



**Address by the Secretary General of ICAO
Mr. Raymond Benjamin
to the First NGAP/TRAINAIR Plus Regional Conference**

(Seoul, 30 March 2011)

I want to thank you all for taking the time to be here with us today.

What brings us here is fundamental to the future of air transport. For the first time in history, there is the very real possibility that we could experience a shortage of pilots, maintenance personnel and air traffic controllers – if we don't effectively address the issue of training capacity around the world.

In rising to the challenge, this conference is unique.

It is the first in a series of Regional Conferences that will be looking into how we can make sure that there will be enough qualified professionals to meet the demand created by the growth of civil aviation from now until the year 2030.

It is therefore an opportunity for us to set the tone for the five other regional conferences to follow on this theme, eventually culminating with the second edition of the Symposium on the Next Generation of Aviation Professionals to be held in 2012.

Thus, the obvious question is – what is the scope of the challenge that lies ahead?

Part of the answer can be found in an extremely useful study published just a few weeks ago by ICAO titled *Global and Regional 20-year Forecasts for pilots, maintenance personnel and air traffic controllers*.

The premise underlying the survey among States and industry alike is that demand for aviation professionals will be driven by the growth in traffic and by the number of aircraft deliveries.

In this context, we estimate that the number of commercially-operated aircraft will jump from about 62,000 today to some 152,000 in 2030. By commercially-operated, I mean any aircraft involved in transport of passengers, cargo or mail, for remuneration or hire. This definition is all inclusive and not limited to airlines, hence the large numbers I have just quoted.

During the same period, between 2010 and 2030, we expect the number of aircraft movements to increase from 26 million annually to close to 52 million.

The implications are clear. We, the aviation community, will have to ensure that there are enough pilots, maintenance personnel and air traffic controllers to go around in every region of the world. That would mean, in effect, to at least double the number of incumbents in each of the categories, not to mention others that are essential to the safe and efficient operation of the global air transport system.

Through our survey, we have been able to estimate the potential global shortage over a 20-year period at 160,000 in the case of pilots, 360,000 for maintenance personnel and 40,000 for air traffic controllers, for a grand total of 560,000.

Our challenge is that we do not currently have enough capacity worldwide to train all of the hundreds of thousands of people needed to fill those positions.

Like safety, security and sustainability of air transport, this is ultimately a global challenge that requires a global solution.

Fortunately, our study makes our task easier by breaking down the anticipated shortages by region. And that is why we are organizing regional conferences which will provide the opportunity to develop solutions that are adapted to local conditions.

Not surprisingly, the Asia/Pacific region is where the situation is more acute, given the remarkable current and projected growth rates. Allow me to mention a few figures:

Over 20 years, the Asia/Pacific fleet will grow by 9.1 per cent annually and represent 22 per cent of aircraft worldwide compared to 12 per cent today. Aircraft movements in 2030 will account for 31.7 per cent of the total, just under North America at 32.3 per cent.

Against those two criteria, enormous efforts will have to be deployed to fill the gap between training needs and training capacity required.

I have no doubt this region and others will succeed in rising to the challenge, provided we begin NOW to develop the roadmap that will get us there.

This is what this conference is all about.

We have a unique opportunity to share best practices and experiences, to look at what works and integrate that into a medium and long term plan for dealing with a situation before it becomes problematic. Whatever the difficulties you may encounter during this three-day meeting, the end result must be a clear definition of the way forward.

The future of the industry and its contribution to society are at stake.

Air transport is a driver of economic, social and political development around the world. It represents 8 per cent of the global GDP and supports at least 32 million jobs. Yet its ability to consistently provide these enormous benefits is dependent on the performance of the people who operate and manage the various components of the system.

Let us keep in mind that we must not only train our professionals, we must first hire them. In this we are in competition with other industries that may offer better salaries, where advancement is more rapid and where the work may not be as demanding.

Perhaps we should discuss these aspects as well, how to make careers in aviation more attractive and more rewarding than they are today.

To sum up then, over the next three days, I would like you to produce a bold and comprehensive plan for ensuring that the Asia-Pacific Region has the required training capacity to produce the aviation professional that it will need to meet the needs of its rapidly expanding air transport industry over the next 20 years.

In return, I promise that I will submit your plans as models for the other five regional conferences that will be held this year and next. Your influence will be felt around the world and you will have contributed to what we urgently need – a global response to a global challenge.

Eventually, all of these regional templates will be integrated into a global plan when we meet again at the second NGAP Symposium in Montreal next year.

I thank you very much for your attention and I wish you fruitful deliberations.

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