

THE REPUBLIC OF THE GAMBIA



THE NATIONAL PARKS AND WILDLIFE POLICY OF THE GAMBIA



MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, PARKS AND WILDLIFE

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THE NATIONAL PARKS AND WILDLIFE POLICY OF THE GAMBIA

Ministry of Environment, Parks and Wildlife

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ACRONYMS

CBC	Community Based Conservation
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CITES	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species
CRR	Central River Region
DPWM	Department of Parks and Wildlife Management
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
ESMP	Environment and Social Management Plan
GBTf	Gambia Biodiversity Trust Fund
GMP(s)	General Management Plan(s)
LRR	Lower River Region
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NGO(s)	Non-Government Organization(s)
NP(s)	National Park(s)
NR(s)	Nature Reserve(s)
PA(s)	Protected Area(s)
WMA(s)	Wildlife Management Area(s)
WS(s)	Wildlife Sanctuary(s)

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The Ministry of Environment, Parks and Wildlife is charged with formulating a National Parks and Wildlife Policy, overseeing its administration and co-coordinating the development of the Wildlife section in The Gambia. The vision of the wildlife sector for the next twenty (20) years conforms to the Development vision 2020 for The Gambia on environmental sustainability and socio-economic transformation. The vision for the wildlife sector is to:

- Promote conservation of biological diversity;
- Administer, regulate and develop wildlife resources;
- Involve all stakeholders in wildlife conservation and sustainable utilization, as well as in fair and equitable sharing of benefits;
- Promote, administer and regulate access and benefit sharing of genetic and biological resources (ABS)
- Administer and regulate the safe handling and use of LMOs and GMOs
- Promote sustainable utilization of wildlife resources;
- Contribute to poverty alleviation and improve the quality of life of the people of The Gambia;
- Deliver professional services to all stakeholders;
- Undertake institutional and staff capacity building as appropriate; and
- Promote exchange of relevant information and expertise nationally, regionally and internationally.
- Promote Public Private Partnership (PPP) and sustainable financing of protected areas.

1.0 BACKGROUND

The Gambia is primarily a natural resource base economy, thus biological diversity provides the basis for survival of the population and socio – economic development of the country. It is a source of food, medicine, energy, industrial products, leisure and recreation. In recognition of this fact the conservation and the sustainable use of biodiversity is central in the government’s socio-economic development strategy.

Over the last three decades the government had taken important policy, institutional and legal initiatives to protect, conserve and encourage sustainable use of wildlife and other renewable natural resources. Since its ratification of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in 1994, the government has intensified its efforts to implement its commitments under the convention. All these notwithstanding, the conservation and sustainable use of wildlife and other renewable natural resources in The Gambia continued to be hampered by several factors. These factors include rapid rate of natural resource degradation, lack of reliable data, limited institutional capacity (equipment, transport, office supplies etc), demographic pressures, poverty and severe economic stress, inadequate trained personnel, inappropriate and outdated laws and policies, poor institutional arrangements and inadequate funding.

In The Gambian context, the evolution of a strategic and policy concept for biodiversity started with the Banjul Declaration and the Wildlife Conservation Act of 1977. These documents or legal instruments, particularly the Banjul Declaration, provide the basis for the conservation and sustainable use of wildlife resources in The Gambia. The ensuing years witnessed the creation of a fully fledged Department of Parks and Wildlife Management in 1994.

2.0 THE GAMBIA WILDLIFE RESOURCES AND POTENTIAL

The wildlife of The Gambia is a unique natural heritage and resource that is of great importance both nationally and globally. Its importance lies both in the biological value of the species and habitats found in The Gambia, the economic value of the resource and its potential to contribute to the sustainable development of The Gambia.

2.1 BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY OF THE GAMBIA.

Wildlife resources form an important component of the country's biotic assets from both ecological and economic viewpoints. These are 8 wildlife protected areas, occupying a total land area of 51,240 hectares, approximately 4.27% of The Gambia's total area and 66 forests parks, with a total area of 34, 029 hectares. According to the available data there are 125 species of mammals, 77 species of reptiles and 30 species of amphibians, 1005 flowering plants, 627 species of fish, 576 of birds, 784 of insects making a total of 3224 species of wild animals in The Gambia.

The Gambia is also endowed with a rich avifauna estimated at a total of about 576 species representing one bird species for every 20km².

It has no endemic species and only 2 species- the purl-back shrike (*Dryoscopus gambensis*) and the spur- winged goose (*Plectropterus gambensis*), bear its specific epithet. However, this is an incomplete list and more information on distribution of residents arrivals and departures of migrants, breeding data (still sparse), and habitat requirements is being accumulated. The key issues in wildlife biodiversity are:

- Inadequate contemporary wildlife Act and policy;
- Inadequate community participation in wildlife management;
- Inadequate up-to-date checklists on the status and trends of wildlife species;
- Insufficient human resources and institutional capacity for the management of protected Areas;
- Poor boundary demarcation of the protected areas and the buffer zones; and
- Inadequate involvement of the private sector in natural resources management.

2.2 MARINE AND COASTAL BIODIVERSITY

The Gambia has 80km long coastline and an Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) extending 200 km from the low water mark. Fisheries resource are provided from two sources, the river covering

an area of 2,000 km² and the ocean covering the continental shelf area of 5000km².The estimated total biomass of fish resource in Gambian water is 178,000 tons (Demersals 22,000 tons and pelagics 156,000 tons). The total fish potential from the maritime fisheries is estimated at about 88,000 tons with pelagic and demersal fish resources constituting 78% and 21% respectively. Total annual fish production is around 38,000 tons in 1996, clearly indicating a surplus potential. Information on the size of the river fish resources and annual fish landings from the river fisheries are not available. Certain fish species such as lobster (*palinurus* spp), shark, catfish (*Arius heudeloti*) and the white grouper (*Epinephelus aethus*) are threatened as a result of unsustainable human exploitation strategies.

Fish is an important source of cheap protein for the population and has enormous potential to contribute to the country's food security policy objective in particular, the economy in generally based on the current production levels there is considerable scope for exploiting the marine pelagic fisheries and aquaculture. In contrast, there is great need for tighter and more effective control of the threatened demersal resources. The key biodiversity issues in fisheries resources are:

- Degradation of the coastal and marine habitats such as mangroves
- Over – exploitation of commercial species, coastal sand mining and pollution;
- Poorly coordinated integrated approach to the management of coastal and marine areas;
- Insufficient data on the taxonomy, status and biological characteristics of fisheries species and habitats;
- Insufficient representation of marine and coastal ecosystem in the protected area network; and
- Limited initiatives in aquaculture.

Wetlands include marine, coastal inland waters and seasonal fresh water ponds/marshes which are distributed country-wide. Wetlands of The Gambia cover almost 20% of the total land area and include 6.4 % of mangrove forest, 7.8% of uncultivated swamps and 3.2% of cultivated swamps. Detailed information on species and distribution of wildlife in the country is limited. The key issues of wetlands of the inland water ecosystems are:

- Mis-use of wetland areas;
- Over-harvesting of wetland resources and the introduction of alien species;
- Inadequate policy and institutional framework for the management of inland water ecosystems;
- Over- lapping mandates of departments responsible for the management of these ecosystems; and

- Other issues include the ownership of wetlands and the legal provisions governing their use.

