The Future of Civil Aviation in Africa:
Restructuring and Social Dialogue

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Working Papers are preliminary documents circulated
to stimulate discussion and comment

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Sectoral Activities Department

The Sectoral Activities Department is part of the ILO Social Dialogue Sector. Its objective is to promote social dialogue at the sectoral level and to facilitate the exchange of information among the ILO’s constituents on labour and social developments concerning particular economic sectors. One of its means of action is practically oriented research on topical sectoral issues. This publication is an outcome of that research.

The particular characteristics of the various primary, manufacturing and service sectors account for the different form taken in them by issues such as globalization, flexible work organization, industrial relations, the implications of structural and technological change, trends in the number and nature of jobs, and the situation of special groups such as children and women workers. The Sectoral Activities Department is the ILO’s interface with its constituents at the sectoral level.

Continuing attention is given to 22 industries or sectors dealing with:

- Industrial activities (extractive, rural, manufacturing, construction);
- Maritime industries (shipping, fishing);
- Services (commerce; financial and professional services, media, culture, graphical industries, post and communications, education; health, public service, utilities, rail, road and air transport, hotels and tourism).

These sectors are vital in virtually all national economies. Issues concerning other sectors or subsectors are addressed on an ad hoc basis.

The principal activities of the Sectoral Activities Department are a mix of the development and undertaking of constituent-driven practical action programmes in various sectors in a number of countries, and the holding of international sectoral meetings that provide a forum for discussion and an exchange of views on current issues in the sector concerned. These activities are generally tripartite, with equal participation by governments, employers and workers. Where the government is the predominant employer, however, participation reflects this. From time to time, specialized meetings of experts are held. An outcome of most meetings is agreed conclusions that serve as guidelines for policies and measures for dealing with the issues and problems – at the national level and by the ILO.
The Department undertakes follow-up activities to these meetings and provides various forms of technical assistance, including the promotion of tripartite sectoral social dialogue on priority labour issues at national level, and the provision of advisory services on sectoral labour issues. It also collects, analyses and disseminates technical sectoral information and carries out studies, such as this one, on issues of concern to particular sectors of groups of sectors.
Preface

In January 2002, the ILO Tripartite Meeting on Civil Aviation: Social and Safety Consequences of the Crisis subsequent to 11 September 2001 (Geneva, January 2002) recommended that the ILO should further investigate the impact of the ‘9/11’ and other events on civil aviation in developing countries and disseminate the results. The basis for this recommendation was the fact that the documents for the Meeting, prepared by the Office, provided relatively little information on the situation of civil aviation in other parts of the world when compared with North America and Europe, for which a wealth of information is readily available.

The ILO’s Sectoral Activities Department therefore commissioned in 2003 a study on Civil Aviation in Latin and Central America: the employment and social consequences of restructuring after 11 September 2001. The study served as the background document for a tripartite workshop (San José, Costa Rica, 5-7 May 2003). The objectives of the workshop were to (a) strengthen the knowledge of the Office, the participants and their organizations about the situation of civil aviation in the region; (b) study good social practices in the region and elsewhere; and (c) prepare a plan of action for the promotion of social dialogue and decent work in the industry in the region. The conclusions of this workshop are available on the ILO Transport Sector website in English, French, Spanish and Arabic (www.ilo.org/public/english/dialogue/sector/sectors/transp.htm).

In 2004, the Department commissioned a study on The Future of Civil Aviation in Africa: restructuring and social dialogue. The study was to serve as the background document for a tripartite workshop – with identical objectives to the Latin American meeting– scheduled to be held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from 13 – 15 April 2005, but this workshop was cancelled due to low participation. The Sectoral Activities Department has nevertheless decided to make the working paper available to constituents in the hope that it will stimulate action on the issue.

The first part of the present study reviews the recent global developments in the industry. It analyses transport policies in Africa before focusing on civil aviation in the region, including its structure, operators, markets and possible future developments. It discusses the impact of the Yamoussoukro Decision while a separate chapter analyses questions of safety and security. The second part of the study discusses issues confronting the industry in Africa such as alliances, low-cost airlines, restructuring; employment, gender, disadvantaged groups, stress and HIV/AIDS; wages, terminal benefits, training, licensing; restructuring and social dialogue. It gives some examples of what could be considered as good practices. Two recent cases of social dialogue in the industry are
included in Annex I, while Annex II provides data tables on civil aviation in Africa.

It is hoped that this study, which was carried out by Bert Essenberg of EpeConsult in the Netherlands, will help to promote action to soften the impact of the restructuring of the industry in Africa, and complement work being carried out by the ILO and other organizations at various levels to assist the industry to recover and to safeguard employment in the transport sector in Africa.

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Part I: The industry

1. Recent global developments

Air transport, including civil aviation, is one of the world’s most important services. Its development and its technical and service achievements make air transport one of the great contributors to the advancement of modern society.

Air transport is a labour-intensive service industry. More than 3.9 million people are directly employed by the industry throughout the world. Although information technology has enabled the industry to automate many tasks, air transport nevertheless remains a service business with custumers requiring personal attention. More than one-third of the revenue generated by airlines goes to pay the workforce.

Three interlinked developments are combining to transform the structure of the industry in a period of unprecedented change:

- the progressive liberalization of the product market,
- the drive to increase private participation in publicly-owned airlines and other operations and services, and
- the accelerated pursuit of globalization by the management of airlines, in terms of both product market and labour market.

Developments in recent years have, once again, demonstrated that there is no such thing as a global, homogeneous airline industry. Very different influences and factors in different parts of the world, be they economic, regulatory or even social and cultural, create different operating environments and ultimately, different financial results.

In early 2003, most airlines were beginning to recover from the losses they suffered in 2001 and 2002. Then, in the first quarter of 2003, the industry was hit by what the Director-General of the International Air Transport Association (IATA), Giovanni Bisignani, called the “Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse”: ¹ war, a weak economy, international insecurity and the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS). Never before in its history had the airline industry been hit with so many negative factors out of its control. By May 2004, the situation was not perfect but looked more positive than a year earlier. Passenger traffic was improving and in most markets it was back to pre-9/11 levels, but US carrier international traffic in 2003 was still almost 13 per cent below 2000 levels. For many

1 IATA: Leading change - Giovanni Bisignani, Director-General & CEO, IATA, speaking at the International Aviation Club Washington, DC, 20 April 2004, www.iata.org
airlines cargo was a financial lifeline, helping to counterbalance the bewildering changes in the passenger business. But the escalation in fuel prices produced another massive loss for the industry. According to IATA, airlines carried 1.8 billion passengers in 2004, up 14 per cent from 2003. But surging fuel prices drove airline losses to US$5 billion, pushing up total losses over the past four years to US$35 billion. In 2004, fuel costs soared to US$62 billion, US$15 billion more than in 2003.²

Preliminary traffic figures for 2004, released by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), show a strong recovery over 2003 for scheduled traffic of the world’s airlines, as measured in tonne-kilometres performed.³ World passenger traffic in terms of passenger-kilometres performed increased by about 14 per cent in total (domestic and international combined) and 15 per cent on international services over 2003. On a regional basis, strong growth was again shown by the airlines in the Middle East, followed by the airlines in Asia/Pacific that, in 2003, were negatively affected by the outbreak of SARS in that region. The growth rate for airlines in North America was similar to the world average, while airlines from Europe, Africa and Latin America showed strong increases that were nevertheless below the world average.⁴


³ A tonne-kilometre is a combined measure of passenger, freight and mail traffic which also takes into account distance flown.

2. **Transport policies in Africa**

“The there is no gainsaying the fact that Africa lacks basic infrastructure in many sectors, including transport, compared to the industrialized world. The gap in infrastructure constitutes a serious handicap to economic growth and poverty reduction on the continent of Africa. Improved infrastructure could - and would - transform the continent into an investors’ haven.”

President Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria
Address to the African Ministerial Forum on Integrated Transport in Africa
10 March 2003

African policy makers have recognized that the economic development of the continent depends on safe, affordable and reliable transport infrastructure and services that are planned at national, subregional and regional levels. Provision of functioning transport services constitutes a necessary precondition for Africa’s economic growth as recognized by the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD) and other initiatives for the development of the continent.

