



*International Civil Aviation Organization*

**The Eleventh Meeting of the FANS Implementation Team for South-East Asia (FIT-SEA/11) and the Eighteenth Meeting of the South-East Asia ATM Coordination Group (SEACG/18)**

Bangkok, Thailand, 3 – 6 May 2011

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**Agenda Item 6: Implementation of the CNS/ATM Systems in the Region**

**THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NEW FLIGHT PLAN FORMAT**

(Presented by the Secretariat)

**SUMMARY**

The 21<sup>ST</sup> Meeting of the Asia/Pacific Air Navigation Planning and Implementation Regional Group (APANPIRG/21, September 2010) reviewed the outcomes of the 20<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the ATM/AIS/SAR Sub-Group (ATM/AIS/SAR/SG/20, July 2010) and the subsequent Third Meeting of Asia/Pacific Flight Plan & ATS Messages Implementation Task Force (FPL&AM/TF/3, August 2010). In addition, many States presented working papers to APANPIRG/21 to raise concern over the implementation of the NEW flight plan format. This paper presents a progress review of the NEW flight plan format in the Asia/Pacific region.

**1. INTRODUCTION**

1.1. This paper presents the discussion regarding the implementation of the new flight plan format in 2012, which took place during the 21<sup>ST</sup> Meeting of the Asia/Pacific Air Navigation Planning and Implementation Regional Group (APANPIRG/21, September 2010) held at the ICAO Asia and Pacific Office, Bangkok, Thailand.

**2. DISCUSSION**

Discussion at APANPIRG/21 on ICAO New Flight Plan Format Issue

2.1 After the review of ATM/AIS/SAR/SG/20 and FPL&AM/TF/3, the meeting discussed working papers presented to the meeting. The meeting agreed that it was important that coordination between States/FIRs should be started as soon as possible to ensure a smooth transition. The meeting adopted Conclusion 21/13 – Coordination for the Transition to the NEW Flight Plan Format among States.

2.2 Australia recalled that the State Letter AN 13/2.1-09/9 stated that “to allow performance case considerations to drive individual airspace user and ANSP implementation schedules, the ATM system will need to simultaneously support both PRESENT and NEW for a

period of time.” However, from 15 November 2012, ANSPs are not required to accept and process PRESENT and airspace users are expected to file NEW as using PRESENT is not assured.

2.3 At FPL&AM/TF/2 (November 2009, Bangkok), a number of risks associated with implementation were identified during development of the region’s implementation strategy. These risks are summarised as follows:

- a) With the almost total reliance placed on FPL and ATS message formats in today’s automated ATM systems, IATA firmly believed the FPL format should be adopted as a Standard.
- b) On FITS located at <http://www2.icao.int/en/FITS/Pages/home.aspx>, it is apparent that there is a great majority of States that are still only evaluating their current systems with no update regarding implementation.
- c) State Letter AN 13/2.1-09/9 provides a conversion table for flight plan data from NEW to PRESENT however no conversion from PRESENT to NEW is available.
- d) If there is no universal adoption by States of the NEW flight plan format, there is a possibility that airspace users will not be prepared to adopt the changes as there would be a requirement to update their flight planning systems to allow filing of flight plans in two formats in circumstances where a region or ANSP only supports NEW or PRESENT.

2.4 United States informed the meeting that European Region signalled intent to document a difference in Regional Supplemental Procedures (SUPPS, Doc. 7030). Europe planned to require filing of an indicator that is not defined in the PANS-ATM to contain region-specific information.

2.5 United States advised the meeting that the presence of “EUR/” may subject flight plans to rejection in other regions, depending on the automation system in particular States. United States further advised that documenting a non-standard filing practice in SUPPS would therefore seem to be insufficient if the non-standard practice affects automated flight plan processing in other regions. Such actions need coordination among all affected regions. There were several potential solutions to this problem, including but not limited to:

- 1) **Avoid use of non-standard indicators.** Regional filing requirements should make use of only the defined indicators.
- 2) **Allow unrecognized indicators.** Regions would document any non-standard indicators in their Regional Supplemental Procedures (Doc 7030) which would allow other regions to program for them if desired.
- 3) **Define an indicator for each region.** The content for each indicator would be managed within the region (e.g. EUR/, NAM/, SAM/).

2.6 In any case, if region-specific indicators are allowed, there should be no expectation that ANSPs in other regions would be able to understand, maintain or otherwise communicate with filers or pilots about the contents of them. IATA observed that there continued to be significant variation in preparation and approach of both States and regions. Some regions had only just started their preparations and some larger States have already indicated that they have no intention of meeting the effective date.

2.7 While the NEW format may not be the best for every circumstance, it represents a significant step forward, particularly with respect to PBN notifications. If a revision to the guidelines is considered necessary, it should either be adopted on a global basis or else rejected. Regional or State solutions should be strongly discouraged.

2.8 Variations in any part of the format would likely create problems for both airlines and ANSPs. AIDC messaging in particular creates an enormous problem with States reliant on the ability of other States “upstream” to process messaging appropriately.

