**National Assembly**

**Question Number: 2558**

**Mr J Vos (DA) to ask the Minister of Transport:**

(1) What progress has been made regarding the ratification with other African countries of the Yamoussoukro Decision regarding the Open Skies for Africa policy;

(2) what is the Government’s position on the specified decision;

(3) in what manner have the delays in implementing the decision affected the air services market in South Africa, with regard to packaging the Southern African Development Community region amongst international arrivals?

**NW2847E**

**REPLY:**

1. Yamoussoukro Decision is not a treaty to be ratified but an African Civil Aviation Policy for the integration and the establishment of a Single African Air Transport Market to enhance African Intra-Trade and Tourism. In terms of Section 35 of the International Air Services Act 60 of 1993, the Minister may, exercise the delegated authority by the State President to enter into any air transport services agreement with the government or other appropriate authority of another State or Territory regarding the control over and regulation of any class or type of International air services operated or to be operated between the Republic and that State or Territory. In the absence of a continental multilateral institutions to fully regularise air transport, South Africa has concluded thirty-eight (38) Bilateral Air Services Agreements (BASA’s) with willing and able states in line with the principle of Yamoussoukro Decision (YD) awaiting the institutionalisation of a multilateral framework to fully regulate the continental civil aviation. South Africa has further integrated the principles of YD in the National Civil Aviation Policy that has since been approved by Cabinet on the 15th of February 2017.
2. Government is in full support of the integration and establishment of the Single African Air market. South Africa has to date signed the Declaration for Solemn Commitment to the implementation of YD towards the establishment of Single African Air Transport Market (SAATM). The former President, His Excellency Mr. Jacob Gedleyihlekisa Zuma, witnessed the launch of SAATM during the 30th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the Union, in January 2018.
3. Implementation of YD has been slow and limited. The delay has caused South African and rest of the continent to miss out on substantial economic benefits. Some air transport markets between Africa and countries outside of Africa have been liberalized to a significant extent. But most intra-African aviation markets remain closed and regulated through bilateral agreements which limit the growth and development of air services.

 Air services arrangements with the South African Development Community (SADC) have been restricted, limiting airline participation in the market. However, of recent, some SADC states are slowly embracing the principles of YD and are progressively liberalizing key elements of the Bilateral Air Services Agreements. Restrictions on designation of airlines on specific routes and limited capacity still exist in air services arrangements with Namibia, Angola, Mauritius, Tanzania, Madagascar and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Reluctance of these states to embrace YD has negatively affected South African airlines desiring to either introduce new services or expanding existing markets. The Government, however, continues to engage these States bilaterally and multilaterally to encourage them to be part of the African Union initiative of creating a single air transport market for Africa.