The lack of an adequate transport infrastructure and services remains an impediment to the development of international and intra-African trade. The continent is mostly served by relatively small (both in size and number) and fewer privately operated enterprises working under poor operational conditions, facing higher risk and costs. The parastatal enterprises established after independence have shown their limitations and are in most cases under severe financial constraint, mismanaged and lack appropriate human resources. Africa’s transport costs are among the highest in the world.

The *Transport in Africa* Platform of Action recognizes that there is a need to develop integrated transport systems to provide the continent with safe, reliable, efficient and affordable infrastructure and services so as to promote regional integration, address the needs of the poor, reduce the impact of HIV/AIDS, empower women, underpin economic growth and enhance Africa’s position in global markets.5

The NEPAD *Blueprint for a transport infrastructure in Africa* recommends that (a) African countries should be encouraged to provide regional transport links in the forms of road, rail, and air


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modes. Given the capital-intensive nature of transport infrastructure, a public-private sector partnership (PPP) should be adopted, which should focus on concessioning to allow the transport system to fund itself for sustainability. Effective capacity building and training programmes should be initiated and implemented through institutional cooperation and technical assistance. Finally, African countries should initiate appropriate regulations that will enhance among others safety and security measures in transport. The NEPAD vision is based on the need to bridge the infrastructure gap and to increase air passenger and freight linkages across Africa’s subregions. This could be achieved through the promotion of PPPs in the rationalization of the airline industry and building capacity for air traffic control.

The 13th session of the Maghreb Council of Transport Ministers (Gammarth, Tunisia, 25-26 January 2005) agreed to strengthen commercial cooperation between the region’s airlines as well as to strengthen cooperation and collaboration in areas such as training, maintenance and air navigation. The ministers also discussed the coordination of their efforts to implement the Convention on the liberalization of air transport between Arab countries.

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3. Civil aviation in Africa

“The African client is the one who is the least provided for, and the one who pays the most for his transport.”

Mr. Zinsou, African Union Commissioner for Infrastructure and Energy
Le Soleil, Dakar, December 2004

(a) Structure

African countries started to participate in the aviation industry in a period when relations were based on the principles of bilateralism and reciprocity embedded in the Convention on International Civil Aviation (Chicago, 1944). They established national airlines as flag carriers, which had dual and contradictory missions such as profitability and social development. Until the late 1970s, African airlines performed relatively well, sharing their markets more or less equitably with the European carriers. The 1980s saw the arrival of charter companies, based on focused markets, with essentially tourist clients, not subject to bilateralism.

Civil aviation in Africa has been plagued by a series of problems. The establishment of over 50 non-physical barriers has limited access to air transport markets in Africa resulting in small markets for small airlines, high costs of air transport because of the lack of competition and the lack of cooperation between airlines and air space regulatory authorities. In addition, many airlines were plagued by government interference in daily running of their operations and the fact that training has not been a priority for enterprises. Due to the debt situation of many African countries, governments have been forced to review their role. They are now looking for better policies, reduction or abolition of subsidies, increased private sector participation, as well as the establishment of autonomous institutions to regulate the industry free of government interference.

Opening the 36th General Assembly of the Association of African Air Carriers (AFRAA) in Dakar in December 2004, the Prime Minister of Senegal dressed a somber picture of the situation of air traffic on the continent. He said that African governments had recognized the need to help air transport to emerge on the continent. One example was the “Airlines Funding Initiative for Africa of the African Union. He underlined the need to create larger African groupings so that the small size of African companies would no longer be an obstacle to development.9

The Secretary-General of AFRAA divides the industry in Africa into three groups of

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countries:

a) Those that no longer have national long-haul carriers with their market largely dominated by foreign companies. In the absence of valid local actors, they have de facto liberalized their skies because the principles of bilateralism and reciprocity are no longer functioning. This is particularly the case in French-speaking West Africa, where the liquidation of Air Afrique after 40 years of existence, marked the end of a symbol of African integration.

b) Countries that are candidates for future “liberalization”. These still have national airlines but these are facing strong competition from foreign companies and are having serious financial and operational problems.

c) Countries that can be considered as ‘strongholds’ of African aviation. They have well-organized companies that can compete with their European rivals on an equal footing (South Africa, Kenya, Ethiopia, Mauritius, Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria, Egypt).

Based on the structure, the industry in Africa can be divided into two regions, namely:

1. **North Africa**

In this region, all countries have their State-owned flag carrier. Privatization is not on the immediate agenda. The aviation, airport and air traffic control infrastructure is relatively well developed, and mostly State-owned. These countries have not been tempted to ‘open their skies’ and prefer an approach based on bilateral agreements. New destinations and frequencies are granted on the basis of reciprocity with European countries and carriers. The results of the big carriers in this region (Royal Air Maroc, Air Algerie, Tunisair, Egyptair) are generally satisfactory. Their traffic, heavily reliant on tourism, has nothing in common with that of the sub-Saharan companies. The dependence on tourism (mainly from Europe) is a major weakness, making them vulnerable to international political events. Several companies went through a difficult period resulting from the drop in traffic after 9/11 and security incidents in the region itself.

Domestically, these carriers are facing competition from new local companies. Tunisair, has to share the market with Tuninter (state-owned) and with Nouvelair and Karthago Airlines (private charter companies). In Morocco, a charter company (Air Atlas) was launched in 2002. In Algeria, several new companies entered the market after the adoption of the air transport liberalization law in 1998, including Khalifa Airways, Antinea Airlines, Eco Air, Sahara Airlines, Madina Airlines and Rym Airlines. In March 2003, Khalifa Airways operated 37 aircraft and had

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2,600 employees. The company was forced to cease operations in April 2004 because of financial problems in other parts of the conglomerate that owned it.\textsuperscript{12}

2. Sub-Saharan Africa

Only a few countries in this region have flag carriers that are relatively healthy in economic terms (Kenya, South Africa, Ethiopia, Mauritius). Several companies have been liquidated in recent years (Uganda, Zambia, Nigeria, Ghana) while others are facing serious financial difficulties and are in dire need of restructuring (Namibia, Zimbabwe, Sierra Leone). In Botswana, the Government is reviewing its strategy in the stalled privatization of Air Botswana. The process ground to halt after it suffered setbacks in late 2003 due to the adverse situation in the aviation field. Rather than finding a strategic partner, the Government is now planning to approach the domestic capital market or the Botswana Stock Exchange to float some of the company shares.\textsuperscript{13} Sudan Airways was privatized in 2004. In most countries, there has been extensive liberalization of ground handling service companies and growing foreign investment in airports and infrastructure. Air traffic management in French-speaking African countries is being coordinated on an international basis (ASECNA - Agency for the security of air navigation in Africa and Madagascar) or commercialized as in South Africa. Other developments include the large number of new market entrants and the active process of restructuring and deregulation, including through new ‘open skies’ agreements.

\textbf{(b) New entrants}

Following the changes in aviation policies in the past decade, new companies are being established all over sub-Saharan Africa. It should be noted, however, that many of these initiatives are short-lived and that the companies have to cease operations, often only after a few months of existence.

