



WORKING PAPER

**DIRECTORS GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION CONFERENCE
ON A GLOBAL STRATEGY FOR AVIATION SAFETY**

Montréal, 20 to 22 March 2006

Theme 1: The status of aviation safety today

Topic 1.2

THE STATUS OF SAFETY OVERSIGHT

(Presented by the Secretariat)

SUMMARY

This paper presents a status report on ICAO safety oversight audit activities since 1999. While significant progress has been made in resolving deficiencies, a number of States continue to experience problems.

Action by the Conference is in paragraph 5.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Directors General of Civil Aviation Conference on a Global Strategy for Safety Oversight (1997) recommended, inter alia, that the safety oversight assessment programme established in 1995 be enhanced to make it more assertive and effective; that, to that end, regular, mandatory, systematic and harmonized safety audits be introduced, which should include all Contracting States and be carried out by ICAO; and that the safety oversight programme should be expanded to other technical fields at the appropriate time.

1.2 Assembly Resolution A32-11 directed the Council to bring into effect, from 1 January 1999, a Universal Safety Oversight Audit Programme (USOAP), including a systematic reporting and monitoring mechanism on the implementation of safety-related Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs).

1.3 The 35th Session of the Assembly (Resolution A35-6 refers) resolved that USOAP be expanded to include the safety-related provisions in all safety-related Annexes to the *Convention on International Civil Aviation*. The Assembly further requested the Secretary General, from 1 January 2005,

to restructure USOAP to adopt a comprehensive systems approach in conducting safety oversight audits in all Contracting States.

1.4 This paper presents an overall report on the audit activities conducted during the first audit cycle from 1999 to 2004 and highlights the current status of safety oversight worldwide and significant issues of concern arising from the audit and audit follow-up missions.

2. AUDIT ACTIVITIES

2.1 Audit activities under USOAP started in March of 1999, following an Annex-by-Annex approach and with the scope of the Programme limited to Annex 1 — *Personnel Licensing*, Annex 6 — *Operation of Aircraft* and Annex 8 — *Airworthiness of Aircraft* as the activities covered by these three Annexes were considered to be the most “exportable” ones. During this first cycle of audits, 181 Contracting States, two Special Administrative Regions (SARs) of China, i.e. Hong Kong and Macao, and three State territories, i.e. Antilles (Netherlands), Bermuda, and Turks and Caicos (United Kingdom), were audited. In all, seven Contracting States could not be audited.

2.2 Audit follow-up activities to validate the status of implementation of the corrective action plans submitted by Contracting States following the initial audits commenced in August of 2001. In all, 162 Contracting States and the two SARs of China, originally audited, were visited for audit follow-up purposes. Summary reports relating to the audits and audit follow-ups have been published and distributed to all Contracting States.

3. AUDIT RESULTS

3.1 The audit results are measured in terms of the degree of implementation by States of the eight critical elements of a safety oversight system, as defined in the ICAO *Safety Oversight Manual*, Part A — *The Establishment and Management of a State’s Safety Oversight System* (Doc 9734):

- a) primary aviation legislation;
- b) specific operating regulations;
- c) State civil aviation system and safety oversight functions;
- d) technical personnel qualification and training;
- e) technical guidance, tools and the provision of safety critical information;
- f) licensing, certification, authorization and approval obligations;
- g) surveillance obligations; and
- h) resolution of safety concerns.

3.2 These elements, in turn, reflect the implementation of the ICAO SARPs, which constitute the basis for the protocols used to conduct the audits.

3.3 Overall, significant progress has been achieved in the implementation of State corrective action plans, when the results of the initial audits and those of the follow-up missions are compared. At the end of the first cycle of audits, the lack of effective implementation of the critical elements of a safety oversight system declined from an average of 32.6 per cent for all initial audits completed to an average of 17.5 per cent at a global level, following the audit follow-up of 162 Contracting States. A chart depicting the overall outcome of the initial audits and audit follow-ups completed is in the appendix to this paper.

4. SIGNIFICANT ISSUES OF CONCERN AFTER THE FIRST CYCLE OF AUDITS

4.1 Overall, significant progress has been made in terms of resolving identified deficiencies, particularly those related to the lack of legislation and regulations, the absence of an appropriate civil aviation system and safety oversight functions and the lack of adequate appropriately qualified staff. However, a number of States continue to experience problems due to lack of appropriate resources. The following paragraphs provide a summary of the situation regarding safety oversight for various groups of States.

States which have not been audited by ICAO

4.2 Seven Contracting States, namely: Afghanistan, Burundi, Iraq, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Solomon Islands and Somalia, could not be audited during the first cycle of audits on Annexes 1, 6 and 8. These audits could not be conducted primarily for security reasons. These seven States will be audited when conditions permit. However, safety oversight audits of those States, whenever they occur, will be conducted under the comprehensive systems approach.

4.3 ICAO does not have validated data on the status of safety oversight activities or on the safety oversight capability established by these States. The lack of reliable information raises some concerns, as aircraft certified and personnel licensed by some of these States have been encountered during audit missions to other States, and informal discussions with some crew members suggested that licences and certificates were being issued through correspondence using a mail box in a third country.

States which did not submit a corrective action plan and therefore could not be visited for an audit follow-up

4.4 Seven Contracting States, namely: Central African Republic, Djibouti, Equatorial Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Micronesia, Nauru, and Sao Tome and Principe, did not submit corrective action plans following their respective audits, as was required by the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed with ICAO. Several attempts made by ICAO to secure a State corrective action plan were not responded to by the States. In the absence of a corrective action plan, audit follow-up missions to these States could not be conducted.

4.5 The initial audit findings concerning these States indicated that they had not established an adequate safety oversight system to enable them to fulfil their obligations for the licensing of personnel, and for the certification and supervision of air operators and aircraft maintenance organizations.

States which submitted an action plan but in which an audit follow-up mission could not be conducted

4.6 The following eight Contracting States: Chad, Congo, Eritrea, Kiribati, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Marshall Islands, Rwanda and Swaziland, were audited and submitted an action plan, but an audit follow-up mission could not be conducted. This was because the States concerned did not provide information on progress made, indicated lack of progress in implementing their corrective action plan, or would not respond to proposals for an audit follow-up schedule or to queries by ICAO on the status of implementation of the action plan that they had submitted. In one case the action plan was only submitted to ICAO after the completion of the first audit cycle. The reports of the safety oversight audits conducted in these States indicate that there was an urgent need for implementing their respective corrective action plan.

States which were not visited for an audit follow-up for other reasons

4.7 In addition to the above fifteen States (paragraphs 4.4 and 4.6), no audit follow-up mission was conducted in five other Contracting States, namely: Andorra, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Israel, Marshall Islands and San Marino. Audit follow-ups of Andorra and San Marino were judged not necessary on the basis of the audit results and the absence of civil aviation activity in the States. Israel could not be visited, as it requested that the audit follow-up be postponed to a period after the completion of the first audit cycle. Finally, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Marshall Islands were scheduled for an audit follow-up, but the missions could not be performed for operational reasons.

5. ACTION BY THE CONFERENCE

5.1 The Conference is invited to

- a) note the results of first cycle of safety oversight audits and audit follow-up missions carried out under USOAP, as described in this working paper and the appendix; and
- b) request those States listed in paragraph 4.4 above to submit their corrective action plans; and
- c) request those States listed in paragraph 4.6 above to provide ICAO with an update on the status of implementation of their corrective action plans and urge them to accept audit dates under the comprehensive systems approach.

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Critical Elements of a Safety Oversight System

Lack of Effective Implementation (%)

