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## Aviation: Strategic Driver of African Development

Addis Ababa - The International Air Transport Association (IATA) called on African governments to build stronger partnerships with industry to prioritize and promote aviation policies that will improve safety, develop a more competitive industry cost structure and advance liberalization.

Aviation is a key driver of Africa's economy. Some 6.7 million African jobs and nearly \$68 billion in African GDP are supported by air transport. "The benefits of aviation connectivity go far beyond these figures. With a few kilometers of runway the most remote region can be connected to the global community. And that could mean access to vital sources of health care and emergency assistance; jobs selling products in global markets or welcoming tourists; or opportunities for education, exploring the world or creating business," said Tony Tyler, IATA's Director General and CEO. Tyler's comments were made at the opening of IATA's Aviation Day Africa in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

### Safety

Safety continues to be the biggest challenge for African aviation. In 2012 airlines averaged one hull loss for every five million flights on Western-built jet aircraft while the African average was one for every 270,000 flights. However, there were no Western-built jet hull-losses among the 380+ airlines on the registry of the IATA Operational Safety Audit (IOSA), including 25 airlines in sub-Saharan Africa.

"World-class safety is possible in Africa. The safety record of African carriers on the IOSA registry tells us that the key to this is integrating the best safety practices of the industry as captured in the IOSA standards. IATA is committed and actively engaged in helping to enhance African aviation's safety performance to reach worldwide levels based on the African Strategic Improvement Action Plan," said Tyler.

IATA, the African Airlines Association (AFRAA), the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and others cooperated to develop the African Strategic Improvement Action Plan, which is based on the following objectives:

- Establishment of independent and sufficiently funded civil aviation authorities.
- Implementation of effective and transparent safety oversight systems by all African States.
- Completion of an IATA Operational Safety Audit (IOSA) by all African carriers.
- Implementation of accident prevention measures focused on runway safety and loss of control in-flight.
- Implementation of Flight Data Analysis (FDA).
- Implementation of Safety Management Systems (SMS) by all service providers.

These objectives garnered political support when they were incorporated in the Abuja declaration adopted by African Ministers for transport. This commits African aviation stakeholders—government and industry—to achieve a safety performance on par with the global average by the end of 2015. Early this year, it was endorsed by the African Union Summit—showing recognition of the importance of aviation safety at the very highest levels of government in the continent.

IATA is focusing its efforts on getting more airlines onto the IOSA registry. "All of our members—including those in Africa—are already on the registry. But of course, safety is not only about IATA's members or those of AFRAA. It is an industry issue," said Tyler. In addition to a series of IOSA familiarization workshops with regulators and airlines, IATA announced sponsored in-house IOSA training for ten African airlines.

Tyler also reiterated IATA's longstanding criticism of the European Union Air Safety List of banned airlines. "The European Union's approach is wrong. It lacks transparency. And it does not improve safety" said Tyler. There are no transparent criteria for removing airlines from the banned list. "But, the overall safety improvements that we can expect from the commitment to mandate IOSA registration for all carriers will be a very strong argument for Europe to re-think its position," said Tyler.

### Costs

"The African industry cannot fulfill its potential if it continues to be weighed down by high costs," said Tyler. IATA highlighted the need for governments to rein in the high costs of fuel and burdensome taxes and charges.

- **Fuel taxes:** Buying aviation fuel in Africa is about 21% more expensive than the global average as a result of heavy taxes, many of which are in contravention of ICAO principles. IATA is working with airlines in Africa on a campaign for compliance with global standards. Improvements have been realized in Angola, Uganda and Ghana. Tyler challenged Ethiopian officials to rectify excise taxes and required contributions to stabilization funds (subsidization of other fuel users) which are levied in contravention of ICAO principles.
- **Taxation:** Africa also suffers the impact of onerous direct taxes on tickets. "We see a combination of 'solidarity' taxes, tourism taxes, VAT, and infrastructure development fees, each of which reduces the ability of aviation to drive economic benefits and generate jobs. Governments must carefully weigh the income generated against lost economic opportunities. There should be a joined-up policy framework that is focused on the benefits of connectivity which would grow in a more favorable tax environment," said Tyler.

### Liberalization:

"In Africa, connectivity is an issue. Getting around the continent is not easy. Aviation connectivity is a catalyst for economic growth. But those ties must be enabled by agreements among governments. There is outstanding potential for greater aviation connectivity among African states to drive development. The African Union's objectives center on unity, and development—both economic and social. Aviation can be a key driver in achieving those goals. As the African Union celebrates its first half-century of success, there is no better way to look towards the future than with a vision for a continent that is connected and working together with safe, efficient, and abundant air links," said Tyler.

African issues will be debated in the full spotlight of the global aviation industry when the IATA Annual General Meeting and World Air Transport Summit is held in Cape Town, South Africa from 2 to 4 June. Journalists are encouraged to [register](#).

[Read Tony Tyler's full speech](#)

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