



**Twenty First Meeting of the Africa-Indian Ocean Planning and Implementation Regional Group  
(APIRG/21)  
(Nairobi, Kenya, 9 – 11 October 2017)**

**Agenda Item 5: Regional Air Navigation Issues**

**5.2: Industry initiatives and other air navigation issues**

**REGIONAL AWARENESS SEMINAR ON THE AFI AIR TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT  
VOLCANIC ASH CONTINGENCY PLAN (VACP)**

*(Presented by Secretariat)*

**SUMMARY**

This paper presents the outcome of the Regional Awareness Seminar on the AFI Air Traffic Management (ATM) Volcanic Ash Contingency Plan (VACP) which was conducted as an ICAO Special Implementation Project (SIP) approved by the Council to provide assistance pursuant to APIRG Conclusion 18/53, and was hosted by Cameroon Civil Aviation Authority at the Hotel Sawa in Douala, Cameroon, from 4 to 7 September 2017.

**Action by the meeting is at paragraph 3**

**REFERENCE(S):**

- Doc 4444
- Doc 976,
- Doc 9691
- APIRG/18 and APIRG/19 Reports
- EUR/NAT VACP
- IP/13

**Related ICAO Strategic Objective(s):** *A – Safety, B – Air Navigation Capacity and Efficiency, D – Economic Development of Air Transport, and E – Environmental Protection.*

**1. INTRODUCTION**

1.1 Following APIRG Meeting Conclusion 19/19 which requires States in the AFI region to develop Volcanic Ash Contingency Plans and append them to their ATM Contingency Plan; and APIRG Meeting Conclusion 18/53 which directs ICAO Regional Offices of Dakar and Nairobi through the ATM/MET Task Force, to conduct regional awareness seminars on the AFI ATM Volcanic Ash Contingency Plan in view of:

- a) Making all aviation stockholders in the AFI region aware of ATM VACP
- b) Supporting its implementation
- c) Proposing further improvements to the plan

1.2 A Regional Awareness Seminar on the AFI Air Traffic Management Volcanic Ash Contingency Plan was conducted as an ICAO Special Implementation Project (SIP) in Douala, Cameroon, from 4 to 7 September 2017 and hosted by Cameroon Civil Aviation Authority.

## 2. DISCUSSION

2.1 The main objective of the Regional Awareness Seminar on the AFI Air Traffic Management Volcanic Ash was to provide awareness and assistance towards the development of the AFI VACP and provide guidance that would prepare for the development of the Exercise Directives (VOLCEX) in the AFI Region, pursuant to APIRG Conclusion 18/53.

2.2 The seminar comprised of 20 presentations from the facilitators ICAO, States and International Organizations. Also the participants worked in an Exercise Directive (ED) preparation, while the ICAO Team provided the outlines and guidance for its development. Finally, the participants developed and presented a draft of an Exercise Directive that could be used as a future baseline.

2.3 The participants were presented with the EUR/NAT VACP, which was compared with the AFI VACP. They provided comments regarding the future amendments to be undertaken in the AFI VACP and highlighted the deficiencies in communication at regional level which is an obstacle to ensuring reliable and efficient coordination among the agencies during an event of crisis

2.4 The participants were also presented with the impact on air traffic across the globe as a result of the eruption of the Eyjafjallajökull volcanic, in Iceland which occurred in April and May 2010. Due to the specificities and differences among ICAO Regions, there was common understanding that the VACP should be adapted to their realities and Regional characteristics.

2.5 The participants were presented with the airspace users' position and expectations from IATA and IFALPA. It was noted that the potential volcanic ash hazard should be treated similarly to any other significant meteorological hazard and airlines assess their abilities and derive to operate in the vicinity of areas affected by volcanic ash through a risk assessment process based on information received from Volcanic Ash Advisory Centres (VAACs) and other information sources. As such States were requested to avoid closing their airspace due to volcanic ash events.

2.6 Despite the fact that States are required to submit their ATM Contingency Plan together with the Volcanic Ash Contingency Plans to ICAO, to date, many States have not submitted its National ATM Contingency Plan with the Volcanic Ash Contingency Plan and Public Health Emergency.

2.6 The seminar came up with the following outcomes:

- a) There is a need to establish a mechanism for communication to enable the transmission of information on a volcano eruption from the Volcano Observatory to the Meteorological Watch Office (MWO) and appropriate ATS Units by the fastest means possible, in order for such information (VONA ASHTAM) to be disseminated to airspace users. Such procedures should be formalized through SLAs or MoUs.
- b) That air navigation States/Service providers (ANSPs) should avoid closing down an airspace due to a volcano eruption without consultation and collaborative decision making process involving the operators and other aviation stakeholders;
- c) States should ensure that the SMS of airline operators, registered within their authority, include provisions for volcanic ash contingency;
- d) States with active or potentially active volcano, should register with agencies providing satellite monitoring and imaging of volcanoes in order to be able to receive such information and data necessary when implementing the VACP;
- e) States should develop and conduct Volcanic Ash exercises using the guidance for conducting volcanic ash exercises in Appendix F of ICAO Doc 9766- Handbook on the

International Airways Volcano Watch (IAVW);

- f) States, which have not done so, urged to finalize the development of their ATM Contingency Plans that fully integrate the AFI ATM VACP as an appendix, in accordance with APIRG Conclusion 19/19.

2.7 Pursuant to APIRG 18/53 (c), the seminar reviewed the AFI Volcanic Ash Contingency Plan for improvements and proposed a draft AFI VACP which requires further consideration by APIRG Sub-groups (**IP/13 refers**).

2.8 The seminar took note that the need for the development of a regional contingency plan is captured under the list of Airspace and Aerodromes Operations Projects as A5 – Contingency Planning and Operational Coordination (CPOC) and listed as Priority. Furthermore, the seminar recognized the important roles played by, and the need for close coordination between Aeronautical Meteorology and Aeronautical Information Management in Volcanic Ash activity and its impact on flight operations.

### **3. ACTION BY THE MEETING**

3.1 The meeting is invited to:

- a) note the information contained in this working paper;
- b) urge States should ensure that the SMS of airline operators, registered within their authority, include provisions for volcanic ash contingency;
- c) urge States with active or potentially active volcano, to register with agencies providing satellite monitoring and imaging of volcanoes in order to be able to receive such information and data necessary when implementing the VACP;
- d) States should develop and conduct Volcanic Ash exercises using the guidance for conducting volcanic ash exercises in Appendix F of ICAO Doc 9766- Handbook on the International Airways Volcano Watch (IAVW);
- e) States, which have not done so, urged to finalize the development of their ATM Contingency Plans that fully integrate the AFI ATM VACP as an appendix, in accordance with APIRG Conclusion 19/19; and
- f) request the APIRG Sub-groups to further consider the proposed improvements to the AFI VACP emanating from the SIP Seminar held in September 2017, in relation to the contingency plan and operational coordination project.

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