

**Concept Note on the
Second Asia Pacific Ministerial Conference on Civil Aviation
(Delhi, India, from 11 to 12 September 2024)**

1. Recognizing the need to coordinate aviation matters of regional and global importance and foster collaboration on a common platform to harmonize regional aviation growth, a monumental step forward was taken by the Ministers of civil aviation in the Asia and Pacific States in 2018 when they met in Beijing, China at the first Ministerial Conference on Civil Aviation and endorsed the Beijing Declaration.
2. The Beijing Declaration underscored the commitment of the region to achieve the globally mandated goals and regional targets in Aviation Safety and Air Navigation Services as well as addressed the obligations in establishing independent Accident Investigation Authorities and key aspects of Human Resources Development.
3. While some of the Beijing Declaration commitments have had reasonable level of achievement, for instance, 'Certification of all aerodromes used for international operations by 2020' where 326 out of 355 aerodromes used for international operations corresponding to 91.83 per cent of aerodromes used for international operations have been certified as of 21 November 2023, the majority of the targets related to safety and air navigation fall short of the expectations, attributable mainly to the devastating COVID-19 pandemic outbreak, which forced the global civil aviation in to a deep crisis.
4. Aviation contributes to building resilient and sustainable infrastructures as envisioned by the *U.N. 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, as its infrastructure connects people to jobs, markets, education, health care, and each other. This is in line with the mandate of ICAO, which through its normative work, oversight and implementation support serves the people of the world in facilitating international civil air transport that is safe, secure, efficient, economically viable and environmentally responsible.
5. The contribution of air transport towards sustainable economic and social development of every nation is undisputed. The global air transport sector supports 65.5 million jobs and \$2.7 trillion in global economic activity, according to pre-pandemic research by the Air Transport Action Group (ATAG).
6. According to ICAO's annual global statistics, the total number of passengers carried on scheduled services had risen to 4.5 billion in 2019, which was 3.6 per cent higher than in 2018, while the number of departures reached 38.3 million, a 1.7 per cent increase. That level of air traffic performance plummeted to 1.8 billion passengers in 2020 which was 60.1 percent lower than 2019 and the number of departures declined to 20.3 million, a 47.1 per cent decline, to recall the grim reality of the day.

7. Four years on since the crisis, ICAO's latest data analysis reveals that air traffic on most routes globally had already reached or surpassed pre-pandemic levels by the end of 2023, which tallies with ICAO's earlier prediction of a recovery of passenger air traffic to around 95 percent of 2019 pre-pandemic levels by the end of 2023. In the first quarter of 2024, ICAO projects that passenger air traffic levels will be around 2% higher than in 2019.

8. Of the 8,686 billion global passenger RPKs (total scheduled revenue passenger-kilometers) performed by airlines in 2019, Asia and Pacific accounted for the highest portion with 34.7 per cent taking the top spot, while posting a second highest annual traffic growth rate of 5.2 per cent. Through the post pandemic recovery process, Asia Pacific has shown that the region can revert to its pre-pandemic performance once again by recording 1343 billion RPKs by region of departures in the second half of 2023, which was the highest by any region with a consolidated 32.7 percent stake of the global total. The total departures originated in the Asia Pacific region reached 10,827,631, in 2023, which is 33.41 percent of the global total departures, thereby recording the highest in all regions.

9. While the aviation industry in the Region showing promising signs to regain its stature, the Universal Safety Oversight Audit Programme – Continuous Monitoring Approach (USOAP – CMA) of ICAO and reviews by other international bodies indicate that several Contracting States in the APAC region have not yet shown the ability to establish an effective national safety oversight system, which raises some concerns. As of March 2024, 19 out of the 37 States in the Asia Pacific region, which were audited had an Effective Implementation (EI) of ICAO Standards lower than the global average of 68.87 per cent. Within Asia and Pacific, only 65 per cent of States have reached the target of 60 per cent EI with an overall regional average EI of 65.48 per cent. This seeming contradiction that the APAC region will regain and represent the expected highest rate of air traffic growth as well as the region with the highest number of low EI States is a difficult challenge which needs priority attention.

10. ICAO reported to the ICAO's 41 Assembly session in September/October 2022, the work accomplished by the Organization to assist the States, not only to navigate through the difficult times for resilience but also maintain the required level of safety and security standards uncompromised, amidst a globally challenging environment in the 2020 – 2022 triennium. In particular, the 2023-2025 edition of the Global Aviation Safety Plan (GASP) endorsed by the 41st Assembly session is significant, which sets forth the global strategy for the continuous improvement of aviation safety.

11. The new edition of the GASP maintains some key elements from its previous edition, such as the six goals and the five high-risk categories of occurrences, while the dates of completion of some targets were extended, as well as new targets were added to better support States and regions setting the strategic direction for the management of aviation safety.

12. The ICAO's 41st Assembly session adopted Resolution A41-24, '*Aviation Contribution towards the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*'. The new Resolution notably encourages Members States to enhance their efforts around collaboration and effective partnerships in support of development of civil aviation in particular considering the special needs and characteristics of LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS, through development assistance, South-South and triangular cooperation and implementation of assistance programmes aimed at enhancing these countries' air transport systems.

13. Building consensus for furtherance of global civil aviation under the framework of UN SDGs will demonstrate States' commitment to support the United Nations common global sustainable development efforts as well as strengthen ICAO's 'No Country Left Behind' (NCLB) initiative driven collaboratively by the member States.

14. In light of the foregoing, it is considered that 2024 would be highly opportune to convene the Second Asia and Pacific Ministers Conference on Civil Aviation to consolidate the Asia and Pacific regional aviation collaboration and cooperation founded six years ago in 2018 in Beijing, China and declare the futuristic vision and priorities for civil aviation of the Asia and Pacific region including promoting a culture of innovation.

15. Given the circumstances, Government of India has confirmed to host the Second Asia Pacific Ministerial Conference on Civil Aviation in Delhi, India from 11-12 September 2024, honoring the offer made at the First Ministerial Conference in 2018. The Conference will provide the setting at political level for the Asia and Pacific States to declare the vision of the region to manage aviation safety towards a resilient and dynamic Asia Pacific air transport system post-pandemic. The ICAO APAC Regional Office is closely working with the Ministry of Civil Aviation, Government of India to develop and finalize the programme and other logistics for the Conference. Both the President of the ICAO Council and the ICAO Secretary General have been invited to participate.