

SAATT 2018 - REPORT



SYMPOSIUM ON AFRICAN AIR-TRANSPORT & TOURISM

Casablanca, Morocco

27-28 September 2018



Morocco Hosts ECOSOCC's Maiden Symposium on African Air Transport and Tourism

SYMPOSIUM REPORT

In its endeavour to promote the Single African Air Transport Market (SAATM), the Infrastructure and Energy Cluster Committee (IECC) of the Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC), organized the first-ever Symposium on African Air Transport and Tourism (SAATT) in Casablanca, Morocco from 27-28 September 2018.



The main objective of IECC in organizing this symposium was to popularize SAATM, one of the flagship projects under the Agenda 2063, and create continent-wide awareness about the benefits of an open sky policy to AU Member States; especially in regards to trade and tourism. The premise of the symposium was mainly built around the operationalization of SAATM and was largely based on the contribution of key stakeholders from the air transport and tourism industries.

The deliberations were structured around interactive panel discussions, presentations, exhibitions and dissemination of information. From an industry perspective, these were powerful pull factors for the implementation of the Yamoussoukro Decision especially as it brought together policy makers, researchers, public and private sector and civil society representatives. The deliberations were very much in line with the World Bank Report (2017) which *explains how liberalized air transport can positively impact on Africa through improved safety, lower fares, and increase traffic.*



SAATT also enjoyed a remarkable presence of key government officials of the Kingdom of Morocco, members of the diplomatic community, private sector experts, representatives of the Minister for Tourism, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, the Wilaya of the Casablanca-Settat region, President of the Region of Casablanca and the Mayor of Casablanca. The latter commended ECOSOCC's choice of hosting the event at Casablanca and provided full support to realize the aspirations of Africa for an open sky and a well-developed tourism sector.



In his opening remarks, the Head of Civil Society at the African Union Citizens and Diaspora Organization CIDO, Amb. Jalel Chelba, was full of appreciation to the Moroccan government and the team that organized the event. He stated that the African Union was giving the symposium huge importance and assured participants that recommendations from the event would eventually be delivered to the African Union Commission.

The Deputy Presiding Officer of the ECOSOCC, Mr. Patson Malisa, stated that the symposium will prepare the sector for the future of work in Africa as it is in line with developing Africa in a people-driven agenda where the potentials of youths and women are unleashed. He insisted that the sector must benefit Africa and its people first while highlighting the need to place a crucial focus on the development, transfer and infusion of technology in the sector.

In his statement, Dr. Raj Chintaram, Chair of the Infrastructure and Energy Cluster Committee described ECOSOCC as a non-state actors parliament whose role is to engage African CSOs on various policies of the AU and places priority on the people. As SAATM was launched on the margins of the 30th AU Summit in January 2018, IECC deemed it timely to engage civil society actors and the industry partners to advocate

and engage remaining Member States to ratify the legal instrument for the liberalization of air access on the continent. He expressed his immense appreciation to the Kingdom of Morocco and the City of Casablanca for taking up the challenge of hosting this event. He also stated that the symposium will now become an annual event of ECOSOCC.

Delivering his presentation, Mr. Tefera Mekonnen, the Director of Air Transport, African Civil Aviation Commission (AFCAC) - the implementing agency of the Yamoussoukro Decision (YD) - insisted that it was the lack of implementation of the decision that led to the launch of the SAATM as the ninth programme of the Agenda 2063. He raised concerns on the excessive taxes imposed on airlines in Africa which led to high airfares while also revealing that during a Ministerial meeting convened by the President of Togo, a Memorandum of Implementation (MoI) was signed by 14 out of the 26 states. Mr. Mekonnen also outlined various works of the AU especially in capacity building for senior experts, national inspectors, regional investigators and REC inspectors in this sector noting the need for specific studies in the sector which AFCAC envisaged to carry out soon. According to Mr. Mekonnen, AFCAC was also working on the urgent implementation of the regulatory and monitoring framework to foster SAATM and addressed concerns of hesitant Member States.

The symposium also coincided with the UN World Tourism Day celebrated annually on the 27th of September. To commemorate this important event of the tourism industry, the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) encourages communities and societies to organise events and activities in order to raise awareness about the benefits of tourism towards the economy, society and environment. In this respect, the SAATT witnessed meaningful contribution from key tourism stakeholders while commemorating the event. Various thematic areas were discussed in the process including development and digitization of sustainable tourism, infrastructure development and logistics optimization; air transport connectivity and security, promotion of African cultural heritage, role of technology in advancing the tourism sector in Africa were tabled for discussions during the two-day deliberations. Concerns were raised over air safety & regulatory issues, taxation, air traffic control and visa openness in Africa with key recommendations that were to potentially enhance intertwined sectors in Africa.



During the main event, there were unique cultural performances from Congo and Moroccan traditional dancers. ECOSOC also hosted an exhibition which showcased African fabrics, artifacts and handicrafts among others; the exhibition was an excellent opportunity to bring Africa to the world.



The event also witnessed the launch of the National Chapter of ECOSOCC in the Kingdom of Morocco. Mr. Khalid Boudali, President of the National Chapter, was officially introduced by Dr. Raj Chintaram and Mr. Ahmed El-Bashir, Director of CIDO.



During his concluding remarks, Dr Chintaram announced that IECC took the unanimous decision to call for the hosting of 2nd edition of SAATT in the Kingdom of Morocco but at an even larger scale around mid-October 2019. It was also agreed that ECOSOCC-IECC will set up a permanent working group to work on Air Transport and Tourism Integration of the African Continent. The 2nd edition of SAATT was coined as International Symposium on Air-Transport and Tourism (ISATT) and is expected to be a high-level event that will bring on board more stakeholders and grow as a flagship event of ECOSOCC.

