Ambitious GASP objectives now being realized with advances in Regional and sub-regional cooperative initiatives

Recent AFI-RAN and RASG-PA events meet with unqualified success

In the final months of 2008, ICAO and the Industry Safety Strategy Group (ISSG) partners began to actively implement new programmes and governance structures to help individual States cooperate more effectively with respect to the efficient oversight and management of their civil aviation safety programmes and infrastructure development.

The basis for these initiatives is provided for by the ICAO Global Aviation Safety Plan (GASP), which complements the objectives laid out in the ISSG Global Aviation Safety Roadmap (GASR). Together, the GASP and GASR outline global safety priorities for governments, industry and Regions, as well as providing a well-defined process for identifying gaps between best practices and reducing duplication in efforts to implement action plans.

In this issue, the *Journal* explores recent developments in the ICAO African (AFI) and Americas/Caribbean (SAM and NACC) Regions that reflect the ongoing application of practical measures to address key global safety concerns. Readers may wish to note that ICAO will review the scope and conclusions from last year's AFI-RAN meeting in more detail in the special *AFI Regional Report* magazine slated for distribution in the coming months.

Two of the most important recent developments with respect to the global objectives contained in the ICAO GASP occurred late in 2008. This progress was achieved in the African (AFI) and Americas/Caribbean (NACC/SAM) Regions respectively.

In the AFI Region, GASP/GASR efforts were moved forward with tremendous success at the Africa/Indian Ocean Regional Air Navigation (AFI-RAN) meeting on aviation safety and efficiency, held in Durban, South Africa last November. This event developed a blueprint for creating new Regional cooperation initiatives among various sub-regional bodies that have been operating under the auspices of ICAO's Cooperation Development of Operation Safety and Continuing Airworthiness Programmes (COSCAPs).

The AFI-RAN results built on the efforts of recent workshops and meetings that were held in: Addis Ababa, Ethiopia; Abuja, Nigeria; Maputo, Mozambique; Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso; and Arusha, Uganda; among others. The event helped to highlight how civil aviation responsibilities, especially with respect to effective safety oversight and the implementation of more advanced air navigation infrastructure, can be extremely expensive for many States to assume individually. It's currently estimated, for example, that some 75 percent of AFI States are not capable of assembling the resources required to be able to develop and manage an effective and sustainable civil aviation safety oversight system.

Captain Haile Belai, ICAO's Chief of the AFI Implementation Programme which was established to give effect to ICAO's broader AFI Plan, noted in a recent *Journal* interview that many of these smaller AFI States only experience a few departures on a daily basis, while larger countries—even those with many millions of inhabitants—may similarly only witness 20 or 30 daily departures.

In all of these instances, civil aviation activities are simply not yet at a threshold whereby they can generate the volume of ancillary revenue which is suitable, on a State-by-State basis, to cover the costs of the comprehensive resources that are required for effective safety programmes. In an era when even a single accident investigation can incur costs in the tens of millions of dollars, the need for these types of cooperative Regional programmes becomes very clear, very quickly.

"The establishment of the new AFI and Pan American initiatives is reflective of an increasing trend towards the Regionalization of international civil aviation safety initiatives. States throughout the world are finding that by pooling their aviation expertise and resources they can achieve real safety improvements in a timely and sustainable fashion through international cooperation," remarked Roberto Kobeh González, President of the ICAO Council.

In the Americas and Caribbean, the inaugural meeting of the Regional Aviation Safety Group – Pan America (RASG–PA), held late in 2008 in Costa Rica, brought together stakeholders from States, industry, and global and regional organizations representing a new and truly *hemispheric* level of coordination. The event established RASG-PA as the key forum in the hemisphere to address safety risks in line with the GASR and will serve to ensure harmonization and coordination of safety risk mitigation efforts taken in the North American, Central American, Caribbean and South American regions.

"The event set the stage for collaboration among the stakeholders to reduce aviation safety hazards," began ICAO NACC Regional Director, Loretta Martin. "In the 21st century, access to safe flights should be a basic right of citizens everywhere, but this right can only be effectively extended when all stakeholders work together on the most significant challenges—especially those related to aviation safety. The RASG-PA brought together industry, international and regional organizations, and Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) stakeholders, building on the work reflected in the Roadmap and GASP as well as new safety data that had been presented and assessed in recent workshops."

RASG-PA planning focuses on eliminating the duplication of efforts and reducing human resource and financial expenditures, which are extremely limited in the South/Central American and Caribbean Regions. All participating stakeholders will be looking for alternative funding sources from organiza-

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The ISSG Roadmap and ICAO GASP require that all stakeholders follow a logical process to address 12 focus areas attributable to States, Regions, and industry, respectively, so that the Regions will always invest their energy in the most critical areas *(see ISSG sidebar, page 14)*. The Roadmap provides metrics through explicit projects that enable managed improvement and channels efforts through existing mechanisms—not new bureaucracies.

