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PRESS RELEASE N°13/30th AU SUMMIT

Africa Opens Its Skies as AU gathers leaders for Summit



Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 29 January 2018: Newly Elected Chairperson of the African Union, H.E. Paul Kagame, President of Rwanda today officially launched the first phase of the Single African Air Transport Market (SAATM) championed by twenty-three African countries at the Headquarters of the AU, a historic and a vital milestone towards the continental effort to start the implementation of the 1999 Yamoussoukro Decision.



Also speaking at the launch, the Chairperson of Africa's Premier Institution – the African Union Commission, H.E. Mr. Moussa Faki Mahamat, who has personally taken an active role in the Market since he took the reins of the Commission reported to African leaders, who are in the Ethiopian city of Addis for the 30th African Union Summit, on the progress achieved in the implementation of the Assembly declarations regarding the establishment of a

Single African Air Transport Market and recommendations of the Commission.

“In order to make good on the Solemn Commitment, the concerned Member States have addressed provisions in their bilateral air service agreements (BASAs) to ensure compliance with the Yamoussoukro Decision (YD),” the Chairperson stated.

“In that regard, the Institutional and Regulatory Texts of the Yamoussoukro Decision which are considered essential for the single market to function effectively have been adopted. The Commission has also drafted guidelines for the negotiation of air service agreement with third countries and a human resource development fund (HRDF) has been established and placed under the management of the African Civil Aviation Commission (AFCAC),” the Chairperson further explained.

The Chairperson concluded his report by recommending to the Assembly to decide to establish a Single African Air Transport Market (SAATM) for African Airlines within the framework of the African Union (AU) Agenda 2063 and urging countries who have not yet committed to the solemn commitment, to do so.

The Commissioner for Infrastructure and Energy, Dr. Amani Abou-Zeid earlier stated 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 additional jobs.

Following the launch at the opening of the 30th African Union Summit, the Chairpersons of the African Union and the African Union Commission headed to the official ribbon-cutting and the unveiling of the commemorative plaque, where Heads of States, partners and guests were invited.

H.E. President Paul Kagame nominated H.E. President Faure Essozimna Gnassingbé Eyadéma of Togo as Champion of the Single African Air Transport Market (SAATM).

The Chairperson took the time to acknowledge the support of various partners, staff of the Commission and individuals who helped contribute to the launch of the Market.

The audience also had the chance to visit the aviation exhibition billed "**SAATM: Flying the AU Agenda 2063 for an integrated, peaceful and prosperous Africa**".

Fighting corruption is the new focus of African leaders at the 30th African Union Summit. The leaders are also expected to deliberate on a number of issues, including institutional reforms of the AU, continental free trade and the state of peace and security on the continent. The AU Assembly was preceded by meetings of the Permanent Representatives Committee on 22 and 23 January 2018, as well as the meeting of the Executive Council on 25 to 26 January 2018.

Note to the Editor

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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