

December 19, 2025

Ed Bastian
CEO
Delta Air Lines
1030 Delta Boulevard
Atlanta, GA 30354

Dear Mr. Bastian,

I write to encourage Delta Air Lines to continue exploring opportunities to expand commercial flight service between the United States and the African continent. As one of the world's fastest growing regions, Africa presents an extraordinary opportunity for U.S. carriers to shape the future of global commerce, deepen U.S. partnerships with African nations, and connect communities on both sides of the Atlantic.

Africa is home to more than 1.5 billion people and is one of the most dynamic and consequential regions in the global economy. By 2050, the continent will account for one-quarter of the world's population¹ and a significant share of global workforce growth.² Africa already boasts 11 of the world's 20 fastest-growing economies,³ a rapidly expanding middle class,⁴ and an increasing demand for travel, trade, and commercial connectivity with the United States. In 2024 alone, total U.S. goods trade with Africa reached an estimated \$71.6 billion.⁵ Africa represents a long-term opportunity for sustained economic partnership, innovation, and investment.

Despite this promise, U.S. travelers and business leaders still face limited direct connectivity to the continent. That is now beginning to change, and I am encouraged by Delta Air Lines pioneering new nonstop routes and driving new economic activity between the United States and the African continent. In 2022, I successfully urged the Department of Transportation to approve Delta Air Lines' application for nonstop service between Atlanta and Cape Town, South

¹ Declan Walsh, *The World Is Becoming More African*, The New York Times (Oct. 28, 2023), <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/10/28/world/africa/africa-youth-population.html>.

² Landry Signé, Acha Leke, Mayowa Kuyoro, and Omid Kassiri, *Leveraging Africa's Inner Strength to Realize Its Full Economic Potential*, The Brookings Institution (Jan. 13, 2025), <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/leveraging-africas-inner-strength-to-realize-its-full-economic-potential>.

³ *Africa Dominates List of the World's 20 Fastest-Growing Economies in 2024*, African Development Bank Group (Feb. 16, 2024), <https://www.afdb.org/en/news-and-events/press-releases/africa-dominates-list-worlds-20-fastest-growing-economies-2024-african-development-bank-says-macroeconomic-report-68751>.

⁴ Cristina Duarte, *A Growing Middle Class and Continental Import Substitution: Connecting the Dots to Unlock "Made in Africa"*, United Nations (Nov. 17, 2023), <https://www.un.org/en/un-chronicle/growing-middle-class-and-continental-import-substitution-connecting-dots-unlock-%E2%80%9Cmade>.

⁵ *Africa*, Office of the United States Trade Representative, <https://ustr.gov/countries-regions/africa>.

Africa⁶—a route that now generates up to \$150 million annually in local economic activity⁷ while deepening our nation’s relationship with a key regional partner.⁸ It has also proven the commercial viability of long-haul U.S.-Africa service.

Last year alone, Delta Air Lines carried more than half a million passengers between the U.S. and Africa, reflecting the strength of this market.⁹ Independent analyses confirm that passenger demand on many African routes is expanding at double-digit rates year-over-year.¹⁰ As United Airlines and Delta Air Lines expand service to destinations such as Dakar, Senegal, and Accra, Ghana, these investments both meet rising consumer demand and underscore the profitability and competitiveness of U.S.-Africa connectivity.¹¹

With each new connection, we strengthen the bonds between nations and open new gateways to opportunity. These flights reduce travel time and complexity, meet rising consumer demand, and create meaningful economic value for travelers and businesses. Improved air connectivity also advances U.S. national and economic security by positioning American carriers to compete in a region where People's Republic of China is rapidly expanding its economic and strategic footprint. Our private sector will play a vital role in ensuring the United States—not Beijing and its state-backed competitors—anchors the continent’s aviation and trade networks and sets the standard for transparent, mutually beneficial engagement. In doing so, we can create jobs at home, foster diaspora and cultural exchange, and help forge deeper bilateral ties with emerging African partners.

As you evaluate your international strategy, I encourage you to consider opportunities for growth in African markets. I remain committed to supporting efforts that deepen U.S.-Africa engagement, deepen commercial and cultural ties, and advance our shared economic future. My office and I stand ready to collaborate with you and other stakeholders as you explore new routes and partnerships on the African continent.

⁶ *Senator Reverend Warnock Celebrates Delta’s Inaugural Flight to Cape Town, South Africa, Applauds up to \$150 Million Boost to Atlanta*, Office of U.S. Senator Reverend Raphael Warnock (Dec. 17, 2022), https://www.warnock.senate.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/06.01.2022-GA-Delegation-Letter-of-Support-to-DOT-for-Delta_FINAL_v2.pdf.

⁷ *Id.*

⁸ Kelly Yamanouchi, *Delta to Launch Flights to Cape Town, South Africa*, *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution* (Dec. 16, 2022), <https://www.ajc.com/news/atlanta-airport-blog/delta-to-launch-flights-to-cape-town-south-africa/QLOKFE6KT5GF7ANQLMYVMSH6V4/>.

⁹ *Delta Restarts Service to Nigeria from New York-JFK, Upgrades Fleet for Ghana and South Africa Service*, *Delta Air Lines* (Apr. 26, 2024), <https://news.delta.com/delta-restarts-service-nigeria-new-york-jfk-upgrades-fleet-ghana-and-south-africa-service>.

¹⁰ *Exploring the Horizons: A Study of Unserved Air Routes to, from and within Sub-Saharan Africa, Volume II*, Airbus (Jun. 2025), https://mediaassets.airbus.com/pm_38_716_716268-lt72elbq5a.pdf.

¹¹ *United Adds Eight New Destinations in Largest International Expansion in its History*, *United Airlines* (Oct. 10, 2024), <https://www.united.com/en/us/newsroom/announcements/cision-125351>; *Delta Introduces State-of-the-Art Airbus A330-900neo on Accra – New York Route*, *Delta Air Lines* (Oct. 8, 2024), <https://news.delta.com/delta-introduces-state-art-airbus-a330-900neo-accra-new-york-route>.

Thank you for your continued leadership in connecting Americans to the world. I look forward to seeing how Delta Air Lines helps shape the next chapter of the U.S.-Africa relationship.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "R. Warnock". The signature is stylized and includes a horizontal line at the end.

Raphael Warnock
United States Senator