**CLOSING REMARKS BY UGANDA CIVIL AVIATION AUTHORITY’S AG. DG, MS OLIVE BIRUNGI LUMONYA, AT THE STAKEHOLDER’S CONSULTATIVE MEETING HELD ON APRIL 26, 2023 AT MESTIL HOTEL IN KAMPALA.**

**The Minister of Works and Transport**

**Officials from the Ministry**

**Our esteemed aviation industry stakeholders**

**Ladies and gentlemen**

Uganda being land-linked / land-locked, Air Transport plays a critical role in facilitating trade, tourism and communication for the country and beyond.

With the aviation industry emerging from an unprecedent crisis of COVID-19 Pandemic, it is incumbent upon us to adapt to ways that accelerate recovery as well as build resilience in case of similar challenges in future.

It is therefore important for Uganda to develop a practical, effective stakeholder led and owned National Civil Aviation Policy to guide and steer the industry forward.

In addition, the Single African Air Transport Market (SAATM) is one of the mechanisms designed to liberalize air transport in Africa by lifting restrictions on market access.

This initiative is expected to propel the growth of air transport industry in Africa and improve on our current global passenger share of 2.1% of the 4.5 billion international passengers through:

* Increased frequencies
* Improved connectivity
* Enhanced passenger choice
* Reduced Air Fares.

As indicated by the presenters, Uganda has done a lot to liberalize the air transport industry through the following initiatives:

* Multiple designation of airlines
* Unlimited frequencies
* Unlimited Capacity
* Grant of 5th freedom traffic right on case by case basis
* Full liberalization of Cargo services.

Further to the above, several efforts are under way, including this consultative workshop, to review tariffs and air fares within the EAC region to boost the growth of air passenger traffic.

Our Stakeholders, the Authority wishes to reiterate its commitment to the growth and development of air transport in Uganda through the following efforts, among others:

* Expansion and upgrade of airport and air navigation infrastructure
* Ensuring compliance with aviation safety and security requirements
* Stimulation of air traffic for Uganda’s airports

Some of the other recent developments at Entebbe International Airport include the following, among others;

* Automation and modernization of Entebbe International Airport, a USD 9.5 million project implemented in conjunction with the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) and commissioned in September 2022.
* As part of the re-modification of the current passenger terminal building, expansion of the departures area was completed and part of it is already in use, awaiting opening of the major entrance to the building so that departing passengers are dropped-off by the entrance to the terminal building later this year. An arrivals component of the project is also being worked on to create more room and ambience for departing passengers.

On completion of all the above infrastructural upgrade projects, terminal building capacity will be enhanced from the current capacity of 2 million passengers a year to at least 3.5 million passengers by July 2024.

Passenger traffic through Entebbe International Airport has been growing steadily as the airport recovers from the adverse effects of COVID-19 on the aviation industry. In February 2023, Entebbe recorded 66,565 arriving passengers and 73,217 departing passengers, a total of 139,782 passengers, which is an average of 4,992 per day up from the average of 4,818 per day recorded in January 2023. In 2022, the total number of passengers was 1,574,405 compared to 1.8 million international passengers in 2019, before the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic. This represents an 87% level of recovery.

61,066 metric tonnes of cargo were handled through Entebbe International Airport in 2022. In February, 2023, the airport handled 1,662 imports and 3,653 exports, a total of 5,315 metric tons in one month.

UCAA is currently undertaking a review of the Entebbe International Airport Master Plan, and I am sure that the process will benefit from your expertise as we plan to continually engage you.

On behalf of UCAA, I wish to commend you for your valuable contributions during this consultative workshop on the draft National Civil Aviation Policy, Single African Air Transport Market (SAATM) and modalities of reduction of tariffs and air fares in the EAC Region.

We shall ensure that the valuable feedback you have given us will be incorporated in the Policies.

I wish you all journey mercies. Thank you for coming. God Bless You.