

**UN HABITAT FOR BETTER URBAN FUTURE**

**BEST PRACTICES COMPENDIUM  
ON BANJUL AND CLIMATE  
CHANGE**

**BY HIS WORSHIP SAMBA FAAL  
MAYOR OF BANJUL**

**05/05/11**

## **INTRODUCTION**

- **The Gambia is one of the smallest countries in Africa**
- **The population in April 2003 was 1,360,81**
- **The population is heavily concentrated along the coast wher the largest cities, Banjul, Kanifing municipality and Brikama are located.**
- **About 27% of the population live in the Greater Banjul Area ,the metropolitan area comprising of the city of Banjul and Kanifing municipality**

## **Introduction cont.**

- The population comprise of 689,840 females and 670,841 males, the fourth highest population density in Africa(210 people per sq. kilometer and a growth rate of 2.7 percent),
- Thus imposing extreme pressure on productive land and the provision of social services
- According to the 2003 Population and Housing Census 51% of the Gambia,s population lives in the urban areas compared to 37% in 1993. Fifty-three percent of urban dwellers live in Banjul and Kanifing Municipalities

# HISTORY OF BANJUL

- Banjul, formally called Bathurst is the capital of The Gambia.
- It was during the colonial period around the 18<sup>th</sup> century that a chartered company engaged in trade relinquished its ownership of the state after making profits of the country.
- It was in 1816 when Captain Alexandra Grant was sent to the region to re-establish a base from which the British navy could continue with the slave trade he purchased Banjul St.Mary) from the King of Kombo.

## History of Banjul Cont.

- Banjul continued to serve as the administrative city of the country and seat of government
- It is one of the smallest cities in Africa strategically visible on an island called St. Mary's Island which is on the mouth of the River Gambia.

## **GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION**

- **The city of Banjul is located on the geographical coordinates of 13°27'N and 16°33'W**
- **The city lies on a flood plain with its highest point not more than 50 centimeter above sea level. The city lies on the coast line and is an exclusive fishing zone and oyster collection.**
- **The coast line over the years has experienced continuous coastal erosion with more than 2.5 – 3m depending on site situation on the Coast line.**

## CLIMATE AND VEGETATION

- The climate of Banjul is predominantly a Sahelian type characterized by a very long dry season (November to May) and a short rainy season (June to October).
- The normal rainfall of the Gambia is 816 mm with average rainfall of the Banjul city being above normal at 867.70 mm (Kinteh S. L., 2008) and this is highly influence by the coastal winds.
- The average minimum temperature of the city is around 7<sup>0</sup>C while the maximum is 41<sup>0</sup>C
- The lowest and highest rainfall recorded is 0 mm and 500 mm as shown in Table 1 below.

## **POPULATION AND ETHNICITY**

- **The population of Banjul city proper is 34,828**
- **That of the Greater Banjul Area (GBA) which includes the Kombo St Mary Region of 357,238 people (2003 census report)**
- **The city of Banjul is inhabited by all ethnic groups of the country ranging from Mandinka, Wollof, Jola, Sarahuli, Fula and so on.**
- **The languages predominantly spoken in the city are Wollof followed by Mandinka.**
- **These different ethnic groups interact freely and inter marry without reservations from parties.**

## **Socio-economic and Livelihoods**

- The socio-economics of the people of Banjul is purely a mixture of rural and urban mixed livelihoods.
- These livelihoods depend on barter between the poor, vulnerable and the rich and retail of goods and services done by all where most of the people serves as middle persons.
- From morning to dusk, Banjul remains a cosmopolitan city(receiving almost one third of the population of the country on daily basis).
- It is full of life as the retailers and transport drivers shout to advertise heir goods and services.
- This life dies down as the sun sets allowing most of the commuters return to the neighboring towns and villages in the Greater Banjul Area
- This allows the Banjulians (people of Banjul) time to socialize with loved ones in a city once full in the day time.
- The people live mainly on rice cooked from a main pot called Benachin (One meal consisting of all ingredients), Cherreh ( coos) with stew.
- When food becomes ready to serve, no one is excluded in the eating for The Gambian generosity prevails to allow all to benefit from what is available to an individual.

