

**REPORT OF THE SELECT COMMITTEE ON TOURISM, ARTS, CULTURE,
YOUTH AND SPORTS ON ITS VISIT TO SPORTING FACILITIES AND TOURIST
SITES ACROSS THE COUNTRY**



17th – 25th OCTOBER 2022

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Honourable Members of the Select Committee on Tourism, Arts, Culture, Youth and Sport wish to express their profound appreciation for the warm reception accorded to the Team by all officials during the oversight visit.

We thank the Ministries of Tourism and Culture and Youth and Sports, and all the Tour Guide we met during the visit.

We extend our sincere appreciation to the Office of the Clerk for the support and the staff of the National Assembly in facilitating these engagements.

MEMBERS OF THE TOURING TEAM

The visiting team comprised the following Honourable Members of the Committee

- | | | |
|-------------------------|---|------------------|
| 1. Hon. Saikou Bah | - | Chairperson |
| 2. Hon. Abdoulie Ceesay | - | Vice-Chairperson |
| 3. Hon. Nfally N. Kora | - | Member |
| 4. Hon. Alieu Baldeh | - | Member |
| 5. Hon. Pa Demba Sanneh | - | Member |
| 6. Hon. Omar Jammeh | - | Member |
| 7. Hon. Ebrima Jaiteh | - | Member |

Support Staff

- | | | |
|--------------------|---|----------------------------------|
| 1. Sarata Bojang | - | Committee Clerk |
| 2. Ebrima Jawo | - | Assistant Senior Committee Clerk |
| 3. Chernob Darbo | - | Communication Officer |
| 4. Sanna Trawalley | - | Driver |
| 5. Ya Awa Nyassi | - | MoTC |

INTRODUCTION

The Select Committee on Tourism, Arts, Culture, Youth and Sport conducted a nine-day visit to selected Sporting facilities and Tourist Centres to get first-hand information on the ground; at both the level of the facilities and also to understand the status of the damage at this Cultural Heritage Facilities.

The purpose of the visit is in fulfilment with the Committee's statutory mandate, in accordance with Section 109 (2) (b) of the Constitution of the Republic of the Gambia and Clauses 97 (1) and (2) (b) of the revised Standing Orders of the National Assembly, to perform oversight on the Institutions under its purview.

The tour group comprised of the Honourable Members of the Committee, support staff, Officials from the two Ministries, and Tour Guides working for NCAC.

Objectives

The overall objective of the tour was:

- To gather first-hand information and facts on all sectors and facilities under its preview.
- To better understand issues in addressing the challenges face by them.

Methodology

The methodology used during the tour was:

- Observations
- Site Visits and inspections
- Photography
- Question and answer sessions

FINDINGS

FORT BULLEN

The Committee commenced the tour at Fort Bullen in Barra, Lower Nuimi North Bank Region. In his statement, the Chairman of the Committee informed the officials of the site that the Committee is on a country wide tour on tourism sites and sporting facilities. The visit by the Committee will guide it to establish firsthand information on the activities, the achievements, challenges and a way forward for more viability of these sites and facilities.

Salma Sarr a tour guide on her part indicated that Fort Bullen was built in 1826 by the British Colonials. It is named after the then Governor of the region Charles Bullen. It was purposefully built to monitor the illegal boats that were transporting slaves as it was abolished by then. The fort is also connected to the James Island historically and this makes it very important for tourist to visit to establish the history about the slavery. It was also used by soldiers during the Second World War.

According to her, there are twelve tour guides operating the Fort Bullen in shifts. These guides are officially trained by the NCAC to take tourist around the site and guide them professional. She also informed the Committee that the site is being renovated, but they are very careful not to tamper with the original structures. She further indicated that the site is threaten by the ocean and the NCAC and the Ministry should work together and create a sea defence in order to protect the original structures of the fort.

There is also a museum in the site, but it is currently under renovations and all the items are placed in store until after this process.

At this point, the Committee intervened with some questions as follows;

1. What is the relationship between the NCAC and the fort bullen staff? According to Ms Sarr, the NCAC is organizing capacity building for the tour guides, and it also facilitates exchange visits with other sister sites e.g Wassu Stones Circle.
2. The Committee was interested to know whether the tour guides are motivated financially by the NCAC.

According to the tour guides, there is no financial motivation for them. They only receive tips from visiting tourists sometimes.

CHALLENGES

1. No financial motivation for the tour guides.
2. There are less activities in the fort, and this discourage tour operators to bring tourist to the site. Sometimes, if they bring tourist to the site, they do not spend enough time to know all that they supposed to know about the site.
3. The tour guides in this site are not registered with the National Tourist Guides Association. This limits the activities of the tour guides to few tourist sites in the country.

Recommendations

1. The site should be upgraded to attract more visitors all year round to create more revenue and employment for the community.
2. There should be some financial incentives for the tour guides.
3. The tour guides should register with the National Tourist Guides Association.
4. There should be more trainings on both new and existing products and services as the sector is dynamic.

BARRA ECOLODGE

The Committee proceeds to the Barra Ecolodge which is being constructed by the Gambia Tourism Board for the promotion of ecotourism within the North Bank Region. The Committee met with the representative of the Contractor. The Chairman indicated that the Committee is performing a routine oversight visit to collect first-hand information on tourism sites.

On his part, the representative of the Contractor stated that the work stopped for about one and a half year due to the unavailability of the specified red blocks recommended for the construction of these ecolodges. This matter has been resolved now as the Contractor has bought a machine for the moulding of these blocks locally. He also informed the Committee that the lodge will consist of seven structures in total. The time anticipation for the completion of this lodge is February 2023.

On the part of the Committee, the Chairman indicated that the information received is information regarding the progress of the work. The Committee will further engage the Contractor as it is very concerned about the completion of the project within the stipulated timeframe.

ALBRED A – JUFFUREH (KUNTA KINTEH ISLAND)

The Committee was welcomed by the officials of the ROOTS. The Chairperson of the Committee informed the officials that the essence of this visit is to establish first-hand information on the operations or activities, the achievements, challenges, and the way forward for this tourist destination.

