

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

**AGENDA ITEM 1: THEME TOPIC**

**SAFE SKIES. SUSTAINABLE FUTURE: TOGETHER FOR  
THE NEXT 80 YEARS**

(Presented by International Civil Aviation Organization)

**SUMMARY**

The air transport connectivity is of utmost importance for the economic, social and territorial cohesion of Member States and their people. The Civil Aviation sector is one of the fastest growing sectors in the world and has witnessed several challenges in the past. In order to advance international civil aviation, ICAO has taken leadership in collaboration with Member States and International Organization as well as other stakeholders by implementing various strategic objectives, goals, programmes, and key initiatives. This paper highlights such activities undertaken by ICAO for the healthy development and long-term substantiality of the global civil aviation sector taking into account the resilience and inclusivity of this sector.

# SAFE SKIES.SUSTAINABLE FUTURE: TOGETHER FOR THE NEXT 80 YEARS

## 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 International civil aviation is a crucial element of global connectivity, trade and tourism that has provided invaluable services to humankind. Aviation, through providing connectivity between nations, reuniting families and friends, facilitating the creation of jobs as well as supporting trade and tourism, is a key driver of economic and social development. The Convention on International Civil Aviation articulated a vision for international civil aviation to be developed as a tool for world peace and prosperity.

1.2 The benefits enabled by air transportation can only materialize if States have a safe, efficient, secure, economically viable and environmentally sustainable air transport system. The economic value of global air transport sector is significant due to its direct, indirect and induced contribution to national economy. Activities to support ICAO Strategic Objectives on safety, air navigation capacity and efficiency, security and facilitation, economic development of air transport, and environmental protection contribute to the attainment of United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

1.3 The smooth functioning of the global aviation system relies heavily on a highly trained and skilled workforce. This workforce plays a crucial role in meeting the diverse demands of the industry and maintaining the highest standards worldwide, in line with ICAO's Strategic Objectives and ICAO global plans. The ICAO Gender Equality program encourages wider participation of women and girls in aviation sector.

## 2. DISCUSSION

### Economic Development

2.1 The Asia-Pacific (APAC) region is expected to experience a growth rate of 4.6 %, surpassing the global average of 2.8%. With a population of over 4.7 billion, accounting for 60% of the world's population, the region holds a significant demographic advantage, and has a significant proportion of young individuals, giving it a demographic advantage and positioning it as a crucial supplier of human resources. Pre-pandemic, the aviation industry in the region was a success story with an impressive level of growth, supporting 30.2 million jobs and USD 684 billion in GDP in Asia and Pacific.

2.2 ICAO's latest analysis also reveals new insights into aviation for the previous year 2023, revealing that air traffic on most routes had already reached or surpassed pre-pandemic levels by the end of the year. This is aligned with ICAO's earlier prediction of an almost complete recovery of passenger air traffic, namely around 95% of 2019 pre-pandemic levels globally by the end of 2023. This clearly indicates the resilience of the air transport sector from adverse external impact and its inherent agility at any difficult situation.

### Environmental Protection

2.3 ICAO's environmental work contributes to 14 of the 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including SDG 13, "Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts". To promote the sustainable growth of international aviation and to achieve its global aspirational goals, a comprehensive approach consisting of a basket of measures including technology, sustainable aviation fuels, operational improvements and market-based measures to reduce emissions and possible evolution of Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs), is necessary.

2.4 ICAO has reiterated that aspirational goals agreed upon by governments towards the decarbonization of air transport by 2050 are supporting the environmental sustainability of the recovery and future development of the global air transport network. This is further driven by initiatives led by ICAO to accelerate the development and implementation of the technologies, operational improvements, and cleaner aviation energies that decarbonization requires. ICAO's latest air traffic forecasts are promising for global development and a reminder that the global community must accelerate its sustainability efforts, particularly to assure the production and deployment of sustainable aviation fuels in sufficient quantities.”

2.5 An inclusive air transport system is better positioned to support the global communities it serves, build and maintain a sustainable professional workforce, and adapt itself to be resilient to the disruptions and adversities faced by aviation.

#### Gender Equality in Civil Aviation

2.6 Gender equality in the air transport system is crucial for the sector to maintain a sustainable professional workforce. The Resolution A41-26 of the 41<sup>st</sup> Session of the ICAO Assembly: *ICAO Gender Equality Programme promoting the participation of women in the global aviation sector* was adopted reaffirming commitment to enhancing gender equality and the advancement of women's development by supporting UN Sustainable Development Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls including by aiming to achieve an aspirational goal of 50-50 (women-men) by 2030 at all professional and higher levels of employment in the global aviation sector.

2.7 Recognizing the importance of advancing gender equality in aviation, in 2016, the 39<sup>th</sup> Session of the Assembly adopted Resolution A39-30 ICAO Gender Equality Programme promoting the participation of women in the global aviation sector. Accordingly, in 2017, the Secretary General established the ICAO Gender Equality Programme.

