



**TRANSPORT MINISTRY
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY MINISTER OF TRANSPORT, MS SINDISIWE CHIKUNGA AT THE COMMEMORATION OF INTERNATIONAL CIVIL AVIATION DAY 2023 HELD AT THE BHISHO AIRPORT IN THE BUFALLO CITY METROPOLITIAN MUNICIPALITY, EASTERN PROVINCE ON, SATURDAY, 9 DECEMBER 2023

- **Programme Director;**
- **Deputy Minister of Transport, Mr Lisa Mangcu;**
- **Office of the Premier, Mr Oscar Mabuyane;**
- **Eastern Cape Province MEC for Transport and Community Safety, Mr Xolile Nqatha, Eastern Cape Province MEC for Education, Mr Fundile Gade;**
- **Executive Mayor of the Amathole District Municipality, Cllr Anele Ntsangani; Executive Mayor of the Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality, Cllr Princess Faku;**
- **MMC for Public Safety, Transport, Health & Emergency Services.**

- **Director-General of the Department of Transport, Advocate James Mlawu;**
- **Deputy Directors-General of the National Department of Transport;**
- **Chairpersons of Boards,**
- **Board Members and CEOs of Transport Sector Entities;**
- **Members of the South African Air Force;**
- **The South African Police Services (SAPS);**
- **The Transport Education Training Authority (TETA);**
- **Representatives of Airlines;**
- **Aviation Schools and Associations;**
- **Officials of Government and Public Entities;**
- **Trade Unions, Civil Society Organizations;**
- **Private Sector companies represented here;**
- **Special guests including Educators and Learners Present;**
- **Academic and Research Institutions,**
- **Members of Participating Communities**
- **Members of the Media;**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

INTRODUCTION

It is with great pleasure and honour that we celebrate the International Civil Aviation Day in the majestic and scenic Province of the Eastern Cape, the Home of Legends. I am delighted to commemorate the remarkable achievements and contributions of the aviation industry to global connectivity, economic growth, and cultural exchange. This is the 18th year that ICAD is celebrated in South Africa and the second time in the beautiful Province of the Eastern Cape.

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE INTERNATIONAL CIVIL AVIATION DAY BY ICAO

Programme Director,

The International Civil Aviation Day commemorates the signing of the Convention on International Civil Aviation, better known as the Chicago Convention in 1944. It is also about celebrating the crucial role of air transport in bringing the world together and showcase the unique role of the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) in helping countries to co-operation and realise a truly global rapid transit network at the service of all mankind.

The ICAO Council has decided that the theme for this year's ICAD is "Advancing Innovation for Global Aviation Development."

TRANSPORT SECTOR AVIATION ENTITIES CELEBRATE 30 & 25 ANNIVERSARIES IN 2023 & TAKING STOCK OF THEIR REMARKABLE CONTRIBUTION IN THE AVIATION SECTOR AND SOUTH AFRICAN ECONOMIC LANDSCAPE

This event takes place against the backdrop of the 30th anniversary celebrations of the Airports Company South Africa (ACSA) and the Air Traffic and Navigation Services (ATNS), while the South African Civil Aviation Authority (SACAA) is celebrating 25 years of remarkable progress and landmark achievements. The role our aviation entities have played in shaping South Africa's economy and contributing towards the development of international aviation gives us reason to celebrate, while we continue to punch above our weight in influencing the trajectory of global aviation.

The aviation sector has been a catalyst for progress, bringing people together across borders and fostering economic development. It has not only revolutionised the way we travel but has also contributed significantly to trade, tourism, and the exchange of ideas. As we celebrate this day, let us reflect on the transformative power of aviation in shaping our interconnected

world and importance of promoting safety, efficiency and skills development for international air transport.

When the world was confronted with the devastation of the COVID-19 pandemic, ICAO reacted with steadfast determination and resolve in supporting international air transport to face the toughest challenge in its history for a quick restart and resilient recovery.

In line with ICAO, a key priority for us is to 'build back better' post pandemic, and to make our aviation sector in South Africa and in Africa more resilient to future pandemic events. Despite these hardships, the industry in South Africa has demonstrated remarkable adaptability, resilience, and commitment to safety.

