

JULY 2025



VOL.2 - ISSUE 9

Newsletter from The Commercial Aviation Association of Southern Africa NPC

From our CEO

Balancing Altitudes

How Aviation Regulators Must Tailor Global Standards to National Realities

In the complex airspace of modern aviation governance, regulatory authorities face a paradoxical flight path: they must chart a course that aligns with international standards yet stays firmly grounded in the socio-economic and operational realities of their own countries.

The International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) provides a critical global framework that underpins aviation safety, security, and sustainability. However, its standards and recommended practices (SARPs), while globally respected, are not always one-size-fits-all.

For aviation regulators, the responsibility is dual: to remain compliant with ICAO obligations as signatories to the Chicago Convention, and to intelligently deviate – filing applicable differences – where global standards may not optimally serve local needs. Stakeholders must avoid using these deviations as political tools or protectionist strategies and instead base them on operational pragmatism, economic uplift, and the pursuit of sustainable aviation growth.

The ICAO Framework: A Global Compass, Not a Straitjacket

ICAO SARPs serve as the foundation of global aviation safety and interoperability. From Annex 1 (Personnel Licensing) to Annex 19 (Safety Management), these standards create the connective tissue between nations, enabling safe and seamless international air travel.

Cont.



IN THIS ISSUE

[AAD2026
UPDATE](#)

[EVENTS](#)

[NEWS](#)

[AFFILIATE PARTNER
PROFILE](#)

[AFFILIATE
PRESIDENT'S PROFILE](#)



Lead Partner

ICAO acknowledges the diversity of its Member States and demonstrates flexibility through Article 38 of the Chicago Convention, which allows States to file differences from SARPs when the standards do not fully apply. The crucial caveat: these differences must be filed transparently and justified clearly.

This flexibility is not a loophole – it is a strategic instrument. It empowers regulators to account for national contexts, including infrastructure limitations, human capital constraints, geographic peculiarities, and evolving economic priorities. When used appropriately, filed differences become a manifestation of sovereign aviation maturity, not a sign of non-compliance.

National Context: The Missing Layer in Copy-Paste Regulation

Too often, aviation regulators in developing or transitioning economies adopt ICAO standards wholesale, fearing international scrutiny or political fallout. This approach produces an overly ambitious regulatory framework that may not align with the actual capacity of the state's civil aviation ecosystem.

Consider, for example, the requirements surrounding the implementation of performance-based navigation (PBN). While crucial for global interoperability, mandating its rapid rollout in a country with limited trained personnel, outdated radar infrastructure, or immature operators can cause more disruption than benefit. Similarly, security and safety protocols designed for high-traffic hubs like Heathrow or JFK may not translate efficiently to small regional airports with a handful of weekly flights.

This “copy-paste” approach also risks stifling local innovation. Many African, Latin American, and Southeast Asian countries have developed creative, context-sensitive solutions to aviation challenges—solutions that may be non-standard but prove entirely effective. Overregulation in pursuit of “gold-plated” international alignment can inadvertently criminalise such ingenuity.

The Regulator's Role: From Rule Enforcer to Growth Enabler

Aviation regulation must evolve beyond compliance enforcement. The modern aviation regulator is not just a guardian of standards but a catalyst for industry development. This shift in mindset is particularly crucial in emerging markets, where aviation plays a decisive role in driving economic transformation.

In these contexts, regulators must engage with stakeholders – including airline CEOs, non-scheduled charter CEOs, associations, air traffic controllers, tourism boards, and chambers of commerce – to ensure that policy design reflects the ecosystem's realities and aspirations. States should view strategic deviations from ICAO SARPs not as compromises, but as customisations that better support their national growth objectives.

For instance, consider filing a difference in pilot licensing requirements that accommodates regional flight training variations without compromising safety. Alternatively, allowing for the phased adoption of SMS (Safety Management Systems) for low-capacity operators enables their gradual evolution toward full compliance without imposing upfront costs.

The key lies in intent: are differences filed to cut corners or to pave a smoother runway for growth?

Political Pressures vs. Aviation Realities

A frequent challenge facing regulators is the threat of political interference.

