International Civil Aviation Organization
North American, Central American and Caribbean Office
Second Meeting of North American, Central American and Caribbean Directors of Civil Aviation (NACC/DCA/2)
Tegucigalpa, Honduras, 11 – 14 October 2005

Agenda Item 2: **Safety Oversight**
2.4 Safety Data Exchange

INTERNATIONAL AVIATION SAFETY DATA EXCHANGE (IASDEX) PROGRAMME

(Presented by the United States of America)

SUMMARY

The International Aviation Safety Data Exchange (IASDEX) programme is expected to become an effective tool for participating civil aviation authorities to aid them in providing oversight of the foreign aircraft that operate in their airspace. This programme involves, under terms established in bilateral agreements between the FAA and a CAA, the collection and exchange of aircraft ramp inspection findings associated with foreign operators who provide service to their countries. The key features of the IASDEX programme are described in detail in this paper

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1   One of the major achievements of last fall's 35th ICAO Assembly was the endorsement of the new unified strategy to resolve identified safety-related deficiencies. One of the major features of this concept is transparency and increased disclosure with respect to important safety-related information. Along these lines, the resolution (A35-16/1) adopted by the Assembly encouraged Contracting States to:

- share with each other "critical safety information which may have an impact on the safety of international air navigation and to facilitate access to all relevant safety information,"

- make full use of "available safety information when performing their safety oversight functions, including during inspections as provided for in Article 16 of the Convention," and

- be mindful of the "need for surveillance of all aircraft operations, including foreign aircraft within their territory and to take appropriate action when necessary to preserve safety."

1.2   The U.S. heartily endorses this Resolution, including these specific directive clauses in recognizing and reinforcing the oversight obligations of States with respect to the operation of foreign aircraft within their airspace. As one response to this initiative, the Flight Standards Service of the Federal Aviation Administration of the United States Department of Transportation is developing and implementing an aircraft ramp inspection data exchange programme called the International Aviation Safety Data Exchange (IASDEX) programme.

2.   DISCUSSION

2.1   More than 600 foreign operators provide service to the United States – service that must comply with the applicable U.S. regulation entitled "Operations: Foreign Air Carriers and Foreign Operators of U.S.-Registered Aircraft in Common Carriage" (14 CFR 129). Following the issuance of economic authority from the U.S. Department of Transportation and operations specifications from the Federal Aviation Administration, foreign operators may commence service with their operations subject to FAA surveillance, usually in the form of ramp inspections when the operator's aircraft arrive at U.S. airports. Along with surveillance reports for U.S. operators, the results of these inspections are recorded in an automated FAA data base called the Performance Tracking and Reporting System (PTRS).

2.2   The Flight Standards Service of the FAA recognized that such data not only have value to the FAA but also to foreign Civil Aviation Authorities (CAAs) that issued Air Operator Certificates (AOCs) to these operators. Participating authorities can also access and use such data in deciding whether to grant authority to foreign operators who seek to provide new air service to their countries. The FAA consequently envisioned a timely exchange of available ramp inspection data among CAAs who could provide comparable ramp inspection data for foreign operators, and would be willing to participate with the FAA in a data exchange venture. This vision led to the birth of the IASDEX programme, a programme that will provide participating CAAs with the means to conduct a global analysis of the safety posture of their international operators, as well as additional data to support their foreign air service decisions.

2. 3   The main features of the IASDEX programme are as follows:

   (a)   Now in its early developmental stage, participation will initially be limited to 5-6 other foreign civil aviation authorities that have ICAO-compliant oversight systems and can provide the necessary ramp inspection data on foreign operators. In the future, participation from other CAAs that meet these criteria will be solicited.

   (b)   A formal written agreement between the FAA and each CAA that addresses responsibilities for the provision and use of data, liability issues, etc.

   (c)   Use of a standardized ramp inspection checklist, based on common data elements, to be used by CAA inspectors when conducting ramp inspections of foreign operator aircraft based on the Chicago Convention and its appropriate annexes,

   (d)   Use of a standardized inspector training programme to guide the conduct of ramp inspections of foreign operator aircraft,

   (e)   IASDEX programme management provided by the FAA Flight Standards International Programmes and Policy Division (AFS-50), and

(f)   Use of a central server accessed through a secure internet connection through which participating CAAs can make periodic uploads of ramp inspection data (a condition for initial and continued participation), i.e. only those data associated with foreign operator aircraft.

3.   CONCLUSION

3.1   There is no disagreement that a free-flow of safety-related information among governmental regulators is indispensable to international aviation safety. Although an AOC-issuing CAA has primary oversight responsibility for its operators, it may not be able to provide for adequate surveillance of international operations conducted by any of its operators. Hence, gaining the experience and access to surveillance records developed by other CAAs where such operations occur has great value in building a more complete global picture of an operator's compliance or non-compliance with its regulations. Now in its infancy, the International Aviation Safety Data Exchange (IASDEX) programme has great potential to become an effective tool for regulatory authorities who will eventually become participants in this new system.

4.   RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1   The Meeting is invited to:

a)   note the contents of this paper, and

b)   urge States in the region to recognize the importance of safety data-sharing initiatives such as the IASDEX programme, and to express interest to the FAA in possible future participation in this specific initiative.

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