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MISSION TO
DELIVER FREEDOM
OF THE SKIES**

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ASSURER LA LIBERTÉ DANS LE CIEL**

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back in
the air after
20 years

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focuses on
major issues

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chains
feel the
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COVER:
Adefunke Adeyemi, the
new secretary-general of
The African Civil Aviation
Commission (AFCAC).
PICTURE: BILLYPIX

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PERHAPS COVID TAUGHT US ALL A LESSON

The sixth edition of the Aviation Africa Summit and Exhibition was an amazing success, hitting record numbers as it saw the industry reconnecting.

The unique sight of the leaders of air forces from across the continent mingling and sharing ideas with the heads of civil aviation authorities was warming to those of us who believe in collaboration.

It was Rwanda's president, Paul Kagame, who pointed out that Covid had taught us all a lot about collaborating – and concern about other challenges in the future mean the groundwork done now could save us in years to come.

While the familiar cries for implementation of the SAATM to open the skies and close the number of gaps in the intra-Africa connectivity charts were as loud as ever, there seemed to be a grudging acceptance in some quarters that this might be the time to put aside national tendencies to protect their slice of the pie and, instead, look to make the pie bigger and get an even larger share.

If anyone will push that change, the new secretary-general of AFCAC could be the person to do it. Adefunke Adeyemi, in our cover story, shows her clear determination to succeed. The former barrister has the drive to make it happen.

One other delight for me at the Aviation Africa summit was the number of women on the stage for key discussions. Too



Top gathering: President Paul Kagame (left) listens intently, along with various air chiefs and other senior aviation representatives. PICTURE: BILLYPIX.

many times our industry events have been dominated by men. In Kigali, we saw one panel where women outnumbered men by a ratio of 4:1. African aviation is on the move.

The land of new opportunities is how the global industry is seeing the continent and companies appear to be preparing to bring parts of the manufacturing process to Africa. And not before time.

Alan Peaford, editor-in-chief



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Top thinking: Adefunke Adeyemi, secretary general of the African Civil Aviation Commission (AFCAC), speaks about her hopes and dreams for the industry across the continent.

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F REPORTAGE EN FRANÇAIS



Modern equipment: The AW169 in operation with BestFly. PICTURE: LEONARDO.

Angolan funding 'first' as BestFly grows helicopter fleet

Angolan operator, BestFly, is adding four new AW169 helicopters to its growing fleet following funding from the Angolan Bank of Investments (BAI). The Leonardo helicopters will be operated by BestFly in Malongo, on the Cabinda Gulf Oil Company (Chevron) field. BAI is the first Angolan bank to grant credit for the acquisition of aircraft to a national private entity. Bestfly CEO, Captain Nuno Pereira (right) said: "This financing allows our company to leverage support to the oil and gas and mining industry, maximising the continuity of oil exploration in Angola with the highest standard of operational safety, and excellent service."



PICTURE: BESTFLY

Proper job for Africa
ExecuJet Africa, part of the Luxaviation Group, is expanding its charter fleet with a new Beechcraft King Air 260.

Gavin Kiggen, Luxaviation's vice president, Africa, said: "The Beechcraft King Air 260 is popular with the business community globally. We'll be offering this turboprop for charter in Africa for the first time. "New from the factory in 2022, and able to carry up to eight passengers, the aircraft will be based at Lanseria International Airport, near Johannesburg. From there, we're expecting high demand for flights to locations including Namibia, Botswana and Zimbabwe."

Serving up a winner
Kenya Airways in-flight catering facility, in collaboration with NAS Servair (NAS), was named best partnership as part of The Sustainable Flight Challenge (TSFC) in July.

Kenya Airways Group managing director and chief executive officer, Allan Kilavuka, said: "As we raise the bar on sustainability in Africa, we recognise that this is not a journey we can walk alone as an industry and as an airline. The win for us, especially from a partnership perspective, was a clear demonstration

that success of sustainable aviation will be dependent on partnerships and synergies."

Moroccan order
The Moroccan Forces Royales Air have ordered a fleet of H135s for military primary training missions. The light twin-engine H135 will be used for

training pilots to perform a wide variety of demanding missions, including search-and-rescue. "The H135 is a reliable, cost-efficient multirole helicopter that is ideally suited to transitioning to more complex aircraft," said Arnaud Montalvo, head of Africa and Middle East at Airbus Helicopters.

TAAGing along
TAAG Angola Airlines has entered a long-term lease agreement with US-based Air Lease Corporation for six new Airbus A220-300 aircraft. The aircraft are scheduled to arrive with the airline in 2023 and 2024. "The A220-300, with its fuel efficiency, range and improved operating economics, will progressively replace TAAG's Boeing 737-700 fleet and allow the airline to optimise and broaden its flight schedule coverage and destinations from Luanda," said Steven Udvar-Házy, executive chairman of Air Lease Corporation.



New lease of life: The Ethiopian Dash-8s could become freighters. PICTURE: DE HAVILLAND

Ethiopia converting Dash-8s to freighters

Ethiopian Airlines has signed a proposal to receive two Dash 8-400 Freighter – large cargo door (F-LCD) conversion kits from De Havilland Aircraft. The proposal provides an option for an additional two kits. The parties are now finalising a definitive and binding agreement. "Cargo has played a pivotal role in Ethiopian Airlines' operations over the past couple of years and will remain a key growth pillar of our business over the coming years," said Mesfin Tasew, CEO, Ethiopian Airlines Group. "The pandemic and subsequent recovery efforts have given rise to significant opportunities in the cargo space and we see great value in converting our older Dash 8-400 fleet to freighters to capitalise on these growing opportunities." ■ Ethiopian ups its conversion rate – Page 40

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Nigerian L-39ZAs return home

Three Nigerian Air Force L-39ZAs, which have been at the Aero Vodochody facility in Czechia for two years, were flown back to Kano Air Base, home to the 403 Flying Training School (TFS) in July.

While in Czechia, the aircraft were taken apart, stripped of all components, which were

either replaced or revitalised, and had their old analogue cockpit systems replaced by a Genesys IDU 680 integrated electronic flight instrument system (EFIS) and a Czech-made Speel head-up display.

Student pilots will now be able to use the aircraft before transitioning to types like the

three Sino-Pak JF-17 Thunders that were delivered in May 2021.

Aero Vodochody engineers and technicians worked alongside a small Nigerian Air Force team. The work took place during the worst of the Covid-19 pandemic, which caused the original delivery timeline to slip considerably.



Homeward bound: The three Nigerian L-39ZAs prepare to depart Aero Vodochody on July 17 for the three-day flight to Kano Air Base in Nigeria. PICTURE: ALAN WARNES.

Linking up together

Airlink, which is based in Johannesburg, South Africa, and Qatar Airways have signed a codeshare agreement that will enable customers to book offers from southern Africa to popular destinations in the US and across Europe.

Airlink chief executive, Rodger Foster, said: “This development is an endorsement of Airlink’s relevance to providing air access to the entire region through our expansive network of destinations, which, when considered in conjunction with Qatar Airways’ global reach, creates unparalleled connectivity opportunities.”

Extending reach

Kenya Airways will extend its reach in the Middle East, the US, and the Caribbean via London thanks to a new interline agreement with Virgin Atlantic.

Kenya Airways chief commercial & customer officer, Julius Thairu, said: “This agreement will advance our strategy to strengthen our major African hubs with connecting traffic and offer new growth opportunities

for both carriers. Additionally, this alliance has a substantial economic impact by enhancing trade and promoting travel across the continent.”

That’s champion

Ethiopian Airlines, a CHAMP Cargosystems customer for 30 years, has extended its partnership agreement with the IT solutions provider for an additional five years.

Ethiopian will continue

to benefit from its use of the Cargospot suite of applications to manage the airline’s day-to-day sales and commercial activities and to support its Addis Ababa hub handling operation.

Magnificent seven

Cape Verde has signed a concession contract for seven facilities across the country with private airport operator VINCI Airports.

The contract covers four

international airports (Praia, Sal, São Vicente and Boa Vista) and three domestic airports (São Nicolau, São Filipe and Maio).

Over a 40-year period, VINCI Airports and its Portuguese subsidiary ANA (owning, respectively, 70% and 30% stakes in the concession company) will be responsible for financing, operating, maintaining, extending and upgrading the airports.

On the up

Ethiopian Airlines has upsized four of the A350-900 aircraft it has on order to the largest variant of the A350 family, the A350-1000.

In doing so, it has become Africa’s first customer for the aircraft.

Ethiopian Airlines has already ordered 22 A350-900s, of which 16 aircraft have been delivered.

With the A350-1000 upsizing, the carrier’s backlog consists of four A350-1000s and two A350-900s.

Group CEO, Mesfin Tasew, said: “The A350-1000 is the best fit for our dense routes, and we believe that the upsizing will be instrumental in satisfying the increasing demand of customers in our vast global network across five continents.”

Maputo connection

Johannesburg-based Airlink has launched the first direct flights between Cape Town and Maputo.

“By flying direct, instead of via Johannesburg, we will more than halve the door-to-door travelling time,” explained Airlink CEO and managing director, Rodger Foster.



Versatile: The ATR 72-600. PICTURE: ATR.

Afrijet orders another ATR 72-600

ATR has finalised the sale of another ATR 72-600 to Gabonese airline Afrijet, to be delivered before the end of the year.

Afrijet CEO, Marc Gaffajoli, said: “Regional connectivity has a significant impact on local economies and community integration. To be effective in Africa an aircraft has to be cost-efficient, reliable and versatile. Moreover, the unique terrain in which Afrijet operates, comprising of the Congo rainforest – the world’s second largest tropical forest after the Amazon – makes an even stronger reason to select the most sensible aircraft on the market for such essential connections.”

Fabrice Vautier, ATR senior vice president commercial, added: “Most traffic in Africa is concentrated on a few well-served routes and there is a real need to connect secondary cities. Afrijet is able to do just that, providing a reliable and comfortable service to local communities.”

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On the tarmac at Blantyre: The MAF's two new MA600 twin-engine transports. PICTURE: MAF.



Malawi receives MA600 transport aircraft

The Malawi Air Force (MAF) has commissioned into service two Chinese-made Xi'an Aircraft Industry Corporation (XIA) MA600 twin-engine transports. The aircraft were showcased publicly at Chileka International Airport, Blantyre, during a formal handover ceremony in July following a ferry flight from China.

Both aircraft wore MAF titles and national markings, with one painted in a wraparound grey livery, while the

other sported a more civilian-looking paint scheme of blue and white.

The MA600s were acquired under an undisclosed deal signed in 2019 with China.

According to local media reports quoting several Malawi officials, the aircraft are to be used to transport government authorities as well as troops, notably to support personnel rotations as part of the country's ongoing contribution to the United Nations

Organisation Stabilisation Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUSCO).

The new aircraft join several Dornier Do 228s, which provide the mainstay of the MAF's fixed-wing transport capability. The MA600 is an improved variant of the MA60, which, is itself, a development of the Y-7, a derivative of the Soviet Antonov An-24. It has a seating capacity of 60 when configured for passenger transport and, besides Malawi, its sole other known African operator is the Air Force of Benin.

Senegal gears up

Senegal is gearing up to host the 54th Annual General Assembly (AGA) of the African Airlines Association (AFRAA), which will take place in Dakar on December 11-13.

This annual gathering of African airline CEOs was last held in-person in Mauritius in 2019. It is expected to attract more than 500 global high-profile delegates.

RAM's return

Royal Air Maroc (RAM) has resumed its service between Mohammed V International Airport in Casablanca and Hamad International Airport in Doha in partnership with Qatar Airways. The daily flight uses a Boeing 787-9.

Diamond move

Akagera Aviation Flying Academy, based at Kigali International Airport, Rwanda, recently took delivery of its first Diamond aircraft – a twin-engine DA42-VI and a single-engine DA40 NG Tundra. The trainers represent the newest versions of Diamond's technology-leading piston aircraft fleet, the first certified general



Green machines: The Deutsche Aircraft D328eco family will be designed to accept Sasol's new hydrogen-based fuel. PICTURE: DEUTSCHE AIRCRAFT.

Fuelling the way to a cleaner future

South African chemicals and energy company, Sasol, has signed a deal with Deutsche Aircraft to use Sasol's new green hydrogen-based PtL-SAF fuel in the German company's D328eco turboprop aircraft. PtL-SAF is a sustainable aviation fuel that uses carbon dioxide and hydrogen to create a synthetic fuel. Fuels manufactured like this retain the characteristics of kerosene: high energy density at low volume, proven safety, and distribution by established infrastructure. They also contain fewer aromatics and less sulphur, further reducing emissions.

Sasol and Deutsche Aircraft will work on technology and production aspects of the new fuel and aim to certify it as a replacement jet fuel.

Deutsche Aircraft is developing the 328eco – a major upgrade of the 1990s-vintage 30-seat Dornier regional turboprop – as a viable competitor in the markets of the 2020s and beyond.

The aircraft, which will be stretched to 40-seat capacity, is scheduled to be certified in 2026 and will be able to use the new Sasol-developed fuel together with any other certified sustainable aviation fuel and regular kerosene. The aircraft will be close to carbon-neutral in operation.

aviation piston aircraft to combine modern technology (composite) airframes, avionics and powerplants.

Double celebration

ExecuJet South Africa, part of the Luxaviation Group, is celebrating both charter fleet expansion and a growing recognition of the company's

outstanding safety standards.

A Bombardier Global Express has joined ExecuJet's charter fleet and will be based at Lanseria International Airport, near Johannesburg. The aircraft can carry up to 13 passengers and offers a range of 4,800 nautical miles.

Meanwhile, the continuing expansion of ExecuJet

South Africa's fleet is being matched by the company's growing reputation for safety excellence.

In September 2021, South Africa's Litson & Associates (L&A) confirmed a silver aviation safety award for ExecuJet South Africa. On August 4 this year, the award was elevated to the gold level.

Sharing and caring

Kenya Airways and South African Airways have signed a codeshare agreement.

Allan Kilavuka, Kenya Airways CEO and group managing director, said: "The arrangement offers our customers more options and flight combinations."

"As part of our strategic partnership framework, we will contribute to making it easier for passengers to reach exciting new destinations within Africa."

■ SAA's tonic, page 16.

Jordan boost

The Crown Prince Foundation (CPF) has signed an agreement with Airbus to provide training opportunities for Jordanian engineering students.

According to the deal, 12 bachelor and master's degree engineering students will be trained at Airbus headquarter in Toulouse.

CPF said it would recruit students by coordinating with all Jordanian universities, according to pre-set criteria, and Airbus would choose the final candidates.

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Air Austral à la croisée des routes

Après avoir redressé et consolidé Air Austral pendant une décennie, Marie-Joseph Malé a quitté ses fonctions de président directeur général en juin dernier. De nouvelles perspectives s'ouvrent certes. Mais de nombreuses incertitudes demeurent. Un reportage de **Vincent Chappard**.

