



ASSEMBLY — 42ND SESSION

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Agenda Item 13: Aviation Security – Policy

**INITIATIVE FOR THE STRENGTHENING OF AVIATION SECURITY AND MEASURES
APPLICABLE IN DOMESTIC CIVIL AVIATION OPERATIONS**

(Submitted by Belize on behalf of the Member States of COCESNA²)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Working Paper aims to present the joint initiative of the State of Belize and the Central American Corporation for Air Navigation Services (COCESNA), aimed at making a coordinated call to Member States to strengthen policies, strategies, and security measures applicable to domestic commercial operations, with an emphasis on preventing and mitigating acts of unlawful interference.

Central America, as a geographically small yet significant region, is experiencing sustained growth in domestic air traffic. This context calls for an urgent and proactive review of security policies at airports serving domestic flights to ensure that there are no regulatory or operational gaps that could be exploited by malicious actors.

A recent incident in the region revealed vulnerabilities that require immediate attention. Beyond its immediate impact, this event should be interpreted as an opportunity to act with vision, responsibility, and regional commitment. It is time to strengthen the preventive approach, raise operational standards, and promote a standardized security culture across the regional airport system.

This initiative seeks to promote a collective response that reaffirms the leadership and consistency of States in aviation security, through concrete actions that ensure effective and sustainable protection of domestic operations, leaving no room for improvisation in the face of real and potential threats.

Action: The Assembly is invited to encourage States to:

- a) Implement national and local risk assessment processes tailored to the reality of each domestic aerodrome to define and implement appropriate security measures against actual threats.
- b) Establish working teams with the competent authorities of the States to carry out aviation security risk assessments at different aerodromes with commercial domestic operations.
- c) Strengthen security measures at aerodromes with regular domestic operations, where passenger and baggage inspections are often limited or nonexistent.
- d) Develop specific security measures for aerodromes that only operate commercial domestic flights, in cases where the same measures as for international operations are not applied.

¹ Spanish version provided by Belize

² Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua

e) Update and review AVSEC contingency plans, ensuring active participation of all entities responsible for responding to acts of unlawful interference, including tenants, accredited agents, and other stakeholders. f) Promote a security culture through continuous training, exercises, and drills to keep all actors involved alert and prepared.	
<i>Strategic Goals:</i>	<i>Every Flight is Safe and Secure; No Country Left Behind</i>
<i>Financial implications:</i>	
<i>References:</i>	Annex 17 – <i>Aviation Security</i> Universal Security Audit Programme – <i>Continuous Monitoring Approach (USAP-CMA)</i> Doc 10118 – <i>Global Aviation Security Plan (GASeP)</i>

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Following recent events in the State of Belize, where an incident occurred classified as an Act of Unlawful Interference under ICAO Annex 17, the vulnerability of civil aviation security systems in the region has become evident, highlighting the urgent need to strengthen our capabilities for prevention, detection, and response to such situations.

1.2 Civil aviation security remains a strategic global priority, aligned with the principles set forth in ICAO Annex 17 and the guidelines of the Universal Security Audit Programme (USAP-CMA). Under this regulatory framework, States have the sovereign responsibility to protect civil aviation against acts of unlawful interference by effectively and sustainably implementing security measures appropriate to their operational environment.

1.3 In this context, and given the sustained growth of domestic air traffic, it is necessary to reinforce security measures at all national airports/aerodromes serving commercial domestic flights. This need stems not only from the States' commitment to meeting international standards but also from the ethical and operational obligation to ensure the protection of passengers, crews, ground personnel, and airport infrastructure.

1.4 This initiative calls upon States to strengthen their domestic airport security systems through coordinated, sustainable actions tailored to current and emerging risks. This requires a joint effort to reaffirm collective commitment to operational security, the prevention of unlawful interference, and the preservation of public trust in air transport.

2. DISCUSSION

2.1 Annex 17 establishes that States must ensure the application of security measures in all operations, without distinction between domestic and international operations, based on a risk assessment conducted by the competent authorities of each State. Likewise, the Global Aviation Security Plan (GASeP) emphasizes the need for robust, coordinated, and sustainable national security systems that address threats across all phases of the aviation cycle, including airports with domestic flights.

2.2 In many States, however, the security measures applied at airports/aerodromes serving domestic flights are, in practice, less stringent than those implemented at terminals with international operations. Given the economic capacities of the region, this disparity can create operational vulnerabilities and facilitate the occurrence of unlawful acts with potentially serious local and regional consequences.

2.3 Strengthening security at these airports is therefore a strategic necessity that not only ensures regulatory compliance but also helps to:

- Enhance protection of passengers, crews, and airport personnel;
- Prevent the use of domestic flights as vulnerable links for illicit activities;
- Promote public trust in national air transport;
- Ensure the resilience of the civil aviation system against current and emerging threats.

2.4 This initiative seeks to mobilize coordinated action by States to address these gaps by strengthening their national security programs and promoting standardized AVSEC measures at airports with regular domestic operations.

3. CONCLUSION

3.1 Strengthening security measures at national airports serving scheduled domestic flights is a strategic necessity in the current civil aviation context. Security should not differ based on whether the operation is domestic or international but should be guided by an integrated, risk-based approach.

3.2 The success of this initiative depends on the strong commitment of States, not only to meet international obligations but also to safeguard human life, protect critical infrastructure, and preserve public confidence in air transport. Interagency cooperation, investment in human and technological capacities, and continuous compliance monitoring are key elements for achieving safer aviation at all levels.

3.3 A call is therefore made to States to adopt and implement actions to strengthen domestic security as an integral part of their national civil aviation security strategy.

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