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SEVENTH WORLDWIDE AIR TRANSPORT CONFERENCE (ATCONF/7)

Montréal, HQ, 16 to 20 November 2026

Agenda Item 1: Overview of developments in the field of air transport
1.1: Developments and progress since the Sixth Worldwide Air Transport Conference (ATConf/6)

DRAFT REPORT

(6 pages)

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1.1.1 DOCUMENTATION

1.1.1.1 In WP/2, the Secretariat provided an overview of key developments in international air transport since the Sixth Worldwide Air Transport Conference (ATConf/6) held in 2013. The paper highlighted progress in the implementation of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) policies and recommendations on market access liberalization, air cargo services, consumer protection, competition, and infrastructure financing, while reviewing broader industry developments, including post-pandemic recovery, digital transformation, emerging technologies, and evolving regulatory challenges. It underscored the importance of modernizing policy and regulatory frameworks, strengthening international cooperation, and enhancing institutional capacity to support the sustainable, resilient and inclusive development of international air transport towards 2050. The Conference was invited to note these developments and support ICAO's efforts to address emerging trends and advance the objectives of its Strategic Plan 2026-2050.

1.1.1.2 In WP/38, China underscored the importance of strengthening global air connectivity in support of inclusive socio-economic development, the ICAO Strategic Plan 2026-2050 and the *No Country Left Behind* (NCLB) strategic goal. The paper highlighted the connectivity challenges faced by developing countries and proposed a data-driven approach to identifying international route network nodes to support their integration into regional and global air transport networks. The Conference was invited to recognize the importance of strengthening global air connectivity, call upon Member States to enhance the connectivity of developing countries and promote a more balanced and inclusive global air transport network, and request ICAO to task the relevant expert panels with conducting research on the proposed approach and encourage the sharing of node selection practices and the conduct of voluntary case studies.

1.1.1.3 WP/56, presented by Eswatini on behalf of the 54 Member States of the African Civil Aviation Commission (AFCAC), emphasized the need to strengthen ICAO's air transport development function in light of persistent connectivity, affordability and capacity challenges, particularly in developing regions. The paper noted that ICAO's existing institutional capacity and resources may not be commensurate with the scope of its mandate and advocated a strengthened, results-based approach supported by adequate resources, expertise and regional capacity. The Conference was invited to recognize air transport development as a principal ICAO function, request the Council to consider an institutional and capacity review of ICAO's air transport development function, establish a strengthened Air Transport Development Work Programme, and provide adequate budgetary resources and a professionally qualified and geographically balanced workforce.

1.1.1.4 WP/64, presented by Ireland on behalf of the European Union (EU), its Member States[1] and the other Member States of the European Civil Aviation Conference (ECAC)[2], highlighted the importance of preserving the integrity of air services agreements (ASAs) to maintain predictable air services during crises. It noted the need for greater awareness and use of ICAO's existing guidance. The paper

[1] Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden.
[2] Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Iceland, Monaco, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Norway, Republic of Moldova, San Marino, Serbia, Switzerland, Türkiye, Ukraine and United Kingdom.

invited the Conference to support its continuous review and more active promotion, and the further development of the Template Air Services Agreement (TASA) to help States strengthen crisis resilience.

1.1.1.5 WP/76, presented by Saudi Arabia, and co-sponsored by Egypt, highlighted that lengthy intervals between Worldwide Air Transport Conferences could limit timely responses to market developments and sustained progress towards ICAO's economic development objective. The paper invited the Conference to request the Council to shorten the interval to five years, with the Eight Worldwide Air Transport Conference (ATConf/8) convened at the start of 2031, and develop a reporting and stocktaking mechanism within three years of each Conference. It also requested continued Secretariat engagement with States, industry and other stakeholders between Conferences.

1.1.1.6 WP/144, presented by the International Coordinating Council of Aerospace Industries Associations (ICCAIA) and the International Business Aviation Council (IBAC), highlighted how persistent supply chain disruptions were delaying aircraft deliveries and maintenance, increasing costs and constraining connectivity, fleet modernization and growth. The paper invited the Conference to encourage States to remove procedural and economic barriers to the movement of critical components and materials, secure access to critical minerals, and support maintenance capacity and certification recognition. It also requested ICAO to integrate supply chain resilience into economic monitoring, policy guidance and crisis response.

