

**58th CONFERENCE OF
DIRECTORS GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION
ASIA AND PACIFIC REGIONS**

*Dhaka, Bangladesh
15 to 19 October 2023*

AGENDA ITEM 9: UPDATES

**REFLECTIONS ON SHAPING BETTER SKY OF THE FUTURE
APAC REGION**

(Presented by the Republic of Korea)

INFORMATION PAPER

SUMMARY

This paper is to elaborate the strong commitment of the Republic of Korea by sharing its views and reflections on how the APAC region can better be connected and harmonized through more effective, efficient and cohesive collaboration, cooperation and coordination. As the advocator of the ICAO's No Country Left Behind (NCLB) initiative, the Republic of Korea encourages each fellow member State of the APAC region to continue its own efforts to communicate and share innovative ideas on how to foster regional presence and representation in the global aviation community toward the utmost future sky of the APAC region by prioritizing and expediting ratification of the Protocol relating to an Amendments to the *Convention on International Civil Aviation*, Articles 50 (a) adopted by the ICAO Assembly in 2016 to expand the opportunity of regional representation at the ICAO Council.

REFLECTIONS ON SHAPING BETTER SKY OF THE FUTURE APAC REGION

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Conference is invited to recall the Republic of Korea's proposal at the 57th Conference in 2022 to establish a more systematic and regular consultation mechanism as the form of the APAC Civil Aviation Commission, to strengthen region-wide cooperation and representation in the ICAO Council for better response toward issues on strategic policies in global aviation to reap the most benefits of the APAC based on common goals and interests.

1.2 Following the decision by the 57th APAC DGCA in July 2022 that the RCM TF is to assess the feasibility of establishing an Asia and Pacific Regional Civil Aviation Commission (APCAC), the Republic of Korea has been actively participating in the discussion with fifteen RCM TF member States/Administrations and the ICAO APAC Regional Office.

1.3 Two main activities newly tasked to RCM TF were a) to develop the APAC Regional Training Cooperation Framework to address identified training needs and priorities in the region for regional capacity building overcoming the lack of resources and qualified aviation personnel, and b) to assess the feasibility of establishing an APCAC through three parts of the processing; Part I. Information-gathering about a Civil Aviation Commission (CAC); Part II. Identifying the challenges and opportunities; and Part III. Assessment of the feasibility of an APCAC.

1.4 Reflecting on the work done by the RCM TF, this paper shares how the Republic of Korea, the active participant of the two main activities aforementioned, views challenges and opportunities faced by the region, and confirms its willingness and commitment to further contributing to any necessary means and supports for the good of fellow APAC member States, regardless of whatever direction the discussion may head to.

2. DISCUSSION

2.1 The Asia and Pacific region is regarded as the most diverse and faster-growing region, and believed to be the next biggest aviation economy in the world in the near future. Some say these merits are posing even bigger challenges hindering the region from effectively and efficiently collaborating and making things more complicated.

2.2 Even more broadly and globally speaking, the whole aviation sector has been confronting the ever evolving aviation landscape transforming itself toward the whole new aviation under the auspice of ICAO's strategic policies and initiatives with various activities for the interoperable, efficient, resilient and sustainable development of the international civil aviation transport.

2.3 **Challenges have to be addressed**

2.3.1 It is obvious the region has been challenged by the issues arising from fast advancing technologies, growing performance expectations, new market players, and environmental pressures by airspace users and the public. While it has been getting even more compelling, the APAC has no other option but to overcome challenges faced to accommodate increasing traffic demand safely and efficiently. As the APAC aviation industry is particularly paramount in socio-economic aspects, State authorities need to meet the needs to maintain sustainable development of the whole APAC economy.

2.3.2 Considering the whole context of rapidly shifting aviation and to make the APAC aviation better perform and continue to develop, now is the time to assess where the region stands and how to make things better and effective in implementing not only standards and recommended practices but also globally driven strategic policy agenda such as gender equality, transformation objectives, digitalization and cybersecurity, and the paradigm change from the legacy to the innovative future aviation systems.

