



AFRICAN AEROSPACE

THE MAGAZINE FOR AEROSPACE PROFESSIONALS IN AFRICA

www.timesaerospace.aero

WE'RE GROWING PLACES

UGANDA AIRLINES CEO
PLOTS THE GROWTH AHEAD

LE PDG D'UGANDA
AIRLINES PLANIFIE LA
VOIE DE LA CROISSANCE

PAGE 9

AFRAA REPORT

AGA's
strong
push for
change

PAGE 21



AIRPORTS

How Guinea
can cash in
on modern
Conakry

PAGE 32



DEFENCE

South
Africa
launches its
own drone

PAGE 35





Find out more
#PowerOfTrent



TRENT 7000

KEEPING COOL UNDER PRESSURE

Our Durability Enhancement package
more than **DOUBLES** engine time on wing.

At the heart of the package is a re-engineered High Pressure Turbine Blade incorporating the very latest in advanced blade cooling design.

This is already proving itself in service by enabling the highest engine efficiency and delivering improved durability for our customers.

Bringing world-class training to **AFRICA** since 2003



FlightPath international

BOMBARDIER BOEING AIRBUS EMBRAER

TRUSTED EXPERIENCE.

TORONTO • DUBAI • BEIJING • COSTA RICA • SPAIN • JOHANNESBURG • LATVIA • MALTA • KENYA

www.flightpathinternational.com • +1-705-434-0058



Published by



TIMES Aerospace Publishing Ltd
3-4 Rumsey House
Locks Hill, Rochford
Essex, SS4 1BB, UK
Tel: +44 (0)1702 53 0000
Fax: +44 (0)1702 53 3088

Website: www.timesaerospace.aero

Publisher:
Mark Brown
mark.brown@timesaerospace.aero

Display Advertising:
Grant Lee
grant.lee@timesaerospace.aero

Circulation Dept:
Clare Brown
clare.brown@timesaerospace.aero

Editorial
news@timesaerospace.aero

Editor-in-Chief:
Alan Peaford

Deputy Editor: Marcelle Nethersole
ella@aerocomm.aero

Consultant Editor: Mark Pilling

Editorial head office:
Aerocomm Ltd,
Norths, Rectory Road, Orsett, Essex
RM16 3JU UK.

COVER: Jenifer Bamuturaki,
CEO of Uganda Airlines
PICTURE: UGANDA AIRLINES

Advertisers

AJW Group	11
AIME & MRO Middle East 2024	39
Airline Management Support Limited	5
AMAC Aerospace	18, 19
Aviaco GSE	17
AviAssist Foundation	30
Aviation Africa 2024	28
Aviation India 2024	IBC
Bestfly Flight Support	24, 25
CFM International	OBC
Egypt International Airshow 2024	20
FlightPath International	2
Rolls-Royce	IFC, 1
SKYPLAN	7
VMS Aero	16



African Aerospace
magazine is published in
partnership with AFRAA



African Aerospace
magazine is published with
the support of AfBAA



African Aerospace
magazine is published with
the support of CAASA

comment & contents ▲

ISSUE 1 VOL 12 | JANUARY – MARCH 2024

New Year - the same old challenges

Uganda's deputy president Jessica Alupo faced the gathered mass of Africa's airline representatives at the AFRAA annual assembly in Uganda and looked bemused.

"I see this is your 55th annual meeting and yet you still have all these challenges. I hope you have them all sorted by the 56th," she joked.

There is an old saying, 'many a true word is said in jest'.

It seems that many of the challenges that were voiced during the excellent two-day event on the shores of Lake Victoria in Kampala could be laid at the feet of government officials.

The bemusement is shared by industry watchers and representatives. So many of the challenges facing the industry have resolutions that seem like "no-brainers" to the outside.

It is common sense to recognise that Africa has immense opportunities for tourism. This includes a great potential for *AFRICAN* tourists as well.

But so many African governments crush this opportunity by adding taxes and charges that are among the highest in the world and then open borders to non-African visitors while at the same time adding visa restrictions to fellow Africans. Incredibly only four of the 54 countries fully open their doors to other African nationals.

Many of the 'Mistrust your neighbour' attitudes rest in ancient history, the reasons often forgotten in the mists of time.

Now is time to realise that today's growing African middle classes yearn for travel. But even those nations with a more relaxed visa agreement see their high charges stifle movement.

How ridiculous is it that it costs less to visit Dubai than a neighbouring country?

Airport passenger charges are among the most expensive in the world – sometimes even three times greater than passengers pay for travelling to the stunning Gulf destinations like Doha or Dubai.

Some tourism boards and ministers have dialogue with airlines and transport ministers – but not with interior ministers and finance ministers. The disconnect is at the heart of the troubles where protectionism overrides good intentions.

Even worse are instances where governments are actively putting the industry at risk.

In the decade or so that I have reported from AFRAA events, I have never seen levels of frustration and perhaps anger pointed at government actions than by IATA's regional VP talking about the blocked funds, particularly by Nigeria.

Airlines' money being stashed by Nigeria is passing the billion-dollar mark. This is cash that many of the debtor airlines need to survive. Meanwhile Nigeria, which has sound ambition to build its aviation industry is seeing its financial risk level rise as international finance and investment houses question whether they would ever be repaid.

Simple? It ought to be. Pay your bills; get increased foreign currency from opening your doors to more tourists and allow a freer movement of goods and people to allow Africa to thrive.

Then maybe, just maybe, the 56th AFRAA assembly in Cairo next year might just see the major challenges behind them. ▲

Alan Peaford, Editor-in-Chief



04 Business Brief: Regional round-up.

▲ AIR TRANSPORT

COVER STORY

09 Growth spurt: Uganda Airlines' Jenifer Bamuturaki on how a young airline is growing up fast.

12 Ocean lines: Air Mauritius bids to strengthen its market share to and from the Indian Ocean.

13 Nile polish: New CEO's mission to bring stability and confidence back to Nile Air.

14 Pair shaped: RAM and Air Senegal consolidate their long-term cooperation.

15 Back from the brink: Air Austral is recovering from the verge of bankruptcy.

16 On the bus: Libya's Buraq Air invests in an 11-year-old Airbus A320.

17 Peace process: Nigeria's Air Peace takes a majority stake in a Caribbean airline.

▲ FOCUS ON AFRAA

21 Share force: Why air transport is vital to the goal of continental integration.

22 Speed limit: The slow road to SAATM.

22 Future perfect: Entebbe Airways set to invest in home-grown talent.

23 Top taskforce: CEO summit.

24-25: Round up.

▲ EVENTS

29: Africa impact: Dubai airshow report.

▲ AIRPORTS

31 Taking off: Angola's plans to capitalise on its new hub.

32 Going it alone: Guinea's plans after ending its French partnership deal.

▲ ATM

34 ATC expectations: Why air traffic control operations need to be a higher priority for government.

▲ DEFENCE

35 Home drone: South Africa's home-grown UAV takes to the air.

36-37 Battle stations: Nigeria builds its air forces in the war against terror.

38: Round-up

▲ GENERAL AVIATION

40 Sling vision: Guy Leitch chats to Sling Aircraft's James Pitman.

41 Private eye: Ethiopia sources new infrastructure investment.

▲ TRAINING

42 Plotting the future: How West Africa can gain from the brain drain.

43 Top class: Rwanda centre of excellence. F

▲ PEOPLE

44 All in a day: Winnie Nafula, Dragonfly.

F REPORTAGE EN FRANÇAIS

TAAG teams with Boeing for four Dreamliners

TAAG Angola Airlines is adding the Boeing 787 Dreamliner to its fleet with an order for four of the widebody jets.

“Our goal is to work with the best manufacturers in the world towards a multi-type fleet, in order to ensure we have the appropriate aircraft for each flight typology, namely our intercontinental connections,” said Eduardo Fairen, CEO of TAAG Angola Airlines. “The 787 option suits our intent for modern, size-wise and efficient equipment, able to progressively replace our current widebody fleet, and provide our customers with an improved flight experience.”



IMAGE: TAAG ANGOLA AIRLINES

Zambia’sATC modernisation

Thales is to modernise Zambia’s air traffic control with the latest TopSky ATC solution. Thales is working with Zambia Airports Corporation to modernise ATC systems at the ATC centres at Kenneth Kaunda International Airport, Lusaka and Harry Mwanga Nkumbula International Airport, Livingstone.

Zambia’s ATC centres and pilots will now be able to communicate via data messages instead of conventional voice radio. This upgrade will enhance flight safety by mitigating the risk of degraded radio communications.

RAM cargo alliance

Globe Air Cargo USA and Royal Air Maroc Cargo have strengthened their long-standing GSSA contract and launched a winter-schedule promotion,

to include destinations across Africa.

Royal Air Maroc operates regular flights out of three strategic American stations to its cargo hub at Casablanca’s Mohammed V International Airport. They are New York’s John F. Kennedy Airport, Dulles International Airport in Washington, and Miami’s International Airport, and are operated by a Boeing 787-9 with a 15 tons of potential uplift, and a Boeing 787-8 with a 13 tons of cargo capacity.

Thales IFE for Airbus

Ethiopian Airlines Group has selected Thales’ AVANT Up inflight entertainment solution for its upcoming Airbus A350-1000s.

Ethiopian Airlines Group CEO Mesfin Tasew said: “We are delighted to introduce the AVANT Up in-flight entertainment solution for our upcoming Airbus A350-1000 aircraft

where passengers will enjoy the finest immersive and cinematic experience. The system provides several unique features enabling passengers to be entertained throughout the flight and arrive at their destination relaxed.”

GHS certificate

Kenya Airways (KQ) and its Nairobi hub have been awarded a certificate of accreditation by IATA’s Safety Audit for Ground Operations (ISAGO) for outstanding ground-handling services.

This follows the successful audit conducted on ground-handling operations at Nairobi’s Jomo Kenyatta International Airport, which recognised KQ for maintaining high standard in ground-handling services as well as the unwavering commitment to ensure safety and security of passengers, aircraft and goods.



IMAGE: BOEING

Air Tanzania hits new heights in Africa with Boeing 737-9

Air Tanzania has received its first Boeing 737 MAX Jet. The East African airline is the first carrier in Africa to receive the larger 737-9 model as it aims to meet growing travel demand in West Africa, Southern Africa and India.

“The acquisition of our first Boeing 737-9 marks a significant milestone for Air Tanzania, a momentous occasion that echoes the spirit of the Wings of Kilimanjaro,” said Ladislaus Matindi, managing director of Air Tanzania.

“This advanced aircraft is fulfilling our promise to deliver an extraordinary experience to our customer. As we ascend to new heights, Air Tanzania enhances the fleet’s capabilities and exemplifies its commitment while extending our appreciation to Boeing as invaluable partners in enabling our vision.”



WE ARE A DISTRIBUTOR, RESELLER AND STOCKIST OF WORLD-CLASS PRODUCTS IN CENTRAL & WEST AFRICA.



OVER 100 YEARS OF AIRCRAFT TYRE MANUFACTURE HISTORY WITH UNQUESTIONABLE RELIABILITY, QUALITY AND SAFETY RECORD.



Over 60 years of providing proven specially formulated high performance aviation fluid, for commercial, business and military aircraft.



Cee-Bee delivers nose to tail tried and trusted routine aircraft cleaning, inspection & overhaul solutions.



UK Office Address:

STARBURST AVIATION UK LIMITED
Brightwell Grange, Britwell Road, Burnham
Buckinghamshire SL1 8DF, United Kingdom

E-mail: sales@starburstaviation.net
Website: www.sbaviationltd.com

West African Office Address:

AIRLINE MANAGEMENT SUPPORT LTD
125 Ogba Road, Ikeja Lagos Nigeria
142 Oba Akran Ave, Ikeja Lagos Nigeria

E-mail: sales@amsaerotyres.com
Website: www.amsaerotyres.com



Ethiopian scoops Africa’s best cargo

Ethiopian Cargo and Logistics Services has won the “best cargo airline-Africa” award at the Arabian Cargo Awards last October.

Ethiopian Airlines Group CEO Mesfin Tasew said: “Ethiopian Cargo and Logistics Services is a customer-focused service provider with continuous improvements. Very soon, we will inaugurate a modern e-commerce facility equipped with state-of-the-art elevating transfer vehicles and sorting machines. The new e-commerce warehouse will be solely dedicated to mail, courier and e-commerce goods and handles 150,000 tons yearly.

The Eagle has landed

Nigerian airline NG Eagle began has commenced its commercial operations using an A320-200 wet-leased from Lithuania’s Heston Airlines.

The first flight operated a return flight from Abuja to Lagos on December 10 having been ferried to Nigeria in mid-November.

The start-up was formed in 2019 by the Asset Management Corporation of Nigeria (AMCON), a



IMAGE: ETHIOPIAN AVIATION UNIVERSITY

government agency dedicated to debt recovery, supposedly to succeed Arik Air which has been in administration.

Destinations currently listed on the airline’s booking portal include Sokoto, Yola, Port Harcourt Awolowo, Benin City, and Kano.

A second A320 is expected in this first quarter.

TAAG in Africa

TAAG Angola Airlines is increasing the frequency of flights to Namibia (Windhoek), Republic of Congo (Point Noire), Island of São Tomé (São Tomé) and

Mozambique (Maputo) from its hub in Luanda, in Angola.

African traffic up

African airlines posted a 28.1 per cent traffic increase in September 2023 versus a year ago. Capacity was up 29.9 per cent and load factor slipped 1.0 percentage points to 72.6 per cent.

Hainan back to Cairo

From January 21, 2024, China’s Hainan Airlines will commence flights from Shenzhen Baoan International Airport to Cairo International

Airport. The move marks the carrier’s return to the Egyptian market, as well as Africa.

TAAG opts for GE

Angola’s national carrier has chosen General Electric’s GEnx engines and an additional spare to power the four Boeing 787 Dreamliners ordered at Dubai Airshow in November.

Czeched out

The Czech defence industry has Africa in its targets. “The best new markets are the African ones because they still use Soviet-era equipment but now want Western technology added to it,” said Jiri Hynek, president and director of industry trade group, the Defence and Security Industry Association of the Czech Republic.

Egypt airshow

The Egypt International Airshow is set to take place on September 2-5, 2024 at the new El Alamein International Airport, El Dabaa, Matrouh Governorate.

The event will have key speakers from the fields of defence, military and air industries, space technology and aviation.

Ethiopian graduates 600 aviation professionals

Ethiopian Aviation University graduated 627 aviation professionals at a ceremony held at the newly-upgraded Ethiopian Aviation University in December.

The graduates were trainees in the university’s pilot, aircraft maintenance technician, cabin crew and catering, and commercial and ground services programmes.

Some 88 pilots, 125 aircraft technicians, 150 cabin crews, and 264 commercial trainees begin the aviation career path.

Nigeria JV still viable, says Ethiopian

JV Ethiopian Airlines CCO, Lemma Yadecha Gudeta, said he remains optimistic about the proposed Nigeria Air joint venture, despite the political setbacks that temporarily halted the launch of the startup airline.

Gudeta said he sees promise in the project and believes the Nigerian government, although requiring additional time for evaluation, will greenlight the venture soon. “We’ve trained the people; we’ve put all the required things in place. We are just waiting for the go-ahead from the Nigerian government,” he said.

Rwanda milestone

RwandAir is continuing its fleet expansion with the delivery of its seventh Boeing 737 aircraft.

Yvonne Makolo, RwandAir CEO, said: “The introduction of our seventh Boeing aircraft is another major milestone for us. We have been expanding our fleet over the past year and look forward to accelerating this growth to offer customers even better service and connectivity across Africa and beyond.

WHERE PLANS COME TOGETHER In Africa

Since 1983, we've been the guiding compass for countless flights across the African skies. Our innovative, web-based flight planning system maps out your journey with precision and efficiency.

We provide round-the-clock operational support, ensuring smooth navigation from take-off to touch-down. From overflight permissions to ground handling, we've got you covered in Africa. Want to elevate your team's skills? Our bespoke flight operations training and consultancy services will help them soar. With our deep-rooted industry expertise, watch your team reach new heights.

Choose SKYPLAN - where flight plans come together seamlessly. Fly with us in Africa, and let's reach for the sky together!

Call us at: +971 4 2999316 or visit: www.skyplan.com for more information.

