INTERNATIONAL CIVIL AVIATION ORGANIZATION

DRAFT REPORT OF THE SEVENTH AERODROME SAFETY & PLANNING IMPLEMENTATION GROUP (ASPIG/7) MEETING

(Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, 6-10 April 2025)

The views expressed in this Report should be taken as those of the Regional Aviation Safety Group and not of the Organization. This Report will, however, be submitted to the ICAO Council and any formal action taken will be published in due course as a Supplement to the Report.

Approved by the Meeting
and published by authority of the Secretary General

PART II – REPORT ON AGENDA ITEMS

REPORT ON AGENDA ITEM 1: ADOPTION OF THE REVISED AGENDA

1.1 The subject was addressed in WP/1 presented by the Chairperson. The meeting reviewed and adopted the Provisional Agenda as at paragraph 6 of the History of the Meeting.

REPORT ON AGENDA ITEM 2: REGIONAL PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK FOR AERODROME SAFETY

Follow-up on the endorsed Conclusions related to Aerodrome Safety

2.1 The subject was addressed in WP/2 presented by the Secretariat. The meeting reviewed the progress achieved in implementing the previously endorsed Conclusions and Decisions, as at **Appendix 2A**.

2.2 The meeting noted that, the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) has proposed significant amendments to Annex 14, Volume I, concerning Obstacle Limitation Surfaces (OLS). These amendments introduce a new concept comprising two sets of surfaces: Obstacle Free Surfaces (OFS) and Obstacle Evaluation Surfaces (OES), each with distinct purposes based on runway type, Aeroplane Design Group (ADG), and available flight procedures. The proposed changes aim to better align with modern aircraft performance and air navigation systems, addressing deficiencies in the existing OLS framework. These amendments are scheduled to become applicable on 23 November 2028.

2.3 In this regard, the meeting agreed that, in accordance with PIRG/RASG MID Conclusion 19/2 concerning the nomination of Obstacle Limitation Surfaces (OLS) Focal Points, the designated AGA Focal Point should establish a Technical Team responsible for revising national regulations and implementing forthcoming amendments. Consequently, MID States are urged to communicate their nominations to the ICAO MID Office at their earliest convenience.

Follow-up of the Aerodromes SEIs included in the MID Regional Aviation Safety Plan (MID RASP) 2023-2025 Edition.

2.4 The subject was addressed in WP/3 presented by the Secretariat. The meeting was briefed on the progress made in the implementation of Safety Enhancement Initiatives (SEIs) related to AGA, as at **Appendix 2B.**

Aerodromes Safety Dashboard Updates

2.5 The subject was addressed in WP/4 presented by the Secretariat. The meeting reviewed. and updated the Aerodromes Safety Dashboard as at the **Appendix 2C.**

2.6 The meeting recalled that the list of International Airports subject to monitoring should be updated in accordance with each State's published Aeronautical Information Publication (AIP). Saudi Arabia provided an updated list of its International Airports intended for inclusion in the MID Air Navigation Plan (MID ANP), AOP Table I-1. The meeting encouraged all States to submit similar updates to the ICAO MID Office at their earliest convenience

Aerodromes Certification Implementation in the MID Region

2.7 The subject was addressed in WP/5 presented by the Secretariat. The meeting noted the current level of Aerodromes Certification in the MID Region. The meeting took note of the current status regarding the certification of aerodromes within the MID Region.

2.8 The meeting underscored that the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) mandates the certification of aerodromes to ensure that national regulatory frameworks effectively enforce regulations transposed from ICAO Annex 14, Volume I standards and specifications. The meeting reiterated that an aerodrome certification confirms that the facility complies with established infrastructural and operational requirements and demonstrates its capability to sustain these standards.

2.9 The meeting reaffirmed that each State is required to certify aerodromes utilized for international operations in conformity with the provisions detailed in ICAO Annex 14. Additionally, States should also certify or license aerodromes open for public use, adhering to these same ICAO specifications

and any other relevant requirements stipulated through their national regulatory frameworks.

2.10 The meeting further noted that aerodrome certification serves as a fundamental basis for compliance monitoring. Concurrently, the ICAO Universal Safety Oversight Audit Programme (USOAP) evaluates the establishment and implementation of aerodrome certification processes through targeted Protocol Questions (PQs), which verify the effectiveness of mechanisms established to fulfil aerodrome certification objectives.

2.11 In this context, the ICAO MID Office continuously gathers data on effective implementation and the progression of certification activities to support regional safety objectives and priorities. Consequently, States are requested to promptly notify the ICAO MID Office regarding any updates or modifications to their Aerodrome Certification Implementation Plans.

2.12 In connection with the above, States updated and agreed about the new Template, at **Appendix 2D**, to be used for the monitoring of the Aerodrome Certification Implementation progress in the MID Region.

2.13 The meeting agreed to the following Draft Conclusion, to be presented to the RASG MID/12 for endorsement to replace, and supersede the previous related RSC Conclusions 7/5, and 7/6:

DRAFT CONCLUSION 7/1: MONITORING OF AERODROMES CERTIFICATION IMPLEMENTATION IN THE MID REGION

That, to facilitate effective monitoring and support the advancement of aerodrome certification activities within the MID Region, States are urged to submit updated progress on their Aerodrome Certification Implementation Plans to the ICAO MID Office ***by the third quarter (Q3) of the current year****, utilizing the revised reporting template provided in* ***Appendix 2D****.*

Runway Safety Teams Implementation in the MID Region

2.14 The subject was addressed in WP/6 presented by the Secretariat.

Local RWY Safety Team Implementation

2.15 The meeting acknowledged that runway safety-related accidents represent a significant concern within the aviation industry, comprising a substantial proportion of the total reported aviation accidents over the past decade. It was particularly emphasized that runway excursions constitute a notable portion of these incidents.

2.16 The meeting highlighted that the landing and take-off phases are critical periods that significantly elevate the risks of runway incursions and excursions involving other aircraft, ground vehicles, or personnel.

2.17 The meeting recalled the development of the Global Runway Safety Action Plan (GRSAP), which was established to address these risks. The GRSAP outlines recommended practices for stakeholders involved in runway safety, focusing specifically on mitigating runway excursions and incursions globally. Additionally, it coordinates the collective efforts of States, aerodrome operators, airlines, air navigation service providers, and manufacturers in implementing effective safety measures aimed at enhancing runway safety and reducing accident rates and fatalities.

