



WORKING PAPER

ASSEMBLY — 41ST SESSION

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Agenda Item 24: Technical Assistance Programme

**REPORT ON THE COMPREHENSIVE REGIONAL IMPLEMENTATION PLAN FOR
AVIATION SAFETY IN AFRICA (AFI PLAN)**

(Presented by the Council of ICAO)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This paper presents the progress made in the implementation of the Comprehensive Regional Implementation Plan for Aviation Safety in Africa (AFI Plan) and its associated work programme.

The paper also recommends the continuation of the AFI Plan beyond 2024, with focus on all safety and air navigation capacity and efficiency related areas, including aviation infrastructure planning. The expansion and continuation of the programme beyond 2024 will contribute to further enhancement of aviation safety in Africa.

The continued implementation of the AFI Plan in an effective and systematic manner in all safety and air navigation capacity and efficiency-related areas, and in full alignment with the Global Aviation Safety Plan (GASP) and the Global Air Navigation Plan (GANP), will contribute to accelerating efforts being made by African States to achieve the goals and targets set by the GASP and the GANP, as well as the revised Abuja Aviation Safety Targets, incorporating Air Navigation Services Targets.

Action: The Assembly is invited to:

- a) support the continued implementation of the AFI Plan activities and extension of the programme term for a further six years from 2024 to 2030, as part of the work programme of the ICAO Regional Offices, covering all safety and air navigation capacity and efficiency related areas, including aviation infrastructure planning; and
- b) urge States, international and regional organizations, finance institutions and industry to continue to make financial, in-kind and other contributions to support the implementation of the AFI Plan.

<i>Strategic Objectives:</i>	This working paper relates to the Safety and Air Navigation Capacity and Efficiency Strategic Objectives.
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<i>Financial implications:</i>	The activities referred to in this paper will be undertaken with the resources available in the 2023-2025 Regular Budget, AFI Plan Fund and from other extra budgetary contributions.
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<i>References:</i>	Doc 9754, <i>Global Air Navigation Plan</i> Doc 10004, <i>2020-2022 Global Aviation Safety Plan</i> Doc 10140, <i>Assembly Resolutions in Force (as of 4 October 2019)</i> The revised Abuja Aviation Safety Targets, incorporating Air Navigation Services Targets Reports of the AFI Plan Steering Committee meetings Africa-Indian Ocean (AFI) Air Navigation Plan
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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Comprehensive Regional Implementation Plan for Aviation Safety in Africa (AFI Plan) was endorsed by the 36th Session of the ICAO Assembly and established by the Secretary General on 1 January 2008 to address civil aviation safety deficiencies in the Africa-Indian Ocean (AFI) region. The programme has since been providing assistance to States with a focus on the establishment of effective and sustainable safety oversight systems through the implementation of the eight critical elements; and fostering of aviation safety culture in Africa.

1.2 In 2009, the ICAO Council decided (C-DEC 188/11) that the programme activities should be integrated into the ICAO Regional Offices' regular work programme as of January 2010. Although the activities are integrated into the regional offices' activities, the programme initiated by AFI Plan continues to function as a specific Africa-wide ICAO implementation support programme since 2010.

1.3 In 2015, the ICAO Evaluation and Internal Audit Office (EAO) evaluated the AFI Plan with a view to providing an independent review of the programme performance in accordance with the original programme document. The evaluation looked at the relevance, design, management and governance of the programme since its inception and made a number of recommendations to ensure effective and continued implementation of the programme. One of the key recommendations called for the review and amendment of the AFI Plan document to ensure that it remains relevant and in line with the changing dynamics of the programme, taking into account its continuation beyond 2016.

1.4 Accordingly, the programme document was reviewed and updated for the planning horizon covering 2017-2020 and approved by the AFI Plan Steering Committee (SC) at its 20th meeting. At its 24th meeting, the AFI Plan SC further extended the programme until 2024.

