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Agenda Item 2: Fostering aviation growth and air connectivity through investments in infrastructure, human capital and partnerships
2.1: Integrating civil aviation into national development and investment plans

DRAFT REPORT

(7 pages)

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2.1.1 DOCUMENTATION

2.1.1.1 In WP/3, the Secretariat addressed the challenges in securing sufficient investments for the development and modernization of aviation infrastructure to meet current and future demands. The paper emphasized the strategic importance of integrating aviation infrastructure planning into national development and investment frameworks to support economic growth, air connectivity and sustainable development. It further examined financing approaches that reinforce traditional funding mechanisms while expanding access to diversified sources of financing. The role of ICAO in supporting States in enhancing aviation infrastructure financing with the provision of policies, guidance, tools and capacity-building was also highlighted. The Conference was invited to consider a comprehensive set of actions for both ICAO and States to address aviation infrastructure financing needs through the combination of sound policy frameworks and practical implementation measures, to strengthen policy coherence, enhance coordination, foster a stable investment climate, and leverage innovative financing mechanisms.

2.1.1.2 WP/99, presented by the Dominican Republic, highlighted the role of civil aviation as a strategic driver of economic development and resilience in Small Island Developing States (SIDS), drawing on the country's experience in aviation sector reforms. The paper demonstrated civil aviation can significantly contribute to economic development when regulation, safety, connectivity, infrastructure, human capital, and investment are managed in a coordinated manner with institutional continuity. It proposed an adaptable five-stage planning model comprising diagnostics, prioritization, integration and financing, implementation, and evaluation, supported by measurable indicators. The Conference was invited to recognize the importance of integrating civil aviation into national development and investment plans, encourage SIDS to adopt coordinated aviation planning frameworks, and request ICAO to provide practical guidance including diagnostic methodologies, financing options and performance indicators to support implementation.

2.1.1.3 WP/162 Revision No. 1, presented by the Dominican Republic and supported by 18 Member States of the Latin American Civil Aviation Commission (LACAC), highlighted the country's experience in integrating air transport, tourism and infrastructure policies to promote economic growth and international connectivity. The paper outlined key measures, including the establishment of a Tourism Cabinet to coordinate public- and private-sector stakeholders, modernization of the legal and regulatory framework, liberalization of air services and sustained investment in airport infrastructure. It also presented major projects to expand airport capacity while noting challenges in coordinating airport charges and incentive policies across different ownership and concession arrangements. The Conference was invited to recognize the Dominican Republic's experience, emphasize the importance of integrating civil aviation into national economic development strategies, and encourage inter-agency coordination and public-private partnerships to strengthen air connectivity and airport infrastructure.

2.1.1.4 WP/52, presented by Ethiopia on behalf of 54 Member States of the African Civil Aviation Commission (AFCAC), proposed the development of a Global Air Transport Development Plan (GATDP), supported by regional air transport development plans and common guidance for national planning, to

address the fragmented approach to aviation's economic and developmental priorities. The paper emphasized the importance of aligning connectivity, economic development, infrastructure financing, human capital and implementation support within a coherent, results-based planning framework, supported by tailored implementation pathways to reflect regional and national circumstances. The Conference was invited to request ICAO to develop the GATDP, collaborate with regional organizations to develop and pilot regional plans, and provide guidance, planning templates and common performance indicators to support national and regional implementation.

2.1.1.5 WP/93, presented by Oman, examined the transformative role of aviation as an enabler and an economic driver supporting diversification and sustainable growth. Drawing on the experience of Oman, the paper showcased how integrating aviation into national planning and investment frameworks helps maximize economic returns by supporting tourism and logistics and stimulating private investment. It proposed an analytical framework highlighting the relationship between air connectivity and economic growth and provides Member States with feasible lessons. The Conference was invited to urge States to integrate aviation into national development and investment plans, encourage ICAO to provide guidance and capacity-building, promote data-driven planning and connectivity indicators, support sustainable and flexible infrastructure financing models, including public-private partnerships, and facilitate the sharing of best practices on aviation's contribution to economic development.

