



Agenda Item 3: NAM/CAR/SAM Safety

**AGREEMENT FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN “ASSOCIATION OF CIVIL AVIATION
AUTHORITIES OF THE CARIBBEAN” (ACAAC)**

(Presented by RASOS/CASSOS)

1. Introduction

1.1 The Civil Aviation Authorities of Barbados, Belize, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, OECS (Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, Montserrat, St. Lucia, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Vincent and the Grenadines), Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago, Member States of the Caribbean Community, signed an agreement in late 2001, formalizing their participation in and support for a cooperative approach to aviation safety oversight. The Agreement provided for the establishment of an “Association of Civil Aviation Authorities of the Caribbean” (ACAAC) under the umbrella of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretariat. The collective mandate of the RASOS member authorities has been to provide aviation safety oversight, and, within the RASOS mandate to do this with specific regard to Annexes 1, 6, and 8 of the Chicago Convention. This has involved assisting and facilitating the provision of aviation safety oversight services for thirteen small nations in the Caribbean region. Although all participating authorities belong to States that are members of CARICOM, membership in the CARICOM was never a pre-requisite for membership in the ACAAC. Member States recently agreed to widen the regional organization’s mandate to include all ICAO Annexes and have taken a major step forward as CARICOM Heads of State have elevated its status by establishing it as a new entity, the Caribbean Aviation Safety and Security Oversight System (CASSOS). It has been designated as an Institution of the Community by the Conference of Heads of Government pursuant to Article 21 of the *Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas Establishing the Caribbean Community Including the CARICOM Single Market and Economy*.

1.2 The Members of ACAAC implemented the Regional Aviation Safety Oversight System (RASOS), to share resources and reduce the cost of providing the required airworthiness and flight operations oversight services to individual member states. The RASOS concentrated on the optimization of the use of the region’s technical resources. Its focus was to strengthen the civil aviation authorities, promote the upgrading and harmonization of regulations, standards, procedural guidance material, inspector training and to enhance the ability of the individual states to fully discharge their safety oversight responsibilities. The sub-regional approach chosen is consistent with the global strategy promoted by ICAO to address safety oversight problems of contracting states. RASOS office core operations were funded by equal annual member CAA contributions and the organization was effectively self sufficient for the past six years.

1.3 Assistance from the FAA between 2003-2008 paid for numerous training courses for inspectors and other technical staff in Member CAAs, ICAO courses were delivered in the region with regard to aerodrome certification, SMS, dangerous goods and PEL. Transport Canada assisted with compliance/enforcement training, medical examiner training and the FAA provided extensive in-country assistance from two of its technical experts that was aimed at advising and assisting Members to achieve IASA category one and compliance with Annexes 1, 6 & 8. This assistance included mentoring of inspectors and technical advice provided during re-certification of air operators. Ongoing FAA technical assistance pursuant to Technical Assistance Agreements was and still is aimed at full implementation in the first half of 2008 of a common and ICAO compliant computer based written airman knowledge testing system. A regionally developed, harmonized, common license format and production system is being installed in all member authorities and will be available commercially to other authorities that are interested in such a system. Transport Canada continues to assist with training of civil aviation medical examiners and cabin safety inspectors and offered ongoing training support in SMS and aviation compliance and enforcement. Common qualifications and training standards for inspectors have been enunciated to facilitate resource sharing, that is, the trans national use of inspectors, and procedures for designation and delegation of authority and for requesting, tasking and deploying trans national inspectors have been published. A RASOS Policy and Procedures Manual was developed to guide the management and operation of RASOS and in its latest version it will now be used to guide CASSOS staff in their duties. Inspector guidance material is shared freely between Members and is well harmonized already. It is anticipated that development of unitary common guidance material will follow the development of common "regional" civil aviation regulations while at present, all regulations are based on adaptations of the ICAO MCAR and are virtually identical. Other initiatives include harmonized enforcement procedures and inspection procedures.

1.4 In 2008 four of the seven RASOS Members meet the IASA Category One standards. RASOS, in a manner similar to that used by the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA), performed reviews of its Members using experienced inspectors from the region and checklists derived from IASA and ICAO USOAP checklists. Reports were developed for the Members authorities reviewed and RASOS used the results to determine and develop some region-wide needs. These reviews have assisted members to prepare for IASA and ICAO audits and were used by RASOS staff to assist Members to develop compliance action plans. There is an ongoing need for on-site mentoring of technical personnel and for technical assistance in all Member CAAs.

1.5 RASOS identified the need for professional training and recurrent qualification training of airport operators' personnel. RASOS had offered its services to assist its Member States' aerodrome operators to and, assisted in part by a member of the FAA airport standards staff, delivered a three day seminar on aerodrome manual preparation to some 33 aerodrome specialists from the region.

