



International Civil Aviation Organization

**The Third Meeting of the Ad Hoc Afghanistan Contingency Group Meeting
(AHACG/3)**

Muscat, Oman, 11 – 14 May 2015

Agenda Item 2: Afghanistan ATS Status and Capability Building

COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATION MEETING OUTCOMES

(Presented by the Secretariat)

SUMMARY

This paper presents information from the Communications (COM) Coordination Meeting held in the IATA Office, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates (UAE), on 25-26 February 2015.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The objective of the COM Coordination Meeting was to update the remedial action plan agreed earlier for the identified air navigation deficiency in the COM field from a technical and operational perspective.

1.2 The meeting was attended by Representatives from Iran (IR), IATA Middle East and North Office (MENA) and ICAO APAC. Due to internal State Ministry processes, the registered participants nominated by Afghanistan Civil Aviation Authority (ACAA) and by Pakistan Civil Aviation Authority (PCAA) were unable to attend, which was a disappointment as it was agreed and the need for the face to face meeting was crucial to address the actions plans.

2. DISCUSSION

Key Issues

2.1 The meeting noted that 28 February 2015 was the day that existing service contract for VSAT service supporting air/ground VHF communication covering Kabul FIR and ground/ground communication between States concerned would expire. While expressing appreciation for the action taken by the ACAA regarding the successful change between the VSAT service providers, the meeting urged Afghanistan to take any necessary action to make an arrangement for the experts from the new service provider to conduct site surveys at VSAT sites in Pakistan and Iran.

2.2 Afghanistan also informed that the ground facilities for High Frequency (HF) air/ground communication serving as back-up during the transition and for future daily operational use had been installed. Lack of information was noted regarding the operational HF frequencies in the NOTAM issued by ACAA. In addition, training for those radio operators on HF radio communication skills would also be required.

2.3 Iran informed the meeting that the data (AFTN) communication had been out of order for a number of years between Iran and Afghanistan/Pakistan.

2.4 **Attachment A** provides the complete report of the meeting.

3. ACTION BY THE MEETING

3.1 The meeting is invited to:

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

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INTERNATIONAL CIVIL AVIATION ORGANIZATION

COM COORDINATION MEETING

Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates (UAE)

25 -26 February 2015

MEETING REPORT

(SUMMARY OF DISCUSSIONS)

1. Introduction

1.1 In accordance with actions items agreed at the COM Coordination Meeting held in December 2014 in New Delhi, India, a follow-up meeting was held in the IATA Office, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates (UAE), on 25-26 February 2015. The objective of the meeting was to update the remedial action plan agreed earlier for the identified air navigation deficiency in the COM field from a technical and operational perspective. The meeting noted that 28 February 2015 was the day that existing service contract for VSAT service supporting air/ground VHF communication covering Kabul FIR and ground/ground communication between States concerned would expire.

1.2 The meeting was attended by Representatives from Iran (IR), IATA Middle East and North Office (MENA) and ICAO APAC. Due to internal State Ministry processes, the registered participants nominated by Afghanistan Civil Aviation Authority (ACAA) and by Pakistan Civil Aviation Authority (PCAA) were unable to attend, which was a disappointment as it was agreed and the need for the face to face meeting was crucial to address the actions plans. The Secretariat informed the meeting that the letter of invitation was issued on time according to the action plan agreed. IATA expressed that hosting such meeting was their second attempt to have a face-to-face meeting in order to offer any required assistance and also to gain confidence by IATA member airlines through transparent action plans well developed and commonly agreed. Afghanistan joined the meeting through e-mails and a telephone connection, Pakistan provided input and required information to the meeting through e-mails. A list of participants and their contact details are provided in **Appendix A**.

1.3 The meeting reviewed the action plan and discussed issues against agenda items per WP/01.

2. Issues discussed and updated

2.1 The meeting reviewed the outcome of the APANPIRG/25 meeting on the air navigation deficiencies in which the poor ground/ground communication between Afghanistan and Pakistan was listed. The meeting further reviewed the outcome of the Second Meeting of the Ad Hoc Afghanistan Contingency Group (AHACG/2) held in November 2014 which was relevant to the ground/ground communication issues between Iran and Afghanistan.

2.2 The AFS communications requirements between the States concerned as specified in the Regional Air Navigation Plan (ICAO Doc.9673 Vol. II) FASID Tables were reviewed by the meeting through WP/02. The meeting noted that the ground/ground Aeronautical Fixed Communication between States played a vital role for provision of Air Navigation Services to the operators and other air spaces users.