South African political interference is a reality. Politicians, while often well-intentioned, may push for regulations that appeal to voters or special interest groups but lack a solid technical foundation or economic justification. Regulatory authorities must insulate their decision-making from transient political pressures while remaining responsive to national development goals.

Here, independence is crucial. Civil aviation authorities that are institutionally independent from direct political control, while maintaining accountability through parliamentary oversight or public reporting, tend to perform better in aligning their long-term regulatory vision with the nation's strategic needs.

Transparent rulemaking, inclusive consultations, and regular engagement between industry and regulators with ICAO's Regional Offices can help mitigate political capture.

The Economic Multiplier Effect

Aviation is a known multiplier of economic growth. ICAO estimates that the industry supports over 65 million jobs and contributes more than \$2.7 trillion to global GDP.

In many developing countries, the potential of aviation as a vehicle for economic development remains largely untapped, not due to a lack of ambition, but rather to regulatory rigidity and underdeveloped frameworks.

Regulators must prioritise policies that unlock this potential. Facilitating the entry of lower-cost carriers, streamlining aircraft certification processes, supporting the development of local MRO (Maintenance, Repair, and Overhaul) capabilities, and enhancing regional connectivity are all regulatory levers that can transform aviation from a niche sector into a national engine of prosperity.

Filing differences (and building a team's capability to address such differences) creates space for these interventions, which is not a deviation from the global path – it's a recalibration to match national needs. We cannot mindlessly follow ICAO, as evidenced by South Africa's consistent practice of implementing recommendations as if they were mandatory. Why? How is this even possible and beneficial for South Africa, given its rich aviation history on the continent?

A Case for Proactive Difference Management

Rather than treating ICAO differences as bureaucratic necessities, regulators should approach them as strategic instruments. This requires a structured framework:

1. **Needs Assessment:** Conduct data-driven evaluations of which SARPs may not be feasible or beneficial in the local context.
2. **Stakeholder Engagement:** Involve airlines, airports, ATC, and industry associations in understanding impacts and alternatives.
3. **Transparent Filing:** File differences with ICAO promptly, with clear justifications and realistic timelines for future alignment.
4. **Periodic Review:** Revisit filed differences regularly to reassess relevance, especially as national capabilities evolve.
5. **Communication Strategy:** Educate political leaders, regulators, upper leadership, and the public on the rationale and benefits of strategic deviations.

This proactive stance strengthens a regulator's credibility both locally and internationally.

Conclusion: Navigating National Airspace with Global Wisdom

In a globalised world, harmonisation of aviation standards remains a noble and necessary goal. But harmonisation should never come at the cost of national practicality or progress. Regulators must resist the temptation of unquestioningly adopting SARPs that don't align with their country's developmental stage and instead leverage ICAO's flexibility to file differences that are safety-consistent, economically sound, and contextually wise.

Done correctly, this balancing act doesn't compromise safety – it strengthens it. It doesn't slow progress – it accelerates it. And it doesn't isolate a country – it positions it as a sovereign contributor to a more inclusive and adaptive global aviation system.



**Commercial Aviation Association
of Southern Africa NPC**

YOUR AVIATION PARTNER



2026 Lead Partner

Our Affiliate Partners



www.caasa.co.za



Melissa Sewgolam
mobile: +27 (0)82 847 3403
e-mail: melissa@caasa.co.za
Gate 9, Lanseria
International Airport



Come Fly with Us

At CAASA we are invested in *your* success.

To that end, CAASA would like to support our valued member's endeavours by offering the opportunity to participate and contribute to our monthly newsletters in the months ahead.

All we need is:

1. Your company logo (JPG or PDF)
2. Your company overview, along with the products and/or services you offer (long short form)
3. Share any significant milestones (again, long or short form and any supporting visuals (JPG or PDF) – Optional
4. All your contact details, including your website and social media links.

Do this, and we'll rack and stack your contribution for inclusion. We'll also share the final copy and the laid-out page(s) with you for review and approval before publication.

Get involved and reap the benefits of getting your business in front of curated, aviation-focused peers pro bono!

Reach out to our General Manager, Melissa Sewgolam (melissa@caasa.co.za) and she'll make sure your voice is heard amongst our fellow members and beyond.

