

Summary
Report ...

Gambia Power Shortage

November 22, 1977 & June 25, 1978



Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance
Agency for International Development

July 1979

Foreign Disaster Summary Reports are publications of the Office of U. S. Foreign Disaster Assistance, Agency for International Development. This office has responsibility for coordinating U. S. Government foreign disaster relief responses and for the further coordination of such activities with those of the U. S. private and international disaster relief communities.

Acknowledgement

The Director acknowledges assistance received in the preparation of this and other summary reports from the many public and private organizations in the United States and abroad engaged in foreign disaster relief.



Office of U. S. Foreign Disaster Assistance
Agency for International Development
Washington, D. C. 20523

Imprint on INSIDE FRONT COVER of
each Disaster SUMMARY REPORT

Save negative & return this flat to
AID-Rm. B930 N.S. M. Hayes, MO/PAV
632-8389

Gambia--Power ShortageDate

Date: November 22, 1977, and June 25, 1978

Location: Banjul and metropolitan area

Dead: 0

People Affected: 25,000 (population of the disaster area)

Damage: Estimated \$4 million

The Disaster

- On November 22, 1977, a generator owned by the Gambia Utilities Corporation, a parastatal organization, malfunctioned and blew up. Due to a scheduling mix-up, no supervisory personnel were on hand at the time of the explosion.
- The generator which blew up, No. 5, had a capacity of 2.2 megawatts. The explosion also severely damaged a neighboring generator, No. 6, and a nearby idle generator, No. 2.
- Generator No. 2 was repaired and put back into service one month later. Banjul then had 2.2 megawatts of power; the normal demand was for 5 megawatts.
- During the month that No. 2 was being repaired, water and sanitation services were intermittent. The only hospital in the area was able to obtain a generator for powering its bio-medical services, but also had to handle an increased load of patients who would have gone to clinics if clinics had had power.
- Also during the month that No. 2 was being repaired, the Government of the Gambia (GOTG) purchased three high-speed 760 kilowatt generators. Two were flown to the Gambia by the United Kingdom Royal Air Force as a contribution from the United Kingdom. The third was transported by ship. These were stand-by generators for peak loads; however, all three were used full-time.
- On May 1, 1978, one of the stand-by generators failed. No. 2 failed again on June 25, 1978. No. 6 was still under repair. On July 2, a second of the high-speed generators failed. Neither could be repaired in the Gambia.
- Water works and some businesses such as bakeries received available power. About 75% of all medical vaccines were lost during these power outages. The fishing industry, dependent upon refrigeration, also suffered greatly.

- Solicitations by the GOTG resulted in the United Nations's purchasing and shipping three generators (750 kilowatts each) to the Gambia. These arrived on August 20, 1978 and were set up in the metropolitan area - in Banjul, in the industrial park of Kanifing, and in Serekunda.

Action Taken by the Government of the Gambia (GOTG)

- The GOTG purchased three stand-by generators as an interim measure in December, 1977.
- Appeals for assistance were made to the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the Office of the United Nations Coordinator for Disaster Relief (UNDRO), the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), and to the U. S. Government.
- The Department of Public Works aided the Gambia Utilities Corporation in installing the three donated generators.

TOTAL - not reported

Assistance Provided by the United States Government (USG)

- On August 10, 1978, the Acting Charge d'Affairs, Rosil A. Nesberg, determined that a disaster of such a magnitude as to warrant USG assistance existed in the Gambia.
- The USG contributed \$83,146 to the cost of transporting the three generators from New York City, where they were acquired, to Banjul. (Total transportation costs were \$123,146; UNDP and UNDRO each contributed \$20,000.)

Total - \$83,146

Assistance Provided by U.S. Voluntary Agencies

- None

Assistance Provided by the International Community

United Nations System

- International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (World Bank) -- 3 technicians to advise on the electrical system in the Gambia
- UNDP -- 3 generators, spare parts, and technical assistance all valued at \$440,000 and \$20,000 for transport of the generators
- UNDRO -- \$20,000 for transport of the above generators

-- UNJDO -- \$49,000 for a special industrial project to repair No. 2 and No. 6 generators

Governments

-- Federal Republic of Germany -- one technician

-- Senegal -- offer of 5 generators, refused by GOTC because of the age of the generators

--United Kingdom -- one technician, services of the RAF in delivering 2 stand-by generators

Private

-- Spanish contractors -- loan of a generator for a specific area

TOTAL - \$529,000