

Greater connectivity leads to greater prosperity: IATA welcomes Single African Air Transport Market initiative by AU

The International Air Transport Association (IATA) has welcomed the launch of the Single African Air Transport Market (SAATM) initiative by the African Union (AU).

The initiative is set to open up Africa's skies and improve intra-African air connectivity, which in turn will stimulate demand, improve African airline industry competitiveness and allow for an increase in air travel accessibility, thereby generating higher volumes of trade, expanded tourism and growing commerce between African nations and the rest of the world.



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“The SAATM has the potential for remarkable transformation that will build prosperity while connecting the African continent. Every open air service arrangement has boosted traffic, lifted economies and created jobs, and we expect no less in Africa on the back of the SAATM agreement. An IATA survey suggested that if just 12 key African countries opened their markets and increased connectivity, an extra 155,000 jobs and \$1.3bn in annual GDP would be created in those countries,” said Rapahel Kuuchi, IATA’s vice president for Africa.

Benefits of a connected continent

“We commend the 23 states that have signed up to SAATM. It is an important step forward, but the benefits of a connected continent will only be realised through effective implementation of SAATM – firstly by the countries already committed and also by the remaining 32 AU member nations still to come on board,” added Kuuchi.

One of the main obstacles to the implementation of previous open skies pledges – 1988 Yamoussoukro Declaration and 1999 Yamoussoukro Decision – has been the absence of an underpinning regulatory text. IATA welcomes the AU’s adoption of the regulatory text of the [Yamoussoukro Decision](#) (YD) – also the framework for SAATM – which covers competition and consumer protection and dispute settlements, as these safeguard the efficient operation of the market.

“Today’s decision is momentous. SAATM is a decisive step towards greater intra-African connectivity and delivers the framework on which to achieve it. Now it’s time to get down to the work of implementation. Greater connectivity will lead to greater prosperity. Governments must act on their commitments, and allow their economies to fly high on the wings of aviation,” concluded Kuuchi.

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