

BAYERO UNIVERSITY, KANO-NIGERIA

FACULTY OF SOCIAL AND MANAGEMENT SCIENCES

One-Day Workshop on the Operational Problems, Challenges and Prospects of Malam Aminu Kano International Airport (MAKIA)

Communiqué

1.0 Introduction

The Faculty of Social and Management Sciences (FSMS), Bayero University Kano (BUK) organized a one-day workshop on the Operational Problems, Prospects and Challenges of Malam Aminu Kano International Airport (MAKIA), in Commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of the Airport, held at the 1000-Seater Theatre, New Campus, Bayero University, Kano, on Wednesday, 30th April, 2008. The workshop which started with a National Anthem at about 10.45am was followed by an opening prayer by Alhaji Muhammad Hassan K/Naisa, the Deputy Librarian of the University and a welcome address by the Dean, FSMS, Dr. K.I. Dandago. In the welcome address, the Dean FSMS told the gathering that discussions at the workshop would centre on two broad topics, all of which were meant to ascertain the real problems of MAKIA with a view to suggesting realistic solutions to the relevant authorities in the Nigerian Aviation Industry so as to make MAKIA a truly international airport. The Dean FSMS concluded his remarks by thanking individuals and organizations who gave some financial assistance in organizing the workshop. These included Khalifa Sheik Isyaka Rabi (the Chairman/CEO, IRS Group of Companies), Alhaji Mustapha Ado (an alumnus of the University), the University Management and the Kano State Ministry of Commerce, Industries, Cooperative and Tourism. He also thanked all the various stakeholders of MAKIA for their moral Support in organizing the workshop.

Similarly, in his opening remarks, the Vice-Chancellor (VC), BUK, Professor Attahiru Muhammadu Jega, OFR, ably represented by the DVC Academics, Prof. Kabiru Ahmed, observed that the workshop was unique in a sense that it brings together both the ‘town’ and the ‘gown’ with a view to finding realistic, concrete and achievable solutions to the problems bedeviling the MAKIA. In this regard, the VC said that the University has a proposal in the pipe line for the establishment of an Institute for research and development which, when established, will collaborate with the general public to address various issues of concern to Nigeria’s Socio-economic development.

During the opening ceremony, good will messages were delivered by His Excellency, the Executive Governor of Kano State, Mal. Ibrahim Shekarau, ably represented by Alh. Abdu

Lawal Kofar Mazugal (the Permanent Secretary, Kano State Ministry of Commerce, Industries, cooperative and Tourism), the Chairman of the Occasion, Alhaji Shehu Muhammad, FCA (the Magajin Rafin Kano and District Head of Rimin Gado) and the Special Guest of Honour, Khalifa Sheik Isyaka Rabi'u (the Chairman/CEO, IRS Group of Companies), ably represented by Alh. Musa Baba Bichi (the Chief Internal Auditor of IRS Group of Companies).

Other personalities present at the opening ceremony were the Military Commandant, MAKIA, in the person of Group Captain A. Adegboye, Flight Lieutenant B. O. Usman, the Divisional Officer MAKIA, Superintendent I. Shamsuddeen, the representatives of NAMA, the representatives of the Nigerian Civil Aviation Authority, the representatives of FAAN, representatives of airliners operating in MAKIA, the representatives of traveling agencies, representatives of the police and other security agencies in MAKIA, distinguished professors, Heads of Departments and lecturers in the University, members of the press and students. Mal. Abubakar Shehu Minjibir, a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Mass Communication, served as the Master of Ceremony.

The opening ceremony ended with a vote of thanks offered by the Sub-Dean, FSMS, Malam Sani Lawal Malumfashi and closing prayers offered by Prof. Ibrahim A. Kiyawa at 11.53am. The proceedings of the workshop began shortly after the departure of some of the dignitaries and a tea break.

