

AfDB Integrated Aviation Transformation Program for Africa (IATP)

Airlines, Capital & Connectivity Forum

25-26 February 2026, Nairobi

Draft Concept Note and Two-Day Agenda

1. Overview

Africa's aviation sector is a critical enabler of regional integration, trade, tourism, and economic competitiveness, yet it remains structurally underdeveloped relative to the continent's size, population, and growth potential. Despite strong underlying demand, African airlines and aviation infrastructure continue to face persistent constraints, including high costs of capital, ageing fleets, limited access to long-term financing, under-developed airport and airspace infrastructure, and fragmented regulatory and operating environments.

In response to these challenges, the African Development Bank (AfDB) is launching the Integrated Aviation Transformation Program (IATP); a continent-wide platform designed to modernize Africa's aviation ecosystem and mobilize private, institutional, and concessional capital at scale.

Within this context, AfDB is convening a two-day Airlines, Capital & Connectivity Forum as a focused engagement and dissemination event for the IATP. The Forum will bring together African aviation stakeholders (ie. airlines, lessors, OEMs, banks, DFIs, ECAs, etc..) to engage in a structured dialogue on sector priorities, investment needs, and financing solutions.

The Forum is designed to move beyond high-level discussion by clearly articulating the IATP architecture, aligning stakeholders around practical and bankable solutions, and building momentum toward pilot transactions across the aviation infrastructure. In doing so, it aims to position the IATP as a credible delivery mechanism for strengthening connectivity, competitiveness, and resilience across Africa's aviation value chain.

2. Objectives

The objectives of the Airlines, Capital & Connectivity Forum are to:

1. Present the IATP architecture and highlight the Pan-African Aviation Financing Platform (PAFP) and associated financing and risk-sharing instruments.
2. Facilitate structured engagement between African airlines and capital providers to align operational realities, risk perceptions, and bankability requirements.
3. Identify and advance priority pilot transactions to support early implementation and demonstrate scalable aviation financing solutions.
4. Strengthen collaboration across the African aviation ecosystem in support of connectivity, competitiveness, and regional integration objectives under the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and the Single African Air Transport Market (SAATM).

3. Agenda

Day 1 — Airline Economics, Challenge, Infrastructure

08:30 – 09:00 | Registration

09:00 – 09:20 | Opening Session: Africa’s Aviation Imperative

Opening Remarks:

- Alex Mubiru, Regional Director, East Africa, African Development Bank
- Abderahmane Berthe, Secretary General, African Airlines Association (AFRAA)
- Tomoki Nakai, Executive Director, Japan, African Development Bank

09:20 – 09:40 | Keynote: Africa’s Aviation Growth Outlook

Keynote Speakers:

- George Kamal, Acting CEO, Kenya Airways
- H.E. Lerato Dorothy Mataboge, Commissioner for Infrastructure and Energy, African Union

09:40 – 09:55 | Presentation: Introducing the IATP & AFCF Architecture

Presenter:

Mike Salawou, Director Infrastructure & Urban Development, African Development Bank

09:55 – 10:55 | Regulatory fragmentation vs Market Integration: Why African Skies are still not open?

The air transport market outlook in Africa is positive. Traffic, both passenger and cargo, is growing and potential is huge. To take advantage of this positive trend, African airlines would have to reorganize, restructure and realign with the market realities. But while they do so, existing regulatory fragmentation at national, Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and Continental level would have to be addressed to facilitate market integration as envisioned by the Yamoussoukro Decision (YD) and the Single African Air Transport Market (SAATM).

This panel discussion will look beyond the positive traffic indicators to identify the regulatory bottlenecks that impact or have potential to impact the industry and proffer solutions to realizing a truly integrated air transport market – a market that will contribute to growth of Africa’s GDP, create jobs, promote trade, business, tourism and facility regional connectivity.

Moderator:

- Raphael Kuuchi, Consulting Director, Government, Legal & Industry Affairs, AFRAA

Panelists:

- H.E. Mr. Festus Keyamo, SAN, CON, FCI Arb (UK), Minister of Aviation and Aerospace Development, Nigeria

- Chris Appiah, Director of Transport, ECOWAS Commission
- Aaron Munetsi, CEO, Airlines Association of Southern Africa
- Eyob Estifanos, Regional Officer, Air Transport Development, ICAO
- Eric Ntagengerwa, Head of Transport and Mobility Division, African Union

10:55 – 11:15 | Coffee Break & Networking

11:15 – 12:15 | Bankability in the African Airline industry.

