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WORKING PAPER

ASSEMBLY — 42ND SESSION

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Agenda Item 16: Environmental Protection – International Aviation and Climate Change

STRENGTHENING THE ALLIANCE FOR SUSTAINABLE AVIATION (ALAS) IN THE MEMBER STATES OF COCESNA AND THE CENTRAL AMERICAN INTEGRATION SYSTEM (SICA) REGION

(Presented by Honduras on behalf of COCESNA Member States[2])

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
Central America and the countries of the Central American Integration System (SICA) are highly vulnerable to climate change, and attention to the problem of climate change and its impacts is a cross-cutting policy in all sectors of the economies of those States. In this regard, the region has been maturing in terms of processes, strategies and policy frameworks aimed at reducing vulnerability to this global phenomenon, and the Central American Commission on Environment and Development of the Central American Integration System (SICA), with technical cooperation from the Taiwan Province of China, has developed a multisectoral project on Promoting Climate Risk Management and Carbon Emissions Reduction (PGRC), which reinforces the Alliance for Sustainable Aviation (ALAS) initiative launched by the Central American Corporation for Air Navigation Services (COCESNA) and its Member States in 2023. The project seeks to improve aviation fuel efficiency and promote sustainable fuels, with the support of initiatives such as the Carbon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation (CORSIA) and the ICAO Long-Term Aspirational Goal (LTAG) of net-zero carbon emissions by 2050. The ALAS initiative reflects the Central American States' common interest in promoting a sustainable air transport system, promoting operational safety, economic growth, improved services, efficiency and environmental protection. The initiative seeks to coordinate efforts among the actors of the international aviation sector, facilitating technology transfer and capacity building to achieve the objectives of the LTAG.

[1] Spanish version provided by Honduras.

[2] Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua.

The PGRC project will provide technical assistance for the admissibility of carbon certificates under CORSIA criteria and promote better environmental practices in the aviation sector. It also includes a commitment to the promotion of sustainable aviation fuels (SAF) and lower carbon aviation fuels (LCAF). The project supports studies of airspace optimization and lower fuel consumption, which reduces emissions and improves air connectivity in the Central American flight information region (FIR).
In the short term, it is proposed to establish a regional policy on the development of SAF/LCAF and the feasibility of a refining plant for this fuel in the region.

The multisectoral project seeks to comprehensively address the pressures on ecosystems, especially in aviation, which impacts the atmospheric system and land use, through airport infrastructure. It promotes international cooperation partnerships to meet the challenges of CORSIA and LTAG.

Action: The Assembly is invited to:

a) take note of the information presented in this working paper;
b) invite other States and organizations to join this initiative;
c) consider the need for cooperation between States to meet the aspirational objectives recently set out in the LTAG for 2050; and
d) request the timely intervention of the ICAO Secretariat on mechanisms to coordinate bilateral, multilateral and South-South cooperation over technical and financial resources for the implementation of these initiatives.

Strategic Goals:	This working paper relates to the Strategic Goal – *Aviation is Environmentally Sustainable*
Financial implications:	
References:	Resolution A41-21, *"Consolidated statement of continuing ICAO policies and practices related to environmental protection – Climate change"* Resolution A41–22, *"Consolidated statement of continuing ICAO policies and practices related to environmental protection - Carbon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation (CORSIA)"*

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Central America and the countries that make up the Central American Integration System (SICA) have been classified as one of the regions of the planet most vulnerable to climate change, a phenomenon that can give rise to various threats in the region. The current variations in climate and the potential effects identified by climate change scenarios include episodes of water excess and deficit that could increase in frequency and intensity if global warming worsens.

1.2 In addition, hydrometeorological disasters, such as hurricanes, floods, landslides and droughts, are those that recur most frequently, more often than geological disasters such as earthquakes and volcanic eruptions. In this context, it is necessary to encourage an intersectoral effort to manage climate risk, coordinating the work programmes of regional entities in charge of key development sectors, the international aviation sector and that sector's specialist body, the Central American Corporation for Air Navigation Services (COCESNA).

1.3 It should be noted that the 21st century has increased the degradation of various ecosystems on the planet, mainly as a result of human activities such as changes in land use and the use of fossil fuels

in transport and industrial systems, sectors whose CO_2 emissions have had a direct impact on the atmosphere, contributing to global warming and the greenhouse effect. Some proposals to minimize CO_2 concentration include increasing energy efficiency, use of renewable energy and carbon capture.

1.4 Accordingly, the countries of the region have encouraged efforts aimed at medium-term mitigation of CO_2 emissions in key development sectors. Aviation has been identified as relevant to such objectives by virtue of greater fuel efficiency, something that can be achieved through improvements in technology, operations and air traffic management. The incorporation of the aviation sector into the multisectoral project on Promoting Climate Risk Management and Carbon Emissions Reduction (PGRC) will make it possible to develop initiatives that contribute to the sustainability of the aviation sector in the region.