2.18 The meeting emphasized that the GRSAP is closely aligned with ICAO's Global Aviation Safety Plan (GASP) and actively supports its prescribed runway safety objectives. Consequently, the meeting reiterated the critical importance of establishing Local Runway Safety Teams (LRSTs) at aerodromes to effectively achieve these global safety targets.

2.19 In this regard, the meeting reviewed the new Template, at **Appendix 2E**, to be used for the monitoring of the progress of local Runway Safety Teams Implementation in the MID Region.

2.20 The meeting agreed to the following Draft Conclusion, to be presented to the RASG MID/12 for endorsement to replace, and supersede the previous related RSC Conclusions 7/9:

DRAFT CONCLUSION 7/2: MONITORING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF LOCAL RUNWAY SAFETY TEAMS IN THE MID REGION

That, to effectively track and support the establishment of Local Runway Safety Teams (LRSTs) in the MID Region, States are urged to submit, ***by the third quarter (Q3) of the current year****, updates on the progress of their LRST Implementation Plans to the ICAO MID Office, utilizing the updated reporting template provided in* ***Appendix 2E****.*

RWY Safety Team Efficiency: Performance Monitoring

2.21 The meeting noted that Aerodromes are responsible for maintain a high level of safety by establishing local runway safety teams (LRSTs) and other aerodrome safety mechanisms led and managed by the aerodrome operator. Such mechanisms should be able to ensure change management during work in progress, suspension of runway operations, and/or runway closure.

2.22 The meeting recognized that aerodromes bear the responsibility of maintaining high safety standards through the establishment of Local Runway Safety Teams (LRSTs) and other safety frameworks managed by aerodrome operators. These safety mechanisms must effectively manage operational changes, including activities during work in progress, suspension of runway operations, and runway closures.

2.23 Furthermore, the meeting reaffirmed that aerodrome safety mechanisms should have the capability to identify and designate "hot spots" based on historical data of incidents and accidents, as well as potential risks associated with runway incursions or collisions within movement areas.

2.24 Additionally, the meeting noted that prior approval from the competent authority is mandatory for operations involving aircraft that exceed the pavement's certified design characteristics. This approval must be supported by technical assessments verifying the infrastructure's capability to safely accommodate such aircraft.

2.25 The meeting emphasized the necessity of monitoring and evaluating the performance of LRSTs. This assessment ensures the effectiveness of these safety mechanisms in achieving the aerodrome's safety objectives and enhancing operational regularity under both normal and adverse conditions.

2.26 Finally, the meeting highlighted the ICAO Universal Safety Oversight Audit Programme (USOAP)'s emphasis on the establishment and efficient implementation of Local Runway Safety Teams at aerodromes.

2.27 The meeting agreed to the following Draft Conclusion, to be presented to the RASG MID/12 for endorsement:

DRAFT CONCLUSION 7/3: FACILITATION OF ICAO RUNWAY SAFETY GO-TEAM PERFORMANCE MISSIONS

That, in order to assess the effectiveness and operational performance of Local Runway Safety Teams (LRSTs) at selected aerodromes across the MID Region, concerned States be urged to confirm, ***by the third quarter (Q3) of the current year****, their acceptance of the ICAO Runway Safety Go-Team*

missions. This confirmation should follow the formal notification from the ICAO MID Office regarding the aerodromes selected for review. States be further encouraged to facilitate the coordination and logistical arrangements necessary to enable these missions, in close collaboration with the designated aerodrome operators.

National Aviation Safety Committee

2.28 The subject was addressed in WP/7 presented by Saudi Arabia. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) has established a comprehensive State Safety Programme (SSP) in alignment with ICAO Annex 19, ICAO Doc 9859, the Global Aviation Safety Plan (GASP), the Middle East Regional Aviation Safety Plan (MID-RASP), and its own National Aviation Safety Plan (NASP). The SSP framework is tailored to the size and complexity of the Saudi aviation system and is supported by all aviation service providers operating SMS. The model presented by Saudi Arabia is as follows:

Governance Structure:

2.29 The SSP is overseen by the National Aviation Safety Committee (NASC), chaired by the President of GACA, who acts as the SSP Accountable Executive. The NASC, composed of high-level representatives from relevant authorities including military bodies, meets quarterly and is responsible for defining safety policy, endorsing national safety plans, and allocating resources for safety oversight.

SSP Working Groups (WGs)

2.30 Technical implementation of the SSP is delegated to specialized SSP Working Groups (SSP-WGs) including AGA, OPS, AIR, and ANS/MET. These groups provide risk-based safety assessments and operational recommendations to the NASC, without exercising direct governance authority.

The SSP AGA Working Group

2.31 The AGA WG consists of subject matter experts from aerodrome operators and ground handling entities. It plays a pivotal role in reviewing safety data, identifying latent hazards not captured by occurrence reporting systems, and advising on key safety concerns such as runway safety and wildlife hazard management. Recommendations are escalated through the NASC Secretariat to the NASC.

Coordination and Reporting

2.32 The SSP AGA WG meets quarterly, ensures regular reporting to NASC, and supports the implementation and monitoring of the NASP. Issues requiring higher-level decisions are escalated to NASC, where prompt policy and regulatory decisions can be taken.

2.33 In this regard, the meeting agreed that in support of a robust safety management framework and to enhance the effectiveness of State Safety Programme (SSP) implementation within the aerodromes domain, States are encouraged to adopt a structured governance model similar to that implemented by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. This includes the establishment of SSP AGA Mechanism (e.g. Working Groups) comprising subject matter experts, with clearly defined roles in data analysis, risk identification, and coordination with the national aviation safety governance structure.

GRF Implementation in the MID Region

2.34 The subject was addressed in WP/8 presented by the Secretariat.

2.35 The meeting recalled that the Global Reporting Format (GRF) for assessing and reporting runway surface conditions, originally applicable as of 4 November 2021, was developed by ICAO to harmonize runway condition reporting worldwide and mitigate the risk of runway excursions. The GRF is

outlined in ICAO Annex 14, Volume I; Annex 6, Parts I and II; Annex 8; and the Procedures for Air Navigation Services – Aerodromes (PANS-Aerodromes, Doc 9981).

