



International
Civil Aviation
Organization

Organisation
de l'aviation civile
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Organización
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Международная
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Subject: Proposed Third High-level Safety Conference
(HLSC 2021)

Action required: Comments to reach Montréal by
21 February 2020

Sir/Madam,

1. I have the honour to inform you that the Air Navigation Commission, at the third meeting of its 212th Session on 22 October 2019, agreed that ICAO Member States and appropriate international organizations be consulted on the convening of the Third High-level Safety Conference (HLSC 2021). The conference will cover all aviation safety elements, the evolution of the Universal Safety Oversight Audit Programme (USOAP) Continuous Monitoring Approach (CMA) and selected air navigation matters. Details on the need, theme, expectations, timing and organization for the proposed HLSC 2021 are elaborated in Attachment A.

2. HLSC 2021 will be convened in the year ahead of the 41st Session of the ICAO Assembly. It will provide a forum for detailed technical discussions leading to agreement on a set of high-level recommendations. These will be submitted for approval to the ICAO Council. The 41st Session of the Assembly will be informed about the outcomes of HLSC 2021. This approach allows the Assembly to focus on global plans, policy matters and strategic issues based on sound technical advice. In this respect, it is important to note the decision of the ICAO Council regarding the Organization's practice in convening high-level meetings and how they inform Assembly sessions (C-DEC 210/6 refers).

3. With a focus on the future of aviation, an initial list of indicative subjects for consideration at HLSC 2021 has been prepared. This list is presented in Attachment B and background information on the origin and purpose of the subjects is contained in Attachment C. To facilitate the preparation of your reply, its subsequent consolidation with other replies, and their analysis and prioritization by the Commission, you are invited to complete the questionnaire in Attachment D, amplified as necessary by narrative comments.

4. As the aviation system evolves rapidly, and becomes more complex and interconnected, discussion must involve all stakeholders and consider all disciplines to ensure meaningful progress. Air navigation topics related to the conference theme will also be discussed. To facilitate the necessary wide

and varied participation, it is envisioned that discussions at the conference will be organized around the proposed theme. Subjects such as security and the environment can be addressed within the context of safety and air navigation.

5. Considering the variety of subjects proposed for discussion at HLSC 2021, attendance by appropriate technical experts in the areas of safety and air navigation will be essential.

6. May I invite you to send the views of your Government/Organization to reach me not later than 21 February 2020 to assist the Commission with its further consideration on this matter. In light of the comments received, the Commission will consider the need for convening the Third High-level Safety Conference (HLSC 2021) in June 2021 and, if the need is established, will agree on an agenda, convening date, site, duration and organizational plan.

Accept, Sir/Madam, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Fang Liu
Secretary General

Enclosures:

- A — Details on the need, theme, expectations, timing and organization
- B — Indicative list of subjects for inclusion in the Third High-level Safety Conference (2021) agenda
- C — Background information on the origin of the theme and intended outcomes
- D — Questionnaire on subjects for discussion by the Third High-level Safety Conference (2021)

**DETAILS ON THE NEED, THEME, EXPECTATIONS,
TIMING AND ORGANIZATION**

1. NEED FOR THE CONFERENCE

1.1 *Purpose:* The purpose of the HLSC 2021 is to bring together the appropriate level of senior officials within States' civil aviation authorities and other State authorities to gain consensus, and formulate recommendations and decisions on the main safety issues and air navigation matters related to the conference theme. The conference will also provide stakeholders with an opportunity to coalesce around major themes, set priorities and refine the way forward based on lessons learned. Considering the variety of subjects proposed for discussion at HLSC 2021, attendance by appropriate technical experts in the areas of safety and air navigation will be essential.

1.2 Similar to the Thirteenth Air Navigation Conference (AN-Conf/13) which was convened a year ahead of the 40th Assembly, HLSC 2021 will be convened ahead of the 41st Session of the ICAO Assembly. The 40th Session of the ICAO Assembly recognized the importance of convening divisional-type meetings ahead of the Assembly. The 40th Session of the ICAO Assembly also requested the Council to continue applying the practice of convening a divisional-type meeting ahead of an Assembly so as to support the strategic planning of the work of the Organization, inform the ICAO Regular Programme Budget covering safety and air navigation for the subsequent triennium, and to help reduce the time and depth of technical discussion during the Assembly. The Technical Commission of the ICAO Assembly will therefore be able to focus its discussion on relevant global plans, policy matters as well as on new issues that had arisen in the interim.

