

**JOINT STATEMENT OF THE MEETING BETWEEN DR AMANI ABOU-ZEID, COMMISSIONER FOR INFRASTRUCTURE AND ENERGY AND AFRICAN AMBASSADORS TO THE INTERNATIONAL CIVIL AVIATION ORGANIZATION -ICAO ON THE NEED TO SUPPORT THE CONTINENTAL STRATEGY ON COVID-19**

1. The Commissioner for Infrastructure and Energy H.E. Dr Amani Abou-Zeid and the African Ambassadors to the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) met via video conference to discuss the urgent actions needed to contain the spread of COVID-19 and the continental strategy to assist Africa's air transport industry during the recovery period.
2. They discussed issues central to the urgent need to maintain the supply chain for drugs; medical equipment and food supplies to facilitate the humanitarian assistance missions to AU member States being organized by the AfricaCDC, the World Food Programme (WFP) and the World Health Organization (WHO) in the efforts to support the effective implementation of the continental strategy on COVID-19 approved by the Extraordinary Summit of the AU Heads of State held on 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2020.
3. H.E Commissioner of Infrastructure and Energy informed the Ambassadors that the AUC is working with AFCAC, ICAO and other key African air transport stakeholders to ensure that all AU Member States keep airports open and maintain air navigation services for cargo flights and humanitarian assistance in order to maintain the supply chain for delivery of the important medical and food supplies and laboratory testing kits. She further informed the Ambassadors that AUC is also working with ICAO and AFCAC to develop an Africa-focused economic assessment of the impact of COVID-19 to the air transport industry.
4. The Ambassadors expressed their commitment to support the African Union Commission and the key African air transport stakeholders in the ongoing efforts to implement the continental strategy on COVID-19.
5. The Ambassadors agreed to work together with the AUC to analyze all necessary actions to contain COVID-19 pandemic and adopt a recovery plan for Africa's air transport industry by working closely with ICAO regional offices, other key air transport stakeholders (AFCAC, AFRAA, IATA AFRICA, ACI AFRICA, CANSO AFRICA, ASCECNA AND, *inter alia*) and the Member States, to ensure compliance with the requirement to keep the airspace and airports open for critical cargo flights and humanitarian assistance as communicated through ICAO State letters.
6. They agreed to work together to develop and implement the relief measures to help the air transport industry recover from the negative impact of COVID-19 pandemic, in a well-coordinated framework involving the key air transport stakeholders.
7. They exchanged views of the possible recovery measures to support the air transport industry and H.E Commissioner emphasized the need to consider Island States in the post-

COVID-19 recovery process as they rely very much on air transport to develop their trade and tourism sectors.

8. The Ambassadors appreciated the AUC initiative to develop an African- focused economic impact assessment of COVID-19 pandemic to Air Transport industry and expressed their readiness to play a leading role in the process.