



# NAYCONF

National Youth Conference & Festival  
BANJUL 2022



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## PRESIDENT BARROW OPENS NAYCONF



## DIFFERENTLY ABLED DELEGATE CALLS FOR MORE INCLUSIVENESS



## PITCHING AND EXHIBITION INTRODUCED IN NAYCONF

# EDITORIAL

## NAYCONF:

# A SYMBOL OF UNITY

**O**ther than the conference, sports and culture components, there is no doubt that the National Youth Conference and Festival, Nayconf also provides a unique opportunity to promote reconciliation and national unity.

In fact, for any society to develop, it needs men and women who exercise a high sense of political maturity. When politicians are united for a purpose, there is a high probability that the masses will follow suit.

This is exactly what was displayed at the official opening of Nayconf with leaders from the political divide participating.

The opening witnessed some exchanges of smiles and hugs between politicians from different parties.

The Mayoress of Banjul was there to welcomed the President at the foot of his vehicle with a big smile.

None of the politicians mentioned their parties, all were focused on how they could better the lives of the youth. We commend our politicians for putting aside their differences and putting the Gambian youth first.

We, therefore believe that this kind of events are needed more frequently to provide more room for national reconciliation and unity.

We commend the national organising committee, NOC for staging one of the most successful official opening ceremonies of Nayconf.

By all indications, this year Nayconf has so far seen unprecedented developments both in context and impact.

We also commend the NOC for the participation of international delegates who are eager to learn the best practices from their Gambian counterparts.

We recognized the support of the government, the president, some cabinet ministers and development partners for supporting this year's Nayconf.

Finally, we urge delegates to remain steadfast and exercise political tolerance, maturity and fully participate in all Nayconf activities by helping to realise its objectives.





# President Barrow opens NAYCONF

By Sulayman Waan & Lamin Fadera

**M**r. Adama Barrow, President of the Republic of The Gambia has on Friday presided over the official opening of the 13th edition of the National Youth Conference and Festival (Nayconf) in Banjul.

The 7-day youth gathering is a biennial event that brings together young people from across the country and beyond to discuss issues of youth and national development.

The theme for this year's event is "The Role of Young People in the Maintenance of Peace and Security for Socio-Economic Development of the Country; Challenges and

Opportunities."

The official opening was attended by the cross-section of Gambians including cabinet ministers, regional governors, chairpersons, mayors, head of public institutions, UN system and youths from The Gambia and beyond.

President Barrow described Nayconf as one of the most important youth gatherings in the country that brings together youth from across the country and beyond to discuss issues of national development.

"I am aware that this discussion is documented in the form of resolutions that will guide the government as well as other stakeholders in addressing the concerns of the young people," he said.

Mr. Barrow recalled that over the years, his government has taken previous Nayconf resolutions with utmost importance.

This, he said, is a clear manifestation that NAYCONF is not a mere gathering for merry-making and jamboree.

The theme, he said, is suitable, considering the fact that the Gambia is embracing democratic principles of accountability and transparency.

"There is a greater need for the youth to take the lead in making sure that The Gambia jealously guard its peace and security that will certainly

guarantee prosperity so that generations yet unborn would be proud of all Gambians,” he said.

“My government is committed to creating that platform for the youth to excel,” he added.

Hon. Bakary Y. Badjie, Minister of Youth and

Sports noted that Nayconf is a platform where youth showcase their talents as well as display their cultures and tradition.

“That is the beauty of Nayconf and that is the beauty that the youth have converge to demonstrate and they would continue to demonstrate in the next six days,” he said.

He added that his ministry will work closely with its satellite institutions to make sure that the youth are engaged meaningfully in the sustenance of peace and security in the country, describing them as champions of peace.

## Differently abled delegate calls for more inclusiveness

By Alieu Jallow

Persons with disabilities in the country especially youth have been clamoring about the lack of sporting facilities in the rural areas of the country.

Their cry has always been that many sporting facilities are lacking in their regions and even where they are available they are not disability friendly.

Speaking to Musa Sowe, a differently abled delegate from the Upper River Region who is also attending Nayconf for the first have expressed concerned about not only the sporting facilities

but also toilet facilities.

Musa who said he was happy to be given the opportunity to attend Nayconf, has also appealed to the national organizing committee to look into their plights.

