

## Vice President Commissions New Air Force Aircraft

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Vice President John Dramani Mahama has commissioned a twin-turboprop transport aircraft for the Ghana Air Force with a call on the pilots and crew to regularly maintain the plane to achieve its maximum benefits.

He said the CASA C-295-M, which is manufactured by Construcciones Aeronauticas SA in Madrid, Spain, would replace the Fokker 27 plane that had been used by the Air Force for the past 37 years.

The new aircraft, which has a civil forward facing capacity of 46 seats, military troop capacity of 70 seats and 24 medical evacuation stretchers, can fly for 11 hours non-stop and maximum speed of 245 knots with a range up to 2100 nautical miles.

The aircraft, apart from carrying passengers and goods would, also be used for supply dropping, surveillance, search and rescue and communications purposes.

Vice President Mahama said the Ghana Air Force would in March next year take delivery of a similar aircraft, while plans were far advanced to procure surveillance and training aircraft and four helicopters in subsequent times.

He commended the Ministers of Defence, Finance and Economic Planning for working out effectively with the government of Spain to procure the plane adding "this will go a long way to strengthen the already cordial relations between Ghana and Spain."

Lieutenant-General J. H Smith (rtd), the Minister for Defence, said the procurement of the aircraft formed part of government's better agenda programme.

He said the government had gone through all mandatory and statutory approvals and appealed to the public against politicising national issues.