



INFORMATION PAPER

FIFTH MEETING OF THE ALLPIRG/ADVISORY GROUP

(Montreal, 23 – 24 March 2006)

Agenda Item 5.3: Coordination between the regions and between the Regional Offices and Headquarters

MIDDLE EAST (MID) REGIONAL AND INTERREGIONAL ACTIVITIES

(Presented by the Secretariat)

SUMMARY

This paper provides a summary of the most significant issues related to regional and interregional activities aimed at harmonization and coordination between the Middle East (MID) Region with other Regions and Headquarters.

Action by ALLPIRG/5 is in paragraph 3.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Air navigation issues between the MID Region and other ICAO regions continue to be considered among the major activities in promoting the role of ICAO and enhancing the safety mandates as reflected in ICAO Air Navigation Documentations (Standards and Recommended Practices), Air Navigation Commission (ANC), Council and General Assembly Decisions.

1.2 The Middle East Air Navigation Planning and Implementation Regional Group (MIDANPIRG), with the assistance of its contributory bodies, promotes air navigation matters in the Middle East (MID) Region with the aim to improve the planning of air navigation facilities, services and procedures, as well as fostering their implementation.

2. DISCUSSION

2.1 Several air navigation issues as indicated in this information paper could be considered part of coordination and harmonization activities, which are amongst the important issues affecting implementation in the MID Region.

2.2 ATM

RVSM implementation and Monitoring Experience in the MID Region

2.2.1 The ANC while reviewing the MIDANPIRG/9 report, noted that since the implementation of reduced vertical separation minimum (RVSM) in the MID Region, effective 27 November 2003 and until 1 June 2004, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) provided full support, both financially and technically, to the activities of the Middle East Central Monitoring Agency (MECMA), in monitoring the height-keeping performance of aircraft operating in RVSM airspace in the MID Region. However, since the receipt of the notice from UAE regarding MECMA support withdrawal effective 1 June 2004, the Secretariat initiated number of follow-up actions including a letter from the Secretary General to all MID States and raising the issue at relevant meetings, which include: the Eleventh Middle East RVSM Task Force Meeting (MID RVSM TF/11, Cairo, 20-21 April 2004), the second meeting of MIDANPIRG Member States (MMS/2, Bahrain, 19-21 September 2004), the ninth meeting of MIDANPIRG (MIDANPIRG/9, Cairo, 11-15 April 2005), the first meeting of Middle East Regional Monitoring Agency (MID RMA/1, Cairo, 14-15 June 2005) and the first meeting of Middle East Regional Monitoring Agency Board (MID RMA Board/1, Cairo, 5-6 September 2006).

2.2.2 At the first meeting of the MID RMA Board (MID RMA Board/1), Bahrain offered to host the MID RMA and EUROCONTROL extended its support to MID RMA in terms of training of staff, provision of software and development of database. Furthermore, Bahrain offered to pay for the initial set up of the MID RMA without waiting for the contributions of MID States and the cost would be recovered eventually through the funding mechanism endorsed by the MID RMA Board for the first year of operation of the MID RMA. The MID RMA Board agreed that the funding mechanism for the first year should be simple based on equitable contribution from the participating States providing that this could be refined once the MID RMA is established and operational, based on more up to date statistics and data. The development by ICAO of a global mechanism for the funding of the Regional Monitoring Agencies, in the near future is strongly recommended.

2.2.3. The ANC appreciated that all tasks pertaining to the set up of the MID RMA, including installation of equipment and training of RMA staff, was completed and MID RMA had become operational in Bahrain effective 24 November 2005 (as required by amendment 43 to Annex 11). Although the issue of re-establishing and funding of MID RMA has been resolved, the ANC acknowledged that other regions are also experiencing a similar situation and recommended that the Secretary General develop a global approach for establishing, funding and determining the basis for cost recovery for regional monitoring mechanisms.

