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WORKING PAPER

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Tulum, Mexico, from 8 to 12 September 2025

Agenda Item 5: NACC/WG Collaborative Task Forces Working Session

UAS/RPAS OPERATIONS IN THE CAR REGION

(Presented by the Secretariat)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The ICAO Regional Workshop on Drone/UAS/RPAS Operations (unmanned aircraft systems/remotely piloted aircraft systems) challenges and opportunities, held in Mexico in June 2025, brought together 260 participants from 29 States and 5 international organisations, focusing on the challenges and opportunities of unmanned aviation and the need to harmonise regulations in the NAM/CAR/SAM Region. ICAO presented its Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs) and Model Regulations (101, 102 and 149) as a reference for States to update their regulatory frameworks, noting that although 95% of NACC States already have drone regulations in place, many remain outdated or limited. Strategic applications in humanitarian aid, radio aid calibration, agriculture, security and advanced air mobility (AAM) were highlighted. However, critical challenges remain, such as weak regulatory frameworks, the integration of unmanned aircraft system traffic management (UTM), beyond visual line of sight (BVLOS) operations, training limitations, financing and social acceptance, as well as AVSEC threats arising from the misuse of drones at airports and illicit operations. ICAO offers tools such as the *UAS Toolkit*, *iPacks*, and training programmes to strengthen state capabilities. Priority actions recommended include updating regulations, enabling BVLOS and humanitarian operations, promoting training, and fostering closer regional cooperation. In conclusion, UAS/RPAS represent great potential for innovation and development in the Region, provided they are implemented under a framework of safety, harmonised regulation, and effective international cooperation.

Action:	Actions suggested in item 5 of this Working Paper.
<i>Strategic Objectives:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Safety• Air Navigation Capacity and Efficiency• Aviation security and facilitation• Economic Development of Air Transport• Environmental Protection
<i>References:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Workshop on drone/UAS-RPAS operations, challenges and opportunities for the NAM/CAR/SAM regions (Mexico City, Mexico, 17–19 June 2025) NACC - Meetings International Civil Aviation Organization

1. Introduction

1.1 The Regional Workshop brought together 260 participants from 29 States and 5 International Organisations, with the aim of analysing the challenges and opportunities of unmanned aviation (UAS/RPAS/AAM), exchanging experiences and proposing actions to strengthen regulation, safety and integration into airspace.

1.2 The importance of aligning regional efforts with ICAO Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs), promoting innovation, ensuring operational safety and moving towards a shared vision of an inclusive, efficient and sustainable airspace was highlighted.

2. Analysis

2.1 Regulatory Framework

- ICAO has developed SARPS and Model Regulations (Parts 101, 102 and 149) addressing licensing, operations, airworthiness certification, safety management and C2 Links
- 95% of NACC States have some regulatory framework in place, although many are outdated or insufficient.

2.2 Applications and Operational Uses

- Humanitarian and emergency: transport of aid, vaccines, and search and rescue missions
- Infrastructure and air navigation: calibration of radio aids and CNS surveillance (example: SENEAM in Mexico)
- Advanced Air Mobility (AAM/UAM): the Dominican Republic and other States are developing projects with eVTOLs, vertiports and urban air corridors.

2.3 Identified Challenges

- Lack of harmonised regulation and clear procedures for BVLOS and UTM operations
- Technical limitations: reliability of C2 links, detection and evasion, cybersecurity, and weather dependency
- Low social acceptance and need for public awareness
- Budgetary and training constraints in small or resource-constrained States.
- Growing security threat (AVSEC) from the misuse of drones in attacks or interference at airports

3. Recommendations for States' work

3.1 Regulatory and institutional

- Adopt and adapt ICAO Model Regulations (101, 102 and 149)
- Accelerate the updating of regulatory frameworks, including BVLOS operations, transport of dangerous goods and offshore operations
- Establish frameworks for inter-institutional and cross-border cooperation for humanitarian and security missions.

3.2 Operational and Safety

- Implement centralised or federated UTM systems, with remote identification, digital authorisations, and coordination with ATC
- Require risk assessments, C2 reliability, and detection/avoidance systems for BVLOS flights
- Promote the use of UAS in health, agriculture, disaster management, and critical infrastructure under the U-AID framework.

3.3 Training and Capacity Building

- Use the UAS Toolkit, iPacks, and ICAO courses to strengthen Civil Aviation Authorities (CAAs)
- Promote UAS/RPAS research and training centres, involving universities and the private sector.
- Advanced Air Mobility (AAM)
- Plan infrastructure for vertiports, air corridors and urban UTM systems.
- Involve municipalities, the private sector and telecommunications in the deployment of air mobility projects.

3.4 The Appendix to this study note lists a series of activities that States should undertake to address the issues of UAS/RPAS operations at the State level and for regional implementation.

4 Conclusions

4.1 UAS/RPAS represent a strategic opportunity for the NAM/CAR/SAM region in terms of innovation, connectivity, emergency response and economic development.

4.2 Regulatory, technical and social gaps remain and require urgent attention to ensure safety and public acceptance.



4.3 Through its SARPS, model regulations, UAS Toolkit and training programmes, ICAO offers a solid roadmap for States to achieve the safe, efficient and harmonised integration of unmanned aviation.

4.4 Regional and international cooperation will be key to consolidating a common framework that will enable States to address current challenges and take full advantage of the opportunities of the future of aviation.

4.5 The report of the Workshop on Drone/UAS/RPAS Operations, Challenges and Opportunities for the NAM/CAR/SAM Regions can be found at the following link:

[DroneUASRPASWorkshop2025-SoD-EN.pdf](#)

4.6 It is important to note that carrying out this series of activities requires resources, such as human resources, financial resources, training, and a defined roadmap that allows States and the region to meet their needs.

4.7 Having the support of States in the region such as Canada and the United States, which have made great strides in this area, is essential to ensuring regional success

5. **Suggested actions**

5.1 The Meeting is invited to:

- a) Take note of the information provided in the study note;
- b) designate national UAS focal points in each Member State;
- c) that States take immediate action and at the same time commit to a medium-term plan; and
- d) Define a work plan with specific deliverables as indicated in the Appendix.

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