

**59<sup>th</sup> CONFERENCE OF  
DIRECTORS GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION  
ASIA AND PACIFIC REGIONS**

*Cebu, Philippines  
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AGENDA ITEM 1:        THEME TOPIC

**PROMOTING SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY: AN INCLUSIVE  
AND RESILIENT FUTURE FOR AVIATION**

(Presented by IFALPA)

**INFORMATION PAPER**

**SUMMARY**

The 41<sup>st</sup> Session of the ICAO Assembly adopted Resolution A41-24, *Aviation's contribution towards the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*. In April 2023 the International Labour Organisation hosted ICAO at a Technical Meeting on a green, sustainable and inclusive economic recovery for the civil aviation sector. On 11 June 2024 the ICAO Council heard an informal briefing on Labour Issues in Aviation and the Social Dimension of Sustainability. This encourages collaboration between states, organisations, ILO and ICAO to promote social sustainability and improve the social future of air transport and the economic

## [PROMOTING SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY: AN INCLUSIVE AND RESILIENT FUTURE FOR AVIATION]

### 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Collaboration between states, organizations, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and ICAO is fundamental to ensuring that ICAO is able to meet its United Nations Sustainable Development Goal objectives and support an aviation sector that is resilient and inclusive.

1.2 ICAO and ILO have agreed to collaborate on areas of common concern including women in aviation, decent and sustainable work and data collection. In 2009 ICAO launched the Next Generation of Aviation Professionals (NGAP) initiative to support the recruitment and retention of aviation workers.

1.3 Ongoing dialogue between ICAO and ILO ensures the promotion of Positive Safety Culture in a manner consistent with ILO standards governing the world of work. Ongoing technical and policy cooperation between ICAO and ILO also demonstrates that states and ICAO are committed to meeting public expectations for a socially sustainable aviation industry that is resilient and inclusive.

### 2. DISCUSSION

#### *Challenges and Opportunities*

2.1 ICAO has identified a critical aviation personnel gap. At the 58<sup>th</sup> Conference of Directors of Civil Aviation from 15 – 19 October 2023, ICAO presented an update on the state of the air transport industry. ICAO identified significant demand for personnel across pilots, air traffic controllers, maintenance technicians and cabin crew. At an informal briefing for the ICAO Council in March 2024 ICAO forecast demand for 670,000 new pilots, 137,000 new air traffic controllers, 698,000 new maintenance technicians and 1,085,000 new cabin crew by 2043.

2.2 In 2017 ICAO convened the inaugural NGAP Global Summit with a view to intensifying awareness regarding the forecast shortage of aviation professionals and encourage Civil Aviation Authorities to communicate and cooperate with government education bodies and industry to promote aviation as a profession. NGAP also aimed to encourage collaboration between States and the aviation industry to identify long-term human resource needs and establish strategies to attract, educate and retain aviation professionals, considering that NGAP is closely linked to SDGs. ICAO identified a need to broaden its scope and begin instilling greater aviation awareness in high school and younger students, and especially in young girls.

2.3 NGAP specifically supported the need to promote best practices that focus on meeting the needs and values of the next generation of aviation professionals to enable employee productivity, performance, recruitment, retention, health and safety.

2.4 In 2022 ILO and ICAO signed an agreement to collaborate on a range of areas of common interest and concern. Those areas were women in aviation; the future of decent and sustainable work in aviation; and data collection.

2.5 ICAO and ILO also agreed to formalize closer collaboration in fulfilling their respective mandates. For the ILO that mandate is the Decent Work Agenda which comprises the four inseparable, interrelated and mutually supportive strategic objectives of employment, social protection, social dialogue and the fundamental principles and rights at work. The ILO also identifies gender equality and non-discrimination as issues cutting across those objectives. ICAO's mandate was articulated in terms of its five strategic objectives of safety, air navigation capacity and efficiency, security and facilitation, economic development of air transport and environmental protection.

2.6 Both agencies committed to using a variety of modalities for cooperation including

joint research, joint technical meetings, joint technical advisory services, joint training, and collaboration on the development of appropriate guidelines, tools and methodologies. They also agreed to mutual regular consultations.