1.1.2 **DISCUSSION**

1.1.2.1 The Conference noted the developments in international air transport since ATConf/6, including progress achieved in a number of policy areas. It underscored the importance of maintaining a forward-looking policy framework to support the sustainable, resilient and inclusive development of international air transport in line with the ICAO Strategic Plan 2026-2050. The Conference also emphasized ICAO's role in supporting air transport development, particularly in regions facing persistent challenges relating to connectivity, affordability and institutional capacity. Broad support was expressed for strengthening ICAO's air transport development work programme, building on existing mandates and outcomes of the Seventh Worldwide Air Transport Conference (ATConf/7), in support of the implementation of the ICAO Strategic Plan with due consideration to the NCLB Strategic Goal.

1.1.2.2 The Conference highlighted the need to preserve the predictability of international air services during crises through cooperation, transparency and timely communication between States, as well as to promote greater awareness and application of existing ICAO guidance, including through the continued review of TASA. In addition, support was expressed for exploring data-driven approaches to identifying strategic nodes in international air transport networks to enhance connectivity.

1.1.2.3 With regard to the frequency of Worldwide Air Transport Conferences, there was support for the Council's consideration to convene future Conferences at shorter intervals and establish an intersessional reporting without duplicating existing mechanisms. It was noted that the scheduling of future Conferences would need to take into account ICAO's overall meeting programme, priorities and resource implications.

1.1.2.4 The Conference also noted the implications of persistent disruptions to global aerospace supply chains and highlighted the importance of international cooperation in facilitating the movement of critical components and materials, strengthening maintenance capabilities and reducing unnecessary procedural barriers. The potential value of incorporating supply chain resilience considerations into ICAO's economic monitoring and relevant policy work was also recognized.

1.1.2.5 The Conference took note of information papers WP/32 presented by China and WP/194 presented by the Air Transport Action Group (ATAG), Airports Council International (ACI), IBAC, Aviation Services Association (ASA World), International Federation of Air Line Pilots' Associations (IFALPA), Civil Air Navigation Services Organisation (CANSO) and ICCAIA.

1.1.3 CONCLUSION

1.1.3.1 As a result of the documentation considered and ensuing discussion under Agenda Item 1.1, the Conference concluded that:

a) ICAO and States should ensure that air transport policies, regulatory frameworks and institutional capacity remain responsive to digitalization, emerging technologies, changing markets and future disruptions, while strengthening connectivity in developing States, including Least Developed Countries (LDCs), Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs) and Small Island Developing Countries (SIDS);

b) States should implement Conference recommendations and provide relevant information and share best practices, while ICAO should strengthen monitoring, identify emerging policy needs and report progress to the Assembly;

c) to maintain momentum between Worldwide Air Transport Conferences, the Council should consider reducing the interval between sessions, in view of the centrality of the economic development of air transport and the dynamic nature of the industry and constant technological change;

d) States should make greater use of ICAO guidance, while ICAO should continue to update TASA to support cooperation, transparency and predictable air services during major disruptions; and

e) States and industry should strengthen cooperation on aviation supply-chain resilience, while ICAO should incorporate relevant supply-chain considerations into existing economic monitoring, policy guidance and crisis-response activities without duplicating the work of other competent bodies.

1.1.4 RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 1/1 — Developments and progress since the Sixth Worldwide Air Transport Conference (ATConf/6)

The Conference recommends that:

a) ICAO and States should ensure that air transport policies, regulatory frameworks and institutional capacity remain responsive to digitalization, emerging technologies, changing markets and future disruptions, while strengthening connectivity in developing and capacity-constrained States;

b) States should take appropriate action to implement the recommendations of Worldwide Air Transport Conferences and provide ICAO with relevant information on progress, implementation challenges and emerging policy needs;

c) ICAO should strengthen the existing process for monitoring the implementation of Conference recommendations, identify emerging policy needs and report progress to the Assembly;

d) ICAO should consider reducing the interval between the Worldwide Air Transport Conferences to maintain momentum between sessions and in view of the dynamic nature of the industry and constant changes in technology;

e) ICAO should strengthen its air transport development function and ensure that its policy guidance, economic monitoring and implementation support remain responsive to the Strategic Plan 2026-2050, including by further update of the TASA to support crisis resilience; and

f) States and industry should strengthen cooperation on aviation supply-chain resilience, while ICAO should incorporate relevant supply-chain considerations into existing economic monitoring, policy guidance and crisis-response activities without duplicating the work of other competent bodies.

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