

Special Meeting of Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Member States
Outcome Summary

Accra, Ghana, 28 March 2017

The Special Meeting of ECOWAS Member States (the “Special Meeting”) was convened at Accra, Ghana, 28 March 2017 at 0900, on the occasion of the Second International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) Meeting on the Sustainable Development of Air Transport in Africa.

The Special Meeting was opened by Mr. Boubacar Djibo, Director, Air Transport Bureau, ICAO. Mr. Abdulai Alhassan, Deputy Director General, Finance and Administration, Ghana Civil Aviation Authority (GCAA) delivered welcoming remarks. A keynote address was delivered by Dr. Paul-Antoine Marie Ganemtoré, Project Director Air Transport, ECOWAS Commission, and Dr. Olumuyiwa Benard Aliu, President of the Council, ICAO, delivered a goodwill address. Mr. Simon Allotey, Director General, Ghana Civil Aviation Authority (GCAA), chaired the Special Meeting.

Presentations were provided by Dr. Paul-Antoine Marie Ganemtoré, Mr. Silué Sinaly, Director General, ANAC Côte d'Ivoire, and Ms. Iyabo Sosina, Secretary General, African Civil Aviation Commission (AFCAC). Under the leadership of Cpt. Edward Boyo, Managing Director, Overland Airways, a panel of experts considered the following topics related to the main theme of the Special Meeting (*Improving Flight Connections in the Region*), and deliberated as follows:

- The 15 Member States of the ECOWAS region, namely Benin, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and Togo, have significant populations, economic resources and air transport capacities are required to support trade and tourism, especially in landlocked or island States. However, intra-African air traffic is still relatively weak, with a 4-5 million passenger market, representing 22 per cent of total Africa traffic. Besides, there is a connectivity gap between West African and other regions.
- In order for the African continent, including States of the ECOWAS region, to take advantage of the socio-economic benefits of air transport, said States and industry stakeholders should address urgently a number of challenges, in particular:
 - Insufficient liberalization of market access prevents air transport in the region from developing as fully as it could. Traffic growth subsequent to full implementation of the Yamoussoukro Decision endorsed in July 2000 (YD) would reach between 12 and 35 per cent per year. In that regard, more States should implement by the end of 2107 the Single African Air Transport Market (SAATM), in line with the African Union's Agenda 2063. Activities of ECOWAS and ICAO to better demonstrate the positive impacts of air transport and its liberalization should be supported at high level, in particular through education and communication, the development of publications and databases, as well as the conduct of advocacy activities.
 - Excessive reliance on bilateral air services agreement, instead of multilateral agreement such as YD, stifles growth of air transport. In this respect, political will is also required for States to alleviate artificial barriers to sound competition.

- High operating costs for airlines, due in part to the high level of taxes, charges, and the challenges in accessing financing for the acquisition of aircraft, hamper airlines' ability to operate in a sustainable manner. States should support activities to assess the impact of levies, such as the study jointly developed by ECOWAS and the International Air Transport Association (IATA). To benefit from efficient aircraft at lower costs, airlines should approach lessors and financial institutions, especially to reduce interest rates. States should also take measures in order for the reduction of costs benefiting airlines to also benefit consumers. States should comply with ICAO's *Policies in the Field of Taxation in International Air Transport* (Doc 8632) and ICAO's *Policies on Charges for Airports and Air Navigation Services* (Doc 9082).
- The lack of commercial cooperation between airlines impacts their viability. Gap analyses should be conducted on frequency and capacity, and operators' route networks must be synchronized and made more cohesive. The ECOWAS project for the creation of a regional airline should be supported. States should refrain from adopting protectionist policies artificially maintaining operators in existence regardless of performance.
- Insufficient airport and air navigation services infrastructure impedes the development of air transport by preventing the aviation system from accommodating the growing demand for aviation. Efforts of ICAO, including through its West and Central Africa (WACAF) Office should be continued, in particular in the framework of the African Comprehensive Implementation Plan (AFI Plan) and AFCAC's AFI Cooperative Inspectorate Scheme (AFI-CIS). AFCAC and ECOWAS must continue to cooperate to support air transport and ensure that AFCAC exercise its mandate. ECOWAS should take the lead in the signing of the Memorandum of Cooperation (MoC) with AFCAC.
- The lack of skilled aviation personnel, in particular in the area of aircraft maintenance, constitutes another impediment to air transport growth. Cooperation should be enhanced between States for aircraft maintenance training capacities.
- In line with the actions identified by the Sixth Meeting of Directors General of Civil Aviation of the ICAO Africa-Indian Ocean Region (AFI DGAC/6), all States should implement the SAATM. All African States should implement the *Lomé Declaration on Air Cargo Development in Africa* (7 August 2014), as well as the *Antananarivo Declaration on the Sustainable Development of Air Transport in Africa* (27 March 2015). For the purpose of monitoring implementation and sharing experiences, States should submit information to the ICAO State Air Transport Action Plan System (SATAPS).
- The Special Meeting heard, and agreed on, the following proposals for the way forward:
 - Strengthen the Air Transport Structure and staffing of the ECOWAS Commission.
 - Strengthen the representation of ECOWAS in ICAO.
 - Establish a High Level Group to support the work of the ECOWAS Commission Steering Committee, to be chaired by Dr. Silué Sinaly, Director of Infrastructure at the Presidency of Cote d'Ivoire. The group will be composed of: Mr. Simon Allotey; Mr. Ousmane Issoufou Oubandawaki, Ministre Conseiller à la Présidence de la République du Niger, former Director General of ASECNA; Mr. Christian Folly-Kossi, President and

CEO, International Consulting and Advisory Services (ICAS), Advisor to several African Heads of State; and Cpt. Edward Boyo.

ICAO is committed to supporting ECOWAS Member States in the development of air transport, in particular under the *No Country Left Behind* (NCLB) initiative.

The Special Meeting was closed at 1230.

Simon Allotey

Chairperson of the Special Meeting