On his part, the PRO of the tour guides informed the Committee that this tourist destination is currently operated by four staff and ten tour guides. Tourists are usually welcomed to the reception of the destination, then they are briefed about the history of the place before visiting the Kunta Kinteh Island as the engagement in this destination. Tourist tickets cost GMD200.00 and this is for the NCAC and GMD200.00 for community fees. The Kinteh family at the end of the year do get share from this money and part of the money is also plough back to the community in the form of social projects e.g., provision of water. The tour guides are also paid salaries from these revenue during the tourist season. During the Covid 19 period, the tour guides were not paid salaries but rather paid honorarium or allowances every four or five months.

KUNTA KINTEH ISLAND - According to the tour guides, the Kunta Kinteh Island is three and half kilometres away the Juffureh/Albreda community. It is three hundred kilometres away from the mouth of the river Gambia. More than half of the island is already lost to the ocean according to the guides. The site is also officially recognized as a world heritage site by the UNESCO.

This Island during the slave trade was the point where all slaves around the Gambia were gathered for two to three weeks before finally transported to the West. Slaves were inhumanly treated in the Island during their stay there before being transported.

DISCUSSIONS

1. How many tourists do you receive during periods?

According to the guides, they received on average fifty visitors per day. When the cruise boats were operational from Banjul, we used to receive about a hundred tourist per day during peak periods.

2. How are the revenues collected spent?

The tour guides are paid from this fund, the Kunta Kinteh family do have a share from this fund at the end of the season, the two Alkalos are also paid

monthly from the fund and part of this money is plough back to the community.

3. Any plans to employ more tour guides from the community?
According to the PRO of the tour guides, they are thinking along that line, but this must correspond with the activities in the tourist destination.
4. Who collects this fund and who manages it?
The fund is collected by a staff of the NCAC, and it is managed by the Juffureh and Albreda Youths Society (JAYS).

ACHIEVEMENTS

1. NCAC do provide trainings for the tour guides to adjust to the needs of tourist.

Challenges

1. The jetty and the Kunta Kinteh Island are both fading away and it needs proper maintenance before it us too late.
2. The lack of cruise boats significantly hampers the number of tourists visiting the Island. Many tourists do prefer a boat trip from Banjul to visit the Island.
3. There is no representative of the GT Board in the community of Juffureh/Albreda.

Recommendation

1. The Ministry should think of reintroducing a cruise boat from Banjul to the Kunta Kinteh Island.
2. There should be a standard Eco-lodge and a cultural centre in the community.
3. More products and services in the destination should be introduced.
4. Renovation or construction of a new jetty at the riverbank.
5. The presence of a G T Board official in this tourist destination to work with the community to develop existing and new products to promote tourism and culture.
6. Diversification of Tourism Products and Services.
7. Creation of Sea Wall at Kunta Kinteh Island to maintain it.

KEREWAN PRESIDENT AWARDS SCHEME (PIA)

The Chairman of the Committee indicated that the Committee is on a countrywide tour of institutions under the Ministries of Tourism & Culture and Youths & Culture to establish first-hand information on the activities, the achievements, challenges, and a possible way forward. This will guide the Committee to make well informed decisions regarding these institutions. On his part, the Manager of the Kerewan PIA informed the Committee that this centre is an annex of the PIA Bakau which is the Headquarters. It has existed for over ten years in the region. Currently, there are fourteen students going through different fields of training. It is a skills centre focused on training youths on different fields of skills. This will help to change the mindset of youths and equipped them with the necessary skills to be employed or become entrepreneurs. Currently, the skills that are taught in the centre are:

1. Hair dressing and beauty therapy
2. Fashion and design

There is also an Auto mechanic, Carpentry and Plumbing workshops in the centre, but these programs are not taught currently. This is because of the male youths venturing into the backway and the centre do not have male students to enrol in these programs. Most of the students in the centre are females.

CHALLENGES

1. Some of the female students if they get married, they quit the institution. This affects the institution as most of the students are females.
2. Some students also quit the institutions because their families cannot afford the materials needed during their training at the centre.
3. It is still a challenge that the community do not understand the importance of acquiring skills.

DISCUSSION

- a. Does the institution tailor its courses according to the need of the community?
According to the manager of the centre, courses are not tailored according to the need of the community but instead the courses that are offered at the Head Office are the same offered at the Annex.
- b. What is the institution doing to popularized itself in the NBR?

The manager indicated that they do engage in community outreaches and during graduation ceremonies, the public is invited, and graduates display their skills in the process.

Recommendation

1. The Ministry should investigate the possibility of providing start-up capital for the graduates.
2. Courses offered by the Centre should be tailored according to the needs of the region.
3. Enough training materials should be provided for the students.

At the end of the discussions, the Committee was taken on a tour of all the different sections within the centre.

MAMA TAMBA YOUTHS EMPOWERMENT (BAOBA TRAVELLING)

The Committee visited the Mama Tamba Youth Empowerment in Illiasa, North Bank Region. This is an association that is involved in empowering youths through education, agriculture and skills acquiring. According to the Manager, the association is registered and is established by an inspiration of what his late grandfather Mama Tamba Jammeh a former Chief of Illiasa was doing for the community of North Bank and the Gambia at large. It is operating a lodge, a poultry house, bakery, and a processing plant. The lodge comprises of rooms and a hall for hosting different types of events including trainings. In the poultry farm, both life birds and eggs are produced. In the processing plant, products produced include, fruit juice, groundnut oil, sesame oil, moringa oil, soap, body oil, etc.

At the end of the discussion, the Committee was taken around the premises and all the units of the Association.

CHALLENGES

- a. Non availability of animal feed in the country.
- b. Inadequate raw materials

The Committee recommended that the Association should work with the Ministry of Agriculture through the regional Agricultural Director to seek support from the government.

GAMBIA SONGHAI INITIATIVE (GSI)

Mr. Lamin A. Camara Deputy Permanent Secretary Ministry of Youth and Sports and the focal person of the project welcomed the Committee to Chamen North Bank Region. Mr. Camara in his presentation gave a brief background of the project and the Challenges its facing. Some of the challenges he mentions where the Human Resources and Financial Resources.

Mr Mbye Saine, the Director of Songhai Initiative, informed the Committee that the idea of initiative was from Benin and the project is purposely designed to training young people to reduce youth unemployment and poverty in the rural Area. It's also meant to transform the agricultural sector into a productive, efficient, and sustainable to promote inclusive agriculture sector growth and employment.

