



Press Release

Yamoussoukro Decision (YD) Day 2020 Celebration



Dakar, Senegal – 13 November 2020: The 29th Assembly of the Heads of State and Government of the African Union (AU) designated 14th November of every year as the Yamoussoukro Decision day (YD Day) to be celebrated at National, Regional and Continental levels.

Against this backdrop, the African Union Commission (AUC) and the African Civil Aviation Commission (AFCAC) celebrated today the Yamoussoukro Decision (YD) which entered into force in 2000 following its endorsement by Heads of State and Government of the African Union for the liberalization of scheduled and non-scheduled air transport services within Africa and with an overall aim of removing restrictions on traffic rights, capacity and frequency between city pairs. The celebration was held under the auspices of H.E. Faure Essozimna Gnassingbé Eyadéma, President of the Republic of Togo and Champion State of the Single African Air Transport Market (SAATM). Distinguished participants from Africa and beyond attended the event including a number of African Ministers in charge of Aviation, Secretary General of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), the International Air Transport Association (IATA) Regional Vice President, Secretary General of the African Airlines Association (AFRAA), Secretary General of Airports Council International Africa (ACI-Africa) and other development partners.

The SAATM established by the Assembly of Heads of State and Government during the 24th Ordinary Session of the African Union in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia (30-31 January 2015), is one of the flagship projects which places the implementation of the 1999 Yamoussoukro Decision on the Liberalization of Air Transport Market in Africa within the context of the AU Agenda 2063. SAATM aims to ensure the full implementation of the Yamoussoukro Decision (YD) on air transport liberalization in Africa.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the celebration of the 21st Anniversary of the YD was held virtually by the African Civil Aviation Commission in collaboration with the African Union Commission.

In his opening remarks, Mr. Tefera Mekonnen Tefera, Secretary General of the African Civil Aviation Commission (AFCAC) said “Today’s event is meant for us to reflect on the journey which we embarked upon 21 years ago on the liberalization of air transport in Africa. Indeed we will focus on the SAATM which was adopted to support the full implementation of the YD”.

H.E. Dr Amani Abou-Zeid, Commissioner for Infrastructure and Energy on behalf of His Excellency, Mr. Moussa Faki Mahamat the Chairperson of the African Union Commission congratulated the 34 AU Member States that have so far joined the SAATM and appealed

to the remaining Member States to join and enjoy the benefits of SAATM. The AU Commissioner congratulated and conveyed her best wishes to the President of Togo H.E. Faure Essozimna Gnassingbé Eyadéma - Champion of SAATM, member States of the AU, aviation stakeholders, partners and in particular, the AFCAC for all the ongoing efforts to fully implement the YD and SAATM.

“Africa's time has come. The full implementation of the YD and the operationalization of the SAATM at the continental level should not be delayed any longer. The benefits for the continent are undeniable.” said H.E. Victoire Sidémého Dzidudu, the Prime Minister of the Republic of Togo who spoke on behalf of H.E. Faure Essozimna Gnassingbé Eyadéma, President of Togo and Champion State of the SAATM.

During the three-hour Webinar, AFCAC gave a detailed presentation on the operationalization of the Executing Agency (EA), implementation status of the Joint Prioritized Action Plan developed with stakeholders and partners on the establishment of SAATM, and sustainable development of air transport in Africa. The webinar offered an opportunity for participants to discuss the current challenges including the delays in the operationalization of SAATM due to the COVID-19, and considered the restart and recovery strategies for the African air transport sector during and after COVID-19. The participants also discussed the opportunities and overall benefits associated with the liberalization of the African air transport through the full implementation of YD and SAATM. One of the key recommendations was to advocate and facilitate the involvement of more AU member states in the full implementation of the Yamoussoukro Decision and joining the Single African Air Transport Market (SAATM).

The event was marked by the Signing of agreements for the implementation of the SAATM activities: (i) Operational Assistance to SAATM States in Safety, Security and Environment Protection between AFCAC & ICAO; and (ii) Operational Assistance to Eligible Airlines in SAATM States to achieve IATA Standard Safety Assessment (ISSA) and IATA's Operational Safety Audit program (IOSA) (IOSA/ISSA) between AFCAC & IATA

Mr. Gabriel Lesa, President of the Bureau of AFCAC in his closing remarks read by Capt. Nuhu Musa, the DG of Nigerian Civil Aviation Authority concluded the event by emphasizing the need to foster an effective collaboration and coordination with stakeholders and development partners towards the full implementation of the Yamoussoukro Decision (YD) “We must take on board the lessons learnt in the past 5 years since establishment of the SAATM and the outcomes of this event today. Our discussions here today have universally affirmed the imperativeness of developing a sustainable air transport systems in Africa.” added Mr Lesa.

Notes to the Editor:

Benefits of Air Transport Liberalization through the YD and the SAATM

The SAATM through the full implementation of the Yamoussoukro Decision will contribute to the socio economic benefits of the African Continent and will also foster the actualization of the continent's integration as espoused by the African Union Agenda 2063. Air Transport liberalization will result in increased routes, reduced costs of travel to the African citizenry, increased trade, tourism, increase in direct employment and investments thereby resulting in economic growth (GDP) for the African States and the continent. So far, 34 member States have subscribed to the Solemn Commitment to implement the SAATM.

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