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Directorate of Information and Communication

PRESS RELEASE

AU Commission and The African Civil Aviation Commission (AFCAC) celebrate the 20th Yamoussoukro Decision Day



Dakar - Senegal, 14th November 2019 : H.E. Dr Amani Abou-Zeid, Commissioner for Infrastructure and Energy, officially inaugurated today in Dakar the celebration of the 20th anniversary of the Yamoussoukro Decision (YD) preceded by the 50th anniversary of the African Civil Aviation Commission (AFCAC) on 13th November 2019. The event was attended by H.E. Mr Alioune Sarr, Minister of Tourism and Air Transport of

Senegal, Dr Fang Liu, Secretary General of International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and H.E Mme Zourehatou Kassah-Traore, Minister of Infrastructure and Transport of Togo, Champion State of the Single African Air Transport Market (SAATM). Other African Ministers and representatives of Member States were among the delegates.

"Yamoussoukro decision is the result of a long process whose starting point could be Saturday, May 25, 1963 in Addis Ababa. This declaration, which announces a new African aviation policy, marks a strong desire to liberalize the African skies while making our air transport system more efficient." highlighted H.E. Alioune Sarr, Senegalese Minister of Tourism and Air Transport at the Opening Ceremony

In her opening remarks, H.E. Dr Amani Abou-Zeid, congratulated AFCAC and all its partners for the ongoing efforts to operationalize the SAATM. Dr Abou-Zeid added that the recent establishment of the Single African Air Transport Market (SAATM) is a clear demonstration of the support that the AU Heads of State and the African Union Commission have given and will continue to give to the aviation industry in Africa especially with regard to reviving the full implementation of the YD and the establishment of a safe, secure and affordable air transport market. She reiterated the AUC support to AFCAC as the Executive Agency of YD especially at the time the Agency enters the critical stages of making the SAATM a reality. She reminded the participants that the full liberalization of air transport services in Africa and operationalization of SAATM with all

its pillars is seen as an important critical enabler of the Continental Free Trade Area and the socio-economic transformation of Africa.

"We look forward to providing much more support as the Agency enters the critical stages of reforming the air transport industry on the continent with the objective to remove all the bottlenecks that are still preventing the continent to enjoy the benefits of a safe, secure and sustainable air transport industry. The full liberalization of air transport services in Africa and operationalization of SAATM with all its pillars is seen as the important enabler of the Continental free trade area and the socio-economic transformation of Africa that we all wish to see in the next few years to come." said Dr Abou-Zeid

The YD Celebration included two important panel discussions. The first session was on the wider socio-economic benefits of liberalized air transport market policies considering global experiences of other Regions on their own liberalized air transport trajectory. The session provided an opportunity to learn from the transformational journeys and the dividends that these States and regional blocks are reaping since they adopted open skies policies. The session also shared the lessons learned globally, and how liberalization of Air Services Agreements (ASAs) resulted in numerous positive benefits and impacted respective economies trade relations with other countries.

"I am speaking of course of the 20th Anniversary of the Yamoussoukro Decision of 1999. A key consideration for the African Ministers who adopted the Yamoussoukro Decision was that the strict regulatory protections sustaining national carriers at that time were having significantly detrimental effects in terms of aviation safety, affordability, and, not surprisingly in light of these factors, poor air traffic growth in Africa. In this regard, full liberalization of intra-African air transport services in terms of access, capacity, frequency and tariffs is key." said Dr Fang Liu, Secretary General of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)

The second session reflected on the various initiatives taken in the framework of the AU Intra-Africa Air Transport liberalization (YD), initiatives taken by the 11 Champion States on the Joint Solemn Commitment on unconditional and expeditious implementation of all provisions of the YD. Number of AU member States that have so far joined SAATM presented the benefits from liberalization of air transport services. The discussion further shared perspectives on the ground in terms of the opportunities or lack thereof that SAATM have created and the existing impediments to implement the YD at national level.

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