The Centre provide the following trainings:

1. Agro- Forestry,
2. Animal Production
3. Ruminants
4. Vegetable Market Garden
5. Crop production
6. Poultry

Most of the programs they offer are 1 year program and mainly practical. He added that during the previous regime, at the end of the training each graduate received a starting capital of twelve thousand dalasi to venture into agriculture, but this is not happening now. The project site is about 250 hectares of Land, the institute have 36 staff.

The Committee was later led into a conducted tour to see the various agricultural activities such as Poultry and Animal Husbandry.

On the issue of the land ownership, the Committee informed the Management that they are aware and doing its best to see that this issue is resolved.

Challenges

- Legal land ownership issue
- Limited Resources
- Limited Human resources
- Inadequate mobility

- Lack of Equipment and Vehicle Maintenance
- High cost of feeds because GGC (SAROOW) prefer to take their feeds to Senegal than selling to them

Recommendation

- To track the graduates to help them know how many of them succeeded and those that did not.
- To continue giving the start-up capital to the graduates to help themselves after completing their training.

FARAFENNI YOUTHS CENTRE

The Chairman of the Committee informed the official that the tour is focused on visiting tourism and sporting facilities under the Ministries of tourism and Youths. This will avail the Committee the opportunity to established first-hand information on these facilities and know their current state. The Committee want to know the progress of work done, challenges and way forward at the Youth Centre.

On his part, the Chairman of the Committee of the Youth Centre informed Honourable Members that the work at the centre started since 2019. The construction of the centre is sponsored by the Youth Empowerment Project (YEP), but the blocks used for the construction is provided by Enable. The construction is generally funded by YEP, Enable and the IMVF but the work is supervised by the NYC. The centre comprises of a conference hall, a resource centre, and a Basketball pitch. He also informed the Committee that the property where the centre is built is owned by the VDC of Farafenni.

The Chairman of the Youth Centre implored on the Committee to do whatever possible to engage the NYC to further engaged this institution to complete the work. He also emphasized that some of these projects are almost facing out, so it is important to complete the work or else it will just be left without being completed.

KAUR MINI STADIUM

The Committee visited the Community stadium of Kaur. The facility is fenced, and a Basketball pitch is also constructed within the facility. The Committee was informed that the Ministry of Youth and Sports (MoYS) sponsored the construction of the Basketball pitch, toilets and the two sitting sheds in the field. The Deputy Permanent Secretary (DPS) of MoYS also informed the Committee that the Ministry is planning to upgrade the facility to a standard Mini stadium. The project is already approved and all the GPPA processes have been completed and the Ministry is now mobilizing funds for its execution.

KAUR YOUTHS CENTRE

The Committee was scheduled to visit this Youth Centre, but it could not access it due to a very bad state of the road. The Committee was also informed that the centre was constructed in a swampy area. In this regard, the Committee agreed to invite the NYC for an update on the construction of this facility.

KERR BATCH STONE CIRCLES

The Chairman of the Committee thanked the officials of the site for the warm welcome. He indicated that the Committee is on a tour on tourism and sporting facilities around the country. The Committee is mandated to perform oversight on all institutions under its purview i.e., the Ministries of Tourism & Culture and Youths & Sports and their satellite institutions. It is against this background that, the Committee embarked on the tour to acquire first-hand information on the activities, the achievements, challenges, and a possible way forward of the Kerr Batch Stones Circle.

On his part, the Manager of the site informed the Committee that, Kerr Batch Stones Circle is a recognized UNESCO world heritage site. It is believed that the Kerr Batch stones circle is 1500 years old and the site represents burial grounds and the people buried there were buried with all their belongings. The site is having two full time staff and two tour guides. The unique V-Shape stone found in Kerr Batch is the reason why the site is recognized as a world heritage site by UNESCO. The community of Kerr Batch is involved in the activities of the stone circles and students in schools visit the site as part of their history lessons. He informed the Committee that they are engaging the community to employ someone as a tour guide as the current tour guides are not residents of the

community. The community is benefitting from both the borehole and the solar system in the site.

He also informed the Committee that the NCAC conducts capacity building programmes for its staff and the tour guides. General awareness is also conducted on the history of these stone circles, and this is supported by the UNESCO. However, he indicated that the project at the Kerr Batch is not yet inaugurated and most of the activities of the stone circles are funded by donors. The official from the Tourism & Culture Ministry informed the Committee that this project is funded by the Ministry and there are no fees charged on visitors to this stone circle. Promotion of intangibles heritages i.e., our culture should be a priority area for NCAC, the president of the Senegambia tour guides association stated.

DISCUSSIONS

- What marketing strategy is in place to promote the Kerr Batch stones circle? According to the site manager, the distance of the site from the road and its bad condition is their biggest challenge to bring tourist to Kerr batch.
- What is done for the tour guides to be employed by the NCAC? The tour guides are not employed by the NCAC due to lack of funds. For this reason, the NCAC encourages the tourist to give tips to tour guides always as this is their main source of income.



RECOMMENDATIONS

- The Committee recommends that the NCAC employ someone from the community who should be trained on the history and the activities of the site. This will promote ownership and sustainability of the site.
- The Committee also recommended to the site manager to produce more tourism products to improve tourism in this site.

WASSU STONE CIRCLES

According to the site manager, this stone circle is also recognized by UNESCO as a world heritage centre. This is also because of the unique stone recognized as the tallest at 2.9 meters. The site has a museum and some offices. Currently, there are four staff in the site and some tour guides. NCAC have trained some youths in the community who are serving as tour guides. Schools within the community are also engaged on the activities of the site.

The President of the Senegambia Tour Guide Association informed the Committee that more trainings are need for both the full-time staff and the tour guides. The involvement of the community more should be a priority as the indigenes who can take ownership of the site, they should be engaged more to know the history and the activities of the place.



CHALLENGES

1. There is no electricity in the site.
2. One part of the fence of the site is down and animals do enter the place.
3. The access road to the site is in bad shape.
4. Poor remuneration, especially for the tour guides.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- a. There should be more training programmes for both officials of the stone circles and the community.
- b. A borehole for the facility.
- c. First aid skits for emergencies.
- d. More toilets for the site - currently there are only two.

