



African States commit to strengthen reciprocal aviation and tourism growth at Inaugural ICAO/UNWTO Ministerial Conference

For immediate release

Montréal and Santa Maria, Cabo Verde, 28 March 2019 – Bringing together African Ministers of Air Transport and Tourism for an inaugural Ministerial Conference hosted by Cabo Verde, the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) stressed important messages to their distinguished guests on their sectors' reciprocal socio-economic benefits.

In helping to open the high-level transport and tourism event, ICAO Council President Dr. Olumuyiwa Benard Aliu, and the Secretary-General of the UNWTO, Mr. Zurab Pololikashvili, complemented the points made by the President of the Republic of Cabo Verde, Mr. Jorge Carlos de Almeida Fonseca, its Minister of Tourism and Transport and Maritime Economy, Dr. Jose Goncalves, and the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, H.E. Moussa Faki Mahamat.

“Air transport and tourism are major and highly synergistic economic sectors which continue to deliver increasing contributions to global socio-economic prosperity, with a combined contribution to world GDP today of close to 14%,” Dr. Aliu told the ministers of government and senior industry leaders in attendance.

“However, in Africa today, the incredible economic potentials of air transport and tourism still remain largely untapped,” he underscored.

In recent years, Africa has accounted for a mere 5% of global tourist arrivals and 3% of global tourism spending, even despite modest recent growth attributable to the revival of the tourism industry in Northern Africa, and improvements to African air connectivity more generally.

Dr. Aliu indicated a variety of associated constraints, including capacity crunches at many African airports, the related lack of finance and investment for infrastructure development and modernization, persisting skilled education and training capacity gaps, and in some jurisdictions ill-conceived market, taxation, and visa facilitation regulation.

While highlighting such existing challenges, the ICAO President reminded his audience that “the African air transport market has the highest potential for growth out of all world regions.” He underscored that a variety of avenues, tools, resources and agreements for undertaking the necessary reforms already exist, citing the [Lomé Declaration](#) and its [Plan of Action](#), the launch of the Single African Air Transport Market (SAATM), the establishment of Africa’s Continental Free Trade Area (CFTA), [ICAO’s Long-term Vision for Air Transport Liberalization](#), the [Antananarivo Declaration and the Declaration and Framework for a Plan of Action for Development of Aviation Infrastructure in Africa](#).

He encouraged delegates to focus on developing pragmatic outcomes that will enhance air transport, increase air connectivity, and improve the investment climate, including through the realization of a dependable regulatory climate and the alignment of air transport and associated national development priorities.

“I am sure that through the continued cooperation of ICAO, the UNWTO, the African Union, and all of our diverse development partners and member States, the required technical expertise,

resources, and support to implement the outcome of this conference will be fully assured,” Dr. Aliu remarked.

“By working toward these objectives together, both here at this event and well into the future, we will be able to maximize the immense socio-economic benefits offered by air transport and tourism to the benefit of all Africans.”

Dr. Aliu concluded his address with gratitude to the Government of Cabo Verde for the leadership it has illustrated toward these objectives through its hosting of the conference, and to the UNWTO for its cooperation toward the organization of the event.

The conference was declared open by the President of the Republic of Cabo Verde, Mr. Jorge Carlos de Almeida Fonseca, with a total of 300 participants, including 21 Ministers of Air Transport and Tourism, from 34 States and 29 International organisations.

At the end of their deliberations the Ministers approved and adopted the Ministerial Declaration and Action Plan on Air Transport and Tourism Development in Africa. The Declaration calls for the bridging of air transport and tourism policies and the advancement of innovative and sustainable solutions to encourage air connectivity development as a means to deliver the sustainable development goals set forth under the African Union (AU) Agenda 2063 and the United Nations (UN)'s 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Through the Declaration, the Ministers also agreed to “raise political willingness to the highest level to mainstream the priorities of the two sectors in the national, regional and global development agendas.”

During his mission to Cabo Verde, the ICAO Council President met with the President, Prime Minister, and Minister of Tourism, Transport and Maritime Economy of the Republic of Cabo Verde, to discuss the State's progress on the development of aviation infrastructure and services. The Head of State expressed appreciation for the work undertaken by ICAO and the organization's collaboration with Cabo Verde. He indicated the State's deep commitment of to the maintenance of high aviation standards and to the development of the sector as a vital component of the economy. He emphasized efforts to strengthen regulatory autonomy and maintain good relations with ICAO, while developing Cabo Verde in to a strong and viable air transport hub.

Dr. Aliu commended Cabo Verde for the remarkable progress in the implementation of international aviation Standards and Recommended Practices and regional cooperation, recalling the efficient and effective management of the Oceanic airspace entrusted to Cabo Verde and its contribution to regional and international initiatives. The President thanked Cabo Verde for hosting the Banjul Accord Group Accident Investigation Agency (BAGAIA) and offered ICAO assistance, through its Regional office in Dakar, in areas such as Search and Rescue Organization, Performance Based Navigation, and the effort to establish an air transport hub. He called on the State to assist neighbouring States, in particular needy Portuguese-speaking countries.

The Council President also held bilateral meetings with heads of various organizations and institutions present, including the Commissioner for Infrastructure and Energy of the African Union Commission (AUC); the Secretary General of UNWTO; and held bilateral discussions on assistance and capacity-building priorities with Tourism and Air Transport Ministers from Angola, the Gambia, Madagascar, Seychelles and Zambia, under the framework of ICAO's 'No Country Left Behind'. Dr Aliu was accompanied by the Director of ICAO's Air Transport Bureau, Mr. Boubacar Djibo; the ICAO Regional Director for Western and Central Africa, Mr. Mam Sait Jallow; and several Representatives of the ICAO Council.



ICAO Council President Dr. Olumuyiwa Benard Aliu addressed the First ICAO/UNWTO Ministerial Conference on Tourism and Air Transport in Africa. Noting that the African air transport market has the highest potential for growth out of all world regions, he encouraged delegates to focus on developing pragmatic outcomes that will enhance air transport, increase air connectivity, and improve the investment climate, including through the realization of a dependable regulatory climate and the alignment of air transport and associated national development priorities.

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About ICAO

A specialized agency of the United Nations, ICAO was created in 1944 to promote the safe and orderly development of international civil aviation throughout the world. It sets standards and regulations necessary for aviation safety, security, efficiency, capacity and environmental protection, amongst many other priorities. The Organization serves as the forum for cooperation in all fields of civil aviation among its 192 Member States.

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