

Trip Report: ICAO Second High Level Safety Conference--HLSC 2015

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ISASI was represented as an approved International Observer Organization at the HLSC 2015 meeting held at ICAO headquarters in Montreal, Canada, from 02 to 05 February 2015. I was designated Chief Observer and Bob MacIntosh and Nick Stoss were designated Observers on behalf of ISASI. This was the first ICAO meeting attended by ISASI since its Observer status was approved in February 2013.

Seven hundred and twenty aviation safety experts from 120 countries and 35 international organizations attended the meeting. One hundred Working Papers (WP) and 40 Information Papers (IP) were submitted by ICAO, Member States and Observer Organizations. WPs 101 to 107, produced at the meeting, contained summaries of the discussions, conclusions and recommendations developed during the meeting. WP 108 contains the Montreal Declaration on Planning for Aviation Safety Improvement. All documents are posted on ICAO's website at <http://www.icao.int/Meetings/HLSC2015/Pages/default.aspx>.

The meeting opened Monday morning with two Information Sessions on the subjects of: *Protecting Safety Information, Safety Management Activities and Initiatives, and Emerging Issues*. Monday afternoon involved presentations of WPs and discussions about *Achievements and Remaining Work* primarily based on the first HLSC held in April 2010 (HLSC 2010), and the GASP (2014-2016) *Global Aviation Safety Plan, Doc 10004*, which was endorsed by the 38th Session of the ICAO Assembly and published in 2013. The GASP, in conjunction with the ICAO *Global Air Navigation Plan* (GANP, Doc 9750), forms the global strategic directions for safety and air navigation, allowing States and aviation stakeholders to anticipate and efficiently manage air traffic growth while proactively maintaining or increasing safety. It was reported during this session that, of the forty-eight recommendations of the HLSC 2010, thirty-three have been completed, and fifteen are on going.

Tuesday morning WPs on the subject of *Emerging Safety Issues* were presented and discussed. The primary themes of this session

involved *Global Tracking of Aircraft and Operations near Conflict Zones*, both of which emerged from the occurrences involving Malaysian MH370 that is missing and MH17 that was shot down over Ukraine. Both topics generated considerable support for ICAO to promulgate new Standards. It was during the discussions about worldwide flight tracking that the ISASI delegation made its first intervention as follows:

Mr. Chairman, for this opportunity to comment. The membership of the International Society of Air Safety Investigators fully supports the concepts of performance based solutions to worldwide aircraft tracking as presented In Working Papers 2, 48, 49 and 50. Our membership's mission of accident investigation must have evidence. Without hard evidence, we find ourselves unable to identify causal factors and complete the full spectrum of safety recommendations to preclude recurrence of similar accidents and serious incidents. We encourage the concepts proposed here today to further enhance global flight tracking of aircraft and look forward to continuing ICAO action with appropriate urgency. Thank you.

The Tuesday afternoon agenda addressed *State Safety Programs*, which is more related to regulators than investigators, although investigators must be knowledgeable about such requirements as part of their investigations.

Wednesday morning, WPs were presented discussed on the subjects of *Safety Information Protection and Safety Information Sharing*. It was during the discussions on safety information sharing that ISASI made its second intervention as follows:

Mr. Chairman. ISASI supports WP39 and the general concept regarding sharing of safety data as a proactive means of preventing accidents and incidents, as long as the proper protections are in place, as discussed in other Working Papers.

However, as many of the members of ISASI are aware, including many air safety investigators in this room today, sometimes the proactive prevention measures fail and an accident occurs.

One of the most important products of our investigations are safety recommendations developed to prevent future accidents. Sharing of such recommendations and any safety actions taken is very important.

As raised in paragraph 3.3 of WP39, ISASI supports the development of an ICAO global database of safety recommendations. ISASI also supports the proposals in paragraph 4.1 of WP39: that the Conference support the establishment of a global safety recommendations database and recommend ICAO to take appropriate actions for the development and management of such a database.

This very subject was raised at the AIG/08 Divisional Meeting in WP42 submitted by ISASI, which urged ICAO to make available, in a database at ICAO, safety recommendations resulting from States' investigations, as well as the safety actions taken, or the reasons why safety actions were not taken.

A recommendation adopted at AIG/08 urged ICAO to "support the establishment of a global safety recommendations database and ICAO to take appropriate actions for development and management of such a database."

