60TH CONFERENCE OF
DIRECTORS GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION
ASIA AND PACIFIC REGIONS

Sendai, Japan
28 July – 1 August 2025

AGENDA ITEM 1: THEME TOPIC

SOCIALLY SUSTAINABLE AVIATION –
SECURING AVIATION AS AN ATTRACTIVE WORK ENVIRONMENT
FOR FUTURE PERSONNEL

(Presented by IFALPA)

INFORMATION PAPER

SUMMARY

In order to facilitate sustainable growth, civil aviation needs to attract more personnel. Civil aviation is recovering strongly from the COVID-19 Pandemic in the Asia Pacific region but there are significant challenges on the horizon in terms of attracting and retaining sufficient personnel within the sector. Developing a truly socially sustainable sector is key to addressing these challenges. States and Administrations are encouraged to note the importance of cooperation with workers and employers' representative organizations to achieving social sustainability.

SOCIALLY SUSTAINABLE AVIATION – SECURING AVIATION AS AN ATTRACTIVE WORK ENVIRONMENT FOR FUTURE PERSONNEL

1.   INTRODUCTION

1.1   The ICAO Assembly has recognized that "the benefits enabled by air transportation" happen only if air transport is "economically viable," and delivers "significant socio-economic benefits."[1] ICAO's work on the economic development of air transport contributes to the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in particular SDG 8 described as the promotion of sustained, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work for all.

1.2   ICAO has also urged Member States to recognize the significant contributions of aviation to sustainable development realized by stimulating employment. Employment is key to aviation, and sustainable aviation employment for all categories of aviation workers, including pilots, cabin crew, ground staff, aircraft maintenance, air traffic controllers and air traffic safety electronics personnel is an integral factor that Member States should include in the civil aviation policies and plans.

2.   DISCUSSION

2.1   The ICAO Council has a Small Group on the Economic Development of Air Transport and recently established a Small Group on the Social Dimension of Sustainability in Aviation to address the concerns discussed by an Informal Briefing to the ICAO Council on Social Sustainability reaffirming ICAO's understanding that social aspects are linked to aviation's growth.

2.2   The ICAO Global Air Navigation Plan identifies key challenges and opportunities as civil aviation that call for an urgent transformation of global air navigation. Amongst these are continued support of social wellbeing worldwide and the development of human capability and capacity. Social sustainability is a crucial prerequisite for effectively addressing these challenges and taking advantage of the opportunities they provide.

2.2   Consistent with Resolution A41-24, ICAO and the ILO concluded an Agreement in 2022. Under the Agreement, the parties agreed to formalize closer collaboration in relation to areas of common interest, including but not limited to the future of decent and sustainable work in aviation.

2.3   A robust Positive Safety Culture is directly connected to those States and businesses that prioritize social sustainability – in other words, supporting processes, structures and elements that benefit society and protect people.

2.4   Where States and operators treat social sustainability as a priority, Positive Safety Culture can flourish; where social sustainability is not considered a priority, Positive Safety Culture has difficulty taking root and will likely wither. The people who report using SMS systems must have confidence that they will be treated as valued safety partners and not face retribution.

2.5   Leaders at all levels, from operators to regulators, must demonstrate commitment to social sustainability as a critical component of creating a foundation for Positive Safety Culture through words and actions.

2.6   According to the ICAO-ILO Agreement, both agencies will collaborate on specific activities in different areas by conducting "joint research, joint technical meetings, joint technical advisory services, joint training, and collaboration on the development of appropriate guidelines..." They have also agreed on three areas of common interest: women and aviation, the future of decent and sustainable work in aviation and

---

1 ICAO Resolution A41-24, *Aviation's contribution towards the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*

data collection.

2.7   Decent Work principles have been articulated in the 2023 ILO Technical Meeting on a Green, Sustainable and Inclusive Economic Recovery for the Civil Aviation Sector, by setting forth a number of elements, including: employment opportunities (i.e., improving the attractiveness of the industry); adequate earnings and productive work (improving employment terms to retain workers); safe work environment and decent hours (furthering Positive Safety Culture, and duty time limits); social dialogue, workers' and employers' representation (stabilizing the employer-worker relationship); and expanding the talent pool.

2.8   In the 2023 ILO meeting, governments, industry, and aviation workers recommended that the ILO collaborate with ICAO on several topics, including just transition planning, evaluating the need for effective ILO standards that reflect ICAO's key occupational safety and health concerns, strengthening cooperation on the Next Generation of Aviation Professionals (NGAP), and promoting policy coherence in relation to the future of decent and sustainable work in aviation.

2.9   States and Administrations were also encouraged to create an enabling environment for effective social dialogue, take action to ensure effective recognition of the right to freedom of association and collective bargaining, and establish or strengthen regular tripartite aviation consultation forums at global, regional and national levels to develop and implement aviation policies.

2.10   ICAO has acknowledged that the attainment of the SDGs will require it to actively promote them. Resolution A41-24 directs the Council and the Secretary General, within their respective competencies, to demonstrate that ICAO continues to serve as an advocate for aviation by raising awareness among Member States, including relevant authorities beyond the air transport sector, the United Nations system, the donor community and all relevant stakeholders about aviation's contributions to sustainable development and the attainment of the SDGs.

2.11   States and Administrations are encouraged to embrace the need for civil aviation to be socially, economically and environmentally sustainable to support industry growth. Policies should support decent job creation, attraction and retention of workers and the constant improvement of safety management in aviation workplaces.

2.12   States and Administrations may take concrete actions to embrace social sustainability through engaging with ICAO, in particular the ICAO Small Group on Social Sustainability, via applicable ICAO Council Members or ILO.

2.13   States and Administrations may also choose to address social sustainability challenges in the context of the recruitment and retention of aviation personnel when developing civil aviation policy, including national air navigation plans, by incorporating opportunities in such policies for regular and structured engagement with international organizations including professional staff organizations.

— END —