



San José, Costa Rica 16 al 20 Abril de 2006

Agenda Item 7: Other Business

THE WHTI/GEASSA INITIATIVE.

(Presented by Canada and Colombia)

SUMMARY

This working paper is presented to the meeting to introduce States to the Western Hemisphere Transport Initiative/Group of experts on Aviation Safety, Security, and Assistance (WHTI/GEASSA), and to encourage States to use the GEASSA as a tool of international cooperation to facilitate the financing of aviation projects and to share aviation safety and security information

References:

- WHTI Ministerial Transportation Meeting, Punta del Este, Uruguay, March 2001.
- ICAO Assembly Resolution A33/16
- GEASSA information Web Page - <http://www.itho-gesaa.org>
- WHTI/GEASSA, 2002-2006 memories of meetings.
- NACC/DCA/2 Report Final Version.

1. Introduction

1.1 The Group of Experts on Aviation Safety, Security and Assistance (GEASSA), co-chaired by Canada and Colombia, was created by the Western Hemisphere Transportation Initiative (WHTI), at the Ministerial Transportation Meeting at Punta del Este, Uruguay, in March 2001, following the fact that safety and security are issues of common interest to all States of the Hemisphere. The GEASSA concept was formalized within the ICAO framework in its Assembly Resolution A33/16.

1.2. The GEASSA is a high level working group whose mandate concerns increasing the levels of aviation safety and security matters, in accordance with WHTI Ministerial statement resulting from the March 2001 meeting in Punta del Este, Uruguay directing the Executive Committee to propose: "within as short a time frame as possible, an action plan that will allow for the improvement of aviation safety conditions in the region, including the identification of programs and sources of funding."; after 9/11, Security was added the mandate.

1.3 The original objective was to enhance transportation safety and security, and to develop an action plan that would allow for an improvement of these aviation matters in the America's Regions, including identification of programs and sources of funding. This criterion was reviewed in the WHTI Ministerial meeting, Ixtapa, Mexico, May 2003, and extended to other commitments which include cooperation with other international organizations and the international funding environment, as follows:

- The provision of safety oversight on a regional basis, as an efficient use of resources, and as a measure to increase aviation safety and security in many parts of the world.
- Civil Aviation Authorities in many countries receive largely insufficient funding and support at the national level. Adequate resources are essential.
- There is a need for coordination between the Minister responsible for Transportation and the Minister responsible for Civil Aviation, when not the same;
- Continuity is an essential component in the management of civil aviation safety and security, particularly during times when government and ministers are changed;
- There is an inter-relationship between civil aviation and the economic development of any country and the resulting need for cooperation between ministries that benefit from civil aviation, such as tourism, labor, etc.;
- GEASSA attendees believe in the potential effectiveness of GEASSA regarding aviation safety and security within the hemisphere.
- Civil Aviation Authorities were requested to support the GEASSA initiative.

1.4 GEASSA is an open group; it is formed by experts in Safety and Security, whose purpose is to study the requirements of our region, to establish priorities concerning safety and security initiatives and to facilitate funding and implementing issues.

1.5. GEASSA's work methodology follows the fundamental principle that its work enhances cooperation between States and international organizations or redresses a safety and security deficiency in a particular State or region. The approved methodology involves identifying if an action increases safety and security; following up the problem identification and preliminary project presentation with an in-depth project description and project funding requests created by the States (s) in question to multilateral development banks with the assistance of the GEASSA Secretariat, and the presentation by the requestor State of the project to these banks supported by the GEASSA secretariat.

2. Discussion

2.1 Since its creation, the GEASSA Group has held 6 meetings. The following projects and activities for the CAR/SAM Regions have been developed within its framework:

- ATS Quality Assurance program being developed by Colombia with the assistance of Transport Canada.
- Aeronautical Phraseology Deficiencies within the ATS Quality Assurance Program.
- AVSEC Training to prepare personnel for the ICAO audits (the funding for this project was \$65,000 USD, funded by Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade). The outcome was: 14 workshops, 2 seminars which provided 401 participants, from the CAR/SAM Regions, with a clearer understanding and awareness of ICAO Annex 17, USAP, and AVSEC familiarization.
- PAAST Runway Incursion Prevention Program Seminar.
- ATS QA Program Workshop.
- Safety Management System Workshop.
- ICAO/PAIGH Project for the production of VFR Aeronautical Charts, scale 1:1000 000/1:500 000.

