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ASSEMBLY — 36TH SESSION

TECHNICAL COMMISSION

Agenda Item 30: Other safety matters

AERODROME LICENSING IN INDIA

(Presented by India)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This working paper brings out the status of India's progress to comply with ICAO's Amendment No. 4 to Annex 14 — *Aerodromes* and Volume I — *Aerodrome Design and Operations* requiring all aerodromes used for international operations to be certified by 27 November 2003. As the amendment also requires establishment of an appropriate regulatory frame-work and well defined safety oversight mechanism, as a pre-requisite for the commencement of action for certification of aerodromes, measures taken in India to comply with the said ICAO Standards and recommendations are also highlighted.

<i>Strategic Objectives:</i>	This working paper relates to Strategic Objective A: Safety – Enhance Global Civil Aviation Safety.
<i>Financial implications:</i>	None
<i>References:</i>	ICAO Annex 14, Volume I.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Regulations for licensing of aerodromes in India have existed since 1956 as provided in Rule 79 of the Aircraft Rules, 1937. The rule, however, excluded government aerodromes, which were managed and operated by the regulator – Director General of Civil Aviation (DGCA). The rule required licensing of a place other than a government aerodrome that is used as a regular place of landing and departure by a scheduled air transport service or for a series of landing and departures by any aircraft carrying passengers for hire or reward.

1.2 ICAO, in March 2001, adopted Amendment 4 to Annex 14 — *Aerodromes* and Volume I — *Aerodrome Design and Operations* that required all aerodromes used for international operations to be certified by 27 November 2003. This necessitated amendments to be carried out in the existing regulations on aerodrome licensing in India. Accordingly, the Rules pertaining to licensing of aerodromes in India were amended to comply with the provisions of Annex 14 which now read in 2004 as “*Rule 78 – No aerodrome shall be used as a regular place of landing and departure by a scheduled air transport service or for a series of landings and departures by any aircraft carrying passengers or cargo for hire or reward unless it has been licensed for the purpose.*”

1.3 In India, there are currently about seventy-five aerodromes which are handling passengers/cargo traffic operated on hire or reward basis with scheduled airlines also frequenting most of them. Keeping in view that the implementation of the amended rule to all these aerodromes would become a gigantic task, a conservative approach was therefore considered and while framing the amendment to the rules, a proviso was included which required that aerodromes already permitted for operating scheduled air transport services, before the commencement of these amended rules, may continue operation of such services until the aerodrome operator obtains the licence from the DGCA by a date to be notified by the government.

2. STEPS TAKEN FOR THE LICENSING OF AERODROMES

2.1 Prior to 1971, the regulator was the operator of government-managed aerodromes and an aerodrome directorate existing within the regulator engaged primarily in management of aerodromes. In 1971, the management of all government-managed international aerodromes vis-à-vis Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai and Kolkata was given to the International Airports Authority of India (IAAI). In 1985, the management of all government-managed domestic aerodromes was transferred from the regulator to the National Airports Authority (NAA) along with the aerodrome directorate. In 1995, the two entities IAAI and NAA were merged to form Airports Authority of India (AAI) with the responsibility of functioning and managing government aerodromes.

2.2 It was in 2002 that an Aerodromes Standards Directorate was formally setup within the regulator (DGCA) with the specific function of licensing of aerodromes as required under the Aircraft Rules. The said directorate with its nucleus at DGCA Headquarters at Delhi has four regional offices located in Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai and Kolkata. The personnel employed in the directorate are suitably qualified aerodrome licensing personnel selected on basis of their earlier experiences in the field of aerodrome management and had also been trained at the Civil Aviation Training Centre (CATC) at Allahabad on above aspect.

