



# AFRICAN AEROSPACE

THE MAGAZINE FOR AEROSPACE PROFESSIONALS IN AFRICA

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## PLANE TALKING

«LE MINISTRE NOUS DÉVOILE SA VISION »

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Essex, SS4 1BB, UK  
Tel: +44 (0)1702 53 0000  
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## Building for the future – Egypt’s resurgence is on

For the past seven years, Egypt has been recovering from the after-effects of the 2011 revolution that saw massive changes in the country.

During repositioning and restoration it was hit again, with a likely terrorist attack on a Russian passenger jet returning from its flagship Red Sea resort, Sharm el Sheikh, and then the loss of an EgyptAir aircraft over the Mediterranean.

With the economy flat-lining, a revaluation of the Egyptian pound and on-going uncertainty in its Sinai region and the Libyan borders, it is no wonder that the country has been rocked by one thing after another.

But the revival is happening. An *African Aerospace* team has been in Cairo meeting some of the leading players from EgyptAir and other airlines and there is an optimism that recovery is on its way.

Tourists are returning, and despite the heinous attack on the al-Rawdah mosque in Sinai, where 305 people died, there is a belief that security is sound and that the Egyptian people will bounce back.

The national carrier also has confidence in its future. After a period of cutting back on routes and investment, the airline announced a series of new orders at the recent Dubai Air Show, including Boeing 787 Dreamliners and Airbus A320s. It also



captured the headlines with an order for the Bombardier CSeries single-aisle airliner.

In this issue you will read about the plans and ambitions, not only of the government-owned carrier, but also the independents, who are increasingly being encouraged to search out new opportunities and create a whole sector strength for the country.

On April 17-18, the Aviation Africa summit and exhibition will be in Cairo. I am delighted to be chairing the conference and, with speakers from across Africa and the Middle East, there will be full insight into the building blocks that will allow North Africa to once again be seen as an aviation powerhouse.

In early December, I was fortunate to attend the African Business Aviation Association annual

conference and its first expo at Lanseria Airport in South Africa. At the conference, founding chairman, Tarek Ragheb, stepped down following the constitution of the association. Tarek – and his colleague and CEO, Rady Fahmy – have done a splendid job developing a focus for the private and corporate aviation businesses across the continent. I wish Tarek well and urge Rady and the new chairperson to continue the good work.

Safe landings,

Alan Peaford, Editor-in-Chief

**COVER: Sherif Fathi, Egypt’s Aviation Minister. PICTURE: JEFF HOLMES, BILLYPIX**

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# Waiting to Take-Off: Can a right-sized single-aisle fleet solve load factor challenges in Africa?

Powered by an entrepreneurial drive and a growing population as its engine, Africa is a region on the cusp of rapid economic expansion.<sup>1</sup> Aviation, offering improved connectivity across key markets in Africa—at affordable prices—can be a lead driver of this economic growth. Before Africa’s aviation market can grow to its full potential, however, airlines must address the weak points in their intra-regional operating models.

## INCREASE FREQUENCY AND IMPROVE CONNECTIVITY

In a report on disruptive strategies for the continent, the air travel intelligence company, OAG, suggests Africa’s airlines need to address “poor development of intra-regional air services, high air fares and citizens, and businesses which are not afforded the opportunities that air travel could bring.” The reports warns, “many of the air services reflect the economic ties of previous times, with better connections to Western European capital cities than other parts of the Continent.”<sup>2</sup>

There is a vibrant market of “productivity flyers” at home that Africa’s airlines can serve. According to the World Economic Forum, 15 to 20 million well-educated young Africans will join the continent’s workforce every year until 2030; many of them in creative and technology sectors.

Unfortunately, there is a gap between the latent potential in this market and current air service. As the OAG reports, “Each of the 10 largest urban conurbations has a population of around 5 million or over. If a non-stop air service were available between each one of them, there would be 45 routes connecting these cities. However, only 22 of the 45 possible routes have non-stop air service today. That leaves 23 routes between these cities unserved, the smallest of which, Abidjan, has a population of nearly 5 million but only has scheduled services to two of the other top 10 urban areas.”

Simply put, the intra-Africa market is a mid-haul one that is simultaneously over and underserved at present. By choosing a cost-efficient, single-aisle aircraft sized appropriately to the market, airlines in the region can address the inter-connectivity gap and deliver profitability to stakeholders.

## FINDING THE RIGHT FIT FOR FLIGHT

Most of Africa’s intra-regional planes are just too large for optimum fleet utilization. IATA finds that over 60 percent of intra-African routes are operated by large narrow body and wide body aircraft, resulting in chronically low load-factors.

The existing intra-Africa market cannot support large capacity aircraft. As an example of this, Jambojet made a dramatic shift in their fleet a few years ago. In an effort to move towards profitability, the airline aggressively optimized its operations by moving their 737-300 fleet to their high-volume routes and leveraged the Q400 turbo-prop to open new markets in Kenya where a bigger aircraft was too expensive to operate.

The move by Jambojet fits intra-Africa’s unique marketplace, where the average number of passengers is 70 to 90 per departure. Airlines should continue to aim for right-sized capacity aircraft in the 80 to 120-seat range. Ideally, aircraft this size also offers additional benefits in fuel efficiency.

Fleet right-sizing also avoids inflated fuel, crew, and maintenance costs. Keeping these profit-drainers low is a core principle of the successful low-cost carrier operating model. With fewer seat sales required to breakeven, Africa’s airlines can also protect yields while keeping fares attractive.



## ADAPT THE LOW-COST CARRIER MODEL TO AFRICA

Africa’s airlines may look to low-cost carriers (LCC) for inspiration, but should not misread what makes the LCC model successful. LCC success does not hinge on cutting fares. As the name suggests, it relies on cutting costs. More specifically, it cuts the right costs in the right way to boost yields—even with lower fares, or during times of varying demand. The low fares, which are carefully calibrated based on near real-time marketplace demand, and bare-bones services that publicly mark the LCC strategy, belie a strategic “C-suite” decision to build intelligent fleets of aircraft.

It is interesting to note that 90 percent of intra-Africa seats operate in a dual-class configuration, with sales of class-differentiated cabins outperforming sales of all-economy seating.<sup>3</sup> This would show that African air travelers also value product differentiation. A low-costluxury strategy (a unique African spin on the likes of JetBlue), which offers a blend of affordability, modernity, and enhanced passenger experience, could suit the intra-Africa market well.

## SIZE MATTERS

Successful airlines discovered that large airplanes by themselves did not deliver large profits. Instead of falling into the vicious cycle of lowering fares and reducing yields to keep load factors high, they adapted their fleets to fit their unique markets and routes. Smaller single-aisle aircraft deployed on the right routes, they learned, kept costs down and load factors high, without having to discount ticket price. With thoughtful inputs from flight planning, yield management, and flight operation teams, *sensible aircraft selection*—calibrated to the market—led to airline profitability.

Aircraft design selection is critical in building profitable airlines and markets. Given high fuel, maintenance, and other operating costs in Africa, aircraft should be right-sized, maintain high load factors without aggressive fare discounting, and protect yields. These smaller aircraft should be fuel efficient, and offer passengers a superior flying experience that justifies a rational fare structure. They should adapt to small and mid-sized airports as well as larger hubs.

The challenge ahead for African airlines is not a matter of will, or a matter of market opportunity—given the continent’s promising potential—it is a matter of right-sizing the fleet.

**Jean-Paul Boutibou** Vice President Sales, Middle-East & Africa  
Commercial Aircraft Bombardier

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## Triple alliance to develop hybrid propulsion

Airbus, Rolls-Royce and Siemens have formed a partnership to develop a near-term flight demonstrator for proving hybrid-electric propulsion for commercial aircraft.

The E-Fan X hybrid-electric technology demonstrator is anticipated to fly in 2020 following a

comprehensive ground-test campaign, provisionally on a BAe 146 flying test-bed, with one of the aircraft's four gas turbine engines replaced by a two megawatt electric motor. Provisions will be made to replace a second gas turbine with an electric motor once system maturity has been proven.

## Afrijet targets new sectors

Afrijet is reacting to commercial opportunities by expanding into new fields of commercial flying.

Managing director Marc Gaffajoli explained: "When I joined the company in 2010, I had the exciting and complicated task of diversifying a company that was purely into business aviation – with a single product – into something entirely different. "Since then we have transformed Afrijet into a company capable of operating in two separate fields, with the emphasis, going forward, on commercial aviation. We intend the balance between business and commercial aviation to be 50-50 this year."

## Leonardo grows its footprint in Africa

Leonardo has signed two contracts to provide air traffic control systems for Somalia and Sudan.

The first contract, signed with the International Civil Aviation Organisation on behalf of the Federal

Government of Somalia, will see Leonardo providing a national area control centre as well as three tower control centres for three major airports, for a total of 16 operator control positions, along with a VHF radio system and satellite network. The systems will be operational by mid-2018.

Leonardo will also provide the Sudan Civil Aviation Authority with a nationwide ADS-B

network and will upgrade four secondary radar systems.

## Ethiopian in talks to partner Air Djibouti

Ethiopian Airlines has initiated talks with the Government of Djibouti over a possible partnership with Air Djibouti.

CEO Tewolde Gebremariam said that talks have focused on developing a joint-venture

between the sides with the Port of Djibouti, a major freight hub for the Horn of Africa, also of interest.

"China, for the first time, has established a military base in neighbouring Djibouti. The major political powers have big military vessels in Djibouti. The country is expanding its seaport and airport. So it can serve as the Dubai of Africa if we do the right thing together," said Tewolde.

## TAAG signs GE engine agreement

TAAG Angola Airlines has signed a five-year, TrueChoice overhaul agreement with GE Aviation for the maintenance, repair and overhaul of its CFM56-7B engines that power its five Boeing 737-700 aircraft.

"For TAAG Angola Airlines to achieve its goal of becoming the most prominent and respected airline in Africa, it is essential to select partners that create respect and confidence from the industry," said Robert Bryant, deputy COO maintenance & engineering, TAAG Angola Airlines.

## Mara-Dikwe Air Taxi launch in 1Q18

South Africa's Mara-Dikwe Air Taxi has announced plans to begin a triangular air shuttle service connecting the Marataba and Madikwe safari lodges with Johannesburg Grand Central this month.

The virtual carrier said its daily flights would start on January 15, using capacity chartered from Angel Gabriel Aeronautics.



## Bombardier cements deal with CemAir

South Africa's CemAir has ordered two new Bombardier Q400 turboprops and signed to lease a used Q400 ahead of the delivery of the new aircraft. The deal – first mooted at the Paris Air Show – is valued at \$66 million at list price.

"CemAir has enjoyed significant growth in the last few years and this has come from our focused approach on selecting the right aircraft for our operation," said Miles van der Molen, the airline's CEO.

"We are working to expand our scheduled operations beyond South Africa and continuing to support new opportunities across the continent."

With these Q400 aircraft, CemAir sees an increase in its current fleet of Bombardier aircraft to 17, including five Q Series turboprops and 12 CRJ Series aircraft.

CemAir recently added a used CRJ900 aircraft to its fleet, the first in South Africa.



## Airlink and Safair set to merge

Airlink and Safair are to apply to South Africa's Competition Commission for approval to unite under the common umbrella of the Airlink group of companies.

"Airlink's acquisition of Safair, which is financially robust and profitable, makes good business sense," said Airlink CEO and managing director, Rodger Foster.

"It presents opportunities to reduce our combined costs, position ourselves for growth, while at the same time increasing connectivity and choice, making air travel accessible and affordable for our customers across Southern Africa."

## Astral-Nam 747F deal

Network Airline Management (NAM) and Kenya's Astral Aviation have signed a long-term wet lease with Air Atlanta Icelandic, adding a factory-built nose-loader B747-400F to their existing managed fleet of three MD11Fs.

This will enable NAM to develop its presence in Africa, and especially the Kenyan perishables market, adding capacity for flowers



## Airbus /Air Mauritius team up for goodwill

The Airbus Foundation and the Air Mauritius Foundation operated a humanitarian flight in November comprising 3.5 tonnes of medical equipment on board the airline's latest A350-900 aircraft.

The cargo, which consisted of medical equipment including examination tables, wheelchairs, mattresses and medical beds, will help the Mauritian NGOs that provide health care services to the community. Equipment will also be flown to Madagascar

in order to ease the tense health care situation in the country.

Somas Appavou, chief executive officer of Air Mauritius, said: "The Air Mauritius Foundation was launched to strengthen our company's social engagement. Every year, we help thousands of Mauritians in the fields of health, education, sports and culture. This mission is an excellent opportunity to demonstrate the power of cooperation in aviation to bring much needed relief to people in the region."

and vegetables from Nairobi to the UK.

Sanjeev Gadhia, Astral Aviation founder and CEO, said: "The newly acquired B747-400F will strengthen our position as a market-leader in perishable exports from Kenya to the UK

market. Furthermore, it will

feed the intra-African network in Nairobi with cargo, which will be consolidated in its Liege hub, originating from Europe and the US."

The B747-400F made its inaugural flight to Nairobi in November.

The partnership expects

to handle around 33,000 tonnes of perishable exports from East Africa to Europe per year.

The aircraft will also enable the group to attract out-sized oil, gas and mining equipment for West and East Africa, which is expected to increase.

## UK firm to build Uganda airport

UK Export Finance is to provide a £215 million loan to Colas UK to build Kabaale Airport in western Uganda. The company will create 820 jobs for Ugandans. The UK's export credit agency described this as a milestone for trade relationships in Africa.

The Government of Uganda seeks to develop an airport that should be able to initially handle international cargo flights and, later on, other commercial operations serving the Hoima area. This will be the country's second international airport, after Entebbe International Airport.

## EgyptAir minor collision at JFK

An EgyptAir Boeing 777 and a Virgin Atlantic A330-300 collided while taxiing at JFK Airport, New York, at the end of November.

An EgyptAir spokesperson said: "Flight MS 986, a Boeing 777, was moving on taxiway kilo at the airport when its right wing slightly touched the left wing of Virgin Atlantic Airlines Flight 4C, an Airbus A333."

No injuries were reported.

## A LOT more cooperation

EgyptAir and LOT enhanced relations by signing a codeshare agreement for passengers flying between Cairo and Warsaw.

"EgyptAir and LOT Polish Airlines have long-standing relations through which both airlines' customers have received many benefits. The new extension of the agreement aims at providing the customers with more travel options and more convenience throughout their flights," said Safwat Musallam, chairman and CEO EgyptAir Holding.



## Lufthansa to tango with Mango

Lufthansa Technik and Mango Airlines signed an exclusive contract for the maintenance of CFM56-7B engines, which power the airline's fleet of 10 Boeing 737NG aircraft.

Within the framework of the agreement, Lufthansa Technik will provide overhaul

services for the engines at its German locations until 2022.

This new agreement now comprises at least 19 overhaul events over the next five years, with billing on a power-by-the-hour basis.

## A330-800 starts final assembly

Final assembly of the newest member of the A330neo family, the A330-800, has started and is on track for the first flight planned in mid-2018. The A330-800 complements the A330-900.

With its 242tonne maximum take-off weight (MTOW) as base variant, the A330-800 can operate routes of up to 7,500nm and, with the recently launched 251-tonne MTOW variant, the aircraft can operate ultra-long-range routes of up to 8,150nm.

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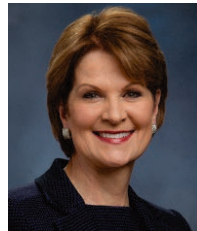
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## Russian's produce Mi-35Ms for Mali

Russian Helicopters holding company has produced two Mi-35M transport/attack helicopters for Mali under a Rosoboronexport-related contract. The aircraft and all property necessary for their operation has been delivered to the customer.

"Performance of the contract on Mi-35M delivery to our Mali partners once again confirms that the holding company holds a leading position in the world market of attack helicopters. I am sure that successful implementation of this order will result in growing demand for Russian helicopters in the region," said Russian Helicopters CEO, Andrey Boginsky.

## Jet MS approved by Nigeria

Jet Maintenance Solutions (Jet MS) has recently announced being recognised by the Nigerian Civil Aviation Authority.

From autumn 2017, Jet MS was officially approved to provide line and base maintenance services in Nigeria. According to the issued certificate, the company is allowed to service Hawker BAE 125-700/800/750/800XP/850



New software will increase operational efficiency for the 43 Air School fleet.

## Intelligent move for 43 Air School

**MOMook, an intelligent business and training management software developer, and 43 Air School, the largest aviation-training provider in South Africa, have signed a contract on the use of software to manage pilot training processes.**

**The MOMook system is tailored to improve training scheduling, document management and expiration tracking in the student evaluation process for flight instructors.**

"Over the past 28 years, 43 Air School has professionally trained more than 5,000 pilots in total, so effective management solutions that can help handle complex and large-scale training processes are very important," said Attie Niemann, CEO of 43 Air School. "We were looking for a proper tool to make daily training operations smoother and more efficient and MOMook came as a right solution for us."

XP/900XP and Bombardier CL-600-2B19, CL-600-2B16, BD-700-1A10/1A11 types.

"Entering the Nigerian market was a huge milestone for us. This approval will provide operators with the possibility of receiving qualitative and rapid service. I am certain that certification will only facilitate our expansion in the so-called 'giant of Africa'," said Darius Saluga, CEO of Jet Maintenance Solutions.

## MoU boosts airspace safety

Air Traffic and Navigation Services (ATNS) and L'Agence pour la Sécurité de la Navigation Aérienne en Afrique et à Madagascar – ASECNA, have signed a ground-breaking memorandum of understanding (MoU), paving the way for south-west cooperation in African airspace management.

The MoU provides for cooperation in air navigation-related services

between ASECNA and ATNS.

ATNS CEO Thabani Mthiyane said: "We are working towards safer African skies. As an air navigation service provider, we invest our resources in air safety, research and development, in consultation with other navigation agencies in Africa and elsewhere.

"ASECNA is no exception.

"We also follow the best navigation services practices."

## Precision Air in deal with Vector

Vector Aerospace has signed a new seven-year exclusive engine service agreement with Precision Air Services to support the Tanzanian airline's fleet of ATR regional turboprop aircraft. Precision has been using the French MRO specialist for three years.

Under the terms of the exclusive multi-year agreement, Vector will provide Precision Air with comprehensive engine maintenance, repair and overhaul services, along with engineering, training and engine condition trend monitoring (ECTM) services.

## ACSA has new COO

Airports Company South Africa has appointed Fundi Sithebe as chief operating officer.

Sithebe said: "I have been with the company for several years and I am privileged to be working with supportive and experienced colleagues.

"I believe that working together we will achieve the company's strategic goals."



Air Serv: supporting relief efforts in the DRC.

## Air Serv responds to cholera outbreak

Air Serv deployed an aircraft in November to the Kasai Province in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) in response to the cholera epidemic affecting the region.

The aircraft, carrying a two-pilot crew, supported efforts by Médecins Sans Frontières to contain the outbreak.

The response team carried out a 10-day mission transporting

medicine, medical teams, and patients as needed, and also completed aerial inspections of local airfields to assess conditions.

"We have been here a long time and we have come to care very much for the people of DRC," said Air Serv CEO, Stu Willcuts "We do everything we can to support relief efforts. This is more than a mission to us. It's personal."



## MoU to improve air cargo sector

TIACA and the African Airlines Association (AFRAA) have signed a memorandum of understanding to work closely on issues affecting air cargo, from security to digitisation.

The MoU means TIACA will collaborate with AFRAA's 40 members from across the aviation sector, to support the rapidly developing air cargo sector in Africa.

"TIACA stands to benefit from better connection with the continent, which is the fastest developing in air cargo movement. We are happy to offer assistance from TIACA in structuring the air cargo part of the future AFRAA agenda," said a spokesperson.

## ExecuJet banks on Money

Money Aviation and ExecuJet South Africa are to work together to boost business aviation sales in Africa.

Both companies are located at Lanseria International Airport and have an active presence across the continent. To date, Money Aviation has specialised in the helicopter and turboprop markets whereas ExecuJet has primarily focused on the Jet market. They will now collaborate to cross-sell the different aircraft types.

## Toughest air race for Africa

Adventurists, the organiser of what has been dubbed the world's toughest air race – The Icarus Trophy – is to take place in Africa for the first time.

Contestants will fly almost 1,000 miles on a paramotor across vast areas without GPS. They will also walk across national borders with the paramotors packed on their backs.

Beginning just north of Johannesburg at Hartbeespoort, the adventure will thunder north to near Victoria Falls in Zambia.

The race is due to start on July 25 and finish on August 1. Previous races have taken place in Australia and the USA.

Southern Africa will welcome paramotoring for this year's event.



## EgyptAir takes its final 737-800

EgyptAir has received its ninth and final Boeing 737-800NGs on a lease deal from Dubai Aerospace Enterprise (DAE) and valued at \$864 million.

All nine were handed over during the course of the past year.

Capt Sherif Ezzat, chairman and CEO of EgyptAir Airlines said the new addition would seat up to 154 passengers divided into 16 seats for business cabin and 138 for the economy class.

For the first time, the

aircraft will feature the Audio/Video on Demand System (AVOD).

## Airbus boosts global start-ups

Airbus BizLab, the manufacturer's start-up accelerator, is hosting twelve new start-ups from around the world – including Nigeria – over a six-month period at its facilities in Europe, where they will perfect their concepts for new aerospace industry ventures.

Nigeria's Aerial Industries has developed a concept using high-

performance drones for crop-spraying on farms in developing countries.

## Pilot seat slip likely cause of excursion

Preliminary investigations into a runway excursion at Accra's Kotoka airport by a Starbow Airline ATR 72-500 on December 2 suggest the captain's seat may have slipped during the takeoff run.

The aircraft which had only been delivered a few days earlier was on its takeoff run for the flight to Kumasi, some 200km north-west of the capital when it skidded off the runway.

## Nigeria bids to revive Arik links

The Federal Government of Nigeria is in talks with the UK on how Arik Air will return to the London route.

In February, 2017, the Asset Management Corporation of Nigeria (AMCON) took over the management of Arik Air due to a rising debt profile said to be in excess of \$830 million. Following the takeover, the airline suspended its international operations to London and Johannesburg to enable it to focus on West African operations.

## RAMmed together

EgyptAir and Royal Air Maroc (RAM) have launched a new code-share partnership.

Together, the two airlines offer their mutual customers 12 weekly flights between Cairo and Casablanca with both airlines designation code.

The agreement was concluded with the prospect of long-term cooperation, allowing access to major cities on both airlines' networks.

## PC-24 certification

Pilatus has obtained type certificates from the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) and the FAA for its PC-24 business jet. The jet is ideally suited for traditional African markets with capability to operate from unpaved runways.

## Cessna launches twin turboprop for utility market

Textron Aviation unveiled a new aircraft in November – a twin-engine, high-wing, large-utility turboprop Cessna SkyCourier 408, which is seen as perfect for Africa's needs. The new aircraft was launched with an order of up to 100 from FedEx Express, with a firm order for 50 cargo variants and options for a further 50.

The clean-sheet design SkyCourier is expected to enter service in 2020. It will come in both cargo and commuter options.

The cargo variant will feature a large

freight door and a flat floor cabin that is sized to handle up to three LD3 shipping containers with an impressive 6,000lbs of maximum payload capability. The aircraft will also have a maximum cruise speed of up to 200kts and a 900nm maximum range.

Computer graphics from Textron show just how much larger the new SkyCourier is, compared to Africa's favourite utility aircraft, the Caravan. With its 54'10" length (16.71m) it is also almost a metre longer than the Viking Twin Otter 400 with which it will compete.



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*More than 450 airline executives from across Africa and beyond gathered for the African Airlines Association (AFRAA) annual general assembly (AGA) in Kigali, Rwanda on November 12-14.*

**Victoria Moores** reports on the key themes from the conference.

# Africa's gazelles must turn into lions

**W**ith intra-African skies poised to finally open this month, the hot topic of discussion among AFRAA delegates was how African airlines can survive, become sustainable and make money in a competitive market.

"The single African air transport market needs to be a success story, or we will risk African airlines continuing to lose market share, or disappearing altogether," warned outgoing AFRAA secretary Elijah Chingosho. "Business as usual will not give us the benefits. It is true that some African carriers are still babies, but competition helps the baby to help itself."

Progress is being made. Between 2006 and 2016, there was a 50% increase in intra-African routes and AFRAA members added 24 regional services in 2016, but work still needs to be done.

"Africa is the most disconnected continent in the world," Nile Air CEO, Ahmed Aly, observed.



The problem is that old attitudes die hard. "The authorities still haven't shown a real appetite to open up their markets," Aly said. "How many opportunities to build African economies have been lost because of poor connections? How many tourists have been lost? While we can't undo the past, we should not miss out on a bright future."

The market potential was reiterated time and time again. Africa is the world number two in terms of size, but its airlines carry less than 3% of global traffic. By 2025, the market is expected to grow from 76.6 million to 300 million passengers.

"I see Africa as the region with the most development potential," said International Air Transport Association (IATA) VP for Africa, Raphael Kuuchi. "The scale of the African footprint is estimated to quadruple over the next 20 years. The opportunities are great, but so are the challenges."

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on Page 18



Outgoing AFRAA secretary Elijah Chingosho: "Our airlines are too small. In this industry small is not beautiful."



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 17

Former Ethiopian Airlines CEO, Girma Wake, summed up the problems while moderating a panel on airline profitability. “Airlines have made a ton of money in the last five years, but in Africa fewer than five airlines made a profit. That is sad, really sad. Anywhere else, when an airline loses money, it is a clear message for it to change its habits. In Africa, we keep doing the same thing and incurring losses again and again. It can’t continue like this.”

He went on to slam African airlines for their poor market strategy, network planning, revenue management, load factors, utilisation, profitability, service levels and “more than anything else, poor leadership”.

“The problem starts from the top,” Wake said. “CEOs are responsible for the change. Everything starts in the head of the CEO. A CEO who says ‘I will make money’ will make money.”

Aly agreed that having the right mind-set is essential. “If you have a defeatist attitude, you are really not going to succeed and, if you don’t get people on board with your vision, it’s going to be very difficult.”



A business plan is the CEO’s most important tool, but sticking to it is not easy. “You may have that strategy somewhere, but you are doing something else,” Wake said. “When you have the plan, you have to implement it. It is a question of discipline, discipline, discipline. The problem for African carriers is that their beautiful business plan is just a decoration for their office. Once it has been agreed and tested against reality, please implement it and involve your employees from the most junior to the most senior.”

There is often talk about the shortage of skilled pilots and engineers, but there is a void at management level too. “We need qualified people, especially at leadership level,” said Chingosho. “We need an urgent solution to frequent management changes, especially in government-owned carriers. That is very destabilising to the running of an airline.”

Wake agreed that an airline should have three to four people ready to take over should anything happen to the CEO, and one of their traits should be stubbornness. “If you don’t like government interference, just walk away,” he said. When the government wanted Ethiopian Airlines to buy Russian aircraft, Wake steadfastly refused and insisted on buying Boeing 737s instead. “Without that, the airline would not have been what it is today. It takes courage. Please take that courage.”

Camair CEO, Ernest Dirkoum, agreed. “You need to talk honestly to the government,” he said. “There is a perception that getting people from A to B is a simple business. You need to tell them what they see is only 10% of what happens.”

When Ethiopian came up with a 25-year business plan, everyone laughed at them. Since the airline started long-term planning, it has



**Camair CEO, Ernest Dirkoum: “Either we learn to walk together, or we will all die.”**

tripled in size. “African airlines are small, small, small,” Wake said. In 2016, the 10 largest African airlines carried 46 million passengers. Emirates carried 56.1 million. “That tells you where we are. If you eat alone, you die alone. In aviation, that is very, very true. You need one another to grow, but we should not assume we are small and cannot do it. We need to think big, but be realistic with what we do.”

Dirkoum called on the continent’s largest airlines to assist their smaller neighbours. “Either we learn to walk together, or we will all die. If Ethiopian, South African, Kenya Airways,

EgyptAir and Royal Air Maroc don’t take the time to sit with the smaller carriers and build a plan, Emirates will do it.

“In Africa, we are all gazelles,” responded Ethiopian Airlines VP for corporate strategy, communications and alliances, Henok Teferra. “I strongly believe in having a pan-African spirit. Within our means, we are willing to cooperate with any African airline, but the mind-set has to be there.”

Likewise, Chingosho urged African airlines to ditch their “selfish tendencies” to help the overall industry succeed. “Our airlines are too small. In this industry small is not beautiful. If the big [non-African] carriers think they are too small, there’s no way African airlines with two to 10 aircraft can make it. We need consolidation to reinforce each other but, to consolidate, we need the industry to be fully liberalised.”

Stephan Heinz, from Seabury Consulting, said there is a misconception that you have to be a big airline to benefit from connections. Instead, smaller airlines can create “clever networks and operations” by feeding into hubs and fitting with bigger airlines’ schedules.

Ultimately, every airline has to find its own way. “The most successful airlines are dynamic and don’t fit into a category. They adapt constantly. Successful business models just do business. At the most basic level, passengers need to be willing to pay more than it costs the airline to create that product,” Heinz said.

This is not true for most African airlines, which





The AfRAA assembly hall.

## Can liberalisation become reality?

After decades of false starts, the African Union (AU) once again revived the push to create a single African air transport market (SAATM) in January 2015. Since then, 23 African states have joined that commitment, up from 14 in November 2016.

The SAATM is finally expected to go live this month, when the AU heads of state sign off the consumer protection and competition rules for the liberalised market.

But, will liberalisation finally become a reality this time around?

"In Africa, we have been talking about this for the last 30 years. In January 2017, we were dead sure Yamoussoukro [intra-African liberalisation] would come into effect, but thanks to African bureaucracy we didn't achieve it and we have had to wait one more year. Hopefully this time we will achieve it," former Ethiopian Airlines CEO Girma Wake told the conference.

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The 2015 attempt at open skies missed its original deadline because of the difference between two words, explained Iyabo Sosina, who heads up the African Civil Aviation Commission (AFCAC) – the body responsible for making African open skies happen.

"We thought that the whole thing had been approved, only for us to discover that

there was a small hitch, a legal technicality. The legal department told us that it hadn't been approved the way we thought. Instead of getting the approval, it was just noted. The difference between 'noted' and 'approved' cost us almost two years. Then the AU changed its processes, so it was like going back to square one," Sosina said.

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That issue has now been resolved but there are still two more hurdles. Firstly, the SAATM dispute settlement mechanisms have been delayed because of an overlap in AU law, but this should be fixed by July 2018. In the meantime, Sosina said the existing AU rules should suffice and the January deadline should be unaffected.

But the second glitch is bigger. For the SAATM to take effect in January, the 23 states that have signed up to it need to have gone through seven 'concrete steps', which include each state formally notifying the other participants that their market is open. "That's the most pivotal step of them all," Sosina said. "I believe about six of them have done it."

Despite the continued setbacks, Sosina remains confident that the SAATM will still take effect in January 2018. "We are not going to let that stop us. The six that have done it can start. They have to do it," she said.

on average lose \$1.50 for every passenger they carry. Wake summed up the situation: "People say the cost of air travel in Africa is too high. But many airlines – despite the high cost of tickets – are still losing money. If you are buying at 100 and selling it at 50, is that really a business?"

A big factor in that cost and revenue balance is right-sizing. Africa has the lowest load factor of any region at just 68.8%, compared with a world average of 80.4%. As one delegate said, it is not a question of whether it's glass half empty or half full – it's whether the glass is the right size.

Bombardier VP and head of marketing, Patrick Baudis, said African regional sectors are "really short," at an average of just 600nm, and 45% of mid-haul routes operate fewer than four times per week, when passengers want daily frequencies.

Aircraft used to fly these routes are simply too big, contributing to a 35% yield decline over the last 10 years. "Yields are going down sharply and that's not a good thing. Airlines need to focus on right-sizing very rapidly. This is why a lot of airlines operate triangular routes, simply because the aircraft is too big," he said. "Too often, airlines want to jump straight to a bigger aircraft. They want to run before they can walk."

Many other challenges – like blocked funds, high costs and visa restrictions – remain, but liberalisation and better business planning could at least help spark the potential and scale that African airlines need to succeed. As Kuuchi neatly summed up: "Aviation is the business of freedom."

