



MEDIA RELEASE

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SOUTH AFRICA RETAINS FAA CATEGORY 1 STATUS

The South African Civil Aviation Authority (SACAA) is pleased to announce that the final report of the United States Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) audit, which was conducted from 30 July to 2 August 2007, has been released. The report, which was hand-delivered to the SACAA's Midrand Offices on Monday, 7 January 2008 by representatives from the US Embassy, was very positive, thus confirming that South Africa's safety standards compare favourably with the best in the world.

Shortly after going through a comprehensive audit by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) in July 2007, SACAA went through a rigorous International Aviation Safety Assessment (IASA) conducted by the FAA from July 30 to 2 August 2007. The IASA audit focused mainly on ICAO's Standards and Recommended Practices for processes relating to Licensing, Flight Operations and Airworthiness and Legislative issues. These four are regarded as the core elements of any state's civil aviation infrastructure and functioning.

The CEO of the SACAA and Commissioner for Civil Aviation, Colin Jordaan, said the Authority was very excited about this report. He said, "As the custodian of aviation safety in South Africa, we are proud to have addressed all of the issues in the initial audit report, especially within the very short time frame that was made available for corrective actions.

It is a very encouraging sign that whatever safety enhancement measures the Authority has taken so far is a step in the right direction. A negative report would have reflected badly on South Africa, with the resultant loss of confidence in the country's aviation industry. South Africa's civil aviation industry, which is regarded as a leader in the African continent, is held in high esteem by the international community, and this report is a confirmation of that reputation". Mr Jordaan said as the FIFA Soccer World Cup draws nearer, the international community also needs to be assured that the levels of aviation safety in this country are amongst the best in the world, and this report has just confirmed that.

Mr James Ballough, Director of Flight Safety Standards at the FAA, congratulated South Africa on her performance in the IASA audit. He said as a result of the positive findings emanating from the audit, the IASA category for South Africa shall remain Category 1.

Mr Jordaan thanked the Minister of Transport, Jeff Radebe, and his department for their support during preparations for the audit. He said the Department's commitment towards developing civil aviation and enhancing its safety will go a long way in ensuring that civil aviation, like other modes of transport, continues to be the heartbeat of South Africa's economy. He also thanked the civil aviation industry for its co-operation during the months prior to the audit, as well as their inputs towards making SACAA a world-class organization.

Mr Jordaan said although the SACAA was pleased with the outcome of the audit, the Authority would not remain complacent, but would continuously implement best practices in order to achieve its vision of Regulatory Excellence in Aviation Safety and Security. He said one of the actions that can be expected from the Authority in 2008 is the recruitment of more inspectors to ensure increased surveillance of the industry in line with global best practices.

The IASA audit followed shortly after ICAO conducted its Universal Safety Oversight Audit Programme on South Africa in July 2007. Although the final report is yet to be released in March 2008, the results of the preliminary report were very encouraging and spoke well of South Africa's aviation standards and practices. In fact, the report indicated that South Africa's aviation standards were on par with those of developed countries in the world, such as New Zealand and Germany.

In its concluding remarks, the FAA Audit Team indicated that they were highly impressed with South Africa's commitment towards high levels of safety. The report said the team was impressed with the SACAA's "strong commitment to providing and sustaining effective safety oversight of South Africa's airline industry".

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Issued by:

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