



ASSEMBLY — 36TH SESSION

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Agenda Item 13: Progress report on the implementation of the ICAO Universal Safety Oversight Audit Programme (USOAP) under the comprehensive systems approach

VISION FOR THE FUTURE OF USOAP FOLLOWING COMPLETION OF THE CURRENT AUDIT CYCLE (2005-2010)

(Presented by the United States)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This working paper addresses the nature of USOAP that should emerge at the conclusion of the current audit cycle in 2010. It is in accord with a European proposal initially made at the ICAO Directors General of Civil Aviation Conference on a Global Strategy for Aviation Safety held in Montreal in March 2006 in proposing the incorporation of safety risk analysis on a universal basis in the conduct of the future USOAP. ICAO's collection of a massive amount of data through two audit cycles and one audit follow-up cycle will greatly aid ICAO in performing such analyses and continuously monitoring State compliance in a more efficient and at least equally effective manner.

Action: The Assembly is invited to:

- a) endorse this concept in principle;
- b) direct the Council to re-design USOAP along these lines in the following triennium so ICAO's new safety risk analysis-based "continuous monitoring" activity can commence in 2011; and
- c) adopt the Resolution contained in the Appendix to achieve these purposes.

<i>Strategic Objectives:</i>	This working paper relates to Strategic Objective A — <i>Enhance global civil aviation safety.</i>
<i>Financial implications:</i>	Not applicable.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 From its beginnings as a voluntary assessment program in 1995, ICAO's compliance monitoring efforts have subsequently evolved into a full-scale mandatory, universal audit program that now encompasses most of the safety-related Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs) in 16 of the 18 Annexes to the Chicago Convention. Throughout this evolution, ICAO's primary goal has not been materially altered, i.e., to provide Contracting States with sufficient information so they can make well-informed judgments about the compliance status of other States. Such audit results can be used by States, for example, when they attempt to fulfill their obligations under Article 33 of the Chicago Convention with respect to recognizing (or not) the validity of licenses and certificates issued by other States as well as the new Annex 6 — *Operation of Aircraft* Standard that involves recognition of an air operator certificate (AOC). Given the important uses of this information by States, it is therefore important that this information be reliable, timely, and address the most critical aspects of State safety oversight systems.

1.2 At the ICAO Directors General of Civil Aviation Conference on a Global Strategy for Aviation Safety held in Montreal in March 2006, the member States of the European Community and the European Civil Aviation Conference (ECAC), along with the European Organisation for the Safety of Air Navigation (EUROCONTROL), addressed the issue of improving ICAO's working methods with respect to its Universal Safety Oversight Audit Programme. One of the recommendations in their working paper (DGCA/06-WP/11) exhorted ICAO to "intensify further its investigating activities under the USOAP programme by prioritizing more frequent and focused audits according to the significance of SARPs to aviation safety and to the associated risk factors." The aim of this proposal was to enhance the relevance, timeliness, reliability and therefore usefulness of USOAP audit results. No action was taken on this matter by the Conference.

2. DISCUSSION

2.1 It is timely now to re-consider the substance of this proposal and its implications for the nature of the USOAP programme that should emerge at the conclusion of the current six-year audit cycle in 2010. If this Assembly endorses significant changes to USOAP, as proposed in this working paper, ICAO will have sufficient time to re-engineer the program and its working methods in time to commence operations in 2011.

2.2 By the end of the current cycle in 2010, ICAO will have amassed and made available to States on an automated basis a tremendous amount of data about State compliance with the safety-related provisions in 16 Annexes. Such data are derived from the audit protocols prepared by ICAO audit teams, the State Aviation Activity Questionnaires (SAAQ), and the Compliance Checklists (CC). States are obligated to periodically update the latter two documents on a continuing basis.

2.3 Given the creation of this valuable baseline, ICAO's audit efforts, beginning in 2011, should evolve into a "continuous monitoring" activity comprised of the following two key interdependent components:

- a) the first key component is continuous data collection, beginning with that acquired by ICAO through two audit cycles and one audit follow-up cycle; State updating of SAAQ/CC data; ICAO regional office inputs; and, when deemed necessary, on-site audit visits; and

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- b) the second key component is safety risk analysis. ICAO should develop and universally apply specific safety risk factors to all ICAO Contracting States on a continuing basis, thus continuing to honor the USOAP principle of universality. This data-driven approach would be crucial to determining the need for and timing of additional data collection in targeted areas, either through the use of actual on-site audit visits or other effective means. Emphasis would continue to be placed on verification of data and corrective measures taken by States.

