

INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION DIRECTORATE

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WORKSHOP CONCLUDES WITH ENHANCED DETERMINATION TO SPEARHEAD THE FULL OPERATIONALISATION OF SAATM, YAMOUSSOUKRO DECISION



Air transport experts and representatives of the African Union Member States, Regional Economic Communities (RECs), the African Civil Aviation Commission (AFCAC), the African Airlines Association (AFRAA), and the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) met in Accra, Ghana from 28th November to 2nd December 2022, to discuss the regulatory instruments of the Yamoussoukro Decision (YD) and Single African Air Transport Market (SAATM).

The workshop provided an opportunity to deliberate on various regulatory instruments including Powers, Functions, and Operations of the YD Executing Agency (AFCAC), Protection of Consumers and Regulations on Competition, Guidelines on External Policy for Negotiation of Air Services Agreements with Non-African States and Regions, Regulation on competition regulations, Dispute Settlement Mechanism and the revised African Civil Aviation Policy (AFCAP) while creating the platform to gather input from key partners on the key strategies and opportunities for accelerated implementation of the SAATM.

In Africa, where the traffic penetration still stands at 14.5%, a considerable number of passenger trips are unable to take place due to fare cost, flight availability, or service convenience. Thus improving connectivity through the full implementation of the Yamoussoukro Decision and SAATM is imperative.

With 35 African Union Member States that represent 90 per cent of the African Air transport market currently signed the Solemn Commitment and all the needed instruments already in place, the full operationalisation of SAATM remains the priority for the African Union to ensure the full liberalization of the air transport services.

Speaking on behalf of AUC Director of Infrastructure and Energy Department Dr Kamugisha Kazaura, Acting Head of Transport and Mobility Division Mr Eric Ntagengerwa, highlighted that the success of SAATM goes far beyond facilitating affordable and reliable air transport services on the continent. *“SAATM, one of the flagship projects of Agenda 2063, aspires to establish a single African air transport market with a direct positive influence on the success of Africa’s regional integration agenda through the improvement of transport connectivity between African capitals, facilitating the free movement of people, goods and services, and serving as one of the key enablers for the of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).”*

By eliminating the need for separate Bilateral Air Service Agreements (BASAs) between countries SAATM will also help improve businesses between countries thereby boosting socioeconomic development job creation, investment and innovation. Director General of the Ghana Civil Aviation Authority (GCAA) Charles Kraikue acknowledged the role of the SAATM in terms of fast-tracking growth, development, and regional integration in Africa, further indicating that the Republic of Ghana is one of the first signatories of the Solemn Commitment of SAATM.

Director of Air Transport with AFCAC Mrs Angeline Simana indicated that the AFCAC recently launched a program dubbed Pilot Implementation Project (PIP) intending to accelerate the implementation of the YD which will lead to the full and sustainable implementation of the SAATM. The pilot project incorporates 18 African Union Member States with favourable environments to accelerate SAATM. Accordingly, Cabo Verde, Côte d’Ivoire, Congo, Cameroun, Ethiopia, Ghana, Gabon, Kenya, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Niger, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa, Togo, and Zambia will be involved in the PIP programme.

Representative of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) Mr Adiron Alberto for his part recalled that air transport was greatly affected by COVID-19 and the recovery pace of the sector poises Africa to reposition itself and ensure that its share of the global aviation market is improved from the current 3% to become one of the fastest growing air transport markets globally.

At the closing of the workshop, participants indicated that the workshop has enriched their awareness of the regulatory instruments of SAATM and YD that have already been adopted by the African Union Executive Council and vowed to increase targeted interventions by their respective institutions to expedite the full operationalization and implementation of SAATM and YD.

Notes to the Editor:

About SAATM

The Single African Air Transport Market (SAATM) is a flagship project of the African Union Agenda 2063, an initiative of the African Union to create a single unified air transport market in Africa, the liberalization of civil aviation in Africa, and as an impetus to the Continent’s economic integration agenda.

The Declaration on the establishment of a Single Africa Air Transport Market, as a flagship project of the AU Agenda 2063 was adopted by the African Union (AU) Assembly in 2015 to expedite the implementation of the Yamoussoukro Decision (YD) of 1999 that provides a framework liberalisation in terms of market access between African States, the free exercise of traffic rights, the elimination of restrictions on ownership and the full liberalization of frequencies, fares, and capacities.

Benin, Burkina Faso, Botswana, Cape Verde, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Chad, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt, Ethiopia, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea Conakry, Guinea Bissau, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Mali, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Eswatini, Togo, Zambia, and Zimbabwe are the countries that signed the Solemn Commitment of SAATM.

For more information on the regulatory instruments of YD and SAATM please visit www.saatmbenefits.org

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