

## MEASURES TO PREVENT TERRORIST FROM ACQUIRING WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION

### INPUT FROM THE INTERNATIONAL CIVIL AVIATION ORGANIZATION (ICAO)

The activities of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) are focused on enhancing aviation security worldwide through the implementation of uniform measures designed to prevent acts of unlawful interference with civil aviation. While the Organization has no specific measures to prevent terrorists from obtaining weapons of mass destruction, a number of provisions are intended to prevent aircraft hijackings and events similar to 9/11.

Since 11 September 2001, measures to enhance the security of the flight crew compartment have significantly improved the overall level of security on board aircraft. Requirements for hardened and locked flight deck doors help prevent unauthorized entry by unruly passengers or would-be hijackers. Other provisions contained in Annex 17 to the Chicago Convention, the document that specifies the Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs) for international aviation security, focus on the preflight screening of travellers and their carry-on items. Annex 17 is regularly updated, since the nature of the threat facing civil aviation is constantly evolving.

Consistent and worldwide implementation of the provisions of Annex 17 is critical to closing gaps in security, denying terrorists opportunities to exploit aviation. With this objective in mind, ICAO continues to promote compliance with Annex 17, in part by disseminating guidance material. An updated version of the ICAO Security Manual is being finalized, with two of the five volumes issued recently. Annex 17 itself is in the midst of being updated, with emphasis on specifying measures for addressing new and emerging threats.

In regard to the security of items to be carried in the aircraft cabin, detailed guidance material on restricting the carriage of liquids, aerosols and gels (LAGs) in aircraft cabins was distributed to States in 2008. The guidelines were initially developed in response to discovery of an alleged plot to sabotage aircraft in flight by assembling an explosive device comprised of hazardous ingredients carried in seemingly ordinary containers. Efforts are under way to develop and deploy new technology at airports capable of detecting hazardous substances within LAGs.

One key to preventing terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction is to concentrate on identifying terrorists at border crossings, and denying them the documents they require for international travel. ICAO continues to play a leading role in ensuring the security of travel documents, principally through its Machine Readable Travel Documents (MRTD) Programme. Under this programme, ICAO developed the worldwide standard for machine readable passports (MRPs); to date, more than 170 States have issued MRPs that comply with the ICAO Standard, and by 1 April 2010 all Member States must do so. In addition, progress continues to be made in developing and implementing measures aimed at enhancing the security of travel documents. In 2008, for example, ICAO disseminated updated specifications for issuing and reading electronic ID cards used for travel; these are contained in the third edition of *Machine Readable Travel Documents* (Doc 9303, Part 3). ICAO also continues to publish an electronic supplement to Doc 9303 updating information on security standards for MRTDs.

Dissemination and sharing of information on all aspects of MRTDs promotes awareness of ICAO MRTD standards and specifications, as well border control developments. ICAO views this activity as a priority, and continues to arrange seminars, exhibitions and workshops at both the worldwide and regional level. Beyond efforts to provide guidance and information, ICAO also offers direct assistance in implementing MRTD-related projects to States and international organizations.

Numerous other developments in the field of international civil aviation contribute to the fight against all acts of terrorism. For example, ICAO Assembly Resolution A36-19, adopted in September 2007, serves to strengthen the aviation community's efforts to address the threat posed to civil aviation by man-portable air defence systems (MANPADS). Among other things, the resolution urges ICAO Member States to take the necessary measures to exercise strict and effective controls on MANPADS and associated training and technologies, and directs ICAO to monitor the threat posed by MANPADS on an ongoing basis and to develop appropriate countermeasures.

Given the importance of effective communications and global coordination in responding to imminent threats to civil air transport operations, ICAO has established an Aviation Security Point of Contact (PoC) Network. The PoC network is comprised of aviation security officials authorized by each participating State to send and receive information concerning imminent threats. To date, 94 States have joined the worldwide network, and ICAO Assembly Resolution A36-20 urges all non-participating States to join as soon as possible.

The Universal Security Audit Programme (USAP), established in 2002 pursuant to ICAO Assembly Resolution A33-1 and strongly endorsed by Assembly Resolution A36-20, completed its first cycle of audits in December 2007. Overall, 181 Member States and one Special Administrative Region received audits during the initial cycle. As of 30 April 2009, audits of 31 Member States and one assessment of the European Commission aviation security inspection system had been completed under the second cycle of the programme, which is focused, wherever possible, on a State's capability to provide appropriate national oversight of its aviation security activities. The USAP audits have proven to be instrumental in the identification of aviation security concerns and in providing recommendations for their resolution. Follow-up missions take place two years after a first-cycle audit to validate the implementation of State corrective action plans and provide support in remedying deficiencies. These missions have validated a markedly increased level of implementation of ICAO security Standards, attesting to States' commitment to achieving the objective of USAP to strengthen aviation security worldwide, and thereby contributing directly to efforts to prevent international terrorism. In addition to continuing USAP audits and follow-up missions, cooperation with the United Nations Security Council Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC), which includes ICAO Secretariat involvement in a number of CTC on-site visits to assess States' compliance with the provisions of Security Council Resolution 1373 (2001), has been strengthened.

The 36th Session of the ICAO Assembly (2007) recognized that the enhancement of global civil aviation security remains a critical strategic objective of the Organization, and thus adopted Assembly Resolutions A36-18, *Financial contributions to the Aviation Security Plan of Action*, A36-19 and A36-20. The ICAO Implementation Support and Development (ISD) Programme continues to carry out this mandate by providing a coordinated approach to facilitate the provision of aviation security assistance and training. One major activity involves assistance to Member States in support of their efforts to comply with ICAO SARPs, provided in anticipation of future audits and to rectify deficiencies that have already been identified under USAP. In relation to audits conducted under USAP, an analysis of audit report data is made in order to prioritize assistance to States. Data from the analysis has led to the development of aviation security capacity building and infrastructure sustainability projects. These projects serve as the basis for short-term and potential long-term assistance. In 2008, the ISD Programme coordinated or provided direct assistance to 18 States. Also, in direct coordination with the United Nations Security Council Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED), the ISD Programme has begun to coordinate aviation security assistance to States referred by the CTED.

The ISD programme continues to support the efforts of States to resolve security deficiencies by seeking resources from States having assistance programmes and from industry partners and stakeholders. To this end, partnership and alliance activities involving States and international financial institutions

have been developed for implementation throughout 2009-2010. This collaboration has already given rise to the implementation of a common database of assistance projects for review by partners and States. The database is a reference for information on aviation safety and security assistance activities, and is designed to help identify complementary or overlapping assistance projects in order to eliminate redundancy and avoid duplication in development efforts.

Finally, the Organization continues to participate in the work of the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force.