CONCEPT NOTE

ON

The Organisation of

THE Third Ministerial Working Group Meeting
on the Single African Air Transport Market.

Addis Ababa - Ethiopia

5- 8 December 2017
I. INTRODUCTION

1. In order to move the continent forward towards the concrete implementation of the AU Agenda 2063 the flagship project on the establishment of a Single African Air Transport Market (SAATM) through the implementation of the 1999 Yamoussoukro Decision on the Liberalisation of Air Transport markets in Africa (YD), the 24th Ordinary Session of the African Union (AU) Assembly took specific decisions namely: (i) Assembly/AU/Decl.1(XXIV): Declaration on the Establishment of a Single African Air Transport Market; (ii) Assembly/AU/Dec.565(XXIV): Decision on the Development of the AU Agenda 2063; and (iii) Assembly/AU/Commitment (XXIV): Solemn Commitment by African Union Member States to the Implementation of the Yamoussoukro Decision towards the establishment of a Single African Air Transport Market by 2017.

2. To that end, the Union Assembly established a Ministerial Working Group to oversee and guide implementation of agreed activities and road map for the establishment of a Single African Air Transport Market by 2017 [Assembly/AU/Commitment(XXIV)]. The working group was initially composed of Ministers responsible for Air Transport of the Eleven (11) Member States which declared their Solemn Commitment to the implementation of the Yamoussoukro Decision towards the establishment of a Single African Air Transport Market during the 24th Ordinary Session of the Union Assembly which took place on 30th and 31st January 2015 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia and includes Ministers from Member States that have since joined.

3. The main functions of the Ministerial Working Group are: (i) following up implementation progress, (ii) providing guidance, and (iii) spearheading the advocacy campaign to urge the rest of the Member States to join the single market. The Ministerial Working Group is supported by air transport experts from their respective countries, the AUC, AFCAC and RECs in collaboration with other key stakeholders.

4. The Group held its first meeting in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on 17th April 2015 and agreed on a number of actions necessary for the establishment of the SAATM, constituting the Activity Road Map 2015-2017 for the Establishment of a Single African Air Transport Market. The Group then held its second meeting in Addis Ababa on the 21st October 2017 in Addis Ababa. At the second meeting the Ministers apprised the task accomplished on the activity road map and noted the following outstanding activities:

   i. Further advocacy and facilitation to involve more States in the implementation of the Yamoussoukro Decision and establishment of a single African air transport market – reminder letter to Member States;
   ii. Consultation and conclusion of Memorandum of Cooperation (MOC) between AFCAC and the Regional Economic Communities (RECs);
   iii. Funding of the Executing Agency;
   iv. Organising the 3rd Ministerial Working Group meeting
   v. Putting in place of an evaluation mechanism for implementation of the Yamoussoukro Decision and the single market project;
   vi. Formulation of implementation regulations for the Yamoussoukro Decision;
   vii. Concretization of the Solemn commitment made through the implementation of immediate steps issued to States via AUC letter CE/L/20/188.16 of 18th May 2016;
   viii. Formulation of External Policy Guidelines and Binding Clauses for negotiation of air services agreements with non-African states and regions;
   ix. Capacity building measures (training, staffing and technical assistance) for Member States, AUC, RECs and AFCAC;
x. Operationalisation of the African Aviation Tribunal (RECs to nominate arbitrators by July 2015;

xi. Formulation of rules for smooth management of the Single African Air Transport Market;

xii. Initiate the process for facilitating the free movement of persons and goods within the SAATM (removal of non-physical barriers)

xiii. Development of a continental air transport infrastructure master plan; and


5. The final communiqué the Ministers expressed concerned on the delay to formalize the adoption of the Regulatory texts of the YD and legal framework of the Executing Agency of the YD emanated from changes made in the AUC process of adopting text via the sectorial STCs;

6. The Ministers also agreed that all Parties to the Solemn commitment made on the establishment of a Single African Air Transport Market are required to report to the AUC and Executive Agency of YD (AFCAC) on measures taken as outlined by the AUC letter CE/L/20/188.16 of 18th May 2016 and adopted seven actions as agreed by the Experts.

7. Twenty-two (22) countries have currently signed the Solemn Commitment to open their respective air transport markets immediately and without conditions, namely: Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Republic of Congo, Côte d’Ivoire, Egypt, Ethiopia, Gabon, Ghana, Kenya, Liberia, Mali, Mozambique, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Swaziland, Togo and Zimbabwe. The group is open for all Member States to join.

