

KEYNOTE ADDRESS DELIVERED BY HON. CECILIA ABENA DAPAAH, MINISTER FOR AVIATION (REPUBLIC OF GHANA) AT THE OPENING CEREMONY OF THE SECOND MEETING ON THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF AIR TRANSPORT IN AFRICA AT THE KEMPINSKI HOTEL, ACCRA, FROM 28 - 31 MARCH 2017

The President of ICAO,

Colleague Ministers,

The AU Commissioner,

The Chief Executives,

Director Generals and Heads of CAA's,

Aviation Industry Practitioners,

ICAO, IATA and Industry Representatives present,

Distinguished Delegates,

Invited Guests,

Our Friends from the Media,

Ladies and Gentlemen;

On behalf of the Government and people of Ghana, and on my own behalf, I deem it a great honor to be handed the opportunity to

warmly welcome all of you to Ghana for the second (2nd) ICAO Meeting on the Sustainable Development of Air Transport in Africa.

I also wish to thank ICAO for the honour accorded me to address this conference and for choosing Ghana to host this august event. I am informed that some of you arrived here a couple of days ago and I believe you have experienced the proverbial Ghanaian hospitality.

I wish to also take the opportunity to thank the organizers for choosing Ghana and I must say that the timing of the Conference could not have been any better.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am informed that the second ICAO Meeting on the Sustainable Development of Air Transport in Africa in cooperation with the Ghana Civil Aviation Authority, Ghana Airports Company Limited, and the Ministry of Aviation is a follow up on the Declaration of the Sustainable Development of Air Transport in Africa adopted in Antananarivo, Madagascar on 27th March, 2015 (the Antananarivo Declaration).

I am further informed that participants supported by air transport stakeholders and international organizations decided at the end of the first Meeting to meet biennially to assess progress made in the implementation of the necessary actions agreed on in relation to the key areas identified for improvement as well as the way forward in furtherance of the Sustainable Development of Air Transport in Africa including: liberalization of market access and air carrier ownership and control; cooperation throughout the air transport value chain; consumer protection; fair competition; security & facilitation; funding for infrastructure and intermodal integration; support to remote or peripheral destinations; taxes and user charges; capacity-building for qualified personnel; support to the Single African Air Transport Market (SAATM); fleet modernization; and adherence to international instruments.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my expectation that during the conference, Participants will also be briefed on the outcome of the 39th Session of the ICAO Assembly

(26 September - 7 October, 2016) in all key areas and activities pertaining to the economic development of air transport, the Implementation Status of the Antananarivo Declaration among others.

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

The need to speed up full implementation of the Yamoussoukro Declaration with regard to the Liberalization of Access to Air Transport Markets in Africa (YD, Nov. 1999), cannot be over emphasized as it seeks to establish a single African air transport market and considered crucial to the achievement of the long-term vision of the African Union (AU) known as the AU Agenda 2063.

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am also informed that there will be a special event aimed at promoting tourism and air links between African states and the Diaspora and the meeting will therefore focus on strategies required for the establishment of air links, trade and investment between African states and the Diaspora, especially the Caribbean states and I

will therefore urge all of us to come out with very practicable and cost effective measures to ensure that we ground this relationship.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I wish to indicate that Ghana has recognized the role of aviation in economic development and we have therefore embarked on a serious mission as a priority to ensure that we become a hub in the sub-region. In addition we are also ready to assist or support other sister countries in whatever way to ensure that our dream of a vibrant and solid aviation industry is developed on the continent.

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

As I have already indicated, the Government of Ghana has made a commitment to make the country an aviation hub both for international and regional airlines within the West Africa sub-region. In view of that, the Government of Ghana has embarked on a number of projects among others, the ongoing ultra-modern terminal three (3) project at the Kotoka international airport, elevation of the status of the Tamale airport to an international airport, scaling up of the

capacity of the Kumasi airport, the scrapping of the 17.5% VAT on domestic flights, and the re-introduction of a national carrier, in collaboration with the Private Sector, all in an effort to consolidate the strides we have made over the years.

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Republic of Ghana acknowledges and commends the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), by virtue of its status as a UN Specialized Agency and in accordance with its mandate, for supporting the realization of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development through assisting States in enhancing their air transport systems.

I also want to take this opportunity to express our gratitude as a country for the tremendous support and guidance we continue to get from ICAO to enable us continue to perform to the expected standards and also assure everybody that we will continue to improve our oversight responsibilities to ensure that our skies are safe.

I am convinced that this Meeting will allow policy-makers, air transport regulators, representatives from the aviation industry and other stakeholders, to review progress towards implementation of the Antananarivo Declaration, identify challenges and opportunities, and agree on a Roadmap for priority actions, building on the decisions of the 39th ICAO Assembly and it is my expectation that at the end of your deliberations, the conference will come out with a communique which will be acceptable and workable within the industry and I trust that all participants will enjoy the hospitality of the people of Ghana and ultimately their stay in the Republic of Ghana.

For those of you who are first time visitors to Ghana, I urge you to take some time off to explore the beauty and niceties of our country which I believe will leave memorable thoughts.

Once again, I would like to take this opportunity to warmly welcome you all to Ghana and wish you a wonderful stay. Akwaaba

Ladies and Gentlemen,

On this note, and on behalf of the people and Government of Ghana,
I have the singular honour to declare the conference duly opened. I
wish you fruitful deliberations

Thank you and may God bless us all.