



WORKING PAPER

COUNCIL — SPECIAL MODEL SESSION

Subject No. XX: BEST PRACTICES IN ATTRACTING, TRAINING AND RETAINING THE NEXT GENERATION OF AVIATION PROFESSIONALS

(Presented by South Africa)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Paper addresses the need to attract, train and retain the New Generation of Aviation Professionals in order to keep up with the anticipated growth of the aviation industry. Statistics indicates that the majority of existing aviation professionals are relatively ageing and there is a need to develop and build a pipeline of new generation aviation professionals. To be able to attract young professionals, the aviation industry needs to address the barriers currently standing in the way of attracting enough young professionals such as funding, technology, continuous learning, unattractive salaries, working conditions, accessibility, and economical challenges. A new approach is needed to retain the calibre of professionals who will lead this industry into its next era. The aviation industry needs to embrace the new ways of reaching young people, explore different learning methods and also encourage a cross pollination of ideas by partnering with academic institutions and all relevant role players.

ACTION:

The Council is invited to:

- (a) Instruct the Secretariat to explore the possibility of establishing an Aviation Development Fund aimed at building human resources capacity in developing countries to enable them to deal with the anticipated growth;
- (b) Encourage Member States to establish National and/or Regional Aviation Academies funded in part through existing funding models such as for instance the fuel levy, the passenger safety charge, etc. in order to create a sustainable pipeline of young aviation professionals;
- (c) Request the Secretariat to facilitate exchange programmes between developed and developing states for the transfer of skills;
- (d) Request the Secretariat to convene a Study Group comprised of Member States, Aviation Industry, Aviation Training Institutions and Academia to work on sustainable systems to ensure continuous knowledge transfer and research and development; and
- (e) Instruct the Secretariat to speed up the digitising of the aviation operations environment, which could be key in attracting the new generation of professionals as well as accessibility of information and knowledge.

<i>Financial implications:</i>	No additional funds from the Regular budget will be required.
<i>References:</i>	

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The aviation industry is one of the fastest growing industries in the world. It has been reported that by 2030 air traffic volume would increase by 50%. At the moment, the aviation industry is dominated by a generation of individuals over the age of 40.

1.2 It is estimated that by 2017 more than 40% of the industry professionals will be 55 years of age or older. Considering the anticipated growth and the numbers of professionals that will be retired, there will be an obvious lack of adequate qualified and competent professionals required to effectively run the industry.

1.3 In the next 20 years, airlines will have to add 25,000 aircraft to the current 17,000 strong commercial fleets. By 2026, the world will need about 480,000 additional technicians to maintain these aircraft, and over 350,000 pilots to fly them.

2. BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION

2.1 While the aviation industry is growing, the professions associated with the industry are not attracting enough of the young generation that will be needed in the near future to run the industry. The situation calls for an immediate action from Member States and the industry to join forces in developing systems and strategies for recruiting, training and retaining the young generation that is already in the aviation industry. The ultimate goal should be to ensure the availability of adequate, qualified and competent aviation professionals to operate, manage and maintain the international air transport system.

2.2 Different ICAO member states have put in place programmes that are meant to assist in attracting, training and developing young aviation professionals. This scenario is not evident in all States. This could be a result of competing priorities in various States; hence the debate on developing a new generation of aviation professionals should be elevated to a higher level.

2.3 The Government of Singapore, through the Civil Aviation Authority of Singapore (CAAS) has set up an Aviation Development Fund (ADF) with a budget of \$100 million over a 5-year period expected to run until the 31st of March 2015. Existing and successful programmes such as this one need to be emulated as much as possible, however the models need to be customised to meet the different dynamics at play in each contracting State.

2.4 South Africa has established the Joint Aviation Awareness Programme (JAAP), which is a state initiated programme that brings together aviation role players to pursue and achieve transformation of the aviation industry by ensuring that previously disadvantaged youth have access and play a part in initiatives aimed at education, awareness and career development in aviation. This programme exposes young potential aviators to the myriad of careers that can be taken up by this new generation however a criticism of this programme is that there is no significant feeder programme that captures interested young people. Funding interested individuals still poses a challenge to this ambitious programme.

2.5 A number of States have signed partnership agreements with AFCAC aimed at providing training to aviation professionals in Africa.

