

## **Third ICAO - EASA Forum on Civil Aviation in South East Asia, Manila, Philippines – 23 April 2024**

### **Theme: “Safe and Sustainable Connectivity in South East Asia”**

#### **Summary Notes**

The third ICAO – EASA Forum was conducted on 23 April 2024 at Hilton Manila, hosted by the Civil Aviation Authority of the Philippines.

The forum was attended by the twelve COSCAP-South East Asia member States and invited partners from Organizations and industry with 83 participants.

Hon. Jaime J. Bautista, Secretary of Transportation, Department of Transportation of the Philippines graced the opening of the forum and delivered the Keynote Address.

There were three panel discussions conducted on the following topics, participated by four speakers in each panel and facilitated by a moderator.

1. Panel 1 – Connectivity and regional integration
  - a) Enhancing connectivity in South East Asia
  - b) ASEAN air transport integration and liberalisation
  - c) Overcoming obstacles towards seamless skies
  - d) The role of RSOOs and RAIOS in regional integration
2. Panel 2 – Addressing the Beijing Declaration
  - a) Where does South East Asia currently stand?
  - b) What are the areas the South East Asia region could address collaboratively?
  - c) Addressing human resource challenges.
  - d) How to strengthen the aircraft accident and incident investigation area?
3. Panel 3 – Sustainable Aviation
  - a) Working towards the Long Term Aspirational Goal (LTAG)
  - b) Gearing Sustainable Aviation at the regional level
  - c) States’ preparedness towards decarbonization of air transport.
  - d) Challenges and opportunities in the decarbonization of aviation: A practical example

The forum discussions generated good interactive discussion and the following highlights.

The first panel discussion explored the challenges and opportunities in enhancing air transport connectivity and regional integration, particularly in South East Asia. The discussion emphasized the importance of seamless connectivity and harmonised regulations, using the example of Europe's Single European Sky initiative, for ensuring safety and efficiency in air traffic management. However, the diverse cultures and perspectives among stakeholders must also be addressed and internal connectivity should not be overlooked while focusing on external connectivity.

Regional cooperation is crucial, as demonstrated by the European experience. Industry involvement from the early stages is key to success. The pivotal role which could be played by partnership collaborations like Regional Safety Oversight Organizations (RSOOs) and Regional Accident and Incident Organizations (RAIOS) in improving aviation safety and security was highlighted, which further facilitate regional integration. The endorsement of Resolution A40-6 during the 40th Session of the ICAO Assembly solidified support for RSOOs.

Overall, achieving seamless skies in South East Asia requires concerted efforts from governments, regulatory bodies and the aviation industry. Collaboration, harmonised regulations, and continuous safety oversight are necessary for enhancing air transport connectivity and integration within the region.

The panel discussion on the Beijing Declaration noted that, despite COVID-19 impacts, South East Asia is forecast to have for substantial air traffic growth in the medium to long term, which will be made more complex by technological development, such in aircraft design, air traffic management and safety systems, and innovation needs.

Slow implementation of safety measures and operational risk mitigation tools, low Effective Implementation (EI) scores, delays in State Safety Programme (SSP) implementation, insufficient resources for data management at the state level, limited regional information sharing mechanisms, and a lack of investment in human capital development, training and retaining workers, are some of the top organizational issues of South East Asia, which are also pertinent to the Beijing Declaration. This environment creates challenges to growth, thus commitment to stronger regional collaboration without working in isolation must be considered a priority.

With growth comes the demand for skilled human resources, emphasizing the importance of investing in workforce development initiatives to sustain the industry's momentum. Depleted skilled human resources compromises the implementation of safety standards and regulatory compliance, adversely impacting operational resilience and efficiency as well as limiting emergency response capabilities. Solutions to key human resource challenges can be found through policy and processes aimed at people. The meeting witnessed an excellent example shared by Thailand to overcome the human resource challenge successfully.

The discussion also pointed to addressing human resources challenges through appropriate governance structures to resolve organizational and political level issues.

A State Investigation Authority should be established to achieve full independence of accident investigation to accomplish the intent of Annex 13. Small Safety Investigation Authorities (SIAs) have the same responsibilities to fulfil as large SIAs. In order to achieve that, small SIAs can cooperate and rely on a robust mutual support system from the region where they are located. A mutual support system involving different SIAs, such as the example of ENCASIA, involves planning, preparation and training.

The discussion appreciated the implementation support that COSCAP-SEA could provide to the South East Asia States.

The panel discussion on Sustainable Aviation noted the strong commitment at international level and from countries such as Indonesia to the decarbonization of the air transportation sector, in line with the Net Zero by 2050 objective.

To address challenges in implementing the decarbonization programs, strong leadership, streamlined national and regional coordination, including the sharing of best practices, and enhanced capability and human resources is needed, paying attention to financial constraints, and regulatory harmonization.

However, these very challenges also present opportunities drawing on the richness of natural resources, capacity building, and collaboration for innovation and progress. By expediting Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF) development and deployment, promoting green airport initiatives, enhancing air traffic management efficiency, and developing effective regulatory frameworks, States can navigate these challenges. Strengthening collaboration with various stakeholders also will be essential in driving these initiatives forward.

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