



ICAO

ELEVENTH MEETING OF THE REGIONAL AVIATION SAFETY GROUP - ASIA AND PACIFIC REGIONS (RASG-APAC/11)

(Video Teleconference, 25-26 November 2021 at 10:00-13:00 hrs. Bangkok Time, UTC+7)

Agenda Item 4: ICAO / Member State / Industry Presentations

UPDATE ON PORT MORESBY DECLARATION - 1ST PACIFIC REGIONAL AVIATION MINISTERS MEETING (RAMM)

(Presented by the Secretariat)

SUMMARY

The First Pacific Regional Aviation Ministers (RAMM) Meeting was held virtually on 30th of June 2021, hosted by the Government of Papua New Guinea. This paper provides an update on the ‘Port Moresby Declaration on Aviation Safety and Security’ and the associated Ministerial Statement endorsed by the Regional Aviation Ministers, and its outcome as it relates to Recommendations of the Pacific Small Island Developing States (PSIDS*) Aviation Needs Analysis conducted by ICAO from March to September 2019.

An update on the PSIDS Aviation Needs Analysis and the Recommendations was provided to RASG-APAC/9 held on 7-8 November 2019 through Working Paper WP/27.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Pacific Small Islands Developing States (PSIDS) feasibility study was conducted from March to September 2019. The Study resulted in a report with 30 recommendations of which five recommendations were directed to ICAO for consideration in relation with its resources and activities while ten more recommendations were for the consideration of ICAO in relation with assistance donors, training institutions and multilateral development banks. The Study report also produced 14 recommendations for the consideration of the PSIDS and one recommendation for the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF).

1.2 The recommendations had taken a holistic approach in the development and implementation of a ‘Pacific aviation roadmap’ to achieve effective, sustainable and resilient aviation regulatory oversight in the Region.

1.3 The Report, amongst its comprehensive reporting, Conclusions and Recommendations, identified that direct support to the State’s regulatory oversight tasks should be achieved through the creation and operation of an enhanced RSSOO (ERSSOO). The Report also recommended ICAO to establish a ‘PSIDS Liaison Officer’ position to facilitate support to the PSIDS and to improve their communication and coordination in a more effective, efficient and timely manner with ICAO which will help the States with their compliance obligations.

2. DISCUSSION

2.1 In reference to *'Rec/PSIDS/1/Establishment of an Enhanced Regional Safety and Security Oversight Organization (ERSSOO)'* directed to the PSIDS, it is recommended that the PSIDS, in a collaborative manner and reaching out to all Pacific Island Forum (PIF) Members, should take action to strengthen PASO's organization and framework by establishing an enhanced Regional Safety and Security Oversight Organization (ERSSOO) with specific functions as outlined in the corresponding recommendation.

2.2 While the recommendation for the establishment of the enhanced RSSOO remains a major organizational infrastructure improvement expected from the PSIDS, there is another equally important recommendation in reference to *'Rec/PSIDS/3/Revised Treaty'* which recommends, that PSIDS reach out to all the PIF Members in a collaborative manner for necessary actions to revise the Pacific Islands Civil Aviation Safety and Security Treaty (PICASST) inviting the current non-members, i.e. the three North Pacific States (FSM, Marshall Islands and Palau) and Fiji also to enter into the Treaty.

2.3 These strategically decisive major recommendation for the PSIDS received due attention during the proceedings of the first Pacific Regional Aviation Ministers Meeting (RAMM) convened virtually on the 30th of June 2021, hosted by the Ministry of Civil Aviation of the Government of Papua New Guinea. The RAMM was the first such high-level regional aviation meeting since the initiation of the PICASST in 2004.

2.4 The meeting was attended by Australia, Cook Islands, Fiji, French Polynesia, Kiribati, Nauru, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Niue, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu and Vanuatu. Additionally, the Secretary General of the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS), the Secretary General of the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) and observers from the various regional organisations from the PIF Secretariat, PASO, as well as Civil Aviation Authority of Singapore, Federal Association Administration of the U.S.A and World Bank attended.

2.5 The RAMM provided a unique opportunity to progress regional collaboration and solutions, and organize political support around harmonisation and cooperation for Pacific regional aviation safety, security and recovery. It considered a range of strategic topics including:

- a) The importance of aviation regionally for social and economic activity
- b) The impact of COVID-19 and economic recovery objectives through aviation connectivity
- c) A framework for enhanced Pacific regional aviation collaboration
- d) Development of a Pacific Regional Aviation Strategy
- e) Amending the Pacific Islands Civil Aviation Safety and Security Treaty (PICASST)
- f) Strengthening and funding regional aviation institutional arrangements
- g) Continuation of the future Ministerial engagements.

