



ICAO

International Civil Aviation Organization

Eighth Meeting of the ICAO Asia/Pacific Search and Rescue Working Group (APSAR/WG/8)

Bangkok, Thailand, 22 – 25 May 2023

Agenda Item 4: Asia/Pacific and inter-regional SAR planning, coordination and cooperation

OUTCOMES OF THE NINTH PACIFIC SEARCH AND RESCUE (PACSAR) WORKSHOP

(Presented by Australia)

SUMMARY

This paper presents the outcomes of the Ninth Pacific Search and Rescue (PACSAR) Workshop which was held from 27th February to 3rd March 2023.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Ninth (9th) Pacific Regional Search and Rescue (PACSAR) Workshop was held in Cairns, Australia from 28th February to 3rd March 2023. This was the first time this workshop was held in person since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. The search and rescue (SAR) workshop was held concurrently with the Third (3rd) Pacific Women in Maritime Association (PacWIMA) conference.

1.2 Both events were hosted by the Government of Australia, through the Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA), and jointly organized by the Government of Australia, the Pacific Community (SPC) and the PACSAR Steering Committee (PACSAR SC), with financial support by the Government of Australia, the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and Government of New Zealand.

1.3 The PACSAR Workshop is a biennial event which aims to build Search and Rescue (SAR) coordination and capabilities across the Pacific region. It provides an opportunity for Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PICTs) to discuss their progress and updates on the four Strategic Pillars of an effective SAR system, namely, SAR Governance, Coordination, Response and Prevention. It also provides an opportunity for Pacific SAR neighbours to build and strengthen collaborative relationships, discuss existing and emerging issues, and share experiences and best practices in SAR. The theme for this workshop was “Reconnecting Search and Rescue across the Pacific.”

1.4 Although PACSAR is sponsored as part of the IMO’s Integrated Technical Cooperation Program and was established with a focus on improvements to implementation of maritime SAR Convention requirements in the Pacific, it has evolved to include discussion on the jointly important ICAO Annex 12 aeronautical SAR requirements.

1.5 The SAR workshop was attended by representatives from Australia, Cook Islands, Fiji, French Polynesia, Kiribati, Republic of Marshall Islands, Nauru, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Niue, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu, United States of America (USA), Vanuatu, the IMO, Pacific Community, University of Queensland and World Maritime University.

1.6 The PacWIMA conference provided opportunities for collaboration and connection in relation to the International Maritime Organization's (IMO's) gender equity goals with a specific focus on developing opportunities for participation by women from the Pacific region in the maritime industry and increase awareness of the role of women in SAR operations.

2. DISCUSSION

Workshop overview

2.1 The workshop provided interactive discussions between participants led by presentations provided on SAR governance matters including international SAR conventions, PACSAR Strategic Plan, Pacific Maritime SAR Technical Arrangement for Cooperation and National SAR Council arrangements.

2.2 Each State presented an update on their individual status against the four pillars of the PACSAR Strategic Plan. These updates included things each State is doing well and things that could be done more effectively.

2.3 JRCCs Australia, Honolulu and New Zealand, and RCC Fiji/ARSC Nadi presented four real SAR case studies sharing what went well and what could have been done more effectively for each case. These formed the basis for interactive discussions and reflections on how these relate to experiences of delegates in terms of planning, coordinating, and responding to SAR incidents.

2.4 Presentations were also provided by SAR industry subject matter experts including aircraft SAR unit, police, volunteer coast guard, cruise industry and telemedical assistance service.

ICAO Asia/Pacific SAR Plan, APSAR/WG and Autonomous Distress Tracking (ADT)

2.5 A [joint presentation by Australia and the USA](#) emphasised the importance of joint aeronautical and maritime SAR efforts. This presentation included an overview of the ICAO Asia/Pacific SAR Plan, annual self-assessments using the ICAO Regional SAR plan monitoring and reporting form, use of the National Self-Assessment questionnaire (IAMSAR Manual, Volume I, Appendix H) and encouraged Pacific Island States to participate in ICAO and IMO SAR forums including the APSAR/WG. A brief overview was provided about the ICAO Global Aeronautical Distress and Safety System (GADSS) to emphasise the need for Pacific Island States to be prepared for the introduction of ADT.

Workshop Outcomes and Further Information

2.6 Workshop presentations, State SAR status reports, SAR case studies and the workshop outcomes report are available on the [Ninth Pacific Regional Search and Rescue Workshop 2023 webpage](#). This webpage also provides links to the:

- *Maritime search and rescue technical arrangement for cooperation among Pacific Island countries and territories that support international lifesaving in the Pacific Ocean (2014)*, and
- *The Pacific Search and Rescue Steering Committee Strategic Plan*.

3. ACTION BY THE MEETING

- 3.1 The meeting is invited to:
- a) note the information contained in this paper; and
 - b) discuss any relevant matters as appropriate.

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