



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)

RASG-APAC/11-WP/21

Agenda Item 4

Agenda Item 4: ICAO / Member State / Industry Presentations

**STRENGTHENING AVIATION SAFETY RESILIENCE
IN THE ASIA PACIFIC REGION**

(Presented by Singapore, co-sponsored by Bangladesh, Fiji, Indonesia, New Zealand, Thailand and IATA)

SUMMARY

As highlighted at the ICAO High Level Conference on COVID-19 (HLCC), RASGs play important roles in supporting safe recovery. The RASG-APAC can be a crucial platform to aid States/Administrations in the region to identify COVID-19 related safety issues, strengthen risk mitigation and collectively build greater safety resilience. In line with the discussion and recommendations from HLCC, this paper invites the meeting to consider ways for RASG-APAC to include the management of COVID-19 impact in the agenda and work programme. States/Administrations are encouraged to share best practices that may be useful in supporting the safe recovery of international air travel in the APAC region. The paper also recommends that the challenges and risks associated with safe recovery are addressed in the update of the Asia-Pacific Regional Aviation Safety Plan (2023-2025 edition), in particular the strategic approach to managing safety and the Organisational (Org) and Operational (Ops) Roadmaps.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 IATA's latest forecast indicates that international air travel within Asia ('within-Asia' revenue passenger-kilometres) is likely to remain nearly 90% below 2019 levels for the full year 2022. This points to an extended COVID impact¹ on air travel in APAC. As States/Administrations adapt to COVID-19 and gradually resume aviation activities, the increase in aircraft, aerodrome and air traffic management operations will add to operational complexity. States/Administrations must therefore plan to ramp up safety oversight capacity, sharpen skills and competencies, and ensure that organisations and personnel are ready to safely resume more operations.

1.2 The importance of regional coordination and planning to support the States/Administrations was highlighted at the ICAO High Level Conference on COVID-19 (HLCC) held in October 2021 and noted in WP/247 *Report of the Safety Stream to the Conference on Agenda Item 2*. The HLCC Safety Stream noted the interest for the planning and implementation regional groups (PIRGs) and regional aviation safety groups (RASGs) to include the management of COVID-19 impact in their agenda and work programmes, to support a safe recovery. The Safety Stream also noted that actions to address challenges that are attributed to the COVID-19 pandemic should be addressed by the

¹ Ezgi Gulbas. 4 October 2021. "COVID-19 Airline Industry Outlook". IATA Economics

RASGs and could be considered when revising the regional aviation safety plans. Furthermore, the Safety Stream acknowledged the key role of the RASGs in the development and implementation support for regional and national aviation safety plans.

2. DISCUSSION

2.1 The sharing of safety lessons learnt and key risks identified at the regional level can support efforts to address aviation safety and operational issues in the region. Collective sense-making, planning and coordination can help promote alignment of safety objectives for aviation recovery and resource allocation for the development of safety initiatives at the regional level.

2.2 Recognising the importance of identifying key safety risks arising from the COVID-19 pandemic, RASG-APAC/10 accepted the recommendations of WP/21 by Singapore for a survey to be conducted on the key risks faced by States/Administrations, their mitigating measures as well as challenges faced.

2.3 The aggregated survey results of 14 APAC respondents have been shared with other States/Administrations in the APAC Annual Safety Report 2021. In a question requesting States/Administrations to rank the key safety risk areas that have arisen from the COVID-19 pandemic (on a scale of 1 to 4 with 4 being the highest), the survey gleaned the following top priorities among States/Administrations:

- a) Flight crew proficiency due to reduction of flights and lack of access to training facilities;
- b) Safety impact of degraded financial situation of aviation service providers
- c) Safety management capabilities within aviation service providers
- d) Surveillance capabilities within CAA (in all operational areas)

2.4 The survey has served as a first step to exchange information and ideas about key COVID-19 related safety risks to improve safety outcomes and improve passenger confidence in air travel. To support the exchange of best practices and mutual learning, the Annual Safety Report 2021 has also consolidated and summarised the mitigating measures implemented by States/Administrations.

