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ASSEMBLY — 42ND SESSION

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Agenda Item 12: Facilitation Programmes

PROTECTING AVIATION THROUGH EFFECTIVE BORDER MANAGEMENT PROCESSES

(Presented by South Africa)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The establishment of the Border Management Authority (BMA) in South Africa was hailed as a good best practice to be emulated by other States. This was deliberated during or at the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) Facilitation Conference of 2025 (FALC 2025) which took place in Doha, Qatar from 14 to 17 April 2025 and featured a High-Level Ministerial Segment.

This paper outlines the establishment of the BMA with various functions previously handled by different national departments including Home Affairs, Agriculture, Health, and Forestry, Fisheries, and the Environment, catapulting in a more streamlined and coordinated approach to border management integrated.

The Assembly is invited to take note of South Africa's best practice in relation to an integrated border management approach.

<i>Strategic Goals:</i>	This information paper relates to the Strategic Goal <i>Aviation Delivers Seamless, Accessible and Reliable Mobility for All</i> .
<i>Financial implications:</i>	
<i>References:</i>	

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The establishment of the Border Management Authority (BMA) in South Africa was hailed as a good best practice to be emulated by the State. This was deliberated by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) Facilitation Conference of 2025 (FALC 2025) which took place in Doha, Qatar from 14 to 17 April 2025 and featured a High-Level Ministerial Segment.

1.2 Since 1994, South Africa has been using a multi-agency approach to its border management agenda. In this regard, seven (7) Departments and Agencies, namely the Department of Agriculture Land Reform and Rural Development; Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment, Health, Home Affairs, the South African National Defence Force, the South African Police Services (SAPS) and the South African Revenue Services (SARS) had a physical presence in South Africa's Border Environment. This was to coordinate and manage the environment as well as activities on the border environment stakeholders.

1.3 Unfortunately, the multi-agency approach was not wholly effective in addressing the national security threats and the challenges that are experienced at the border environment. For example, OR Tambo International Airport, there were six Port managers, with six different uniforms and operating procedures. Officials based at this Port also had other national priorities outside of the border environment. In light of this, the South African cabinet took a decision to establish the BMA as a Schedule 3A Public Entity on 01 April 2023 in terms of the Public Finance Management Act, 1999 (Act 1 of 1999). Subsequently, the Border Management Authority (BMA) Act, (Act No 2 of 2020) officially established the BMA.

1.4 The Authority is responsible for the execution of frontline border law enforcement functions related to, inter alia, port health, immigration control, access control, biosecurity, food safety and phytosanitary control, land border infrastructure development and maintenance and border security information and - risk management through the National Targeting Centre. The National Targeting Centre identifies, analyses, and makes recommendations to mitigate risks which affect the border law enforcement areas and the ports of entry. It is intended that this innovative approach will adapt and respond effectively to the challenges, threats and opportunities that exist in the border environment whilst safe-guarding South Africa's borders and meeting the country's regional, national, and local development responsibilities and human rights imperatives.

2. DISCUSSION

2.1 Many countries have established border management agencies. It is frequently recorded that the primary purpose of such an establishment is to enable an appropriate balance of the facilitation of legitimate trade and travel while simultaneously addressing the associated security risks in an integrated and harmonised manner. Furthermore, most countries have recognised that an uncoordinated multi-agency approach is outdated and non-responsive to the modern border management requirements. There was also the recognition that existing coordinated mechanisms had proved incapable of addressing the structural and management coordination problems affecting border management and border security of the country.

2.2 The benefits for the establishment of an integrated border management Authority amongst others are the following. A single line of authority and accountability for border law enforcement operations at Ports of Entry and within the border law enforcement area which has a potential for more cost effective and efficient services. This includes the integration of immigration, port health, environmental, agriculture as well as access control functions into the Border Law Enforcement area, including Ports of entry; a formalised relationship between the BMA and relevant organs of state to enhance security and management of the border environment; improved and shared information to create a coordinated and secure border

environment intelligence. A focus approach to optimise Port of Entry operations and processes to enhance efficiency through maximum compliance and minimum administrative costs and delay and the creation of customer service efficiencies, through streamlined integrated operations at the Ports of Entry.

2.3 Since the establishment of the BMA, improved collaboration for efficient communication between the different departments/agencies was noted. For example, Memoranda of Understandings (MoUs) and Implementation Protocols (IPs) have been concluded with relevant transferring departments and agencies with presence in the border environment respectively. In the past this collaboration was complex due to the level of coordination with various ministries. Additionally, collaboration with neighbouring countries relating to port operations and related matters is now made efficient. This makes it easier to track progress relating to the activities that are agreed upon to meet the objectives of the establishment of the BMA which also include the protection of aviation and improved customer experience.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 The Assembly is invited to take note of South Africa's best practice in relation to an integrated border management approach.

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