

FREE MOVEMENT OF PERSONS IN AFRICA: IMPLICATIONS FOR AfCFTA AND SAATM

Ms. Jailza Soraya Rodrigues Silva
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Africa has set the objectives of growing its economy and improving the lives of its citizens through the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and the Single African Air Transport Market (SAATM). This article argues that without the implementation of the Protocol on Free Movement of Persons, the continent may never optimize the benefits of these initiatives.

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COVER DESIGN

Features

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PUBLISHER'S NOTE



In recent months, some states in Africa have announced plans to introduce charges, fees or taxes on air ticket that would have direct impact on ticket prices on the continent in spite of calls to reduce these charges to encourage more people to fly for the growth of the air transport industry. This is coming after governments in West Africa had set a January 1, 2026 timeline to reduce charges and fees on air transport in the region.

We reiterate that additional charges on air transport are not conducive for the growth of the sector but, if anything, would further asphyxiate it. Air transport is a driver of economic growth and has been employed by many countries to stimulate their economic development. We therefore urge African states not to impose additional charges, fees or taxes on air transport.

The International Air Transport Association - (IATA)'s air passenger traffic data for August 2025 has conveyed the pleasant news that Africa had the highest growth rate of all regions at 8.9 percent over the same period in 2024, reinforcing the resilience of air transport on the continent. It also reflects the huge potentials of the industry, if provided the right environment.

One of such areas calling for attention is the Free Movement of Persons Protocol. Free Movement of Persons is one of the flagship projects of the African Union Agenda 2063. It is worth echoing that without free movement for Africans within Africa, the continent would not fully achieve the objectives of the two other crucial initiatives of Agenda 2063 namely the Africa Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and the Single African Air Transport Market (SAATM). We commend the African states that have taken the bold steps to remove visa requirement for Africans to visit their countries, but the pace of implementation of free movement for Africans must be sped up, and we call for a unified continental push at this juncture.

The SAATM Project Implementation Programme (PIP) will be marking its third year in November 2025 having been established in November 2022 in Dakar, Senegal. The African Civil Aviation Commission (AFCAC) Secretariat has leveraged the PIP programme to promote SAATM implementation. As we reflect on the third anniversary of the SAATM PIP, we urge for a rekindled vigour amongst African states to liberalise air transport on the continent.

Notably, at the just concluded 42nd Triennial Assembly of the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) in Montreal, Canada various sectors of the industry including airlines, airports and ANSPs have articulated their key priority areas for the next three years; Africa must be on board.

We congratulate the African states that were elected into the ICAO Council during the Assembly and urge them to be a consistent voice for Africa. We also salute the Director General of Cameroon Civil Aviation Authority, Ms Paule Assoumou Koki who served as the 2nd Vice President of the Assembly, and the Director General of Rwanda Civil Aviation Authority, Mr. Silas Udahemuka, who was appointed Chairperson of the Economic Commission.

On the same note, we felicitate with Mrs. Olubunmi Kuku, Managing Director, Federal Airports Authority of Nigeria on her recent election as Vice President for Airports Council international (Africa)

This edition of the Journal features materials on air transport liberalization, free movement of persons, aviation training and border management in Africa. We also feature news from the 42nd ICAO Assembly. Our interview guest for the edition is Ms. Silva Rodrigues Jailza, the Executive Director of BAGASOO (Banjul Accord Group Aviation Safety And Security Oversight Organisation).

Please have an enjoyable reading. 



CAPT. ED BOYO

CONTRIBUTING TO THE JOURNAL

This is your industry Journal and we encourage you to submit articles we can consider for publication. We give preference to unpublished materials on aviation and allied business, especially those relating to Africa. The majority of our readers are decision makers, senior industry executives in core aviation and allied business sectors as well as pilots, aircraft maintenance engineers, aviation consultants, air traffic controllers and engineers, aviation lawyers, bankers, aviation insurance experts and oil company executives. By contributing to the Journal, you and your firm will gain recognition and our readers will benefit from your expertise.

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New Delivery

Air Côte d'Ivoire Takes Delivery Of Its First A330neo

West African carrier, Air Côte d'Ivoire has taken delivery of its first of two Airbus A330-900 aircraft, the aircraft manufacturer has announced. "The A330neo is the first widebody aircraft in Air Côte d'Ivoire's fleet" and according to Airbus "is configured in a comfortable four-class cabin layout with four seats in First, 44 in Business, 21 in Premium Economy and 173 in Economy class."

Airbus says "Air Côte d'Ivoire's first A330neo delivery flight from Toulouse to Abidjan transported five tonnes of humanitarian goods, including materials and school supplies. This marked the airline's third goodwill flight, coordinated with the Airbus Foundation and supported by Aviation Sans Frontières, who provided the donations. The goods were distributed to two local NGOs, LifeShine and la

Bienfaisance, to directly support their initiatives within the health and education sectors in Abidjan."

Air Côte d'Ivoire is a the leading airline in West and Central Africa with 22 destinations served all over the continent. The A330-900 fleet will play a key role in Air Côte d'Ivoire's expansion plans to Europe, starting with the French Capital, Paris, then to destinations in the Middle-East and North America.



The A330-900 fleet will play a key role in Air Côte d'Ivoire's expansion plans

"At the end of July 2025, the A330 Family had won over 1,920 firm orders from more than 130 customers worldwide. As with all Airbus aircraft, the A330neo aircraft is already able to operate with up to 50% Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF). Airbus is targeting to have its aircraft up to 100% SAF capable by 2030," says the aircraft manufacturer. ■



New Route

TAAG Launches Direct Flight Between Luanda And Nairobi



The inaugural event at Jomo Kenyatta International Airport (JKIA), Nairobi.

Angola's National carrier, TAAG Angola has launched a "direct flight from Luanda, Angola, to Jomo Kenyatta International Airport (JKIA), Nairobi." TAAG says the flight "carried the first commercial passengers and a high-level delegation with government officials, diplomats from both Angola and Kenya, stakeholders' representatives, and the airline board members."

According to TAAG, the new connection will "have three weekly frequencies and will be operated with Airbus A220-300 aircraft, modern equipment with high operational efficiency, providing customers and passengers with a differentiated flight experience."

The Inaugural flight event "brought together institutional bodies, the diplomatic corps, organisations from the

civil aviation ecosystem, partners and TAAG customers, in a symbolic meeting and celebration of an important milestone in the company's ongoing journey of development and commercial superiority." TAAG says this new Luanda - Nairobi route "aims to strengthen air connectivity between Southern Africa and East Africa, positioning TAAG Linhas Aéreas de Angola as a facilitator of regional mobility."

According to TAAG, the new Luanda-Nairobi route marks its "official entry into the Kenyan market and opens a strategic route between Southern and Eastern Africa. The connection is expected to boost bilateral trade, promote tourism, and provide travelers with greater access to regional and global markets."

The Southern African carrier has been involved in fleet and route expansion. It is leveraging Angola's infrastructure renewal including a new international airport to position itself as a leading regional airline. ▣

New Connection

SAA Launches New Route To Gaborone, Leases A330-300 To Aid Increased Flight Frequency

South African Airways (SAA) is launching "a twice-daily service between Johannesburg and Gaborone, Botswana" from November 2025. This further extends SAA's "regional reach and connectivity, thus continuing to provide both business and leisure travellers with convenience and connectivity."

According to SAA, the new schedule "designed to meet demand for direct travel between Johannesburg and Gaborone, includes two daily return flights, seven days a week."

Group CEO of SAA, Prof John Lamola says, "The launch of this route not only strengthens the cultural and economic ties between Botswana and South

Africa but also reinforces SAA's position as a premium network carrier."

The GCEO stated that "The addition of Gaborone to our network is a clear demonstration of our dedication to supporting regional integration, tourism, and inclusive economic growth."

The airline says it is adding "flights across key regional and international routes to meet growing demand during the upcoming festive season." SAA says it will increase frequencies on the Lagos, Accra and Sao Paulo routes.

To support this, the airline confirms that "an A330-300 Airbus has been leased from Hi Fly, configured in line with our fleet,

ensuring passengers continue to enjoy reliable connectivity across our network." According to SAA, Hi Fly will operate aircraft configured similarly to its widebody fleet, with 249 passenger seats be used on routes connecting Johannesburg with Lagos, Accra, and São Paulo.

SAA Group Chief Executive, Prof. John Lamola, said: "This temporary arrangement that is normal in the airline industry is similar to our arrangement with Sun Express. It represents an innovative solution that enables South African Airways to maintain its operational schedule and revenue targets while upholding our unwavering commitment to reliability, connectivity, and safety." ▣



Aircraft Deliveries

TACV Cabo Verde Airlines Receives two ATR72-600s From TrueNoord

T rueNoord, regional aircraft leasing company, has "delivered two ATR72-600's to TACV Cabo Verde Airlines." TrueNoord said "provided on long-term operating leases, the turboprops will be based at Praia International Airport on Santiago Island and mark the first ATR72-600s to join the operator's fleet."

Maarten Grift, TrueNoord Sales Director said: "Intra-island connectivity is a geographic necessity and vital for the economy of the country, as it drives tourism, facilitates international trade and reconnection of the diaspora. The delivery of these ATRs will significantly increase CVAs ability to meet the country's mobility needs."



Cabo Verde Airlines ATR72-600

Pedro Barros, Chairman & CEO of TACV Cabo Verde Airlines, adds, "The lease of these two aircraft marks an important step for TACV Cabo Verde Airlines, better positioning us to enhance connectivity across our island nation. This partnership reflects our shared vision for sustainable regional aviation and passenger-focused service."

He concluded that TrueNoord is "seeing a strong increase in demand for all regional aircraft types, but in particular turboprop aircraft which are well suited to providing efficient and frequent connectivity across Africa's diverse and often challenging terrain." ▢

Aviation Training

Solving Manpower Shortage in Africa: EAU Graduates Over a Thousand Aviation Professionals



EAU offers a wide range of undergraduate and postgraduate programs to both local and international trainees.

B oeing's 2025 Pilot and Technician Outlook (PTO) predicted that Africa will require 23,000 new pilots, 24,000 new technicians, 27,000 new cabin crews and 74,000 total new personnel through 2044. To meet this demand, it is crucial to focus on aviation training programs.

vibrant graduation ceremony at its facility, in the presence of Ethiopian Airlines Group Board Chairman His Excellency Let. Gen. Yilma Merdasa, Ethiopian Airlines Group CEO Mr. Mesfin Tasew, executives and graduates' families."