2.0 Observations/Findings

Immediately, after the tea break, the proceedings of the workshop began. The 1st session, which was on “Defining Universal Standards and Facilities Requirements for Airline Operations in MAKIA”, was chaired by Professor E.A. Olofin (of the Department of Geography, BUK). Discussants at the session included Prof. Ibrahim Bello Kano (Department of English and French), Engr. Mubarak Khalid Muhammad (Aviation Consultant, Murtala Muhammad International Airport, Lagos), Alhaji Suleiman Bello (Deputy President, KACCIMA), Mr. Olayiwola J.O., Airspace Manager, NAMA and the Zonal Manager of NCAA, MAKIA. The 2nd Session was on “Major Achievements, Challenges, Problems and Prospects of MAKIA: A Critical Assessment from the Business Point of View”. It was chaired by Professor Abdallah Uba Adamu (Department of Science Education). Discussants during the session were, Alhaji Bashir Borodo, National President, Manufacturers Association of Nigeria (MAN), Mr. Tayo John (Air Traffic Controller, MAKIA), Mal. Sani Inuwa Adamu (Lecturer, Aminu Kano College of Islamic Legal Studies), Alh. Suleiman Bello (Business Enterprenuer and Deputy President, KACCIMA), Alhaji Sunusi Wakili, a Clearing Agent and Mr Kenneth O., the Director Operations of IRS airlines.

The following were the major conclusions reached by the workshop through the two sessions:

1. MAKIA lacked most of the requisite facilities expected of an international airport and many of the facilities on the ground are not in tune with the international standard and are not well maintained. Again, poor electricity and water supplies are enough to discourage foreign airlines from patronizing MAKIA.
2. The terminal at MAKIA is not well equipped to ensure safe and easy air travel in and out of the airport. Also, the control tower is noted to be far below international standard, the run-way is short and both the arrival and departure halls are grossly lacking in the facilities obtainable in truly international airports.
3. The number of airlines that fly MAKIA (for both domestic and international travels) has drastically fallen over the years, and this is mainly as a result of the inadequacy of the required facilities for efficient and effective airline operations. Airlines are not always ready to assume unnecessary risks in flying airports that are not equipped with facilities and equipments that meet the international standards.
4. The human factor and maintenance culture are part of the problems facing MAKIA. There are many dimensions of mismatch in the utilization of human resources, especially where staff of relevant aviation industry's agencies are not well trained or are put in places that are not suitable to their training. This habit usually breeds corruption at the airport. The maintenance culture to be demonstrated on all the equipment and facilities at the airport is either completely lacking or is very weak and, so, the facilities are not being utilized in a sustainable way.
5. Although the workshop appreciates the fact that where businesses and commercial activities are not booming, there would be no effective air transportation, it is a conclusion of the workshop that the poor condition of MAKIA has negatively affected business/commercial activities in Kano State, the whole of the North and the country as a whole, as Kano is believed to be one of the major commercial nerve centers of the Country.
6. The Federal Airports Authority of Nigeria (FAAN) is not doing all that is required of it to attract international airlines and passengers with a view to increasing the volume of airline traffic in MAKIA. Other aviation industry's agencies like NAMA, NCAA, etc were also rated low in terms of their efficiency and effectiveness in positioning MAKIA to catch up with international standard.
7. There are no adequate arrangements for duty-free shops at MAKIA at present, for passengers to take advantage of. There are no internet cafés, cultural shops and restaurants of international standards in MAKIA thereby hindering the convenience and relaxation of passengers. All these are indications that addressing MAKIA international is just "a mockery of reality"!
8. Political setting in terms of the opposition posture of Kano state to the party holding power at the centre, the struggle for the dominance of economic power between the North and the South, especially the Southwest and the "I don't care attitude" of the influential "voices" in Kano, in particular, and the North, in general, to the plight of MAKIA are important factors that directly and indirectly result in the neglect or abandonment of MAKIA by those that matter.
9. Undue harassment of passengers by security personnel and touts and, perhaps, sabotage by some groups of individuals in MAKIA have greatly discouraged many

passengers from patronizing the airport, thereby affecting the number of aircrafts (both domestic and international) that fly MAKIA.

