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**FOURTH MEETING OF THE
MINISTERIAL WORKING GROUP ON
OPERATIONALISATION OF THE SINGLE
AFRICAN AIR TRANSPORT MARKET
25-28 MAY 2018**

AU/STC-TTIET/MWG/ Rpt (IV)

**DRAFT FINAL REPORT OF THE MINISTERS'
MEETING**

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Ministerial Session of the Working Group took place in Lomé, Togo on the 28th May 2018, under the patronage of the President of Togo, Champion of the Single African Air Transport Market. It was preceded by a preparatory meeting of Experts of the Ministerial Working Group held from 25th to 27th May 2018 that also took place in Lomé, Togo.

2. In attendance, were representatives from twenty (20) Member States out of the twenty-six (26) Member States which have declared their Solemn Commitment to the implementation of the Yamoussoukro Decision towards the establishment of the Single African Air Transport Market. These were Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Capo Verde, Central African Republic, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Chad, Ethiopia, Gabon, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, South Africa and Togo. Egypt was represented by a consulate of the Embassy and Angola participated as an observer, represented by the Embassy of Angola to Togo.

3. The following organisations also participated: The African Union Commission (AUC), African Civil Aviation Commission (AFCAC), the African Airline Association (AFRAA), NEPAD Planning and Coordination Agency (NPCA), the Economic Community of Arab Maghreb Union (AMU), Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the International Civil Aviation Organisation, the International Air Transport Association, and Aviation Allied Business. The following airlines also attended: IMEXKA, South African Airways, RwandAir, ASKY, COMAIR, Niger Airways, Niger Airlines, Alpha Aviation Niger, Air Côte d'Ivoire, Africa World Airlines, Air Burkina, Bessah Airlines, Ethiopian Airlines and Aero Contractors.

4. The list of participants is attached herewith – Annex 1.

II. OPENING

5. In his opening remarks, the AU Commission Chairperson **H.E. Moussa Faki Mahamat** expressed his pleasure to be part of this important project of Agenda 2063. He expressed his gratitude towards the personal commitment of the SAATM Champion, President of the Togolese Republic and chairman of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), H.E. Mr. Faure Gnassingbé in the development of this sector, which is a major asset for the regional integration. H.E. Moussa Faki Mahamat said that the Single African Air Transport Market (SAATM) was the first of the thirteen Agenda 2063 flagship projects, considered priority for continental economic integration, launched in January 2018, during the 31st Ordinary Summit of AU Heads of State and Government. Other flagship Agenda 2063 flagship projects include the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), and the Free Movement of People and Goods and the African Passport.

6. H.E. Moussa Faki Mahamat thanked the stakeholders present at the meeting such as the International Air Transport Association (IATA), International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), The African Airlines Association (AFRAA), and the African Civil Aviation Commission (AFCAC), who all contributed to the operationalisation of SAATM. The AUC Chairperson noted that the AU is seeking technical assistance for Member

States to improve the level of aviation safety and security to meet the minimum global requirements. Finally, the AU Commission Chairperson commended the efforts of the Ministerial Working Group (MWG) in the development of a Roadmap of specific activities for both the implementation of the Yamoussoukro Decision and the operationalisation of the Single African Air Transport Market as well as the establishment of the Dispute Settlement Mechanism. He further urged the MWG to spearhead an advocacy campaign to urge the rest of the Member States to join the SAATM and to encourage them to abide by provisions of Yamoussoukro Decision. The AU Chairperson reiterated the commitment of the African Union to fast track this important continental initiative. Chairperson Faki called on the African Development Bank and other funding partners to expedite resource mobilisation efforts towards the full operationalisation of the Single African Air Transport Market (SAATM) and its Executing Agency.