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ABDERAHMANE  
BERTHÉ

# Berthé of a new era

«Berthé emboîte le pas à Chingosho » – Page 22

*Former Air Burkina and Air Mali CEO, Abderahmane Berthé, was named as the next African Airlines Association (AFRAA) secretary general during the association's annual general assembly (AGA) in Kigali, Rwanda. Victoria Moores caught up with Berthé to learn about his plans.*

**D**uring the AFRAA AGA there was a lot of talk about shoes. “African airlines need to design their own shoe that fits them. Don't try and cut and paste business models,” AFRAA president and RwandAir acting CEO, Chance Ndagano, said. Likewise, new AFRAA secretary general, Abderahmane Berthé, will tread his own path when he takes office this month.

“You need to have huge feet to fit into Elijah's shoes,” International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) Eastern and Southern African (ESAF) regional director, Barry Kashambo, said, referring to the legacy of outgoing AFRAA secretary general Elijah Chingosho.

Berthé's response was humble: “I will not try and compare with the many things that Elijah has done,” he said.

Berthé witnessed Chingosho's achievements first hand. He was on the AFRAA executive committee seven years ago, when Chingosho was promoted to secretary general.

Under Chingosho's leadership, AFRAA grew from 25 to 37 airlines. The 16-year AFRAA veteran created the association's first business plan and cut the price of airline membership twice by developing other income streams. Today airline fees contribute just 30% of total revenues, compared with 85% when Chingosho took office. He also cut costs for members through joint fuel and ground-handling purchasing projects, and grew revenues through a network-planning group.

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“When I became secretary general, there were major challenges to overcome to ensure AFRAA was seen as a serious organisation. I am very proud of what we've been able to achieve together, especially in the areas of safety and joint projects. I would like to thank my team profoundly for their support and urge them to

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give similar backing to my successor,” Chingosho said.

The outgoing secretary general, who hands over the leadership of AFRAA this month, is planning to “smell the flowers and breathe fresh air” for six months, before becoming a consultant. “I will continue to work in the industry and be an ambassador for the association,” he said.

AFRAA’s new secretary general is not used to fresh air; Berthé has been breathing in kerosene since he was a child. “I was watching aircraft land and take off at Bamako International Airport and, as a young boy, I was fascinated. It was hard to imagine what featured in my future. I was far too naïve.”

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That little boy went on to become CEO of Bamako-based Air Mali and Air Burkina, accumulating 28 years’ aviation experience. Berthé has also been an aircraft performance engineer and a private pilot.

“After 16 years as an airline CEO, I know how difficult it can be to run an airline,” he said. “I



PICTURE: CYRIL INDEGEVA

Abderahmane Berthé: “We should bring smaller airlines – even those that are not members of AFRAA – to a good level.”

want AFRAA to be effective and create value for its member airlines and partners. For many, many years, we have been talking about the same things. There has been progress, but not enough.”

Berthé is a French speaker. “We are an association of airlines, not languages,” Kenya Airways CEO, Sebastian Mikosz, said, announcing Berthé’s appointment and switching into French. “Our new secretary general is francophone. I hope, in the future, we can be the body of our industry without being divided by language.”

The next AGA will be in French-speaking Morocco.

Getting down to business, safety and security are Berthé’s top priorities.

While airlines have to be IATA IOSA-registered to be full members, he wants to work with smaller airlines to improve the safety image of African aviation.

“We should bring smaller airlines – even those that are not members of AFRAA – to a good level. We are working on setting up a safety and security assessment for African airlines. I think members should help associate members get IOSA certified, so they can become full members.”

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His second priority is connectivity, stepping up the work of AFRAA’s route and network committee to truly connect the dots. “They have done a good job on interlines, special purchase agreements and codeshares, but I want to go another step, to focus on routes where there is no connectivity and see how airlines can feed them.”

AFRAA will gather the data to support this work. “It’s not easy,” he said. “You can’t just ask another airline to delay their flight by an hour – they’d think you’re crazy – you have to work at it.”

Market access comes next. Back in 1994, when Berthé was a young CEO, he recalls attending a meeting to push through intra-African liberalisation. More than two decades on, he is still waiting on the outcome of that meeting. “I have seen progress, but it’s been very slow. If you don’t have access to markets, how do you fill your aircraft and get good load factors?”

Finally, he plans to battle high industry costs – maybe even naming and shaming monopoly suppliers – and improve training cooperation among AFRAA members. “We have to keep the pressure on,” he said.

As Chingosho said farewell at his final AGA, he added: “I look forward to meeting you all – well I hope I will be there – at the next AGA in the Kingdom of Morocco.” But Berthé is not about to abandon his old friend: “I just want to assure you, you will be invited,” he replied, as the curtains went down in Kigali.

## SOMMAIRE

# BERTHÉ EMBOÎTE LE PAS À CHINGOSHO

Abderahmane Berthé, ancien PDG d’Air Burkina et d’Air Mali, a été nommé secrétaire général de l’AFRAA lors de l’assemblée générale annuelle de l’association (AGA) à Kigali, au Rwanda.

Victoria Moores nous présente son projet pour l’AFRAA.

Pendant l’AGA de l’AFRAA, il a beaucoup été question de chaussures. « Les compagnies aériennes africaines doivent concevoir des chaussures qui leur conviennent. N’essayez pas de couper et de coller des modèles de business », a déclaré le président de l’AFRAA, Chance Ndagano.

Ainsi, le nouveau secrétaire général, Abderahmane Berthé, tracera sa propre voie lorsqu’il prendra ses fonctions en janvier. Il est conscient, pour avoir témoigné les grandes réalisations de son prédécesseur Elijah Chingosho, que la barre est très haute.

□□□□□

Sous la direction de Chingosho, l’AFRAA est passée de 25 à 37 compagnies aériennes. Il a préparé le premier business plan de l’association et a réduit par deux le prix de l’adhésion en développant d’autres sources de revenus. Aujourd’hui, les frais du transport aérien ne représentent que 30% de la totalité du chiffre d’affaires, contre 85% lorsque Elijah Chingosho a pris ses fonctions. Il a également réduit les coûts à travers l’achat combiné de carburant et des projets de manutention au sol, et a augmenté les revenus grâce à un réseau planifié.

« Je suis très fier de ce que nous avons réalisé ensemble, notamment dans les domaines de la sécurité et des projets communs. Je tiens à remercier profondément mon équipe pour leur

soutien et les encourage à montrer la même détermination à mon successeur », a déclaré Elijah Chingosho.

Du petit garçon qui admirait des avions, Abderahmane Berthé a été nommé PDG d’Air Mali et d’Air Burkina, cumulant 28 ans d’expérience dans l’aviation. Il a également été ingénieur en aéronautique et pilote privé.

« Je veux que l’AFRAA soit efficace et crée de la valeur pour ses membres et ses partenaires. Pendant de nombreuses années, nous avons parlé des mêmes choses. Il y a eu des progrès, mais pas assez. »

La sûreté et la sécurité sont les priorités d’Abderahmane Berthé. Il veut travailler avec les petites compagnies aériennes même celles qui ne sont pas membres pour améliorer l’image de l’aviation africaine en matière de sécurité. « Nous travaillons à la mise en place d’une évaluation de sûreté et de sécurité pour les compagnies aériennes africaines. »

La deuxième priorité est la connectivité. Il va se concentrer sur les routes sans connectivité pour voir comment les compagnies aériennes peuvent les alimenter.

L’accès au marché est également une composante essentielle de son projet.

Enfin, il prévoit de lutter contre les coûts élevés de l’industrie et améliorer la coopération en matière de formation entre les membres de l’AFRAA.

La prochaine AGA se tiendra au Maroc.

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*Air Tanzania is going through a dramatic rebirth, reinventing itself with a new fleet and a business-focused culture. Victoria Moores caught up with the airline's CEO and managing director, Ladislaus Matindi, to hear about the rapid transformation.*

# REBORN FREE...

**H**enry Ford once said: "Failure is the opportunity to begin again more intelligently." This is precisely the reinvention that Air Tanzania is pursuing under the leadership of CEO and managing director, Ladislaus Matindi.

When Matindi was asked to come in and run Air Tanzania in 2016, the airline had just one aircraft – an old and unreliable Bombardier Q300 – and a mountain of debt. "I won't disclose how much the debt was, but it was huge enough to make me think twice about accepting the job," Matindi said.

The airline had made losses year after year and was in bad shape, but when John Magufuli took office as president of Tanzania in late 2015, he decided enough was enough. The Government started investing in Air Tanzania again, wrote off the airline's debts and brought Matindi in as CEO in October 2016.

"It was like starting a clean airline, putting a new one in the old boots," Matindi said. "Reborn, that is the word. We have new management, new investment, everything is new."



When Matindi took office, the terms and conditions were two-way. "I gave them conditions," he said. "I told them that if you liberalise the airspace, open up and make sure there is no government interference, I will make money. The most important message is, 'let's make this airline run as a business first'. This is a new, commercial airline, not a government department."

To understand where the airline is now involves going back to its roots.

Dar es Salaam-based Air Tanzania was created in 1977, after East African Airways – the joint carrier of Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda – was dissolved. Air Tanzania went on to build up a variety of domestic, regional and intercontinental destinations and, in 2002, South African Airways (SAA) took a 49% stake alongside the Tanzanian Government's 51% shareholding. That

Within two years, Air Tanzania will be flying a brand-new fleet including three Q400s.



partnership was dissolved after just four years, in the face of mounting debts.

"We didn't see why we should continue the marriage [with SAA]. It wasn't working. Then we lived in anticipation of finding another strategic investor, but we were too cautious after the failed marriage, trying to make sure we didn't make the same mistake again," Matindi said.

Instead of waiting on a new spouse, Tanzania decided to invest in a single life for Air Tanzania. The Government is now committed to reviving the airline in its own right, under a five-year strategic plan aimed at giving Air Tanzania the capacity to compete.

During the African Airlines Association (AFRAA) annual general assembly (AGA), former Ethiopian Airlines CEO, Girma Wake, said African airlines have a habit of using their business plan as a decoration for their office wall, rather than as a working blueprint. Air Tanzania's strategy is no office ornament. Matindi described Air Tanzania's business plan as a talking paper. "It speaks to us and tells us what to implement and achieve," he said.

The Government is 100% serious about getting the airline back on track and the business plan has spoken. Within two years, Air Tanzania will transition from a single geriatric Q300, to proudly flying a brand-new fleet of three Q400s, two CSeries CS300s and up to two Boeing 787s.

As of November 2017, Air Tanzania was still flying the elderly Q300, but two new Q400s had already arrived. When the third and final Q400 comes – it is expected imminently – Matindi will make a call on whether to retire the Q300. "It is getting old. In fact, it is old," he says, laughing, "and the operating costs are high. We kept it, because we only had two other aircraft and we thought the schedule needed back-up. We will evaluate it once the third Q400 arrives, based on our schedules and our plan."



Before Matindi joined in 2016, Air Tanzania flew to just four domestic destinations – Kigoma, Kilimanjaro, Mwanza and Zanzibar – and one international route, Hahaya in the Comoros. This has rapidly grown to 11, with the addition of domestic flights to Bukoba, Dodoma, Tabora, Mbeya, Mtwara and Songea.

Within 10 months, passenger numbers more than doubled from around 40,000 in October 2016 to more than 103,000 as of July 2017. Matindi said Air Tanzania's domestic market share has shot up from 4% to around 23% within that 10 months, gaining a foothold against local rivals Fastjet and Precision Air.

By the close of 2018, Matindi was hoping to add three to five more destinations, extending Air



**“Liberalise the airspace, open up and make sure there is no government interference, I will make money.**

LADISLAUS MATINDI

One part of that strategy involves partnerships and traffic feed, although Air Tanzania needs to prepare itself for that level of corporate dating. In the first quarter of 2018, the airline is aiming to go through an IOSA audit to make it a more attractive match, before the larger aircraft start arriving. “Today, an airline can’t do without those commercial arrangements. It is a must to have greater outreach to lower operating costs,” Matindi said.

Air Tanzania’s greatest challenge has been the shift from the old mind-set and patterns of behaviour to a new way of doing business. “They say a culture change takes a minimum of three years, but I can see our people understand that this is a new airline, a new philosophy.”



Likewise, the Government has a completely new approach. Matindi said Air Tanzania used to be “a tool for generating debts”, but Tanzania’s new president insists that the airline must be run as a business. Nobody has the right to interfere with the running of Air Tanzania – not even his wife.

“This gave a very strong message, which was confidence-building for me,” Matindi said. “I have bad memories of how we failed. I know how good projects, like Air Afrique, went down. They didn’t fail because of the competition, they failed for man-made reasons. You can facilitate an airline to be inefficient, not to be efficient.”

And, while Air Tanzania is still loss-making, the draft numbers for the latest financial year are on the right track.

“It is still a work in progress. We have achieved a lot, but things won’t change overnight. We have given ourselves five years minimum to break even, because when you invest in six or seven aircraft, it’s not easy to get the money back within a short time. The most important thing is the trend towards our business performance milestones; it’s very important that they’re not delayed. I don’t want to see us going back where we have come from,” Matindi said.

Tanzania’s network to include routes to Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda.

“We have to get used to international competition. We are now confined to the domestic environment, but our people only have a short time until July, when we start getting our international fleet. Long-haul and intercontinental flights need a new way of thinking and doing business. We have to expand our wings beyond the traditional markets that we have been operating in,” Matindi said.

In June 2018, the airline will receive two CS300s and a 787. Work is already under way to firm up Air Tanzania’s option on a second 787.

The CS300s will be used to open five or six international destinations, targeting Air Tanzania’s traditional markets of Ghana, Nigeria, Senegal,

Johannesburg (South Africa), Zambia and Zimbabwe, as well as one or two Middle East destinations. Meanwhile, the 787s will be deployed on intercontinental routes to China and India, followed by Europe in a second phase.

“We still have some work going on, but it is much more about our market-entry strategy, fine-tuning what we have already agreed so that, when we start, the possibility of failure is minimal,” he said.

But how will Air Tanzania fill the aircraft? “Our business plan tells us what to do. We have theories about how we will fill them. We know it is not an easy plan and strategy, but we adopted it knowing we have that capacity. Tanzania is a country with enormous tourism potential – if we work hard and have a good plan, that number will be within reach without any problem.”





Marie-Joseph Malé: « Une approche gagnant-gagnant. »

# Le partenariat revient aux

*Air Madagascar et Air Austral ont finalement signé leur accord de partenariat stratégique en présence du président de la République Malgache Hery Rajaonarimampianina et du président de la Région Réunion, Didier Robert. Des détails avec Vincent Chappard.*

**A**ir Madagascar et Air Austral ont finalement entériné leur partenariat le 9 octobre 2017. Les deux compagnies ont officialisé les modalités d'entrée de la compagnie Air Austral dans le capital d'Air Madagascar et le « business plan » pour les 10 prochaines années. Le pacte d'actionnaire a également été ratifié.

« Ce partenariat stratégique s'est fait naturellement, dans une continuité géographique, culturelle et historique entre nos deux compagnies », soutient Marie-Joseph Malé, PDG d'Air Austral. « C'est dans une approche gagnant-gagnant qu'on a vu l'intérêt de participer à cette compétition et à ce projet ambitieux de partenariat stratégique. »

Le processus a démarré en avril 2016. En février 2017, Air Austral figurait sur la « short list » (avec Ethiopian Airlines) et avait été désignée comme « preferred bidder » en mars. Le protocole d'accord fut signé le 4 avril, avec le démarrage de la « due diligence ».

Cette période de négociation a été un peu « âpre », la signature du partenariat ayant été reportée à plusieurs reprises. Selon des sources proches du dossier, la dette de la compagnie nationale malgache s'élevait à environ 84 millions d'euros, cette somme devant être épongée par l'Etat malgache. C'était la condition requise par Air Austral pour entrer dans le



## Le retour de Rolland Besoa Razafimaharo

**Air Madagascar a nommé Rolland Besoa Razafimaharo directeur général d'Air Madagascar en octobre dernier après la signature du partenariat stratégique. C'est un poste qu'il a déjà occupé entre 1996 et 2000. Cette nomination a été proposée et validée par Air Austral. Il travaillera à l'exécution du business plan. Rolland Besoa Razafimaharo est ingénieur diplômé de l'ENAC de Toulouse et détient un MBA de la Pace University de New York. Il a débuté sa carrière à Air Madagascar en 1976 en intégrant la direction industrielle pour en devenir le DG en 1996. En 2000, il devient ambassadeur de Madagascar au Canada et son représentant auprès de l'OACI.**

capital d'Air Madagascar à hauteur de 49% avec un apport de 40 millions d'euros.

Rappelons que cet appel d'offre a été initié sous l'impulsion des institutions internationales en particulier la Banque mondiale et le FMI pour l'attribution des aides à Madagascar. Elles souhaitent apporter une gestion rigoureuse, pérenne et rentable, et une bonne gouvernance des entreprises étatiques malgaches (Air Madagascar, JIRAMA) pour arrêter cette hémorragie.

Ralava Beboarimisa, ministre malgache des Transports, a déclaré à la presse que ce partenariat stratégique représente « la meilleure issue possible et la plus réaliste pour un redressement effectif et durable de la compagnie Air Madagascar ». L'Etat malgache apporte une entreprise « libre de dettes » ainsi qu'un plan pour le développement des infrastructures aéroportuaires prioritaires.

L'objectif principal de ce partenariat est d'assurer un retour au vert dans les comptes d'Air Madagascar, un chiffre d'affaires estimés à 420 millions de dollars, avec un taux de rentabilité de 4,6% dans 10 ans.

Ce partenariat est également un levier de croissance pour Air Austral. C'est un moyen de développer son réseau de dessertes régionales qui représente environ 25% de son activité.

Le « business plan » d'Air Madagascar sera exécuté en deux phases sur une période de 10 ans : une phase de redressement et de rétablissement des fondamentaux déployée sur trois ans et une phase de croissance, incluant le développement de la flotte et l'ouverture de nouvelles lignes.

Selon Marie-Joseph Malé, le rétablissement des fondamentaux passera par la revue des procédures, une relance des investissements



# fondamentaux

## Le transport aérien épargné par la peste

La peste sous ses formes bubonique et pulmonaire a refait surface à Madagascar en août dernier. Bilan : 42 morts en 3 mois et 80 nouveaux cas se sont déclarés. Selon le communiqué du ministère des Affaires étrangères, il convient d'observer strictement les mesures de prévention et de rester très vigilant sur les signes cliniques de la maladie.

Les autorités malgaches, en liaison avec l'OMS, ont organisé la riposte avec la mise en place de plusieurs mesures : renforcement des contrôles sanitaires, contrôles systématiques de température, distributions de masques et de thermomètre pour les compagnies aériennes.

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Le transport aérien a été peu affecté même si il est tôt pour connaître l'impact sur le secteur touristique. Les principales compagnies desservant le pays (Air Austral, Air France, Air Mauritius et Corsair) ont maintenu leurs plans de vols alors qu'Air Seychelles a suspendu temporairement ses vols vers Madagascar. Ils reprendront en janvier 2018. Les autorités et les aéroports ont pris les précautions sanitaires nécessaires.

Dans un communiqué émis par la UNWTO et les pays de l'océan Indien durant le World Travel Market à Londres, les ministres ont rappelé que leurs pays appliquaient toutes les mesures recommandées par l'OMS. Selon eux, tout se déroule de manière satisfaisante. Taleb Rifai a réaffirmé que l'OMS ne recommandait aucune interdiction de vol vers Madagascar et que "d'après les informations disponibles à cette date, les risques de propagation de la peste à l'échelle mondiale paraissent très faibles".

pour la remise en ligne d'une partie de la flotte et la mise en place d'un programme de vol robuste. Des synergies et un apport de compétences ponctuel seront trouvés avec Air Austral concernant notamment la refonte du site internet d'Air Madagascar pour l'achat de billets en ligne. Il s'agit de remettre en place une exploitation solide, remplir le contrat de services avec les passagers et surtout retrouver une place sur le marché domestique et international (en particulier avec la France).

La compagnie Ewa Air (filiale d'Air Austral) s'inscrit également dans la coopération avec Air Madagascar avec une rationalisation des vols d'Ewa Air et d'Air Madagascar par exemple sur la route Mayotte-Antananarivo.

Marie-Joseph Malé projette d'ouvrir des lignes vers l'Europe, l'Afrique et l'Asie et de développer Air Madagascar en s'appuyant sur le potentiel que représente le marché. La flotte devrait, par ailleurs, être modernisée et consolidée, avec une prévision de 14 avions en 2020 et 17 en 2023.

Ce partenariat stratégique se réalise dans le giron de l'alliance Vanilles. Malgré les changements au niveau de la direction d'Air Mauritius, d'Air Seychelles et d'Air Madagascar, « la volonté de coopération renforcée » existe toujours entre les compagnies de la région avec le soutien de la Commission de l'Océan Indien (COI) et des actionnaires.

Ce partenariat stratégique et la mise en place du business plan est une dernière alternative pour Air Madagascar. Sa restructuration et son redressement auront incontestablement des retombées positives dans tous les secteurs de l'économie malgache.

Air Madagascar and Air Austral will be working together from now on.

Un A340 d'Air Madagascar et un ATR72-500 d'Air Austral.

## SUMMARY

### PARTNERSHIP GOES BACK TO BASICS

Air Madagascar and Air Austral finally signed their strategic partnership agreement on October 9 2017 in the presence of the president of Malagasy republic, Hery Rajaonarimampianina, and the president of the Reunion region, Didier Robert.

Air Austral CEO, Marie-Joseph Malé, said the partnership became an obvious "win-win" next step in the relationship between the two companies.

The process began in April 2016 and then, nearly a year later, Air Austral was 'short-listed' along with Ethiopian Airlines, although it was soon declared to be the 'preferred bidder' and an MoU was signed to enable due diligence to proceed.

Some snags soon emerged delaying the signing of the agreement with sources claiming that 'financial issues' were to blame. However, these were resolved, enabling Air Austral to acquire a 49% shareholding in Air Madagascar, thanks to support from the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.

At the signing, Malagasy's minister of transport, Ralava Beboarimisa, said the partnership represented the best possible outcome for the effective and sustainable recovery of Air Madagascar as the Malagasy state had provided a debt-free enterprise and a plan for the development of airport infrastructures.

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Both parties agree that the main objective was to return Air Madagascar's accounts into the black, on an annual turnover estimated at \$420 million, with a target rate of return of 4.6% over 10 years.

The partnership is also a growth driver for Air Austral, creating the means to develop its regional network, which represents around 25% of its business.

According to Malé, the 'back to basics' phase will require a review of procedures; a revival of investments to bring part of the fleet back online; and the implementation of a robust flight timetable.

Synergies and a one-off contribution of skills will come from Air Austral, particularly concerning the redesign of the Air Madagascar website to enable tickets to be bought on-line and to enhance passenger contacts.

Air Austral subsidiary, Ewa Air, will also be cooperating with Air Madagascar by rationalising competing flights, particularly on the Mayotte to Antananarivo route.

Following the signing of the agreement, Air Madagascar appointed Rolland Besoa Razafimaharo as director general, a position he previously held between 1996 and 2000.

He is a graduate engineer and began his career at Air Madagascar in 1976, becoming CEO 20 years later. From 2000 he was Madagascar's ambassador to Canada and its representative on the International Civil Aviation Organization.



# A dish called Rwanda...

*RwandAir hosted the recent African Airlines Association (AFRAA) annual general assembly in Kigali. Victoria Moores caught up with acting CEO, Colonel Chance Ndagano, to find out what has happened since he took over the leadership in April 2017.*

**T**rying to get a slot with RwandAir acting CEO, Colonel Chance Ndagano, is tricky. As AFRAA host, he was a busy man, but he is even busier when it comes to RwandAir's growth strategy.

"Airlines go through stages of growth, stabilisation and renewal. Rwanda is in the growth phase, but that growth is always driven by demand. We are still at the infant stage," Ndagano said, when he was finally able to stop for a moment.

RwandAir is definitely growing. The airline added two Airbus A330s in 2016 and launched flights to Brussels (Belgium), Dakar (Senegal), Mumbai (India), Harare (Zimbabwe) and London Gatwick (England) in 2017.

It is also venturing beyond Kigali, creating a second hub and single-aircraft base at Cotonou (Benin).

RwandAir is starting the Cotonou operation with seven freedom flights to Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire), Brazzaville (Republic of the Congo) and Libreville (Gabon), with plans to extend this network to include Bamako (Mali) and Conakry (New Guinea) next month.

But the Benin project will go even further. The Rwandan Government, which owns 99% of RwandAir, is in talks with the Benin Government to create a joint venture airline, which will operate under a new brand. Benin is planning to take a 51% stake in the project, with Rwanda having the remainder.

"We are going to develop a business plan together. We are targeting six months to complete [the planning], so in less than a year we should have the business plan in place. We will launch after that. Right now, we are just in the early stages," Ndagano said.

RwandAir was not actively seeking a regional hub but the Benin Government made the approach and it seemed like a good opportunity. The Cotonou operation will help RwandAir increase its regional connectivity in west and central Africa, but long-haul flights to Europe – particularly France – could also be on the cards for the new airline.

The Cotonou base, served by RwandAir aircraft, is aimed at laying the foundations for the new project. "We are trying to stimulate the market, so by the time it becomes a joint-venture, the network is established and passengers will know the airline and be used to it."

Closer to home, RwandAir is pushing ahead with its 2017-

2027 growth strategy, which will see the airline's network nearly double from 24 to 47 destinations over the next 10 years. Over that time, passenger numbers are expected to increase by 10-15% per year, supporting around 12% annual revenue growth. In 2016, the airline handled 760,000 people and this will grow to 1.2 million this year. This strategy should see RwandAir hit break-even within five years.

The next step in RwandAir's expansion will be the launch of flights to Guangzhou (China), followed by New York (USA). "We are in the process of applying for [China] permits and as soon as that process is done, we will be able to serve that route. We are looking for one [A330] to lease and be used on the China route," Ndagano said.

RwandAir has already expanded from eight aircraft in

2015 to 12 today. These comprise two A330s, six Boeing 737-800s and -500s, two Bombardier CRJ900s and two Q400s. Ndagano said RwandAir has approached Airbus and Boeing to come up with some proposals on the A330 and 737/737 MAX respectively, although no numbers have been set and any order is still two to three years off.

He has a very pragmatic approach: "If the aircraft get filled up, maybe we need another," he said. RwandAir is not seeking growth for growth's sake.

Airport capacity is another limiting factor, but the Rwandan Government is

already taking action. With Kigali International already modernised, but at maximum capacity, Bugesera Airport is being built. The new airport will be able to handle 1.7 million passengers in its first phase and 4.5 million in its second. Rwandan Prime Minister, Edouard Ngirente, said the first phase would be operational this year.

Training is also a pinch point, but once again this is in hand. Kigali-based Akagera Aviation, which specialises in rotary work, is looking to expand into fixed-wing pilot training. Ndagano used to be Akagera Aviation's CEO and he set up its training facilities and standards.

RwandAir is also on the lookout for other revenue streams and is keen to build partnerships beyond its existing codeshare relationships with Ethiopian Airlines, Kenya Airways and SN Brussels Airlines. However, Ngirente said a strategic investor was "not on the cards" for now.



**Colonel Chance Ndagano: "Rwanda is in the growth phase, but that growth is always driven by demand. We are still at the infant stage."**



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# ETHIOPIAN WEIGHS IN

*One of Ethiopian Airlines Group's seven profit centres – Ethiopian Cargo and Logistics Services – is making huge investments to its infrastructure and fleet. Kalesyesus Bekele reports.*

**Fitsum Abadi: Ethiopian Cargo is a pioneer, not only in Africa but also in the world.**

PICTURES: DANIEL GETACHEW

**W**ith eight dedicated cargo aircraft – six B777-200Fs and two B757-200Fs – and a daily uplift capacity of 8,672 tonnes, Ethiopian Cargo and Logistics Services is the largest cargo operator in Africa.

At last year's Paris Air Show, Ethiopian placed firm orders for two B777Fs, valued at \$615.4 million at list prices, and recently it inaugurated a state-of-the-art \$150 million cargo terminal at its main hub in Addis Ababa.

Built on 150,000sqm of land, the terminal was opened by Ethiopian Prime Minister, Hailemariam Desalegn, Dr Olumuyiwa Benard Aliu, president of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) Council, and Tewolde Gebremariam, Ethiopian Airlines Group CEO.

It has the capacity to handle 600,000 tonnes of cargo per annum, adding to the existing facility, which can cater for 350,000 tonnes.

The new facility includes a dry cargo terminal warehouse, a perishable cargo area with cool

chain storage, full automation, with the latest elevating transport vehicle (ETV) technology, an office building, an apron area that accommodates five additional big freighter aircraft, sufficient truck parking, and a canteen and wash rooms for employees.

The terminal is also fitted with different climate chambers for storage and handling of temperature-sensitive products, such as fresh fruit and vegetables, pharmaceuticals, and life science products.



Ethiopian inaugurated the first expansion of the cargo terminal in 2006 and is in the process of launching the third expansion project – terminal III.

The new cargo terminal civil work was completed by Varnero, a distinguished Italian construction firm, while US consulting firm

Molen and Associates, with its local partner Sileshi Consult, supervised the construction.

The French Development Bank, AFD, financed the construction, while the German Export credit agency, KfW, financed the electro mechanical work.

This is not the first time that ADF has provided a loan to Ethiopian Airlines. It also financed the \$100 million Ethiopian Aviation Academy expansion project.

Tewolde claims that the new cargo terminal is not only the largest in Africa but is also one of the best in the world. "It is comparable with the largest cargo terminals at Schiphol Airport in Amsterdam, Changi Airport in Singapore and in Hong Kong. With this large and modern terminal, Africa can position itself in the global competitive market," he said.

The cargo terminal has various compartments dedicated for fruits, vegetables, flower, meat,

Continued  
on Page 32





**Ethiopian Airlines CEO Tewolde Gebremariam (right) and Fitsum Abadi (left) visiting the new cargo terminal.**

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 31

pharmaceuticals and other export items. It has four modern electronic transport vehicles and it can store 900 aircraft pallets at a time.

It has eight lanes exiting to the ramp and it can load eight aircraft at a time. The ramp can accommodate five Boeing B777 dedicated freighter aircraft at a time and it can also dock 18 trucks at a time unloading fresh flowers, vegetables, fruits, meat, textiles, leather articles and pharmaceuticals.

Fitsum Abadi, Ethiopian Cargo and Logistics Services managing director, said his company is now transporting 345,000 tonnes of cargo every year, generating 10 billion Ethiopian birr (\$366m) revenue.

According to the Ethiopian 15-year growth roadmap, dubbed Vision 2025, Ethiopian Cargo will have 19 dedicated freighter aircraft (11 B777s, four B767-300s and four B737-800s), which will be able to transport 820,000 tonnes of cargo, generating two billion dollars of revenue by flying to 57 destinations. It now serves 39 international cargo destinations.

Abadi said Ethiopian Cargo is a pioneer, not only in Africa but also in the world, in migrating its freight business transactions to electronic freight (e-freight) and electronic air waybill (e-AWB). Ethiopian Cargo has fully implemented e-freight and is undertaking 78% of its business through e-AWB.

According to Abadi, Ethiopian Cargo and Logistics Services is closely working with the Ethiopian Shipping and Logistics Services, Ethiopian Revenue and Customs Authority and the Ethiopian Industrial Parks Development Corporation to provide integrated air, land and sea transport and logistic services.

Abadi said Ethiopian Cargo and Logistics Services is dealing with global electronic giants

like General Electric (GE), Samsung and Techno Mobile, to set up its storage and distribution centres in Addis Ababa, where it can provide efficient and reliable transport services throughout Africa. “With modern B777 freighter aircraft, each with a hauling capacity of 100 tonnes of cargo, and a state-of-the-art cargo terminal with a capacity to accommodate close to one million tonnes of cargo, we are now globally competitive. Since Ethiopia is a land-locked country it should have a vibrant air cargo sector.”

The Ethiopian Government is developing industrial parks in different parts of the country.



With an ambitious plan of becoming Africa’s manufacturing hub by 2030, the government has built three industrial parks and seven more are in the pipeline. Ethiopian Cargo wants to support the thriving manufacturing sector by providing efficient cargo and logistics services.

