

# INTERIM COUNTRY STRATEGY

## IOM THE GAMBIA

2022 - 2023





“When well managed migration works, closed societies can become open, and political tensions fade away.

Whether we are living, working, loving or building, we do so **together.**”

António Vitorino  
IOM Director General



#### Disclaimer

IOM is committed to the principle that humane and orderly migration benefits migrants and society. As an intergovernmental organization, IOM acts with its partners in the international community to: assist in meeting the operational challenges of migration; advance understanding of migration issues; encourage social and economic development through migration; and uphold the human dignity and well-being of migrants.

Publisher: International Organization for Migration  
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Cover photo: IOM staff distributing non-food items during flood response. ©IOM 2022 / Robert Kovacs.

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ISBN:  
© 2022 International Organization for Migration (IOM)

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AAP	Accountability to Affected Populations
AVM	Assistance to Vulnerable Migrants
AVRR	Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration
C4D	Communication for Development
CCA	Common Country Analysis
CF	Cooperation Framework
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease 2019
CRR	Central River Region
CT	Counter-Trafficking
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
DTM	Displacement Tracking Matrix
GCM	Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration
IBM	Immigration and Border Management
IMRF	International Migration Review Forum
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IP	Implementing Partner
IT	Information Technology
LGA	Local Government Area
LHD	Labour Mobility and Human Development
MECC	Migration, Environment and Climate Change
MGI	Migration Governance Indicators
MHPSS	Mental Health and Psychosocial Support
MIC	Migration Information Centre
MIDAS	Migration Information and Data Analysis System
NCM	National Coordination Mechanism on Migration
NMP	National Migration Policy
NRM	National Referral Mechanism
OVP	Office of the Vice President
PSEAH	Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and Sexual Harassment
RCM	Regional Coordination Mechanism on Migration
RCO	Resident Coordinator Office
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SOPs	Standard Operating Procedures
TiP	Trafficking in Persons
TORs	Terms of Reference
TWG	Thematic Working Group
UN	United Nations
UN OHCHR	United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNNM	United Nations Network on Migration
UNSDCF	United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework
URR	Upper River Region
WAAR	West African Atlantic Route
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

## FOREWORD FROM THE REGIONAL DIRECTOR

When I first assumed the position of IOM's Regional Director for West and Central Africa, I had the opportunity to visit The Gambia on my first official duty travel in April 2021. Through meeting various stakeholders, I came to learn about and appreciate a country where numerous migration-related vulnerabilities remain to be addressed, but where there is also a concerted effort from all sectors of society to better govern migration and harness its potential.

With The Gambia now a Global Compact for Migration (GCM) Champion Country, we have witnessed the significant strides made over the past years in promoting safe, orderly and regular migration. Five years since officially becoming a country office in July 2017, our mission in The Gambia is at a critical stage of reflection: how can IOM support the government in leveraging these strides, while responding to the remaining gaps and challenges in a continuously evolving migration context?

As such, it is with great pleasure that I present IOM's first Interim Country Strategy for The Gambia, covering 2022 to 2023. Building on the IOM Strategic Vision, the IOM Continental Strategy for Africa and the IOM Regional Strategy for West and Central Africa, the strategy highlights a course of action for IOM's work in the coming years, revolving under three fundamental pillars: resilience, mobility and governance. It outlines six strategic priorities, which aim to facilitate regular migration, strengthen assistance to migrants, mitigate the impacts of forced migration, and more. The strategy's core principles are aligned to various international guiding frameworks, including the GCM, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the African Union Agenda 2063.

All of this, of course, is anchored on The Gambia's national development priorities. The strategy was developed under the lens of a thorough analysis of the country context, needs and opportunities in relation to migration as a phenomenon. In full alignment with the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (CF), to be elaborated by the UN System and launched in 2024, we have also maintained our interim strategy's coverage through 2023, with a view to issuing a new Country Strategy starting in 2024 that is based on the new CF.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank IOM's many partners who provided valuable feedback during the development and validation of this strategy. I can attest to IOM's readiness and commitment to stand by the Government of The Gambia in its endeavours, collaborating closely with sister United Nations agencies and important partners among the non-state actors in the process.

Finally, I would like to congratulate our team in The Gambia for the great work done over the past five years. The launch of this strategy sets you on a new path, for which I wish you the best of luck. Remember that it is only through working closely together that we are able to put the hopes and aspirations of migrants front and centre.

**Christopher Gascon**

Regional Director, West and Central Africa  
International Organization for Migration (IOM)



## FOREWORD FROM THE CHIEF OF MISSION

The Gambia became a member state of the International Organization for Migration in December 2001, and soon after, IOM set up an office in the country. For the next 15 years our office remained modest in size, with only a few staff implementing a limited scope of activities under the guidance of our Regional Office in Dakar. Then, in December 2016, the then- 22-year dictatorial regime was ousted, ushering in a democratic Government keen to manage migration. Ubiquitous in the lives of Gambians at the time was the phenomenon of the *backway*, a local term for irregular migration towards Europe. To respond to the need for support in return and reintegration of Gambian migrants, a project to be managed entirely by IOM in The Gambia, in close coordination with the Government, was launched in mid-2017.

It was in this context that I arrived in July 2017 as IOM The Gambia's first Chief of Mission and met my team of four staff, working out of a single-story house in a leafy compound on Kairaba Avenue. Already, there was a backlog of more than 1,100 Gambian returnees, most of whom had returned from Libya and had not received their reintegration assistance. We rolled up our sleeves and got to work, to transform our satellite office into a fully functional IOM mission able to independently implement projects.

Fast-forward to 2022, IOM has more than 60 staff and is now a household name, having set up offices in the capital and in the eastern city of Basse as the first UN agency in the country to have a permanent regional presence. While providing return and reintegration assistance to more than 7,500 Gambian migrants since 2017 will certainly register as a key achievement for IOM, I am equally proud of our work that is not as tangible. These are the efforts at building a migration governance system based on the “whole-of-government” principle that we were called upon by the Government to support, notably the set up of the National Coordination Mechanism on Migration (NCM) and launch of the National Migration Policy (NMP).

In fact, over the last five years The Gambia has registered an impressive array of milestones in migration management and governance, such as the implementation of the Global Compact for Migration, development of the Labour Migration Strategy and frameworks for promoting regular migration, digitalization of traveller records through the Migration Information and Data Analysis System, and launch of the National Referral Mechanism on the protection of vulnerable migrants including victims of trafficking, among others. IOM was able to contribute to these seminal initiatives because migration was and continues to be a priority topic for The Gambia, and because of the confidence our partners placed in IOM, for which we are truly grateful.

And now, based on our experiences and analyses gained by working hand-in-hand with our partners in Government, migrant associations, academia, civil society, media, private sector and the UN system since 2017, we are proud to share our first country strategy for The Gambia for the interim period 2022-2023.

It is my hope that this strategy will serve as a basis for IOM in The Gambia into the future, to enable us to continue to walk alongside all our partners on this journey to strengthen The Gambia's migration governance system that stands by migrants and upholds their rights, and enables the country to maximize the positive contributions of safe, orderly and regular migration while managing the negative effects of irregular migration.

**Fumiko Nagano**

Chief of Mission

International Organization for Migration (IOM) – The Gambia

With migration being highly prominent in the social and political fabric of The Gambia, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) has a unique opportunity to advance safe, orderly and regular migration in the country and advance the operationalization of the Global Compact for Migration.

