

*V.A. Khomanets, Ph.D. in Economics
(Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Ambassador of Ukraine
to the Tunisian Republic and to the State of Libya with concurrent accreditation)*

Potential for the development of cooperation in the aviation sphere between Ukraine and African countries

The development of aviation cooperation between Ukraine and African countries can contribute to the strengthening of economic and diplomatic ties, which will enable both sides to profitably use their strengths for the development of the aviation industry and the economy. Therefore, it would be appropriate to prioritize the promotion of Ukraine's foreign economic interests on the African continent, in particular with regard to the activation of bilateral cooperation in the aviation sphere, among the key tasks of Ukrainian economic diplomacy with such countries of the Global South.

Today, Africa is growth, youth and energy. Despite the difficult political, security and socio-economic situation in many subregions of the continent, Africa today is attracting more and more attention from the industrialized countries of the world, primarily the EU (and some of its member states, primarily France, Great Britain, Italy, Germany), the USA, Japan, China and Russia, which are taking measures aimed at strengthening their own positions on it. This region is considered by them, first, as an alternative source of supply of energy resources in the conditions of growing demand for energy carriers, instability in the Middle East and the discovery of new hydrocarbon deposits. Africa is also an important and promising market for the export of goods, services and technologies.

There has been a fierce struggle for dominance on the continent for a long time, using the entire arsenal of political, military, economic and informational tools between the world's most powerful forces. Western countries conduct an active offensive policy and apply systematic practices in the direction of expanding their presence in Africa. They also actively use multilateral cooperation mechanisms with African countries, creating relevant international bodies and structures for this purpose.

In economic terms, the active offensive policy of developed countries in the region, revitalization of the activities of international financial institutions (the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the African Development Bank, the Development Bank of the Sahel and the Sahara) and regional associations in the short-term and in the medium term, it can become a catalyst for the development programs of a number of states in the region, the inflow of foreign investments and, in general, contribute to the improvement of the economic and social situation on the continent.

For Ukraine, the importance of the African continent is determined, first, by its large natural resources and significant opportunities for mutually beneficial trade and economic cooperation. In the strategic political dimension, the intensification of cooperation with the countries of the African continent can bring significant political dividends to Ukraine. Considering the significant representation in international and

regional organizations (more than a quarter of the votes in the UN General Assembly), African states today have a tangible influence on the world stage. In the conditions of Russia's war against Ukraine, the support of African states to Ukraine in the international arena is of particular importance. In the strategic economic dimension for Ukraine, the mentioned region is important as a huge market for the export of Ukrainian products and services, as well as an important source of supply of raw materials, where giant deposits of minerals, including energy carriers, are located.

The development of cooperation in the aviation sector, which has significant potential due to a number of strategic, economic and technological advantages of both sides, also belongs to the promising economic directions of Ukraine's cooperation with African countries. The main such perspectives can be identified in the following areas:

Training of aviation specialists. Ukraine has a high level of training of aviation personnel. African countries may be interested in cooperation with Ukraine in the field of pilot training for civil and military aviation, training of engineers and technicians for maintenance of aviation equipment, organization of trainings and courses on aviation safety and air traffic control.

Development of airport infrastructure. Africa is actively developing its airport infrastructure due to the increase in the number of passengers and cargo traffic. Ukraine has experience in the design, modernization and construction of airports, which can be useful for African countries, in particular, these are joint projects on the modernization of existing airports and the construction of new ones, as well as the implementation of navigation and security systems for airports and aviation hubs.

Investments and creation of joint ventures. Ukrainian aircraft construction enterprises can invest in the creation of joint ventures or production bases in African countries. This will help reduce logistics costs and adapt products to local needs, create new jobs and promote the transfer of technologies to the local level.

Export of Ukrainian aircraft. Ukraine is one of the leaders in the production of medium-sized transport aircraft, thanks in particular to the products of Antonov State Enterprise. An-series aircraft such as the An-178 and An-132 can be attractive to African countries due to their ability to perform a variety of tasks, namely: cargo transport - the aircraft can be used to transport humanitarian cargo, commercial goods and equipment in complex infrastructure environments; medical evacuations and search and rescue operations - especially in regions with a low level of transport infrastructure development; military transport - African countries may be interested in military versions of aircraft for logistics operations.

Modernization and maintenance. Ukraine has extensive experience in maintenance and modernization of aircraft in service in various countries. This opens prospects for the modernization of Soviet-made aircraft, which are still in use in many African countries, as well as for the maintenance of aircraft at Ukrainian enterprises or the creation of technical bases in Africa to support local aircraft fleets.

Cooperation in the aerospace industry. Ukrainian aerospace enterprises, in particular "Pivdenmash" and KB "Pivdenne", have significant potential for cooperation in the development of space technologies, including the launch of satellites and the development of aerospace infrastructure. African countries seeking

to develop their space programs (for example, South Africa, Nigeria, Egypt) may be interested in partnering with Ukraine.

Increase in air-travel connections. Increasing the number of flights between Ukraine and African countries, especially in the context of tourism and business, can significantly strengthen bilateral relations. This may include the opening of direct flights between major cities and the development of cargo air transport, which will contribute to the growth of trade between regions.

International aviation projects. Ukraine can join international projects aimed at the development of aviation infrastructure in Africa, such as projects under the auspices of the UN or the African Union, which will contribute to more active involvement in economic and political processes on the continent.

The development of aviation cooperation between Ukraine and African countries can contribute to the strengthening of economic and diplomatic ties, which will enable both sides to profitably use their strengths for the development of the aviation industry and the economy. Therefore, it would be appropriate to prioritize the promotion of Ukraine's foreign economic interests on the African continent, in particular with regard to the activation of bilateral cooperation in the aviation sphere, among the key tasks of Ukrainian economic diplomacy with such countries of the Global South.

At the same time, it should be noted that Ukrainian economic diplomacy on the African continent must face a number of serious challenges: political instability and conflict potential, underdevelopment of local infrastructure, highly competitive environment, limited financial resources, insufficient state institutional support, perception and recognition of Ukraine in Africa, cultural and linguistic differences, barriers to trade, etc.

To effectively overcome the above-mentioned key challenges, Ukraine needs to continue the comprehensive approach of conducting offensive economic diplomacy on the African continent, conducting actually aggressive marketing, including growing diplomatic activity, purposeful targeted investments in human capital, support for the industrialization of African economies, and promotion of the creation of new workers places and reducing migration risks in this way.

Ukraine should pave its way to Africa, which will correspond to our national interests, borrowing the positive experience of the leading countries of the world and, if possible, cooperating with them. So far, the available economic opportunities and financial resources do not allow Ukraine to act in Africa in the way that the leading countries of the world do, but this does not mean that we should not set ourselves ambitious tasks and try to implement them.