Aviation organisations launch safety information exchange

On 31st March it was announced from IATA HQ in Montreal that the Association along with three governmental aviation safety organizations, took the first step to creating a global information exchange to improve aviation safety.

IATA, together with ICAO, the US Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), and the Commission of the European Union (EU), signed a Declaration of Intent to exchange safety data. The signing took place during the ICAO High-Level Safety Conference in Montreal.

"Today’s milestone agreement marks the first time the global aviation community has come together to work on a global safety information exchange. Data must drive our actions so that we can focus our joint efforts on reducing the greatest risks," said Giovanni Bisignani, IATA’s Director General and CEO. He added, "Working together with governments using global standards, safety has improved tremendously. In 1945, there were 9 million passengers and 247 fatalities. In 2009, 2.3 billion people flew with 685 fatalities. Every fatality is a human tragedy and reminds us that we must do better. Today’s agreement is one more important step to make a safe industry even safer," said Bisignani.

Audit data will be a key element in the project. IATA, ICAO, the FAA and the EU conduct audit programs that collect complementary safety information. "We must understand safety trends, not just from the handful of accidents each year, but by bringing together and analyzing data from millions of safe flights. With this we can take more effective action to reduce risks and improve safety performance," said Bisignani.

“There is no competition when it comes to safety. Cooperation is the way forward. We have a common goal of zero accidents and zero fatalities. The safety data from audits and oversight programs contains important parts of a whole picture. Agreeing to put this data together is a major step forward,” said Bisignani.

The four organizations will now start work on a way to standardize safety audit information and ensure compliance with local privacy laws and policies. This is targeted to be completed within 12 to 18 months.

The 2009 global accident rate, measured in hull losses per million flights of Western-built jet aircraft, was 0.71. This is a significant improvement of the 0.81 rate recorded in 2008. Compared to 10 years ago, the accident rate has been cut 36% from the 1.11 rate recorded in 2000.
IATA represents some 230 airlines comprising 93% of scheduled international air traffic.

The association created the IATA Operational Safety Audit (IOSA) in 2001, focused on air carrier organizations, operational management and control systems.

The (US) FAA created the International Aviation Safety Assessments (IASA) audit program in 1992 and the European Commission established the Safety Assessment of Foreign Aircraft (SAFA) audit programme in 1996, focused on air carrier operational performance and compliance. In January 1999 ICAO created the ICAO Universal Safety Oversight Audit Program (USOAP), focused on State oversight capability and compliance with ICAO annexes.