Through an assessment of the migration and political outlook and challenges of The Gambia, as well as an assessment of the Country Office's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, IOM The Gambia has developed its first interim country strategy. In alignment with key international frameworks – including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM), the African Union's Agenda 2063, IOM Strategic Vision 2019-2023, IOM Continental Strategy for Africa 2020-2024, IOM Regional Strategy for West and Central Africa 2020-2024, and The Gambia's National Development Plan 2018-2021 – six strategic priorities have been identified under the overarching pillars of Resilience, Mobility and Governance:

### RESILIENCE

- 1 Enhance provision of assistance to migrants through strengthening protection and referral mechanisms, facilitating safe and dignified return, promoting livelihood and reintegration opportunities, contributing to national counter-trafficking efforts and empowering informed migration decision-making.
- 2 Build capacities to mitigate chronic vulnerability among key populations and forced migration resulting from crises, disasters or other emergencies through preparedness, adaptation, resilience and risk management practices.

### MOBILITY

- 3 Promote and regulate ethical recruitment and expand alternatives to irregular migration – in particular through safe, legal migration pathways – while strengthening diaspora engagement, enhancing the efficiency of remittance transfer corridors and reinforcing alternative local livelihood opportunities through job creation and enterprise development schemes.
- 4 Promote migrant-sensitive health programming to ensure migrants and mobile populations benefit from an improved standard of physical, mental and social well-being.

### GOVERNANCE

- 5 Mainstream migration into government plans and policies, support policy operationalization, strengthen inter-actor coordination and implementation on migration, and build the evidence base for migration data and trends.
- 6 Enhance national capacities to improve the policy, legislation, operational systems, human resources, and administrative and technical structures required to respond more effectively to diverse border management challenges to facilitate safe, orderly and regular migration.

IOM The Gambia seeks to effectively work on these priorities between 2022 and 2023 while laying the foundation for a future longer-term country strategy to be developed in alignment with the upcoming UN Sustainable Development Country Framework. To this end, IOM is committed to deploying strong resource mobilization, communication, partnerships and coordination to achieve the outcomes.



# INTRODUCTION

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## ABOUT IOM



Established in 1951, IOM is the leading intergovernmental organization in the field of migration with 174 Member States, further eight States holding Observer status, and offices in over 100 countries. By collaborating with its key stakeholders, migrants and Member States, IOM works to navigate the complexities of migration by promoting humane and orderly migration for the benefit of all. To advance this aim, IOM provides services and advice to governments and migrants from an integrated and holistic perspective, to maximize the benefits and opportunities of migration and reduce its challenges.

IOM's Strategic Vision, adopted by IOM Member States in 2019 and spanning the period between 2019 and 2023, articulates how IOM plans to meet its new and emerging responsibilities. IOM The Gambia's Interim Country Strategy is aligned with The Gambia's National Development Plan 2018-2021 (extended through 2022), as well as the IOM Strategic Vision, IOM Continental Strategy for Africa 2020-2024, and IOM Regional Strategy for West and Central Africa 2020-2024 – which are anchored in the overall framework of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development – and the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) and the African Union's Agenda 2063.

As recognized in the 2030 Agenda, human mobility is linked to sustainable development, with well-managed migration providing significant opportunity to benefit migrants and communities of origin, transit and destination. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) – and the commitment to leave no one behind and to reach the furthest behind – will not be achieved without due consideration of migration. This Interim Country Strategy outlines how this important objective of leaving no one behind can be achieved within The Gambia's context, leveraging the potential of migration through a whole-of-government, whole-of-society approach to ensure sustainable development outcomes for all. It is a direct contribution to the Decade of Action to fast-track progress for reaching the SDGs. It brings greater coherence and development impact to IOM's activities and allows for a joined-up approach to the way the Organization designs and delivers its operations, as called for in IOM's Strategic Vision.

Having established an operational presence in The Gambia in 2001, IOM officially established a country office in The Gambia in July 2017 and implements an extensive range of migration management programming comprising Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR), Assistance to Vulnerable Migrants (AVM) and Counter-Trafficking (CT), as well as Communication for Development (C4D), Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR), Immigration and Border Management (IBM), Labour Mobility and Human Development (LHD), Migration, Environment and Climate Change (MECC) and Migration Health.



**Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR)**



**Immigration and Border Management (IBM)**



**Assistance to Vulnerable Migrants (AVM) and Counter Trafficking (CT)**



**Labour Mobility and Human Development (LHD)**



**Communication for Development (C4D)**



**Migration, Environment and Climate Change (MECC)**



**Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR)**

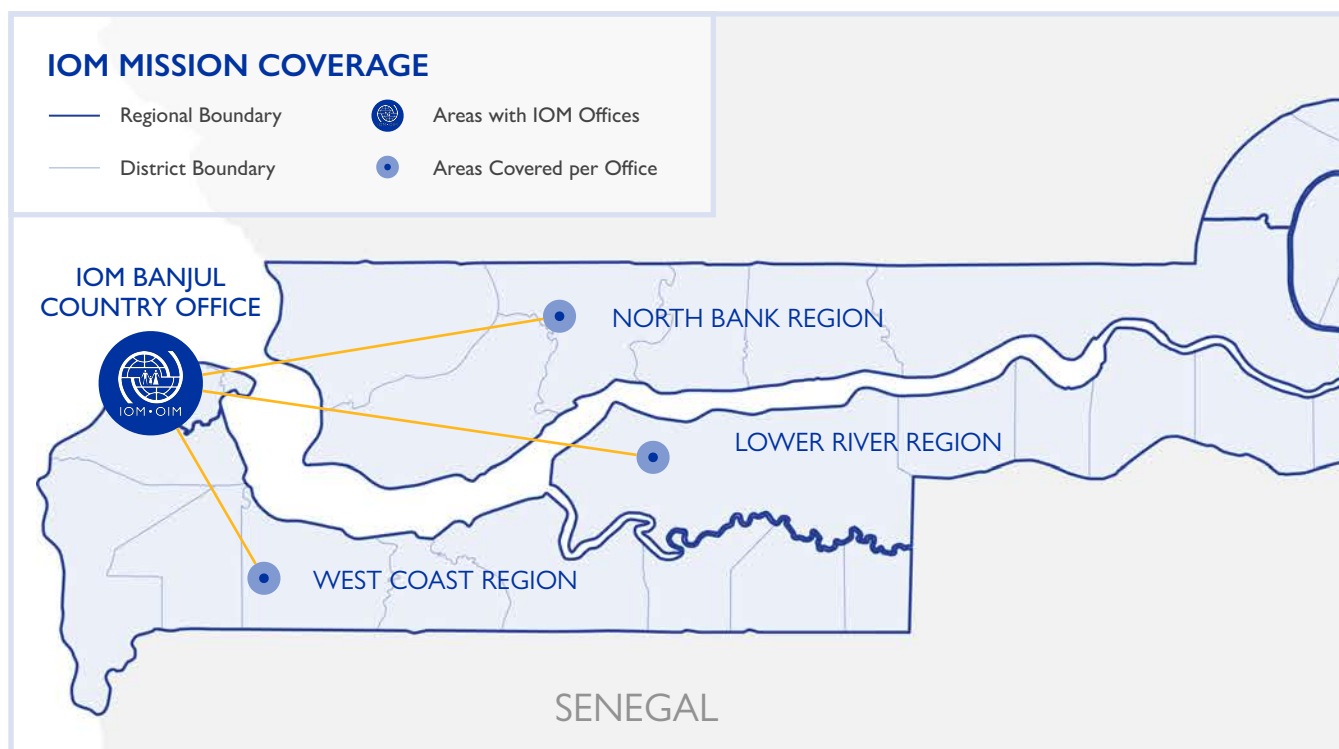


**Migration Health**

IOM works closely with the Government of The Gambia to strengthen migration governance through national coordination frameworks and evidence-based policy design through research as well as data collection and analysis. Operationally, IOM is recognized in the country for facilitating the sustainable reintegration of returning migrants, placing a particular emphasis on the protection of vulnerable migrants. IOM also works with government and local partners to facilitate safe, orderly and regular movement of migrants across borders, advocate for regular labour migration, combat trafficking in persons, promote the health of migrants, raise awareness on the risks of and alternatives to irregular migration and facilitate diaspora engagement to contribute to economic development through knowledge and skills transfer. As a whole, IOM supports the Government of The Gambia and national and local partners to build their capacities to protect and promote migrants' rights and

