

MEDIA RELEASE

Supporting African jobs, economic growth and sustainable development through aviation

Air transport: supports 6.8 million jobs and \$72.5 billion of African GDP

New York, 19 July 2016 – Aviation is vital to the modern, globalised world, supporting millions of jobs and driving economic growth. But the benefits of connectivity must be protected with appropriate support from governments if the air transport sector is to help fulfil its potential as a connector of people, trade and tourism and is a driver of sustainable development. These are the conclusions drawn in a new report, *Aviation: Benefits Beyond Borders*, issued by the Air Transport Action Group (ATAG).

Worldwide, aviation supports 62.7 million jobs and generates \$2.7 trillion in gross domestic product (GDP). Not only does air transport provide significant economic benefits, but it also plays a major role in the social development of people and communities all over the globe, allowing people to travel for educational opportunities and cultural exchange, more broadly. Across Africa, specifically, air transport supports 6.8 million jobs and contributes \$72.5 billion to the African continent's GDP.

In the next 20 years, forecasts suggest that aviation-supported jobs worldwide will increase to over 99 million and GDP to \$5.9 trillion. Africa is the second-fastest growing region in the world as far as international air traffic is concerned. However, the overly strict regulatory environment in the region must be simplified if Africa's true economic potential is to be realised. For decades, industry leaders have been urging governments in Africa to unlock this potential by moving ahead with the policy of open skies in the region, allowing aviation services to flourish and continue to support growth. Industry costs in Africa, including passenger fees, are among the highest in the world. These regulatory arrangements should be improved, according to industry experts in the region.

ATAG executive director, Michael Gill, says that the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at the United Nations highlights a number of goals that the international community should strive to achieve by 2030: "We found that air transport in some way supports 14 of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, from decent work and economic growth to quality education and reduced inequalities. By continuing to grow in a sustainable manner, aviation can strive to be a force for good for many years to come."

"A significant factor in our work on sustainable development is the industry's world-leading climate action plan. We need support from governments around the world to agree on a key part of that plan at the upcoming International Civil Aviation Organization Assembly, where we hope an agreement can be reached on a global offsetting scheme for air transport. It is a vital part of our industry's future role in helping to support development worldwide."

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Elijah Chingoso, Secretary General of the African Airlines Association (AFRAA): “Sustainable development of air transport in Africa requires that the industry be fully liberalised, industry costs are brought down to global standards through adhering to ICAO stipulations as well as removal of constraints to the development of the industry such as monopolies and visa requirements. Reliable aviation infrastructure, efficient, inexpensive and sustainable transport services are crucial for speedy socio-economic development, regional integration and for the continent’s competitiveness in the global economy.”

Boni Dibate, Director Africa Affairs for the Civil Air Navigation Services Organisation (CANSO): “As the second fastest growing region for international air traffic, Africa needs efficient, cost-effective and safe air traffic management (ATM) infrastructure to fully realise the economic benefits of aviation. CANSO is working hard with its industry partners to improve the safety, efficiency and sustainability of ATM across Africa, by improving safety through its standard of excellence; providing training; disseminating best practice; and promoting opportunities for collaborative decision-making. States have a key role to play by investing in ATM infrastructure; modernising airspace by implementing the ICAO Aviation System Block Upgrades; and liberalising air transport by implementing the Yamoussoukro Declaration.”

The report, *Aviation: Benefits Beyond Borders*, covers the global aviation sector, with regional and some national analysis. It is available for download at www.aviationbenefits.org.

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Notes:

- The full report and case studies are available from www.aviationbenefits.org
- Media may also be interested in the newswire, capturing sustainable aviation news from across the industry at www.aviationbenefits.org/newswire
- The **Air Transport Action Group** is a coalition of organisations and companies throughout the air transport industry that drive the sustainable development of the air transport sector. Funding members include ACI, Airbus, ATR, Boeing, Bombardier, CANSO, CFM, Embraer, Honeywell Aerospace, GE, IATA, Pratt & Whitney, Rolls-Royce and Safran. www.atag.org