



ICAO

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North American, Central American and Caribbean Office

WORKING PAPER

NACC/WG/SAR/TF/6 — WP/03  
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**Sixth NAM/CAR North American, Central American and Caribbean Working Group Search and Rescue Implementation Task Force (NACC/WG/SAR/TF/6)**  
Mexico City, Mexico, 28 to 30 October 2025

**Agenda Item 3: SAR Coordination Affairs**  
**3.1 Follow up to the SAR Agreements of the CAR Region**

**STATUS OF SAR AGREEMENTS IN THE NAM/CAR REGIONS:  
CHALLENGES FOR THEIR SIGNATURE AND PERIODIC UPDATING**  
(Presented by the Secretariat)

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This Working Paper provides information on the requirements of Annex 12 – *Search and Rescue* for the coordination of SAR operations, as well as an analysis of the status and challenges in signing and updating these agreements at the regional level. The Paper requests support to promote their signature, highlighting their importance in fulfilling the State's responsibilities regarding SAR coordination.

<b>Action:</b>	Suggested actions are included in Section 5.
<i>Strategic Objectives:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Safety</li><li>• Air Navigation Capacity and Efficiency</li></ul>
<i>References:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Convention on International Civil Aviation (Chicago Convention)</li><li>• Annex 12 – <i>Search and Rescue</i></li><li>• Final Report of the Fifth North American, Central American and Caribbean Working Group (NACC/WG) Search and Rescue (SAR) Implementation Task Force Meeting (NACC/WG/SAR/TF/5), Mexico City, Mexico, 23 to 27 September 2024</li><li>• Final Report of the Thirteenth North American, Central American and Caribbean Directors of Civil Aviation Meeting, (NACC/DCA/13), Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, 4-7 August 2025</li></ul>

**1. Introduction**

1.1 The Convention on International Civil Aviation (Chicago Convention) recognizes that each Contracting State has full and exclusive sovereignty over its territory. For the purposes of the Convention, the territory of a State shall be deemed to be the land areas and territorial adjacent thereto under the sovereignty, suzerainty, protection or mandate of such State.

1.2 Each Contracting State undertakes to provide such means of assistance as it deems feasible to aircraft in distress within its territory and to permit, subject to the control of its own authorities, the owners of the aircraft or the authorities of the State in which they are registered to provide such means of assistance as circumstances may require.

1.3 Each Contracting State, when undertaking a search for lost aircraft, shall cooperate in any coordinated measures that may be recommended from time to time pursuant to the Convention.

## **2. Background**

2.1 All SAR/TF meetings addressed the issue of the lack of SAR agreements. SAR/TF/5 identified the lack of coordination among SAR organizations of neighbouring States as the non-conformity most frequently evidenced by the ICAO Universal Safety Oversight Audit Programme (USOAP) in the NAM/CAR Regions.

2.2 Also at NACC/SAR/TF/5, France presented a proposal for a SAR technical agreement to formalize the delegation of SAR responsibilities between the Piarco Aeronautical rescue co-ordination centre (ARCC) and the Martinique and Guadeloupe Aeronautical Rescue Sub-Centres (ARSCs). As a result, Conclusion NACC/WG/SAR/TF/5/02, *FORMALIZATION OF SAR AGREEMENTS UNDER THE PIARCO SEARCH AND RESCUE REGION*, was approved, which calls on the Search and Rescue (SAR) authorities of Trinidad and Tobago to formalize SAR agreements with the States and Territories under the Piarco Search and Rescue Region (SRR).

2.3 Subsequently, during the Thirteenth Meeting of Directors of Civil Aviation of North America, Central America and the Caribbean (NACC/DCA/13), held in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, from 4 to 7 August 2025, France presented a Working Paper on the Search and Rescue Exercises (SAREX) 2025, requesting that the template proposed by France be used to formalize all search and rescue (SAR) delegations at the Piarco FIR.

2.4 Consequently, Conclusion NACC/DCA/13/06 *SUPPORT TO THE FORMALIZATION OF SAR RESPONSIBILITIES* was approved, which requests the formalization of SAR responsibilities and the enhancement of the proper implementation of the Global Aeronautical Distress and Safety System (GADSS) in the Caribbean (CAR) Region. This NACC/DCA Conclusion requests the NACC/WG SAR/TF to take the necessary actions to clarify the status of the CAR Region's aeronautical and maritime rescue coordination centres (RCCs) and sub-centres (RSCs) and to continue working to delimit the SRRs declared to ICAO in the CAR/SAM Regional Air Navigation Plan and to the International Maritime Organization (IMO).

## **3. Annex 12 – Search and Rescue Requirements on SAR coordination**

3.1 Delimitation of Search and Rescue Regions (SRR)

3.1.1 Annex 12, chapter 2, section 2.2, establishes that *“Contracting States shall delineate the search and rescue regions within which they will provide search and rescue services. Such regions shall not overlap and neighbouring regions shall be contiguous”*.

3.2 Establishment of rescue coordination centres and rescue subcentres

3.2.1 Annex 12, chapter 2, Section 2.3, establishes that “*Contracting States shall establish a rescue coordination centre in each search and rescue region*”.

3.3 SAR cooperation and coordination

3.3.1 Annex 12, chapter 3, section 3.1, establishes that “*Contracting States shall coordinate their search and rescue organizations with those of neighbouring States*”.

3.3.2 Additionally, establishes that “*Subject to such conditions as may be prescribed by its own authorities, a Contracting State shall permit immediate entry into its territory of search and rescue units of other States for the purpose of searching for the site of aircraft accidents and rescuing survivors of such accidents*”.

#### **4. Conclusions**

4.1 The delimitation of search and rescue regions remains a pending task for the CAR Region, particularly for those SRRs that include several States and Territories.

4.2 The signing of SAR agreements, in addition to being a requirement established in Annex 12, is an invaluable tool for SAR operations, proven to impact the effectiveness of SAR operations.

4.3 Compliance with the requirements of Annex 12 is a priority for our regions, so we must encourage the necessary collaboration from States, especially those that have assumed responsibility for implementing RCCs.

#### **5. Suggested actions**

5.1 The Meeting is invited to:

- a) take note of the information provided in this Working Paper and make recommendations to improve awareness of the importance of SAR agreements;
- b) take action to identify SAR agreements pending signature and update and present a plan to address them;
- c) address the NACC/DCA Conclusion requesting the NACC/WG/SAR/TF to take the necessary actions to clarify the status of the CAR Region's aeronautical and maritime rescue coordination centres (RCCs) and subcentres (RSCs) and continue working to define the SRRs declared to ICAO in the CAR/SAM Regional Air Navigation Plan and to the International Maritime Organization (IMO); and,
- d) make any additional recommendations deemed necessary.