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African aviation news February 2009

Anxiety over delay in naming civil aviation boss

By STEPHEN MBURU Posted Saturday, January 17 2009 at 20:10

There is growing concern among air operators over the delay in naming a new Kenya Civil Aviation Authority director general to replace long-serving Chris Kuto. Mr Kuto left the authority last month after seeing through the one-year extension on his contract. He should have officially retired in December 2007 after serving for five years as KCAA boss.

Members of the Kenya Association of Air Operators and the Aero Club of East Africa argue that KCAA is too sensitive a body to be run by an acting director general. They cite some major decisions which they say can only be made by a substantive director. The decisions concern air safety, licensing new airlines and contracting dealers to purchase navigational aids.

A KCAA source, who asked not to be named because he is not authorised to discuss the matter in the media, said the Authority needed a CEO who can give clear directions about adhering to new civil aviation regulations drawn up in line with the International Civil Authority Organisation. "The (aviation) industry is very sensitive. We need somebody who can develop and maintain standards of air safety," he said.

Mr Nicholas Bodo was named acting director general by Transport Permanent Secretary Abdulrazaq Ali on December 12. He had been a KCAA board member representing the minister but is said to have no background in aviation. KCAA chairman Charles Wako told the *Sunday Nation* that the board may have to re-advertise the job if Transport minister Chirau Mwakwere does not appoint any of the three candidates whose names the board submitted to him in October last year. Mr Wako said the minister seemed dissatisfied with the list of names. "The parent ministry has told us there was some technical aspect we may have overlooked during the advertisement and interviews," he said.

The three candidates were among six an international firm of accountants had interviewed and shortlisted in July from among 53 candidates. However, Mr Wako declined to give further details or the names of the candidates, saying he was bound by the Civil Service rule against discussing confidential information with the media. He said only the minister or Mr Ali could give such information. Neither could be reached for comment.

Mr Wako said he knew there was concern in the industry due to the delay to name a director at the Authority but he sought to downplay its impact. "I know there is concern in the (aviation) industry. But I don't know where the concern is coming from in the first place. The industry is intact. They (air operators) would like the process taken (faster). You cannot rush decisions. Many factors have to be considered. The NSIS has to be involved in vetting the candidates," Mr Wako said.

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But he added that there was still time to name the next director. “I can assure you the parent ministry is taking action,” Mr Wako said. “It could be sooner. In fact, no one is to blame over the appointment. We don’t want to act in haste and regret. Whatever action we take is to improve the industry. I think that is the precaution they (ministry officials) are taking.”

Emirates SkyCargo to Addis Ababa

February 16th, 2009

Emirates SkyCargo has started a weekly flight to Addis Ababa. The flight, which runs on the Dubai - Addis Ababa - Nairobi - Amsterdam - Dubai route, is operated using a B744F.

Air Malawi : More Flights from Lilongwe to Johannesburg, Dar es salaam **Source: Air Malawi – 5-3-2009**

Air Malawi has increased its frequencies to Dar es Salaam and Johannesburg. There are three flights per week between Dar es Salaam and Malawi and seven between Johannesburg and Lilongwe direct.

Lilongwe customers need not worry about travelling to Blantyre to catch each of these flights. We are a listening airline. As always, we want the best for our customers. Lilongwe customers have demanded more flights in and out of Lilongwe. After a thorough analysis, we decided to increase flight frequency for their greater convenience.

Dar es Salaam is slowly becoming the business hub of the eastern market. There, buyers find most of the items they used to find after paying heavily to travel to places like Dubai and Guangzhou in China. At Kariakoo Market in Dar es Salaam, different goods are to be found at reasonable prices. Items such as clothes, shoes, handbags, cosmetics and general merchandise are readily available. Proactive business people are now travelling to Dar es Salaam to procure their merchandise, effectively saving time and expense.

Dar es Salaam is also a gateway to Zanzibar - a hot tourist destination. With three flights a week our customers travelling for the purpose of tourism are able to connect to our partner flights into Zanzibar. Nkhwazi Holidays, an Air Malawi brand that offers various packages to Zanzibar and Dar es Salaam, can tailor holidays to suit the needs of individual customers.

Nigeria: Tackle Fuel Marketers

[Leadership](#) (Abuja) 2 February 2009 editorial

Until last Thursday, the cost of aviation fuel (Jet-A1) in Nigeria remained N156 per litre, one of the highest in the world, even though crude oil prices have crashed from \$147 per barrel in July 2008 to about \$40 now. That has kept the fare for a one-hour flight at N20, 000, against N14, 000 a year ago. Jet-A1 marketers had maintained their merciless grip on the price of the product, despite efforts by the Aviation Committee of the House of Representatives to persuade them to see reason and listen to the dictates of market forces since the price of aviation fuel is deregulated.

Recent developments indicate that greed and profiteering have replaced Campbell McConnell's "invisible hand" on the price mechanism of Jet-A1 and other petroleum products. Petrol is still sold between N70 and N100 per litre in many parts of the country, even though the official price is N65. The marketers, it appears, can only listen to the language of force. Government's silence on the issue is not helpful. Fleecing of the public must stop now. The marketers should be compelled to comply with directives.

Ethiopian receives first MD11F

February 3rd, 2009

Ethiopian received its first of two MD11 freighter aircraft from Boeing on Saturday. This example was purchased from the manufacturer, while the second aircraft, slated for delivery in August, will be leased.

Nigeria: Aviation - U.S. to Partner Country

[Leadership](#) (Abuja) Samuel Aruwan 3 February 2009

Kaduna — As Nigeria intensifies the reduction of air crashes in the nation's aviation sector, the United States of America (USA) is to partner with the country to raise the standard of the aviation sector. The Minister of Aviation, Babatunde Omotoba, stated this in Kaduna while declaring open a three-day retreat for management staff of the Nigeria Metrological Agency (NIMET) at the weekend, held at the Asaa Pyramid Hotel.

The minister also stated that the Federal Government, in its commitment to move the sector forward, is strengthening the operations of NIMET to enable it achieve its 13 per cent economic growth in the areas of agriculture, transportation, health as well as oil and gas among others through metrological services. He said: "Every socio-economic sector and human activity is influenced by weather, climate and water", hence the need to ensure adequate and efficient workforce, supported by a state-of-the art equipment and purpose driven leadership at NIMET.

The Aviation Minister, who was speaking through the Director of Safety and Technical Policy in the ministry, Captain Mohammed Ruma, added "Let me use this opportunity to inform you that USA has chosen Nigeria as a first beneficiary of a plan to significantly reduce the high record of air crashes in Africa through the implementation of safe sky in the region. "The programme is aimed at improving skills and ensuring strict compliance with international regulations on safety in the continent. NIMET should exploit this opportunity to its advantage", the minister said.

Speaking further, he said that climate change and the attendant increase in frequency and intensity of extreme weather events constituted a major threat to socio-economic development programmes in Nigeria and worldwide, noting that it was in this regard that accurate and timely weather cum climate information have become more valuable than before. In his welcome address, the Director General of NIMET, Dr. Anthony Anufom, maintained that Nigeria is highly vulnerable to extreme weather and climate events as witnessed in the form of draughts, floods, desertification and erosion which he argued had caused untold socio-economic hardship to the people.

On this Anuforum said, "Indeed, extreme weather events constitute a threat to the realisation of the objectives of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the National Economic Empowerment Development Strategies (NEEDS). "It is pertinent to note that these objectives are all sensitive to weather and, therefore, underscore the need to further examine our strengths and weaknesses with a view to significantly increasing our capacity to provide solutions to many of man's socio-economic problems of the country.

