

Lausanne, September 2, 2013

**Discussion Paper for the 107<sup>th</sup> FAI General Conference**

**“Meeting the FAI challenges”**

**Summary**

This Discussion Paper from the Executive Board of Fédération Aéronautique Internationale (FAI) identifies some major challenges for FAI and its stakeholders, suggests a clarification of the main purpose of FAI, and introduces a proposed revised overall Goal for FAI. It also identifies necessary FAI action to meet these challenges and suggests goals and strategies for a number of areas. It is proposed that the main purpose of FAI and the revised overall Goal be supported by the General Conference 2013 in Kuala Lumpur, to be confirmed at the 2014 General Conference in Bangkok.

**The layout of this Discussion Paper is as follows:**

- a. A look at the history and the issues involved
- b. Introduction to the Discussion Paper
- c. The discussion paper itself: “Meeting the FAI challenges”
- d. Appendix 1: Suggested goals and strategies for selected main areas identified as posing challenges to FAI

***We expressively state that this Discussion Paper shall not be seen as suggesting a major change in the direction of FAI and its main purpose of arranging international competitions and administering records/championships, but is intended to ensure that we forcefully examine and address the increasing challenges to our air sports and recreational flying activities.***

\*\*\*\*\*

## **A look at the history of FAI and the issues involved**

### **To begin with, let's look how FAI got where we are now.**

FAI was founded in 1905 by eight NACs\*, solving the need for an international association representing them.

At that time flying was mostly privately funded, but within a decade, due to the first World War, the state's presence became comparatively overwhelming and most NACs became subsidized institutions – and therefore politically controlled ones – distributing public funds and determining to a very large extent how non-commercial flying was to be carried out. Strong “private” national exceptions, such as the US and the Swiss NACs, did not alter this evolution.

In many important countries non-commercial flying was thus organized “from the top” and limited to the available subsidies, “crowding out” the economic viability of a “bottom up” grass-roots construction and evolution of the country's NAC.

A significant part of the FAI community shares these historic cultural roots and behaves accordingly.

This is the reason why, in so many countries, the new air sport disciplines tend to self-organize separately, even antagonistically, to the existing NAC with its “centralistic” mindset.

In 1985, the International Olympic Committee recognized FAI as an International Sport Federation and through the Air Sport Commissions (ASCs) FAI arranges approximately 40 World or Continental championships every year.

FAI is now a federation of 102 NACs on all continents with air sport activities.

\* NAC was initially an abbreviation for National Aero Club but was later changed to mean National Air Sport Control.

### **Now, let's look at FAI from the stakeholder's eyes.**

First, who are all these FAI stakeholders?

Obviously, at least the *NACs externally* and the *ASCs internally*. Just look at our Statutes and at who has voting power at our General Conferences.

But we also include air sport persons (“APs”) as stakeholders, although they are indirectly represented by NACs and ASCs. It is justified to include them by the not-so-trivial observation that both NACs and ASCs (and therefore FAI) would not exist without them.

Frequently, we tend to think that FAI, perhaps unduly, restricts its interests to *competing APs*, thus overlooking the vast majority of non-competitive “*recreational*” APs. But all competitive APs start as recreational ones and many of them, even repeatedly so, emerge from and then return to the larger “recreational pool” of APs during their sports life.

Why is this relevant?

*Because there is no strict and permanent border separating “recreation” from “competition”; it is rather a porous, spongy interface with lots of traffic crossing it all the time. Therefore, when we try to define and choose “things that FAI should do”, we should*

not be misguided by this useless dichotomy – we should rather be guided by what gets the most “*bang for the buck*” for all these stakeholders.

We have tried to look at FAI through the eyes of a NAC, an ASC, and an AP and tried to identify their perception of FAI.

### ***What do they see?***

- NACs: Some believe that most NACs see FAI as a costly membership obligation with little obvious return beyond some tourism and occasional glory. They trust FAI to do a reasonable job and meddle little with it. Sometimes there are very positive interactions and contributions to FAI’s strategic issues, but mostly a NAC expresses its desire to influence FAI by nominating their candidates to FAI bodies.