“With double-digit gross domestic product (GDP) growth and an on-going industrialisation process, the country badly needs integrated logistics services. The logistics sector should prepare itself to handle the growing import and export sector,” Tewolde said.

To that end, Ethiopian Cargo has already partnered with global forwarding company DHL to enter into the multi-modal logistics business. “We are establishing a joint-venture logistic service with DHL. We are making significant progress. Once the joint-venture is up and running we are going to serve the industrial parks. Our main location will be Addis, industrial parks and major export areas,” Tewolde said.

State Minister of Industry, Mebratu Meles, said the construction of the new cargo terminal would

benefit the agricultural processing parks now under construction. “Fresh produce needs to be transported painstakingly. We have up to 60% harvest loss in Ethiopia due to backward handling systems of fresh produce. Consequently, the new cargo terminal is critical for the agro processing parks being developed in different regional states,” Meles said.

Ethiopian Cargo is also supporting the development of the horticulture sector – Ethiopia is the second largest fresh flower exporting country in Africa next to Kenya.

Zelalem Messele, chairman of the Ethiopian Horticulture Producers Association, said that previously there were some complaints raised by exporters about the existing cold room facility. “It was a good cold room facility but there were no separate compartments for each product. We do not produce only flowers. We grow vegetables and fruits. We have strawberries. We also produce herbs. So now the new cargo terminal has dedicated cold rooms for each product. It will enable us to export better quality produce and in large amounts, and that will fetch more foreign currency to the country.”

Messele added: “We compete with Kenya and other countries and the cold chain system built now will make us more competitive in the global market. It is a great job done by the management of Ethiopian Airlines. It is a big deal for us.”

Ethiopian Cargo and Logistics Services will soon commence work on the third cargo terminal expansion project, which will add an additional 600,000 tonnes of cargo handling capacity. When the third terminal is complete, Addis Ababa will be one of the top ten leading cargo hubs in the world, competing with Dubai, Amsterdam, Hong Kong and Singapore.

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*The Swaziland aviation landscape could be on the brink of change, as former national flag-carrier Royal Swazi National Airways considers resuming flights, creating uncertainty for joint-venture incumbent Swaziland Airlink. Victoria Moores reports.*

## Partnerships key to Swaziland revival

**R**oyal Swazi National Airways started operations in 1978. Through the years, the airline operated central, eastern and southern African routes using a Fokker F28, a Fokker 100, a Vickers Viscount and a Boeing 737-200. Destinations included Cape Town, Dar es Salaam, Gaborone, Harare, Johannesburg, Lusaka, Maputo, Maseru and Nairobi.

However, once sanctions on South Africa were lifted in the mid-1990s, passenger numbers dropped.

The Swaziland Government decided to restructure the airline and ultimately sold off the last two aircraft, triggering Royal Swazi National Airways to cease airline operations in 1999. The company lived on and still exists today, but only as an airline ticket sales agency and a fuel supplier.

In 1999, the government formed a new joint-venture airline, Swaziland Airlink, in partnership with South African regional carrier SA Airlink.

Swaziland took a majority stake in the JV, with SA Airlink holding the remainder.

Today Swaziland Airlink operates one Embraer ERJ135, leased from SA Airlink, on a single route between Manzini and Johannesburg. “We tried other routes in central and east Africa but they didn’t work for us,” Swaziland Airlink general manager Teddy Mavuso said. “Our one route feeds into Johannesburg, giving us the ability to connect on to other destinations.

That seems to work for us.”

Swaziland Airlink uses SA Airlink’s air operator’s certificate and is able to bring in replacement aircraft from the SA Airlink fleet when it hits technical problems.

“We can draw from the Airlink pool and they give us aircraft within a reasonable time. It has worked effectively over the years,” Mavuso said.

The airline is also profitable. Over the 17 years that Swaziland Airlink has been flying, Mavuso said there have only been two years of losses.

In 2016 it was a bumper

year because the King of Swaziland chaired the Southern African Development Community (SADC), bringing a stream of conferences to the country. “There was sharp growth but the following year has been down. Our loads have not been as good. We are waiting to see the figures,” Mavuso said.

Further turbulence is looming, because the Swaziland Government is considering reviving Royal Swazi National Airways as an airline.

“We have been waiting for them to give us direction for almost a year now. It’s crippling for us. The directors of Swaziland Airlink are unable to forge ahead with strategic plans when they don’t know what’s coming,” Mavuso said. “We would love to see growth and continued cooperation. Airlink is intent on continuing the partnership. It is quite difficult to understand why they want to resuscitate the airline.”

The situation is unclear, but Mavuso said the government may use a revived version of the old airline to perform charter flights, which fall outside Swaziland Airlink’s remit.

In late 2017, the Swaziland Government appointed a new CEO for Royal Swazi National Airways. They picked the old airline’s former chief pilot and flight operations manager, Captain President Dhlamini, to head the company. Dhlamini has a foot in both camps; he has also served as chief pilot for Swaziland Airlink.

“We will be going into ground-handling and we continue to study the market to see if there is an opportunity to go back into the airline industry,” Dhlamini said. “We are looking to forge partnerships and get airborne again as an airline but we will only do that if it’s viable. I’ve only been in office five weeks. We need to sit down and do the study to see if it is possible or not. The issue of us competing with Swaziland Airlink doesn’t exist for now. That decision will be taken by our shareholder.”

In 2014, Swaziland opened a new airport serving the country’s main city of Manzini, because the original airport was surrounded by mountains and the runway there could not be extended. However, Swaziland Airlink is currently the only operator and the Government is keen to attract more airlines. Lufthansa Consulting has been brought in to advise on service development.

“The airport is strategically located, close to key tourist attractions like game reserves. The Government is in the process of an air services development programme, inviting other airlines to come in, and they plan to build an aerotropolis around the airport to bring people in,” Dhlamini said.

If Royal Swazi National Airways does fly again, Dhlamini recognises the value of partnerships. “These days, it makes more sense to do partnerships, even as a big airline. You can’t do it alone; you must form some sort of alliance.”



**“We are looking to forge partnerships and get airborne again as an airline but we will only do that if it’s viable.”**

**CAPTAIN PRESIDENT  
DHLAMINI**



*Every recent forecast has said that prospects are bright for Africa's airlines but, for many, success has proved elusive. Now, however, Raphael Kuuchi, vice-president Africa for the International Air Transport Association (IATA), tells Alan Dron why he believes that a genuine upswing is just around the corner.*

## Is this a new dawn for Africa's airlines?

In the past few years, several African airlines and governments have expressed concerns that carriers from outside the continent are increasingly sucking up passengers and cargo that should be handled by indigenous operators.

Certainly, Emirates Airline, Etihad Airways, Qatar Airways and Turkish Airlines have been making substantial inroads into Africa, pulling traffic through their respective hubs.

Raphael Kuuchi, IATA's most senior man on the continent, accepts that outsiders are elbowing their way in, but believes African airlines have to look at themselves before pointing accusatory fingers at others.



"I always say that if goods and people have to move, they will move anyway.

"If African airlines and operators fail to organise themselves effectively to take care of their traffic, then they shouldn't blame non-African carriers for doing so.

"Intra-African traffic is basically the preserve of African airlines, but they are ill-prepared to take advantage. Traffic being taken by non-African airlines is inter-continental.

"African airlines need to get their act together and take advantage of what is predicted to be the fastest-growing aviation region of the world over the next 20 years, with 5.9% annual growth projected out to 2036."

African carriers should work with each other, develop their traffic flows within the continent,



**Raphael Kuuchi: "African airlines need to get their act together and take advantage of what is predicted to be the fastest-growing aviation region of the world over the next 20 years."**

and then launch themselves on the intercontinental scene, said Kuuchi.

Of course, there are already some profitable African airlines, but they are in the minority. They include Ethiopian Airlines, Royal Air Maroc, Asky Airlines of Togo, plus South Africa's Comair and SA AirlinK.

RwandAir and Air Cote d'Ivoire are among a small category of expanding airlines, while the oldest carrier on the continent, EgyptAir, is returning to strength after a series of disruptions in recent years caused by external political factors.

But many of Africa's airlines are held back by a combination of factors, said Kuuchi. "To start with, most airlines are very small and, in aviation, small is not beautiful. If you're small, everything you buy is at huge cost.

"Additionally, most airlines are grossly under-capitalised, so they use ageing aircraft that are not economic to operate and very expensive to maintain."

The cost of operations is driven further upwards by high taxes, charges and airport fees.

African airlines also fail to cooperate, for example, by working together in codeshares, while weak management is another issue, particularly where governments choose managers or board members.

The last of these is one area where governments could make a rapid improvement – by not getting involved in management: "Getting out of the boardroom is one thing; stay away from running airlines. We know governments throughout the world haven't been good

## SOMMAIRE

## UNE NOUVELLE ÈRE POUR LES COMPAGNIES AFRICAINES?

*Les prévisions indiquent que les compagnies aériennes africaines ont de bonnes perspectives d'avenir, mais pour beaucoup, elles sont difficiles à atteindre. Raphael Kuuchi, vice-président pour l'Afrique de l'IATA estime que la reprise est proche.*

**Ces dernières années, plusieurs compagnies aériennes et des gouvernements africains ont exprimé leurs inquiétudes face au nombre croissant de transporteurs étrangers sur le continent africain à l'instar d'Emirates, Etihad Airways, Qatar Airways et Turkish Airlines.**

Raphael Kuuchi admet que ces compagnies progressent. Mais il estime que les opérateurs africains doivent s'organiser efficacement avant de blâmer les transporteurs non-africains. Le trafic intra-africain est essentiellement l'apanage des compagnies aériennes africaines qui sont mal préparées pour en profiter. Surtout que durant les 20 prochaines années, l'Afrique devrait être la région la plus dynamique du monde pour le transport aérien, avec une croissance annuelle de 5,9%. Les compagnies aériennes africaines doivent agir ensemble.

Il existe déjà des compagnies aériennes africaines rentables (Ethiopian, RAM, ASKY, Comair et SA Airlink) mais elles sont en minorité. Rwandair et Air Côte d'Ivoire sont en expansion et Egyptair reprend de la vigueur.

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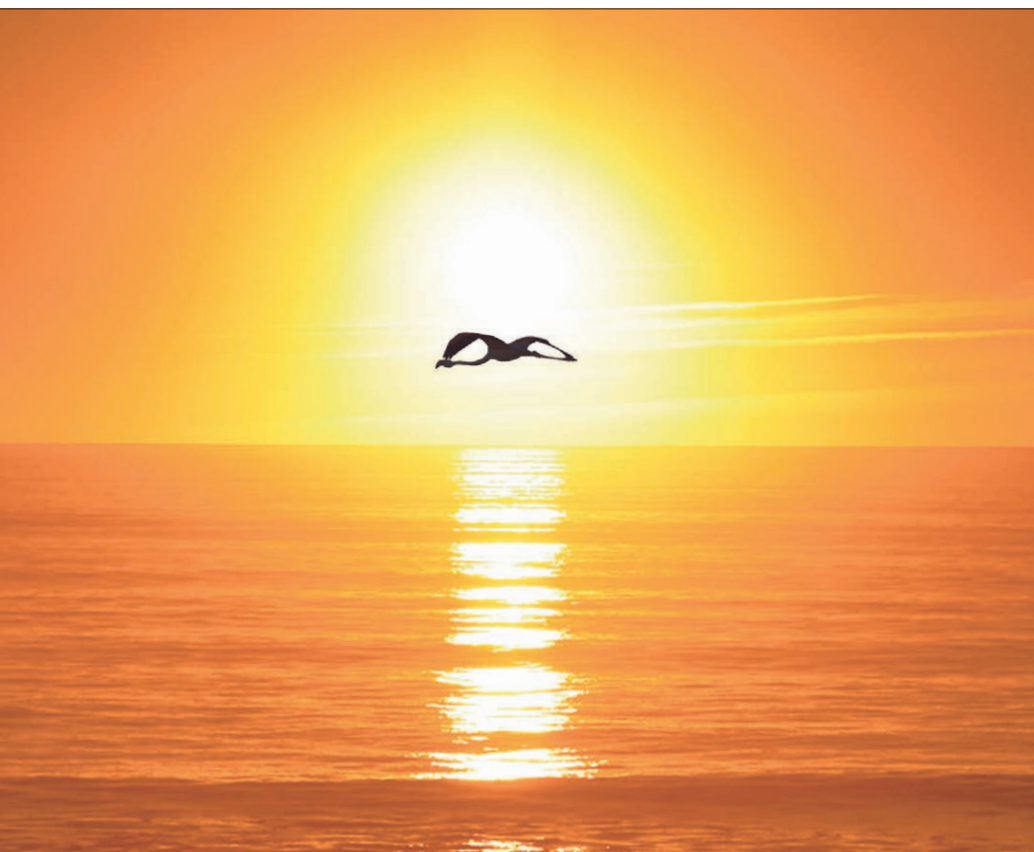
**Cependant, beaucoup de compagnies aériennes africaines connaissent des difficultés. Pour Raphael Kuuchi, la plupart d'entre elles sont très petites et dans le domaine du transport aérien, si vous êtes petit, tout ce que vous achetez est exorbitant. La plupart des compagnies aériennes sont fortement sous-capitalisées et elles opèrent des avions vieillissants et peu économiques. Les taxes et charges aéroportuaires alourdissent les coûts d'opération. Les compagnies aériennes africaines peinent également à coopérer via par exemple des partages de code. Les lacunes de gestion sont un autre problème touchant en particulier les compagnies étatiques. Il faut aussi investir dans les infrastructures aéroportuaires et les technologies de navigation aérienne, et faciliter les procédures d'immigration.**

La Déclaration de Yamoussoukro de 2002 a synthétisé les solutions aux problèmes auxquels fait face le transport aérien en Afrique. A ce jour, 22 pays l'ont signée, ce qui représente environ 80% du trafic intra-africain.

« Il faut une mise en œuvre effective. Cela requiert un cadre légal, qui pourrait être imminent », affirme Raphael Kuuchi.

En novembre 2017, un comité ministériel composé des premiers signataires de la Déclaration a ratifié une série de mécanismes juridiques couvrant les règles de la concurrence et un mécanisme de règlement des différends. Ils doivent être adoptés lors d'une réunion des chefs d'État à Addis-Abeba en janvier 2018. La Commission africaine de l'aviation civile sera enfin capable de mettre en place des observateurs et de tenir les États redevables « de faire de la liberté de circuler dans l'ensemble du continent une réalité ».

Cela augure peut-être une nouvelle ère pour les compagnies aériennes africaines.



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businessmen. Leave it to the private sector – they'll drive the business,” said Kuuchi.

Giving national civil aviation regulators the powers for necessary oversight of carriers to ensure air transport is safe was also vital, he added.

One area where governments can be useful is putting in place the necessary infrastructure; many African airports are capacity-constrained and should be expanded. But investment in infrastructure should not be disproportionate to the market; it should be tailored to forecast demand, not spent on vanity projects that cost too much and then require high charges to repay the outlay. That deters traffic.

Investment in air traffic navigation equipment and technology to facilitate passenger movement and immigration procedures is also needed, he said.

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For example, intra-African traffic is all too often stifled by a lack of 'visa-on-arrival' facilities. Many African nations do not have embassies in every country on the continent, which means that travellers often have to visit a third country to obtain a visa before embarking on their intended journey. Other nations allow visa-on-arrival for only a limited number of countries. And even those nations that do allow visa-on-arrival frequently charge large sums for them – as much as \$100-150 – which is out of the reach of many.

The answer to many of the problems of intra-African traffic was put forward in the

Yamoussoukro Declaration of 2002, which theoretically allowed an 'open skies' system throughout Africa, giving airlines the freedom to operate services wherever they thought they could profitably fly.

Unfortunately, the declaration has remained inactive, as many nations have failed to ratify the original document. Eleven countries signed up to the initial decision, with another 11 having joined them over the years. Those 22 nations account for around 80% of intra-African traffic.

What is required is actual implementation. This requires certain legal instruments to be put in place. And this may – finally – be about to happen, said Kuuchi.

In November 2017, a ministerial committee made up of the 11 original signatories to the decision ratified a series of legal instruments covering competition regulations and a dispute settlement mechanism. They also agreed on the functions and powers of the declaration's 'executing agency', the body that is supposed to oversee this long-awaited liberalisation of air services.

These legal instruments are due to be agreed at a head of states meeting in Addis Ababa this month: “Once that happens then, at last, the African Civil Aviation Commission, which has been tasked with the responsibility of the executing agency, will be able to put monitors in place and hold states accountable for making freedom of movement throughout Africa a reality.”

Perhaps dawn is finally about to break for Africa's airlines.



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Cape Verde has an airline that is burdened with debt and – in summer 2017 – had just a single operational aircraft, a Boeing 757-200.

## ICELAND TAKES A COLD, HARD LOOK AT TACV

*Transportes Aéreos de Cabo Verde (TACV/Cabo Verde Airlines) is struggling with debt and a sub-optimal fleet. Now, as Alan Dron reports, it has turned to the seemingly unlikely location of Iceland to help it improve the situation.*

**A**part from the fact that they are both islands in the Atlantic, Iceland and Cabo Verde (Cape Verde in English) would seem to have very little in common.

Their respective national airlines are also very different. Icelandair is a flourishing carrier, whose size belies its country's small population and has carved out a niche for itself over several decades by using its Keflavik hub as a staging post for transatlantic services. Iceland has also become an increasingly popular tourist destination in its own right.

Cape Verde, while it has a promising inbound tourist trade, has an airline that is burdened with debt and – in summer 2017 – had just a single operational aircraft, a Boeing 757-200.

The Cabo Verde Government is seeking to reinvigorate and eventually privatise the state-owned national carrier, TACV, and has brought in Loftleidir Icelandic, part of the Icelandair Group, as its strategic partner to handle the project.

Loftleidir, which acts as a capacity provider within the group and handles charter, and aircraft, crew, maintenance and insurance (ACMI – wet lease) operations for Icelandair, has been given a 12-month management contract, renewable each year, to oversee the necessary changes.

Its roles at TACV will include network planning, marketing, sales and distribution planning.

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“The Government of Cabo Verde is very pleased to have negotiated this mutually beneficial agreement with Loftleidir Icelandic, leading to the restructuring and privatisation of our national airline,” said José Gonçalves, the islands’ minister of economy and employment, who has responsibility for the air transport sector.

Loftleidir will coordinate the work of several companies within the Icelandair Group to implement a new business plan that has been approved by the Cabo Verde Government and TACV’s board. This includes implementing the re-defined mission of the company to become an airline that will connect four continents – North and South America, Africa and Europe.

The two carriers have a previous connection: for decades, Icelandair provided ground support to TACV when it operated into Boston’s Logan Airport.

A new TACV CEO, Mario Chaves, has been appointed, together with several specialists to help in the restructuring of the airline; Loftleidir will also post some permanent staff to the archipelago off the West African coast.

“TACV is facing many challenges, including debt issues and infrastructure problems,” said a Loftleidir spokesman. “We believe there is great opportunity for improvement and subsequent success of the airline.

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“We see the unique geographical position of Cabo Verde as the main opportunity for the future TACV network. We also feel that the opportunities for tourism in Cabo Verde will support the growth of the airline and, in equal measure, that the growth of the airline will stimulate tourism growth.” One major aim is to establish Cabo Verde as a year-round tourist destination.

“Loftleidir has already delivered two Boeing 757-200s on wet lease to TACV and it is foreseen that additional aircraft will be supplied under dry lease contracts in the future.”

TACV operates scheduled services to destinations including Providence in the US, Fortaleza and Recife in Brazil, Paris and Amsterdam in Europe, plus Dakar and Bissau in Senegal and Guinea-Bissau respectively. The short-haul African services were operated with an ATR 72 turboprop.

As one of the first steps in its restructuring, it discontinued all inter-island operations in the Cabo Verde archipelago in August 2017, with Binter Cabo Verde taking over those duties with schedules to link into TACV’s international services.

TACV’s future seeks to make use of its home base’s strategic position as a hub for mid-Atlantic operations. With this in mind, Loftleidir will draw on the Icelandair Group’s successful experience in building a hub-and-spoke system to support an air hub at Cabo Verde’s Amílcar Cabral International Airport.



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Colonel Gaddafi's Libyan Air Force operated the biggest fleet of L-39s but many were donated to allied countries. In the wake of his demise in 2011, the country was split into two and several aircraft may fly with both sides now.



## The 39's steps...

*The Aero L-39 Albatros high-performance jet trainer was created in Czechoslovakia by Aero Vodochody in the 1960s. Alan Warnes looks at how the aircraft is still being used throughout Africa.*

**O**f the 3,600 L-39/L-59s sold worldwide, just over 400 different L-39 Albatros aircraft have been delivered to Africa, most from the mid-80s onwards. The last brand new aircraft delivered there were not L-39s, but the more advanced L-59.

The company started to develop a newer fourth-generation trainer – the L-59 Super Albatros – from the original L-39 Albatros in the early-90s. It came with a new integrated weapons delivery and navigation system (WDNS) supplied by US-based Flight Visions.

Having been designed with a slightly different architecture and being heavier than the L-39, the new jet needed more thrust, which led to the 1,680kg Ivchenko AI-25 powerplant being replaced by the 2,100kg Lotarev DV-2.

Aero eventually sold 60 L-59s, with both customers from Africa – 12 L-59Ts went to Tunisia in 1995 and 48 L-59Es to Egypt in 1994/5. These were the last L-39/-59s to be built before the L-159 started rolling off the production line.

The Egyptian aircraft utilised eastern ammunitions, while the Tunisians were designed to use western weapons, like the AIM-9 Sidewinder. Egypt was keen for a new lead-in-fighter trainer for its F-16 and Mirage 2000 fleet and purchased a large number of L-59Es. Unfortunately, its 48 jets were grounded in or around 1999, due to alleged engine issues. They have remained stored ever since.

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Tunisia's 12 L-59Ts, which were ordered in 1994, are used for advanced pilot training and weapons training, although they are also used as armed patrol aircraft. They fulfilled this role during the Libyan revolution in 2011 and have also been involved in reconnaissance, counter-insurgency and air support missions for Tunisian ground forces.

During 2014-16, six Tunisian aircraft were overhauled at Aero Vodochody. Milos Trnoblansky, Aero's head of engineering said: "They were put through standard general overhaul; there was no mid-life update. Each overhaul took about 10-11 months."

More L-39s were sold to African nations after the L-59 deals, but they came from surplus stock. Algeria took delivery of 17 L-39ZAs between 2002-04, but these were originally destined for Nigeria, while Yemen purchased 12 L-39Cs in 2001 that were originally ordered by the USSR in 1999/2000 but never acquired in the wake of Czechoslovakia's 1989 Velvet Revolution.

When Algeria took the delivery of the 17 new aircraft, the country had about seven existing L-39Cs, and 32 L-39ZA-1s, which had Russian avionics. The newer L-39ZAs were the -4 variant, which boasted the same fuselage and systems but western avionics.

In 2013, Aero signed a contract to overhaul the 15 surviving L-39ZA-4s, as well as two L-39Cs.

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Aero's support of the Algerian Air Force L-39 fleet is a prime example of how it has improved its customer support in recent years. Pavel Sedlacek, Algeria project manager said: "We have a follow-on service and support (FOSS) contract for delivery of spare parts and services in Algeria. We have also sent technical staff to Tafraoui to extend the service life of the 14 L-39ZA-1s of 30+ delivered. Two ZA-1s will also be upgraded next year with western avionics."

Libya was easily the biggest customer of the L-39, although Colonel Gaddafi liked to donate them to other allied forces whenever he could. In the wake of the Libyan war, most Libyan Air Force L-39s have been split between the two warring factions, although most are grounded.

Aero is also discussing with Nigeria how it can provide after-service support of its fleet of around 19 L-39s, although at the moment there is only a handful currently airworthy.

Several other air forces in Africa continue with the L-39. Angola has about six L-39Cs operational; Ethiopia has around 30 with only half operational; Uganda about six operational of its 14 L-39ZA/ZOs.

Several other countries have operated the Albatros, but the majority are all grounded.



*The Somalia National Air Force was decimated by the Ogaden War with Ethiopia in the late-1970s and the civil war in the 1990s. It now has no aircraft and has been reduced to guarding the airport. However, the Somali Government has approved a plan that will reboot the service by training pilots and buying aircraft so it can contribute to the fight against al-Shabaab. Tim Fish reports from Mogadishu.*

# Somalia battles for an air force to fight against terror

**G**eneral Mohamud Sheikh Ali, the Somali National Air Force (SNAF) commander, admits that he is going to have to 'start from scratch' to introduce any new capabilities.

The air force headquarters building was renovated in November 2016.

"It was destroyed by the civil war and had become a refugee camp," explained the General. "We had nothing. It was Somali business that helped rebuild the office.

"We were the premier air force in Africa in the 1960s and 70s. Now we have no air force. We have the manpower, but we don't have the equipment because building an air force is not easy. We need money and resources but the Somali Government does not have any, so we are building for the future."



Although Somalia no longer has enemies among its neighbours, it is still engaged in an internal conflict and has very real threats that highlight a need for an air force.

Ali said that the number one priority was the fight against al-Shabaab, providing support to the ground forces. In this kind of war an air force can make a real difference as it transports soldiers, and can provide medical evacuation, but it is costly.

He said the second priority was maritime security.

Somalia has 3,333km of coastline that needs to be defended from a variety of threats, including illegal fishing, illegal waste dumping, piracy and drugs trafficking, as well as the illegal harvesting of marine resources without compensation.

An air force can also offer a search and rescue capability over

sea and land. "Therefore, the SNAF has new responsibilities to safeguard the resources of the country," said Ali.

Thirdly is the requirement to assist Government communications. Ali explained there is a poor road network and no trains. The roads are often a target for attack by al-Shabaab and, therefore, aircraft are needed for transportation.

The aim is to acquire light and medium aircraft and helicopters for this purpose because it will be cheaper than using contracted Russian and Ukrainian Mi-8 helicopters. Furthermore, because of the danger of using the roads, the aircraft need to be able to operate from small airstrips in the bush.

"The Government is committed to building a small but efficient air force. We have a plan," said Ali.

"First we will train people – the pilots, engineers, technicians and ground support staff. After that we will look for good small aircraft that can carry 10-120 passengers for Government and Army transportation. The light capability will be for combat operations and the medium can take some of the load off of the UN, which provides this level of transport capability.

"It is well known that in Somalia the UN is transporting a lot of water around and, when all the costs are taken into account, moving one litre of water is costing the equivalent of 1kg of gold. It is unaffordable, so we need our own aircraft. If Somalia did its own

transportation for the UN it could charge for its services, through the donor programme. It would be cheaper for the UN and Somalia could recoup some money. It is a part of the business plan to bill for services so that Somalia can benefit from that."

The plan is expected to get presidential approval shortly and the SNAF is already working towards acquiring its first aircraft in 2018, second-hand either fixed-wing or rotary. Suitable aircraft already identified include: Britten-Norman BN-Islander light utility aircraft; De Havilland Canada DHC-6 Twin Otter STOL utility aircraft; British Aerospace BAe 146 short-haul airliners; CASA/IPTN CN-35 medium transport aircraft; CASA C-212 Aviocar STOL medium transport aircraft; and the Shorts SC-7 Skyvan medium transport aircraft.

Also in the short term, there is a suggestion of an unmanned aerial system (UAS) detachment to assist the Somali Stabilisation Force and the National Intelligence and Security Agency (NISA) in Mogadishu, but this will require ground support, technicians and facilities.



In the medium term, the SNAF wants to acquire helicopters for tactical lift, casualty evacuation and intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance – it is in talks with Russia about a Mi-17 capability. Long term it aims for a light close air support aircraft like the Super Tucano A29 or Archangel to give direct combat support to the Somali National Army (SNA).

But the first phase will be for the SNAF to regenerate the capability to resupply and provide logistical support to the SNA.

The SNAF has just 200 men, which is enough to secure the northern part of Mogadishu International Airport and Afisoni Base under the Mogadishu security plan, with the assistance of the UN and AMISOM. But the problem is that SNAF soldiers are not trained as air force personnel and often come from other organisations following basic training. It has no pilots, technicians or air traffic controllers, so to

**"We need money and resources but the Somali Government does not have any."**  
GENERAL MOHAMUD SHEIKH ALI



**“The Government is committed to building a small but efficient air force. We have a plan.”**

GENERAL MOHAMUD SHEIKH ALI

the US or UK, or maybe pay for them to train in Oman or the UAE,” he added.

“We are looking for second-hand aircraft that are good quality and refurbished to our requirements. It is not difficult to get aircraft, but it is more difficult to get the budget. We can get small aircraft from Britain, they are ready to sell next year, or we can acquire them from other countries.”

Ali is aware of the challenges in establishing even a small capability because the SNAF lacks experience in operating aircraft, which is why the training element is so important.

“The challenge is the funding, to get a budget. But I am sure we will have something, even to get one or two small aircraft. I know my superiors in government are thinking about this. They are committed and there is political weight behind it.”



One estimated sum to establish and support a new air force is about \$50 million a year. The World Bank recently reported that this is what it would cost for a small African air force but Ali believes it could be done for much less with donations, contributions, investment or partnerships.

“When Somalia first became independent we had support from Italy and Russia and had pilots training in 1956 in advance of independence, but we don’t even have that, so it is a harder job. Therefore, even if we take one step ahead, I will be happy.”

Ali said that while the international community was happy to support Somalia’s land forces it won’t support an air force or navy. “But they must realise that the land force alone will not succeed in liberating the country by itself, so we want assistance from any private company or government that is willing to help and we offer an open hand without conditions.”

support the expansion it will grow to 300 personnel next year.

The SNAF also needs fire-fighters, ground-handlers, operations officers and a weather team. So, to get the right type of people, Ali will increase the overseas training quota and send more people abroad. However, the SNAF needs assistance and offers of hosting and training.

“We are looking for any country to help meet our training requirement; we are knocking on every door for a government to give support – Arabic, Asian, anyone. Some training is already under way in Turkey, where there are air traffic controllers and technicians being taught and officers at the military academy. From next year we hope to start training the pilots,” added Ali.

Turkish involvement in Somalia is growing; it already owns the port and airport (from which

the Somali Government gets no income) and, on September 30, opened a new training facility near the southern end of Mogadishu International Airport that can support more than 300 trainers and act as a base for Turkish military personnel.

Other prospects for training include sending personnel to Egypt and Italy. Ali said that discussions are under way but he is waiting for a formal invitation. He explained that when planning for training there was a need to know how many to train and what equipment they would be using and the aircraft they would be operating so it had the right crew complement.

“For example, if we get five aircraft then we may need a crew of 20 and this is not too much. Or two aircraft and two helicopters is not so much either. But we will ask to send people to



Angola has purchased 12 of India's initial batch of Su-30Ks and Su-30MKs after storage and upgrade in Belarus.



## Angola inducts Sukhoi Su-30 twins as part of \$1 billion order

The Força Aérea Nacional de Angola (FANA – National Air Force of Angola) took delivery of its first two Sukhoi Su-30K fighters in September 2017 and is due to receive 10 more by early 2018.

Angola placed a \$1 billion order for a range of Russian defence equipment, including 12 Su-30K fighters, during a visit by Russian Deputy Prime Minister, Dmitry Rogozin, to Luanda in October 2013.

Deliveries were originally expected to begin in 2015 but were delayed due to the need for unexpected upgrades, including improvements to the radar and navigation system and installation of a video recorder.

Though designated as Su-30s, these aircraft bear little resemblance to the family of advanced multi-role 'Flanker' derivatives delivered to India, Algeria, China,

Malaysia and Venezuela. They more closely resemble standard Su-27UB trainers, with minimal modifications for operational use.

Angola's Su-30Ks are drawn from a batch of 18 early model aircraft (10 Su-30MK and eight Su-30K fighters) that were originally delivered to India between May 1997 and December 1999.

The aircraft were briefly used as an interim solution while India took delivery of 200 more advanced Su-30MKIs in a number of batches. The Su-30MKI featured uprated avionics, Bars PESA radar, canard foreplanes and thrust vectoring.

India had initially intended to upgrade these early aircraft but it soon became clear that they could not economically be brought to the same standards as the

new Su-30MKIs, and they were, instead, used in part-exchange for the new aircraft.

