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**Tenth North American, Central American and Caribbean Directors of Civil Aviation Meeting
(NACC/DCA/10)**

Martinique, France, 21 to 23 June 2022

**Agenda Item 5: NAM/CAR Regional Safety/Air Navigation Implementation
5.3 Air Navigation Implementation Matters**

RESPONSE PLANNING TO FACE EMERGENCIES AND CONTINGENCIES IN CENTRAL AMERICA

(Presented by Belize, Costa Rica, the Salvador, Honduras and Nicaragua, members of the Central American Corporation for Air Navigation Services COCESNA)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

According with ICAO Annex 11 ICAO, the States responsible for providing air traffic services also have the responsibility in case of current or possible interruption to establish the necessary measures aimed at ensuring safety of international civil aviation and, in as much as possible, to count with the necessary arrangements to provide alternate facilities. Central America is constantly under the effects of phenomena that may limit the provision of air traffic services, as was the case in 2020 with ETA and IOTA hurricanes. Considering that the objective of contingency plans consists of activate other facilities when the ones indicated in the air navigation plan are temporarily interrupted, it is critical to count with harmonized planning and response between States when facing emergency and contingencies situations.

Currently, the States of Central America count, together with COCESNA, with planning in case of experiencing “zero ATC”. Likewise, the Civil Aviation Department of Belize and the CAA of Honduras have established operational agreements with COCESNA on coordination of the traffic in their respective airspace in case of emergencies and/or contingencies (technical or operational failures). Similar agreements will be established between the remaining member States of COCESNA.

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| Action: | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Keep contingency plans updated for the implementation of a more efficient response before of emergency and contingency situations in the area.• Establish operational agreements between adjacent units and FIRs containing operational procedures according to the CNS/ATM capabilities that should be implemented as a response before emergencies, in order to ensure continuity of air traffic services. |
| <i>Strategic Objectives:</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Safety• Air Navigation Capacity and Efficiency• Security & Facilitation• Economic Development of Air Transport• Environmental Protection |

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| <i>References:</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Annex 11• Annex 19• PANS/ATM |
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1. Introduction

1.1 According to ICAO, States shall prepare, promulgate and execute suitable contingency plans. The preparation of said plans shall be done in consultation with other States and interested airspace users and with ICAO, as appropriate, whenever it is probable that the interruption of the services affects those provided in the adjacent airspace.

1.2 Today more than ever, it is necessary to count with applicable contingency plans ensuring the continuity of services and complying with safety levels required by the industry. This paper reflects how the States of Central America and COCESNA develop their response plan for emergencies and contingencies.

2. Background

2.1 In Central America, through COCESNA, air traffic services in the upper airspace are provided under the seamless sky model. COCESNA in turn assists its member States on the air traffic management. As a result, regional plans that increase the efficiency of the provided service have been planned and are being carried out through sub-regional projects such as: redesign of the airspace of Central America, central validation of flight plans, Air traffic Flow Management (ATFM), among others.

2.2 Central America is constantly under the effects of phenomena that may limit the provision of air traffic services, as was the case in 2020 with ETA and IOTA hurricanes. Considering that the objective of contingency plans consists of activate other facilities when the ones indicated in the air navigation plan are temporarily interrupted, it is critical to count with harmonized planning and response between States when facing emergency and contingencies situations.

3. Planning of Response to Emergencies and Contingencies in the Area

3.1 Since 2018, jointly with ICAO and with the support of the FAA, IATA and CANSO, COCESNA has worked with the Central American States to establish, document and socialise the response before contingencies and emergency situations.

- 3.2 Additionally, COCESNA has a back-up control centre located in El Salvador for provision of air traffic services in case that the ACC CENAMER located in Honduras is not available.
- 3.3 Currently, the States of Central America count, together with COCESNA, with planning in case of experiencing “zero ATC”. Likewise, the Civil Aviation Department of Belize and the CAA of Honduras have established operational agreements with COCESNA on coordination of the traffic in their respective airspace in case of emergencies and/or contingencies (technical or operational failures)..
- 3.4 COCESNA plans to define operational agreements with remaining member States in 2022, and in conjunction with ICAO, to perform drills aimed at ensuring their feasibility.
- 3.5 ICAO through the NACC office has supported the States so that they have a response in case of emergencies and contingencies.
- 3.6 With regards to service provision of COCESNA NOTAM office, in order to ensure its continuity, a contingency plan was defined and contingency operational agreements were established with Cuba and Dominican Republic. Moreover, coordination is undergoing with PANAMA on signing operational agreements.
- 3.7 It may be noted that COCESNA developed an application to process centralized flight plans at a sub-regional level (Central America) that serves as a back-up to receive and send of flight plans in order to ensure fluidity of aeronautical information.

4. Conclusion

- 4.1. Anticipated planning provides efficient tools to face contingency situations, ensuring continuity of the services.
- 4.2. Considering the experiences of the Central American States on emergency and contingency matters, there has been a continuous plan review process with the support of COCESNA and different international organizations.
- 4.3. Beside establishing operational agreements in case of contingency of Central American States with COCESNA, it is necessary to define agreements with adjacent FIRs.

5. Suggested Actions

5.1 States are invited to:

- a) note the experience of the Central American area and promote actions to keep contingency plans up-to-date for the implementation of a more efficient response to emergency and contingency situations in the area.
- b) Ask the support of ICAO to foster actions to establish operational agreements between units and adjacent FIRs containing operational procedures in line with the CNS/ATM capabilities that must be implemented as a response before emergencies, in order to ensure continuity of air traffic services.

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