INTERNATIONAL CIVIL AVIATION ORGANIZATION

SIXTH MEETING OF THE STEERING COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONAL AVIATION SAFETY GROUP FOR AFRICA-INDIAN OCEAN (RASC/6) – VIRTUAL.

12 July, 2021

Agenda Item 1: Review of the status of implementation of the 2021 RASG-AFI Work Programme

1.1 RASG-AFI Projects and Critical Activities.

(Presented by the Secretariat)

SUMMARY
This paper provides some background and status of implementation of the 2021 RASG-AFI Work Programme for review and adoption by the RASC/6 meeting. Action to be taken by the Meeting is provided at paragraph 3 of the Paper
REFERENCE(S): RASG-AFI/6 Report
Related ICAO Strategic Objective(s): SAFETY

1.   **INTRODUCTION:**

The fifth meeting of the RASG-AFI Steering Committee (RASC) virtually held on 28 October 2020 endorsed the RASG-AFI programme of activities for 2021, which was later adopted by the sixth RASG-AFI meeting conducted virtually from 23 November to 2 December 2020.

This working paper, as a mid-term review, brings some highlights on the background, status of implementation and course of action relating to the various activities, initiatives and projects aiming at improving the overall level of safety in the RASG-AFI region, while outlining underlining challenges and proposing some recommendations.

2.   DISCUSSION:

2.1 Fundamentals of Safety Oversight (FSO) project

2.1.1.   The Fundamentals of Safety Oversight (FSO) project, funded by the AFI Plan, aims to support eligible States to establish the Fundamentals of Safety Oversight (FSO) system vis-à-vis the Critical Elements (CE) of a State Safety oversight system with particular emphasis on the establishment of CE1 through CE5.

2.1.2.   Accordingly, the project has recently been revised to assist and support nineteen (19) eligible States within the RASG-AFI Region namely; Angola, Burundi, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Djibouti, Eritrea, Eswatini, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Lesotho, Liberia, Libya, Malawi, Sao Tome and Principe, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Somalia, and South Sudan.

2.1.3.   The implementation of the project was initiated with the submission of the FSO project document together with a sample letter to be signed by each eligible State confirming formal acceptance of the project and commitment to implement the project's recommendations.

2.1.4.   Since the inception of the project in early 2018, at least one assistance mission was conducted in each beneficiary State and some of these missions were coordinated and conducted with the participation of relevant RSOO experts.

2.1.5.   However, limited progress towards increasing the level of effective implementation (EI) of the Critical Elements (CEs) of a State safety oversight system has, so far, been registered and this is evident by the following performance indicators:

a) current average USOAP score for the project States is 23.88%, up from 20.47%, though still below the world average of 68.68 %;
b) current number of the project eligible States that have achieved the target of 60% EI is zero; and
c) limited number of project States that have increased their individual EI since the commencement of the project; Seychelles, Comoros, Malawi, Eswatini and Burundi. This could partly be attributed to the limited number of USOAP CMA activities conducted in the concerned States.

2.2 Significant Safety Concerns (SSC) project

2.2.1   Currently, only one SSC in one State exists in the RASG-AFI region. This is the longstanding SSC in Eritrea, which was identified more than ten years ago in 2010 in the area of aircraft operations, specifically pertaining to the certification of air operators. There are seven other outstanding SSCs worldwide, the longest of which is only three years.

2.2.2   The continued existence of the SSC in Eritrea is contrary to the Abuja Safety Targets, specifically that a State should resolve an SSC within 6 months from the date of its official publication by ICAO.

2.2.3   The other most recent SSC identified in the RASG-AFI Region was in Côte d'Ivoire last year on 9 March 2020, specifically in the area of air navigation services pertaining to the ground and flight validations of published instrument flight procedures. On a positive note, Côte d'Ivoire immediately implemented corrective actions acceptable to ICAO to resolve the SSC, so the SSC was removed within a record period of less than four months from the date it was identified.