IMAGE: ETHIOPIAN AIRLINES



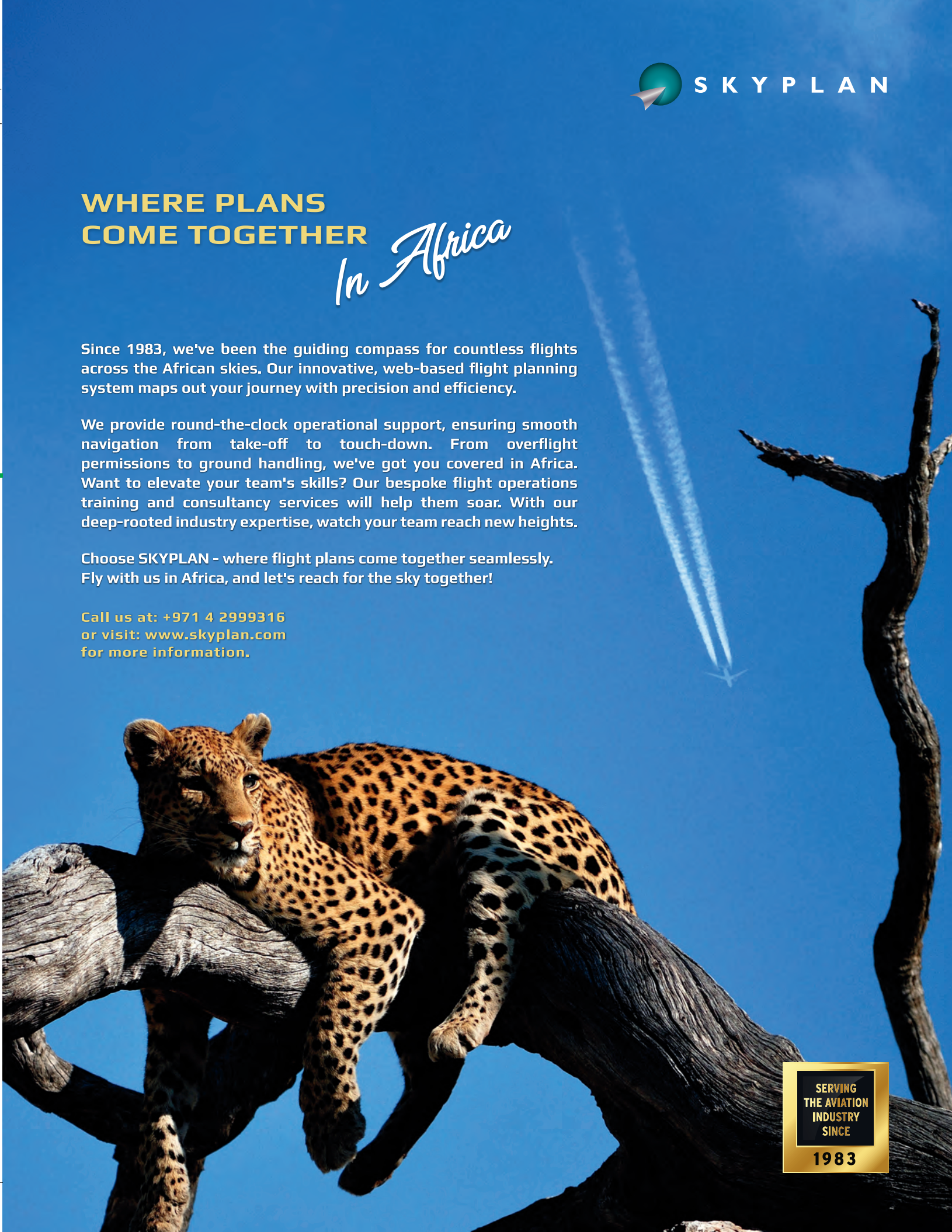
Ethiopian and Citi sign loan agreement for five aircraft

Ethiopian Airlines has entered a landmark US\$450 million loan agreement that will finance five new Boeing aircraft – three Boeing 737-8 and two Boeing 777F (cargo). The loan will be secured against the value of the five planes and has been arranged exclusively by Citi’s corporate banking and export agency and finance teams.

The US\$450 million loan is Citi’s largest aircraft

financing in Ethiopia within the last decade and will help support the bank’s bid to increase its footprint in the region.

Ethiopian Airlines Group CEO Mesfin Tasew said: “Fleet expansion is one of our strategic growth pillars, we will continue expanding and modernising our fleet size so as to grow our business and reach new markets.”



SERVING THE AVIATION INDUSTRY SINCE 1983

South Africa to step up biometric solutions

Idemia has been selected by Airports Company South Africa (ACSA) to implement its passenger flow facilitation (PFF) solution in nine South African airports.

The four-year project, which began in October 2023, will be deployed in three phases with the South African airports expected to be equipped with Idemia's end-to-end PFF solution, ID2Travel, by 2026. This includes e-Gate technology to improve the border clearance process.

The biometric solutions deployed across the nine airports will enhance quality of the services offered to passengers throughout their airport journey, from check-in to boarding.

Passengers will be able to use fingerprint, facial and iris recognition to verify their ID and ensure a more seamless experience during the passenger screening process.

Bestfly's Gulfstream

Angola's Bestfly and Jet Finance have completed the finance and purchase by Bestfly of a Gulfstream G550 business jet.

"Our current long-range Gulfstream's, Bombardier Globals, and our Falcon 900 have been instrumental in establishing an operating presence in the Middle East," said Alcinda Pereira,



Bell hands over the first 429 helicopter to Caverton for Cameroon operations. IMAGE: TEXTRON AVIATION

Bell 429 for West Africa offshore market

Caverton Helicopters is to operate the first Bell 429 in West Africa's oil and gas operations following the delivery of the first aircraft into Cameroon.

Caverton is a fully-integrated offshore support company providing aviation and marine logistics services to the oil and gas industry in Nigeria and across West Africa.

Rotimi Makanjuola, chief operating officer, Caverton Offshore Support Group said: "Introducing the Bell 429 into our fleet is an exciting milestone for us and will enable us to provide the best support for our oil and gas clients across the continent."

Bestfly's executive director: "We see even more opportunities and need to grow the VIP charter fleet."

Nuno Pereira, Bestfly's chairman and group CEO, added: "We have seen a need for a stronger fleet position for Bestfly in the Middle East and this next acquisition gives us the added capacity we need to meet the demand."

Boeing Africa MD

Boeing has appointed Henok Teferra Shawl as the new managing director for Boeing Africa to strengthen the company's operations and relationships across Africa.

The former Ethiopian ambassador, CEO of ASKY and holder of several senior roles at Ethiopian Airlines, will be involved in setting

up the new Boeing office in Addis Ababa where he will be based.

Embraer's Africa VP

Embraer Defence & Security has appointed José Gustavo as the new vice president for sales and business development in Europe and Africa. He has held several leadership positions in Defence projects including functions in the NATO Command Structure and has solid sales records for Embraer, which includes the A-29 in Africa and the C-390 sales campaigns in Europe.

Corsair codeshare

Madagascar Airlines has unveiled a codeshare partnership with Corsair International. The

company's director of programs and partnerships, Haja Raelison, said the agreement between the two airlines would cover the Antananarivo-Paris route.

This partnership will use Corsair's Airbus A330 aircraft on the route. The collaboration maintains identical pricing and Malagasy service standards, with flights landing at Orly via Reunion rather than the busier Charles de Gaulle, Raelison said.

Execujet honoured

The African aviation services arm of Luxaviation Group, ExecuJet, was honoured in the South Africa Civil Aviation Awards organised by the country's regulator. The company earned top rank in

the categories of aviation innovation, people development, aviation security, and aviation customer service.

Kenya coup

Kenya Airways has been crowned as the winner for Africa's leading airline for its economy-class service and inflight magazine (Msafiri) at the World Travel Awards 2023.

Allan Kilavuka, Kenya Airways Group CEO said: "This award is a testament that our 'customer-first' strategy is bearing fruit. It is also a vote of confidence from customers in the initiatives we have implemented to improve customer experience across all touchpoints."

Africa's innovative space team explores opportunities for UK collaboration



IMAGE: PLANE TALKING

Space experts from Kenya, Nigeria, Rwanda and South Africa toured the UK's top space research, manufacturing and launch facilities in December.

Organised by Innovate UK and Research and Innovation Systems for Africa (RISA), with support from the Research Institute of Innovation and Sustainability (RIIS) – the delegation of African space innovators, entrepreneurs and government officials met their British counterparts to share insights and explore opportunities for collaboration and partnership.

Joining the tour were representatives from the Kenyan and Rwandan national space agencies; academics from the universities of Kwa-Zulu Natal and the Witwatersrand; and directors of African space startups such as Astrofrica, AgriBORA Labs, Locus Dynamics, Sayari Labs, and Wanscan Consulting.

Uganda Airlines, the East African nation's relaunched flag carrier, is only entering its fifth year of operation. Chief executive Jenifer Bamuturaki explains to **Mark Pilling** how it is faring.

Uganda raises its standard

“We are fortunate to be hosting the AGA as a young airline.”

JENIFER BAMUTURAKI

As the host, Uganda Airlines naturally went all out to impress at the African Airlines Association (AFRAA) annual general meeting, especially as the 2023 edition was the first time in over five decades that the association's member carriers had rendezvoused for this meeting in this landlocked country in East Africa.

"It gives me great pleasure to see all of you come to Uganda, most of you for the first time," said Bamuturaki, in her role as President of AFRAA. "We are fortunate to be hosting the AGA as a young airline."

Uganda Airlines is not a new name, but it is a new incarnation of the country's flag carrier. The original state-owned airline operated from 1977 to 2001, but folded that year after attempts to privatise the ailing carrier did not materialise.

Government efforts to relaunch Uganda Airlines came to fruition on 28 August 2019 with its first commercial flight from home base Entebbe to Nairobi, Kenya.

Soon after its resurrection, the airline had an enforced six-month operational hiatus because of Covid in 2020, but resumed its fledgling regional network in October of that year with a fleet of four 76-seat Bombardier CRJ900s and two 258-seat Airbus A330-800s.

Management upheaval

The airline was flying, but there were issues on the leadership front and local media reported in May 2021 that most of the top executives of the carrier were suspended amid allegations of corruption and mismanagement.

Continued on Page 10 ▶

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

Jenifer Bamuturaki, who had a short stint as commercial director of the carrier from April to October 2019 setting up its sales operation, returned as acting CEO in May 2021. She was promoted to full CEO in July 2022.

Bamuturaki has had a lengthy career in Uganda’s travel and hospitality industry, spending eight years as the head of sales and marketing at Air Uganda from 2006 to 2014, and later running the sales operations at two leading Kampala hotels.

The past year has been “very hectic” implementing the growth strategy of Uganda Airlines and preparing for the AFRAA event, said Bamuturaki.

Running any airline is a demanding job, no more so than in Africa where corruption and stakeholder interference are sadly commonplace and media reporting can only be sensational and negative.

One of the things Bamuturaki wanted to do, in partnership with AFRAA, was find a better connection with reporters and enable them to report “from a point of knowledge.”

An out-of-town retreat for three days was organised for local journalists. “We took 22 of them in the run up to the AGA and we went through aviation like we were teaching interns. It has changed the way they report. They ask more informed questions.

“One thing we also noticed [since then] is that when they present a story, they no longer do the sensational headlines. They do the factual headlines,” said Bamuturaki. The sessions included an explanation of airline profits and losses to help journalists understand the cost drivers for an airline.

“We also wanted them to understand that the way you report determines how Uganda Airlines is looked at by fellow airlines,” she explained. “I mean, will they partner with you if they think you are closing tomorrow?”

Performance

The carrier’s financial results show it has made a loss in the past three years, and Bamuturaki told Uganda reporters in early December that the airline needs five to seven more years to reach breakeven.

The cost of launching new routes as the carrier establishes a market presence is a major factor in a gradual move into the black.

Bamuturaki prefers to talk about growth in percentage terms as opposed to revealing passenger numbers, and confirms this growth means Uganda Airlines is “making money” even though this is not translating into net profitability quite yet.

In terms of passenger numbers, it grew 75 per cent in its fiscal year ending June 2023 compared to the previous year.

“However, it means that we are growing and penetrating different markets and being known,” she said. “It has been hectic because this fiscal year is when we have seen numbers grow. People



Jenifer Bamuturaki, CEO of Uganda Airlines, welcomes delegates to the 55th AFRAA AGA. PICTURE: AEROCOMM

want to fly. There are no more virtual meetings. Tourism is back.”

Uganda Airlines is seeing healthy traffic flows on its regional African network, and its presence on routes like Dubai is enabling it to win passengers, as its competitors Emirates and Air Arabia [which serves Sharjah in the United Arab Emirates] are finding, noted Bamuturaki.

The carrier’s route expansion is another reason for a busy 2023, which will continue in 2024.

“In our business implementation plan, the airline should have launched close to 18 routes now. We now have a strategic plan and the new routes being launched are part of this plan,” she explained.

There is no doubt that new route rights have taken longer to secure than expected. Understanding the different regulatory regimes in the markets where it seeks to operate to is time-consuming and complex.

“Because we are a young, new airline getting into these markets was so difficult,” said Bamuturaki. “For us, that scrutiny is because we are a start-up where everyone is wondering, what are they up to?”

The carrier has been receiving staunch support from the country’s CAA as well as the

government to secure new route rights, noted Bamuturaki.

“We have been working on the launch of flights to Mumbai and Lagos for close to two years,” she said. “We have been working on London for three years now. Guangzhou the same. It takes longer now to go over the hurdles of regulatory requirements.”

The carrier’s efforts came to fruition on October 19 with the inauguration of Airbus A330 flights to Lagos, while the Mumbai service, also featuring the A330, began on October 7. These were the 12th and 13th routes for Uganda Airlines. The hope is that services to the UK and China will follow soon as it aims for its 18 routes.

Fleet mix

The main issue with the Uganda Airlines fleet mix is obvious: it has no 150-seat size single-aisle aircraft in between the Bombardier CRJ900s regional jets and the widebody Airbus A330s. “Some of the routes we are operating with the CRJ should be a mid-range [narrowbody], while some of the routes we operate with the A330 should be with a smaller aircraft,” said Bamuturaki.

The carrier is addressing this and intends to introduce around 10 mid-range and long-range, two-class narrowbodies in the coming decade, she said.

“The conversation has started with government. This 10-year fleet plan is moving to a level where we are going to confirm it with government to make sure that it’s cast in stone so that every time a plan is being made nationally this is put into consideration,” said Bamuturaki.

Additionally, the government is open to the carrier leasing aircraft, said Bamuturaki. Its current fleet is 100 per cent owned, but with aircraft orderbooks so packed the option of leasing is important to gain access to earlier delivery slots.

“We are already talking to lessors,” said Bamuturaki. The plan is to make aircraft commitments by the end of its fiscal year in June 2024 with both Airbus and Boeing models under evaluation.

The fleet plan also sees the widebody fleet doubling to four aircraft, she added.

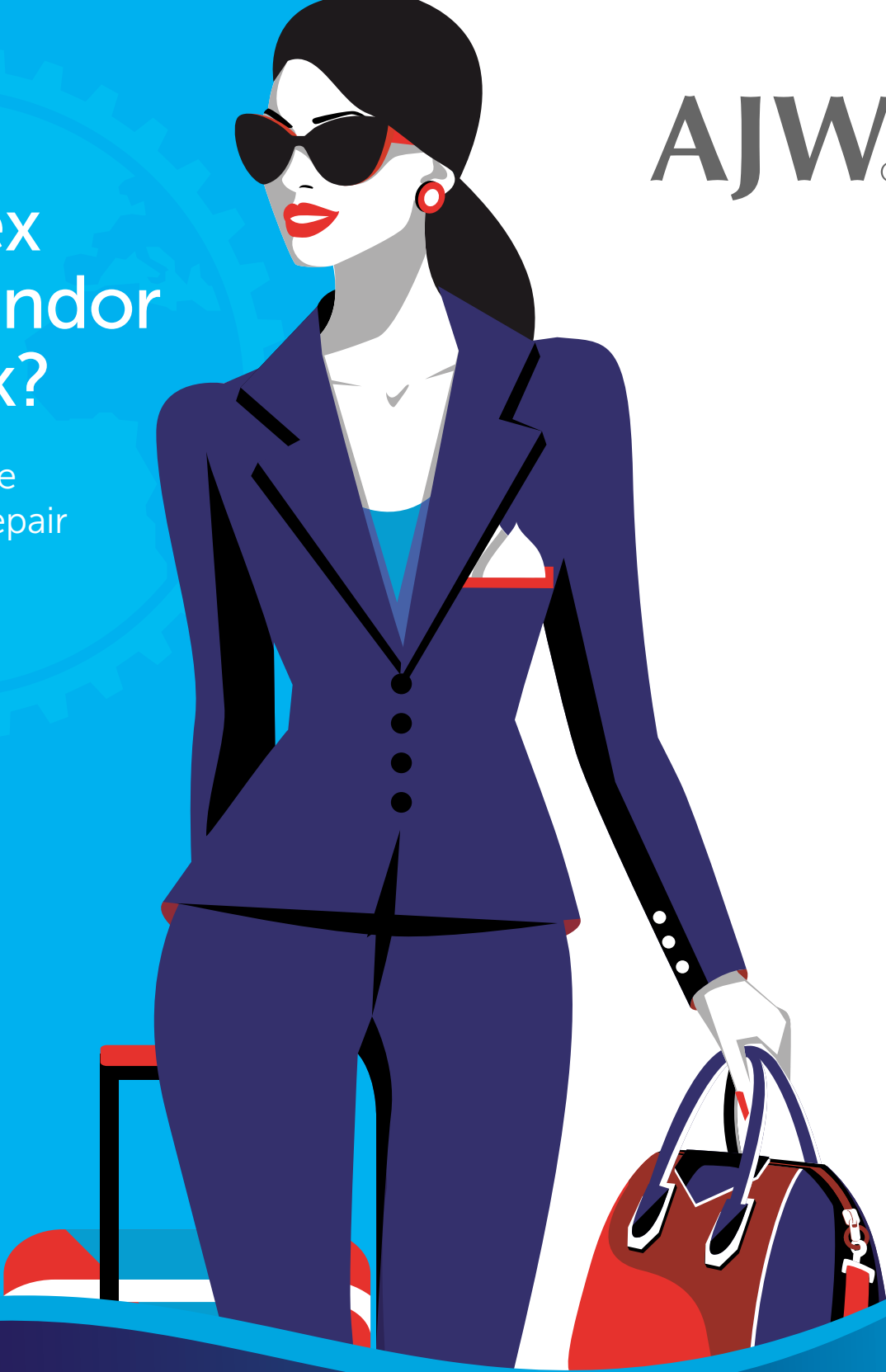
From launching new routes and building up the fleet, Uganda Airlines can also look forward to a revamped home airport at Entebbe International Airport. Delegates to the AFRAA AGA saw at first hand the progress on the expanded terminal.