The economic costs of dealing with climate extremes could be reduced if we can continue to provide more timely, effective and accurate early warning systems that will assist government agencies accept preparedness strategies to deal with the impact of climate extreme".

Angola: Prime Minister, Cape Verde Envoy Discuss Aviation And Finance Cooperation

3 February 2009

Luanda — Cooperation in air transports and financial sectors topped Tuesday's meeting held in Luanda between Angolan prime minister, António Paulo Kassoma, and the special envoy of Cape Verde Government, Manuel Inocêncio de Sousa. Speaking to the press, at the end of the audience with António Paulo Kassoma, the envoy of the Cape Verde's premier expressed the wish to work together with a view to boosting air transport business in favour of the Airlines of Angola (TAAG) and of Cape Verde (TACV).

According to Manuel Inocêncio de Sousa, the parties also discussed some proposals focussed on deepening of partnership in the financial field. He praised the performance of the Angola's African Investment Bank (BAI) in his country. Manuel Inocêncio de Sousa who is also Cape Verde's minister of Infrastructures, Transport and Telecommunications, said that the participation of BAI in the financial market of his country is "extremely interesting" and "is very well positioned."

In Luanda since Monday, Manuel de Sousa explained that his mission is focused on the effort aimed at implementation of the agreements signed between the two countries during the visit paid by the president of Cape Verde, Pedro Pires, in December last year, which was intended to deepen the partnership between the two states. A joint Committee met on the sidelines of the visit, with view to implementing concrete steps towards the setting up of partnership in the fields of the air transport and finance.

Nigeria: FG Threatens to Sanction BA, Delta Airlines Over Poor Service

[Daily Independent](#) (Lagos) Gboyega Adeoye 4 February 2009

Both British Airways (BA) and Delta Airlines risk sanction by the Federal Government for maltreating Nigerian passengers, if the word of Aviation Minister, Babatunde Omotoba, is anything to go by. He disclosed on Tuesday that both BA and Delta Airlines treat Nigerian passengers in violation of the rules of the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO). He lamented

the recent ordeal BA passengers went through when its London bound flight was delayed for over six hours as a result of technical problems the aircraft encountered twice within an hour. He also accused Delta Airlines of flying its Nigerian route with old aircraft that could not be used on other routes. Omotoba said the Nigerian Civil Aviation Authority (NCAA) has concluded plans to summon Delta Airlines for allegedly using "scrappy" aircraft on the Nigerian route, adding that BA is also guilty of the practice.

He recalled that BA had committed another blunder when a flight was cancelled on the excuse that the pilot was indisposed. He warned foreign airlines to operate to Nigeria with top class airplanes and to treat passengers with dignity. BA alone made over N30 billion from ticket sales on the Nigerian route in a year, Omotoba noted, and wondered why it shows little care for passengers.

"Never mind, British Airways and Delta Airlines will soon hear from us. The development in recent times shows a lot of laxity on the part of both airlines and that is completely unacceptable. We must get the best of services," he added. He directed all airlines to comply with safety procedures or close shop, because the government will not allow the lives of passengers to be endangered. Omotoba added that instruction has been issued to the NCAA to establish a Customer Protection Directorate that will oversee the handling of passengers by foreign and local airlines. He also disclosed that the government has approved about N2 billion to build a second runway at the Nnamdi Azikiwe Airport, Abuja.

The current runway was built over 23 years ago, and has now been in use three years longer than its normal life span. "The second runway will cost between N4 billion and N8 billion. Approval of N2 billion has been given, and very soon we will embark on the construction." Omotoba confirmed that he has just returned from Germany where he held discussions on safety and infrastructure matters. Nigeria is in partnership with Lufthansa Technik, the technical arm of Lufthansa Airline, to have a hangar in the country that will maintain all types of aircraft, he said.

Namibia: Plane Hits Golf Course

Denver Isaacs 4 February 2009

TWO people were rushed to the intensive care unit of a Windhoek hospital yesterday after a single-engine Jabiru light aircraft plummeted to earth and crashed on the Windhoek Country Club's golf course. The two were identified as Wolfgang 'Kücki' Kuhhirt, owner of the Rostock Ritz Desert Lodge near Sossusvlei, and Aron Jeremia, one of his employees.

The accident happened right after takeoff from the Eros Airport at around 12h45. The two were apparently on their way to Rostock Lodge. A spokesperson for the Works and Transport Ministry, Julius Ngweda, said yesterday afternoon that both men were reported to be in a critical condition.

According to eyewitnesses at the scene, the plane was seen shuddering just moments after takeoff before it smashed into the golf course and hit a tree. The plane's left wing reportedly caught the tree on impact, which then caused it to crash into a second tree. Initially, the Aircraft Accident Investigations Director in the Works Ministry, Erickson Nengola, told The Namibian that engine failure was suspected to be the cause of the accident. This was rejected later by Ngweda, who said

the Ministry would inform the media of its findings at a later stage. "We are looking at two possible causes that we think led to the accident happening, but we will inform you in due time," he said.

Sources at the scene suggested that the aircraft's engine failed on takeoff. The plane lifted off from Runway 19, Nengola said, which is the Eros Airport's longest runway, according to a recent report on a spate of plane accidents since last year. In his initial conversation with The Namibian, Nengola said the fuel used on the aircraft would be tested to determine whether engine problems were the cause.

Ngweda said yesterday that the Ministry continues to work with members of the international aviation community currently in the country to try and come to grips with the increasing number of air accidents since mid-2007. Yesterday's accident is the seventh involving a plane taking off from Eros Airport since September 2007.

Air Namibia launches Walvis Bay to Cape Town

February 4th, 2009

Air Namibia launched new service between Walvis Bay, Namibia and Cape Town, South Africa with 3x per week service using B735. Flights are operated on Sundays, Wednesdays and Fridays.

49% of Air Tanzania to be sold to Chinese investor

February 5th, 2009

Tanzania's government has reportedly announced plans to sell a 49% stake of the airline to private Chinese investor China Sonangol International.

Nigeria: FG Partners Luftansa Technik on Hangar Facility

[Leadership](#) (Abuja) Kinsley Alu 7 February 2009

Abuja — The Federal Government of Nigeria has concluded arrangements to establish an aircraft maintenance facility in Abuja, the federal capital. Minister of aviation, Babatunde Omotoba, who returned to the country after about two weeks visit to Germany and the United States, said this week in Lagos that world renowned aircraft maintenance firm, Lufthansa Technik, has been contracted to build the aircraft hangar .

According to the Minister, the new state-of-the-art facility to be co-owned by Nigerian firms and Lufthansa Technik would save the country foreign exchange and also provide gainful jobs for Nigerian aeronautical and aircraft maintenance engineers. Omotoba said the firm, would collaborate with the Nigerian College of Aviation Technology (NCAT), Zaria to train and thereafter employ Nigerian young aircraft engineers.

The hanger when completed will be the first of its type in the West African sub-region as there are currently no aircraft maintenance facilities that can carry out C and D-checks on aircraft in West Africa. Presently, Nigerian airlines do major checks and maintenance of their aircraft in America ,Europe, and Ethiopia Airlines hangar in Addis-Ababa, Ethiopia, depending on the degree of



maintenance required. Lufthansa Technik Group, a sister company of Lufthansa German Airlines, has a global 32 networks of affiliates and subsidiaries and is the world's leading manufacturer-independent provider of maintenance services to airlines. The group with a 1,000-strong workforce provides a wide range of aircraft maintenance covering the products of all the major aircraft manufacturers including Boeing and Airbus.