2.8 States in Asia and Pacific Region have taken exemplary steps in the gender equality by adopting policies and issuing circulars to promote representation of women and girls in aviation sector. These activities directly support the ICAO's key initiative on gender equality in the respective States/Administrations while they may also inspire other States/Administrations to follow similar approaches in support of gender equality in the APAC region.

2.9 Recent data has suggested that representation of women and girls in major aviation professions like flight crew, maintenance personnel and air traffic controller has improved over a decade. In a few APAC States/Administrations, such representation has even surpassed the global average of respective data.

2.10 The development of a disability-inclusive air transport system is crucial for the sector to support all people in the global communities it serves. The Resolution Assembly A41-15: *Accessibility in International Civil Aviation* resolved that the dignity and non-discrimination are universal rights that apply to all persons and including persons with disabilities and persons with reduced mobility traveling by air, and further urged Member States to prioritize the inclusion and accessibility of air transport services to persons with disabilities and reduced mobility.

#### Cybersecurity in Civil Aviation

2.11 Cyber resilience and cybersecurity are a critical and urgent requirement for the air transport system to address rapidly evolving cyber-attacks and cyber threats. Resolution A41-19: *Addressing Cybersecurity in Civil Aviation* of the 41<sup>st</sup> Session of ICAO Assembly has instructed ICAO to ensure that cybersecurity and cyber resilience matters are considered and coordinated in a cross-cutting manner through the new mechanism in ICAO to address aviation cybersecurity. States and industry stakeholders have also been urged to take action to address cyber threats to civil aviation and encouraged to continue contributing to ICAO in the development of international Standards, strategies, and best practices to support advancing aviation cybersecurity and cyber resilience.

2.12 In the face of evolving aviation security threats, Member States have been encouraged to develop a strong, sustainable and resilient air cargo security framework in a coordinated manner.

#### Sustainability of Civil Aviation

2.13 ICAO continues to assess the need, as well as the resources required, to evolve and keep pace with innovations that affect the sustainable development of civil aviation. Volunteerism is being advanced as a significant instrument for qualified experts to engage in the sustainable development of civil aviation worldwide positively.

2.14 ICAO APAC Regional Office and Ministry of Civil Aviation, Government of India organized the Second Asia and Pacific Ministerial Conference in New Delhi, India from 11-12 September 2024. In this Conference, Ministers responsible for civil aviation have expressed their unwavering commitments for the overall growth and sustainability of civil aviation sector. The Conference adopted the Delhi Declaration 2024 that is a roadmap for the future of aviation in one of the world's fastest-growing regions.

#### Shaping the Future of Aviation: ICAO new Long-term Strategic Plan and new Vision

2.15 7 December 2024 will mark the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the signing of the Convention on International Civil Aviation in Chicago, United States. For eight decades, this defining international agreement has served as the foundation for the development of the global civil aviation system to the benefit of all nations. As we celebrate ICAO's 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary, ICAO is introducing a new Long-term Strategic Plan that will guide us from 2026 to 2050. Looking ahead to 2050, ICAO is projecting that the sector will manage 12.4 billion passengers. This growth is not just numbers – it represents increased global connectivity, economic opportunities, social development, poverty reduction and cultural exchange. With this future in mind, ICAO is proclaiming a new vision: "A safe, secure and sustainable international civil aviation system that connects the world for the benefit of all nations and people." This vision is supported by three aspirational goals:

- i. Zero fatalities in international aviation from accidents and acts of unlawful interference;
- ii. A long term global aspirational goal of Net-zero carbon emissions by 2050 for international civil aviation operations; and
- iii. The goal of aviation to serve as an integral part of a thriving, connected, accessible, inclusive, and affordable transport system for people and goods, contributing to socio-economic development, while ensuring no country is left behind.

### **3. ACTION BY THE CONFERENCE**

3.1 The Conference is invited to:

- a) Take note of the contents of this Discussion Paper;
- b) Urge States/Administrations to formulate policies and associated strategies for environmentally friendly and sustainable development of the aviation sector in the APAC region;
- c) Encourage States/Administrations to continue with their efforts to improve gender equality;
- d) Urge States/Administrations to develop policy and associated strategies for accessibility of air transport services to air travelers with disabilities and reduced mobility;

- e) Encourage States/Administration to formulate national policy for adopting emerging technologies by following ICAO SARPs and guidance materials for overall benefit of the aviation sector;
- f) Urge States and industry stakeholders to take urgent action to address cyber threats to civil aviation; and
- g) Urge States/Administrations, International Organizations and stakeholders to support ICAO strategic objectives, goals, programmes and key initiatives for healthy growth and sustainable development of aviation sector in the APAC region.

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