2.3. ECOSYSTEMS

The Gambia with its characteristic sudano and sahelian savanna woodland vegetation has different types of ecosystems. These ecosystems can be grouped into two broad categories: terrestrial (wildlife, forestry, agriculture – plants, livestock and land resources) and aquatic ecosystems.

(A) WILDLIFE ECOSYSTEMS

The most important wildlife ecosystems are the wildlife protected areas. The Wildlife Conservation Act of 1977, has defined protected areas as any area of land set aside by the Government for purposes of preserving and managing the habitat and ecology thereof, including any forest park or local sanctuary. The current protected area system in The Gambia comprises seven protected areas under the mandate of the Department of Parks and Wildlife Management and a community wildlife managed reserve.

The National Parks and Nature Reserves of The Gambia have been specifically selected for either species richness, habitat fragility, the endangered nature of the habitat type and/or species found within them. The intention is to provide a safe haven for fauna and flora to flourish without undue interference from man.

(B) FRESHWATER ECOSYSTEMS

The major inland water ecosystem in the country is the River Gambia. It originates from the Futa Djallon highlands in Guinea and runs through a length of 1,130 km to the Atlantic Ocean. It has a surface area of approximately 2,000 km² representing about 20% of the total surface area of the country.

Other riverine ecosystems are the catchments of Rivers Saloum and Allahein at the northern and southern borders with Senegal respectively and several small local rivers such as the Kotu stream, Tanji River, Tujereng River and River Kakim. The country also has an extensive network of wetlands. Wetlands are defined by the Ramsar convention as “areas of marsh, fen, whether peat land or water, natural or artificial permanent or temporary with water that is static or flowing, fresh, brackish or salt including areas of marine water, the depth of which at low tide does not exceed 6 metres. There are different classifications of wetlands. The most common species in the freshwater ecosystems of The Gambia are the riverine fish species mostly found in freshwater parts of the River Gambia and its tributaries and wetlands. These include catfish (*Clarias* spp), Osteoglossoids (particularly *Heterotis niloticus*), Cichlids (*Tilapia* spp) and Gymnarchus (e.g. *Gymnarchus niloticus*). However, certain species as the Cynoglossidae and sharks etc may cross the ecosystem boundaries.

(C) MARINE AND COASTAL ECOSYSTEMS

The Gambia, with a coastline of about 80 km along the Atlantic Ocean, from the mouth of the Allahein River in the South (130° 4N) to Buniadu point in the north, has several coastal and marine habitats of high ecological importance. There are different types of coastal and marine habitats including coastal environments, laterite reefs, offshore environments and coast associated habitats which can be broadly classified as coastal and marine habitats of higher ecological value, marine fisheries zones and protected/ reserved areas.

2.4 CATEGORIES OF WILDLIFE AREAS

The Gambia's protected area (PA) network covers 4.27% of the total land area of which Abuko Nature Reserve has an area of 134 hectares, River Gambia National Park has an area of 589 hectares, Niumi National Park has an area of 7,758 hectares, Kiang West National Park has an area of 11, 526 hectares, Tanji Bird Reserve has an area of 612 hectares, Bao Bolong wetland has an area of 22, 000 hectares and Tanbi wetland area has an area of 6,034 hectares.

Consequently The Gambia has 51,240 hectares of her surface area devoted to wildlife in PAs where no human settlement is allowed except Niumi National Park which was declared with human settlements in it.

2.5 WILDLIFE UTILISATION

The network of PAs devoted to wildlife conservation forms the basis of The Gambia's wildlife utilization industry. The forms of wildlife currently practiced in The Gambia include:

2.5.1 GAME VIEWING

At present Abuko Nature Reserve, Tanji Bird Reserve and River Gambia National Park are the main tourist destinations, while Kiang West National Park, Bao Bolong Wetland Reserve, Niumi National Park and Tanbi Wetlands National Park are under –utilized. Wildlife based tourism and game viewing have great potential for earning considerable local and foreign currency and providing employment. The above mentioned PAs have potential to perform well if consideration to restock them with wildlife is put in place.

2.5.2 TOURIST HUNTING

Tourist hunting is an economically viable and sustainable use of wildlife that is consistent with the policy of high quality, yet low density tourism that can contribute significantly to the national economy. At present, tourist hunting is practiced across many remote areas of The Gambia in Upper River Region (URR) in both north and south, in Central River Region (CRR) in both north and south, in Lower River Region (LRR).

2.5.3 RESIDENT HUNTING

It is the right of indigenous Gambians to have legal access to wildlife use. Different scales of fees for tourists and residents to hunt have been established through the enabling legislation. Resident hunting licences are issued for open areas and game controlled areas not allocated to tourist hunting.

2.5.4 RANCHING AND FARMING

Ranching and farming of wildlife are not yet well-developed forms of the wildlife use in The Gambia.

It is not the government policy to engage itself in the direct utilization of wildlife resources in The Gambia. The private sector is therefore encouraged to invest in the following:

- (i) Conducting hunting and photographic safaris;
- (ii) Investing in wildlife ranching and farming;
- (iii) Wildlife and wildlife products; and
- (iv) Developing tourism infrastructures in the framework of wildlife policy and respective protected areas management plans.

2.6 WILDLIFE RESEARCH AND MONITORING

Considerable research on wildlife has been undertaken in The Gambia and has contributed greatly to the knowledge and publicity of wildlife in the Country. The research so far undertaken has been varied in scope and includes taxonomic descriptions of species and their biogeography, behaviour and ecology of single species, and studies of ecosystem processes. A number of Monitoring programmes are in place for wildlife, mainly through baseline data collection in and around Protected Areas (PAs) and through monitoring individual populations during the course of long-term research.

The researches undertaken to date have largely been directed towards aspirations of foreign researchers to publish results internationally, rather than to the needs of Gambians. Furthermore, there is little involvement of Gambians in wildlife research, which is carried out mostly by foreigners permitted to study in the country. Moreover, wildlife authorities have continually been limited by financial resources and trained manpower to undertake all the applied or pure research that might be necessary or desirable.

2.7 HUMAN RESOURCES AND CAPACITY BUILDING

There is an elaborate scheme of services for wildlife personnel which shows the optimal establishment requirements, qualifications and career ladder. The above notwithstanding, there still exist shortfalls in the implementation of this scheme of service. Furthermore, the wildlife sector human resource is less than 50% of the requirement and most of it is of low cadre. The training is formally undertaken at Universities abroad for graduate and post graduate studies college of African wildlife Management in Mweka, Moshi in Tanzania and Southern African Wildlife College for certificate, diploma and post graduate studies and other colleges in the continent for Rangers certificate.

2.8 INFRASTRUCTURE AND EQUIPMENT

The condition of infrastructure and equipment in PAs is below the required standards. The roads are in poor conditions; equipment in terms of vehicles and field gear are equally poor and insufficient; office and staff buildings are of poor quality and also insufficient.

2.9 INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE

The Gambia experiences scarce resources to undertake the task of wildlife conservation alone. As a result she has been assisted in terms of finance and expertise by NGOs, bilateral and multilateral donor agencies.