Bamuturaki has her plate full to ensure the next five years of Uganda Airlines is a success story. The ingredients to achieve this are apparent. The African Development Bank estimates the country’s GDP growth is projected to be 6.7 per cent in 2024.

And crucially, the state-owned carrier has a government that is working to give Uganda Airlines the opportunities it must take to ensure this version of the airline stays the course. ▲

Complex MRO vendor network?

We are your one stop shop for repair excellence



AJW®

AJW Group is the world-leading independent component parts, repair, lease, engine, flight hour programme, and supply chain solutions integrator, transforming efficiency in commercial, business and defence aviation.

With hubs and offices on every continent - including AJW Technique, a state-of-the-art component MRO facility in Montreal - nose to tail, we have you covered.

ajw-group.com



Air Mauritius signé une commande de trois nouveaux A350 lors du dernier salon de Paris-Le Bourget.
IMAGE: AIR MAURITIUS

LE PAILLE-EN-QUEUE À LA RECONQUÊTE DE SES MARCHÉS

Air Mauritius souhaite surfer sur la croissance du trafic aérien pour renforcer ses parts de marché de et vers l’île Maurice. Elle a dû cependant gérer une énième crise au sein de sa direction générale en septembre dernier. Un reportage d’Anuradha Deenapanray Chappard.

Air Mauritius a été très fortement impactée pendant la période du Covid-19. Elle est d’ailleurs entrée sous administration volontaire suite à un effondrement de ses revenus avec une perte de 238 millions de dollars durant l’exercice financier clôturant en mars 2021. L’État mauricien a dû mettre en place un plan de sauvetage pour éviter la faillite.

Depuis 2022, les équipes s’attellent à redéployer les capacités et le réseau d’Air Mauritius en Europe et à l’international comme vers Delhi, Perth ou Cape Town. Le porte-drapeau mauricien a signé une commande de trois nouveaux A350 lors du dernier salon de Paris-Le Bourget face aux perspectives de croissance du trafic aérien.

La compagnie exploite déjà quatre Airbus A350 et quatre Airbus A330. Air Mauritius poursuit ainsi la standardisation de sa flotte qui garantit des bénéfices économiques, opérationnels et logistiques.



Laurent Recoura: Air Mauritius espère développer le marché européen.
IMAGE: AIR MAURITIUS

Krešimir Ku ko, le directeur général affirmait à cette occasion que ces appareils allaient permettre à la compagnie de consolider son réseau en Europe et de capturer de nouveaux marchés.

Or, trois mois plus tard, le conseil d’administration annonçait sa suspension, presque neuf mois après sa nomination, tout comme le directeur financier Jean Laval Ah Chip.

Laurent Recoura, directeur commercial, a ainsi pris le poste d’officier en charge de la compagnie. Il s’attache donc à redynamiser Air Mauritius. Il souhaite notamment qu’Air Mauritius soit en capacité de développer davantage le marché européen qui demeure très porteur.

Air Mauritius a récemment musclé son hub de Londres en passant de trois à cinq fréquences hebdomadaires. Heathrow étant un aéroport très demandé, Air Mauritius assure désormais ses opérations depuis l’aéroport de Gatwick. Elle a également repris ses vols directs vers Genève, ce qui représente également une étape significative dans le renforcement et l’expansion de son réseau.

Air Mauritius a également annoncé la reprise des vols directs entre La Réunion, Maurice et Chennai à compter du 12 avril 2024. Cette liaison était assurée par Air Austral avant d’être suspendue dans le cadre de son plan de restructuration.

À noter qu’Air Mauritius avait signé un accord interligne avec Air Belgium pour desservir la Belgique en 2024. La compagnie belge a cependant changé de stratégie et n’assurera plus la desserte vers l’île Maurice. Les marchés historiques comme Munich, Milan ou Rome sont également passés en revue.

La compagnie nationale a aujourd’hui toutes les capacités à redéployer ses ailes et retrouver sa notoriété d’antan dans la région et à l’international.

Un quatrième ATR 72 viendra consolider la connectivité régionale surtout les dessertes avec Rodrigues, où la piste d’atterrissage de Plaine Corail sera étendue.

Air Mauritius représente aujourd’hui environ 45 % de la capacité de l’offre des vols sur Maurice. Son ambition est de franchir la barre des 55 % pour mieux répondre à la demande croissante du tourisme et à l’appétence ou aux besoins des Mauriciens pour le voyage.

Cela implique non seulement une reconnexion avec ses clients mais aussi une valorisation et une mobilisation de ses employés au profit du paille-en-queue.

SUMMARY

AIR MAURITIUS RECONQUERING ITS MARKETS

Air Mauritius is capitalising on both regional and international growth in air traffic to strengthen its market share to and from the Indian Ocean island State.

As with many international airlines, Air Mauritius was hugely affected during the global pandemic, entering into voluntary administration with losses of US\$238-million. Subsequently, the Mauritian state instigated a rescue plan, dismissing directors Krešimir Ku ko and Jean Laval Ah Chip and then appointing Laurent Recoura as commercial director. Since then, the airline has been redeploying both its capacity and network.

Air Mauritius has strengthened its London presence by increasing weekly frequencies from three to five, moving to London Gatwick to cut costs, while also resuming direct flights to Geneva. It is also looking at resuming flights to Munich, Milan, Rome and Brussels.

Regionally, the airline has acquired a fourth ATR-72, enhancing services to Rodrigues - where the Plaine Corail airstrip will be extended - and between its home base and both Reunion Island and Chennai.

Air Mauritius currently represents around 45% of the flight capacity offered in Mauritius and its ambition is to cross the 55% mark, better to respond to the growing demand for tourism and the appetite of Mauritians for regional and international travel.

MEET MR NICHE GUY

Armed with a new leader, plans for more regional services and the introduction of cargo aircraft, Nile Air is seeking its niche in a tightly-regulated market. Mark Pilling investigates.

Egypt’s Nile Air is hoping it will be granted more traffic rights to continue its post-pandemic recovery, explained its newly-appointed chief executive, Richard Tan, to Arabian Aerospace at the 56th Arab Air Carriers’ Organisation in Riyadh in late October.

The Nile Air role is Tan’s first as an airline CEO. The Singaporean is an aviation veteran with a CV that has seen him hold a variety of C-suite positions in aviation at businesses as diverse as Emirates In-flight catering, Hong Kong Airlines, SATS and Singapore Airlines.

He arrived in September 2023 at Nile Air with the carrier engaged with Egypt’s CAA about gaining more route rights, especially to European destinations, which is not an easy task, and one that the airline has been grappling with for years.

“We have given them our [route] wish list and explained why it will be good for Egypt to allow us to grow,” said Tan, including the all-important feat of bringing visitors and foreign currency to the country. The hope is that new rights will be granted for fresh destinations to be served in 2024.

The carrier may be the country’s largest private airline, but it is a small player carrying just 110,000 passengers a month on its fleet of four leased Airbus A320neos and two A321XLRs. This enables it to capture a tiny three per cent share of the country’s passenger market, said Tan. The point is that Nile Air is hardly a threat to flag carrier EgyptAir.

□□□□□

Nile Air has gradually built up a modest scheduled network, with just two routes to Europe. A service from Cairo to Stockholm began in early 2022 while a connection to Cologne in Germany started in October 2023. Both are served twice weekly.

The carrier’s most extensive scheduled network is from Cairo to Saudi Arabia, where it operates to 12 cities and generates around 30 per cent of its traffic, said Tan. This is mostly origin and destination traffic today, but the addition of European services is aimed at developing a connecting product to the Kingdom.

Nile Air is also targeting routes to north and east Africa, as well as central Asia, said Tan.

The airline began operating in 2011, but has found consistent growth difficult operating a limited scheduled network due to the difficulty of gaining traffic rights and facing setbacks such as currency devaluations in Egypt and the impact of the pandemic.

Tan was appointed in August by Nile Air’s majority shareholder and prominent Saudi businessman Dr Nasser Al Tayyar with a mission to revive the carrier following tough times of the pandemic.

With scheduled routes tough to launch, Nile Air has diversified into leisure operations working with the large European tour firms and is looking to acquire two Airbus A320neo aircraft to develop short-haul air cargo activities, said Tan.

The airline is scouring the lease market to find the A320neo aircrafts to arrive in H1 2024 in addition to another two passenger A320s in the second half of 2024, he said.

Nile Air is aiming to carry 1.4 million passengers in 2023, said Tan, with traffic mainly unaffected to date by the war between Israel and Hamas. The main impact so far has been a reduction in bookings from European leisure customers.

□□□□□

“I have been brought in to bring stability and confidence back to the airline. We were battered by the pandemic and are now in a rebuilding situation,” he said.

“As a non-Egyptian leading the transformation of the company, my management style and approach is to build trust and focus on teamwork rather than individual efforts,” explained Tan.

“As is often the case, many organisations rely on individuals’ responsibilities to achieve their goals, but in many cases the lack of accountability makes the difference between a good and an excellent outcome,” he added. “So, I try to instil a culture of accountability while also encouraging the development of critical-thinking skills.”

Financially the airline is recovering, and it returned to the black in 2023 despite the impact of high fuel prices, said Tan.

If Nile Air is successful in gaining traffic rights the plan is to increase its fleet up to 10 aircraft by 2027.

I have been brought in to bring stability and confidence back to the airline.

RICHARD TAN



Royal Air Maroc Boeing 787-9 Dreamliner.
IMAGE: ADAM MOREIRA, WIKIMEDIA COMMONS.

RAM side by side with Senegal

A new strategic partnership between Royal Air Maroc (RAM) and Air Senegal aims to bring benefits to the airlines and their passengers. Alan Dron investigates.

The two airlines signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) in late September that will launch a codeshare, as well as other behind-the-scenes initiatives.

The partnership is designed to consolidate long-term cooperation between the two carriers and is aimed at stimulating economic, social and cultural exchanges between the two countries.

The codeshare will allow passengers to purchase their tickets from either of the two companies and to travel on the fleet of either airline.

Other areas of co-operation will include aircraft maintenance, chartering and handling. The two companies will also increase synergies between personnel, including technical and managerial training.

Finally, the two airlines will be able to pool their activities in the areas of communication and digitalisation of services.

“This partnership is perfectly in line with the excellent relations between our two countries and we expressed,



Air Senegal A330-900.
IMAGE: AIRBUS

during numerous preparatory meetings, our firm desire to build a strategic and lasting partnership with Air Senegal,” RAM chairman and CEO Hamid Addou said.

“Royal Air Maroc and Air Senegal are today realising the desire of the highest authorities of our respective countries to develop this air bridge, both in terms of passengers and cargo,” Air Senegal CEO Alioune Badara Fall added. “This South-South agreement commits us to respecting international standards for the common good of our future Royal Air Maroc/Air Senegal passengers.”

RAM has an ambitious expansion programme, with the goal of quadrupling its fleet over the next 14 years to 200 aircraft. Speaking at the Arab Air Carriers Organisation annual meeting in Riyadh in late October, Addou said RAM aimed to issue tenders by the end of 2023 for around 200 aircraft, two-thirds narrowbodies and one-third widebodies.

At present, the airline largely uses Boeing types, including 28 737-800s, with new 737-8s arriving and nine 787-8/9 widebodies (with two more announced at the Dubai airshow).

Air Senegal is much smaller and built around Airbus models: two A330-900 widebodies, two A321s and three A319s, plus a single A220-300 (with seven more to arrive) plus two ATR 72-600 turboprops. ▲

le cadre du contrat-programme avec le gouvernement du Royaume.

Bien plus qu'un accord de partage de code, il s'agit de développer une véritable coopération Sud-Sud. Les passagers pourront ainsi bénéficier du réseau des deux compagnies aériennes et d'une diversification des destinations entre les deux pays. Ils pourront également acheter leurs billets auprès du réseau de vente des deux compagnies aériennes.

RAM est présente au Sénégal depuis 1958, l'année de l'ouverture de la ligne Casablanca-Dakar. Ce fut l'une des premières routes aériennes internationales de la compagnie nationale du Maroc.

L'accord entre les deux compagnies aériennes prévoit d'autres domaines de coopération à savoir la MRO, l'affrètement d'avions ou encore la formation. ▲

ANURADHA DEENAPANRAY CHAPPARD

SOMMAIRE

UN PARTENARIAT SUD-SUD STRATÉGIQUE

Royal Air Maroc (RAM) et Air Sénégal ont signé en septembre dernier un accord pour renforcer leur coopération historique. Les passagers profiteront désormais d'une offre accrue et diverse sur le réseau des deux compagnies.

Cet accord vise à consolider les liens entre RAM et Air Sénégal et ainsi développer les échanges économiques, sociaux et culturels entre le Maroc et le Sénégal.

« Royal Air Maroc et Air Sénégal concrétisent aujourd'hui la volonté des autorités des deux pays de développer ce pont aérien, tant en termes de transport des passagers que de cargo », affirme Alioune Badara Fall, directeur général d'Air Sénégal.

Selon Abdelhamid Addou, le PDG de RAM, ce partenariat témoigne la volonté de la compagnie de poursuivre ses efforts de se positionner davantage comme une référence sur le continent africain. Il s'inscrit également dans

AIR AUSTRAL SUR LA BONNE TRAJECTOIRE

Le nouveau PDG d'Air Austral, Joseph Bréma, s'est exprimé sur la santé de la compagnie aérienne réunionnaise lors du récent salon IFTM 2023 de Paris et de la cérémonie commémorant les vingt ans de la ligne Paris-La Réunion. Un reportage d'Anuradha Deenapanray Chappard.

Joseph Bréma a assuré l'intérim dès 14 juin 2022 suite au départ de Marie-Joseph Malé qui a accompagné les opérations de la compagnie durant plus d'une décennie. Il a notamment piloté une stratégie de différenciation rentable afin de retrouver l'équilibre financier en 2019. Air Austral avait par la suite remporté le titre de « Best Overall Airline » en Afrique à la cérémonie « APEX Passenger Choice Awards® 2022 ».

Pour rappel, Air Austral est passée tout près de la faillite après la pandémie. L'État français a contribué à son sauvetage en injectant 120 millions d'euros en 2020 et 60 millions en 2021, sous forme de prêts garantis (PGE).

Le plan de restructuration (à horizon 2025) piloté par Joseph Bréma avait préalablement nécessité l'aval de l'État et de la Commission européenne. Jean-François Carencio, le ministre délégué chargé des Outre-mer, avait à l'époque souhaité convaincre la Région de soutenir un rapprochement avec Corsair via une holding, tout en gardant l'identité de chaque compagnie. Finalement, c'est un consortium de 27 investisseurs privés locaux qui a pris 55,18% du capital d'Air Austral. Le reste du capital appartient à la Sematra (société d'économie mixte de la Région). Grâce à l'entrée de ces nouveaux actionnaires et de nouveaux capitaux, la dette de la compagnie a pu être réduite. Elle serait aujourd'hui estimée à 65 millions d'euros.

Joseph Bréma a ensuite été confirmé dans ses fonctions de Président du Directoire d'Air Austral pour mener à bien son plan de restructuration. Huguette Bello, la nouvelle présidente de la Région de La Réunion, a pris le poste de Présidente du Conseil de Surveillance de la compagnie.

L'année 2023 fut l'occasion pour Air Austral de mettre en place sa feuille de route avec pour principal objectif de remettre les indicateurs au vert. Selon Joseph Bréma, il serait atteint le 31 mars 2024, à la clôture de l'exercice financier 2023-2024. De nouvelles routes long-courriers seront annoncées en mars 2025 dans le cadre de la consolidation du réseau d'Air Austral.

Le trafic aérien a bel et bien repris à l'aéroport international de Roland Garros avec une augmentation de 6% par rapport à 2019. Il y a également une meilleure

Joseph Bréma pilote le plan de restructuration; et le Boeing 787 d'Air Austral.
IMAGES: AIR AUSTRAL



visibilité de la destination La Réunion à l'international et en particulier en Asie.

Autre source de satisfaction, la demande régionale reste très dynamique avec une demande d'augmentation des fréquences par les autorités malgaches. L'axe Maurice-Réunion, la route la plus importante de l'Océan indien, fonctionne très bien. La fréquence sur la liaison avec Mayotte va également augmenter. Cependant, la liaison vers Canton reste fermée alors que la route vers Chennai va être reprise par Air Mauritius en avril 2024.

