ICAO safety audit programme celebrates 20-year anniversary

For immediate release

ICAO HQ, Montréal, 11 March 2020 – During a special ceremony conducted at yesterday's fourth meeting of the ICAO Council's 219th Session, ICAO Council President Salvatore Sciacchitano accepted a framed gift from the UN agency's Secretary General, Dr. Fang Liu, commemorating the 20th Anniversary last year of ICAO's Universal Safety Oversight Audit Programme (USOAP).
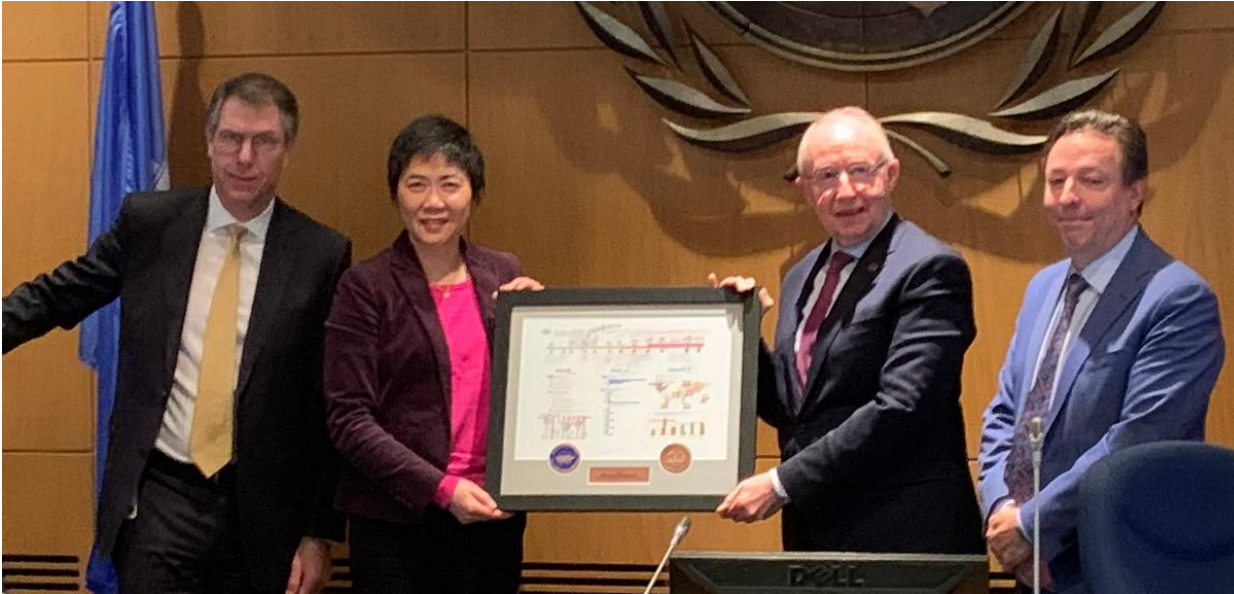
Dr. Liu highlighted that "the one constant throughout the programme's history has been its commitment to adapt to achieve its objectives through continuously more effective and efficient approaches," and that she looked forward to "the improvements now being considered to enhance the efficiency of the USOAP while maintaining safeguards to guarantee its independence, universality, standardization and global acceptance."

Mr. Sciacchitano appreciated that the prestigious ICAO programme had completed close to 900 activities since its inception, of which more than 450 were audits, adding that he looked forward to it "continuing to evolve to meet the changing needs of ICAO Member States in our rapidly innovating air transport environment, and to provide an invaluable service in helping countries to identify and address areas of deficient safety oversight performance, including through the cooperation and assistance of other States as coordinated through ICAO."

The USOAP programme continues to be one of the most visible that ICAO has launched in the last two decades. Its eight Critical Elements (CEs) have provided an aligned set of safety oversight categories for the aviation community to work with, and the Effective Implementation (EI) metric ICAO uses to measure safety oversight performance under the USOAP is just as widely understood as an important and objective global aviation safety indicator.

Through the evolution of the USOAP CMA, ICAO aims to maintain the programme's status as a global aviation monitoring system of ICAO Member States' capabilities for safety oversight, aircraft accident and incident investigation, and their maturity in implementing State Safety Programmes (SSPs). It recently initiated a new SSP Implementation Assessment cycle to this end, and has also been adapted to audit cooperative regional safety oversight organizations (RSOOs).

"These and further transformations will strengthen the programme and progress it in line with the evolving safety strategy of ICAO," Dr. Liu commented, "while also resulting in a more efficient programme supported by enhanced technologies, structures, and management systems."

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Resources for Editors

FAQs on the ICAO Universal Safety Oversight Audit Programme (USOAP)
USOAP audit results – interactive online viewer

About ICAO
A specialized agency of the United Nations, ICAO was created in 1944 to promote the safe and orderly development of international civil aviation throughout the world. It sets standards and regulations necessary for aviation safety, security, efficiency, capacity and environmental protection, amongst many other priorities. The Organization serves as the forum for cooperation in all fields of civil aviation among its 193 Member States, and helps them to share their skies to their mutual benefit.

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