WASSU SKILLS CENTRE

The delegation was welcomed by the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Kuntaur Area Council and his staff. The Chairman of the Committee thanked the officials for the warm welcome. He indicated that the Committee is on a tour on tourism and sporting facilities across the country. The Committee is mandated to perform oversight on all institutions under the purview of the Ministries of tourism & culture and youths & sports. In this regard, the Committee wants to establish first-hand information on the ownership, the state of the purported youth centre and a possible way forward on handing it over to the youths of the region. According to the CEO of the Area Council, the property is legally owned by the Council. It is constructed on a property that is also owned by the Council. They came to occupy the facility when a general renovation started at its Headquarters and after the completion of these works, the Council will move back, and the Council intends to use the property as a revenue generation station.

The Clerk of the Council also informed the Committee that the facility was constructed to generate funds for the Council. The Council had several meetings with the youths over the property, but there is no breakthrough on a way forward. They claimed to own the property, but there is no legal document to show that the property is owned by the youths.

The Director of Planning of the Council also stated that the ownership of the property was transferred to the Council from a family. The former CEO of the

Council was summoned by the Governor on state of the property and all the legal documents of the property were submitted to the office.

The Honourable Member for Janjangbureh informed the Committee that the facility was constructed by a project which is supporting the activities of youths in the country. He added that the facility is needed by the youths of the region for their enhancement and entrepreneurship development which is also a mandate of the Council.

At this point, the Chairman of the Committee told the meeting that the Committee had from both sides on the issue of the facility. He promised that the Committee will meet both the Ministries of Youths & Sports and Regional Government, NYC, and all other relevant parties to the matter to resolve it.

MUNGO PARK

The Committee visited Mungo Park's Obelish at Karantaba in Sami. They found no attendant on the ground and the state of the monument was in a deplorable condition. There was no signage leading to the site and the plate of the monument was removed. The access road was also in a very bad /poor condition.

The Committee also found out that a project amounting to 4Million was undergoing at the site which includes Fencing, Toilet, and a museum.

- The Committee Recommends that the Ministry of Tourism and Culture ensures that the structure is preserved and protected.
- To improve the road for accessibility of the site.

JANJANGBUREH YOUTHS CENTRE

The Chairman of the Committee thanked the officials of the Centre for the welcome. He indicated that the Committee is on a tour on tourism, youths, and sporting facilities around the country. The Committee is mandated to perform oversight on all institutions under the purview of the Ministries of tourism & culture and youths & sports. In this regard, the Committee wants to establish first-hand information on the activities, the achievements, challenges, and a possible way forward regarding the youth centre.

The Chairperson of the Janjangbureh Youths and a Board member of the Youth centre informed the Committee that the Centre was owned by the Janjangbureh Area Council. The facility was handed over to the youths after it was renovated by the YEP Project. The centre has a full-time staff of five people. All these staff are paid by the Centre from the funds generated by the centre. He also informed the Committee that the staff of the facility were trained on how to maintain the Centre efficiently and effectively. The Centre has the following facilities.

- A resource centres.
- A computer lab
- Accommodation
- Hall
- Video club
- Restaurant
- Tourism information centre

A representative on behalf of the Tour Guides Association informed the Committee that Janjangbureh is tourist destination. The Association consist of thirty young people, and it is locally registered. Members of the Association are all trained on tourist guiding. Tourists visit the Island through tour operators who do direct bookings with us. Some of the challenges of the Association are:

1. The National Association of tourist guides do not want to cooperate with the Janjangbureh tour guides when they visit the Island i.e., they do not surrender tourist to the local guides who versed with the history of the town.
2. The Janjangbureh Tourist Guide Association after their trainings on tourist guiding, applied for licenses and now for more than a year, these licenses are not issued.

The Committee recommends for the youth centre to draft a strategic plan. This will guide the activities of the centre and can also be used to advocate for funds from donors.

JANJANGBUREH MINI STADIUM

The Committee also visited the Janjangbureh mini stadium which is under construction. This project is sponsored by MoYS.

The Committee was informed that the project was initiated on the 13th December 2010. The project duration was supposed to be six months. This deadline could not

be met, and the Ministry gave the contractor an extension of two months, but it is not completed still now. The contractor of the project is Top Spot Properties. The Committee was also informed that 80% of the funds were paid to the Contractor based on the advice of the Consultant in reference to the contract agreement.

1. Fencing of the entire field
2. Offices for the sports committee
3. Water system (a borehole)
4. Electricity
5. Perimeter fence of the pitch
6. Backfilling of planting of the pitch and planting of natural grass

FULABANTANG MINI STADIUM

The Chairman of the Committee thanked the sports committee of Fulabantang. He indicated that the Committee is on a tour on tourism and sporting facilities around the country. The Committee is mandated to perform oversight on all institutions under the purview of the Ministries of tourism & culture and youths & sports. In this regard the Committee wants to establish first-hand information on the state of the mini stadium, the achievements, challenges, and a possible way forward on the project.

On his part, the Chairperson of the Sports Committee informed the Committee that the project is not progressing as planned. The duration of the contract has elapsed for a long time. He further indicated that there was no Nawettan played in Fulabantang for the past two years and it is affecting their sports in the area as Fulabantang is the biggest catchment in the community. For this reason, the youths of the area decided that the tournament will proceed this year even though the project is not completed.

The sports Coordinator of the region informed the Committee that he was posted to the region in 2021 when the project was already on. Since then, he has engaged the Committee managing the field on a discussion for a possible way forward. This was affected when part of the fence that was already constructed fell during the rainy season in 2021. The Minister of MoYS also visited the site and informed the

community that there is an issue with the contractor, but the Ministry is discussing on settling the matter for the project to be completed.

The DPS on behalf of the MoYS informed the Committee that the Contractor is Gam-Engineering. He further stated that this was a project that was requested by the community of Fulabantang. After an assessment by the Ministry, the project was approved, and work commenced on the 21st of November 2020. The duration of the contract was six months at a cost D7.9million.

According to the contract agreement, the payment is done in phases i.e., 45% for the first instalment, the payment of the second instalment is informed the consultant at the rate of 35%. The Ministry realized that after the payment of the second instalment, the Contractor has not been working on the site. The Ministry is engaging him for a possible completion of the work or resort to litigation. The Ministry of Justice is already consulted on the subject for legal advice.

DISCUSSIONS

1. Is the community involved in the execution of the project? DPS- the community is involved in every stage of the project.

The Chairman of the Committee reassured the community of the Fulabantang that the Committee will play its part by engaging all the relevant stakeholders to resolve this matter.

