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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 1.1: Worldwide and regional trends in aviation safety

THE STATUS OF AVIATION SAFETY IN AFRICA

(Presented by the International Air Transport Association)

SUMMARY

The level of safety in Africa as appraised from the accident statistics remains poor and after a slight improvement in 2004-2005 appeared again as a bad year. Promising solutions have been identified by IATA in close cooperation with States and ICAO.

Action by the Conference is in paragraph 5.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Accident rates are calculated by IATA based on the number of western-built jet hull losses in a given region per million departures. The worldwide average reached 0.76 whilst Africa had the highest rate of all regions with 9.8 hull losses per million departures.

1.2 The AFI safety enhancement team (ASET) in its 2005 "Safety Summit" (Nairobi, 23 to 24 February 2005) had already expressed concern as regards AFI safety statistics and had developed resolutions that were endorsed by the Ministers of the African Union (Sun City meeting, 16 to 19 May 2005) and then distributed under an ICAO State letter (ES AN 9/8 – 0740) urging States to implement them.

1.3 ICAO has undertaken a huge effort through the Unified Strategy Programme (USP) aimed at correcting safety deficiencies identified in the Universal Safety Oversight Audit Programme (USOAP) audits.

1.4 IATA has launched a fully complementary campaign through its Partnership for Safety (PFS) that has already led to the IATA Operational Safety Audit (IOSA) registration of four IATA Members in the AFI Region. A lot more will follow in 2006.

2. DISCUSSION

2.1 Causal factors for the accidents occurring in Africa are generally difficult to identify due to the lack of proper reporting and/or investigation of the occurrences. Often, data on accidents and serious incidents are known from various sources, including the media, but some are not available in the ICAO Accident/Incident Data Reporting (ADREP) system due to lack of compliance by some States with Annex 13 — *Aircraft Accident and Incident Investigation*. This is an issue that should be addressed and corrected in the course of the forthcoming comprehensive ICAO audits, if one is to properly identify the specific causes of accidents in Africa.

2.2 A review of the information available on the accidents having occurred in recent years show that they are concentrated in a limited number of States, have involved essentially AFI carriers and the causes tend to be different from those that prevail in the rest of the world. For example, controlled flight into terrain (CFIT) that used to be “the most wanted killer” in other regions was never a significant factor in Africa. On the other hand, issues such as poor maintenance, insufficient crew proficiency and, more generally, lack of safety oversight by the States involved played an obvious role in the AFI accidents.

2.3 Infrastructure deficiencies so far, have not been identified as major contributors to serious accidents but they are likely to become major players in the years to come. For example, the lack of appropriate aerodrome maintenance, especially as regards runway pavement, has already caused serious incidents. Airport fencing is very often deficient which is a big threat not only due to security breaches but also due to wildlife wandering within the airport perimeter. The obvious degradation of the ground infrastructure that can be observed in some places must be stopped before it causes a major accident.

2.4 In the en-route phase, quality of air traffic services (ATS) is often below global standards and communication is sometimes impossible to a point that crews often claim that they have crossed entire flight information regions (FIRs) without any radio contact with ATS. Again, this does not seem to have caused accidents so far (thanks to the airborne collision avoidance system (ACAS) and the wide-spread use of the in-flight broadcast procedure (IFBP) frequency), but with the constant growth in traffic, that situation cannot be tolerated any more.

3. PROPOSED SOLUTION

3.1 Lack of safety oversight by States is another source of concern in Africa as abundantly highlighted by ICAO USOAP. IATA fully supports the implementation of the ICAO Assembly Resolution A35-7 — Unified Strategy to resolve safety-related deficiencies based on increased transparency, cooperation and assistance. IATA is already assisting, under an ICAO/IATA contract, a national administration in the region to enhance its safety oversight capability. Other similar initiatives are currently underway.