2.2.4. It is to be noted also that, during MIDANPIRG/9 meeting the idea of re-establishment of the MID RMA through a Technical Co-operation Bureau (TCB) project was raised. Based on the outcome of The MID RMA/1 and MID RMA Board/1 meetings and after a long process of coordination with ICAO HQ to accommodate all the Decisions of the MID RMA Board/1 meeting and resolve the legal issues, it was strongly suggested to clarify the legal status of the MID RMA and to establish a constitutional document - Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) signed by all participating States. Upon signature of the MOA, ICAO would be able to establish a Custodian Agreement with the representative/entity authorized by the MID RMA Board to deal with ICAO in compliance with ICAO's Financial Regulations and Rules. Accordingly, a two-step approach was suggested to reconcile the issue related to the re-establishment of MID RMA: firstly the participating MID States would agree among themselves through the MOA on such issues as the structure, operation, and budget of the MID RMA; and secondly, upon the signature of the MOA, ICAO will propose a Custodian Agreement which will be tripartite in nature (between Bahrain, the MID RMA Board and ICAO) and would incorporate one or several paragraphs to describe exactly the support functions of ICAO in the MID RMA (*invoicing the MID RMA States according to the apportionment provided by the MID RMA Board, collection of States' contributions, recording States'*

contributions in the MID RMA fund and tracking accrued interest, reporting on funds received and balance of funds to the MID RMA Board via a quarterly statement, reimbursing Bahrain on the basis of a certified request for payment by the MID RMA Board on a semi-annual basis, etc).

2.2.5 The MID RMA Board/2 meeting was held in Bahrain 27–28 February 2006. During the course of the meeting, the original copy of the MOA was signed by the seven (7) States attending the meeting. It is to be noted in this regard that, Yemen, even though not attended the meeting, already signed the MOA and returned it back by Fax to the ICAO MID Regional Office, who would follow up the matter with the remaining States for the signature of the MOA.

2.2.6 The MID RMA Board/2 meeting also reviewed the main points of negotiation for a Custodian Agreement between ICAO, the MID RMA Board and Bahrain and agreed that the Chairman of the MID RMA Board be delegated the authority to sign on behalf of the Participating States, the Custodian Agreement to be prepared by ICAO, based on the agreed main points of negotiation.

2.2.7 The meeting recalled with appreciation the tremendous efforts deployed by UAE in the preparation for the successful and safe implementation of RVSM in the MID Region effective 27 November 2003 by, inter-alia, hosting all RVSM Task Force Meetings and Seminars and providing full support, both financially and technically, to the activities of the Middle East Central Monitoring Agency (MECMA). Accordingly, the meeting agreed to invite UAE to join the MID RMA Project and to exempt them from paying contributions for the first ten (10) years of operation of the MID RMA.

2.2.8 The meeting agreed that the RVSM post-implementation safety analysis is to be ready before 24 November 2006 with a view to be presented to MIDANPIRG/10 meeting.

Preparation for RVSM implementation in Baghdad and Kabul FIRs

2.2.9 The MID Region in several of its RVSM meetings and also in receiving official requests from Afghanistan (Kabul FIR) and Iraq (Baghdad FIR) discussed ways and means on how to provide assistance to both these State FIRs for the preparation of RVSM implementation. The assistance of the MID RMA would be necessary and of utmost importance in order to carry out the readiness and safety assessment work in preparation for RVSM implementation these FIRs. The MIDANPIRG RVSM TF/11 meeting proposed to request assistance from EUROCONTROL and FAA for carrying out the safety assessment for RVSM operations in both Baghdad and Kabul FIRs and to assist these States in the process of implementation of RVSM in their respective FIRs.

Issues pertaining to RVSM implementation in the MID Region (Apparent false filings)

2.2.10 MIDANPIRG/9 meeting noted with concern that many operators are erroneously filing flight plans with the RVSM qualifier “W” in item 10. As a result of a survey carried out in the MID Region, it was noted that such discrepancies indicate a more widespread problem and reveals a widespread lack of adherence to ICAO standards and procedures, manifested in:

- late filing of FPL
- no filing of FPL
- use of incorrect aircraft type designators
- incorrect procedures for filing of changes to FPL
- duplicate filing of FPL
- incorrect addressing of FPL
- lack of compliance with ICAO Doc 4444 and Doc 7910 procedures.

