

Gambia

Background: The Gambia gained its independence from the UK in 1965. Geographically surrounded by Senegal, it formed a short-lived Confederation of Senegambia between 1982 and 1989. In 1991 the two nations signed a friendship and cooperation treaty, but tensions have flared up intermittently since then. Yahya JAMMEH led a military coup in 1994 that overthrew the president and banned political activity. A new constitution and presidential election in 1996, followed by parliamentary balloting in 1997, completed a nominal return to civilian rule. JAMMEH was elected president in all subsequent elections including most recently in late 2011. A presidential election is scheduled for December 2016.



Basic Facts

Population	1,882,450 (2013)
Area	10,689 km ²
currency	Dalasi (GMD)
GDP (Nominal)	\$3.491 billion
Export Volume	92,936
Import Volume	413,846
Export to OIC Member States	73,725
Import from OIC Member States	190,343

Economy - overview: The government has invested strongly in the agriculture sector because three-quarters of the population depends on the sector for its livelihood and agriculture provides for another one-fifth of GDP. The agricultural sector has untapped potential - less than half of arable land is cultivated. Small-scale manufacturing activity features the processing of peanuts, fish, and hides. The Gambia's re-export trade accounts for almost 80% of goods exports and China has been its largest trade partner for both exports and imports for several years.

The Gambia has sparse natural resource deposits and a limited agricultural base. It relies heavily on remittances from workers overseas and tourist receipts. Remittance inflows to The Gambia amount to about one-fifth of the country's GDP. The Gambia's natural beauty and proximity to Europe has made it one of the larger tourist destinations in West Africa, boosted by government and private sector investments in eco-tourism and upscale facilities. Tourism normally brings in about 20% of GDP, but suffered in 2014 from tourists' fears of Ebola virus in neighboring West African countries. Unemployment and underemployment remain high.

Economic progress depends on sustained bilateral and multilateral aid, on responsible government economic management, and on continued technical assistance from multilateral and bilateral donors. International donors and lenders continue to be concerned about the quality of fiscal management. The IMF provided \$10.8 million in emergency financial assistance to The Gambia in April 2015 to shore up the country's finances. Relations with international donors have been tarnished by the country's human rights record.