Industry participation in the Roadmap is essential and includes airlines, operators, airports, ANSPs, Maintenance and Repair Organizations (MROs) and manufacturers. Martin commented on the usefulness of having the Roadmap's focus areas clearly indentified as the RASG-PA membership joins together to tackle their agenda.

"My own observation has been that, even though there is some degree of overlap under current safety and development regimens, certain gaps nonetheless remain—for instance between air navigation and flight safety activities," continued Martin. "The RASG-PA will help to minimize these and other deficiencies by concentrating on the Roadmap's 12 focus areas."

A number of ICAO Member State officials were elected at the RASG-PA meeting to serve as members on its Executive Steering Committee (ESC).

Lt. Col. Oscar Derby, Director General of the Jamaica Civil Aviation Authority, was elected as the RASG-PA's first Chairman, and other State aviation dignitaries from Brazil, Costa Rica, Chile and the U.S. will serve as Vice-Chairmen of RASG-PA and the ESC.

International organizations, including the International Air Transport Association (IATA), Airports Council International

Attendees of the ground-breaking Regional Aviation Safety Group – Pan America (RASG-PA) meeting in Costa Rica, November 2008. While addressing the ICAO, State, aviation stakeholder and industry participants, ICAO Council President Roberto Kobeh González noted that:

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(ACI), the Asociación Latinoamericana de Transporte Aéreo (ALTA), the International Federation of Air Line Pilots' Associations (IFALPA), the International Federation of Air Traffic Controllers' Associations (IFATCA), the Central American Corporation of Navigation Service Providers (COCESNA), as well as the U.S. Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and manufacturers Airbus and Boeing, will also serve on the RASG-PA ESC to help establish the highest level of coordination and collaboration possible.

"Some of the most significant advances in civil aviation safety have been achieved when government and industry work together to identify potential safety hazards and work together to mitigate risks to an acceptable level," added Kobeh González.

The spirit of his remark was heartily supported by Loretta Martin.

"This group is results oriented," commented Martin. "We will be a forum for expedient, efficient, and cost effective implementation of near-, mid- and long-term Roadmap initiatives for all stakeholders. The RASG-PA will determine roadblocks and identify priorities to achieve GASR implementation with clearly-defined stakeholder action plans."

Representatives from several regional and sub-regional safety groups also attended and shared valuable safety information at the RASG-PA meeting, including the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA), the Commercial Aviation Safety Team (CAST), the Caribbean Aviation Safety and Security Oversight System (CASSOS), and the Central American Aviation Safety Agency (ACSA).

During RASG-PA/1, participants completed a gap analysis for the

implementation of Safety Management Systems (SMS). Members of the Steering Committee used this information to determine the implementation requirements and develop a plan for the roll-out of SMS programmes throughout the Region by building upon the synergies of all the countries and industry stakeholders involved and following-up on the extensive training and workshop activity that has previously been conducted in the Region by both ICAO and ISSG members.

While speaking with ICAO Flight Safety (FLS) Section Chief Mitchell Fox, who also attended the RASG-PA meeting and has been participating in regular teleconference calls with Steering Committee members in the weeks since, his excitement at being involved in this truly "hemispheric" event was clearly in evidence, but it was the subject of SMS that became an early focal point in our discussions.

"The Pan Am application of the more refined SMS imple-mentation framework is currently set for 2010, and this still represents a tremendous challenge for industry and governments," Fox began. "In the most recent call I had with the Steering Committee we got some great news from the representative at Boeing about a company with aviation ties that has developed a very sophisticated system for implementing SMS in their aviation operations. He noted that they're willing to donate this to the RASG-PA free of charge so that it can assist all the relevant stakeholders in taking on and meeting this significant challenge."
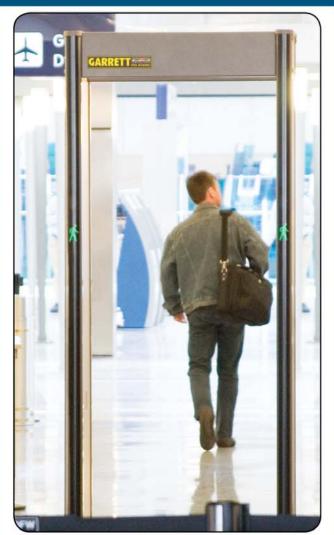
Fox went on to comment on the important role that ICAO performs as "a very well-suited network" for getting stakeholders and States connected, communicating and cooperating. In early pre-Roadmap, pre-GASP discussions between the Organization and industry groups, a strong conclusion was reached that their efforts at that time were making inefficient use of limited resources.

This preliminary groundwork paved the way, first for the Roadmap and GASP and now more specific Regional initiatives to take shape— moving beyond the setting of priorities and getting started on the actual implementation of distinct plans of action.

"When you put forward a structured approach that makes sense to both government and industry, and you provide a logical process to reveal the gaps in various global safety initiatives, it in effect makes it much simpler for States and stakeholders to cooperate with a degree of effectiveness that was once a fairly distant goal on our horizons," Fox remarked.

"In my opinion, the success that this initiative will lead to is precisely why people choose to work in international aviation to begin with." ■