According to the Aviation University, "The graduates include 524 cabin crew, 293

To bridge this gap, Ethiopian Aviation University (EAU) has graduated "1053 professionals in various aviation fields including international trainees from 18 countries." Marking the trainees' achievement, the university "held a

aircraft maintenance technicians, 214 trainees from various Commercial & Ground Services fields, 41 pilots, and 8 Marshalling & Aerobridge Operators" and also reports that in showcasing gender diversity at the university, "the graduates include 579 male and 474 female aviation professionals."

Mr. Mesfin Tasew said, "We are delighted to witness young men and women from across the globe completing one chapter and beginning another in their aviation carrier journey. This is not just a personal achievement to the trainees; it is an achievement to the industry in Africa and the world. Today's graduates are tomorrow's industry leaders, and we are proud to take part in shaping the future of our industry through shaping the people who will run it." ▢



Development

Ethiopian Hosts A Two-Day Bishoftu Airport Project Showcase



Stakeholders at the Bishoftu Airport project showcase

In a bid to actualize the USD7.8 Billion Bishoftu Airport Project, "Ethiopian Airlines Group in partnership with African Development Bank (AfDB), Dar AlHandasah Consultants (DAR), and KPMG brought together a diverse group of stakeholders in a project showcase". The two-day showcase, according to the airline, was attended by "Ethiopia's Finance Minister His Excellency Ahmed Shide, Ethiopian Airlines Group CEO Mr. Mesfin Tasew and Executives, representatives from various financing institutions, contractors, suppliers, investors, and others."

ET said the "project showcase aims to present the structure, financing strategy, and risk allocation framework, including expected roles for Engineering, Procurement, Construction (EPC) to contractors and suppliers, development finance institutions, multilateral and bilateral development banks, commercial banks, export credit agencies and other wide pool of prospective stakeholders."

Ethiopian Airlines Group CEO Mr. Mesfin Tasew commented, "The Bishoftu mega international airport,

Africa's transformative project, calls for the collaboration of various stakeholders. Ethiopian has already partnered with several institutions for the initial works and will continue to further expand its collaboration with various other stakeholders. This project showcase paves the way for new partnerships, allowing deep insight into the project and its significance in the African aviation landscape and beyond."

The two-day event includes visit to the site of the airport about 40 kilometers from Addis Ababa and detailed presentation of the project by Ethiopian Airlines. "The project showcase is expected to also promote alignment among participants on expectations, timelines, and structuring considerations in preparation for the formal launch of the syndication process", said the airline.

The Bishoftu Airport is the largest airport project on the African continent and is poised to accommodate 60 million passengers by 2040. The scope of the airport project no doubt requires the involvement of diverse stakeholders, especially if it is to meet the 2030 commencement date. ■

Airport Upgrade

Nigeria's Ibadan Airport Receives First Flight After Recent Upgrade

The Ladoke Akintola Airport, Ibadan has received "its first aircraft since being closed down in March 2025 for upgrade to international standards."

According to Dr. Sulaimon Olanrewaju, the Special Adviser (Media) to Oyo State Governor, the aircraft "is an advanced member of the presidential flight" and "the successful landing underscores the readiness and capabilities of the airport's infrastructure to handle high-profile flights safely and efficiently."

The Oyo State government confirms that the presidential flight "sets a positive precedent for future arrivals and departures."

It can be recalled that Oyo State governor, Engr. Seyi Makinde, had in September 2024, performed the ground-breaking ceremony for the airport upgrade. Before its closure the airports received domestic flights from Overland Airways, Air Peace and Green Africa Airways.

The governor had noted that: "The upgrade of the airport is expected to

enhance air travel operations and provide a reliable transportation network for both business and leisure travellers, positioning the state for economic growth and development."

Earlier the airport's VIP lounge had been upgraded and a fire truck installed. The airport also boasts a 500,000-litre aviation fuel storage and dispensing facility.

With the reopening of the upgraded airport, the State expects a boost in regional air traffic. ■



Appointment

Mr. Urvesh J. Desai Joins Zambia Airports Corporation As Managing Director



Mr. Urvesh J. Desai, ZACL Managing Director

As of September 1, 2025, the Board of Zambia Airports Corporation Limited (ZACL) has appointed Mr. Urvesh J. Desai as Managing Director of the company to continue the repositioning of the

organization and "align airport development with national tourism goals to position Zambia as a leading regional destination."

The appointment of Mr. Desai, according to the airport company, "underscores the Board's commitment to continuity in leadership and strategic alignment with national and regional development priorities."

"Mr. Desai brings to ZACL a wealth of extensive leadership experience, having served in senior executive roles across diverse sectors in Ghana and Zambia. His proven track record in financial strategy, organisational transformation and corporate governance will play a key role in reinforcing ZACL's efforts to position Zambia as a leading aviation hub in the region", says the ZACL.

Mr. Desai's global outlook, paired with his understanding of the local environment, will lead ZACL to its next phase of growth and transformation. This aligns strongly with ZACL's vision to modernise airport infrastructure, enhance service delivery, and drive sustainable growth in the aviation sector.

Mr. Zevyanji Sinkala, ZACL Board Chairperson stated that: "Mr. Desai joins at a pivotal time for the Corporation. We are confident that under his leadership, ZACL will scale greater heights. His expertise in financial oversight and operational delivery will be invaluable as we continue to strengthen our commercial footprint, including expanding connectivity, and enhancing customer experience across all our airports." □

Training

GATA Partners with BAGASOO to host OJT Instructors' Course

The Ghana Civil Aviation Training Academy (GATA) hosted "a five-day intensive On-the-Job Training Instructor (OJTI) course organised by the Banjul Accord Group Aviation Safety Oversight Organisation (BAGASOO)." The programme commenced with an opening address by the Acting Director-General of the Ghana Civil Aviation Authority (GCAA), Rev. Stephen Wilfred Arthur.

Rev. Arthur said: "The aviation industry, by its very nature, is built on collaboration and the highest standards of professionalism. Training and capacity-building are essential activities that sustain our industry's safety, efficiency, and growth."

According to the GCAA, "participants

were drawn not only from Ghana but also from Cabo Verde and The Gambia, reflecting a strong commitment to cross-border collaboration and knowledge-sharing."

Reaffirming GATA's vision, Rev. Arthur stated: "The Ghana Civil Aviation Training Academy continues to demonstrate its commitment to providing world-class training and capacity-building, not only for Ghana but for the African region."

I hope that one day, we will welcome participants from Singapore, Indonesia, the Americas and beyond-affirming our truly global outlook."

GCAA's Director of Safety Regulation, Mr. Franklin Gyamera said: "for the

instructors, the training is an opportunity to share expertise, and for the participants, to absorb as much as possible" and noted that the session "will serve as an OJT platform for two of GCAA's prospective instructors, who will soon contribute to GATA's faculty."

Representative of BAGASOO's Executive Director, Jailza Silva, Mr. Jacob Idaewor expressed gratitude to GCAA for hosting the training programme. Mr. Idaewor said that the "OJTI course, once a component of BAGASOO's Inspector Training System (ITS), was later separated to cater specifically to experienced inspectors tasked with delivering OJT. The course extends beyond instruction to include planning, organisational setup, management, and continuous evaluation for quality improvement." □



Additional Frequencies

Qatar Airways Cargo Increases Belly-Hold Capacity In Africa



Qatar Cargo is continuously working to meet market demands

Qatar Airways Cargo, says it is "boosting belly-hold flight frequencies, in addition to its scheduled freighter capacity to strategic international destinations this winter to meet rising demand during the peak season."

For Africa, the increase will be as reflected in the following cities:

- Casablanca: Increased to seven weekly flights (from 4)
- Cape Town: Increased to 12 weekly flights (from 10)

- Johannesburg: Increased to 18 weekly flights (from 14). Three freighter flights also offer 300 tonnes capacity each way per week
- Zanzibar: Daily widebody service begins 26 October 2025.

Notably, the cargo carrier reports that "London will see a historic increase from 8 to 10 daily flights-marking the highest-ever frequency for Qatar Airways."

Leveraging its unique location at the crossroads of Europe, Asia, and Africa,

Qatar Airways Cargo says its "hub at the award-winning Hamad International Airport continues to play a pivotal role in global trade. This winter, the airline is enhancing connectivity across major trade routes, further strengthening its position as a bridge between East and West."

Mark Drusch, Chief Officer Cargo at Qatar Airways Cargo said: "With over 60 freighter destinations and more than 170 passenger destinations, Qatar Airways Cargo already offers an unmatched global network. But excellence is a journey, not a destination. We are continuously refining our capacity and operations to meet dynamic market demands, especially as we head into the peak season."

These frequency increases reflect our commitment to delivering reliable, high-performance cargo solutions across the globe." ■

New Order

Turkish Airlines Orders up to 75 Boeing 787 Dreamliners, Commits to More 737 MAX Jets

Turkish Airlines has made "a firm order for up to 75 787 Dreamliners", the flag carrier's largest ever Boeing widebody purchase. Boeing confirms that the deal "includes 35 of the 787-9 model, 15 of the larger 787-10, and options for 25 787 Dreamliners to grow and modernize the airline's fleet. The new order will support more than 123,000 jobs across the U.S."

The airline also reported its intent "to purchase up to 150 more 737 MAX airplanes, which will be its largest Boeing single-aisle order when finalized." The 787 and 737 MAX orders

combined will double Turkish Airlines' Boeing fleet as the carrier expands its capacity and network.

Prof. Ahmet Bolat, Turkish Airlines Chairman of the Board and the Executive Committee said: "The addition of these advanced Boeing aircraft to our fleet will not only enhance our operational capabilities but also become a significant element supporting Turkish Airlines' 2033 Vision of expanding our fleet to 800 aircraft."

Turkish Airlines says adding the larger 787-10 to its future fleet will enable it to "benefit from additional passenger and

cargo capacity while improving fuel efficiency on high-demand routes between Istanbul and destinations in the U.S, Africa, Southeast Asia and the Middle East."

