

**REPORT OF THE JOINT COMMITTEE ON THE RATIFICATION OF
BILATERAL AIR SERVICE AGREEMENTS BETWEEN THE GAMBIA
AND TWELVE OTHER COUNTRIES**

INTRODUCTION

It could be recalled that during the 3rd ordinary session of the National Assembly in September 2019, the Hon Minister of Transport, Works and Infrastructure tabled a motion for ratification of the Bilateral Air Service Agreements (BASAs) from twelve Countries.

In this regard, the BASAs were considered and referred to the Joint Committee of Trade, Regional Integration and Monitoring the Implementation of Government Projects for review and report back to the plenary.

The Joint Committee reviewed the Bilateral Air Service Agreements (BASAs) from twelve Countries and Protocol relating to supplementary to Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Seizure of Aircraft. The twelve Countries are as follows:

- 1. The Government of The Kingdom of Morocco**
- 2. The Government of the Republic of Mali**
- 3. The Government of the State of Qatar**
- 4. The Government of the Republic of Finland**
- 5. The Kingdom of the Netherlands**
- 6. The Government of the United Arab Emirates**
- 7. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia**
- 8. The Kingdom of Spain**
- 9. The Government of the Republic of Rwanda**
- 10. The Government of the Republic of Kenya**
- 11. The Government of the Republic of Cameroon**
- 12. The Government of the Republic of Turkey**

In reviewing the Agreements, the Joint Committee recognized that all the Agreements are based on the Convention on the International Civil Aviation (ICAO) done at Chicago on 7th Day December 1944, which was ratified by The Gambia on the 13th May 1977, as well as the decision relating to the Implementation of the Yamoussoukro Declaration done on 13 and 14 November 1999 in Cote d'Ivoire concerning the Liberalisation of Access to the Air Transport Markets in Africa.

In light of the above, it should be noted that BASAs are treaties signed between two contracting States aimed at liberalizing Commercial Civil Aviation between Countries in terms of passengers and Cargo. These Agreements provide the framework under which designated airlines from the respective Countries fly into identified Ports in each other's country. BASAs usually cover issues regarding

traffic rights, use of intermediate routes, types of aircraft, safety standards, competition, policy on ownership, design and control of airlines, among others, in order to enable both Countries to benefit from the Agreement.

ENGAGEMENT WITH RELAVANT STAKEHOLDERS

The Joint Committee met with the Gambia Civil Aviation Authority (GCAA), the Ministry of Transport Works and Infrastructure and the Gambia International Airlines. During the engagement, the Joint Committee was informed that the whole idea behind Yamoussoukro Declaration is to liberalize air services and use it as catalyst to economic growth. The GCAA stressed the need for Gambia to have its own airline/home carrier serving as a feeder and connecting airlines as a hub to filter passengers to their destination. Having a home based airline will make Gambia enjoy the reciprocity provided in the Agreements. Airlines is national strategic infrastructure that support economic development. However, it is a requirement, especially for The Gambia, to enter BASAs noting its dependent on Tourism as a one of the main contributors to GDP.

In order to ascertain the Gambia's state of preparedness, the Joint Committee visited the Airport rehabilitation project which was ratified in Parliament in 2017 as well as the Airport Cargo Complex/Trade Facilitation Project. During the visit, the Joint committee was informed that ninety (90%) percent of the works are completed with the security scanning machines ready for installation, Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) developed for the security. With regard to the Cargo Complex/Trade Facilitation Project, the Committee was informed that the purpose of the Cargo Complex is to improve Trade Facilitation and increased logistic infrastructure and services at the Banjul International Airport through improved institutional arrangements, building human capacity and providing support services to ensure transparent, secured and competitive airport services are available to exporters and small holder businesses to stimulate the tourism and horticulture and fisheries export sub-sectors. In general, the Cargo Complex will enable Banjul International Airport meet international safety and security standards in handling cargo and passenger travel thereby increase the number of airlines serving and accepting cargo from The Gambia. During the conducted tour to the cargo and we had the opportunity to see the Rapiscan systems, cold storage and the weighing scale.

BENEFITS OF BASAs

Some of the key benefits of bilateral Air Service Agreements include the following

1. BASAs liberalize air transport between states in terms of access, capacity, frequency, tariffs and fair competition.
2. BASAs greatly enhance market access which improves air transport connectivity. Consequently, there is great potential in traffic growth, boost in trade and tourism and promotion of economic development.
3. These agreements promote consumer protection.
4. BASAs also enhance aviation security and facilitation.
5. BASAs open up the continent to both inter, intra and extra Africa trade.
6. The BASAs will give protection to lives and properties on aircraft.
7. The BASAs will create employment opportunity for contracting parties.

THE JOINT COMMITTEE RECOMMENDS AS FOLLOWS;

1. Coordination amongst GIEPA, Ministries of Trade, Transport, Works and Infrastructure and Gambia International Airline to ensure effective utilisation of the Cargo Facility.
2. The Gambia to invest in home-based air transport so as to enjoy the reciprocity of BASA benefits.
3. Coordination between GCAA and Ministry of Work in implementing the Protocols.
4. For GIA to have close partnership with exporters of fruits and vegetables, horticulture and fisheries products to make best use of the Cargo facility.
5. GCAA to prioritise local catering service in the country.
6. To review the possibility of expanding the aeronautical space.

Finally, the Joint Committee begs the indulgence of this August Assembly to consider and adopt this report.

Thank you.

HON. MEMBERS OF THE JOINT COMMITTEE, SMS AND SUPPORT STAFF

1. Hon. Muhammed Mahanera - Chairperson (Trade)
2. Hon. Sulayman Saho - Chairperson (Monitoring Gov. Project)
3. Hon. Lamin F.M Conta - Member
4. Hon. Alfusainey Ceesay - Member
5. Hon. Kebba Jallow - Member
6. Hon. Amadou Camara - Member
7. Hon. Alhagie Drammeh - Member

- | | |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 8. Hon. Momodou S. Ceesay | - Member |
| 9. Hon. Lamin J. Sanneh | - Member |
| 10. Hon. Ya Kumba Jaiteh | - Member |
| 11. Hon. Alhagi SB. Sillah | - Member |
| 12. Hon. Samba Jallow | - Member |
| 13. Hon. Alhagie H. Sowe | - Member |
| 14. Hon. Majanko Samusa | - Member |
| 15. Hon. Abdoulie Ceesay | - Member |
| 16. Hon. Billay G. Tunkara | - Member |
| 17. Hon. Kebba K. Barrow | - Member |
| 18. Hon. Sidia S. Jatta | - Member |
| 19. Hon. Omar Ceesay | - Member |
| 20. Hon. Sainey Jawara | - Member |
| 21. Mr. Bai Ibrahim Jobe | - Subject Matter Specialist (SMS) |
| 22. Modou Sillah | - Committee Clerk |
| 23. Fatou Gibba | - Committee Clerk |
| 24. Adama Sey | - Driver - Minority Leader |
| 25. Yusupha Jatta | - Driver - Majority Leader |