

## Breaking News: Gambia: Africa Travel Conference Underway In Gambia Africa Travel Conference Underway In Gambia

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**G**ambia's Vice President Isatou

Njie officially officiate the four-day Africa Travel Association (ATA) 2010 congress, which is currently underway at the Sheraton Resort and Spa Hotel in Brufut. The congress brought together over 300 local and international experts in travel and tourism, tourism ministers, the media, as well as tourism students.

Apart from the discussions on a wide range of topics ranging from the promotion of tourism in Africa, trade, the event is offering The Gambia a unique opportunity to showcase what it offers as a viable tourist destination worthy of emulation.

In his speech, the executive director of ATA Edward Bergman said the ATA was established in 1975 as an international travel association with a mission to promote travel and tourism in Africa and to strengthen Africa's partnership.

“As the world's premier travel industry trade association, ATA provides services to a broad range of members including: tourism, diasporas, culture, medium size enterprises, businesses, small and medium-size enterprises, travel trade media, airlines, hoteliers, travel

agents, tour operators and other organizations engaged in tourism promotion,” he said.

In declaring the congress open on behalf of the Gambian leader, VP Njie-Saidy assured government support, as she puts it, “ it is in line with government’s vision of transforming the country into a tourist paradise, thriving on free-market policies and a vibrant private sector that is self-reliant and enterprising.”

She expounded on the negative impacts of tourism, but was quick to add that government has over the years, devised strategies in which tourism will be enhanced while reducing the risks associated with it.

Also speaking earlier, was Fatou Mass Jobe-Njie, the minister of Tourism and Culture, who expressed appreciation to ATA for giving the country the opportunity to host such an important event. This she said is an indication of international confidence on the travel, tourism and hospitality industry of The Gambia.

She says tourism is one of the world's top job creators, and largely seen as a driver for potential economic growth which depends on the viability of many small and medium enterprises.

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