

Global Pilots & Industry Partners Call for New Guidance on Drone Operations

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Important issue raised at ICAO's 40th Triennial Assembly in Montreal

Montreal, 5 October 2019 – The International Federation of Air Line Pilots' Associations (IFALPA) and its global aviation industry partners have addressed the pressing need for standards and guidance to address unauthorised drone operations to the 40th International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) Assembly.

ACI World, the Civil Air Navigation Services Organisation (CANSO), International Federation of Air Traffic Controllers' Associations (IFATCA), International Federation of Air Line Pilots' Associations (IFALPA) and International Air Transport Association (IATA) presented a paper – entitled The need for standards and guidance to mitigate the risks of, and to improve response to unauthorized UAS operations - which stated that disruption to airport operations by drones is a safety matter that requires urgent attention by ICAO, States and industry.

In addition to the safety risk which comes directly from unauthorized drone – or Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) – operations, several major airports have been shut down by drone sightings around the world and this major disruption has led to frustration for passengers and substantial economic costs.

The ICAO Assembly supported the working paper, recognizing the safety risks associated with the unauthorized presence of unmanned aircraft in close vicinity to commercial

aircraft and airports and noted the offer from industry to assist in drafting suitable guidance material.

The Assembly was invited to request ICAO to establish a process to allow the industry to provide input to mitigate the risks of, and improve government and industry responses to, unauthorized drone operations, such as:

- developing guidance material
- developing a generic concept of operation that could be used by States to establish procedures, and,
- defining taxonomy related to UAS incidents and accidents.

ICAO noted the offer of the industry to assist in drafting the above guidance material.

"It is critical that all States address the risk to aviation safety due to the unauthorized use of drones in controlled airspace," says IFALPA President Captain Jack Netskar. "IFALPA has already produced some guidance material aimed at flight crew on what to do when a drone is reported or encountered with specific actions that can reduce the risk of a collision. We believe a collective effort by industry and regulators to mitigate these risks will lead to a harmonized set of standards and guidance for all stakeholders to implement."

"The issue of unauthorized drone incursions is a clear and present risk to airport operations around the world," ACI World Director General Angela Gittens said. "ACI is ready to join our industry partners to work with ICAO in drafting new international guidance material which builds upon existing standard, guidance, and regulations to protect operations and assist airports in responding to incidents. The industry needs harmonized processes for the detection of - and counter measures against - unauthorized drone operations that may interfere with international aviation."

IFATCA President & CEO Duncan Auld said, "Air Traffic Controllers require clearer procedures for the handling of unauthorized UAS. Controllers are expected to make informed decisions based on established rules, without any ambiguity. A risk-based procedure will allow more practical management of these situations, where often the complete closure of an airport introduces significant complexity and associated risk into the ATM system."

In addition, the Assembly reviewed a paper – entitled UAS Traffic Management – which was presented by ACI, IFALPA, IFATCA, and the International Coordinating Council of Aerospace Industries Associations (ICCAIA). The Assembly recognized the value of ICAO’s activities towards the development of a common framework for UAS traffic management and recommended that ICAO be urged to accelerate and expand its work on the development of a full regulatory framework for this.

The Assembly reviewed an additional paper – entitled The safe and efficient integration of UAS into airspace - presented by CANSO, IATA, IFALPA, which outlined the expected growth of the UAS sector, and requested ICAO to consider establishing a framework through which it can work with industry on developing provisions for new airspace entrants. The Assembly agreed that UAS should be a key focus of the assessment on new entrants that the Assembly will submit for the consideration of the Council.

NOTE TO EDITORS

IFALPA The International Federation of Air Line Pilots’ Associations represents more than 100,000 pilots in nearly 100 countries around the globe. The mission of IFALPA is to promote the highest level of aviation safety worldwide and to be the global advocate of the piloting profession; providing representation, services and support to both our members and the aviation industry.

Airports Council International (ACI) the trade association of the world’s airports, was founded in 1991 with the objective of fostering cooperation among its member airports and other partners in world aviation, including the International Civil Aviation Organization, the International Air Transport Association and the Civil Air Navigation Services Organization. In representing the best interests of airports during key phases of policy development, ACI makes a significant contribution toward ensuring a global air transport system that is safe, secure, efficient and environmentally sustainable. As of January 2019, ACI serves 646 members, operating 1,960 airports in 176 countries.

IFATCA is the recognised international organisation representing air traffic controller associations. The Federation has been representing air traffic controllers for more than 50 years and has more than 50,000 members in over 125 countries.

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