



INTERNATIONAL CIVIL AVIATION ORGANIZATION

**FIRST MEETING OF THE APAC CIVIL AVIATION COMMISSION
TASK FORCE**

Bangkok, Thailand, 22 to 23 June 2015

Agenda Item 5: State Presentations

**STRENGTHENING COORDINATION ON CIVIL AVIATION
IN THE ASIA PACIFIC REGION**

(Presented by Singapore, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Palau and Vanuatu)

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Proposals had been raised at some previous Conferences of the Asia Pacific Directors General of Civil Aviation (Asia Pacific DGCA Conferences) for a study on or the establishment of a Civil Aviation Commission/Conference (CAC) in the Asia Pacific Region, similar to the CACs in Africa, Europe and Latin America and of the Arab States. At all these Conferences, strong objections were raised by a number of Asia Pacific States against the formation of an Asia Pacific CAC. Instead, strong support was voiced for the existing Asia Pacific civil aviation structure to be enhanced for better coordination on operational and technical matters.

2. DISCUSSION

2.1 Key Objective and Interest with respect to Civil Aviation in the Asia Pacific

2.1.1 In line with ICAO's strategic goals, the key objective and interest of Asia Pacific States is to develop a safe, secure, efficient and sustainable air transport system for the region and beyond. Towards this, Asia Pacific States also share the desire for coordination, cooperation and assistance on technical and operational matters among the Asia Pacific States to be enhanced.

2.2 Concerns raised over an Asia Pacific CAC

2.2.1 There have therefore been proposals made at previous Asia Pacific DGCA Conferences for a study of or the establishment of an Asia Pacific CAC (APCAC). However, these have been met by strong objections from several Asia Pacific States, which have raised specific concerns.

2.2.2 The diversity of the Asia Pacific is significantly greater than in the other regions. Member States of the Arab Civil Aviation Commission (ACAC) share a common language and culture, and have reference to the Arab League. A majority of the Member States of the African Civil Aviation Commission (AFCAC) are also part of the African Union, which has a common aviation agenda, such as the Yamoussoukro Decision. 28 of the 44 Member States of the European Civil Aviation Conference (ECAC) are in the European Union (EU), which has supranational authority. Most of the Latin American Civil Aviation Commission (LACAC) Member States share a common language and mutual priorities. Asia Pacific States, however, are vastly different in terms of physical size, geography, culture, political ideology, economic development, as well as their aviation industry, market, priorities and levels of effective safety and security implementation. Given this diversity, the potential need for political coordination, even

implicitly, in an APCAC would lead to friction and divisions among Asia Pacific States, distracting from and worse, undermining important technical and operational work to enhance civil aviation in the region.

2.2.3 Additional finances, manpower, time and effort would be required for an APCAC with an Executive Committee, full-time Secretariat and working groups to coordinate positions. Besides the added bureaucracy, this would put further strains on many Asia Pacific States with limited resources, and divert from the ICAO Asia Pacific Regional Office much needed contributions and resources by Asia Pacific States to support the development of aviation in the region. Further, strong concerns had also been raised that small States and those with insufficient resources to be in the Executive Committee or working groups would be marginalised, and lose having their views, interests and positions on issues represented against those of bigger and better-endowed States which may impose their different perspective.

2.3 **Strengthening the Asia-Pacific Civil Aviation Coordination Framework**

2.3.1 Instead of an APCAC, there has been strong support for the existing Asia Pacific civil aviation structure to be enhanced for better coordination, cooperation and assistance on operational and technical work to further develop the air transport system in the Asia Pacific.

2.3.2 The Asia Pacific DGCA's Conference – an annual event with the highest participation of Directors-General of Civil Aviation from the region - can be strengthened as the central coordination platform. The informal nature of the Conference has provided for open discussion, free sharing and useful exchanges to advance Asia Pacific civil aviation in technical and operational areas. The flexibility provided to States to move at a pace commensurate with their aviation industry, with development of the necessary capabilities and capacity and addressing the essential priorities as their industry changes, have helped to move the region in a coordinated manner. Indeed, the Asia Pacific DGCA's Conference has been effective in delivering outcomes due to its focus on practical solutions for aviation safety, security, efficiency and sustainability. The Asia Pacific DGCA's Conference could be enhanced with:

- The Conference providing holistic and systematic guidance on technical and operational areas and issues of importance to the Asia Pacific and Asia Pacific States to advance civil aviation development in the region. This could include strategic intents such as “Safer Skies across the Asia Pacific”, in line with ICAO’s “No Country Left Behind” campaign, over a 3-to-5-year period.
- The Conference providing guidance on the strategies for addressing the assistance required by Asia Pacific States under the different sub-regional Cooperative Development of Operational Safety and Continuing Airworthiness Programmes (COSCAPs), but moving beyond sub-regional boundaries to better match the assistance offered by States across the Asia Pacific.