THE AVIATION TRANSFORMATION AGENDA AND CAREERS IN THE TRANSPORT SECTOR

Ladies and gentlemen,

As South Africa joins the world in commemorating ICAD, we are determined to take aviation to the youth, in particular black youth and women. We are committed just to the transformation of the aviation sector, particularly women and youth empowerment. We are fully behind ICAO's Gender Equality Programme. The Department, together with its aviation entities are leading a

comprehensive effort to transform the aviation sector in our country.

Ladies and Gentlemen, the key stakeholders of this ICAD are the learners, who are in attendance today. I must also thank the Department of Education in the Province and District as well as the educators for supporting these learners. We must continuously implore and encourage our educators to create an enabling environment for learners to be exposed to various career opportunities. Young learners must be exposed to the aviation sector and other career interests at school level.

Programme Director, the Career Expo also provides these learners with an opportunity to interact with exhibitors and experts within the aviation sector, and across the broader transport spectrum. They need to see what is possible within the transport sector.

It gives me pleasure to inform you that we are working towards the establishment of a state Aviation Academy in order to ensure that the aviation sector is accessed by all South Africans, the Civil Aviation Branch within the Department has successfully partnered with the Nelson Mandela Bay University in the Province, introducing a new civil aviation module as an addendum to the already existing transport MOA with the Department.

PRACTICAL IMPLEMENTATION OF THE TRANSFORMATION AGENDA IN AVIATION CAREERS

We are excited to report that this civil aviation module is currently in full force as a semester module within the Bachelor of Engineering Honours Degree. The University has about 25 students registered for this module with thirteen (13) students choosing to take on the aviation semester module. This accomplishment is indeed encouraging and noteworthy since this is just the first intake of students.

As the National Department of Transport, we have 13 Memoranda of Agreement with various Institutions of Higher Learning from different Provinces. They offer different Transport Qualifications. Here in the Eastern Cape we have agreements with the University of Fort Hare and the Nelson Mandela University and a number of TVET Colleges including PE TVET College and King Sabatha Dalindyebo TVET College. Fort Hare focuses on Transport Economic while Mandela University focuses on Maritime and Aviation qualifications.

AIRSHOW

I am informed that we will end the day with an airshow to be enjoyed by the learners. I hope the weather will be kind to us and allow our learners and guests to experience this spectacular showcase of aviation pilot excellence.

THE TRANSFORMATION IN THE AVIATION INFRASTRUCTURE

Ladies and gentlemen,

Transformation have not only happened in terms of gender parity, this government led by the African National Congress, ensured that that transformation reaches the very aviation infrastructure that we see today. Our three major airports which is OR Tambo International Airport, Cape Town International Airport and King Shaka International Airport have seen major capital infrastructure growth. These National Key Points and Continental Marvels used to be small airports during the apartheid regime. The OR Tambo was known as Jan Smut, King Shaka was known as Louis Botha Airport and the Cape Town International was called DF Malan airport. Today, there are perpetual complaints about the renaming of these airports including the newly name Gqeberha airport here in the Easter Cape. Renaming carries history and the identity of a nation. It communicates important historical milestones which are critical for every country.

And the milestones achieved by construction and growth of our aviation infrastructure from airports to airspace, says the government of the ANC have brought economic growth and development to the people of South Africa, Africa and the World.

TRANSFORMATION AGENDA: AVIATION EMPLOYMENT STATUS

Programme Director;

Compared to some years ago, some progress has been made towards transforming the civil aviation sector, but there is much work to be done to achieve an aviation landscape that does justice to the potential of all our people, especially those that have remained excluded and disadvantaged.

I would like to encourage everyone in the industry to throw their weight behind this cause and towards gender participation, while all of us contribute towards the creation of a pipeline of aviation experts for the future and creating a sustainable stream of job opportunities especially for our talented youngsters. I am hoping that we can realise more aviation programmes focused on transformation and gender participation in the coming years.

Currently, out of a total of 26 299 pilots, Aircraft Maintenance Engineers, Cabin Crew and Air Traffic Services licenses issued by the end of October 2023, only 18% are held by women across all license types. This picture must continue to improve.

When we look at the racial breaking down of pilot licenses 15,9% of licenses are held by Africans, 2,8% by Coloureds whilst 2,7% are held by Indians and the rest of the 78,5% of the licenses are held by White persons. Once again this shows a steady improvement but again not nearly satisfactory. The only way we can measure the success of our efforts in transforming industry is by seeing a difference in these variables.

