



International Civil Aviation Organization

WORKING PAPER

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ASSEMBLY — 42ND SESSION

TECHNICAL COMMISSION

Agenda Item 24 : Aviation Safety and Air Navigation Priority Initiatives

ENHANCED AERODROME EMERGENCY PLANNING AND PREPAREDNESS

(Presented by African Civil Aviation Commission on behalf of 54 African States²)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Despite regulatory requirements established under ICAO Annex 14 — *Aerodromes*, implementation gaps persist in the development, coordination, and testing of Aerodrome Emergency Plans (AEPs), particularly in developing States. In an era of increasingly complex emergencies—including aircraft accidents, pandemics, security threats, and natural disasters—ensuring global readiness and interoperability of AEPs has become a critical priority.

This working paper calls for ICAO to reassess the current framework supporting emergency preparedness and proposes targeted capacity-building and policy enhancement measures under the No Country Left Behind (NCLB) initiative. It advocates for elevated global attention, peer-to-peer collaboration, and practical support to States struggling with implementation, to ensure robust, inclusive and regularly exercised AEPs worldwide.

Action: The Assembly is invited to:

- a) urge ICAO to reinforce the global importance of comprehensive Aerodrome Emergency Plans (AEPs) and promote stronger oversight mechanisms under Annex 14 — *Aerodromes* provisions;
- b) direct ICAO to scale up technical assistance and peer exchange programmes under the No Country Left Behind (NCLB) initiative to support Member States in the practical development and testing of AEPs;
- c) urge ICAO to consider reviewing and updating Doc 9137, *Airport Services Manual*, Part 7 — *Airport Emergency Planning* to reflect current global threats and enhance operational guidance on inclusive, scalable emergency planning models;
- d) encourage States to ensure that emergency and contingency planning includes regular, multi-agency exercises at aerodromes, and that such exercises are monitored as part of their national oversight programmes; and
- e) urge States and industry Stakeholders with established best practices to support regional -knowledge sharing, especially for States with limited capabilities, in line with ICAO's cooperative principles.

¹ English and French versions provided by AFCAC.

² Algeria, Angola, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Cabo Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Congo, Cote d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Libya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, São Tomé and Príncipe, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, South Sudan, Sudan, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

<i>Strategic Goals:</i>	This working paper relates to the Strategic Goals <i>Every Flight is Safe and Secure; Aviation delivers Seamless, Accessible, and Reliable Mobility for All; and No Country Left Behind.</i>
<i>Financial implications:</i>	To be determined.
<i>References:</i>	Annex 14 — <i>Aerodromes</i> , Volume I — <i>Aerodrome Design and Operations</i> and Volume II — <i>Heliports</i> Annex 9 — <i>Facilitation</i> Annex 11 — <i>Air Traffic Services</i> Annex 17 — <i>Aviation Security</i> Annex 19 — <i>Safety Management</i> Doc 9137, <i>Airport Services Manual</i> , Part 7 — <i>Airport Emergency Planning</i> Doc 9998, <i>ICAO Policy on Assistance to Aircraft Accident Victims and their Families</i>

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Aerodrome emergency planning is an essential pillar of airport safety and resilience. Its purpose is to ensure that aerodromes are equipped to respond swiftly and effectively to any emergency occurring at or near the aerodrome. This includes minimizing human and operational impact, safeguarding lives, and maintaining continuity of airport operations.

1.2 ICAO Annex 14 — *Aerodromes*, Volume I — *Aerodrome Design and Operations* obligates States to ensure the establishment and regular testing of Aerodrome Emergency Plans (AEPs). These requirements are further supported by guidance in Doc 9137, *Airport Services Manual*, Part 7 — *Airport Emergency Planning*, and other relevant ICAO provisions. However, the scale, complexity, and variability of modern emergencies now call for renewed attention and reinforcement of these plans across the globe.

2. DISCUSSION

2.1 Gaps in implementation and testing

2.1.1 While many States have instituted regulatory frameworks requiring aerodromes to develop AEPs, evidence suggests a lack of consistent implementation and meaningful testing. Exercises are often under-resourced, poorly coordinated, and inadequately linked to realistic emergency scenarios. In some regions, key agencies are either uninformed of their roles or unable to participate effectively due to operational or logistical constraints. Such systemic limitations undermine the integrity of emergency preparedness efforts and expose vulnerabilities during actual crises.

2.2 Complexity of multi-agency coordination

2.2.1 Aerodrome emergency responses inherently involve numerous stakeholders—fire and rescue services, police, medical responders, airport operations, air traffic services, municipal authorities, and national security forces. The effectiveness of any emergency plan depends on these entities’ shared understanding, interoperability, and access to resources.

2.2.2 ICAO’s existing guidance emphasizes a coordinated, all-hazards approach, but practical challenges remain. Many States struggle to conduct multi-agency training or simulate realistic drills due to

financial, logistical, or institutional barriers. Strengthened ICAO-led capacity-building and regional collaboration could play a key role in closing this gap.

2.3 Rationale for global direction

2.3.1 The increasing frequency of emergencies with cross-border implications—such as infectious disease outbreaks and security-related events—warrants a globally harmonized approach to AEPs. A reprioritization of ICAO support and the institutionalization of peer-learning platforms could facilitate this effort, aligned with Assembly criteria for items needing global direction and maturity.

3. CONCLUSIONS

3.1 Aerodrome emergency preparedness is no longer just a local priority—it is a global imperative. Without regular multi-agency drills, integration of emergency services, and ICAO-supported implementation frameworks, significant gaps will persist in the world’s collective capacity to respond to crises. A renewed global effort is needed to reinforce aerodrome emergency planning as a standardized, well-tested, and inclusive safety mechanism.

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