



**Remarks of  
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52<sup>nd</sup> Virtual AFRAA AGA**

## **Introduction**

Distinguished colleagues, ladies and gentlemen, greetings from Geneva. It's a pleasure to address the 52<sup>nd</sup> AFRAA AGM. Thank you Abderahmane for the kind invitation. And thank you to AFRAA for being a strong and effective partner in this crisis. We are working as a team to help our members when they need us the most.

We are in the middle of the biggest crisis our industry has ever faced. As leaders of Africa's aviation industry, you know that firsthand. Airline revenues have collapsed. Fleets are grounded. And you are taking extreme actions just to survive.

We all support efforts to contain the COVID-19 pandemic. It is our duty and we will prevail. But policymakers must know that this has come at a great cost to jobs, individual freedoms and entire economies.

## **Economic Outlook for Africa**

For aviation in Africa the numbers are staggering:

- Traffic is down 89%
- Revenue losses are expected to reach \$6 billion. And this figure is likely to be revised downwards in our next forecast to be released later this month.

But the impact is much broader. The consequences of the breakdown in connectivity are severe:

- Five million African livelihoods are at risk
- And aviation-supported GDP could fall by as much as \$37 billion. That's a 58% fall.

We have a health crisis. And it is evolving into a jobs and economic disaster. Fixing it is beyond the scope of what the industry can do by itself.

We need governments to act. And act fast to prevent a calamity.

I call on you to join IATA in calling for governments to address two top priorities:

The first is unblocking committed financial relief. Airlines will go bust without it. Already four African carriers have ceased operations and two are in administration. Without financial relief, many others will follow.

Over US\$31 billion in financial support has been pledged by African governments, international finance bodies and other institutions, including the African Development Bank, the African Union and the International Monetary Fund.

Unfortunately, pledges do not pay the bills. And little of this funding has materialized.



And let me emphasize that, while we are calling for relief for aviation, this is an investment in the future of the continent. It will need financially viable airlines to support the economic recovery from COVID-19.

The second priority is to safely re-open borders using testing and without quarantines.

People have not lost their desire to travel. Border closures and travel restrictions make it effectively impossible.

Forty-four countries in Africa have opened their borders to regional and international air travel.

In 20 of these countries, passengers are still subject to a mandatory 14-day quarantine. Who would travel under such conditions?

Systematic testing before departure provides a safe alternative to quarantine and a solution to stop the economic and social devastation being caused by COVID-19.

### **Conclusion**

These are the darkest days in aviation's history. But as leaders of this great industry I know that you will share with me continued confidence in the future.

Our customers want to fly. They desire the exploration that aviation enables. They need to do international business that aviation facilitates. And they long to reunite with family and loved ones.

Our industry will, no doubt, be changed by this crisis. But flying will return. Airlines will be back in the skies. The resilience of our industry has been proven many times. We will rise again.

We are the business of freedom. For Africa that is the freedom to develop and thrive. And that is not something people on this continent will forget or lose their desire for.

Thank you.