

Opening Address by the ICAO Regional Director, Eastern & Southern Africa
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to the

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[Introductory salutations, as appropriate]

1. I am delighted to join you today for the third Pan-African Aviation Training Coordination Conference. My goal is to learn firsthand and discuss how far you, Africa's training experts and authorities have progressed towards the implementation of the recommendations and conclusions of the last Pan-African Aviation Training Coordination Conference held over a year ago in Cairo, Egypt.
2. As an industry, aviation is facing many challenges worldwide. One of those challenges is the sustained availability of competent and qualified technical personnel necessary to ensure the development and growth of a safe and efficient air transport industry.
3. ICAO's Universal Safety Oversight Audit Programme has identified the lack of qualified aviation personnel as a major deficiency in many African States. This seriously impedes their ability to fulfil their responsibilities under the Chicago Convention and to participate in the global marketplace.
4. This weakness will be even more pronounced with projections that the African air transport industry will expand in this decade at a faster rate than the world average. In this context, the availability of aviation professionals is more critical than ever before.
5. Moreover, in our globalized society and economy, Africa's aviation industry is competing with other countries and other industries in attracting and retaining human resources that are absolutely necessary for operational and safety oversight functions.
6. These are harsh realities that must be faced squarely and decisively by regulators, industry and training organizations, working in very close cooperation to bridge the gap between training needs and training capacities across States and across regions in Africa.
7. In 2009, the training survey conducted by the Training Experts Working group has shown the extent of the gap between training needs and resources. Also, recent studies conducted by ICAO estimate the potential global shortage over a 20-year period at 160,000 in the case of pilots, 360,000 for maintenance personnel and 40,000 for air traffic controllers, for a grand total of 560,000.
8. As Africa's training experts and authorities, you have already started the journey towards addressing those challenges. The Pan-African Aviation Training Coordination Conference held over a year ago in Cairo, Egypt. You have identified the issues to be addressed and adopted an action plan. Also, the Training Experts working Group has been working on the implementation of the same action plan.
9. For my part, I would like to provide you with an update on some of the activities and initiatives of ICAO to harmonize and standardize aviation training in Africa and elsewhere, in the hope that it can provide food for thought in your deliberations.

10. First and foremost is the establishment of the database on the training needs and available resources. That is fundamental to continue monitoring the scope and nature of the problem.
11. As requested by the 2nd Pan-African Aviation Training coordination conference, ICAO continues to collect data on training needs and resources. You will receive during the next session an update on the status of aviation training in Africa based on the data collected. ICAO would continue to maintaining this database and in analyzing training-related trends.
12. It appears from the available data that there are a considerable number of institutes in Africa that have been training pilots, air traffic controllers and mechanics for decades now. The weakness is that many of these facilities are limited in scope. They do not possess the critical mass of resources and clientele to grow and better meet increasing demand.
13. One solution is to pool the inherent strengths and resources of institutions through harmonization, standardization and quality assurance of training dispensed. In ICAO's view, this is the most productive and effective approach. This must be done in such a way that everybody wins – regulators, industry, training institutions and, of course, the travelling public and citizens at large.
14. ICAO has been providing the required support to the Training Experts Working Group for the development of proposals to implement the action plan adopted in Cairo.
15. During the next days you will discuss the proposals for the creation of an Association of Training Organizations, the designation of centres of excellence, the creation of a Training advisory board as well as a training policy for the continent.
16. Ladies and gentlemen, my pledge is to work with all of you – African States and stakeholders, regulators, industry and international organizations – so that together we can bridge the gap between the training needs and the current capacities for aviation training in Africa.
17. Thanks you and have a productive and stimulating conference.