

## **Regulation of Unmanned Aircraft Systems in Rwanda**

On Friday, 19 February 2016, the Cabinet (the Government of Rwanda) approved the Ministerial Regulations governing civil unmanned aircraft system (UAS) or drones as are commonly known. These Regulations will become effective upon publication in official gazette.

The regulations provide for an enhanced regulatory and permit framework for drone operations in Rwanda. The enhanced framework:

- a. provide for operations of unmanned aircraft of maximum take-off weight not exceeding 25 kilograms;
- b. limit the operations of unmanned aircraft to visual line of sight (VLOS) operations (i.e., the lateral distance between the unmanned aircraft and the remote pilot must not be more than 300 metres);
- c. prohibit flying an unmanned aircraft at a speed exceeding 87 knots (100 metres/hour);
- e. prohibit operators from flying or operating an unmanned aircraft above an altitude of 100 metres;
- f. prohibit operations of unmanned aircraft at lateral distance of less than 50 m from any person, building, structure, vehicle, vessel or animal not associated with the remotely piloted aircraft operation;
- g. prohibit an unmanned aircraft from flying over people or congested areas unless a permit is issued;
- h. prohibit operators from flying or operating an unmanned aircraft within 10 km of an aerodrome regardless of height, unless authorized to do so;
- i. prohibit an unmanned aircraft from overflying or taking photographs of a prohibited areas;
- j. prohibit night operations of unmanned aircraft;
- k. prohibit a person from acting as a pilot or operator flying more than one (1) unmanned aircraft at the same time;
- l. require operators to obtain a permit to fly or operate an unmanned aircraft;
- m. require operators of unmanned aircraft to subscribe for liability insurance;

- n. provide the necessary enforcement powers to deter malicious or dangerous unmanned aircraft activities which may threaten public safety and security;

In coming up with these regulations, the Rwanda Civil Aviation Authority (RCAA) took into account the national safety and security needs. RCAA also took into account the work done by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) thus far.

RCAA is mindful that any form of regulations would never satisfy each and all stakeholders. However, RCAA has been flexible enough to try and accommodate each and every suggestion made in coming up with what can be regarded as the best interpretation of consensus by the majority of stakeholders.