

INTERNATIONAL CIVIL AVIATION ORGANIZATION

**FIRST MEETING OF DIRECTORS OF CIVIL AVIATION OF THE
CARIBBEAN REGION (CAR/DCA/1)**

(Grand Cayman, Cayman Islands, 8 - 11 October 2002)

Agenda Item 7: Search and Rescue/Mass Casualty Incidents (SAR/MCI)

**Regional Civil Aviation Mass Casualty Incident Response Plans
for the Central and Eastern Caribbean Regions**

(Presented by the Secretariat)

Summary

This paper presents a review of the current status of the proposal to develop and establish Regional Civil Aviation Mass Casualty Incident Response Plans for the Central and Eastern Caribbean regions.

References:

- Reports of the 1st and 2nd MCI/SAR C/CAR Task Force Meetings
- Draft MCI/SAR Emergency Response Plan prepared by the MCI/SAR C/CAR Task Force
- Reports of the 1st to 5th Meetings of Directors of Civil Aviation of the C/CAR
- Report of the 1st E/CAR MCI Task Force Meeting
- Reports of the 1st to 3rd E/CAR SAR Committee Meetings
- Reports of the 11th to 17th Meetings of Directors of Civil Aviation of the E/CAR

1. Introduction

1.1 Statistics of aircraft operational safety related incidents and accidents in the Caribbean Region reveal that high passenger capacity aircraft operate in the region and the risk of accidents resulting in mass casualties exists.

1.2 Individual States and Territories in the Central (C/CAR) and Eastern (E/CAR) Caribbean Regions remain ill-prepared to respond effectively to an emergency created by a civil aviation mass casualty incident¹ (MCI) due to the lack of resources. It has been established in previous DCA meetings that a well-coordinated regional response to such an incident could however be much more effective in reducing the loss of life and serious injuries. This requires a full commitment and subscription by all States in the regions and the preparation of adequate Regional Civil Aviation Mass Casualty Incident Response Plans (CAMCIRP).

1.3 The task of developing CAMCIRPs in the C/CAR and E/CAR Regions has been delegated by the corresponding DCAs to the MCI/SAR C/CAR Task Force in 1998 and E/CAR SAR Committee in 1995, respectively. The E/CAR SAR Committee in turn established the E/CAR MCI Task Force in 2001 to undertake this work. The relevant conclusions from recent DCA meetings are presented in **Appendix A** for the C/CAR Region and in **Appendix B** for the E/CAR Region.

1.4 Little progress has been achieved to date and the tasks remain incomplete due to insufficient work and meetings. Work has recently advanced more due to the active participation of the Caribbean Disaster Response Agency (CDERA) and the Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO) which have considerable expertise and experience in disaster emergency response planning in the Caribbean region, as well as having the necessary contacts and resources databases and political lobbying power.

1.5 The present status in the C/CAR Region is that a Draft MCI/SAR Emergency Response Plan has been prepared by the MCI/SAR C/CAR Task Force. The current status in the E/CAR Region is that the E/CAR MCI Task Force has developed a programme for the preparation of a CAMCIRP.

1.6 The concept of a Regional MCI Mechanism was also introduced to States in the Central American Region, however no work in this area has commenced.

2. Discussion

2.1 Progress Related Issues

2.1.1 Although the proposal to develop CAMCIRPs for the C/CAR and E/CAR Regions has been a topic of discussion during DCA meetings since 1994 and States have committed to the task through its inclusion in the work programme of the C/CAR MCI/SAR Task Force and E/CAR SAR Committee, to date, the evidence of any progress and results is limited. The following issues are seen to be hindering the current approach for the efficient development of a plan in the shortest time and with the minimum application of resources:

- a) Insufficient contribution from States and Territories to the participation in the C/CAR MCI/SAR Task Force and E/CAR SAR Committee;

¹ It is noted that technically the definition in aviation of an “accident” is an aircraft operational safety related occurrence in which a person suffers death or serious injury, or the aircraft sustains substantial damage. An “incident” is an aircraft operational safety related occurrence which is not considered an accident. For the purpose of maintaining consistency in the discussion on this topic, the term “incident” in this paper, which has been adopted from disaster related terminology, is identical to the term “accident”.

