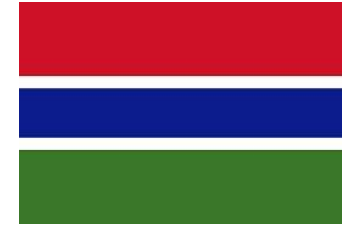




KINGDOM OF MOROCCO



REPUBLIC OF GAMBIA



PRESS RELEASE

Visit of a Delegation of the Kingdom of Morocco to Banjul for the official inauguration of the Decentralized Cooperation Project between the Lagfifat Communal Council and the Banjul City Council, supported by the African Support Fund for International Decentralized Cooperation (FACDI) of the Ministry of the Interior of the Kingdom of Morocco

Banjul, February 26-29, 2024

From February 26 to 29, 2024, the Delegation that undertook an official visit to Banjul, Republic of the Gambia, included:

- **The Honorable Madame Mina Bouhdoud**, President of the Lagfifat Communal Council ;
- Mr. Hicham Stital, 2nd Vice-President, Lagfifat Communal Council ;
- Mr. Brahim Ouchene, 3rd Vice-Chairman, Lagfifat Communal Council ;
- Mr. Mohamed Chinoune, 5th Vice-Chairman, Lagfifat Communal Council ;

- Mr. Mostafa Ameer, Programme Officer in charge of FACDI, General Directorate of Local Authorities (DGCT) of the Ministry of the Interior ;
- Dr. Najat Zarrouk, Director of Development, Knowledge Management and the African Local Governments Academy, representing United Cities and Local Governments of Africa (UCLG Africa) ;
- Mr. Zouhair El Bikri, Director of Services, Lagfifat Communal Council ;
- Mr. El Haimer Khalid, Administrator, Lagfifat Communal Council ;
- Dr. Juliet Sale Mekone, Director of the West Africa Regional Office, UCLG Africa ;
- Mrs. Saissi Meslouhi Rachida, Expert in Climate Action and Circular Economy ;
- Mrs. Lamien Ouando Adiza, Expert in gender and women's political participation, Burkina Faso.

This visit, which follows that made to Lagfifat by the Honorable Mayor of Banjul, Mrs. Rohey Malick Lowe, in November 2023, is part of the implementation and finalization of the decentralized cooperation project between the Lagfifat Communal Council and the Banjul City Council, which has been subsidized by the African Support Fund for

International Decentralized Cooperation (FACDI) of the Ministry of the Interior of the Kingdom of Morocco and the Commune of Lagfifat.

As a reminder, the FACDI was created in 2020, at the height of the Covid-19 pandemic, as a mechanism to promote South-South Cooperation between African local authorities, as part of the implementation of the High Directions of HIS MAJESTY THE KING MOHAMMED VI -May God Assist Him- and of the Country's official Diplomacy calling for investment in Partnership and Cooperation in Africa, at all levels of Governance, as levers of Peace, Solidarity, Fraternity and Sustainable Development.

The cooperation project between the two local authorities, Lagfifat and Banjul, called the "Better Life Initiative", which has received a grant of around 4,000,000 Dirhams, focuses on several areas:

- Establishment of decentralized cooperation between the two local authorities, including twinning;
- Construction and upgrading of the "Albert Market" in Banjul;
- The supply of drinking water through the construction of wells in four (4) rural communities in the suburbs of Banjul;

- Training and capacity-building for women members of the Gambia Chapter of the Local Elected Women of Africa Network (REFELA-Gambia).

The program of the delegation's visit was marked by several activities, including:

- Tuesday 27 February 2024





After being welcomed at the Banjul headquarters, the Honorable Mrs. Rohey Malick Lowe, Mayor of Banjul, President of REFELA, the Honorable Mrs. Mina Bouhdoud, President of the Lagfifat Communal Council and His Excellency Mr. Ahmed Belhadj, Chargé d'Affaires of the Embassy of the Kingdom of Morocco in Banjul, in the presence of members of the Moroccan Delegation and representatives of the city of Banjul, officially inaugurated the construction and renovation work carried out at the "*Albert Market*". This project will

benefit 120 women, who will be able to sell their products in decent conditions, sheltered from the weather.

On this occasion, the Mayor of Banjul saluted and paid tribute to the Kingdom of Morocco and to His Majesty King MOHAMMED VI - May God Assist Him - for all the efforts undertaken in terms of cooperation and partnership, including in favor of African Local Authorities and especially for the benefit of women and communities. The Honorable Madame Mina Bouhdoud, for her part, declared that this is a project initiated by two women leaders who have joined forces to carry out this decentralized cooperation project for the benefit of women, girls and populations, thanks to the support of her country and the FACDI. His Excellency Mr. Ahmed Belhadj declared that this initiative is part of the Kingdom of Morocco's commitment to invest in cooperation and partnership in Africa for

the benefit of all actors and stakeholders, including local authorities. The Representative of UCLG Africa, Dr. Najat Zarrouk, recalled the role played by UCLG Africa in supporting and facilitating the deployment and success of the FACDI at the African level and stressed that the project initiated by Lagfifat and Banjul is also part of the support for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, including through the empowerment of women and girls and the promotion of decent employment.

- Wednesday 28 February 2024

This day was marked by :

- The two Honorable Mayors of Lagfifat and Banjul travelled to Jarra Sukuta to inaugurate the drinking water supply and women's empowerment project; a project that the inhabitants of this community have appreciated, and which has a strong impact on their well-being, health and activities.



- The program was carried out by UCLG Africa, through its African Local Governments Academy (ALGA), with the support of the Lagfifat Communal Council and Mrs. Mina Bouhdoud's team, for the benefit of 60 women members of REFELA-Gambia. The program featured presentations on SDG 5, the promotion of equality for women and girls, the promotion of women's leadership, women's participation in politics, resource mobilization and women's commitment to climate action and the circular economy.



- Thursday 29 February 2024

The Lagfifat Delegation and the Mayor of Banjul and her close collaborators were received at the Embassy of the Kingdom of Morocco. After an exchange of speeches between the two Honorable Mayors, who expressed their satisfaction at the realization of this project that targets the populations and communities of both Banjul and its suburbs, His Excellency Mr. Ahmed Belhadj, Chargé d'Affaires of the Kingdom of Morocco in Banjul, underlined that the inauguration of these projects is part of the



dynamic relations between the two countries since the visit of His Majesty King Mohammed VI, may God assist him, to Banjul in February 2006, during which 8 agreements were signed. More recently, these relations have been intensified through the signing of 9 agreements in various fields. This dynamic in bilateral relations is the fruit of the strategy developed by Morocco, under the leadership of His Majesty the King, may God assist Him, towards an African continent which advocates co-development in

various key areas for the common future of Africa, thus contributing to the promotion of peace, stability and sustainable development in its various dimensions.
The two Mayors then signed a Framework Partnership Agreement to consolidate and perpetuate this decentralized cooperation in the future.



