



**REPORT ON 2023 BUDGET POLICY DIALOGUE WITH THE PRIVATE SECTOR
HELD AT THE SIR DAWDA KAIRABA JAWARA CONFERENCE CENTRE ON JUNE
8th, 2023.**

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INTRODUCTION

The Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs (MOFEA) in collaboration with Gambia Chamber of Commerce and Investment (GCCCI) organized a budget policy dialogue with the private sector of the Gambia at the Sir Dawda Kairaba Jawara on 8th June 2023. The purpose of the dialogue was to facilitate discussions on fiscal policy and reforms for the upcoming 2024-2026 budget period. In addition, the dialogue was also an opportunity to promote inclusivity in the budget process. At the high table were Aziz Balla Gaye- Deputy Director of Industry, Naffie Barry- President Gambia Women's Chamber of Commerce and Investment and Abdoulie Jallow-Permanent Secretary Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs.

REMARKS FROM THE HIGH TABLE

Trade

The Deputy Director of Industry from Ministry of Trade, Industry, Regional Integration and Employment Mr. Aziz Balla Gaye started by thanking the Ministry for a timely intervention of the dialogue with private sector. He added that the forum is for the private sector and he wants to hear from them on how we can collaborate more and promote better policies in promoting a good business environment in the Gambia.

Women Chamber of Commerce

The President of the Gambia Women's Chamber of Commerce, Ms. Naffie Barry, stated that, the dialogue was a very important meeting, and she hopes whatever is discussed is taken seriously and put into action. She advised the dialogue should identify four or three critical issues affecting the business environment, discuss and find solutions to these issues to improve the general business outlook of the Gambia.

GCCI

The CEO of GCCCI Sarata Konateh thanked everyone present and gave credit to the Ministry of Finance and Economics for always conducting this consultation with private sectors. She advises the private sector to voice out the boiling issues affecting them and encouraged MOFEA to take actions to help improve the business environment for all.

MoFEA

The opening Remarks of the dialogue was given by the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs, Abdoulie Jallow who used the opportunity to thank all those present. He noted the essence of having the dialogue annually is to get information from the private sector to address business issues. He also highlighted the pandemic and its impact on the business sector

over the last few years. He encouraged that the session be more interactive and constructive to produce a productive way forward.

PRESENTATION

There was a Presentation by the Directorate of Revenue and Tax Policy on a Private Sector-Focused Tax Policy Environment”. The presentation touched on the overview of revenue and tax policy directorate and their objectives. Presenter Mrs. Asta Jobe-Wadda also touched on the planned tax reforms including the review of tax laws.

In conclusion, Mrs. Wadda stated that the Directorate aims to actively engage with the private sector to better understand its needs and concerns. This will set the pace for a more inclusive policy environment that is beneficial for all parties. She urged the participants to be participate during the dialogue.

DISCUSSIONS

The dialogue was opened for questions and discussions after the presentation, with multiple issues raised throughout the dialogue.

Some of key points or issues of major concern during the dialogue are as follows;

No.	Key Points/Issues	Recommendation/Action Point/Comments
1.	There was a question on what plans are in place to broaden the Tax Base?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving tax Administration Process. • Increasing the business environment to promote more people in doing business. • Working with other institutions in line with private sectors • Comprehensive review of tax laws and policies. The review Process is on currently according to P.S Jallow. • Views and comments of the private sectors will be captured on the reviews.
2.	As part of discussions, a question was asked on measures in place to reduce cooperate tax.	This was addressed by P.S Jallow. He stated that attention is shifted to those not paying taxes to improve compliance.
3.	On the Issue of PAYE, a participant stated that some parts of sectors not paying tax on their allowances whiles others are which needs a look into.	

