



**SPEECH BY**

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**At the**

**2<sup>nd</sup> AFRICAN AIR TRANSPORT  
MINISTERS' CONFERENCE**

**LIBREVILLE, GABON, 15-19 MAY 2006**

## **SPEECH BY THE SECRETARY GENERAL**

- Mr. Vice Prime Minister in charge of Transport,
- Mr. Commissioner of the African Union,
- Dear friends in charge of the Air Transport Industry,
- Ladies and gentlemen,
- Dear friends from the Media,

It is my privilege and honour to address you today at this important meeting of the African Union, which is aimed at reviewing the problems of the industry in Africa, especially those related to air transport safety.

I express my gratitude to the African Union and of course to the Government of Gabon for inviting AFRAA to address this gathering, and particularly for taking this initiative, which will undoubtedly contribute to the progress and economic development of Africa.

My speech will focus on three major issues:

- **Air transport safety in Africa;**
- **The European Union external air transport policy, especially towards the African continent;**
- **AFRAA's recommendations to speed up with the implementation of the Yamoussoukro Decision;**

Mr. Vice Prime Minister;

Ladies and gentlemen;

### **AIR SAFETY IN AFRICA**

The high rates of aircraft accidents in some African countries requires that the African States, the African air transport

Industry and also the African Union Commission take immediate and urgent interventional measures, if not this situation could seriously and permanently jeopardize the reputation of African airlines.

There is need to reassure all the African and global air transport passengers who need to know the corrective measures we have taken so far to address the issue of high accident rates on the continent.

### **THE FACTS**

Africa has the highest rate of aircraft accidents in the whole world. While the African continent represents only 4.5% of the global traffic, it has recorded nearly 30% of air transport victims worldwide between 1996 and 2005.

### **THE COUNTRIES CONCERNED**

As a matter of fact, the bad reputation of the air transport in Africa and the lack of safety in this area are due to nine countries where 74.1% of accidents have taken place.

The Democratic Republic of Congo (21.1%) and Angola (13.3%) alone have recorded 34.4% of aircraft accidents during the period under review. These countries are followed by Sudan (11.9 %), Nigeria (9.3%), and Kenya (7.0%). In total, the five above-mentioned countries have recorded 62.6% of the accidents that occurred in Africa during this decade.

### **THE TYPES OF AIRCRAFTS INVOLVED IN THE ACCIDENTS**

As far as the types of aircraft involved in the accidents are concerned, it is important to note that most of them are ageing

aircraft of small and medium size. Their technology is generally outdated and the majority were made in the former USSR. They are of Antonov type or others, and the technical maintenance registers have either gone missing or are simply unavailable.

In 2005 for instance, out of 14 accidents recorded in Africa, 10 were Antonovs, 2 Ilyushins and 2 ageing aircraft made in the West: 1 Boeing 737-200 and 1 DC-9-30 which occurred in Nigeria.

### **What should be done?**

All the countries concerned should take decisive measures to salvage Africa's reputation in the area of air transport safety and to enable it, in the face of competition, to remain in this high-technology industry which is essential to its economic development.

Since Angola has taken the decision to ban the use of ageing aircraft from the former USSR in civil air transport services in 2003, no aircraft accidents have been reported so far in that country. That is undoubtedly an avenue of solution that ought to be explored.

### **Conclusions and Resolutions of ICAO**

AFRAA fully supports the conclusions and resolutions taken by ICAO at the recent world conference of Directors of Civil Aviation held in Montreal in March 2006. AFRAA supports and recommends particularly:

- The autonomy of Civil Aviation Authorities;
- The establishment of regional organisations aimed at monitoring safety issues in particular;

- The publication of accident reports;
- The transparency and facilitation of public access to ICAO audit reports by 2008;
- The obligation for the states to implement the necessary corrections following ICAO audits.

Africa ought to achieve world standards in the field of air safety.

### **The European Union's Black List**

That notwithstanding, the European Union has adopted a very retrogressive approach by publishing a black list unilaterally

In so doing, the EU indirectly and unjustly recommended to the European passengers to avoid the African airlines though none of the 25 scheduled African airlines currently operating to Europe has been blacklisted.

The airlines included in the black list do not operate to Europe. Most of them only exist on paper. Those that exist operate domestic flights within the boundaries of their states or in the neighbouring countries with the low-technology Antonovs and Ilyushins, but they have no plan of flying to Europe. Under these conditions, the approach of the EU is by all means an unfair competition and an indirect attack against African competitors on the European/African routes.

The European Union being a prominent and faithful development partner of the African continent should be more careful of these indirect and negative consequences.