- b) Insufficient commitment from States and Territories of resources for responding to MCIs and provision of this information to the C/CAR MCI/SAR Task Force and E/CAR SAR Committee;
- c) Insufficient communication between the C/CAR MCI SAR Task Force, E/CAR SAR Committee and regional organisations with expertise and experience in disaster response planning such as CDERA, RSS and PAHO;
- d) Inadequate participation and insufficient meetings of the C/CAR MCI/SAR Task Force and E/CAR SAR Committee;
- e) Attempt to combine MCI and SAR which instead could be considered separately with a common interface; and
- f) Lack of a time-based coordinated activity programme for the development of the response plan.

2.2 Proposed Required Activities

2.2.1 The following steps are considered to be required in order for the C/CAR MCI/SAR Task Force and E/CAR SAR Committee to develop regional CAMCIRPs:

- 1) Consultation with airports on airport emergency plans.
- 2) Consultation with States on National Emergency Plans and SAR Plans.
- 3) Obtain a sample MCI response plan, preferably applicable to civil aviation accidents.
- 4) Establish the availability and commitment of resource and service providers in each State and Territory – Aviation, Airport, Health, Fire, Police, Defence, Coast Guard, Disaster, Red Cross, Clergy, Transportation, Communications and Meteorological Services.
- 5) Collection of data from States and Territories – resources, contacts, etc.
- 6) Create a database of resources – staff, supplies, accommodation, ambulances, helicopters, aircraft and watercraft.
- 7) Appoint a volunteer State/Territory/Organization to establish an MCI Regional Response Coordination Centre (different to the Emergency Operations Centre established near to the site of the accident).
- 8) Appointment of national co-ordinators in each State and Territory.
- 9) Establishment of a response coordination network – communication and transportation.
- 10) Preparation of the civil aviation MCI Response Plan.

11) Testing of the plan to establish areas for improvement.

12) Revision of the plan.

2.2.2 Alternatively, the existing regional response procedures for other disasters could be modified to include provisions for the response to a civil aviation aircraft accident. This approach would be quicker and easier but requires the full commitment of CDERA, RSS and PAHO in managing the process and States to provide the necessary contribution. It is recognised that a civil aviation MCI is different to other types of disaster with its particular medical requirements but the information databases and communication and transportation mechanisms which have been established for other disasters would provide a sound basis for developing the additional requirements for an aviation specific catastrophe.

2.3 Potential Implementation Problems

2.3.1 Problems which have been identified associated with a regional response to civil aviation MCIs are as follows:

- inadequate communications between national agencies
- poor co-ordination of response from different national agencies
- slow mobilisation of response activities and resources
- language barrier – English, Spanish, French, Dutch, Creole
- insufficient resources – supplies, trained personnel, transportation, accommodation
- Financing – coordination centre, personnel training, response activities
- Political – existing bilateral and regional agreements, i.e. CDERA member States

2.3.2 Although none of the above appear to be insurmountable, these issues do need to be addressed by the C/CAR MCI SAR Task Force and E/CAR SAR Committee. These should identify and evaluate options for the resolution of each issue, and recommend a preferred option for adoption. The basic principle should be that however little States have at a national level, should be effectively combined and coordinated to facilitate a regional response to a civil aviation MCI with the ultimate objective of reducing loss of lives and serious injuries.

3. Action to be taken by the Meeting

3.1 The meeting is invited to review, note and comment on the contents of this working paper and take any action it considers appropriate to promote and follow-up the development of regional CAMCIRPs.

APPENDIX A

RECENT C/CAR DCA MEETING CONCLUSIONS ON MCI

Conclusion 4/12 Civil Aviation Mass Casualty Incident (MCI) Response Plan for the Central Caribbean

That,

- a) States/Territories/International Organizations confirm their full commitment to the establishment of a Civil Aviation MCI Response Plan to be completed by the 6th C/CAR Directors of Civil Aviation Meeting;
- b) the ICAO Regional Office in Mexico City convene a Meeting between representatives of the MCI/SAR C/CAR Task Force, E/CAR SAR Committee, CDERA, PAHO, and other appropriate organizations to establish the preferred approach to creating a mechanism for a regional response to a MCI; and
- c) the list of proposed required activities for the establishment of a MCI Response Plan, shown in **Attachment A** to this part of the Report, be used in developing this effort.

