INTERNATIONAL CIVIL AVIATION ORGANIZATION

**Eighth Meeting of the AASPG Airspace and Aerodrome Operations Sub-Group
(AAO/SG8)**

Dakar, Senegal, 14-18 July 2025

Agenda Item 3:   **Achievements in AOP and ATM/SAR**

SEARCH AND RESCUE AGREEMENTS IN THE AFI REGION

(Submitted by Senegal)

SUMMARY
This working note outlines the challenges associated with establishing Search and Rescue (SAR) memoranda of understanding in the AFI region and proposes some possible solutions. **Objectives:** Share with the Meeting Senegal's experience on the establishment of SAR memoranda of understanding; and Propose recommendations to facilitate the signing of memoranda of understanding. **Action by the meeting is in paragraphe 3**
References: Annex 12 to the Chicago Convention International Manual of Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue (IAMSAR) Vol 1, § 2.3.15, § 5.2.14
Related ICAO Strategic Objective(s): Safety

1.   **INTRODUCTION**

1.1 In accordance with the standards and recommended practices contained in ICAO Annex 12, States are required to coordinate search and rescue operations with those of neighbouring States. In order to facilitate and make search and rescue in the various search and rescue regions more effective, cooperation agreements are necessary and sensible.

2.   **DISCUSSION**

CHALLENGES IN CONCLUDING SAR AGREEMENTS
2.1 As part of the implementation of the relevant provisions of Annex 12, Senegal has

concluded SAR agreements with several States of the Dakar Search and Rescue Region (SRR) as well as with States whose SRRs are contiguous to the region. It should be noted that the establishment of these agreements, both state and operational, presents several challenges, at the same time legal, political, technical and operational. Here are some of them:

National sovereignty

2.2   Each state is very attached to its sovereignty, especially in border or maritime areas. Accepting SAR cooperation can be perceived as interference. There may be reluctance to allow foreign teams to operate in its airspace or sea.

Delineation of SAR area

2.3   SAR areas of responsibility are not always aligned with national land and sea borders. As a result, the signing of SAR operational agreements sometimes poses problems when States are sufficiently aware of the difference that could exist between the SAR zone and the territorial limits of a State.

Political and diplomatic issues

2.4   Geopolitical tensions may prevent the signing or implementation of SAR agreements. For example, in some areas, territorial disputes block cooperation.

Administrative slowness

2.5   State-to-state SAR agreements have to be signed at the ministerial level, which takes time because of internal procedures.

SOME FOOD FOR THOUGHT

2.6   The conclusion of SAR agreements follows a process that may last several years depending on the level of commitment and the will of the relevant State authorities.

2.7   One of the key points in facilitating this process would be to ensure that the relevant national authorities are sufficiently imbued with the role of the SAR in civil protection and its contribution to the economic development of a State. It would therefore be beneficial for the process of signing SAR agreements between States to organize high-level national seminars involving potential decision-makers.

2.8   It is also important to ensure that the level of operational cooperation and coordination is satisfactory in order to stimulate the conclusion of agreements between States. The conduct of regular intra SRR or inter SRR meetings could be an effective means of developing and strengthening this cooperation to promote the signing of SAR agreements.

3. ACTION BY THE MEETING

3.1   The meeting is invited to:

a) Take note of this presentation;

b) Encourage States to facilitate the signing of operational and/or state SAR agreements by promoting the role and importance of SAR to national authorities; et

c) Encourage States, with the support of ICAO, to hold regular intra/inter SRR

meetings to boost cooperation and operational coordination that are enablers of SAR agreements.