



**ASSEMBLY — 39TH SESSION**

**TECHNICAL COMMISSION**

**Agenda Item 37: Other issues to be considered by the Technical Commission**

**KIRIBATI AVIATION INFRASTRUCTURE**

(Presented by Kiribati)

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Kiribati has been a Contracting State since 1981. Recently the State, assisted by international agencies, has commenced activity to ensure the responsibilities pursuant to its status as a Contracting State are addressed and applied. This will enable Kiribati to effectively implement regulatory and administrative processes to apply ICAO Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs), particularly those relative to safety regulation and provision of services.

Kiribati acknowledges that there are many steps yet to be concluded to demonstrate to the international aviation community that the State has successfully implemented procedures for the required compliance with SARPs; however, process has commenced and progress is already apparent.

In preparation for assuming the responsibility for management of Kiribati sovereign airspace in accordance with guidance from the Pacific Islands Forum Kiribati attended the recent ASIA/PAC Air Navigation Planning and Implementation Regional Group (APANPIRG) meeting and provided that meeting with an update on the development of aviation infrastructure in Kiribati.

**Action:** The Assembly is invited to:

- a) note the recent steps taken by Kiribati to ensure procedures are in place to enable the State to meet its responsibilities as a Contracting State;
- b) note that it will be necessary for the establishment of a Kiribati flight information region (FIR) to enable the Government of Kiribati to effectively implement procedures for the effective regulation by Kiribati of its sovereign airspace;
- c) note that Kiribati, in close collaboration with Pacific States, commenced the process for establishment of the Kiribati FIR.

<i>Strategic Objectives:</i>	This working paper relates to the Safety Strategic Objective – enhance global civil aviation safety, focused primarily on the State's regulatory oversight capabilities.
<i>Financial implications:</i>	This working paper does not attempt to quantify the financial implications of the necessary process for the establishment of a new FIR in the understanding that such action would be one of the action items for the Asia Pacific Air Navigation Planning and Implementation Regional Group.
<i>References:</i>	Articles 1 and 6 of the Chicago Convention Assembly Resolution A37-15 Assembly Resolution A34-14

## 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Kiribati is located in the central tropical Pacific Ocean where the International dateline crosses over the Equator.

1.2 Kiribati is one of the remotest air route destinations within the ICAO Contracting States community; however, remote as it may be, Kiribati attaches great importance to its membership of ICAO and to this end, the State has engaged in the process of implementing procedures and processes to meet its obligations as an ICAO Contracting State in a timely and comprehensive manner. With the assistance of the World Bank's Pacific Aviation Improvement Program and the Pacific Aviation Safety Office the Civil Aviation Directorate Kiribati now has access to specialists and advisors to ensure those procedures and processes are comprehensive, robust, well documented, consistent with ICAO Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs) and properly implemented.

1.3 Under the Convention on International Civil Aviation (the Chicago Convention), each State has complete and exclusive sovereignty over the airspace above its territory. While national sovereignty cannot be delegated, the responsibility for the provision of air traffic services can be delegated.

1.4 In 2014, ICAO introduced its 'No Country Left Behind' initiative, which aims to ensure that all States have access to the significant socio-economic benefits of safe and reliable air transport.

1.5 At the Assemblies in 2004 and 2007, Kiribati requested a review flight information region (FIR) arrangements governing Kiribati airspace. The request was basically to enable Kiribati, as a full sovereign State, to have full control and management over its own airspace in accordance with Article 1 of the Chicago Convention. Some years ago the Kiribati Government submitted a proposal to the ICAO Regional Office seeking the establishment and proper delineation of a Kiribati FIR to enable Kiribati to be held accountable to ICAO for the provision of safe services to airlines travelling through that airspace. Little progress, if any at all, has been achieved in this respect.

1.6 Kiribati is committed to fully supporting the overall work of ICAO. In particular, Kiribati commends ICAO in its continuing efforts at improving overall security and safety Standards within the Aviation Industry, notably through its assistance to the Pacific Aviation Safety Office (PASO) and through its Universal Safety Oversight Audit Programme (USOAP) and ASAP programs. In this regard, Kiribati supports the relevance and work of ICAO Regional Offices and in particular, the need to adequately resource them with the view to strengthening their capacity to enable them reach out more in extending their services and assistance to Member States.

## 2. DISCUSSION

2.1 A contract is already in progress to replace the aging navigation aids at Tarawa and Cassidy. It is expected these new aids will be operational by the end of the current year (2016). Under the same project meteorological observing systems and very high frequency (VHF) radios will be provided at both airports and the runway and taxiway lighting at Cassidy will be replaced. The project includes technical and operator training.

2.2 The non-directional radio beacon (NDB) approach procedures for Tarawa are to be redesigned to take account of the relocation of the NDB. At the same time, global navigation satellite system (GNSS) procedures will be designed and implemented at Tarawa.

