

Minutes of 2017 ITSA Meeting Tokyo, Japan

Welcome and opening of the meeting

Kazuhiro Nakahashi, Chairman of the Japan Transport Safety Board (JTSB), welcomed participants to Tokyo and introductions were made around the table. No one from India or Korea was present. Usual attendees Lois Hutchison of New Zealand and Chong Chow Wah of Singapore also sent their regrets. Trine Reitan, Director General of the Norwegian Defense Accident Investigation Board, was welcomed as a guest.

Review and approval of the agenda

The agenda was approved without comment.

Review and approval of the minutes from 2016 meeting

The minutes from the 2016 meeting in Paris were approved with no changes.

Recent Developments and Experiences

This section will only highlight a few points from some of the presentations that resonate with a number of the member states.

Japan noted an aviation investigation where they think global warming is a contributing factor. They are discussing whether they are seeing an increase in ice crystal formation, although they have no scientific evidence thus far. France said they are seeing an increase in ice crystal formation, but are unsure if it is just because more planes are flying at the higher altitude.

France initiated a discussion about deciding which cases to investigate and the need to convince investigators that it is more important to focus efforts and do a better job on fewer investigations than to try to do them all. Discussion continued during Canada's presentation on its new classification policy that allows more flexibility for the director of investigations to upgrade, downgrade or stop investigations as they get into the investigations and have a better idea of how best to focus efforts. The UK noted its increased reliance on gaining more systemic learning, often through utilizing data from multiple accidents rather than just investigating each accident as an isolated event. This affects the way investigators will need to be trained in the future. The US said it is also undertaking the aggregation of data to see what lessons can be learned.

Canada generated interest when it noted that it has included on its most recent watchlist the issue of the regulator being very slow in addressing TSB recommendations. In its presentation, New Zealand noted it has a similar issue with its regulator.

Russia discussed the challenge of investigators and regulators keeping up with fast-changing technology and noted it is critical that they understand the technology they are investigating and/or regulating.

Many of the members talked about how they are using drones in their investigations, efforts to shorten the time it takes to complete investigations, and work they are doing to develop investigative manuals.

Presentations

Canada – Briefing on OECD ITF roundtable discussion on safety management systems

The International Transport Forum is a 59-member intergovernmental organization that functions as a think tank for transport policy. The roundtable was composed of more than 50 experts representing all modes of transportation and focused on 5 discussion papers on various aspects of SMS. The final report of the forum will be published on the ITF website. SMS and the roundtable will also be topics of the 2018 Summit of Ministers in May where the theme is Transport Safety and Security. It was noted that this Summit provides an opportunity for ITSA visibility if members are interested in making presentations or organizing a side event.

UK – Briefing on the investigation into the tram crash at Croydon, London

This accident involved a tram taking a 20 kph curve at 73 kph, a risk that the RAIB said was not foreseen by anyone. There were 7 deaths and 16 serious injuries among the 70 passengers. There was high media interest, and a criminal investigation was conducted in parallel to the RAIB investigation. The presentation analyzed the strengths and weaknesses of the RAIB in conducting the investigation.

The Netherlands – Assistance to and communication with victims and families

The DSB reported on lessons learned from its involvement with the family members of the MH17 victims. They utilized a liaison to communicate with the families and felt that was important to keep the families informed while at the same time leaving the investigators free to focus on the investigation. Other members discussed the differences in dealing with survivors as opposed to next of kin.

Norway – The helicopter accident investigation and developments in AIBN

Two back-to-back helicopter accidents which resulted in worldwide grounding of certain helicopters put significant stress on AIBN as a small organization.

The Netherlands – Governmental aspects within investigation

This presentation raised the challenge of doing broad investigations which look at an entire system. In a gas extraction investigation, the DSB looked at tradeoffs between safety and economic issues and in looking at air traffic safety at Schiphol Airport the DSB examined the whole system in and around the airport – such as daily runway configuration changes made because of noise issues, the fact that no one has final responsibility for safety at Schiphol, and the administrative and political aspects of airport operation.