L'enjeu pour le PDG d'Air Austral est de poursuivre cette dynamique et d'être attentif au contexte inflationniste actuel avec notamment un prix du kérosène en hausse et un dollar fort. Air Austral doit aussi gérer des problèmes opérationnels liés aux problèmes de motorisation de ses Airbus A220.

Mais, l'équipe d'Air Austral reste optimiste et déterminée pour consolider les ailes de la compagnie réunionnaise. ▲



SUMMARY

AUSTRAL ON THE RIGHT TRACK

Air Austral's new chairman and CEO, Joseph Bréma, has been speaking about the health of the Indian Ocean island of Reunion's airline.

Having come close to bankruptcy after the global pandemic, France contributed to its rescue by injecting €120-million in 2020 and a further €60-million in 2021 - both in the form of guaranteed loans.

Air Austral subsequently won the title of 'Best Overall Airline' in Africa at the 2022 'APEX Passenger Choice' awards.

Bréma's restructuring plan - targeted for completion by 2025 - had previously required the approval both of the State and the European Commission. Initially, Jean-François Carencio, the minister delegate for overseas territories, wanted a merger with French airline Corsair - via a holding company - while keeping the identity of each company.

Ultimately, a consortium of 27 local private investors took 55.18% of the capital of Air Austral. The remaining capital is held by the regional semi-public Sematra company and it's thanks to this that the airline's debt has been reduced to an estimated €65-million.

Air traffic has indeed resumed at Roland Garros international airport with an increase of 6% compared to 2019. There is also better visibility of Reunion as a destination internationally - and in particular throughout Asia. ▲

LIBYA'S FIRST PRIVATE AIRLINE CATCHES THE AIRBUS

Libya's Buraq Air has acquired its first Airbus A320 as it seeks to expand its services within and from the strife-ravaged North African nation.

Until recently the airline, which is based at Mitiga, outside the capital, Tripoli, has been a long-time Boeing 737 operator, having flown early-200 models in the early part of the century and now operating single examples of the 737-400 and -800.

However, the company has now picked up an 11-year-old model, previously mainly employed in the Far East, from a leasing company. According to Flightradar 24 data, the aircraft underwent pre-delivery maintenance at East Midlands Airport in the UK and was then ferried to Istanbul Atatürk Airport in Türkiye in September prior to being re-registered in Libya ahead of delivery to Libya in October.

Buraq Air – Its name comes from the buraq, a creature on which the prophet Mohammad is believed to have flown from Mecca to Jerusalem – lays claim to being the first privately-owned Libyan airline, established in November 2000, with its initial services connecting the country's oilfields to its major cities.

International services followed, with its



The Buraq Boeing 737-800.
IMAGE: BURAQ AIR WIKIMEDIA

initial route being to Istanbul, followed by the development of a more comprehensive domestic network encompassing Labraq, Tobruk and Sebha. Aleppo in Syria and Rabat in Morocco followed.

Several variants of the 737 were acquired for these services and the company has been a faithful user of the US narrowbody since then, which makes the arrival of the new A320 more surprising, given the increased costs that will accrue from operating a single aircraft of a different type, with its different operating and maintenance requirements.

Buraq Air currently flies a small

international scheduled network, notably to Istanbul, together with additional charter services to destinations such as Alexandria and Tunis.

Recent tasks have included repatriating Bangladeshi migrants who had illegally entered Libya and had been detained before being returned to their homeland. It has also undertaken flights in support of Canada-based helicopter operator CHC, which provides rotor-wing flights for oil companies.

Multiple attempts to contact the airline for more information on its new fleet addition went unanswered.

Air Peace plans Caribbean connection

Nigerian airline Air Peace is in negotiations to take a majority stake in struggling West Indian airline LIAT, apparently with the intention of increasing links between the Caribbean and West Africa.

The Lagos-based carrier has been in talks with the government of Antigua and Barbuda, one of the small island states in the Caribbean, since 2022. LIAT is a longstanding airline in the region, but went into administration in July 2020, early in the Covid-19 pandemic. It has since been operating under administration, at a reduced size compared to its former existence. However, it is operating under a temporary framework and lacks funding.

□ □ □ □ □

LIAT 2020 operates a small fleet of three ATR 42-600 turboprops that criss-cross the region, serving around a dozen destinations. Its major shareholders are the governments of Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Dominica and St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

Delivering Antigua and Barbuda's annual budget speech in December 2023, prime minister Gaston Browne told the country's parliament that his government had taken on the responsibility of restructuring LIAT, "with a vision of returning the airline to the regional skies" noting that the airline "has long been an essential thread in the fabric of Caribbean connectivity".



Caribbean carrier LIAT operates a small fleet of ATR 72-600s.
IMAGE: ATR

Browne added that the Barbados-based Caribbean Development Bank will help bring the various shareholders together, and that this would set the stage for finalising the arrangement with Air Peace.

Browne said that, in 2024, the Antigua and Barbuda government would provide funding to "ensure LIAT 2020 Ltd has all the aircraft needed and appropriate maintenance and operational arrangements are in place for the safe, reliable, and efficient delivery of service."

Air Peace's motivation behind its desire to become the driving force behind the revamped LIAT remains

uncertain. An Air Peace spokesperson told *African Aerospace* in December 2023 that "we are not at liberty to discuss LIAT now, as we are still putting things together".

According to media reports, Air Peace is interested in greater Caribbean connectivity to Nigeria. Earlier in 2023, the Barbados government said that the Nigerian airline was negotiating with Barbados and the Africa Export-Import Bank over the possibility of direct flights between Barbados and Lagos.

ALAN DRON

➤ Affrètements aériens, vols à la demande
charter and on-demand flights

➤ Location d'avions
Aircraft leasing

➤ Achat et vente d'avions
Aircraft sales and purchase



VMS AERO, votre partenaire aéro avec une présence mondiale :
VMS AERO, your aero partner with a global presence :

United Kingdom, Canada, United Arab Emirates, Gabon

Contacts :
Email : contact@vms.aero
Tel : +33 6 20 31 19 03 / +241 62 24 24 02



MORE THAN 30 YEARS
OF EXPERIENCE

GSE REFURBISHMENT, MAINTENANCE & RENTAL

Industry leading expert in refurbished and used GSE! We are ready to assist you with all your ground support equipment needs.

✂ Sales and Purchase
✂ GSE Rental Solutions

✂ Repair & Maintenance
✂ Fleet Management

✂ Value-added Services
✂ GSE Electric conversion ➡



Save up to
40%

Electric GSE supports your company in reaching your sustainability goals, as well as your economic targets.



AVIACO BECOMES GREEN!
NEW SERVICE:
CONVERSION ELECTRIC GSE



sales@aviaco-gse.com | spare-parts@aviaco-gse.com | www.aviaco-gse.com



THE PERFECT PLACE

FOR BUSINESS AIRCRAFT

AUCH • LONDON • BASEL • ZURICH • ISTANBUL • BODRUM • BEIRUT • RIYADH

AMAC AEROSPACE

www.amacaerospace.com

EGYPT
INTERNATIONAL
AIRSHOW | 2-5
SEPT
2024

El Alamein International Airport

DEFENCE | SPACE | COMMERCIAL

THE GATEWAY TO AEROSPACE IN AFRICA & THE MIDDLE EAST

2-5 September 2024
El Alamein
International Airport

DISCUSS YOUR PARTICIPATION:
sales@arabianworldevents.com



FOCUS ON

AFRAA

OVERVIEW

The African Airlines Association (AFRAA) descended on Kampala, Uganda, for its 55th annual general assembly (AGA) with a strong push for transformation.

Marcelle Nethersole, Alan Peaford and Mark Pilling were there.



IMAGE: ALPHAVECTOR, VECTORSTOCK

SWITCH ON THE SHARE CONDITIONING

Uganda epitomises the huge potential that Africa has. A beautiful country dependent on agriculture and its mineral deposits; plus enough natural attractions to draw tourism from around the world, and plenty of produce to ship to willing markets.

But as a landlocked country it depends on aviation. And until recently it has been left wanting.

The importance of aviation to help Uganda achieve its potential has been realised by the country's government. And the republic's vice president, Jessica Rose Epel Alupo made her way to the AGA stage to emphasise why her government had been anxious to bring the African aviation industry to the capital.

"Air Transport is the business of freedom," she said. "It is a critical enabler of economic and social integration, which Africa cannot do without because the rail and road infrastructure lack due coverage for interstate movement.

"As Africa pursues the goal of continental integration, it will be important to focus on growing air



Jessica Rose Epel Alupo: "We are proactive in driving Africa's integration agenda."

IMAGE: AFRICAN AEROSPACE

transport for ease of intra-Africa connectivity. This has become central to our development agenda, and the national carrier is seen as an extension of national infrastructure.

"We are committed to investing in the flag carrier and to facilitate the airline's expansion within Africa, while also

providing those vital air bridges between the continent and the rest of the world. For that reason, we are proactive in driving Africa's integration agenda and committed to removing any obstacles that might obstruct this goal in way."

A commitment that addressed not just this domestic progress, but also opening the way for other African carriers to share in the market through collaboration.

That was music to the ears of more than 500 delegates from 49 countries attending the AGA which had the theme "Strides to Transform Aviation for Development", which the organiser said challenged African airlines and air transport stakeholders with new thinking on initiatives and strategies to drive the sustainability of the air transport sector to realise its potential.

"Our industry has almost recovered from the COVID-19 pandemic," said Abdérhmane Berthé, the AFRAA secretary general.

"It provides an opportunity for cooperation and collaboration to develop a sustainable perspective for the airline industry. At

Continued on Page 22

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 21

AFRAA we will keep our mission to promote and serve African airlines and champion Africa’s aviation industry and ‘Better Skies for Africa’ remains the pillar of all our actions.”

The conference around the assembly allowed much debate on the key actions that would drive change.

Of course, at the heart of it all was SAATM, the African single skies that would liberate transport and connectivity through Africa – and ease the way to open new markets both withing the continent and beyond.

Frustration over the implementation of SAATM was more apparent than ever before.



CEO of Uganda Airlines, Jennifer Bamuturaki, who had taken on the presidency of AFRAA for the past year said a lot of her time had been spent pushing the authorities to introduce smart regulation to support intra-Africa connectivity.

“At least two-thirds of African states have signed up to SAATM and are at different stages of implementation. Here in Uganda, internal conversations about joining SAATM have started,” she said.

Her challenges are echoed by others, keen to see routes become available. But even domestic growth is hampered by lack of investment. Tourists travelling to popular sites in the north or west of the country can spend a day on difficult roads – sometimes impassable in the rainy season – all for the want of appropriate airstrips and services.

Opportunites to collaborate with Kenya, Tanzania and Rwanda were discussed at the AGA, and delegates urged governments to be brave and take action sooner than later.

Movement has been made on other issues such as gender diversity and inclusivity, Berthé said.

He also called for African collaboriom and effective attainment of the aviation Net Zero roadmap and generally developing initiatives across the continent for sustainable aviation. ▲

■ **The 2024 AFRAA general assembly will be moving to North Africa with EgyptAir named as the host for the 56th Assembly. It will be held in Cairo in November, with final dates to be confirmed. The EgyptAir group chairman will be the host of the event.**

In other Association news, LAM Mozambique will provide the chair of the executive committee with Kenya Airways elected for first vice chair and Tunisair for second vice chair. ▲

SAATM LIBERALISED MARKET:

Delegates described the frustratingly slow process of bringing the Single African Air Traffic Market to fruition.

“If we were to create a scorecard for ourselves, I don’t think [as] students we would be proud to take the scorecard back home,” said Aaron Munetsi, chief executive of the Airlines Association of Southern Africa, speaking during the AFRAA 55th Annual General Meeting and referring to Africa’s record to date on bringing in air transport liberalisation via the Single African Air Traffic Market (SAATM).

He described the progress since 2018 of 37 countries signing up to SAATM as “good progress, but not good enough”, especially considering that only 18 of them have “fully submitted” to it. “We cannot predict a dismal performance to

the generation that is coming after us,” said Munetsi.

Hosted on the shores of Lake Victoria by national carrier Uganda Airlines, the principle of SAATM received strong support from all sides at the AFRAA meeting, but has been hampered by protectionism and fears about a more competitive market.

“We would look to switch it on tomorrow if we could, but let’s be honest it needs a lot of work,” said Kamil Al-Awadhi, vice-president Middle East and Africa at IATA.

Katumba Wamala, minister of works and transport in the Ugandan government, reaffirmed his government’s continued support of SAATM, but noted: “It is not an event, but a process.

SLOW PROCESS, SLOW PROGRESS

“We have commenced the process to align our legal regime with the SAATM principles and in due course we will be announcing our commencement date.”

Wamala noted that “SAATM is not a magic wand”, sounding a warning that it alone will not solve Africa’s lack of regional connectivity.



Jenifer Bamuturaki, CEO of Uganda Airlines, noted that while Africa’s air transport industry has shown “remarkable resilience” over the past few years, it was disappointing there had been no significant increase in the propotion of international

traffic carried by the continent’s carriers compared with other regions.

She said the region needs to find “faster ways to speed up market liberalisation”, adding that conversations with her country’s CAA and government were “moving in a good direction” in terms of achieving greater freedom to operate.

The guest of honour, Uganda’s vice president Jessica Alupo, noted how “air transport has become an important part of our national strategy”, adding that the government is committed to investing in the national carrier.

Speaking on the CEO panel, Ethiopian Airlines head Mesfin Tasew said that his airline is “eagerly awaiting the full implementation of SAATM”, but that it has



Aaron Munetsi: “We would look to switch it on tomorrow if we could, but let’s be honest it needs a lot of work.”

PICTURE: AASA

been able to expand regardless of markets opening through the SAATM process.

Tasew added that its recent slew of Airbus and Boeing orders placed at the Dubai Airshow in the week prior to the AFRAA meeting were made based on its long-term strategic growth plan not on any SAATM dividend.

He also noted that while most AFRAA airline CEOs publicly support SAATM, in private some are worried about the implications of SAATM and the competition that would bring.

Joao Jorge, CEO of LAM Mozambique Airlines, said he understands the “fear” airline leaders might have, but stressed “we need to be open to the fact that competition is necessary for us all to grow.” ▲

Oscar Ssemawere, the CEO of Entebbe Airways, speaks to Ella Nethersole about the launch of its two Boeing-777s and his ‘excitement’ at being involved in the East African Airshow.

ENTEBBE AIRWAYS LOOKS TO INVEST IN HOME-GROWN AVIATION PERSONNEL

Entebbe Airways was established in 2010 as a GSA (general sales agency), handling sales, airport operations and customer relations for several air operators.

The company rebranded in 2016 with a purpose of promoting aviation and logistics services. The company evolved from a GSA for other operators to a locally-licensed operator in Uganda with Entebbe Airways air services with a licence issued by the Civil Aviation Authority in September 2017.

Ssemawere has been at the helm of Entebbe Airways since 2018.

“We started off with some issues at first with the CAA,” said Ssemawere.

“We wanted to bring in Embraer 120s, but the registration process didn’t go well. Later we changed to the Airbus A320, but we paused that.”

Finally, Ssemawere is pleased to announce Entebbe Airways, which is licensed by the Ugandan CAA, but in the process of getting its Air Operator Certificate (AOC) and is expecting two Boeing 777-200s, and a B737-300.

“We have two Boeing 777-200ERs, leased from Saudia Airlines which are registered and currently under C-checks in Dubai. We expect operations to start at the end of January 2024,” explained Ssemawere.

He said that the airline’s ‘niche’ is charters, working with militaries around the region, including Uganda, Somalia and Burundi for troop transportation, but it is expected to also tap into pilgrim travel for Umrah and Hajj.

“The B777s are perfect aircraft allowing for the large capacity of pilgrim travellers,” said Ssemawere.

There are also bigger plans for the airline – where Ssemawere said the Ugandan government has been ‘extremely helpful and supportive’.

“We want to concentrate on ad-hoc flights, charters and leasing,” he said.

“We are looking out for more financing to get four more Boeing 777s, which we might lease out to other airlines. Actually, we have had interest from an airline here during AFBAA. We are also looking into constructing a hangar at our hub at Entebbe International Airport,” he said.

Ssemawere is well aware of the challenges in African aviation and said he believes the continent lacks ‘synergies’.

“At the moment it seems it’s every man for themselves,” he said. “This doesn’t work. If we had synergies, we could tap into the market.

“Foreign operators have benefitted far more from the African market than local operators and yet the market is there.

▼ We are going to sponsor 20 or 30 students to study the aviation process, piloting and engineering, here in Uganda. ▲ OSCAR SSEMAWERE



Oscar Ssemawere: “At the moment it seems it’s every man for themselves. This doesn’t work. If we had synergies, we could tap into the market.”

IMAGE: AFRICAN AEROSPACE

Africa is a burgeoning market – so something needs to change.

“Another problem, which was spoken of here at AFBAA, is the visa issue. Africans should be able to travel freely within their own continent.”

Ssemawere was also at AFBAA promoting the East African Airshow, set to take place in December 2024 at Entebbe. Ssemawere is its board chairman.

