

FOREWORD

International Civil Aviation Organization

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Global demand for a regulatory framework, which will provide the means to integrate unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) into non-segregated airspace and at aerodromes, continues to increase as this new field of aviation develops. Each year, the technologies supporting UAS advance, the number and types of UAS expand and the pressure on States to grant airworthiness and operational approvals increases. The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), working with experts nominated by States and international organizations from around the world, is at the forefront of responding to these demands.

ICAO, based in Montreal, Canada, was established in 1944 with the objective of ensuring that international civil aviation be developed in a safe and orderly manner and that international air transport services be established on the basis of equality of opportunity and operated soundly and economically. For 65 years now, this has been the guiding policy of ICAO.

The *Convention on International Civil Aviation*, (Chicago Convention) the charter of ICAO, lays the foundation for international civil aviation. The 96 articles of the Convention establish the privileges and restrictions of all Contracting States and provide for the adoption of International Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs) regulating international air transport. The Convention accepts the principle that every State has complete and exclusive sovereignty over the airspace above its territory and provides that no scheduled international air service may operate over or into the territory of a Contracting State without its previous consent. Reinforcing this principle, Article 8 of the Convention addresses pilotless aircraft as follows:

No aircraft capable of being flown without a pilot shall be flown without a pilot over the territory of a contracting State without special authorization by that State and in accordance with the terms of such authorization. Each contracting State undertakes to insure that the flight of such aircraft without a pilot in regions open to civil aircraft shall be so controlled as to obviate danger to civil aircraft.

The aims and objectives of ICAO, as contained in Article 44 of the Chicago Convention, are to develop the principles and techniques of international air navigation and to foster the planning and development of international air transport so as to:

- insure the safe and orderly growth of international civil aviation throughout the world;
- encourage the arts of aircraft design and operation for peaceful purposes;
- promote safety of flight in international air navigation;
- promote generally the development of all aspects of international civil aeronautics.

In 2005 ICAO first began to explore the subject of unmanned aviation. Two years later, it was agreed by the Air Navigation

Commission (ANC) of ICAO that, while the Organization should not be the entity responsible for developing the necessary technical specifications, it would be appropriate that ICAO lead the global harmonization effort to define unmanned aviation. The Unmanned Aircraft Systems Study Group (UASSG) was therefore established and tasked with assisting the Secretariat in coordinating the development of ICAO SARPs, Procedures and guidance material for civil unmanned aircraft systems (UAS), to support a safe, secure and efficient integration of UAS into non-segregated airspace and aerodromes.

Sixteen States and eight international organizations have nominated experts to the UASSG. Bringing together experts from many parts of the world with diverse backgrounds and perspectives allows a full spectrum of ideas and approaches to be considered as the Study Group progresses its work toward global harmonization. The UASSG, working in collaboration with the Air Navigation Commission and its technical panels, will formulate a cohesive strategy for the development and adoption of new SARPs and PANS. This will be an evolutionary process lasting many years with new material being incorporated as subject matters reach maturity.