BANSANG YOUTHS CENTRE

The Chairman of the Committee thanked the staff of the centre for the warm welcome. He indicated that the Committee is on a tour on tourism, youths, and sporting facilities around the country. The Committee is mandated to perform oversight on all institutions under the purview of the Ministries of tourism & culture and youths & sports. In this regard, the Committee want to establish firsthand information on the state, activities, the achievements, challenges, and a possible way forward on the youth centre of the Bansang.

The Manager of the Centre told the Committee that the Centre is operated by five full time staff and governed by a board. The staff are paid by the centre from the funds it generates from its activities. The facilities available at the centre are:

- a. A Lodge (accommodation)
- b. A Restaurant
- c. A Hall.

There are plans for a computer lab with the support from SoS. This discussion is at advanced stage. The centre also engaged on awareness campaigns on topics like illegal migration, early marriage, and other trending issues in the society. The major partner of the youth's centre is the IMVF i.e., Tekki fii project. The rehabilitation of the centre is funded by this partner.

The funds generated from the facility are mostly spent on the maintenance of the facility including staff welfare and community activities/events.

CHALLENGES

1. Mobility – they do not have any car or motorbike to facilitate its work outside of the town.
2. No sub-vention from the Ministry.
3. No space available within the Centre for the construction of more structures.

The board Chairman also reiterated the challenges faced by the youth centre and request the Committee to assist in any way possible.

DIABUGU MINI STADIUM

The Chairman of the Committee thanked the sports Committee and the villagers for the warm welcome. He indicated that the Committee is on a tour on tourism and sporting facilities around the country. The Committee is mandated to perform oversight on all institutions under the purview of the Ministries of tourism & culture and youths & sports. In this regard, the Committee wants to establish first-hand information on the state, activities, the achievements, challenges, and a possible way forward on this project.

On his part, the District Sports Chairman thanked both the Select Committee and the Ministry for the visit on the state of the project and for the construction of a mini-stadium in their community respectively. He stated that the size of the facility is 210ms and the initial contract duration was six months. Some of the facilities to be embedded in the facility are:

- a. A perimeter fences.
- b. Offices
- c. Basketball and volleyball courts
- d. A fence for the pitch

- e. Back filling of the pitch and planting of natural Bahama grass
- f. A borehole and solar system

CHALLENGES

1. The community requested a copy of the contract documents but could not receive it till now.
2. A ticket selling point at the gates of the perimeter fence.
3. Lack of electricity within the facility.
4. The main gates are not properly fixed.

On his part, the DPS of MoYS informed the Committee that the project cost is D9.8m and this project is the second most expensive project the Ministry is currently executing. He informed the Committee is not yet complete and most the issues raised by the community will be addressed if the project is completed. The Chairman if the Committee reassure the community of Diabugu that they will play their part to see that the project is completed as agreed.

REGIONAL YOUTH DEVELOPMENT FARM (KUNDAM REFUGEE CAMP)

From the Diabugu Mini Stadium, the touring team proceeded to Kundam Farm where they were welcomed by the Management of the Farm. The Chairperson of the Select Committee gave an introductory remark on the purpose of the visit and later handed over to the Manager of the Farm. Mr. Alhagi Mawdo Suso thanked the Committee for the visit. And later gave a brief background on the formation of the Association/ Kaffo which he said it's a registered Association, and it has membership from 7 Districts of URR. He also informed the Committee that the said land was used as a Refugee Camp and when the refugees relocated, the kaffo then requested for the Land to be used for Agricultural purpose and serve as employment to the youths within the Country.

Through partnership with GIZ, Ministry of Youth and Sport, NYC they were able to carry out with some Agriculture activities in the farm.

The dimension of the said land is 650 by 550 and due to the large size of the land they could not fence the entire land and also its location from the village contribute to the low turnout of people to participate in some of the activities in the farm.

In addition, Mr. Ceesay thanked the Ministry of Youth and Sport for their endless support that they have been giving to them since day one. The Committee was also informed that the Association went into an agreement with NYSS to build a recruitment Centre for Agriculture and order Skill Centre training for the youth.

The Association benefited the following project from the Ministry of Youth and Sport.

1. 100 youth were trained on how to manage the Fishpond.
2. Renovation of the Office
3. Capacity Building on Argo Organic Farming
4. They were provided with a Borehole.

Challenges

- Low number of Youth turnout
- Fencing
- The fishpond was not properly Build by the Contractor
- Delay in the completion of the fishpond and the Poultry House
- Lack of marketing place for the vegetables

BASSE YOUTH CENTRE

The Committee was welcomed by the Regional Youth Chairperson with his Team. Bubacarr Sidibeh the Regional Chairperson thanked the Committee for visiting the centre and for giving them the opportunity to share their ideas with them. During his deliberations, he informed the Committee that they are currently have some projects and activities they are conducting which are as follows: -

- Solar Project supported by GIZ
- They also have a project that will help them in changing their guest houses into a job creation centre
- An IT Centre, where 6 people have already been employed

- Solar centre and Argo processing machine
- They were also able to build an annex at the stadium where some of their activities are being done. (IMVF/Tekki Fii project)
- Employed 3 staff (Cleaner, Watchman and IT Manager) and this employment will be increase to 6
- Register up to 50 associations
- Provide training to the youth within the region
- Provide Community Outreach where they sensitize the youth on the danger on illegal migration
- Provision of a Basketball Lawn
- A study Cafe was also created and accessible by all with no charges attached to it

Bubacarr Sidibeh also informed the Committee that the Youth Centre is supporting them through giving back to the Community. It is also in their plans to support NAYCONF. The Committee was also informed that URR as a Region is representing the Gambia in the SAFRA which is an international event relating to youth development around the Country, and URR is not only participating but also bringing back the trophies to their Communities and the Gambia at large. In the area of youth development some of their staff benefited from the trainings. Also 50 youths from different youth associations were trained on how to share information properly.

With the support of the IMVF and the NYC they were able to revive the Basse Hall to make it suitable for the young people and to meet the standard. The Migration and Information Officer, joint his chairperson in welcoming the Committee to URR.

