



MEDIA RELEASE

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South Africa re-elected to key role in United Nation's aviation agency

SA to chair the International Civil Aviation Organization's Aviation Security Panel

[Montreal] The global aviation community has once again demonstrated their trust and faith in South Africa's capabilities on aviation matters by re-electing the South African representative, Ms Poppy Khoza, as chairperson of the International Civil Aviation Organization's Aviation Security Panel. The appointment was made on Monday, 14 March 2016, at the start of the 27th Aviation Security Panel meeting held at the agency's headquarters in Montreal, Canada.

The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) is a specialised agency of the United Nations tasked with the development of aviation security standards and recommended practices, which member States must effect when developing their civil aviation regulations. The panel is also tasked with, amongst others, enhancing civil aviation security across the world by developing and coordinating an effective global policy framework in response to the evolving threat to civil aviation.

This is the second year running that Khoza, who heads the South African Civil Aviation Authority, is appointed as Chair, after her initial appointment last year when she became the first woman to take up the position.

"The re-election not only reaffirms the global aviation community's trust in South Africa's capabilities on aviation matters and specifically aviation security; but it also provides a platform for the current leadership of the panel to continue with the delivery of the objectives set," commented Khoza soon after the announcement.

"With all being said, I still maintain that ICAO has made remarkable strides in guiding the global community on aviation security matters. I am also encouraged by the fact that peers across the world acknowledge that with the passing of time and advances in technology, technical systems as well as procedures need to be upgraded in order to improve the levels of aviation security. Evolution, through the constant re-evaluation of systems and processes employed, is a necessity and the only way to remain a yard ahead of those with less noble intent," Khoza said.

She acknowledged the work done by governments across the globe in ensuring that their aviation security systems continue to meet international legislative requirements. She also acknowledged the advancement of South Africa's aviation security regulatory framework, which is recognised as first-rate in most parts of the world, including the European Union as well as the United States.

Khoza warned against complacency, adding that the nature of terror events evolves rapidly and regulators should continuously come up with strategies to proactively mitigate the threats and risks facing aviation. "Terror threats are real and require an out-of-the-box approach and ICAO provides a good platform to delve deeper into discussions and subsequent measures that should be adopted."

The re-elected chairperson wants aviation to be elevated on the list of priorities for countries. "We are aware that in certain instances, aviation security has to compete with other pressing socio-economic priorities for budgetary allocations. However, aviation is at the core of any country's development in this modernised and intertwined economic era and should not be neglected. Regulations and measures applied at airports and on board remain necessary in order to prevent acts of unlawful interference with aviation activities. However, as regulators we should also begin to be mindful of the need to have a balance between regulations and the economic impact such may have on operators; still bearing in mind the need for passengers to always have a sense of security when they use air travel," Khoza said.

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About the SACAA:

The South African Civil Aviation Authority (SACAA), a self-funded agency of the Department of Transport, is a juristic body established in terms of the Civil Aviation Act, 2009 (Act No. 13 of 2009) (the Act). The SACAA is governed and controlled by the Civil Aviation Authority Board (the Board). In terms of mandate, the SACAA is tasked with promoting and maintaining a safe, secure and sustainable civil aviation environment, by regulating and overseeing the functioning and development of the industry in an efficient, cost-effective, and customer-friendly manner according to international standards.

About ICAO

ICAO is a specialised agency of the United Nations, tasked with working with Member States and global aviation organisations to develop Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs) which States must effect when developing their legally-enforceable national civil aviation regulations.

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