



WORKING PAPER

ASSEMBLY — 40TH SESSION

TECHNICAL COMMISSION

Agenda Item 30: Other issues to be considered by the Technical Commission

DRUG AND ALCOHOL IN AVIATION SAFETY

(Presented by the United Arab Emirates)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This working paper addresses the issues concerning alcohol and drug use by aviation personnel. It highlights the importance of introducing and enforcing the testing program amongst the aviation industries and empathizes on the benefits of this program.

Action: The Assembly is invited to:

- a) conduct global survey and analysis on the capability of the States to understand and overcome the alarming phenomenon related to psychoactive substance use;
- b) identify actions that the global community would be required to implement since borders may act as “laundry” of a medical file. An individual declared as “symptomatic” by a State may be re-accepted into the aviation system of another State;
- c) develop basis and framework for data/information sharing of medical file between States, in particular for States largely depending on conversion of foreign licence like UAE; and
- d) adopt a proactive approach towards enhanced education solutions to the attention of licence holders which focus on the wise use of over the counter or prescribed medication and on safe drinking habits.

<i>Strategic Objectives:</i>	This working paper relates to the Safety, Air Navigation Capacity and Efficiency, and Economic Development of Air Transport Strategic Objectives.
<i>Financial implications:</i>	N/A
<i>References:</i>	N/A

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Nowadays, the world is witnessing an alarming increase of use of psychoactive substances at all levels of the society.

1.2 This problematic use of substances is less prominent in air transportation than in any other transportation sectors.

1.3 Alcohol, medication and drugs are among the most common medical causes of worldwide fatal commercial air transport aircraft accidents and with due consideration with last confirmed causes of aircraft accident/incident (e.g. Germanwings), the aviation community must take active steps to protect and promote aviation safety. These actions would be in vain if the global aviation community is not addressing the issue in a more global manner.

2. DISCUSSION

2.1 Aviation personnel are not different from the rest of the society in their relationship with psychoactive substances. So, it is appropriate to design and adopt an internationally recognized testing programme in aviation to achieve enhanced safety outcomes.

2.2 The introduction of a drug and alcohol policy within the aviation industry that includes an adequate educational component, which is non-punitive and supportive, and has a rehabilitation as a key comment should provide a safe and productive working environment.

2.3 Introduction of a regulation with a minimum standard for drug and alcohol testing for safety sensitive roles in the aviation sector, to be managed as appropriate by industry with their safety management system and reported on to the regulator is the key step. The testing program are subject to audit, oversight and monitoring by the regulator.

2.4 The introduction of alcohol and drug testing programmes provides safety benefits since they offer a mechanism to measure, analyse, manage, and prevent from the use of these substances and it also assist in human resources conservation.

2.5 Testing for psychoactive substance is the key component within a comprehensive drug and alcohol policy. There are several types of testing available enabling the aviation community to identify, exclude, refer to treatment program, monitor the affected individuals and deter the use of such substances. The best approach would be to mix various forms of testing such as pre-employment test, random testing, reasonable suspension testing and follow up testing.

2.6 There are fundamental aspects that must be included in the design of any program to ensure its effectiveness and efficiency, these include: fairness, maintain employee privacy and confidentiality, minimum requirement set by the regulator, clear policy, integrity of testing process and the presence of gatekeeper in place to ensure “due process” such as evidential breath testing devices and medical review officers.