



President Jammeh gives US\$40, 000 to Gambia Golf Association

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The president of the Republic has donated a cash amount of US\$40,000 to the Gambia Golf Association.

This gesture from His Excellency Sheikh Professor Alhaji Dr Yahya Jammeh is earmarked for organising an international golf competition dubbed 'Baby Mariam Jammeh Golf Tournament' slated for 11-18 February 2011 in The Gambia. The vice president and minister of Women's Affairs, Aja Dr Isatou Njie-Saidy presented the money to the association on behalf of the Gambian leader Thursday at State House. This latest donation came on the heels of a similar donation of US\$ 10, 000 by the Gambian leader, to the first prize winner of the 2010 Gambian Open, which attracted foreign players from the sub-region and beyond.

Speaking at the brief presentation ceremony, Sheriff Gomez, the minister of Youth and Sports described the gesture as not only a motivational one, but an investment coming from the Gambian leader. He described President Jammeh as a champion and patron with regards

to the development of sports in the country. He further stated that his ministry is not at all surprised by this latest move by the Gambian leader, because this is not the first time he is supporting the development of sports in the country. The Youth and Sports minister further maintained that the move is a challenge and encouragement to the Gambia Golf Association in particular and other sporting sectors in general, saying: "We must always continue to work hard to ensure that we put strategies that are necessary to ensure that the sports that we propagate reaches all people as well as develop component that will always sell the good image of this country both internally and externally."

He then lauded the efforts of the Gambia leader while expressing optimism that this forthcoming event will be a maiden edition for development of golf in the country. Minister Gomez expounded on the numerous benefits the game of golf is associated with in terms of economic development and youth development, calling on members not to look at the amount that is being given out but the challenge put to them to ensure that the game of golf is developed in the country. "I hope you will work with different sporting organisations as well as the National Sports Council to that regard," he said, while commending members of the Golf Association for their effort. He equally implored on them to always remember that the most critical person in sport is not the executive member nor the club member or whatever but that athlete who should be motivated to do best in the game.

Presenting the monies, VP Njie-Saidy, hailed the Gambian leader for his efforts in the development of sports in the country maintaining that sports is beyond just a game but a game towards a vision. She said: "The Gambian leader has encapsulated all this in the Vision 2020 blueprint, to ensure that the Gambia is a middle-income country by 2020 and sports in general can play a pivotal role in realising this ardent objective." VP Njie-Saidy noted that golf has a lot of prospects and that Gambian golf has prospects as well. "I am beginning to see beyond just amateur players but professionals emerging," she said.

She added: "Also, golf can even go beyond that as it can attract investors as a lot of wealthy people are golfers. The Gambia Golf Association can also do a lot by attracting investors in the development of golf courses in the country as we have ideal landscape around the country." She expressed optimism that the association will leave up to expectation in promoting The Gambia to international levels stressing that the Gambia's leader ambition is for the development of mass sports in the country.

In his vote of thanks, Ebrima Jawara, the president of The Gambia Golf Association, praised the Gambian leader for the donation. He recalled that not long ago, they came to State House to receive the first prize of US\$10,000, sponsored by the Gambian leader during the 2010 Gambian Open, held in The Gambia. "Few weeks ago, we received a letter from the secretary general and Head of Civil Service, informing us that the president wants us to organise a Golf tournament to coincide with the 46th Independence Anniversary and that he [President Jammeh] will sponsor the event,"

He explained that the money will enable them to award about 10 pros prizes as they are set to invite about 50 foreign players from around the sub-region and other countries. Jawara again thanked the president on behalf of the Gambian Golf Association for what he called his generous donation to golf in the history of the country. Malang Jasse, the director of Youth and Sports moderated the ceremony, which was graced by members of the association and senior government officials.

Author: **by Sheriff Janko**