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

SAFETY AND ECONOMIC BENEFITS OF AN ELECTRONIC PLATFORM FOR CROSS-BORDER TRANSFERS OF AIRCRAFT

(Presented by Aviation Working Group)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This document summarizes the potential safety and economic benefits to be derived from actively pursuing the recommendation of the Cross-Border Transferability Task Force (XBT-TF) for ICAO to develop an electronic platform to facilitate cross-border transfers of aircraft nationality (e-XBT platform).

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

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The subject of an electronic tool to facilitate cross-border transfers (XBTs) of aircraft nationality registration (e-XBT platform) was discussed at length during the work of the XBT-TF. Initial plans for the development of such a platform were put on hold during the covid pandemic. In the meantime, the need for it has increased while the power of the available technology to produce the potential safety and economic benefits has increased significantly. This paper elaborates on these factors and recommends that work on an ICAO-sponsored electronic e-XBT platform be swiftly restarted.

2. DISCUSSION

2.1 Prior to the 1980s, commercial aircraft were generally purchased by an operator directly from a manufacturer and then stayed in the operator's fleet for most or all of the aircraft's useful life. Changes in the regulatory structure of the commercial aviation industry during the 1980s and 1990s resulted in a significant increase in demand for aircraft and a rapid growth of operators leasing rather than owning aircraft and more seasonal leasing and subleasing of aircraft by operators. Both changes provoked more XBTs.

2.2 The percentage of leased commercial aircraft has steadily increased and now represents approximately 50 per cent of the global installed base. A 2011 independent study commissioned by the AWG and conducted by SGI Aviation, XBTs averaged 950 per annum between 2007 and 2009. Of those, 55 per cent involved lessors and 45 per cent were between aircraft operators. The number of large commercial aircraft in service has expanded significantly during the years since the study and the number of XBTs has grown even more rapidly.

2.3 Recognizing the safety and other implications of this growth of aircraft and XBTs and the increased prevalence of leasing and subleasing, ICAO has taken numerous action. That started with the adoption of Article 83*bis* and the development of new guidance recommended by the Article 83*bis* Task Force and the XBT-TF.

2.4 XBT-TF recommendations to streamline and standardize XBT processes have been incorporated into ICAO guidance manuals but plans to pursue the recommendation to develop an e-XBT platform were set aside during the covid pandemic. However, the already substantial number of annual XBTs has continued to grow at a faster rate than the global fleet of aircraft, a trend projected to continue for the foreseeable future. These increases put strains on civil aviation authority resources.

2.5 The safety and economic benefits achievable through application of e-technology is widely acknowledged. As is its corresponding tendency to increase documentary and process standardization, which, themselves, produce safety and economic benefits. This is seen clearly by ICAO's work on 'paperless' licenses and certifications.

2.6 An e-XBT platform, linking an exporting CAA, and importing CAA, and the commercial parties, would accelerate the above-mentioned documentary and process standardization, and would, in consequence, produce safety and economic benefits.

2.7 ICAO has acquired substantial expertise over the years in designing and supervising E-Systems, as seen most clearly in its supervision of the Cape Town Convention international registry.

3. **CONCLUSION**

3.1 Restarting work on the formal functional specification document for an e-XBT platform, as recommended by the XBT-TF, would be beneficial and timely.

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