



MEDIA RELEASE

Wednesday, 12 January 2011

CAA ANNOUNCES APPOINTMENT OF INTERIM DIRECTOR OF CIVIL AVIATION

Word count: 745 (headline included)
For immediate release

Midrand – The Board of the CAA would like to announce the appointment Mr Zakhele Thwala as the interim Director of Civil Aviation. The appointment of Mr Thwala follows the departure of Captain Colin Jordaan whose employment contract came to an end on 31 December 2010.

“As the Board of the South African Civil Aviation Authority (SACAA) we wish to thank Captain Jordaan for his contribution during his tenure at the helm of SACAA and wish him well with his future endeavours. We also wish to announce that the process of appointing a permanent Director of Civil Aviation is at an advanced stage. It is envisaged that this process will be concluded by the end of this financial year. In the interim, Mr Thwala will act as the head of the SACAA until a permanent Director of Civil Aviation has been appointed,” said Mr Desmond Golding, the acting Chairperson of the SACAA Board.

The process of appointing a permanent Director of Civil Aviation will coincide with the appointment of a new Board for the SACAA. The current Board’s tenure has been extended until the end of March 2011. “The SACAA and the Ministry of Transport will make the necessary announcements once the process of appointing a new Board and Director of Civil Aviation is concluded,” said Mr Golding.

The appointment of Mr Thwala as acting Director comes as no surprise as he is a former employee of the SACAA who served as Executive Manager: Accident and Incident Investigations for a number of years until his appointment by the Department of Transport in June 2008.

Mr Thwala boasts almost 25 years of experience in various positions in the transport industry, and more specifically in aviation. Whilst in exile, he served the ANC in various capacities and in many countries, especially in Southern Africa. He also acted as the Chief Representative of the ANC in Ethiopia. He returned to South Africa in 1992 and worked at the head office of the ANC before joining the South African Airways (SAA).

Mr Thwala kick-started his aviation career in 1988 at the Ethiopian Airlines School of Pilot and Engineering Training. He has since plied his trade in various capacities at a number of entities, including the South African Airways, South African Air Force (as Lieutenant-Colonel), Denel Aviation as well as Gauteng's Department of Transport. He currently holds the position of Deputy Director-General at the Department of Transport, with his main area of responsibility being aviation.

An MBA graduate, Mr Thwala has several other qualifications and is currently studying towards his PHD on Aviation Safety.

"The SACAA Board and Executive Management will give support to and have full confidence in Mr Thwala's capability to guide the SACAA in order to ensure that the Authority executes its mandate, namely the promotion of aviation safety and security. During a meeting held last week between the Board and Executive Management, a commitment was expressed by all to work towards a common vision in a collective, coherent and consistent manner. At the same meeting, several issues that require immediate attention in order to stabilize the organisation were identified. Having said that though, it is important to point out that, overall, it is business as usual at the SACAA," said Mr Golding.

The SACAA's Board and Executive Management have identified four critical priorities that they will focus on during this interim period. The four critical priorities are to:

1. intensify the SACAA's oversight role and activities in order to maintain South Africa's Category 1 status as was reconfirmed by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) in 2008;
2. improve on compliance and corporate governance matters as well as the SACAA's financial sustainability;
3. stabilize the leadership and management of the SACAA by ensuring that the Minister concludes the process of appointing a new Board as well as ensuring that the filling of vacant strategic positions such as that of the Chief Financial Officer and Director of Civil Aviation takes place speedily; and
4. ensure improved relations with all stakeholders.

"The Board and Executive Management will consistently monitor performance towards achieving the abovementioned priorities, and will regularly convey results to key stakeholders. The Board and Executive Management wish to take this opportunity to thank the industry for its continued support of the SACAA in the interest of a safe and secure flying environment. We are confident that such support will continue during and beyond this period of transition," concluded Golding.

-ENDS-

About the CAA:

The South African Civil Aviation Authority (SACAA), an agency of the Department of Transport, is tasked with promoting and maintaining a safe, secure and sustainable civil aviation environment, by regulating and overseeing the functioning and development of the industry in an efficient, cost-effective, and customer-friendly manner and according to international standards.

For more information contact:

Kabelo Ledwaba
Manager: Communications
South African Civil Aviation Authority
Tel. + 27 11 545 1511
Cell: + 27 83 451 2654
Fax: + 27 11 545 1400
Email: ledwabak@caa.co.za
Website: www.caa.co.za

or

Phindiwe Gwebu
Senior Manager:
Corporate Communications and Marketing
South African Civil Aviation Authority
Tel: +27 11 545 1086
Fax: + 27 11 545 1400
Cell: +27 83 461 6070
E-mail: gwebup@caa.co.za
Website: www.caa.co.za