



International Civil Aviation Organization

The Second Meeting of the APANPIRG ATM Sub-Group (ATM/SG/2)

Hong Kong, China, 04 – 08 August 2014

Agenda Item 6: AOP, MET, AIM, SAR

ASIA/PACIFIC SEARCH AND RESCUE TASK FORCE (APSAR/TF)

(Presented by the United States of America)

SUMMARY

The Asia/Pacific Search and Rescue Task Force (APSAR/TF) was established by the ICAO Bangkok Regional Office with the objective of considering the enhancement and improvement of SAR capabilities within the Asia/Pacific Region and adjacent regions. Recent events indicate at least two areas on which the APSAR/TF should be considered for focused attention in the near term.

This paper relates to –

Strategic Objectives:

A: *Safety – Enhance global civil aviation safety*

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Asia/Pacific Search and Rescue Task Force (APSAR/TF) was established by the ICAO Bangkok Regional Office with the objective of considering the enhancement and improvement of SAR capabilities within the Asia/Pacific Region and adjacent regions. Based upon the results from its first two sessions, the APSAR/TF provides commendable service and valuable outputs for consideration by the ICAO Bangkok Regional Office and all of its States. To the credit of the Asia/Pacific region, more States are participating and are also very active in the discussions and sharing of information and views on SAR.

1.2 The mystery of the disappearance of Malaysia Flight MH 370 is still unfolding and the final investigation report could be years away. However, there may be SAR concerns similar to those revealed by other aircraft incidents at sea in recent years, including the Air France flight AF 447 in 2009. The global community, as well as the Asia/Pacific region would benefit by gathering the experiences and lessons learned from this incident before they are forgotten.

1.3 In May 2014, the ICAO Council received the informal briefing “Accident Site Location and Data Retrieval – *Progress Since 2009 and the Work Ahead.*” SAR was a significant part of the presentation. On the matter of “AF 447 Recommendations to ICAO”, ICAO action included “...in identifying the priority that needed to be placed on SAR in the APAC Region, APANPIRG established the Asia/Pacific Regional Search and Rescue Task Force in 2012. They will deliver a draft regional Search and Rescue Plan in 2015.”

2. DISCUSSION

2.1 The disappearance of Malaysia Flight MH 370 is a unique incident in many ways but it also could have SAR concerns that have been revealed by other aircraft incidents at sea over the years. A typical practice is to record all of these concerns in a final investigation report. However, there were many separate parts in the search, numerous States involved and no one knows when the overall final report will be published. Most likely, several of the States will produce internal reports which could provide helpful insights on SAR. The Asia/Pacific region in particular, and ICAO overall, would greatly benefit if such SAR experiences (lessons learned, recommendations, findings, etc.) were provided to the ICAO Bangkok Regional Office. In turn, the ICAO Bangkok Regional Office would benefit if there was a single point for receiving, consolidating and reviewing this information. The APSAR/TF could provide this function.

2.2 The draft regional “Search and Rescue Plan” will receive extensive effort to finalize its text at the next session of the APSAR/TF. The regional Plan is already being discussed within ICAO Headquarters, and it will greatly enhance and improve SAR capabilities within the Asia/Pacific Region and adjacent regions. Asia/Pacific States are encouraged to review the Plan and provide their advice to the APSAR/TF or, preferably, participate in the next session scheduled in January 2015.

3. ACTION BY THE MEETING

3.1 The meeting is invited to:

- a) consider encouraging States to submit SAR experiences (lessons learned, recommendations, findings, etc.) from the ongoing effort for Malaysia MH 370, and where to deliver that information for consolidation and initial review; and,
- b) consider encouraging States to review and provide advice to the APSAR/TF regarding its draft regional SAR Plan, and actively participate in the next APSAR/TF scheduled for January 2015.

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