

INTERNATIONAL CIVIL AVIATION ORGANIZATION



**REPORT OF SPECIAL COORDINATION MEETING (SCM)
AFGHANISTAN, INDIA AND PAKISTAN**

BANGKOK, THAILAND, 27 JUNE 2013

The views expressed in this Report should be taken as those of the
Meeting and not the Organization

Approved by the Meeting
and published by the ICAO Asia and Pacific Office, Bangkok

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1. INTRODUCTION

Meeting

1.1 The Special Coordination Meeting (SCM) was held at the Kotaite Wing of the ICAO Asia and Pacific (APAC) Regional Office, Bangkok, Thailand on 27 June 2013.

Attendance

1.2 The meeting was attended by 14 participants from four States and one International Organization. A list of participants is provided at **Appendix A** to this Report.

Officer and Secretariat

1.3 Mr. Soon Boon Hai, Air Traffic Management (ATM) Expert, ICAO Asia and Pacific Office, was the Secretary for the meeting.

Language and Documentation

1.4 The SCM met as a plenary throughout the meeting. The working language of the meeting was English inclusive of all documentation and this Report. Four working papers were considered by the meeting. The list of working papers is attached at **Appendix B** to this report.

Opening of the Meeting

1.5 Mr Soon Boon Hai welcomed the participants to the Meeting on behalf of the Regional Director Mr Mokhtar Awan. He said it was important for the meeting to provide updates on the outcomes of the follow-up action following the dissolution of the Bay of Bengal Reduced Horizontal Separation Task Force (BOBRHS/TF). He acknowledged the efforts of the states bring to a close many of the outstanding issues.

2. REPORT ON AGENDA ITEMS

Agenda Item 1: Adoption of Provisional Agenda

2.1 The provisional agenda (WP01) was adopted by the meeting.

Agenda Items 2 to 7:

Agenda Item 2: Issues arising from Implementation of 50NM horizontal separation

Agenda Item 3: ATS surveillance, including update on capability, handoff and data sharing
ATS routing, including restrictions on availability

Agenda Item 4: ATS routing, including restrictions on availability

Agenda Item 5: Flight level restrictions, including FL280 and FL310 within the
Kabul FIR

Agenda Item 6: ATFM, (Delhi departures) including assignment of flight levels


Agenda Item 7: ATS routing, including restrictions on availability

2.2 As the issues in the various agenda items were inter-related, the meeting addressed them together.

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Report on Agenda Items

Implementing 50/50 Horizontal Separation FIR wide

2.3 The meeting agreed that it was more effective to implement 50 Nautical Miles (NM) horizontal separations in an airspace as a whole, instead of route by route. Meeting noted that many airspaces in the region had already done so years ago, even in airspace without Air Traffic Services (ATS) surveillance (See figure 1 extract from ISPACG report).



Summary of the Twenty Sixth Meeting of the
Informal South Pacific Air Traffic Services Coordinating Group
(ISPACG/26)

Appendix B
Capacity Enhancement Table
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Capacity Enhancement	Action With	Estimated Completion Date	Date Completed	Notes
Implement 50NM Lateral Separation				
Australia	Airservices		Dec-98	
Chile	DGAC - Chile		TBD	ADS aircraft only
Fiji	AFL		Aug-03	
New Zealand	Airways		Dec-98	
PNG	ASL of PNG			Planned with RNP10
Solomon Islands				See Australia
Tahiti	SEAC Tahiti	May 2012		ATCO Training in progress
United States	FAA		Dec-98	
Implement 50NM Longitudinal Separation				
Australia	Airservices		Jul-00	50 NM Longitudinal implemented in AGGG FIR in July 2001
Chile	DGAC - Chile		TBD	ADS aircraft only
Fiji	AFL		Aug-03	ADS aircraft only Will provide updated timelines for NON-ADS aircraft by Q3 2012
New Zealand	Airways		Jul-00	ADS aircraft only
PNG	ASL of PNG			Planned with RNP10
Solomon Islands	Airservices		Jul-01	
Tahiti	SEAC Tahiti	May 2012		ATCO Training in progress
United States	FAA		17 Oct 05	
Implement 30NM Lateral Separation				
Australia	Airservices		20 Jan 05	Oceanic airspace only
Fiji	AFL		Jan-05	
New Zealand	Airways		20 Jan 05	
PNG	ASL of PNG			No identified plans
Solomon Islands	Airservices		20 Jan 05	See Australia
Tahiti	SEAC Tahiti			No identified plans
United States	FAA		13 Mar 07	All Oakland Sectors

