



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**
1.1: Reprioritization of the ICAO 2023-2025 Business Plan

**ENHANCING ACCIDENT INVESTIGATIONS AND THE PUBLICATION OF ACCIDENT
INVESTIGATION REPORTS**

Presented by the International Air Transport Association (IATA), International
Business Aviation Council (IBAC) and International Federation of Air Line
Pilots' Associations (IFALPA)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

State obligation to investigate and publish aircraft accident reports are covered under Annex 13 — *Aircraft Accident and Incident Investigation* of the Convention on International Civil Aviation.

The objective of ICAO Annex 13 investigations is to generate safety information to aid in the understanding of accidents and the prevention of future events. The Annex, and related guidance material, outlines a structured framework for the investigation of aviation accidents and serious incidents to facilitate the issuance of accident investigation final reports as soon as possible.

Final Reports provide as much official information as possible on an accident investigation, as well as providing specific safety recommendations on how applicable aviation safety frameworks should be amended in the future to prevent further accidents.

Failure to publish prompt, complete, and thorough accident investigation reports deprive operators, equipment manufacturers, regulators, infrastructure providers and other concerned stakeholders of critical information that could make aviation even safer.

Further, complete accident investigations and accident reports enable survivors of accidents, and bereaved families of accident victims, to understand the facts resulting in an accident whereas incomplete investigations and reports affect the confidence of the public in aviation safety.

The IATA Annual Safety Report 2023 has highlighted that less than 49 per cent of all commercial schedule passenger and cargo accidents between January 2018 and December 2023 have published final accident reports – 51 per cent of accidents, in this category, have not published a final report.

¹ Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish versions provided by IATA.

This working paper presents the concern of IATA with inconsistent State compliance with ICAO Annex 13 and highlights where IATA is taking action to support the investigation and publication of accident reports in accordance with Annex 13 to the Convention on International Civil Aviation.

Action: The Conference is invited to:

- a) recognize the criticality that a State of Occurrence institutes a timely accident investigation into all aircraft accidents occurring within their territory and that these accidents are investigated in accordance with Annex 13 obligations;
- b) reaffirm to States the importance of producing accident investigation reports, in compliance with Annex 13 to the Chicago Convention timelines, to prevent the occurrence of future aircraft accidents and serious incidents;
- c) request that ICAO prioritize capacity building for States to enable proper accident investigation, specifically by ensuring that the appropriate level of training and resources are provided, to improve any identified shortcomings in the delivery of accident reports; and
- d) note and support the activities undertaken by IATA and the industry to draw attention to current issues relating to the timely investigation of accidents and serious incidents as defined by Annex 13, and the issuance of accident investigation reports in accordance with Annex timelines, to ensure continuous improvement in aviation safety.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Effective accident investigations are a cornerstone for the enhancement of global safety standards.

1.2 The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) has established a framework within Annex 13— *Aircraft Accident and Incident Investigation*, which provides guidelines for conducting thorough investigations and the publishing of factual reports on aviation accidents. This framework emphasizes the necessity for complete, accessible, and timely reports, which are critical for learning from past accidents and preventing future occurrences.

1.3 The Annex establishes a clear Standard for the release of final accident investigation reports. In particular, this includes the expectation that States conducting an accident investigation produce a preliminary report within 30 days of an accident; and a publicly available final report is produced within 12 months of the accident.

1.4 Safety remains the top priority for the International Air Transport Association (IATA). Promoting the importance of accident investigations, enhancing the effectiveness of investigation capabilities, encouraging the timely publication of accident investigation reports, sharing reports through a single repository, and contributing to safety performance by sharing data from accident investigations are key objectives included in IATA's work plan.

1.5 Failure to publish thorough and timely accident investigation reports prevents operators, equipment manufacturers, regulators, infrastructure providers and other concerned stakeholders from accessing critical information that could make aviation even safer.

1.6 Further, complete accident investigations and accident reports enable survivors of accidents and bereaved families of accident victims, to understand the facts resulting in an accident whereas incomplete investigations and reports affect the confidence of the public in aviation safety.

1.7 IATA has identified, as highlighted within the IATA Annual Safety Report 2023, that less than 49 per cent of all commercial schedule passenger and cargo accidents between January 2018 and December 2023 have published final accident reports – 51 per cent of accidents, in this category, have not been published.

1.8 This has led to IATA creating a strategic priority to promote increased State compliance with ICAO Annex 13 specifically for the production of thoroughly investigated, high quality, consistent and timely accident investigations.

1.9 This topic has been raised in official statements from IATA’s Director General, the IATA Annual General Meeting, IATA Media Day, numerous press releases, the IATA World Safety and Operations Conference, Regional Aviation Safety Groups and the ICAO Air Navigation Commission.

1.10 Furthermore, IATA has worked with all key stakeholders to improve the reporting level of the accident investigation final reports and to coordinate and lobby for support and resources to elevate the Effective Implementation of Annex 13

2. DISCUSSION

2.1 The current shortfall in compliance with timelines presented in Annex 13 prevents aviation industry stakeholders from accessing vital information that could significantly improve flight safety through the reduction of accidents.

2.2 IATA is working with States through the ICAO Accident Investigation Panel (AIGP) to understand why accident reports are not published in accordance with ICAO Annex 13. To support this initiative, a five-point roadmap has been developed by IATA.



2.3 The objective of Annex 13 is to investigate accidents for the purpose of understanding accident causes and preventing similar occurrences. This aim may be compromised when accident investigation reports are not published in a timely manner.

2.4 Not issuing or delaying in the release of final reports hinder the industry's ability to promptly implement safety improvements based on the findings. IATA's advocacy for timely and complete reports aligns with the industry's commitment to continuous improvement and the proactive prevention of aviation accidents.

2.5 The findings of safety-oversight audits conducted under the ICAO Universal Safety Oversight Audit Programme (USOAP) show that several States have been unable to establish an efficient system to investigate accidents and incidents that have occurred within their territory.

3. **CONCLUSION**

3.1 The accident investigation process is one of the most important learning tools when building global safety standards. But to learn from an accident, the aviation industry needs reports that are complete, accessible and timely. States should follow the requirements laid out in ICAO Annex 13 and publish thorough final reports of accident investigations in accordance with the timelines required by this Annex, to guarantee the continuous improvement of aviation safety Standards.

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