

Report of the Deputy President

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SUMMARY

This paper summarizes the work of the Deputy President (DP) since the last Annual Conference, in Singapore, April 2024. The paper provides an overview of the progress made regarding the upcoming Annual Conference in Abu Dhabi, an update on the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Task Force (EDI TF) and the newly formed Website Task Force (WTF), as well as other tasks falling under the responsibility of the DP.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. While this report may be more succinct than what you might be used to read from me when I was at ICAO, it does in no way reflect the amount of time invested in the different portfolios falling under the responsibility of the DP. This report is my first report to Conference as DP, with all the tasks related to ICAO now transferred to the new Liaison Officer to the ICAO Air Navigation Commission (LO ICAO ANC), David Perks. Compared to my previous role within the Federation, I have to say this new position brings a lot more challenges in terms of time management, dealing with uncertainty, unforeseen circumstances, highly variable workload, just to name a few.
- 1.2. I am happy to report, however, that I'm settling relatively well (I think) in my new position and that I find it very exciting and motivating. I would like to start this report with some special thanks for President and CEO Helena Sjöström, who has been invaluable in the transition, providing endless support and wise advice to assist me with the new tasks at hand. I would also like to take a moment to thank the entire Executive Board (EB) for their support and patience, in particular our Office Manager (OM), Tatiana. We are an amazing team and I could not have wished for a better group to undergo this transition.

2. DISCUSSION

2.1. Conference 2025 – Abu Dhabi, UAE

- 2.1.1. Organizing a Conference of this magnitude is clearly not within my existing skill set, so the entire experience is a steep learning curve, to say the least.
- 2.1.2. Fortunately for me, I am surrounded by an extraordinary team of people, starting with Jez Pigden, our Conference Coordinator, and Nicola Ni Riada, our Communications Coordination. Special mention too to our Industry Partner Coordinator, Philippe Domogala. All three have proved to be far more knowledgeable than I am, and the amount of time, energy and personal dedication they invested into making this event a success cannot be expressed with numbers or words. I truly admire their devotion and there is no way I cannot thank them enough.
- 2.1.3. From the Organizing Committee (OC), I would like to highlight the unconditional support and hard work of Omar Abdouli, who has been our focal point for this year and chief of the OC, and Ahmed Al Jallaf, president of the Member Association (MA). Even through difficult times, when we sometimes didn't know how to move things forward and how to solve issues at hand, they always reassured us that they would do everything to make sure things work. And they did. Their commitment and dedication are to be commanded, and they deserve to be recognized.
- 2.1.4. At the time of writing this working paper, I am happy to report that the organization of the venue, the rooms, the logistics, the website, the registration, the invitation letters and visas, the industry partners, the speaker permits, and all other elements required to make our Conference a great one are in place and everything seem to be on track. There are of course small issues to resolve here and there (slight amendments to the schedule, individual hiccups to take care of, etc.) but nothing major or of significance to report.
- 2.1.5. Luckily, Jez, Nicola and Philippe are keeping track of every single detail and are doing an extraordinary coordination work – and there's a lot of it – with the event company hired by the OC. The fact that the company doesn't have an extended knowledge of the work of IFATCA could have been a challenge, however, the communication has been fluid from the beginning and things are progressing well.
- 2.1.6. The hotels have been online since January, and thanks to the generosity of the UAE MA, we have benefited of two months of registration at an extremely low cost (64 \$USD). Another reduced cost (164 \$USD) has been made available for a few more weeks following these two months.
- 2.1.7. The initial plan was to host the entire EB, chairs and co-chairs at the Andaz Hotel, located in the same building as the Conference venue. However, the cost was prohibitive (260+ \$USD) and significantly above the amount permitted by the Blue Book. For this reason, it was decided to host everyone at the Pearl Rotana, located in the same complex but a short 150m away. The cost is more in line with our budget (195 \$USD). The economy might seem harmless, but multiplied by 23 paid delegates for an average of 8 nights, this simple change will save almost 12,000 \$USD to the Federation.

