



Better Skies for Africa

Press release

Clarion call for a Safe and risk-based approach for Travel

Nairobi, 13 January 2022: The travel ecosystem is reeling from the adverse impact of the re-introduction of travel restrictions and implementation of blanket travel bans since the onset of the Omicron variant of the coronavirus. The African Airlines Association (AFRAA) is making a clarion call to governments and stakeholders to harmonise the health protocols, reconsider the bans and adopt a risk-based approach in line with the World Health Organization (WHO) guidelines.

AFRAA Secretary General, Mr. Abdérahmane Berthé stated: “2021 marked the dawn of recovery with positive trends in air transport activity being remarked across the globe. As at October 2021, African airlines had reopened 81.3% of their international routes that had been closed due to the pandemic. African cargo capacity grew by 33% since 2019 and cargo load factors improved by 9% from pre-pandemic levels.”

“The travel restrictions and blanket bans are a huge risk to the gains made in the recovery of the travel ecosystem. Furthermore, air transport connectivity and economic sustainability of airlines’ operations will be negatively impacted.” Mr. Berthe added.

AFRAA recognises that a risk-based approach and the safe reopening of borders are critical for the efficient restart of aviation. We urge governments to remove border restrictions and open their markets to restart the industry with support from Industry Restart Plan Standards and guidance documentation.

Recommendations for Vaccination, Travel Entry and Exit Requirements

AFRAA reiterates the Call to Action campaign for Africa against Covid-19 “Saving Lives, Economies, and Livelihoods” by the Africa High-Level Task Force. In line with the Call to Action campaign, AFRAA is impressing upon governments and stakeholders on the following specific elements to safely re-open all borders:

- i. States should not impose COVID-19 vaccination certificates as a mandatory travel entry and exit requirement until there is satisfactory access to vaccines globally, reasonable vaccination coverage is attained, and sufficient guidance on the use of the vaccine for travel is available based on recommendations of the WHO.
- ii. States to continue with pre-departure testing until vaccines become widespread, with States transitioning to the use of Rapid Antigen Testing as an alternative to PCR, some of which have been proven to have similar reliability to PCR, is significantly cheaper and takes within 30 minutes for results.
- iii. To address credibility of test/vaccination certificates, Governments to continue to adopt digital COVID-19 test/vaccination certificates wherever possible as verifiable health credentials and as a trusted platform for traveler information.
- iv. States to implement rapid roll-out of vaccines across the continent to facilitate the restart of economies and Air Transport. To date, less than 6% of Africans are fully vaccinated. Vaccination will mitigate the greatest risks of the spread of the pandemic.



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AFRAA remains committed to support the travel ecosystem recovery and continues to engage in collaborative efforts with stakeholders on initiatives that will form a strong foundation for the transformation and development of air transport sector.

Download PDF: The Call for Action document can be accessed via the link: <https://africacdc.org/download/call-to-action-safe-reopening-of-borders-to-save-lives-economies-and-livelihoods-in-africa/>

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](#).