2.36 The meeting further noted that ICAO extended the applicability date of the GRF to allow additional time for States and stakeholders to complete implementation and ensure compliance with related provisions. This extension aims to facilitate a more effective transition, especially for those States facing challenges related to infrastructure, training, or resource limitations.

2.37 The meeting urged States that have not yet finalized the implementation of the GRF methodology at their aerodromes to expedite the process and fully comply with the ICAO provisions related to GRF deployment. Ensuring standardized and timely runway condition reporting is essential to supporting flight crew situational awareness and operational decision-making, particularly during landing and take-off phases.

2.38 The meeting was apprised of the current level of GRF implementation across the MID Region. States were encouraged to liaise with the ICAO MID Office and identify their specific needs related to training, capacity building, and technical support, as necessary, to facilitate effective and sustainable implementation of the GRF.

2.39 The meeting took note of the sample Action Milestones for GRF Implementation provided in **Appendix 2G** and agreed on the use of the updated monitoring template presented in **Appendix 2H**. This template shall serve as the standard reporting tool for tracking the progress of GRF implementation across the MID Region.

2.40 The meeting agreed to the following Draft Conclusion, to be submitted to the RASG-MID/12 for endorsement, replacing and superseding the earlier related PIRG-RASG Conclusion 1/2.

DRAFT CONCLUSION 7/4: MONITORING OF GLOBAL REPORTING FORMAT (GRF) IMPLEMENTATION IN THE MID REGION

That, in order to ensure effective monitoring and support the timely implementation of the Global Reporting Format (GRF) methodology at aerodromes in the MID Region, States are urged to submit, ***by the third quarter (Q3) of the current year****, updates on the progress of their GRF Deployment Plans to the ICAO MID Office, utilizing the standardized reporting template provided in* ***Appendix 2H*** *and with reference to the action milestones illustrated in* ***Appendix 2G****.*

ACR-PCR Implementation in the MID Region

2.41 The subject was introduced through three presentations: PPT/9 by the Secretariat, PPT/16 by the ACI and PPT/17 by Saudi Arabia.

2.42 The meeting recalled that the ICAO Aircraft Classification Rating – Pavement Classification Rating (ACR-PCR) methodology became effective in July 2020. In this context:

- Aircraft manufacturers were expected to begin publishing Aircraft Classification Ratings (ACRs);
- Training programmes could be launched for Civil Aviation Authorities (CAAs), airport operators, and aircraft manufacturers;
- CAAs should initiate the incorporation of the new standard into national regulatory frameworks;
- Aerodrome operators would consequently begin applying the new methodology.

2.43 The meeting recalled that the full applicability of the ACR-PCR methodology was expected in November 2024. By that date, aerodromes should have published their Pavement Classification

Ratings (PCRs), following completion of relevant technical training on pavement strength evaluation. The meeting encouraged States to approach the ICAO MID Office to communicate any capacity-building needs necessary to support effective implementation.

2.44 In this context, the meeting reviewed and updated the sample Action Milestones for ACR-PCR Implementation provided in **Appendix 2I**, and agreed on the new monitoring template in **Appendix 2J**, which is to be used by States for reporting progress on ACR-PCR deployment.

2.45 The meeting agreed to the following Draft Conclusion, to be submitted to RASG-MID/12 for endorsement:

DRAFT CONCLUSION 7/5: MONITORING OF ACR-PCR METHODOLOGY IMPLEMENTATION IN THE MID REGION

*That, in line with the Action Milestones sample for ACR-PCR Implementation as at **Appendix 2I**, and with a view to ensuring effective monitoring of the deployment of the ACR-PCR methodology in the MID Region, States are urged to submit, **by the third quarter (Q3) of the current year**, progress updates on the implementation of their Aerodrome ACR-PCR Deployment Plans to the ICAO MID Office, using the standardized template provided in **Appendix 2J**.*

2.46 In addition, the meeting was briefed on ACR-PCR implementation strategies adopted in the Asia-Pacific (APAC) Region, as presented by ACI. Notable experiences from China, Malaysia, and the Republic of Korea highlighted varied but structured national approaches, including specialized task forces, data-driven safety assessments, and the use of customized or ICAO-recommended software tools. The phased implementation, supported by capacity building and institutional coordination, facilitated technical evaluation and progressive transition from ACN-PCN to ACR-PCR methodology.

2.47 The meeting encourage MID States are encouraged to draw on APAC's experience by adopting a phased, data-informed approach to ACR-PCR implementation, supported by technical training, inter-agency coordination, and integration of ICAO guidance materials.

2.48 Furthermore, the meeting was apprised of the practical implementation of the Aircraft Classification Rating – Pavement Classification Rating (ACR-PCR) methodology at Red Sea International Airport (RSIA). The implementation was carried out in accordance with GACAR Part 139 and ICAO Annex 14 provisions, which require publication of pavement strength using the ACR-PCR system by 28 November 2024.

2.49 The meeting noted that RSIA adopted ICAO's latest methodology for pavement strength reporting, using the FAA FAARFIELD software and ICAO's Doc 9157 – Aerodrome Design Manual, Part 3. The PCR values were derived based on detailed data inputs including aircraft fleet mix, pavement composition, subgrade characteristics, and operational forecasts.

2.50 The meeting recognized the benefit of shifting from the legacy ACN-PCN system to the ACR-PCR methodology, which allows a more rational and performance-based approach to pavement strength evaluation using cumulative damage factor (CDF) calculations.

2.51 The meeting also noted that RSIA has incorporated PCR data into its Aeronautical Information Publication (AIP) and produced a full PCR map for its airfield infrastructure. Additionally, training initiatives were launched to enhance technical knowledge on pavement evaluation, design, and maintenance for operational and maintenance personnel.

2.52 In this regard, the meeting encouraged States to leverage the experience of RSIA in implementing ACR-PCR by aligning with ICAO's provisions, conducting thorough technical assessments,

and ensuring capacity-building measures are in place to support the transition from ACN-PCN to ACR-PCR.

Wildlife Strike Reporting Enhancement in the MID Region

2.53 The subject was introduced through three presentations: PPT/10 by the Secretariat, PPT/11 by the World Bird Strike Association (WBA), and PPT/12 by the State of Egypt.

