

CASSOA Headquarters Commissioned

Details



Entebbe, Uganda; 28 July 2010: The 1st Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of East African Community Affairs, Eriya Kategaya commissioned the Civil Aviation Safety and Security Oversight Agency (CASSOA) headquarters in Entebbe on Wednesday 28th July 2010, following the re-location of the Agency to Uganda.

Speaking at the event, Kategaya hailed the opening of CASSOA's premises as a landmark occasion that radiates the hallmarks of the East African Community (EAC) efforts towards full integration as a region.

"Now that you are in your own home, quickly implement the good ideas enshrined in your 5 year strategic and organization development plans. Assist the Partner States to meet their aviation safety and security obligations as required by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and make us realize our desire for a safe and secure single airspace," the 1st Deputy Prime Minister said.

He further reiterated the need to harmonize regional safety and security oversight efforts and initiatives to make the regional airspace safer following the implementation of the Common Market Protocol that was successfully launched on 1st July, 2010 in all Partner States.

The 1st Deputy Prime Minister noted that the EAC region required "deeper liberalization of air transport operations within the framework of the Yamoussoukro Decision to bring down costs of passenger and cargo transportation which are currently too high."

Upon establishment CASSOA was temporarily hosted at the EAC Headquarters in Arusha, Tanzania, pending relocation to one of the Partner States. The Republic of Uganda offered to host the Agency and the Council of Ministers approved the request. The Agency relocated in mid-March 2010 upon the completion of the Headquarters facilities rehabilitation and remodelling.

Earlier on, the Minister of Works and Transport, John Nasasira expressed gratitude towards the contractors who remodelled the office premises and all parties that were involved in "putting together" the Ugandan Shillings 450 million facilities." He further assured CASSOA of fervent support from his ministry, through the Civil Aviation Authority.

CASSOA's Board Chairman, Col. (Rtd) Hilary Kioko, hailed the establishment of the Agency as the only feasible way for the EAC region to "compete and remain relevant in this globalised and highly competitive air transport sector."

He also echoed his Board's appeal to the EAC Council of Ministers to fast-track discussions and approval of a sustainable funding mechanism for CASSOA to enable it to continue carrying out its mandate effectively.

The Executive Director of CASSOA, Mr. Mtesigwa Maugo, in his welcoming remarks, stated that it took the Agency about three years to relocate which although seems to be long but was necessary for the completion of the facilities which required bringing it to the current remarkable status as it is seen today.

Mr Maugo gave an account of the achievements of the Agency since its establishment in June 2007. He stated that civil aviation sub-sector is one of the few sectors in the region already subjected to and operating under a harmonised regulatory system and processes as the region starts the implementation of the common markets phase of its integration process. The Agency has harmonised aviation safety and security regulations in areas of personnel licensing, flight operations, airworthiness, aerodromes, air navigation services and aviation security. It has also harmonised accident and incident

investigation regulations which is in the approval and promulgation process. The Agency has also developed comprehensive technical guidance materials to guide implementation of the harmonised regulations.

The Executive Director further elaborated on the planned strategic objectives intended to be achieved in the next five years as detailed in the Agency's five years Strategic and Organisation Development Plans. One of the strategic objectives is to build an effective and sustainable civil aviation oversight system in the region. The Agency intends to implement activities towards developing adequate capacity to carry out effectively and efficiently oversight activities as well as monitoring and evaluating continuously the status of aviation safety and security in the region.

Mr Maugo added that the Agency also plans to work with the industry in another strategic objective focusing on minimising incident and accident rates in the region. The Agency looks at facilitating and guiding the industry in the region in implementing the safety management system in their operations. In parallel, the Agency intends to develop an integrated aviation IT system which will capture, manage and avail relevant safety, security and other statistical aviation information to the stakeholders including the general public. The IT system in consideration will also incorporate aviation content management system to cater for the on-line common aviation personnel examination system planned to be implemented within the next three years.

Inspired by the need to operate a single airspace or a unified flight information region for the EAC and the progressive liberalisation under the framework of the Yamoussoukro Decision, the establishment of CASSOA is a strategic initiative to resolve a pre-requisite institutional requirements of an effective and strengthened regional safety and security oversight system.

The Agency, an autonomous specialised technical institution of the EAC, commenced its operations on 1st June 2007 with responsibilities for the development and promotion of safety and security in the East African region. The Protocol for the establishment of the Agency was signed on 18th April, 2007 by the founder Partner States of Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda.

Thereafter the Agency was formally established by the summit of Heads of State at the 5th Extraordinary Meeting in Kampala on 18th June 2007. The Republics of Rwanda and Burundi later became members of the Agency having acceded to the Treaty and its Protocols in 2007.