COUNTRY REPORT

Senegal
The Gambia
Mauritania

1st quarter 1997

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The Economist Intelligence Unit

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Senegal

Outlook for 1997-98: The peaceful manner in which the November local government elections were conducted augurs well for continuing constitutional stability and business confidence in the run-up to legislative elections in 1998. The success of the ruling PS in the local elections will help to paper over its internal divisions and give the opposition groups a much harder task in the next elections. Despite the PDS's reservations the unity government is likely to survive. The economy will be boosted by news of SONATEL's impending privatisation although problems remain over labour relations and the EU fisheries accord.

Review: The ruling PS performed much better than anticipated in the local elections, particularly in the urban areas. The PDS's poor election showing was partly blamed on a loss of identity due to its participation in the unity government. The AJ/PADS has emerged as a strong contender for the position of main opposition party. Opposition claims of electoral irregularities have generally been dismissed, although the government acknowledged certain organisational problems. The Casamance region remained peaceful during the election period and scores of MFDC prisoners have been released. Senegal has denied involvement in a mercenary raid on The Gambia. The budget has been approved. SONATEL's sale to a Swedish-led consortium is to go ahead although the privatisation programme has heightened labour unrest. The inflation rate fell below 3% for 1996 while the World Bank has praised the government's economic management. The IFC has opened a Dakar office. Official agriculture forecasts are up for 1997, although farmers disagree. EU trawlers have left Senegalese waters and fishing talks have been suspended. The trade deficit with France has widened. A buyback arrangement has eliminated all official commercial debt.

The Gambia

Outlook for 1997-98: The APRC's election victory should ensure the continuation of Mr Jammeh's economic and social reform programme. "Vision 2020" promises a more market-oriented economic strategy, based on diversification, while the economy's rejuvenation should continue as tourist numbers increase.

Review: The APRC's clear-cut victory in the January legislative elections came as no surprise. The new parliament was installed on January 16. Mr Jammeh has freed most political detainees. Mercenaries have attacked an army camp. The captured mercenaries have implicated Senegal although there is little proof. Mr Jammeh visited Tripoli. The economy has remained stable and the inflation rate fell to negligible levels during 1996. External support will target rice farmers. An Islamic bank has opened in Banjul. The government has called for roadworks tenders.

Mauritania

Outlook for 1997-98: The president appears to have decided to seek re-election in 1998. Although there are no serious challengers, he is already on the election trail. Economic prospects continue to look good. The IMF programme should remain broadly on track while project grants and the lucrative EU fishing accord promise to yield significant foreign exchange inflows. The only dilemma will be over how to keep the economy from overheating. A Paris Club rescheduling may be sought later this year.

Review: The president has toured marginal regions. Opposition leaders have been arrested on dubious grounds, the press has been harassed and the USA has frozen military aid over human rights concerns. Mauritanian refugees have begun returning home. Further ESAF funds have been released as international donors have endorsed Mauritania's progress so far. Poor rainfall has fuelled fears of famine although international backing for a food distribution scheme will continue. Electricity and water systems are to be overhauled. Gold and oil exploration has increased. A satellite network has been inaugurated. Efforts are to be made to increase tourism.

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Senegal

Political structure

Official name	République du Sénégal	
Form of state	Unitary republic	
Legal system	Based on the Code Napoléon and the 1963 constitution	
National legislature	Assemblée nationale, with 120 members elected by universal suffrage on a part first-past-the-post (50) and part proportional representation (70) system; all serve a five-year term	
National elections	February 1993 (presidential), May 1993 (legislative); next elections due in May 1998 (legislative) and February 2000 (presidential)	
Head of state	President, elected by universal suffrage, serves a seven-year term and is re-electable	
National government	The president and his Council of Ministers; last major reshuffle March 1995	
Main political parties	Parti socialiste (PS) is the ruling party within a government of national unity; Parti démocratique sénégalais (PDS—the main opposition party); Parti de l'indépendance et du travail (PIT); Ligue démocratique-Mouvement pour le parti du travail (LD-MPT); Parti pour la libération du peuple (PLP); And-jëf/Parti africain pour la démocratie et le socialisme (AJ/PADS)	
	President	Abdou Diouf
	Prime minister	Habib Thiam
Ministers of state	Agriculture	Robert Sagna
	At the presidency	Abdoulaye Wade (PDS)
	Foreign affairs & Senegalese abroad	Moustapha Niasse
	Presidential affairs	Ousmane Tanor Dieng
Key ministers	Armed forces	Cheikh Hamidou Kane
	Commerce, crafts & industry	Idrissa Seck (PDS)
	Communications	Serigne Diop (PDS-R)
	Economy, finance & planning	Papa Ousmane Sakho
	Education	André Sonkho
	Energy, mines & industry	Magued Diouf
	Environment & protection of nature	Abdoulaye Bathily (LD-MPT)
	Fisheries & marine transport	Alassane Dialy Ndiaye
	Interior	Abdourahmane Sow
	Justice & keeper of seals	Jacques Baudin
	Labour & employment	Assane Diop
	National education	André Sonkho
	Public health & social action	Ousmane Ngom (PDS)
	Tourism & air transport	Tidiane Sylla
	Urban planning & housing	Daour Cissé
Governor of the BCEAO	Charles Konan Banny	

Economic structure

Latest available figures

Economic indicators	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996[a]
GDP at market prices CFAfr bn	1,613	1,589	2,148	2,413	2,610
Real GDP growth %	2.4	–2.0	2.4	4.5	4.5
Consumer price inflation %	–0.1	–0.5	32.3	7.8	3.0[b]
Population[c] m	7.7	7.9	8.1	8.3	8.58
Exports fob $ m	861	737	818	968[b]	1,124
Imports fob $ m	1,192	1,087	1,022	1,224[b]	1,349
Current account $ m	–219	–279	3	–53[b]	–45
Reserves excl gold $ m	12.4	3.4	179.6	271.8	179.7[d]
Total external debt $ m	3,634	3,768	3,679	3,765[a]	3,864
External debt-service ratio %	14.6	9.5	14.0	14.6[a]	14.5
Groundnut production[e] '000 tons	579	628	718	791	850[b]
Exchange rate (av) CFAfr:$	264.7	283.2	555.2	499.2	510.4[f]

February 2, 1997 CFAfr564.2:$1

Origins of gross domestic product 1995	% of total
Primary sector	20.3
Secondary sector	30.5
Tertiary sector	49.2
GDP at factor cost	100.0

Components of gross domestic product 1995	% of total
Private consumption	77.6
Government consumption	11.5
Gross domestic investment	15.1
Exports of goods & services	33.6
Imports of goods & services	–37.8
GDP at market prices	100.0

Principal exports 1994	$ m
Fish & fish products	249
Groundnut products	204
Phosphates	102
Chemicals (ICS plant)	95

Principal imports cif 1994[a]	$ m
Intermediate goods	324
Food products	270
Capital goods	180
Petroleum products	123

Main destinations of exports 1995[g]	% of total
France	30.0
Italy	12.8
Mali	7.3
Spain	5.2

Main origins of imports 1995[g]	% of total
France	37.8
USA	5.6
Thailand	4.8
Germany	4.3

[a] EIU estimates. [b] Official estimate. [c] UN estimates. [d] June actual. [e] Unshelled; crop years beginning October. [f] Year to November actual. [g] Derived from partners' trade returns, subject to a wide margin of error.

Outlook for 1997-98

Peaceful elections offer hope of greater stability—

More significant than the actual results of the November local government elections, in which the ruling party did much better than expected, was the fact that voting took place peacefully without the violence that followed previous elections. This augurs well for the continued stability of Senegal's political system. With the next legislative poll coming up in 1998 and presidential elections in 2000, both the local business community and foreign investors will be reassured that politics can be kept within constitutional channels and not seriously disrupt the prospects for economic recovery, as had been feared. High unemployment, widespread poverty and other difficulties will continue to generate social discontent, and the opposition parties will certainly play on such frustrations, but the possibility of severe urban unrest appears more remote than it has for a number of years. Even the one area of continuing concern, the armed separatist insurgency in the southern Casamance region, has been fairly quiet for the past year. The insurgents heeded an appeal by the movement's best-known leader, Father Augustin Diamacoune Senghor, not to disrupt the November elections, although no concrete steps have been taken by either the government or the separatists to resume talks.

—including within the ruling party—

The clear victory by the ruling Parti socialiste (PS), particularly in the urban areas, will do much to counter the severity of the factional conflicts that had been building up within the party. Some tensions resurfaced in the immediate aftermath of the elections, as the many PS-dominated municipal councils set about selecting their mayors, although for the most part the competition was contained within the party structure. The sheer number of local government offices captured by the PS helped to ensure that enough patronage resources were available to share out among all the party factions, so that the appearance for unity will be maintained over the short term at least. The biggest winner, however, was the PS secretary-general, Ousmane Tanor Dieng, who had staked the political authority of his *refondateur* (renewal) tendency on reasserting the party's political dominance in the main cities.

—but some doubts hang over the unity government

One factor which has helped Senegal's current political stability has been the inclusion of members of several key opposition parties in the government, especially the Parti démocratique sénégalais (PDS) of Abdoulaye Wade. Paradoxically, political commentators and sectors of the PDS itself are blaming the party's poor election showing partly on its participation in the government. Logically, therefore, the PDS should pull out in order to reclaim credibility as the opposition. Some party members have begun agitating for just that. Although an extraordinary meeting of the PDS, in February, confirmed its continued participation in the unity government this does not preclude a withdrawal closer to the 1998 elections, in which case the political atmosphere may once again become highly volatile.

SONATEL sale signals government's intent—

Reflecting growing investor confidence in the country, a Swedish-American consortium has agreed to pay CFAfr70bn ($125m) for a one-third share of Senegal's state-owned telecommunications utility, Société nationale des télécommunications (SONATEL). The agreement is significant on two counts:

the consortium's offer was well above the government's minimum asking price, and it won over a rival bid from France Télécom, which had been considered the favourite. The success of a non-French consortium is seen by the Senegalese press as heralding greater investor interest in other public enterprises due to be privatised, such as the groundnut marketing company, Société nationale de commercialisation des oléagineux du Sénégal (SONACOS).

—although privatisations still face some difficulties

However, the response of SONATEL's workers to the announcement of the sale, a strike for salary increases, plus demands for government subsidies to support the employees' acquisition of 10% of the SONATEL shares, highlights the problems that accompany privatisation in Senegal. When it was announced that the electricity company, Senelec, would be sold the electrical utility's union threatened to plunge the country into darkness for 72 hours. Although the government has so far held firm in the face of such threats, it will have to move cautiously, both to allay employee anxieties about job security and more general public concerns about the changes that privatisation may bring.

The economy remains strong—

The start of the government's privatisation programme is likely to attract the interest of a wide range of foreign investors, not only in areas undergoing privatisation, the impact of which, combined with the continuation of prudent fiscal policies, should ensure that the economy lives up to the fairly upbeat assessment given by the main international donors. The agro-industrial and re-export sectors should continue to grow in the wake of favourable weather predictions and the lasting effects of the currency devaluation in 1994. The international competitiveness of Senegalese exports will also benefit from a stable currency and a return to the low pre-devaluation levels of inflation. The EIU's forecast for inflation in 1997 has been revised downwards following the release of recent government figures, which show average inflation at around 3% in 1996. On this basis we have also slightly increased our forecasts for exports in 1997-98.

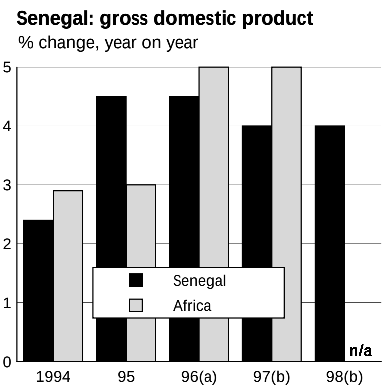
—although weaknesses remain

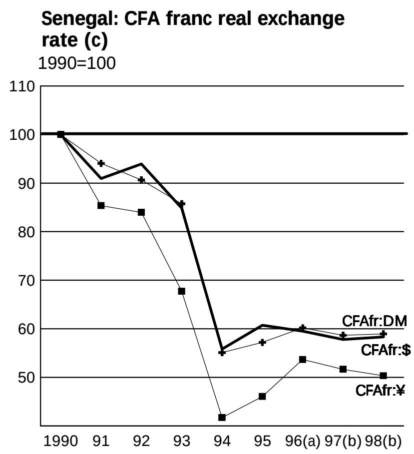
Nevertheless, the economy will remain exposed to the exigencies of the international market as well as being susceptible to damaging domestic labour unrest. In addition, growth will be seriously affected if the difficulties over a new fishing accord with the EU cannot be resolved quickly (see Agriculture and fishing). Fishing is Senegal's principal export earner and about 60% of industrial fishing is carried out by foreign vessels operating under licence. Any further disruption will be particularly unfortunate as international prices for fish and shellfish are expected to improve throughout the forecast period on the basis of higher world demand, particularly from the EU.

Senegal: forecast summary
($ m unless otherwise indicated)

	1995[a]	1996[b]	1997[c]	1998[c]
Real GDP growth (% change)	4.5	4.5	4.0	4.0
Consumer price inflation (%)	7.8	3.0[d]	2.8	2.5
Merchandise exports fob	968[d]	1,124	1,280	1,345
Merchandise imports fob	1,224[d]	1,349	1,474	1,548
Current-account balance	–53[d]	–45	–50	–60
Average exchange rate (CFAfr:$)	499	512	524	517

[a] Actual. [b] EIU estimates. [c] EIU forecasts. [d] Official estimates.





