

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

*Sendai, Japan
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AGENDA ITEM 7: AVIATION AND ENVIRONMENT

**[HARMONISATION ON RESTRICTIONS ON SINGLE USE
PLASTIC IN THE ASIA PACIFIC REGION]**

(Presented by DGCA INDIA)

SUMMARY

Single-use plastics (SUPs) are widely used in aviation but pose major environmental risks. India has led efforts in the Asia-Pacific region by banning certain SUP items and promoting eco-friendly alternatives. Other countries In Asia Pacific Region have also introduced regulations, though enforcement and standards vary.

Harmonising these regulations across the region is challenging due to differing laws, economic factors, and enforcement gaps. The conference is encouraged to support cooperation, share technology, and request ICAO to create global standards for sustainable alternatives in aviation.

[HARMONISATION ON RESTRICTIONS ON SINGLE USE PLASTIC IN THE AISA PACIFIC REGION]

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Single-use plastics (SUPs) have emerged as a significant environmental challenge, contributing to pollution, harming marine ecosystems, and straining waste management systems. The aviation industry relies heavily on single-use plastics (SUP), creating significant environmental and regulatory challenges. These plastics are favoured for their lightweight properties, affordability, safety, and hygiene benefits, making them a staple in in-flight hospitality and airport services. However, with over 430 million metric tonnes of plastic produced annually—one-third of which is discarded after a single use—there is a pressing need for the sector to minimize consumption and improve waste management.

1.2. Despite their advantages, plastics contribute to environmental degradation and harm wildlife. The majority are derived from non-renewable fossil fuel-based virgin feed-stocks, and their production generates greenhouse gas emissions. Disposal further exacerbates pollution, particularly in oceans, affecting both human and animal health. While consumer awareness, corporate responsibility, and regulations are increasing, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) reported in 2022 that only 9% of plastic waste is recycled globally, with 22% being mismanaged or littered.

1.3. United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) has convened an intergovernmental negotiating committee (INC) to develop an international legally binding agreement on SUPP use by the end of 2024.

1.4. India's plastic ban is a significant step toward curbing plastic pollution. Since 1 July 2022, the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has prohibited the production, import, storage, distribution, sale, and use of specific single-use plastic items—especially those with minimal utility and a high tendency to become litter. This regulation aims to reduce plastic waste and promote sustainable alternatives, pushing industries to explore biodegradable and eco-friendly options.

2. DISCUSSION

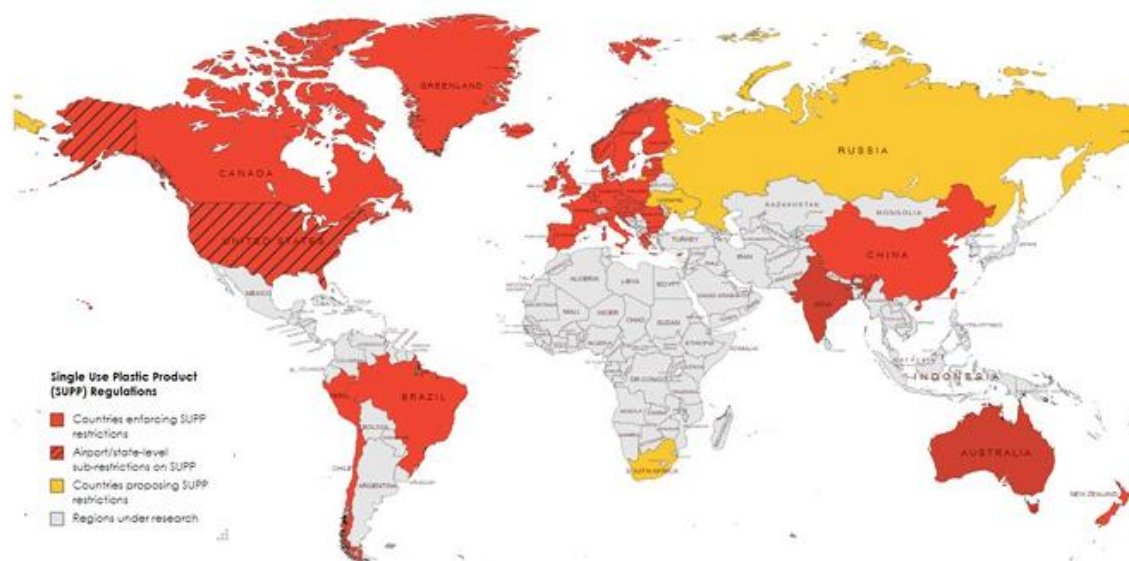
India's Policy Framework on Single-Use Plastics in Aviation

