



INTERNATIONAL CIVIL AVIATION ORGANISATION
AFI PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION REGIONAL GROUP (APIRG)
AFI OPMET MANAGEMENT TASK FORCE FOURTH MEETING (AFI OPMET MTF/4)
(Pretoria, South Africa, 10 to 11 September 2012)

- Agenda Item 4: Review of regional guidance material on OPMET exchange**
b) Review of the AFI Meteorological Bulletin Exchange (AMBEX) Handbook

IMPLEMENTATION OF SPECIAL AIR REPORTS

(Presented by South Africa)

SUMMARY

The paper discusses the requirements for implementation of Special Air Report by States and highlights some challenges encountered in the dissemination of this data type.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The exchange of special air reports remains a challenge despite the existence of related provisions in ICAO Annex 3, *Meteorological Service for International Air navigation*, and guidance material in *Manual on Coordination between Air Traffic Services, Aeronautical Information Services and Aeronautical Meteorological Services (Doc 9377)*, and procedures in AFI SIGMET guide.

2. DISCUSSION

2.1 The meeting may recall that the requirements for relaying of Special Air Reports by Air Traffic Service (ATS) units is defined in ICAO Annex 3, paragraph 5.8 as well as Doc 9377, paragraph 4.2.12. Further, the AFI SIGMET Guide provides the procedures in this regard under paragraph 2.1.2.

2.2 The responsibilities for Meteorological Watch Offices (MWOs) are also clearly defined and this is with regards to the distribution of Special Air Reports to associated Regional OPMET Data banks (RODBs) as well as World Area Forecast Centers (WAFCs). The later is contained in ICAO Annex 3, paragraph 3.1. Additional guidance material on the exchange requirements of Special Air Reports is also provided in Manual of Aeronautical Meteorological Practice (Doc 8896), paragraph 7.7.

2.3 In light of the above, the meeting may agree that sufficient guidance material exist which if applied will improve the availability of this data type at RODBs and to users. The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) has raised concern about the lack of compliance by States to the requirements for dissemination of Special Air Report. The concern was also raised for discussion during recent Meteorological Warning Study Group (METWSG/4) and Satellite Distribution Operations Group (SADISOPSG/17), resulting in agreed action 4/8 and conclusion 17/15 being formulated respectively. This has been reproduced here below for the convenient of the meeting.

“Agreed Action 4/8: Implementation of air reports

That the Secretary draws the attention of the ICAO Regional Offices to the implementation of air reports and to the correct use of WMO headers for the dissemination of air reports so that appropriate action may be taken.”

“Conclusion 17/15 Inventory of WMO AHLs used by States to promulgate special air-reports

That the Secretariat:

- a) consult with all States on the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) abbreviated header lines (AHL) used to promulgate special air-reports; and
- b) prepare a report (in the form of an inventory) on the results thereof, in time for the SADISOPSG/18 Meeting”

2.4 South Africa appreciates and supports all efforts taken by ICAO to try and address the challenges relating to the dissemination of Special Air Reports by States. Further, South Africa believes that lack of understanding, by the ATS units, of the importance of this data type to the safety of air navigation is also a contributing factor. It would also appear that the ATS unit’s personnel are not aware of their responsibilities as stipulated in various documentation referred to in paragraph 1.1 and 2.1 above.

2.5 Moreover, the lack of implementation by MWOs particularly in the AFI Region, of the mechanisms developed for Special Air Reports is also a contributing factor. The Special Air Reports collection centers seems to be non functional or they are not aware of their responsibilities. This calls for action to be taken to engage the AFI AMBEX Focal points to take steps in order to address the lack of this data type in the databanks and other platforms.

Recommendation 4/xx: Implementation of Special air reports

That ICAO reminds:

- a) **States of their responsibilities regarding the dissemination of Special Air Reports and implementation of related existing mechanisms.**
- b) **the ATS units in different States of their responsibilities for obtaining (from Pilots) and dissemination of Special Air Reports to their associated MWOs and,**
- c) **those States who are not complying of the need to do so or file a difference with ICAO.**

3. ACTION BY THE MEETING

3.1 The AFI OPMET MTF is invited to take the following action:

- a) note the information presented in this paper.
- b) decide on the recommendation and decisions proposed for the group’s consideration.
