



# ICAO

International Civil Aviation Organization  
North American, Central American and Caribbean Office  

---

WORKING PAPER

NACC/WG/11— WP/12  
15/09/26

## Eleventh Meeting of the North American, Central American and the Caribbean Working Group (NACC/WG/11)

Guatemala City, Guatemala, September 21-25, 2026

---

### Agenda Item 3: Presentation of the progress of the action plans of the NACC/WG Task Forces and the progress in the regional work

#### Implementation Status and Strategic Priorities for Search and Rescue Services in the NAM/CAR Regions

(Presented by the Rapporteur of the SAR Task Force)

| EXECUTIVE SUMMARY                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| This Working Paper reports on the key activities carried out by the Search and Rescue (SAR) Implementation Support Task Force since the last NACC/WG meeting. It highlights the outcomes of the NACC/WG/SAR/TF/7 meeting, including progress on Mass Rescue Operations (MRO), follow-up on regional conclusions, GADSS implementation, SAR exercises, aeronautical-maritime coordination, and strategic priorities to strengthen SAR services in the NAM/CAR Regions. |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <b>Action:</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Suggested Actions are included in Section 6.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <i>Strategic Objectives:</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Every Flight is Safe and Secure</li><li>• Aviation is Environmentally Sustainable</li><li>• Aviation Delivers Seamless, Accessible, and Reliable Mobility for All</li><li>• No Country Left Behind</li><li>• The International Civil Aviation Convention and Other Treaties, Laws and Regulations Address All Challenges</li><li>• The Economic Development of Air Transport Assures the Delivery of Economic Prosperity and Societal Well-Being for All</li></ul> |
| <i>References:</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Annex 12 – Search and Rescue</li><li>• International Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue Manual (IAMSAR) – Doc 9731</li><li>• Summary of Discussions Seventh Meeting of the Search and Rescue (SAR) Implementation Task Force of the North American, Central American and Caribbean Working Group (NACC/WG/SAR/TF/7), Mexico City, Mexico, 3–7 August 2026</li></ul>                                                                                       |

## 1. Introduction

1.1 Support for the implementation of search and rescue (SAR) services remains a priority activity for the NAM/CAR Regions and requires close coordination among aeronautical, maritime, and military authorities, civil protection agencies, and other entities responsible for emergency response.

1.2 The provision of SAR services is based on national and international cooperation to ensure an effective and timely response to aeronautical emergency situations, in accordance with the provisions of Annex 12 – Search and Rescue and the International Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue (IAMSAR) Manual.

1.3 During 2026, the SAR Task Force continued to promote initiatives aimed at strengthening the operational capabilities of States and Territories, implementing new technologies associated with the Global Aeronautical Distress and Safety System (GADSS), conducting SAR exercises (SAREX), and consolidating regional coordination mechanisms.

## **2. Background**

2.1 The NACC/WG SAR Implementation Support Task Force was established to assist States and Territories in implementing the requirements contained in ICAO Annex 12 and to promote the harmonization of SAR services within the NAM/CAR Regions. Since its inception, the Task Force has conducted regular meetings, specialized workshops, and SAR exercises aimed at strengthening regional cooperation, promoting the signing of operational agreements, and supporting technological initiatives related to locating aircraft in distress.

2.2 The Seventh Meeting of the SAR Implementation Task Force (NACC/WG/SAR/TF/7) was held at the ICAO NACC Regional Office in Mexico City, Mexico, from August 3 to 7, 2026. The meeting was preceded by a specialized workshop on Mass Rescue Operations (MRO), conducted by specialists from the United States Coast Guard (USCG).

## **3. Results of NACC/WG/SAR/TF/7**

### **3.1 Workshop on Mass Rescue Operations (MRO)**

3.1.1 As a prior activity to the meeting, a Workshop on Mass Rescue Operations was held, facilitated by USCG specialists. The workshop addressed the analysis of capacities available to respond to emergencies, the assignment of responsibilities, the delimitation of areas of responsibility and the identification of national resources and capacities available in neighboring States to facilitate mutual assistance.

3.1.2 It was highlighted that MRO requires the coordinated participation of aeronautical, maritime and military authorities, civil protection organizations and emergency services. Among the main challenges were operations in remote locations, communications limitations, the availability of support infrastructure and the need to strengthen inter-institutional coordination.