2.3 The meeting also reviewed the outcome and action items resulted from the COM Coordination meeting held in December 2014 in India.

2.4 Through e-mails Afghanistan informed the meeting that in following up the action plan agreed earlier, ACAA had signed the contract with the service provider (SpaceCom). The service scope continued the satellite spectrum service with the existing spectrum service provider – ASIASAT 5. The contract would have included the maintenance service and recovered those VSAT ground stations which had been out of service. Some parts of these VSAT terminals may need to be upgraded and most of parts of existing terminals can be extended for use. This would also apply to those terminals located in the Pakistan and Iran.

2.5 Afghanistan further informed the meeting the changeover to the new service provider had taken place in evening of 25th February 2015 lasting about 2 hours. The change took place this time include all eight VSAT. The other three sites would be connected at the next step. It was reconfirmed later in the evening and on 26 February 2015 the changes, including relay link frequencies changes in the C-bands, were carried out successfully around 19:30 hours, 25 February 2015. VHF air/ground communication for Air Traffic Service was working successfully through SpaceCom International.

2.6 While expressing appreciation for the action taken by the ACAA regarding the successful change between the VSAT service providers, the meeting urged Afghanistan to take any necessary action to make an arrangement for the experts from the new service provider to conduct site surveys at VSAT sites in Pakistan and Iran. Such need was also identified by the COM coordination meeting held in December 2015.

2.7 Afghanistan was reminded of the responsibly, given to the new service provider, for the end-to-end testing between VSAT terminals in Pakistan and Afghanistan. Pakistan and Iran were also urged to take a cooperative approach and provide the required assistance for such a survey. Any recommendations derived from such a survey need to be further discussed and agreed upon among States concerned.

2.8 Afghanistan also informed that the ground facilities for HF air/ground communication serving as back-up during the transition and for future daily operational use had been installed. Lack of information was noted regarding the operational HF frequencies in the NOTAM issued by ACAA for the period of changeover and for the daily operation, The meeting noted that in order to make the availability of HF air/ground communication capability for Kabul FIR, necessary training for those radio operators on HF radio communication skills would also be required, subject to the further discussions with the parties concerned in Afghanistan. In addition, HF day and night frequencies to be guarded by Kabul ACC should also be made available through the established procedures.

2.9 In this connection, Iran (I.R.) informed that the HF frequencies used by Teheran and published in their AIP are as follows:

Night Frequencies: 5658 kHz; 5667 kHz; 6925 kHz; 8091 kHz and 8918 kHz.

Day Frequencies: 10018 kHz; 13312 kHz; 13288 kHz.

The communication status between Iran and Afghanistan/Pakistan

2.10 Iran informed the meeting that the data (AFTN) communication had been out of order for a number of years. The requirement for such circuit was listed in the MID Regional ANP (Air Navigation Plan). The traffic was currently sent via an alternate routing. The ATS voice communication was exchanged through International Direct Dial arrangement. The minimum operational requirement for voice communication was met.

2.11 Iran also informed the meeting that the Aeronautical Fixed Service (AFS) between Iran and Pakistan through a dedicated 64 Kbps leased line supporting both data and voice communication was satisfactory.

2.12 Pakistan echoed its confirmation that Pakistan had placed a router on the shared data circuit and both voice and data traffic was operating perfectly normally up until the date of the meeting. Additionally out-going AFTN/data traffic collected recently against their routing destinations were classified as follows:

B=02
C=89
E=395
K=339
L=388
M= Nil
S= Nil
T=Nil

2.13 The information of good performance of AFS communication between Iran (I.R.) and Pakistan should be taken into consideration when the contingency plan for the sub-region was developed.

2.14 IATA emphasized the need for open and transparent communications with Afghanistan CAA and ANS service providers impacting safety of flight i.e. Planned ATC system outages, replacements or airspace changes

Update remedial action plan

3.1 Since the key Administrations were not available for development of actions plans, the relevant action item agreed earlier and some additional action items developed by this meeting are listed below:

ACTION ITEM 1: Flight Plan and ATS message processing

That, Afghanistan make an arrangement for an expert to examine the procedure of Flight Plan and other movement ATS messages. So transmission and distribution of the ATS message to the neighboring FIR including Iran and Pakistan could be made in a timely manner.

