



THE REPUBLIC OF THE GAMBIA

STATEMENT BY

**Hon. Mr. Mambury NJIE
Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs,
The Gambia**

AT THE

**Groundbreaking Ceremony for the Foundation Stone Laying for the
Widening of the Bertil Harding Highway and the Airport
VVIP/Presidential Lounge Projects, and the Inauguration of the
Airport Rehabilitation Project**

HELD

On Wednesday, 17th November 2021 at 11:00 a.m

SALUTATIONS

- ❖ Your Excellency Vice President of the Republic of The Gambia, Dr. Isatou Touray,
- ❖ Honorable Speaker of the National Assembly
- ❖ Honorable Ministers
- ❖ Honourable Members of the National Assembly
- ❖ Governor West Coast Region
- ❖ His Excellency, the Gambia Ambassador to Saudi Arabia
- ❖ His Excellency, Director IsDB Regional Hub in Dakar
- ❖ CEO of the Saudi Fund for Development
- ❖ CEO of the OIC Gambia Secretariat,
- ❖ Distinguished Representatives of the Islamic Bank for Development, the Kuwaiti Fund and Arab Bank for Economic Development,
- ❖ Distinguished Senior Government Officials,
- ❖ Chief of Kombo North,
- ❖ The Alkalo of Old Yundum,
- ❖ Distinguished Religious Leaders- including the Imams and Priests,
- ❖ Security Personnel,
- ❖ The Media
- ❖ Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

1. I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Honorable Mr. Bai Lamin Jobe, Minister of Transport, Works and Infrastructure who is unable to join us at this momentous occasion. Honorable Minister Jobe sends his best wishes and congratulates all on this very significant milestone in the history of The Gambia.

2. Having said that, please allow me to convey a very special and cordial welcome to you all. This event is indeed a significant and joyous one. Today we join His Excellency the President of the Republic of The Gambia, Mr. Adama Barrow, in inaugurating the Airport Rehabilitation Project, the laying of the foundation stones for the ultra-modern Airport VVIP Presidential Lounge and the widening of the Bertil Harding Highway.

3. This Project is a significant milestone in President Adama Barrow's agenda for infrastructural development in the Gambia. It also forms part of the preparatory works for the upcoming OIC Summit which will be hosted by The Gambia in 2022. We all do recall that these roads are one of the key projects of the OIC Gambia Summit.

Your Excellency, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

4. A comprehensive and enabling road network is the backbone of any country's transportation system. In fact, a robust road network has positive implications for ease of doing business, it facilitates other economic activities including that of farm to market, and roads also ease access to social amenities like schools and hospitals.

5. The Gambia is therefore very proud that the Bertil Harding Highway which is one of the main road links in this country, will be expanded into a dual carriage way.

6. It is worthy to also note that with this road transformation, the Barrow Government is addressing a major social and economic challenge of our times. We have seen the need for the upgrading of roads to improve traffic circulation and congestion.

7. With works expected to be completed within a period of 16 months, the road will significantly ease the burden of movement in the country.

8. It will further boost commerce and improve the urban outlook for this country once completed. The new and improved Bertil Harding

Highway will also improve The Gambia's tourism infrastructure, while mitigating against the wear and tear of our motor vehicles.

9. By the same token, and following the infrastructure improvement at the Banjul International Airport, the building is now able to handle up to 500 passengers in a peak hour. This development is in line with Government's aim to increase operational capacity and efficiency at the Airport. Systems including self-service kiosk amongst others will also be introduced in the terminal to enhance service delivery.

10. As the first point of entry for visitors to the Gambia, the Airport Rehabilitation and the new VVIP Lounge will enhance the country's regional competitiveness in travel and tourism, uplifting its image and standards in line with international protocols and high-level reception requirements. An important aspect of these Projects is the requirement for an international consultant having to team up with a local constructor. The expertise and skills transferred to our fellow Gambians will also be vital to our national construction industry.

11. In celebrating these momentous achievement, please allow me to acknowledge the contributions that made this project possible. Notable among them are the OIC, the Islamic Development Bank, the Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa, the Saudi Fund for

Development and the Kuwait Fund. Without their financial support, this Project would not have been possible.

12. The Government is committed to continue strengthening bilateral relations with these Organizations as we will continue to partner and collaborate in support of The Gambia's development.

13. I use this opportunity to also thank the Ministry of Transport, Works and Infrastructure, the OIC Secretariat, the National Roads Authority and the Gambia Civil Aviation Authority for the significant efforts and work put into the successful hosting of the OIC Summit in 2022.

14. At this juncture, I wish to thank the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs for providing 10 billion dalasi used to finance the project. We also thank the Hon. Speaker of the National Assembly, the Deputy Speaker, the Majority and Minority members of the National Assembly for facilitating and approving the financing of this projects.

15. We look forward to the completion of these significant projects and more importantly to the positive impact they will have on the lives and livelihoods of Gambians, residents of The Gambia and our development partners. I thank you for listening.