



Wednesday, 2 November 2016

**WELCOME ADDRESS BY ATNS CEO MR THABANI MTHIYANE:
ATNS AVI AFRIQUE AVIATION INNOVATION SUMMIT**

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen

It is my privilege and honour to welcome you to the 5th fifth year ATNS Avi Afrique Aviation Innovation Summit.

How time flies!

In its inception in 2012, the Summit has taken a significant step towards establishing an integrated approach to innovation, research and development targeted at the aviation sector as a whole. It has grown in leaps and bounds since then.

This year's theme is "Aviation Innovation for Regional Integration in Africa contributing towards Economic Infrastructure Development and Social Cohesion". By way of unpacking this theme, we need to answer the following questions:

- How can Aviation contribute towards Economic Infrastructure Development and Social Cohesion
- What kind of support is required from private, public and/or Inter-Government institutions and entities (to address the above).
- Trends and Developments within the continent vs trends and Development elsewhere

Panel Discussion topics are also very interesting. I humbly urge you –

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apart from listening, to actively participate come Q & A sessions. I have been reliably informed that this event is live-streamed on various social media platforms – as well on Avi Afrique website. In this instance, those that did not have an opportunity to attend, may follow the proceeding live on-line.

ATNS is at the forefront of skills development and innovation and plays a major developmental and transformative role in the industry. This endeavour is supported by our Aviation Training Academy, which by the way has received a myriad of international accolades. This is a reflection of our determination to be a hub of excellence.

The Avi Afrique Innovation Summit has become a highlight of the aviation year because we offer the industry an opportunity to come together to hear some of the best minds talk about new developments and debate the future. The Summit also brings the industry together in one place, thus providing a chance to build new relationships with each other. Aviation has always been an exciting industry, and it's events like this that help to turn that excitement into achievement. I trust this year's event will fulfil this purpose once again.

We acknowledge the significant store of value represented by our relationship with our stakeholders - to support the long-term economic and social sustainability of the business. These relationships are exemplified by the strength of our supply chain relationships, community partnerships, government and regulatory relations and our relationships with our customers, sector partners and the general public. Our social and relationship capital is also represented by the trust our customers and the general public demonstrate in our ability to ensure safe skies.

In this context, safety remains the first and overriding priority in air traffic management to ensure safety service provision to our customers and safe operations for our employees, partners, suppliers and the



general public. As such, ensuring safety in our operations remains paramount and is not negotiable.

This extends to cultivating an intrinsic awareness of the impact our operations have on our natural resources – such as the use of electricity and fuel, the management of aircraft noise and carbon emissions – and to explore workable alternatives to curb our contribution to long-term environmental degradation. It also requires that we remain receptive to the needs and expectations of our various stakeholders, with safety and service reliability being the most critical deliverables.

I would like to acknowledge the efforts of all our employees in promoting safe and reliable operations during the year and to thank them for their on-going commitment to ‘green practices’ to reduce our company’s carbon footprint.

Dr Neluheni, one of our guest speakers last year. She pointed out that the opportunities for African innovation were very real. She said “in South Africa, the National Development Plan identifies the key role that reliable public transport will play in enabling economic growth. To implement the NDP, we need to focus on areas where the implementation of existing policies needs to improve, as well as overcome obstacles to implementation”.

Looking more broadly, Dr Neluheni alluded to the real opportunities offered by African aviation. For example, four of the world’s fastest growing air routes (passenger and freight) will be in Africa. However, to realise these opportunities, we can no longer take refuge in complaining about what does not work and what has gone wrong. Accordingly, she challenged all the delegates to resolve the problems during their lifetimes.

Both of these institutions have made, and will continue to make, substantial investments in aviation innovation, supported by robust R&D



policies and strategies. If one believes, as we do, that African solution to African challenges is the way of the future, then the future of African aviation will be secured by initiatives like this.

Innovation in context

The context for innovation has changed over the past decade: Global economies are increasingly dependent on innovation to remain competitive; the innovation process is more open and increasingly involves collaborations within and across borders; ICTs have become a key driver of innovation in all industries; and new global players have emerged. In this context, a major challenge for governments is to tap into and exploit global networks to access new knowledge and markets while generating value locally.

The challenge for governments is to tap into and exploit global networks to access new knowledge and markets while generating value locally. Given the fluidity with which people and firms can move, this is increasingly difficult. People and firms are attracted or deterred mainly by local factors. For innovative firms the most important factor is gaining access to markets and human capital. For people it is the availability of opportunities: jobs, education and high quality of life.

Institutions of higher learning can play an important role by both producing and attracting the human capital needed for innovation. They can act as essential bridging institutions between players—businesses, governments and countries—in more open and broad systems of innovation. They also provide an important dimension of quality of life that can attract the highly skilled from around the globe. They can be the anchor for clusters of innovative activity that participate in global networks, while rooting value locally. The policy challenge is to encourage a view of universities as essential cogs in the innovation machine and possessed of independence, a competitive and



entrepreneurial spirit, and flexibility.

Lastly, let me take this opportunity – first and foremost, to offer my sincere gratitude, to all those who took their time effort to register and attend this Summit. Secondly the MC (Aki) – who has been with us all these years, Speakers, Panellists, Sponsors, Exhibitors and lastly, the 2016 Avi Afrique Innovation Summit Steering Committee members for making this a rounding success. **Ends**