2.5 In line with the recommendations from the HLCC, RASG-APAC and its sub-groups may wish to consider other initiatives and plans to include the management of COVID-19 impact in the annual agenda and work programmes to support a safe recovery. Potential areas for further work include sharing of safety information, facilitating of cross-border safety oversight activities, capacity building and development of crisis response mechanisms. Furthermore, regional planning and guidance will also support the development and implementation of national aviation safety plans, as highlighted in Recommendation 2.1/2 of WP/247 *Report of the Safety Stream on HLCC Agenda Item 2*. Please refer to the Annex for the HLCC recommendations.

Updating the APAC Regional Aviation Safety Plan in the next triennium

2.6 Recognising that States/Administrations within the APAC region could face similar safety challenges on their road to aviation recovery, further coordination and mutual sharing efforts at RASG-APAC would be helpful. Those in the early stages of recovery can benefit from the sharing of experiences by other States/Administrations. For instance, the ICAO APAC Regional Office has played a useful role in coordinating regional effort to exchange ideas and practical guidance via the ICAO Asia-Pacific COVID-19 Contingency and Recovery Planning Group (ACCRPG).

2.7 The Asia-Pacific Regional Aviation Safety Plan 2020 – 2022 (AP-RASP) aims to chart the region’s strategy to strengthen the management of aviation safety in the APAC region to continually reduce aviation fatalities and the risks thereof. The current AP-RASP explains the strategic approach to managing safety in the region and lays out the Operational (Ops) and Organisational (Org) roadmaps to address operational safety risks and other regional safety issues respectively.

2.8 In addition, as the AP-RASP was issued in February 2020 prior to the height of the pandemic, the AP-RASP should be updated accordingly in the next triennium. The update would provide regions, States/Administrations and industry with the relevant direction and guidance, and ensure the AP-RASP’s relevance in a COVID-endemic state. Some areas to consider include the changes to the operating context in the APAC region as a result of COVID-19 and the potential risks and challenges associated with ramp up in air traffic, which may require re-prioritisation or additional emphasis on certain mitigation areas.

2.9 Notwithstanding the attention to be given to COVID-19, the AP-RASP should remain steadfast in addressing the commitments and prioritisation to fulfil the ICAO Global Aviation Safety Plan (GASP) and the Declaration of the Asia Pacific Ministerial Conference on Civil Aviation 2018. Through executing the AP-RASP, in particular enhancing the effectiveness of safety oversight capability in the region, we would also address the challenges to safe recovery.

3. ACTION BY THE MEETING

3.1 The Meeting is invited to:

- a) Consider ways for RASG-APAC to include the management of COVID-19 impact in their agenda and work programmes;
- b) Encourage States/Administrations to share best practices that may be useful in supporting the safe recovery of international air travel in the APAC region; and
- c) Request that the challenges and risks associated with safe recovery are addressed in the update of the Asia-Pacific Regional Aviation Safety Plan (2023-2025 edition), in particular the strategic approach to managing safety and the Organisational (Org) and Operational (Ops) Roadmaps.

List of HLCC Recommendations

The following are specific recommendations for RASGs in the WP/247 *Report of the Safety Stream to the Conference on Agenda Item 2*:

Recommendation 2.1/2 – Development and implementation of national aviation safety plans

That States:

- a) develop and implement their national aviation safety plan (NASP), in line with Assembly Resolution A40-1: *ICAO Global planning for safety and air navigation*;
- b) use existing ICAO guidance material and tools to develop and implement their NASPs;
- c) provide the most recent version of their NASP for posting on the ICAO Global Aviation Safety Plan (GASP) public website;
- d) submit proposals to ICAO for the update of guidance material related to national aviation safety plans;

That ICAO:

- e) submit a report regarding the development of NASPs at the 41st Session of the Assembly; and
- f) further enhance its safety intelligence initiatives to support States' implementation of NASPs and enable them to monitor progress made towards achieving their national safety goals and targets, in line with the GASP and the regional aviation safety plan (RASP), as well as safety management provisions.

Recommendation 2.2/1 – Regulatory capacity enhancement, new training approaches and improvement of current processes and tools to embrace changes in aviation

That ICAO:

- c) share relevant experience with the broader aviation community through ICAO on how to enhance regulatory capacity, training and improve current processes and tools (including licensing, certification, safety oversight activities, authorizations, and approvals) to embrace changes in aviation;

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