With 80 years of legacy and reputation, your contribution can only help us foster growth in your business and across our critically important aviation sector.



EXPLORING NEW PATHS, SHARING SOLUTIONS SHOWCASING INNOVATION AND CAPABILITIES

AAD 2026

Gearing Up for Global Impact

The Africa Aerospace and Defence (AAD) exhibition is once again attracting strong global interest, with leading aerospace and defence companies confirming their participation.

Their involvement reaffirms AAD's position as the ultimate platform for innovation, bringing together key industry players such as:



AAD set to deliver a world-class three-day trade exhibition and thrilling two-day air show, AAD2026 is where innovation meets opportunity. Don't miss your chance to be part of the action. Take advantage of our current early bird special offer and enjoy exhibition space at a massively discounted price.

SPONSORSHIPS AND BRANDING OPPORTUNITIES DASH.

For exhibitors who wish to enhance their visibility at Africa's premier aerospace and defence show, AAD2026 offers ample opportunities to enhance brand awareness. These branding and sponsorship opportunities are also available on the website.

[CLICK HERE TO VIEW
THE SPONSORSHIP BROCHURE](#)

WHAT CAN YOUR BUSINESS ACHIEVE AT AAD 2026



Everything you need to know ABOUT AAD ALL IN ONE PLACE

We are thrilled to announce the unveiling of our newly updated website. The revised platform is designed with you in mind, with a new look and improved navigation. A host of improved features to make your exhibition planning easier and more efficient than ever before.

Everything you need is now just a few clicks away, from browsing exhibitor lists and the trade visitor registration portal to accessing the entire program, maps, and important updates. Whether you are an exhibitor, delegate, or visitor, our easy new interface helps you get the most out of your AAD experience.

[CLICK HERE TO VISIT THE WEBSITE](#)





EXPLORING NEW PATHS, SHARING SOLUTIONS
SHOWCASING INNOVATION AND CAPABILITIES

Africa Aerospace And Defence (AAD) CELEBRATE ITS 25TH ANNIVERSARY IN 2025, COMMEMORATING ITS ROLE AS THE PREMIER EXHIBITION FOR AIR, LAND AND SEA TECHNOLOGIES ON THE AFRICAN CONTINENT.

In 2025, Africa Aerospace and Defence (AAD) celebrates a significant milestone, 25 years of influencing the future of aerospace and defence across the African continent. From its daring inception to evolving into one of the most significant exhibitions in the Southern Hemisphere, AAD has transformed into a representation of creativity, teamwork, and regional pride. As we mark this silver jubilee, we honour a legacy that has connected nations, advanced industries, and inspired generations.

In 2000, a pivotal moment in South Africa's defence and aviation history took place. The merger of Aerospace Africa and the Defence Exhibition of South Africa (DEXSA). This bold consolidation led to the formation of AAD.



The inaugural edition of AAD was jointly hosted by AMD, Armscor, and CAASA, with vital support from the National Government, the Department of Defence (DOD), and the Department of Trade, Industry and Competition (the dtic). The event was the most extensive civil and military aerospace and defence exhibition ever held in Africa. This edition also marked a grand celebration of the South African Air Force's (SAAF) 80th anniversary, celebrated through an unforgettable Air Tattoo.

AAD has grown in leaps and bounds to become one of the leading global defence and aerospace exhibitions not only on the African continent, but worldwide, attracting over 400 exhibitors from more than 35 countries at its biennial event.

"In AAD 2024, we attracted 86 official delegations from over 36 countries, including various African nations and international participants who took part in previous editions, demonstrating AAD's broad international appeal and relevance. Next year, we will strengthen the legacy of a platform that has been tried and tested. We aim to increase representation from across the continent, showcasing the entire value chain," emphasises AAD Exhibition Director Nakedi Phasha.

Reflecting on our progress and achievements, many words spring to mind: challenging, fulfilling, unexpected, humbling. But one word stands out above the rest – grateful.

We wish to sincerely thank all those who have supported us over the past quarter of a century, including our partners, employees, volunteers, investors, delegates, speakers, sponsors, and exhibitors. We could not have achieved this without you.

