



International Civil Aviation Organization

**The Second Meeting of the ICAO Asia/Pacific Search and Rescue Task Force
(APSAR/TF/2)**

Singapore, 27 – 30 January 2014

Agenda Item 4: Asia/Pacific and inter-regional SAR planning, coordination and cooperation

SAR TECHNICAL OFFICER AT ICAO HEADQUARTERS

(Presented by the United States of America)

SUMMARY

ICAO Headquarters Montreal does not have a dedicated search and rescue (SAR) technical officer. The APSAR task Force is encouraged to discuss the implications, if any, upon SAR services within the region, and especially on inter-regional planning, coordination and cooperation.

Strategic Objectives:

A: *Safety- Enhance global civil aviation safety*

Global Plan Initiatives:

GPI-9 Situational awareness

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 ICAO Headquarters Montreal does not have a dedicated search and rescue (SAR) technical officer. In the past, ICAO Montreal had a dedicated SAR Technical Officer but that function is now one of many duties assigned to a single person. This places more responsibility upon ICAO regional offices to oversee SAR matters.

2. DISCUSSION

2.1 The ICAO/IMO Joint Working Group on SAR is concerned about the lack of a dedicated ICAO SAR Technical Officer at ICAO HQ. This matter was discussed at the twentieth session of the ICAO/IMO JWG held in September 2013. The ICAO/IMO JWG report documented the discussion in paragraph 2.5.1.6 as shown below:

“The JWG was briefed on the status of the ICAO HQ resource dedicated to SAR. The JWG noted the information provided by the ICAO Secretariat and expressed its concerns on the risks associated with the reduced involvement of ICAO HQ with respect to SAR issues. The JWG recognized the involvement of some ICAO regional offices on SAR matters but a framework from ICAO HQ may be required to ensure harmonization of SAR implementation. It was noted that the ICAO regional offices had a role in SAR through their Air Traffic Management (ATM) section, and that SAR was on the agenda for meetings of the planning and implementation regional planning groups (PIRGs). Further discussion revealed the hope that SAR would become its own Global Plan Initiative (GPI).”

2.2 Various documents sent from ICAO HQ and some ICAO regional offices have been making statements regarding the importance and responsibilities of the regional offices. Typical of such recent correspondence is the ICAO Regional Office for Europe and North America regarding the proposal for amendment of the ICAO EUR Air Navigation Plan. In its letter to member States, the EUR Regional Office provided the following statements under its “Originator’s reason for amendment”:

“Under the umbrella of the global performance framework, the regional performance frameworks are facilitated through formulation of regional air navigation plans (ANPs) and the associated regional supplementary procedures (SUPPs).”

“...the proposals will integrate within each of the PIRGs the responsibilities for development and upkeep of ANPs and SUPPs for their respective air navigation regions.”

2.3 It is right that the regional offices have such responsibility but it is also proper that oversight is provided to ensure differences within the region are correctly handled, and that inter-regional SAR planning, coordination and cooperation is ensured. In the past, the dedicated ICAO HQ SAR Technical Officer could provide a focused global oversight. Now it appears that ICAO’s audit scheme and continuous monitoring is the process to follow but ICAO HQ lacks a dedicated SAR expert to insert SAR aspects or review SAR results from such a process. The burden has shifted in some ways to the air traffic management (ATM) section in each regional office; however, this section also has a heavy, broad workload.

3. ACTION BY THE MEETING

3.1 The meeting is invited to:

- a) discuss the information on the lack of a dedicated SAR technical officer at ICAO HQ and its implications, if any, upon SAR services within the region, and especially on inter-regional planning, coordination and cooperation; and,
- b) recommend steps that States can consider to assist the ATM Section of ICAO regional offices to maintain proper attention on SAR matters.

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