Il y a dix ans Marie-Joseph Malé prenait les commandes d'Air Austral pour accompagner son redressement. Il a transmis le relais en juin dernier au moment où la compagnie réunionnaise a remporté le prix de "Best Overall Airline" Award in Africa au APEX Passenger Choice Award 2022. Elle a été récompensée pour son engagement RSE.

Le Business Plan établi et mis en œuvre à son arrivée a permis à Air Austral de retrouver l'équilibre en seulement une année et d'amorcer par la suite une nécessaire transformation dans l'objectif d'assurer sa pérennité. En 2017, pour faire face à la concurrence et l'arrivée d'une compagnie à bas prix, Marie-Joseph Malé déploya une stratégie de différenciation rentable. Grâce à cette stratégie la compagnie se

démarcha de la concurrence par un positionnement distinctif reposant sur un confort amélioré et des produits innovants de même que la qualité de ses services. Elle a également diversifié son réseau et développé des correspondances depuis son hub de La Réunion et de Mayotte. Air Austral est aussi responsable de la genèse de la compagnie mahoraise EWA Air (filiale à 51% d'Air Austral) qui affiche depuis sa création « des bénéfices et de belles perspectives de développement ».

Marie-Joseph Malé a été également un fervent artisan de l'Alliance Vanille et soutenu la coopération régionale. Il a initié un partenariat stratégique avec Air Madagascar mais la crise du Covid-19 et la décision politique de l'état malgache en ont décidé autrement.

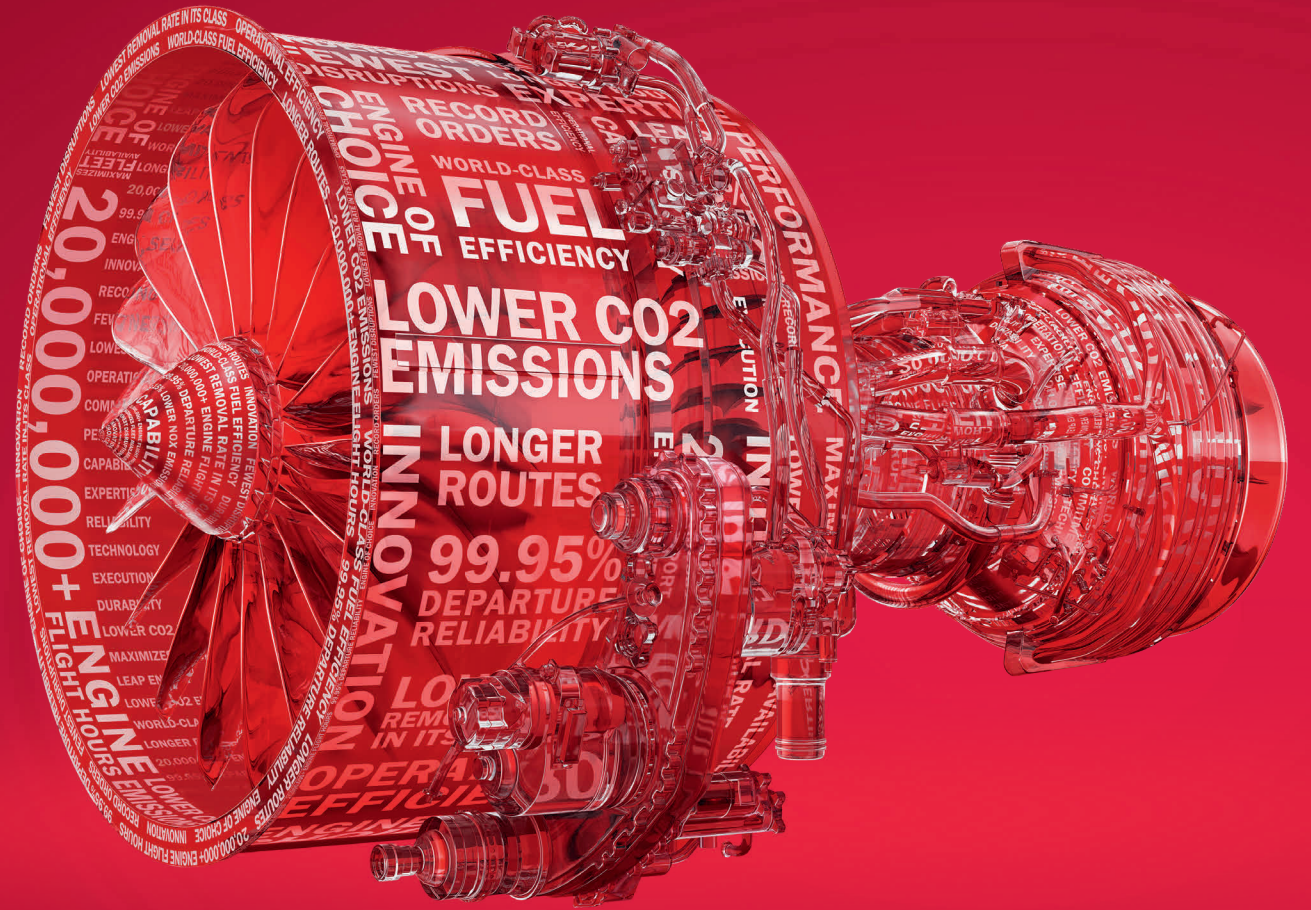
« J'ai travaillé aux côtés de gens remarquables, volontaires et formidablement engagés dans le développement de leur compagnie. Je suis aujourd'hui fier de tout ce que nous avons accompli ensemble, fier de la montée en compétence de l'ensemble du personnel qui permet à Air Austral d'être aujourd'hui une compagnie de référence dans l'océan Indien », affirme Marie-Joseph Malé.

Air Austral n'est tout de même pas sorti d'affaires même si le transport aérien a retrouvé des couleurs dans la région. La pandémie, la parité euro-dollar et la flambée du kérosène engendrée par la crise en Ukraine ont accentué la dette de la compagnie réunionnaise. L'État français a contribué à son sauvetage en injectant 120

Marie-Joseph Malé: "Je suis aujourd'hui fier de tout ce que nous avons accompli ensemble."

PICTURES: AIR AUSTRAL

Continuer à la Page 10 ►



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SUITE DE LA PAGE 8

millions d’euros en 2020 et 60 millions en 2021, sous forme de prêts garantis par l’État (PGE). Son avenir se trouve désormais sur le terrain politique. La Région de La Réunion, actionnaire majoritaire via la Sematra, a toujours plaidé pour une solution locale et ne laissera pas l’État imposer une solution qui remettrait en cause l’indépendance d’Air Austral et son ancrage réunionnais. Des investisseurs réunionnais incluant le groupe Deleflie (Clinifutur) ont proposé un plan de sauvetage pour restructurer Air Austral sous réserve d’un nouveau coup de pouce de l’État pour alléger sa dette. La Sematra y est partie prenante. Ce plan nécessite cependant l’aval de l’État et de la Commission européenne.

Or, Jean-François Carencio, le ministre délégué chargé des outre-mer, souhaite convaincre la Région de soutenir un rapprochement entre Air Austral et Corsair via une holding tout en gardant l’identité de chaque compagnie. Cette dernière a également été sous perfusion de l’état pendant deux années et bénéficie de nouveaux actionnaires (Outre-mer R Plane).

Une réunion avec l’ensemble des acteurs qui s’est tenue en juillet dernier s’est cependant soldée par un constat d’échec.

Le transport aérien reste une industrie capitalistique et nécessite d’importants capitaux pour opérer. Même si les compagnies connaissent une embellie avec la reprise du trafic, elles devront s’atteler tôt ou tard à rembourser leurs dettes auprès de leurs créanciers. ▲

SUMMARY

AIR AUSTRAL AT THE POLITICAL CROSSROADS

Air Austral chairman and CEO, Marie-Joseph Malé, stepped down in June following a decade at the helm.

He left at a time with the airline still facing many challenges as huge financial uncertainties remain.

“I have worked alongside remarkable people who are determined and tremendously committed to the development of their company. Today I am proud of all that we have accomplished together and proud of the increased skills of all the staff, allowing Air Austral to be a benchmark company in the Indian Ocean,” said Malé.

When he took control, Air Austral was struggling. However, he implemented a business plan that enabled the airline to re-establish its equilibrium, culminating in the Reunion-based company being named best overall airline in Africa at the APEX Passenger Choice Awards 2022.

Malé has been a fervent supporter of the Vanilla Alliance – an airline agreement involving the Seychelles, Mauritius, Madagascar, the Comoros, Réunion, and Mayotte – while also supporting greater regional cooperation that resulted in a strategic partnership with Air Madagascar. However, the Covid-19 pandemic, and some recent political decisions, have called the alliance into question.

The pandemic, euro-dollar parity, and the surge in fuel costs caused by the crisis in Ukraine, have all increased Air Austral’s debt, despite France injecting €120 million (\$119m) in 2020 and a further €60-million in 2021.

The airline’s future now lies in politics. The region of Reunion, majority shareholder via Sematra, has always pleaded for a local solution and does not want France to impose anything that would call into question the independence of Air Austral and its roots in Reunion.

Reunionese investors, including the Michael Deleflie-owned group, Clinifutur, have proposed a rescue plan to restructure Air Austral subject to a new boost from France to alleviate its debt. Sematra is a stakeholder in this proposal, which requires approval from France and the European Commission.

However, Jean-François Carencio, France’s minister delegate in charge of overseas, wants the region to support a relationship between Air Austral and Corsair via a holding company, while keeping the identity of each company. Corsair has also been on a state drip for two years.

An initial meeting of all parties ended in failure. Air transport requires significant capital to operate. Even if the companies experience an upturn with the resumption of traffic, they will have to get down to repaying their debts sooner or later. ▲

VINCENT CHAPPARD

Air Tanzania on a proper footing

Air Tanzania’s revival under government ownership since 2016 was thrown off course by the pandemic but has not caused managing director and chief executive, Ladislaus Matindi, to waver from making it a “proper airline again”.

Mark Pilling reports.

Ladislaus Matindi is proud of the “diligent” work undertaken by his management team in the latter part of the 2010s to institute a strong safety, governance, and commercial structure, and bring the airline back into the International Air Transport Association (IATA) fold.

Air Tanzania’s poor record had made it an air transport industry outcast. However, the team’s work enabled the airline to rejoin the international body’s banking and settlement system, and become accredited to IATA’s operational safety audit.

“We were bringing an airline up from the ground,” explained Matindi, who was tasked by the government as it injected fresh capital into the airline to oversee its transformation. Based in Dar es Salaam, the country’s largest city and major financial centre, the aim is “to meet investor desire to see the airline has a route to



Ladislaus Matindi: “Demand is growing as people have no fear of travelling anymore.”

PICTURE: BILLYPIX.

profitability and is meeting the challenge of the market”, he said.

“Covid did derail the mission, but we are regaining traffic rapidly,” he added.

In 2019, the airline carried two million

passengers, which dropped to 700,000 in 2021 but should recover to 1.2 million this year.

“Demand is growing as people have no fear of travelling anymore,” he enthused.

Today, Air Tanzania is operating to 11 international destinations and 13 domestic points. International routes are up from the pre-pandemic eight, with services added to Kenya’s Nairobi, Lubumashi in the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Ndola, Zambia.

In addition to expanding its east African network, the carrier wants to add London to its long-haul roster of destinations, with the aim to begin services by the end of 2023, said Matindi.

India and China, where it serves Mumbai and Guangzhou, are also good markets for Air Tanzania and frequencies to the Chinese city were scheduled to increase to four a week as *African Aerospace* was going to press.

At present, the airline operates a fleet of four Airbus A220s, five De Havilland Canada Dash 8-400s and two Boeing 787-8s.

At the Dubai Airshow in November 2021, it ordered a third 787-8, a pair of 737MAX narrow-bodies and a 767-300 freighter. The majority of these aircraft will be delivered by the end of 2023, added Matindi.

This order completed its fleet planning for the coming three-to-four years, he concluded. ▲

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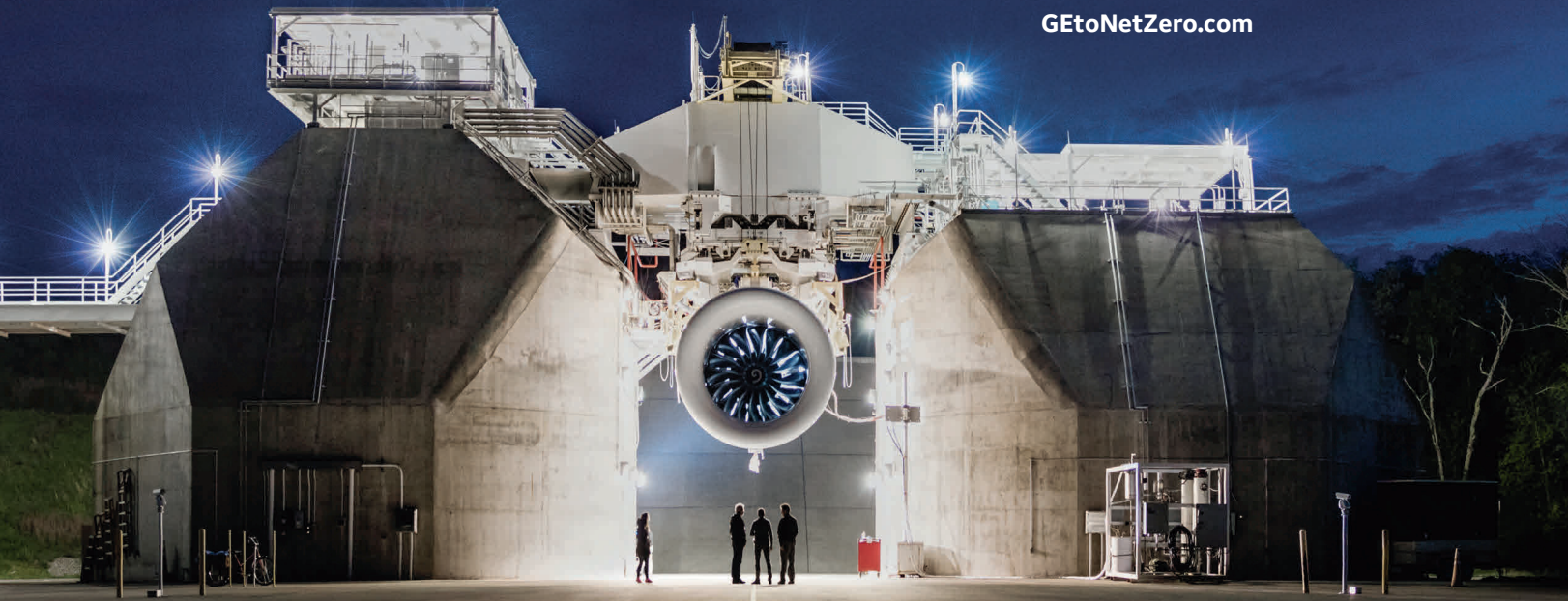
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More than \$1billion owed to airlines is being blocked, according to the International Air Transport Association (IATA). Now, as **Mark Pilling** reports, the guilty parties are being named and shamed.

