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**REPORT OF H.E. FAURE ESSOZIMNA GNASSINGBE,  
PRESIDENT OF THE TOGOLESE REPUBLIC AND LEADER OF  
THE SINGLE AFRICAN AIR TRANSPORT MARKET (SAATM)**

**REPORT OF THE CHAMPION OF THE AFRICAN SINGLE AIR TRANSPORT  
MARKET (SAATM) – H.E., PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF TOGO  
ON  
THE OPERATIONALIZATION OF THE SINGLE AFRICAN AIR TRANSPORT  
MARKET (SAATM) WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE AFRICAN UNION (AU)  
AGENDA 2063**

**Executive Summary**

1. Last year we witnessed a historic event of great significance to the aviation sector in Africa. That was the launching of the Single African Air Transport Market (SAATM) that took place in January 2018 during the 30<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session of the Africa Union Assembly of Heads of State and Government in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. I was given the singular honour of being appointed the Champion of the project with the mandate of overseeing its accomplishment. Establishment of the SAATM came to reality about twenty years after the adoption of the Yamoussoukro Decision on the liberalisation of air transport markets by the Union Assembly in July 2000 and thirty years after the adoption of the Yamoussoukro Declaration on a New African Air Transport Policy in 1988.

2. The “Yamoussoukro agenda” was focused on resolving major challenges confronting Africa’s air transport sector. Africa has been facing unfair competition from major world airlines which have been dominating both the international market as well as the domestic market of the continent. The share of Africa’s airlines currently stands at about 3% only. In addition, there have been numerous regulatory barriers to interconnection of African cities and commercial centres with direct cost effective flights. Hence, air transport in Africa has been the most expensive and inefficient compared to other regions of the world. Establishment of the Single African Air Transport Market is, essentially, a practical mechanism to speed up implementation of the Yamoussoukro Decision (YD).

3. As Champion of this important flagship project, I am expected to oversee and advocate for effective implementation of specific actions that will lead to complete establishment and full-functioning of the Single African Air Transport Market. These include:

- i) Advocacy for all Member States to join the market;
- ii) Harmonisation of air services agreement between States;
- iii) Capacity building of Member States and RECs;
- iv) Strengthening of the Executing Agency (AFCAC);
- v) Resources mobilisation; and
- vi) Appointment of regional Champions;

4. In this report, I would like to highlight key achievements as well as crucial implementation issues that I have experienced in working on the operationalisation of the Single African Air Transport Market in collaboration with the Commission and other aviation industry stakeholders since January 2018 .The status is as follows:

## Advocacy

5. As you would recall, in January 2018, the SAATM was established by **twenty-three (23)** Member States. Currently, there are **twenty-eight (28)** Member States that have signed the Solemn Commitment, namely: **Benin, Burkina Faso, Botswana, Cabo Verde, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Republic of Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Chad, Egypt, Ethiopia, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Mali, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Eswatini, Togo and Zimbabwe.**

6. This means that twenty-seven (27) Member States are yet to join the Single African Air Transport Market. They are: **Algeria, Angola, Burundi, Comoros, Democratic Republic of Congo, Eritrea, Libya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritania, Mauritius, Morocco, Namibia, Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Seychelles, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania, Tunisia, Uganda, and Zambia.**

7. I would like to commend the 28 Member States currently in the market. I also want to express appreciation to the Chairperson of the Commission who has intensely engaged the Member States individually and collectively on the imperative of joining the SAATM. I intend to increase my interaction with the remaining Member States in order to ensure they are able to easily make the decision to join the market. The target for 2019 is to reach at least forty (40) member countries and to ensure that all fifty-five (55) Member States are in the market by June 2021, the date set for the adoption of the PIDA-PAP 2 programme. The single market would be of greater advantage economically, socially and politically to the continent, with all Member States included. No country should be left behind.

## Harmonisation of Air Services Agreement

8. Two events were organised in which a number of Member States in the SAATM had the opportunity to harmonise their **Bilateral Air Services Agreement (BASAs)** in order to remove barriers to their air transport markets. These are:

1. Fourth Meeting of the Ministerial Working Group on the SAATM held in Lomé, Togo, from the 25 to 28 May 2018; and
2. International Civil Aviation Air Services Negotiation meeting (ICAN 2018) held in Nairobi, Kenya, from 10 to 15 December 2018.

