Recruiting and Retaining Talent: The Key to Success in the Aviation Industry

(Presented by ACAO)

At the beginning of this paper, it is essential to emphasize the role of the aviation industry in achieving sustainable development for all societies, in accordance with the seventeen goals set by the United Nations. This role is achieved through facilitating the transportation of individuals and goods, which enables the creation of wealth and employment opportunities within the industry or the transportation infrastructure.

Air transport, as an integral part of this system, distinguishes itself from other modes of transportation through its speed, efficiency, regularity, and high level of safety. It adheres to international standards at the institutional, legal, economic, and technical levels. It is worth mentioning the efforts of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) in establishing standards and recommended practices, which are incorporated in the first annex to the Chicago Convention to assist members states in issuing licenses for flight crew members, including pilots, engineers, navigators, air traffic controllers, operators of civil aviation stations, maintenance technicians, and dispatchers.

Furthermore, the consolidation of a culture of aviation security and safety, as consistently pursued by the International Civil Aviation Organization, has enabled the expansion of the security and safety management system to include all human resources within government authorities, aviation industry entities, and institutions. This system undergoes periodic audits aimed at enhancing its efficiency. Aviation industry institutions have actively embraced and reinforced this culture by adopting programs for the training and qualification of their human resources, which serves as a significant incentive for them, in addition to adopting initiatives to encourage employment in these institutions, which provide funding for training, obtaining licenses, and incentives for retention.

Furthermore, the international nature that characterizes the aviation sector has prompted countries to establish fundamental principles within the framework of the Chicago Convention and define implementing standards and regulations in its annexes, which are still applicable and in force, We are called upon to continuously adapt to developments in the international environment. One of the significant consequences of the crisis resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic is the need to accelerate the digital transformation and reduce carbon dioxide emissions to mitigate negative and severe climate changes. This challenge adds to the existing challenges faced by the aviation sector, which were extensively discussed during the 41st General Assembly of the International Civil Aviation Organization. These discussions resulted in the adoption of short-term and long-term action plans.

Moreover, we believe that the implementation of these programs will create significant opportunities to stimulate the sector's human resources and attract new and diverse talent, especially as air transport activity approaches pre-COVID-19 levels and is expected to continue growing in the future.

While the Arab Civil Aviation Organization supports this approach, we must note that the League of Arab States, of which we are a technical arm, is currently developing a comprehensive plan for the technical and vocational education system in The Arab countries, in accordance with a decision issued by the Arab Development Summit. The decision highlights the importance of enhancing technical and vocational education in the Arab world and directs the General Secretariat of the League of Arab States, specialized organizations, and relevant entities to establish a comprehensive

development plan aligned with labor market needs and to develop mechanisms for its implementation.

This plan fits within the context of achieving the education-related Sustainable Development Goals for 2030, with an emphasis on quality, inclusive, and equitable education for all, decent work, and economic development. It seeks to reduce unemployment, develop industry, and increase its competitiveness.

We cease this opportunity to present the objectives of the plan and the mechanisms for its implementation.

The objectives of the plan are as follows:

1. Aligning the technical and vocational education system with current and future labor market needs, taking into account future professions and anticipating the required skills.

2. Building regional and international cooperation based on common interests.

3. Developing organized legislative projects for the labor market that go beyond ensuring the rights of all parties involved in the system, extending to incentivizing youth to pursue technical and vocational education.

4. Establishing a mechanism to periodically update curricula and courses to align them with developments in the labor market.

5. Enhancing the capacities of teachers, trainers, and administrations in the basic and continuous technical and vocational education system.

6. Establishing specialized electronic systems for managing education and distance learning.

7. Integrating people with disabilities into the technical and vocational education system (implementing accessibility codes in technical education schools and training institutes).

8. Adopting "non-traditional" mechanisms for resource management that contribute to increasing financial allocations directed towards the advancement of technical and vocational education to ensure sustainable development.

9. Improving societal perception regarding the importance of technical and vocational education and the value of its certificates.

10. Involving all stakeholders in the development and evaluation processes of the proposed plan.

Proposal for mechanisms to achieve the objectives

- **Objectives 1 and 2:**

> ❖ Linking the vocational and technical education system to current and future labor market needs, taking into consideration the professions of the future and anticipating the required skills.
>
> ❖ Building regional and international cooperation bridges based on common interests.

- Conduct field studies to identify current labor market needs in terms of quantity and quality in each Arab country, in accordance with the individual investment plans of each country.

- Anticipate the future professions required by the labor market through modern and accredited international studies.

- Implement studies to enumerate the number of young people of school age, and monitor their distribution in terms of age, gender, living conditions, and geographic distribution.

- Work on establishing "labor market information systems" and activate existing ones to identify current and future workforce needs, thus preparing suitable specializations on an ongoing basis.

- Conduct a study to determine digital factors for the cost of infrastructure preparations, which should include the type of vocational school, the number of students per class, and the establishment or development of a specialized class in vocational schools (industrial, agricultural, hospitality, nursing, commercial, etc.).

- Collaborate and form partnerships with specialized international training institutions, accreditation bodies, and qualification authorities that evaluate and develop international vocational education programs.

