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**Agenda Item 9: SAR**

**ASIA/PACIFIC SEARCH AND RESCUE PLANNING**

(Presented by the Secretariat)

**SUMMARY**

This paper presents information on Search and Rescue (SAR) planning within the Asia/Pacific Region.

This paper relates to –

**Strategic Objectives:**

A: *Safety – Enhance global civil aviation safety*

**Global Plan Initiatives:**

Nil GPIs

**1. INTRODUCTION**

1.1 The First Meeting of the Asia/Pacific Regional Search and Rescue Task Force (APSAR/TF/1) was held in Bangkok, Thailand from 5 to 7 February 2013. The main objective of the APSAR/TF was to develop an Asia/Pacific SAR Plan, in cooperation with adjacent regions and the International Maritime Organization (IMO).

**2. DISCUSSION**

SAR Agreements

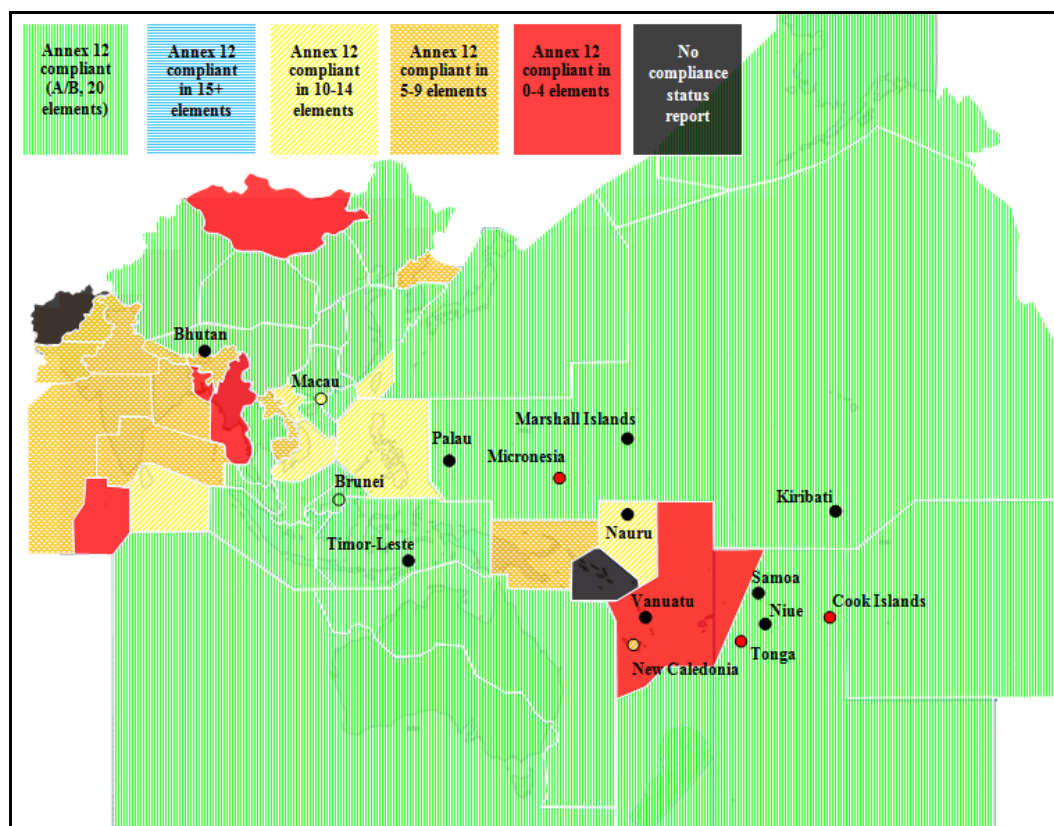
2.1 The meeting discussed the difficulties of enacting agreements between States, which often involved waiting for long periods for political agreement. The Philippines asked if the Secretariat could assist to facilitate new SAR Agreements. The meeting noted that ICAO/IMO may be able to facilitate some agreements involving high-level decision-makers. The Task Force developed a Conclusion that was agreed by the ATM Sub-Group and APANPIRG/24:

**Conclusion 24/22: Search and Rescue Agreements**

Recognising the difficulties of enacting Search and Rescue (SAR) Agreements, States should be urged to make arrangements for senior civil and military decision-makers to facilitate the implementation and maintenance of SAR Agreements as early as possible.

## Regional SAR

2.2 The APSAR/TF reviewed the status of SAR information in the Asia/Pacific Region known to the ICAO Regional Office for reporting to APANPIRG, and requested States to update this information, including the List of SAR Agreements and the SAR Capability Matrix Table.



**Figure 1:** Regional SAR Overview

2.3 The SAR Status data indicated that only three Asia/Pacific administrations had Annex 12 compliance in all elements (**Figure 1**). The Regional SAR Compliance Overview indicated particular weaknesses in South Asia, Mongolia and the Southwest Pacific areas.

### Second Joint SAR Exercises of Mongolia and the Russian Federation

2.4 Mongolia successfully organized joint aviation SAR exercises between Mongolia and the Russian Federation from 5 to 8 September 2012 near their common border. Joint SAREX 2012 was a Full-Scale Exercise or a Field Exercise, where actual SAR facilities were deployed. This increased the scope of SAR system-testing and added realistic constraints due to times involved in launching, transit and activities of the SAR Units (SRUs). Chinese SAR experts were also invited to observe SAREX 2012. The first joint SAREX had been held in the territory of the Altai Republic of the Russian Federation from 22 to 25 June 2010.

