



WORKING PAPER

THIRTEENTH AIR NAVIGATION CONFERENCE

Montréal, Canada, 9 to 19 October 2018

COMMITTEE B

- Agenda Item 7: Operational safety risks**
7.2: Operational safety risks at the global, regional and national levels, and the role of RSOOs and RASGs in achieving the GASP goals

**IMPORTANCE OF MAINTAINING THE RASG SAFETY FRAMEWORK
IN SUPPORT OF THE GASP**

(Presented by the United States)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The United States supports the benefits of the *Global Aviation Safety Plan* (GASP, Doc 10004) and the need for regional support of it through the Regional Aviation Safety Groups (RASGs). The role of the RASGs is to support the purpose of the GASP and achieve its purpose to continue to reduce fatalities in commercial aviation. The established framework of the RASGs has allowed fulfilment of this role and has contributed to improved safety in the regions. This is largely due to the implementation of safety enhancement initiatives (SEIs) that address risks based on a collaborative, data driven process. As the GASP and the *Global Air Navigation Plan* (GANP, Doc 9750) are interrelated, with the latter being supported regionally through the Planning and Implementation Regional Groups (PIRGs), achieving their respective objectives is inherently dependent upon coordination among the RASGs and PIRGs. However, the continued success of the RASGs is vital for the improvement of safety within the regions, and can only be accomplished through a strong, safety-focused framework. In this regard, ICAO and Member States are encouraged to study the safety benefits of the RASGs, which have resulted from the current safety framework, and support its sustainment.

Action: The Conference is invited to agree to the recommendations in paragraph 3.1.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 As stated in the plan, the purpose of the *Global Aviation Safety Plan* (GASP, Doc 10004) is to, “continually reduce fatalities, and the risk of fatalities, associated with accidents by guiding the harmonized development and implementation of regional and national aviation safety plans.”¹ States, regions, and industry work to manage the implementation of the GASP through the coordination of safety enhancement initiatives (SEIs).

¹ International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), *Global Aviation Safety Plan*, 2020-2022 Edition (Draft), Doc 10004, ICAO, p.ii.

1.2 The Regional Aviation Safety Groups (RASGs) fulfil their role as defined by the GASP through the safety framework it has established. From their founding, several of the RASGs were modelled after the United States Commercial Aviation Safety Team (CAST), a joint government-industry group with the goal of reducing fatality risk in commercial aviation. CAST membership includes representatives from civil aviation authorities, the air carrier industry, labor organizations, manufacturers, ICAO, and other industry organizations. Like CAST, the success of several of the RASGs is dependent upon the collaboration and partnership between government and industry.

1.3 Over the past several years, the RASGs have shown success in achieving the purpose of the GASP to enhance aviation safety in the regions. This can be seen through the established government-industry partnerships that have influenced change, as well as in the implementation of the SEIs identified through this data-driven process. This collaboration has promoted a positive culture for the sharing of safety information, and the development of effective risk mitigation strategies to address fatality risks in the regions. While in support of enhanced collaboration between the regional groups, in order to ensure the regions continue to experience safety benefits, it is essential that the RASGs sustain their data-driven methodology established to identify and mitigate risks.

2. DISCUSSION

2.1 As the RASGs have been instrumental in decreasing the accident rate within the regions, ICAO and its Member States must continue to build upon these efforts and ensure the RASGs remain focused on leveraging a data-driven approach to advance safety.

2.2 In AN-Conf/13-WP/30, paragraph 2.2, “Enhancing Implementation Support Through Regional Mechanisms,” ICAO noted support for the planning and implementation of the global plans through regional mechanisms, such as the planning and implementation regional groups (PIRG)s and RASGs, as well as support for inclusion of a process for States to provide feedback on their respective terms of reference (TORs). ICAO also shared the suggestions made by the Global Forum on PIRGs and RASGs Development, which took place in Montréal, Canada, December 13, 2017.

2.3 The United States supports the planning and implementation of the global plans through regional mechanisms and the inclusion of a process for States to provide respective terms of reference (TOR) feedback. The United States also supports the suggestions made by the Global Forum on PIRGs and RASGs Development for more effective collaboration between the RASGs and PIRGs, and would be in agreement with improving regional mechanisms to facilitate collaboration, harmonization, the sharing of best practices and lessons learned. Additionally, the United States would be in agreement with the need to increase efficiency and avoid overlapping or duplication of activities.

2.4 While in support of finding solutions to these challenges, the United States recommends proceeding with caution in considering the restructuring of these regional mechanisms, and that this be done in consultation with States, as any related restructuring could have a detrimental effect on safety. As each region is unique, a solution tailored to the needs of each region should be considered upon further discussion. Regional partners and participating organizations like CAST have expressed concerns with the proposal to restructure the RASGs and the PIRGs, as it has in some cases resulted in the combination of the two groups taking focus away from a data-driven safety agenda and ultimately diluting the resources and impact of the RASGs on advancing safety. It is vital that the RASGs remain focused on building upon their successes in improving safety within their respective regions.

2.5 The differing structures and processes of the RASGs and PIRGs have each contributed to their successes. Both groups encourage government and industry collaboration. The scope of the RASGs

is data-driven and encompasses analysis of systemic risks. The scope of the PIRGs, while also data-driven, focuses on risks related specifically to airspace matters including efficiency and safety issues. As a result, restructuring may pose a challenge to the success of these frameworks.

2.6 The agreements between the RASGs (RASG – Asia Pacific and the RASG – Pan America), and CAST, allow the sharing of safety data and are established on protocols to ensure appropriate use of - and access to - the safety information. If the RASGs were restructured, the agreements would need to be re-evaluated to determine whether the sharing of safety data would still be possible. The loss of this data sharing could have a potential negative impact on current safety efforts underway within these regions.

2.7 ICAO calls for further improvement of the RASG and PIRG mechanisms to enhance the coordination between them and other regional groups. The United States supports this strategy; however, more information is needed as to what mechanisms or processes would be changed. Both the RASGs and the PIRGs play critical roles in improving the safety and the efficiency of the global aviation system. Safety is the highest priority, and the role of the RASGs is vital in sustaining safety improvements around the world.

3. CONCLUSION

3.1 In order to ensure the RASGs continue to support the purpose of the GASP and improve safety in the regions, the United States recommends that ICAO and States review the RASG-related safety benefits and support their continued success by maintaining the established safety framework. On this basis, the Conference is invited to agree to the following recommendations:

- a) request ICAO to support better alignment and harmonization of the RASGs and PIRGs working mechanisms through consultation with Member States, while maintaining the established safety framework of the RASGs;
- b) request ICAO to provide more detailed information to States as to how the regional mechanisms and processes might be changed, to inform decision-making;
- c) request ICAO to promote the importance of the data-driven process established in the RASGs which led to the SEIs that have been published;
- d) request ICAO to promote the adoption by all States of the SEIs within the regions designed to address fatality risks;
- e) request ICAO to promote the importance of government and industry collaboration to enhance aviation safety worldwide, as well as the participation by both States and industry in the RASGs; and
- f) urge States to support the implementation of GASP goals and principles, as well as the planning and implementation of the global plans through the RASGs and the PIRGs.