Joint Meeting of APIRG Sub-Groups:

Aerodrome Operations Planning (AOP); and,
Air Traffic Management/Aeronautical Information Management/Search and
Rescue (ATM/AIM/SAR)
(Nairobi, Kenya, 5 – 8 July 2016)

Agenda Item 4: ATS Competency Study Group (ATSCSG)

Identify Short Comings in ATS Competency
(Presented by IFATCA)

SUMMARY

The **ATSCSG** was set up following a resolution by APIRG. This resolution was a result of a recommendation from the AFI Tactical Action Group (TAG) to APIRG on the level of competency of air traffic controllers in the region. Since the first meeting of this Sub-Group in 2014 (ATSCSG/1), not much work have taken place. Draft survey paper was done but resources failed to carry the work forward to enable distribution to the States. It is important that the work of this Sub-group be given priority as the region continues to realize more and more ATS incidents resulting from ATS competency.

REF: TAG/8 and AIAG/13 report
     RASG-AFI Annual Report 2015
     AATO Report 2015

1. **Introduction**

1.1   In the ATSCSG terms of reference:

1.1.1   The SG was required to review and assess the adequacy of training in the following areas against ICAO Annex 11 requirements, Doc 4444 and common operational requirements (industry best practices) as follows:

   a) Aviation Training Academies, schools and institutions.
   b) Abridging (conversion) training being provided by ANSPs in order to bring their candidates to set Standards and to specific requirements air traffic services units (ATSUs) requirements (airspace configuration, aircraft movements, procedural or radar control, etc.).
   c) Type and quality of on-the-job (OJT) training being provided, covering both initial and in-service OJT.
   d) Recurrent training.

e) Special training including introduction/indoctrination to new technologies.
f) Development and implementation of training programmes and training plans (Ref. ICAO USOAP Audit reports)
g) ANSP mechanisms to identify and rectify competency deficiencies

1.1.2   Review the shortcomings in the above areas and make recommendations to the ATM/AIM/SAR SG to address and rectify them, so as to close the gaps identified.

1.1.3.   Conduct Surveys to cover all AFI States, but only visit selected academies/schools/institutions in AFI States and detailed focus should be on the four institutions with low output/enrolment of ATM and AIM (including Message Handling) candidates, and four with the highest output. In addition, four ANSPs having the highest number of unsatisfactory safety reports should be visited.

2.   Discussion

2.1   In the last ATS Incident Analysis Group (AIAG/13) and the Tactical Action Group (TAG/8) meetings held in March 2016 it was clear that previous trends on causes of ATS incident had continued in the year 2015. The following three were high on the list:
  a) ATC competence
  b) Loss of situational awareness
  c) Fatigue (Human Factors)

