TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE:
THE FIRST STEPS AT ICAO

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Figure 1

The ICAO cover at Figure 1 provides the opportunity to review the origins of the Technical Assistance Programme running since 1950 at the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), whose Headquarters have been in Montreal since 1945. It is also the only item from the ICAO philatelic collection depicting a direct relationship with ICAO's technical assistance activities.

THE "INVENTION" OF
TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

There was extensive interest during the early postwar years in assisting what were then called the "underdeveloped countries." The United Nations Secretariat received *ad hoc* requests for assistance in various fields and responded by sending staff members or consultants to provide "technical assistance" to these countries, most of which were still under or had just emerged from colonial rule. It may be noted that initially the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD, now the World Bank) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) were concerned almost exclusively with the recovery and monetary problems of Western Europe after World War II.

The General Assembly of the United Nations (UN), at its first session in 1946, authorized the Secretary-General Trygve Lie to assume and continue certain non-political functions that the League of Nations had adopted before its demise, and referred to the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) for study the subject of the provision of expert advice in the economic, social and cultural fields to member nations desiring such assistance. At its third session in 1948, the General Assembly established a special technical assistance appropriation for "advisory social welfare services," amounting to US$750,000, in the regular budget.

The UN Secretariat's role in technical assistance operations during the early years was quite modest, consisting of *ad hoc* expert missions, advisory services, local training, and fellowships for study overseas. The earliest operations were under the rubric of "social welfare" and were directed mainly toward such items as nutrition,

sanitation, and medical support. They gradually but steadily expanded to include assistance in the more technical matters related to development.

THE EXPANDED PROGRAMME OF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE (EPTA)

A breakthrough took place with U.S. President Harry S. Truman's inaugural address in January 1949. "Point 4" of that address included a massive programme of technical assistance to the "underdeveloped" countries of the world. Proposals to have a special programme of technical assistance financed from voluntary contributions suddenly became viable, when the U.S. agreed to pay into it. The Expanded Programme of Technical Assistance (EPTA) was formally established later that year by the General Assembly in December 1949 and started operations in July 1950. A Technical Assistance Board, consisting of representatives of the secretariats of the United Nations and the participating organizations, was formed at the UN.

EPTA marked a significant advance for the developing countries, as it was the first multilateral development programme financed from voluntary contributions. EPTA would have a wider scope than the UN regular technical assistance programme, with a wide variety of activities such as economic planning; public administration; education and training; agriculture including fisheries, forestry and livestock; public health; transport and communications; and civil aviation (in fact, all sectors covered by the UN, and its Specialized Agencies and Programmes).

BEGINNING OF THE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME AT ICAO

A Technical Assistance Conference was held at Lake Success, New York, from 12 to 14 June 1950 and attended by 54 country members of the United Nations. States pledged a total of US$20 million for the first year's operations, and by October 1950, a sufficient amount of money had been paid into the Technical Assistance Fund to enable the participating organizations to get their programmes under way. One of the basic principles governing the granting of technical assistance was that it would lead to the economic development of the assisted country; the role of air transport as a means of promoting economic development was extremely important in many underdeveloped areas, especially where topographical barriers made the development of surface transport costly and difficult.

Under the provisions of the EPTA and by decision of the ECOSOC, ICAO would receive 1% of the funds been allocated for the entire programme. A few years later, this predetermined percentage was increased to 4.4%, with some flexibility on the basis of priorities established by the requesting governments.

ICAO started to receive requests from many states (15 by the end of 1950); these covered the whole range of civil aviation activities including training of civil aviation personnel in the various disciplines, and technical advice in the building of airports, the organization of civil administrations and the operation of air transportation.

To assist the ICAO Secretary General in drawing up his recommendations for technical assistance, a Technical Assistance Advisory Board was established; the responsibility for the supervision and co-ordination of the ICAO Technical Assistance Programme was assigned to the External Relations Officer, with the advice and assistance from the bureaux concerned (Air Navigation, Air Transport, Legal, and Administration). Over-all control of the programme was exercised by the ICAO Council, through the review of periodic reports submitted by the Secretary General. The External Relations Officer, Mr. E.R. Marlin, became the first Director of Technical Assistance, when this new Office was created at ICAO in November 1952. Mr. Marlin was a member of the Secretariat at the Conference on International Civil Aviation (Chicago 1944); he participated in the initial establishment of the Provisional ICAO, being one of the first members of the staff of that organization. Expenditure on technical assistance administration would be limited in any one year to 10% of the funds available in that year.