8. The African Union Commission also convened a consultative meeting of the Ministerial Working Group on the 16th March 2017 on the side-line of the First Ordinary Session of the African Union Specialised Technical Committee on Transport, Transcontinental and Interregional infrastructure, Energy and Tourism. Nine Member States to the solemn commitment attended the consultative meeting, presided by the Republic of Congo. On the 16th-18th October 2017, the Experts of the Ministerial Working Group also met to appraise progress on the implementation of the immediate measures and consideration of the concept note for launching the SAATM in January 2018.

II. OBJECTIVES OF THE THIRD MEETING

9. This meeting is being convened to appraise progress in the implementation of the updated Ministerial Working Group Road Map and final preparation for the launching of the SAATM during the summit in January 2018. Specifically, the meeting will address the following issues:

1. Progress Report on implementation of the Activity Road Map for establishment of the Single African Air Transport Market (SAATM) especially on the budgeted activities of 2017 including:
   i) Final validation of the policy, institutional and regulatory instruments for the Yamoussoukro Decision and the Single African Air Transport Market;
   ii) Development of a continental air transport infrastructure master plan.

2. Appraise the progress made by Member States in the implementation of the immediate measures;

3. Signing of the MOC between AFCAC as the Executing Agency and the Regional Economic Communities;

4. Consideration of report of the Experts of the MWG and Activities to launch the SAATM;
5. Consideration of the agenda and programme for launching of the SAATM;
6. Consideration of the draft protocol to formally launch the Single African Air Transport Market; and
7. Signing of the AFCAC-RECs MOC

III. THE SESSIONS

10. To effectively accomplish the objectives of the meeting, it is envisaged that two (2) sessions will be held as follows:

   (a) Meeting of Experts to review actions taken towards the implementation of the concrete immediate measures and consideration of the activities for the launching of the SAATM including status of the AFCAC-RECs MOC; 5th-6th December 2017; and
   (b) Ministerial Working Group meeting: 8th December 2017.

11. The proceedings and recommendations from the Expert meeting will finally be presented to the Ministerial Working Group for consideration and adoption.

12. The Report of the Ministerial Working Group will be presented to the Executive Council for consideration.

IV. EXPECTED OUTCOMES

13. In line with the specific objectives of the meeting, the following outputs are targeted:

   a) Signing of the Memorandum of Cooperation (MOC) between AFCAC and the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) on the implementation of the Yamoussoukro Decision and management of the single African air transport market;
   b) Final Plan for the launching of the SAATMs; and
   c) Status report on the implementation of the Ministerial Roadmap and recommendations covering especially the following items:
      iii) Implementation of the immediate measures for operationalization of the SAATM;
      iv) Final validation of the policy, institutional and regulatory instruments for the Yamoussoukro Decision and the Single African Air Transport Market;
      v) Development of a continental air transport infrastructure master plan.

14. The outcome of the technical meetings will be presented to the Ministerial Working Group Meeting for consideration and approval. The expected final outcome of this meeting is a Ministerial Working Group declaration with recommendations drawn from the reports and action plans on the status of implementation of the Activity Road Map.

V. PARTICIPANTS

15. The following organisations will participate in the meeting:

   1. Member States that have signed the Solemn Commitment and their focal persons;
   2. African Union Commission;
   3. United Nation Economic Commission for Africa
   4. African Civil Aviation Commission (AFCAC);
5. Regional Economic Communities (RECs);
6. Members of the Monitoring Body of the Yamoussoukro Decision;
7. NEPAD Planning and Coordination Agency (NPCA);
8. African Airlines Association (AFRAA);
9. CEOs of Airlines in Solemn Commitment Member States
10. African Development Bank (ADB);
11. Pan Africa Parliament
12. Invitation will also be made to all member States who are willing to sign up to the Solemn Commitment to the SAATM;
13. Other Partners as appropriate.

VI. DATE AND VENUE OF THE MEETING

16. The meeting will be hosted at the Headquarters of the African Union Commission, Addis Ababa from 5th to 8th December 2017. The AUC will provide the meeting with interpretation and translation services English and French for the Expert meeting and with interpretation and translation services Arabic, English, French and Portuguese on the 8th December 2017 for the Ministerial Session.

VII. Contact Information

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