

# Preparing for take-off: transforming the civil aviation sector

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## Introduction

The Bahamian authorities have embarked on an ambitious project to reform and enhance the country's civil aviation sector.

The Civil Aviation Act 2016 (together with amendments to the supporting regulations) came into force in late 2016, while the Civil Aviation (General) Regulations (with accompanying schedules) came into force in 2017.

New and updated legislation is expected to make the civil aviation sector in The Bahamas even more robust.

## Civil Aviation Act

Civil aviation falls within the scope of the Ministry of Tourism and Aviation and is governed by the Civil Aviation Act. The act created the independent Civil Aviation Authority – the first of its kind in The Bahamas – which was launched in 2017 and is headed by the director general of civil aviation. It also transferred certain ministerial powers to the authority.

The act has provided for:

- the Civil Aviation Security Division;
- the Bahamas Air Accident Investigation Department, headed by the chief investigator of air accidents;
- the Bahamas Air Navigation Services Division, with supporting facilities and services;
- a national civil aviation security programme; and
- powers to establish and maintain aerodromes.

Together with supporting legislation, the act has given effect to the government's civil aviation reform project. Supporting legislation includes:

- the Airport Authority (Amendment) Act;
- the Civil Aviation (Investigation of Air Accidents and Incidents) Regulations;
- the Civil Aviation (Air Navigation) (Amendment) Regulations;
- the Civil Aviation (Safety) (Amendment) Regulations; and
- the Civil Aviation (Civil Penalties) Regulations.

Under the new regime, The Bahamas can fulfil its obligations as an International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) member state and fully comply with ICAO standards.

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## **Aircraft registry and Cape Town Convention**

The Civil Aviation Act further provided for the country's first aircraft mortgage register. In an ongoing effort to stimulate the civil aviation sector, the government has expressed its commitment to enhance its current aircraft register and ratify the Cape Town Convention on International Interests in Mobile Equipment and its protocol relating to aircraft equipment. The government has even earmarked funding in its 2018/2019 fiscal budget to this effect.

### **Comment**

Efforts to transform The Bahamas' civil aviation sector are well underway and will enhance its standing in the global arena, where aviation is experiencing considerable and dynamic growth. This growth will benefit not only the country's civil aviation sector, but also its financial services and private sectors.

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