



NEWS

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Joint Efforts to Improve Safety

-Industry and Governments Address Safety Over Conflict Zones-

29 July 2014 (Montreal) - The International Air Transport Association (IATA) joined with the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), Airports Council International (ACI) and the Civil Air Navigation Services Organization (CANSO) in a declaration committing the parties to review processes for the overflight of conflict zones. The high-level meeting was called by ICAO in the aftermath of the tragic downing of MH17 over the Ukraine earlier this month.

“The tragic shooting-down of MH17 was an attack on the whole air transport industry. The world’s airlines are angry. Civil aircraft are instruments of peace. They should not be the target of weapons of war. That is enshrined in international law through the Chicago Convention,” said Tony Tyler, IATA’s Director General and CEO.

The declaration includes a commitment by ICAO, with the support of its industry partners, to immediately establish a senior level Task Force composed of state and industry experts to address the civil aviation and national security issues arising from MH17. In particular, the Task Force will look at how relevant information can be effectively collected and disseminated. IATA will be among the participants on the task force.

Industry has also called on ICAO to address:

- Fail-safe channels for essential threat information to be made available to civil aviation authorities and industry
- The need to incorporate into international law, through appropriate UN frameworks, measures to govern the design, manufacture and deployment of modern anti-aircraft weaponry

“We are asking ICAO to address two critical tasks. The first, and most urgent, is to ensure that governments provide airlines with better information with which to make risk assessments of the various threats they may face. The second is equally important but comes with a longer time frame. We will find ways through international law that will oblige governments better to control weapons which have the capability to pose a danger to civil aviation. Achieving these will make our safe industry even safer,” said Tyler.

Better Information:

Clear, accurate and timely information on risks is critical. “We were told that flights traversing Ukraine’s territory at above 32,000 feet would not be in harm’s way. We now know how wrong that guidance was. It is essential that airlines receive clear guidance regarding threats to their passengers, crew and aircraft. Such information must be accessible in an authoritative, accurate, consistent, and unequivocal way. This is the responsibility of States. There can be no excuses. Even sensitive information can be sanitized and still remain operationally relevant,” said Tyler. He noted that IATA stands willing to assist with the dissemination of such information.

A clear illustration of the need for such information was evident last week with respect to operations to and from Tel Aviv’s Ben Gurion Airport. “The Israeli authorities declared that the airport was safe. The US Federal Aviation Administration told its airlines they could not fly. And the European Aviation Safety Agency provided strong recommendations that European airlines should not fly. This is all far from the authoritative, accurate, consistent, and unequivocal information needed to support effective decisions on such an important issue. Governments must do better,” said Tyler.

Better Control of Weapons:

IATA and the rest of the industry called for controls on the design, manufacture and deployment of anti-aircraft weapons. “Weapons of war—including powerful anti-aircraft weaponry—are also in the hands of non-State entities. We have conventions that address chemical, nuclear, and biological weapons, plastic explosives, and weapons trade generally. But there is no international law or convention to manage them as exists for many other forms of weaponry. MH 17 shows us that this is a gap in the international system which must be closed. Under ICAO’s leadership, I am confident that we can find ways within the UN system, to augment the international law framework to ensure that states fully understand and discharge their responsibilities in this regard,” said Tyler.

Safety Record:

In supporting the industry’s high expectations of the task force, Tyler also re-assured the traveling public that flying today remains safe and secure. “Every day about 100,000 flights take to the air and land safely. The systems supporting global aviation have produced the safest mode of transportation known to humankind. There is no need for major surgery. But we must identify and close some specific gaps in the system that, however infrequently, lead to unspeakable mistakes and tragedies,” said Tyler.

- IATA -

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Notes for Editors:

- IATA (International Air Transport Association) represents some 240 airlines comprising 84% of global air traffic.
- You can follow us at <http://twitter.com/iata2press> for news specially catered for the media.