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Directorate of Information and Communication

## PRESS RELEASE / 30<sup>th</sup> AU SUMMIT

### African Union Commission gears up to launch highly-anticipated Single African Sky

**Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 22 January 2018:** The African Union Commission is set to launch the first AU Agenda 2063 Flagship project, the Single African Air Transport Market (SAATM), in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on 28<sup>th</sup> January 2018 as a historic event at the African Union Summit, nearly two decades after the adoption of the 1999 Yamoussoukro Decision.

Speaking ahead of the launch event, Dr. Amani Abou-Zeid, Commissioner for Infrastructure and Energy at the African Union Commission said “With preparations continuing on schedule, the launch of the Single African Air Transport Market will spur more opportunities to promote trade, cross-border investments in the production and service industries, including tourism resulting in the creation of an additional 300,000 direct and two million indirect jobs contributing immensely to the integration and socio-economic growth of the continent.”

The Commissioner stated that the aviation industry currently supports eight million jobs in Africa and hence SAATM was created with the aim of enhancing connectivity, facilitating trade and tourism, creating employment, and ensuring that the industry plays a more prominent role in the global economy and significantly contributing to the AU’s Agenda 2063.

“The AU Summit will also see the adoption of the regulatory text of the Yamoussoukro Decision, that is, the competition and consumer protection regulations that safeguards the efficient operation of the market,” the Commissioner added.

An exhibition billed "**Flying the AU Agenda 2063 for an integrated, peaceful and prosperous Africa**" will be unveiled to mark the launch, as well as ribbon cutting and the inauguration of the commemorative plaque.

So far, 23 African countries out of 55 have subscribed to the Single African Air Transport Market whereas 44 African countries signed the Yamoussoukro Decision.

“The African Union Commission, under the leadership and personal commitment of H.E. Moussa Faki Mahamat, has been playing a key coordinating role in the establishment of the Single African Air Transport Market and advocacy to AU Member States, who have not yet committed to the solemn commitment, to do so,” the Commissioner intimated.

The African Union Commission (AUC), the African Civil Aviation Commission (AFCAC), the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), the International Air Transport Association (IATA) and the African Airlines Association (AFRAA) are also advising African countries to open their skies for enhancement of connectivity and efficiency of air services in the continent.

“As the first of the 12 African Union’s Agenda 2063 flagship projects to be launched, the implementation of SAATM will pave the way for other flagship projects as the African Passport and enabling the Free Movement of People, the Continental Free Trade Area (CFTA),” Commissioner Abou-Zeid stressed.

The Declaration on the establishment of a Single African Air Transport Market, as a flagship project of the AU Agenda 2063, was adopted by the African Union (AU) Assembly in January 2015. Immediately thereafter, eleven (11) AU Member States declared their Solemn Commitment to establish a Single African Air Transport Market through full implementation of the Yamoussoukro Decision of 1999 that provides for full liberalization of market access between African States, free exercise of traffic rights, elimination of restrictions on ownership and full liberalization of frequencies, fares and capacities.

To date, the number of Member States that have adhered to the Solemn Commitment has reached twenty-three (23), namely: Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Congo, Cote d'Ivoire, Egypt, Ethiopia, Gabon, Ghana, Guinea, Kenya, Liberia, Mali, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Swaziland, Togo and Zimbabwe.

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