Ghana: US to Provide 1.1 Million Dollars for KIA Projects

[Public Agenda](#) (Accra) 9 February 2009

Accra — The United States Trade and Development Agency (USTDA) will provide 1.1 million dollars to upgrade the capacity of the Kotoka International Airport (KIA) and help Ghana regain its Category 1 status under the International Safety Assessments (IASA). A press release from the US Embassy in Accra said the project will consist of refurbishment of the passenger terminal, development of a new Air Traffic Control Centre (ATC) and modernization of the Meteorological Services Department (MSD).

"Improvements to KIA will increase the chances that Ghana will achieve IASA Category 1 status, which will increase the country's ability to trade with the US by allowing direct service to the US by Ghanaian carriers," the press release said. Under the first project, the USTFA would grant 650,000 dollars to fund a feasibility study and design for the terminal refurbishment in partnership with the Ghana Airports Company Ltd (GACL) which would contribute 17,250 dollars in technical assistance.

The funding would provide architectural and engineering services to improve passenger flow, renovate the arrivals area and add new ticketing building, concourses and departure gates. Ghana has experienced strong growth in air passenger traffic over the past 10 years with international passenger traffic at the airport growing at double digit rates since 2004, outstripping capacity. The press statement noted that KIA handled more than one million international passengers in 2007. GACL recently completed a 15-year master plan for KIA which projects that there would be some two million passengers by 2024.

"In order to accommodate this ongoing growth, GACL needs to refurbish KIA's passenger terminal and requires the schematics and design documents to determine what goods and services to procure." It said KIA's refurbishment would offer opportunities of 25 million dollars in the form of airport consulting, engineering and design services as well as equipment for baggage handling, security, electronics, boarding bridges, communication and building services. Total capital requirements for the project are estimated at 47 million dollars, it added. The second project is a grant for 295,000 dollars to fund a feasibility study to support the development of a new Air Traffic Control Centre (ATC) at the KIA. The press statement said a new ATC, with an improved location and increased capacity to handle projected air traffic levels for the next 15 years, will allow for safe handling of Ghana's air space using the latest traffic control technologies. Annual aircraft movements have almost doubled since 2002 and Ghana has an extensive Flight Information Region (FIR), including the upper air space for Benin and Togo.

"This (feasibility study) will provide Ghana Civil Aviation Authority (GCAA) with the specifications and location for the new facility as well as recommend the equipment needed to accommodate both near-term traffic and projected traffic over the next 15 years." The expansion of the MSD project is a grant of 235,000 million dollars to fund a feasibility study to modernize the Department. It is to improve the accuracy and availability of weather information with a central Weather Forecast Office (WFO), equipment for all airports in Ghana, an automated meteorology database and the means to communicate pertinent weather information to aviation, agricultural, energy producing, industrial and water resource users.

The feasibility study would assist MSD in their efforts to improve the accuracy and availability of weather information in Ghana. MSD plans to establish a central WFO, equip all airports in Ghana with Automated Weather Stations or radar surveillance. "The proliferation of accurate and timely weather information is expected to improve safety in the aviation sector, optimise agricultural productivity, and assist the management of water and energy resources such as the Akosombo Dam which generates 912 megawatts of electricity for Ghana, Togo and Benin," the press release said.

Namibia: Air Namibia Tries to Recruit Foreign Pilots

Christof Maletsky 10 February 2009

AIR NAMIBIA has approached an international labour-hire company to help them recruit pilots and captains for their European routes. The Namibian has established from well-placed sources that the company, which is grappling with a shortage of pilots, has approached international aviation consultants Rishworth Aviation Limited to help it get the services of captains and first officers to fly their A340 planes between southern Africa and Europe. Air Namibia has yet to confirm the information. Several experienced pilots left the national airline last year because of alleged mismanagement. This led to the Republican Party last year calling on President Hifikepunye Pohamba to launch an investigation into allegations of nepotism, mismanagement, lack of financial discipline, double standards, the fast-tracking of pilots not capable of shouldering the responsibilities expected of them and low staff morale.

The party warned of alleged "glaringly obvious malpractices which had the potential to seriously affect Air Namibia's long-term viability and safety of passengers". At the time, Air Namibia claimed the RD statement had racial undertones and was a direct assault on the country's affirmative action policy. Managing Director Kosmas Egumbo accused RP president Henk Mudge of making "blatantly racist" statements because a relative of his had unsuccessfully applied for a job at the national airline. The RP said experienced pilots had left because several under-qualified black people were appointed in key positions because of the affirmative action policy and it posed a major safety risk to the airline's operations.

South Africa: SAA Chief Expected to Stand Down for Inquiry

Julius Baumann 11 February 2009

Johannesburg — SAA CEO Khaya Ngqula is expected to step aside today as an investigation into his alleged mismanagement of the airline gets under way. South African Airways (SAA) and the public enterprises department were tight-lipped on Ngqula's future after a special board meeting attended by Public Enterprises Minister Brigitte Mabandla and her director-general, Portia Molefe, yesterday morning. However, it is clear pressure is mounting on Ngqula to step aside while allegations of mismanagement are investigated. Ngqula would not be drawn on yesterday's meeting or the possibility that he might step aside, referring queries to SAA spokeswoman Robyn Chalmers.

In a brief statement on yesterday's meeting, which gave precious little away, SAA said: "The decision of the board of SAA to commission an independent investigation into allegations surrounding Ngqula and the executive team was endorsed. "The board will submit the terms of reference for the independent investigation to the shareholder (government) for approval. "The investigation will be undertaken as a matter of urgency. The board will take the necessary measures to ensure that due process is followed during the investigation as well as in respect of any required remedial, risk-mitigation and disciplinary measures as a consequence of the findings of the investigation." The board said it would provide further details of the meeting later this week. The department would also not be drawn on the details of the meeting. On Friday, the department said it viewed the allegations, and resolution of the allegations, in a serious light, and had called yesterday's meeting to bring the matter to an "expeditious and objective resolution".

The flurry of activity at Airways Park was sparked off when the South African Transport and Allied Workers Union (Satawu) recently handed Mabandla a dossier containing allegations of wrongdoing by senior members of SAA management, in particular Ngqula. The department handed the document to SAA chairman Jakes Gerwel, and demanded that the board take urgent action as it viewed the allegation in a "serious light". The SAA board held a scheduled meeting on Friday, when the allegations, which include issues involving procurement, retention premiums and conflict of interest, were discussed. It is believed Ngqula was at the meeting, but recused himself when the dossier came up for discussion. Ngqula said on Friday he welcomed the investigation, and would co-operate fully with the investigators.

Until now Ngqula has not been found guilty of any wrongdoing. He has courted controversy since his appointment in 2004. Most recently it was alleged that Ngqula's wife, Mbali Gasa, was part of a consortium that clinched a R1,5bn catering deal with SAA. Satawu's aviation co-ordinator, Kenneth Monnana, said on Friday the same dossier given to Mabandla was presented to former public enterprises minister Alec Erwin, who dismissed the allegations

Nigeria: NCCA Advocates For Removal of Customs Duties on Aircraft

Chris Agabi 12 February 2009

Abuja — The Nigerian Civil Aviation Authority (NCAA) has advocated for the total removal of customs duties on aircraft purchased for flight operations in Nigeria. "The reintroduction of customs duties on aircraft by the government is unacceptable. We had this removed before and we refused the

reintroduction for it is even against the Cape Town convention" said the Director General of NCAA Dr. Harold Olusegun Demuren.

