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ICAO NACC Regional Office, Mexico City, 30 August - 1 September 2022

**Agenda Item 3: Follow-up of the Activities of the NACC/WG Task Forces**

- 3.1 Progress of the NACC/WG on Aeronautical Information Management (AIM), Air Traffic Management (ATM) and Communications, Navigation and Surveillance (CNS)

**EMERGENCY AND CONTINGENCY RESPONSE PLANNING IN CENTRAL AMERICA**

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

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

In accordance with ICAO Annex 11, the States responsible for providing air traffic services also have the obligation, in the event of actual or possible interruption of said services, to institute the necessary measures aimed at guaranteeing the safety of international civil aviation operations and, where possible, to arrange for the provision of alternative facilities and services.

Planning and response to emergency and contingency situations continue to be a priority for the Central American States and COCESNA. The region is constantly under the possible effects of phenomena that may limit the provision of air traffic services. Communication, coordination, and collaborations are one of the best defences we can maintain.

Currently, the States of the Central American region have, together with COCESNA, a plan in case of experiencing “zero Air Traffic Control (ATC)”. Likewise, the Department of Civil Aviation of Belize and the Honduran Civil Aviation Agency have operational agreements with COCESNA, for the coordination of transits in their respective airspaces in emergency situations and/or contingencies (technical/operational failures). Similar agreements will be drawn up between the rest of the member states and COCESNA.

<b>Action:</b>	Suggested actions are presented in Section 5.
<i>Strategic Objectives:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Safety</li><li>• Air Navigation Capacity and Efficiency</li></ul>
<i>References:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Annex 11</li><li>• Annex 19</li><li>• PANS/ATM</li></ul>

## **1. Introduction**

1.1 According to ICAO, States must prepare, promulgate and execute adequate contingency plans. The preparation of these plans should be done in consultation with other interested States and airspace users and with ICAO, as appropriate, whenever it is likely that the interruption of services will affect those provided in the adjacent airspace.

1.2 Having applicable contingency plans that guarantee the continuity of services and comply with the safety levels required by the industry is necessary today more than ever. This working paper reflects how the Central American States and COCESNA prepare their emergency response plan and contingencies.

## **2. Background**

2.1 In Central America, through the Central American Corporation for Air Navigation Services, the Air Traffic Service (COCESNA), is provided the air traffic service in the upper airspace under the model of a seamless sky and this organization, in turn, assists in air traffic management its Member States. As a result, regional projects have been planned and are being carried out that increase the efficiency of the service provided in the area, such as the redesign of the Central American airspace, the centralized validation of flight plans, the Air Traffic Flow Management (ATFM), among others.

2.2 Central America is constantly affected by phenomena that may limit the provision of air traffic services. Considering that the objective of the contingency plans is for other facilities and services to function when the facilities and services indicated in the air navigation plan are temporarily interrupted, it is a priority to have a harmonized Planning and Response between States in the face of emergency situations and contingencies.

## **3. Emergency and Contingency Response Planning in the Sub-Region**

3.1 Since 2018, together with ICAO and with the support of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), IATA, and CANSO, COCESNA has been working with the Central American States to establish, document, and socialize the response to contingencies and emergency situations.

3.2 Additionally, COCESNA has a backup control centre located in El Salvador for the provision of air traffic services in case the Area Control Centre (ACC) CENAMER located in Honduras is not available.

3.3 Currently, COCESNA and its Member States have a plan in case of experiencing “zero ATC”. However, planning cannot be carried out if contingency agreements have not previously been established and documented in the adjacent dependencies. For the foregoing, COCESNA has operational agreements with the Department of Civil Aviation of Belize and the Honduran Civil Aviation Agency for the coordination of transit in their respective airspaces in emergency situations and/or contingencies (technical/operational failures).

3.4 Regarding the provision of the services of the COCESNA Notice to airmen (NOTAM) office, in order to guarantee its continuity, a contingency plan has been defined and contingency operational agreements have been established with Cuba and the Dominican Republic, likewise, coordination is being carried out with Panama for the signing of operational agreements.

3.5 It is worth mentioning that the Corporation has developed an application for the centralized processing of flight plans at the Central American sub-regional level that serves as a support for the reception and sending of flight plans with the purpose of guaranteeing the fluidity of aeronautical information.

#### **4. Conclusion**

4.1 Advance planning provides us with effective tools to respond to contingency situations, guaranteeing the continuity of services.

4.2 Considering the experiences of the Central American States in emergency and contingency aspects, we have been in the continuous process of reviewing the response plans with the support of COCESNA and different international organizations.

4.3 In addition to establishing operational agreements in case of contingency between the Central American States and COCESNA, it is necessary to define agreements with the adjacent Flight Information Regions (FIRs).

#### **5. Suggested actions**

5.1 The States are invited to:

- a) take note of the experience of the Central American sub-region and promote actions to keep the contingency plans updated for the execution of the most efficient response to emergency and contingency situations in the region; and
- b) request support from ICAO to promote actions to establish operational agreements between dependencies and adjacent FIRs that contain the operating procedures in accordance with the CNS/ATM capabilities that must be implemented as a response to emergencies, in order to guarantee the continuity of air traffic services.