



ICAO Council President hails AU single African air transport market launch as key to continent's economic development

For immediate release

Montréal and Addis Ababa, 30 January 2018 – Addressing African leaders at the 30th African Union (AU) Summit this past weekend in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, ICAO Council President Dr. Olumuyiwa Benard Aliu praised the official launch of the Single African Air Transport Market (SAATM), noting that it represented an historic milestone for Africa and Africans.

“This new and more liberalized air services framework stands to deliver tremendous new economic benefits and potential to this continent,” Dr. Aliu remarked, “and by steadily enhancing regional and global connectivity, continent-wide, air transport has continued to foster economic growth in Africa in terms of enhanced travel and tourism and other vital trade activities.”

Referring to the lower than expected rates of connectivity and competitiveness still persisting regionally, President Aliu underscored that aviation supports almost seven million jobs and generates more than 72 billion dollars in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in Africa.

“Let us acknowledge therefore, that with this launch today of the Single African Air Transport Market, we are taking together a very major step in enabling the Yamoussoukro Decision’s fuller potential, and in concretely advancing the implementation and objectives of the AU Agenda 2063,” he stressed. “Certainly the 23 States which have signalled their early participation in this new market will be reaping the initial and quite significant socio-economic benefits it will help to deliver, including toward the realization of Agenda 2063 and the attainment of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals adopted under Agenda 2030.”

Recognizing that increased African air travel demand must be commensurate with expansion and modernization of Africa’s airport and air navigation systems infrastructure, the ICAO Council President encouraged African States to take pragmatic measures to build a transparent, stable and predictable investment climate to support aviation development, and to integrate aviation development planning into their national development and foreign economic cooperation platforms.

“No fewer than 24 international airports in Africa will be saturated and unable to handle more traffic in just two years’ time,” he stressed.

Dr Aliu further underscored ICAO’s continued support to States in Africa, and around the world, through its *No Country Left Behind* initiative, the Global Plans it sets out for Aviation Safety, Air Navigation Capacity and Efficiency, and most recently Aviation Security.

“In this connection, we have implemented specific programmes to assist African States including the AFI Plan and AFI SECFAL Plan and the Human Resources Development Fund to provide assistance to African States in aviation safety, security and facilitation, and training and capacity building,” he commented.

President Aliu reiterated in closing that ICAO, as the UN specialized aviation agency, will continue to play a leadership role in ensuring that aviation growth brings greater socio-economic benefit to Africa, its citizens, States, industries and economies at large.

“We have taken great strides together in cooperating more successfully on a number of air transport and sustainability priorities, and by continuing to work together, through ICAO, even greater growth and prosperity await the African continent in the years ahead,” he concluded.

While in Addis Ababa, President Aliu had the opportunity to meet with the President of Angola, H.E. João Lourenço, and with Dr. Ibrahim Mayaki, CEO of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), with whom he discussed matters of mutual interest relating to capacity building, aviation policy and regulations, the development of aviation infrastructure in Africa, and the need for greater advocacy of air transport as an essential means of transportation for regional and global connectivity.



While in Addis Ababa at the 2018 AU Summit, praising the official launch of the Single African Air Transport Market (SAATM), ICAO Council President Dr. Olumuyiwa Benard Aliu had the opportunity to meet with the President of Angola, H.E. João Lourenço (left), and with Dr. Ibrahim Mayaki, CEO of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD, right), with whom he discussed matters of mutual interest relating to capacity building, aviation policy and regulations, the development of aviation infrastructure in Africa, and the need for greater advocacy of air transport as an essential means of transportation for regional and global connectivity.

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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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