(a) EIU estimates. (b) EIU forecasts. (c) Nominal exchange rates adjusted for changes in relative consumer prices.
Sources: EIU; IMF, *International Financial Statistics; World Economic Outlook.*

Review

The political scene

The ruling PS recaptures cities—

Reversing the trends of the last major elections in 1988 and 1993, when electoral support for the ruling Parti socialiste (PS) declined markedly in the main urban centres, the November 24 local government polls brought the party a surprisingly strong and broad-based victory. Even allowing for some irregularities, as the opposition parties charged, the size and consistency of the PS's gains cannot be attributed solely to its control of the administration and the electoral machinery. With a nationwide voter turnout of about 50% (not high, but better than the 41% rate in the 1993 legislative poll), the PS won 56 of the country's 60 municipalities, 300 of the 320 rural community councils, and all ten of the regional councils. The party's strong showing in the rural areas had been expected, so the results of the urban polls were the most notable: the PS gained control of the municipal councils in Dakar, Thiès, Rufisque, Pikine, Kébémer and other urban centres that had voted decisively for the opposition during the last elections in 1993. In Greater Dakar, which was subdivided into 43 arrondissements just before the elections, the PS secured a majority in 38 of them. The party focused much of its electoral campaign on regaining the cities. It whipped up the enthusiasm through frequent public rallies, made patronage promises of new urban amenities and services, and may well have benefited from the efforts of overzealous local election officials to swing the vote towards the PS. The party leadership was clearly delighted that its strategy paid off. It will now look with greater confidence to the next legislative elections in 1998 and the presidential poll in 2000.

—but must still share power in many local governments

It was inevitable, however, that the ruling party would have to make room for representatives of opposition parties on the local councils (4th quarter 1996, pages 10-11). These were previously run almost exclusively by the PS, given the opposition's decision to boycott the last local government elections in 1990 in protest over the electoral code then in effect. The opposition's participation this time around, aided by the fact that half the seats on municipal, rural and regional councils were filled according to a proportional voting formula which favours smaller parties, ensured that the PS would no longer be the only political voice at a local level. In many municipal and regional councils, and some rural ones, there are now at least a handful of opposition deputies, while in a few the PS finds itself in the minority.

The PDS slips back to a distant second—

The election results were a major disappointment for Abdoulaye Wade, the leader of the most important of the opposition parties, the Parti démocratique sénégalais (PDS), who is also a member of the government as minister of state at the presidency. Mr Wade had confidently predicted that the PDS would be able to consolidate its previously strong base in the main urban areas and capture the municipal councils in Dakar, Thiès and elsewhere. But when the final results were announced, the PDS had gained control of only four smaller towns, Vélingara, Goudomp and Sédhiou in the south and Dagana in the north. It also had a majority in only five of Dakar's 43 arrondissements, as well as in seven rural community councils, mainly in the Diourbel region. Nevertheless, the PDS has representatives in many other councils across the country, including in all of Dakar's wards. Mr Wade (who had hoped to become mayor) won a seat, along with ten other PDS candidates, on the Dakar regional council—the constitution permits cabinet ministers to hold both national and local elective office simultaneously. In some areas, the PDS benefited from factional splits within the ruling party, as in Vélingara and Sédhiou, where the PDS lists were headed by former local leaders of the PS.

—unable to match PS sweeteners

During the election campaign, Mr Wade and his fellow PDS candidates sought to take advantage of the party's participation in the government by promising incinerator plants, sewerage systems and other new projects if they won at the local level. But in a system of politics based largely on patronage, there was no way the PDS could compete with the ruling party's control over state resources. Moreover, the sharp attacks by the PS secretary-general, Ousmane Tanor Dieng, on Mr Wade's proposed plans for a new international airport made it clear that the ruling party could easily block any project specifically championed by the PDS.

The AJ/PADS ascends into the limelight—

Although the PDS remains the PS's strongest rival, the And-jëf/Parti africain pour la démocratie et le socialisme (AJ/PADS) emerged from the elections as a party in the ascent. Nationally, it was estimated to have secured about 11% of the total vote, and won minority representation on many municipal and some regional councils. In the department of Bignona, in the southern Casamance region, the AJ/PADS surprised everyone by winning control of nine out of 16 rural community councils, thus breaking from its past image as a party of urban intellectuals, while at the same time demonstrating the possibility of making inroads into the PS's traditional dominance in the countryside. Although the party leader, Landing Savané, originally hails from the town of Bignona (which remains in PS hands), the AJ/PADS's strong showing is not just a reflection of support for a native son, but also the result of patient groundwork and the party's close collaboration with numerous non-governmental and civic organisations. It is a strategy the party has employed in other rural areas, including the northern Senegal River Valley, with some success. Perhaps the greatest advantage of the AJ/PADS at the national level is its image as an uncompromised opposition party. Unlike the PDS and several other parties, the AJ/PADS has never accepted a position in the government, making it a clear favourite for the protest vote of the young and disaffected.

—while other political parties fade—

The Ligue démocratique-Mouvement pour le parti du travail (LD-MPT), which has two ministers in the government, lost its previous ranking as the country's "third" party to the AJ/PADS, with its share of the vote falling almost everywhere, except in Fouta. Support for the Parti de l'indépendance et du travail (PIT), which took part in the unity government until its leader lost his cabinet position in September 1995, collapsed, winning some representation only as an election coalition partner with the PDS. Some dozen other parties also fielded candidates, either on their own or as part of various local electoral alliances, but none made any notable gains.

—and an outlawed Islamicist movement is rehabilitated

Although it fielded no candidates of its own, a once-outlawed Islamic youth movement made a dramatic intervention in the elections by publicly throwing its support behind the ruling PS and spurning its former allies in the opposition. Called the Moustarchidina wal Moustarchidaty (MwM, which in the Wolof language means "those who seek the truth") and claiming some 500,000 supporters, the movement had backed the PDS in the 1993 elections, while its leader, Moustapha Sy, took part in various opposition protests. Mr Sy was subsequently jailed and the movement itself was banned in February 1994 after riots in which several policemen were killed. It was thus a startling about-turn when some 200 MwM activists, including Mr Sy, accompanied by his father, Serigne Cheikh Ahmed Tidiane Sy, a prominent religious authority, appeared at a PS campaign rally in Thiès in early November. Just a few days before the elections the president, Abdou Diouf, received the elder Mr Sy, symbolically ending a six-year rift between the two. Cheikh Tidiane Sy credited Mr Dieng with working behind the scenes to effect the reconciliation and end the ban on his son's movement. Although Cheikh Tidiane Sy refrained from issuing his followers a *ndigël* (a binding religious command) to vote for the PS, as Islamic religious leaders have often done in the past, both he and the MwM made their political preferences clear. They also turned down invitations to meet Mr Wade.

The opposition cries foul—

Except in Saint-Louis, which experienced several days of street clashes, the opposition parties generally refrained from calling their supporters out to protest against the election results. But they were nevertheless very sharp in their criticisms, accusing the PS-dominated administration of conducting an electoral “hold-up”, with some parties calling for the outright annulment of the vote and others challenging the results in specific areas or constituencies. Even the PS leadership and the government acknowledged that there were problems with the organisation of the elections. The elections themselves were a complex affair, with voters, depending on their constituency, asked to select 826 regional councillors, 15,386 rural councillors and 4,214 municipal councillors, plus 20,426 alternates and, in Dakar, an additional 3,559 ward-councillors. Half the offices were filled by direct majority vote, and the other half on a proportional basis. Under the circumstances, some confusion was inevitable. But the opposition parties and the media cited numerous problems: missing candidates’ lists, insufficient ballot papers, voters whose names could not be found on the registration rolls, official vote counts that disappeared and in a few cases outright harassment or intimidation of opposition voters or election monitors. In about 100 of the 1,200 voting centres in Dakar, the election on November 24 went so badly that it was repeated three days later. All this provided ammunition for the opposition parties to question the official results. Some 115 challenges (some by the PS itself) were filed with the Court of Appeal, which threw out the vast bulk and ruled that only ten had any legal merit.

—raising doubts over the future of the unity government

Despite some sharp exchanges during the election campaign between Mr Wade and Mr Dieng, with both questioning the viability of the PDS’s continued participation in the government, their initial reaction after the vote was to try to calm the waters. Mr Dieng declared that the elections were local and thus would not have any direct impact on national political institutions. Mr Wade dropped an earlier call for the elections to be annulled and said that what had happened in the campaign would not affect the PDS’s work in the government. But as the significance of the PDS’s setback in the polls sank in among the party members, pressure began to build to reassess its participation in the government, which many believed had obscured the party’s identity. By the end of December both the youth wing and the coordinating body of party cadres were calling on the party leadership to withdraw from the government. In early January the PDS secretariat announced that it would hold consultations at all levels of the party to discuss whether or not it should remain in the government. However, following an extraordinary meeting in February, the PDS declared its intention to remain within the unity government.

Casamance separatists keep hands off elections—

In an interview with a Senegalese daily, *Wal Fadjri*, shortly before the elections, Edmond Bora, a central figure in the Mouvement des forces démocratiques de Casamance (MFDC: the Casamance separatist group), revealed that the MFDC’s leader, Father Augustin Diamacoune Senghor, had issued instructions that the local government elections should not be disrupted. Although there have been sporadic incidents in the region, including occasional armed hold-ups and cattle thefts by suspected MFDC insurgents, and the death of some soldiers from landmines, no direct attacks on the election campaign or voting were reported. Mr Bora made it clear, however, that the MFDC’s hands-off policy on the elections did not signify any change in the movement’s basic positions.

—and scores of detainees are freed

Since the last planned peace talks in April 1996 failed to materialise, no concrete moves to set a new date have been made by either side. But the government responded to the MFDC's elections gesture by ordering the release in early December of 56 detainees. Those released, about half the total number of suspected Casamance insurgents held in Dakar, were either ill, very young or accused of minor offences.

Germany restores Senegal's good human rights designation

Germany's deputy minister of foreign affairs, Helmut Schaffer, announced in early November that his government was restoring Senegal to its list of countries deemed to be fulfilling basic human rights requirements. This reversed a decision in March 1996 when Senegal was struck from the list, following publication of a damning report by the London-based human rights group Amnesty International. The report claimed to have found evidence of police torture, arbitrary arrests and the disappearance of perceived trouble-makers.

Senegal rejects Gambian assault charges

After an unsuccessful commando attack on the Gambian military camp at Farafeni on November 8, the Gambian government presented two alleged participants at a press conference in Banjul who claimed that the attack had been mounted with Senegalese support (see The Gambia). The key figure behind the attack, they charged, was Kukoi Samba Sanyang, the leader of an abortive 1981 uprising which was put down by Senegalese troops. The two prisoners claimed that Mr Sanyang was operating out of the Sokone forests, near Kaolack, with Senegalese logistical and financial assistance. The Senegalese authorities vigorously denied the allegations, pointing to numerous inconsistencies in the Gambian accounts of the Farafeni attack, some of which blamed Liberian "mercenaries" while others blamed officials of the former regime of Sir Dawda Jawara.

China blocks a Senegalese UN bid

In early December, before the selection of Kofi Annan of Ghana as the new UN secretary-general, the name of the Senegalese foreign minister, Moustapha Niasse, was put forward by some francophone African countries as a possible candidate for the post. But China, which until then had stayed largely on the sidelines of the debate over a new secretary-general, quickly made it known that it would exercise its power of veto as one of the permanent members of the UN Security Council to block Mr Niasse's candidacy, prompting the Senegalese government to announce on December 10 that Mr Niasse was not in fact a candidate. China's move was seen as retaliation for Mr Diouf's decision in January 1996 to recognise Taiwan, leading to a break in relations with Beijing.

The economy

Budget and investment programme are approved

The 1997 budget, which was originally submitted by the government to the Assemblée nationale in early October (4th quarter 1996, page 13), was approved on December 13, without any amendment or discussion. The same session also adopted a new three-year public investment programme for 1997-99. It projects a total of CFAfr868bn ($1.7bn) in investments, or 8% more than in the previous programme. Some 341 separate projects are identified, with about two-thirds of the total expenditure expected to come from external sources. According to the economy minister, Papa Ousmane Sakho, CFAfr620bn (71.5%) of the financing has already been lined up. And in accord with the government's decentralisation policy, about CFAfr300bn of the investments will be handled directly by local government authorities. In response to complaints from some parliamentary deputies that the investment programme included only negligible amounts for the fishing, artisanal and tourism sectors, Mr Sakho said that negotiations with donors were still under way and that, if further financing could be secured for those sectors, adjustments would be made later.

A lucrative privatisation is agreed for SONATEL—

The government has accepted a bid for a 33.3% stake in Senegal's most attractive privatisation, the Société nationale des télécommunications (SONATEL), the state-owned telephone and communications firm, by a Swedish-US consortium, led by a subsidiary of Sweden's national telecommunications company, Telia, in late November. The government had initially estimated the value of the state utility at a minimum of CFAfr55bn but the winning bid was significantly higher, at CFAfr70bn. SONATEL is not only one of Senegal's largest companies, but also one of its healthiest, generating CFAfr11.6bn in profits in 1994. Telia Overseas is ranked among the world's most efficient telephone firms and has a 50% share in the consortium. Another 27.5% share is held by Sénécom Partners, a new locally registered firm set up by three investment bankers (two US citizens and a Senegalese). The remainder is split between a Taiwan wireless communications firm based in Boston, China Telecommunications Services (CTC) and a US telecommunications company with extensive international experience, the Walter Group. The Senegalese government will retain a one-third stake in the company, and is offering 23% to local investors and 10% to SONATEL employees.

