



International Civil Aviation Organization

**First Meeting of the APRAST – Accident Investigation Ad hoc Working Group
(APRAST-AIG AWG/1)**

(Bangkok, Thailand, 6-8 June 2012)

Agenda Item 6: Investigation Cooperation

REGIONAL INVESTIGATION COOPERATION AND CAPABILITY BUILDING

(Australia / Australian Transport Safety Bureau)

SUMMARY

Aviation knows no borders, and the very nature of ICAO rests on the notion of international cooperation in all matters relating to civil aviation. This approach is emphasised in Resolution A37-8 of the ICAO 37th Assembly, which urges Contracting States to develop and further strengthen regional and sub-regional cooperation in order to promote the highest degree of aviation safety. Successful regional cooperation requires an approach that acknowledges the experience, knowledge, and capability that exists within other States, and that takes account of local conditions and sensibilities. Working together, States can develop investigation capability for the benefit of all States in the region.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 ICAO was founded on the principle of international cooperation, with the *Chicago Convention on International Aviation* being based on the ideal of promoting “cooperation between nations and peoples” (p. 1).

1.2 In the context of cooperation between States, ICAO acknowledges that some States may not have the resources to comply with ICAO standards and recommended practices on their own, and that the international community has a responsibility to assist those States to meet acceptable standards. For example, this approach is emphasised in Resolution A37-8 of the ICAO 37th Assembly (October 2010), *Regional cooperation and assistance to resolve safety-related deficiencies*, which (p. 13), “Urges Contracting States to develop and further strengthen regional and sub-regional cooperation in order to promote the highest degree of aviation safety”.

1.3 ICAO States need to work together cooperatively with one another in order to achieve their safety objectives. One important aspect of this cooperation is the building of good relationships between the safety investigation agencies of States, so that if and when an accident or serious incident occurs the agencies already have effective mechanisms in place to facilitate good communication and cooperation.

1.4 At the ICAO Accident Investigation and Prevention (AIG) Divisional Meeting in Montréal in 2008, Recommendations 6/1, 6/2, 6/3 and 6/4 were adopted on the subject of regional cooperation in accident and incident investigations. Recommendation 6/2 specifically urged ICAO to develop guidance material for States on how to establish and manage a regional accident and incident

investigation system. Accordingly, ICAO developed the Manual on Regional Accident and Incident Investigation Organization (ICAO, 2011, Doc 9946 AN/481).

1.5 The Regional Accident and Incident Investigation Organization (RAIO) manual provides information and guidance on the establishment and management of an RAIO to assist States in fulfilling part or all of their obligations for accident and incident investigation.

1.6 As outlined in the RAIO manual, ICAO Universal Safety Oversight Audit Programme (USOAP) audit findings indicate that not all States have been able to implement an effective accident and incident investigation system. The findings have been associated, in general, with a lack of resources (human and financial) and, specifically, with a lack of: appropriate legislation and regulations; an organization for the investigation of accidents and incidents; a training system for investigators; equipment to conduct investigations; and policies, procedures and guidelines for accident and incident investigations. A RAIO is one way of addressing these issues, for example by providing economies of scale by allowing for the sharing of resources.

1.7 Whether the RAIO model is adopted, or some other mechanism developed to promote a shared capability for all or just some of the component parts of a regional or sub-regional air safety investigation system, open and willing cooperation between States is the key principle that will sustain such an initiative.

2. ATSB REGIONAL ENGAGEMENT IN THE ASIA PACIFIC

2.1 The ATSB has an active program of regional engagement with other aviation safety agencies in the Asia Pacific region, with the aim of improving air safety for the benefit of both Australia and our regional neighbours.

2.2 The philosophy underpinning the ATSB's regional engagement is one of cooperation and mutual respect. For example, the ATSB is committed to engagement with our counterpart agencies at all levels - from the Chief Commissioner, through the General Managers and Managers, to investigators and other ATSB staff. Involvement at all levels is important in order to develop engagement that has continuity, balance and depth.

2.3 The ATSB carries out its regional engagement work in a way that is unbiased, open, and accountable. The ATSB does not have an 'agenda', and works with our counterpart agencies to develop programs that are mutually beneficial and that accord with the policy of both Australia and the other State.

2.4 The ATSB acknowledges the experience, knowledge, and capability that exists within other States in the region, often in spite of their limited resources. The ATSB works cooperatively to develop programs that take appropriate account of local conditions and sensibilities.

2.5 A key principle of the ATSB's program of regional engagement is that, to the greatest extent possible, activities are aimed at capability building rather than service provision. For example, wherever possible, project activities take a 'train-the-trainer' approach.

2.6 The type of capability building support that the ATSB is able to provide includes advice and guidance related to,

- legislation and regulations for accident notification, investigation, etc
- investigation function/agency structure and staffing
- investigation function/agency policy and procedures
- training for investigators and investigation support staff
- 'first responders' awareness training

2.7 The ATSB's regional assistance program acknowledges that sustainable capability building is a slow process. Sometimes there can be quick gains, but often the results are incremental over time. While capability building must be guided by goalposts along the way, it is really a journey rather than a destination. The preferred approach to capability building is a staged approach where both the ATSB and the counterpart agency commit resources over an extended period of time.

2.8 The ATSB has entered into Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) with a number of States in the Asia Pacific region, namely, China, Timor-Leste, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Papua New Guinea, and Singapore. The MoUs recognise the separate and independent roles of the parties but confirm their commitment to achieving the best possible outcome for air safety.

2.9 While the ATSB is favourably disposed to requests from States in the Asia Pacific region for the establishment of bilateral MOUs, the ATSB is also interested in exploring possibilities for a multi-lateral approach where States pool resources and expertise for regional benefit.

2.10 The ATSB has ongoing involvement in the Australian Government Indonesian Transport Safety Assistance Package (ITSAP) and cooperation with Papua New Guinea (PNG) consistent with the Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation in the Transport Sector. The ATSB has conducted joint air safety investigation training with the Indonesian National Transportation Safety Committee (NTSC), the Papua New Guinea Accident Investigation Commission (AIC), and the Singapore Air Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB).

2.11 To reiterate, the ATSB's program of regional engagement and capability building is a very important part of the work of the ATSB. The first meeting of the ICAO Regional Aviation Safety Group in the Asia Pacific region (RASG APAC) held in Noumea in October 2011 was very successful, and the Asia Pacific Regional Aviation Safety Team (APRAST), including the Accident Investigation Ad-hoc Working Group (AIG AWG), promises to be an excellent initiative that can breathe new life into regional co-operation in air safety investigation in the Asia Pacific.

3. ACTION BY THE MEETING

3.1 The meeting is invited to:

- a) Note ICAO Resolution A37-8 of the ICAO 37th Assembly (October 2010), *Regional cooperation and assistance to resolve safety-related deficiencies*, which (p. 13), "Urges Contracting States to develop and further strengthen regional and sub-regional cooperation in order to promote the highest degree of aviation safety".
- b) Consider ways in which States in the Asia Pacific region can develop regional capability for air safety investigation.

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