Challenges

- Funding
- Non-Subvention from the NYC
- Mobility
- Lack of a recruitment Centre within the region
- No Salaries to the Regional Youth Management team

Recommendation

- To have their own subvention from the National Youth Council

- To be provided with Mobility

BASSE MINI STADIUM

The Select Committee was received by the Executive of the Basse Sport Committee responsible for the management of the Field. The Committee was informed that the project to construct the Field with Dressing Rooms, Pavilion and Guest House has been there since 2001, and still the Project has not been completed. Their football Pitch is in a bad condition, but with all that the Committee was informed that the youth still use the field to Play their tournaments as it severed as the main regional football field. In URR, sport is divided into categories and each of these categories has their own activities that they carry out. Also looking at the field it's quite dangerous to continue using that field, therefore, Sport Coordinator pleaded with the Committee to help them solve the issues they are facing in the Field.

The Committee was also informed that to develop sport within the rural areas, Sport must be decentralized to meet the needs of the young people. Government must restructure their structures within the rural areas to be able to promote sport within the young people. Under the cultural aspect Mr. Abubacarr Krubally who doubles as the cultural president of URR recommends for the regional cultural Committees to be constituted at the regional level and to renovate or restructure the local structures across the regions to promote tourism and Culture within regions.

Challenges

- Inadequate finance for proper maintenance of the Mini Stadium
- The dressing rooms are all dilapidated.
- Poor state of the pitch
- The basketball is not working.
- Mobility
- Lack of security service
- The Field is eroded, and the soil texture is not favourable to be use as a football field

Recommendations

- Construction of a standard football field, with pavilion, and dressing rooms

- Provision of security

BASSE COTTON WEAVERS

From the Mini Stadium the Committee members proceeded to Basse cotton weavers where they had a meeting with the Cotton weavers on the ground. The Chairperson of the Committee introduced his team members and informed them that the purpose of the visit is to find out the activities they are doing, the constraints they are facing and to find out ways in solving the problem they are facing as this is the only cotton weaving place in the whole Gambia.

- During the discussion the Committee find out the followings:
- In adequate cotton tread
- The association is not register.
- They have no permanent place to stay.
- Marketing of their product is challenge.



Recommendation

- A permanent place which includes a production centre and a show room
- Financial support to be provided by the Ministry of Tourism and Culture
- Motivation
- The traditional skills need to be preserved

SOTUMA SAMBA ECO LODGE

The Committee visited the Sotoma Samba Eco Lodge which is also among the five Eco Lodges been constructed by the Gambia Tourism Board (GTB). The lodge have 12 rooms, and the Contract is awarded to Lerr Group. The Committee also find out that the construction is ongoing meaning the contract is not yet completed after the expiration of the contract duration.

SOMA MINI STADIUM

The Committee was received by the Regional Youth Chairperson and his Executive. The Committee was informed that most of their projects are mainly sponsored by the UN through National Youth Council. And that most of this project are already designed project that cannot be change cannot by them. They also contribute to the development of the young people of the Gambia more especial the Lower River Region (LRR). He also informed the Committee that to reduce crime rate in the Gambia, the Youth facility most be developed to keep them busy. The Centre have a communication unit that is responsible for information sharing within the Region.

NEDI also supported them with 10 Argo Processing Machine, and they have the Karang Bunda project that provided them with a Library service and its free of charge.

The National Sport Council coordinator for the region also requested the government to give support to the youth and not letting all their programs to be funded by the UN especial IMVF.

He also informed the Committee that the issue of them not been sub-vented by NYC is really given them problems in running their day-to-day affairs.

Achievements

- Creation of a youth hub in LRR
- Recruitment of youth into different field
- Sensitization and Community outreach program to the people of LRR
- Capacity Building

Challenges

- Not been sub-vented by the National Youth Council
- Inadequate Financial support
- Lack of mobility (the Centre have only one motorbike which is been use by the 3 staff)
- The Mini Stadium is without a pavilion, dressing room and the perimeter fence is not a good shape.

PAKALINDING YOUTH CENTRE

The Migration and Information Officer at the Migration Centre welcomed the Committee and thanked them for visiting the Youth Centre. Mr Sanneh informed the Committee that the Youth Centre was establish in 2017 by the National Youth Council and their main objective is to create awareness among the youth, timely and relevant information sharing on migration to empower potential in making informed decisions, to provide information about the reintegration of returnees, provide training to the youth, creating opportunities. Sensitization and educating the Committee on the danger of illegal migration. They also create a computer lab and 6 school were duly sensitized on illegal migration and sexual reproductive dangers.

Mr. Fabakary Sanneh of the National Sport Coordinator informed the Committee that the Migration Centre is been run by the National Youth Centre (NYC). He thanked the Government through the NYC for creating the Centre to help the Youth and the Region at large in making better decision regarding the illegal migration. He pleaded with the government to also render their support to the youth as all their projects are fulling funding by the donors.

He also recommends the Government to take up their responsibility in developing the youth and protecting their lives, and the government should restructure all the youth and youth facilities to make them engage. The Government need to decentralize sport and other youth activities and all Regional Youth Centres must be sub-vented.

Recommendations

- The Committee recommends them to be sharing their activity reports to the government.

- To develop strategic plan to be guiding their activities
- To be more innovative and creative to attract more donors.

TENDABA CAMP

The General Manager Mr. Ismaila Ceesay and Team received the Committee and welcomed them to Tendaba Camp. In his introduction remarks he told the Committee that Tendaba Camp is an eco-tourism camp located on the river side in Kiang Central District. It was built in 1970s as a hunting lodge and it's a locally owned camp. The Committee was also informed that the Camp attract mostly birdwatchers and nature lovers.

Mr. Ceesay informed the Committee that their main source of income is through hosting retreats and Workshop. The camp has not been receiving guest since the beginning of the Covid -19 pandemic. They were also affected by flood during the rainy season, and this really affects their business and day to day activities. They have 42 active staff. Mr. Ceesay pleaded to the Government through the Committee to help them protect their environment, by preventing deforestation and bushfire and to help them developed Kiang West Park and protect the Animals in the Park. He recommends providing them with River transportation to be able to attract more tourist.

Challenges

- Insufficient Financial Resources
- Lack of accessibility of the place
- Lack of drainage system to prevent flooding.

MANDAUR MINI STADIUM

The Committee was received by the Julafar Ward Executive. Mr. Omar NK Bajinka the Secretary General of the Association gave a brief background on the formation of the Association. He said it was an initiative from the 22 communities under the Julafar Ward, and after the successful formation of the association they deem it necessary to meet with their elders to formally request for a land where they can

use as a main field to play their tournaments and other sporting activities. The elders grant them with 300 by 300sqm land size.