2.2.4   Since the inception of the SSC-SST in 2013 to date, 19 SSCs have been resolved in 12 States.

2.2.5   In spite of the long standing SSC in Eritrea, it is evident that the SST-SSC, under the championships of Ghana, South Africa and AFCAC, has achieved significant progress in assisting States to resolve actual or potential SSCs.

2.2.6   Here are some of the strategies adopted to realize this progress:
   a) Continuous monitoring of States' safety performance, with special emphasis on States with SSCs, low EI, high traffic, or complex aviation activities.
   b) Assistance by ICAO, including AFI Plan, TCB and ROST missions.
   c) Assistance to RASG-AFI States in need by stronger RASG-AFI States.
   d) Assistance by AFCAC through the AFI Cooperative Inspectorate Scheme (AFI-CIS).
   e) Assistance by RSOOs/COSCAPs to States in need.
   f) Assistance by development partners, including China, EU and the US.
   g) Assistance by Industry partners, including Airbus, Boeing, ACI, CANSO and IATA.

2.2.7   On the other hand, these are some of the significant challenges:
   a) Limited funding or budget to the SST-SSC
   b) Unwillingness , reluctance or refusal by some States to solicit or to accept assistance
   c) Unwillingness, reluctance or refusal by some States to inculcate a positive safety culture, including the sharing and exchange of safety data and information, especially through the USOAP CMA OLF and State Letters as well as to AFCAC.

2.3 Emerging Safety Issues (ESI) project, LOC-I

2.3.1 A RASG-AFI Workshop on Loss of Control in-Flight (LOC-I) and Upset Prevention and Recovery Training (UPRT) is held annually, under the auspices of the two ICAO Regional Offices (WACAF and ESAF) and Kenya as the RASG-AFI Champion for LOC-I.

2.3.2 The Workshop objectives are mainly to:
   • Sensitize States and stakeholders on the safety risks related to LOC-I;
   • Provide guidance on the implementation of SARPs relating to UPRT;
   • Assist in spearheading the implementation of the RASG-AFI 5-year plan on LOC-I;
   • Provide and maintain specific guidance material for States and stakeholders.

2.3.3 Last year's workshop put emphasis on deficiencies in the use/availability of flight simulators for UPRT and Instructor competencies, especially in the COVID-19 context, with many pilots being grounded for extended periods and the risk of skills and knowledge degradation.

2.3.4 It also enabled more alignment with provisions addressing High-Risk Categories of occurrences as contained in the 2020-2022 Edition of the GASP by the identification/reviewing at the level of the RASG-AFI region, of the following:
   • Organizational Challenges (ORG Roadmap);
   • Operational Safety Risks (OPS Roadmap);
   • Action Plans;
   • LOC-I RASG-AFI Safety Enhancement Initiatives (SEIs):
       ➢ ORG SEIs;
       ➢ OPS SEIs;
   • Performance.

2.3.5 As a way forward emphasis was put, in particular, on the necessity to:
- Consolidate the ORG and OPS safety initiatives at the State and stakeholders' levels;
- Collect and analyse safety data;
- Identify additional threats and develop corresponding safety enhancement initiatives as well as further mitigation measures;
- Update RASG-AFI Guidance and establish bridges between LOC-I initiatives and the State Safety Plans and Regional Safety Plan.

2.3.6 The next virtual LOC-I and UPRT Workshop which is scheduled to take place in November 2021 will enable, in particular, the assessment of progress made and lay out additional measures to be taken.

2.4 Aircraft Accident Investigation (AIG) project

2.4.1.   The AFI Plan project entitled "Establishment of Basic Aircraft Accident, Incident Investigation (AIG) Oversight Systems in RASG-AFI States" was designed to assist RASG-AFI States in the development of harmonized AIG legislation, regulations, and associated procedures required for the establishment of the critical elements (CEs) of a State Safety Oversight system with respect to AIG. This project facilitated the conduct of a series of workshops on the implementation of related AIG SARPs.

2.4.2.   The RASG-AFI Region has achieved steady continuous improvements in the effective implementation of the critical elements of a State's safety oversight system. However, in the area of aircraft accident and incident investigation, the RASG-AFI States group average EI in AIG was 42.32 % as of 01 June 2021, which is very low.