- 2.1.8. Similar to previous years, the Conference will take place from Monday to Friday, 8:30 AM to 5 PM. The same format will be maintained this year, with a few minor changes:
- 2.1.8.1. The regional meetings and the opening ceremony + panels have been swapped. This means the regional meetings will take place in the morning on Tuesday.
 - 2.1.8.2. Given the continued success of the IFATCA Basics, held after hours on Tuesday last year, it was decided to reconduct the initiative. Furthermore, similar informal sessions will be planned on Wednesday and Thursday. At the moment, the idea is to feature our communications Committee and our new Mental Well Being Task Force.
- 2.1.9. What remains to be done (at the time of writing this paper)? A lot. But we are getting there. Industry Partners are being set up and booths, sponsorships, etc. are on the way to be finalized. The Panel on Monday still needs to be confirmed with speakers and moderators. Registrations are well under way, hotel rooms have been booked, chairs and co-chairs confirmed, as well as ICAO attendees. We are now fixing smaller logistic problems as they come.
- 2.1.10. The UAE requires anyone who will present on the stage to obtain a speaker permit. Jez has been extremely proactive in arranging those well in advance, so it shouldn't be a problem. Shall also be included: potential new EB members (should there be elections), Industry Partners speaking during coffee breaks, etc.
- 2.1.11. Any concern regarding Conference? Please reach out to me and/or Jez, sooner than later, so that we can fix it. There will be issues – there are always issues – but the better we can be prepared, the better.

2.2. EDI TF

- 2.2.1. Betsy Beaumont (NATCA USA) has joined forces with Sverre Ivar Elsbak (NATCA Norway) to manage the workload of the EDI TF. A meeting was held at the beginning of February with Sverre, Betsy, and myself, to update everyone with the progress made by the taskforce.
- 2.2.2. With IFALPA, the EDI TF plans to have a coordinating group and some common messages to be publicly released. Sverre will liaise with Emily Bitting from IFALPA to set up the working group and start working on the key messages.
- 2.2.3. When referring to equity, diversity and inclusion, organizations throughout the world use either EDI or sometimes DEI. It appears that EDI is the preferred way to go (putting equity first), but DEI is more widely spread. It was suggested that IFATCA renames the taskforce to DEITF. More research could be done to determine if we should go ahead with the change, but the status quo is preferred at the moment.
- 2.2.4. Similar to what TOC and PLC are already doing, the EDI TF plans to put in place a Job Card (JC) system where people will be able to propose work programme items for the group, ideally in a discreet or confidential manner.
- 2.2.5. The EDI TF also plans to increase its visibility during Conference, namely by having a booth/table to discuss with attendees, socialize the new JC system, etc. The idea is also to provide lanyards of a bright colour to all EDI TF members so that they are easily recognizable, should attendees wish to learn more. At the time of writing, these details are yet to be confirmed.

- 2.2.6. Also, similar to last year and the year before, the code of conduct will be posted on the webapp and a message to the effect that all attendees are bound by it will be delivered by the EB at the beginning of the Conference. It is important to remember that we are a family, bound by our professional ties, and attending Conference to discuss ATC, not politics or other sensitive topics. Let's all have a great time and be respectful of one another!
- 2.2.7. A Tool Kit has been developed at the European level (with IFATCA involved) that could provide some good guidance for our membership. Not everything is usable or desirable. Sverre will distil what could be profitable and see how it could be made available to our membership, potentially via the EDI TF page on the website.
- 2.2.8. Finally, there was a vacant spot in the EDI TF for the AFM Region. Mrs. Imane Elmi (Djibouti) has agreed to fill that spot and will be taken on board in the following weeks.

2.3. WTF

- 2.3.1. The Website Task Force (WTF) will be covered under Agenda Item A.9.7, but in summary, the Expression of Interest (EOI) was published after summer last year, and the task force was officially formed during the Fall. While the number of members is small (5), the group is composed of very smart and knowledgeable people. The “gap analysis” and feasibility study has been completed, and the group will now focus on the implementation phase, which may end up being one of the following options: a revamp of the existing website, creating a new website inhouse, outsourcing the creation of a new website. Pros and cons will be balanced, and a decision is to be expected soon. A verbal update will be provided during Conference, as appropriate – the task force is meeting shortly after the deadline for working papers.

