



Agenda Item 6: Analysis of environmental protection and sustainable development of air transport

a) Role of civil aviation in natural disasters

**REGIONAL CONTINGENCY PLAN IN CASE OF NATURAL DISASTERS AND/OR
CATASTROPHIC EVENTS**

(Presented by the Secretariat)

SUMMARY	
<p>This working paper analyses the current situation in the South American Region with respect to the role of international civil aviation <i>vis-à-vis</i> natural disasters and/or catastrophic events, and invites the Meeting to study the advisability of developing a Regional Contingency Plan to address these events with a view to minimising their impact and restoring air navigation and airport services as soon as possible.</p>	
References: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Annex 11 to the ICAO Convention;- Annex 12 to the ICAO Convention;- GREPECAS/13 and GREPECAS/14 meetings;- ICAO Doc 9854; and- ICAO Circular 330	
ICAO strategic objectives:	<i>A – Safety</i> <i>C – Environmental protection and sustainable development of air transport</i>

1. Introduction

1.1 Attachment C to Annex 11 to the ICAO Convention contains material on preparatory measures related to contingency planning. These measures include the recommendation of analysing the likelihood and possible consequences of natural disasters, as well as the drafting of special contingency plans with respect to natural disasters, amongst other events, to ensure continued safety of air navigation, in view of the possibility of affecting the availability of airspaces for civil aircraft operations or the supply of air navigation services and support services.

1.2 Annex 12 to the ICAO Convention, in its Chapter 3 on Cooperation, recommends contracting States to coordinate their search and rescue activities with neighbouring States and other appropriate maritime and aeronautical organisations, subject to the conditions established by their own authorities, to enable an immediate entry into its territory of rescue units whenever necessary.

1.3 Likewise, Doc 9854 – *Global air traffic management operational concept*, establishes in its ruling principles that, in order to maintain continuity, the application of the concept requires contingency measures in order to provide maximum service continuity in face of major interruptions, natural disasters, riots, security threats and other unusual circumstances.

1.4 Circular 330–AN/189 – *Civil/military cooperation in air traffic management*, stipulates that, in situations of crisis with little or no lead time, such as earthquakes, hurricanes, and conflicts, it will be necessary to increase coordination between civil and military authorities in order to permit continued management of civil traffic in the most appropriate manner while facilitating military aircraft operations. Civil/military coordination can be enhanced if contingency plans include requirements that respond to these types of crisis.

2. Discussion

2.1 Upon analysing the recent natural disasters occurred in Chile, Haiti, China, and Japan, as well as the recent volcanic eruption in Chile that affected air navigation in Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay, and Paraguay, it is clear that civil aviation is subject to extreme tension and huge economic losses in this type of events.

2.2 Aviation is vital for the transport of goods and passengers, and is even of more critical importance during emergencies, when it may be more affected by additional operational and logistic deficiencies when recovering the injured and transporting supplies to the area affected by a natural disaster and/or catastrophe in a State, as well as in the recovery and early restoration of services to international aviation.

2.3 Delays in the evacuation of the injured can exponentially increase their probability of death, which implies that operational efficiency in these events is critical for minimising the negative impact of such events.

2.4 At present, there are early alerts for some undesired natural events; however, there are some events that unleash unexpected natural disasters with catastrophic consequences for the communities, for which current technology cannot provide early warning, and the only way of minimising their impact is for the sector to develop, at regional and State level, an operational and logistic plan to address these events with a high rate of efficiency.

2.5 In this sense, SAR activities, the assurance of the minimum infrastructure for timely arrival of humanitarian assistance to the site of the event, available systems for prompt and reliable coordination, and operational coordination of all air navigation and airport areas are critical, especially the existence of appropriate contingency plans to minimise the impact of the disaster.

Contingency Plans in the SAM Region

2.6 It should be noted that the ATS contingency plan model approved through GREPECAS Conclusion 13/68, contains many of the elements that can be used for initial coordination of natural disasters. Likewise, based on GREPECAS Conclusion 14/50, ICAO NACC and SAM Regional Offices maintain a catalogue of ATS contingency plans of all the FIRs in the CAR/SAM Regions.

2.7 However, within the aeronautical sector, during a catastrophic event, multiple specialised areas, such as AIM/AGA/ATM/CNS/MET/SAR must work in a harmonious and coordinated manner with each other and with other areas of a State, exceeding the ATS environment for which such plans were initially conceived. Even at national level, there may be much coordination between states and with neighbouring States or international aid organisations.

2.8 In this regard, it might be appropriate and timely to recognise the need for the South American Region to have a broader Regional Contingency Plan to face this type of events, and that contemplates the early restoration of services at airports and the affected air navigation areas.

3. Suggested action

3.1 The Meeting is invited to review this working paper and, if deemed appropriate, approve the following draft conclusion:

Conclusion RAAC/12-X Regional contingency plan in case of natural disasters and/or catastrophic events

That ICAO, in cooperation and coordination with the States of the South American Region, develop a Regional Contingency Plan to address natural disasters and/or catastrophic events, with a view to minimising the impact on civil aviation and restore the operation of air navigation and airport services as soon as possible.

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