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**MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE
ON AVIATION SAFETY IN AFRICA,
16-20 JULY 2012
ABUJA, NIGERIA**

AU/EXP/AT/Decl. (IV)

**ABUJA DECLARATION
ON AVIATION SAFETY IN AFRICA**

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AVIATION SAFETY IN AFRICA**

We, African Ministers responsible for Civil Aviation, meeting in Abuja, Nigeria from 19 to 20 July 2012, on the occasion of the Conference on aviation safety in Africa organized by the African Civil Aviation Commission (AFCAC) under the auspices of the African Union Commission (AUC);

Mindful of the Convention on International Civil Aviation done in Chicago on the 7th December 1944;

Mindful of the Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community signed in Abuja, Nigeria, in June 1991;

Mindful of the Yamoussoukro Decision relating to the liberalisation of Air Transport in Africa done in Yamoussoukro on 14th November 1999;

Mindful of the Constitutive Act of the African Union (AU) adopted in Lomé, Togo, on 11 July 2000, particularly Articles 14, 15 and 16 thereof which entrust the African Union Commission with the role of coordination in the transport, communication and tourism sectors;

Mindful of the African Civil Aviation Policy (AFCAP) adopted by the Second Conference of the AU Ministers of Transport, in Luanda, Angola on 25 November 2011 and the strategies and commitments outlined therein;

Mindful of the new Constitution of the African Civil Aviation Commission (AFCAC), a specialised agency of the African Union, that came into force provisionally on 11 May 2010;

Mindful of the role of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) as a framework for the development of Africa;

Considering the Declaration adopted by the Second Conference of AU Ministers responsible for Transport held in Luanda, Angola from 24 to 25 November 2011, which Declaration was subsequently endorsed by the Summit of the Heads of State and Government, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia on 27 January 2012;

Considering the importance of aviation safety in air transport industry development world-wide, and its impact on the national economic development particularly in Africa;

Considering the compelling need to continuously improve aviation safety in Africa and the need to urgently find immediate and sustainable resolution to deficiencies in safety oversight;

Considering the Comprehensive Regional Implementation Plan for aviation safety in Africa (AFI PLAN) of the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO);

Having considered the Report of the Experts who met in Abuja, Nigeria, from 16 to 18 July 2012;

Concerned by:

1. unilateral operational bans imposed on some African Airlines by EU , which limits participation of African Airlines in the international Air Transport market and the resultant negative impact on the national economies, and may lead to a robust action being taken by African States against airlines from EU member states ;
2. insufficient number of competent/skilled aviation professionals for ensuring aviation safety in Africa;
3. inadequacy of financial resources to ensure aviation safety;
4. uneven implementation of the Yamoussoukro Decision.

Recalling:

1. the importance of air transport in the economic development of the Continent particularly the attendant increased interactions among peoples, and the wealth creation resulting from the various forms of exchanges so facilitated;
2. the challenges arising from the globalization of economies and the need for Africa to fully and effectively implement the 1999 Yamoussoukro Decision relating to the Liberalization of the Air Transport Markets in Africa;
3. the primordial leadership, coordination, harmonization, facilitation and advocacy role of the African Union Commission in the building of economic infrastructure for Africa's development through the Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA) and its Institutional Architecture for Infrastructure Development in Africa (IAIDA);

4. the role of the African Civil Aviation Commission (AFCAC), a specialized agency of the African Union in the development of the air transport industry in Africa and in particular as the executing agency of the Yamoussoukro Decision of 1999;
5. the crucial roles of the Regional Economic Communities (RECs), Regional Safety Oversight Organisations (RSOOs) and the Cooperative Development of Operational Safety and Continuing Airworthiness Programmes (COSCAPs) in the implementation of regional aviation safety and continuing airworthiness programmes;
6. the role of the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) and in particular the African Representatives on the Council of ICAO in fostering the development of international civil aviation;

Reaffirm:

1. the urgent need to implement national, regional and continent-wide strategies on aviation safety in the African continent with a view to promoting air transport as a mode of transport which enhances Africa's development and integration;
2. the urgent need for the establishment of regional safety oversight, search and rescue and accident investigation organisations as means of developing and supporting State capabilities to implement international obligations and protect users;
3. the need for a permanent mechanism of consultation between the African Union Commission and the European Commission, to address the interdiction of African Airlines' access to the European air space.

Welcome the various initiatives undertaken by sector organizations in the continent and by Regional Economic Communities (RECs), notably:

- The implementation of the Cooperative Development of Operational Safety and Continuing Airworthiness Programmes (COSCAPs) and Regional Safety Oversight Organisations (RSOOs) and the establishment of Regional Accident Investigation Agencies (RAIAs);
- The IATA Operational Safety Audit (IOSA) and the Airports Council International (ACI) Airports Excellence (APEX) partnership for Safety Programmes in addition to the ICAO initiatives.

