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Directorate of Information and Communication

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The African Union urged African countries to treat the implementation of Single African Air Transport Market

Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe, November 26, 2018: The African Union (AU) High Representative for Infrastructure Development in Africa, Honorable Raila Odinga, has urged African countries to treat the implementation of Single African Air Transport Market (SAATM) as a matter of emergency.

Honorable Odinga made the remark on Monday at a Parallel Session on SAATM on the sidelines of the PIDA Week 2018 taking place in Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe from November 26 to 29, 2018.

“Ratification is one thing, complying is another ... I think it is an emergency that we do this matter,” he said in his intervention alluding to the fact that the problem has always been with implementation. “... and I have been given this responsibility, I know the limitations, I know the challenge. But I am happy to see that at least at this level there is commitment and there is understanding,” Odinga said.

Appreciating the delegates attending the Parallel Session on SAATM for their commitments, Mr. Odinga also stated that working together Africa will be able to achieve what has been decided.

Jointly organized by the African Union Commission (AUC), the NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency, the African Development Bank (AfDB) and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), the 2018 PIDA Week is taking place under theme, PIDA Implementation through Good Governance – Realizing Smart Infrastructure for Africa’s Integration.

Zimbabwe’s permanent secretary in Ministry of Transport and Infrastructural Development Engineer Amos Marawa said HR Odinga has addressed a fundamentally important matter regarding SAATM.

“Mr. Odinga hit the nail by the head by saying it is one thing to ratify and another thing to implement,” he said.

According to Engineer Marawa, the first step towards speedy implementation is to identify gaps in member states so that they can be supported in the implementation.

Also speaking at the same side event, the African Union Commission Director for Infrastructure and Energy, Chiekh Bedda said the priority should be building the capacity of the African Civil Aviation Commission (AFCAC).

“The starting point should be to strengthen the capacity of AFCAC. In this regards, able experts have been recruited for AFCAC” to give it the required capacity.

As a platform to bring together key stakeholders involved in the implementation of the PIDA programme, to take stock of progress and identify ways to continue to advance implementation, PIDA Week is believed to be an important platform that helps to push for the realisation of AU’s flagship projects.

SAATM is one of AU’s flagship project meant to create a single unified air transport market in Africa, the liberalisation of civil aviation in the continent and as an impetus to its economic integration agenda. It was launched at the January 2018 AU Summit in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia by the current Chairman of the AU and Rwandan President, H.E. Paul Kagame.

About 27 African countries have agreed to open up their skies so far as the first of the mega projects in AU’s Agenda 2063 - Africa’s roadmap for the next half a century - started to take root. SAATM has a key interlink with PIDA as the blueprint for infrastructure transformation in the continent for the period 2012-2040.

The 2018 PIDA Week is being held under the theme “PIDA Implementation through Good Governance – Realizing Smart Infrastructure for Africa’s Integration”.

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