



International Civil Aviation Organization

Search and Rescue (SAR) Meeting for the North American, Caribbean and South American Regions (SAR/NAM/CAR/SAM)

(Puntarenas, Costa Rica, 18 to 22 May 2009)

SAR/NAM/CAR/SAM WP/07

12/03/09

- Agenda Item 1: Global and Regional Overview of SAR Services**
1.2 ICAO Guidelines for SAR Service including COSPAS-SARSAT System
- Agenda Item 3: Cooperation Agreements for SAR Service and COSPAS-SARSAT**

SARSAT TRAINING SPONSORED BY UNITED NATIONS AND UNITED STATES

(Presented by Dominican Republic)

SUMMARY

This working paper presents the SARSAT training sponsored by United Nations and United States.

REFERENCES

- Annex 6 - Operation of Aircraft
- Annex 11 - Air Traffic Control Service/ Flight Information Service

1. Background

1.1 United Nations and United States provided SARSAT training from 19 to 23 January 2009, in Miami Beach, Florida, USA, aimed at improving international usage of the search and rescue satellite system. The main objective was to promote greater awareness and usage of COSPAS-SARSAT and to establish a formal and reliable database protocol between user countries for better understanding and coordination of search and rescue (SAR) activities among Americas organizations.

1.2 A crucial aspect was the need for States to convince themselves to switch from 121.5 Mhz ELT to 406 Mhz ELT in accordance with ICAO provisions.

1.3 The **Appendix** presents information on the event.

2 Suggested action

2.1 The Meeting is invited to urge States that have not yet done so, to implement databases for the use of ELT on 406 Mhz and of COSPAS-SARSAT systems.

APPENDIX

United Nations/United States of America Training Course on Satellite-Aided Search and Rescue

**19-23 January 2009
Miami Beach, Florida, United States of America**

1. Background

Search and Rescue (SAR), utilising state-of-the-art space technology services, is receiving worldwide attention. Most of the space-faring nations have included this as one of their important space programme elements. The Cospas-Sarsat International Satellite System for Search and Rescue provides distress alert and location information for maritime, aviation and land users, and supports the search and rescue objectives of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and the International Maritime Organization (IMO). The system is available to any country on a non-discriminatory basis and is free of charge for the end-user in distress.

The Cospas-Sarsat system comprises:

- i. a space segment operating in low-Earth orbit (LEO) and geostationary orbit (GEO);**
- ii. a ground segment consisting of satellite receiving stations, known as local user terminals (LUT), and data distribution centres, known as mission control centres (MCC); and**
- iii. emergency beacons operating at 121.5 MHz and 406 MHz, the characteristics of which comply with appropriate provisions of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and Cospas-Sarsat specifications.**

Approximately 600,000 406 MHz emergency beacons are currently in use worldwide.

As a humanitarian search and rescue programme, Cospas-Sarsat has been in place for over 25 years. It has been providing critical assistance in terms of real time or near real-time information support that helped in rescuing more than 24,000 persons in over 6,700 distress situations. Countries or organizations may participate in the management and the operation of the system through their association with the Cospas-Sarsat programme. There are now 40 countries and organizations formally associated with the Cospas-Sarsat programme, including the four parties to the international Cospas-Sarsat programme agreement (Canada, France, Russian Federation and the USA), which provide and operate the space segment of the system.

As member of ICAO and the IMO as well as party to the relevant International Conventions, the United States of America recognizes the great importance of saving lives and the need to be directly involved in rendering aeronautical and maritime search and rescue service to person in distress. The United States is also aware of its obligations in terms of these Conventions hence the Government involvement in the provision of these services.

The United States also acknowledges that SAR is humanitarian in nature and accepts its moral obligation to assist craft and person in distress in terms of established international practice founded in international law. International law requires of signatory states to establish SAR systems on a multi-agency, regional or global basis to provide SAR services. The United States has, over the years, developed her own national SAR system that is being associated with other countries' SAR system through bilateral agreements.

2. Objectives and results

The primary objectives of the Training Course were to promote an awareness of the International Cospas-Sarsat Satellite-Aided Search and Rescue Programme and to establish a formal interface with the user States for better understanding and coordination of the programme activities and operations within the above regions.

3. Programme of the Training Course

The programme of the Training Course will include, but not be limited to, the following topics:

- System Concept
- International Maritime Organization and International Civil Aviation Organization Regulations
- Beacon Specifications
- Beacon coding and registration policies and procedures
- Data distribution procedures
- Understanding the Cospas-Sarsat distress alert formats
- Guidelines for developing national regulatory policies
- System testing and exercising
- Phase-out plan for 121.5/243 MHz beacons
- Ship security alert systems
- Future system developments including MEOSAR
- Alternative satellite alerting systems
- Cospas-Sarsat as part of the search and rescue system.

4. Participation

Profile of participants was of managerial or decision making-responsibility at national institutions with programmes and activities in areas related to navigational security, Search And Rescue and, in particular, the use of the Cospas-Sarsat system