ILLUSTRATION: ALASHI - STOCK

Billion dollar blockage

Obtaining the fast release of \$1 billion in airline funds blocked across five African countries is at the top of IATA's priorities in the region, according to Kamil Alawadhi, the association's regional vice-president Africa & Middle East.

Speaking at a media briefing during the IATA Annual General Meeting in Doha, Alawadhi took the unusual step of not only highlighting an issue that has plagued several countries in the past, but also of naming and shaming the main culprits.

"Nigeria alone is holding back \$450 million," he said. "It is the most money blocked by any single African country, and the amount is rising every week."

□□□□□

Other African countries with significant blocked funds are Zimbabwe at \$100 million, Algeria at \$96 million, Eritrea at \$79 million, and Ethiopia at \$75 million (all figures as of May 2022).

Blocked funds are revenues from airline tickets sold by an overseas carrier in the country it is serving, where the money is not released by the state's banks. It is a situation not applicable to locally based carriers.

"It's getting worse," said Alawadhi. "This is not acceptable. It's damaging the aviation industry and it hurts the travellers. It's going to get to a point where people can no longer afford to travel, and the aviation industry will collapse in and out of Nigeria."



Kamil Alawadhi: "Hopefully, in the next three months, we should see some positive reaction."
PICTURE: IATA

The impact on ticket prices is substantial. Foreign carriers increase prices on the sector that originates in their own country, where they obtain the money directly, to ensure the route remains profitable, as they know the funds from the other leg will be blocked.

"Cashflow is key for airlines' business sustainability – when carriers are unable to repatriate their funds, it severely impedes their operations and limits the number of markets they can serve," said Alawadhi.

"The consequences of reduced air connectivity include the erosion of that country's competitiveness, diminished investor confidence, and reputational harm caused by a perception that it is a high-risk place to do business."

IATA has no power to force banks to release funds but does meet them to find solutions to the problem. Alawadhi recently met with Nigeria's Central Bank to flag the issue and push the case for aviation funds to be released up the priority list. A repayment schedule with funds paid over a period, rather than in one go, is one solution.

"This is my top priority to take care of," said Alawadhi. "Hopefully, in the next three months, we should see some positive reaction from them. It depends on how willing the government is to tackle this seriously.

"Connectivity is precious," he added. "The crisis has demonstrated that everybody suffers when aviation stops. A financially viable air transport sector supports jobs and must be a driving force for Africa and the Middle East economic recovery from Covid-19."

As of April, there was \$1.6 billion in funds blocked by 20 countries worldwide, showing that Africa, with its \$1 billion, is the biggest problem.

"We call on governments to prioritise aviation in the access to foreign exchange on the basis that air connectivity is a vital economic catalyst for the country," said Alawadhi. ▲



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Eswatini Air flies the flag again – two decades on

The southern African Kingdom of Eswatini is resurrecting its national airline after a gap of more than 20 years.

Alan Dron reports

The new flag-carrier – Eswatini Air – will end a hiatus of more than two decades, following the demise of Royal Swazi National Airways in the 1990s.

Since then, air transport for the small kingdom has rested with a joint venture between the Government of Eswatini – previously known as Swaziland – and South African regional carrier, Airlink.

The resulting Eswatini Airlink was established in 1999 to provide air services for the country.

Now, however, the Eswatini Government believes that opportunities presented by the recovery from the pandemic mean that restoring a national carrier is a viable option.

As a result, the government and Airlink mutually agreed to end their joint venture from June 1. The service, which used Airlink's Embraer 190s, operated multiple daily services between Johannesburg and King Mswati III International Airport, Sikhuphe, in Eswatini.

"Through our jointly owned and operated Eswatini Airlink business, we have enjoyed a long and mutually successful partnership connecting Eswatini to the world," Airlink's CEO and MD, Rodger Foster, said.

"However, as the Government of the Kingdom of Eswatini recently re-established a national airline, we have jointly and amicably agreed to discontinue Eswatini Airlink's operations in an orderly manner to avoid any disruption and inconvenience to our customers."

Eswatini Air is believed to be planning initially to operate to several South African cities, such as Durban and Cape Town, as well as to the Zimbabwean capital, Harare, although these had not been confirmed at the time of writing.

The new airline was initially planned to start operating by June 1, but had not yet started services by late August.

So, what is the rationale behind Eswatini establishing a national carrier again?

The country is landlocked and not only are air routes to and from it limited, they are currently only available via



▲ Our business model aims to establish a new product that was not there before, designed for our target market segments. ▲
XAVIER MASULE

PICTURE: ESWATINI AIR.

Capable: A pair of Embraer 145s, previously operated by Air France's regional subsidiary HOP! will form the new company's initial equipment. Personnel for the new carrier are being recruited locally. PICTURES: ESWATINI AIR.

Johannesburg, explained Xavier Masule, Eswatini Air's director, commercial.

Fewer than 1% of people travelling in and out of the kingdom use air; the rest rely on roads.

"Aviation is critical for any economy, not as a 'good to have' but contributing positively to socio-economic development, including job creation, contribution to gross domestic product (GDP), and tax revenues for the government," said Masule. "Aviation is an enabler in many respects."

□ □ □ □ □

The southern African airline market has suffered a recent significant loss with the closure of South Africa's Comair, which operated a British Airways franchise, and low-cost carrier Kulula.com. However, said Masule, while the closure of an airline may seem to open a gap in the market, in the long run and from a sustainability perspective it is a negative development.

"The air travel market should be growing, capacity is supposed to be growing and in that way we will be pulling demand and making air travel become more accessible to the populations in the region," he added.

"Our business model aims to establish a new product that was not there before, designed for our target market segments, which we believe are not currently served."

"The market potential analyses shows that all factors needed to support a viable airline operation are present, and we need to take advantage of that. This only requires launching an operation with an appropriate business model, and the correct scale of operations, then grow it from there."

Eswatini Air's initial equipment will be a pair of Embraer 145 regional jets. The new airline plans to use these for the initial two years. Equipment plans beyond that time have not been revealed.

"As we launch, we will field fewer frequencies and limited destinations. As the market responds and volumes increase, we will increase utilization. The two aircraft will be able to absorb the increased utilisation expected over the next 18 to 24 months," Masule concluded. ▲

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It's no secret that South African Airways (SAA) has been in turmoil recently. **Guy Leitch** caught up with SAA executive chairman and CEO, John Lamola, to ask key questions about the new, much slimmed-down airline.

SAA'S SLIM-LINE TONIC

GL: What is your vision for the new SAA version 2 in the broader African airline market?

JL: SAA's fate is bound to that of the rest of Africa. For this reason, among others, we have come together with Kenyan Airways (KQ) and the presidents of our respective countries to sponsor the idea of a Pan-African airline.

GL: What will the eventual KQ tie-up look like? Will it form the launch platform for this new Pan-African airline?

JL: A taskforce has been established on how to optimise the relationship. It's a process that we have started, with the end as a point of departure. The goal is for SAA and KQ to create a foundation for a new pan-African airline.

Cargo and lounge cooperation began in April 2022, and passenger code sharing began in June. By September 2023, our goal is to have secured regulatory approval for broader network cooperation and operational efficiencies.

GL: What will happen to the SAA and KQ brands?

JL: The SAA and KQ brands will remain. There are already models for this sort of cooperation operationalised in the world.

GL: You have not increased your seat availability much to cater for Comair's closure. Are you short of aircraft and flight crew?

JL: SAA does have a small aircraft fleet, with limited capacity, but we have added capacity where possible, and are in the process of addressing the need for more capacity in the future.

We are taking a deliberately measured response to the reduction in market capacity. We have already increased Cape Town services from three times daily to six times daily. Durban has increased from three times daily to five times daily. Mauritius capacity is also doubling.

Additionally, SAA is deploying wide-body aircraft when and where it makes sense, as in the Cape Town and Durban routes. But one accepts that we have a small fleet, thus limiting our capacity, and we are addressing the need for more capacity in the future.

GL: When do you anticipate returning to long-haul flying? And which routes first?

JL: International demand is not expected to normalise until late 2023 at the earliest. Considering this, we foresee returning to long-haul routes

late in 2023, or early 2024. It's too early to determine which routes we will launch first, as we are constantly monitoring market conditions to inform the right time to resume service to the right destination.

GL: Will you be able to return to long-haul flying with your current fleet?

JL: Our current fleet has two wide-bodies: an A330-300 and A340-300, which can immediately support long-haul flying.

GL: What is your time framework for fleet replacement?

JL: We foresee procuring a fleet of 20 to 30 aircraft in three to four years' time.

GL: Will you continue as executive chairman, or do you foresee a return to a separation of roles? In which case which one will you take?

JL: The current arrangement is to manage the interim period during the build-up to the conclusion of the strategic equity partner deal. There will be separation of the roles and I should, in due course, revert to my previous role as non-executive chairman.

GL: Is there a planned return to profitability and if so, when?

JL: We re-started quite small and the budget, in terms of the corporate plan, anticipates that the business should turn around in a year.

GL: When you accepted the CEO position did you have any agreement with the South African Department of Public Enterprises (DPE) about the limitations of 'government interference'?

JL: Not really. The roles are clear. The board plays a governance oversight role, management make day-to-day executive decisions, and the shareholder gets involved in specific shareholder issues, including funding.

▼ We re-started quite small and the budget, in terms of the corporate plan, anticipates that the business should turn around in a year. ▲

JOHN LAMOLA

PICTURE: SAA

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into life

The busiest ever Aviation Africa Summit and Exhibition saw recovery plans and skills shortage solutions top the agenda – **Ella Nethersole, Chloe Greenbank, Mark Pilling and Alan Peaford** report.

OPENING TIME

RWANDA PRESIDENT'S PRIORITY – FREEDOM OF AFRICA'S SKIES

Aviation Africa – the continent's largest aviation summit – saw industry, government and defence leaders come together in Kigali, Rwanda to focus on key issues affecting the sector.

Some 1,400 delegates from 86 countries, including representatives from more than 100 exhibitors, 60 airlines, 26 directors general of civil aviation, and 15 air chiefs, packed the Kigali Convention Centre.

Rwanda President, HE Paul Kagame, opened the summit and praised the industry for its role in delivering vaccines and support during the Covid pandemic that wreaked havoc around the world.

"The pandemic severely affected the aviation industry's vision worldwide and Africa is no exception. Airlines and airports around the world faced massive lay-offs," Kagame said. "Now travel and tourism are getting back to normal. Recovery means increasing connectivity, stimulating demand and creating jobs. And opening up the skies helps to lead our businesses to regional and global supply chains, boosting trade and investment."

"This is why the full implementation of the single African air transport market (SAATM) must remain a top priority for Rwanda as it continues to grow."



Paul Kagame:
"Opening up the skies helps to lead our businesses to regional and global supply chains, boosting trade and investment."
PICTURE: BILLYPIX.

A government-to-government agreement, outlined three years ago, will see Qatar Airways take a 49% stake in the national carrier, RwandAir, and a key stake in a new Kigali airport. While the airline investment is still to be finalised, a giant model of the airport was a centrepiece of the show.

President Kagame said: "RwandAir currently serves 24 routes, 19 of which are regional. We intend to continue

expanding within the continent and abroad. We are working together with our partner, Qatar, on the new national airport, Bugesera, which is currently under construction. This will become a regional hub for passengers and cargo."

Qatar Airways CEO, Akbar Al Baker, told the summit why Rwanda investment was a win-win for both sides.

"I found that this was the prime place where we could invest in Africa," he said.

carbon dioxide emissions compared to previous generation aircraft," he said. "It can carry up to 146 passengers in single-class configuration and 124 passengers in a typical dual-class arrangement."

Embraer has a 60-airline customer base across the African continent, with more than 200 aircraft.

Also on the static park, Diamond was celebrating the handover of the first twin-engine DA42-VI to the Akagera Aviation Flying Academy based at Kigali International, with the aircraft on display.

The Austrian firm has also delivered a single-engine DA40 to the Rwandan academy.

"We are proud to welcome Akagera Aviation to our long list of renowned flight school customers and are looking forward to supporting them on their future journey," said Jane Wang, sales director, Diamond Aircraft Austria. ▲

EMBRAER E195-E2 MAKES A BIG IMPRESSION



Looking things over: Dr Ernest Nsabimana checks out the spacious overhead bins watched by Yvonne Manzoni and Arjan Meijer.

PICTURE: OLIVIER MUGWIZA/BILLYPIX.

On the sidelines of the Aviation Africa summit, Brazilian manufacturer, Embraer, gave an impressive debut to its E195-E2, the largest commercial aircraft it has ever made.

Rwanda's Minister of Infrastructure, Dr Ernest Nsabimana, and RwandAir CEO, Yvonne Manzoni, led a hoard of VIPs and media to see the 'profit hunter'.

The aircraft, belonging to Air Peace, Nigeria's largest carrier, is one of five currently in service with the airline.

Air Peace has said the E2 is helping it achieve its ambition of connecting, not just all of Nigeria, but the whole of the African continent, while feeding long-haul flights from its Lagos hub.

Embraer Commercial president and CEO, Arjan Meijer, told the summit how the aircraft can increase market connectivity quietly and efficiently.

"It is the quietest and most efficient single-aisle aircraft flying today, saving up to 25%



Packed out: Aviation Africa was attended by 1,400 delegates from 86 countries.
PICTURE: BILLYPIX.

"We see the huge potential of Africa – the resilience of the African people. OK, it is an airline and the airport that we are building in Rwanda, but keep in mind that will attract expertise from all around the country."

"It was very clear from the president that he doesn't only want this to be a project for Rwanda, but he wants to also invite the neighbouring countries to benefit from what we are going to do here."

"This is very exciting to me," added Al Baker. "We will be able to create the human capital that Africa encompasses. We will need to train them. We will need to bring them up to speed. I'm glad to say that we are getting the support that we require from the leadership to grow this business and to serve, not only Rwanda, but also the African people."

Al Baker said plans under the investment included developing a training centre in Kigali on the lines of Qatar's facility at Hamad International Airport in Doha.

"The facility will train cabin crew, ground staff, handling staff, equipment operators, engineers, and even pilots."

"We have a flying school in Qatar, where we could bring the Rwandans and other people from around the region to come and to get trained. We have very advanced training facilities. ▲

"But that will be replicated here, in order not only to bring the training for Rwandan employees of the airline, but also from the region. It will be an aviation centre of excellence for Africa."

Addressing the issue of the anticipated skills shortage was a central theme to the summit.

One panel considering how to make the industry more appealing to young people, to women, and to people from poorer backgrounds, saw Afrijet's Fadimatou Noutchemo Simo, the first winner of the International Air Transport Association (IATA) young flyer award – make an impassioned appeal to the industry to stop talking about inspiring young people and actually do something about it.

Simo won the award last year for demonstrating leadership through concrete action in favour of diversity and inclusion, and making a positive impact on the industry.

