



International Civil Aviation Organization

MIDANPIRG/20 and RASG-MID/10 Meetings

(Muscat, Oman, 14-17 May 2023)

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**Agenda Item 2.1: ICAO update**

HIGH-LEVEL REVIEW OF THE ICAO 41ST ASSEMBLY

*(Presented by the Secretariat)*

**SUMMARY**

This paper presents a high review of the outcome of the of the ICAO 41st Assembly held at ICAO Headquarters from 27 September to 7 October 2022.

Action by the meeting is at paragraph 3.

**1. INTRODUCTION**

1.1. Some 2,573 Ministers and high-ranking government officials from 184 States gathered in-person and virtually at the Montréal Headquarters of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) for the launch of the ICAO 41st Assembly, the first since the COVID-19 outbreak. The opening ceremony was also attended by the Mayor of ICAO's host city of Montréal, Madame Valerie Plante, the Deputy Minister of International Relations and La Francophonie of the Province of Québec, Madame Sylvie Barcelo, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs for the Government of Canada, the Honourable Mélanie Joly.

1.2. In a notable turn during a period when aviation gender equality is still a prominent goal among government and industry stakeholders, Delegates to the 41st Assembly elected its first ever female President, the Director General of Civil Aviation of South Africa, Ms. Poppy Khoza.

1.3. The ICAO Council President Salvatore Sciacchitano recognized nine States' significant progress in improving safety and security oversight systems by awarding them with Council President Certificates. These Certificates are awarded on the basis of the outcomes of ICAO's Universal Safety and Security Oversight Audit Programmes, which pertain to the effective implementation of ICAO Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs) in these areas.

1.4. At this year's ceremony, ICAO presented Ethiopia, Fiji, Hungary, Slovenia, and Ukraine with certificates for their safety progress, while Serbia, and Tunisia were recognized for their achievements in regard to aviation security. Côte D'Ivoire received certificates for its progress in both aviation safety and aviation security. Nigeria's exceptional level of effective implementation of ICAO safety and security standards, one of the highest in the world was also acknowledged.

1.5. The Edward Warner Award, acknowledged as the highest honour in the world of civil aviation, was posthumously conferred by the ICAO Council on Dr. Ángela Marina Donato of Argentina.

1.6. Other topics for State consideration centred around the integration of unmanned aircraft systems into traditional aviation airspace, the re-opening of air tourism markets and overcoming protectionist constraints to enable air operators to swiftly recover from COVID-19, digital travel documents and the deployment of interoperable health certificates using ICAO verification, and many other issues surrounding future sectoral resilience and passenger security and convenience.

## 2. ELECTION OF THE 36 COUNTRIES TO SERVE ON THE ICAO COUNCIL

2.1. The 41<sup>st</sup> Session of the Assembly of ICAO elected its new Council for a three-year term. The election process was divided into three parts, with the following States elected:

### **PART I - States of chief importance in air transport**

Australia\*, Brazil\*, Canada\*, China\*, France\*, Germany\*, Italy\*, Japan\*, United Kingdom\*, and the United States\*.

### **PART II - States which make the largest contribution to the provision of facilities for international civil air navigation**

Argentina\*, Austria, Egypt\*, Iceland, India\*, Mexico\*, Nigeria\*, Saudi Arabia\*, Singapore\*, South Africa\*, Spain\*, and Venezuela.

### **PART III - States ensuring geographic representation**

Bolivia, Chile, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea\*, Ethiopia, Ghana, Jamaica, Malaysia\*, Mauritania, Qatar, Republic of Korea\*, Romania, United Arab Emirates\*, and Zimbabwe.

*\*Indicates re-election.*

## 3. ENVIRONMENT

3.1. The 41<sup>st</sup> ICAO Assembly, ICAO Member States adopted a collective long-term global aspirational goal (LTAG) of net-zero carbon emissions by 2050. The achievement of the LTAG will rely on the combined effect of multiple CO<sub>2</sub> emissions reduction measures, including the accelerated adoption of new and innovative aircraft technologies, streamlined flight operations, and the increased production and deployment of sustainable aviation fuels (SAF).

