



**ADDRESS BY THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF ICAO,  
MR. RAYMOND BENJAMIN,  
TO THE OPENING OF  
AFI AVIATION WEEK MEETINGS**

(Maputo, 18-21 May 2015)

Honourable Carlos Agostinho do Rosário - Prime Minister Republic of Mozambique

His Excellency Eng. Carlos Fortes Mesquita - Minister of Transport, and Communication – and all other Ministers present;

Dr Elham Ibrahim - Commissioner of Infrastructure and Energy - African Union Commission;

Mr. Abdulai Alhassan - President of the African Civil Aviation Commission (AFCAC);

Ms. Iyabo Sosina- Secretary General of AFCAC;

Cpt Joao de Abreu- Chairman of the Mozambique Civil Aviation Authority - and all Directors General of CAAs;

Representatives of International and Regional Organisations;

Distinguished Delegates;

Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. It is indeed an honour for me to join you for the opening ceremony of a series of meetings on Africa and Indian Ocean Region (AFI) Aviation Safety, Security and Facilitation, and Human Resource Development dubbed “AFI Aviation Week”.
2. I wish to take this opportunity to thank the Government of Mozambique for having accepted to partner with ICAO and host these important events. All the support and excellent facilities provided in this regard are highly appreciated.
3. Since the signature of the Memorandum of Cooperation between ICAO and the African Union Commission, the collaboration between the two organizations continues to progressively improve. In that context, a number of initiatives taken by ICAO such as; the aviation safety and security targets and the Human Resources Development Fund are supported by the African Union Organs through Decisions. ICAO is committed to work with the African Union Commission and AFCAC in assisting African States to meet their obligations under the Chicago Convention.

4. I am particularly pleased by the participation of many key representatives from States as well as recognized international and regional organizations — this is a clear demonstration of the importance given to the civil aviation sector and to the need for all partners to work closely together to progress Safety, Security and Facilitation, and Human Resource Development in this region.
5. The meetings taking place here in Maputo from 18-21 May 2015 include an open session of the first meeting of the AFI Comprehensive Implementation Plan for Security and Facilitation for Africa (AFI SECFAL Plan) which will be held this morning to be followed by a AFI SECFAL Plan Steering Committee meeting in the afternoon. The Fifteenth Meeting of the Comprehensive Regional Implementation Plan for Aviation Safety in Africa (AFI Plan) Steering Committee will be held on 19 May; the open session of the second AFI Aviation Safety Symposium on 20 May and in the morning of 21 May; and lastly the meeting of the AFI Human Resources Development Fund (HRDF) will be held in the afternoon on 21 May.
6. This series of meetings will provide ICAO, its Member States and Partner Organizations with an excellent opportunity to advance our aviation safety and security and facilitation priorities in the AFI region, especially the main goal of the ICAO No Country Left Behind (NCLB) campaign to help ensure that the implementation of Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs) is better harmonized globally so that all States have access to the significant socio-economic benefits of safe, secure and reliable air transport, with due consideration to local needs and expectations.



7. Let me now turn my attention to the first **AFI SECFAL Plan meeting**: The AFI Aviation Week in Maputo is very special as the AFI SECFAL Plan is being launched here under ICAO's leadership. The AFI SECFAL Plan calls for collaboration between States and their regulatory authorities, and the industry in the implementation of coordinated activities aimed at rectifying aviation security and facilitation deficiencies in a sustainable manner. The AFI SECFAL Plan is also aimed at reaching the global average in terms of effective implementation of critical elements of State aviation security oversight system and helps in addressing the prevailing terrorism threats while supporting sustainable economic growth in Africa. This will be achieved through establishing a strong management mechanism and coordination of efforts by various stakeholders and partners, and drawing on expertise available in African States, ICAO, and donor States and Organizations.
8. The SECFAL Plan is expected to change the prevailing AVSEC/FAL situation in Africa through an ambitious and clearly defined eight-year programme. This Plan will be managed under the supervision of the ICAO Regional Director, Eastern and Southern African (ESAF) Regional Office, in Nairobi, in coordination with the ICAO Regional Directors, Western and Central African (WACAF) Regional Office, in Dakar, Middle East (MID) Regional Office, in Cairo and Europe/North Atlantic (EUR/NAT) Regional Office in Paris.
9. It is important to recognise that the AFI SECFAL Plan was unanimously supported by States at the First AFI Aviation Security Meeting in Dakar, Senegal, on 28 May 2014. Subsequently, it was endorsed by the 24th Extraordinary Plenary Session of the African Civil Aviation Commission (AFCAC) also held in Dakar, Senegal, from 1 to 4 July 2014, and approved by the ICAO Council, at its 203<sup>rd</sup> Session, as an ICAO programme. The Council requested the Secretary General to report on the progress of its implementation.

