



**WORKING PAPER**

**ASSEMBLY — 38TH SESSION**

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

**Agenda Item 24: Increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of ICAO**

**AVAILABILITY OF ICAO DOCUMENTS  
IN THE OFFICIAL LANGUAGES OF THE ORGANIZATION**

(Presented by the 22 (\*) member States of the  
Latin American Civil Aviation Commission)

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This working paper highlights the on-going difficulties encountered with respect to the availability in all of the official languages of ICAO documents concerning safety and other important areas of work of the organization.

Cuba presented a working paper on this matter to the HLSC 2010, which won the necessary consensus for action. Since then, Cuba has presented other papers at various regional and global events calling attention to the unavailability of ICAO documents in all of the official languages, with negative consequences for the work, in particular on safety-related issues. Because this problem has not been satisfactorily resolved, the State of Cuba insists on the need for a solution, which it submits for the consideration of the 38<sup>th</sup> Assembly of the Organization.

**Action:** The Assembly is invited to:

- a) Take note of the information in section (2) of this working paper;
- b) Support the proposed amendment to Resolutions A37-15 and A37-25 as set out in Appendix B to this paper, so as to increase the dissemination of ICAO documents in all of the official languages of the organization;
- c) In the discussion and approval of the Budget of the Organization for the next triennium, support the appropriation of funds required by the Secretariat for the timely translation of technical specifications for SARPs and PANS developed by ICAO, and;
- d) Propose any other actions deemed necessary.

<i>Strategic Objectives:</i>	This working paper relates to all Strategic Objectives, in particular Safety.
<i>Financial implications:</i>	The Organization should have the necessary financial resources in the Regular Programme Budget.

(\*) Argentina, Aruba, Belize, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Dominican Republic, Uruguay, and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of).

<i>References:</i>	HLSC 2010-WP/49, 12/3/2010; C/CAR/DCA/11 – NE/16, 09/7/2010; A37-WP134, 23/9/2010; C/CAR/DCA/12 – NE/22, 06/7/2012; Document 9935, HLSC 2010; Resolution A36-13 of the 36 <sup>th</sup> Assembly of ICAO; Resolution A37-15 of the 37 <sup>th</sup> Assembly of ICAO; Resolution A37-25 of the 37 <sup>th</sup> Assembly of ICAO; Document 7300, <i>Convention on International Civil Aviation</i> ; Document 7231, <i>ICAO Publications Regulations</i> ; ICAO Portal, List of Documents.
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## 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The ICAO language services are governed by Article 54 of the Chicago Convention and a number of Assembly resolutions that call for provision of adequate language services for the global distribution of ICAO documentation, for the proper functioning of the Organization and its permanent bodies, and for parity and quality of service in all of the working languages, as well as observance of the principle of simultaneous distribution in all of the ICAO working languages. ICAO has the mandate and obligation to draft and produce publications (including Annexes), Manuals, Circulars and other guidance material in the fields of safety, aviation security, environmental protection and the sustainable development of air transport.

1.2 Resolution A37-25, *ICAO Policy on the language services*, resolved that:

The Assembly:

- (1) Reaffirms that multilingualism is one of the fundamental principles to achieve the goals of ICAO as the specialized UN agency;
- (2) Reaffirms its previous resolutions regarding the strengthening of the working languages of ICAO;
- (3) Recognizes that language services are an integral part of any ICAO programme;
- (4) Resolves that parity and quality of service in all of the working languages of ICAO be the continuous objective of the Organization.

1.3 The official languages of ICAO are Arabic, Chinese, Spanish, French, English and Russian, as is the case in most bodies of the United Nations system.

1.4 Document 7231 *ICAO Publications Regulations*, Article VII – *Languages* states that, subject to other decisions made by the Council and the availability of resources, publications of a worldwide character such as Manuals, Circulars and the *International Civil Aviation Vocabulary* should be published in all of the official languages. Although *Resolving* clause 4 of Resolution A37-25 says that parity and quality of service in all ICAO working languages should be the continuous objective of the Organization, the reality is different. Indeed, for the last several years many documents have been published only in English.

1.5 Countries whose language is not one of the official languages of the Organization must choose one of them to access all of the information produced and take further steps to ensure the documents are correctly understood.

## 2. DEVELOPMENT

2.1 There is a heightened need for consistency in the development of national standards in relation to ICAO SARPs. The new navigation systems based on the latest technologies are helping to phase in the main principles of a single sky. For this endeavour to succeed, not only must the Standards and Recommended Practices be available in all of the languages, but also a wide range of documentation that expounds on the new concepts and provides adequate guidance on implementation in the different languages. This is to prevent misinterpretations that could impact the safety, regularity and efficiency of

air operations. A large portion of the documentation that supports SARP implementation by States is not translated into all ICAO official languages, which may result in the aforementioned consequences. Appendix A to this paper gives a brief example of important documents that are not available in all official languages of ICAO.

2.2 Resolution A37-25, *ICAO Policies on language services*, paragraph 9, requests the Council to consider the need for amendment of the *ICAO Publications Regulations* (Document 7231/11) to provide dissemination of ICAO publications in all working languages of ICAO, but this has not happened. On the contrary, the Council has seriously discussed proposals to reduce translation (and interpretation) capacity at a time when demand for those services is increasing. In its 198<sup>th</sup> session, the Council adopted Decision C-DEC 198/7 paragraph 4(i) of which states, “*Waiving the requirement for simultaneous distribution for Manuals and Circulars so as to publish the original language first and other languages later within a period of a maximum of 60 working days. Annexes and PANS and their amendments will continue to be published simultaneously in all languages.*” Although this measure may seem rational for purposes of optimizing the resources available for translation in a context of budget constraints, if the principle of simultaneous distribution has not been upheld, how will it be possible to ensure compliance with the 60-day period approved by the Council?

