



International Civil Aviation Organization

**Third Meeting of the Asia/Pacific Regional Search and Rescue Task Force
(APSAR/TF/3)**

Maldives, 25 – 29 January 2015

Agenda Item 4: Asia/Pacific and inter-regional SAR planning, coordination and cooperation

NEW ZEALAND SAR ASSISTANCE IN THE PACIFIC

(Presented by New Zealand)

SUMMARY

This paper presents information on assistance the New Zealand government has provided in the Pacific to improve SAR in the Pacific region.

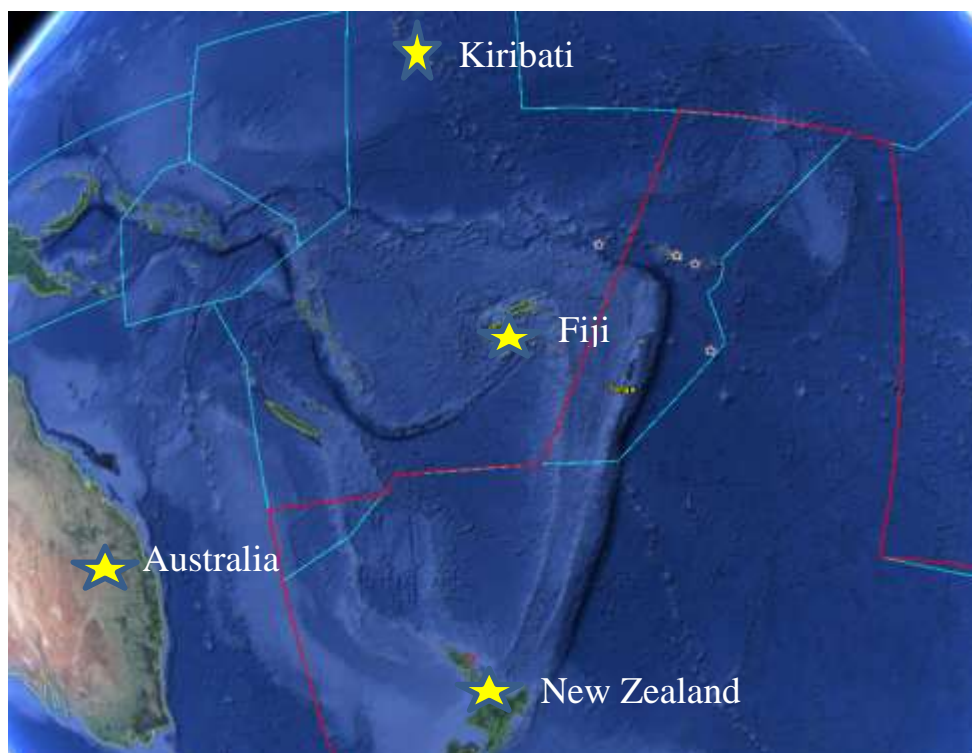
1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The paper is intended to inform members of assistance provided by the New Zealand government to Pacific Island nations of Kiribati and the Kingdom of Tonga to improve SAR in their areas of responsibility.

2. DISCUSSION

Kiribati

2.1 The island nation of the Independent and Sovereign Republic of Kiribati is part of the division of the Pacific islands known as Micronesia and is located approximately 4000 kilometers southwest of Hawaii and 4,000 kilometers north of New Zealand.



2.2 The local population relies heavily on fishing to provide food, often going many miles off shore in small open boats with a single outboard engine and no lifesaving equipment. Some of these vessels don't return and are reported missing, sometimes after a long delay, to authorities.

2.3 I-Kiribati lies within the northern part of the Fiji SRR and its isolation means there are few resources available to search for the missing vessels.

2.4 The Rescue Coordination Centre New Zealand (RCCNZ) provides assistance to the I-Kiribati authorities with the provision of search plans and aerial searching by Royal New Zealand Air Force P-3K2 aircraft at the request of MRCC Fiji.

