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Opening Up the World for Aspiring West African Seafarers: Celebrity Cruises Unveils New Industry-First Partnership

The first new-hire from the partnership symbolizes an important milestone in diversity for the industry

MIAMI, FL – August 22, 2017 – Celebrity Cruises is proud to announce a unique partnership with the Regional Maritime University (RMU) in Ghana. For the first time in cruise industry history, female bridge officers will be openly recruited from a West African country through a new Celebrity Cadet Program in partnership with RMU.

With the announcement, the brand is also excited to welcome the first official new crew member from the program, RMU Cadet Nicholine Tifuh Azirh, who will be joining the bridge team onboard *Celebrity Equinox*.

The partnership with RMU came about when Celebrity's President and CEO Lisa Lutoff-Perlo met with students from the Mandela Washington Fellowship at Florida International University (FIU). There, she met Tifuh Azirh who shared her inspiring story of perseverance; Tifuh Azirh holds two degrees, yet following graduation she struggled to find opportunities in the maritime industry as an African female despite her academic performance, subsequent teaching at RMU, and cadet experience.

"After hearing Nicholine's story, I met with our SVP of Global Marine Operations, Patrik Dahlgren, to see what we needed to do in order to give her, and others, the opportunities they've earned. A year later, I'm so excited to share the news of our partnership with RMU and to welcome Nicholine onboard," said Lutoff-Perlo. "Nicholine isn't just a new-hire, she symbolizes hope for women around the world who dream of working in a very male-dominated industry; she's the face of our industry-leading partnership; and she is an incredible example of Celebrity's commitment to opening up the world."

"Nicholine's success is our entire world's success. Her story shows the power of win-win partnerships and the positive impact they have on our communities – and beyond," said FIU President Mark B. Rosenberg. "FIU is proud to be the only university in Florida to host the Department of State's Mandela Washington Fellows program – and use our resources, talent and partnerships to help prepare the next generation of our world's leaders. We are so proud to have been a part of Nicholine's journey to a successful career!"

"The goal of our partnership with RMU is to inspire and disrupt the social norms that burden female officers in western African nations, such as Ghana," said Patrik Dahlgren, SVP of Global Marine Operations, Celebrity Cruises. "Nicholine is our pioneer cadet and a pioneer for women in her country;

moving forward, we will continue to evaluate candidates and continue to push the envelope in developing a growth sector for marine officers in a part of the world that traditionally underserves female officers.”

Tifuh Azirh is scheduled to join the *Celebrity Equinox* family on August 27, 2017.

About Celebrity Cruises:

Celebrity Cruises' iconic "X" is the mark of modern luxury, with its cool, contemporary design and warm spaces; dining experiences where the design of the venues is as important as the cuisine; and the amazing service that only Celebrity can provide, all created to provide an unmatched experience for vacationers' precious time. Celebrity Cruises' 12 ships offer modern luxury vacations visiting all seven continents. Celebrity also presents incredible cruise tour experiences in Alaska and Canada. Celebrity is one of five cruise brands operated by global cruise vacation company Royal Caribbean Cruises Ltd. (NYSE: RCL). For more information, dial 1-800-437-3111, visit www.celebritycruises.com, or call your travel agent.

About FIU:

Florida International University is classified by Carnegie as a “R1: Doctoral Universities - Highest Research Activity” and recognized as a Carnegie Community Engaged university. It is a public research university with [colleges and schools](#) that offers [bachelor's, master's and doctoral](#) programs in fields such as business, engineering, computer science, international relations, architecture, law and medicine. As one of South Florida's anchor institutions, FIU contributes almost \$9 billion each year to the local economy. The university is ranked second in Florida in Forbes Magazine's "America's Best Employers" list and received honors in all categories of The Chronicle of Higher Education's 2017 "Great Colleges to work for" survey. FIU graduates are consistently among the highest paid college graduates in Florida and are among the leaders of public and private organizations throughout South Florida. FIU is Worlds Ahead in finding solutions to the most challenging problems of our time. FIU emphasizes research as a major component of its mission with [multiple state-of-the-art research facilities](#) including the [Wall of Wind Research and Testing Facility](#), [FIU's Medina Aquarius Program](#) and the [Advanced Materials Engineering Research Institute](#). FIU has awarded more than 220,000 degrees and enrolls more than 54,000 students in two campuses and centers including FIU Downtown on Brickell, FIU@I-75, the Miami Beach Urban Studios, and Tianjin, China. FIU also supports artistic and cultural engagement through its three museums: [Patricia & Phillip Frost Art Museum](#), the [Wolfsonian-FIU](#), and the [Jewish Museum of Florida-FIU](#). FIU is a member of [Conference USA](#) and more than 400 student-athletes participating in 18 sports. For more information about FIU, visit <http://www.fiu.edu/>.

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