2.6 The meeting resulted in the Pacific Island Regional Aviation Ministers endorsing the 'Port Moresby Declaration on Aviation Safety and Security' and the Ministerial Statement. The Declaration provides a range of strategic priorities and actions to respond to the critical challenges regarding aviation safety and security performance facing the Members, who have been seriously impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

2.7 Through the Port Moresby Declaration and the Ministerial Statement, the Ministers expressed commitment to maintaining a safe, secure, resilient and sustainable aviation system in compliance with ICAO Standards, and respond to the obligations of the Convention on International Civil Aviation, as well as strengthen the regulatory oversight capability, capacity and effectiveness of the Member States.

2.8 One of the key outcomes of the meeting was the Minister's endorsement of the Framework for Aviation in the Pacific. Ministers agreed that the PICASST can be improved; noting that there have been significant changes over the last fifteen years which have impacted aviation in the Pacific, but which are not reflected in the PICASST. Thus, the Ministers acknowledged that amendments to the PICASST are required and further tasked Aviation Officials to work with PASO to improve the PICASST.

2.9 While identifying the need to strengthen the multi-functional regional aviation organization, PASO, the Ministers acknowledged that further enhancements can be made for PASO to ensure it delivers enhanced aviation safety and security services to all Member States. Therefore, the officials were tasked with investigating ways to ensure PASO is appropriately and sustainably resourced (human and financial) to deliver on the priority areas by 2022.

2.10 Close coordination between PSIDS, ICAO and all concerned stakeholders will be required in respect of the follow up and eventual implementation of the recommendations contained in the feasibility study report of the PSIDS Aviation Needs Analysis, which has received ample support from the political level commitment through the Port Moresby Declaration and the Ministerial Statement.

2.11 It should be noted that momentum for advancement of the implementation of the feasibility study report recommendations has been gathered as clearly evidenced by the fact that the next RAMM will monitor the progress and consider the amended PICASST, Regional Pacific Aviation Strategy, and sustainable funding arrangements to support enhanced regional collaboration and Regional Aviation Organisation under the new Strategy. The Pacific Aviation Ministers agreed that the next RAMM to be hosted by the Cooks Islands in 2022 before the 41st Session of the ICAO Assembly.

2.12 The "Port Moresby Declaration on Aviation Safety and Security" and the Ministerial Statement are provided as Appendices to this Working Paper.

3. ACTION BY THE MEETING

3.1 The Meeting is invited to note and discuss as applicable the Port Moresby Declaration and Ministerial Statement.

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PORT MORESBY DECLARATION ON AVIATION SAFETY AND SECURITY

Hereafter to be referred to as “The Port Moresby Declaration”

We the Aviation Ministers:

Recognizing that the Pacific Islands Forum Leaders, at their meeting in Funafuti in 2019, tasked Aviation Ministers to consider and discuss aviation-specific matters of importance to the region, in particular: aviation safety and security, compliance with International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) Standards, and opportunities for increased connectivity;

Reaffirming our commitment to the Blue Pacific vision and the development of the 2050 Strategy, as endorsed by Forum Leaders;

Reaffirming our commitment to ensure safe, secure, reliable, sustainable and cost-effective air services in line with the principles of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals and the Small Islands Developing States Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway;

Reaffirming our commitment to the *Boe Declaration on Regional Security* for strengthening existing security architecture, inclusive of regional law enforcement, to monitor and support security measures within the region;

Acknowledging our commitment to the Convention on International Civil Aviation and agreement to the principles and arrangements therein;

Recognizing the *No Country Left Behind* (NCLB) initiative by ICAO to assist States in implementing ICAO Standards and Recommended Practices (SARP) and Assembly Resolution 40-21 *Aviation’s Contribution towards the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*;

Acknowledging our commitment to the *Beijing Declaration* to implement increased aviation safety and air navigation standards within the Asia-Pacific region;

Hereby commit to;

- (i) the priorities and actions detailed in the 2021 Regional Aviation Ministerial Statement to respond to the following key challenges:
 - a) maintaining a safe, secure, resilient and sustainable aviation system;
 - b) compliance with ICAO standards, as well as obligations of the Convention on International Civil Aviation;
 - c) increasing connectivity, within the Pacific region and beyond; and
 - d) having regard to the serious impact of COVID-19 on aviation in the region
- (ii) strengthen the regulatory oversight capability, capacity and effectiveness of Member States;
- (iii) strengthen the Pacific Aviation Safety Office (PASO), as an important part of the response to the ICAO Pacific Small Island Developing States Study; and
- (iv) convene in 2022 before the ICAO Assembly, and thereafter in accordance with the Regional Aviation Ministers Meeting Charter, to monitor progress and amendments to the PICASST.

