



ICAO COMMENDS MAURITANIA AS EC REMOVES AFRICAN STATE FROM SAFETY WATCH LIST

MONTREAL, 20 December 2012 – Acknowledging Mauritania’s exceptional progress on its aviation safety oversight challenges, as recently validated by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), the European Commission (EC) has removed the African State’s certified air carriers from its safety watch list, effective earlier this month.

ICAO has highly commended Mauritania for its recent safety progress, which led to the EC’s action. The UN specialized civil aviation agency works closely with its Member States to improve their levels of aviation safety oversight, primarily through auditing programmes and targeted capacity-building initiatives.

Two ICAO Coordinated Validation Missions (ICVMs), conducted in Mauritania during 2012, confirmed the State’s latest safety progress and have directly led to the re-opening of European skies to its airlines.

“We are very encouraged by the excellent safety results recently achieved by Mauritania,” commented ICAO Council President, Roberto Kobeh González. “It has worked very hard in recent months to achieve a 70 percent effective implementation rate with respect to ICAO’s safety oversight guidance. This has led to dramatic improvements in the safety of its system – improvements which can now be of direct benefit to travellers, tourists and businesses that rely on timely access to related destinations and markets.”

Kobeh went on to reiterate his Organization’s full commitment to work in close coordination and collaboration with global aviation safety partners, including the EC, in order to continually enhance aviation safety. ICAO is presently expanding its portfolio of strategic safety partnerships, seeking to encourage the more comprehensive sharing of safety information and improve global coordination of related technical assistance activities.

“We would invite all ICAO Member States with similar challenges before them to look to Mauritania as a clear example of how much improvement can be achieved in a relatively short period of time,” stressed ICAO Secretary General, Raymond Benjamin. “The safety of the global air transport system is ICAO’s guiding Strategic Objective and Mauritania’s example should serve as a beacon to States facing similar challenges.”

Benjamin also welcomed the recent announcement by the EC Vice-President responsible for transport, Siim Kallas, that the Commission “...is ready to spare no effort to assist countries affected by the safety list in building technical and administrative capacity to overcome the difficulties in the area of safety as quickly and as efficiently as possible.”