Africa's aviation paradox stems from strong demand, strategic geography, and integration ambitions, yet airlines remain undercapitalized, fragile, and unattractive to investors; the African Development Bank's Integrated Aviation Transformation Program (IATP) aims to shift from piecemeal fixes to a coordinated platform linking policy, capital, and execution, but success hinges on credible economics — good governance, predictable regulation, and risk-sharing that make airlines investable. Beyond calling for open skies and modern airports, the discussion will probe why, despite reforms and growth, African carriers are still seen as high-risk rather than strategic assets, examining structural barriers — from balance sheets to sovereign risk and fund repatriation — and identifying concrete steps for airlines, governments, and financiers to unlock capital and build a resilient, bankable aviation industry. The goal of this session is to identify not just the problems, but the pathways to solutions—the specific, tangible steps that airlines, governments, and development partners must take to unlock capital and build a truly bankable African aviation industry.

Moderator:

- Maureen Kahonge - Director Commercial & Communications, AFRAA

Panelists:

- Hellen Mathuka, Chief Strategy and Innovations Officer, Kenya Airways
- Robert Lisinge, Chief of the Energy, Infrastructure and Services Section of the Private Sector, Development and Finance Division - United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) (virtual)
- George Uriesi, Managing Director & CEO, Ibom Air (TBC)
- Somas Appavou, Regional Director External Affairs & Sustainability Africa, IATA
- John Njoroge, Country Manager & Senior Business Development Leader for Kenya, South Sudan & Somalia – Visa

12:15 – 13:45 | Networking Lunch

13:45 – 14:45 | Sustainability, Safety, Climate-Aligned Aviation

This panel will explore how Africa's aviation sector can align growth with sustainability commitments while maintaining safety and operational resilience. Discussions will focus on harmonized regulations, fleet and air navigation modernization, sustainable aviation fuels, and technology-driven efficiency improvements. Panelists will address financing mechanisms, risk-sharing models, and

scalable partnerships to overcome infrastructure, capital, and capacity constraints unique to Africa. The session aims to identify actionable solutions for climate-aligned aviation development, investment readiness, and enhanced safety performance across the continent.

Moderator:

- Marco Yamaguchi, Manager, Transport and Logistics Division, African Development Bank

Panelists:

- Prosper Zo'o Minto'o, Director General, ASECNA
- Chinga Mazhetese, ICAO ESAF Regional Officer
- Kwame Bekoe, CEO, AfriSAF (virtual)
- Henok Tefera Shawl, Managing Director, Boeing Africa
- Frankline Omondi, Aviation Expert, African Civil Aviation Commission (AFCAC)

14:45 – 15:45 | Cargo, Logistics & MRO : Discussion on the opportunity to have regional cargo hubs and MRO facilities

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, African airlines generally prioritized passenger services over air cargo, and although this view is shifting with carriers expanding into cargo, the continent still lacks dedicated freight airlines, modern warehousing, specialized storage, and efficient customs processes; at the same time, airlines are recognizing cargo's profit potential and the AfCFTA is increasing intra-Africa trade opportunities. To fully benefit, stakeholders including airlines, airports, and governments must invest not only in aircraft but also in infrastructure like modern warehouses, handling equipment, streamlined cross-border procedures, and transform major cargo destinations into capable continental hubs. Likewise, the shortage of Maintenance, Repair and Overhaul (MRO) facilities forces airlines to seek costly services abroad, underscoring the need for more local MRO capacity if air transport is to effectively support economic growth, trade, tourism and job creation across Africa.

