

**INTERNATIONAL CIVIL AVIATION ORGANIZATION  
SOUTH AMERICA REGIONAL OFFICE**

**CAR/SAM AIS/ATM/CNS 02/00 Informal Meeting**

**(Cayenne, 27-29 March 2001)**

**Item 3 b): Contingency plans**

(Presented by the Secretariat)

**Summary**

This working paper provides information about the national ATS contingency plan and its relationship to the regional plan, with a view to consider its updating and maintainance.

**References:**

- *National ATS contingency plans;*
- *SAM regional ATS contingency plan;*
- *CAR regional ATS contingency plan; and*
- *Report of the SAM ATM/SAR 02/00 Informal Meeting (Lima, September 2000.)*

**1. Introduction**

1.1 Pursuant to Assembly Resolution A23-12 and following the study made by the Air Navigation Commission and the consultations carried out with the States and international organisations concerned, the ICAO Council approved the guidelines on contingency measures to be adopted in the event of a disruption of air traffic services and the corresponding support services, so that the main international routes will remain available in those circumstances.

1.2 In 1999, due to the problems expected from the change in millennium, all of the ICAO Regions developed regional and national Y2K plans, which resulted in a trouble-free transition from 1999 to 2000.

1.3 Civil aviation administrations in the SAM Region worked seriously to resolve the Y2K problem and developed a series of contingency measures to enable them to continue providing safe, orderly, and efficient air traffic control service in the areas under their responsibility, despite any Y2K problems which might arise.

1.4 In view of the above, the ICAO SAM Office on that occasion drew up some guidelines for the drafting of national ATS contingency plans. These guidelines were prepared taking into account the provisions of the Air Traffic Services Planning Manual, Doc. 9426, information obtained from other ICAO Regions, and, basically, the experienced acquired in the region with regard to ATS contingencies.

1.5 As a result of all this Y2K effort, the SAM Region today has national contingency plans drawn up by each of the States in the Region and also a regional plan involving the CAR and SAM Regions, which must be updated so that they can be used whenever needed.

## 2. **Analysis**

2.1 The purpose of ATS contingency plans is to ensure the operation of other facilities and services when those provided for in the regional air navigation plan are temporarily interrupted. It is the responsibility of States to take the necessary measures to guarantee the safety of international civil aviation operations.

2.2 According to the concept applied at the regional level, the Y2K problem was one more factor, together with others such as communication, surveillance, and other problems, resulting from a countless number of factors, which could lead to a partial or total reduction of air traffic services and related systems. For that reason, it is necessary to be prepared for and to deal with any contingency that could arise.

2.3 The difference in this particular case was that the problems that could have arisen as a result of the millennium virus could have been massive –*i.e.*, there could have been more than one problem at a time–, making it more difficult than usual to overcome the situation. Moreover, the same failure could have occurred simultaneously in more than one control unit in the region, resulting in a combination of situations that could have created an environment that threatened air navigation safety.

2.4 In relation to the above, and as a tool to reduce the negative impact of any deficiency and/or problem of international civil aviation, ICAO urges civil aviation administrations to draw up appropriate ATS contingency plans to overcome any situation affecting the safety, regularity, and efficiency of international air navigation.

2.5 These ATS contingency plans should take into account the activity in each FIR. In other words, national ATS contingency plans should be drafted taking into account not only international civil aviation but also State domestic aviation, and a regional (intra - and inter-regional) ATS contingency plan should take into account the main traffic flows in the CAR/SAM Regions.

### 3. National ATS contingency plans

3.1 The National ATS Contingency Plans for the FIRs in each State that were prepared in 1999 should be re-examined by the parties involved, that is, the State concerned together with the neighbouring States, since these contingency plans undoubtedly have a direct effect on adjacent FIRs. This is quite true, especially in the case of the operating procedures to be established, co-ordination, and the re-routing of traffic, as required, in order to achieve a precise harmonisation of the different contingency plans.

3.2 These ATS contingency plans should be duly revised by the parties concerned, including aircraft operators, and disseminated far enough in advance so that air traffic service users and personnel can become familiar with them.

### 4. Regional ATS Contingency Plan

4.1 According to the analysis made in the SAM Region, the main international traffic flows that were identified when drafting the CAR/SAM Plan for the Implementation of CNS/ATM Systems run from north to south and *vice-versa*. A review of these traffic flows reveals that this aircraft movement also affects other ICAO Regions, like the CAR, NAT, AFI, and EUR Regions. Of these regions, the CAR and NAT Regions on one hand, and the AFI Region on the other, would be those most affected if a problem were to arise, considering the traffic flow that exists over the South Atlantic (between southern South America and Europe).

