

## AID FOR E-TRADE

### STATEMENT BY GAMBIA

#### **PRIVATE SECTOR PERSPECTIVE - OMAR B. SANNEH, GUARANTY TRUST BANK (G) LTD**

The Gambia, like many other developing countries is grappling with challenges of embracing E-Commerce. Business are yet to embrace online trade due to several reasons from lack of awareness, internet access and affordability, digital divide between rural and urban centres and other trade barriers.

Notwithstanding, there is a clear commitment from Government and the private sector (especially financial institutions and telecommunication companies) to facilitate the growth of E-Commerce in the country.

Financial institutions have laid the foundation for effective and efficient payment systems that would enhance the operability of online trade. Mobile banking allows users to make payments without access to Internet and at no cost. Banks have also rolled out debit cards and local cash plus cards that can be used on Point Of Sales terminals to make payments and also purchases online. These platforms also allow for the payment of utility bills and airtime purchases.

Telecommunication companies on the other hand, have recently introduced Mobile-Money ( E-Wallet) which allows users to make faster and cheaper remittances. It also allows for the payment of utility bills and other commercial transactions. The hallmark of the E-Wallet is that it has improved the financial inclusion of rural populations who hitherto had no bank accounts but could now partake in financials transactions.

Despite these significant steps, there still remain challenges mainly due to lack of trust, awareness and acceptance of these methods.

#### **GOVERNMENT'S CONTRIBUTION: SANUSI DRAMMEH, MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS INFRASTRUCTURE**

In The Gambia, we have laws and or provisions that govern electronic transactions in the Information Communications Act of 2009, which was revised in 2013.

However, we have some challenges in the implementation of e-Commerce; even though we have some few e-Commerce platforms for businesses in the urban areas, their utilization by the general public is on the low side.

This is mainly due to the low awareness of the general public on the importance of e-Commerce.

This, we believe, can be tackled with the formulation of a National e-Commerce Strategy (such as done in Egypt) and Action Plan to help guide the proper Implementation and utilization of e-Commerce in the country.

And we believe the AID for E-Trade initiative is an opportunity The Gambia could leverage upon to solve these issues.