

# “Let’s Speak With One Voice” RwandAir on the Power of Collective Bargaining Case for African Unity

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**A** FRAA runs several Projects. We have the Joint Fuel Program. We have the Roots Network Coordination and Cargo. We have safety, technical and operations, training, distribution, aero political and advocacy. sustainability market intelligence and various industry forums and events which of these initiatives has delivered the most tangible value to your airline and why that specifically

I’ll list a couple of them and one of them being of course the joint fuel program the other one being safety of course like any African carrier or any carrier, safety is a very important aspect of our daily operations and distribution as well.

So I’ll mainly list out three of those and especially when it comes to distribution, we’re looking at ways of expanding our accessibility in terms of our product. So that’s very important for us as well.

**Free Route Airspace has moved from a concept, to a WACAF trial, to full deployment and now Eastern and Southern Africa is next. In plain terms, what does flying a User Preferred Route actually change for your pilots and your bottom line?**

I think the simplest way of putting that is mainly on cost. You cut heavily on costs.

**What can African airlines do collectively to improve the intra-African connectivity?**

If we can go ahead and really implement the Yamoussoukro declaration, that’s very important for us because, again, we still have all these expenses in terms of navigation, taxes, all those.

So if as African airlines, we can sit down and agree that we need to adopt this, including countries, because we need governments

supporting this initiative. So if all African carriers can sit together and raise this voice together, I think we’ll see a better opportunity for open sky policy in place.

**Ten years from now, what do you want people to say your airline did for African aviation?**

The biggest thing and I’ll speak on behalf of the passengers, one is the ease of travel connectivity within Africa right now. I think even in the previous meeting that we just had right now one of the challenges is how we make Africa accessible so Rwandair wants to play its part in terms of easing connection not only in Africa but even at the global stage.

**What’s one thing you wish the flying public understood about what it takes to keep an African airline in the air?**

Oh, that's quite big and quite interesting. Behind the scenes, there's a law that goes on, really, right from ground handling, right from the flight operations, be it the check-in agents that you meet here. There's a lot that goes behind setting up an aircraft to fly.

Most times people will always ask a simple question like, why is it I have to go to the airport and sit for two hours for it to take off? But behind all that, there are people who are making sure the aircraft is clean, there's fuel on the aircraft, there's catering and everyone making sure that even the crew that will operate, because we have many destinations, you require a lot of coordination when it comes to crew. So there's really a lot, and it's quite

interesting. If we really ever have a chance to sit down in detail, I can really share that journey

**Where do you think AFRAA needs to be bolder for its members?**

In advocacy we really need to see much advocacy especially pushing different governments. Some of the challenges we face as African carriers relate to the fact that, for instance, we have many barriers. We just discussed open skies we still have a lot of challenges on that so we need to see AFRAA step up on that.

**If you could send one message to every other AFRAA member airline today, what would it be?**

We are on the right track as AFRAA. There's a lot of effort and initiatives that AFRAA is coming up with, of which I would really encourage member airlines to really, not even member airlines, even other airlines, please join this. Because at the end of the day, we'll have one voice. We'll be able to collectively bargain on certain activities, which is going to be actually when you're looking at cutting costs. It's very important. If we have one voice that speaks for us all, that would be very good.

Thank you so much.

