



## PRESS RELEASE:

### Adefunke Adeyemi to receive the coveted Ato Girma Wake Lifetime Achievement Award at AviaDev Africa 2021

**Date:** 6 May 2021

**AviaDev Africa**, the premier route development event for the continent will be hosting its 2021 episode on a digital platform with the support of Ravinala Airports, Madagascar.

The format will remain similar to that of what has made the live event so successful with a focus on interaction and networking via our private prescheduled route development meetings and comprehensive conference programme. With 35+ Airlines already confirmed this is the opportune moment for all stakeholders to have these important discussions as we look to rebuild connectivity within the African continent.

As in previous editions, AviaDev has presented distinguished leaders in aviation this award for their contribution to route development in Africa. Previous winners include Raphael Kuuchi, Special Envoy on Aero-political Affairs, IATA and Chris Zweigenthal, Chief Executive, Airlines Association of Southern Africa. We are delighted to announce that in 2021, this esteemed award will be presented to Adefunke Adeyemi, Regional Director, Advocacy and Strategic Relations, Africa – IATA.



Recently identified as one of the 200 Most Influential People of African Descent (MIPAD) globally in recognition of her achievements, Adefunke Adeyemi is a transformative leader, agent of change and influencer, positively impacting lives and the business environment through her passion, work and initiatives. A product of the prestigious University of Cambridge, United Kingdom, she is a lawyer, advocate and aviation expert, focused on bringing value and international standards to everything she does, especially throughout her career spanning over 18 years.

In her current role as the Regional Director for Member and External Relations of the International Air Transportation Association (IATA), Africa and Middle East covering 68 countries, she advocates for the overall sustainability and growth of the aviation industry, showcasing the value it brings to business and economies as an enabler and catalyst for development and growth. She is the intermediary between airlines, the wider aviation community, governments and policy makers and the general public. She is responsible for conceptualising and delivering an ongoing campaign regarding the transformation of Africa's socio-economic prospects through

improved air connectivity across the continent and introducing the concept of Smarter Regulation as a fundamental basis for sustainability.

All award winners are nominated and chosen by the AviaDev advisory board who consist of recognised experts in African aviation. Jon Howell, CEO and Founder, AviaDev said “We are delighted our advisory board nominated Adefunke. Her passion for the industry is contagious and she has been a leading light, balancing pragmatism and positivity in equal measure during the last 12 months. This leadership has been vital during some of the darkest times our great industry has known.”

On receiving the news of the award, Adefunke said “I am deeply humbled to receive this award. Africa is a continent with immense talent in aviation and across the board and I’m proud to represent the people of Africa through this award to continue to promote the integration, prosperity, unity and emancipation of Africa. My passion for Africa and aviation keep burning brighter and I remain committed to working with partners like AviaDev and so many others to ensure the growth and sustainability of African aviation.”

Ato Girma Wake who received the first award and following the award has been named in his honour said “This is great news. The iron lady of African Aviation deserves the award. I am very happy that due recognition is served to a very accomplished member of the industry. Congratulations and thanks are appropriate at this time to Adefunke for being the advocate of African Aviation.”

The award will be presented to Adefunke during the 2021 event and she will be interviewed about her life and times by our previous winner Chris Zweigenthal about her life’s work to date and what she hopes the future will bring.

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### **About AviaDev**

AviaDev Africa is the only dedicated air service development event for Africa, taking place online in 2021. It is organised by Bench Events ([www.benchevents.com](http://www.benchevents.com)), which is known for producing the Africa Hotel Investment Forum (AHIF) and several other top-level hotel conferences around the world.

Sponsors of AviaDev are: Host Sponsor: Ravinala Airports; Event Sponsor: The Ministry of Transport, Tourism and Meteorology of Madagascar; Meeting System Sponsor: De Havilland Aircraft of Canada Ltd; Sponsors: ADB Safegate, AeroCRS, Cell Point Digital, Collins Aerospace, DoHop, Embraer, Ink Aviation, MHIRJ Aero Advisory Services, Navpass, Netherlands Airport Consultancy and Engineering (NACO), TRM and Tuscar Aero Consulting.

For more information please visit: [www.AviationDevelop.com](http://www.AviationDevelop.com),

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