“We wanted to come up with something to celebrate aviation in Uganda, and East Africa generally. We believe the East African Airshow can help aviation business in the region,” he said.

“We all know that Kenya Airways is well ahead of all the countries in the region, so we are trying to attract other people, investors and students. This event is targeted at improving capacity in this region.



“Here is a good example, Uganda Airlines has so many foreign pilots. “Why? It’s hard for Ugandans get the right education or have the money to fulfil their dreams. What we are going to do is sponsor 20 or 30 students to study the aviation process, piloting and engineering, here in Uganda. Then we will rotate it round the countries in the region, we will do the same in Rwanda, Sudan, Tanzania, and Kenya.

“It’s about building capacity in aviation and attracting interest and investment in the aviation industry in east Africa.

“The air show will serve as a melting pot of ideas, a fertile ground for collaboration, and a catalyst for the next wave of advancements that will shape our region’s trajectory,” he concluded. ▲

AFRICAN AIRLINE CEOs IN CONFERENCE

One of the initiatives brought in at the 55th AFRAA Annual General Assembly was a CEO retreat, which was held on the first day of the event.

With the industry facing challenges on several fronts, as AFRAA secretary general Abderahmane Berthe explained in his state of the nation address to the AGA, the retreat was a timely opportunity for CEOs to address these issues behind closed doors before the official business of the assembly.

Issues such as high inflation in Africa, rising jet fuel and energy prices, place a drag on airline profitability, although Berthe noted that African economies remain resilient, with average growth projected to stabilise at 4.1 per cent in 2023-24.

According to Berthe, during the retreat the CEOs discussed AFRAA’s priorities for 2024 and if there are opportunities for the continent’s carriers to work together more closely on areas of mutual interest.

The topics under discussion were safety, connectivity and route development, sustainability, blocked funds and high taxes.

For example, AFRAA has set up the sustainable aviation fuels (SAF) taskforce, which has membership from all the AFRAA member airlines.

Another issue under discussion was the availability of aircraft, with many carriers struggling to obtain capacity. ▲



VIP ground handling
Fast and efficient National and
International flight dispatch
Overflight and Landing permits
Flight planning
Crew transfers
Hotel reservations
VIP Catering
Fuelling
Immigration
Aircraft Management
discover much more by
contacting us



BEST FLIGHT WITH BESTFLY

FBO, Aircraft Handling, Charter and Sales



Sheila Namuddu: “We are very excited to help future African, as well as international, pilots fulfil their dreams.”
IMAGE: AFRICAN AEROSPACE

DAS HANDLING EXCELS AT ENTEBBE

Entebbe International Airport is the gateway to Uganda and independent ground handling service provider DAS Handling (DAS) serves more than 50 per cent of its commercial traffic. DAS provides the full spectrum of ground handling services, ranging from special flights coordination, ramp operations, passenger services, document verification, load control, turn around coordination, fast track, cargo handling as well as security services. Besides being the key handler for Uganda Airlines, its African customers include: African Express, Fly-Sax, JamboJet, FastJet, Precision Air, SkyJet Aviation, as well as international airlines such Saudia and Etihad Airways. “A tribute to our commitment to provide quality services is that Kenya Airways Entebbe station has been awarded ‘the best on-time performing station’ for two years in a row,” said Sheila Namuddu, training officer at DAS.

□□□□

DAS also has a ‘little sister’ – its IATA-authorised DAS Aviation School. “It offers a wide range of aviation courses in departmental and operational studies for young students, or refresher courses such as airline cabin crew, airline customer services, flight operations, cargo introductory and ticketing, to name a few,” said Namuddu. “We also offer a handling dangerous goods regulatory (DGR) course. This can be for exporting arms for military used to live animals that need transporting. The person needs to know how to handle them and how to safely transport them. We off this service to a number of airlines, ranging from regional and low-cost airlines to five-star carriers.” Namuddu also confirmed during AFRAA that the DAS Aviation School will commence pilot training from early 2024. “We are very excited to add this course and help future African, as well as international, pilots fulfil their dreams,” she said. She added that DAS attended AFRAA to highlight the new course, as well as meet with airlines with which it can potentially partner. ▲

Congo Airways turns to KlasJet

Congo Airways is resuming operations with a Boeing 737 wet-leased from Lithuanian ACMI operator KlasJet. KlasJet has undertaken its latest ACMI contract in Africa with the wet-lease of a Boeing 737-800NG to Congo Airways, the state-owned airline of the Democratic Republic of Congo. The 737 was delivered to Congo Airways in late November 2023 for domestic operations out of Kinshasa’s N’djili Airport, where it will enable the flag carrier to resume flying following the grounding of its small fleet of Airbus A320s.

□□□□

The four-month contract with Congo Airways is the first time KlasJet has worked with the carrier, said Zivile Zasinaite, ACMI sales development manager at KlasJet. The deal could potentially be extended, she added. Captain José Dubier Lueya, chief executive officer at Congo Airways, said: “Partnership with KlasJet opens up new possibilities for our airline and allows us to ensure the highest quality flights for our passengers traveling to various destinations within the Democratic Republic of Congo.”

The African market is a growing region for KlasJet’s ACMI services with the Lithuanian operator currently wet-leasing a 737-800NG to FlyEgypt and one to Reunion’s Air Austral, said Zasinaite. KlasJet moved into the 737-800NG ACMI business in 2022 with a fleet of eight aircraft. The firm has a long history of providing private and corporate jet charter services and is part of the Avia Solutions Group, which has several ACMI businesses with a combined fleet of 192 aircraft. “There are a lot of opportunities in Africa for KlasJet and ACMI services in general,” said Zasinaite. At the recent AFRAA meeting, ACMI providers were being sought out by airlines keen to secure extra capacity. Delivery delays in new aircraft from the OEMs, in addition to a scarcity of MRO capacity, is putting a squeeze on aircraft availability across the globe, and Africa is no exception. ▲

PICTURED RIGHT: KlasJet’s team in Congo, from left to right: Dominik Kitkovskij, chief crew planning; Simas Sakalauskas, maintenance control engineer; Captain Sandro Casale; Congo project base commander and Captain David Kashoa.

IMAGE: KLASJET.



Lillian Mwenda: “African nations need to be friends together so that can we build on capacity.”
IMAGE: AFRICAN AEROSPACE

HOW CASSOA AIMS

The Civil Aviation Safety and Security Oversight Agency (CASSOA) is garnering strength to further harmonise aviation in East Africa as it adds The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) as a partner state. Lillian Mwenda from the office management of CASSOA has a dream that one day, the East African Community (EAC) will have one airline. “It would be amazing if we could finally have one airline like we used to have (the former East African Airways - 1945–1977) before the collapse in the African community,” she said. It’s perhaps a wish that is not unachievable further down the line as the DRC has become its seventh partner state. CASSOA’s mandate is that partner states strive to

TO HARMONISE EAST AFRICA AVIATION

make air transport services safe, efficient and profitable; adopt common policies for the development of civil air transport in the region; harmonise civil aviation rules and regulations and coordinate measures and co-operate in the maintenance of high security. For a country to be a member of the EAC, it must share a border with a country who is already a member.

□□□□

“We are currently overseeing the partner state civil aviation authorities of Kenya, Uganda, South Sudan, Tanzania, Burundi, Rwanda, and last year, we welcomed the DRC. This was a particularly big thing, firstly as it’s a huge country heading to the west, so we are able to spread in that direction. Also, a challenge is because it is a Francophone country - but

we are endeavouring to translate all our English communication into French,” said Mwenda. Mwenda also revealed during AFBAA that Somalia has also requested to join as a member state, and now that South Sudan is a member, Sudan is also expressing interest. CASSOA was established in 2007 in Tanzania. Mwenda, who is located at the Ugandan hub of Entebbe, also said CASSOA is hoping to bridge the generation gap in East Africa. “Sixty-five per cent of the population is under 35, but know little about aviation – we want that to change and educate future African aviators,” she said. “We are helping do this with our database of examinations, which is offered to all partner states. The exam, for example, that will be done by a pilot in Uganda, will be the same exam being done by a pilot in Burundi or a pilot in Tanzania.” ▲

FUNDS COULD CRIPPLE AIRLINES

“The non-essential stuff that they consume their dollars for luxury items while they will not pay their bills. This has to stop!” Al-Awadhi said the situation is getting to a point where countries are no longer respecting the bilateral agreements. “What shocks me is I have been addressing this for the last two years, and every time I managed to squeeze it down a few dollars, it jumps another \$150.” He said that the bad debt to airlines from the Nigerian government was expecting to pass the billion-dollar mark by the start of 2024.

He called to airlines to push their own governments to open channels with their opposite numbers in Nigeria to address the critical debt. He also warned Nigeria that its hopes for foreign investment in new projects would be affected. “How is Nigeria expecting anybody to trust its government and invest?” he said. They’re looking for foreign investment, but nobody’s going to invest in a country that doesn’t give them money back.” ▲

SAFARILINK STUDIES GREEN FLEET OPTIONS

Kenyan domestic carrier Safarilink is studying the potential for converting its turboprop fleet to electric or hybrid-electric propulsion as it seeks to retain its environmental credentials, said Alex Avedi, chief executive officer on the sidelines of the AFRAA annual meeting in Uganda in November. Safarilink operates a fleet of four Bombardier Dash 8s and eight Cessna Caravan C208Bs on connecting domestic scheduled services to Kenya’s safari destinations and across the border into northern Tanzania.

□□□□

The carrier is conducting internal studies on its engine options, with its short 45-minute stage lengths ideal for electric or hybrid power, said Avedi. “Our business is built on sustainable tourism,” he added, which makes a strong case for a transition to lower carbon-emitting power solutions. The earliest Safarilink could introduce more sustainable aircraft would be 2026, but there are considerable regulatory hurdles to overcome, although the good news is that the technology is becoming proven, said Avedi. ▲



Alex Avedi: “Our business is built on sustainable tourism.” IMAGE: MARK PILLING





BRIDGING SKIES AND LEVERAGING GROWTH

Diving the breakthrough for a flourishing African aviation industry

To find out more please contact **Mark Brown**: E: mark.brown@aviationafrica.aero
T: + 44 (0) 1702 530 000 | M: + 44 (0) 7889 100 987

CO-LOCATED WITH:  AFRICAN BUSINESS ASSOCIATION AGM & SYMPOSIUM	GOLD SPONSOR:  PAYMENT SOLUTIONS SPONSOR: 	SILVER SPONSORS:  	REGISTRATION SPONSOR:  DELEGATE BAG SPONSOR: 	SUMMIT SESSION SPONSOR:  BRONZE SPONSORS:  
---	---	---	--	---

www.aviationafrica.aero

Follow us:   

The Dubai Air Show took place last November with African airlines making large orders, including major ones from Ethiopian Airlines and EgyptAir. **Ella Nethersole** was there.

Dubai the real deal for Africa



The Dubai Airshow took place last November at Dubai World Central and African airlines made a big impact during the five-day event.

Ethiopian Airlines placed Africa's largest commercial aircraft order, reserving up to 67 Boeing jets during the second day. The agreement was for 11 787 Dreamliners and 20 737 MAXs, with opportunity for 36 more jets.

Ethiopian Airlines group CEO Mesfin Tasew stressed that this order volume is "conservative", and more orders will be placed in the "coming years" with both Boeing and Airbus types in contention.

However, the airline will wait on a potential order for the Airbus A220 until issues with its Pratt & Whitney PW1500 engine are "corrected", he added.

The carrier's strategic roadmap sees a fleet of 270 aircraft by 2035, nearly double its current fleet size, he said.

□ □ □ □ □

The carrier is seeking several 787-9s from the operating lease market starting in summer 2024 to provide bridge lift. A scarcity of delivery slots is forcing Ethiopian to turn to interim capacity, and it will "trade between leases and the Boeing options" in its fleet planning in the coming years, explained Tasew.

The deliveries of the firm orders will begin in 2026 and continue until 2030.

Ethiopian also placed an order with Airbus for 11 more A350s.

The carrier is Africa's biggest A350 customer with 20 A350-900s already in its fleet. It is the only Airbus product in its lineup.

Tasew said: "As a customer focused airline, we are particularly excited for these fleet as it offers extra comfort to passengers with its features like the quietest cabin in its class and ambient lighting. We are keen to expand our fleet

size, acquiring the latest technology aircraft to offer a convenient and memorable onboard experience to our esteemed passengers."

The carrier also announced during the air show it signed an MoU with Rolls-Royce for a comprehensive TotalCare service agreement for Trent XWB-84 engines. The Trent XWB-84 exclusively powers the Airbus A350-900 aircraft.

Tasew, said: "We are excited to place this commitment for 11 Rolls-Royce Trent XWB-84 powered Airbus A350-900 aircraft, which will be supported by a comprehensive Rolls-Royce TotalCare services agreement. We are keen to expand our fleet size, acquiring the latest technology aircraft to offer a convenient and memorable onboard experience."

EgyptAir announced an order during the show for 10 Airbus A350-900s to bolster its long-haul fleet.



Top: Ethiopian Airlines Group CEO Mesfin Tasew (right) and Brad McMullen, Boeing senior vice-president of commercial sales and marketing at the airline's signing for 737s and 787s.

Bottom: EgyptAir Holdings CEO, Yehia Zakaria (left) and Airbus CCO Christian Scherer sealed the latest deal aimed at expanding the airline's fleet during the Dubai Airshow.

IMAGES: AFRICAN AEROSPACE

2026, would supplement rather than replace the carrier's existing 737-800s, which form the backbone of its short- and medium-haul fleet.

The new acquisitions will help boost the fleet from its current 91 aircraft to 125 by 2028.

"We have ambitious plans for expansion," Zakaria said. This meant keeping the previous-generation 737s, but the new aircraft would reduce the average age of the fleet. "We will replace them later, when we think the markets are able to give us a mature aeroplane," he said.

Among EgyptAir's other priorities will be increasing its dedicated freighter fleet, with at least two A330-200s scheduled to be converted to freighters by 2025.

Another North African carrier also had the chequebook out. Royal Air Maroc confirmed an order for two more Boeing 787-9 Dreamliners. Chairman and CEO, Abdelhamid Addou said: "The two Boeing 787-9 Dreamliners will enable Royal Air Maroc to expand in the short-term its long-haul network in response to the highly-favourable market conditions in 2023. Simultaneously, the company is actively pursuing a significant tender to quadruple the fleet before 2037."



3 REASONS TO JOIN OUR COURSES

- 1 AFFORDABLE QUALITY - STARTING AT US\$ 99
- 2 WE TRAIN YOUR STAFF /IN AFRICA - ALREADY FOR 28 YEARS.....
- 3 ICAO STANDARDS ARE OUR STANDARDS

OUR COURSES IN 2024 IN AFRICA INCLUDE:

- Safety Management Systems - Feb- Rwanda
- Human Factors in Aviation - May - Nigeria
- Team leadership in aviation - May - Nigeria
- Incident investigation - June - Namibia
- Peer Support training - Sep - South Africa
- International Air Law - Sep - South Africa



MORE INFO & BOOKING:
www.aviassist.org/shop

AVIASSIST
FOUNDATION

Safety Promotion for the African aviation industry since 1995



Angola's new international airport. IMAGES: AIAAN

Angola scores with new hub

While the opening of Angola's new Dr. António Agostinho Neto Airport (AIAAN) came up against several delays, it was officially inaugurated on 10 November 2023 by Angolan president Joao Lourenco.

Chloë Greenbank takes a closer look.

Now the hunt is on for interested parties to manage the new airport, for which plans were initially mooted more than 20 years ago, under a 25-year concession, which could be extended by a further 15 years.

German airport operator Fraport, French operator, Vinci Airports, and Airports Company South Africa (ACSA) are all reported to be among the companies that have expressed an interest in operating Angola's new air transport hub.

With the next phase of the tender process due to be announced in February, a final decision on the new operator is anticipated before the end of 2024.

Named after the nation's first president and situated 40km southeast of Luanda, the airport is currently capable of handling up to 15 million passengers per year and features a 130,000-tonne cargo terminal and 82m high control tower, as well as its own rail station.

Plans are also under way to develop an airport city on a 110 sqkm space close to the new airport. Although it is currently serving cargo traffic, domestic passenger flights (which are already 20 per cent over 2019 figures in Angola) are expected to begin in February and international flights in June.

The airport features two parallel runways measuring 3,800m and 4,200m in length, with the longer runway able to handle aircraft up to the size of an Airbus A380.

TAAG Angola Airlines, which is the first carrier to relocate to the new airport, will have its own terminal at the hub. At the end of 2023, and in line with its relocation, TAAG announced it was expanding its regional network with additional services to Namibia, Republic of Congo, São Tomé and Mozambique.

The new airport's passenger terminal building occupies an area of around 160,000 sqm and has 12 aircraft finger docks. It also boasts modern baggage carousels and check-in counters with plenty of space for restaurants, retail concessions and lounges.

The construction of the airport and supporting infrastructure, including the cargo terminal, fuel farm and administrative buildings, is estimated to have cost more than US\$3 billion. Funding was provided by the government as a public investment, with the development of a modern air transport hub, to complement and ultimately replace the existing Quatro de Fevereiro International Airport for scheduled traffic.

