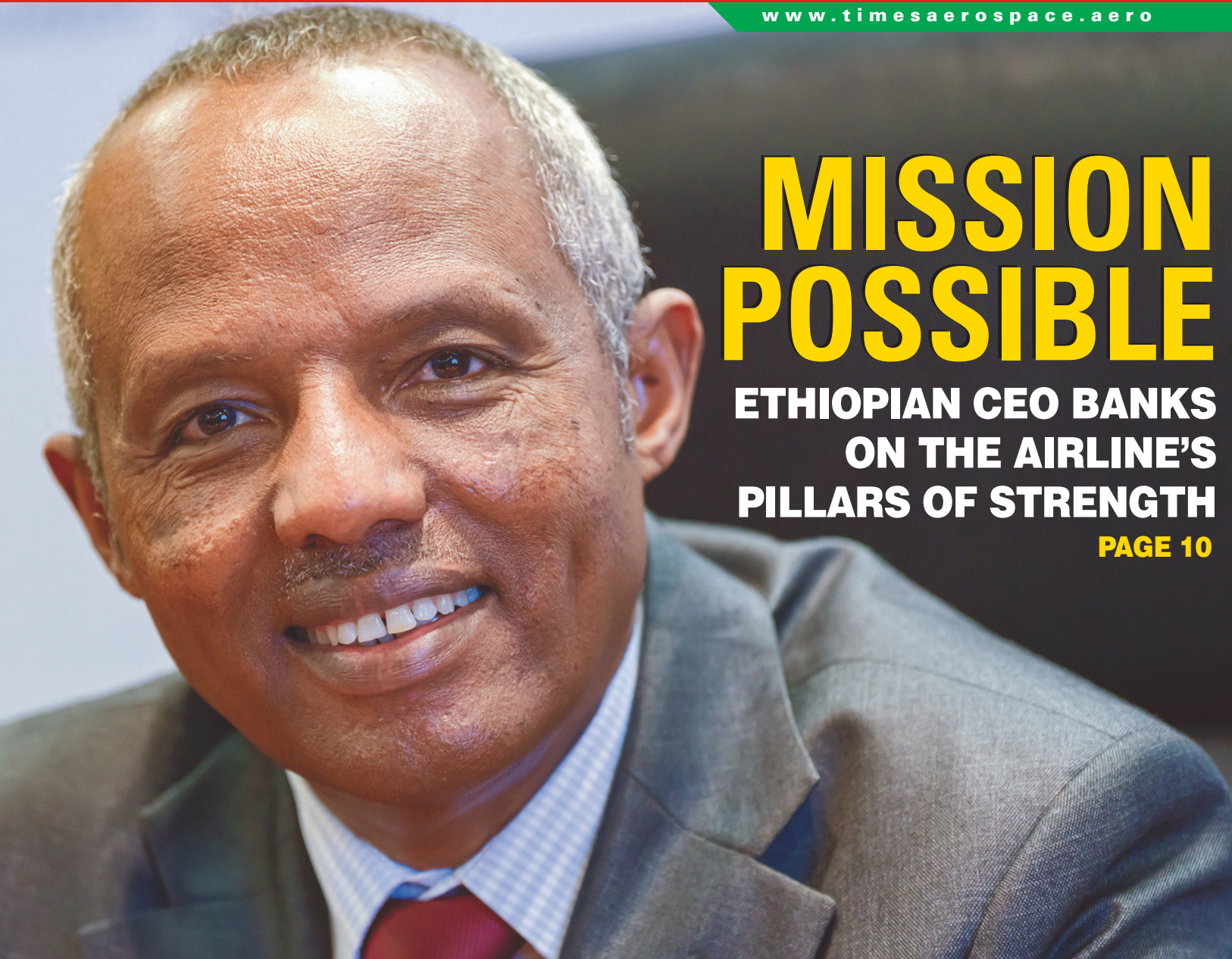




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PILLARS OF STRENGTH**

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DEFENCE

Can Gripen deal be SAAF's saviour?

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What's an ape doing in the cockpit?

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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.

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A giant step backwards...

The recent news that the South African Airways latest escape plan has been thwarted at the 11th hour must bring frustration to the fans of the former giant and torch bearer for African aviation.

SAA will revert to being fully state-owned, a government statement said, and a new way to raise money based on SAA's assets will be explored with financial institutions.

It sounds vaguely familiar – there is a saying that insanity is doing the same things again and again, but expecting different results.

While South Africa has been playing with the national carrier (this latest deal had been three years in the making) further north, the national carrier has been steadily filling the vacuum vacated by SAA, by offering an airline that has internationally reputable service and systems. And is doing it well.



In this edition we get to talk to Mesfin Tassew, the CEO of Ethiopian Airlines. Tassew follows a line of strong-willed aviation professionals who have shared a common goal. Government investment is a good thing for a great national asset. Government management of an airline is a disaster.

Once again Ethiopian has gone back to its funders to support its plan for a brave new future. The multi-billion

deal for Boeing 777X-9 aircraft will see the next stage of the airline's growth strategy with the first deliveries arriving as the current orders are completed.

Tassew recognises the challenges ahead – but addresses the issues head on.

The aviation academy investment is admirable. Ethiopia will be supplying pilots to African airlines (once it has satisfied the demand for its own and its partner airlines), which is good news for the country's human capital and job prospects – but could aid Ethiopia's supposed competitors.



It is no secret that some African airlines scorn the efforts of Ethiopian and believe the airline is entering their markets by the back door.

Aviation is a competitive business. Tassew is grown-up enough to recognise that strong competition is good.

With less than three per cent of Africa's international market being covered by Africa's own airlines, it is an appalling state of affairs.

The myriad of two-or-three aircraft fleets will never compete with the giants of the Gulf or Europe.

I would urge government officials and airlines to read this story and think. There is a clear message to heed.

Alan Peaford, Editor-in-Chief



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Port congestion boosts freight business

Airfreight volumes through Dube TradePort's cargo terminal at King Shaka International Airport has risen significantly over the past six months. This is due to the effects of congestion and slow-throughput capacity at South Africa's major ports ripples across the supply chain.

However, demand for airfreight spiked over the past four months leading into 2024

with cargo throughput rising by 57 per cent quarter-on-quarter from September to December 2023, and port challenges continued to drive significant demand towards airfreight in January 2024.

"This significant increase in airfreight has been observed across various industries, from perishables to automotive, the latter traditionally being reliant on ocean freight," said Ricardo Isaac, Dube cargo terminal senior manager, cargo development and operations. "This emphasises the need of these industries to ensure uninterrupted production and timely delivery to export markets."



SAIF slams aviation's hinderance to tourism

The Southern African Industrialization Forum (SAIF) held in Sandton, South Africa, last month concluded the economic potential of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) is being hindered by aviation regulations, restrictive visa requirements, and a dearth of cross-industry collaboration.

Tourism growth is hindered by excessively expensive airfares. Without accessible air transportation options, the tourism sectors are unable to flourish, the Forum concluded.

"The existence of a free and unhindered movement of Africans within Africa is crucial for all our aspirations to be realized. It is perplexing to witness that in the year 2024, a staggering 45% of African nations still require visas for their citizens to travel to other African

countries, while 23 of these same African countries offer visa-free entry to Americans," said Aaron Munetsi, CEO of the Airline Association of Southern Africa.

Botswana GSA

Air Botswana has appointed APG as its general sales agent (GSA) for markets outside Botswana. APG will provide Air Botswana with an online GSA in South Africa and offline GSAs in Kenya, Australia, New Zealand, UK, Ireland, Germany, Austria, Italy, Switzerland, Belgium, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Hong Kong, China and Japan.

Out of Africa

The iconic Moth aircraft from the film 'Out of Africa' has been auctioned with proceeds from the sale going toward rhino conservation in Kenya.

RM Sotheby's auctioned the 1929 De Havilland DH60M Gipsy Moth,

featured in the Academy award-winning film 'Out of Africa' in March.

The film, a 1985 masterpiece by Sydney Pollack, starred Meryl Streep and Robert Redford and painted a vivid picture of Kenya's sprawling savannahs and rich cultural tapestry.

"This will not only help secure the survival of a critically endangered species, but will conserve vital biodiversity and pristine wilderness for future generations," said actor Redford.

Gabon hub hope

Gabon's Afrijet and Air France have signed a commercial cooperation "interline" agreement allowing the combination of flights operated by both airlines on a single Air France ticket. The two companies aim to develop air traffic to/from Libreville airport, with a plan to become a hub for Central Africa.



Proflight Zambia signs interline agreement with Air Tanzania

Proflight Zambia has announced its newest interline ticketing agreement as it links up with Air Tanzania to unlock access to new destinations.

Under the agreement, a streamlined ticketing process will enable travellers to book itineraries across both airlines and enjoy the benefits and services of the two airlines in a single ticketed journey.

Proflight Zambia's director of flight operations Captain Josias Walubita said: "With the interline agreement now in effect, the aim is to provide cost-effective and flexible travel options for passengers travelling with both airlines. We look forward to enhancing passenger experiences across both airlines' routes."

Air Tanzania managing director, Ladislaus Matindi added: "By choosing to travel with us, passengers will join the largest network family of Air Tanzania where they can now benefit from better connections and suitable travel options within Zambia domestic routes and other four major cities including Dar es Salaam, Johannesburg, Durban and Cape Town as part of our commitment in providing extraordinary timely travel solutions to our passengers across the Southern African region."



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TAAG team renews freighter contract

TAAG Angola Airlines and Network Airline Management have renewed their long-term freighter aircraft contract.

Resuming its regular weekly scheduled service from Liege, Belgium, to Luanda the capital of Angola, NAM provides a Boeing 747-400F aircraft with nose door capability offering up to 120,000 kilos cargo capacity.

Andy Walters, commercial director of Network Airline Management said: "We are delighted to have renewed this contract with TAAG once again, resuming our partnership with TAAG Angola Airlines. Network Airline Management has a long-established track record of offering our customers the most cost-effective solutions and this service is no exception. We provide the capacity to carry heavy and oversized cargo on our main deck freighter aircraft, as well as pieces up to 20 metres in length via the aircraft's nose door."



Menzies Aviation and SGA Angola agree joint venture

Menzies Aviation has entered a joint venture with Sociedade Gestora de Aeroportos to deliver cargo and lounge services at Luanda International Airport.

As part of the new partnership, the newly-formed Menzies Angola will handle more than 30,000 tonnes of cargo each year, serving a broad range of customers including Taag-Angola Airlines, Air France, TAP Air Portugal and Ethiopian Airlines. It will also manage the VIP lounge at LAD, which serves more than 45,000 passengers each year.

RwandAir safety

RwandAir has joined the IATA Safety Leadership Charter.

The Charter is aimed at strengthening organisational safety culture, which is an area of focus in IATA's Collaborative Aviation Safety Improvement Program (CASIP), under Focus Africa.

"At RwandAir, safety is not just a priority but a fundamental principle guiding our operations," said Yvonne Makolo, CEO of RwandAir.

"By signing the IATA Safety Leadership Charter, we are not only reaffirming our unwavering commitment to a culture of safety but also recognising the imperative to continuously build on the work that has gone before."

New GSAs for Astral

Astral Aviation has entered into a global sales partnership agreement (GSP) with Take Off Aviation in South Africa.

It has also entered a GSA with Euro Cargo Aviation in Europe, USA and the UAE.

Astral Aviation CEO, Sanjeev Gadhia, said: "Euro Cargo Aviation will

act as an extension of our company, representing its cargo services, driving sales, ensuring operational efficiency, and maintaining customer satisfaction for its scheduled and charter network from Europe, USA and UAE, which will be directed towards Astral's strategic hubs in Dubai and Nairobi while Take Off Aviation will promote Astral in South Africa."

Digital package

Air Algérie and ATR signed a digital maintenance documentation package in January to strengthen the airline's maintenance documentation system.

It will also optimise the maintenance and engineering operations for its fleet of 15 ATR aircraft. A new service provided by ATR to its operators, this three-

year digital maintenance documentation contract consists in providing customers with raw data of line maintenance publications in XML format, to be uploaded into the airline's maintenance information system via 'AMOS', the comprehensive solution designed by Swiss-AS to optimise the digitalisation of airline maintenance management.

IMAGE: KENYA AIRWAYS



Kenya tourism on the road

Kenya Airways (KQ) partnered with the Kenya Tourism Board (KTB) to strategically position Kenya as a tourist destination in North America through a trade roadshow.

The roadshow took place between March 19-21 in New York, Boston, and Toronto, aiming to showcase Kenya and stimulate travel demand for the country.

The airline will also introduce two additional flights on the New York route between June 15, 2024 to September 28, 2024, covering the summer peak season. This move brings the number of weekly flights to nine.

Sparkling Winelands

South Africa's Cape Winelands Airport is poised for a ground-breaking metamorphosis as the airport charts an ambitious course toward scheduled domestic and international passenger services.

The project is focusing on sustainability and says it will be 'a smart and green hub'.

The core drivers of this expansion are centred around making the airport completely off the grid for all services – energy, water, and waste.

Scheduled to open its gates in 2027, with construction commencing in 2025, the airport expansion project is set to redefine air travel in the region.

Dubai to Mombasa

Dubai low-cost carrier Flydubai has inaugurated its operations to Mombasa, Kenya.

Sudhir Sreedharan, senior vice president, commercial operations said: "Flydubai's inaugural flight to Mombasa reflects our commitment to further strengthening our network in Africa and to providing our passengers with more options for convenient travel to one of East Africa's most attractive destinations.

"The start of operations will serve the growing Kenyan community in the UAE, and support trade between our two countries."

IMAGE: ETHIOPIAN AIRLINES



Ethiopian inaugurates e-commerce hub

Ethiopian Airlines inaugurated its pioneering e-commerce logistics facility at Bole International Airport, marking a significant leap forward for the continent's logistics landscape.

With a substantial investment of \$55 million, the airline spearheaded the creation of a state-of-the-art logistics centre exclusively dedicated to e-commerce, mail, and courier logistics services. This facility, the first of its kind on the African continent, promises to bridge logistical gaps and elevate the capabilities of e-commerce across Africa.

During the inauguration, Ethiopian Airlines

Group CEO, Mesfin Tassew, expressed his enthusiasm for the transformative potential of the new facility. "The launch of this e-commerce logistics facility represents a significant milestone not only for Ethiopian Airlines, but for the entire African economy," remarked Tassew.

"We've leveraged advanced technologies to redefine the transportation and delivery of goods within the e-commerce sector across Africa," he added. Spanning an impressive 15,000 square meters, the facility boasts an annual handling capacity of 150,000 tonnes.

Trainer crash

Two people were killed after a mid-air plane crash involving a training aircraft and a passenger plane in Nairobi, Kenya, in March.

The Dash 8, belonging to SafariLink, collided with a single-engine Cessna 172 operated by Ninety-Nines flying school with a student and trainer losing their lives.

Cemair BA boost

British Airways has signed an interline agreement with South Africa's Cemair to give passengers access to

more destinations in the region.

"We're excited to launch this new interline agreement with CemAir, providing customers with more options when traveling within South Africa. This is good news for flyers wanting to see more of the country and expand their travel itineraries," said British Airways' director of network and alliances, Neil Chernoff.

iTOO to tango

South African insurance underwriters, iTOO Special Risks has unveiled an

aviation insurance offering in South Africa – which it describes as a 'game-changer'.

The niche risk specialist said the local and African aviation markets show a lot of growth potential

"For many years, the South African aviation market has been tough, soft and challenging, but it has recently hardened and started to correct," says aviation underwriter Lorenzo Bettini.

Bettini said iTOO also sees opportunities in six other African countries.

Congo's plans

Congo Airways is navigating a strategic move to lease additional aircraft, signalling an effort to revitalise its fleet – having recommenced operations late last year after a temporary suspension. The airline's plan includes securing several Embraer E190 aircraft and a Boeing 777-200ER. Negotiations are currently underway.

Gold sponsor

Northrop Grumman has joined Egypt International Airshow (EIAS) as gold sponsor. The event takes place on September 2-5 at El Alamein International Airport.

Air Zimbabwe adds

Zimbabwe's nation carriers has continued to grow its fleet in order to expand its flight operations. Air Zimbabwe has welcomed a 50-seater Embraer ERJ 145 regional jet along with a refurbished Boeing 737 aircraft to its Harare-based fleet.

Air Tanzania support

Air Tanzania has signed up to the De Havilland Component Solutions Program (DCS), for support for its Dash-8 400 aircraft. DCS will provide extensive MRO services for Air Tanzania's aircraft components, as well as access to a conveniently located spare part exchange pool. Air Tanzania CEO Ladislaus Matindi said the agreement was crucial to support the airline's growth strategy.

