



WORKING PAPER

THIRTEENTH AIR NAVIGATION CONFERENCE

Montréal, Canada, 9 to 19 October 2018

COMMITTEE A

Agenda Item 5: Emerging issues

5.1: Operations above Flight Level 600

PROJECT LOON EXPERIENCE IN KENYAN AIRSPACE

(Presented by Kenya)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This paper presents an overview of Kenya's experience with Project Loon, a heavy free unmanned balloon network which intends to bring the internet to underserved parts of the world, and supports the AN-Conf/13-WP/16 Recommendation.

Action: The Conference is invited to :

- a) note the benefit that Loon, and new entrants like Loon, will bring by providing internet to underserved parts of the world, and
- b) agree to Recommendation 5.1/x — Higher airspace operations in paragraph 3.1. of AN-Conf/13-WP/16

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Supporting the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and the ICAO "No Country Left Behind" initiative, Project Loon seeks to enable education, investment, remote medical information and emergency services by expanding the internet capability to areas of the world which are currently underserved.

1.2 Much of Kenya's population of over 45 million people is catered for by mobile coverage, but the mountainous regions and remote areas of the country are disconnected from internet providers. In 2016, Kenya signed a Letter of Agreement with Loon for overflights and landings. Since October 2016, Loon balloons have safely flown 850,000 hours globally, with over 16,000 hours in Kenya airspace.

2. DISCUSSION

2.1 In June 2018, at Kenya's invitation, Project Loon held a Loon briefing and workshop for selected key stakeholders including high level officers from the Eastern African Community (EAC) States and EAC Secretariat. The participants at the briefing recognized the importance of Project Loon in

providing internet to remote areas and appreciated the humanitarian services offered by Project Loon in providing internet to Peru and Puerto Rico during their devastating natural disasters. The briefing appealed to all EAC States to consider signing with Loon, Letters of Agreement for overflight and landing of balloons in order to enable provision or enhancement of internet access in underserved areas of EAC.

2.2 The EAC Secretariat, which believes in the united purpose to facilitate increased accessibility, affordability, availability, reliability and usage of broadband services throughout the EAC region, signed a Letter of Intent with Loon in June 2018 to deepen cooperation and collaboration on provision of access to internet for all East African citizens.

2.3 In July 2018, Loon signed a commercial agreement with Telkom Kenya. The objective of the agreement is to bring 4G internet access to parts of Kenya using high-altitude balloons. The initiative is to take place in Central Kenya, which due to the mountainous terrain has proved difficult to provide with 4G, and is expected to be operational by 2019.

2.4 As outlined above, high airspace operations are increasing for testing purposes and will expand and grow in the near future with new agreements to come in Africa and in other regions of the world.

2.5 This paper supports the recommendation put forth in the Secretariat paper AN-Conf/13-WP/16 that request ICAO to provide guidance on the regulatory aspects of these operations.

3. CONCLUSION

3.1 As the higher altitude operations grow in Africa and in other regions of the world, this paper supports Recommendation 5.1/x — Higher airspace operations in paragraph 3.1. of AN-Conf/13-WP/16 that requests ICAO to provide guidance on the regulatory aspects of these operations.

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