2.4.3.   To leverage and maintain the progress made so far, a new approach is being proposed in order to prioritize, assist and support States in that they will be provided direct assistance in the implementation of Annex 13 provisions. The expected beneficiary States are those with generally poor or low percentage of effective implementation of Safety oversight systems and in particular an AIG EI under 60%. Hence, the "Establishment of Basic Aircraft Accident, Incident Investigation (AIG) Oversight Systems in RASG-AFI States project", is renamed "Aircraft Accident and Incident Investigation (AIG) Systems Enhancement Project".

2.5 State Safety Programme (SSP)

2.5.1   The SSP implementation project was initially developed under the AFI Plan to support the establishment of a sound safety oversight system in twenty-four (24) States. The project was launched in February 2017 for a duration of 24 months with the following eligible States: Botswana, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Morocco, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa, Sudan, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, and Zimbabwe. Their eligibility was based on the attainment of the 60% EI regional target. With more RASG-AFI States attaining the 60% EI target, the SSP Project Document was revised to incorporate new eligible States including Benin, Congo, Gabon, Mozambique and Rwanda. In addition, the Project implementation approach was revised to take into account SSP implementation based on satisfactory implementation of SSP Foundation Protocol Questions (PQs).

2.5.2   During the course of the project, eligible States were provided with assistance and capacity building activities, which included safety management training and assistance in the review for acceptability and implementation of the USOAP Corrective Action Plan (CAP), for the SSP Foundation PQs as well as the review of the States' results of the SSP Gap Analysis Questions.

2.5.3   The table below shows the SSP status of implementation for the current 29 eligible states, based on the information reported by the States on the ICAO iSTARS, June 2021:

SSP Status of implementation for RASG-AFI SSP project (iSTARS) - Eligible States		
SSP Level of implementation	**# of States**	**% of States**
L0 - States not started a GAP analysis	5	17%
L1 - States started a GAP analysis	5	17%
L2 - States with Gap Analysis Completed	6	21%
L3 -States with Implementation Plan Defined	12	41%
L4 -States fully implemented their SSPs	1	3%
Total Number of States	29	100%

Note: Level zero (L0) means that State did not start or not report the project on iSTARS-GAP analysis tool

2.5.4   Although the RASG-AFI States achieved some progress on the SSP implementation, from the above results, it is evident that additional efforts from States and continuing support of ICAO will be required to ensure States meet the Annex 19 requirements and achieve the established related GASP Goal.

2.5.5   It is important to highlight that GASP edition 2020-2022, Goal 3, calls for States to effectively implement the SSPs. This goal addresses organizational challenges faced by States when implementing an SSP and includes the implementation of SMS by service providers within individual States, in accordance with Annex 19. The Goal 3, establishes two targets to be achieved in phased approach:

   a)   Target 3.1 calls for all States to implement the foundation of an SSP by 2022;and
   b)   Target 3.2, which calls for the implementation of an effective SSP by 2025. An "effective SSP" refers to an SSP that actually achieves the objectives that it is intended to achieve.

2.5.6   An extension of SSP project is required to ensure that the SSP Goal and Targets in the GASP are achieved; and to adopt a new approach to assist eligible RASG-AFI States in the implementation of the SSP. Assistance to a specific State will be provided based on the fulfilment of the eligibility criteria, that include the status of implementation of SSP foundation PQs and the level of progress on the SSP. A phased approach will be adopted to ensure that States have first, a robust foundation for an SSP and then progress into the implementation of an SSP. In addition, the project revision includes the establishment of a mechanism to improve coordination and collaboration among the States, which will support SSP development and implementation.

2.6 Aerodrome Certification.

2.6.1   The AFI Plan Steering Committee under the "No country left behind" initiative directed the AFI Plan Secretariat in December 2016 to initiate the Aerodrome Certification project aimed at supporting States to certify at least one international aerodrome and build capacity to certify the rest. The revised Abuja Safety Targets reviewed the Aerodrome Certification target for States to certify all international Aerodromes by 2022.

