



ASSEMBLY — 41ST SESSION

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Agenda Item 24: Technical Assistance Programme

REGION UPDATE – OUTCOMES OF FIRST REGIONAL AVIATION MINISTERS MEETING

(Presented by Samoa on behalf of the Pacific Aviation Safety Office (PASO))

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The first Pacific Regional Aviation Ministers (RAMM) Meeting was held virtually on 30th June 2021, hosted by the Government of Papua New Guinea. The Pacific Island States Ministers¹ advanced the profile of the aviation agenda in the Pacific at the political level. At the end of the one-day meeting, the RAMM adopted the “Port Moresby Declaration on Aviation Safety and Security” and the associated Ministerial Statement as the key outcome of the meeting as it provides for direction for a collaborative, coordinated approach for a safe and secure aviation that will benefit the Pacific region.

This paper presents an update on the progress of the works undertaken to address the key outcomes of the RAMM held virtually on 30th June 2021 and hosted by the Government of Papua New Guinea.

Action: The Assembly is invited to:

- note the information contained in this working paper concerning the progress on the first Pacific Regional Aviation Ministers (RAMM/1) Meeting;
- provide technical support to PASO on the work it has undertaken so far on the establishment of an Enhanced Regional Organization to support its aviation safety and security oversight responsibility and aligning it to the Regional Aviation Strategy; and
- continue to provide support to PSIDS in their efforts to address the COVID-19 pandemic in our efforts towards aviation recovery and connectivity.

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| <i>Strategic Objectives:</i> | This working paper relates to Strategic Objectives of Aviation Safety, Economic Development and Environmental Protection (Regional Aviation Strategy priority). |
| <i>Financial implications:</i> | None |
| <i>References:</i> | |

¹ Australia, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), Fiji, French Polynesia, Kiribati, Nauru, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 While there was steady progress of implementing the agreed outcomes of the Forum Aviation Policy Ministers meetings between 1998 and 2005, there was need to develop a strategic long-term vision that is relevant, fit-for-purpose, and member driven. Aviation also tends to be understated in various regional frameworks and plans.

1.2 The convening of the Pacific Regional Aviation Ministers (RAMM) Meeting is an initiative of the Member States of the Pacific Aviation Safety Office (PASO) with a decision from the Pacific Islands Forum Leaders Communique in 2019 to "...consider and discuss aviation-specific matters of importance to the region, in particular aviation safety and security, compliance with International Civil Aviation Organisation standards and opportunities for increased connectivity...²".

1.3 Obtain support from our political leaders in addressing outstanding air transport issues that were pertinent to improve the delivery of a reliable and sustainable air transport industry in the region that supports the Framework for Pacific Regionalism. Most importantly, this will empower the State's ability to control their own future.

1.4 The first Pacific Regional Aviation Ministers (RAMM/1) Meeting was held virtually on 30th June 2021, hosted by the Government of Papua New Guinea. The Ministers' meeting advanced the profile of the aviation agenda in the Pacific at the political level. At the closing of the meeting, the RAMM adopted the "Port Moresby Declaration on Aviation Safety and Security" and the associated Ministerial Statement as the key outcome of the meeting as it relates to the Pacific Small Island States.

2. DISCUSSION

2.1 The RAMM provided a unique opportunity to progress regional collaboration, solutions and organize political support around harmonization and cooperation for Pacific regional aviation safety, security and recovery. At the strategic level, amongst a range of key topics discussed included the importance of aviation regionally for social and economic activity, the impact of COVID-19 and economic recovery objectives through aviation connectivity and the endorsement of the Framework for Aviation in the Pacific.

2.2 The Declaration provides a range of strategic priorities and actions to respond to the critical challenges regarding aviation safety and security performance facing the Members, who have been seriously impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Through the Port Moresby Declaration and the Ministerial Statement, our Ministers endorsed the Framework for Aviation in the Pacific for strengthened regional collaboration to comply with ICAO Standards and best practices.

2.3 Pacific Island States officials and PASO have responded by call from the Ministers and have completed a RAMM project plan including engaging consultants to implement the activities listed under the Framework to be able to report back to Aviation Ministers in 2022.

