



**STATEMENT BY H.E. DR. ELHAM M.A. IBRAHIM, COMMISSIONER FOR
INFRASTRUCTURE AND ENERGY, AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION AT THE
IATA AFRICA AVIATION DAY
ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA, 16TH APRIL 2013**

- **Honourable Deriba KUMA, Minister of Transport of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia;**
- **Honourable Tony Tyler, Director-General and Chief Executive Officer of IATA;**
- **Honourable Elijah Chingosho, Secretary-General of AFRAA;**
- **Mr. Tewolde Gebremariam, Chief Executive Officer of Ethiopian Airlines;**
- **Invited Guests;**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen:**

I wish to begin by thanking the Chief Executives of the International Air Transport Association (IATA), and Ethiopian Airlines for inviting the African Union Commission to address the IATA Africa Aviation Day at its opening session. Organisation of the Africa Aviation Day is a commendable initiative, indeed, coming at the time when we are celebrating fifty years of the existence of the African Union and its predecessor, the Organisation of African Unity.

In the same spirit, let me convey the gratitude of the African Union Commission to Government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia for the hosting of this event. The presence of the Honourable Minister of Transport of the Federal Republic of Ethiopia in this meeting says a lot about the commitment attached by Ethiopia to the growth of Africa's aviation sector

Honourable Minister

Ladies and Gentlemen

The aviation sector in Africa has come a long way and faced numerous challenges within the continent and at international level. It has endured difficult domestic economic conditions and limited markets. Even the current global financial downturn

has not stopped its progress. It still continues to deliver benefits to the socio-economic development of the continent.

Given the poor state of many African economies, one would have expected most African carriers to disappear from the world scene when even some major international airlines with once famous names are no more. But thanks to the commitment and ingenuity of some dedicated professionals, we see a number of African airlines maintaining their market share and some even flourishing. These remarkable actors have never fallen short of dynamic strategies to cope with emerging challenges.

The African Union Commission is pursuing the agenda of creating a single strong African aviation market and, ultimately, a single safe and efficient African sky emerging soon as a result of implementing the Yamoussoukro Decision and the African Civil Aviation Policy which are strategic frameworks for the continent.

In that quest, the AU Commission is working closely with both internal and external partners. African organisations like the Regional Economic Communities, AFCAC, AFRAA and NPCA are considered as members of the AU family who have a collective ownership of this agenda. ICAO, IATA and other international institutions are expected to provide the requisite technical support to enable Africa's air transport industry plays its expected role in the global economy.

Honourable Ministers

Distinguished Participants

As I mentioned at the beginning, the Africa Union is celebrating this year its 50th anniversary since the founding of its predecessor, the Organisation of African Unity. In that regard, we will be paying tribute, as always, to the founders and visionaries of our organisation. Here, I cannot hesitate mentioning the name of His Majesty Emperor Haile Selassie who is acknowledged as one of the champions of African Unity.

In that regard, I wish to invite you to join the African Union Commission to promote and facilitate the commemoration which was inaugurated on 8th April 2013 and will

cover the period till May 2014. To that end, the African aviation industry is expected to be one of the major faces of the event especially by placing colourful displays in international airports and on board of all flights.

Let me also inform you that the Third Session of the Conference of African Ministers of Transport is scheduled to hold in November 2013 in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea. In air transport, an assessment will be done with a view to defining the way forward in the context of current global developments. Proceedings of this event would hopefully contribute significantly to the agenda of the planned Ministerial conference.

I, therefore, wish you successful celebration of the IATA Africa Aviation Day and very fruitful deliberations in assessing the challenges and opportunities for aviation in Africa.

THANK YOU.