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WORKING PAPER

ASSEMBLY — 36TH SESSION

PLENARY

Agenda Item 2: Statements by delegations of Contracting States and of Observers

STATEMENT ON CURRENT TRENDS IN ATM

(Presented by International Federation of Air Traffic Controllers' Associations)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
This paper presents the position of the International Federation of Air Traffic Controllers' Associations (IFATCA) on current trends in Air Traffic Management.
IFATCA wishes to record our support for the work being done by ICAO. The various regions of the world are all at different stages of aviation development. To achieve the goal of a safe, efficient and seamless air traffic management system requires creativity and flexibility while adhering to agreed standards. IFATCA stresses the importance of stakeholders', particularly States', commitment to and cooperation with the work of ICAO.
It is IFATCA's view that States must demonstrate the necessary political will and resolutely commit to cooperating with all stakeholders in order to achieve the vision of a seamless ATM system.
IFATCA reiterates our readiness and commitment to work with all States and all organisations to create the future air traffic management system.

Strategic Objectives:	This working paper relates to All Strategic Objectives
Financial implications:	Adequate financial support is essential to guarantee the vision of a seamless air traffic management system
References:	Doc 9750 , Global Air Navigation Plan; ICAO Global Aviation Safety Plan

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[1] English version provided by IFATCA

1.   **INTRODUCTION**

1.1   With 132 member associations representing some fifty thousand air traffic controllers in all regions of the world; and after 47 years of involvement with global aviation, IFATCA has come to this conclusion:

Cooperation among all stakeholders, requiring the committed involvement of all States in the process and in the consequences, is the only path to the vision of a seamless, performance based air traffic management system.

1.2   This cooperative approach requires that all stakeholders, particularly our States, demonstrate a commitment to change and the political will to act at all levels for the benefit of the global system.

1.3   IFATCA stresses that this approach of cooperation and commitment is more important than the final technology or procedures that will be implemented.

1.4   IFATCA has demonstrated that we have the experience and expertise, and most important, the commitment to participate and assist in the process of creating our future Air Traffic Management System.

2   **DISCUSSION**

2.1   Collaboration is critical as we move toward the deployment of SESAR in Europe, Next Generation in the USA and Joint Upper Airspace projects in Africa. Collaboration is not only necessary among the neighbouring and regional States, but with all aviation stakeholders under the guidelines of ICAO. It is imperative that future systems are developed in accordance with ICAO's vision, concepts and standards and recommended practices.

2.2   The lack of political will of which we speak is most evident in the inability of States to develop and implement adequate Corrective Action Plans following audits of their aviation systems. IFATCA respectfully reminds States that there are various means through which assistance may be had to implement these safety recommendations.

2.3   IFATCA again reminds States, as we did at the 35th Assembly, that ICAO's Technical Cooperation Bureau is one of the main instruments through which States are provided with assistance to remedy deficiencies. However, without the political will to make these changes, many States will continue to fall below even the minimum requirements for a modern air navigation services administration, resulting in the catastrophic incidents of the recent past.

2.4   As of 2006, ICAO requires that States develop and promote safety programmes that mandate their ANSPs, and Airport and Airline Operators implement safety management systems. IFATCA commends those States that have realised the importance of a safety programme to maintaining and surpassing our current safety standards. Sadly, there are too many States that have not begun the move toward developing and actively promoting safety programmes. Given that experience has shown that a functional and mature safety management system takes 2-3 years for development, it is critical that States move now to implement these programmes, so that the safety management systems of their providers evolve along with the air traffic management systems. IFATCA commends ICAO for the work done on

the development and promotion of safety management systems and again remind States that assistance and support is available in the form of training and supporting documentation.

2.5   IFATCA believes that once States implement the fundamental elements of SMS this would address two critical elements: The lack of competently trained ATM personnel and the lack of funding for aviation development.

2.6   The shortage of Air Traffic Controllers and, more critically, the lack of competently trained ATM specialists are well documented; this is one of the main reasons that States are unable to address identified deficiencies.