At Aviation Africa she called on companies to invest in at least one young person, and look outside their own countries to fill shortages of staff.

"It is ridiculous that we have pools of skilled people in Kenya unable to get jobs and then vacancies in west Africa. We must think not just of the youth of our country but of Africa as a whole," she said. ▲

RWANDAIR AIMING TO DOUBLE UP

RwandAir is aiming to double its fleet over the next five years, according to chief executive, Yvonne Makolo, speaking at the Aviation Africa summit.

The company is already in the process of acquiring its first freighter and will also be getting another Airbus A330.

"Right now, we have 12 aircraft and, by the end of the year, that will be 14 – then up to 24 by the end of 2025-26," she said.

Makolo explained why the Rwandan carrier was moving into the cargo market.

"Cargo has become a key focus area for us. It's actually the only revenue line that has kept going through the pandemic. We've been using the belly capacity of our aircraft but we're getting a cargo freighter. It's key for the future of the airline."

The airline is opening new routes, including Paris, which will tag with Brussels, allowing London to become a direct flight.

"The majority of the routes that we're going to open up are within the African continent. Our focus is really to connect Rwanda to the rest of Africa and Africa to the world."

"We do face some challenges here and there but that doesn't stop us. The biggest challenge is getting fifth freedom rights."

Talking about the announced tie-up with Qatar, Makolo said the two airlines had already begun working together as partners.

"We recently started off flights to Doha, and have an extended codeshare together, which has expanded our network." ▲



FOCUS ON AVIATION AFRICA

AIRPORTS

A model of the new Bugesera International Airport (NBIA), which is being built around 25km south-east of Kigali, was displayed at Aviation Africa for the first time.

International design consultancy, Dar Group, a headline sponsor at the summit, is behind the latest design for the new airport.

Covering an area of 2,500 hectares, the airport will be built in two phases and will have an initial capacity to handle 8.2 million passengers and 150,000 tonnes of cargo annually. Serving as a regional hub for east Africa, in its second phase the greenfield airport's capacity will rise to 14 million passengers and 300,000 tonnes of cargo.

Bringing extensive experience to the project, Dar has been tasked with overseeing the design of the airport and is also the principal consultant supervising the works on site.

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The company, which has nearly 300 offices in 60 countries around the world, has planned, designed, constructed and innovated more than 300 airports across six continents.

"We have been involved in the new Bugesera International Airport since late 2019 but started working on the design in January 2020," said Eli Kharrat, partner and director of operations Rwanda and Mozambique.

"We have been at the forefront of airport design for decades and have worked on most of the major projects on the continent. The new airport will be a jewel in Africa's airport crown and will be a regional air transport hub for east Africa."

The Bugesera Airport project was initially born back in 2010, with plans to

Unveiling the jewel in Africa's airport crown

award the building contract to the China State Construction Engineering Company (CSCEC). However, the project was halted with the withdrawal of CSCEC in 2013.

Then, in August 2016, the Rwandan Government signed a deal with Portuguese engineering firm, Mota Engil, which remains involved as a building contractor for the project.

In 2019, Qatar Airways also came on board following a successful public-private partnership (PPP) agreement with the Government of Rwanda through Aviation Travel and Logistics Holdings (ATL), which saw Qatar Airways agree to take a 60% stake in the airport.

The airport's new design has evolved to accommodate the country's updated aviation strategy and a higher growth rate than previously anticipated.

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"Construction is in progress with some of the buildings, such as the primary substations, out of the ground. Surfacing on the runway, taxiway, and some of the stands is also now under way," said David Riddick project director, MATAR [Qatar company for airports operation and management].

The new airport will feature a 120,000sqm main terminal building as well as a 6,500sqm presidential terminal building capable of accommodating 200

VVIP, plus a 4,500 metre runway able to accommodate aircraft up to and including the A380.

Other facilities will include a state-of-the-art baggage-handling system and air traffic control tower, a ground services equipment garage, catering building, animal control centre, MRO and cargo facilities. It will be operated by Bugesera Airport Company (BAC).

Sustainability will be at the core of the airport's infrastructure, with a focus on energy and water efficiency, as well as renewable energy and green transport, and the sourcing and analysis of local construction materials.

With the airport aiming to be one of the greenest in Africa, it is also targeting leadership in energy and environmental design (LEED) certification.

Completion for phase one of the airport is currently scheduled for 2026. Jules Ndenga, CEO for ATL, explained that Kigali's existing international air transport hub will remain operational once Bugesera has opened.

"While Bugesera will become the primary hub for passenger and cargo traffic, Kigali International Airport will remain an important asset for Rwanda. It will continue to operate for other aviation business, including humanitarian, private and training flights, as well as offering facilities for MRO activities," he said. ▲

▼ The new airport will be a jewel in Africa's airport crown and will be a regional air transport hub for east Africa. ▲
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FOCUS ON

AVIATION AFRICA

NETWORKING

UGAACO first summit takes off

This year's Aviation Africa was co-located for the first time with the Union of Central and West African Airport Managers' (UGAACO) debut Salon Mondial des Infrastructures Equipements et Services Aeroportuaires (SMIESA) event.

Bringing together airport members from all 54 African countries, SMIESA's aim throughout its two-day get-together was to stimulate technology transfer by promoting the continent's airports and their related services and suppliers, including equipment manufacturers.

Daniel Lefebvre, UGAACO president and general manager for AERCO, which operates Brazzaville Maya Maya, Pointe-Noire Agostinho Neto, and Ollombo Sassou N'Goussou airports in the Republic of Congo, opened the SMIESA summit.



Debut line-up: Some of the speakers at the first SMIESA event in Kigali. PICTURE: BILLYPIX.

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He impressed on stakeholders that they should welcome sector-specific events as they are "a must for the future development of the continent's airport sector".

He added: "UGAACO's mission is to create a cohesive uniform framework to support our members with regulatory procedures, strategic objectives, and sustainable growth. The aim of this inaugural SMIESA is to encourage collaboration between our members and the exchange of ideas and information to enhance airport operations throughout the region.

"African countries must play their part as designers, builders, and managers of their equipment and, in this respect,

Rwanda serves as an exemplary model for the rest of the continent."

Lefebvre also noted: "Although it's not global yet, that's our ambition for SMIESA, so we are delighted to co-locate with Aviation Africa for our inaugural event."

Echoing Lefebvre's enthusiasm, Rwanda Airports Company managing director, Charles Habonimana, added: "Co-locating these two events has enabled us to bring together stakeholders from across Africa's aviation industry, including service providers to the airport sector, government officials, policymakers and airlines."

Addressing the challenges that Africa's aviation community has faced in recent years, Habonimana added that events

such as SMIESA provided a valuable networking platform to unite different organisations. "For the last two days we have come together to address the challenges we face and speak with one voice. We have Aviation Africa to thank for helping bring us all together."

SMIESA's two-day conference ran alongside Aviation Africa's own sessions, with panels covering topics that included: funding, operating and business models for airports; streamlining airport development, air cargo, air connectivity and operational efficiency; strengthening airport capabilities and embracing the digital era; and strengthening collaborations between airports, tourism, and trade bodies, as well as airlines across the continent. ▲



Cost-effective solutions: Xavier del Valle (left) with Arnaud Bertrand, head of training at Groupe ADP. PICTURE: CHLOE GREENBANK.

GROUPE ADP LAUNCHES ITS 'SECOND-HAND MARKET'

Groupe ADP, which was exhibiting and participating at this year's Aviation Africa as well as UGAACO's SMIESA, used the summit to promote its new 'airport market' product, which it aimed to launch as *African Aerospace* was going to press.

"The airport market is the world's first marketplace dedicated to providing second-hand equipment to airports around the world. It offers a simple, yet cost-effective, solution," explained Xavier del Valle, head of airport market at Groupe ADP.

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"The idea is that whether it's runway sweepers, ground service equipment, airport vehicles, fire trucks, or even terminal seating, we can source the equipment from airports and sell it on to

other airports. The equipment will be certified by the original manufacturer.

"I already have one prospective customer in Africa wanting to purchase a passenger boarding bridge."

Airport market plans to sell its second-hand equipment for between 15-25% of the original manufacturing price.

"It's all about creating a circular economy, which will also help airports to achieve their sustainability goals," said del Valle.

"I have a catalogue of equipment that's available now and we are equipped to source additional items on request.

"Ultimately, we hope to source and supply equipment within the same region to help reduce the carbon footprint of our operations," he concluded. ▲

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FOCUS ON AVIATION AFRICA

HALL HIGHLIGHTS



Something different: Frank Vieira Hugger reveals an inventive way of thinking. PICTURE: BILLYPIX.

INVENTING A NEW WAY TO TRAIN

CPaT Global offers distance learning solutions with a difference for airlines, training organisations, aircraft maintenance companies, and aviation professionals.

“Our training content is designed to be interactive and engaging,” said Frank Vieira Hugger, director of business development.

“Our content-design software platform, Invent, is structured that way to keep the trainee more alert and interested. It is a first-of-a-kind platform that empowers the trainer.

“Because airlines have highly specialised needs, ranging from multiple airframes, unique operating procedures, regulatory differences, and the need for ongoing modifications and tailored training programmes, existing distance

learning training platforms have limitations that fail to meet the needs of individual training providers. That’s how CPaT Invent was invented.”

The company, based in Houston, Texas, has around 300 training organisations, such as flight schools, around the world.

“In Africa alone we have 40 customers, including RwandAir, EgyptAir, Air Tanzania, Kenya Airways and Safair,” said Hugger.

TAAG Angola was added to its customer list in August this year.

CPaT will be providing enhanced tailored aircraft system courses for the B737-700, B777-200ER, B777-300ER, and Bombardier DHC-8/Q400 fleets. ▲

KRIMSON BRIDGES THE MECHANICAL GAP

Krimson, the Addis Ababa-based flight support, charter, leasing, MRO solutions, and aviation consultancy, is expanding in the USA.

The company’s founder and CEO, Dawit Lemma, believes there is a shortage of aviation mechanics there and plans to do something about it.

“People talk about pilot shortage, but there is also a mechanic shortage – there is a real demand, especially in the US. As more aircraft are being produced, there is a slight neglect in mechanical training,” he said.

“I feel that the aviation industry globally is struggling to get the next generation excited. The younger generation don’t really look to aviation as a career.

“In 25 years it is predicted there will be a human resource crises within the industry, and I want to bridge that gap and make sure we are equipped to mitigate that crises for ourselves.”



launched last year to fund a new endowment at the aviation and business institutions of Purdue University.

The Krimson aviation scholarship and the Krimson business opportunity programme (BOP) scholarship will be awarded to students from minority groups under-represented in aviation, with the intention of opening new aviation flightpaths for talented individuals.

Dawit Lemma: “People talk about pilot shortage, but in the US it is a mechanic shortage.” PICTURE: BILLYPIX.

□ □ □ □ □

The company is currently in negotiations for a classroom and a hangar, and is looking to launch there by January 2023, with 30 students expected in the first batch.

Lemma said this is a progression from the \$100,000 scholarship Krimson

The scholarships highlight the need to increase diversity within the aviation industry and are designed to attract applications from women and ethnic minorities.

This is close to Lemma’s heart as he, himself, experienced challenges as a youngster.

“I grew up between the US and Switzerland, but I am of Ethiopian background,” explained Lemma.

“Without going into it, I know how it feels to be part of a diverse minority.”

□ □ □ □ □

Lemma studied aeronautical engineering and flight technology, and also obtained his commercial pilot’s licence (CPL) and airframe and powerplants licence – Federal Aviation Authority (FAA) mechanic’s licence.

“I came across remarks when I first started out in the industry, so I just feel opening a scholarship for women and ethnic minorities made sense. I want to create a platform to learn, grow and be safe,” he said.

Lemma is also developing a science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) programme for high school students – again, for everyone from disadvantaged communities to ethnic minorities and women.

“The idea is then to offer internship programmes for kids to get scholarships,” said Lemma.

Krimson has 26 representative connections around Africa and Lemma hopes to convert at least 10 of these into improved facilities.

Lemma said: “It might just be an office, or perhaps MRO hangars. The idea is to focus on east Africa.” ▲

BOEING PARTNERS RWANDA SAFETY CENTRE

Boeing has become the latest partner in the AviAssist Safety Promotion Centre – Rwanda, which promotes access to continuous professional development and research.

According to Boeing, air traffic in Africa is expected to grow by 5.2% annually, above the global average growth of 3.8%. This underscores the importance of continued investment in safety and security performance improvements.

“Safety is fundamental to the success of our industry, and is a core value for the Boeing team,” said Akachi Iroez, Boeing director, global safety and regulatory affairs.

“Growth of the aviation industry in Africa depends on the

safety of the aviation ecosystem and we are collaborating with customers, regulators, and other stakeholders to help strengthen the safety of that ecosystem. Working with AviAssist gives us access to a world-class and effective way of promoting safety in the region.”

AviAssist director, Tom Kok, was equally enthusiastic. “We are thrilled to include Boeing in our work in Africa and our AviAssist safety promotion centres,” he said. “With this partnership, Boeing invests in current and future African aviation professionals to help grow the continent’s aviation industry.” ▲



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SHEDDING THE LIGHT FOR NEARLY A CENTURY

Family-run CU Phosco Lighting will celebrate 100 years in operations next year. The UK-based company designs, manufactures, installs and maintains high mast lighting, specialising in airport apron lighting.

"We undertake contracts at airports worldwide, including at London Heathrow, Manchester, Dubai, Bristol, Abu Dhabi, Dublin, and Beijing," said Lee Sanderson, export manager.

The company also has contracts in Nigeria, Kenya, and Ghana, and Sanderson was in Rwanda to meet with representatives of the country's

new airport being constructed – Bugesera International Airport – which is due for first phase completion in 2026.

The company also chose Aviation Africa to launch its latest floodlight – the FL810 LED area floodlighting system. "The FL810 provides an innovative solution for area lighting," explained Sanderson. "It is a high-output LED floodlight, suitable for all types of area lighting, and may be used as a replacement for existing 1kW or 2kW floodlight systems. It is available as a single or twin module with chip scale package (CSP) LEDs."

Glowing with pride:
Lee Sanderson,
export manager,
with the company's
latest floodlight –
the FL810.

PICTURE: BILLYPIX.



Dynamics duo: Robert Mujambere with the company's Songbird 150 VTOL.

PICTURE: BILLYPIX.

SONGBIRD IN TUNE WITH AFRICAN NEEDS

Locus Dynamics, which is a certified unmanned aircraft system operator in Rwanda, was displaying its Songbird 150 vertical take-off and landing (VTOL) drone at the show.

The company, which offers a range of aerospace, robotics and integrated security solutions, covers a wide number of activities within Rwanda and east Africa.

"Our drones can be used for powerlines and other infrastructure inspection and monitoring, land mapping and surveying, photography and videography, or for search-and-rescue," said systems engineer Robert Mujambere.

"The Songbird allows us to cover more distance and we plan on getting a second one."

