



International Civil Aviation Organization

CAR/SAM Regional Planning and Implementation Group (GREPECAS)

**Eighth Meeting of the GREPECAS Aeronautical Meteorology Subgroup
(AERMETSG/8)**

Santiago, Chile, 9 to 13 October 2006

AERMETSG/8 – WP/17

12/09/06

Agenda Item 3: Implementation of the International Airways Volcano Watch (IAVW) in the CAR/SAM Regions

Planned Test of Volcanic Ash SIGMETs, Volcanic Ash Advisories and Volcanic Ash NOTAMS

(Presented by the United States)

SUMMARY

This working paper discusses the planned test on the dissemination of Volcanic Ash Advisories, VA SIGMETs, and VA NOTAMS in the CAR/SAM Region

1. Introduction

1.1 In reference to GREPECAS Conclusion 13/20 – Periodic Tests on Volcanic Ash SIGMETs, Volcanic Ash Advisories, and Volcanic Ash ASHTAMs or NOTAMs the United States Washington Volcanic Ash Advisory Center (VAAC) is pleased to participate in the proposed ICAO test of Volcanic Ash SIGMETs (WV), Volcanic Ash Advisories (FV) and Volcanic Ash ASHTAMs or NOTAMs within the CAR/SAM region. We are appreciative of the AERMET Subgroup developing a plan to take action on GREPECAS Conclusion 13/20 to test for the correct issuance and dissemination of volcanic ash products.

1.2 We have reviewed the plan. While the plan is very comprehensive we wish to offer some suggestions as provided in the discussion in section two of this paper that could make the test more robust. We fully understand that the plan as developed has been presented to the ANC and was approved on 15 June 2006 and that it may be difficult to undertake any changes at this time, but your consideration is most appreciated.

2. Discussion

2.1 The Washington VAAC will respond to a SIGMET issued by the Mexico City and the Lima Meteorological Watch Office (MWO) and will prepare a simulated VAA in accordance with the test protocol.

2.2 The following are some suggestions that should be considered to enhance the quality of the test.

2.2.1 Consideration should be given to inviting the International Air Transportation Association (IATA) to participate in this test by requesting them to identify to the Secretary airlines willing to participate in the test. We believe it is important that the end user report back as to whether they actually receive the test products. This will serve as a quality control check as to whether these messages are received by the end user that being the Airline Operations Center (AOC). We believe that IATA will respond prudently and cooperate and provide the name of one or two airlines that can participate in the test protocol.

2.2.2 Even though the ICAO State letter of 4 September 2006 refers to the Lima MWO as a participant, the attached test protocol has no reference to the Lima MWO. We appreciate the participation of the Lima MWO in this test. It is also suggested that consideration should be given to the Bogota MWO as they have active volcanoes in their Flight Information Region (FIR) requiring the issuance of SIGMETs. Therefore, we suggest that the Bogota MWO also be included.

2.2.3 While the test protocol seeks to see if the designated MWO and Air Traffic Service (ATS) units receive the appropriate message, there is no reference to the timeliness of the message. Perhaps it would be useful, if the participating States log in the time the message was received. This would help the Secretary better understand if there are delays in the communication network and where those delays may exist. We believe timeliness of the message is an important factor in the test.

2.2.4 While the Washington VAAC is fully committed to support this test protocol, the resources of personnel on duty are limited. In other words, if there is an ongoing eruption, the first priority is to support the operations while the testing would then become secondary and participation would be done on time available basis. This may result in a delay in sending out a test VAA. The Secretary and Rapporteur need to be aware of this requirement if there was a delay in executing the simulated VAA.

3. **Conclusion**

3.1 The meeting is requested to invite IATA to participate in the test, include an additional MWO in the test, and request participants to record the time of receipt of the messages and provide this to the Secretary and the Rapporteur.

4. **Recommendation**

4.1 The meeting is invited to note the information provided in this paper and consider making a recommendation to enhance the planned test protocol for WV, ASHTAM, VA NOTAMs and VAA based on the discussion presented.