2. DISCUSSION

2.1 On the basis of the focus areas of the AFI Plan and in accordance with its annual work programme, many assistance activities were conducted by the Regional Office Safety Teams (ROSTs), laying the groundwork for the development of ICAO Plans of Action for priority States identified with significant safety concerns (SSCs), low levels of effective implementation (EI) and/or that are on the ICAO Monitoring and Assistance Review Board (MARB) list.

2.2 Specific assistance activities envisaged under the ICAO Plans of Action have been carried out jointly by the ROSTs, the Africa Indian-Ocean Cooperative Inspectorate Scheme (AFI-CIS) of the African Civil Aviation Commission (AFCAC) and regional safety oversight organizations (RSOOs) as well as other partners. ICAO has played a leading role in coordinating these activities in order to avoid duplication of efforts and waste of resources, including the regional prioritization and coordination of all regional safety-related initiatives by the Regional Aviation Safety Group of the AFI region (RASG-AFI) and through the annual coordination meetings of the ICAO Eastern and Southern African, Nairobi (ESAF) and the Western and Central African, Dakar (WACAF) Regional Offices with AFCAC, RSOOs, Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and other partners.

2.3 Over the years, significant progress has been achieved in enhancing aviation safety in Africa as a result of the considerable work and activities undertaken by ICAO through the AFI Plan. The programme continues to register significant gains towards the attainment of the Abuja Aviation Safety Targets, incorporating Air Navigation Services (ANS) Targets, including: a) the improvement of the level of EI of the critical elements of States' safety oversight systems; b) resolution of SSCs; c) the certification of aerodromes used for international operations; d) the establishment and strengthening of regional safety oversight and accident and incident investigation organizations (RSOOs/regional accident and incident investigation organizations (RAIOs)); and e) capacity building through various training activities.

2.4 In addition to the traditional State support mechanism, the AFI Plan has adopted a project-based approach over the past six years by developing and launching specific projects. Since 2016, seven projects were developed, presented to and approved by the AFI Plan SC and are currently being implemented in the areas of aerodrome certification, search and rescue (SAR), air navigation service providers (ANSPs) peer review, State safety programme (SSP) implementation, aircraft accident and incident investigation (AIG), the fundamentals of safety oversight (FSO) and aeronautical information management (AIM), so as to further assist States in achieving a sustainable aviation safety oversight level in the region. These projects were revised and aligned with the scope and timeframe of the programme to help achieve the broad and specific programme objectives.

2.5 Efforts made over time in attaining the revised Abuja Aviation Safety Targets, incorporating Air Navigation Services Targets and achieving sustainable safety improvements have already shown tangible results. Following validation of the evidence of implementation of the USOAP corrective actions plans (CAPs), a number of African States have registered significant improvements in their safety oversight systems as evidenced by the increase in their EI scores. Between July 2012 and April 2022, the number of States throughout the AFI region with a level of EI of 60 per cent and greater increased from 14 to 31, and the number of States with SSC declined from 20 to only one, in one area namely certification of aircraft operators.

2.6 The various project implementation activities have also supported States to enhance their safety oversight capacity in specific areas. The aerodrome certification project so far enabled to certify 14 international airports in 13 eligible States. This achievement raised the percentage of certified aerodromes in Africa from 22 per cent in 2016 to 32 per cent as at 31 March 2022. Some of these States, including their airport operators and industry, have been able to build capacity and are in the process of certifying additional international airports within their territory.

2.7 With respect to ANS, the AFI Plan developed an implementation project to support the African ANSP Safety and Quality Assurance (ASQA) Programme through a peer review mechanism established in 2015. The main goal of this initiative is to assist ANSPs to continuously improve the safety and quality of air navigation services in view of the limited ANS regulatory oversight in the African region. Accordingly, a programme reference manual as well as a cooperation framework and a roadmap were developed and endorsed to govern the implementation of the African ANSP peer review programme, among other cooperation activities in the area of air navigation services. Within the established cooperation framework and in accordance with ANSP roadmap, a Memorandum of Cooperation (MoC) was signed among ANSPs for the improvement of air navigation services on the African continent. This positive development enhanced the membership of the African ANSP peer review programme significantly. Currently, 35 States fully support activities pertaining to the attainment of the Abuja Aviation Safety Targets, incorporating Air Navigation Targets in this continental programme. Various supports are also provided under the SAR, SSP and AIG projects to enhance the safety oversight capacity of States.

