



International Civil Aviation Organization
North American, Central American and Caribbean Office
Twenty First Meeting of Directors of Civil Aviation of the Eastern Caribbean
(21st E/CAR DCA)
Tortola, British Virgin Islands 11 to 14 February 2008

Agenda Item 3:- Air Navigation Issues

3.6 Organization of the Search and Rescue (SAR) Services in the E/CAR Subregion

(Presented by Trinidad and Tobago)

SUMMARY

This Working Paper need to establish/follow up SAR Agreements among E/CAR States and States with responsibility for adjacent Flight Information Regions (FIRs) to the Piarco FIR.

References:

- CAR/SAM/3 RAN
- CAR/SAM Regional ANP
- Annex 12 – SAR
- Doc 9731 – IAMSAR Manual
- Report on 20th DCAs Meeting
- Report of SAL and Dakar ACCs Safety Coordination Meeting
- Doc 7300 – ICAO Convention

1. Introduction

Annex 12, Chapter 3 – Cooperation, establishes that contracting States shall:

1.1 Coordinate their SAR Organizations with those of neighbouring States, subject to conditions prescribed by their own authorities.

1.2 Arrange for all aircraft vessels and local services and facilities which do not form part of the SAR Organization to cooperate fully with the latter in SAR to extend any possible assistance to survivors of aircraft incidents.

1.3 Publish and disseminate all information necessary for entry of SAR units of other States into its territory or alternatively include this information in SAR Services arrangements.

2.0 Discussion

2.1 During the CAR/SAM/3 RAN Meeting, the matter was reviewed by States/Territories and International Organizations to provide a group of basic regulations for the SAR services in the CAR/SAM and the meeting agreed on Recommendation 6/12 (c) among others; that States are requested to adopt the necessary and possible measures to establish domestic and international SAR agreements which permit the improvement of SAR services and coordinate the efforts among entities that provide or support SAR Services.

2.2 The 20th DCAs Meeting recalled that SAR cooperation should be fostered by States/Territories for an effective SAR regional system. This cooperation should consider civil and military authorities and aeronautical and maritime agencies by the combining of efforts through multilateral agreements. This is to ensure that the Rescue Coordinating Centre (RCC) can carry out coordination with all parties concerned. This provides for facilitated operational coordination between SAR units. It was agreed that ECAR continue to work to achieve an effective regional SAR system through suitable agreements with neighbouring States.

2.3 Trinidad and Tobago in its efforts to achieve same embarked on several initiatives during the last year, 2007.

2.4 Following the 20th DCAs Meeting in December 2006 Trinidad and Tobago submitted to the Directorate of the OECS, Barbados, FrenchAntilles, the Model SAR Agreement from the IAMSAR Manual - Doc 9731 (**Appendix A**) for the consideration of the States in the development and/or updating of their respective SAR International Cooperation Agreement within the Region.

2.5 Trinidad and Tobago presented a Working Paper at the ACCs Safety Coordination meeting, Sal Island, Cape Verde 3-4 May 2007 in which Trinidad and Tobago informed the meeting that it was seeking to develop SAR Agreements with all adjacent FIRs making use of a common model proposed in the IAMSAR Manual. This envisaged bilateral and or multilateral agreements for effective modus operandi and coordination between RCCs within the various concerned States. This will permit the much needed regional/international SAR system harmonization as well as facilitate coordination and cooperation in those areas over the high seas for which Trinidad and Tobago has responsibility as well as common boundaries, namely with Dakar, New York, Rochambeau, Sal and Santa Maria, along with other FIRs such as Georgetown, Maiquetia, Paramaribo and San Juan.

2.6 That meeting adopted Conclusion SAL/DKR/07 - Regional Search and Rescue (SAR) Harmonization which is recommended to this meeting also and is included as the suggested action to this paper.

2.7 In October 2007 at a bilateral meeting with the French, it was agreed that the Model Agreement from IAMSAR Manual (Doc 9731) could form the basis of a bilateral Agreement for SAR. Further discussions are necessary.

2.8 Trinidad and Tobago Civil Aviation Authority in its recognition that SAR activities require high level involvement at the level of government's executive, coordinated meetings with representatives of key government Ministries/Agencies during June-December 2007 and has established a working committee with legal and operational sub-committees to ensure that the appropriate legislation and operational manuals are produced. A final Draft of the legislation is due March 2008.

