ICAO hosted the Global Air Traffic Management Forum on Civil/Military Cooperation at the ICAO Headquarters from 19 to 21 October 2009 in partnership with Civil Air Navigation Aviation Services Organization (CANSO), European Organisation for the Safety of Air Navigation (EUROCONTROL), International Air Transport Association (IATA), North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and supported by Air Traffic Control Association (ATCA) and UVS International.

The Forum was attended by more than 400 participants from 67 Contracting States, 9 international organizations, 6 air navigation services providers and 46 industry organizations.

The programme of the Forum covered a number of subjects of interest aimed at fostering and promoting improved civil/military cooperation and coordination.

In opening of the Forum it was emphasized that a flexible and efficient use of airspace for both civil and military operations would provide benefits in terms of more efficient aircraft operations and the environment. One of the key conditions for increasing the effective use of available airspace, while maintaining safety and security, was a commitment from both civil and military authorities to improve cooperation and coordination. Good relations and trust were essential elements in this respect.

The civil as well as the military perspectives on how to achieve optimum use of the airspace were presented taking into account the differing needs of both sets of operators and the environment. A detailed analysis of the environmental benefits to be gained from flexible airspace management was provided to the Forum. IATA highlighted the fact that the operational requirements of air transport could change on a daily basis and noted that the optimum route is rarely the shortest one. The general aviation users emphasized the need to release restricted airspace when not in use. Several States provided their views on necessary complementary arrangements for cooperation between the civil authorities and the air navigation service providers and the military authorities.

Military speakers emphasized that the term “military aviation” covers not only the use of airspace but also the military infrastructure, regulations and procedures. It was stated that rather than equipage requirements, performance requirements for military aircraft were preferred. It was also stated that some types of military operations need access to non-segregated airspace. In posing the question “can civil and military requirements meet?” it was concluded that this was indeed possible, provided there existed a will and mutual understanding between civil and military communities.

A presentation on the fundamental building blocks to civil/military cooperation was given under the agenda item Cooperative Global ATM System. The presentation provided a synopsis of civil military cooperation in Germany, detailing the progress towards dynamic airspace management and the integration of civil/military ATM. Other States also shared their experiences.

Representatives of NATO, in reviewing the phases of air incident management, emphasized the need for a comprehensive approach to, and a global harmonization of, security measures. Several States presented their views and experiences.

Presentations on the progress of activities related to unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) within ICAO, Europe, Russia and United States were provided, as well as the
integration of UAS into an already complex system. In the context of UAS, it was noted that 51 States had UAS in operation.

In discussing optimization of airspace use, speakers provided different approaches to the concept of flexible use of airspace (FUA). ICAO’s mandate to ensure global interoperability and harmonization will become increasingly important as the ATM operational concept component elements of the future programmes are introduced. Presentations by a number of States provided ample information on their respective methods and practices for civil/military cooperation in the context of FUA. Representatives of a number of international organizations presented the experiences of pilots and controllers with respect to civil/military coordination as well as the experience gained by these organizations in terms of best practices.

A draft outline for guidance material on civil/military cooperation, prepared by an ICAO informal drafting group, was presented to the Forum. In this context, States will be requested to provide ICAO with information on their best practices for civil/military cooperation as well as for the management of airspace use.

Detailed presentations were given by the ICAO Regional Directors, offering a comprehensive review of the status of civil/military cooperation within the various ICAO regions.

The Forum agreed that much progress has been achieved in most of the ICAO regions in the management of the airspace and in the civil/military cooperation; however, it was recognized that continued improvements were required with regard to the cooperation between the authorities as well as with air navigation service providers. It was suggested that military representatives should participate in ICAO meetings, seminars and other related events as part of the delegations of States in order to promote and foster cooperation.

In summarizing the results of the Forum, the following statements were made:

a) peace and stability are essential preconditions for social and economic development;

b) mutual trust and confidence are principal requirements for collaboration between civil and military authorities;

c) safety, security and efficiency are common civil and military values;

d) efficiency for civil aviation signifies increased capacity, less delays, reduction of cost, fuel burn and emissions;

e) efficiency for military aviation signifies mission effectiveness (in peace time and through crises) and realistic training along with increased capacity, less delays, reductions in cost, fuel burn, and emissions;

f) cooperation and coordination requires communication;

g) civil/military cooperation is essential at national, regional and international levels;
h) airspace is a continuum and a common limited resource for all civil and military users;

i) broad awareness and application of flexible use of airspace principles form a good common basis for global civil-military ATM coordination;

j) civil/military interoperability is essential to optimize safe and efficient use of airspace for all users and gaps must be duly addressed by the aviation community as a whole;

k) integration of UAS is a challenge and at the same time an opportunity for growth of the aviation system;

l) international civil/military cooperation and coordination are indispensable requirements both in peacetime and in crisis situations;

m) a comprehensive global civil/military approach to security and to incident management is needed; the approach taken should build on existing positive experiences which have a potential for further improvement;

n) further effort is needed, not only on flexible use of airspace but also with respect to compatible standards and procedures and the global interoperability of ATM systems; and

o) successful collaboration requires communication, education, relationship and trust.

The Forum recognized that Doc 7300, Convention on International Civil Aviation, applies only to civil aircraft and shall not be applicable to State aircraft (Article 3a refers). It agreed, however, that ICAO should play a pivotal role in improving the level of cooperation and coordination between civil and military authorities and that the Organization should serve as the international facilitating platform. It was further agreed that ICAO should use its global and regional framework to bring civil and military authorities together, raise the awareness of the States in relation to the civil/military cooperation and coordination, and facilitate the use of existing arrangements wherever they exist.

Civil and military authorities should further endeavour to understand each other’s needs and support each other in meeting objectives as well as to support a more seamless and global interoperable ATM system.

The Forum was informed that the Air Traffic Control Association (ATCA) would organize a civil/military conference at the regional level, tentatively scheduled for 2011.

The Forum supported the notion that ICAO, States, military authorities and partners should work together for their mutual benefit and progress the following next steps:

a) use ICAO as an open forum for civil/military cooperation, collaboration and the sharing of best practices;

b) develop an ICAO manual on civil/military cooperation;

c) disseminate an ICAO State letter to advise States and international organizations of the outcome of this Forum with follow-up actions
and to solicit the submission of best practices and lessons learned which would be included in an ICAO manual on civil/military cooperation;

d) work together toward ensuring the safe and efficient integration of unmanned aircraft systems into non-segregated airspace;

e) work together on ATM security issues;

f) address civil/military cooperation at the 37th Session of the ICAO Assembly in a way that ensures that the momentum gained at this Forum is strengthened at high levels within State administrations and international organizations;

g) present a working paper to the Assembly proposing an amendment to Assembly Resolution A36-13, Appendix O, Coordination of Civil and Military Air Traffic, aimed at strengthening States’ commitment to enhance cooperation between civil and military authorities;

h) ICAO Regional Directors will further promote civil and military cooperation through the planning and implementation regional groups (PIRGs);

i) all of the civil/military cooperation partners will collaborate to support regional civil/military events; and

j) ICAO will convene, together with its partners, a second global forum at an appropriate time, to measure progress in civil/military cooperation and to determine the next steps.

ICAO and its partners can only do so much to achieve success in civil/military cooperation. State administrations, working closely with air navigation service providers and military authorities, must take action to establish political will, develop institutional arrangements, bring civil and military authorities together at the national level, set performance objectives, develop practical and operational measures and finally, implement the necessary changes to make this happen.