

## **SINGAPORE STAGES INAUGURAL NEXT GENERATION AVIATION PROFESSIONAL CONFERENCE**



Getting a complex mix of training tools, methodology and regulation right is key to the development of young aviation professionals, highlighted Yap Ong Heng, Director-General, Civil Aviation Authority of Singapore, at the Next Generation Aviation Professional Conference. *Photo courtesy of Association of Aerospace Industries (Singapore).*

Representatives from government agencies, NGOs, the private sector, academia, and even students, representing tomorrow's aspiring generation of aviation professionals gathered in Singapore to unearth solutions to today's human capital challenges in the aviation sector. The inaugural Next Generation Aviation Professional (NGAP) Conference was held at the Singapore Expo on 1 March as part of The 2013 AeroSpace eXchange (ASX), held at the Singapore Expo convention and exhibition centre.

"We know that our biggest challenge is in attracting people into the industry. But, the good news is that once our graduates set foot into the industry, they generally stay and circulate within. We must realise that it is then our prerogative, as employers, to come up with innovative

ways to attract and retain talent in today's manpower crunch." said Mr Tin Ho, 2nd Vice President of AAIS in his welcome address.

Acknowledging the scale of the sector's human resource challenge, Mr Mohamed Elamiri, Deputy Director, Safety Management and Monitoring, Air Navigation Bureau at the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), claimed "the global aviation industry must recruit over 980,000 pilots, over one million maintenance personnel, and almost 50,000 air traffic controllers in order to satisfy the industry's growing needs over the next two decades. " He called on all industry players to establish industry-wide partnerships in order to assist human resource planning. And, he also called for the formation of an independent sector-wide research group, which uses knowledge and expertise supplied from industry players.

The conference examined the role of academia in developing the next generation of aviation professionals. Topics discussed included the impact of science and technology and the need for continued up-skilling, and the supportive role education centres must play in order to aid talent recruitment and retention.

Views and concerns over issues such as generational differences, Gen Y expectations, talent reward and retention, and performance evaluation were also raised by aerospace companies. Forum speakers, Rolls-Royce's Human Resource Director, Ms Kim Kersey and Pratt & Whitney's Global Services Engineering – Asia (Singapore)'s General Manager, Mr Robert Mazurkivich acknowledged that while their respective companies have advanced human capital development programmes, there remains no single silver bullet to the global talent challenge facing the aviation industry.

The conference's final session, Piecing the aerospace human capital jigsaw, aptly concluded the day's discussions, and offered participants insights into possible solutions with which to retain and develop human capital in the short- to mid-term.