

**KEYNOTE SPEECH By**

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**THEME: REDEFINING AFRICAN AIR TRANSPORT FOR A NEW ERA.**

**Honourable Delegates,**

**Secretary General of the African Airlines Association (AFRAA)**

**Dear CEOs of Airlines;**

**Distinguished Delegates**

**Ladies and Gentlemen**

It is a great honour for me to join you virtually for this 52<sup>nd</sup> AFRAA Annual General Assembly during these challenging times when the world is faced with a global pandemic that has disrupted the global air transport industry.

I wish to extend my sincere gratitude to the organizers of this general assembly for your kind invitation to AFCAC to present this keynote address. Thank you Mr. Secretary General for having us and for your continued support and collaboration with AFCAC. It is my hope and prayers that all of you and your families are all in good health.

**Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

The COVID-19 pandemic has had an unprecedented impact on our industry. Massive losses in revenues and jobs are being witnessed by airlines, civil

aviation authorities, air navigation service providers and airports. The ripple effect has spread to other strategic institutions and pillars that drive air transport's contributions to the African economy.

Despite the impact of the pandemic, we believe that the aviation industry has been put in a situation where it must focus on every opportunity to recover, build resilience and become sustainable through rethinking its strategies and collaboration in ways that will truly **REDEFINE AIR TRANSPORT FOR A NEW ERA.**

AFCAC in recognition of the importance of the African aviation industry, at the onset of the pandemic, embarked on activities aimed at supporting and reducing further damage caused by COVID-19. AFCAC coordinated the African Immediate Relief and Recovery Measures with various stakeholders including AFRAA on development of immediate relief measures for the African aviation sector for the consideration of Ministerial Sub-Committee of STC Transport. Following this action, some important resolutions were taken as result to support the African aviation sector.

AFCAC, through the leadership of the African Union and with the support from ICAO Regional Offices coordinated and mobilized Industry Partners across the aviation supply chain to establish a High Level Task Force (HLTF).

The objectives of the HLTF amongst other was to ensure African's aviation sector's response to the impact of COVID-19 followed a structured and coordinated approach for a successful restart and sustainable recovery. You may wish to recall that, the HLTF Report not only adopted the ICAO CART key principles and measures as part of its framework but also developed 15 African specific recommendations grouped as Financial, Technical, Sustainability of Air

Transport, Communication, Policy Harmonization and cooperation and Quality Data and Capacity Building recommendations.

In coordination with the respective African civil aviation authorities, AFCAC has been championing the harmonization and coordination in the implementation of COVID-19 protocols to effectively support our African airlines in their resumption of international travel. With regards to the issue of financial aid, AFCAC continues to work with the AUC, the World Bank, Afrexim Bank and African Development Bank to mobilize the required financial resources to support African aviation not only to support the restart and recovery but to put the African air transport industry on a renewed path towards sustainability.

During the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions, AFCAC has also continued to undertake work towards putting in place a mechanism to assist all eligible African Airlines to achieve IOSA/ISSA certification. To this effect we will be signing agreements with AFRAA and IATA as part of the AfDB institutional support project to implement the SAATM.

The SAATM, a flagship project of the African continent to liberalize air transport continues to grow from strength to strength. I am happy to inform you that thirty four (34) African States have signed the Solemn commitment to join the SAATM and unconditionally open their markets to eligible African airlines. We will continue to solicit the views of African airlines for instance through the questionnaire circulated to African Airlines on challenges faced in the implementation of the provisions of the YD. We have reviewed the Concrete measures for the implementation of SAATM and in the process of development of KPIs to measure the implementation of the YD. All these are aimed at

supporting States and African airlines benefit from the various opportunities offered by SAATM and other continental policies.

**Distinguished Delegates,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

There is no doubt on the level of commitment to support the aviation sector in Africa by various institutions. There is also no doubt on the contribution of aviation to the socio-economic development of the Continent. The challenges that threaten the benefits promised by aviation in Africa, must be addressed in order to increase Africa's share in global air transport.

There is no better time than now. We have seen how innovation has become the new normal. We must equally be innovative in aviation. Existing African continental initiatives such as the SAATM, AfCFTA and other Agenda 2063 flagship projects provide a good basis for the growth of intra African air travel ready to be exploited by African airlines. The sheer population of the African continent (Over 1 billion as per the World Bank estimates) is another opportunity to expand air travel.

In concluding, ladies and gentlemen, I wish to remind us all that the challenges are numerous, the road ahead is difficult but in order for us to realize the aviation benefits, achieve the African Union Agenda 2063 and fully **REDEFINE AIR TRANSPORT IN THE NEW ERA**, I conclude by calling all of us to action, especially the African Airlines;

- 1) Operating under the SAATM to freely file and fly without hindrance based on their own economic considerations and subject to safety and security concerns of the aviation authorities in order to improve access to air travel for Africans, support regional integration, boost

intra-Africa trade and tourism. Any challenges encountered to be brought to the attention of AFCAC, the Executing Agency.

- 2) Encourage your respective States to fully liberalize air travel, join the SAATM, bring to the Executing Agency of the YD any challenge faced in implementation of the YD in general and from those who are party to SAATM thus take advantage of the vast market provided by intra African travel.

While the COVID-19 has affected African aviation industry, it has presented all of us with an opportunity to collaborate, look inwards and unleash the full African potential and grow together into the Africa we want. For this, I would like to extend my sincere appreciation to the Secretary General and his Team for working collaboratively during this challenging time.

I thank you.