



## **AIR SEYCHELLES SIGNS HISTORIC FLEET DEAL WITH CANADA'S VIKING AIR**

Air Seychelles today announced the purchase of three Viking Air DHC-6 Twin Otter Series 400 aircraft, in a deal which will see the iconic island carrier renew its domestic fleet. The new aircraft will be used for services between Mahé and Praslin, as well as other islands in the archipelago, including Bird, Denis and Frégate.

All three aircraft deliveries are scheduled for mid-2015, with an option for earlier delivery if aircraft become available. The airline currently operates one Viking Air DHC-6 Twin Otter Series 400 and three Series 300 aircraft.

The multi-million dollar fleet announcement was made at a joint Air Seychelles-Viking Air press conference this morning at Mahé International Airport, and comes as Air Seychelles marks 35 years in business.

Present to share details of the new fleet order were Air Seychelles Chief Executive Officer, Cramer Ball, Viking Air President and Chief Executive Officer, David C. Curtis, and the Seychelles Minister for Home Affairs and Transport and Chairman of Air Seychelles, Joel Morgan.

Cramer Ball said: "On the eve of our 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary, I'm delighted to mark a major milestone in our carrier's development with this historic fleet order. This announcement is testament to the success of our turnaround strategy, which has seen an expansion in both our international and domestic services, and the synergies derived from working closely with our equity partner, Etihad Airways. Once delivered, the new aircraft will replace our three existing DHC-6 Series 300 Twin Otters, forming the backbone of a



younger Air Seychelles domestic fleet. The aircraft will secure the future of our inter-island services, Seychelles tourism and our economy.”

Mr Ball added the Canadian built 19-seat twin engine Pratt & Whitney PT6A-34 aircraft are ideally suited for short sector flying, being able to land on rugged, short airstrips, and having few issues operating in a saline and humid environment. “These aircraft are designed for Short Take-offs and Landings, and are robust in extreme conditions – something we have a lot of experience with in the Seychelles since the Twin Otters were first introduced here in the early 1980s. The new aircraft are the right tools at the right time for Air Seychelles.”

Joel Morgan said: “This purchase of three brand new Twin Otters to serve the inter-islands is a win-win situation for both the Seychellois community and Air Seychelles. Twin Otters have proven to be the best and most reliable type of aircraft to serve the islands. The replacement of the domestic fleet had long been planned by the government, however, due to previous financial constraints this was not possible. Today we are delighted that we are able to do so not only for the benefit and comfort of our international visitors but, for our local commuters as well.”

David C. Curtis, said: “Air Seychelles has been a long time and loyal operator of the Twin Otter aircraft, and was one of the first customers to commit to the new Viking Series 400 Twin Otter during development. They put a great deal of faith in Viking and our ability to deliver, and their return to Viking for additional aircraft speaks to Air Seychelles’ on-going commitment and confidence in the Twin Otter Series 400. We value the relationship we have developed with Air Seychelles, and are honoured that such a world-class organisation has made the Twin Otter Series 400 their aircraft of choice in the 19-passenger category.”



The new aircraft will be manufactured at Viking Air's state-of-the-art production facility in Victoria, British Columbia, Canada. Previously, Twin Otters were manufactured by de Havilland Canada, and of the 850 built since the mid-1960s, more than 600 are still in active service around the world.

Mr Ball concluded that 2013 has been an historic year for Air Seychelles. So far in 2013 the carrier has introduced a second Airbus A330-200 aircraft, launched services to Hong Kong, signed codeshare agreements with airberlin, South African Airways and Czech Airlines, expanded the number of codeshare destinations with equity partner Etihad Airways, witnessed surging passenger growth in its domestic services, and crucially, posted its first profit in three years. The indicators also point to the carrier being on track for a second successive year of profitability.

“Key to this fleet deal has been the growth in our domestic traffic since the beginning of 2013, up 15 per cent for visitors and up 13 per cent for local commuters, and we're already seeing strong bookings going into next year. We have also seen solid business with our charters. Working alongside our international and local tourism partners, as well as Viking Air, we look forward to a successful entry into service of these new aircraft.”

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### **About Air Seychelles**

Air Seychelles was established in 1978 and began long-haul service in 1983. The airline currently offers international flights to Abu Dhabi, Johannesburg, Hong Kong and Mauritius. Air Seychelles also offers more than 200 domestic scheduled flights a week throughout the archipelago, as well as domestic charter services. As the national airline of the Republic of Seychelles, Air Seychelles is a pillar of tourism, the island nation's strongest and growing economic sector. The airline maintains a strategic partnership with Etihad Airways, the national airline of the United Arab Emirates and 40 per cent stakeholder. For more information, please visit: [www.airseychelles.com](http://www.airseychelles.com).

### **About Viking Air, Victoria, British Columbia, Canada**

Incorporated in 1970, Viking Air Limited is a world-class aerospace manufacturing company located in Victoria, British Columbia, Canada. Viking owns the Type Certificates for the de Havilland Canada legacy fleet, and has been providing all product support functions since May 2005. In 2010, Viking certified the Twin Otter Series 400, now in service in over 18 countries worldwide and regarded as the best-selling 19 passenger turbo-prop aircraft available on the market today. Viking is part of Westerkirk Capital Inc., a Canadian private investment firm with substantial holdings in the hospitality, aviation and real estate sectors.