



**WORKING PAPER**

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

**Durban, South Africa, 24 to 29 November 2008**

**Agenda Item 3: Overview of the *Comprehensive Regional Implementation Plan for Aviation Safety in Africa*, the Global Air Navigation Plan (GANP) and the Global Aviation Safety Plan (GASP) (General Committee)**

**PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION REGIONAL GROUPS (PIRGs)**

(Presented by South Africa)

**SUMMARY**

The current regional planning process requires a full review of the current planning and implementation regional groups (PIRGs), as mandated by the Council, taking into account their names, composition, terms of reference, expanded scope and reporting structure. To achieve this, it is proposed that ICAO establish a multidisciplinary working group to advance, within a specified time-frame, a proposal on the restructuring of the regional planning process with a shift in focus to aviation safety and implementation and support in the regions. The expansion of the membership of PIRGs will require additional support in the regional offices.

Action by the meeting is at paragraph 4.

**1. INTRODUCTION**

1.1 Planning and implementation regional groups (PIRGs) were established by the Council, in response to regional air navigation (RAN) meeting recommendations, to ensure the continuous and coherent development of the regional air navigation plan (ANP) and to monitor and foster its implementation.

1.2 There are currently six planning and implementation regional groups: North Atlantic Special Planning Group (NAT SPG), European Air Navigation Planning Group (EANPG), Africa-Indian Ocean Planning and Implementation Regional Group (APIRG), Caribbean (CAR) South American (SAM) Regional Planning and Implementation Group (GREPECAS), Middle East Air Navigation Planning and Implementation Regional Group (MIDANPIRG), and ASIA/PAC Air Navigation Planning and Implementation Regional Group (APANPIRG).

## 2. DISCUSSION

### 2.1 Names of groups

2.1.1 Even though the different PIRGs function in the same way, there is a discrepancy in the way ICAO refers to the groups. For example, the NAT SPG is a *special planning group* and the EANPG is an *air navigation planning group*, without a reference to implementation and regional aspects, whereas the other planning groups are referred to as *planning and implementation regional groups*, highlighting implementation and the regional aspects.

2.1.2 It should be noted that, in terms of the *Convention on International Civil Aviation, signed at Chicago on 7 December 1944 and amended by the ICAO Assembly (Doc 7300)*, implementation is the responsibility of individual contracting States. PIRGs can therefore not be directly responsible for implementation. In light of this, it is proposed that the planning groups be named in a consistent manner which reflects general aviation planning, not limited to air navigation planning matters.

### 2.2 Current structure of the planning and implementation regional groups

2.2.1 The work programme of PIRGs is based on reviewing and maintaining the regional air navigation plans and the identification of related deficiencies. This is achieved through meetings once a year for groups such as the EANPG and NAT SPG. However, in the case of APIRG, with arguably the highest level of deficiencies identified, meetings are held every second year. With the implementation of reduced vertical separation minimum (RVSM) in the AFI Region scheduled for 25 September 2008, this may indicate that the air navigation plan for the region has reached maturity and, therefore, a meeting is convened only every two years. However, the aviation safety record and list of identified deficiencies may indicate otherwise.

2.2.2 Planning and implementation regional groups establish sub-groups and task forces as required. These groups then undertake the technical work required and report to the main body. With an interval of two years, this creates a backlog or cases where, by the time it reaches the main body, the issue was superseded by events. Feedback and advice from the Air Navigation Commission (ANC) and/or Council is also only reviewed by the group after two years.

2.2.3 It is also noted that the Global Air Navigation Plan (GANP), with its initiatives and associated interactive planning tools, serves as a strategic document providing the planning methodology that will lead to global harmonization. To this end, the Assembly instructed (A36-13 j)) that the structure and format of regional plans be aligned with the Global Air Navigation Plan. The Assembly also urged the Council to monitor the implementation of regional, sub-regional and national plans on the basis of the GANP. However, the current regional air navigation plan for the AFI Region is not aligned and no mechanism exists to specifically monitor implementation of the GANP. This could be considered under the application of a continuous monitoring approach: to assess, on an ongoing basis, States' compliance with their oversight obligations as resolved by the Assembly (A36-4).

2.2.4 It is important to note that, in general, PIRGs address only air navigation matters related to the ICAO efficiency objective. With the exception of the European and North Atlantic Regions, both of which have monitoring functions in place and mechanisms for the exchange of safety-related data and follow-up on safety-related incidents, there is currently no mechanism in the regions to address any aviation safety, operational issues, airworthiness training or accident and incident prevention considerations, which seem to be of a higher priority in line with the Strategic Objectives, and are highlighted by the *Comprehensive Regional Implementation Plan for Aviation Safety in Africa*. As the primary objective of the Organization continues to be to improve the safety of

international civil aviation worldwide, the focus of ICAO's work in Africa must be aviation safety as the highest priority. It is important to note that security is not addressed in the regional planning context to ensure harmonization at the regional level.

