



# AIRPORTS COUNCIL INTERNATIONAL AFRICA

## Special Newsletter Regional Conference & Exhibition Luanda, Angola 28 March – 03 April 2026

*Welcome to this special edition of the ACI Africa newsletter, recapping the key moments of the ACI Africa Regional Conference & Exhibition, hosted by Sociedade Gestora de Aeroportos S.A. and held in Luanda, Angola, from 28 March to 3 April 2026. On the sidelines of the conference, ACI Africa also convened its 75th Board Meeting, Regional Committee meetings, workshops, and a full day dedicated to its Business Partners.*

*Under the theme '**Stronger Airports, Stronger Africa**,' this year's event brought together aviation leaders from across the continent and beyond to explore critical issues including innovation, sustainability, safety, security, and the future of airport development.*

*We invite you to revisit the key discussions, sessions, and moments that shaped an inspiring week and continue to drive the future of African aviation.*

### **ACI Africa Team**

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## Regional Committees Setting the Strategic Tone



The conference opened on 28 March with the ACI Africa Regional Committee Meetings, establishing a strong foundation for a week of meaningful dialogue and collaboration.

Over the first two days, airport leaders and industry experts engaged in discussions across key committees, including Economics; Safety & Technical; and Environment & Sustainable Development. These sessions focused on strengthening airport performance, enhancing operational standards, and advancing sustainable practices to support long-term growth.



Day two expanded the conversation to people, security, facilitation, and innovation. Discussions underscored the importance of talent development, robust aviation security frameworks, and the integration of technology to improve operational efficiency and passenger experience.

In parallel, the Executive Committee Meeting provided a critical platform to align on strategic priorities and reinforce a shared vision for the development of Africa's aviation sector.

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A dedicated workshop on “Future-Ready RFFS: Transforming Operational Capability,” led by ACI Africa expert Peter McMahon, further emphasized operational readiness.

Through practical case studies and global best practices, participants explored ways to strengthen training, leadership, emergency preparedness, and performance.

These engagements highlighted the essential role of ACI Africa’s governance and technical platforms in fostering collaboration, knowledge sharing, and sector-wide advancement.

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## A Strong Convergence of Innovation, Solutions and Leadership



Day three placed innovation, leadership, and partnerships at the forefront.

The Business Solutions Forum served as a key interface between ACI Africa Business Partners and airport leaders, showcasing practical and forward-looking solutions across operational efficiency, safety, digital transformation, and commercial development.



At the same time, the 75th ACI Africa Board Meeting convened, reinforcing strategic alignment and collective commitment to advancing safe, secure, and sustainable airport development across the continent.

The African Airports CEOs’ Session provided a high-level platform for dialogue on investment, infrastructure development, and the growing role of artificial intelligence in airport operations. These discussions emphasized the importance of forward-looking leadership in positioning African airports for long-term competitiveness.



The day also revisited the vibrant cocktail evening marking the soft opening of the exhibition, which created an enabling environment for networking, partnerships, and exchange of ideas.

Together, these engagements reflected the core value of the conference: a platform where ideas translate into action and partnerships drive progress.

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## Official Opening and High-Level Plenary Sessions



Day four marked a defining moment with the Official Opening Ceremony, bringing together leaders from across Africa and the global aviation community.

The ceremony was presided over by H.E. José de Lima Massano, Minister of State for Economic Coordination of Angola, alongside Hon. Ricardo Viegas D'Abreu, Minister of Transport. Their presence underscored aviation's critical role in driving economic growth, connectivity, and regional integration.



Messages from ACI Africa and ACI World leadership reinforced the importance of collaboration, innovation, and sustainability in shaping the future of African aviation.

The exhibition tour that followed enabled direct engagement between government officials, airport leaders, and industry partners showcasing innovative solutions.

High-level plenary sessions throughout the day explored:

- Strengthening regional connectivity and integration through collaboration and harmonized frameworks
- Enhancing corporate governance to build trust, resilience, and investor confidence
- Diversifying non-aeronautical revenues to position airports as broader economic hubs



These discussions reflected a shared ambition to build airports that are efficient, connected, resilient, and central to Africa's economic transformation.

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## Celebrating Digital Communications Excellence at the Gala Dinner

The conference also came alive through a memorable Gala Dinner on 31 March, graciously hosted by SGA.



