



**FPL MONITORING GROUP**  
**Minutes of Teleconference/18**  
**(2 August 2016 1800 UTC)**

**References:**

- 1 None

**Purpose and agenda:**

Statement of purpose:

- 1 Discussion of a unified procedure for flight plan processing in the NAM/CAR region

**Participants:**

1. Curaçao: Natasha Leonora-Belefanti
2. Mexico: Margarita Rangel, Oscar Vargas, Daniel Castañeda
3. Dominican Republic: Fernando Casso (rapporteur)
4. Trinidad and Tobago: Ricky Bissessar
5. United States: Dan Eaves
6. IATA: Marco Vidal
7. ICAO: Julio Siu, Raúl Martínez

**Discussions:**

*Discussion of unified procedure*

1. The rapporteur started out the meeting presenting the current flight plan processing cases:
  - 1.1 Operator originates the flight plan to involved FIRs
  - 1.2 Operator submits flight plan to ATS unit of departure and from there it is originated to involved FIRs
    - 1.2.1 In Paper
    - 1.2.2 Electronically
  - 1.3 Both methods at the same time
2. United States pointed out that goal is to have one and only one flight plan. Everyone should use that same flight plan, and that controllers get the right information without having to worry about flight plans.
3. Curacao mentioned item 4.4.2.1.2 of Document 4444, which indicates that "...a flight plan submitted prior to departure should be submitted to the air traffic services reporting office at the departure aerodrome...", and mentioned that the term "should" should be changed to a "shall". Curaçao added that the document does not say how, but each ATS Reporting Office has its working methods. If another unit does the work it should comply with the way AROs accomplish the task.
4. The rapporteur mentioned that many countries are implementing a system which generates rejection messages when there are errors in flight plans, and that it is important that there be a filter before the data goes to the controller. IATA mentioned that most ATC systems do the checking for flight plan compliance, and added that there should be no need to use a manual process if there is already an automated process, in which the term "manual" means looking at each flight plan at a time. To this Curaçao pointed out that there are other errors, for example pertaining to routes, that are not always detected by automation. Automation is trusted, but there are issues in the content that must be tended by the corresponding personnel. IATA added that most problems are not in the system but are human errors, and that is the importance of correcting the data at least on the airline side. Curaçao indicated that each automation system is different, and it depends on the structure of the FIR.
5. The rapporteur mentioned that airlines should have their own plan for implementing ASBUs, and mentioned that in past



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meetings the airlines did not have a plan for changing to AMHS. It is important that airlines also evolve their systems in line with ASBUs and the evolution of aviation technology. IATA mentioned that some airlines will be able to, some (the small ones) won't. Any strategy should allow those that are technologically more capable to obtain benefits from the changes, as is with PNB.

6. United States indicated that Document 4444 does not give context on the acceptance of flight plans. We know what can go in but not what can't. There is, however, guidance in item 4.4.3, and systems should try to adhere to that. There should be one flight plan and any changes should be through modifications of this first flight plan. Currently different versions of a same flight plan exist, and flight plans with errors are being rejected, but no action taken.
7. Trinidad and Tobago pointed out that airlines are not cancelling the original flight plans where there are changes, and requested that this practice be encouraged. IATA proposed that there be a minimum performance level for flight plan processing in the case of airlines (taking into account total errors, use of cancels or another metric). Those airlines that can reach this minimum could be trusted to send flight plans themselves. Those that are not can go through the manual procedure. This will challenge airlines to be better, to commit less errors. IATA also mentioned that not all airlines have the same technology, so this will be a factor in determining who can or cannot send the flight plans themselves.
8. The rapporteur asked what would be the specific benefit of airlines sending flight plans themselves, and IATA answered with the example of a case of a flight plan from Colombia, in which the ATS unit transmitted the flight plan with a different WTC, and sustained that the practice of airlines originating the flight plan is a safety and legal measure, in the sense that if a flight is delayed or any other thing happens to the flight because of the flight plan, it would be the airlines sole responsibility.
9. The United States asked if the following statement is true: that the operator should file a correct flight plan to the departure ANSP, and any changes beyond those such as altitude, time at a point, or departure SID (ATC changes) should be from that operator. Changes such as equipment, capabilities, normal route, etc should be from the operator sending the flight plan. To this the meeting agreed.
10. Curaçao mentioned that in item 4.4.3, paragraph d) of Document 4444, ATS units shall "indicate acceptance of a flight plan or change thereto, to the originator", so originators should be getting feedback if there are errors. Regarding this point, IATA commented that some ATS systems are capable of doing this and others are not. Curaçao indicated that this is a problem of oversight, as the document requires this. Trinidad and Tobago added that if a reply is sent to the operators regarding an error in flight plans, 99% of the time there is no response. IATA pointed this out as a deficiency that we can agree on how to improve and that most small airlines don't receive feedback. Curaçao added that user meetings and education can help improve this issue.
11. Finally there was a proposal for a unified method of flight plan processing to be used throughout the region: Airlines to use one of three methods : submission via flight plan form, submission electronically to departure aerodrome or origination to all FIRs. The method used by an airline would depend on a predetermined level of errors established as a threshold for each method.
12. The rapporteur will send the proposal and any comments to it will be accepted for one week after.

*Other Matters*

13. No other matters were discussed.

**Review of Previous Action Items**

<b>ACT No.</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Comments</b>
01/17	Members to submit to the rapporteur the total number	Valid	Ongoing



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ACT No.	Description	Status	Comments
	of flight plans processed during the last data collection, if available		
02/17	FIRs to record samples of duplicate flight plans during the next data collection in September	Valid	To be done on data collection in September
03/17	Members to participate in teleconference to draft a recommendation to ICAO for a regional procedure for flight plan filing.	Valid	Complete
04/17	Rapporteur, with assistance from IATA, to send to members references to ICAO documentation pertaining to flight plan processing, to serve as input for the teleconference referred to in Act 03/17	Valid	Complete

**Summary of Action Items from this Meeting**

ACT No.	Description	Status	Comments
01/18	Rapporteur to send the proposal for unified flight plan processing procedure to group for comments	Valid	

**Next meeting: TBD**