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ASSEMBLY — 42ND SESSION

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Agenda Item 13: Aviation Security — Policy

OUTCOME OF THE HIGH-LEVEL MINISTERIAL SEGMENT OF THE ICAO SECURITY WEEK 2024 HELD IN MUSCAT, OMAN

(Presented by the Council of ICAO)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This paper presents the outcome of the High-level Ministerial Segment convened on 11 December 2024 during ICAO Security Week 2024 hosted by the Civil Aviation Authority of Oman, in Muscat, from 9 to 12 December 2024. Ten Ministers participated in this event, with seven of them delivering oral statements. The High-level Ministerial Segment culminated in the adoption of the Muscat Declaration on Aviation Security and Aviation Cybersecurity. The event reaffirmed the commitment of States to enhancing aviation security and aviation cybersecurity, and provided policy direction, advancing the new Strategic Goal *Every Flight is Safe and Secure*.

Action: The Assembly is invited to:

- a) reaffirm the commitments made in the Muscat Declaration on Aviation Security and Aviation Cybersecurity;
- b) note that continued efforts will be made to promote and raise awareness of the Muscat Declaration through publications, outreach activities and promoted through global and regional event opportunities; and
- c) support the inclusion of key elements of the Muscat Declaration into proposed revisions to Resolutions A41-18 on the *Consolidated Statement on Continuing ICAO Policies Related to Aviation Security* and A41-19 on *Addressing Cybersecurity in Civil Aviation* to the 42nd Session of the ICAO Assembly (refer to A42-WP/11 and A42-WP/12)

<i>Strategic Goal:</i>	This working paper relates to the <i>Every Flight is Safe and Secure</i> Strategic Goal.
<i>Financial implications:</i>	The ICAO activities referred to in this paper are expected to be undertaken within the resources available in the 2026-2028 Regular Budget and/or from extra-budgetary contributions as guided by the ICAO Business Plan 2026-2028.
<i>References:</i>	Doc 10184, <i>Assembly Resolutions in Force</i> (as of 7 October 2022) A42-WP/11 <i>Consolidated Statement on Continuing ICAO Policies Related to Aviation Security</i> A42-WP/12 <i>Cybersecurity in Civil Aviation</i>

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The ICAO Security Week 2024 in Muscat, Oman commenced on 9 December and concluded with a High-level Ministerial Segment on 11 December. The event brought together 911 participants representing 77 States and 12 international and regional organizations, industry and other stakeholders.

1.2 This paper focuses on the outcome of the High-level Ministerial Segment during which Ministers, senior officials, and aviation leaders from across the globe gathered with the purpose of strengthening aviation security and aviation cybersecurity as foundations of sustainable air transport culminating in the adoption of the Muscat Declaration on Aviation Security and Aviation Cybersecurity.

2. HIGH LEVEL MINISTERIAL SEGMENT

2.1 The High-level Ministerial Segment was presided by Mr. Salvatore Sciacchitano, President of the ICAO Council, supported by Mr. Juan Carlos Salazar, Secretary General of ICAO, Mr. Mohamed Khalifa Rahma, Director Air Transport Bureau, ICAO, and Ms. Michele Merkle, Director Air Navigation Bureau, ICAO, with participation of H.E. Naif Ali Al-Abri, President of the Civil Aviation Authority of Oman. Ten Ministers attended the High-level Ministerial Segment. Altogether this segment featured oral statements by 7 Ministers, 7 Directors General and 13 other high-level officials and/or heads of delegations who overwhelmingly advocated strong aviation security and aviation cybersecurity frameworks. The event concluded with the adoption of the Muscat Declaration on Aviation Security and Aviation Cybersecurity (“Muscat Declaration”), which recognizes that aviation security and aviation cybersecurity are critical for the sustainable development of air transport and that they need to be prioritized and appropriately resourced.

3. MUSCAT DECLARATION

3.1 By way of State letter SD39/1-24/74 dated 4 July 2024, it is recalled that extensive consultation was made on the Muscat Declaration during its development, including comments received during ICAO Security Week 2024, in which the Secretariat published such revisions on the event website in all official ICAO languages.

