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A MORE CO-ORDINATED APPROACH TO SHARING INFORMATION RELATED TO SUSTAINABLE AVIATION FUELS DEVELOPMENT AND DEPLOYMENT

(Presented by New Zealand)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

International aviation emissions comprise currently less than 2% of total global CO_2 emissions. The anticipated continued growth of air transport means these emissions are projected to increase to undesired levels. The introduction of sustainable aviation fuels (SAF) is one area where ICAO can contribute significantly to its climate objectives, in particular, to reduce global CO_2 emissions.

There are early indications of imbalance between States, developing and developed, in their SAF deployment processes. A key reason for this imbalance is likely to be insufficient technical capability among some States to use SAF. This imbalance could cause a more fragmented approach to using SAF and cause States to disproportionately contribute to the CO_2 emissions reduction goals.

ICAO has recognised that information-sharing among States, facilitated by programmes such as the ICAO Assistance, Capacity-building and Training for SAF (ACT-SAF) programme, could alleviate the challenges States encounter to use SAF.

This paper proposes to build on such ICAO programmes by enhancing information sharing to minimise the risk of further fragmentation. A suggested starting point, with reference to the ICAO SAF policy work, is to establish clear definitions of the various stages of the SAF development and deployment process. This would enable States to better recognise the various proven approaches to using SAF and potential information-sharing opportunities.

Strategic Objectives:	This working paper relates to Strategic Objective of Environmental Protection.
Financial implications:	Nil
References:	Nil

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 International aviation emissions are currently less than 2% of total global CO_2 emissions. It is anticipated that there will be continued growth of air transport, which in turn means these emissions are projected to increase.[1]

1.2 The 2050 ICAO Vision for sustainable aviation fuels (SAF) recognises that the introduction of SAF is one of the measures that can contribute significantly to ICAO's climate objectives. The other basket of measures ICAO is pursuing to help achieve the objectives are: technology and standards; operational improvements; and the Carbon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation (CORSIA) market-based measure.[2]

1.3 This paper considers the need to explore a coordinated approach that would enhance existing information-sharing mechanisms. The goal of this approach should ensure a more organised and timely dissemination of lessons learned, proven methods and approaches, and opportunities for better implementation, to States as they progress through the development and deployment stages of SAF.

2. IMBALANCE BETWEEN STATES

2.1 States are likely to face a range of different challenges that affect their capacity to deploy SAF and other sustainable aviation measures.

2.2 Developing States will require a different type of support to that of developed States to ensure their progress in contributing to achieving the emissions reductions goals do not negatively impact their own growth in air transport.[3]

2.3 This imbalance between the capability of individual States is well recognised. ICAO encourages States to assist in the "international cooperation on SAF development and deployment by sharing examples of policy implementation, results, and lessons learned, useful to other States" and other similar initiatives.[4]

2.4 To address such imbalance specific to SAF, as well as Lower Carbon Aviation Fuels (LCAF) and cleaner energy sources for aviation, the new ICAO Assistance, Capacity-building and Training for SAF (ACT-SAF) programme was launched in June 2022.[5]

2.5 The ACT-SAF programme aims to facilitate the establishment of partnerships among States and relevant stakeholders, in line with the No Country Left Behind (NCLB) initiative, the 2050 Vision for SAF, and the three main pillars of sustainable development recognised by the United Nations.[6] This programme is stated to include work such as feasibility studies, policy and regulatory development, and specific SAF implementation projects that have potential for green funding.

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[1] ICAO Assembly 39th Session, Resolution A39-2.
[2] Ibid n1.
[3] Ibid n1.
[4] 2050 ICAO Vision for Sustainable Aviation Fuels.
[5] 57th Conference of Directors General of Civil Aviation Asia and Pacific Regions, Working Paper: DGCA – 57/DP/7/2, at paragraphs 3.1.
[6] Ibid n5.

2.6 There is early indication that not all States currently have the capability to equally contribute towards reducing CO_2 emissions. This was highlighted in a paper presented at the recent 57th Conference of Directors General of Civil Aviation Asia and Pacific Regions, where of the 39 countries within the APAC region, 22 have notified ICAO of their voluntary participation in CORSIA. Furthermore, of the 16 States that are Small Island Developing States (SIDS) in the APAC region, 13 have notified of their voluntary participation in CORSIA.[7]

2.7 Similarly, developed countries and States are at different stages in the SAF development and deployment journey. The information from the 'SAF Tracking tools'[8] can be used to illustrate this point.

2.8 This is one of ICAO's 'Innovation for reduction of Aviation CO_2 emissions - Tracker Tools'[9], in which the Global Coalition for Sustainable Aviation partners can record and monitor various development innovations that can generate sector CO_2 emissions reductions.

2.9 At the time of writing, the SAF Tracking tools showed there were 24 policies adopted or under development[10] in relation to SAF. A brief overview of these policies shows the different and various stages some developed countries and States are at in their SAF development and deployment journey.

3. THE VALUE OF INFORMATION-SHARING

3.1 For developing or developed States that have yet to begin their SAF journey, there is considerable value in learning from the experiences of other States that have progressed further. There are significant differences in ways that individual States have approached SAF deployment, and it is unlikely that that there will be a single pathway that will work equally for all States.

3.2 This underscores the value of sharing a broad range of information from different States to create a body of knowledge that can be used to inform the development of new SAF deployment programmes. States that are in early stages of SAF deployment could take successful elements of existing programmes and apply them domestically with a lower level of risk.

3.3 In the same manner, States already on their journey may recognise an opportunity that they had not considered. They could use this information to review their SAF development and deployment objectives to re-align on a pathway that presents fewer risks.

3.4 Elements of a successful information-sharing programme would include:

3.4.1 Some form of centralised coordination mechanism to ensure that information can be easily accessed and used by States. ICAO is encouraging States to submit or update their State Action Plans, which would include State-specific information on SAF programmes. This is likely to be a valuable resource in future information sharing activities.

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[7] 57th Conference of Directors General of Civil Aviation Asia and Pacific Regions, Working Paper: DGCA – 57/DP/7/1, at paragraphs 3.2 to 3.3.
[8] https://www.icao.int/environmental-protection/Pages/SAF.aspx.
[9] https://www.icao.int/environmental-protection/SAC/Pages/GCSA%20main%20page.aspx.
[10] https://www.icao.int/environmental-protection/GFAAF/Pages/Policies.aspx.

3.4.2 Clear definitions of the various stages that make up the SAF development and deployment process, with reference to the ICAO SAF policy work adopted or under development, so States can recognise where they are at.

3.4.3 Well defined exemplar pathways to help States to identify which approach might be most appropriate with respect to their particular aviation environment.

4. CONCLUSION

4.1 The deployment of SAF is a complex undertaking, and there is a clear need to ensure that all States have sufficient capability to use SAF as a measure for meeting emissions reduction objectives.

4.2 Building this capability will depend on an effective transfer of information from States that have well-progressed SAF deployment programmes to those that are still in the early stages of this work.

4.3 There is value in exploring options that utilise and build on the existing ICAO SAF support networks, to enhance the sharing of SAF-related information in a coordinated way that aligns with States' desired approach as they progress through the SAF development and deployment stages.

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