Russia – Dealing with emergency operations, safety vs duty

This presentation addressed high-risk operations that do not fall in the common patterns of risk analysis and raise difficult questions about how decisions are made in high-risk situations and whether those decisions themselves create additional risks. People in occupations such as search and rescue or firefighting must be selected utilizing psychological assessments and must be trained to make quick decisions based on their situational risk analysis. The desire of such professionals to complete the mission despite the risks means that simply having rules and procedures are insufficient for these types of situations. If they are not well-trained they are more likely to take actions to finalize the mission despite the risks rather than taking more safe options. The following question was raised: should the decision as to whether to proceed with a very risky operation be left to the individual in the midst of the event or should it be left to an individual or group with some separation to fully analyze the risks.

Singapore – Protection of safety data from judicial proceedings

The TSIB outlined efforts it is undertaking to develop common understandings among all stakeholders so that when an event occurs they are respectful of the differing needs, roles and powers. This sparked an extensive discussion on evidence collection at an event, resulting in the suggestion that evidence management should be a topic at the next meeting.

New Zealand – Access to medical records

An extended discussion also flowed from the New Zealand presentation on a situation which caused the TAIC to realize that the regulatory process was insufficient to ensure that all medical conditions are disclosed and did not provide

clear direction to medical professionals of their obligation to disclose. The medical profession believes that patient privacy is of utmost importance, but this creates a tension with what may be important for public safety. Members shared experiences of obtaining medical information during an investigation which is not deemed to be a cause of the accident but is relevant to the individual's ongoing work and what the investigative agency's responsibility is in that situation. These issues were also suggested as important for further discussion at the next meeting

Taiwan – The ASC occurrence investigation management system

This presentation explained Taiwan's new management system to help it meet ICAO requirements.

Australia – Evolving the ATSB

The new Chief Commissioner of the ATSB detailed his efforts to evolve the organization, including changing recruitment methods, spending one-on-one time with every employee, cross-training all investigators, reconfiguring staff into multi-modal investigative teams, and changing to an outcome focus instead of an output one. Other members noted they have also been exploring ways to increase organizational efficiencies and improve employee morale. Effecting changes in the organizations is another topic members expressed exploring further in future meetings.

Japan – FDR for small aircrafts

This discussion examined the experiences of member states with recorders in small aircraft and the value they bring to accident investigations.

Canada – Expanding the use of on-board voice and video proceedings

This presentation continued the discussion begun by Japan and expanded it into the possibilities of using the recordings for broader SMS purposes and the concerns that raises. The different practices that exist across different modes was also discussed.

Sweden – Automation and new risks

This presentation posed the question "Will supervising automated procedures increase risk over that involved when manually performing the procedures?" New technologies promise to present new investigative challenges. Members suggested it would be helpful to develop a list of new technologies that can be expected to impact investigations in the future and share with each other as they encounter them.

Miscellaneous

Future Meetings

Russia will host the 2018 meeting in Baku, Azerbaijan, the headquarters of the IAC Council. A firm date is yet to be set, but it will likely be in May. Members were urged to quickly advise Russia of potential conflicts in May. The Strategic Planning Committee for the meeting consists of Russia as chair, Japan as past chair, the U.S. as Secretariat, Canada, Australia and Norway. The Membership Committee consists of Sweden, New Zealand and Taiwan.

Topics suggested for the 2018 meeting include:

- Roundtable discussion of how members are addressing organizational and leadership issues, such as employee morale, doing strategic planning, instilling agency values, getting additional resources
- Taking a strategic look at new issues and technologies agencies will be facing in the future and how best to hire and train staff to address them
- Addressing the safety of investigators on site
- Obtaining and using medical records
- Evidence management

Canada offered to host in 2019; Australia in 2020; and Finland in 2021.

ITSA structure

Members finalized the Terms of Reference. The final version is attached to these minutes.

Sweden and the US will have their IT staff consult with each other about hosting the web site. There was agreement that ITSA should continue to have a website, but the issue is maintaining it. Canada and The Netherlands agreed to assist with providing content for the website.