

**61ST CONFERENCE OF
DIRECTORS GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION
ASIA AND PACIFIC REGION**

*Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
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AGENDA ITEM 9: UPDATES

**REPORT OF THE MONTREAL GROUP OF ASIA-PACIFIC
REPRESENTATIVES ON THE COUNCIL OF ICAO**

(Presented by the Representative of Japan on the ICAO Council on behalf of the Montreal Group of Asia Pacific ICAO Council Representatives comprising Australia, China, India, Japan, Malaysia, the Republic of Korea and Singapore)

SUMMARY

The Montreal Group wishes to highlight key issues discussed within the ICAO Council since DGCA/60 in 2025. These include: the Joint Communication issued by the Montreal Group; the convening of an air transport conference and Extraordinary Session of the Assembly; the expansion of the ICAO Council and Air Navigation Commission (ANC); the budget reform and organizational efficiency initiatives; environment and climate change matters; standards, technical provisions and implementation readiness; and aviation safety trends.

REPORT OF THE MONTREAL GROUP OF ASIA-PACIFIC REPRESENTATIVES ON THE COUNCIL OF ICAO

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Montreal Group is an informal grouping of the Representatives of the seven Asia-Pacific States on the ICAO Council (Australia, China, India, Japan, Malaysia, Republic of Korea, and Singapore) in Montreal, Canada. The Montreal Group meets as may be required to discuss matters before the Council and other matters of interest to members.

1.2 This report highlights key discussions and decisions arising from the 236th Session of the Council held in the second half of 2025, and the 237th and 238th Sessions of the Council held in the first half of 2026.

2. JOINT COMMUNICATION FROM THE MONTREAL GROUP

2.1 The Montreal Group circulated a Joint Communication to all Asia-Pacific DGCA Conference members via email on the following three time-sensitive matters for States' consideration and action as necessary, with timelines in July and August 2026 before the 61st APAC DGCA Conference in September 2026:

- a) **Seventh Worldwide Air Transport Conference (ATCONF/7)** scheduled to convene on 16-20 November 2026, at the ICAO Headquarters, in Montréal, Canada. The conference will include a Ministerial Declaration and the draft would be circulated to States to provide timely comments in August 2026.
- b) **Provisional Arrangements to Convene an Extraordinary Session of the Assembly** on 19 and 20 November 2026 were being considered by Council, should the required 128 ratifications for the 2016 Protocol Amending Article 50 (a) of the Convention on International Civil Aviation be deposited by 31 July 2026. The Protocol would expand the ICAO Council by four additional seats, from 36 to 40. This was provided for the awareness of Asia Pacific States and in particular for States that may wish to ratify the Protocol by the timeline.
- c) **Implementation of the ICAO Carbon Offsetting Scheme for International Aviation (CORSIA) and European Union (EU) Emissions Trading System (ETS)** were discussed in the Council, including the potential expansion of the EU ETS to external international flights and possible use of the ETS to offset CORSIA obligations for EU aeroplane operators. A joint letter from the ICAO Council President and Secretary-General to the President of the European Commission conveyed ICAO's concerns that the approach by EU Member States was not contemplated in the ICAO Annex 16 Volume IV on CORSIA. The letter also requested for a meeting to discuss a constructive way forward.

The joint letter was provided to Asia Pacific States that may have similar concerns, so that they could also communicate with the European Commission before 15 June 2026, ahead of the European Commission's review on expanding the EU ETS for aviation by 1 July 2026.

2.2 This communication channel is aligned with one of the recommendations by the Regional Cooperation Mechanisms Task Force that was endorsed by the 59th APAC DGCA Conference in 2024 to improve two-way communication between the DGCA Conference and the Montreal Group (Discussion Paper DP/9/2, Action Item 59/43 refers). Montreal Group invites the Conference to discuss further the modality of this Joint Communication channel.

3. EXPANSION OF THE ICAO COUNCIL AND AIR NAVIGATION COMMISSION

3.1 The 2016 Protocol Amending Article 50 (a) of the Convention on International Civil Aviation to expand Council by four additional seats from 36 to 40 entered into force on 12 June 2026 upon the deposit of the 128th instrument of ratification with ICAO. Accordingly, the Council approved the convening of the Extraordinary Session of the Assembly from 19 to 20 November 2026 for the election for the four additional Council seats. Council agreed to recommend to the Assembly under Rule 55 (b) of the *Standing Rules of Procedure of the Assembly of the International Civil Aviation Organization* for all four seats to be held under Part Three of the elections. The election of these additional four States in Part Three elections will only apply for the remainder of the 2025-2028 triennium and will not determine the Council's future recommendation for the distribution of the 40 seats on the Council among the three Parts of the election in advance of the next Ordinary Session of the Assembly in 2028.

