



ASSEMBLY — 40TH SESSION

TECHNICAL COMMISSION

Agenda Item 30: Other Issues to be considered by the Technical Commission

ADOPTION OF A REGIONAL APPROACH FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN EFFECTIVE AND OPERATIONAL SEARCH AND RESCUE (SAR) STRUCTURE

(Presented by Cameroon)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and the International Maritime Organization (IMO) are working together to implement an effective global search and rescue (SAR) system by establishing search and rescue regions (SRRs) so that, wherever in the world people are exposed to danger in the air or at sea, SAR services are available if need be. However, many countries are still experiencing difficulties in establishing an SAR structure in their area of responsibility, thus undermining the global system. This working paper suggests a regional approach, which relies on regional champions, with a view to establishing an effective and operational global SAR system.

Action: The Assembly is invited to:

- a) take note of the information contained in this working paper;
- b) support regional SAR projects, particularly the AFI (Africa and Indian Ocean) Plan, in order to:
 - 1) identify sub-regions with the lowest degree of implementation of SAR services;
 - 2) identify and appoint SAR champions in the sub-regions concerned; and
- c) recommend that ICAO support the appointed champions to ensure the establishment of an effective and operational SAR structure in the sub-regions.

<i>Strategic Objectives:</i>	This working paper relates to the <i>Safety and Air Navigation Capacity and Efficiency</i> Strategic Objectives.
<i>Financial implications:</i>	The activities referred to in this working paper will be subject to the resources allocated to the 2020-2022 Regular Programme Budget.
<i>References:</i>	Doc 9731, <i>International Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue Manual (IAMSAR)</i>

¹ French version provided by Cameroon.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 ICAO and IMO are globally coordinating the efforts of their Member States to provide SAR services.

1.2 The objective of ICAO and IMO mainly consists in implementing an effective global system by establishing SRRs so that, wherever in the world people are exposed to danger in the air or at sea, SAR services are available if need be.

1.3 Every Member State of ICAO, pursuant to Article 25 of the Chicago Convention on International Civil Aviation, is obliged to provide assistance to aircrafts in distress in its territory.

1.4 However, many countries are still experiencing difficulties in establishing an SAR structure in their area of responsibility, thus undermining the global system.

2. DISCUSSION

2.1 The world is divided into SRRs, each with its own rescue coordination centre (RCC). The RCC is an operational body that is primarily responsible for creating an effective structure of SAR services and for coordinating SAR operations within the SRR.

2.2 ICAO regional air navigation plans (RANPs) outline aeronautical SRRs for most of the world and States agreed to take on SAR responsibilities for the areas assigned to them. To fulfil these responsibilities, States must either establish a national SAR structure or join one or several other States in forming a regional SAR structure. In some regions, it is effective and practical to achieve this objective by creating a regional system associated with a vast oceanic and continental area.

2.3 In August 2018, the audit results of the Universal Safety Oversight Audit Programme Continuous Monitoring Approach (USOAP CMA) indicated that the average rate of compliance with SAR protocols was only 54.8 per cent and that only 29 per cent of States had established an entity that provides SAR services 24 hours a day.

2.4 Similarly, the results of the gap analysis conducted by the SAR Technical Expert Team (TET) under the SAR project of the AFI Plan indicate that many States, some of which host RCCs, have difficulties in ensuring the structure of SAR services in their area of responsibility. It also shows that some States, which have a rescue subcentre (RSC) only, are making many efforts to establish an effective and operational SAR system. Unfortunately, these efforts are not valued at the sub-regional or regional level because the State only has an RSC which is dependent on a RCC.

2.5 In this regard, the IAMSAR, Volume I, *Organization and management*, stipulates the following:

“2.4.1 There may be situations where an RCC is not able to exercise direct and effective control over SAR facilities in an area within its SRR. The establishment of an RSC with its SRS (search and rescue sub-region) may be appropriate.”

“2.4.2 In such situations, the RCC may delegate some or all of its responsibility to an RSC, including communications, search planning and arrangements for SAR facilities. An RSC may be as capable as an RCC. The more complicated the Administration or the poorer the communications, the greater the authority that should be delegated to the RSC.”

2.6 It must be noted that, in Africa in particular, the overall level of SAR State capacities does not guarantee a fast and effective intervention in an emergency situation for aircrafts in distress. Organizing SAR services in less developed regions should therefore be more in line with the regional concept proposed in the *IAMSAR*. The *IAMSAR* states in 5.1.5 that, “A regional approach like this to providing SAR services has many advantages both to the beneficiaries of SAR services and to the States which provide those services. Duplication of effort and facilities can be avoided, more uniform services throughout the region can be provided, and proficient SAR services are possible even near States with limited resources...”

2.7 For this reason, it might therefore be more beneficial to free States from the current SAR structure and to rely on regional champions to ensure the development of SAR services at the regional and global level.

2.8 Regional champions could be selected according to the following criteria:

- a) implementation rate of SAR standards;
- b) experience in the management of SAR operations; and
- c) availability of SAR facilities.

2.9 Regional champions would have the responsibility of ensuring the effective establishment of a sub-regional SAR structure. They would notably be tasked with:

- a) developing, in coordination with other States, a sub-regional SAR plan with a view to guaranteeing the cooperation, communication, coordination and sharing of information and resources between the countries concerned;
- b) preparing and ensuring the signing of a multilateral SAR agreement between the countries concerned;
- c) ensuring the availability in all their areas of responsibility of fast and effective means of intervention and communication, trained personnel, warning procedures and SAR operations plans; and
- d) assisting other States in bringing their SAR services up to standard.

3. CONCLUSION

3.1 Based on the analysis offered above, it would be wise to adopt a regional approach to ensuring the effective global provision of SAR services by freeing States from the current SAR structure.

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