



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact AviAssist Foundation
Tel: +44 (0)1326-340.308
info@aviassist.org

Contact: Emily McGee
Director of Communications, FSF
Tel. +1 703.739.6700 (ext. 126)
mcgee@flightsafety.org

Practical airport fire fighting training completed

Hoofddorp, Netherlands, 19th October, 2011 —

The AviAssist Foundation has completed its first annual airport rescue and fire fighting training in Africa.

“Firemen from 2 African countries participated in this practical training at our partner host airport, Kilimanjaro International Airport in Tanzania” explained AviAssist Director Tom Kok. “In partnership with Groningen Airport Eelde (GAE) from the Netherlands, the Foundation delivered the five day course. With the trainers from GAE, one of the many subjects we paid attention to was the use of a firefighter’s lifeline – the breathing apparatus. The training also included a number of nighttime live-fire exercises. The training directly improved the emergency preparedness of the participating airports. We are keen to continue our contribution to training more professionals that are close to the hazards”.

It is most likely that an airport fire-fighter will work an entire career without having to respond to a large frame aircraft accident resulting in a hull loss or significant loss of life. It is for this reason that airport fire fighters rely on initial and recurrent training to prepare them for a wide spectrum of aircraft emergencies should one occur. ICAO audits in the African region having found quite some deficiencies in the area of fire fighting minimum training requirements (including live fire drills) with recurrent training in the region taking place at a much lower interval than required.

Recognising that very little (in-region) training is available to airport fire fighters, the AviAssist training combined a refresher course with numerous practical exercises over the course of five intensive days.

“As part of our long term commitment to the subject, we will continue our support to the professionals that attended this courses through an internet group <http://uk.groups.yahoo.com/group/AfricanARFF> . On top of that, all of the participants receive a two year subscription to our quarterly safety magazine *SafetyFocus* that will feature regular articles on airport rescue and fire fighting ” Kok said.

The Foundation is in discussion with the Zambian airport operator NACL to have next year’s event take place in Zambia with selected invitations from 1 or 2 airports from the East African Community.

“However much we wish to include larger numbers in the training, the practical part of it in combination with safety for the trainers and participants makes that we cannot accommodate more than 14 firemen in each course”, Kok commented.

Financial support for the organisation of the training was provided by the Netherlands Ministry of Transport and KLM Royal Dutch Airlines, with Kenya Airways providing the air transport for the trainers and facilitator. The support by KLM Royal Dutch Airlines and Kenya Airways is further proof of the fact that the Foundation addresses priorities identified or recognised by the aviation industry.

###

The AviAssist Foundation is an independent, non-profit organization that promotes professionalism in African aviation safety. As regional affiliate of the Flight Safety Foundation, it provides safety support to African countries and companies. It aims to replicate safety successes from elsewhere on the African continent and beyond. It does so in close coordination with ICAO, stakeholders and safety support providers.

More at www.aviassist.org & <http://www.facebook.com/pages/AviAssist-Foundation/165826106812721>