



**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)

IDENTIFY MAJOR AIR NAVIGATION DEFICIENCIES IN THE REGION

(Presented by the International Federation of Air Line Pilots' Associations (IFALPA))

SUMMARY

For the months leading up to RVSM implementation in AFI, the RVSM Project Management Team (PMT) had weekly teleconferences (telecons) that proved to be very effective tracking and promoting the investigation/follow-up of communications problems, errors and deviations brought to its attention on a regular basis.

IFALPA has raised on several occasions in meetings and via letters that there are many safety areas of concern with the ATM/CNS infrastructure in Africa.

In light of the successful weekly telecons the PMT used during the months leading to RVSM implementation IFALPA believes that a group such as the PMT or the PMT itself could become a subgroup/task force of the Scrutiny Group or even report directly to APIRG to deal tactically with areas of opportunity identified not only for RVSM but the air navigation system as a whole in the African Region.

Action by the meeting is in paragraph 3.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The International Federation of Air Line Pilots' Associations (IFALPA) represents more than 120 thousand pilots in 100 countries. IFALPA is the global voice of pilots with one aim, "working for the highest level of air safety worldwide". IFALPA has been very active in the AFI Region, recently participating actively as a member of the reduced vertical separation minimum (RVSM) Task Force from the beginning of the proposed implementation of RVSM in Africa as well as the Project Management Team (PMT) since last June.

1.2 IFALPA has raised on several occasions in meetings and via letters that there are many safety areas of concern with the air traffic management/communications, navigation, and surveillance (ATM/CNS) infrastructure in Africa. Most recently, since 2004 during the RVSM implementation planning, concern was expressed with the inadequate communications network over

part of the region. It is recognized that there has been a significant improvement but there is still much to be done.

1.3 For the months leading up to RVSM implementation in AFI, the PMT had weekly teleconferences (telecons) that proved to be very effective tracking and promoting the investigation/follow-up of communications issues, errors and deviations brought to its attention on a regular basis. The weekly focus on deficiencies, errors and deviations had very good results including reducing the number of reported communications deficiencies.

2. DISCUSSION

2.1 In AFI as in other parts of the world an RVSM Scrutiny Group has been established to have oversight of the recent RVSM implementation. In light of the successful weekly telecons the PMT used during the months leading to RVSM implementation IFALPA believes that a group such as the PMT or the PMT itself could become a subgroup/task force of the Scrutiny Group or even report directly to the AFI Planning and Implementation Regional Group (APIRG) to deal tactically with areas of opportunity identified not only for RVSM but the air navigation system as a whole in the African Region.

2.2 The forming of a group such as suggested above was discussed thoroughly by the PMT with general consensus that it was a good idea. However, one of the possible drawbacks was the costs involved in making the long distance telephone call to ICAO Headquarters in Montreal where the PMT telecons were hosted.

2.3 The PMT experimented with very good results a web application that allowed members to see each other's screen thus allowing presentations to be made. The application used was GotoMeeting (www.gotomeeting.com). The new version of this web based application now adds voice, allowing conference bridges with local telephone numbers in Europe, Asia and North America as well as voice over internet protocol (VOIP) for less than fifty U.S. dollars a month with unlimited meeting scheduling. Like the above application there are many, IFALPA does not endorse any one in particular, however the application used by the PMT provided by IFALPA, proved to be very useful and in its new version should be even more.

2.4 Regardless of scheduled telecons the above proposed group would need to meet face to face initially and periodically as deemed appropriate in order to determine how best to track, and deal with the areas of opportunity identified as well as other administrative issues that could arise.

2.5 The areas of concern in the African Continent such as the Intertropical Convergence Zone (10 degrees North to 10 degrees South of the Equator) where the air traffic control (ATC) is at times unreliable and with less than ideal communications, the pilot has few options should he need to alter his flight planned route and flight level due to the ever changing meteorological conditions. A subgroup/task force would allow us to deal with reports of specific instances on a timely matter in order to proactively research the problem and solving it, thus improving overall safety in the AFI Region.

3. ACTION BY THE MEETING

3.1 The meeting is invited to:

- a) note the information provided in this working paper;

- b) note that IFALPA has raised the concerns over less than ideal ATM/CNS infrastructure in the AFI Region for a long time and recently since 2004 at the RVSM Task Force and PMT meetings;
- c) agree that these concerns need to be seriously considered and rectified to improve the overall safety of the air navigation system in the AFI Region in a timely manner;
- d) agree on forming a group such as PMT or transform the PMT itself into a subgroup/task force of the Scrutiny Group or even report directly to APIRG to deal tactically with areas of opportunity identified;
- e) study ways to adequately fund the group's activities if feasible; and
- f) take any other action it deems necessary.

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