One should also never forget the large hidden amount of NAC support beyond the FAI membership fees it pays: the yearly FAI Commissions attendance costs may be greater than the FAI membership fees and most NACs also subsidize competitions. NACs are very tolerant long-term owners/supporters of FAI.

Given their prevailing “top down” culture mentioned before, NACs could be exercising far more control as FAI owners – they still were doing so when we had the FAI Council – but, after all, it was a NAC dominated GC that later relinquished its power by delegating much of it to the EB and even included the ASCs at the highest decision level: this open mindedness should never be forgotten!

NACs are struggling with a number of issues not directly related to competition, such as regulation, restrictions, costs etc., and frequently ask for joint efforts in these areas.

- ASCs: Some claim that most ASCs tend to look at FAI just as a cumbersome superstructure with little if any interference from the FAI Head Office (HO) (at least until commercial issues emerged recently), but also little perceived support.

Many of the “newer” ASCs have a culture that was formed during years of NAC neglect (maybe even obstruction) of their activities. Their leading APs know almost nothing about FAI and their FAI representatives more of the same. To most of these representatives their “international home” is their ASC, not FAI, although we believe that progress is being made at a noteworthy speed considering that this, again, is a cultural issue.

ASCs mostly consider the FAI to be a service provider, enabling them to generate revenue from sanction fees. The ASCs are seeking more independence from the FAI rather than seeing the FAI as their real institutional home and contributing directly to the organization.

But, they increasingly do contribute, since an obvious case can be made for it. However, greater attention to cost-effective FAI Head Office (HO) service quality may be needed, and the value of joint ASC projects must be better “sold” to them by a strong “internal marketing” effort to speed up the “*ASC – FAI mutual appreciation*” growth.

- APs: they almost do not “see” FAI at all! There is little doubt about the urgent need to establish a direct, solid “FAI to AP” connection; Internet allows this, at a low cost, far beyond what we have exploited until now. Once the APs sufficiently know,

understand and appreciate FAI, the entire representative pyramid above them will, both via their NAC and via their ASC, feel much more attached to FAI and will support it rather than tolerate it.

The thoughts offered above have one aim: to contribute identifying the criteria that should guide us in determining ***“what should FAI do to become even better in supporting its stakeholders”***.

\*\*\*\*\*

## **Introduction to the Discussion Paper “Meeting the FAI challenges”**

FAI is a well-established international sport federation and the management of competition and record setting is generally working well. A number of key issues to consolidate the HO work have been implemented during the last year, and the exploitation of our sports commercial potentials have been initiated. It is now time to re-open the discussion of future priorities. When these are agreed, there will be the time to see if we are organized in the optimal way for this. Organizational issues are therefore not discussed here. Similarly, the financial implications of any possible reorganization of resources, or the costs of additional resources, are not discussed here.

There have been several attempts the last few years to get time and focus at the Executive Board (EB) and Commission/NAC Presidents meetings to discuss strategic and structural issues of FAI management, and whether we are developing the organization in the best direction for the future. Papers have been provided and received more or less attention and time/focus. This is not unusual in today’s working environment, as most management teams struggle to find time for items other than the challenges of the day-to-day operations.

This spring (2013), the challenges facing FAI now and in the future have been discussed at the Executive Board, and we have also placed this issue on the agenda and made presentations at the Commission Presidents Meeting in Lausanne in May and the NAC Presidents Meeting in Hong Kong in June. The feedback to the Executive Board from both meetings was generally positive and supportive, giving us added incentive to continue our work in this direction.

*Our initial thoughts and suggestions are described below. However, we would like to clearly state that these are “drafts”, and that we – through this paper distributed in advance of the Kuala Lumpur General Conference – are soliciting the opinions and feedback from the stakeholders present at that venue, and others, as appropriate.*

This Discussion Paper is called “Meeting the FAI challenges”, since it is an attempt to improve a very important process, namely how the FAI management promotes the FAI purpose and goals, and how it implements the ideas and suggestions from stakeholders in order to ensure the organization is properly focused and resourced to meet the present and future challenges.