Demuren, who engaged stakeholders of the aviation industry with his management team in Lagos yesterday also told airline operators to invest some more in safety equipments particular airline tracking technology. He said though NCAA is also deploying similar technology to track any missing aircraft in the futures said the airline should also acquire similar equipments so they be factored into NCAA's. He said: "We want a situation where any missing aircraft would be tracked so there wouldn't be any speculation as to where an aircraft is in such a situation."

According to the DG, NCAA is currently seeking zero tolerance for accidents and carbon emission, thus the operators should work with NCAA to have a safe and secured industry. Also commenting on the present high cost of air fare tariff, he said the airline operators should also consider reducing their charges now that aviation fuel has been reduced from N160 per litter to N85. But he still decried the cost, saying it's still too much considering the low prices of crude oil in the international market. He assured he would engage stakeholders on further reduction in the air fare. He said the industry faces challenges of aging infrastructure and manpower, which the NCAA is seeking to address. "We need to improve infrastructure at both the air side and land side," he said.

While the NCAA will pursue new regulations to improve flying experience for Nigerians and foreign, he said consumer protection will be paramount. He said annually at least 4 million people travel by air locally and 4 million travel outside of Nigeria. He accepted Captain Joji Mohammed, the Secretary Airline Operators of Nigeria, request that the number of days for inspecting aircrafts abroad by NCAA before they are brought to Nigeria be reduced. Thus, henceforth, he said, aircraft inspection in European countries will be four days rather than 5 days while inspection days in the USA is reduced to six days from eight. The Middle East inspection days is now five days from seven while France and Far East is seven days.

Nigeria: Aviation Safety - U.S. Team to Visit Country

13 February 2009 [Leadership](#) (Abuja)

A management team from the U.S. Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) is expected in Nigeria in a fortnight as the country intensifies its bid to attain the FAA International Aviation Safety Assessment (IASA) Category 1 status. Attainment of the Cat.1 status will enable airlines to operate commercially to the U.S. directly from Nigeria, the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports. Without the status, they have the option of wet-leasing aircraft from a compliant country, an option considered very expensive. Dr Harold Demuren, Director-General, Nigerian Civil Aviation Authority (NCAA) made this known in an interview with NAN on Thursday in Lagos.

Demuren said that Nigeria had already covered a lot of grounds in its bid to attain the much-coveted status, adding that the visit would be another great leap. "We are now 75 per cent ready, so we are very happy and the NCAA is preparing itself for the corrective action plan which is necessary to attain the status. Demuren said that new regulations to ensure that Nigeria satisfied the FAA IASA Cat.1 specifications would soon be introduced in the industry. He said that the NCAA had already met with airline operators on the proposed rules, in line with guidelines concerning their introduction.

"I have been able to explain to industry operators the new regulations we are bringing out which meet the FAA IASA Cat. 1 certification and this is a new civil aviation regulation based on model civil aviation regulations. "We have also spoken to them about guidance materials which tell what the operators must do and what the safety inspectors must do so that there will be no conflict," he said.

The NCAA chief said there was also the need for airlines designated on the U.S. route to meet with requirements of the IASA Cat. 1 status. Virgin Nigeria, Arik Air and Bellview airlines have been designated on the route. Demuren also spoke on the passenger traffic in the Nigerian aviation industry, saying expectations were that it would hit the 10 million mark by the end of year. "Already, we are at the four million mark on both the domestic and international routes and I believe that by the end of year, we should be able to get another five million to enable us hit the 10 million mark," he added.(NAN)

Africa: Abuja, Lagos Airports Pass Continent's First ICAO's Evaluation

[Leadership](#) (Abuja) Kingsley Alu 13 February 2009

The Director-General, Nigeria Civil Aviation Authority, NCAA, Harold Demuren has described the series of airport evaluations conducted between the 9th -11th of February, 2008, by the International Civil Aviation Organisation,(ICAO) and the co-operative Arrangement for the Prevention of Spread of Communicable Disease by Air Travel(CAPSCA) in Lagos and Abuja Airports to ascertain the country's level of preparedness to checkmate the outbreak of communicable diseases by air travel, as the first in Africa.

Demuren, who disclosed this in Abuja, yesterday during the ICAO CAPSCA steering committee meeting in Abuja, said that the team had successfully assessed the level of preparedness of the two major Nigerian Airports in the prevention of communicable diseases by air travel .He said that the evaluation was carried out using checklists from the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and International Health Regulations(IHR).

A CAPSCA and ICAO statement issued at the meeting said Lagos and Abuja International Airports were evaluated for compliance with ICAO guidelines and the relevant articles of the World Health Organisation International Health Regulations(2005)on pandemic preparedness planning for the aviation sector. The team therefore congratulated Nigeria for taking the initiative to have its airports pandemic preparedness plans evaluated, making it the first country in Africa to do so.'ICAO team is very pleased that Nigeria has initiated the airport evaluation process for CAPSCA Africa. ICAO CAPSCA project team acknowledges the co-ordinated and excellent effort being contributed by all agencies to develop effective aviation pandemic preparedness plans that are in concert with the state preparedness plans for Nigeria,"the statement read.

CAPSCA is an initiative of ICAO which aims at providing assistance to countries to enable them comply with Article 14 of the Convention On International Civil Aviation' Prevention of Spread of Diseases'; as well as ICAO annex 9,paragraph 8.16 that requires states to establish a national aviation plan in preparation for possible outbreak of serious communicable diseases.

Nigeria: Conrad Clifford - Virgin Nigeria Must Be Doing Something Right

 Nseobong Okon-Ekong
The logo for "THIS DAY" features the words "THIS" and "DAY" in black, with a red circular icon containing a white stylized figure between them.

14 February 2009

Lagos — Conrad Clifford, Chief Executive Officer, Virgin Nigeria Airways is a happy man for two reasons: It is that time of the year that he can reward customers for their loyalty. He has chosen to roll out the goodies to coincide with the Valentine. Every couple who fly Virgin Nigeria's sub-regional or domestic route will do so for half the normal price. "Basically for Valentine's Day, we are giving half price fares where two people can go together to a domestic or a regional destination. We are doing that over the Valentine weekend.

Second, a combination of the global economic meltdown and the drop in cost of aviation fuel has given the airline the opportunity to show that it is a responsive corporate entity. "The price of fuel has come down, so our prices are coming down. The second thing is that this is traditionally a slow period and we want to stimulate demand and we are doing that with lower prices as well. We are doing that also because we are trying to encourage people to book online, we have introduced a whole series of what we call 'early bird fares.' These are discounted fares that are available on our website. We are trying to encourage people to take advantage so if you go on to our website and you book a couple of days in advance, you will be entitled to those fares and lastly we are doing discount on certain days, from time to time at the airport. At the moment we have a special Abuja fare of 15,000 which is available at MM2."

Conrad is quick to puncture the notion that the airline is in the throes of death. On the contrary, he argues vehemently that what is happening to Virgin Nigeria is no different from prevailing circumstances in the industry. He believes business has been good and that the airline is only making strategic adjustment to the dictates of the economic environment. "It is about reflecting the lower cost of the fuel and also stimulating demand," he insists. "What happens normally is that the prices go up and down depending on the season. The next peak season will be Easter and usually the prices down again after Easter. They go up again during the summer and they usually come up again for Christmas. That is the way airline pricing works not only in Nigeria but worldwide," he explains.