4.2 On the other hand, and as we have already seen, despite the necessary measures taken by the administrations to overcome their problems duly in advance, it could so happen that one or several regional units could be affected by circumstances at a given moment or for a given period of time. For that reason, it would be highly desirable to have a Regional Contingency Plan that would provide for any unforeseen event.

4.3 Inasmuch as these regional and inter-regional contingency plans were drawn up in 1999, the States should examine the possibility of making adjustments to cover any problem that could result in the total or partial disruption of any ATS and/or related service. Finally, through the corresponding Regional Offices, they should be co-ordinated with the adjacent regions that could be affected.

### 5. Technical/operational personnel involved

5.1 On this issue, it should be stressed that proper training of the operational and technical personnel of the ATS units involved is extremely important for the application of an ATS contingency plan, whether national or regional.

5.2 It should be recognised that, if a normally functioning aeronautical system revolves around the human being, in a contingency of this nature the operation of the entire system will depend largely on the skill and competence shown by the personnel. Therefore, it is essential that administrations establish awareness and training programmes with regard to the respective contingency plans.

5.3 We must remember that radar surveillance systems could be affected eventually, which would imply continued provision of non-radar (procedural) control. Consequently, in such cases, CTAs should be trained in such control methods. It should also be considered that the implementation of the contingency plan could result in a rerouting of traffic, as well as a modification of the procedures to be applied.

## 6 Adaptation of contingency plans

6.1 In order to ensure the continuity of air operations in the event of an occurrence that would reduce or interrupt the provision of ATS or its support services, the SAM ATM/SAR 02/00 Informal Meeting agreed on the convenience of updating and adapting the contingency plans that were prepared to deal with the Y2K problem to face other problems.

6.2 It was also understood that while the States should undertake the updating and adaptation of their national contingency plans, the South American Regional Office should do likewise with the Regional Contingency Plan. To this end, the meeting formulated Conclusion 3/5 – Contingency plans (**Attachment A**).

## 7. Conclusions

7.1 In view of all the foregoing, it must be recognised that contingency measures should be in place for application in the event of partial or total disruption of air traffic and support services, so that the main international routes may remain available.

7.2 In 1999, civil aviation administrations of the SAM Region worked very seriously on the Y2K problem. Contingency measures were developed to allow for continued provision of safe, orderly, and efficient air traffic control services in the areas under their responsibility, despite any Y2K problems which might arise. This effort resulted in the development of National Contingency Plans and the CAR/SAM Regional Contingency Plan.

7.3 According to the concept applied at the regional level, the Y2K problem was one more factor, together with others such as communication, surveillance, and other problems, resulting from a countless number of factors, which could lead to a partial or total reduction of air traffic services and related systems. For that reason, it is necessary to be prepared for and to deal with any contingency that could arise. This concept was embodied in both national and regional contingency plans, making it possible, with little additional effort, to update and adapt the national and regional Y2K contingency plans for their use when circumstances so warrant.

**8. Suggested action**

8.1 The meeting is invited to take note of the information provided and to agree to the following Conclusion in recognition of the fact that failures affecting the normal provision of flight protection services could occur in any ATS unit, irrespective of its technological sophistication:

**Draft Conclusion xxx**

That Brazil, French Guiana, Guyana, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, and Venezuela:

- a) within the framework of Conclusion 3/5, item a), of the SAM ATM/SAR 02/00 Informal Meeting, review the national ATS contingency plans with their neighbouring States and agree upon the most appropriate measures for harmonising them, and
- b) forward information about the agreements reached to the CAR or SAM Regional Office, as appropriate.

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**Attachment:**

**Appendix:** Conclusion 3/5 (SAM ATM/SAR 02/00)

**Conclusion 3/5 - Contingency Plans**

That:

- a) SAM States review with their neighbouring States the national ATS contingency plans prepared and co-ordinated to cope with the Y2K problem and agree upon the most appropriate measures for adapting them to any event that could totally or partially affect the supply of ATS and related services; and
  
- b) by virtue of the agreements reached on this subject by the States in the Region, the ICAO SAM Regional Office take the relevant measures to adapt the Regional Y2K Contingency Plan and co-ordinate it with the other Regions that could be affected by such Plan.

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