To stimulate to debate and feedback, we offer a few frank, challenging and maybe even provoking questions, as follows:

- ***Is the purpose of the FAI still valid, and is our overall goal relevant for guidance and governance?***
- ***Are we using our resources effectively and to the best of our constituents?***

We appreciate that there will be different responses to these questions. In this discussion paper, we offer our contribution, in order to get input and feedback from as many stakeholders as possible. You should note that this paper has not been developed from scratch by the Executive Board, but is partially based on the work of the Strategy Task Force (STF) of 2009-2010.

Our main objective is to end up with improvements to our working processes and the way we are organized to carry these out, enabling FAI to be better prepared to handle the challenges facing us now and in the foreseeable future.

The following five areas have been subject for discussions at the EB, and have also been presented at the Commission Presidents and NAC Presidents meetings during the first part of this year:

1. *The main challenges of FAI*
2. *A needed modification of scope and direction of FAI*
3. *Establishing/documenting the main purpose of FAI (list)*
4. *An revised «overall FAI goal»*
5. *Detailed goals and strategies for a number of areas*

We have included detailed goals and strategies for seven of our eight defined “main challenges” as Appendix 1 to this Discussion Paper. They are included as examples and to facilitate deeper understanding.

*It is our hope that the History and Issues Involved, the Introduction, the Discussion Paper itself and the Appendix will produce debate and result in feedback. A broad involvement by all FAI stakeholders will ensure higher quality of the end product, for the benefit of FAI and all of us involved in aeronautical activities in its broadest sense, be it in competitions or in recreational activities.*

### **The FAI Executive Board**

## Meeting the FAI challenges

### Adjusting, renewing and deploying the FAI purpose and goals

The present FAI activities cover a wide variety of activities. However, an inspection of the Executive Board (EB) minutes over the previous 3 – 4 years clearly indicates that the present main focus is on competitions, records and keeping historical archives. The substantial content of the EB minutes deals with competitions and their administration, anti-doping, finance etc. This is not contrary to the stated purpose of the FAI, and the activity is in-line with the following statement in the FAI Sporting Code – General Section:

*The FAI is a world organization that is concerned mainly with air sport competitions, records, including space activities, and other certified performances.*

In addition the FAI Statues state:

*To make evident the essentially international spirit of aeronautics as a powerful instrument for bringing all people closer in mutual understanding and friendship regardless of political, racial or religious considerations, thereby helping to create international good will and thus build a better and more peaceful world.*

However, such descriptions of the FAI goals (purpose, objectives, mission – have your pick at the nomenclature) may be considered too limited (the first) and too broad and abstract (the second). The first (from the Sporting Code – General Section) is too limiting, given that the FAI is a federation of NACs, that NACs represent the interest of their air sport persons, *and* the fact that in most member countries, only a small percentage of air sport persons participate in competitions and record setting. The second statement is idealistic, broad and abstract, but we still question the usefulness of promoting goals in this manner if they actually do not provide useful guidance to the organization and its people?

Many FAI stakeholders believe that an overall FAI goal should encompass a broad definition of air sport, where the recreational activities are included, and that the purpose and goals of the FAI should be stated in terms easily understood by our stakeholders, both internally and externally.

And – we must remember to actually ensure effective deployment of our important goals and objectives, or else it is just a self-satisfying exercise for the management and staff. Deployment can be measured (e.g. as in a ISO 9001 certification), and is a combination of ensuring that the persons affected have received the relevant information, and have understood and accepted it as relevant guidance/governance.

