



Remarks by the AFCAC SG at the Opening Ceremony of the Second ICAO Meeting on the Sustainable Development of Air Transport in Africa, Accra, Ghana, 28 March, 2017

Honourable Minister for Aviation

Honourable Members of Parliament

The Director General of The Ghana Civil Aviation Authority

Directors General of Civil Aviation

Invited Guests

Members of the Media

Ladies and Gentlemen

It is an honour and a great pleasure to stand before you on behalf of the African Civil Aviation Commission (AFCAC) on the Second ICAO Meeting on the Sustainable Development of Air Transport in Africa taking place here in Accra, Ghana and to deliver these remarks. May I also take this opportunity to congratulate the government and people of the Republic of Ghana on the occasion of its sixtieth independence anniversary that fell on 6 March, 2017.

On behalf of AFCAC member States, I will like to express our deep appreciation to ICAO and the government of the Republic of Ghana for organizing and hosting this important meeting on a subject so dear to all of us.

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, have you thought for a moment what the world would be like without aviation? But what would Africa in particular with its large land mass, poor road and rail infrastructure also be like without aviation?

The importance and benefits of air transport to the economies of Africa is clearly acknowledged in the Declaration on the sustainable development of air transport in Africa adopted in Antananarivo in 2015 and I quote:

'Air transport is a catalyst for economic growth. Air transport connects African States to regional and global markets which enhance travel and tourism, and the movement of goods and other vital business activities. It represents an essential lifeline for Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs) and Small Island Developing States (SIDS). Increased connectivity provides African

countries with quick and efficient access to destinations throughout the continent and worldwide markets. Air transport and tourism are deeply interconnected drivers of economic growth and sustainable development. Today, over half of all international tourists arrive at their destination by air. Africa has been one of the fastest-growing tourism regions of the last decade. This trend is indicative of how aviation is helping to expand tourism and vice versa, and how this can foster sustainable economic development and integration on the African continent.'

Would it therefore surprise you to know that a twenty (20) year, (2015-2035) passenger growth outlook presented by IATA and Tourism Economics forecasts 5.1% growth for Africa, the highest growth rate in the world. A recent study by InterVistas also found that red tape regarding African skies has resulted in the continent losing out economically, with the potential loss running into millions of passengers, hundreds of jobs and billions in economic growth opportunities each year.

The UN-World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) reports that by 2030, Africa's international tourist numbers could grow from its current 56 million to 134 million. This is because a growing number of African countries have embraced tourism as a priority for their development.

Madam Chairperson, Ladies and Gentlemen, while on board a Kenya Airways flight recently, I picked up a Kenyan newspaper (Business Daily) dated 6 March, 2017 to read and came upon this rather unusual article titled "How 'flying donkeys' will boost trade in Africa. The article paints both a gloomy and promising picture of the future of air transport on the continent. It laments in part that 'owing to current aviation infrastructure in Africa (or lack thereof), what should be a three-hour journey between Algeria and Cameroon, in fact takes 24 hours, with the flight touching down in Istanbul (Turkey) en-route. It continues 'A single air transport market for Africa is key to unlocking the opportunities the continent presents. Today, transporting goods in and out of Africa, as well as within the continent, is prohibitive in both time and cost. The restrictions it places on the movement of people also makes for a highly-fragmented continent. The article then refers to the IATA Inter Vistas studies and the benefits of the open skies agreement between South Africa and Kenya that saw a 70 per cent increase in the number of passengers, and a similar agreement with Zambia resulting in a reduction of fares by 40 per cent.

Thus, if we acknowledge that air transport is so vital to growing the economies of African States, providing jobs and facilitating tourism and trade, as well as improving air connectivity to various African cities, the question then is, why are some of our States reluctant to fully implement the Yamoussoukro Decision (YD)?

The YD as we are already aware, is vehicle for the single African air transport policy that seeks to liberalize access to air transport on the continent. Implementation of the YD has been very slow and limited for a number of reasons most of which you will get to know more about in the course of this meeting. Meanwhile, let me use this opportunity bring you all to speed on the measures recently taken by the Assembly of Heads of State and government of the African Union to further liberalize air transport on the continent.

Adoption of the Single African Air Transport Market (SAATM)

During the African Union Summit in June, 2014 the Executive Council adopted Decision EX.CL/Dec.821 (XXV) on the African Agenda 2063, placing the implementation of the YD on the Liberalisation of Air Transport Markets in Africa as the foundation for the establishment of the Single African Air Transport Market (SAATM) in the context of the African Agenda 2063. Establishing a SAATM is among the Flagship and priority projects of the African Union Agenda 2063. Accordingly, the 24th Ordinary Session of the Heads of State and Government (HoSG) adopted the declaration on the Establishment of a Single African Air Transport Market (Doc. Ex.CL/871(Xxvi)).