1.5 Medium-term mitigation of CO_2 emissions from the aviation sector can be achieved by increasing fuel efficiency through action on technology, operations and air traffic management. However, such improvements are expected to only partially offset the increase in aviation emissions. Full mitigation of the sector's impacts would require also addressing the effects of greenhouse gases other than CO_2.

1.6 The launch of the Carbon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation (CORSIA), driven by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), is an achievement for the international aviation sector, as it is the first mechanism of its kind to be adopted by an entire sector of the economy. This achievement should be highlighted at the Conferences of the Parties of the United Nations framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and other international activities related to this issue.

1.7 Of particular note is the adoption of the ICAO Long-Term Aspirational Goal (LTAG) for CO_2 emissions at the 41st Session of the ICAO Assembly, which set net-zero carbon emissions for international aviation by 2050 in support of the Paris Agreement's temperature target. This landmark decision reinforces ICAO leadership on issues related to international aviation and climate change.

1.8 Irrespective of the hypotheses put forward, it is indisputable that the aviation sector and its main players will have to make significant investments in order to alter the trajectory of their emissions, something that cannot be achieved with existing technologies. It is therefore crucial to forge partnerships to coordinate the various actions aiming to improve the environmental performance of the international civil aviation sector.

1.9 Consequently, COCESNA Member States, supported by the Central American Commission on Environment and Development (CCAD) of the Central American Integration System (SICA), and with technical cooperation from the Taiwan Province of China, have developed a multisectoral project on Promoting Climate Risk Management and Carbon Emissions Reduction (PGRC). This project reinforces the Alliance for Sustainable Aviation (ALAS) initiative launched by COCESNA and its Member States in 2023 and will permit development of the Plan for capacity-building in climate change adaptation and climate risk management, with additional studies in airspace optimization and lower fuel consumption, which will reduce emissions and improve air connectivity in the Central American flight information region (FIR).

2. DISCUSSION

2.1 This initiative reflects the Central American States' common interest in promoting a sustainable air transportation system, fostering aviation safety and operational security, economic growth, improved services, efficiency and environmental protection.

2.2 The ALAS initiative aims to become a mechanism for coordination of the various actors in the international aviation sector, establishing practical means for facilitating financial assistance, technology transfer and capacity-building efforts towards the achievement of the established LTAG.

2.3 It has also found itself a role in the implementation of the PGRC multisectoral project in the SICA Region; this has inter-institutional scope, bringing together six bodies of the SICA system, namely CCAD, the Central American Agricultural Council (CAC), the Central American and Dominican Republic Forum on Drinking Water and Sanitation (FOCARD-APS), the Regional Committee on Hydraulic Resources (CRRH), COCESNA and the Coordination Centre for Disaster Prevention in Central America and the Dominican Republic (CEPREDENAC). These institutions work hand in hand to achieve common objectives, on the basis that the environmental question must be approached from various perspectives. It should be noted that this initiative receives technical assistance from the Taiwan Province of China, to which special thanks are extended for its commitment to the project.

2.4 Through the project on Promoting Climate Risk Management and Carbon Emissions Reduction in the SICA region, studies will be carried out to ensure the admissibility of carbon certificates in the region in line with the CORSIA criteria. In addition, various regional technical working groups are in place to apply best environmental practices in the aviation sector and its service chain.

2.5 It is important to highlight the strong commitment of the PGRC project to the promotion of sustainable aviation fuels (SAF) and lower carbon aviation fuels (LCAF), particularly as regards the source of raw material for their production.

2.6 The project supports studies of airspace optimization and lower fuel consumption, which reduces emissions and improves air connectivity in the Central American flight information region (FIR).

2.7 Sustainable work with the various actors aims to establish a regional policy for the development of SAF/LCAF, as well as the feasibility of at least one SAF/LCAF refining plant.

3. CONCLUSIONS

3.1 The design of this multisectoral project allows for a more holistic view of the various conditioning factors and pressures acting on the planet’s ecosystems. In the particular case of aviation, the greatest impacts occur in the atmospheric system and in changing land use due to the construction of airport infrastructure. It is therefore appropriate that mitigation and adaptation measures should aim for a comprehensive approach, taking account of the impacts on the various environmental systems.

3.2 The forging of mutually beneficial cooperative partnerships between the various interested parties in the international aviation sector is essential in order to meet the challenges of implementing CORSIA and achieving the LTAG, and promote sustainable development.

3.3 We are grateful for the broad support of the SICA and CCAD, the participation of the PGRC multisectoral project, as well as the solidarity of the Taiwan Province of China in facilitating the relevant technical cooperation to give life to this initiative.

3.4 The ICAO Secretariat is urged to assist in lobbying various agencies to provide technological and financial resources to enable developing countries, countries with economies in transition and small island states to implement their plans and initiatives aimed at achieving environmental and LTAG objectives.

3.5 The Central American States urge all aviation stakeholders to progress as far as possible in implementing measures to reduce CO_2 emissions in the aviation sector, in the areas of technology, operations and alternative fuels.

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