7. Minister of Infrastructure and Transport of the Togolese Republic, **H.E. Mr. Ninsao Gnofam** in his opening remarks extended his appreciation to the AU Commission for organising this event under the patronage of the SAATM Champion, President of the Togolese Republic and chairman of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), H.E. Mr. Faure Essozimna Gnassingbé. The minister encouraged all Member States to join the current 26 African countries who are already members of the SAATM, by adhering to the Solemn Commitment to the establishment of the single market. H.E. Mr. Ninsao Gnofam expressed the strong commitment of the Champion for the operationalisation of the Single African Air Transport Market. In his capacity as Champion, President Faure Essozimna Gnassingbé urged for a more robust advocacy campaign to sensitise and the unique opportunity that the Single African Air Transport Market offers for the development of African economies and citizens

III. PROCEDURAL MATTERS

8. After the opening session, the meeting proceeded in its deliberations starting with setting-up its bureau and consideration of the agenda. .

i) Set-up of the Bureau of the Ministerial Working Group Meeting

9. In accordance with the Rules of Procedure of the Ministerial Working Group, the composition of Bureau is as follow:

Chairperson :	South Africa
1 nd t Vice-Chair :	Congo Republic
2 nd Vice-Chair :	Egypt.
Rapporteur :	Rwanda

10. The Chair of the Ministerial Working Group, the Minister of Transport of South Africa informed the AU Commission by an official letter that he could not attend the fourth Ministerial Working Group meeting due to other pressing commitments. He therefore requested the First Vice-Chairperson of the MWG to preside over the meeting in his absence. The meeting was therefore presided by **H.E. Fidèle DIMOU**, the Minister of Transport, Aviation and Merchant Marine of the Republic of Congo, as the 1st Vice-

Chairperson and the Honourable Minister of State for Transport of the Republic of Rwanda as Rapporteur.

11. The Bureau was also assisted by the Commissioner for Infrastructure and Energy as well as the Minister of Infrastructure and Transport of the Togolese Republic.

ii) Adoption of the Agenda and Work Programme

12. The meeting adopted the following agenda:

1. Opening

2. Procedural matters:

- i) Setting up of the Bureau of the Ministerial Working Group*
- ii) Adoption of Agenda and Work program*

3. Working Sessions:

- i) Consideration of report of the Experts' Meeting*
- ii) Election of a new Bureau of the Ministerial Working Group.*
- iii) Signing of the Memorandum of Implementation of the Yamoussoukro Decision*
- iv) Consideration of the Draft final communique of the Ministerial Working Group;*

4. Closing

13. The agenda and programme of the meeting is attached as Annex 2.

IV. PROCEEDINGS

Agenda item 1: Consideration of the Report of the Experts – Fourth meeting of the Ministerial Working Group

14. The Report of the Meeting of the Experts was presented to the meeting and attached as **Annex 3** of this Report. After deliberations, the meeting decided and took notice of the following.

15. **Prioritised Action Plan for the Operationalisation of SAATM.** The plan advocates for at least 10 more States to join the SAATM before the next July African Union Summit 2018. - The updated plan was elaborated in Abidjan in March 2018 with the following six pillars:

- a. A focus on advocacy for at least ten more States to join the SAATM by the next July African Union Summit 2018. Proposed activities include advocacy at regional economic community high level meetings, encourage AFRAA to engage advocacy amongst African airlines for SAATM and ensure the implementation of the immediate measures.
- b. Ensure the availability of the appropriate regulations for the oversight of the Single African Air Transport Market, in particular establishing the Dispute Settlement Mechanism and dissemination of the existing adopted Regulatory texts..
- c. Operationalisation of the SAATM focusing on capacity strengthening of the implementing agency, in particular resource mobilisation for the Executing Agency

and advocacy for the harmonisation of policies on aeronautical related taxes and charges and other tariff barriers; undertake a continent-wide study on the benefits of the SAATM, establish an evaluation mechanism of SAATM and to facilitate airline cooperation in the operation of the SAATM;

- d. Planning for future traffic growth through ensuring development of the RECs aviation infrastructure master plans and the Continental master plans and elaboration of the road map for the establishment of the Single African Sky architecture;
- e. Enhancing Safety and Security through providing technical assistance to States with under 60% effective implementation of the ICAO critical elements. This involves collaboration with the international Civil Aviation Organisation(ICAO) in expanding the Fundamental of Safety Oversight projects to cover such States; and
- f. Focusing on resource mobilisation to ensure the industry has access to sustainable funding. In this regard, the African Development Bank and the World Bank have expressed interest in supporting activities on the SAATM prioritised action plan (2018-2019).

