



WORKING PAPER

HIGH-LEVEL CONFERENCE ON AVIATION SECURITY (HLCAS)

Montréal, 12 to 14 September 2012

Agenda Item 1: ICAO Global Risk Context Statement

GLOBAL RISK CONTEXT STATEMENT

(Presented by Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Israel, the Netherlands, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and the United States)

SUMMARY

This paper notes the importance of a risk-based approach to aviation security, and proposes that the development and circulation of a global Risk Context Statement provides a means to deliver the conclusions of the 37th Session of the Assembly on this matter.

Action: The High-level Conference on Aviation Security is invited to endorse the conclusions and recommendations in paragraph 6.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Declaration on Aviation Security adopted by the 37th Session of the Assembly urged States to “share best practices and information in a range of key areas, such as ... threat-based risk analysis.” In addition, the Assembly directed the Council to “instruct the Aviation Security (AVSEC) Panel to identify and develop a risk assessment methodology for aviation security and to include risk-based assessment with any recommendations for the adoption of new or amended aviation security measures in Annex 17 or in any other ICAO document.”

1.2 The Twenty-third Meeting of the AVSEC Panel concluded that an abridged version of the Risk Context Statement (RCS) could be a useful baseline tool to assist States in carrying out their own risk assessments, should they choose to use its methodology.

1.3 The global RCS aims to further these ambitions by providing a methodology for conducting risk assessment, and by making available a global risk assessment for ICAO to take into account in considering measures to be included in Annex 17, as well as for States in carrying out national risk assessments.

2. IMPORTANCE OF A RISK-BASED APPROACH

2.1 The continuing threat of terrorism is most effectively managed by identifying, understanding and addressing the potential risks both to and from civil aviation in general, and its specific

transported persons (both passengers and persons other than passengers) and specific goods (baggage, cargo and mail). The potential range of risks is limited only by the imagination, so it is important that the aviation community concentrate its attention on the most real threats and risks, and on the areas of greatest vulnerability, so that security resources may be dedicated where they have the most value.

2.2 The terms “risk assessment” and “security risk assessment” appear in Annex 17 in no fewer than seven Standards. This reflects the fact that Annex 17 represents a set of Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs) below which level international aviation security must not be allowed to fall; but as a set of retrospectively drawn up measures, the SARPs will always lag behind the threat that they intend to address. It is therefore essential that individual States, as well as ICAO, base their measures on risk assessment, based on a robust methodology and on an evidence-based sense of the risk environment, especially in cases where the Annex 17 SARPs specifically call for a risk assessment.

3. **ROLE OF THE RISK CONTEXT STATEMENT**

3.1 The global Risk Context Statement, circulated as a draft document to the Twenty-second and Twenty-third Meetings of the AVSEC Panel, is intended to underpin a more effective approach to risk-based security measures.

3.2 First, it sets out a summary analysis, based on the best available information, of the terrorist threat and risk to civil aviation. This can provide a baseline tool for States to carry out their own risk assessments, and for ICAO to take account of the present risk to civil aviation from terrorism in considering future measures, in accordance with Resolution A37-17 of the 37th Session of the Assembly. Additionally, the RCS provides States with a universe of known threats to civil aviation that should be considered when implementing risk-based security measures.

3.3 Second, the RCS provides States with a broader context in which to conduct their own risk assessments. The RCS does *not* seek to substitute for States’ own risk assessment processes. Instead, the Statement provides a picture of the general terrorist risk as it applies across most of the world, and a methodology that States should consider using to conduct their own risk assessments on which to base their measures. This methodology is comparable with existing good practice for risk management systems, adapted to take account of the particular issues associated with the threat from terrorism. As such, it contributes to the delivery of the aims of the Declaration on Aviation Security to share best practices in this area.

