

**61ST CONFERENCE OF
DIRECTORS GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION
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AGENDA ITEM 6: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
 OF AIR TRANSPORT .

**INTEGRATING AVIATION WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT INTO
NATIONAL PLANNING THROUGH SOCIAL DIALOGUE
AND PERSONNEL ORGANISATION ENGAGEMENT**

(Presented by IFALPA)

INFORMATION PAPER

SUMMARY

This paper examines the role of aviation workforce development as a critical component of integrating civil aviation into national development. It highlights that human capital constraints – including workforce shortages, skills gaps, and retention challenges – increasingly reflect system-level coordination challenges. The paper highlights the importance of coordinated, system-wide approaches to workforce development, supported by inclusive stakeholder engagement and strengthened governance frameworks. The paper proposes that States consider aligning workforce planning, skills development, and inclusive career pathways into national aviation and economic development strategies, supported by coordinated engagement between governments and industry. By strengthening coordination with other workforce actors, States can enhance the effectiveness of aviation investments and ensure long-term sector sustainability.

INTEGRATING AVIATION WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT INTO NATIONAL PLANNING THROUGH SOCIAL DIALOGUE AND PERSONNEL ORGANISATION ENGAGEMENT

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The aviation sector is facing persistent workforce challenges across multiple professions, including shortages, recruitment barriers, and retention difficulties. These challenges impact not only operational resilience, but also the effectiveness of national aviation and development strategies.

1.2 These pressures are often not solely the result of insufficient numbers of entrants, but rather reflect misalignments within the broader workforce system, including gaps between training, licensing, employment readiness, and career progression pathways.

1.3 Aviation plays a critical role in national economic development, supporting employment, trade, tourism and connectivity. The availability of a skilled and sustainable workforce is a foundational condition for aviation investment to deliver on national outcomes.

1.4 These challenges underscore the need for a comprehensive and coordinated workforce strategy aligned with ICAO's Next Generation of Aviation Professionals (NGAP) initiative that is integrated into national aviation planning frameworks as a system-wide policy priority.

2. DISCUSSION

2.1 The development of a sustainable aviation workforce requires effective coordination between multiple stakeholders, including regulators, other government agencies, industry, education providers, and aviation professionals. Collaboration and partnerships can be crucial to supporting development and capacity building.

2.2 In this context, States are encouraged to strengthen inclusive governance mechanisms that bring together relevant stakeholders across aviation, personnel and education systems in order to improve alignment between education, training and industry requirements.

2.3 The 60th DGCA Conference encouraged States, in Action Item 60/4, to implement Positive Safety Culture and to share best practices including, for example, planned and regular engagement with the representative organisations of personnel, operators and manufacturers.

2.4 Personnel Representative Organisations (PROs), including professional associations and worker organisations, can contribute to these coordination efforts by:

- (a) Identifying skills gaps and emerging competency requirements;
- (b) Supporting training standards and professional development frameworks;
- (c) Highlighting barriers to workforce entry and progression;
- (d) Promoting aviation career pathways; and
- (e) Contributing to policies that enhance workforce sustainability.

2.5 Within such frameworks, structured engagement between personnel, employers and policymakers can support the development of balanced and responsive workforce policies, improve workforce attraction and retention and enhance system resilience.

2.6 The ICAO Next Generation of Aviation Professionals (NGAP) framework recognizes that workforce development must address the full lifecycle of aviation careers, including attraction, training, transition into employment, and retention.

- 2.7 It also emphasizes the importance of aligning education and training systems with evolving industry needs and emerging technologies.
- 2.8 The 42nd ICAO Assembly has highlighted the need for improved coordination across government, industry and education stakeholders, and for stronger integration of workforce strategies into national aviation plans.
- 2.9 These priorities support a shift from fragmented interventions toward integrated, system-level workforce planning approaches.
- 2.10 A number of specific challenges should be considered:
- (a) *Fragmentation across Workforce Pipelines* – disconnections between training systems, regulatory requirements, and employment pathways can lead to inefficiencies, delays in workforce entry, and underutilisation of trained personnel.
 - (b) *Barriers to Entry* – a key challenge arises between training completion and entry into employment. Where structured pathways are limited, graduates may experience delays, underemployment or attrition.
 - (c) *Retention and Workforce Sustainability* – retention challenges are linked not only to working conditions, but also to the availability of clear progression pathways and early-career support. Weaknesses in these areas may contribute to loss of skilled personnel from the sector.
 - (d) *Limited System Coordination and Data* – In many cases, workforce policies are developed in isolation, without sufficient system-wide data or coordination mechanisms to guide decision-making.
- 2.11 The following measures can be adopted to effectively address these challenges:
- (a) *Adopting a System-Wide Workforce Perspective* – States are encouraged to address workforce challenges as part of an integrated system, ensuring alignment between education, training, regulatory requirements, and employment outcomes.
 - (b) *Strengthening Workforce Pathways and Transitions* – States should consider developing clearer and more structured pathways from education and training into aviation employment; and improving alignment between training outputs and industry entry requirements, including exploring opportunities to reach agreements between States regarding the mutual recognition of training standards.
 - (c) *Improving Coordination across Stakeholders* – States should strengthen coordination between aviation, education and labour/manpower systems to ensure workforce strategies secure retention of experienced personnel whilst also attracting new talent.
 - (d) *Enhancing Workforce Planning and Data Systems* – States should consider developing workforce indicator frameworks covering supply, demand, training outcomes, and retention.
 - (e) *Engaging Early with Future Aviation Professionals* – States should consider opportunities to include aviation knowledge and competencies in secondary school curricula.
 - (f) *Strengthening Partnerships and Implementation Mechanisms* – where appropriate, States may consider establishing or strengthening coordination mechanisms or platforms that utilise social dialogue between government agencies, NAAs, PROs and other industry organisations to promote coordinated approaches to workforce development.
 - (g) *Ensuring Inclusion and Access* – improving access to aviation careers remains essential, including through outreach, financial support mechanisms, and inclusive policies.

(h) *Supporting Evolving Skills Needs* – Education and training systems should remain adaptive, incorporating emerging technologies and future competency requirements.

2.12 Workforce challenges in aviation are increasingly systemic in nature and require coordinated responses.

2.13 Aligning training, regulatory frameworks, and employment pathways is essential to ensuring that aviation workforce development supports national investment and growth objectives.

2.14 Improved system design and strengthened engagement with PROs and industry associations can help ensure that workforce pipelines are efficient, responsive and sustainable.

2.15 Member States are encouraged to integrate these approaches into national aviation planning, consistent with ICAO NGAP objectives, to support a resilient and future-ready aviation sector.

3. ACTION BY THE CONFERENCE

3.1 The Conference is invited to note the information contained in this Paper.

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