

**Closing remarks by the Secretary General of the  
International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO),  
Mr. Raymond Benjamin,  
to the Next Generation of Aviation Professionals Symposium**

**(Montreal, 4 March 2010)**

At this symposium on the Next Generation of Aviation Professionals we have seen wide participation, including by groups and individuals that ICAO does not often have the chance to interact with. We have been especially happy to welcome the students in the audience who have provided us with a fresh new perspective on the issues that must be tackled. After all, these are issues that affect them directly now and will affect the rest of us in the very near future.

In his opening remarks, the President of the Council of ICAO, Mr. Kobeh, asked us to keep in mind four fundamental questions throughout the discussions:

1. What is the underlying problem?
2. What is the size of the problem and how do we measure it?
3. What are the possible solutions?

And finally,

4. What can ICAO do to usher in the next generation of aviation professionals?

Our exchange of ideas over the past few days has been encouraging and informative. I think we are now in a better position to answer President Kobeh's questions.

**First, what is the underlying problem?**

Simply stated, the demand for aviation professionals will exceed supply. To be more precise, we can point to three dynamics:

1. training capacity will be insufficient to meet demand;
2. learning methodologies do not match the learning styles of the next generation; and
3. last but not least, let me quote Ms. Graham, and I hope I am not offending anyone, "we have to bring sexy back to aviation".

We have heard your concerns about difficulties you are facing: wholesale retirements in the current generation of aviation professionals, accessibility to affordable training, competition with other industry sectors for skilled employees, a lack of harmonization of competencies in some aviation disciplines, and a lack of awareness by the "next generation" of the types of aviation jobs available, to name just a few.

**How do we measure the size of the problem?**

This is a more difficult task because the data we have is fragmented. As regulators, members of industry, trainers and education providers, we clearly need to coordinate our human resource data collection process. Nevertheless, some interesting, and in some cases, astonishing numbers have been presented to us:

- In the next 20 years, airlines will have to add 25,000 new aircraft to the current 17,000-strong commercial fleet
- By 2026, we will need 480,000 new technicians to maintain these aircraft and over 350,000 pilots to fly them

- Between 2005 and 2015, 73% of the American air traffic controller population is eligible for retirement

### **What are the possible solutions?**

How do we ensure sufficient numbers of aviation professionals for the future; how do we attract the next generation. From human resource planning tools to new and exciting learning technologies and methodologies that are well adapted to the next generation, there are many tools to make use of and many approaches that we can adopt.

We need global solutions — harmonized provisions, accredited training and educational programmes, and perhaps a global voice for aviation training. President Wu's suggestion of a Future Aviation Leaders Programme coupled with regular conferences by aviation universities is another idea worth considering.

We can also learn from different organizations that are already putting creative initiatives into play — the National Business Aviation Association's Project Bootstrap; the Young Eagles of the International Council of Aircraft Owner and Pilot Associations (IAOPA); and interesting programmes at various educational institutions.

We must all be part of the solution to ensure a large and well-trained next generation of aviation professionals.

### **What can ICAO do?**

Let me start with what ICAO has done so far. In 2009 we established the Next Generation of Aviation Professionals Taskforce. This group of experts consists of 29 representatives from industry, education and training providers, regulatory bodies and international organizations whose near-term objectives are to inventory human resources planning data, to identify and support initiatives to reach out to the next generation, and to find ways to harmonize training regulations. We plan to use this group over the long term to support next generation of aviation professionals initiatives.

Looking ahead, more concrete ICAO action will follow. Later this year we will develop a new training policy that will allow ICAO endorsement of aviation training institutions by 2011. And, by the end of 2011, the Next Generation of Aviation Professionals Taskforce will complete the development of competencies for all Annex 1 functions: pilots, air traffic controllers, maintenance personnel, flight dispatchers and flight engineers.

We are working with IATA and benefiting from the synergy of good collaboration between the IATA Training and Qualification Initiative (ITQI) and the Next Generation of Aviation Professionals Taskforce. IATA is supporting global harmonized standards and will be implementing evidence-based training and as well as competency-based training for engineering and maintenance. We appreciate these efforts.

A key component of the Next Generation of Aviation Professionals Symposium has been the students. Their participation has provided us with valuable insight. They have brought fresh ideas and energy to our discussions. We certainly don't want this new line of communication to close and I am happy to note that the students have agreed to stay in contact with each other and with ICAO and also to track their progress in pursuing a future in aviation.

Along with all aviation training stakeholders, ICAO is committed to creating an environment that will allow the next generation to lead in the development of aviation's future. We have made a good start this week. My thanks to the speakers, the moderators and sponsors. My thanks also to all participants in this event and particularly to the next generation for picking up the challenge and responding so positively.