3.2. It was recognized that ICAO has played a fundamental role in support of the safe, secure and sustainable development of international air transport, and how aviation serves as a fundamental enabler of the social, economic, and cultural development of countries through mobility and connectivity. With respect to the Economic Development of Air Transport, the Assembly strongly promoted the recognition of aviation as a powerful enabler of recovery, the need for increasing liberalization of air services, and the role of air cargo operations in keeping our world supplied and connected in times of crisis.

3.3. In addition, the assembly agreed to improve funding access for the modernization of aviation infrastructure and air navigation services worldwide, while urging the ICAO Air Transport Regulation Panel (ATRP) to advance its work on the draft Convention on Foreign Investment in Airlines.

3.4. Recalling that industry operators have already targeted NetZero 2050 as well, States adoption of this new long-term goal for decarbonized air transport will contribute importantly to the green innovation and implementation momentum which must now be significantly supported through new investments and commitments so that we can reach our ultimate goal of emissions-free powered flight. In the meantime, offsetting and the increased production and use of sustainable fuels will continue to be critical to helping international aviation address its near-term emissions objectives.

3.5. States at the ICAO Assembly also collectively underscored the importance of viable financing and investment support to the new CO<sub>2</sub> emissions goal's attainment, and fully supported the new ICAO Assistance, Capacity-building and Training for Sustainable Aviation Fuels (ACT-SAF) programme to accelerate the availability and use of SAF – requesting in addition that a third ICAO Conference on Aviation and Alternative Fuels be convened in 2023.

3.6. The need to focus on priorities areas including the recovery and sustainability of air transport, agreements on CO<sub>2</sub> emission reduction goals, and the application of ICAO's implementation support policy and Transformational Objective to better serve its Member States was highlighted. It was noted that mere aspirations are no longer sufficient where our climate, and the well-being of our planet and all its species are concerned.

3.7. Other notable environmental developments at the 41st ICAO Assembly included the completion of the first periodic review of the Carbon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation (CORSA). Countries agreed on a new CORSA baseline from 2024 onwards, defined as 85% of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in 2019, and on revised percentages for the sectoral and individual growth factors to be used for the calculation of offsetting requirements from 2030 onwards.

#### **4. BUDGET**

4.1 The Assembly concluded the latest efforts by ICAO Member States to forge diplomatic consensus on ICAO's budget for 2023 to 2025 and the work programme for the next three years, which includes focusing on the key priorities.

#### **5. REGIONAL ACTIVITIES**

5.1 During the ICAO's 41st Assembly, Pacific States officially launched a new Pacific Regional Aviation Strategy. The new Strategy is a major turning point for the Pacific Sub-region, and will help its participating States work together more effectively with ICAO and the Pacific Aviation Safety Office (PASO) to assure the safe, secure, and sustainable growth of regional air connectivity and socio-economic development. It was noted that, ICAO, especially through its Asia Pacific Regional Office, has actively engaged with the Pacific Small Islands Developing States through various activities promoting a closer working relationship between the Pacific Sub-region and ICAO.

#### **6. AIR TRANSPORT AND FACILITATION**

6.1 The security and facilitation decisions made at this year's Assembly will help us to collectively achieve important post-pandemic enhancements to air transport system resilience. The Assembly noted that the outcomes of ICAO's High Level Conference on COVID-19 have factored into States' agreements in the area of Air Transport Facilitation, and notably in terms of its recommendations on the need for a contactless digital passenger experience to be achieved, supported by new public health related ICAO provisions.

6.2 On the topic of the post-pandemic recovery, it was stressed that States and ICAO cannot become complacent about the risk of future pandemics just because this latest one is now waning. This insight must inform the many decisions States will be presented with concerning the resilience of air transport in the coming decades.

6.3 States agreed to promote the global adoption of internationally interoperable health certificates featuring ICAO Visible Digital Seal for Non-Constrained Environments (VDS-NC) verification features. In addition, States also voiced their support for the ICAO Health Master List, which aids States and aviation stakeholders in achieving efficient and secure authentication of traveller vaccination status and test result certificates, as part of maintaining health and sustaining safe international air transport during public health emergencies affecting air travel.