2.4. Web App

- 2.4.1. As per previous years, the webapp will be done by Philip Marien and myself. The platform is already in place, so it is not a difficult task to accomplish, it just requires time. At present only the schedule and the agenda are available, so these will be the first items to appear, working papers will be uploaded as they become available. A comms campaign similar to the one from last year will also be rolled out. Visit www.ifatca.org/ifatca2025 to access the Web App and bookmark it on your smartphones (Android, iPhone and other platforms).

2.5. Baymac's corporate liability insurance

- 2.5.1. The EB has agreed to contract a corporate liability insurance to protect the Federation against potential lawsuits. Albeit unlikely, the potential for such undesired event cannot be entirely discarded. Daren Bailey Hay from Baymac coordinated the effort and acted as our broker. The EB received two quotes that were extremely competitive for that corporate liability insurance, and the EB decided to go with Intact Insurance from Canada.
- 2.5.2. The insurance is in effect now (it has been since the week after we made the decision back in September), but there were a few administrative details to tackle and now the contract has been signed and the insurance has been paid. Smita Bhargava (Daren's colleague) offered to present the EB with the various benefits and particularities of the insurance policy.

2.6. IHB

- 2.6.1. Since the launch of the new questionnaire, last year in Singapore, more than 44 responses have been received from our MAs, which is way above what I expected. These responses will provide an interesting portrait of our MAs with respect to the new 88 metrics (KPIs) that were designed by Lacramioara Popescu (Romania, PLC). The report for this year will be fundamentally different than the previous ones, as it will contain extremely valuable information for our MAs, not only raw data. To this end, the working paper on IHB will propose the creation of the “Purple Book”, which will present all the IHB KPIs and metrics. The plan is to update this book on a yearly basis. Ideally, the revamped website would allow the integration of these metrics, a search engine, and customizable parameters. This is a long-term project, but the “Purple Book” is a good start in the right direction.
- 2.6.2. Besides the questionnaire, the revamp of the IHB has now been completed and the rollout of the new KPIs is well under way. It is not a complicated task to update the responses – the system I have put in place reduces the burden significantly, from 30 minutes per questionnaire to now less than 5 minutes – but it is time that I do not have and my plan is to consult with PLC Chair and EVPP to find a potential successor (or ideally two) within PLC to continue in this role. At present, I am the single person who knows how to process the entries, and we need to avoid single points of failure. My plan is to look for volunteers at Conference (should you be interested, please do not hesitate to reach out to me!).

2.7. Corporate Governance Training

- 2.7.1. Our Office Manager, Tatiana, receives regular newsletters and invitations from an organization called Montreal International, whose objective is to facilitate the implementation of international organizations in Montreal. She was made aware of a consultant in Corporate Governance, and suggested I get in touch with her to see if she could provide the training we are looking for. To note: the IFATCA 2030+ task force recommended, in its Blueprint for the Federation, that the EB participates in such training for the benefit of all board members.
- 2.7.2. The consultant, Mrs. Rita Karakas, has an impressive curriculum vitae and is specialized in the governance of international organizations, in particular non-profit ones. I had a very long call with her at the beginning of the year, and she gave me a strong impression that she is the person IFATCA needs. On top of that, her honoraria are 3,000\$USD, which is way lower than the other proposals we have received so far. We agreed after the call that I’d seek the approval from the rest of the EB before moving further. That approval was received during the 2nd EB meeting in February, and the training is scheduled to take place in September, at the next EB meeting in Montréal, Canada.

2.8. PLC Meeting – 7-9 October 2024, Osaka, Japan

- 2.8.1. I was supposed to attend the AFM RM, but to my great regret, due to visa issues, I was unable to do so. Luckily, David Perks, our new LO ICAO ANC, didn’t need the said visa and was able to go instead of me. We agreed that I would cover the first PLC meeting instead (we basically swapped meetings). I was happy to attend what was most likely my last TOC/PLC meeting, and I was delighted to, one last time, comment on PLC papers and debate for three days with the group. I wish to thank Adam Exley, PLC Chair, and the rest of PLC for always welcoming me with open arms, and I remain available to assist them whenever I can be of help.