2.54 2.38 The meeting reiterated the importance of reporting wildlife strikes to ICAO, as stipulated in ICAO Annex 14. It was recalled that, starting from 2023, ICAO revised the reporting timelines, consolidating submissions into a single annual report covering the preceding calendar year. For the 2022 reporting cycle, the deadline was 4 September 2023. From 2024 onwards, the deadline for submitting the previous year's reports has been set to the end of the first quarter (Q1) each year.

2.55 2.39 The meeting noted with concern the weak wildlife strike reporting level in the MID Region. Accordingly, States must ensure compliance with this requirement and adhere strictly to the reporting deadlines as per the guidance outlined in the **Appendix 2K**.

2.56 2.41 The meeting endorsed the following Draft Conclusion, to be presented to RASG-MID/12 for endorsement:

DRAFT CONCLUSION 7/6: STRENGTHENING WILDLIFE STRIKE REPORTING IN THE MID REGION

That, recognizing the critical importance of systematic wildlife strike reporting for enhancing aviation safety in the MID Region, States be urged to ensure that, through their designated IBIS Focal Points, all ***wildlife strike reports for the current year*** *are consolidated and submitted to ICAO in accordance with the guidance provided in* ***Appendix 2K****,* ***no later than the end of the first quarter (Q1) of the subsequent year****.*

2.57 Furthermore, the meeting was apprised of the Egypt experience on Wildlife Management and encourage States to share their respective experience on subject during the upcoming ASPG meetings.

2.58 In addition, the meeting recognized the strategic importance of the Middle East as a critical migratory corridor for Central Asian bird populations, noting that this presents unique and growing challenges to aviation safety as indicated by WBA. Particular concern was raised over the increasing frequency and unpredictability of wildlife hazards, driven by climate-related shifts in migratory patterns and habitat behaviour.

2.59 The meeting recalled that key migratory choke points in the region currently lack protective measures or formal monitoring mechanisms, thereby exposing air navigation operations to heightened risk. The meeting highlighted the need for targeted surveillance, habitat management, and tailored capacity building initiatives.

2.60 It was noted that ICAO data continues to underrepresent the true scale of wildlife strike risk in the region, largely due to inconsistent reporting. The meeting emphasized that airports with established Wildlife Hazard Management (WHM) programmes report significantly higher detection rates, reinforcing the need for systematic reporting mechanisms and capacity-building activities.

2.61 The meeting noted that the economic impact of inadequate WHM is substantial. Reference was made to the Jeju Air Flight 2216 accident in March 2025, which resulted in 217 fatalities and losses exceeding USD 360 million. Additionally, airports lacking structured WHM systems face elevated operational costs and delays, while those with comprehensive programmes benefit from significant cost savings and improved safety outcomes.

2.62 The meeting recognized the fragmented nature of existing expertise across the MID Region, noting that only 22% of airports have implemented ICAO recommended habitat mapping. Staff shortages and limited adoption of modern technologies were also highlighted as persistent challenges to effective wildlife risk mitigation.

2.63 In light of these concerns, the meeting acknowledged the value of establishing a dedicated MID Wildlife Hazard Management Working Group (MID WHM WG), drawing on best practices from other ICAO regions such as APAC. The proposed WHM WG would serve as a regional platform to coordinate efforts, foster data-driven approaches, and develop certification and training frameworks tailored to regional needs.

2.64 The meeting supported the proposal submitted by the World Bird Strike Association (WBA) to establish the MID WHM WG, with its Terms of Reference (ToR) to be developed during its first meeting and subsequently presented to MIDANPIRG/23-RASG-MID/13 for endorsement.

DRAFT DECISION 7/1: ESTABLISHMENT OF THE MID WILDLIFE HAZARD MANAGEMENT WORKING GROUP (MID WHM WG)

That, recognizing the growing threat posed by wildlife hazards to aviation operations in the MID Region, and the need for a coordinated and proactive regional approach, the MID Wildlife Hazard Management Working Group (MID WHM WG) be established. The Working Group shall develop and agree on its Terms of Reference during its inaugural meeting and submit them to the MIDANPIRG/23-RASG-MID/13 meeting for endorsement.

Ground Handling Operations

2.65 The subject was addressed in PPT/13 presented by Saudi Arabia.

2.66 The meeting acknowledged the increasing significance of ground handling operations in enhancing aerodrome safety performance, with a particular focus on the structured implementation of Safety Management Systems (SMS) among Ground Handling Service Providers (GHSPs). The experience of Saudi Ground Services (a Ground Handling Service Provider) was presented as a case study, showcasing best practices in aligning with national and international regulatory frameworks, including GACAR Part 151 and ICAO SMS standards.

2.67 The meeting noted that the Ground Handling Service Provider has institutionalized a robust safety culture through organizational restructuring and integration of dedicated safety functions such as the Safety Officer, Turnaround Coordinator, and Wing Walker. These measures were supported by the implementation of a Just Culture, anonymous reporting channels, and data-driven monitoring tools to foster transparency and proactive safety reporting.

2.68 The meeting recognized the continuous improvement in safety performance metrics reported by a Ground Handling Service Provider, particularly in ramp and aircraft incident rates, which consistently outperformed both regional and international IATA benchmarks. These improvements are attributed to effective operational oversight, performance analytics, and the presence of a qualified and empowered safety workforce.

2.69 The meeting also noted that GACAR Part 151 mandates comprehensive safety, training, and emergency preparedness frameworks for GHSPs operating at aerodromes in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The Ground Handling Service Provider has demonstrated full compliance with these requirements, including the conduct of full-scale ERP exercises, deployment of confidential safety reporting systems, and delivery of over 1,500 safety awareness sessions.

2.70 Furthermore, the meeting highlighted the integration of advanced safety assurance processes by a Ground Handling Service Provider, including real-time data analysis, risk assessments, and corrective action recommendations, in accordance with GACAR Part 5. These systems have enabled informed decision-making and continuous risk mitigation in high-tempo operational environments.

2.71 The meeting emphasized the importance of visible management commitment, internal auditing, employee training, and safety communication campaigns in sustaining an effective SMS framework. The Ground Handling Service Provider's engagement with national and international partners was recognized as a model for regional GHSPs aiming to elevate their safety maturity levels.

2.72 In light of the demonstrated outcomes, the meeting encouraged MID States to refer to the provisions of GACAR Part 151 as a benchmark and to promote knowledge-sharing among Ground Handling Service Providers (GHSPs), with the objective of advancing ground handling safety performance across the MID Region.