4. **PRACTICAL APPLICATION**

4.1 An abridged version of the RCS prepared by the Working Group on Threat and Risk (WGTR) is available to delegates to the High-Level Conference on Aviation Security (HLCAS). A longer version, which sets out the risk analysis in more detail, is available on the ICAO AVSEC Panel Secure Portal. This analysis is in turn based on a series of risk matrices drawn up by the WGTR, which set out individual threats, the likelihood and consequences of their occurrence, relevant existing mitigation, and possible appropriate responses.

4.2 Such a risk-based approach has already been applied in the consideration of air cargo security by the AVSEC Panel. The WGTR presented a more detailed assessment of the terrorist risk to the air cargo system, enabling the Working Group on Air Cargo Security to draw on this analysis to produce proposals for discussion by the HLCAS, representing a practical manifestation of the risk-based approach to aviation security.

4.3 Experience in the use of risk assessment by States for aviation security purposes appears to vary greatly, and an initial voluntary trial by one State showed that detailed analysis based on this approach could be difficult for many States. It seems reasonable to conclude that, in common with other aviation security initiatives, effective use of this approach by States will also need to be supported by guidance, education, and training, along with frequent and good quality interaction with their intelligence communities. In addition, the WGTR will keep the methodology under review to ensure that it remains effectively useable by States.

4.4 There will be a role for regional approaches to risk assessment. Clearly, while this analysis of worldwide risk provides an evidence-based context in which to work, the assessed risk will vary from region to region according to the present terrorist threat. It is notable that States in the Americas have taken the initiative to produce a draft manual on threat assessment and risk management methodology, which takes into account the draft RCS presented to the Twenty-third Meeting of the AVSEC Panel, while drawing on regional factors.

4.5 In order to connect the RCS with practical measures that States may implement to mitigate the most prevalent threats to civil aviation, the WGTR will, in addition, develop a threat assessment document on at least an annual basis to present to the AVSEC Panel. This document will identify the pertinent threats to civil aviation at a given time and may suggest possible appropriate responses to mitigate the threat. However, this document is not meant to supersede individual risk assessments conducted by States, nor to take the place of their current intelligence on threats, as such matters remain the sovereign responsibility of each State. Rather, it will be a guidance document that provides an evidence-based risk picture and a variety of tangible actions that States may implement to achieve or complement a risk-based security programme.

5. CIRCULATION OF THE RCS

5.1 The presenters of this working paper envisage, subject to the views of the HLCAS, that a global Risk Context Statement will be circulated as an ICAO document, updated at least annually, and supplemented by information provided directly to States, as necessary when new evidence of threats and risks emerges, based on the advice of the WGTR.

5.2 In addition, further work would be done by the AVSEC Panel and the WGTR to develop 'daughter documents' to provide more detailed and technical guidance on areas of risk currently less well explored, such as cyber attacks or chemical, biological and radiological threats to aviation. In addition, the WGTR will continue to refine the methodology to reflect the experience of States in using it.

6. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 The HLCAS is invited to conclude that:

- a) a global Risk Context Statement provides a useful basis for ICAO and States to consider in taking a risk-based approach to aviation security measures; and
- b) the circulation, use, and continued development of a Risk Context Statement by ICAO would be a significant step in delivering the aims of the Declaration on Aviation Security and Resolution A37-17 of the 37th Session of the Assembly.

6.2 The HLCAS is invited to recommend that:

- a) taking into account the conclusions of the HLCAS, ICAO circulate, on at least an annual basis, an abridged version of the global Risk Context Statement as a source of information for States, which they should consider in developing their risk assessments, and as a basis for the development of the risk-based assessment that should accompany any recommendations for the adoption of new or amended aviation security measures in Annex 17 or in any other ICAO document, in accordance with Resolution A37-17 of the 37th Session of the Assembly; and
- b) the AVSEC Panel and the WGTR continue to develop this approach in more detail, including through the development of guidance material and training and the continued enhancement of the methodology, in order to assist States that wish to use it.

— END —