—as France Télécom loses out—

The SONATEL deal surprised the local business community, where French interests generally predominate. Many had expected that the tender would be won by France Télécom, which has been working closely with SONATEL for years. But France Télécom's bid of about CFAfr65bn fell short of the winning offer. As the government-owned daily, *Le Soleil*, noted, the SONATEL agreement represents a "diversification" of Senegal's international business partners. But the independent *Wal Fadjri* put it more bluntly: by selecting the consortium over France Télécom, it commented, the government was sending a "strong signal to foreign investors: that Senegal is not a private reserve of France".

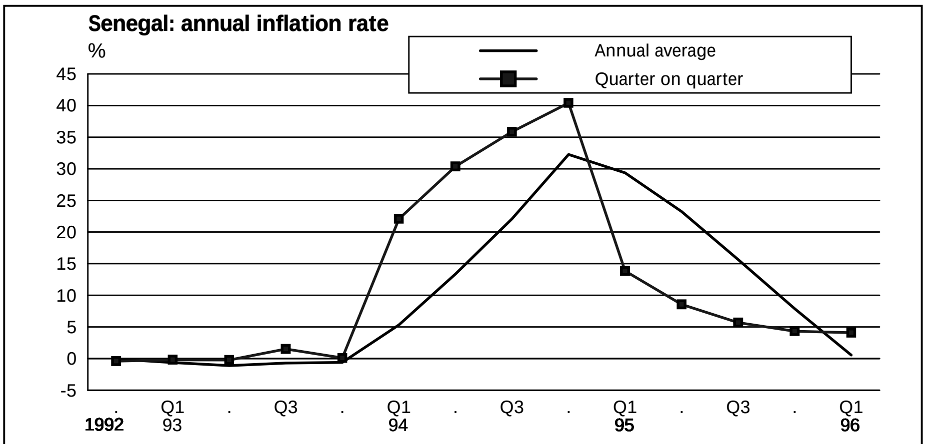
—and labour unrest mounts

The three trade unions representing SONATEL's 1,880 employees have been agitating for some time about the parameters of the privatisation, as well as over more immediate economic grievances. They had initially lobbied to keep the share of SONATEL sold to an external "strategic partner" to just 15%, with an equivalent 15% going to the employees, and were disappointed when the government decided to offer one-third to foreign investors and reduce the employees' share to 10%. The unions had also appealed, with little success, to the government to subsidise the employees' acquisition of shares. Tensions were further heightened when the police, on November 20, blocked a meeting of the unions' coordinating body, called to discuss action for a 6% wage increase and other economic demands. In such an atmosphere of distrust, the announcement of the sale to the Swedish-US consortium heightened anxieties;

the unions feared that the higher than anticipated sale price of CFAfr70bn would raise the value of the remaining SONATEL shares, and therefore of the amount the employees would have to pay for their stake. On December 6 the SONATEL workers went on strike, disrupting the telephone service, both to press their 6% wage demand and to gain some concessions on the share acquisition issue. The next day Mr Sakho told parliament that the price of the SONATEL shares sold to employees would be differentiated from those sold to the investment consortium, but gave no further details.

The unions oppose the privatisation of Senelec

Ending a long period of uncertainty about the fate of the troubled Société nationale sénégalaise d'électricité (Senelec), the government announced in mid-December that it had decided to privatise the state-owned electricity utility. The prime minister, Habib Thiam, said that the state would retain only a minority stake, selling the rest to foreign investors, the local private sector and the employees. Mademba Sock, the general secretary of the employees' main union, the Syndicat unique des travailleurs de l'électricité (Sutelec), immediately condemned the move. He said that the government had earlier agreed not to privatise Senelec if its personnel succeeded in restoring the company to health; this they did, he maintained, citing a CFAfr9bn profit in 1995. But the prime minister responded that Senelec was still in difficulties, a view generally shared by the business community, which has often cited high electricity rates and poor performance, with frequent unexpected blackouts. If Senelec is to raise the massive investment funds needed to enhance its capacity, the government argues, its capital will have to be opened up to the private sector. So far, the union has remained adamant, to the extent of threatening a 72-hour nationwide power blackout, as happened in 1992. The police promptly picked up Mr Sock for interrogation and government officials warned that they would react with firmness to any attempt at "sabotage".



Source: IMF, *International FInancial Statistics.*

The 1996 inflation rate is kept below 3%

According to estimates released in early January by the government's *Direction de la prévision et de la statistique*, consumer price inflation averaged 3% in 1996, compared with 8% the year before, marking a return to the inflation levels that prevailed before the January 1994 devaluation of the CFA franc. The government estimated that households classified as having "African" consumption patterns experienced average price increases of just 2.8% in 1996, while those with “European-type” consumption patterns saw prices rise by around 3% (reflecting the higher costs of meat, sugar and preserved foods). Imported inflation has also been tempered by the relative stability of the French franc, to which the CFA franc is tied, against the major international currencies and the comparatively low domestic inflation rate in France (which the EIU estimates at 2% for 1996). The French franc appreciated steadily against the D-mark over 1995 and 1996 while the gains made against the dollar in 1995 were largely eroded in 1996.

The head of the World Bank praises Senegal’s reforms—

During a visit to Senegal in early February the World Bank president, James Wolfensohn, congratulated the government on its reform efforts stressing the central role played by the private sector in improving international competitiveness. In particular he noted the achievements of Senegal’s market garden sector, which produces fruit and vegetables for export. Mr Wolfensohn had two meetings with the country’s president, Abdou Diouf, as well as meeting business leaders. Prior to leaving on his tour of Africa, which also included Ghana, Mozambique and South Africa, Mr Wolfensohn warned that “corruption is one of the greatest inhibitors to investors” and that anyone found guilty of corruption would be put on the Bank’s watchlist and excluded from future deals. A statement to mark the end of the visit expressed the Bank’s commitment to support reforms and investment in the energy sector.

—and the IFC is to open a Dakar office

The private-sector lending arm of the World Bank, the International Finance Corporation (IFC), is to appoint a permanent representative in Dakar, the Bank’s new director of operations for Senegal, The Gambia, Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde, Mahmood Ayub, announced in early November. The opening of an office of the IFC, which has already extended some $24.3m in loans to Senegal since 1980, will facilitate an expansion of the corporation’s activities in the country, Mr Ayub said. This will be good news for Senegalese businesses, which often have experienced difficulties in raising long-term loans from commercial banks.

Agriculture and fishing

The government is bullish over 1996/97 harvest—

In an interview in mid-October the agriculture minister, Robert Sagna, predicted that the 1996/97 (October-September) cereal harvest would exceed 1m tons, and that most export crops would also do well, despite the erratic rains. Some 2.4m ha were planted with both grains and cash crops, he noted, compared with the previous year’s 2.2m ha. The government later revised these projections upwards in its *Direction de l’agriculture* publication.

Senegal: agricultural production
(’000 tons)

	1995/96	1996/97[a]	% change
Grain	1,060	1,250	17.9
Groundnuts	791	850	7.5
Cotton	30	50	66.0

[a] Official estimates.

Source: *Direction de l’agriculture*.

—but many farmers are not so sure

Based on preliminary estimates from its 3 million members, the Conseil national de concertation et de coopération des ruraux (CNCR), which comprises nine farmers' associations, believes that the 1996/97 harvest may not be as good as that of 1995/96. According to the CNCR's permanent secretary, Cheikh Amar, the poor distribution of rainfall is worrying many farmers, while in the Kaolack region, locust infestations are causing serious problems. In December the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), estimated that the 1996/97 grain harvest would reach 1.09m tons, short of the government's prediction but close to last year's results, and by Senegalese standards still a good harvest.

Rice producers welcome an import surcharge

Heeding appeals from rice producers in the Senegal river valley for protection from cheap foreign imports, in December the government introduced a temporary surcharge on imported rice, designed to raise its retail price to around CFAfr200 (36 cents) per kg, the same as for valley rice (4th quarter 1996, page 16). While rice importers had bought in some 580,000 tons from January to September 1996 (compared with normal annual import levels of around 400,000 tons), producers in the valley had not been able to sell more than 5,000 tons left over from the 1995/96 harvest, making it impossible for them to pay off their debts. Because of the crisis, only 20,000 ha have been planted to rice this year, compared with 34,000 ha the year before, so national production is unlikely to exceed 100,000 tons.

EU trawlers leave Senegalese waters after talks are suspended

Differences over a new agreement on fishing in Senegalese waters by EU vessels led to a suspension of negotiations in October, and the withdrawal of some 100 ships at the end of the month. The previous agreement had expired on September 30, but the deadline was extended for a month in the hope that a new accord could be hammered out. But the two sides remained too far apart on several key issues. The EU was offering some Ecu11m-12m ($12.8m-13.9m) per year in compensation (a 22% increase over the previous agreement with a proposed 23% reduction in catch limits), while Senegal, encouraged by a much more favourable agreement between the EU and Mauritania, was targeting Ecu18m per year. Senegal was also pressing for more direct support to the country's 50,000 artisanal fishermen and for lower limits on the quotas of fish EU ships would be permitted to catch. Artisanal fishermen's associations, which have long accused the Europeans of overfishing, have welcomed the breakdown in the talks and the departure of the European vessels. Informal contacts between Senegal and the EU have continued, but as of early February there had been no resumption of formal negotiations.

Transport

Restructure is planned for Dakar public transport

The government is projecting a major restructuring operation for the state-owned bus company in the Dakar metropolitan area, the Société des transports du Cap-Vert (SOTRAC). For the time being, the state will retain a majority stake, but is aiming to open up SOTRAC to private participation, with the possibility of further reducing the government share at some point in the future. According to one scenario under consideration, SOTRAC may be split into two entities, one a leasing company and the other an operating enterprise. Whatever the precise form of the restructuring, SOTRAC is in dire need of new financing and better management. Many of its buses have been withdrawn from service due to maintenance problems and sometimes even fuel shortages. In November employees staged a work stoppage, blocking major streets for half a day with their vehicles, to dramatise their demand for payment of salaries owed for September and October (the management agreed to pay the September salaries immediately and promised that October's pay would soon follow). Some donor support came in October when the Caisse française de développement (CFD) agreed to provide CFAfr1bn ($1.8m) to SOTRAC for the acquisition of 50 new buses, and then again in December when the Islamic Development Bank agreed to finance the purchase of another 100 buses.

Casamance ceasefire makes road rehabilitation possible

With a ceasefire in effect in the southern Casamance region for the past year, the Senegalese government and its international partners have been encouraged to resume road rehabilitation projects previously postponed because of the fighting. The rehabilitation of the Sénoba-Ziguinchor road, with CFAfr4.4bn in financing from the EU, is expected to be completed by May 1998. There are also plans to rehabilitate the Ziguinchor-Tanaff road, and to carry out repairs along the Bignona-Diouloulou-Séléty road.

Foreign trade and payments

The trade deficit with France worsens

Historically, France has been the main trading partner for many west African countries and its pre-eminence is underlined through a common language and the French Treasury's backing of the CFA franc. In an attempt to retain its market share, following particularly strong competition from the USA over the past few years, a French trade mission visited the region in December. French interests still dominate Senegal's external trade and, according to unattributed figures published by the independent daily, *Wal Fadjri*, although Senegalese exports to France during the first six months of 1996 were 6% lower than in the corresponding period of 1995, imports from France were 16% higher. Unless the trends were reversed in the second half of 1996, which seems unlikely, Senegal's 1996 trade deficit with France will be greater than the CFAfr133bn ($237.7m) recorded in 1995.

Senegal: France's 1995 trade balance with selected west African countries
(FFr m)

	Imports from	Exports to	Trade balance
Senegal	968	2,301	1,333
Côte d'Ivoire	4,566	4,673	107
Mali	38	866	828
Benin	27	956	929
Niger	685	473	–212
Togo	128	564	436
Burkina Faso	150	674	524

Source: *Jeune Afrique*.

A commercial debt buyback eliminates $118m

Senegal's entire commercial debt, about $118m, was eliminated in late December with the signing of a debt buyback scheme at the headquarters of the Banque nationale de Paris (BNP). Under the agreement, Senegal bought back the debt it owed to the BNP and its other major commercial creditors, Citibank, Crédit Lyonnais and Société Générale, at 16% of face value. For that purpose, the World Bank, with the support of the French, Swiss and Dutch governments, mobilised a loan of $13.4m, with the remainder covered by Senegal through interest-free letters of commitment. The elimination of the country's commercial debt, particularly the arrears, comes as welcome news to private Senegalese businessmen, who can now gain easier access to international financial markets.

Aid news

New aid agreements this quarter, not mentioned elsewhere in this report, included the following.

- CFAfr6.15bn ($11m) from the Caisse française de développement (CFD) in October to help finance Senegal's 1996 economic and financial programme.
- From Belgium CFAfr500m to support horticultural production in the Niayes area near Dakar, and a CFAfr2bn grant for a health project in Diourbel, announced in October and December, respectively.
- A concessional loan of DM34.5m ($21.1m) extended by the German aid agency in November to finance rice and horticultural production in the Senegal river valley.
- Ecu140m ($177m) in grants from the EU, covering a five-year period, announced in December, within the framework of the Lomé convention.
- A loan of $17.5m, approved by the African Development Fund in December, to finance the construction, equipment and rehabilitation of 810 classrooms in the Saint-Louis and Kolda regions.