3.2 As of the submission of this information paper, the Indonesia delegation to ICAO in Montreal, Canada had informed the Montreal Group of its intention to put up its candidature for election to the ICAO Council.

3.3 The 2016 Protocol Amending Article 56 of the Convention on International Civil Aviation to enlarge the membership of the Air Navigation Commission with two additional Members also entered into force on 12 June 2026. Council has approved for the elections for the two additional Members of the Commission by the Council to take place in November 2026 at its 239th Session.

4. AMENDMENTS TO STANDARDS, AND RECOMMENDED PRACTICES (SARPs) AND TECHNICAL INSTRUCTIONS

4.1 The Council adopted nine (9) amendment packages across Annexes 1-4, 6, 10-11, 13, 15 and 16, and Procedures for Air Navigation Services (PANS) addressing Aeronautical Information Management (AIM), Air Traffic Management (ATM) and Flight Operations (OPS), as recommended by the Air Navigation Commission (ANC), with applicability dates ranging from November 2026 to November 2028. The amendments are intended to facilitate the application and implementation of existing SARPs, and address four broad areas as follows:

- a) in the area of flight operations, the amendments include changes relating to aircraft equipage and operations, including Emergency Locator Transmitter requirements for tracking and locating aircraft in distress, and Runway Overrun Awareness and Alerting Systems (ROAAS) to minimize runway excursions;
- b) in the area of air traffic management operations, the amendments refine Controller-Pilot Data Link Communications (CPDLC) Standards across Annexes 2, 10 and 11 and PANS-ATM to improve air-ground communications;
- c) in the area of accident investigation, the amendments refine accident report submission criteria, strengthen guidance on maintaining investigation credibility and transparency where a State and suspected unlawful interference are involved, and reinforce protection frameworks for flight recorder data during normal operations, accident investigations and safety management; and
- d) in the area of environmental protection, the amendments introduce new Chapter 15 noise standards for supersonic aircraft and Chapter 16 standards for new subsonic aircraft, and simplify CORSIA reporting requirements through the removal of threshold restrictions for the CO₂ Estimation and Reporting Tool.

4.2 The ANC highlighted the challenges faced with the determination of applicability dates to ensure timely implementation while providing States have adequate time, guidance and capacity to implement ICAO provisions effectively. Specifically, it was highlighted in the Council that the effectiveness of applicability-date determination depends significantly on the quality, completeness and timeliness of inputs from both States and industry through the SARPs development process, and the

continuing low response from States to ICAO State letters seeking inputs was noted in this regard. The ANC is committed to updating the Council on possible solutions to address the matter of applicability dates for SARPs, including issues relating to Assembly Resolution A42-11, Operative Clause 7, on the proposal for a revised applicability date for halon replacement in Annex 8 — Airworthiness of Aircraft for new aircraft type certificate applications.

4.3 The Council also emphasized the importance for ICAO to ensure that appropriate guidance material and implementation support are available in a timely manner to facilitate effective implementation of ICAO SARPs. In this regard, the Council requested ICAO to accelerate the development of guidance material so that it is available in line with SARPs applicability dates, and to identify and plan more targeted capacity-building activities to better address the needs of Member States.

4.4 The Montreal Group therefore strongly urges Asia-Pacific States to engage more actively and provide timely feedback on future State letters concerning amendments, so that regional needs, operational realities and implementation challenges are adequately reflected in the development of international civil aviation standards and technical provisions.

5. AVIATION SAFETY TRENDS

5.1 Council was briefed on the increase in accident rates and fatalities in aviation in recent years, indicating that ICAO is not yet on track to achieve its safety aspirations without further action. The five existing global high-risk categories (G-HRCs) of controlled flight into terrain (CFIT), loss of control in-flight (LOC-I), mid-air collision (MAC), runway excursion (RE) and runway incursion (RI) remain and continue to account for most fatal accidents and require sustained attention. These are further compounded by new emerging risks including Global Navigation Satellite System (GNSS) radio-frequency interference (jamming and spoofing), and radio-frequency spectrum protection, cybersecurity, artificial intelligence, advanced air mobility, increasingly connected aircraft systems, and operations in conflict zones.