Figure 1

2.4 Afghanistan, Pakistan and India agreed that 50NM horizontal separation would be implemented Flight Information Region (FIR) wide throughout the day, and if there were specific routes or occasions where 50NM horizontal separation was not applicable, this would be specified in the Letter of Agreement (LOA), or notified to the upstream FIR if it impacted them. IATA concurred this was the preferred method.

2.5 India informed the meeting that they would be providing surveillance separation for flights, both domestic and overflying international traffic, while they operate in ATS surveillance airspace. They were also contemplating implementing 30/30NM horizontal separation in Indian airspace.

PRA/SERKA Extension

2.6 IATA noted that India had already implemented the route concerned in the Mumbai FIR and should Pakistan also implement the extension in Karachi FIR it would result in major savings in terms of distance reduction and hence fuel burn and CO₂ emissions. IATA urged Pakistan to consider implementing the route urgently. Pakistan was aware of the issue and would continue to pursue the matter to the extent possible. However, Pakistan added that they were not optimistic of a positive outcome in the immediate future as this route transited some highly sensitive areas.

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G325 FL330 availability

2.7 The meeting was informed that FL330 was restricted to flights on G325 operating between Middle Eastern airports and destinations in China. This restriction denied eastbound over-flights the use of this level. Pakistan explained that it was necessary to block off one flight level to ensure vertical separation from eastbound flights entering Lahore FIR as a buffer between these flights because there was insufficient reaction time for ATC in Lahore/Karachi Area Control Centers (ACCs), given the poor prevailing communications between the Kabul FIR and the Lahore/Karachi ACCs. Further, Pakistan added that in order to minimise the inconvenience to flights by using the same level (FL330) for flights in the reciprocal direction as well.

G208/N895 TELEM routing

2.8 The secretariat reported that there was an on-going issue with traffic routings in the G208/N895 / TELEM area, and requested that both Pakistan and India continue efforts to resolve the issues to the satisfaction of all concerned parties. The issues related to the direction of traffic flow and points of conflict in the area which were not conducive to efficient ATM.

2.9 Both Pakistan and India agreed to continue discussions to resolve the issues in order to provide safe and efficient ATM service in the area of concern. The outcomes would be reported to the Bay of Bengal, Arabian Sea and Indian Ocean Region (BOBASIO) and South Asia/Indian Ocean ATM Coordination Group (SAIOACG) meetings.

Converging routes in a Downstream FIR

2.10 The meeting agreed that where two or more aircraft flying routes which converge in a Downstream FIR immediately after being transferred, the transferring ACC would be responsible for providing separation such that when the aircraft eventually converge at the common point, the aircraft would be separated either vertically or longitudinally. While this was understood to be the most appropriate policy in the current environment where communications and surveillance were not optimal between ATC units, it was noted by the meeting that in more optimal circumstances that the FIR within which the conflict occurred should be responsible for resolution of conflicts.

Aligning availability of Conditional Routes

2.11 The Secretariat highlighted that several new conditional routes had been implemented over the years by India and Pakistan to provide shorter and more economical routes, in response to user requirements. These routes had been put in place primarily to address the evening traffic rush for over-flights from South East Asia to Western Europe and to coincide as far as possible with the ATFM (BOBCAT) hours of operation. However, because the timings and duration of the conditional routes had to be decided by the States in consultation with their own military agencies, the final timings in one FIR did not necessarily align with the neighbouring FIR. The routes were shown in the table 1.

