



WORKING PAPER

FOURTEENTH AIR NAVIGATION CONFERENCE

Montréal, Canada, 26 August to 6 September 2024

- Agenda Item 1: Update on the ICAO 2023-2025 Business Plan and long-term strategic planning**
1.3: Evolution of the Technical Commission of the ICAO Assembly

EVOLUTION OF THE TECHNICAL COMMISSION

(Presented by the Secretariat)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This paper addresses the need to continue the transition initiated by the ICAO Council, on request of the ICAO Assembly during its past Sessions, to further increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the Assembly by proposing a recommended scope and considering a two-phased approach to the evolution of the Technical Commission.

The first phase centres on increasing the efficiency of the Technical Commission at the next Assembly by, *inter alia*, focusing on matters within the recommended scope, and in particular considering the lessons learnt from the 41st Session of the Assembly (A41) (C-DEC 229/4 refers).

Based on the discussions of this Conference, the second phase will be to present to the 42nd Session of the Assembly a proposal on more substantive changes, which may include a reformation of the Technical Commission in terms of name and scope for its consideration.

Action: The Conference is invited to agree to Recommendation 1.3/x — Evolution of the ICAO Assembly Technical Commission contained in paragraph 3.

<i>Strategic Objectives:</i>	This working paper relates to the Safety and Air Navigation Capacity and Efficiency Strategic Objectives.
<i>Financial implications:</i>	<i>Impact for the aviation community:</i> States, as well as international organizations, will benefit from significantly reduced overlap between the deliberations of Assemblies and high-level technical conferences. <i>Impact for ICAO (relative to the current Regular Programme Budget resource levels):</i> The resources necessary for implementation can be accommodated within the current regular budget resource levels allotted to the Safety and Air Navigation Capacity and Efficiency Programme.
<i>References:</i>	AN Min. 223-7 C-DEC 210/6 C-DEC 229/4 Doc 7600, <i>Standing Rules of Procedure of the Assembly of the International Civil Aviation Organization</i>

	Doc 7709, <i>Assembly 10th Session. Caracas, June – July 1965. Report of the Executive Committee</i> Doc 8143, <i>Directives to Divisional-type Air Navigation Meetings and Rules of Procedure for their Conduct</i> Doc 9662, <i>Assembly Resolutions in Force (as of 4 October 1995)</i> Doc 10024, <i>Assembly 38th Session Montréal. 24 September - 4 October 2013. Report and Minutes of the Executive Committee</i> Doc 10137, <i>Assembly 40th Session. Montréal, 24 September – 4 October 2019. Technical Commission Report</i> Doc 10140, <i>Assembly Resolutions in Force (as of 4 October 2019)</i> Doc 10184, <i>Assembly Resolutions in Force (as of 7 October 2022)</i>
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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Assembly Resolution A41-23 (preceded by A31-2 and A40-20): *Increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of ICAO*, directed the ICAO Council to “continue to streamline the working methods and procedures of the Assembly with a view to increased..., transparency, simplification and efficiency”. Furthermore, the Executive Committee at the 38th Session of the Assembly called for the Council to examine ways on improving the overall structure of the preparatory work leading up to the Assembly (Doc 10024, paragraph 24.10 c) refers). At the sixth meeting of its 210th Session, the Council, in taking action on these requests, agreed that Category 2 meetings covered by the *Directives to Divisional-type Air Navigation Meetings and Rules of Procedure for their Conduct* (Doc 8143) be held no later than the third quarter of the second year of a triennium, to the extent possible, so that they can inform the ICAO Business Plan and Regular Programme Budget for the subsequent triennium.

1.2 The Technical Commission was established by the Executive Committee during the 10th Session of the Assembly in 1956. While it has been acknowledged as fit for purpose for decades, several factors have contributed to the need for ICAO to enhance its efficiency, as well as that of the Assembly. These include the pace of innovation in aviation, the ever-increasing work programme items, recurring divisional-type meetings, and the Business Plan and regular budget preparations cycle.

2. DISCUSSION

2.1 While the 40th Assembly referred to “policy decisions” (Doc 10137, paragraph 28.25 refers) there is still much ambiguity in the interpretation of this term, especially when considering that the term was used with respect to improving the efficiency of Assemblies. A better way to achieving that objective might thus be to consider providing guidelines for what the scope of the Technical Commission should be.

2.2 The recommended scope can be indicated as including items related to the Global Aviation Safety Plan, the Global Air Navigation Plan, new Resolutions and amendments to existing resolutions. The Technical Commission would be expected to avoid matters normally covered by ICAO expert groups, matters that have been discussed at a divisional-type meeting and matters that fall under the terms of reference for regional groups.