The Su-30Ks were retired in 2006 and were sold back to the Irkut Corporation. The aircraft were ferried to the 558th Aircraft Repair Plant at Baranovichi in Belarus between August and November 2011, where they awaited modernisation and resale.

The first ex-Indian Air Force Su-30K destined for Angola made its first flight after overhaul in early February 2017.

In July, *Komersant* newspaper reported that Angola was in negotiations to purchase the remaining six ex-Indian Air Force aircraft that are stored at the repair plant.

The Su-30s will augment around half-a-dozen Su-27s, out of 18 originally delivered.

## More helicopters for Burkina Faso

Burkina Faso signed two agreements covering the delivery of two Mil Mi-171Sh transport helicopters and associated weapons during Russia's Army 2017 exhibition, according to Sergei Kornev, the deputy director general of the Russian state arms export agency Rosoboronexport. The contract was reportedly signed on August 25 2017.

The Force Aérienne de Burkina Faso (FABF – Burkina Faso air force) has undergone a modest expansion and capability improvement programme in recent years, partly in response to events in neighbouring Ivory Coast.

The FABF received two Mi-35s from Russia in 2005, later augmenting these with three Mi-17s and a handful of lighter Alouette III, AS350 and AS365N Dauphin helicopters.

The air force also took delivery of three Embraer Super Tucanos from Brazil in 2011, and an AgustaWestland AW139 was delivered in 2016.

On June 6 2017, Burkina Faso inducted a pair of ex-Taiwanese Bell UH-1H Huey helicopters. These have been armed for combat roles and Burkinabe air and ground crew have been trained by a US Air Force training mission.

The new Mi-171Sh helicopters are due for delivery in 2018 and will be the most capable rotary-winged aircraft in the inventory. They can accommodate up to 36 soldiers or 12 stretcher cases, and can lift a 4,000kg cargo, either in the cabin or under-slung. The Mi-171Sh can be armed with Shturm-V missiles or unguided rockets for close air support missions.

The two armed Mi-171Sh helicopters ordered by Burkina Faso's military from Russian Helicopters will be delivered in 2018.



There have been suggestions that the aircraft for Burkina Faso could be the new Mi-171Sh-VN version. This was first unveiled at the MAKS 2017 air show at Zhukovsky, outside Moscow, and is a specially modified variant intended for special operations missions and developed as a result of combat experience in Syria.

The new variant has composite main rotor blades and a new X-type tail rotor.

Despite all of the recent acquisitions of combat aircraft, the air force is still primarily geared up for limited border surveillance missions, relying on neighbours and allies to boost actual combat capabilities.

## Transport of the light for Mali Air Force

The Y-12E ordered by Mali has winglets and four bladed propellers.



The Force Aérienne de la République du Mali (FARM - Republic of Mali Air Force) has taken delivery of a pair of Harbin Y-12E Harbinger light transport aircraft, which staged through Malta on delivery in September 2017.

The Harbin Y-12 is a high-wing twin-engine turboprop military transport aircraft with a fixed tricycle landing gear, similar in configuration (and performance) to the DHC-6 Twin Otter.

The aircraft is optimised for short take-off and landing and is designed to fulfil passenger and cargo transport, parachute jumping, medical evacuation, geological exploration, aerial photography and coastal surveillance missions. It is built by the Harbin Aircraft Industry Group (HAIG) – previously known as the Harbin Aircraft Manufacturing Corporation – in Heilongjiang province, China.

## Sierra Leone angles for air power to tackle illegal fishing

Though the Sierra Leone armed forces have been rebuilt since the civil war ended in 2002, the air wing (which is expected to become an Air Force) has been hard hit by equipment shortages and lacks some key capabilities.

Illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing along the coasts of Sierra Leone, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Gambia, Mauritania, and Senegal, costs these West African economies more than \$2.3 billion annually, and may have led to the loss of as many as 300,000 jobs, according to a report on illegal fishing in West Africa by Frontiers in Marine Science.

Illegal fishing also costs lives, with night-time incursions by trawlers into the zones reserved for artisanal fishermen resulting in collisions in which

The Y-12E variant is powered by Pratt & Whitney PT6A-135A engines driving four-bladed propellers and has a maximum payload of 5,700kg. It can be fitted with up to 18 passenger seats.

The aircraft are expected to augment Mali's recently delivered Airbus Military C295W, and to replace the air force's long-serving Basler BT-67 Turbo Dakota, a re-manufactured and extensively modified version of the Douglas DC-3.

The delivery of the Harbins represented one part of a wider FARM modernisation and expansion programme, which has seen it take delivery of new attack, transport, and training aircraft and helicopters.

In October 2016, Mali received the first of a pair of Airbus Helicopters H215 Super Puma helicopters. A single Airbus Military C295W transport aircraft

followed in December. The C295W has entered service with the Transport Squadron at Base Aérienne 101 Bamako-Senou, which is likely to take the two Harbins as well.

The three aircraft will provide the Malian Army with troop transport, logistics support, and medical evacuation capabilities. All will be able to operate from unpaved runways.

As well as these transport and support aircraft, Mali is inducting a number of new frontline types. The EU Training Mission in Mali revealed in its September newsletter that the country had received two Russian Helicopters Mi-35M attack helicopters and has another two on order, while the air force is also awaiting the delivery of six Embraer A-29 Super Tucano light attack aircraft, ordered in June 2015.

fishing gear and canoes are often lost, and which have even resulted in loss of life.

Sierra Leone's joint force commander, Major General Brima Sesay, said: "With the assets that we have, we can only patrol our inshore exclusive zone. We cannot venture into the exclusive economic zone (EEZ), which is more than 200 nautical miles. We don't have the platform to go there. We see the different vessels out there but we do not have the means to go out there."

The navy has played an important role in safeguarding the country's waters against illegal fishing, piracy, smuggling and maritime crime, but the air wing has been largely unable to participate.

Currently co-located with Headquarters Joint

Force Command at Cockerill Barracks on Wilkinson Road in Freetown, the air wing is an all rotary force and is believed to operate two Mil Mi-17s, two AS 355 Ecureuils, and a single MBB Bo 105C, having retired its single Mi-24 and Sea King Commando helicopters.

There is a recognised requirement for a fixed-wing maritime patrol aircraft to identify vessels and levy appropriate fines, raising useful revenue for the Government, and to guide Joint Force Command vessels on to trawlers that have been targeted for arrest.

When it gains a fixed-wing element, the air wing is expected to move to a new permanent base at Hastings Airfield, where it will be re-designated as the Sierra Leone Air Force.



**Working together:  
Royal Saudi Air Force and  
the Egyptian Air Force.**

*Following its participation in Exercise Blue Shield in Sudan and Exercise Red Flag in the USA, the Royal Saudi Air Force undertook a further major training exercise, Faisal-11, in Egypt. Jon Lake reports.*

# THE POWER OF TWO...

In recent years, the Royal Saudi Air Force (RSAF) has dramatically expanded the scope and extent of training with allied air forces, and has seen its capabilities and credibility grow almost exponentially as a result.

The RSAF certainly bears little resemblance to the pre Desert Storm force, which had limited operational capabilities and relied heavily on contractors and on personnel seconded from friendly nations' air forces. Today's RSAF has gained extensive operational experience in Yemen and over Syria and Iraq, and has participated in, and led, a number of international coalition operations.

The latest Faisal exercise marked the 11th edition in a series of joint air force training exercises between the RSAF and the Egyptian Air Force. These have usually been held annually, though 'Faisal-10' took place at King Fahd Air Base in June 2013.



Intended to enhance and improve cooperation and ties between the air forces, the exercise involved Saudi F-15C/D and Egyptian F-16C/D fighters, and included live weapons firing.

The Saudi F-15Cs (and at least one two-seat F-15D) were drawn from the 2nd Squadron, part of the 7th Wing at King Faisal Air Base, Tabuk. The Egyptian F-16s are understood to have been drawn from the squadrons assigned to the 272nd TFB at Jiyanklis AB.

Egyptian Defence Minister, Sedqi Sobhi, and Air Force commander, Pilot Lieutenant General Younis Al-Sayed Al-Masri, greeted the participants during a formal welcome ceremony. General Al-Masri stressed that Egypt's military forces were eager to bolster cooperation in joint exercises with what he called "brotherly and friendly countries" and emphasised the importance of such exercises in developing the combat abilities of the air force in order to equip it to better protect Egyptian national security. He stressed the vital importance of cooperation in countering terrorism and



maintaining regional development and stability.

An official Egyptian Air Force spokesman said: "The joint training aims to support the capabilities of Egypt, Saudi Arabia and the coalition countries to form a common Arab defence force and to unify our plans and combat current regional challenges."

These thoughts were echoed by Major General Mohammed bin Saleh Al-Otaibi, the RSAF acting commander, who welcomed this opportunity for his force to demonstrate its preparedness and expertise and who expressed pride and satisfaction in what he called "the stunning performance of all participants in the manoeuvres". He said that this "reflected the professionalism and the strength of harmony of the two brotherly countries' air forces".

Finally, he praised Egypt's efforts to uproot terrorism and its role in maintaining regional stability and security.

Saudi-Egyptian relations have grown progressively closer since the removal of Muslim Brotherhood President Mohamed Morsi by the Egyptian Armed Forces on July 3 2013, which gained the backing of most of the Gulf states.

Within days of toppling Morsi, Saudi Arabia pledged \$5 billion in grants, deposits, and petroleum products to boost the ailing Egyptian economy.

Saudi Arabia congratulated President Abdel

Fattah Al-Sisi after his victory in the June 2014 presidential elections and called for "a conference for donor brothers and friends of Egypt to help Egypt overcome its economic crisis".

Egyptian and Saudi aircraft have participated in air operations against Daesh in Syria, and the RSAF is believed to have provided unspecified assistance to Egypt in its own war against insurgents on the Libyan border and in the wider Sinai, fighting against the jihadi terrorist group Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis.



Since then, Egypt has supported Saudi Arabia in its military campaign in Yemen, which was intended to re-establish the government of President Abd Rabbuh Mansour Hadi, and to strike a decisive blow against Houthi rebels and Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula.

Egypt has denied that any Egyptian troops have been involved on the ground, but has admitted the participation of naval units (deploying four warships to secure the Gulf of Aden), and there also seems to have been some Egyptian participation in the Saudi-led air campaign.

In fact, at least 800 Egyptian soldiers were



initially deployed to Yemen, and the Egyptian Rapid Intervention Force's paratroops have also been involved.

The Egyptian Air Force is also believed to have played a significant part in air operations against Houthi targets, though in October 2016 it was reported that the Egyptian Air Force had withdrawn from the Saudi-led coalition of countries attacking Yemen after 12 months of operations.

While the 7th Wing at Tabuk deployed F-15C/D interceptors to Egypt, the RSAF's Typhoon force (part of the 2nd Wing at King Fahd Air Base at Taif) made its first Red Flag deployment. A reported total of 11 tranche 2 and tranche 3 Typhoons made the 9,000nm journey to Nellis Air Force Base, Nevada, to participate in Exercise Red Flag 17-4, between August 14 and 25.

Though the aircraft involved wore the markings of the Third, 10th and 80th Squadrons, the pilots were reportedly all drawn from the 10th Squadron (the 80th has yet to stand up).

An initial eight-ship formation of RSAF Typhoons left King Fahd AFB on August 1, supported by Airbus Military A330 MRTT tankers from the 24th Squadron, part of the 6th Wing at Prince Sultan Air Base, Al Kharj.

The RSAF Typhoons participated in both Red

Flag and Green Flag exercises in the US, and flew swing-role missions by both day and night, flying against stationary and mobile targets and using electronic warfare to defeat a range of threats.

Major General Mohammed al-Otaibi, the RSAF commander, said these exercises had contributed to raising the combat readiness and morale of air and ground crews, and praising the support received from the Government of King Salman bin Abdulaziz and Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz. He said that the exercise had demonstrated that the RSAF was "comparable to other worldwide air forces in terms of processing and keeping pace with the latest air force systems".



The deployment commanding officer, Lieutenant Colonel Khalid al-Yousef, proudly agreed, saying that Red Flag would maximise the RSAF's readiness for real air combat situations, enhancing survivability and operational effectiveness. He also suggested that the fact that the RSAF was the only Middle Eastern air force to participate in Red and Green flag exercises six times in a row represented proof that it was one of the best air forces in the Middle East and worldwide!

The Typhoons transited back to Saudi Arabia via Albacete Air Base in Spain, where there was some opportunity for Saudi and Spanish Typhoon pilots to compare notes. One Saudi Typhoon pilot was delighted to find that the RSAF was "some steps ahead"!

Both Typhoons and F-15s were involved in the first major international exercise for the RSAF in 2017.

The RSAF deployed four F-15C Eagles and four Eurofighter Typhoons, all drawn from the 2nd Wing at King Fahd Air Base, to Sudan for Exercise Blue Shield 1. The 12-day exercise, held at Merowe Air Base, about 300km north of Khartoum, saw the Saudi aircraft flying alongside Sudanese MiG-29 'Fulcrum' fighters, Su-25 'Frogfoot' fighter-bombers and Su-24 'Fencer' attack aircraft.

The exercise followed Sudanese participation in the Saudi-led air operations against Houthi targets in Yemen, during which Sudanese Su-24 strike fighters have been deployed to Saudi air bases.

Sudanese President Omar Al-Bashir said the exercise demonstrated the Sudanese military was playing a key role in improving Khartoum's ties with Saudi Arabia and other Gulf countries, and noted "relations between Sudan and Saudi Arabia are progressing".



# SOUTH KOREA'S EAGLE SWOOPS ON BOTSWANA

South Korea's Korea Aerospace Industries (KAI) has mounted a renewed effort to sell its FA-50 Golden Eagle lightweight fighter to the Botswana Defence Force (BDF).

The BDF is seeking a new fighter aircraft to replace its legacy Canadair CF-5 Freedom Fighters.

Botswana Defence Minister, Ramadeluka Seretse, and other BDF officials originally had talks with KAI in November 2013, discussing the possible acquisition of T-50 and FA-50 aircraft. President Ian Khama subsequently visited South Korea and KAI in October 2015.

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But, in 2016, Botswana's interest seemed to have shifted to Saab's JAS-39C/D, with reports that Sweden had offered eight to twelve JAS-39C/D Gripen fighters at a reported cost of \$1.7 billion. President Khama visited Sweden between June 19 and 21, meeting Swedish Prime Minister, Stefan Lofven, and visiting Saab's facilities, where he was briefed on the Gripen.

In August, Botswana's Sunday Standard newspaper reported that it had been passed KAI's latest proposal to the BDF. Titled "FA-50 for the Botswana Defence Force: The right choice for the future" and dated May 2017, the document included claims that the Gripen's life-cycle cost was "three



Botswana has reportedly requested information on KAI's FA-50 Golden Eagle as a potential replacement for its ageing CF-5A Freedom Fighters.

times" that of the FA-50, with higher acquisition and operating costs.

Though KAI highlight the FA-50's proven weapons capability, the aircraft's operational capabilities do not match those of the Gripen, which offers longer combat radius, payload/range and ferry range and significantly greater radar and weapons capabilities – though KAI claims that the FA-50's radar, avionics and weapons suite are comparable to the Gripen C/D, HAL Tejas and PAC JF-17 Thunder.

A Gripen buy would confer a high degree of interoperability with Botswana's neighbour, South

Africa, which also operates the JAS-39C/D, and this could allow the BDF to take advantage of South Africa's Gripen training and maintenance, repair and overhaul (MRO) infrastructure.

On the other hand, the FA-50 would offer an ability to undertake both combat and training missions, or would give useful synergy with the near-identical T-50 advanced trainer, should Botswana purchase the aircraft.

The Golden Eagle has gained export orders from Iraq, Indonesia and Thailand in its T-50 trainer form, while the FA-50 light fighter variant has been ordered by the Philippines.



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At least two of the Chadian Air Force's small combat force of Sukhoi Su-25 attack aircraft were damaged during the storm. The degree of damage is uncertain.



## Storm devastates Chadian Air Force

*An unseasonably violent storm has potentially hampered the Chadian Air Force's fight against Boko Haram Islamist terrorists in West Africa. Alan Dron reports.*

**F**reak, hurricane-strength winds have destroyed or damaged a substantial proportion of the Chadian Air Force's aircraft.

Torrential rain and high winds caused the collapse of several hangars and other structures at the airport serving the capital, N'Djamena.

Several of the hangars were lightweight structures constructed from metal frames covered in fabric, which were completely destroyed by the storm. As they collapsed, they damaged aircraft stored inside.

Pictures of the airport showed widespread damage, with at least half of the force's six Eurocopter H125M helicopters (previously known as the AS550 Fenec) blown over with varying degrees of damage, some of it apparently serious.

At least one of the helicopters had its tail boom and

rotor blades snapped off. Another was blown on to its side and a third had its cockpit area severely damaged. All had lost their rotor blades.

A Pilatus PC-12 – part of the small governmental air squadron used for VIP transport – was seen with its starboard undercarriage leg collapsed, its propeller destroyed and airframe panels missing.

The small air arm's main combat strength lies in eight Sukhoi Su-25 attack aircraft. One of the force's six single-seat variants and one of its two Su-25UB two-seat versions were left with their tails pinned to the ground and their nose undercarriage legs in the air after debris from collapsed hangars fell across the rear of the aircraft.

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The country's sole MiG-29 (two more are on order) could be seen covered in debris, with an unknown degree of damage.

Impoverished Chad is unlikely to be able to quickly replace the damaged aircraft.

Chad's armed forces have played a significant role in the on-going fight against Boko Haram. The country's army is regarded as probably the most efficient in the region, (although even it has found it difficult to combat Boko Haram's fast-moving, motorbike-mounted soldiers in the bush) and its air arm has been involved in strikes against the movement, whose northeast Nigerian base butts up against Chad's south-western border.

The porous borders in the region mean that the insurgents have also spread across the nearby frontiers of Niger and Cameroon.

To what extent the damage inflicted by the storm has affected the Chadian Air Force's sortie rate remains to be seen, although fighting tends to die down in the early autumn due to rain making the terrain difficult.

However, the scale of the damage will undoubtedly take some time to be put right.

### SUMMARY

## UNE TEMPÊTE DÉVASTATRICE AU TCHAD

Une violente tempête a potentiellement entravé la lutte de l'armée de l'air tchadienne contre les terroristes islamistes de Boko Haram en Afrique de l'Ouest.

Celle-ci a endommagé une partie de la flotte tchadienne. Des pluies torrentielles et des vents violents ont en effet provoqué l'effondrement de plusieurs hangars de l'aéroport de N'Djamena où se trouvaient des avions et des hélicoptères.

Parmi les appareils endommagés, on dénombre au moins trois hélicoptères Eurocopter H125M et un Pilatus PC-12. Deux des huit Sukhoi Su-25 ont également subi des dégâts. Le MiG-29 tchadien (deux autres exemplaires sont en commande) a été recouvert de débris avec des dégâts encore inconnus.

Il est peu probable que le Tchad puisse

remettre en service rapidement cet avion. Les forces armées tchadiennes jouent un rôle important dans la lutte en cours contre le Boko Haram. Elles sont considérées comme la plus efficace de la région. Elles ont participé à des attaques ciblées contre l'organisation, dont la base nord-est du Nigeria, est proche de la frontière sud-ouest du Tchad. Les frontières restent poreuses dans cette région. De ce fait, les insurgés se sont également répandus à travers le Niger et le Cameroun.

Il reste encore à mesurer les dégâts causés par cette tempête à l'armée de l'air tchadienne. Les combats tendent également à disparaître au début de l'automne en raison des fortes pluies. Cependant, vue l'ampleur des dégâts, un retour à la normale risque de prendre un certain temps.





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Regourd Aviation opère des vols pour les VIP et les compagnies minières et pétrolières en Afrique. Son président-fondateur, Alain Regourd, a partagé sa vision sur le continent à **Vincent Chappard**.



## Regourd Aviation au service de l'Afrique

**L**e groupe français Regourd Aviation est un opérateur présent en Afrique depuis 35 ans. Spécialisé dans l'aviation d'affaires et le transport pour les entreprises pétrolières et minières, elle dispose d'une flotte d'avions (Falcon, Embraer Legacy, Embraer 145, ATR, et Dornier) adaptée pour chacune de ses activités.

Regourd Aviation met en place des opérations pour ses clients (Total, Perenco, Chevron, Rig Africa, Shell, Tullow Oil Gabon, Congo Mining, DMC Iron, MDP Congo,...). Le groupe assure également le transport des équipages de compagnies aériennes dont Air France entre Brazzaville et Kinshasa.

« Nous sommes sur un marché de niche qui s'adresse à une clientèle particulière qui a besoin d'une qualité de services reconnue et d'une certification européenne », affirme Alain Regourd.

Regourd Aviation possède un certificat de transport européen avec des avions immatriculés en France sous « CTA » européens et locaux. Elle dispose de solides implantations à

Abidjan (Ivoire Executive), à Brazzaville (Equajet) et à Pointe-Noire (Equaflight) ainsi qu'en RDC (Equa2R). Le groupe dispose également d'un atelier de maintenance Airman en France, d'un centre de coordination technique au Bourget et d'un centre CAMO (Aero4M) en Slovénie.

Ce montage vise à satisfaire des clients basés en particulier dans les pays et pour les compagnies qui sont « blacklistés » par l'Union européenne.

« Nous nous développons là, où il y a une demande pétrolière, minière et étatique », rappelle-t-il. « Nous sommes attentifs aux opportunités en Afrique de l'Ouest, dans les pays qui constituent la ceinture du pétrole. »

Ce marché a connu un fort ralentissement ces dernières années avec en toile de fond la crise économique mondiale. Selon Alain Regourd, l'ensemble des pays pétroliers d'Afrique ont traversé des turbulences avec le prix du baril qui est passé de 120 à 40 dollars. La baisse des recettes a généré des difficultés économiques et de rentabilité pour les compagnies pétrolières, entraînant des réductions drastiques des contrats.

Cette situation a provoqué des arrêts de production au Tchad, au Nigéria, en Guinée équatoriale et au Gabon. La baisse d'activités au Nigéria a engendré une surcapacité d'avions par rapport à la demande. Les compagnies pétrolières au Yémen ont également procédé des arrêts d'activités pour des raisons sécuritaires.

Il est aujourd'hui extrêmement difficile de prévoir la reprise du marché. Le prix du baril oscille entre 45 et 54 dollars alors que le taux de change euro/dollar fluctue.

La stratégie de Regourd Aviation est de s'implanter localement en Afrique et de rester flexible face à la demande. Elle est également impliquée dans le projet Guinea Airlines.

Le groupe a ainsi diversifié son développement en particulier en Europe où elle se positionne sur des opérations « charter » et pour les « brokers ». Alain Regourd demeure optimiste concernant ses activités sur le continent.

« L'Afrique va continuer à se développer, tous les indicateurs sont au vert. »

### SUMMARY

## FLEXIBILITY THE KEY FOR REGOURD

Regourd Aviation operates flights for VIPs and mining/oil companies in Africa.

The French company has operated on the continent for around 35 years and it has a fleet of aircraft (Dassault Falcon, Embraer Legacy, Embraer 145 and ATR) all adapted for specific customers, including Total, Perenco, Chevron, Africa Rig, Shell, Tullow Oil Gabon, Congo Mining, DMC Iron and MDP.

It also handles transportation of airline flight crews – including those of Air France – between Brazzaville and Kinshasa.

Today's challenging marketplace has focused the attention of many in the business, including the company's president and founder, Alain Regourd.

"We are in a niche market that targets

particular clients needing a high quality of service and European certification," said Regourd.

The company has a European transport certificate and its aircraft are registered in France. It has offices in Abidjan (Ivoire Executive), Brazzaville (EquaJet) and Pointe-Noire (Equaflight), as well as in the DRC (Equa2R).

The group also has a maintenance centre in France, a technical coordination centre at Paris' Le Bourget Airport, and a maintenance centre (Aero4M) in Slovenia.

All this is designed to offer excellent customer service, particularly for companies based in regions where the EU blacklists airlines, said Regourd.



*The African Business Aviation Association (AfBAA) launched its first 'Expo' alongside its annual conference. The static display and exhibition was hosted by ExecuJet at its Lanseria, Johannesburg base with the conference at nearby Montecasino.*

*As Alan Peaford reports there were shocks and celebrations in store.*

# Shocks away for another AfBAA success story

**T**arek Ragheb, AfBAA's founding chairman, is stepping down from the role. In his opening address to the organisation's annual conference at Johannesburg's Montecasino, Ragheb described the challenges that had been overcome to see AfBAA progress to the point where it has been adopted as a member of the International Business Aviation Council (IBAC) and had launched its first African Business Aviation Expo at Lanseria Airport.

"The one challenge, which I believe strongly as the most important, is the establishment of transparent and institutionalised corporate governance," Ragheb said. "This is something that I believe is fundamental for any institution to grow and prosper.

## First business aviation Expo voted great success

Relieved AfBAA chief executive, Rady Fahmy, had a huge grin on his face as delegates sat in the sun at a celebratory event to mark the closure of the first AfBAC Expo. The two-day expo saw more than 700 business aviation professionals visit the giant ExecuJet hangars at Lanseria Airport, where some 60 exhibitors from as far afield as New Zealand and the USA had gathered to meet the African industry.

"You never know how these things are going to go," Fahmy said. "We had a small team involved in organising the event and we are delighted with the result. There has been a lot of positive feedback."

ExecuJet vice-president Africa, Gavin Kiggan, cut the ribbon to officially open the event, where delegates could visit a selection of aircraft from helicopters to a Bombardier Challenger 350 and a Gulfstream G280.

One highlight on the display was an AW139 helicopter from local operator Fireblade.

Like all of the Fireblade fleet, it featured a unique livery. This particular artwork, by Stellenbosch artist Francesco Dall'Antonia, covered the entire airframe and had matching cushions with the luxury cabin interior.

The Fireblade aircraft, owned by the Oppenheimer family, is not limited to South African operations and recently carried out a 27-stop mission from Johannesburg to London following the west coast of Africa.

"As such, and in keeping with our charter and corporate governance, I have established this institution and faithfully guided it over the last five years. When I first started thinking about creating AfBAA, about seven years ago, I was a young 55-year-old. This December I will turn 62 and I will be handing the reins over to a new chairman."

As *African Aerospace* went to press, AfBAA was considering nominations as it conducted a search for a successor. The organisation is looking both within and outside its membership for the right person – someone with a passion and commitment to the voluntary role.

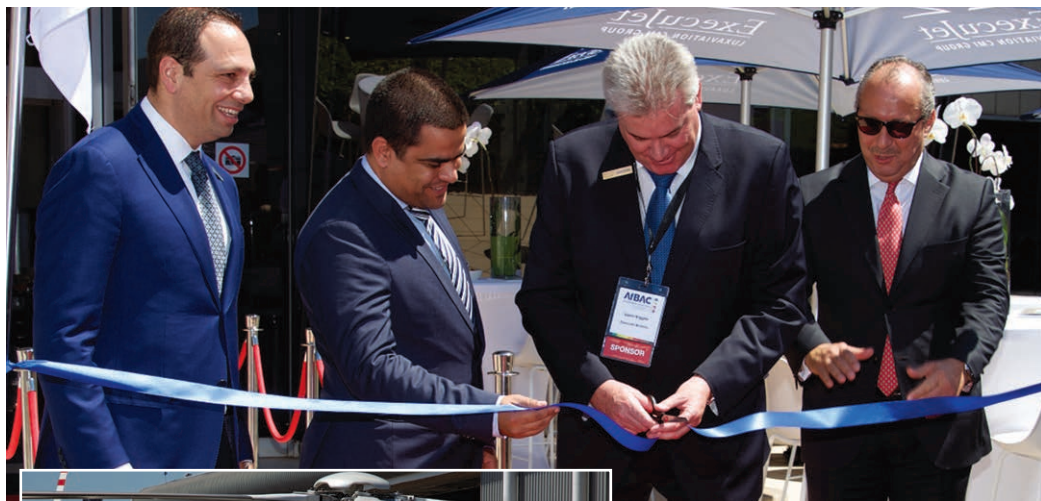
Ragheb bowed out after leading the organisation for the past five years.

"Back then, there was not an entity that

represented business aviation in Africa, nor was there an organisation that helped you grow your business inside and outside the continent," he said. "In the beginning, I must admit we were met with a certain degree of scepticism. However, my guiding principle to the association was to ignore the scepticism and do the best possible job we could do for business of aviation in Africa."

AfBAA now has more than 100 members and is rolling out chapters in a number of different countries.

"We are continually looking to see how business aviation stimulates economic growth. We will explore what stimulates local demand for business aviation as well as demand from international operators into the continent," he said.



Blue ribbon event: Declaring the first AfBAC Expo open, from left: AfBAA's Rady Fahmy, BestFly's Nuno Periera, ExecuJet's Gavin Kiggan, and Bombardier's Khader Mattar.

Left: Fiery design: The stand-out Fireblade AW139.



Outgoing: AfBAA founding chairman, Tarek Ragheb, addresses the conference with his farewell speech.

## Aruba registering interest in Africa

An Angolan BestFly-liveried Gulfstream had pride of place on the static display. On its tail, its P4 registration shone in the bright sunshine.

And in the show's exhibition hall, the folk behind the registration, the Aviation Registry Group (ARG), were generating plenty of interest.

P4 is the mark of Aruba, an autonomous, self-governing Caribbean state of the Kingdom of the Netherlands and an overseas territory of the European Union.

Established in 1995, The Registry of Aruba was the first privately-managed aircraft registration programme rated Category-1 by the Federal Aviation Authority (FAA), with a regulatory framework in compliance with international standards (ICAO).

According to the organisation's Alexandria Collindre, the boutique registry is gaining traction in Africa for aircraft with a minimum MTOW of 5,700kgs. As well as BestFly, the registry also looks after the presidential flight of Equatorial Guinea. Also, airlines such as Air Astana have selected the tax-efficient jurisdiction of Aruba.

"Aruba has an outstanding reputation that offers flexibility and value-added services that are enhanced through the introduction of the Cape Town Convention and the registration of an aircraft through the election of domicile. Innovation continues in Aruba as we develop and grow our client services to offer the most qualified registration, certification, and inspection team, and efficiently manage all the details associated with registering the aircraft," Collindre said.

"With a dedicated and experienced staff, our management and technical personnel are available 24/7 to offer a personalised and effective service to meet all operational needs from day one. We pride ourselves in offering unrivalled boutique-appeal solutions," she said.

## AfBAA celebrates place on international council

AfBAA has become the 15th member of the International Business Aviation Council (IBAC), the umbrella organisation for business aviation associations around the world. The adoption was seen as a milestone moment for the African group.

IBAC's director general, Kurt Edwards, made his first visit to South Africa for the AfBAC Expo and told delegates: "It is clear to all here that Africa holds much promise for business aviation and that the benefits of business aviation hold much promise for Africa."

He added: "The great distances within and among countries on this enormous continent, the lack of convenient scheduled service between most city pairs, and the growth of businesses and national economies across Africa present huge opportunities for business aviation and its benefits of time savings, efficiency, safety and security. I know these are all attributes that AfBAA promotes in its good work here."

He called on African operators and ground-handlers to take note of the international standard for business aircraft operations, (IS-BAO), the industry-developed, global, voluntary code of best safety practice. "It was developed to enhance safety culture within organisations – large and small – and to help operators meet safety management systems requirements. About 750 operators around the world are IS-BAO-registered," Edwards said.

"For the ground-handling world, we launched a similar programme in 2014. The international standard for business aircraft handling (IS-BAH) is the voluntary code of best safety practices for FBOs and handlers. By the end of this year, we'll have about 100 facilities worldwide registered to the programme."



Welcome: IBAC director general, Kurt Edwards, delighted to see AfBAA as part of the international council.



## World's busiest operator on a Mission for life

The track record of one operator at the AfBAA Expo may be a surprise to many – and yet it is one of the biggest operators – and certainly the busiest – in the world.

One of its aircraft takes off every four minutes somewhere around the world and, with 135 aircraft serving 1,500 different organisations in 26 countries, it is reaching more destinations than any other operator, according to marketing coordinator Gabriella Szarbo.

The operator is the Mission Aviation Fellowship (MAF), whose humanitarian aims sees it reach out to some of the most isolated people in the world.

