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**P. O. Box 3243, Addis Ababa, ETHIOPIA Tel.: (251-11) 5182402 Fax: (251-11) 5182400  
Website: [www.au.int](http://www.au.int)**

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**ADDRESS OF H.E. DR. H.E. AMANI ABU-ZEID (MRS.)  
COMMISSIONER FOR INFRASTRUCTURE AND ENERGY  
AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION (AUC)**

**AT THE**

**SIDE MEETING OF MINISTERIAL WORKING GROUP ON THE  
SINGLE AFRICAN AIR TRANSPORT MARKET (SAATM)**

**STC – TTIET Lomé, Togo**

**March 2017**

- **Excellency, Minister of Transport of the Republic of Congo and Co-Chairperson of the Ministerial Working Group on establishment of a Single African Air Transport market;**
- **Excellencies Ministers, Members of the Ministerial Working Group and Representatives;**
- **Secretary-General of the African Civil Aviation Commission (AFCAC);**
- **Representatives of Regional Economic Communities (RECs);**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen;**
- **All Protocols Observed:**

1. A very warm welcome to all of you to the city of Lomé, Togo for this side meeting of the Ministerial working Group on the establishment of the Single African Air Transport Market. I am, indeed, happy to have this opportunity to welcome and meet you here today, as this is my first most important event since being elected Commissioner for Infrastructure and Energy at the Africa Union Commission in January. Accept sincere warm greetings from the outgoing Commissioner, H.E. DR. ELHAM M.A. IBRAHIM. She would have wished to bid you farewell in person but things moved faster and she requested me to greet you and express her gratitude for the support you accorded her in getting this ambitious continental initiative off the ground and in good progress.

2. This is an informal meeting convened by the Commission in order to take the opportunity of the STC for us to meet and quickly apprise ourselves on (i) the progress we have made towards the launching of the Single African Air Transport Market, (ii) brainstorm on the kind of event we would like undertake for the launching the Single Market in June on the margins of the Union Summit meetings, and (iii) plan for the final meeting of the Ministerial Working Group before the launch.

3. The African Union Commission is profoundly grateful to you, as Champion States in the establishment of the Single Market and I wish to take this opportunity to welcome the states that recently subscribed to the solemn commitment namely: Mali, Mozambique, Swaziland and Togo. The single market now has nineteen (19) Member States that have signed the solemn commitment and we believe more Member States will join before the launch date in June 2017.

### **Excellencies**

#### **Ladies and Gentlemen:**

4. We all know the importance of the establishing the single market, a flagship project of the AU Agenda 2063. Just to recall, we all know the importance of achieving improved air connectivity in the continent, ensuring that the cost of air travel is reduced and the potential contribution of the single market to the economic growth of each of our countries, boosting intra-Africa trade, the potential of job creation and enhancing the integration of Africa.

5. I have been informed that during your first meeting held in April 2015, you adopted a **Road Map** with very specific activities and timelines. The Road Map was reviewed during your second meeting in October in Addis. Among the priorities indicated in your communique, is the need to implement the **immediate measures** to operationalise the single market that were communicated to the Member States of Single Market. It is, therefore, essential that all Member States in the market harmonise their bilateral air service agreement to ensure the full implementation of the Yamoussoukro Decision to enable the single market to function smoothly. The Commission trusts that Member States which are party to

the single market will accomplish these tasks before the launching of the single market in June 2017.

## **Excellencies**

### **Ladies and Gentlemen:**

6. I would like us to also brainstorm on the launching process of the Single Market in June 2017, the activities envisaged and the form of the launching. Obviously, we will need another meeting to make concrete plans for the launch and, in that case, we would appreciate any offers from Member States to host the next (third) meeting of the Ministerial Working Group to finalise the preparation for the launch of the Single African Air Transport Market.

7. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank our partners particularly the African Development Bank (AfDB), the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), and the European Union as well as the African Civil Aviation Commission (AFCAC), the African Airlines Association (AFRAA) and the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) for their technical and material contribution to the activities of this flagship project. We count on the co-operation between the eligible airlines of Member States to maximise the opportunities offered by establishment of the Single Market.

## **Excellencies**

### **Ladies and Gentlemen:**

8. The African Union Commission will continue the task of advocacy to get all the Member States on board. Currently the Membership includes (19): *Benin, Botswana, Cape Verde, Republic of Congo, Cote d'Ivoire, Gabon, Ghana, Egypt,*

*Ethiopia, Kenya, Mali, Mozambique, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Swaziland, Togo and Zimbabwe.* I would like to urge the current members to also engage in the campaign to get more member states to joint. Most importantly we count on the successful launch and operationalisation of the Single African Air Transport Market as the most effective campaign strategy that is expected to bring in all the Member States.

9. On that note, I wish your meeting very successful deliberations and outcomes. I am part of this meeting and I, as well, look forward to your deliberations, guidance and decisions in the Ministerial Meeting of the STC tomorrow.

10. Thank you for your kind attention.