As far as the Virgin Nigeria CEO is concerned, if you can make it in Nigeria, you can make it anywhere in the world. True, it is a tough business environment, but it is still driven by the basic rules of demand and supply. The logic is one that every merchant understands. "If there is a lot of demand, the prices go up and if there is no demand, the prices go down. That is the way it is the world over." It took a while for the global economic down turn to hit the shores of Nigeria. It is here finally. The signs are obvious. "We are definitely seeing a reduction in demand at the moment. It is lower than normal because it is a worldwide problem. If you talk to any of the airline bosses, they will definitely be experiencing problems with demand which is lower than normal because of the worldwide recession which is definitely affecting Nigeria."

As yet, Conrad is not able to put figures to the volume of business loss. "I don't have any figure in my head. We have only seen and we have been tracking this for the last couple of weeks. It has just arrived Nigeria." Tongues are still wagging and a lot of conjectures bandied around over Virgin Nigeria's decision to suspend its long haul operations. To the uninformed, it is a sure sign of unhealthy business. Again, Conrad has a plausible answer that comes across as a passionate appeal for understanding. "Really, it didn't make sense to us anymore. What we then looked at with our product was that we felt that our product was not really competitive. What we have done is to sort of suspend our operations and try to come back with a number of modern and competitive products so that we can compete better. 'That', really is the rationale behind it. Virgin Nigeria is not really different from any other airline in the world. Airlines are laying off thousands of people in India. In China, the entire state carrier which is the entire airline has had to be bailed out by the Chinese government. British Airways has laid off thousands of people. Virgin Atlantic is talking about grounding five aircraft.

They have been laying off hundreds of people. We all know the American airlines have burnt out. For us the regional and domestic routes are not as badly affected, but they are affected. That is the situation. That is what we are doing. Again, with the long haul you can say it was the worldwide recession. What you can see again is a tremendous reduction in prices because the number of passengers peaks, particularly in the UK apart from the peak of peaks, one of our sales people described it and said it was like somebody switched the tap off and when you have that kind of situation all prices start dropping. What we have seen is that at Christmas there are peak prices that extend over a long period. This year we only had peak prices for the peak of peaks, the rest of the year we just carried on discounting."

Conrad is happy with the fact that he has not sent too many of his staff home, for the simple reason that management of the airline was quick to refocus its attention on profitable routes. He knows exactly what to do to make a phenomenal come back. Part of what the airline is doing today is actually part of the bigger, emerging picture. "Really, we need to develop our feeder network more effectively. Right now, we need to concentrate on expanding our regional and domestic network and we are bringing newer aircrafts for that which will be replacing our current fleet which are over 10 years old and that will help to feed our long haul when we bring it back. When we bring our long haul back we don't want to wet lease them which is using somebody else's crew; so we will operate them ourselves with a Nigerian register. What a lot of airlines do at the moment is they use foreign flags to drive the aircraft and that is very, very expensive; so we need our own aircraft."

His plans are better understood within the framework of time set for these achievements. It is going to take hard work and the uncanny perception of a prophet. That means nothing must go wrong with his projections. If things as planned, in the next 18 months the airline will add four more cities to its domestic routes and five cities in the sub-region. With its new aircraft, more frequencies will be added to existing routes like to Port Harcourt and Calabar, while growing new business in Maiduguri, Yola and Jos. "To be honest we could do with more frequencies to Accra which is proving to be a good route. We just added frequencies to Dakar. We will also be adding frequencies to places like Abidjan. We will increase frequencies to Douala. We want to gradually build all these places up to at least daily. Obviously Ghana is already twice, I will like to add three times a day."

Conrad understands the despondency of the Nigerian towards his airline. It is borne out of the perception with which Virgin Nigeria arrived into the market. Nigerians expected it to reclaim the lost glory of Nigeria Airways; and the airline was perceived as an international carrier from the outset. It was a sort of hope misplaced. "I think the hope is different now because in the beginning there was a lot of focus on just flying internationally. What we have seen over time is that we have developed far more regionally. We can actually say that is our bigger strength than the international stuff. If you talk to people in the beginning and say Virgin Nigeria they will say London, but today they say Ghana, Senegal. Our aspiration is much towards regional than international

How come he understands the Nigerian so well? His relationship with the country is over one decade; and he can say confidently that he has settled in well in Nigeria. "I am a Nigerian Chief (inducted into Yoruba culture at Oshogbo -leans back in his chair and laughs for long). I have been coming here for 13 years regularly. I have been living here for about four years. I used to live in Ikoyi, now I live in Ikeja."

A few factors have helped his integration into Nigeria; both on a personal and business level. Personally, things are improving. The roads (in Lagos) are getting much better, much nicer and I love the beautification in Lagos. It is lovely. A while ago, there was rubbish everywhere, that wasn't very nice. I wish we could do the same with power supply. The safety situation is getting better. When I first came here, it was terrifying, nowadays I drive myself around. In terms of business we are an established brand. We have built our reputation and we will still carry on building that. It is a very tough environment; we are still here and we are pushing it to grow; so we must be doing something right.

Conrad F.J Clifford was appointed Chief Executive Officer in December 2005 after the pioneer CEO left the company. He started his aviation career in 1981 as a Management Trainee in Cathay Pacific Airways in Hong Kong. Fourteen years later, Conrad joined Virgin Atlantic Airways as the General Manager Commercial and he was the Crisis Commander for VAA after the event of the 9/11 World Trade Center handling the day to day management of all areas of the airline in the event of any emergency. During his eight-year stay in Virgin Atlantic Airways, he rose to the position of a Commercial Director, and supported Richard Branson to negotiate the entry of Virgin Atlantic into Nigeria and was responsible for setting up their operations. Subsequently, he spent three years with Menzies Aviation as Commercial Director and Director Africa and Asia Pacific setting up aircraft and ground handling operations in West Africa, Australia and China. Conrad holds an MA from Cambridge and an MBA from Durham. He is married with two sons. Conrad brings his experience to Virgin Nigeria to develop a global network of domestic, regional and international routes from its home base in Lagos.

Nigeria: Spraying Aircraft Cabin, No Health Risk - ICAO

 **DAILY TRUST** Chris Agabi 17 February 2009

The International Civil Aviation Organization(ICAO) has said that there is no risk to individuals in the spraying of disinfectants inside the cabin of an aircraft as the exercise is to prevent communicable disease by air travel. The ICAO Chief of Aviation Medicine Section, Dr Anthony Evans,

who is in Nigeria on Evaluation Visit to African airports on the airports' arrangement for preventing the spread of communicable diseases through air travel, said 'there is no any risk to the health of the individual.'

He said: "The aircraft can be treated during heavy maintenance circle. That does not need spraying at all. The other is in a boxed way. That is when everybody is on board, the door is closed then the cabin is sprayed. The air will be sprayed while the passengers are on board." He said two types of treatment are carried out which include during heavy maintenance circle on an aircraft where you don't need spraying the aircraft and inside the cabin while the passengers have boarded in which case the cabin is sprayed with the disinfectant. "We are doing it because it is a confined space; there is no opportunity for the mosquitoes to get out of the aircraft. The safety of the insecticide itself has been reviewed equally extensively by the World Health Organisation, WHO. Used properly there is no any risk to the health of the individual.

