Background and Objectives

With support from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the National Democratic Institute (NDI), the Inter-Party Committee (IPC) held its 3rd quarterly breakfast session on Saturday, 25th September 2021 in Janjanbureh, Central River Region.

It was attended by all 18 political parties registered by the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC). The concept of quarterly breakfast sessions was initiated by UNDP in 2021 to provide space for political leaders to meet, engage in dialogue and build consensus on emerging political and electoral issues in the country. This contributes to improved communication, confidence and trust building while reducing interparty tensions and rivalry.

The key objective of the meeting was to reinforce political parties’ commitments to fully abide by all the rules and regulations as laid down in the legal frameworks for elections in The Gambia, especially the 1997 Constitution; the Elections Act 2009; the IPC MoU and Code of Conduct and as well as the IEC Code on Election Campaign Ethics as the guiding principles in the run up to the 2021 presidential election; thereby enhancing citizens confidence in the electoral process.

The key presentation, made by IEC Vice-Chairman, Mr. Joseph Colley on IEC Code on Election Campaign Ethics Order, emphasized political parties, candidates and supporters are expected to respect campaign activities of other parties and
candidates, abstain from use of violence, bribery and use of inflammatory or insulting language, among other provisions of the Code.

A breach of the provisions of the Code carries the risk of deregistration of a political party and cancellation of the nomination of an independent candidate.

Political parties committed to comply with electoral regulations to ensure a violence-free election period. They also recommitted to peaceful elections and dialogue during the campaign period by validating and signing the Peace Pledge, dubbed The Janjanbureh Peace Pledge.

The UNDP Resident Representative, Ms. Aissata De, in her speech congratulated the IPC for coming up with a peace pledge that commits party leaders to the inclusion and diversity agenda, especially promoting political participation of women, youth and persons with disabilities. “As we approach parliamentary election in 2022, the role of political parties will be instrumental in increasing the number of elected women in the National Assembly from the current 8.6% to the minimum target of 30%”, stated the UNDP RR, while also congratulating the IPC for establishing a youth branch and initiating the process of establishing the women branch to systematically address exclusion gaps in political and electoral processes.

“Our joint efforts will assist in institutionalization of IPC and consolidation of democratic governance and peace in The Gambia”

Ms. De also observed the importance of collaborative partnerships to support IPC and appreciated the partnership with the National Democratic Institute (NDI) in promoting good governance and
strengthening democratic institutions such as the IPC in The Gambia.

Mr. Raymond Esebagbon, the NDI Resident Director, outlined NDI’s activities in the country and underscored the importance of the peace pledge as a tool for promoting a climate of peace and tolerance in electoral processes, ultimately leading to peaceful elections and legitimacy of the elected government. He appealed for issues-based campaigns and pledged NDI’s support towards the operationalization of the IPC dispute mediation committee and facilitating peaceful political engagements in partnership with UNDP and other partners.

Meeting Participants

The meeting was attended by 96 participants. 24 (25%) were female and 72 (75%) were male. All 18 political parties registered by IEC were represented. Five party leaders attended and those who did not attend sent their representatives.

The Inter-party Committee (IPC) members and representatives of the Youth Branch of IPC also attended. Development partners included UNDP, NDI and Nigeria High Commission.

Key Meeting Outcomes

1. Validation and signing of the Peace Pledge by party leaders present (The Janjanbureh Peace Pledge). See Annex 1
2. Recommitment by all political parties to fully abide by all the rules and regulations as laid down in the legal frameworks for elections in The Gambia.
3. Consensus to translate the IPC MOU and Code of Conduct into five national languages.

Next Breakfast Meeting

The 4th quarterly breakfast meeting will be held in Banjul in conjunction with the UNOWAS led National Stakeholders Forum against hate speech on 26th October 2021. Leaders of all registered political parties and presidential candidates will attend.
Media Coverage

Some media coverage links:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=epwHpcDRy98
https://fatunetwork.net/nations-political-parties-prepare-for-huge-summit-where-they-are-set-to-sign/
https://standard.gm/political-leaders-commit-to-violence-free-election0/
Annex 1

THE GAMBIAN PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION 2021: POLITICAL PARTY LEADERS’ PEACE PLEDGE (aka, JANJANBUREH PEACE ACCORD) MADE ON SEPTEMBER 25, 2021

We, the undersigned leaders and representatives of registered political parties in The Gambia, met at its 3rd Quarterly Breakfast Meeting at Janjanbureh, in Central River Region at the instance of the Inter – Party Committee (IPC), with the objective to pledge and secure our total commitment to peaceful election campaigns ahead of the December 2021 Presidential election and subsequent elections in The Gambia.

Reaffirming that registered political parties in The Gambia through their leaders have subscribed to the Inter – Party Committee’s Memorandum of Understanding and Code of Conduct to promote peaceful political dialogues, credible electoral process, and foster national unity; and understand the imperatives for its leaders, officials and supporters to adhere to the terms of the MoU as well as the IEC’s Code on Election Campaign Ethics (The Order).

Determined to avoid any conduct or behavior that will endanger the political stability or security of the country, and to place national interest above personal and partisan considerations.