2.2   **AIAG/13 report**: The Work Group analyzed a total of one hundred and fifteen (115) safety reports from the year 2015. The highest percentage of causes of ATS incident was Inadequate Controller proficiency at 27% followed by inadequate airspace organisation at 20%. Also of concern were inadequate ATC procedures at 13% and Inadequate coordination between ATC units at 4%.
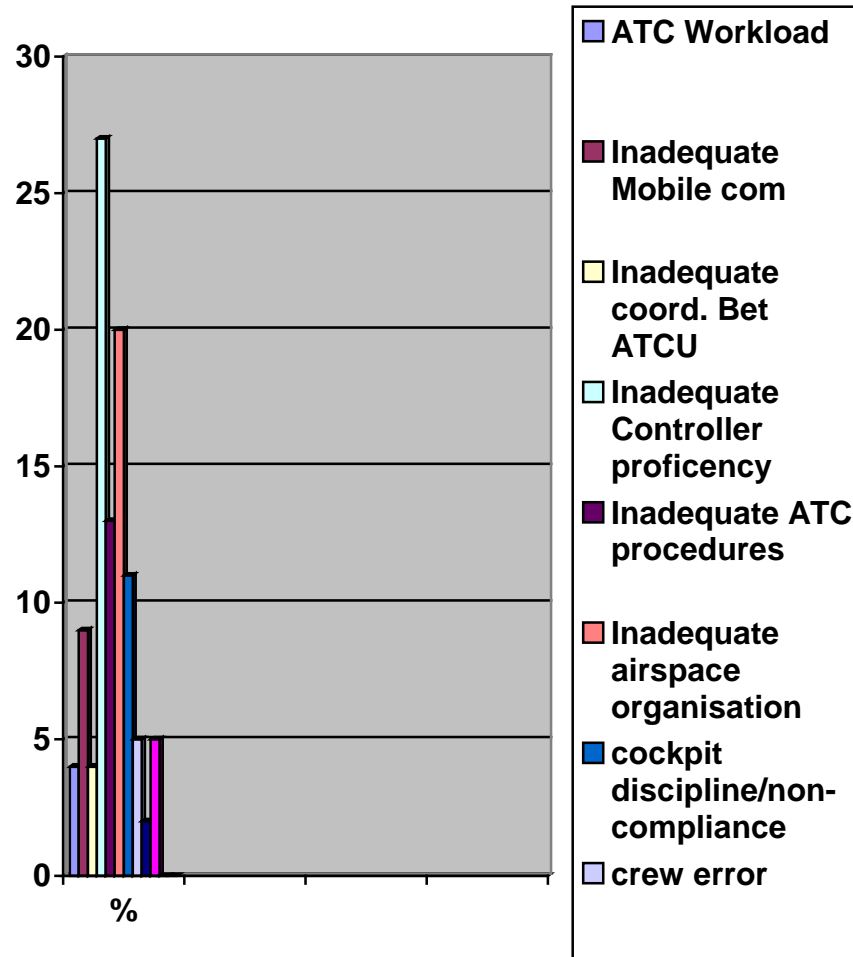
The report also indicates that handling of conflict requires improvement from ATC; initiators of avoiding action were 53% cockpit crew and only 47% from ATC. This shows that in a lot of the situations controllers have lost situational awareness much more then the crew. In a safer environment where ATC is provided, these figures should be higher for ATC than crew.

2.3   **TAG/8 report**: In the year 2015, during its teleconference meetings, the Group reviewed 287 Air safety reports (only within the RVSM airspace), including those classified as Communication failures, of which 182 were accepted by TAG for discussions and formally analysis. The year saw low reporting of incidents, however the number of AIRPROXs remained high; thirty six in total (36). In these incidents ATC competency rated as one of the main causes.

2.4   **AFI week reports**:
2.4.1   *AATO survey report 2015*: In their report presented at the AFI Aviation Safety week 2016 , AATO reported that they had carried out three surveys to determine the training needs in the AFI region and from this developed an implementation plan to be carried out in three phases as follows:

Phase 1: **Increase the level of effective implementation** to above 60% for states with less than 60%. *(July to December 2016);* Assist states with effective implementation of less than 60% to gradually come out of the status *(January to December 2017),* Increase the level of effective implementation for all states to 90%. *(From January 2018 to be continuous)*.

Phase 2: Succession plan: Replacement of ageing/retiring personnel in all disciplines. Provide training in: Abnitio, Basic, Advanced, Specialized, OJT, and Management

Phase 3: Harmonize & Standardize Training, and Designate Centres of Excellence.

AATO also reported that there are only 11 TRAINAIR PLUS members and a total of 30 CAA accredited ATOs and members of AATO in the region. However there is a longer list of available training organizations in Africa.

2.4.2 The AATO indicates that Harmonization and Standardization of Training is NOT a priority at the moment. This raises great concern as previous reports from IFATCA members indicate that serious competency levels is related to different training standards among the training organisations in the region.

2.4.3 **ATS System Capacity Seminar/Workshop report**: At the ATS system capacity workshop/seminar held in June 2016 in Nairobi, Kenya discussions from delegates indicated a clear deficiency in the regional ATM system. Many ANSPs still report staff shortage and lack of refresher and proficiency training.

3.   Conclusion

3.1   Looking at the reports emerging from the various regional meetings that have been held in the last two years, ATS competency continues to be a major area of concern for the Region, however priority in handling the problem is not being given as would be expected. If we are going to achieve the required level of safety, it is important that the work of the subgroup be given priority to enable the region resolve the deficiency in Air Traffic Management. It is only then that the region can push forward projects and know that the implementation of such projects will be done safely and timely.

4.   Recommendation

4.1   To note the information provided in this paper.

4.2   The meeting is requested to highlight the importance of the work being done in this SG and to prioritize it in the APIRG project work Calendar.