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International Civil Aviation Organization

**Twelfth Meeting of the South China Sea Traffic Flow Review Group (SCSTFRG/12)**

Bangkok Thailand, 11 – 12 November 2024

**Agenda Item 6: Decisions/Recommendations to SAIOSEACG**

**REVIEW THE SOUTH CHINA SEA OPERATIONAL CONCEPT**

(Presented by Secretariat)

**SUMMARY**

This paper outlines the South China Sea Operational Concept for discussion and revision by the SCSTFRG.

**a) INTRODUCTION**

1.1 To enhance safety and harmonise Air Traffic Management (ATM) procedures in accordance with the Seamless ATM Plan and take advantage of the communications and surveillance capabilities in the SCS. The *South China Sea Operational Concept* was developed by SEACG/23 and agreed upon by ATM/SG/4, then subsequently adopted by APANPIRG (APANPIRG/27, Bangkok, Thailand, 5 - 8 September 2016).

1.2 The *South China Sea Operational Concept* is appended as Attachment A to this paper.

**b) DISCUSSION**

Review and Revision needed

2.1 According to the initial plan, the *South China Sea Operational Concept* should have been implemented in 2017; eight years have passed, and SCSTFRG continues to consolidate efforts and consensus towards its goal.

2.2 The Fourteenth Air Navigation Conference (AN-CONF/14) was held at Montreal, Canada, from 26 August to 06 September 2024. The Conference provided detailed technical discussions that led to agreement on a set of high-level recommendations in the field of air navigation and safety. Following the AN-CONF/14, SCSTFRG/12 is an appropriate time for this original concept to be revised and updated to align with the current stage of global development and the latest version of the Asia/Pacific Seamless ANS Plan (Version 4.0).

**ACTION BY THE MEETING**

3.1 The meeting is invited to:

- a) note the information contained in this paper; and
- b) give suggestions for the revision of the *South China Sea Operational Concept*.

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## **South China Sea Operational Concept**

Expected Implementation: 09 November 2017

Communication:

- VHF, either direct or using a shared facility (therefore States are encouraged to provide shared transceivers where they are required)\*

Navigation: using the Seamless ATM Plan's expectations:

- RNAV 2/ RNP 2 – near parallel or parallel routes spaced 20NM apart for the major traffic routes to increase capacity where required (note: this is a procedural separation, and is not the determinant of the ATC separation, which is based on ATS surveillance);
- implementation of extra RNAV 2/ RNP 2 routes where required which are not necessarily based on existing routes; and
- the new routing structure to be based on the most direct routes possible, using key entry/exit waypoints to/from the South China Sea, or SID/STAR waypoints.

Surveillance: using the Seamless ATM Plan's expectations:

- coverage by ADS-B and SSR\*;
- ADS-B data to be shared wherever this data is required.

ATM: using the Seamless ATM Plan's expectations:

- operationalization of 5-10NM ATC separation;
- 10-20 NM separation at Transfer of Control Points (TOC);
- removal of the Flight Level Allocation Scheme (FLAS);
- ATFM measures such as Miles-in-Trail or Minutes-in-Trail to be applied where required for tactical capacity/demand balancing; and
- an update of ATC LOAs and contingency plans as required.

*\*ICAO encourages states to share surveillance and communications capabilities wherever possible, and in instances where necessary, establish new capabilities to plug the gaps in surveillance and VHF communications within the South China Sea. It is suggested that 09 November 2017 be set as preliminary target for full surveillance and communications within the South China Sea area.*