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WORKING PAPER

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ASSEMBLY — 37TH SESSION

TECHNICAL COMMISSION

Agenda Item 34: Proficiency in the English language used for radiotelephony communications

**LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY REQUIREMENTS
IMPLEMENTATION STATUS AND CHALLENGES**

(Presented by Nepal)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This paper presents the development status of language proficiency requirements (LPR implementation) in the country. It touches upon some of the difficulties that stand along with the system establishment process of LPR, while also giving an overview of challenges on the use of English in aviation beyond March 2011. The paper culminates with an urge for ICAO and States to cooperate in matters of LPR in order to generate and sustain competency among States.

Action: The Assembly is invited to:

- a) facilitate, through active lead of ICAO and regional organizations like COSCAP-SA, international and inter-professional exchanges between all motivated individuals and organizations involved in pursuing English in aviation communications; and
- b) urge States to cooperate and assist Nepal in its effort to pursue implementation, even beyond March 2011.

<i>Strategic Objectives:</i>	This working paper relates to Strategic Objective A.
<i>References:</i>	Doc 9902, <i>Assembly Resolutions in Force</i> (as of 28 September 2007) Doc 9835, <i>Manual on the Implementation of ICAO Language Proficiency Requirements</i> State letter AN 12/44.6-09/53 State letter AN 12/44.6-07/68

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Nepal presented a discussion paper on language proficiency requirement (LPR) implementation in the 46th DGCA Conference, Asia and Pacific Regions, in which challenges of implementation had been discussed. Two major challenges – scarcity of manpower and inadequacy of regulatory documents – had been highlighted. Now with the concern and cooperation of States, Nepal is poised to meet the LPR by the new timeline of March 2011.

1.2 ICAO introduced Standards for level 4 language proficiency requirements in 2003, 26 years after the Tenerife disaster which is acknowledged to be a powerful activator for ICAO to initiate language enhancement efforts for aviation personnel, particularly air traffic controllers, pilots and aeronautical station operators. The subsequent steps taken to assist in their effective and timely implementation has significantly altered the environment in which aviation English training is now carried out. ICAO published the *Manual on the Implementation of ICAO Language Proficiency Requirements* (Doc 9835) in 2004, followed by the development of “Language Testing Criteria for Global Harmonization” in July 2008.

1.3 As per the call of the ICAO State letter AN 12/44.6-07/68, the Civil Aviation Authority of Nepal (CAAN) posted its implementation plan in early 2008, with a compliance target of 2009. However, considering the challenge of system establishment with regard to language requirements implementation, an amended plan was posted on the ICAO LPR website with a compliance target of March 2011. The process is underway, with training and testing to be executed by CAAN’s own limited trainers and testers. CAAN strongly seeks the assistance of the Cooperative Development of Operational Safety and Continuing Airworthiness Programme — South Asia (COSCAP-SA) and the cooperation of States and organizations in CAAN’s effort to have smooth and expeditious compliance by the stipulated timeline.

2. DISCUSSION

2.1 At a time when the issue of accreditation of training organizations’ training programmes in the world is mounting, pending the nature of language training as a mostly unregulated industry, it was necessary to help address the challenges that have emerged for aviation English educators and the end-users of new training programmes that have been developed to address ICAO's requirements. In this realization, ICAO has produced, in cooperation of International Civil Aviation English Association (ICAEA), Guidelines for Aviation English Training Programmes in 2009. It is expected that State civil aviation authority personnel, pilots, controllers, designers and facilitators will directly benefit from the guidelines in their efforts to ensure aviation language training efficiency and effectiveness.

2.2 Since 2006/2007, when only one personnel with tremendous aviation and educational background was made available, the subject of LPR remained confined to the learning phase. It also remained as an independent exploration phase for the personnel. However, to respond to the call of ICAO State letter AN 12/44.6-07/68 as mandated by Assembly Resolution A36-11, the implementation plan of Nepal on English language proficiency requirements was posted on the ICAO website. Our plan had indicated revelation of two major pitfalls. They were:

- a) lack of supportive documents at national level; and
- b) acute shortage of manpower.

2.3 Aviation English training and testing procedures are being developed to respond to the provisions in the Personnel Licensing Requirements (PLR), Second Edition 2010 and subsequent Procedures for Personnel Licensing requirements (PELR), enforced by CAAN under CAAN Act 1996, Section 34, followed by the Civil Aviation Regulations 2002, Rule 82, Schedule 3 Serial Number 27. It was only with active involvement of experts from COSCAP-SA that the longstanding PLR and PELR both came into effect in early 2009 and second edition of PLR in early 2010 which included LPR requirements. The questionnaire attached to the ICAO State letter AN 12/44.6-09/53, dated 17 July 2009, has been duly completed and submitted to ICAO Headquarters, in which CAAN affirmed its acceptance to comply with the language proficiency requirements by March 2011. Accordingly, an amended plan has also duly been posted on the ICAO LPR website. Now, with the continued cooperation of States, Nepal has three qualified trainers/raters in place. Testing is expected to be achieved towards the full implementation of LPR by March 2011.

3. CHALLENGES BEYOND 2011

3.1 Taking into account the need of reactive and pro-active implementation of LPR, full and complete LPR system establishment in a State is difficult and challenging. A workable pool of trainers and the category and areas of training are not sufficient. For example, Nepal can boast of having three basic aeronautical English trainers on the one hand, whereas language test specialization expertise or linguistic competence is lacking on the other. As envisaged in the Language Testing Criteria for Global Harmonization produced by ICAO, a rater's initial and recurrent training has also been underscored – another factor to ensure quality and standards when it comes to evaluation of the programme. As regards exploration of possibilities in terms of training and expertise, Nepal urges the concerned training organizations and States to continue with their fellowship programmes for developing countries like Nepal to allow more participation in training and workshops, in particular the Train-the-Tester Programme and the Aviation English Language Proficiency Interviewer/Rater Course, STP No. 291/154/LAANENG, rater's recurrent training, curriculum development courses, etc., taking into account the continuity of the LPR implementation process in respect of new entrants beyond 2011. Obviously, the LPR must be integrated into the main stream of civil aviation. All the documents produced so far on language proficiency need to be updated. In this regard, Nepal is considering its participation in the 10th Aviation English Forum of International Civil Aviation English Association (ICAEA) to be held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, on 23 and 24 November 2010, which aims to discuss the theme of sustaining ICAO LPR implementation beyond March 2011 from the operational and language training and testing perspectives.

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