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WORKING PAPER

ASSEMBLY — 42ND SESSION

TECHNICAL COMMISSION

Agenda Item 25: Other issues to be considered by the Technical Commission

ENHANCING THE UNDERSTANDING OF STANDARDS AND RECOMMENDED PRACTICES (SARPS) FOR EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION

(Presented by Singapore, co-sponsored by New Zealand)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This working paper acknowledges the growing complexity of aviation and the corresponding challenges that States may face in fully understanding the intent, content and implications of amendments to Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs). To support States in their subsequent implementation of SARPs amendments, this paper proposes enhancing communications between ICAO and States by considering additional avenues of communication in the form of briefings or explanatory sessions. This would allow ICAO to better and more efficiently support States in their understanding and thereby alignment of their safety regulatory frameworks with the updated SARPs, towards more consistent implementation globally.

Action: The Assembly is invited to consider the proposal for ICAO to make use of webinars, ICAO TV, and / or other similar channels to more effectively communicate the intent and rationale behind SARPs amendments to States to support more consistent global implementation.

<i>Strategic Goals:</i>	This working paper relates to <i>Every Flight is Safe and Secure</i>
<i>Financial implications:</i>	Nil
<i>References:</i>	Nil

1. INTRODUCTION

The critical role of SARPs in aviation safety

1.1 Aviation continues to evolve rapidly, with increasing complexity in operations, technology, and regulatory frameworks. In this dynamic environment, ICAO Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs) serve as the cornerstone for global aviation safety, providing crucial harmonised standards on international aviation.

1.2 To communicate the SARPs to Member States, ICAO has established processes for the development and dissemination of the SARPs amendments, supported by the policies in implementation support and the provision of guidance material. States then take effort to understand the intent and content of the proposed amendments and the key implications to their aviation industry and operating context. As part of their rule-making processes, States may also have to communicate the purpose of their regulations which should reflect the intent, content and implications of the SARPs amendments. The effectiveness of SARPs in maintaining global aviation safety standards is therefore heavily dependent on the States' ability to fully understand and implement them within their operational context. The level of understanding by the States will depend to some extent on the efficient communication between ICAO and States that provides for clear and consistent interpretation of the SARPs.

Need to enhance the understanding of SARPS

1.3 States however often face challenges in fully comprehending the intent and context behind SARPs amendments. Currently, State Letters that communicate the amendments are useful in showing the changes to specific Standards or Recommended Practices in affected Annexes, as well as changes to Guidance Material, and may contain formal summaries of the proposed changes. These State Letters are often voluminous and can pose particular challenges for the many States that are unable to closely follow the development of every topic that results in an amendment to the SARPs. States must review and analyse multiple State letters simultaneously and across different technical domains. Many States have limited aviation safety experts or resources to fully analyse the technical details across the various domains. There are no broadly accessible platforms that States can use or approach for clarification or to improve their understanding. Yet, thorough understanding of SARPs amendments remains critically important for States' comprehensive assessment of their operational impact, and subsequent implementation.

2. DISCUSSION

2.1 This working paper proposes enhancing the effectiveness of communications between ICAO and States by considering the use of additional channels of communication, such as webinars, ICAO TV, or other visual and audio channels. Webinars, for example, have since the COVID-19 pandemic become an invaluable way to reach thousands around the world simultaneously to communicate information in a bite-sized manner. Such channels can enable ICAO to distil and share on the SARPs amendments in an easy-to-understand format that allows States to quickly grasp key aspects of the SARPs changes. Such information, properly framed and presented in a digestible manner, can help States to better understand the context behind the SARPs changes, and subsequently help them better process the amendments contained in the State letter.

2.2 To illustrate, the recent changes to obstacle limitation surfaces (OLS) were well and thoroughly documented in a 92-page State letter. The benefits are wide-ranging. To better assist States'

transition, ICAO and the OLS Task Force undertook efforts to identify and develop training, aids, and programmes. This positive example could also be applied to other SARPs amendments. Potentially, presentations by ICAO through webinars or ICAO TV could explain these benefits and parse out the key aspects of the SARPs in a more comprehensive and efficient manner. These channels can allow ICAO to help viewers or participants visualise the changes to the OLS, for example with animations that cannot be conveyed by text alone. The use of interactive features, such as Question-and-Answer sessions, can facilitate participants' better understanding of the technical specifications, operational procedures and implementation methodologies, in relation to their operational environment.

2.3 In support of the above, the ICAO Technical Panels and Working Groups that had participated in the SARPs development process could consider synthesizing their work into focused presentations suitable for webinars or ICAO TV. Webinars are additionally useful in providing opportunities for verbal clarifications and interactions which can facilitate the participants' understanding of the subject. For webinars, consideration should also be made to hold the session in the different time zones to facilitate States' participation.

2.4 The proposal offers significant benefits that contribute to a more consistent and globally harmonised SARPs implementation through enhanced understanding of the intent behind SARPs amendments. The focus on communicating the SARPs amendments through other channels by ICAO will complement the technical specifications detailed in the State Letters for proper implementation. Institutional knowledge will also be strengthened over time, ensuring that expertise and understanding are maintained with personnel changes.

3. CONCLUSION

3.1 This initiative represents a strategic investment in improving global aviation safety through enhanced understanding and implementation of SARPs and supports ICAO's "No Country Left Behind" initiative.

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