Peace of the European action

Air Peace is to open a route between Lagos and London Gatwick using aircraft wet-leased from Norse Atlantic Airways. Norse Atlantic states that it will begin operating the service on Air Peace's behalf from April, initially for a two-month period.

"As we make a foray into the European market, we are confident that this strategic partnership will further position us to surpass the expectations of our customers," said Air Peace chief Allen Onyema.

Norse will operate four-times weekly on the route.



IMAGE: NORSE ATLANTIC



The D328eco™ turboprop from Deutsche Aircraft is the reliable solution for regional and logistics connections across the African continent

The vast and varied continent of Africa is witnessing a surge in the adoption of turboprop aircraft, driven by a growing demand for regional travel and logistics, which is playing a key role in the economy of the region. With approximately 2,000 ageing turboprops that need to be replaced globally, Africa is emerging as a promising market for regional aircraft.

With its diverse landscape of stark contrasts and challenging geography, Africa is set to accommodate the next-generation turboprop aircraft from Deutsche Aircraft. The 40-seater D328eco offers exceptional design, features and operational flexibility, making it the ideal solution for African operators looking to increase profitability by replacing old aircraft. There are already flourishing regional aviation networks across the continent, many of them operated by turboprops. These networks contribute to the growth of local businesses, while facilitating the transport of goods and boosting tourism.

Fitted with the latest PW127XT-S engines, the D328eco is a real game-

changer for the industry. Setting new standards for operating economics, maintenance and sustainability for regional aircraft, the engines offer 40% longer time-on-wing, a 20% reduction in maintenance costs and 3% less fuel burn compared to the previous generation engine.

The D328eco will be manufactured at the Final Assembly Line in Leipzig, Germany, an innovative, carbon-neutral manufacturing environment that will be powered by renewable and solar energy. Fully compatible with Sustainable Aviation Fuel and zero aromatics Power-to-Liquids (PtL) to reduce the climate effects of contrails, the D328eco also boasts impressive fuel efficiency. This not only translates into cost savings for operators, but also contributes to a greener and more sustainable aviation industry.

The African region is a diverse market for aviation and the versatility of the D328eco will allow it to serve a variety of purposes, from scheduled operations and corporate shuttles, to multi-role applications. The D328eco Multirole conversion also allows a wide

range of special mission operations including cargo, coast guard search & rescue, firefighting and air ambulance services.

With its right size, STOL performance and unpaved runway capabilities, the D328eco will connect regional communities and facilitate the transport of people and goods between remote locations in a much more efficient and sustainable way than any other aircraft available today. Equipped with key features that make it a strong contender for success in the region, the D328eco is one of the most versatile aircraft on the market.

The exceptional capabilities of the D328eco make it an ideal choice for the African market. Given the region's commitment to supporting regional aviation through the Africa-wide adoption of SAATM (Single African Air Transport Market), the versatility and operational flexibility of the D328eco will make it an exceptional asset to the African aviation industry.

Find out more on Deutsche Aircraft.

IMAGE: ETHIOPIAN AIRLINES



“It is a stretched strategy, but it is not unachievable. It is practically possible. We must continue investing in our pillars.”

MESFIN TASSEW

2023, we reached \$6 billion revenue, six times in 13 years, and by 2025, we will exceed those targets. So now, in 11 or 12 years, between now and 2035, we are saying we will double the number of aircraft twice, nearly twice, and would carry more than three times the passengers compared to what we had in 2020.

“Many people still believe that it is too ambitious. It is a stretched strategy, but it is not unachievable. It is practically possible. That means to reach there, we must invest. We must continue investing in our pillars, the five pillars,” he said.

Ethiopian currently operates more than 140 aircraft, and has 64 firm orders placed. Once you add options the carrier totals 120 on order.

acknowledged and corrected, restoring global confidence in the model.

“Despite these challenges, we believe Boeing, with its vast resources and talented engineers, can resolve these issues, which is why we continue to invest in Boeing aircraft.”

With regard to the human capital issue, Tassew believes Ethiopia’s growing young population is the key.

“We have a population of more than 120 million, mostly young. There’s ample opportunity to train, hire and turn these individuals into aviation professionals. Our strategy involves expanding our aviation academy. Currently, the main academy is in



HIGH HOPES: Ethiopian maintains confidence in Boeing and the 787. PICTURE: BOEING

PILLAR TALK

Mesfin Tassew celebrated his second anniversary as CEO of Africa’s largest airline – Ethiopian Airlines – earlier this year. **Yonathan Menkir Kassa** asks him about the group’s latest development and strategic goals.

Ethiopian’s CEO has been busy. Two years into the role Mesfin Tassew has a clear direction in sight.

“We aim to be among the top 20 global airlines by 2035, with strategies built on five pillars,” Tassew said.

“The first is fleet expansion; we plan to double our current size by 2035. Infrastructure is our second pillar, involving major expansions and construction. We’re expanding the airport terminal to add seven aircraft parking spaces and increase capacity to handle more passengers and aircraft.

“Additionally, we’re building two hangars to boost maintenance capacity for our growing fleet and a component maintenance shop for in-house repair capabilities of aircraft spare parts.

“A modern warehouse for aircraft spare parts is also under way, enhancing maintenance as our fleet expands. Alongside, we’re constructing a new headquarters due to our old one being too small for our operations.

“We’ve recently launched a new facility for e-commerce as part of our cargo expansion, and are

developing five new airports in Ethiopia, improving airport terminals to support our broad plans.”

The latest orders have seen 21 777x-9 added to Boeing’s backlog as part of a dramatic expansion, but Tassew is unfazed by the challenge of infrastructure and human capital needed to make the goal a reality.

“Ethiopian has been operating for the last 78 years and until 2005 its growth was incremental, very slow. That’s why it took us longer, but in 2005 we recognised that unless Ethiopian Airlines grew, it would be like another African airline; it will become dwarfed, swallowed by major non-African carriers, and its future will be dim,” Tassew said.

“We saw the opportunity and market potential and had a five-year strategy to double our revenue in five years, and by 2010, we had achieved it.

“Many were skeptical, but we did it. Then we developed a 15-year strategy, called Vision 2025, aimed to increase Ethiopian revenue four times, even more, by 2025. But you know, by 2010, our revenue was \$1 billion, which we achieved. By

“Most of the new deliveries will increase the fleet, but some will be used to replace older generation aircraft that we are operating today. In a few years we will have to make additional orders for deliveries during the period 2031 to 2035. So, I have no doubt that we will achieve our goals stipulated in our Vision 2035 - it is doable,” he said.

Ethiopian faced the tragedy of the Boeing 737 Max crash in March 2019, and the loss of a Boeing 787 Dreamliner to fire at London’s Heathrow six years earlier. Both were new design, new technology aircraft. But Tassew said the carrier maintained confidence in the manufacturer.

“We’ve had a long-standing partnership. Boeing aircraft have been a staple since our early days, known for their reliability and robust design. “Historically, Boeing has exemplified high quality. The 787’s challenges, in our view, were partly due to the incorporation of new technologies, which brings inherent risks, not only in the airframe, but also in engines and components.

“The accidents associated with the Max were linked to design issues, which Boeing has since

Addis, with another campus in Awassa, and a capacity to train 4,000 individuals across various professions – pilots, cabin crew, technicians, sales, and service people – at any one time.

“We plan to open additional campuses outside Addis Ababa to further increase our training capacity. Currently, we can train 200 pilots annually, which is unprecedented.

“This year, we will graduate around 200 pilots and believe we can train enough, even excess, people not just to meet our operational needs but also to anticipate and replace any potential turnover.”

The growth of regional carriers could lead to a threat of poaching, but Ethiopian sees this as an opportunity.

“Our strategy is to train more professionals than we need, creating global opportunities for Ethiopians in aviation, even with other airlines. We’re discussing with regional airlines to understand their human capital needs, proposing to train Ethiopians for them.”

The airline has invested in other regional carriers with mixed success, but Tassew argued that Ethiopian’s

Continued on Page 12

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experience and involvement has contributed to the growth of aviation in Ethiopia.

“We wanted to expand our footprint across Africa,” Tassew said. “We wanted to help African airlines get stronger and build a dynamic air transport sector in Africa. That’s why we’ve been teaming up with different African governments, especially when they ask us to help set up airlines in their countries. If it looks doable, we’re all in. But if it’s not looking good, we step back.

“The strategic partnerships across Africa, such as in Togo, Malawi, and the talks we are in with Nigeria, all ties back to our big picture plan – to really push our market presence by setting up hubs in key spots across the continent because just operating out of Addis Ababa won’t cut it for reaching every city in Africa.

“With ASKY Airlines in Togo, we dove into an equity partnership and even took on managing the airline. ASKY has turned out great, becoming a powerhouse in Africa, which we’re incredibly proud of. Malawi Airlines had a rocky start, but has found its footing and is now profitable. Then there’s Zambia Airways, still early days there and not yet turning a profit.

“Our efforts to set up national carriers in Nigeria and the Democratic Republic of Congo have hit some snags, like changes in government interest, but it’s all part of the process. Our focus remains on boosting air service across Africa, enhancing connections, and supporting the continent’s economic growth. We see this as more than just expanding our business – it’s about making a real difference, helping to understand the full potential of air transport in Africa and pushing for its development. That’s the journey we’re on.”

□□□□□

Tassew remains concerned that changes in attitude by some governments is critical to the Africa Agenda 2063 for greater integration. Currently with less than three per cent of Africa’s market share the continent’s industry needs this change.

“We believe that air transport must be considered as an engine or a catalyst for the socio-economic development of a country, a region, or a continent. If you see it from this perspective, it will be much easier to address the challenges entangling the development of air transport in Africa.

“The airline business in Africa is considered not as an important tool for socio-economic development, but as a luxury, a service which can be used only by the high-income groups – because of this, they impose a lot of taxes on industry.

“For example, if you take a taxi between Lome in Togo and Accra in Ghana, it will cost you around \$15. If you take air service, it will take you 25 minutes to fly between these two cities, but you must pay a minimum of \$200. Out of this \$200, \$100 is tax.

“Secondly, because African countries are still developing, they don’t invest enough in

MESFIN TASSEW

Mesfin Tassew joined Ethiopian in 1984 as an associate engineer and progressed to supervisory and managerial positions in maintenance and engineering. In 1997 and 1999 he was appointed as director operations and technical systems support and chief information officer, respectively.

In 2006, he became vice president, maintenance and engineering. And from 2010-2021 he also served as chief operating officer of the airline. In 2021 he was appointed CEO of ASKY until his current appointment. He also serves as a member of the IATA board of governors.

infrastructure; the airports are very limited, airport terminals are very limited, ground service providers are monopolies.

“In most cities, there is one ground service provider, so if you fly there, you must pay whatever amount they ask, which makes the cost of running an airline very expensive in Africa.

“The third issue is traffic rights. They focus more on protecting their national airline, however small it may be, they want to protect it. So, they don’t give you traffic rights, or if they give you them, it will be very limited. There is protectionism in Africa. I can tell you one country doesn’t want to see Ethiopian Airlines flying to their country. I talked to the head of the government during the African Union meeting, and he told me: ‘If you come here, you will kill my national carrier.’

“The paradox is that several European and Middle East airlines are flying, some even daily with big aircraft. They are allowed, but the fear is about their national airline.

“So, African governments would like to protect their market access under the pretext of protecting their national carrier. That’s why the market is very weak. It is fragmented. In one country, you may see three airlines, one having two aircraft, another having one aircraft. Air transport needs economies of scale. You have huge, fixed costs. If you have an aircraft, you must pay for the loan, whether it flies or not. You have to maximise the utilisation of the aircraft, but many of these smaller airlines fly their aircraft half or less than half of what they are supposed to fly.

“So, their operations couldn’t grow. They cannot be profitable because of the lack of economies of scale, lack of traffic rights, high operating cost, and absence of a conducive business environment.

“That is why Africa is still in this state. The African Union has initiated or has rolled out very important initiatives like Single African Air Transport Market (SAATM), the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), and others that are very useful to promote air transport in the continent.

“If you take the SAATM initiative, it allows African airlines to fly freely within Africa, no traffic right restriction. Several countries have signed into it, but when it comes to practical implementation, it is extremely slow. Recently, we

have seen some improvement, like Nigeria, for example, have declared that they accept the Yamoussoukro Declaration (YD) and have signed an MOU under that principle. We have requested additional frequencies, not yet allowed, but should be allowed if they agree with the YD or the SAATM principle. So, this has to be expedited.

“The national regulations on ownership of airlines or investment have also to be more liberal to enable several airlines to join their resources together and become stronger.

“Government interference is a problem. Most African airlines that you can consider major players are fully owned by the government, starting with Egypt Air, Ethiopian Airlines, Kenya Airways, and others. It is possible that an airline still owned by the government can be efficient, but often, they hire people they don’t need, they fly to destinations which are not profitable, and they buy aircraft based on government instructions.

“Governments must remove their hands from the airlines if they want to see their airlines become successful, independent from the government, self-sufficient in financing, and the like. So, government interference should be eliminated in African airlines.”

□□□□□

Tassew says the Ethiopian’s model works. “We operate as an independent commercial business entity,” he said. “When we order aircraft, the decision is largely a management one. We fly where we see business opportunities, not where the government tells us to.

“We hire people based on our own criteria, which allows us to select individuals based on their competencies and talent. Thus, it’s crucial for the government to establish conducive regulations and business policies. Fuel costs, ground service costs, and taxes are additional challenges for African airlines, all of which are increasing or worsening the financial challenges of the industry.”

Africa’s geopolitical issues including the instability in countries like Sudan and Somalia affecting air traffic control and airspace access have also had an impact.

“Air transport development needs peace and stability. Demand declines, operating costs increase, and we may have to reduce or stop flights. We were forced to cancel our flights to Khartoum and use longer routes, increasing operational costs,” he said.

“Similarly, the airspace closures in South Sudan, controlled by North Sudan, affected our routes to Nairobi, Entebbe, and Lagos. The situation in Tel Aviv and issues with Somalia’s airspace over Somaliland have also posed challenges, leading to conflicting instructions and safety concerns.

“These conflicts disrupt operations, impacting safety, and revenue. We hope for peace in Sudan and Somalia, so air transport is not affected. Despite these challenges, we’re adapting and continuing our operations as best we can.” ▲



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Deux compagnies aériennes majeures, Air Sénégal et Air Côte d'Ivoire, ont scellé un partenariat stratégique. Des détails sur cette avancée importante du transport aérien dans la région avec **Anuradha Deenapanray Chappard**.

UNE INITIATIVE INÉDITE EN AFRIQUE DE L'OUEST

Ce partenariat stratégique concerne principalement les aspects commerciaux et opérationnels. L'objectif reste pour Air Sénégal et Air Côte d'Ivoire la mise en commun de leurs réseaux et proposer aux passagers une meilleure connexion aérienne avec un coût d'exploitation optimisé.

« C'est une fierté de concrétiser cette opération d'envergure en Afrique pour deux fleurons nationaux appartenant à des pays frères. Cet accord vient établir des liens solides entre la Côte d'Ivoire et le Sénégal », souligne le directeur général d'Air Sénégal Alioune Badara Fall.

Sur le plan commercial, les clients peuvent bénéficier de plus de destinations des deux transporteurs nationaux, davantage de fréquences et de connexion tant dans la région qu'à l'international, dont l'Europe et l'Amérique du Nord. L'accord inclut aussi les avantages des programmes de fidélité des deux compagnies.

Côté opérationnel, l'accord prévoit une mutualisation des ressources techniques et humaines pour les opérations aériennes, l'achat de kérosène ou encore la MRO. Les deux compagnies exploitent essentiellement une flotte d'Airbus.

La compagnie nationale sénégalaise a annoncé en janvier dernier l'augmentation de son offre de près de 50%, soit un total de 29 destinations (contre 20 en 2023).

□□□□

Cette expansion commerciale a été possible suite à l'obtention de la certification IOSA en août 2023. Selon Alioune Badara Fall, Air Sénégal a franchi un nouveau cap vers l'excellence et la certification permettra au porte-drapeau national de nouer des partenariats importants pour offrir les meilleures prestations à ses passagers.

Cela s'est traduit, dans la foulée, par un accord de coopération (partage de code) avec Royal Air Maroc en septembre 2023, ouvrant la voie à une véritable coopération Sud-Sud. RAM est présente au Sénégal depuis 1958, l'année de l'ouverture de la ligne Casablanca-Dakar. Les destinations européennes comme Lyon, Marseille, Barcelone et Milan sont désormais accessibles quotidiennement depuis le hub de Dakar, depuis fin janvier 2024.