2.6.2   The aerodrome certification project designed initially to support 16 African States to certify at least one of their International aerodromes was launched in August 2016, in both ESAF and WACAF Regions. At the request of some States, four (4) other airports were added to the Project during this first phase.

2.6.3   In accordance with the project schedule, meetings/teleconferences with Directors General of CAAs and CEO of Airports of the beneficiary States as well as supporting States were conducted to sensitize them on the importance of the project and secure the required support. Following the high level meetings, aerodrome certification workshops were conducted in Accra, Lomé, Brazzaville and Nairobi for the benefit of Regulatory and airport personnel of both supporting and beneficiary States.

2.6.4   As outcomes of the workshops, beneficiary States prepared and submitted their action plans to the two ICAO Regional Offices in Dakar and Nairobi. Most States are progressing in the implementation of their plans, although some are behind schedule. Implementation assistance and progress monitoring missions were conducted by the project Team. So far, assistance provided led to the certification of 14 international Airports (Abidjan, Abuja, Bamako, Cotonou, Dakar, Kigali, Lagos, Libreville, Lusaka, Manzini, Maputo, Niamey, Ouagadougou and Windhoek) in thirteen beneficiary States.

2.6.5   The current percentage of certified aerodromes in the AFI region is 31.78 per cent. The fact that some aerodromes published in the eANP are neither used for international operations, nor compliant with SARPs, is negatively impacting the overall percentage of certified aerodromes. By December 2020, 50 per cent of AFI States developed aerodrome certification capacities.

2.6.6   The COVID 19 pandemic has hampered the progress on the project. However in order to ensure progress of the project, ICAO Regional Offices and nominated experts have been supporting the beneficiary States through virtual means. Many States in the WACAF Region received virtual and onsite assistance activities to support the Certification exercise.

2.7 The AFI-CIS Activities

2.7.1   AFCAC in collaboration with ICAO ESAF/ WACAF Regional Offices and EU-ASA Project hosted the 3rd AFI CIS Induction and Refresher workshop held virtually for eight consecutive days from 22 to 31 March 2021. A total of 70 AFI CIS inspectors from 21 African member States participated in the workshop. Out of the 70 participants, 58 were new AFI CIS Inspectors while 12 were experienced inspectors.

2.7.2   2.7.2 Beginning April 2021, AfDB is funding at least 11 AFI CIS technical assistance missions to SAATM member States whose EI is below 60%. The assistance program under the Project Implementation Agreement (PIA) will be supported for the triennium from 2021 to 2023. As of the end of June, Zimbabwe and Guinea have gone through the first phase of the technical assistance missions. AFI CIS activities are being supported by AfDB and ICAO through the Project Implementation Agreement.

2.8 **The 7th Edition of the RASG-AFI Annual Safety Report.**

2.8.1   For the seventh consecutive year since its inception, the RASG-AFI Annual Safety Report Team (ASRT) has produced the 7th Edition of the RASG-AFI Annual Safety Report (ASR) 2020, but this time, under an unprecedented circumstance that the world has been confronted with - the

outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic. The COVID-19 pandemic is more than a health crisis; it is an aviation safety crisis, an economic crisis, a humanitarian crisis, a security crisis, and a human rights crisis. A crisis that has highlighted severe fragilities and inequalities within and among nations; and presented new threats to the achievement of the RASG-AFI Work Programme and Targets, as the world's attention focused more on how to control the pandemic and facilitate aviation operations.

2.8.2   The Report is to be presented to RASC/6 for endorsement; and subsequent official release at the Extra-Ordinary AFI Aviation Week Events. The electronic version of the Report will be available in PDF format, on the ICAO Western and Central African Regional Office website: http://www.icao.int/wacaf/Pages/default.aspx and the ICAO Eastern and Southern African Regional Office website: http://www.icao.int/esaf/Pages/default.aspx.