2.9 States felt that a contingency plan should be formulated which should cover eventualities where a State or group of States is not in a position to receive flight plans in the NEW Format. ICAO advised that FPL&AM/TF agreed that it was premature to develop the contingency plan as no State in the Region has explicitly expressed that the effective date of 15 November 2012 would not be met. The task Force would continue to urge States to implement the NEW flight plan format by the due date. Nevertheless, FPL&AM/TF was aware of the possibility for the need to develop the contingency plan and had included the task in the task list of the Task Force to be commenced in the first quarter of 2012.

2.10 In regard to making the NEW flight plan format an ICAO Standard, ICAO advised that the proposal had been discussed at the ANC. The ANC was of view that the NEW flight plan format should remain in the PAN status.

2.11 The Regional Office has issued a series of State letters to highlight the importance of Amendment 1 and development towards its implementation:

- a) on 8 January 2010, State Letter Ref: T3/10.0, T3/10.1.20 – AP003/10 (ATM), recognizing a pressing need to increase awareness amongst States about the complexities involved and encouraging them to commence work on implementation. APANPIRG/20 adopted the following Conclusion:

***Conclusion 20/7 – Adopt Interim Strategy for Implementation of New Flight Plan Format***

*That the ‘Interim Strategy for the Implementation of new ICAO Flight Plan Format and Supporting ATS Messages’ provided in Appendix A to the APANPIRG/20 Report on Agenda Item 3.2 be adopted and published as the interim edition, and States and users be urged to commence implementation planning based on the interim strategy.*

- b) on 28 July 2010, State Letter Ref: T3/10.1, T3/10.1.20 – AP119/10 (ATM), highlighting an additional conclusion as follows:

***Conclusion 20/8 – Notification of State Transition Date to New Flight Plan Format***

*That, in order to align regional implementation planning, States inform the Regional Office by 1 July 2010 of their scheduled date and implementation methodology for transition to the new Flight Plan and ATS Message formats.*

- c) on 24 September 2010, State Letter Ref: T3/10.0, T3/10.1.20 – AP147/10 (ATM), to highlight the Conclusion regarding the *Asia/Pacific Guidance Material for the Implementation of Amendment 1 to Procedures for Air Navigation Service – Air Traffic Management*:

**Conclusion 21/4 – Regional Guidance Material for the Implementation of Amendment 1 to PANS-ATM**

That, in order for States to clearly understand what is intended in Amendment 1, the ‘Asia/Pacific Guidance Material for the Implementation of Amendment 1 to the 15<sup>th</sup> Edition of the Procedures for Air Navigation Services – Air Traffic Management (PANS-ATM, Doc 4444)’ provided in Appendix B to the APANPIRG/21 Report on Agenda Item 3.2 be adopted and published as regional guidance material.

- d) on 7 October 2010, State Letter Ref: T3/10.0, T3/10.1.20 – AP152/10 (ATM), to draw the attention of States to the following APANPIRG Conclusions:

**Conclusion 21/5 – Strategy for Implementation of New Flight Plan Format**

That, the ‘Strategy for the Implementation of new ICAO Flight Plan Format and Supporting ATS Messages’ provided in Appendix C to the APANPIRG/21 Report on Agenda Item 3.2 be adopted and published. States and users to be urged to continue implementation planning based on the strategy.

**Conclusion 21/6 – Notification of State Transition Date to the NEW Flight Plan Format**

That, in order to keep the ICAO Flight Plan Implementation Tracking System (FITS) website updated, States which have not yet provided data, inform the Regional Office of the initial set of data required in the FITS website, such as scheduled date and contact person, by 22 October 2010, and subsequently update the data as required.

- 2.12 In addition, APANPIRG/21 agreed the following Conclusions, which emphasised the need for urgent and appropriate coordination:

**Conclusion 21/13 – Coordination for the Transition to the NEW Flight Plan Format among States**

That, as the global and the regional harmonization is crucial in implementing the NEW flight plan format by 15 November 2012, States start close coordination soon with adjacent States/FIRs on transition about, but not limited to:

- i) difference of timing for transition between the States/FIRs;
- ii) operations in the mixed environment of PRESENT and NEW;
- iii) operational transition for AIDC; and
- iv) procedures when ATS messages are not processed properly.

**Conclusion 21/14 – Enhancement of the Global Coordination for Implementation of the NEW Flight Plan Format**

That, in light of the varying degree of States in implementing the NEW flight plan format, ICAO:

- i) urge all the States, including those outside the Asia/Pacific Region, to record their readiness in the FITS;
- ii) take action to ensure that any States or ICAO regions not use non-standard local procedures; and

*iii) ensure appropriate coordination take place between ICAO regional planning and implementation groups (PIRGs) to address implementation issues.*

2.13 To date, there are several APAC States that have not yet provided the Regional Office with data on their Amendment 1 implementation, despite this again being highlighted at the 47<sup>th</sup> Directors-General of Civil Aviation Conference (DGCA/47), held from 25 to 29 October 2010. The implementation of the NEW flight plan format will be a problem if it is not implemented in a uniform manner globally. It is therefore considered important for States to review urgently their status and readiness for implementation.

### 3. ACTION BY THE MEETING

3.1 The meeting is invited to:

- a) note that the three phase transition plan has been developed for the region and urge States to follow the transition phases;
- b) recall that implementation of the NEW flight plan format would be a problem if it is not implemented in a uniform manner region-wide and seek update from States on their plans:
- c) update the FITS site by States present: and
- d) identify issues which may be addressed by SEACG.

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