



WORKING PAPER

ASSEMBLY — 41ST SESSION

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Agenda Item 17: Environmental Protection – International Aviation and Climate Change

Agenda Item 18: Environmental Protection – Carbon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation (CORSIA)

INTERNATIONAL AVIATION NEEDS TO AGREE AMBITIOUS MEASURES TO ADDRESS CLIMATE CHANGE AND COMMIT TO AN EQUITABLE TRANSITION

(Presented by New Zealand)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

New Zealand seeks an ambitious long term aspirational goal (LTAG) for international aviation that acknowledges that developing countries, Pacific Island States and other low-lying States do not have time to wait for action. New Zealand supports the progress made at the LTAG High Level Meeting (HLM), and notes that an equitable transition should underpin the LTAG, and any subsequent measures, to ensure no country is left behind. New Zealand also seeks to retain the ambition and purpose of the Carbon Reduction and Offsetting Scheme for International Aviation (CORSIA) during its first periodic review.

Action: The Assembly is invited to:

- a) note the contents of this working paper;
- b) note that decisions on climate action cannot be delayed as doing so will have a significant and catastrophic impact on small island States;
- c) note that States should be striving for an LTAG that is ambitious, and is underpinned by an equitable transition in line with ICAO's *No Country Left Behind* initiative; and
- d) note that the ambition of CORSIA should be retained or strengthened, and the baseline should ensure that offsetting occurs in the coming years.

<i>Strategic Objectives:</i>	This working paper relates to Strategic Objective – <i>Environmental Protection</i> .
<i>Financial implications:</i>	N/A
<i>References:</i>	Annex 16 – <i>Environmental Protection</i> , Volume IV – <i>Carbon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation (CORSIA)</i> Doc 10178 – <i>Report of the High-Level Meeting on the Feasibility of a Long-Term Aspirational Goal for International Aviation CO₂ Emissions Reductions</i>

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 New Zealand welcomes and supports the work that the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and the Committee on Aviation Environmental Protection (CAEP) have completed to provide a technical report that sets out the feasibility for a long-term aspirational goal (LTAG) for the international civil aviation sector. New Zealand also welcomes and supports the work CAEP has undertaken to provide the Assembly with baseline options for the first periodic review of the Carbon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation (CORSA).

1.2 This paper seeks to highlight the importance of ICAO agreeing on an ambitious LTAG, including an equitable transition, retaining the intention and objective behind the CORSA, and why we require action to be taken now.

2. THE TIME FOR ACTION IS NOW

2.1 The international civil aviation sector has an opportunity to responsibly play its part to reduce global carbon emissions (CO₂) emissions. The CAEP report has demonstrated that an LTAG for international aviation is feasible and can contribute to significant global emissions reductions out to 2050 and 2070.

2.2 The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has shown that anthropogenic climate change is real. The planet's average surface temperature has risen about 2 degrees Fahrenheit (1 degrees Celsius) since the late 19th century, a change driven largely by increased carbon dioxide emissions into the atmosphere and other human activities. Most of the warming occurred in the past 40 years, with the seven most recent years being the warmest. The years 2016 and 2020 are tied for the warmest year on record.¹

2.3 The scientific understanding of climate change as an existential threat is a given. We have seen it in ocean warming and acidification, biodiversity and species loss, and more frequent and severe weather events. Only a few weeks ago, two areas in New Zealand were under a State of Emergency for severe weather events, and globally, Pakistan suffered the most severe flooding in history, and Europe suffered some of the most severe droughts ever recorded.

2.4 Efforts must now focus on how this sector can make rapid and meaningful steps to reduce its carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions to reach net zero by 2050. New Zealand considers the recent HLM showed collective promise for how this sector can achieve this by agreeing to a LTAG.

2.5 The 2015 Paris Agreement seeks a global response to the threat of climate change, by holding the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels and pursuing efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels, recognising that this would significantly reduce the risks and impacts of climate change.

2.6 The Glasgow Climate Pact adopted at COP26 in 2021 reaffirms this and also recognises that the impacts of climate change will be much lower at the temperature increase of 1.5°C compared with 2°C, and resolves to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C.

¹ <https://climate.nasa.gov/evidence/>

2.7 A net zero by 2050 carbon emission reduction goal is the minimum aspiration this sector should aim for, if we are to do our part in reaching these temperature limit goals set out by the Paris Agreement and Glasgow Climate Pact.

2.8 New Zealand considers that more emphasis should be given to the urgency required to address climate change. The Boe Declaration², signed by the Pacific Islands Forum in 2018, reaffirmed that climate change remains the single greatest threat to the livelihoods, security and wellbeing of the peoples of the Pacific. States must rapidly agree an ambitious LTAG so that discussions on subsequent measures that will support achievement of the LTAG can be progressed without delay.