Undertake to:

1. Meet our States safety obligations under the Convention on International Civil Aviation (the Chicago Convention), including ensuring effective safety oversight;
2. ensure the implementation of the policy objectives, commitments, regulations and strategies on aviation safety as adopted in the African Civil Aviation Policy (AFCAP);
3. ensure that aviation safety is given its due consideration in States' National Development Plans;
4. accelerate the establishment of, strengthen, and maintain autonomous Civil Aviation Authorities with independent regulatory oversight or delegate their functions to Regional Safety Oversight Organisations (RSOOs) or other African States;
5. ensure the provision of sustainable sources of funding and resources to carry out effective safety oversight and regulation of the aviation industry
6. support the effective implementation of the ICAO Global Aviation Safety Plan (GASP), the Comprehensive Regional Implementation Plan for Aviation Safety in Africa (AFI PLAN) and the AFI Cooperative Inspectorate Scheme (AFI CIS);
7. ensure the resolution of all Significant Safety Concerns (SSCs) and deficiencies, including the implementation of a thorough and documented air operator certification process;
8. ensure progressive increase in the Effective Implementation (EI) rate of ICAO's eight Safety Oversight Critical Elements to no less than the world average;
9. ensure the reduction of the rate of aircraft accidents and fatalities in Africa to global average;
10. ensure that all States in Africa attain overall maturity level 3 in each Global Safety Initiative (GSI) of the Global Aviation Safety Plan (GASP);
11. ensure that Aviation Training organisations in Africa attain reputation as international centres of excellence;
12. ensure the availability of sufficient and competent/skilled aviation professionals;

13. support the African Civil Aviation Commission (AFCAC) to enable it to effectively play its roles; and
14. Request ICAO, AFCAC, IATA, ACI and CANSO to contribute to the AU process on post conflict or natural disaster reconstruction and development as regards to aviation.

Decide to:

- a) Work jointly under the auspices of AU to realize and implement the measures contained in the Plan of Action and the safety targets adopted by this Declaration within the stipulated timeframes;
- b) Direct AFCAC to establish effective monitoring and reporting mechanisms for this Declaration, other resolutions and regional initiatives;
- c) take all necessary measures to ensure safe air transport operations in Africa, including a thorough and documented air operator certification process and an effective oversight of all African airline operators;
- d) take measures to create effective Regional Aviation Safety Oversight Organisations (RSOOs) and Regional Accident Investigation Agencies (RAIAs) as a means of developing State safety capabilities;
- e) urge the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) to transit their Cooperative Development of Operational Safety and Continuing Airworthiness Programmes (COSCAPs) into RSOOs;
- f) urge States to refrain from duplication of services in joining more than one RSOO;
- g) direct the African Civil Aviation Commission to develop cooperative schemes to facilitate bilateral and multilateral collaboration in accident investigation and search and rescue;
- h) ensure that the appropriate authorities sign with the African Civil Aviation Commission the Memorandum of Understanding on the AFI Cooperative Inspectorate Scheme (AFI CIS) as well as contribute inspectors and utilise the assistance available through the Scheme;
- i) demonstrate commitment and willingness to effectively participate in regional cooperation initiatives as a means to enhancing safety oversight capabilities;
- j) provide resources and support the implementation of ICAO State-specific Plans of Action aimed at addressing safety deficiencies and make use of the assistance available through ICAO;

- k) expedite the implementation of the conclusions and recommendations of the Special Africa-Indian Ocean Regional Air Navigation (AFI RAN) Meeting held in Durban, South Africa in November 2008;
- l) ensure the implementation of the recommendations of the AFI Planning and Implementation Regional Group (APIRG) and the Regional Aviation Safety Group (RASG-AFI) Meetings;
- m) take appropriate steps to accelerate the ratification of the Constitution of the African Civil Aviation Commission and ensure that the contributions are paid timely and arrears owed to AFCAC are settled fully;
- n) Urge the relevant authorities to accede to and ratify relevant international air law instruments and, as a matter of priority, ratify the Cape Town Convention and its Protocols to facilitate acquisition of modern aircraft fleet;
- o) support the US Safe Skies for Africa Initiative the IATA Operational Safety Audit (IOSA), the ACI APEX and other initiatives and partnerships for aviation safety in Africa;
- p) ensure active participation at all High Level meetings and other events of ICAO that will promote safety;

Make a Solemn Appeal to the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), the African Development Bank (ADB), and all Civil Aviation development partners to support the aviation safety programme of the African Union.

Urge African States and Regional Economic Communities (RECs) to foster cooperation in the air transport sub-sector.

Request the African Union Commission to submit for endorsement this Declaration to the next Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union.

Adopt the Plan of Action and High Level Safety Targets annexed to this Declaration.

Done and adopted in Abuja, Federal Republic of Nigeria on this 20th day of July 2012.