5.2 As these emerging risks are interconnected, ICAO is developing an Integrated Risk Management (IRM) framework to better understand and manage the interactions between safety, security, cyber, environmental and operational risks with a strengthening of analytical capabilities with the use of data from accident reports, USOAP findings, regional safety information and other datasets to support more predictive, risk-based decision-making. Council urged the Secretariat to develop more systematic identification of emerging trends and focus on implementation through enhancing guidance material, capacity-building and implementation support for States, beyond developing new SARPs.

6. ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE

6.1 ICAO's work in environment is governed under the Long-Term Global Aspirational Goal (LTAG) 2050, the Framework for Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF), Lower Carbon Aviation Fuel and other cleaner energies and ICAO CORSIA with its primary focus on implementation support to States. Secretariat updated Council of a new Assistance, Capacity-building and Training for LTAG (ACT-LTAG) programme to support implementation across all elements of the ICAO basket of measures to reduce aviation CO₂ emissions, including provision of guidance materials. Work is accelerating on the analysis and approval of life cycle values for new fuel feedstock, sources and pathways and their sustainability certification for the CORSIA eligible fuels. It was reported that the ICAO Finvest programme has 25 projects across 18 States with an aggregate of USD10.5 billion in capital investment to deliver an estimated 2.25 million tonnes of annual SAF production capacity.

6.2 The Council strongly reaffirmed CORSIA as *“the only global market-based measure (MBM) applying to CO₂ emissions from international aviation so as to avoid a possible patchwork of duplicative State or regional MBMs, thus ensuring that international aviation CO₂ emissions should be accounted for only once”* (A42-22, paragraph 18, refers). It continued to emphasize the critical importance of maintaining the globally harmonized approach under CORSIA and its ICAO implementation framework, for the monitoring, reporting and verification of CO₂ emissions as well as the sustainability criteria and eligibility criteria to ensure the quality of CORSIA eligible fuels and CORSIA eligible

emissions units respectively. As CORSIA enters into its Second Phase in 2027, the Council highlighted the importance of continued participation of States in CORSIA, as well as the value of cooperation and dialogue among States to further increase the number of participating States in CORSIA, thereby enhancing the effectiveness and integrity of the scheme.

6.3 The Council also raised concerns on reports of several initiatives and proposals by other organizations to impose aviation levies and taxes for the mobilization of climate finance to other sectors, including recent proposals under the UN Committee of Experts on International Cooperation on Tax Matters, as well as initiatives launched by the Global Solidarity Levies Task Force. It requested ICAO to develop a communications strategy to informed of the efforts and measures taken by the sector to address international civil aviation emissions and to highlight the negative effect of such levies and taxes against the development of the international aviation sector.

7. SUSTAINABLE BUDGET AND ORGANIZATIONAL EFFICIENCY

7.1 The Assembly, in the Resolution A42-27, requested the Council to continue its work towards the long-term financial sustainability and viability of the Organization, and report the outcome to the next ordinary session of the Assembly. Furthermore, the Assembly emphasized the need for further reforms in the budget formulation process with a view to ensuring fit-for-purpose budgets to uphold the highest standards of transparency, accountability, and efficiency. It further underlined the significance of prioritizing the work programme, expanding revenue-generating activities, and enhancing operational efficiencies.

7.2 Following the Assembly decision, a Small Group of the ICAO Council Finance Committee on Sustainable ICAO Financing and Budgeting was formed to develop a long-term strategy for the Organization's financial sustainability and viability. Its mandate includes a clearer framework for preparing budgets for future triennia and ensuring that budget reform is supported by enhanced operational efficiency in ICAO.

7.3 The Secretary-General developed a 2026-2028 Continuous Organizational Improvement (COI) programme focusing on the processes, structures and capabilities required to enhance the Organization's effectiveness, efficiency, agility, and responsiveness in support of its strategic objectives, built upon the ICAO 2023–2025 Transformational Objective to modernize the Organization and improve its performance through institutional reforms, business process improvements, and digital transformation efforts. The COI programme is a response to generate efficiencies through cost reductions, process streamlining, and time savings and will be further discussed in the Council.

8. ACTION BY THE CONFERENCE

8.1 The Conference is invited to note the updates on the items discussed in the ICAO Council, with particular focus on Asia-Pacific's priorities, implementation needs and opportunities for stronger engagement between States and the Montreal Group.

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