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UN forum examines links between weather forecasts and aviation



3 February 2010 – With adverse weather causing air traffic delays and aircraft accidents, the United Nations today kicked off a week-long meeting in Hong Kong to examine the link between aviation and climate and look at improving the accuracy of forecasts, especially in light of the expected increase in extreme weather events.

According to the UN World Meteorological Organization (**WMO**), three quarters of significant air traffic delays in regions with high traffic density are related to weather and nearly half of aircraft accidents occur during operations in adverse weather.

“Accurate weather forecasts and warnings are indeed vital for safe and regular air transport, in ever more crowded skies,” the agency noted on its website, adding that planning of flight routes and development of infrastructure relies heavily on climate information.

WMO Secretary-General Michel Jarraud **told** the Hong Kong meeting that several issues would have “significant impacts on the provision of meteorological services to civil aviation during the 21st century.” These include the need for establishing standards of competency for meteorological personnel serving civil aviation.

The 150 representatives from national meteorological and hydrological services meeting for the 14th session of the WMO Commission for Aeronautical Meteorology will review existing guidance of required qualifications and competencies.

They will also explore different types of training and assessment such as distance-learning, web-based and computer-aided methods, and increased cooperation with recognized training institutions.

The Geneva-based WMO works closely with the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) and the International Air Transport Association (IATA) representing the airline industry, as well as with other actors such as airports, pilots and business aviation to provide the meteorological information needed for safe, efficient and sustainable air travel.

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