Aerodromes Fire Firefighting

2.73 The subject was addressed in WP/14 presented by Saudi Arabia.

2.74 The meeting acknowledged the global transition away from the use of firefighting foams containing Perfluorooctanoic Acid (PFOA) and Perfluorooctane Sulfonic Acid (PFOS), in view of their environmental persistence and potential adverse health impacts. These substances, commonly used in Aircraft Rescue and Firefighting (ARFF) operations, are part of a broader group known as polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS).

2.75 The meeting highlighted the health and environmental concerns associated with PFOA and PFOS, including their potential to contaminate soil, surface water, and groundwater at aerodrome sites. Long-term exposure has been linked to serious health conditions such as cancer, liver damage, and immune dysfunction. Moreover, airports face significant challenges in managing legacy contamination as they transition to PFAS-free solutions.

2.76 The meeting noted that several States and regions, including the United States, European Union, United Kingdom, Australia, and Canada, have enacted regulations or established deadlines to phase out the use of PFAS-based foams. Fluorine-free alternatives (F3 foams) are being promoted as safer substitutes, although implementation challenges persist.

2.77 It was further noted that the transition to PFAS-free foams entails operational, technical, and financial challenges, including the need for equipment retrofitting, staff training, and safe disposal of existing foam stocks. Despite these challenges, the transition is necessary to align with global safety and environmental standards.

2.78 The meeting recognized the importance of maintaining ICAO compliance during the transition and emphasized that airports must ensure their ARFF services remain fully capable while adopting fluorine-free foam solutions. It was stressed that such alternatives must also be free from other harmful chemicals to prevent future regulatory complications.

2.79 In this regard, the meeting emphasized that recognizing the environmental and health risks posed by PFOA and PFOS-containing firefighting foams, and in alignment with international best practices, MID States are encouraged to:

- Develop and adopt national regulations supporting the safe transition to PFAS-free firefighting foams;
- Take proactive steps to phase out existing PFOA/PFOS foam stocks and address legacy contamination; and
- Coordinate regionally to ensure harmonized implementation while maintaining compliance with ICAO standards for Aircraft Rescue and Firefighting (ARFF) services.

MID Region Aerodrome Safety Reporting and Data Sharing Initiative

2.80 The subject was addressed in WP/15 presented by the Secretariat.

2.81 The meeting discussed the importance of establishing a regional mechanism to share data on significant or challenging non-compliances at aerodromes, particularly those successfully mitigated through the implementation of effective corrective action plans. This initiative is intended to foster a cooperative safety culture across the MID Region.

2.82 The meeting noted that the Minimum Reporting Areas of Significant/Challenging Non-Compliance, as outlined in **Appendix 2L**, were endorsed by RASG-MID/11 through Conclusion 11/8. In this context, the meeting agreed on the need to establish a regional repository—referred to as the Aerodrome Safety Data Sharing Framework—based on anonymous data contributions.

2.83 The meeting emphasized the importance of building a regional database that captures meaningful safety performance intelligence related to aerodrome design and operations. States were encouraged to coordinate with their aerodrome operators to collect and transmit anonymized data on significant non-compliance events that have been resolved through appropriate safety measures.

2.84 The meeting highlighted the role of Aerodrome Safety Committees and Local Runway Safety Teams in identifying and reporting on these events, and encouraged the use of the endorsed reporting template in **Appendix 2L** to ensure consistency and comparability.

2.85 It was further noted that, upon collection and validation, these datasets should be submitted to the ICAO MID Office to support regional analysis and the development of targeted safety enhancement initiatives.

DRAFT CONCLUSION 7/7: ESTABLISHMENT OF THE MID AERODROME SAFETY DATA SHARING FRAMEWORK

That, in order to support a proactive and collaborative approach to aerodrome safety in the MID Region, States are urged to:

a) Coordinate with aerodrome operators to collect anonymized data on significant and challenging non-compliances, particularly those addressed through effective corrective action plans;
*b) Promote the use of the standardized reporting template endorsed in **Appendix 2L** by Aerodrome Safety Committees and Local Runway Safety Teams;*
*c) Submit the compiled datasets to the ICAO MID Office **by the third quarter (Q3) of the current year** to support the establishment of the MID Aerodrome Safety Data Sharing Framework.*

Aerodromes Safety vs State Oversight Capability

2.86 The subject was addressed in WP/18 presented by the Secretariat.

2.87 The meeting was introduced to the scope and purpose of the ICAO Universal Safety Oversight Audit Programme (USOAP), which aims to assess a State's capability to oversee its civil aviation safety obligations under the Chicago Convention. This is achieved through continuous monitoring and periodic audits against the eight Critical Elements (CEs) of a safety oversight system, with Effective Implementation (EI) scores serving as a benchmark to evaluate performance across various technical areas, including Aerodromes and Ground Aids (AGA).

2.88 The meeting was presented with an overview of the current USOAP results in the MID Region concerning the AGA area. While the regional average for effective implementation in AGA stands

at 71.26%, disparities in performance among States were evident. For example, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Bahrain, Egypt, Qatar, and the UAE recorded high EI scores above 80%, indicating strong aerodrome safety oversight systems. Conversely, countries such as Iraq, Libya, Lebanon, Syria, and Yemen registered notably low or no USOAP activity during a considerable timeframe, underscoring critical gaps in regulatory implementation.

2.89 The analysis revealed a concerning misalignment in several States between their Effective Implementation scores in AGA oversight and the actual safety performance of their aerodromes. Some States showed strong oversight capacity but lacked clear evidence of corresponding safety performance improvements at aerodromes, while others demonstrated high safety levels despite limited formal oversight structures.

2.90 States such as UAE, Oman and Qatar were recognized for their consistency, reflecting both high EI scores and demonstrated safety performance at the aerodrome level. This dual effectiveness highlights the impact of institutional maturity and sustained compliance with ICAO provisions.

2.91 The meeting acknowledged that targeted ICAO implementation support activities and technical assistance initiatives remain vital to closing performance gaps, particularly in lower-performing States. This includes support through workshops, on-site missions, training, and tools to facilitate State Safety Programmes and effective certification systems.

2.92 The meeting encouraged States to consistently assess the correlation between their oversight capabilities (as reflected in USOAP EI scores) and actual aerodrome safety performance. States should leverage ICAO support mechanisms and prioritize corrective actions to address systemic weaknesses, while fostering the integration of aerodrome safety committees and data-driven monitoring to sustain long-term safety improvement.

