



## **Support African Airlines Urges Development Expert**

Banjul, 25 May 2010 -- Africa's airline systems were branded "colonial and cold war remnants" stunting the continent's progress by a development specialist who called on African governments to urge international donors to actively support Africa's airline industry.

Speaking to the African Travel Association Congress, which drew ministers and some 300 delegates to the capital of The Gambia, Lelei LeLaulu, co-chairman of Innovation for Sustainable Development Centre, said the current airline route systems "were designed by former colonial powers to fly Africa's riches and ex-patriots to their colonial capitals - - and were further exacerbated by the East-West divisions of the Cold War."

"These route systems have rarely served Africa's real needs -- and as a result going from West to East on the continent often requires transiting through a European capital," he observed.

"Africa will not develop its full potential until these remnants of colonialism and the Cold War are sorted out," added LeLaulu, who is also an advisor to CDC Development Solutions.

LeLaulu who was involved in setting up sustainable tourism projects in Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, urged that "airline transport systems in Africa be recognized as integral parts of infrastructure -- just like terrestrial highways, causeways and bridges."

"Infrastructure is essentially a means of sharing the wealth -- and that is precisely why airlines should be treated as Aerial Highways sharing the burgeoning global tourism receipts with the continent," he asserted.

Furthermore, cautioned LeLaulu, "without aerial highways transporting Africa's goods and services to global markets, many of our economies will wallow in the backwaters of the world economy."

LeLaulu, also chairman of the Leadership Council of George Washington University's Tourism and Hospitality Management Department in the School of Business, urged African governments to proactively support airlines serving the continent with subsidies, "and by buying large blocks of airplane seats for government travelers, in advance."

"International donors like the World Bank, International Monetary Fund and bi-lateral supporters understand, and respond to, infrastructural needs and there is none more in need than aerial highways," opined LeLaulu.

### **About African Travel Association (ATA)**

The Africa Travel Association was established as an international travel industry trade association in 1975 to promote travel, tourism and transport to and within Africa, and to strengthen intra-Africa partnerships. ATA provides services to a broad range of members including: tourism, diaspora, culture, and sports ministers, tourism boards, airlines, hoteliers, travel agents, tour operators, travel trade media, public relations firms, consulting companies, non-profit organizations, businesses, small and medium-sized enterprises, and other organizations engaged in tourism promotion.

### **About Innovation for Sustainable Development Centre (ISDC)**

Innovation for Sustainable Development is a non-profit US company which is focused on sustainable businesses, communities and environment. Its objective is to be a catalyst facilitating sustainability and carbon neutrality through learning, dialog, innovation, research, investment and partnership amongst cross-sector tourism stakeholder players. The focus is to find common grounds that meet the stakeholders' interests and facilitate the implementation of their initiatives and investments that foster responsible tourism related job creation, trade, preservation of culture and environment, and enhancing the economy of disadvantaged communities. Tourism stakeholders from government, NGO, travel & tourism industries, financial sector, academia, commerce & trade, facilities & infrastructure development, IT & communications, and science & medicine have the opportunity to interact and learn through global online communities and forums, as well as in person events.

For further information

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