Thank you for your ongoing support, and we look forward to continuing our collaboration. Cheers to our first 25 years, and many more to come!



**Join over 300 Global Exhibitors
AND 30,000 TRADE VISITORS**

In addition to these incredible numbers, we anticipate 80,000 public visitors to the event during the air show days, who will witness the exhilarating aerobatics display. Our incredible discounted special means you are guaranteed access to a global defence industry showcase that will highlight the best of land, air, and sea technologies.

This year's Diamond Sponsor is MILKOR Group, and we anticipate they will contribute to creating a one-of-a-kind event once again.

[CLICK HERE TO BOOK YOUR SPACE](#)

**Discounted Rates FOR AAD 2026
CLOSING SOON**

The Africa Aerospace and Defence (AAD) trade exhibition and air show is all set to run from 16 to 20 September 2026 at the Air Force Base Waterkloof in the City of Tshwane.

Now in its 13th edition, this biennial event is one of South Africa's largest contributors to the GDP when it comes to foreign visitors attending the event. To be part of what is considered to be one of the top six defence events in the world, we are offering you exclusive access to our special discounted rates if you book between now and the end of September 2025.



SUPPORTED BY:





EXPLORING NEW PATHS, SHARING SOLUTIONS
SHOWCASING INNOVATION AND CAPABILITIES

IDEF



istanbul

ISTANBUL EXPO CENTER | 22-27 JULY 2025

Meet AAD Team AT IDEF 2025

Join the AAD team at the South African Pavilion, as we gear up to #AAD2026, and you could gain exclusive exhibitor special deals.

If you are attending IDEF 2025, you will find us at the SA Pavilion in Hall 11, Stand B0A6, and you can schedule an in-person meeting with AAD Exhibition Director Nakedi Phasha.

[CLICK HERE TO CONTACT
OUR AAD EXPO DIRECTOR](#)

Important dates

TO KEEP IN MIND!

To make it easier for our exhibitors to plan their participation at AAD2026, please see below for an easy breakdown of important dates.

16 - 18 SEPT 2026

TRADE DAYS & CONFERENCING

19 - 20 SEPT 2026

PUBLIC AIR SHOW DAYS

EARLY BIRD RATES VALID UNTIL 30 SEPTEMBER 2025

**STAY TUNED TO OUR SOCIAL MEDIA
CHANNELS FOR UPDATES AND
ANNOUNCEMENTS!**



Industry News

DEFENCE INDUSTRY LEKGOTLA TO BE HELD BEFORE YEAR-END AS MOTSHEKGA PLEDGES SADI SUPPORT

Defence and Military Veterans Minister Angie Motshekga has once again promised to host the long-delayed South African defence industry (SADI) lekgotla, as well as an inaugural National Defence Industry Council (NDIC) meeting.

[READ MORE](#)



Industry News

SAMHS ADDS 32 DOCTORS TO ITS PERSONNEL STRENGTH

The Cuba/South Africa connection was again in evidence at the Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University where 23 SA Military Health Service (SAMHS) graduates were welcomed post re-integration in the wake of medical training on the Caribbean island.

[READ MORE](#)

PARTNERS: **AMD**
SOUTH AFRICAN
AEROSPACE & DEFENCE
INDUSTRY

ARMSCOR
ARMAMENT CORPORATION OF SOUTH AFRICA



defence
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



SUPPORTED BY:

the dtic
Department of
Trade, Industry and Competition
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



4th – 5th September

Radisson Blu Hotel & Convention Centre, Kigali, Rwanda

EXHIBITOR



CAASA will be exhibiting at this year's Aviation Africa Summit & Exhibition, 4-5 September at the Radisson Blu Hotel & Convention Centre, Kigali, Rwanda.

Come and join us and meet the team on the CAASA stand.