Stephanie Pope, president and CEO of Boeing Commercial Airplanes said: "We are honored that Turkish Airlines has once again chosen the 787 Dreamliner and 737 MAX to power its future growth. As a proud partner to Türkiye and the Turkish aviation industry for 80 years, we look forward to continuing our support of Turkish Airlines as they expand operations and deliver exceptional experiences to their passengers." ■



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Restrictive Travel Regimes For Africans Are Impeding SAATM And AfCFTA

By Monday Ukoha



More African countries need to embrace visa openness

In September 2025, the government of Burkina Faso announced that it would waive visa fees for African visitors; it stopped short of offering no visa free entry to all African citizens, else it would have joined the four countries namely Benin, Seychelles, The Gambia and Rwanda as countries with no visa requirements for African citizens. Ghana has equally announced that from 2025 all Africans with valid passports can visit the country without visas. Kenya in July 2025 allowed Nigerians to visit the country without visa.

Visa Openness report for 2024 while not dire is certainly not a remarkable improvement on 2023. According to the report only 4 African countries out of 54 allow all Africans to visit their countries without a visa. It notes that 28 per cent of intra African travels do not require a visa; 26% of intra African travellers can obtain visas on arrival while 46% must obtain visas before travelling to other African countries. This report would seem to suggest that the process forwards freer movement of African within Africa has tanked.

It is telling that less than 10 percent of African countries do not require visa for visit from citizens of other African countries. It is more interesting to note that African countries open their countries more to citizens of other regions than to fellow Africans. Former African Union Chairperson, Moussa Faki Mahamat had warned in 2018 that African states must ensure "that African are no longer treated like foreigners on their own

continent, while others move about therein often freely".

There are regional disparities in performance with the West African region performing better than other regions even as the report notes that wealthier African countries tend towards more restrictive practices, for obvious reasons.

SAATM AND AfCFTA Are Negatively Impacted

Visa openness and accessibility no doubt is a critical part of any integration process in Africa. Movement of goods and people cannot be optimized; intra African tourism, increased trade relations, etc all depend on the ability of citizens of Africa to assess each other's countries with limited restrictions. It is for this reason therefore that the African Union in its Agenda 2063, a 50-year project of economic improvement and advancement, has recognized Free Movement of Persons Protocol as one of its flagship projects.

Amongst other sectors where visa openness has serious direct implications is air transport and trade which happen to be two areas Africa is paying attention to through the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and the Single African Air Transport Market (SAATM). While considerable efforts are being put into both AfCFTA and SAATM, it appears more efforts are need to be invested in the free movement of persons. Intra

African tourism is equally impacted by restrictive entry regimes. To access the Safari sites that litter East Africa currently, a citizen of West Africa may require visas for Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda respectively.

This Visa Openness report would seem to suggest that the process towards freer movement of Africans within Africa has all but tanked, if not for the efforts of few states. And there are many reasons for this.

■ **Economic Disparity** - Economic disparities have given vent to the fear of loss of jobs due to immigrants, and regional immigrants seem to pose the most challenge for governments. People tend to migrate to areas where they have greater potential to find jobs. Obviously, this is one of the major reasons wealthier African countries have some of the most restrictive visa policies for Africans.

■ **Security Challenges** - Economic challenges often lead to crime and security challenges, especially when there is no means of livelihood. Immigrants are heavily associated with increased crime rate, even if not always the case. So many states shut their borders to Africans to control crime and prevent security challenges. Internecine crisis in many parts of Africa have often led to tighter borders and more restrictive intra Africa movement.

■ **Social Pressure** - Social cohesion is disrupted by irregular migration flow and is often cited as reason for more restrictive visa regimes.

These reasons are germane and unless they are addressed many countries in Africa would continue having restrictive entry policies for Africans.

Examples of West Africa And East Africa

Whilst these challenges remain, examples from West Africa and East Africa and especially Rwanda have shown that free movement of persons does not necessarily equate to more economic, security and social pressures. Of the top 20 countries with liberal entry regimes for Africans, 16 are in East and West Africa regions. Professor Pali Lehohla writing in the New Times notes "Certainly, there are valid concerns about security and managing migration flows. In regions facing significant threats or economic disparities, restrictive policies may seem necessary. However, a more balanced approach is essential. African nations must weigh the imperative for security against the substantial economic benefits of integration and openness." He concludes that "If Africa is to unlock its full potential, it must start by reimagining its borders. In daring to change the status-quo".

The example of West African and East African Community can be replicated especially for North Africa and Southern Africa. The case of Rwanda's openness and the economic benefits has continued to receive attention in recent literature and suffice it to say here that it is indicative of the economic benefits that a relaxed movement regime can foster, if well



28 per cent of intra African travels do not require a visa; 26% of intra African travellers can obtain visas on arrival while 46% must obtain visas before travelling to other African countries.

managed. West Africa's 15 member states have enjoyed free movement within each other's countries. Though security challenges exist, they have not been overwhelmed by crime nor economic exploitation. It does even appear that the proclivity to overstay exists more where visa regimes are restrictive.

The Role For the AU

It bears repeating that the benefits of the AfCFTA and SAATM will not be fully attained without a commensurate freer movement for Africans within Africa. If anything, it has also become clearer that mere proclamations at AU summits without needed ground work would not move the needle. What is required now is a continental workplan to ensure the full implementation of the Free Movement of Persons Protocol.

The starting point may be to ensure that all African states fully subscribe to the Free Movement of Persons Protocol. Secondly, elsewhere, many have recommended increased adoption of national identity documents in all countries of the continent. Thirdly, regional and bilateral approaches remain very recommended and must be encouraged as building blocks for what would become a visa less Africa for Africans. Furthermore, the AU can drive more continental cooperation in the areas of economic development, security and crime prevention.

Conclusion

Free movement of persons will definitely improve air transport. One can make an example of the number of flights between Nigeria and Ghana for inference. Trade will also be positively impacted.

The progress of the Regional Economic Communities namely ECOWAS, EAC, SADC, has shown that free movement of persons across Africa is possible. As East Africans are moving freely within the East African Community, and West Africans are moving freely within ECOWAS, it does not need to stretch much of the imagination to know that it possible, if efforts are invested.

Africa must be open to Africans. □

Tackling The "Big Five" - Addressing The Border Challenges You Keep Hearing About

By Andy Smith



Andy Smith, Director, Industry and Innovation, SITA

Global travel is booming again while at the same time border threats are increasing. This dual problem is putting government border agencies under tremendous pressure: they need to maintain national security while providing smooth and efficient travel flows. Yet outdated manual and analogue systems cannot keep up.

This is where modern border tech comes in. Today's modern digital platforms bring together travel authorisations, biometrics and real-time risk checks to keep things secure and moving fast.

It is not just about speed. Governments need the tools to act quickly, confidently, and smartly.

These are the "Big Five" challenges border agencies face - and how digital tools are helping them stay ahead.

Doing More With Less

Budgets are tight. Staff are stretched thin. And the tech is often outdated. Meanwhile, traveller numbers keep climbing while various threats are increasing and evolving.

Digital tools help address these problems. For instance, online electronic travel authorisations and e-Visas let travellers apply online from anywhere with no need for in-person consular visits. Real-time updates to entry rules become easy to do with Advance Passenger Processing (APP) and it does not require systems overhauls. And biometric automated border control gates (a.k.a. eGates or ABC gates) and kiosks speed up ID checks, so border agency officers can focus their attention on the high-risk travellers.

The results are lower costs, faster passenger processing, stronger security and smoother traveller journeys through airport and cruise terminal passport checkpoints.

Keeping Up With Changing Rules

Border policies can shift fast—thanks to politics, global events, and new rules. Agencies must stay in step with international standards, industry frameworks and regulations from the likes of the UN International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO), the International Air Transport Association's (IATA) One ID, the EU's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and its Entry/Exit System. Rigid systems cannot keep pace. But more flexible digital ones can. Dynamic Advance Passenger Processing lets governments change entry criteria easily and share information with airlines to approve or deny boarding based on identity, documentation and risk profiles.

This allows government agencies to be flexible, compliant and ready for whatever comes next.

Staying Ahead Of Health Risks

COVID-19 showed just how vulnerable manual border checks can be. The health threats created long lines, lots of contact between border agents and passengers along with slow health screenings.

Now, digital systems are built with health in mind. Travellers can upload test results or vaccine records before they fly for verification. Self-service eGates and kiosks with facial

recognition make for fast, contactless entry or exit processing. And everything updates in real time.

It's safer, faster, more accurate and gives travellers peace of mind.

Responding To Mass Migration / Displacement

Wars, natural disasters, and economic crises are forcing millions to move. Borders need to handle sudden surges while treating these people with care and dignity.

Digital tools help make that possible. In a digital clearance process, Electronic Travel Authorisations (ETAs) serve as the first layer, pre-screening travellers before they begin their journey. At departure, APP links to this data, allowing airlines to verify authorisation and to approve or deny boarding in real-time. Upon arrival, eGates use biometric checks to match travellers with their cleared records by automating and efficiently finalising the clearance process. Together, these systems create a continuous, risk-based control flow from pre-travel to arrival.

For border agencies, it's about staying in control, knowing who's coming and going while being compassionate even while under time pressure.

Stopping Organised Crime

Transnational Criminal Organisations exploit border weaknesses to illicitly move drugs, weapons, counterfeit goods and to traffic people. Manual checks alone can't stop them.

Digital platforms offer a smarter defence. Governments can conduct real-time risk profiling using Passenger Name

Record (PNR) data, APP integration with watchlists, biometric collection with ETAs, and travel histories to flag suspicious travellers.

Integrated biometric clearance links eGates and kiosks with digital travel applications, so only verified travellers can use automated lanes. This enables instant watchlist checks.

This strategic transformation empowers governments to intercept threats before they arrive.

The Future Of Borders Is Smart, Safe, And Seamless

The right tech will provide enhanced security together with smooth and fast travel. Modern border solutions help governments protect people, stay compliant, respond to health and humanitarian needs, and help economies to be competitive, attracting investments, trade, travel and tourism, while enhancing the traveller experience.

This isn't just an upgrade. It's a whole new strategic way of thinking about modern borders - built for today but ready for tomorrow. 

Andy Smith is the Director, Industry and Innovation at SITA (Société Internationale de Télécommunications Aéronautiques), the global airline industry-owned IT-tech and solutions provider. He is an expert on border management, immigration, digital identities, digital travel and aviation security.



Modern border tech will help provide security and fast travel for passengers

Route Optimisation

Air Botswana Adjusts Routes, Achieves 84% OTP



Air Botswana also achieved 84% On-Time performance

Botswana's national airline, Air Botswana has "suspended services on the Gaborone Durban and Gaborone Windhoek routes." The airline confirms that: "passengers traveling to Windhoek will continue to have access via our Gaborone-Maun-Windhoek connection." According to the airline, this is part of its "route optimisation

tourism."

