President Paul Kagame called on African nations to make air travel more accessible, saying flying should not remain a privilege for the wealthy. His remarks came at the 9th Aviation Africa Summit and Exhibition, held in Kigali on Thursday has drawn over 2,000 participants, including airline executives, policymakers, and aviation experts.

Kagame highlighted the economic potential of aviation while noting Africa faces high travel costs and limited infrastructure. “Air travel should not be reserved for the rich. We must work together to make it more accessible,” he said.

The summit showcased innovations including Rwanda’s use of drones through Zipline, which delivers medical supplies to remote areas. Kagame also emphasized Rwanda’s pilot program with eVTOL drones, capable of transporting people and cargo on 100% electric power, calling it a step toward modern, efficient urban transport.

He stressed regional cooperation, urging support for the African Union (AU) and the Agency for Aerial Navigation Safety in Africa and Madagascar (ASECNA) to harmonize air transport policies. “Africans can achieve great things when we work together,” Kagame said.

ASECNA Director-General Prosper Zo’o Minto’o called for investment in technology and infrastructure, citing gaps that hinder African aviation. Summit director Alan Peaford highlighted the importance of collaboration to overcome obstacles and strengthen the continent’s air transport system.

Kagame also promoted inclusivity, noting Rwanda’s removal of visa requirements for African travelers and efforts to encourage women and youth in aviation careers. He projected that by 2044, air travel in Africa could double from today’s 180 million passengers to 411 million, underscoring the need for safe and efficient skies.

Zipline, operational since 2016, now delivers blood, vaccines, and medicines to over 650 health facilities across Rwanda. Its drones cover more than 500 delivery routes, reducing delivery times and saving lives, while the eVTOL program marks Rwanda’s move toward advanced aerial mobility.

The two-day summit, running September 4–5, also featured over 120 exhibitors and more than 90 aviation companies, addressing infrastructure, regulation, and

technology to boost Africa’s air transport sector.