



**Address by the Secretary General
of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)
Mr. Juan Carlos Salazar
to the Twenty-Seventh AFI Plan and thirteenth AFI SECFAL Plan Steering Committees meetings
held during the 9th Edition of African Aviation Week**

Libreville, Gabon

Tuesday, 16 July 2024

Distinguished Chairs, Committee Members, Partners, Participants and Colleagues,

1. Welcome to the twenty-seventh AFI Plan and thirteenth AFI SECFAL Plan Steering Committees meetings. As we gather here in Libreville, we stand at a crucial juncture for African aviation. These meetings offer us a vital opportunity to review the AFI and AFI SECFAL Plans, our progress, address challenges, and chart our course forward in enhancing aviation safety, security, and facilitation across the continent.
2. The 27th AFI Plan Steering Committee meeting will discuss the implementation support activities provided by the ICAO Regional Offices to States through the AFI Plan work programme. This programme focuses on several key objectives. These include:
 - Assisting States with safety oversight activities;
 - Resolving Significant Safety Concerns;
 - Certifying international airports;
 - Strengthening of air navigation capacity;
 - Establishing Regional Safety Oversight Organizations (RSOOs) and Regional Accident and Incident Investigation Organizations (RAIO); and
 - Building capacity through safety-related training.

Progress in these areas has been encouraging.

3. As a result of activities undertaken by ICAO through the AFI Plan, significant progress has been achieved in enhancing aviation safety in Africa.

4. The programme continues to register gains towards the attainment of the Global and Regional Aviation Safety Plans targets. Indeed, many African States have registered significant improvements in their safety oversight systems following the Universal Safety Oversight Audit Programme Continuous Monitoring Approach (USOAP-CMA) validation activities last year.
5. The relevance of the programme to the region was confirmed during the Office of Internal Oversight (OIO) evaluation that looked at the design, management and governance of the AFI Plan programme, and made several recommendations to ensure effective and continued implementation.
6. As the current AFI Plan cycle concludes in December 2024, I'm pleased to note that the ICAO Council has recommended the continuation of the AFI Plan beyond 2024, a proposal supported by the 41st ICAO Assembly. Project implementations are progressing well, with beneficiary States improving in critical areas. The AFI Plan continues to provide support through targeted training, including a GSI OPS training for 20 candidates from 15 countries at the Eastern Africa school of Aviation in Nairobi, Kenya. Subsequent safety-related trainings will be conducted in accordance to the 2024 approved work Plan.
7. The Second Forum on Regional Safety Oversight Organizations for Global Aviation Safety, held in Nairobi Kenya from 10 to 12 October 2023, in collaboration with the European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA), had a dedicated session on AFI RSOOs. At the meeting, the AFI RSOO Strategy and roadmap developed under the AFI plan were presented. The participants agreed to conduct an in-depth feasibility analysis for the Ministers' consideration, following up on the Ezulwini Ministerial Declaration of March 2017. ICAO is collaborating with EASA to implement the recommended feasibility study, which is currently progressing.
8. The aviation infrastructure gap analysis and traffic forecast for Africa is one of the key activities that the AFI Plan is coordinating with the African Union Commission and the African Civil Aviation Commission. Under this partnership, ICAO is supporting key deliverables of the study including data collection processes and tools, consolidation and analysis of the information collected, as well as reporting.
9. Referring now to The AFI SECFAL Plan, it has also shown significant progress since its inception in 2015. The current USAP overall average Effective Implementation rate of African States increased to 65% by December 2023, while the compliance with Annex 9 security-related Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs) reached 55%. While improvements have been made in State Specific

Projects, capacity-building needs for States, and the prevention or resolution of Significant Security Concerns, major efforts still have to be made by States to significantly improve the situation. Further work is needed to address deficiencies and gaps identified by the Universal Security Audit Programme Continuous Monitoring Approach (USAP-CMA) audits.

10. The USAP-CMA risk-based prioritization model considers the completion of improvement activities when scheduling audits. This approach recognizes States' efforts to enhance their aviation security systems.
11. The year 2024, marking the 50th anniversary of Annex 17 and 75th anniversary of Annex 9, has been designated as the ICAO *Year of Facilitation*. Ensuring efficient passage of travellers, crew, baggage and cargo through borders is vital for realizing the economic benefits of air transport, and assuring resilience to challenges arising from external events such as natural disasters or communicable disease outbreaks. States must work to guarantee the full and proper implementation to ensure harmonized and uniform application of standards globally.
12. The milestone anniversary and celebratory year present an opportunity to emphasize advancement in facilitation. We call States and aviation stakeholders to organize activities and events, promote facilitation amongst the entire civil aviation sector in States, and recognize the positive contributions of facilitation among all stakeholders.
13. Progress has been made in several areas. These include the delivery of Annex 9-*Facilitation* courses and ICAO Traveller Identification Programme (TRIP) courses, as well as assisting States with implementing Advance Passenger Information (API) and Passenger Name Record (PNR) systems. We have also supported States in joining the Public Key Directory (PKD), in line with UN Security Council Resolutions on the improvement of border management.
14. Regarding the membership of the ICAO PKD, AFI State participation has steadily grown from three members in 2015 to eighteen by August 2023.
15. On the other hand, the slow progress in the implementation of API and PNR in most AFI States calls for enhanced collaboration among all partners to hasten the pace of improvement on the continent.

16. ICAO actively participates in the UN Counter-Terrorism Travel Programme, which provides crucial assistance to States implementing API and PNR systems. This programme presents a significant opportunity to enhance aviation security across Africa and globally.
17. I would like to commend the Secretariat for amending the AFI SECFAL Plan Master Document and Terms of Reference of the Steering Committee, which will be presented for your consideration. This will ensure the continued relevance of the Plan during the extended period (2024 - 2030) and reinforce its objectives towards enhancing aviation security and facilitation, and the attainment of the Global Aviation Security Plan (GASeP) global and regional targets.
18. In conclusion, improving aviation Safety, Security and Facilitation in Africa requires the commitment of all stakeholders, particularly States, but also Organizations and Industry. Collaboration and cooperation among all stakeholders remain important. There is a need to strengthen the existing frameworks and levels of engagement, while intensifying joint technical assistance activities.
19. I express my appreciation to the AFI Plan and AFI SECFAL Plan Steering Committees outgoing Chairpersons, Mr. Levers Mabaso and Mr. Kabbs Twijuke, for their leadership and guidance during their tenure. I also extend my gratitude to our partners for their important updates and contributions, and wish to especially thank AFI Plans Donors for their continued valuable support. I recognize African States who are greatly supporting the Plans by releasing their experts to provide implementation support to beneficiary States at no cost.
20. It is very encouraging to see such increasing engagement, expressions of interest, and offers of support to the AFI Plan and AFI SECFAL Plan from States and partners.
21. In closing, I wish you very productive deliberations and look forward to your progress toward improving the aviation safety, security and sustainability throughout Africa.
22. Thank you.