2.10 PROBLEMS FACING THE WILDLIFE SECTOR

Despite this endowment and its economic potentials to the nation and the local communities, the wildlife sector has not been able to develop to its full potential due to the following constraints:-

- (i) Lack of elaborate wildlife policy;
- (ii) Failure of the wildlife conservation as a form of land use to compete adequately with other forms of land use, especially to the rural communities;
- (iii) Lack of wildlife conservation awareness by planners and decision makers and hence low priority on land and wildlife resource in the planning process.
- (iv) Loss of wildlife habitats to settlement, agriculture, grazing and logging due to human population increase;
- (v) Escalating illegal wildlife off-take and trade;
- (vi) Inadequate financial and human resources to enable the government to devolve wildlife management responsibilities to the rural people countrywide;
- (vii) Inadequate wildlife user rights especially to the rural communities;
- (viii) Inadequate capacity to control problem animals;
- (ix) Low budgetary allocation for conservation and development of the wildlife sector;
- (x) Poor remuneration which results in low staff morale performance and erosion of professional ethics; and
- (xi) Limited human resources to carry out wildlife conservation activities.

In recognition of the importance of conservation of biological diversity to the livelihood of mankind the state will remain the overall ownership of wildlife. The government will access user rights to various stakeholders, provide clear policy guidelines, stimulate public and private sector investment in the wildlife industry and provide support to investors.

Within a changing ecological socio-economic, institutional settings nationally and internationally, the functions of the government in the wildlife sector will focus on:-

- (i) Developing sound wildlife management policies and actively take part in the management of wildlife resources throughout the country;
- (ii) Developing an enabling legal, regulatory, institutional environment for rural communities and private sector to participate in wildlife conservation;
- (iii) Developing appropriate regulatory mechanisms that will continue to set aside PAs where wildlife and natural areas will be conserved;
- (iv) Combating illegal use of wildlife;
- (v) Subjecting wildlife personnel to strict codes of discipline;
- (vi) Developing wildlife information data base;

- (vii) Reinforcing wildlife extension services and assistance to rural communities in managing wildlife resources; and
- (viii) Providing sufficient funds for cost effective management of wildlife resources.

The private sector will play a key role in direct economic investment in the wildlife sector. Investors in the wildlife industry in The Gambia will enjoy the following advantages:-

- assured political stability
- harmonious and friendly social environment
- a wide scope of private sector involvement in wildlife industry

3.0 THE NATIONAL PARKS AND WILDLIFE POLICY

3.1 CHALLENGES

The National Parks and Wildlife Policy envisages to address the following national challenges:-

- (i) To conserve areas with great biological diversity which are representative of the major habitats of The Gambia;
- (ii) To continue to support and where necessary, enlarge the PA network as the core of conservation activities;
- (iii) To promote involvement of local communities participation in wildlife conservation in and outside the PA network;
- (iv) To increase foreign exchange earnings;
- (v) To integrate wildlife conservation with rural development;
- (vi) To foster sustainable and legal use of wildlife resources;
- (vii) To ensure that wildlife conservation competes with other forms of land use;
- (viii) To enhance the recognition of the intrinsic value of wildlife to rural people;
- (ix) To minimize human – wildlife conflicts wherever they occur;
- (x) To regulate wildlife related research to be of direct value to wildlife management;
- (xi) To build the capacity of the wildlife sector and foster professionalism; and
- (xii) To create enabling environment for international cooperation in wildlife conservation.

3.2 OBJECTIVES

Wildlife is a natural resource of great biological, economical, environmental cleaning, climate ameliorating, water and soil conservation, and nutritional values that must be conserved. It can be used indefinitely if properly managed. In view of the dynamic and complex nature of the wildlife resource and challenges ahead on conserving the same, the Government policy for the wildlife sector aims at involving a broader sector of the society in wildlife conservation particularly the rural communities and the private sector. The role of the public sector will be to stimulate and guide the local communities and the private sector by administering, regulating and promoting the management of the wildlife resource, through the following objectives;

3.2.1 ON WILDLIFE PROTECTION

- I. To continue the establishment of PAs on the basis of systems planning;
- II. To stress maintenance and development of a PA network in order to enhance biological diversity;
- III. To promote conservation of wildlife and its habitats outside core areas (NPs, NRs and WSS) by establishing WMAs;
- IV. To enhance the conservation of biological diversity by administering wetlands;
- V. To transfer the management of WMAs and biosphere reserves to local communities thus taking care of corridors, migration routes and buffer zones and ensure that the local communities obtain substantial tangible benefits from wildlife conservation; and
- VI. To prevent illegal use of wildlife throughout the country by taking the appropriate surveillance, policing and law enforcement.

3.2.2 ON WILDLIFE UTILISATION

- I. To promote the use of PAs so as to provide government revenue, employment, income, food and other benefits to Gambians; especially the rural communities;
- II. To ensure that wildlife is appropriately valued in order to reduce its illegal off-take and encourage its sustainable use by rural communities;
- III. To create an enabling environment which will ensure that legal and sustainable wildlife schemes directly benefit local communities; and
- IV. To create an enabling environment for the private sector to invest in different forms of wildlife utilization and conservation.

3.2.3 ON MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT OF PAs

- I. To promote greater public awareness and understanding of wildlife issues;
- II. To retain sufficient revenue from wildlife utilization in PAs for management and development purposes;
- III. To establish and manage the Biodiversity Trust Fund for the sustainable financing of Protected Areas;
- IV. To regulate development projects/ activities in PAs;
- V. To promote research and monitoring activities which focus on providing answers to management issues;
- VI. To undertake human resources development and institutional capacity building at all levels; and
- VII. To revamp professional ethics and standards.

3.2.4 ON INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION

- I. To encourage, where necessary, possible and appropriate, the involvement of donors and other conservation agencies to support The Gambia to conserve her wildlife resources, both for national, regional and international benefits;

- II. To enable The Gambia to participate in relevant international treaties and conventions and promote policies within the framework of such treaties and conventions (CBD, UNCCD, UNFCCC, CITES etc) as are consistent with The Gambia's position on conservation of wildlife;
- III. Cooperate with neighbouring countries in the conservation of transboundary ecosystems; and
- IV. Promote regional and international cooperation in the field of biodiversity and sustainable development.

3.3 STRATEGIES

In order to achieve the wildlife policy objectives the following strategies have been set.

3.3.1 PROTECTING BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

The ultimate goal of the PA network is to create series of viable conservation areas which includes a representative sample of all important habitats and viable populations of all species with particular reference to those that are threatened and endemic to The Gambia. Increased human population, exerts pressure on biological resources mainly through farming, grazing and settlement. In order to achieve the PA network goal, the government is committed to continuing to maintain the existing PAs and create new ones for the purpose of protecting biological diversity and community livelihoods.

STRATEGIES FOR PROTECTING BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

- (i) Continuing to maintain a PA network whose overall objectives are to enhance conservation and to promote the socio-economic development of the people of The Gambia;
- (ii) Identifying, creating and upgrading protected area network and important wetlands in order to safeguard the biological diversity of The Gambia;
- (iii) Establishing a new category of protected area to be known as Wildlife Management Area and Biosphere Reserves for the purposes of effecting community based conservation ;
- (iv) Giving special conservation status to rare, or endangered wildlife species; an
- (v) Incorporating important wetlands into the wildlife protected area network.

