

**Statement By His Excellency, The President of  
The Republic of The Gambia, Mr. Adama  
Barrow, at The Official Opening Ceremony of  
The Ground Handling Services Facility of Niro  
Company Limited at The Banjul International  
Airport, Held as Part of Events Marking The  
Gambia's 59<sup>Th</sup> Independence Day Anniversary  
Celebration.**

**23<sup>rd</sup> February 2024**

Honourable Ministers,  
The Chief Executive Officer, ASKY Airlines,  
Members of the Diplomatic and Consular Corps,  
Members of the Board of NIRO Company Limited,  
Venerable Religious Leaders,  
The Director General, Gambia Civil Aviation Authority and Staff,  
Distinguished Guests,  
Members of the Press,

It is with profound pleasure that I preside over the official opening of the Ground Handling Services Complex of NIRO Company Limited. That this is part of the events marking the 59<sup>th</sup> Independence Day Anniversary of The Gambia adds grace to the occasion. I feel honoured, therefore, to be part of this historic event.

Before proceeding, I must welcome the distinguished Chief Executive Officers from ASKY Airlines to the Smiling Coast of Africa. Welcome, and thank you for being here. You have clearly demonstrated the importance you attach to this laudable project and your friendship and partnership with NIRO Company Ltd.

I extend similar appreciation to the Company Board Members and congratulate the Chief Executive Officer and his team on this huge achievement. In the spirit of this celebration, I also convey deep gratitude to the founder, whose love for the country gave rise to the Company. This investment does not only add to the economic landscape of The Gambia but also sets a precedence for innovation and success in the African aviation industry.

Of course, I acknowledge the remarkable efforts of the construction team of talented young engineers, led by the capable Mr. Abdullah Konateh. Their commitment to excellence, which has resulted in this admirable state-of-the-art facility, is a testament to the potential that lies within our youth.

Within the aviation industry here, NIRO Company Limited now stands as a shining example of what can be achieved through innovation and determination. We acknowledge, with joy, that this initiative has created openings for employment and will contribute to the economic prosperity of the nation.

For us, the rise of NIRO signals a promise of growth and collaboration. It also portrays the capacity of our youth to initiate positive change and elevate our nation on the global stage. We are hopeful that the company will flourish to become a model in the aviation industry.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Banjul International Airport now hosts a company that goes beyond mere business; it is a symbol of progress. By focusing on inflight catering and ground handling services, NIRO will dually support the aviation sector and play a vital role in enhancing the efficiency of air travel. This is expected to foster an environment conducive to economic advancement and job creation.

As we inaugurate this magnificent edifice, let us recognise the significance of NIRO Company Limited in influencing the future of our youths and the nation. May it serve to inspire other young entrepreneurs to dream big, work hard, and contribute meaningfully to the economic growth of the country.

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am particularly thrilled to commission this complex, noting that it houses the operations of the Ground Handling Services offered by NIRO.

Gambians who doubt themselves, especially the young people, should take a leaf from the book of the proprietor and take risks to create employment for themselves and for others, instead of waiting for Government intervention.

The role of Government is to create the enabling environment for businesses to grow for the development of investors. Interestingly, I have learnt that NIRO Company Limited started with a restaurant in 2015 and expanded to incorporate catering services for interested clients. It is amazing that, within nine years, the catering component evolved to include inflight catering for Airlines. Notable among which is the ASKY Airlines.

It is wise that the Inflight Catering component of the Company is located within the Airport premises. The inclusion of Ground Handling Services this year has created employment for over two hundred (200) young people. This is the type of investment my government advocates. The youths who believe that they cannot succeed except by going to Europe through deadly journeys should learn from this example.

As Gambian citizens, it is our responsibility to develop the country. Outsiders will not do so for us.

Once again, I thank NIRO Company and all those associated with it for the initiative and risks taken to contribute to the development of the country.

To accelerate my government's development agenda, I encourage everyone to support such initiatives, especially businesses initiated by young people.

Before concluding, on behalf of all Gambians, I extend heartfelt congratulations to the founder, the dedicated team behind NIRO, and all those who played a part in making this vision come true. Together, let us celebrate and look forward to the day when Niro Company Limited will stand tall as a beacon of success in Africa's aviation industry.

As we continue to celebrate fifty-nine years of nationhood, I wish you success in your endeavours.

With this brief statement, I gladly declare the NIRO Ground Handling Services Complex open and pray that Allah, the Almighty, bless the operations and staff of the company.

Thank you for your attention.