Route	Segment in Pakistan	Segment in India
L509	1500-2359	1630-2230
N875	1500-2359	1630-2230
L333	N/A	1630-0030
P628	1900-2359	N/A

Table 1: ATS Route Availability

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2.16 Thailand highlighted that congestion at SAMAR was partly due to unavailability of route segments L509 (SAMAR-LAJAK) in the Lahore FIR and M875 (BUTOP-JHANG) within the Delhi and Lahore FIRs during the period 0730 – 1030 UTC, which would have enabled parallel flow of traffic feeding into routes M875 and N644 in the Kabul FIR as illustrated in Figure 2, effectively doubling the number of flight levels available. It is understood that availability of L509 and M875 involves civil-military coordination, which may require time.

2.17 In the interim, Thailand agreed to study the situation and if possible to extend the hours of operation of the ATFMU. ICAO thought it might not be necessary for the ATFMU be manned during the period as the system was robust. Thailand agreed to study the traffic and possible solutions, including the extension of the operating hours of the ATFMU, and to conduct a trial when ready.

2.18 India also requested that FL280 be made available for such traffic as the blocking of FL300 meant that only FL320 and higher was available. Traffic departing from Delhi had difficulty reaching the higher flight levels in the early stages of the flight.

2.19 India had also mentioned that an earlier solution which provide relief, and which was no longer available, was for the downstream ACC to accept a traffic pair at the same level with five minutes separation provided the pair of aircraft were flight planned to take separate routes in Kabul FIR, thereby ensuring lateral separation.

2.20 This issue required further consideration and States concerned were urged to continue efforts to work towards resolving this expeditiously.

*Note: Based on agreement of India, AEROTHAI had extracted December 2012 Traffic Sample Data showing the westbound traffic data volume at SAMAR during the period in question with results summarized in **Appendix C**.*

Communications issue between Afghanistan and Pakistan

2.21 The meeting was apprised of SCM between Afghanistan, IATA and ICAO at the Regional Office in Bangkok on 27 and 28 May 2013 during which the communications issues were discussed at length.

VPN circuit

Action Item 1: Near-term by end of September 2012, fully utilize the Virtual Private Network VPN circuit operational since January 2012 for exchange of Aeronautical Fixed Telecommunication Network (AFTN) traffic and organize training for users if required;

Status: The VPN circuit via U.K. has been operational in normal status. Messages exchanged over the circuit between Karachi and Kabul was as follows:

- March 2013: Received messages from Kabul 3307 and sent to Kabul 62152
- April 2013: Received 4062; sent 57344

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The number of flight plans received from Kabul by Lahore ACC in first 4 months of 2013 were as follows:

- January 105, February 108, March 106 and April 97. The number of Flights per day was from 15 to 25. Only about 18% flight plans were received before departure of the flights. This might have been because of operational reasons including lack of appropriate training to the operators and/or air traffic controllers in using the Aeronautical Fixed Service or some system discrepancy.

Lack of flight information received at Lahore / Karachi side for aircraft entering Pakistan airspace from Kabul Low Sector.

Action Item 2: Mid-term by end of March 2013, harmonize Very Small Aperture Terminal (VSAT) equipment and select common network service provider to recover the VSAT Links;

Status: VSAT at Pakistan side had been upgraded with spare parts imported from the supplier in Germany. The VSAT terminals on both sides had been aligned with ASIA SAT 5 through the common service provider. It had been fully tested and confirmed serviceable at Pakistan side. Efforts were made to conduct trials using the recovered VSAT, however, connectivity problems probably still existed from time to time including operational issues such as no response from Afghanistan side.

Action Item 3: Long-term by end of June 2014, establish 2 MB dedicated landline connection with multiplexers between Afghanistan and Pakistan to support both data and voice communication between Communication (COM) centers and ACCs

Status: Pakistan confirmed again that a landline cable was available up to the border (Torkhum) from Pakistan's side. No further progress had been made, as difficulties were experienced coordinating with Afghanistan.

