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International Civil Aviation Organization

Seventh Meeting of the MIDANPIRG Steering Group (MSG/7)

1-3 September 2020

Agenda Item 7: MIDANPIRG Working Arrangements and Future Work Programme

THE POSITION OF BAHRAIN ON QATAR'S WORKING PAPER TITLED (Date of next MIDANPIRG Meeting)

(Presented by the Kingdom of Bahrain)

Summary

This paper is presented in response to Qatar's working paper recommending the scheduling of a dedicated virtual MIDANPIRG meeting to address the proposal Serial No. MID ANP-1 20/01-ATM/SAR. The Kingdom of Bahrain reserves its rights to discuss the proposal for amendment and present the documentation submitted by Bahrain effective and efficient face-to-face MIDANPIRG Meeting scheduled as previously agreed in February 2021.

References

Summary of Discussions of the 1st Virtual Meeting of the MIDANPIRG Chairpersons 13th May 2020
 Summary of Discussions of the 2nd Virtual Meeting of the MIDANPIRG Chairpersons 9th July 2020

Action by the meeting is in Paragraph 4

1. Introduction.

On 13th May 2020, a teleconference meeting was held with the MIDANPIRG and its subsidiary bodies chairs and vice chairs as a follow up to the outcomes of the DGCA Teleconference/Meeting of 23rd April 2020 to discuss the future work Programme and working arrangements. The meeting agreed that the MIDANPIRG Steering Group (MSG/7) meeting should be conducted as planned (1-3) September 2020) via teleconference, while MIDANPIRG/18 will be conducted with RASG-MID/8 face-to-face in the first Quarter of 2021.

On 9th July 2020, a second teleconference meeting was held with the MIDANPIRG and its subsidiary bodies chairs and vice chairs, with agenda items that included again discussions on the future work Programme and working arrangements. Despite the meeting being conducted for the MIDANPIRG chairs, and MIDANPIRG Subsidiary Bodies Chairpersons and vice chairpersons not States representative, the chairperson from Qatar chairing FWC 2022 TF referred to the proposal for Amendment of the ICAO MID Air Navigation Plan Volume 1 (Serial NO.: MID ANP-1 20/01 –ATM/SAR) dated 12 January 2020, originated by Qatar and requested to hold a MIDANPIRG Virtual meeting as soon as possible to discuss the proposal, no reason for the urgency was given. Objections were raised by several chairpersons and vice chairpersons to the proposal and highlighted that it is important to stick to the agreed work Programme i.e. MSG/7 to be conducted virtually beginning of September and MIDANPIRG/18 to be conducted concurrently with RASG-MID/8 as a face to face meeting beginning of 2021. It was further underlined the highest priority of the MIDANPIRG program while addressing the specific priorities should be consistent with the CART framework and the Global implementation Roadmap priorities.

The MIDANPIRG chairman further highlighted that the subject should not be discussed during a MIDANPIRG chairs meeting, rather it should be consulted with all 15 MID States through a State letter. Accordingly, the ICAO MID Office circulated a State letter dated 5th July to all member States with options for MIDANPIRG meetings in order to obtain their views/preferred option with regard to schedule for MIDANPIRG meeting, and it is believed that the States responses are now with ICAO MID Office for action.

This paper is presented to state Bahrain's position on the recommendation made by Qatar in their working paper regarding the need to convene a special Virtual MIDANPIRG meeting to discuss their proposal for amendment of the MID ANP Volume I, detailing the reasons for the objection.

2. Discussion

It is important to highlight that the MIDANPIRG working arrangements and future work Programme has been addressed by two meetings of the MIDANPIRG Chairpersons, although there was a general agreement on the future work Programme as stated in the summary of discussions of the first meeting, the same item was included again in the second meeting

which led to the circulation of a State letter to obtain the views of the State on the preferred option to discuss the proposal originated by Qatar by MIDANPIRG. The matter therefore is left with the ICAO Middle East regional office for further arrangements according to responses provided by the Member State, this raises a question, why the same subject is to be discussed again while it was addressed through a State letter and member States provided their responses which are not yet officially addressed by the MID office.

The kingdom of Bahrain does not consider it efficient or adequate to hold a virtual MIDANPIRG meeting on Qatar's proposal that is challenged by several Member States and does not require any immediate attention.

The State of Qatar was given ample opportunities in the past two years to present a reasonable technical argument and failed to this date to show any facts that have led it to conclude that the current arrangement "no longer serves the best interest of flight operations in the Region" (Qatar's Proposal), nor is there any consensus that Qatar's proposal to segment the Bahrain FIR is necessary or desirable. There are in fact no technical, operational, safety or efficiency considerations that require the proposed segmentation of the Bahrain FIR that has been successfully managed for more than half a century.