The organisation owns many of its own aircraft, as well as received support from charter operators, who donate aircraft and crew for special missions.

MAF's own African fleet is primarily made up of bush aircraft such as Caravans, Cessna 182s and the Quest Kodiak.

□□□□□

It operates in 27 different areas from Chad to South Sudan, with the South African branch working in the Vhembe region of Limpopo.

"People walk for hours from isolated areas to come to the landing strip where the MAF pilots bring doctors, dentists or teachers," said Szarbo.

MAF works to support many other aid organisations. Under the 'flying for life banner', it also helps with a day centre for people with disabilities in the Ha-Makuya village, Limpopo.

"Some 24 people with disability visit the centre; it is currently in a derelict building but a new centre is being built. We fly in volunteers who help train and support the carers. We also bring in farmers to help train people on how to manage the land, and an ophthalmologist who can do 30 operations a day," said Szarbo.

Pilots, too, are volunteers.

They train for up to nine months to gain the specialist bush-flying skills needed to land safely on 300 metre gravel runways on a 45-degree incline. "They go on to work in places like Papua New Guinea," Szarbo concluded.



Opportunity: South Africa Civil Aviation Authority director general, Poppy Khoza, with a positive message.

## South Africa's CAA outlines opportunity for business aviation

The director general of the South African Civil Aviation Authority (SACAA) has given full backing to the growth plans for business and general aviation in the country and vowed that the regulator would be mindful of unnecessary financial burden through regulation.

"We are aware that constantly changing aviation regulations can be potentially expensive in terms of compliance," said Poppy Khoza. "The SACAA is committed to ensuring that the development of civil aviation regulations takes into account the financial implications of compliance for licence-holders.

"It is not the aim of the regulator to complicate the running of business aviation with unnecessary or time-consuming and costly regulations. To this end, the SACAA's mandate, as entrusted by the government of South Africa, is clear – alongside its role to regulate aviation safety and security, it also has an obligation to promote industry growth. There is an inherent, mutually beneficial relationship between aviation safety, security, and industry growth. One is certainly not more important than the other."

She called on the business aviation sector to think creatively about the opportunity, as well as costs, associated with growth projections.

"How do we expand the network such that it opens up for the new markets within reasonable means?" she asked. "Of the projected growth figures through traditional flying, how many of those passengers are your potential future customers?"

"In Europe, business aviation is the third largest market segment after the traditional scheduled and low-cost segments. While being a smaller market segment after the two mentioned, it has a significantly positive impact on the economy and it generates jobs and indirectly stimulates commerce."

Khoza continued: "Yours is a market with great potential and, indeed, a promising future. The sad reality, though, is that access to this sector remains an inhibitor due to high costs of aircraft and related operations. Although this may be seen as a sad reality, it presents new opportunities for many who aspire to access this market."

## South Africa's revised Part 93 plans get approval

A close collaboration between South Africa's regulator and the industry, through the Commercial Aviation Association of Southern Africa (CAASA) and its business and general aviation members, has seen a revision of a controversial addition to ICAO's Annex 6, called Part 93, which effectively toughened up rules for private and corporate aviation operators.

Although having correctly followed consultation procedures to implement Part 93, the industry realised there would be many instances in which it would be impossible to comply.

Speaking at the AfBAC conference, Justin Reeves, CEO of Comair Flight Services said: "We, as industry, have to accept some of the blame for allowing these

regulations to come into effect, as the draft regulations were published for comment and were passed through CARCOM – our regulatory committee involving all stakeholders – with no objections before being promulgated into law.

Only after promulgation did operators affected by the regulations really look into the details and then realised that they were no longer able to operate to many of their regular destinations."

The SACAA introduced a six-month exemption to the Part 91 and led a workshop and meeting with CAASA to ensure a revision could be offered. During AfBAC, CARCOM approved the changes.

"We had always seen a benefit in what Part 93 was

intended to achieve, which is to regulate corporate operations with the intention of making it safer and giving operators a defined set of guidelines within which to operate, especially by offering a corporate pilot the necessary protection he needs to tell a pushy principal that he cannot perform a flight due to safety concerns or limitations without fear of retribution." Reeves said.

CAASA's chief operations officer, Kev Storie, said the original Part 93 regulations overregulated this sector of the industry.

He said the new regulation was evidence of what could be achieved if the regulator and the industry worked closer together.

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## MAKE THE MOST OF OUR OPPORTUNITIES— AfBAA BOSS

Rady Fahmy, executive director and CEO of African Business Aviation Association (AfBAA), has called upon stakeholders to “organise and engage”.

At the AfBAA Ethiopia Chapter second round table meeting, held in Addis Ababa, Fahmy said stakeholders should act and act quickly.

“Operating in Africa is sometimes a very difficult affair and yet the continent is rife with opportunities. Do not expect a quick success-and-run business. This is a market that requires long-term vision,” he told stakeholders.

He noted that AfBAA’s forums were not platforms to only discuss issues and air frustrations. “We should be able to deliver solutions that the industry can implement,” he said. “We work with the African Union, the African Civil Aviation Commission (AFCAC) and the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO).”

Fahmy said that Ethiopia, the seat of the African Union, was the political capital of Africa, adding that, with a fast economic growth and a 100 million population, it would soon become a business aviation hub.

He advised Ethiopian general aviation operators to engage stakeholders, who have a common vision. “You have to grow the business, not fight for the small piece.”

Solomon Debebe, managing director of the Ethiopian Aviation Academy, said Ethiopian Airlines



Panel discussion: from the left, JP Fourie, NAC; Nebil Mohammed, Ethiopian Airlines; Solomon Gizaw, Abysinnian Flight Services and Wiehahn Strauss, JSSI.

supported AfBAA’s initiatives, which, among other things, promote reliable general aviation and business aviation services in the continent.

“We believe that AfBAA will significantly contribute to the development of business aviation in Africa. Safety, security and reliability have a paramount importance. Business aviation, like the commercial airlines, needs to have a strong regulatory oversight to ensure compliance with international safety and security standards, commercial competitiveness and financial viability,” he said.

According to Debebe, general aviation in Ethiopia,

when compared to neighbouring countries, has not grown much. “AfBAA’s Ethiopia chapter needs to do a lot to catch up. It is also in the interest of Ethiopian Airlines that this sector grows and develops as the group directly or indirectly benefits from the sector,” he concluded.

Dawit Lemma, president of AfBAA Ethiopia Chapter, revealed that efforts are under way to establish an Ethiopian business aviation association.

During the panel discussion, JP Fourie, executive director NAC, said there was a huge untapped market potential for MRO service providers in Africa for business aviation operators.

PICTURE: DANIEL GETACHEW

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*As EgyptAir made major equipment announcements at the Dubai Airshow, Egypt's aviation minister, Sherif Fathi, talked to Alan Dron at the show on prospects for the national carrier and the development of the country's aviation industry.*

**A**s someone with three decades of experience in the aviation industry, Sherif Fathi says his background is undoubtedly an advantage in his job...but also causes him occasional anguish.

"It requires a strong will to prevent yourself from getting involved in the detail. It takes great effort to force yourself to allow the CEOs and chairman under you to work freely and make their own decisions, without intervention.

"I do the vision, the strategy and high-level target setting. We have scheduled reviews where they come and present where they are and the achievements so far and next steps."

He admits, however, that occasionally, "I get involved in nitty-gritty that I shouldn't get involved with, because I know the answers."

Naturally, state-owned national carrier EGYPTAIR forms a major part of Fathi's responsibilities. Despite difficult times since the 2011 revolution, which has seen passenger numbers dip on several occasions, he believes the airline has managed its difficulties very well. Financial losses had been contained and its strong network in the Middle East had given it the ability to cope.



"However," he says, "EgyptAir, even before the revolution, did not have an aggressive strategic plan that would allow it to cope with the big change and growth of competitors in the Middle East and Africa." Some airlines were adding new aircraft and frequencies every month while EgyptAir growth was much slower, with some markets being under-served, or not covered at all. And the fleet requires modernisation. Not that it is old – 60% is quite young – but the plan we have will have an impact as of 2019-20." Just 24 hours after making these comments, the airline announced a series of major orders for aircraft.

During Dubai Air show 2018; EgyptAir announced a 3 deal for a total of 45 new aircraft of the latest types including B787 Dreamliner, A320 neo and the new Bombardier C300, while last year the company added nine B737-800NG too.

One lingering shadow over EGYPTAIR is the fate of flight MS804, an Airbus A320 that crashed into the Mediterranean in May 2016 as it neared Cairo on a flight from Paris Charles De Gaulle airport.

The accident investigation is still underway, so there are strict limits on what Fathi can say. However, he says that the government has dealt with the tragedy with "complete transparency and followed best practices for such cases. We've kept the public aware of all the developments that can be shared."

When explosive traces were found on the wreckage, the incident changed from a technical to a criminal investigation, with the prosecuting authorities occasionally asking for clarification of aspects of the case.

Inevitably, many people want definitive answers to aspects of the crash and Fathi says he understands their frustration at not receiving them. However, he adds, "Let's be realistic. I haven't

**"I do the vision, the strategy and high-level target setting."**

SHERIF FATHI

# FATHI KEEPS FAITH WITH HIS VISION...

seen an accident like this resolved within a year or so.” The wreckage had to be retrieved from the seabed and he twice extended the length of the mission of the vessels searching for the remains of the Airbus deep beneath the waves.

Logic and best practice suggested that the report issued on the first anniversary of the crash could be realistically assumed to be the last word on the affair, “but we’ve not done that. We’ve kept it open until further conclusions can be reached by our procedures.”

Beyond EGYPTAIR, Egypt has a small but active private airline sector. However, Fathi would like them to be more adventurous. “Most of the private companies are very much focused on operating to Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Dubai,” he notes.



There are great opportunities in Egypt’s tourism sector, with flights operating direct into Upper Egyptian and Red Sea destinations such as Luxor, Sharm El-Sheikh and Hurghada. Some companies are tapping into this, with strong traffic flows between Germany and Hurghada, for example, while others are going as far afield as China and Japan to bring in visitors, with their much-needed foreign currency, but not quickly enough. “They need to shift their focus from places like Saudi Arabia and Kuwait to different parts of the world,” he says.

In a geo-politically sensitive part of the world such as the Middle East, there is often conflict between the civil and military aviation authorities over allocation of airspace; this is particularly a problem in the Gulf. However, Egypt has avoided such problems, says Fathi. “I can’t complain about that at all. We work closely together and have an efficient process, in my opinion. We consult each other and work together.” He cannot recall any delay to any civil aircraft that can be put down to problems with defence airspace.

A major issue Fathi had to deal with has been security. This was raised following the crash of a Russian Metrojet Airbus A321 shortly after departing from Sharm El-Sheikh in what was almost certainly a terrorist attack, although Egyptian investigators have not conclusively ruled out other causes. This led to Russia and the UK halting flights to Red Sea airports; The two countries still have a flight ban in place, although the Russian restriction may have been partly lifted by the time this article is published. But shortly UK resumed flights to Hurghada and Luxor in addition to the never stopped Cairo operation and rated Sharm El Sheikh airport as one of the best airports in the region with regard to security measures.



## A man with vast experience

**Sherif Fathi has held several senior positions with major European and Arab airlines, including KLM and the now-defunct US carrier Northwest. He also served as regional director of the International Air Transport Association (IATA) in the Middle East and North Africa. He is a former CEO of Air Cairo and played a key part in the development of the region’s major low cost carrier, Air Arabia where he was chief operating officer. He had chaired EgyptAir since August 2015, before being appointed to his ministerial post on March 2016.**



The security issue re-emerged in 2017 when the US and UK banned the carriage of large personal electronic devices (PEDs) such as laptops and tablet computers in aircraft cabins from several Middle East countries, following fears that these could be used to hide explosives that could bring down an airliner.

When the ban was announced, Fathi suggested to have passengers boarding UK-bound aircraft in Egypt show their PEDs to security staff and have them individually tested for explosive residues before taking them into the cabin. He also raised the widely-voiced concern among airlines and aviation safety specialists over the wisdom of lacing large numbers of lithium batteries, used to power PEDs, in the cargo hold.

“That wasn’t accepted initially,” he says, but eventually the ‘solution’ arrived at by the US & UK authorities were precisely the one he had suggested at the start of the episode.

Egypt airport security was among the top 20 nations in ICAO’s security rating however we had adopted a new approach to the way we manage, assess and develop it by using quality management principles, he said. “We have reviewed the leadership, people, organization, training, documentation & registration and sit developments plans accordingly”.

In addition to the above, we have invested heavily in technology and upgrading the infrastructure of our airports by adding the latest security equipment, biometric, CCTV and Radar systems.

ICAO has awarded Egypt with the ICAO Council President Certificate, in recognition of Egypt’s recent commitments and actions to address aviation safety oversight priorities and improve the Effective Implementation (EI) of ICAO Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs).

Fathi is also proud with the recent achievements of Cairo International Airport for receiving the best 2017 air safety award in Africa by Airports Council International (ACI) for its continuous efforts in increasing safety levels as rated by the Airport Excellence (APEX) that aims to improve safety levels in line with ICAO Standards and recommended practices. ACI has also ranked Cairo Airport first at the African level in air cargo as it accounted 340,000 tons of the total African cargo and Cairo Airport secured the second position in passenger traffic in Africa, with 16 out of 178 million passengers.

In addition to the award for excellence in Air Cargo for Africa given by the STAT times International to Cairo International Airport.



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*EgyptAir has just announced a major re-equipment programme to help meet its objectives. EgyptAir Holding Company chairman and CEO, Safwat Musallam, talks to Alan Dron about fleets, routes and future prospects.*

# MUSALLAM RAISES THE STANDARD FOR THE FUTURE

**L**ike all Egyptian airlines, the national flag-carrier has had to deal with the downturn in traffic that occurred after a series of security-related issues and the US and UK bans on personal electronic devices being carried in the cabins of aircraft departing from Cairo.

Those situations have now been resolved, or are on the way to being fixed, and the airline is looking forward to the future.

EgyptAir took centre-stage on two separate occasions at the Dubai Air Show in November. It filled outstanding requirements for new aircraft in three categories – wide-body, narrow-body and small narrow-body.

Its wide-body needs were met through an order for six Boeing 787-9s, which are being acquired on long-term operating leases from Ireland-based lessor AerCap and will be delivered in 2019. They will come from the lessor's existing order book and will be powered by Rolls-Royce Trent 1000 engines.

The airline may look for a second batch of the Boeing twin-aisle aircraft, although this may come from another lessor.



Its narrow-body requirement was filled by another leasing deal with AerCap for 15 Airbus A320neos, which will use CFM International's LEAP-1A powerplants and are scheduled to be delivered in 2020. These will also come from AerCap's existing orders with the manufacturer.

Separately at the air show, it announced that the 'small narrow-body' category would be filled through a letter of intent with Canadian manufacturer Bombardier for 12 CS300 regional jets, with options for a further 12.

It is EgyptAir's first order with the Canadian manufacturer: "We undertook a thorough evaluation process of our fleet and realised that

the CS300 would fit perfectly into our business plans and growth strategy," explained EgyptAir Holding Company chairman and CEO, Safwat Musallam.

"We selected the C Series aircraft because its excellent range will allow us to best serve domestic and regional destinations, including neighbouring Arab cities and the Middle East, as well as several European destinations. This is in addition to the CS300 aircraft's exceptional economics and outstanding cabin. We look forward to expanding our network with the CS300 and we are happy to see that the partnership announced with Airbus will bring added support to the C Series programme."

The C Series aircraft will replace 12 Embraer 170 regional jets, which are approaching 10 years in service with EgyptAir. These operate both domestic services and regional services, as well as longer, thinner routes to places as far afield as central Europe on behalf of the mainline airline.

The Embraers will be sold, said Musallam at the Arab Air Carriers Organization (AACO) AGM in Sharjah in late November. "The best time to get rid of them is before they are due their C-Check," the heavy maintenance session that aircraft normally undergo after 12 years. "This will be our strategy in future," he added.

The new Boeing 787-9s, meanwhile, will replace the carrier's existing fleet of six Airbus A330-200s, which are also around the 12-year-old mark.

The A320neo order initially seems a less obvious choice; although EgyptAir has around 10 A320-family aircraft in service (split between A320s and larger A321s), it is just completing deliveries of around 30 Boeing 737-800s. The new Airbus order will eventually give the company around 30 of

each, said Musallam.

There are obvious cost penalties in terms of maintenance and spare parts inventories, but Musallam said that the two fleets would be sufficiently large to each have critical mass.

The company's cargo division has also benefited from recent equipment renewal: EgyptAir operates three dedicated Airbus A300-600F freighters, but these will be replaced by the same number of the European OEM's A330Fs, the first of which was delivered in June 2017.



In addition, it intends to operate single examples of both the A320 and the Boeing 737-800 in the cargo role: "These will allow us to cover all airports," explained Musallam. "Some airports in Africa can't accept the A330."

When all the new aircraft have arrived, the enlarged fleet will be used to open up new routes, as well as to increase frequencies on existing ones.

EgyptAir is already expanding its route map; the increasing number of tourists from China is boosting the passenger numbers of several Egyptian airlines and the country's flag-carrier is no exception. It already flies to Beijing and Guangzhou and was due to start services to Shanghai by the end of 2017.

However, the company is also looking west and south for its major expansion plans: "Africa is our target," said the chairman and CEO. "We have very, very strong plans for Africa in the next five years."

This will see EgyptAir increasingly competing, not only against the Gulf 'Big 3', which are rapidly increasing flights throughout Africa, but also against Turkish Airlines, which is on record as saying it wants to be the largest carrier on the

**"We have very, very strong plans for Africa in the next five years."**  
SAFWAT  
MUSALLAM



**“The Egyptian market is getting better, day by day.”**

SAFWAT MUSALLAM

getting better, day by day,” said Musallam. Tourists are starting to return – at the time of writing, an agreement to allow the resumption of Russian tourism to Egypt was thought to be imminent – and leisure traffic is a major component of EgyptAir’s business.

Apart from tourism, however, the national carrier can tap into two other major revenue streams: around 11 million Egyptians live outside the country, which provides a steady flow of passengers going back and forth between their jobs and their homes for vacation breaks. And religious tourism between Egypt and Saudi Arabia provides an unending stream of traffic as pilgrims head for Mecca to perform the Hajj and Umrah.



Not all route news for EgyptAir has been good recently. The decision by the governments of Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and the UAE to break off relations with Qatar meant that the Cairo-Doha route has been suspended since June. Musallam was philosophical at the loss: “It was a golden route for us but, at the end of the day, we just have to deal with it.”

On the ground, EgyptAir also intends to expand the activities of its maintenance and engineering division: “Our technical company is already the largest in Africa and we have cooperation with Pratt & Whitney, Rolls-Royce and General Electric. More than 80 airlines in Europe, the Far East and Africa use us.”

continent. Turkish is a fellow Star Alliance partner, which opens up the possibility of cooperation between the two.

EgyptAir also has a codeshare agreement with one of the ‘Big 3’, Etihad Airways, and there are already plans to extend this beyond the Cairo-Abu Dhabi route.

Under stage two of the codeshare, Etihad will gain access to major cities across Africa on flights operated by EgyptAir via its Cairo hub. In turn, EgyptAir will be able to access routes to Australia and the Far East served by Etihad from its Abu Dhabi hub.

A third phase will see Etihad’s EY code placed on EgyptAir domestic flights across Egypt.

Cairo Airport is likely to play an increasingly important role in EgyptAir’s

plans. The carrier has, for some time, looked at establishing the Heliopolis site as a major transit point that could compete with the Gulf hubs and the completion of Cairo’s Terminal 2 in mid-2017 gave it an expanded annual capacity of around 20 million passengers.

Musallam said that the airport was a “magical location to connect Europe with Africa” and even potentially to act as a hub between the US and Africa.

Bombardier predicts that African intra-regional traffic will grow by 4.6% annually over the next 20 years. It argues that the continent’s fleet of 60 to 150-seat aircraft will grow by 2.4 times to meet growing traffic demand; the manufacturer’s CSeries, of course, spans the upper half of that category.

Meanwhile, “The Egyptian market is



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Since it began operations in 2007, EgyptAir Express has operated 12 Embraer 170s on a collection of domestic and international routes. The aircraft have performed well, but some problems have become apparent.

The EgyptAir subsidiary, for example, sometimes operates services for its mainline parent on thinner international routes when reservations are too low to economically use one of EgyptAir's Boeing 737-800s or A320s, both of which have around 140-plus seats.

However, if the replacement Embraer has a full 74-passenger load on a service to Budapest or Vienna, for instance, there can be problems coping with all the luggage that tends to accompany passengers flying a four-hour sector.

This payload/range limitation was one of the factors behind EgyptAir Express seeking a replacement for the Brazilian regional jets, although they are still relatively young, at 10 years old.

Another factor was that the Embraer's seat costs were rising, due to the maintenance costs associated with a relatively high number of cycles. Flights to central Europe are in the minority, with most of EgyptAir Express's sectors being just an hour or slightly longer. The large number of periods on the ground between such short sectors also means that utilisation is relatively low at around eight hours a day.

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Hence the announcement at November's Dubai Air Show that EgyptAir was signing a letter of intent (LoI) for 'up to 24' Bombardier CS300 airliners, as part of the group's fleet replacement strategy.

The LoI is for 12 firm orders and 12 purchase rights, worth \$2.2 billion at list prices if all the options are exercised.

EgyptAir Express will be the Middle East launch customer for the Canadian-built aircraft. Initial delivery dates for the aircraft were not mentioned at Dubai, but the carrier hopes that the first CS300s will arrive at the end of 2018/start of 2019.

Asked at the air show if October's announcement that Airbus was taking a 50.01% stake in the C-Series programme had reassured EgyptAir about the project's viability and encouraged it to sign on the dotted line, group chairman and CEO, Safwat Musallam, said: "No, we were going to buy the CS300 anyway."

The Canadian jets will give EgyptAir Express a substantial capacity increase, with the aircraft likely to operate with around 120 seats. They will also open up new markets for the airline, said the

**Helmy Rezk: "We can serve our domestic routes and other destinations with lower costs."**



# ALL CHANGE!

*It's not often that an airline changes its entire fleet in one fell swoop, but EgyptAir Express plans to do precisely that as it seeks to overcome its operational challenges.*

regional carrier's chairman, Captain Helmy Rezk. "The route network will expand considerably. As well as the south of Europe it will give us more markets in Africa. We can go to Casablanca, for example. And we can get to Mumbai with a full payload."

The CS300's range will also allow direct flights between Egyptian tourist destinations such as Sharm El-Sheikh and Germany or Italy. EgyptAir Express plans to make the Red Sea resort its third operational base, after Cairo and Alexandria.

"This will give us a very big competitive advantage," said Rezk. "We can serve our domestic routes and other destinations with lower costs."

Those lower seat costs will allow the company to offer lower fares. Currently, around 75% of EgyptAir Express' services are domestic and 25 regional; the capabilities of the new aircraft are likely to tip that balance more towards international services.

Although the carrier has its own staff and its aircraft operate in a different livery

to those of its mainline parent, the two parts of the company work from a single network fleet plan, explained EgyptAir Express general manager, planning, Ahmed Ali Alashwat. "It's very dynamic. In the low season, we can take more routes from the mainline operation. And we can use the 737-800 in the high season to go to places like Sharm El-Sheikh."

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One advantage that EgyptAir Express enjoys is the speed with which it can take decisions. "I sit with operations and maintenance beside me," said Alashwat. That allows it to react swiftly to changing conditions.

Like most Egyptian carriers, EgyptAir Express has found itself having to battle against outside conditions, such as the country's political upheavals of recent years. Profitable until 2011, it broke even in 2016. It hopes 2017's accounts will see it back in profit and that its new equipment will keep it on an upward trajectory.






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*Before he became chief financial officer (CFO) of AlMasria Universal Airlines, Ahmed Gadallah was a professional footballer with Egypt's most famous club, Al Ahly. Ask him in what position he played and he smiles: "I was a playmaker. Same position here!"*

# The playmaker heading for his next goal...

**L**ike many Egyptian airlines, family owned AlMasria has had to change its game-plan to cope with recent external problems, notably the floating of the Egyptian currency against the US dollar and the collapse in tourism following terrorist attacks.

The floating of the country's currency caused problems for many of its carriers. The pound dropped sharply against the greenback, almost overnight making everything denominated in dollars roughly twice as expensive. And, as aviation is a global business, many goods and services have to be paid for in dollars.

"We were 100% scheduled until the currency floating last year. We changed our mind and added charter operations to gain foreign currency; with scheduled services, we weren't allowed to sell tickets in any currency except Egyptian Pounds."



In the past two years, like a skilful footballer, AlMasria has pivoted sharply on to its other foot and headed in a new direction; around 80% of its business is now charter flights.

Football will also play a significant role in AlMasria's activities in 2018, as Egypt has qualified for the World Cup finals in Russia for the first time since 1990 and large numbers are expected to fly north to support their team.

"It has big potential," said Gadallah. "We are the only private airline in Egypt to have traffic rights to operate scheduled services to Russia." He anticipates that the airline will add services for the event.

The airline has a small fleet of three

Airbus A320s and a single A321; it has recently added a larger A330-200 from lessor CDB and is talking to GECAS about acquiring a second. There is also a single Boeing 737-500.

The A320s can be configured either with a 180-seat all-economy cabin or an eight business-class/156 economy configuration. Similarly, the A321s can have 220 economy seats or a 12/176 layout.

The airline makes a point of owning its aircraft; if it cannot buy outright initially, it will take an aircraft on a finance lease, with the aim of owning it eventually.

Gadallah classes AlMasria as a 'value-price carrier', somewhere between a full-service legacy airline and a low-cost carrier. On its flights, it serves a hot meal and offers passengers newspapers, for example.

AlMasria is steadily building up its capabilities to make itself a self-contained airline, said Gadallah. It has its own catering unit, its engineering staff are certified to handle maintenance up to 'C' checks, it has recently added ground-handling to its activities and has approval from Egypt's civil aviation regulator to undertake in-house training in several areas.

The crash of Russia's Metrojet Airbus A321 shortly after take-off from Sharm El Sheikh in October 2015, due to an improvised explosive device that was placed on board, led to many countries to cease flights to Egypt until the country's authorities could demonstrate they had tightened

up security at its airports.

Gadallah says that the Russian ban on travel to the Red Sea resorts should end "very soon". However, the travel ban that was put in place, not only by Russia but also by most other European nations, has affected AlMasria less than some other Egyptian carriers because many of its services are operated to the Gulf, carrying Egyptian workers to and from their places of employment.

There is also a steady traffic in Egyptian pilgrims heading to Saudi Arabia for the Hajj and Umrah: the latest statistics show that some 3.7 million people visited the kingdom for religious pilgrimages: "If you target just 5% of that market, it's still a very large one."



The Gulf has been something of a double-edged sword, however, as major carriers, such as Emirates, Etihad and Qatar Airways, have temped away around 30% of AlMasria's pilots with much larger salaries than the small Egyptian airline can offer.

The company was set up by chairman, Ahmed Ismail, who owned a chain of more than 40 travel agencies and had been general sales agent for Qatar Airways and the now-defunct Bahrain Air, as well as for EgyptAir.

His three sons, Ismail, Mohammed and Tareq, are all managers with the airline, with Gadallah the sole non-family director. "It is a family company, yes, but they act very professionally. They began from zero and his sons took training for

**Egypt has qualified for the World Cup finals in Russia and large numbers are expected to fly north to support their team.**



**“We are the only private airline in Egypt to have traffic rights to operate scheduled services to Russia.”**

**AHMED GADALLAH**

three years before launching this airline.”

Although Russia will provide a boost to AlMasria’s sales in 2018, the company’s biggest long-term market is Germany; it flies to no fewer than eight destinations there and the European nation accounts for around 20% of its operation. Italy, France and Poland are other significant markets for AlMasria.

German tourists were some of the first to return to Egypt when travel restrictions were lifted “and the market is booming”, said Gadallah. “Last summer, we had 17 flights a week to Germany. Next summer, it will be 30.”

For future expansion, however, AlMasria is looking east, to Asia. The A330s will allow it to reach as far as India and China. “We’re looking at these markets at the moment.”

The phenomenon of outbound tourism from China, as the country’s burgeoning middle class gets a taste for foreign travel,

is well-known and has been experienced in many African and European countries.

Not only do they want to travel, the yields from that market for an airline like AlMasria are very healthy, said Gadallah.

“That’s where we see the main opportunities in the market. It’s very difficult to compete with the Gulf area carriers to places like New York, Canada and South America, but in China there is no competitor. The Gulf airlines are not allowed to fly direct to Egypt, as open skies has not been implemented here yet.” That would mean Chinese tourists carried by Gulf airlines would have to break their journeys at the latter’s hubs and change aircraft.

“If we operate direct, we will compete,” said Gadallah. Services into airports such as Luxor and Aswan in Upper Egypt, with their access to many of the country’s historical sites, are a possibility.

The Egyptian economy, although hit by

the recent fall in tourism, is not a story of unrelieved gloom. It is often not realised in the West that Egypt has its own oil and gas reserves and a new gas field recently discovered in the Mediterranean looks like being the biggest in the area.

Ask him where he would like AlMasria to be three years from now and Gadallah has no hesitation: “From my point of view, we have to make some connection with a large company, such as an interline agreement or codeshare, or enter into an alliance.”



That would mean aligning reservation systems and Gadallah points out that AlMasria is already registered with Amadeus, Galileo and Sabre. It also has an online booking system.

“The mentality has changed now in Egypt. My mother, grandmother and grandfather use computers; everyone has credit cards and 30% of our direct sales come from a booking engine.”

Gadallah accepts that on-going terrorism threats in Egypt, notably in the Sinai Desert, make life difficult for companies such as AlMasria. “But if we are able to save our company, there is no ceiling for expansion here at all.”

And with that comment and a brisk handshake, he is off, the playmaker heading for his next goal.



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*EgyptAir In-Flight Services chairman and CEO, Hesham Abdel Hafeiz Mohamed, is hoping for expansion in the Middle East and Africa.*

**H**esham Abdel Hafeiz Mohamed hit the ground running when he became chairman and CEO of EgyptAir In-flight Services over a year ago, saying he is “happily on-call 24/7” to make sure everything runs smoothly.

“EgyptAir In-Flight Services is a huge company with more than 2,500 fully trained staff across its various departments, so there is a lot to oversee to make sure we run a seamless operation,” said Mohamed.

“The method of running the business has been refined and enhanced over 60 years of producing high-quality meals, services and solutions and delivering more value to our customer, which means that, in turn, we earn their respect and loyalty.”

The company recently renewed its joint venture with Lufthansa and Egyptian Aviation Services (EAS) in a company known as LSG Sky Chefs Egypt – of which EgyptAir owns 70%.



Its catering unit at Cairo International Airport can provide 30,000 meals daily and its rapidly expanding facilities at Hurghada International Airport and Sharm el-Sheikh International have production capacity of 6,000 meals daily for each.

Soon a new catering unit will be open in Burg El Arab Airport in Alexandria.

“We have bought a piece of land there and we have started to establish a new unit,” said Mohamed. “Staff are currently there but with external suppliers until the unit opens.”

Mohamed added that while the state-of-the-art kitchens can serve up to 30,000 meals a day at full capacity, it is more normal to see figures of 12-15,000 meals per day, unless it is holy holiday periods like Hajj and Umrah, where figures climb to 27,000.

He is hoping to see these figures increase substantially within the next 10 years.

“As soon as I started in my position, expansion was my plan,” he said “So we are now working on a 10-year plan to increase our catering capacity level by



**Hesham Abdel Hafeiz Mohamed:** “We believe Egypt is already back on track seeing passenger numbers increase, and expect in 10 years it will once again be one of the world’s top destinations.”

## Mohamed gets a taste for growth

another 30,000 meals – to reach 60,000. We believe Egypt is already back on track seeing passenger numbers increase, and expect in 10 years it will once again be one of the world’s top destinations.”

He added: “We are also thinking to expand outside Egypt – we have already looked into extending catering units in other Arab countries and Africa. We are currently in talks with Iraq for a catering unit in Baghdad, but this is at an early stage.”

The company’s catering menus change every three months according to airline requirement. “We make sure we keep airlines happy by providing new menus with different choices for each class. This is something, for example, EgyptAir likes,” said Mohamed.

