

Namibia passes airport security audit

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Leon Jooste

THE International Civil Aviation Organisation yesterday cleared all Namibian airports of significant security concerns, public enterprises minister Leon Jooste told The Namibian yesterday.

The Namibia Airports Company (NAC) has since the beginning of this year been preparing for the audit by the international body responsible for overseeing that airports meet international operational standards.

Jooste confirmed to The Namibian yesterday afternoon that “there were no significant security concerns identified”, and that the status of the airports will remain intact.

“There are certain areas where improvements are required, and these will have to be addressed. But this has not affected the outcome of the audit,” Jooste said.

Namibia Civil Aviation Authority executive director Angelina Simana also confirmed the clearance, saying that while the preliminary report's conclusion had minor areas needing improvement, the findings were good.

She added that Namibia did not register any significant security concerns in any of the audit areas, which she says is “very good, and revalidated Namibia's international credibility as a state willing to rise to its responsibilities under the Chicago Convention, despite challenges and to contribute to the orderly, safe and secure development of air transport as a participant in the global system”.

"The preliminary report's conclusions were good, had minor areas for improvement which we all agree that as a team, we would do better now that we know," Simana said.

The executive director added that the analysis of the audit will be made available to them towards 30 January next year after quality control has been completed at the ICAO headquarters in Montreal, Canada.

Transport minister John Mutorwa said while he will only be debriefed about the auditing today, he understands that the NAC did not do too bad.

ICAO auditing team leader Aurelien Lavayssiere said during a briefing with stakeholders before the kick-off of the audit last week that there are three types of audits, namely documentary audits, oversight audits and compliance audits.

Namibia underwent the compliance audit.

He further explained that the audit was to cover nine compliance areas, which included regulatory, training and quality control.

Significant security concerns (SSEC) were an essential focus of the audit, Lavayssiere highlighted last week.

He added if immediate action is taken, they will go back to the airport to see if this had been addressed.

The preliminary report on the SSECs will, however, have to be submitted to the ICAO headquarters for scrutiny before Namibia can be declared compliant.

Mutorwa at the same briefing pointed out that Namibia is the first country to be audited under Amendment 16 to Annex 17 of the provision of the Convention on International Civil Aviation, which deals with provisions on information-sharing and communication, passenger and cabin baggage screening, as well as security controls for in-flight supplies.

Icao in 2014 downgraded Hosea Kutako International Airport over safety breaches