Air Botswana says this decision enables it to optimize its "route network, safeguard schedule integrity, and ensure that our customers continue to benefit from reliable and efficient services." The airline further notes that in the past financial year, it "achieved an On-Time Performance (OTP) of 84%, exceeding

strategy", says its "focus is to strengthen operational efficiency, enhance services, improve customer access, and continue to facilitate trade and

80% industry target, with July 2025 OTP performance reaching 92%." Acting General Manager, Mr. Boikanyo Ntwaagae said: "These results demonstrate the impact of our operational discipline and reflect our commitment to delivering a dependable service. By streamlining our routes, we expect to build further on this momentum, reduce disruptions, and provide our customers with greater confidence in our schedule integrity."

There are media reports of financial difficulties at the national carrier including inability to pay some salaries and the General Manager of the airline placed on administrative leave. The reports also allude to the drive by the country's president to ensure public enterprises do not remain a drain on national resources especially in the light of economic challenges facing the country. ▣

Partnership

Uganda Airlines And Air India Sign New Interline Partnership

Uganda Airlines, the National carrier of the Republic of Uganda, has signed "a new interline partnership with Air India. India's leading global airline." Uganda Airlines says that the agreement will "seamlessly connect networks of both carriers, offering passengers unparalleled travel options between Africa and the Indian subcontinent and beyond."

According to Uganda Airlines, this strategic partnership allows its "guests to book a single ticket for seamless travel from Entebbe International Airport (EBB) to over 25 destinations across India and key international hubs via Air India's major gateway in Mumbai (BOM)."

Conversely, Uganda Airlines states that: "the partnership opens up the Pearl of Africa for Air India's extensive customer base. Air India guests from across India and other parts of Asia can travel to Mumbai or Dubai with Air India and take onward connections on Uganda Airlines flights to Entebbe (Uganda) to explore Uganda's renowned wildlife, landscapes, and business opportunities." Also, "Air India guests will also be able to take onward connections from Entebbe to South Africa, Nigeria, Tanzania, Zimbabwe, Zambia, and other African countries through Uganda Airlines growing network within Africa."

Jenifer Bamuturaki, Chief Executive Officer, Uganda Airlines said: "This Interline agreement is a significant step

in our strategy to connect Uganda to Africa and beyond. It provides our customers with a smooth, single-ticket travel experience to dozens of new destinations, strengthening economic and cultural ties between our regions."

Nipun Aggarwal, Chief Commercial Officer, Air India said: "We are happy to partner with Uganda Airlines, enhancing connectivity between India and Africa. This partnership not only provides our customers with seamless access to Uganda and an extended network across Africa but also warmly welcome Uganda Airlines' passengers to explore Air India's extensive routes within India and beyond, fostering stronger economic and cultural ties between our regions." ▣

Supply Chain

Aviation Supply Chain Group Report Shows Progress in the Adoption of its 13 Recommended Actions



Source: GE Aerospace

The Aviation Coalition is an organisation formed to prevent unapproved parts from entering the industry.

A new report from the Aviation Supply Chain Integrity Coalition, an organization formed to prevent unapproved parts from entering the industry, "finds that companies are making progress implementing its initial recommendations." The report comes less than one year after the Coalition shared a list of 13 recommended actions.

According to the Coalition, the Implementation Progress Update, released at the International Civil Aviation Organization's General Assembly, "outlines how members and others in the aviation industry have started implementing the report's five short-term recommendations. These recommendations-focused on strengthening vendor accreditation, improving document traceability and verification, and enhancing part traceability-are designed for

implementation within two years." Coalition co-chair Robert L. Sumwalt, former NTSB chair said: "The Coalition didn't stop with the report's release last year-it was just getting started. More work is ahead, but the update shows progress and that lasting change is underway."

Coalition co-chair John D. Porcari, former deputy U.S. Transportation Secretary said: "The progress we've made over the past year is proof that collaboration on aviation safety works and is a must. Preventing unapproved parts requires sustained focus and collective action from every corner of the aviation industry."

The Coalition, which has been meeting throughout the year, also reported the addition of new members this year, "including AAR CORP., Aeroxchange Ltd., the Aviation Suppliers Association, and Southwest Airlines,

further bolstering industry-wide efforts to implement the recommendations."

The report includes case studies outlining how specific companies are implementing the recommendations.

According to the Coalition, "One is how GE Aerospace will deploy a signature validation tool across its Maintenance, Repair, and Overhaul (MRO) shops and on-wing support facilities in support of the Coalition recommendation to enhance the integrity of ARCs. This tool verifies the identity, employment, and authority of signatories. It builds on past efforts to digitize key MRO paperwork and use AI to verify that data fields are valid and match other records."

Another case study outlines the presentation StandardAero gave during a Coalition webinar to help others across the industry, especially smaller suppliers, adopt best practices for controlling unserviceable and scrap material.

GE Aerospace Chief Transformation Officer Phil Wickler, one of the coalition's members said: "GE Aerospace continues to make progress advancing digital tools and processes to strengthen supply chain integrity, but the work is far from over. We remain dedicated to collaborating with industry partners to implement these recommendations and develop innovative solutions."

Founding members of the coalition include senior representatives from Airbus, American Airlines, Boeing, Delta Air Lines, GE Aerospace, Safran, StandardAero and United Airlines. 

BAGASOO: Assisting Members States To Strengthen Their Safety And Security Oversight Systems

Ms. Jailza Soraya Rodrigues Silva, the Executive Director for the Banjul Accord Group Safety Oversight Organization (BAGASOO) in this exclusive interview with Aviation & Allied Business Journal discusses the 1st BAGASOO Safety Conference (BSC), safety in African aviation, the new one US Dollar passenger safety levy and other issues pertinent to safety in the African aviation industry.



Ms. Jailza Soraya Rodrigues Silva, Executive Director, Banjul Accord Group Safety Oversight Organization (BAGASOO)

Q: First, we would like to congratulate you on the 15th anniversary of BAGASOO and to ask what essentially is the objective of this Inaugural Safety Conference

A: Over the past 15 years, BAGASOO has been working closely with its member states but we have over time observed that quite a number of the relevant stakeholders within our member States are not sufficiently aware of our activities. In many cases, even within the Member states, civil aviation safety inspectors are not abreast or well informed of BAGASOO's work and what we are doing to support them. So, this inaugural conference is part of our efforts to increase BAGASOO's visibility and it is also a good opportunity to combine this goal with the celebration of our 15th anniversary.

Q: In these 15 years, what in your opinion are the achievements of BAGASOO as an institution?

A: BAGASOO has recorded several achievements. One of our earliest was the drafting of the civil aviation acts for countries that didn't have such when we started. States that had significant safety concerns at the beginning of BAGASOO we are able to help them to resolve those. More recently expand BAGASOO scope to include aviation security has been a major step forward. Another key development was the approval by our ministers, in April 2025 to implement a USD 1 passenger safety levy charge to address the financial sustainability issues we've faced since inception.

Q: On the USD1 Passenger Safety Charge which is most likely going to fall on the passengers, historically our region is known for high charges and operators and airlines are wondering if this \$1



is going to be a stop-gap measure, or it is a permanent charge, and if it is not going to be an additional burden to passengers?

A: That concern was anticipated. When we were designing the Passenger Safety Levy Charge it was very clear that we should avoid adding an extra burden on states or passengers. The ministers agreed that any state that has already implemented a similar mechanism, will not add a new charge, but rather remove this one dollar from the mechanism already implemented. Several states are already collecting Passenger Safety Levy Charge, they will simply remove this \$1 from what they have already implemented. For example, The Gambia have already included this provision in the Civil Aviation Act. The approach is to properly formalize the implementation of what is already in place. This is what we are working with the states.

Q: For a conference of this magnitude, what would you say are the key terms of takeaways?

A: One of the key takeaways was the discussion on the certification of aerodromes that are not open for international traffic. A panelist rightly pointed that aerodromes not classified as international are operating without meeting the required standards. The overall message was about collaboration-how we can combine our financial and human resources. Rather than working as isolated entities, we can achieve far more through collaboration.

Q: What are your long-term ambitions for BAGASOO?

A: Our long-term goals remain the same: to assist our Members States to strengthen their safety and security oversight systems. From the beginning, this has been our focus, and we want to continue to support the states in



When we were designing the Passenger Safety Levy Charge it was very clear that we should avoid adding an extra burden on states or passengers. The ministers agreed that any state that has already implemented a similar mechanism, will not add a new charge, but rather remove this one dollar from the mechanism already implemented.

implementing the eight critical elements of the oversight system. Capacity building will remain a top priority. Building an internal regional training capacity that enables member States to look inwards and be able to obtain all the resource in achieving self-sufficiency in the area of training and to put an end to perpetual dependence on those external sources that are not cost-effective.

Q: What in your opinion are the issues with data collection in BAGASOO states and how do you work together with the states to resolve this?





A: A key issues is the absence of digital platforms for data collection. Some of the states don't have the necessary tools in place to collect data. Many States are still relying in paper-based format, which makes it difficult to collect and analyze data properly. To address this we are launching a the new version of Safety Information Management for Civil Aviation (SIMCA) to make data collection easier for the member states. This tools are designed to be user friendly and widely accessible.

However, technology alone is not enough. Resistance to change is common, so we must invest in training and change management. Inspectors must be trained and supported to adopt new tools.

Q: Harmonization and standardization came up very strongly at the Conference. Why is it difficult to harmonize regulations and then standardise across our industry, especially within a small microcosm like BAGASOO?

A: The main objective of harmonization and standardisation is mutual recognition of licenses and certificates among our member States and potentially the delegation of oversight functions to BAGASOO. But this inevitably raises sovereignty concerns. States perceive oversight as a core national function and are often reluctant to delegate it, even within a trusted regional framework like BAGASOO. It's often that sense of ownership that continues to be a significant barrier.

Q: You are a wonderful lady doing a wonderful job in BAGASOO, and obviously you have come a long way in the industry. What are you doing to encourage more

women participation in the African Civil Aviation sector?