REGISTER TO ATTEND



www.aviationafrica.aero



info@aviationafrica.aero





4th – 5th September
Radisson Blu Hotel & Convention Centre, Kigali, Rwanda

Dear CAASA member,

On behalf of Times Aerospace Events, the Rwanda Civil Aviation Authority, RwandAir, Rwanda Airports Company and Akagera Aviation, it's our pleasure to officially invite you to register as a delegate at this years **Aviation AFRICA Summit & Exhibition 2025**, 4 & 5 September in the wonderful city of Kigali, Rwanda. The event will once again be held at the fantastic Kigali Convention Centre.

Collaborating to unlock Africa's growth - how can Africa deliver a sustainable aviation industry is the 2025 conference theme as part of this two-day, high-level networking conference & exhibition bringing together aviation professionals, leaders and C-suite executives from airlines, including cargo and business aviation operators, government, regulators, airports, lessors, OEMs, MROs, ATC, training, finance & leasing, insurance, law firms and aviation suppliers and services providers from across the entire supply chain with some 1500+ delegates expected and 120+ exhibitors and sponsors including major OEMs such as Airbus, Boeing, Embraer, Rolls Royce, Pratt & Whitney through to MRO's, training, legal and insurance firms across the aerospace supply chain.

The exhibition area – packed with leading companies and service providers from Africa and across the world - will also include an **INSIGHT THEATRE** which will feature a whole series of presentations and discussions on the geopolitical challenges - as well as the internal frustrations - that hamper the growth of aviation.

Please follow this link for the full programme of confirmed speakers and topics: [Aviation AFRICA 2025 Summit Programme](#).

Now in its 9th year, our event is the largest of its kind in Africa attracting more aviation related professionals from across the continent, airline chiefs, CAAs, airports, senior management decisions makers and we would love for you to be part of what's going to be an exciting and packed event.

WHAT'S INCLUDED:

1. Two full days of summit sessions and leading industry speakers & moderators
2. One-to-one meeting planner
3. Networking lunch & coffee breaks
4. Gala Reception on the evening of 4th September at the KCC

We hope you will be able to join us at this important event.

Airline/Operator members are requested to register, free of charge, as an Airline/Operator [here](#). All other members are requested to register as a **Supplier/Vendor** to receive 40% off, [here](#). Please quote promo code: **CAASA25** when ticking 'yes' to attend the summit.

We look forward to seeing you there!

Yours faithfully,

Mark T Brown

Mark Brown - Managing Director



In association with
**Rwanda Civil Aviation Authority,
RwandAir and Rwanda Airports Company**

We cordially invite you to attend

Aviation Africa 2025 Summit and Exhibition

4th - 5th September 2025

Registration: 08:00 - 09:00hrs

Summit Start: 09:30hrs

Radisson Blu Hotel & Convention Centre,
Kigali, Rwanda

HOSTED BY:



SUPPORTED BY:



To secure your attendance, please
register online at www.aviationafrica.aero
- using promotional code: **CAASA25**

Dress: Business Attire



4th – 5th September

Radisson Blu Hotel & Convention Centre, Kigali, Rwanda

News

CFS AVIATION GROUP Announces Strategic Shareholding Restructure & Brand Evolution



CFS Aviation Group, a leading South African business aviation company, is pleased to announce a strategic evolution in its ownership and brand.

Following unconditional approval from the South African Competition Commission, Parrot Aviation, the holding company of Federal Airlines (FedAir), has acquired the 50% stake previously held by Comair General Aviation Holdings.

Simultaneously, Justin Reeves, co-founder and long-serving CEO of CFS, has acquired the remaining shares from other minority shareholders.



Justin Reeves

This transaction marks the conclusion of a successful 12-year partnership with Comair and ushers in a new chapter for the company. It also signals the formal retirement of the Comair Flight Services name, with the company now operating under its refreshed brand: CFS Aviation Group—a reflection of its evolution into a fully independent and integrated business aviation group.

“This marks an exciting new chapter in the CFS journey,” said Justin Reeves, Group CEO of CFS Aviation Group. “The new structure reinforces our long-term vision, strengthens our shareholder base, and preserves our operational independence.

“Our clients can expect the same exceptional service, safety and professionalism they’ve come to know, with renewed energy and focus.”

Cont.