“We want to be part of nation building and contribute to a successful Nayconf but we are challenged in terms of accessing the toilet facilities. In fact, since we arrived yesterday we couldn’t take bath because our wheelchairs can’t access the toilets. We want the NOC to at least allocate a restroom for us to be using,” he appealed.

Abdoulie Mballow of the Rural Support for the Disabled made similar remarks adding that the lack of trainers as persons with disabilities has immensely affected their level of participation.

“We are challenged with wheelchairs to help in our training and thus need support to fully participate in the Nayconf activities and the subsequent ones,” he says.

Meanwhile, similar concerns were raised by Haddy Kanteh and Saikou Njakateh all representing the Upper River Region.







# Pitching and Exhibition Introduced in Nayconf

By Kaddijatou Jawo

The organizers of this year's National Youth Conference and Festival, Nayconf 2022 has for the first time introduced pitching competition and exhibition.

According to organizers, the idea is to provide an opportunity to young people to showcase their talent by selling their business ideas for possible funding.

In the same vein, the exhibition provides

delegates the chance to display and market their products at the event.

It's worth mentioning that young people over the years have been complaining about limited funding opportunities to support their businesses.

However, many young people at this year's Nayconf are with the believe that with the introduction of pitching and exhibition, it provides another opportunity to boost youth businesses.





# Chairman Fatty Assures Delegates of Nayconf Resolution Implementation



By Kaddijatou Jawo

In the past, many people do argue that the resolutions from the National Youth Conference and Festival, Nayconf were never fully implemented. However, if the NYC board chairman's words are anything to go by, this year's Nayconf resolutions will be implemented.

"I will work together with my team to make sure that these resolutions are implemented by the stakeholders because the resolutions are the main reason for this convergence," he says.

Ousman Fatty, made the assurances on Saturday at the opening ceremony of the Nayconf at the Never Again Arch in Banjul.

The conference is one of the

main highlights of Nayconf and conference delegates are tasked to come up with resolutions on behalf of all delegates.

"This is where youths will critically look at the burning issues and then proffers solutions. We look forward to having an interesting discussion that will be the basis for forming a resolution," he says.

Mr. Fatty also called on delegates that are chosen to represent their various regions to compete with a sense of belonging and maintain peace at all times.

"Let us be patient and be tolerant and always have the nation's interest first before self-interest," Fatty noted.

He further disclosed that this

year's convergence is different as it also attracts international delegates.

"We have international delegates who are here to grace the occasion and they are expected to go home with the success stories the young people of The Gambia have to offer," he says.

Meanwhile, the theme for this year's Nayconf is "The role of young people in the maintenance of peace and security for socio-economic development of the country; progress, challenges and opportunities".

This year's thematic sessions will include: youth migration management, education, entrepreneurship, employment, youth in the creative industry, tourism, and culture, information technology and access to information, gender-based violence, sexual and reproductive rights and HIV, youth in political participation, Environment, climate change, biodiversity and agriculture.

The week-long event will eventually see young people from all walks of life showcase their talent while discussing issues of national interest, focusing on the strengthening of peace and security in The Gambia.

# NAYCONF is essential for Youth Development - Banjul Youth Chair

By Sulayman Waan

Essaha Sowe, Chairperson for Banjul Youth Committee (BYC), has said that the National Youth Conference and Festival (Nayconf) is vital for youth development and empowerment in the country.

The Nayconf is a biennial event that brings the young people together to discuss issues affecting their lives as well as their role in national development.

“The Nayconf is important in the country because it would ensure the development of the youth on various issues,” he told Nayconf Daily in an exclusive interview.

He added that it provides the youth to network, share ideas and experiences as well as help them to discuss issues that are affecting them. “Nayconf also gives youth the opportunity to come up with resolutions that would be delivered to the government for implementation to address our plights,” he said.

This, he said will enable the government and stakeholders to know the issues affecting the youth and then come up with solutions to those problems.

“Definitely the NAYCONF is very important to us as young people. Probably some people may perceive it in another way but to us, it is very important,” he added.

Mr. Sowe said the biennial event provides young people the opportunity to explore and network among themselves.

“Some youth never travel out of their regions but the Nayconf has availed them the opportunity to travel and meet their fellow Gambians. This will help them to share ideas and experience as well network with others,” he noted.

As part of activities of Nayconf is the conference, where regions send in delegation to the to discuss various thematic areas that are of great national importance. He challenged the participants to concentrate and contribute immensely to the discussions.

