

REMARKS BY THE AG. DIRECTOR GENERAL, MR. FRED K. BAMWESIGYE, AT A PRESS CONFERENCE ABOUT ENTEBBE INTERNATIONAL'S READINESS FOR RESUMPTION OF COMMERCIAL PASSENGER FLIGHTS AT THE VIP PRESS LOUNGE ON SEPTEMBER 29, 2020

UCAA Management and stakeholders present,

Members of the Press,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a pleasure for me to welcome you all to Entebbe International Airport (EIA) as we prepare for resumption of commercial passenger operations on October 1, 2020. This is what many aviation industry stakeholders and passengers have been looking forward to.

As you may know, the aviation industry across the globe was affected by the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic leading to suspension of international passenger flights. In Uganda, commercial passenger flights in and out of Entebbe International Airport were suspended on March 22, 2020, owing to the need to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 through air travel.

With the easing of travel restrictions in many countries, the aviation industry is slowly getting back to its feet by adjusting to the new way of doing business with observance of health Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) that present new challenges to airport authorities, airlines and passengers in almost equal measure. No one can afford to be left behind in the implementation of health travel SOPs, many of which have been harmonized with guidance from international oversight bodies.

Uganda Civil Aviation Authority (UCAA) in conjunction with air operators have drawn a plan for resumption of flights in phases

with the first phase covering the period from October to December 2020, which is expected to have scaled down operations. With time, the operations will be increased, and we plan to have more flights in the second phase covering six months starting in January 2021. We shall continue to review the situation as and when the situation changes.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

UCAA has in conjunction with airport stakeholders put in place a number of interventions and Standard Operating Procedures to address the challenges occasioned by the COVID-19 pandemic on air travel. The key highlights of the intervention include the following;

- Installation of automated sanitizers at various points within the terminal building.
- Social distancing marks on the ground and on passenger waiting seats within the lounges.
- Erection of glass shields at Immigration and check-in counters to avoid direct interface of Airport staff with the passengers.
- Wearing of masks is mandatory within the Airport's terminal building and anyone without a mask will be denied entry. Frequently touched surfaces are regularly disinfected and this will continue, but passengers are also reminded to avoid unnecessary touching of surfaces, and to sanitize after touching documents or surfaces. Announcements to this effect are being aired on the Public Address system whenever there is any flight being facilitated.

- Temperature screening is emphasized at all points of entry to the airport. A Thermo scanner is deployed in some areas and it detects temperature of anyone within a 30 meters radius.
- There are ongoing efforts to create more space in the waiting lounges by removing the partitions to create open lounges that accord more space for social distancing. Passengers can be facilitated while this is being completed.
- Departing passengers will be urged to report to the airport 4 hours prior to their flight departure time to cater for additional time that will be spent going through the added Health screening procedures on top of all the other existing security regulations.
- Aircraft will also be disinfected on landing after passengers have disembarked before others board.
- All departing passengers shall present authentic and valid COVID-19 Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) test certificate issued within 120 hours before travel.
- All arriving passengers shall possess authentic and valid COVID-19 Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) test certificate issued within 72 hours before boarding aircraft in-bound to Uganda.
- In special circumstances where departing passengers are not required to present a negative COVID-19 PCR test certificate in the country of destination, such passengers should ensure that they have clearance from the destination country so as to be allowed to board.

- Airline(s) shall not board any passenger coming to Uganda without a negative COVID-19 PCR test. An arriving passenger without the negative COVID-19 PCR test shall be denied entry and the Airline shall be obliged to take back the passenger. In the unlikely event that a returning Ugandan comes without COVID-19 PCR test, they will be allowed to enter the country, but shall have the test done at their cost at \$65, and quarantined at own cost till the results are out.
- A passenger who exhibits signs and symptoms of an infectious disease shall be transported in an ambulance to an isolation center (Entebbe Referral hospital) for a COVID-19 test. The results shall be returned within 24-48 hours as the passenger remains in the isolation center.
- In case a foreign national tests COVID-19 positive and wishes to be repatriated for treatment in another facility outside Uganda, this shall be done at their cost following COVID-19 medical evacuation protocols.

Other detailed SOPs have been shared online.

The aviation industry is very well known to be compliant when it comes to enforcement of safety regulations. I therefore have no doubt in the capacity of the international aviation in ensuring practical and effective enforcement of the safety precautionary measures for the good of all air transport users.

Thank you for listening.