



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

INDIAN OCEAN SEARCH AND RESCUE CAPABILITY PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM

(Presented by Australia)

SUMMARY

This paper presents a new initiative between Australia, the Maldives, Mauritius and Sri Lanka with the objective of improving regional SAR service capability in the Indian Ocean region.

1. INTRODUCTION

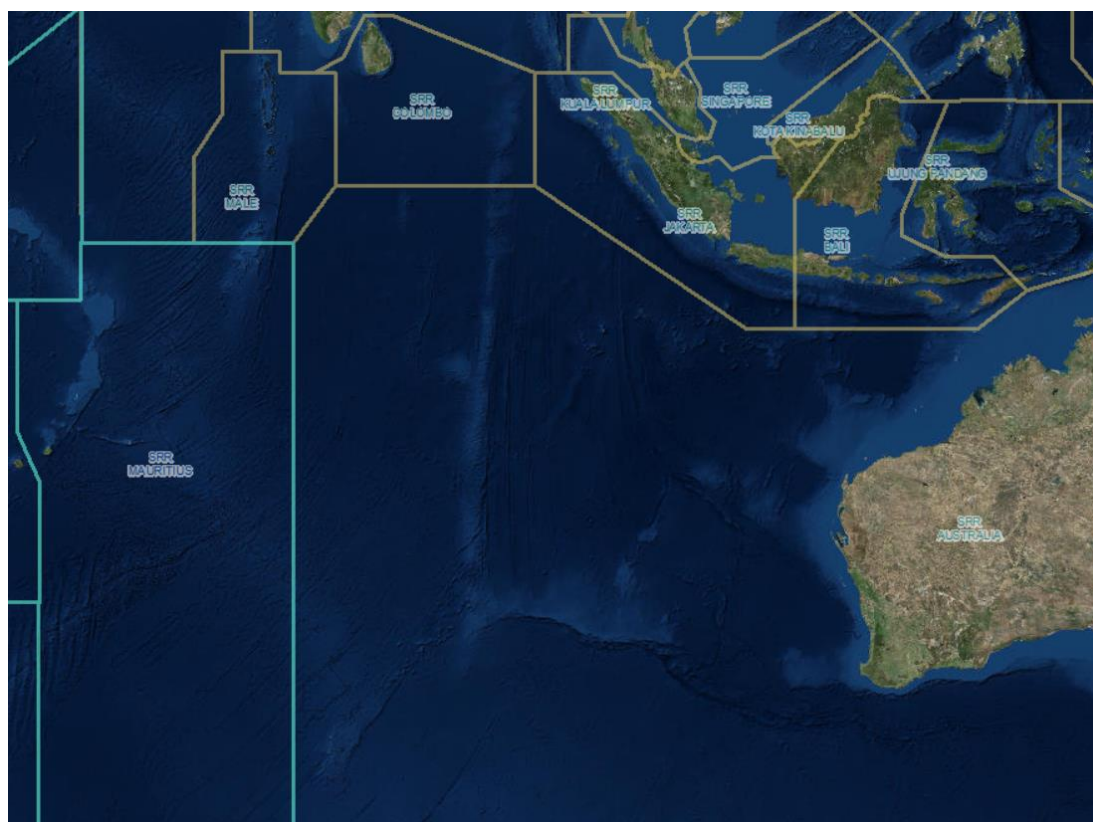
1.1 The last decade has seen a steady increase in air traffic over the oceanic areas of the Indian Ocean region which is expected to continue to grow. The Indian Ocean region has also seen changes in air traffic patterns. For example, airlines which used to fly between Europe and Australia via South-East Asian airport hubs are now increasingly flying via Middle Eastern airport hubs such as Dubai, Abu Dhabi and Doha direct to Australian airports and in the process are transiting the vast, and in places remote, Indian Ocean for many hours at a time. Maritime shipping traffic is also increasing across the Indian Ocean.

1.2 As already noted through this Task Force and reported to the ICAO Asia/Pacific Planning and Implementation Regional Group (APANPIRG) there are weaknesses within the Indian Ocean region SAR system which need to be addressed. Noting the previously mentioned increases in Indian Ocean airline and shipping traffic, it is therefore reasonable to assume there will be an increased demand for SAR services from both the aviation and maritime community in this region.

