



MEDIA STATEMENT**11 November 2011****CAA set to keep an eye on Airlink fleet following an emergency landing**

Midrand - The South African Civil Aviation Authority's (SACAA) is set to keep a close eye on the SA Airlink fleet following last night's emergency landing involving one of the airline's aircraft. The emergency landing involved the airline's BAE Avro 146-RJ85, which was carrying 73 passengers and 4 crew members.

According to the SACAA the aircraft took off from OR Tambo International Airport (ORTIA) at approximately 19:10 and was destined to land at Pietermaritzburg Airport at 19:40. However, soon after takeoff the piloting crew noticed that the aircraft's nose gear was malfunctioning. The crew then decided to return to ORTIA for an emergency landing. The crew managed to land the aircraft safely and no one was injured.

In a statement released today, the SACAA indicated that they had received a call from the operator whilst the aircraft was still in the air and they had immediately dispatched an investigator who arrived at the scene moments after the aircraft had managed to land. The investigation began there and then and was intensified this morning with more personnel allocated to the incident. The aircraft has since been taken to a nearby hangar.

"Whilst only a final report can declare with certainty the cause of this particular incident and recommendations that need to be considered, information available at this stage suggests that human factor could have contributed to this incident. In the meantime, we have assembled a team of inspectors who will work parallel to investigators to conduct ramp inspections in order to ensure that an occurrence such as this and other unsafe scenarios or potential hazards do not happen. We are thus hoping that the preliminary report together with the inspections report will be able to guide us towards the next steps that need to be taken in this regard. In the meantime, we regret any inconvenience that the ramp inspections may cause to the travelling public. We would also like to commend the crew for handling this incident as professionally and safely as they did. Further tribute should go to ACSA, Air Traffic Control personnel, Emergency Services and all other teams that were involved in this emergency, which had undoubtedly tested them to the limit," said Mr. Zakhele Thwala the acting Director of Civil Aviation.

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About the SACAA:

The South African Civil Aviation Authority ("SACAA") is a juristic body established in terms of the Civil Aviation Act, 2009 (Act No. 13 of 2009) ("the Act"). SACAA is governed and controlled by the Civil Aviation Authority Board ("the Board"). In terms of mandate, the SACAA 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 according to international standards.

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