Currently, twenty (20) member States have signed a Solemn Commitment for the actualization of SAATM namely: Benin, Cape Verde, Republic of Congo, Cote D'Ivoire, Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa and Zimbabwe as champion states in 2015 and later joined by Ghana, Sierra Leone, Gabon, Botswana, Mali, Swaziland Togo, Mozambique and last week, Republic of Guinee. Other States are free to join at any time and a dateline for the launching of the single market has been scheduled for June 2017. The liberalisation of air transport in Africa is based on the full implementation of the YD towards the realization of the SAATM. To achieve this goal, a Ministerial Working Group comprising States that have signed the Solemn Declaration was constituted with three main functions:

- Following up the implementation progress to establish the SAATM;
- Providing guidance to the Executing Agency (EA) which has the responsibility to supervise the implementation of the SAATM; and
- Spearheading the advocacy campaign to urge the rest of the member States to join the SAATM.

The Ministerial Working Group agreed on a number of actions necessary for the establishment of the single market constituting the 2015-2017 Activity Road Map. The Activity Road Map was subsequently revised during its 2nd meeting held in October, 2017.

The Activity Road Map consists of eighteen action items among which are:

- Advocacy and facilitation to involve more States in the implementation of the Yamoussoukro Decision and establishment of a single African air transport market;
- Funding of the Executing Agency;
- Conclusion of Memorandum of Cooperation (MOC) between AFCAC and the Regional Economic Communities (RECs); and
- I must add that a consultative meeting of the Ministerial Working Group was held during the meeting of the STC in Lome, Togo last two weeks. The Ministers agreed to meet again in Egypt during the first weeks of May to plan for the official launch of the Single African Air Transport Market in June this year while reminding States party to the Solemn Commitment to report on their respective concrete measures taken so far while stepping up on its advocacy for many more States to sign on to the Solemn Commitment.

Memorandum of Cooperation with Regional Economic Communities

Considering the need to harmonize air transport policies to eliminate non-physical barriers that hamper the sustainable development of air transport services in Africa, the role of the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) in this effort cannot be over-emphasized and there is no doubt that they have done substantial work individually to advance air transport in their respective Regions.

Therefore, in supervising and managing the liberalization of air transport in Africa, the Executing Agency must work closely with the RECs to monitor the application of the YD by the Aeronautical Authorities, airlines and other air transport service providers. The Executing Agency will also in collaboration with the RECs, facilitate the training of senior management personnel of State parties and RECS responsible for monitoring the implementation of the YD as well as investigation into breaches thereof.

The RECs are further expected to play a crucial role in the establishment of the African Aviation Tribunal to adjudicate matters involving the interpretation and application of the YD and its Regulations as well as the Board of Appeal of the YD which also has mandate to adjudicate complaints raised against the decisions of the Executing Agency.

In view of this, the Draft MoC prepared by AFCAC has been forwarded to the RECs by the AUC and the feedback we have received so far from some of the RECs has been very positive.

Regulatory Texts

The following Regulatory Texts on Functions and Responsibilities of the Executing Agency; Competition Rules; Dispute Settlement Mechanism and Consumer Protection Regulations have also been developed to empower the

EA to manage and enforce appropriate rules and regulations in respect of liberalization, as well as give fair and equal opportunities to all players and promote healthy competition, protection of consumers' interest and the settlement of disputes:

However, due to new procedural rules introduced by the Constitutive Act of the African Union, these Regulatory Texts have had to be re-submitted and adopted by the Specialized Technical Committee (STC) for endorsement by the appropriate Organs of the African Union.

Honourable Chairperson, ladies and gentlemen

There can hardly be a policy on sustainable development of air transport without improved airport and air navigation infrastructure and facilities, improved safety and security as well as skilled aviation professional at all levels.

In this respect, AFCAC in collaboration with ICAO and other partner States and organizations with the support of the relevant Organs of the AU adopted measures on updating the Abuja Safety Targets and the inclusion of Air Navigation in the Targets and also the Windhoek Declaration and Targets on aviation security and facilitation. These measures are all aimed at putting the continent on a good footing for the liberalized market.

As we assess the progress of implementation of the actions agreed to in Antananarivo, AFCAC will have the opportunity to brief you in detail on the developments since the last meeting in 2015. In conclusion ladies and gentlemen, I will like to wish us all a fruitful meeting.

I thank you for your attention.