A selection among the initial requests for assistance was necessary, as ICAO could only expect to receive a promised US$200,000, that is, far too low to meet all requests in full; however, in the circumstances, the United Nations generously came to ICAO's aid, agreeing to make available an additional US$300,000 from its own allocation. As a result, the Organization would have at its disposal US$500,000 for its 1951 programme.

Consequently, during 1951 ICAO's participation in the UN Technical Assistance Programme could pass from planning to execution.

ICAO'S FIRST PROJECT

On 18 January 1950, a letter was received from the Director of Civil Aviation of Ethiopia stating that his country wished to be listed as one of the first to benefit from the Technical Assistance Programme. In fact, Ethiopia became the first State to receive ICAO assistance. An agreement was signed with the Government of Ethiopia on 2 February 1951, which provided for the appointment of a mission of four experts (for advising on organization and operation of ground services, and for training local nationals in aeronautical meteorology, installation and maintenance of communication and navigation equipment, and in engine and air frame maintenance) and for the granting of nine fellowships. Among these, five fellowships for advanced flying

training and three for air traffic services were awarded. Two of the first experts appointed on the Ethiopian project were Canadians, Mr. Stuart Graham (Alternate Council Member for Canada on the ICAO Council, Head of the Mission and Civil Aviation Advisor) and Mr. N.E. Dennison, Technical Assistant at Trans-Canada Air Lines (the predecessor to Air Canada). The technical assistance project for Ethiopia amounted to US$57,100 for 1951. A supplementary agreement was signed in February 1953 to expand the technical assistance services provided by ICAO in Ethiopia.

The Ethiopian Airlines (EAL) was formed in December 1945 and started to operate scheduled flights on 8 April 1946, with the first scheduled inauguration passenger service to Cairo. In 1951, the Ethiopian fleet consisted mainly of Convair CV-240 aircraft, which replaced the Douglas DC-3's of the company. The method used to start up these airplanes would seem quite spectacular to people today: they were equipped with booster rockets JATO (jet-assisted take-off) in the shape of canisters under the wings, which fired for 12 seconds and gave the necessary extra lift to make the aircraft airborne; because of that the runways at Addis Ababa were too short for the aircraft with full load. In many less developed countries, roads, railroads and waterways were often scarce and of poor quality; few channels of transportation existed other than camel and donkey tracks. The extreme inadequacy of transport facilities other than aviation and the geography of Ethiopia, coupled with enormous distances, had made the EAL a leading example of what aviation could mean to an economically underdeveloped country.

CONCLUSION

In 1953, three professional employees were directly engaged in the supervision of field activities and the policy direction of the Programme, while six support staff dealt with budget and accounting, personnel, purchasing, travel and other administrative tasks. ICAO's participation in the Expanded Programme of Technical Assistance of the United Nations steadily increased over the years to the level of US$1.36 million for 1957. While technical assistance was, and still is of course, primarily designed to meet the needs of the recipient countries, it has had beneficial effects on ICAO's regular work programme, since many of the facilities, services and procedures for domestic civil aviation are also used by international civil aviation.

Figure 2

With the first day cover shown at Figure 1 (in blue, a colour close to that of the 3-cent stamp) and issued on 9 February 1955, Ethiopia paid tribute to the success achieved by ICAO's technical assistance activities in that country for pilot training, meteorology and engine maintenance and showed appreciation for the civil aviation's extraordinary contribution to economic development. A similar cover with a red cachet showing UN Scott #32 was issued at the same time. The two covers show the Convair CV-240 aircraft used by the Ethiopian Airlines at that time. Later, Ethiopia issued a set of three stamps (Figure 2) to commemorate the 50th anniversary of ICAO.

CHECKLIST

| Ethiopia | 1394-1396 | 1994 Dec 07 | 50th anniversary of ICAO |
| United Nations | 31-32 | 1955 Feb 09 | International Civil Aviation Organization |

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