

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Jula Consultancy FZE and Affiliated Organizations Announce the Passing of Founder Dr. Karamo N.M. Sonko and the Appointment of Ms. Mariama Sonko to Lead the Organizations

DUBAI, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES — AUGUST 7, 2026 — [Jula Consultancy FZE](#), [Sahara Gold Corporation](#), [Heeno International \(HI\)](#), [Sables Sustainable Mining Consultancy LLC](#), [The Strategic Management Sustainability Tool \(SMST\)](#) and [The Gambia Special Needs Entrepreneurial Fund \(GSNEF\)](#) (collectively, the "Organizations") announce with profound sadness the passing of their Founder, Dr. Karamo N.M. Sonko, on May 29, 2026, in London. Dr. Sonko served the Organizations as President, Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Managing Director (MD) and Chairman.

By unanimous shareholder resolution, Ms. Mariama Sonko has been appointed Managing Director of the Organizations and Acting Chairman of Sahara Gold Corporation¹. The appointments are effective August 7, 2026.

"My father was much more than a business leader — he was a visionary, mentor, teacher and father figure whose integrity and unwavering commitment shaped the values of our companies and everyone who knew him," said Ms. Mariama Sonko. "I carry that legacy forward with gratitude and full commitment to the vision he built."

Career and Scholarship

Over a career spanning more than twenty-eight years, Dr. Sonko built an international reputation in natural resources, corporate governance and sustainable development.

He served as Vice President and Deputy Managing Director of Tasiast Mauritania and as Vice President of Sand Metals, and held senior roles with the Lundin Group, Red Back Mining, Kinross Gold, Orca Gold and Perseus Mining ([see list here](#) and [here](#)).. He also founded [Sahara Gold Corporation](#) and Bin Maria Minerals, the latter of which was named in honor of his wife and daughter.

Dr. Sonko earned a first-class degree from the University of Swaziland (now the University of Eswatini), an M.Phil. from the University of Cambridge, and a PhD with distinction from the University of Denver. He taught at five universities and advised the United Nations (UN), the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the Organization of African Unity (OAU) / African Union (AU), including work with the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA).

Publications and Recognition

A prolific author, Dr. Sonko authored numerous works and co-authored several with his daughter, Ms. Mariama Sonko, among them [Demystifying Environmental, Social and Governance \(ESG\) \(Palgrave Macmillan\)](#), launched during the UN COP28 in Burj Khalifa (the world's tallest building), Dubai.

He received the 2017–2018 Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) Research Award in Islamic Economics and Finance and developed the [Strategic Management Sustainability Framework \(SMSF\)](#). In 2025, the Asian Business Outlook ranked Jula Consultancy [sixth among the top ten ESG consultancies in the GCC region](#), in a list that also included EY, Deloitte, McKinsey and KPMG. His full body of work is available in [Jula Consultancy's gallery](#).

Philanthropy

Dr. Sonko founded and self-financed [Heeno International](#), and championed [GSNEF](#), which supports persons with disabilities through entrepreneurship. As Chairman of WellBoring West Africa and a Trustee of

¹ M.D. of Jula Consultancy, Sables Sustainable Mining Consultancy and HI; Chairman of GSNEF; and Acting Chairman of Sahara Gold Corporation. She remains General Manager of SMST.

[WellBoring UK](#), he helped bring clean water to schools and communities in The Gambia and Sierra Leone. In 2025, he received the [Africa Humanitarian Award in Education](#).

Looking Ahead

Over the next three to six months, the Organizations' leadership will:

- Ensure a seamless leadership transition with no disruption to client, partner, or community commitments;
- Continue active ESG and sustainability mandates;
- Initiate the introduction and adoption of SMST in target markets;
- Sustain and grow GSNEF's entrepreneurship programmes and Heeno International's projects;
- Complete and publish the research initiated with Dr. Sonko, preserving his scholarly contributions;
- Strengthen international partnerships and honor his legacy.

The Board, management and employees remain fully dedicated to continuing Dr. Sonko's vision, guided by the professionalism, integrity and excellence he instilled.

The Organizations extend their deepest condolences to the Sonko family and everyone whose lives were touched by him. May he rest in eternal peace.

About Julia Consultancy FZE and Affiliated Organizations

[Julia Consultancy FZE](#), founded in 2014 in the UAE, is an international consulting firm providing advisory services in ESG, sustainable mining, strategic management, public policy, and international development across Africa, the Middle East, Europe, Asia, and North America. Its affiliated organizations include [Heeno International](#), a Gambian non-profit founded in 2011 that promotes poverty reduction, education, healthcare access, economic inclusion and social development; [Sables Sustainable Mining Consultancy LLC](#), a UAE-based mining and ESG advisory firm established in 2024; [Sahara Gold Corporation](#), a gold exploration and development company in Mauritania, [the Strategic Management Sustainability Tool \(SMST\)](#), a strategic planning framework developed by Dr. Karamo N. M. Sonko; and the [Gambia Special Needs Entrepreneurial Fund \(GSNEF\)](#), a social enterprise initiative established in 2020 to support entrepreneurship and economic inclusion for persons with disabilities in The Gambia.

Media Contact

Lamin Sanneh

Media & HR Manager

info@julaconsultancy.com | +220 682 6788

www.julaconsultancy.com