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IFALPA reminds Indonesia that the need to discover why an accident happened should always have primacy

CHERTSEY7 April: The International Federation of Air Line Pilots' Associations (IFALPA) is disappointed that once again the internationally agreed principles of accident investigation set out in ICAO Annex 13 have been ignored by a signatory state.

The Indonesian authorities prosecuted, and yesterday in the Sleman District Court in Indonesia, convicted Marwoto Komar of negligence charges in connection with the tragic overrun of Garuda Flt 200 at Yogyakarta in March 2007 before the accident investigation was fully completed. IFALPA's concerns are solely focussed on the incompleteness of the technical investigation of the accident rather than the outcome of the trial or any appeal.

IFALPA's approach to accident investigation is simple: The public interest is best served by skilled and independent investigators, in a non-judicial environment with an emphasis on technical flight safety, having the time and resources to determine the cause of air accidents and recommending actions to prevent similar occurrences in the future. If the findings of such an investigation reveal facts that indicate a criminal prosecution is warranted then, and only then, should a criminal investigation begin.

In this case, the technical investigation of the accident was secondary to the criminal investigation and as a result, the inquiry was unable to conclude its work and publish its findings into the causes of this tragic event. Consequently, it has never been established why the crew failed to abandon their approach to a landing, which was outside the limits of normal procedures. Therefore, the chance to learn valuable lessons has been lost.

If we learn nothing of the reasons why this event happened then this avoidable accident may well be repeated. Indonesia's rejection of modern principles of safety management can only have a negative effect on air safety.

Therefore, IFALPA calls on Indonesia to honour its commitment to improve the safety of its air transport system by ensuring compliance with ICAO Standards and Recommended Practices.

Finally, IFALPA wishes to express again its deepest sympathy and condolences for the victims and families affected by this tragic and avoidable accident.

Notes to Editors

The International Federation of Air Line Pilots' Associations represents in excess of 100,000 pilots in more than 100 countries world-wide. The mission of IFALPA is to be the global voice of airline pilots, promoting the highest level of aviation safety and security world-wide and providing services, support and representation to all of its Member Associations. See the Federation website www.ifalpa.org

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