2.2.11 These discrepancies are hampering ATC units in carrying out their tasks of ensuring that correct separation minima are applied within RVSM airspace. It is clear that serious questions exist with regards to the integrity of the basis upon which access to RVSM airspace is granted. However, the effectiveness of this process hinges on several conditions.

2.2.12 Based on the above, MIDANPIRG/9 endorsed a working methodology in order to identify and remedy the inconsistencies related to the multiple repetitions and non-receipt of ATS messages and agreed on the following concrete measures:

- a) All en-route addresses be standardized and those required in the relevant Flight Data Processing System be made available to all ATC Units so that FPLs can be addressed to them.
- b) Flight Data Processing Systems be able to process all FPL items in accordance with Doc. 4444 procedures.
- c) Encourage the automated filing of FPLs.
- d) ICAO MID Regional Office to inform adjacent regions about problems associated with the omission of the letter “W” in FPL item 10 and/or non-reception of FPLs.

Uncoordinated flights over the Red Sea Area and Civil Military Coordination

2.2.13 Despite all the efforts made and agreement on procedures to resolve the issue of uncoordinated flights over the Red Sea Area, it is noted with concern that an important number of flights are still not strictly following the procedures endorsed by MIDANPIRG/8 (Conclusion 8/22), which jeopardizes the safety of air navigation over the Red Sea Area. More generally, the issue of Civil/Military coordination represents a major concern for many States in the MID Region. The issue of Military flights using the airspace over the high seas was especially raised during the last MID Region Global ATM Operational Concept Seminar (Cairo, 28 November - 1 December 2005) and several previous meetings and Seminars/Workshops. It is strongly recommended that this issue be tackled by all concerned parties, as a matter of urgency and a special Civil/Military coordination meeting is to be organized.

Assignment of Five-Letter Name Codes (5LNCs)

2.2.14 MIDANPIRG/9 recalled that the need to facilitate the transfer and allocation of five-letter name-codes for the designation of reporting points was recognized by MIDANPIRG and under Decision 8/11 the Secretariat was requested to coordinate with the ICAO Paris Office to enable the MID Region to use the ICAO Five-Letter Name Codes and Route Designator (ICARD) System being hosted by EUROCONTROL.

2.2.15 The meeting noted with appreciation that work has been finalised and coordinated between the MID Office, the EUR/NAT Office and EUROCONTROL to integrate the updated list of five-letter name-codes of the MID Region into the ICAO Five-letter name Codes And Route Designators (ICARD) Database. It was convened that, before proceeding to the full implementation in the MID Region, it is necessary to start a pilot phase with a selected number of States (Bahrain, Egypt, Lebanon, Oman, Saudi Arabia, UAE and Yemen).

2.2.16 MIDANPIRG/9 expressed its appreciation for the improvement of the process of assignment of 5LNCs through the use of the ICARD system in the MID Region. It also thanked EUROCONTROL for hosting and managing the database for the MID Region and reiterated that the spirit of cooperation which has always prevailed between the MID Region States and EUROCONTROL cannot be over-emphasized.

2.3 CNS

Master Frequency Register

2.3.1 The aeronautical demand for frequencies continues to increase, placing considerable pressure on the frequency management process.

2.3.2 The effective use of aeronautical frequency spectrum depends on the expert technical planning of the frequencies used by the various Air Navigation Service Providers in the Region. The main technical tools at the disposal of the frequency manager at Regional Office are:

- Handbook on Radio Frequency Spectrum Requirements for Civil Aviation
- ITU Radio Regulations
- Frequency Manager Programs

2.3.3 There is no specific problem to use the ICAO Handbook and ITU Radio Regulations. However, the Regions are managing frequencies using different softwares. For example, both APAC and MID Offices are operating two versions of the same software, which are different from those, used by ESAF and EUR/NAT Offices.