1.3 *Indicative list of subjects for HLSC 2021:* An indicative list of subjects and background information are presented in Attachments B and C, respectively.

2. THEME OF THE CONFERENCE: EMBRACING EVOLUTION

2.1 The theme of the conference is "Embracing Evolution". In today's world, aviation is about safety, efficiency, speed and interconnectivity. The aviation sector is growing rapidly and demand for air transport in the near future is set to increase dramatically. By 2030, annual passenger traffic and global cargo volumes are expected to have doubled. In addition, the rapid technological changes in the industry, including the implementation of artificial intelligence, unmanned aircraft, "urban air mobility" and block chain, digitalization of aviation, and introduction of new business models and approaches will all impact aviation. As the evolution in aviation accelerates, it is essential, inter alia, to enhance regulatory capacity and infrastructure, develop new training approaches, and improve current processes and procedures (including licensing, certification, authorization and approvals) to embrace these transformations. At the same time, it is important to ensure that all Member States will be able to effectively fulfil their safety oversight functions and responsibilities. An inclusive dialogue at strategic level is essential in order to encourage further collaboration and sharing of experience. This dialogue should include States, governmental and non-governmental organizations, the private sector, academia and the relevant United Nations system entities as called for by Assembly Resolution A40-27: *Innovation in Aviation*, as well as non-traditional innovators.

2.2 *Application:* As the aviation system evolves rapidly, and becomes more complex and interconnected, discussion must involve all stakeholders and consider all disciplines to ensure meaningful progress. Air navigation topics related to the conference theme will also be discussed. To facilitate the necessary wide and varied participation, it is envisioned that conference discussions will be organized around the proposed theme. Subjects such as security and the environment will be addressed within the context of safety and air navigation.

3. **EXPECTATIONS OF THE CONFERENCE**

3.1 *Expectations:* The conference is a formal ICAO meeting that will provide an opportunity for Member States and aviation stakeholders to work together towards a global aviation safety strategy that would allow them to adapt and respond to the rapid pace of developments in civil aviation. It will identify and set priorities, and coalesce views of the global aviation community around major objectives. The conference will also provide a stimulus for strategic planning at the global, regional and national levels, and inform the ICAO Regular Programme Budget covering safety and air navigation capacity and efficiency for the subsequent triennium.

3.2 The outcomes of the conference will allow ICAO to plan work programmes of subject matter expert groups, regional aviation safety groups (RASGs), and planning and implementation regional groups (PIRGs).

3.3 Similar to AN-Conf/13, HLSC 2021 will provide a forum for detailed technical discussions leading to agreement on a set of high-level recommendations that will be submitted for approval to the ICAO Council. The 41st Session of the Assembly will then be informed about the outcomes of HLSC 2021. This approach allows the Assembly to focus on strategic issues based on sound technical advice.

4. **TIMING AND ORGANIZATION OF THE CONFERENCE**

4.1 *Timing and organization:* The conference will deal with all safety elements, including personnel licensing, aircraft certification and operation, airworthiness, safety management and the transport of dangerous goods, as well as the evolution of USOAP CMA. Air navigation matters related to the conference theme will be also considered. The number of committees at the conference will be decided in light of comments to be received from States and international organizations. It is estimated that the conference will require five working days. Based on the foregoing, it is proposed that HLSC 2021 will be convened at ICAO Headquarters, Montréal, from 1 to 5 June 2021.

4.2 Prior to the conference, an industry event, planned for 31 May 2021, is intended to provide an opportunity to showcase the latest developments, share experience and knowledge, and inform the discussions at HLSC 2021.

**INDICATIVE LIST OF SUBJECTS FOR INCLUSION IN THE
THIRD HIGH-LEVEL SAFETY CONFERENCE (HLSC 2021) AGENDA**

1. STRATEGY AND POLICY

2023-2025 Edition of the Global Aviation Safety Plan

1.1 The *Global Aviation Safety Plan* (GASP, Doc 10004) sets forth the global strategic direction for safety and provides the framework in which regional, subregional and national implementation plans are developed and implemented, thus ensuring harmonization and coordination of efforts aimed at improving international civil aviation safety.

1.2 It is intended that the conference will review progress made by the Global Aviation Safety Plan Study Group (GASP-SG) on the revision of the GASP. It will also provide an opportunity to obtain feedback on challenges related to GASP implementation, as well as proposals for the high-risk categories, organizational challenges and emerging issues to be considered in the GASP.

