



WORKING PAPER

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

Durban, South Africa, 24 to 29 November 2008

**Agenda Item 5: Development of a set of comprehensive work programmes in the safety field
(Safety Committee)**

**SMS IMPLEMENTATION AND THE NOTION OF A “JUST SAFETY CULTURE”
IN ASECNA MEMBER STATES**

(Presented by ASECNA¹)

SUMMARY

This paper presents the Safety Management System (SMS) activities carried out and planned by the Agency within the framework of the implementation of the safety management system. It introduces the notion of a “just safety culture” in ASECNA Member States.

Action by the meeting is in paragraph 3.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 In respect of ICAO Annex 11 — *Air Traffic Services* requirements and also of the general policy statement of Member States (Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Côte d’Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Guinea-Bissau, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Republic of the Congo, Senegal, Togo) regarding safety management, the Agency has begun the implementation of the safety management system in Member States.

1.2 The Agency has defined its SMS implementation strategy in a document which is currently in the process of internal validation. This document is entitled “ASECNA SMS Implementation Plan”.

1.3 The implementation of this comprehensive and pro-active approach generally aims to demonstrate that the risks involved in the provision of air traffic management (ATM) services in a given airspace fall within safety levels deemed acceptable by the dispatcher. This should contribute to reducing the role played by ATM in aircraft accidents as much as possible.

¹ Presented by Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Côte d’Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea, France, Gabon, Guinea-Bissau, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Republic of the Congo, Senegal, Togo, ASECNA Member States.

1.4 The following four elements are the components of the process by which the Agency has implemented the safety management system.

Safety Objectives and Policy

1.4.1 The two essential aspects of this component concern the general policy statement of Member States and the creation of a specific structure, the Air Navigation Safety Assessment Centre (ANSAC).

1.4.2 In July 2005, Member States adopted an SMS general policy statement. At ASECNA, an SMS work unit was created and reinforced by the appointment and training of SMS officers at the Agency's schools, representations, and operational branches in order to deal with the immense undertaking of this new approach.

Safety Risk Management

1.4.3 The important measures relating to this SMS component concern the ASECNA ACC safety studies commissioned to deal with any changes in ATM. In its implementation strategy, ASECNA, in terms of safety assurance, reaffirmed the principle of conducting safety studies and establishing safety cases for each significant change which could affect the airspace of its Member States.

1.4.4 In view of this commitment, ASECNA conducted careful safety studies and filed a safety case with the Chadian regulation authority upon radar and ADS-C activation at the N'Djamena ACC.

1.4.5 This first step was followed by the launch of safety studies and cases at other ACCs expecting the same types of changes: namely, Dakar, Niamey and Abidjan in 2007, and Brazzaville and Tana in 2008.

1.4.6 The results of such studies are presented in four kinds of documents:

- a) a functional hazard analysis establishing the pertinent safety objectives (FHA);
- b) a document assessing risk mitigation measures (PSSA);
- c) a document demonstrating the effective implementation and efficiency of these mitigation measures (SSA); and
- d) the implementation safety case to be submitted to the appropriate authority.

1.4.7 As regards daily incident management, several actions are planned, such as the establishment of a process for the treatment of safety occurrences, the extension of safety studies to all activities, and the extension of safety studies to all areas of ANS provision.

Safety Assurance

1.4.8 The management of significant ATM changes through the establishment of safety cases is a safety assurance commitment made by the Agency which must be taken into account. It justifies the actions described below.

1.4.9 The following is planned:

- a) a safety performance monitoring mechanism involving an annual statistics-based study of the development pattern of safety occurrences; and
- b) a corrective action follow-up mechanism.

SMS Promotion within the Agency

1.4.10 From 8 to 11 January 2008, a seminar was held in Cotonou with the cooperation of ICAO, the French DGCA, and ALTRAN Southwest. SMS promotion is centred on awareness-raising actions which resulted from this seminar. These actions are based on the training of ASECNA managerial staff who have received training in safety assessment methods and safety case preparation.

1.4.11 Also programmed are SMS awareness seminars for senior management, audit workshops, orientation training, continuous training and training of instructors at schools.

1.4.12 In addition, the Agency's journals are slated to include SMS information.

1.4.13 Lastly, to increase transparency and the sharing of safety information, ASECNA, like several administrations in the field, favours a "just safety culture".

1.5 The Concept of the Just Safety Culture

1.5.1 Between a punitive culture and a non-punitive culture, the notion of a just culture is today a new path for the improvement of civil aviation safety. It is a complex alternative which must be developed with the participation of all those concerned.

1.5.2 The international aviation community is painfully aware that, despite technical progress and improvements in safety management, aircraft accidents continue to cause numerous deaths.

1.5.3 In-depth study of the matter revealed that a very large number of high-risk acts (accidents or serious incidents) were the result of inadvertent errors which were not really condemnable.

1.5.4 Thus, in the 1990s, the need to establish a "non-punitive culture" arose. It did not take long for this culture, in which blame was not laid, to reveal its shortcomings in terms of impunity, laissez-aller and deterioration.

1.5.5 To prevent an industry as sensitive as civil aviation from falling into a tailspin, a middle path (the just culture) between the punitive culture and the non-punitive culture was introduced. This middle path aims to define unacceptable and, therefore, punishable behaviour. It aims to establish this definition with the cooperation of the role-players in safety, particularly, the front-line players: the pilots and air traffic controllers.

1.5.6 Within this framework, in a circular letter, ASECNA heralded this new culture to its staff. The Agency expects to spread this message extensively through the mass media or through other means which might be more suitable.

1.5.7 In the near future, ASECNA plans to organize a seminar bringing together the front-line players in order to define the difference between condemnable acts and behaviour which does not warrant punishment.

2. CONCLUSION

2.1 The Agency is aware that the implementation of safety provisions will be successful only if the States in the subregion all work together to address the issue. So that the system may bear fruit and fully repair deficiencies and reduce incidents in the AFI Region, ASECNA hereby invites the meeting to systematically implement the SMS and put the concept of a just safety culture into practice.

3. ACTION BY THE MEETING

3.1 The meeting is invited to note the state of SMS implementation in ASECNA Member States. To ensure reliable experience feedback, guaranteeing better safety management, the meeting is also invited to recommend the dissemination of the “just safety culture” concept throughout the AFI States.

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