Accordingly, the Kingdom of Bahrain wishes to raise its objection to the recommendation made by State of Qatar in their working paper to schedule a dedicated virtual MIDANPIRG meeting to address the proposal Serial No. MID ANP-1 20/01 ATM/SAR, by October 2020.

Considering the high complexity of the subject matter to the Kingdom of Bahrain and undoubtedly other States in the region along with the serious safety consequences that will affect a sophisticated, well-established technical and operational arrangement of air traffic services in the region. It is fundamental that this subject is thoroughly debated during the MIDANPIRG/18 face-to-face meeting, this is justified and explained in the below paragraphs;

Firstly, in response to the Proposal for amendment – PFA (Serial No.: MID ANP -1 20/01 – ATM/SAR) dated 12th January 2020 originated by Qatar, Bahrain has raised a formal objection to the proposal supported by adequate documentation detailing the technical argument for the objection, referenced USCA/02/ICAO/2-13 letter dated 10th February 2020, additionally, in response to the ICAO letter AN 6/5A – 20/140 dated 5th July 2020, Bahrain reiterated its formal objection by an official letter referenced USCA/07/ICAO/08-02 dated 8th July 2020. In accordance with the procedure for amendment of the MID ANP – Volume, (1) and since the objection remains, the matter has to be documented for discussions by the respective planning and implementation regional group (PIRG). Therefore, we would emphasize that the contents of Bahrain's submitted documents and all subsequent documentation that will be presented to the meeting, necessitate a face-to-face meeting for effective presentation to the MIDANPIRG. To that end, the virtual meeting of MIDANPIRG is not a viable option, the agreed scheduled face-to-face MIDANPIRG/18 for first Quarter 2021 is the most appropriate forum for such complex discussions.

Secondly, the global pandemic of the COVID -19 dictates measures that would force all States and international aviation organizations to be fully focused and engaged with reviewing their strategies at all levels, whether national, regional and international. Therefore,

it is expected from the ICAO to take into considerations the involvement of States and International Organization with such actions rather than addressing a single case raised by one State that is not a safety critical matter that would necessitate urgent changes to the working arrangements and the meetings schedules. Moreover, according to the Summary of Discussions of the second virtual meeting of the MIDANPIRG Chairpersons and vice Chairpersons 3.4, 2nd paragraph which states that: *“The meeting agreed that the highest priority should be accorded to the “ANS Business Continuity and Recovery” and underlined the need to make rapid progress on this matter under the directives of MIDANPIRG...etc”*. and the 6th paragraph of 3.4 which states that: *“Considering the advisory role of the MID RPTF, the meeting agreed that the MSG/7 meeting (1-3 September 2020) should be used to support the implementation of CART in the MID Region, through the review of the MID RPTF outcomes and eventually endorsement of necessary Conclusions to foster harmonized implementation by States”*. The recommendation made by Qatar is contrary to the agreed accorded priorities for both the MID Office and the MIDANPIRG directive roles reflected in the paragraphs. It is likewise imperative to refer to the highest priority of the MIDANPIRG program focus areas underlined in paragraph 3.12 of the SOD: *“It was further underlined that the highest priority of the MIDANPIRG program while addressing the region’s specific priorities should be consistent with the CART framework and the Global Implementation Roadmap priorities”*.

On the basis of the above considerations, Bahrain sees no reasons to bring forward the next MIDANPIRG meeting to address Qatar’s proposal, and request to maintain the agreed plan to hold MIDANPIRG/18 and RASG-MID/8 meeting concurrently in Q1 2021.

3. Conclusion

This paper highlighted the position of the Kingdom of Bahrain on the recommendation made by Qatar in their working paper to schedule a dedicated Virtual MIDANPIRG Meeting to address the proposal for amendment of the MID Air Navigation Plan Volume 1 originated by the State of Qatar. The paper detailed the reasons for Bahrain objection to the recommendation made by Qatar for consideration by the MSG/7 Meeting taking into account the importance of the subject which has to be properly documented for discussion during the MIDANPIRG/18 meeting scheduled February 2021.

Member States should be given sufficient time to consider how the result of consultation on Qatar’s proposal are documented and presented to the next MIDANPIRG meeting for discussion. As part of this, all the relevant documents and data should be shared with the MID Member States for their review and analysis. Bahrain notes the reference in the state letter to replies to Qatar’s proposal made by 13 Member States and an international organization; they would be important for further discussions but are yet to be circulated within the MID Member States.

The Kingdom of Bahrain remains committed to the safety and efficiency of the international air transportation across the region and will spare no effort in fulfilling its commitments and obligations.

4. Action by the Meeting

The meeting is invited to:

- a) note the information provided in the working paper
- b) consider and support the importance of holding a face-to-face MIDANPIRG meeting (February 2021) as agreed to adequately present the case of the PFA (Serial No.: MID ANP-1 20/01 – ATM/SAR).

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