National aviation safety plan (NASP) implementation

1.3 Assembly Resolution A40-1: *ICAO global planning for safety and air navigation* recognizes the importance of effective implementation of regional and national aviation safety plans. It resolves that States should develop and implement national aviation safety plans (NASPs), in line with the goals of the GASP. The conference is expected to review the impact of ICAO efforts to assist States in developing NASPs and to work towards strategic planning in managing aviation safety and responding to new challenges at the regional and national levels.

Innovation in aviation

1.4 New technologies and concepts of operation are rapidly becoming available across the aviation industry. These innovations have significant potential for improving aviation safety, security, sustainability, accessibility and affordability across the globe. They can also lead to more efficient and streamlined aviation regulatory processes. It is therefore vital that the aviation community takes timely action to monitor and evaluate these developments so that their potential benefits can be realized in a manner that leaves no country behind from the start. It is expected that the conference will continue an inclusive dialogue at the strategic level that will encourage further collaboration and sharing of experience in relation to innovation. This dialogue will also include non-traditional actors in aviation.

Evolution of the Technical Commission

1.5 The conference is expected to discuss the evolution of the Technical Commission of the Assembly, specifically whether it should only focus on strategy and policy leaving technical issues to be discussed at divisional-type meetings.

2. STANDARDIZATION

Regulatory capacity

2.1 Due to new business models, traffic growth and introduction of innovations, new technologies and concepts of operation, there is a need to enhance regulatory capacity, training approaches, current processes and procedures to ensure safe development of civil aviation. These enhancements will include, inter alia, issuance of licenses, certification processes and training approaches.

Risk management

2.2 The aviation system is constantly changing. Recognizing that the ability to adapt and respond to new risks and rapid changes to aviation is crucial to safety, the conference will discuss new challenges associated with the evolution in aviation, as well as those related to the transport of dangerous goods, risks generated by passengers, new types of aircraft operating in new locations, unmanned traffic management and other new entrants, and how they can be effectively managed to minimize adverse consequences.

3. IMPLEMENTATION AND SUPPORT

3.1 ICAO and Member States need to find ways to adapt to the rapid pace of evolution in aviation and the ever-increasing needs of the Members States. Expanding existing partnerships and a proactive engagement with industry will be essential. The conference will provide a forum for discussion on how to enhance regional implementation support mechanisms to assist States in accomplishing certain safety oversight, accident and incident investigation and safety management functions and activities.

4. MONITORING AND OVERSIGHT

Oversight and new approaches

4.1 During the 40th Session of the Assembly, a new concept of “cooperative” oversight was raised to address the growth of cross-border operations, new business models, operational and training approaches and technological developments. It is intended that the conference continue the discussion on how to ensure that all Member States will be able to effectively fulfill their safety oversight functions and responsibilities.

Evolution of the Universal Safety Oversight Audit Programme (USOAP) Continuous Monitoring Approach (CMA)

4.2 The Universal Safety Oversight Audit Programme (USOAP) was launched more than two decades ago and transitioned to a full-scale implementation of the Continuous Monitoring Approach (CMA) in January 2013. The USOAP CMA continues to mature, improve and expand.

4.3 To enable the USOAP CMA to be effective and current in light of the future challenges and transformations to civil aviation, the conference will review: developments based on the outcomes of the Ad Hoc USOAP CMA Advisory Group; the status of the implementation of recommendations of the Group of Experts for a USOAP CMA Structured Review (GEUSR); and organizational improvements brought about by the long-term evolution of the programme.

5. **AIR NAVIGATION CAPACITY AND EFFICIENCY**

5.1 Given the rapidly evolving aviation system, which becomes ever more complex and interconnected, the conference will consider air navigation matters related to the theme, and not already addressed by the Thirteenth Air Navigation Conference (AN-Conf/13), 40th Session of the Assembly or within the current work programme of the Organization.

6. **EMERGING ISSUES**

6.1 The conference will identify and formulate recommendations to address any emerging safety and air navigation issues that may arise.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE ORIGIN OF THE THEME
AND INTENDED OUTCOMES**

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Aviation plays a major role in global economic activities and development. It generates more than 65.5 million jobs worldwide, while contributing more than 2.7 trillion dollars to global gross domestic product. Aviation is an integral part of society, connecting people and transporting goods worldwide, and is an important driver of economic growth and sustainable development, improving the standard of living of people around the world through safe and reliable operations.

