



Stakeholders align on strategies for the sustainability of Africa's aviation industry beyond enhancing intra-African connectivity



Addis Ababa, 12-14 May 2024: While the air transport data indicates that African aviation industry has seen traffic levels reaching or exceeding pre-COVID19 pandemic levels, concerted actions by air transport ecosystem stakeholders are critical for air transport business to thrive and contribute to the continent's sustainable rapid development. It is important to envision and seize the opportunity that aviation presents beyond connectivity where African move easily to trade, open businesses and invest within the continent and elsewhere with the rest of the world driving economic development, fostering cultural exchange and advancing technology.

This year's Convention was a unique opportunity to discuss strategies for the sustainability of Africa's aviation industry beyond the connectivity aspect. This was the impetus of the much-awaited Convention, held under the theme "**Beyond connecting African aviation**".

The Convention was held at the Ethiopian Skylight Hotel in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from 12-14 May 2024 under the patronage of the Government of the Federal Republic of Ethiopia and was graced by His Excellency Dr. Alemu Sime, Ethiopia Minister of Transport and Logistics – who was the Guest of Honour. The event is renowned for bringing together top aviation experts to engage in discourse, brainstorming, and dialogue with the aim of addressing the challenges faced by African airlines and unlocking the vast potential of air transport in the region.

In his welcome remarks, His Excellency Dr. Alemu Sime reiterated the Ethiopian government's dedication to supporting the development of aviation on the continent. He stated: "We recognise that the movement of people and goods is crucial for achieving economic growth and promoting tourism among African nations. Therefore, we pledge to take every



necessary step to facilitate and encourage the progress of aviation in Africa.”

Speaking at the opening ceremony on the importance of concerted actions to change the future of the aviation industry in Africa, Mr. Abdérahmane Berthé Stated that only 10% of African citizens can afford Air transport, meaning there is considerable room for growth. In addition to the policies at the political level, he added that airlines must enhance cooperation through interline, code sharing, and partnerships and reduce their cost of operation to make air transport affordable for more Africans. “Our objective is to convene stakeholders to dialogue and deliberate on subject matters to pave the way for the air transport industry’s development and change the narrative of African Aviation”, he concluded.



Mr. Mesfin Tasew, Ethiopian Airlines Group CEO, in his speech during the opening ceremony emphasised the importance of collaboration to overcome the challenges facing African aviation so as to unleash the industry’s potential. “Stakeholders in African aviation and their partners play a critical role in promoting the significance of aviation. It is imperative to underscore the value of air transport as a substantial economic catalyst. Policymakers should focus on crafting policies that facilitate the growth of African aviation, encourage competition in aviation services, liberalise traffic rights (similar to North America, Europe, and others), streamline business operations by easing fund transfers, reducing taxation burdens, and making strategic investments in aviation infrastructure, including airports, maintenance facilities, and aviation training academies.” he stated.





Event highlights

A total of 25 African airlines attended the conference, with several represented at the CEO level. Overall, the event was attended by over 500 participants from 50 countries. Aviation ecosystem stakeholders at the Convention deliberated on the following key subjects that were lined up in the programme:

Africa market outlook and insights into airline risks

The session discussed how investors can perceive the opportunity and the risk of investing in African airlines, the need for African airlines to consolidate to operate effectively, the role of the AfCFTA and SAATM and how to de-risk the risk of investing and doing business in Africa at the macro-level and its impact on the aviation sector.

Industry Leader Keynote Interview – Focus on Air Cargo for Sustainability

Astral and Ethiopian Airlines Cargo shared extensive insights on

- Digital transformation for cargo;
- Pathways to NetZero: Initiatives through the cargo supply chain on environmental sustainability;
- Keeping abreast on the latest trends and regulations;
- African Perspectives on AI in shaping the future of Air Cargo.

Evolving airline network planning strategies

The presentation gave an overview of the underlying factors for network planning strategies, the shifts in the way airlines approach network planning in the near to medium term.

Intra-Africa route development and matchmaking for success between airlines and airports

The session discussed insights on:

- What route development strategies are airlines and airports utilising in 2024;
- Airports initiatives for intra-Africa route development and SAATM action plan;
- How SAATM is a critical success factor for airlines;
- What needs to be done to make effective implementation of SAATM a reality – a stocktake of the SAATM Joint Prioritized Action Plan.

Converging State and Stakeholders' interests in achieving the decarbonisation of the aviation sector

The endorsement of the LTAG report during the 41st ICAO Assembly in November 2022 showed scientific and political consensus on the need to decarbonise the aviation sector, as well as on the overall challenges and way forward. However, the size of the endeavour and the uncertainties on the economic impacts, make necessary – even more than ever – the active collaboration of all parties and the lead of the Governments and the international players. This active role would help maximise investments, timely mature the necessary technological developments and efficiently roll-out of the decarbonisation initiatives. The presentation called to foster common initiatives among all parties, and it particularises the context for Governments and Aeroplane Operators. Only understanding their differentiated goals, challenges and opportunities will be possible to draw common initiatives to achieve the decarbonisation target of net-zero aviation by 2050.

The future of SAF is now: Africa's Roadmap to move the needle on SAF production, what are the challenges and opportunities?

