



WORKING PAPER

**SEVENTH WORLDWIDE AIR TRANSPORT CONFERENCE
(ATCONF/7)**

Montréal, HQ, 16 to 20 November 2026

Agenda Item 3: Strengthening regulatory and institutional frameworks

3.1: Strengthening regulatory oversight and evolving institutional frameworks

**STRENGTHENING THE NEXT GENERATION OF AVIATION PROFESSIONALS (NGAP)
PROGRAMME AND TECHNICAL COOPERATION AMONG STATES FOR THE
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF AVIATION TALENT**

(Presented by Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) and endorsed by 18 LACAC Member States²)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This working paper proposes complementing national efforts through Regional Next Generation of Aviation Professionals (NGAP) Cooperation Frameworks to coordinate the identification of human resource needs, share training capabilities, expand scholarship and exchange programmes, enhance instructor training, and facilitate cooperation among civil aviation authorities, training centers, universities, industry, and international organizations. The proposed mechanism would build on existing regional structures without establishing new permanent administrative bodies.

Action: The Conference is invited to:

- recognize the importance of strengthening regional cooperation through the NGAP Programme in support of the sustainable development of aviation talent, particularly in developing States;
- recommend that the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), through its Regional Offices and in coordination with the relevant organizations, promote Regional NGAP Cooperation Frameworks tailored to the needs of each region;
- encourage States to develop regional mechanisms for identifying current and future aviation professional needs and available training capabilities; and
- request ICAO to develop guidance and common indicators to support the progressive assessment of the needs and outcomes of national and regional NGAP initiatives.

<i>Strategic Goals:</i>	This working paper relates to Strategic Goals: <i>No Country Left Behind</i> and <i>The Economic Development of Air Transport Assures the Delivery of Economic Prosperity and Societal Well-Being for All</i> .
<i>Financial implications:</i>	The proposal prioritizes the use of existing regional structures, national training capabilities, and existing technical cooperation arrangements.
<i>References:</i>	Resolution A42–24, <i>Next Generation of Aviation Professionals - Global Aviation Talent Development</i> ICAO Next Generation of Aviation Professionals (NGAP) Strategy ICAO Strategic Plan 2026-2050

¹ Spanish version provided by Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)

² Belize, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Jamaica, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, and Uruguay.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The sustainable growth of civil aviation depends on institutions capable of performing their regulatory functions and on the availability of a skilled aviation workforce capable of operating, managing, maintaining, overseeing, and developing the air transport system.

1.2 This need is further underscored by the projected growth of international aviation. The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) projections indicate that, by 2043, the sector will require hundreds of thousands of new pilots, cabin crew members, maintenance professionals, and air traffic controllers. Additional workforce needs are emerging in areas associated with digitalization, artificial intelligence, sustainability, cybersecurity, and new aviation operations.

1.3 The 42nd ICAO Assembly reinforced this approach through Resolution A42-24 on Global Aviation Talent Development. The new direction broadens the scope of the Next Generation of Aviation Professionals (NGAP) beyond a youth-centered approach to encompass talent from across generations, professional backgrounds, and levels of experience.

1.4 Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) views strengthened regional cooperation as essential to the implementation of these principles. National initiatives remain essential, but coordination among States offers opportunities to share capabilities, reduce duplication, expand training opportunities, and address needs shared by multiple States.

2. DISCUSSION

2.1 Human resource needs in civil aviation vary significantly among States. Some States have training centers, instructors, and specialized programmes that exceed their national requirements in certain areas, while others require access to training that is not available locally.

2.2 The 42nd Assembly identified specific challenges faced by developing States in training and retaining aviation professionals. It also recognized the need for knowledge-sharing programmes, joint training projects, capacity-building workshops, and technical assistance to strengthen national training capabilities.

2.3 The NGAP Strategy expressly calls for national and regional actions to assess current and future personnel needs, identify competency gaps, analyze training capabilities, and establish monitoring mechanisms. In response to these challenges, a regional approach would make it possible to translate these principles into practical forms of cooperation. This cooperation would not replace the responsibilities of individual States for training, certification, licensing, or oversight of aviation personnel. Its purpose would be to match existing needs with available capabilities.