L'actualité d'Air Côte d'Ivoire a été marquée par sa désignation comme transporteur et sponsor



Partners: Air Côte d'Ivoire's Director General Laurent Loukou (right) and Air Senegal's Alioune Director General Badara Fall at the agreement signing ceremony. IMAGE: AIR COTE D'IVOIRE

officiel de la CAN 2024 dont le pays était l'hôte et vainqueur. Elle a renforcé sa flotte en passant de 9 à 12 avions.

Le directeur général d'Air Côte d'Ivoire, Laurent Loukou, a dressé le bilan 2023 et les perspectives 2024 lors d'une conférence presse en janvier dernier à Abidjan.

La compagnie nationale ivoirienne, qui a transporté 6,7 millions de passagers durant la dernière décennie, entame sa onzième année de vie commerciale avec de belles perspectives en 2024. Laurent Loukou a annoncé le lancement de vols long-courriers, la livraison dans le courant de l'année de trois Airbus A330-900 pour assurer ses opérations à l'international et une stratégie essentiellement tournée sur les vols régionaux.

« Les vols pour desservir Paris sont programmés à partir de décembre 2024. D'autres destinations internationales

telles que New York, Bruxelles, Washington, Beyrouth et Londres suivront d'ici 2027 », a précisé Laurent Loukou.

D'ici 2031, Air Côte d'Ivoire prévoit une flotte de 18 avions, de relier 35 villes dont six intercontinentales et de transporter 12,55 millions de passagers.

Ce partenariat va sans conteste stimuler la croissance des deux compagnies, consolider le hub ouest africain, améliorer la connectivité dans la région, et par ricochet dynamiser le tourisme et les économies de la Côte d'Ivoire et du Sénégal. ▲

SUMMARY

WEST AFRICAN AIRLINES SEAL STRATEGIC ALLIANCE

Two major airlines, Air Sénégal and Air Côte d'Ivoire, have sealed a strategic commercial and operational partnership with the intention of pooling their networks, offering passengers enhanced connections while optimising both airlines' operating costs.

"It is a source of pride to realise this major partnership for two national flagship airlines belonging to West African countries. This agreement establishes further strong links between Ivory Coast and Senegal," said Alioune Badara Fall, general director of Air Senegal.

Commercially, customers will benefit from more destinations along with enhanced frequencies and connections - both in the region and internationally - including Europe and North America.

The agreement also links benefits of both airlines' loyalty programmes.

On the operational side, the agreement

provides for a pooling of technical and human resources for flight operations, the purchase of fuel and even MRO. The two companies mainly operate a fleet of Airbus aircraft.

The Senegalese national airline announced in January an increase in flights by almost 50 per cent, resulting in a total of 29 destinations, compared with 20 in 2023 - a commercial expansion made possible through obtaining IOSA certification in August 2023.

Air Côte d'Ivoire has strengthened its fleet from nine to 12 aircraft and the airline's general director, Laurent Loukou, announced the launch of long-haul flights that will follow the delivery of three Airbus A330-900s.

"Flights to serve Paris are scheduled from December 2024 while other international destinations - such as New York, Brussels, Washington, Beirut and London - will follow by 2027," said Loukou. ▲

Abiy Asrat Jiru, CEO of Zambia Airways, talks to **Mark Pilling** about his mission to establish and grow this southern African airline.

Revival – from A-Zambia

Zambia Airways head Abiy Asrat Jiru harbours big ambitions for his relaunched flag carrier, with aspirations to add five more Boeing 737-800s this year and even the widebody 787 within a couple of years.

The owners and management at the carrier, which describes itself as "The new wings of Africa", is on a mission to establish a well-run, financially-sound business that can develop a strong network from this land-linked republic in southern Africa.

The shareholders of Zambia Airways signed an agreement on August 19, 2018 to launch the airline the same year. The board was established, and a management team appointed, but due to several factors, predominantly the onset of the pandemic, the initial plan was paused for the next three years.

In December 2021, the shareholders met to see if a fresh attempt could be made to relaunch Zambia Airways. Through the Zambian Industrial Development Corporation, the government took a 55 per cent stake in the airline with the remaining 45 per cent taken by Ethiopian Airlines as part of its strategy to set up hubs across the continent.

□□□□

Jiru arrived in February 2022, selected by former Ethiopian Airlines group CEO Tewolde GebreMariam to lead Zambia Airways. Jiru had been director, group business development and innovation hubs at Ethiopian since 2019.

"I was told the airline was in a very serious survival issue," he told *African Aerospace*. "It was on the brink of failure and needed someone innovative who could transform the airline from A to Z."

Undoubtedly, it has been a struggle to bring the new Zambia Airways to life, a task made almost impossible by the financial blow inflicted by Covid. However, the carrier had restarted flying with a single De Havilland Dash 8-400 from Ethiopian Airlines in December 2021 just prior to Jiru's arrival.

What Jiru found was a disorganised operation, but he relished the challenge. "When I was at Ethiopian Airlines my job was to find the major problems and turn them into opportunities," he said.

"At Zambia Airways the first thing I have done is bring in a high-performance culture and a world-class operating system which can utilise our capacity to the ultimate," said Jiru.

The turnaround was fast, with the renovated

carrier seeing its traffic double within just five months on its domestic routes from capital Lusaka and to Ndola in the Copperbelt Province of Zambia, he said. The airline brings in a second Dash 8-400 from Ethiopian to supplement the original one when demand is high.

A permanent and significant addition to the fleet came in September 2023 with the arrival of new carrier's first jet, a Boeing 737-800, also from Ethiopian Airlines.

This aircraft has given Zambia Airways the ability to launch a daily service to Johannesburg, timed to connect with the morning bank of outbound flights from the South African hub, said Jiru.

The increase in traffic brought by the changes introduced by Jiru, plus the extra capacity on offer, means the carrier is profitable at the operational level but with the investors in the initial phase of the strategy it will take longer to achieve net profitability.

Zambia Airways is in a strong growth trajectory, boosting its RPKs significantly in 2023 compared to the previous year, and this will climb again in 2024.

"I am so excited on what we have achieved in the past two years of leading Zambia Airways," said Jiru. "My airline has been voted by the public of Zambia and awarded the Trophy by The Office of The President as 'the most transformed and innovative company' in my first year and as 'the most performing ethical and responsive company' in my second year in Zambia."

"Ultimately, my role as a leader of a national airline is to deliver to the nation real and tangible results," he added. "It is like the coach of a national soccer team. I am so proud of what I have delivered in the past two years here in Zambia." ▲

▼ I was told the airline was in a very serious survival issue. It was on the brink of failure and needed someone innovative who could transform the airline from A to Z. ▲

ABIY ASRAT JIRU



Forty-fied: The A340-300 is part of SAA's increased fleet.
IMAGE: SAA



SOUTHERN DISCOMFORT

A breakdown in negotiations with a private shareholder has rendered South African Airways' future uncertain once again.

Alan Dron investigates.

The future of South African Airways (SAA) is once again unclear, after almost three years of negotiations to privatise the national airline failed.

The mid-March collapse of negotiations between the South African government and the private Takatso Consortium means that the flag-carrier will revert to 100 per cent government control while the airline's board tries to work out a new way forward.

At a hurriedly called press briefing on March 13, South Africa's minister for public enterprises, Pravin Gordhan, said the government and the consortium had mutually agreed to walk away from the deal through inability to reach agreement on the airline's value.

Perennially loss-making SAA and its regional subsidiary SA Express were grounded in March 2020 at the start of the global pandemic, followed by the halting of flights by SAA's more successful low-cost subsidiary Mango in July 2021. SA Express is being liquidated, while Mango's fate is enmeshed in complex legal proceedings.

SAA was placed into South Africa's 'business rescue' process, similar to the US Chapter 11 proceedings, where a company is granted protection from creditors while it attempts to financially restructure itself.

Following that restructuring, a much smaller SAA resumed operations on a few routes in September 2021 with a handful of aircraft. Its fleet and route network has gradually increased.

It recently announced its first two restored intercontinental routes, to Sao Paulo, Brazil and Perth, Australia.

In another measure to improve connectivity for South Africans, SAA signed a renewed codeshare deal with Lufthansa. Under this, South African passengers can book a long-haul trip with SAA to European destinations, but fly on Lufthansa aircraft from Johannesburg.

Fellow-Lufthansa Group airline Swiss also plans to codeshare with SAA. These arrangements mean that passengers can book a single ticket to connect through Lufthansa or Swiss's hubs at Frankfurt and Zurich respectively to further points on the two European carriers' networks.

Ironically, this gradual restoration of SAA's fortunes was a

major underlying factor in the failure of the South African government and the Takatso Consortium, consisting of three private-sector companies – infrastructure investor Harith General Partners as the main shareholder, together with minority shareholders and technical partners South African airline capacity provider Global Aviation and Syranix.

This arrangement ran into problems last year, however, when South Africa's competition tribunal ruled that Global Aviation and Syranix had to step aside. The tribunal said that Global Aviation is a wet-lease provider for rival South African carrier LIFT, while Syranix co-owns the LIFT trademark.

The Takatso consortium had been expected to take a 51 per cent shareholding in SAA, with the government retaining 49 per cent. Just weeks before the breakdown in negotiations, Gordhan warned that there could be no more taxpayers' funds for SAA and that future funding would have to come from the new owners.

The breakdown occurred over disagreements over the price the consortium had to pay for its majority stake in SAA.

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In a statement, the Department of Public Enterprises (DPE) said that an initial valuation of SAA during the pandemic had placed a 'liquidation value' on the carrier of R2.4 billion (around \$120 million).

"However, in the last three years, it became clear that the market conditions have changed, the economy has improved, the demand for flying had increased formidably and this required that a new valuation be done." That new valuation put a price tag of R6.5 billion – almost three times as much – on the national airline.

"It became clear in the negotiations [with the consortium] that the revised transaction structure must take into account public interest and fair market price. However, these requirements were not met in the renegotiations."

Consequently, said the DPE, "It was decided...that there was no purpose in continuing with further negotiations".

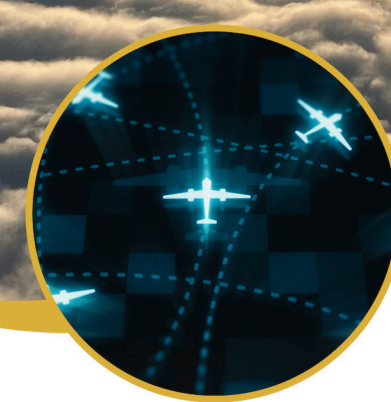
The DPE added that it was confident that SAA "will continue to fly and grow, in terms of the number of routes and aircraft that it is able to lease." It added that new means of raising funding for the national carrier would be explored with financial institutions.

The saga of SAA seems set to continue for some time yet. ▲

▼ It became clear in the negotiations [with the consortium] that the revised transaction structure must take into account public interest and fair market price. However, these requirements were not met in the renegotiations. ▲
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LE RÊVE NEUTRE EN CARBONE DE RAM DEVIENT RÉALITÉ

Royal Air Maroc a lancé en marge de la COP28 de Dubaï, le premier vol écoresponsable entre Casablanca et Dakar à bord d'un Boeing 787.

La compagnie nationale du Maroc et la Fondation Mohammed VI pour la Protection de l'Environnement ont uni leurs forces pour garantir un développement du secteur aérien plus responsable.

En décembre dernier, Royal Air Maroc (RAM) et Afriquia SMDC ont lancé le premier vol africain neutre en carbone, en utilisant un carburant d'aviation durable (SAF).

RAM et la Fondation Mohammed VI ont également procédé à la plantation de milliers d'arbres dans des zones désertiques au Maroc pour compenser les émissions de carbone émises lors de ce vol.

« Nous sommes fiers de lancer le premier vol avec du carburant d'aviation durable reliant deux pays africains. Cela illustre notre engagement commun à accélérer le processus de décarbonation dans le transport aérien marocain, en nous engageant entièrement, au même titre que les grands leaders de l'industrie, pour atteindre l'objectif d'une neutralité



RAM B787 flight with SAF. IMAGE: RAM

SUMMARY

RAM'S SAF DREAM COMES TRUE

Royal Air Maroc (RAM) and the Kingdom's Casablanca-based oil company Afriquia SMDC joined forces in December 2023 to make the continent's first-ever carbon neutral international flight. The Boeing 787-9 Dreamliner was at maximum capacity and - using 40 per cent sustainable aviation fuel (SAF) - avoided 23 tonnes of CO2 emissions. The flight coincided with the UN's Climate Change Conference - COP28 - in Dubai.

From Casablanca's Mohammed V Dakar's airport to Blaise Diagne airport in Dakar, Senegal, the flight lasted three hours.

carbone d'ici 2050 », a affirmé Abdelhamid Addou, le PDG de RAM.

La première étape du plan stratégique de RAM sera d'incorporer 10% de SAF dès 2030.

Pour Saïd El Baghdadi, directeur général d'Afriquia SMDC, « ce vol est une nouvelle pierre en faveur de la promotion de la consommation de carburants durables » au Maroc. « Celle-ci est indispensable pour atteindre la décarbonation du transport aérien. »



Le lancement de ce vol écoresponsable est en accord avec la politique du Royaume en matière de développement durable et d'utilisation d'énergies renouvelables.

RAM a également mis en place le « Fuel Efficiency Program (FEP), qui a permis à la compagnie de réduire sa consommation de carburant de 10%.

Grâce à cette politique volontariste, Royal Air Maroc a obtenu la certification IEnvA (basée sur des standards environnementaux et de durabilité) par l'IATA en 2023.

ANURADHA DEENAPANRAY CHAPPARD

WILL 2024 BE A DIFFICULT YEAR FOR AFRICA?

Airlines face more challenges as underlying economic conditions refuse to improve.

African carriers are expected to generate further losses in 2024, according to airline lobby group IATA.

In its preview of the coming year, the carriers' organisation said "the continent remains a difficult market in which to operate an airline, with economic, infrastructure, and connectivity challenges impacting the industry performance."

On the plus side, there is robust demand for air travel, which should mean that the level of financial losses continues to reduce.

At its end-of-year briefing last December, IATA estimated that African airlines would lose \$500 million in 2023. Its forecast for 2024 is that that losses will narrow only slightly, to \$400 million. Demand, in terms of revenue passenger kilometres (RPK), is estimated to grow 7.3 per cent in 2024 over 2023.

However, capacity on African airlines, measured as available seat kilometres (ASK), is forecast to jump nine per cent over 2023 levels, which shows there are still too many seats chasing too few passengers.

Last autumn, Rodger Foster, CEO of South African airline Airlink, told *Air Transport World* magazine that there had to be consolidation in the African airline sector, in which more than 200 carriers are fighting for market share, a situation he described as unsustainable.

In an attempt to improve the situation, IATA last year launched its Focus Africa initiative.

Africa's aviation problems are well-known and include infrastructure constraints, high costs, lack of connectivity,

regulatory impediments, slow adoption of global standards and skills shortages.

However, "The limiting factors on Africa's aviation sector are fixable," insisted IATA director-general, Willie Walsh. "And the economic boost that a more successful African aviation sector will deliver has been witnessed in many economies already."

The initiative will focus on six areas:

- improving safety;
- improving infrastructure;
- promoting liberalisation of intra-African market access;
- accelerating implementation of effective, cost-efficient financial services;
- helping Africa's airline industry achieve 'Net Zero by 2050' emissions targets;
- and promoting aviation-related careers among young people.

"Partnerships will differentiate the outcome of Focus Africa from previous efforts to stimulate Africa's development with air transport," said Kamil Al Awadhi, IATA regional vice president for Africa and the Middle East. "By partnering, stakeholders will effectively pool their resources, research, expertise, time and funding to support the common goals of the six work areas."



Willie Walsh: Africa's aviation problems are fixable. IMAGE: IATA

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Nigeria has all it takes to lead the whole of Africa in air cargo export volume, but remains far from the leadership position. **Chukwu Emkele** reports.



FAAN club: Nigeria's airports cargo imports were much higher than exports and stakeholders believe this massive gap between imports and export should be bridged. IMAGE: SAHCO CARGO

Why Nigeria has loads of potential...

According to Ikechi Uko, coordinator of the Federal Airports Authority of Nigeria (FAAN) AviaCargo road map committee, set up in 2022 by FAAN, Nigeria loses \$1 billion annually to non-certification of agricultural produce for export, despite being one of the largest producers of agricultural products.

