



**EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY
CIVIL AVIATION SAFETY AND SECURITY OVERSIGHT AGENCY**

PRESS RELEASE

**EAC-CASSOA HEADQUARTERS - ENTEBBE, UGANDA
THURSDAY, 21ST AUGUST 2014**

**EMERGENCY MEETING OF THE EAC PARTNER STATES
NATIONAL CIVIL AVIATION AUTHORITIES AND NATIONAL
AIRPORT AUTHOURITIES ON THE REGIONAL APPROACH TO
COMBATING EBOLA THREAT IN THE EAST AFRICAN REGION**

The current Ebola Virus Disease scourge in the West African Region has become a global concern with serious consequences. Possible transportation of infected persons by Air Transport is a reality and appropriate measures need to be put in place as a priority. East African Community (EAC) Partner States have individually introduced mechanisms to proactively address the matter in coordination with the Ministries responsible for Health, East African Community Secretariat and the World Health Organization (WHO).

On the 8th August 2014, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) in West Africa Region as a “Public Health Emergency of International Concern” (PHEIC) under the International Health Regulations (IHR). The WHO further categorized the Republic of Kenya which is a member state of the East African Community as one of the high risk countries for the possible spread of the Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) from West Africa to the East African Region.

In this regard, the East African Community Civil Aviation Safety & Security Oversight Agency (EAC-CASSOA) strongly advocates for a regional approach to establishment of methods and strategies towards combating this Scourge bearing in mind the fact that some operators based or transiting through the East African Community Partner States operate direct flights into the affected region. Therefore, CASSOA found it prudent to convene an Emergency Meeting of the EAC Partner States’ National Civil Aviation Authorities and National Airport Authorities to discuss the issues related to this serious matter under the auspices of the Centre for Aviation Medicine. The emergency meeting was held on Thursday, 21st August 2014 at the CASSOA Headquarters in Entebbe, Uganda.

The meeting was chaired by Mr. Harrison Machio, Safety Manager at the Kenya Airports Authority (KAA) and attended by delegates from:

- a) Kenya Airport Authority (KAA);

- b) Tanzania Civil Aviation Authority (TCAA);
- c) Tanzania Airport Authority (TAA);
- d) Burundi Civil Aviation Authority (BCAA);
- e) Rwanda Civil Aviation Authority (RCAA);
- f) Civil Aviation Authority Uganda (CAAU);
- g) Uganda Ministry of Health;
- h) Uganda Ministry of East African Community Affairs;
- i) Entebbe Airport Handling Services Limited;
- j) East African Community Secretariat; and
- k) EAC Civil Aviation Safety & Security Oversight Agency.

The Agenda of the meeting as presented by CASSOA Secretariat included; the Reports of Current Measures taken by Partner States to combat the outbreak in West Africa through Air Travel and Airport Facilities, Evaluation of the Measures Instituted and the Strategies of Improvements and Report on a Harmonized Approach to address the Ebola Threats in the Aviation Sector.

Mr. Barry Kashambo, Executive Director of EAC-CASSOA welcomed members to Entebbe and particularly to CASSOA and underscored the need to put up joint effort to prevent the possible spread of Ebola Virus Diseases in the Region, while Hon. Jesca Eriyo, Deputy Secretary General in charge of Productive and Social Sectors at the EAC Secretariat reiterated the effect of Ebola both economically and socially in the Region. She also emphasized that the reoccurrence of the disease in East Africa requires a structured way to handle the threat.

Various presentations were made by various experts including: Dr. Kirunda from the CASSOA Centre for Aviation Medicine who presented the Background Paper on the threat of Ebola Virus Disease in the Region; Dr. Luswa Lukwago from Uganda Ministry of Health who presented the paper on the Uganda Experience on Ebola Virus Disease and Partner States representatives who gave presentations on the Status, Measures and Challenges in addressing the Threat of Ebola in the individual States.

Recommendations of the Meeting

The meeting urged all the EAC Partner States' National Civil Aviation Authorities, National Airport Authorities and all airlines operating and/or transiting through the East African Community Partner States to adhere to and enforce all the relevant International Regulations and Guidelines from International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), WHO, International Air Transport Association (IATA) and Airports Council International (ACI) with regard to Civil Aviation and International Public Health Measures with particular reference to the following immediate, short- and long-term measures:-

- a) Conduct entry screening of all persons at international airports, seaports and major land crossings for suspected cases of Ebola Virus Disease especially those from the highest risk Countries of West Africa.
- b) Provide medical advice about Ebola Virus Disease to all travellers to and from the high risk regions of the world.

- c) Institute measures to detect, investigate and manage Ebola Virus Disease cases including access to qualified diagnostic laboratory, referral health services, isolation and evacuation.
- d) Take measures to ensure the protection from Ebola infection of passengers, airline crew and staff including those working in affected regions of West Africa.
- e) Take measures to restrict international travel of Ebola Virus Disease contacts or cases unless the travel is part of an appropriate supervised medical evacuation.
- f) Mandate establishment and testing of National Aviation Public Health Emergency Preparedness and Response Plans.
- g) Foster effective lines of communication between the Public Health Sector and the Civil Aviation Sector including airlines to mitigate and prevent the spread of Ebola Virus Disease and other communicable diseases into the East African Region.
- h) Comply with Airport Preparedness Guidelines and strengthen infrastructure to prevent possible outbreaks of Ebola Virus Disease and other communicable diseases.
- i) Develop and test contingency plans on business continuity management for airports, airlines and other related businesses at the airport.
- j) Strengthen surveillance and management of on-board cases of suspected Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) and other communicable diseases through the provision of training and awareness campaigns for all airport stakeholders, including the provision of adequate sanitary facilities and First Aid kits.
- k) Enforce the use of Public Health Passenger Locator Form (PLF) for contacts tracing of potentially exposed travellers.
- l) Urge airlines to carry Surveillance Forms on-board to make it easier for all arriving passengers to fill-in.
- m) Urge the EAC Secretariat and CASSOA to develop a Monitoring and Evaluation Tool to follow-up on the implementation of the above Recommendations and make a detailed Report on the progress to the EAC Council of Ministers through the EAC Sectoral Council of Ministers of Health and Ministers Responsible for Transport before 30th November, 2014.