CANSO CALLS FOR COLLABORATION TO EXPLOIT TECHNOLOGIES AND OPPORTUNITIES TO MODERNISE AIR TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT IN AFRICA

Marrakech, 26 September 2017 – CANSO, the Civil Air Navigation Services Organisation, has highlighted the opportunities to exploit new and emerging technologies to modernise air traffic management (ATM) in Africa. CANSO Director General, Jeff Poole, has called for shared ambition, commitment and partnership to ensure that ATM in Africa is ready to meet the expected surge in air traffic. New technologies such as automation, digitisation and space-based surveillance enable air navigation service providers (ANSPs) to make the leap to the latest systems without having to address legacy systems or build expensive ground-based infrastructure.

Speaking at the CANSO Africa Conference 2017 in Marrakech, CANSO Director General Jeff Poole said, “There has never been a more exciting time to be in aviation and air traffic management in Africa. This continent has huge potential to develop, increase trading links, and grow economies but at the moment this is hampered by poor connectivity and a fragmented air transport system. There is a vital role for efficient air traffic management to facilitate increased connectivity, enable access to markets, and increase tourism. New and emerging technologies provide the opportunity to modernise air traffic management more efficiently and at lower cost than ever before. Industry and States need to work together to grasp this opportunity.”

With the limited ground transport infrastructure and huge distances of the African continent, air transport can provide the connectivity needed to provide access to markets, boost tourism and thereby grow GDP across the continent. Africa has a population of over 1.2 billion people, some 16 percent of world population but only 2 to 3 percent of air transport. By 2050, Africa will be the world’s most populous continent with 2.4 billion people. Aviation can help to ensure that this huge population growth is matched by economic development but States and industry must ensure that air traffic management is well prepared and equipped.

New technologies are making air traffic management more efficient, cost-effective and sustainable. Importantly for Africa, they provide a unique opportunity to ‘leapfrog’ to the latest ATM systems. Rather than having to invest in costly ground based systems and build expensive air traffic control towers, ANSPs can make use of space-based and digitised systems. Remote, digitised, air traffic control towers will enable economies of scale, greater controller productivity and improved safety. They will allow cost-effective air traffic management at remote and lesser-used airports without the
necessity of building traditional air traffic control towers. Space-based surveillance will enable ANSPs to track aircraft in remote and oceanic areas not currently covered and also allow aircraft to reduce separation minima thus increasing capacity; without major investments in ground based radars. Automation enables aircraft to reduce their separation distances from each other while maintaining safety. This optimises traffic flow, thereby increasing capacity and reducing delays.

Jeff Poole concluded, “Now is the time of opportunity for even greater collaboration between industry, States and other stakeholders to prepare for expected traffic growth in Africa by modernising air traffic management and adopting the latest cost-effective technologies. The ICAO Aviation System Block Upgrades (ASBUs) provide a clear road map for States to modernise at their own pace and CANSO is on hand to provide advice and training on implementation. The ATM industry can provide the long-term planning and implementation of new technologies and infrastructure, while States should ensure that these improvements in ATM are properly financed. Together, with shared ambition, commitment and partnership, we can ensure that Africa reaps the benefits of its journey of growth: onwards and upwards”.

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About CANSO

CANSO – the Civil Air Navigation Services Organisation – is the global voice of air traffic management (ATM) worldwide. CANSO Members support over 85 percent of world air traffic. Members share information and develop new policies, with the ultimate aim of improving air navigation services (ANS) on the ground and in the air. CANSO represents its Members’ views in major regulatory and industry forums, including at ICAO, where it has official Observer status. CANSO has an extensive network of Associate Members drawn from across the aviation industry.

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