INTERNATIONAL CIVIL AVIATION ORGANIZATION
WESTERN AND CENTRAL AFRICAN OFFICE

First Meeting of Directors General of Civil Aviation

(Abuja, Nigeria, 19 – 21 March 2002)

Agenda Item 1:   Strategies for elimination of shortcomings in the Air Navigation field

CONTINUATION AND EXPANSION OF THE
ICAO UNIVERSAL SAFETY OVERSIGHT AUDIT PROGRAMME

(Presented by the Secretariat)

SUMMARY

This paper presents a report on the continuation and expansion of the ICAO Universal Safety Oversight Audit Programme (USOAP) to include Annex 11 — *Air Traffic Services* and Annex 14 — *Aerodromes* as resolved by the 33rd Session of the Assembly, to commence in 2004. Detailed information on the continuation of the programme is presented in paragraph 2. Paragraph 3 contains a report on the expansion of the programme to other areas of audit. Action by the meeting is contained in paragraph 6 of this paper.

1.   **INTRODUCTION**

1.1   Assembly Resolution A32-11 directed ICAO to conduct regular, mandatory, systematic and harmonized safety audits of all Contracting States, with the objective of enhancing safety by promoting the implementation by States of international Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs). The mandate for regular audits foresaw the continuation of the programme, and the term *safety audits* suggested that all safety-related areas should be audited. The expansion of the programme "at the appropriate time", as recommended by the 1997 Directors General of Civil Aviation Conference, has thus been accepted as an integral part of the future development of the programme.

1.2   The Air Navigation Commission examined proposals for the continuation and expansion of the ICAO Universal Safety Oversight Audit Programme beyond 2001, and presented its views and recommendations to the Council during subsequent sessions.

2.   **CONTINUATION OF THE PROGRAMME**

2.1   The ICAO Universal Safety Oversight Audit Programme is a safety tool which enables ICAO to ascertain the effective implementation of the critical elements of safety oversight and the provisions of

related Annexes. It also enhances safety by enabling the determination of deficiencies as identified by USOAP and PIRGs, accurately identifying and prioritizing effective solutions.

2.2   The ICAO Universal Safety Oversight Audit Programme was established to conduct "regular" and "mandatory" audits in all Contracting States. Thus, as a regular programme, safety oversight audits are expected to continue to form the core activity of the ICAO Universal Safety Oversight Audit Programme beyond the year 2001, when the initial audits in all Contracting States are completed. In addition, an audit follow-up on the status of implementation of State corrective action plans of the forty-nine Contracting States audited in 1999 has already started, in August 2001. Action plans submitted by States indicate that most of the corrective measures proposed will be completed within one to three years.

2.3   The continuation of the programme, including the launching of a second cycle of audits, will be based on the advice forwarded by the Air Navigation Commission which, bearing in mind the principles of "regular, mandatory, systematic and harmonized safety audits, to be carried out by ICAO", recommended that ICAO continue to conduct safety oversight audits with control being exercised by ICAO Headquarters. Regional offices would continue to play a major role both in the conducting of follow-up missions and in assisting States to overcome the deficiencies identified through the audits and PIRGs. Contracting States would be audited at least once every five years and an audit system tailored to known safety problems (risk assessment-based), in which ICAO would initiate assessments whenever it had reliable information which led it to believe that a State might no longer be complying with ICAO safety provisions, be established.

3.   EXPANSION OF THE PROGRAMME TO OTHER TECHNICAL FIELDS

3.1   General

3.1.1   The framework for the ICAO Universal Safety Oversight Audit Programme is the Convention on International Civil Aviation, in particular its Articles 1, 37, 38, 54 and 55 thereof, and its objective of safe, regular and efficient air transportation.

3.1.2   The current safety oversight audit programme is concerned with auditing Contracting States' compliance with their safety obligations under Annex 1 — *Personnel Licensing*, Annex 6 — *Operation of Aircraft* and Annex 8 — *Airworthiness of Aircraft*, and looks into the legislative framework and structural organization established to support Contracting States' safety oversight activities.

3.1.3   The DGCA Conference on a Global Strategy for Safety Oversight (Montreal, November 1997) re-affirmed that safety oversight activities are an effective means to ensure the adequate implementation of safety-related SARPs and should not be limited to any particular field. Specifically, the conference recommended that the ICAO safety oversight programme should be expanded to other technical fields at the appropriate time, initially to include air traffic services, aerodromes and support facilities and services. In addition, the Accident Investigation and Prevention (AIG) Divisional Meeting (1999), held in Montreal from 14 to 24 September 1999, recommended (Rec. 1.2/11) that, as a matter of high priority, ICAO expand the ICAO Universal Safety Oversight Audit Programme to include Annex 13 — *Aircraft Accident and Incident Investigation*. Due to financial reasons, Annex 13 audits could not be included in the first phase of expansion of the programme. However, the 33rd Session of the Assembly instructed the Secretary General to undertake a study regarding the expansion of the programme to other safety-related fields and, in particular, on the conduct of audits of the core elements of Annex 13 as soon as possible.

