



FUTURE IN OUR HANDS THE GAMBA

NEWSLETTER

AUGUST 2019

NEWS IN SHORT

FIOHTG MOURNS THE DEMISE OF SIR DAWDA JAWARA

FIOHTG IS SERVING OVER 7000 RESIDENTS OF NBR

**CEREAL BANKING, A MODEL FOR ERADICATING THE
HUNGER SEASON**

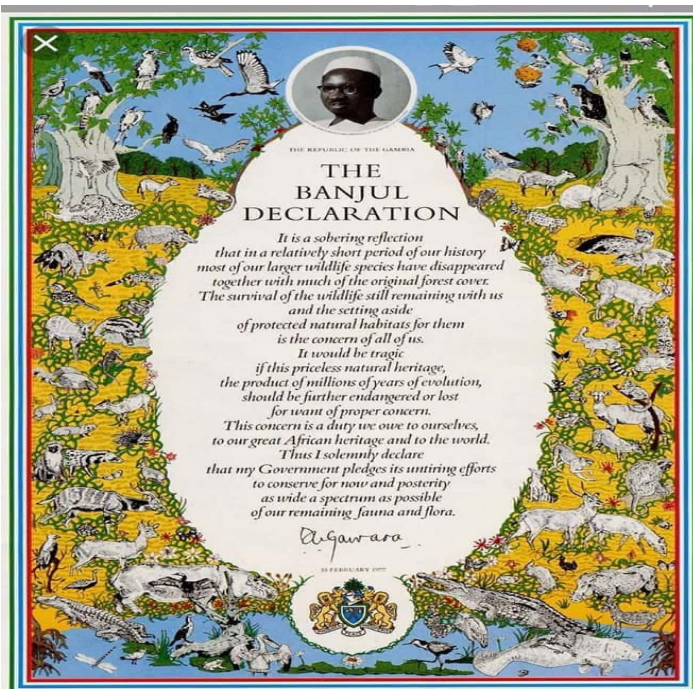
**FIOHTG ORGANISES SEMINAR ON POLITICAL PARTICIPA-
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CONSTRUCTION OF SCHOOLS AT AN ADVANCED STAGE





ENVIRONMENTALISM IS LIVING SIR DAWDA'S LEGACY



Future In Our Hands The Gambia (FIOHTG) joins the rest of the nation to express our condolences to friends, family, the Gambian citizens and Africa as a whole on the demise of our country's founding President His Excellency Sir Dawda Kairaba Jawara. He will be remembered and celebrated as a beacon of Democracy and Environmental Conservation. May he Rest in Eternal Peace and Jannahtul Firdaws be his final destination.

Although Gambians may be divided on Jawara's achievements, there is unanimity that he was an environmentalists. And that upon which men are united is no controversy but He knew the future needs of children of the Sahel and the Gambian children hence the Banjul Declaration to preserve as wide as possible our fauna and flora. For us, environmentalism is a creed. It pains us and we know it pains Jawara, the conservationist that even reserved forests like Salagi

and Nyambai are not being spared by those who profit at the expense of the future. Considering our country's vulnerability to climate change, we should be advocates of climate justice and live by those ethos for the attainment of development.

Therefore, FIOHTG believes that one of the best ways of preserving the Jawara legacy is by living in accordance with the values he espoused. Seeing the vulnerability to which our people have been exposed to due to the injustices inflicted on nature, FIOHTG chose the development of sustainable product base as a strategic goal. Under this goal, we conduct climate change sensitization and implement adaptation projects. In fact, we have planted 100s of drought resistant trees in schools and communities in vulnerable communities. This month, our Omar Cham is (trans)planting cashew trees in the Lower River Region in four communities to recover some of the lost forest cover.