One of the challenges is that not much attention had been given to the flow of air cargo, and deliberate attention had been given to the analysis of the flow of passenger, aircraft movement, and flight operations, emphasising safety and security, as well as policy issues.



Other challenges include the cost of aircraft and maintenance, high cost of freight, poor incentives and government's quality of regulations, deficiency of cargo security, technology, harassment and extortion by law enforcement agencies, climate change and multiple taxation. Uko called for enhanced certification of farms and operators in the value chain.

However, most airlines in Nigeria rely on cargo business for revenue generation even though they are not dedicated cargo airlines. There are indications that Nigeria's domestic cargo business is worth more than N40 billion (about \$US52 million as at February 2024), from which the airlines and government can make a lot of money.

Former chief executive of FAAN, Hamisu Yadudu said Nigeria has the capacity to triple its existing volume of cargo traffic if it gets priorities right, having surpassed Africa's growth of 11.6 per cent in 2021, recording an increase of 52 per cent within 2021 over 2020. Nigeria has a population of more than 200 million and is the largest market in Africa with a higher air cargo import than export.

According to FAAN's data, almost 871 million kilos of cargo passed through Nigeria's airports, between 2017 and 2021, but import was much higher than cargo exported and stakeholders believe this massive gap between imports and export should be bridged.

The importance of freight to Nigeria's gross domestic product (GDP) has inspired governments at all levels to take steps to boost the sector's growth by seeking to close the gap between import and export volumes. This is evident in the increasing number of airports established by state governments, most of which were designated as cargo airports. Some of the airports established in recent years by state governments in Nigeria were licensed as cargo airports – 15 of 32 Nigerian airports have been officially designated as such.



The increasing number of cargo airlines equally poses a prospect for freight business growth. ValueJet airlines recently ordered a CRJ freighter for a dedicated cargo service thereby joining Allied Air, which over the years has operated as a dedicated cargo airline in Nigeria.

Patronage of freight business in recent years has also been boosted by high level of insecurity in the country, which makes the road and air transportation compete on freight delivery.

Segun Musa, former president, National Association of Approved Government Freight Forwarders (NAGAFF) said: "There is a need to look at constraints to getting more cargo airlines into Nigeria and the passenger airlines need to maximise cargo opportunity.

"Once airlines fly empty and yet, pay so many charges at airports, the freight cost will go up." He said automation of systems and processes would reduce corruption at cargo sheds by 85 per cent.

To enable Nigeria to realise its full potential in the air cargo sub sector, stakeholders in a communique issued after the Aviation Safety Round Table Initiative (ASRTI) Quarter 3 business breakfast meeting held in Lagos on December 7, 2023 said: "There is need for an executive order to put a stop to all forms of charges that dissuade cargo export investments and hinder the country from attaining its full potentials in the air cargo sector" and that "the high landing and parking fees for cargo aircraft in Nigeria should be reviewed so that interested investors will not keep preferring neighbouring countries like Ghana and Togo for their cargo operations." ▲

▼ Most airlines in Nigeria rely on cargo business for revenue generation even though they are not dedicated cargo airlines. ▲

Arrêt des vols internationaux, recentrage et développement sur les vols domestiques et régionaux, mise en œuvre du plan stratégique et recherche d'investisseurs. Les défis sont nombreux pour Thierry de Bailleul, le PDG de Madagascar Airlines comme l'indique **Anuradha Deenapanray Chappard**.



Air Madagascar merged with Tsadaria last year to form Madagascar Airlines. IMAGE: AIR AUSTRAL

MADAGASCAR RATIONALISE SES OPÉRATIONS

Thierry de Bailleul a récemment partagé les enjeux et la stratégie de Madagascar Airlines avec les acteurs du tourisme français, un important marché pour la nouvelle compagnie malgache. Elle a reçu son Certificat de Transport Aérien (CTA) et sa licence d'opérations en avril 2023. Madagascar Airlines est née de la fusion entre Air Madagascar et Tsadaria, sa filiale dédiée aux vols domestiques. L'arrêt du partenariat stratégique avec Air Austral et la crise du Covid-19 ayant provoqué la liquidation d'Air Madagascar.

Malgré un environnement financier difficile, Thierry de Bailleul a stabilisé l'état de santé de la compagnie grâce à un changement de gouvernance. Il s'attelle résolument à déployer son nouveau plan stratégique évocateur, baptisé Phénix 2030, qui se décline en trois phases.

La compagnie a d'abord arrêté ses vols long-courriers. Les vols vers l'Europe étaient assurés par des avions sous un contrat « wet lease », et cela engendrait trop de pertes.

Deuxièmement, il y aura un recentrage de ses vols vers les destinations domestiques et régionales notamment La Réunion, les Comores et Maurice cette année.

La compagnie a aussi remis en service la flotte existante d'ATR. Dès que le réseau et les marchés domestiques et régionaux seront à l'équilibre, se posera la question d'investir dans l'A330-200 pour relancer le long-courrier.

Le ministère du tourisme malgache souhaite multiplier les destinations pour ouvrir de nouveaux marchés touristiques. L'objectif étant d'atteindre un million de touristes par an d'ici 2028.

D'où, la signature d'un MOU entre le gouvernement malgache et Qatar Airways en janvier dernier. La compagnie lancera prochainement un vol direct quotidien au départ de Madagascar. Selon Valéry Ramonjavelo, ministre des Transports, l'objectif est de multiplier par trois le nombre des vols internationaux, qui devrait passer de 80 à 240 annuellement. D'autres partenariats avec des compagnies du Moyen-Orient et de la Chine sont envisageables.

Actuellement, une dizaine de compagnies aériennes assurent environ 80 vols internationaux hebdomadaires vers Madagascar. L'État envisage d'accueillir trois fois plus

▼ Le ministère du tourisme malgache souhaite multiplier les destinations pour ouvrir de nouveaux marchés touristiques. ▲

de vols directs internationaux pour consolider la connectivité aérienne de la Grande Île.

Thierry de Bailleul est également à la recherche d'investisseurs pour développer Madagascar Airlines. Rappelons, que la compagnie réunionnaise Air Austral et Ethiopian Airlines étaient en « short list » pour sceller un partenariat stratégique avec Air Madagascar voici une décennie.

Il semble que les cartes du transport aérien sur la Grande Île soient rebattues pour ouvrir davantage le ciel malgache aux compagnies aériennes étrangères et trouver des investisseurs privés. Une fois encore, l'océan Indien est convoité pour ses atouts et son positionnement stratégique. ▲

SOMMAIRE

MADAGASCAR STREAMLINES ITS OPERATIONS

Ceasing international flights, refocusing and developing domestic and regional flights and the implementation of the airline's strategic plan are among many challenges facing Thierry de Bailleul - the CEO of Madagascar Airlines - as he searches for international investors.

Thierry de Bailleul recently shared the many challenges facing the airline with France's tourism stakeholders - an important market for the new Malagasy company.

The airline received both its Air Transport Certificate (CTA) and operations license in April 2023 when Madagascar Airlines was born from the merger of Air Madagascar and Tsadaria, its subsidiary dedicated to domestic flights. The ending of the strategic partnership with Air Austral - and the Covid-19 global pandemic - having caused the liquidation of Air Madagascar.

Despite a difficult financial environment, de Bailleul has stabilised the company thanks to a change in structure and he continues to deploy the strategic plan, named Phénix 2030, that's divided into three phases.

The first initiative was to cease long-haul flights to Europe. These were operated by wet-leased aircraft, but were costing too much.

Second came a refocusing of its flights towards domestic and regional destinations including the fellow Indian Ocean airports such as Reunion, Comoros and Mauritius.

The company has also recommissioned its existing ATR fleet, stating that soon as the network and the domestic and regional markets are in balance, investing in the Airbus A330-200 to revive long-haul will be considered.

Malagasy's tourism ministry plans to increase the number of international destinations - and to open new tourist markets - with the goal of an annual total of a million tourists by 2028.

This plan resulted in the signing of an MoU between the Malagasy government and Qatar Airways in January and the company will soon launch a daily direct flight from Madagascar.

According to minister of transport Valéry Ramonjavelo, the objective is to triple the annual number of international flights to 240 - while further partnerships with companies in the Middle East and China are on the cards.

Currently, around 10 airlines operate 80 weekly international flights to Madagascar and the nation plans to introduce more than 150 additional direct flights. ▲

Egypt is in the market for new fighters, but budgetary constraints mean that they may have to settle for a mixture of new and second-hand aircraft. **Jon Lake** reports.

Egypt goes shopping for pick and mix...

Before 1979, when then President Anwar Sadat signed a historic peace agreement with Israel, the Egyptian Air Force was primarily equipped with aircraft of Soviet design, some of them supplied by China after the loosening of ties with Russia in 1976.

Thereafter, though, Egypt increasingly diversified its combat aircraft acquisition, turning to the US and France to augment Soviet and Chinese aircraft deliveries. This policy allowed the Egyptian Air Force to maintain force size, and to become one of the numerically strongest air arms in the region, though the interoperability of its large and disparate fleet was increasingly called into question. Egypt now operates the world's fourth-largest fleet of Lockheed Martin F-16s, but operating these beside older Russian and Chinese supplied fighters was always problematic, and inhibited Egyptian air defence capabilities.

Egypt's dual-track procurement approach continued until very recently, with Egypt ordering 24 Dassault Rafale F3-R aircraft in February 2015, with options for a further 12 aircraft, and, at almost the same time, also ordering 46 MiG-29M/M2 fighters.

Egypt then ordered 24 Sukhoi Su-35S fighters in 2018. Egypt took delivery of the MiGs from April 2017, but the Su-35S aircraft remained undelivered after the USA threatened to impose sanctions under the CAATSA (countering America's adversaries through sanctions act) regime.



In 2019, the US rejected an Egyptian request for 20 F-35As and Cairo returned to pursuing a follow-on Rafale buy, signing a contract (formally announced on May 3, 2021) with Dassault Aviation to purchase 30 more Rafales.

The new batch of Egyptian Rafales will be to F3-R standard, and will be equipped with active electronically scanned array (AESA) radar and probably the Thales' Talios new-generation laser designator pod, laser homing Safran AASM modular air-to-ground weapons, and the MBDA SCALP cruise missile.

Dassault Aviation is to integrate a new data link that will allow the Rafale to communicate

Egypt's MiG-29M/M2 fighters are becoming more difficult to support and are now in need of replacement. IMAGE: EGYPTIAN AIR FORCE



with US and NATO allies, and with Egypt's remaining non-western fighters. Egypt is known to want MBDA's Meteor long-range air-to-air missile for its Rafales, too, though this might attract US opposition since it might be thought to erode Israel's regional 'Qualitative Military Edge' which the US is sworn to uphold. This is because Meteor outperforms the air-to-air weapons currently in service in Israel.

This consideration previously led to restrictions on the weapons that Egypt's F-16s were allowed to carry, in particular preventing the supply of the active radar homing long-range AIM-120 AMRAAM missile. Instead, Egyptian F-16s were forced to rely on the semi-active radar homing AIM-7 Sparrow, and this in turn led Egypt to turn to the MiG-29M/M2 and Su-35S, and the R-77 active radar-homing beyond visual range air-to-air missiles they were compatible with.

The EAF will soon have a frontline element consisting of 11 tactical fighter wings. These will include 13 Squadrons of F-16s, two of MiG-29Ms, four of Rafales, two of Alpha Jets and two of Mirage 2000s. The Alpha Jets, Mirage 2000s, and some of the older F-16s will soon need replacing, however, and the MiG-29M/M2s are likely to become increasingly difficult to support and sustain in the face of US sanctions against Moscow in the wake of the war in Ukraine, which has dramatically affected

Russian arms exports. The MiGs are already proving to be lacking in interoperability with Egypt's Western-supplied fighters, command and control, and combat support aircraft, and have to be operated as an 'air force within an air force', which is becoming problematic as modern doctrine and tactics emphasise ever-closer co-operation and connectivity.

Egypt is, however, already 'shopping around' for new fighters.

Budgetary constraints mean that the solution to Egypt's fighter gap will almost certainly involve a mix of new and second-hand aircraft. This could include an upgrade of some or all of the F-16s to F-16V standards, perhaps with a top-up buy of Block 70 or Block 72 F-16s (the new-build equivalent to the F-16V upgrade standard). There have been reports that "a significant upgrade" has been approved by the US administration, but details have not been revealed.

Perhaps more likely is a recapitalisation of the Dassault Mirage 2000 fleet through the acquisition of 12 aircraft retired by Qatar (Indonesia recently cancelled its \$790 million procurement of these aircraft), and some of the UAE's Mirage 2000-9s, when they are replaced by new Rafales, though 34 of the 56 or so survivors have reportedly been earmarked for supply to Morocco. This could leave Egypt with

three quite different standards of Mirage 2000s – its own original Mirage 2000EMs and BMs, the ex-Qatari Mirage 2000-5EDAs and 5DDAs, and the Emirati Mirage 2000-9s.

In addition to upgrades and second-hand aircraft, Egypt hopes to acquire new-generation combat air platforms, looking in particular at the US Boeing F-15 and Europe's Eurofighter Typhoon.

The US government has reportedly already approved plans to export the F-15EX Eagle II to Egypt, though there has not been a DSCA (Defense Security Co-operation Agency) notification to Congress. On March 15, 2022, General Kenneth McKenzie, the head of US Central Command (USCENTCOM), did, however, tell lawmakers during a session of the Senate Armed Services Committee in Washington, DC. That: "In the case of Egypt, I think we have good news - we're going to provide them with F-15s," McKenzie said, before adding that it had been "a long, hard slog" to finalise the sale.

In 2002, Israel pressured the US not to sell the legacy F-15C to Egypt as part of "a series of understandings" relating to US weapons sales to Egypt. But Israel has reportedly expressed support for the new deal, since it already has the more advanced Lockheed Martin F-35I Adir in service, and has itself requested the supply of 25 F-15EX aircraft in January 2023, of a total

requirement for up to 50 of the new aircraft. Some reports suggest that there could be some 'linkage' between the supply of the F-15EX and the disposal of Egypt's surviving MiG-29M/M2s – several of which were destroyed in Sudan last year. There is believed to have been a proposal that the MiGs (and their R-77 missiles) might be transferred to Ukraine, though Egypt may be resistant to such a course of action, which would significantly undermine its relations with Russia.



Egyptian president Abdel Fattah El-Sisi is reportedly determined to prevent any US efforts to blunt Egyptian capabilities in order to maintain Israel's qualitative military edge, and to avoid an undue reliance on the US as a supplier, which could lead to a potential future vulnerability to US sanctions.

Any F-15EX purchase is therefore likely to be balanced by the purchase of a European fighter aircraft as well. There have already been reports that Egypt could eventually purchase the new Rafale F4, increasing the overall Egyptian Rafale fleet, 54 of which have been delivered or are on order to 72 or even 100 aircraft "depending on Egypt's financial capacity."

Though a further Rafale buy would bring commonality with Egypt's existing fleet, there are

some doubts as to Dassault's ability to deliver aircraft in the required timescale. In view of its very full order book, Egypt is also understood to require certain capabilities beyond those offered by the Rafale (especially in terms of electronic attack and beyond visual range air-to-air combat), and has been looking at the Eurofighter Typhoon for some time.

The Eurofighter consortium allocates particular sales campaigns to individual 'lead nations', and Egypt has always been an Italian 'responsibility'.

Initially, it was reported that Egypt was interested in second-hand Italian Tranche 1 aircraft, although Egyptian interest in the type is now believed to be focused on the latest standard EF-2000 aircraft, with AESA radar and the Meteor beyond-visual-range air-to-air missile (BVRAAM). These would be new-build aircraft assembled in Italy.

The Egyptian requirement is believed to be for 24-48 aircraft and they would form part of a wider \$10-12 billion arms package from Italy. This would reportedly also include 24 Leonardo M346 Master training aircraft, 20-24 more AW-149 medium-lift/utility helicopters, as well as four FREMM heavy frigates (additional to the two already being discussed), 20 Falaj-II class patrol boats to be co-manufactured in Alexandria Shipyard, and a Telespazio radar-equipped military surveillance and reconnaissance satellite. ▲

Egypt operates the world's fourth largest fleet of F-16s. IMAGE: US AIR FORCE



Kenya's expanding air force is one of the most efficient and best equipped in Africa that does not rely on Russian equipment or support. **David Oliver** finds out why.

Kenya's firm foundation



Two of Kenya Army Aviation's recently-delivered MD530F Cayuse Warriors at Embakasi Barracks, Nairobi.

