



51st AFRAA Annual General

Opening Remarks by Adiron Alberto, Representative of the International Civil Aviation Organization

GOODWILL MESSAGE

Ladies and Gentlemen

1. On behalf of the ICAO Council President, Dr. Olumuyiwa Benard Aliu and Secretary General, Dr. Fang Liu, I wish to express my heartfelt appreciation to the Government and people of the Republic of Mauritius for the warm hospitality. My appreciation also goes to Air Mauritius for hosting this very important event.
2. Let me extend my gratitude to the Secretary General of AFRAA, Mr. Abdérahmane Berthé, for inviting ICAO to attend the 51st AFRAA Annual General Assembly under the theme: “*Success in an integrated and interconnected Africa*”. The two Organizations have a history of close and continuous collaboration on matters of common interest and participation in each other’s events attests to this cooperation.

3. As anticipated, the global growth of aviation continues on pace and current projections for Africa indicates that the continent is poised to become one of the fastest growing air transport markets. This growth will strongly support the realization of the goals of AU Agenda 2063 and UN Agenda 2030 and aspirations of the MoveAfrica, Branding Africa Tourism and African Continental Free Trade Area towards increased and sustainable development, greater prosperity for all, and the accelerated integration of sustainable Africa's economies and social development.

4. However, this growth requires commensurate modern airport, air navigation and other related infrastructure to meet the future capacity expectations. Critical to the growth are the new air traffic management technologies, human resources development, integration of air and surface transport at airports, being prerequisites of robust international air connectivity that satisfies public and business community demands.

Ladies and Gentlemen

5. Through its policy and regulatory framework, ICAO continues to promote, guide and foster development of good operating and regulatory environment to maximize the benefits of aviation within the ICAO NCLB Initiative to ensure safe, secure,

affordable, accessible, efficient, resilient and environmentally responsible civil aviation.

6. Indeed, there are inevitable challenges to meet the expectation of the travelling public which are mainly related to safety, security and facilitation, as well as reaping the expected economic benefits from the liberalization of air transport such as creation of jobs, development of trade and tourism, and increase in GDP. However these can be addressed through appropriate political will and government commitment together with adequate investment in the sector coupled with effective cooperation and collaboration amongst all Stakeholders.
7. Consequently, there is a need for effective implementation of Abuja safety targets and Windhoek aviation security targets which should be supplemented through human resource development. Joint efforts in implementing the aforementioned targets will lead to the achievement of ICAO strategic objectives and the materialization of the NCLB Initiative.

Ladies and Gentlemen

8. In line with ICAO Assembly Resolution concerning the consolidated statement of continuing ICAO policies in the air transport field, Africa has a regional liberalization approach

through the adoption of the YD and the SAATM which will create a favourable environment in which air transport can thrive and prosper, and realize consumers benefit from enhanced services, additional choices and better value. There is, therefore, need for dedicated efforts to expedite regulatory convergence in the areas of consumer protection regulations, competition and taxation policies for international air transport.

9. ICAO continues to support the implementation of the continental declarations on Air Cargo development and on the sustainable development of air transport in Africa in line with the recommendation of the sixth Worldwide Air Transport Conference. Air cargo is increasingly becoming an indispensable component of e-commerce. States and aviation stakeholders should embrace the development of regional approach for air cargo liberalization.
10. The prevalence of proliferation of various taxes on the sale and use of air transport in Africa is considered counterproductive resulting in reduced revenue and diminishing the demand for air travel. No negate the perception that taxes on air transport are sustainable ways for governments to generate revenue, States should build robust cost-benefit analyses for decision-makers to show the impacts of excessive levies on aviation growth.

11. As regard to development of Aviation Infrastructure in Africa, the Fourth ICAO World Aviation Forum outcomes led towards the adoption of the Declaration and Framework for Plan of Action. The main objective is to attract private investors to aviation infrastructure projects which particular focus will be on building a transparent, stable and predictable investment climate; creating good governance such as enabling institutional, legal and regulatory frameworks; monitoring and evaluation mechanisms; and consolidating planning and development efforts for aviation, tourism and trade infrastructure in an appropriately balanced development of transport modes, including multi-modal and urban planning initiative.

Ladies and Gentlemen

12. The transformation and evolution in Aviation today is at very fast pace as witnessed by increasing application and operation of Unmanned Aircraft Systems, the launch of autonomous, suborbital, and supersonic activities, as well as other innovations such as artificial intelligence and block chain technologies. Africa proactively must join ICAO to embrace these transformations, and innovatively prepare for the related regulatory frameworks and infrastructure to keep the sector vital, efficient, and fully responsive to the needs and expectations of modern businesses and societies.

13. It is further essential that Africa proactively seeks out and integrates the new entrants to the world of aircraft design and operation more meaningfully into the existing regulatory frameworks and processes. The processes themselves must also become more responsive in terms of addressing and accommodating innovations more rapidly than is the case today.

Ladies and Gentlemen

14. Before concluding my statement, I would like to inform you that ICAO, for the very first time, is organizing in Nairobi, Kenya, from 29 June to 1 July 2020, an Africa/Middle East Air Transport Symposium on promoting and harnessing the benefits of liberalization, and to discuss issues experienced by the two regions for successful integration and interconnection of air transport in support of ICAO NCLB initiative.

15. Beforehand, ICAN2019 will be held in Aqaba, the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan from 2 to 6 December 2019, where States will conduct multiple bilateral including regional (plurilateral) air services negotiations or consultations.

16. Please let me once again express ICAO's deep appreciation to the Secretary General of AFRAA for the invitation to attend this

event. I wish you all very productive proceedings especially so as we commemorate and celebrate the 75th Anniversary of the signing of the Chicago convention. Kindly join us in our anniversary the climax of which will be on 7th December 2019.

17. Thank you