But we know that living this legacy must go with awareness. And that is why our Rose T Mendy in collaboration with Forestry is conducting sensitization in five communities in the Lower River Region. For Jawara has bequeathed the Banjul Declaration to us, and if Gambia fail to handover "our remaining fauna and flora" in a befitting manner to the unborn generation, at least FIOHTG would have planted 1000s of trees. FIOHTG have intensified its work in environmentalism in the month of August. It is not by coincidence that Jawara passed away in July; for the Lord had decided that he will go in a month full of rainfall. Nature has it that the environmentalist will die on a month when many trees can be planted. Rest in Peace Sir Dawda, while we work on sustaining our flora and fauna.



FIOHTG IS SERVING OVER SEVEN THOUSAND PEOPLE IN NBR

Following the launching of its Management Information System, preliminary results shows that FIOHTG is serving over seven thousand Gambians in the North Bank Region. Until recently, FIOHTG was operational in the Central River, Upper River and Lower River regions. However, after conducting several assessments, it was deemed necessary to phase in the North Bank Region to help in the fight against poverty. Today, the organisation is happy to report that it serves 7587 from 4 main villages and 16 feeder villages in NBR, which represents 3.4% of the total population of North Bank Region. The percentage of the beneficiaries in the districts is as follows: 4% of the population in Jokadu, about 7% in Lower Badibu; 19% in Upper Niimi and 1.7% in Central Badibu.

Several trainings on democracy and human rights, gender equality, have been held in the communities to raise awareness of the people. However, FIOHTG is well aware that development results from interrelated factors, thus to complement the trainings to yield development, the organisation conducts training on entrepreneurship to help women realize their economic potentials while challenging the gender divide through sensitization. It is hoped that by expanding into the satellite villages, about 5% of the inhabitants of NBR would be reached stated the M&E Officer.

FIOHTG's CEREAL BANKING SCHEME, A MODEL FOR ERADICATING POVERTY WITHIN FARMING COMMUNITIES

FIOHTG's cereal banks is a scheme where FIOHTG provides money for communities to purchase cereals which are stored by the community and shared amongst those in need during the hunger season. One lesson learnt by FIOHTG is that democracy and empowerment means allowing people to design their development programmes for themselves. Therefore FIOHTG allows communities to decide the rate of payment for community to relend the cereals. The scheme has been created in Maria and Samba Nyadoh and it benefits by 20 heads of households. The scheme has been hailed for its low interest paid in kind. For every 100 kilogrammes of seed taken as a loan during the hunger season, an interest of 10 kilogrammes is paid either after harvest or before the next hunger season (August). It is hoped that this new bank will yield greater results and help in the eradication of hunger within farming communities just as it did in Tabajang.

The Cereal Bank in Tabajang started with 20 bags of cereals. Initially, for every bag of 50 Kg taken, an interest of 10Kg was repaid. However to conform with the principle of 'making loans accessible and cheaper' the community decided to reduce the interest to 6 kg per 50kg of seeds. The community has succeeded in multiplying this from the small interest charged. Explaining the benefits of the scheme, Omar said "it is usually difficult for heads of households to afford food during the rainy season. So the scheme tackles that. Farmers can access food through us as a loan while not missing work hours/days" 3 communities, Sareh Jawbeh, Fatako and Dembanding were all beneficiaries from the Tabajang cereal bank. "Currently they have their own" said Omar. The scheme has been further linked to ensuring that families have access to 3 daily meals. It has changed the lives of the people in the community. "Those who pay their interest can always access and be given more bags. This is almost a gift" said another woman. Oumu Cham affectionately calls it 'sutura' – the secret. FIOHTG believes that the government, NGOs and donors should employ the cereal banking model to revitalize cooperatives and tackle the problem of hunger during the rainy season.