IMAGE: COMBINED JOINT TASK FORCE-HORN

Inset: One of the Kenya Air Force's F-5EM Tiger II fighter aircraft at Laikipia Air Base in Nanyuki.

IMAGE: DAVID OLIVER

Kenya's 2023 defence budget showed a small increase over 2022's to US\$1.3 billion. Its armed forces are mainly concerned with threats from al-Shabaab fighters from neighbouring Somalia, while its troops are deployed to support the United Nations missions MINUSCA in the Central Africa Republic and MONUSCA in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and with the African Union's African Transition Mission in Somalia.

Kenya has reaffirmed its defence and security agreement with the United Kingdom, which provides a permanent UK training unit within the country. It also has a strong relationship with the United States and the Cooperative Security Location Manda Bay remains an operational base for US AFRICOM.

In January 2020 Manda Bay's nearby Magagoni Airfield was attacked by al-Shabaab militants who destroyed six US aircraft and one Kenyan. During the raid a Kenyan helicopter provided close air support to suppress the raiders and a separate Kenyan helicopter transported a wounded US serviceman to a civilian airport for evacuation. Lt Gen Basham, deputy commander of US Air Forces in Europe and Africa said: "Without question, the swift, skillful, and courageous response of the Kenyan Defense Force saved many lives that day."

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The Kenya Air Force's motto is "We are firm in the sky" and it is one of the most efficient and best equipped in Africa that does not rely on Russian equipment or support.

Moi Air Base in Eastleigh, Nairobi Moi Airport, is the headquarters while other bases include forward operating bases (FOB) at Mandera, Wajir and Nyeri.

The Kenya Air Force's (KAF's) number two squadron flies 17 Northrop F-5EM and four F-5FM Tiger II, former Jordanian fighter aircraft from Laikipia Air Base in Nanyuki, while basic and advanced training is carried out by eight former RAF Scottish Aviation Bulldog 103s, nine Grob G120TPs with two more on order, and 11 Short Tucanos.

The KAF's latest acquisition has been three Leonardo C-27J Spartans which are operated by No 1 Squadron alongside three former USAF PZL C-145A Skytrucks. Kenya does have ties with China and has operated eight Harbin Y-8 light transport aircraft that are being replaced by the Skytrucks after three had been lost in accidents. The C-145A aircraft will be used for medical evacuation and aerial resupply. They also can be reconfigured for precision combat

airdrops, search and rescue and disaster relief missions.

China also supplied six Harbin Z-9WE helicopters, which are among a diverse KAF rotary-wing fleet that includes 10 Aerospatiale SA330 Pumas, seven Bell UH-1H Huey IIs, three AgustaWestland AW139s and a single Mil Mi171E. Three Bell AH-1F Cobras donated by Jordan in 2017 are the air force's only attack helicopters although its eight Airbus Helicopters H125M Fenecs can also be armed.

The air force AH-1 Cobra helicopters together with the Army's 50th Air Cavalry helicopters are controlled by the Joint Helicopter Command based at Embakasi Garrison. The Kenya Army Aviation operates a fleet of 33 Hughes 500M/MD Scout Defenders and has recently taken delivery of six MD Helicopters MD530F Cayuse Warrior scout and light-attack helicopters.

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A Rapid Deployment Squadron (RDS), the newest special forces unit among all three branches of the Kenya Defence Forces, is predominantly tasked with the recovery of downed airmen in hostile territory, but it can carry out other specially assigned tasks. The unit was established after a downed F-5 pilot went missing in action in al-Shabaab held territory in Southern Somalia. This led to the need of a tactical quick response unit to respond in such emergencies as the search and rescue mission for the downed airman was hampered by the lack of a dedicated response unit. This RDS is headquartered at Laikipia Air Base and it also maintains an FOB at Wajir Airport in North Eastern Kenya.

The Kenya Air Force has a much better safety record than those of other African nations, but it suffered a spike of helicopter accidents in 2023. And one type of aircraft so far not included in the Kenya Air Force's itinerary is a dedicated training helicopter. ▲



Left: Only one SAAF two-seat Saab Gripen JAS-39D was airworthy at the end of 2023. Right: Only seven of the SAAF's 39 Denel Oryx support helicopters are operational. IMAGES: DAVID OLIVER



LIFELINE FOR THE SAAF?

A new support contract for its Gripen fighters may prove the catalyst that kick-starts the rebuilding of South Africa's air combat capability. **David Oliver** reports.

Once Africa's best equipped and most capable air force, the South African Air Force (SAAF) has been in terminal decline for the last two decades with most of its aircraft non operational. Its priority is to arrest the decline of its critical capabilities and equipment, but a lack of funding is constraining its ability to meet performance targets. In October 2023, a government spokesperson confirmed that 85 per cent of the SAAF fleet was "currently out of action".

South Africa was the first export customer for the Saab Gripen when it ordered 26 JAS-39C/D aircraft in 1999. A new support contract is being negotiated for its Gripen fleet, which have been grounded for more than a year, and which may begin the process to rebuild its air combat capability.

The entire Gripen fleet was grounded in August 2021 after budget cuts and contractual problems left the SAAF without a maintenance contract. A limited new airframe maintenance contract with Saab went into effect in September 2022 and after negotiations between the South Africa's military procurement agency and Saab and GKN, a compromise was reached. However, the resulting three-year contract only supports 13 of the total Gripen fleet. By the end of 2023 only two out of 26 Gripens and three of 24 Hawk Mk. 120 advanced trainers were airworthy. Qualified Gripen and Hawk pilots numbered 41, all based at AFB Makhado with Number One Squadron, few of which get the opportunity to fly their aircraft on a regular basis.

There is a similar situation for both the SAAF's helicopter and transport assets. Of the 11 airframes in the Denel Rooivalk attack helicopter fleet, only four were serviceable by mid-2023, with seven either unserviceable or undergoing maintenance. Of the 25 engines in the fleet, only 13 were serviceable. The situation with the Atlas Oryx support helicopters was no better with only seven out of 39 being operational while 13 were at Denel's state-owned servicing centre, and the remaining fleet were at squadrons awaiting servicing. Three Rooivalks and two of the five Oryx helicopters that support South Africa's mission to

MONUSCO in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) were grounded in 2023 as were one of the only two Oryxs deployed to the Southern African Development Community Mission in Mozambique (SAMIM) Mozambique. The Rooivalks were in the midst of a 15-year overhaul of engine and transmission systems, but government officials said there was insufficient funding to do anything more than overhaul four engines.

In October 2023, South Africa's defence minister Thandi Modise said only five of 39 Oryx were functional and R2.5 billion (\$0.13 billion) was needed to restore the fleet. She added that three of 11 Rooivalk could fly "with restrictions," and that the helicopters' avionics systems were obsolete. Denel Aeronautics has claimed that it has not been paid by the SAAF for further Oryx and Rooivalk maintenance work.

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To add to the problem, in February this year an Oryx medium transport helicopter was hit by small arms fire while carrying out a casualty evacuation in the DRC injuring two of the crew.

A SAAF Casa C-212 Aviocar light transport aircraft was damaged in a landing accident while taking part in Exercise Vuk'uhlome in 2023. Its No 44 Squadron only had one of three C212s serviceable prior to the accident although in September, Armscor reported that a maintenance contract with Airbus was in progress to make the fleet serviceable.

Only two of its five Lockheed Martin C-130BZ Hercules transports are airworthy, while the whole fleet of nine Cessna 208 Caravan light transport are all non-operational.

In reply to questions by opposition politicians, defence minister Modise said: "The chief of the SAAF recently approved a seven-year medium term strategic framework plus Plan 2030 with an end-state of an organisation that is affordable, sustainable and responsive.

"This plan seeks to ensure prime mission equipment (PME) will be held at the minimum level of capability maturity required with provision to optimise as and when the threat scenario changes.

"Plan 2030 Focus in so far as PME is concerned is the rejuvenation of core capabilities by means of essential life extensions, mid-life upgrades, and disposal management in order to reduce baseline costs." ▲

▼ Plan 2030 Focus is the rejuvenation of core capabilities by means of essential life extensions, mid-life upgrades, and disposal management in order to reduce baseline costs. ▲
THANDI MODISE

New military aircraft and upgrades have been ordered or delivered to many African countries, including Tunisia, Nigeria, Ghana, Kenya, Tanzania and Ethiopia. **Jon Lake** takes a closer look.

The handover of the first Nigerian T129. IMAGE: NIGERIAN AIR FORCE



One of the two newly delivered Ethiopian air force Su-30s. IMAGE: ETHIOPIAN TV



Embraer's A-29 Super Tucano demonstrator will bolster the Ghana Air Force's defensive and offensive capabilities. IMAGE: GHANA AF



Africa's military upgrades out in force

TUNISIA

Honeywell and ST Engineering Defence Aviation Services (STEDAS) are to implement a major upgrade of the Tunisian Air Force's two C-130J-30 tactical transport aircraft. Tunisia ordered two C-130J-30 in 2010, and the first of these was delivered in April 2013, marking the first-ever C-130J-30 delivery to an African nation. The second aircraft was delivered in January 2015.

The new upgrade will include the first integration of a Honeywell Aerospace Technologies Cockpit Display System Retrofit (CDSR) glass cockpit solution by STEDAS, though it is not clear whether this will be Honeywell's three-display or five-display upgrade option. Whichever has been chosen, CDSR includes large format multi-function LCD displays, digital instruments and new air data and altitude sensors, as well as an RDR7000 weather radar, a Traffic Collision Avoidance System (TCAS) and advanced flight controls.

The upgrade will provide enhanced situational awareness, reduced workload, improved safety, as well as enhanced flexibility and efficiency.

NIGERIA

On February 6, the Nigerian Air Force formally inducted its first two Turkish Aerospace T129 ATAK attack helicopters at a ceremony held at the NAF Base at Makurdi, attended by an array of VIPs, including Nigerian Army commander Taoreed Lagbaja, Hidayet Bayraktar, Turkish ambassador to Nigeria, and vice president Kashim Shettima. The first Beechcraft King Air

360ER aircraft was introduced to service at the same event.

The first pair of T129 ATAK Attack Helicopters were subsequently allocated to the Nigerian Air Force's 115th Special Operations Group (the former 97th SOG) at Port Harcourt. The unit currently operates a mix of Mi-24P, Mi-24V and Mi-35 heavy assault/attack helicopters, together with Airbus Helicopters EC135s for observation and reconnaissance.

The Nigerian Air Force will receive four more T129 ATAK attack helicopters under the terms of the contract announced in July 2022. Two will be delivered during the second quarter of 2024, and the final pair will be delivered in the fourth quarter of 2024. Further orders may be placed, though Nigeria is also receiving 12 MD Helicopters MD530F Cayuse Warrior Plus reconnaissance/attack helicopters and 12 Bell AH-1Z attack helicopters.

These attack helicopters will be used against terrorist groups such as Boko Haram and ISWAP (Islamic State-West Africa Province), which Nigeria has been fighting since the early 2000s.

Air Marshal Hassan Abubakar, commander of the Nigerian Air Force, has said that the NAF will induct 46 new aircraft over a period of 18 months to combat terrorism and other threats. As well as the T129s, this total now seems likely to include the first of 12 Bell AH-1Z Viper attack helicopters from the United States.

The US originally approved the possible sale of 12 AH-1Zs to Nigeria in April 2022.

In August 2023, the US State Department revealed that: "Nigeria delivered the first

payment for 12 AH-1Z attack helicopters worth a total of \$997 million. The Foreign Military Sales (FMS) case includes an additional \$25 million of funding allocated for Nigeria's AGI programme, which continues to train the Armed Forces of Nigeria (AFN) on developing targeting processes that are legally compliant with international humanitarian law."

On 19 December 2023, the US Department of Defence announced a contract award to Northrop Grumman for the production and delivery of an additional 32 "H-1 tech refresh mission computers in support of the AH-1Z aircraft for the government of Nigeria."

The new attack helicopters will augment a range of recently-acquired aircraft and systems, including Embraer/Sierra Nevada A-29 Super Tucano light attack aircraft, CAC/PAC JF-17 Thunder fighter aircraft, and a range of UAVs, including Wing Loong II unmanned aerial vehicles from China and Bayraktar TB2, STM Togan, and Asisguard Songar UAVs from Turkey.

GHANA

Neighbouring Ghana also aims to enhance its counter-insurgency capabilities, and on February 19, 2024 the Ghana Air Force, in partnership with Embraer Defence and Sierra Nevada Corporation (SNC), provided a display of the A-29 Super Tucano light attack aircraft's capabilities at Accra Air Force Base.

According to some sources, Ghana is already engaged in a US \$52.8m acquisition of the Super Tucano training and light attack aircraft from

Embraer, the Brazilian aerospace company and the US Sierra Nevada Corporation (SNC). Others suggest only that negotiations were launched after the February 19 demonstration.

Air Vice Marshal Frederick Asare Kwasi Bekoe, Ghana's chief of the air staff, described the partnership with SNC and Embraer as a timely initiative to bolster the Ghana Air Force's defensive and offensive capabilities, and highlighted the strategic significance of light attack aircraft in countering emerging terrorist threats. Ghana's minister for defence, Dominic Nitiwul, also praised the A-29 Super Tucano as a vital asset in augmenting Ghana Air Force counter-insurgency and anti-terrorism capabilities.

If Ghana's acquisition goes ahead, the nation would join Angola, Burkina Faso, Mali, and Nigeria as a regional operator of the Super Tucano. The type is already playing a vital role in enhancing border security and combatting instability in the Sahel region and beyond.

KENYA

Air Forces in East Africa are also re-equipping and recapitalising their aircraft fleets in response to a continuing terrorist and insurgent threat. Kenya is waiting to receive 16 ex Republic of Korea Army MD500MD Defender helicopters, which were pledged by South Korea in 2021, during the UN peacekeeping forum in Seoul. The aircraft will be used to equip a new unit being formed to support United Nations peacekeeping missions.

Korean Air's aerospace division built some 280 (or 283, according to some sources)

MD500s under licence between 1976 and 1984, and these are now being replaced in Korean service by the indigenous LUH-1 Surion.

On December 21 the first six of the 16 donated MD500s were shipped from the Korean Army Logistics Command's general maintenance depot in Jinhae to the US for repairs and maintenance before delivery to Kenya under US State Department auspices.

The Kenyan Army's 50th Air Cavalry Battalion already operates several MD500 variants (principally the H500E/H500MD/H500MG), of 40 delivered by the United States between 1980 and 1985. These were recently augmented by the delivery of six new MD530Fs to the co-located Joint Helicopter Command at Embakasi air base in December 2019.

The latter were acquired to support of the AMISOM mission in Somalia.

ETHIOPIA

The Ethiopian Air Force (EAF) has recently taken delivery of two Sukhoi Su-30K 'Flanker' fighters and an unknown number of Baykar Bayraktar Akıncı armed unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs).

The Su-30Ks and Akıncı UAVs arrived in Ethiopia on January 16. The two Su-30Ks are believed to be part of a batch of 18 originally manufactured for the Indian Air Force. These were returned to Russia in 2007 and were replaced by more advanced Su-30MKIs. They were transferred to the 558th aircraft repair plant at Baranovichi, Belarus, before 12 were upgraded to Su-30SM standards and sold to Angola.

Ethiopia seems to have now acquired the six remaining Su-30Ks, with four still to be delivered.

TANZANIA

On January 9, 2024, the Italian government announced that Tanzania had ordered two Leonardo C-27J Spartan transport aircraft, primarily for civil support duties by the Jeshi la Anza la Wananchi wa Tanzania (Tanzania Air Force Command). The C-27J Spartans will be operated by the Transport Squadron at Dar Es-Salaam/Julius Nyerere air base and will be equipped with kits for humanitarian, search-and-rescue, and firefighting missions. This, the announcement said, was because: "the new aircraft will be used by the Tanzanian authorities for firefighting operations on Mount Kilimanjaro and in the East African region."

The C-27J Spartan is an advanced derivative of the earlier Alenia Aeronautica G.222, capable of operating in the most challenging environments and operating conditions, which makes it especially well suited to African air arms. Chad, Kenya, Morocco, and Zambia have acquired the type, which is also in service with (or on order for) Australia, Bulgaria, Greece, Italy, Lithuania, Mexico, Peru, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, and the United States Coast Guard and US Special Operations Command.