CAVERTON MAINTAINS ITS MRO GROWTH

Caverton took the opportunity to attend Aviation Africa to highlight its capabilities in MRO and training.

The company operates out of Murtala Muhammed International Airport in Lagos, where its MRO facility maintains fixed and rotary-wing aircraft, including the Bell 12, A139, A109 and Airbus H125, as well as Twin Otters. It also maintains visiting business jets.

The MRO facility includes a large and spacious hangar floor measuring approximately 4,000sqm, as well as a paint booth to spray helicopters, and a bonded warehouse including consignment stock.

The company is also the only training centre in Africa to have an AW139 flight simulator.

"We are really proud to be the first to have this simulator on the African continent," said Rotimi Makanjuola, chief operating officer.

The company, which includes Caverton Helicopters, and boasts separate MRO, marine, and training sections, has been offering flight helicopter operations for 12 years, mainly offshore support.

"We mainly support the oil and gas industries for large companies such as Shell, by providing logistics support. The AW139 is used a lot for this type of work, so it made sense to get the A139 simulator," explained Makanjuola. "It is



Model of consistency: Rotimi Makanjuola talks up the progress being made by Caverton.

PICTURE: BILLYPIX.

also popular for medevac and search-and-rescue work."

Pilots visit Caverton's facility from all over west Africa, mainly to do their recurrent training on the AW139, which takes seven days.

"We got the simulator two years ago, which was actually the right time as pilots could continue their training post pandemic," said Makanjuola. "We are also now looking to get an AW109 simulator."

The company also operates out of Cameroon, using a Twin Otter, and has plans to operate from Ghana, and eventually across west Africa.

"We are also looking to focus on developing local content, especially in Nigeria," said Makanjuola.

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New deal: Fahari Aviation and EVE commit to establishing the foundations that will sustainably support the ecosystem for urban air mobility in Kenya.
PICTURE: FAHARI AVIATION.

Fahari is all about Eve...

Kenya's Fahari Aviation has signed a letter of intent to buy 40 electric vertical take-off and landing aircraft. **Marcelle Nethersole** finds out more from general manager, Hawkins Musili.

Electric vertical take-off and landing (eVTOL) aircraft are seen as the future for the aerospace industry, with many start-up companies going head-to-head in production.

The new technology uses electric power so aircraft can hover, take off, and land vertically, making it easier to travel within cities and avoid traffic jams.

Already there is much global interest in these 'flying taxis' for companies looking to develop the urban air mobility (UAM) market. Fahari Aviation, a subsidiary of Kenya Airways, is no exception.

The initial focus for Fahari Aviation has been on the uncrewed airspace sector. It has offered specialised training courses including remote pilot licence training, remote pilot licence instructor rating, and beyond visual line-of-sight training. It has also offered enterprise solutions for drone technology applications.

Now the company has gone one further, signing a letter of intent (LoI) for up to 40 eVTOLs with EVE UAM, a subsidiary of Eve Holding (EVE) and a carve-out of Embraer.

The agreement includes joint studies through a working group to develop and scale the UAM market and a business model for cargo drone operations in Kenya.

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"The signing with EVE is an expression of interest that will enable Fahari Aviation to participate in the development of eVTOLs," explained general manager Hawkins Musili.

"Emerging and future aviation technology is the core of our mandate and, in our view, eVTOLs represent the future of air mobility.

"Beyond enhancing movement and simplifying connectivity, UAM is expected to lower the cost of air transport and, hence, provide more access for people. As a result of enhanced accessibility to rural areas, there will be a heightened emergence of economic regions within Kenya and the entire African region."

The company has been focusing on innovative and sustainable solutions to address different challenges, such as

overcoming traffic jams, creating sightseeing opportunities, parcel delivery, agriculture, and wildlife protection.

Musili believes EVE's zero-emission, low-noise and accessible eVTOL will benefit the development of air mobility in Kenya, and he pointed out that the new agreement was an opportunity to participate in the design and development of the technology.

He added that the company would take the time to study potential use cases and their feasibility in the region to determine the timing and magnitude of any acquisition or investment in eVTOLs in the future.

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The eVTOLs are expected to be ready in five years, but there are still potential challenges to overcome.

"There is a lot of work to be done in developing the ecosystem for this technology, such as infrastructure, regulations, safety, traffic management, and awareness," explained Musili. "We are working very closely with industry stakeholders to formulate a development plan and make this a reality for Kenya. Once urban air mobility is operationalised, it will create a new stream of economic activity and, with it, new employment opportunities within the aviation sector."

Musili is proud that Fahari Aviation is one of the first companies in Africa to sign a LoI for eVTOL aircraft.

"Disruptive technology is bound to catch up in Africa," he said. "We recognise that making our intentions clear from the onset will allow us to shape and understand the technology and product better. This knowledge will be critical in deciding the timing and magnitude of investment in eVTOLs and will help us influence its adaptability in Africa and beyond.

"Beyond existing and emerging technology, aviation is in on the cusp of a combination of massive technological shifts that will bring into reality efficiencies and capabilities that we can only imagine now.

"The future of the aerospace industry will be an accessible autonomous air mobility ecosystem that will revolutionise the bounds of connectivity, distance, and time." ▲

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Far left: The Tunisian AB 205s are all armed with cabin-mounted machine-guns. Seen here is an FN MAG, although the Dillon Aero M134D can also be carried.
Left: The Tunisian aircraft can operate by day and night, using NVGs, and are able to carry out both close air support sorties using machine guns and rocket launchers, as well as ISR duties thanks to their Star Safire III EO/IR sensor. PICTURES: MINUSCA.

CAR TRIP

Erwan de Cherisey takes a look at the Tunisian helicopter unit's line of duty in the Central African Republic.

March 2022, early morning in the western Central African Republic (CAR). Two Agusta Bell 205 helicopters with United Nations and Tunisian Air Force (TAF) markings are flying in close formation at low altitude over the Batangafo-Bouca road.

Machine-gunners on each side of the aircraft keep a close eye on the ground, looking for signs of the presence of armed groups in the area, while, inside, a sensor operator does the same using an externally mounted camera.

In the meantime, ground troops are moving through the area to flush out the bandits and reassure the civilian population. The two helicopters loom close by, ready to deliver air support when needed.

The scenario is a good example of the duties performed by the Tunisian Armed Helicopter Unit, which has been deployed under the banner of the United Nations multidimensional integrated stabilization mission in the CAR (MINUSCA) for nearly a year now.

The unit has made its home at the Bangui M'Poko Airport and comprises 130 people, including five aircrew, each made up of two pilots, one flight engineer and two gunners, and three AB 205s hailing from the TAF's 32nd Squadron based at Sidi Ahmed Air Base in Bizerte.

The Tunisian helicopters fill a gap left following the withdrawal of the Senegalese Mi-35s from the CAR in 2019.

According to a spokesperson for the unit, the helicopters and their support equipment were transported to Bangui in several rotations of TAF Lockheed Martin C-130J, while personnel flew on a chartered commercial aircraft on September 22 2021.

Meanwhile, ground support equipment and spare parts were shipped by sea from Tunisia to Douala in Cameroon and from there moved by road to Bangui.

Following aircraft assembly and testing, the Tunisian detachment was declared fully operational on November 6 2021 and started flying operations on November 8.

The Tunisian AB 205s are tasked with carrying out

▼ The Tunisian AB 205s are tasked with carrying out multiple duties including VIP, personnel and cargo transport, search-and-rescue, close air support, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR), casualty and medical evacuations, armed escort, air assault, and air control. ▲

multiple duties including VIP, personnel and cargo transport, search-and-rescue, close air support, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR), casualty and medical evacuations, armed escort, air assault, and air control.

The aircraft can be armed with FN MAG and Dillon Aero M134D 7.62mm cabin-mounted machine-guns and with 70mm rocket launchers under two external hardpoints. A single Teledyne FLIR Star Safire III electro-optical/infrared (EO/IR) sensor can be externally mounted on the left side of the airframe for ISR duties.

The aircraft are also outfitted for night flying using night vision goggles (NVG), a particularly valuable feature allowing for greater tactical flexibility, which was previously lacking in MINUSCA.

These weapons and equipment are all part of the standard fit of the aircraft in TAF service and no special modification was made to any of the helicopters for the purpose of their deployment to the CAR.

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The unit is intended to be assigned to MINUSCA for a year, although mandate extensions could increase this out to August 31 2024.

Pre-deployment preparation started in Tunisia and included several lectures and courses on local customs and legal aspects, as well as UN rules of engagement. It concluded in the CAR, where additional operational matters of significance were also reviewed.

Between November 2021 and August 2022, the Tunisian unit flew more than 300 hours despite the ongoing fuel supply crisis, which is having an impact on the CAR.

Flying in the region involves many challenges due to the lack of navigation aids in the country, as well as the changing weather, which includes heavy downpours during the rainy season.

The heat tends to affect aircraft performance and the dust when landing in unprepared areas can be a major hazard due to the 'brown out' phenomenon, where an aircraft is surrounded by a cloud of dust and the aircrew is left without spatial references while closing the ground. According to the spokesperson, Tunisian fliers are quite familiar with several of these difficulties due to their experience operating in the desert, where sand and high temperatures are ubiquitous.

Overall, the TAF's helicopter unit provides MINUSCA with a vital airborne multipurpose armed capability and its deployment is also a major achievement for Tunisia, which had never before sent helicopters to a UN mission. Although, as the spokesperson highlighted, it follows in the footsteps of the commitment of a Tunisian C-130J to the United Nations mission in Mali since 2019. ▲

DES DRONES DÉFILENT EN CÔTE D'IVOIRE

Quatre drones DT26 de surveillance sont aujourd'hui déployés pour des besoins de sécurité. Il s'agit pour la Côte d'Ivoire de prévenir des attaques de groupes armés au nord du pays.

L'information a été confirmée par le chef d'Etat-Major des armées.

Le drone DT26 E Tactical de la société française leader sur le marché des drones professionnels Delair est largement opérationnel en Afrique pour assurer des missions de sécurité, de reconnaissance et de défense. La Gendarmerie royale marocaine et la Garde nationale du Niger le déploient pour surveiller leurs frontières. Il est également utilisé au Burkina Faso et au Nigéria.

« L'Afrique est une région très importante dans notre vision stratégique et notre développement commercial. Nos drones sont adaptés pour le continent africain et résistent à des températures élevées de même qu'à un environnement sableux et poussiéreux dans lequel ils évoluent », explique Vincent Desperiere, Global Sales Manager Security & Defence chez Delair.

Le DT26 dispose d'une capacité d'autonomie de 3 heures et d'une portée de communication de 50km. Facile à utiliser, robuste, résistant, fiable, il est avant tout mobile. Il peut être transporté à l'arrière d'un pickup et être déployé en quelques minutes. « Ils sont également très compétitifs sur le marché et nécessitent peu de maintenance. »

Les drones Delair trouvent également des débouchés pour les applications civiles en Afrique notamment



AIR FORCE: Delair DT-26 at the national day ceremony in Ivory Coast.

auprès des entreprises minières ou pétrolières, et des agences spatiales.

Depuis quatre ans Delair développe une version du DT26 permettant une propulsion à l'hydrogène. Baptisé Hydron, ce projet d'innovation est financé et conduit par la Direction Générale de l'Armement (DGA).

« Nos drones de nouvelle génération seront hybrides. Ils pourront passer d'une utilisation électrique standard avec une batterie à une utilisation électrique à propulsion hydrogène. Cela permettra de multiplier par deux voire trois l'autonomie du drone et de bénéficier de coûts d'opération et de maintenance inégales », soutient Vincent Desperiere.

Ce sera alors une véritable rupture technologique dans l'industrie du drone.

VINCENT CHAPPARD

SUMMARY

DT26 DRONES PATROL IVORY COAST

The chief of staff of the Ivory Coast's armed forces has confirmed that four DT26 surveillance drones are currently deployed in the north of the country, 'for security purposes', to help to prevent attacks by armed groups.

The DT26 E tactical drone, from the French company, Delair, is operational throughout the continent to carry out security, reconnaissance and defence missions. Morocco and Niger deploy it to monitor their borders and it's also used in Burkina Faso and Nigeria. ▲

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Photographic record made during the unpaved runway test campaign.



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Nigeria terminals plan hits patch of turbulence

Great expectations: Nnamdi Azikiwe International Airport in Abuja, which is operated by the Federal Airports Authority of Nigeria (FAAN).

PICTURE: KOPEE15, WIKICOMMONS.



World events are creating significant challenges for Nigeria's airport investment programme. **Chloë Greenbank** reports.

Nigeria's aviation sector is in something of a holding pattern. The country's proposed national carrier, Nigeria Air, for which plans seemed to be full steam ahead earlier this year with a proposed launch date in July, has stalled.

In June, Nigeria's Minister of Aviation, Hadi Sirika, confirmed the carrier had received an air transport licence (ATL) from the Nigerian Civil Aviation Authority (NCAA) and, at the end of July, plans for leasing three aircraft were announced.

However, there is still a question mark over the airline's confirmed start date.

Similarly, plans to privatise at least some of Nigeria's air transport hubs are at a standstill.

In 2015, Sirika revealed plans to hand over four out of five of the country's major airport terminals – Murtala Muhammed International in Lagos, Port Harcourt International in Rivers State, Nnamdi Azikiwe International in Abuja, and Kano International in the country's northern region – to private concerns under concession agreements. However, despite the prequalification phase of the airport concession programme closing in October 2021, it remains unknown as to when the next phase will be announced.

According to Kabir Mohammed, regional manager/airport manager of Nnamdi Azikiwe International Airport, and head of Nigeria's aviation roadmap implementation team, the process of privatising the airports "is still ongoing".

He said that a transaction advisor is overseeing the process. "The initial bidding process has now closed and further negotiations need to take place with those bidders that have been shortlisted."

looking at programmes and projects to expand the current capacity of all the country's airports."

In line with these plans, reports from a cabinet meeting held at the end of June suggested the Federal Executive Council (FEC) of Nigeria had approved an investment of \$57 million for the purchase of equipment for 16 airports throughout the country. The kit includes radio communication systems for control towers and instrument landing aid systems.

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Although Mohammed was unable to confirm the details of the \$57 million investment, he was able to clarify that 12,000 hectares of land in Abuja have been handed over to Sirika in line with the country's aviation roadmap projects.

He explained that one of the key projects for this land is a second runway at Nnamdi Azikiwe International Airport. China Civil Engineering Construction Limited (CCECC) has been tasked with building the runway.

Whether privately operated or not, Mohammed underlines the need for all Nigeria's airports to be operated effectively and efficiently, regardless of whether they are profit-making.

"Not all airports can sustain themselves, but having that consistent network of air transport hubs across the country is vital in terms of connectivity for both trade and tourism. Our skies are safe, but I believe our airports can and should be run more effectively," he said.

While Mohammed remains confident that Nigeria Air will be up and flying before the end of the year, he also underlined the need for greater alliance and investment across Nigeria's aviation sector to ensure its roadmap is successful.

