BRIDGING SKIES

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STRENGTHEN DATA ANALYTICS AND ADOPT A STRONG SAFETY CULTURE, INDUSTRY URGED

Close to 450 local and overseas industry professionals from various aviation sectors attended the Aviation Safety Forum held at the Orchid Country Club.

Aviation professionals have benefitted significantly from technological advancements that have allowed for safer and more efficient carriage of passengers and cargo by air. However, the increasing reliance on technology adding greater complexity in managing various systems and information has renewed interest in the interface between man and machine and its impact on aviation safety.

On 14 March 2014, leading aviation experts and professionals convened at the third Aviation Safety Forum(ASF) held at the Orchid Country Club to exchange views on this very topic. Themed “Human Factors and Technology”, the conference discussed the latest developments in human performance and limitations as well as share their experience on the successes and challenges in applying human factors to effectively manage and reduce safety risks.

Examining the interface between man and machine, Dr Lim Kee Yong, Chief Consultant and Managing Director, Human Centred Analysis & Design Pte Ltd, explained the importance of human factors in aviation assurance and accentuated the key roles played by aviation personnel in ensuring air safety. He underlined the flawed focus on human error in the event of an accident, adding, “Accident investigations should take into account not only human factors, but also failures of safety measures and defences.” This is extremely important as the aviation industry is expected to grow exponentially in the coming years.

With a projected 200 per cent increase in aircraft numbers in Southeast Asia alone within the next two years, Asia Pacific is expected to make up one third of the world’s air traffic by 2017. These numbers will have a major influence on the air transport industry and lead to more congested skies, pushing the limits of the airports, infrastructure and human capital, resulting in the need for improved air safety in the skies.

Aviation safety today is at a crossroads in terms of safety standards as it is already deemed highly safe with little room for improvement. Even so, Professor Sidney Dekker from Griffiths University(Australia) recommends enhancing safety regulations to bolster the existing safety framework. With current incident report systems having limited forecasting capacity, he advocates developing new technology that will augment accident prediction capabilities.

With the call for greater safety measures, Mr Alan Foo, Director of Safety Policing & Licensing/Aerodome & Air Navigation Services Regulation, Civil Aviation Authority of Singapore(CAAS), shared the roadmap of upcoming initiatives for the modernisation of the Aviation Safety Regulatory Framework in Singapore, while Mr Yap Ong Heng, DirectorGeneral ,CAAS urged the industry to strengthen data analytics and adopt a strong safety culture.

Organised by CAAS, ASF covered a wide spectrum of topics including upcoming trends, safety challenges and opportunities for the future of aviation safety in Asia Pacific and the global markets. The conference concluded with an in-depth and fruitful panel discussion on human factors and technology, providing participants new perspectives on managing the man-machine interface to further improve aviation safety.