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EVALUATION OF THE QUALITY OF SERVICES PROVIDED TO AIR TRANSPORT USERS IN CAMEROON

(Presented by Cameroon)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The aim of this paper is to share Cameroon's experience in the supervision and monitoring evaluation of the quality of services and facilities offered to air transport users, in particular at airports, via the regular annual forum organized involving airline companies, airport operators, air navigation service providers, and partner administrations intervening at the airports. It highlights the importance of a platform of exchange with all stakeholders to improve the quality of services offered to users of air transport.

<i>Strategic Objectives:</i>	This working paper relates to the 5 Strategic Objectives of ICAO aimed at fostering the development of a safe, secured, economically viable, and sustainable civil aviation system.
<i>Financial implications:</i>	
<i>References:</i>	Annex 9 – <i>Facilitation</i>

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 In line with its mission to supervise and promote aviation activities in the country, the Cameroon Civil Aviation Authority (CCAA) organizes every year a forum of dialogue between key stakeholders of the air transport sector, including airlines serving Cameroon, Cameroon Airports (ADC), the Air Navigation service provider (ASECNA) and partner administrations (Customs, Police, Gendarmerie, health, forestry and phytosanitary services at the airports) on the quality of services provided to air transport users. Evaluating the quality levels of airports, air navigation, and airline services can help improve the services provided to users.

1.2 This forum thus serves as a platform of exchange and open collaboration among these stakeholders with the objective of identifying particular lapses in the services rendered to users in the aviation sector and proposing suitable, as well as practical solutions to improve the quality of such services.

2. ORGANISATION OF THE FORUM AND FOLLOW-UP OF ITS RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 The first edition of the forum on the quality of services provided to air transport users in Cameroon was organized in 2012, under the theme “Brainstorming between CCAA/ADC/ASECNA and airlines on the quality of the services provided to air transport users”.

2.2 The work of this forum is to identify difficulties encountered in the sector, through the use of the information contained in the questionnaire that hitherto, had been sent to participants and to propose suitable and practical solutions to improve the quality of the services provided to users in compliance with international norms and standards.

2.3 The aim is to foster the spirit of open dialogue, exchange of experiences and ideas, as well as formulation of recommendations to stimulate actions in order to improve service levels standards at the airports.

2.4 During the forums, discussions usually center on the following key points:

- safety issues;
- management of flight schedules;
- management of slots;
- ground handling situation;
- facilitation measures at airports;
- security infrastructure;
- implementation of security measures at airports;
- access control;
- air navigation and aerodrome services and infrastructure;
- implementation of environmental norms at airports;
- protection of passengers' rights; and
- evolution of the collection of statistical data.

2.5 In order to ensure follow-up of the implementation of the recommendations emitted at the forum, an enlarged permanent statutory follow-up committee has been established to monitor and evaluate the implementation level of the said recommendations and propose solutions to address the difficulties

faced in the implementation process. Generally, the service quality levels are monitored by investigating airlines' and passengers' claims, perceptions, or satisfaction with the services provided at the airports.

3. RESULTS

3.1 Since the launching of the forum, substantial improvements have been observed in service quality levels and infrastructure standards at the airports in Cameroon. For instance, following the implementation of forum recommendations, the international airports of Douala and Yaounde-Nsimalen have witnessed among others:

- significant expansion and rehabilitation works of their infrastructure;
- laudable improvement as concerns ground handling, which had been a real concern for airlines, in terms of pricing, quality of service, and infrastructure;
- effective holding of briefing and debriefing operational meetings for each flight; and
- establishment of an ad hoc calendar system of meetings to address urgent cases.

3.2 This has led to lesser complaints from companies regarding ground handling issues, resulting in improvement on the punctuality rate of airlines on slot compliance, fewer delays, and better passenger experience.

3.3 Similarly, the issues regarding the treatment of passengers with disabilities and reduced mobility has been resolved thanks to service liberalization.

3.4 Furthermore, some issues relating to security have been resolved, enhanced by the efficiency of a more global vision of airport security adopted by CCAA via the deployment of the Airport Security Units (ASU).

3.5 Finally, there has been improved training for the personnel, as well as enhanced collaboration among various actors on the platforms, which has facilitated work fluidity at the airports.

4. CONCLUSION

4.1 Today, air transport is certainly the safest mode of transportation for the movement of people and goods from one part of the world to another. However, it needs to be improved in some aspects to better achieve the goal of providing safe and comfortable transportation.

4.2 Cameroon is actively committed to improving the quality of services provided to air transport users through the necessary facilitation and assistance, developing a more efficient, orderly, and attractive transportation system that meets the needs of consumers. Although the multicultural nature of the air transport industry and the variety of the services offered at the airports, and in-flight make the service quality assessment levels more complex, the forum appeared to have the best platform for the appreciation of the standards of the services provided to users.