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Agenda Item 7: Updates from member States / Safety Partners

CULTIVATING A JUST CULTURE: INITIATIVES AND CHALLENGES IN THAILAND

(Presented by THAILAND)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This paper presents Thailand's commitment for enhancing aviation safety through the implementation of Just Culture, as a part of State Safety Policy and State Safety Programme (SSP). Safety initiatives include the introduction of the Just Culture survey, organising safety talks, conducting training to reinforce a safety culture and encourage collaboration between CAAT and stakeholders. These contributions play crucial roles in achieving State Safety Objectives. On the other hand, presence of the facing challenges such as Asian or Seniority Culture and organisational practices are required training and structured models for determining acceptable and unacceptable behaviour.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 In recent years, the concept of Just Culture has gained significant traction within aviation. This paradigm emphasizes the importance of creating an atmosphere of trust in which people are encouraged (even rewarded) for providing essential safety-related information, but in which they are also clear about where the line must be drawn between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour.

1.2 Thailand has established the State Safety Policy for the years 2022-2037 which was announced on June 1st, 2023, with its explicit focus on promoting positive safety cultures and Just Culture. This emphasises Thailand's commitment to enhancing safety management within its aviation sector. This commitment extends beyond mere compliance with regulations; it involves encouraging a cultural shift towards proactive risk management and continuous improvement.

1.3 Thailand's State Safety Programme document outlines the strategy for effective State safety promotion, emphasizing the importance of internal and external dissemination of safety information. This initiative aims to cultivate a positive safety culture within the Thai aviation community and enhance safety management effectiveness at all levels, facilitating better sharing of safety data between Civil Aviation Operators (CAOs) and the Civil Aviation Authority of Thailand (CAAT), thus improving the quality and quantity of safety information available for analysis.

1.4 CAAT applies Just Culture approach as part of its safety occurrence reporting system and during surveillance activities. This provides protection and confidentiality to anyone that reports a safety issue unless there is evidence of gross negligence or recklessness.

2. DISCUSSION

INITIATIVES

2.1 In adherence to Thailand's State Safety Programme document and State Safety Policy, the Thailand Aviation Safety Action Plan (TASAP) for the years 2021 to 2023 was established. TASAP serves as the national aviation safety strategy aimed at effectively implementing and enhancing Thailand's State Safety Programme (SSP). It encompasses safety measures to ensure the establishment of an efficient safety oversight system and the adoption of a proactive approach to safety management.

2.2 In order to measure and monitor the safety performance of Thai civil aviation, particularly concerning safety reporting systems and the implementation of Just Culture, Thailand introduced the Just Culture survey in 2023. Information gathered from this survey is treated confidentially, with statistical summaries anonymized to avoid identifying individual operators. CAAT utilizes this data exclusively to gain insights into areas requiring safety enhancement within the Thai aviation industry. Despite the implementation of the Just Culture survey, the response rate remains suboptimal, indicating substantial room for improvement. However, CAAT recognises that it is crucial to obtain support from top management to fully understand the concept of Just Culture and adopt such approach.

2.3 To address this, CAAT conducted "Just Culture for Safer Skies" safety talk in December 2023, inviting a representative from each domain to share their best practices regarding safety culture. Along with the survey questionnaires. The objectives of this event are to cultivate a safety culture in the aviation industry characterized by fairness, accountability, and proactive prevention of safety occurrences. This involves finding a balance between accountability and a safety-focused environment, emphasising individual and collective responsibility for safety, promoting fear-free safety reporting, shifting the focus from blame to understanding root causes and corrective actions. Additionally, it encourages open dialogue at all levels, reaffirms the CAO's commitment to safety, and motivates active engagement, safety reporting, and collaborative efforts to enhance aviation safety and prevent potential accidents and incidents.

2.4 CAAT has received a large volume of industry interest in participating in this event and are honored to have speakers from senior management from airlines, airport operators, air navigation service providers and approved training organizations including senior management from CAAT to share their practices, challenges, experience and recommendations for improvement.

2.5 In addition, to support the implementation of Just Culture across the aviation system as a part of Thailand's commitment in State Safety Policy, CAAT is actively promoting the Just Culture by conducting the training to CAAT's aviation inspector and personnel in the office of the Aircraft Accident and Incident Investigation Committee (AAIC). This training programme is designed to illustrate the role of State in applying Just Culture and how to develop Just Culture through the aviation system. By equipping qualified technical personnel with the competency and clear understanding on Just Culture, this effort aims to reinforce trust of aviation industry to share safety data and information. Such sharing of safety information is essential for improving State safety analysis and facilitating proactive safety management.

CHALLENGES

2.6 Implementing Just Culture involves fostering an environment where individuals feel confident to report errors and near misses without fear of reprisal, while also holding individuals

accountable for reckless or intentional misconduct. Here are the results of the challenges shared from the seminar:

- a) Asian or Seniority Culture: Hierarchical structures and values of humble to the senior may inhibit open reporting of errors. Similarly, in these cultures, resistance to change, reluctance to hold senior members accountable, and limited reporting channels for junior member's present obstacles to embedding Just Culture principles effectively within organisation. Addressing these challenges requires cultural sensitivity training, the establishment of confidential reporting mechanisms, set up safety leadership, customized accountability processes respecting hierarchies, and the fostering of continuous communication channels. By adapting Just Culture principles to align with these cultures and addressing these challenges proactively, organizations can cultivate environments where safety is prioritized, accountability is upheld, and continuous improvement is fostered.
- b) Practice in organisation: Implementing Just Culture within an organization requires both competency and understanding among management and staff. Drawing the line between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour involves adopting structured models such as the Fair3 model, Hudson's Model, or Decision Trees for determining culpability in unsafe acts. These models provide frameworks for assessing the severity of an action, considering factors like intent, knowledge, and behaviour. Competency in applying these models requires thorough training and clear guidelines for management and staff to follow. Additionally, fostering a culture of open communication and trust is essential in ensuring that decisions regarding accountability are fair and transparent. By incorporating these practices into organizational processes, Just Culture can be effectively implemented, promoting accountability while supporting learning and improvement.

2.7 In conclusion, implementing Just Culture is Thailand's commitment to continuously improve SSP and SMS, as well as encourage CAOs to implement Safety Culture by providing the essential guidance materials, facilitating safety seminars for sharing information and experiences, conducting training for CAAT's inspector and personnel in AAIC office and promoting collaboration between CAAT and aviation industry. These safety actions, align with TASAP play a crucial role in achieving the State Safety Objective

3. CONCLUSION

3.1 The meeting is invited to:

- a) note the information contained in this working paper; and
- b) discuss any relevant matters as appropriate.

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