

GAMBIAN CREATIVITY IGNORED

By: Haddy Gaye.

The Gambia is full of talent. Engineers, designers, tech innovators, and entrepreneurs are creating ideas that could compete globally. Yet only 20 percent of IP registrations through the Gambian IP Office come from people living in the country. The other 80 percent are foreigners protecting their ideas in The Gambia.

Most local innovators are not registering their work. Ideas go unprotected. Brands go unclaimed. Meanwhile, Gambians abroad are safeguarding their creations. They rely on foreign systems to secure what should be owned here.

Our creators watch as foreign-based traders profit from their ingenuity, and our economy loses out on value that should remain in the country. The question we must confront is uncomfortable. Why are Gambians still consuming what others create instead of producing our own brands? Why do we rely on foreign systems for protection while allowing external actors to dominate inside our markets? Our engineers, designers, and innovators are capable of world-class excellence. What is stopping them from creating, registering, and scaling locally?

Every unregistered idea is a lost opportunity. Every local invention left unprotected is a signal that innovation at home is undervalued. Every foreign-based registration shows that Gambians abroad are more active than we are locally.

The Gambia has creativity and excellence. What we lack is urgency. What we lack is action. We must start creating our own brands. We must register and protect them locally. We must support Gambian-owned ideas.

We cannot continue to be passive consumers. We cannot support counterfeit goods while ignoring local creators. There is a law. Individuals found selling or profiting from counterfeits can be charged and penalized. Ignoring it is a choice. Every time we buy imitations we betray local innovation.

The question is simple. Will we keep watching our own people abroad claim and protect Gambian innovation? Or will we finally rise and claim it ourselves?

The Gambia has talent. Now it needs action.