"The dosages are so low for individuals that there is no serious health effect from the spray. Whether some people are affected, perhaps superficially by the spray, may be they get some itching of the eyes, that it is a bit interesting but in terms of significant health effect, even with people with asthma there shouldn't be any significant effect to the health. This is the WHO view on the use of disinfectant. A lot of work had been done on the production. All these are being used properly according to the manufacturers' recommendation," he said.

South Africa: Minister Mandated to Beef Up Airport Security

[BuaNews](#) (Tshwane) Professor Ndawonde 18 February 2009

Cape Town — Cabinet has mandated the Minister of Safety and Security Nathi Mthethwa to take urgent steps to ensure that security around South Africa's airports, is beefed up. In its ordinary meeting on Wednesday, Cabinet raised concern over reports regarding the arrest of South African Airways crew members on charges of possession of narcotic substances.

On Monday, 15 SAA crew members were arrested at Heathrow Airport in London, after cocaine was found in one of the crew members' hand luggage. This is the second time in a month that an SAA crew was accused of being in possession of contraband. In January, 50kg of dagga and 4kg of cocaine was discovered on an SAA crew bus. Briefing media after the Cabinet meeting, Government Spokesperson Themba Maseko said Cabinet was extremely concerned about the incidents which were "causing untold damage to the reputation of the national airline, the country and its people".

"The Minister of Safety and Security, Nathi Mthethwa, was mandated to take urgent steps to ensure that stringent security measures are implemented at all our airports with immediate effect. "In this regard, the steps already taken by the airline to set up a joint task team with the airports company and the crime intelligence services of the SAPS to address this problem were welcomed," said Mr Maseko. A special task team, comprising representatives from South African Airways (SAA), Airports Company SA (Acsa), South African Revenue Service (SARS) officials and the South African Police Service (SAPS) was formed on Wednesday to identify immediate additional measures

which can be implemented to prevent drug traffic through South African Airways and any other carriers that operate at the airports.

According to a statement, the team will be expected to review the additional interventions implemented by SAA since the first incident in January and manage the urgent implementation of additional security measures. Measures introduced by SAA include changing security systems, physical searches of bags and using sniffer dogs. These and other measures will now be extended across all SAA international flights. However, Mr Maseko said the task team must ensure that additional security measures are introduced immediately to prevent any further abuse of the existing security checks for the airline crew. He added that the development was totally unacceptable and must be condemned by everyone. "Anyone found responsible for these criminal acts must and will face the full might of the law," he said.

SAA is said to be cooperating fully with the British authorities in their investigation which is currently underway as well as another investigation in Johannesburg involving SAA Aviation Security and the SAPS Crime Intelligence Unit. The crew members have been released on their own cognisance and will be required to appear back in London on 6 April 2009. The conditions of their release are unknown and arrangements for their possible return to South Africa are being made, but this will depend on the conditions of their release.

Zambia: Tender for New Radar Systems Still in Process

TIMES
OF ZAMBIA

18 February 2009

THE tender for new radar systems at Lusaka and Livingstone international airports is still in process and has not been single-sourced to an Italian company, Communications and Transport Minister, Dora Siliya has said. Ms Siliya said in Lusaka that Italian company, Selex Sistemi Integriti had not been awarded a contract for the supply, delivery, installation and commissioning of radar equipment at the two airports as reported in the media.

She said in a statement issued yesterday that the radar tender was still in process though her office had received a number of complaints of alleged corruption by some of her officers. She said the complaints to her office had also been sent to the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) regarding the tender for the procurement of the radar systems for the two airports. "The correct position is that Selex requested to repair at their own cost the facility in Lusaka and we have given them an opportunity to do so as they manufactured, supplied and installed the current facility at Lusaka International Airport. "While the procurement of radars for Livingstone and Lusaka was still in process, we received an offer from Selex to repair the Lusaka facility," the minister said.

She said bearing in mind the budget limitations and the fact that the Government would not spend anything, it was decided in consultation with the Department of Civil Aviation, National Airports Corporation (NAC) and the Finance ministry to accept the offer. "Infact, there is no provision in the 2009 yellow book for the procurement of any radar in the ministry of Communications and Transport budget. "Should the repair of the radar at the Lusaka International Airport by Selex be successful,

Government and the nation would have saved K50 billion on the Lusaka and Livingstone radar requirements," Ms Siliya said.

She said Selex on January 30, 2009 sent their engineer to undertake the assessment and actual repair work was expected to start this week and be completed by mid-March, 2009. In a letter dated December 4, 2008 to Ms Siliya, Selex vice-president for Middle East and Africa, Domenico Lovino offered the free repair of the existing radar head which the company manufactured. "In fact, Selex has always been willing to promptly answer NAC requests for any kind of technical support but too many problems in the past prevented us from performing maintenance, including lack of funds," Mr Lovino said.

In the letter which is copied to the then Permanent Secretary, Eustace Mambwe, Mr Lovino asked the Government to grant the Selex engineering team access to the Lusaka radar installation to perform the necessary work. He said the maintenance would take an estimated two weeks and Selex would then commission the equipment with one year additional warranty at no cost, while spares would also be granted for an additional five years.

South Africa: SAA Needs Big Bail-Out, Finance Chief Tells MPs

BUSINESSDAY Linda Ensor 19 February 2009

Cape Town — Unprofitable South African Airways (SAA) could not keep going without a big state capital injection, the national airline's executives warned yesterday. SAA is expected to post a significant loss for the year to March for the third year running because of interest payments well in excess of R300m and losses from hedging against the volatility in the fuel price. Higher fuel costs and falling passenger numbers have also contributed to its troubles.

SAA suffered a loss of R1bn last year, and its loss was R833m the year before. SAA chief financial officer Kaushik Patel warned that the airline's precarious financial situation was likely to deteriorate even further as it was severely undercapitalised and burdened by debt, which exceeded its equity by 10%. No business could survive in the long term with such a load, Patel told Parliament's public enterprises portfolio committee during a briefing. It was just not sustainable. The economic meltdown would make the situation worse as passenger volumes and revenue slumped.

Public enterprises deputy director-general in charge of transport Andrew Shaw also warned that SAA was "very inadequately positioned to deal with the recent turbulence in the aviation market. It remains very thinly capitalised." The carrier's sustainability was threatened. SAA's level of indebtedness was among the highest in the world, and was even higher than those of American Airlines and Delta, which were placed under bankruptcy protection, Shaw said. He noted that 35 medium-sized network airlines were liquidated last year. Failure to get sufficient funding from the government meant that SAA had to pay more for its borrowings than would otherwise be the case. "The interest burden as a whole is so big that it wipes out all operational profits," Patel said.

About R300m in interest has been paid this year on loans taken out against government guarantees of R2,86bn, and even more for the airline's total debt book. SAA also has a liability of more than R1bn for its Voyager loyalty programme, which has still to be taken on to its books. The Treasury turned

down an SAA request for a R5,2bn capital injection, which would have brought the percentage of debt to equity down to a more acceptable 60%-70%. Instead, SAA got only R1,6bn in the 2009-10 budget. Patel would not be drawn on SAA's estimated hedging loss, saying this would depend on the fuel price on the last day of the financial year. But he stressed that after the R6bn hedging loss in 2004, which wiped out SAA's capital base, a conservative hedging policy was adopted. This limited hedging to 40% of SAA's total book compared with 80% at some international airlines. SAA head of restructuring Vera Kriel told the committee that cost savings of R2,3bn were achieved in the period to December, about 35% higher than the target of R1,7bn and equal to the total 2008-09 target.