SEMINAR ON ANTICORRUPTION, POLITICAL PARTICIPATION, POWER STRUCTURES, RELEVANT ACTS AND REFORMS CONCLUDED



The HR Unit of FIOHTG organized a two day seminar on *Political Participation, Anti Corruption, Power Structures and Relevant Acts* at its Conference Hall. The event attended by programme officers of the organisation was open to the public, attracting students, academics and CSO workers. The HR Officer Jainaba T. Sarr who doubles as Acting Director while the Director is on leave welcomed the speakers and urged the participants to make it an interactive one. In emphasizing the importance of the training she

reminded the participants that one of FIOHTG's core values is Transparency and Accountability. Therefore staff are required to be well acquainted with national and international issues and forms of corruption. Marr Nyang of the Gambia Participates led the deliberation on anticorruption. Mr. Nyang presented on the many forms of corruption and its effects on development. On tackling corruption, he emphasized the important role that CSOs must play in the fight against corruption. Mr. Nyang hailed FIOHTG for its budget tracking sessions in rural communities. Without you, most of those communities would not have the opportunity to know the budget allocated to the different sectors, he said. FIOHTG has been partnering with Gambia participates to discuss national and local government budgets in rural communities. It is worth to remember that the Gambia scored 37/100 in the 2018 Corruption Perception Index, thus Transparency International ranked the country 93 out of 187 states. This has prompted FIOHTG to intensify its drive against corruption.

The second segment of the seminar was facilitated by Mr. Amat Jeng of Uppsala University and Gambia Groups. The session focused on political participation and participants discussed various kinds of political participation. This segment of the seminar was equally important as FIOHTG is conducting several programmes on political participation in partnership with the NCCE. Therefore, the programme was a refresher for staff and to widen their understanding of political participation.



On the second day of the seminar, Dr. Ismaila Ceesay of the University of The Gambia delivered a presentation on Power Structures, Relevant Acts and the Reforms. He lamented the piecemeal reforms and the slow pace of reforms. Several matters of public interests such as the CRC, TRRC, SSR were discussed. Ebrima Drammeh thanked the presenters for the job well done and asked them to always come back to FIOHTG.

“Corruption is a cancer: a cancer that eats away at a citizen's faith in democracy, diminishes the instinct for innovation and creativity; already-tight national budgets, crowding out important national investments. It wastes the talent of entire generations. It scares away investments and jobs.”

Joe Biden



CONSTRUCTION OF SCHOOLS AT AN ADVANCED STAGE



Jainaba T Sarr the Human Resource officer who is overseeing the office of the country director of FIOHTG, has visited schools being built by the organisation. The visit took her to Bakoteh annex and other project sites in the Central River Region. Madam Sarr assured the staff on the ground that FIOHTG will do everything possible to see that workers deliver on time and with quality as schools are about to resume.

In a similar vein Mr. Bah, head of the construction unit has told given updates about the status of projects contracted to his unit. According to Mr. Bah, 90% of work has been completed in the Niaminas while Bakoteh Annex is somewhere around 60%. In Sandu, 50% of the buildings have been completed while the staff quarter in Bayaba at 90%. Mr. Bah explained that the heavy rains have affected the timely transportation of materials to sites that are off the main roads.

FIOHTG is a trusted partner of the Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education and her donors. Thanks to an established tradition of quality work and delivery on time, FIOHTG has been tasked with building schools around the country. Our staff know that people have different needs and therefore our buildings are accessible to all, either on foot or wheelchairs. Our organisation has been in compliance with international standards and creating friendly environment for people with special needs well before the state thought about a Bill on Special Needs (Disability Bill). Indeed the Future is IN OUR HANDS.

Have you heard about the FIOHTG WEEKLY QUOTES? Below we reproduce two. Follow our social media platforms

FIOHTG WEEKLY QUOTES



"Infrastructure continues to pose a major challenge to the Education sector, despite all the giant strides towards the provision of school facilities. This is being exacerbated by a growing need for expansion in response to the policy requirement of 2.5 km radius from home to school and the population growth. FIOHTG through its Construction Unit is a strong partner in achieving that goal."

DEMBO BAH, HEAD OF CONSTRUCTION UNIT, FIOHTG

August 2019

FIOHTG WEEKLY QUOTES



"Literacy and development have endless companionship; the role played by literacy on development is quite dominant. Literate societies make informed decisions. And literate people are the architects of development. Let's leave no child at home this academic year."

AMINATA SECKA, HEAD OF SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT UNIT, FIOHTG

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Do you have a story or an event for the next newsletter?

If so, we would like to hear from YOU!

Thank you for your support!