



WORKING PAPER

ASSEMBLY — 37TH SESSION

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Agenda Item 17: Environmental protection

AVIATION EMISSIONS

(Presented by Colombia)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This working paper seeks to reiterate the position of the State of Colombia on the leadership role that ICAO should continue to play in limiting or lessening the impact of aviation greenhouse gases, using a balanced approach that also allows for the orderly and safe growth of international civil aviation. Colombia also supports the ICAO guidance on emissions trading for international aviation, so long as the airlines of other States become part of such a scheme by mutual consent since any binding requirements in this regard would significantly stunt the growth of civil aviation in developing countries.

Action: The Assembly is invited to:

- a) modify the ICAO Global Air Navigation Plan, highlighting the working program to reduce aircraft fuel burn and emissions. Ask States and regional groups to accelerate their endeavours to improve air traffic efficiency and ease airport congestion. This is the quickest way to produce tangible cuts in both local and global aviation emissions;
- b) encourage States to foster research and development and support the use of cost-effective market based measures; and
- c) as a leader on aviation environmental issues, ICAO should continue its work to attain its vision for the secure, safe and sustainable development of civil aviation through cooperation with its Member States. Contracting States are encouraged to consider ways to better manage the aviation emissions of their airlines.

<i>Strategic Objectives:</i>	This working paper relates to Strategic Objective C, <i>Environmental Protection - Minimize the adverse effect of global civil aviation on the environment.</i>
<i>Financial implications:</i>	No additional resources required.
<i>References:</i>	<i>Resolution A35-5</i> High-level Meeting on International Aviation and Climate Change 15th Conference of the Parties (COP 15) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Aviation has a vital role to play in the economic progress of the world. Every year, billions of passengers and 40% of total world exports are transported by air, shaping and re-shaping opportunities and markets around the globe.

1.2 Mindful of the importance of eco-friendly aviation, States and industry have been working to improve their environmental practices against a backdrop of high growth over the past decades. For example, aircraft noise has been cut by 75%, and fuel efficiency has increased by 70% in the last 40 years.

1.3 Encouraged by these achievements and aware of the need to take on new environmental commitments commensurate with the fast pace of growth in international aviation, the 35th Assembly of ICAO in October 2004 unanimously approved *Resolution A35-5* setting out environmental targets for limiting or lessening the impact of aircraft noise, the effects of emissions on local air quality and the effects of aviation greenhouse gases. The Assembly also recognized that Contracting States had already adopted a number of measures deemed appropriate to address the aviation emissions of their own airlines, through cooperation and mutual agreement. Consequently, the Assembly urged States to “refrain from unilateral environmental measures that would adversely affect the orderly development of international civil aviation”. At the 36th Assembly of ICAO in September 2007, Colombia presented a working paper jointly with Canada, Japan, Panama and the United States inviting States to refrain from unilaterally imposing greenhouse gas charges and ICAO to support their position on emissions trading and the principle of mutual consent.

1.4 Although no agreement was reached on bunker fuels at the 15th Conference of the Parties (COP 15) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Copenhagen on 7-18 December 2009, ICAO is moving forward with its plan of action to help mitigate climate change.

1.5 In response to the outcome of COP 15, the President of the Council of ICAO, Roberto Kobeh Gonzalez, stressed the fact that States remain committed to continuing the work, under the International Civil Aviation Convention and through ICAO, to control international civil aviation emissions in a way that will make the air transport industry environmentally sustainable.

1.6 Likewise, at the High-level Meeting on International Aviation and Climate Change held at ICAO Headquarters on 7-9 October 2009, States representing 93% of global commercial air traffic agreed to further reduce the impact of aviation on climate change, in cooperation with the air transport industry under such initiatives as: the establishment of the worldwide target to improve fuel efficiency by 2% annually through 2050; a global CO₂ standard for aircraft; a framework of market-based measures for international aviation; assistance measures for developing States to help them gain access to financial resources, technology transfer and capacity building; and on-going additional work to develop and roll out alternative fuels for the aviation community, which would make it the first sector to use these fuels on a global scale.

1.7 For aviation to successfully rise to the challenge posed by increasing emissions, ICAO must seek the cooperation of Contracting States in managing the impact of aviation emissions by means of efficiency measures, technological and operational improvements, alternative fuels and policies of an international nature, keeping in mind the interdependencies inherent in actions to reduce the environmental impact of noise and emissions.

2. DISCUSSION

2.1 The goal of mitigating the environmental impacts of noise and emissions depends on technical assistance and support for Contracting States in promoting scientific research and development in fundamental areas, so as to improve understanding and define the necessary metrics to gauge the impact of aviation greenhouse gas emissions, and design more environmentally efficient engines (aircraft design) as well as advanced CNS/ATM air transport in a timely and robust fashion. It is technological improvements such as these that have given rise to the greatest number of environmental breakthroughs in the most seriously impacted areas and in the most cost-effective way.

2.2 Moreover, the Committee on Aviation Environmental Protection (CAEP) completed development of emissions trading guidelines in February 2007. Last March, the Council of ICAO approved the document in draft form with a foreword indicating that the majority of Council members were of the view that emissions trading schemes should only apply to the airlines of other States by mutual agreement. In keeping with its leadership role, ICAO should further its work on market based measures by addressing linkages among the different emissions trading schemes established in States and/or regions.

2.3 As regards greenhouse gas emissions charges, which is still the subject of great legal controversy, the CAEP has shown that such charges are much less profitable than emissions trading.

2.4 It is important to understand that the measures adopted to control the impact of aviation emissions carry significant costs and stall economic growth, given the economic conditions in developing countries. The implications of environmental measures for the developing world have to be taken into account, hence the usefulness of an approach based on mutual consent.

2.5 Contracting States must respect one another's right to determine the best way to manage the aviation emissions of their airlines. In light of the different experiences and structures of the aviation sector around the world, there is bound to be a wide variety of goals and measures. Solutions to the problem of international aviation emissions can be found if ICAO and its Member States find common ground for action through consultation and cooperation.

— END —