Acting CEO Chris Smyth emphasised that SAA was operationally sound and profitable. All of its domestic routes were profitable, as were all international routes last month, except for New York. Africa was still the most profitable market. SAA grew its share of the market in southern Africa by 13% compared with market growth of 8%; west Africa 11% (2%); central Africa 48% (31%); north Africa 27% (17%); and east Africa 5% (4%). However, until last month the flights to the leisure destinations of Mauritius and Victoria Falls were unprofitable, and would be in the red for the year as a whole. In Australasia, SAA grew 19% compared with market growth of 12%, capturing market share from Emirates and Qantas. South American traffic had fallen 7% and North America's 8% while the number of SAA passengers on Asian routes fell 12% as the market grew 6%. "Traffic from SA has declined by 2% overall," Smyth said.

He conceded the drug trafficking incidents involving SAA crew had caused "horrendous" damage to SAA's image. The cabinet was also gravely concerned about this, it said in a statement after a meeting.

Kenya Airways ups Johannesburg service to 20x per week

February 21st, 2009

Kenya Airways will increase its service to Johannesburg from Nairobi to 20x per week with the addition of 6 new flights in May. This will have KQ operate into Johannesburg 3x per day except on Wednesdays.

Nigeria: Medview Airlines Partners Saudi Cargo Company on Airfreighting

VANGUARD Kenneth Ehigiator 21 February 2009

Medview Airlines, one of Nigeria's leading charter operator has signed an agreement with Saudi Cargo Company on airfreighting of goods between the country and Jeddah. By this agreement, Medview has become the Saudi company's general sales agent (GSA), with the sole responsibility of generating businesses for the Saudi Cargo Company, which is a subsidiary of Saudi Air, Saudi Arabia's national carrier. General Manager, Medview Airlines, Mr. David Babatunde, who disclosed this on the arrival of the airline's inaugural flight to Lagos last week, said the company was chosen by the Saudi company because of its track record in Muslim pilgrims' airlift to Saudi Arabia.

According to him, the agreement between the two companies will enable Medview generate markets for the Saudi company in Nigeria. He said the agreement covered the airline's flights into Lagos and Abuja, while that of Kano would be handled by a separate company. "Medview has over 30 years experience in commercial airline's business, we shall bring that to bear to consummate this relationship. "By the agreement, Medview will source cargo in Nigeria for Saudi Cargo Company in Lagos and Abuja," Babatunde added.

Although officials of the Saudi company were not available for comments, Vanguard learnt that the company was delighted to start cargo operations into the country, especially against the backdrop of the huge market in Nigeria. Babatunde noted that the company for cargo in the country by existing cargo operators would not frighten the airline, as Medview has been a major player in the country's aviation sector. Medview Airlines played a very critical role in ensuring that the 2008 Muslim pilgrims' airlift was a huge success.

East Africa: EA Aviation Licences to Be Standardized



Happy Lazaro 21 February 2009

Arusha — East African member states are in the process of standardizing aviation licences for pilots operating in the region and carrier companies. The Executive Director for the Civil Aviation Safety and Security Oversight Agency, Mtesingwa Maugo revealed in Arusha recently where a special meeting to lay down a five-year strategy plan on levelling out operating procedures for local airlines and freight in the region, took place.

Speaking at the meeting the Secretary General for the East African Community, Dr. Julius Rotich pointed out that the EAC member states were confronted with great challenges of ensuring proper safety in the region's air transport system. Dr. Rotich called for expansion of airports in members' states saying air transport was the best means of bringing East African partners together. CASSOA Seals deal on the Consultancy of its 5-Year Strategic and Organisation Evolution Plan The Civil Aviation Safety and Security Oversight Agency (CASSOA) started operations on 1st June 2007, as an autonomous self-accounting body of the Community.

CASSOA was formed to promote the safe, secure and efficient use and development of civil aviation within and outside the East Africa Community Partner States. The agency also assists the Partner States in meeting their safety and security oversight obligations and responsibilities under the Chicago Convention and its Annexes.

The Agency further provides the Partner States with an appropriate forum and structure to discuss, plan and implement common measures required for achieving the safe and orderly development of international standards and recommended practices relating to the safety and security of civil aviation. CASSOA secured funds to meet the development of a 5-Year Strategic Plan and Organisation Evolution plan and advertised for the Consultancy through tendering. Of all the bidders, IATA - International Air Transport Association won the Consultancy project. The contract for the consultancy was signed on 8th December 2008 by the CASSOA Executive Director, Mr Mtesigwa Maugo and Ms. Patricia Morgan, IATA Manger, Civil Aviation Consulting Services.

Nigeria: Local Airlines to Fly U.S. Routes

[Leadership](#) (Abuja) 22 February 2009

The Director-General, Nigeria Civil Aviation Authority, Dr. Harold Demuren, at the weekend stated that Nigerians may not have to wait longer to fly Nigerian owned aircraft to the United States of America, as the country is now set to earn the mandatory Category 1 (CAT1) status as prescribed by the Federal Aviation Administration, FAA, of The United States of America. Demuren told aviation correspondents that the FAA team has concluded plans to perform the last recertification of the airlines designated by the Federal Government of Nigeria unto the US route.

LEADERSHIP SUNDAY learnt from reliable aviation sources that, the decision of the U.S regulatory body was hinged on Nigeria's poor performance at the audit carried out by the FAA technical team towards the last quarter of last year.

The audit exercise was said to be unsatisfactory and below pass mark, and the FAA team did not hide their dissatisfaction especially with what was on ground in terms of regulations and monitoring. The team had stated emphatically that the country has to scale some hurdles for it to be granted the CAT 1 status. It was also gathered that the shortage in the number of airworthiness engineers currently in NCAA's employ was said to have been a major bottleneck to the agency securing the nod of the FAA inspection team during their last visit.

Demuren however affirmed that there was hope for Nigeria in its bid to attain the Category 1 (CAT 1) status this year. Listing enforcement and training workshop for its technical and legal personnel and recertification of operators that are designated on the United States routes by the agency and assessed by the FAA as a must, the NCAA boss said a management review as well as on the job training for flight operations and airworthiness safety inspectors would be carried out by next month.

The NCAA boss said hope is not yet lost for the country as he assured that the country would make it to the apex status come the fourth quarter of this year. He noted that the country has already been given 75 per cent compliance by the FAA. "The FAA has scheduled the management review for March; this comes when a country is assessed as having completed at least 75 percent of the requirements for Category 1. Nigeria is currently on track to achieve Category 1 by the fourth quarter of this year," He said.

South Africa: Drug Detection Devices to Be Installed At Airports

[BuaNews](#) (Tshwane) Edwin Tshivhidzo 24 February 2009

Johannesburg — Sophisticated drug detection devices are to be installed at the country's major airports to prevent drug trafficking, following the arrest of South African Airways (SAA) crew members. Fifteen crew members were arrested at the Heathrow International Airport last week after contraband was allegedly discovered in one of the member's hand luggage.

The detection devices are one of the recommendations made by a special task team established to review the additional measures put in place by SAA after the first incident in January when a crew member was arrested on the same charges. The task team, comprising

representatives from the airline, Airports Company South Africa (ACSA), customs and the South African Police Service (SAPS), was also expected to identify immediate additional measures aimed at curbing drug trafficking. The task team recommended that the luggage of crew members be physically searched with the aid of snuffer dogs. Other recommendations include the installation of updated scanner technology with narcotic detection capabilities by end of March 2009 and that searches be conducted on both inbound and outbound aircraft to ensure no unauthorised goods are onboard aircraft.