A: Last year, Cabo Verde CAA organized a conference where one of the panels focused on attracting young women to the aviation industry. A key outcome was the signing of MoU aimed at raising awareness among young girls through the schools' visits and workshops. Many young girls are not aware of the opportunities available in the aviation industry beyond pilots. So, it's important to bring this information to them and help them to explore new avenues in the aviation industry. I'm also involved with some groups that are looking for ways to secure resources, probably through scholarship for girls to join the aviation industry. This is very personal to me due to the challenges I have experienced for instance I faced difficulties in finding a simply personal protective equipment in a size to fit a woman. I'm very passionate about making aviation more inclusive for women.

Q: BAGASOO is doing a good job, building capacity across states, leveraging on its own expertise. But we have the issue with brain drain across states where people are trained and they go elsewhere because industry pays better than government. Is there any solution you have for this or what are you doing in BAGASOO?

A: During the preparation for a USOAP CMA audit, we supported a CAA in developing a succession plan. This succession plan has been meticulously prepared not solely to focus on the current personnel within the CAA, but also to encompass the aviation industry as a whole. For instance during capacity building activities, we extend invitations not only to the CAAs personnel but also invite the aviation stakeholders. This approach ensures that when employees leave the CAA (because that is inevitable, we cannot stop people from leaving), we have created a workforce that is prepared to replace the ones leaving.

Also, personnel turnover is not solely based on individuals seeking for a better job opportunities, but other factors such as retirement age, the aging of licensed personnel necessitate a broad-based capacity strategy development. It's not sufficient to focus solely on the inspectors you have in the house; the entire aviation industry must be trained to secure the future of the aviation industry.

Talent development in the aviation industry enables the identification of critical skills shortage particularly in specific areas like pilot, air traffic controllers, and also inform strategies to attract these professionals to the CAA. Moreover to attract the aviation professionals, CAAs must offer better compensation, improved benefits and a compelling career vision. By focusing on the key areas and investing in building capacity can cultivate qualified successors who can assume critical roles in the near futures. ■

Collaboration

ET & SITA Collaborate To Strengthen Africa's Passenger Experience



Ethiopian Airlines & SITA - MOU Signing

With air travel demand across Africa skyrocketing and passenger expectations shifting fast in a digital-first world, SITA reports that "airlines face mounting pressure to deliver smoother, more efficient journeys while managing increasingly busy operations. At the same time, destinations like Ethiopia are rapidly emerging as hubs for tourism, investment, and trade, raising the stakes for national carriers to leave a lasting positive impression on travelers."

To meet these challenges head-on, Ethiopian Airlines and SITA have "signed a new Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to co-develop innovative solutions that strengthen the airline's operations and enhance the passenger experience." According to SITA, the collaboration "will tap into startups, technology providers, business accelerators, and industry partners to identify key challenges and create fresh, forward-looking solutions tailored to the airline's needs."

Mr. Mesfin Tasew, Ethiopian Airlines Group CEO said: "Ethiopia is realizing its ambition to become a sophisticated, dynamic destination for investment, trade, and tourism. Ethiopian Airlines plays a central role in making that vision a reality."

Mr. Selim Bouri, President, Middle East & Africa, SITA said: "Africa is experiencing unprecedented growth in air travel just as passengers' expectations are being reshaped by rapid advances in digital technology. Hubs like Addis Ababa's Bole International Airport need to provide a frictionless passenger journey so airlines can optimize flight schedules and deliver smooth, memorable trips. This collaboration between Ethiopian Airlines and SITA is all about driving the innovation needed to meet these demands and help shape the future of African aviation." ▣

Expansion

AFG Aviation Ireland Limited Leases Two CRJ1000 Aircraft To Nigeria's Cally Air

AFG Aviation Ireland Limited ("AFG"), is expanding its footprint in Africa with "the successful acquisition of two Bombardier CRJ1000 aircraft (MSN 19004 and MSN 19009) from Regional One, and the respective placement of both aircraft with Cally Air. The airline is the state-backed carrier of Cross River State, Nigeria, and will operate the aircraft under a finance lease agreement with AFG."

AFG Aviation says the "addition of these modern, fuel-efficient regional jets will serve as a cornerstone for Cally Air's fleet development, providing the operational foundation needed to expand connectivity within Nigeria and open new routes across West Africa." Noting that

the "strategic boost will help accelerate the airline's growth trajectory, thereby supporting regional trade, tourism, and sustainable economic development."

Christian Nuehlen, Founder and CEO of AFG, said "Africa's aviation sector is poised for exceptional growth, and we are committed to delivering the aircraft, financing structures, and expertise that enable our partners to realize their full potential", while the lessor's Senior VP Commercial Christian Hatje adds: "Our collaboration with Cally Air reflects our long-standing belief in the opportunities this dynamic continent has to offer."



Mr. Christian Hatje, MD, AFG Aviation, with Prince Otu, Governor, Cross River State, overseeing the landmark deal

AFG prides itself of "a proven track record in structuring complex transactions and delivering aircraft on time and within budget" and "remains a trusted partner for airlines, lessors, and aviation stakeholders seeking to grow across the continent of Africa." ▣

ICAO 42nd Triennial Assembly



The ICAO 42nd Triennial Assembly recorded a high level of participation.

Safety & Security

ICAO Recognises African Countries for Their Achievements in Aviation Safety and Security

The International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) has recognised "Albania, Azerbaijan, Botswana, India, Morocco, Oman and Senegal" for their achievements in aviation Safety and has also recognised "Angola, Bahrain, Cameroon, Indonesia, Kuwait, Moldova and Togo" for their achievements in aviation security.

The Council President Certificates were awarded to the states during the opening ceremony of the 42nd session of the Assembly on

September 23, 2025.

The ICAO Council President Certificate was established in support of the No Country Left Behind initiative, now a Strategic Goal. The purpose of these certificates according to ICAO is to "recognize States from each ICAO region which have made significant progress in establishing an effective implementation (EI) of safety and security oversight systems and for their ongoing commitment to the implementation of ICAO Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs). These

certificates honor progress achieved but feature no financial rewards."

According to ICAO, "The eligibility criteria used for this recognition are objective and transparent and are based on the results of the respective audit programme." In addition, ICAO says "the Council, during its 226th Session, approved that the criteria be updated based on the current edition of the Global Aviation Safety Plan (GASP) and the current edition of the Global Aviation Security Plan (GASeP)." 

Transformation

ICAO's 42nd Assembly Records High Participation, Delivers Clear Mandate for Transformation of Aviation



L-R ICAO Secretary General, Juan Carlos Salazar; President of the 42nd ICAO Assembly, Engineer Naif Al-Abri and ICAO Council President Salvatore Sciacchitano

The International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) Assembly has given the Organization a clear mandate to "pursue its long-term strategy for transforming air transport, with Member States adopting resolutions in support of eliminating fatalities, reducing carbon emissions to net-zero, and ensuring no country is left behind as air services grow in emerging economies."

ICAO Council President Salvatore Sciacchitano at the close of the 42nd Assembly said: "Let this Assembly be remembered as one that set us firmly on track to transform global aviation for generations to come. Let it be remembered as one where global ambition becomes global action."

The 42nd Assembly had a record-breaking 192 Member States, with nearly 3,000 delegates having attended the two weeks of deliberations and decision-making.

According to ICAO, this high level of participation confirms its "singular and irreplaceable role in leading international cooperation across the

entire air transport value chain." The Assembly demonstrated this through strengthening global safety and security frameworks, resounding unity on environmental action, and establishing the foundations for universal access to air transport. The decisions taken comprehensively address the opportunities and challenges facing civil aviation.

ICAO Secretary General Juan Carlos Salazar said: "Aviation's transition to a safe, secure and sustainable aviation system is achievable. The decisions you have taken here will guide aviation for decades, with a positive impact that will benefit all nations and people."

ICAO reports that the Assembly also completed the election of its new Council. The 36-member Council according to ICAO "is the governing body of ICAO responsible to the Assembly, and is elected for a three-year term. Countries for PART I and II were elected on 27 September, and elections for PART III were held on 30 September."

A key milestone was the inaugural

High-Level Resource Mobilization Event, with exemplary commitments made by Australia, Canada, France, Italy, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Mongolia, Nigeria, the Republic of Korea, Saudi Arabia, Switzerland, the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom, the European Union, and industry partners Airbus and Boeing.

ICAO says the Assembly also approved the "Budget for the upcoming 2026-2028 triennium and called for the Organization to continue its comprehensive transparency, accountability, and efficiency reforms. It also endorsed the creation of a Strategic Fund to be financed through voluntary contributions to address remaining funding gaps. This transitional and exceptional measure will support the implementation of priority activities under the ICAO Business Plan."

According to ICAO, "Member States also encouraged further progress on ensuring the long-term financial sustainability of the Organization through prioritization, revenue generation, and operational improvements." 

Commitment

Nigeria Reaffirms Commitment To Aviation Development



Nigeria delegates at 42nd ICAO Assembly

Nigeria has reaffirmed its commitment to the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) principles and global aviation standards.

Speaking at ICAO's 42nd Assembly, Nigeria's Honourable Minister of

Aviation and Aerospace Development, Barrister Festus Keyamo says, "Nigeria remains firmly committed to the principles and objectives of ICAO." He outlined bold steps to "position Nigeria as Africa's aviation hub and called for stronger collaboration in shaping the future of global aviation."

The Honourable Minister highlighting the ongoing investments in safety, security, and infrastructure modernization said: "As Africa's most populous Nation and a strategic aviation hub in West Africa, Nigeria continues to invest in infrastructure modernization, regulatory reforms and capacity building to ensure that our aviation sector meets global standards and contribute contributes meaningfully to regional and international connectivity."

On environment, the Minister confirmed Nigeria's "strong focus on sustainability and climate resilience, including SAF (Sustainable Aviation Fuel) development and participation in Carbon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation (CORSIA) aligning with President Tinubu's drive for a green economy." Keyamo reiterated Nigeria's "commitment to SAATM (Single African Air Transport Market) and the Yamoussoukro Decision for African air transport liberalization." ▣

Election

Seven African Countries Elected as ICAO Council Members

At the 42nd Session of the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) Assembly, African countries alongside other countries were elected into the 36-Member Council.

According to ICAO, the 36- Member council elections divided into three parts, with part I being "states of chief importance in air transport", and Part II being "States which make the largest contribution to the provision of facilities for international civil air navigation" and Part III being "States which make the largest contribution to the provision of facilities for international civil air navigation."

African countries Nigeria, Egypt and South Africa joins 9 other countries re-elected into Part II of the ICAO Council while Angola, Equatorial Guinea, Morocco and Uganda were elected into the Part III of the Council.