manage migration for the benefit of all. IOM further plays a leadership and coordination role within the United Nations System, having led the UN Migration Working Group from January 2018 to June 2019, and leading the UN Network on Migration together with the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (UN OHCHR) as co-leads since July 2019 to date.

In June 2019, IOM opened its sub-office in Basse Santa Su, the administrative capital of the Upper River Region (URR). As IOM's first sub-office in The Gambia and the first permanent sub-office of a UN agency in the country, the Basse Sub-Office was designed to expand IOM's geographical coverage and improve the quality of its work for the beneficiaries. The sub-office covers IOM's operations in URR and the Central River Region (CRR).



Starting as a country office of four persons in June 2017 to 69 staff as of October 2022, IOM has reached several milestones in supporting the Government's migration governance efforts. Most notably, this includes technical assistance to establish a National Coordination Mechanism on Migration (NCM), launched in November 2019, and to develop The Gambia's first stand-alone National Migration Policy (NMP), which was officially launched in December 2020. IOM has also helped put in place several other strategies and frameworks, including Guidelines for the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) for the Protection of Vulnerable Migrants, including Victims of Trafficking; a Labour Migration Strategy; Ethical Recruitment Guidelines; a Pre-Departure Training Manual; and various national frameworks and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) on border management, health (including Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS)), protection of

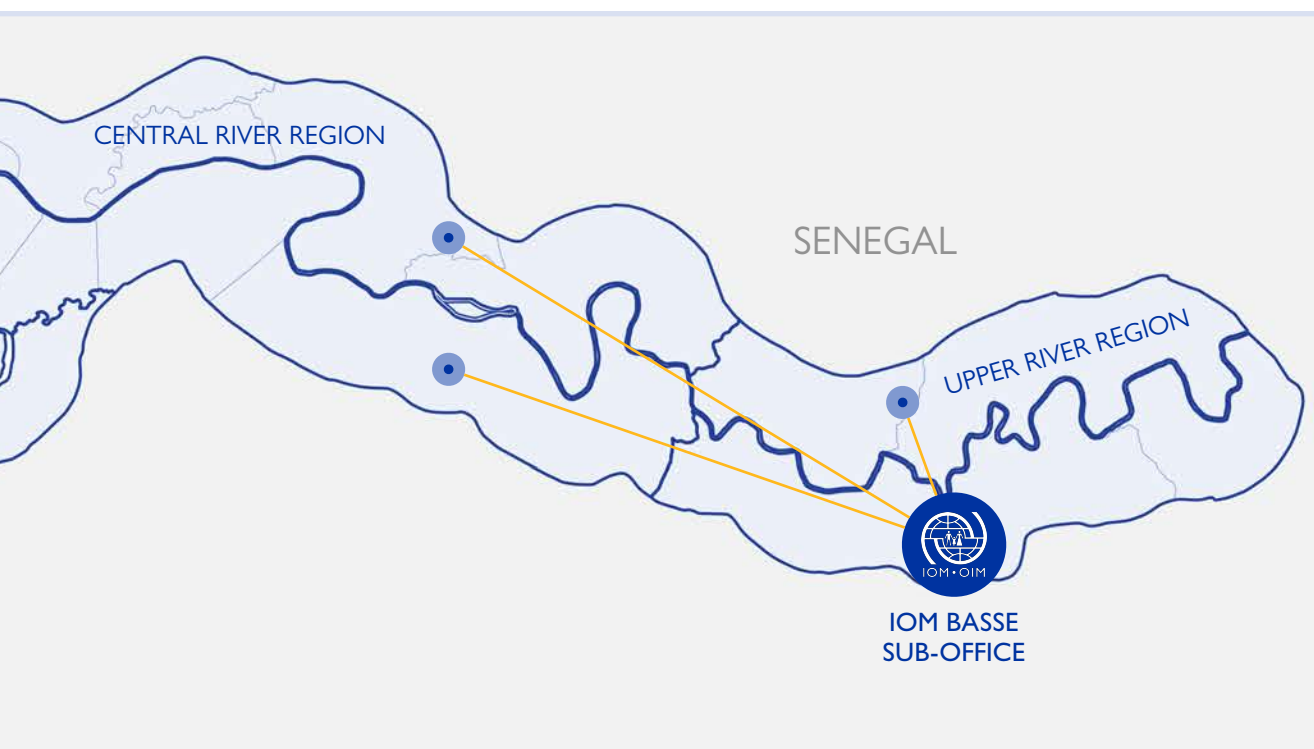
unaccompanied and separated migrant children, and return and reintegration.

Data on migration has improved significantly through several research initiatives, as well as the launch of the Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) in July 2021.<sup>1</sup> In particular, the June 2018 Comprehensive Border Assessment paved the way for the installation and subsequent launch of the Migration Information and Data Analysis System (MIDAS) at four border posts connected to Immigration Headquarters in February 2021. With MIDAS, IOM has supported the Government in moving from manual to digital processing of traveller information key to ensuring timely and accurate data on movement across borders, which, in turn, contributes to evidence-based policymaking.

Between January 2017 and October 2022, IOM facilitated the return of more than 7,500 Gambian migrants, nearly 6,000 of whom were provided with reintegration assistance. IOM also supported the establishment and

<sup>1</sup> The Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) gathers and analyses data to disseminate critical multi layered information on the mobility, vulnerabilities, and needs of displaced and mobile populations that enables decision makers and responders to provide these populations with better context specific assistance.





operation of two Jobs Centres (one in the Greater Banjul Area and another in Basse, Upper River Region) and four Migration Information Centres (MICs) to raise awareness on and promote alternatives to irregular migration. At the request of the government, IOM has also constructed two border posts: one in Sabi in January 2022 and another in Nyamanarr in March 2022 to facilitate safe and orderly processing of travellers. Additionally, IOM supported the renovation of the only state-owned, in-patient psychiatric facility for The Gambia, finalized in March 2022, to facilitate improved capacity and access to dignified health and MHPSS services and treatment for migrants and communities. Finally, IOM has built the capacities of government (including local government and township structures) and non-government organizations on various fronts, including border management, counter-trafficking, diaspora engagement, international migration law, labour migration frameworks, mental health and psychosocial support, migrant protection, COVID-19 preparedness and response, and more.

