



**WORKING PAPER**

**ASSEMBLY — 41ST SESSION**

**TECHNICAL COMMISSION**

**Agenda Item 30: Aviation Safety and Air Navigation Policy**

**30.1 Global Aviation Safety Plan (GASP), and implementation of regional and national aviation safety plans**

**STRENGTHENING SAFETY FUNDAMENTALS AS THE AVIATION SECTOR RAMPS UP OPERATIONS IN SUPPORT OF AIR TRAVEL RECOVERY**

(Presented by Singapore and co-sponsored by Australia, Bangladesh, Canada, China, Malaysia, Papua New Guinea, Thailand, Flight Safety Foundation (FSF) and the International Air Transport Association (IATA))

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted the aviation sector and introduced new challenges and risks to aviation safety. As aviation operations ramp up, it is crucial that ICAO and States focus their efforts on strengthening safety fundamentals such as safety oversight and safety management capabilities, and pay greater attention to the implementation of the regional and global aviation safety priorities. These regional and global priorities include the implementation of safety enhancement initiatives developed by the Regional Aviation Safety Groups (RASGs), and the fulfilment of targets under their respective regional aviation safety plans (RASPs)

**Action:** The Assembly is invited to:

- a) encourage States to focus resources and efforts on strengthening their safety oversight in support of safe recovery of air travel;
- b) encourage States to effectively implement their State Safety Programme in a timely manner, and to strengthen the implementation of safety management systems in their aviation industry;
- c) urge States and industry to implement the safety enhancement initiatives and fulfil the targets contained within the respective Regional Aviation Safety Plans; and
- d) urge ICAO and States to implement and support regional capacity building efforts including under the RASGs and their subsidiary bodies, and where relevant, COSCAPs,

<i>Strategic Objectives:</i>	This working paper relates to all Strategic Objectives.
<i>Financial implications:</i>	Not applicable.
<i>References:</i>	Doc 10004, <i>Global Aviation Safety Plan</i> Doc 10160, <i>High-Level Conference on COVID-19 (Montréal, 12 to 22 October 2021)</i> . <i>Report</i>

## 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 COVID-19 has decimated international air travel. Civil aviation authorities and the industry had to manage the disruption arising from the pandemic, in close consultation with public health authorities and other stakeholders. COVID-19 has also presented significant challenges and risks to aviation safety due to changes to the operating and business environments brought about by the pandemic.

1.2 It is crucial that the aviation sector maintains its attention on aviation safety as international air travel recovers from the pandemic, to enable a smooth and safe ramp-up of aviation operations. This paper proposes that the aviation community works together and focuses on strengthening safety fundamentals such as safety oversight and safety management. This would entail prioritising efforts to implement the regional and global aviation safety priorities.

## 2. DISCUSSION

2.1 International air travel is now on the path to recovery. However, this will present challenges to a battered aviation sector, where skilled personnel and resources may have in many cases been temporarily or permanently lost.

2.2 As aviation operations ramp up, it is crucial that safety remains the foremost priority. The aviation sector needs to maintain and where appropriate strengthen safety fundamentals, building upon the significant investment over past decades to improve safety oversight and safety management capabilities.

### 2.3 Strengthening safety oversight

2.3.1 The ICAO High-level Conference on COVID-19 (HLCC 2021) highlighted several safety risks related to COVID-19 that require attention. These include the loss of proficiency and operational readiness among flight crew and air traffic controllers, prolonged regulatory alleviations, reduced airworthiness of aircraft under prolonged storage, and weakened safety oversight and surveillance capabilities. Furthermore, border and movement restrictions had led to reduction or disruption of safety oversight activities, even as some of the activities were performed via digital means. The pandemic had also strained the regulatory resources of most civil aviation authorities (CAAs), which might have been diverted to cope with managing the impact of the pandemic.

2.3.2 It is therefore important for States to take stock of their safety oversight capabilities and ramp up or restore their safety oversight activities in tandem with aviation recovery, and focus on areas of greater safety concern. This would entail putting on track their plans for the Universal Safety Oversight Audit Programme (USOAP) Continuous Monitoring Approach (CMA) enhancements. In this regard, it would be timely for ICAO to fully resume the regular conduct of in-person activities under its USOAP CMA programme, to assist States in identifying areas that need improvements to strengthen their safety oversight capabilities.

### 2.4 Strengthening safety management

2.4.1 In the area of safety management, the pandemic has accentuated the need for effective implementation of safety management systems (SMS) within the aviation industry. The fundamentals of

safety hazard and risk identification and mitigation cannot be over-emphasised as the industry manages their ramp up of operations in a safe and orderly manner.

2.4.2 States and industry must work closely together to identify and assess new or emerging safety issues to address aviation recovery, which is likely to be uneven within each region and between regions. Strong focus on SMS, backed by effective safety leadership and a positive safety culture, is essential to galvanise the aviation community to strengthen safety management.

2.4.3 In line with the ICAO Global Aviation Safety Plan (GASP), States are encouraged to implement their State safety programme (SSP) early to further strengthen their abilities to systematically address safety risks and continuously improve safety performance. Presently, according to integrated Safety Trend Analysis and Reporting System (iSTARS), the average global implementation of an SSP Foundation is 74.8 percent, while only 6 States have fully implemented the SSP Foundation Protocol Questions. As of June 2022, about 25 per cent of States (49 States) have shared their published NASPs on the GASP public website.

## 2.5 Strengthening regional cooperation

2.5.1 At the regional level, much support would be needed from States and industry to achieve the goals and targets set out in their respective regional aviation safety plans (RASPs). The timely implementation of the safety enhancement initiatives in RASPs will help address hazards, organizational challenges and operational safety risks identified by Regional Aviation Safety Groups (RASGs) and put the respective regions on a firm footing in aviation safety.

2.5.2 RASGs and their subsidiary bodies, in coordination with other regional sub-groups, play a crucial role in steering the region in the implementation of the respective RASP as well as the GASP. To support States' implementation, capacity building mechanisms including Cooperative Development of Operational Safety and Continuing Airworthiness Projects (COSCAPs) should be strengthened and mobilised, while States with the necessary capabilities can assist others in capacity building, training, and technical assistance.

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