

SPEECH DELIVERED BY PS, MRS NAFFIE BARRY.

## **WORKSHOP ON BID RIGGING IN PUBLIC PROCUREMENT**

PROTOCOLS.

It is my privilege to stand before you to deliver the opening remarks on the workshop on bid rigging and public procurement organized jointly by the Gambia Competition Commission and the Gambia Public Procurement Authority. Let me take this opportunity to acknowledge and appreciate the presence of Ms Hilary Jennings, Head of Competition Outreach at the OECD who is our lead resource person.

You would recall that the Gambia Competition Commission was set up by an Act of the national Assemble in 2007 charged with the responsibility of promoting competition and protecting Gambian markets against anti-competitive practices by enterprises. The Act prohibits anticompetitive agreements, and the abuse of dominant position by enterprises with a view to ensure that there is no adverse effect on competition in The Gambia. The Act prohibits any agreement which causes, or is likely to cause, appreciable adverse effect on competition in markets in The Gambia.

Bid rigging is one of the practices deemed to be anti-competitive in The GCC Act.

Ladies and gentlemen, Bid rigging is a problem that plagues government procurement around the world and costs taxpayers billions of dollars. Thus the fight against bid rigging is crucial for the economic development of The Gambia. It is estimated that Bid Rigging can increase the cost of goods and services by up to 20% or more. Data has shown that the cost is around 35% to 55% for developing countries. The victims of bid rigging are the customers and in public procurement where the customers are government agencies, the harm extends to whole economy. The impact is particularly serious when it involves the provision of essential goods and services that affects the lives and well-being of citizens.

I am pleased of the partnership with the GPPA in this endeavor. GPPA as you all know was set up in 2001 and charged with ensuring:

- (a) transparent, efficient and economic public procurement;
- (b) accountability in public procurement;
- (c) a fair opportunity to all prospective suppliers of goods, works and consultancy services;
- (d) the prevention of fraud, corruption and other malpractices in public procurement; and
- (e) Improvements in social and economic capacity in The Gambia, including providing opportunities for local small enterprises and individuals to participate in an economic manner as suppliers, contractors and subcontractors in public procurement.

The aforementioned objectives fit neatly with the overall of the workshop. Fighting bid rigging is a duty on the GCC under the GCC Act 2007. However, the processes to fight bid rigging are enshrined in the GPPA Act 2001 and hence the need for the partnership.

The OECD guideline which Hilary will present is the bridge between the two. Based on the best practices from all around the world, the OECD Competition Committee has developed [Guidelines for Fighting Bid Rigging in Public Procurement](#).

These Guidelines focus firstly on how government contracting rules and procedures can make bid rigging more difficult for contractors and secondly on aiding

government officials to identify suspicious bidding.

However, this is just the beginning of the process. The full implementation and application of the Guidelines will ensure that Public Procurement is done in a most competitive manner resulting in value for money, growth and innovation. I urge the GCC and the GPPA to work with the OECD to ensure that the guidelines are applied ASAP.

Ladies and Gentlemen, It is great honor for me to declare this workshop officially open.

Thank you very much.