3.3.2 PROTECTING WILDLIFE AGAINST ILLEGAL USE

The greatest threat to PA network and wildlife population is the illegal use of wildlife resources. The wildlife authorities have the mandate to combat illegal use of wildlife by a dual but interlinked strategy which focuses both on PAs and areas outside PAs. In order to carry out their law enforcement functions effectively, Government recognizes that wildlife authorities responsible for managing areas of land are Para-military agencies whose staff wear uniforms, are supposed to carry firearms and have powers of search and arrest. As the successful outcome of anti-poaching operations depends in part on manpower, equipment and staff morale, the Government will ensure that the wildlife authorities have sufficient capability to carry out their law enforcement functions effectively.

STRATEGIES FOR PROTECTING WILDLIFE AGAINST ILLEGAL USE

- (i) Cooperating with other law enforcement agencies in the execution of functions relating to wildlife offences;
- (ii) Assisting the wildlife authorities in carrying out their legal functions;
- (iii) Establishing a disciplinary code;
- (iv) Ensuring that the wildlife staff are subjected to strict codes of discipline;
- (v) Establishing effective informer networks and intelligence data bases at local and national levels;
- (vi) Protecting the wildlife staff from liabilities resulting from injuries and death of suspects during their official duties;
- (vii) Co-operating and enrolling the good will of rural communities;
- (viii) Devolving responsibility for containing illegal use of wildlife in WMAs to rural communities;
- (ix) Training and supporting community wildlife scouts to protect wildlife resources under their control in the context Community Based Conservation (CBC), and
- (x) Initiating and developing strategies for acquiring enough funds to enable the wildlife authorities to provide adequate level of manpower and boost staff morale.

3.3.3. CONSERVING AND MANAGING BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

The Gambia has designated a significant proportion of her surface area to a PA network devoted to wildlife conservation. This PA network has overall objectives that relate both to conservation and socio-economic of The Gambia's people. The main objectives of The Gambia's PA network is to:

- Preserve representative examples of The Gambia's terrestrial and aquatic habitats and their physical environments;
- Conserve viable populations of species making up The Gambia's fauna and flora, with emphasis on endangered threatened, endemic species and their habitats;
- Protect areas of scenic beauty and special or cultural interest;
- Conserve water catchments and soil resources;
- Provide opportunities for public enjoyment and the advancement of science;
- Provide opportunities for sustainable utilization of natural resources;
- Provide for rehabilitation of particular habitats, introduction and re-introduction of particular fauna species; and
- Create opportunities and conducive environment for human communities to access natural resources for enhancement of rural development.

This policy recognizes that the PA network will continue to serve as the core for the future conservation and developing of the wildlife industry and that rural communities must benefit from living adjacent to PAs and among wildlife.

The financial returns and distributions from the wildlife industry have not allowed the wildlife authorities to achieve their management objectives. Only small proportion of wildlife revenue is ploughed back for development and management of PA network without sufficient budgetary

allocation. PAs are poorly managed and infrastructure, equipment, facilities and staff moral are run down and the natural resources base has become depleted. This policy emphasizes proper distribution of revenue from wildlife industry for efficient conservation and management of PAs.

STRATEGIES FOR CONSERVING AND MANAGING WILDLIFE RESOURCES.

- (i) Administering wildlife by conserving core wildlife species habitats including wetlands through wildlife authorities and devolving management responsibility of the settled and areas outside unsettled PAs to rural people and the private sector;
- (ii) Retaining the ownership of, and overall responsibility for management of wildlife resources by the state to ensure that national priorities are addressed and abuses are controlled;
- (iii) Managing wildlife resources based on the ecosystems, rather than administrative boundaries, due to Mobility nature of wild animals, availability of resources and habitat coverage;
- (iv) Regulating mining in core wildlife protected areas (NPs, NRs) in order to preserve the biological diversity;
- (v) Prohibiting capture and translocation of species into PAs except for small existing populations and locally extinct species;
- (vi) Preparing management plans for some species or taxonomic groups of particular concern in order to ensure their survival;
- (vii) Regulating the importation of exotic species and the re-introduction of a species known to be indigenous to the area, in order to safeguard against negative effects resulting from their introduction and re-introduction into the Protected Areas;
- (viii) Developing management plans and zoning prescribing levels and types of use in each zone to ensure attainment of management objectives of each PA;
- (ix) Promoting the involvement of stakeholders in setting aside PAs and PAs' management planning initiatives;
- (x) Enforcing EIA/ ESMP process for proposed development in PAs and requesting for environment planning for developments to be carried out in wildlife areas outside PAs in order to minimize negative impacts;
- (xi) Allowing rural communities to receive benefits from Community Based Conservation Schemes (CBC);
- (xii) Maintaining and enhancing The Gambia Biodiversity Trust Fund (GBTF) to secure enough funds for supporting wildlife conservation activities;
- (xiii) Ensuring effective partnership with rural communities and the private sector in and outside PAs and providing those rural communities with direct and indirect benefits from wildlife utilization;
- (xiv) Adding and extending PA network on the basis of a system plan, prepared in co-ordination among different sectors including consideration of the distribution of species and habitats, present coverage of PAs and patterns of land use;
- (xv) Locating future major tourist development outside PAs in order to reduce negative impacts and enhance benefit sharing with local communities;

- (xvi) Promoting the use of prescribed fires for management programmes as stipulated in the management plans of the area.

3.3.4 ENSURING THAT WILDLIFE CONSERVATION COMPETES WITH OTHER FORMS OF LAND USE

Wildlife conservation is an important form of land use in The Gambia that generates some amount of revenue and foreign exchange. If well developed, wildlife conservation could compete with other forms of land use. However, wildlife conservation has not been developed to its full potential, especially outside PAs, and rural communities have benefited little from those forms of wildlife utilization taking place in settled land. It is the aim of this policy to allow rural communities and private land holders to manage wildlife on their land for their own benefit.

STRATEGIES FOR ENSURING THAT WILDLIFE CONSERVATION COMPETES WITH OTHER FORMS OF LAND USE:

- (i) Involving rural communities and other stakeholders in taking joint responsibility for the sustainable management of wildlife and other natural resources;
- (ii) Including a wide range of activities which build trust between PA managers and rural communities and creating awareness of indirect and direct values of wildlife and natural resources;
- (iii) Providing technical advice to Park management committees and training community rangers to ensure the success of community based conservation;
- (iv) Encouraging rural communities to establish wildlife management Areas in such areas of critical wildlife habitat, with the aim of ensuring that wildlife can compete with other forms of land use that may jeopardize wildlife populations and movements;
- (v) Conferring user rights of wildlife to the land holders to allow rural communities and private land holders to manage wildlife;
- (vi) Assisting wildlife ranchers and farmers to become eligible for the same benefits and incentives that the agricultural farming and livestock industry receive from the Government;
- (vii) Learning from other regional countries with well established wildlife ranching and farming industry;
- (viii) Influencing policies such that land of marginal value to agriculture and livestock development (tsetse infested areas) is set aside for wildlife conservation to the best interest of rural communities as a primary form of land use; and
- (ix) Establishing mechanisms to facilitate public awareness and understanding of wildlife conservation.