Leonardo has developed a new C-27J Next Generation (NG) variant, with new cockpit displays, weather radar, modern navigation and communications equipment, and undefined "advanced aerodynamic features," though it is not clear as to whether Zambia will acquire the new variant. ▲

LANDING PARTY: Delivery of the Beechcraft T-6C Texan II N1.
IMAGE: TUNISIAN MINISTRY OF DEFENCE



HUIT T-6C TEXAN II POUR L'ARMÉE DE L'AIR TUNISIENNE

Textron Aviation Defense va livrer huit Beechcraft T-6C Texan II à l'Armée de l'air tunisienne, consolidant ainsi la coopération américano-tunisienne en matière de sécurité.

Les quatre premiers T-6C ont été livrés en juillet dernier, suite à la signature en 2020 d'un contrat de ventes militaires entre Textron Aviation Defense (Foreign Military Sales) et le gouvernement américain. Elle souligne l'engagement des États-Unis à soutenir les efforts de la Tunisie pour répondre à ses besoins sécuritaires et humanitaires.

L'acquisition de ces avions d'entraînement font partie intégrante du plan de modernisation de l'aviation de la Tunisie à l'horizon 2030.

Il s'agit de former la prochaine génération de pilotes tunisiens, de développer de l'interopérabilité avec les États-Unis et l'OTAN, et de renforcer la sécurité nationale.

Ces avions, constituent un réel atout pour la Tunisie, qui joue un rôle prépondérant au niveau de la sécurité nationale et de celle de l'Afrique du Nord et du continent africain.

« Devenir un leader régional dans l'excellence de la formation au pilotage militaire est l'une des étapes sur la voie de la réalisation des exigences de nos missions de lutte contre le terrorisme et de sécurité des frontières », souligne le général Mohamed Hajjem, chef d'état-major de l'Armée de l'air tunisienne.



Affectés au 13ème escadron de l'Armée de l'air tunisienne sur la base aérienne de Sfax, les T-6C aideront à renforcer la sécurité à la frontière sud du pays et contrecarrer la contrebande transfrontalière ainsi que les activités terroristes.

Selon Brett Pierson, PDG de Textron Aviation Defense, le Beechcraft T-6 Texan II est désormais une référence en matière de capacités d'entraînement. « Notre main-d'œuvre de classe mondiale se surpasse pour concevoir, fabriquer, livrer et soutenir le premier avion d'entraînement au vol militaire au monde. »

La flotte de T-6C remplacera les avions d'entraînement tunisiens vieillissants, les L-59T Super Albatros.

Le contrat comprend entre autres le service sur le terrain et le support logistique, le soutien à la gestion du programme, la formation des pilotes et du personnel de maintenance de même que les moteurs et pièces de rechange.

Un simulateur de vol opérationnel et un laboratoire de formation informatisé font également partie de cette coopération.

southern border and thwart cross-border smuggling as well as terrorism.

According to Brett Pierson, CEO of Textron Aviation Defense, the Beechcraft T-6 Texan II is now a benchmark in training capabilities. "Our world-class workforce goes above and beyond to design, manufacture, deliver and support these flight training aircraft."

The T-6C fleet will replace the country's ageing Czech-built Aero L-59T Super Albatros trainers.

Among other things, the contract includes field service and logistical support; programme management support; pilot training; a flight simulator/computerised training; maintenance personnel; and engines and spare parts.

The Beechcraft T-6 Texan II is a single-engine turboprop basic trainer aircraft based on the Swiss Pilatus PC-9 and examples are in service with the USAF, US Navy, the Royal Canadian Air Force; the Argentinian Air Force; the Moroccan Air Force; and the Greek Air Force. There are currently more than 850 aircraft in service worldwide.

SUMMARY

TUNISIAN TRAINER DELIVERIES BEGIN

Textron Aviation has begun deliveries of eight Beechcraft T-6C Texan II trainers to the Tunisian Air Force, further consolidating US-Tunisia security cooperation.

The first four T-6Cs were delivered in July 2023, following the signing in 2020 of a military sales contract between Textron and the USA government, underlining America's commitment to supporting Tunisia's security and humanitarian needs.

The acquisition of these training aircraft is an integral part of Tunisia's aviation modernisation plans up to 2030 and involves training the next generation of Tunisian air force pilots; developing interoperability with USA and NATO; and strengthening national security.

"Becoming a regional leader in excellence in military flight training is one of our steps on the path to delivering counterterrorism and border security missions," explained General Mohamed Hajjem, chief of staff of the Tunisian Air Force.

Assigned to 13-squadron of the Tunisian Air Force at Sfax air base, the T-6Cs will help strengthen the security of the country's

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TEKEVER AR3 HOTSWAPPABLE VTOL

TEKEVER AR5

As one of Africa's fast growing UAV service providers, Aerial Robotix aim to be the leading provider of drone services in the region of west Africa by harnessing the power of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) to transform industries, in Partnership with TEKEVER.

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Aerial Robotix and TEKEVER places a strong priority on safety and compliance. Adhering to international standards and regulations and working closely with local authorities, aviation agencies, and communities, we ensure responsible and ethical use of our drone technology. This dedication has not only enhanced our reputation but has also set a benchmark for professionalism in the industry.



Simon Mwansa Kapwepwe International Airport



Mwamba Patience Nakambale Phiri: "Sustainability was at the core of the build from the very start."

IMAGE: ZACL

This August will see Simon Mwansa Kapwepwe International Airport (SMKIA), which is operated by Zambia Airports Corporation Limited (ZACL), celebrate its third anniversary since opening its doors in 2021 and replacing the original Ndola Airport. **Chloe Greenbank** looks at its progress.

Named after the nation's former vice president, the US\$397 million greenfield airport serves as a gateway to Zambia's copperbelt mining province on the border with the Democratic Republic of Congo and was designed and constructed by the Aviation Industry Corporation of China (AVIC International).

Airport Manager, Mwamba Patience Nakambale Phiri, told *African Aerospace*: "The Zambian Government has been supporting growth across the country's aviation sector and the new airport is aligned with those plans for growth."

"The original airport [which is the oldest in the country and currently belongs to the Zambian Air Force] was built in 1938 as a military base for the British Army before being converted in the 1950s for civil operations."

"Various upgrades and transformations were made over the years, but it was old and had an ageing infrastructure. The objective of building a new air transport hub for the region was to enhance and reimagine the passenger experience with a focus on safe, secure, seamless air travel and sustainable growth."

Nakambale has been managing the airport since October 2022. Her background is originally in marketing and banking, but she joined ZACL in 2009 working as head of customer services at Harry Mwanga Nkumbula International Airport in Livingstone and then as deputy airport manager at Lusaka's Kenneth Kaunda International Airport in 2015, before joining Simon Mwansa Kapwepwe. "I sort of fell into aviation out of curiosity, but the global industry is changing and women are increasingly rising to the top," she said.

While the airport is state-owned, the government is hands-off in terms of the day-to-day operations.

"Their focus is on ensuring the airports across ZACL's portfolio provide exceptional services and build connectivity for the region, but they really leave us to function independently as the experts when it comes to managing operations," said Nakambale.

THE GATEWAY TO ZAMBIA

Simon Mwansa Kapwepwe Airport: The airport regularly holds forums for local residents to disseminate information about current and future plans. IMAGE: ZACL

"They were however instrumental when SMKIA's new terminal was being constructed in terms of engaging with, compensating and resettling the community that previously occupied the 2,000-acre site the airport is built on."

She added that community engagement is one of the key and ongoing considerations when building a new airport. "Those living locally need to be involved from the start and their concerns must be listened to and addressed."

The airport regularly holds forums for local residents to disseminate information about current and future plans.

Alongside community engagement, Nakambale revealed that other factors to consider when constructing a greenfield airport include site selection and making sure the chosen location has a minimal environmental impact and preserves biodiversity.

Ensuring good surface access is also key and if that doesn't exist already, then Nakambale emphasised the need for a robust understanding of the planning requirements "for transport infrastructure, such as road and rail networks. With the industry's net zero targets, the aim should also be to design infrastructure that optimises energy efficiency and is aligned with sustainable growth," she added.

Water conservation is also important and in countries with high rainfall, rainwater harvesting should be factored into construction plans. "Similarly, effective waste management and exploring waste-to-energy initiatives is also key," she continued. "At SMKIA, sustainability was at the core of the build from the very start. Large floor-to-ceiling windows in the terminal provide plenty of natural lighting and create a modern, airy environment."

"In addition, we extract and recycle our own water to use for irrigation and cleaning. As well as more efficient operations, these initiatives have also helped keep costs down," she added.

While the airport isn't currently using renewable energy

sources, it is something that's being explored.

With a capacity of one million passengers per annum, enhancing and reimaging the passenger experience was another key driver behind the new airport design.

"We want passengers to look forward to travelling through Zambia, whether they're transiting or stopping here, it was important that they felt this sense of excitement with a bright and airy terminal and are happy to fly here again," said Nakambale.

Part of that reimagined journey was also creating a seamless passenger processing experience in terms of check-in, baggage handling and border control. The airport has partnered with SITA for its airport management operations systems with a focus on automated services.

Nakambale explained that while much of the inbound passenger traffic currently passing through SMKIA is business travellers visiting the surrounding mining region, there is also a mix of tourists and leisure passengers. "Zambia has a fair number of overflights and technical flights heading from North to South and vice versa and stopping at our airport for refuelling or emergencies. That gives us a good outlook of where we should be focusing our efforts in terms of growth. In terms of inbound traffic, it's not just miners flying in, but also businessmen and expatriates."

"Cargo is also a flourishing market for us and we are forecasting growth in this space in line with growth in the mining sector."

Looking ahead, Nakambale asserted that the outlook for Zambia's airport sector looks strong. The airport is working alongside its existing and new airline partners to develop its destination network and the government has been hugely supportive.

"A large part of the government's work has been to create initiatives that will attract visitors, while ZACL will continue to engage key stakeholders in the industry and focus on seamless air travel. I am excited about the impending growth and bright future we have to look forward to at our airport." ▲

▼ I am excited about the impending growth and bright future we have to look forward to at our airport. ▲
MWAMBA PATIENCE NAKAMBALE PHIRI

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FOCUS ON

AIRPORTS

ENVIRONMENT

Leading the way: Félix Houphouët-Boigny airport.

IMAGE: AERIA



Abidjan sur la piste vers le net zéro

Les aéroports africains se sont engagés sur la route vers la zéro émission nette de CO₂, chacun à son rythme. L'Aéroport FHB d'Abidjan, qui a atteint la neutralité carbone, est un exemple à décliner sur le continent, pour que ce dernier ne reste pas à la traîne. Des détails avec **Anuradha Deenapanray Chappard**.

Au fil des années, AERIA, le concessionnaire de l'Aéroport International Félix Houphouët-Boigny, a transformé cette plateforme en un principal hub de l'Afrique de l'Ouest et de l'Afrique Centrale. Elle est aujourd'hui une référence attractive, sûre, verte, conviviale, à la pointe de la technologie, et en matière de parité.

Soil.is by Egis accompagne l'Aéroport d'Abidjan dans sa stratégie de décarbonation. Par son expertise en ingénierie écologique, Soil.is conçoit et met en place des solutions fondées sur la nature pour séquestrer du carbone dans le sol sur le foncier de l'aéroport. Il pourra ainsi compenser localement 1500 tonnes CO₂eq/an soit environ 30% de ses émissions résiduelles (Scope 1 et 2).

Ces projets ont l'avantage considérable de compenser les émissions là où elles sont produites. « Cette approche innovante contribue à la traduction opérationnelle de la politique RSE et des engagements climat, par l'optimisation du potentiel de séquestration carbone des sols à co-bénéfices sociaux et environnementaux », explique El-Hadji Aly Ouattara, Chef de Département Conformité et Gestion des Risques, auprès d'AERIA.

Après les études de conception, une phase de concertation avec les riverains, maraîchers, pêcheurs, éleveurs, a été mise en œuvre. « Il s'agit de concevoir le projet avec eux. Nous sélectionnons

actuellement un opérateur local qui pilotera les travaux. »

Le déploiement du projet va être accéléré en 2024. Ainsi, une plateforme de compostage pour traiter les biodéchets de l'aéroport et les effluents des élevages de porcs à proximité sera construite. 28 000 arbres et arbustes seront plantés autour des parcelles maraîchères et des actions de formation mises en place pour accompagner les maraîchers vers « la transition agroécologique de pratiques maraîchères ». Aussi, cinq hectares de mangrove dégradée, bordant la lagune Ebrié au nord de l'aéroport, seront restaurés.

« Nous avons le souhait de décliner cette solution sur d'autres aéroports en Afrique.

SUMMARY

ABIDJAN LEADS THE WAY TO NET ZERO

The Ivory Coast's major international airport is leading the race for West and Central Africa to reach the goal of carbon neutrality. Félix Houphouët-Boigny airport, in the country's capital city of Abidjan, is run by operator AERIA and over recent years it has been transformed into what it claims to be an '...attractive, safe, green and user-friendly hub'.

Ecological company, Soil.is by Egis, supports the airport operator in its decarbonisation strategy and it's implementing nature-based solutions to sequester carbon in the soil on airport, so that it will be able to offset 1,500 tonnes of CO₂ per year representing around 30 per cent of its residual emissions.

Following initial design studies, a consultation phase began with local residents, market gardeners, fishermen and animal breeders and work on this will be speeded-up

D'autant plus, que souvent sur les aéroports africains, nous remarquons des enjeux sociaux importants, et nous avons à cœur de générer de l'impact social et de co-concevoir les solutions avec les acteurs, vivant et travaillant autour de l'aéroport, afin qu'ils soient acteurs et bénéficient directement du projet », souligne M. Ouattara.

La plateforme a gagné davantage en compétitivité avec l'ouverture du Terminal 2 en marge de l'organisation de la Coupe Africaine des Nations (CAN), remportée d'ailleurs par la Côte d'Ivoire. Ces travaux de transformation s'inscrivent dans le cadre du vaste projet de réhabilitation et d'agrandissement de l'Aéroport International FHB pour accueillir jusqu'à cinq millions de passagers.

En septembre dernier, AERIA a reçu le Certificat « Airport Accreditation Customer Experience » pour les actions mises en œuvre dans le cadre de l'amélioration de l'expérience passagers à l'Aéroport d'Abidjan. ▲

in 2024, including building of a composting plant to treat bio-waste from the airport and effluent from nearby pig farms. Some 28,000 trees and shrubs will be planted around the market gardens and five hectares of degraded mangrove swamp, bordering the Ebrié lagoon north of the airport, will be restored.

"We would like to assist by rolling-out our solution to other airports in Africa," says El-Hadji Aly Ouattara, head of the AERIA's compliance and risk management department. "We sometimes see important social issues at African airports and are keen to generate social impact and co-design solutions, along with stakeholders living and working around the airports."

In 2023 AERIA received the 'Airport Accreditation Customer Experience Certificate' for its work on this project. ▲

ARE NIGERIA'S AIRPORTS THE WORLD'S MOST EXPENSIVE?

In September 2023, the International Air Transport Association (IATA) ranked Nnamdi Azikiwe International Airport, Abuja, and Murtala Muhammed International Airport, Lagos, both in Nigeria, as the most expensive airports in the world to do business, in terms of levy and tax charges.

At the Aviation Africa summit held in Abuja, on September 13-14, 2023, IATA's vice president, Africa and Middle East, Kamil Al Alwadi, said: "Abuja has the highest charges followed by Lagos. How can you have such high taxes and expect to be profitable?"

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At the 55th annual general assembly and summit of the African Airlines Association (AFRAA) in Kampala, Uganda, held on November 19-21, 2023, IATA made a comparison, stating that Lagos (LOS) and Abuja (ABV) were the most expensive airports in the world as the passenger service charge was \$100 per passenger, while Doha (DOH), the best airport in the world, charged \$44 for that service and Dubai (DXB) charged \$40.

Nigeria's aviation stakeholders reacted to this assertion at the quarterly business breakfast meeting of the Aviation Safety Round Table Initiative (ASRTI) held in Lagos, on December 7, 2023, under the theme: "Nigerian aviation sector: charges, duties, and tariffs, truly exorbitant?"

President of the National Association



of Nigeria Travel Agents (NANTA), Susan Akporiaye, called for an investigation to determine whether or not IATA's assertion is correct.

"There is a need for investigative analysis of all airports in the world, to have a composition of all the existing airports taxes and charges, comparing airports of the same category, before arriving at a general rating," she said.

Chief operating officer of Bicourtney Aviation Services, operators of MMA2 terminal, Lagos, Tosan Duncan Odukoya

Murtala Muhammed Airport, Lagos
IMAGE: FAAN

said there was need to assess whether or not they are extortionary or actually realistic charges, but that if collected, "the charges should be used for the good of the travelling public."