We note a State Letter issued in September 2011, contained a definition of a Safety recommendation of Global Concern, and instructed States to forward such recommendations to ICAO for posting on the Flight Safety Information website. Further, ICAO Doc 9756, part 4, Manual for Aircraft Accident and Incident Investigation, contains similar instructions, as well as excellent guidance about developing and publishing safety recommendations.

We also note that there is a link on the AIG portion of the ICAO website for "safety recommendations of global concern"; however, it shows to be "under construction and coming soon."

ISASI trusts that the results of this meeting will move us forward in an expeditious manner to the establishment of a database of safety recommendations of global concern at ICAO for the purpose of sharing safety information that illustrates the lessons learned from previous accident/incident investigations. - Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The above concept was first raised by the ISASI delegation to ICAO for AIG/08 in WP 42. Although ICAO moved forward and requested States to forward safety recommendations and actions taken or not taken in a specific format to ICAO, the effort stalled because of staffing shortages in the AIG section. Following the ISASI intervention, Marcus de Costa, Chief of the AIG section, approached the ISASI delegation and thanked us for the support, which should facilitate the necessary staffing to complete this important task.

Wednesday afternoon, WPs on the subject of *Evolution of the Global Aviation Safety Plan (GASP)* were presented and discussions followed on this topic. This was followed by the introduction of WPs and discussion of *Effective and Efficient Regional Cooperation*. This topic carried over until Thursday morning. The last topic on the agenda involved a report of the meeting, including discussions and approval of a *Summary of Decisions and Recommendations*.

The ISASI delegation elected to attend the Thursday afternoon "side event" on the subject of *Current Initiatives to Assist Accident Victims and Their Families*. At this session ICAO and a few States made presentations about existing relevant legislation and regulation, along with recent developments aimed at improving the assistance to accident victims and their families.

As with most international forums and meetings, there was ample opportunity for our ISASI delegation to establish contact with executives interested in the ISASI mission and prospective individual or corporate membership. A list of those prospects has been created and information packets will be forwarded to them along with invitational material for the 2015 International Seminar in Augsburg, Germany.

In summary, many of the topics discussed at the HLSC and many of the conclusions and recommendation developed during the meeting pertain directly to the goals and objectives of ISASI. The summary of discussions, conclusions, and recommendations can be found at: <http://www.icao.int/Meetings/HLSC2015/Pages/summary-of-discussions.aspx>. Further, the *Declaration on Planning for Aviation Safety Improvement* can be found on the HLSC website link at: <http://www.icao.int/Meetings/HLSC2015/Pages/declaration-and-recommendations.aspx>.

Several of the recommendations developed during the meeting will eventually be handed off for action to the Accident Investigation Panel (AIGP) to be convened in April 2015, in Montreal.

ISASI has been invited and will participate in AIGP, which will be tasked with addressing certain recommendations from the HLSC 2015 and developing proposed Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs), as well as guidance materials for adoption and publication by ICAO.

The scope of the task cited in the Terms of Reference contained in a 15 December 2014, State Letter (SP 70/1-14/95) from ICAO states:

The AIGP will research and develop provisions for accident and incident investigations to allow for timely and effective investigations as set forth in Annex 13, and in support of the Global Aviation Safety Plan (GASP).

The objectives cited in the State Letter Terms of Reference are as follows:

- 1. Develop and maintain provisions for accident/incident investigations in support of the GASP;*
- 2. Consider new procedures, techniques and methodologies for investigations, proposing amendments to provisions and guidance as necessary;*

- 3. Review Attachment E to Annex 13, along with other relevant provisions, and determine measures to enhance the protection of safety information gathered during investigations, in particular of certain accident and incident records;*

- 4. Identify the category of serious incidents that could be precursors to, or associated with the types of accidents having the highest rate of fatalities (e.g. LOC-I; CFIT; runway incursion/excursion) and discuss strategies for investigating those incidents;*

- 5. Consider methodologies to assist States with limited resources to conduct large scale investigations, including regional accident and incident investigation organizations (RAIOs);*

- 6. Consider strengthening protection of accident and incident records, including development of guidance on protocols and agreements between accident investigation authorities and judicial authorities; and*

- 7. Progress provisions for accident/incident investigations involving remotely piloted aircraft systems (RPASs).*

In closing, the ICAO-ISASI WG will keep the ISASI Council and Membership informed about future activities of the WG with periodic updates.