The new airport is expected to play a key role in boosting international travel and trade as well as providing a hub for transit passengers. To support this increase in traffic, a resolution to allow a 90-day visa-free stay for foreign nationals from almost 100 countries, including Morocco, the US, UK, China and Brazil, was also recently passed.

□ □ □ □ □

One of the most populous cities in Africa with around nine million inhabitants and counting (according to the World Population Review), Luanda, and Angola's wider 37 million population, is certainly expected to benefit from having two air transport hubs. Once scheduled carriers have transitioned to the new airport, Quatro de Fevereiro will be used for non-commercial air services including VIP operations, business aviation and charter flights, as well as maintenance and training facilities.

"Angola is currently one of the most stable countries in the continent and is currently diversifying its economy away from oil revenues with aviation a strong contributor to explore all the different opportunities from tourism and trade to agriculture and logistics," said Ricardo Viegas D'Abreu, minister of transport for Angola, speaking ahead of the airport's opening.

He added: "Africa has tremendous potential to grow connectivity but it is lacking the capacity to do so not only because of the infrastructure, but also due to airlines, access to aircraft and financing to support a civil aviation ecosystem and the single African air transport market. The new international airport is an important element not only for Angola, but also for supporting the region and continent."

As Guinea terminates its French partnership deal, managing director Namory Camara talks to **Chloë Greenbank** about how modernisation of Conakry’s Ahmed Sékou Touré Airport can now push ahead.

GUINEA BANKS ON ITS TOURÉ DE FORCE...

A bustling coastal city situated on West Africa’s Atlantic coastline, Conakry is the vibrant capital of Guinea. With an estimated population of 1.5 million, the city boasts a blend of traditional and modern influences with a vibrant cultural scene. It is also a hub of economic activity, housing government offices, financial institutions and a growing infrastructure, including Ahmed Sékou Touré Airport.

The primary gateway to the Republic of Guinea, the airport is located just 13km from the capital’s city centre and is now solely managed and operated by the Gbessia Airport Management Company (SOGEAC).

Namory Camara, has an aviation background spanning 20 years and was appointed the airport’s managing director two years ago. SOGEAC’s sole management of the airport is a recent development as it had previously been jointly managed with Groupe Aeroports de Paris (ADP).

The French operator had agreed in 2020 to take a 33% stake in the airport, providing technical and operational assistance, as well as to co-develop and finance its expansion and modernisation.

□□□□□

However, the Guinean state terminated the partnership at the beginning of 2022, with Camara noting authorities felt commitments that had been made to launch the airport’s expansion and modernisation had not been met. With Camara at the helm, progress has now been made and work on the airport’s modernisation, which is expected to cost in the region of €250-300 million, began in April 2023.

“To date, the work is progressing smoothly,” said Camara. He added that the Turkish contractor, Albayrak Group, “has deployed considerable financial, material, logistical and human resources over the last six months. Work on Phase One of the project – the construction of the general aviation building, which will serve as a terminal for private and national flights and as a temporary presidential pavilion has effectively begun. There is also the construction of the



Ahmed Sékou Touré Airport undergoing change as it steps up development.
IMAGE SOGEAC

administrative buildings including the SOGEAC headquarters and the freight terminal, which are also well advanced and on schedule.”

In line with anticipated scheduled passenger growth at the airport, plans are also underway to construct a new passenger terminal covering an area of three hectares. Once Phase One is complete, Camara hopes to begin work on this new terminal in 2024, with the government seeking private funding through a public-private partnership arrangement. “We have seen steady growth in passenger traffic, with 630,000 passengers in 2022 and we expect to close 2023 with 750,000 passengers - the airport’s highest level of traffic on record. To meet this ongoing growth, plans for the new terminal, which currently has a capacity of 1.5 million passengers per annum, will ultimately enable us to accommodate up to three million passengers, which we expect to reach in the next 10 to 15 years,” he explained.

The overall expansion project will be completed in five phases and as well as the passenger terminal, general aviation building and presidential pavilion, the master plan includes a new control tower, improved surface access by road, a hotel, fire station and power plant, as well as new aircraft parking, improved passenger car parking facilities and a ground support equipment (GSE) maintenance hangar.

The wider adoption of new technologies to enhance the passenger experience is also integral to Camara’s vision for the airport. “We have to look at the airport as a business with passengers expecting the same service here in Guinea as they’re seeing elsewhere in the world,” he remarked.

□□□□□

Camara has already taken steps to improve car parking at the airport and has partnered with Kiwi to offer “one of the best parking systems in West Africa.” Visitors to the airport can now book and pay for parking using their mobile phones, which, revealed Camara, has not only improved parking for passengers but also seen a 20-fold increase in non-aeronautical revenues from parking. The important thing here, he noted, is understanding your market. “Elsewhere in the world payment by credit card is widely accepted. However, in Africa the penetration of credit cards is relatively low, so enabling passengers to pay using their mobile is key, particularly when around 75% of the continent’s population is under the age of 25 and for whom the use of mobile technology is prolific.”

Underlining the need to see airports as a business, Camara noted that when he came on



IMAGE: AVIATION AFRICA

board, Ahmed Sékou Touré didn’t have much of a presence online with passengers having to call the airport to get information on flight schedules and airport operations. “Our collaboration with Kiwi has also enabled us to introduce an online flight booking system, enabling passengers to search for flight schedules from the airport, as well as book and pay for their travel.” Although, reiterating his point about the lack of credit card use, he also noted: “While we are seeing plenty of passengers looking online for flight information, they rarely book online.”

When it comes to digitalising and automating airport operations, Camara warns that airports across Africa need to be really considered when implementing these technologies. “Biometrics and automated services are a major investment for airports and the other stakeholders involved, including the government and immigration

authorities. It comes back to understanding your customer base prior to making that investment. We are looking at doubling our check-in facilities from 14 to 30 kiosks as part of our modernisation project, but before doing so, we will survey our customers to see how much demand there is for self-service check-in and baggage kiosks,” he said.

“There is a saying, that Africans don’t travel, they move! We don’t travel light, it’s always with multiple suitcases so passengers prefer to use the counters manned by airport personnel.”

Acknowledging that one of the key aspects of the airport is its role in fostering economic development, Camara points to the country’s mining industry, which is worth an estimated US\$20 billion, as being a key driver for boosting Guinea’s air traffic.

“Around 35% of our traffic currently

▼ We have to look at the airport as a business, with passengers expecting the same service here in Guinea as they’re seeing elsewhere in the world. ▲

NAMORY CAMARA

originates in Europe, where we have a huge diaspora, but the Asian/ Chinese market is growing rapidly,” he said. “We have mining companies from China, the US and the UAE all conducting business in Guinea and the airport needs to cater as a world-class facility for those business travellers. In addition, the investment in our cargo facilities also contributes to the efficient movement of goods, which will further bolster the country’s economic activities.”

Currently served by carriers including: Air France, Emirates, Brussels Airlines, Ethiopian Airlines, Asky, Royal Air Maroc, Air Senegal, Turkish Airlines and Air Cote D’Ivoire, Camara hopes to expand the airport’s existing destination network. Towards the end of 2023 Egis provided route development training for the team at Conakry.

□□□□□

Tailored specifically to incorporate relevant examples from the African market to foster a more insightful understanding, the plan is to extend the airport’s reach with new routes and enhanced frequencies of existing services. Camara also agreed that “the implementation of SAATM will of course be integral to boosting connectivity for the airport and the wider region. There is no other option if we want to develop air services in Africa.”

A crucial asset for Guinea and with a pivotal role to play in connecting the country to the global community, the expansion and modernisation of Ahmed Sékou Touré embodies the nation’s aspirations for growth, efficiency and connectivity on the international stage.

The challenge the airport will have beyond its current modernisation plans is that its location so proximate to the city centre means there is limited growth beyond the three million passenger capacity.

But Camara is one step ahead.

Plans have already been mooted to build a new airport in Maferinyah (about 75km from Conakry), which could be developed into a fully-fledged airport city and which could replace the existing airport when it reaches capacity.

Watch this space! ▲

President of the Nigerian Air Traffic Controllers Association (NATCA), Abayomi Agoro, has called on aviation authorities across west Africa to prioritise air traffic control operations in decision making and give improved attention to air navigation and safety systems. **Chukwu Emkele** reports.

AIR TRAFFIC CENTRAL...

Speaking in an exclusive interview with *African Aerospace*, Agoro said: “NATCA has been advocating for welfare of its members that cuts across adequate training, unnecessary meddling in air traffic controllers’ employment, and provision of working tools, among others.”

“NATCA can only plead with the government to do what is needed on the air navigation service providers (ANSP) by placing more emphasis on their core mandate.

“The resources are scarce and should be tailored towards the priority areas. We have too many staff in the agencies, but the operational staff are grossly inadequate. That should be the focus of attention, coupled with the system upgrades. These are challenges that, if not attended to, can impair safety and service deliveries,” he said.

Considering the fact that more airports have been built by state governments in Nigeria, increasing the number to be manned from 21 to 32 and creating demand for more ATC personnel in the country, amidst a deficit of more than 250 controllers, Agoro said: “It is obvious that we have a manpower challenge and inadequate personnel to man the existing facilities. Now that the states are more interested in building more airports, it is in their best interest to assist the agencies responsible for the services provision, by funding the training and recruitment of staff.

“The government should include aviation agencies and ATC in their annual budgetary provisions and support the system.”

□□□□□

Agoro frowned at governments’ frequent claims of paucity of funds as an excuse for not training adequate air traffic controllers. “We are concerned about the recruitment of competent hands and training. Today, we still have challenges in training as they claim it’s due to the paucity of funds, but we see more administrative and financial training being budgeted for and running year in, year out.”

On the push for all African countries to sign and implement the single African Air Transport Market (SAATM) agreement, Agoro called for a careful observation of the single European skies initiative as Africa works towards that collaboration.

“I believe that such effort is meant to create some kind of economics of scale as done in the single European sky case to enable the region to compete favourably with other aviation entities engaged in such regional collaboration. The

issue of trust among associating members in this kind of arrangement would be the test for Africa’s success. If the European Union, as sophisticated as it is in dealing with large scale collaboration is currently in a battle for survival, then we should consult properly before venturing into this collaboration,” Agoro advised.

Commenting on the impact of recent military coups in some countries in west Africa on aviation activities in the sub region, Agoro said: “A military coup by nature, is a disruption of the normal flow of the democratic process and affects aviation activities momentarily by giving the national airspace an unsafe status and scaring international airlines from even overflying the airspace.

□□□□□

“While this disruption lasts, revenue generated by all commercialised aviation is stalled. This certainly affects air traffic control and other service providers that depend on these activities for sustenance.”

On regional ATC collaboration, Agoro said “NATCA and other ATC associations in Africa and the Indian Ocean area, under the banner of the International Federation of Air Traffic Controllers Associations (IFATCA) are united in so many respects, particularly in the area of lending opinions on matters that require members’ collaboration. The relationship is very cordial and mutually beneficial.”

However, he called on IFATCA, which NATCA hosted in Abuja from December 6 to 9, 2023, to support member associations’ in their efforts to overcome technical, operational and welfare challenges, underscoring their integral role in the federation’s success. ▲



▼ **The government should include aviation agencies and ATC in their annual budgetary provisions and support the system.** ▲

ABAYOMI AGORO

Home drone: Milkor's new Model 380 UAV made its maiden flight in September, 2023. IMAGE: MILKOR



FORTIFIED MILKOR

The 380 is the largest unmanned UAV built in Africa, and could play a vital role in enhancing operational capability of the SA national defence force. **Jon Lake** reports.

South Africa’s Milkor (Pty) Ltd flew its model 380 UAV for the first time at Air Force Base Overberg, near Bredasdorp, on September 19 2023, though the maiden flight was not immediately confirmed.

Flight trials are set to continue into the first quarter of 2024 at Overberg, which is home to No.525 squadron and the SAAF’s test flight and development centre.

It has been reported that five aircraft are under construction, for delivery next year; reportedly for service with the South African air force.

□□□□□

Milkor’s group CEO, Phuti Jackson Mampa, recently said that: “There are many applications where the Milkor 380 could play a vital role in enhancing operational capability and the overall success of the SA national defence force, border management authority, and South African police service.

“Having a locally-supported platform that is produced and manufactured in South Africa will increase the operational readiness to support troops during operations.

The aircraft has five hardpoints for weapons and reconnaissance payloads.

We have been honoured to receive an enormous level of support from the department of defence, South African air force, and Armscor and trust that South Africa will be the ultimate beneficiary of this system.”

The Milkor 380 UAV is the largest unmanned aircraft built in Africa, with an 18.6 metre wingspan and a maximum take-off weight of 1,300kg. This, together with the aircraft’s 135-hp, four-stroke, four-cylinder turbocharged Rotax 915iS engine, puts the aircraft in the same category as the US GA-ASI Predator.

□□□□□

The company’s communications director Daniel du Plessis, said that: “It is the largest drone ever produced on the African continent. There are only a few companies in the world that have the capacity to produce and have actually produced a device of this size. It offers the possibility to South Africa and other countries on the continent to use this technology for their defence and security forces.”

The Milkor 380 can fly at a maximum altitude of around 30,000 ft, for up to 35 hours, and is classified as a medium-

Continued on Page 36 ▶

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 35

altitude, long-endurance (MALE) UAV, carrying a payload of up to 210kg.

The Milkor 380 has been described as a UCAV (unmanned combat air vehicle) or UCAS (unmanned combat aerial system) and the company’s brochure shows higher payload options, with 400kg under the fuselage, 150kg under each inner wing, and 80kg under each outer wing.

The aircraft has five hardpoints for weapons and reconnaissance payloads and can carry an L3-Harris EO/IR turret, or the Airborne Technologies’ self-contained aerial reconnaissance (SCAR) pod. Other options include synthetic aperture radar/inverted synthetic aperture radar (SAR/ISAR), communications intelligence (COMINT), automatic identification system (AIS), communications relay, and communications jammer payloads.

The aircraft will be offered to military export customers, but also to parapublic, border control, and conservation/anti-poaching operators. Milkor hopes that the aircraft will become a competitor to Turkey’s popular Bayraktar TB-2 and TAI Anka and Akinci drones, which have enjoyed significant sales success – especially to nations who cannot afford, or are blocked from acquiring the latest US UCAVs.

□□□□□

The Milkor 380 follows the smaller, hand-launched MA18 portable UAV, and the smaller, T-tailed MA80 and the confusingly named MA380 UAV, which also has a T-tailed configuration, unlike the new UAV, which has a configuration more reminiscent of the US GA-ASI Predator, with a V-tail (or more accurately a Y-shaped tail with a ventral tailfin augmenting the dihedral tailfins.

Milkor (Pty) Ltd and its Polish group company Milkor Polska Sp.zo.o. have signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Germany’s Aerodata AG “in the field of unmanned airborne maritime surveillance,” perhaps indicating that a maritime version is under consideration.

A United Arab Emirates office, Milkor UAE, was officially launched at IDEX 2021, when what was then known as the Milkor UCAV was launched by minister of state for defence affairs Mohammad Ahmad Al Bowardi.

A mock-up of the aircraft was shown, carrying six HALCON desert sting weapons under its wings. The desert sting is an unpowered glide bomb with an inertial and GNSS navigation system and an optional semi-active laser seeker. The sting series has a range of 16km and offers a range of different warhead sizes, and weighs between 10 and 50kg. Other weapons displayed with the Milkor 380 mock-up at defence exhibitions (including IDEX and then the Africa Aerospace and Defence 2022 international arms exhibition at Tshwane) include the Al Tariq X-series PGM, and the Belgian Thales FZ602 laser-guided rocket launcher. ▲

Nigeria storms ahead in war against terror

Last January, the then chief of the air staff, Air Marshal Oladayo Amao, said that that the Nigerian military was winning the war against terrorism, attributing this success, at least in part, to the air force’s newly-acquired JF-17 Thunder aircraft, A-29 Super Tucano aircraft and UCAVs.

Nigeria has acquired 38 new aircraft since 2015, including three JF-17 Thunder multi-role fighters, 12 A-29 Super Tucano light attack/advanced trainer aircraft, 10 Super Mushshak trainer aircraft, five Mi-35M attack helicopters, two Bell 412 transport helicopters, four A109 Power utility helicopters, two Mi-171E transport helicopters, and large numbers of unmanned combat aerial vehicles (UCAVs).

Further new aircraft are expected, says current chief of the air staff Air Marshal Hasan Abubakar, including 12 AW109 Trekker helicopters, two C295 transport aircraft, two Beechcraft King Air 360i fixed-wing aircraft and three Wing Loong II unmanned combat aerial vehicles.

Nigeria is also expected to receive M346FA light attack aircraft, although Leonardo has not confirmed this order, while some 12 AH-1Z Viper attack helicopters were approved in April 2022, though these are not yet on contract.

Jon Lake reports.

PIONEERING UNMANNED FLEET IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

Nigeria is the only country in sub-Saharan Africa to operate armed unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV) and to have used them in combat.

