



WORKING PAPER

ASSEMBLY — 40TH SESSION

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Agenda Item 26: Other high-level policy issues to be considered by the Executive Committee

**PROMOTION OF THE CRITICAL SAFETY ROLE OF CABIN CREW MEMBERS THROUGH
RECOGNITION OF AN INTERNATIONAL CABIN CREW DAY**

(Presented by the International Transport Workers' Federation)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The critical safety role of cabin crew members is essential in the maintenance of flight and cabin safety and the protection of passengers, crew and aircraft alike. Past accident investigations have stated that the performance of cabin crew members was a significant factor in the successful evacuation of aircraft and the survivability of occupants.

The promotion of the International Cabin Crew Day annually would allow the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) to promote the standards and practices recommended in the Cabin Crew Safety Training Manual (Doc 10002) and documents developed through the ICAO Cabin Safety Group (ICSG). This promotion is in line with the goals of the Next Generation of Aviation Professionals (NGAP) programme, as it would help attract and retain the next generation of cabin crew. An international day to promote the role of cabin crew would promote the diverse and safety-critical role that the cabin crew provide to aviation. As cabin crew is a role which has a high percentage of women's employment, the promotion of the safety-critical role of cabin crew has a strong gender equality aspect and assists ICAO in contributing to UN Sustainable Development Goal 5 and promoting a gender-balanced workforce in aviation.

Action: The Assembly is invited to:

- a) request the Council to establish an annual international cabin crew day to enhance the awareness of the cabin crew role in order to attract future aviation professionals to the industry through the NGAP programme; as well as to raise the awareness of Member States of the ICAO Cabin Crew Safety Training Manual and other ICAO cabin safety-related provisions.
- b) note the existing date of 31st May as a cabin crew day, which was celebrated by airlines and organisations from at least 32 Member States in 2019.

<i>Strategic Objectives:</i>	This working paper relates to Strategic Objectives of continuous safety improvements, and training and capacity building in aviation.
<i>Financial implications:</i>	None
<i>References:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Annex 6 <i>Operations of Aircraft, Part 1 – International Commercial Air Transport – Airplanes</i>• Doc 10002, <i>ICAO Cabin Crew Safety Training Manual</i>• Doc 10062, <i>Cabin Safety Investigation Guidelines</i> Doc 10075, <i>Assembly Resolutions in Force (as of 6 October 2016)</i>

¹ Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish versions provided by ITF.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Civil aviation is an industry where the safety, security and lives of many thousands of people depend on aviation personnel who work in a range of occupational groups, including approximately 570 000 cabin crew members who manage numerous safety features of aircraft.

1.2 Cabin crew are skilled professionals with a critical role in cabin and passenger safety and security. The concerns of cabin and passenger safety encompass a range of different disciplines, topics and procedures, which are not always evident to airline customers, including risk management, training, reporting, investigating, auditing, fatigue risk management, formulating safety and emergency procedures, security, and first aid.

1.3 Many organisations, including airlines and representative bodies, informally recognise an 'International Cabin Crew Day' on the 31st May each year, but there is no consistent and formalised event to recognise the important work of these aviation professionals. A short survey of activities for the 2019 'International Crew Day' showed airlines and organisations from at least 32 Member States celebrated the day in some way.

1.4 The ability to promote the role of cabin crew will aid with retention of cabin crew in light of a global labour shortage. Additionally, a full understanding of the diversity and importance of the role of cabin crew members will assist recruiters in promoting the cabin crew position beyond the traditional understanding of what the role entails.

2. THE CRITICAL SAFETY ROLE OF CABIN CREW MEMBERS

2.1 The role of cabin crew is highly varied; however, all of these tasks need to be carried out with a particular focus on safety. The discipline of cabin safety focuses on preventing injuries and avoiding the escalation of an abnormal situation into an emergency. Cabin crew also play a crucial role in preventing human trafficking on commercial flights as well as spotting and tackling cabin smoke, and fume events amongst many other possible scenarios.