## **BANJUL CITY COUNCIL AND GOVERNANCE**

- **Banjul City is the seventh administrative region of The Gambia covering only the island of Banjul.**
- **The area is administered by a Mayor who is elected by universal adult suffrage.**
- **The Mayor is the political head and supported by the Chief Executive Officer(CEO) who is selected as the administrative head of the council.**
- **The city has three elected National Assembly members and nine elected Ward Councilors.**
- **The elected Ward Councilors and three nominated councilors( representing youth, women and commerce) constitute the Banjul City Council (BCC).**
- **The Council is responsible for policy planning, whilst the CEO and other employees are responsible for implementation under the supervision of The Mayor.**

## **BANJUL AND ITS CHALLENGES ON CLIMATE CHANGE**

- Banjul City is surrounded by the Tanbi Wetland Complex, which is classified as a Ramsar Site.
- The Gambia being a party to the Ramsar convention is obligated to implement the commitments and obligations of protecting wetlands of international importance.
- The Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, called the Ramsar Convention, is an intergovernmental treaty that provides the framework for national action and international cooperation for the conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources.
- The convention's mission is "the conservation and wise use of all wetlands through local and national actions and international cooperation, as a contribution towards achieving sustainable development throughout the world".

## **BANJUL AND ITS CHALLENGES ON CLIMATE CHANGE**

### **CONT.**

- **The convention uses a broad definition of the types of wetlands covered in its mission, including lakes and rivers, swamps and marshes, wet grassland, etc.**
- **At the center of the Ramsar philosophy is the “wise use” concept.**
- **The wise use of wetlands is defined as “the maintenance of their ecological character, achieved through the implementation of ecosystem approaches, within the context of sustainable development”.**
- **Wise use” therefore has at its heart the conservation and sustainable use of wetlands and their resources, for the benefit of humankind.**

## **VULNERABILITY OF BANJUL TO CLIMATE CHANGE**

- **The island of Banjul is among the most vulnerable areas to Climate Change in The Gambia.**
- **A one meter sea level rise is expected to lead to the submergence of most of the capital city of Banjul (Jallow et al 1996).**
- **Changes in seasonal rainfall patterns combined with sea level rise and global warming could also alter mangrove ecosystems significantly.**
- **Considering that 85 percent of the organic carbon input to the River estuary originates from the mangrove ecosystem (NAPA 2007); almost all fish species captured in The Gambia**
- **of the mangrove ecosystem productivity could lead to substantial net loss in population of species associated with mangroves including rare/ endangered species**

## **CHALLENGES**

**Banjul's environmental challenges includes;**

- I. Continuous influx of refugees from neighboring countries**
- II. In-migration of rural communities for trade and employment**
- III. Unemployment and under employment**
- IV. Accommodation for the most vulnerable becoming problematic**
- V. Pressure on utilities such as toilets, water and electricity high**
- VI. Illegal dumping of waste**
- VII. Oil spills from the transport mechanic workshops into the river and marine waters**
- VIII. Beach erosion increasing and**
- IX. Difficult prediction of weather conditions due to the changing climate**

## **EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE ON THE VULNERABLE**

- In the city of Banjul, almost everyone is vulnerable to climate change.
- However, the most affected by the changing climate are the women and children.
- Since Banjul is susceptible to annual rain storms and floods, over 80% of the city becomes flooded.
- Most of the houses dwelled by the poor, women and children are made of laminated bamboo or lattices that do not hold water
- As a result, life and property becomes submerged and food security threatened
- This group of the urban poor often have fewer informal safety nets, such as kinship and community networks
- They depend mainly on purchased food, which may account for as much as 70% of their incomes.
- This dependence is compounded by their lack of access to natural resources, principally land and water, which would allow them to grow food.

# **HOW CLIMATE CHANGE IS BEING ADDRESSED BY THE AUTHORITIES**

The International Community adopted the Hyogo Framework For Action for the period 2005-2015, with five key priority pillars namely:-

- 1. Ensure that disaster risk reduction (DRR) is a national and local priority with a strong institutional basis for implementation;**
- 2. Identify, assess and monitor disaster risk and enhance early warning;**
- 3. Use knowledge, innovation and education to build a culture of safety and resilience at all levels;**
- 4. Reduce the underlying risk factors;**
- 5. Strengthen disaster preparedness for effective response at all levels.**

**These priority areas are the guiding pillars of disaster management at the international, regional, sub-regional and national level.**

## **ADDRESSES CONT.**

- The Gambia is also on course on the other priority areas.
- This situation could not have been possible without the government taking the lead role and firmly in the driver's seat
- with the establishment of an institutional framework for Disaster Management in the country
- with the setting up of The National Disaster Governing Council and The National Disaster Management Agency with its decentralized structures
- The concern is to ensure that our impressive development gains are not eroded by natural and human induced calamities.
- During the 2009 and 2010 devastating floods, The Government of The Gambia provided leadership, response material and logistic support for all the operations
- with technical support from NDMA. H.E. The President gave a personal donation of a pumping machine to the NDMA to support disaster response at community level.

