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

Strengthening the Integrity of Aircraft Registration Systems and Preventing the Fraudulent Use of Nationality and Registration Marks in the AFI Region

(Presented by Secretariat)

SUMMARY	
Recent cases reported within the AFI Region have highlighted concerns regarding the issuance or apparent unauthorized use of aircraft nationality and registration marks, as well as the circulation of suspected falsified aircraft registration and airworthiness documents. These occurrences present significant safety, security, legal and oversight challenges. This paper highlights recent cases reported in the AFI region and proposes actions to strengthen aircraft registration oversight, information sharing, and verification mechanisms among States. Action by the Meeting in **paragraph 3**	
REFERENCE(S)	• Doc. 7300 - Chicago Convention • Annex 2 - Rules of the Air • Annex 7 - Aircraft Nationality and Registration Marks • Doc 9734 Part A - Safety Oversight Manual – The Establishment and Management of a State Safety Oversight System • Doc. 10142 - Manual on Registration and Deregistration of Aircraft
Strategic Goals	• A - Every Flight is Safe and Secure

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Convention on International Civil Aviation recognizes the fundamental principle that every State has complete and exclusive sovereignty over the airspace above its territory. At the same time, it establishes obligations for all Contracting States in relation to civil aviation activities, including aircraft registration.

1.2 By becoming a party to the Chicago Convention, each Contracting State accepts certain obligations and responsibilities for every aircraft listed in its register. Although the methods for discharging these responsibility may vary, no particular method can, in any way, relieve the State of such responsibility.

1.3 Annex 2 - Rules of the Air to the Convention on International Civil Aviation establishes a common set of operating rules that ensure safe, orderly, and efficient conduct of aircraft operations and predictable aviation worldwide. Article 12 of the Chicago Convention provides the legal basis for these requirements and established obligations for every State to comply with these rules for aircraft in its territory and its own aircraft wherever they operate..

1.4 Articles 17 to 21 of the Chicago Convention establish the international framework for aircraft nationality and registration including nationality of aircraft, prohibition of dual registration, registration and transfer of registration in accordance with national laws and regulations, the bearing of nationality and registration marks, and the provision of registration information to ICAO.

1.5 ICAO Annex 7 - Aircraft Nationality and Registration Marks establishes Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs) for the allocation, display, and administration of aircraft nationality and registration marks; and places responsibility on States to maintain the integrity of their aircraft registers.

1.6 The increasing globalization of aircraft ownership, leasing arrangements, cross-border transfers, and international operations has increased the importance of maintaining reliable aircraft registration records and effective mechanisms for verifying the authenticity of aircraft-related documentation.

2. DISCUSSION

2.1 Aircraft registration provides an important basis for establishing applicable responsibilities relating to continuing airworthiness, licensing, certification and safety oversight of an aircraft. It enables the State to exercise continuing safety oversight of the aircraft.

2.2 Recent information received within the AFI region has identified cases in which aircraft registration and airworthiness documents presented for regulatory or operational purposes were reported to be fraudulent, altered, or otherwise invalid. The use of such documents in support of international aircraft operations raises concerns regarding the integrity of aircraft certification processes, the authenticity of regulatory approvals, and the adequacy of existing verification mechanisms.

2.3 Reports have also identified situations in which aircraft were operating or being represented as possessing nationality and registration marks that could not be validated against official records. Such occurrences raise concerns regarding compliance with the provisions of the Chicago Convention and Annex 7 and may create uncertainty regarding aircraft identity, traceability, and the allocation of safety oversight responsibilities..

2.4 The integrity of aircraft registration systems is essential for establishing accountability within the international civil aviation framework. Any deficiencies relating to aircraft identity, registration status, or associated certification documentation may affect the ability of authorities to effectively exercise their oversight responsibilities and coordinate actions with other States and stakeholders.

2.5 The use of fraudulent or unauthorized aircraft documentation and the improper use of nationality and registration marks may have significant safety implications, including:

a) difficulties in determining the authority responsible for safety oversight functions;
b) diminished confidence in the integrity of aircraft registration systems;
c) challenges in the conduct of certification, surveillance, and enforcement activities;
d) potential operation of aircraft outside established regulatory oversight systems;

e) complications in accident and incident investigations; and
f) increased risks associated with unsafe or unauthorized aircraft operations.

2.6 Timely access to accurate information is essential to enable authorities to confirm the authenticity of aircraft-related documentation and take appropriate corrective actions when necessary.

2.7 The timely exchange of safety-critical information is an important element in safeguarding the integrity of aircraft registration and continuing airworthiness systems. Existing ICAO mechanisms provide opportunities for States to notify and share information relating to safety concerns that may have implications beyond national borders.

2.8 In particular, the Online Airworthiness Information Network (OAIN), the online version of ICAO Circular 95,(the Continuing Airworthiness of Aircraft in Service, Version 2.0), promotes the timely exchange and dissemination of continuing airworthiness information among States. Available through the ICAO iSTARS platform, OAIN supports authorities in identifying, assessing, and addressing safety risks associated with aircraft, aeronautical products, and related certification matters, thereby enhancing regional and global aviation safety oversight.

2.9 Greater utilization of OAIN, together with the timely notification of Member States and ICAO through appropriate information-sharing channels, would strengthen the ability of authorities to exchange safety-critical information related to suspected fraudulent documentation, unauthorized use of nationality and registration marks, and other issues that may adversely affect aircraft airworthiness, operational safety, or the effective discharge of safety oversight responsibilities.

2.10 Effective oversight of aircraft registration also requires an adequate legal and enforcement framework. States should ensure that the appropriate mechanisms are in place to enable aviation authorities and other competent national agencies to investigate suspected cases involving fraudulent aircraft registration documents, falsified certificates, unauthorized use of nationality and registration marks, or misrepresentation of aircraft ownership and registration status. Such mechanisms should support the timely application of administrative, civil, or criminal enforcement actions, including prosecution where appropriate, to deter fraudulent activities and preserve the integrity of national aircraft registers and the international aviation system.

3 ACTION BY THE MEETING

3.1 The meeting is invited to:

a) note the information contained in this paper;
b) encourage States to promptly notify ICAO and other affected Contracting States, as appropriate, of suspected fraudulent aircraft registration or airworthiness documents;
c) encourage States to make full use of the Online Airworthiness Information Network (OAIN) mechanisms available through iSTARS, as appropriate, for the timely notification and sharing of safety-critical information; and
d) encourage States to establish or strengthen verification, legal and enforcement mechanisms to detect, investigate and, where appropriate, prosecute, fraudulent activities involving aircraft registration, nationality and registration marks, certificates of registration, deregistration certificates, airworthiness certificates, and related aviation documents.