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Annex i

CAPACITY BUILDING

IMPACT OF BRAIN DRAIN ON AFRICAN AVIATION
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SUMMARY
This paper presents information on the adverse impact of brain Drain on African Aviation and recommends measures that may be taken by States, Regional organizations and other stakeholders. States are requested to take the necessary measures recommended in the paper to address the problem.

REFERENCES
- Conclusions and Recommendation of the 1st Conference on Brain Drain in Aviation organized by AFCAC in collaboration with the Government of Ethiopia, 29-30 September, 2009 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
- Reports of the AFI Training Experts Working Group (TEWG) which was established by ICAO/ACIP and AFCAC in May 2009

1. INTRODUCTION

African aviation industry is not new to the phenomenon of brain drain. The industry has been losing its highly skilled manpower since its inception. Its highly trained professionals and skilled employees have been migrating to greener pastures. Until recently the rate of loss from the industry has been manageable though with some difficulty through the normal training and hiring process.

However in the last 5-6 years, there has been a significant upward increase in the loss of professional and skilled manpower especially pilots, engineers/aircraft technicians, Air Traffic controllers, safety inspectors etc. The scope has also expanded to include professionals employed in almost all other major areas in civil aviation and airlines, such as management, marketing and finance. Furthermore the frequency and the numbers being taken without adequate notice have dramatically increased.

All indications are that the current trend will continue and get even worse as demand for highly skilled manpower and professional staff increases with the anticipated growth in the sector. This will have a negative impact on the overall growth of air transport in the continent at large and cause disruption of air transport services, adversely impacting on safety and force operators to scale down operation and or put on hold plans for expansion.
2. Main Factors Actors Contributing To the High Rate of Brain Drain In African Aviation

In addition to the general pull and push factors that have been identified as the causes of brain drain from Africa and other developing regions, the following are some of the main factors that contribute to the current worsening manpower situation in the aviation industry in Africa.

2.1 Air Traffic Growth

Significant growth in air traffic in the last decade or so in certain markets such as the Asia Pacific and the Middle East had fuelled the current spate of exodus of professional and skilled employees from Africa. This trend will continue into the foreseeable future as forecasts by Boeing (Current Market Outlook 2011-2030) indicate,

- Globally traffic will grow in RPK/RTK terms by 5.1% for passenger and 5.6% for Cargo, per annum.
- Passenger number will grow by an average of 4.2% per year. By region, Africa following the Middle East will be the highest growing region.
- 33,500 new airplanes will be added over the next 20 years. Africa’s fleet is expected to grow by 800 aircraft.
- The world’s airlines will need to add 460,000 pilots and 650,000 maintenance technicians, both to fly and maintain the new airplanes and to replace current personnel.
- The Middle East alone will need 36,600 pilots and 53,000 technicians, while Africa will require 14,300 pilots and 19,200 technicians.

The demand from the Middle East will have greater effect on the African aviation manpower situation due to the regions geographic proximity, cultural and historical ties and the influence of African employees already working in the region. The growth in the Asia Pacific market may not have as much direct impact as in the Middle East, but will have a significant knock-on effect as it will increase global manpower demand and create shortage.

2.2 Limited Training Capacity

For almost two decades the continent has invested little in aviation trainings. Most aviation training was being provided by individual airlines and CAAs whose primary objective was limited to address their own manpower requirement. If airlines extend training to other airlines, it was limited and the main objective was mainly to defray their costs.

There has been very little public and private sector investment in aviation training and funding institutions have offered very little support in this area. In the words of Chief Executive Officer of Kenya Airways “It is quite expensive to train pilots. It used to be a State responsibility but has now been left to the private sector and now
airlines have to initiate this process”. The continent is now paying for its failure to invest in training.

According to Boeing “The demand for trained maintenance personnel will also grow in proportion to the expanding global fleet. Many emerging markets currently recruit trained personnel from outside the region to fulfil their growing need for maintenance mechanics, technicians, and managers. There will be a strong need for basic skills training in these emerging markets to develop a local source of technicians”.

2.3 Restriction on Free Movement of Manpower within Africa

National regulations that restrict the free movement of manpower within Africa also contributes though its contribution may be limited. With the demise of many of the major African carriers, their skilled manpower in many cases was not absorbed into the industry in other countries where demand existed.

2.4 Policy of manpower Poaching

Many of the large Middle East airlines as well as some start-up airlines have found it cost effective to poach trained and experienced manpower such as pilots and technicians from other carriers instead of investing in costly training. As a result they have opted to pursue an aggressive poaching strategy utilizing the services of highly skilled hiring agencies and offering attractive packages to entice professionals from all over the world particularly from airlines in developing nations.

