



ICAO to seek global traffic management solutions for drone operations

For immediate release

Montréal, 15 May 2017 – In the near future, an overhead drone delivery or even a flying taxi may enter your daily life. To make these services safe and efficient, the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) announced today that it will begin establishing low-altitude traffic management guidance for domestic unmanned aircraft systems (UAS), and that industry, academia and other innovators will have a chance to further explore these issues later this year, when ICAO convenes its 'Drone Enable' Symposium in September at its Headquarters in Montréal, Canada.

"Today we're seeing many new proposals and innovations emerging in terms of both unmanned aircraft and operations at lower altitudes," commented ICAO Air Navigation Bureau Director, Mr. Stephen Creamer. "ICAO recognizes that it's the natural agency to be gathering together the best and brightest from government and industry to define how these craft can be safely integrated into 21st century airspace, and in a way that optimizes their benefits globally for the wide range of public and private sector operators now exploring their potential."

Because of their size and operational profiles, unmanned aircraft and prototypes generally do not fit the definitions for normal aircraft operations established under the Convention on International Civil Aviation (Chicago Convention). To address that fact, and better accommodate the speed being seen in UAS innovations today, ICAO will be employing a more responsive Request for Information process focused on specific problem statements relating to low-altitude UAS operations.

"Our 191 Member States asked us to begin looking into this at our 39th triennial Assembly last October, and these new activities are ICAO's response to that call," confirmed the President of the ICAO Council, Dr. Olumuyiwa Benard Aliu. "Multiple States and regional groups have proposed creating something along the lines of a UAS airspace management tool for lower altitudes, along with registration and identification solutions and related initiatives. Our work through this RFI process will help to make sure that all related solutions set out are safe, secure, sustainable, and most importantly globally aligned."

ICAO's over-riding goal is to better define the issues involved, whether technical, operational or legal, and also to ensure safety continues to remain the driving priority. The agency understands that the sooner this framework is agreed upon globally, the sooner industry will be able to launch their UAS businesses with suitable levels of investment confidence.

Experts, companies and others wanting to contribute to the applicable ICAO Requests for Information will find information on its Drone Enable website, at icao.int/DroneEnable.



The Ehang184 prototype from China is one of a number of new remotely piloted aircraft being designed to function as aerial taxis, or for related operations at low altitudes. It features pre-set routes which passengers select from upon entry. If current plans in the UAE remain on track, it could begin carrying travellers from the city's main airport to downtown Dubai as early as July of this year.

Resources for Editors

About ICAO

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, capacity and environmental protection, amongst many other priorities. The Organization serves as the forum for cooperation in all fields of civil aviation among its 191 Member States.

[ICAO's UAS initiatives](#)

[ICAO's DRONE ENABLE Symposium](#)

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