2.3 The Technical Commission continues to face the challenge of having to conduct in-depth technical discussions on a high volume of working papers tabled during its limited sittings. The number of working papers submitted to the Technical Commission at the 39th and 40th Sessions increased from 211 (135 working papers, 76 information papers) to 237 (133 working papers, 104 information papers),

respectively, with a slight decrease in working papers submitted to the 41st Session (possibly as an impact of COVID-19 to the aviation system). This resulted in an allotment of less than 30 seconds for the review and discussion of each paper, with a number of working papers not even being introduced from the floor. While the reduction of the time allotted for the Technical Commission at Assemblies is a factor, many papers were on technical matters that were effectively referred to the relevant ICAO expert group for consideration instead.

Divisional-type meetings: a focus on technical discussions

2.4 Divisional-type meetings, such as air navigation conferences or high-level safety conferences, became the preferred forum that should ideally address the evolving challenges of new technologies and concepts of operation over future triennia, and coming decades, in support of the evolution of the aviation system. They are attended by appropriate experts, allowing for detailed technical discussions on safety and air navigation matters. These discussions often lead to agreements on a set of high-level recommendations submitted for approval to the ICAO Council and for subsequent inclusion in the ICAO work programme. The ICAO Assembly is then informed of the outcomes of the divisional-type meetings, which include critical recommendations to the Council regarding amendments to the *Global Air Navigation Plan* (GANP, Doc 9750) and *Global Aviation Safety Plan* (GASP, Doc 10004) (C-DEC 210/6, paragraph 16. c) iii) 2) refers).

Synchronization between budget construction and technical work input

2.5 Considering the importance of strategic planning for the work of ICAO to face current and future challenges, it has been recognized that divisional-type meeting recommendations, made available in a timely fashion, are critical to inform the Organization's budgetary preparation work, also supporting Council decision (C-DEC 210/6, paragraph 16. d) refers). This timely availability of recommendations is critical, considering that Assembly resolutions containing new work impact the budget of the Organization.

2.6 A stable and consistent long-term work programme will ease the construction of the budget ahead of its presentation to the Assembly for approval. This will also limit the need to reprioritize the work to be executed during the triennia.

Enhancing the efficiency of the Technical Commission

2.7 Convening of a divisional-type meeting sufficiently ahead of the Assembly for the preparation of the next triennium budget proposals with the most up-to-date information on technical developments has had some positive effect on the efficiency of the Technical Commission. However, technical discussions with significant impact on the budget are still being held during the Technical Commission, making potential amendments to the triennium budget practically impossible.

2.8 By concentrating on matters within the recommended scope, as outlined in paragraph 2.2, during the Technical Commission, delegates may be better prepared and engage in more thorough discussions.

2.9 Measures implemented at the last Technical Commission to ensure the completion of its agenda items should be noted. These include the batching of working papers, the conversion of papers to information papers and the referral of papers to relevant expert groups. Those, together with the development of similar guiding principles for the preparation and conduct of this Conference (AN Min. 223-7), as well as the lessons learnt from the 41st Session of the Assembly (A41) (C-DEC 229/4 refers), should be considered when convening the Technical Commission of the next Assembly.

3. CONCLUSION

3.1 Since 2019, the Organization has been emphasizing the need to move technical discussions held during the Technical Commission of Assemblies to divisional-type meetings, aiming towards more efficient and effective Assemblies. Considering that most technical air navigation and safety matters are thoroughly discussed during divisional-type meetings ahead of Assemblies, steps should be taken to further ensure that the Technical Commission of the Assembly focuses on matters within the recommended scope as outlined in 2.2.

3.2 To continue and complete this transition, a two-phased approach is proposed.

3.3 The first phase implements efficiency measures for the Technical Commission at the next Assembly by *inter alia*, focusing the scope of agenda items, and considering the lessons learnt from the Technical Commission of A41.

3.4 The second phase will include presenting a proposal for consideration by the next Technical Commission on more substantive changes, which may include a reformation of the Technical Commission in terms of name and scope. The proposals will be based on the discussions of this Conference.

3.5 This would further strengthen the high-level role of the Assembly and ensure that States are suitably informed of and consulted on the evolution of the Technical Commission.

3.6 In light of the above, the Conference is invited to agree to the following recommendation:

Recommendation 1.3/x — Evolution of the ICAO Assembly Technical Commission

That States:

- a) note that the recommended scope of the Technical Commission include items related to the Global Aviation Safety Plan, the Global Air Navigation Plan, new Resolutions and amendments to existing Resolutions and that the Technical Commission would be expected to avoid matters normally covered by ICAO expert groups, matters that have been discussed at a divisional-type meeting and matters that fall under the terms of reference for regional groups; and
- b) prepare their participation, including the submission of working papers for the Technical Commission of the 42nd Session of the Assembly, focused on matters within the recommended scope;

that ICAO:

- c) implement a two-phased approach to the evolution of the ICAO Assembly Technical Commission by:
 - 1) preparing the draft agenda for the Technical Commission at the 42nd Session of the Assembly with a view to enhancing the efficiency for States by, *inter alia*, focusing on matters within the recommended scope, and considering the lessons learnt from the Technical Commission of the 41st Session of the Assembly; and
 - 2) presenting a working paper to the 42nd Session of the Assembly, based on the discussions at the Conference, on the options for the evolution of future Technical Commissions.