

## **1.1 Geographical situation**

The Gambia is a very small country located on the west coast of Africa, surrounded on three sides by Senegal, extending inland at widths varying from 24 to 48 kilometers along the banks of the River Gambia, with a total area of 11,632 square kilometers. The Gambia's geographical location is in the drought threatened sahelian scrub land which means it has very limited natural resources. This has adverse economic and social repercussions. The Agricultural area is only 4,300.00 Sq Km and a wet land area of about 2,077.55 Sq Km. The prevailing climatic pattern favours only a short agrarian production regime (on average three months) which is the main source of employment and food supply for 80% of the population who reside in the rural areas. However, the vegetation is generally Savannah grassland and has a sahelian Climate, typified by a long dry season (December to June), and a wet season (July to November). It has an average rainfall of about 811.5mm and an average temperatures ranging from 18 to 30 degree Celsius during the dry season (December to June) and 23 to 33 degree Celsius during the wet season (July to November). The relative humidity is about 68% along the coast and 41% inland during the dry season and generally about 77% throughout the country during the wet season.

The Gambian economy is mainly agricultural with groundnut production contributing about 15% of the GDP. Other major agricultural produce are rice, maize, cotton, vegetable and fruit which collectively account for about (10%) of the GDP. The current contributions of Agriculture to GDP, shows a declined as compared in the mid-70s which attributed about 40% of the GDP, thus, reflecting the strategies and action plans incorporated in the national sectoral policy framework. In view of the foregoing, government has laid down programmes aim at diversifying agricultural production and to develop other non-farm activities which started to yield gains, particularly, the performance of livestock and fisheries.