



**ASSEMBLY — 39TH SESSION**

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

**Agenda Item 28: No Country Left Behind Initiative**

**REGIONAL SUB-OFFICE IN THE PACIFIC**

(Presented by Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, New Zealand, Papua-New Guinea, Samoa, Singapore, Tonga and Vanuatu)

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The diversity of the Asia Pacific (APAC) Region creates major challenges for each State in implementing the comprehensive suite of ICAO Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs) covering aviation safety, air navigation and aviation security. These challenges are most apparent in States with limited resources, as is the case for Pacific Island States. It is proposed that ICAO collaborate with Pacific States to consider the merits of establishing a Regional Sub-office located in the Pacific, in order to provide more direct support to the Pacific Island States.

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

- a) note the challenges faced by small States in the Asia Pacific Region in implementing the comprehensive suite of ICAO Standards and Recommended Practices covering aviation safety, air navigation and aviation security;
- b) note that these challenges are most apparent in Pacific Island States with limited specialized aviation and financial resources; and
- c) recommend that ICAO, in close collaboration with Pacific States, examine the feasibility and consider undertaking further analysis on the merits of establishing a Regional Sub-office for the Pacific.

<i>Strategic Objectives:</i>	This working paper relates to the Safety and Air Navigation Capacity and Efficiency Strategic Objectives.
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<i>Financial implications:</i>	A feasibility study, as per Action Item C, will have financial implications for ICAO.
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## 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 ICAO's Asia Pacific (APAC) region is accredited to 38 contracting States and covers 50 flight information regions (FIRs), the largest airspace of any ICAO region. The APAC Regional Office is based in Bangkok, Thailand, and a Regional Sub-Office is located in Beijing, China.

1.2 The APAC Region is extremely diverse in its different levels of air navigation system development and implementation of aviation security provisions. This, coupled with continued strong air traffic growth across the region poses significant challenges. The attainment of safe and secure air transportation across APAC requires a strong commitment to ICAO initiatives and close collaboration amongst States and the aviation industry, in order to build integrity and capacity within the APAC Region.

1.3 In 2014, ICAO introduced its 'No Country Left Behind' initiative, which aims to ensure that the implementation of ICAO Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs) is better harmonized globally so that *all* States have access to the significant socio-economic benefits of safe and reliable air transport. At that time, ICAO also resolved that it should provide more direct assistance to developing States by playing a more active coordination role between States and help to generate the political will needed for these States to pool resources and build capacity.

## 2. DISCUSSION

2.1 APAC States are facing significant challenges in the regulation of air transport as the sector continues to grow. This includes:

2.1.1 Considerable air transport growth<sup>1</sup>:

- a) international traffic to, from and within the APAC region represented 42% of total international revenue passenger kilometers;
- b) APAC region carriers carried 33% of total global passengers – the largest amount of any ICAO region (1.1 billion passengers, an 8% increase on 2013);
- c) APAC region carriers recorded a demand increase of 8.2% compared to 2014 – the largest regional increase. Demand was stimulated by a 7.3% increase in the number of direct airport connections; and
- d) the five busiest international and domestic city-pair air routes were all in the APAC Region;

2.1.2 Lack of harmonization of aviation security across APAC States – APAC is the most diverse ICAO region with significant differences in the scale, capacity, security, safety, compliance and volume of aviation security operations;

2.1.3 Limited availability of quality training institutions and lack of aeronautical professionals – ICAO estimates that the APAC Region will need 230,000 pilots by 2030. This would require approximately 14,000 trained annually to meet demand (the current capacity is around 5,000);

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<sup>1</sup> Figures from the International Air Transport Association, 2015

2.1.4 Preparing for the impact of natural hazards and disasters – the natural hazards and disasters resulting from climate change will have a long term impact on air transport to, from and within APAC, particularly island/coastal States, thereby affecting the economic growth of the region.

2.2 In facing these challenges, the comprehensive and consistent implementation of ICAO SARPs will be increasingly demanding, particularly for the APAC Region’s under-resourced States. The current discrepancy of SARP implementation in APAC is already significant. The APAC Region’s lowest ‘Effective Implementation’ (EI) score is approximately 6%, whilst the highest is approximately 99%.

2.3 Analysis of APAC EI results, as outlined in Table 1 below, also indicates that there is a discrepancy in the implementation of SARPs between ‘Asia States’ and ‘Pacific States’. More than three quarters of the Pacific States have an EI result below the ICAO average, compared to less than half in Asia, and the lowest EI result in the Pacific is the second lowest of all 185 audited States. This suggests that despite the best efforts of Regional Working Groups, the ICAO Regional Office and bilateral and multilateral arrangements, a number of States within the Pacific region require further targeted assistance so as not to be left behind.

*Table 1: Comparison of APAC ‘Effective Implementation’ results*

Safety Audit average across all ICAO States	63%
APAC average	59%
Asia States <sup>2</sup> average	68%
Pacific States <sup>3</sup> average	43%
Asia highest result	99%
Pacific highest result	84%
Asia lowest result	34%
Pacific lowest result	6%
Asia States results below ICAO average	41%
Pacific States results below ICAO average	84%

2.4 For the region’s under-resourced States, the application of ICAO’s Continuous Monitoring Approach (CMA) may be inappropriate as it does not take into account the less developed

<sup>2</sup> Those States categorized as Asia are: Afghanistan, Thailand, Bhutan, Cambodia, Indonesia, Timor Leste, Bangladesh, Vietnam, Nepal, Philippines, Brunei Darussalam, Myanmar, India, Maldives, Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, China, Sri Lanka, Mongolia, Japan, Singapore, and Republic of Korea. Afghanistan does not have a Safety Audit result.

<sup>3</sup> Those States categorized as Pacific are: Cook Islands, Kiribati, Micronesia (Federated States of), Palau, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Tonga, Solomon Islands, Samoa, Vanuatu, Papua New Guinea, Fiji, Australia, and New Zealand. Kiribati does not have a Safety Audit result.

regulatory environment in which they operate. ICAO should consider taking a modified auditing approach for these States, such as focusing on the development of the 8 Critical Elements in the first instance. This would then subsequently better inform the targeting of support resources to these States. The feasibility of this approach could be explored in a CMA Post Implementation Review, a proposal which is tabled by Australia at this 39th ICAO Assembly.

### 3. CONCLUSION

3.1 To provide additional support to the Pacific, and in recognition of ICAO's 'No Country Left Behind' initiative, it is proposed that ICAO consider the merits of establishing an additional APAC Regional Sub-office, located in the Pacific.

3.2 Further analysis would need to be undertaken to determine the costs and benefits of this proposal. This analysis should include, but not be limited to, the following:

- a) assessing what relationship the Sub-Office would have with other APAC forums, offices, and initiatives that aim to support States in meeting ICAO requirements, such as the Pacific Aviation Safety Office (PASO), the Asia Pacific Air Navigation Planning and Implementation Group, and the Regional Aviation Safety Group;
- b) determining the level and sources of funding required (taking into account the limited resources in the Pacific);
- c) considering the appropriate location for a Sub-Office.

3.3 This analysis should involve close collaboration with States in the Pacific region to ensure that the challenges and opportunities facing them are accurately captured.

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