3.2 During the Ministerial Segment on 11 December 2024, participants expressed broad support to the final draft Muscat Declaration through their oral statements, and no additional comments or revisions were requested. In this regard, the President of the Council announced that the Declaration was adopted by acclamation.

3.3 The Muscat Declaration, provided in the Appendix to this paper, seeks to achieve the following objectives:

- recognition that aviation security and aviation cybersecurity are fundamental to the sustainable development of air transport, and require prioritized and appropriate resourcing;
- understanding that the perceived absence of major aviation security or aviation cybersecurity incidents does not equate to a low risk, and that proactive measures remain essential; and
- calls for more global cooperation to counter emerging threats, including cyberattacks and insider threats, while building resilient security frameworks for the future.

3.4 The Muscat Declaration embodies the collective resolve to ensure aviation remains a secure and resilient force for global progress. As such, the following are the five pillars of the Muscat Declaration:

- a) **Strengthening global frameworks:** States are encouraged to ratify critical legal instruments, such as the *Convention of the Suppression of Unlawful Acts Relating to International Civil Aviation* and the *Protocol Supplementary to the Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Seizure of Aircraft* (Beijing Instruments), and foster more robust information-sharing on aviation threats, including cyber threats;
- b) **Allocation of sufficient resources:** Addressing evolving threats requires adequate resources for aviation security, and hence, States must nurture diverse, skilled professionals who can harness emerging technologies and drive innovation;
- c) **International and regional coordination:** Recognize that regional aviation security plans, programmes and groups are invaluable as they enhance operational efficiency and ensure compliance with international standards, serving as models for collective progress;
- d) **Alignment with the Global Aviation Security Plan (GASeP):** The updated GASeP, with its ambitious goals and milestones, reflects shared commitment to protecting international civil aviation, and this declaration reinforces the need to align regional and national security priorities with the second edition of the Plan; and
- e) **No Country Left Behind (NCLB):** Reaffirm ICAO's efforts through its NCLB Strategic Goal to support effective capacity-building (including training and assistance) to ensure that aviation security Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs) are effectively implemented globally, and that all States have access to the significant socio-economic benefits of safe, secure and reliable air transport.

4. NEXT STEPS

4.1 The Muscat Declaration serves as a reminder that those who wish to target civil aviation will keep innovating and that continued vigilance is imperative, and therefore, only through a collective response that the aviation community will succeed in addressing these threats. It also highlights the vital importance of ICAO's work within a comprehensive United Nations framework to foster partnerships and cooperation across ICAO's Member States and the civil aviation sector.

4.2 As the first follow-up action, the Muscat Declaration was disseminated to Member States and international organizations in order to convey a strong political message to the international aviation community. As the next steps, the key elements of the Declaration are reflected in the proposed revisions to Assembly Resolutions A41-18 on the *Consolidated Statement on Continuing ICAO Policies Related to Aviation Security* and A41-19 on *Addressing Cybersecurity in Civil Aviation* (refer to A42-WP/11 and A42-WP/12). Finally, continued efforts will be made to promote and raise awareness of the Muscat Declaration through outreach activities at various regional and international events.

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APPENDIX

MUSCAT DECLARATION ON AVIATION SECURITY AND AVIATION CYBERSECURITY Muscat, Sultanate of Oman, 11 December 2024

We, the Ministers, and Heads of Delegation, meeting at the Ministerial Segment of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) Security Week held in Muscat, Sultanate of Oman, on 11 December 2024, in the presence of senior representatives of the aviation industry. In addition to the general support to this declaration by all the States and organizations represented and participants, formal statements were made by Ministers, Directors General and Heads of Delegations from the following States and organization: Algeria, Angola, Australia, Azerbaijan, Brazil, Canada, China, Dominican Republic, Egypt, France, Italy, Jordan, Malaysia, Morocco, Nigeria, Oman, Papua New Guinea, Poland, Qatar, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Somalia, South Sudan, United Kingdom, United Republic of Tanzania, United States, Yemen, Zimbabwe, and the European Commission.

