

**INTERNATIONAL CIVIL AVIATION ORGANIZATION
NORTH AMERICAN, CENTRAL AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN OFFICE**

**FOURTH MEETING OF DIRECTORS OF CIVIL AVIATION
OF THE CENTRAL CARIBBEAN**

(Grand Cayman, Cayman Islands, 17-20 May 2000)

Agenda Item 7: Safety Oversight

**Experiences with the Federal Aviation Administration
International Aviation Safety Assessment Program**

(Presented by the United States of America)

SUMMARY

This paper will provide an overview of the International Aviation Safety Assessment (IASA) Program and its results. It will describe how and why the program was initiated several years ago and what has been learned in terms of the shortcomings that have been most frequently encountered. The relationship of the IASA program to the related ICAO programs, both past and present, will also be discussed. Finally, this paper will conclude with some thoughts on opportunities to address identified problem areas.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The following discussion will address the past history and current status of the IASA program and what has been learned in this area of international safety oversight. With respect to this latter point, the specific focus will be the shortcomings that have been encountered in the course of FAA assessments. Lastly, this paper will close with FAA views on what FAA and others can do to assist in instances where political will exists and resources can consequently be brought to bear to mitigate or eliminate these shortcomings.

2. DISCUSSION

2.1 In 1992, FAA began what later came to be known as the IASA program, a new approach toward assessing the safety oversight capabilities, in accordance with ICAO standards, of foreign civil aviation authorities responsible for air carriers that operate, or seek authority to operate, to the U.S. FAA launched this major initiative based on its concerns and those expressed by the U.S. Congress that the level of safety oversight being applied by other civil aviation authorities (CAAs) to their operators which had air service to the United States was simply inadequate and not in compliance with that level contemplated in ICAO safety oversight provisions. FAA's IASA experience over the course of the ensuing years largely confirmed that this "phenomenon" was, unfortunately, fairly common in many countries around the world.

2.2 By 1994, however, FAA came to recognize that while it was important to identify deficiencies in this critical safety-related area, it was equally important to successfully address and resolve these needs and to marshal wider support for achieving such goals on a multilateral basis. Hence, the U.S. became an early proponent of what would, the following year (1995), become the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) Safety Oversight Program, a voluntary program which would not only result in a "needs assessment" for participating States but would also offer the services of the ICAO Technical Cooperation Bureau (TCB) to manage any follow-on "fixes" needed to bring CAAs into compliance with ICAO standards. During the 3-year life (1995-98) of this program, the U.S. also lent tangible support to this program with long-term secondments of FAA personnel and financial contributions to cover operational expenses. During this same time, FAA has also been a participant and financial contributor to ICAO TCB regional safety oversight improvement projects in Latin America and in Asia and the Pacific rim.

2.3 With FAA support and that of most other ICAO Contracting States, ICAO launched in early 1999 its new ICAO Universal Safety Oversight Audit Program. This transition from the previous voluntary program marks a fundamental change in the role of ICAO. Now, not only will ICAO continue to be the "standard-setter" but it will also now be the "standard-monitor"--a welcome and much-needed role for ICAO to play. FAA will continue to support this successor program, both with continued secondments at ICAO headquarters in Montreal, provision of FAA personnel to serve on ICAO audit teams, and financial contributions to pay travel and other related operational costs of this new program. It is also very important to note that the technical assistance component of the previous program still remains intact, i.e. the availability of the ICAO TCB to assist with both the development and implementation of action plans to remedy deficiencies identified during the course of the ICAO audits. It should also be noted that, at the last ICAO Assembly, Contracting States endorsed the eventual expansion of this new audit program to include areas such as accident investigation, air traffic services, and

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airports. ICAO's new monitoring role will hence grow and international aviation safety will be the prime beneficiary.

2.4 So, now with ICAO as the major player in this arena, where does this leave the FAA and its IASA program? FAA must continue to make determinations, for the sake of safety of U.S. airspace, as to the adequacy of the safety oversight being applied to the operators which fly in U.S. airspace. As noted before, FAA remains a fervent supporter of the enhanced role ICAO is playing, both in the audit and technical assistance arenas. Like many other ICAO Contracting States, the U.S. is hopeful that the results of the ICAO audits, as intended and documented in the summary reports, will enable FAA to make these determinations and diminish our reliance on on-site visits by FAA assessment teams.