"There is no shortage of passengers wanting to fly and the airports exist to accommodate that air traffic. However, I would like to see greater collaboration and support among the different stakeholders going forward," he concluded. ▲

■ **Grounds for concern, page 42.**

For the seventh consecutive year, Cape Town International Airport has been awarded the Skytrax Best Airport in Africa award. Regional general manager, Mark Maclean, explained to **Guy Leitch** how the team did it.

Secrets of our magnificent seven



PICTURE: CTA

Our passenger process times through the airport are world-class. **MARK MACLEAN**

As the head of Cape Town International, Mark Maclean is particularly proud of the Skytrax award, where airports across the world compete on the basis of customer experience.

Cape Town was rated against all the other airports across Africa and came out top – once again.

Maclean said: “It shows how the ethos we build in making sure that we take care of our customers is serving us well in terms of how they rate us.”

Not only did he and his team win the best airport in Africa award, they completed a hat-trick with the best airport staff in Africa, and also the cleanest airport in Africa awards – a combination that goes a long way to explaining how they took the continent’s top prize.

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Covid-19 caused a drop in passenger numbers from 10 million in 2019 to just 4 million in 2021. Despite this, Cape Town’s service levels have not slipped and Maclean is proud of the airport’s ability to process passengers efficiently and reduce aircraft turnaround times.

“We have been able to deliver one of the best on-time performances in the world for our client airlines. Our passenger process times through the airport are world-class – certainly within the international best-of-class standard,” he said.

“Non-airside revenue is vital for our survival and we

have a good retail offering with a relaxed environment for our passengers. All those things come together to create an environment where passengers can feel that, not only will they get a reliable service, but also they will feel welcome and relaxed.”

Maclean used the Covid-19 lockdown for developing and implementing new procedures and protocols to minimise the disruption to passengers in anticipation of a slow return of international tourists.

One of the key new customer-centric developments has been the introduction of e-gates for passport control. These improve passenger processing times and experience, while maintaining the security and integrity of the airport’s immigration facility.

The e-gate system identifies threats based on passenger profiles, and the advanced passenger processing system is used to identify known suspects – for example, those to stop or on watchlists.

The airport’s award-winning status contributes to Cape Town being rated as one of the best tourist destinations in the world.

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Ten years ago, the airport was planning for a 90% local traveller mix, with just 10% international travellers. However, due to the collapse of two of South Africa’s low-cost carriers – Mango and Kulula – and the Western Cape’s success as an international tourist destination, the passenger mix is now almost 25% international.

This is largely due to the airport’s ability to attract new airlines and expand the routes it serves. The world-renowned cape air access initiative has been instrumental in this success.

The appointment, in 2021, of former Airlines Association of Southern Africa chief executive officer, Wrenelle Stander, as CEO of the Western Cape Tourism, Trade and Investment Promotion Agency (Wesgro) has further continued the airport’s recovery. “Our airport’s role has had to grow to match the demand,” Maclean explained.

Before Covid, the airport was set to finally begin its huge new expansion plan with the runway realignment project. However, with the dramatic drop in passenger numbers and recovery expected to continue for at least another year or two, Maclean said the expansion plans have once again been postponed. ▲

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A single regional jet destined for Congo Airways sitting under unusually grey skies at Embraer's Sao Jose dos Campos facility may not have seemed particularly significant, but it exemplified the Brazilian manufacturer's ambitions in Africa, as Alan Dron reports.



Good example: This Air Peace Embraer E195 E2 typifies the Brazilian company's expanding presence in the African regional jet sector.

PICTURE: EMBRAER.

Jets propel Embraer's African aspirations

Embraer is hoping to expand its already strong position in Africa, where its E-Jet regional airliners operate with at least 19 carriers and its older-generation models serve many more. It is the continent's second-largest airliner manufacturer. "There are a lot of E-Jets flying around and we are actively talking to several operators," revealed Embraer commercial president and CEO, Arjan Meijer.

He added that the E175 E1 version was a good replacement for smaller and ageing regional aircraft for routes that could accommodate a little more upsizing and which were currently served by the previous-generation Embraer 135 and 145, Bombardier CRJ regional jets and smaller, older, Boeing 737s, such as the -300.

Embraer plans to take a decision by early 2023 on whether to launch a new-generation 70-to-90-seat turboprop.

Where the 70-plus seats of the smaller of the two versions may provide too much capacity as a replacement for the 145, Embraer is looking at the possibility of providing a three-class configuration (business, premium economy and economy) similar to that used by some US regional airlines, which would bring seat numbers down to 50, similar to that of the 145 or smaller members of the CRJ family.

The larger E190 and E195, meanwhile, are particularly suitable for sectors feeding into hubs, Meijer added.

Providing an illustration of Embraer's African ambitions, that Congo Airways E190 E2 could be seen on the ramp of the manufacturer's Sao Jose dos Campos facility in late May, being prepared for delivery to the Republic of Congo carrier.

"We see the regional segment gaining relevance," said Meijer. Smaller aircraft already

in service had enabled nimble airlines to juggle capacity through the pandemic and they would be required over the next few years to rebuild routes, he suggested. "We see regional jets gaining at the expense of narrow-bodies."

In 2017, he said, around 17% of the market had been composed of aircraft in the 70-to-150-seat category. That figure had now risen to around 30%, partly because airlines had jettisoned uneconomic, older, larger aircraft during the pandemic.

Around 850 aircraft in the 70-to-80-seat sector will need replacing by the end of this decade, together with around 2,000 in the 100-to-150-seat market segment over the same period, he said. "And that's simply replacement, without growth."

In the military market, meanwhile, despite the Brazilian Air Force cutting back on its order for Embraer's C-390 multi-role tactical transport, the company believes that the aircraft still offers great potential in a market where the average age of medium military airlifters is a remarkable 31.2 years.

There are around 1,500 aircraft in the medium transport aircraft category, said Jackson Schneider, president of Embraer Defense and Security at a briefing at Embraer's Sao Jose dos Campos facility.

A little more than half of that number is in North

Continued
on Page 38



Still operating: The previous generation of Embraer regional jets, the EMB-145, is in service with many African carriers, including Ghana's Africa World Airlines. PICTURE: COMMONS

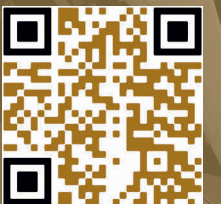
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America, but the company estimates that around 105 will require to be replaced in Africa and another 150 in the Middle East.

While the pandemic brought talks on fleet renewals to a complete halt, Schneider said, the Russia-Ukraine conflict had shocked it back into life. The problems faced by Russia in supplying its troops and the flood of weaponry from western countries to Ukraine had moved the importance of logistics centre-stage, he said.

The chaotic withdrawal of western forces from Afghanistan last year also alerted some countries that their military air transport capabilities were not up to date, added Schneider.

“Many countries have realised that their logistics systems are very old and need to be replaced as soon as possible.”

Embraer had been besieged by countries seeking information on the C-390. “I have to be candid, some of them were not on our radar.

Suddenly [the war] has reinforced strong interest in the C-390,” said Schneider.

Of course, Embraer is not the sole purveyor of medium transport aircraft and many countries will see the best replacement for the ubiquitous C-130 Hercules as a new (or newer) C-130. There are also likely to be some bargains around. The UK, for example, is retiring around 10 of its fleet of 25 C-130Js and stretched C-130J-30s earlier than planned and these are likely to be sold off. Bahrain has already required two, for example.

The British examples were heavily used in the UK’s involvement in Afghanistan but have been well maintained and will give several years’ more service to new owners, especially if they fly the aircraft at a lower tempo than the British. And they will be much cheaper than buying new aircraft such as the C-390.

Schneider said that Embraer respected the C-130J-30 as a “great product” but that the C-390 represented a new generation of equipment.

The two aircraft’s cargo compartments are roughly similar in size, but the C-390’s is slightly larger in all three dimensions and Embraer says that the C-390 will carry 26 tonnes, compared to the C-130J-30’s 20 tonnes.

Significantly, in May, the aircraft embarked on a tour of two African and eight Middle Eastern countries. Some had specifically asked for the aircraft to visit, Schneider added.

African Aerospace understands that the head of the Rwandan Air Force has suggested that the C-390 would be a contender for use by nations of the African Union – perhaps in a multinational unit – that could undertake humanitarian and other missions throughout the continent.



Potential: Embraer believes there is an African market of more than 100 military transport aircraft that could be filled by the C-390 Millennium or its KC-390 tanker variant. Left: Embraer’s Super Tucano has found niches with several African air arms (in this case, Mauritania), where its simplicity and ruggedness stands in good stead for the counter-insurgency and border patrol roles.

PICTURES: EMBRAER.

Following its tour, the aircraft was scheduled to tour Asia-Pacific and, in early June, Embraer announced that it was in talks with India over the aircraft.

Commentators have estimated that India requires 25-30 aircraft in the medium transport category, following the ending in 2017 of the Indo-Russian medium transport aircraft project. India is facing increasing pressure from China on its north-eastern border. The Indian Air Force operates both C-130s and C-17 Globemaster strategic transports, but observers believe the C-390 could add useful capacity.

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Meanwhile, in Embraer’s domestic market, the Força Aérea Brasileira (FAB) ordered 28 C-390s, with the first being delivered in 2019. However it has subsequently cut back its order from 28 to 22. A decrease or increase of up to 25% of the initial 28-strong order was allowed under the terms of the contract.

Then, earlier this year, the FAB said it wanted to cut the order further, to only 15, with a senior officer citing budget unpredictability as the reason for being unable to afford more, at least in the short term.

The eventual outcome remains uncertain, but Embraer says it retains a contract for 22 of the twin-turboprop aircraft. A further five have been ordered by Portugal to replace its Lockheed Martin C-130s – the first of these was on the final assembly line in late May – together with two examples for Hungary.

Argentina has said it plans to order four, but that country’s ongoing severe economic problems have so far prevented it from signing a firm order. The aircraft has also been shortlisted by the Netherlands to replace its existing C-130s.

Embraer has said that it plans, imminently, to unveil a ‘partnership’ on the C-390 to increase market penetration. The identity of the defence company involved was awaited as *African Aerospace* went to press.

Meanwhile, with more than 260 aircraft in service or ordered by 16 air arms, the turboprop-powered A-29 Super Tucano tactical trainer, armed reconnaissance and light attack aircraft already has considerable traction in Africa.

Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauritania, Angola and, most recently, Nigeria, have acquired the type. In Nigeria, the aircraft’s light attack capabilities will be put to work in sorties against the militant Islamic Boko Haram movement.

Several A-29 operators in Africa use the aircraft in roles such as border patrol, where its relatively low operating cost of \$1,200 an hour suits it for lengthy patrols.

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Historic times: The first Ethiopian B767-300 passenger aircraft being converted into a freighter.
PICTURE: ANTHENEH GIRMA.

Ethiopian ups its conversion rate

Ethiopian MRO is developing its passenger-to-freight conversion capabilities.

Kaleyesus Bekele reports from Addis Ababa.



Kidus Melkamu: "In our 76-year history we are doing conversion work for the first time."

Dozens of Ethiopian Airlines aircraft maintenance technicians are working tirelessly on a Boeing B767-300 aircraft in one of the large modern hangars at the Addis Ababa Bole International Airport.

The chilly weather doesn't seem to deter them from their hard work. Young and energetic airframe technicians are welding, cutting, and painting the fuselage of the Ethiopian passenger B767-300 aircraft in a bid to convert it into a cargo freighter.

The aircraft belongs to Ethiopian Airlines, which phased out most of its Boeing 767 fleet, replacing the aircraft with B787s and A350s.

Ethiopian MRO, in collaboration with Israel Aerospace Industries (IAI), is now conducting the first conversion work on the B767-300 aircraft.

"This is a very exciting moment for us," said Kidus Melkamu, managing director of Ethiopian MRO. "In our 76-year history we are doing conversion work for the first time. We are the first MRO centre in Africa to convert a B767 jetliner into a cargo aircraft."

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In August 2021, Ethiopian Airlines and IAI signed a partnership agreement to set up a conversion centre in Addis Ababa, the hub of the national flag-carrier. The new IAI facility will serve as an extension of Ethiopian's MRO centre, allowing it to convert Boeing 767-300 airliners into cargo aircraft.

According to IAI, the new site is going to become the largest conversion facility in Africa. It is the company's third such centre, the other two being located at Ben Gurion International Airport in Tel Aviv, and in Mexico.

Ethiopian Airlines has a long history of operating and maintaining the Boeing 767. Although only three such jets remain in the carrier's fleet, the company has flown the model continuously since 1996.

The B767-300 jetliner, which is being converted to cargo,

had 260 seats. When conversion is complete it will be a freighter aircraft able to ferry up to 60 tonnes of cargo.

Ethiopian also plans to convert its remaining two B767 passenger aircraft.

According to Melkamu, the design work, engineering and conversion is done by IAI. "Ethiopian Airlines contracted them to convert the aircraft to cargo and we agreed to use our MRO centre as a facility to accommodate all the preparation for the conversion. We have deployed our own workforce. IAI is supervising and we do all the technical work."

More than 100 Ethiopian technicians and engineers are working on the first conversion project on a full-time basis. Personnel from other departments join them to assist on the project. There are also about nine Israeli experts supporting them.

Avi Edri, IAI's project manager, said: "The Ethiopian MRO team is amazing. All the technicians are well trained and qualified. The MRO centre and the hangars are well equipped and very clean."

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Edri believes that the Ethio-Israeli partnership will be a success. "We will do more conversion work. The facilities are excellent and the people are nice. So it is up to ET and IAI to move the project forward."

However, the B767 conversion has not been easy. "It is a challenging project," admitted Melkamu. "The conversion work requires high precision. If you make an error in this project it will be difficult to recover. So we have to be very precise."

He added that the team had faced some challenges. "We have manufactured most of the tools in our facility. Since the hangar was not originally designed for conversion work, we have encountered some obstacles here and there. But we work with various departments and IAI experts and solve the problems."

"Challenges make us stronger. We at Ethiopian know how to work hard and win. That is what makes the project so exciting," he said.

Melkamu praised IAI's well-developed engineering capability. "We are learning a lot from their rich experience in conversion work," he said.

Ethiopian MRO is also planning to convert B777 and B737NG aircraft. "After developing our skills in converting B767s we will move to B777 and B737NG conversion work," Melkamu revealed. "We will develop the capability for B777-300 ER passenger-to-cargo conversion."

Ethiopian MRO Center operates six maintenance hangars and is in the process of building two more.

"Conversion work will be another line of business for us. We see a big opportunity in Africa and elsewhere," concluded Melkamu. ▲

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Grounded aircraft are the last thing an airline needs or wants, yet two-thirds of Nigeria's national fleet finds itself in that predicament. **Chuck Grieve** looks into the situation.

GROUNDINGS FOR CONCERN



Nigeria had the dubious distinction of topping the global list for grounded commercial aircraft in June, with 64% of its total national fleet – 79 of 123 aircraft – out of service.

