



WORKING PAPER

ASSEMBLY — 40TH SESSION

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Agenda Item 26: Other high-level policy issues to be considered by the Executive Committee

FACILITATION FOR ATTENDANCE AT ICAO MEETINGS

(Presented by Kiribati)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

While the majority of States have few issues in obtaining visa and travel documents to participate in ICAO events and meetings, smaller States experience difficulty and greatly increased costs as a result of restrictions in consular access and the need to obtain single entry visas for each ICAO related trip. This reduces their ability to fully participate in desired ICAO meetings and events.

Assistance is sought from the ICAO Secretariat and the Regional Offices (ROs) to request the relevant agencies in Canada and the host States of the RO to facilitate the visa and entry process for delegates from smaller States by enabling the issue of multiple entry VISA documents for accredited delegates attending ICAO meetings and events.

Action: The Assembly is invited to:

- a) note the difficulties experienced by the small States in participating in regional and international ICAO events and meetings; and
- b) seek the assistance of the Regional Offices and the ICAO Secretariat in approaching the relevant Foreign Ministries to facilitate the regular entry of aviation officials from smaller States to attend ICAO events and meetings.

<i>Strategic Objectives:</i>	This working paper relates to Strategic Objectives of Capacity and Efficiency at it will encourage participation from Smaller Island States.
<i>Financial implications:</i>	This will reduce the travel cost that will be incurred for processing of visa at third countries instead of traveling direct to meeting destinations, hence encourages more participation from Small island States.
<i>References:</i>	

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Attendance at Regional and International meetings of ICAO committees and sub groups is an essential part of the active participation and aviation development for all States. This is of critical importance for smaller and developing States. These States typically have limited budgets available for travel and those budgets must be carefully managed to enable maximum participation.

1.2 Staff resources and official responsibilities mean that each of the smaller States have a limited number of officials regularly participating in ICAO events and meetings.

1.3 International travelers require approved documentation when entering States of which they are not citizens or permanent residents. Typically, this documentation consists of a visa issued by a consular official in State of residence of the traveler.

1.4 Embassies and High Commissions for most States are located in many States; however, several of the smaller States do not have immediate access to the Embassies or High Commissions of Canada and the host States of the ROs.

2. DISCUSSION

2.1 As a result of the lack of consular representation in the smaller States civil aviation officials of those States often have to travel to third party States, which have appropriate consular representation, to obtain travel documentation for visits to Canada and the host States of the ROs. This involves considerable additional time and cost. In some cases this additional cost and time impost prohibits attendance.

2.2 Recent experience has shown that it is generally the case that visas issued for travel to ICAO meetings are issued on a single entry basis. This means that for each meeting or event the relevant officials from smaller States must expend the additional time and cost of travel to the third party State hosting the diplomatic missions of either Canada or the host States of the ROs to obtain the appropriate visa.

2.3 As an example, for ICAO meetings in Bangkok, officials from Kiribati must travel to Canberra to obtain a visa for entry to Thailand. In turn this requires the issue of a visa from the Australian High Commission in Kiribati, necessitating additional administration and time away from official duties before travel. The restricted nature of airline schedules from Bonriki and the time required to obtain a visa in Canberra mean the official must commence travel to attend the Bangkok meeting at least a week ahead of the start of the meeting and travel via Nadi, Fiji. This travel involves four working days of "lost" time and additional travel and allowance costs for the week.

2.4 The ability to obtain a multiple entry visa would reduce the time and cost of obtaining the necessary visas for smaller State aviation officials regularly attending ICAO meetings and events.

2.5 To enable issue of suitable multiple entry visas it is necessary for ICAO to seek approval from the relevant Ministries in Ottawa and the Capital cities of the host States of the RO. It is suggested that should be on the basis of a limited number of accredited officials for those smaller States requiring such assistance.