Recalling ICAO Assembly Resolutions A41-18 and A41-19 enshrining the global commitment of States to enhancing aviation security and cybersecurity;

Affirming that aviation connects the world, brings people and countries together, and makes social and economic development possible through travel, trade and tourism, and thus shall be effectively protected;

Acknowledging the importance of a common UN approach involving cooperation and coordination among all relevant UN bodies and specialized agencies in recognizing the aviation sector as critical infrastructure on which national security, prosperity and development, as well as the global economy, are dependent;

Recognizing that aviation security and cybersecurity are critical for the sustainable development of air transport and that they need to be prioritized and appropriately resourced; and

Emphasizing the need to maintain vigilance as the perceived absence of major aviation security or cybersecurity incidents does not mean the risk is lower.

THEREFORE, URGE STATES, ICAO, INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS, INDUSTRY AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS TO:

- a) Strengthen efforts in addressing new and existing threats to international civil aviation, including those from insiders and cyber attacks;
- b) Advocate for States to ratify the *Convention on the Suppression of Unlawful Acts Relating to International Civil Aviation* and the *Protocol Supplementary to the Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Seizure of Aircraft* (Beijing 2010), as a means to deter and respond to attacks against civil aviation;
- c) Give aviation security and cybersecurity the same importance, high priority, and support as applied to other aspects of civil aviation;
- d) Ensure effective coordination of aviation safety, security, and cybersecurity to benefit from shared knowledge and strengthened efforts;
- e) Secure sufficient resources to ensure qualified and competent professionals are available to regulate, operate, manage, maintain, and oversee the effective implementation of measures related to aviation security and cybersecurity;

- f) Adopt risk-based and outcome-focused policies, standards, regulations and innovative approaches including the development of management systems and effective oversight to guide the coordinated development of sustainable aviation security and cybersecurity measures;
- g) Ensure the prompt sharing of information to help conduct risk assessments for threats to aviation, including cyber threats, preventing and mitigating those threats, developing and maintaining a resilient aviation ecosystem, and responding to and recovering from incidents impacting civil aviation. At the technical level, this sharing of information should include all relevant experts;
- h) Strengthen cooperation in the development of comprehensive aviation security and cybersecurity guidance material;
- i) Ensure that security measures are effective and at the same time facilitate the flow of passengers and cargo;
- j) Ensure effective implementation of ICAO Standards and strive to achieve together the aspirational goal of the ICAO Global Aviation Security Plan (GASeP) and its six Priority Areas;
- k) Recognize the specialist skills needed to operate and manage current and emerging aviation security technologies, and hire and train staff for their use, while pursuing efforts to attract the next generation of aviation professionals and to promote policies and initiatives aimed at enhancing diversity, equity, and inclusion, which includes bridging the gender gap within the aviation industry;
- l) Expedite the implementation of the ICAO Aviation Cybersecurity Strategy and its Cybersecurity Action Plan to support a robust global aviation cybersecurity framework;
- m) Be proactive in identifying and addressing cyber threats to civil aviation and encourage the implementation of regular cybersecurity training and awareness sessions for aviation personnel to ensure they have the necessary skills;
- n) Proactively support ICAO's regional groups in aviation security and cybersecurity and cooperative programmes, such as the Comprehensive Regional Implementation Plan for Aviation Security and Facilitation in Africa (AFI SECFAL Plan), Cooperative Aviation Security Programme – Middle East (CASP-MID) and Cooperative Aviation Security Programme – Asia Pacific (CASP-AP), which are vital to help States implement ICAO Standards and to enhance operational efficiencies; and
- o) Reaffirm the value and importance of ICAO's *No Country Left Behind* initiative that aims to help States through supporting and providing delivery of targeted and effective aviation security and cybersecurity training, assistance and capacity-building to States in need.

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