



International Civil Aviation Organization

**Thirteenth Meeting of the APANPIRG
ATS/AIS/SAR Sub-group (ATS/AIS/SAR/SG/13)**

Bangkok, Thailand, 23-27 June 2003

Agenda Item 9: Any other business

**TRANSFER OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR SEARCH AND RESCUE SERVICES WITHIN THE
UNITED STATES**

(Presented by the United States)

SUMMARY

This information paper affirms that there will be no change in U.S. search and rescue services and that the U.S. Coast Guard will continue to be the U.S. focal point for international civil search and rescue services.

1. Background

1.1 The U.S. Coast Guard, as part of the Department of Transportation, oversaw the U.S. responsibility for international civil search and rescue (SAR) services in the maritime environment and international oceanic airspace. In March 2003, the U.S. Coast Guard and its responsibility for international civil SAR were transferred to the Department of Homeland Security.

2.0 Discussion

2.1 The global SAR system is established under the *Convention on International Civil Aviation, Annex 12 - Search and Rescue* and the *International Convention on Maritime Search and Rescue*. In March 2003, the U.S. Coast Guard was transferred from the Department of Transportation to the Department of Homeland Security. The U.S. law that directed this transfer noted that SAR is a traditional Coast Guard mission and stated that SAR functions and capabilities to perform it “shall be maintained intact.” When security and safety measures do not prevent an incident, SAR response must be available. The U.S. Coast Guard will continue to be the U.S. focal point for international civil search and rescue services.

3.0 Recommendation

3.1 The meeting is invited to note the above information.

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