



FACILITATION (FAL) DIVISION — TWELFTH SESSION

Cairo, Egypt, 22 March to 2 April 2004

- Agenda Item 5: Modernizing airport facilities and service delivery systems**
5.2: National, regional and airport FAL programmes

REGIONAL INITIATIVE IN THE FACILITATION OF AIR TRANSPORT

(Presented by Tanzania)

SUMMARY

This paper gives an overview of the structure, membership and the operation of a regional facilitation forum, as well as the advantages and importance of having such body in place.

It emphasizes the need to have a forum that addresses facilitation and aviation security issues together, as they both affect smooth flow of passengers. Particular reference is made to the East African Community States' Consultative Forum on Facilitation of Air Transport.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The East African (EA) States, that is, Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania have much in common. They have common borders, with people from same ethnic groups living across those borders, natural resources with similar eco-systems, and also, the majority of people speak and understand common languages, English and Kiswahili.

1.2 In such an environment, cooperation is necessary because events or activities affecting one State, either positive or negative, can also impact on one or both of the remaining States. The impact can be either positive or negative. One such area of cooperation is the facilitation of air transport.

1.3 The forum for the EA Consultative Meetings on Facilitation of Air Transport between Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania has been active for almost 9 years, and starting in 1996 meetings have been regular and the proceedings have improved year after year. However, Air Transport Facilitation and Aviation Security functions are considered together in these fora, due to their complementarities, and the need to balance the two for the smooth flow of passengers, aircraft, baggage and cargo through the airports.

2. MEMBERSHIP

2.1 The membership of the consultative meetings is constituted of the National Facilitation Committees of the three States, which in turn are formed according to Annex 9 to the Convention on International Civil Aviation, with representatives from Civil Aviation Authorities, Airlines, Airports, Ground Handling Companies, Government Clearance Agencies i.e. Immigration, Customs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Health, Airports Police, Quarantine, Agriculture etc., and other government agencies concerned with facilitation such as trade, tourism, and security agencies. In Tanzania, at the national level, there is a Joint National FAL/AVSEC Committee that meets two times a year, but there is also a separate Aviation Security Committee.

2.2 Chairmanship differs from State to State. In some States the Chairmanship is with the Ministry for the time being in charge of Civil Aviation, while in the other it is with the Civil Aviation Authority. This depends on who has the responsibility of coordinating the facilitation programme for that State.

3. OPERATION OF MEETINGS

3.1 The organization of the meetings is on rotational basis, with each of the EA States taking turns in hosting the meetings. The hosting States provide the Chairmanship, Rapporteur and Secretariat services for smooth conducting of meetings.

3.2 Such meetings are held twice a year, after every six months. In attendance there are representatives of the ICAO ESAF Regional Office and the East African Community Secretariat, who give guidance with respect to Annex 9 to the Convention on International Civil Aviation, and the Community procedures respectively. There have also been observers invited from COMESA Secretariat.

3.3 There has been continuous improvement in the way of conducting such meetings; for example, the handling and follow-up on matters arising, which are normally forwarded to the hosting State, by the other partner States, assists timely production of documentation and speeds up deliberation.

3.4 Agenda items discussed in the Consultative Meetings include both Facilitation and Aviation Security issues relating to Facilitation, and usually they are those issues of common interest, such as:

3.4.1 Standardization and Harmonization of Procedures for

- a) animals, plants and quarantine procedures;
- b) health;
- c) immigration;
- d) customs;
- e) aircraft clearance;
- f) exchange of traffic data;
- g) eradication of pilferage;
- h) ground handling;

- i) handling of dangerous goods;
- j) narcotics and drug trafficking; and
- k) emergency and risk management Strategy, etc.

3.4.2 New Agenda items are introduced and discussed exhaustively within the allocated time, which is three days.

3.4.3 During these three days, usually an airport visit is included, and members make observations on the facilitation and aviation security procedures. Tours made to airports, observations made, and ensuing discussions have contributed towards regional harmonization and improvement of the security checking systems, with the view of facilitating passengers better, without causing unnecessary delays that can have negative impact on air transportation. The airport managements and States concerned work on the suggested improvements and report back at the next meeting.

4. **ADVANTAGES**

4.1 Collaboration of the participating States in this regional forum

- a) encourages cooperation among the various players in the aviation and related industries of the East African States;
- b) encourages regular exchange of ideas, information and experiences, impacting on Air Transport Facilitation and Aviation Security;
- c) minimizes differences in facilitation, through harmonization of the procedures in the region for smooth flow of passengers through the airports;
- d) provides expert inputs for the Heads of Civil Aviation Regional Meetings, and for other sector meeting of the East African Community;
- e) enhances cooperation in the facilitation of economic activities like export/import trade and tourism, which depend on air transportation for them to be competitive and efficient;
- f) prepares the region for the implementation of the common market, which is the future objective of the East African Community;
- g) introduces economies of scale in the sharing of training and seminar facilities and expertise;
- h) helps sharing of new ideas and ways and means of their implementation, through visits and educational tours made to airports and other facilities during meetings; and
- i) encourages close coordination among regulators, law enforcement authorities, airports and other service providers, to the implementation of air transport facilitation and aviation security programmes so as to mitigate negative effects on air travel in the region.

5. **CONCLUSION**

5.1 With the issues of aviation security becoming more and more of public concern, regional groupings are urged to form such consultative fora in their regions, because such meetings encourage improvement of air transport facilitation, without compromising aviation security, in the individual States, and in the region as a whole.

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