The host region youth chair said the conference would enable the delegates to identify the issues affecting their well-being and come up with resolutions that would be presented to the government for implementation.

On youth empowerment

On youth employment, he added that its high and there is a greater need for the government to empower the youth through entrepreneurship and skills development.

“Every Gambia youth cannot work in office but if the government empowers young entrepreneurs by awarding contracts as well as providing them the needed financial support and skills training, this will help in scaling down youth unemployment in the country,” he noted.

He said: “We do not want the government to only focus on providing training programmes for us but we also want our brothers and sisters to be awarded contracts so that the money earned will stay in the country. This will increase the youth employment rate and boost our economy.”

He called on the government to introduce a national youth revolving fund that would be used to empower micro, small and medium enterprises with the needed finances to expand their businesses.



# PRESIDENT BARROW DONATES OVER HALF A MILLION DALASI TO NAYCONF

*By Lamarana S. Jallow*

**H**.E Mr. Adama Barrow, President of the Republic of The Gambia have made a personal donation of staggering six hundred and twenty thousand dalasi (D620.000.00) to the National Organizing Committee of the National Youth Conference and Festival (Nayconf).

President Barrow's donation came following central government's support to the at a tune of 8.5 million dalasis.

Its worth mentioning that the initial 2022 Nayconf budget was pegged at 11 million to cater for

the over 2000 delegates from across the country.

The donation is in fulfilment if the president Barrow's earlier pledged to donate to the National Organizing Committee of the biggest youth convergence.

The president's donation was received with excitement among delegates many describing it as unprecedented.

Meanwhile, reacting to the donation, Musa Mbye, Deputy Permanent Secretary Techniacl at the Ministry of Youth and Sports commended the president for the gesture.

He noted that the donation by the

president and the government are unprecedented and goes to show how much commitment government attached to the event and youth development as whole.

He hailed the young people of the country for contributing to the advancement of the country.

"Many people may not know but some countries are looking up to The Gambia for its success in providing platforms like Nayconf where youth meet and discuss their plights and come up with resolutions to influence policies," he added.



# President Barrow reaffirms Gov't commitment to provide more job opportunities for youth

**By Aisha Tamba**

**P**resident Adama Barrow has reaffirmed his government's commitment to creating employment opportunities for the young people of the country.

The president made the remarks on Friday in Banjul during the opening of the 13th edition of the National Youth Conference and Festival (Nayconf).

"My government is committed to creating that platform for the youth to excel," President Barrow said

He said his Government through the Ministry of Youth and Sports and other relevant ministries and stakeholders will continue to provide the enabling environment for you to continue to strive and excel in the Gambia without the need to leave the country through dangerous journeys.

The President said with more than 70% of Gambia's population under the age of 35 the Gambia has a lot to tap into from her youthful population. "The Youth play an important role towards the socioeconomic advancement of all country.

He indicated that his government has recently launched the National Employment Policy and

Action Plan 2022 – 2026. The NEP 2022-2026, he said aims to create gainful and decent employment opportunities for the growing labour force to improve their living conditions and contribute to economic growth and national development within the framework of equity, fairness, security and dignity.

"It is important to note that the Government of the Gambia is on course towards achieving the Youthconnekt Goals which include creating jobs, and opportunities through education, entrepreneurship and skills, as well as closing the gender gap. To this effect, we wish to thank the UNDP for their support and Youthconnekt Africa Hub for their collaboration," he said.

He said the recently concluded Tekki-fii program supported through the European Union Trust Fund has laid a great foundation for the Promotion of Entrepreneurship and skills training among young people across all spheres of the country's economy.

He informed that the next government's blueprint, "The Recovery Focus National Development Plan" now has youth issues as a pillar of its own and not a critical enabler as in the previous plan.

"The legal and statutory documents of the Ministry of Youth and Sports and its satellite institutions are currently being reviewed including the Acts of the National Youth Council, The National Enterprise Development Initiative, The National Youth Service Scheme, the President's International Awards and The Sports Council. These reviews will put these institutions on a better footing to serve the needs of young people. A five-year Strategic Plan for 2023 – 2025 for the Ministry has also been developed," he noted.

He challenged the youth to take the lead in the promotion of peace in the country. "There is a greater need for the youth to take the lead in making sure that Gambians jealously guard their peace and security that will certainly guarantee prosperity so that generations yet unborn would be proud of us all."

