

Intra-African Travel is About to Become Easier, Safer and More Open

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Intra-African travel — [which is critical to unlocking the region's tourism potential](#) — is set to become easier, safer and more open.

Easier — Open Skies Agreement between Ethiopia and Rwanda. Ethiopia and Rwanda signed an aviation agreement that will allow their respective national carriers — Ethiopia Airlines and RwandAir — to operate in the other country's airspace without restrictions. In addition, under the fifth freedom arrangement, each "airline [has the right to carry passengers](#) from one country to another and from that country to a third country." This is a clear sign of the deepening relationship between the region's most successful airline and one of its most ambitious ones. This announcement follows [a similar agreement entered into](#) by Rwanda, Uganda, Kenya and South Sudan in the Fall of last year.

Safer — Installation of one of the world's largest automatic dependent surveillance-broadcast (ADS-B) networks. The Agency for Aerial Navigation Safety in Africa and Madagascar (ASECNA) has selected Indra "to [provide and deploy an ADS-B surveillance network](#) that will cover a total of 17 countries in Africa," primarily in West and Central Africa. ADS-B is a satellite-based surveillance system that is part of the next generation in aviation technology. ADS-B Out [uses GPS technology](#) to locate and broadcast data about an aircraft's location, airspeed and other information to air traffic control displays and nearby aircraft equipped with ADS-B In.

More Open — Ghana To Introduce Visas On Arrival for All African Nationals. Ghana's President John Mahama has announced that, starting in July, Ghana will issue visas on arrival to nationals of all 54 member states of the African Union (AU). At present, nationals from only about 40% of African countries do not need a visa to enter Ghana or can obtain one upon arrival. Ghana's new visas on arrival policy is in line with [the African Union's push](#) for a continent-wide visa free regime in order to accelerate mobility and integration across the region. It also is particularly timely considering the recent African Development Bank report that found that "[North Americans have easier travel access](#) to the continent than Africans themselves."

These are promising and key developments in the run-up to the African Airlines Association's Aviation Stakeholders Convention that will be held in Rwanda in early May of this year. The event is expected to bring together about 400 representatives from "[airlines, civil aviation authorities, airports](#), air navigation service providers and ground handlers [...] regulators, aircraft-engine manufacturers,

component suppliers, service providers in the aviation industry and other aviation stakeholders.”

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