The Gambia

Political structure

Official name	The Republic of The Gambia	
Form of state	Unitary republic	
Legal system	Based on English common law and the 1996 constitution	
National legislature	House of Assembly: installed on January 16 1997 following its suspension after the military coup of July 1994; 49 members, 45 elected by universal suffrage, four nominated by the president; all serve a five-year term	
National elections	September 1996 (presidential), January 1997 (legislative); next elections due in September 2001 (presidential) and January 2002 (legislative)	
Head of state	President, elected by universal suffrage for a five-year term	
National government	The president and cabinet	
Main political parties	The ban on political activity was lifted in August 1996, but three pre-coup parties (the People's Progressive Party, the Gambia People's Party and the National Convention Party) remain proscribed. The ruling party is the Alliance for Patriotic Reorientation and Construction (APRC); the United Democratic Party (UDP) and the National Reconciliation party (NRP) are the main opposition parties	
The government	Following the January 16 inauguration of House of Assembly delegates, the new cabinet has yet to be announced. Last major re-shuffle July 28, 1996	
	President	Colonel Yahyah Jammeh
Key ministers	Agriculture	Musa Mbenga
	Civil service	Mustapha Wadda
	Culture & tourism	Susan Waffa-Ogoo
	Defence	Captain Edward Singhateh
	Education	Satang Jow
	External affairs	Baboucar Blaise Jagne
	Finance & economic affairs	Bala Garba Jahumpa
	Health, social welfare & women's affairs	Isatou Njie Saidy
	Interior	Captain Lamin Bajo
	Justice & attorney general	Hawa Sisay Sabally
	Local government & lands	Captain Yankuba Touray
	Public works, communications & information	Ebrihima Ceesay
	Trade, industry & employment	Dominic Mendy
	Youth & sports	Aminatta Faal-Sonko
Central Bank governor	Clarke Bajo	

Economic structure

Latest available figures

Economic indicators	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996[a]
GDP at market prices[b] D m	2,948	2,519	2,886	n/a	n/a
Real GDP growth[b] %	5.4	1.4	1.5	–7.0[c]	3.2[c]
Consumer price inflation %	9.5	6.5	1.7	7.0	1.0[cd]
Population[e] '000	986	1,026	1,080	1,120	1,161
Exports fob[b] $ m	147.0	157.0	125.0	123.0	130.0
Imports fob[b] $ m	177.8	214.5	181.6	162.5	168.0
Current account[b] $ m	37.2	–5.3	8.2	–8.2	n/a
Reserves excl gold $ m	94.0	102.2[f]	98.0	106.2	104.3[f]
Total external debt $ m	403	424	419	n/a	n/a
External debt-service ratio %	13.0	13.7	19.0	n/a	n/a
Groundnut production[g] '000 tons	84.2	54.9	76.7	80.8	90.0
Charter tourists[b] '000	65.8	63.9	90.0	43.3	68.0[c]
Exchange rate (av) D:$	8.89	9.13	9.58	9.55	9.75[f]

February 10, 1997 D9.889:$1

Origins of gross domestic product 1994[b]	% of total
Agriculture	23
Industry	12
Services	65
GDP at factor cost	100

Components of gross domestic product 1994[b]	% of total
Private consumption	74
Government consumption	18
Gross domestic investment	20
Exports of goods & services	53
Imports of goods & services	–65
GDP at market prices	100

Principal exports 1993[b]	$ m
Fish & fish preparations	2.7
Groundnuts (shelled)	1.5

Principal imports 1993[b]	$ m
Food	77.5
Machinery & transport equipment	61.7
Manufactures	52.7
Minerals & fuel	15.7

Main destinations of exports 1995[h]	% of total
Japan	29.2
Senegal	10.8
Hong Kong	9.2
France	7.7

Main origins of imports 1995[h]	% of total
China	20.3
Côte d'Ivoire	13.9
Hong Kong	9.8
UK	7.6

[a] EIU estimates. [b] Fiscal year ending June 30. [c] Official estimate. [d] Over the year to October. [e] Based on 1993 census. [f] End-September actual. [g] Crop years ending in calendar years. [h] Derived from partners' trade returns, subject to a wide margin of error.

Outlook for 1997-98

The president appears secure—

Following a decisive victory for his party at the legislative polls in early January, which capped his own clear 55% win in the presidential election last September, the president, Colonel Yahyah Jammeh, can look forward to a five-year term, secure in the knowledge that his party has a large enough parliamentary majority to enable him to push through whatever reforms he has in mind. There have been few detailed policy statements, however. The colonel and his party made some sweeping promises during the electoral period from which a general sense of his mission may be guessed at. Despite various allegations of strong-arm behaviour, notably in the way in which virtually all former politicians were banned from standing by one subterfuge or another, the elections themselves seem to have been conducted fairly. Most foreign partners seem resigned to accepting the status quo. Old enemies, jailed under one pretext or another until after the presidential election, have been given amnesty and set free, presumably because they are thought to pose no further threat. The handful of armed mercenaries captured after they recently entered the country intending to launch a destabilisation campaign can expect short shrift.

—and resolved to continue his reforms—

The new government is not likely to deviate from its current policy objectives. When the colonel and his group of young officers seized power in July 1994 their proclaimed intention was to clean up society, ridding The Gambia of sex tourism, the administrative corruption for which it had become a byword and a political class which was considered to have enriched itself at the people's expense. Much was made of the shortage of hospitals, decent schools, and the public amenities which the previous easy-going regime had failed to provide given the healthy state of the country's finances in the early 1990s. Since July 1994 corrupt officials have been forced out of office and made to repay ill-gotten monies; the wealthy have been made to give up their opulent second homes; and pimps and gigolos have been chased from the tourist hotels. At the same time, new schools and a hospital have been built, and work has progressed rapidly on Yundum airport and various port and road schemes. Much has been made of the fact that Mr Jammeh, a devout Muslim, is an avowed admirer of the Libyan leader, Colonel Muammar Qadhafi, with whom he recently spent five days, and comparisons between the two countries' economic programmes seem likely to continue.

—although doubts remain

Despite his public image of a patriotic leader bent on building a just, fair and democratic society, Mr Jammeh has shown that he can be ruthless. Trouble from soldiers has been firmly put down, with blood being shed behind barrack walls on several occasions since July 1994. More recently allegations of corruption have been made by the foreign press and the opposition.

The government outlines its economic policies—

The government's long-term economic plans have been broadly outlined in a policy document titled "Vision 2020". The general tenets of the market-friendly programme include: increased deregulation and competition (including the proposed introduction of a stock exchange and the establishment of and export processing zone, EPZ), macroeconomic stability, private-sector-led growth and institutional development. On the external front the government has announced its commitment to the "implementation of agreements signed with the International Financial Institutions" as well as to maintaining the stability of the currency.

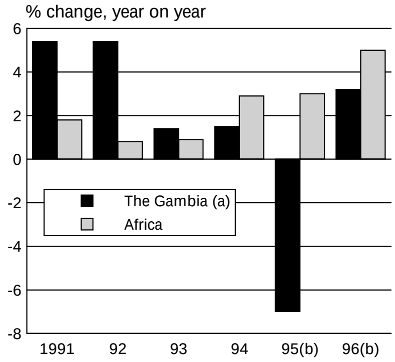
The call for a shake-up of the agricultural sector, in which at least three-quarters of the Gambian labour force is engaged, but which returns a mere 23% of GDP, appears reminiscent of the largely rhetorical policy statements of the previous regime, which regularly urged diversification of agriculture away from the growing and smuggling of groundnuts, to little avail. The target for industry which at present accounts for about 12% of GDP, is 25-30% of GDP by the year 2020. The government has outlined its commitment to privatisation throughout the productive sectors, and to encouraging foreign investment as a means of financing infrastructure and human resources development. Special attention is to be given to encouraging the growth of financial services.

—while political stability will boost tourism recovery

Anecdotal evidence, pending new official figures, suggests that tourism (which contributed a substantial portion of The Gambia's pre-coup economy) has enjoyed a modest recovery during the current high season, with increasing numbers of west European sun-seekers taking mid-winter package holidays along The Gambia's beaches. UK visitors, who accounted for upwards of 55% of all foreign tourists before the July 1994 coup, have been slower to return to normal. However, the EIU's expectation of tourist numbers returning to 80,000-90,000 during the 1996/97 season still seems realistic. On this basis, and with expectations of a return to normal levels of international development aid and budgetary support following the donors' approval of the elections, the government's estimate of GDP growth of 3.2% seems realistic for the 12 months to end-June 1997 with a further increase likely the following year as domestic demand and capacity utilisation begin to recover.

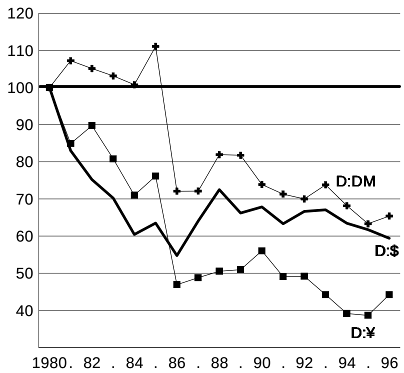
The Gambia: gross domestic product

% change, year on year



The Gambia: dalasi real exchange rate (c)

1980=100



(a) Fiscal years starting July 1. (b) Official estimates. (c) Nominal exchange rates adjusted for changes in relative consumer prices.
Sources: EIU; IMF, *International Financial Statistics; World Economic Outlook.*

Review

The political scene

Legislative elections are scheduled—

Once Colonel Yahyah Jammeh was securely installed as president following his decisive win in the September 26 election the country's return to a fully democratic system was scheduled for completion on January 2, with elections to the 49-seat House of Assembly (parliament), 30 months after the colonel, then a lieutenant, had seized power. Four of the parliamentary seats are allocated by the president himself while the remainder are subject to election. The line-up of candidates, announced on December 9 by the Independent National Electoral Commission, comprised 45 members of Mr Jammeh's party, the Alliance for Patriotic, Reorientation and Construction (APRC), 34 contestants from Ousainou Darbo's United Democratic Party (UDP), 17 from the People's Democratic Organisation for Independence and Socialism (PDOIS) of Sidia Jatta, and five representing the National Reconciliation Party, led by Hamat Bah. Six independents also stood. In five constituencies, APRC candidates were unopposed. Mr Darbo, who had won 35% of the votes against Mr Jammeh's 55% in the presidential poll, had demanded, as a condition of the UDP's participation, the liberation of all political detainees, the revocation of sweeping powers conferred to the president over the security forces and a guarantee that the army and security services would not interfere in the electoral process. The UDP announced on November 28 that it would take part, although it was by no means clear whether all the conditions had been met (although by this time at least some of the political prisoners had been freed under a presidential amnesty).

—in which the president's party has clear advantages—

Mr Darbo's party campaigned with promises of genuine democracy, good governance, and a respect for human rights. It promised to rebuild good relations with Senegal, the omnipresent francophone neighbour, to develop the private sector, promoting investment in the economy, and to create a workable national agricultural policy. For its part, the APRC pledged to consolidate what had been achieved under military rule and to undertake major new projects such as the proposed east-west highway (to be built with aid from Taiwan) and pointed to successes achieved during military rule (4th quarter 1996, pages 27-28). The party also made much of an agricultural development programme aimed at encouraging young Gambians back to the land. Not only was the APRC able to put up candidates in every constituency, it also had the support of traditional chiefs and village leaders as well as seven district governors, all of them army officers, and a strong groundswell of support among young Gambians.

—in a mostly dull campaign—

Two days before an otherwise incident-free election 21 UDP supporters were arrested by security forces and held, following a reported fracas with APRC activists at Brikama, west of Banjul. APRC officials went to the police, complaining that UDP supporters had beaten them up and stoned an election campaigner's car, reports said. However, the majority of voters appeared to have had enough of elections, having already voted in a referendum and a presidential poll in recent months, and seemed more preoccupied with the important business of preparing to celebrate New Year's Eve. Security forces stayed mainly out of sight during the campaigns, over New Year, and on election day itself, and no incidents of any significance marred the period.

—which the APRC easily wins

The final results, announced on January 3, showed that as expected, Mr Jammeh's APRC had gained a decisive victory, with more than the two-thirds majority it required to amend the constitution. The electoral commission reported a higher than expected turnout, at 73.2% of voters (307,856 of the 420,507 registered electorate), compared with the 88.35% participation rate in the presidential poll.

The Gambia: legislative election results

	No of seats
Alliance for Patriotic Reorientation & Construction (APRC) (elected)	33
APRC (presidential nominations)	4
United Democratic Party (UDP)	7
National Reconciliation Party (NRP)	2
People's Democratic Organisation for Independence & Socialism (PDOIS)	1
Independents	2
Total	49

Source: National press.

The new parliament is installed

The new parliament was formally inaugurated on January 16. The deputies were sworn in by the chief justice, Omar Aghali, who declared that a new constitution, approved by referendum and adopted by parliament as its first act, had come into force. The former secretary to the presidency, Mustapha Wadda, was elected as speaker. He was one of four unelected members nominated by the president. A second nominated member, Cecilia Cole, was elected as deputy speaker, the first woman to hold such a post in The Gambia.