For example, in Benin alone, of the 19 companies now serving the country, 13 arrived on the market (five national and eight foreign) after the liquidation of Air Afrique. A host of small companies was created or re-emerged such as Transtel Air Togo (2001, State-owned), Air Niger International (2002), Air Burkina, Air Mali, Aéro Benin (2002, Mali-based), Centrafricaine Airlines, Bissau Airlines (2002), Air Guinée, KedAir, Atlantic Express Airlines, Slok Gambia, Sunuair (Senegal, 2004),\textsuperscript{14} and Sénégal Airways (2004). Others include Air Bourbon (Réunion, 2002-2004).\textsuperscript{15}

\textsuperscript{13} Kabo Mokgoabone: “Govt Reviews AB Privatisation”, in The Reporter (Gaborone), 19 Nov. 2004.
Antrak Airline (Ghana), East African Airways, (Uganda).\(^{16}\) Two pan-African companies were created: Afriqiyah Airways in Libya in 2001, and AfricaOne, in Uganda in May 2002 (collapsed in March 2003)

In Nigeria, according to the Airline Operators of Nigeria 58 of the 88 registered airlines in the country have ceased operations over the past ten years. Operators blamed the harsh economic climate and the increases in service charges by the various agencies in the Ministry of Aviation for the unfavourable situation in the airline industry.\(^{17}\) In 2004, the Federal Government granted a total of 66 licences to individuals and corporate bodies wishing to undertake different kinds of aviation business. Of the licences, seven were Air Transport Licences (ATL) to enable prospective companies to import aircraft and 32 Air Travel Organizers’ Licences (ATOL) to enable prospective companies to offer charter services to the public.\(^{18}\)

In Uganda, the Civil Aviation Authority granted licences to ten airlines in 2004 and another seven applications were under consideration at the end of the year.\(^{19}\)

Cote d’Ivoire has designated Pan African Airways as its flag carrier. The Government decided to float a flag carrier because it had suffered from the dominance of a monopoly of mega carriers such as Air France, after the collapse of Air Afrique and Air Ivoire, which has become a virtual subsidiary of Air France. Traiton AG of Switzerland will manage the new company – expected to start its operations on 26 June 2004 with flights to Paris.\(^{20}\)

The Gambia has given the Nigerian Slok Group approval to set up its national flag carrier known as Slok Gambia. The Nigerian Civil Aviation Authority deregistered Slok in November 2004 for “unethical practices”.\(^{21}\) In Senegal, Air France has been condemned for misuse of its dominant position in its relations with local travel agents.\(^{22}\)


(c) Markets

The African air transport market has grown considerably since the mid-1980s, by a cumulative 56 per cent between 1985-96 in terms of revenue passenger-kilometers (RPKs). The rate of growth has been particularly high for Africa-Asian routes, reflecting the Far Eastern “economic miracle”, but also the opening up of new destinations following the end of the economic sanctions against South Africa.

With 2.7 per cent of world traffic (RPKs) (down from more 4 per cent in 1985), Africa represents only a small part of world air transport. According to the AFRAA, the total revenue of African carriers amounted to US$6 billion in 2001. They transported 32.4 million passengers, of which 13 million were domestic, 4.7 intra-African and 14.7 million transcontinental (-2.7 per cent compared with 2000). The domestic market in Africa accounted for 40.2 per cent of the number of passengers carried, the intra-African market for 14.4 per cent, and the international market accounted for 45.4 per cent. The load factor, when compared with the year 2000, remained stable at 64.2 per cent (64.1 per cent in 2000). Airfreight went down from 494,300 tonnes in 2000 to 469,300 tonnes in 2001.23

At the end of the 2nd UN Communications and Transport Decade in Africa (UNCTADA II) in 2001, the UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) concluded that the share of African airlines in world traffic stagnated despite the boom in international and intra-African traffic during the decade and that the African freight-loading coefficient remained far behind that of other regions.24

Preliminary 2003 results from over 820 airports worldwide - members of Airports Council International (ACI) - showed that passenger traffic was up 2 per cent, cargo up 3 per cent and movements down 1 per cent over 2002. Passenger traffic in Africa was up 3.8 per cent, cargo up 0.7 per cent and aircraft movements up 2.4 per cent.25

24 12th Meeting of the Conference of the African Ministers of Transport and Communications (CAMTC), ididop.cit..
(d) Possible future developments

IATA recently revised its projected growth figure for the next five years in Africa to four per cent. This represents a more than one per cent rise from the earlier projection that averaged 2.5 per cent. The figures are for airlines operating within and outside the African continent. The highest growth is expected to come from flights within the continent.\footnote{N. Wandera: “Aviation Experts Paint a Rosier Growth Picture”, in The East African Standard (Nairobi), 13 May 2004.}

At the initiative of African Aviation, aviation practitioners met in Mauritius in November 2004 to discuss the future of commercial aviation in Africa. Their message was: African aviation is flying in a clouded sky: the fleets are old and the till is empty. With the strengthening of the competition, the future lies in the re-financing of the industry. Although the situation may look difficult, it is not desperate. It suffices to change direction and aim for good governance. However, without dollars, the majority of African carriers are doomed to disappear.

The rejuvenation of their fleets should be the main priority. At present, they are, on average, 20 years old. The decay of the aircraft not only reduces passenger comfort but also and above all the profitability of the companies. Old aircraft consume high quantities of fuel and need much maintenance. The acquisition of new aircraft would be the ideal solution but not a realistic one for most African carriers. In the past, African financial institutions showed little interest in aviation. This forced African companies to look elsewhere with the consequence that they pay higher amounts for insurance, leasing and maintenance.\footnote{Ryan Coopamah: “Air Finance for Africa”: vol au-dessus d’un nid de coucou”, in L’Express (Port Louis), 24 Nov. 2004.} Some companies, such as Kenya Airways, TunisAir, Air Algérie, have started to modernize their fleet.

According to the Aircraft Commerce Journal, Africa is forecast to become a major growth region for aircraft sales over the next 15 years, with a need for about 1,000 aircraft in the next 15 years. With increased stability in the region, it is expected that aircraft lessors will be more willing to offer modern aircraft to a larger number of airlines. The large African population makes this a fertile market for aircraft placement. There are, at the moment, 728 commercial aircraft, with an average age of 18 years, registered in Africa.

The growth of the African market is among the highest of any region and Airbus predicts that intra-regional growth will average 4.1 per cent per annum and will increase by 4.4 per cent over the next 20 years. Boeing believes that the traffic growth will be slightly higher based on GDP
performance and predicts annual growth of 5.3 per cent over 20 years and that, if maintained, traffic will treble over the period.  

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**e) Yamoussoukro Decision**

An important event for civil aviation in Africa was the adoption of the Yamoussoukro Decision concerning the *Liberalization of Access to Air Transport Markets in Africa* in 1999 and the commitment expressed by African countries to implement the Decision. The Decision, which entered into force in August 2000, accelerated the liberalization of access to the air transport market in the region. It also brought airport and airspace management reforms, which showed the advantage of competition resulting from free access to the air transport market. Constructing a liberalized intra-African air transport market is a difficult and evolutionary process. An underlying principle of the Decision is safeguarded liberalization and the principle that liberalization is not *laissez faire* or the absence of regulations. A major concern is how to avoid the risk of larger airlines becoming so dominant that they prevent smaller carriers from benefiting from the liberalization process and present the danger of too high a concentration of business in the hands of a few.

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4. **Questions of safety and security**

While the number of fatal accidents in Europe, Latin America and the United States decreased in the past decade; the number of in Africa is increasing. According to the Aviation Safety Network, about 28 per cent of fatal accidents occur in Africa, while only 3 per cent of all flights depart in the region.\(^{30}\) It has to be noted, however, that most accidents involved either old Western-manufactured aircraft (B.707 and DC type aircraft) or Antonov and others from the former USSR. Most reported cases were from foreign-owned non-scheduled flights, charter, cargo and on-request flights. African governments have been urged to limit the operations of old aircraft in Africa, following the example of Angola and Nigeria.\(^{31}\) In the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Government ordered a general control of the air transport sector following an accident involving an Antonov cargo plane in January 2003.\(^{32}\)

The Bureau of Archives of Aviation Accidents concluded that in 2004 there had been 150 civil aviation accidents, resulting in the deaths of 760 persons, a decrease of 37 per cent when compared with 2003. Most accidents occurred in North America (37 per cent), South America and Africa (13 per cent, and Europe (8 per cent). The most serious accident was the crash of the Flash Airlines B.737-300 near Sharm el-Sheikh in January 2004.\(^{33}\)

The outgoing Director-General of the Agency for the Security of Air Navigation in Africa and Madagascar (ASECNA) said in December 2004 that there had been a marked improvement in air space security with a notable reduction in incidents related to the non-regulated separation of aircraft. These had declined from 25 in 1998 to seven in 2003 and only two in the first nine months of 2004 notwithstanding the strong growth of air traffic. In the past, the poor quality of the services provided by ASECNA had given rise to strong criticism from customers through IATA.\(^{34}\)