3.3.5 WILDLIFE UTILIZATION AND ECONOMICS

The wildlife industry is a major source of foreign exchange and employment, but it still remains under-developed in relation to potential. Furthermore, the present system of the wildlife utilization concentrates on non-consumptive and consumptive tourism, but has not promoted

successfully other forms of utilization such as farming, ranching and village utilization schemes, consequently, The Gambia's earnings from wildlife have been well below their potential, while actual earnings are not distributed equitably among various stakeholders.

This policy encourages domestic tourism by ensuring that Gambians continue to benefit from differential scale of PAs' fee structures. Accordingly, the policy place special emphasis on wildlife conservation and the suitable use of wildlife for the benefit of people, and on using wildlife to reduce hunger by providing food and to generate foreign exchange.

3.3.6 INTEGRATING WILDLIFE CONSERVATION AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

The policy will continue to give wildlife economic value to rural communities to enhance rural development without prejudice to the environment, and in such a way that the benefits compensate for the opportunity cost of this form of land use.

STRATEGIES FOR INTEGRATING WILDLIFE CONSERVATION AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

- (i) Promoting the legal use of wildlife and its products;
- (ii) Encouraging legal and sustainable trade in wildlife and its products from NPs, NRs, Wetland Areas and outside PAs, thus according wildlife a high commercial value yet promoting sustainable utilization of the species in which it is appropriate to trade;
- (iii) Adopting measures that bring an equitable share of revenue from tourist hunting to the rural communities on whose land the industry is practiced;
- (iv) Providing the necessary assistance in allocating concessions and setting wildlife utilization quotas for the rural communities;
- (v) Permitting and regulating trade on wildlife and wildlife products;
- (vi) Adopting a flexible approach of collecting revenue from harvests of biological natural products in hunting areas;
- (vii) Compelling licensed dealers to employ casual workers from areas where wildlife utilization activities are conducted, with aim of generating local employment and income benefits;
- (viii) Encouraging ranchers and farmers operating on privately owned or leased have to develop cropping programmes to supply designated markets with meat and trophies; and
- (ix) Encouraging the involvement of the private sector in supporting protection of wildlife and development of wildlife areas.

3.3.7 GENERATING FOREIGN EXCHANGE FROM WILDLIFE UTILIZATION

There are considerable investment opportunities in the wildlife sector in The Gambia. The future development of the wildlife sector requires substantial investment which is not available to the government. Therefore, the key role of the private sector in investing in the development of the wildlife industry is recognized. In view of this the Government affirms to:

- (i) Encourage private investment in various form of consumptive and non-consumptive uses of wildlife resources in a manner that is compatible with principles of

- conservation, and that maximizes earnings from wildlife, to the people of The Gambia;
- (ii) Work with other relevant institutions that will provide an overall framework in which investments in the wildlife industry will be encouraged;
 - (iii) Ensure that investors adhere to conservation principles and have a firm financial basis for the proposed operations;
 - (iv) Stimulate the growth of the wildlife industry by providing concession for appropriate period, favourable working conditions and setting aside viable wildlife areas for development;
 - (v) Develop a sound international and domestic tourist industry, since tourism in The Gambia can greatly improve through game viewing in PAs and hunting of wildlife; and
 - (vi) Promote a series of actions designed to enhance Gambia's tourist industry while ensuring the conservation of wildlife resource base that supports the industry.

STRATEGIES FOR GENERATING FOREIGN EXCHANGE

- (i) Compelling all potential investors in the wildlife sector to register their companies in The Gambia;
- (ii) Allowing registered companies to operate in the tourist industry based on clean record of company director(s) and personnel from within and outside The Gambia;
- (iii) Ensuring that appropriate fees are paid by the investor for the right to use the wildlife resources;
- (iv) Ensuring that the wildlife resources is not undervalued by setting appropriate competitive prices and fees for various forms of wildlife utilizations;
- (v) Regulating the flow and conduct of visitors within PAs; and
- (vi) Marketing wildlife resources in accordance with the national tourism policy.

3.3.8 RECOGNISING THE INTRINSIC VALUE OF WILDLIFE TO RURAL PEOPLE

It is the right of The Gambian citizens to have legal access to utilise wildlife. Hunting by residents of The Gambia will remain an important aspect of this policy.

STRATEGIES FOR RECOGNIZING AN INTRINSIC VALUE OF WILDLIFE TO RURAL COMMUNITIES:

- (i) Working in partnership with rural communities;
- (ii) Encouraging resident hunting which benefits rural communities in WMAs on whose land hunting is conducted;
- (iii) Permitting rural communities to hunt in WMAs under community based conservation programmes, whose aim is to promote the development of rural communities living among or close to wildlife;
- (iv) Facilitating the establishment of CBC programmes in WMAs by helping the rural communities to have secure ownership/long term use rights of their land and enabling them to use the wildlife and natural resources on that land;
- (v) Giving due consideration to collection of natural products inside National Parks or Nature Reserves provided the collection is managed on a sustainable basis with

- minimal environmental damage and without conflicting with the primary aims of managing PAs;
- (vi) Initiating formation of Authorized Associations for sustainable management of wildlife outside core protected areas;
 - (vii) Initiating and strengthening the formation of Representative Association(s) for particular wildlife commodities or products to develop the wildlife industry in a manner which does not foster the monopolies and helps to ensure the equitable and efficient allocation of opportunities;
 - (viii) Enhancing the use of indigenous knowledge in the conservation and management of natural resources; and
 - (ix) Promoting internal trade on wildlife products in order to enhance the value of indigenous wildlife species to The Gambian people.

3.3.9 SHARING OF BENEFITS

It is recognized that a range of direct and indirect benefits can be derived from wildlife and that the sharing of revenue is an important benefit. In this respect, various stakeholders in wildlife conservation are recognized as follows;

- Rural communities and private holders living around PAs and among wildlife outside PAs;
- District councils, bearing the opportunity cost of establishing PAs and providing services to rural communities;
- Wildlife Authorities, Managing PAs and providing technical advice on wildlife outside PAs;
- Central Government, bearing the opportunity cost of establishing PAs and providing services nationally; and
- Private sector, using wildlife in and out of PAs and who pay taxes to Government on their profits.

This policy adopts relative distribution of revenue and benefits to stakeholders who consider their relevant roles in different categories of land, the effort invested in conservation of the resource and the institutional and management costs.

STRATEGIES FOR SHARING OF BENEFITS

- (i) Involving various stakeholders in determining distribution of revenue and benefits among themselves, and
- (ii) Determining proportions for benefit sharing by the Government and vary them from time to time.

3.3.10 REGULATION AND DEVELOPING THE WILDLIFE INDUSTRY

The PA network devoted to wildlife conservation forms the basis of The Gambia's wildlife industry and much of The Gambia's tourism industry is suppose to benefit from it. Wildlife utilization forms range from non-consumptive use, primarily game viewing by both residents and non-resident tourists, to consumptive uses such as hunting by tourists and residents, live

animal capture; cropping, ranching and farming, trophy sales and protection of human life and property. These activities generate revenue through direct earnings attributable to PAs from fees and through charges made by tour operators and outfitters working in PAs. The tourist wildlife industry needs to be developed in order to improve the economy of the country. The Government will encourage private investment in a manner that is compatible with principles of conservation and that maximize earnings from wildlife to the people of The Gambia.