Mr Jammeh frees political detainees

The president announced in early November, to a group of religious leaders (imams) who called to offer congratulations on his victory in the presidential election five weeks earlier, that he would free political detainees. A total of 11 detained army and police officers had been freed earlier the same week, including Colonel Mamat Cham, who had served as interior minister in the first days of the 1994 coup. A subsequent official announcement said that 41 political prisoners were being freed, in the interests of leading The Gambia to an era of "forgiveness, reconciliation and unity". Several of those released had been detained since the coup, including several ministers of the former government of Sir Dawda Jawara, among them the former agriculture minister, Omar Amadou Jallow; a former police chief, Pa Sallah Jagne, said to have been close to Sir Dawda; and the former head of the secret service, Kabba Cessay. All charges against the detainees were dropped. A number of Mr Darbo's supporters, detained during the presidential election campaign, were also given amnesty. However, it remained unclear whether any other political prisoners were to stay in detention.

Land ministry officials are penalised

Four senior officials of the local government and lands ministry were reported in early December to have been ordered to repay money (with accumulated interest) said to have been acquired through the sale of illegally appropriated land plots, dating back to 1992. A report in the newspaper, *Gambia Daily*, said the chairman of the lands commission investigating corruption allegations, Justice Robbin-Coker, spoke of a “greedy and most audacious system of land-grabbing which permeated the ministry”. The report is consistent with the military government’s allegations of widespread corruption under the former regime.

Mysterious mercenaries attack an army camp—

Six Gambian soldiers died and five others were wounded on November 8 when a group of eight commandos, later identified as Gambian mercenaries, opened fire on an army camp at Farafeni in the east, near the Senegalese border. Two of the attackers were reported to be wounded of whom one was captured while the other managed to reach a Senegalese border post. During the attack, the mercenaries succeeded in seizing the camp armoury and taking the commandant and two soldiers hostage, but fled when troop reinforcements arrived, abandoning a stolen truck which they had loaded with army weapons. According to the French news agency, Agence France-presse (AFP), the mercenaries’ aim had been to free the former vice-president, Sana Sabally, who was being held in connection with an attempt to overthrow Mr Jammeh in January 1995, and to destabilise the regime.

—as a connection with 1981 coup leader emerges—

The camp commandant, Captain Biram Saine, identified the attackers in a television report as followers of a Gambian disciple of Muammar Qadhafi of Libya, Kukoi Samba Sanyang. Mr Sanyang fled the country after a failed attempt to overthrow Sir Dawda in 1981. Scores of people died in the coup attempt which was suppressed by Senegalese troops. In exile, Mr Sanyang remained a thorn in Sir Dawda’s side and his name has recurred subsequently in reports of subversion in various countries of west Africa, most recently in Liberia where he was said to be a close associate of the leader of the dominant rebel faction in that country’s protracted civil war, Charles Taylor. The captured mercenary, named as Yaya Drameh, was paraded before the press on November 12, when it was disclosed that he had been one of 40 Gambians trained in Libya to fight in Liberia between 1990 and 1994 under the command of Mr Taylor and Mr Sanyang. According to Mr Drameh, the mercenaries’ aim had been to seize the Farafeni camp and use it as a base from which to destabilise The Gambia, while recruiting young mercenaries.

—and Senegal is implicated

The Gambian authorities are reported to have asked Senegal to return the fugitives who had crossed their border. According to Mr Drameh, he and his companions had gone to Abidjan, Côte d’Ivoire, in March 1996 on Mr Sanyang’s orders, moving on to Senegal after taking the train to Bamako, Mali. Mr Drameh said that Mr Sanyang was at present in Dakar, the Senegalese capital, and was receiving financial support from the Senegalese authorities. Mr Sanyang was later reported to have left Senegal and gone to Guinea-Bissau. Later in November, it was reported that two other mercenaries had been arrested, although it was not clear whether in Senegal or in The Gambia, and were being interrogated by Gambian security forces. They were named as John Dampha and Essa Baldeh. A third, the wounded escapee, was reported to be in hospital at Kaolack in Senegal, but was subsequently extradited, following a visit to Dakar by the local government and lands minister, Captain Yancuba

Touray, who conveyed a message from Mr Jammeh to the president of Senegal, Abdou Diouf.

Mr Jammeh visits Tripoli—

The president spent five days in Libya at the end of November and appears to have had a meeting of minds with Qadhafi. A communiqué called on fellow Organisation of African Unity (OAU) member states to work together for African solutions to African economic problems and to reinforce intra-African cooperation. They also expressed concern over attempts by foreign powers to interfere in the continent's affairs, calling on fellow African countries to resist such moves. In a statement to the Libyan news agency *Jana*, Mr Jammeh said that he had been inspired by the Libyan leader since his youth and had been impatient to meet him. Discussions on future ties emphasised the need for closer cooperation in political, economic, scientific, technical and cultural matters, and for the encouragement of investment in tourism, hotels, agriculture and food manufacture, Libyan radio reported. The two sides called for the establishment of a joint holding company covering agriculture, hotels, and industry. They also agreed to revive a cultural agreement dating from 1974 and to consider a fresh agreement.

—and supports Libya over sanctions

Before leaving Tripoli, Mr Jammeh issued a statement calling for an immediate end to "the unjust sanctions imposed on the Libyan people on the lines of the ad hoc resolutions taken by the OAU, the Non-Aligned Movement, the Islamic Conference Organisation, and the Arab League". The Gambian leader stressed that the imposition of sanctions was not the correct way to settle international problems.

The economy

The inflation rate falls rapidly

Despite the imposition of sanctions after the military coup in 1994, which led to a broad-based contraction of the economy, the government's reforms have already achieved a high degree of macroeconomic stability. Although economic activity remains depressed and below pre-coup levels, since the start of the reforms the Dalasi has remained stable (after an initial fall) against the major international currencies and official statistics show that over the year the inflation rate fell to around 1% by October 1996, having risen to 13.2% in August 1995. The average, year-on-year inflation rate to October 1996 was about 1.7%.

The Gambia: consumer price index, 1996[a]

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct
CPI (1974=100)	1,396.7	1,394.3	1,404.2	1,365.6	1,371.2	1,383.5	1,408.3	1,418.4	1,415.7	1,418.6
% change, year on year	3.51	2.87	3.18	0.04	–0.04	0.2	0.2	–0.6	–0.5	1.0

[a] Index for low-income households in Banjul and Kombo St Mary.

Source: Central Bank of The Gambia.

A major rice-growing scheme targets small farmers—

A loan of $5.8m from the Abidjan-based African Development Fund (ADF), announced on November 21, will give a substantial boost to the government's small-scale agricultural development plans. It will aim to provide a livelihood for 20,000 rice-growing smallholders, in a country where rice is the staple diet.

A statement from the African Development bank (ADB), which manages the Fund as its soft-loan affiliate, said that the project would be co-financed by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), which would provide 49.68% of the total cost. The aim was to ensure self-sufficiency for the smallholders and their families and if possible to enable them to market a small surplus. In theory, the scheme should make a substantial contribution towards the government's aim of food self-sufficiency, yielding an additional 12,500 tons of paddy rice annually. The official price of rice, the national staple, had risen by late 1996 to D200 ($22) per 50-kg bag, from D160 in early of 1994. The unofficial price was said to have climbed to D210 in some areas.

—in line with the government's plans for agriculture

Under the government's long-term economic strategy document, "Vision 2020", there have been calls for a reorientation of agriculture towards development of food security in tandem with production for export. Mr Jammeh's government, like its predecessor, has repeatedly called for diversification and greater emphasis on achieving food self-sufficiency in a country where at least 70% of the labour force is engaged in agriculture, although the sector accounts for only 23% of GDP. Newspaper accounts of the "Vision 2020" document, which contains little in the way of practical policy detail, speak of it as advocating the need to increase agricultural output "to ensure food security and generate earnings of foreign exchange to finance other aspects of the development process", as well as to create employment, reduce urban-rural disparities, diversify production and create a sustainable mix between rainfed and irrigated agriculture, all of which were longstanding priorities under the previous government.

Medical workers benefit from Taiwan funds

The foreign affairs minister of Taiwan, John Chang, visiting Banjul on January 22, announced a $411,500 grant to enable the government to pay the salaries of Cuban, Egyptian and Nigerian doctors and health workers, and to carry out refurbishment work at army barracks in the capital and inland. Mr Chang met Mr Jammeh during a brief visit, flying on to Guinea-Bissau. Since The Gambia alienated China, its longstanding ally, by restoring diplomatic relations with Taipei in 1995, aid from Taiwan has reputedly totalled around $40m by early 1997.

An Islamic bank opens in Banjul

The executive director of the Saudi Arabia-based Islamic Development Bank, Dr Ahmad Ali, has inaugurated the Arab Gambian Islamic Bank in Banjul. The bank commenced operations on January 7 and its aim is to encourage the economic development and social progress of Muslim communities in member countries (of which The Gambia is one) in accordance with the principles of the Islamic *sharia* (sacred law).

The government calls for road work prequalification bids

The Ministry of Public Works, Communications and Information has invited contractors to submit prequalification statements for construction of the Kombo coastal roads, a project for which the government has approached the Kuwait Fund for International Development and other donors for loans. The project includes the upgrading to a bitumen standard of 80 km of gravel roads along the Atlantic coastline between Sukuta and Kartong; various road improvements in the Western Division; rehabilitation of the Serrekunda-Mandinaba road (28 km); and rehabilitation of a 24-km section of the Trans-Gambia

Highway (24 km) southwards from Keur Ayib on the northern border with Senegal, terminating at Senoba on the Gambia-Casamance border. Consultants for the project are United Engineering and Technical Consultants (UNETEC) of Nicosia, Cyprus.

Plans for a university are announced

The University of The Gambia is to open its doors to students from both francophone and anglophone countries in October this year, according to the chairman of the national commission on higher education which is responsible for the project, Momodou Lamin Sedat Jobe. The new institution will have close ties with universities in the UK and other Commonwealth countries. The university is to make use of existing facilities within the education system, incorporating the teacher training college and other institutions. The government was understood to be planning a donor conference for May 1997.

Mauritania

Political structure

Official name	République Islamique de Mauritanie	
Form of state	Arab and African Islamic republic	
Legal system	Strongly influenced by the *sharia* (Islamic law), based on the 1991 constitution	
National legislature	Bicameral Assemblée nationale, consists of an upper house with 56 senators and a lower house with 79 deputies	
National elections	January 1992 (presidential), October 1996 (legislative); next elections due in January 1998 (presidential) and October 2001 (legislative)	
Head of state	President, elected for a renewable six-year term	
National government	The president and his appointed Council of Ministers; last major reshuffle January 1997	
Main political parties	21 political parties are registered, the foremost of which are: Parti républicain démocratique et social (PRDS—ruling party); Action pour le changement (AC); Rassemblement pour la démocratie et l'unité (RDU); Union des forces démocratiques (UFD)	
	President	Maaouya Ould Sid'Ahmed Taya
	Prime minister	Cheikh El Avia Ould Mohamed Khouna
Key ministers	Civil service, labour, youth & sports	Baba Ould Sidi
	Culture & Islamic affairs	Khattry Ould Jiddou
	Education	S'Ghaïr Ould M'Bare
	Finance	Camara Aly Gueladio
	Fisheries & the maritime economy	Abdallahi Ould Neme
	Foreign affairs & cooperation	Sidi Ould Khaliva
	Health & social affairs	Mohamed Mahmoud Ould Dahmane
	Information & relations with parliament	Rachid Ould Saleh
	Interior, posts & telecommunications	Kaba Ould Elewa
	Mines & industry	N'Gaidé Lamine Kayou
	Planning	Ahmed Killy Ould Cheikh Sidya
	Trade, crafts & tourism	Abou Demba Sow
	Water & energy	Mohamed Yeslem Ould Vil
Central Bank governor	Mohamed Ould Michel	

Economic structure

Latest available figures

Economic indicators	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996[a]
GDP at market prices UM bn	103.6	114.0	126.9	138.6	150.1
Real GDP growth %	1.6	5.5	4.6	4.6	4.7
Consumer price inflation %	10.1	9.3	4.1[b]	6.5[b]	4.8
Population m	2.11	2.16	2.21	2.28	2.34
Exports fob $ m	341	392	401	483	448
Imports fob $ m	359	368	357	330	330
Current account $ m	–88	–91	–52	3	20
Reserves excl gold $ m	61.2	44.6	39.7	85.5	105.8[c]
Total external debt $ m	2,138	2,182	2,326	2,383	2,351
External debt-service ratio %	40.7	30.4	28.0	22.2	22.5
Iron-ore exports ’000 tons	8,010	9,737	10,342	11,514	11,158
Fisheries output ’000 tons	289	313	196	287	250[d]
Exchange rate (av) UM:$	87.0	120.8	123.6	129.8	136.9[e]

February 10, 1997 UM141.91:$1

Origins of gross domestic product 1994	% of total
Agriculture & fishing	24.9
Mining	12.3
Manufacturing	3.9
Services	41.5
GDP at factor cost incl others	100.0

Components of gross domestic product 1994	% of total
Private consumption	82.6
Public consumption	10.2
Gross fixed investment	16.1
Exports of goods & services	42.1
Imports of goods & services	–50.9
GDP at market prices	100.0

Principal exports 1995	$ m
Iron ore	203.0
Fish & fish products	132.3
Gold	14.4

Principal imports 1994	$ m
SNIM	103.9
Food	101.1
Fuel	33.5
Transport equipment & machinery	30.9
Consumer goods	12.7

Main destinations of exports 1995[f]	% of total
Japan	27.2
Italy	18.3
France	12.4
Spain	11.0

Main origins of imports 1995[f]	% of total
France	23.9
Spain	8.0
USA	7.4
Belgium-Luxembourg	5.7

[a] EIU estimates. [b] IMF estimate. [c] End-November actual. [d] Official estimate. [e] Year to November actual. [f] Derived from partners’ trade returns, subject to a wide margin of error.

