



International Civil Aviation Organization

Fourth Meeting of the Asia/Pacific Regional Search and Rescue Task Force (APSAR/TF/4)

Bangkok, Thailand, 06 – 10 July 2015

Agenda Item 8: Date and Venue of Next Meeting

APSAR/TF – NEXT STEPS?

(Presented by the United States of America)

SUMMARY

The Fourth meeting of the Asia/Pacific Regional Search and Rescue Task Force (APSAR/TF) is expected to be its final session. Recognizing that the ICAO Bangkok Regional Office has limited resources, discussion should be held to decide possible next steps to ensure momentum is maintained to improve SAR capability and capacity throughout the Asia/Pacific region.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Asia/Pacific Regional Search and Rescue Task Force (APSAR/TF) was established with the idea that it would exist for a limited period of time. The initial three sessions have seen a growth in the number of participating States and also in the number and value of inputs. The fourth session of the APSAR/TF appears likely to be its last. Even though certain products will be delivered, it has become obvious that much work remains.

1.2 Recognizing that the Bangkok Regional Office has limited resources, discussion should be held to decide possible next steps to ensure momentum is maintained to improve SAR capability and capacity throughout the Asia/Pacific region. This paper does not make any specific proposal but seeks to generate a range of options for serious discussion leading to implementation.

2. DISCUSSION

2.1 States must not overlook the need to address SAR capability and capacity in the Asia/Pacific region; and, nor should we overlook the quality of the work already produced under the guidance of the ICAO Bangkok Regional Office. For example, the ICAO Council working paper for its 205th session, C-WP/14280 dated 21/5/15, is a strong indicator of the role that the Asia/Pacific Office has played and the reputation it has earned. Of the five Actions the Commission recommends that the Council adopt, the only regional office mentioned is Asia/Pacific Office: "c) note the availability of the information provided by Asia/Pacific search and rescue (SAR) task force as relevant to the ongoing consideration of the global aeronautical distress and safety system (GADSS) concept of operation and request that other regions, using an appropriate mechanism, provide similar information regarding their own regions."

2.2 It is understood that SAR may not be the top priority throughout ICAO but it also must not be overlooked as a core safety matter, particularly now that “SAR” no longer appears prominently in the title of the ICAO ATM Sub-group. To enable a proper level of attention on SAR, there may be two paths that the Regional Office could encourage its Member States to consider:

- a) The next step after the APSAR Task Force could be a mechanism or process that brings recurring focus onto SAR. Such a mechanism or process must be more than only the Regional Office conducting a periodic review of a plan or status of SAR capability. States must be engaged and solutions discussed for practical implementation. One example could be the SAR Working Group which convenes concurrently with other specialist working groups under the annual meeting held by the International Maritime Organization (IMO).
- b) State SAR professionals and, as appropriate, the ICAO Bangkok Office Technical Officer, participate in regional forums and ad hoc SAR meetings/workshops held by ICAO or IMO. Of particular relevance are the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) each of which has expanded its agenda to include substantive debate on SAR matters. There is also the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC), a regional group of Pacific island communities which is reaching out to include aeronautical SAR participants.

3. ACTION BY THE MEETING

3.1 The meeting is invited to consider sustaining the improvement of SAR capability and capacity throughout the Asia/Pacific region begun under its Asia/Pacific SAR Task Force by:

- a) developing a recurring mechanism or process to maintain a measured focus on SAR matters; and,
- b) encouraging Asia/Pacific States to participate in other Asia/Pacific forums which have SAR on the agenda and also ad hoc regional SAR meetings/workshops held by ICAO or IMO.

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