



DIRECTORS GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION CONFERENCE ON A GLOBAL STRATEGY FOR AVIATION SAFETY

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Theme 1: The status of aviation safety today

Topic 1.3: Initiatives by States and industry

FOCUS ON AVIATION SAFETY IN NIGERIA

(Presented by Nigeria)

SUMMARY

This information paper focuses on the state of the Nigerian aviation industry and the efforts being made by the Nigerian government to reposition it for sustainable growth through the promotion of a safe, secure and efficient air transport system.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Nigerian aviation industry has experienced steady growth since the gradual liberalization of the industry by government. The liberalization policy has led to significant increase in air transport activities evidenced by the growing number of airline operators (domestic and foreign), increased movement of passengers, cargo and mail, increased utilization of airport facilities and growing number of companies providing allied services.

1.2 This situation has equally increased the challenges facing the industry in terms of regulatory framework, manpower, airports and air navigation infrastructural facilities, etc. In response to these the Nigerian government embarked on a comprehensive exercise to harmonize and integrate these developments in the various sectors of the industry through an aviation Master Plan with the assistance of ICAO.

2. INITIATIVES TOWARDS ENHANCING SAFETY

2.1 The issue of aviation safety is of global concern and Nigeria is not left out in the bid to continue to put in place, measures that will promote safety in its aviation industry as well as in the region. The country is totally committed to the various global initiatives and collaborative efforts to ensure aviation safety. This has been demonstrated through her role in the Cooperative Development of Operational Safety and Continuing Airworthiness Programme (COSCAP) project of the Banjul Accord Group (BAG) which has its headquarters in Abuja, Nigeria. The COSCAP project is part of the ongoing initiative for the establishment of the Banjul Accord Group Aviation Safety Organization (BAGASO) also located in Abuja. Furthermore, the country has continued to support the International Financial Facility for Aviation Safety (IFFAS) set up by ICAO. Nigeria is also a party to the Convention on International Interests in Mobile Equipment and the Aircraft Protocol thereto which, expectedly, should facilitate acquisition of most modern aircraft by Nigerian airlines.

2.2 The two fatal air crashes in Nigeria towards the end of 2005 have further increased the resolve of government and strengthened its political will to facilitate on-going efforts and also put in place new mechanisms to minimize incidents and accidents and promote safety and security of air transportation in Nigeria. Aviation has become safer all over the world and the Nigerian government is determined to make it even safer in Nigeria.

2.3 Accordingly, far reaching activities to enhance safety have been embarked upon, including:

- a) the verification of airworthiness status of aircraft and operational competencies of commercial aircraft operators;
- b) recruitment of aviation experts on secondment from ICAO, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), the International Air Transport Association (IATA) and the Flight Safety Foundation (FSF) in the areas of: airworthiness, flight operations, personnel licensing, aerodrome operations, communications, navigation, surveillance/air traffic management (CNS/ATM), aero medical services and aviation security to further boost aviation safety surveillance and enforcement;
- c) upgrade and replacement of airports and air navigation infrastructural facilities including runway resurfacing, airport perimeter fencing, fire fighting and other rescue equipment, weather reporting and forecasting system, total radar coverage of the airspace as well as the implementation of standard instrument departure (SID), standard arrival route systems (SARS) and national obstruction mapping and charting project;
- d) fast-tracking of the legislative process of granting autonomy to the Nigerian Civil Aviation Authority to enable it to exercise full safety regulatory powers devoid of political interference;
- e) intensifying the training and retraining of aviation personnel to meet with the current demands in the industry;
- f) harmonizing and developing all operating regulations into a single document;

- g) establishing a non-punitive Nigerian aviation safety intelligence gathering network;
and
- h) comprehensive re-certification of the entire aviation industry using ICAO Standards.

2.4 These efforts are also geared towards preparing the Nigerian aviation industry for the ICAO Universal Safety Oversight Programme audit scheduled for November 2006.

3. OPERATION OF FOREIGN AIRCRAFT

3.1 Nigeria has noticed with concern an emerging trend where aircraft are deliberately registered in countries that have weak and ineffective safety oversight mechanisms resulting in situations where questionable aircraft safety certificates (Certificate of Airworthiness, Air Operators Certificate, Flight Crew Licenses, etc.) are issued without due diligence.

3.2 The regulatory authority in Nigeria has increased its surveillance mechanism to curb these types of operations from Nigerian airspace. The country is, however, in full support of the provisions of Article 83 *bis* and is already discussing with other concerned States in the implementation of this Article.

4. CONCLUSION

4.1 Nigeria, as a signatory to the Chicago Convention, is unequivocally committed towards promoting a safe, secure and efficient air transport system at domestic, regional and global levels, and seeks the cooperation and support of other Contracting States and stakeholders in this regard.

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