Outlook for 1997-98

The president begins electioneering—

Although the president, Maaouya Ould Sid'Ahmed Taya, has yet to announce officially whether he will seek re-election in January 1998, he appears to have started on the campaign trail. He has increased his visits to regions where support for his ruling Parti républicain démocratique et social (PRDS) is most hotly contested, notably in southern parts of the country, and has reshuffled his government yet again, with a view to consolidating the support of influential clans.

—while the opposition is stifled

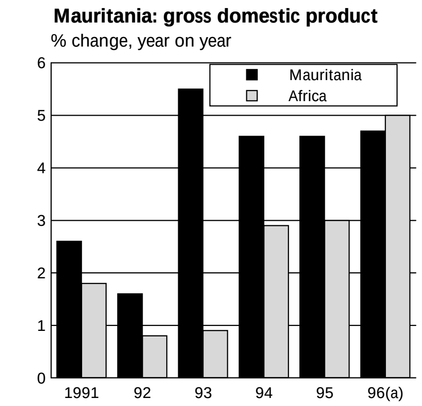
While Mr Taya currently faces no serious threat to his re-election, from either within the PRDS or the country generally, his government is doing all it can to undermine likely opponents. The leader of the opposition Union des Forces Démocratiques (UFD), Ahmed Ould Daddah, is virtually certain to run for the presidency, as he did in 1992, but his support may continue to fall away, even in his party's heartland, as local politicians cross to the ruling party in search of patronage. A more serious challenge is expected from the leader of Action pour le changement (AC), Messaoud Ould Boulkheir. The AC was the only opposition party to win a seat in last October's legislative elections, and the government is already doing all it can to tarnish Mr Boulkheir's image. His recent arrest on charges of supporting a foreign power (he participated in anniversary celebrations of Colonel Muammar Qadhafi coming to power in Libya) could be a precursor to his eventual disqualification from holding elected office.

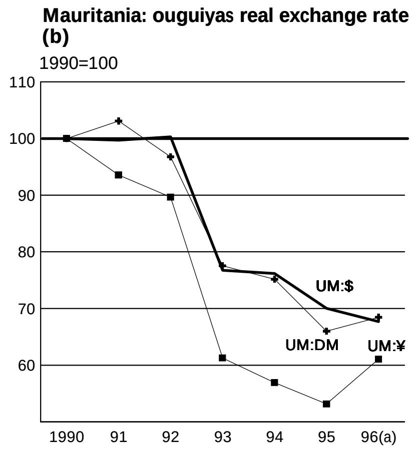
IMF support will continue despite programme slippages—

The IMF's continuing confidence in Mauritania's economic management was demonstrated by the release of another tranche of the current three-year Enhanced Structural Adjustment Facility (ESAF) in November. During the first half of 1996 economic growth, inflation and external-sector performance were all close to forecast outcomes, while government revenue collection was above that programmed, leading to a narrowing of the expected fiscal deficit. Although some ESAF performance criteria were breached, the Mauritanian authorities were able to convince the Fund of their good intentions and provide credible explanations for exceeding targets on the use of bank credit, the net domestic assets of the banking system and money growth, as well as its failure to honour in full promises to make good external payments arrears to non-Paris Club creditors. Efforts in the second half of the year corrected some of the slippage, but the IMF noted the need to pursue further structural reforms with a view to improving the operation of the foreign exchange market in particular, and reform in the fisheries sector.

—while strong growth fuels fears of rising inflation rates

There is little likelihood of any serious deviation from the government's current economic policies over the next few years, given the PRDS's massive parliamentary majority and the lack of any real opposition. With the continuation of prudent policies, Mauritania may be in a position to apply to the Paris Club of industrial creditor countries for a debt-stock buyback arrangement, perhaps towards the end of 1997, and is certain to continue arguing for inclusion within the framework of the IMF/World Bank's Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative (4th quarter 1996, page 37). According to official estimates, GDP is set to expand by 4.8% in 1997, with strong growth in the fisheries, mineral exploration and donor-project-related sectors. While the government has targeted inflation to remain at around 1996 levels, there is a risk that, if not contained by flexible and responsive monetary and fiscal policies, the substantial inflows of foreign aid and funds from the new fisheries pact with the EU, combined with increasing domestic activity, could lead to excessive expansion in domestic liquidity and a jump in consumer prices.





(a) EIU estimates. (b) Nominal exchange rates adjusted for changes in relative consumer prices.
Sources: EIU; IMF, *World Economic Outlook.*

Review

The political scene

The president reshuffles the cabinet—

In early January the president, Maaouya Ould Sid'Ahmed Taya, fine-tuned his government, bringing in two new faces and swapping three portfolios. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is now under the stewardship of the former head of the domestic tenders commission, Sidi Ould Khaliva, while that of the interior, post and telecommunications comes under Kaba Ould Elewa, who entered the government last October as minister for the civil service, labour, youth and sports. His old job passes to Baba Ould Sidi, whose former portfolio at the education ministry has been assumed by the second newcomer, S'Ghaïr Ould M'Bare. Other changes involved a direct exchange of responsibilities between the ministers of health and of trade, Sow Abou Demba and Mohamed Mahmoud Ould Dahmane. The former ministers of foreign and internal affairs, Lemrabott Sidi Mahmoud Ould Cheikh Ahmed and Dah Ould Abdel Jelil, both left the cabinet. No official reason was given for the reshuffle, but it is believed that the president was seeking to realign his power base amongst Mauritania's most influential clans.

—and multiplies domestic visits

Shortly after the legislative elections the president spent two days visiting various towns and agricultural projects in the southern region of Trarza. Although the trip was described as an opportunity for the president to hear local farmers' grievances, its political aspect was equally important. The town of Rosso, once a fiefdom of the opposition, is now firmly within the grip of the ruling Parti républicain démocratique et social (PRDS) and the presidential voyage was more about congratulating and thanking local politicians for their support and success, as well as bolstering his own support for the future.

Opposition leaders are arrested on dubious grounds—

Towards the end of January a group of leading opposition politicians were arrested for "doubtful relations with a foreign power"; the leader of Action pour la Changement (AC, the only opposition party to win a seat in the legislative elections last October), Messaoud Ould Boulkheir, was taken into custody along with: the leader of the small Alliance Populaire et Progressiste (APP, a left-of-centre group that takes its inspiration from the ideals of the former Eygptian leader, Gamal Abdel Nasser), Mohamed El-Hajedh Ould Ismail; the spokesman for a group opposing normalisation of relations with Israel, Abdallahi Afigh Ould Yahi; and two recently dismissed members of the national committee of the PRDS, El Khory Ould Hmeity (former general secretary of the Mauritanian workers' union) and Hamoud Ould Abdi. They all attended the celebrations in Libya on September 1 to mark the anniversary of Colonel Muammar Qadhafi's coming to power. Mauritania's relations with Libya are traditionally strained, with Nouakchott accusing Tripoli of trying to destabilise it. Opposition parties called for the immediate release of those arrested, and for the establishment of a meaningful dialogue with the government and the ruling party.

—while newspapers continue to fall foul of press laws—

Mauritania's independent press continues to suffer from the capricious application of the notorious Article 11 of the national press law, which forbids publication of any report likely to damage the image of the country. In late October the independent weekly, *Le Calame,* was suspended for three months, on the grounds of a "deliberate effort to create subversion and undermine the country's interests", following its publication of an article on slavery. Selected issues of *Tribune* and *l'Eveil Hebdo* fell foul of the interior ministry in November, and in late December *Mauritanie Nouvelles* received yet another ban as it planned to publish an article accusing a senior official of involvement in an arms-trafficking scandal and another decrying racist statements made by a member of the government. The ban (the sixth such imposed on *Mauritanie Nouvelles*) came just two weeks after an award to the paper's founder, Bah Ould Saleck, for "free expression" awarded by the Union internationale des journalistes et de la presse de langue française (UJPLF, the international union of French language journalists). According to the citation, the prize was awarded for maintaining the independence of the publication, despite strenuous efforts to muzzle it. Reporters Sans Frontiers, the French organisation set up to promote press freedom, has protested against the ban in an open letter to the president, published in late December, called for modification of the press laws. Also under fire for critical reporting is the sports correspondent of Radio France Internationale, Souleymane Koulibani, who was detained in Nouakchott in December, following publication of articles critical of the former president of the Mauritanian Football Federation (who is the current chairman of the national Olympic Committee).

—and the USA freezes military assistance

The US administration is reported to have suspended military assistance to Mauritania. According to unconfirmed reports, the USA has suspended aid because the government has failed to give sufficient attention to the situation of minorities within the country, notably negro-Mauritanians.

The government complains of negative press coverage

The persistence of slavery in Mauritania, despite efforts to stamp out the practice, is a source of continuing embarrassment to the government which vehemently denies its existence. The president has denounced what he described as a "campaign of calumny" mounted against his country in the international press, orchestrated by a few "pseudo-journalists" who have sought voluntary exile. He was referring to recent reports published by humanitarian organisations, based on research by a handful of opponents which have been repeated in leading journals (in particular the British *Sunday Times*). Opposition leaders, notably Ahmed Ould Daddah and Messaoud Ould Boulkheir, leaders of the UFD and AC, have made the plight of the black-Mauritanian population a major issue in their election campaigns.

The fate of a deportee will be watched closely

Human rights organisations will keep a close watch on the fate of Diadé Diarra, a Mauritanian asylum-seeker deported from France in early January having been refused legal residence. Mr Diarra, who fled Mauritania in 1989, was among a group of African immigrants who occupied a Paris church for nearly two months last year in the hope of gaining legal residence in France. Last September a French judge allowed another Mauritanian from the same group permission to stay in France, even though his request for asylum had been rejected, on the grounds that his life would be in danger if he were sent home.

Malian refugees queue to go home—

A spokesperson for the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Geneva claimed that up to 250 people every day were seeking to register for repatriation and that by late October some 7,000 out of the estimated 19,000 people sheltering in the Mberra camp in eastern Mauritania had signed up to go home. Repatriation was proceeding at a steady pace, with four convoys organised during October carrying an estimated 1,000 Tuareg tribespeople back to sites in northern Mali (virtually all the refugees are Tuareg), and further exercises planned during the coming months. Several of the Tuareg, who constitute roughly 7% of the population of Mali, fled the country following ethnic unrest in the early 1990s.

—while Mauritanians return from Senegal

Since last April, when the association of Mauritanian refugees in Senegal called on its members to prepare for the journey home, the trickle of returning refugees has become a flood. Poor conditions in the refugee camps, coupled with food shortages, have encouraged several families to cross the river back to their traditional homes. Even though many of those who have made the trip complain of difficulties in regularising their papers and getting restitution for goods and lands lost when they fled in the wake of ethnic strife in 1989, the situation is steadily improving and various organisations are helping the reinstatement of the returnees. The UNHCR and the Mauritanian Red Cross are working alongside community groups to undertake various microprojects in villages receiving the former refugees, with the rehabilitation of wells, health centres, classrooms and granaries. A Programme spécial d'insertion rapide (PSIR) has been established, under the overall coordination of the Red Cross, with the UNHCR taking charge of the logistics of repatriation. A spokesman for the Peulh community of Trarza recently said that most of his members had regained their homes and were settling in without too many difficulties.

Kuwait extends a hand of friendship

Kuwait has announced its willingness to normalise ties with countries that sympathised with Iraq during its 1990-91 occupation of the country. Kuwait had protested to Mauritania and other Arab states over what it saw as sympathy with Iraq. Kuwait has dropped its insistence that Mauritania apologise for backing Baghdad but wants its support in seeking freedom for some 600 Kuwaitis it believes are held by Iraq, as well as Mauritanian approval for efforts to ensure enforcement of UN Security Council resolutions from the Gulf crisis.

The economy

The ESAF remains on course—

In late November, following a successful review of Mauritania's economic performance, the IMF approved the payment of SDR7.12m ($9.9m) under the SDR42.75m three-year Enhanced Structural Adjustment Facility (ESAF) agreed in January 1995. The funds, representing the second payment made during the second year of the agreement, will be released in March 1998. According to an IMF spokesman, Mauritania has graduated from being a "model pupil" of the international financial community to becoming a "teacher". The spokesman added: "It does not appear that the missing of some performance criteria by end-June correspond to slippages, and the [ESAF] programme is on a sound track ... both the fiscal and monetary performances remain strong and give cause for comfort." Given their resounding support for Mauritania's reforms, the Bretton Woods' institutions may yet be flexible over the issue of additional debt relief. External debt obligations remain a heavy burden although paradoxically the very success of the country would make it ineligible for further relief under the strict terms and conditions of the proposed new debt relief initiative. Special consideration may be granted, but no decision is likely before 1998 and the reopening of negotiations with the Paris Club (4th quarter 1996, page 37).