It was agreed that a follow-up COM coordination meeting should be held by the end of 2013 in Pakistan to progress remedial actions.

Afghanistan mentioned that the location of the communications terminals might need to be re-examined as they were not optimally located.

ATS direct speech circuit between Pakistan and China

Mistakes made in transfer messages between Lahore and Urumqi ACCs in 2010 was initially brought to the notice of Pakistan and China. These errors were initially partly attributable to the unsatisfactory performance of ATS Direct Speech Circuit provided between the ACCs of the two States. A SCM between China and Pakistan was held in Karachi in 2011 resulting in the renewal of the LOA. Two separate International Subscriber Dialling (ISD) lines had been made available in Lahore ACC. Pakistan informed that the ISD lines were working satisfactorily and no major problem had been observed/reported. In the recent RASMAG/18 meeting held at the end of March 2013, this was reported as one of the issues causing concern that require further improvements and necessary remedial action. As a result of an investigation by China, the reason was identified as unstable ISD supporting the ATS direct communication operating.

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In order to resolve the problem raised by China, it was considered necessary, as a minimum requirement, to establish a direct ATS speech circuit between Lahore and Urumqi as the primary means for communications, and to keep the ISD as a secondary means. China had proposed to use the new technology of VSAT to provide an economical and efficient solution to the problem. Pakistan agreed to take urgent action to improve the ATS direct speech communication between Karachi and Urumqi ACCs. The meeting therefore recommended Pakistan in coordination with China to take necessary action to establish a dedicated ATS direct speech circuit between Lahore and Urumqi. The dedicated circuit to be established would serve as the primary means for the ATS coordination and the existing ISD circuit between two ACCs was to be kept as an alternate means. The ICAO APAC Office was also requested to facilitate the coordination for early implementation.

List of Action Items

2.22 The List of Action items is at **Appendix D**. The meeting agreed that outcomes were to be reported through BOBASIO and ASIOACG meetings.

Agenda Item 8: Any other business

2.23 Afghanistan informed the meeting that civil aviation activities were currently in transition in the state. With regard to ATM, they were increasing efforts to enhance infrastructure and manpower training.

2.24 ICAO informed the meeting that an ATFM steering group meeting would be held in late September ATFM in Hong Kong China and encouraged states to participate in its work. ICAO also informed the meeting that states should take into account the requirements of the Seamless ATM plan in future infrastructure improvements and implementation.

2.25 India felt that Oman's presence was necessary in future meetings as the Muscat FIR adjoins the Mumbai FIR. Meeting agreed that Oman should be invited to participate in meetings concerning ATM improvements for the region involving the Arabian Sea.

2.26 IATA thanked all the participants to the meeting. IATA felt that the meeting had clarified many of the outstanding measures arising from the implementation of 50NM horizontal separation in the airspace. IATA was grateful that states would be continuing to work on the remaining issues.

3. Closing

The Chairman thanked the meeting participants for their contributions.

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Appendix A to the Report

List of Participants

	Name	Title/Organization	TEL/FAX/E-MAIL
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	14. Mr. Owen Dell	Manager, International Operations Cathay Pacific Airways Limited International Affairs Department 9/F, Central Tower, Cathay Pacific City 8 Scenic Road Hong Kong International Airport Lantau Island Hong Kong, China	Tel: +852-2747 8829 Fax: E-mail: Owen_dell@cathaypacific.com