10. I assure you of my full commitment to meet this new challenge, banking on the support of ICAO Council and President, national, regional and international organizations, stakeholders and the industry at large. I would like to call upon each and every one of you to support the AFI SECFAL Plan implementation so that its objectives can fully be realized.
11. The convening of an inter-ministerial conference currently proposed for end of 2015 is being considered to further enhance political commitment to the SECFAL Plan. Given that aviation security and facilitation activities involve diverse agencies and entities within each State, the objective of the inter-ministerial conference is to bring together the Ministers responsible for these agencies and entities to ensure their full support.  
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12. The **15th AFI Plan Steering Committee** meeting will also be held during this AFI Aviation Week, and I am pleased to report that the AFI Plan Work Programme for 2015 is being effectively implemented with the primary focus being on: providing assistance to African States to improve their Effective Implementation (EI) of the International Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs), resolving Significant Safety Concerns (SSCs) and supporting the establishment and strengthening of Regional Safety Oversight Organizations (RSOOs) and Regional Accident Investigation Organizations (RAIO).
13. In this regard the two ICAO WACAF and ESAF Regional offices met in Dakar last December and agreed on a set of common strategies including the implementation of the 2015 AFI Plan work programme and activities to achieve the Abuja Safety targets such as having at least 50% of African States to reach the 60% EI, and resolution of all outstanding SSCs by the end of 2015.
14. As at May 2015, a total of 31 tailored ICAO Plans of Action have been presented to African States. I am particularly pleased to note that all of these States have confirmed acceptance of their respective Plans. The commitment to and implementation of the accepted Plans have started to show positive and encouraging results details of which will be presented during the AFI Plan Steering Committee Meeting tomorrow. However, it is worth mentioning that there are also certain States that have shown little or no progress.
15. It is the success of the first **AFI Aviation Safety Symposium** which was held in Dakar in May 2014 that prompted me to consider it necessary to repeat the event. During the first Symposium, we jointly reviewed the status of aviation safety and air navigation performance in the AFI Region with a focus on the progress made in attaining the Abuja safety targets endorsed by the African Union (AU) Heads of State in January 2013. The Symposium also charted the course on tackling the challenges and harnessing the opportunities as we continue to pursue our goals in the coming years.
16. It would be recalled that the Symposium gave birth to the Collaborative Implementation Programme which aimed to coordinate efforts of stakeholders and partners in addressing safety oversight deficiencies. We have since witnessed the expansion of the AFI Plan to include Air Navigation Services (ANS), Aerodromes and Grounds Aids (AGA) and Aircraft Accident Investigation (AIG) specialty areas.
17. Since the establishment of the AFI Plan, significant progress has been made in the traditional areas of Airworthiness of Aircraft (AIR), Personnel Licensing (PEL) and Operation of Aircraft (OPS). It was therefore, envisaged that this expansion in the scope of the AFI Plan will serve as a catalyst in meeting the Abuja safety targets by African States.
18. The objective of the second Symposium is to review the status of implementation of the various ICAO safety initiatives for Africa, share success stories and challenges, and agree on relevant strategies to further enhance safety in the region.

19. I have noted, with satisfaction, the continued commitment by African States towards the implementation of the accepted ICAO Plans of Action and the desire to attain the agreed targets including the Abuja safety targets. Since the last symposium, an increased number of States have accepted the ICAO Plan of Action, the implementation of which has resulted in an increase in the number of States that have attained the 60% EI and/or overall EI improvement.
20. On the last day of this AFI Aviation Week, we will have the chance to review together and discuss a very important capacity-building initiative for the civil aviation sector in Africa which has been established as a joint collaboration between ICAO and AFCAC. This is the **Human Resources Development Fund (HRDF)**.
21. The HRDF was established by ICAO, at the request of AFCAC, and in accordance with the mandate given to AFCAC by the African Union Ministers of Transport. The Fund is a mechanism which allows for the collection and use of voluntary contributions from States and other stakeholders to develop and finance opportunities for capacity-building in civil aviation in African States.
22. Voluntary contributions made to the HRDF will be used to assist in building the human capital required for operational efficiency and continuous implementation of ICAO Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs) and other programme activities in the civil aviation sector.
23. On Thursday, a progress report on the establishment and implementation of the Fund will be provided and the importance of the needs assessment being conducted by AFCAC will be highlighted. A discussion will take place on the human capacity challenges in civil aviation which African States are currently facing and possible solutions for these challenges will be explored.
24. Even before this discussion takes place, I can already say with certainty that one way to make a meaningful impact in African civil aviation would be to maximize capacity-building opportunities for its personnel through the use of the HRDF. For example, voluntary contributions made to the HRDF will finance secondments to ICAO of African civil aviation personnel, thus enabling the selected official to upgrade his/her skills and knowledge, and which, on return to their State, will enhance the overall skills capabilities of their national civil aviation administration. The benefits to the individual, as well as to the State, are manifold.
25. However, it is worth mentioning and comes as no surprise, that the success of HRDF, as well as the scope of its impact, is dependent on the receipt of voluntary contributions from donors. States, industry partners and collaborators and other interested parties will therefore be encouraged to make voluntary contributions to the HRDF in order to ensure its success.
26. Together, all of us, we can bring about positive change in civil aviation in Africa through the HRDF.
27. Let's make this happen.
28. Thank you for your attention.

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