—as World Bank and IMF teams review progress

Missions from the World Bank and the IMF were in Mauritania in November, looking at overall economic performance and progress on specific projects. According to reports, the World Bank would like to see two of the projects modified. The fifth Education Sector Support Programme is apparently showing some "deficiencies" and additional support is required to ensure that it meets its targets. Also criticised was the Private Sector Capacity Building Plan, which has fallen behind schedule. A World Bank spokesman said that future efforts would be directed to the provision of clean drinking water and that further missions would be arriving to study the proposed project to tap deep aquifers and to pipe water to the capital from the Senegal River.

External inflows swell the budget

The 1997 draft budget was presented in late November to the first session of the new parliament. It projected an increase in receipts of 7.1%, to UM40.7bn ($297m), compared with 1996, with a more modest expansion of 6% in total expenditure, to UM46.4bn. Almost half of the total expenditure, UM23.1bn, is dedicated to investment, of which UM4.8bn will be funded by the state while the remaining UM18.3bn is expected from international grants and loans. Mauritania has decided to sterilise part of the exceptional royalty revenue it will receive from the recently concluded fishing agreement with the EU: of the UM11bn due, only UM4bn is included in the current budget while the remaining UM7bn will be placed in overseas accounts. The same goes for much of the

$77m due to be drawn under other Lomé Convention agreements signed with the EU. Indeed, according to officials within the finance ministry, the economy is at some risk of overheating (with an excessive rise in consumption) if all the funds due to arrive in 1997 are to be spent, as there are not enough viable investment projects available to absorb them. Critics claim the agreements should have been negotiated in a different manner, with provisions being made for the accelerated repayment of some of the country's outstanding debt.

A new tariff regime is postponed to help local industry

Contrary to earlier reports, the application of the new tariff regime (4th quarter 1996, page 38), due to have been introduced in January 1997, has been postponed and is now thought likely to come into full effect in January 1998. The delay has been agreed by the IMF and the World Bank, which have approved a progressive introduction of the new arrangements to give further time for domestic industries to adjust to facing global competition.

Agriculture and fisheries

Poor rainfall fuels famine fears

1996 was not a good year for rainfall in Mauritania. Although the overall level of rainfall was not substantially below normal, its distribution left some regions with a severe deficit. At Tidjikja, for example, the lack of rain has reduced the area of land irrigated by three-quarters, and forecasts of crop yields indicate a drop of 77% in output. In normal years some 1,300 tons of cereals are produced in the region from 3,220 ha, but with just 840 ha available in the current season, production is now forecast at just 203 tons. At the national level, Mauritania's food deficit will be 115,000 tons of cereals in 1997, according to recent estimates made public in early January. Already there are rumours of malnutrition in parts of the country and the government has embarked on a programme of free distribution of food. In addition, the Commission de Securité Alimentaire (CSA, the food administration authorities) have announced that prices of basic foods will be pegged. Prices for wheat, sugar, milk and butter were cut by between 15-30% at the start of the Muslim fast of Ramadan.

Food for Work scheme secures continued backing

The World Food Programme (WFP) has decided to prolong its support for the Vivres Contre Travail (VCT—food for work) programme for a further four years (1997-2001). As its name implies, this programme provides for the distribution of foodstuffs in return for labour, notably among the poorest living in rural areas of Mauritania. Part of the food allocated is sold on the open market, in order to provide funds for the purchase of materials to undertake the various operations and to pay skilled workers employed to oversee microprojects. The VCT scheme, already backed by the WFP to the sum of $7.3m during its first phase (with a further $3.4m from the Mauritanian government), is to be extended and modified. At present it targets the populations of eight regions (located in the two Hodhs, Assaba, northern Brakna, northern Gorgol, Guidimakha, Tagant and Adrar/Inchiri), encouraging them to build community infrastructures (roads, schools, health centres, wells) and preserve the environment (tree planting, fencing, sand dune consolidation) with a view to stabilising nomadic groups and establishing permanent settlements. Also backed are various urban development projects in the cities of Nouakchott and Nouadhibou, with construction of classrooms, water reservoirs, public latrines and, notably, rubbish collection. Future plans include efforts to encourage self-sufficiency, with the provision of assistance in the form of seed, fertilisers, and advice on farming methods and harvest distribution.

Mauritiania: food distributed under the VCT programme, 1992-96
(tons)

	Microschemes	Environment	Urban development	Total
Wheat	8,154.0	5,779.9	1,195.5	15,129.3
Niébé	611.6	433.5	89.7	1,134.7
Vegtable oil	228.3	161.8	33.5	423.6

Source: Central Statistical Office cited in *Mauritanie Nouvelles.*

Cooperative Bank officially launched

The fund established to assist the artisanal fishing industry is to be extended. The Crédit Maritime was set up under an agreement signed last August between the French development bank, Caisse française de développement (CFD), and the Union national des coopératives de crédit pour la pêche artisanale en Mauritanie (Uncopam). The launch of the project was somewhat delayed, due to disagreement between the partners over who should manage the fund, but these problems have been resolved and Uncopam has expanded to include two other organisations, Coopératives de crédit pour la pêche artisanale du Nord and its sister organisation covering southern waters (Copanord and Copasud). The Crédit Maritime, holding funds valued at UM4.2bn ($29.6m), is now the leading, if not the only, credit institution in Africa with a cooperative status.

Energy, mining and industry

Arab Fund backs an expansion plan for Nouakchott power station

The Kuwait-based Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development (AFESD) has granted Mauritania a loan of KD4.6m ($15.2m) towards increasing the capacity of the Nouakchott power station. This facility, already expanded under an earlier AFESD-backed scheme, is yet again straining under the load imposed by rapidly growing consumer demand in the capital. The current loan will allow the installation of two oil-powered generators, operating with heavy oil or diesel, with an overall capacity to generate 14-20 mw. AFESD has also provided KD250,000 in the form of technical assistance and payment for feasibility studies destined to develop a coherent overall strategy for managing the cleansing and sanitation services in Nouakchott.

Water schemes attract international support

With the population of Nouakchott expanding at an estimated 7% per year and average consumption of water at 15-25 litres per head per day (compared with 40-70 litres in Dakar), the need to find alternative supplies of clean water is becoming urgent. The Idini reservoir that supplies the town at present is fast approaching its limits and experts fear further exploitation will encourage salt water infiltration (the sea is just 50 km away). Already work is advanced on trial wells being dug at Ténadi (funding for which has been promised, of $20m-25m, from the French Caisse française de développement, CFD), due to take over from the Idini source in the coming years. Nevertheless, given the rate of consumption growth, this project will quickly reach its limits. Two possible solutions are being examined. One scheme is to tap reservoirs further east in Trarza, but since construction of the river barrage at Diama, the problem of salt water encroachment up the river Senegal has been overcome and the Aftout Es Sahli scheme is currently favoured. This project foresees the treatment of river water and pumping it 120 km north, following the course of the coastline, through the region known as Aftout Es Sahli. Nevertheless, the cost of the project has been estimated at $100m-150m and donor agencies are far from convinced that this is the best solution. Studies are under way, with alternative stop-gap measures being considered, including better resource management, with higher tariffs, reduced technical losses and improved waste water collection and treatment rates.

The state power and water utility, Sonelec, is decentralising its operations with the establishment of eight regional technical and sales offices, each to be granted a measure of autonomy and responsibility for power and water supplied by the central authority. To this end, meters are being installed to measure the quantities of electricity and water furnished to each centre, which will have to manage and account for onwards distribution to consumers. At the same time, the overall management structure of Sonelec is being studied by a French consulting firm (Eurequipe) which is expected to recommend a leaner central bureaucracy to accompany the decentralisation drive.

General Gold extends its search for minerals

The Australian mining company General Gold Resources (GGR) is moving to consolidate its dominant position in Mauritania. The company made application in late November for a new mining permit covering a region close to northern frontier with Western Sahara and has high hopes of receiving government backing. It was behind a recent visit to Australia of the Mauritanian mines and energy minister, N'Gaidé Lamine Kayou, during which he also met with heads of the Australian conglomerate, Broken Hill Properties (BHP), about taking up exploration areas in the country. GGR is the operator of the Akjoujt gold recovery project and the Guelb Moghrein Copper-Cobalt-Gold scheme, where it is in a 50:50 partnership with the Société Arabe de Mines de l'Inchiri (SAMIN), which in turn is 45% owned by the Mauritanian government. Forecast annual output from the venture, due to start gold oxide production in April 1998 and the sulphide circuit in April 1999, is 25,000 tons of copper cathodes, 150 tons of cobalt, and 75,000 oz of gold. GGR is also involved in the 20,000-sq km Mauritania Sud concession and has a stake in La Source's Inchiri exploration. In a separate move SAMIN has received the backing of the American Rothschild Bank for a proposed 20-year investment project, valued in the region of $120m. The promoters of the venture, designed to boost copper and gold output, are unwilling to give details of likely yields but consider $100m output per year ought to be achieved.

Oil prospectors return to Mauritania

Oil companies have sunk half a dozen wells off Mauritania's shores over the past 25 years, none of which have produced viable commercial results. Australia's Hardman Resources is the latest to try its luck and has been awarded a 25,000-sq km prospect (Shafr al Khanjar) in offshore Mauritania. Hardman, which is in partnership with Elixir Corporation in a 90:10 venture, currently has plans for one well. The zone includes some known prospects and, according to Hardman, several salt domes in the region beyond the 500-metre water-depth limit. Hardman claims that Mobil previously estimated recoverable reserves in known prospects at 286m-956m barrels. The permit is the first to be granted since Mobil left Mauritanian waters in 1993, and since the government revised oil prospecting legislation.

Transport, communications and tourism

Satellite communications network inaugurated

The president, Maaouya Ould Sid'Ahmed Taya, seized the occasion of the anniversary of independence, in late November, to inaugurate the Domsat satellite communications project. The $16m Domsat scheme, built in just 18 months by a US company, Harris, is the largest of its type in Mauritania. It will link regional centres to the capital and the rest of the world by radio, television, telephone and telex, services that were previously available only in Nouakchott and Nouadhibou. The project includes an automatic telephone exchange, radio and television transmission repeater stations, a considerable enlargement of the Arabsat ground station in Nouakchott and the construction and equipping of 14 link-up stations in regional capitals. The project, funded by the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development (AFESD), will be managed by the Mauritanian Office des postes et télécommunications (OPT) operating under the tutelage of the Ministry of the Interior.

Nouakchott-Atar road-work progresses

Work on improving the road from Nouakchott to Atar is progressing rapidly. Already all but 40 km of the 256 km from the capital to Akjoujt are complete and the remaining section is due to be opened in the next few months. The second section of the road, from Akjoujt to Atar (the president's home town), will be executed in two stages. The first 76 km is fairly advanced, with 50 km compacted and 20 km of foundations complete. The second stage (also 76 km) recently won funding from the African Development Bank ($13m) and the call for tenders was launched in early November (the choice of contractor was due in late January). A clause inserted into the contract will allow for the hard-topping of 4 km along the spur leading off the main road to Chinguetti.

A workshop aims to boost tourism

The economic impact of tourism has been neglected in Mauritania. The state iron-ore mining company, Société nationale industrielle et minière (SNIM), Air France and Air Afrique hope to redress the balance and organised a series of seminars on tourism in Nouakchott in mid November. SNIM is diversifying its activities and recently laid the first stone of a new five-star hotel being built in Nouakchott, in partnership with Hilton Hotels. Cooperation agreements have been reached with Burkina Faso, Tunisia and Mali, which will allow the development of new tourist circuits. Various barriers to the development of tourism were discussed at the meeting, at which private operators expressed interest in developing non-traditional forms of tourism, stressing the need for small- to medium-scale ventures offering "Saharan" treks rather than the development of "package" tourism.

Aid news

Other aid agreements announced recently and not mentioned above are as follows.

- A French government organisation, Fonds d'Aide et de Coopération (FAC), has allocated a grant of FFr16m ($2.8m) towards a new four-year programme designed to aid the decentralising of healthcare management and to reinforce the training given to regional nursing and paramedical staff.

- The French Caisse française de développement (CFD) has granted a FFr13m subsidy and a FFr10.85 loan for air transportation.

- The African Development Fund has extended a loan of $11.5m towards the public resource management programme, the aim of which is to boost domestic savings and improve the efficiency of management of public health and education.

- The OPEC Fund has loaned $3.2m towards a $3.75m education project, destined to boost the textbook printing capacity of the Institut Pédagogique National. The three-year project aims to boost printing capacity to 500,000 books per year.

- The UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) has agreed to fund two conventions valued at FFr2.5m to assist Mauritania in the fight against cattle disease and locusts.

- Japan has granted balance-of-payments assistance worth ¥1.5bn ($12.2m), linked to the $20m World Bank public finance management project.