2.1.1.6 WP/116, presented by Saudi Arabia, highlighted the importance of strengthening States' capacity to develop comprehensive national civil aviation strategies aligned with national development priorities and ICAO's Strategic Plan 2026–2050. The paper noted that differences in institutional capacity, technical expertise and strategic-planning resources can hinder States' ability to coordinate infrastructure investment, connectivity, regulation and human capital development. It proposed that ICAO assess the feasibility of establishing a National Aviation Strategy Support Framework (NASSF), building on existing ICAO mechanisms and providing an adaptable planning methodology, needs-based expert assistance and guidance on implementation. The Conference was invited to recognize the importance of national aviation strategies, invite ICAO to assess the feasibility of the proposed framework, and encourage Member States to voluntarily share their experience, expertise and good practices to support its development.

2.1.1.7 WP/111, presented by Airports Council International (ACI) and the United Arab Emirates, highlighted the structural financial challenges faced by small and regional airports, which provide essential connectivity and contribute to economic development, trade, tourism and social inclusion, particularly in Least Developed Countries (LDCs), Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs) and Small Island Developing States (SIDS). The paper emphasized the need for enabling institutional, legal and regulatory frameworks, a stable and predictable investment climate, the integration of airport infrastructure into national development and investment plans, and diversifying financing approaches, including private-sector participation, blended financing and airport networks. The Conference was invited to recognize small and regional airports as strategic assets, encourage States to integrate them into national development and investment plans, establish enabling frameworks for investment, and promote diversified financing approaches to preserve essential air connectivity.

2.1.2 **DISCUSSION**

2.1.2.1 The Conference recognized the strategic role of civil aviation in supporting economic growth, trade, tourism, connectivity and sustainable development. The integration of civil aviation into national development and investment plans was considered essential to ensuring that aviation priorities are

appropriately reflected in broader national economic**,** and infrastructure planning as well as the continuous development of aviation. The need for strengthening coordination among civil aviation authorities, relevant government ministries, financial institutions and industry stakeholders was underscored, with a view to enhancing policy coherence, improving investment planning and maximizing aviation's socio-economic benefits.

2.1.2.2 Several States shared their national experiences in integrating civil aviation into broad economic development strategies, demonstrating the benefits of coordinated policies on air transport, tourism, infrastructure development and investment. The importance of developing comprehensive national aviation strategies, supported by evidence-based assessments, clear priorities and appropriate performance indicators, was emphasized. In this regard, support was expressed for ICAO to provide practical guidance to assist States in developing and implementing national aviation strategies, while ensuring flexibility to reflect different national priorities, institutional capacities and resources.

2.1.2.3 The Conference also considered the proposal to develop a GATDP and NASSF, supported by regional plans and national planning guidance, to promote a more coordinated approach to aviation development. Broad support was expressed for these proposals as potential means of enhancing coordination and strengthening national aviation planning activities. Some States raised concerns regarding the resource implications and potential duplication of existing ICAO initiatives and the suitability of a uniform global framework given differing national circumstances and the market-driven nature of air transport development. The importance of ensuring that any such frameworks remain voluntary, flexible and consistent with national priorities was emphasized.

2.1.2.4 The importance of establishing enabling institutional, legal and regulatory frameworks to facilitate sustainable investment in aviation infrastructure was equally highlighted. Several States and industry stakeholders supported diversified financing approaches to address structural financial challenges faced by small and regional airports, which provide essential connectivity and contribute to economic development and social inclusion, especially in LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS. The value of flexible airport management models, tailored to national circumstances, was emphasized, together with the need to recognize such airports as strategic infrastructure assets and to consider their role in national development and investment planning.

