



## ASSEMBLY – 35TH SESSION

### PLENARY

#### Agenda Item 2: Statements by delegations of Contracting States and of Observers

#### STATEMENT

(Presented by International Federation of Air Traffic Controllers' Associations<sup>1</sup>)

Safety is the highest priority in aviation. Safety of international air traffic continues to be the most important consideration in all phases of the ATM process from concept through development and day-to-day operation. We believe any and all measures designed for performance improvements of other system elements must include an assessment of how they will impact on overall system safety. We also believe safety practices must comply with requirements and standards of the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO).

The ICAO Global Aviation Safety Plan (GASP) urges all Contracting States to provide necessary support for the various elements of the ICAO Global Aviation Safety Plan. GASP also recognizes that the human element in aviation is of paramount importance to both accident prevention and aviation safety initiatives. In spite of global recognition of humans as the “key” to safety, certain States have in the recent past, chosen to abandon long-standing and accepted international terms of reference pertaining to the assurance and maintenance of high levels of safety in aviation. It would appear that some States may be experiencing difficulties in the implementation of ICAO SARPs and other elements of their State's safety oversight system. IFATCA has on several occasions received credible information from its Member Associations indicating that safety oversight in their country leaves room for improvement. There appears to exist in some States an apparent lack of “due diligence” in the application and monitoring of a Safety Management System. This, in spite of the various avenues of assistance available to States, such as ICAO's Technical Co-operation Bureau, one of the main instruments of ICAO to assist States in remedying the deficiencies identified through assessment and audit activities.

Professionally trained and licensed air traffic controllers have on several occasions been removed from control positions and replaced with unqualified personnel, as part of “contingency plans” to deal with professional or industrial matters. It is policy of IFATCA that in the interests of guaranteeing safety, controllers shall not be replaced by any personnel who do not hold an air traffic controller's license in accordance with the ICAO Annex 1, with the ratings, recency, and competency appropriate to their duties. Any air traffic control function as outlined in Annex 1, including the use of radar for any purpose whatever, shall not be added to the work responsibilities of unlicensed personnel. IFATCA submits that the deployment of non-current and/or unqualified personnel to man air traffic control positions displays total disrespect for the integrity of system safety, as well as a disregard for the safety of the flying public.

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<sup>1</sup> IFATCA is the worldwide Federation of air traffic controllers with more than forty thousand members representing 128 countries. Among its goals are the promotion of safety, efficiency and regularity in International air navigation, and the protection and safeguarding of the interests of the air traffic control profession.

The Air Traffic Services Provider has an important role to play in ensuring that all airspace it manages has safety as the undisputed number one concern. We need a positive safety culture, recognizing that accidents or incidents can result not just from system failures, but also from the practice of unsafe behaviour.

Recognizing that States or regions may not be able to immediately adopt the ATM concept, IFATCA reminds States that ICAO has the expertise and experience to provide valuable assistance should they experience difficulties in dealing with deficiencies.

IFATCA respectfully reminds States that safety must not be compromised to accommodate economy of ATS operations.

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