REPORT ON AGENDA ITEM 3: REGIONAL PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK FOR AERODROME CAPACITY AND EFFICIENCY

Follow-up on Regional Capacity and Efficiency Initiatives

3.1 The subject was addressed in WP/19 presented by the Secretariat.

3.2 The meeting reviewed the implementation status of the previously endorsed Conclusions related to aerodrome capacity and efficiency, as outlined in **Appendix 3A**.

Basic Building Block (BBB) Framework for Airport Operations

3.3 The subject was addressed in WP/20 presented by the Secretariat.

3.4 The meeting was apprised of the structure of the ICAO Global Air Navigation Plan (GANP), with particular attention given to the Basic Building Block (BBB) Framework for Airport Operations, which encompasses Aerodrome Design and Operations.

3.5 The meeting noted that the BBB is a foundational framework that operates independently from the ASBU framework, as it defines a baseline of essential services rather than evolutionary improvements. These services are considered critical by ICAO Member States to ensure the safe and orderly development of international civil aviation. Once implemented, the BBB serves as the minimum operational standard upon which future enhancements may be built.

3.6 The meeting encouraged States to prioritize the capacity building of their aerodrome-related technical personnel, particularly inspectors and airport operator staff, to facilitate effective implementation of the BBB elements within their aviation systems. In support of this effort, the meeting agreed to the following revised conclusion, which supersedes the earlier PIRG-RASG Conclusion 1/2:

DRAFT CONCLUSION 7/8: STRENGTHENING CAPACITY BUILDING FOR BBB IMPLEMENTATION IN THE MID REGION

That, in order to support the effective implementation of the Basic Building Block (BBB) Framework for Airport Operations, States are urged to provide the ICAO MID Office, ***by the third quarter (Q3) of the current year****, with information on their capacity building needs for AGA inspectors and airport operator technical personnel, using the standardized template provided in* ***Appendix 3B****.*

ASBU Operational Threads: Surface Operations (SURF)

3.7 The subject was addressed in WP/22 presented by the Secretariat.

3.8 The meeting reviewed the current status and planning framework for the implementation of Advanced Surface Movement Guidance and Control Systems (A-SMGCS) in the MID Region. The implementation is aligned with the Surface (SURF) thread under ICAO's Aviation System Block Upgrades (ASBU) framework, as outlined in the ICAO Global Air Navigation Plan (GANP).

3.9 The meeting noted that A-SMGCS plays a critical role in enhancing safety and efficiency of surface operations, especially under low visibility and high-density traffic conditions. A-SMGCS enables surveillance, conflict detection, route planning, and visual guidance through a structured deployment of integrated services and technologies.

3.10 The meeting was apprised of the Implementation Dependencies between A-SMGCS services and functions, as detailed in **Appendix 3C**. It was highlighted that these services are interdependent

and that progressive deployment is necessary to enable full operational benefits, with specific emphasis on Surveillance, RMCA, CATC, CMAC, Routing, and automated visual guidance systems.

3.11 The meeting emphasized that timely and structured deployment of A-SMGCS functions is essential to accommodate the growing operational complexity at MID Region airports. To support implementation planning and monitoring, a dedicated reporting template as at **Appendix 3D**, was made available to States.

3.12 The meeting acknowledged that comprehensive and harmonized reporting of A-SMGCS deployment plans will enable the ICAO MID Office to provide targeted support and facilitate regional performance assessments. As such, the proposed draft conclusion was reformulated to reflect a more strategic objective and outcome-driven intent:

DRAFT CONCLUSION 7/9: MONITORING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ADVANCED SURFACE MOVEMENT GUIDANCE AND CONTROL SYSTEMS (A-SMGCS)

That, in support of the progressive implementation of A-SMGCS services aligned with the ASBU Surface (SURF) thread, States are urged to provide the ICAO MID Office, by the third quarter (Q3) of the current year, with updated information on the status of A-SMGCS deployment plans at aerodromes listed in the RANP Applicability Area, using the reporting template provided ***in Appendix 3D****. The information should be validated by the concerned airport operators and should consider the implementation dependencies outlined in* ***Appendix 3C****.*

ASBU Operational Threads: Airport Collaborative Decision Making (ACDM)

3.13 The subject was addressed in WP/21 presented by the Secretariat.

3.14 The meeting reviewed the current status of Airport Collaborative Decision-Making (A-CDM) implementation across the MID Region and discussed potential frameworks for supporting its further rollout and performance monitoring.

3.15 The meeting emphasized the importance of using harmonized planning tools, including the action milestones as at **Appendix 3E,** and the monitoring template as at **Appendix 3F**, to support consistent A-CDM implementation tracking across the Region.

DRAFT CONCLUSION 7/10: MONITORING A-CDM IMPLEMENTATION PROGRESS IN THE MID REGION

That, with reference to the A-CDM Planning and Implementation Milestones presented in ***Appendix 3E****, States are urged to submit,* ***by the third quarter (Q3) of the current year****, the status of their A-CDM Deployment Plans to the ICAO MID Office, as confirmed by aerodromes listed in the Regional Air Navigation Plan (RANP) applicability area, using the standard reporting template provided in* ***Appendix 3F****.*

3.16 The meeting recalled that A-CDM is a cross-functional, performance-driven concept that facilitates real-time information sharing and operational collaboration between airport operators, air navigation service providers, ground handlers, and air carriers. Its implementation is central to optimizing airport operations, reducing delays, and enhancing capacity and efficiency.

3.17 The meeting noted that while the MIDANPIRG/21 and RASG-MID/11 had endorsed the establishment of a dedicated MID A-CDM Task Force (ACDM-TF), concerns were raised regarding the increasing number of subsidiary bodies under MIDANPIRG. As an alternative to a standalone Task Force,

the meeting considered the establishment of a more flexible and agile AOP Thread Go-Team.

3.18 The AOP Go-Team, proposed as a pragmatic and resource-efficient approach, would provide tailored technical assistance to States and airports, facilitate A-CDM deployment, and ensure alignment with ICAO's A-CDM methodology and regional priorities. It would also serve to monitor the performance and maturity of A-CDM systems already in operation, including under adverse conditions.