3. PACIFIC ISLAND STATES DO NOT HAVE TIME TO WAIT

3.1 The IPCC Working Group 1 report makes clear that the impact on Pacific Island States from climate change will be significant and, in some instances, catastrophic, if credible efforts are not made to rapidly reduce greenhouse gas emissions.³ Increased temperatures, severe weather events, coastal erosion, the destruction of crops and clean water supplies, and sea level rise are already having significant negative impact on Pacific Island States.

3.2 For example, unabated sea level rise is a real and significant risk. The IPCC has reported that some Pacific Islands will disappear, and some may no longer be habitable if the impact of climate change continues at its current pace.⁴ Since 2014, a total of 150 villages along Fiji's coastline have been identified by the government for relocation to higher ground.⁵ Should climate change mitigation continue at its current pace, citizens of those affected villages, and entire Pacific Islands, will be displaced. This means a loss of country, of culture, of home; their unique identity, connection to their land, and way of life will be destroyed.

4. AN EQUITABLE TRANSITION SHOULD BE PART OF THE LTAG

4.1 New Zealand considers that decisions taken to deliver on the LTAG should also include consideration of the need for an equitable transition to net zero emissions by 2050.

4.2 At the recent high-level meeting (HLM) on a LTAG, many developing States shared concerns as to how a LTAG and the costs of reducing aviation CO₂ emissions, would affect their nascent aviation sectors. New Zealand, as a small nation itself with a comparably small aviation sector, understands this concern.

4.3 New Zealand considers that despite the differing levels of aviation sector development, all ICAO States should be aiming towards the same ambitious LTAG. This would enable investment that facilitates green aviation in developing States, creates jobs and opportunities that align with a Just Transition and the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Many developing and developed States are aligned on the view that support will be needed to honour ICAO's *No Country Left Behind* initiative. An agreed LTAG would help to facilitate this support, financial or through capacity-building.

² <https://www.forumsec.org/2018/09/05/boe-declaration-on-regional-security/>

³ https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg1/downloads/report/IPCC_AR6_WGI_SPM.pdf

⁴ <https://www.ipcc.ch/sr15/>

⁵ <https://www.stuff.co.nz/pou-tiaki/300596791/climate-crisis-villagers-forced-to-abandon-their-homes-as-sea-levels-rise>

4.4 Leading an equitable transition means addressing barriers to participation in the transition, not delaying the transition itself, or accepting different goals for different States. It is important that financing options do not put small developing States in high levels of debt to reach an agreed LTAG.

4.5 Typically, the countries at risk of falling behind will be those most vulnerable to climate change, those struggling most with their adaptation burdens and with debt. ICAO will need to find methods to provide support; methods that do not depend on exceptions and exemptions that weaken the emissions reductions effectiveness of measures that are adopted. New Zealand supported the ideas raised during the HLM of increasing ICAO's role as a facilitator to match developing States with green aviation investments and capacity building.

4.6 With the deployment of different technologies and practices, ICAO must ensure States are not left behind. Such support will be critical for developing States, to ensure they have the capability and resources for the shift to net zero carbon emissions for the aviation sector. ICAO should seek to ensure an equitable transition for all States.

5. **CORSIA'S AMBITION SHOULD BE STRENGTHENED**

5.1 It is critical a satisfactory review of CORSIA is achieved to ensure it remains ambitious and in use.

5.2 As identified in the feasibility study for the LTAG, out of sector action will be required to manage the residual emissions that the sector cannot reduce. CORSIA is the current tool to assist with this.

5.3 As part of the CORSIA periodic review, the baseline is to be reassessed. New Zealand supports maintaining or increasing the ambition of CORSIA and ensuring that the baseline is at a level which will see offsetting required under the scheme in the coming years. This is vital to ensure the future viability, and credibility, of the CORSIA.

5.4 Similarly to the LTAG, offsetting remains an important measure to ensure investment into greener aviation practices that reduce CO₂ emissions, including Sustainable Aviation Fuels, Zero-Emission Aircraft, and operational improvements. Ensuring offsetting is required under the CORSIA will help to facilitate this investment.

6. **ACTIONS BY THE ASSEMBLY**

6.1 The Assembly is invited to:

- a) note the contents of this working paper;
- b) note that decisions on climate action cannot be delayed as doing so will have a significant and catastrophic impact on small island States;
- c) note that States should be striving for an LTAG that is ambitious, and is underpinned by an equitable transition in line with ICAO's *No Country Left Behind* initiative; and
- d) note that the ambition of CORSIA should be retained or strengthened, and the baseline should ensure that offsetting occurs in the coming years.