The list, compiled by Ch-aviation, put Hong Kong second and Iran third at 62% and 52% respectively. South Africa was ranked fifth and Kenya eighth.

Industry observers have suggested the situation is down to Nigeria's becoming a junkyard of old and obsolete types. Such aircraft, easier to obtain at often give-away prices, are expensive to maintain and operate.

For example, for Boeing 737 Classics, the cost of heavy maintenance checks – most of which are beyond the range of African maintenance, repair and overhaul (MRO) facilities – is between \$2 million and \$3 million per aircraft.

The International Centre for Investigative Reporting (ICIR) said Nigerian Aviation Minister, Hadi Sirika, deplored the situation, quoting him as saying: "The choice of equipment speaks to the professionalism in the industry."

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Based on *Planespotter* reports, the ICIR said Boeing 737-300/400/500 examples dominate the fleets of the majority of Nigerian airlines, a factor that "cannot be ignored".

The industry, on the other hand, regularly complains about a lack of government support and long-term vision for aviation.

Rabiu Yadudu, managing director of the Federal Airports Authority of Nigeria (FAAN), told delegates to the FAAN national aviation conference that the \$2.5 billion spent on MRO in 2021, had it been invested in-country, would have resulted in opportunities for Nigerians to be trained and employed in aircraft maintenance.

The African aviation sector operates in one of the highest

Boeing Classic: Sending aircraft such as B737-500s abroad for heavy maintenance places a huge burden on operators.

PICTURE: AERO CONTRACTORS.



Isaac Balami: "The enabling environment is what is lacking."

PICTURE: SEVEN STAR HANGAR.

cost environments in the world. At the best of times, these conditions limit the ability of domestic airlines to grow – even to survive.

One of the factors leading to decisions, such as that of Aero Contractors in July to temporarily suspend operations, was an inability to access sufficient foreign exchange to pay for regular maintenance, leaving aircraft stranded abroad.

The Lagos-based airline and MRO said in a statement: "This decision was carefully considered and taken due to the fact that most of our aircraft are currently undergoing maintenance. We are working to bring these aircraft back into service in the next few weeks."

Significantly, the Aero Contractors statement said that the activities of AeroMRO, its approved maintenance organisation, would not be affected.

Speaking earlier, Captain Abdullahi Mahmood, managing director of Aero Contractors, repeated the mantra of domestic versus foreign checks: "The good thing about having MRO [in Nigeria] is that you are not only going to be maintaining your own fleet; other Nigerians and the whole of Africa will come here."

He suggested a vibrant MRO industry could even turn the crippling capital flight around for a positive foreign exchange balance.

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Where industry can help itself is in increased cooperation and collaboration, something the African Airlines Association (AFRAA) has long advocated in all areas, including the full utilization of existing training centres and experienced trainers on the continent, shared maintenance facilities and pooling of resources.

Although it was frequent disruptions in flight schedules that provided the impetus in March for forming the spring alliance in Nigeria, its founding members – Aero Contractors, Air Peace, Arik Air, Azman Air, Max Air and United Nigeria – hope it will appeal to other regional carriers enough for them to join. In time, it could encompass MRO.

Isaac Balami, managing director and chief executive of Seven Star Global Hangar, who also chairs the Association of Aircraft Maintenance Organisations of Nigeria (AAMON), said: "It pains me to see more than \$1 billion wasted every year on MRO work abroad."

"We export our jobs everywhere when we have competent hands in-house that can do these things. The enabling environment is what is lacking."

"The point is that we need a sustainable structure in place to support businesses."

MRO, he added, was the 'poor relative', continually ignored by government. "When the authorities acknowledge that billions of dollars have been lost to maintenance, the question I ask myself is: 'If the government knows that, has it ever supported us?'"

The answer, he suggests, has to change. ▲



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Aymeric Mechin: "This [shortage] puts pressure on prices and leads to operational cost increases."
PICTURE: AFI KLM E&M.



How are global supply chain pressures affecting Africa's MRO services? **Keith Mwanalushi** caught up with Aymeric Mechin, AFI KLM E&M vice president sales Middle East & Africa, to find out.

Supply chain woes hinder the recovery

MROs from outside of Africa are looking to increase their footprint in the continent and find new opportunities. They consider that, although African airlines are ramping up their schedules, local infrastructure to support the aviation MRO aftermarket is limited. Data from the International Air Transport Association (IATA) shows airlines had a 103.6% rise in June revenue passenger kilometres (RPKs) compared to a year ago, and capacity for the month was up 61.9%. International traffic between Africa and neighbouring regions was close to pre-pandemic levels. "After two years of a pandemic, we are seeing that traffic is picking up again in Africa," said Aymeric Mechin, AFI KLM E&M vice president sales Middle East & Africa. "However, the zone's recovery has struggled to gain pace, hampered by the pressure being felt throughout global supply chains." He said the risk of supply shortages of components and parts, feared as early as 2021

following the Covid crisis, had become a reality, amplified by geopolitical tensions in certain areas of the world. "This puts pressure on prices and leads to operational cost increases. The shortage sometimes leads to flight cancellations and grounded aircraft, even though demand is strong again and airlines are trying hard to offer services that are comparable to those before the crisis." African operators are expected to reduce their average fleet ages as several airlines in the region upgrade with new deliveries in the coming years. Mechin said his company is confident in the recovery and was well positioned on the next-generation platforms. It could support the renewal of fleets like the A220, A320neo A350, 737MAX and 787s operating in Africa. "We have proven expertise in a wide range of services such as component supply, auxiliary power units (APUs), engines, aerostructure support, and the process of bringing aircraft into active service. We are ready to support new-

generation products and existing fleets with innovative solutions adapted to the needs of operators." Mechin said the Air France-KLM group has set itself ambitious sustainability objectives, including using greener energy for maintenance operations, repairing parts rather than replacing them, and dealing with aircraft or sub-assemblies on-site wherever possible. "These are just some of the initiatives that contribute to the virtuous environmental dynamic in aviation, made possible by optimally designed maintenance services," he added. MRO services generally will need to adapt to a smarter supply chain in times of disruptions, Mechin said, suggesting that while the larger MROs and manufacturers have sufficient stature to find solutions for supply chain problems, these difficulties are a major concern for smaller lower tier suppliers. "Some of these have struggled to keep up with the pace of the recovery, and their shortfalls actually accentuate the global supply chain issues," he pointed out.



Time for change: MRO services in Africa and elsewhere will need to adapt to a smarter supply chain.
PICTURE: AFI KLM E&M.

To support the recovery, AFI KLM E&M is using maximum flexibility and innovation to manage the lack of parts availability. "We are banking on several proven solutions like our extensive logistical networks, with maintenance centres positioned within geographical proximity to our customers," said Mechin. In the Africa and Middle East regions, AFI KLM E&M works with affiliates operating within its global MRO network, such as ATI in Casablanca, a joint venture with Royal Air Maroc for narrow-body aircraft maintenance, or the AMES aerostructures maintenance centre, which is a joint venture with Safran Nacelles in Dubai, and capable of handling large-scale components. Mechin said that AFI KLM E&M remained proactive in partnering with other MROs to add value to services. Being part of an airline group was a key competitive advantage in terms of ensuring the availability of spares, and getting parts dispatched to the right place at the right time, he believed.

WHY GHANA PROJECT IS SO CRUCIAL FOR AFRICA

Keith Mwanalushi looks at the opportunities for aircraft maintenance technical training in Africa and some of the recent initiatives taking shape.

New training initiatives will be required to beef up the continent's MRO labour market, with long-term projections forecasting huge demand for technical skills on the continent, mainly in west Africa. In April this year, the Aerojet Aviation Training Academy, a key part of the Accra MRO project in Ghana, reached an important milestone when it opened applications for the first aircraft maintenance engineering training programme in the sub region, scheduled to begin in the first quarter of 2023.

At the launch, the deputy director-general (technical) at the Ghana Civil Aviation Authority (GCAA), Daniel Acquah, said the fundamental training for technicians was long overdue in the region.

"It is important that technicians get trained to meet the high standards of safety we have set ourselves," he said. "The GCAA is supportive of this initiative and will continue to work with Aerojet to improve aviation safety in Ghana and the west Africa region as a whole."

This development follows a recent agreement with the Joramco Academy of Jordan to provide certified instructors that will train Aerojet's first batch of students, as well as local instructors, who will be taking over in the academy under Aerojet's own approvals when granted.

The four-year, full-time training programme includes a required experience period of two years working on live operational aircraft under strict supervision. Students will be put through their paces on the fundamentals of aviation mathematics and science, in addition to aircraft aerodynamics, structures and systems for turbine engines, digital communications, and more.

Chris Markou, the International Air Transport Association (IATA) head of operational cost management, believes aircraft technical training on the continent will be in demand as the region develops and aviation grows. "The opportunities will come from servicing and maintaining small aircraft, familiarising the new mechanics with the basics, and moving up to larger and more technologically demanding aircraft," he explained. Markou said aircraft technicians needed to become

familiar and adapt to the safety and operational and airworthiness requirements. "As the cost of living in Africa is lower than other parts of the world, this presents a great opportunity for labour-driven aircraft work," he added.

There is plenty of interest in MRO services in Africa. One prime example is New York-based United Aviation Solutions (UTD) and the African Airlines Association (AFRAA) launching the brown condor initiative (BCI) aimed at providing a platform for

PICTURE: IATA.



▼ **The growth of aviation on the continent will provide opportunities to engage more people locally and attract them to aviation-related jobs.** ▲
CHRIS MARKOU

AFRAA members with MRO facilities to support their North American counterparts.

AFRAA recently announced a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Ethiopian Airlines and UTD to work together.

Brown condor provides AFRAA members with MRO capabilities with the ability to relieve the workforce crunch in the US in terms of both facilities and labour constraints, as well as supporting other airlines from the US for MRO services and aircraft spares.

Prior to the pandemic, the MRO sector globally was struggling with a shortage of technical expertise. Africa has not been completely shielded by these challenges. Many skilled workers in Africa are recruited to work in other regions that can attract them with higher pay and benefits.

Also, notably, a lot of aircraft maintenance services are still not provided in Africa. Most airframe, engine, and component MRO work must be exported, which drives significant logistics costs for regional airlines and cargo operators.

"We are seeing aircraft, their parts and components being flown to other regions – such as the Middle East and north Africa – to undergo even basic airframe checks. The growth of aviation on the continent will provide opportunities to engage more

people locally and attract them to aviation-related jobs," Markou said.

MROs in Africa only represent around 4% of the global market, so the establishment of technician training academies that can feed state-of-the-art facilities will have benefits for generations to come and will be a critical resource for regional airlines and operators.

La ville ocre de Marrakech va accueillir l'assemblée générale, la conférence et l'exposition d'ACI World/Africa (WAGA 2022) en octobre prochain. **Anuradha Deenapanray Chappard** nous donne un aperçu de ce rendez-vous incontournable et déterminant en présentiel de l'ère postpandémique.

ACI WORLD À L'HEURE AFRICAINE

L'ambition des organisateurs et des partenaires est d'en faire un creuset fertile d'échange d'expériences et de savoir-faire, et de l'innovation. Il s'agit de préparer l'industrie aéroportuaire à relever les innombrables défis pour peser de tout son poids dans la reprise, les mutations et le développement futur de l'aviation.

800 experts africains et internationaux dont les représentants d'ACI, de l'OACI, de l'IATA, d'AFRAA, de CANSO, de la DGAC, de la DTA de même que 80 exposants sont attendus à Marrakech pour cet événement accueilli par l'Office national des aéroports marocains.

« Cette rencontre renforcera notre optimisme et notre volonté d'une relance durable sûre et irréversible », affirme la directrice générale de l'ONDA, Habiba Laklalech.

La thématique de WAGA 2022, « Tout est possible : À la découverte d'opportunités dans un monde en changement » est révélatrice comme le souligne Ali Tounsi, secrétaire général d'ACI Africa. « L'industrie de l'aviation repart plus unie et avec le constat clair qu'une reprise pérenne et prospère repose sur la solidarité et la coopération », dit-il en ajoutant que ce sera l'occasion d'échanger sur les problématiques actuelles pour dégager une vision commune et avancer en accord. « Marrakech, la ville des rêves et des mille et une nuits, sera le lieu idéal pour faire du networking et de partager des expériences. »

Luis Felipe de Oliveira, directeur général d'ACI World, souligne pour sa part la qualité des participants et des



Rendez-vous at ACI World and Africa AGA 2022 in Marrakesh. PICTURE: ACI AFRICA.

SUMMARY

'ANYTHING IS POSSIBLE' AT ACI WORLD SUMMIT

Marrakech, Morocco will host the Airports Council International (ACI) World/Africa general assembly, conference and exhibition (WAGA 2022) this month.

ACI is an organisation of airport authorities aimed at unifying industry practices for airport standards.

More than 800 African and international delegates – including representatives of ACI, the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), the International Air Transport Association (IATA), the African Airlines Association (AFRAA), the Civil Air Navigation Services Organisation (CANSO), and the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGAC), in addition to 80 exhibitors, are expected in Marrakech from October 22-26.

The event will be hosted by the National Office of Moroccan Airports (ONDA).

"This meeting will reinforce our optimism and our desire for a sustainable, safe and progressive recovery," said ONDA director general, Habiba Laklalech.

The theme of WAGA 2022 – Anything is possible: Discovering opportunities in a changing world – is particularly pertinent as Ali Tounsi, secretary general of ACI Africa, pointed

out: "The aviation industry is united and has the clear view that a lasting and prosperous recovery is based on solidarity and cooperation."

He added that the summit would be an opportunity to discuss current issues, identify a common vision and to move forward together. "Marrakech is the ideal place for networking and sharing experiences," he said.

Luis Felipe de Oliveira, CEO of ACI World, underlined the high quality of the participants and partners of the association, including more than 100 CEOs from airports around the world.

According to him, the themes on the agenda are pertinent, reflecting both the current situation and discussing the many questions, including workforce challenges, digital transformation, carbon neutrality, development of non-aviation revenues, coordination of safety and security procedures, certification, improvement of the passenger experience, and the quality of airport services.

"WAGA 2022 coincides with the global recovery and it's important to meet together to coordinate our ideas and actions to prepare for the future," he concluded.

ANURADHA DEENAPANRAY CHAPPARD ▲

partenaires de l'association dont plus d'une centaine de directeurs généraux des aéroports du monde entier. Selon lui, les thématiques à l'agenda sont pertinentes et reflètent le contexte et les questionnements actuels : challenge de la main d'œuvre, transformation digitale, objectifs de neutralité carbone, développement des revenus non aéronautiques, coordination des procédures de sûreté et de sécurité, certification, amélioration de l'expérience passager et de la qualité des services aéroportuaires.