While the company’s kitchen staff and chefs are all Egyptian, Mohamed said he is looking into finding chefs abroad that can offer expertise in various cuisines.

The company also provides services for business jet customers, as well as providing ground support equipment at

Cairo, including a fleet of 47 high-loaders.

Other facilities that Mohamed oversees include a dry ice factory with a capacity of 625kg an hour, a laboratory that ensures that each product line meets food safety standards, and a huge laundry service.

“We are the only company at Cairo International Airport to provide a laundry service that consists of washing, drying, maintaining, and replenishing cabin interior products including napkins, tablecloths, pillowcases, headrest covers, trolley runners and cotton towels – basically everything you see on board,” said Mohamed.



If that wasn’t enough, the company also has its own registered brand name in cafe management – Aero Café – and a sales department for different on-board brands, including perfumes and watches.

With so much going on Mohamed said that his main challenge is maintaining and finding the ‘right balance’ between quality and price.

He added: “My challenge is how can we offer a reasonable price to customers while still making a profit. During the recent circumstances of inflation in Egypt and its political position, it is a challenge to keep business running and stable while regaining profit for high standards.”

“However, in the last few years, we are keeping it all in great shape and we are seeing an increase in profit each year as tourist figures climb.”

**“We are now working on a 10-year plan to increase our catering capacity.”**

**HESHAM ABDEL HAFEIZ MOHAMED**



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*Setting up a new airline, even at the best of times, is one of the most difficult enterprises that a business executive can undertake. But how does one do it in even more challenging circumstances?*

# TALAAAT PILOTS FLYEGYPT TOWARDS A NEW DESTINY

**A**s well as the normal financing, marketing and recruitment problems that any new business must surmount, few industries have as many regulatory hoops to jump through before getting to the point where they can actually begin revenue operations.

When you add to that the problems faced by FlyEgypt in early 2015, when it was preparing to fly its first passengers, the situation must at times have seemed overwhelming.

You feel that CEO, Ahmed Tarek Talaat, is employing under-statement to its fullest extent when he says: "The security situation was still a bit sensitive."

It was just a few months after the crash of Russia's Metrojet Airbus A321 over Sinai and the subsequent halt on flying into Egypt's Red Sea airports by many European carriers. And the new airline had to persuade potential tour operator customers that it could provide a reliable service with just a single aircraft in its portfolio: "Even when we got the second aircraft, it was still very difficult," admitted Talaat.

"But if you fast-forward to now, tourism is starting to flow back again and, for a small company like us, it's been really amazing."

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FlyEgypt now operates a mix of roughly 70% charter flights and is integrating scheduled services into the mix. Germany has proved to be a particularly rewarding market, with the company racking up a remarkable utilisation of 16 hours a day to service the European nation, whose inhabitants are some of the most enthusiastic visitors to its Red Sea resorts.

"Utilisation has sky-rocketed and we've been able to get back on track with the flight development plan," said Talaat. Each aircraft – the airline now has four Boeing 737-800s, with two more due to be delivered in spring 2018 – typically undertakes two round trips a day between Egypt and Germany.

One of those new aircraft will be the company's first purchased example. The others are on dry lease.



On the scheduled side, FlyEgypt operates services from secondary Egyptian airports such as Alexandria, Assiut and Sohag to Kuwait and Jordan, with new routes due to be added to Saudi Arabia this year. Jeddah and Riyadh will be the first two destinations in the kingdom.

**Ahmed Tarek Talaat: "Tourism is starting to flow back again and, for a small company like us, it's been really amazing."**

In Europe, the UK and Scandinavia are high on the priority list for FlyEgypt "as those routes have a high yield compared to other Western European destinations and they are very kind to the aircraft in terms of maintenance cycles."

Cutting the ratio of take-offs and landings to the number of flying hours places less strain on airframes and, thus, eases maintenance and repair expenditure.

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Talaat, who used to be a pilot with EgyptAir, has an ambition to make FlyEgypt his country's first true low-cost carrier (LCC) that offers value-for-money products. LCCs are proliferating in the Middle East and North Africa region, but although this means more competition, Talaat is convinced that low prices help stimulate and enlarge the market by attracting passengers who have previously not flown at all, or only very occasionally.

LCCs are the way ahead, he firmly believes: "If you're flying for just one hour, you really need just a clean seat and a good flight attendant. If you want a bottle of water and a sandwich, that's great, but anything more just means passengers paying for something they don't really need."

However, charters also provide an avenue for expansion: "A very small percentage of inbound tourists are carried by Egyptian airlines." A good, efficient, reliable Egyptian charter airline is potentially a more efficient option for European tour operators, believes Talaat.

Russia, with its large tourist volumes, remains out of reach at present because of rules that bar Egyptian charter companies from operating into that country.

And FlyEgypt's information is that it would be difficult to offer lower prices than those charged by Russian carriers, anyway.

However, given FlyEgypt's success in solving problems to date, it would not be surprising if they found a solution to that particular situation, either.





*Egyptian Aviation Academy is looking to target African and Middle Eastern student pilots and engineers, according to its chairman and CEO, Captain Elias Sadek.*

**E**stablished in 1931, the Egyptian Aviation Academy is located at the 6th of October Airport in Giza. It is Egypt's oldest aviation academy.

It consists of three faculties – Misr Flying College, the Air Traffic Control College, and the Civil Aviation Management Training College.

The academy has the recognition and the approval of the Ministry of Civil Aviation of Egypt for all of its colleges as a regional training centre in Africa and the Middle East. It was the first academy to get such approval.

Its Misr Flying College gives student pilots a 'unique' advantage by offering a jet rating licence upon graduation.

"For a small sum of money, students will get the jet rating licence upon graduation, which will serve as a transition for pilots from light aircraft to large commercial aircraft – and we are the only company in the world to do this," explained Captain Elias Sadek, chairman and CEO.



The college offers 38 training capabilities of different aircraft types on its young and advanced fleet.

"We offer training on the Cessna 172 G1000, which is the most modern with a glass cockpit, so when they transition to the real aircraft it is exactly the same," said Sadek.

The fleet also include Bonanzas – it received two new ones in November – as well as two Baron multi-engine aircraft, and four Cessna Mustang C510s.

The company also has seven modern flight simulators.

Sadek has been CEO of Egyptian Aviation Academy for 18 months but he still manages to fly for EgyptAir once a month on a B777 to maintain his licence.

He is also an instructor and examiner, and last April was elected a member of the TRAINAIR PLUS steering committee (TPSC) in Addis Ababa. This is the body



**Captain Elias Sadek: "I am targeting having 75% non-Egyptian students in the next few years – mainly from African and Arab countries."**

## Aviation academy targets African students

that is connected to the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), which is responsible for the upgrade and development of all courses.

"As a full TRAINAIR PLUS member, the Egyptian Aviation Academy is applying right now to become a centre of excellence – the final accolade," said Sadek.

The CEO wants to reach out to other Arabic countries and, especially, to the African market.

"I am targeting having 75% non-Egyptian students in the next few years – mainly from African and Arab countries," said Sadek.

"We currently have Egyptian students, as well as other Middle East students from countries including Yemen, Kuwait, and Iraq. Our African students are from Nigeria, Tanzania and Sudan."

He added: "We would like to serve as a place where African pilot and engineer students can come for high-quality training. We have competitive prices but we have lowered the margin of profits to help attract both Africa and the Arab world."

Sadek believes there is a "deep shortage" of pilots and aviation engineers in many of these targeted countries.

"Iraq has ordered about 70 Airbus and

Boeing Aircraft, so they have a pilot and engineer shortage. Our academy is perfect for them and, actually, we already have Iraqi engineers training."

Sadek said the company has many things of which to be proud.

"We have a department that graduates aircraft maintenance engineers and I am delighted that, for the first time, the class that joined in October last year will graduate with an ICAO licence carrying a European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) endorsement.

"We have a lot of female students from all over the world. One female pilot that trained at the Egyptian Aviation Academy is Naveen Darwish, now captain of an Emirates A380."

The academy also offers aero medical examiner certificate training – allowing graduates to have the licence to examine pilots and flight crew, and it will soon start a new field, in hot-air balloon training for pilots and engineers.

"We have about 28 companies working in the south of Egypt, so we are starting pilot and engineer training for this in 2018," said Sadek. "A hot-air balloon pilot training course takes six months. It is quite complex – but we can do complex."

*A new corporate livery marks a fresh beginning for Air Cairo as it emerges from the troubles of the past few years and prepares to expand once more.*

# AIR CAIRO AIMS TO STAND OUT FROM THE CROWD

**L**ike most of Egypt's airlines, Air Cairo was badly affected by the double blow of the floating of the Egyptian pound, which saw its value halve against the US dollar, the currency in which the international aviation community operates, and by fears of terrorism.

The airline had planned to move from a fleet of seven Airbus A320s at the end of 2016 to 20 by the end of the decade. Progress has slowed, but chairman and CEO, Yasser El-Ramly, is hopeful that the delay will not be too great.

"We now have nine A320s and we're going to increase that to 12 by summer 2018. We're behind our plan, but I think we will reach our new business plan by around 2021."

Despite the company's title, it conducts relatively little business from the Egyptian capital. A single aircraft is dedicated to the Cairo market and has a business-class cabin to complement the economy-class seats, but the rest of its Airbuses operate with a single-class configuration.



The airline specialises in serving Gulf nations from secondary Egyptian airports, handling labour, visiting friends and relatives (VFR) and religious traffic.

The bulk of the airline's business comes from Europe. "The tourism market is returning and we had a good summer," said El-Ramly. Air Cairo flew around 250,000 tourists to Egypt over the summer 2017 season on roughly 65 flights a week, more than double last year's number of services. Those were split roughly 75/25% between scheduled and charter flights; load factor was around 78%. This he regards as healthy, considering that on its routes from Germany it typically faces competition from five or six airlines, including many of Europe's major low-cost carriers.

"We wish to have more than that, of course, and we're planning by summer 2018 to have increased the frequency to Europe to around 90 flights a week. We've



**Yasser El-Ramly:** "We are the largest private airline in Egypt, but still only have 10 aircraft."

been operating in Europe since 2003 and I think we have a good name with tour operators as a charter carrier." However, El-Ramly believes that the airline is not as well-known among travellers in Europe as it could be and plans a marketing campaign to make its name more visible.

A more distinctive colour scheme for its aircraft is being introduced, to help it stand out from the crowd.

The chairman is confident that, by next summer, tourists will be reassured that security has been tightened at Egypt's airports. In fact, he says that Sharm El

Sheikh and Hurghada, the two airports over which security concerns were raised by foreign governments, are now some of the most secure in the world.

"Every [passenger] is checked twice. You receive a pat-down even if you do not set off the alarm."

Air Cairo is starting to branch out in new directions. It has instituted a new Sharm El Sheikh-Yerevan service to the Armenian capital and, by the time of publication, Milan should also have been added to the route map, with Stockholm and perhaps Azerbaijan following shortly.

There is no doubt, says El-Ramly, that Egyptian airlines such as Air Cairo can and should be taking a bigger slice of the market when it comes to transporting tourists to their home country. "Before the [2012] revolution, we had around 12 million passengers a year coming through Sharm El Sheikh and Hurghada and the market share of Egyptian airlines was less than 1% of this."



He believes that Egyptian airlines should increase the size of their fleets to improve that figure: "We are the largest private airline in Egypt, but still only have 10 aircraft and the rest of them have not more than around 25 in total."

European low-cost carriers, with their huge fleets and rock-bottom prices, remain the main threat to airlines such as Air Cairo.

The halving of the value of the Egyptian pound against the US dollar due to the floating of the currency meant that yields went through the floor. Obviously airlines like Air Cairo could not simply double their fares to compensate – "The market wouldn't accept that immediately" – but it has been slowly inching up its fares to recover yield levels.

El Ramly remains "very optimistic" and is confident that within the next year Air Cairo will have returned to the levels of success seen before political unrest started to affect the country in recent years.





# Moneir back in business, bearing fruit

*Mohamed Moneir had been retired for five years and was growing citrus fruit on his farm when he was given the chance to cultivate something rather different than oranges and mandarins... an airline.*

**T**he airline that Mohamed Moneir was called back from retirement to oversee was Air Leisure.

Previously known as Air Memphis, an Egyptian charter airline that had been operating for 20 years, it had been bought by new owners in 2013, renamed and given a new role of operating long-haul charters.

“The vision of the airline is to operate long-haul routes, concentrating on Asia,” explained Moneir who, before he became Air Leisure’s chairman, had a long career with EgyptAir including as vice-president, commercial of EgyptAir Holding

Company and several regional manager roles around the world.

One advantage of focusing on Asia, he said, was that the region (with the exception of Japan) was not so sensitive to the Middle East’s geopolitical problems and so did not suffer from sudden dips in tourist traffic. Another was simply to break away from what he described as “cut-throat competition” in the shorter-haul charter market.

Air Leisure particularly focuses on China, with charter services operating from more than 10 Chinese cities. Chinese tourists tend to want to sample different aspects of Egypt, combining time at the historical sites of Upper Egypt with a few days’ relaxing at Red Sea resorts, such as Sharm El-Sheikh or Hurghada, followed by a stay in Cairo.

From January to the end of September 2017, Air Leisure flew some 60,000 Chinese tourists into Egypt. This market is particularly attractive, not only because of

its size – Boeing has estimated that 130 million Chinese took foreign holidays in 2016 – but also because the country’s tourists tend to be high spenders.

The two main seasons for Chinese tourists are January to March and July to September. In those periods, Air Leisure typically operates 10 to 14 flights weekly to China.

And the focus on overseas markets means that Air Leisure is pulling in hard currencies, so the company has been less affected by the drop in the value of the Egyptian Pound than have many of the country’s other airlines.

Air Leisure’s initial equipment consisted of three Airbus A340-200s, acquired from EgyptAir from late 2014. This made it, at one time, the world’s last commercial operator of the initial variant of the European four-motor wide-body.

In 2017, it moved on to the more economical twin-engined A330-200, with three former Emirates Airline examples

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# for Air Leisure

acquired via lessor Dubai Aerospace Enterprise on 10-year finance leases.

Latterly, the A340s were modified internally into a single-class 283-seat layout, to suit them for religious tourists heading for Mecca on the Hajj or Umrah pilgrimages from long-haul points such as Malaysia and Indonesia. However, the type was finally withdrawn in July 2017.

Air Leisure is now in negotiations to acquire more A330s and has also signed a memorandum of understanding with Russia's Sukhoi Civil Aircraft Corporation (SCAC) for four SSJ100 Superjets. The latter would be used for domestic charter flights and to cater for the Chinese and Japanese tourists, who like to make multi-sector visits, basing themselves in Egypt but making short side-trips to destinations such as Athens.

If the Sukhoi deal goes ahead – and SCAC president Alexander Rubtsov was hopeful at the Dubai Air Show that it would – the aircraft would initially be



**Mohamed Moneir: "The vision of the airline is to operate long-haul routes, concentrating on Asia."**

operated by Russian pilots, said Moneir, while Egyptian pilots were trained on the type.

Airbus had been surprised that an A330/340 operator would not take on examples of its A320, he added. It was possible that the European narrow-body could yet be procured and operate alongside the SSJ100 – it all depended on the right markets becoming available to the carrier.

Air Leisure is seeking to become more recognised internationally through joining the International Air Transport Association and by undertaking the IATA operational safety audit (IOSA), which assesses an airline's operational management and control system, as well as ensuring that it is adhering to evolving quality standards.

With these plans in place, Moneir and his colleagues hope that the taste of success will be as sweet as the mandarins that he used to grow on his farm.



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*The last couple of years could have not have been a more difficult time to run an airline in Egypt and even now, it's a tough job, says the managing director of Nesma Airlines, Ashraf Lamloom.*

**"L**ast year was traumatic. All businesses were negatively impacted by inflation and the currency floating," said Nesma Airlines MD Ashraf Lamloom.

The situation is slowly being restored to normal, but airlines such as Nesma are not clear of danger yet: "European operations have resumed, but what is the yield? We are chartering the aircraft to travel agents or brokers and they are consolidating the flights but, even then, you're selling your aircraft at the lowest price."

For the moment, said Lamloom, Nesma is prepared to operate the aircraft on those services so long as they cover their operating costs and at least part of their fixed costs.

Nesma Airlines is unusual in that it splits its operations between two countries, Egypt and Saudi Arabia. The company has been able to take advantage of the liberalisation of domestic air services in Saudi and has stationed a group of four ATR 72-600 turboprops in Hail, in the north of the country. From there, they serve a small network of secondary northern airports, some of which cannot handle jets. Operations began in November 2016.



Traditionally, turboprops have not found favour with passengers in the Gulf, who have tended to prefer jets. However, said Lamloom, reaction to the Franco-Italian aircraft has been good. "The range between Hail and the other airports is very short, so we're not facing any performance problem."

The lukewarm attitude towards turboprops is not just a problem in the Gulf, but throughout the wider Middle East, explained Lamloom. However, if an airport is underserved by scheduled flights and the turboprop can demonstrate good on-time performance – which the ATRs have – people accept them.

Nesma is preparing to step up its operations in Saudi Arabia by bringing in some of its four Airbus A320s, partly to offer enough capacity on heavily

# STEP BY STEP TO RECOVERY

trafficked routes such as Jeddah-Riyadh and partly to be able to offer longer, international services from the kingdom.

The A320s will offer a small, business-class area of four seats. This will be European style; with the four-abreast configuration achieved by folding down the middle seat in each row of three standard seats to give business-class passengers more elbow room and privacy – useful if someone is working on documents that he would prefer not to be seen by someone sitting close to him.

This row of seats will have 36in pitch, with the next few rows set at 30 inches and the rest at 29 inches. This may seem tight but, as Lamloom pointed out, it is the same seat pitch used in many major European carriers' aircraft and it is considered acceptable.

The Egypt-based A320s, meanwhile, will concentrate mainly on services between Cairo and Saudi Arabia during weekdays, with charter flights – particularly to Germany – occupying the weekends.

Nesma's fleet plans include adding at least one or two ATRs in 2018, together with another pair of A320s from the airline's Egyptian AOC.

Currently Nesma's fleet is dry leased but, from this year onwards, it plans to acquire new units on a lease purchase basis.

The Egyptian A320s mainly concentrate on scheduled services from Cairo to Saudi destinations during the week, then revert to charter flights between Egypt and Europe – notably Germany – at weekends.

Indeed, Lamloom believes that expansion for the Egyptian side of the business will come from charter, rather than scheduled, work.

In the early part of the decade, Nesma operated to most western European countries. It was only after Egypt's political upheavals began that tourism started to drop away, as Europeans started to worry about the security situation in the country. But, after the 2015 crash of Russia's Metrojet Airbus A321 over Sinai shortly after taking off from Sharm El-Sheikh, European flights ceased completely.

Lamloom would like to see the previous situation restored. European services started again in April 2017. Over this winter season, charter services to Italy and Switzerland are getting under way.

Ideally, he would like to see an equal split between charter and scheduled services.

Like many Egyptian carriers, Nesma has the advantage of a large, inbuilt market of pilgrims wishing to travel to Saudi Arabia to perform the Hajj and Umrah. The latter, in particular, lasts for 10 months in the year and provides guaranteed volumes of high-yield passengers.

In addition, there are huge numbers of foreign workers in Saudi Arabia, who need transport to and from their home nations at the end of contracts or for vacations. Many of them – from Bangladesh, for example – currently do not have direct flights home and have to travel via Gulf hubs such as Dubai and Doha, at additional cost.

An A320 has the necessary range to

The company has been able to take advantage of the liberalisation of domestic air services in Saudi.



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Ashraf  
Lamloum:  
holding his  
nerve.

reach Pakistan and most of India. If something with more range and capacity is required, Lamloum favours the Airbus A330. The new A321neoLR would also have the necessary range, but the managing director believes the new generation aircraft are too expensive, especially for passengers at the economy end of the market. The A330 will be a lower-cost platform to operate initially, he believes, although he does not rule out the neo at some time in the future.

On the staffing front, Nesma is unusual among Egyptian carriers in that it trains its own co-pilots. It naturally hopes that eventually these co-pilots can be promoted to captain but, at the moment, Egyptian regulations stipulate that co-pilots must undertake a minimum of 4,000 hours before being considered for the left-hand seat, unlike most other jurisdictions, which require only 3,000.

The Egyptian regulation equates to roughly two more years before a co-pilot gets his fourth stripe, which is causing something of a bottleneck in promotions.



Nesma is hopeful that a change in the rules is on the horizon. New captains from outside the company usually come to the airline with the appropriate type ratings and just need route training before assuming command.

Nesma can boast a dispatch reliability rate of more than 98%. Partly this is down to a maintenance contract with respected provider Lufthansa Technik, but partly also to the airline's policy of carrying an engineer on board all its services.

This may seem either over-cautious or wasteful – the engineer is, after all, taking up a seat that could be used by a fare-paying passenger, but Lamloum believes the benefits outweigh the disadvantages.

Apart from anything else, Egyptian regulations stipulate that an engineer, not just a pilot, should be on board, so "It's more efficient to have an engineer sign off the pre-departure checks. It's best to have one of our engineers do it, rather than a side contract [with an outside company] and it helps cope with any unforeseen problems."

With the security situation at Egypt's Red Sea airports now gradually being given the all-clear by European nations, and tourists starting to return, 2018 will hopefully be less nerve-racking for Lamloum and his management colleagues than recent years have been.





Guillaume Branlat.

# L'aéroport de La Réunion: Un nouveau modèle économique

*L'aéroport international Roland Garros de La Réunion a lancé un plan stratégique 2017-2022 baptisé « WELCOME ». Un nouveau design dans une démarche écologique et de rentabilité comme nous le montre Vincent Chappard.*

**L**e plan WELCOME se décline en trois objectifs: ouvrir La Réunion au monde, créer une expérience unique et affirmer la responsabilité sociétale de l'aéroport au service du territoire. « WELCOME est un plan de développement de la desserte de La Réunion en termes de volume et de connectivité au service du territoire, tout en augmentant la part des recettes extra-aéronautiques et en créant une expérience unique pour le passager par la modernisation et le redimensionnement de l'infrastructure », indique

Guillaume Branlat, président du directoire de l'aéroport international Roland Garros.

Ce plan bénéficie d'un programme d'investissement d'environ 180 millions d'euros d'ici 2022. L'aéroport a accueilli 2,1 millions de passagers en 2016 avec une forte croissance du trafic prévue en 2017.



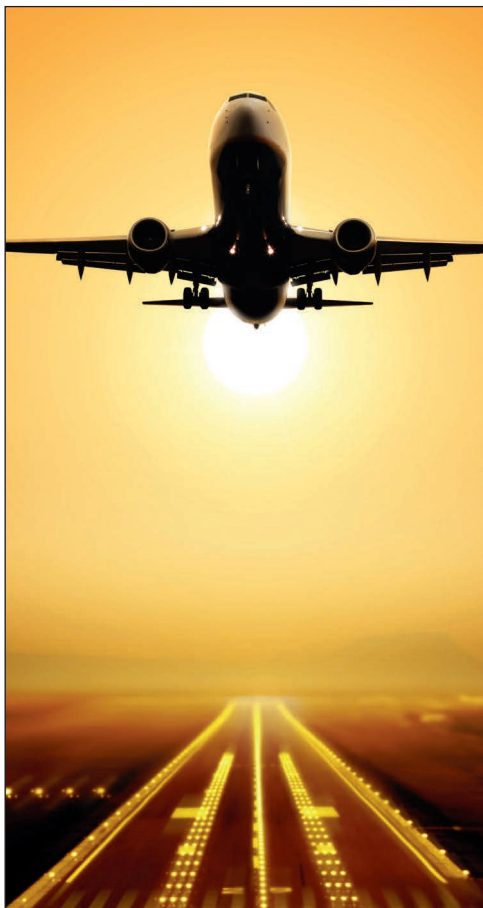
L'aéroport de La Réunion prospecte pour attirer de nouvelles compagnies aériennes de concert avec les acteurs de la promotion

économique et touristique de l'île.

« Nous sommes très attentifs à l'Europe et en particulier l'Allemagne qui est un foyer touristique important », rappelle Guillaume Branlat.

« Nous poursuivons notre développement sur l'Asie et dans tout l'océan Indien. Des prospections sont également en cours dans d'autres pays d'Afrique et du Moyen-Orient. »

Des campagnes de communication ont déjà été lancées avec un objectif précis : atteindre un trafic de 3 millions de passagers annuels en 2025.



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L'aéroport de La Réunion prospecte pour attirer de nouvelles compagnies aériennes.

L'aéroport a accueilli en août 2017 French Blue, la première compagnie française low cost long-courrier.

L'aéroport Roland Garros se fixe également pour objectif de porter la part de ses recettes générées par les activités extra-aéronautiques à 40% de son chiffre d'affaires en 2022, contre 25% en 2016.

Cela va dans le sens du concept de commercial revenues, adopté de plus en plus par les aéroports pour rentabiliser leurs investissements.

Il s'agit de diminuer le coût unitaire par passager et ainsi réduire le coût global de l'escale. Cette évolution est indispensable pour améliorer la compétitivité de l'aéroport.

L'aéroport international Roland Garros a fait le choix volontariste d'une conception bioclimatique pour la future extension de l'aérogare. Selon Guillaume Branlat, il s'agit de

se différencier tout en étant « en adéquation avec la politique de la France et de La Réunion en termes de développement durable ».



L'ambition affichée par La Réunion est d'être en autonomie énergétique en 2030. L'aéroport pilote la construction d'une centrale photovoltaïque. 3 000 m<sup>2</sup> de panneaux seront posés en 2018.

Le secteur des croisières est en pleine croissance dans l'océan Indien. C'est un levier qui intéresse Guillaume Branlat. Reste maintenant à trouver des modes d'exploitation souples et de transfert entre les croisiéristes et l'aérien.

Des pistes de réflexion et des partages de bonnes pratiques sont actuellement menés pour identifier une formule efficace.

## SUMMARY

### REUNION GOES ECO-FRIENDLY

Reunion Island's Roland Garros International Airport has launched a five-year strategic plan, which is designed to emphasise its eco-friendly approach, while enhancing profitability.

The plan, which is estimated will cost \$214 million by 2022, has three objectives:

- To continue opening Reunion Island to the world;
- To create a unique experience;
- And to enhance the eco-friendliness of the airport.

The airport welcomed 2.1 million passengers in 2016, with further strong traffic growth predicted for 2017. The intention is to welcome around three million passengers annually by 2025 with an emphasis on Europe – particularly tourists from Germany – but also concentrating on Asia, the Indian Ocean and the Middle East.

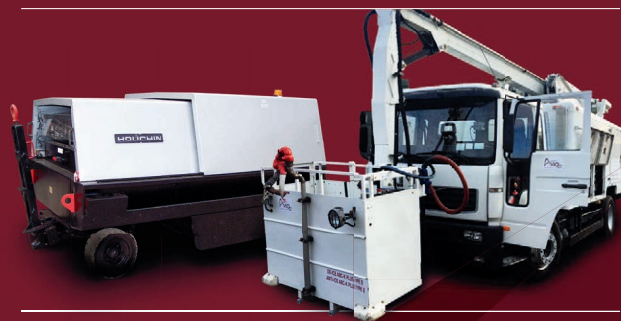
In August 2017, Reunion welcomed the French low-cost long-haul airline, French Blue, for the first time and other routes and destinations are under active review.

Reunion Island has ambitions to achieve energy autonomy by 2030 and, to this end, during 2018 the airport is installing 3,000sqm of solar panels as a pilot study.

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*Located on the outskirts of Johannesburg, Lanseria International Airport has ambitious plans to grow. The airport's CEO, Rampa Rammopo, explains to Keith Mwanalushi how it's all being achieved.*

# Rampa ramps up Lanseria

**B**y all accounts, domestic air travel in South Africa has been picking up over the last few years. There are several factors at play. Price is probably primary here – air fares in South Africa are more affordable now than even five years ago, which is stimulating market demand and opening up travel opportunities for many who have never had them before.

A weaker currency, while not generally good for the country, has prompted an upsurge in international tourists coming into the country too, which is great for the domestic carriers.

Despite some tough operational conditions in the South African airline industry, it's these domestic operators that are fuelling growth at Lanseria International Airport (LIA), which has set out a plan to become the airport of choice. "We are the fourth largest airport in South Africa by passenger traffic and one of only two privately owned international airports in the country," declared CEO, Rampa Rammopo.



The airport caters for both the general aviation and commercial scheduled airlines offering services to destinations in South Africa. It mainly services the low-cost carrier (LCC) market, and is positioning itself to be the main alternative to Johannesburg's main OR Tambo International Airport for domestic air traffic.

Its retail offering includes an upgraded passenger terminal building, restaurants, duty-free shopping, lounge facilities, ample parking, easy flow pick-up and drop-off area, with an improved road access getting to the airport.

LIA has established itself as a favoured low-cost hub for passengers to quickly and conveniently connect to South Africa's other main cities. FlySafair recently joined Kulula and Mango in operating flights from Lanseria to Cape Town, Durban and now George.

The airport handles more than two million passengers a year and the existing terminal is being extended to accommodate more airlines and flights.

Since the launch of its services to LIA, domestic operator, FlySafair, has reported that passengers are a good mix of leisure, business and commuter travellers. The airline says the airport is



The airport handles over two million passengers annually.

PICTURE: PETRUS POTGIETER

particularly appealing to those situated in the northern parts of Johannesburg and Pretoria because of its easy access and small and friendly nature.

Rammopo is keen to expand the airport's footprint to the greater region. "The recently upgraded international section of the terminal building positions the airport to also cater for the regional commercial scheduled airlines," he said.

There are plans to attract regional air traffic services between South Africa and its neighbouring countries. LIA is currently in discussions with various regional airlines to introduce commercial regional scheduled services within, particularly, the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region to operate to and from LIA.

"We want to be catering for the SADC and sub-Saharan African region. We have started talks with international and local airlines to develop regional routes to countries such as Namibia, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Mozambique and Mauritius," said Rammopo.

"With our new control tower now more ideally located with improved visibility of the runway and airfields, the opportunity for us to progress our masterplan has become far more viable."

He plans to strategically place the airport into a niche catchment area, particularly around the Gauteng Province, creating a readily accessible business and tourist hub for the LCC market.

In fact, the new control tower, unveiled in October 2017, is a significant development for the airport.

"We were very excited to officially open our new tower complex. The facility is more than a building that offers additional space for the operations that it will accommodate – it represents our commitment to levelling up and expanding for the growth that we forecast for the future of Lanseria International Airport," said Rammopo.

The control tower complex also accommodates air traffic and navigation services (ATNS), South African Weather Services (SAWS) and aerodrome rescue and fire-fighting services (ARFFS). "We are confident this facility will improve the operations by having a comprehensive view of and better access response to the airfield for the emergency response team."

The CEO is particularly keen to see the air traffic management upgrade to a highly sophisticated and top-of-the-range system because of the new tower. "The system is planned to be commissioned and operational in 2018," he reported.

The Gauteng Provincial Government says it remains committed to growing the province's economy through strategic partnerships. As such, it has identified LIA as one of the province's aviation hubs. It's been stated that the growth and expansion at the airport ties in very well with the province's vision of becoming an economic hub.



**Rampa Rammopo: "The opportunity for us to progress our masterplan has become far more viable."**

In addition, LIA has been identified by the Gauteng Provincial Government, together with the City of Johannesburg, as the main anchor for the Airport City development plan. "These two tiers of government will facilitate the development of secondary initiatives linked to the airport, such as residential developments, tourism, a special economic zone, industrial developments and related developments," explained Rammopo.

He said the master plan for the airport is aligned with the Airport City concept and makes provision for extended terminal building capacity,

adequate public parking – both surface and multi-storey, road accessibility and sufficient public transport services.

It's reported that LIA is being guided by the city and the province in terms of the developmental roadmap for the Airport City concept. According to the premier of the Gauteng Province, David Makhura: "In the coming years, more than R10 billion (\$720m) will be injected into the establishment of the new Airport City in Lanseria."

Makhura continued: "We are investing massively in improving access and the movement



**Lanseria Airport has become popular for LCC traffic.**

of people, goods and services into and out of the West Rand region. The new economy of this area will be anchored specifically on the development of new economic nodes around the Lanseria Airport. The Gautrain [rail service] will reach the Lanseria Airport to connect all our major cities in Gauteng. The future is unfolding in front of us."

