

STATEMENT BY THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR WORKS AND TRANSPORT (TRANSPORT), HON. FRED BYAMUKAMA AT A PRESS CONFERENCE HELD AT THE UGANDA MEDIA CENTRE ON THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 28, 2023 IN RELATION TO THE UNIVERSAL SAFETY OVERSIGHT AUDIT PROGRAMME – CONTINUOUS MONITORING APPROACH

## **UGANDA'S AVIATION SECTOR SCORES 72.17% IN ICAO SAFETY AUDIT**

As you may be aware, Uganda has been undergoing a Universal Safety Oversight Audit Programme - Continuous Monitoring Approach (USOAP-CMA), an on-site audit conducted by the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) from September 6 -18, 2023. The international audit was undertaken to evaluate the effectiveness of Uganda's safety oversight systems in compliance with the ICAO Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs).

At the closing meeting of the audit held on September 18, 2023, ICAO's Lead Auditor issued the preliminary results for Uganda with a score of 72.17%. The results indicated an overall improvement in the safety performance of the state of Uganda, ranking the state above the regional/Eastern and Southern Africa (ESAF) region average of 55.66% and global average of 67.68%. The audit score is a vote of confidence in Uganda's aviation safety system, which shows the entire international Aviation community that the country complies with ICAO standards.

The 72.17% score was reached at after an assessment of Uganda's effective implementation of the eight critical elements (CEs) of the State Safety Oversight System as well as the status of compliance with the ICAO SARPS in the eight audit areas, which included Primary Legislation, Organisation, Personnel Licensing, Flight Operations, Airworthiness, Aircraft Accident Investigation, Air Navigation Services, and Aerodrome and Ground Aids.

It is also important to note that Uganda has never registered and did not register a Significant Safety Concern (SSC). When a country registers an SSC in such an audit, it means that there is a serious breach of safety standards which can ultimately lead to several airlines shunning the airspace of that particular country.

I also take this opportunity to inform the public that Entebbe International Airport is certified. The audit team appreciated the good work done by the regulator in the Certification process of Entebbe International Airport and re-certification of Uganda Airlines, among others.

I urge the Regulator and Industry stakeholders to maintain the momentum that was exhibited during the on-site audit with intent to retain the consistency in the oversight responsibilities, to ensure a robust state oversight system in the country.

The ICAO auditors clearly indicated that these are preliminary results, The final report with details will be issued by ICAO after six months. Industry practice is that the final results do not usually deviate a lot from the preliminary results.

The last ICAO audit on Uganda in the area of safety was the 2014 ICAO Coordinated Validation Mission (ICVM) in which the state scored 61.64%. The difference between an ICVM and the recent audit conducted on Uganda is that the objective of the ICVM is to assess and validate the rate of implementation of corrective actions taken in relation to a previous audit while the USOAP-CMA is a full safety oversight audit. That Uganda has scored 72.17% in such a comprehensive audit, is highly commendable.

Prior to this, the other most recent audit conducted by ICAO on Uganda was the Universal Security Audit Programme (USAP) in which the country scored 81.8% in 2017, and that was well above the then global average of 72%. Back then, that score earned Uganda special recognition at the 2019 ICAO General Assembly in Montreal, Canada with award of an ICAO President's Certificate in recognition of the excellent performance. The security audit is totally different from a safety audit.

The above record in both audits is testimony of Uganda's commitment to upholding the highest standards of safety and security in the aviation industry. I commend all the stakeholders that were involved in the run-up to the audit, including but not limited to the Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs, Civil Aviation Safety and Security Oversight Agency (CASSOA),

Uganda Civil Aviation Authority, Uganda's aviation industry stakeholders, and the Ministry of Works and Transport, among others.

ICAO conducts such audits every six (6) years. If Uganda had not passed the audit, the country's score would have been below that of the global and regional average, which would lead to loss of confidence in the country's aviation system. In such an international audit, the worst case scenario is getting a Significant Safety Concern (SSC), which leads to blacklist of the entire country's aviation system until it is resolved. The impressive score by Uganda is clear testimony of the hard work and effort towards efforts aimed at enhancing safety in the country's aviation system. In addition, considering that the audit focused a lot on the national airline, the success means that it will become easier for the national carrier to join other international airline alliances and associations. This presents tremendous opportunities for them and other licensed operators to get more business.

ICAO is a specialized United Nations agency responsible for the promotion of the uniform development and growth of civil aviation among the 193 Contracting Member States. ICAO develops harmonized Standards and Recommended Practices for member States to implement. Uganda became a member of ICAO in 1967, and as a Contracting Member State, the country is obliged to comply with the articles of the Chicago Convention and with the Standards and Recommended Practices spelt out in the 19 Annexes to the convention.