There are several initiatives to make Africa a safe continent for air transport. An African Air Safety Enhancement Team (ASET) has been formed to help reduce continental air accidents by 50 per cent.\(^{35}\) The Safe Skies for Africa initiative, led by the United States Department of Transport, is


based on the premise that “Safe Skies” are a prerequisite for increased trade and investment and long-term economic development in Africa.36

In December 2002, the ICAO Council established the International Financial Facility for Aviation Safety (IFFAS). This is a mechanism to provide financial support to developing countries to improve their aviation safety through the implementation of measures mainly identified by the ICAO Universal Safety Oversight Audit Programme (USOAP).37

In Equatorial Guinea, the UNDP is helping the government to prepare a plan to develop the civil aviation sector. The objective is to restructure the civil aviation authority, strengthen air traffic control to ensure that airports meet international standards, as well as to evaluate staff competencies and conduct training to upgrade skills. The UNDP Resident Representative noted that the project supports efforts to achieve the Millenium Development Goals and the NEPAD regional integration strategy.38

In Nigeria, the Federal Airports Authority has put in place measures to enhance ramp safety. Between 2002 and 2003, no fewer than nine ramp accidents were recorded. As part of these measures, a seminar was organized to sensitize ramp personnel at airports on the need to be safety-conscious and abide by all safety rules and regulations.39

Five African countries (Ghana, South Africa, Cape Verde, Ethiopia, Egypt) have received a Category I classification from the US Federal Aviation Authority and have the right to operate direct flights to the United States from their main airports.

Part II: Issues
5. Alliances, low-cost airlines, restructuring

Airlines throughout the world started forming alliances more than a decade ago. Global alliances allow partners to gain access to a more comprehensive route network with far less risk, securing economies of scale and scope that would otherwise be beyond their reach. Alliances and other forms of cooperative agreements between airlines are an answer to the need to increase traffic feed and to adapt to an increasingly competitive environment. Airline alliances are widespread but still evolving, with partnership relations becoming more intertwined and complex. At the time of writing, none of the African airlines had been invited to join any of the major world alliances, except South African Airways, which has been admitted as a member of the Star Alliance.40 It is generally expected that Kenya Airways will join the Sky Team Alliance as an associate member.

Low-cost airlines are making increasing inroads into the market share of major carriers and in the process are rewriting the rules of commercial aviation. They have attracted many new passengers who would otherwise not have flown. For the moment, this development does not have the same importance in Africa as in North America and Europe. Many African airlines fear the arrival of low-cost rivals because of their own inability to reduce operational costs, partly due to the average age of their fleets and the high costs of maintenance. Atlas Blue of Morocco thinks that the African market offers good opportunities for low-costs, particularly for tourist traffic, but observers feel that only Nigeria and South Africa have markets that are big enough to support low-cost companies.41 An increasing number of low-cost airlines are operating in Africa: Kalula, Civair, 1Time (South Africa), Flamingo (Kenya) or Atlas Blue (RAM - Morocco). Even Virgin Nigeria is expected to operate as a low-cost airline like Virgin Blue in Australia. While most are independent companies, others are subsidiaries of established airlines.

The industry in the region is to different degrees and in different tempos involved in a process of restructuring (deregulation, “open skies” agreements, concentration, private sector participation and commercialization). It is clear, however, that African airlines need to work together to effectively compete and survive global liberalization. The fear exists that African airlines may disappear one by one, resulting in massive employment losses, the absence of the necessary means of transport for the promotion of tourism in Africa and, above all the concretization of the economic,

social and political integration of the continent. Africa needs a viable long-term strategy to create bigger groups or, at least, federations of the existing small companies that can meet the needs of the markets offering joint flights to certain destinations. While European carriers account for 70 per cent of inter-African traffic, African airlines combined account for about 30 per cent. In addition to the competition from Europe, companies based in the Middle East (Emirates, Gulf Air, Qatar Airlines) are making rapid inroads into the African market. The governments in this region often fund their airlines by buying new equipment and helping them to gear up for future challenges. At the moment, air traffic in Africa still is very much compartmentalized between isolated zones: west, east, south and north and only a few African companies (Ethiopian Airlines, Kenya Airways, Afriqiyyah Airways) fly transcontinental routes.

Today, the European carriers are trying to penetrate the African domestic market by creating their own hubs and competing with local companies. British Airways, for example, has signed a series of franchise contracts with local companies in South Africa, Kenya and Zambia. Air France took control of Air Ivoire for the same purpose. Air Luxor, a privately held Portuguese airline, has developed a strategy to operate to Portuguese-speaking countries in a joint venture regime with local airlines (in Mozambique, Sao Tome, Bissau, and Cap Verde.

The number of cooperation agreements between African airlines is growing. In 2003, Kenya Airways invested in Precision Air of Tanzania. South African Airways invested in Air Tanzania in July of the same year, when it acquired 49 per cent ownership in terms of shares. It is now strengthening and improving the infrastructure of the privatized airline. A South African Airways-led consortium has been invited to acquire 60 to 70 per cent of the shares of Air Malawi. Royal Air Maroc and Air Senegal International formed another joint venture in 2001, hailed as an example of South-South cooperation.

In the meantime, the curtain has gone down on Ghana Airways, which has lost money each year over the last ten years, apart from 1997 and 1998. According to a recent report, the airline had been insolvent since 1999. One of the major defects was that the management team of the airline was

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44 Ryan Coopamah, op. cit.
45 N. Gillet, op. cit., pp. 468–472.
dysfunctional, coupled with the problem of a board that lacked independence. Another problem was
Government interference in the day-to-day running of the airline, replacing the Chief Executive
approximately every 18 months, with five different appointments in the last two years alone.48 The
entire fleet of the company was prematurely out of service for non-payment of bills or lack of funds to
carry out essential maintenance.49 In August 2004, the Government of Ghana decided to take full
control of the airline and sacked its board. It also ordered the airline, which was banned from flying to
the United States in July pending an investigation that it flew unsafe planes and operated without a
licence, to halt ticket sales.50 In December 2004, an agreement was signed between the Government of
Ghana and an US consortium to create a new airline based in Accra, to be called Ghana International
Airlines Limited.51

In February 2004, a Nigerian Federal High Court granted approval for the liquidation of
Nigeria Airways. The national carrier - incorporated in 1958, two years before Nigeria’s
independence -, was run into the ground by huge foreign and local debt, indiscipline, corruption, poor
management and a bloated workforce. Concern has been expressed about the political interference in
the creation of Nigeria’s new national carrier Nigeria Eagle Airlines, which was expected to start
operations in the second half of 2004. Initially South African Airways had been selected as the core
investor and technical partner for the airline but in a later development the South African Airways bid
was rejected.52 In September 2004, Nigeria signed an agreement with the Virgin Group to create a
new national airline to be called Virgin Nigeria, expected to start operations in 2005. There are,
however, problems about landing rights in the United States.

The Aviation Association of Zambia has called upon the government to urgently establish the
much-talked-about new national airline, following the demise of Zambia Airways in the mid-1990s.
The Zambian Minister of Communications and Transport has confirmed the need for private sector
involvement in the quest to establish a national airline since an efficient private sector-driven national
carrier would enhance the country’s tourism promotion efforts.53

chronicle.com, 1 June 2004.
52 K. Ehigiator: “Yuguda confirms withdrawal of SAA bid as investor in Nigeria Eagle Airlines’ project”, in

23
6. Employment

It is estimated that one operational aircraft supports 150-250 direct jobs and that any direct airline job creates one additional indirect job. The ILO Meeting on Civil Aviation (Geneva, January 2002) noted that the employment effects of the weak world economy together with 9/11 resulted in the loss of approximately 400,000 jobs affecting all the segments of the air transport industry, and about 200,000 in the airlines alone. In the United States, in 2001, the airline industry cut more than one out of every ten jobs. In the course of 2002, many airlines were forced to announce further restructuring measures including about 30,000 job cuts because of the prevailing situation in the industry. As a result of the continuing restructuring of the industry since 9/11, at least 300,000 airline jobs worldwide have disappeared or will disappear in the near future.