3.19 The meeting was persuaded that the deployment of an AOP Go-Team presents a superior solution over the formation of a permanent Task Force. It minimizes administrative overhead, accelerates deployment timelines, and allows for integration of other airport operational threads, including support for Advanced Surface Movement Guidance and Control Systems (A-SMGCS), without requiring additional structural layers within the regional framework.

DRAFT CONCLUSION 7/11: FACILITATION OF ICAO AOP GO-TEAM MISSIONS FOR A-CDM AND A-SMGCS

That, in order to support the establishment and assess the operational performance of Airport Operational Threads including A-CDM and A-SMGCS systems, at selected aerodromes defined at the MID ANP applicability Area, concerned States be urged to confirm, ***by the third quarter (Q3) of the current year****, their acceptance of ICAO AOP Go-Team missions. This confirmation should follow the formal notification from the ICAO MID Office regarding the aerodromes selected for support. States are further encouraged to facilitate the coordination and logistical arrangements required to enable these missions, in close collaboration with the designated aerodrome operators.*

ICAO GANP / RANP & MID States NANP Matters

Outcomes of the RANP-NANP TF/2 Meeting

3.20 The subject was addressed in WP/23 presented by the Secretariat.

3.21 The meeting was briefed on the outcomes of the Second Meeting of the Regional Air Navigation Plan and National Air Navigation Plan Task Force (RANP-NANP TF/2), with a particular focus on aligning national implementation priorities with regional planning objectives.

3.22 The meeting acknowledged that the RANP-NANP TF/2 served as a key platform to harmonize State-level initiatives with the MID Region Air Navigation Plan (MID ANP), ensuring consistency in planning, monitoring, and reporting on air navigation implementation activities.

3.23 The meeting took note of the practical recommendations and decisions captured in the RANP-NANP TF/2 meeting's outcomes, which emphasized the need to:

- Ensure regular updates and alignment between the National Air Navigation Plans (NANPs) and the MID ANP;
- Monitor the progress of key infrastructure and operational threads through structured reporting;
- Improve the integration of ASBU modules and ensure that national plans reflect realistic and measurable targets;
- Encourage States to identify focal points for each ASBU thread and provide implementation status through ICAO templates; and
- Promote enhanced coordination between civil aviation authorities and air navigation service providers.

3.24 The meeting further highlighted the importance of closing the loop between planning and implementation by enhancing the role of the MID Office in tracking progress and supporting States with

targeted guidance. Enhanced coordination mechanisms were recognized as essential for maintaining momentum in ASBU-related deployments, particularly in the AOP Threads.

3.25 The meeting encouraged States to institutionalize regular reviews of their NANPs to ensure continued alignment with the MID ANP and ASBU planning framework. Focal points should be identified for each ASBU thread, and implementation data should be reported using ICAO-provided templates to facilitate regional monitoring and performance benchmarking.

Seamless Operation Program in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

3.26 3.21 The subject was addressed in WP/24 presented by the State of Saudi Arabia.

3.27 The meeting was briefed on the Seamless Operation Program, a national initiative designed to transform airport operations across four major international airports in the Kingdom: Riyadh, Jeddah, Dammam, and Madinah. The program aims to deliver measurable improvements in efficiency, predictability, and sustainability in alignment with Vision 2030 and the Saudi National Aviation Strategy.

3.28 The meeting noted that the Seamless Operation Program is a comprehensive initiative supported by 296 targeted actions, 25 stakeholder entities, and 36 working groups. Through coordinated governance and digital transformation, including real-time data sharing, predictive analytics, and collaborative decision-making platforms, the Program supports operational performance enhancements across key areas such as aircraft flow, airfield efficiency, and service integration.

3.29 The Program is underpinned by three guiding pillars:

(1) unifying aviation stakeholders;
(2) establishing a global benchmark in airport operations; and
(3) achieving operational transformation across airports, airlines, ground handlers, and air navigation service providers.

3.30 The meeting recognized that the Program introduces high-impact enablers such as A-CDM implementation with AI-supported predictive tools, airspace optimization aligned with the Saudi Future Airspace Concept, and digital automation of operational processes. These innovations contribute to optimizing aircraft flow, improving turnaround predictability, and reducing operational delays.

3.31 The meeting also took note of the performance framework that guides the Seamless Operation Program over a five-year implementation timeline. Eight core KPIs are tracked to evaluate runway capacity, taxi times, on-time performance, turnaround adherence, and gate punctuality, thereby ensuring a data-driven, results-focused transformation.

3.32 In addition to its current success at Riyadh and Jeddah airports, the Program is now scaling its initiatives to Dammam and Madinah airports, while also exploring new operational domains such as baggage and cargo flows.

3.33 The meeting encouraged States to draw from the Seamless Operation Program as a model of airport system transformation through multi-stakeholder coordination, performance-based planning, and technology integration. The experience of Saudi Arabia demonstrates how national strategies, when linked to ICAO frameworks and supported by structured KPIs, can deliver sustainable improvements in airport capacity and operational efficiency.

Heliports, Vertiports and Drones Operations

3.34 The subject was introduced through three Working Papers: WP/25 by Saudi PPT/26 by Egypt.

3.35 The meeting was briefed on the regulatory framework and guidance material developed by the General Authority of Civil Aviation (GACA) of Saudi Arabia to support the design and safe operation of vertiports in alignment with the emergence of Advanced Air Mobility (AAM) and Vertical Take-Off and Landing (VTOL) aircraft.

3.36 The meeting noted that GACA has promulgated Advisory Circular AC 140-01 (Vertiports Design Specification – VDS) and Chapter 17 of GACA E-Book Volume 7 to guide stakeholders and aviation inspectors on vertiport design requirements, authorization procedures, and operational oversight. The framework reflects a structured and phased approach consistent with global practices, including ICAO Annex 14, Volume II; EASA prototype specifications; and guidance from other national regulators.

3.37 The Advisory Circular provides comprehensive specifications addressing physical characteristics (e.g., FATO, TLOF, safety and protected areas), visual aids, lighting, obstacle limitation surfaces (OLS), and emergency planning elements including Rescue and Fire Fighting Services (RFFS). The E-Book establishes an end-to-end authorization pathway covering pre-application, document compliance, demonstration, and final authorization.

3.38 The meeting acknowledged the importance of Saudi Arabia’s proactive engagement in the ICAO Vertical Flight Infrastructure Working Group and its commitment to shaping globally harmonized regulatory outcomes. It was further noted that GACA's model may serve as a useful reference for other States aiming to establish regulatory frameworks for vertiports.