2.3 Cuba has been stressing this matter since the High-level Conference on Safety held in Montreal in 2010. We have also raised the issue in working papers presented at the 37<sup>th</sup> Assembly of ICAO and at regional events such as Meetings 11, 12 and 13 of Central Caribbean Civil Aviation Directors, which were generally well received. The High-level Conference on Safety of 2010 adopted Recommendation 3/3, paragraph 1(e) of which refers to the availability of ICAO guidance material in the official languages of ICAO. Of the 47 recommendations adopted, Recommendation 3/3 has still not been addressed. Though many of the documents mentioned have been translated, the new document list currently on ICAO NET still has a large number of untranslated documents.

2.4 Judging by experience in the last triennium, it is essential to further increase the number of ICAO documents available in all official languages by amending Resolutions such as A37-15 and A37-25. Cuba proposes amendments to this effect, the preliminary draft of which is contained in Appendix B to this working paper.

### 3. CONCLUSIONS

3.1 A lack of supporting documents for SARPs in the official languages of ICAO could give rise to misinterpretations by States whose language is not the original language of publication (mostly English). Consequently, national regulations and other texts prepared by those States may contain errors that can lead to improper implementation.

3.2 In spite of the Resolutions adopted by the Assembly and the provisions of ICAO Standards, a large number of important documents relating to safety are still only published in one language.

3.3 In order to adhere to the principle of multilingualism as one of the essential requirements for ICAO to achieve its goals, we reiterate the view that the Budget of ICAO should cover translation needs, in compliance with the relevant Assembly Resolutions and commitments to States, for the sake of aviation safety.

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**APPENDIX A**

**LIST OF ICAO GUIDANCE AND PROCEDURAL DOCUMENTS  
NOT AVAILABLE IN ALL OFFICIAL LANGUAGES OF ICAO**

Doc. 7192	Training Manual
Doc. 8984	Manual of Civil Aviation Medicine
Doc. 9375	Dangerous Goods Training Manual
Doc. 9376	Preparation of an Operational Manual
Doc. 9379	Manual of Procedures for Establishment and Management of a State`s Personnel Licensing System
Doc. 9426	Air Traffic Service Manual (En/Fr)
Doc. 9654	Manual on Prevention of Problematic Use of Substances in the Aviation Workplace
Doc. 9766	Handbook on the International Airways Volcano Watch (IAVW) - Operational Procedures
Doc. 9849	Global Navigation Satellite System (GNSS) Manual, Second edition
Doc. 9880	Manual on Detailed Technical Specifications for the Aeronautical Telecommunication Network (ATN) using ISO/OSI Standards and Protocols
Doc. 9694	Manual of Air Traffic Services Data Link Applications
Doc. 9776	Manual on VHF Digital Link (VDL) Mode 2

Doc. 9887	Report of the Independent Experts on the LTTG NOx Review and Medium and Long Term Technology Goals for NOx
Doc. 9888	Noise Abatement Procedures: Review of Research, Development and Implementation Projects – Discussion of Survey Results
Doc. 9896	Manual on the Aeronautical Telecommunication Network (ATN) Using Internet Protocol Suite (IPS) Standards and Protocols
Doc. 9943	Report to CAEP by the CAEP Noise Technology Independent Expert Panel. Aircraft Noise Technology Review and Medium and Long Term Noise Reduction Goals. Report
Doc. 9953	Report of the Independent Experts to CAEP/8 on the Second NOx Review and the Establishment of Medium and Long Term Technology Goals for NOx
Doc. 9992	Manual on the Use of Performance-Based Navigation (PBN) in Airspace Design
Doc. 9993	Continuous Climb Operations (CCO) Manual
Doc. 9995	Manual of Evidence-Based Training
Doc. 9997	Performance-Based Navigation (PBN) Operational Approval Manual

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## APPENDIX B

### PRELIMINARY PROPOSAL FOR THE AMENDMENT OF RESOLUTIONS A37-15 AND A37-25

#### **Resolution A37-15, *Consolidated statement of continuing ICAO policies and associated practices related specifically to air navigation***

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#### **Appendix A, Formulation of Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs) and Procedures for Air Navigation Services (PANS)**

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3. SARPs and PANS shall be drafted in clear, simple and concise language. SARPs shall consist of broad, mature and stable provisions [...]. Supporting technical specifications, when developed by ICAO, **shall be translated into all of the official languages in a timely manner**, and shall be placed in separate documents to the extent possible.

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#### **Appendix E, ICAO technical manuals and circulars**

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The Assembly resolves that priority shall be provided for the continuing updating of the contents of present ICAO technical manuals and the development of additional guidance material as warranted by advancing technology, **with the timely translation into all ICAO working languages of safety-related documents**, thus ensuring optimum value for Contracting States in their implementation of Standards, Recommended Practices and Procedures for Air Navigation Services [...].

#### **Resolution A37-25, *ICAO Policy on the language services***

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8. Requests the Secretary General of ICAO to adhere to UN best practices related to the language services, including temporary recruitment of staff at peak periods and the level of outsourcing of translations and interpretation, **with priority given to safety-related documents**;

9. Requests the Council to consider the need for amendment of Doc 7231/11 *ICAO Publications Regulations* to provide **timely** dissemination of ICAO publications in all working languages of ICAO, **with priority given to technical specifications for SARPs and PANS, when developed by ICAO**.

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