Moderator:

- Raphael Kuuchi, Consulting Director, Government, Legal & Industry Affairs, AFRAA

Panelists:

- Flory Okandju, Executive Secretary, Central Corridor Transit Transport Facilitation Agency (CCTTFA)
- Frankline Omondi, Aviation Expert, African Civil Aviation Commission (AFCAC)
- Ayman Thabet, VP Planning, EgyptAir
- Chamsou Andjorin, Director, CDA Technologies

15:45 – 16:45 | Aviation Training & Skills Development

Africa's aviation growth is limited by a shortage of skilled professionals, including pilots, engineers, air traffic controllers, safety inspectors, and managers, which affects safety, reliability, and investor confidence. This panel will explore how training ecosystems can be structured to be safe, scalable, and financially sustainable, aligning academia with industry needs. Panelists are encouraged to discuss workforce shortages, innovative training approaches, financing models, and regional cooperation to enhance skills and operational readiness. Strategies to retain talent, promote inclusion, and develop centers of excellence will be highlighted, along with mechanisms for mutual recognition of licenses and harmonized standards. The session aims to identify actionable solutions to produce job-ready graduates, strengthen safety oversight, and support Africa's aviation sector growth.

Moderator:

- Sidy Gueye, Aviation Specialist, Transport and Logistics Division, African Development Bank

Panelists:

- Yves Koning, Senior International Cooperation Officer, European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA)
- Eddah Munyi, Head of KQ Pride Centre, Kenya Airways
- Yves Noel Fossou, Secretary General, Air Cote d'Ivoire
- Arielle Abandja, Deputy Director Strategy, FlyGabon
- Eliud Jela, Registrar, Finance and Administration, East African School of Aviation (EASA)

16:45 – 17:00 | Day 1 Wrap-Up

Summary remarks by the session moderator and AfDB, highlighting key takeaways and previewing Day 2.

17:00 – 18:00 | Cocktail

08:30 – 09:00 | Morning Coffee & Networking

09:00 – 10:00 | Financing African Aviation: From Risk Perception to Bankable Structures

This session aims to move the discussion from identifying financing challenges to demonstrating how aviation transactions can actually be structured under the IATP. The conversation will clarify how AFCF instruments — including partial credit guarantee, leasing structures, and risk-sharing tools — reduce perceived risk and enable commercial capital to participate in African aviation. The benefit is to align airline expectations with investor requirements while helping financiers understand how AfDB participation improves risk-adjusted returns. The expected outcome is a clearer pathway toward bankable airline transactions and identification of candidates for early financing under IATP.

Moderator:

- Marco Yamaguchi, Manager, Transport and Logistics Division, African Development Bank

Panelists:

- James Woodward, Partner, Africa Head of Transport and Infrastructure, KPMG East Africa
- James Caslin, VP Marketing, SMBC Aviation Capital
- Aschalew Fedasa, Manager Financing and Risk Management, Ethiopian Airlines
- Maíra Madrid, CEO, Brazilian Agency for Managing Guarantee Funds (ABGF) (virtual)
- Manuel Moses, CEO, African Trade & Investment Development Insurance (ATIDI)
- Dina Bouzekri-Alami (Senior Client Advisor, Credit Specialties, Marsh Specialty (virtual)

10:00 – 11:00 | Developing Aviation Financing Pool

This session explores how pooled financing platforms under IATP can mobilize large-scale capital by aggregating airline demand and diversifying risk across markets. The discussion will show how standardized platforms — including leasing pools, Sukuk platforms and structured financing vehicles — can transform aviation into an investable asset class.

The benefit is attracting institutional investors that typically avoid fragmented deals. The expected outcome is alignment among partners on how pooled platforms should be structured and momentum toward collaborative financing pilots .

Moderator:

- Marco Yamaguchi, Manager, Transport and Logistics Division, African Development Bank

Panelists:

- Binyam Reja, Practice Manager for Eastern and Southern Africa (Transport), World Bank
- Isaac Kahara, Country Head – East Africa, UK Export Finance
- Lerece Rose, Senior Finance Director, Boeing Customer Finance, Boeing Commercial Airplanes
- Ross Palmer, Associate Director & Senior Banker for Eurasia, Middle East and Africa, EBRD
- Helen Brume, Director, Projects & Asset Based Finance, Afreximbank
- Mike Salawou, Director, Infrastructure & Urban Development, African Development Bank

11:00 – 11:15 | Coffee Break

11:15 – 11:20 AfDB Country Compact Initiative

Presenter:

- Mike Salawou, Director Infrastructure & Urban Development, African Development Bank

11:20 – 12:20 | Country Compact: Nigeria

This session demonstrates how IATP moves from continental vision to national implementation through the Country Compact model. Using Nigeria as a case study, the discussion will examine how policy reform, airline growth, infrastructure investment, and financing solutions must advance together to create a bankable aviation ecosystem. The benefit is showcasing a practical implementation pathway for both governments and investors. The expected outcome is alignment on Nigeria's priority actions and identification of near-term pilot opportunities under IATP.

