



ASSEMBLY — 42ND SESSION

TECHNICAL COMMISSION

Agenda Item 24: Aviation Safety and Air Navigation Priority Initiatives

PROPOSAL FOR ADVANCING IN THE INTEGRATION OF SPACE OPERATIONS INTO THE INTERNATIONAL CIVIL AVIATION ECOSYSTEM

(Presented by Chile and supported by 18 LACAC Member States²)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Space operations have coexisted with aviation since 1949. Although there have been attempts at coordination between the two areas - as users of the same resource, airspace - the momentum of such initiatives has weakened over time.

Contracting States to the Chicago Convention that are affected by space operations are subject to the provisions of Annex 15 — *Aeronautical Information Services*, as they relate to the notification of hazardous activities in their respective flight information regions (FIR). However, they do not have effective tools to collaborate in managing the use of airspace in these contexts.

Considering the increasing frequency of spacecraft launches and re-entries, the steady increase in international civil aviation operations and the emergence of new players in the aviation ecosystem, it is highly advisable to strengthen coordination among the specialized agencies of the United Nations system with jurisdiction in these areas.

Action: The Assembly is invited to instruct the Council to take the necessary steps to resume and strengthen discussions with the relevant specialized agencies of the United Nations system in order to advance the integration of space operations into the civil aviation ecosystem, while safeguarding the harmonious, safe and efficient development of both activities.

<i>Strategic Goals:</i>	This working paper relates to <i>Every Flight is Safe and Secure</i> and <i>The Economic Development of Air Transport Assures the Delivery of Economic Prosperity and Societal Well-Being for All</i> .
<i>Financial implications:</i>	– There are no financial implications for ICAO. – Air navigation services providers' (ANSP) investments are expected to maintain profitability. – Savings in operating costs for operators are expected.

¹ Spanish version provided by Chile.

² Argentina, Belize, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of).

<i>References:</i>	Doc 10184, <i>Assembly Resolutions in Force (as of 7 October 2022)</i> Doc 10209, <i>Report of the Fourteenth Air Navigation Conference</i> , Committee Report on Agenda Item 3 <i>100 Years of Commercial Aviation</i> , Hermes - Air Transport Organization <i>General Catalog of Artificial Space Objects</i> , Dr. Jonathan C. McDowell
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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 According to the *General Catalog of Artificial Space Objects* database of astrophysicist Dr. Jonathan McDowell, the first recorded non-warlike exoatmospheric flight was Viking I, a scientific sounding rocket developed by the Naval Research Laboratory/Johns Hopkins Applied Physics Laboratory and launched on 3 May 1949, which reached an altitude of 106 km. The publication *100 Years of Commercial Aviation*³ states that, only 13 years after that exploit, in 1962, commercial aviation carried 156 million passengers worldwide and in the same year 43 suborbital launches were recorded.

1.2 In 2024, there were 87 suborbital launches, 263 orbital launches and 275 re-entries into the atmosphere, while passenger figures for commercial air transport stood at 4,779,000,000. A mere glance shows that the scenario has clearly changed drastically.

2. DISCUSSION

2.1 As early as its 29th Session in 1992, the ICAO Assembly showed foresight in requesting the General Secretariat to ensure that the positions and needs of international civil aviation were communicated to all relevant space agencies. It also instructed that the Organization should ensure its continued representation at appropriate conferences and meetings related to aviation or affecting its interests in this regard.

2.2 In March 2015, the first International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)/United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA) Aerospace Symposium was held in Montreal. The event addressed emerging space activities and their relationship with civil aviation, recognizing that the entry of a significant number of actors into the space arena would impact on the application of instruments of space law and air law. At that meeting, the need to create common spaces between the aviation and space communities was established.

2.3 In 2016, the second symposium was held in Abu Dhabi, with the aim, among other things, of presenting the latest trends in commercial space transportation and suborbital operations and studying the regulatory and legal frameworks for aerospace operations and cooperation with aerospace stakeholders.

2.4 The last of this series of symposiums was held in Vienna in 2017 and addressed such important topics as the elements that might constitute the future management of space traffic, how suborbital operations might affect activities in airspace and outer space, and possible gaps in air law and space law in ensuring sustainability of aerospace activities.

³ Kostas Iatrou, *Hermes - Air Transport Organization*, 2014, p. 127.

2.5 At the 40th Session of the ICAO Assembly in 2019, the need to work closely with several United Nations entities, in particular UNOOSA and the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS), was recognized. On that occasion, ICAO's role in developing, in coordination with UNOOSA, policy guidance in those areas where international commercial space transportation operations intersect with international civil aviation was reaffirmed.

2.6 The Fourteenth Air Navigation Conference, held in Montreal in 2024, recognized the need to further promote collaboration, including the possibility of joint events with COPUOS, UNOOSA and other United Nations agencies, as appropriate. It was also pointed out that aviation law and space law are distinct legal regimes. The Conference emphasized that space transportation operations are different from higher airspace operations and concluded by recommending that ICAO work with Member States and international organizations to identify, compile and publish best practices, as necessary, related to safe and efficient air navigation of aircraft around space transportation operations.

2.7 Our Organization has on multiple occasions recognized the importance of maintaining open channels of communication among all parties involved in the use of our limited resource, airspace. The need for a comprehensive approach to higher airspace operations (HAO) has already been envisaged; the time has come to adopt the same approach for those operations that take place beyond that limit, whether different in nature or not, and whether governed by different legal regimes or not.

2.8 In conclusion, the series of events and declarations described above indicate a clear and steady course, one that has been maintained without significant change for more than 30 years. The next logical step is to resume and strengthen conclusive and binding discussions with the relevant specialized agencies of the United Nations system, in order to advance in the integration of space operations into the civil aviation ecosystem, while safeguarding the harmonious, safe and efficient development of both activities.

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