in their vision through actions. A leader must also be decisive, considering all options and making difficult decisions when needed. The GFA-led government will ensure that leadership of any public unit is carefully chosen and vetted on objective criteria and held accountable for results delivery.
- ▶ **Competency and integrity:** The GFA-led government will ensure that competency and integrity are among the most important elements considered in appointing officials to any position. Meritocracy in appointments is critical and guaranteed to ensure that holders of public office carry out their duties effectively. Leadership positions in government will be filled based on competence, experience, and integrity — not political loyalty. After all, "personnel are policy."
- ▶ **Ethical standards:** The GFA-led government will establish a government where public servants adhere to the highest standards of behaviour. Our government will actively fight against unethical behaviours. Public service must always be prioritized over personal gain by our public servants.
- ▶ **Changing norms:** The GFA-led government will change norms in numerous ways to ensure that any behaviour not aligned with the long-term interests of the country is addressed. The GFA government will fight against the status quo, especially aspects of behaviours and norms such as "mass-lah-ha" that have held us back.
- ▶ **Citizen engagement:** The GFA-led leadership understands that the best way to serve the country's citizens is to remain attuned to their concerns and needs. Therefore, our government will ensure an open line of communication with the public and the media houses. Mechanisms such as the Access to Information Act will be diligently implemented in good faith, and key government information, including budgets, contracts and major policy decisions will be made publicly accessible.
- ▶ **Fighting corruption:** The GFA-led government will fight corruption as one would fight a plague or disease. While following due process, our government will fight corruption with determination, the higher the official, the more severe the repercussions for wrongdoing. Corruption is a cancer for good governance and erodes trust between the government and the people. Our government will strengthen anti-corruption institutions, strictly enforce procurement rules, and ensure that public officials are held accountable for misuse of public resources.
- ▶ **Rule of law:** The GFA leadership understands that an effective and just government follows rules, regulations, and procedures diligently and consistently. A just government considers all citizens equal under the law, regardless of their social status or connections.

- ▶ **Incentive compatibility:** The GFA leadership understands that to ensure that public servants deliver satisfactorily and consistently, incentives must be aligned. Public officials who exceed expectations should be recognized and rewarded through a fair and transparent process. Those who fail to discharge their duties should face consequences that are clearly articulated. Our government will constantly remind all public servants that they occupy offices to serve the Gambian people, not to enrich themselves and that their output will be monitored and evaluated through a transparent performance and development review process.
- ▶ **Civic Education:** Citizens are better able to keep their leaders accountable and honest when they are well-informed about their rights and responsibilities. Civic education strengthens the foundations of democracy by raising citizens' awareness and promoting their engagement in the country's social and political arena. The GFA-led government will institute a nationwide civic education program for all age groups, starting from the basic education level. Our government will ensure that the program's reach extends beyond formal education by providing civic education opportunities in local languages.
- ▶ **Effectiveness and efficiency:** The legitimacy of a government extends beyond simply winning an election at the ballot box. The government must also deliver relevant results for its citizens. The GFA-led government stands for proper stewardship of national resources through efficiency and effectiveness. By efficiency, we mean how well we use our limited national resources. By effectiveness, we refer to the diligent execution of programmes and policies to achieve national goals. One of the key ways in which GFA will achieve this will be through the professionalisation of the civil service.
- ▶ **Effective Decentralization:** Efficient and effective execution of government programs requires respect for local government structure through decentralization and devolution. GFA-led government will strengthen these structures and complement them rather than undermine them. Further local government reforms will be implemented to improve not only the financing of local governments but also service deliveries.
- ▶ **Resilient accountability system:** To institute credible mechanisms that will enhance accountability, systems of checks must be built that transcend individuals. The credibility of such a system must not vest power only among those in authority. The GFA-led government will strengthen oversight institutions, including the National Assembly, the Auditor General and the Ombudsman, and the courts, to ensure they perform their roles independently and effectively.