All these achievements fall under the framework of IOM's support to the Government of The Gambia in implementing the 23 objectives of the Global Compact for Migration (GCM). IOM has so far played a key role in supporting the government in the prioritization of GCM objectives and the implementation, follow-up and review of the GCM through a series of multi-stakeholder consultations, including support to undertake a national voluntary review, the outcome of which was presented by the Government at the GCM Africa Regional Review Conference in August-September 2021. In preparation for the Government's participation in the International Migration Review Forum (IMRF) in May 2022, IOM, as the lead agency of the UN Network on Migration (UNNM), spearheaded the UN system-wide support to the Government to update the 2021 national voluntary review report, which was validated by a wide range of stakeholders in April 2022. In collaboration with the UN Resident Coordinator, IOM intends to continue its leadership role in the UNNM in The Gambia to support the Government in GCM

### MIGRATION OUTLOOK IN THE GAMBIA

With a population of a little over two million, The Gambia is one of Africa's smallest countries. The Gambia has a long tradition of migration. A first wave of migration of Gambians towards the United Kingdom followed the country's independence in 1965. By the end of the 1980s, internal migration towards cities and emigration to North America and the European Union became common coping strategies to the economic situation in the country. Later on, outward migration was also a response to the regime of Yahya Jammeh. The Gambia is also a destination country for other African countries, especially among its neighbours, and a transit country for sub-Saharan migrants on their way to Europe. An estimated 215,000 migrants are resident in The Gambia.<sup>2</sup>

Over the past few years, the pursuit of socioeconomic advancement has driven many to undertake irregular migration with the aim of reaching Europe, leading to a per capita migration rate that remains one of the highest in Africa. Limited viable economic opportunities are identified as the main cause for emigration<sup>3</sup> for young Gambians without vocational skills, leading to high rates of irregular migration between 2015 and 2017, primarily through the Central Mediterranean Route. During these three years, more than 30,000 irregular Gambian migrant arrivals were recorded.<sup>4</sup> Though these numbers have since decreased (2,785 in 2019 and 322 in 2020<sup>5</sup>) and there is generally more awareness of the risks of irregular migration, there remains strong interest in Europe-bound migration. This was evidenced in a fatal shipwreck off the coast of Mauritania in December 2019, in which hundreds of Gambians aimed to reach the Canary Islands, leading to over 60 deaths.<sup>6</sup> Since then and in 2020 and 2021, the Western African Atlantic Route by sea to the Canary Islands has seen a

steep rise in its use. Between January and June 2021, some 6,952 individuals reached the Canary Islands from West African shores, a 156 percent increase compared to the same period in 2020.<sup>7</sup>

Magnifying the risk of exploitation is the socioeconomic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Public health measures, such as border closures and restrictions on economic activity, have impacted livelihoods across the board. These impacts have been felt most among communities and populations traditionally reliant on cross-border trade and the tourism industry. The pandemic also led to Gambian migrants being stranded for prolonged periods in various countries. These trends also point toward the need to empower potential migrants with the capacity to make informed migration-related decisions and the need to work with relevant stakeholders in combatting smuggling and trafficking in persons, while protecting vulnerable migrants.

Forced returns from EU Member States continue to be one of the most politically sensitive and challenging issues, receiving widespread media and public attention. Public backlash against forced returns is expected to remain in the near future, should larger numbers of irregular Gambian migrants be subjected to this fate. Aside from the challenge of ensuring the dignified and sustainable return of migrants, growing issues around stigma and discrimination against forced returnees could threaten social cohesion in host communities.

Remittances account for a significant portion of income for a large section of Gambian society. The figure for remittance flows through formal channels in 2020 alone stood at USD 589.81 million, a significant increase from USD 329.79

million in 2019<sup>8</sup> from an estimated 118,000 Gambians living abroad.<sup>9</sup> More recently, according to the Central Bank of The Gambia, the remittance inflow to The Gambia through formal channels in 2021 was estimated at USD 776.67 million,<sup>10</sup> having increased by more than 30 percent and accounting for approximately 38.3 percent of the national gross domestic product, estimated at USD 2.03 billion in the same year.<sup>11</sup> These statistics demonstrate the critical contribution of remittances to development. The Government of The Gambia historically did not prioritize the developmental potential of remittances and has yet to put in place facilities that leverage remittance receipts. In recent years, however, the Government is actively reaching out to Gambian communities abroad and has set up a dedicated Diaspora and Migration Directorate within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to better engage with the diaspora.

Significant progress has been made in migration policy and governance overall. This includes the establishment of a National Coordination Mechanism on Migration (NCM), led by the Office of the Vice

President, in November 2019, and the official launch of the first stand-alone National Migration Policy (NMP), led by the Ministry of Interior, in December 2020, reflecting the Government's commitment to managing migration from a whole-of-government perspective. Furthermore, while migration was not well-captured in the National Development Plan (NDP) 2018-2021, the next iteration of the NDP, currently under development, appears promising in recognizing the developmental potential of migration.

There remains a huge gap in data on migration flows, routes, demographics, and potential migrants' and returnees' skills – owing mainly due to a lack of investment on research and data collection during the previous regime. Recently, the gap is slowly attracting attention and interest from various actors. Notably, IOM has worked with the Gambia Bureau of Statistics on research on internal mobility in 2019 and launched the Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) in the country, piloted in four areas in 2021.

<sup>2</sup>IOM, Regional Mobility Mapping: West and Central Africa, June 2020.

<sup>3</sup>Action document for the EU Trust Fund to be used for the decisions of the Operational Board, Strengthening the management and governance of migration and the sustainable reintegration of returning migrants in the Gambia.

<sup>4</sup>Frontex, Detection of Illegal Border Crossings.

<sup>5</sup>IOM, Flow Monitoring Report, 2021.

<sup>6</sup>IOM, Death Toll from Mauritania Ship Sinking Mounts as Support to Survivors Gathers Momentum, 6 December 2019.

<sup>7</sup>IOM, Irregular Migration Towards Europe: Western Africa Atlantic Route, July 2021

<sup>8</sup>The Gambia Diaspora and Migration Directorate, Remittances, 2021.

<sup>9</sup>United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2019.

<sup>10</sup>Government of The Gambia, "National Voluntary Review Report on the Status of Implementation of the GCM: the Government of the Republic of The Gambia," April 2022.

<sup>11</sup>International Monetary Fund Country Report No. 22/195.

# STRATEGIC PRIORITIES





IOM aims to be the trusted lead in migration issues in The Gambia – providing innovative, needs-oriented and rights-based programming and policy support to complement government efforts in promoting safe, orderly and regular migration. IOM intends to achieve this objective by focusing on delivering specific goals across the three pillars of resilience, mobility and governance, in the following key programmatic areas: Migrant Protection and Assistance (including Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration and Counter-Trafficking); Communication for Development; Data; Disaster Risk Reduction, Environment and Climate Change; Immigration and Border Management; Labour Migration; Migration and Development; Migration Health; and Policy and Governance.



### RESILIENCE

1

Enhance provision of assistance to migrants through strengthening protection and referral mechanisms, facilitating safe and dignified return, promoting livelihood and reintegration opportunities, contributing to national counter-trafficking efforts and empowering informed migration decision-making.



IOM aims to strengthen the provision of protection and assistance to migrants in need, particularly returnees and vulnerable migrants in irregular situations – including stranded and smuggled migrants, trafficked persons, children at risk of being stateless and unaccompanied and separated migrant children – by supporting the continued cascading of the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) for the Protection of Vulnerable Migrants, including Victims of Trafficking, to ensure its widespread awareness and operationalization nationwide.