2.4 The current focus on States' overall safety oversight capabilities would be maintained and careful attention would also still be paid to "exportable activities" (those that involve the international movement of aviation personnel and aircraft) addressed in the provisions of Annexes 1 — *Personnel Licensing*, 6 — *Operation of Aircraft*, and 8 — *Airworthiness of Aircraft*. USOAP's primary goal – to provide Contracting States with sufficient information so they can make well-informed judgments about the compliance status of other States – would not change. To that end, the results of ICAO's "continuous monitoring" activity would always be available to States, as now, on ICAO's secure web-site.

3. CONCLUSION

3.1 The application of a system safety approach, involving the development and application of safety risk factors to the matter of State safety oversight, is a more appropriate and certainly more efficient auditing approach that should be applied by ICAO in its conduct of USOAP following the completion of the current audit cycle. It will result in a sharper focus on the most pressing safety concerns identified in States and lead to their more timely resolution, thus enhancing international aviation safety.

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APPENDIX

**DRAFT RESOLUTION FOR ADOPTION BY THE 36TH SESSION OF THE ASSEMBLY
(to supersede Resolution A35-6)**

**COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEMS APPROACH OF THE FUTURE:
ICAO UNIVERSAL SAFETY OVERSIGHT AUDIT PROGRAMME (USOAP)**

Whereas the primary objective of the Organization continues to be that of ensuring the safety of international civil aviation worldwide;

Whereas promoting the implementation of international standards contributes to this objective;

Whereas Article 37 of the Convention requires each Contracting State to collaborate in securing the highest practicable degree of uniformity in regulations and practices in all matters in which such uniformity will facilitate and improve air navigation;

Recalling that the 32nd ordinary Session of the Assembly resolved that a universal safety oversight audit programme be established, comprising regular, mandatory, systematic and harmonized safety oversight audits to be carried out by ICAO;

Whereas the ICAO Universal Safety Oversight Audit Programme (USOAP) has been successful in meeting the mandate given by Resolution A32-11;

Recalling the objectives of the ICAO Universal Safety Oversight Audit Programme, which seeks to ensure that Contracting States are adequately discharging their responsibility for safety oversight;

Recalling that ultimate responsibility for safety oversight rests with Contracting States, who shall continuously review their respective safety oversight capabilities;

Recognizing that the implementation of the comprehensive systems approach for the USOAP has been instrumental in the identification of safety concerns and in providing recommendations for their resolution;

Recognizing that the effective implementation of State action plans is essential to enhance the overall safety of global air navigation;

Recognizing that the 35th ordinary Session of the Assembly, in Resolution A35-6, requested the Secretary General to adopt a more flexible approach in the implementation of the Programme on a long-term basis;

Recognizing the consequent need to address the future nature and direction of the USOAP following the completion of the current audit cycle in 2010;

The Assembly:

1. *Expresses* its appreciation to the Secretary General on the successful implementation of the comprehensive systems approach for the ICAO Universal Safety Oversight Audit Programme (USOAP);
2. *Directs* the Council to make appropriate changes to USOAP to incorporate safety risk factor analysis principles and apply them on a universal basis in a new continuous monitoring role to assess, on an on-going basis, States' compliance with their oversight obligations;
3. *Directs* the Council to ensure that the continuous monitoring role, to be implemented beginning at the end of the current audit cycle in 2010, continue to maintain as core elements the key safety provisions contained in Annex 1 – *Personnel Licensing*, Annex 6 – *Operation of Aircraft*, Annex 8 – *Airworthiness of Aircraft*, Annex 11 – *Air Traffic Services*, Annex 13 – *Aircraft Accident and Incident Investigation*, and Annex 14 – *Aerodromes*;
4. *Urges* all Contracting States to submit to ICAO in a timely manner, and keep up-to-date, all the information and documentation associated with USOAP and to be provided to ICAO, to ensure the effective and efficient implementation of the Programme;
5. *Declares* that Resolution A35-6: *Transition to a comprehensive systems approach for audits in the ICAO Universal Safety Oversight Audit Programme (USOAP)* has been superseded by this Resolution;
6. *Requests* the Council to report to the next ordinary Session of the Assembly on the overall implementation plans for this new auditing approach to commence in 2011.

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