



**SPECIAL AFRICA-INDIAN OCEAN (AFI)
REGIONAL AIR NAVIGATION (RAN) MEETING**

Durban, South Africa, 24 to 29 November 2008

Agenda Item 6: Development of a set of comprehensive work programmes in the air navigation field, aimed at improving efficiency of the air navigation system (Efficiency Committee)

**REPORT ON THE 2007 CONSULTATIVE CONFERENCE ON THE
INTEGRATION OF AERONAUTICAL AND MARITIME SEARCH AND RESCUE
SERVICES IN THE SOUTHERN AFRICA REGION**

(Presented by South Africa)

SUMMARY

This paper provides information on the outcome or decisions of the Consultative Conference on the integration of aeronautical and maritime search and rescue services in the Southern Africa Region held from 26-29 October 2009 in Port Elizabeth, South Africa.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Consultative Conference on the integration of SAR services in the Southern Africa region was held from 22-26 October 2007 in Port Elizabeth, South Africa. The conference was held under the theme “Southern Africa goes all out towards the integration of aeronautical and maritime search and rescue services”.

1.2 The Conference elicited active participation from the majority (8) of the States within the region with about 4 States tendering apologies for not being able to attend and requesting that documents pertaining to the conference be forwarded to them. The International Maritime Organization (IMO) and the African Civil Aviation Committee (AFCAC) were also represented at the meeting. The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and the SADC Secretariat tendered their apologies.

1.3 The primary objective of the Conference was to consult with SAR experts from the region with a view to facilitate full integration of SAR services within the region in line with the Saly Portudal Declaration, the 2000 Florence Conference on SAR and GMDSS Resolutions and the SADC Protocol.

1.4 An international conference held under the auspices of ICAO and AFCAC in Saly Portudal, Senegal, in October 2004, developed a Declaration that stated inter alia as its primary conclusion, that:

“Optimal organization, management and regulation of SAR services has a profound and positive effect on the cost and the efficiency of SAR service provision and that in particular, the extent of required resources can be reduced if the following principles are applied:

- b) signing and updating domestic and international SAR agreements
- f) establishing sub-regional SAR provision
- g) establishing joint aviation/maritime operational centres, possibly multi-functional”.

1.5 The 2000 Florence Conference on SAR and GMDSS adopted a resolution on arrangements for regional co-ordination of maritime SAR services in Africa and invited all African coastal States bordering the Atlantic and Indian Oceans to agree to the establishment of subregional RCCs. The conference proposed that territories bordering these two oceans be divided into five sub-regional areas serviced by RCCs located at Morocco, Liberia, Kenya and South Africa. The national MRCC in Cape Town was commissioned as the regional MRCC on 16 January 2007.

1.6 The SADC Protocol on Transport, Communications and Meteorology is the blueprint for co-operation among SADC member countries in the areas of transport, communications and meteorology. Chapter 8, article 8.5(1) provides that SADC members shall;

“apply international standards and recommended practices of the IMO and to participate as a region in the formulation of new standards and practices in respect of

- c) search and rescue.”

With specific reference to search and rescue, SADC member States have through Article 8.5(4) undertaken to:

“take steps necessary to develop their search and rescue capacity on a regional basis by inter alia:

- b) the investigation of options to develop a regional search and rescue organization with participation by all member states including consideration of available search and rescue capacity and capability, funding requirements and legal, operational and organizational requirements.”

2. DISCUSSIONS

SAR Documentation

2.1 On 30 July to 08 August 2007, South Africa hosted and participated in the work of the ICAO/AFCAC Working Group established to compile comprehensive guideline material, which could assist African States in carrying out SAR services more effectively and efficiently. The Working Group consisted of SAR experts from all over Africa. These basic SAR documents could be used by SAR authorities within the region and the continent in the establishment of their national or regional SAR services or systems. The adoption and implementation of these standard documents would lead to and contribute towards common approaches and procedures to SAR challenges and operations, standardization and effective and efficient prosecution of SAR incidents/accidents nationally and within the region. This workshop was followed by a conference on SAR documentation, which was held in St Dennis, La Reunion where the draft documents referred to above

were adopted. The documents reviewed included SAR Agreements, Bills, RCC Operational Handbook, and SAR Exercise Manual. To create awareness of the existence of and ensure usage of these documents, the PE Consultative Conference resolved as follows:

“1. That the following documents which are considered critical for the establishment and conduct of SAR services be domesticated and implemented by 31 December 2009. The documents are as follows:

- 1.1 The SAR Bill.
- 1.2 SAR Operational Manual.
- 1.3 SAREX Manual.”

Ratification of relevant International Conventions

2.2 The conference discussed the status of ratification of Conventions and noted that SADC States continue to make significant progress in terms of ratifying international Conventions. Some key Conventions were prioritized for ratification and to this end the Conference resolved that:

“2. That the countries in the sub-region accelerate the process of acceding, ratifying the following conventions by 31 December 2009:

- 2.1 The International Convention on Search and Rescue (SAR 79).
- 2.2 United Nations Law of the Sea.
- 2.3 SOLAS 1979.
- 2.4 Chicago Convention.
- 2.5 Intervention Convention 1969.
- 2.6 SADC Protocol.”