9. Sixteen (16) countries signed a **Memorandum of Implementation (MOI)** which was adopted to harmonise all Bilateral Air Services Agreement between members of the Single African Air Transport Market in order to ensure compliance with the Yamoussoukro Decision. Furthermore, ten (10) Member States signed new Bilateral Air Services Agreement that are compliant with the Yamoussoukro Decision.

## **Resource Mobilisation and Capacity Building of the Executing Agency**

**10.** The Commission convened two (2) consultative meetings with aviation stakeholders, the **first on 27<sup>th</sup> March 2018 in Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire** and, the **second on 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> January 2019 in Dakar, Senegal**. The meetings elaborated and updated a **Prioritised Action Plan** for the **SAATM** for the period 2018 – 2019.

**11.** Also, during the fourth Meeting of the Ministerial Working Group on the SAATM held in Lomé in May. I personally, held consultations with various stakeholders including the Commission, AFCAC, AfDB, IATA, AFRAA, EU, the World Bank and ICAO. The stakeholders made specific pledges to provide technical and financial support currently amounting to over US\$ 5.0 million for implementation of the Prioritised Action Plan.

## **Conclusion and recommendations**

**12.** I would like to conclude by congratulating the Member States that have joined the market and call for countries still to join to do so as soon as possible.

**13.** I am satisfied with the progress made since the launch of the market, in particular efforts to strengthen the capacity of the Executing Agency (AFCAC). It is time for AFCAC to fulfil its responsibilities effectively. The Commission and I are committed to supporting the Executing Agency perform its duties.

**14.** To further the advocacy efforts, I recommend that the Single African Air Transport Market is inscribed in your regular agenda of meetings of the Regional Economic Communities.

**15.** Finally, I wish to recommend that the Single African Air Transport Market (SAATM) be included among the projects currently under the Presidential Infrastructure Championship Initiative (PICI).

**A. Background:**

16. As you will recall, during the 30<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Summit of the African Union Assembly of Heads of State and Government summit held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, the Single African Air Transport Market (SAATM) was established on the 28<sup>th</sup> January 2018, as one of the first flagship projects of AU Agenda 2063 to be launched, (Decision - **Assembly/AU/Dec.665 (XXX)**). I was honoured by you and designated by his Excellency, Paul Kagame, President of the African Union, to be the Champion of the Single African Air Transport Market. That is one year already.

17. It is important to underscore the benefits of the Single African Air Transport Market and the need to unify our internal air transport market. The market will spur huge opportunities for cross border investments in the aviation and tourism industry, create millions of jobs and increased economic prosperity for our citizens as well as facilitate the successful operation of the African Continental Free Trade Area and the free movement of people. The Single African Air Transport Market offers a great opportunity to improve connectivity between our Member States and to increase routes and flights between the various capital cities of Africa and also reduce the cost of air travel. Our citizens should not be flying to other continents to get back to Africa.

18. The Decision adopted by the 30<sup>th</sup> Summit called for a number of specific actions in establishing the Single African Air Transport Market including steps for more States to join, harmonisation of air services agreement between States, capacity building of Member States, resources mobilisation for the operationalization of the Single African Air transport Market (SAATM) and appointment of regional Champions.

19. This report therefore highlights some of the key actions undertaken by the Champion in collaboration with the African Union Commission and aviation industry stakeholders since the last January 2018 Summit and overall progress in the operationalization of the Single African Air Transport Market.

**B. Advocacy for more Member States to sign the Solemn Commitment towards the establishment of the Single African Air Transport Market**

20. At the launch of the Single African Air Transport Market, twenty-three (23) Member States had signed the Solemn Commitment towards the establishment of the Single African Air Transport Market. As champion of the Single African Air Transport Market, one of my major roles is to undertake advocacy for more states to join the market.

21. There are currently twenty-eight (28) Member States that have expressed their Solemn Commitment to the SAATM, namely: Benin, Burkina Faso, Botswana, Cabo Verde, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Republic of Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Chad, Egypt, Ethiopia, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Mali, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Eswatini, Togo and Zimbabwe.

**22.** Since assuming this role, I have contacted a number of countries and based on the feedback we have received, I expect the number of countries subscribed to the Solemn Commitment to reach forty or more by the end of the year 2019. Some countries are in the process of joining through their national legislation mechanism.