Quarterly indicators and trade data

Senegal: quarterly indicators of economic activity

		1994			1995				1996		
		2 Qtr	3 Qtr	4 Qtr	1 Qtr	2 Qtr	3 Qtr	4 Qtr	1 Qtr	2 Qtr	3 Qtr
Prices: Dakar	Monthly av										
Consumer prices:	1990=100	124.9	135.3	138.3	134.0	135.6	143.0	144.3	139.5	140.4	n/a
change year on year	%	30.4	35.8	40.4	13.8	8.6	5.7	4.3	4.1	3.5	n/a
Money & banking	End-Qtr										
M1, seasonally adj:	CFAfr bn	255.8	284.2	297.9	294.6	279.5	318.3	308.1	n/a	n/a	n/a
change year on year	%	30.8	48.2	53.7	31.6	9.3	12.0	3.4	n/a	n/a	n/a
Discount rate	% per year	12.00	10.00	10.00	9.00	8.50	8.50	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.00[a]
Foreign trade[b]	Qtrly totals										
Exports fob	CFAfr bn	51.05	45.51	44.94	69.97	82.47	77.13	66.03	75.32	77.57	88.50
Imports cif	“	100.96	97.91	111.07	172.56	174.78	143.17	200.00	188.73	190.57	181.74
Exchange holdings	End-Qtr										
Central Bank:											
gold[c]	$ m	8.3	8.4	8.4	8.2	8.4	8.4	8.4	8.7	8.5	n/a
foreign exchange	“	2.8	45.2	176.9	244.2	275.5	277.4	266.2	287.1	233.9	n/a
Exchange rate											
Official rate	CFAfr:$	547.2	528.2	534.6	484.9	485.3	491.5	490.0	503.2	515.3	517.2[d]

Note. Annual figures of most of the series shown above will be found in the Country Profile.
[a] End-August. [b] *DOTS* estimate. [c] End-quarter holdings at quarter’s average of London daily price less 25%. [d] End-4 Qtr, 523.7.

The Gambia: quarterly indicators of economic activity

		1994		1995				1996			
		3 Qtr	4 Qtr	1 Qtr	2 Qtr	3 Qtr	4 Qtr	1 Qtr	2 Qtr	3 Qtr	4 Qtr
Prices	Monthly av										
Consumer prices:	1990=100	126.8	132.4	134.6	136.3	140.9	139.2	138.8	136.4	140.4	n/a
change year on year	%	–0.6	4.9	6.1	5.8	11.1	5.1	3.1	0.1	–0.4	n/a
Money	End-Qtr										
M1, seasonally adj:	D m	399.6	405.5	399.4	449.1	446.5	468.7	486.3	459.4	469.5	449.1[a]
change year on year	%	–11.6	–11.9	–10.3	7.8	11.7	15.6	21.8	2.3	5.1	n/a
Foreign trade	Qtrly totals										
Exports fob	D m	37.24	65.56	72.19	38.61	25.53	18.90	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Imports cif	”	465.38	430.93	350.08	315.72	315.38	358.66	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Exchange holdings	End-Qtr										
Monetary authorities:											
foreign exchange	$ m	96.19	95.59	95.99	98.09	97.98	103.81	110.73	102.07	100.27	99.28[b]
Exchange rate											
Market rate	D:$	9.480	9.579	9.372	9.542	9.630	9.640	9.700	9.790	9.810	9.890[b]

Note. Annual figures of most of the series shown above will be found in the Country Profile.
[a] End-October. [b] End-November.

Mauritania: quarterly indicators of economic activity

		1994		1995				1996			
		3 Qtr	4 Qtr	1 Qtr	2 Qtr	3 Qtr	4 Qtr	1 Qtr	2 Qtr	3 Qtr	4 Qtr
Prices	Monthly av										
Consumer prices[a]:	1990=100	134.9	135.3	138.3	140.0	142.2	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
change year on year	%	3.6	5.0	8.1	6.5	5.4	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Money	End-Qtr										
M1, seasonally adj:	UM m	17,512	20,535	19,440	19,519	19,839	18,442	18,409	18,097[b]	n/a	n/a
change year on year	%	–14.8	–5.4	–3.0	–3.9	13.3	–10.2	–5.3	n/a	n/a	n/a
Foreign trade[c]	Annual totals										
Exports fob	$ m	(462)		(591)				(n/a)			
Imports cif	“	(570)		(637)				(n/a)			
Exchange holdings	End-Qtr										
Foreign exchange	$ m	46.0	39.7	70.9	61.5	73.4	85.4	87.3	110.8	108.3	139.8
Exchange rate											
Market rate	UM:$	124.12	128.37	125.28	130.16	134.05	137.11	136.21	139.80	138.16	142.45

Note. Annual figures of most of the series shown above will be found in the Country Profile.
[a] Mauritanian households. [b] End-April. [c] *DOTS* estimate.

Senegal: foreign trade

	$ '000		
Imports	Jan-Dec 1989	Jan-Dec 1990	Jan-Dec 1991
Dairy products	42,881	46,490	41,737
Cereals & products	156,476	180,544	115,011
Sugar & products	9,280	36,534	8,115
Beverages, tobacco & manufactures	29,760	29,334	15,303
Mineral fuels	361,029	258,680	120,418
of which:			
crude petroleum	353,105	248,628	91,437
Animal & vegetable oils & fats	19,444	33,186	50,056
Chemicals	147,478	157,626	155,127
Manufactured goods	218,592	259,763	168,130
of which:			
cotton yarn & fabrics	41,953	45,534	28,620
iron & steel	49,060	64,911	39,688
metal manufactures	46,682	51,875	34,161
Machinery incl electric	190,655	235,195	177,720
Transport equipment	119,713	109,294	71,311
of which:			
road vehicles	107,002	102,329	66,6659
Total incl others	1,533,973	1,620,419	1,096,951

continued

Exports fob[a]	Jan-Dec 1989	Jan-Dec 1990	Jan-Dec 1991	Jan-Dec 1993
Fish & products	208,121	216,041	215,256	121,108
Oilseed cakes	39,112	35,366	17,451	11,647
Cotton, raw	10,718	9,533	20,248	27,210
Phosphates, mineral	63,875	56,962	43,926	4,145
Salt	6,330	7,820	7,625	7,470
Mineral fuels	84,515	96,768	104,390	87,434
Groundnut oil	102,828	129,980	69,534	33,722
Chemicals	97,452	116,680	95,110	102,538
Machinery & transport equipment	28,197	18,470	13,695	35,092
Total incl others	750,884	782,600	652,208	521,464

	$ m			
Exports fob	Jan-Dec 1992	Jan-Dec 1993	Jan-Dec 1994	Jan-Dec 1995[b]
France	191	138	77	173
Italy	36	36	19	74
Mali	40	27	34	42
Spain	16	8	7	30
India	96	67	28	22
Germany	13	8	5	15
Portugal	4	2	2	14
Guinea	18	13	10	12
Netherlands	17	6	17	11
Cameroon	27	18	11	11
Iran	23	12	8	9
Total incl others	741	530	340	577

	$ m			
Imports cif	Jan-Dec 1992	Jan-Dec 1993	Jan-Dec 1994	Jan-Dec 1995[b]
France	391	352	257	508
USA	80	52	38	75
Thailand	46	41	33	64
Italy	70	42	28	57
UK	23	15	11	56
Netherlands	29	34	26	55
Japan	44	36	34	41
China	24	20	21	40
Hong Kong	6	8	6	35
Belgium-Luxembourg	37	27	28	33
Nigeria	78	62	20	23
Total incl others	1,258	996	704	1,344

[a] Export statistics are not available for 1992. [b] *DOTS* estimate.

The Gambia: foreign trade

	D '000				
Imports cif	Jan-Dec 1990	Jan-Dec 1991	Jan-Dec 1992	Jan-Sep 1992	Jan-Sep 1993
Food	522,882	566,846	690,667	457,405	412,552
Beverages & tobacco	77,554	72,048	87,493	63,746	88,856
Crude materials	14,617	21,369	20,974	13,881	48,947
Mineral fuels	136,827	195,582	167,364	135,002	96,805
Animal & vegetable oils	22,701	36,661	74,083	45,438	58,690
Chemicals	95,590	149,831	120,733	85,744	83,205
Manufactured goods	310,363	358,011	363,327	245,914	285,120
Machinery & transport equipment	237,797	310,445	413,348	297,749	413,349
Total incl others	1,932,744	1,932,744	2,081,387	1,483,760	1,617,061

Exports fob	Jan-Dec 1990	Jan-Dec 1991	Jan-Dec 1992	Jan-Sep 1991	Jan-Sep 1992	Jan-Jun 1993
Fish & preparations	32,809	36,019	19,429	26,515	13,412	10,218
Groundnuts, shelled	63,483	40,433	n/a	40,433	25,660	n/a
Groundnut oil	38,637	18,197	n/a	10,288	0	n/a
Groundnut meal	7,788	9,978	n/a	9,226	6,362	n/a
Total incl others	320,066	371,358	565,734	280,422	472,977	311,449

continued

Exports fob	Jan-Dec 1992[a] ($ m)	Jan-Dec 1993[a]	Jan-Dec 1994	Jan-Dec 1995[a]
Belgium-Luxembourg	119	59	n/a	n/a
Japan	33	35	n/a	19
Senegal	2	1	6	7
Hong Kong	5	4	n/a	6
UK	5	8	8	5
France	1	1	3	5
Spain	5	2	2	4
Indonesia	n/a	n/a	3	3
Total incl others	232	153	35	65

Imports cif	Jan-Dec 1992[a] ($ m)	Jan-Dec 1993[a]	Jan-Dec 1994	Jan-Dec 1995[a]
China	57	77	11	64
Côte d’Ivoire	11	13	36	44
Hong Kong	62	42	9	31
UK	39	39	22	24
Netherlands	18	22	13	21
Belgium-Luxembourg	22	24	13	16
France	24	30	25	15
Thailand	17	16	7	15
Total incl others	392	376	209	316

[a] *DOTS* estimate.

Mauritania: foreign trade

Imports fob	Jan-Dec 1991 (UM m)	Jan-Dec 1992	Jan-Dec 1993	Jan-Dec 1994
Food	8,838	13,801	11,358	12,500
Other consumer goods	1,881	2,785	1,603	1,574
Fuels	2,972	3,735	4,212	4,142
Machinery & transport equipment	2,304	3,054	6,429	3,823

Exports fob	Jan-Dec 1991	Jan-Dec 1992	Jan-Dec 1993	Jan-Dec 1994	Jan-Dec 1995
Fish & products	18,044	27,522	26,945	28,073	17,169
Iron ore	17,287	17,377	19,442	22,282	26,353
Gold	n/a	775	1,893	2,605	1,869

Exports fob[a]	Jan-Dec 1992 ($ m)	Jan-Dec 1993	Jan-Dec 1994	Jan-Dec 1995
Japan	138	107	129	161
Italy	58	75	69	108
France	46	63	63	73
Spain	49	46	53	65
Côte d’Ivoire	21	25	30	37
Belgium-Luxembourg	39	21	25	30
Total incl others	450	424	462	591

Imports cif[a]	Jan-Dec 1992 ($ m)	Jan-Dec 1993	Jan-Dec 1994	Jan-Dec 1995
France	166	149	137	152
Spain	48	48	30	51
Belgium-Luxembourg	29	27	30	36
China	16	5	35	35
Netherlands	15	46	16	33
Germany	37	24	36	32
Total incl others	599	591	570	637

[a] *DOTS* estimate.

Senegal and Mauritania: French trade

($ '000)

	Senegal				Mauritania			
	Jan-Dec 1992	Jan-Dec 1993	Jan-Dec 1994	Jan-Dec 1995	Jan-Dec 1992	Jan-Dec 1993	Jan-Dec 1994	Jan-Dec 1995
Exports fob								
Food, drink & tobacco	78,799	83,766	63,857	63,944	42,590	45,255	29,759	38,371
of which:								
dairy products	35,429	37,177	21,861	13,998	9,334	4,262	3,470	2,358
cereals & preparations	19,512	25,611	27,130	26,921	19,744	21,068	15,682	22,147
sugar & products	4,678	5,913	1,201	4,954	9,811	15,775	4,064	9,995
Mineral fuels	4,871	12,181	16,434	24,758	9,369	17,291	6,090	7,580
Chemicals	83,732	79,154	63,796	70,853	16,172	16,694	15,547	16,025
Rubber manufactures	5,526	4,971	5,069	5,721	3,679	2,486	4,426	2,914
Paper & manufactures	9,847	8,980	7,038	12,508	1,405	1,178	1,033	1,193
Textile fibres, yarn & manufactures, incl clothing	9,658	9,021	6,382	7,373	2,467	2,162	2,262	1,762
Non-metallic mineral manufactures	7,038	6,808	6,615	8,119	1,876	1,482	1,415	1,271
Iron & steel	11,228	14,927	6,982	8,813	4,340	1,355	1,995	5,994
Metal manufactures	14,264	12,124	9,874	16,718	9,763	5,874	5,761	5,638
Machinery incl electric	113,857	100,224	86,770	117,832	36,810	33,041	37,944	35,185
Transport equipment	44,002	33,593	27,867	41,037	11,945	9,394	23,276	12,473
Scientific instruments etc	16,847	9,548	9,667	11,645	3,104	2,568	3,506	2,013
Total incl others	448,800	421,460	363,374	461,599	149,705	142,516	138,215	138,033
Imports cif								
Fish & products	106,620	97,476	94,836	108,657	1,477	4,221	4,841	7,236
Crude fertilisers & minerals	8,117	6,397	6,392	3,853	0	1	1	0
Metalliferous ores & scrap	853	477	538	1,738	50,069	65,979	66,069	71,961
Petroleum & products	0	0	0	0	0	1,570	0	0
Animal & vegetable oils & fats	32,060	29,969	47,380	46,136	0	0	0	0
Total incl others	178,584	161,822	183,113	194,095	52,196	72,873	72,673	80,723

Mauritania: Japan's imports

($ '000)

Imports cif	Jan-Dec 1992	Jan-Dec 1993	Jan-Dec 1994	Jan-Dec 1995	Jan-Nov 1995	Jan-Nov 1996
Fish & products	146,023	113,569	138,414	176,323	173,439	188,022
Total incl others	151,100	117,550	140,861	178,749	175,830	189,006