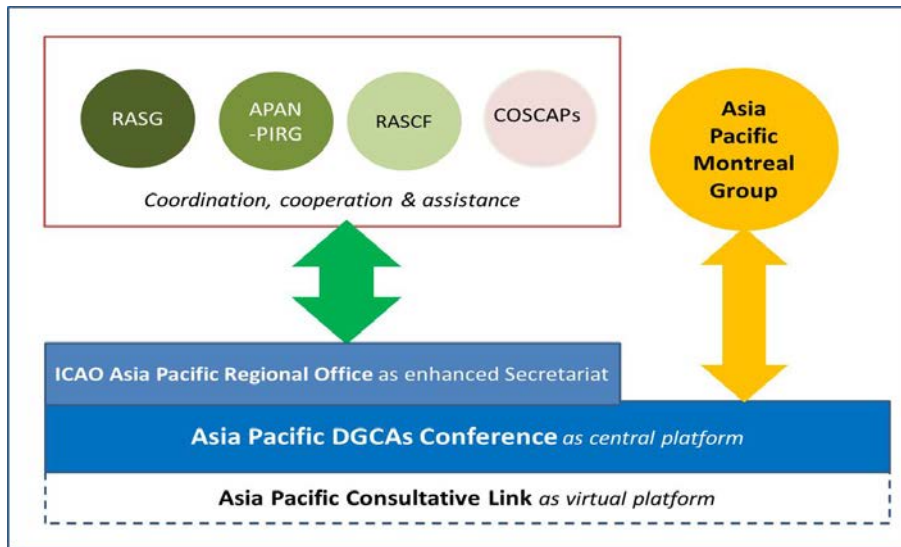
2.3.3 There can also be a strengthening of the linkages among the Asia Pacific DGCA's Conference, Asia Pacific Air Navigation Planning and Implementation Regional Group (APANPIRG), Regional Aviation Safety Group – Asia Pacific (RASG-APAC) and other ICAO regional working groups and expert bodies. The presentations by the ICAO bodies on their work on the operational and technical areas and issues and their recommendations to the Asia Pacific DGCA's Conference could be made more robust to support effective discussion and adoption by the Conference.

2.3.4 The Asia Pacific Montreal Group in ICAO (comprising representatives from Asia Pacific to ICAO based in Montreal) could be required to present to the Asia Pacific DGCA's Conference on ICAO Council and ICAO matters, especially those with significant impact on the Asia Pacific.

2.3.5 Communications links among the Asia Pacific States could also be further enhanced to provide for the sharing of information, including from ICAO working groups and expert bodies, the Montreal Group, and even ICAO, as well as for exchanges and discussions on issues via a secure virtual platform in-between the DGCA Conferences. The existing Asia-Pacific Consultative Link (APCL) could be revamped to serve as the virtual platform. As the APCL coordinator, Singapore is prepared to put up a submission to the Asia Pacific DGCA's Conference on enhancing the APCL.

2.3.6 As important, the ICAO Asia Pacific Regional Office could be strengthened as an effective Secretariat for the Asia Pacific DGCA's Conference, to ensure alignment with ICAO's overarching programmes and integration with the ICAO regional expert bodies and working groups, while maintaining the neutrality of the Secretariat. Instead of having a separate Secretariat with increased costs, States could provide experts and other personnel, as required, to beef up the Regional Office for it to more effectively support Asia Pacific States in their civil aviation development.

2.3.7 A diagrammatic representation of the enhanced Asia Pacific civil aviation coordination framework is shown below:



3. ACTION BY THE MEETING

- 3.1 The meeting is invited to:
 - a. note that the diversity of the Asia Pacific Region and the concerns raised by Asia Pacific States over an APCAC, mean that a different approach is required in strengthening Asia Pacific civil aviation coordination; and
 - b. consider the strengthening of the Asia Pacific civil aviation coordination framework as set out in paragraphs 2.3.1 – 2.3.7 to bolster the continued development of a safe, secure, efficient and sustainable air transport system for the region.