2.9 The RASG-AFI Procedural Handbook, Third Edition.

2.9.1   The RASG-AFI Procedural Handbook is a publication prepared by the ICAO Secretariat and adopted by the RASG-AFI. Its purpose is to provide, for easy reference, a consolidation of material, particularly of a procedural nature, about the work of the RASG-AFI. The Secretariat reviews and updates the Handbook periodically, and as required, to ensure a result-oriented approach. The Third Edition of the RASG-AFI Procedural Handbook reflects the ICAO Council's review of the reporting structure and terms of reference, functions and participation of the Planning and Implementation Regional Groups (PIRGs) and the Regional Aviation Safety Groups (RASGs) and the adoption of revised terms of reference as published by the ICAO Secretary General under Electronic Bulletin EB 2019/43, as further amended following its Review of Assembly Resolutions and Decisions (C-DEC 219/7).

2.9.2   The Third Edition of the Handbook has been produced in the English and French languages, the electronic versions of which will be available in PDF format, on the ICAO Western and Central African Regional Office website: http://www.icao.int/wacaf/Pages/default.aspx and the ICAO Eastern and Southern African Regional Office website: http://www.icao.int/esaf/Pages/default.aspx.

2.10   The proposed amendment of the Terms of Reference (ToR) of the Safety Support Teams (SSTs).

2.10.1 To assist in its work and support the development, implementation and prioritization of RASG-AFI safety initiatives, the Group may create contributory bodies (Safety Support Teams (SSTs)) to discharge the RASG-AFI work programme by working on defined subjects requiring detailed technical expertise. The SSTs should accomplish their tasks by developing mitigation strategies which shall be focused on the Global Aviation Safety Plan (GASP), corresponding Safety Enhancement Initiatives (SEIs) and the associated Global Aviation Safety Roadmap (GASR).

2.10.2 The Secretariat has made proposals for the restructuring of the existing four Safety Support Teams: Significant Safety Concerns (SSCs), Fundamentals of Safety Oversight (FSO), Aircraft Accident and Incident Investigation (AIG) and Emerging Safety Issues (ESI), designed to better align their

functions to the GASP. These proposals when ready, shall be presented for the endorsement of RASC and subsequent approval by RASG-AFI.

3.   ACTION BY THE MEETING:

3.1.   The meeting is invited to:

a)   Endorse the revised AFI Plan projects;

b)   Support the appropriation of funding from either SAFE, AFI Plan or other financial partners for the efficient implementation of the AFI Plan projects, particularly the resolution of the SSC in Eritrea;

c)   Support States implement comprehensive training programmes, with special emphasis on on-job-training (OJT) whereby inspectors from these States can be attached to States with relatively mature safety oversight systems in order to learn from best practices;

d)   Foster the intensification of technical assistance to States with special emphasis on assisting States to perform self-assessment using the CMA Protocol Questions and, when applicable, develop and implement corresponding corrective action plans (CAPs); and

e)   Co-opt into the FSO Project those States that have never been audited under USOAP, specifically South Sudan and Somalia, which clearly deserve special assistance towards the establishment of adequate safety oversight systems;

f)   Urge:

   i.   States to regularly report on progress made at their level on the implementation of the LOC-I 5-year Plan of action;

   ii.   States, Organizations, air operators and training organizations to nominate experts and to actively participate in the activities of the Core Expert Group on LOC-I and UPRT, including the annual LOC-I workshop; and

   iii.   SST-ESI to continuously enhance the RASG-AFI LOC-I Model guidance material;

g)   Support the SSP project extension with the proposed approach;

h)   Encourage States and support the implementation of the SSP project including but not limited to release identified Resources Experts to participate in the collaboration mechanism;

i)   Encourage States to aggressively pursue the Certification of their International Aerodromes;

j)   Recognize the effort deployed and consistency of the RASG-AFI Annual Safety Report Team in producing the Annual Safety Report consecutively for Seven years since its inception;

k)   Urge the Secretariat to pursue the restructuring of RASG-AFI in view of better aligning it with the Goals and Targets of the current GASP;

l)   Urge stakeholders to maintain or even increase their support to the SSTs, especially in terms of funding;

m)   Urge States to solicit or accept assistance to resolve safety issues; and

n)   Urge States to inculcate a positive safety culture, including the sharing and exchange of safety data and information, especially through the USOAP CMA OLF and State Letters as well as to AFCAC.

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