

## **EC/ICAO SYMPOSIUM ON REGIONAL ORGANISATIONS**

**Montreal, 10-11 April 2008**

### **SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS**

1. On 10-11 April 2008, 168 participants from 48 Contracting States and 38 organisations, including many representing different Regional Organisations from around the world, gathered at ICAO headquarters, Montréal, to discuss the experiences of regional civil aviation bodies, their contributions to international civil aviation, and how to strengthen their relationship with ICAO.
2. The Symposium was jointly organised by ICAO and the European Commission (EC) and was opened by Dr Taïeb Chérif, Secretary General of ICAO, and Mr Daniel Calleja, Director of Air Transport at the EC.
3. The moderators of the three panel sessions were: Ms. Nancy Graham (Director, Air Navigation Bureau, ICAO), Professor Brian Havel (DePaul University, Chicago), and Professor Michael Milde (McGill University, Montreal).
4. The three panel discussions were highly stimulating and of high quality. Panel 1 examined regulatory cooperation at regional level, notably in the field of safety. Panel 2 discussed regional initiatives to remove economic barriers to air transport. Panel 3 studied the legal implications of regional governance and proposed ways to facilitate the contribution of regional bodies to ICAO, within the international legal framework for civil aviation.
5. The Symposium came to the conclusion that Regional Organisations in civil aviation are already a positive reality and that a clear trend towards more regional governance can be observed.
6. The Symposium recognised that the development of civil aviation activities at regional and sub-regional levels and regional cooperation can lead to the creation of regional civil aviation bodies with executive and/or regulatory tasks and responsibilities. Such initiatives are of great benefit to the worldwide aviation community as they can make an important contribution to the safe and orderly development of international civil aviation as a whole.
7. The wider international aviation community also benefits from the development of common rules within Regional Organisations and the greater harmonisation of standards and regulations they achieve.
8. However, there are many different kinds of Regional Organisations in international aviation: there is no “one-size-fits-all” model, and the development of such a single model is not desirable. The situation in different regions of the world varies and so do the Regional Organisations that are created. They vary in degree of integration – the

extent of powers or tasks that have been transferred to them by States in a region (e.g. rule-making, enforcement, harmonisation), and they vary in their scope of activity (safety, air traffic management, security, economic regulations). In addition, regional integration is often an evolving endeavour whereby Regional Organisations proving useful to the States they serve can acquire a more extensive role over time.

9. The Symposium identified a number of issues related to the question why States join together in a Regional Organisation in civil aviation. The political will to cooperate is fundamental, but it is equally clear that a Regional Organisation allows for the pooling of resources and the reduction of costs, which is crucial in an ever more demanding international context. These advantages are most evident in the area of safety oversight, but can also be achieved in other aviation areas, such as the provision of air navigation services, security or environmental policy. They are most evident for developing States with lower levels of aviation activity, but they equally apply to other States.
10. When States decide to embark on a process of liberalisation at regional level, such a process should preferably go hand in hand with the converging of rules, the development of common rules (safety, security, competition), or even the creation of a regional regulatory framework. In this respect, regional integration can be a means to develop a more flexible approach to the issue of ownership and control, a factor hampering the development of civil aviation on a global scale. However, the development of common regulations at regional level should not inhibit the liberalisation process itself, provided that ICAO safety and security standards are met.
11. Another question that was addressed by the Symposium was how ICAO could support the further development of Regional Organisations, and how they could be brought to participate more actively in the governance of international civil aviation by ICAO. The Symposium underlined that, while ICAO has historically always been positively inclined to the role of Regional Organisations, more should be done in strengthening the cooperation and relationship of regional civil aviation bodies with ICAO.
12. The Symposium made clear that it was not necessary to await any revisions to the Chicago Convention. ICAO can today embark on a number of initiatives to assist the further development of Regional Organisations and facilitate their contribution to its activities, thus achieving shared objectives of the international civil aviation community:
  - a. ICAO should provide improved guidance and assistance, notably in the form of a template of success (e.g. how should harmonisation be achieved) on managing the different functions and responsibilities of Regional Organisations. Different models could be developed to assist different kinds of regional bodies;
  - b. Cooperative agreements between ICAO and Regional Organisations (Memoranda of Cooperation, Framework Agreements for Cooperation, or

ICAO Regional Agreements) should be established to provide an overall framework for cooperation between ICAO and a Regional Organisation wishing to engage in such cooperation. Such agreements could manage the relationship between ICAO and the Regional Organisation in different fields, depending on the scope of activity of the Regional Organisation: safety, security, environment, air traffic management, technical assistance, audits, State Letters, etc.

- c. A process of systematic dialogue between ICAO and Regional Organisations should be launched, for example through an annual high-level conference.
13. In sum, the Symposium concluded that the global, regional and national approaches to civil aviation go hand in hand. Civil aviation is a global activity but its seamless and sustainable development can be reinforced by cooperative initiatives at regional level. For this reason, ICAO should actively support the regional integration of civil aviation activities.

*The conclusions of each panel, as presented by the moderators, are provided separately, on the Documentation page, as well as the Opening Remarks by Dr Taïeb Chérif and by Mr Daniel Calleja, and Mr Calleja's presentation to the Royal Aeronautical Society, Montréal Branch, and the presentations given in the Pre-Symposium Information Session.*