At the end of the meeting, stakeholders resolved in a communiqué that the country's aspiration to be competitive was being burdened by this challenge and "it is important for Nigeria as a nation to cease taxing seeds and, instead, foster an environment that encourages businesses to thrive." ▲

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Mpofu accepted the challenge of being CEO of ACSA at the height of the Covid-19 pandemic. A key objective has been to rebuild ACSA's balance sheet and income statement. Under her leadership, ACSA reported an improvement in earnings to R2-billion for the financial year ended March 31, 2023, from R342-million in the 2022 financial year. Revenue of R6-billion for 2023 was up by 55 per cent compared with R3.9-billion posted for the prior financial year. As a key performance indicator of her management, ACSA has tightly controlled operating expenditure, which only increased by 10 per cent to R3.5-billion.

However, the company is not out of the woods yet, as it reported a loss for both 2022 and 2023. Mpofu said: "Our profitability has been impacted by high

MPOFU'S BALANCING ACT

Ms Mpumi Mpofu has occupied the hot seat as chief executive of ACSA, the Airports Company of South Africa, for a tumultuous past four years. **Guy Leitch** finds out more.

Mpumi Mpofu has a post-graduate degree in town planning from Coventry University in the UK and brings extensive experience to her role as head of ACSA, from more than 25 years senior management in transport, local government and infrastructure development.

Mpofu's first key exposure to airport management was in 2010, the year South Africa hosted the FIFA Soccer World Cup, for which Mpofu headed up ACSA's development and redevelopment programme. She has also been instrumental in the development of South Africa's Airlift Strategy which aims to apply a holistic approach to global aviation in support of improved South African air connectivity.

credit losses on trade receivables and fair value losses on investment properties, resulting in a 2023 after-tax loss of R142-million, which is a significant improvement on the R1-billion loss of the previous year. The results reflect the group's steady trajectory towards recovery and a move closer to profitability, following the turbulent trading conditions brought on by the Covid-19 pandemic."

Mpofu is confident ACSA will return to profits for 2024, thanks to the company's recover and sustain strategy, as well as the implementation of a revised financial plan. She says that, to ensure this profitability, ACSA is focusing on

operational efficiency, by making full use of its R30-billion asset base, plus its diversified revenue streams, and by growing the business through new commercial initiatives. She says that all ACSA facilities that were mothballed during Covid-19 have now been brought back to full operations.

As a monopoly, ACSA aeronautical pricing is determined from a series of 'permissions' negotiated with government and the airline users. For 2023 a 3.1 per cent tariff increase was

approved by the regulator. Mpofu says that ACSA has been looking to maintain a 50:50 split between aeronautical and non-aeronautical revenue, but says the constraints on the two revenue streams are largely interdependent, because non-aeronautical revenue is driven by aeronautical activity.

As the passenger numbers have rebounded, non-aeronautical revenue has shown a strong recovery, increasing by 46 per cent year-on-year to R3.1-billion for 2023. The bulk of this income, R982-million, was derived from property rentals and the balance, R848-million, from retail activities.

Mpofu adds that, going forward, ACSA will efficiently manage its investment property portfolio, but to divorce non-aeronautical revenue completely from aeronautical revenue is impossible, because this portfolio contains retail properties which are highly dependent on the footprint of passengers at the airports.

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With ACSA now back on a stable financial footing, and hopefully profitable for 2024, it is moving back into a growth phase. IATA predicts that passenger traffic in Southern Africa will only fully recover to pre-pandemic levels in 2025 or 2026. However, ACSA's hub airports remain among the busiest on the continent.

To cater for the expected take-off in growth, R21 billion has been allocated to CAPEX for airport infrastructure development at Cape Town International Airport (CPT) and OR Tambo International Airport (ORT) over the next five years. This is ACSA's largest capital investment since the 2010 FIFA World Cup.

ORT is the gateway to Southern Africa and will receive upgrades to its passenger and cargo facilities. Noteworthy is the long-awaited Mid-field Cargo Terminal, to be built between runways 03 Left and 03 Right. This will be followed by a Mid-field Passenger Terminal which

Continued on Page 38 ▶

TANZANIA APPOINTS INDRA FOR UPDATED AIM SYSTEM

The Tanzania Civil Aviation Authority (TCAA) has contracted Indra to strengthen the safety and environmental sustainability of the country's aviation sector.

The Spanish company will provide new AIM systems that will provide airlines and controllers with reliable, updated aeronautical data with which to plan and manage flights more efficiently.

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As global air traffic has increased over the years, says Indra, the volume of aeronautical alerts and bulletins published on paper by bodies ranging from airports and meteorological services to air forces or navigation service providers, has increased to the point that it is practically impossible for a pilot to be able to consult them all.

This poses a safety risk and means that the prior planning of each flight is not as precise as it should be, forcing corrections to be made en route. This takes up both time and fuel.

To solve this, the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) is promoting a transition to



digitised AIM systems that help the pilot access the necessary information much more quickly and easily.

Indra's system not only facilitates this search, but also "controls the entire process from the moment the data is generated until it reaches the desired user", said Jon Goyarzu, general

Indra says its new system will pave the path to a new, global 'aviation intranet'.
IMAGE: INDRA

director of the Indra subsidiary specialising in this type of ATM system.

Indra has already put this technology into operation in the UK, Dubai, Vietnam and 10 other countries.

The system manages key data for flight safety and for planning air operations in a much more efficient way, says Indra, contributing to reduced emissions and costs.

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Its implementation is essential for any navigation service provider to make the leap to the intranet that will globally connect all aviation, a system known as SWIM.

The implementation of the AIM system in Tanzania also paves the way for the TCAA to incorporate the forthcoming SWIM system, the global aeronautical intranet that will connect all parties involved in flight management.

This database provides a common access point or 'single point of truth' that "guarantees that all parties involved in the management of a flight share the same updated view of the situation," Goyarzu said. ▲

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 37

may offer the low-cost carriers cheaper power-in, power-out, ground movements.

Mpofu says that OR Tambo will also receive six new gates, while the retail, seating, and lounge areas will also receive uplifts. Additionally, ACSA will add a new mezzanine level to improve passenger circulation and seating capacity.

Speaking on the sidelines of the Board of Airline Representatives of South Africa (BARSA) 2024 conference, Mpofu said that Cape Town Airport will benefit from large investment in its terminals and runway. She said that ACSA is prioritising the R7 billion runway realignment project, “which will enable a 60 per cent increase in flights, both in and out the airport.”

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Mpofu says that in December 2023, Cape Town Airport broke its pre-Covid record for international traffic with more than 317,000 passengers. Cape Town’s domestic arrivals terminal will be expanded to increase the meet and greet area, baggage claim area, domestic departures lounge, retail spaces, and ablution facilities. The airport will also receive an additional baggage carousel, three new contact gates, and fixed boarding bridges.

ACSA’s smaller airports are also in line to benefit from the large CAPEX programme. South Africa’s third-busiest airport, Durban’s King Shaka, will see the construction of a new hotel and probably further terminal expansion within five years.

East London’s King Phalo Airport will get an expansion of its departure lounge and the upgrading of retail options plus



The new ACSA head office at OR Tambo is short of tenants as the SCAA pulled out during Covid-19. IMAGE: ACSA

the addition of offices and lounge space on the first floor, plus relocation of the security checkpoint and enhancement of the ablution facilities.

Port Elizabeth (now named Gqeberha) with its Chief Dawid Stuurman Airport and nearby George Airport is also slated to undergo terminal expansion over the next two years.

Meanwhile, ACSA has consistently won awards for being one of the best airport management companies in Africa, which is a position Mpofu says she wants to maintain. “In 30 years ACSA has transformed small airport terminal buildings to world-class airport facilities through solid financial footing and a balance sheet that allowed for investors to trust us with their monies. We are among the best-run airports companies on the African continent and state-owned entities in South Africa and we have worked out a path to ensure a predictable growth and profitability trajectory,” Mpofu said.

Key concerns remain the reduction of theft from baggage handling and the safety and security environment around the airports. “We conducted an in-depth investigation to interrogate the entire

baggage handling system. We have eliminated blind spots in the camera system, so the problem then relates primarily to human factors such as a high turnover of staff,” she said. “I’m pleased to be able to report that we have seen the numbers decrease significantly. In 2019 the baggage theft numbers were much higher than they are now.”

ACSA has had a difficult past year with ground-handling companies, which have experienced several mergers and joint ventures which made it difficult to maintain standards with the key service providers that they out-source to. Mpofu said: “The reality is that we operate in an ecosystem that has many role players. Our responsibility is just the coordination of these various players. Sometimes they do not conform as much as we would like to them to.”

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A further key challenge she is focusing on is relationships with the communities that surround the airports. “As an airport, we have a primary responsibility to cater to those communities. We even prioritise them in terms of job creation by making sure that they get any job offers before any outsiders to the community. In Cape Town we have a lot of informal settlements surrounding the airport.

“We have a programme where we do a whole lot of work within those communities, such as providing support for schools and crèches, and we do community service projects such as gardens for job creation. This is in order to mitigate against a potentially hostile situation against the airport.” ▲

CAPE’S INFRASTRUCTURE CRUSADE STARTS TO PAY DIVIDENDS

A scattering of 10 idyllic islands off the west coast of Africa, Cape Verde may not be a major player in the global aviation sector, but it is making significant strides in developing connectivity to boost the island nation’s trade and tourism.

One of the key drivers of the sector growth has been substantial investments in airport infrastructure. Work is due to start early this year on the modernisation and expansion of airports including the main gateway serving Cape Verde, Amilcar Cabral International Airport on Sal Island.

These upgrades follow the finalisation last year of a deal with French airport operator, Vinci Airports, to share a 40-year concession across seven airports in the Cape Verde archipelago, with Portuguese subsidiary Aeroportos de Portugal (ANA).

The deal was secured with €60 million (US\$66 million) funding from the World Bank-IFC, France’s Proparco and Germany’s DEG. In one of Vinci Airports’ first financing



The Sal Island airport is making significant strides. IMAGE: ANA

arrangements of its kind, the funding is linked with sustainability targets, including a progressive reduction in carbon emissions.

The operator described Cape Verde’s airports as having “solid potential” and in line with the sustainability-linked financing framework, is rolling out an environmental action plan including the development of renewable energy production at airports.

Vinci isn’t the only company to have invested in Cape Verde’s aviation sector. Last year also saw global technology and consulting firm,

Indra, implement a far-reaching programme to modernise the country’s air traffic control centres and towers, equipping them with advanced technology to manage air traffic more efficiently.

Given that Cape Verde’s Sal Island oceanic control centre is the final point of contact for aircraft crossing the Atlantic to the US, the renewal of systems “will have an immediate impact on the punctuality of operations at airports in Africa, America and Europe,” said Enrique Castillo, Indra’s ATM sales director. There’s no shortage of carriers lining up to serve the islands either. British leisure operator Tui announced at the end of 2023 it is one of the latest airlines to expand its services from the UK to Boa Vista and Sal.

Meanwhile, Bestfly Cabo Verde’s operations are now back on track following disruptions and cancellations of its services at the end of August, due to supply chain and logistical challenges and a two-day strike by cabin crew in November. ▲

How grounding the grey market can grow business aviation in Nigeria. Albinus Chiedu reports.

TIME TO PUT OUR MINDS TO THE GREY MATTER...

Roland Iyayi, the CEO of Topbrass Aviation, a Nigerian-registered non-scheduled airline, has said that Nigeria’s business aviation subsector has not been able to achieve its full potential.

He said this was because the grey market has been largely allowed to thrive due to inadequate structuring of the market, poor enforcement of regulations and a one-cap-fits-all airline licensing policy.

In an exclusive interview with *African Aerospace*, Iyayi said: “If you have more of the grey market than the licensed operators, how can the market grow?”

“You can’t grow that market because it means that there is a distortion in pricing. The distortion in pricing is a major element, a disincentive for investors to go in there. Those are the fundamental issues that need to be taken up and addressed before talking about whether there is growth or no growth.

“So, we are looking at issues relating to regulations and enforcement of regulations for that sector to be able to record the required growth.”

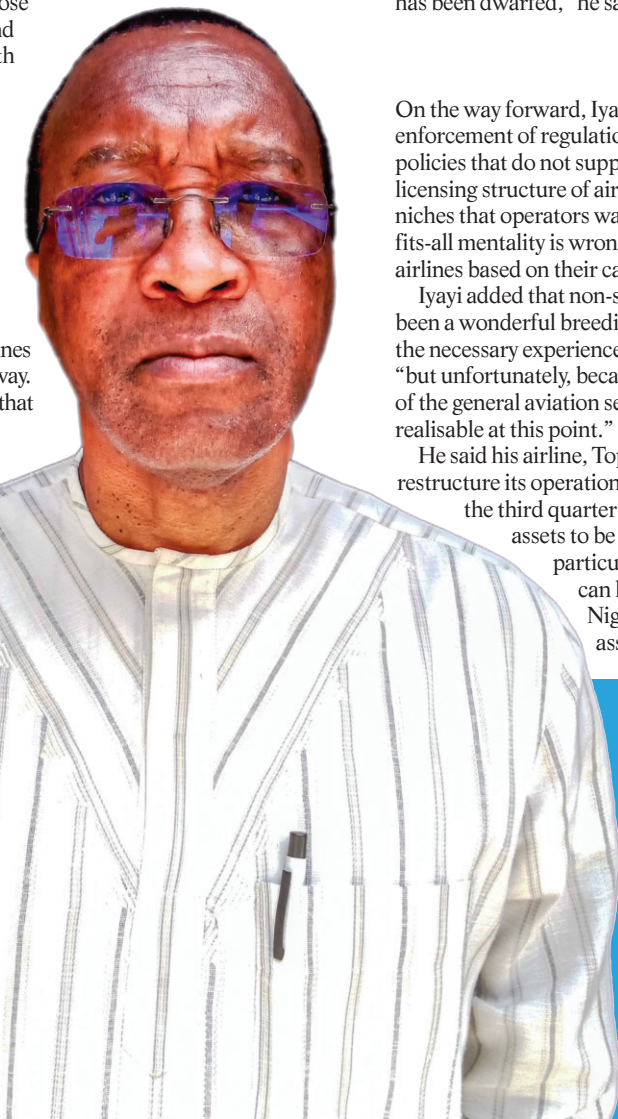
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Iyayi cited a recent case of two incidents occurring at Ibadan airport within a space of few weeks. “No scheduled airline would go into Ibadan because the airport would be closed at a certain time. One of the airlines arrived one particular night and landed short of the runway. Fortunately, the accident was not fatal, but it turned out that the particular airline was not even a licensed operator.

“That is part of the grey market. I can guarantee that the operator would have charged below the market price because they are not paying any taxes to the CAA.

“So, the licensed operators who ordinarily would charge so that they could pay taxes to the CAA are already cut out of the market. The grey market player is going to be taking on the market, undercutting everyone else.

“You can’t see growth when you have such structure. Fundamentally, the structure of the industry is defective and needs to be addressed through regulation and enforcement and until that is done, whatever potential we are talking about today will just be a mirage,” he said.



Iyayi said the huge potentials in the non-scheduled market resides in the fact that scheduled domestic airlines operate regularly to only 11 of the 33 airports in the country and that more elite passengers who have the tendency to patronise non-scheduled airlines would have had more reasons to do so because of the schedule integrity problems of scheduled airlines.

“Ordinarily, that should grow the business aviation sector, but why we have not seen the growth boils down to issues of structure, which is very fundamental,” he emphasised.

“Because the regulator has turned a blind eye to the grey market, the potential of a structured growth in the sector has been dwarfed,” he said.

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On the way forward, Iyayi said: “For things to change, enforcement of regulations is key. We need to review our policies that do not support growth. We must review the licensing structure of airlines to accommodate the different niches that operators want to come into. I think the one-cap-fits-all mentality is wrong. There is a wisdom in licensing airlines based on their categories.”

Iyayi added that non-scheduled operations would have been a wonderful breeding ground for young pilots to get the necessary experience required to move to bigger aircraft “but unfortunately, because it is not yet structured in terms of the general aviation sector in Nigeria, that potential is not realisable at this point.”

He said his airline, Topbrass Aviation has decided to restructure its operations and focus on another niche. “By the third quarter of this year, we are bringing in new assets to be able to exploit those niche markets particularly. We are trying to see how we can leverage our contacts outside Nigeria to be able to access those assets.” ▲

▼ The structure of the industry is defective and needs to be addressed through regulation and enforcement and until that is done, whatever potential we are talking about today will just be a mirage. ▲

ROLAND IYAYI

As head of Virunga National Park's Air Wing programme, Anthony Caere is a pilot with a plan - to protect the park and the animals living in it one flight at a time. **Chloë Greenbank** takes a closer look.