In another development, as part of the on-going progress in Uganda's aviation industry, international passenger traffic through Entebbe International Airport continues to rise. In August 2023, Entebbe International Airport recorded 93,560 arriving passengers and 97,947 departing passengers, a total of 191,507 passengers, an average of 6,177 per day, the highest figure to be ever recorded in a single month in the history of the airport.

The August 2023 international passenger traffic reflects 38,048 passengers more than what was recorded in the same month of August 2022, and 6,254 more than was recorded in the previous month of July 2023. This is a sign of progress and steady recovery of Uganda’s aviation sector from the adverse effects of COVID-19. In 2019, prior to COVID-19, the airport used to handle an average of 5,000 passengers per day.

A total of 1,219,189 international passengers have so far been handled during the period between January to August 2023 compared to 1,012,862 international passengers in the same period of January to August 2022 and 1,166,796 international passengers in January to August 2019, before the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic. The January to August 2023 international passenger traffic figures reflect a growth of 20.37%.

#### RECOVERY OF INTERNATIONAL PASSENGER TRAFFIC (JAN - AUG 2023)

MONTH	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Recovery (2023 Vs 2019) %	Growth (2023) %
Jan	14,7346	158,615	53,504	110,547	154,391	104.8	39.7
Feb	12,8624	144,334	57,988	101,227	138,205	107.4	36.5
Mar	13,8461	831,63	71,904	113,800	109,718	79.2	-3.6
Apr	136,338	987	80,785	122,341	126,190	92.6	3.1
May	140,108	1,146	71,307	124,574	153,010	109.2	22.8
Jun	145,595	1,892	69,346	135,261	160,915	110.5	19.0
Jul	166,980	6,235	52,731	151,653	185,253	110.9	22.2
Aug	163,344	6,541	71,360	153,459	191,507	117.2	24.8
<b>Total</b>	1,166,796	402,913	528,925	1,012,862	1,219,189	104.5	20.4

In relation to cargo, the airport handled 3,669 metric tones of exports and 1,705 metric tones of imports in August 2023, a total of 5,374 metric tones. In the period between January to August 2023, Entebbe International Airport handled a total of 26,822 metric tones of exports compared to 27,905 metric tonnes in the same period of January to August 2022, 26,118 metric tones in January to August 2021, 23,436 metric tones in January to

August 2020 and 28,971 metric tones of exports in January to August 2019. The recovery rate for exports from pre-covid times stands at 92.58%.

### PERFORMANCE OF EXPORTS (JAN - AUG 2023)

MONTH	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Recovery (2023 Vs 2019) %	Growth (2023) %
Jan	3,508	3,287	3,044	3,451	3,438	98.0	-0.4
Feb	3,262	3,299	3,028	3,402	3,701	113.5	8.8
Mar	3,846	2,700	3,753	3,483	1,841	47.9	-47.1
Apr	3,230	1,893	3,388	3,314	2,794	86.5	-15.7
May	3,739	2,753	3,085	3,935	3,360	89.9	-14.6
Jun	3,884	3,278	3,181	3,935	3,692	95.1	-6.2
Jul	3,934	2,901	3,380	3,245	4,326	110.0	33.3
Aug	3,567	3,325	3,260	3,139	3,669	102.9	16.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>28,971</b>	<b>23,436</b>	<b>26,118</b>	<b>27,905</b>	<b>26,822</b>	<b>92.6</b>	<b>-3.9</b>

In terms of imports, Entebbe International Airport handled 10,726 metric tones from January to August 2023 compared to 13,923 in 2022, 16,790 in 2021, 14,053 in 2020 and 13,831 in 2019. The recovery rate for imports is 77.5%.

### PERFORMANCE OF IMPORTS (JAN - AUG 2023)

MONTH	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Recovery (2023 Vs 2019) %	Growth (2023) %
Jan	1,472	1,794	1,867	1,581	1,419	96.4	-10.3
Feb	1,388	2,405	1,738	1,452	848	61.1	-41.5
Mar	1,793	1,617	2,224	1,660	757	42.2	-54.4
Apr	2,291	993	2,337	1,784	1,124	49.1	-37.0
May	1,652	1,239	2,244	1,656	1,315	79.6	-20.6
Jun	1,625	2,337	1,967	1,943	1,661	102.3	-14.5
Jul	1,741	1,717	2,519	1,484	1,896	108.9	27.8
Aug	1,869	1,950	1,894	2,365	1,705	91.2	-27.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>13,831</b>	<b>14,053</b>	<b>16,790</b>	<b>13,923</b>	<b>10,726</b>	<b>77.5</b>	<b>-23.0</b>

Of late there are more exports than imports through Entebbe International Airport, but cargo traffic has not recovered at the same rate as passenger traffic.

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