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HIGH-LEVEL MEETING OF AFRICAN AIRLINES
29-30 MAY 2006
TUNIS, TUNISIA

FINAL COMMUNIQUE

Tunis, 30 May 2006

A high-Level Meeting of African Airlines has been held on 29 and 30 May 2006 at Hotel Africa, Tunis (Republic of Tunisia) on «**the Strategy for Development of the Air Transport Industry in Africa**». The meeting has been organized by the Commission of the African Union in collaboration with the African Development Bank Group, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa and the African Airlines Association (AFRAA).

The tone of the meeting was set in the opening statement by Mr. Bernard ZOBA, African Union Commissioner for Infrastructure and Energy.

Statements were then made by the following personalities:

- **Mr. T. de LONGUEMAR**, Vice President of the African Development Bank Group;
- **Mr. C. FOLLY-KOSSI**, Secretary General of the Association of African Airlines;
- **Mr. A. JANNEH**, Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa;
- **H.E. A. OKOMBI SALISSA**, Chair of the Meeting of African Ministers Responsible for Transport;
- **H.E. A. O. KONARE**, Chair of the African Union Commission;
- **H.E. A. ZOUARI**, Minister of Transport, representing the Government of Tunisia.

Also present at the meeting were the Chairpersons and Directors General of African airlines, African civil aviation administrations and regional and international air transport sector organizations.

In his statement, the Chair of the Commission of African Union, which initiated this meeting, stressed the Commission's determination to see the deliberations translated into concrete action that will enable the African air sector to play its full role in the continent's integration. To that end, he proposed the following:

- Inter-airline cooperation (group purchase of fuel, insurance, aircraft ...)
- Development of intra-African route networks;
- Lowering ticket costs;
- Using African training centers

The high-level meeting appointed a Bureau as follows:

- Chair: Tunisair (North Africa),
- First Vice Chair: Air Mauritius (southern Africa),
- Second Vice Chair: Ethiopian Airlines (East Africa),

- Third Vice Chair: Ghana International Airlines (West Africa),
- Fourth Vice Chair: TAAG (Central Africa),
- Rapporteur: African Union.

The deliberations were conducted within four committees examining the following topics:

- Topic 1: Institutional and Regulatory Framework;
- Topic 2 : Development of intra-African route network;
- Topic 3 : Impact of Globalization and the African Response;
- Topic 4: Financing of the African Air Transport Industry

The high-level Meeting of African Airlines adopted the following recommendations:

- **For Topic 1: Regulatory and Institutional Framework**
 - Establishment of Executing Agency

The Executing Agency should be set up within twelve (12) months starting from June 2006. The African Union Commission should appoint a project team with a clear mandate, to speed up the process. This team will comprise:

- A legal expert
- An air transport expert
- An economist

The assistance of the African Development Bank will be sought for this task.

- Harmonization of Rules of competition

A workshop will be organized by the African Union Commission, with the support of the African Development Bank and in collaboration with all the Regional Economic Communities, to examine and adapt across the continent, the rules for competition adopted by COMESA, SADC, EAC and WAEMU. This workshop is expected to be held in the third term of 2006.

- Adoption of arbitration mechanism

The process will be under the responsibility of the Executing Agency.

- Evaluation of Yamoussoukro Decision implementation

An evaluation of the implementation of the Yamoussoukro Decision will be conducted by region and by country, specifying why the Decision was not implemented by some State Parties. ECA will be entrusted with its implementation.

- **For Topic 2: Development of Intra-African Route Network**

- Work out trade agreements between airlines to improve the African network.
- Cooperation and partnership agreements between small and large companies on the continent, combining the respective competitive advantages.
- Harmonize air service charges across the continent.
- Encourage African countries to favor African airlines in granting traffic rights.
- Have Governments bear part of the airport security costs.
- Set up a fund through air service charges, for direct financing of airport infrastructure, making it possible to lower to airlines costs
- Request African oil-producing countries to grant preferential tariffs to airlines of African Union member states.
- To avoid a multiplication of airlines and hubs on the continent:
 - propose that governments of countries without airlines take shares in other airlines
 - promote the establishment of sub-regional and/or regional airlines
 - encourage the use of the existing hubs

- **For Topic 3: Globalization and the African Response**

- Formulate a common strategy for African countries' negotiations with external parties, including the European Union. The strategy should provide for a transitional period allowing the African countries to strengthen their air transport industries
- Since the interim guidelines are under preparation, the member countries must rapidly carry through the implementation of the Yamoussoukro Decision.
- A study is required concerning the high fuel costs in Africa and their adverse impact on the industry. The African Union will coordinate this study using in particular the data presented by Ethiopian Airlines at the meeting.

- To raise the competitiveness of the African airlines and promote intra-African tourism and business travel, the African Union Member States must eliminate all non-tariff barriers affecting travel, including visa restrictions for trips within Africa.
- **For Topic 4: Financing the African Air Transport Sector**
 - One or two priority projects should be selected and submitted by 31 July 2006, to be considered for ADB financing.
 - Build institutional and operations capacities (training, maintenance center)
 - Feasibility study for an African air transport sector investment fund

The financing requests for these measures will be prepared under the aegis of the African Union and submitted to the African Development Bank.

The Plan of Action examined and adopted by the meeting is provided as an annex.

The meeting expressed its wish to see an innovative air transport sector financing strategy formulated for Africa by the African Development Bank.

At the end of the deliberations, the participants in the high-level Meeting of African Airlines expressed satisfaction with candid and rich exchanges which augur well for the future of air transport in Africa.

Done in Tunis on 30 May 2006.