2.7   Though the lack of funding is often cited as a problem, one lesson of the commercialisation of ANSPs is that adequate funding is available for the development of the aviation system. While commercialisation is not a requirement, an adequate organisational structure with the required trained staff is necessary and allows States to work with users to implement an appropriate user charges regime.

2.8   ICAO urges all Contracting States to provide necessary support for the various elements of the Global Aviation Safety Plan. The International Federation of Air Traffic Controllers' Associations along with the aviation industry has identified two of these elements in particular that have potential to significantly enhance and improve safety throughout the aviation world. They are the introduction of a Just Culture in ATM, and the adoption of English language proficiency requirements for pilots and air traffic controllers.

2.9   Recently there has been an unfortunate tendency for some States to conduct legal actions before aviation investigations have been completed. We speak here of the prosecution of aviation personnel involved in incidents and accidents. This trend, which in fact undermines aviation safety, runs counter to what we in the aviation community believe is the necessary approach to incidents and accidents.

2.10   The complex nature of the air traffic management system requires a nuanced approach. The introduction of a "just culture" as an essential element of a global action plan has received the endorsement of virtually every sector concerned with international aviation. The sole purpose of an investigation should be to find the causes and prevent recurrence. It should not be to assign blame and prosecute and punish. IFATCA agrees with the thinking of the experts in this area: A blame and punishment approach does nothing to improve safety; it fosters a culture that is not conducive to the provision of safe, orderly and efficient air traffic services.

2.11   IFATCA urges States to make the promotion of a just culture a priority with their safety programmes. IFATCA further urges States to ensure that the intent of Annex 13 regarding the use of safety sensitive information and the treatment of all personnel involved in aviation incidents and accidents is enshrined in national legislation by reviewing without further delay their existing legislation to remove any and all deterrents to the collection and analysis of valuable safety-related information which is the foundation of a successful just culture environment.

2.12   Aviation is critical to the modern economy. The dedicated personnel that ensure the continued operation of this system should not be criminalized for doing their jobs. IFATCA endorses the concept that a just culture does not allow violators of norms to get a free pass. A properly functioning just culture will ensure that honest mistakes are dealt with fairly and lead to system improvement; while violation shall be dealt with in accordance with agreed standards of justice.

2.13   The introduction of English language proficiency requirements is an ambitious undertaking. It remains the responsibility of States to ensure that within their own jurisdictions training and testing procedures will comply with ICAO Annexes. Proficiency training and testing for air traffic controllers of all language abilities must be made available in sufficient time to allow the acquisition of ICAO Level 4 prior to the implementation date of March 05, 2008.

2.14   We will all agree that the prospect of the timely accomplishment of this goal appears to be beyond the capability of many States. Indications are that States are in one of three categories concerning language training: 1) they have no idea of how to proceed; 2) they have little idea of how to proceed and no plan in place, and 3) they know best and will "go it alone".

2.15   IFATCA would like to remind States of their responsibility(s) with regard to English language proficiency training and testing for air traffic controllers. We encourage Service Providers and Regulators to take immediate action to ensure that an English language proficiency training and testing program is in place in their State and that the English language proficiency of all operational air traffic controllers is fully tested and rated not later than March 05, 2008.

3   CONCLUSSION

3.1   A commitment to cooperation with other States; adherence to ICAO standards and recommended practices; implementation of safety programmes and the adoption of the ICAO's Global Aviation Safety Plan by all States are all necessary for the achievement of the ICAO vision of a seamless ATM system with the required safety, efficiency and security.

3.2   States must demonstrate the necessary political will and resolutely commit to cooperating with all stakeholders and strictly adhere to accepted standards and recommended practices in order to achieve this vision of a seamless ATM system.

3.3   IFATCA wishes to record our support for the work being done by ICAO. With the various regions of the world at different stages of aviation development, the achievement of a safe, efficient and seamless air traffic management system requires creativity and flexibility along with a strict adherence to accepted standards. IFATCA believes that only where States resolutely commit to and cooperate with the work of ICAO will this achievement be realised.

3.4   IFATCA reiterates our readiness and commitment to work with all States and all organisations to create the future air traffic management system.

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