**23.** So far, we still have twenty-seven (27) Member States that are yet to join the Single African Air Transport Market, namely: Algeria, Angola, Burundi, Comoros, Democratic Republic of Congo, Eritrea, Libya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritania, Mauritius, Morocco, Namibia, Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Seychelles, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania, Tunisia, Uganda, and Zambia. The Single African Air Transport Market is critical to the integration agenda of our Union. Therefore, no country should be left behind.

**24.** In this regard, I am engaging appropriate actions to expedite the process of Member States subscribing to the solemn commitment and the appointment of regional champions. We commend the decision taken by the twenty-eight countries already in the market to open up their respective air transport markets immediately and I hope other States will be joining soon. I also wish to commend the efforts of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission on his dedication and drive to promote this important project of the AU Agenda 2063.

### **C. Harmonisation of Air Services Agreement between Member States in the Market**

**25.** In order to operationalise the market, it is important that all countries in the market and those that join the market later, remove any restrictions in their Bilateral Air Service Agreements and/or ensure that any new agreements are compliant with the provisions of the Yamoussoukro Decision. In that regard, the Government of Togo, hosted the fourth SAATM Ministerial Working Group meeting on the 25-28 May 2018. The meeting was attended by twenty-one Ministers that have signed the Solemn Commitment.

**26.** I am pleased to report that the fourth Ministerial Working Group meeting agreed on a Memorandum of Implementation (MOI) that aims at harmonising all Bilateral Air Service Agreements between members of the single African air transport market, namely: Benin, Cabo Verde, Central African Republic, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Rwanda, Sierra Leone and Togo). The memorandum also require Member States not to refuse an eligible African airline to operate services due to lack of an existing Bilateral Air Service Agreement.

**27.** Ten Member States signed new Yamoussoukro Decision compliant Bilateral Air Services Agreement during this meeting. Twelve countries undertook bilateral consultations on harmonisation of their respective Bilateral Air Service Agreements (BASAs) aimed at removing all restrictions that are incompatible with the Yamoussoukro Decision.

**28.** Recently, the African Civil Aviation Commission (AFCAC) in collaboration with the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) and the Government of the Republic of Kenya, organised the eleventh edition of the international civil aviation air services negotiation meeting (ICAN2018) 10-15 December 2018. This platform

provided an opportunity for more States to harmonise their bilateral air service agreements. Two additional countries also signed the Memorandum of Implementation of the Yamoussoukro Decision, namely Gambia and Mozambique. I wish to take this opportunity to thank, my brother, President Uhuru Kenyatta, for personally opening that event, for the commitment of Kenya to the Single African Air Transport Market and for your message urging all African Countries to join the Single African Air Transport Market.

**D. Consultation with the Aviation Industry, Resource Mobilisation and Strengthening the Capacity of the Executing Agency of the Single African Air Transport Market (AFCAC)**

**29.** The African Union Commission held a consultation meeting with the aviation industry in March 2018 in Abidjan. At that meeting, a SAATM Prioritised Action Plan was agreed for 2018-2019. The action plan focuses on implementation of the immediate measures by subscribed States, developing an advocacy campaign, resource mobilisation, to enhance airline cooperation and to seek technical assistance to Member States to enable them improve the level of safety and security implementation.

**30.** In that regard, I held a consultative meeting with the different industry stakeholders namely: The African Union Commission, the African Civil Aviation Commission, the African Airlines Association, ASECNA, the International Civil Aviation Organisation and the African Development Bank, on the 28<sup>th</sup> March 2018. At that meeting, I received pledges to support the operationalisation of the Single African Air Transport Market, with the African Development Bank indicating that they will be making resources available to strengthen the capacity of the African Civil Aviation Commission, whilst the International Civil Aviation Organisation pledged to elaborate a technical assistance programme to assist States with below 60% level of safety and security effective implementation. I would therefore be following up on these pledges.

**31.** The Status of implementation of the Prioritised Action Plan was reviewed on the 28-29 January 2019 in Dakar, Senegal. I am informed that the African Development Bank has established a framework to fund the Executing Agency of the Yamoussoukro Decision to a tune of four and half million US Dollars (US\$4.5 million). The World Bank has also mobilised resources about US\$ 1.0 million to support the operationalisation of the Single African Air Transport Market and the European Union has initiated projects to support the enhancement of aviation safety among Member States.