STRATEGIES FOR REGULATING AND DEVELOPING THE WILDLIFE INDUSTRY

- (i) Determining the limits of acceptable use to volumes of game viewing tourists that the PAs can sustain;
- (ii) Assessing visitor flows that will not result in ecological deterioration and increasing the quality of visitor experience and enjoyment;
- (iii) Diversifying tourist circuits and visitor experience;
- (iv) Co-operating with the relevant sector in improvement of road networks' leading to tourist destinations and in PAs;
- (v) Imparting a deeper appreciation and understanding of the resource and significance of protected areas, and prohibiting high profile visitor activities that tend to focus visitor and user attention on the event;
- (vi) Encouraging and promoting game viewing within appropriate WMAs which could offer a wide variety of recreational opportunity than are available within protected areas;
- (vii) Advising tourist authorities on the minimum standards that are required to be upheld by all tourist operators basing their activities on game viewing;
- (viii) Adopting flexible approaches which are based primarily on economic returns from alternative forms of wildlife utilization;
- (ix) Encouraging the processing and manufacturing of finished wildlife products and articles ready for sale in The Gambia and abroad in order to increase local employment and retain a greater share of revenue derived from wildlife products in The Gambia;
- (x) Seeking to improve participation in the tourist hunting industry through;
 - Open and fair allocation of hunting blocks through a system acceptable by majority of stakeholders without prejudicing the long – term economic returns from tourist hunting in The Gambia;
 - Adopting a fee structure formulated and approved by the appropriate wildlife authority;
 - Setting sustainable hunting quotas on a scientific basis and monitoring wildlife populations that are hunted;
 - Conducting examinations for professional hunters and monitoring their competence in the practice of hunting;
 - Enforcing hunting regulations to ensure a high standard of hunting and of trophies;
 - Facilitating the timely export of trophies to hunting clients in their home countries; and

- Creating an enabling environment for promotion of citizen professional hunters.
- (xi) Permitting small-scale animal cropping by rural communities practicing CBC, ranchers and farmers operating on privately – owned or leased land; and
- (xii) Exercising control in wildlife utilization activities.

3.3.11 ADDRESSING WOMEN AND CHILDREN ISSUES IN WILDLIFE CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT

Traditionally, women and children have been involved directly in the management of wildlife resources in the following ways:

- Collection of firewood; in some places women walk over 10km a day in search of firewood;
- Collection of wild fruits and food products;
- Fishing and hunting of small animals and birds for the pot, mainly done by children;
- Collection of building poles, thatch grass and herbs;
- Collection of traditional medicine;
- Clearing land for farming; and
- Setting wild fires during cultivation and hunting.

There is a clear division of labour among men, women and children in The Gambia rural society. Predominantly, hunting is done by men, while women and children form proportionally large part of the agricultural labour. Land is owned by men and decisions on where, what to cultivate, and the type of crops is decided upon by men. In general, women and children are the source of labour in rural communities. This trend shows that, women and children interact more with natural resources and the environment and therefore, are very important in the conservation of the wildlife and other renewable natural resources.

Women in rural areas work long hours in trying to accomplish the above mentioned tasks. Together with children, they form the least advantaged groups in terms of leisure time/enjoyment and education. They are the most vulnerable groups to diseases due to poor nutrition status and maternal services, insufficient health services, and tender age for children.

This policy recognizes the role of women and children in the conservation of natural resources and the need for them to participate and benefit from the conservation of resources.

STRATEGIES FOR ADDRESSING WOMEN AND CHILDREN ISSUES:

- (i) Initiating and supporting women self-help projects in order to increase their income;
- (ii) Encouraging women to work on natural resources conservation related projects which enhance the nutritional status and contribute to the family income;

- (iii) Encouraging and supporting men and women to work on those project which reduce women and children workload;
- (iv) Supporting maternal care in villages surrounding PAs;
- (v) Supporting and promoting efforts in providing education to children;
- (vi) Enhance women access to natural resources products in PAs where appropriate, and
- (vii) Promoting conservation awareness.

3.3.12 SOLVING HUMAN – WILDLIFE CONFLICTS

There is a necessity of controlling wildlife which pose or cause damage to human life and property. The Government wishes to draw attention to the economic value of wildlife to rural communities through practice of community based conservation. In implementing this policy, the government assumes that rural communities who manage wildlife will realize the inherent conflict which exists between the objective of maximizing earnings from wildlife and reduced productivity which may result from excessive control of problem animals.

Accordingly, the government will introduce a compensation scheme for wildlife damage.

STRATEGIES FOR SOLVING HUMAN – WILDLIFE CONFLICTS

- (i) Develop and establish rapid response plan and compensation scheme
- (ii) Continuing to control dangerous animal species as a matter of priority; and
- (iii) Devolving progressively the responsibility for problem animal control to rural communities operating CBC programmes, and continuing to give assistance where rural communities have not developed this capability.

ALTERNATIVE STRATEGIES:

In the long term, alternative strategies to reduce the conflict between people and wildlife will be explored. Possibilities include:

- Incorporating numbers of animals that are shot on problem animal control into hunting quotas that can derive greater economic benefits to rural communities;
- Ensuring that those most affected by problem animals are the main beneficiaries of revenue earned from wildlife;
- Exploring the use of control methods which rely on mechanical and electrical deterrents, which are non-lethal;
- Where practical, capturing and translocation wildlife of high commercial value; and
- Publicizing the economic value of wildlife, especially to those rural communities operating community-based conservation scheme.

3.3.13 WILDLIFE RESEARCH AND MONITORING

Research and monitoring of change in wildlife resources and their use remains an integral part of wildlife management and planning. So far little research has been incorporated into management plans due to insufficient communication between researchers and wildlife managers. The government recognizes that there are few Gambia research scientists and their motivation is very low to undertake the required research. Accordingly the government wishes to institutionalize an improved research and monitoring capability within the wildlife authorities.

STRATEGIES FOR WILDLIFE RESEARCH AND MONITORING:

- (i) Regulating and monitoring wildlife research in The Gambia;
- (ii) Strengthening the capabilities of the wildlife authorities in research and monitoring;
- (iii) Facilitating regular censuring of wildlife populations;
- (iv) Focusing research and monitoring on levels and economics of wildlife use, human-wildlife interactions, sociology of rural communities around wildlife areas, basic knowledge of ecosystems processes, and the biology of threatened species;
- (v) Rehabilitating and putting into full use the present network of field research stations around the country;
- (vi) Emphasizing research and monitoring in management planning of PAs, according to wildlife research guidelines;
- (vii) Allowing foreign researchers to undertake studies of particular priority topics; and
- (viii) Encouraging and motivating Gambian researchers to undertake wildlife research.

3.3.14 PROVIDING EXTENSION SERVICES

Extension services and good neighbourliness between PA management and rural communities permits identification of wildlife related problems and increases the chances of their solution for mutual benefit. Furthermore, extension work is of prime importance in providing technical assistance to the establishment of WMAs. Accordingly, the government is committed to promoting the extension services that forms the link between wildlife authorities and rural communities outside PAs.

