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INTERNATIONAL CIVIL AVIATION ORGANIZATION

ASSEMBLY – 35TH SESSION

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Agenda Item 16: Improvement of safety oversight

**FOUNDATION OF A REGIONALLY BASED
SAFETY OVERSIGHT ORGANISATION IN THE PACIFIC
[THE PACIFIC AVIATION SAFETY OFFICE (PASO)]**

(Presented by Samoa on behalf of Australia, Fiji, Kiribati, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Samoa, Tonga and Vanuatu)

SUMMARY

This paper addresses the difficulties faced by small States in meeting their safety and security oversight responsibilities and describes the considerable progress made in the Pacific with the foundation of PASO. The paper covers the unique facets of the organisation and suggests that ICAO give consideration to more general support for the variety of regional organisational structures which are developing in various locations.

REFERENCES

A35-WP/63 Unified strategy to resolve safety-related deficiencies.Doc 7300
Convention on International Civil Aviation

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The difficulties faced by small Islands States of the Pacific in meeting their international aviation safety oversight obligations were recognised in the mid 1990s. A policy to move towards a regionally based, collaborative and harmonised system was developed as part of a regional aviation plan in 1998.

1.2 Various studies were undertaken, using the ICAO COSCAP system as a start point. It was decided that a Pacific regional organisation needed to go further than COSCAP had developed at that time and the Pacific Aviation Safety Office (PASO) concept was conceived. The original coverage of the organisation was airworthiness, flight operations and licensing however airports and security have now been added.

1.3 PASO was incorporated as a non-profit company in August 2002 and the office has developed since then. The commencement of safety and security oversight operations, based on the eight critical elements of a safety oversight system, is planned for early 2005.

2. SITUATION

2.1 PASO is built on the fundamental premise that the organisation is fully owned and directed by its member States. This is undertaken via a Council of Directors with representatives from each State, normally at the Secretary of Transport or Director General of Civil Aviation level. The Council also includes representation from the Association of South Pacific Airlines and the Secretariat of the Pacific Islands Forum. ICAO has been invited on to the Council in a technical advisor/observer role. Only States have a vote on the Council and the Chair is rotational by election.

2.2 Under the PASO concept the organisation will actually undertake safety and security oversight tasks, on behalf of the member States and as a technical advisory body. This oversight will include auditing, surveillance, assistance to industry and compliance checking. To facilitate this operation those member States who will seek services from PASO have agreed to standardise their national operating regulations, based on the New Zealand rule set.

2.3 Auditing will initially utilise both product/output audit and a Safety Management System (SMS) approach, with an increasing emphasis on SMS as the aviation industry becomes better able to utilise this. The IATA IOSA system is also being reviewed and it is under consideration to form a major part of PASO system.

2.4 In accordance with the Convention, States maintain their responsibility for oversight and therefore reports from PASO will go to the relevant State with recommendations for approval or remedial action and follow up as necessary.

2.5 The role of PASO also includes assistance and advice to the industry, as a 'safety partnership' is seen as the most effective way to use scarce technical resources in the region.

2.6 Staffing of PASO will include technical experts in the disciplines of flight operations, airworthiness, airports and security; as well as administrative support staff. The collaborative and regional nature of the organisation allows economies of scale to be realised and the non-profit nature basis means that it works in a cost-recovery mode.

2.7 To bind the States and the organisation the Pacific Civil Aviation Safety and Security Treaty has been completed and is presently open for signing by member States. The treaty specifically refers to the Convention on Civil Aviation.

2.8 All funding so far for PASO has come from within the member States via contributions and an annual fee for Council membership. Long term loan funding to cover start up costs is now being progressed through the Asian Development Bank.

3. CONCLUSION

3.1 The member States of PASO believe that the organisation will allow them to meet their international obligations in a complete and cost effective manner. While it has taken considerable time and effort to put the organisation in place it is now close to fruition.

3.2 Due to some of the specific difficulties within the region the organisation has a slightly different shape and direction than the standard ICAO supported COSCAP.

3.3 These differences indicate the need for flexibility in the set up of regionally based organisations to allow the best possible safety and security result. Paragraphs 6.4 and 6.7 of A35-WP/63, A Unified Strategy to Resolve Safety Related Deficiencies, specifically refer to organisations such as PASO.

3.4 For these reasons the PASO member States fully support the initiatives covered in Paper A 35-WP/63 and in particular the flexibility inherent in an approach which allows groupings of States to develop a regional organisation structure suitable for their specific deficiencies and requirements.

3.5 ICAO support in principle to regional organisations other than COSCAPs has the potential to encourage larger States within regional groupings to provide support in a local and cost effective manner.

4. FINANCIAL IMPACT OF THE PROPOSED ACTION

4.1 The adoption by ICAO of a more flexible approach to the development of regionally based organisations has no specific financial effect on ICAO resources. Work within the Secretariat on the provision of guidance material for such organisations is already well advanced.

5. ACTION BY THE ASSEMBLY

The Assembly is invited to:

- a) note the contents of this paper
- b) recognise the need for a flexible approach to the set up of regionally based organisations,
- c) endorse A35-WP/63 and its attached resolution; and
- d) direct the Secretary General through the Organizations' regional offices to provide appropriate assistance to foster the creation of sub-regional organizations responsible for safety oversight tasks.

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