



DIRECTORS GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION CONFERENCE ON A GLOBAL STRATEGY FOR AVIATION SAFETY

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Theme 2: Improving Aviation Safety
Topic 2.5: Enhancing safety oversight

RESTRUCTURING A CAA SAFETY OVERSIGHT ORGANIZATION

(Presented by Oman)

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 One of the key functions of the universal safety oversight programme is to audit the structure of Civil Aviation Authorities (CAAs) in terms of composition as "being headed by a Director, with the necessary technical supervisory and support personnel with adequate resources." ICAO has been instrumental in providing guidelines on how such a structure can be instituted, bearing in mind the size and complexity of the State's aviation industry. An example is given in ICAO document *Safety Oversight Manual, Part A — The Establishment and Management of a State's Safety Oversight System* (Doc 9734), Figure A-1. This document was first published in 1999 and has not been amended since.

1.2 As we are aware, the rapid technological growth in aviation has mandated Contracting States to reorganize their civil aviation structure to cope with such growth and fulfill their obligations to meet the Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs). Two critical areas stand out that require being addressed: safety oversight structure and security (we will touch on security in another working paper).

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 Presently, safety oversight has been concentrated in aircraft operations, aircraft airworthiness, and personnel licensing. In fact, many CAA structures are formed under a Flight Safety Department. In essence, such an arrangement has been working quite well despite shortfalls due to intrinsic and extrinsic factors. As aviation has recently evolved to be systematic and performance-based, a safety management system (SMS) was recently introduced. Unfortunately, however, SMS has been more with academia and lectures and not in the regulatory framework. In other words, many aviators are not even aware of the concept of SMS. It is so conspicuous that the regulatory-based approach dominates the

¹ Arabic and English provided by Oman.

performance-based approach, essentially limiting the vision of the regulators in these sections: aircraft operations, aircraft airworthiness, and personnel licensing.

2.2 SMS has evolved to cover other perspectives as well. These include airport safety and air traffic management safety. Many CAAs are presently having safety oversight functions disorganized. Yes, there is airport safety dealing with events such as runway incursion, ground handling accidents and incidents. And yes, there is ATM safety that handles near mid-air collision, operational errors, etc. However, these critical safety elements are not combined or managed under one umbrella but scattered. Many aviation management personnel are perplexed with operations and regulations; are they running the airport, or are they regulating such airport? This has led to certain functions being duplicated or oversighted. It has also led to overlapping of duties and responsibilities. Partiality and objectivity can be lost as well.

2.3 Privatization of aviation has more confused aviation management personnel. Whereas the CAA was operating an airport, privatization has tasked such operation to private or quasi-government enterprises. In a such case, due to the newness of this arrangement, the role of both the airport operation and the CAA has not been evidently defined, either contractually or regulatory. In particular, the safety side of airport operation, the approval of personnel, (post-holders), the approval of airport operation manuals, training, etc. are yet to be defined.

2.4 In addition, CAAs are struggling to find well-qualified staff to be airport regulators rather than airport operators. There is a severe shortage of qualified airport inspectors worldwide. And those qualified come with a heavy invoice. How can we qualify a CAA airport inspector? What basic qualifications, training, experiences, are required in the area of runway inspection, instrument landing system (ILS) navigational aids, fire-fighting, certification in general? Can ICAO Contracting States or the Secretariat agree on SARPs, or guidance material, or at least, introduce a major amendment to Doc 9734 to assist other Contracting States to become airport regulators?

2.5 As ICAO has embarked on auditing air traffic management (ATM), it is not clear whether air traffic control should be left as a self-regulated entity. We lack total guidance or guidance material as to what should be managed strictly by air traffic control (ATC) personnel, and what should be regulated by the Flight Safety Department? SMS has been introduced to ATM but the structure is yet to be defined. Everyone would agree that the safety of airspace, operational errors, and system deficiencies should be dealt with impartially and objectively. But how can that be achieved in relation to the existing CAA structure?

3. CONCLUSION

3.1 We, in the Sultanate of Oman, believe that a CAA safety oversight structure should be organized to cater for those recent trends in the economic-political contests, e.g., privatization. In addition to aircraft operations, aircraft airworthiness, and personnel licensing, airport safety and ATM safety should be added to the core function of any Flight Safety Department (to be named Aviation Safety Department, instead of Flight Safety Department). Whereas a CAA can be an operator and a regulator, all "regulatory" functions of the CAA should be under one umbrella. SMS should be able to reflect this to harmonize all efforts and cope with the evolving changes witnessed in aviation.