

# Developing a regional hub

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The Gambia Civil Aviation Authority will continue to pursue its longtime objective of making Banjul International Airport the gateway to West Africa

Banjul international Airport (BIA) is The Gambia's only international airport situated 24 km from Banjul. As a state owned institution, Banjul International Airport is managed and operated by The Gambia Civil Aviation Authority (GCAA). The GCAA comprises seven different directorates that are tasked with the collective responsibility of regulating the air transport industry in The Gambia, providing air navigation services as well as managing the airport. In its management of the airport, part of the revenue that is generated is invested in the improvement of airport infrastructure.

In our drive to conform to international standards, the GCAA is ready to attend to the challenges facing the aviation industry in the sub region and the world at large by opening up its skies to potential investors. The airport has recently undergone a significant transformation and in line with our aim to make it a vibrant hub, GCAA has intensified efforts to expand commercial operations in the airport. As at the end of year 2010, the authority had more than fifty concessionaries and tenants providing a wide range of products and services to passengers, airport employees, visitors, meters and greeters and airline crew amongst others.

In achieving our aims and objectives, the GCAA continues to invest heavily in human capital, equipment, airport infrastructure and safety as stipulated in the International Civil Aviation Organisation convention and technical annexes. In order to provide increased choice and convenience for passengers we actively encourage airlines and tour operators to introduce new services and destinations and to develop and grow their existing operations from the airport. To support this growth and development, the airport offers discounts on its published fees and charges. Discounts are available to all existing and potential airlines and tour operators wishing to increase their services or commence operations from the airport.

Over the past several years, the airport industry, with diversified revenues and innovative entrepreneurial decisions, has become a beacon of financial stability in a volatile aviation market place. Cognizant of the stiff competition faced by Banjul International Airport from other sub regional airports coupled with the new trend in the aviation

industry of a shift towards non aeronautical revenue generating activities, GCAA continues to promote commercial activities in the airport such as duty free shops to reduce our dependence on pure aeronautical revenues. The addition of shops such as the Flemingo International Duty Free shop to the already existing ones has given passengers a wide range of choice and will also greatly enhance the diversification of the airport business.

The Department of Air Transport and Commerce (DATRAC) is tasked with promoting the air transport industry in The Gambia. DATRAC ensures consistent development of traffic and routes linking Banjul to the rest of the World. This is in line with the GCAA's objective of making Banjul a major hub in the region. GCAA through DATRAC is in the process of amending the airport certification regulations so as to comply with current international standards and recommended practices. Upon completion of the amendment process, the Department of Airport Operations will embark on the recertification of the airport with the Department of Flight Safety Standards thus making it compliant with this international requirement.

Meanwhile, the GCAA will continue to pursue its longtime objective of making BIA the gateway to West Africa. The authority has put in place incentives so as to encourage home based operators as well as attract other major carriers in a bid to make BIA a hub for the region. It is expected that these incentives will start paying dividends during the 2011/2012 winter season with more operators selecting Banjul International Airport as a destination.

The GCAA has also now completed major improvement works in the airport terminal, all geared towards enhancing passenger experience and comfort with result that the United States FFA has conferred the status of last point of departure for flights to USA on the airport.

We would like to welcome all to Banjul International Airport and ensure all stake holders and potential investors of the GCAA's commitment to ensuring competitiveness and affordability of tariffs at our airport. We further believe that the challenge for efficient and professional airport management is to ensure that a balance is maintained between all parties.