4.	Clarification on tax policy and additional administrative charges being paid to other institutions (e.g. the GPPA). The question raised relates to who is regulating these charges and policies?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • P.S Jallow stated that the power to collect these extra fees/charges are usually contained in the principal acts that created these institutions. These charges are paid for other services provided offered and Ministry of Finance has no control over that. P.S Jallow advised the Private sector to prepare a list of all agencies or institutions with other charges to be submitted to Directorate of Budget for a consultative meeting. •
5.	The port infrastructure and expansion delay are a concern as the port was the main center of transportation and business hub.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • P.S Jallow stated that the delay in the port expansion was due to funding, acquisition of space for the expansion and the negotiations were also taking time. The government has now finalized the negotiations and compensation has begun; it was noted. • Muslim High School, KG5 and Gambia High will form part of the expansion. • The government secured funding of \$29M from the African Development Bank and the European Union.
6.	The issue of power supply and recent increment in tariffs has also affected the flow of business. This was noted as concern to be addressed.	<p>P.S Jallow noted the impact of the Russia-Ukraine War on this aspect.</p> <p>It was clarified NAWEC had two options which are; either to increase tariffs of both water and electricity or go back to the on-and-off system of power supply. This was what led to the increment in the tariffs, it was noted.</p>
7.	Cargo Tracking Issue	The cargo tracking is suspended for now and government is investigating subsequent to which a decision will be taken.
8.	Another major issue raised during the dialogue was the barriers to trade. This is considered a big challenge Gambian Businesses are encountering from Senegal. ECOWAS trade protocol is not been followed by Senegal; it was noted. The Gambia is losing billions of dollars to Senegal due to high taxes on business shipments resulting in the shifting of business to Senegal.	P.S Jallow informed the participants that there will be a special meeting to develop a paper to help address the ports and trade issues as this is a top priority and needs attention.
9	The issue of VAT was also raised for clarification	The GRA representative informed the participants VAT registration numbers should be displayed on all payment invoice, receipts or documents for businesses charging VAT inclusive prices.

10.	The issue of multiple check points in the Gambia was also raised up during the dialogue as this causes a lot of delays and reduction in productivity and efficiency.	P.S Jallow agreed that the many check points are not necessary and this causes low productivity. This will also be forwarded to the management and the relevant authorities for action.
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Action Points

Recommended Action	Responsible Party
Provide a list of institutions charging new fees for MoFEA to engage them (i.e. On the issue of additional charges/fees from other government authorities. E.g. FSQA, GPPA, etc)	Private Sector
Document all challenges being encountered by business and forward to the Minister of Trade (i.e on issues hampering including the multiple hidden costs and charges)	Private Sector
Organise meeting with the private sector to discuss the above	Ministry of Trade (MoTRIE)
Organise regular meetings with MoTRIE and the private sector to get updates on the business environment.	Ministry of Finance (MoFEA)
Integrate dialogue with the private sector in the calendar, as part of ongoing review of taxes.	MoFEA (Directorate of Tax)
Develop a functional trade strategy	MoTRIE
Follow-up meeting or dialogue with MoFEA on the inaccessibility of affordable loans by start-up businesses (high interest rates and collaterals)	Chamber of Commerce (GCCCI)
Implement the GIEPA Act	GIEPA and MoTRIE
Consider moving towards solar for electricity power generation	Government

Pictures from the Event









Annexes

Agenda

Time	Activity	Responsible Persons/Entity
8:30-9:00 am	Registration	GCCI/MOFEA
09:00-09:10 am	Welcome Remarks	CEO GCCI

09:10 – 09:20 am	Opening Remarks	Honorable Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs
09:20 – 09:35 am	Presentation on the Budget Process	Budget Directorate
09:35 – 10:05 am	Tea Break	All Participants
10:05 – 10:20 am	Presentation on Tax Policy	Director of Tax Policy
10:20 – 12:50 pm	Panel Discussion	All Participants
12:50 -1:00 pm	Way Forward & Closing	GCCI & MOFEA
1:00 pm	Lunch	All Participants