The Aerostar UAV was Nigeria’s first operational UAV, nine of which were purchased in 2006 from Israeli’s Aeronautics Defense Systems (ADS), the Aerostar UAVs were primarily intended to be used for maritime patrol, as well as ISR during the Niger Delta crises, but the insurgency ended in 2008.

The 8.7 metre wingspan ADS Aerostar tactical UAV can carry a 50kg payload, has a 12-hours operational endurance and is equipped with Controp’s DSP-1 dual-sensor stabilised payload, providing day/night surveillance coverage.

However, today most of the Nigerian airframes are no longer airworthy as a result of the lack of spare parts and have been mothballed and put into storage,

In 2020, the Nigerian Air Force (NAF) received two Chengdu Aircraft Industrial Group (CAIG) Wing Loong IIs multirole medium altitude, long-range (MALE) UAVs, four (CASC) CH-4B MALE UAVs and two additional CH-3As tactical UAVs from China to replace the examples lost in service since the type first entered service in 2014. The type is armed with AR-1 missiles and what may have been a guided bomb.

The NAF has since announced the use of the CH-3A in air strikes against Boko Haram and its offshoot, the Islamic State West Africa Province



The Nigerian Air Force Tsagumi designed in collaboration with the Portuguese company UAVision. IMAGE: NAF

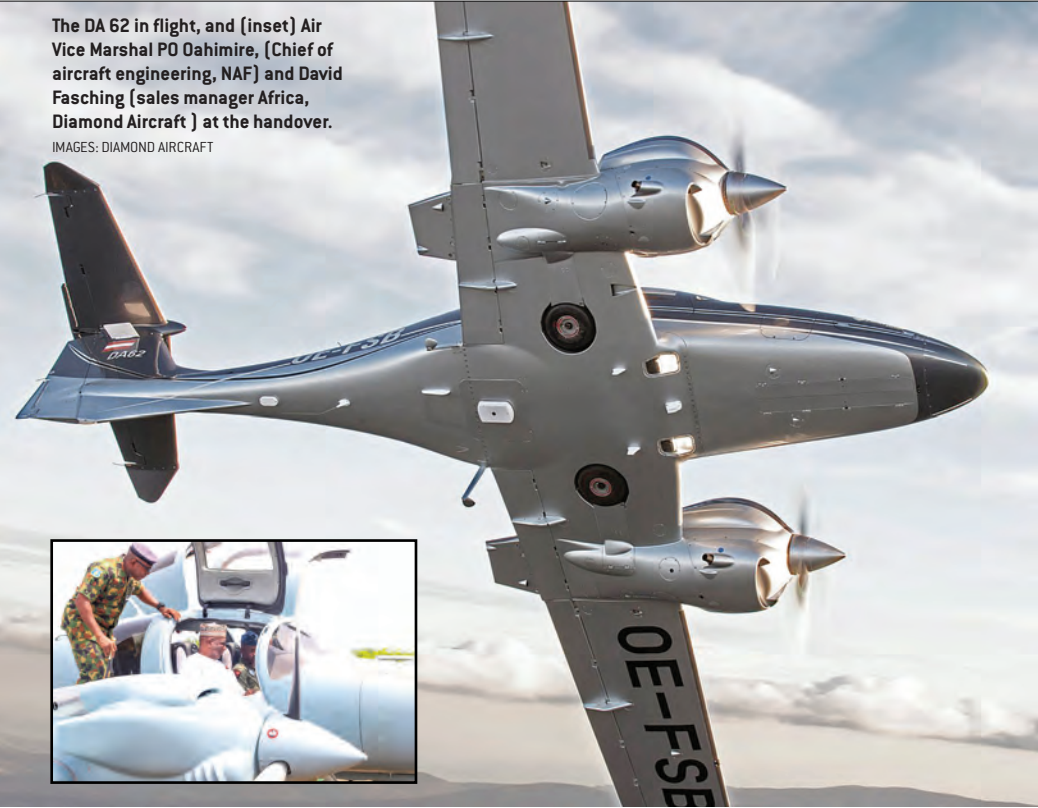
(ISWAP). The Emirati Adcom Yabhon Flash-20 MALE UAV was first reported to have been ordered by Nigeria in 2016, but only one has been confirmed in NAF service.

In September 2022, Nigeria ordered the ubiquitous Turkish Bayraktar TB2 armed MALE UAV.

Nigerian senator Ali Ndume, chairman of the senate committee on Army, stated that Nigerian UAV pilots were undergoing training in Turkey and the first of six TB2s were reported to have been delivered in October 2023.

Several other types have been tested by the Nigerian military including the AeroVironment RQ-11 Raven and the Schiebel Camcopter S-100, neither of which have been adopted.

To supplement its unmanned capability, and



The DA 62 in flight, and (inset) Air Vice Marshal PO Oahimire, (Chief of aircraft engineering, NAF) and David Fasching (sales manager Africa, Diamond Aircraft) at the handover. IMAGES: DIAMOND AIRCRAFT



The Tekever AR3 Net Ray UAVs are operated by the Nigerian Navy. IMAGE: TEKEVER

increase self-reliance, Nigeria started developing its own UAVs. The first locally-made UAV is the Amebo, which was designed in collaboration with the UK’s Cranfield University for training, and it was followed by the Gulma, which was built on the design of the Israeli-supplied Aerostar UAV and manufactured by the Nigeria Air Force Institute of Technology. These were followed by the Tsagumi UAV designed in collaboration with the Portuguese company UAVision, and introduced into service for training in 2018 to replace the Gulma.

Nigeria also has its own UAV pilot training capability, the 401st flying training school based in Kaduna. Training is conducted using the Chinese-made Mugin commercial UAV for initial training. However, for advanced training the

Tsaigumi and Gulma tactical UAVs are used. Nigeria’s first in-country trained UAV pilots completed training after clocking nearly 100 flying hours on the CH-3A in 2018.

The Nigerian Navy operates three different UAV systems, South Korea’s Uconsystems RemoEye 002Bs, China’s AR-500B, and Portugal’s Tekever AR3. Tekever delivered several shipborne AR3 Net Ray UAVs to the Nigeria Navy at the end of 2020 as part of the deep blue project in collaboration with the Maritime Administration and Safety Agency, (NIMASA).

The Tekever AR3s were delivered to the Apapa Dockyard in Lagos partially disassembled and shipped in several crates. Officers of the Nigerian Navy and Customs were on-hand to inspect the shipment for proper documentation. The AR3 has an endurance of more than 16 hours and can be launched from ships using a catapult. The cruising speed of the 3.5-metre wingspan UAV is 85km/h with a maximum speed 140km/h. Powered by a petrol engine, it has a payload of up to 4kg and options include electro-optical and infrared sensors as well as laser illuminators and communications relay systems.

The Nigerian Police use Elistair Orion tethered hexacopter UAVs for border protection. The system is equipped with Sony and FLIR EO/IR sensors which provide day and night surveillance in any weather condition. ▲

NAF SPARKLES WITH SECOND PAIR OF DIAMONDS

The Nigerian Air Force (NAF) has received a second pair of Diamond DA62 surveillance aircraft, bringing the fleet to four aircraft, and joining two aircraft delivered earlier this year, the first of them in February.

The first pair of DA62 aircraft have already been deployed to operational theatres in support of Nigeria’s ongoing effort to restore peace and stability in the face of terrorist and insurgent groups.

The NAF officially took delivery of the two aircraft on October 11, according to air commodore Edward Gabkwet, NAF’s director of public relations, the day after they arrived in country.

A reception ceremony for the aircraft was held at General Tunde Idiagbon International Airport near Ilorin in Kwara State. The aircraft had been expected to join the NAF’s other ISR aircraft with No.107 air maritime group at Benin, but air vice marshal Tajudeen Yusuf said that they would instead be assigned to No.303 medium airlift group at Ilorin.

All four DA62s were present for the ceremony, and all were fitted with undernose electro-optical sensor, probably the Hensoldt Argos II HDT electro-optical turret.

The DA62’s universal nose can carry sensors weighing up to 60kg, while the belly can carry maritime or surveillance radars of up to 50kg. A satellite communications pod can house L-, Ku-, or Ka-band antennas. ▲



Nigerian personnel were sent to Turkey to train on the TAI T129. IMAGE: NIGERIAN AIR FORCE

TURKEY DELIVERS FIRST T129 ATAK HELICOPTERS

The first pair of six T129 ATAK helicopters for the Nigerian Air Force (NAF) arrived in the country on November 1, on board a Turkish Air Force A400M Atlas tactical transport

Nigeria initially signed a contract for six T129 helicopters from Turkish Aerospace Industries in 2021. The first batch of 26 NAF pilots and maintenance personnel were sent to Turkey to train on the type in May 2023.

In August, the chief of the air staff, Air Marshal Hasan Abubakar, predicted that the first T129s would be operational in September, but this failed to transpire, and he and defence minister Mohammed Badaru Abubakar visited Turkey on October 29 to facilitate the speedy delivery of the helicopters, which were then delivered three days later.

Two more were due to be delivered before the end of 2023, and the remaining helicopters are expected before the end of second quarter of 2024. ▲

MWARI TO TURBO CHARGE DCR

The Democratic Republic of Congo has ordered a number of Paramount Mwari advanced high-performance reconnaissance light aircraft (AHLAC) – believed to be three, though some reports say four, and others six.

The Mwari is a single-engined turboprop multi-role light attack and ISR aircraft developed by the Paramount Group for ISR, light ground attack, border patrol, and maritime surveillance missions.

Paramount is a South African-founded global aerospace and technology company, now headquartered in Abu Dhabi in the United Arab Emirates, and with production and maintenance facilities in South Africa, Kazakhstan, India, and the USA.

□ □ □ □ □

Paramount designed the Mwari to be cost-effective, easy to maintain and capable of operating from austere airstrips with a minimal logistical footprint, powered by a Pratt & Whitney PT6A-66B turboprop engine. The aircraft features an innovative interchangeable mission systems bay (IMSB), in the lower part of the fuselage, with open-architecture and flexible mission systems allowing for the rapid low-cost integration of new sensors, payloads, weapons and avionics equipment, and for the rapid installation of new sensor or payload options in the field in less than two hours.

Initially marketed to air forces with limited budgets as a relatively inexpensive and more cost-effective and operationally useful alternative to higher-end fast jets, Paramount has started to market the aircraft more widely, recognising that it has greater applicability to modern-day counter-insurgency operations than traditional fourth and fifth generation fighters, and stressing that with the integration of modern command, control and communications systems architecture the



The Mwari: A single-engined turboprop multi-role light attack and ISR aircraft.
IMAGE: PARAMOUNT

Mwari can serve as a critical link between aircraft, and ground forces in a range of scenarios.

Paramount (in association with Leidos and Vertex Aerospace) offered an International Traffic in Arms Regulations (ITAR)-compliant variant, the Bronco II, for the US special operations command’s armed overwatch requirement, narrowly losing out to the Air Tractor/L3Harris AT-802U sky warden.

□ □ □ □ □

At DSEI, Paramount founder Ivor Ichikowitz said that the company hoped to sell the Mwari to European air forces, as an alternative to platforms like the Embraer/Sierra Nevada Corporation] Super Tucano.

“We believe that a lot of NATO countries are going to have operational requirements for this class of aircraft. We know Portugal has a light attack and ISR requirement, and we are talking to a number of smaller

NATO countries who have limited air force capabilities,” he said.

The Mwari was the first clean-sheet-of-paper manned South African military aircraft since the Rooivalk attack helicopter. The aircraft was originally developed by AHLAC Holdings, a joint venture between the Paramount Group and Aerosud, and made its first flight on July 26 2014. The so-called AHLAC experimental demonstrator (XDM) was, followed by the advanced demonstrator (ADM), which was built for testing weapons and mission systems.

The production-standard aircraft flew for the first time in 2022, and Mozambique took delivery of the first production Mwari in December 2022, rapidly putting the aircraft into use for challenging reconnaissance and surveillance missions.

The aircraft is being manufactured at a new factory at Wonderboom airport, near Pretoria.

ZAMBIA AND MOROCCO GAIN NEW HELICOPTERS



Above: A Moroccan delegation visited Airbus in August 2022 to look at the H135.

IMAGE: AIRBUS



Left: The Bell 412 will soon be the most important type in the ZAF helicopter fleet.

IMAGE: ZAMBIAN AIR FORCE.

While Nigeria is rearming at a formidable rate, with many new types entering service, other African air arms are also introducing new aircraft and helicopters.

The United States has announced an \$80m grant to Zambia for the supply of four Bell 412EP helicopters to the Zambia Air Force (ZAF), together with a three-year training, service, and parts package.

Zambia is expanding and modernising its rotary wing fleet, whose ‘backbone’ was until recently provided by some half a dozen Mil Mi-171Sh and Mi-171E utility and assault transport helicopters delivered from Russia between 2015 and 2017, and seven Chinese Z-9s.

□ □ □ □ □

But in recent years, about a dozen surviving Agusta-Bell 205s have been augmented by three Bell/Agusta-Bell 412 helicopters from Italy and South Africa, and a second hand Bell 212 previously operated by Era Helicopters in Canada.

Zambia also ordered two Enstrom 480B helicopters from the United States in February, for training pilots and personnel.

Further north, the Royal Moroccan Air Force has taken delivery of the first pair of H135M helicopters of 12 ordered from Airbus Helicopters. The contract also includes an extensive support package encompassing the training of instructor pilots and maintenance personnel and the delivery of flight training devices.

The new H135Ms will replace the AgustaBell AB206A and AB206B helicopters currently being used by the Royal Moroccan Air Force helicopter flight school.



ORGANISED BY

AVIATION WEEK
NETWORK

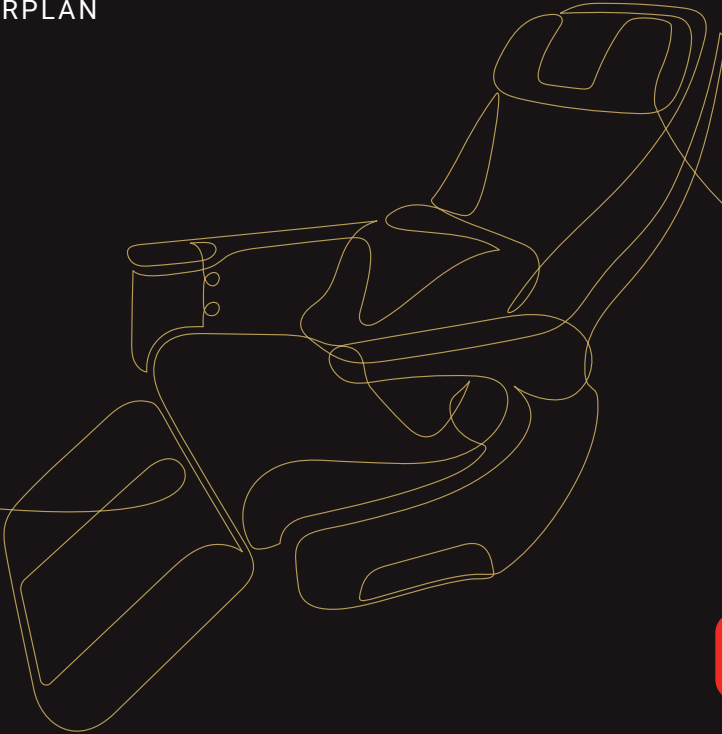
TARSUS
AEROSPACE

#MROME

Connecting the airline supply chain

BOOTHS AT LIMITED AVAILABILITY!

VISIT MROMIDDLEEAST.AVIATIONWEEK.COM
FOR THE LATEST FLOORPLAN



#AIME

Guy Leitch chats to Sling Aircraft executive chairman James Pitman.

The sultan of Sling

Q Congratulations on more than 1,000 Sling deliveries. Many of these were sold as kits – do you have any idea how many are flying?

A. We've taken orders for 1,250 Slings: 550 Sling 4s, 450 Sling 2s and 250 Sling high wings. They are sold as either ready to fly, as quick-build kits, and as standard kits, so we cannot be certain exactly how many are now flying. The number, though, is more than 750.

Q You've come a long way in 17 years. What were your major milestones?

A. Our first challenge was to design a practical, high-performing, safe and beautiful aircraft. Our first major milestone was flying the development prototype in 2008. In 2009, we built a 'production prototype', which we flew to Oshkosh and on around the world. Paradoxically, COVID improved aircraft sales. In 2023 we acquired large new premises, investing significantly in increased production.

Q The quality of your ready-to-fly aircraft in terms of fit and finish rivals expensive sportscars. Do you pursue quality rather than price in your market positioning?