The few figures available indicate that in 2001, African airlines employed some 91,000 persons against 95,500 in 2000 when Air Afrique was still operational. Since then, there has been the liquidation of Nigeria Airways and the closing down of Khalifa Airways, both in 2004. One expert claims that some 24,000 persons will be affected by the liquidation of Nigeria Airways alone. The deregistration of Slok Air by the Nigerian Civil Aviation Authority in December 2004 may, according to some sources, have resulted in job losses for about 5,000 employees. Ghana Airways, Air Namibia, Air Malawi, Air Congo, South African Airways, Air Zimbabwe, and the national carrier of Swaziland announced other retrenchments. The collapse of Air Bourbon in December 2004 resulted in the loss of 165 jobs. On the positive side, Virgin Nigeria has promised to directly employ several thousands of Nigerians within the first few years of its operation. In addition, it will create an estimated 20,000 indirect jobs through suppliers, partners and activities at airports.

Airports are highly significant centres of employment generation. In 2001, airport operators worldwide employed some 330,000 persons directly, while a total of over 4,300,000 persons were employed on airport sites. This means that, for every person employed directly by an airport operator, another ten work on the airport site. This ratio is much higher in North America (1 to 45), where many airport activities are outsourced (i.e. performed by private contractors). In contrast with the situation in other regions, national civil aviation authorities operate many airport systems in the Africa/Middle East-region. The proportion of public employees on the airports in these systems is therefore quite high and the outsourcing of services is limited. Moreover, airports in the region tend to have lower

56 Saphira Kallee: op. cit.
average traffic volumes than those in other continents, thereby limiting opportunities for job creation in non-aeronautical activities, such as retail concessions and hotel and convention facilities. In Africa/Middle East, the 68 airports participating in an Airports Council International survey average about 1.2 million passengers each so that the performance of a few large airports and airport systems has a disproportionate effect on the results. Airports Company South Africa (ACSA), for example, served almost 20 million passengers - about one-seventh of the traffic of the entire region.

ACSA, together with the Moroccan airport system (ONDA), the Tunisian airport system (OACA), Cairo International Airport and Dubai International Airport account for over 50 per cent of the total regional airport revenues, giving the overall results from Africa/Middle East a fairly optimistic colouring. This may be misleading, however, because the majority of the airports in the region do not generate enough traffic to be run on a commercial basis. Yet, the cost of not having an airport, which would mean political and economical isolation for many countries - particularly those with poor ground transport systems - would be so high that government subsidies to airports are a social and economic necessity.  

7. **Wages, terminal benefits, training, licencing**

The payment of wages and terminal benefits becomes a problem when an airline goes bankrupt. Following the liquidation of Nigeria Airways, funds were lacking to pay the entitlements due to the former employees of the company. The Nigerian Government has announced that it would make the necessary funds available to offset arrears in pensions and salaries.\(^59\) In April 2004, hundreds of workers and retirees of the airline protested in front of the United Nations office in Lagos. A week later, they took over the premises of the company in Lagos, vowing to continue the occupation of the area until their pensions and other entitlements were paid.\(^60\) In September, they were forcibly ejected. The Bureau for Public Enterprises will handle their entitlements.\(^61\)

As the process towards the formation of a new national carrier to replace Ghana Airways continues, one of the biggest challenges that the Government has to deal with is compensation of the some 1,500 employees. The collective agreement stipulates that the workers must be compensated in the event that the company is closed down. To date, no agreement has been reached on what modalities to follow in paying the severance package. The question, however, is whether the government would want to or even can afford to pay the severance package.\(^62\) Zambia Airways went into liquidation in 1991 and some 280 workers were laid off. By January 2005, some 130 had received their terminal benefits, which have been paid in a piece-meal fashion. The spokesperson of the steering committee of former workers said that the Government had the capacity to make one-off payments to each of the entitled workers and questioned why the money was being paid in instalments.\(^63\)

Similar problems occurred with the bankruptcies of Air Afrique and Air Chad. On the positive side, the management of Slok Air (Nigeria) tried to pay salaries to its staff for six months (during its suspension) before it started to lay off workers.\(^64\)

The Industrial Court in Kenya ordered Kenya Airways to pay compensation to 29 former employees.\(^65\)

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employees it summarily dismissed in April 2002 on drug charges. The decision, which reduced the 
dismissal to termination of duty, also ordered the company to pay the employees their terminal 
benefits in line with the collective bargaining agreement. The Court further awarded each of the 
former cabin crew staff 12 months pay in compensation for loss of employment. As for the three other 
workers involved, the judge upheld the airline’s decision of dismissal.\footnote{Judy Ogutu: “Kenya Airways Ordered to Pay Dismissed Staff”, in \textit{East African Standard} (Nairobi), 14 Dec. 2004.}

The age of retirement may become an issue in the industry in Africa. At present, ASECNA air 
traffic controllers retire at age 55. Recently, Senegal increased the age of retirement for civil servants 
to 60. Consequently, all Senegalese nationals working for ASECNA, upon their retirement, revert to 
their country’s civil service, which unfortunately cannot re-deploy them. Senegal has asked ASECNA 
to revise its rules and increase the age of retirement for its employees.\footnote{J. Mbengue: “Traitement des agents de l’Asecna: le Sénégal réclame une revision des textes ”, in \textit{Wal Fadjri} (Dakar), 13 Jan. 2005.}

**Training**

Tomorrow’s employer will need to provide adequate opportunities for workers to acquire new 
skills if they are going to be in a position to keep up with the pace of change and take full advantage 
of future employment opportunities. The airline industry has always devoted substantial resources to 
training, largely owing to the nature of the industry and as an essential means to meet the technical 
and safety standards dictated by external regulatory authorities. Much of this training is still 
occupation-specific.

Pilots have licenses and many hours of flying experience before they join the airlines and they 
receive further training upon their recruitment. Considerable training in safety, interpersonal skills and 
personal presentation is given to flight attendants. On the ground, maintenance engineers often go 
through a comprehensive system of apprenticeship in which on-the-job training is combined with off-
the-job instruction.

Air traffic controllers are awarded ratings in area and/or airfield disciplines at air traffic 
control colleges. They are required to be confirmed as competent by the unit at which they work. On 
transfer the controller must “validate” by undertaking lengthy on-the-job training overseen by 
validated and trainer-accredited controllers, and pass an oral and practical examination. Failing to 
validate at a unit may result in transfer to another unit and in some cases dismissal.\footnote{J. Hallier; P. James: “Management enforced job change and employee perceptions of the psychological contract”, in \textit{Employee Relations} (Bradford), Vol. 19, No. 3, 1997, pp. 222-247.}
During an emergency meeting of the European Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee on Civil Aviation, the social partners agreed that, in respect of security, not only were aviation workers’ lives at risk, they were also responsible for enforcing many of the existing and new security measures under discussion. The workers had the additional enormous responsibility for passenger safety and the protection of the flying public. Therefore, fully trained, professional staff must be employed in the sector on the ground and in the air. Funding should be made available for this purpose in particular.\(^\text{68}\)

There are several attempts to improve the training situation in Africa. South African Airways will train all its 11,000 staff in customer care and all executive managers are doing duty at the airports served by the airline to learn about passenger problems first hand.\(^\text{69}\) In order to improve the quality of its services, ASECNA considerably increased its training budget between 1998 and 2004 to meet the shortage of technical staff and put the required number of staff in place. During that period, the number of technical staff increased from 781 to 1,116 graduates.\(^\text{70}\)

In Tanzania, the Director-General of the country’s Civil Aviation Authority (TCAA) announced that the agency will set up a training fund for workers in the industry to meet the shortage of pilots and aircraft maintenance engineers. According to the Tanzania Civil Aviation Act, 2003, the sources of money for such a training fund would include contributions from regulated suppliers, TCAA and donations, grants or loans from other sources. The Government stopped supporting training programmes for aircraft maintenance engineers in the mid-1980s following liberalization of the sector and the subsequent privatization of the Air Tanzania Corporation. To date, the Government had been using training facilities in South Africa and Ethiopia.\(^\text{71}\)

An effort is also being made in the Nigerian College of Aviation Technology (NCAT), established in 1964 with active and technical support from ICAO and UNDP. After many years of decay, it is gradually coming back to life. October 2004 saw the graduation of Standard Pilot Course No. 22. The significance of this graduation stemmed from the fact that for over a decade, the college had not graduated student pilots. Students had been stuck in the college for eight years on a course that should normally run for 18 months. Among the measures taken to revive the institute are the approval to join the ICAO Trainair Programme, the rehabilitation of training aircraft, training

\(^{68}\) Joint opinion of the European Social Partners in Aviation (Brussels), 12 Oct. 2001.


