



International Civil Aviation Organization

First Meeting of the Asia Pacific Accident Investigation Group (APAC-AIG/1)  
(Bali, Indonesia, 18-19 September 2013)

**Agenda Item 2: Report on recent accident/incident investigation related developments and activities**

**OBSERVER ATTACHMENTS TO ENHANCE INVESTIGATOR'S PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE AND COMPETENCY**

(Presented by Singapore)

**SUMMARY**

This paper discusses the benefits of observer attachment as a means to enhance the practical experience and competency of accident investigators.

**1. INTRODUCTION**

1.1 For a variety of reasons, investigators in many States lack practical experience in accident investigation. It is a challenge for the States to find opportunities for their investigators to obtain practical training and gain exposure to major investigations.

**2. DISCUSSION**

2.1 The practical experience and competency of an accident investigator cannot be adequately achieved through classroom training. Experience and competency would come about from being involved in and from participating in actual investigations. It would take many years and many investigations in order to attain the level of experience desired. One avenue that can help investigators gain experience and competency is participation as observer in others' investigations. Paragraph 3.5.4 of Chapter 3 of ICAO Circular 298, *Training Guidelines for Aircraft Accident Investigators*, identifies observer attachment as a form of additional training for gaining exposure to major investigations through being on accident sites in other States.

2.2 Observer attachments to counterparts' investigations present a good alternative to acquire exposure and practical experience that will quickly enhance an investigator's competency. Aspects of investigation where observer attachments can be instrumental in enhancing an investigator's competency include:

- Management of an investigation, including coordination arrangement with other agencies
- Management of investigation team for field investigation works
- Evidence collection, debris mapping and photographing techniques

- Management of a sea search operation
- Management of site safety, access control and recovery of wreckages
- Use of personal protective equipment
- Conduct of media briefing
- Interview techniques

2.3 Over the years, AAIB Singapore's investigators have gained valuable experience from attachments to investigations conducted by the ATSB (Australia), SSCA (Cambodia), BEA (France), NTSC (Indonesia), ARAIB (Republic of Korea), MAIB (Myanmar), AAIB (UK) and NTSB (US). These observer attachments provided much needed exposure for the AAIB Singapore's investigators in various aspects of investigation operations.

2.4 In line with the cooperative spirit embodied in APAC-AIG's terms of reference and in the Asia Pacific Code of Conduct On Cooperation Relating To Civil Aviation Accident/Incident Investigation, accident investigation authorities should consider allowing investigation observer attachment opportunities to their APAC-AIG counterparts. This will be highly beneficial to collectively enhance the capabilities of the investigators in this region. It is understandable, of course, that the accident investigation authorities may have a limit to the number of observers which they can accommodate.

### **3. ACTION BY THE MEETING**

3.1 The meeting is invited to consider suggesting to the APRAST that RASG-APAC encourage States/Administrations to accept requests for observer participation when conducting investigations.

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