The task team also said there should be improved co-ordination between SAPS and Customs Dog Units. Bongani Maseko, ACSA's Operations Director, said ACSA would continue to work with SAA, the police and customs to ensure that the resolutions of the task team are implemented. "Taking the government's concerns and directives into account, ACSA will assume responsibility for security and processing of staff through the SAA crew centre. "We wish to assure all parties concerned that every possible measure will be put in place over and above the prescribed international standards to reduce criminal activity at the crew centre," Mr Maseko said.

Chris Smyth, SAA's acting Chief Executive Officer, thanked the task team for the work done so far and acknowledged that SAA could not resolve these issues alone. "SAA has neither the capability nor the mandate for broader policing and security matters and we have requested assistance via the task team," he said. Mr Smyth said other parties such as the SAA Pilots Association (SAAPA) had also made valuable suggestions about ways to improve security, and negotiations were being held with the relevant authorities.

The SAA said it remained committed to a zero tolerance approach towards the use of the airline's services for any criminal activity and would continue to closely monitor the situation. The 15 crew members have since been released on their own cognisance and will be required to appear back in London on 6 April 2009. The airline said it was cooperating fully with British authorities in an investigation which is currently underway. An investigation in Johannesburg, involving SAA Aviation Security and the SAPS Crime Intelligence Unit, is also underway.

Africa: 'There is Room in Airline Business'

[East African Business Week](#) (Kampala) Walter Isenged 28 February 2009 interview

Air Burundi hosted a symposium of the African Airlines Association (AFRAA) in Bujumbura last week. This is a bi-annual meeting held in the different member states to review the airline industry in Africa and make recommendations on the way forward. East African Business Week's Walter Isenged spoke to Dr. Elijah Chingosho, the technical and training director of AFRAA. Below are excerpts

Q: What is AFRAA?

A: It is the body that represents most of the major airlines in Africa. It caters for the interests of the airlines. These could be legal, economic, communications and technology issues, environmental and technical issues, maintenance, safety, security and training. It was established in 1968 in Ghana as a pan African airline organization. The current headquarters are in Nairobi, Kenya.

What is the meeting in Burundi all about?

The organization has several standing committees. There is the traffic committee that deals with traffic, schedules, passenger numbers and profitability; the technical and operations committee deals with safety and security; the joint ground handling committee; and the training committee. We get experts from different member airlines in the areas of these different committees to deliberate and share ideas on various issues pertinent to the airline industry. The training committee meets twice a year in various locations throughout Africa and it is this committee that is meeting here in Burundi.

This committee is discussing the kinds of training courses needed to meet airline requirements, where we can get funding for the courses and where AFRAA can help. We meet in different locations in order to learn the kinds of challenges and experiences in the different airlines. The last meeting was in Nairobi and it was decided then that the next meeting should be held in Burundi because Air Burundi was an airline emerging from a conflict situation and it would be interesting to learn how it has overcome its challenges.

So, what have you learnt from Air Burundi's story?

Well, the challenges in Burundi are not actually unique. Many countries in Africa have gone through conflict situations. Air Burundi was started over 30 years ago and is now emerging from a conflict situation. The association is interested in how they managed to overcome this challenge and we are discussing with Air Burundi how they can move forward. As AFRAA we always call upon governments to find ways to solve their problems peacefully. If two groups fight, all of them are losers. Conflict always impacts business and development negatively. We encourage countries to use dialogue as the best course of action to overcome conflict. Air transport can only grow and develop in a peaceful environment and we are happy to note that Burundi is now peaceful and Air Burundi is on its way to becoming a successful airline.

How does the airline industry in Africa compare to the rest of the world?

Well, in Africa, there is still a lot of opportunity for business. In Nairobi on my way to Addis Ababa, I met this Burundian businessman who was traveling to Congo Brazzaville but to reach there he had to go to Addis Ababa through Nairobi, and then on to Brazzaville with another stop along the way. AFRAA encourages formation of a strong airline alliance so that it would be possible for direct travel in the region. Africa is generally a poorer continent than the rest and so, it would be prudent for us to reduce our traveling and airline operational costs. We are doing that by facilitating the connections within Africa so that the Burundian businessman would pay a quarter or even a fifth of the total cost he paid to travel to Brazzaville.

Furthermore, we are seeing an added interest from airlines operating from other continents. We are seeing the Chinese airlines now operating in Africa; American airlines are also coming to Africa. Also airlines from the Middle East are increasing the frequency of their flights. You also see the heavy involvement of Virgin Airlines in Nigeria. This is because they see that there is business in Africa. AFRAA is calling upon the entrepreneurs in Africa to invest in the airline business because it makes sense due to the profitability of this venture.

Even among the local airlines, there is a large growth with various airlines actually increasing on their fleets. For example, Afriqiyah Airways from Libya has over 25 aircrafts on order; Libyan Arab Airlines is also ordering more than 20 aircrafts and Arik Air of Nigerian is ordering 47. There are also some other individual airlines that are doing well, Ethiopian Airlines, Kenya Airways, Egypt Air, South African Airways, Precision Air is small but doing well, Air Seychelles, Afriqiyah Airlines, Libyan Arab Airlines, Air Morocco, Arik Air and Virgin Nigeria. This shows there is a bright future. Compared to Europe or America where there have been collapses of airlines, in Africa, they are doing fairly well. There have been a few cases like Cameroon Airlines, Gambia Airways and Air Tanzania which, however, will soon re-start operations.

What do you see as the role of government in the airline industry?

We believe that government needs to be involved mainly in facilitating the development of air transport. Government should set relevant infrastructure. It should also establish autonomous civil aviation authorities with well remunerated personnel so that they do not look elsewhere for a livelihood. Government should also aid in the formation of private airlines or give the existing national airlines some level of autonomy to be able to compete. Government should not be a player but a facilitator because they do not have the expertise to run private business.

Do you see the possibility of emergence of one major airline in Africa to be called, say, African Airlines?

The idea of one big airline has been proposed but this has been based on political considerations. However, we believe that such an airline should be based on business interests and considerations because politics and business don't make a very good mix. AFRAA encourages the merging of airlines. Already, we see spontaneous effort by airlines, for example, Ethiopian Airlines is getting a shareholding in a new airline called ASKY from Togo together with some private interests. Kenya Airways have merged with Precision Air, a small airline in Tanzania. In 1988, African ministers of transport came up with a memorandum called the Yamasukro Decision. This decision was focusing on how the African air transport business could be consolidated. This was slow to come into effect, so the ministers came up with the Yamasukro Declaration in 1999. This declaration encourages African airlines to open up their air spaces to other African airlines. For example, if Air Burundi does not fly to Brussels, why not allow, say, Ethiopian Airlines fly that route? This way, we facilitate the development of larger and more competitive African airlines. It should be noted that while the international airlines mainly fly to Europe, the African airlines also connect cities within Africa. It would therefore be better

What resolutions did you come up with in this meeting?

We resolved to find ways to stem the brain drain from Africa. Some of the experienced personnel are going to bigger airlines say in the Middle East that has been a major source of brain drain from Africa. We are looking into ways to train our personnel so that we are also competitive. We also agreed on the various training courses to be done at various airlines to improve the capacity of the airlines competitiveness. We discussed how to plan effective strategic human resource development, how to motivate cabin attendants and reduce stress levels and how to make the staff happy and effective.