To meet some of the demands for the region, expansion plans for the airport include the construction of the three-level multi-storey car park currently under way, as well as the expansion of the terminal building and upgrades to the airport's fuel farms and technical facilities.

LIA is now investing in self-service technology developed by IT company SITA. Using the systems, passengers will now be able to quickly check-in and drop their bags before proceeding directly to the gate without having to visit a traditional check-in counter.



"LIA is proud to be the first airport in Africa to introduce a complete suite of self-service technology in partnership with SITA. The introduction of this technology is aimed at maximising convenience for our passengers and airlines," Rammopo said.

He stated the new technology would allow passengers to check in online, tag and drop their bags and improve the passenger validation process, thus facilitating a seamless and quick flow of passenger traffic through the airport.

"LIA has also rolled out the new baggage reconciliation technology from SITA, which will enable the passengers to track bags at key points during their journey. The airport is also upgrading its common-use kiosks and desk infrastructure to use SITA's cloud-based solution, eliminating the need for local servers," he added. This development should also help airlines using the airport to comply with IATA's Resolution 753, which requires that they track bags at key points during the journey.

Lanseria International Airport has its visions set on expansion. With all the changes that are currently under way, the airport is levelling up to start realising its ambitions.



*Forte de ses récompenses, Airports of Mauritius (AML) compte préparer l'aéroport international SSR à mieux faire face aux futurs défis à travers le Master Plan 2040. Anuradha Deenapanray a rencontré son directeur général, Romesh Bhooyroo.*

# Un Master Plan pour Maurice

**M**aurice a accueilli pour la première fois la 27<sup>ème</sup> assemblée générale annuelle de l'ACI Africa/World ainsi qu'une conférence et un salon en octobre dernier.

L'aéroport international Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam (SSR) a remporté le Best Airport in Africa Safety Award en 2016 et le Best Airport Africa Region dans la catégorie des moins de 5 millions de passagers annuellement lors des Airport Service Quality (ASQ) de l'ACI. Comme l'aéroport international est en tête des études ASQ depuis trois ans (2014-2016), cela lui a valu le ACI Director General's Roll of Excellence récompensant les aéroports offrant des « services exceptionnels ».

Il a aussi reçu l'ACI Airport Carbon Accreditation Programme Level I Mapping status. Maurice est le 10<sup>ème</sup> aéroport international à rejoindre ce programme en Afrique. « L'aéroport international SSR peut être considéré comme un pionnier en matière environnementale en Afrique. » La stratégie d'AML pour diminuer son empreinte carbone concerne aussi le bruit, la qualité de l'air, le traitement des eaux usées, le recyclage et l'économie d'énergie (photovoltaïque).

L'aéroport de Maurice est devenu au fil des années un des leaders en Afrique. Il doit toutefois adapter ses infrastructures à un trafic et un fret en pleine croissance.

« Notre aéroport a aujourd'hui une capacité de 4 millions de passagers. Avec la progression soutenue de notre trafic, nous aurons bientôt

## Maurice, un hub pour la formation

**L'AML Aviation Training Centre est déjà opérationnel. Ce centre a reçu l'accréditation Trainair Plus de l'OACI. Il peut ainsi dispenser des formations à son personnel, à ses partenaires et aux agences de l'aéroport. Une dizaine de formateurs d'AML seront prochainement certifiés.**

**Par ailleurs, les autorités de l'aviation civile chinoise souhaitent installer une académie en Afrique. Les discussions sont en cours entre les gouvernements mauricien et chinois sur la création d'une académie internationale de formation des métiers de l'aviation, à proximité de l'aéroport. « Les discussions sont à un stade très avancé. Nous restons optimistes quant à la concrétisation de ce projet et espérons que Maurice puisse devenir un hub pour la formation des métiers de l'aérien dans la région. »**

atteint les limites opérationnelles de notre infrastructure », affirme Romesh Bhooyroo.

Il est donc essentiel de penser à l'agrandissement de sa capacité d'accueil pour soutenir l'accroissement du nombre de passagers et éviter tout « impact négatif sur la qualité du service ».

Lors de l'ouverture de la conférence ACI, le premier ministre mauricien, Pravind Jugnauth a confirmé la construction d'un nouveau terminal en 2019 ainsi que le lancement d'un « Master



**Romesh Bhooyroo: « L'aéroport international SSR peut être considéré comme un pionnier en matière environnementale. »**

Plan 2040 » pour le développement et la modernisation de l'aéroport de Maurice.

AML compte rénover et remettre en opération l'ancien terminal. Il dispose aussi de trois passerelles permettant d'augmenter le nombre d'avions en contact avec le terminal simultanément et d'améliorer la gestion du mouvement des appareils côté-piste.

« Après les travaux, notre capacité annuelle passera à plus de 4,5 millions de passagers », assure Romesh Bhooyroo.

Le Master Plan 2040 sera défini après l'exercice de mise à jour du plan directeur de l'aéroport et identifiera les principaux axes du futur développement aéroportuaire. Il prévoit entre autres, l'extension du terminal permettant éventuellement d'accueillir 8 millions de passagers annuellement. L'investissement dépassera les 250 millions d'euros.

D'autres projets sont également prévus dans l'immédiat : l'acquisition d'équipements de sûreté additionnels pour réduire le temps d'attente et fluidifier le trafic dans le terminal, et la création d'un salon avec facilité d'enregistrement pour les passagers qui

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Le terminal se décline sous le profil de l'arbre voyageur (Traveller's Palm).  
À droite : Arrivée du premier A350 d'Air Mauritius le 20 octobre 2017.

souhaitent bénéficier d'un service premium au départ.

L'aviation civile mauricienne a enclenché la construction d'une nouvelle tour de contrôle pour rehausser davantage le niveau de sécurité des opérations. Les travaux sous la supervision d'AML devraient débuter d'ici mi 2018.

Par ailleurs, la mise en opération de la zone port franc et de fret a aussi démarré.

L'année 2016 a été « très positive » en termes de croissance du trafic (plus de 10%) avec 3,6 millions de passagers contre 3,2 millions en 2015. L'aéroport devrait enregistrer un nouveau record en 2017 avec une croissance moyenne de 7%.

L'expansion est donc indispensable suite à l'accroissement du nombre de compagnies aériennes desservant Maurice et dans le sillage d'une hausse moyenne annuelle de 5 à 7% du nombre de passagers durant les cinq années à venir. Selon AML, l'Air Corridor entre Maurice et Singapour est un levier de croissance important.

Ajouter à cela, la hausse du trafic prévue suite au partenariat entre Air Mauritius et KLM ainsi qu'à l'arrivée de Saudi Arabian Airlines à Maurice le 15 septembre 2017.

De nombreuses compagnies comme Etihad Airways, Norwegian et French Blue souhaitent obtenir des droits de trafic et profiter de la libéralisation de l'espace aérien.

L'aéroport de Maurice possède donc tous les atouts pour devenir l'un des plus grands d'Afrique. Comme le souligne à juste titre son DG, il faut une continuité au niveau du leadership pour un pilotage efficace.

## SUMMARY

# AWARD-WINNING MAURITIUS AIRPORT REVEALS EXPANSION MASTERPLAN

Mauritius had a big announcement to make as it hosted the Airports Council International (ACI) Africa/World AGM, conference and exhibition for the first time.

At the opening, Mauritian Prime Minister, Pravind Jugnauth, confirmed the construction of a new terminal at Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam International Airport (SSR) to begin in 2019, as well as the launch of a "master plan 2040" for the development of the facility.

SSR International Airport has received plenty of plaudits recently. It won the "Best Airport in Africa Safety Award" at ACI's 2016 awards and, for the third consecutive year, "Best Airport, Africa Region" in the airport service quality (ASQ) category for airports catering for fewer than five million passengers annually.

The airport also received ACI's level one status in its carbon accreditation programme, becoming the tenth African airport to join the programme. SSR airport claims to be a pioneer in eco-friendliness by reducing its carbon footprint and enhancing air quality, waste water treatment, recycling and energy saving.

The airport has an annual capacity of four million passengers and CEO, Romesh Bhoyroo says, it will soon reach its operational expansion limit. "So we must think about expanding our capacity if we're to avoid any negative impact on service quality."

Once the new terminal is completed, the "old"

terminal will be renovated and three new gates will be created to increase the number of aircraft that can be accommodated simultaneously.

"After the work, our annual capacity will increase to more than 4.5 million passengers," said Bhoyroo.

□□□□

The Master Plan 2040 will be clearly defined following a period of consultation that will identify the main areas of the future development. Among other things, it will provide for the extension of the terminals, which could, eventually, accommodate eight million passengers annually. The initial investment will exceed \$296 million.

Mauritius has also initiated the building of a new control tower, along with the creation of a free port and freight zone. The airport is expected to announce a new record number of passengers for 2017 with an average year-on-year growth of 7%. Add to this the increase in traffic expected following the partnership between Air Mauritius and KLM and the arrival of Saudi Arabian Airlines in Mauritius on September 15 2017, and it's simple to see why expansion will be needed, creating one of the largest airports in Africa.

The Airports of Mauritius (AML) Training Centre, certified by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) is already operational and discussions are underway with the Chinese Government about the creation of an international training academy near the airport.



**Keith Mwanalushi** speaks to *Alexander Herring* from ADB Safegate about the airfield and gate management projects that are modernising African airports.

# LIGHTING THE WAY TO SAFER SOLUTIONS

**T**o enable more efficient and safer aircraft ground movement, airports need to upgrade to the right kind of systems and technologies.

Ideally, these should be the type that can be operated and maintained easily for better management and for the security and safety of passengers.

ADB Safegate has been providing airfield solutions in Africa since 1951. “We are supporting the development and modernisation of the continent’s airfield infrastructure,” said Alexander Herring, regional director for sales, Africa.

Herring said ADB has been present across the continent with a strong team of sales, service technicians, and engineers based in Johannesburg and Cape Town, as well as offices in Paris, Hamburg and Brussels. A network of authorised distributors complements this customer support structure.



“We have built up a real end-to-end approach, which encompasses all of our solutions,” said Herring as he pointed out airfield ground lighting (AGL) products and related systems, as well as gate and tower solutions, and systems integration. “We help our customers improve their airport safety, reliability and sustainability with a focus on reducing operational complexities.”

Herring is fully aware that Africa’s aviation industry is faced with a series of important challenges. As testament to this, the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), at the end of its recent World Aviation Forum (IWAF) in Abuja, Nigeria, called on people to address the challenges of financing and creating an enabling environment at all levels for the development of aviation infrastructure.

At the forum, the ICAO called for planned, strategic, consistent and long-term funding of airport infrastructure in Africa to build capacity

that would be able to process the increase in air travellers on the continent, which is projected to double from 120 million passengers in 2015 to 300 million by 2035.

Herring said airport development financing and the market remained volatile because of political, economic and environmental instability, but there was a huge potential in the various upcoming greenfield airports. “Despite the challenges Africa is facing, the long-term forecast is that growth might only be delayed but not stopped. We know that traffic is expected to grow above the industry average in the coming decade,” he stated.

Herring is also confident that African airport managements are already aware of their corporate responsibility to ensure cost-efficient, safe operations by making wise investments in facilities and technologies. “Despite the challenge of poor funding holding back African airports in terms of meeting technology needs, managements know that these efficient technologies are vital as there is no substitute to safety,” he stressed.

In May 2017, ADB Safegate announced a project to automate operations at 14 remote stands at Bole International Airport in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

The airport, operated by Ethiopian Airports Enterprise (EAE), was facing severe aircraft congestion at 14 remote stands due to limited apron space and difficult manual guiding conditions during peak hours. In an open bid, EAE decided to bring ADB on board to implement its Safedock advanced visual docking guidance systems (A-VDGS) to allow the possibility of safer and smoother operations within the apron area.

“We were very happy with this key implementation at Bole International Airport; it clearly shows the airports need to implement important efficiency gains with a focus on safety and faster turn-around times,” said Herring.

As part of the turnkey deployment, ADB

provided the masts, cabling and installation of the A-VDGS. The company said that, together with the control system, the automated solution reduces congestion caused by aircraft waiting to pull into occupied or unstaffed gates and eliminates delays that occur when marshallers are not available.

“The project has now been finalised and we are discussing further extensions,” Herring reported.

Airport lighting systems are essential for the safety and security of passengers, cargo, and aircraft. Constantly evolving technology means that airports need to meet changing safety norms set by various authorities and, in Africa, this is even more pronounced when it comes to facilitating intercontinental traffic.



ADB was also chosen to provide a new airfield lighting system at Goma International Airport in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Goma is strategically important because the airport is used by the Mission de l’Organisation des Nations unies pour la stabilisation en République démocratique du Congo (MONUSCO), a United Nations peacekeeping mission for the region.

Goma is the largest airport in the DRC and it is operated by Régie de Voies Aériennes (RVA), the Congolese airport authority.

As part of the first phase of the project, ADB Safegate provided various solutions, such as airfield lighting systems, generators, floodlights, control systems, constant current regulators and commissioning services, to configure accuracy for installed systems.

Setting up of these systems has enabled night operations, which has increased throughput at the airport.

The second phase of the project is under way with the installation of a stop bar, utilising an individual lamp monitoring and control system



**“Managements know that these efficient technologies are vital as there is no substitute to safety.”**

ALEXANDER HERRING

improve visibility with energy savings and long life, industry reports are showing that airports throughout the world are transitioning to LED-based solutions at an increasing rate.

Today, airfield ground lighting has shifted from halogen to LED lights appearing on runways and taxiways and, increasingly, that's happening across Africa.

For Tamale Airport, the turnkey project included an ASP individual lamp control and monitoring system, power distribution system, standby generators, floodlights and approach masts, as well as site management.

The airport authority wanted the airport to be ready to receive Boeing 747s operating Hajj pilgrimage flights to Mecca.



“We have a strong presence in Ghana, having already worked with GACL at Accra Kotoka International Airport, Kumasi Airport and Takoradi Airport. By equipping Tamale Airport with our airfield ground lighting, it will experience increased throughput, longer operational hours and, most importantly, night time operations,” explained Herring.

The market for commercial airport lighting is anticipated to expand at approximately 7% a year during the period from 2017 to 2022, according to industry estimates.

Considering that air transport is expected to grow significantly in Africa, investment into airfield technologies will seemingly be very necessary.

There are, of course, other solution providers. For instance, Cairo International Airport has selected OCEM Airfield Technology to supply and integrate advanced technology as part of a new runway lighting upgrade to LED lighting.

ATG Airports was also commissioned for the provision of airfield ground lighting at Moi International Airport, located on the outskirts of Mombasa in Kenya.

(ILCMS) with airfield smart power (ASP) addressable airfield lighting technology.

“The introduction of the stop bar is to increase operational safety and efficiency by relieving congestion on the taxiway and reducing the risk of runway incursions, shortening taxi time and saving on fuel,” explained Herring.

The company has, in the past, been responsible for modernising operations at other airports in the DRC including Kinshasa, Lubumbashi, Mbuji-Mayi, Kindu, Bunia, and Kisangani.

ADB has been putting much emphasis on its concept of the ‘intelligent airfield’ to transform airport operations in recent years. Herring said this ‘intelligence’ comes from the way operations are managed. “We see a strong need for

intelligent airfields, which is great because it's critical to make them safe and more efficient.”

ADB has been active in Ghana, too. The latest project involved upgrading the Tamale Airport with more efficient category II LED airfield ground lighting.

The airport was in dire need of an upgrade, as the existing narrow runway did not support night operations. “The upgrade will help accelerate growth and development of the region, setting it up as an economic hub,” said Herring. The Istanbul Ghana Airport Company Limited (GACL) operates the airport.

Airports around the world are currently upgrading to energy-efficient LED lighting systems to enhance conditions and save on operational costs. Thus, with the potential to



Has a Jordanian offshoot company got the answer to North Africa's aviation training woes? **Vincent Chappard** has been talking to senior officials at the Morocco Aviation Private Academy to find out.

# RJA academy puts Morocco back on the training MAPA

## Three questions to Captain Mohammad Khawaldeh



**Q:** Why has MAPA been set up?

**A:** The market is very promising and the need for pilots and engineers will increase. Morocco was the best choice because of the existing regulation, space and human workforce availability. We are transferring our know-how from Jordan into Morocco. The MAPA is not a branch but an investment by the Royal Jordanian Academy. It is a complete entity.

**Q:** What are your development prospects?

**A:** Initially, we are looking for the Morocco market but we have in mind 14 to 15 countries around Morocco and central and western Africa. The aviation sector is growing and there will be a need for crew and air ground crew. Also, North African countries like Algeria and Libya would need such facilities to train their pilots and their engineers.

**Q:** What does the future hold?

**A:** Aircraft fleets in North Africa are getting bigger and will continue to grow in the next decade. There will be a need for crews, pilots, technicians and engineers. We offer both French and English training in our academies. In Jordan, we have private investors from Saudi Arabia and Bahrein. We are also looking for investors in Morocco for MAPA.

As the number of students grow, we will increase our Diamond fleet and capacity.

Since the Moroccan national school for pilots closed at the end of 2014 and, following Royal Air Maroc's decision to outsource crew training at the expense of the RAM Academy, Morocco and North Africa have been facing a lack of aeronautical training in the region.

Now the Royal Jordanian Air Academy (RJA) has decided to seize the opportunity to establish itself in Morocco in line with its development strategy.

The country will, thus, be a springboard to reach the African francophone market.

"After 52 years of existence, RJA wanted to spread to North Africa," explained Captain Mohammad Khawaldeh, who is now the founder and CEO the Morocco Aviation Private Academy – a 'sister' company to RJA.

MAPA deputy director, Captain Driss Rhazi, added: "It is the ideal period to launch our academy. We want to make the MAPA a centre of excellence to meet the demand of Moroccan and African youth.

"It benefits from the expertise, the human and material means of Jordan to deliver ATO/EASA and EASA PART 147 certified training in Africa."

The Moroccan academy aims to be a regional leader in the training of pilots and mechanical engineers by attracting trainees from all over Africa.

It was established in the summer of 2016 at Benslimane International Airport (between Casablanca and Rabat). According to Rhazi, it is an ideal location as the airport has a low traffic density and an airspace with unconstrained flights.

MAPA has a fleet of eight Diamond aircraft and

two workshops for training technicians: one for type P1 (engines and airframes) and another for on-board instrumentation and avionics. It also has seven training classes, including three computer-based training (CBT) facilities with a capacity of 24 trainees per class.

The MAPA has obtained the required approvals from the Moroccan authorities and the International Civil Aviation Authority (ICAO) to train pilots and issue pilot licences. The academy is now in the process of EASA Part 147 certification.

"We hope that by the end of 2017 we will have our first class. We will open two classes for pilot and engineer courses in the coming months," said Khawaldeh.



In addition to initial or integrated training courses, the MAPA offers modular training private pilot licence (PPL) or multi-engine pilot sessions.

Its promoters have studied the market and are confident about the needs of the aviation sector for pilots and mechanical engineers. The academy relies on the experience and support of the RJA to make itself known in the region.

"We are going to deploy our training all over the African continent," said Rhazi. "We intend establishing partnerships with airlines, in particular African ones, to enable our trainees to pilot their aircraft."

The MAPA hopes to be a centre of excellence in aeronautical training at the national and regional level, especially in Africa in the coming years, and to be responsive to the needs of African youth.



Captain Driss Rhazi: "It is the ideal period to launch our academy. We want to make the MAPA a centre of excellence to meet the demand of Moroccan and African youth."

## SOMMAIRE

# DÉCOLLAGE IMMINENT POUR LA MAPA

Le capitaine Mobammad Khawaldeh, fondateur et PDG de la Royal Jordanian Academy, s'apprête à lancer la Morocco Air Private Academy. Un projet régional tant attendu comme nous le dit **Vincent Chappard**.

Le Maroc et l'Afrique du Nord ont grandement besoin d'une école de formation aéronautique. Cette situation a créé une véritable opportunité pour la Royal Jordanian Academy (RJA) qui, forte de ses 52 ans d'existence, a décidé de s'implanter au Maroc.

Ce projet, en droit fil avec sa stratégie de développement, permettra au pays d'utiliser le Maroc comme un tremplin pour accéder à la région.

« Nous bénéficions de l'expertise, des moyens humains et matériels de la Jordanie pour développer la première école de formation certifiée ATO/EASA et EASA PART 147 en Afrique », a déclaré le capitaine Driss Rhazi, directeur adjoint de la MAPA.

La MAPA compte être un leader régional en matière de formation des pilotes de ligne et des ingénieurs mécaniciens.

Créée en été 2016, la MAPA est basée à l'aéroport international de Benslimane. Elle dispose d'une flotte de 8 avions Diamond et de 2 ateliers de travaux pratiques pour la formation des techniciens. Elle compte également 7 classes de formation.

La MAPA a reçu les agréments des autorités marocaines et de l'OACI pour former les pilotes et délivrer les licences de pilotes. La MAPA est aujourd'hui en plein processus de certification Part 147 de l'EASA.

« Nous souhaitons ouvrir deux salles pour la formation des pilotes et des ingénieurs le mois prochain », affirme le capitaine Khawaldeh.

La MAPA compte, en plus de la formation initiale ou intégrée, proposer des formations modulaires (PPL) ou des sessions de perfectionnement pour les pilotes (Multi Engine Pilot).

La MAPA compte ainsi devenir un centre d'excellence de formation aéronautique sur le plan national et régional surtout en Afrique dans les prochaines années et être à la hauteur de la jeunesse africaine.

## 3 questions au capitaine Mohammad Khawaldeh

**Q:** Pourquoi la MAPA ?

**A:** La RJA est une académie de premier plan au Moyen-Orient et en Afrique du Nord. Nous voulons nous développer en Afrique du Nord et sur le continent. Le marché est très prometteur. Le Maroc est le meilleur choix par rapport à la réglementation, la capacité et la main d'œuvre. Nous transférons notre savoir-faire de la Jordanie au Maroc.

**Q:** Quel est votre projet de développement en Afrique ?

**A:** Dans un premier temps, nous prospectons le marché marocain mais nous ciblons 14 à 15 pays autour du Maroc et de l'Afrique centrale et occidentale qui auront besoin de former leur personnel navigant et au sol. Les pays d'Afrique du Nord comme l'Algérie et la Libye auront également besoin d'une telle académie pour former leurs pilotes et ingénieurs.

**Q:** Quelles sont les perspectives de la RJA et la MAPA ?

**A:** Je vois un avenir prometteur. Le marché se développe au Moyen-Orient et en Afrique. Les flottes d'avions s'agrandissent en Afrique du Nord et continueront de croître au cours des 10 prochaines années. Il y aura donc un besoin de PNC, de pilotes, de techniciens et d'ingénieurs.



**Kaleyesus Bekele** *explains why an East African flight school is luring cadets from other parts of the continent.*

# School puts life saving in a class of its own



**Captain Girma Gebre:** “We are confident that our pilots can go to any part of the world and be competitive enough to find jobs.”

**A**fter serving with Ethiopian Airlines for more than 39 years as a commercial pilot, Captain Mulat Lemlemayehu was pondering how best to serve his country once he retired.

Staying in aviation seemed logical so, when he finally stepped down in 2014, the man who had flown everything from a DC3 to a B787 Dreamliner established East African Aviation, a company providing air ambulance and charter flight services as well as a pilot training school.

The Addis Ababa-based company acquired a King Air 350 aircraft for the medevac and charter flight operations. Fully equipped with all the required emergency medical equipment and licensed medical doctors and nurses, East African Aviation became the first air ambulance service provider in Ethiopia.

Three years on, East African Aviation general manager, Captain Girma Gebre, said the company ferries critically ill people, or those who have sustained injuries, either to Addis Ababa or on to modern hospitals in Nairobi, Johannesburg, Dubai or Riyadh.

“We have agreements with local insurance companies in Ethiopia and Rak Hospital in Dubai,” he said. “We are proud that we are saving so many lives.”

The East African Pilot Training School became operational in 2015. It has acquired a pair of Cessna 172

Sky Hawk glass cockpit trainer aircraft and a fully automated full-motion simulator fitted with a Garmin 1000 glass cockpit. Located near the Addis Ababa Bole International Airport, it has qualified instructors, who have many years of experience at the Ethiopian Airlines Aviation Academy and the Ethiopian Air Force.

The school has classrooms, dormitories, a canteen, a simulator room, a briefing room and a library. It can accommodate 25 cadets at a time.

Certified by the Ethiopian Civil Aviation Authority (ECAA), the East African Civil Aviation Pilot Training School offers private pilot licence (PPL), commercial pilot license (CPL), multi-engine rating, instrument rating, and trains flight instructors and operational control officers (dispatchers).

“We have a proficiency-based curriculum,” Gebre explained. A PPL course takes six months and 60 hours of flight time. There is a \$16,000 tuition fee for each cadet. CPL courses take 15 months and 220 flight hours with a fee of \$53,000. The fees do not include boarding expenses.

Gebre said the school has trained more than 20 cadets from Yemen, Sudan, South Sudan and Congo Brazzaville. “We also have cadets from Ethiopia. We have partners in Rwanda and are trying to set up a training centre in Kigali,” he added. “Now we are promoting and advertising our pilot training school in Sudan, South Sudan, Rwanda, Congo Brazzaville, and the DRC. We are trying to attract more trainees from these countries through their embassies in Addis Ababa.”



There are some challenges, however. Gebre explained that some Ethiopian parents asked if the company would offer them jobs after graduation. “East African Aviation has hired some of our graduates but we cannot guarantee employment for all,” he said. “But, since we offer a quality training programme, we are confident that our pilots can go to any part of the world and be competitive enough to find jobs.”

The other major challenge is the congestion at Bole International Airport, where there is only one runway. “The trainer aircraft are told to hold by the air traffic controllers until the big airliners have cleared off. The problem is not only with the runway, but also the airspace is congested with large and small aircraft. The problem is not peculiar to East African Aviation; the Ethiopian Aviation Academy faces similar challenges. So we are forced to do the flight training at regional airports.”

Currently, the East African Aviation Pilot Training School conducts flight training at Arba Minch Airport, 221 miles south of Addis Ababa.

“Apart from this challenge, we are doing our business smoothly,” said Gebre. “We believe we are successful in offering international standard medevac, charter flight services and pilot training programmes. The Ethiopian Civil Aviation Authority’s assistance has been very much appreciated.”

President Edgar Lungu with Air Force Commander Lt Gen Eric Chimese inspect the assets at the opening of the new training centre.



PICTURE: EDDIE MWANALEZA

## PRESIDENTIAL PRAISE FOR THE ZAF'S NEW PILOT TRAINER

*Training for Zambian Air Force pilots has been given a major boost with the help of China's AVIC.*

**Humphrey Nkonde reports.**

**T**he Zambia Air Force (ZAF) has a new multi-million-dollar three-storey simulator that can be used to train military pilots without them going into the air.

The facility, located at the L-15 Training Centre in Lusaka, has been constructed by China's National Aero-Construction Import and Export Corporation (CALTIC).

CALTIC falls under the umbrella of Aviation Industry Corporation (AVIC), which is constructing the new \$397 million Copperbelt International Airport in Ndola.

The ZAF has an ambitious programme of constructing office buildings, aircraft hangars, mess facilities and roads at air bases throughout the country.

Acquiring this modern infrastructure is in line with the ZAF's vision of having a lean, well-equipped, well-trained, professional and efficient tactical air force that is capable of responding to the air power needs of the 21st century.

Zambia has built the simulator in light of the country's growing economy, using finance from both local and foreign investors. However, its construction comes amid growing security concerns.

Using the simulator is expected to not only save on fuel costs associated with airborne aircraft operations but also enhance air safety standards.

The Government plans to replicate the simulator at other ZAF bases throughout the country.

The new Lusaka training facility was officially opened on September 5, 2017, by commander in chief, President Edgar Lungu.

"I am happy that the new developments in the ZAF have been coupled with specialist training for our pilots, engineers, technicians and information technologists in China," he said. "It is also gratifying to note that systems in the simulator centre are capable of monitoring the aircraft from the ground and make it possible for ground crew to easily detect faults and rectify them."

The president added that with Zambia's economic growth, coupled with investments by local and foreign investors, there was a need for more modern defence systems.

He said his government was committed to equipping the defence forces with modern equipment to address new security challenges.

"A long time ago, such programmes were directly funded by the government but lately the alternatives are public private partnerships (PPPs) like the one between the ZAF and CALTIC," said the president.

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In general terms, infrastructure development is one of the priorities that have been highlighted in Zambia's vision 2030 and the seventh national development that runs for five years from 2017 to 2021.

"Infrastructure is central to our country achieving sustainable socio-economic development," President Lungu said. "It is for this reason that my Government will ensure that we have cutting-edge infrastructure in the ZAF in line with our modernisation programme."

He commended CALTIC for facilitating the transfer of the state-of-the-art technology from China to defence forces in Zambia.

Apart from constructing the simulator, CALTIC has assisted Zambia to build the L-15 hangar at the ZAF base in Lusaka.

President Lungu said CALTIC was a committed partner in its projects of modernising and equipping the security and defence wings in Zambia.

"I also wish to pay growing tribute to CALTIC for being active in its corporate social responsibility by rendering support to the construction of the ZAF Hospital out-patient department, which I officially opened last year," President Lungu concluded.



ACI Africa Secretary General Ali Tounsi makes remarks at the opening session.



*There were 2,300 attendees, 165 registered exhibitors and 300 key aviation and non-aviation-related players taking part in the 1st Aerospace Aviation Exhibition & Conference of West Africa, dubbed 'The African Airshow'.*

**Chukwu Emeke** reports.

# How the West was won

**C**onnecting professionals across all areas of the industry with the African market was the theme as the inaugural 'African Airshow' took place at Kotoka International Airport (KIA) in Accra, Ghana from October 24 to 26.

Business networking, interaction and the signing of deals were features at the exhibition stands, while the conference panel sessions provided the platform for experienced industry practitioners to make presentations and provoke debates in search of sustainable solutions to the challenges confronting Africa's aviation sector.

Ghanaian President, His Excellency Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, opened the show.

Ministers in charge of air transport from Egypt and Niger also attended, along with representatives of the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO), the African Civil Aviation Commission (AFCAC), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the African Airlines Association (AFRAA), Airports Council International (ACI) and the International Air Transport Association (IATA).

In his opening speech, the president expressed concerns regarding the challenges of air travel connectivity in Africa, stating that his Government was committed to implementation

of the Yamoussoukro Declaration (YD). He expressed confidence that the show would create investment opportunities and avenues for aircraft fleet modernisation, mobilisation, networking and other activities that could help connect Ghana to the other parts of the world, making its aviation sector competitive in the global market.

Ghana's Minister of Aviation, Cecilia Abena Dapaah, said the event was targeted at overall development of civil aviation in the West African sub-region, while attracting more investors and development to KIA and the entire aviation industry in Ghana.



The importance of enhancing safety and security at African airports in pursuit of aviation hub status was evaluated in one of the events major conference sessions.

Airport certification is significant in the pursuit of safety, according to Ali Tounsi, ACI's secretary general. It is aimed at ensuring that the hazards that can lead to accidents are reduced. "Before an accident happens, there are hundreds of incidents that occur. Such incidents should be prevented," he said.

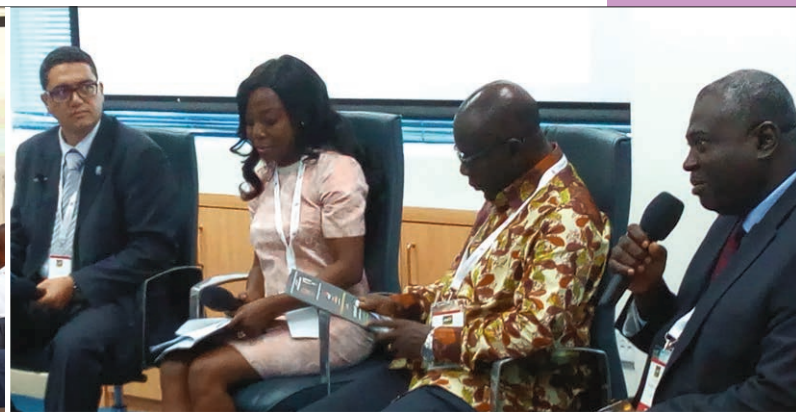
There was good news in the fact that West African countries like Nigeria, Ghana and Cape Verde, had certified airports. "Back in 2011, five countries had records of a safety culture, as against more than 20 countries that are presently committed to it," noted Daniel Acquah, director, safety regulations for the Ghana Civil Aviation Authority (GCAA).

