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AFRICAN MINISTERS AND AVIATION OFFICIALS MEET AT ICAO TO DISCUSS NEXT STEPS FOR AVIATION SAFETY IN AFRICA

MONTREAL, 24 September 2013 – The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) completed a special high-level briefing yesterday on the status of aviation safety in Africa.

More than 200 African participants, including 22 State Ministers, Directors General of Civil Aviation and representatives of relevant international and regional organizations attended the briefing. They focused during a series of presentations on recent enhancements in African aviation safety which have been achieved through the implementation of the ICAO Comprehensive Regional Implementation Plan for Aviation Safety in Africa (AFI Plan) and considered its continuation through 2016.

“The success and achievements we’ve seen thus far through the AFI Plan would not have been possible without commitment from AFI States and the efforts of multiple aviation safety partners,” stressed ICAO Secretary General, Raymond Benjamin. “But to maintain our momentum, we must now jointly expand our areas of activity and confirm the continued engagement of AFI States and the relevant authorities. This meeting is a first step towards confirming those commitments and aviation safety in Africa will only continue to improve as we move forward with this work.”

Dr. Benard Aliu, Representative of Nigeria on the ICAO Council and former Chairperson of the Steering Committee for the AFI Plan, emphasized during the briefing the importance of harnessing all available resources through the sharing of knowledge, best practices and available expertise, as well as harmonizing common objectives to avoid duplication of efforts.

In line with the decisions and targets adopted during the Ministerial Conference on Aviation Safety in Africa held in July 2012 in Abuja, Nigeria, later endorsed by the Assembly of Heads of States of the African Union in January 2013, Aliu also re-encouraged States not to join more than one Regional Safety Oversight Organization (RSOO) or Regional Accident Investigation Agency (RAIA), unless the Organization in question provides different functions.

“Safety improvements in the AFI region have been the result of close and effective collaboration and the significant efforts of many African States,” Aliu commented. “But though implementation progress has been made on several fronts, there is still considerable work to be done. The expansion of the AFI Plan is therefore the logical next step as ICAO continues to drive improved safety outcomes and capacities in every corner of the African continent.”

Also on hand at ICAO's AFI Briefing were Air Cdre. Kwame Mamphey, President of the African Civil Aviation Commission (AFCAC), and AFCAC Secretary General, Ms. Iyabo Sosina. Mamphey reiterated AFCAC's support to AFI States in meeting the targets that were set under the Abuja Declaration, highlighting that "to eliminate safety deficiencies and enhance aviation safety in the AFI region, AFCAC, with technical support from ICAO, has provided assistance to African States in addressing their safety oversight deficiencies with emphasis and priority given to States identified with Significant Safety Concerns (SSCs)."

The next steps in the AFI Plan expansion process includes new technical areas, such as Air Navigation Services (ANS), Aerodromes, Air Routes and Ground Aids (AGA), and Aircraft Accident and Incident Investigation. This expansion will enable the AFI Plan to align with the decisions and targets adopted during the Ministerial Conference on Aviation Safety in Africa.

The continuation and expansion of the AFI Plan to cover the technical areas of ANS and AGA will need additional financial support from safety partners to assist African States in addressing safety-related deficiencies and achieve the Abuja Targets. Donors interested in contributing to the AFI Plan or other African aviation assistance projects can do so through the ICAO Safety Fund (SAFE). Further information on assistance projects and SAFE can be accessed at www.icao.int/safety/scan.

A specialized agency of the United Nations, ICAO was created in 1944 to promote the safe and orderly development of international civil aviation throughout the world. It sets standards and regulations necessary for aviation safety, security, efficiency, capacity and environmental protection, amongst many other priorities. The Organization serves as the forum for cooperation in all fields of civil aviation among its 191 Member States.

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