3.39 The meeting encouraged States to consider the regulatory approach adopted by Saudi Arabia as a reference model for the development of national frameworks governing the design, authorization, and operation of vertiports. Enhanced regional collaboration is recommended to ensure interoperability, consistency with ICAO standards, and the safe integration of AAM infrastructure across the MID Region.

3.40 In addition, the meeting was briefed on the heliport certification process currently implemented by the Egyptian Civil Aviation Authority (ECAA), covering both onshore and offshore heliports, as well as aerodromes serving petroleum operations.

3.41 The meeting noted that Egypt has established clear regulatory requirements for the design, approval, and certification of heliports in line with ECAR 138 and ICAO Annex 14, Volume II. Offshore helidecks, onshore hospital heliports, and petroleum-supported airstrips are all subject to structured certification processes involving administrative and on-site inspections.

3.42 The certification process includes comprehensive documentation reviews, personnel training audits, operational readiness assessments, and safety inspections. Specialized inspection committees are formed to evaluate compliance and ensure continuous oversight through annual re-certification procedures.

3.43 The meeting encouraged States to adopt structured and risk-based certification procedures for heliports, as demonstrated by Egypt, ensuring alignment with ICAO provisions and supporting safe rotorcraft operations in both offshore and onshore environments.

Water Aerodromes Design and Operations

3.44 The subject was addressed in WP/27 presented by the State of Saudi Arabia.

3.45 The meeting was briefed on the national regulatory approach to water aerodrome certification, introduced through GACAR Part-137. The regulation defines the process for the certification, authorization, and operation of water aerodromes, aligned with international guidance developed by the ICAO Asia-Pacific (APAC) Office.

3.46 The meeting noted that since the promulgation of GACAR Part-137, Saudi Arabia has certified two water aerodromes; Ummahat Island and Sheybarah Island and accepted regulatory establishment for three additional sites along the Red Sea coast. The certification process involves a structured multi-phase approach, including document evaluation, technical inspections, and stakeholder engagement.

3.47 The meeting further acknowledged the Kingdom's collaboration with the Republic of Maldives to support capacity-building and facilitate knowledge exchange in the area of water aerodrome and seaplane operations. In parallel, Saudi Arabia has maintained active participation in the ICAO Water Aerodrome Working Group (WAWG), contributing substantively to the development of globally harmonized guidance material.

3.48 The meeting encouraged States, to consider Saudi Arabia's regulatory model under GACAR Part-137 as a reference for developing their own frameworks for water aerodromes, as deemed necessary. Regional collaboration is recommended to address common challenges, such as the integration of SMS in small water aerodrome operations and coordination with maritime regulatory frameworks.

REPORT ON AGENDA ITEM 4: FUTURE WORK PROGRAMME

4.1 The subject was addressed in WP/32 presented by the Secretariat.

4.2 The meeting agreed that the ASPIG/8 Meeting is tentatively planned to be held in Qxx of 2026. The ICAO MID Office has started initial coordination with Kuwait to host the meeting and will confirm the official dates in due course and once official confirmation will be received by the hosting State.

REPORT ON AGENDA ITEM 5: ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Use of Alphanumeric Callsigns to Reduce Callsign Confusion

5.1 The subject is addressed on the WP/28 presented by ACI on behalf of ACI, CANSO, IATA.

5.2 The meeting was briefed on the safety implications of callsign confusion and the benefits of adopting alphanumeric callsigns to mitigate related risks, particularly those linked to runway incursions and communication errors.

5.3 The meeting noted that callsign confusion, especially when aircraft operate with similar or identical flight numbers, poses serious safety risks both in the air and on the ground. These risks include miscommunication between ATC and flight crews, incorrect aircraft movements during taxiing, and delayed or incorrect responses to airfield instructions.

5.4 The meeting acknowledged that callsign confusion is a documented contributor to Global High-Risk Categories of Occurrence (G-HRCs) such as runway incursions and mid-air collisions, as outlined in ICAO Doc 10004 (GASP 2023–2025). Alphanumeric callsigns significantly reduce this risk by increasing the uniqueness and clarity of each identifier.

5.5 The meeting recognized previous regional efforts, including MIDANPIRG Conclusion 15/2 and related follow-ups, which urged States to de-conflict similar callsigns and report occurrences. However, implementation remains limited across many States due to awareness gaps and system limitations.

5.6 The meeting was informed of the potential for broader stakeholder engagement, including ANSPs, airlines, and airport operators, to support the transition to alphanumeric callsigns. Examples were provided of successful implementation by some operators, demonstrating reduced callsign similarity through strategic use of letters and numbers.

5.7 The meeting encouraged States to promote the use of alphanumeric callsigns as a proactive safety measure and include related actions National Aviation Safety Plans as deemed necessary.

The Adoption of Annex 14 Recommended Practices as National Standards

5.8 The subject was addressed in WP/29, presented by ACI.

5.9 The meeting was briefed on the outcomes of the ICAO APAC Workshop on the Transposition of Annex 14 SARPs into National Standards, held in Langkawi in February 2025. The discussion highlighted the challenges faced by aerodrome operators when ICAO Annex 14 Recommended Practices are adopted as binding national standards without adequate technical assessment or regulatory impact analysis.

5.10 The meeting noted that such unqualified adoption may lead to significant compliance burdens, particularly when infrastructure modifications are required in constrained environments with limited safety benefit. ACI emphasized that this practice can misdirect national resources from higher-priority safety initiatives and training programmes.

5.11 The meeting noted with appreciation the draft "Guidance on the Transposition of ICAO Annex 14 SARPs" developed by the ICAO APAC AP-ADO Task Force (Appendix A to the working paper). The guidance provides a structured process for reviewing, adopting, and implementing SARPs—including mechanisms for industry engagement, regulatory consultation, and the filing of differences to ICAO.

5.12 The meeting encouraged States to adopt a risk-based and consultative approach when

transposing ICAO Annex 14 Recommended Practices into national regulations. The draft guidance provided in **Appendix 5A** may serve as a reference to help ensure proportionality, practicality, and stakeholder engagement in the national rulemaking process. Consideration should be given to developing similar region-specific guidance reflecting the needs and contexts of MID States.

--------END-------