WAGA 2022 coïncide avec la reprise et « il est important aujourd'hui d'être ensemble et de coordonner nos idées et nos actions pour préparer l'avenir. »

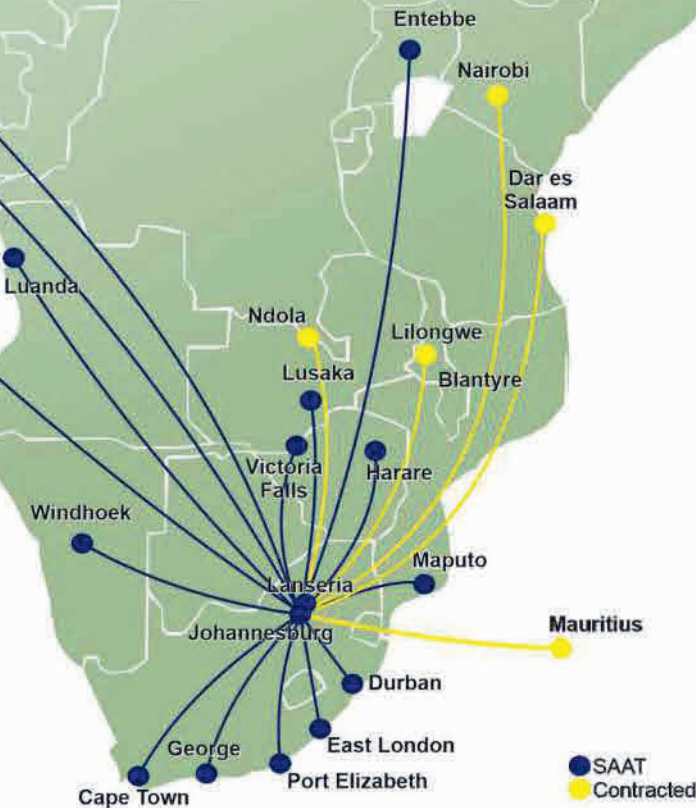
Certes Marrakech se transformera en centre névralgique de partage et de discussions. Toutefois, les partenaires et décideurs de l'industrie doivent en profiter pour définir des stratégies efficaces et pragmatiques face aux enjeux économiques, technologiques, énergétiques liés à la crise Ukraine-Russie, de décarbonation à l'horizon 2050, de gestion, de bonne gouvernance, des ressources financières et humaines, et de la formation.

Comment construire une vision commune face à l'accès inégal aux infrastructures, aux investissements, à la sûreté, à la sécurité, au numérique, à la cybersécurité et à l'innovation ?

Ce sera surtout l'occasion de donner le cap pour les décennies à venir qui rimeront vraisemblablement avec réactivité, révolution et rupture, tout en respectant les atouts, contraintes et spécificités de chaque aéroport. ▲

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Mohamed Moussa: "There is a need to pool together the capacities of all training centres on the continent."
PICTURE: ASECNA.

Moussa: We must work together on training

Mohamed Moussa, the director general at the agency for aerial navigation safety in Africa and Madagascar (ASECNA), has called for the continent's aviation authorities to join forces to create new training opportunities. **Chukwu Emeke** reports.

Mohamed Moussa believes that every effort should be made to allow Africa to offer "a seamless sky" – more direct routes, reduced flight times, reduced CO₂ pollution, and optimised air transport costs.

"Technology is key," believes Moussa, who heads up ASECNA, the Senegal-based international public organisation that provides air navigation services to 17 states, spread across west and central Africa and the Indian Ocean.

"Achieving a seamless sky requires the implementation of several innovative technologies and services, the training of the required human capital, and the management of all institutional and regulatory aspects in alignment with the provisions of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) global air navigation plan," he said.

"Initiatives are under way, particularly at the level of air navigation service providers (ANSPs) on the continent to transform themselves and align themselves with the concept of seamless sky."

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ASECNA currently has two major satellite-based projects under way relating to navigation and surveillance of the entire 16 million square kilometres under its jurisdiction.

Moussa identified financial constraint as the major challenge facing ASECNA in its operations across west Africa, especially as a consequence of the Covid-19 pandemic. This, he said, had reduced the agency's financial resources due to the sharp drop in air traffic.

"Other regions of the world have obtained subsidies to mitigate their financial issues, but ASECNA has continued to meet its expenses from its own resources," he explained.

As a measure to cut costs, Moussa said ASECNA had adopted a cost-effective four-year plan for recruitment and training of its personnel.

On possible new measures for funding training without compromising quality, especially for airspace management personnel, he advised African aviation authorities to join forces and collaborate to create training centres.

"There is a need to pool together the capacities of all training centres on the continent," he said. "The key action today is to update the competence and to move toward implementation of new technology." ▲

The African Civil Aviation Commission (AFCAC) – the aviation arm of the African Union – has a new secretary-general. She talks to **Alan Peaford** about her hopes and dreams for the industry across the continent.

My mission to set Africa free

When Adefunke Adegemi walks into the room, you can immediately feel there is a force of nature at work. She has a disarming smile, a firm handshake, and a clear sense of purpose. The new secretary-general of AFCAC is on a mission.

This can only be good news for the civil aviation industry across the whole of Africa as it embarks on the rocky road of implementing the single African air transport market (SAATM) agreement.

This aims to remove restrictions on Africans' ability to travel, work and live within their own continent by transforming restrictive laws and promoting visa-free travel to enhance movement as part of a continental free trade agreement.

Taking up the AFCAC role in July, Nigeria-born Adegemi had spent 12 years working with the International Air Transport Association (IATA) and has been a keen advocate for the ideal of the SAATM agreement.

She is thrilled to be in the role encouraging implementation of the deal, which she fervently believes will deliver economic benefits across Africa. **Continued on Page 50** ▶

Adefunke Adegemi: "My job is really to try to persuade, to convince, to motivate people to understand the critical nature that aviation can play for Africa."
PICTURE: BILLYPIX.



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“Aviation plays a role all around the world as a catalyst for economic development and social enablement. But, for Africa, I have always said, I thought that it’s existential. Aviation is not just the means of transportation; it’s not just taking people from point A to B, it’s about so much more.

“It’s enabled many of these countries and continents, who have access to resources – natural resources, people resources – to have the ability to take those to other parts of the world, or to transport them in a way that not just adds value, but also helps the world. And that’s a really fundamental aspect of aviation that I think a lot of people don’t see.”

Her first awareness of aviation related to business trips her father, a law professor in Lagos, made around the world.

“He worked for the UN in various capacities and, every time he came back, I and my siblings were always so excited, because he was bringing us part of the world back with him.

“I remember seeing old pictures of me and my younger sisters in Chinese outfits, with bottles of sake on the table for dinner, and things like that. It opens up opportunities for so many people.

“As one of my DGs used to say when I was at IATA, ‘Aviation is the business of freedom.’ If you really start to see it that way, then I think that whole transformational potential can come to reality.

“So, my job is really to try to persuade, to convince, to motivate people to understand the critical nature that aviation can play for Africa.”



Early dreams of a travel career path were set aside when the young Adeyemi watched the TV mini-series *Roots*. “I watched this show, and I just had a total transformation on the inside,” she said.

“It was a trigger and a driver and the most obvious path for that was the law. I loved the concept of the idea of what the law could bring. And so I became a lawyer. I qualified as a barrister, solicitor of the Nigerian Supreme Court. I went off to do my master’s degree at Cambridge University as a Commonwealth scholar to the UK, and then I came back home and started practising law.”

She began doing pro-bono work, going to prisons and trying to help where people had been awaiting trial for years on end. “They were there for stealing an orange or bread and nobody cared enough to come and handle their case, so they just stayed there in prison,” she explained.

One day her firm assigned her to help do the legal work to set up Virgin Nigeria, the flagship joint venture carrier between Nigerian stakeholders and Virgin Atlantic. When the airline launched, she was reluctantly recruited and became company secretary and general counsel.

“I was 32 and it was unheard of for such a young girl to be in such a role in corporate Nigeria at the time. But, I wasn’t aware of all of these things. I was just doing my stuff.

“This was a wonderful experience to come into aviation and its culture. It was a start-up and we



We are stronger together and I am fully committed to collaboration, multilateralism and fostering cooperation with all states, partners, and relevant stakeholders to move African aviation forward.
ADEFUNKE ADEYEMI

were building something and finding these talented Nigerians working side-by-side with people from all over the world. This was such a wonderful thing, a real multicultural meshing, and a great experience. So that’s how I started in aviation right in at the deep end.”

She was headhunted by IATA and, again, was reluctant. But, as country manager, she was called on to engage with the governments and policymakers about what needed doing in those areas.

“This was a fascinating journey and also the focus on how policy can translate into something really powerful,” she said.

One project was looking at the floundering Yamoussoukro Decision (YD) and assessing data to evaluate the economic advantages. The result was the SAATM. “It is like a full circle,” she laughed.

“The vision for African aviation is to enable a

fully connected, prosperous and united Africa. We have made so much progress and we must stay the course and build on current momentum to strengthen existing partnerships and create new mutually beneficial relationships.

“We are stronger together and I am fully committed to collaboration, multilateralism and fostering cooperation with all states, partners, and relevant stakeholders to move African aviation forward.”

Adeyemi is a firm advocate for diversity in the industry and recognises she has a responsibility as a role model for women in aviation with a leadership position in a seriously male-dominated sector. “This is something that we’ve really got to move the needle on,” she said. “But it’s not going to happen unless the men support it. We need to bring everyone on board, everyone who supports us, everyone who champions the cause, to come along and do this together. Let’s make sure that we can get more women into aviation.

“There’s enough science behind this with enough data to show that countries, companies and so on, that have more women in leadership positions, do better.

“We are setting up a ‘women in aviation’ platform under the human resource development fund of the African Union and AFCAC to build aviation skills.

“We have an ageing workforce in African aviation and the younger people are not coming in. That’s the gap that needs to be bridged.



“How do you make aviation exciting as a career opportunity for young people and for your women? How do you ensure that even from school, your young girls are not taken off science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) subjects and socialised differently? We need to teach girls that it’s okay and cool to like maths. It doesn’t mean you are not too girly – you can still have red lipply.”

Adeyemi is a serial marathon runner and, until her recent move to Dakar, loved spending time with her running friends and her family. “I’ve spent a lot more time with my mother now. My father passed; before, I was really a daddy’s girl but now I’ve seen how powerful and just how strong my mother is. She’s really become a rock for me.”

Now in Dakar, she has discovered the Senegalese music scene. “I love dancing,” she said. “I love music. I’m kind of a sensual creature, you know, everything that is appealing to the eyes, to the senses. I love art. I’m a bit of a collector, particularly of Nigerian and African art, and there’s so much beautiful art across the continent.

“The work is still hectic. But, really and truly, at heart I’m just a simple girl. I like the simple things of life – good food, good company and good people, and to be at peace.”

Adeyemi is not underestimating the task in hand and is embracing the goal of delivering the SAATM. You wouldn’t bet against her achieving it. ▲



The 4th Manama Air Power Symposium (MAPS 2022) has established itself as the most elite business-to-business event on the global airshows calendar with approximately 30,000 trade visitors in and billions of dollars’ worth of agreements signed. MAPS 2022 will bring together a select high-caliber audience of **over 300 air force commanders and operators, policymakers, and industry leaders from over 25 countries** for the most important regional air power conference in 2022. Strategically timed to pre-cursor BIAS, the theme for MAPS 2022 is “**Air Power and Air Defense in the Era of Transformation, Automation and Integration,**” where the one-day international conference will discuss the most pressing issues in air power and air defense considering the most recent experiences and lessons learned in-theater from operations.

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Diana Nuwatuheire

Marcelle Nethersole speaks to the DAS Aviation School head of training.

Can you tell me about DAS Handling?

DAS has more than 20 years' ground-handling experience at Entebbe International Airport in Uganda and has built up an extensive structure to offer such services to top international and regional carriers. DAS has a reputation of providing excellent service, as illustrated by the fact that it appears regularly in the Kenya Airways top 10 worldwide performers for on-time performance, and has been highly recommended by Saudia Airlines, Etihad, Uganda Airlines, Jambojet, Air Tanzania, and Airlink.

We also have an excellent service record for our special flights team in support of ministry of defence operations, the world food programme (WFP), the Bank of Uganda, National Medical Stores and numerous VIP/VVIP charter flights, where service quality is paramount.

DAS currently employs 404 staff to support its 24/7 operations.

Tell me about DAS Aviation School.

DAS Aviation School is a section within DAS Handling that was created to cater for the company's training needs and has since grown to serve the region in terms of aviation training.

The school is certified by the International Air Transport Association as both an IATA-accredited training school (ATS) and authorised training centre (ATC). It has also been certified by the Uganda Civil Aviation Authority as an approved training organisation (ATO).

Currently the school is undergoing IATA's competency-based training and assessment centres (CBTA) certification preparations to enable it to be complaint by 2023. The school is also undergoing licence approvals with the national ministry of education.

What aviation courses does it provide?

The school offers a wide spectrum of aviation courses, both at certificate and diploma levels.

These include: all categories of dangerous goods (DGR), flight dispatch, cabin crew, safety management systems (SMS), aviation security, airport operations, live animals transportation, airline customer service, cargo introductory course, time & temperature sensitive healthcare products, air cargo advanced marketing, global distribution systems (GDS) fares and ticketing, fundamental skills in journey pricing and ticketing, cargo operations, and travel and

tourism consultant courses, to name but a few. These courses are available for internal staff and aviation professionals, those in hospitality as well as those aspiring for a career in the aviation industry.

The school ensures that all trainees receive on-the-job-training to allow for real hands-on application in the field to enable them assimilate more quickly and complete their training successfully.

Additionally, DAS has partnered with Kenya Airways Pride Center, one of the oldest training institutions in Africa.

Is Africa seeing an increase of people interested in being in the aviation industry?

Yes, over the years we have seen an increase in the younger generation joining the aviation sector by specialising in aviation-related training.

Despite these unprecedented times, we still see new entrants, which is an indication that people still see their future within aviation.

What challenges does the company face in the region?

Like any other stakeholder in aviation, as a ground-handling agent we had to overcome the challenges of the pandemic as a whole; the shortage of skilled and experienced staff when restart happened.

There were new requirements, which were costly, and a loss of revenue when some airlines stopped operations and when schools were closed.

There is a need for continuous training and skilling the workforce to bridge the skills gap. DAS provides continuous refresher and initial training to all our ground staff to better equip them with the necessary skills.

What does a typical day hold for you?

I am passionate about my job. I draw a lot of inspiration from my students, colleagues and customers, but mostly my parents, who instilled in me the value of hard work, perseverance and integrity.

A typical day is not routine or structured as such, but I make sure to prioritise urgent matters, engage all my staff and our customers, find ways to improve day-to-day operations, and take time to reflect on my short-term and long-term objectives.

For example, I could start my day with a meeting ranging from customer relations, contractual discussion, an interview, business development, meeting students, reviewing our policies and procedures, stakeholder meetings, etc.

I ensure implementation of policies and procedures that will improve day-to-day business operations.

PICTURE: DAS HANDLING



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