



International Civil Aviation Organization

North American, Central American and Caribbean Office (NACC)

**Tenth Meeting of Directors of Civil Aviation of the Central Caribbean
(C/CAR/DCA/10)**

Grand Cayman, Cayman Islands, 18 to 21 August 2009

C/CAR/DCA/10 - IP/19

31/07/09

Agenda Item 6: Air Navigation Matters
6.3 Other Air Navigation matters

**Initial Discussions of a Project to Implement
50 NM Lateral Separation in the Gulf of Mexico**

(Presented by the United States)

SUMMARY

The purpose of this Information Paper is to inform the group that the U.S. Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and SENEAM, the Air Traffic Service (ATS) provider for Mexico, have held initial discussions of a project to implement 50 NM lateral separation and a new area navigation (RNAV) route system in the Gulf of Mexico.

1. Introduction

1.1 The purpose of this Information Paper is to inform the group that the U.S. FAA and SENEAM, the Air Traffic Service (ATS) provider for Mexico, have held initial discussions of a project to implement 50 NM lateral separation and a new area navigation (RNAV) route system in the Gulf of Mexico. Representatives from the U.S. FAA and SENEAM met in Merida, Mexico from 17-19 February 2009. Participants included representatives from the SENEAM Mexico City Office, U.S. FAA Headquarters, the U.S. FAA Eastern Service Area, and Merida, Monterrey, and Houston Centers.

2. Proposed Gulf of Mexico 50 NM Lateral Separation Project Objectives

2.1 The meeting covered a number of agenda items related to Gulf of Mexico operations. One of them was to begin discussion of a project that would be undertaken to do the following:

- a) Reduce lateral separation in the Gulf from 100 NM to 50 NM between aircraft authorized Required Navigation Performance 10 (RNP 10) or RNP 4

- b) Implement a redesigned RNAV route structure based on a minimum 50 NM track spacing
- c) Harmonize the proposed RNAV route structure with adjacent ATS providers
- d) Have 90% or more of Gulf flights conducted by operators/aircraft authorized RNP 10 or RNP 4
- e) Accommodate the operation of a small percentage of operators/aircraft not authorized RNP 10 or RNP 4

2.2 The group agreed that the implementation of 50 NM track spacing can enable additional routes to be established in the Gulf of Mexico to enhance operations for air traffic operating between North America and South America. The group agreed that additional routes provide the potential to do the following:

- a) Increase airspace capacity;
- b) Add more direct, cost efficient routes; and
- c) Reduce delays during periods of heavy traffic volume.

3. Proposed Follow-up Meeting and Coordination

3.1 SENEAM and U.S. FAA representatives agreed to continue to pursue the project. The next meeting was scheduled to take place July 28 – 31, in Merida, Mexico.

3.2 The group has recognized that it will be necessary to broaden the project coordination and plans to do that as the project matures. The current Concept of Operations directly affects only U.S. and Mexico Flight Information Regions (FIRs). However this project could be expanded in a phased approach if there are additional improvements to be gained by including additional FIRs.

4 Conclusion

4.1 The meeting is invited to note that the U.S. FAA and SENEAM have begun initial discussions of a project to reduce lateral separation in the Gulf of Mexico to 50 NM between operators/aircraft authorized RNP 10 or RNP 4.