### **How FAI is seen by the members, other stakeholders and the public – “the FAI image”**

FAI has a website ([www.fai.org](http://www.fai.org)), which is the main “window” to FAI and it’s various activities and competitions. The website is modern, and good looking, but very much reflecting the competition and record activities of FAI, with little coverage of our general challenges and our responses to meet these. Promotion material made by the FAI Head Office generally focuses on the competition and record activities; and the main purpose

and goals of the federation are normally placed in a fairly obscure position, if at all included.

*We are aware that contrary to most websites profiling organizations comparable to FAI, it is not easy (if at all possible) to find the purpose, goals and strategies of the FAI by visiting the website.*

### **What has been done since 2010?**

We are not saying that there has not been improvement since the Strategic Plan was presented in Dublin2010. The financial reporting system has been fundamentally overhauled to provide more transparency with better reports. A commercial company FAME has been established and a new global sponsor contracted. Considerable effort has been and is made to improve the overall IT situation and the FAI Internet site. Anti-doping issues have been streamlined and are now managed to the satisfaction of IOC and WADA. We have moved and re-structured the Head Office, the Executive Board has new defined portfolios, and the annual report has a completely new format. Major strategic initiatives have taken place, and have resulted in the establishment of an FAI Expert System with Expert Groups, focusing on several of the identified areas of challenge, as well as the Regional Management Structure with Regional Vice-presidents, which is gradually implemented.

Please note that FAI remains the international governing body for air sport competitions and records, which continue to be the major vehicle for attracting new APs, media interest and revenue. ***There is no intention to change or reduce these activities, but rather to ensure that we are ready and able to respond to the other challenges facing us.***

### **The challenges facing FAI and the air sports person in 2013**

It is useful to consider the challenges we face in 2013, to ensure that we make the right decisions and choose the optimal priorities when managing the FAI. The following list seems to arise from fairly commonly held perceptions, judging from the content of discussions and meetings in various forums:

- Further airspace restrictions
- New and stricter regulations (more limiting; costlier)
- Reduced availability of airports and air sports facilities
- New and stricter environmental regulations; increased costs of emissions
- The need to improve safety through avoidance of accidents/incidents
- Difficulties in recruiting young people for activities in aeronautics and to promote air sports
- Impact and opportunity of new technology

There are also other challenges and opportunities, which may be considered of lower priority than the above, although still of high importance, such as:

- Issues of flying in various countries and across borders
- Individual's participation in FAI voluntary activities
- Attracting women to air sports and FAI work
- Role/position of FAI in the international community
- Cost impact to FAI and air sports generally



## **The main purpose of FAI**

The seven areas of activities listed below constitutes the main purpose of FAI, and hence the reasons for the stakeholders in maintaining and supporting this organization. The seventh area (“business”) has been added as a result of the establishment of FAME and the transfer of the parachuting oriented commercial company IPETA to FAI.

- ***Arranging international competitions and administering records/ championships***
- ***Supporting NACs and regional organizations, mainly through information sharing and provision of expertise***
- ***Representing air sports at international organizations, especially ICAO***
- ***Establishing and carrying out the FAI award procedures***
- ***Supporting programs to attract young people to join the wide field of aeronautics generally and air sports specifically.***
- ***Conserving and protecting the air sports history***
- ***Utilizing the FAI brand name and intellectual property to develop, market and produce specialist sports events aimed at promoting air sports to the public and produce income to FAI***

Based on the rationale of the “FAI challenges” and the list constituting the FAI main purpose statements, a revised overall FAI goal statement is offered.

## **A revised overall FAI goal**

- ***FAI shall facilitate the development and promotion of aeronautics worldwide, in order to achieve increased participation and improved public acceptance and awareness of aviation activities and air sports***

We consider this may be considered as a suitable statement of an overall FAI goal, valid for the Executive Board, the Head Office, the ASCs as well as the NACs.

