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ASSEMBLY — 37TH SESSION

REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC COMMISSION ON AGENDA ITEMS 53 AND 54

(Presented by the Chairman of the Economic Commission)

The attached report on Agenda Items 53 and 54 has been approved by the Economic Commission.

Note.— After removal of this covering sheet, this paper should be inserted in the appropriate place in the report folder.

(4 pages)

Agenda Item 53: Economic Analysis

53.1 At its first meeting, the Commission considered developments in the statistics, forecasting and economic analysis programmes on the basis of a report of the Council (WP/7, Corrigenda Nos. 1, 2 and 3). In addition, three working papers were presented by Venezuela WP/300, WP/301 and WP/302 and one Information paper was presented by India (WP/170).

53.2 In WP/7, the Council reported to the Assembly on the key outputs and adjustments to the Organization's work programmes relating to statistics, forecasting and economic analysis. The paper also presented the plan of action for the next triennium in these fields. The future tasks include the implementation of the recommendations of the Tenth Session of the Statistics Division (STA/10), held in November 2009, as well as the development of various sets of forecasts and economic studies. In addition, support would be provided to the Traffic Forecasting Groups (TFGs) and manuals on forecasting and the statistics programme would be revised. The future work programme also calls for workshops and training sessions to be held on a cost-recovery basis.

53.3 Venezuela, in WP/300, proposed that a single chart of accounts be developed by the Organization. Such a chart would serve to harmonize and standardize the accounting systems of all companies in the aviation sector. It would decrease the disparity between and rationalize the delivery of information collected by the aviation authorities as well as provide a source of information for the development of necessary financial indicators for decision making.

53.4 In WP/301, Venezuela proposed that a method be developed to measure price variation in the aeronautical sector and to allow for a global diagnosis that would take into account the factors affecting activities in the sector to enable the authorities concerned to develop strategy and take timely action to mitigate the adverse impact of economic fluctuations on the sector.

53.5 In WP/302, Venezuela, underscoring the importance of verifiable statistics and economic aviation indicators for planning and decision making by various aviation stakeholders, stressed the need for the Organization to promote and implement a continuous and systematic training programme for States in order to improve the quality and timeliness of aviation statistics submitted under the ICAO Statistics Programme.

53.6 In an information paper (WP/170), India described aviation data collections maintained by major civil aviation stakeholders in India, data dissemination as well as new initiatives, including an IT-led solution for the Directorate General of Civil Aviation. It also informed about the establishment of a Committee of Experts on Air Transport Forecasting/Planning to develop quality and reliable forecasts and to act as a think tank for the civil aviation industry.

53.7 The Commission noted the activities undertaken by the Organization in the fields of statistics, forecasting and economic analysis. It recognized that there was no duplication of forecasting activities with those carried out by the Committee on Aviation Environmental Protection (CAEP), as the development of forecasts to support the airports and air navigation systems planning and environmental planning as well as to monitor the implementation of the Strategic Objectives was the mandatory function of the Organization. It endorsed the future tasks planned by the Organization in these fields.

53.8 Some States expressed concerns regarding the cost recovery principle to be applied to future training and workshops while others felt that the additional training activities proposed in WP/302 would require extra resources which the Organization lacks. In view of the resource constraints that the Organization will be facing in the next triennium, particularly in the air transport field, the Commission did not endorse the waiving of this cost recovery principle or additional training activities.

53.9 The Commission recognized the substantial work and resources that would be required for the future tasks proposed in WPs 300 and 301. Furthermore, it noted difficulties experienced by some States and organizations in attempting to conduct similar studies, including collecting and managing data and information, as well as the resource implication of these tasks for the Organization. Consequently, the Commission did not endorse the proposed tasks. The Commission noted the information contained in WP/170.

Agenda Item 54: Other issues to be considered by the Economic Commission

54.1 The Commission considered this item based on two papers: WP/312 by Cuba and an information paper WP/215 by Malaysia.

54.2 In WP/312, Cuba provided updated information on and evidence of the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed on it by the United States of America, and the impacts of such blockade on all of its economic sectors, including civil aviation. Cuba invited the Assembly to acknowledge that such unilateral measures negatively affecting the development of civil aviation, constituted a violation of the principles and objectives of the Chicago Convention; and to request the Secretary General to inform Secretary General of the United Nations of the impacts of these measures on Cuban civil aviation and for an annual report to be made to the Council by the President of the Council, for as long as these impacts remain in effect.

54.3 In the discussion that followed, a number of delegations stated their support for the position taken by Cuba, and for the actions proposed in the paper. In their view, the US embargoes on some States had an adverse impact on civil aviation of the countries concerned, especially on economic development of air transport. Such unilateral measures affected their participation in international air transport activities, causing additional expenses in order to fulfil safety obligations under the Chicago Convention due to their denial of access to aircraft, spare parts and aviation equipment, as well as technical support. Although recognizing that the issue was a political one, it also had an economic impact on civil aviation. They felt that this was not just a bilateral matter but one that could have wider effects on third parties. They considered ICAO the appropriate forum to examine this matter because the principles and provisions of the Chicago Convention were at issue. Highlighting the lack of progress in resolving the issue in ICAO, they called for more effective action by the Assembly and the Council to address this matter.

54.4 The United States expressed the view that the matter was a bilateral political issue not appropriate for discussion at this forum dealing with technical matters. It requested that the matter be handled appropriately, and suggested that it be referred to the President of the Council. A delegation expressed the view that this was not an issue for the Economic Commission but one of political nature that should be dealt with by the Council.

54.5 The Commission noted the information contained in WP/312 and recognized that this was a complex, delicate and sensitive issue which had generated strong views on each side but one which the Economic Commission could not resolve. It was therefore decided that the Chairperson of the Commission would bring this matter, including the views expressed in the Commission and the concerns expressed by Cuba and others over the lack of progress, to the attention of the President of the Council, whose “good offices” had been involved in this issue on previous occasions.

54.6 Through an information paper WP/215, Malaysia explained the need and benefit of introducing a State aviation planning approach, spearheaded by aviation authorities, which it believed could help eliminate wastage of resources and achieve economic efficiency of the aviation sector. The Commission noted the information contained in the paper.