EXPECTED IMPACT

- ▶ *A high-trust society where leaders honour their side of the social bargain.*
- ▶ *A country with an investment climate where citizens and foreigners are confident that honest work and investments will be justly rewarded.*
- ▶ *An efficient and effective civil service that understands that public service is an avenue for working for national rather than personal interests.*
- ▶ *Standards to which public servants are held represent a higher bar than merely legal compliance.*
- ▶ *Recognition that there is no virtue in robbing the nation to benefit a friend or relative.*

IMPLEMENTATION & DELIVERY FRAMEWORK

Delivering national transformation requires more than good ideas. It requires discipline, political will, competence and a government that is serious about results. GFA is committed to a new culture of governance where promises are matched by performance, and where public institutions are outcome-driven and work with clarity, efficiency, and accountability.

A RESULT-DRIVEN GOVERNMENT

GFA administration will operate on clear performance targets for every ministry, agency, and public institution. Ministers and senior officials will be held accountable for measurable outcomes aligned with the four national pillars, and, in fulfilment of our social contract, citizens will be transparently informed of progress so that they can judge the credibility of our word.

EVIDENCE-BASED POLICYMAKING

All major policies will be guided by data, research and expert analysis. Decisions will be transparent, and the rationale behind them will be communicated to the public.

STRENGTHENED PUBLIC SERVICE CAPACITY

We will rebuild civil service into a professional, merit-based institution capable of delivering high-quality public services. Training, performance incentives and modern management systems will be introduced across the government.

COLLABORATIVE DELIVERY

Transformation requires partnership. The GFA government will work closely with:

- ▶ Local governments
- ▶ Private sector actors
- ▶ Civil society organisations
- ▶ Global Gambian diaspora and associations
- ▶ Development partners
- ▶ Communities and traditional leaders

This collaborative approach will ensure that solutions are grounded in local realities and national priorities.

TRANSPARENT MONITORING AND REPORTING

Citizens deserve to know how their government is performing. GFA will publish annual progress reports on each pillar, allowing the public to track achievements, challenges, and next steps. In line with our commitment to transparency and inclusion, these reports will be translated into local languages and made broadly accessible to ensure every citizen can monitor and evaluate our performance.

FINANCING THE AGENDA

SAVINGS FROM REDUCED IMPORTS

Achieving rice self-sufficiency, expanding horticulture, and revitalising livestock and poultry will significantly reduce food imports. These savings will strengthen the dalasi and free resources for development.

INCREASED EXPORTS AND VALUE ADDITIONS

Agro-processing, light manufacturing and improved fisheries management will generate new export revenues and expand the tax base.

EFFICIENT PUBLIC SPENDING

A GFA government will eliminate current wasteful expenditure, strengthen procurement systems and ensure that public funds are used for national priorities rather than political patronage.

EXPANDED DOMESTIC REVENUE

As the economy grows and formalises, tax revenues will increase through the expansion of the tax base without raising the burden on ordinary citizens. Reforms to the GRA Act will improve compliance and fairness.

STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

GFA will work with development partners, private investors and regional institutions to mobilise financing for infrastructure, energy and human capital, always ensuring that partnerships align with national interest.

CLOSING CALL TO ACTION

The Gambia stands at a crossroads. We cannot continue on the current path of stagnation, frustration, and missed opportunities; instead, we must choose renewal, dignity and progress. GFA offers a new beginning rooted in competence, patriotism, and a clear vision for a self-reliant and prosperous nation.

Our agenda is bold because Gambians deserve nothing less; we must change course and we are committed to building a nation where everyone counts. Our commitment is firm because the stakes are too high. And our belief in the potential and capacity of this country is unwavering.

Together, we can build a Gambia that feeds itself, powers itself and develops itself. A Gambia where every child has a chance, every region has opportunity, and every citizen lives with dignity.

A Gambia that works for all of us.