



HIGH-LEVEL CONFERENCE ON AVIATION SECURITY (HLCAS)

Montréal, 12 to 14 September 2012

Agenda Item 5: Capacity-building and technical assistance

CAPACITY BUILDING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE IN THE PACIFIC REGION

(Presented by New Zealand)

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The threat to civil aviation is constantly evolving and Pacific Island countries are not immune to the consequence of that threat. While Pacific Island countries are committed to mitigating these ongoing threats, New Zealand recognises the significant and often onerous obligations placed on Pacific Island countries to comply with ever increasing security requirements promulgated by ICAO and other States – especially in a time of increased financial constraints.

1.2 Over the past few years Pacific Island countries have benefited from increased donor support from a number of governments and organisations. This support, while much needed, runs the risk of being uncoordinated and therefore potentially of reduced benefit. A mechanism is required to ensure that the various governments and organisations co-ordinate their capacity building and technical assistance activities.

1.3 This paper provides information on how New Zealand has supported Pacific Island countries to improve their compliance with international aviation security requirements and identifies the challenges that donor governments and organisations need to overcome to ensure capacity building initiatives are effective.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 New Zealand has close relationships with most Pacific Island countries, especially in Polynesia. We have constitutional links with Niue and the Cook Islands, and a Treaty of Friendship with Samoa. New Zealand's national identity and interests are closely intertwined with the Pacific. Large Pacific Island communities are resident in New Zealand.

2.2 New Zealand's transport security is inextricably linked with the Pacific. Elements such as direct transport links, trade, historic, constitutional and cultural connections, and geographic proximity all contribute towards interdependencies in the security environment. These interdependencies include the relationships between transport and trade and, security and social stability. These interdependencies must be understood and managed to achieve the desired security outcomes.

2.3 The countries New Zealand has the closest ties with are: Samoa, Tonga, the Cook Islands, Niue and Vanuatu. We have prioritised these countries for transport security engagement because of their direct air links with New Zealand and their special historic/constitutional links with New Zealand. The

Solomon Islands is assisted through New Zealand's commitment to the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands (RAMSI) arrangements. The grouping is not exclusive but is rather an indication of where transport security projects are targeted in the first instance.

3. NEW ZEALAND'S INVOLVEMENT IN THE PACIFIC

3.1 New Zealand's Pacific Transport Security Strategy recognises these close ties and provides a formal framework to guide the aviation and maritime security activities of New Zealand transport agencies in the Pacific. The strategy sets out the objectives and priorities for New Zealand's transport security engagement. The strategy has been in place since 2007 and is regularly reviewed.

3.2 The strategy supports the delivery of assistance programmes and equipment to Pacific Island countries, and the ongoing development of regional organisations, such as the Pacific Aviation Safety Office (PASO), to assist Pacific Island countries to meet their international obligations. For example New Zealand funded the Security Inspector position at PASO for several years.

3.3 The adoption of the New Zealand Civil Aviation Rules requirements across all disciplines of civil aviation in the Pacific as a template for each State's own regulation, and the in-depth knowledge of those rule requirements by New Zealand aviation regulatory staff working with Pacific Island countries, means this regional response to assess needs is highly effective.

3.4 Technical assistance and training support has been provided by the New Zealand Aviation Security Service (Avsec) – mainly to the countries listed above. Examples of Avsec's efforts to build internal capability and provide technical assistance include:

- regularly providing ICAO aviation security related courses, Improvised Explosive Device (IED) recognition courses, screener training and lead auditor courses.
- carrying out needs assessment visits, briefings on Annex 17 and Civil Aviation Rule Part 140 to aviation security providers in each island.
- working with security providers to undertake audits and spot-checks on their operational activities and mentor their internal auditors; developing internal audit capability has been a continual focus of activity for Avsec.
- providing Pacific Island countries with up-to-date screening equipment, processes to certify the equipment, and management of an equipment maintenance regime.
- running a Regional Aviation Security Forum (at least annually) where the service providers and their airport chief executives are invited to discuss common issues, carry out Needs Assessments and plan work for the following 12 months. These meetings have been a resounding success and contributed significantly to the highly effective partnerships Avsec has in place in the Pacific.

3.5 Avsec also makes a useful contribution to ICAO initiatives in the Asia-Pacific region. Avsec's Auckland training facility is an approved ICAO, sub-regional aviation security training centre. This complements and enhances Avsec's in-country training initiatives in the Pacific region.

3.6 The New Zealand government's involvement is not confined to Avsec. The New Zealand Police, New Zealand Customs Service and Immigration New Zealand are involved in various capacity

building activities in the South Pacific, working with their partner agencies. This all of government approach to capacity building strengthens both the border and aviation security.

3.7 Most of the capacity building initiatives and technical assistance projects are funded through the Pacific Security Fund. This Fund, which is co-ordinated by the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, is an interagency pool of money, drawn on by Government departments and agencies to advance or protect New Zealand's security interests by reducing risks from threats arising in, or operating through Pacific Island countries. Projects are funded using a risk-based approach.

4. THE CHALLENGES TO OVERCOME

4.1 Development of a formal regional threat assessment would provide a foundation to build risk-based decisions on, and consequently decisions on where capacity building/technical assistance efforts are most needed.

4.2 There are common challenges across many Pacific Island countries - namely financial constraints, training and retaining staff, and correctly identifying where capacity building and technical assistance is most needed. However the findings from each State's PASO security audit and Needs Assessments, should provide the basis to identify capacity building and technical assistance priorities specific to each country.

4.3 For many Pacific Island countries this will include the need to strengthen aviation regulatory systems, in particular the aviation security legislative framework and oversight functions required of a regulator. The extensive work being undertaken by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) across the region provides an invaluable source for Pacific Island countries to identify their capacity building needs in the regulatory environment.

4.4 The World Bank's Pacific Aviation Investment Programme is a critical component to build capacity and improve the region's aviation safety and security infrastructure. New Zealand has expressed a view to the PASO Council that it should provide support for the PASO business plan being developed by the World Bank to ensure the long-term viability of PASO.

4.5 Over the past few years the number of governmental and non-governmental organisations providing Pacific Island countries with technical assistance and supporting capacity building initiatives has steadily grown. Efforts by the New Zealand, Australian and United States governments, ICAO, the ADB, World Bank, Secretariat of the Pacific Community and PASO are all offered with the best of intentions – to improve the safety and security of aviation in the Pacific region. There is a risk, however, of support being duplicated, not targeted at the right capability level or not of the highest priority for each Pacific Island country or the region as a whole.

4.6 The challenge for donor governments and organisations is to ensure the assistance they provide is co-ordinated and relevant to each Pacific Island country. A common understanding of the criteria donor governments and organisations use to determine what projects to support would be useful, as would the development of effective communication mechanisms between donor governments and organisations, and Pacific Island countries, to ensure a collaborative, co-ordinated and efficient approach to providing assistance is developed.

4.7 Successful capacity building initiatives rely on strong relationships between Pacific Island countries and donor governments and organisations. There is no substitute for spending time to develop and strengthen relationships to truly understand the needs of each Pacific Island country to effectively build aviation security capacity across the region.

4.8 New Zealand supports an increasingly open dialogue to support a regional response to improve aviation security across the Pacific. It is encouraging to see donor governments and organisations moving towards greater co-ordination but recognise there is scope to extend this further to ensure the most appropriate support is provided to Pacific Island countries to improve aviation security.

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