The association then approached the Minister of Youth and Sport to help them with a mini stadium which the Minister promised and later fulfilled the funding.

The association also informed the Committee that since 1965 the Mini Stadium is the only project in the west ever benefited from the Government.

The alternative pitch they have is an open field which has no sources of income for the association, they only depend on their brothers and sisters in the diaspora to fund their sporting activities.

The Select Committees engagement with the contractor

The Contractor (Bala Engineer) informed the Committee that the total amount of the project was 7.9 million Dalasi, he started work since 2019. According to him he submitted a master plan which included all the relevant facilities that a stadium could have to the Ministry of Youth and Sports. However, the contract awarded to him only covers the field and a dressing room with toilets.

The contract duration was 8 months but according to him he was having some problems with water, and the place was bushy. He informed the Committee that he even went further in clearing the place which was not part of the contract. He told the members that everything is finish except the grassing of the field which is due to lack of water.

Mr. Fabakary Sanneh thanked the Committee for creating time and giving them the opportunity to share ideas regarding sports development. He also thanked the Julafar ward association for the great work they are doing in developing sports within the area.

Mr. Fabakary informed the Committee that, the Julafar ward association and the Regional Sport Committee have an internal issue to solve and if those issues are not solve then the problem they are facing will continue to occur. According to him there is no chain of command among themselves, therefore, they don't recognize each other, and for them to succeed they must cooperate and accept the rules and regulations governing sports.

He also advised them to be complementing each other efforts to succeed.

Challenges

- Inadequate Financial Support
- No office
- No furniture

- No Pavilion
- The perimeter fence is short
- Valley ball and basketball ground
- Wrestling ground

KIANG WEST NATIONAL PARK

Kiang West National Park is one of the largest and most important wildlife reserves in the Gambia and it was declared a National Park in 1987. The park is managed by the Gambia Department of Parks and Wildlife. It's about 11,000 hectares and is located on the South Bank of the River Gambia in the Kiang West District.

The Committee was received by the Watchman who gave them a brief explanation of some of the activities at the Park.

He also highlighted on some of the activities carryout and listed some of the animals they have in the park which are as follow, Baboons, Red Colobus, Monkeys, Bush pigs, Birds etc.

INDEPENDENT STADIUM BAKAU

The Committee was received by the General Manager of the Stadium. Mr. Faye. In his deliberation, he informed the Committee that the Stadium is the only Stadium that can host International Matches in the whole Country, and since its inspection it has never gone under any major maintenance.

The Stadium was built in 1982 and has 87 Staff. The total budget for the Stadium is 9 million every year covering both Salaries, Operations and Development but the Stadium never received the whole 9 million subvention which is allocated for them.

He informed the Committee that the Stadium is banned from hosting International Matches due to its poor conditions, and after some consultation with the

Government they were given 10 million to renovate some of the facilities to meet up with the FIFA Standards as per their recommendations.

They also have a hotel which has its own manager but under the supervision of the General Manager of the Stadium, as at now the Hotel is the only source of revenue they have for the Stadium.

Mr. Faye also told the Committee that they have once requested 35 million from the Government to renovate the Hotel and make it a 3-Star Hotel, but this request has never been granted, and they believe that if they invest the 35 million in the hotel it will save them from all the financial constraint they are facing. They are also constructing a Bella Arena for musical and other festivals.



Challenges

- Inadequate Financial Support
- Lack of general rehabilitation of the Stadium
- They have no wrestling ground and its sustainability.

Recommendation

- General rehabilitation of the Stadium
- The Government to support them with 35 million to renovate the Hotel to a 3-star hotel.

BAKAU MINI STADIUM

The Committee was received by the Executive of Bakau Mini Stadium. The Committee recognised the efforts of the Community towards the development of sports in general. The President of the Sports Committee informed the Committee that the Community of Bakau also benefited from the GFF Project which include the construction of the field, Pavilion, grassing and a dressing room. He also highlighted that the Community of Bakau needs a Multipurpose facility that can host all the sporting activities. He added, to develop sports, the Government must come up with infrastructures needed in developing sports. The Committee was also informed that Bakau Sports Committee have never been in partnership with any institution and that National Sports Council (NSC) have never engaged them in any way. The football pitch was done by the Community. The Sport Committee thanked their Alkalo for the support and advise he have been rendering to the community.

Challenges

- Financial support
- Provision of Pavilion
- A multipurpose Stadium

SEREKUNDA WEST MINI STADIUM

From Bakau Mini Stadium the Committee proceeded to Serekunda West Mini Stadium and they were informed that since Covid 19 pandemic they have not been engaged in any activity. They have 36 Clubs. The Gambia Football Federation (GFF) also used the ground for its scheduled matches. Also, the Select Committee was informed that the Sports Committee had an MoU with GFF on the Usage of the pitch.

The main source of income is through gate ticket, inter-house competition and wrestling.

The committee found out that the football field was not properly kept clean, and it was informed that it is because of other activities e.g., wrestling, and other activities that were organized there.

Challenges

- Inadequate Financial Support
- Lack of Security Service
- Lack of peri meter fence
- Bad condition of the pitch.
- Lack of standard dressing rooms

SEREKUNDA EAST MINI STADIUM

At Serekunda East Mini Stadium, the Select Committee was received by the full Management. Mr. Modou Yousuha Cham, the President of the Serekunda East Sport Management, thanked the Committee for giving them opportunity to share ideas and providing way forward in the development of Sports. Mr. Cham informed the Committee that his executive was elected to office on 1st August 2021, and during 2021, the Management were not able to organize Nawettan due to Covid-19 Pandemic. They have register 40 teams and they have 7 Divisions namely, Football, Volleyball, Basketball, Handball, Wrestling, Culture and Martial Arts. He also informed the Committee that they have benefited from GFF Project which is the construction a field, Pavilion, Dressing Room, and Lighting. Though the lighting system they received is not up to standard. They also build a strong relationship with NSC, GFF and RSC. They have some vendors who registered with them. The Committee was also informed that the only way they generate money is through the selling of tickets during Nawettan and Branding.

Challenges

- The Pitch not up to standard
- Pavilion
- The grassing of the field is also a challenge they are facing.
- Lack of Electricity
- No structure/ training ground for Martial Art
- Lack of Security

MANJAI MINI STADIUM

The Committee ended its day at the Manjai Mini Stadium. The Committee was informed that the perimeter fence was removed by GFF with the intention of renovating the field within 6 months and its now 3 years nothing has been done about it, and this is preventing them from using the field. SOS supported them after they qualified and GFF also donated them with D150,000.

