

- ***After the hit by COVID- 19 Pandemic, Aviation sector is now showing gradual revival***

**Nairobi, 10<sup>th</sup> August, 2021...**Kenya's aviation sector is gradually arising from the damaging blow inflicted by the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. Addressing aviation industry stakeholders recently, Capt. Gilbert Kibe, the Kenya Civil Aviation Authority (KCAA) Director General revealed that the average daily Aircraft movements is currently about 550 from 1,045 before Covid-19 outbreak. Current daily international aircraft movement is 110 while domestic traffic is 440.

With the setting in of the COVID -19 pandemic, Kenya and the global aviation sector was negatively affected at an exponential pace, with passenger traffic in July 2020 recording a decline of 94% in comparison to the same period in 2019 due to the pandemic. Aircraft traffic movements was lowest in July 2020, standing at 9,185, which decreased by 68% below the levels of July 2019 (28,825).

"Macroeconomic data on recent estimates of demand shocks shows that traffic forecast will return to 2019 levels in 2024 at low growth rate of 3.6% compared to 4.2% before COVID-19," said the KCAA Director General. This is based on International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) Global forecast. KCAA added that "international lags are envisaged up to 2023 based on income reduction for leisure travel and countries restrictions to travel."

However, on the local front, domestic traffic growth is expected to resume to normal in 2022 based on the level of vaccination in the country. This estimate assumes that there will be no unforeseen challenges that may be posed by new variants of the coronavirus, such as new vicious strains of the Delta virant.

In the last one year, KCAA instituted several measures to support the aviation sector absorb the COVID-19 shocks. For instance, the Authority offered exemptions and dispensations where full compliance with applicable aviation requirements were not possible, of course without compromising aviation safety and security. For instance, starting from 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020, expiry periods for Air Operation Certificates (AOCs) were extended for a period of six months, and thereafter, extensions were given on a case-by-case basis until it became possible to resume on-site Inspections.

Similarly, Designate Check Pilots (DCPs) renewals, Flight Simulator Training Device (FSTD) renewals, and Various Regulatory Trainings & Checks recurrent approvals were extended for periods determined on a case-by-case basis. This would be informed by the submitted Risk Analysis & Alternative means of compliance proposed by the Operator. Another measure taken was to waive Fees and Charges for services rendered for the period of exemption/dispensation.

According to Capt Kibe, since the resumption of Air Travel, Flight Operations department (FOPs) resumed scaled down on-site inspections and Oversight activities, which were undertaken on a case-by-case basis. Physical interactions were limited and virtual means were encouraged. This has worked well to spur the industry that was in limbo.

Another notable achievement was the re-purposing of the Kenya Airways Boeing 787 (Dreamliner) cabin from carrying Passengers to carrying Cargo, that was supervised and approved by KCAA. This aircraft conversion was a "First" in the World.

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**Note to Editor:**

Kenya Civil Aviation Authority (KCAA) is the regulatory authority established by the Civil Aviation Act, 2013 as amended in 2016 with the primary functions of regulation and oversight of aviation safety & security; economic regulation of air services and development of Civil Aviation; provision of air navigation services, and training of Aviation personnel. KCAA undertakes these functions guided by the provisions of the Convention on International Civil Aviation, related ICAO Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs), the Kenya Civil Aviation Act, 2013 and the civil aviation regulations.

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