2.5 A special procedure on cooperation between the main participants in the aviation SAR field had been developed and approved by the Mongolian Cabinet. Search and rescue services for civil aircraft in danger or emergency were organised by the Civil Aviation Authority in cooperation with the aircraft operator and several national agencies. SAR coordination was provided by the Aeronautical Rescue Coordination Centre, which was a part of the Air Traffic Services Division of the Civil Aviation Authority of Mongolia. The Aeronautical Rescue Coordination Centre has been designated as the SAR point of contact (SPOC) since 2002 and was fully manned with officers and navigators 24 hours/7 days.

2.6 At present, Mongolia had a SAR agreement with the Russian Federation. The Agreement between the Government of the Russian Federation and the Government of Mongolia concerning co-operation in respect of aviation SAR. Within the framework of agreement between two governments, an operational agreement between Federal Aeronautical Agency of the Russian Federation and Civil Aviation Authority of Mongolia (MCAA) for SAR cooperation was established on 11 July 2006, and signed on 11 April 2008.

2.7 As a result of the first Joint SAREX 2010, the MCAA amended working documents and national rules to improve procedures in SAR cases. MCAA also amended certain procedures regarding delivery of emergency reports to other entities involved in aviation SAR operations, and streamlined the rapid facilitation of border control of cross border SRUs with mobile facilities. Malaysia asked for a clarification regarding the cross-border cooperation. Mongolia commented that the Russian Federation were always cooperative with cross-border requests.

2.8 The APSAR/TF/1 meeting congratulated Mongolia for its improvement in SAR capability and the SAR exercises, particularly the facilitation of improved diplomatic clearance for SAR assets from the Russian Federation and the involvement of Chinese observers.

#### SAR Enhancement Strategies

2.9 The United States stated that the Asia/Pacific SAR Capability Matrix Table provided an excellent initial focal point for discussion on SAR matters. The Asia/Pacific SAR Capability Matrix Table was gaining usage in other parts of the world and provided a powerful document for a SAR manager to present to senior government officials so as to sustain or improve SAR capability and capacity.

2.10 The United States advised that typically, a good first step was to see what capability already exists, nationally and with neighbouring States, and then make arrangements to cooperatively make use of all available resources. They noted that all States had valuable experience and views which would benefit all of the other States in this matter. Using the Matrix simply as an initial guide, discussion could include ideas such as:

- a) establishment of a SAR committee to make efficient and effective use of a State's own resources;
- b) completion of SAR Agreements to define SAR responsibilities and strengthen cooperation/coordination;
- c) development of an aeronautical regional SAR plan using the Pacific maritime agreement as an example;
- d) amalgamation or close integration between the national aeronautical and maritime SAR authorities to improve efficiencies and reduce costs;
- e) development of aerodrome emergency plans to provide for co-operation and co-ordination with the RCC;
- f) creation of a SAR Library using a web site if possible, or even an Asia/Pacific community resource;
- g) improvement of Cospas-Sarsat Distress Alerts reception and response capability, particularly by registering distress beacons and planning for the latest ELT equipage capability;
- h) identification of States that need assistance through the Regional Office, the Task Force, or other developed ('champion') States;
- i) Discussion on delegation of SAR service to resolve some SAR gaps.

2.11 Australia submitted that the Air France 447 accident in the mid-Atlantic contained some valuable SAR lessons for consideration in the development of oceanic SAR material:

- importance of normal ATS SAR alerting procedures;
- need for SAR Agreements between regional SAR neighbours to improve coordination and awareness of SAR asset availability;
- desirability of Joint RCCs (JRCCs) to incorporate aviation and maritime activities;
- need to publish a geographical depiction of SRRs;
- importance of SAR Datum Buoys for them to be deployed; and
- requirement for a State SAR point of contact.

2.12 The meeting noted the Australian experience that combining a Maritime RCC (MRCC) and an Aviation RCC (ARCC) can provide improved efficiencies such as:

- providing a single 24 hour point of contact instead of two;
- more exposure and practice for RCC staff in both aviation and maritime SAR;
- sharing of SAR expertise and workload;
- consolidation of facilities; and
- reduction in costs and improved coordination and communication.

2.13 Australia submitted that the following additional issues should be considered as part of the Regional SAR planning:

- improvement and enhancement of oceanic SAR capability as a priority task;
- inclusion of material regarding Air Traffic Services (ATS) SAR alerting with RCCs;
- establishment of reliable and published 24 hour national SAR point of contact;
- encouragement of SAR coordination plan, agreement, arrangement and/or regional protocol implementation covering all maritime areas;
- adding another category to the SAR Capability Matrix ‘Droppable Datum Buoys’ for States with oceanic SAR area responsibility; and
- incorporation of material contained in the IAMSAR Manual, Volume I, Chapter 6, Section 6.4.6.

#### Asia Pacific Regional SAR Plan

2.14 The Secretariat presented information on possible methods that an Asia/Pacific SAR Plan could be developed, as required by the TOR. The APSAR/TF was expected to deliver a plan within two years of establishment for enhancement of SAR capability within the Asia/Pacific Region, including enhancement of SAR services with neighbouring States, which required references to:

- the current status of SAR preparedness of Asia and Pacific Region States and State SAR arrangements;
- SAR contingency procedures from other ICAO Regions; and
- recommendations for SAR planning and preparedness in terms of compliance with Annex 12, the International Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue Manual (IAMSAR) and accepted best practice.

**3. ACTION BY THE MEETING**

3.1 The meeting is invited to:

- a) note the information contained in this paper;
- b) discuss trans-regional SAR strategies; and
- c) discuss any relevant matters as appropriate.

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