OTHER FUNDS AND PROGRAMMES

UNITED NATIONS FUND FOR POPULATION ACTIVITIES

PROPOSED PROJECTS AND PROGRAMMES

Recommendation by the Executive Director

Assistance to the Government of Gambia

Comprehensive population programme

Estimated UNFPA contribution: $2,550,000

Estimated value of the Government's contribution: $12,000,000

Duration: Three years (1981-1984)

Estimated starting date: July 1981

Executing Agencies:
- United Nations
- International Labour Organisation (ILO)
- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)
- World Health Organization (WHO)
- United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)
- UNFPA

Government Co-operating Agency:
- Ministry of Planning and Industrial Development

1/Includes $1,581,500 approved by the Governing Council at its twenty-seventh session in June 1980 for strengthening of basic maternal and child health services in rural areas (DP/FPA/11/Add.1).

81-07181
I. Summary

1. On the basis of the findings of a needs assessment mission fielded to Gambia in 1978, UNFPA proposes assisting the Government of Gambia in the amount of $2,550,000 over a three-year period in implementing a comprehensive population programme. Of this amount, the Governing Council approved $1,581,500 for the Government's programme of strengthening of basic maternal and child health (MCH) services in rural areas at its twenty-seventh session in June 1980. The proposed additional assistance would enable Gambia, a priority country for UNFPA assistance to: 1) strengthen its demographic data collection and analysis system, 2) increase population research and training activities and improve population policy formulation and development planning, 3) expand the integrated maternal and child health and family planning programme, and 4) strengthen a newly-established Women's Bureau in providing opportunities for women to participate in social and economic development. The programme would emphasize the development of skills and self-reliance among all cadres of staff involved in the main population programme areas, promote awareness of the population factor in over-all national development efforts, and assist institution-building, including the establishment of linkages among various Government agencies. UNFPA assistance would support technical assistance, training, some local operating costs, and equipment.

II. Background

2. Gambia covers 11,300 square kilometres of land and has a population estimated by the United Nations in 1980 at 603,000. Population density is 53 persons per square kilometre (1980), but internal and international migration have, among other things, produced regional differences in density that, in turn, have affected the provision of essential services. Available data indicate that only 23 per cent of the land area is suitable for intensive agricultural activity, while approximately 79 per cent of the population depend on agriculture for their livelihood. The country lies within the drought-stricken Sahelian belt, and food production capacity is limited. Severe malnutrition affects some regions.

3. According to United Nations estimates, the natural growth rate of the population is 2.45 per cent per annum. The compounded growth rate, however, is over 2.8 per cent due to in-migration from neighbouring countries. The crude birth rate is 47.5 per thousand, and the crude death rate is 23 per thousand. About 44.4 per cent of the population are under the age of 15. Women between the ages of 15 and 49 account for 45 per cent of all women. Life expectancy is estimated at 39.4 years for males and 42.6 years for females. Infant mortality is estimated to be over 200 per thousand live births. The per capita gross national product, according to the World Bank, was estimated at $230 in 1978.

4. In May 1979, the Government adopted a population policy based on the following guiding principles: Population policy should be considered as part of rural development and should pursue the goals of self-reliance; policy measures should be based on voluntary acceptance; and direct policy measures are desirable with respect to mortality. Support will be given for child-spacing and contraception will be made available through the MCH programme. The section on health in the Five-Year Development Plan (1975/76-1979/80) calls for immunization, health and nutrition education, regular care for children under five, maternity services, and the promotion of planned parenthood, i.e., child-spacing and birth avoidance for health reasons. The Government is in favour of delivery of family planning...
services within the context of MCH and other related services such as population information, education and communication.

UNFPA began providing assistance to Gambia in 1973. The Fund supported the 1970 round of the population and housing census. The census was completed in 1975, and the results were published in 1977. In 1977, at the request of the Government, UNFPA supported a consultant to assist the Government in formulating a national population policy. In 1978 UNFPA began funding a population communication project, scheduled to continue through 1983, which is designed to sensitize both policymakers and the general public to population issues. Under this project, UNFPA has funded advisory services, local training, and study tours. UNFPA has also funded pre-project activities aimed at strengthening rural health services, including maternal and child health and family planning (MCH/FP), by upgrading rural health units and supplying medical equipment and contraceptives. In addition, UNFPA is supporting the training of Gambian nationals in the operation of rural health units, providing international advisory services, and supplying fellowships for advanced training. Total UNFPA assistance to Gambia through 1980 amounts to $370,485 (as of 31 October 1980).

The major bilateral donor in the population area has been the United States of America. The United States Agency for International Development has assisted in the training of medical and paramedical personnel in MCH/FP.

The Gambia Family Planning Association, an affiliate of the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF), has received assistance from IPPF in the form of administrative support costs and equipment, including contraceptives and audio-visual materials. The Pathfinder Fund has also provided grant assistance.