2.8 In addition to the ongoing projects, a new project on capacity building for aviation professionals in the AFI region was initiated to develop sustainable professional personnel to carry out effective regulatory and oversight responsibilities in each ICAO Strategic Objectives.

2.9 In support of States requiring more qualified technical staff, the AFI Plan has conducted numerous activities including seminars and workshops in various safety-related fields. Over 2 300 personnel from African States have benefited from these activities conducted from 2008 to date. Furthermore, another project was initiated during the COVID-19 pandemic to increase online training enrolments of aviation professionals from Civil Aviation Authorities (CAAs) in Least Developed Countries (LDCs) in Africa to sustain the knowledge, skills and overall competencies of relevant CAA staff on a number of key operational and/or technical areas. Accordingly, over 110 participants from 28 States were trained under this initiative.

2.10 The Ezulwini Ministerial Declaration on Regional Safety Oversight Organizations in Africa called for the conduct of a specific study for supporting and strengthening AFI RSOOs. In accordance with this Declaration and taking into account results of the global RSOO evaluation conducted by ICAO in 2017, a consultant was recruited under the AFI Plan to conduct a strategic planning study to support and strengthen RSOOs in Africa. The study was presented during a validation workshop and the final recommendations of the study are ready for consideration and approval by the upcoming meeting of the AFI Plan SC planned to be held in mid-2022. The implementation of this strategy is expected to enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of the RSOOs in the region.

2.11 The aviation infrastructure for Africa gap analysis was conducted in response to ICAO Council Decision (C-DEC 214-7) at its 214th Session, on the implementation of the Declaration and Framework for a Plan of Action for Development of Aviation Infrastructure in Africa. The objective of the gap analysis was to carry out a State-by-State evaluation and determine the current status of implementation of aviation infrastructure based on global, regional and national requirements, taking into account existing traffic levels, demand and capacity in the African region. The gap analysis is to serve as a basis and provide inputs for the preparation of regional and national aviation plans and ensure that the development of aviation infrastructure complies with ICAO Standards and Recommended Practices and responds adequately to traffic and capacity demands. In this respect, the exercise involved all African States and covered aspects related to airports, ANS, and aircraft fleet capacity and equipment. The gap analysis was conducted within the context of operationalizing the Single African Air Transport Market (SAATM), a flagship project of the Agenda 2063 of the African Union (AU).

3. CONCLUSION

3.1 Although significant progress in enhancing aviation safety in Africa has been achieved as a result of the considerable work and actions undertaken through the AFI Plan in collaboration with aviation partners, it is evident that the current situation demands additional efforts, resources and time not only to retain and sustain the achievements attained so far, but also to enhance these achievements through provision of additional assistance to States to strength their safety oversight capacities. The achievement of the revised Abuja Aviation Safety Targets, incorporating ANS Targets, is critical to the attainment of the GASP and GANP goals in the region. Therefore, there is need for continued assistance to States through the AFI Plan in collaboration with aviation safety partners, particularly to ensure the inclusion of all aviation safety and air navigation capacity and efficiency-related activities, including infrastructure planning.

3.2 In view of the above context and considering the revised AFI Plan work programme for the year 2021-2024 which was approved during the 24th AFI Plan SC meeting, the continuation of the AFI Plan at least to the next two triennia beyond the current planning horizon of 2024 to 2030 is therefore essential, as agreed at the 25th AFI Plan SC meeting held in May 2022 in Abuja, Nigeria.