



the meeting that demonstrated the commitment of the PBC to continue accompanying The Gambia towards a more democratic society.

4. H.E. Mr. Mambury Nije, Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs of The Gambia, recognized the significant development challenges linked to the COVID-19 pandemic and noted that a 2% GDP loss due to COVID-19 was projected for 2020. This would slow down the implementation of the National Development Plan (2018-2021) and the negatively impact the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals. In addition, the pandemic risked reversing investments made in priority areas of the Government's development agenda, including the empowerment of women and youth, social cohesion and inclusivity, resolution of land conflict, climate change induced tensions, press freedom and human rights. The Minister underlined that particular attention must be directed towards reducing inequalities that had been exacerbated by the pandemic, especially affecting women with increased risk of gender-based violence and household burdens. The Government had reoriented the 2020 budget to mitigate the socio-economic impact of the pandemic with increased focus on food security, health, education and other social protection measures. The Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs was engaging its development partners, including the UN, to undertake COVID-19 related assessments aimed at informing evidence-based policy responses. He

taken to curb the spread had given rise to significant socio-economic issues, especially those impacting the livelihood of the 48% of the population living in poverty. Vj g"WP ø"etkuk" management team had been working in tandem with the National Health Emergency Committee to respond to the pandemic. She explained that the UN had set up a UN COVID-19 response structure, which covered support in the areas of health, social services, socio-economic response and recovery, and risk communication and community engagement. This included supporting the Government in reprioritizing the National Development Plan in light of COVID-19. She noted the 16 million USD that had so far been approved from the PBF to support the country in key peacebuilding areas, and highlighted the flexibility of the PBF in reprogramming some of these projects to address COVID-19 related issues. In conclusion, she reiterated the UN Country Team's commitment to continue supporting the I qxgtpo gpøu COVID-19 national response in a coherent and collaborative manner that strengthened the health and socio-economic nexus for sustainable peace and development.

7. Ms. Oumie Sise, Manager of Discovery Tours and member of the Board of the Gambia Chamber of Commerce and Industry, reiterated that the pandemic had shed light on existing vulnerabilities