According to ICAO, "All elected States will form the Council for a three-year term. The 36-member Council is the governing body of the Organization."

ICAO reports that the new Council will be formed by:

PART I - States of chief importance in air transport.
Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United

Kingdom, and the United States.

PART II - States which make the largest contribution to the provision of facilities for international civil air navigation
Argentina, Colombia, Denmark, Egypt, India, Mexico, Nigeria, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, South Africa, Spain, and Switzerland.

PART III - States ensuring geographic representation
Angola, Belize, Cuba, Ecuador, Equatorial Guinea, Malaysia, Mali, Morocco, Poland, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Uganda, the United Arab Emirates, and Uruguay. ▣

Cooperation

CAA Singapore Signs MOU With Cameroon and Comoros

The Civil Aviation Authority of Singapore (CAAS) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Civil Aviation Authority of Cameroon and the Comoros.

According to the CAAS, through the signing of these MoUs, Singapore is "stepping up support for Africa and the Caribbean in aviation training and development."

The signings took place on the side of the 42nd International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) Assembly in Montreal, Canada, where Singapore was re-elected to the ICAO Council with the record highest number of votes since Singapore first joined the ICAO Council in 2003 and in ICAO's history.

CAAS says it "has trained over 160,000 aviation professionals from over 200 States, including from Africa and the Caribbean." The new MOUs will allow the CAAS to "step up engagement to support more countries in these regions in growing aviation."

CAAS adds that the MOUs with Cameroon and the Comoros were signed by "Mr Han Kok Juan, Director-General of the CAAS, with Mdm Paule Avomo Assoumou Koki, Director-General of the Cameroon Civil Aviation Authority and Mr Abdou Mondoha Abdillah, Director-General of the National Civil Aviation Authority of the Comoros respectively."

Under the MOUs, CAAS says it will work with the Cameroon Civil Aviation Authority and the National Civil Aviation Authority of the Comoros respectively to:

- Exchange information and best practices in areas of mutual interest such as civil aviation administration and management, the ICAO Universal Safety Oversight Audit Program Continuous Monitoring Approach (USOAP-CMA), the ICAO Universal Security Audit Program Continuous Monitoring Approach (USAP-CMA) and the use of technology in air



Mrs. Paule Avomo Assoumou Koki, Director-General of the Cameroon Civil Aviation Authority and Mr Han Kok Juan, Director-General of the CAAS



Mr Abdou Mondoha Abdillah, Director-General of the National Civil Aviation Authority of the Comoros and Mr Han Kok Juan, Director-General of the CAAS.

traffic management and safety monitoring.

- Develop capacity building training programmes in areas such as safety oversight, aircraft certification, air traffic management, and compliance with ICAO standards; these programmes may be jointly delivered in the respective States, Singapore or virtually.

From 2025 to 2028, CAAS says it will "support States in the African region in their capacity building through 195

fellowships, eight scholarships for the Singapore-ICAO Next Generation of Aviation Professionals Programme and 12 in-region training programmes conducted by the Singapore Aviation Academy, the training arm of CAAS."

Mr Han said, "As a member of the international aviation community and the ICAO Council, Singapore is deeply committed to sharing our expertise and experience, to help support aviation development around the world. 

Rethinking Aviation Training In Africa

By Seton Serge Hodonou



Mr. Seton Serge Hodonou, Training & Quality Manager, AAMAC

How can Africa ensure that aviation training becomes a catalyst - not a constraint - for sustainable air transport development?

Air Traffic Control Officers, safety inspectors, engineers, pilots, and airport operators all rely on one critical enabler: quality aviation training. And yet, across the African continent, training remains a structural weakness in the aviation system. This persistent gap poses a serious threat to safety, efficiency, and long-term sustainability.

Indeed, the capacity to safely and efficiently operate a liberalized, modernized, and increasingly digital air transport system depends more than ever on human capital. Infrastructure, aircraft, and regulatory frameworks are vital - but without adequately trained personnel, they are rendered ineffective. In this regard, the development of competent aviation professionals must be viewed not merely as a technical task but as a strategic priority for national and continental development.

For decades, African aviation has been defined by ambition and disparity. While air traffic grows and regional integration accelerates, the training systems intended to support this evolution are struggling to keep up. From inadequate infrastructure and outdated curricula to a lack of

harmonization and innovation, the current ecosystem is not equipped to deliver the volume or quality of personnel required.

However, rethinking aviation training in Africa is not only possible - it is urgently needed. It requires a bold vision, strategic reforms, and smarter investments in people, technology, and institutions.

With this in mind, this essay seeks to answer the following key questions:

- Why does Africa struggle to match aviation training capacity with the growing needs of its air transport sector?
- What structural and operational weaknesses hinder Africa's aviation training systems today?
- What are the broader consequences of failing to modernize aviation training in Africa?
- What concrete steps can Africa take to rethink and rebuild its aviation training ecosystem?
- Can success stories guide the way forward?
- What vision should guide the transformation of aviation training in Africa?

It is in this context and to address all these questions that this essay explores the present state of aviation training on the continent, highlights the risks and consequences of inaction, and proposes forward-thinking solutions for a resilient and inclusive training model.

Although Africa has made significant strides in liberalizing its skies and expanding airport infrastructure, training has not followed at the same pace. Many States continue to depend on a limited number of regional centers such as EAMAC (Niger), NCAT (Nigeria), GATA (Ghana), EASA (Kenya) and ATNS (South Africa). These institutions, while valuable, cannot meet the rising and diversified demands of a liberalized, technologically evolving sector.

Moreover, the few existing training institutions often operate under constraints: limited simulator capacity, funding challenges, and disconnection from operational realities. Consequently, the region faces long waiting lists, high dropout rates, and a mismatch between training output and real-world requirements.

But what structural and operational weaknesses hinder Africa's aviation training systems today?

First, the continent suffers from a lack of training

infrastructure. Many countries have no national aviation training center. Those that do, often struggle with obsolete equipment, a lack of practical tools, and inadequate funding. Second, training curricula are fragmented and unaligned. The absence of a continent-wide standard leads to difficulties in qualification recognition, staff mobility, and coordination among States.

Third, the aging instructor base is another concern. Many experienced professionals are nearing retirement, with few replacements in sight. Worse still, there are limited opportunities or incentives for young professionals to transition into training roles.

Fourth, Africa's aviation training ecosystem has yet to fully embrace technological innovation. E-learning, virtual reality, and simulation tools remain underutilized despite their potential to expand access and reduce costs.

Finally, industry-academia links are weak. There is often a disconnect between what is taught in classrooms and what is expected in the field. This leads to inefficient onboarding, additional costs for retraining, and a loss of trust between employers and training providers.

So what are the broader consequences of failing to modernize aviation training in Africa?

Indeed, the repercussions go far beyond academic performance. The lack of up-to-date, harmonized training creates direct threats to aviation safety, as underprepared professionals are more prone to operational errors. Moreover, airlines and airports face delays in launching new routes, services, or projects because of human resource shortages. Innovations such as UAS integration, ATFM, or all the new concepts remain stalled not because of



For decades, African aviation has been defined by ambition and disparity. While air traffic grows and regional integration accelerates, the training systems intended to support this evolution are struggling to keep up.

technological barriers, but due to insufficient qualified personnel.

Furthermore, Africa risks losing its brightest aviation talents to other regions. Young professionals seek training and careers elsewhere, further weakening local systems and diminishing return on training investments.

But what concrete steps can Africa take to rethink and rebuild its aviation training ecosystem?

Fortunately, solutions do exist. First, a continental aviation training strategy must be developed under the coordination of AFCAC and regional safety oversight organizations. Such a strategy would define shared standards, mutual recognition mechanisms, and regional specialization.



Training is a critical enabler in the prevention of manpower shortage in the aviation industry



Second, existing training organizations must be strengthened, not replaced. Upgrading simulation tools, increasing instructor capacity, and sharing resources across borders would improve access and quality.

Third, digital learning must be mainstreamed. Blended learning models, e-courses, and virtual simulation can democratize access to training and improve cost-efficiency.

Fourth, the instructor workforce must be professionalized. Regional certification, peer-exchange programs, and incentives for experienced controllers or pilots to become trainers should be encouraged.

Fifth, stronger ties with industry are essential. Training centers must co-develop programs with ANSPs, airlines, and regulators to ensure relevance and employment pathways.

Sixth, the costs of training in aviation schools are often prohibitively high, posing significant barriers for aspiring professionals, especially youth. Tuition fees, accommodation, and transportation costs are compounded by limited access to student loans or scholarship programs. Without deliberate policies to address this issue, many talented individuals are excluded from entering the profession. To mitigate this, governments should consider targeted scholarship schemes and grant mechanisms, while public-private partnerships involving airlines and aviation companies could support bursaries and sponsorships. Otherwise, the current shortage of qualified aviation personnel risks worsening.

Lastly, youth and gender inclusion should be actively pursued. Scholarship programs, school outreach campaigns, and women-in-aviation networks can help shape a more diverse next generation.

So can success stories guide the way forward?

Yes, and they already are. South Africa, Ghana, and Kenya provide models of public-private cooperation, strategic investment, and adaptation to global standards. NCAT Zaria is expanding its reach and renewing its equipment. Rwanda is pioneering drone regulation and training initiatives. Additionally, programs such as ICAO's NGAP and partnerships with IATA or EASA offer African institutions the opportunity to leap forward by adopting proven models adapted to regional needs.

Finally, what vision should guide the transformation of aviation training in Africa?

The answer lies in a simple truth: training is not a support function. It is a strategic enabler.

Therefore, Africa's future training ecosystem must be inclusive, harmonized, responsive, and deeply connected to



Air Traffic Control Officers and other aviation professionals all rely on quality aviation training for sustainability

its operational environment. It must empower not only students, but instructors, institutions, and employers to become co-creators of aviation excellence.

In conclusion, rethinking aviation training in Africa is not about cosmetic adjustments. It is about fundamentally repositioning education and skills development at the heart of the continent's air transport ambitions.

This means breaking down silos, investing in people, and aligning systems with future realities. It also means recognizing that every hour spent in a simulator, every concept taught in a virtual classroom, every partnership between academia and industry is a step toward safer skies and stronger sovereignty.

Moreover, this transformation requires shared leadership and a clear commitment from all stakeholders. The African Union, its Member States, regional oversight bodies, and international partners must seize this moment - not to produce another strategic plan, but to implement one that is bold, funded, and accountable. At stake is not just the quality of training, but the continent's ability to shape its own aviation future.