Identifying a need to expand resources and capacity to support stranded migrants, IOM aspires to continue supporting government efforts to facilitate safe and dignified return, including consular protection (GCM Objectives 6, 14 and 21) and supporting cross-border dialogues to establish a sub-regional cooperation framework to ensure the safe return of Gambian migrants from the sub-region, including those saved at sea (GCM Objective 21). Similarly, IOM aspires to strengthen its position to provide urgent assistance to migrants stranded in The Gambia, which has been a recently evolving phenomenon in line with the resurgence of the West African Atlantic Route.

Anchored on IOM's Return, Readmission and Reintegration Policy and its integrated reintegration assistance framework, IOM

intends to strengthen its work with returnees, communities of return, host countries, the private sector and the whole of society to provide livelihood opportunities that address local development needs. This includes comprehensive returnee profiling to inform career guidance, as well as implementation of pilot job creation schemes that provide decent employment opportunities for returnees. Moreover, IOM intends to increase the number of referral partners that offer training and income-generating activities and increase the number of community-based reintegration projects in country. In line with GCM Objective 18, IOM will strive to improve the capacity of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) programs through strengthening institutional setup as well as human capital development, including investing in a skills recognition framework so that returnees can formalize the skills they have obtained while abroad. This contributes to minimizing “the adverse drivers and structural factors that compel people to leave their country of origin” (GCM Objective 2).

Furthermore, IOM will continue supporting national efforts to combat trafficking in persons (GCM Objective 10), primarily through building the capacities of institutions to identify, refer and protect victims of trafficking. The Gambia has reached a milestone when it was upgraded to Tier 2

ranking in the United States Trafficking in Persons (TiP) Report in July 2022. To maintain or improve on this ranking, stronger partnerships are needed with state and non-state actors. This includes partnerships aimed at raising awareness on trafficking in persons in communities, especially child trafficking that is on the rise; supporting protection services for victims, including psychosocial support; and building the capacity of criminal justice system's to rigorously identify, investigate and prosecute traffickers. This work is anchored on Agenda 2063, promoting "respect for human rights, justice and the rule of law" (Aspiration 3), and the Sustainable Development Goals Target 16.2 on "ending abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children."

The unique needs and vulnerabilities of migrant children, including those who fall victim to or are vulnerable to trafficking and exploitation, unaccompanied and separated migrant children stranded in The Gambia who are in need of support to return home, among others, will be considered at all stages. Finally, IOM identifies the need to continue working with local and community partners

to "provide accurate and timely information at all stages of migration" (GCM Objective 3), focusing on accurate and concrete information on alternatives to irregular migration to empower informed decision-making. While many young people and potential migrants in The Gambia are aware of the risks of irregular migration, many still lack access to information on how they can avail themselves of local education, employment or entrepreneurship opportunities, as well as the basic requirements of safe migration. Improved migration knowledge and behaviours, in turn, serve to combat exploitation, such as smuggling and trafficking (GCM Objectives 9 and 10). More broadly, IOM aims to promote accurate, balanced and in-depth discourse on migration that fosters positive perceptions toward migrants, which is vital to their social and psychosocial wellbeing. Stigma and discrimination towards returning migrants can adversely affect social cohesion, with returnees potentially branded as "failures." On these efforts, IOM envisions collaborating with a range of partners from civil society, the diaspora and the media.

2

Build capacities to mitigate chronic vulnerability among key populations and forced migration resulting from crises, disasters or other emergencies through preparedness, adaptation, resilience and risk management practices.



Renewed armed conflict along The Gambia's border with Senegal's Casamance Region has emphasized the need to build preparedness and response to disasters. IOM aims to continue supporting the Government in addressing emergencies that lead to displacement, such as floods, windstorms and bushfires, conflicts and armed violence, epidemics as well as transhumance and environmentally-induced conflict between herders and farmers, and other potential future crises

## STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

arising from slow and sudden-onset disasters, with a focus on addressing the humanitarian needs of vulnerable mobile populations.

Thus far, IOM has supported the updating of The Gambia's National Contingency Plan, as well as the Municipal and Regional Contingency Plans of Banjul, Kanifing and the West Coast Region – all accompanied by crisis simulation exercises on identified hazards, including mass population movements. Emphasis was placed on the protection of vulnerable migrants in times of crises, also reflected in IOM's provision of non-food items and psychosocial support to displaced populations in 2022.

Future support to affected populations will be anchored on IOM's overarching approach to recovery, peacebuilding and community stabilization (GCM Objectives 2 and 7). As needed, IOM will explore the possibility of mobilizing its Displacement Tracking Matrix

(DTM) tool, launched in 2021 to track mobility patterns, to help manage displacement before it becomes a further destabilization factor among displaced and local communities.

Furthermore, recognizing the nexus between migration, environment and climate change, IOM aims to empower policymakers, practitioners, and communities to mainstream migration into key environmental policies, as well as to support and assist affected communities. IOM proposes to achieve this objective through the expansion of the existing Flow Monitoring Points across the country at strategic key locations with highest flow of migrants and concluding two pilot research studies: one on vulnerabilities caused by climate change, existing adaptation practices and mobility impacts of environmental degradation, and another on green jobs and nature-based livelihoods opportunities.

## MOBILITY

3

Promote and regulate ethical recruitment and expand alternatives to irregular migration – in particular through safe, legal migration pathways – while strengthening diaspora engagement, enhancing the efficiency of remittance transfer corridors and reinforcing alternative local livelihood opportunities through job creation and enterprise development schemes.



Building on promising gains in labour migration management in The Gambia, IOM will prioritize its support to the Government in strengthening its labour migration governance system and operationalizing the Labour Migration Strategy, validated in 2021 and launched in 2022. IOM's Strategic Vision highlights "facilitation of access to legal pathways for migration" as being more important than ever. In this regard, IOM aspires to continue supporting government efforts to put in place effective regulatory frameworks and institutional arrangements to promote ethical



recruitment in the labour migration sphere (GCM Objective 6), in line with providing youth and potential migrants concrete alternatives to irregular migration and contributing to “inclusive growth and sustainable development” (Agenda 2063’s Aspiration 1).

IOM intends to capitalize on the recent development of key policy frameworks, including the Labour Migration Strategy, Ethical Recruitment Guidelines and Pre-Departure Training Manual, to continue building Government capacity to protect migrant workers and optimize the benefits of labour migration. IOM also seeks to contribute to the overall development goals of The Gambia through entrepreneurship and skills development schemes (GCM Objective 18) aimed at creating employment opportunities for youth. Emphasis will be placed, among others, on building Government capacities to negotiate and implement Bilateral Labour Agreements and regulate private employment and recruitment agencies.

Finally, IOM will focus on strengthening government capacity for effective diaspora engagement (GCM Objective 19), capitalizing on the sizable number of the Gambian diaspora and the significant increase in the volume of remittances flowing into the country. The first key consideration is to support the Government of The Gambia in clearly identifying its own goals in devising a strategy to facilitate stronger diaspora involvement in development undertakings and define the internal tools and mechanisms. Supporting the government to better understand and know the Gambian diaspora that it hopes to engage is the second key priority area. This includes facilitating mapping

exercises to build the evidence base and understand the profile of Gambian diaspora communities in key destination countries. Supporting comprehensive data collection (e.g. through a migrant/diaspora census, for example); mapping the location of the Gambian diaspora; compiling inventories of their skills and experience as well as priority sectors for engaging the diaspora; and engaging a wide range of diaspora members in listening exercises to understand what they have to offer and are willing to offer, and what they expect from the government in turn, will also be key areas of focus, among others. This will complement the Government’s effort to build partnerships with the Gambian diaspora, based on a strong foundation of good communication and mutual trust, as well as previous IOM-supported mapping exercises conducted in Italy (March 2019) and the United Kingdom (March 2020).

