

Air travel is expensive in Africa but what can be done to make it affordable?

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The business of air travel in the continent of Africa is booming as commercial airlines are battling to get and cement their market share. This competition is awesome as currently, Africa's aviation industry supports 6.8 million jobs and \$72.5bn in economic activity. Unfortunately, this has had little or no impact on the rates of these airlines.

This continues despite the presence of 'budget airlines' that fly to only a handful of destinations. While budget airlines have secured their foothold in other parts of the world, countries in Africa are still struggling to establish a continent-wide one.



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Hence, it is unarguably true that air travel is quite expensive and travellers within and outside the continent are left with no choice than to make these payments because they will be the ones to bear the brunt.

The International Air Transport Association (IATA) vice president for Africa Raphael Kuuchi recognises the fact that air travel in Africa has to become more affordable.

Kuuchi said that the cost of air travel in Africa is far more expensive than anywhere else in the world, and the reasons are this includes very high operating costs from the airport ends, high taxes and charges that are imposed by governments and other institutions on passengers and airlines.

Indeed, there is the need for an urgent solution to reduce the cost of air transport in the continent despite many challenges highlighted by Kuuchi. This is key because an expensive air transport system will stifle the growth of the tourism industry as local and international tourists won't want to visit destinations that are not affordable.

Making air travel affordable in Africa

Understandably, the government has a huge role to play when it comes to making air travel more affordable. The

government should grant tax breaks to airlines and create an air transport fund dedicated to the industry to reduce their overhead cost. Additionally, more airlines should collaborate so that they can deplore data and technology to cut cost which will have a ripple effect on the price of air travel.

Amidst the demand to make air travel more affordable, Jumia Travel, for example, recently partnered with Amadeus, a leading travel technology company, to launch the first flight marketplace in Africa. According to a statement announcing the partnership: "It is the base for a new flights marketplace on Jumia, that will be a step further towards making travel in Africa simple and affordable. The platform aims at enabling travel agents, airlines, and travel websites to bring all flight content online, to offer customers the best available prices for their flights."

In the near future, it is hoped that budget airlines across Africa will make African travel less expensive.

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