



International Civil Aviation Organization  
Western and Central African Office

**First Meeting of the AFI SAR Services Integration Task Force  
(ASSI TF/1) (Dakar, Senegal, 19-20 September 2011)**

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**Agenda Item 4: Review of SAR guidelines**

(Presented by the Secretariat)

**SUMMARY**

This paper recalls the guidelines for the implementation of SAR services in the AFI Region, and invites attention to relevant ICAO Assembly Resolutions, Air Navigation Plan (ANP) provisions, Regional Air Navigation and APIRG Recommendations, Conclusions/Decisions relating to SAR implementation..

Action by the meeting is at **paragraph 3**.

**REFERENCES:**

ICAO Doc 7300  
ICAO Annexe 12  
IMSAR Doc 9731  
AFI ANP Doc 7474  
Report of the 37th Assembly Session  
AFI RAN Meetings Reports  
APIRG Meetings Reports

This Working Paper is related to Strategic Objectives: **A**

**1. INTRODUCTION**

1.1 States' obligations with regard to SAR are rooted, specifically, in Article 25 of the Chicago Convention which states that:

*Each contracting State undertakes to provide such measures of assistance to aircraft in distress in its territory as it may find practicable, and to permit, subject to control by its own authorities, the owners of the aircraft or authorities of the State in which the aircraft is registered to provide such measures of assistance as may be necessitated by the circumstances. Each contracting State, when undertaking search for missing aircraft, will collaborate in coordinated measures which may be recommended from time to time pursuant to this Convention.*

## 2. DISCUSSION

2.1 The Standards and Recommended practices applicable to the provision of SAR services are contained in Annex 12 to the Chicago Convention. The attention of the meeting is drawn to Chapter 3 thereof which deals specially with the necessary cooperation and coordination in this field.

2.2 The International Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue Manual (IMSAR Manual Doc 9731) provides guidelines for a common aviation and maritime approach to organizing and providing SAR services that could assist States in developing or improving their SAR services, and meeting their obligations contracted on the international level. Volume 1 of Doc 9731 shows helpful provisions with regard to co-operation in the SAR field and SAR agreements.

2.3 In order to support and facilitate States in discharging their responsibilities under Article 25 of the Convention, the Assembly has developed the “ *Consolidated statement of continuing ICAO policies and associated practices related specifically to air navigation*”, which is reviewed and updated as necessary at every Assembly Session. In this regard Appendix N of the Assembly Resolution 37-15 on *Provision of Search and Rescue Services* addresses various elements that are pertinent to SAR implementation (see **Appendix A** to this paper)

2.4 In support of the provisions of Annex 12, the basic principles, operational requirements and planning criteria regarding search and rescue services, have been developed for the AFI Region and are indicated in Part VII of the Basic Air Navigation Plan (ANP) (Doc 7474). The AFI ANP FASID Table SAR1 specifies the minimum units and facilities necessary for the provision of SAR operations in the AFI region.

2.5 Some of the provisions in the ANP are the outcome of Regional Air Navigation (RAN) meetings. The AFI Planning and Implementation Regional Group (APIRG) provides also guidance through its Conclusions and Decisions aimed at fostering implementation in the field of SAR:

## 3. ACTION BY THE MEETING

3.1 The meeting is invited to:

- a) note the information in this working paper;
- b) call upon States to ensure that their SAR services are provided in accordance with international standards and recommended practices, contained in guidelines recalled in this paper.

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**APPENDIX A**  
**Appendix N to Assembly resolution A37-15**  
**Provision of search and rescue services**

*Whereas* in accordance with Article 25 of the Convention each Contracting State undertakes to provide such measures of assistance to aircraft in distress in its territory as it may find practicable and to collaborate in coordinated measures which may be recommended from time to time pursuant to the Convention;

*Whereas* Annex 12 to the Convention contains specifications relating to the establishment and provision of search and rescue services within the territories of Contracting States as well as within areas over the high seas;

*Whereas* Annex 12 to the Convention specifies that those portions of the high seas where search and rescue services will be provided shall be determined on the basis of regional air navigation agreements, which are agreements approved by the Council usually on the advice of regional air navigation meetings;

*Whereas* Annex 12 to the Convention recommends that search and rescue regions should, insofar as practicable, be coincident with corresponding flight information regions and, with respect to those areas over the high seas, maritime search and rescue regions;

*Whereas* Article 69 of the Convention specifies that, if the Council is of the opinion that the air navigation services of a Contracting State are not reasonably adequate for the safe operation of international air services, present or contemplated, the Council shall consult with the State directly concerned, and other States affected, with a view to finding means by which the situation may be remedied, and may make recommendations for that purpose; and

*Whereas* the air navigation services referred to in Article 69 of the Convention include, inter alia, search and rescue services;

*The Assembly resolves that:*

1. search and rescue regions, whether over States' territories or, in accordance with regional air navigation agreement, over an area greater than a State's sovereign airspace or over the high seas, shall be delimited on the basis of technical and operational considerations, including the desirability of coincident flight information regions, search and rescue regions, and, with respect to areas over the high seas, maritime search and rescue regions, with the aim of ensuring safety, and optimizing efficiency with the least overall cost;
2. States shall ensure the closest practicable cooperation between maritime and aeronautical search and rescue services where they serve the same area and, where practical, establish joint rescue coordination centres to coordinate aeronautical and maritime search and rescue operations;
3. if any search and rescue regions need to extend over the territories of two or more States, or parts thereof, agreement thereon should be negotiated between the States concerned;
4. the providing State in implementing search and rescue services over the territory of the delegating State shall do so in accordance with the requirements of the delegating State, which shall establish and maintain in operation such facilities and services for the use of the providing State as are mutually agreed to be necessary;

5. any delegation of responsibility by one State to another or any assignment of responsibility over the high seas shall be limited to technical and operational functions pertaining to the provision of search and rescue services in the area concerned;

6. remedies to any inadequacies in the provision of efficient search and rescue services, including over the high seas, should be sought through negotiations with States which may be able to give operational or financial assistance in search and rescue operations, with a view to concluding agreements to that effect;

and, *furthermore, declares* that:

7. any Contracting State which delegates to another State the responsibility for providing search and rescue services within its territory does so without derogation of its sovereignty; and

8. the approval by Council of regional air navigation agreements relating to the provision by a State of search and rescue services within areas over the high seas does not imply recognition of sovereignty of that State over the area concerned.

### **Associated practices**

1. Contracting States should, in cooperation with other States and the Organization, seek the most efficient delineation of search and rescue regions and consider, as necessary, pooling available resources or establishing jointly a single search and rescue organization to be responsible for the provision of search and rescue services within areas extending over the territories of two or more States or over the high seas.

2. The Council should encourage States whose air coverage of the search and rescue regions for which they are responsible cannot be ensured because of a lack of adequate facilities, to request assistance from other States to remedy the situation and to negotiate agreements with appropriate States regarding the assistance to be provided during search and rescue operations.