

By Geoffrey Mutegeki

**L**ike in many parts of the world, air transport in Uganda plays an important role of fostering tourism and enhancing the import-export trade.

To make this role count, the country requires a vibrant air transport system and good management. To this effect Uganda established the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) in 1991 to manage Uganda's air transport.

CAA is the government agency responsible for licensing, monitoring and regulating aviation matters.

However, to strengthen this mandate the board of CAA, called for the amendment of the Civil Aviation Authority Act, which was forwarded to Parliament.

David Mpango Kakuba, the CAA managing director, expressed optimism that Parliament would handle the process of amending the Civil Aviation Authority Act with utmost urgency.

The Parliament physical infrastructure committee is currently charged with the responsibility of reviewing the Civil Aviation Authority (Amendment) Bill, 2017.

"The proposed amendments are aimed at ensuring harmonisation of Uganda's regulations and practices with the universal practices across the globe. The current Act has been in place since 1991 and while it has ably guided the industry a number of practices have since changed which called for an update," Kakuba says.

The Civil Aviation Authority (Amendment) Bill, 2017, Cap 354 seeks to address and make the following changes to the Act of 1991.

#### Proposed amendments

To re-designate Civil Aviation Authority as the Uganda Civil Aviation Authority; to re-designate the managing director as the director general; to empower the director general to take specific actions without consultation with the Minister; to provide for the establishment of an independent accident and incident investigation unit and for related matters. To grant air worthiness inspectors



Section of the Entebbe Airport old runway that is being rehabilitated. Photos by Hajarah Nalwadda

# CAA looks forward to change of aviation law

unlimited access to aircraft and private aerodromes without first seeking permission.

Under its management, CAA oversees one international airport and 13 airfields. There are also privately owned airdromes which complement air travel with in the country.

#### Refurbishing airport

The Government is currently refurbishing and expanding Entebbe International Airport and paying more attention to maintenance of the various airfields across the country.

Mpango, says majority of these airfields do not make profit but are being maintained using revenue generated at Entebbe Airport.

"We get less income from these airfields compared to what

we spend on them. They are maintained by subsidies from Entebbe airport," Mpango says.

He explains that quality air transport plays a crucial role in the promotion and sustenance of particularly high value, perishable goods like horticultural products and frozen fish.

"Most of Uganda's exports to Europe and other foreign markets comprise of fresh produce, including flowers, fish and the like. The airfields are being maintained to mainly facilitate tourism," Mpango says.

In 2017, there were 1.62 million passengers who traveled through Entebbe and over 69,000 tonnes of cargo was handled by the same airport.

On the revival of the Uganda Airlines, Kakuba says the idea

should be looked at in comparison with establishing a road or a ferry where the Government invests without hope of making profits.

"Airline should be equated to a road, you will not make profits from the road, but you will benefit from the multiplier effects such as advertising, jobs and easy movement of Ugandans and goods," Kakuba says.

Vianney Luggya, CAA's public relation's manager, says air transport business in Uganda is steadily growing and thus the focused developments at Entebbe and other airfields.

"The traffic is increasing every day and the demand for quality services is enormous. We have to answer all these demands with no excuses and we are already doing it," Luggya says.



David Mpango Kakuba



Some of the structures being put up at Entebbe airport



More counters have been opened up at the airport