Parrot Aviation brings a transformation-aligned ownership structure, including majority black ownership and representation by black women. Although CFS and FedAir now share a common shareholder in Parrot Aviation, the two companies remain entirely independent in brand, operations, and leadership. CFS Aviation Group continues to operate under its own Air Operator Certificate (AOC), with Justin Reeves remaining at the helm as Group CEO.

CFS Aviation Group offers a comprehensive suite of services including aircraft management, charter, sales, and FBO operations. Headquartered at Lanseria International Airport, the company has built a strong reputation for excellence, safety, and personalised service.

“The new structure allows us to sharpen our focus and continue doing what we do best – delivering the ultimate aviation experience,” added Reeves.

Media Enquiries:

Justin Reeves – Group CEO
marketing@flycfs.com | +27 11 540 7664
www.flycfs.com



Affiliate Partner Profile



AQSASA (AEROSPACE QUALITY AND SAFETY ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHERN AFRICA) EST: 2024

AQSASA is the leading aerospace professional quality and safety association committed to quality and safety objectives within the aerospace environment, including aircraft, airports, operations, maintenance and training.

The purpose of AQSASA is to set and maintain an acceptable quality and safety standard for the aerospace industry, represent the members regarding legislative matters, create a network of aerospace industry professionals, share knowledge and expertise to benefit the aviation industry as a whole and foster common values and collaboration among the members.

AQSASA's main objectives are to promote high levels of quality and safety in the aerospace sphere and to support growth in the aviation industry.

Formed in 2024, AQSASA is involved in various negotiations with the National Aviation Authorities of Southern Africa and other aviation stakeholders to resolve issues pertaining to its sphere of influence.

AQSASA exists as a regional representative body for aerospace Quality and Safety professionals who provide services to the aviation industry's operational, maintenance, training, and infrastructure sectors.

The effectiveness of AQSASA, as an association, hinges on the commitment and participation of the members to achieve the common goal of growth, quality and safety in aviation.

For membership details, please contact our General Manager, **Melissa Sewgolam** at: melissa@caasa.co.za

Meet Our Affiliate Partner President

Each month, we introduce you to the members of our CAASA Board and Council to give you context as to their qualification and overall commitment to our vital sector.

This month, we welcome our **AQSASA President and CAASA Council Member, Colin Visser.**



Colin started work at South African Airways Technical in 1979 in the Ground Support Equipment Department. In 1981, he began his career as an Aircraft Maintenance Mechanic. After qualifying as a Technician in Aircraft Mechanical Maintenance, he spent several years in the Aircraft Overhaul environment.

Colin has always had a passion for teaching and moved into the Technical Training Department. He completed a Technical Diploma (Aviation Mechanical) before obtaining a National Higher Diploma in Post School Education to equip himself further in this area of expertise.

He was involved in mechanical apprentice and national and international regulatory training for several years. He implemented Documentation Training, Human Factors Training and FAA, JAA and SA CAA Training within SAAT during this time.

After that, he moved into the Quality Assurance and Safety related field of operation and training. From there, Colin advanced to training management and was the Accountable Manager for SAA Technical Training upon his departure from SAAT.

He was with SAAT for nearly 30 years before leaving to work with several Aircraft Operators and Maintenance Facilities in the areas of Quality and Safety.

In recent years, Colin has focused on establishing and maintaining MRO capabilities within the aviation industry and assisting local and foreign Airline Operators with aircraft-related regulatory compliance. He was also a consultant to companies in Africa, the Middle East and Asia.

He currently manages an aviation consulting company, Griffin Airline Operations, Maintenance and Training Consultants (Pty) Ltd, which provides management, quality, and safety assistance to the commercial aviation industry in Southern Africa.

Colin also teaches at an Aviation Academy in the areas of Civil Aviation Regulations, Human Factors, and Safety Management Systems. He has also been retained as a consultant to the College: Economic and Management Sciences of the University of Southern Africa (UNISA) on Aviation Safety in the Risk and Safety Management curriculum.

He served as a Director on the board of the Commercial Aviation Association of Southern Africa (CAASA), and currently serves as a Member of the CAASA Council and was President of the Association of Southern African Aircraft Traders (ASAAT) until the establishment of the Aerospace Quality and Safety Association of Southern Africa (AQSASA).

