ST HELENA AIRPORT WILL SOON BE OPEN

A Bombardier Challenger 300 business jet (illustrated) landed at St Helena Airport in the East Atlantic on 10 April 2016, at around 1120, the first ever jet aircraft to land at St Helena Airport (HLE). The island, a British Overseas Territory, lies 1210 miles west of Namibia, 4,000 miles east of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

This business jet was chartered by Air Safety Support International (ASSI) to bring its team of five personnel to St Helena to assess St Helena Airport, the construction of which had only recently been completed.

The flight had departed from Lanseria Airport, Johannesburg, on the morning of 10 April, calling at Walvis Bay, Namibia, for refuelling and a weather update.

On board the aircraft were three pilots and eight passengers connected to the Airport project – including DFID Airport Project Manager, Nigel Kirby, and Certification Manager, Alan Shaw. The ASSI team will be led by Senior Aerodrome Inspector, Justin Rothwell, who first visited St Helena last year.

On 11 April 2016, the ASSI team undertook its key on-site audit as part of the certification process. The Bombardier jet will conduct several flights during the visit for Air Traffic Control and other purposes.

It is expected that the aircraft will depart St Helena on 15 April 2016, at around 0830.

The airport building contract
In November 2011, St Helena Government signed a Design, Build and Operate (DBO) contract with Basil Read (Pty) Ltd. The contract included £201.5 million for the design and construction of the airport, an additional amount - of up to - £10 million on shared risk contingency and £35.1 million for ten years of operation.

The project aims to provide air services to St Helena, fulfilling the UK Government’s commitment to maintaining access to the Island, and provide it with a real opportunity for economic growth through tourism.

Both the St Helena Government and the UK Government hope that this will lead to eventual financial self-sustainability for St Helena.

Photo: www.sainthelena.gov.sh