

**WELCOME ADDRESS BY THE DIRECTOR GENERAL OF NIGERIAN
CIVIL AVIATION AUTHORITY (NCAA) DR. HAROLD DEMUREN AT THE
ICAO AIR TRANSPORT SYMPOSIUM HOLDING AT ABUJA, NIGERIA
FROM 28TH - 30TH APRIL, 2008**

Distinguished Chairman, Senate Committee on Aviation, Senator (Elder)
Anyim Ude;

Honourable Chairman, House Committee on Aviation,

Honourable Minister of State 1 (Air Transport), Mr. Felix Hassan Hyat,

The President of ICAO Council, Mr. Roberto Kobeh González,

Permanent Representatives on the ICAO Council here present,

Director of ICAO Air Transport Bureau, Mrs. Folasade Odutola

The Secretary-General of African Civil Aviation Commission (AFCAC), Mr.
Boubacar Djibo,

The Secretary General of African Airline Association (AFRAA), Mr.
Christian Folli-Kossi,

Representative of Regional and International Organizations,

Chief Executives of Aviation Parastatals,

Distinguished Participants,

Gentlemen of the Press,

Ladies and Gentlemen

It is a great honour and privilege for me, on behalf of the good people and Government of Nigeria, to welcome you all to this "Air Transport Symposium" which we are hosting in the beautiful city of Abuja. On behalf of the Nigerian aviation industry, I wish to sincerely express my deep appreciation to ICAO for giving us the opportunity to host this symposium in Nigeria. This is no doubt an indication of ICAO's commitment and support for Nigeria and indeed Africa towards ensuring safe air transportation and sustainable growth for the African aviation industry.

This symposium is coming a week after the successful hosting of the Global Aviation Safety Roadmap Workshop by Nigeria. As you are aware, the workshop was the aftermath of the new Comprehensive Regional Implementation Plan for Aviation Safety in Africa (AFI Plan) which was adopted at the ICAO 36th Assembly. At the end of the workshop, the Banjul Accord group member States all committed themselves to the full implementation of the AFI Plan using the programme management methodology contained in the Global Aviation Safety Roadmap.

As we pursue the objectives of safety, security and the environment we must not forget that a major challenge for the airlines is that of profitability. We need airlines that are safe, secured and profitable.

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, there is no doubt that liberalisation has brought tremendous growth to our industry in terms of improved services, better choices and competitive fares for the customer, wider route networks for the airlines, increase in aircraft movement and passenger traffic as well as encouragement of Public Private Partnership, amongst others. Liberalisation has equally brought about several challenges in terms of safety, security, the environment and consumer protection, especially from the regulatory point of view.

Consumers have a right to be concerned about their safety and security as we embrace liberalization and de-regulation. I'd like to re-assure the traveling public, that as we continue liberalization and de-regulation of the industry, safety is not de-regulated. Instead, higher safety standards and more stringent regulatory requirements are imposed. For this reason, Nigeria is totally committed to the implementation of the resolutions of the Workshop on the Global Aviation Safety Roadmap and the principles of Safety Management Systems. This is the only way to ensure sustainable growth of the aviation industry.

Ladies and Gentlemen, the Nigerian Government strongly supports the full implementation of the Yamoussoukro Decision (YD) however there are still few hesitant States. It is sad that up till today you still have to travel through Europe to connect other African countries while the foreign airlines dominate the African market. It is crucial that African states give access to African airlines both for intra-African connection and international flights.

I am also very delighted that this Symposium will once again address many other challenges, some of which were extensively discussed during the 5th World Air Transport Conference. The conference will equally examine the emerging problem of economic regulation of airports, air navigation and the environment. The high calibre of the moderators, speakers, discussants and participants gathered here, guarantees that this symposium will come up with far reaching conclusions that will address the challenges facing our industry and improve air transportation globally.

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, I wish to once again welcome you all to Nigeria and hope that you will find some time to enjoy our beautiful city of Abuja, Nigeria's new Federal Capital. I would once again like to welcome the President of ICAO, to Nigeria. Your presence at this symposium is a great honour to our country. It is a show of your commitment to the development of air transportation in Africa. I wish you all fruitful deliberations and a pleasant stay in Nigeria.

Thank you.

Abuja

April 28, 2008.