2.7 At the 41<sup>st</sup> Assembly the ICAO Council submitted WP/55. That paper invited the Assembly to recognize the importance of international solidarity and multilateral partnerships and mechanisms in support of an inclusive, sustainable and resilient economic recovery that promotes sustainable development of international civil aviation and advances the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

2.8 The Working Paper recognized that partnerships are of particular significance for ICAO in successful mobilization of resources. The Working Paper recognized the framework agreement that ICAO has signed with the ILO. The paper encouraged Member States to continue to more strongly advocate for interlinkages between enhanced air transport systems and the achievement of the 2030 Agenda. National aviation plans play an important role in indicating what commitments Member States make to the SDGs.

2.9 Assembly Resolution A41-24 requested the Secretary General to enhance existing and establish new partnerships to assist Member States in enhancing their air transport systems with a view to contributing, consequently, to the attainment of the SDGs.

2.10 That resolution also urged Member States to enhance their air transport systems by effectively implementing ICAO SARPs and policies while at the same time including and elevating the priority of the aviation sector into their national development plans supported by robust air transport sector strategic plans and civil aviation master plans, thereby leading to the attainment of the SDGs.

2.11 It also encouraged Member States to include clear references to the UN SDGs in their relevant national plans, with the objective of showcasing the contribution of aviation to the UN SDGs and national economies.

2.12 Also, at the 41<sup>st</sup> Assembly IFALPA, ITF and ILO submitted A41-WP/540 commending the ICAO on its signing of the framework agreement with the ILO. That paper also provided some detail regarding the ILO's work with regard to decent work.

2.13 The ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization, 2008 records that Members have a key responsibility to contribute, through their social and economic policy, to the realization of a global and integrated strategy for the implementation of strategic objectives including the Decent Work Agenda. To that end, the Declaration recognizes that member States may consider a range of activities including the adoption of a national strategy, and the establishment of appropriate indicators.

2.14 The ILO Tripartite Meeting of Experts on the Measurement of Decent Work sought to provide guidance to States on measuring the various dimensions of decent work and adopted the ILO Framework Work Indicators covering ten substantive elements corresponding to the strategic pillars set out in the ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization, 2008. Those ten elements are as follows:

- 2.14.1 Employment opportunities;
- 2.14.2 Adequate earnings and productive work;
- 2.14.3 Decent hours (of work);
- 2.14.4 Combining work, family and personal life;
- 2.14.5 Work that should be abolished;

- 2.14.6 Stability and security of work;
- 2.14.7 Equal opportunity and treatment in employment;
- 2.14.8 Safe work environment;
- 2.14.9 Social security;
- 2.14.10 Social dialogue, workers' and employers' representation.

2.15 In addition, the ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization, 2008 recognizes that sustainable institutional and economic environments (enabling environments)<sup>1</sup> promote sustainable enterprises, public or private, to enable growth and the generation of greater employment and income opportunities and prospects for all. To achieve the goal of transforming growth into decent and sustainable work, the ILO advocates and promotes global policy frameworks and partnerships that aim at generating more quality employment opportunities.

*ILO – ICAO joint meetings*

2.16 From 24 to 28 April 2023 ILO hosted ICAO at a Technical Meeting on a Green, Sustainable and Inclusive Economic Recovery for the Civil Aviation Sector (TMGCAS<sup>2</sup>). That was attended by ITF, IFALPA, ACI, ATAG, IATA, ASA, IFATCA and a large number of states' representatives as well as the IOE.

2.17 The TMGCAS noted social dialogue paves the way for workers and employer to realize a human-centred approach to the future of work. It noted that the civil aviation sector plays a crucial role in economic, social and sustainable development and is vital for the transport of passengers and delivery of time-sensitive and high-value goods.