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Appendix B to the report



International Civil Aviation Organization

Special Coordination Meeting – Afghanistan, India and Pakistan

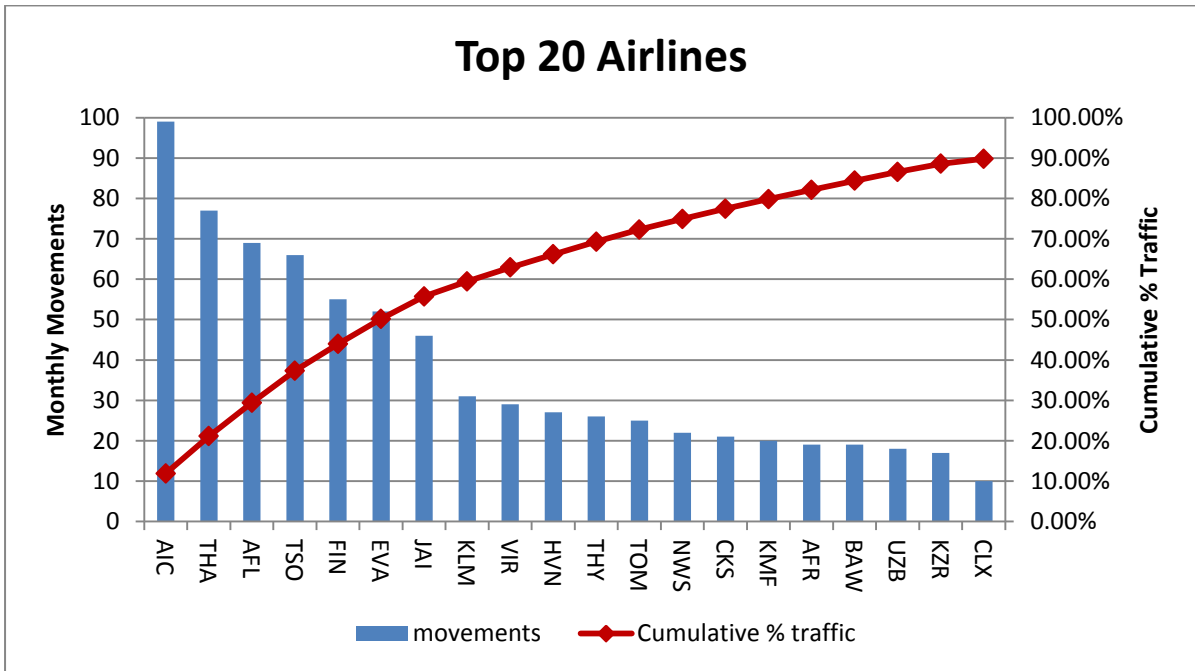
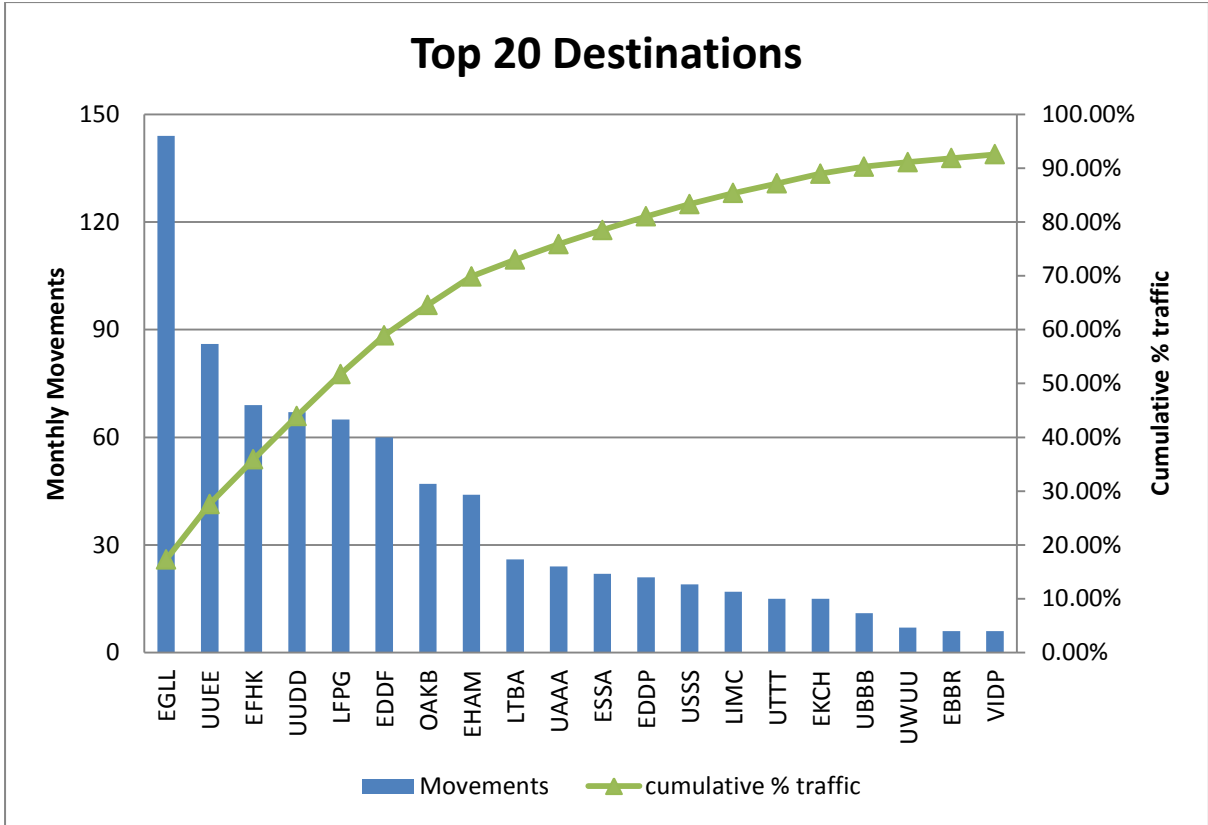
Bangkok, Thailand, 27 June 2013

