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ATA's 35th Annual Congress will be hosted by Gambia

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Banjul — Gambia will host the 35th Annual Congress of the Africa Travel Association (ATA) in May 2010.

According to a press release from The Gambia Tourism Authority, the four-day event will engage delegates in discussions on a range of industry topics, such as public-private sector partnership, marketing and promotion, tourism infrastructure development, industry trends and social media

In her efforts to promote The Gambia as an up market tourist destination, Hon. Nancy Seedy-Njie, the minister of Tourism and Culture, announced that the Republic of The Gambia will host the Africa Travel Association's (ATA) 35th annual congress in the capital city of Banjul in May 2010.

It is with great pride that we are once again partnering with ATA to invite the world to visit and explore The Gambia," said Minister Njie. "The Gambia government places great priority on tourism, which has contributed significantly to our country's growth and stability. We hope that the ATA congress will help us continue to promote our country in new market places and attract new investment in the sector.

The Gambia, known as the "Smiling Coast of Africa", is famous for its luxurious beach resorts, fine fishing villages and magnificent coastline, but there is much more to the affordable and safe West African country, including peaceful and friendly people, eco-tourism, sports fishing, bird watching and safaris, music, dancing and traditional wrestling matches, and visiting trans-Atlantic slave trade sites.

"The Gambia has made amazing progress with its travel and tourism industry by building public and private sector partnerships, where the government creates the conditions for the private sector to invest in the industry," said Bergman. "By combining The Gambia's ability to attract tourist arrivals, particularly from Europe, with ATA's ability to engage diverse travel professionals from around the world, particularly in North America and across Africa, the congress holds tremendous promise for turning tourism into a continental economic driver".

ATA's hallmark international event will be attended by African tourism ministers and industry experts representing tourism boards, travel agencies, ground operator companies, airlines and hotels. Many participants from the travel trade media and the corporate, non profit and academic sectors are also expected to attend.

The four-day event will engage delegates in discussions on a range of industry topics, such as public-private sector partnership, marketing and promotion, tourism infrastructure development, industry trends and social media. ATA member countries will organize a few evening networking receptions and ATA's Young Professionals network will meet with local hospitality professionals and students.

For the second year, the congress will also include a market place for buyers and sellers specializing in Destination Africa. Delegates will also have the opportunity to explore the country on pre or post congress trips, as well as s on the host country day. The 2010 congress builds on the success of the West African country's longstanding ties with ATA. In 1984, ATA held its ninth congress in Banjul, immediately following the association's eight congress in Cairo, Egypt.

To prepare for the annual event, ATA will send a delegation to Banjul in November for a site inspection. During the visit, the team will meet with representatives from the public and private sectors and ATA-Banjul chapter members, as well as visit the proposed conference, lodging and entertainment venues.

Hon. Nancy S. Njie took the opportunity to thank His Excellency, the President, Sheikh Professor Alhaji Dr Yahya AJJ Jammeh for his continued support towards promoting The Gambia as a tourist destination, and the government for their assistance in securing the bid to host the vent in The Gambia. She also congratulated the chairman of the Gambia Hotels Association, Mr Alieu Secka who was recently appointed as chairman of ATA, The Gambia Chapter. She thanked all stakeholders for their support and urged them to carry on the good job for the mutual benefit of all Gambians.

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