Endorsed by Pacific Island Regional Aviation Ministers at their Meeting on 30th June 2021



REGIONAL AVIATION MINISTERS MEETING

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

THE IMPORTANCE OF AVIATION

1. Aviation is an enabler of social and economic activity by facilitating the movement of people and goods. It is vital to many industries, in particular tourism and trade. It is fundamental to job growth, productivity, prosperity, development and well-being.
2. Pacific Aviation Ministers have been discussing the critical challenges and opportunities facing aviation across the region, which have been seriously impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, including aviation safety and security performance.

COVID-19 IMPACTS AND RECOVERY OBJECTIVES

3. Ministers acknowledged the significant impacts that COVID-19 has had on the Pacific region and supported collaboration among Forum Members, organisations, and stakeholders to continue to respond to, and recover from, the COVID-19 pandemic, with the aim of providing benefit to all citizens of the region.
4. To address the transition and recovery needs of Pacific States, Ministers requested officials to:
 - a. Review what is required to ensure that the aviation system is ready to play its part in Pacific economic recovery, identify where funding is already being provided, and explore options for priority areas of funding
 - b. Coordinate provision of information and provide guidance and assistance to States to ensure that safety, security, health, economic and environmental risks are effectively managed in the aviation sector throughout the re-start and recovery process.
5. Ministers agreed that affordable and sustainable air services are critical to economic recovery post COVID-19 and noted that there are opportunities to encourage economic recovery of the region through aviation connectivity by:
 - a. Establishing temporary arrangements with other like-minded nations that encourage air travel between nations, as an interim measure to help kick-start economic recovery when border restrictions are lifted
 - b. Considering whether there are essential air routes that could be serviced through different funding models.

FRAMEWORK FOR ENHANCED PACIFIC REGION AVIATION COLLABORATION

6. Ministers endorsed the *Framework for Aviation in the Pacific* for an enhanced collaboration framework through:
 - a. A Pacific Regional Aviation Strategy,
 - b. An amended Pacific Islands Civil Aviation Safety and Security Treaty (PICASST); and
 - c. A strengthened multi-functional regional organization.

PACIFIC REGIONAL AVIATION STRATEGY

7. Recognizing the benefits in creating a pathway to long term safe and sustainable development of the aviation system, Ministers agreed in principle a Vision, Goals and initial priority areas to guide officials in the development of a Pacific Regional Aviation Strategy.
8. Ministers also agreed five initial priorities that should be progressed by officials. The priorities are:
 - a. Regional Legislative Framework;
 - b. Audits and Inspections Programme;
 - c. Strategic Training and Human Resource Development;
 - d. Regional Governance, Engagement and Coordination; and
 - e. Sustainable Economic Development that will maximise benefits to members through regional collaboration.

AMENDED PICASST

9. Ministers agree that the PICASST can be improved, noting that there have been significant changes over the last fifteen years which have impacted aviation in the Pacific, but which are not reflected in the PICASST.
10. Ministers acknowledged that amendments to the PICASST are required and further tasked Aviation Officials to work with PASO to improve the PICASST.

STRENGTHENED MULTI-FUNCTIONAL REGIONAL AVIATION ORGANISATION

11. Ministers recognised that the Pacific Aviation Safety Office (PASO) has made important gains in recent years with better governance arrangements and increased financial stability. Ministers also acknowledged that further enhancements can be made for PASO to ensure it delivers enhanced aviation safety and security services to all Member States.
12. Ministers tasked officials with investigating ways to ensure PASO is appropriately and sustainably resourced (human and financial) to deliver on the priority areas by 2022.

13. Ministers also agreed that in the longer term, there should be a wider aviation-focused Regional Organisation, to address aviation issues and opportunities, as a key regional priority.
14. Ministers agreed that the core function of the Organisation will be safety and security oversight, and over-time, a broader range of services and functions may be enabled in accordance with the Regional Strategy.
15. Ministers committed to ensuring that the Organisation has a sustainable funding model that reflects the resourcing required to achieve the level of service and focus on priorities, as directed through the Regional Strategy.

REPORT BACK

16. Ministers requested officials to report back to the next Minister's Aviation Meeting with a Regional Pacific Aviation Strategy, an amended PICASST, and options to sustainably fund enhanced regional collaboration and a Regional Aviation Organisation under the new Strategy.

30 June 2021