### **3.2 Monitoring of current SAR conclusions and decisions**

3.2.1 The Secretariat presented a review of the status of implementation of current SAR conclusions and decisions, identifying progress and areas that require additional attention from the States and Territories.

3.2.2 The review included the delimitation of Search and Rescue Regions (SRR), the establishment and operation of Rescue Coordination Centers (RCC), the update of the CAR Region SAR Plan, SAR exercises (SAREX) and the implementation of SAR agreements.

### 3.3 SAR operations in the territory of other States

3.3.1 The United States presented a proposal to clarify the procedures related to the entry of SAR units into the territory or territorial waters of other States, highlighting the applicable provisions of Annex 12 and the IAMSAR Manual. The meeting recognized the importance of strengthening agreements and procedures that allow expeditious authorization to mobilize international SAR resources when operational circumstances require it.

### 3.4 Efforts to reduce false ELT(DT) notifications

3.4.1 The United States presented information on the SARSAT Program's efforts to reduce false notifications associated with ELT(DT) emergency location transmitters (distress tracking) and its operational impact on RCCs and other agencies responsible for SAR response. The meeting took note of efforts to analyze data, coordinate with air operators and manufacturers, and improve information used to manage real emergencies.

### 3.5 Development of complex SAR scenarios

3.5.1 France presented a methodology to design complex SAR exercises aimed at strengthening coordination between aeronautical and maritime SAR organizations of different States.

3.5.2 A joint exercise between French and Brazilian authorities aimed at validating coordination procedures, transfer of responsibilities, exchange of information and use of international SAR resources was presented as a reference. The meeting recognized the value of establishing regional SAR exercise programs to share methodologies, scenarios and lessons learned.

### 3.6 Implementation status and strategic priorities

3.6.1 The Rapporteur presented a regional evaluation that highlighted progress and challenges related to the availability of resources, staff training, operational agreements, and strengthening of RCC and RSC. The importance of continuing to strengthen the implementation of GADSS, Autonomous Distress Situation Tracking (ADT) and the Aircraft in Distress Location Data Repository (LADR) was highlighted.

## 4. Future activities

4.1 The Task Force will continue to promote the implementation of GADSS, ADT, LADR, and associated procedures to improve the location of aircraft in distress, including their incorporation into the CAR Region SAR Plan.

4.2 Attention will continue to be focused on the formalization and updating of SAR agreements between States and Territories—especially where shared responsibilities exist—as well as on following up on pending delegations within the Piarco SRR.

4.3 The Task Force will promote the conduct of national, binational, and regional exercises incorporating scenarios involving GADSS, ADT, ELT(DT), aeronautical-maritime coordination, the entry of SAR units into other States, and MRO.

## **5. Conclusions**

5.1 The formalization of SAR agreements, the updating of information regarding SRRs, and the strengthening of RCCs and RSCs are fundamental to a coordinated and effective response. Government and strategic support are essential for the sustainability and preparedness of national SAR systems. Regional cooperation remains the most effective mechanism for strengthening SAR services in the NAM/CAR Regions.

5.2 The lack of progress regarding the delineation of responsibilities, the submission of national plans, the updating of the CAR Region SAR Plan, and the formalization of agreements require a renewed commitment from States, Territories, and the Secretariat.

5.3 The implementation of GADSS, ADT, LADR, and Cospas-Sarsat constitutes a strategic priority for improving the location of and response to aircraft in distress. SAR exercises are an effective tool for validating procedures and strengthening aeronautical-maritime interoperability.

5.4 Personnel training and MRO capabilities are essential for responding to complex emergencies and large-scale events.

## **6. Suggested actions**

6.1 The Meeting is invited to:

- a) take note of the information presented in this Working Paper;
- b) reiterate to States and Territories the importance of updating and submitting information regarding SRRs, RCCs, RSCs, and SAR points of contact;
- c) request the Secretariat to conduct the regional study on the development and implementation of national SAR plans and establish support measures;
- d) encourage national, binational, and regional SAR exercises featuring GADSS, ADT, aeronautical-maritime coordination, and MRO scenarios, and promote regional training programs for SAR personnel; and
- e) suggest any additional action the Meeting deems appropriate.