2.4 Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) proposes that ICAO, through its Regional Offices and in coordination with States and relevant regional organizations, support the gradual establishment of Regional NGAP Cooperation Frameworks. These would not require new international organizations. Rather, they would build on existing regional coordination arrangements and points of contact voluntarily designated by participating States.

2.5 Each Regional Framework should initially focus on five areas of cooperation:

2.5.1 Regional Identification of Aviation Talent Needs. The outcome would be a periodic regional assessment to support national planning and facilitate the early identification of shared needs. Participating States would identify, based on shared criteria and available data:

- a) professional categories in highest demand;
- b) future needs arising from the growth of air transport activity;
- c) specializations facing personnel shortages;
- d) new competencies associated with digital transformation, artificial intelligence, sustainability, safety, aviation security, and emerging technologies; and
- e) available national training capabilities for such professionals.

2.5.2 Regional Inventory of Training Capabilities. The purpose would be to identify training capabilities available within the region before seeking training opportunities elsewhere. States could share information on:

- a) aviation training centers;
- b) specialized programmes;
- c) instructor availability;
- d) simulators and other training facilities;
- e) university programmes related to aviation;
- f) courses available to foreign participants; and
- g) capabilities available through ICAO training networks and programmes.

2.5.3 Regional Technical Cooperation and Training Programme. States with available capabilities would voluntarily offer training, specialists, facilities, or expertise, as appropriate. Based on the needs identified, States, regional organizations, and participating partners would promote:

- a) scholarships and training opportunities;
- b) temporary exchanges of instructors and specialists;
- c) instructor training programmes;
- d) joint in-person and virtual training courses;
- e) professional internships;
- f) mentoring and knowledge-transfer programmes;
- g) technical assistance between civil aviation authorities; and
- h) joint projects involving educational institutions and industry.

2.5.4 Attraction, Development and Retention of Talent. Regional cooperation should encompass the full professional development cycle. States would share experiences on programmes to attract new professionals, partnerships with universities and educational institutions, internships, career development, continuing training, and strategies for retaining qualified personnel. The ICAO NGAP Strategy recognizes that the sustainability of the system depends not only on attracting new professionals, but also on educating, upskilling, and retaining talent within the aviation sector.

2.5.5 Cooperation with Universities, Industry and International Organizations. Developing aviation talent requires engagement beyond civil aviation authorities. As appropriate, regional mechanisms should bring together aviation authorities, air navigation service providers, airports, airlines, maintenance organizations, training centers, universities and technical institutions, regional organizations, international organizations, and institutions that finance education and capacity-building programmes.

2.6 Each Regional NGAP Cooperation Framework should be developed gradually and tailored to regional circumstances.

2.7 As an initial step, interested regions could develop a pilot plan for the 2027-2028 period, including four specific deliverables: baseline assessment of regional human resource needs; inventory of available training capabilities; annual programme of cooperation, training, and exchange activities; and indicators for assessing results.

2.8 Indicators should focus on simple, verifiable results, including the number of participating States, professionals trained, scholarships awarded, instructors exchanged, joint activities conducted, and new training capabilities established. This information would help assess the effectiveness of the mechanism and guide the adaptation of regional initiatives to identified needs.

2.9 A key element of this mechanism would be to prioritize cooperation and the use of existing capabilities before creating new structures or making new investments. Resources could be mobilized through voluntary contributions by States, training opportunities available through national programmes, bilateral cooperation arrangements, regional organizations, industry, universities, training centers, and international scholarship programmes.

2.10 In-kind contributions should also be encouraged through instructors, virtual platforms, training materials, technical advice, access to specialist expertise, and temporary access to facilities. This approach is aligned with the NGAP Strategy, which identifies capacity development, implementation support, and resource mobilization as elements of its fourth key focus area, guided by the principle of leaving no country behind.

3. CONCLUSION

3.1 A coordinated regional approach would help expand access to training opportunities for developing States, align training with the actual needs of the aviation industry, improve the use of existing training centers and facilities; reduce duplication of efforts, enhance national instructor training, facilitate knowledge-sharing among States, improve human resource planning, support workforce continuity and renewal within aviation authorities, facilitate entry into aviation professions for new generations, and reinforce the institutional resilience of the regional aviation system.

3.2 The expected outcome would be a shift from isolated national efforts to a collaborative network in which capabilities available in one State also contribute to strengthening other States, while respecting national mandates and responsibilities.

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