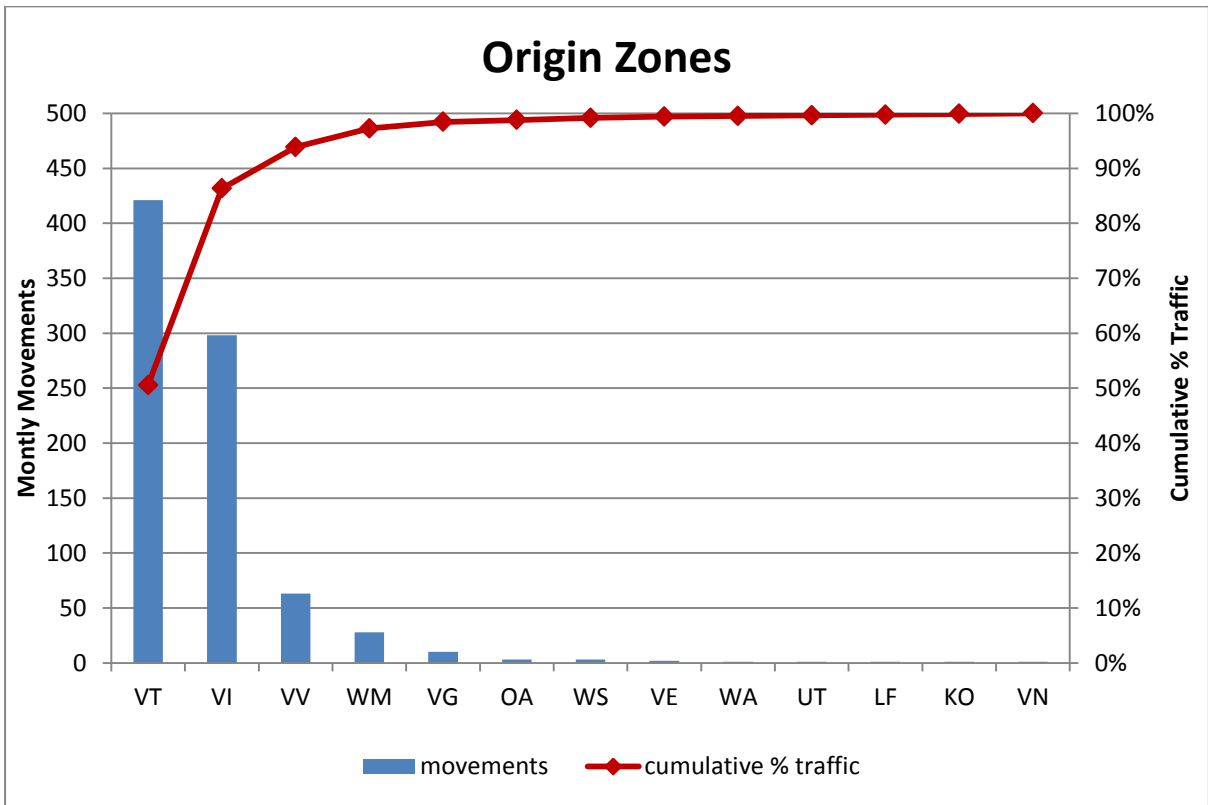
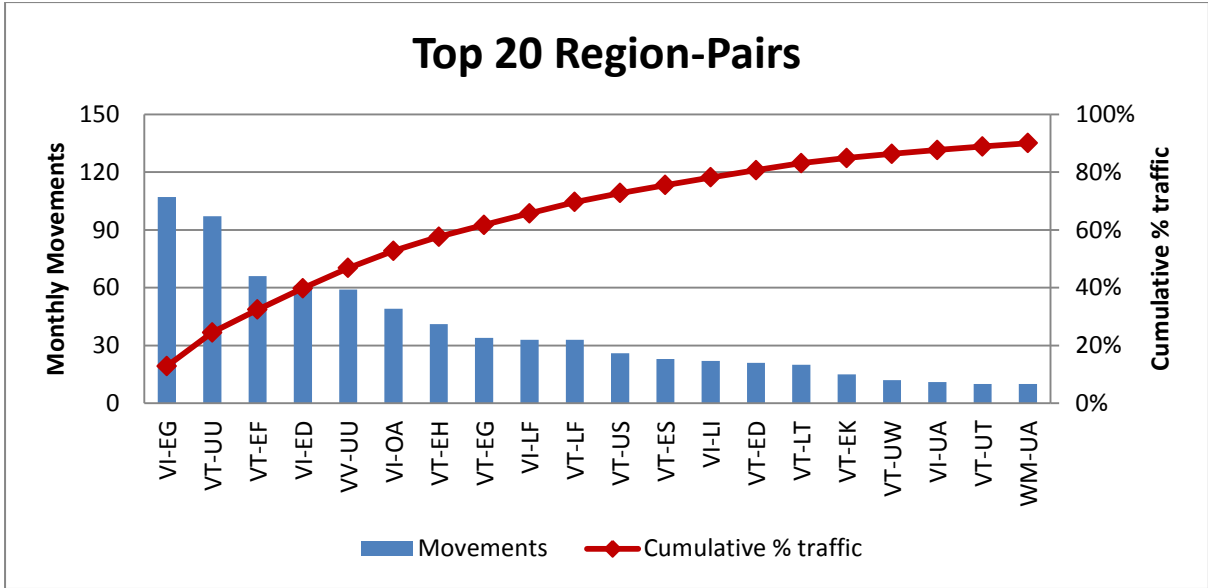
LIST OF WORKING PAPERS