In line with promoting the role of the diaspora, IOM also sees the need to further facilitate faster, safer, and cheaper transfer of remittances (SDG 10 and GCM Objective 20) through supporting the Government to strengthen remittance infrastructure, including via informing the diaspora about existing remittance transfer mechanisms, creating more efficient channels for remittance transfer as well as strengthening the financial institutions that migrants already use, among others. These objectives will build on IOM’s support to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs’ efforts in 2020 and 2021, rolling out diaspora mentorship programmes targeted at institutional capacity development, launching a diaspora website and portal, and organizing an inaugural diaspora roundtable conference to strengthen government engagement with the diaspora.

## STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

4

Promote migrant-sensitive health programming to ensure migrants and mobile populations benefit from an improved standard of physical, mental and social well-being.



IOM's migration health programming aims to "address and reduce vulnerabilities in migration" (GCM Objective 7) and "facilitate social inclusion of migrants" (GCM Objective 16). Through close engagement with the Ministry of Health and other relevant partners, IOM will continue to advocate for "access to basic services for migrants" (GCM Objective 15) through health promotion initiatives. This includes addressing gaps in mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) services; water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) services in vulnerable border communities; and rehabilitation of health infrastructure, among others.

In providing direct assistance to migrants, IOM identifies the need to continue and expand health information campaigns, post-arrival health screening services, travel health assistance and psychosocial support. This includes ongoing work in cross-border tuberculosis detection and control by screening migrants for pulmonary TB prior to their departure to countries of destination, as a core component of IOM's Health Assessment Programme. Close attention will be paid to the intersection of health and

borders, particularly in exploring further means to build national capacities and infrastructure to prevent and respond to public health emergencies.

Following the principles of "leaving no one behind," the particular health needs of specific vulnerable groups will be considered at all stages, including children, the elderly, persons with disabilities and victims of trafficking. Additional considerations include the sexual and reproductive health of migrants who have been in exploitative situations, and targeted psychosocial support for migrant children, among others.

Overall, IOM's health programming aims to address the physical, mental and psychosocial needs of all migrants, with a view to promoting their right to health in accordance with international human rights obligations and relevant international standards. It also aims to support actions to minimize migrants' vulnerability to ill health and to address the social determinants of health by promoting and enhancing migrants' ability to access promotive, preventive, curative and palliative health services.

## GOVERNANCE

5

Enhance national capacities to improve the policy, legislation, operational systems, human resources, and administrative and technical structures required to respond more effectively to diverse border management challenges to facilitate safe, orderly and regular migration.



Aligned with Agenda 2063's vision for a peaceful and secure Africa (Aspiration 4), GCM Objective 11 to “*manage borders in an integrated, secure and coordinated manner*,” IOM aspires to continue supporting government efforts to realize well-functioning and transparent immigration and border management processes, supported by integrated information technology (IT)-based solutions. This approach aims to protect both national security and the rights of migrants by protecting The Gambia from irregular and criminal entries, while improving legal identity document management (GCM Objective 4). This, in turn, serves to facilitate legal pathways for international migration and to promote cross-border cooperation and economic development.

IOM's approach to achieving this objective will continue to be anchored in recommendations of the 2018 Gambia Comprehensive Border Assessment Report,<sup>12</sup> specifically through sustained improvement in infrastructure and equipment at various land, air and sea borders; institutional capacity building of immigration and border authorities; strengthening and digitization of border management operations via the expansion of the border management information system to facilitate movement of travellers; and enhancement of inter-agency coordination and regional cooperation efforts. IOM will explore remaining gaps in border

infrastructure, especially at land border crossing points and the seaport.

Furthermore, IOM intends to continue promoting a cross-border perspective to border management efforts, building trust and social cohesion among border communities to prevent conflict and combat transnational organized crimes. This builds on the work of two joint UN projects launched in 2022, which address the relationship between mobility and natural resource management, border officials' capacity building, and youth and women empowerment for skills development, and more.

Finally, as the world continues to both manage and recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, IOM will continue advocating for mobility-related considerations to be integrated into public health emergency preparedness and response plans. Anchored on its Health, Border and Mobility Management Framework, IOM will continue to pay attention to The Gambia's land borders, identifying further needs to equip government with capacities to prepare for and respond appropriately to extraordinary cross-border movements arising not only from disease outbreaks and epidemics, but also from natural and man-made disasters, in a manner that protects the rights of crisis-affected populations while respecting national sovereignty and security.

<sup>12</sup> Gambia Immigration Department, The Gambia Comprehensive Border Assessment Report, June 2018.

## STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

6

Mainstream migration into government plans and policies, support policy operationalization, strengthen inter-actor coordination and implementation on migration, and build the evidence base for migration data and trends.



IOM will prioritize supporting government efforts to operationalize the National Migration Policy (NMP) 2020-2030, as well as mainstream migration into existing and new government policies, particularly the National Development Plan and its future iterations. Additionally, IOM will continue to provide support to the Government in strengthening its National Coordination Mechanism on Migration (NCM), with a view to enhancing policy coordination in migration management through a whole-of-government approach to migration governance, as part of GCM's guiding principles. In its role as the technical advisor to the NCM, IOM sees an opportunity to support the government to move towards a whole-of-society approach to migration governance and remains ready to provide guidance on emerging migration issues that require a timely and coordinated response.

IOM will further work to mainstream migration into local development plans by working with local government authorities to operationalize and strengthen regional migration governance and protection structures. These include the transformation of the existing Regional Migration Sub-Committees into more permanent coordination structures on migration at the regional level,<sup>13</sup> Migration Information Centres and community-based organizations working on migration and related issues. In coordination with the Economist Impact (formerly Economist

Intelligence Unit), IOM also intends to build on the national Migration Governance Indicators (MGI) report, launched in 2020, and support local government authorities in undertaking Local MGI exercises to complement the national findings, starting with the Kanifing Municipal Council in 2022.<sup>14</sup>

In the UN System, IOM is the lead agency and chair of the UN Network on Migration (UNNM) in The Gambia. In this capacity, IOM will continue to work alongside UNNM co-chairs, UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) and UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (UN OHCHR), to coordinate a UN system-wide support to Government in the implementation, follow-up and review of the Global Compact for Migration (GCM). In this regard, IOM will continue to lead the UNNM to implement the Network's 18-month workplan from July 2021 through December 2022, to be updated on an annual basis starting in 2023 and spearhead the UN System's support to the Government of The Gambia in implementing its ambitious pledges made at the May 2022 International Migration Review Forum, especially given the government's commitment to officially join the GCM Champion Country initiative in March 2022. A key priority under the current workplan is to strengthen internal capacity building, empowering the UNNM to provide coordinated technical support to the government.

<sup>13</sup> The Regional Migration Sub Committees are a local government-led coordination platform in charge of discussing migration issues and facilitating cooperation among relevant stakeholders, both government and non-government. Operational in the Central River, North Bank and Upper River Regions, its primary aim is to support the sustainable reintegration of returnees.