3.2 As stated in the ASET Recommendations, “States should look for every opportunity of bringing their resources together on a sub-regional basis in order to collectively discharge their

responsibilities in terms of safety oversight, implement common regulations and rely on a common body of inspectors”. It must be made clear that not many States in Africa have the resources and the volume of air operations that can justify the maintenance of a national safety oversight workforce. Also, to the extent possible, safety inspectors should enjoy a degree of independency to ensure they are free to take the (sometimes unpopular) decisions, which their safety findings require. cooperative development of operational safety and continuing airworthiness programme (COSCAP) projects are an obvious means to create such international safety oversight bodies. IATA is of the opinion that they should be promoted insofar as they are clearly aimed at the implementation of common regulations and the creation of a common body of inspectors.

3.3 The IOSA audits cannot replace the States’ safety oversight activities, but they are a valuable complement. Through IOSA, airlines structures and operational procedures are checked against ICAO Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs) as well as the best practices of the industry. The value of IOSA was highlighted by the last ICAO Assembly (cf. Resolution A 35-7), and it is now recognized by many national administrations as a “guarantee of operational excellence”. In the African continent, four airlines are now IOSA registered and fifteen more are expected to undergo an IOSA audit in 2006. Again, the ASET Safety Summit reached the following conclusion:

“States agree — to request their certified aircraft operators to take the necessary steps to achieve compliance with all the relevant Standards, Recommended Practices and best Industry practices in order to become IOSA registered”

Indeed, some States are already in the process of requiring their operators to become IOSA registered and see that procedure as the best available means to correct the type of deficiencies in aircraft operations and maintenance that can be identified in most accident reports in Africa. IOSA is prepared to closely cooperate with States and with ICAO in order to ensure that IOSA is used to its maximum extent to improve safety in Africa.

3.4 Aerodrome deficiencies are addressed by an IATA team performing on-site visits and bringing relevant reports to the attention of the local/national authorities. Major safety issues have already been identified through this process and it is hoped that States concerned will take necessary action. A complete report on the findings and on the corrective actions undertaken by the authorities concerned will be made available on the IATA website at the end of 2006.

3.5 En-route deficiencies are addressed, in close cooperation with ICAO, through the reduced vertical separation minimum (RVSM) implementation process. The RVSM effort in AFI was launched further to a decision taken by States at the AFI/RAN/7 meeting (Abuja, 1997). It is now gaining momentum and has reached a crucial phase where all States need to be fully involved.

3.6 In August 2005, the functional hazard assessment (FHA) and collision risk analysis (CRA) were completed, leading to the conclusion that the AFI region did not meet the overall RVSM target level of safety (TLS) and therefore, RVSM could not be implemented at that time. Since then, ICAO, IATA and a number of air navigation service providers have been working together to highlight the actions required to ensure the State in question can safely implement RVSM. Currently forty-six AFI States have submitted a national safety plan (NSP). It is hoped that all AFI States will eventually provide an NSP and that all the necessary infrastructure improvements described in those plans will be put in place in good time for a safe RVSM implementation. When this happens, the infrastructure and the quality of air traffic services in Africa will have been significantly improved. This makes the process of RVSM implementation, a major safety undertaking in itself beyond its expected operational benefits.

4. **CONCLUSION**

4.1 Even though safety statistics continue to be a major concern in Africa, promising initiatives are being pursued by IATA in close cooperation with States and ICAO. It is hoped that the renewed political will expressed by some States in AFI will lead to significant improvements in safety oversight, the requirement for airlines to become IOSA-registered and the correction of infrastructure deficiencies as identified in the aerodrome visits or in the RVSM implementation process.

5. **ACTION BY THE CONFERENCE**

5.1 The Conference is invited to:

- a) note the information in this working paper and, in particular the degree of degradation of safety in the AFI Region;
- b) agree that improvements will come from a strong involvement from States in the safety efforts described in this working paper, in particular IOSA and the application of the ICAO Unified Strategy; and
- c) requests those States that have not provided ICAO with their National Safety Plan, to do so as a matter of urgency.

— END —