The session discussed Africa's roadmap on SAF production, challenges and opportunities, SAF policy framework, Hydrogen in aviation update, Market developments and views on increasing SAF production and uptake.

ESG Spotlight on driving sustainable and inclusive growth – A case study

The presentation shared insights on the social aspects of ESG and the case study initiatives – roadmap to drive sustainable and inclusive growth.

Changing business models globally – the impact for Africa

Globally the traditional airline business models of Full Service Carrier and Low Cost Carrier are converging. The presentation showed implications of this trend for (African) airlines and how they can stay competitive.





Strategies for enhanced airline and airport operational efficiencies

Free Routing Airspace Reality in Africa: game-changer for Africa, what lies ahead?

Implementing the Free Routing Airspace in Africa for the first time in history is a game-changer to support a sustainable future for the African air transport industry. The session discussed what lies ahead on the roadmap and the elaborated the pilot airlines' cost-savings, benefits and perspectives.

Industry Leader Keynote Interview with TAAG Angola Airlines

The session covered insights on:

- Milestones that have defined TAAG
- Landscape and shifts that have shaped the South African market, opportunities for regional/intercontinental markets
- Business dynamics – traffic, cost, skilled labour, cooperation and future prospects
- Airline collaboration and pan-regional partnerships
- Labour shortage/cost and capacity for training
- The future of TAAG Angola – what lies ahead?

- SAATM implementation – the opportunities/challenges and way forward

Technology and digitalisation – What are Africa's priority areas for digital transformation for 2024 and beyond?

The air transport industry continues to embrace new technologies to enhance operational efficiency, enhance selling opportunities and revenue generation, enhance the passenger experience and reduce environmental impact. The session discussed:

- Innovation, digitalisation, including next-generation technology and how to think about AI.
- Who is leading the technology and digitalisation transformation?
- What are the areas of spending priority for digital transformation for 2024 and beyond?
- Digital transformation is a major priority for airlines and airports, is there parity between the drive for digital initiatives and the pace of change?



- What is the best approach for digitalisation – is the industry better off being led by third parties, developing technology on its own or taking partnership and hybrid approaches?

Masterclasses

There were master classes where cutting-edge ideas, industry best practices, new opportunities, and practical solutions were presented and discussed. The following masterclasses took place:

i. Masterclass 1: A Spotlight of AFRAA Solutions Navigating the Skies: Mastering African Aviation Market Intelligence

The African aviation industry serves as a pivotal driver of economic growth and connectivity, especially in the African continent. AFRAA master class, 'Navigating the Skies: Mastering African Aviation Market Intelligence,' was designed to provide aviation professionals with the tool and insights needed to thrive in the African aviation market. From passenger trends and route optimisation to understanding regional opportunities and competitive benchmarking, participants learnt how to extract actionable insights to drive strategic network planning and schedule growth to gain a competitive edge in the African market and beyond.

ii. Masterclass 2: Accelya

Empowering African airlines: Accelerating retailing with Accelya

Accelya elaborated on global trends impacting airline retailing and how African airlines can adopt a customer centric retailing approach. This session discussed how the speed at which NDC can now impact cost efficiencies and grow incremental revenues and what airlines need to address to transform into retailers.

iii. Masterclass 3: Amadeus

Transforming payments into a strategic enabler for airlines

The session discussed how to enhance the traveller experience through the entire payment journey, from pre-trip to the airport to post-trip, while giving Airlines flexibility and autonomy to customise offering. Amadeus works with Airlines across the globe to maximise your payment strategy through the next-gen payment platform, travel expertise, and deep technical integration with Airline IT infrastructure.





Focus on Youth Development in Aviation

CSR event Themed: 'Building Pillars for NextGen African Aviators'

On the backdrop of 2 consecutive successful events for the development youth in aviation that was held by AFRAA with the support of Collins Aerospace, Kenya Airways and Ethiopian Airlines for the past years at various locations, the 2024 edition of the initiative was held at the side-lines of the 12th Aviation Stakeholders Convention on 16 May 2024 at the Ethiopian University in Addis Ababa Ethiopia after the conclusion of the Convention.

The event was staged in collaboration with Ethiopian Airlines and Collins Aerospace, with the support of Rolls Royce, with the aim of empowering and motivating the next generation of aviators at the Ethiopian Aviation University. The event was sponsored by Ethiopian Airlines and Collins Aerospace. A total of 150 high school students from 20 schools in Ethiopia benefited from the initiative, which is aimed at supporting youth development in aviation.

i. Exhibition

Various aviation-related companies showcased their products and solutions through an exhibition at the Convention. The exhibitors include: ATNS, AEG Fuels, Aerospace Technical Services, AFRAA, Flight Safety Foundation, African Aerospace, Amadeus, Aviation Co-ordination Services (ACS), Boeing, Collins Aerospace, DPO Pay by Network, East African Aviation, EgyptAir, Ethiopian Airlines, Fokker Services Group, GE Aerospace, Ministry of Tourism Ethiopia, Nucore, SITA, The Aviation Services Association and Tomoca Coffee.



Sponsors: The Stakeholders Convention was proudly sponsored by: ATS Technic, ATNS, Boeing, Collins Aerospace, DPO Pay By Network, Ethiopian Airlines, European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA), GE Aerospace and Rolls Royce.