The 1979 needs assessment mission recommended population assistance in several priority areas: a) basic population data, including the requirement for additional demographic data in almost all areas collected on a regular basis as well as the need to improve the national capacity to interpret these data for planning purposes when they become available; b) population dynamics and policy formulation, including the need to strengthen the institutional and executive capabilities of both the Central Statistical Department of the Ministry of Planning and the Ministry of Health in the collection and registration of vital events and the analysis and dissemination of vital events statistics; and c) maternal and child health and family planning, including the bringing about of a more equitable distribution of health resources in the rural areas, improving the planning of health services and the health statistics and information system, the training of additional health services staff in all categories and the development of promotional and educational activities in support of MCH/FP programmes.

III. The programme

UNFPA proposes to support a comprehensive population programme, based on the findings of the needs assessment mission, to assist the Government in building the infrastructure and developing the human resources required for the conduct of its population programmes, and in promoting awareness of the interrelationship of demographic variables in development planning. The total estimated UNFPA contribution of $2,550,000 would be allocated among the projects in the following categories as a result of joint consultations between the Government and UNFPA:

...
Basic data collection and analysis

10. **Assistance to the 1983 population and housing census.** The Government has requested both financial and technical assistance in carrying out a national census in 1983. The major elements of this exercise, to be executed over a three- to four-year period, include pre-implementation activities, enumeration, and a post-enumeration survey as well as communication support for the census. The project also aims at laying the groundwork for future demographic surveys. UNFPA assistance in the amount of approximately $400,000, would include support for project personnel, training, and equipment. The United Nations would be the Executing Agency.

11. **Assistance to the Ministry of Health in the establishment of a vital statistics and civil registration system.** Responsibility for the registration of births, deaths and vital events is vested in the Ministry of Health. Though vital events registration is required by law, in fact it rarely takes place outside the capital city of Banjul and even there it is incomplete. The Government realizes that, in terms of both cost and manpower, building a nationwide vital statistics and civil registration system will take many years. However, it believes a beginning should be made now on a sample basis, with technical and financial assistance from external sources. The major components of this project would be the provision of international experts to assist in laying the foundations for an efficient system, training, and equipment. The UNFPA contribution would be $150,000. The United Nations Economic Commission for Africa would be the Executing Agency.

Population dynamics, policy formulation and development planning

12. **Establishment of a Population Planning Unit.** Planning in Gambia has been hampered by a dearth of personnel with the requisite demographic skills to interpret the demographic phenomena as well as by the lack of accurate and up-to-date data on demographic variables. This project calls for setting up a Population Planning Unit within the Ministry of Planning and Industrial Development. The Unit would update and interpret vital information and key social indicators necessary for planning purposes. It would co-ordinate its activities with those of existing Government entities involved in data gathering and would supplement the efforts of the Central Statistical Department. UNFPA assistance would support experts to assist in establishing the Unit, fellowships to train national personnel, implementation of surveys, and a limited amount of equipment. The Executing Agency would be UNFPA in collaboration with the United Nations and the International Labour Organisation. UNFPA assistance would total $200,000.

Maternal and child health and family planning

13. **Strengthening basic maternal and child health and family planning services in rural areas.** Gambia has a well-articulated policy regarding the integration of family planning activities with the delivery of maternal and child health services throughout the country. The Government seeks to reduce rural-urban imbalances in health care facilities, consolidate existing facilities in the rural sector, increase the number of trained health personnel, and generally promote family health. UNFPA is already assisting with pre-project activities in this area. The present project calls for upgrading some rural health facilities and supplying medical equipment and contraceptives. UNFPA assistance would also support the design of a staff training programme and provide fellowships as well as consultants. The Executing Agency would be WHO. UNFPA assistance would total $1,750,000; this amount includes $1,581,500 already approved by the Governing Council in June 1980 for MCH/FP activities.\(^3\)\footnote{Ibid.}
Special programmes

14. Establishment of a Women's Bureau. The Government has stated that its population policy must afford equal rights to women, and it has established a Women's Bureau, located in the Office of the President. UNFPA proposes to assist the Bureau in the amount of $50,000 in achieving its major aim of providing women with increased opportunities to participate in the social and economic development process through the establishment of programmes and projects designed to upgrade their basic skills and knowledge, with the over-all objective of enabling Gambian women to realize their full potential. The Government will also be approaching other donors to assist it in achieving this objectives. The project would be directly executed by the Government.

15. The breakdown of proposed UNFPA assistance by Work Plan category, subject to availability of funds, is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Work Plan category</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Basic data collection and analysis</td>
<td>$550,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population dynamics, policy formulation and development planning</td>
<td>200,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maternal and child health and family planning</td>
<td>1,750,000a/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special programmes</td>
<td>50,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,550,000</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

16. The status of programme development as of February 1981, is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Approved</td>
<td>$1,581,500a/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pending</td>
<td>350,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forseen</td>
<td>618,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand total</td>
<td><strong>2,550,000</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

IV. Recommendation

17. The Executive Director recommends that the Governing Council:

   (a) Approve an additional amount of $968,500 for a population programme for Gambia to bring the total amount to $2,550,000 for the period 1981-1984; and

   (b) Authorize the Executive Director to allocate the funds and to make the appropriate arrangements with the Government of Gambia and with the Executing Agencies.

---

a/Including $1,581,500 approved by the Governing Council in June 1980 for strengthening of basic maternal and child health services in rural areas.