2.5 FAA has assessed--and publicly disclosed the results in some manner--the CAAs of almost 100 countries around the world. While FAA has determined that many of these countries are currently what is called Category 1, in compliance with ICAO safety oversight provisions, FAA has been unable to make such a positive determination initially for several countries. Based on this experience, as well as FAA's on-going relationships with its counterparts in most countries and carriers which operate to the United States, FAA has much data to support its perspective on the most common shortcomings around the world.

2.6 FAA believes that the most serious and persistent deficiency in safety oversight in this area relates to inspector resources. As background, ICAO guidance material emphasizes that the "success or failure of a State" to maintain a satisfactory level of oversight depends on the competence of its inspectors. To adequately perform their duties, ICAO states that inspectors must have:

- a. Educational and operational/technical experience qualifications that compare favorably with those operator and maintenance personnel they will inspect.
- b. Conditions of service and remuneration consistent with their education, technical knowledge/experience and comparable to those personnel whose activities they will inspect.
- c. Aeronautical licenses, certificates and/or academic degrees commensurate with their job responsibilities
- d. Periodic practical and theoretical specialized training

2.7 FAA has often found major shortcomings in this area. As to numbers first, few States seem to have any effective methodology for determining how many inspectors they need in the first place and the result has been a woefully inadequate number of inspectors assigned to an operator, e.g. one operations and one airworthiness inspector for a major international carrier. FAA has also found a dearth of well-documented, standardized training profiles and syllabi, i.e. what training an inspector should receive throughout his/her career---both classroom and on-the-job training (OJT). A similar method to track and document the training which each inspector does receive has also been lacking at times.

2.8 FAA has concern as well with hiring qualifications and how much inspectors are paid. FAA has found, for example, that some CAAs often recruit inspectors who have had little, if any, prior work experience in the aviation industry and, hence, are at a distinct disadvantage in performing their oversight functions when they interact with more experienced industry personnel. Inspector pay scales are much too low in many instances and, at times, can lead to undesirable situations such as inspectors supplementing their pay by working part-time for the entities they regulate or, after acquiring experience or training from the CAA, departing the CAA prematurely for higher-paying jobs in the industry.

2.9 In addition to this inspector resource issue, FAA has noticed at least occasional occurrences of several other undesirable situations which relate, in some way, to safety oversight issues:

- a. Inadequate attention to cabin safety oversight and English language proficiency of flight crews
- b. Challenges to inspector access to facilities of regulated entities, e.g. cockpit enroute inspections
- c. Less-than-optimal implementation of crew resource management (CRM) concepts
- d. Lack of cooperation between, or integration of, operations and airworthiness components of CAA safety oversight organizations

2.10 First and foremost, FAA is always prepared to share its oversight experience and invite its counterparts to pick, choose, and modify what they believe will best work in their environments. FAA will continue to participate in the multi-lateral ICAO COSCAP projects by lending its technical expertise and, when possible, making financial contributions. In addition to this, FAA also managed to devote resources to assisting ICAO and its Contracting States further in this safety oversight arena with the recent completion of a model aviation law, regulations, and implementing standards, along with related inspector training courses now being developed by the FAA Academy under the aegis of the ICAO TRAINAIR program. Other opportunities continue to exist, as in the past, with respect to classroom courses at the FAA Academy in Oklahoma City and on-the-job training (OJT) in our flight standards field offices. CAAs may pursue these opportunities through the FAA International Area Office in Miami.

3. CONCLUSION

3.1 FAA encourages its counterparts to take advantage of the new ICAO audit program and, when needed, the follow-on services of the Technical Cooperation Bureau (TCB), along with those which can be obtained from other qualified consultants and other civil aviation authorities (including FAA), to address any identified deficiencies. The TCB has many years of experience in planning and executing technical assistance projects, both on bilateral and multilateral bases, and through a register it maintains, has access to many well-qualified technical experts and consulting firms. All Contracting States need to do is apply...and demonstrate the necessary political will and commit the resources needed to sustain the improvements which will hopefully result from these TCB projects.