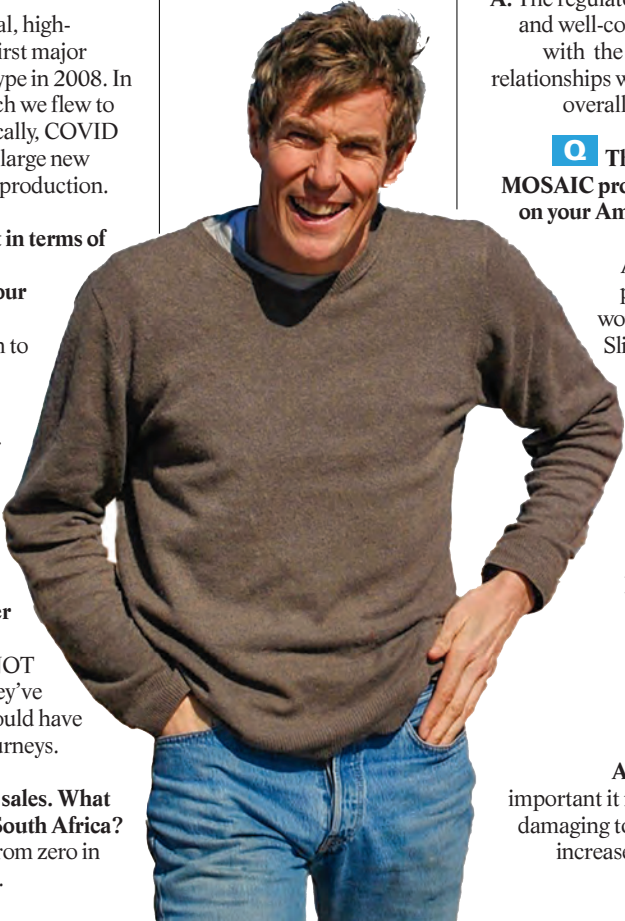
A. We have indeed made a conscious decision to focus on high-quality products, rather than seeking to compete primarily on price. From our first AERO Friedrichshafen we learned how much the purchase of a plane is an act of love and bonding. So beauty and quality are essential!

Q Do you think your many daring round-the-world flights made a big difference in differentiating Slings from other light sport aircraft?

A. Our long-distance flights have definitely NOT been first and foremost about marketing – they've been about fun and adventure. The planes would have proven themselves in the absence of those journeys.

Q You are doing great things with export sales. What percentage of your sales are now outside of South Africa?

A. The export percentage has risen steadily, from zero in 2010 to approximately 85 per cent at present.



Sling Aircraft's two High Wing models head to the USA.
IMAGE: SLING AIRCRAFT

BELOW: James Pitman: "Beauty and quality are essential!"
IMAGE: GUY LEITCH

Q The American market is traditionally hard to break into – how are you doing there?

A. It took us several years to break into the US market, but today the US represents approximately 60 per cent of all sales. The Sling Pilot Academy in Los Angeles uses Sling LSAs and has been incredibly successful. It has just opened a second campus in San Diego.

Q How is your relationship with South African regulator – the SACAA? Have they been a help or a hinderance?

A. The regulatory framework in South Africa is permissive and well-conceived. We've had real frustrations dealing with the SACAA, but we have also developed strong relationships with individuals within the organisation, and overall, there is a fair deal of goodwill and support.

Q The FAA is moving towards finalisation of its MOSAIC proposals - will that have a big positive impact on your American market – and perhaps the rest of the world?

A. MOSAIC will have an almost unimaginably positive impact on Sling's business. Most pilots would not choose to build their own aircraft. And Sling, by the nature of our products, and because we have the South African regulatory framework, is perfectly positioned to supply MOSAIC-compliant products.

Q The Sling high wing has been a long time coming, and market demand seems strong. Is it outselling the low wing?

A. Over the past two years high wing orders have outstripped low wing orders, but more recently the balance has pretty much re-established itself.

Q Vans Aircraft has just entered Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection – are there lessons for Sling in that?

A. The Vans bankruptcy is a reminder of how important it is to remain vigilant. We hope it won't prove damaging to the industry, despite their 35 per cent price increase. Fortunately, Sling is in a stronger financial position than it has ever been. ▲

The East African nation, Ethiopia, has long been successfully running the largest airline in Africa – Ethiopian Airlines. The national carrier in recent years has transformed into an aviation group comprising eight profit centres with an annual income of US\$6bn. **Kaleyesus Bekele** reports.



▼ To avail an equitable air transport service all over the country we need to have the required air transport infrastructure. ▲
GETACHEW MENGISTIE

we need to have the required air transport infrastructure," Mengistie said.

Currently, there are 22 airports and four of them are certified to operate as international airports. There are few air strips, but civilian heliports are nonexistent. "We have fewer airports as the development and administration of airports has been carried out only by the Federal government," he said.

According to Misrak Tilahun, deputy director general of ECAA, the authority has issued a directive and regulation that enables private investors, regional governments, and city administrations to engage in the development and administration of airports. "They can build and operate air strips and heliports after obtaining the permits from ECAA," Tilahun said.

□□□□□

Investors first secure the investment licence from the Ethiopian Investment Commission

while the ECAA conducts the technical evaluation and safety audits as well as grant the operational permits. "We have signed an MoU with the Ethiopian Investment Commission that enables us to cooperate in issuing licences," she added.

Airport development is not the only investment area that is open for investors. According to Mengistie, the authority encourages investors to engage in air transport service. "They can establish private airlines that transport passengers and cargo. They can render agricultural spray services using aircraft and drones," Mengistie said.

The ECAA also calls on private investors to invest in MROs, aviation academies, and aerospace manufacturing. So far there is no private MRO centre operating in Ethiopia. Private airlines are forced to fly their aircraft to Nairobi, Kenya, for heavy maintenance, which costs them dearly.

Ethiopia anticipates establishing an aerospace manufacturing industry. Mengistie said foreign investors can partner with Ethiopian investors to establish MRO centres, aerospace manufacturing plants and aviation academies. "They can build drone assembly plants," he added. Foreign investors are also allowed to invest in the domestic airlines. ▲

NOW ETHIOPIAN HAS A PRIVATE EYE

Ethiopian Airlines Group is wholly-owned by the Ethiopian government. However, the country that owns the largest African airline has not been able to build a vibrant private sector in the aviation industry.

General aviation is at its infant stage. Private investment in the aviation sector is limited to the operation of small private airlines that operate charter flight services. There are about 12 private airlines operating in Ethiopia, but none of them operate scheduled flights.

The Ethiopian Civil Aviation Authority (ECAA) now seems to be determined to change this narrative. Getachew Mengistie, director general of ECAA, said that aviation has been creating job opportunities and generating much-needed foreign currency for the country.

"Air transport has been contributing to the GDP of the country by facilitating trade, investment and tourism. To avail an equitable air transport service all over the country

Globally, there is a projected high demand and shortage of aviation professionals between 2024 and 2050. **Chukwu Emkele** discovers that flying schools in west Africa are churning out professionals amidst the fluctuating performance of the region’s airlines, most of which lack good economic health.

BRAIN CHECK...

Since the late 1990s, several aviation markets worldwide have been repeatedly reported to have a shortage of pilots and other aviation professionals. For west Africa, loss of jobs for professionals followed the collapse of national carriers that hitherto harboured many of them, who eventually retired.

However, with the advancements in technology that came with more airlines and more modern aircraft, poor airline management in west Africa alongside the high cost of training, airlines in the Middle East, Europe, America and Asia have been gladly receiving willing west Africa’s young professionals, giving them irresistible job offers and welfare packages.

Nigeria, the leading country in west Africa, currently has a deficit of more than 200 air traffic controllers and the director general, civil aviation, Musa Nuhu, says there is shortage of safety inspectors at the regulatory agency as well.



The challenges in Nigeria have further powered the exit of many professionals from the country to work for airlines overseas. Some operators’ preference for expatriate pilots and engineers has not helped matters. Today, there are many professionals from Nigeria and Ghana who are working and prefer to work for various foreign companies across the world because of better welfare packages and conditions of service.

Meanwhile, aviation training institutions in west Africa produce professionals yearly. Perhaps, this is why some stakeholders posit that the region should take advantage of the global shortage of aviation professionals based on the availability of good training institutions, with a view to turning the global brain drain situation into economic gain for the sub-region.

“There is brain drain in the world and there are brains here in Nigeria. Nigeria has a lot of brains and there is an inadequacy of pilots everywhere out there, in Canada, the Middle East and so on.

“Rather than see the exit of trained professionals from Nigeria as a disadvantage, it can be turned into an advantage if you develop



Above: Graduation ceremony of pilots from the Ethiopian Aviation Academy.
IMAGE: ETHIOPIAN MEDIA RELATIONS DEPT.

Left: Graduation ceremony of pilots from the International Aviation College, Ilorin, Nigeria.
IMAGE: IAC, ILORIN

more capacity to train more and export them, suggested Emmanuel Chavez, president, Airports Council International (ACI), Africa.

“Since we are not producing things to export as a country and the rest of the world is looking for the professionals we are producing, we should focus on selling the brains and make it another export product”, said Hamisu Yadudu, former chief executive officer, Federal Airports Authority of Nigeria.

“It is not that we are draining them. We don’t have enough of them. So, African governments need to invest more on aviation training

capabilities for aviation professionals to be available in the continent,” said Esayas Woldemariam Hailu, director general, Asky.

Aaron Munetsi, president, Airlines Association of Southern Africa said: “For me, I think it is a blessing in disguise” and “the brain drain is actually a brain claim for us. Once we can claim that we have been able to train our own African workforce that is now competing globally and positioning themselves globally and being able to command some of the most highly-skilled and desired jobs globally, in a way, I think it is a win-win.” ▲



Rwanda's new training hub. IMAGES: RWANDA BOARD INVESTMENT

RWANDA BOOSTS ITS HUB HOPES WITH CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE FOR AVIATION SKILLS

Pursuing its constant development, Rwanda is now investing in capacity building to empower the African aviation industry labour force with the help of the African Development Bank (AfDB). A new training facility will take flight in 2025.

Anuradha Deenapanray Chappard reports.

The AfDB will grant a loan of US\$23.6 million to build and equip the Centre of Excellence for Aviation Skills (CEAS) near Kigali International Airport.

This project, which is in line with Rwanda’s Vision 2050, will boost the country’s ambition to become a regional aviation hub. It will also draw international investment, while producing a skilled workforce to meet global aviation training standards and growing industry demands.

The centre will initially accommodate up to 500 students per year and will offer a large spectrum of courses, encompassing pilot training, maintenance instruction, air traffic control expertise and drone piloting proficiency.

There will also be dispatch and ancillary courses, including airport emergency operations services and practical courses in simulators.

It will have an aircraft hangar and benefit from its partnership with well-established learning institutions to improve human capital and transform the workforce for higher productivity.

“The Bank’s financial support for this Centre of Excellence speaks to our commitment to

investing in human capital to meet demands for the jobs of today – and tomorrow – in Africa’s aviation and related industries,” says Dr. Beth Dunford, the Bank’s vice president for agriculture, human and social development.

According to analysts, Africa will need about 50,000 aviation professionals (15,000 pilots, 17,000 technicians and 23,000 cabin crew members) during the next two decades.

The CEAS comes at time when Rwanda and the region are prioritising aviation development as a growth lever.

As Nnenna Nwabufu, the Bank’s director general for East Africa, underlines: “Overall, the project aligns with the Bank’s skills for

employability and productivity in Africa action plan, which stipulates ways of elevating the skills level of Africa’s workforce”.

She calls upon the youth to seize these opportunities. The construction phase will necessitate around 1,000 workers. Around 100 jobs will be created during the operation phase.

“There is a diversity of skilled and sustainable employment in the aviation industry that should be on the radar of Africa’s youth. We aim to scale up the infrastructure needed to increase access to the aviation sector skills training to succeed in securing decent jobs,” said Dr Martha Phiri, the Bank’s director for human capital, youth, and skills development. ▲

SOMMAIRE

CENTRE D'EXCELLENCE AÉRONAUTIQUE POUR LE RWANDA

Le Rwanda investit pour développer les compétences de son industrie aéronautique avec l'aide de la Banque africaine de développement (BAD). Un nouveau centre de formation prendra son envol en 2025.

La BAD accordera ainsi un prêt de 23,6 millions de dollars pour construire et équiper ce pôle d'excellence aéronautique en Afrique. Il sera situé près de l'aéroport international de Kigali. Ce projet s'inscrit dans la Vision 2050 du Rwanda. Il attirera également des investissements internationaux, tout en formant une main-d'œuvre qualifiée pour répondre aux besoins croissants du transport aérien.

Le centre accueillera jusqu'à 500 étudiants par an. Il proposera un large éventail de formation: pilote, maintenance, contrôle du trafic aérien, pilotage de drones, etc.

« Le soutien financier de la BAD à ce centre d'excellence témoigne de notre engagement à investir dans le capital humain pour répondre aux demandes dans le secteur du transport aérien en Afrique », affirme le Dr. Beth Dunford, vice-présidente de la BAD pour l'agriculture, le développement humain et social.

Dr. Martha Phiri, directrice du capital humain, de la jeunesse et du développement des compétences de la BAD appelle également la jeunesse africaine à saisir toute la diversité des emplois qualifiés et durables dans le secteur aéronautique.

Selon les analystes, l'Afrique aura besoin d'environ 50 000 professionnels de l'aviation (15 000 pilotes, 17 000 techniciens et 23 000 personnels cabine) au cours des deux prochaines décennies. ▲

Winnie Nafula

Marcelle Nethersole speaks to the accountable manager at Dragonfly.

Can you tell me about DragonFly Aviation?

Dragonfly Aviation is a Kenyan-registered company with its base at Wilson Airport in Nairobi and its just shy of two years since inception.

Dragonfly specialises in a range of aviation services including: aircraft, crew, maintenance, and insurance solutions (ACMI) - this comprehensive package is often sought by airlines or organisations that require a temporary or long-term solution to meet their operational needs without the burden of managing the entire process.

We also provide charter flights, providing a flexible and tailored air travel solution. Most clients prefer charter flights for convenience and flexibility, allowing them to customise travel schedules and destinations according to their specific requirements.

Our adhoc flights are typically organised in response to specific requests or unforeseen circumstances. Dragonfly Aviation's capability to offer ad-hoc flights adds a layer of flexibility for clients who may have immediate or unplanned travel needs.

And, finally, Dragonfly Aviation engages in specialised operations, which could include missions such as emergency evacuations.

What is the fleet made up of?

Presently, our fleet comprises two Fokker 50s, with the most recent addition being the Dash 8 400. This aligns with our strategic plan and tactical operational planning.

The upcoming focus for Dragonfly involves updating our fleet through modernisation efforts.

Who do its customers include?

Our customers are generally government agencies, as well as non-governmental organisations (NGOs), who may require specialised aviation services for missions such as diplomatic travel, emergency response, and humanitarian aid. Dragonfly Aviation's capabilities in specialised operations make it a valuable service provider in this sector.

DragonFly also serves the tourism and hospitality sectors, as well as working with companies involved in natural resource exploration and extraction, such as mining or oil and gas, which may require non-scheduled flights to transport personnel and equipment.

“ Finding innovative solutions to minimise the environmental impact of air travel while ensuring operational efficiency remains a critical task. ”

What hurdles does the airline have in Africa?

Many airports in Africa lack modern infrastructure and have limited capacity. Upgrading existing airports and building new ones can enhance connectivity.

Also, fluctuating fuel prices can significantly impact operating costs. Exploring alternative fuels and adopting fuel-efficient aircraft can mitigate this challenge, and there are complex and varied regulatory frameworks across African countries that create operational difficulties. Advocating for standardised regulations and working closely with regulatory bodies to streamline processes can simplify compliance.

One of the foremost challenges is climate change, which poses a considerable threat to the aviation sector globally. African airlines, like their counterparts worldwide, are under increasing pressure to adopt sustainable practices, reduce carbon emissions, and implement eco-friendly technologies.

Finding innovative solutions to minimise the environmental impact of air travel while ensuring operational efficiency remains a critical task for these airlines. Demographic challenges represent another crucial area of concern. With a rapidly-growing population in many African countries, there is an increasing demand for air travel. However, this growth also brings challenges, including the need for infrastructure development, skilled workforce management, and ensuring accessibility to air travel for diverse demographic groups.

What does your role as an accountable manager involve?

Some of the specific roles I cover include ensuring that we adhere to all applicable aviation regulations, standards, and requirements set forth by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) or relevant regulatory bodies, and overseeing the implementation and maintenance of a robust safety management system (SMS) to identify, assess, and mitigate potential safety risks within the organisation. Also, overseeing the Implementation and monitoring of quality assurance processes to maintain high standards in all aspects of the airline's operations, including maintenance, training, and flight operations.

I also ensure that the airline's personnel are adequately trained, and qualified, in compliance with regulatory requirements, as well as serving as the primary point of contact between Dragonfly and regulatory authorities, facilitating open communication and cooperation.



NEW INDIA RISING

How India's aviation renaissance can achieve global ambitions

SAVE THE DATE & JOIN US IN NEW DELHI

To find out more please contact **Mark Brown: E:** mark.brown@aviationindia.aero
T: + 44 (0) 1702 530 000 | **M:** + 44 (0) 7889 100 987

www.aviationindia.aero

Follow us: [X](#) [in](#) [yt](#)



LEAP

LEAP turns heads in the boardroom.

LEAP-powered aircraft are achieving the highest days flown ratio* for their thrust class. That means fewer spare aircraft and more flights, which helps profitability climb. Another reason to say **LEAP. By example.**

*Compared to 83% for competition, per third-party data.

cfmaeroengines.com

92% asset availability

LEADERS AREN'T BORN. THEY'RE ENGINEERED.