1.2 One of the key elements to maintaining the performance of civil aviation is to ensure safe, secure, efficient and sustainable operations at the global, regional and national levels. Improving the safety of the global air transport system is a guiding and fundamental ICAO strategic objective. The Organization works constantly to address and enhance global aviation safety through the coordinated activities and targets outlined in its Global Aviation Safety Plan (GASP).

1.3 ICAO remains focused on the development and implementation of new safety initiatives. Continuous improvement in global aviation safety is fundamental to ensuring that air transport continues to play a major role in driving sustainable economic and social development around the world.

2. SUSTAINING THE FUTURE OF AVIATION

2.1 Aviation is a growing and forward-looking industry that promotes global connectivity, stimulates development, innovation and entrepreneurship and continuously seeks to enhance its safety and efficiency. Aviation is now going beyond mobility between continents and cities — it is evolving and will soon impact mobility within cities.

2.2 The pace of development in civil aviation is faster today than ever before and aviation today is going through some major transformations. These include the increasing deployment and application of innovations and new technologies, such as: artificial intelligence, unmanned aircraft and “urban air mobility”; digitalization of aviation; growing passenger and cargo traffic; and new cross-border operations and business models. The substantial impacts of these changes emphasize the high priority that should be accorded to aviation development in order to fully capture and realize its socio-economic benefits.

2.3 Several key challenges will need to be addressed by the aviation community in the years ahead. As the evolution in aviation accelerates, it is essential, inter alia, to enhance regulatory capacity and infrastructure, develop new training approaches, and improve current processes and procedures (including licensing, certification, authorization and approvals) to embrace these transformations. The availability of the skilled workforce with enhanced competencies is important to professionally and efficiently operate and manage all of the new aviation systems and capabilities.

2.4 At the same time, it is important to ensure that all Member States will be able to effectively fulfill their safety management functions and responsibilities supported by competent and qualified personnel. All these enhancements should be taken into consideration for the evolution of the

Universal Safety Oversight Audit Programme (USOAP) Continuous Monitoring Approach (CMA) into a global aviation monitoring system of the safety oversight and aircraft accident/incident investigation capabilities of ICAO Member States, as well as of their progress in implementing State safety programmes. Therefore, ICAO, with the support of its Member States, should continue to provide more direct assistance to developing countries in support of the *No Country Left Behind* (NLCB) initiative so that all States can access the significant socio-economic benefits of safe and reliable air transport.

2.5 As future challenges and transformations will impact all areas in aviation, there is a pressing need to ensure that the global aviation community continues working together on strategic planning in managing aviation safety and responding to new challenges. In this regard, during the Third High-level Safety Conference, ICAO Member States, international organizations and other stakeholders will continue the dialogue on the future of aviation that started during the 40th Session of the ICAO Assembly.

3. INTENDED OUTCOMES

3.1 The conference will provide an opportunity for senior officials within States' civil aviation authorities and aviation stakeholders to discuss and agree on recommendations related to:

- a) a global strategic direction for safety;
- b) strategic planning in managing aviation safety and responding to new challenges at the national level;
- c) how to ensure effective “cooperative” oversight;
- d) how to enhance the efficiency of the USOAP CMA;
- e) enhancement of collaboration and sharing of experience in relation to innovation;
- f) how to enhance training and improve current processes and procedures (including licensing, certification, authorizations and approvals) to embrace rapid changes in aviation;
- g) how challenges and risks associated with the evolution in aviation can be effectively managed to minimize adverse consequences;
- h) regional implementation support mechanisms; and
- i) other matters.

3.2 Experience has shown that the convening of divisional-type meetings, such as air navigation or high-level safety conferences, ahead of the Assembly is important for strategic planning for the work of the Organization. HLSC 2021 will provide a forum for detailed technical discussions leading to agreement on a set of high-level recommendations that will be submitted for approval to the ICAO Council. The 41st Session of the Assembly will be informed about the outcomes of HLSC 2021. This approach allows the Assembly to focus on global plans, policy matters and strategic issues based on sound technical advice, as well as on any new issues that have arisen in the interim.

2. Additional subjects proposed

a) Description of the subject

b) Proposal for action to be taken by the conference

c) Justification supporting its inclusion in the agenda

3. Need for the conference

In view of the foregoing, is there a need for a high-level safety conference in June 2021?

Yes No

4. Participation of non-traditional innovators in aviation

Should non-traditional innovators in aviation be invited to participate at HLSC 2021?

Yes No