

MEDIA RELEASE

Aviation plays important role in African economy, could help drive further growth

Geneva, 21 March 2012 – In Africa more than 6 million jobs and \$67.8 billion in GDP are supported by aviation, according to a new report released today at the Aviation and Environment Summit in Geneva. The report, *Aviation: benefits beyond borders*, was produced by the Air Transport Action Group (ATAG) and Oxford Economics. It outlines an industry that plays a larger role in both the African and global economy than many would expect.

“In Africa alone aviation directly employs over 250,000 people,” says Paul Steele, Executive Director of ATAG, the global association that represents air transport. “If we include indirect employment at suppliers to the industry, induced employment from spending by aviation industry employees and the jobs in tourism that air transport makes possible, this increases the regional figure to 6.7 million jobs. In addition, African economies derive substantial benefits from the spending of tourists travelling by air.

“Of course, aviation’s economic benefits spread far beyond the monetary aspects outlined here. When you take into account the further benefits gained through the speed and reliability of air travel, the businesses that exist because air freight makes them possible and the intrinsic value to the economy of improved connectivity, the economic impact would be several times larger,” Steele adds.

For Africa, forecasts indicate that passenger numbers are expected to almost triple from 67.7 million in 2010 to over 150.3 million in 2030. Meanwhile, cargo volumes are projected to rise at a rate of 5.2% per annum. “The African continent can really take advantage of the benefits that aviation provides over the coming decades. Already, over 1.5 million livelihoods in Africa are supported through the trade in fresh produce to the UK alone. Tourism is another area for potential growth, providing long-term sustainable development of the economy.”

The report, available at www.aviationbenefitsbeyondborders.org, also outlined the role aviation plays at a global level, supporting 56.6 million jobs worldwide and \$2.2 trillion of the world’s GDP. There are some 1,500 commercial airlines using nearly 24,000 aircraft to serve 3,800 airports around the globe.

Dr. Elijah Chingosho, Secretary General of the African Airlines Association (AFRAA) adds: “the expansion in air transport activity we are witnessing here is set to generate significant economic returns, particularly in terms of trade activity and tourism. Africa is a continent where surface transport infrastructure is very poor. Aviation offers benefits in social, economic and political integration of countries, regions and indeed the huge continent. Whilst this report will help promote the very important role aviation has on the African continent, it also recognises the contribution aviation makes to long-term sustainable growth aimed at balancing economic prosperity with social responsibility and a reduction of environmental impact.”

more

MEDIA RELEASE

The major issue of aviation safety is being addressed by the industry and the United Nations specialised agency for aviation, the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO). All players are working to improve the regions safety record through training and the implementation of safety management systems across the continent.

Says Ali Tounsi, General Secretary of Airports Council International Africa: “Figures in the report show that if Africa’s growth potential is fulfilled, more economic growth and more jobs are set to follow. However, whereas our airports are likely to be able to cope with this projected growth, skills shortage in particular poses a short term obstacle – we have jobs, but need well-trained people to take them.”

ends