



Infrastructure Development Levers to Socio-Economic Growth: The Case of Aviation in Zambia

PRESS STATEMENT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Saturday 7th August, 2021

Zambia's aviation sector has been **expanding at a steady rate and a number of strides have been made towards revamping the industry which plays a critical role in facilitating tourism, international travel and various market linkages.** A few years ago, Government embarked on various infrastructure development projects that included the revamping and upgrading of the airports in order to boost the aviation industry and cater for the anticipated increase in traffic, cargo volumes and passenger numbers in and out of the country.

The Government has been fully committed to driving the country's development agenda and harnessing its economic potential. This is illustrated by the investments that have been made in the transportation sector and the aviation sub-sector. **The country remains well positioned to be a transportation hub for the region.**

On 5th August 2021, President Edgar Lungu commissioned the **Simon Mwansa Kapwepwe International Airport in Ndola** pegged at a cost of **US\$397 million.** The airport has a capacity of 1 million passengers per year and comes with a 50-room luxury hotel. **This is a key development in the sector as the airport links to Zambia's mining hub on the Copperbelt and the Northern Tourism Circuit, which is expected to further boost investment in the provinces. The airport will also be pivotal in facilitating**

the country's tourism and industrialization agenda as well as play a key role in elevating the development agenda to another level.

Furthermore, the **newly built US\$ 360 million Kenneth Kaunda International Airport (KKIA)** in Lusaka has been opened for international flights. The new airport includes a new passenger terminal, a hotel, rescue and fire services station, air traffic control tower, presidential pavilion, cargo terminal, a shopping mall and an office complex. Previously, KKIA had a capacity of **two million passengers per year**, but with the addition of the new passenger terminal the capacity will be **increased to 6 million per year**.

It is worth noting that the reopening of the **KKIA coincides with the expansion of a Qatar Airways route into Zambia beginning 6th August 2021**. This move is expected to enhance connectivity for passengers as well as meet increasing cargo demands. PMRC believes that Qatar Airways will be the first of many airlines to open routes into Zambia in **order to tap into this growing market in the coming future**.

The development of these two airports will provide several benefits for the country. Firstly, in terms of **job creation**. It is noteworthy that both airports are well equipped with restaurants, hotels, duty-free shops and other retail outlets. **These developments will provide employment opportunities for Zambians beyond the traditional jobs associated with check-in, baggage handling and cargo.**

In the second place, **these airports will provide benefits to the tourism industry**. The connectivity provided by air transport is at the heart of tourism development. There is now a particular opportunity for Zambia to expand into business tourism, specifically through meetings, conferences and exhibitions. **This form of tourism relies significantly on the availability of air travel and can generate a larger economic impact because business travellers traditionally spend more than leisure visitors.** Considering the redevelopment of the Mulungushi International Conference Centre, which will have a main hall with a capacity of 2500 seats, Zambia will be well prepared to make inroads in the business tourism market.

The construction of the Simon Mwansa Kapwepwe International Airport and the upgrading of the Kenneth Kaunda International Airport into ultra-modern facilities will enable the country to handle higher volumes of traffic (both in terms of passengers and cargo) as well as to enhance passenger connectivity. Additionally, the two airports are set to play a key role in job creation and driving tourism growth hence achieving some of the aspirations of the Seventh National Development Plan and the Economic Recovery Programme. Zambia has now become a major aviation hub.

For more details, interviews or queries about this PMRC Media Statement
Please contact;

MRS. BERNADETTE DEKA-ZULU
PMRC Executive Director

POLICY MONITORING AND RESEARCH CENTRE

Corner of Nationalist & John Mbita Roads, opposite Ridgeway Campus gate
10101 Lusaka, Zambia
Tel: +260 211 269 717 | +260 979 015 660
<https://pmrczambia.com>

UNLOCKING ZAMBIA'S POTENTIAL