## **Necessary FAI activities to meet the challenges of 2013 and on**

*Based on (a) the identified challenges facing FAI (listed above), (b) the “main purpose”(as described above) of the FAI and (c) the suggested new overall FAI goal, it is proposed that there is a need for FAI to focus on the below listed activities, **in addition to the traditional FAI activities.***

*As a consequence, our ambition must be to do our utmost to:*

- *Ensure improved availability of airspace (absence/removal of restrictions)*
- *Ensure practical and realistic regulations (safety improvement combined with reduced restrictions; improved and simpler oversight systems)*
- *Ensure improved availability/accessibility of/to airports; increased availability of air sports facilities*
- *Ensure improved availability of environmental friendly engines & fuels at acceptable prices*

- *Ensure higher level of environmental focus and adaption of sound environmental practices*
- *Ensure more attention to safety; improved safety record in all areas*
- *Ensure more effective promotion and recruitment activities, with focus on increasing the number of young people and women in aeronautics*
- *Ensure effective development and increased use of new technology*
- *Effectively utilize the FAI brand name and intellectual property to develop, market and produce specialist sports events aimed at promoting air sports to the public and produce income to FAI*

We believe that paying attention to these factors will benefit all FAI stakeholders and will also facilitate the competition and record activities which lie at the heart of our organization.

### **Conclusion and recommendation**

Further changes are needed in FAI in order to meet the challenges facing air sports at all organizational levels, and to retain FAI as an organization seen as valuable by the stakeholders.

***As a consequence, this discussion paper suggests a revised “overall FAI goal” and a new “main purpose of FAI”, repeated below as follows:***

***New revised overall FAI goal:***

- ***FAI shall facilitate the development and promotion of aeronautics world wide, in order to achieve increased participation and improved public acceptance and awareness of aviation activities and air sports***

***FAI main purpose:***

- ***Arranging international competitions and administering records/championships***
- ***Supporting NACs and regional organizations, mainly through information sharing and provision of expertise***
- ***Representing air sports at international organizations, mainly ICAO***
- ***Establishing and carrying out the FAI award procedures***
- ***Supporting programs to attract young people to join the wide field of aeronautics generally and air sports specifically.***
- ***Conserving and protecting the air sports history***
- ***Utilizing the FAI brand name and intellectual property to develop, market and produce specialist sports events aimed at promoting air sports to the public and produce income to FAI***

In an appendix to this Discussion Paper (Appendix 1) you will find suggestions for goals and strategies for seven main areas that are posing new and increased challenges.

To successfully implement any new or changed strategy requires a change in resource allocation and priorities. A certain realignment and reallocation of resources may be necessary to be able to implement strategies for the “FAI challenges” as outlined in this document.

***We believe that there is an urgent need to increase focus on some very important and real challenges to FAI and air sports, and address these forcefully, while still***

*providing sufficient resources and effective management of our competition/record activities and protecting our heritage.*

*The Executive Board invites the General Conference to consider the issues covered in this document, and to give guidance for our further work in making the FAI an even better organization for our stakeholders.*

.....

*I wish to convey my gratitude to Executive Director Otto Lagarhus who has been the facilitator of this document, which has gradually evolved during Executive Board seminars and discussions during 2013*

*John Grubbström*

*FAI President*

## Appendix 1

### **Suggested goals and strategies for 7 areas identified as posing challenges to FAI**

Below you will find suggestions for goals and strategies for seven of the areas identified as posing challenges to FAI.

The seven areas are as follows:

- Airspace
- Environment
- Safety
- Regulations
- Air sports facilities
- Promotion and recruitment
- New technology

**In order to have a complete goals and strategy document, it is also necessary to harmonize and/or develop strategies for the very important areas/activities not covered below, namely:**

- Arranging international competitions and administering records/championships
- Conserving and protecting the air sports history
- Establishing and carrying out the FAI award procedure
- Strategy for our commercial activities (FAME, IPETA)

### **1. Airspace**

#### Goal

The FAI shall support the NAC and regional organizations in securing adequate access to the airspace so that air sports can be conducted under the greatest possible freedom and in balanced interaction with other aviation activities.