2.2. the last meeting of the GEASSA was held in Cartagena, Colombia in December 2006. At this meeting:

- Information was provided on recent meetings that were held with the World Bank, the Organisation of American States and the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB). Based on information garnered during these meetings, the IADB seems the most likely source of financing and had requested that GEASSA acts as an independent organisation to validate their aviation safety and security programmes, which the Secretariat agreed to do. States have to start motivating their Finance Ministers to encourage Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs) to include aviation in their

country assistance strategies, which would make the financing of aviation safety and security projects more feasible. It was also noted that the GEASSA member countries had to be involved in the funding requests to the multilateral lending institutions. The GEASSA existed to provide support and guidance in the funding requests. The main impetus still has to come from individual countries acting as a group.

- The GEASSA accepted a project concerning the creation of a Center that would establish regional standards in the field of accident investigations and introduce accident reduction programs by applying appropriate risk mitigation techniques that could pool available resources and reduce costs. GEASSA is considering presenting this project to the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) for funding and is asking states about their interest to join this initiative. This project benefits many States, is cost-effective and is based on ICAO recommendations to develop regional solutions to common problems and to further accident investigation capabilities and research.

- the ICAO/PAIGH cooperation project for the production of aeronautical charts was reactivated. This would involve sponsoring technical meetings of the Aeronautical Charts Committee of the Pan-American Institute of Geography and History (PAIGH)/GREPECAS Task Force and to find financial support for the PAIGH/ICAO Project for the production of Aeronautical Charts in those States who are not members of the PAIGH.

- A discussion on accident conditions in Latin America highlighted the need for increased cooperation and information sharing among the GEASSA countries in support of ICAO's standards and its strategic plan in order to increase the level of awareness about the status of accident conditions in the region.

- GEASSA urged States to examine the issue of the ICAO requirements with respect to the language proficiency requirements for Air traffic Controllers and how states in the region are preparing to demonstrate Air traffic Controllers skills to talk and to understand English in a level specified by ICAO.

- The Dominican Republic submitted a Project on an Integrated Security Management System to strength aviation security into civil aviation in this particular state, this project would unfold in four phases and involve aviation security structure, training and education, technology and human resources, GEASSA strongly support this project.

- The Aviation security Awareness training program which the first phase of this project occurred in 2004-2005. The Second phase will be delivered between 2007 and 2009. The courses were developed and managed by ICAO. Canada's financial contribution, through its Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade's Counter-Terrorism and Capacity Building Programme, granted \$CDN 479,000 in order to pay for the cost of trainers. Under phase 2, a total of 44 training activities will be delivered.

- Other projects that are presented in separated working papers to GREPECAS in behalf of GEASSA concern the AVSEC secure network that could allow us to have a better flow of information in Aviation Security; and a training program for Machine Readable Travel Documents (MRTDs).

- Canada presented its Safety Management Systems Implementation process by outlining the background of SMS in Canada, introducing the concepts and principles related to SMS, the need to understand the Regulations and Standards. It also demonstrated how to implement an SMS and the pitfalls of SMS implementation in Canada. Finally, it provided an assessment of the effectiveness of the implementation process in Canada. GEASSA has considered the support of SMS process one of its priorities.

The next GEASSA meeting will be hosted by the Civil Aviation Authority of Panama in mid to late 2007

3. GEASSA Strategic Objectives 2007-2009

The GEASSA Group has 3 Strategic objectives:

- Building Knowledge through Information Sharing. The GEASSA has sponsored information sessions on such topics as SMS and Aviation Security Awareness Training.
- Building Realities – Facilitating the financing of Aviation safety and security projects in the western Hemisphere such as the Accident Investigation center and the Aeronautical charts project.
- Building Sustainability through Training. The GEASSA is encouraging States to provide the Secretariat with current training schedules so that we can create a database of ongoing initiatives in the region. If GEASSA members allow other States to attend their ongoing training initiatives on a space available basis, the existing pool of training resources will be expanded without adding any cost. The GEASSA encourages regional solutions to training.

4. Action required

4.1 Based on the above GREPECAS is invited to:

- a) take note of the content of this working paper;
- b) consider the GEASSA group as an important means to provide support for regional technical cooperation; and
- c) participate in GEASSA activities by attending the next meeting, submitting training initiatives or as deemed appropriate.

4.2. To approve the next project of conclusion:

PROJECT OF CONCLUSION 7/x

WHTI/GEASSA ACTIVITIES

That States/Territories/International Organizations:

- a) consider the GEASSA group as an important means to provide support for regional technical cooperation; and
- b) participate in GEASSA activities as deemed appropriate.

- END -