

EUROMED AVIATION ACCIDENT / INCIDENT INVESTIGATION SEMINAR

27 – 28 January 2008

AMMAN – JORDAN

Opening Speech by Capt. Suleiman OBEIDAT

CARC - Chief Commissioner

Honorable guests, ladies and gentlemen.

Good Morning....

I am indeed honored to deliver the opening address for this very important Seminar and I would like to thank the EUROMED Aviation Project and in particular its team Leader, Mr. Olivier TURCAS, Mr. Paul-Louis ARSLANIAN the Director of the French BEA and Mr. Jean-Pol HENROTTE the representative of the Directorate General of Transport and Energy of the European Commission for having made it possible that we can meet here for the next two days and discuss this important topic of aviation.

The slogan of “**Working together towards a Euro-Mediterranean Common Aviation Area**” is very appropriate. No doubt that the contribution by EUROMED and ICAO’s commitment for support and the EC’s promotion for its implementation, will result in the establishment of such a Common Aviation Area.

A proficiently trained and knowledgeable workforce is the key to success for any establishment, especially in aviation, and EUROMED’s support by not only offering workshops, but more so by providing specialized training to personnel from all facets of aviation and from all over the Region, contributes substantially to a competent and effective aviation industry, required to meet the challenges facing the States of the Mediterranean Region in the implementation of the Common Aviation Area.

As the Chief Commissioner of the Civil Aviation Regulatory Commission of Jordan, I often participate in very diverse activities, which normally are all related to aviation. This seminar is not an exception to the rule - to the contrary - it addresses one of those very important subjects that we either have already been or will at some or other time be confronted with – Aviation Accident and Incident Investigation.

I am not revealing a secret if I say that aviation is a dynamic and ever changing industry. The results of changes are seen in the ever increasing number of airspace users and a technology that is keeping tread with changes to ensure the safe operation of aircraft. ICAO estimated that in 1998, 1.5 billion passengers traveled by air and in 2006 a total of 2.2 billion people were transported by air. The safety of these billions of passengers and the reliability of the aircraft they are on is our responsibility and it is our duty to provide the basis for their safety.

The increasing number of aircraft led to overpopulated skies in some areas and again we reacted by introducing RVSM and by doing so enabling more aircraft to use the congested skies. One would say that the more aircraft the higher the chances for accidents and to counteract and to ensure the highest possible level of prevention, many tools, today better known as “safety audits” were implemented to enhance safety oversight which again would result in lesser aircraft accidents and incidents.

With the introduction of its Universal Safety Oversight Audit Program, USOAP, in 1996, ICAO endeavored to address concerns that some Contracting States were not carrying out their oversight functions and on 1 January 1999, this voluntary program became compulsory for all Contracting States.

The original USOAP audit spectrum included Annexes 1, 6 and 8 and in 2005 the Program was expanded to cover all safety-related Annexes from 1 through 18, with the exception of Annexes 9 and 17 and all States are now being progressively audited under the Program. By 2002, 186 safety oversight audits and reports had been completed, showing the level of dedication for compliance of the Program.

USOAP cemented the way for universal compliance in safety oversight and it is generally accepted that the Program is well organized and results clearly indicate considerable improvements in State compliance with ICAO.

It is widely acknowledged that USOAP is one of the most important activities undertaken by ICAO and that it should be developed to fully meet the needs of all Contracting States, the aviation industry in general and the traveling public. However, and it goes without saying that the usefulness of USOAP audits can only be achieved when the auditing process is fully transparent, audit results are current, corrective measures are validated and audit reports provide sufficient information for Contracting States to make informed judgments as to the safety oversight capability of other States. Full final audit reports, including reports on the status of implementation of State's corrective action plans should therefore be made available through the ICAO website.

The Jordan Civil Aviation Regulatory Commission has set its target for full compliance of the safety oversight program and as a regulator will ensure that the country's aviation industry follows suit.

Another "tool" for augmenting safety in aviation is the IATA IOSA Program for air carriers. 2006 was considered to be the safest year ever with an industry hull

loss rate of 0.65 accidents per million flights and IATA members did even better at 0.41 when a total of 2.2 billion people were transported safely in that year. The tragic crash in Indonesia in 2007 brought a change to that record and confirmed that the aviation industry's constant challenge was to be even safer. IATA'S target was a 25% reduction in the accident rate by 2008 and the introduction and implementation of the IATA Operational Safety Audit (IOSA) was the tool to achieve this target. IOSA is the first global standard for airline safety management audits and the industry is well aware of how serious IATA is about this program as it is now a prerequisite for IATA membership. The goal of IOSA is to raise the bar on safety and the Association strives to bring all members up to standard, especially in areas where high accidents rates are registered.

As a global industry and irrespective of how small our part in the mechanism of the big wheel is, it is our responsibility to improve safety everywhere and I can assure you that Jordan is not an exception to the rule when it comes to safety.

I have said a lot about aviation safety for a good reason – it is my firm belief that a well managed, efficient and well functional safety system, managed by well trained and equipped personnel, will result in the reduction of aviation accidents and incidents. Our job as accident and incident investigators will become very small if we don't have accidents or incidents to be investigated.

It is however a fact of life that there will be accidents, attributed to many reasons ranging from human error or poor judgment and decision making; bird strikes and weather related; human factor other than pilot; airframe or engine or mechanical failure or malfunction; loss of control to controlled flight into terrain (CFIT)...etc .

Although our involvement in aviation accident and incident investigation will vary in nature from playing the aircraft owner part or the operator's part or the regulator's part, our ultimate goal will be essentially the same - **getting to the root of the cause for an accident or incident and finding solutions for future preventative action.** An accident or incident does not ask for HOW, WHEN, and WHERE it happens but when it happens, we must be well prepared, our personnel must be equipped with the right tools and must possess the correct attribute for the job to act efficiently and professionally when called upon to conduct an investigation.

As a closing note, I want to reiterate the axiom "**Prevention is better than cure**" and I strongly believe that a well-functioning safety management system will add credence to the word "Prevention" .

Thank you for your attention, and thank you in advance for your valuable contribution to this Aviation Incident and Accident Investigation Seminar.

SPEECH ENDS