#### Strategies

The FAI shall strive to facilitate access to airspace for air sports by:

- Strongly advocating the interests of air sports at the international level (mainly ICAO)
- Working to ensure continued access to currently available airspace
- Working to improve access to airspace unnecessarily blocked by other civil and military airspace activities
- Working for greater flexibility in the use of airspace, thereby facilitating improved airspace access for air sports activities
- Working for good predictability in the availability of air space for air sport activities

### **2. Environment**

#### Goal

The FAI shall foster a public perception of air sports as environmentally considerate, and as a positive contributor to society.

### Strategies

The FAI shall strive to improve its environmental position by:

- Representing the interests of air sports in environmental issues at the international level
- Supporting and guiding the NACs and ASCs in identifying and addressing air sports environmental issues
- Researching and documenting the impact of air sports activities on the environment
- Communicating the impact of air sports on the environment to the affected parties, and the public in general
- Planning and conducting FAI-sanctioned air sports activities with the least possible negative impact on the environment
- Raising the environmental awareness in the air sports community

### **3. Safety**

#### Goal

The FAI shall strive to reduce the number and seriousness of accidents and incidents in all air sports activities.

#### Strategies

The FAI shall actively and systematically work to minimize the risk of participating in air sports by:

- Prioritizing and promoting safety in every aspect of FAI work
- Supporting and facilitating the development and implementation of effective incident and accident reporting systems
- Actively communicating developments in air sports safety and the FAI work to promote safety
- Facilitating the sharing of safety information between the various air sports activities and the NACs

#### **4. Regulations**

##### Goal

The FAI shall promote regulations that facilitate air sports activities, and do not pose unnecessary restrictions or deterrent to the growth of air sports

##### Strategies

The FAI shall strive to prevent the over-regulation of air sports activities by:

- Working to influence international regulations for the benefit of air sports activities and development.
- Supporting NACs and regional air sports organizations in influencing their regulatory bodies for the benefit of air sports activities and development
- Working to improve the regulation of air sports activities in a manner that improves safety, flexibility, service and economy
- Working to prevent and eliminate unnecessary regulatory restrictions on air sports activities

#### **5. Air sports facilities (airports and air sports sites)**

##### Goal

The FAI shall support NACs in their work to make air sports facilities widely available for air sports activities.

##### Strategies

The FAI shall strive to assist NACs in order to:

- Improve the availability and the predictability of the availability of present air sports facilities
- Ensure that replacement sites are offered if closure/restrictions are imposed on present air sports facilities
- Ensure better air sports access to public places
- Actively promote development of new air sports facilities
- Identify appropriate guidance material for developing/constructing new air sports facilities

#### **6. Promotion and Recruitment**

##### Goal

Working with the NACs and regional organizations, the FAI shall promote air sports activities world wide, with special focus on attracting increased participation, especially among young people and women.

##### Strategies:

The FAI shall strive to:

- Develop promotional and educational material for use by all NACs and ASCs, and ensure wide dissemination

- Actively use state-of-the-art web methodology to promote air sports (Internet, Facebook, Twitter etc.)
- Develop and arrange promotional activities specifically aimed at attracting young people and women to participate in air sports activities
- Establish activities and procedures to encourage the retention of participants in air sports activities
- Publically promote champions of air sports activities
- Arrange air shows and games
- Develop “public friendly” events
- Publically promote the high safety of air sports
- Establish good relations with media
- Arrange regular FAI activities with a focus and attention on promotion and recruitment
- Actively work to remove barriers to increased air sports participation
- Encourage air sports participant to take part in FAI and NAC organizational activities

## **7. New Technology**

### Goal

The FAI shall support research in the use of new technology for the advantage of all air sports

### Strategies

The FAI shall strive to facilitate:

- Development of technology making air sports activities safer, more effective, less costly and/or with a lower environmental impact
- Development of improved communications technologies
- Use of technology to decrease FAI costs
- Use of technology in competitions and record-setting
- Use of technology to enhance public attractiveness of FAI events

\*\*\*\*\*