



DANGEROUS GOODS PANEL (DGP) WORKING GROUP MEETING (DGP-WG/17)

Montreal, 24 to 28 April 2017

Agenda Item 6: Other business

COORDINATION WITH THE UN SUB-COMMITTEE OF EXPERTS ON THE TRANSPORT OF DANGEROUS GOODS

(Presented by the Secretary)

SUMMARY

This information paper provides an update on an Air Navigation Commission (ANC) review of progress related to mitigating risks posed by lithium batteries and its subsequent report to Council on the subject. It highlights concerns raised with respect to whether aviation safety needs were being adequately addressed by the United Nations Economic and Social Council's (ECOSOC) Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods.

1. During its consideration of the report of the twenty-fifth meeting of the Dangerous Goods Panel (DGP/25) (ANC 201-6), the Air Navigation Commission (ANC) identified a need for periodic updates on progress related to mitigating risks posed by lithium batteries aimed at lifting the prohibition on their transport as cargo on passenger aircraft. Furthermore, the Council, during its review of the DGP/25 Report and its consideration of the ANC's recommendations related to lithium batteries (C-DEC 207/5), directed the ANC to specifically monitor the progress of work relating to the development by SAE International of the performance-based packaging standard for lithium batteries, the development by ICAO of provisions and supporting guidance material for operators to conduct safety risk assessments, and the improvement of transparency of shipments of lithium batteries. Accordingly, the ANC reviewed the developments related to mitigating risks related to the safe transport of lithium batteries by air (AN 203-2) and reported its review to the Council (C-DEC 209/5).
2. During its review, the ANC expressed concerns with respect to the way provisions for dangerous goods were developed and whether aviation safety needs were being adequately addressed by the United Nations Economic and Social Council's (ECOSOC) Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods. Specifically, concerns with hazard communication and the lack of a mechanism to confirm whether batteries have been safely manufactured were raised. The Council, noting these concerns, requested the ANC to examine options for a mechanism to better address these issues in a comprehensive manner and requested a letter be dispatched to the UN ECOSOC emphasizing the need for that body to take them into account. A letter was subsequently sent from the President of the Council to the President of ECOSOC. It is provided in the attachment for the information of the DGP.

APPENDIX

LETTER FROM PRESIDENT OF ICAO COUNCIL TO PRESIDE OF ECOSOC



International
Civil Aviation
Organization

Organisation
de l'aviation civile
internationale

Organización
de Aviación Civil
Internacional

Международная
организация
гражданской
авиации

منظمة الطيران
المدني الدولي

国际民用
航空组织

THE PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL

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E 2/2

9 March 2017

H.E. Frederick Musiiwa Makamure Shava
President
United Nations Economic and Social
Council
UN Headquarters
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United States
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Excellency,

I have the honour to inform you of discussions by the Council of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) related to risks associated with the transport of lithium batteries by air. The global air cargo system is a complex and multifaceted network of people, products, procedures and information exchanges involving all modes of transport. As the United Nations (UN) Agency responsible for the safety of civil aviation, ICAO must collaborate with entities both internal and external to the aviation industry to ensure cargo is transported safely by air. In this respect, the ICAO Council has expressed concerns with whether aviation safety risks are being adequately addressed by the United Nations Economic and Social Council's (ECOSOC) Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods.

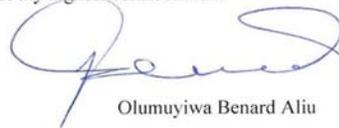
The degree of risk posed by lithium batteries is dependent on many variables including cell or battery chemistry, size, design and manufacturer. Some batteries pose very little hazard while others may contribute to a catastrophic event during an in-flight incident. Despite these varied risks, the ECOSOC Committee requires they be classified under only two major groups, lithium ion or lithium metal. Additionally, it considers a particular cell or battery type safe based on whether it has passed required design type tests, but does not impose any method to prove that these tests have been passed. The lack of a mechanism to identify and communicate specific hazards and confirm whether batteries have been safely manufactured makes it impossible for airline operators to adequately assess whether a consignment of batteries can be transported safely by air. It is for this reason that the Council applied the prohibition from transport by air to all lithium batteries, regardless of the degree of risk various sizes and types pose.

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ICAO technical experts have raised these concerns to the ECOSOC Sub-Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods, and I am pleased to hear that they will be discussed under a new item on electric storage systems that has been added to the 2017-2018 work programme of the sub-committee. However, as there may be new risks in the future as new products and technologies are developed, we need jointly to ensure that such problems as encountered with safely transporting lithium batteries are avoided.

The ICAO Council's ongoing mission is to support and enable a global air transport network that meets or surpasses the social and economic development and broader connectivity needs of global businesses and passengers. While its objective is to do so without unnecessarily impacting on efficiency or convenience, safety must be aviation's first and overriding priority. The safety of passengers and crew, as well as people on the ground, depends on our continued efforts to ensure hazards are accurately identified and risks mitigated accordingly. I wish to express my appreciation for the work being done by the ECOSOC Committee, and it is my hope that the Committee will continue to collaborate with ICAO to ensure aviation safety needs are being adequately addressed in the future.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.



Olumuyiwa Benard Aliu

cc: Ms. Leslie Wade
Chief, ECOSOC and Interorganizational Cooperation Branch
Department of Economic and Social Affairs

Mr. Olivier Kervella
Chief, Dangerous Goods and Special Cargoes Section
United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

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