MET PANEL (METP)
MET OPERATIONS GROUP (MOG)
VOLCANIC ASH (VA)

SECOND MEETING

Buenos Aires, Argentina, 27 to 28 April 2016

Agenda Item Various

Observations / Comments on METP MOG VA Documents

As attendance at the meeting was not possible, some comments on the Documents presented

(Presented by IFALPA)

1. DISCUSSION

1.1 VAAC Reports

It is welcomed that communication between VAAC Anchorage and VAAC Tokyo has been markedly improved. VAAC Washington has been very active, providing and using backup support to other VAAC. VAAC Montreal has acquired and is using a new modelling tool to help with ash tracking and forecasting. The plans and activities of VAAC Buenos Aires to enhance operations are highly welcome and appreciated.

1.2 SN 05 Implementing Operational Risk Severity Indicators

The ORSI code seems to duplicate information already present in the VAA, which already describes the ash-cloud in 3-d, plus development over time. Thus, the airspace and airports affected are clear. The use of the (new) confidence values (high or low) in flight operations is not clear: Should a high distance be kept from a high or a low confidence ash cloud ? Overall, the ORSI concept needs further study .

1.3 SN 06 Common Website

The recent eruption of Mt. Pavlov showed that from a users´ point of view, it would be beneficial to see ash that is stretching across two or potentially three VAACs on one page in order to understand the whole situation easier and better. This would be but one reason to have such a website.

1.4 SN 07 Aviation Colour Code

The problem of different use or assignment of different meanings to a colour of the colour code could be observed during the Etna as well as the Pavlov eruptions. It is proposed that one set of meanings be agreed upon, related to the volcanic activity , which is consistently used.

1.5 SN 09 Extension of the VAAC Tokyo Area of Responsibility

IFALPA welcomes the closure of a significant gap in the geographic coverage of VAACs by VAAC Tokyo.

1.6 SN 10 Resuspended ash

The introduction of the natural phenomenon ´resuspended ash´ into ICAO Annex 3 is welcomed.

1.7 SN 02 IATA No Ash

The introduction of ´No Ash´ reports is not in agreement with scientific evidence which shows that pilots may be unable to see even significant amounts of volcanic ash. See the study *On the Visibility of Airborne Volcanic Ash and Mineral Dust from the Pilot's Perspective in Flight*" (Weinzierl et al., 2012, Physics and Chemistry of the Earth, v. 45-46, p. 87-102, http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.pce.2012.04.003), quoted in IAVWOPSG/7-WP/17. Reference is also made to the 2014 Kelut ash encounter.
For these reasons, ´No Ash´ reports cannot be supported. It may be possible to report ´no ash visible´ or ´no visible ash seen´, but that would require training and standardisation in ash cloud recognition for pilots.

1.8 SN 15 Efficacy of post-encounter reporting arrangements

Continuing improvement of knowledge about effects of ash encounters is vital to safe operations. Therefore, improved and comprehensive reporting of damage or excessive operational difficulties / early replacements of parts should be reported, including details of encounters, if available.

1.9 SN 16 Map projections

The effects of using a very limited number of coordinates on different map projections is noted. This information should be promulgated and map-projection / number of points should be specified so as to enable sufficiently accurate depiction of ash clouds as per Model VAG and Model SVA.

2. CONCLUSION

As can be seen from the above, a great number of topics are of interest to IFALPA. It would have been welcomed to find information about the progress in the introduction of t + 24 hr ash, as well as the operational effect of the Pavlov eruption on air traffic.

ACTION BY THE METP-WG/MOG

2.1 The METP-WG/MOG is invited to:

a) note the information contained in this Study Note.

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