A flight on the wild side

It's not every day you come across a chimpanzee in the cockpit, but for Anthony Caere it's not that unusual. Head of Virunga National Park's (VNP's) Air Wing programme, the 43-year-old Belgian born pilot has been living in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) for the last 11 years.

"I came originally to work as a pilot on a television documentary about flying doctors. It was on this trip that I met the conservationist and anthropologist Emmanuel de Merode, the director of VNP, and we donated the Cessna 206 we were using to his project."

There was one small snag. Merode needed a pilot. "He asked me if I wanted to stay and that was that!" Caere told *African Aerospace*. "We started up VNP's Air Wing with one Cessna 206 to help monitor and protect the park and the wildlife living in it. We now have 10 aircraft, thanks in large part to the support of US-based non-profit organisation, Last Chance for Animals (LCA).

In addition to the Cessna 206, Air Wing's fleet includes a Cessna 182 and Bat Hawk aircraft.

Designed with surveillance and conservation work in mind, the Bat Hawk's half open cockpit is similar to that of a helicopter and provides excellent forward visibility either side of the cockpit.

Alongside a handful of expats, some of VNP's rangers have now also been trained as pilots. "Following a rigorous selection process, we currently have three Congolese pilots working for the Air Wing.

"We're also looking to build additional airstrips and incorporate modern technology in our aerial surveillance work, including the use of Artificial Intelligence to help identify, gather and analyse data on wildlife populations more efficiently."

As head of the Air Wing, Caere's typical day involves a fair amount of administration and scheduling of flight operations. He is also tasked with overseeing maintenance of the Bat Hawks and securing spare parts.

Given the Bat Hawks ability to land in remote locations on air strips of just 250-300m long, the aircraft are also used to transport equipment and supplies, as well as for medical evacuations.

Caere noted that medical emergencies can range from



HEALTH CAERE: Anthony Caere in the cockpit with chimps (top and bottom) and gorilla (centre).
IMAGES: LCA AIR WING / ANTHONY CAERE

rescuing rangers from rebel attacks to injuries from snake bites.

"Time is of the essence when getting these victims to safety, so medevac services are at the core of our work," he said, revealing he has lost 72 colleagues in the last 11 years.

Some of the aircraft are also equipped with a large DJI - Matrice drone and cameras which are used to take pictures every three to five seconds of the ground below. These thousands of images are then stitched together to provide a crystal-clear, high-definition image of the park.

"We often rescue orphaned infant chimpanzees. They are traumatised, as most if not all of their family will have been killed in order to get just one baby, which if

it's smuggled out of the country can be sold for as much as US\$20,000.

"So, before we fly them off to safety, we spend time with them to form a bond and keep them calm.

"They are like human babies, so once you've built up that trust, it's easy to wrap them in a blanket and keep them safe and warm in the cockpit with you," he said.

Being an Air Wing pilot in VNP is certainly not for the faint hearted. "We operate in extremely challenging and frequently dangerous situations," said Caere. "Often the airstrips themselves are short and difficult to land on."

Given his time again, would Caere have pursued a more conventional career as a commercial pilot? "Since I was a child, the only thing I ever wanted was to fly and work with animals. So, for me my work is a dream come true."

It's a job he was clearly destined for as he concluded: "Nothing is more enjoyable than flying a Bat Hawk at a low altitude over the VNP with a big herd of elephants below, the sun setting on the horizon and music blasting through my Bose headset!" ▲

Regional security challenges are the main concern for Morocco's armed forces and it obtained increased access to defence technology thanks to improving defence ties with France and the United States, and has received military training and equipment from both. **David Oliver** reports.

The Belgian Orizio Group's subsidiary Sabca Maroc has been modernising the Moroccan Air Force Alpha Jet fleet.
IMAGE: DAVID OLIVER



In addition, some of the major MRO companies in Morocco have established training centres to enhance the skills of their workforce.

The Belgian Orizio Group, formerly the Blueberry Group, has been operating in Morocco since 2012 through its subsidiary Sabca Maroc, which recently announced its investment of more than €17 million (US\$18.6 million) in the construction of a new 16,000 square metre facility, which will house Pilatus, Airbus and Dassault aerostructure assembly lines in the Nouaceur area. It also participated, in co-operation with the Moroccan Air Force, to the modernisation of its fleet of Dassault Mirage F1C/E and Alpha Jet training aircraft.

Boost for Moroccan aerospace industry

Morocco's relative stability has attracted western defence companies such as Airbus, Safran and Thales to establish aerospace manufacturing and servicing facilities in the country.

The aerospace industry sector currently accounts for some 142 companies with 17,000 employees that have a turnover of around US\$2 billion in exports. In 2020, Morocco's aerospace industry ranked 36th globally and third in the Middle East and Africa region.

The Moroccan government has actively supported the development of the aerospace industry, implementing initiatives and offering incentives to attract foreign investors. The government has also invested in infrastructure development, including the creation of aerospace industry clusters like the Midparc Free Zone near Casablanca.



The Moroccan government has also placed an emphasis on developing the infrastructure and resources necessary to attract maintenance, repair and overhaul (MRO) companies to its Technopark in Casablanca and the Mohammed VI Tanger-Tech City, being built by the China Communications Construction Company (CCCC).

In 2018 the French aircraft manufacturer Daher invested €15 million (US\$16.4 million) in its third plant in Morocco in the Tanger Free Zone, near the airport. It supports production for international aerospace programmes partnered by Daher and provides a platform to meet the needs of customers like Airbus Commercial Aircraft, Airbus Helicopters and Dassault.

A joint venture, Maintenance Aero Maroc (MAM), was formed between Morocco, Lockheed Martin and the Orizio Group in 2022, to carry out MRO of Moroccan Air Force Lockheed Martin F-16C/Ds and C-130H Hercules. This project represents an additional development of the Orizio Group in the Kingdom of Morocco.

The partnership includes the construction of a 15,000 square metre maintenance, repair, overhaul and upgrade (MRO&U) centre for military aircraft and helicopters at Benslimane Airport for the first time and supports the creation of up to 300 jobs.



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In 2021 Morocco confirmed a US4.25 billion contract for 24 Boeing AH-64E Apache attack helicopters. Deliveries will begin in 2024 and Morocco has an option for 12 additional helicopters. The Moroccan Administration of National Defense and Boeing signed an industrial agreement in February 2023 as part of the extension of the acquisition programme of AH-64 Apache Helicopters. Boeing is already a partner of the MATIS Aerospace joint venture which produces aircraft wire bundles and harnesses in Morocco.

In June 2023, Pratt & Whitney Canada launched an affiliate, Pratt & Whitney Maroc, and is building a new facility in Casablanca's MidParc Free Zone that will cover an area of 150,000 square feet. According to Pratt & Whitney it will be built according to state-of-the-art efficiency principles, both in terms of quality and cost, employ up to 200 staff and is due to open in 2025. The components factory would allow the company to increase its presence and strengthen its relationship with its customers and partners in the region. ▲

While Africa is one of the biggest markets for Embraer's commercial arm, it still has challenges in the region with access to financing being a big problem.

Marcelle Nethersole finds out more.

What we need is purchase power...

Embraer has more than 285 aircraft with over 75 operators across Africa, making it one of its biggest markets.

"We have managed this as we have all aircraft types in Africa, all the way up from the Embraer EMB 120, which was our traditional twin-turboprop 30-passenger commuter airliner, up to the Embraer ERJ family, including the 135, 140 and 145, and the E1 and E2 family which are the most popular aircraft family in Africa as it's available more readily through lessors.

"There's an aftermarket for it from a lot of the E1s that essentially have been passed from North Africa and European operators," said Akie Chhabra, Sub Saharan Africa and Southern Africa sales director for Embraer commercial aviation.

Nigerian carrier Air Peace currently operates the E2, where last year it commenced two non-stop weekly flights from Lagos to Johannesburg, lasting six hours.



However, Chhabra, explained that Embraer still encounters hurdles in Africa which he said is mainly due to lack of access to financing.

"As an OEM, we are finding access to financing a problem in the region, in respect to the fact that if you're looking to buy aircraft, or, lease aircraft, it can be quite heavy on your balance sheet.

"So, to preserve financial sustainability, a lot of the operators don't typically go immediately into the buying solution because you need access to funds for that.

"We need to open up source markets for them to be able to get these funds and for them to be able to actually invest in the acquisition of new aircraft as well as used aircraft.

"We need banks, exporting agencies, and credit agencies to be a little bit more used to the fact that they need to finance new aircraft in Africa. And if we can find more and more financing partners, then I feel like we could bridge that gap that currently exists in some of the financing aspects."

Chhabra said the second barrier to entry is the need to work with governments for certifications.

"The E2 is type-certified in certain countries where it can



Akie Chhabra: "We need banks, exporting agencies, and credit agencies to be a little bit more used to the fact that they need to finance new aircraft in Africa."

IMAGE: MARCELLE NETHERSOLE

operate within Africa," he explained. "But if we are looking to bring in the E2 aircraft to other countries we have to sit down with their governments, and their civil aviation authorities to type rate the aircraft, and that process can take anything between three months, six months or 12 all the way up to two years. So, that might delay the entry of an E2 aircraft into the continent."



Chhabra added that aviation events, such as AFBAA and Aviation Africa are "great stepping-stones" to helping bridge that gap.

"Such events are a great incubator and good ecosystem to bring everyone together," he said.

"We need to have these conversations and align customers with the banks in the lessons of these kinds of events, because it's very easy to facilitate an introduction between the two and get the conversation going.

"In fact, at Aviation Africa in Abuja last year, we actually did manage to close two transactions. Those were with Overland and with Air Peace for the E175. E1 aircraft variants, which is an aircraft that we still produce very actively for the North American markets.

"But we're also trying to grow the presence of the E175 in the African market now, because it's a really comfortable aircraft for this region market, and it replaces your traditional turboprops like the ATR72," Chhabra concluded. ▲

Rwanda is officially the 19th member of the Agency for Aerial Navigation Safety in Africa and Madagascar or ASECNA (L'Agence pour la Sécurité de la Navigation aérienne en Afrique et à Madagascar), since last January. Its director general Mohamed Moussa told Anuradha Deenapanray Chappard that this will further strengthen the agency's footprint as it pursues its efforts to bring new solutions, enhance airworthiness and boost integration within African skies.

Rwanda joins ASECNA's roadmap

According to Mohamed Moussa, Rwanda's accession will open up new perspectives. "It will also enrich the vision and practices for the governance and operation of our air navigation services.

"It is the culmination of a long process and above all the crowning achievement of a vision carried by ASECNA for almost 15 years; that of a Single Sky for Africa within the framework of a reinforced cooperative management of airspace."

This form of management should lead to the standardisation of regulations and procedures for training and operating services throughout the African continent.

According to ICAO, the next 20 years will be a period of transformational change for the aviation sector, especially for air traffic management (ATM) and flight operations.

Satellite navigation is the future of global civil aviation and ASECNA, which is at the forefront of technological development, carries the ambitions of Africa in this field, respectful of all required safety and sustainability objectives.



"Our ambition for 2024 is to strengthen and consolidate what we have achieved. We will continue to deploy all continent-wide projects, including the African Flight Procedures Program FPP/AFI office. This programme is of paramount importance for African civil aviation in view of the forecasts of air traffic growth on the continent in the coming years," said Moussa.

ICAO has chosen ASECNA to host the programme.

The agency will also focus on a Satellite-Based Augmentation System (SBAS) for Africa and the Indian Ocean initiative. SBAS, known as Augmented Navigation for Africa (ANGA), is similar to the European Geostationary Navigation Overlay System (EGNOS).

It will provide a safety-of-life service enabling the safe use of GPS signals for air navigation during all phases of flight, from en-route to landing. It will thus improve the safety and



Rwanda Foreign Minister Vincent Biruta (right) and Mohamed Moussa, Director General of ASECNA, at the signing.

IMAGE: ASECNA

efficiency of flights, while reducing their negative impact on the environment. The system will also offer an open service with a higher accuracy performance than standard GNSS systems.

The services provided will comply with ICAO standards and recommended practices and will be compatible with SBAS avionics already deployed in fleets of commercial aircraft.

"Beyond the political and operational challenge for ASECNA to have its own means to improve and secure air traffic management, ANGA will take up a major technical challenge.

"It is the first system of its kind to be deployed in the equatorial zone, and as such it is the first SBAS in the world to provide a service despite ionospheric disturbances that are at their maximum around the equator," pointed out Mohamed Moussa.

The implementation of SBAS with community capacity is a further step towards building a uniform sky for Africa. ▲

IMAGE: ASECNA



▲ ALL IN A DAY

Alcinda Pereira

Marcelle Nethersole speaks to the chair of AfBAA and co-founder of Angola's Bestfly.

How does it feel to be the first woman to lead AfBAA?

As the first woman to lead AfBAA in the association's history, I feel honoured and excited about the opportunity to make a positive impact.

My goals include promoting diversity and inclusion within the aviation industry, empowering women in leadership roles, and advocating for the growth and development of executive aviation in Africa. I am committed to fostering collaboration among industry stakeholders and driving innovation to enhance the industry's overall sustainability and success.

How will you face business aviation challenges in your role?

The business aviation industry in Africa faces several challenges, including regulatory barriers, infrastructure limitations, safety concerns, and access to financing.

As the president of AfBAA, I can address these challenges by advocating for regulatory reforms to streamline processes and enhance safety standards, collaborating with governments and stakeholders to improve infrastructure and airport facilities, promoting training and professional development programmes to ensure a skilled workforce, and facilitating access to funding and investment opportunities for business aviation projects.

How will you encourage more collaboration between AfBAA members?

I plan to implement various strategies and initiatives. These include organising regular networking events, workshops, and conferences where members can connect, share ideas, and build partnerships. I also aim to establish online platforms and forums for communication and collaboration, provide opportunities for mentorship and knowledge-sharing among members, and facilitate joint projects and initiatives that benefit the entire business aviation community.

I recognise the importance of collaboration among AfBAA members in driving innovation and growth in the business aviation industry. To encourage more collaboration, I plan to create a structured framework that promotes communication and interaction among members. This framework may include the establishment of specialised working groups or task forces focused on key industry issues, where members can contribute their expertise and work together towards common goals.

Furthermore, I aim to organise regular networking events, workshops, and conferences that bring members together for face-to-face interactions and relationship-building.

“To encourage more collaboration, I plan to create a structured framework that promotes communication and interaction among members.”

How is business for Bestfly?

Bestfly has established itself as a leading provider of aviation services in Angola, offering a wide range of services including aircraft management, charter flights, ground handling, and maintenance services.

Business has been thriving. The company has built a loyal client base of corporate clients, government agencies, and private individuals who rely on Bestfly for their aviation needs. Bestfly's commitment to safety, quality, and efficiency has set it apart in the market and contributed to its continued success.

The company is constantly evolving and expanding its services to meet the changing needs of the aviation industry. Bestfly is investing in technology and infrastructure upgrades to enhance operational efficiency and customer experience. The company is also exploring new market opportunities and partnerships to further grow its business and reach new customers.

Additionally, Bestfly is focusing on sustainability and environmental responsibility, implementing initiatives to reduce its carbon footprint and promote eco-friendly practices in its operations.

What does a typical work-day involve for you?

In my busy roles as the president of AfBAA and co-founder of Angola's Bestfly aviation operator and ground handling service, a typical day for me involves a diverse range of responsibilities and activities.

I start my morning routine that may include exercise and reviewing my schedule with my husband Nuno Pereira and priorities for the day.

With AfBAA; I attend meetings with AfBAA board members, government officials, and industry stakeholders to discuss strategic initiatives, policy advocacy, and collaboration opportunities. I may lead working groups or task forces focused on key industry issues, driving projects and initiatives that benefit AfBAA members and the aviation community.

I also participate in industry conferences, events, and speaking engagements to represent AfBAA and promote the interests of the business aviation sector in Africa.

With Bestfly, I oversee operations, including aircraft management, charter flights and ground handling services. I meet with the management team to review performance metrics, operational efficiency, and customer feedback, identifying areas for improvement and growth.

Overall, my typical day is dynamic, fast-paced, and multifaceted, requiring a balance of leadership, operational management, strategic thinking, and relationship-building to succeed in my busy roles in the business aviation sector, but always focus on customer service, my company - and my family that always supports me!



IMAGE: AfBAA



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