

**57th CONFERENCE OF
DIRECTORS GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION
ASIA AND PACIFIC REGIONS**

*Incheon, Republic of Korea
4 – 8 July 2022*

AGENDA ITEM 9: UPDATES

**THE PORT MORESBY DECLARATION AND
MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**

Presented by Papua New Guinea and the Pacific Aviation Safety Office (PASO)

SUMMARY

The First Pacific Regional Aviation Ministers (RAMM1) Meeting was held virtually on 30th of June 2021, hosted by the Government of Papua New Guinea. RAMM2 was held also held virtually hosted by Cook Island on June 22nd 2022. This paper provides an update on the progress made by Pacific Island Forum States to prioritize aviation through the thematic theme of connectivity. The progress made also relates to Recommendations of the Pacific Small Island Developing States (PSIDS) that was conducted by ICAO in 2019.

THE PORT MORESBY DECLARATION AND MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Since the adoption of the Pacific Islands Civil Aviation Safety and Security Treaty (the PICASST) in 2004 – the International Treaty that establishes PASO – there was no Ministerial platform to advance the regional aviation needs of PASO Members. In 2018 this changed when the PASO Council¹ of Directors (the governing body of PASO) endorsed a Regional Aviation Ministers Meeting (RAMM) as an important mechanism to ultimately improving connectivity for all Pacific Nations. This important priority was further strengthened at the Pacific Islands Forum Leaders, who endorsed the RAMM to meet, consider and discuss aviation-specific matters of importance to the region, in particular aviation safety and security, compliance with International Civil Aviation Organisation standards and opportunities for increased connectivity. Papua New Guinea (PNG), who were also the Chair of PASO at the time, kindly offered to host the 1st Regional Aviation Ministers Meeting (RAMM1) since 2004.

1.2 However, the Pacific cannot work in isolation, thus from March to September 2019 the Pacific Small Islands Developing States (PSIDS) feasibility study was conducted by ICAO. The Study resulted in a report of 30 recommendations of which five recommendations were directed to ICAO for consideration because of its resources and activities while ten more recommendations were for the consideration of ICAO in relation to the assistance of donors, training institutions and multilateral development banks. The Study report also produced 14 recommendations for the consideration of the PSIDS and one recommendation for the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF). Implementation of the recommendations directed to ICAO, took a holistic approach in the development and implementation of a ‘Pacific aviation roadmap’ to achieve effective, sustainable and resilient aviation regulatory oversight in the Pacific Region.

1.3 The Report also recommended ICAO to establish a ‘PSIDS Liaison Officer’ position to facilitate support to the PSIDS and to improve their communication and coordination in a more effective and efficient manner with ICAO which will help the States achieve their compliance obligations.

1.4 RAMM1 convened virtually on 30 June 2021. 14 of the 18 Pacific Island Forum Members participated (11 are ICAO contracting States), the ICAO Secretary General presented as did the Pacific Islands Forum Secretary General. The meeting provided the high level platform to make strategic decisions and commitment for improvement of aviation by endorsing the Port Moresby Declaration (Declaration) and Ministerial Statement. The Declaration confirms 16 key statements agreed by the Ministers and furthermore, three (3) major outcomes deemed to be the highest priority, that being:

- 1.4.1 A Pacific Regional Aviation Strategy
- 1.4.2 An amended Pacific Islands Civil Aviation Safety and Security Treaty (PICASST)
- 1.4.3 A strengthened multi-strengthened regional organization

1.5 RAMM2 took place on 22 June 2022 and was Chaired by the Cook Islands which was a report back to Ministers on the progress that Pacific Islands States have made. The three (3) Major items identified in RAMM1 were all considered by Ministers and endorsed. The meeting saw a higher level of participation with 17 of the 18 Pacific Islands Forum States present (14 ICAO Contracting States) and supported by the Secretary General of ICAO and the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat.

1.6 Despite the impacts of the pandemic, all Pacific Islands have worked exceptionally and diligently through the entire period, to make prudent decisions to improve the performance and outcomes of aviation in the Pacific region. PASO as the RAMM Secretariat is the administrative body for all RAMM matters. This is an important distinction because PASO now has a broader mandate which increases our ability to provide greater levels of support to our Members.

¹ PASO Council of Directors consist of: Australia*, Cook Islands, Kiribati, Fiji*, Nauru, New Zealand*, Niue, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu.

* The State is not a signatory to the PICASST but they are a Member of the governing body of PASO.

1.7 Whilst Members and PASO have all contributed to this work it has been with the full commitment of our development partners and their unwavering support, collaboration, and shared values for the Pacific Region to succeed. All Pacific States and PASO wish to acknowledge the valuable contribution and continuous support that has been provided.

2. DISCUSSION

2.1 The Declaration endorsed at RAMM1 ensures linkages to, amongst other things:

2.1.1 Pacific Priorities: Forum Leaders commitment to the 2050 Blue Pacific Strategy, Principles of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable development goals, Small Island developing States accelerated modalities of action (SAMOA) pathway, and the Boe declaration on Regional Security.

2.1.2 Aviation Priorities: The ICAO Convention, No Country left behind initiatives and the Beijing Declaration.

2.2 The commitments made by Ministers include primarily, responding to a need to connect the Pacific, understand the impacts of COVID-19, and address aviation compliance in the region. Ministers also committed to strengthening PASO as an important response to the PSIDS Needs Analysis Study.

2.3 The accompanying Ministerial statement provides more detail and elaborates on the importance of aviation to the region. The document focuses on ensuring there is a platform to have a regional discussion on the impacts of COVID 19 and to understand best ways to recovery. Furthermore, Ministers agreed to an affordable and sustainable air services as being critical to economic recovery and noted that there are opportunities to encourage economic recovery of the region through increased connectivity amongst aviation stakeholders.

2.4 Moreover, Ministers endorsed the RAMM2 deliverables that have resulted in the development of a Regional Aviation Strategy (a document that brings together all Pacific Islands Forum Members), and amended and modern international treaty (the PICASST), and a strengthened multi-functional organization (enhancing PASO to a Level 2 RSSOO).

2.5 At RAMM2 Ministers endorsed the amended PICASST, agreed in Principle to the Regional Aviation Strategy and considered the impacts of the COVID-19 and what economic recovery might look like for each State.

2.6 Integrating the efforts of all stakeholders, in particular the support from developing partners and with ICAO through the PSIDS Needs Analysis Study recommendations is mandatory. It has been well documented, the extreme challenges Pacific Members face. However, unlike in the past, the Pacific now has political mandate, has expertise and robust consultative plans, and is committed to achieving success akin to international best practice with full collaboration with ICAO and development partners.

3. ACTION BY THE CONFERENCE

3.1 The Conference is invited to:

- a) Note and discuss the high level Ministerial commitment made by PSIDS to strengthen aviation;
- b) Note the increased mandate of PASO, both through it being recognized by Ministers as an RSOO and now as the RAMM secretariat; and
- c) Identify current or new mechanisms to support Pacific States achieve their aviation ambitions and regional priorities.