International Civil Aviation Organization

MIDANPIRG ATM Sub-Group

First Meeting (ATM SG/1)
(Cairo, Egypt, 9 – 12 June 2014)

Agenda Item 7:   SAR Issues

PROPOSAL FOR ENHANCING SEARCH AND RESCUE SYSTEM IN THE MID REGION

(Presented by United Arab Emirates)

SUMMARY

This paper provides general information on the outstanding need for cooperation and coordination of the SAR services in the region for reasons of their greater effectiveness and the safety of their own operations. Fundamental to meeting this need is the development of a working group focusing on enhancing search and rescues system and eliminating deficiencies in the region.

Action by the meeting is at paragraph 3

REFERENCES

- ANNEX 12
- DOC 9731

1.   INTRODUCTION

1.1   ICAO search and rescue Annex 12 requires that, "Contracting States shall, individually or in cooperation with other States, arrange for the establishment and prompt provision of search and rescue services within their territories to ensure that assistance is rendered to persons in distress."

1.2   As Per the International Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue Manual (IAMSAR) - "In many areas of the world, the fastest, most effective and practical way to achieve a global SAR service is to develop regional systems associated with each ocean area and continent."

1.3   Shortcomings and deficiencies in the global provision of search and rescue (SAR) services have defied resolution for a long period. These have been repeatedly found to be attributable to lack of effective implementation of fundamental regulatory controls, not least in the patchwork organization of State by State services.

1.4   In keeping with the principles documented in the Safety Management and Safety Oversight manuals, there is an outstanding need for a more extensive and robust regulatory framework, including a more relevant global organizational structure, in which needful improvements in SAR service provision can be established and overseen.

2.   DISCUSSION

2.1   Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs) contained in ICAO Annexes need to be incorporated in national Civil Aviation Regulations that are supported by State legislation to provide a legal foundation and an effective framework for safe aviation activities within a State.

2.2   ICAO has elaborated strengthened safety, quality and oversight provisions for air navigation services, including SAR, through a structured State Safety Programme (SSP).

2.2.1   Effective application of safety provisions requires collation of safety data for analysis and findings; sufficient data can only be generated by sufficient operational activity. Because SAR events are rare, many independent State service organizations do not accrue enough operational data to develop safety management strategies.

2.2.2   Many of those independent State SAR services that are rarely called upon are poorly supported by State governments whose attention is directed to more frequently expressed needs. Many State SAR service areas are disproportionately small and providers suffer from insufficient recruitment, training and retention of specialist staff, thus cannot maintain necessary levels of proficiency. Poor allocation of resources and dysfunctional organization is common.

2.2.3   State by State systems are not cost-effective, and are inappropriate in providing service support to regional and international aviation operations that commonly cross SRR boundaries in minutes.

2.2.4   Crash alert and location messages initiated by the Cospas-Sarsat satellite network are frequently neither acknowledged nor re-distributed by individual State providers; a sub-regional message distribution system that is independent of non-compliant providers is evidently necessary.

2.2.5   Major SAR actions commonly necessitate cross-border operations extending over both land and sea areas; coordinating such SAR operations across a patchwork of State SRRs is untimely, often ineffective and liable to error in the transfer of operational information.

2.2.6   Further to evaluation by the ICAO audit program, it is clear the development of a Global SAR system has been hindered by the following facts:

- 40% of the Rescue Coordination Centres (RCCs) have not developed job descriptions for their technical staff;
- 45% of States do not ensure that RCC personnel involved in the conduct of R/T communications are proficient in the use of the English language;
- 55% of States have not established training programmes for their RCC staff; and
- 60% of States' SAR personnel are not regularly trained and appropriate SAR exercises are not carried out.

2.2.7   It is imperative that the aviation community is seen to capitalize on every opportunity to maximize the lessons learnt from unfortunate events such as aviation accidents. Such events are usually emotionally charged and hence pose high risks to the reputation of States, ATS Units and Airline Operators. The fatal accidents AF447 in 2009 and the recent still unsolved MAS370 accident, clearly highlight the inherent failures present in the SAR Alerting, and RCC management of search events, particularly across international boundaries. These events and the subsequent delays, confusion and general breakdowns demonstrated in communications between ATC units, RCCs and Search Units clearly raise the urgent necessity to bring all States together to gain agreement on enabling RCCs and supporting aviation organizations to attain Letters of Agreement to ensure when such accidents do occur, the reaction by the International aviation community is seen to be cohesive, effective and safe.

2.3   In all, the need for SAR operations to be organized sub-regionally is evident. The UAE, in perceiving this need, has taken several initiatives:

2.3.1   Sponsorship of the ICAO Global SAR Forum, Abu Dhabi, June 2010,

2.3.2   Conduct of the ICAO/UAE Gulf SAR Seminar, Abu Dhabi, March, 2011, both of which events made findings in support of sub-regional SAR organization, and

2.3.3   Sponsorship and management of the ICAO SAR Project to States of the Southern African Development Community, 2011 – 2012, which had as its principle, focus the development of a regulatory framework amenable to sub-regional organization of SAR through SADC States.

2.3.4   Published SAR national regulations – CAR VIII Sub part 8 which includes the certification of SAR service providers and the regulation is in line with ICAO Annex 12, IAMSAR Volumes I, II, III and international best practices.

2.3.5   Implemented a robust oversight system on UAE SAR service providers to ensure compliance with national regulations and ICAO SARPs, using Audit checklists catered for SAR Audits.

3.   ACTION BY THE MEETING:

3.1.   The meeting is invited to:

   a) note the activities relating to SAR regulation and certification taken in the UAE;

   b) encourage States to consider the development of national SAR Regulations and a SAR Certification process; and

   c) establish a task force to eliminate Search and rescue deficiencies and enhance and develop Search and Rescue system in the region.

- END -