2.3 Apart from the in-house training at CATC, the aerodrome licensing personnel of DGCA have been provided training on Aerodrome Certification under ICAO's regional Technical Cooperation Project, cooperative development of operational safety and continuing airworthiness programme — South Asia (COSCAP-SA) and the European Union – India Civil Aviation Cooperation Project. The approach in India has been not only to train the regulator but also to bring awareness to people from the aviation industry who have also been trained through these international training programmes. Thirteen training courses have been conducted under the above programmes wherein experts from the United Kingdom and Australia have trained personnel from the regulator and the industry. In addition, technical assistance is provided under the COSCAP-SA programme by deputation of experts to assist the DGCA personnel.

2.4 The Indian Aircraft Rules provide a basic framework for the licensing of the aerodromes. Detailed requirements and guidance in the form of Civil Aviation Requirements and advisory circulars have been issued for the implementation of the Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs) in ICAO Annex 14, Volume I which cover areas relating to issuance of an aerodrome license, preparation of aerodrome manual, aerodrome design and operations including exemption procedure for non-compliances of Standards. Aerodromes are licensed based on procedures and checklists given in the procedures manual designed and developed on the basis of ICAO guidelines.

2.5 In view of the large number of aerodromes to be licensed, a phased approach was taken by India wherein priority was given to licensing the international aerodromes in the first phase. This was also aimed at fulfilling India's obligation to the Chicago Convention. In the subsequent phase, licensing of aerodromes other than international aerodromes has been taken.

2.6 The aerodrome licensing process comprises of assessing the formal application, including evaluation of the aerodrome manual; assessing the availability of aerodrome facilities and equipment; issuing an aerodrome license; and promulgating the licensed status of an aerodrome and the required details in the AIP (India). As a pre-requisite to the issuance of an aerodrome license, the aerodrome operators are also required to put in place a Safety Management System as required by ICAO in Annex 14, Volume I. The licensing conditions include safety audits to be first conducted by the aerodrome license holder and thereafter inspection and surveillance by the regulator which are conducted by the aerodrome inspectors from the four regional offices. The inspectors use checklists for surveillance/inspection of the licensed aerodromes.

2.7 To date, sixteen aerodromes used for international operations namely Cochin International Airport, Kerala; Indira Gandhi International Airport, New Delhi; Chhatrapati Shivaji International Airport, Mumbai; Trivandrum International Airport, Kerala; Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose International Airport, Kolkata; Chennai International Airport, Tamil Nadu; Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel International Airport, Ahmedabad; Hyderabad International Airport, Andhra Pradesh; Coimbatore Airport; Lucknow Airport; Jaipur Airport; Guwahati Airport; Varanasi Airport; Nagpur Airport; Calicut Airport; and Amritsar Airport have been licenced. Further, three aerodromes namely Lengpui, Mizoram; Puttaparthi, Andhra Pradesh and JSW Vijaynagar, Karnataka used for domestic operations have also been licensed. In addition to the above, three aerodromes are in the process of being licensed.

3. ICAO USOAP AUDIT

3.1 ICAO under their Universal Safety Oversight Audit Programme audited India in October 2006. The report of the audit indicated that India has requisite regulatory framework and detailed operating regulations and guidance material for its aerodrome inspectors for the licensing of aerodromes.

While accepting the initial trainings conducted by COSCAP-SA and EU-India Civil Aviation Cooperation Project on aerodrome licensing, the audit expressed the need to build a continuous training programme for the technical officers of the regulator including surveillance programme for the aerodromes licensed by it. India is in the process of ensuring compliance to the corrective actions on the findings and recommendations of ICAO.

4. **CONCLUSION**

4.1 India has successfully commenced licensing of aerodromes in compliance with ICAO Standards through extensive cooperation between the regulator and the aerodrome operators. All licensed aerodromes are being operated by adequately trained personnel and in accordance with the regulations based on the standards of ICAO in Annex 14 Volume I. As a consequence, all the airline operators can be assured of the highest level of safety at the international aerodromes.

4.2 The regulator has adopted a continuous programme of licensing for the remaining aerodromes and it is envisaged that all aerodromes used for commercial air transport operations will be licensed by 31 December 2008.

4.3 The Assembly is requested to take note of the contents of this working paper.

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