

SG's OPENING REMARKS

- H.E Paramasivum Pillay Vyapoory, Acting President of the Republic of Mauritius
- The President of AFRAA and CEO of Air Mauritius, Mr. Somas Appavou;
- The Director-General and CEO of IATA, Mr. Alexandre de Juniac;
- The Representative of the African Union Commissioner for Infrastructure & Energy, Dr. Amani Abou-Zeid,
- Chief Executives and representatives of Member Airlines,
- Industry Partners and Sponsors,
- Members of the Media,
- Distinguished guests, ladies, and gentlemen

It is a great pleasure for me to welcome you all to our 51st General Assembly in Mauritius, one of Africa's great destinations, 2,000 miles off the coast of Africa mainland.

Allow me to recognize the organizations attending our 51st Assembly. Among others, I would like to name ICAO WACAF, AFCAC, PAPU, TIACA,

I wish to express our profound gratitude to His Excellency the President of the Republic of Mauritius, for being our guest of honour.

Since our arrival, we are enjoying the warm welcome and gracious hospitality extended to us by Air Mauritius and the people of the Republic of Mauritius.

I wish to express my gratitude to the CEO and all the team members of Air Mauritius for their commitment to this General Assembly. Air Mauritius has hosted the two major events of our association in 2019 namely the Aviation Stakeholders Convention which was successfully hosted in May and this 51st Annual General Assembly.

Air Mauritius has been a member of AFRAA since 1985 and has been very active in the activities of the association and they are contributing tremendously to the aviation industry in Africa. Under the leadership of Mr. Somas Appavou, Air Mauritius is engaged in a fleet modernization plan and is flying to 22 destinations and over 100 destinations with codeshare partners.

Since its inception in 1968, AFRAA has grown to 44 member-airlines representing more than 85% of the African traffic and 42 industry partners.

On behalf of AFRAA members, I wish to thank our industry partners who are supporting and helping AFRAA to fulfil its mandate.

African traffic represents less than 3% of world traffic while Africa carries 16% of the world's population. There is still a huge potential for the growth of Air Transport in Africa.

2019 is a special year in the history of African aviation.

It marks:

- **The 75th Anniversary of the ICAO**
- **The 50th anniversary of the African Civil Aviation Commission**
- **The 20th anniversary of the Yamoussoukro Decision**

The above milestones have paved the way for the African Aviation industry as it is today.

Liberalization of the African sky and cooperation for the growth and development of African aviation were the driving vision behind the Yamoussoukro Decision.

The Single African Air Transport in line with the YD is a continuous work in progress and will take some time before full implementation.

As we celebrate the 20th anniversary of the YD, we need to recognize the positive changes that aviation continues to make on our continent; YD induced the opening of market access in the past 20 years.

Even if the pace is slow, we know that the direction is the right one although we are aware of the challenges on the way.

These challenges should not affect our trust in the vision behind liberalization which would occur.

Yes, we all know the challenges. I will not repeat them here today. It is time for all of us as an industry to tackle them.

As AFRAA, our new vision is:

“A sustainable, interconnected, and affordable Air Transport industry in Africa where African Airlines become key players and drivers to African economic development.”

AFRAA has set its work plan along its new strategic objectives aligned to addressing the challenges our members are facing:

- **Safety, Security**, and reliable air transport remain our priorities. In this area, we need to adopt global standards and best practices.
- We need **sustainable air transport** in Africa to enhance the influence of African Airlines in the global aviation industry. It implies:
 - Significant reduction in **costs of operation** in Africa (taxes, fees, charges, fuel...).
 - Implementation of cost-effective **Human Resource Development**. The need for more human capacity should be addressed to cope with aviation development in Africa.

- **Market access liberalization** to increase revenues and enhance connectivity.
- **Cooperation** remains critical for better connectivity in a large continent where it is difficult for a single airline to serve all the African continent. Cooperation and partnership also help at reducing operating costs for airlines and increasing revenues and market share.
- **Data and market intelligence** are key to develop expertise and winning strategies for African Airlines.

We will continue and intensify our advocacy for:

- **The Implementation of SAATM** which remains a continuous work in progress that should consider the views and concerns of everyone.
- **The achievement of the six-pillars work plan** behind the implementation of SAATM, which engages all stakeholders and aims to tackle the challenges our industry is facing.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The industry's profit represented **US\$ 6.85** average per passenger in 2018, while Africa was the weakest region with an estimated **US\$ 1.09** loss per passenger.

This weak performance affects the sustainability and growth of African Airlines despite the market's potential.

We are convinced that the AUC flagship projects will help to improve the financial position of African airlines, namely:

- The **Single African Air Transport Market** to support trade, tourism with better connectivity.
- The **Continental Free Trade Area** to boost intra African trade and positively impact air transport.

- The **Protocol of the free movement** of people and goods to facilitate African integration.

There are many reasons for hope.

“Success in an integrated and interconnected Africa” is the theme of this 51st Assembly.

- If we want to grow, we need to do it together toward an interconnected African continent and an integrated African economy.

Africa is a continent with strong development potential. Given the huge size of Africa, the lack of adequate infrastructure on the ground, the high growth rate of the economies and the African population, air transport will play a key role in the development of the continent.

According to experts, air traffic in Africa is expected to double every 15 years. We must be prepared to absorb this growth.

To realize this potential, all stakeholders will have to play their part in promoting a sustainable and efficient air transport system.

As we expect more and more passengers for years ahead, the industry needs to tackle the challenges related to its future expansion: safety, security, environment, infrastructure on ground and air, regulation, capacity building, market access, and operational costs among others.

“Better Skies for Africa”, remains the pillar of all our actions.

We need profitable airlines which can give the best product and connectivity at the best fare to our growing number of customers.

Distinguished delegates,

The next game-changer in aviation is technology.

The world aviation industry is fast-moving with new customers' expectations. Digitalisation is transforming the customer's experience at all stages of their journey. New technologies will also play a critical role in aircrafts designs and operations.

As frequent travellers in this audience, we all agree that the boring moments of our traveling experience remain the time and processes on the ground.

IATA new project on OSS (One Stop Security) and RFID will change our customer's experience.

Disruptive innovations should be cost-effective and facilitator to simplify and sustain the growth of our business.

Authorities, airports, airlines should join their efforts to implement these innovations.

Distinguished delegates,

Ladies and gentlemen,

As I conclude,

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to our guest of H.E the President of the Republic of Mauritius, for gracing this opening ceremony.

My sincere appreciation and thanks to the President of this 51st Annual General Assembly, CEO of Air Mauritius Mr. Somas Appavou and his team.

I also wish to engage those who have some time to enjoy the legendary hospitality and beauty of the Republic of Mauritius.

I would like to thank everyone for your attendance at this 51st General Assembly and your continued support to our association for greater achievements and success.

Thank you for your attention.