

Sub-Saharan Africa addresses capacity issues

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Infrastructure is being expanded to cater for higher demand in the region. Keith Nuthall reports

According to the Airports Council International (ACI) World Annual Traffic Report 2018, Africa was one of the fastest growing regions for air passenger traffic in 2017 with a 6.3% increase, behind Asia Pacific (10%) and Europe (8.8%). ACI will release the next edition of the report later in 2019, but for the six months to June 2018, it recorded year-on-year passenger traffic growth of 10.8% in Africa – better than any other region.

Africa was the fastest growing region for air cargo in 2017, with 9.2% growth to 2.2 million tonnes – but this is a small market compared with 47.1 million tonnes in Asia Pacific and 21.6 million tonnes in Europe.



Terminal 3 under construction at Julius Nyerere International Airport in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. (BAM International)

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In its most recent 20-year market forecast, published in October 2018, the International Air Transport Association (IATA) expects African airports to deliver average annual passenger traffic growth of 4.6% until 2038. Continued growth not only reflects higher demand, but also

the comparatively low starting point for airports in the vast continent. Infrastructure is being expanded to cater for higher demand in sub-Saharan Africa, where airport passenger traffic increased by 4.2% in 2017 despite an economic recession in Nigeria.

In Tanzania, for example, construction of Terminal 3 (T3) at Julius Nyerere International Airport (JNIA) in Dar es Salaam is on course. The Tanzania Airport Authority (TAA) hopes that the new T3 will be operational by the end of May. Speaking to *Jane's*, TAA Director General Richard Mayongela said the project began in 2013 at a projected cost of USD300 million. "We are on target. The project is 90% complete," he added.

With T3 in place, Mayongela said, the airport will attract more direct commercial flights from Europe, reducing the need for Tanzanians to fly from Nairobi for long-haul transit connections. Annual passenger traffic at JNIA is predicted to increase from 2.5 million to 6 million, with the ultimate goal of 8 million. After completing T3, the TAA will start upgrading the 34-year-old T2, which will handle domestic instead of international traffic. T3 would also raise security standards at the airport.

Dutch companies have played a prominent role in the T3 project, with Netherlands Airport Consultants (NACO) as designer and BAM International as main contractor. Arab Consulting Engineering (ACE) of Egypt acted as project consultant.

Work on the main T3 building and associated facilities was undertaken alongside construction of a new taxiway, parking, apron, and access roads. "The contractor has already handed over the car parking area to us," said Mayongela. "The remaining element is the mechanical and electrical installations and testing of systems, which is ongoing."

Botswana plans

The Civil Aviation Authority of Botswana (CAAB) has plans to improve Maun International Airport, which serves a catchment area that includes the increasingly popular eco-tourism destination of the Okavango Delta. CAAB spokesperson Modipe Nkwe said final costs and contractors had yet to be decided upon for a terminal upgrade project at Maun, which follows the official opening in 2018 of a 7,800 m² terminal at the nearby Kasane International Airport, which serves other main tourism destinations such as Victoria Falls and Chobe National Park.

The new terminal at Kasane is six times larger than its predecessor. The runway was also widened and extended by 1,000 m, to 3,000 m. New airfield ground lighting was installed to facilitate night operations.

Both Maun and Kasane feature new air traffic control (ATC) towers with VHF and other radio communications equipment from Northrop Grumman Park Air Systems; a GAREX voice communication and control system from Indra; and an airport control and monitoring system from ACAMS. ADB SAFEGATE provided tower tools and automated weather observation (AWOS) equipment.

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