Challenges

- The first challenge they are facing is not having access to the Contract documentation.
- The non-provision of a playing ground for the Nawettan
- Financial Support for proper maintenance of the Mini Stadium
- Lack of Structures for sports development
- The dressing room is not in good shape
- Lack of security services

FOOTBALL HOTEL AND NATIONAL TECHNICAL TRAINING CENTRE

The Select Committee was received by the Management of the Hotel. Mr. Lamin Sanneh. The Hotel Manager briefed the Committee on the core functions of the Hotel. The Committee was informed that the hotel was initiated in 2014 under the leadership of Kabba Bajo, the President of the Gambia Football Federation. The hotel is semi-autonomous and has 40 standards rooms, administrative block, conference room, gymnasium room, playing field with artificial turf and a swimming pool which is still under construction at the time of the visit.

The Hotel is classified as a three-star hotel, but now is being upgraded which is run by a Management Team appointed by the Federation. The hotel provides accommodation and services to the National Team and host meetings and retreats.

Under the National Technical training Centre which is run by the Technical Director and a Youth and Grassroot Football Manager used for training of young talents under 15, to accommodate the National Team during training sessions and some of the league matches.

Challenges

- Inadequate funding for expansion of the hotel, including the Conference Centre and the Hall

Recommendation

- To upgrade the standard of the Hotel including the Conference Centre and the Hall

BRIKAMA MINI STADIUM

Brikama Sports Committee is charge with the responsibility of managing and running the affairs of Sports within the Community. They also use the sporting activities to bring together, the youths of West Coast Region together especially the sport lovers. Sport also helps them in settling all their difference and guiding them to achieve their goals and objectives. Mr. Demba Jarju, the President of the Sports Committee, informed the Committee that their only source of income is through selling of gate tickets which is during Summer Nawettan only.

Brikama Mini Stadium also benefited from GFF Project which supposed to end within 6 months but that was never the case. The lighting system is not up to standard, the grassing needs to be upgraded and extra pavilions needed. The Committee was also informed that the drainage system is not in place, and this led to flooding during rainy season. Their Volleyball and Basketball courts are not in a good condition; therefore, they are requesting for support from anybody who can assist them in solving this problem. They also have some vendors that they rent their shops to, and they pay them annually.

About the Land Ownership, one Clan of Brikama called BULUNDA wrote to them informing them that they own the Land where the Mini Stadium is built, therefore, they own the Mini Stadium. After that they had some consultation with them but all to no avail. Mr. Jarju told the Committee that this issue of land ownership has prevented them from partnering or even having support from other entities. He pleaded with the Committee to help them solve this matter as soon as possible, also the Bulunda gave them some conditions and agreement to sign which they never did, because by signing the agreement the Field will belong to Bulunda.

Challenges

- Inadequate Pavilion
- Low infrastructural Development
- Inadequate Financial support
- Lack of a drainage system within the Field
- No Standard Lighting System
- Land ownership issue

GUNJUR MINI STADIUM

It's also a GFF project which is about 9 million Dalasi and the project started since 2019 and the contract was meant for only 6 months, but the work is incomplete. The full package of the project was a field, a Pavilion and Dressing Room. Mr. Abdoulie Bojang informed the Committee that the Gunjur Sports Committee have no ideas about how the project, or the contract look like, they have no access to the Contract documentation.

TANJI ECO LODGE

The Committee was received by Mr. Zakaria Sowe the owner of the Eco Lodge. Mr Sowe expressed his appreciation and thanked the Committee for being the first delegate from the Government to visit him since the inception of his Eco Lodges. The Tanji Eco Lodge is a private own eco lodge own by a Gambian. The facility has 8 rooms, 7staff and a Conference Centre with a capacity of 60 people.

Mr. Sowe informed the Committee that he has two Eco Lodges, and both are registered with the GT Board. The second Eco Lodge is located at Foni Bulock West Coast Region and due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Bulock Eco Lodge have not been operational. He also informed the Committee that he has never been visited neither get support from GT Board and the Ministry of Tourism and Culture.

Mr. Sowe informed the Committee that the Land is owned by the people of Brufut, Madiana and Tanji and after every year a percentage is paid into their account as per their agreement.

Challenges

- Water and Electricity
- Lack of Security (he encounters a lot of theft cases)
- Inadequate Human Resources
- Inadequate Financial Support
- Lack of support from the Government

SUKUTA DEMBA DOO MINI STADIUM

Sukuta Mini Stadium was the last place visited by the Committee. The Committee was received by the Management of Sukuta Sports Committee. The President thanked the Committee for giving them the opportunity to share ideas, concerns, and way forwards. Mr. Demba Cham informed the Committee that their where no activity for the past 2 years due to Covid-19 pandemic. Demba Doo Mini Stadium have 54 Communities under it, the Field has no pavilion and no grasses thus, making it hard for the footballers playing on the ground. There is no security, and they are not supported by the Government. Mr. Cham also informed the Committee that all their expenses are covered by themselves, they are into all type of sporting activities. They also create seasonal job to the youth. The only source of income they have is through selling tickets during the Nawettan.

Challenges

- No Financial Support
- No pavilion
- No grass on the football field
- Lack of transportation
- Lack of Security services

BROAD RECOMMENDATIONS

- ✚ Funding on the preservation and rehabilitation of our cultural sites
- ✚ To subvent all the Regional Sport Committees
- ✚ The sector develops a tourism countrywide calendar of events and leverage on the 182 historical and cultural sites for the development of cultural tourism,
- ✚ The investment of Ecotourism camp be in line with government policies. That a domestic tourism policy should be in place in consultation with the respective stakeholders.

CONCLUSION

The Tourism and Cultural sites are facing serious challenges due to the inadequate funding and support from the relevant authorities. We need to find solutions to challenges and ensure that the tourism industry is strived to meet standards.

The Committee also noted with concern that the development of youth and sports are facing serious financial constraints both in the areas of infrastructural development, governance, management, and ownership of land problems that needs to be addressed as soon as possible. We know that with the intervention and support from the Government and other relevant authorities and stakeholders the problems highlighted above can be addressed.

.....
Hon. Saikou Bah
Chairperson

