

The country director of the [World Food Programme](#) (WFP) in The Gambia has disclosed that annually, the global organisation imports an average of 2,301.44 metric tonnes of rice for approximately 100,000 Gambian school children. Victoria Ginja made the disclosure on Thursday at a local hotel in Cape Point, Bakau while addressing the opening session of a validation workshop on the feasibility study on local procurement documents.

She said based on this data, it is apparent that production and productivity levels of farmers must be greatly improved in order to get the right quantities of the commodities that WFP imports into the country annually for school feeding.

She explained that the local procurement feasibility study provides recommendations on models that can fit or tailor regional settings. She said WFP is just one player in the equation and thus urged all the participants to continue the teamwork for better and coordinated efforts. Ginja informed the gathering that it is the desire of both the Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education and WFP with the help of partners from agriculture to design and implement a successful and sustainable School Feeding Programme that is home-grown.

But for this to happen, she stressed, there has to be a well-defined system and structures that will guide the process. She said designed school feeding programmes have been shown to increase access to education and learning, and improved children's health and nutrition, especially when integrated into comprehensive [school health and nutrition programmes](#).

The WFP Gambia boss said the initiative has and will continue to engage a wide range of stakeholders to promote agricultural development by using locally-produced foods for school feeding - providing regular markets and a reliable income for smallholder farmers.

"The local procurement feasibility study was supported by the Howard Buffet Foundation which resulted to a visit to The Gambia and the commitment of The Gambia government to move to a Home Grown School Feeding. International Development Support Services (IDSS) won the contract to carry out the study which we are here today to review," Ginja further informed.

The director of Basic and Secondary Education, Amie Colleh-Mbaye, said it is envisaged that from 2016 to the end of 2020, The Gambia government with its various partners and communities will be able to sustainably run and manage the entire value chain of the home-grown school feeding process.

Adapted from an article from

[All Africa](#)

.