10. The workshop sees high prospects for MAKIA to be truly international in view of the abundance of space for expansion and installation of all the internationally accepted equipment and facilities, the patronage available from the business communities and bureaucrats in Kano and neighboring states and their foreign associates and the army of experts posted to the airport whose capacity is being grossly under-utilized. All these are indications that, with the ‘political will’ to make MAKIA great, it would not take long before it becomes truly international.

3.0 Recommendations

Based on the above observations/findings of the workshop, the following recommendations were made:

1. There is the need for the Federal Airports Authority of Nigeria (FAAN) to ensure the provision or standardization of fire fighting equipment, parking space for aircrafts, landing facilities (with an alternative means of landing), alternative sources of power and water and other necessary facilities that are required for an effective functioning of MAKIA. Other aviation industry agencies too are expected to play their roles effectively and efficiently, with a view to matching up MAKIA with the international standard.
2. The ministry of aviation, through FAAN, should also ensure the provision of excellent means of communication in MAKIA, which connects the pilots with the control tower, as is available in the international airports of other countries of the world.
3. MAKIA needs a befitting back-up hotel for decent accommodation to all classes of passengers, to be provided by either the government, private investors or through public-private partnership. There is also the need for MAKIA to be blessed with adequate restaurants of international standards that take into account differences in passengers’ diets and tastes at the international wing of the airport when completed.
4. There is the need for FAAN to create enabling investment environments which would encourage business entrepreneurs to invest in restaurants, internet cafes, provision stores and cultural shops at MAKIA. This can be done by giving concessions on charges, at the initial stage, in view of the low volume of sales resulting from low volume of airline traffic.
5. There is the need for an effective public-private partnership initiative with a view to developing all the sectors and facilities of MAKIA to make it truly international. Strategies like Build Operate and Transfer (BOT) and Joint Venture (JV) arrangements were recommended for the authorities concerned to consider as viable measures towards developing the airport to catch up with the international standard.
6. There is the need to avoid the mismatch of human resources by ensuring that the right people with the right training are put in the right places in all the aviation industry’s agencies, and, in particular, in their departments and units at MAKIA.
7. There is the need for FAAN and the security agencies at MAKIA to enhance the security system at the airport and to reduce the undue harassment of passengers by

security personnel and touts at MAKIA. The touts at the airport should be decisively dealt with, by the appropriate authorities, and the security operatives at the airport should be trained or retrained to be good image makers of the country as they serve as the first point of contact to visitors to the country, as a whole, or Kano in particular.

8. The government(at the state and federal levels) should put in place all the necessary structures and the enabling investment environment needed to boost commercial activities in Kano, and the country as a whole, for prospective local and international investors to be encouraged to invest their capital in the different sectors of the Kano economy to make it bubbling. When that becomes possible, air transportation and MAKIA would be greatly patronized.
9. On the opposition posture of Kano state to the party holding power at the centre, the workshop observes that the same posture exists in Lagos state but the Murtala Muhammad airport is progressing and catching up with the international standards. The influential “voices” in Kano state, in particular, and the Northern states, in general, particularly the traditional rulers, the religious leaders and the elites have to be united in fighting for the redemption of MAKIA from total collapse and for ensuring that attention has been given to the airport by the appropriate authorities for the airport to be truly international.
10. The Ministry of Aviation should do everything possible within its jurisdiction to spearhead the process of remedying all the problems of MAKIA, facing all its challenges squarely and ensuring the actualization of its prospects.

4.0 Conclusion

The Dean, FSMS, Dr. K.I. Dandago, gave a vote of thanks on behalf of the Faculty and the University to all the discussants, moderators and participants for sparing their time to attend the workshop and make meaningful contributions to the two discussion sessions. He assured them that the communiqué of the workshop will soon be ready for distribution to appropriate authorities and stakeholders. Thereafter, he declared the workshop closed.

Dr. Murtala Sabo Sagagi, the Head, Department of Business Administration, Bayero University, Kano offered the closing prayer at 3.44pm to round up the whole workshop.

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