

Press Release

Travel Ban on Africa is Not the Solution to COVID-19 Pandemic

Nairobi, 03 December 2021 – The commendable work done by South African scientists in unearthing and transparently announcing to the world the discovery of the Omicron strain of SARS CoV-2 instead of attracting applause was met with harsh and uncoordinated travel restrictions. Unfortunately, in nearly two years since Covid-19 was first discovered, it appears we have not learned useful lessons that could lead to finding a permanent solution to the pandemic.

The unscientific, poorly targeted, knee-jerk reactions that have not helped much in containing the SARS CoV-2 virus since March 2020 seem to be the preferred response to scientific challenges of our time. Restricting travel has never been the solution to curtailing the spread of COVID. On the contrary, such restrictions have adversely impacted economies and unleash untold hardship.

In the case of Omicron, the hasty decisions by some EU countries to ban travel to South Africa and other neighbouring countries in Southern Africa, is in stark contrast to the numerous unheeded appeals to the western world to ensure equitable access to vaccines around the world. While stockpiling excess vaccines they may never need at the expense of developing countries that remain in a long queue for their supplies, the developed world is yet to fully understand that COVID19 virus does not discriminate.

AFRAA Secretary General, Mr. Abdérahmane Berthé stated: “The Omicron variant is now detected in several regions of the world, yet the travel bans seem to be targeted at Africa. This is an affront to the global efforts to find an enduring solution. We will be better off confronting the virus if we work together for solutions and avoid discrimination.”

“Why target Africa when the virus is reported in other regions as well? Any attempts to stigmatize Africa through travel bans will not work. We should not confuse politics with science.” Mr. Berthé added.

The African Airlines Association (AFRAA) is calling on all countries that have issued unilateral travel restriction to immediately revoke them and instead seek collaborative measures that will address the COVID challenge holistically. Besides vaccination, there are tried and tested protocols that have proven effective in curbing the spread of covid19. These must continue to apply while we work together towards neutralizing or eliminating the virus.



Better Skies for Africa

AFRAA is also urging African governments to speak out at any attempts to smear the continent with propaganda and medical mischief. They must remind the world that we can only defeat Covid together not divided.

About AFRAA

The African Airlines Association, also known by its acronym AFRAA, is a trade association of airlines from the member states of the African Union (AU). Founded in Accra, Ghana, in April 1968, and headquartered in Nairobi, Kenya, AFRAA's mission is to promote, serve African Airlines and champion Africa's aviation industry. The Association envisions a sustainable, interconnected and affordable Air Transport industry in Africa where African Airlines become key players and drivers to African economic development.

AFRAA membership of 44 airlines cuts across the entire continent and includes all the major intercontinental African operators. The Association members represent over 85% of total international traffic carried by African airlines. Follow us on [Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#), [Twitter](#) and [YouTube](#).