



WORKING PAPER

ASSEMBLY — 37TH SESSION

TECHNICAL COMMISSION

Agenda Item 26: Safety management and safety data

**ROLE OF SENIOR MANAGEMENT IN IMPLEMENTING
SAFETY MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS (SMS)**

(Presented by Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of))

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This paper outlines the importance of the States having information and training initiatives and safety management strategies, particularly aimed at the management sector of the aviation industry. In this respect, we are specifically talking about handling appropriate information sent to the Chief Executive Officer and other members of the senior management of an organization. All of this is in order to achieve the effective contribution and commitment of this important sector to support the implementation of Safety Management Systems (SMS).

We can therefore highlight the need for the States to receive assistance from ICAO in terms of providing information about the management role and in supporting the States with guidelines, information, or procedures which support the contribution of the industry managers, bearing in mind that it is the managers who are responsible for safety, and that to a lesser extent they have access to specialized training given their working dynamic.

Action: The Assembly is invited to urge ICAO to take the action required to:

- a) concentrate efforts on the issue of the role of the Chief Executive Officer and the senior management in the implementation and maintenance of SMS in order to use a group of experts to create more specific reference texts, regulations, or training methods which are more suited to the particular characteristics of the management level;
- b) incorporate the exchange of experiences in the different States as regards management issues into forums or regional meetings, and use these scenarios to come up with alternative solutions to this problematic area; and
- c) develop any other initiative which may be deemed appropriate to handle this difficulty in supporting the States.

*Strategic
Objectives:*

This working paper relates to Strategic Objective A.

¹ Spanish version provided by Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of).

<i>References:</i>	Annex 1 — <i>Personnel Licensing</i> Annex 6 — <i>Operation of Aircraft</i> Annex 8 — <i>Airworthiness of Aircraft</i> Annex 11 — <i>Air Traffic Services</i> Annex 13 — <i>Aircraft Accident and Incident Investigation</i> Annex 14 — <i>Aerodromes</i> Doc 9859, <i>Safety Management Manual (SMM)</i>
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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Improving safety and ensuring a suitable transition towards the new framework require the effective implementation of both the safety management system (SMS) in the industry and the State safety programme (SSP) in the States.

1.2 To ensure the effective implementation of these processes (SMS and SSP), a permanent organizational commitment is required, especially in terms of supporting the activities which are put forward by people appointed to plan, implement and be accountable for implementing and maintaining the SMS and SSP.

1.3 The organizational commitment is initiated and expanded based on the decisions of the senior management. If safety and the new management methods do not become a major priority for aviation managers, progress will be slow, with more obstacles than are currently encountered, since the senior management of the organization is the body which has the power to make decisions, take actions and allocate resources, among other things, which in turn define the rhythm, values, policies, and practices of the organization.

1.4 On the other hand, as indicated in Chapter 2 of the *Safety Management Manual (SMM)* (Doc 9859), the management staff are restricted in terms of time, budgets and policies. Since these deficiencies cannot always be avoided, measures should be adopted to detect them and reduce their harmful effects, particularly if we bear in mind that most of the underlying and uncertain conditions of an organization begin with the people who make the management decisions.

2. DEVELOPMENT

2.1 The National Civil Aviation Institute (INAC) of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela has made every effort to implement SMS and SSP.

2.2 In this respect, the experience of training 176 organizations in the Venezuelan aviation community, including airlines, aviation maintenance organizations, aviation instruction centers, airports, and air navigation services, has brought the aviation authority closer to the industry, allowing it to closely monitor the processes for implementing management systems.

2.3 An analysis of the result of monitoring and providing consultancy services for the organizations, as well as the responses of professionals from the aviation community who are responsible for implementing SMS at their companies, has identified the role and the commitment of the senior

management as an important situation which could significantly help or hinder the implementation and maintenance of the SMS.

2.4 In this respect, although it is relatively simple to identify the Chief Executive Officer in an organization, their commitment cannot always be taken for granted. The particular characteristics of the managers, as well as their agenda, interests and work dynamic, become the main barrier for the implementation of the SMS when they do not handle the right information. In Venezuela, we have been able to highlight the difference in terms of the progress of SMS, depending on whether the responsible managers have access to SMS training or not. The difference is incredible. It is important to remember that people who are trained are normally those responsible for safety activities, and these people then have the responsibility of informing the senior management and the Chief Executive Officer of the major importance of their role, bearing in mind that these managers are often specialized or trained in areas other than safety.

2.5 We should add that at a lot of organizations, the top level executives do not necessarily come from the aviation sector and in other situations the positions are subject to management rotation either on account of the sale or merger of companies or for political or internal reasons in the case of State services.

2.6 Since the issue of management commitment is so relevant and complex in the implementation and maintenance of SMS and SSP, it is important to concentrate efforts on the management role, and to come up with procedures which will in future promote more knowledge and commitment among this important professional sector. Assistance may come in the form of reference texts, specific training adapted to the characteristics of the managers, increased information on Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs), promoting the exchange of experiences at a regional level, or any other initiative considered by ICAO or the States, in order to increase the participation and contribution of the management level, which, at the end of the day, is the body which is in charge of safety management.

3. CONCLUSIONS

3.1 The effective and dynamic implementation of SMS in the aviation industry is extremely important in order to achieve the transition to the new safety framework.

3.2 The Venezuelan experience of implementing SMS has identified the role of the senior management and the Chief Executive Officer as an important catalyst for the success or difficulty of implementing SMS.

3.3 Given the direct repercussion on the improvement in safety and given the dynamic and labor context, ICAO and the States should concentrate efforts on finding initiatives and strategies which promote learning and training on safety, aimed specifically at the role of the Chief Executive Officer and the senior management. These strategies result in greater organizational support for the activities aimed at implementing SMS and SSP.

3.4 Finally, forums or debates on the management issue are important within the framework of the exchange of experiences between the States at regional level.