1.6 The RASOS web site contains public information and members only sections. The inspectors' section contains downloadable inspection forms, some common guidance material, flight test forms and other data required by the region's technical staff. The site also hosts a safety newsletter, links to Member CAA sites, contact to RASOS and provides a secure 128 bit encrypted e-mail service for the Directors, RASOS staff and all technical safety inspectors in the RASOS group and other selected officials who have been working with RASOS. Its a very strong tool for communication, information and data sharing and for providing a public identity for the organization as well as serving as a virtual office for RASOS personnel.

1.7 RASOS and by inheritance, CASSOS has adopted the European Center for Civil Aviation Incident Reporting System (ECCAIRS) for incident and accident reporting and in a regional project, CASSOS Members will soon have their own common, harmonized regional inspection planning, tracking and reporting system. While this will protect national security, confidentiality and sovereignty as required, it will provide a valuable tool for analysis and tracking of trends and allow development of appropriate safety and regulatory interventions. RASOS was considering sharing data as in the European Safety Audit of Foreign Aircraft (SAFA) system and this will be continued by CASSOS. Seminars in ALAR CFIT accident reduction have been delivered by RASOS staff and this will continue under CASSOS with a much widened safety promotion mandate. RASOS has assisted members with accident and incident investigation and it is expected that this area will grow into a truly regional service as the benefits of a centralized investigating office are beyond question. The foregoing summarizes the major efforts of the past six years toward safety oversight harmonization within the CARICOM CSME framework.

1.8 All of the above initiatives have been aimed at building a strong regional regulatory and Safety Management System to enhance civil aviation safety in Member states and throughout the region and will continue under CASSOS. Funding at this time permits the provision of two technical experts and one administration person. Future development and strengthening of the regional safety oversight capability may require changes to member contributions or seeking new sources of funding or assistance.

1.9 It is clear that the direct beneficiaries of the ACAAC's RASOS organization safety oversight efforts and those of the new CASSOS institution are the participating States of CARICOM and other States or Territories in the region that might become part of the regional oversight mechanism during the next few years. Other direct beneficiaries are the owners and operators of aircraft and those using the aviation industry infrastructure and services in the CASSOS States and the indirect beneficiaries of the air transport, aviation services and infrastructure including the tourism and business sector of the economies. External benefits flow to the States from the improved aviation safety environment resulting from the upgraded aviation infrastructure and the increased surveillance and enforcement of the safety standards established by ICAO.

1.10 The RASOS organization has matured into CASSOS after six years of operating experience and is facilitating the establishment of a self-sufficient regional safety oversight system in an area of high economic priority to all participating States as well as to other States whose airlines operate into the region. ACAAC and its RASOS has been a regional safety oversight organization success story and this high level of achievement will continue as RASOS changes into CASSOS, a truly regional institution.

1.11 The immediate benefits of regional cooperation are evident from the constantly improving track record of results of the ICAO and FAA safety oversight audits of member CAAs. Benefits are also accruing to members from the mutual technical cooperation, mutual technical assistance, attainment of greater numbers of trained and qualified technical inspectors, and the valuable technical expertise contributions made while assisting all seven Authorities in their efforts to achieve and sustain ICAO and FAA IASA compliance with international aviation safety oversight standards. A strong regional safety oversight partnership has been forged.

2. **The Meeting is invited to:**

- a) note the information contained in this information paper and in particular to recognize the ACAAC and RASOS as a regional organization aimed at enhancing the level of aviation safety of civil aviation in the region as well as facilitating other mutually accepted initiatives for the good of the Caribbean region and the Caribbean Community.
- b) note the substantial progress achieved by the ACAAC and RASOS in improving safety oversight in its Member States.
- c) note the future developments of ACAAC RASOS following its next major step forward as a formal institution of the Caribbean Community.
- d) extend all possible support to the CASSOS in cooperating in and building wider technical support and resource partnerships to further its work.
- e) consider that ACAAC-RASOS membership is not limited to CARICOM Members.
- f) consider that as a CARICOM Institution the CASSOS will be much more effective than RASOS as it will have the political and diplomatic status to deal with regional and external agencies on all aviation issues on its own.
- g) consider that under the Revised Treaty, CASSOS can become the center of expertise for all matters dealing with technical aspects of aviation within the Community.
- h) recognize and support CASSOS as it actively seeks international donor funding to enhance and expand its aviation safety activities and programs and its goals of assisting in the development of the highest and most modern standards and services supporting air transport operations and safety in the region and facilitating aviation growth in the region.
- i) note the contents of the CASSOS development briefing and the CASSOS safety initiatives briefing that will be delivered as accompaniments to this paper during the meeting and be prepared to share information and participate in some of those initiatives.

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