<sup>14</sup> Developed by IOM and the Economist Impact (formerly Economist intelligence Unit) in 2015, the Migration Governance Indicators (MGI) are a set of 90 indicators that help States assess the comprehensiveness of their migration governance structures.

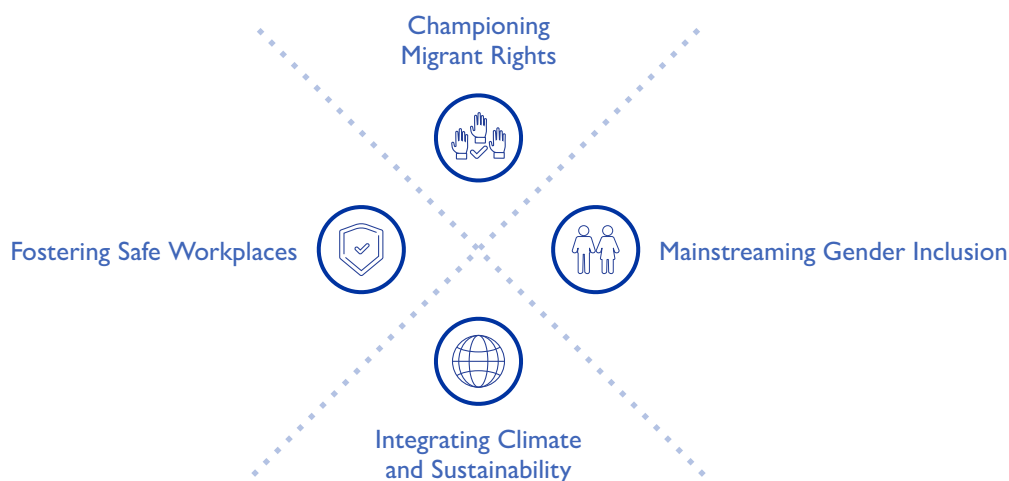
Moreover, taking into account the importance of data and evidence for effective migration governance policies and interventions, IOM aims to strengthen the capacity of government agencies to collect and utilize accurate and disaggregated data as a basis for evidence-based policies (GCM Objective 1). IOM will primarily focus on continuing to track mobility patterns through Flow Monitoring; advocating for migration to be mainstreamed in data collection efforts, such as the population census and the Labour Force Survey; and providing technical support to bolster government's data collection methodologies and analyses, including in the upcoming 2023 national census. Additionally, IOM will work to enhance the capacity of the Policy, Legislation and Data Thematic Working Group under the National Coordination Mechanism on Migration (NCM), to put in place enabling policy and regulatory frameworks to assist in migration data collection efforts.





# CROSS-CUTTING THEMES





IOM will integrate international human rights and norms in all of its programming, with a focus on the promotion and protection of migrants' rights. In IOM's approach to programme and project development and implementation, the impact on migrants' rights will always be front and center, with potential adverse impacts identified and appropriately addressed.

As a component of the rights-based approach, the gender component will also be mainstreamed into all activities. IOM will look into gender-specific trends, issues and concerns, in order not to perpetuate inequality in its programming. When evaluating migration trends and designing interventions, collecting and considering gender-disaggregated data will guarantee a more holistic approach – including through the continued production of return and reintegration reports with gender-disaggregated data. Through its designated Gender Focal Points, IOM will continue identifying and implementing specific initiatives that foster gender awareness and inclusion among its staff members and in its programming.

IOM has a zero-tolerance policy on sexual exploitation and abuse. In the coming years, IOM will intensify its work on the Prevention

of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and Sexual Harassment (PSEAH), to ensure 100% compliance with PSEAH training completion among all its staff, implementing partners (IPs), vendors and contractors. IOM will go one step further, to roll out PSEAH awareness raising module targeting non-staff and non-IPs to include even our beneficiaries, in an effort to contribute to the process of changing social norms and behavior on this very important topic. To this end, IOM has identified a team of PSEAH focal points who is tasked to develop a workplan with innovative initiatives and implement it. As part of its efforts, the team will also design a mechanism to collect feedback from our beneficiaries on this topic.

In relation to this, IOM has also identified a team of Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP) focal points to mainstream AAP principles across the full spectrum of IOM's work. A Complaints and Feedback Mechanism workflow was finalized in November 2021 and will be key to ensuring IOM's work is responsive to the needs and feedback of beneficiaries and partners.

With climate change and environmental degradation having an increasingly important impact on migration trends, including in The Gambia, IOM will consider this aspect in all its

## CROSS-CUTTING THEMES

programming and in its back-office operations. To ensure that adverse environmental risks and impacts are mitigated and managed, environmental sustainability will be mainstreamed in programmatic activities. Projects will endeavor to enhance the understanding of migration's link to environment and climate change, and where possible, identify solutions to climate change-related drivers of migration. In fact, IOM's first project in The Gambia on this thematic area focuses on two research studies: one on vulnerabilities caused by climate change, existing adaptation practices and mobility impacts of environmental degradation; and another on green jobs and nature-based livelihoods opportunities.

Other cross-cutting issues crucial to IOM's work in The Gambia – for example, youth and children, disability and inclusion – will be mainstreamed across the entire project cycle, from development to implementation to monitoring and evaluation, as well as all relevant data collection initiatives. IOM has an inclusive approach towards persons with disabilities within IOM premises and programming. To ensure that persons with disabilities are able to have equal access to IOM premises, IOM has installed ramps to facilitate wheelchair access. Through its programming, IOM ensures that migrants with disabilities receive tailored medical and mental health services to promote their rehabilitation, social inclusion and effective reintegration into their communities.

## COOPERATION FRAMEWORK

Since 2020 to date, IOM has actively contributed to the Common Country Analysis (CCA) that would inform The Gambia's next iteration of the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF). Within the UN System, IOM was tasked in 2020 to lead the drafting of an issue paper on the "Migration and Cross-Border Cooperation," one of eight priority topics identified, reflecting the recognition by the Government and UN System of the importance of migration as a key thematic area in The Gambia. The issue paper addresses migration in a holistic and comprehensive manner, expanding the understanding of migration beyond the common practice in The Gambia of viewing it only from the perspective of irregular migration, return and reintegration. Instead, the paper challenges the readers to view migration as cross-cutting and multidimensional across issues such as border management and cross-border mobility, climate change and displacement, counter-trafficking and smuggling, diaspora engagement and remittances management, labour migration, migration

health, and policy frameworks and coordination structures. IOM also contributed substantively to CCA issue papers on Environment and Climate Change; Governance; the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus; and Social Services. These papers reflected migration's cross-cutting nature throughout a range of development priorities.

Expanding on the contributions made in 2020, IOM provided significant support in 2021 to the drafting of the updated CCA report, which was finalized in early 2022, ensuring migration is adequately captured and in a manner that informs the design of the upcoming UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF). IOM has also joined other UN sister agencies in The Gambia to support the Government in conducting regional level consultations for UNSDCF, particularly those conducted in URR and CRR, given IOM's sub-office presence in Basse covering these two regions.