2.4 **Reflections on Status quo in decision-making in the global aviation community**

2.4.1 Decision-making on standards and global strategic policy agenda has been led by rather small number of more developed States and allied organizations in aviation. In the middle of commencing phases of the paradigm-shift from the legacy toward the next generation, technical standardization driven by two major pivotal factors, new technologies, and environmental crisis, will have significant impacts and implications on the future aviation system requiring corresponding changes in States' regulatory governance.

2.4.2 It is also important to note that the tendency of stronger alliance between four Civil Aviation Commissions and coordinated influence and unanimous voting on strategic policies and initiatives if ICAO has been fortified representing their own good and benefits of respective region including securing the viable seats in the Council except for the APAC.

2.4.3 It is believed that strengthened regional representation for common benefits and interests will give more power and leverage in the decision-making process bringing more impacts and benefits to the region and member States.

2.5 **Are we really good as it is?**

2.5.1 Despite all the activities having been provided through various mechanisms and programmes under ICAO-supporting bodies, the USOAP CMA EI of the APAC region has still been remaining lower than the global average. In addition, implementation of performance expectations in the APAC Seamless ANS Plan aligned with the Global Air Navigation Plan, which is driving the modernization of the Air Navigation Systems with impacts on aviation industry, has been slowed down.

2.5.2 The result of the survey to identify common and evolving needs conducted by the RCM TF from June to July 2023, confirms that the region has experienced a lack of resources and technical expertise, and required further cooperation and collaboration at the regional level to foster capability and capacity development.

2.5.3 To better and effectively address the needs for enhancement of capacity building and technical supports in implementation, more systematic and collective approach would be required for the region to make the best outcome out of limited resources based on reassessment and reorganization of the existing resources and systems and to eliminate possible duplication of efforts.

2.6 **Collaborative One voices as ONE APAC: we stick together**

2.6.1 Responding to the fortified tendency of the alliance amongst four regional aviation commissions with one voice except for the APAC region, it should be highly desirable and deliverable if the APAC has a collective voice as "ONE APAC" to serve our common interests and benefits of the region.

2.6.2 With the stronger representation commensurate with importance and stature of the APAC as the biggest aviation market, there should be more APAC States in the Council of the ICAO to lead the strategic agenda for the best positive outcomes in favor of the region. As sooner or later, at the 42nd or 43rd ICAO Assembly, the four more seats for the Representatives of the ICAO Council is to be added with the 128 ratifications of the Protocol to an amendment to the *Convention on International Civil Aviation* [Article 50(a)].

2.6.3 And the APAC would better be fully prepared having the best strategic response plan to leverage this opportunity to the maximum extent.

- Only 13 out of 39 APAC States have ratified the Protocol as of September 2023

CONCLUSION

2.7 **What's most important is securing the best common interests of the region**

2.7.1 To this end, the most viable and feasible choice we have is a collective, coherent and sustainable mechanism that can allows the entire region to keep pace with the fast changing aviation landscape stemming from technical innovations for the future aviation system in a safe, secure, efficient, resilient and timely manner.

2.7.2 The Republic of Korea is not only a true believer of the idea that the APAC region has potential strengths and capabilities to better cooperate and collaborate responding effectively to emerging challenges and issues surrounding us, but also a committed contributor to the supporting activities for the region to better perform and address these emerging challenges and issues in ever-evolving global aviation ecosystem supporting “No Country Left Behind” initiative of the ICAO.

2.7.3 The Conference is encouraged to facilitate the active discussion and consideration among the APAC member States to explore all the options and possibilities in hand that can allow the region to have the best benefits and opportunities.

3. ACTION BY THE CONFERENCE

3.1 The Conference is invited to note the information contained in this Paper.

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