SOUTH AFRICAN AIRWAYS FURTHER STRENGTHENS ITS WEST AFRICAN NETWORK, INTRODUCES ABUJA

News / Airports / Routes

JOHANNESBURG. 14 October 2015. South African Airways (SAA), the leading carrier in the Sub-Saharan Africa region, has introduced a second entry point to Nigeria in its quest to enable trade and unlock mobility, which will considerably add to business travel options in the West African region.

Adding a second gateway in Nigeria to SAA's existing daily service to Lagos materially strengthens SAA's position in West Africa where it plays a significant role in enabling the movement of goods and people between Southern Africa and West Africa thereby enhancing the growing trade and cultural exchanges between these two regions.

The addition of Abuja to SAA's network follows closely on the successful introduction of the Accra, Ghana to Washington Dulles, USA route, as a West African platform in August 2015. SAA

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launched flights between Accra, Ghana and Washington DC in North America, in cooperation with Africa World Airways. The introduction of the Accra to Washington route has seen a steady growth in the number of passengers using this route and has performed in line with expectations. This has provided SAAwith the confidence to invest further and enhance its footprint in West Africa.

“A second entry point in Nigeria forms part of our Long-Term Turnaround Strategy, which identified growth on the African continent as one of its key objectives. Nigeria is one of the fastest growing air travel markets in Sub-Saharan Africa and will be well served with our additional services to Abuja.

“Introducing Abuja as a second entry point in Nigeria will add more travel options, especially for the business community, and will enhance our footprint on the continent,” says Sylvain Bosc, SAA Chief Commercial Officer.

“Enhancing air travel links with Nigeria speaks to the growth in bilateral relations between South Africa and Nigeria. The two countries historically have had strong economic, diplomatic, social and fraternal ties. These are the two economic powerhouses of Africa, with much more to offer and share,” says Aaron Munetsi, SAA Regional General Manager for Africa.

Abuja flights have been scheduled for seamless connectivity into SAA’s inter-continental route network to destinations such as Perth, Hong Kong and Sao Paulo. These connections will make it easy for regional traders, leisure travellers, travellers visiting friends and relatives, diplomatic communities, and international organisations from the northern and central parts of Nigeria to seamlessly connect through O.R Tambo International airport onwards to the airline’s inter-continental and regional route network.

Abuja, built in the 1980s, became Nigeria’s capital in December 1991, and is known for being one of the few purpose-built capital cities in Africa. Located in the centre of Nigeria, within the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), it is the Nigerian seat of government where the Presidency, National Assembly, Supreme Court, and Embassies of most countries are situated. A business city housing many government employees, Abuja has also become popular for the serene and beautiful landscape it offers.

With Abuja, SAA will be serving eight destinations in Central and West Africa, with flights from its Johannesburg hub to Lagos (Nigeria); Abidjan (Ivory Coast); Cotonou (Benin); Accra (Ghana); Douala (Cameroon), Dakar (Senegal) and Libreville (Gabon) already forming part of the extensive regional route network.

The three weekly flights will operate non-stop between Johannesburg and the Nnamdi Azikiwe International Airport in Abuja aboard modern Airbus 330-200s, offering SAA Business class comfort and luxury, with the latest in In-flight entertainment.

The first flight is scheduled to depart O.R Tambo International Airport on 26 January 2016. Flights are open for sale on all SAA’s distribution channels.

14 OCTOBER 2015

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