1.3 Australia has a very large Search and Rescue Region (SRR) with responsibility for nearly 11% of the world. This includes a very large area of the Indian Ocean with some very remote locations presenting a challenge to Australia's ability to respond in a timely manner to distress situations. Australia's Indian Ocean SAR neighbours include Indonesia, Reunion (France), the Maldives, Mauritius, South Africa and Sri Lanka. For Australia and these neighbouring States to be able to fulfil their collective SAR obligations in these more remote areas of the Indian Ocean, it is essential to have strong cooperative and well established SAR working relationships as it is likely in most SAR responses for these States to need the help of their neighbours to save lives. Of course the same importance for strong cooperative and well established SAR relationships also extends to the other Indian Ocean SAR States spanning ICAO's Asia/Pacific, Middle East and African Regions.

1.4 Recognising the previously noted factors the Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) made a submission to the Australian Government's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade in 2014 seeking funding for a program to assist with the development of the SAR systems of the Maldives, Mauritius and Sri Lanka. (Note Australia and Indonesia have been working very successfully together over the past decade with improving SAR capability between the two States).

1.5 AMSA was successful with its application and received funding approval for a new three year Indian Ocean region Search and Rescue initiative named the Search and Rescue Capability Partnership Program (SCPP) which commenced in January 2015.



Central Indian Ocean SAR Regions

2. DISCUSSION

Search and Rescue (SAR) Capability Partnership Program (SCPP)

2.1 The SCPP is between the Australian Maritime Safety Authority, Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, and the aeronautical and maritime SAR Agencies of the Maldives, Mauritius and Sri Lanka. The program will assist partner countries to strengthen their national SAR services to enable more effective response to aviation and maritime SAR situations in their SRRs and enhance cooperative SAR response capability across regional SRR boundaries. Approximately \$3 million Australian dollars have been made available to fund this initiative between January 2015 and June 2017.

2.2 The SCPP will commence with a SAR Gap Analysis of the existing aeronautical and maritime SAR capabilities of the Maldives, Mauritius and Sri Lanka against the SAR requirements of the relevant International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and International Maritime Organization (IMO) Conventions. The ICAO/IMO International Aeronautical and Maritime SAR (IAMSAR) Manual will be used to guide the program. The SAR Gap Analysis will use the National Self-Assessment on Search and Rescue, found at Appendix H of Volume I of the IAMSAR Manual, as a basis for assessment of requirements.

2.3 The SAR Gap Analysis outcomes will inform the prioritization of, and delivery and implementation plan for, core SAR systems and supporting documentation to meet the identified needs of each State over the program timeframe. It is envisioned that provision of SAR training for RCC personnel, SAR exercises and staff exchanges with JRCC Australia will likely form part of the program to promote the sharing of knowledge, improving SAR expertise and SAR working relationships.

2.4 The SCPP will also aim to improve regional SAR capability through better engagement and cooperation between SAR authorities and aim to be delivered in line with international standards according to ICAO and IMO guidelines. This program also compliments the development of an Indian Ocean Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on SAR which is currently being progressed through the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA). This MOU aims to enhance regional cooperation among the SAR authorities and agencies of the entire Indian Ocean region. It also aims to support global actions resulting from the disappearance of Malaysia Airlines flight MH370 in the Indian Ocean in 2014.

2.5 The objective of the SCPP is to provide long term sustainability of strengthened national SAR services for the Maldives, Mauritius and Sri Lanka. It is planned to include a significant focus on training, collective skilling strategies, exchange programs and sharing of specialist knowledge, not only between Australia and the individual countries, but also regionally between the four countries and encourage future cooperative efforts towards strengthened relationships beyond the life of the program. The program also aims to assist the partner States with meeting future ICAO and IMO audit requirements.

2.6 The Australian Maritime Safety Authority looks forward to working with the partner States to deliver improvements in capability and provision of more effective responses to aviation and maritime SAR incidents.

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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