**32.** Since February 2018, the African Civil Aviation Commission, which is also the Executing Agency of the Single African Air Transport Market did not have a substantive Secretary General. I therefore directed the African Union Commission and the African Development Bank to facilitate the process of electing a new Secretary General for AFCAC as soon as possible. In this regard, the 29<sup>th</sup> Extraordinary Plenary Session of the African Civil Aviation Commission appointed a new Secretary General of AFCAC, Mr. Tefera Mekonnen Tefera who is here with us today.

**33.** Whilst congratulating the newly appointed Secretary General on his appointment including members of the new Bureau of African Civil Aviation Commission, I urge the new Secretary General and the Bureau to immediately engage the process of getting the Executing Agency of the Yamoussoukro Decision effective in supervising the operation of the market, implementation of the competition and consumer protection regulation as adopted by the 30<sup>th</sup> AU Assembly. I am informed that the Institutional and Regulatory Text of the Yamoussoukro Decision have been published. The African Union Commission in collaboration with the African Civil Aviation Commission need to ensure that Member States are sensitised on these regulatory Instruments.

**34.** The Commission organised a Continental Transport Policy Workshop from the 19<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> November which (i) reviewed the External Policy Guidelines with Binding Clauses for the Negotiation of Air Services Agreements with non-Africa States and regions; and (ii) considered a proposal on the Dispute Settlement Mechanism and its institutions.

**35.** The successful operation of the Single African Air Transport Market is going to create aviation infrastructure constrains at several airports and airspace congestion. The future demand for aviation infrastructure needs to be addressed in the next phase of the Program for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA). In this regard, I wish to congratulate the appointment by the Chairperson of the African Union Commission of my Brother, Honourable Raila Odinga of Kenya as High Representative for Infrastructure Development in Africa. Together, we should be able to ensure that the Single African Air Transport Market is operational and afforded the connectivity required across our continent.

## **E. Conclusion**

**36.** Since last January 2018, I am satisfied that sufficient progress made in the implementation of the Activity Roadmap of the Ministerial Working Group for the establishment of the SAATM including (a) advocacy for more States to join; (b) SAATM member counties to implement immediate measures necessary to concretise their Solemn Commitment, (c) finalisation and adoption of the Yamoussoukro Decision Regulatory Texts, (d) resource mobilisation for the Executing Agency of the YD, (e) establishment of a memorandum of cooperation between the Regional Economic Communities and the African Civil Aviation Commission on the operation of the SAATM, (f) mobilisation of technical assistance to member States on the implementation of the Abuja Safety Targets and (g) elaboration of an External policy guidelines with binding clauses on the negotiation of air service agreement with non-African countries and regions.

**37.** The operationalization of the Single African Air Transport Market is very crucial to the successful integration of our continent and it is an important logistical supply system for the successful operation of the African Continental Free Trade Area. I therefore call on all States that are yet to join, to direct their Foreign Ministers to complete and submit to the African Union Commission, their instrument of Solemn Commitment towards the establishment of the Single African Air Transport Market and those who are party to sign the Memorandum of Implementation. In this regard, I am assigning my foreign Minister to following-up on your commitments.



**38.** The appointment of Honourable Raila Odinga, will go a long way to enhance the advocacy for all member states to join the Single African Air Transport Market. The appointment of the new Secretary General is also an important development since the launch of the SAATM. We are grateful to the African Development Bank and other Development Partners, in particular the European Union in supporting the operationalisation of the Single African Air Transport Market, the World Bank, the African Airlines Association (AFRAA), the International Civil Aviation Organisation and the International Air Transport Association (IATA) for supporting advocacy among African airlines for the Single African Air Transport Market.

## **F. Recommendation**

**39.** I would like to conclude by congratulating the Member States that have joined the market and call for countries still to join to do so as soon as possible.

**40.** I am satisfied with the progress made since the launch of the market, in particular efforts to strengthen the capacity of the Executing Agency (AFCAC). It is time for AFCAC to fulfil its responsibilities effectively. The Commission and I are committed to supporting the Executing Agency perform its duties.

**41.** To further the advocacy efforts, I also plan to participate in meetings of Heads of State and Government of the Regional Economic Communities. In this regard, I request that the Single African Air Transport Market is inscribed in your regular agenda of meetings of the Regional Economic Communities.

**42.** Considering the importance of the Single African Air Transport Market, I recommend that the Single African Air Transport Market (SAATM) be included among the projects currently under the Presidential Infrastructure Championship Initiative (PICI).

2019-02-10

# Report of H.E. Faure Essozimna Gnassingbe, president of the Togolese Republic and leader of the single African Air Transport Market (SAATM)

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