2.6 Pursuant to the decision of the AU Ministers responsible for Aviation, ICAO has established a Human Resources Development Fund, which will be managed in partnership with AFCAC. The objective of the Fund is to provide a funding mechanism which will allow for the collection and use of voluntary contributions from States and others to assist in establishing opportunities for capacity-building in civil aviation in African States in order to assist them to better meet their human resources needs required for operational efficiency and continuous implementation of ICAO's Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs) and other ICAO programme activities.

2.7 In the African context, the question of attracting new generation of aviation professionals goes beyond the question of readiness and awareness. Added to this dynamic is the non-taxable salaries offered by other regions to cash strapped African based aviation personnel and the resultant stringent economic conditions in developing countries.

2.8 Programmes such as the New Generation of Aviation Professionals therefore introduce debates that encourage States to advance output driven solutions in building a pipeline of skills for the development of the aviation industry globally.

3. CONSIDERATION OF ISSUES

3.1 Attraction of the Young Generation

3.1.1 The industry of aviation is very volatile, thus making it extremely challenging to lure young professionals into the trade. As outlined above, the industry will need a huge number of suitably qualified personnel. In order to get enough personnel to train, there is a need for strategies and programmes to lure the young generation to aviation careers.

3.1.2 Introducing training programs to accommodate the new dynamics at play in the industry is very fitting to attract young candidates.

3.1.3 All concerned should work together to ensure that training opportunities are accessible to the younger generation. All the cumbersome requirements, which do not add value, should be done away with. For instance, some countries like South Africa have reduced the age of acquiring a Student Pilot Licence to 16 years to further create opportunities for the younger generation to enter the aviation industry. Similar considerations should be explored for other technical areas other than piloting. New measures should, however, always balance the creation of opportunities without compromising safety.

3.1.4 The use of technology, fully funded scholarships and fellowships, job guarantees and promise of sustainable salaries may be useful tools to lure the younger generation into aviation.

3.2 TRAINING

3.2.1 The time is right for aviation to explore e-learning as a way of attracting the new generation of aviation professionals. This method of tuition can target short courses that give prospective aviators elementary training at a very early age. Technology ensures that training and development becomes accessible and affordable.

3.2.2 The establishment of Aviation Development Funds is not a new concept in developed States but can be explored further by those countries who have not ventured into such programmes. Evidence shows that where such programmes have been implemented a lot of young individuals benefit. The use of such developmental funds ensures a greater chance of a variety of courses being accessible to

students. Good examples, even though they reach a small number of individuals, include the Young Aviation Professionals ACI and IATA programmes.

3.2.3 Introducing stringent requirements for acquisition of pilot licenses as a result of the spate of aircraft accidents may be counterproductive to initiatives that support the development of a new generation of aviation professionals. There must be a balance created when such considerations are made.

3.2.4 Building partnerships between academic institutions and aviation institutions will ensure that there is continuous learning and a cross transfer of knowledge both from a research perspective and the operational perspective.

3.3 **RETAINING**

3.3.1 The primary concern for young candidates is job placement. People will only stay in the industry if they are inspired. The younger generation is attracted to a lifestyle that would be maintained by a high income. The economic conditions of most parts of Africa and other developing countries are still not at the level of income as the first world countries. The issue of brain drain comes at a high cost to the Member States that are developing young professionals as they lose them as soon as better opportunities present themselves outside. Non-taxable salaries are always attractive to young professionals and opportunities to work internationally are equally attractive to them. This will always put developing countries at a disadvantaged position.

3.3.2 Opportunities for continuous learning will encourage young aviation professionals to remain within this industry without looking elsewhere for opportunities. The prospect of growing intellectually / academically may encourage candidates to be loyal to the industry in the long run.

3.4 The concept of a global village has been possible in most parts because of technology. Technology also resonates with the younger generation and therefore it would make sense for the aviation industry to explore ways of digitising the operating environment such that it becomes attractive to this target audience.

4. **CONCLUSION**

4.1 Although the effects of brain drain are directly felt by the developing countries, its implications are global. This therefore calls for concerted efforts by all role-players to tackle the challenge.

4.2 It is clear that ICAO along with Member States and the industry have to urgently put in place effective ways to attract, train and retain the younger generation in the aviation industry.

4.3 Introduction of sponsorship programmes may also facilitate the recruitment, education, training and retention of the next generation of aviation professionals.

5. **ACTION**

The Action by the Council is as contained in the Executive Summary.