Regarding the safety issue, we are rather seeking the support of the EU to upgrade the capacity of civil aviation authorities

which have problems and to assist the scheduled African airlines in meeting the cost of the IOSA audits that IATA has introduced to enhance the safety of airlines in the world including Africa.

## **EUROPEAN UNION EXTERNAL AIR TRANSPORT POLICY**

We are also concerned about the attempts by the EU Commission to renegotiate the bilateral air service agreements with our States, while its legal mandate only allows it to replace the national designation clause with the Community clause.

In any case, while Africa is organising itself to negotiate as a community with other communities like the United States, China and Russia, AFRAA recommends that the African States wishing to individually request the review of the bilateral air services agreements take into account the principles and safeguards laid down by the group of experts that the African Union has formed to study this issue.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE YAMOUSSOUKRO DECISION**

Despite all the complaints and recriminations, the implementation of the Yamoussoukro Decision is proving to be more and more effective. Within the COMESA, the SADC and ECOWAS sub-regions, many "city pairs" with heavy traffic have about 14 to 70 flights per week.

Let us stop complaining during the meetings about the non-implementation of the Decision. Our dream, which is to obtain an immediate and simultaneous implementation in all the 53 African countries, will take time to be achieved.

Many of the landlocked countries in West and Central Africa, for instance, want full implementation of the decision but no airline is going to them because of the low volume of the market.

To achieve the practical objectives of the Decision, that is the multiplication of air services and the intensification of economic exchanges, first of all it has to be implemented without reserve in the major countries where the traffic is substantial and/or where important airlines exist.

Our main idea is therefore to identify these countries, to urge them to form a club here and now to spearhead the implementation of the Decision and the others will follow sooner or later.

Furthermore, the monitoring/follow-up Committee presided over by the African Union should be informed about all the difficulties encountered in the other states by the expanding airlines that are willing to operate or increase their frequencies. The highest authorities of the institutions comprising the Follow-up Committee will intervene politically at the highest level to forge ahead with the implementation of the Decision. To this end, it would be very useful for the Executing Agency and the Committee of the Transport Ministers provided for by the Decision to be effectively established.

Mr. Vice Prime Minister,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

Africa should advance on all the issues we have just mentioned. At this meeting, it is our duty to adopt the most appropriate decisions to take us in the right direction.

Let us always bear in mind that we are here to create the conducive environment for the development of African airlines, that our objective is to adequately equip them to face competition, so that they can survive, prosper and serve Africa better.

At this juncture, we are counting on the willingness of the European Union, whose airlines are dominating the African Intercontinental market, to cooperate and to share equitably. The sustainable development in this sector requires it.

I wish you every success in this meeting and fruitful deliberations. Thank you very much for your kind attention !

## ANNEXE

### Accidents in Africa: 1996 - 2005

Country	N° of Accidents	% Of Total
DRC	57	21.1
Angola	36	13.3
Sudan	32	11.9
Nigeria	25	9.3
Kenya	19	7.0
South Africa	9	3.3
Egypt	8	3.0
Gabon	7	2.6
Algeria	7	2.6
Rest of Continent	70	25.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>270</b>	<b>100</b>

### Accidents Statistics on the Continent in 2004

Country	Airline	No of Fatalities	Aircraft type
Egypt	Flash Air	148	Boeing 737-300
Algeria	Tassili Airline	1	Beech 1900
Sudan	Air Cush	6	Let 410
Sudan	El Magal Aviation	1	Antonov 12
Kenya	Blue Bird Aviation	2	Let 410
Gabon	Gabon Express	19	HS-748
DRC	Transworld Safaris	3	Cessna 208
Sudan	Sarit Airlines	4	Antonov 12
<b>Total</b>		<b>184 (636)</b>	

### Accidents Statistics on the Continent in 2005

Country	Airline	No. of	Aircraft type
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		<b>Fatalities</b>	
Uganda	Service Air	6	Antonov 12
Sudan	Air West	7	Ilyushin 76
Tanzania	Airline Transport	8	Ilyushin 76
DRC	Kisangani Airlift	10	Antonov 26
DRC	Victoria Air	27	Antonov 12
Sudan	Marshland Aviation	3	Antonov 24
Equatorial Guinea	Equatair	60	Antonov 24
DRC	Kavatshi Airlines	11	Antonov 26
DRC	Air Kasai	13	Antonov 26
DRC	Pan African Airways	2	Antonov 2
DRC	Wimbi Dira Airways	2	Antonov 12
Nigeria	Bellview Airlines	117	B737-200
Nigeria	Sosoliso Airlines	108	DC-9-30
Sudan	African Union	2	Antonov 28
<b>Total</b>		<b>376 (1107)</b>	