Africa's air transport future depends on more than airports and aircraft. It depends on people. And the time to prepare them is now. ■

Mr. Sèton Serge Hodonou is a civil aviation safety expert and training manager with over 22 years of experience in the African aviation sector. Currently serving as Training & Quality Manager at AAMAC (African and Malagasy Civil Aviation Authorities) in N'Djamena, he has previously held operational, instructional, and leadership roles within ASECNA and EAMAC. His expertise spans safety oversight (SSP/NASP), ICAO compliance (USOAP CMA), ANSP certification, training systems design, and regional harmonization of technical regulations.

RPAS

GCAA Partners Korea Transportation Safety Authority on Drone Training



A group photograph of participants at the training

Ghana Civil Aviation Authority (GCAA) has partnered with the Korea Transportation Safety Authority (TS), the Korean agency responsible for safety across aviation, railways, and road transport systems to organize "a three-day drone capacity-building programme" at the GCAA headquarters in Accra, Ghana.

Mr. Cho Ju Yong of the TS explained that the training session aimed to share knowledge on drone technology, covering pilot licensing, safety management, and practical applications.

change in logistics, agriculture, environmental protection, and disaster response. But without safety, the full potential of drone technology can never be realised."

GCAA reported that while highlighting the successful selection of TS and GCAA for a new Official Development Assistance (ODA) project, Mr. Yong explained that the initiative was structured in three phases with the Track 1 focusing on: "Development of a comprehensive master plan for drone

Through this new technology, he stressed that "we can build a safer and more sustainable future together. Drones are more than just products; they are powerful tools driving

operations in Ghana (currently underway until April 2026)", while the track 2 is on "Pilot projects to test the feasibility of the master plan" and the track 3 on the "Full implementation, including institutional reforms and the establishment of supporting systems."

On behalf of the GCAA RPAS Committee under the Safety Regulation Department, Mr. Jacob Tetteh Lartey, who is the Deputy RPAS Coordinator, underscored the critical role of TS in developing Ghana's drone safety architecture. He recalled a similar training programme held in Korea in May 2025, which had significantly benefited Ghana. He noted that TS was now extending such programmes abroad, with Ghana being the first country to benefit.

GCAA's Acting Deputy Director-General (Technical), Mr. Theophilus Ago, reiterated that the training aims to "enhance our knowledge and skills in drone technology, which is rapidly transforming industries such as agriculture, surveillance, logistics, and environmental monitoring." 

New Lease

EgyptAir to receive 1st Boeing 737-MAX aircraft in January 2026

According to media reports, "EgyptAir is expected to receive the first Boeing 737-MAX aircraft in January 2026 under the deal for leasing 18 of the model through US-based Air Lease Corporation."

It was reported that Prime Minister Mostafa Madbouly announced during a meeting with Brendan Nelson, President of Boeing Global.

It can be recalled that in 2023, the airline leased 18 new Boeing 737 Max Jets from Air Lease and this delivery will mark its first Max Jets.

According to the reports, the Minister highlighted "the importance of the civil aviation sector in Egypt, given its significant economic impact in providing new job opportunities and strengthening the overall economic

activity. This is in addition to boosting the state's efforts in the tourism sector."

The Prime Minister also outlined the "state's expansion of investments in airport infrastructure and other aspects of the civil aviation system, as well as the Ministry of Civil Aviation's efforts to develop and modernize EgyptAir's fleet." 

Lease

Airlink completes Embraer E195-E2 acquisitions



Airlink has "concluded its lease agreement with Azorra with the formal acceptance of the first three of ten new Embraer E195-E2 jetliners."

According to the airline, "The new aircraft, which seat up to 136

routes such as Johannesburg-Cape Town, while the E195-E2s additional range will open new route opportunities to connect more destinations and markets across sub-Saharan Africa."

Airlink CEO, Mr. de Villiers Engelbrecht, said "The integration of the E195-E2s into Airlink's fleet is an important

passenger s in a two-by-two cabin layout, will provide Airlink with additional capacity to better compete on high-density

milestone in the company's 33-year history and will set it on a new trajectory. In addition to the operational and commercial flexibility the larger and more capable aircraft offer, they will also unlock additional efficiencies and cost savings from the high degree of operating, maintenance, training and equipment commonality with our existing E-Jets. The new E2s and our current E-Jets have very similar flightdecks, operating procedures and handling characteristics. This will also ensure a streamlined entry into service."

Arjan Meijer, President and CEO Embraer Commercial Aviation, said: "This delivery marks another exciting chapter in our long-standing partnership with Airlink, and we look forward to seeing the E2 flying across more destinations in the region." ▣

Connection

Air Tanzania Launches Direct Flights to Lagos, Partners With SAHCO

The national carrier of Tanzania, Air Tanzania has launched direct flights from Dar es Salaam to Lagos and has selected Skyway Aviation Handling Company (SAHCO) Plc to "provide ground handling operations to Air Tanzania at Murtala Muhammed International Airport in Lagos, Nigeria."

ATCL Managing Director, Engineer Peter Ulanga, stated that the Lagos flights bring the company to a total of 29 destinations both within and outside Tanzania. He said "this destination is unique as it is the first to be established by ATCL in the West African region. These flights will open new opportunities for business, transportation, and strengthen diplomatic relations."

The Ambassador of Tanzania to Nigeria, Honorable Selestine Kakele emphasizing how the new flights will boost trade between the two countries, said: "Nigeria is a major buyer of sisal from Tanzania, accounting for about 26% of total production after China. Other products we export include leather, which is used here as food and also as raw material for industries. These flights will further enhance that trade."

SAHCO says it will provide "comprehensive ground handling services, which includes Passenger Handling, Baggage Handling, Ramp Handling, Cargo Handling & Warehousing and other aviation related services to Air Tanzania that would be flying from its hub at Julius Nyerere International Airport, Dar es Salaam, three times a week to Lagos."

The Managing Director/CEO of SAHCO, Mrs. Adenike Aboderin said: "We are fully prepared to support Air Tanzania's new service, ensuring a seamless and efficient experience for their passengers and cargo."

SAHCO confirms that it is "the only Ground Handling Company in Nigeria that is in all the commercially operated Airports in the country."

Air Tanzania joins a rising number of airlines that have commenced commercial services to Nigeria in recent times. It joins other East African carriers on Nigerian routes including Kenya Airways, Ethiopian Airlines, Uganda Airlines in offering connectivity between East and West Africa. ▣

Election

FAAN MD, Olubunmi Kuku Elected as ACI Africa Vice President

Nigeria's Olubunmi Kuku, Managing Director of the Federal Airports Authority of Nigeria (FAAN), has been elected Vice President of Airports Council International (ACI) Africa. According to FAAN, "this election not only highlights her leadership but also elevates her from her previous role as Regional Advisor for Africa to a permanent member on the ACI World Governing Board." It can be recalled that Ms. Kuku was nominated to serve as a Regional Advisor representing Africa on the ACI World Governing Board in September 20, 2024, during the ACI Africa AGA held in South Africa. FAAN confirms that the "ratification took place during the 34th ACI Africa General Assembly h34thACIeld in Lusaka, Zambia."

In her new position, "Mrs. Kuku will champion initiatives aimed at promoting safe and passenger-centric

airports and enhancing connectivity throughout Africa", according to FAAN. Mrs. Kuku said: "Being elected as Vice President of ACI Africa is an incredible honor, one that I do not take lightly. I am committed to collaborating with my colleagues to ensure that our airports not only meet international standards for safety and efficiency but also serve as critical drivers of economic growth and connectivity for our nations."

Under Olubunmi Kuku's leadership, Nigerian airports have begun a remarkable transformation, characterized by significant infrastructure changes and repositioning efforts. Her management has also gained recognition through numerous awards, reflecting her commitment to elevating aviation standards in Africa.



With 56 member states across Africa, ACI Africa plays a vital role in advocating for the interests of aviation across the continent. The ACI World Governing Board oversees approximately 2,100 airports globally and is comprised of 814 members across 169 countries. ▣

Aircraft Acquisition

United Nigeria Airlines Signs Agreement For Six Boeing 737-800 Delivery

United Nigeria Airlines, has signed "a landmark aircraft sale and purchase agreement with Southwest Airlines for the delivery of six Boeing 737-800 aircraft. This strategic acquisition and fleet expansion marks a new phase in United Nigeria Airlines' strategic plan and growth.

The airline confirms that this agreement "represents not only the acquisition of aircraft but also a ground-breaking opportunity for collaboration with Southwest Airlines, one of America's most reliable and profitable operators of the B737NG family." The aircraft features a spacious

cabin with enhanced passenger-comfort and will seat up to 189 passengers in a single-class configuration.

Professor Obiora Okonkwo, OFR, Executive Chairman of United Nigeria Airlines commended Boeing for their support throughout the process and remarked on the excellent maintenance culture of Southwest Airlines, which motivated the acquisition. He said: "Consequently, we have also expressed interest in acquiring an additional four Boeing 737-800 NG aircraft, bringing the total to ten, which will be inducted into the United Nigeria Airlines fleet between the first quarter of 2026 and the first quarter of 2027."

Anbessie Yitbarek, Boeing's vice president of Commercial Sales and Marketing for Africa said: "The 737-800 will provide United Nigeria Airlines with superior reliability, fuel efficiency and high-value returns operators require in today's competitive market."

This acquisition was brokered in partnership with SkyWorks Holdings, LLC. Anders Hebrand, Chief Commercial Officer of SkyWorks Holdings opined: "With United Nigeria Airlines, these top-of-the-line 737-800s have found a great home in the growing African aviation market, where they will be productive for many more years to come. ▣



The New Tax Act 2025: Implications For The Nigerian Aviation Industry

By Aminat Bakare



The new tax reforms would have a huge impact on aviation and allied companies

Nigeria is bracing itself for a significant change in taxation as the Federal government of Nigeria's new tax laws are billed for implementation from January 1, 2026. The new tax regime will have impact on corporate taxation, personal income tax, VAT amongst other significant effects for companies and individuals.

In order to create awareness for the aviation sector, one of the sectors to be affected by the changes, Africa's leading magazine on air transport development, Aviation & Allied Business Publications partnered with the Nigeria Revenue Service (NRS) formerly Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS) to host a webinar with the theme: Nigeria Tax Act (2025) & The Aviation Industry: Aviation Sector Enlightenment Initiative.

