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A single African air transport market critical to agenda 2063

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia - 10 October, 2014: The Chairperson of the African Union Commission, HE Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma met a delegation of the African Airlines Association (AFRAA) to discuss the importance of the aviation sector in the socio-economic transformation of the continent.

During the meeting, Dr. Dlamini Zuma said: “Connecting Africa through aviation and other transport infrastructure is critical to integration, intra-Africa trade, as well as to tourism, economic growth and development more generally. The sector is also an important creator of jobs and critical skills on the continent. The aviation sector is strategic for the implementation of Agenda 2063.”

In the engagement with the Chief Executives, they noted that discussions on African open skies have been on-going for the last two decades, culminating in the adoption of the Yamassoukro Decision by African Heads of State and Government in 2000. Over the last decade, with sustained economic growth on the continent, a growing middle class and more tourists and businesses coming to Africa, the delays have been at Africa’s peril, with loss of market share by African airlines, from 60% in the early 90s to under 20% at present.

The meeting considered what needs to be done to remove the blockages towards the full implementation of the Yamoussoukro Decision on the Liberalisation of Air Transport Markets in Africa and to move towards the creation of a single African aviation market.

AFRAA Secretary General, Dr. Elija Chingosho highlighted the importance of the liberalisation of the continent's air market to be accessible by all citizens. He said, "*air transport should be affordable for everyone, not just be monopolized for the rich and the wealthy. As a continent we are subsidizing the industry for international carriers.*" Dr. Chingosho appreciated the timeliness and pertinence of convening the meeting at a time when African aviation occupies 20% of market share in Africa.

As an immediate follow up, the AU Commission's Department of Infrastructure and Energy will convene a meeting of African aviation experts to be held at the end of October 2014 in Nairobi, Kenya. They will iron out the technical issues that will facilitate the full implementation of the Yamoussoukro Decision, to move towards the single African aviation market, and come up with recommendations for Member states.

The AU Commission will continue to engage with all stakeholders in the aviation sector to accelerate the full implementation of the Yamoussoukro Decision.