

STATEMENT BY HON. MINISTER OF TRANSPORT, WORKS AND INFRASTRUCTURE ON SECURITY AND PASSENGER FACILITATION

Your Excellencies, Honorable Ministers

Director Generals of Civil Aviation Authorities, Here present

National and International Media Houses Here present

Distinguished guests and personalities. *

I have the honour and pleasure to extend fraternal greetings from HE The President of the Republic of The Gambia, Mr. Adama Barrow to the Emir of the State of Qatar, His Highness Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al Thani and the people of the State of Qatar.

On my behalf and the Gambian delegation, I sincerely acknowledge the warmth hospitality accorded to us by the Government of Qatar since our arrival in the beautiful city of Doha. As such, we thank and express our deepest appreciation and gratitude to you for making us feel at home.

INTRODUCTION

My topic of discussion today which is on Airport Security and Passenger Facilitation is an important dynamic process which aims to balance efficient and passenger flow with robust security measures in ensuring a safe and smooth travel experience for aviation passengers.

As a country which is strategically located within the sub region, we must bear in mind that The Gambia is a vibrant, growing and popular destination for Western tourists, other holiday makers as well as conference tourists. The country is now becoming a major hub for travellers coming for leisure's due to our sandy beaches, hot sun and friendly people hence, we are called the "Smiling Coast of Africa" Therefore, the Government of the Gambia through my Ministry, has placed a special focus and attention on security and passenger facilitation as utmost priority.

It is worth noting that the Government of The Gambia has put in place stringent mechanisms at the Banjul International Airport (BIA) in ensuring that traveling passengers meet all conditions required to travel with the desired flight and board on time as scheduled.

GLOBAL STANDARDS

These rigorous processes were necessitated by the growing security threats and concern around the globe. Therefore, as critical stakeholders in aviation matters, the Government of The Gambia does not only ensure airlines, handling companies and airport management systems provide the services required but also endeavour that all passengers boarding their flights adhere to the set rules and regulations of not carrying incendiary devices and other prohibited instruments or goods on board.

The security and passenger facilitation is to comply with global standards of mitigating terrorists and hijackers who might be in possession of dangerous weapons while boarding the aircraft.

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

STATUS OF THE GAMBIA IN TERMS OF IMPLEMENTATION*

You may wish to agree with me that air travel is one of the most sensitive and used means of transportation in recent times. This is because world leaders, business communities leading entrepreneurs, government officials, international diplomats, and others travel by it.

Thus, for these travellers to be safe coming to destination Gambia, our aviation security operatives have put in place strict measures in ensuring that all passengers passing through the BIA are scrutinized within the shortest possible time.

Consequently, enhanced security and passenger facilitation, according to the International Air Transport Association (IATA), all countries require Advanced Passenger Information (API) before the flight flies and lands to the respective destinations.

ALIGNMENTS WITH THE LAWS OF THE GAMBIA AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL INSTRUMENTS *

The Gambia, being a Member State of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), do align its procedures with the ICAO Annexes and also developed operational manuals as well as programmes in accordance with the laws of The Gambia particularly the Gambia Civil Aviation (GCAA) Act 2018 and existing regulations.

Currently, the Government of The Gambia is finalizing the API and Passenger Name Record (PNR), which in the future will replace the passenger manifest. As a country, be assured that we will endeavour to ensure seamless, safe passage and free flow of passengers, luggages and cargoes, through BIA facilities follow the established global procedures adopted in the National and Airport Facilitation Programmes.

The facilitation processes at the Banjul International Airport adequately have uncompromised layers of security coverage in all ramifications. It is an all-time airport process during normal or favourable periods, as well as adverse periods, especially during the occurrence of flight disruption or delay.

The ensuresnsuring that the operational process for seamless airport passage serves as a **‘balancing act’** between facilitation and security procedure, no one institution overrides the other. Furthermore, be kindly informed that the security regime being implemented at the Banjul International Airport (BIA) is a well coordinated and cooperation programme whereby all stakeholders are statutorily assigned to implement this without any compromised.

To conclude, as stakeholders and critical partners in the drive to ensure there is a secure, safe hinch free air travels, I encourage all Member States and their esteemed Governments to Forster more collaborations in areas of capacity buildings and best practices especially now that the world requires a more robust system and digitalization for example:

biometric identification, digital identity verification, digital travel credentials, metal screening equipment, and digitalization of admissibility, among others, while also focusing on data privacy and interoperability.

Finally, may I seize this opportunity to thank my counterpart His Excellency Shiekh Mohammed bin Abdulla bin Mohammed Al Thani, Minister of Transport State of Qatar for his special invitation and facilitation of our attendance to this very important conclave. We also recognize organizers' efforts and commitment and thank them for a well-organized conference where global unity and networking is felt at all levels.

Thank you for your kind attention.