3.1.4   The Commission recommended that the initial expansion should cover air traffic services (Annex 11 — *Air Traffic Services*), accident investigation and prevention (Annex 13 — *Aircraft Accident*

and Incident Investigation) and aerodromes (Annex 14 — *Aerodromes*). While safety-related issues can be found in all air navigation fields, these three areas should be given priority because a number of civil aviation administrations do not have national legislation with regard to regulatory oversight of these fields. Furthermore, in view of the increasing privatization, particularly with respect to aerodromes and air traffic services, safety oversight is becoming essential. It is believed that the expansion of the audit programme to these areas will encourage the development and promulgation of national legislation while enhancing the capability of the State for safety. With this in mind, the 33rd Session of the Assembly resolved that the ICAO Universal Safety Oversight Audit Programme be expanded to include Annex 11 — *Air Traffic Services* and Annex 14 — *Aerodromes* as of 2004. The Assembly further requested that ICAO continue to develop safety-related guidance material as reference manuals.

4.   DISCUSSION

4.1   **Annex 11 — *Air Traffic Services***

4.1.1   In December 2000, there were some thirty Contracting States which had effected an organizational separation between the air traffic services (ATS) regulator and the ATS provider. In the remaining 155 States, the ATS regulator and ATS provider belong to the same organization, usually the Directorate of Civil Aviation or the Civil Aviation Authority, or a similarly named government department. The trend in the industry is that more States will eventually separate the two responsibilities.

4.1.2   The implication for the ICAO safety oversight audits is that the audits need to take into account two different levels, i.e. that of the regulator and that of the provider. Broadly speaking, the provisions of Annex 11 — *Air Traffic Services* would have to be audited at the regulatory level and the provisions of the *Procedures for Air Navigation Services — Air Traffic Management* (Doc 4444, PANS-ATM) would have to be audited at the provider's level. At the same time, however, the audits must assess the effectiveness of the regulator's oversight *vis-à-vis* the provisions of Doc 4444 as applied by the provider.

4.1.3   The active inspection of applied safety standards at ATS facilities will be a new phenomenon to the majority of ICAO's Contracting States. However, these inspections are in line with the newly adopted amendments to Annex 11 and Doc 4444 by which ATS providers are required to implement a safety management system.

4.2   **Annex 14 — *Aerodromes***

4.2.1   The trend toward autonomy of aerodromes is continuing in almost all regions with a view to freeing governmental funds while encouraging greater efficiencies in the operation and management of airports. However, the role of the regulating agencies and the obligations of States under the Convention on International Civil Aviation remain unchanged. Per Article 28 of the Convention, States undertake to provide adequate and safe aerodrome facilities and services in accordance with the Standards and Recommended Practices promulgated by ICAO. In this context, it should be noted that the recent amendments to Annex 14, Volume I to introduce provisions concerning certification of aerodromes were welcomed by almost all the States responding to the State letter that carried the proposal.

4.2.2   The overall framework of States' Safety Oversight Systems, including safety objectives and means of resolving safety issues, will already have been audited against the *Safety Oversight Manual* (Doc 9735), Part A, during the Annex 1 — *Personnel Licensing*, Annex 6 — *Operation of Aircraft* and Annex 8 — *Airworthiness of Aircraft* audits. The auditing of aerodromes will therefore be limited to the

specific part of those systems regulating aerodromes. The three areas for an initial audit would be: regulatory provisions (with a flexible approach on the issue of aerodrome certification); organizational structure; and implementation of Annex 14 — *Aerodromes* and related manuals, as appropriate.

4.2.3   The initial audits in the area of aerodromes would be focused on the capability of States to conduct safety oversight of aerodromes and aerodrome operators to ensure the provision of safe facilities and services. The audits would include an evaluation of States' processes for the implementation of Annex 14 specifications, including the new requirement as well as training of States' regulatory personnel.
This would include the State's plan for oversight of the management and operation of aerodromes, as well as provision and maintenance of the infrastructure. This would give an additional opportunity for the assessment of a State's conformance and compliance in the area of safety management.

4.2.4   An average aerodrome-related audit of the regulator would require a minimum of two auditors and would vary from four to six working days, depending on the State and size of the industry, and the complexity of the regulatory system. Three to five days would be spent with the regulator covering the three review areas and would include aerodrome certification, safety management, operations, engineering and rescue and firefighting areas of the State's regulatory system. This also includes the pre- and post-audit briefings. One to two additional days would be spent with providers (aerodrome operators), depending on the relationship between the regulator and the provider, and considerations such as travel time.

4.2.5   The actual audits will start in January 2004 and be completed at the end of 2008.

5.   **ACTION BY THE MEETING**

5.1   The meeting is invited to:

a)   note the information contained in paragraph 2 relating to the continuation of the programme; and

b)   note that the actual audits will start in January 2004 and be completed at the end of 2008.

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