



REPUBLIC OF THE GAMBIA

National Assembly, New Assembly Building, Reginald Pye Lane
Banjul, The Gambia



GOODWILL MESSAGE of the Speaker of The National Assembly of The Gambia during the 2022 Strategic Review and 18th Governing Board Meeting of the African Organisation of English-speaking Supreme Audit Institutions (AFROSAI-E) May 9th, 2022.

Honourable Minister for Finance and Economic Affairs, the Chairperson of African Organisation of English-speaking Supreme Audit Institutions (AFROSAI-E), Mr. Mohammed Ali, respected Members of the Governing Board of AFROSAI-E, the Auditor General and staff of the National Audit Office, the Board of Governors of NAO herein present, Hon. Secretary General and Head of Civil Service, the Permanent Secretary, MoFEA, the Solicitor General & Legal Secretary, the Accountant General, the Director General of Internal Audit Directorate, Distinguished Delegates, representatives of government departments and institutions, invited Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, all other Protocols duly and respectfully observed, I greet you all in the name of peace, ASSALAAMU ALEIKUM WA RAHMATULLAH.

I am greatly honoured and privileged to be accorded this unique opportunity to serve as the guest speaker on behalf of the Speaker of the National Assembly of The Gambia on the historic occasion of 2022 Strategic Review and 18th Governing Board Meeting of AFROSAI-E, a regional organisation of international repute that



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commits itself to cooperating with and supporting its members to enhance their institutional capacity to enable them successfully fulfil their audit mandates and making a difference to the lives of their citizens.

The importance of a high-profile forum of this magnitude cannot be overemphasised. It accords stakeholders an opportunity to interact and exchange ideas and experiences centred around strengthening the Supreme Audit Institutions' determination to improve in the areas of Independence, Accountability and Transparency.

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

To empower and support Supreme Audit Institutions (SAIs) should be everyone's business, State, and non-State actors alike, if we want to ensure transparency, accountability, and probity in our public finance management systems in all institutions financed with public funds.

Thus, the focus of this forum is not only to present and reward best performance audit report to prize winners but equally to brainstorm on the strategies and mechanisms that would ensure



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and strengthen the accountability of public funds in our public institutions.



Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

National Audit Office (NAO) of The Gambia has been supporting and continues to support the National Assembly in conducting its oversight functions over public institutions. The NAO is staffed with professionals and patriots who leave no stone in carrying out their work. For the past five years, NAO has been so initiative taking in the way they conduct their audits. The reports submitted to the National Assembly are more user friendly now compared to before.

The NAO has performed an audit on the funds spent during Government's response to the Covid-19, even before the Finance and Public Accounts Committee (FPAC) of the National Assembly requested them to do so. Furthermore, the Auditor General and Team spent days with the Hon. Members taking them through the said report. This has not only empowered Hon. Members in understanding the report but also helped them to ask the right questions to the government officials entrusted with the implementation of the Covid Response.

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Similarly, the National Audit Office has over the years conducted performance audit on various government institutions, such as Gambia Ports Authority on its Cargo Handling and the report was presented to the Public Enterprises Committee for scrutiny. Equally, it has conducted similar audit on the supply of farm inputs by the Ministry of Agriculture and distribution of drugs by the central medical store under the Ministry of Health. These audits were all geared to making sure that public funds are judiciously utilised by public officers for the public good. These exercises put Government and its institutions on the spotlight thereby ensuring efficient and effective public finance management and ensuring proper public service delivery.

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

For the past two decades, FPAC has been thoroughly scrutinising and extensively deliberating on Auditor General's audit reports. The Committee ensures that all relevant stakeholders are engaged during the scrutiny process, with a view to addressing the anomalies reported in the reports. Equally, the Auditor General serves and continue to serve as the Principal Aide to the Finance and Public Accounts Committee in all its deliberations. This goes



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to demonstrate the trust and confidence that the National Assembly has for the Auditor General and the National Audit Office in general.

Cognisant of the crucial role played by the NAO in ensuring accountability and probity, with all the financial and budgetary constraints posed by Covid, the National Assembly has been approving the NAO budget as proposed with insignificant cuts compared to other budget entities. We believe that not empowering the NAO to do their work will be more deadly than Covid or any other austerity measures.

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

The National Assembly has recently constituted committees for the Sixth Legislature, and I happen to be selected as the Vice Chairperson for the FPAC. I can assure you that we will continue to support the excellent work that the NAO is doing in fostering good governance and fighting against wastage of public resources.



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Before I conclude, I would urge all Auditor Generals across the continent to take a closer look at the extractive industry in the continent. The continent is bleeding and our natural resources are under attack and we are short-changed! I asked that you interrogate the contracts, the productions and exports of our resources. If the laws need to change, lets work together and do it. If capacities have to be built, let's work together and do it for the benefit of Mama Africa.

Finally, on behalf of the Honourable Speaker and Members of the National Assembly, I wish you a very fruitful deliberation and a memorable stay in the Smiling Coast of West Africa.

I thank you all for your kind attention!