Reaffirming that the IPC, political parties and party leaders in The Gambia are committed to peaceful, inclusive, and issues driven campaigns in the run up to and beyond the 2021 Presidential election.

Conscious of the fact that the struggle among the various political parties and their supporters over the votes of the Gambian electorates in the impending December 2021 Presidential election have continued to generate fear and apprehensions among electoral stakeholders including the electorates.

Cognizant of the need to take proactive measures to prevent and/or mitigate hate speech, fake news and electoral violence, before, during and after the Presidential election, and reaffirm our commitment to the Constitution of the Republic of The Gambia, as well as the unity and existence of The Gambia as an entity.

We hereby reaffirm and commit to fully abide by all the rules and regulations as laid down in the legal framework for elections in The Gambia, especially the 1997 Constitution; the Elections Act 2009; the IPC MoU and Code of Conduct and as well as the IEC Code on Election Campaign Ethics as our guiding principles in the run up to the 2021 presidential election, and totally submit ourselves and our parties as follows:

Voter Education

a. Intensify and expand the scope of our civic and elections education activities to improve our members’ awareness and understanding of the relevant electoral laws, IEC guidelines, and the normative codes of conduct.

b. Strengthen the policy and institutional capacities of our political parties so that internal compliance with the electoral laws and normative codes of conduct ratified by our political parties will be stronger and become widespread.

c. Promote respectful and productive dialogue by organizing our campaigns around constituency and national issues that affect the present and future of Gambian citizens, rather than on tribal, religious, or personal considerations, and to discipline party members and candidates who engage in personal attacks.

Conduct of Political Parties / Candidates

a. 

b. 

c. 


a. To support all institutions of government involved in conducting or securing the elections - in particular the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) and the security forces - to act with professionalism, impartiality and transparency.
b. Respect the right of all other parties to campaign freely and to disseminate their political ideas and principles without fear.
c. Respect freedom of speech, of the press, of assembly and of peaceful assembly.
d. Refrain from disrupting or frustrating the legitimate activities of other political parties, including the holding of political rallies and meetings.
e. Refrain from defacing or destroying the posters, leaflets and handbills of other political parties and their candidates.
f. Conduct our political campaigns in such a manner that the ability of the Police or other security agencies to perform their roles and duties in enforcing the law and maintaining law and order will not be hindered whatsoever whether at the polling station, constituency, regional or national levels.
g. In this Pledge, references to “political parties”, shall, as provided in the context, include independent candidates.

Language

a. Organize and conduct all our campaign activities in a manner that contributes to a congenial and peaceful atmosphere.
b. Take a definitive stand against hate speech, misinformation, or fake news (online or offline), intimidation of opponents, and other forms of electoral impunity and unfair electoral practices.
c. Avoid any action that threatens or incites violence against any person or group of persons, and to publicly and regularly speak out against provocative utterances perpetuated by our supporters, especially the youths and party agents.
d. Refrain from making or causing to make in our names or that of our party any public statement, pronouncement, declaration, or speeches that have the capacity to incite any form of violence before, during or after the election.
e. Commit not to issue advertorials, pamphlets, newsletters, or posters containing language or materials that threaten or incites disorderly conduct or violence.

Violence and Intimidation

a. Hold ourselves mutually accountable as peers, especially, in promoting effective political leadership in the campaign against electoral violence, impunity and injustice.
b. Issue directives expressly forbidding our party officials, candidates, members, and supporters from intimidating any person anywhere and at any time.
c. Campaign against violence and all acts of vandalism or public disorder committed or threatened by our party officials, candidates, members or supporters.
d. Respect other competing parties, persons, and their properties.
e. Respect constituted authorities on election management and refrain from violence towards agents of the government including IEC officials and security agents.
f. To accept the outcome of the votes and the results announced by IEC as long as the election is adjudged to be free, fair and credible, devoid of intimidation, violence and conducted in accordance with the provisions of the law; knowing that our laws provide avenues for legal redress should that be necessary.
Inclusion and Diversity

a. Promote meaningful and peaceful participation of women, youths and persons with disabilities in all the phases of the electoral process, and to advocate for policies and programs that advance their interests.

ENDORSED BY THE RESPECTIVE PARTY LEADERS HEREUNTO THIS 25TH DAY OF SEPTEMBER 2021

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<th>S/N</th>
<th>POLITICAL PARTY</th>
<th>PARTY LEADER / REPRESENTATIVE</th>
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<td>National Convention Party</td>
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<td>People’s Democratic Organization for Independence and Socialism</td>
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<td>Alliance For Patriotic Reorientation and Construction</td>
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<td>United Democratic Party</td>
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<td>Gambia Party For Democracy and Progress</td>
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<td>17</td>
<td>Alliance For National Re-orientation and Development</td>
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<td>18</td>
<td>Democratic Party</td>
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As witnessed this day by The Independent Electoral Commission (IEC)

Name of IEC Representative:

Signature:

This Code of Conduct reinforcement and Peace Pledge event was made possible through technical and financial support from IPC’s development partners, The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI)