



**AOPA NAMIBIA**

## AIRCRAFT OWNERS AND PILOTS ASSOCIATION

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### PRESS RELEASE

#### **AOPA (AIRCRAFT OWNERS AND PILOTS ASSOCIATION), AS THE RECOGNISED REPRESENTATIVE OF THE AVIATION INDUSTRY IN NAMIBIA, WISHES TO INFORM THE CONCERNED PUBLIC OF THE FOLLOWING**

In a letter addressed to the Interim Executive Director of the NCAA dated 29<sup>th</sup> January 2021, AOPA voiced its concern that aircraft approaches under Instrument Meteorological Conditions (IMC), are no longer supported nor authorised in Namibia, owing to the non-calibration of airport meteorological equipment and ground-based navigation aids (NAVAIDS) and latterly, the unserviceability of the surveillance radar. It mentioned that following the issuance of a NOTAM (notice to airmen) bulletin the previous week, the last remaining option to carry out instrument approaches into Namibia's airports was no longer permitted nor legal, and that all aircraft are required to operate under Visual Flight Rules for landing and take off.

The reason AOPA had taken on the issue as a matter of urgency and called for a meeting at short notice with all concerned parties (operators and the regulators) on the 27<sup>th</sup> January, is that owing to the current inclement weather, approaches into airports under Visual Flight Rules are often not possible and many flights have had to be cancelled, or have had to divert to airports other than their destination airport. This has been at considerable cost and inconvenience to both passengers and operators, but more importantly, **this situation presents an extremely serious safety hazard.**

Pilots and operators have reported several safety incidents directly related to the inability to carry out approaches under Instrument Flight Rules. AOPA warned the NCAA and the Ministry of Works and Transport, that their non-compliance and negligence with their statutory function and responsibility to ensure the serviceability of all instruments at Namibian airports had already and will continue to result in an extremely serious safety hazard to the flying public, notwithstanding the negative impact on the aviation industry and the economy at large.

**In spite of AOPA's warning, the regulators failed to act timeously and as of today, 12<sup>th</sup> February 2021, several domestic and international flights, including those of EuroWings, Airlink and Westair have been delayed, cancelled or have had to divert to airports in other countries. Thus leaving passengers stranded at Hosea Kutako International airport and other passengers not able to reach their destinations in Namibia. This is a significant safety risk and affects the already crippled aviation sector.**

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Furthermore, there has been no consideration for alternate means of compliance to mitigate the safety risk, negative financial implications and negative public perceptions due to non-service delivery.

This situation was entirely avoidable and is indicative of the alarming state of dysfunction on the part of the regulators relating to aviation matters. Furthermore, it is a thoroughly embarrassing situation for Namibia, that none of the state-owned airports throughout the entire country are able to support arrivals and departures under Instrument Flight Rules.

This matter continues to place the public, operators and pilots in the situation of an extremely serious safety risk, notwithstanding the cost, inconvenience and sheer embarrassment the public and the country is currently enduring.

**AOPA urges GRN to take immediate steps to ensure that the matter is dealt with expeditiously and to prevent a repeat of this situation through the restoration of good governance and management on the part of the aviation regulators.**