## **2.3 Global aviation safety plan (GASP)**

2.3.1 The Global Safety Aviation Roadmap is the backbone of the Global Aviation Safety Plan. It was developed by the Industry Safety Strategy Group (ISSG), in collaboration with ICAO, to address aviation safety through a process that would best prioritize safety initiatives and ensure their proper coordination throughout the world.

2.3.2 The primary objective of the GASP is to provide a common frame of reference for all stakeholders, including States, regulators, airline operators, airports, aircraft manufacturers, pilot associations, safety organizations and air traffic service providers. The Assembly (A36-7 a)) urged States to, inter alia, share appropriate safety-related information amongst States and all other stakeholders, including the public. At this time, no regional platform exists for this purpose and no monitoring of implementation of the GASP is undertaken.

2.3.3 The Assembly (36-13 u)) resolved that States cooperate with regard to the investigation of major aircraft accidents or accidents in which the investigation requires highly specialised experts and facilities. However, no current mechanism or platform currently exists in the Africa-Indian Ocean (AFI) Region to address this important issue. There are also currently no accident and incident prevention experts in the regional offices accredited to States in Africa.

2.3.4 The Assembly (A36-23) also placed a very high importance on performance-based navigation (PBN) and, amongst other items, resolved that States and PIRGs complete PBN implementation plans. However, APIRG is not geared for this and the regional offices in Africa does not have the necessary PBN expertise to assist States to reap the benefits identified by the Assembly. The transfer of expertise from Headquarters to the regional offices to support implementation will be addressed in a separate paper.

2.3.5 In a related development, the Assembly urged States to support one another's efforts to reduce the risk of introducing, through civil air transportation, potentially invasive alien species to areas outside their natural range and to ensure the implementation of provisions related to the health of passengers and crews. To this end, the Assembly (A35-12) requested the Council to establish suitable institutional arrangements to coordinate efforts by States and other members of the international civil aviation community. A regional platform is required to discuss and coordinate efforts in this regard.

## **2.4 Aviation security**

2.4.1 Previously, the Air Navigation Commission agreed that security matters require a different type of expertise as currently available in PIRGs; however, with the exception of within the EUR/NAT Regions, security matters are not currently addressed at the regional level. It may be time to revisit this issue as it seems that there is a lack of coordination and sharing of related security issues.

## **2.5 Environmental protection**

2.5.1 ICAO's activities in the environment field are primarily focused on those problems that benefit most from a common coordinated approach, on a worldwide basis, namely aircraft noise and the impact of aircraft engine emissions. To this end, the Assembly requested States to work closely together to ensure harmonization of programmes, plans and policies. However, this is not

currently addressed to its fullest in Africa as no regional platform exists for States to share common interests.

2.5.2 PIRGs also identify deficiencies in the regions. However, the identified deficiencies are noted by the Commission, but there are no follow-up actions taken by the Universal Safety Oversight Audit Programme (USOAP), the Technical Co-operation Bureau or by the Implementation Support and Development Section at ICAO Headquarters to specifically address the deficiencies. The value of these lists is therefore lost.

2.5.3 A review of the APIRG/16 list of participants indicates that air navigation service providers play a major role in the current regional air navigation planning system, whereas participation at the State level was limited due to the establishment of autonomous authorities. This also creates the situation where a State may be represented by a service provider as well as by the Department responsible for civil aviation. From a practical point of view, this arrangement is a cause for concern, as the two entities with different responsibilities — oversight versus business implementation — may not always agree and it is not clear who represents the State.

2.5.4 To this end, it may necessary to develop a mechanism whereby a State, clearly identify to the Secretary of the PIRG, who has been authorised to voice the State's official position, including the acceptance of subsequent responsibilities and obligations. It is proposed that the ANC take this issue into consideration during their current review of the regional planning process.

2.5.5 It was previously suggested that meetings of Directors General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) be used to serve as planning meetings. However, DGCA meetings may not be in a position to address regional planning, as the DGCA are overall responsible for implementation but are not directly in charge of the autonomous authorities, and therefore cannot commit to certain technical obligations required during a PIRG meeting.

2.5.6 It should be noted that the procedural handbooks and administrative procedures for the PIRGs are not consistent. For example, APIRG elects a Chairman at each meeting, whereas the EANPG elects a Chairman to continue indefinitely to ensure consistency. A rotating chairmanship might be good for political reasons in one region to ensure that no State dominates the developments, but a different need may exist in other regions. The handbooks should be aligned to accommodate the different needs.

2.5.7 Although PIRGs are dealing with implementation matters, there is no follow up or measuring tool, other than an audit, to measure actual implementation in States. With the creation of the Comprehensive Regional Implementation Plan for Aviation Safety in Africa, it will be necessary to measure implementation against a benchmark. It seems that an implementation mechanism to assist States with implementation and support is missing in the regional context.

## **2.6 PIRG review process**

2.6.1 As mentioned earlier, PIRGs establish subgroups to address specific technical issues. During a PIRG meeting, work is then referred to the subgroup for review. The sub-group formulates conclusions and decisions, which are then endorsed by the PIRG. This action indicates regional agreement. The PIRG meeting itself consists of high-level decision-makers in the regions; the subgroups consist mainly of technical experts, nominated by States.