2.18 The meeting noted that structural change in terms of ownership, operations and the consolidation, and adoption of new business models and practices (including ownership and control in countries other than the State of registry) constitutes features of the industry that could have an impact on employment and labour protection and may represent a challenge for regulatory oversight and enforcement. Dealing with these specificities of the sector in a coherent manner, in the policy, regulatory and practice spheres, can advance decent work in the sector and overcome safety and health, and inspection challenges.

2.19 The TMGCAS called on Governments, employers' and workers' organizations to promote equality of opportunity and treatment for all, especially women, including by ending gender biased practices, where they exist, and through policies that provide access for women to work and career progression in technical roles, accredited roles and leadership positions. Meanwhile, the ILO committed to promote actions to close the gender participation and pay gap and end discrimination at work, and promote the participation of women in the sector.

2.20 The meeting noted that in order to attract and encourage workers to remain in the industry, career prospects and terms and conditions of work should be competitive and promote decent work.

2.21 The TMGCAS also noted that “Just culture” (positive safety culture) supported by effective grievance mechanisms and by global coordination – that aim to make the industry safer without fear of retaliation – could effectively level playing fields between countries as well as support compliance with technical regulations and address reporting concerns.

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<sup>1</sup> ILO, [Conclusions concerning the promotion of sustainable enterprises](#), 2007.

<sup>2</sup> ILO, [Conclusions and recommendations on the promotion of decent work to shape a green, sustainable and inclusive economic recovery for the civil aviation sector](#), 2023.

2.22 The ILO committed to produce a compendium of best practices focused on policy coherence and efficiency, conduct evidence-based research, in particular on occupational safety and health, collect data and statistics on opportunities and challenges, and undertake an analysis of the extent of application of international labour standards to civil aviation.

2.23 The ILO committed to collaborating with ICAO to explore challenges and priorities of a just transition, evaluation how ILO standards apply in aviation (especially in relation to worker safety), and assist ICAO to realize the ambitions of ICAO Resolution A41-21 on carbon emissions. It also committed to strengthening coordination with ICAO including on NGAP in order to promote policy coherence, and involve social partners therein.

2.24 In June 2024 the President of ICAO invited Council to an Informal Briefing on Labour Issues in Aviation and Social Dimension of Sustainability.

2.25 At that briefing presentations were made by the ILO, IFALPA, ITF and ACI. The President of ICAO proposed that the social dimension of sustainable development of aviation should be the matter of a workstream within ICAO, under the guidance of the ICAO Council.

2.26 That briefing discussed the promotion of full and productive employment and decent work, ensuring a positive safety culture and a just transition, and facing the challenges and opportunities of economic development and liberalization of air transport.

2.27 At the briefing, IFALPA noted that cooperation between ICAO and ILO is key to reaching consensus on the social dimension of sustainable development of aviation. IFALPA also pointed out the strong connection between the social sustainability of the industry and an effective and meaningful positive safety culture which is the core of SMS.

### *Conclusions*

2.28 The signing of the framework agreement between ICAO and ILO is a significant positive step to initiating collaboration on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and particular SDG 8.

2.29 ICAO and ILO are also to be congratulated for collaborating in the holding of the ILO Technical Meeting on civil aviation in April 2023 and the ICAO Council Informal Briefing in June 2024.

2.30 ICAO has an important role to play in assisting the ILO to realize the commitments it has made to promoting decent work and sustainable development of the international aviation sector.

2.31 Likewise, the ILO can provide meaningful technical assistance, advice and collaboration for Member States in creating an enabling environment for effective social dialogue, actively fostering equal and inclusive employment policies, and ensuring a safe and health working environment for aviation workers.

2.32 ICAO and ILO are now at the point where they may wish to consider further formalizing their collaboration in relation to the social dimension of sustainable development of the aviation sector. In particular, it may be worth ICAO considering collaborating with the ILO on decarbonization and just transition of the civil aviation sector towards an environmentally sustainable future for aviation.

2.33 Likewise, the ICAO might consider providing ILO with guidance concerning best practices in the aviation sector that are relevant to the ILO's interest in occupational safety and health.

**3. ACTION BY THE CONFERENCE**

- 3.1 The Conference is invited to note the information contained in this Paper.

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