2.9. EUR Regional Meeting – 15-17 October 2024, Skopje, North Macedonia

- 2.9.1. For the first time ever, I attended the EUR RM and was invited by EVP Europe, Frédéric Deleau, to deliver a presentation on what I have been busy with as DP since the Conference, on the ANC, and what is currently going on at the ICAO HQ and on the different panels on which we have membership.
- 2.9.2. The regional meeting was simply outstanding, I learned a lot, enjoyed it a lot, met tons of people, new and old friends, ironed out things with people I needed to see anyway, and I would just like to thank Fred for his warm welcome and hospitality to “his” meeting, and for allowing me some time in his extremely busy agenda to address the audience. Merci beaucoup Fred.

2.10. CAC & FIC Meeting – 6-7 December 2024, Dubai, UAE

- 2.10.1. Also, for the first time ever, I attended the Constitution and Administration Committee (CAC) & the Finance Committee (FIC) meeting at the beginning of December. The mechanics is somewhat different than the way the Professional and Legal Committee (PLC) and the Technical and Operations Committee (TOC) operate, in the sense that the workflow is less structured, and the deadlines are more flexible. Obviously both committees are much smaller, so it is easier to adjust. I do understand now how both committees operate, and I’m happy with the direction papers are taking. There is nothing too controversial on this year’s agenda. I contributed with my own paper, which is a follow up (and an IOU) from last year’s paper on plagiarism, copyright infringement, and intellectual property. I was questioned back then on the need to add something to cover artificial intelligence (AI), and I thought it was a sensible suggestion. This paper addresses that, proposing additional guidance to complement the overarching policy, which at this point is deemed sufficient to cover AI as well.

2.11. Next Steps

- 2.11.1. Following Conference, I will continue to work with the WTF, start planning next year’s CAC work programme, including setting the scene for a much-needed IFATCA Administrative Manual (IAM) cleanup, and start preparing an action plan for the IFATCA 2030+ TF Blueprint, jointly with President and CEO Helena.

3. CONCLUSION

- 3.1. In conclusion to this report, I wish to reiterate how happy I am in my new position. While I sometimes miss some aspects of ICAO (in particular the fantastic people I had the pleasure to deal with, our IFATCA team of ICAO Rockstars), working more closely with the EB, new committees and new taskforces has largely made up for this. Our group of volunteers is amazing, and I am honoured to be part of it. We should all be proud of who we are, what we do, and the things we accomplish.
- 3.2. There are of course numerous challenges to overcome. Some are known, some are unforeseen, some are harder to overcome than others. It is important to remember that we are a team, and we are there for each other. We are all facing constraints that affect us to various degrees, both in our private and professional lives, but I can say without a doubt that the EB I work with now has done an outstanding job, sometimes in difficult conditions, in order to maintain or increase our influence, progress the work, face challenges, and much more, since our last Conference in 2024.

- 3.3. On a personal note, my first tangible achievement – the first our members will actually see – will be the coordination of our upcoming Conference in Abu Dhabi, just in a few weeks. When I debuted in the position of Liaison Officer to the ICAO ANC for IFATCA, ten years ago, I would never have imagined that a job could be so rewarding. Neither could have I imagined that I would one day become Deputy President of IFATCA. I am extremely proud of the work I have done, the work we have done, and I shall continue to work relentlessly to make sure I live to the expectations of the role.
- 3.4. I shall not forget to mention all the fantastic people I am surrounded by who makes the entire experience even more enjoyable. I could simply not do it without them. Among these people, I can count on the unwavering support of my association CATCA, I am extremely lucky to have them. I am also fortunate to be supported by a great employer, Nav Canada; they show understanding and flexibility and above all believe in what I do. Very sincerely, a huge and heartfelt thank you, the profession, our Federation, and me are extremely grateful to you.
- 3.5. My last words go to Marc, my partner in life, who is always there for me, even though I spend way too many hours on my computer, on my phone, attending Zoom meetings or being away from home. Very few people would be that understanding, and I am extremely fortunate to share my life with someone who has this level of patience and who understands what IFATCA means to me.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1. It is recommended that this report is accepted as information.

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