2.6.2 A recent review of PIRG reports has indicated that a different format is used by each of the groups. To obtain a global picture of implementation, a consistent format may provide better opportunities to identify future implementation activities or lack of implementation.

2.6.3 After a PIRG meeting, the ANC reviews the PIRG report and provides feedback to the PIRG. However, it seems that the Air Navigation Commission, consisting of technical experts, provides technical advice and support after the meeting and the value added to the work of the PIRG could be further enhanced with ANC participation earlier in the planning process. In everyday terms, it translates to the engineers reviewing building plans after construction. It may be more efficient for the Commission to consider and provide advice on technical matters before they are approved at the PIRG level.

2.6.4 It should be recalled that all the planning and implementation regional groups were established by the Council. However, the current practice is to only report to the Council on PIRG activities that require specific Council action. It is proposed that the Secretary of the PIRG, usually the senior ICAO Regional Director, with expert multidisciplinary knowledge of the region and responsible for all regional activities, present the outcome of the PIRG meeting to the ANC and Council. This would create an opportunity for the ANC and Council to interact directly with the Secretary of the PIRG.

2.6.5 It is important to note that not all outcomes of PIRG meetings are reviewed by the ANC and/or Council. The NAT SPG report is not reviewed in detail by the ANC Working Group on Regional Plans. Each of the PIRG reports should be reviewed in a similar way.

2.6.6 It is important to note that the majority of PIRGs meet within the regional office in the area of accreditation successfully, as all the facilities and Secretariat are available on-site. However, in some cases, meetings are convened in host States. This may create logistical difficulties for some States and international organizations to attend. It is proposed that the ANC consider the various options and decide on a standard approach for venues.

2.6.7 In a related development, the membership of PIRGs has been extended. To this end, the membership of APIRG has more than doubled, and additional resources will be required in the regional offices to accommodate the growth in membership. Once additional fields are added to the work programme of PIRGs, it will be necessary to add expertise to drive and serve the various working groups of PIRGs in the regions. It is proposed that the work of the ANC related to the restructuring of PIRGs be included in the scope of the Council group that reviews the Regional Programme to ensure that the correct resource requirements are identified to be included in the next triennium budget.

## **2.7 All Planning and Implementation Regional Group (ALLPIRG) coordination**

2.7.1 The Council also established the All Planning and Implementation Regional Group, where the Secretaries and Chairmen of the individual PIRGs meet and discuss issues at hand. However, this structure did not add additional value to the work of PIRGs and met infrequently. It is proposed that the concept of a global coordination group to harmonize the work of all the multidisciplinary groups be addressed to ensure coordination.

## **2.8 Terms of reference of PIRGs**

2.8.1 The terms of reference of PIRGs were reviewed in 2002 and again in 2007, with minor changes and no definite conclusion. However, after the latest proposal, the Council requested the Commission to again revisit the terms of reference of PIRGs and to start with a clean slate. This is therefore the ideal opportunity to review the regional planning needs of the Contracting States, taking the latest aviation developments into consideration, and expand the scope from the current efficiency objective and include Safety and other multidisciplinary issues, as identified in the *Comprehensive Regional Implementation Plan for Aviation Safety in Africa*.

2.8.2 In light of the above, and given the complexity of the regional aviation planning process and the need to include additional elements, it is proposed that the Commission establish a multidisciplinary working group to address the future of the regional aviation planning process, to address the ICAO Strategic Objectives related to Safety, Security, Efficiency and the Environment, with high emphasis on Aviation Safety.

2.8.3 It should be recalled that the Assembly resolved to strengthen the degree of autonomy given to the regional planning process and the associated authority and resources given to ICAO's regional offices.

### 3. SUMMARY

3.1 The current regional planning process requires a full review, as mandated by the Council, taking into account the names, composition, terms of reference, expanded scope and reporting structure of the current planning and implementation regional groups. To achieve this, it is proposed that ICAO establish a multidisciplinary working group, with the most senior PIRG Secretary as team leader, to advance, within a specified time-frame, a proposal on the restructuring of the regional planning process with a shift in focus to aviation safety and implementation and support in the regions.

### 4. ACTION BY THE MEETING

4.1 The meeting is invited to approve the following recommendation:

#### **Recommendation 3/x – Review of the regional planning process**

That ICAO:

- a) consider the expansion, modernization and standardization of the regional aviation planning process in all regions to include Aviation Safety and Environment, taking related Assembly resolutions into account;
- b) task the Secretaries (i.e. Senior ICAO Regional Director) of the planning groups with reporting to the deliberative bodies of the Organization on a regular basis;
- c) consider the establishment of a multidisciplinary working group, with the most senior PIRG Secretary as team leader, to develop proposals for a new standardized multidisciplinary regional aviation planning mechanism, including all disciplines, to be managed and operated from the regions;
- d) note the need for additional expertise in the regional offices accredited to States in Africa, specifically with the expansion of PIRG membership; and
- e) ensure that the work related to the review of the Regional Programme take the additional tasks of PIRGs into consideration to be included in the next triennium budget.

— END —