Domestication of ICAO annexes by member states, provision of adequate funds by authorities, training, and the adequacy of safety personnel, were identified as key drivers towards aviation hub status.

Security is of great concern in Africa as only 20% of airports have effective security, according to an ACI study.

Since 50% of security has to do with observation, vigilance was advocated, alongside the building of confidence for information volunteers. Better collaboration by airport security agencies, public enlightenment, adequate finance and personnel training, were also advocated by panellists.

Adefunke Adeyemi, IATA's regional head, member & external relations, Africa/Middle East, moderated a session on building a supportive regulatory regime and set the tone by emphasising the problems of high taxes and



Sessions at the conference and, top right, one of the sessions featured, from left: Ali Tounsi, Secretary General, ACI Africa; Irene D. K. Arthur of UK's AAIB; Grp. Capt. Emmanue Kommeng of Ghana CAA and Daniel Acquah, Director, Safety Regulation, GCAA at the panel session on Enhancing Aviation Safety & Security At African Airports.

# over by Ghana's show

charges on airlines' growth by reeling out stunning statistics.

Although the governments of Senegal and Ghana were commended for waiving certain taxes and charges, airlines were urged to reciprocate with reduced air fares.

However, John Okwesie Arthur, group executive, finance, Ghana Airport Company Limited (GACL), maintained that poor business planning and management were other factors responsible for airline failures and that the blame should not be heaped only on airport charges.

Considering the rate at which airlines have continued to collapse over the years in West Africa, while those attempting survival have been weighed down by high charges for fuel, and maintenance, among other issues, there was a consensus that regulatory authorities should review existing taxes and charges to encourage growth.

It was reported that 180 airports in the 54 African states have been declared as international facilities, while 55 in 26 states are certified aerodromes. Some 125 in 28 states are non-certified aerodromes.

According to Mam Sait Jallow, ICAO regional director, West and Central Africa, 12 African airports would have been certified under the

aviation safety in Africa (AFI) plan by the end of 2017, although he informed panellists that "it is the responsibility of a state to declare its airport international when standards are met".

There were calls to address the challenges of lack of qualified CAA personnel and aerodrome operators, compliance of aerodromes with ICAO standards and recommended practices (SARPs), and enforcement of punishment for lowering of certification standards by certified aerodromes.



Do all air travellers have to be subjected to all screening inconveniences at all airports because of growing security threats and terrorist activities? That was one of the major topics discussed under the 'passenger facilitation solutions' heading.

Panellists assessed the impact of such processes on tourism interests and emphasised the need for more passenger education and pre-travel information on passenger processing facilitation requirements at various airports.

As for private charter flight travellers, the common user facility has to remain to sustain basic international travel facilitation rules of immigration, custom processes and so on.

Samson Fatokun, IATA's area manager, South West Africa, informed the audience that IATA and ACI were jointly working on a study regarding the possibility of categorising passengers in such a way that not everyone would have to be subjected to all hazards of security checks.

In another debate, the need for countries to establish autonomous CAAs and the importance of separating airport operators from regulators had informed Ghana's decision to decouple the agency, according to Simon Allotey, director general, Ghana CAA. He identified the source of funding for a separate airport agency as an initial fear that was eventually overcome.

Participants resolved that, since airports were significant safety concerns, airports certification that constitutes part of regulatory activities required commitment of every industry player.

Even though initiatives for certification should come from the airports, most in Africa are owned by governments, many of which may not, on their own, appreciate the importance of certification. Airlines and other players, therefore, needed to collaboratively push for certification and effective regulation measures in the interest of overall safety.

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on Page 89



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During the public-private partnership (PPP) and viability of African airports debate, there was an argument on the definition of viable airport as against ACI's 500,000 passengers, which eventually qualified an airport for PPP.

"Your visibility study report should be your benchmark. If a 100,000 passenger airport can give you your margin in the venture, you can embark on it," believed Patrick Asamoah, treasurer, GACL.

There was the issue of cost burden that comes with PPP as concessionaires usually increase taxes and charges when they link up; a situation that passengers detest, not because of its existence but because the taxes are often diverted to other sectors of the economy.

PPP might not be necessary where corporate governance works, argued Asamoah. "GACL has been able to generate \$400 million to improve the airport, even as a government agency. What is the need for PPP where corporate governance is working in government? Ghana's government recently directed that all taxes from the aviation sector should be ploughed into airports development. This is government support needed for the system," he said.



Participants also discussed the issue of the proliferation of airports in Africa, most of which were established for political reasons, and the need for categorisation of airport types, as not all airports needed facilities for all types of flight.

There was resolution that PPP could be a viable option for airports development but that the engagement process must be transparent whenever the approach was adopted.

"The only problem with PPP projects in Africa is failure to comply with agreements. The goalposts are moved and the investor is left with a big burden," stated Jari Williams, chief operating officer, MMA2, Lagos.

According to IATA's Adeyemi, who moderated the session on enhancing socio-economic development via improved air transport connectivity and tourism, Africa has more than 1.2 billion people and air passenger numbers are forecast to grow to 300 million by 2035. The projected annual growth rate for international traffic by region (2014-2034) is 5.4% and six of the 13 fastest growing economies in the world are in Africa, with a growing young and middle-class population. So, the need to encourage easy movement by air, and to open up African skies by ensuring YD implementation, is obvious.

"There is need for cooperation among African airlines to get a win-win situation," said Iyabo Sosina, secretary general, AFCAC.

"Even if we open up our skies and close our airports, it doesn't give us easy movement that we want," noted Elijah Chingosho of AFRAA.

Delegates also stressed the

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## Pricing and fuel availability key to growth

Captain Samuel Thomson, chief operating officer for African World Airlines (AWA), is highly positive about the future for Ghana's aviation market.

"We see it is improving in terms of passenger traffic and passengers wanting to fly to destinations. As people get used to flying more often, we also want to improve services because it is good to offer them what they want.

"We think the West African market is there. We just have to take advantage and ensure that we have the right equipment to provide the right service to the people."

At the beginning of 2017, the airline had three leased aeroplanes, which had increased to six by October. "We intend to have 10 aircraft by the end of 2017 or early 2018," stated Thomson.

AWA is the dominant Ghana-registered airline operating the Lagos-Accra route, competing with the likes of Nigeria's Med-View Airline, Arik Air and Air Peace.

"We believe that providing a good service on that route will give us the required number of passengers that we want," said Thomson.

The airline is looking to take advantage of international partnerships and alliances, which Thomson describes as "part of our strategy". In this regard, registration for membership of International Air Transport Association (IATA) has started.

A major challenge that AWA wants to see West African aviation authorities address, is the issue of pricing and availability of jet fuel at airports in the sub-region.

"It is disheartening when you are told that fuel is not available at the station that you go to. You then cut



Captain Samuel Thomson: "We think the West African market is there."

down on your passenger load because you have to pay to get fuel and all that. We hope the price will be made more steady and the availability will be there," said Thomson.

He also called for a downward review of regulatory charges and improvement in airport facilities. "It is not proper to see that there is delay of 20 minutes because of airport facilities. The facilities should improve to enable the passengers to travel as seamlessly as possible," he concluded.

## Liberia working towards drone registration



Richelieu Williams: "I think it is bad for a country to register drones without having experts on drones."

The Liberia Civil Aviation Authority (LCAA) has revealed that it is not yet ready to register remotely piloted aircraft systems (RPAS) or drones.

LCAA director general, Richelieu Williams, said: "We don't register drones. We only register an aircraft if we have the capacity to supervise it and know about it. We don't have experts on registering drones. I think it is bad for a country to register drones without having experts on drones."

The agency has, however, started training some of its engineers and air worthiness inspectors on drones registration and hopes to start registration once there is sufficient capacity.

According to Williams, deliberate efforts are in place to avoid compromise of air safety standards in the country, while the regulator has started developing regulations for the air cargo sub-sector.

Despite its determination to liberalise that sub-sector, it would have to wait for development of the regulations before approving more cargo operators.

"We have DHL coming in and we will work with other different carriers but we must have some regulations to do that. We must have expertise to do the evaluation," he said.

Liberia, which has Oral Roberts International Airport as its major airport, is targeting a 20% traffic growth in the coming year. To boost traffic, the CAA has embarked on tourist registration and is looking at possibility of safaris in future.

"If you don't have any attractions like that, tourists are not going to come and airport traffic may not grow as expected. There has to be something to attract people," noted Williams.



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 89

need for improved marketing of African airports, a review of high airport charges and taxes, categorisation of hotel classes to encourage more travellers, encouragement of low-cost carriers by CAAs, and general efforts to reduce costs for airports.

According to Chamsou Andjorin, Boeing International sub-Sahara Africa director, studies show that average connectivity within Africa is 9%. Highest connectivity within Africa is 42%, as against EU's 58%.

Poor connectivity within the continent has been attributed to failure by airlines to take advantage of the Cape Town Convention, while wrong choice of aircraft was largely blamed on failure of airlines to define business models before operations commencement.

Africa as a maturing economy with diverse categories of air passengers requiring on-time departure, efficiency and safe flights, would require various aircraft types. Less than 5% of city pairs can afford 50 passengers per day but inter-country connections might require big aeroplanes. So, choice of aircraft type must be dictated by business model.



Captain Samuel Thompson, chief operating officer, African World Airlines (AWA) had some sound advice about leasing: "Before you lease, do a market survey on cost. Knowing what the market rates are, you should be able to negotiate a good lease rate. Aircraft leasing is a bit complex. If you are not careful, you may end up paying for things not initially considered like power-by-the-hour, maintenance cost, etc. You must be thorough and have good understanding of aircraft leasing."

With the ICAO predicting a global shortage of pilots and aircraft maintenance personnel, panellists frowned at the fact that there was only one pilot training school in West Africa – the Nigerian College of Aviation Technology (NCAT) in Zaria – despite that fact that the industry is growing faster than it can churn out professional personnel.

The conflict between availability of jobs for professionals and the unacceptable welfare package for existing professionals was equally discussed, and it was resolved that: "It will take a lot of government involvement to resolve this emergency in Africa."

The event was rounded off with a gala dinner at the State House in Accra. "We expect this air show to bring a lot of business, make the world aware of Ghana and put us on the world map," said John Attafuah, managing director, GACL "I hope that we will repeat this, maybe in the next two years, and put Ghana on the aviation exhibition map."

■ **African Aerospace understands that talks have begun with organisations in Nigeria about the possibility of hosting the next edition.**



## A captain of industry...

Asamoah Gyan, the captain of Black Stars Football Club of Ghana, the country's national football team, has obtained an air carrier licence for the establishment of a commercial airline called Baby Jet Airlines.

Ghanaian president, Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, said he was enthused about the development.

He called on Ghanaians, both home and abroad, to take advantage of the prevailing friendly environment and invest in the rapidly growing aviation sector, adding that the Government had successfully created the right conditions for the private sector to thrive in the industry in order to propel growth and create employment, especially for the youth.

## Boeing's mission to boost West Africa

Boeing perceives the fact that West Africa's aviation market is not growing as fast as expected as one of its major concerns. Now it intends to assist in addressing the problem, according to Chamsou Andjorin, Boeing International sub-Sahara Africa director.

"It is not only about competing with current players, but also helping the market to grow. It will have more benefits for us than competing only in an existing market," he said.

The manufacturer, which has around 250 aircraft with West African operators, including about 100 various B737 versions, is equally worried about the difficulties experienced by airlines in the region in their attempt to access aircraft finance.

Such difficulties are linked to the fact that the dialogue between the operators and the financiers is not well established. Most of the airlines don't necessarily have the right business plans to attract the financiers and this creates the need for harmonisation between the operators, the financiers and market dynamics, "so that we can have a comprehensive solution in place".

"Choosing the right aircraft is very important," said Andjorin. "So, our mission is to educate our partner

airlines on the tools that are available today. The 737 MAX is for regional operations, while the 787 is for long-haul operations. It has tremendous potential for cost reduction and helps the airlines to be more successful in their operations.

"This is something that they need to understand. They also need to have better understanding of the market; where to fly to and how often. These are studies that we are partnering with them to develop so that they understand the networking and trip planning exercise."

Boeing is currently discussing with some West African airlines the possibility of new deals, with confidence that "the MAX" will continue the legacy of the 737s and take the market to the next level.

"Africa has a lot of potential; it has 12% of world population but only 2.3% of the aviation market on the global economy," said Andjorin. "If we can work together with the governments to have the right policies in

place, work with the industry and have the right standards in place as we are currently doing, while allowing the market to grow, it will be beneficial for all of us."



Chamsou Andjorin: "It is not only about competing with current players, but also helping the market to grow."

## IATA, ECOWAS, push for review of airport charges

The International Air Transport Association (IATA) and Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) have advocated a review of various existing airport taxes and charges to enable growth of the aviation sector in Africa.

According to Adefunke Adeyemi, IATA's regional head, member & external relations, Africa/Middle East, airport charges are 20% higher in Africa than in other parts of the world. An IATA study has identified 97 different taxes that African governments impose on service providers.

She says the three highest airport charges in the world are in West Africa, even though the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) has, through the Chicago Convention and policy on charges, attempted to prevent excessive taxation and charges on the industry to enable it to grow.

Adeyemi urged West African governments to adopt aviation as a key economic component in Africa in order to ensure easy movement across the sub-region.

*Airports of Mauritius (AML) “proudly and efficiently” hosted the 27th Airports Council International (ACI) Africa/World annual general assembly, conference and exhibition.*  
**Anuradha Deenapanray and Vincent Chappard** report.

# MASEKO – THE HISTORY MAN

«L'Afrique à la tête d'ACI World» – Page 92

**B**ongani Maseko, CEO and executive director of the Airports Company South Africa, made history when he took over the chairmanship of ACI World from Declan Collier, CEO London City Airport.

It is the first time that a representative from Africa has occupied the position of chairman.

“This shows that Africa is equally capable and confirms that the continent is making its mark at the global level,” said Maseko.

Collier will be a tough act to follow. Angela Gittens, director general, ACI World, made a point of praising him for his guidance.

The 27th ACI gathering coincided with the 50th anniversary of Air Mauritius.

“This conference is, therefore, a unique milestone and opportunity for our country to proudly showcase the progress achieved in the aviation sector,” said Pravind Jugnauth, the Prime Minister of Mauritius. He added that “a bold vision” was the only way to enable Mauritius to play its role in a competitive environment.

More than 500 aviation professionals were gathered for this first ACI conference organised in the country.



The theme, *Bold Leadership In Time Of Change*, reflected the trend over the past years. As Dr Olumuyiwa Benard Aliu, president of the ICAO council, pointed out, there’s a need “to confront and manage the challenges of sectorial growth together”.

Safety was one of the conference’s main themes.

Sharing the safety culture is crucial, stressed Charles Hanson Adu, deputy managing director, technical and operations, Ghana Airports Company. His organisation has invested substantially in training, the enhancement of professionalism, and the development of protocols and promotion policies.

As SV Arunachalam, general manager, daily operations at Bangalore International Airport, rightly pointed out, safety brings efficiency. “To manage the complexities you should have an airport operation centre to manage capacity (zone-wise), predictability, punctuality and maintenance.”

As a technological and IT hub, India wants to collect proper data and manage it efficiently.

Through a case study presentation, Gilles Darriau, Abidjan International Airport CEO, reported how a review had provided a comprehensive gap analysis that set a path for the implementation of safety recommendations in line with the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) standards and the ACI best practices.

David Gamper, director, safety, technical and legal



**“This shows that Africa is equally capable and confirms that the continent is making its mark at the global level.”**

**BONGANI MASEKO**



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 91

affairs, ACI World, addressed important airport challenges like capacity and navigation constraints, accommodating the new larger aircraft, impact operations and the link between airport design and traffic growth management.

Romesh Bhoyroo, AML CEO, explained how leaders could foster a world class safety culture. For him safety was not a goal but a journey.

As Nina Brooks, head security, ACI World and Rishi Thakurdin, director safety, technical and legal, ACI Africa, showed, the higher the level of compliance and investment, the bigger the benefits.

Panellists unanimously showed how safety was good for business, "an aspect sometimes neglected in institutional arrangements or when looking at safety budgets or business cases".

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At the dawn of a new era in civil aviation and with innovation in IT and new technologies, cyber security is becoming a growing threat. Global collaboration between governments and stakeholders should be strengthened, stated Dr Olumuyiwa Benard Aliu. He called upon the aviation community to reduce security threats, while enhancing customer service.

ACI has an IT security benchmarking tool to help airports tackle this "growing issue".

Turning to innovation and IT trends, by 2020 almost all airports will have self-service activities. The trend is towards integrated, interactive and intelligent airports with emerging technologies and R&D-focused programmes.

ACI's world business partners, from well-established to entrepreneurial start-ups, shared their in-depth understanding of daily demands and their expertise as solution providers tailored to the sector.



From left: Angela Gittens (director general, ACI World), Romesh Bhoyroo (CEO, AML) and Ali Tounsi (secretary general, ACI Africa).

Catherine Mayer, VP, airport services, SITA, said that airport IT expenditure would be more than \$8.4 billion in 2017 and that "technology and airport development go hand in hand".

Pablo Reich, Arconas executive VP, closed the session by showcasing the new evolving airport terminal concept for a maximised passenger experience and enhanced comfort through technology integration. He estimated that, by 2040, 18% of travellers would be retired.

Every year around 600,000 individual surveys are carried out in 42 languages in 85 countries under the ASQ programme.

It collects passenger views on 34 key performance indicators including airport access, check-in, security screening, cleanliness of restrooms, stores and restaurants etc.

ASQ awards were presented to the best airports as determined by their passengers in the survey. The awards are categorised to reflect and

recognise the efforts of large and small airports in different regions. This year there were 91 winners, the largest group ever.

"These airports have dedicated themselves to deliver a stellar customer experience. Promoting a culture of continuous service improvement has become a matter of gaining competitive advantage and optimising non-aeronautical revenue performance," said Gittens.

Non-aeronautical sources of income, which now represent 40% of total airport revenues, can ensure profitability and support airport development.

Tunde Oyekola, CEO El Mansour Group, spoke of new airport city concepts, whereby an efficient use and management of land around airports can bring high returns. For example, Denver Airport works with farmers.

The forum addressing this issue was an important component of the ACI conference, as many airports, especially in Africa, face funding problems. It enabled

SOMMAIRE

# L'AFRIQUE À LA TÊTE D'ACI WORLD

*Airports of Mauritius (AML) a accueilli «fièrement» et «efficacement» la 27ème ACI Africa/World AGA Conference & Exhibition en octobre dernier. Un compte-rendu de Vincent Chappard et Anuradha Deenapanray.*

C'est la première fois qu'un représentant de l'Afrique est à la tête d'ACI World. Bongani Maseko, PDG et directeur exécutif de Airports Company South Africa, a succédé à Declan Collier, PDG de London City Airport, qui a été félicité par Angela Gittens, directrice générale d'ACI World.

« Cela montre que l'Afrique est tout aussi capable et confirme que l'Afrique marque continuellement ses empreintes au niveau mondial », a déclaré Bongani Maseko à African Aerospace.

Le Premier ministre mauricien, Pravind Jugnauth a affirmé qu'« une vision audacieuse est le seul moyen de permettre à Maurice de jouer son rôle dans un

environnement compétitif ».

Le thème, Bold leadership in time of change, reflète la tendance des dernières années. Selon le Dr Olumuyiwa Benard Aliu, Président du Conseil de l'OACI, il est nécessaire de « confronter et gérer ensemble les défis de la croissance sectorielle ».

Outre l'exposition réunissant les fournisseurs de solutions adaptées, la conférence a été ponctuée de plusieurs sessions thématiques.

Le programme APEX d'ACI apporte un soutien technique et professionnel aux aéroports et rassemble les acteurs de l'aviation dans un but commun de préservation de la sécurité.

□□□□

Les PDG ont expliqué comment les leaders peuvent favoriser une culture de sécurité. La sécurité n'est pas un but mais un voyage.

Les experts ont unanimement montré que la sécurité est bonne pour les entreprises, « un aspect parfois négligé » au niveau institutionnel ou « dans les budgets de sécurité ou encore les analyses de rentabilité ».

La cybersécurité devient une menace croissante pour l'industrie. La collaboration mondiale entre les gouvernements et les parties prenantes doit être renforcée a insisté le Dr Olumuyiwa Benard Aliu.

La tendance est aux aéroports intégrés, interactifs et intelligents avec des technologies émergentes et des programmes axés sur la R&D.

Les ASQ Awards ont été décernés aux meilleurs aéroports selon les données recueillies auprès des passagers. Les prix sont catégorisés pour reconnaître les efforts des grands et petits aéroports dans



The venue all set for the ACI conference.

stakeholders involved in commercial activities to exchange knowledge on developing activities at African and international airports.

Zouhair Mohamed El Aoufir, ONDA (Morocco) CEO, showed how airport concessions could generate revenues to reinvest in modernisation and construction programmes.

There was much consensus on the need for private/public partnership.

Meanwhile, the conference also looked at connectivity, taxes and sustainable tourism.

Airline connectivity is crucial for large and small airports to serve communities, regions and countries. As Toby Nicol, executive director, Uniting Travel underlined: "In an island economy, international connectivity is vital."

The conference highlighted the importance of networking to maintain connectivity and sustain smaller airports in remote areas like Africa or India. Guruprasad Mohapatra, chairman of

Airports of India, explained the Indian Government's policy to safeguard the national carrier's interest in a very competitive environment.

Vijay Poonoosamy, CEO, Etihad Airways, raised the issue of open skies and protectionism.

Jacques Follain, deputy executive officer, Aéroports de Paris International, said that "when you open the skies it will give you more opportunities and help airport development. This will also enable your national airline to compete with others".

The Mauritian Minister of Tourism, Anil Gayan, explained that with Mauritius being an island, there was a need to attract people from long distances. "We need a gradual opening of the skies to prevent too much competition and sustain our tourism sector."



Panellists also showed how charges are often too fragmented. "In India, there's a regulator to whom the operator goes before deciding the rate of charges," said Mohapatra.

In Africa, like in other regions, connectivity affects trade and tourism. Therefore, an increase in taxes has a direct impact on traffic development.

Governments and stakeholders should therefore ensure "a fair process to enable the most common person to fly".

The environment forum provided practical examples of how airports are managing new environmental challenges by investing in biofuels, data management, sound pollution, waste water management and wildlife protection.

It also released the airport carbon and emissions reporting tool (ACERT) version 5.0, initially developed by Transport Canada. It is distributed to airports free by ACI to help them manage their CO2 emissions and progressively plan their emission reduction targets. The tool is compatible with all levels of airport accreditation.

The 2018 ACI Africa Regional General Assembly, Conference & Exhibition will be held in Lagos, Nigeria.

## Three questions to Angela Gittens, director general, ACI World



**Q: Is ACI satisfied with decisions taken in Mauritius?**

**A: The world's airports accomplished much in a short period in Mauritius and I'd like to reiterate my gratitude to AML for being such a gracious host. In addition to the comprehensive programme, the ACI World Assembly took resolutions to ensure a safe and sustainable future for the world's airports and the communities they serve.**

**Q: The aviation industry is changing at a very rapid pace. How can a bold leadership help airports face new challenges?**

**A: Whatever causes the changes, airports must react to them. Airports play a crucial role in the economic and social health of communities and countries, regions and the world at a large, and we must craft a strategy for their sustainable development to continue their benefits and help them compete with others. Be it small or large airports, as a leader you are required to satisfy the demands for your community and, therefore, you need to attract and retain the various entities, especially airlines, and you need to have space for facilities. You also need to show empathy. You'd better be bold.**

**Q: Does Bongani Maseko's election reflect the growing importance of Africa in the aviation industry?**

**A: It's absolutely the message. We have had African leaders heading the ACI Africa region but they didn't stay long enough to take leadership positions at the international level. That is a problem in Africa.**

différentes régions. Cette année, il y a eu un record avec 91 gagnants.

Un autre élément important de la conférence, les sources de revenus non aéronautiques qui peuvent assurer la rentabilité et soutenir le développement des aéroports.

Autres questions abordées : le protectionnisme, la libéralisation de l'espace aérien et la connectivité.



Les intervenants ont également montré comment les charges sont souvent « fragmentées ».

En Afrique, comme dans d'autres régions, la connectivité affecte le commerce et le tourisme. Par conséquent, une augmentation des taxes a un impact direct sur le développement du trafic.

Le forum sur l'environnement a fourni des exemples pratiques de la façon dont les aéroports gèrent les nouveaux défis environnementaux.

Selon Angela Gittens, les aéroports du monde ont fait des avancées à Maurice. Des résolutions ont été prises pour assurer un avenir sûr et durable aux aéroports du monde et aux communautés qu'ils servent.



# On board with quality

*Systems manufacturer Liebherr-Aerospace enjoys an unblemished reputation for quality, thanks to hard work, continuous investment and a long-term vision. **Chuck Grieve** has been finding out more.*

**T**he factories of Liebherr-Aerospace in Germany and France are spotless, modern and well organised – just like the company itself.

Liebherr, the family-owned group with interests ranging from aerospace and construction to hotels and household appliances, is a progressive organisation with a long-term approach to business and customer relationships. Its aerospace division, established in 1960, is one of the world's leading suppliers in this competitive sector.

“We are one of the few worldwide companies able to provide full systems to our airframer customers,” said Josef Gropper, managing director and chief operating officer for production, purchasing and asset investments.

Liebherr concentrates on five areas: air management, flight control and actuation, landing gear, gears and gearboxes, and electronics.

Its systems fly on wide-bodied aircraft, commuter aircraft, regional jets, business jets, military aircraft and helicopters of almost all major airframers. “We are on board most of the major aircraft programmes launched over the last 20 years,” said Gropper.

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In terms of volume, the Airbus A320 is the most important of the many current programmes for Liebherr. It is also on the Boeing 777X, Bombardier C-Series, Embraer E-Jet, and the Rolls-Royce UltraFan programmes, the latter signalling a move into the aero engine market.

In addition, Liebherr-Aerospace offers extensive customer services based on a worldwide network with repair and maintenance services, technical support, documentation and spare parts logistics. Customers in Africa are looked after directly by its OEM facilities in Lindenberg, Germany, and in Toulouse, France.

The company opened a logistics centre in Dubai's Jebel Ali Free Zone (JAFZ) in 2015 to stock parts and line replacement units, a move it described as “an important milestone” in its strategy of developing “enhanced support” for airline customers.

If there's a secret to Liebherr's success, it could be the company's huge investments in research and development and testing. Last year, the aerospace and transportation division invested about €70 million (\$82.1m) in R&D: more than 17% of revenue and “far above the industry average”.

One result, Gropper said proudly, is Liebherr's 100% record for delivery of systems to Airbus. So rigorous is Liebherr's attention to detail in manufacturing, assembly and testing that it is one of a small number of suppliers whose components are delivered directly to the Airbus assembly line.

Each of Liebherr-Aerospace's four manufacturing sites – at Lindenberg and Friedrichshafen in Germany, and Toulouse and Campsas in France – has benefited from the investment and continuous improvement that is the company's hallmark. New assembly lines and work stations featuring state-of-the-art manufacturing technology and testing facilities are up-and-running at each site.

□□□□□

Despite its size, Liebherr remains a private company; the descendants of the founder, Hans Liebherr, are active in its management. Their involvement, said Gropper, encourages long-term thinking and a high level of investment in technology. It is what drives the company's embrace of ‘industry 4.0.’ with its emphasis on automation, seamless human-machine interface, paperless working and sustainability.

Evidence of this is clear in all the Liebherr-Aerospace factories. In Lindenberg, for example, radio frequency identification (RFID) is being introduced in 2018 for order tracking and management. That work dovetails with sophisticated part labelling for Airbus and Boeing. Quality testing of the labelling system is under way on Airbus types.

People are important to Liebherr, and it pays dividends in quality management. By reorganising shop floor management, integrating traditional white and blue-collar roles and responsibilities – involving machine minders in redesign of assembly lines, for example – and breaking down silos with cross-functional meetings, the company has increased its ability to detect and deal with potential issues.

Liebherr-Aerospace's relentless R&D includes two additive manufacturing (AM) development cells, in Lindenberg and Toulouse. Working with Airbus, it has created critical parts (in this case, a flight control actuator) and installed it on the A380 – a world-first. The focus now is on industrialising the process.

The company is also involved in the European more electric aircraft (MEA) initiative. Prototypes of fully electrical air-conditioning systems flew on an ATR regional turboprop and A320 in 2016.

In its OEM role, Liebherr-Aerospace has been “accompanying” its customers in the development of their products. “Together with them,” said Gropper, “we're preparing the next generation of aircraft. Our technologies will be there to make their aircraft a reality.”



**Josef Gropper:** “We are on board most of the major aircraft programmes launched over the last 20 years.”



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## Scott Collier

Marcelle Nethersole *speaks to the head of leasing at ACMI24.*

1

■ As a UK-based company you have been busy in Africa. What do you see as the best opportunities for your wet-leasing business?

Over the past few years, we have seen a steadily growing demand for wet-lease aircraft worldwide. However, the issue is that capacity is not keeping pace with demand, and this is particularly evident during the European summer season, where the gap between the two increases year on year.

The annual Hajj pilgrimage now occurs during the International Air Transport Association (IATA) northern summer peak season, adding further pressure on available wet-lease resources.

The introduction of the new 737MAX and A320neo, as well as wide-body aircraft such as the A350 and B787, should see a reduction in the market rates for slightly older vintage aircraft families and this will prompt a drive in airlines to offer wet leasing as an additional revenue stream to their product portfolio.

I forecast significant growth in Africa over the next five years. We are already working with some national entities that are seeking to re-energise their local and regional aviation markets with more modern, efficient equipment to offer a broader choice and greater point-to-point connectivity.

2

■ ACMI24 has developed a reputation for helping airlines and operators in some of the toughest markets. Tell us about these?

Be it placing African capacity on Hajj contracts in harsh environments in the Middle East, or placing European capacity within Africa to start up new routes or cover maintenance checks, we have 11 staff in our leasing team with extensive operational background who can assist both lessee and lessor on pretty much any issues that arise. These range from moving spare parts or crew to assisting with over-flight permits or fuel arrangements.

ACMI24 will manage the contract from the very first call of the request to the final lease reconciliation, adding both value and a sense of security to both parties.

We thrive in all markets because, being one of the world's market leaders, we are able to use our buying power, our up-to-the-minute knowledge of market rates and trends, and our reputation to negotiate realistic prices for our clients, as well as our suppliers.

Due to growing demand in the region, in 2016 ACMI24 dedicated a member of our leasing team to focus purely on business development within Africa.

3

■ Can you give us a typical example of a short-term ACMI requirement?

Our H24 ACMI team would either receive a call or e-mail with basic details of a requirement, be it an aircraft on ground (AOG), crew shortage etc.

Our team would need to ascertain full details of the requirement, including routes and schedules, then match this up with suitable availability within the market at competitive prices, while considering any necessary operational requirements, such as aircraft performance and crew flight time limitations. Initial offers should be immediate and an aircraft could be airborne within 60 minutes of confirmation.

4

■ What are the biggest challenges that you face?

At present, within Africa there seems to be a surplus of commuter aircraft capacity but strong demand for narrow-bodied aircraft. So a current challenge is trying to find homes for the excess commuter aircraft while sourcing capacity outside of Africa to fulfil the current requirements in the region.

Well documented political, as well as geographical, historical and social challenges, are clear throughout Africa, so an up-to-date knowledge of all aspects is required to overcome such challenges.

5

■ ACMI24 features longer-term leasing as well as short-term deals, what is your background that enables you to cover this market?

Having started out in tour operations in the UK in the mid 1990s, before moving into airlines operations and then holding senior commercial positions within an airline and a brokerage company. This experience has given me a good grounding in aviation. This includes understanding the needs of our passengers, ensuring programme integrity at an airline and selling capacity on a charter and ACMI basis further down the line.



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