STRATEGIES FOR PROVIDING EXTENSION SERVICES

- (i) Institutionalizing extension services and supporting them with adequate levels of manpower, funds and equipment; and
- (ii) Promoting communication and collaboration with other sectoral rural extension services.

3.3.15 WILDLIFE CONSERVATION EDUCATION AWARENESS

The long-term success of wildlife conservation depends largely on the way that conservation is perceived by the public. The government is committed to putting special effort to raise conservation awareness among Gambian peoples.

STRATEGIES FOR WILDLIFE CONSERVATION EDUCATION AWARENESS

- (i) Creating the widest possible understanding and support for wildlife conservation by preparing and distributing posters, magazines and pamphlets written in both English and local languages and use of other news media, and
- (ii) Cooperating with the sector responsible for education and continuing to promote, the incorporation of conservation education into school syllabi so that wildlife conservation receives a broad foundation of support among future generations.

3.3.16 HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT AND CAPACITY BUILDING

The sustainable development and performance of the wildlife sector depends largely on the development and proper utilization of human resources. In order to sustain the wildlife sector the government is committed to provide appropriate training at all levels, good working environment and adequate working facilities.

STRATEGIES FOR HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT AND CAPACITY BUILDING

- (i) Encouraging and facilitating training in wildlife ecology and management and other skills necessary for the development of the wildlife sector;
- (ii) Monitoring training standards in wildlife training institutions in the country;
- (iii) Maintaining adequate and good quality human resources;
- (iv) Acquiring appropriate technologies;
- (v) Encouraging the establishment of training institution in wildlife management and conservation at all levels of skills;
- (vi) Encouraging, motivating and facilitating foreign investors in the wildlife sector to train Gambians in different skills;
- (vii) Ensuring that employees of the wildlife sector are imparted with new skills to adapt to new situations;
- (viii) Developing programmes and criteria for staff development;
- (ix) Promoting optimum allocation and placement of professional, technical and field staff in appropriate positions in the wildlife sector; and
- (x) Motivating the wildlife sector personnel who are protecting and conserving the wildlife resource by improving working conditions, remuneration, providing adequate working equipment and sufficient incentives.

3.4 POLICY IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK

In the context of this policy wildlife is defined as: “Those species of wild and indigenous animals, and their constituent habitats and ecosystems, to be found in The Gambia, as well as those species that have been introduced to The Gambia and that are temporarily maintained in captivity or have become established in the wild”.

This definition includes the terrestrial invertebrates which were not covered in the previous definition in the Biodiversity/Wildlife Act of 2003.

The present definition places much emphasis on ecosystem which makes it possible to conserve many of the small animal species and less common plants that make up the whole Gambia's unique and important biological diversity. The government recognizes that the definition of wildlife adopted in this policy cannot be applied universally across The Gambia due to the responsibility of other sectors for management of certain areas of land or of particular classes of animals and plants within the operational definition of wildlife. The particular situations, in which the above definition may vary, are in the Fisheries and Forestry sectors. The wildlife authorities will retain overall responsibility for the management of all terrestrial species of mammals, birds, reptiles and amphibians and invertebrates where these occur outside PAs devoted to wildlife and forest conservation and of marine species not covered by fisheries legislation.

Since the wildlife sector of The Gambia has a number of institutions concerned with wild conservation, this policy recognizes the responsibilities of these institutions in the implementation of the policy, however, the overall executive and overseeing responsibility for the wildlife sector, PAs devoted to wildlife conservation and wildlife outside PAs will be vested with Directorate of Parks and Wildlife Management in the Ministry responsible for the wildlife sector. In implementation of the wildlife policy, it interacts with other sectoral policies such as, tourism, agriculture, water, forestry, minerals and environment. This policy recognizes the roles of other sectoral policies in its implementation.

STRATEGIES FOR ADMINISTRATION OF WILDLIFE

- (i) Reviewing the existing Biodiversity and Wildlife Act of 2003 in order to accommodate proposed conservation strategies in this policy which includes management and development of important wetlands, community participation in wildlife conservation, establishment of WMAs, benefit sharing and wildlife user rights for the communities;
- (ii) Managing specific types of PAs and specific components of the wildlife sector through relevant institutions within the sector;
- (iii) Managing vertebrate and invertebrate animals within PAs through the Directorate of Parks and Wildlife Management;
- (iv) Vesting the overall responsibility for seabirds with the Directorate of Parks and Wildlife Management;
- (v) Retaining overall responsibility for the management of all terrestrial species of mammals, birds, reptiles and amphibians and invertebrates where these occur outside PAs devoted to wildlife and forest conservation and of aquatic species not covered by fisheries legislation, and
- (vi) Continuing issuance of all permits required by law for wildlife related activities and for regulating the access to, utilization of and trade in, the wildlife resource.

STRATEGIES FOR CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT OF PAs

- (i) Establishing a new category of protected area (WMAs) for the purposes of affecting CBD;
- (ii) Continuing to manage NPs and NRs through National Parks and Wildlife Legislation

- (iii) Continuing to manage PAs through the Forestry Legislation, and controlling components of the operational definition of wildlife other than forest produce when they occur in Forestry Reserves, through the wildlife legislation;
- (iv) Drawing MOUs with the relevant sectors for the management of areas of great biological and economic importance in order to ensure the effective management of wildlife in PAs, and areas outside the jurisdiction of wildlife authorities; and
- (v) Gazetting new or upgrading PAs by joint agreements between districts, regional and central government with overall sectoral responsibility.

STRATEGIES FOR WILDLIFE CONSERVATION OUTSIDE UNSETTLED PAs

- (i) Establishing WMAs in order to facilitate the implementation of the CBD;
- (ii) Using wildlife in WMAs in accordance with the laws governing wildlife conservation in The Gambia;
- (iii) Retaining overall responsibility for ensuring the co-ordination of all national priorities for wildlife conservation outside unsettled protected areas;
- (iv) Enhancing inter-sectoral co-ordination and co-operation in safeguarding the wildlife conservation interests; and
- (v) Administering wildlife outside unsettled PAs by observing other relevant legislations such as the Local Government Act, the Urban Authorities Act and the Mining Act.

STRATEGIES FOR TRADE IN WILDLIFE PRODUCTS

- (i) Regulating trade in wildlife products derived from various types of utilization, natural mortality and confiscation;
- (ii) Retaining the mandate of internal trade in products produced under jurisdiction of other sectors, such as forestry, fisheries under their jurisdiction;
- (iii) Regulating international trade in wildlife and its products in accordance with appropriate Gambian laws and international regulations; and
- (iv) Instituting the appropriate measures to ensure that the export/import of CITES species or parts derived from the forestry and fisheries sectors meet the requirements of CITES regulations.

STRATEGIES FOR SPECIES CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT

- (i) Preparing management plans with other stakeholders for some species or taxonomic groups of particular concern in order to ensure their survival; and
- (ii) Revising the list of species classified as National Game in collaboration with relevant sectors for inclusion in a new category of protected species, which will include any invertebrates and any plants.

STRATEGIES FOR WILDLIFE RESEARCH AND MONITORING

- (i) Drawing MOUs with the partners for any joint research programme;
- (ii) Reviewing and supervising research priorities and programmes through research guidelines; and
- (iii) Managing and coordinating wildlife research through research guidelines.

