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**Agenda Item 1: Review of Project H2 – Implementation of the International Airways Volcano Watch (IAVW)**

**Volcanic Ash Exercises**

(Presented by Argentina)

**SUMMARY**

This working paper presents a brief account of the Volcanic Ash exercise that took place on December 2016 under the protocol developed for “Fictitus”. Analysis and results are also discussed

**1. Introduction**

- 1.1. Starting with GREPECAS/14, the Region has continually carried out Volcanic Ash exercises that were evolving according to the results obtained the previous years.
- 1.2. The GREPECAS/17 has revised the development of the Project and decided to continue with the activities.
- 1.3. In the 2015 meeting that discussed the MET program of the GREPECAS for the SAM Region, it was decided that the protocol was to be modified.
- 1.4. Accordingly, a new protocol was developed that includes neither precise information about the date of the event nor information on the movement of the ash cloud.

**2. Analysis**

- 2.1. VAA and AMHS messages were sent at the appropriate time, but due to communication issues in the National Weather Service (NWS), these were not received directly by the Meteorological Watching Offices (MWOs). These, however, did receive the information through the institutional web page ([www.smn.gov.ar](http://www.smn.gov.ar)). It is for this reason that the MWOs transmitted the SIGMET messages as soon as they were learning of the event through this web page.
- 2.2. For the reason mentioned above there were no reports of the ASHTAM messages produced by NOF during the exercises.
- 2.3. During the exercise with the new protocol some problems were detected:

- ✓ SIGMET messages from some countries were not received in Argentina;
- ✓ There were a large number of errors in the format of the messages;

- ✓ Some of them did not have a number sequence;
- ✓ Some SIGMET CNL were sent ahead of time;
- ✓ There were errors in the period of validity;
- ✓ Messages were sent 12 hours before the ash plume affected the corresponding FIR;
- ✓ The same MWO splits the SIGMET from the same period of validity into two: one OBS and one FCTS.

### 3. **Conclusions**

- 3.1 Some systemic errors were found during these exercises, particularly in communications. These findings shows the importance of continuing with these activities.
- 3.2 There is a need to check the Tables to verify errors in the existing addresses and missing ones in the lists used by the MWOs.
- 3.3 Information on the Appendices sent by MWOs from different countries were received with enough lead time to be able to analyze their results.
- 3.4 In this occasion it is important to highlight that the Regional Office SAM and the project coordinator have received from Washington the results from the 2016 exercise associated to the SAM countries.
- 3.5 It should be discussed the possibility of extending these exercises the amount of years that are deemed necessary, and this extension should be included in the program of the project.
- 3.6 We recommend to carry out the exercise twice a year, but with a shorter duration.
- 3.7 An update of the SIGMET guide, to be carried out as part of this project, would be very helpful for the generation of future messages.

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