

REPUBLIC OF



THE GAMBIA

**MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND
COMMUNICATION INFRASTRUCTURE
GRTS BUILDING, MDI ROAD, KANIFING, THE GAMBIA, WEST AFRICA.
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNMENT SPOKESPERSON**

PRESS RELEASE Dated: September 26, 2019

The Gambia Government Finds Alternatives to Thomas Cook

In the wake of world aviation giant, Thomas Cook's declaration of bankruptcy, leaving millions of travellers stranded across the globe, The Ministry of Tourism and Culture wishes to assure Gambians and our global friends that significant steps have been taken to mitigate the potentially devastating effects of this unfortunate situation on Gambian tourism, which is the heartbeat of our economy. With the looming collapse of Thomas Cook, the Honourable Minister of Tourism, **Amat N. K. Bah** immediately summoned a meeting of stakeholders to seek remedial actions to respond to this emergency.

Predictably, given the crucial role that Tourism plays in the Gambian economy, the Government of President Adama Barrow is shocked and saddened by the devastating news of Thomas Cook's collapse following an unsuccessful attempt to secure a bailout. No sooner had news of Thomas Cook's definitive liquidation broke, than The Ministry of Tourism and Culture convened an emergency meeting with all stakeholders including the International Monetary Fund, the European Union, the World Bank and the Ministry of Finance to devise a strategic response.

The meeting came up with an Emergency Response Team which has already recommended a Strategy to immediately mitigate the shock on the job market and the impact on the overall economic situation of The Gambia.

The Barrow Government, working with our partners, has since developed modalities to increase the frequency of flights to Destination-Gambia by other carriers as a direct measure to minimise the impact of Thomas Cook's collapse on The Gambian tourism market.

Thomas Cook, the oldest and one of the most popular names in leisure travel with a track record of over 150 years, flew in British tourists to The Gambia for over two memorable decades. Because The Gambia annually receives some 30% of its tourists from the UK, the company found it appealing and profitable to fly to the Destination. Although the Airline only operates in The Gambia during the Winter Season (6 months), it has contributed significantly in addressing our air access challenge and accounts for a staggering 45% of tourists visiting the Destination during the tourism season.

While the government of President Barrow recognises the worrying effects of Thomas Cook's collapse, it however wishes to assure Gambians and the generality of holiday makers to the country that the situation is under total control and there is no need for alarm.

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