

## Gambia needs to be an effective participant in global trade processes – *Global trade expert*

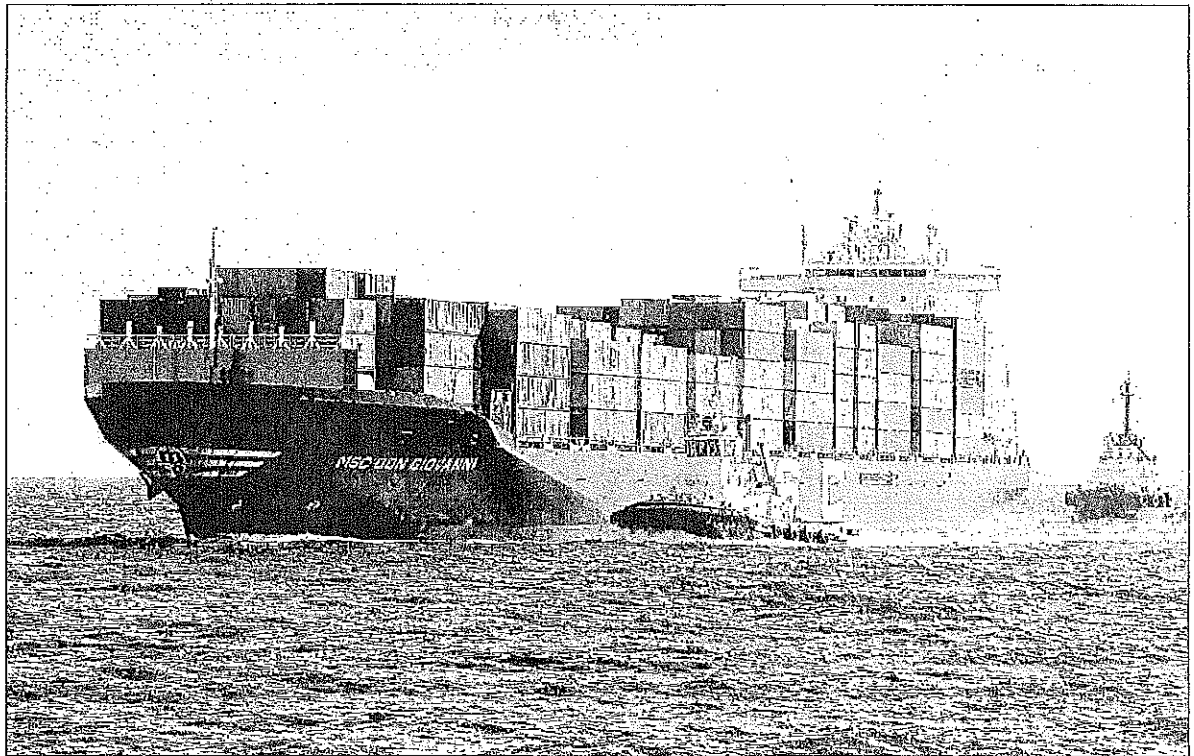
MODOU BALDEH

**P**anos Konandreas, Trade Expert at the Geneva based Agency for International Trade Information and Cooperation (AITIC) has laid emphasis on the

the SPS and TBT process. "There is no reason for The Gambia not to be in a position to defend its export interests at the World Trade Organisation (WTO) when these may be threatened by unfair practices of other WTO members.

the MTS is a prerequisite for protecting domestic producers and consumers from unfair practices of its trading partners.

According to Mr Panos, the WTO membership has grown to 153 members and nearly all the new



need for The Gambia to be an effective participant in the Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) and the Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) process.

He made this call while delivering a statement on behalf of the AITIC at the opening ceremony of a three day workshop on Notification Requirements under the SPS and TBT Agreement, organised by the Department of State for Trade, Industry and Employment, held at the Corinthia Atlantic Hotel in Banjul.

He added that the main objective of the workshop is to see that The Gambia becomes a full participant of

Conversely, there is no reason for The Gambia not to be in a position to protect its domestic producers and consumers, their health and that of plants and animals from unfair practices," said the Geneva based diplomat.

He emphasised that, The Gambia should be in a position to put in place a system where both its offensive and defensive interests are effectively addressed. He described The Gambia as a very small country with limited resources to fully engage in the World Trade Organisation process. Adding that the country is open in economic and trade matters and being able to play by the rules of

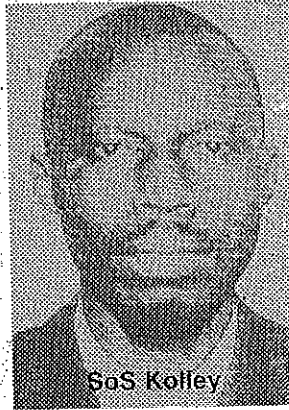
members are developing countries. "More importantly, developing countries have become very vocal in WTO meetings and in the on-going negotiations. "You are all familiar with the cotton issue, that has been raised by four West African cotton producers and it is an integral part of the negotiation on agriculture and will be addressed effectively, together with a package of comprehensive programmes to be able to achieve these goals. Our objective is to draw a road map for The Gambia to become an effective participant in the SPS & TBT processes," said the Geneva based diplomat.

## Stakeholders meet on WTO agreements

by Hatab Fadera

The Department of State for Trade, Industry and Employment, in collaboration with the Agency for International Trade Information and Cooperation, yesterday started a three-day training seminar on the World Trade Organisation's notification requirements under the Sanitary and Phytosanitary

**Cont'd on page 2**



SoS Kolley

Page 2

## Stakeholders meet on WTO agreements

**Cont'd**

(SPS) and Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) Agreements, at the Corinthia Atlantic Hotel, Banjul.

The seminar will look at an array of issues revolving around the SPS and the TBT agreements. The seminar is also expected to produce a road map for The Gambia to become a full participant in the SPS and the TBT.

Speaking at the occasion, Abdou Kolley, the secretary of state for Trade, Industry and Employment, said the training will assist The Gambia in identifying practical ways in which it can effectively make use of its rights under the SPS and TBT agreements to fulfil notification obligations.

Part of The Gambia's obligations as a member of the WTO under these requirements is to effectively notify and respond to enquiries from other WTO member countries by providing information on the legislation and technical regulations applicable to trade in goods.

"The notification also

enables the WTO members to know what changes are being made, so that the country's trade is impeded. However, one of the major constraints of meeting this notification requirement is the limited capacity that we have to handle enquires," said SoS Kolley.

According to him, this training seminar will help in building the capacity to better manage notification and ensure that producers and exporters are not only informed on the SPS and TBT requirements at the national level but also of their trading partners.

The Trade SoS noted that the impact of SPS and TBT measures on international trade is significant and will continue to grow as consumers in both developed and developing countries strive for increased food safety.

Like many countries, he said, The Gambia faces significant challenges concerning quality assurance, in various aspects, particularly for its exports to the European Union. In this regard, he said the gov-

ernment, with the support of the European Union, was able to launch, early this year, the Competitiveness Support and Harmonisation of TBT and SPS Measures Project under the framework of the West African Quality Programme.

SoS Kolley challenged the participants to use the seminar to strengthen communication and networking among institutions that deal with SPS and TBT issues.

For his part, Panos Konandreas, an expert in commerce at the Agency for International Trade and Cooperation, observed that though The Gambia may be a small country, it has a very open economy that accommodates trade in import and export.

Madam Gayatri Kanth, the programme coordinator at the agency, said her agency deemed it necessary to provide technical assistance and collaboration that will enable The Gambia to know its needs and requirements.