

EAC Headquarters, Arusha, August 20, 2008: The Civil Aviation Safety and Security Oversight Agency (CASSOA) has embarked on a re-certification exercise for airlines in the region, the CASSOA Executive Director Mtesigwa Maugo has said.

The exercise, which is to be conducted in five phases, commenced on Tuesday, August 19 and concludes on Tuesday, August 26. The first phase involves pre-application, where operators meet with CASSOA for a briefing on the entire exercise. The next four stages are; formal application (by operators), evaluation of documents (by CASSOA), demonstration (physical assessment of operators' systems and equipment) and approval for operation (by CASSOA).

As part of the exercise, representatives of all the region's major carriers will meet with CASSOA and the agency's appointed aviation experts in Arusha. Kenya Airways and East African Safari Express were in Arusha on Tuesday and Wednesday respectively, and Tanzanian carriers Air Tanzania (Thursday) and Precision Air (Friday) were due to follow before Uganda's Air Uganda and Eagle Air complete the phase early next week.

The re-certification exercise follows the end of a one-year grace period provided to carriers to make necessary adjustments to new regional aviation requirements – put in place after the East African Community Partner States of Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda harmonized air safety regulations. Rwandan and Burundian carriers, from the two countries that only joined the EAC last year, are yet to be included in this arrangement.

Airlines that do not meet the basic standards set by CASSOA will be not certified, Mr Maugo said. He added however, that the agency, working through its experts and local civil aviation authorities will help such carriers achieve the minimum standards set by the regional body. CASSOA was set up in April 2007 to help Partner States implement recommended standards and ensure a safe and secure aviation industry in the region.

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