

African Airlines on the Rise



Air transport has become an increasingly important issue throughout Africa. For tourism and much of business, it is vital. The continent is vast and traveling by railways or roads takes too long. Thus, it is very important that governments of African countries support quick expansion of air transport.

The African Airline Association (AFRAA) wants the African Union to speed up implementation of the Yamoussoukro Declaration (YD) to ensure open skies and more cooperation between airlines. They also see a need to remove intra-African travel barriers, such as restrictive visa policies, and suggest that African Diplomatic Passports be established to facilitate movement of staff working for African continental organizations. One difficulty is that, for many African nations, tourism does not rank high in their government's budgetary priorities.

Nonetheless, airline industries are expanding in Africa and growth forecast for next year is 6.3%. This is expected to continue as the African population is due to reach 1.12 billion in 2020 and GDP should rise by five per cent per annum. According to Mike Gray, President of Uniglobe Travel, a worldwide tour and travel franchise, it is necessary to attract investors to the airline industry to accelerate growth in the sector. He also said that there are too few routes in the continent compared to Europe and North America. Mr. Gray said travel and tour firms must ensure they hire qualified personnel as the industry was highly dependent on trained manpower.

Date: 2007-04-10

Article link: <http://www.tourism-review.com/african-airlines-on-the-rise-news275>