



ICAO

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North American, Central American and Caribbean Office

WORKING PAPER

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**Third NAM/CAR Regional Contingency and Emergency Planning and Response Meeting
(NAM/CAR/CONT/3)**

Mexico City, Mexico 9 to 11 May 2023

Agenda Item 4: Evaluation of Impact and Response of Contingencies Faced in 2022

REVIEW OF CONTINGENCIES OCCURRED IN THE CAR REGION IN 2022

(Presented by the Secretariat)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	
This Working Paper presents a summary and review of the contingencies related to Air Traffic Services (ATS) occurred in the CAR Region in 2022, with a brief analysis for lessons learned.	
Action:	Suggested actions are included in Section 6
<i>Strategic Objectives:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strategic Objective 1 – Safety• Strategic Objective 2 – Air Navigation Capacity and Efficiency
<i>References:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Annex 11 – <i>Air Traffic Services</i>• Final Report of the Second Regional Contingency and Emergency Planning and Response Meeting (NAM/CAR/CONT/2) Mexico City, Mexico, 20 to 22 April 2022• CAR Region ATM Contingency Plan

1. Introduction

1.1 The work of evaluating and monitoring the regional response to contingencies is a fundamental part of the process of improving regional resilience.

1.2 Transparency and openness to promote a more robust safety culture must be part of the commitment of all those involved in the aviation system.

1.3 Systematic analysis of the events, objective evaluation of the response and commitment to resilience, are key elements encouraged by highly reliable organizations.

2. Background

2.1 Since 2019, the ICAO NACC Regional Office has been promoting the annual review of contingency events that occur in the CAR Region, aiming to improve the resilience of the Region's aviation system.

2.2 This review is based on information available to the CAR Contingency and Emergency Response Coordination Team (CAR CERT) and other information submitted to the ICAO NACC Regional Office.

2.3 Additionally, the tabletop exercises carried out by the NAM/CAR Regional Contingency and Emergency Planning and Response Meeting takes as a reference the information available on the events that occurred in the period for this analysis.

3. Analysis

3.1 The nature of the contingencies faced in the CAR Region during 2022 was the same as previous years. The number of air operations in the CAR Region has had a good recovery after the reduction due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

3.2 Unfortunately, some States restrict the information they share about contingencies experienced on their systems, which limits the opportunity to analyse the effectiveness of the established controls and find systemic solutions.

3.3 Hurricanes and tropical storms

3.3.1 Hurricanes and tropical storms continue to be one of the main threats to the civil aviation system in our Region. Its direct impact, as well as its associated disturbances, can cause significant damage in the Region.

3.3.2 Most of the events follow their traditional form of evolution, beginning their formation near the eastern Caribbean islands. However, some events started as weather disturbances that become more active in the southern part of the central Caribbean or on the coasts of Central America.

3.4 Social demonstration and civil unrest

3.4.1 Social demonstrations and protests continue to be a matter to be taken into consideration by the CAR Region due to their tendency to affect not only local airport operations but also the continuity of operations in the upper airspace, since they put the facilities for ANS provision in a difficult situation, since they restrict the access and change of shift of key personnel as well as the resources to maintain these facilities.

3.5 Air Traffic Control (ATC) industrial actions

3.5.1 Industrial actions by ATC personnel continue to occur in our region, either openly or through actions to reduce service capacity and continuity. The causes of these actions are sometimes related to changes or measures that are taken outside our Region, which are considered to affect the social conditions of air traffic control personnel.

3.6 Communications Navigation and Surveillance (CNS) systems failures

3.6.1 The sustainable provision of air traffic control has become increasingly dependent on CNS support systems. The provision of services in the conventional way is simply impossible in many cases, without the flow of traffic being completely stopped or seriously affected at minimum levels.

3.6.2 The interruption of the regional telecommunications network, as well as the outages or lack of reliability in ATS surveillance systems are the failures that most affect the continuity of operations. Failures in flight plan processing systems also continue to affect services in our Region.

4. Lessons learned

4.1 The periodic update and review of contingency procedures must continue to be a priority for ATS in the Region. The rehearsal and inclusion of contingency plans as part of the recurring training of ATC personnel must be assumed as a regional standard to ensure an effective response to contingencies.

4.2 Social events and changes in the working conditions of the States must continue to be closely monitored.

4.3 One aspect to be taken into consideration is the degradation of the airspace classification in contingency situations. Coordination with the ATS service providers of adjacent airspaces can help to maintain better levels of service, as well as the application of contingency routes for arrivals and departures.

4.4 Due to the importance that CNS systems have on the sustainability of air navigation services, service providers must continue working to reduce the possibility of failure of these systems and improve recovery times.

5. Conclusions

5.1 The requirements and conditions for the provision of air traffic services have evolved significantly in that period. The Region should focus on improving the resilience of the air navigation system, working to raise awareness on the importance of a positive safety culture and strengthening its internal controls.

5.2 The guidelines for contingency planning for the CAR Region were established almost 20 years ago. The revision of these regional guidelines should be the next priority.

6. Suggested actions

6.1 The Meeting is invited to:

- a) take note of the information provided in this Working Paper, evaluate and give recommendations to enhance contingency preparedness in the CAR Region;
- b) present to the NACC/WG the analysis of the different contingencies occurred and provide recommendations to improve the resiliency of the ANS system of the Region; and
- c) make any additional recommendation deemed necessary.

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