2.3 As part of the wider World Bank project for the Pacific, automatic dependent surveillance — broadcast (ADS-B) receivers and associated displays are being sited at Christmas Island and Bonriki. The data from the ADS/B receivers will be used to enhance the situational awareness of the AFIS officers and provide a more effective search and rescue (SAR) response in the event of a ditching within the coverage area. Additionally, the data will be made available to third party air navigation services providers (ANSPs), who may have a use for it in the provision of upper airspace management services. The contract includes technical and operator training.

2.4 A refurbished Stryker 6 fire tender has been purchased by the Government of Kiribati and is now in use at Tarawa. Appropriately named “Pride of Tarawa” it replaced the tenders which had gone well beyond their useful life and stands by for all aircraft movements. The contract included training for mechanics and operational firefighting specialists.

2.5 The contract arranged by the Kiribati Aviation Improvement Programme (KAIP) for the provision of two fire tenders at Cassidy and two at Bonriki has been signed and the activity to prepare and deliver the vehicles commenced. The tenders will be delivered progressively over the next ten months. The contract includes training for mechanics and operational firefighting specialists.

2.6 The improvements are not confined to physical infrastructure. Additional regulatory specialists and inspectors have been appointed in the Civil Aviation Authority and are in the process of ensuring the necessary procedures and process are documented and can be implemented. This includes a review of data to be published in the AIP, planned for early 2017.

2.7 To ensure Kiribati adequately fulfils its responsibilities in relation to SARPs and official correspondence, registers for State letters and Electronic Bulletins have been established and specific responsibility for updating the registers and ensuring timely and appropriate responses are provided has been allocated to a desk officer in the Civil Aviation Authority.

2.8 Security procedures at both Bonriki and Cassidy already include checked baggage screening and airside quarantine and passenger screening. The procedures will be enhanced later this year with promulgation of the National Civil Aviation Security Programme and establishment of the National Aviation Security Committee and Airport Security Committees.

2.9 In the longer term regulatory compliance for the two international airports will be improved. In this regard the KAIP will shortly release an international tender for a team of experienced airport management and operational consultants to spend two years improving the management, operations and regulatory compliance at both airports. Very importantly, this consultancy includes a major component for training of local personnel to take over the management and operations at the consultancy.

2.10 Currently, one third of Kiribati sovereign airspace is under the control and management of the Nadi (Fiji) FIR while the other two thirds of the sovereign airspace is under the control and management of the Oakland (USA) FIR. By virtue of such arrangements, Kiribati sovereign airspace is, therefore, allocated to and divided between the managers of the Nadi and Oakland FIRs and effectively regarded as Fiji’s and USA’s airspace.

2.11 The present arrangements were inherited from the colonial era when Kiribati was under colonial rule. As such, these arrangements are well out of date and profoundly unfair to the people, aviation community and Government of Kiribati. The arrangements must now be reviewed and updated to give full sovereign rights to Kiribati to manage its own sovereign airspace.

2.12 Present arrangements are not only depriving Kiribati of its sovereign rights assured under the Chicago Convention but are also depriving the people of Kiribati from fully enjoying the economic benefits that they should rightly be enjoying from the ownership of their own airspace.

2.13 At least 10 major air routes cross Kiribati sovereign airspace and a large number of foreign airlines fly across Kiribati sovereign airspace without any formal Air Service Agreement or In-transit Agreement with the Kiribati Government. This is a direct violation of Article 1 of the Chicago Convention and is also inconsistent with the spirit of Assembly resolution A35-14 on consolidated statements of ICAO policies and practices relating to Regional Air Navigation Plans and Delimitation of Air Traffic Services (ATS) airspaces. In this connection Kiribati is being continually marginalized in future developments within the aviation industry.

2.14 Kiribati is a small nation with very limited natural resources to support the sustainability of its economy. The financial pressures placed upon its national budget to meet the requirements of the aviation industry are particularly very demanding. This includes obligations in facilitating Cassidy Airport on Christmas Island as an extended range operations by twin-engined aeroplanes (ETOPS) alternate airport for airlines in the Pacific region flying scheduled flights. The benefits from the establishment and proper delineation of the Kiribati FIR would go a long way in assisting the Government of Kiribati to establish formal arrangement for airspace management and regulation to finance the infrastructure and services for safe and efficient aviation within and throughout its sovereign airspace.

2.15 Kiribati does not yet have the technical capacity to provide safe and effective airspace management services in a Kiribati FIR and in the short- and medium-term will need to establish formal arrangements with one or more established air navigation service in that respect. Under such arrangements it is likely the large expanse of Kiribati airspace would be combined with adjacent sectors providing a more efficient airspace management arrangement. What is important is that Kiribati's sovereign right to fully own and control its own airspace and thus proper delineation of its FIR, is accorded due recognition by ICAO and the international aviation community.

### 3. CONCLUSION

3.1 As a result of recent activities and with international agency assistance, Kiribati has commenced activity to effectively meet its responsibilities and obligations as an ICAO Contracting State.

3.2 The Government of Kiribati has commenced the process of working with the Asia Pacific Regional Office and neighbouring States to enable the establishment of a Kiribati FIR. This will enable the Government of Kiribati to assume its rights to make formal arrangements for the safe and effective management of the sovereign airspace in accordance with Articles 1 and 6 of the Chicago Convention.