

**MESSAGE OF H.E. DR. ELHAM M.A. IBRAHIM, COMMISSIONER FOR
INFRASTRUCTURE AND ENERGY, AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION TO THE 44TH
AFRICAN AIRLINES ASSOCIATION ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY AND
SUMMIT
SANDTON, JOHANNESBURG, 18 – 20 NOVEMBER 2012**

- **Honourable Minister of Transport of the Republic of South Africa,**
- **Distinguished Secretary General of AFRAA,**
- **Distinguished Directors General and Chief Executive Officers of African Airlines,**
- **Distinguished Guests,**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen,**
- **All Protocols Observed**

On behalf of the African Union Commission, I would like to express our profound gratitude to the Government of the Republic of South Africa and the South African Airways providing a home to the 44th AFRAA Annual General Assembly and Summit. The role played by the Republic of South Africa over the years in building a strong air transport industry as well as the entire transport sector in Africa is well noted and appreciated.

I would also like to thank Dr. Elijah Chingosho, Secretary General of the African Airlines Association who is working tirelessly not only to develop air transport in Africa but also carrying out advocacy aimed at positioning African airlines in the global market. In that regard, he is reshaping the confidence of the worldwide travelling public in African Airlines. As a result, more and more foreign airlines and stakeholders are negotiating commercial arrangements such as code sharing, alliances and franchising with African Airlines.

Furthermore, Dr. Chingosho has made sure that the relation between AFRAA and AU Commission is sealed by the signature of a Memorandum of Understanding.

**Honourable Minister
Ladies and Gentlemen**

The African Union Commission welcomes the African Airlines Association's initiative aimed at assisting African airlines to survive the stiff competition by working together. One of these initiatives is the joint purchase of fuel to manage their fuel cost which is considered as the top operational cost element of airlines. Some Airlines are also taking proactive action by acquiring new technologies which are fuel saving and environmentally friendly through fleet renewal. In addition, it is further required that States invest in modernization of aviation infrastructure such as airports and air navigation facilities.

In accordance with statistics published by various stakeholders, there is no doubt that the air traffic in Africa is among the fastest growing worldwide. The world recognises the continent's economic potential and expansion which offer great opportunities. Hence, there is the need for speeding up the process of liberalisation of air transport markets in the continent while looking forward to gradually expanding air services with the rest of the world. African air transport has a greater role to play in achieving sustainable development in the continent.

The African Union Commission and the African Airlines Association understand that, African airlines, in competing altogether, should be engaged in fair and sustainable competition when providing air transport users with efficient, affordable, secure and safe connectivity in the continent and beyond. In that regard, the African Airlines Association is actively involved in the implementation of the Yamoussoukro Decision on the Liberalisation of Air Services in Africa.

In that context, the African Airlines Association has tirelessly contributed to the successful implementation of the Yamoussoukro Decision by participating in such related activities as the recently completed Study on the Continental Evaluation of the implementation of the Yamoussoukro Decision and the ongoing Study on the Operationalization of the Executing Agency of the Yamoussoukro Decision whose functions have been entrusted to the African Civil Aviation Commission.

As regards intra-Africa connectivity, the African Airlines Association has come up with a widely endorsed programme concerning coordination of African airlines' schedules whose objective is to revamp cooperation among African airlines, eradicate wasteful competition, provide tailored air service to users and increase profitability of the airlines.

In terms of policy, the Yamoussoukro Declaration is completed by a comprehensive African Common Aviation Policy in whose development the African Airlines Association also played a key role. Its implementation would largely depend on the enforcement of effective regulations to be elaborated by technical institutions.

The African Airlines Association is currently joining efforts with the African Civil Aviation Commission to have international air law instruments especially the Cape Town Convention ratified by African States. This Convention is instrumental for African Airlines to renew their fleet under reasonable financial conditions.

I wish you all the best in your deliberations.

Thank you.