2.9 Trinidad and Tobago suggests that other States which may be experiencing the same challenge, seek to sensitize its executive in the same manner by establishing a similar National SAR committee which would be the link between the required action by the DCAs to sign off the SAR Letters of Agreement and the commitment on the part of the State in accordance with its obligation under Article 25 and 28 of the ICAO Convention (Doc 7300) to which it is a signatory.

2.10 As previously expressed, it is of utmost importance that ECAR States continue with their efforts to establish operational Letters of Agreement that document and permit a better level of SAR response in their respective areas of responsibility through sharing of resources and personnel and that simultaneously these Agreements contribute to a Regional E/CAR SAR Coordination Plan.

3.0 Suggested action

3.1 The meeting is invited to note the information presented in this working paper, and if deemed pertinent, approve the following draft conclusion:

That States which have not yet done so,

- a) consider establishing National SAR committee with responsibility to coordinate its SAR activities.
- b) consider establishing bilateral or multilateral SAR Co-operation Agreements as necessary, allowing the use of mechanisms and resources to improve SAR Services;
- c) consider adopting the format of the Model SAR Agreement included in the IAMSAR Manual (Doc 9731); and
- d) to submit to the Mexico ICAO Regional Office a report on the progress attained in this regard.

- - - - -

APPENDIX A

AGREEMENT ON AERONAUTICAL AND/OR MARITIME SEARCH AND RESCUE BETWEEN:

_____, _____, _____,
_____, _____, _____.

1 INTRODUCTION

Knowing the importance of co-operation in search and rescue (SAR), and of the provision of expeditious and effective SAR services;

Desiring to support the provisions of the International Convention on Maritime Search and Rescue of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and/or the Convention on International Civil Aviation of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO); and

Seeking to provide an overall plan for SAR co-ordination, use of available resources, mutual assistance, and efforts to improve SAR services;

The Parties have agreed as follows:

2 EXTENT OF ASSISTANCE

The Parties agree to co-operate in the following areas:

- (a) Support each other by pooling SAR facilities as appropriate for operations within their respective search and rescue regions (SRRs);
- (b) Make, and respond to, requests for operational assistance between the designated rescue co-ordination centres (RCCs) or rescue sub-centres (RSCs) of the Parties as capabilities allow;
- (c) Develop procedures and communications appropriate for co-ordination among facilities of both Parties responding to the same distress incident, in co-ordination between the RCCs or RSCs of the Parties;
- (d) Normally apply the guidance of the International Aeronautical and Maritime SAR manuals regarding SAR operational procedures and communications;
- (e) Work to establish agreed procedures, with balanced concern for sovereignty and for saving lives, regarding entry of various types of SAR facilities into the territory of the other Party, solely for a search or a rescue operation; and
- (f) Enter into other collaborative SAR efforts which many include:
 - Mutual visits by SAR personnel of the parties;
 - Joint training or exercises
 - Co-operation in development of SAR procedures, techniques, equipment, or facilities;
 - Exchange of pertinent SAR or communication information; and
 - Establishment of one or more SAR committees to provide a means for ongoing cooperation in improving SAR effectiveness.

3. SEARCH AND RESCUE REGIONS

Establishment of SRRs is intended only to effect an understanding concerning where each Party accepts primary responsibility for co-ordinating or providing SAR services. SRRs of the Parties shall be separated by lines connecting points as follows: [appropriate co-ordinate points describing applicable lines.]

4. TERMS OF AGREEMENT

Each Party will:

- (a) Keep the other fully and promptly informed of all SAR operations of mutual interest, or which may involve use of facilities of the other Party;
- (b) Keep information readily available on the availability of any SAR facilities or other resources which may be needed for implementing these agreements;
- (c) Authorize its RCC(s) to request assistance from the RCC(s) of the other Party, and to provide all pertinent information on the distress situation and scope of assistance needed;
- (d) Authorize its RCC(s) to promptly respond to any request for assistance from an RCC of the other Party;
- (e) Authorize its RCC(s) to promptly arrange, or arrange in advance, with other national authorities for territorial entry of SAR of the other Party (including overflight or landing of SAR aircraft, in similar accommodation of surface (land or water) SAR units) as circumstances dictate for fueling, medical or other appropriate and available operational support, or in response to a request to the RCC of the other Party for assistance of those facilities which will involve territorial entry;
- (f) Normally fund its own activities in relation to this agreement unless otherwise arranged by the Parties in advance, and, in any event, will not allow a matter of reimbursement of costs to delay response to persons in distress.

5. GENERAL PROVISIONS

This Agreement:

Shall enter into force... [provisions as appropriate];
May be amended ... [provisions as appropriate]; and
May be terminated or superseded ...[provisions as appropriate].