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

Addressing recurrent SAFA findings to Strengthen Safety Oversight and enhance the international acceptance of Air Operators of the AFI region

(Presented by CASSOA)

SUMMARY	
Foreign aircraft ramp inspections are an important component of a state's safety oversight system and a key tool for monitoring compliance with ICAO Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs). Several Air operators from the AFI Region continue to face operational restrictions in international markets, including inclusion on the European Union (EU) Air Safety List. Findings identified through the Safety Assessment of Foreign Aircraft (SAFA) programme provide important indicators of operator compliance with international safety requirements and the effectiveness of safety oversight systems. The recurrence of significant SAFA findings involving Air operators of the AFI region highlights the need for strengthened surveillance, effective corrective actions, and enhanced regional collaboration to address safety concerns and improve the international standing of AFI operators This paper highlights recurrent foreign aircraft ramp inspection findings, associated challenges, and proposes actions to strengthen surveillance programmes and improve aviation safety performance across the AFI Region. Action by the Meeting in **paragraph 3**	
REFRENCE(S)	• ICAO Annex 6 – Operation of Aircraft • ICAO Annex 19 – Safety Management • ICAO Doc 9734 – Safety Oversight Manual • ICAO Doc 8335 – Manual of Procedures for Operations Inspection, Certification and Continued Surveillance • ICAO Global Aviation Safety Plan (GASP) • AFI Regional Aviation Safety Plan (AFI-RASP)
Strategic Goals	• A - Every Flight is Safe and Secure

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Ramp inspections constitute an important element of State safety oversight systems and provide a practical means for verifying compliance by foreign aircraft operators with applicable operational, airworthiness and safety requirements. ICAO Annex 6 and Annex 19 require States to establish effective surveillance systems capable of ensuring continued compliance with regulatory requirements and identifying safety risks requiring corrective action.

1.2 While many States of the AFI region have made significant progress in strengthening their aviation safety oversight systems, several operators from the region continue to be subject to operational restrictions in international markets, including inclusion on the EU Air Safety List. Recurrent findings identified through the SAFA programme remain a matter of concern and may indicate deficiencies in operator compliance or oversight effectiveness.

1.3 Addressing recurrent SAFA findings is essential to strengthening safety oversight capabilities, improving operator compliance with ICAO Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs), enhancing international confidence in Air operators of the AFI region, and supporting efforts to prevent or remove operational restrictions.

2. DISCUSSION

2.1 The AFI Region has made measurable progress in strengthening safety oversight capabilities. The average Effective Implementation (EI) of ICAO safety oversight critical elements among African States has continued to improve through the implementation of ICAO initiatives, RSOOs, AFCAC programmes, and support from development partners.

2.2 However, several States continue to face challenges relating to inspector availability, technical expertise, sustainable funding, and the effective implementation of surveillance programmes.

2.3 Common Foreign Aircraft Ramp Inspection Findings

2.3.1 Foreign aircraft ramp inspections conducted in the AFI Region continue to identify recurrent deficiencies in operational and airworthiness areas, particularly relating to aircraft documentation, flight crew licences and qualifications, MEL compliance, maintenance records, emergency equipment, operational procedures, and dangerous goods requirements. The recurrence of these findings highlights the need for strengthened compliance monitoring and more effective corrective action by both operators and regulatory authorities.

2.4 Challenges Affecting the Resolution of SAFA Findings

2.4.1 The effectiveness of ramp inspection programmes within the AFI Region is often constrained by shortages of qualified inspectors, limited resources, inconsistent implementation of surveillance programmes, and challenges in the timely follow-up of corrective actions. Variations in the application of ICAO SARPs and limited information sharing among States further affect the overall effectiveness of these programmes.

2.5 Implications for Safety Oversight and International Recognition

2.5.1 Persistent and unresolved deficiencies identified during ramp inspections may indicate broader weaknesses within a state's safety oversight system. Such deficiencies can adversely affect confidence in Air operators and regulatory authorities and may result in increased scrutiny by foreign authorities and contribute to operational restrictions imposed by foreign authorities.

2.5.2 The continued inclusion of several AFI Air operators on international safety monitoring and restriction programmes underscores the importance of robust surveillance systems, timely corrective actions, and sustained compliance with ICAO SARPs. Addressing recurrent SAFA findings is therefore critical to improving aviation safety performance and enhancing the international acceptance of AFI operators.

2.6 Opportunities for Regional Collaboration

2.6.1 Addressing recurrent ramp inspection findings requires enhanced collaboration among States, Regional Safety Oversight Organizations (RSOOs), and industry stakeholders. Strengthened information sharing, inspector training and standardization, coordinated surveillance activities, and the exchange of lessons learned, and best practices can support the consistent implementation of ICAO SARPs and contribute to improved safety oversight performance across the AFI Region.

2.7 Role of RSOOs and Regional Mechanisms

2.7.1 Although significant progress has been achieved in strengthening safety oversight systems across the AFI Region, recurrent deficiencies identified during foreign aircraft ramp inspections continue to indicate gaps in compliance, surveillance effectiveness and technical capacity.

2.7.2 Strengthened ramp inspection programmes, enhanced inspector competencies, effective corrective action processes, increased regional cooperation and sustained support from development partners are essential to improving compliance with ICAO SARPs, strengthening safety oversight systems and reducing the likelihood of operational restrictions affecting AFI Region operators.

3 ACTION BY THE MEETING

3.1 The meeting is invited to:

a) note the recurrent deficiencies identified during foreign aircraft ramp inspections within the AFI Region;
b) encourage States of the AFI region to strengthen inspector competency, risk-based surveillance programmes and corrective action follow-up processes;
c) encourage States, RSOOs and development partners to enhance the exchange of ramp inspection information, lessons learned and best practices;
d) encourage States and RSOOs to undertake periodic assessments and continuous improvement initiatives aimed at strengthening safety oversight capabilities;
e) encourage States to make greater use of regional cooperation mechanisms and technical assistance programmes to address shortages of qualified technical personnel;
f) Request ICAO, RSOOs, and industry partners to continue supporting regional initiatives aimed at reducing recurrent SAFA findings, strengthening safety oversight, and enhancing the international acceptance of AFI Air operators.