Moderator:

- Marco Yamaguchi, Manager, Transport and Logistics Division, African Development Bank

Panelists:

- H.E. Mr. Festus Keyamo, SAN, CON, FCI Arb (UK), Minister of Aviation and Aerospace Development, Nigeria
- George Uriesi, Managing Director & CEO, Ibom Air (TBC)
- Somas Appavou, Regional Director External Affairs & Sustainability Africa, IATA
- George Ajibose, GM, Data & Economics Analysis (DEA), Nigeria Civil Aviation Authority (NCAA)
- Odotayo Adewale Ojuri, CEO, Aglow Air Ltd

12:20 – 13:30 | Networking Lunch

13:30 – 14:30 | Ministerial Panel Discussion

Moderator:

- Abderahmane Berthe, Secretary General, African Airlines Association (AFRAA)

Panelists:

- H.E. Mr. Festus Keyamo, SAN, CON, FCI Arb (UK), Minister of Aviation and Aerospace Development, Nigeria
- H.E. Mr. Davis Chirchir, Cabinet Secretary, the Ministry of Roads and Transport, Kenya (TBC)
- H.E. Dengue Boru Kosi, State Minister of Transport and Logistics, Ethiopia
- H.E. Mr. Makame Mnyaa Mbarawa, Minister for Transport, Tanzania (TBC)
- H.E. Mr. Hassan Houmed Ibrahim, Minister of Transport and Equipment, Djibouti (TBC)

14:30 – 14:45 | Family Photos

14:45 – 15:45 | Country Compact: Kenya

Kenya's strategic position as a regional aviation and logistics hub requires continued investment, policy coherence, and integration with regional trade corridors. This panel will explore how to strengthen Nairobi's hub status through infrastructure modernization, cost competitiveness, cargo ecosystem development, and sustainable financing. Panelists will discuss policy reforms, public-private partnerships, multimodal connectivity, and regional integration to enhance trade facilitation and investor confidence. The session aims to identify actionable solutions to improve efficiency, sustainability, and resilience while positioning Kenya as East Africa's primary aviation and logistics gateway.

Moderator:

- Zerfu Tessema, Transport Manager, East and Southern Africa, African Development Bank

Panelists:

- H.E. Teresia Mbaika, Principal Secretary, State Department for Aviation and Aerospace Development, Kenya
- Mohamud Gedi, Ag. Managing Director/CEO, Kenya Airports Authority
- Karanja Ndegwa, CEO & Managing Director, Jambojet
- Alex Avedi, CEO, Safarilink Aviation
- Mike Mutahi, COO, Astral Aviation

15:45 – 16:45 | Country Compact: Ethiopia

Aviation is strategically important for Ethiopia's economy, especially because the country is landlocked. Ethiopia thus aspires to become Africa's primary aviation hub, not just via Ethiopian Airlines' network but through cargo expansion, aviation training, and integrated logistics services. However, challenges such as infrastructure

bottlenecks, geopolitical airspace limitations, and financial constraints remain hurdles. The session aims to discuss how to cope with these challenges as well as effective policy implementation and partnerships so that the country fully achieves its vision as Africa's pre-eminent aviation hub.

Moderator:

- Marco Yamaguchi, Manager, Transport and Logistics Division, African Development Bank

Panelists:

- H.E. Dengue Boru Kosi, State Minister of Transport and Logistics, Ethiopia
- Mesfin Tasew, CEO, Ethiopian Airlines (TBC)
- Daniel Demeke, Managing Director, Ethiopian MRO Services (TBC)
- Ethiopian Aviation University (TBC)
- Lerece Rose, Senior Finance Director, Boeing Customer Finance, Boeing Commercial Airplanes

16:45 – 17:00 | Closing Remarks

Closing Remarks:

- Mike Salawou, Director, Infrastructure & Urban Development, African Development Bank