



# ICAO

## INTERNATIONAL CIVIL AVIATION ORGANIZATION

### Twenty-Fifth Meeting of the AFI Planning and Implementation Regional Group (APIRG/25)

7 - 11 November

### 3.6 Other Air Navigation Initiatives

#### ICAO location indicators for UPPER TERMINAL AREA (UTA) to be inserted in case A of the NOTAMs for FIRs with at least two (02) UTA

(Presented by ASECNA)

#### SUMMARY

This document takes stock of the challenges to be solved for a better interpretation of case A of the NOTAM relating to several UTA in the same FIR by end users or intermediaries using the automated systems for sorting, monitoring and rebroadcasting NOTAM issued from the three (03) NOF of ASECNA. It is derived from ASECNA's feedback following the implementation of combined contingency plans of several FIRs at once, including several UTA in the same FIR.

#### REFERENCE(S)

AMDT 05 of Annex 15—*Technical amendments to standardize the terminology of location indicators, replacing place name abbreviations. October 1, 1959.*

DOC ICAO 10066 – Appendix 3, Edition 2018

Doc OACI 7910 -

Doc 8126<sup>7th</sup> Edition 2022

### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Agency for the Safety of Air Navigation in Africa and Madagascar (ASECNA) provides air navigation services in the airspace entrusted to it by its Member States consisting of five (05) Flight Information Regions in the AFI region, as well as part of the FIR Accra consisting of the UTA of Lomé.
- 1.2 The FIRs are:
  - FIR Dakar Oceanic and Dakar domestic: composed of the UTAs of Dakar, Nouakchott, Bamako and Abidjan;
  - FIR Niamey: composed of UTAs from Niamey, Ouagadougou and Bamako;
  - FIR Brazzaville: composed of the UTAs of Brazzaville, Douala and Libreville;
  - FIR Ndjamena: composed of the UTA of N'Djamena EAST and WEST;
  - FIR Antananarivo: composed of the UTA of Antananarivo.
- 1.3 From 23 to 25 September 2022, ASECNA went through a crisis that led to the unavailability of air traffic control services in the Dakar Oceanic and Dakar domestic FIRs, Niamey FIR, Douala UTA and Lomé UTA.
- 1.4 The publication of the NOTAMs relating to the condition in force in UTA within these airspaces during contingency revealed confusion in the interpretation of case A of the NOTAMs, when they were taken over by the automated systems of Europe or America (FAA NOTAM site) for users.
- 1.5 This discussion paper presents the challenges to be addressed in order to better interpret the NOTAM relating to these situations.

## **2. Regulatory Review**

- 2.1. Case A of a NOTAM identifies the ICAO location indicator of the **aerodrome** or **FIR** in which the facility, airspace or reported situation is located.
- 2.2. The provisions of paragraph 6.3.4.2 of doc 8126<sup>7th</sup> Edition clearly indicate that the location indicator of the FIR to be included is that of the Area Control Centre (ACC) or the Flight Information Centre (FIC) providing air traffic services in the FIR.
- 2.3. Doc 7910 provides location indicators for the following ASECNA Sub FIRs:
  - Abidjan : DIII
  - Douala: FKKK
  - Libreville: FOOO.
- 2.4. Paragraph 6.3.4.5 of 8126 states that "if an ICAO indicator is not available, the letters of ICAO nationality of the State followed by "XX" should be used. The name of the location must be indicated in the first line of case E in plain language."

## **3. Discussion**

- 3.1. Many UTA and TMA in ASECNA-managed airspace do not have ICAO-assigned location indicators in Doc 7910.
- 3.2. The territorial borders of each state do not correspond to an FIR location indicator or a group of location indicators.
- 3.3. As part of the contingency managed by ASECNA, it was a necessary to issue NOTAMs on the control situation that prevailed on aerodromes, in Terminal Area (TMA) and in upper controlled area (UTA).
- 3.4. The Agency applied the provisions of paragraph 6.3.4.5 of ICAO doc 8126 for case A of the NOTAM relating to the applicable contingency situation. This consisted of indicating the two letters of nationality of the State to which UTA refers followed by "XX", and then the UTA is specified in plain language in case E.
- 3.5. This approach, while addressing the concerns mentioned above, also becomes problematic when it comes to publishing a situation relating to both the UTA and the TMA of a centre. We end up with the first two letters of nationality of the State, followed by XX at the same time especially for both types of airspace. Some TMAs, extending beyond the territorial limits of the State to which they relate, deserve to be clearly identified.

In the case of Togo whose aerodrome location indicator is DXXX: The rule applied does not make it possible to clearly distinguish the location indicator of the UTA of Lomé from that of the aerodrome of Lomé.

- 3.6. This situation has generated a lot of confusion among air users who have asked for clarification. NOTAM's automated sorting systems also did not generate NOTAMs for the Region concerned. This led to a delay in informing users. In addition, to avoid blockage, some AIS have replaced the proposed indicator with the FIR indicator to which the UTA or the FIR subsector relates, which has generated:
  - The irrelevance of the information;
  - Confusion among users who consulted the access to information website.

## **4. Actions by the Meeting**

### **The meeting is invited to:**

- a) Take note of the information contained in this working paper, and the operational difficulties involved;
- b) Support the assignment of location indicators to UTA, some TMA and FIR sub-sectors resulting from the ATS sectorization of airspace management;
- c) Encourage the systematic compliance of automated systems with the regulations in force within a specific period of time after the entry into force of the regulation; in particular for information impacting the UTA or an FIR sub-sector, in order to guarantee the integrity of the rebroadcast of NOTAM using the first two letters of nationality followed by XX in box A.