I applaud the South African Civil Aviation Authority, SACAA's, the Regulator's continuation with their external bursary programme, including efforts to grow skills in Aeronautical Engineering, the Cadet Pilot programme, and the Aircraft Maintenance Engineering programme; as well as the regular career awareness outreach to schools in rural areas that continue to enlighten learners about careers in aviation.

I also commend them for leading the way in terms of having female representation within the SACAA with 51% of women being employed the Regulator.

MILESTONES RECORDED BY OUR AVIATION ENTITIES

Programme Director,

Allow me to share with you the great strides recorded under the different legislated mandates of our aviation entities.

The **Air Traffic Navigation Services (ATNS)** is a significant aviation role player in South Africa and beyond and is responsible on any given day to guide air transport safely through the skies of thousands of flights. Whether they are carrying passengers or cargo, flight crews are responsible for their load, and when they fly, they rely entirely on the professionalism of Air Traffic Controllers, the systems they use and all the people behind the scenes who make this journey so unique and safe.

The ATNS is a technologically driven entity, therefore, by design, its technical competencies remain the backbone of ensuring that it provides service excellence, making it sustainable and innovative. The entity works closely with the Department of Basic Education and other industry players to create awareness about the careers requiring science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) subjects within the aviation space.

The value proposition of ATNS is premised on giving bursaries or study assistance to those keen on joining the air traffic controller (ATC) profession and other engineering-related disciplines within the organisation. The thought of working with 4th Industrial Revolution-responsive technologies often becomes reasonable enough to create an interest among young people to join the aviation space.

The ATNS Aviation Training Academy (ATA) is a premier Air Traffic Services and aviation training provider across the African continent. Being an ICAO Regional Training Centre of Excellence, ATNS training products are world-class, stretching beyond just Air Traffic Controller training and many other disciplines across the aviation value chain.

The ATA has trained aviation personnel from around 32 African states. The African airspace is much safer due to the contributions of ATNS Academy – the ATA. The specialist nature of air traffic controller training and the current gap within the academic space in training aspiring ATCs means that we are the country's primary providers of air traffic services.

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The ATNS transformation plan consists of a leadership pipeline through which women can be capacitated and developed for upward career mobility. This includes establishing programmes for leadership development, such as bursaries, mentorships, and internships. The company has also adopted a comprehensive set of options for organisational support to promote women's empowerment and gender equality.

The ATNS is committed to skills development as part of the National Skills Development Strategy. This commitment is reflected in the organisation's annual investment by funding core and non-core training initiatives. The entity further funds and collaborates with women-led Small, Medium, and Micro Enterprises (SMMEs) as part of its transformation agenda.

The entity's collaborations with organizations like the International Air Transport Association (IATA), the Airlines Association of Southern Africa (AASA), and the Board of Airline Representatives of South Africa (BARSA) further solidify its position as a critical stakeholder in the aviation sector.

These collaborations ensure that ATNS's services align with the needs and expectations of airlines and other aviation stakeholders, which leads to mutual benefits. During this festive season, ATNS has already started with initiatives to educate and raise awareness about the responsible use of South Africa's airspace.

The ATNS manages different types of aircraft in various types of airspaces. These include commercial aircraft, business jets, unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) better known as drones, unmotorised and motorised aerial aircraft, known as gliders, and privately-owned aircraft such as helicopters and small aircraft.

Communication forms the cornerstone of ATNS' service provision, and the entity plays a crucial role in ensuring adequate communication with drone operators, gliders, and general aviation pilots. All the air traffic service units under ATNS control have a process to follow when any aircraft has illegally entered

its control airspace. This plan is aimed at protecting all aircraft and its occupants.

Furthermore, ATNS is punting awareness to the general public about the illegal use of laser beams and their danger to flying aircraft. Laser interference can be a modern-day weapon as it is a potential hazard to aircraft safety and, at most, can threaten national security. This often involves people directing powerful laser beams at aircraft, especially during landing and take-off. Air traffic controllers are not immune to this heinous criminal act.

The fact that the laser can startle the crew during the critical phase of flight makes these acts very dangerous. A pilot may momentarily lose situational awareness and control of an aircraft due to being blinded by these lights, which could lead to an aircraft accident.

THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN CIVIL AVIATION AUTHORITY

Ladies and gentlemen,

As signatories to the Chicago Convention on International Civil Aviation and a Member State of the ICAO since 1944, South Africa is obligated to continuously comply with prescribed

international civil aviation Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs).

I am pleased to announce that the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) under its Universal Safety Oversight Audit Programme - Continuous Monitoring Approach (USOAP-CMA) audited South Africa's aviation oversight system in April 2023, a process that was coordinated and led by the South African Civil Aviation Authority on behalf of the State.

South Africa did not attract a significant safety concern and received an overwhelming safety rating of 91.11% - improving from the 87.39% that ICAO gave the country in a previous audit conducted in 2017.

We were the first African country to surpass the 90% mark, and it proved that our country's aviation standards were the best on the continent and are among the leading 20 in the world in accord to the ICAO rankings.

I would like to take this moment and congratulate the SACAA as they celebrate 25 years this year since first opening their doors in 1998. It is through our Regulator that we can be proud of the State's 0% rate in major accidents in the country's scheduled airline operations in over 36 years. This is by no means an easy

feat. It is an exceptional milestone that we would all like to ensure that it is kept that way.

One of our continuous efforts are on ensuring that the zero-fatality rate is also reflected with our General Aviation sector, with one of the strategic targets for the Regulator being on reducing aircraft accidents and fatal accidents by 50% by 2025.

At the end of the 2022/23 financial year, the number of accidents had decreased from 168 to 140 accidents translating into a 15% decrease from the previous year. The fatal accidents decreased from 12 to 9 fatal accidents, translating into a 25% decrease with the number of fatalities decreasing by 29,4%.

This reduction can be attributed to the General Aviation Safety Strategy, or GASS, that was developed and implemented by the Regulator in consultation with the industry. This shows that when government works in unison with the industry real improvements will be seen.

It should be noted that the SACAA has now received ten clean audits in the last 11 years from the Auditor General South Africa and have registered a sterling governance record.

Ladies and gentlemen, as we head to the festive period, it is also important for us to call on the public and remind them that aviation security at airports, with airlines and air cargo is as much their responsibility as it is of all the oversight entities.

The State has embarked on aviation security culture initiatives in response to the United Nations Security Council Resolution 2309 and the ICAO's call for Member States to promote a safety and security aviation culture across airports, airlines, and with air passengers, air cargo entities as well as aviation security training organisations.

As we head towards a busy festive period in the country where air transport will be an important feature for travel, the promotion of a positive security culture helps to mitigate against both insider threats and external threats as we think and act in more initiative-taking, security-conscious ways.

Almost 30 years since the dawn of democracy, we have much to celebrate and many achievements to be proud of. Indeed, while we have made considerable progress since 1994 in institutionalising and consolidating the quality of our democracy, we also have to acknowledge that many socio-economic challenges continue to persist. Challenges loom large, but our resolve to make a better life for all a lived reality is larger.

Released earlier this month, the results of the Quarterly Labour Force Survey for the third quarter of 2023, show that the total number of unemployed youth (aged 15–34) decreased by 174 000, to 4.6 million, while there was an increase of 237 000 in the number of employed youth to 6 million. While this is undoubtedly a move in the right direction and any decrease in the unemployment rate should be celebrated, the fact remains that our youth employment rate is still at an alarming 43.4%.

While our education system continues to produce graduates each year, these young people often have no access to proper skills development opportunities. So, with no work experience and no real practical skills, many of these graduates remain unemployable.

We need to address this gap with a stronger focus on developing artisanal skills through institutions such as Technical Vocational Education and Training colleges and trade schools.

One such initiative – one that I am particularly proud of – is the Airport Company South Africa’s Aviation Training Academy, which plays a vital role in making a positive contribution to the socio-economic transformation of South Africa by promoting

inclusive growth that boosts the economy, creates jobs and empowers people.

ACSA AND ITS MILESTONES

Ladies and gentlemen;

Since its inception in 1993, ACSA has positioned itself as a key enabler of economic growth, transformation and socio-economic development, and its contributions to the country's economy can be seen in the previous financial year's injection of a staggering R8.4 billion into South Africa's gross domestic product. The organization also contributed to employment with 16 225 jobs and an income contribution of R2.8 billion during this period.

As many of you may know, the ACSA's Aviation Training Academy has the dual responsibility to deliver learning and development initiatives through two channels, namely through commercial development initiatives for external customers, as well as a skills development programme for ACSA's internal employee development.