² Paragraph 56 - <https://www.forumsec.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/50th-Pacific-Islands-Forum-Communique.pdf>

Revision of the current Pacific Islands Civil Aviation Safety and Security Treaty

2.4 Ministers agreed that the Pacific Islands Civil Aviation Safety and Security Treaty (PICASST) can be improved; noting that there have been significant changes over the last fifteen years which have impacted aviation in the Pacific, but which are not reflected in the PICASST.

2.5 The need to widen the scope of the Treaty to achieve a holistic coordinated, collaborative, and cost-effective approach to sustainable development in the Pacific aviation industry is recognized and Regional progress to amend the [PICASST](#) and strengthen Pacific regional aviation that Ministers considered at the second Regional Aviation Ministers Meeting (RAMM/2) in June 2022.

2.6 PASO has consulted widely with Regional Aviation Officials of the Pacific Islands States and an updated version of the proposed PICASST amendments were initially shared in December 2021. Additional comments were further contributed by States at a Regional Aviation Workshop on 13 April 2022. The latest version of amendments to the PICASST text were presented to aviation officials that included three options for progress changes to the Treaty.

2.7 A pathway was further endorsed by officials which proposes progressing the PICASST amendments via the RAMM to obtain consensus from Aviation Ministers. Officials also agreed that some additional revisions to the text of the Treaty. A refined draft of the proposed PICASST amendments was presented at the second Regional Aviation Workshop on 6th May 2022. Following this workshop, PASO has identified the actions required to prepare the text for endorsement from Aviation Ministers.

2.8 The amended PICASST will strengthen the multi-functional regional aviation organization, PASO, and those further enhancements can be made for PASO to ensure it delivers enhanced aviation safety and security services to all Member States including non-member States.

Development of a Pacific Regional Aviation Strategy

2.9 In respect to creating a pathway to long-term safe and sustainable development of aviation system, work is already underway to develop a 10-year Pacific Regional Aviation Strategy as agreed in RAMM/1. The 10-year Regional Aviation Strategy lays out a vision for Pacific States to do our part, in a cooperative and collaborative manner through a Regional Aviation Organization. A discussion document prepared by consultants has been circulated to all Pacific States and stakeholders for their inputs. PASO undertook a one-to-one consultation with States for their input on their national positions and views on the strategy.

2.10 The draft Regional Aviation Strategy was reviewed by Aviation Officials and presented for Ministers consideration to endorse in *principle* at the RAMM/2, noting that further refinement would be done before it is launched by the end of 2022.

Enhanced Regional Aviation Safety Oversight Organization

2.11 PASO has commenced with the assessment of an Enhanced Regional Organization (RSOO) including reviewing and consolidating all available information on PASO as an RSOO, establishing a comprehensive detail of financial options and economic case for the process, pathways and preferred options to fund a sustainable enhanced regional organization, and establishing a regional platform for Pacific Island States engagement.

2.12 Aviation Officials have considered the funding proposals and agreed that the model required further face-to-face individual sessions for further discussions with PASO and the consultants. This will ensure that there is a clear understanding on how the funding model will support the new strategic direction as articulated in the Regional Aviation Strategy and the underpinning treaty guiding the development of aviation safety oversight in the Pacific region.

3. CONCLUSION

3.1 A clear pathway to long-term safe and sustainable development of aviation system has commenced with support at the political level and a discussion document has been circulated to all Pacific States and stakeholders for their inputs. The progress made to date in addressing the outcomes of the RAMM/1 contained in the Port Moresby Declaration and the Ministerial Statement is progressing well.

3.2 PASO does not have any funding to address all these Ministerial outcomes and will continue to approach donor partners for assistance.

3.3 Close coordination between the Pacific Islands Developing States, ICAO, Donor partner agencies and all concerned stakeholders will be required in respect of the follow-up and eventual implementation of key priorities. Some PSID States have many economic challenges, and if focus is placed in aviation, as an enabler to economic development, the Pacific region will prosper tremendously.

3.4 Despite identified challenges including COVID-19, the key outcomes of the RAMM and the unified approach by the Pacific Island States to progress its outcome has provided an opportunity for the Pacific Island States to improve their aviation system.

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