President Barrow urged youth to take the convergence seriously, and debate constructively and come out with attainable resolutions for government.

"The government will obviously help in the implementation of the expected resolutions," he assured.





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**CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES**





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# KM, URR AND NBR ALL OPTIMISTIC OF GLORY IN NAYCONF 2022

By Lamin Fadera

In anticipation of a competitive sporting competition in this year's NAYCONF championship 2022 in Banjul, heads of regional teams are optimistic of glory, come the final day of the sporting activities.

NAYCONF is one of the biggest platforms that expose talents in the area of sports and other development areas. The sporting competition includes football, basketball, wrestling, athletics, and others.

Muhammed Suwareh, Chairperson of North Bank Region is confident that his team of athletes will shine like a star in their quest to win trophies in the different sporting categories they will be participating in.

'My target basically is to see that NBR take all trophies in all competitions, we have prepared for this year's championships very well, I am confident that our guys are ready mentally, physically and psychologically ahead of the competitions,' said chairperson Suwareh.

Mr. Suwareh cannot hide his feeling in expressing gratitude to the Governor of NBR Lamin Saidykhan, the district Chiefs and the Chairman of Kerewan Area Council, for being supportive of their full participation in the NAYCONF 2022.

Kemo Ceesay, the head coach of the North Bank Region Football team is confident that his region will have the best discipline record in the championship while highlighting the importance of discipline in sports.

Cherno Badjie, head Coach of the Kanifing Municipality football team said he is upbeat about his side's success in this year's NAYCONF football competition. They are seeded in the same group as NBR and URR in the football competition. Mr. Badjie's main objective is to compete and win the

title and bring glory to KM.

'Our main objective is to win the tournament, but we will take it game by game. The NAYCONF is very important and the KMC is expecting so much from us as the Mayor already told us that he expects us to win every competition,' he said.

Bakary Camara, head coach of the Athletic team of the Upper River Region affirms his region's readiness to take the competition with a different approach. He told NAYCONF daily that this year they came to rectify the mistakes they made in the past competition.

URR has been a household name in the competition and Mr. Camara said they are here to win the competition and other competitions they will participate in.

'Before the NAYCONF, we conducted trials across the region to select the best athletes from the region, and I am sure we will make everyone in URR proud after the competition and all other events we will be participating in'.







# Banjul, NBR grabs first win in female volleyball opener

By Lamin Fadera

**B**anjul female volleyball team smash Central River Region (CRR) team two set to zero in a dominance display at the Manneh Sillah court in Banjul. The inexperienced CRR side paid a heavy price against a resolute city side coach by Marie Wadda.

CRR lost by 25 set to 7 in the first set and 25 set to 8 in the second set respectively.

Marie Wadda knew playing against an unsophisticated side in the first game in Group A was a golden opportunity for her side to begin their quest to defend the title they won in the last Nayconf way back in 2017 in Basse.

Marie Wadda, female volleyball coach for Banjul expressed delight on her side's victory against the CRR female team. She said that the Banjulians first victory is very important for them in this tournament. The volleyball technician said training hard and commitment to the game led her team to victory over the rural giant region.

"The inexperience of the CRR girls in participating in such tournament is an added advantage to my Banjul girls. I do not know my opponent well but they are young and seem inexperienced. But if you look

at my team also is a composition of young players who played in leagues and others have many experience," she said.

Gibril Sabally, head Coach of CRR was not surprised with his side dull performance against the defending champions Banjul. Coach Sabally blamed his side heavy lost against Banjul due to the limited time they had before the start of the NAYCONF.

"We were not well prepared for the tournament. The girls spend only one week on training which was too late. But Banjul has very experience volleyball players and they used that experience to win us. We will learn from our mistakes so that we perform well in our subsequent games," he assured.

Despite the size and inexperience of his girls, Coach Sabally is optimistic of winning his next game against the Lower River Region (LRR).

Elsewhere, North Bank Region defeated Upper River Region female volley team by two set to nil (2.0) while in the other results Lower River Region couldn't play their game after they failed to produce a complete team. The points were given to the West Coast Region team.

Matches will continue tomorrow, with WCR vs BJL at St. Augustine 08.30 am, KM vs NBR at St. Augustine, 10.30 am, CRR vs LRR.

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