

**60th CONFERENCE OF
DIRECTORS GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION
ASIA AND PACIFIC REGIONS**

*Sendai, Japan
28 July - 1 August 2025*

AGENDA ITEM 3: AVIATION SAFETY

ACCIDENT AND SERIOUS INCIDENT INVESTIGATIONS

(Presented by International Air Transport Association)

SUMMARY

The timely publication of final report following aircraft accident investigation is a core obligation under ICAO Annex 13. However, despite these clear requirements, there remains a concerning level of non-compliance with this obligation under the Chicago Convention, resulting in significant delay or, in some case, the complete absence of the published report. This paper calls for renewed attention to this issue and calls for the timely release of accident investigation final report.

ACCIDENT AND SERIOUS INCIDENT INVESTIGATIONS

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 At the 58th Conference of Directors General of Civil Aviation Asia and Pacific Regions held in October of 2023 in Dhaka Bangladesh, IATA presented one Discussion Paper titled *The Items to be Improved for the Accident Investigation Report*. The paper outlined current deficiencies in the reporting of accident investigation within the ICAO APAC region, asking for the attention and collective action to address these issues. Meanwhile, IATA remains committed to collaborating with all relevant stakeholders to address the issue of non-compliance with Annex 13 provisions through a comprehensive roadmap aimed to improve investigation final report at all time. IATA calls upon DGCA to encourage all States in the ICAO APAC region to publish both Preliminary Report and Final Report according to the timelines stipulated in the Annex 13.

2. DISCUSSION

2.1 Chicago Convention Obligation and Timelines: Timely publication of final report following aircraft accident investigation is a core obligation under the ICAO Annex 13. The Annex establishes key procedural requirements and broad timelines for each phase of the investigation process. These include the immediate notification¹ and initiation of an investigation, issuance of a Preliminary Report within 30 days, and publication of the Final Report ideally within 12 months of the occurrence. Compliance with these provisions is monitored under ICAO's Universal Safety Oversight Audit Programme (USOAP) through the Effective Implementation (EI) metric.

2.2 ANC Concerns: The fourteenth ICAO Air Navigation Conference (ANC/14) recognized the risk to the global aviation system when lessons learned from accident investigation are delayed or not applied in a timely manner. The ANC/14 Conference also reiterated the urgency for the States to investigate and report accidents promptly, in line with the Annex 13 provisions.

2.3 Status update and consequences: Through ongoing initiatives by the aviation committee and IATA, the publication rate is slightly improving. IATA data indicates that only 57% of the 269 accidents classified by the IATA Accident Classification Task Force (ACTF) resulted in a published final report. This data covers the period from 2018-2023. [IATA Annual Safety Report](#) shows that, in ICAO APAC Region, only 45% of the 60 accidents resulted in a final report. Failure to publish thorough and timely accident investigation report deprives key aviation stakeholders, including operators, equipment manufacturers, regulators, and infrastructure providers of critical safety information. This hinders the identification of safety issues, delays the implementation of preventive, corrective measures, and ultimately undermines aviation safety.

2.4 Classification: Some States have different interpretations of Annex 13 when it comes to classifying an accident, serious incident, or incident. Also, ICAO and IATA have somewhat different definitions of what constitutes an accident - this is for operational reasons or the need to capture and analyze a larger number of events with the intent of safety improvements. With that in mind, IATA may classify an event as an accident which may be classified as a serious incident by the

¹ As per Chapter 4 of Annex 13, the State of Occurrence shall forward a notification of an accident, a serious incident, or an incident to be investigated within the context of Annex 13, with a minimum of delay and by the most suitable and quickest means available, to:

- a) the State of Registry;
- b) the State of the Operator;
- c) the State of Design;
- d) the State of Manufacture; and
- e) the International Civil Aviation Organization, when the aircraft involved is of a maximum mass of over 2 250 kg or is a turbojet-powered airplane.

State. Regardless of the classification, all events should be investigated and final reports issued to ensure the aviation system learns from these events and implements recommendations for improvement.

2.5 Quality of the report: IATA also emphasizes the need for high-quality final accident investigation report that is comprehensive and providing a detailed, fact-based description of the accident. These reports should identify the contributing factors and offer actionable recommendations to prevent similar occurrences in the future. Such reports form the foundation for meaningful safety improvements across the aviation sector.

2.6 English language: As the international language of Aviation, English facilitates a better understanding of the safety concerns amongst aviation professionals at a global level. IATA encourages States to publish the English version of the final reports that support quicker safety responses with timely global dissemination and implementation of the safety recommendations.

2.7 Preliminary report and timeline: Similar to the timely publication of final report, the prompt publication of Preliminary Report is a must. The timely release of the factual information following an accident or incident ensures the prevention of speculation and the spread of any misinformation. It enables stakeholders to initiate immediate safety measures where necessary.

2.8 Independent Accident Investigation Authority (AIA): A foundational requirement under Annex 13 is that each State establishes an Accident Investigation Authority (AIA) that is functionally independent of regulatory and operational entities. However, in many cases, investigation authorities report to government ministries (e.g., Transport or Justice) or Civil Aviation Authorities, raising concerns over potential conflicts of interest. Lack of independence can undermine the credibility of investigations, delay or prevent the publication of final report, weaken the impact of safety recommendations, ultimately compromising aviation safety and breaching obligations under the Chicago Convention.

2.9 Collaboration: Under Chapter 5, 5.1 of ICAO Annex 13, the State of Occurrence is responsible for initiating and conducting accident investigations but may delegate this role, in whole or in part, to another State or a Regional Accident and Incident Investigation Organization (RAIO) by mutual consent. IATA recommends ICAO to actively promote this provision and encourage States with limited capacity to partner with regional safety organizations or experienced investigative bodies to ensure compliance and enhance the quality of the investigation.

3. ACTION BY THE CONFERENCE

3.1 The Conference is invited to:

- a) Discuss the presented issues; and
- b) Request ICAO APAC to send a State letter to States to:
 - i) Comply with Annex 13 provisions regarding the timely publications of interim/final accident investigation report;
 - ii) Adhere to standard ICAO taxonomy for classifying occurrences, to ensure consistency in safety statistics enabling industry access to meaningful investigation outcomes;
 - iii) Establish an independent accident investigation agency; and

- iv) Remind States of their right to delegate accident or serious accident investigations to other States or Regional Accident and Incident Investigation Organization (RAIO) and encourage mutual partnership wherever national capacity is limited.

— END —