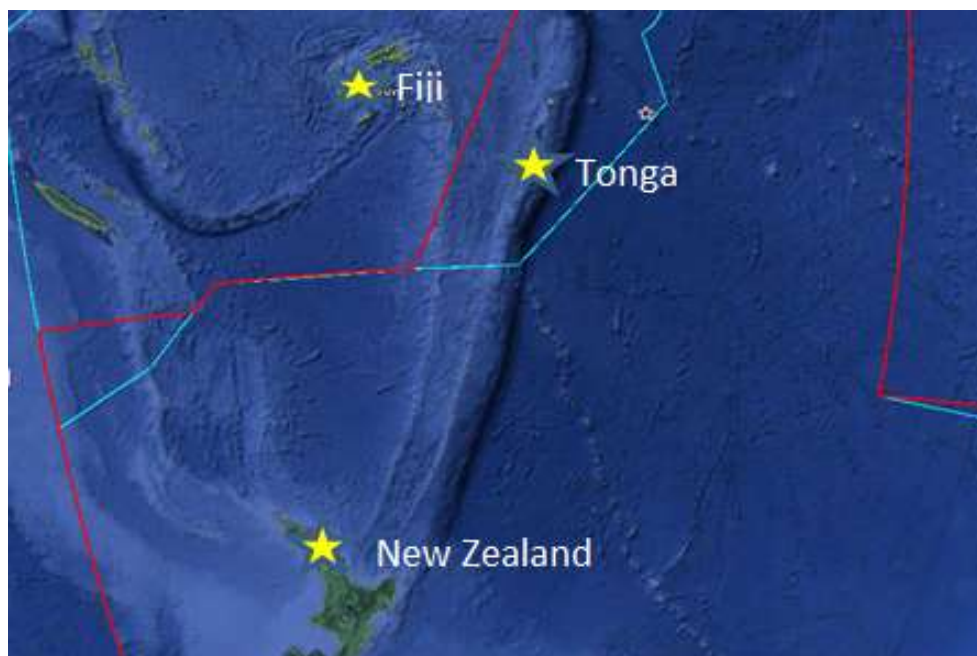
2.5 The New Zealand Government recognized the problem of the vessels going missing due to engine problems, vessels losing sight of land and travelling in the wrong direction, insufficient fuel to return home and no form of communication to indicate a problem.

2.6 In an effort to reduce the number of vessels going missing, a scoping visit was conducted by Maritime New Zealand and as a result, a number of initiatives have been agreed between the New Zealand and I-Kiribati governments that the New Zealand government will fund. These include:

- a. The purchase of a new 8.2 metre inshore rescue vessel;
- b. The re-establishment of a long range aid to navigation beacon on the south western point of the atoll of Tarawa and other beacons on telecommunications towers. ;
- c. The extension of the 3G mobile phone network to provide coverage for some of the marine area;
- d. Installation of a VHF repeater network in the Tarawa area;
- e. The provision of boating education and awareness to the community and donation of safety equipment upon completion of training; and
- f. The provision of SAR training to the relevant I-Kiribati SAR authorities.

Tonga

2.7 The Kingdom of Tonga is in the New Zealand Search and Rescue Region and is located 1000nm NE of New Zealand.



2.8 The New Zealand government was invited by the Tongan government to help develop a SAR structure and strategic National SAR Plan. The project is being financed by the New Zealand government and facilitated by RCCNZ. A scoping visit was completed to understand the requirements and from that a National SAR Plan was written. A workshop was held and attended by senior members of Tongan government agencies where the plan was presented, discussed and amended to suit their requirements and is to be presented to the Tongan Government for approval.

2.9 Under the National SAR Plan, it was agreed a Joint Rescue Coordination Group would be formed and they are responsible for operational matters under the guidance of the National SAR Coordinator who is a member of the Police. The SAR Coordinator would report to the National SAR Committee who responsible for strategic SAR matters.

2.10 Although Tonga sits within the New Zealand SRR, any SAR capability Tonga builds helps both New Zealand and Tonga with a coordinated approach to SAR and the Government of Tonga is to be commended for taking the initiative on this matter.

3. ACTION BY THE MEETING

3.1 The meeting is invited to note the information contained in this paper.