## PARTNERSHIPS AND COORDINATION

The impact of IOM's work in The Gambia will be maximized through effective partnerships and coordination. The National Coordination Mechanism on Migration (NCM), launched by the Office of the Vice President (OVP) in November 2019, forms the core of mainstreaming a whole-of-government approach to migration management and governance, an approach representing one of the guiding principles of the Global Compact for Migration (GCM). As a government-led inter-agency platform for all migration actors aimed at timely addressing of migration issues, mainstreaming of migration into national development plans and policy coherence, the NCM consists of eight Thematic Working Groups (TWGs) with a respective government lead:



### Border Management

Gambia Immigration Department



### Labour Migration

Ministry of Trade, Industry, Regional Integration and Employment



### Communication and Advocacy

Ministry of Information and Communication Infrastructure



### Migration and Development

Ministry of Foreign Affairs



### Cross-Cutting

Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Welfare; Ministry of Justice



### Policy, Legislation and Data

Gambia Bureau of Statistics



### Internal Migration

Ministry of Lands and Regional Government



### Return and Reintegration

Ministry of Interior

IOM has an observer status in the NCM and plays a key advisory role in the ongoing work of the NCM, providing technical expertise, strategic guidance and logistical support to the NCM Secretariat housed at OVP and to the TWGs. Furthermore, as one of the Government's four GCM pledges made at the May 2022 International Migration Review Forum (IMRF) to cascade the NCM structure to the regions, IOM has been supporting the establishment of Regional Coordination Mechanisms on Migration (RCMs) under the overall NCM umbrella in five Local Government Areas (LGAs). The establishment of the RCMs aims to strengthen the

governance of migration at the regional and local levels. As of June 2022, terms of reference for the RCMs in five LGAs have been validated.

Three other pledges made by the Government of The Gambia at the IMRF include:

- Implementing all 23 GCM objectives
- Enacting the Anti-Smuggling Bill
- Moving beyond the whole-of-government to whole-of-society approach to migration management and governance

IOM will continue to take guidance from other government-led coordination platforms, such as the National Task Force Against Trafficking in Persons, nine Inter-Agency Border Coordination Committees, and other platforms that may arise on an *ad hoc* basis (such as in response to the Foni displacement crisis).

Working hand-in-hand with the United Nations System in The Gambia will also be critical. At the suggestion of IOM in late 2017, the UN Country Team (UNCT) launched a UN Migration Working Group in January 2018, initially led by IOM and later supported by UNICEF, as a coordination platform on migration initiatives within the UN System. With the endorsement of the Global Compact for Migration (GCM) in December 2018 and the corresponding need to facilitate coordinated UN system-wide support to the Government in GCM implementation, the transformation of the then-UN Migration Working Group into the UN Network on Migration with its new Terms of Reference (TOR) was endorsed by the UNCT in June 2019, with the first meeting of the Network held in July 2019. As outlined in the TORs, IOM leads the Network, with UNICEF and OHCHR as co-leads, with a bimonthly meeting schedule maintained since then. In August 2021, the Network's 18-month workplan between July 2021 and December 2022 was endorsed by the UNCT. The workplan outlines six priority areas to facilitate joint work among the 15 UN agencies (including the RCO) that

are members of the Network.<sup>15</sup> The implementation of the current workplan and its successors, to be updated on an annual basis beginning in 2023, will be IOM's focus in the coming years.

Finally, IOM The Gambia will mainstream partnerships with the academia, civil society, media and private sector to effectively carry out its work. IOM has signed cooperation agreements with Georgetown University's Global Human Development (GHD) Program in July 2022 and the University of The Gambia in November 2022 to forge formal partnerships with the academia to facilitate internship placements, interest students and academics to pursue research on migration and related topics, and intensify efforts to build the evidence-base on migration in the country. Furthermore, IOM will continue to work closely with the Gambia Press Union and Migration Reporters Association of The Gambia to build the capacities of journalists to report on migration more accurately and in-depth, in turn contributing to a strengthened, nuanced and fact-based public discourse on migration. Civil society organizations will continue to play a critical role, with many serving as implementing partners, while IOM, in turn, provides technical advice on civil society-led advocacy around migrant rights and protection. Finally, IOM aims to explore collaboration with the private sector in a range of areas, including counter-trafficking, reintegration and youth empowerment.

<sup>15</sup> The UN Network on Migration in The Gambia comprises the following 15 agencies, with the lead/co-lead agencies highlighted in bold: UN Resident Coordinator's Office (RCO), FAO, IFAD, ILO, **IOM**, ITC, **OHCHR**, UNAIDS, UNCDF, UNDP, **UNICEF**, UNODC, UNOPS, WFP and WHO.





## INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

A core component of IOM's strategy is to continue its resource mobilization efforts in full alignment with the Government's vision for migration governance, to enable the Country Office to effectively carry out its mandate to support the Government in addressing its migration priorities. In addition to regularly consulting the Government and seeking its input for priority intervention areas, IOM employs an iterative approach to designing and fundraising for new projects, with a focus on building on the lessons learned and gaps identified during project implementation, so that subsequent interventions will address the emerging priorities and needs.

To ensure IOM's work in The Gambia is well-understood and appreciated, the Country Office will continuously strategize on what information to communicate, how, to whom and through which platforms. The main objectives for 2022 to 2023 include:

- Promoting migration as a thematic area that cuts across all sectors in the pursuit of local and national development
- Shifting the narrative on migration from a negative to a positive frame, to build public and policymakers' understanding of the benefits of well-managed migration
- Highlighting the tangible impact of IOM's work on migrants in host, transit and destination communities

IOM will invest significantly in knowledge management processes, in order to support

effective project implementation, resource mobilization and communication. This entails a systematic approach to creating, sharing, using and managing information, allowing the Country Office to build on feedback and lessons learned and transfer knowledge between units.

IOM will further invest in staff development, building technical expertise in their respective areas of work and overall administrative and managerial responsibilities as appropriate. This will be supported through initiatives such as a staff mentorship programme and internal capacity building sessions.

Moreover, IOM will maintain regular engagements with donors, in particular through donor briefings and courtesy visits. IOM will capitalize on donor presence in Banjul, reinforcing these relationships. In addition, IOM will look to the wider donor presence in Dakar – through more frequent visits if circumstances and resources permit – in order to regularly touch base with the donor community on possible funding opportunities. Donor engagement may also come in the form of arranging donor visits to existing project sites and activities and highlighting the impact of donor funding and the needs that remain to be addressed. Regularly keeping abreast of donor priorities, such as through analysing the donor profiles prepared internally within IOM and through direct engagement with donors, will be key to finding synergy among donor priorities, government needs and IOM capacity to support.

## CONCLUDING STATEMENT

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As migration trends continue to evolve, both new protection challenges and opportunities to maximize the benefits of migration arise. Now, more than ever, a clear and strong framework for supporting government efforts to facilitate safe, orderly and regular migration is needed.

IOM The Gambia has developed its first interim country strategy to support government efforts at migration governance, in alignment with wider objectives outlined by IOM, the UN and the African Union in key frameworks. The six identified priority areas in this document will serve as the primary guide for IOM's work from 2022 to 2023, ahead of the longer-term country strategy to be aligned with the CF and launched in 2024.

Through strong partnerships and coordination with critical stakeholders across state and non-state actors and the UN, IOM aims to build a strong foundation for achieving the outcomes outlined in this interim strategy in the coming years, toward the implementation and operationalization of the GCM's 23 objectives, with a particular focus on the 15 objectives prioritized by the Government.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> In December 2019, the Government of The Gambia conducted a GCM prioritization exercise, which resulted in the prioritization of 15 of the 23 objectives: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10, 11, 14, 15, 17, 19, 20 and 23.





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