These airlines capitalize on the vulnerability of airlines in Africa and elsewhere and are greatly assisted by regulatory and policy environment in their country which facilitate and encourage the importation of skilled manpower.

Sometimes it is suggested that the current situation is a result of the operation of market forces and competition. There is no much truth in this considering the current manpower market. There is no global and liberalized labour market which allows free movement of manpower across national borders. Manpower movement is very much restricted and regulated at national level with the exception of some regional blocks such as the EU. Where it exists, it is very much distorted by national policies and regulatory measures that encourage flow of manpower to a country at the expense of other countries.

Policies such as selective migration, tax and duty exemptions incentives are examples of incentives offered by some governments to attract skilled manpower to the recipient countries. The Gulf airlines, for example, offer tax free salary and benefit packages which may be hard to match for airlines based in Africa where tax on employment tends to be high.

2.5 Continued instability in African airlines

The frequent changes of senior management and the lack of autonomy of African aviation organization have continued to destabilize African aviation industry. Protracted restructuring and privatisation processes which are in many cases
complicated by the politicization of the process also continue to be a source of uncertainty. All together these factors tend to create a sense of general insecurity, dissatisfaction and low morale among employees forcing professionals and skilled employees to look for jobs outside their own country and the continent.

3. Addressing the Challenge

Considering the serious adverse effect that increased loss of highly skilled manpower and the impending severe manpower shortage in critical aviation areas has on the operation, growth and ultimately on the survival of airlines, African aviation needs to establish a comprehensive strategy that minimize such losses and mitigate its impact to the aviation industry. Such strategy should take into account the global, regional and national dimension of brain drain and the rapid growth of air transport with growing demand for professional manpower. Due its global, regional and national dimension, concerted effort by governments, industry and other stakeholders at national, regional and continental level would have to be taken.

3.1. Meeting the Manpower Demand

The huge manpower short fall cannot be fully addressed with the current training capacity in the continent. In fact the shortage has already reached a level where current training capacities would not be able to cope. This will get worse as demand increases.

With the view to enhance and fully exploit existing training facilities the AFI TEWG is working on creation of a framework for a closer cooperation and harmonization of training requirements as well as standardization and quality assurance. The rationalization of training resources as Centres of Excellences, harmonization and standardization of training programmes and the creation of Association of Aviation Training Advisory Board together with a comprehensive data base on training capacities are some of the measures that the TEWG recommends and on which it has focused its work.

AFRAA in collaboration with IATA has been organizing and facilitating training particularly focused on assisting airlines to prepare for and meet the IOSA certification. In this regard in the last few years over 200 airline staff had been trained.

Some African Airlines have also taken steps to enhance their existing training facilities or establish new ones. Ethiopian Airlines upgrading of its training facility to an Aviation Training Academy and Kenya Airway’s establishment of the “Pride Center” training facility are but a few examples of the industry effort to address the looming shortage.

Increasing the continents’ training capacity to meet not only the demand in Africa but also to ultimately export manpower has been identified as one long term solution to the problem.
However this requires much investment which industry alone cannot provide especially with the current financial situation. African Governments, the private sector and regional funding institutions such as the African Development Bank need to step up and provide the necessary finance and support to enhance existing training institutions and establish new ones.

3.2 Government Policies

- The manpower challenge that African Aviation is facing is very much connected to the broader global problem of brain drain in developing countries as well as the acute shortage globally of aviation professionals and skilled manpower. It is also abated by the deliberate policies of some recipient countries. It therefore requires political and policy response on the part of African States.

- African governments therefore need to put in place policies and measures that encourage and support the attraction and retention of aviation manpower in the continent while discouraging their leaving. Such measures if necessary may be justified on the basis of critical public service requirement such as safety of passengers, strategic or overriding public interest etc.

- African Governments need to engage recipient countries notoriously known for deliberately targeting skilled manpower from African to urge them to desist from such practices and instead partner with the continent and together address the challenge. Thus African Governments need to make the brain drain issue a political one at international platforms and seek compensation from such practices and effects on African carriers.

- African Governments should encourage the establishment of an Aviation Training Organizations to foster technical cooperation, sharing of resources, harmonization of competency requirements, etc. Thus the initiative taken by ICAO, stakeholders and airlines would be expeditious in attaining the envisaged Pan African vision to the continent.

4. **Recommendation**: It is requested that the text below be included in the conference Declaration.

**Declares**

- Call upon to African States, The AU and Regional Economic Communities to address the issue of Brain Drain in African Aviation at the political level.
- Put in place measures that encourage and support the retention of skilled manpower in the continent.
- AFCAC to establish a strategic plan to enhance and expand aviation training centres within the continent.
- Sensitize the African Member States on the problem of Brain Drain in African Aviation and its impact for the Safety and Security of Civil Aviation.