\(^{70}\) Abibou Mbaye: op. cit.

facilities and infrastructure, and provision of radars and simulators for the training of air traffic controllers. In addition, all training programmes on the Total Radar Coverage of the Nigerian Airspace (TRACON) programme, which were to be conducted in South Africa, will now be conducted at the NCAT.\textsuperscript{72}

This raises again the question of the certification of cabin crew and ground staff as safety professionals, a position strongly promoted by the International Transport Workers Federation (ITF). It argues that “Industry and governments need to recognize the safety-professional role of crews and ground staff to ensure that the industry has the personnel equipped, qualified and motivated to deliver safety and security.”\textsuperscript{73}

The ILO \textit{Meeting on Civil Aviation} in 2002 recommended that “different possibilities for finding alternative employment opportunities or re-skilling should be pursued and measures taken that would allow the conservation of a very highly skilled workforce in the long term. Governments should consider funding long-term training and retraining for all categories of workers, which should be viewed as an investment in the national aviation industry. Governments should, through the ILO and ICAO, consider establishing minimum global harmonized standards for training of all safety and security-sensitive aviation occupations, thus promoting enhanced opportunities for continued employment, and the retention of skills within an expanded aviation labour market.”\textsuperscript{74}

In Africa, many air navigation service providers (ANSPs) have unfortunately tended to invest in equipment but have hardly paid attention to the training needs of the human beings who must operate it. Almost all African ATC units are understaffed. The Namibian Air Traffic Controllers’ Association, for example, announced that failure to address the working conditions of the country’s air traffic controllers and to upgrade avionics systems could soon jeopardize Namibia’s air safety. The statement was made after the resignation of yet another controller to take up a better post in the Middle East.\textsuperscript{75}

ICAO has established minimum standards for approved ATC training and has approved institutions in several African countries. However, the total capacity of these institutions is less than 30 per cent of the total training requirements of Africa. Many African ANSPs are compelled to send their student controllers to foreign ATC training institutions. Since there is a global shortage of air

\textsuperscript{72}N. Francis: “A Re-Awakening for Nigerian College of Aviation Technology”, in \textit{This Day} (Lagos), 6 Jan. 2005.


\textsuperscript{74}ILO: Final report, Tripartite Meeting on Civil Aviation, (Geneva, ILO), 2002.
traffic controllers, most ATC training institutes outside Africa are fully booked to train their own nationals to meet local needs. In addition, training fees keep increasing as a result of growing demand.\textsuperscript{76}


8. **Gender, stress, disadvantaged groups**

The gender division of labour between men and women is not specific to any one country. It is so entrenched worldwide that many people consider it normal. In the transport industry, there is a high level of occupational segregation. Although more women are now working in the transport industry, they still only make up about ten per cent of the total workforce. “Women’s work” is considered low status. It is mostly men who occupy supervisory and managerial positions. Whether it is in recruitment, promotion, training or conditions of work, women workers receive unfair treatment.

Sexual harassment is a serious problem in civil aviation, for example, where the advertising campaigns of airlines portray flight attendants as mere sex objects. Only a few countries have passed laws that deal specifically with sexual harassment.

With globalization and technological change, many workers no longer have permanent jobs. They are now employed on more vulnerable terms as part-time, temporary, seasonal or casual workers. Employers refer to this as “flexibility”. According to the ILO, between 65-90 per cent of all part-timers in the developed countries are women.\(^{77}\) In recent years, airline unions have reported extensive changes in terms and conditions of employment. These changes, such as flexible working practices, have had a particular effect on cabin crew - a sector where women are concentrated.

According to the ILO, women workers experience higher levels of stress than men. This is mainly due to the double workload of women. Women also experience greater stress because they are in low pay jobs, in organizations lacking family friendly policies, and in occupations which do not give them control over their jobs, or in work organization. Studies in civil aviation show that stress amongst cabin crew workers is high, increases in the speed, volume and intensity of work are all sources of stress. Cabin crews are more prone to experience prolonged contact with abusive or disruptive passengers during journeys, where they may be considered trapped by such passengers in aircraft, and the strain can become more pronounced. In the confines of a crowded aircraft at 30,000 feet high, cabin crew cannot simply walk away from threatening or violent situations. Alcohol and tobacco were found to be the two main contributory factors to air rage, and violence was involved in about 10 per cent of all incidents in 2002. Many cabin crew members feel that their health has suffered because of their jobs.\(^{78}\)

In 2003, the ILO developed a code of practice on ‘Workplace violence in services sectors and

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\(^{77}\) International Transport Workers’ Federation: Women transporting the world, ITF (London), 1999, p. 47.

\(^{78}\) ITF: op.cit.
measures to combat this phenomenon’. Violence at work is a threat to productivity and decent work. The ILO code responds to the needs of workers in services sectors in industrialized and developing countries. Workers in both public and private services may be exposed to violence as part of their daily jobs. The code was targeted at the services sectors, including transport, since services workers often face violence because of the public nature of their work. Workplace violence is defined as ‘any action, incident or behaviour that departs from reasonable conduct in which a person is assaulted, threatened, harmed, injured in the course of, or as a direct result of, his or her work:

- Internal workplace violence is that which takes place between workers, including managers and supervisors.

- External workplace violence is that which takes place between workers (and managers and supervisors) and any other person present at the workplace.

The code provides general guidance to develop practical responses to violence at work, to promote dialogue, consultation and negotiation among governments, employers and workers, and to draft national laws, policies and programmes of action.

In Namibia, at least 12 air traffic controllers have quit since 1999 largely because of poor salaries and long working hours in a profession that is widely considered as one of the most stressful in the world.80

More positively, women have started to break through the glass ceiling and more are being appointed at managerial levels, either as managing directors or as presidents of the board of airline companies. Women are also entering jobs that were until now largely male-dominated, such as those of pilot and mechanic. In South African Airways, for example, women were previously only used on flight simulators, but many women pilots are now flying on scheduled services, with the first female captain recently having been appointed.81

Among the rights enshrined in the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work is the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation. There are indications that many companies in the transport sector, including civil aviation, are not living up to the provisions of the ILO’s Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100), Maternity Protection Convention (Revised), 1952 (No. 103) (Revised in 2000 as Convention No. 183), and the Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111). Different world regions have adopted instruments relevant to sex discrimination, such as the African Charter on Human and

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79 ILO: Workplace violence in services sectors and measures to combat this phenomenon, ILO (Geneva), 2004.
80 L. Dentlinger: op.cit.
Peoples’ Rights, 1968.

In 2004, the International Labour Conference adopted a Resolution concerning Pay Equity emphasizing that the achievement of pay equity is integral to any successful poverty eradication strategy, and that quality jobs as well as quality public services are fundamental in promoting equal opportunities for all. Many women and men experience the process of globalization as heightened insecurity and marginalization. They also feel that the global gap between economic growth and social development is fundamentally also a gender gap.

A high official in the Limpopo Province, South Africa, in May 2004 welcomed the fact that previously disadvantaged communities were now being exposed to job opportunities in the aviation sector. “Currently we are celebrating the fact that there are black pilots and air traffic controllers.” He added that the nation’s first black women pilot was from Limpopo and announced that more young people would be encouraged to explore careers in the aviation field. South African Airways has several affirmative action programmes for staff members of previously disadvantaged groups, including training programmes for non-white pilots or actively recruiting racially mixed cabin crews.

Progress in this field has also been demonstrated by Kenya Airways which recently appointed its first female captain. Capt. Mutungi took charge of a symbolic all-female crew.

