

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Dear Editor,

RE: LAUNCHING OF THE SINGLE AFRICAN AIR TRANSPORT MARKET

The Single African Air Transport Market (SAATM) will be launched on 28th January at the African Union headquarters in Addis Ababa and will be presided over by H.E Paul Kagame, President of The Republic of Rwanda. The launch will convene Heads of State and Governments from African states, aviation experts, airlines, aviation authorities and other aviation organs in African and beyond.

The launch will take place under the theme **SAATM- flying the AU agenda 2063- (The Africa we want) for an integrated, peaceful and prosperous Africa.**

The Single African Air Transport Market is one of numerous projects that the AU has set out to achieve before 2063 to ensure a prosperous Africa.

The Launch of SAATM will be part of a four-day event that will kick off on the 25th to 28th January 2018 with an exhibition showcasing the various services and products the African aviation industry has to offer.

At the African Union summit in January 2015, eleven African countries with Rwanda inclusive were the first to sign the Declaration of the Solemn Commitment, showing willingness to pave way for other African countries to open up their markets.

A total of 23 countries have since signed the declaration towards the realization of the SAATM. They include; Rwanda, South Africa, Benin, Cote D'ivoire, Kenya, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Republic of Congo, Egypt, Ethiopia, Gabon, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Mali, Mozambique, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Swaziland, Togo, Zimbabwe and Niger.

So far the countries that have signed the solemn commitment for the Single African Air Transport Market cover 75% of Intra African Air Transport. They bring together a potential market of 600 million people, a combined GDP of 1450 Billion USD as of 2015 and potential passengers greater than 200 million per year.

The expected benefits of the Single African Air Transport Market include the following; Air Service connectivity, over 25% Lower Fares, the survival of African Airlines, enhanced intra-African Trade, contribution to tourism growth, contribution to National GDP, creation of employments, and enhance integration by bringing Africans closer to each other.

A study conducted by the International Air Transport Association (IATA) on 12 African countries to showcase the benefits of intra-African air transport liberalization found that full implementation of YD across the 12 States would generate an additional \$1.3bn in GDP, would create an additional 155,000 jobs, would lead to savings of about \$500m in air fares, would increase direct services by 75% and lead to increased penetration of trade, greater convenience and customer choice and significantly reduce travel times.

Editors' notes

The Yamoussoukro Decision (YD) which led to Declaration of the Solemn Commitment, was adopted in 1999 and entered into force in 2000. It is the most important air transport reform policy initiative in Africa and provides for the liberalization of scheduled and non-scheduled air transport services within Africa. The YD aims at removing restrictions on traffic rights, capacity and frequency limitations between African countries.