The symposium was strategic in raising awareness about the Single African Air Transport Market (SAATM) and tourism in Africa; it unveiled a new spectrum for knowledge for many of the participants and drew resource persons from top organizations across the world. It highlighted issues pertaining to the development of the tourism economy in Africa, job creation, skill and training, infrastructural

development, influx of tourists, foreign exchange earnings among others. The symposium also provided an excellent platform for participants to express and display their cultural diversity. Ultimately, SAATT was a unique event in its own right, as it allowed participations of various tourism stakeholders and succeeded in bringing their voice towards a collective platform in the quest of operationalizing SAATM.



End of Report

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| Photos & Videos | https://www.auecosocc.org/saatt18 |
| Contact us | chair.ie@aeucosocc.org |
| Media Queries | dmpr.manager@aeucosocc.org |

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ANNEX to Report

(A) Summary of Key Issues & Deliberations

| Taxation |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Excessive taxation and non-aviation charges causing high airfare cost throughout the continent● Charges and taxes being higher as compared to other countries● Non-aviation tax used by governments to raise revenue with accounts for almost 40% of the entire airfare.● Such taxes discourage passenger traffic● Competition regulations for new airline operators discourage operations and thus leads to little connectivity and little competition● Travel taxes to ensure it does not hamper travel and tourism development● Lack of coordination among Member States authorities result in double taxation in origin and destination countries of a flight● Government departments and agencies wanting to return the highest duties or charges as revenue through aviation sector● Imposition of taxes to finance activities other than Aviation or Tourism services are discriminatory (e.g “Solidarity Tax” to fund social programmes) and have adverse effect on the industry. |
| Security |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Majority of African Air Companies are black listed with old aircrafts and unaudited infrastructure● Lack of required infrastructure impacting on safety issues● Lack of sufficient expertise in areas such as air traffic control impacting on security issues● Insurance policies that do not cover passenger in case of any incidence● Insecurity and insurgency or some ecological factors due to climate change impacting on national heritage |

ICT & Other Issues

- Dearth of data in tourism and aviation sectors on the continent
- International threats, hackers & entities, and lack of needed collaborations to protect air transport & tourism sectors from these invasions.
- Fake News phenomenon which is considered a more potent threat than armouries
- Lack of technological investments to control air traffic
- Visa requirements and documents for travel in Africa cause major challenges for the tourism in the continent
- Lack of training, low marketing skills and devalorization is hurting our tourism

(B) Proposed Recommendations

Aviation

- Reduction of taxation on airline companies, non-aviation taxes and charges
- Ending restrictive visa policies that favour non-Africa visitors
- Encouraging Member States to think beyond protectionism and enter into intra-Africa partnerships that will bridge knowledge and infrastructural deficit
- Training and re-training of air traffic control officials in the continent
- Governments to consider the full socio-economic impacts (both negatively and positively) of Air Transport and Tourism on the wider economy – demand being highly sensitive to price, levying none related and ill-conceived taxes could be counterproductive.
- Signatory states to the Chicago Convention and Contracting States of ICAO are obliged to adhere to the following:
 - Article 15 of the Chicago Convention which states that: *“No fees, dues or other charges shall be imposed by any contracting States in respect solely of the right of transit over or entry into or exit from its territory of an aircraft of a contracting State or persons or property thereon.”*
 - Policies on Taxation in the Field in the Field on International Air Transport contained in ICAO Document 8632 which states that *“ each Contracting State shall reduce to the fullest practicable extent and make plans to eliminate... all forms of taxation on the sale or use on international transport by air, including taxes on gross receipts of operators and taxes levied directly on passengers or shipper”*
- Encourage Governments to embrace Single Africa Air Transport Market to unlock the full benefits of aviation in Africa.
- Improve airport security
- Urgency in setting up regulatory frameworks for the implementation of open skies
- Ensure fruitful South-South cooperation in the transport and logistics sector
- Encourage scientific research to different problematic by implementing partnerships with Universities
- The removal of different hindrances to the political problem of transport and to

come to bilateral agreements within countries that have common borders

- Regular auditing of airline companies to ensure security
- Provide incentives for new flight services
- Investment in infrastructure and logistic support
- Promote competition in air transport
- Urge more coordination among government agencies within the continent to avoid double taxation and improve air transport as well as tourism

Tourism

- Training of African tourism experts to meet the demands of the growing market
- Investment in ICT
- Commission studies on relevant areas where the sector is facing challenges in the continent
- Relaxation of visa regime in Africa to allow easy packaging of tourism products that could be marketed as a region (example: having a tourist visa that can allow a visitor see a number of countries on a stretch)
- Improve branding of African tourism
- Create a balance between air capacity and bed capacity
- Training young people to receive tourists and travelers (it is the human touch that makes the difference in tourism)
- Investment in airlines, airports, security, ICT infrastructure and Energy
- There is need for Eco-facilities (flora and fauna), Medical facilities and retail facilities (rarely do you find in Africa places to buy t-shirts that say you have been to those cities)
- Need for mobile and other digital Apps to be deployed in marketing tourism in Africa
- Vocational training for experts in this sector
- Promotion of gender equality in the tourism sector

Miscellaneous

- Formulate policies that will enhance development of regional, national and continental centers for preservation of heritage for knowledge sharing
- Government authorities to support the repatriation of African heritage and support the preservation
- Creation of an institution tasked for the preservation, valorization and promotion of African heritage
- Encourage embassies to promote African heritage
- Place crucial focus on the development, transfer and infusion of technology in the sector as well as strengthening the technological component of education