The webinar had in attendance the Honourable Minister of Aviation and Aerospace, Barrister Festus Keyamo represented by Alhaji Mohammed Ahmed Tijani, Director, Air Transport Management, Ministry of Aviation and Aerospace, Assistant Director, NRS, Mrs. Nkechi Umegakwe, Assistant Director, Tax Policy and Advisory, Nigeria Revenue

Service (NRS), Captain Edward Boyo, Publisher, Aviation & Allied Business Publications, Dr. Richard Aisuebeogun, a former Managing Director, Federal Airports Authority of Nigeria (FAAN), Dr. Samson Fatokun, Regional Manager, West and Central Africa, International Air Transport Association (IATA), Captain Samuel Caulcrick, Former Rector, Nigerian College of Aviation Technology (NCAT), Mrs. Nkechi Onyenso, Managing Director, Pathfinders International and Chairperson, Aviation Sectoral Group, Institute of Chartered Secretaries A of Nigeria, amongst many others.

The representative of the Honourable Minister stated that "discussions are underway between the Ministry and the Tax Reform Committee, and the Minister is pushing for necessary adjustments with certain aspects of the reform as it affects the aviation sector."

Major Concerns of the Industry

NRS resource person, Mrs. Nkechi Umegakwe in her presentations said the reform was created with "businesses, the wider economy and the employees in mind." She said

Aviation should not be grouped generally with other sectors as the sector is uniquely vulnerable, this is because most of its operations ranging from aircraft acquisitions, maintenance and a host of others depend heavily on foreign exchange. We call on the government to review the numerous charges and levies that affect airlines in the country, if not we may see an increase in air fares because high cost of operation could lead to rising ticket prices.

"the new tax act is a tool to strengthen the economy and expand enough disposable income for citizens to be able to access luxuries like air travel amongst others."

According to Mrs. Umegakwe, with the new tax laws, signed into law in June 2025 and expected to take effect January 2026, aviation assets that are peculiar to the aviation industry such as commercial aircraft, engines, spare parts and airline transportation are no longer exempted from Value Added Tax (VAT) charged by NRS, though overpaid taxes can be refunded within 30 days.

She noted that VAT is now enshrined in the Nigerian Tax Act, with the VAT (Modification) Order 2024 remaining in force. She said: "Nigerian companies engaged in airline transportation business and other allied companies in aviation sector are charged to tax like every other Nigerian company."

According to her, the new tax reforms were "geared towards increased revenue generation for the Federal Government, business cost reduction via VAT recovery, improved cash flow for businesses, and stronger compliance via digital invoicing and tracking, among others."

Umegakwe noted that under the new tax reforms, various taxes are now harmonised to create a unified system in order to eliminate inconsistencies and drive efficiency, while it also simplified the current tax laws.

Whereas the intentions of the Government appear noble, the provisions of the new tax act as it relates to the aviation sector have raised a lot of concerns among the stakeholders. Dr. Samson Fatokun of IATA noted the different levies that are already imposed on the aviation industry and how the additional tax would impact the industry. He explained that some provisions of the new tax laws are contradictory to the

commitments that has been previously signed by President Bola Ahmed Tinubu as Chairman of ECOWAS which exempts air passenger and cargo transport from taxation effect and called for an adjustment to avoid such contradictions. He particularly noted that internationally there is no Value Added Tax (VAT) on air ticket across the world and noted that the situation of charging VAT on air tickets in Nigeria will be a misnomer.

Buttressing Dr. Fatokun's points, Professor Mustapha, Nigeria's Professor of Aviation Law said: "By virtue of sections 22 and 23 of the Civil Aviation Act 2022, no taxation can be deducted from the income of the aviation sector. The FIRS position contradicts this provision. If applied, it would amount to double taxation."

From a private sector perspective, Mrs. Onyenso pointed out the fact that even though the new taxation policy has its own benefits, the move will most likely push up ticket prices and further contribute to the low passenger traffic and rising cost. She canvassed for further engagement by the Federal Government and aviation business stakeholders.

Also, Capt. Samuel Caulcrik, highlighted the fact that the various taxes and levies in the sector were already choking the operators and slowing down the growth of the business in the sector and stated that all the money being spent on the sector comes from air passengers and shippers, noting that any additional tax would kill the industry.

Capt. Boyo noted that "aviation should not be grouped generally with other sectors as the sector is uniquely vulnerable, this is because most of its operations ranging from aircraft acquisitions, maintenance and a host of others depend heavily on foreign exchange." He emphasized that piling additional tax burden could stifle the aviation sector." While noting that the new tax laws have a lot of benefits, Capt. Boyo called on the President to bring the aviation industry in Nigeria as a priority sector as the country's economy cannot grow without the aviation industry. He said: "we call on the government to review the numerous charges and levies that affect airlines in the country, if not we may see an increase in air fares because high cost of operation could lead to rising ticket prices."

Mrs. Umegakwe reassured the participants that all their contributions had been noted and would be taken up for review and reconsideration but assured the stakeholders that with the implementation, the benefits would become clearer.

Even with the reassurances, the industry remains apprehensive especially as some of the exemptions including VAT on tickets, import duty waivers and modifications to the Export Free Zone provisions are set to take effect. ▣

SEPTEMBER 2025

September 4 - 5, 2025

Under the theme "Collaborating to unlock Africa's aviation growth", the annual Aviation Africa event brought together leaders from government, CAAs, airlines, airports, manufacturers, MRO providers amongst others from across the whole industry spectrum. Held in Kigali, Rwanda, the 2-day saw African leaders adopt a nine-point plan to fast-track the Single African Air Transport Market (SAATM).

September 13-19, 2025

Hosted by Zambia Airports Corporation Limited (ZACL) in collaboration with Airports Council International Africa (ACI Africa), the 34th ACI Africa General Assembly and 74th Board Meeting, Regional Conference and Exhibition held in Lusaka, Zambia explored the theme: Powering African Airports for Strategic Growth. The conference brought together key aviation stakeholders to explore strategic growth opportunities for African airports.

September 14-16, 2025

The 21st edition of the Akwaaba African Travel Market Expo took place in Lagos, Nigeria and saw the gathering of over 3000 delegates ranging from tourism to airlines, travel agencies, hospitality brands, travel practitioners to industry stakeholders from different African countries. The event featured a culinary competition, exhibitions, panel sessions, awards ceremony and the Chinnet Aviarcargo conference.

COMING EVENTS

2 - 3 October, 2025

AESATA Conference
Kigali, Rwanda
www.aesata.org

4 October, 2025

NCAA Cost recovery optimisation stakeholders' retreat
Lagos, Nigeria
www.ncaa.gov.ng

14 - 16 October, 2025

IATA World Safety and Operations Conference
Xiamen, China
www.iata.org

16 - 19 October, 2025

55th AASA AGA
Lusaka, Zambia
www.aasa.za.net

25 - 28 October, 2025

ACI World's AGA, Conference and Exhibition 2025
Toronto, Canada
www.aci.aero

29 - 30 October, 2025

APG World Connect
Seville, Spain
www.apgfrance.com

4 - 6 November, 2025

FSF 78th Annual International Aviation Safety Summit
Lisbon, Portugal
www.flightsafety.swoogo.com

17 - 18 November, 2025

FAAN National Aviation Conference
Lagos, Nigeria
www.fnac.faan.gov.ng

21 - 23 November, 2025

131 ATAF General Assembly
Libreville, Gabon
www.ataftax.org

30 November - 02 December, 2025

AFRAA 57th Annual General Assembly & Summit
Luanda - Angola
www.afraa.org

09 - 10 December, 2025

ICAO ESAF - WACAF Coordination Meeting
Nairobi - Kenya
www.icao.int

28 March - 03 April, 2026

ACI Africa Conference 2026
Luanda, Angola
www.aci-africa.aero

Air Passenger Market in Detail - August 2025

AUGUST 2025 (% YEAR-ON-YEAR)	WORLD SHARE ¹	RPK	ASK	PLF(%-PT) ²	PLF(LEVEL) ³
Total Market	100%	4.6%	4.5%	0.1%	86.0%
Africa	2.2%	8.9%	6.6%	1.7%	80.2%
Asia Pacific	33.5%	6.1%	5.5%	0.5%	85.9%
Europe	26.7%	4.2%	4.2%	-0.1%	87.9%
Latin America	5.3%	7.5%	5.9%	1.3%	85.0%
Middle East	9.4%	8.4%	7.0%	1.1%	83.8%
North America	22.9%	0.5%	1.6%	-1.0%	85.6%

1) % of industry RPK in 2024



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TRAINING CALENDAR (OCTOBER-DECEMBER, 2025)

OCTOBER 2025

DATES

PROGRAMME TITLE

October 06 - 08	Customer Service Course
October 06 - 10 + 3 days practicals	Basic Airfares and Ticketing- Sabre Course
October 06 - 31	Cabin Crew Ab-initio Course
October 13 - November 07	Managing the Travel Business
October 20 - 22	Aviation Store Management
October 20 - November 21	Advanced Flight Dispatcher's Course
October 27 - 29	Radio Telephony Course
October 27 - 31 + 3 days practicals	Basic Airfares and Ticketing- Sabre Course

NOVEMBER 2025

DATES

PROGRAMME TITLE

November 03 - 05	Refresher: Airfares and Ticketing Sabre Course
November 03 - 05	Safety Management Systems
November 03 - 07	Passenger Handling Course
November 03 - January 30	Basic Aircraft Technician Course
November 10 - January 14	IATA Foundation in Travel & Tourism (Regular)
November 14 - February 14	IATA Foundation in Travel & Tourism (Executive)
November 17 - 19	Customer Service Course
November 17 - December 12	Cabin Crew Ab-initio Course
November 24 - 28 + 3 days practicals	Basic Airfares and Ticketing- Sabre Course

DECEMBER 2025

DATES

PROGRAMME TITLE

December 01 - 05	Sabre GDS Practical Course
December 15 - 17	Aircraft Maintenance Planning and Technical Records Course
December 15 - 19 + 3 days practicals	Basic Airfares and Ticketing- Sabre Course

COURSES AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

Bird/Wildlife Hazard Management Course
Helideck Assistant Course
Flight Announcer's Course
Quality Management System
Aircraft Marshalling
Airside Drivers' Safety Course
Basic Aerodrome Operations
Ramp Service Course



N.B:

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