## **ADDRESSES CONT.**

- Through the National Climate Change Committee (NCC) in which BCC, KMC and Local Government are represented collaborate and support all stakeholders in addressing Climate Change issues.
- They work together by forming responsible committees (representatives come from government, local authorities and communities) for actions.
- They have a participatory planning and implementation of programmes and projects.
- The committee ensures that ownership of the projects and programmes are clearly spelt out and benefit sharing is equitable.

## **ADDRESSES CONT.**

- **One of the major catalysts of working together is the recognition of using opinion leaders (Imams or priests referred to as religious leaders) in communities to support community plans and actions.**
- **This does not mean that the poor and the vulnerable are voiceless in the selection of the committees.**
- **Each member of the committee has equal weight in decision making and taking action.**
- **Each major decision has to be approved by the ward committees before it is adapted at Council prior to work implementation.**

**POLICIES AND STRATEGIES IN THE PROTECTION OF MARINE  
AND COASTAL BIODIVERSITY FOR CC ADAPTATION**

- a. The Banjul City Council, a member of the NCC and its management have ensured that the conventions on Climate Change and biodiversity are fully mainstreamed in its projects and programmes both at council and community
- b. Furthermore, the Forest Policy 1995-2005 supported by the Forest Act and Regulation 1998 including the Biodiversity Policy, 2003 and Act have enhanced the protection of the marine and coastal biodiversity
- c. In addition, Council collaborates with schools to ensure that animal rights and their protection are enforced as part of the school curriculum (particularly bird study and watching as enshrined in the Biodiversity Act, 2003).

# **STRATEGIES FOR CC ADAPTATION IN BANJUL**

**Strategies for climate change adaptation in Banjul and its citizenry is premised on the following guiding principles;**

- 1. Early warning on environment information and risks provided by the Ministry of water Resources, fisheries and National Assembly matters housed in the city of Banjul**
- 2. Use The Gambia National contingency Plan on climate change , sea level rise and coastal protection**
- 3. Identification of climate hot spots (most vulnerable sites such as the Banjul Cemetery , Tobacco Road area, Banjul port area and half die) within and around the city and their timely mitigation and adaptation actions**
- 4. Controls the population dynamics and management of the population in response to the carrying capacity of the city**
- 5. Provide a data base to guide planning and implementation of projects ideal for the city**

## **STRATEGIES CONT.**

- 6. Ensure that all projects undergo an Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) before implementation by the National Environment Agency**
- 7. Participatory project and programme planning for Banjul with all stakeholders before work implementation**
- 8. Provide immediate live saving assistance using the ward Disaster Management committees with collaboration of the Community-based Organization, service institutions and volunteer organization (Youth groups)**
- 9. Mobilize resources for immediate short-term support and recovery with support from other stakeholders like Government, private and Non-Government Organizations**

## **STRATEGIES CONT.**

- 10. Ensure a large scale introduction of Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) including use of improved cooking stoves to reduce fuel wood consumption and emissions of 2°C concentration in the atmosphere**
- 11. Encourage the use of renewable source of energy particularly use of photo-voltaic cells (solar energy) for domestic energy and household electricity**
- 12. Support in capacity building for staff on climate issues and provide the necessary infrastructure for climate adaptation**
- 13. Engage the youths on self-employed projects to reduce un-employment, banditry, prostitution, drug abuse and dependence**
- 14. Construction of environment friendly buildings and structures by involving the private sector including NGOs**
- 15. Construction of first class roads with drainage, sewage systems for development to allow easy flow of water and waste out of the city (Fig. 2 City of Banjul). These actions are geared towards having the city resilient to climate change**

# **HOW CC ADAPTATION HAS BEEN REPLICATED IN OTHER COASTAL CITIES**

- A.** The example of climate Change mitigation and adaptation measures have over the years been replicated in some of the coastal cities of Serekunda, Bakau, Bijilo, Brufut, Sanyang, Gunjur and Kartong in the West and Barra, Farafenni, Basse in the West of the country.
- B.** Planting of coconuts, capacity building for the coastal fishing villagers for the sustainable use of the coastal beaches, environment cleaning and rational waste disposal at designated sites have been internalized and adapted.
- C.** Finally, the beach nourishment project done for Banjul even though not being very successful has finally attracted implementation in other areas that are being threatened by coastal sea erosion in the country such as Sene-Gambia, Fajara, and Bungalow Beach hotel areas in Bijilo, Fajara and Kotu respectively using sand bags to allow safe settlements in the area as a means of working towards adaptation to Climate Change.

## **CONCLUSION**

**It is quite evident that the tackling of issues related to climate change requires the concerted and sustained efforts of all stakeholders to achieve sustainable solutions**

**END**