Conclusion 5/31 Mass Casualty Incident (MCI) Response Plan for the Central Caribbean

That the ICAO Regional Office in Mexico City,

- a) update the information requested in the initial MCI Questionnaire and solicit input from all States/Territories/International Organizations by 30 August 2001,
- b) convene a Meeting of the C/CAR MCI/SAR Task Force including appropriate organizations by 28 February 2002, in order to develop an MCI Response Mechanism Plan, and
- c) in consultation with the Rapporteur of the C/CAR MCI/SAR Task Force, hold a preparatory Meeting prior to b) above if determined necessary.

Proposed Required Activities

The following steps are considered to be required in order for the MCI/SAR C/CAR TF to develop an adequate dedicated civil aviation MCI response plan:

- i. Confirm commitment and subscription of States.
- ii. Confirm participation and assistance of regional organizations specialised in disaster emergency response including CDERA and PAHO.
- iii. Consultation with IATA and airlines on existing provisions and requirements.
- iv. Consultation with ACI and airports on airport emergency plans.
- v. Consultation with States on National Emergency Plans and SAR Plans.
- vi. Obtain a sample MCI response plan, preferably applicable to civil aviation accidents.
- vii. Qualify and Quantify the resource and service requirements based on a worst case scenario (i.e. wide-body aircraft accident with mass casualties due to impact and fire in darkness and poor weather at an isolated location in difficult terrain with dense vegetation on a small island with limited national resources).
- viii. Establish the availability and commitment of resource and service providers in each State and Territory – Aviation, Airport, Health, Fire, Police, Defence, Coast Guard, Disaster, Red Cross, Clergy, Transportation, Communications, and Meteorological Services.
- ix. Collection of data from States and Territories – resources, contacts, etc.
- x. Create a database of resources – staff, supplies, accommodation, ambulances, helicopters, aircraft.
- xi. Appoint a volunteer State/Territory/Organization to establish an MCI Regional Response Coordination Centre (different to the Emergency Operations Centre established near to the site of the accident).
- xii. Appointment of national co-ordinators in each State and Territory.
- xiii. Establishment of a response coordination network – communication and transportation.
- xiv. Preparation of the civil aviation MCI Response Plan.
- xv. Testing of the plan to establish areas for improvement.
- xvi. Revision of the plan.

APPENDIX B

RECENT E/CAR DCA MEETING CONCLUSIONS ON MCI

Conclusion 16/18 Civil Aviation Mass Casualty Incident Response Plan for the Eastern Caribbean Region

That,

- a) E/CAR States and Territories confirm their full commitment to the promotion of national disaster response plans and the establishment of a Regional Civil Aviation MCI Response Plan, the latter a task already assigned to the E/CAR SAR Committee, with a deadline for completion by the 18th DCA E/CAR Meeting;
- b) the E/CAR SAR Committee convene a MCI meeting by the end of March 2001 with the participation of representatives from the MCI/SAR C/CAR TF, PAHO, RSS, CDERA and other appropriate organizations to establish the preferred approach to creating a mechanism for a regional response to a MCI created by a civil aviation aircraft accident in the Eastern Caribbean region; and
- c) the E/CAR SAR Committee, in consultation with other involved parties, develop a time-based coordinated activity programme by the end of June 2001 for the completion of a response plan for the Eastern Caribbean region by the 18th DCA E/CAR Meeting.

Conclusion 17/3 Civil Aviation Mass Casualty Incident Response Plan for the Eastern Caribbean Region

That the E/CAR SAR Committee develop a programme for the development of a civil aviation MCI response plan for the Eastern Caribbean region to be completed by the 18th DCA E/CAR Meeting and present this programme to the CAR DCA Meeting in 2002.

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