In an article about the training of air traffic controllers, the International Federation of Air Traffic Controllers Associations (IFATCA) Executive Vice President Africa and Middle East, Albert Aidoo Taylor, wrote “Concerns have been raised that some African countries still have a negligible number of blacks as air traffic controllers. Whilst I believe there are many suitable black Africans who would qualify as potential controllers, it is important to stress that safety in not negotiable. Efforts should be made to attract those who meet the high ATC standard and encouraged to stay on as controllers.”

9. HIV/AIDS

The UNAIDS Report, published in July 2004, stated that life expectancy in Southern Africa, the world’s region hardest hit by AIDS, had dropped to 49 years and that without large-scale treatment programmes it could plummet to below 35 in some countries. An estimated 25 million people are living with HIV in sub-Saharan Africa, a region that is home just to over 10 per cent of the world’s population – and almost two-thirds of all people living with HIV.

There is no such thing as the ‘African’ epidemic; there is tremendous diversity across the continent in the levels and trends of HIV infection. In Southern Africa all seven countries have prevalence rates above 17% with Botswana and Swaziland having prevalence above 35%. There is no single explanation for why the epidemic is so rampant in Southern Africa. A combination of factors seems to be responsible, including poverty and social instability; high levels of other sexually transmitted infections; the low status of women; and sexual violence. Other factors are high mobility, which is largely linked to migratory labour systems and transport; and ineffective leadership during critical periods in the epidemic’s spread.

In West Africa, HIV prevalence is much lower with no country having a prevalence above 10% and most having prevalence between one and five per cent. Adult prevalence in countries in Central and East Africa falls somewhere between these two groups, ranging from 4% to 13%. In North Africa and the Middle East, around 480,000 persons are living with HIV but systematic surveillance of the epidemic is not well developed, particularly among high-risk groups.

AIDS is a workplace issue not only because it affects labour and productivity, but also because the workplace has a vital role to play in the wider struggles to limit the spread and effects of the epidemic. The epidemic affects the world of work in many ways. Discrimination against people with HIV threatens fundamental principles and rights at work, and undermines efforts for prevention and care. The disease cuts the supply of labour, reduces income for many workers and valuable skills and experience are lost. Finally, investment is undermined and tax revenue cut just as countries face more pressure on public services.

The ILO Code of Practice on HIV/AIDS represents the commitment by the ILO to help secure decent work and social protection in the face of the epidemic and a framework for workplace action. It contains fundamental principles for policy development and practical guidelines for

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responses at enterprise, community and national levels in key areas.\(^{87}\)

The ILO and international and national organizations of employers and workers, with the support of donor countries, have conducted research in several African countries to study the impact of HIV/AIDS on the transport sector – a sector characterized by high mobility. It is important to have a better understanding of existing workplace policies and programmes – including in the air transport sector – in order to develop effective prevention and care policies. An interesting example of national action in the transport sector can be found in the transport sector in South Africa where the social partners from all sub-sectors in transport – including civil aviation - reached an agreement in 2001 on the prevention and care of HIV/AIDS patients in the transport sector.

The HIV/AIDS Awareness Club of the Federal Airports Authority of Nigeria (FAAN) organized a workshop to mark World AIDS Day 2004 and called on the management of the parastatal enterprise not to discriminate against employees infected with the HIV/AIDS virus. Objectives of the Awareness Club include disseminating information relating to HIV/AIDS; creating such awareness to meet international standards; forming counseling committees at FAAN offices nationwide and participating in HIV/AIDS awareness campaigns. Others are to activate a spirit of solidarity with infected workers in FAAN.\(^{88}\)

\(^{87}\) [www.ilo.org/ILOAIDS](http://www.ilo.org/ILOAIDS)

10. Labour relations and social dialogue

The airline industry is highly organized, although the situation differs between various occupational groups, from country to country, and sometimes from company to company. Labour-management relations in the air transport industry have often been fraught with conflict. According to ICAO, many new labour contracts are reached only after long disputes, which in a number of cases involve industrial action. In 1997, nearly 36 airlines were reportedly affected by the industrial action of their staff. On a global basis pilot and flight attendant unions were the most active in staging industrial action.

An example of industrial action in the industry in Africa in recent years is Air Zimbabwe which has for several years been plagued by industrial unrest. Work stoppages linked to poor working conditions have continued to affect the airline that has been experiencing cash flow and operational problems. Last year, several pilots left the airline for other airlines overseas. Workers downed tools in a wage dispute end April 2004. In December 2004, they embarked again on strike action following the suspension of the 10 per cent discount travel facility granted to the parastatal enterprise’s serving staff and pensioners.

In October 2001, following a serious drop in the number of passengers, Royal Air Maroc, had to introduce a drastic savings plan, including reductions in the wage bill and operational costs of between 20 and 50 per cent, increase in tariffs, suppression of loss-making routes, and postponement of investments and the delivery of two new B.767s. The labour-management relations in the company remained under pressure as recently demonstrated by the strike of pilots aimed at the re-hiring of six dismissed colleagues, which lasted for six days.

In December 2004, some 100 workers made redundant from the Mozambique’s publicly owned airports demanded the direct intervention of the Transport Minister in their dispute with their former employer over their redundancy payments.

Sometimes the aviation sector is affected by labour unrest beyond its control. In June 2004, the major trade union organizations in Nigeria closed airports and seaports to protest the increase in

fuel prices. The Nigerian Aviation Safety Initiative re-affirmed its call for legislation forbidding air traffic controllers and other essential air services from embarking on strikes, appealing to the unions to exempt critical sectors in the aviation industry from action.

In air traffic control, there have been conflicts in Kenya and Zimbabwe as well as an industrial dispute between ASECNA and the controllers in the member countries.

The ILO Tripartite Meeting on Civil Aviation recommended that in order to contribute to the development of a resilient aviation industry for the twenty-first century, social dialogue at the appropriate levels should be encouraged. In many places, social dialogue has helped to find innovative and socially responsible solutions to crisis situations in the industry but much more needs to be done. Social dialogue should include the provision of information on the situation of the company to all stakeholders. It should be based on good faith and seek to minimize all possible negative consequences. Cooperation and dialogue between the social partners and with governments is vital to this end. The government should be an active partner in social dialogue as appropriate.

Social dialogue should be an ongoing process.

National governments should recognize the critical public interest role that civil aviation plays in the overall economy and afford it an appropriate place in national or regional strategic planning. Given the fact that many national flag carriers are, at least partially, publicly owned, means that restructuring policies in general will require government intervention such as financial support for unemployment benefits, early retirement schemes, short-time working arrangements and training and retraining for furloughed and unemployed workers. A study revealed that trade unions strongly approved government funding to support retraining programmes as well as extending unemployment benefits. The initiatives of governments to promote social dialogue were considered as vitally important by the unions.

The special meeting of African Heads of State, convened in parallel with the Second Ordinary Session of the Labour and Social Affairs Commission of the African Union (Cotonou, Benin, April 2004) identified social dialogue as a key instrument in the fight against poverty. The Minister of Labour of South Africa, Membathisi Mdladlana, told the 17th Annual Labour Law Conference (Sandton, South Africa, July 2004) that “The past ten years saw history-making developments such as new legislation and an institutional framework capable of putting our economy on the growth path,

while restoring the dignity of workers through the philosophy of decent work.” He added that maturing social dialogue has led to unprecedented industrial peace. The South African Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration handled 116,000 cases between April 2003 to February 2004 - at an average of 553 cases per day.\(^\text{96}\) 

\(^{95}\) G. Harvey; P. Turnbull: Contesting the Crisis, (Cardiff University/ITF, London), 2003. 

\(^{96}\) Thabang Mokopanele: “Labour minister outlines policy”, in Mail&Guardianonline (Johannesburg), 3 Jul. 2004, [www.mg.co.za](http://www.mg.co.za).
11. **Good practices**

The ILO *Tripartite Meeting on Civil Aviation* considered that there was no single model of “best practice” and none was sufficiently adaptable to the circumstances and needs of different countries. Best or good practices are not static; their workings should be monitored and experiences shared. Socially acceptable human resource policies could help to develop long-term, proactive human resource policies, building confidence between management and workers. Information on best practices concerning socially acceptable human resource policies should be shared and broadly disseminated.

