



ICAO

INTERNATIONAL CIVIL AVIATION ORGANIZATION

**Twenty-Seventh Meeting of the AFI Planning and Implementation Regional Group
(APIRG/27)**

5 to 6 November 2024

Agenda item 3: Implementation of air navigation objectives, targets and indicators, including the priorities set out in the regional air navigation plan

ORGANIZATION OF SEARCH AND RESCUE SERVICES IN THE DRC

(Note submitted by the DRC.)

SUMMARY	
This paper aims to share with the meeting the progress made by the Democratic Republic of the Congo in the organization of search and rescue services for civil aircraft in distress. It briefly presents the content of the decree organizing the SAR.	
Action by the meeting is in paragraph 3 .	
REFERENCE(S)	Chicago Convention- Article 25 Annex 12 -Search and Rescue AFI Air Navigation Plan Lomé Declaration
<i>Strategic Objectives</i>	A-Safety.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This information paper shares the experience of the Democratic Republic of the Congo in the process of implementing the standards and recommended practices relating to the organization of search and rescue services for civil aircraft in distress.

1.2 At the end of the USOAP audit conducted by ICAO in February 2023, only 4 of the 16 protocol issues were deemed satisfactory due to the low implementation rate of SAR SARPs. A corrective action plan has been drawn up to resolve the findings.

1.3 The corrective actions selected by the DRC included the signing of a new decree organizing search and rescue services, to which the National SAR Plan is appended. This is the response to PQ 7.481 that was not satisfactory during the 2023 audit.

1.4 The new decree has clearly defined the role of each stakeholder in SAR, including the air force, the national police, the fire service, the naval force, the Red Cross, aircraft operators, merchant navy, etc.

2. DISCUSSION

2.1 Although search and rescue operations for civil aircraft have always been carried out on national territory, they have not been organized in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in strict compliance with certain provisions of ICAO Annex 12 as amended to date with the publication of its 9th Edition in July 2024.

2.2 Decree 23/07 of 20 February 2023 published in the Official Gazette of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, lays a very good foundation for the establishment in the near future of a Joint Aeronautical and Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre to play the role of SAR provider in the search and rescue region of Kinshasa.

2.3 Compared to the repealed legal texts, the particularities of this Decree include the following:

- The inclusion of all stakeholders likely to contribute effectively to SAR activity. These include, for example, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Humanitarian Action, The Ministry of Defense, etc.;
- The direct involvement of senior officials in the National SAR Plan which is annexed to the Decree and countersigned by all the eight Ministers involved;
- The granting of full powers to the Director General of Civil Aviation to sign SAR agreements with neighboring countries;
- The taking into account of the evolution of ICAO standards and recommended practices contained in Annex 12 (19th amendment), including those relating to the periodic organization of SAR exercises and international cooperation in search and rescue;
- The clear definition of the roles to be played by each SAR stakeholder;
- The explicit statement that the Rescue Coordination Centre (RCC) is subject to technical supervision by the Civil Aviation Authority.

2.4 Discussions with the parties are ongoing for the signing and publication in the Official Journal of two interministerial Decrees to enable the RCC to be set up.

2.5 The challenge remains the existence of certain zones characterised by armed conflicts, which significantly reduces the chances of signing SAR agreements with certain neighboring States.

3 ACTION BY THE MEETING

3.1 The meeting is invited to.

- a) Take note of the progress made by the DRC on this issue; and
- b) Strengthen the mechanism for raising awareness among stakeholders on SAR standards.