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## **ASSEMBLY — 39TH SESSION**

### **PLENARY**

#### **Agenda Item 8: Statements by delegations of Member States**

#### **STATEMENT BY THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES**

(Presented by the United Arab Emirates)

Mr. President of the Council,  
Mr. Secretary General,  
Your Excellencies Ministers and Heads of delegation of Contracting States,  
Distinguished Delegates,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

#### **1. INTRODUCTION**

1.1 Since the last ICAO Assembly in 2013, much progress has been reached by Member States on issues recommended in the Assembly Resolutions. Despite the phenomenal achievement, Member States still face new challenges due to the growth and expansion in global aviation namely in the areas of infrastructure capacity, human factor and human capital.

1.2 It is paramount that these challenges are reiterated and deliberated once more at this Assembly. Although the issues are plentiful, the United Arab Emirates' (UAE) concerns in this paper are confined to ground operations, ultra long range operations and human capital development.

1.3 The UAE wishes to highlight these challenges as we believe it is equally important in many other Member States. Allow my delegation to share briefly what the UAE feels with regards to the above challenges.

#### **2. DISCUSSION**

##### **2.1 Ground Operations**

2.1.1 A working paper highlighting UAE experiences and issues related to ground operations was presented at the Second High Level Safety Conference 2015 (HLSC 2015) Planning for Global Aviation

Safety Improvement in Montreal from 2 to 5 February 2015. The paper was accepted in principle but needs to be reinforced once more to this esteemed Assembly. The issues raised were:

- 2.1.1.1 Standard of ground operations varies significantly among the ICAO Member States. It is imperative for ICAO to review its ground operations requirements and accord them the dues similar to those of Annex 6 and Doc 8335 requirements.
- 2.1.1.2 Currently some airport operators operate with only a single ground operations service provider. Apart from not promoting competitiveness in ground operations services, this single entity may also give rise to non-adherence to safety standards.
- 2.1.1.3 Regulatory Authority personnel are subjected to risks and hazards in countries experiencing armed conflicts which could hamper Member States in complying with ICAO oversight requirements.
- 2.1.1.4 Stringent immigration formalities by certain countries impede free access and movements for the regulatory inspectors, especially when inspections are to be made at short notice. The use of CAIC (Civil Aviation Inspector Certificate as described in ICAO Annex 9) is yet to be fully realized with regard to its potential.

2.1.2 In view of the above, UAE recommends a holistic and comprehensive approach to be led by ICAO in formulating ground operations strategies as follows:

- 2.1.2.1 To review ground operations documentation and develop SARPs, guideline materials and a sample checklist specific to ground operations and safety audits covering load control, passenger handling, baggage handling, aircraft handling and loading, non-dangerous goods cargo activity, aero bridge operations, aircraft ground movement and sub-contracting.
  - 2.1.2.2.1 To provide guidance in managing and coordinating the diverse ground operations field, in the goals of connecting and integrating the many different departments, responsibilities, policies, professions, work culture, thoughts, facilities and others in the pursuit of a common task.
- 2.1.2.3 To encourage the deterrence of monopolistic ground operations service provider at airports, taking into consideration applicable avenues such as the anti-competitive laws to enable the freedom to choose sub-contractors for ground handling operations based on merit and proven capability.
- 2.1.2.4 To review immigration requirements and travel restrictions, currently applying to inspectors and auditors, in order to facilitate their entry into Member States for the purposes of regulatory surveillance duties.
- 2.1.2.5 To promote to Member States the acceptability of the CAIC (Civil Aviation Inspector Certificate) identification card to facilitate entries into Member States for safety audits or inspections.
- 2.1.2.6 To review and provide appropriate recognition to the industry best practices adopted by the aviation industry on ground-handling operations such as IATA- ISAGO in the field of audit and inspection.

## **2.2 Ultra Long Range Operations**

2.2.1 To remain competitive, many international operators are enhancing their transcontinental connectivity by having direct flights, surpassing current prescriptive flight duty time limitations. Ultra Long Range Operations (ULR) is one of the options but requires regulations and guidelines based on Member States' approval.

2.2.2 It is therefore imperative that the ICAO initiative in formulating more specific SARPs and guidelines for ULR, based on operational experiences and research and studies conducted, be completed expeditiously to set the benchmark for all Member States. The SARPs and guidelines may cover, but not be limited to, upper and lower limits of flight duty period, rest periods, crew complement, on-board rest schemes and contingency plans. ULR schemes should also cater for non-scheduled or charter operations.

2.2.3 In our initial attempt to develop fatigue management in ULR operations, which requires risk assessment based on scientific approaches, UAE had to outsource this task to specialists beyond our borders. Some of the tools used in evaluating ULR operations are:

2.2.3.1 System for Aircrew Fatigue Evaluation, which is a validated modelling tool to predict flight crew members' level of alertness during duties.

2.2.3.2 The use of PDA (Personal Digital Assistant) containing a special diary.

2.2.3.3 Actiwatch (a watch-size device that measures physical activity and provides an objective measure of sleep quantity and quality).

2.2.4 Since then we have acquired greater knowledge and developed local expertise in ULR operations. In view of this development, the UAE General Civil Aviation Authority and its operators would like to offer assistance to ICAO to accomplish this agenda.

## **2.3 Contributing Expertise on Human Capital**

2.3.1 The UAE supports the ICAO Next Generation of Aviation Professionals (NGAP) initiative to address the challenges in aviation manpower development. Towards this end, we are committed to contributing our resources and expertise, and work together with ICAO and fellow Member States.

2.3.2 For several years we have undergone rigorous in-house and international audits. These have facilitated the improvement of our documentation and implementation of flight operations surveillance in accordance with international standards. Together with a pool of home grown professionals and international experts, the UAE has been able to enhance its flight operations management. The documentation, e-auditing management and safety resolution systems are extensively used which have consequently contributed significantly to our accomplishment in the recent ICAO USOAP.

2.3.3 Undoubtedly, sharing of knowledge and experience is crucial for the betterment of the aviation industry in view of current challenges faced by many countries in this region in particular, and other countries at large. Henceforth, our delegation would like to propose the following:

2.3.3.1 Through the coordination of ICAO, the UAE will provide assistance to regional Member States which require expertise in flight operations especially in the formulation of operational processes and procedures.

- 2.3.3.2 The UAE will provide limited support to deserving Member States for on-job-training in the UAE in the areas of flight operations surveillance audits and inspections.

### **3. CONCLUSION**

- 3.1 In summary, the UAE delegation would like to reiterate the following:
- 3.1.1 Ground operations in all Member States require a holistic and comprehensive approach to address the challenges in the aviation industry, to be led by ICAO.
- 3.1.2 The ICAO initiative in developing more specific SARPs and guidelines for ULR operations need to be completed expeditiously. Towards this end, the UAE is willing to offer some assistance to deserving Member States.
- 3.1.3 With regards to human capital development, we are committed to contributing our resources and expertise, and work together with ICAO and fellow Member States.

### **4. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 4.1 The followings are the recommendations:
- 4.1.1 ICAO to consider formulating ground operations strategies as recommended in paragraph 2.1.2 above.
- 4.1.2 ICAO to further facilitate Member States that are willing to offer assistance to ICAO in enhancing its roles and responsibilities. In this regard, the UAE is willing to share our best practices in ULR operations. Some support will also be given to deserving Member States for on-job-training in the UAE in areas of flight operations surveillance audits and inspections.

Mr. President, the future of global aviation will be determined by how well we work together to address our challenges. We need to find pragmatic solutions that cater for all stakeholders so that we can enhance the industry. Thank you.

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