INTERNATIONAL CIVIL AVIATION ORGANIZATION

Second Meeting of the Africa - Indian Ocean Aviation System Planning and Implementation Group (AASPG/2)
Livingstone, Zambia, 2 - 6 November 2026

Agenda Item 4: Implementation of safety and air navigation goals, targets and indicators, including priorities set in the Regional Aviation Safety and Air Navigation Plans

FRA IMPLEMENTATION PROGRESS IN THE LUSAKA FIR.

(Presented by Zambia)

SUMMARY	
This information paper presents the progress made by Zambia in implementing Free Route Airspace (FRA) within the Lusaka Flight Information Region (FIR). It highlights work undertaken on the FRA safety case, Aeronautical Information Publication (AIP) arrangements, User Preferred Routes (UPR) trials, controller familiarisation, and coordination with neighbouring States. The paper also identifies outstanding actions requiring attention to support safe and harmonised FRA implementation.	
Strategic Goals	Every Flight is Safe and Secure Aviation Delivers Seamless, Accessible, and Reliable Mobility for All No Country Left Behind

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Zambia is progressing towards the implementation of FRA within the Lusaka FIR in alignment with the ICAO Global Air Navigation Plan (GANP) and the applicable Aviation System Block Upgrades (ASBU) framework.

1.2 The FRA concept under development provides for preferred flight trajectories between published entry and exit points, subject to ATC clearance, applicable airspace restrictions, military/Special Use Airspace requirements, and flow-management measures.

1.3 The implementation work is undertaken with consideration of safety, controller situational awareness, CNS capability, coordination with adjacent FIRs, contingency arrangements and the need for appropriate regional harmonization.

2. DISCUSSION

2.1 FRA Safety Case

2.1.1 A draft Safety Case for the Implementation of FRA in Zambia has been developed. The safety case addresses the safety requirements for FRA implementation within the Lusaka

FIR and is intended to support implementation under the State and ANSP safety management framework.

2.1.2 Senior Area Control controllers have reviewed the FRA safety case. The next step is submission to the CAA for review and approval.

2.2 Aeronautical Information Publication

2.2.1 The AIP Supplement supporting FRA implementation has been prepared by the FRA team and submitted to AIS for further review and processing.

2.2.2 Timely completion of the AIP publication process remains important to ensure that the operational concept, procedures and requirements are available to airspace users before implementation.

2.3 User Preferred Route Trials

2.3.1 Zambia has conducted UPR trials within the Lusaka FIR involving Kenya Airways (KQ), Ethiopian Airlines (ET) and RwandAir (RWD Air). The latest trial period covered 15 August to 15 September 2026.

2.3.2 The trials used bidirectional entry and exit points, including OVANA–TEVAS, RETAR–UDNOT, KOKEN–UVUDOM, AVIVA–ESRES, GADBA–ESRES and UDNOT–IBGOT–XOSIV. IBGOT was used as an intermediate point to prevent traffic from overflying Prohibited Area 4.

2.3.3 During the period under review, no loss of separation or ATS coordination failure was reported. CPDLC was deployed to capable aircraft as part of the Area Control trial. Performance was reported as good in areas with limited radar coverage, while additional controller orientation on CPDLC use is required.

2.4 Regional Coordination and LOA

2.4.1 A key outstanding action is the revision of Letters of Agreement (LOAs) with neighbouring States to incorporate the FRA component and associated cross-border operational arrangements.

2.4.2 Regional harmonisation of procedures, entry/exit arrangements, coordination requirements and contingency provisions will be necessary to support seamless FRA operations across FIR boundaries.

2.5 Controller and Operational Readiness

2.5.1 Controller familiarisation with FRA, UPR operations and associated CNS capabilities is being undertaken as part of operational readiness.

2.5.2 Continued practical orientation, particularly on CPDLC procedures and the management of free-route trajectories, will support safe integration of FRA operations into the Area Control environment.

2.6 Outstanding Actions

2.6.1 Complete the review and approval process for the FRA safety case.

2.6.2 Complete AIS review and publication of the relevant AIP material.

2.6.3 Progress with the urgent revision of LOAs with neighbouring States to include FRA arrangements.

2.6.4 Continue with controller familiarisation and operational validation of FRA/UPR procedures.

2.6.5 Continue monitoring UPR trial results and address operational issues identified during subsequent phases.

3 ACTION BY THE MEETING

3.1 The meeting is invited to:

a) note the progress made by Zambia towards FRA implementation in the Lusaka FIR;
b) note the results of the UPR trials and the operational experience gained through participation by KQ, ET and RWD Air;
c) note the importance of timely completion of the FRA safety case and AIP publication process;
d) encourage continued coordination between Zambia and neighbouring States for the revision and harmonisation of LOAs incorporating FRA arrangements; and
e) support regional information sharing and harmonisation of FRA implementation practices within the AFI region.