

REGIONAL PLANNING A KEY FACTOR IN SOLVING SOME AVIATION PROBLEMS

The air navigation requirements and air transport matters of different parts of the world vary significantly. Because of this, not all the air navigation problems can be dealt with on a worldwide scale. Many subjects need to be considered on a regional basis.

To maintain close awareness of the specific needs of each region and serve its Contracting States effectively, ICAO has created nine geographical areas.

In each of the regions, careful planning is necessary to produce the network of air navigation facilities and services upon which the airplanes depend. That is to say, airports, meteorological and communications stations, navigation aids, and search and rescue bases. In essence, a large number of facilities to be established and operated and the services to be rendered.

This planning is done at ICAO regional air navigation meetings, held at regular intervals for each of the regions, where the need for each facility is carefully considered and decided upon. The plan which emerges from a regional meeting is so designed that, when the States concerned put it into action, it will lead to an integrated, efficient system for the entire region.

When States require help in this regard, it is available through ICAO's seven regional offices, each one being accredited to a group of Contracting States. These offices have, as their main function, the duty of encouraging, supporting, expediting and following up the implementation of the Air Navigation Plans and maintaining them up to date.

Financial and technical resources vary widely between nations. Air transport's demands also involve

some complex and costly equipment and well-qualified personnel for staffing and maintaining the facilities, therefore there may be uneven implementation of parts of these plans. ICAO can, however, support States through its technical co-operation activities (please see story on page 40).

ICAO promotes the provision of multi-national aeronautical facilities and services and has also succeeded in arranging for "joint financing". Certain facilities in the North Atlantic, for example, are financed by the States whose airlines make use of them.

These facilities comprise a transatlantic cable for transmitting messages of interest to aviation, and air navigation aids and meteorological and air traffic control facilities in Greenland and Iceland.

STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN GUIDES ICAO INTO NEXT CENTURY

As aviation moves towards the 21st century, States and the civil aviation industry are facing unprecedented challenges posed by traffic which continues to grow.

These challenges include emerging new technology, a rapidly changing commercial and regulatory framework, a growing awareness of the need for protection

of the human environment, and a requirement for substantial investment in infrastructure, equipment and human resources at a time of increasingly competitive pressures for financial resources.

The ICAO Assembly has endorsed a **Strategic Action Plan** designed to provide a framework for the priority activities of the Organization into the next century

within the context of these challenges. And implementation of the Plan is currently well underway.

For while the fundamental objectives of the Organization remain as relevant as they were when first conceived in Chicago in 1944, ICAO is today focusing the vision of Chicago to adapt to a rapidly-changing world.