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Sangster International Airport privatised

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THE AIRPORTS Authority of Jamaica (AAJ) said that the agreement with MBJ Airports Limited, the new operator of the Sangster International Airport, became effective on Saturday, April 12.

Under the Agreement, M3J Airports Limited assumed full responsibility for the day-to-day management and operation of the airport and for capital development of the facility.

The MBJ Airports team, the AAJ said, brings to Jamaica and the airport a wealth of operation and construction experience. Among the members is Vancouver Airport Services, operator of the Vancouver Airport in British Columbia, Canada, which is rated among the best airports in North America by the International Air Transport Association (IATA).

The group also includes Agencias Universales S.A., majority shareholders in Santiago de Chile International Airport and a large service provider to cruise ship operators in South America, Grupo Dragados of Spain, which has investments in several international airports, and Ashtram of Israel, which has had a long relationship with Jamaica through its local subsidiary Ashtram Building Systems Limited.

The expansion and upgrading of the airport is to commence immediately with the entire development expected to cost in the region of US\$200m. The initial programme will include the installation of six jet bridges as well as the expansion of the Immigration and Customs halls. Further development involves the construction of a 12-gate Airside Concourse complete with jet bridges, gate lounges and shopping areas, as well as four additional aircraft parking positions.

The final phase will involve significant construction of new space for facilities such as expanded Immigration, Customs and baggage halls, check in and arrival facilities and shops, food outlets and other facilities to cater to passengers' needs and comforts. All facilities developed by the new operator will revert to the Airports Authority at the end of the concession period, namely thirty years.

The AAJ will administer the Concession Agreement and will ensure that all agreed developments are of an acceptable standard. The Airports Authority will also continue to operate the Norman Manley International Airport and the four aerodromes: Tinson Pen, Boscobel, Ken Jones and Negril.

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