ASSEMBLY — 32ND SESSION

PLENARY

Agenda Item 7: Annual Reports of the Council to the Assembly for 1995, 1996 and 1997

ICAO ACTION PLAN TO ADDRESS THE IMPACT OF THE YEAR 2000 (Y2K) COMPUTER DATE CHANGE PROBLEM

SUMMARY

There is concern that without appropriate preparation the “year 2000” date change could have an adverse impact on the safe, efficient and regular operation of international air transport. This paper outlines the work of ICAO in co-ordinating a global approach to the problem.

REFERENCES

Doc 7300, Convention on International Civil Aviation

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 On 1 January 2000, many computer systems world-wide will begin to malfunction or produce incorrect information, simply because of the date change. The impact of the “Year 2000” or “Y2K” problem, as it is called, is considered to be a potential threat to the safe, efficient and regular operation of international air transport.

2. ACTION TAKEN AND PLANNED

2.1 In response to the concern, ICAO has collaborated with others in addressing the Y2K problem through an action plan (copy at the appendix). The primary efforts of ICAO have focussed on making information available, raising the level of awareness within the international civil aviation community, assessing States’ progress and urging States to develop contingency plans which will be reviewed by ICAO.

2.2 To raise awareness, State letter AN 13/46-97/92 was circulated on 12 December 1997. Following this, several informal meetings were held with representatives of concerned States as well as with the International Air Transport Association (IATA). To make maximum use of the available
resources and unique capabilities of IATA and ICAO, action has been taken to combine the efforts of the two organizations, effectively merging the two programmes. In co-operation with IATA, a second, more substantial State letter was circulated (AN 13/46-98/37) on 15 May 1998.

2.3 In the second letter, States were encouraged to establish a Y2K programme, and completion of a questionnaire aimed at assessing States’ progress was requested. The issue of potential problems with communications systems was raised, as was the need for contingency planning. Peripheral complications that may be expected, such as possible power outages and telephone system disruptions, were identified. States were also reminded of their responsibilities, in accordance with Article 28 of the Convention on International Civil Aviation (Doc 7300), for the provision of air navigation facilities and services and with paragraphs 3.1.5 and 3.1.6, Chapter 3 of Annex 15 — Aeronautical Information Services, for providing an aeronautical information service necessary for the safety, regularity and efficiency of air navigation, including information on hazardous circumstances. States were urged to prepare NOTAMs on the Y2K compliance status of their aviation systems, including those dealing with operations at international airports. It is expected that the NOTAMs will be disseminated on appropriate dates so that aircraft operators and others concerned will be in a position to monitor progress and assess the readiness of States as the year 2000 approaches.

2.4 Further action by ICAO has consisted of the issuance of press releases; the establishment and maintenance of a web page on the ICAO web-site with information on the Y2K problem; compilation and analyses of responses to the questionnaire in the State letter mentioned above; and co-ordination with ICAO regional offices for the purpose of obtaining responses to State letters and for the development of regional contingency plans.

2.5 In addition to the above, ICAO co-ordinates the work of an informal global co-ordination action group that meets once a month at ICAO Headquarters. The group is comprised of representatives from the aviation industry, and seeks to provide leadership and global co-ordination to Y2K efforts in air traffic services and airports. The group exchanges ideas, takes action to avoid duplication of effort, alerts its members to relevant issues, defines priorities and generally attempts to establish an efficient track to the year 2000.

2.6 Ongoing work by ICAO will include the circulation of follow-up State letters; review of States’ aviation contingency plans; compilation of status reports on progress made in order to provide confidence to the travelling public and aircraft operators; providing guidance, support and assistance in finding solutions to identified problems; responding to queries from States; and assisting States by bringing them together with manufacturers, software vendors, and other experts as appropriate.

3. ACTION BY THE ASSEMBLY

3.1 The Assembly is invited to note the contents of this paper, and to invite all States to keep ICAO up to date with the progress they are making in the aviation field, and to highlight outstanding problems.
ACTION PLAN TO ADDRESS THE YEAR 2000 DATE PROBLEM

ICAO's efforts will focus on making information available, raising the level of awareness within the international civil aviation community, assessing States' progress, urging them to develop contingency plans. This will require a substantial effort amongst the ICAO Contracting States and significant follow-up action. In order for ICAO to conduct this extensive programme, it will be necessary that at least one expert on the subject be made available to ICAO for a considerable period of time.

Action plan:

1. Circulation of the first State letter raising awareness (completed);

2. Transmission of a second State letter (AN 13/46-98/37) that goes further than the first letter by:
   - being more assertive in urging States to take action;
   - being more informative, describing a plan of action to be followed;
   - reminding States of their responsibility for safety and its relationship to the Y2K problem;
   - making reference to the oversight responsibility of States and the need for action by aircraft operators registered to a State;
   - including a brief checklist of items to be addressed and a questionnaire;
   - requiring States to send their responses to the questionnaire to ICAO;
   - identifying the need for contingency planning; and
   - stating the requirement for States to establish programmes and to notify ICAO as to the scope and progress of such programmes.


4. The plan would also involve the following milestones:
   - compiling and analyzing responses to the questionnaire in the State letter mentioned above, in order to assess the level of preparedness in States and recommend appropriate actions. From the analysis of the responses, identify:
     - shortcomings and deficiencies;
     - specific areas where States need assistance; and
     - areas where problems may be expected to occur.

     [Target date: 1 September 1998]

   - organizing and maintaining a home page on the ICAO web-site with information on the Y2K problem;

     [Target date: 1 September 1998]
publishing status reports on the progress among States in order to provide confidence to the travelling public and aircraft operators; and

[Target dates: 1 September 1998, 1 April 1999, 1 September 1999 and 1 December 1999]

organizing and conducting a series of Y2K seminars to be held at several locations in each of the ICAO regions.

Note. – The seminars would consist of presentations by experts made available, and funded, by States and international organizations. Presumably, the same group of experts would be available for the complete series of seminars.

[Target date: programme to be completed by 1 April 1999]

5. The plan would also involve the following continuous activities:

• following up on the questionnaire including liaising with Y2K contact persons in States;

• ensuring the continuous promotion of awareness of the Y2K problem among Contracting States;

• determining the readiness of States by;
  – reviewing the Y2K progress in States to the level of detail necessary;
  – reviewing States’ contingency plans;

• providing guidance, support and assistance in finding solutions to identified problems;

• encouraging the establishment of a self-help system between neighbouring States, so that those States able to do so, assist other States requiring support;

• responding to queries from States; and

• assisting States by bringing them together with manufacturers, software vendors, and other experts as appropriate.

6. Co-ordination with the ICAO regional offices leading to follow-up action by ICAO at a regional level to obtain responses, if possible, from all States.

7. Continuing efforts, including follow-up State letters informing States of actions taken by States and international organizations and the status of the action plan, also including additional information as it becomes available.

Note. – In order to carry out the actions mentioned in paragraphs 4, 5 and 7 above, secondment by States of suitably qualified experts, for work at ICAO Headquarters, is required.

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