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ICAO SETS NEW STANDARDS FOR CREW FATIGUE MANAGEMENT

MONTRÉAL, 14 June 2011 – The Council of ICAO adopted at its meeting of 13 June international standards for Fatigue Risk Management Systems (FRMS) as an alternative to prescriptive flight and duty limitations to address crew fatigue, often cited as a factor in aircraft accidents. The new standards become applicable on 15 December 2011.

“Current flight and duty time regulations are a ‘one size fits all’ solution. FRMS recognize the growing complexity of crew fatigue and offer multi-layered, comprehensive approaches to various types of fatigue-related hazards, according to different operational contexts”, said Nancy Graham, Director of the Air Navigation Bureau of ICAO.

“Operators using FRMS have reported greater operational flexibility than current flight and duty time regulations, while maintaining, and even improving on, current safety levels. The new standards will facilitate the development and globally-harmonized implementation of the systems, while making it easier for regulators to assess and monitor their use,” Graham explained.

The FRMS standards are supported by extensive guidance material based on the input of an FRMS Task Force comprised of State regulators, operators, scientists and industry representatives. This includes an FRMS implementation guide for operators, jointly produced by ICAO, the International Air Transport Association (IATA) and the International Federation of Air Line Pilots’ Associations (IFALPA).

“The fact that regulators, airlines and pilots all contributed to the effort ensures that all of the technical, operational and economic issues were covered. The input of world-recognized scientists ensures that the FRMS approach has solid scientific grounding. We can look forward to widespread acceptance of the concept and its systematic application around the world,” Graham emphasized.

The new fatigue management standards allow States to choose whether to establish FRMS regulations. The provision of prescriptive flight and duty time limitations regulations remain mandatory for all States.

The new standards and related guidance material will be the focus of a symposium, followed by a meeting of the International FRMS Forum, to be held from 30 August to 2 September 2011 at ICAO Headquarters in Montréal.

A specialized agency of the United Nations, ICAO was created in 1944 to promote the safe and orderly development of international civil aviation throughout the world. It sets standards and regulations necessary for aviation safety, security, efficiency and regularity, as well as for aviation environmental protection. The Organization serves as the forum for cooperation in all fields of civil aviation among its 190 Member States.