2.1 India has taken significant steps in tackling plastic waste through a series of regulations and initiatives:

- **Plastic Waste Management Rules (2016):** Introduced guidelines for waste segregation and processing.
- **Plastic Waste Management Amendment Rules (2021):** Banned specific single-use plastic (SUP) items, including plastic cutlery, straws, and carry bags, from 1 July 2022.
- **Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) Guidelines (2022):** Imposed obligations on producers, importers, and brand owners to ensure responsible plastic waste management.
- **Sustainable Alternatives and Industry Support:** Government-backed incentives for biodegradable alternatives and collaborative efforts between public and private sectors to promote eco-friendly solutions.

Comparing Regulations across the Asia-Pacific Region

2.2 The figure shows a large number of countries have introduced bans on SUP bags, and some have introduced additional restrictions on manufacture, import, and distribution of SUPP.



Source: IATA.

2.3 The below table provides SUPP regulations review and implications for the airline industry especially in the Asia Pacific Region.

Country	Dates	Implications
Australia	From 2021 to 2025 (proposed) depending on the state.	Phase out the use and sale of problematic single-use plastics by 2025, with different regulations per state and comply with the National Packaging Targets by 2025. Airlines will not be able to procure packaging that is made, used, and sold in Australia.
India	July 2022.	Airlines and catering companies will not be able to source or use restricted items in India.
People's Republic of China	2022: items banned in airports over 2 million passengers and domestic flights. 2023: items banned in international flights.	These are restrictions on the use, but there is no clarity on how the Work Plan is being enforced

Source: [Reassessing single-use plastic products in the airline sector](#)

2.4 The varying approaches across APAC nations highlight both progress and challenges in regulating single-use plastics (SUP). While all countries in the region enforce bans on SUP straws, stirrers, crockery, and cutlery, regulations on other plastic items are less uniform, largely due to the limited availability of sustainable alternatives. India has taken notable steps by restricting beverage cups made from polystyrene and implementing a strict labeling scheme. Additionally, Indian states impose different volume restrictions on PET plastics, while the EU mandates a minimum percentage of recycled plastic in new PET bottles. For e.g. - China stands out has enforced restrictions on cargo sheets, further demonstrating its distinct approach to SUP regulation. These differences reflect the broader complexities of balancing environmental responsibility with practical implementation.

Challenges to Regional Harmonization

2.5 Despite shared environmental concerns, regional harmonization of SUP regulations faces hurdles:

- **Regulatory Disparities:** Different nations employ varied approaches—some focus on bans, while others emphasize waste segregation and recycling.
- **Economic Dependencies:** Nations with significant plastic industries face economic challenges in shifting to alternative materials.
- **Compliance and Enforcement:** Countries lack uniform monitoring mechanisms, leading to inconsistencies in enforcement.
- **Consumer Behavior and Cultural Factors:** Public awareness and habits influence policy effectiveness, requiring tailored approaches.

2.6 India's proactive stance on SUP restrictions provides a foundation for regional discussions on harmonization. While challenges persist, collaborative approaches, policy convergence, and shared commitments across the Asia-Pacific region can pave the way for a more sustainable future.

3. ACTION BY THE CONFERENCE

3.1 The Conference is invited to:

- a) Note the significant steps taken by India for protection of environment through posing restrictions on the Single use plastic.
- b) Encourage States to work towards plastic waste increasingly through **technology and knowledge sharing**, which play a critical role in promoting sustainable alternatives, improving waste processing techniques, and driving innovation.
- c) Invite ICAO to develop further guidance and best practices related to Single Use plastic in Aviation.

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