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IFALPA Calls on Japanese Government to intervene in JAL restructuring

Chertsey 16 November: The International Federation of Air Line Pilots' Associations (IFALPA) is gravely concerned to learn that the Administrator of Japan Air Lines (JAL) is choosing to disregard both Japanese law and internationally accepted labour standards.

In the plan for the airline's restructuring programme, the JAL Administrator sets out a requirement for a significant reduction in the pilot workforce. While this is unfortunate, what is neither acceptable nor wise are the methods employed to select pilots for involuntary redundancy. Under the scheme proposed by the Administrator, Captains over the age of 55 and First Officers over the age of 45 will be made redundant. This approach is not only morally and legally flawed as a clear case of discrimination on the basis of age; it also demonstrates poor business sense as the most experienced pilots, the very individuals on whom a return to growth will be built, will be lost to the airline forever.

In addition, and more worrying for aviation safety, the JAL Administrator is also using pilots' sickness records in selecting pilots for involuntary redundancy, despite the fact that the use of this sick leave was proper and in accordance with company regulation. With this precedent, there is the danger that pilots concerned for their job security will report for duty when they are unfit to fly.

IFALPA believes that had the JAL Administrator entered a dialogue with its Member Association ALPA-Japan, in accordance with International Labour Organisation Conventions (ILO), these moral, ethical and commercial errors could have been avoided, but, so far, there has been no serious attempt to open such a negotiation. Accordingly, The Federation calls on the Japanese Government to intervene in this critical situation to ensure that not only JAL honours its obligations to its loyal employees but also helps to ensure that the airline is staffed so that it may rise to the challenge of recovery.

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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