



INTERNATIONAL CIVIL AVIATION ORGANIZATION

ELEVENTH MEETING OF THE DIRECTORS GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION OF THE AFRICA-INDIAN OCEAN REGION (AFI-DGCA/11)

Cairo, Egypt, from 27 to 31 July 2026

Agenda Item 05: Updates including issues related to States Letters response rate on SARP development

(Presented by the ICAO Council's AFI Group)

SUMMARY	
This working paper highlights the challenges associated with low responses to ICAO State Letters, particularly those relating to Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs). The objective of this agenda item is to improve response rates to ICAO State Letters, by drawing the attention of Directors General of Africa's Civil Aviation Authorities (CAAs) to the seriousness of non-response and its unintended consequences; and triggering and facilitating discussions on practical solutions to address the issue. Action by the meeting is in paragraph 3 of this Paper.	
REFERENCE(S)	• Assembly Resolution A39-21
Strategic Goals	• <i>Every Flight is Safe and Secure</i> • <i>Aviation is Environmentally Sustainable</i> • <i>Aviation Delivers Seamless Accessible and Reliable Mobility for All</i>

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. In order to ensure the safe and orderly development of international civil aviation, ICAO adopts Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs) and makes policies to be implemented by its Member States in support of a safe, efficient, secure, economically sustainable and environmentally responsible civil aviation sector.
- 1.2. ICAO Assembly Resolution A39-21—Addressing the low response rate by Member States to ICAO State letters that can adversely impact the fulfilment of obligations to the Chicago Convention and to prevent decisions being taken on the basis of a small number of responses—calls on Member States to reaffirm the necessity and honour their commitment to responding to all State letters issued by ICAO

in a complete and timely manner and to share best practices through ICAO Regional Offices and/or regional civil aviation commissions.

- 1.3. This session aims to encourage all Member States to commit to responding to State Letters—whether to agree or disagree—and to provide substantive feedback, including reasons such as difficulty in understanding proposed SARPs. Greater participation would foster a deeper understanding of SARPs and support their more effective implementation across the region.

2. DISCUSSION

- 2.1. State letters serve as an important means with which ICAO directly interacts with Member States and other concerned stakeholders on all facets of international civil aviation, from the identification and development of required standards and policies through to the implementation by and auditing and validation of Member States against the required standards and policies.
- 2.2. The low level of responses and subsequent implementation of SARPs remains a serious concern for ICAO. Further measures are needed to encourage meaningful participation in the standards-setting process.
- 2.3. While the exact reasons for the low response rate remain unclear, several factors have been identified:
 - Limited understanding of proposed SARPs by some States.
 - High frequency of new or amended SARPs, making it difficult for developing countries to keep pace.
 - Insufficient consultation time, though the recent extension from three to six months—while a positive step—may not fully resolve the issue on its own.
- 2.4. To better understand the underlying challenges and improve the response rate, the discussion should examine the reasons behind the current low levels of engagement. Key questions to explore include:
 - What are the main obstacles preventing African States from responding in a timely manner?
 - Why is the response rate generally low?
 - Has ICAO provided sufficient support and engagement to enable States to participate effectively in and respond to State Letters on SARPs?

3. ACTION BY THE MEETING

The meeting is invited to:

- a) Take note of the contents of this WP;
- b) Commit to enhance responses to ICAO State Letters relating to SARPs;
- c) Resolve to ensure meaningful participation of their states in ICAO's rulemaking processes of SARPs and other provisions; and
- d) Provide proposals to Council on how to enhance states responses to State Letters.

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