(Presented by the Secretariat)

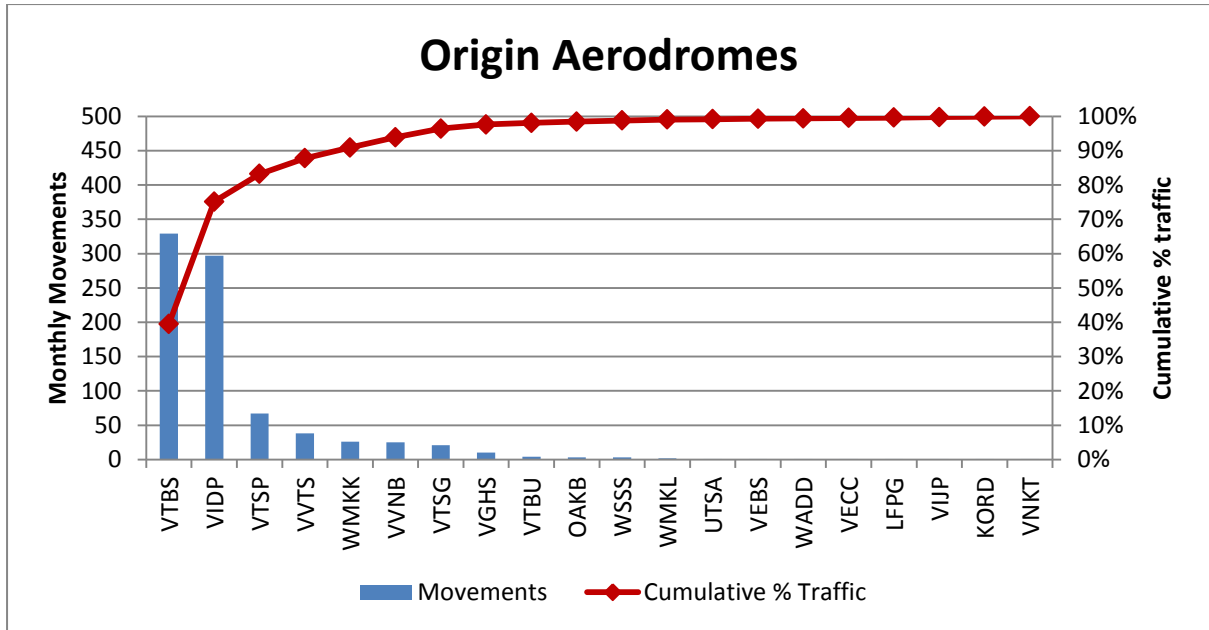
WORKING PAPERS

NUMBER	AGENDA	TITLE	PRESENTED BY
WP01	1	Provisional Agenda	Secretariat
WP02	2	Update on discussion held on 27 and 28 May 2013	Secretariat
WP03	3	Background and some operational issues	Secretariat
WP04	4	ATS Routes and Restrictions	Secretariat





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Appendix C to the report



SCM – Afghanistan, India and Pakistan
Appendix D to the report

List of Action Items

S/N	Issue	Afghanistan	Pakistan	India	Action
1.	Communications between Afghanistan and Pakistan			N/A	<p><i>By end of June 2014, establish 2 MB dedicated landline connection with multiplexers between Afghanistan and Pakistan to support both data and voice communication between COM centres and ACCs</i></p> <p>Afghanistan and Pakistan to resolve as soon as possible. Follow-up COM coordination meeting to be held by end 2013 in Pakistan to progress remedial actions</p>
2.	PRA/SERKA Extension	N/A		Completed segment in India	Pakistan to continue internal action to facilitate implementation.
3.	G325 FL330 availability	N/A		N/A	Pakistan to review restriction
4.	G208/N895 TELEM routing	N/A			India and Pakistan to coordinate effort to resolve this.
5.	Converging routes in a downstream FIR	Agree	Agree	Agree	<p>Interim Measure: Transferring ACC to provide longitudinal or vertical separation prior to aircraft entering downstream FIR.</p> <p>Amend LOA if applicable</p>
6.	Align availability of conditional routes	N/A	L509: 1500-2359	L509: 1630-2230	Pakistan and India to consider aligning the opening and closing times. The preferred times were 1500 to 0030.
		N/A	N875: 1500-2359	N875: 1630-2230	
		N/A	N/A	L333: 1630-0030	
		N/A	P628: 1900-2359	N/A	
7.	FL Restrictions in Afghanistan FIR FL280/290 & FL300		N/A	N/A	Afghanistan will investigate the possibility of allowing FL280/290 on high sector routes outside BOBCAT hours.