2.1.2.5 With regard to aviation infrastructure financing, the Conference emphasized the importance of mobilizing adequate investment, while ensuring that charges remain cost-related, transparent and non-discriminatory, consistent with established ICAO policies on charges and Article 15 of the Chicago Convention. The need for incorporating air navigation infrastructure modernization into national investment priorities was also highlighted, recognizing its contribution to safety, capacity, efficiency and resilience. In this context, broad support was expressed for ICAO's continued role in providing practical guidance, tools, capacity-building and facilitating the exchange of good practices. Some States highlighted that ICAO's activities should remain within its mandate and available resources, avoiding duplication of the functions of financial institutions and private sector investment entities.

2.1.2.6 The following information papers were noted by the Conference: WP/180 presented by Brazil, WP/199 presented by India, WP/205 presented by Madagascar, WP/206 Revision No. 1 and WP/207 Revision No. 1 presented by Mexico and WP/192 presented by Saudi Arabia.

2.1.3 CONCLUSION

2.1.3.1 As a result of the documentation considered and ensuing discussion on the integration of civil aviation into national development and investment plans under Agenda Item 2.1, the Conference concluded that:

a) civil aviation plays a strategic role in supporting national economic development, trade, tourism, connectivity and sustainable development. Its integration into national development and investment plans is essential to ensuring that aviation development priorities are appropriately reflected in broader national planning.

b) effective aviation development planning requires coordinated policies and actions across relevant government authorities, industry stakeholders and financial institutions, supported by appropriate institutional arrangements, evidence-based assessments, clearly defined priorities and measurable performance indicators.

c) States have different aviation development needs, institutional capacities and financial resources. National aviation strategies and investment planning approaches should therefore be flexible and adapted to national circumstances, with particular consideration given to the challenges faced by LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS;

d) small and regional airports play an important role in providing essential connectivity and supporting economic development and social inclusion. Their specific operational and financial challenges should be taken into account in national development and investment planning;

e) a stable, transparent and predictable institutional, legal and regulatory environment is essential to attracting investment in civil aviation infrastructure. Diversified financing approaches, including public-private partnerships and blended finance, can complement traditional funding mechanisms and support sustainable infrastructure development; and

f) ICAO Council should consider developing a Global Air Transport Development Plan (GATDP), which builds upon existing ICAO policies, guidance and initiatives, to support coherent aviation development planning, in line with the NCLB strategic goal.

2.1.4 RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 2/1 — Integrating civil aviation into national development and investment plans

The Conference recommends that:

a) States should integrate civil aviation into national development and investment plans, and strengthen coordination among relevant government authorities, aviation stakeholders and financial institutions to ensure coherent aviation development and investment priorities;

b) States should develop and strengthen national aviation development strategies, supported by evidence-based planning, clearly defined priorities, appropriate implementation mechanisms and performance indicators, taking into account national circumstances, institutional capacities, particularly those of LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS;

c) States should address the operational and financial challenges of small and regional airports in national planning, including through appropriate management models and diversified financing approaches;

d) States should establish and maintain enabling institutional, legal and regulatory frameworks that provide a stable, transparent and predictable investment environment, and promote diversified financing approaches, including public-private partnerships, blended finance and other appropriate mechanisms, to support sustainable aviation infrastructure development;

e) ICAO should keep its existing policies and guidance on aviation infrastructure funding, financing and charges current, forward-looking and responsive to the evolving needs, while continuing to enhance their implementation by States;

f) ICAO should continue to develop and enhance practical guidance, tools and capacity-building assistance to support States in integrating civil aviation into national development and investment plans, including methodologies for assessing aviation development needs, identifying investment priorities, evaluating financing options and monitoring implementation;

g) ICAO should consider developing a Global Air Transport Development Plan (GATDP), building upon existing ICAO policies, guidance and initiatives to support aviation development planning, in line with the NCLB strategic goal; and

h) ICAO should facilitate the exchange of experiences and good practices among States and relevant stakeholders on national aviation development planning, institutional coordination, investment strategies and financing approaches, with particular attention to the needs of LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS.

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