

Double tax may send green-flights cost soaring

Suggestions by the South African government that it will include airlines in its economy-wide carbon tax will, if they become reality, lead to further costs for passengers, *Saturday Star* reports.

If a carbon tax is levied on flights in and from South Africa by the government, there will be an effective double taxing of emissions, because the EU's emissions trading scheme (ETS) will see carbon taxes levied on the distance and duration of flights into Europe - regardless of the time those flights spend in European airspace.

The International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) is leading the opposition to these measures, which it describes as unfair and a violation of international sovereignty law. For example - during a typical SAA flight from Johannesburg's OR Tambo International Airport to London Heathrow, of the 10.5 hours of total flying time, just 2.5 hours are in EU airspace, still - according to the EU ETS, carbon charges will be levied against the entire flight, from point of departure to point of arrival and based on a calculation which considers the distance and duration of the flight.

Each airline has to collect the charges (without compensation for administrative costs) associated with each flight and pay them to the EU, which will pocket the money. According to the *Saturday Star*, ICAO is concerned that none of this money will go back to any of the non-EU countries en route. It is also unclear whether the EU will spend any of the money on initiatives to further reduce carbon emissions. South Africa was one of the signatories to a recent protest to the EU about the proposed taxes.

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