16. The highlights on the YD Institutional and Regulatory Texts/Dispute Settlement provisions of the YD – The Ministers noted the adoption of the YD regulatory texts at the January 2018 summit and recommended their urgent publication and dissemination. The AUC was also urged to expedite the elaboration of the dispute settlement mechanism.

17. The Ministers also considered the draft Memorandum of Implementation of the Yamoussoukro Decision prepared by the Expert Meeting and approved it for signature, as amended.

Agenda item 2: Election of the New Bureau of the Ministerial Working Group

18. The fourth meeting elected its new bureau in accordance with its rules of procedure. The elections were carried out considering the geographical distribution of the SAATM member States.

Chairperson:	- Minister of the Transport, Mali
1st Vice President:	Minister of Infrastructure, Rwanda
2nd Vice President:	- Minister of Equipment and Transport, CAR
Rapporteur:	Minister of Transport, South Africa.

Agenda item 3: Signing of the Memorandum of Implementation (Mol) of the Yamoussoukro Decision by accredited Representatives of States.

19. The Ministers/Director Generals of the representatives of the various States proceeded to sign the Mol in the English and French languages. Fourteen countries, (namely: Benin, Capo Verde, Central African Republic, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Rwanda, Sierra Leone and Togo) present at the Fourth Ministerial Meeting finalised and signed the Memorandum of Implementation of the Yamoussoukro Decision. The memorandum is a multilateral instrument that ensures that all provisions of Bilateral Air Services Agreements are compatible with the Yamoussoukro Decision.

20. Twelve countries also undertook bilateral consultations on harmonisation of their respective Bilateral Air Services Agreements (BASAs) aimed to remove all restrictions that are incompatible with the Yamoussoukro Decision, namely: Central African Republic, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Rwanda, Sierra Leone and Togo. Cabo Verde and Burkina Faso reported that they already have YD compliant BASAs with all the States that attended the meeting.

21. The AUC was charged with ensuring all 26 members of the SAATM sign the Mol including those who join later. **Annex 4**

Agenda item 4: Consideration of the Draft final communique of the Ministerial Working Group

22. The Ministers considered and adopted their final communique as amended. The new Chairperson of the MWG, the Honourable Minister of Transport, Mali; then held a press conference. In that press conference, the new Chairperson of the MWG thanked the Prime Minister of Togo who was representing the President of Togo and expressed appreciation for the Champion of the SAATM, regarding his commitment towards operationalisation of the SAATM. The Chairperson then proceeded to read the Final Communique to the press core present. (**Annex 5**)

Agenda item 5: Closing Session

23. The Closing session was presided over by the Prime Minister of Togo. The newly elected bureau was presented to the audience before the closing remarks were made.

24. The Prime Minister of Togo, delivered the closing remarks on behalf of H.E. President of Togo, Champion of the SAATM. In the message of the Champion, H.E. the President expressed sincere gratitude to all the participants for having honoured the invitation to the fourth Ministerial Working Group meeting. The message reiterated the benefits of SAATM as highlighted by the IATA study and the President encouraged SAATM Member States to abolish all restrictions that are hindering the full liberalisation of the African Air Transport Market.

25. The Prime Minister then proceeded to declare the fourth Ministerial Working Group meeting closed.

Annexes:

- **Annex 1: Attendance list**
- **Annex 2: Agenda and Programme**
- **Annex 3: Expert Report**
- **Annex 4: Final Adopted Mol**
- **Annex 5: Final Communique**