The restructuring and subsequent privatization of Kenya Airways\(^97\) in 1996, was seen by some experts as a historical event for Kenya as well as for the whole aviation industry in Africa. The success of the privatization was a result of careful planning, a comprehensive feasibility study and undoubtedly a strong government commitment to see the process to fruition - an essential ingredient for successful privatization. Staff numbers were reduced through a voluntary severance programme.

Ethiopia maintains strict control over its skies, authorizing only a few foreign companies to fly to Addis Ababa. The company has its own regional hub structure based on Bole International airport. The success of Ethiopian Airlines can also be explained by the fact that the Ethiopian government has always granted the management of the company full autonomy and has never interfered in its business.

Air Bourbon released 165 employees without payment of their salaries but the local authorities are trying to re-employ, to the extent possible, the ex-employees through Sématra (a public-private company). Air France has also been asked to consider employing some of the employees.\(^98\)

South African Airways has offered voluntary severance packages to its 602 managers as part of its efforts to turn the business around. Management staff will be offered three weeks’ pay for every year served. The company’s CEO said, “Packages will be designed to mostly benefit people wanting career changes or to start their own business. The company will be happy with 50 per cent of its management taking the severance offer, which will put its management profile in line with ratios of

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\(^98\) Saphira Kallee: op. cit.
airlines such as Cathay Pacific and Singapore Airlines.\footnote{99}

Is it the case of the tripartite agreement in Italy for the restructuring of Alitalia. In October 2004, the government reached an agreement with the unions and the management of the company. End September, an agreement had been reached between the Alitalia president and the staff representatives on important improvements in productivity and the suppression of 3,700 jobs. Under the tripartite agreement, the employees laid off will for two years be placed in the “cassa integrazione”, i.e. these employees no longer work for Alitalia, receive unemployment benefits but continue judicially to be considered as company employees. After these two years, the company, based on its needs and performance, could re-integrate them into the company. In case they are not re-integrated, the employees will be subject to a mobility programme under which they can receive indemnities for another three years.\footnote{100}


Annex I: Social dialogue: difficult processes

South Africa

The case below demonstrates some of the problems the social partners may be facing when trying to reach a package deal on wages, working conditions and working hours.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thousands march for baggage handlers</th>
<th>(Pretoria, 12 March 2004)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Labour minister loses his patience with strike</td>
<td>(Pretoria, 17 March 2004)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Airport strike is over</td>
<td>(Pretoria, 8 April 2004)</td>
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Source: Mail&Guardianonline

In South Africa, 800 airport baggage handlers, represented by the South African Transport and Allied Workers Union (SATAWU), downed tools at four of the country’s six airports on 18 December 2003 when negotiations between the union and Equity Aviation Services became deadlocked. The sticking point was working hours - Equity wanted to increase the working week from 40 to 45 hours, with a 6 per cent wage increase, while SATAWU proposed a 42.5-hour week, with a 7.5 per cent increase backdated to April 2003. Underlying the dispute was the deeper issue of privatization and the impact on union negotiating power. Equity was formed last year when British multinational service giant SERCO and a local black economic empowerment consortium, Equity Alliance, bought a 51 per cent share of Apron Services from Transnet, which still holds 49 per cent.

Equity insisted that a 45-hour working week was essential for the company’s health, as it would generate annual savings of Rand 15 million. Reduced costs would bring the company in line with its main competitors, all with 45-hour weeks. The union insisted that it supported the Government’s need to advance black economic empowerment but that the State’s ‘disengagement’ was unacceptable if the price the unions had to pay was ‘ruthless profiteering’. In a memorandum addressed to the Minister of Public Enterprises, SATAWU warned that the unions would resist the ‘restructuring of State assets’ if it happened at the expense of workers. The union demanded that 5 per cent of the Equity Alliance shares be handed back to Transnet to restore State control. To stem the weakening of union power, SATAWU is pushing for a national bargaining council in the civil aviation industry. In theory, central bargaining would bolster the labour movement by setting minimum wages and conditions for the sector’s entire workforce.
By mid-March 2004, the Minister of Labour expressed his concern about the slow pace of negotiations between the parties despite the intervention of the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA), the Minister of Public Enterprises, the Transnet chairman and the Minister himself.101

SATAWU welcomed a decision by South African Airways on 19 March not to allow its staff to be used as scab workers for Equity Aviation. The union also called on all other aviation operators and their workers to avoid being used as ‘strike breakers’ by the company.102

The parties reached an agreement on 8 April. The workers won a 12 per cent wage increase and a 2 per cent performance incentive. All workers dismissed during the strike were reinstated. The parties agreed to a relationship counseling exercise ‘to improve the industrial relations and workplace environment’. The company won its demand for the 45-hour week.

Cameroon

In this case, the Minister of Labour and Social Security decided to intervene personally to avoid a strike at Cameroon Airlines, the endangered national carrier. It shows that good intentions alone are not enough but that hard cash is needed to put them into practice.

The relations between management and workers at Cameroon Airlines (Camair) have been strained for some time. Due to shortage of funds, the corporation cannot pay staff salaries at regular intervals. A first agreement between the management, the labour inspectorate and staff representatives was signed on 8 November 2004, thus avoiding a strike announced for 3 December. The agreement included a timetable for the payment of arrears to the staff, which the company was unable to meet. The Director-General, in a letter to the staff, explained that the delay was due to problems not foreseen when the agreement was signed, including the slow process of valuating spare parts before their sale, the seizure of proceeds of sales by European travel agencies and the need to pay cash for the delivery of fuel.

In response, the staff announced another strike for 29 December. The grievances included three points: three months of salary arrears, final payment to employees retired for more than one year and the payment of all deducted charges (taxes, social security) to the concerned institutions, social

coverage (payments to pensioners) and the improvement of working conditions.

On 29 December, the Minister of Labour and Social Security called and presided over a tripartite meeting between management, government and staff representatives during which he praised the social dialogue. After six hours of discussion an agreement was reached. Camair promised to take the necessary measures to pay the salary arrears for October and November at latest on 31 December in cash, while the December salaries would be paid on 8 January 2005. Appropriate solutions for the other points would be found within the shortest time possible. Finally, the Minister promised to visit Camair’s HQ early January to consolidate the dialogue.

The Minister recognized that Camair did not have the necessary funds and he therefore announced the injection of Government funds into the company during the next budget period. He recognized that the Government’s concern for the company was contrary to the position of the donors who have often insisted on the outright liquidation of Camair. On 31 December, Camair, contrary to the agreement, apparently only paid 50 per cent of the November salaries to not more than 334 of its 1,000 employees.

Another tripartite meeting, again chaired by the Minister, was held on 4 January 2005 but failed to resolve the protracted crisis. The persistent failure of Camair management to pay workers’ monthly salaries since October 2004 was partly attributed to a claim by management to the fact that the corporation was struggling to put together some money to clear at least part of the debt with insurance companies. The insurance companies were said to be threatening to ground the carrier’s aircraft. For the Camair Director-General, the only solution was new Government funds and that the employees contribute through a reduction in salaries. The restructuring of the company could result in the laying off of about 50 per cent of the present staff.

But this was not the end. In mid-January, the Government transferred CFA 697 million to the corporation. On 17 January, the Director-General announced that part of the money would be used to pay outstanding bills of suppliers. Employees went on strike, an agreement was reached the next day: the staff would receive CFA 534 million to pay the December 2004 salaries, CFA 29 million will be paid to suppliers, the remainder remains at the disposal of the corporation, provided that the remainder

of the November 2004 salaries would be paid within two days.\textsuperscript{104}

\textsuperscript{104} R. Lebogo Ndongo: “Camair: grève du personnel annulée ”, in 
Annex II: Tables - Civil Aviation in Africa

1. World airline financial results 2001 - Africa

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Airline</th>
<th>Total operating revenue (000)</th>
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<th>Total operating expense (000)</th>
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5. World airline traffic 2003 - Africa

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