2.2 Survivability in accidents is rising, and in these situations, it is the cabin crew who implement safety and emergency procedures. The incidents in which cabin crew fully executed their safety responsibilities to ensure as rapid an evacuation as possible, and saved numerous lives, makes for a long list. Some examples in recent years include Air France 358 at Toronto Pearson International (CYYZ) in 2005, Asiana 214 at San Francisco International (KSFO) in 2013, British Airways 2276 at Las Vegas McCarran International (KLAS) in 2015, and Emirates 521 at Dubai International (OMDB) in 2016 to name a few. While we still await the results of the investigation, initial reports suggest that Aeroflot 1492 is another example, in which 22 year old cabin crew member Maxim Moiseyev died while evacuating passengers.

2.3 Because of the heightened security awareness in the airline industry in recent decades, and subsequent changes to inflight procedures, the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) believes cabin crew's security role has also become ever more important. As security procedures require keeping a locked flight deck door, cabin crew have become the last line of defence. This was graphically illustrated by several cases, including the case of American Airlines 63 in 2001, and more recently the attempted hijacking of a Biman Bangladesh 737 in 2019.

2.4 Promotion of the professional safety role of cabin crew by the industry, governments and all other stakeholders is critical to ensure that aviation has competent personnel, who are qualified and motivated to manage safety and security as an absolute priority.

2.5 It also serves as an important supporting role for the Next Generation of Aviation Professionals (NGAP) Programme, which aims to tackle labour shortages of skilled professionals at present and in the near future. According to ICAO's forecast, the global aviation industry will require more than 1 185 000 cabin crew by 2037 and with the attrition rate taken into consideration, an additional 920 000 new cabin crew will be required during this period.

2.6 Promotion of the key safety role and the importance of cabin crew will give greater attraction to new personnel, while also ensuring that personnel currently employed as cabin crew are properly recognized for their work as safety professionals. Recognition of this community of aviation professionals is essential in showing the true professionalism and expertise of cabin crew to the public and potential future members of the aviation community.

2.7 As cabin crew is a role which has a high percentage of women's employment, the promotion of the safety-critical role of cabin crew has a strong gender equality aspect. As emphasised in UN Sustainable Development Goal 5, the work that women do is often undervalued – and in this case, the safety and security professional roles they take as the cabin crew is undervalued. There is still a strong tendency to put emphasis on the so-called 'female' service component of the job done by cabin crew and not on the critical role they hold in protecting the safety of the aircraft, crew and passengers. The ITF believes that promoting diversity, including a gender-balanced workforce in aviation is also a priority for the NGAP programme. This is also reflected in Resolution 30 from the 39th General Assembly which 'calls upon all actors to intensify and accelerate action to achieve the full and effective implementation of the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action'.

2.8 In 2014, the ICAO Cabin Crew Safety Training Manual was published as guidance for a competency-based approach to cabin crew safety training. The ITF has welcomed the manual along with many other manuals and guidance materials developed by the ICAO Cabin Safety Group, which have established an international baseline for cabin crew competencies by providing international regulators and operators with guidance to develop cabin crew safety training based on proficiency in duties and responsibilities.

2.9 Aviation is an ever-evolving industry, and with it, the safety and security roles of cabin crew will evolve. Promotion of their work should also include promotion of the benefits of the ICAO Cabin Crew Safety Training Manual as a tool to ensure that aviation remains as safe as it can possibly be. The competency of cabin crew is ensured through these training provisions and it is important that they are recognised as a means to ensuring safety and security.

3. CONCLUSION

3.1 The ITF believes that the role of cabin crew is one of the most essential safety roles in the aviation industry. In addition to this, cabin crew are the largest group of professionals in aviation and have maintained the safety of passengers, crew and aircraft to the best of their ability since early in the 20th century. The work of the NGAP programme is key in developing decent work, gender equality and sustainable development for States, airlines and workers alike. The ITF believes that it is through initiatives like this that the industry can attract and retain the best and the brightest possible workforce for the continued growth of the aviation industry.

3.2 This initiative is also in line with UN Sustainable Development Goals 5: Gender Equality, 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth, and 17: Partnership for the Goals. Such days for the promotion of cabin crew already exist both formally at the domestic level, and informally globally. As the international body representing aviation, it is fitting that ICAO take this mandate and formalise recognition of an annual cabin day crew across the globe.

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