



Agenda Item 6:

Other business

**THE ICAO OPERATIONAL DATA LINK WORKING GROUP (CP-OPDLWG): CURRENT
ACTIVITIES AND IMPORTANCE OF SAM STATES' PARTICIPATION**

(Prepared by Brazil)

SUMMARY

This paper presents the mission, current work programme and recent initiatives of the ICAO Operational Data Link Working Group (OPDLWG), highlighting the benefits of active participation and encouraging greater engagement by SAM States in its activities.

References:

- CP-OPDLWG Terms of Reference
- CP-OPDLWG Meetings

1. Background

1.1 Established under the ICAO Communications Panel (CP) in 2014, the Operational Data Link Working Group (OPDLWG) develops global operational provisions for aeronautical data link communications. The group advises the Air Navigation Commission (ANC) and coordinates its activities with other ICAO expert groups to promote the worldwide harmonization of data link implementation and support the evolution of global ATM communications.

1.2 The OPDLWG provides the operational framework for current and future ATM communication capabilities through the development of ICAO provisions and guidance material. The group contributes to the development and maintenance of Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs), Procedures for Air Navigation Services (PANS), Required Communication Performance (RCP) and Required Surveillance Performance (RSP) specifications, as well as key ICAO guidance, including the GOLD Manual (Doc 10037) and the PBCS Manual (Doc 9869). It also develops guidance material supporting emerging operational capabilities such as ground-ground data link services and SATVOICE.

2. Analysis

Current Work Programme

2.1 The current OPDLWG work programme addresses several strategic initiatives that will shape the future evolution of global ATM communications.

2.2 A major priority is the revision of the Global ATS Data Link Harmonization Strategy, recently restructured to address the coexistence of FANS 1/A, ATN Baseline 1 and ATS Baseline 2 implementations. The revised strategy aims to guide States, ANSPs and industry towards a seamless,

interoperable and technology-agnostic global data link environment, with the resulting guidance expected to be incorporated into the GOLD Manual (Doc 10037).

2.3 The group is also developing the next edition of the Performance Based Communication and Surveillance (PBCS) Manual (Doc 9869), including updated RCP/RSP provisions, enhanced performance monitoring guidance and alignment with the latest industry standards. In parallel, the OPDLWG is developing new ICAO provisions for Automated ATS Interfacility Data Communications (AIDC) to support digital ground-ground communications and the future implementation of FF-ICE.

2.4 Other priority activities include the development of operational provisions for SATVOICE and the future use of SATCOM as a Long Range Communication System (LRCS), as well as objective performance specifications for voice communications to support emerging technologies, including space-based VHF.

2.5 Collectively, these activities demonstrate that the OPDLWG is addressing not only the maintenance of existing ICAO provisions but also the development of future ATM communication concepts. Consequently, active participation by States provides an opportunity to influence the evolution of globally harmonized communication capabilities at an early stage.

New Initiatives Approved at CP-OPDLWG/12

2.6 In addition to the ongoing work programme, the twelfth meeting of the CP-OPDLWG approved several new initiatives that will support the evolution of ICAO provisions for future ATM communication capabilities.

2.7 Three new Job Cards were established to address emerging operational needs. These initiatives will:

a) evaluate the extended use of CPDLC in dense continental airspace, including scenarios where data link may become the primary communication medium;

b) develop a global framework for assessing the operational benefits of data link through standardized performance indicators; and

c) harmonize voice and data link message sets to improve operational consistency and predictability.

2.8 The meeting also advanced work on future communication capabilities supporting Trajectory-Based Operations (TBO), including services enabled by ADS-C, CPDLC and ATS Baseline 2.

2.9 Early participation in these activities allows States to contribute to the development of ICAO provisions before they are finalized, facilitating future implementation while ensuring that regional operational perspectives are adequately represented.

Importance of CAR/SAM Participation in the OPDLWG

2.10 The work of the OPDLWG directly influences the implementation of operational data link services across all ICAO Regions. Its strategies, operational provisions, performance specifications and guidance material provide the foundation for the implementation and evolution of capabilities such as CPDLC, ADS-C, AIDC and PBCS, ensuring global interoperability and harmonized operational concepts.

2.11 The experience of Brazil illustrates the practical benefits of sustained participation in the OPDLWG. Over several years, Brazil has contributed operational experience, technical proposals and performance analyses that have supported the development of ICAO provisions. The knowledge acquired through this participation has also contributed to the planning and implementation of major national CNS/ATM modernization programmes, including the successful nationwide implementation of CPDLC and the ongoing implementation of PBCS in the FIR Atlântico.

2.12 The operational experience accumulated during these programmes, together with the systematic collection and analysis of communication performance data, has enabled Brazil to provide evidence-based technical inputs to the OPDLWG. These contributions have supported discussions on performance monitoring, operational effectiveness, implementation challenges and future ICAO communication provisions, demonstrating the mutual benefits of active State participation.

2.13 Broader participation by SAM States would strengthen the regional contribution to ICAO activities by ensuring that regional operational needs and implementation challenges are adequately represented in future ICAO provisions. Participation in the OPDLWG, its Project Teams and intersessional meetings also provides early awareness of emerging concepts, facilitates national implementation planning and enables States to contribute directly to the development of globally harmonized ATM communication capabilities.

2.14 Greater regional participation would also promote closer coordination among SAM States, facilitating harmonized implementation of future ICAO communication provisions across the Region.

Opportunity	Benefits
Participate in OPDLWG meetings and Project Teams	Contribute to the development of ICAO provisions before they are finalized and ensure that regional operational perspectives are represented.
Share operational experience and implementation challenges	Influence future ICAO guidance with practical lessons learned from regional CNS/ATM programmes.
Contribute operational performance data and analyses	Support evidence-based improvements to ICAO provisions while benchmarking national performance against international practices.
Engage in technical discussions on emerging communication capabilities	Gain early awareness of future developments such as ATS Baseline 2, TBO, SATVOICE, AIDC and future data link applications, facilitating national implementation planning.
Strengthen regional representation within ICAO expert groups	Increase the visibility of SAM operational needs and promote harmonized implementation across the Region.

Table 1 – Opportunities for SAM States through Participation in the OPDLWG

2.15 The next meeting of the OPDLWG is scheduled to take place in Montreal from 2 to 6 November 2026. SAM States are encouraged to participate in the meeting and its associated Project Teams, thereby strengthening regional representation in the development of future ICAO communication provisions.

3. Conclusion

3.1 The continued engagement of SAM States in the ICAO OPDLWG will strengthen regional representation in the development of future ICAO provisions, facilitate the exchange of operational experience and support the harmonized implementation of advanced ATM communication capabilities throughout the Region.

4. **Suggested actions**

4.1 The meeting is invited to:

- a) note the information presented in this paper;
- b) recognize the importance of the ICAO CP-OPDLWG in supporting the evolution of global ATM communications; and
- b) encourage greater participation by SAM States in the activities of the CP-OPDLWG.

END