As a result, ACSA provides mandatory and regulatory training that is conducted through the Training Academy, with 1 890 of its employees receiving training in the three core areas of safety,

security and fire and rescue during the last financial year. This is an achievement of which we can be proud.

I am also equally proud of the fact that the Training Academy is the only International Civil Aviation Organization-endorsed Aviation Security Training Centre in Southern Africa that has been accredited to provide training since 2004. With a footprint spanning more than 20 countries on the continent, the Training Academy has become an important training destination for the Eastern and Southern African region.

Considering its success, ACSA is currently implementing a commercialization strategy for the Academy, with the aim of creating an aviation training centre of excellence on the African continent. It is envisaged that the centre will be a stand-alone entity that will leverage ACSA's human capital, institutional knowledge and experience to offer tailored programmes for both internal and external clients.

The establishment of an industrywide aviation training centre of excellence within the continent will support the Africa 2063 Agenda, which is the continent's development blueprint to achieve inclusive and sustainable socio-economic development over a 50-year period.

This set of initiatives has been proposed and is currently under implementation by the African Union and includes the establishment of the Single African Air Transport Market, which aims to create a single market for air transport in Africa. Once completely in force, the Single African Air Transport Market is envisaged to allow significant freedom of air transport in Africa. As a leading player in the aviation space on the continent, it is of paramount importance that ACSA maintains its position as a key player in the implementation of the Africa 2063 Agenda.

Its current accreditation is based on ad hoc audits by various authorities throughout the year and has to be renewed annually so that it can continue to offer accredited courses in line with its commercialization strategy. I am confident that through ACSA's strong brand and positioning in the global landscape, the Training Academy will be able to achieve this vision.

I think it's worth mentioning some of the milestones that have shaped the academy's journey to becoming the successful and highly respected training and skills provider that it is today.

The academy, on an ad-hoc basis, provides ICAO-accredited aviation security training courses through ICAO-certified instructors. Since July 2007, the Academy has been accredited

as a Regional Training Centre for the Airports Council International's Global Training Hub.

In line with the South African Civil Aviation Authority's requirements, the academy ensures that its content complies with locally set training standards and requirements, with the SACAA having accredited the academy as an aviation security training centre.

Furthermore, in compliance with relevant skills development legislation, the academy and several of its staff have been accredited by the Transport Education Training Authority as training providers. The academy also partners with relevant providers to facilitate the delivery of identified leadership, management and supervisory development interventions.

The Academy is also in the process of applying for accreditation with the various Sector Education and Training Authorities, universities and TVET colleges, which will ensure that the courses it offers are certified by the South African Qualifications Authority and count as credits towards various diploma and degree courses.

Currently, the Academy offers training in the areas of Airport Rescue and Fire Fighting, Aviation Safety, Airside Operations

and Aviation Security, and plans to expand its programme to include courses in Airport Operations, Cargo, Customer Care, Route Development, Planning and Maintenance.

It is further encouraging that the academy will play a central role in the rollout and implementation of ACSA's Aerotropolis Strategy which will see ACSA significantly develop its three largest airports that will vastly improve both its passenger and cargo handling capabilities and over time develop six airport cities at its smaller local airports, with the aim of redefining the role and function of airports as economic hubs in the cities and towns that they serve.

In conclusion, let me express our gratitude to all the men and women who work tirelessly to keep our skies safe and our journeys secure. I extend my appreciation to all aviation professionals, from pilots and air traffic controllers to ground staff and maintenance crews, for their dedication and commitment to excellence.

I wish to thank the ICAD Steering Committee and representatives of all the stakeholders for arranging ICAD 2023. I can see that a tremendous amount of work and months of planning went into ensuring that it is the success that it has turned out to be. I would

like to take this opportunity to wish you all a Happy International Civil Aviation Day and a happy and safe festive season.

As we start the festivities of the festive season and prepare to undertake long distance travel to rural areas and other Provinces to spend time with loved ones and families, we must be responsible on the roads. Each one of us has a duty to ensure that our roads are safe, by playing our part in respecting the rights of other road users. If we are to protect life and limb on our roads, we must be our brothers' and sisters' keepers at all times. As we take to the roads during this period, we must ensure that all those who use our roads Arrive Alive.

I thank you.