

# Five priorities that need to be addressed for aviation in Africa to reach its full potential

In Africa, aviation currently supports 6.8 million jobs and contributes \$72.5 billion in GDP. Passenger demand is set to increase, over the next 20 years, by an average of 5.7% annually. According to Alexandre de Juniac, the International Air Transport Association's (IATA) director general and CEO - in a keynote address delivered on his behalf by Raphael Kuuchi, IATA Vice President, Africa, to the 49th African Airline's Association Annual (AFRAA) General Assembly in Kigali, Rwanda - Africa has the greatest aviation potential.



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"Over a billion people are spread across this vast continent. Aviation is uniquely placed to link Africa's economic opportunities internally and beyond. And in doing so, aviation spreads prosperity and changes peoples' lives for the better. That's important for Africa. Aviation can help in achieving the UN's Sustainable Development Goals, including the eradication of poverty and improving both healthcare and education," said De Juniac.

"Africa also faces great challenges and many airlines struggle to break-even. And, as a whole, the African aviation industry will lose \$1.50 for each passenger it carries. Governments should be aware that Africa is a high-cost place for aviation. Taxes, fuel and infrastructure charges are higher than the global average. Additionally, insufficient safety oversight, failure to follow global standards, and restrictive air service agreements all add to the burden that stands in the way of aviation's economic and social benefits," said de Juniac.

IATA highlighted five priorities which must be addressed for aviation to deliver maximum economic and social benefits in Africa.

## Enhancing safety efforts

Safety in Africa has improved. In 2016 there were no passenger fatalities or jet hull losses in sub-Saharan Africa. When turbo-prop operations are included, sub-Saharan Africa recorded 2.3 accidents per million flights against a global average of 1.6 accidents per million flights.

"African safety has improved, but there is a gap to close. Global standards such as the IATA Operational Safety Audit (IOSA) are the key. Performance statistics for IOSA show that the accident rate of the 33 IOSA registered carriers in sub-Saharan Africa is half that of carriers not on the registry. That's why I urge African governments to use IOSA in their safety oversight," said de Juniac.

De Juniac also called for improved government safety oversight, noting that only 22 African states have reached or surpassed the implementation of 60% of the International Civil Aviation Organization's (ICAO) standards and recommended practices (SARPs) for safety oversight. "The Abuja declaration committed states to achieve world-class safety in Africa. ICAO SARPs are critical global standards. And governments must not fall behind in delivering on important revised Abuja targets such as the establishment of Runway Safety Teams," said De Juniac.

## Enabling airlines to improve intra-Africa connectivity

IATA urged the 22 states that have signed-up for the Yamoussoukro Decision (which opens intra-Africa aviation markets) to follow through on their commitment. And it further urged governments to progress the African Union's Single Africa Air Transport Market initiative. "African economic growth is being constrained by a lack of intra-Africa air connectivity. Opportunities are being lost simply because convenient flight connections are not available. While we cannot undo the past, we should not miss out on a bright future," said De Juniac.



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## Unblocking airline funds

Airlines experience varying degrees of difficulty repatriating revenues earned in Africa from their operations in Angola, Algeria, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Libya, Mozambique, Nigeria, Sudan and Zimbabwe. "Practical solutions are needed so that airlines can reliably repatriate their revenues. It's a condition for doing business and providing connectivity," said De Juniac.

## Avoiding air traffic management re-fragmentation and over-investment

IATA called on African governments to avoid air traffic management re-fragmentation in the face of decisions by Rwanda to leave the Dar-Es-Salaam Flight Information Region (FIR) and South Sudan to leave the Khartoum FIR. "ASENCA, COMESA and the EAC upper airspace initiatives improve the efficiency of air traffic management by working together. I urge Rwanda and South Sudan to reconsider their decisions," said De Juniac.

IATA also urged industry consultation on air traffic management investment decisions. That will ensure alignment with airline operational needs and avoid over-investment. "Investments must improve safety and efficiency from the user's perspective. If not, they are just an additional cost burden," said De Juniac. The ICAO Collaborative Decision Making (CDM) framework is a practical guide for such consultations.

## Ensuring that Africa has the professionals it needs to support the industry's growth

Supporting that growth will need a much-expanded labour force. "African governments need to collaborate with the industry to better understand the industry's future needs. That will guide the creation of a policy environment to support the development of future talent needed to deliver the benefits of aviation growth," said De Juniac.

[Read Alexandre de Juniac's full speech.](#)

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