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Agenda Item 35: Economic Regulation of International Air Transport — Policy

AIR TRANSPORT ACTIVITIES BEING UNDERTAKEN IN THE EASTERN AFRICAN, SOUTHERN AFRICAN AND THE INDIAN OCEAN (EA-SA-IO) REGION

(Presented by 19 Member States² of the Common Market for the Eastern and Southern States
(COMESA))

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Information Paper presents an overview of air transport activities being undertaken in the Eastern African, Southern African and the Indian Ocean (EA-SA-IO) Region leveraging on the mandate of the African Civil Aviation Commission (AFCAC) and supported by the European Union (EU) for a period of four (4) years under the European Development Fund (EDF 11). Programme implementation is being coordinated by the Programme Implementation Unit hosted by the COMESA on behalf of the other four (4) Regional Economic Communities (RECs) namely: East African Community (EAC), Intergovernmental Authority for Development (IGAD), Indian Ocean Commission (IOC) and Southern African Development Community (SADC). This paper focuses on ongoing initiatives that will improve air transport in the region such as the implementation of the Single African Air Transport Market (SAATM), strengthening of regulatory and institutional capacity of civil aviation institutions and improving air navigation efficiency.

Action:

The Assembly is invited to:

- a) note the information contained in this paper;
- b) take cognizance of the project results;
- c) Support; and facilitate implementation of identified goals and programme.

¹ English and French versions provided by COMESA

² Burundi, Comoros, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Kenya, Libya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Rwanda, Seychelles, Sudan, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Air transport sector is crucial and has the potential to contribute to employment, trade, tourism and support the industrialization processes. As a result, a number of policies, frameworks, instruments, and protocols have been developed and implemented at national, regional, and continental levels to promote growth of the air transport sector but with limited success. The development of the sector remains a priority to the EA-SA-IO region and thus, has continued to collaborate on the basis of the Protocols that provide the objectives and scope as well as basis of institutional mechanisms for cooperation and integration. Over the years the region has shown the potential to grow economically, however, non-liberalization of the air transport market is holding back development and growth thus resulting in higher transport costs and long travel times.

1.2. The African Union (AU) launched the SAATM in January 2018 to ensure liberalization and full integration of the African air transport market. The pillars of SAATM include promoting economic integration, strong institutional and regulatory frameworks, harmonization, safety, security, enabling technology infrastructure and capacity building. The region cannot maintain the desired growth in the aviation industry if it cannot liberalize air transport, harmonize and implement legal, institutional, and organizational reforms of the sector.

1.3. In this regard, the implementation of the Yamoussoukro Decision (YD) and operationalization of SAATM in the EA-SA-IO region will bring costs down and allow more people to afford air travel. Seamless operations will positively contribute towards market integration; hence air transport market integration, enhanced technologies, capacity building and institutional development and reform will be achieved.

1.4. This support to Air Transport Sector Development (SATSD) programme aims to support air transport market integration, strengthening regulatory and institutional capacity for the aviation sector, and improving air navigation efficiency. The overall objective of the programme is: “To contribute to the development of the air transport sector in the region”. The specific objectives are:

- operationalization of SAATM;
- strengthening of regulatory and institutional capacity of civil aviation institutions in EASA-IO region; and
- improving air navigation efficiency in the region.

2. DISCUSSION

2.1 The programme has adopted a participatory approach in the implementation of the activities where both national and regional institutions are expected to play a critical role in achieving the three key result areas as follows:

2.2 **Result 1: Operationalization of SAATM**

- a) *Sub result 1:* Support the signing of solemn commitment to the implementation of 1999 YD and establishment of SAATM by Member/Partner States in the region who have not signed, through awareness campaigns, lobbying, advocacy and development and implementation of regional institutional frameworks and instruments to further the implementation of YD.
- b) *Sub result 2:* Support the operationalization of joint competition rules and regulations through dissemination, advocacy, and capacity building.

- c) *Sub result 3:* Enhanced capacity for a regional model for sustainable air transport market development by signing of a Multilateral Air Service Agreement (MASA) to facilitate air traffic movements within an integrated and liberalized market. Activity to be achieved through development of a regional model that will ensure sustenance of the resulting air transport market in addition to training of air transport personnel to cope with the new market environment.

2.3 institutions

Result 2: Strengthening regulatory and institutional capacity of civil aviation

- a) *Sub result 1:* Facilitate separation of Civil Aviation Authority regulatory functions from operational functions. This will be accomplished through development of new legislations and review of existing ones to foster effectiveness, neutrality, and accountability.
- b) *Sub result 2:* Facilitate capacity building in the aviation sector for the purpose of improving managerial and technical competence to run and the business in an integrated air transport market with evolving technology and business environment.
- c) *Sub result 3:* Improved gender sensitivity and environment mainstreaming in the aviation sector through adoption of gender sensitive approach to equality in the workplace, diversity and inclusiveness, coaching and mentoring in support of leadership, and partnerships for gender equality in aviation. This activity is to be achieved largely through dedicated training workshops/seminars, and facilitation in development and implementation of gender sensitive policies and regulations.

2.4

Result 3: Improved air navigation efficiency:

- a) *Sub result 1:* Enhanced airspace coordination for Regional Seamless Upper air space through implementation of Flexible Use of Airspace (FUA) in the upper airspace with enhanced civil-military coordination and implementation of ICAO Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPS).
- b) *Sub result 2:* Facilitate data sharing through centralized regional aeronautical information databases through development of a framework that will support sharing of regional aeronautical information databases for seamless operations.

2.5

Aviation stakeholders such as Member/Partner States Ministries responsible for Civil Aviation, Civil Aviation Authorities (CAAs), Airport Operators, Air Navigation Service Providers (ANSPs), Airline Operators, Aviation Training Organizations (ATOs) and international/regional/national aviation organizations/ associations are critical players in the programme, and their participation will ensure achievement of the intended results.

3. CONCLUSION

3.1 In conclusion, the Assembly is invited to note the progress of air transport activities being undertaken in the EA-SA-IO region and support the implementation of the programme as outlined in the Executive Summary of this Information Paper.