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Gambia: Delegates commend Gambia's tourism industry

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Banjul, Gambia - Delegates who attended the 35th Annual Congress of the African Travel Association (ATA) say they appreciate The Gambia as a great potential for harnessing the 'untapped' tourism market in the continent, PANA reported from here Thursday.

They said that they had learnt great lessons from The Gambian experience and believed that the country could be a model for the Africa's tourism industry with specific regards to the development pace of the industry.

"The Gambia is situated in a strategic position and has a great potential for the sustainability of the tourism market," they said, noting that the traditional and cultural heritage in the West African country painted a mental picture of "the norms and values of our great ancestors".

The delegates were taken on a conducted tour, organized by The Gambia Tourism Authority (GTA), to historical sites like the James Island and Juffureh (a designated UNESCO World Heritage Site) which was the base for the transportation of slaves from The Gambia, across the Atlantic Ocean to the New World of the Americas.

They also visited the Eco Tourism Centres at the GIG Farm, Mama Africa Museum Centre in Brufut and the President's Village of Kanilai , which has been transformed into a cultural stronghold by The Gambian leader.

Kanilai is known for hosting the country's biggest annual cultural jamboree, the Kanilai Cultural Festival.

Having seen just a few tourist centres, Mr. Ogo Sow, the first African Immigrant and Expatriate to start a Radio Programme in the United States and Canada, aimed at promoting African tradition and positive image, said the delegates had a lot to learn from The Gambia.

Mr. Sow, fondly called Mr. Africa in America, said The Gambia was a real tourist destination and served as a role model for tourism sustainability and development in Africa.

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