IMPERATIVES FOR A SUSTAINABLE RECOVERY OF THE AIR TRAVEL INDUSTRY IN AFRICA

Joint message by AFCAC AFRAA, ACI Africa, CANSO, IATA and UNWTO at the auspices of the 9th AFRAA Aviation Stakeholders' Convention, 18-19 May 2021

Africa is running a race against time in the battle against the historic crisis for the air travel industry posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The different organizations in the aviation ecosystem have to date demonstrated resilience to some extent, leading to much progress made in restarting the industry on the continent.

COVID-19 is a global challenge that requires global solutions and international solidarity and collaboration.

The evolution of the virus is unpredictable and therefore there is need for a co-ordinated approach by African States for sustainable recovery of the air travel industry.

We, the undernamed stakeholders, therefore urge the decision-makers in the various instances to consider the following steps for a durable restart and recovery of the air travel industry in Africa:

i. **Harmonization of travel protocols**
    There is need for constant and sustained dialogue among African governments, civil aviation authorities, tourism and travel industry players, air transport associations and other key stakeholders, to implement harmonized and internationally adopted health and travel protocols to bring back the necessary confidence for a safe, simple and seamless air travel in the new normal.

ii. **Accessibility of COVID-19 testing facilities**
    African States are encouraged to make available universal, accessible and affordable COVID-19 testing facilities to all air travellers, i.e. PCR or Rapid antigen tests.

iii. **Reduction of high PCR test costs in Africa**

There is need for the reduction of the high cost of testing fees noting that the PCR test costs are very high in some African States. Where possible, African States are also urged to consider alternative testing protocol for travel that uses the rapid diagnostic antigen test which is more cost-effective.

iv. **Expedition of the vaccine roll-out campaign in Africa**

Vaccines, coupled with testing and the current health measures in place, present the most efficient way out of this pandemic. It is therefore vital that the vaccine roll-out campaign in Africa is expedited equitably with the prime objective of achieving the herd immunity or that level of vaccination which inhibits the ability of the virus to circulate in the population.

v. **Lifting of prohibitive travel restrictions**

African States are encouraged to consider steps towards lifting prohibitive travel restrictions in the form of quarantine measures for fully vaccinated and negatively tested travellers. In the short term, quarantines may be applicable only to passengers coming from those determined areas with a very high incidence of the virus, to be regularly reviewed in co-ordination with national and international health authorities.

vi. **Adoption of globally interoperable digital health passes**

African States are further encouraged to adopt any form of globally interoperable digital health pass or certificate, approved by the World Health Organization, that will seamlessly integrate into testing and travel processes of the different stakeholders of the air travel industry.

Signed parties

AFCAC AFRAA, ACI Africa, CANSO, IATA and UNWTO