

# Forwards ever!



Since the last quarter of 2023, passenger traffic carried by African airlines has reached the levels of 2019, while intra-African connectivity has surpassed the pre-COVID level. This progress is being backed by deliberate initiatives from the industry stakeholders, and AFRAA's priorities are aligned to support the sector accordingly.

On intra-African connectivity, SAATM implementation continues to take shape, with several ongoing initiatives to speed up the process underway. At AFRAA, our actions are about advocacy toward States and airlines, quarterly reporting from member airlines on the challenges they are encountering in specific countries to help the Secretariat plan for actions, capacity building on awareness of the legal framework of SAATM and the implementation of specific actions under the 6-pillar SAATM Joint Prioritized Action Plan.

AFRAA plays a pivotal role as a member of the YD Monitoring Body, actively participating in the establishment of the Administrative Council. This Council, a significant milestone, is responsible for reporting disputes between states, airlines, or service providers, and making binding decisions. Our involvement in this process underscores our commitment to ensuring fair and effective dispute resolution within the industry.

Improving connectivity is not only about SAATM. SAATM is definitely very important, but we really want to see African airlines working together to improve connectivity. This should also be done with airports because the aspect of infrastructure is also important. New routes development across the continent

is part of our priorities for 2024 and strategies to develop the market access aspect.

Safety First is another priority focus for AFRAA. The much-awaited Inaugural African Aviation Safety & Operations Summit was staged in Addis Ababa – Ethiopia, on May 15 by AFRAA and Flight Safety Foundation (FSF) under the theme: “**Championing Africa Aviation Safety Together**”. The summit commenced with a snapshot of the region's aviation safety landscape and focused on the strides made, challenges addressed, and roadmap for sustaining and advancing safety in African skies. While the African aviation industry's safety performance has improved in recent years, more progress is needed to achieve global safety targets.

Another priority for the Association is sustainability. It is very important for us to have sustainable air transport across the continent, which is why the African Air Transport Sustainability Laboratory was organised in June 2022 in Nairobi. It was hosted by AFRAA under the African Aviation Industry Group (AAIG). For us, sustainability includes economic sustainability and social and environmental sustainability. And when we talk about environmental sustainability, we talk about various initiatives such as CORSIA implementation and Sustainable Aviation Fuels (SAF). At AFRAA, we have established a task force on SAF as well.

Among the initiatives at the centre of moving forward the needle on the sustainability of the airline industry in Africa that AFRAA is spearheading is the implementation of the Free Route Airspace (FRA) in Africa. This initiative will bring significant cost savings to airlines annually, shorter travel times for passengers, and fewer CO<sub>2</sub> emissions into the environment. The trials along User Preferred Routes, which started in November 2023, are ongoing in 2024. The Project will continue to provide critical data to accelerate the FRA implementation in the entire African Airspace, improving air navigation efficiency and, ultimately – **Better Skies For Africa.**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Abd' and ending with a flourish.

**Mr. Abdérahmane Berthé**  
AFRAA Secretary General