

THE REPUBLIC



OF THE GAMBIA

MINISTRY OF HEALTH
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Press Release

ARRIVAL OF CARGO PLANE TO DELIVER 10 AMBULANCES, MEDICAL EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES & PROVISION OF INCINERATORS TO SUPPORT COVID-19 RESPONSE IN THE GAMBIA

The Gambia has initially witnessed few confirmed cases of COVID-19, mainly imported cases but the number of the confirmed COVID-19 cases has been increasing steadily particularly in the last few weeks with some local transmission. From March to May 2020, there were 25 confirmed cases but the Gambia had its' highest daily cases of 15 on July 16, 2020. As of Saturday, 18th July 2020, the country registered 93 COVID-19 confirmed cases. The Government is doing its best to address this emergency.

On the basis of this surge in the cases, the Government of the Gambia through the Ministry of Health would like to inform the general public that today Monday 20th July 2020 at 3 p.m. in the afternoon, the second largest cargo plane (Antonov AN-124 Ruslan plane) in the world, will arrive at the Banjul International Airport from Ankara, Turkey with 10 well-equipped ambulances that will allow intensive care treatment (ICU) en route, and critical lifesaving medical equipment and supplies for the prevention and treatment of COVID-19. These materials and equipment will be received by the Hon. Minister of Health, **Dr. Ahmadou Lamin Samateh** on behalf of The Government of The Gambia.

A total of One Hundred Million Dalasi (approximately US\$2 million) of the Government Local Fund (GLF) along with financing from the World Bank was used to procure the 10 ambulances and large quantities of high quality medical equipment and supplies. These includes 60 ICU beds, 600,000 surgical masks, 1.2 million gloves, 5,000 oxygen masks, 4 ultrasound machines, 20,000 face shields, 25,000 personal protective equipment (coverall), 30,000 respirators (N95), 205 oxygen flowmeters, 3 digital 4D color ultrasound machines, 4 Ultrasound scanner and 100 non-touch thermometers.

Currently, there are no functional incinerators in Western regions 1 and 2, so this will help to establish a modern environmentally friendly cluster treatment of health care waste. The World Bank responded positively to this challenge by supporting MOH with AMB Ecosteryl 250, a state-of-the-art healthcare waste treatment machine, which was delivered last week.

Similarly, another support of a smaller AMB Ecosteryl 75 plus currently under production in Belgium is also expected to be delivered by AMB Ecosteryl www.ecosteryl.com. The two machines were financed by the World Bank at a cost of US\$1,360,000.

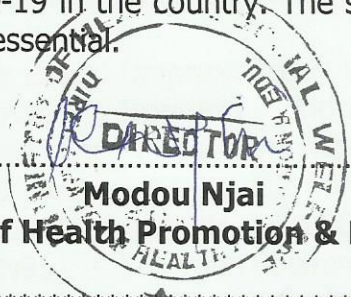
Prior to this support, the World Bank previously financed the construction of 37 incinerators in 5 other regions excluding the Western Regions but incinerators have drawbacks such as release of pollutants into the air which is hazardous particularly when used in populated areas that is why the microwave disinfection technology with a processing capacity of between 250 and 300 kg/hr (4000 liters/hr) is a viable solution for the urban regions under The Gambia's COVID-19 Response and Preparedness Project.

Currently, the Ministry of Health is working closely with the Ministry of Transportation, Works and Infrastructure (MOTWI) for the construction of the Clinical Waste Treatment Center and temporary healthcare waste storage facilities. This will enable health facilities to hold healthcare waste prior to transportation to the treatment center. Additionally, the World Bank is supporting the procurement of a refrigerated waste disposal truck to facilitate the movement of infectious waste to the treatment center.

The Ministry of Health would like to extend gratitude to the Government of The Gambia for funding the procurement of the 10 ambulances, medical equipment and supplies for COVID-19 response. Sincere gratitude is extended to the World Bank for facilitating the procurement of the ambulances, equipment and supplies.

Similar thank is extended to TMS Co. and Mr. Onur Özcan for their support in securing the necessary clearances and permission in Turkey at a time of global shortage of medical equipment and supplies under the COVID-19 pandemic conditions.

The Ministry of Health would like to assure the general public that efforts are being made to contain the spread of COVID-19 in the country. The support of the general public in fighting COVID-19 is therefore essential.



Modou Njai
Director of Health Promotion & Education