2.3.4 In this regard, there is an urgent need to harmonize the different tools used for the Frequency management by creating a Master Frequency Register (MFR). It is accordingly, recommended that the Master FR located at HQ could serve as formal record and planning guide for new assignments. Copies of the MFR entries could be held by Regional Offices and regularly amended.

Use of VSAT for the improvement of communications between Regions

2.3.5 The Feasibility Study and Business Case of MID VSAT Project were conducted by the consultant ATNS (Air Traffic Navigation Service) of South Africa.

2.3.6 The MID Office coordinated the technical specifications of the MID VSAT with those of the NAFISAT in AFI Region. It was agreed that both networks (MID VSAT and NAFISAT) would operate the same protocol and the same satellite.

2.3.7 At this stage, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Yemen have signed the MOU of the NAFISAT project becoming thus the first nodes of the MID VSAT operating with the NAFISAT network. This will solve the communications deficiencies between MID and AFI Regions, over parts of the Red Sea area.

2.3.8 The next phase of the MID VSAT project would be to finalize the technical documents and submission for tendering, as well as the follow-up of equipment implementation. In this regard, the creation of a Pilot Project covering both MID VSAT and NAFISAT would facilitate and assist MID States implementation process.

2.4 AIS/MAP

2.4.1. The main challenge for the MID Region pertaining to the AIS/MAP field is the implementation of AIS automation and quality management system (QMS) in the different AIS Services of MID States leading to the provision of efficient, uniform, harmonized service and timely delivery of accurate and quality-assured digital aeronautical information. Based on the results of two surveys carried out in the MID Region pertaining to the implementation of AIS automation and quality management systems, and the outcome of the missions conducted to 5 MID States within the framework of a SIP on implementation of QMS within these States' AIS, it was noted that:

- The level of implementation of AIS automation in the MID Region is still under expectation. This is due essentially to the lack of global standard pertaining to the electronic provision, storage, access and exchange of aeronautical information and charts. Guidance material from ICAO in this respect was repeatedly requested.
- While the importance and need for the provision of high quality aeronautical information is gaining momentum, the implementation of quality system appears to be a specific domain with low degree of implementation among MID States. The big majority of States in the MID Region need to be assisted to comply with Annex 15 provisions related to quality system. None of the States visited in 2005 has in place a QMS implemented in their AIS. However, they are planning to start the implementation of such system in the near future. The lack of awareness about quality and the need/requirements for the implementation of a QMS for AIS/MAP Services was noted. In all cases States requested further ICAO guidance and seminars/workshops to facilitate greater knowledge and understanding of how to implement such system. A number of specific recommendations and tasks were identified, to be further addressed by States. The need for the harmonization of the AIS/MAP training programmes at regional/global level was also highlighted and guidelines from ICAO in this regard have been requested.
- Some States are encountering difficulties related to the implementation of Amendment 33 to Annex 15 pertaining to the provision of electronic Terrain and Obstacle Data (eTOD) within the specified time frame. The need for harmonization and coordination of the implementation activities on a regional basis and more guidelines from ICAO in this respect were requested.

2.5 Air Navigation Deficiencies

2.5.1 MIDANPIRG/9, with a view to analyze the rationale for non-elimination of air navigation deficiencies, had proposed in Conclusion 9/61 an amendment to the uniform methodology for the identification, assessment and reporting of air navigation deficiencies. During the review of MIDANPIRG/9 report by the ANC, it was agreed that this proposal would be taken into account by the Secretariat at the next revision of the methodology.

2.5.2 MIDANPIRG had reviewed, analyzed and prioritized the list of air navigation deficiencies and agreed that a database of regional air navigation deficiencies that provides secure access to authorized users, be developed, taking into consideration the work done by the CAR/SAM Regions. It is recommended in this regard to adopt a standard model for the different regional databases and that the tools used for the development of these databases and their posting on the website are standardized.

3. ACTION BY ALLPIRG

3.1 The ALLPIRG/5 Meeting is invited to note the contents of this information paper.