6.4 The Assembly States further endorsed that ICAO will develop a new strategy in order that the world may be better prepared to respond to future public health emergencies, notably through its Collaborative Arrangement for the Prevention and Management of Public Health Events in Civil Aviation (CAPSCA). Emphasis was given to this strategy to include a comprehensive crisis management framework and mechanism.

6.5 The Assembly also noted that ICAO's Global Aviation Security Plan (GASeP) and the GASeP Roadmap provide global structure and direction to States' enhancement of the effectiveness of global aviation security, concurrently, the new ICAO Implementation Support Policy helps to underpin ICAO's efforts to assist States to deliver the aviation security measures required under Annex 17 – Aviation Security.

6.6 The efforts by States, regional groups and industry to implement the GASeP and its Roadmap received exceptional recognition by the Assembly, who further agreed on the need to update the Plan to provide a strong focus on human factors, performance, and the professionalization of the aviation workforce.

6.7 In addition, States decided to adopt and implement the recommendations from the **ICAO Symposium on Assistance to Aircraft Accident Victims and their Families** conducted last year, and to officially designate 2023 as the ‘Year of Facilitation Culture’ to underscore the scope and relevance of the challenges which lie ahead.

6.8 The Assembly adopted a Declaration on air transport facilitation affirming global commitment to enable the safe and efficient recovery of aviation from the COVID-19 pandemic, and to make aviation more resilient in the future.

## **7. AVIATION SAFETY AND AIR NAVIGATION CAPACITY AND EFFICIENCY**

7.1 States endorsed the latest editions of ICAO’s Global Aviation Safety Plan (GASP) and Global Air Navigation Plan (GANP). These important strategic plans guide States cooperation and actions on the basis of global aviation targets and technology roadmaps, enabling aligned worldwide progress on key priorities and challenges.

7.2 The endorsement of the latest editions of ICAO’s GASP and GANP will bring the aviation community together around common targets and pathways to achieve an agile, safe, secure, sustainable, high-performing and interoperable global air transport system. Cyber resilience of safety critical systems is a key priority in the next edition of the GANP. The Assembly fully endorsed the Safety Stream recommendations from ICAO’s High Level Conference on COVID-19.

7.3 The adoption of the Safety recommendations that had resulted from ICAO’s High-level Conference on COVID-19 held in October 2021, led to the endorsement of the evolution of ICAO’s Universal Safety Oversight Audit Programme (USOAP).

7.4 The Assembly also endorsed the new ICAO Implementation Support Policy which will enhance efforts to assist States to implement the international standards contained in the nineteen Annexes to the Convention on International Civil Aviation.

7.5 The Assembly further underscored the intrinsic value of ICAO’s technical cooperation and assistance efforts to effective global capacity-building, and of its portfolio of products and services to support the recovery, resilience, and sustainable development of international aviation. The governments have also underscored the invaluable assistance to Member States provided through ICAO’s global aviation training activities and programmes, while agreeing that a new ICAO conference should soon be convened to fully assess current and future human resource skills requirements and training needs for global aviation.

7.6 The 41<sup>st</sup> Assembly also agreed that regional aviation safety organizations and accident investigation bodies should be better supported through more sustainable funding and legal frameworks. This cooperation is seen as fundamental to enabling cost-effective ICAO compliance for many countries, improving local and regional oversight, and the realization of air transport’s socio-economic benefits for civil societies.

## **8. INNOVATION FAIR**

8.1 Taking place in Montréal, this special three-day event attracted over 1,400 attendees, and featured traditional and new players who are delivering a technological revolution in aviation worldwide. An exhibition included prototypes of cutting-edge aircraft types and other latest air transport technologies and solutions, all of which were highly appreciated by the attending government and industry delegates.

8.2 One of the key intentions of the ICAO 2022 Innovation Fair was to provide a prominent platform for innovations and initiatives that will contribute to a more resilient future for the air transport sector. It was highlighted that the COVID-19 pandemic has led to proposals for numerous technical and policy solutions to help reconnect the world in its aftermath, but a more systematic approach to disaster risk identification and management will be necessary to circumvent the compound impacts of multiple disasters. This is a pre-requisite to building a resilient future for the aviation sector.

**9. ACTION BY THE MEETING**

9.1 The meeting is invited to note the information provided and take action as deemed necessary.

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