STRATEGIES FOR INTERNATIONAL, REGIONAL, NATIONAL ASSISTANCE AND OBLIGATIONS

- (i) Calling for regular meetings with donors to discuss conservation priorities and to co-ordinate action plans;
- (ii) Exercising care in dealing with non-parties to international treaties to which The Gambia is a party, and in fulfilling obligations as a party;
- (iii) Committing to playing a truly international and regional role to ensure that successful conservation of wildlife is achieved both within and outside The Gambia;
- (iv) Welcoming support on wildlife conservation from the international, regional and The Gambian communities and co-operating with any party interested in wildlife conservation, without sacrificing the sovereignty and primary interests for the support and co-operation; and
- (v) Collaborating with neighbouring countries in the conservation and management of transboundary species and ecosystems.

4.0 THE ROLES OF DIFFERENT INSTITUTIONS

Government's role in the wildlife sector is to provide clear policy guidelines, stimulate and promote involvement of various stakeholders, manage core wildlife protected areas, retaining ownership of wildlife resources, and see to the sector's general development. The government will not engage itself in conducting business in the wildlife industry; instead it will concentrate its effort on being the sector's regulator, facilitator and service provider. The role of the private sector and Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs) will be to support the government in this endeavour.

4.1 THE ROLE OF THE GOVERNMENT

4.1.1 GOVERNMENT AS REGULATOR

- (i) Administer the wildlife laws and regulations;
- (ii) Pursuing sound economic and wildlife management policies that are conducive to private and local communities investments;
- (iii) Issuing and administering all types of wildlife resource user rights and trading license and permits;
- (iv) Developing management plans for wildlife protected areas; and
- (v) Collecting royalties, fees and concessions payments arising from wildlife management and development.

4.1.2 GOVERNMENT AS FACILITATOR

- (i) Co-ordinating activities of the wildlife industry; and
- (ii) Ensuring appropriate wildlife management professionalism and skills.

4.1.3 GOVERNMENT AS SERVICE PROVIDER

- (i) Controlling problem animals all over the country;
- (ii) Ensuring conservation education to rural communities and the general public; and
- (iii) Establishing extension services in rural communities.

4.2 THE ROLE OF THE PRIVATE SECTOR

The role of the private sector is to support the government in the conservation and management of the wildlife resources. In addition, the private sector is encouraged to invest in the wildlife industry.

4.3 THE ROLE OF NGOs

The role of the local and international NGOs is to support the government financially and technically at all levels, in the conservation and management of wildlife resources.

4.4 THE ROLE OF THE PUBLIC

The role of the public is to support the government efforts in the conservation and management of the wildlife resources. In addition, the public has a role of utilising the wildlife resources sustainably. Furthermore, the local communities living adjacent to PAs or in areas with viable populations of wildlife have a role of managing and benefiting from wildlife on their own lands, by creating WMAs.

5.0 CONCLUSION

The Gambia has been successful in establishing PA network which is a basis for conserving its country's biological diversity and for the growth of its wildlife industry. The long term wildlife conservation perspective is to maintain great biological diversity which contributes to healthy environment and increase its contribution to the country's economy from the present level of about 2% to 5% of the GDP by the year 2020.

In order to attain this goal, the wildlife sector puts emphasis on maintaining and developing the wildlife PA network and involving all stakeholders in the conservation and management of the resource, especially the local communities, and the private sector.

The role of the Government focuses on regulating, facilitating and promoting sustainable utilisation of the wildlife resource. The Government also acts as a service provider in the case of problem animals and extension services to the rural community.

Furthermore, the Government will facilitate the establishment of a new category of PAs known as WMAs, where local people will have full mandate of managing and benefiting from their conservation efforts, through Community Based Conservation Programmes. The private sector will be encouraged to invest in the wildlife industry, taking advantage of the prevailing political stability and sound investment policies.

The Government has set clear, transparent and simple procedures for participation in the wildlife based tourist industry, and investment in other wildlife related activities. In

safeguarding the sustainable use of the wildlife resource, the Government will strengthen its capabilities of carrying out law enforcement functions.

In fulfilling its obligations, the Government will continue to administer the present PA network through designated wildlife institutions, whose functions are differentiated by the purpose of conserving the respective PAs.

In order to monitor the wildlife resources effectively, the Government will institutionalise the research and information management, extension services, and conservation education activities.

The Government will co-operate with neighbouring countries in the conservation of migratory species and transboundary ecosystems, and will promote and welcome support on wildlife conservation from the international, regional and Gambian communities, and co-operate with any party interested in wildlife conservation.

GLOSSARY

Community-Based Conservation means conservation of resources based on the participation of the local communities.

Concession means an agreement entered between a group of people, corporation, parastatal or person and the Wildlife Authority or Authorized Association to put to use a designated piece of land, for a short period (not more than ten years) for conservation purposes.

Cropping in wildlife context means the harvest of free ranging animals for a relatively short period of time for a range of products including meat, and other trophies.

Corridors means areas used by wild animals when migrating from one part of the ecosystem to another, daily, weekly, monthly, annually in search of basic requirements such as water, food, space and habitat.

Conservation means the act of protecting and sustainably utilizing biodiversity; in this context wildlife natural resources.

Dispersal Areas means areas adjacent to or surrounding PAs into which wild animals move during some periods from the PAs.

Director of Parks and Wildlife Management means the head of Parks and Wildlife Management within the Ministry responsible for wildlife in the Government of the Republic of The Gambia.

Farming means the rearing of specimens, bred from adult stock held under largely natural conditions, for the purpose of engaging in different forms of wildlife utilization.

General Management Plan means a tool to guide management and development programmes of PA.

Land use means activities carried out on a given piece of land.

Lease means an agreement entered between a person, group of people, corporation or parastatal organization and the wildlife authority to put to use a certain piece of land for a long period of time.

Migration means the movement of wild animals commonly birds and mammals over large distances in search of basic needs.

Migratory routes means areas, strips or zones of land used for migration by large herds of wild animals during their migratory cycles.

Minister means the Minister for the time being responsible for matters related to the conservation of wildlife.

Natural resources means biological resources which include forestry, aquatic fauna and flora, bees, wildlife and their products.

Protected Area means an area set aside and managed under the appropriate legislation for wildlife and other biological natural resources conservation.

Protected species means an animal or plant species protected by an international convention, or laws for the Gambia or any other country.

Ranching means the rearing in a controlled environment of specimens, usually of young, taken from the wild with the intention of engaging in wildlife trade.

Unsettled PAs means National Parks and Nature Reserves.

Wetlands in this context means areas of marsh, fen, peat land or water, whether natural or artificial, permanent or temporary, with water that is static or flowing, brackish, or salty including areas of marine water the depth of which at low tide does exceed six metres. It may also incorporate riparian or coastal zones adjacent to the wetlands, and islands or bodies of marine water deeper than six metres at low tide lying within the wetlands.

Wildlife means those species of wild and indigenous animals and plants, and their constituent habitats and ecosystems, to be found in The Gambia, as well as those exotic species that have been introduced to The Gambia, and are temporarily maintained in captivity or have become established in the wild.

Wildlife Management Areas means an area declared by the Minister to be so and set aside by village governments for the purpose of biological natural resources conservation.