Held at Galerias Fançony, the evening showcased Angolan hospitality and provided a vibrant setting for networking and celebration across the aviation community.

A highlight of the evening was the presentation of the Digital Communication & Engagement Awards 2026, recognizing airports leading digital transformation across Africa.

Airports were honored for excellence in areas such as digital innovation, website user experience, and social media engagement, demonstrating how technology is enhancing communication,

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strengthening stakeholder engagement, and transforming the passenger experience.

Recognized airports included:

- Airports Company South Africa (ACSA)
- Egyptian Holding Company for Airports and Air Navigation (EHCAAN)
- Zambia Airports Corporation Limited (ZACL)
- Kenya Airports Authority (KAA)
- Ravinala Airports
- AERIA (Abidjan)



Presented by ACI Africa President Fabrice Grondin and Secretary General Ali Tounsi, the awards underscored the growing importance of digital transformation in the sector.

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## Final Panels & Forward-Looking Dialogues



The final conference day focused on future-oriented priorities shaping African aviation.

Discussions opened with a session on enhancing the passenger journey, emphasizing seamless facilitation, customer-centric approaches, and data-driven strategies.

A dedicated session on aviation security and resilience explored risk-based approaches, digital solutions, and concepts such as One Stop Security and One ID as enablers of both efficiency and safety.



Route development discussions highlighted the importance of strategic partnerships, market intelligence, and data-driven decision-making in expanding connectivity.

The concluding panel focused on people and the future of the industry, emphasizing capacity building, mentorship, and youth and gender inclusion as essential drivers of sustainable growth.

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## Elevating Women in Aviation: Leadership in Action



On the sidelines of the conference, ACI Africa celebrated excellence through the **ElevateHer Initiative**, aimed at advancing the role of women in aviation across the continent.

The initiative recognizes airports that are making a tangible impact through training, capacity building, and leadership development.

This year, two airports were particularly recognized:

- **Kenya Airports Authority (KAA)** – 33 women trained in 2025



- **Airports Company South Africa (ACSA)** – 59 women trained in 2025

These achievements reflect more than numbers; they represent opportunities created, barriers broken, and leadership pathways strengthened.

They also demonstrate the growing commitment across African airports to building a more inclusive and future-ready aviation sector.

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## From Luanda to Abuja A Continental Journey Forward



The Closing Ceremony marked a symbolic handover from Angola to Nigeria, with Abuja announced as the host of the next ACI Africa Conference.

Remarks were delivered by:

- Mrs. Nerica Pitta-Grós, CEO of SGA
- Mrs. Olunmi (Bunmi) Kuku, Managing Director/CEO of FAAN
- ACI Africa leadership



The ceremony also provided an opportunity to express sincere appreciation to SGA for the outstanding organization and warm hospitality that defined the event.

As Luanda passed the baton to Abuja, the message was clear: African aviation continues to advance through unity, ambition, and shared purpose.

**#SeeYouInAbuja**

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## A Memorable Social Day: Aviation Meets Culture



Following the conference, delegates participated in a Social Day hosted by SGA, combining professional exchange with cultural discovery.

Participants chose between:

- A **technical visit** to Dr. António Agostinho Neto International Airport, offering insights into infrastructure and operations
  - A **Luanda cultural tour**, featuring key landmarks including Independence Square, the Marginal, the Iron
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Palace, the Currency Museum, and the Agostinho Neto Mausoleum

The day concluded at the Armed Forces Museum, where delegates shared a closing moment of reflection and networking.

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## Exploring Key Topics Through Masterclasses



Two MasterClasses provided in-depth engagement on emerging aviation challenges:

**MasterClass 1:** *Securing the Digital Airport – Cybersecurity and Drone Risks*

Led by IT Thrust, focusing on digital threats and operational resilience.



**MasterClass 2:** *Preparing Airports for a Sustainable and Resilient Future*

Facilitated by NACO, addressing sustainability, climate resilience, and future-ready infrastructure.

These sessions reinforced ACI Africa's commitment to capacity building and knowledge leadership.

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### [Airports Council International Africa \(ACI Africa\)](#)

Contact : Tel : +212 662 300 640, E-mail : [aci-africa@aci-africa.aero](mailto:aci-africa@aci-africa.aero), <https://www.aci-africa.aero>

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