ACTION ITEM 2: Restoration of VSAT Communications – Afghanistan and Pakistan

That, Afghanistan and Pakistan work with relevant service providers to harmonize VSAT terminal equipment to be used (through a technical survey) and recover the VSAT communication supporting both ATS voice and AFS data with target date of circuits restoration by May 2015.

ACTION ITEM 3: Restoration of VSAT Communications – Afghanistan and Iran (New Action Plan)

That, Afghanistan and Iran (I.R.) work with relevant service providers to harmonize VSAT terminal equipment to be used (through a technical survey) and identify a common network service provider for the Satellite Radio Spectrum with target date of circuits restoration by the end of 2015.

ACTION ITEM 4: Monitoring the air/ground communication – IATA (New Action Plan)

That, IATA provide timely feedback on the operational status of the air/ground communications (focusing VHF and HF in the future as well) to the Afghanistan Civil Aviation Authority (ACAA) and copy to ICAO APAC Regional Office.

3.2 Delegate from Iran (I.R.) further stated that the Islamic Republic of Iran will be ready to any cooperation to investigate the establishment of the VSAT or any other kinds of communications between Iran and Afghanistan. In following it, Iran would play the role of alternate AFS communication point between Afghanistan and Pakistan. However, any recommendations, actions to be taken need face-to-face discussions on technical and non-technical issues and achieving agreements among the concerned States (Afghanistan and Pakistan) and Iran (I.R.).

3.3 IATA suggested that the early opportunity for such a coordination meeting would be organized in conjunction with the Third meeting of the Ad Hoc Afghanistan Contingency Group (AHACG/3) to be held in Oman in Middle of May 2015.

4. Closing the Meeting

4.1 In closing the meeting, the Secretariat thanked IATA for hosting this meeting and their support on development of a remedial action plan for communication deficiencies identified by APANPIRG. Iran (I.R.) also expressed appreciation to ICAO Regional Office for organizing such COM coordination meeting although the key partners were unable to come for the face-to-face discussion. ICAO was requested to further facilitate such coordination in the future.

**COM Co-ordination Meeting
Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates
25 – 26 February 2015**

Appendix A to the Report

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

STATE/ORGANIZATION/ NAME	DESIGNATION/ADDRESS	TEL/FAX/-EMAIL
AFGHANISTAN (1)		
Mr. Mohd Shaker Popal	CNS Director Afghanistan Civil Aviation Authority (ACAA) Ministry of Transport and Civil Aviation Ansari Watt, P.O. Box 165 Kabul <u>AFGHANISTAN</u>	Tel: +93 (20) 231 1962 Mobile: +93 799 601 095 E-mail: engpopal@yahoo.com
	Provided input through e-mails and telephone conversation	
IRAN (ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF) (2)		
Mr. Ali Reza Sabahi	Junior expert in Communication Department. (Work in ACC) CNS Department Iranian Airports Holding Company, Tehran, Iran (I.R.)	Tel: +989122583688 +982144544057 Fax: +982144665478 E-mail: Alireza.cao@gmail.com
Mr. Seyyed Reza Yousefzadeh	Deputy of Communication Instrument Office CNS Department Iranian Airports Holding Company, Tehran, Iran (I.R.)	Tel: +982144665532 Fax: +982144665478 E-mail: seyyedreza.yousefzadeh@yahoo.com
PAKISTAN (1)		
Mr. Muhammad Fasih-uz-Zaman	Senior Additional Director Com-Ops Pakistan Civil Aviation Authority Headquarters Jinnah International Airport Terminal 1 Karachi 75200 <u>PAKISTAN</u>	Tel: is +9221 99242795 Fax: E-mail: Fasih-uz-zaman.Khan@caapakistan.com.pk
	Provided input/information through emails input	
IATA (1)		
Mr. George Rhodes	Assistant Director Infrastructure IATA P.O. Box 940587 Amman <u>JORDAN</u>	Tel: +962 79 944 4252 Fax: +962 (6) 593 9923 E-mail: rhodesg@iata.org

STATE/ORGANIZATION/ NAME	DESIGNATION/ADDRESS	TEL/FAX/-EMAIL
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ICAO (1)		
Mr. Li Peng	Regional Officer CNS International Civil Aviation Organization Asia and Pacific Office 252/1, Vibhavadi Road Ladyao, Chatuchak Bangkok 10900 <u>THAILAND</u>	Tel: +66 (2) 537-8189 Ext. 158 Fax: +66 (2) 537-8199 E-mail: PLi@icao.int
