



International Civil Aviation Organization

**The Special Coordination Meeting for the Bay of Bengal area (SCM/BOB)
and The Sixteenth Meeting of the Bay of Bengal ATS Coordination Group
(BBACG/16)**

Bangkok, Thailand, 31 January – 4 February 2005

Agenda Item 3: Review current operations across the Bay of Bengal and identify problem areas

**PROPOSED INTERNATIONAL UPPER AIRSPACE MANAGEMENT
IN THE BAY OF BENGAL**

(Presented by Thailand)

SUMMARY

This working paper presents information for consideration to improve air traffic management for the Bay of Bengal airspace. The forecast traffic growth in this area and the implementation of data link services (ADS/CPDLC) could result in the present airspace arrangements and air traffic management structure being reviewed for the Bay of Bengal area.

Action to be taken by the meeting is in paragraph 3.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The meeting would recall that an ICAO Special Implementation Project (SIP) focusing on improvements to ATS and Communications in the Bay of Bengal area was carried out in November/December 2004.

1.2 The SIP team visited all ACCs responsible for their areas of the Bay of Bengal except Indonesia, which has airspace in the lower portion of the Bay of Bengal. Several recommendations were made in an effort to enhance CNS/ATM services within each States' designated airspace as well as to foster coordination and a good working relationship between neighboring FIRs.

1.3 The SIP recommendation pertinent to all States visited was the concept of a revised upper airspace management process over international waters of the Bay of Bengal taking into consideration the expected traffic growth in this area and the proposed ability to use new CNS/ATM solutions and other measures to cater for this increase. This recommendation is as follows:

**UPPER AIRSPACE MANAGEMENT OVER THE INTERNATIONAL
AIRSPACE OF THE BAY OF BENGAL**

That, taking into account the forecast increase of international flight operations over the Bay of Bengal, concerned States are requested to support an initiative to investigate a process whereby a mechanism is established to look at all issues regarding this important area and develop procedures to safely, efficiently and

expeditiously manage future aircraft operations in the upper airspace over the international waters of the Bay of Bengal.

1.4 Further, the meeting should note that, in an extract from the Report of the 35th Session of the ICAO Assembly held in Montreal, Canada from 28 September to 8 October, the Assembly under **Appendix X, The provision of air traffic services** stated:

Whereas cooperative efforts between Contracting States could lead to more efficient air traffic management;

The Assembly resolves that:

1. in implementing air traffic services, States shall ensure that the services being provided meet established requirements for safety, regularity and efficiency of international civil aviation;

2. taking into account the need for cost-effective introduction and operation of CNS/ATM systems, States give consideration to cooperative efforts for introducing more efficient airspace management, in particular, the upper airspace; and

3. States should ensure that safety management programmes are introduced by the relevant air traffic services provider in all airspaces and at all aerodromes where air traffic services are provided.

Associated practice

Contracting States should consider as necessary establishing jointly a single air traffic services authority to be responsible for the provision of air traffic services within ATS airspace extending over the territories of two or more States or over the high seas.

2. DISCUSSION

2.1 The meeting is invited to note that the present IATA forecast on traffic growth in the Asia/Pacific region has been calculated as 6% p.a. for the next 15 years. This effectively means that air traffic will double in the next 13 years based on these estimates. However, over the past 12 months, this 6% figure has been significantly exceeded in many States within the Bay of Bengal area. With the influx of low-cost airlines now coming into the market place as well as many airlines indicating that fleet size will increase substantially over the next few years, it could be expected that the doubling of traffic in this area would be much earlier than previously forecast. With this increase in traffic, the present air traffic management structure in the Bay of Bengal may not be able to efficiently cater for this increase.

2.2 A major issue affecting the present system of operations is the number of FIRs (8), which are involved in the control and management of traffic in the upper airspace across the Bay of Bengal. This situation has seen little change over the past five decades and results in excessive reporting by aircraft coupled with the extensive coordination over relatively short distances or periods of time between ACCs responsible for each FIR. Under the current ATM arrangements, optimum utilization and efficiency is posing difficulties to manage the peak traffic flows. Under the current ATM arrangements maximum optimization and efficiency of airspace utilization is difficult to achieve; thus, adversely affecting the peak westbound traffic flows across the Bay of Bengal area.

2.3 The meeting is invited to consider a possible solution to improve upon this situation in line with the Assembly Resolution above. In this regard, States are invited to consider this matter

with a view to improve the airspace and air traffic management in the Bay of Bengal to streamline the provision of air traffic service management over this area.

2.4 The introduction of data link services, ADS and CPDLC with the capability of providing surveillance and communications over the whole of the Bay of Bengal would significantly enhance overall air space management capabilities and operations. To maximize the benefits of data link services, it is strongly urged that States consider the optimum airspace arrangements and management to support data link services and the forecast increase in traffic.

2.5 The meeting is also advised that in any restructuring of airspace and air traffic management it is not intended that there would be any changes to FIRs in this area.

3. ACTION BY THE MEETING

3.1 The meeting is invited to:

- a) note the Assembly resolution;
- b) note the forecast significant increase in traffic for the Bay of Bengal area;
- c) consider the recommendation put forward in the Report of the Special Implementation Project (SIP) on improvements to ATS and Communications in the Bay of Bengal area (see para 1.3 above), and
- d) review the present ATM practice and airspace structure for the Bay of Bengal area and to progress the matter through the ATM/AIS/SAR/SG/15 meeting.

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