SAR Points of Contacts (SPOCs)

2.3 The issue of non-responding Rescue Co-ordination Centres and SAR Points of Contact, particularly in our continent, is a matter of grave concern to the international SAR community. This challenge, has after several audits and investigations conducted by both ICAO and the IMO, been attributed to lack of SAR facilities or structures, lack of funding, training etc. The Conference, after acknowledging and agreeing that this challenge needs to be confronted or addressed, decided as follows;

“3. That countries in the sub-region establish and enhance structures on SAR services for the benefit of the region, by the end of 2008 and provide details about their SPOCS to other countries.”

SAR Funding

2.4 The Saly Portudal Declaration provides that States should explore all possible sources of funds for SAR activities, including navigation charges. In pursuance of this recommendation, the Conference considered, discussed and listed other possible sources of funding and to this end resolved as follows:

“4. That States in the sub-region explore the use of one or a combination of the possible sources of funding for SAR operations identified:-

- 4.1 Government funding.
- 4.2 Air navigation charges.
- 4.3 Fuel levy.
- 4.4 Donor agencies / Development partners.

- 4.5 Voluntary services.
- 4.6 Light dues.
- 4.7 Shipping levies.
- 4.8 Levies on ship surveys.”

Basic SAR Training

2.5 Some delegates at the conference identified lack of training as a major impediment towards the establishment of robust and effective SAR services. The provision of skeletal SAR services as well as non-existence of SAR services in certain areas was also attributed to lack of funds and basic SAR training. The conference therefore analyzed the training requirements for the region and came up with some basic training needs that could at least assist in the establishment of basic SAR services in areas where they are non-existent within the region. In order to address these training needs, the conference adopted the following resolution:

“5. That it be noted that the following training needs were identified as a priority:-

- 5.1 SAR Mission Coordinators and SAR Administrators training.
- 5.2 Basic SAR training should be included in the Air and Maritime Crew as well as Air and Maritime Traffic Controllers trainings.

6. That South Africa approach ICAO/IMO/AFCAC for possible assistance in the identified basic SAR training.”

Regional Cooperation

2.6 Regional co-operation is critical to the efficient and effective provision of SAR services. Through it, duplication of efforts and facilities can be eradicated, services provision can be more uniform across large areas and most importantly, services can be provided even near and within States with limited resources. A regional approach therefore ensures greater cost-effectiveness and relieves the unnecessary sense of obligation otherwise imposing on some States unable to provide a State-wide service. The delegates at this conference embraced this concept and encouraged by the recent conclusion of a multilateral agreement on the co-ordination of maritime SAR services within the sub-region, resolved as follows in this regard:

“7. That South Africa coordinate the process of concluding a multilateral agreement on aeronautical SAR services between states in the sub-region.

8. That the agreement referred to above be in place by 31 December 2009 and a progress report on the process be made by 31 December 2008.

9. That delegates inform and obtain mandates from their Governments to negotiate and conclude the multilateral agreement referred to in 7 supra.

12. That countries party to the existing Multilateral Agreement on the co-ordination of maritime SAR services expedite the establishment of a co-ordination committee as required by the Agreement.”

National Joint Rescue Co-ordination Centre

2.7 The pros and cons of establishing a national Joint Rescue Co-ordination Centre was discussed at length during Working Group’s meetings as well as plenary at the Conference. The conference was receptive of the idea but the delegates acknowledged that the concept could be cost-

effective in certain countries and where it would not be feasible, relevant countries are at liberty pursue separate Rescue Co-ordination Centres. The following resolution was consequently adopted:

“7. That it be noted that the establishment of joint rescue coordination centre would be feasible and viable in some countries.”

Establishment of RCC peer review mechanisms

2.8 The possibility of establishing a RCC peer review mechanism that would support the continuous improvement of SAR services was explored. This could be achieved on a bilateral or multilateral basis. To this end, the conference resolved;

“7. That States in the sub-region support the establishment of RCC peer review mechanisms that could be established on a bilateral / multilateral basis that would support continuous improvement of SAR services.”

Voluntary services

2.9 The critical role that volunteer services could play in support of SAR services was penned out at the conference. Using South Africa as a case study, their role was clarified and emphasized in the form of presentations by existing volunteer organizations that are members of the South African Search and Rescue Organization. The delegates were urged to explore this cost-saving method through the following resolutions:

“13. That South Africa assists countries in the region to identify/establish volunteer groups to support SAR services, where necessary.

14 That States and business in the sub-region consider funding volunteer groups supporting and enhancing SAR services.”

3. CONCLUSION

3.1 As it may have been realized, the above resolutions were informed mainly by the provisions of the Saly Portudal Declaration and the 2000 Florence Conference on SAR and GMDSS Resolutions which, the conference sought to advance and implement. The meeting is therefore invited to take note of the resolutions and take action as it deems appropriate.

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