- **Objective 3:**

> ❖ Preparing organized legislation projects for the labor market that ensure the rights of all stakeholders within the system and contribute to motivating youth to pursue technical and vocational education.

- Organizing a forum to raise and discuss the issue of developing labor legislation that provides incentives for working in professional and technical fields, including insurance, extended contracts, and appropriate salaries for workers in these fields.

- Encouraging and involving the public and private sectors in supporting the technical education system, vocational training, and ensuring their employment in exchange for

granting benefits such as tax exemptions, thereby alleviating the burden of material management and training expenses on countries.

- Exchanging experiences and practices among Arab countries in this regard.

- Enacting laws that take into account previous achievements and recognize them.

- Establishing regulations for granting professional licenses.

- **Objectives 4, 5, 6 and 7**

❖ Establishing a mechanism for periodically updating curricula and syllabi to align them with the developments in the labor market and enhance them with concepts of information technology, digital transformation, and smart cities, while linking them to professional certifications in various fields.

❖ Enhancing the capabilities of teachers in basic and continuous vocational and technical education.

❖ Establishing electronic systems specifically for the management of remote education and learning.

❖ Integrating individuals with disabilities into the vocational and technical education system (implementing accessibility codes).

❖ Adopting "non-traditional" resource management mechanisms that contribute to increasing financial allocations directed towards the advancement of vocational and technical education, **ensuring sustainable development.**

- Introducing a reference framework through which the alignment between curricula and the needs of the labor market is periodically achieved.

- Developing the capacities of administrative and educational staff in vocational and technical schools and institutes, particularly in the management of remote learning.

- Adopting successful experiences in the field of vocational education and gradually implementing them, taking into account the country's circumstances.

- Establishing continuous training systems (in-person or remote) in collaboration with the targeted industry to enhance the proficiency of teachers and trainers, and linking training to career advancement.

- Expanding the concept of "learning in the labor market."

- Adopting an integrated system of "productive investment vocational schools" (such as having a factory, farm, or hotel within the school premises) that are managed in an investment-oriented manner with independent budgets, benefiting all stakeholders and

contributing to increased financial allocations directed towards the advancement of vocational and technical education.

- Gradually transitioning towards distance learning, particularly electronic learning, based on the requirements of each profession.

- Developing an Arab portal for remote learning resources, especially those related to training for practical work execution.

- Establishing a unified Arab framework for qualifications.

- Adopting transitional training programs to facilitate the career transition of unemployed graduates and equip them with market-relevant skills.

- Incorporating technology, entrepreneurship, life skills, and work-related concepts into vocational and technical education curricula.

- Establishing departments responsible for integrating individuals with disabilities into the vocational and technical education system by applying accessibility codes and managing the necessary budgets to utilize their skills and integrate them into their communities.

- Designing educational programs that facilitate students' transition between general education and vocational education.

- **OBJECTIVES 8 and 9:**

  ❖ Enhancing the positive perception of the community towards vocational and technical education and training.

  ❖ Engaging all stakeholders in the processes of development and evaluation of the proposed plan.

- Opening up opportunities for vocational education students to continue their studies and obtain bachelor's, master's, and professional doctoral degrees.

- Supporting the organization of specialized events for vocational skills at the Arab level and adopting the idea of holding skills competitions for various professions in each Arab country, as well as organizing an annual competition at the Arab level and encouraging Arab countries to participate in the WorldSkills competition.

- Developing a communication plan aimed at raising awareness of the importance of vocational education to indirectly influence and guide society towards vocational education, as well as promoting it.

- Activating the role of career guidance.

- Providing a conducive environment for women to join various technical and professional fields.

- Focusing on instilling professional ethics and employability skills among students in vocational and technical programs.

- Encouraging companies to link career advancement to job descriptions and competency in fulfilling job requirements, rather than solely relying on academic qualifications.

- Expanding support for entrepreneurship programs and encouraging youth participation in them.

- Conducting surveys and organizing workshops, seminars, or forums that involve all stakeholders (students, teachers, trainers, parents, official authorities, representatives of relevant ministries, business people, media, international funding agencies, international references, etc.) to discuss the development and evaluation of the proposed plan for the vocational education system.

In recognition of the importance of human resources as one of the key pillars of the aviation industry, the Arab Civil Aviation Organization has adopted a qualitative approach aimed at developing a comprehensive training system and enhancing the institutional, organizational, and technical capacities of Arab authorities and institutions operating in the field of civil aviation. This is to achieve strategic objectives in the areas of air transport, air navigation, security, safety, and environmental protection.

We believe that the implementation of this plan by the training officials in civil aviation authorities, in partnership with accredited training institutions and centers, will enable the member states to harness their potentials to meet the needs of the aviation industry in terms of attracting and qualifying human resources. It will also involve developing more flexible, effective, and efficient programs that reconsider training methodologies in light of the challenges resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly remote training, in accordance with the outcomes of the high-level ICAO conference on the coronavirus for the year 2021. Additionally, it will aim to enhance cooperation among these centers to improve the quality of training courses and programs.

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