



Findings of the ICAO Global Search and Rescue Forum

Abu Dhabi

United Arab Emirates

21-22 June, 2010

The UAE GCAA hosted the ICAO Global SAR Forum in Abu Dhabi from 21 to 22 June 2010.

The Forum was attended by more than 250 participants from over 57 Contracting States, and included the President of ICAO, Mr. Roberto Kobeh González, 26 Representatives on the Council of ICAO, and 7 international organizations.

The programme consisted of presentations by highly experienced SAR specialists and industry representatives, followed by moderated interaction between expert panel members and the audience.

The Forum identified key gaps in coverage of global civil aviation SAR services.

1. Urgent and focused attention should be given to more closely implementing the established ICAO policy of sub-regionalised SAR services.

Such a policy should allow flexibility in the determination, at a regional level and in close cooperation with ICAO, of the geographic areas best suited to the provision of such sub-regional SAR service taking into account operational, technical and economic factors while paying due regard to the fundamental principle of sovereignty.

Some areas of appropriate project activity are already evident, notably in the area of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) States where, at the States' request and in cooperation with all African and international stakeholders, an ICAO project, funded by the United Arab Emirates (UAE), is being managed by the UAE General Civil Aviation Authority (GCAA).

The Australian Maritime Safety Authority has recorded its intention to explore prospects for closer cooperation with its neighbouring States in the sub-region of the Indian and Pacific Ocean.

The UAE GCAA has also announced its intention to advance the establishment of a Regional SAR Coordinating Committee in the sub-region of the Gulf and to host a regional SAR event to that topic in the first half of 2011.



2. A project is required to educate, encourage, facilitate and coordinate the efforts of State governments, authorities and agencies in the development of sub-regional SAR services. External funding is necessary for its inception.

A key project activity should be to facilitate the establishment of Regional SAR Coordination Committees to make SAR service provision more consistently effective across regions and, ultimately, the world. These committees should comprise experts from both civil and military SAR communities, aerodrome operators and, when judged appropriate by the Committees, maritime authorities, with a view to joint aeronautical/maritime SAR service provision. An early action item should be to remedy the issue of non-responsive SAR Points of Contact (SPOCs).

3. Although there is organizational opportunity for States to input SAR subject material for consideration for inclusion in ICAO documents through planning and implementation regional groups (PIRGs), many States do not make SAR experts available for this purpose and a general insufficiency of data results.

The Regional Air Navigation Plans provide inadequate information in terms of accurate, up-to-date and relevant data concerning minimum necessary resources for the provision of appropriate State SAR services and facilities.

The need exists for more relevant, accurate and detailed text to be included in appropriate ICAO documents with respect to both the organization of SAR services and SAR operational procedures, and more emphasis to be put on the procedures to be implemented by air traffic services with respect to SAR alerting and cooperative management of in-flight emergencies. This need extends to closer cooperation with military SAR providers.

4. To improve the vital aspect of communication in the coordination of SAR actions, States should ensure the sufficient proficiency in a common language of all SAR operatives interacting internationally. ICAO should publish more detailed guidance material in this respect.

5. There exists a need for a broader array of industry stakeholders to share responsibility for the development of more consistently effective global civil aviation SAR services. In particular, international airline operators should accept some responsibility for assisting in the organizational reconstruction and, thus, the strengthening of SAR services.

6. The partnership of SAR services with the Cospas-Sarsat programme should continue to be the mainstay of satellite alert and location support services.

In consideration of a proliferation of commercially available emergency notification, location and tracking devices that do not conform to Cospas-Sarsat specifications and that threaten, if unregulated, to inundate SAR service providers with unstructured demands, ICAO should develop guidance material for States that addresses the limitations and problematic aspects of these units.

7. ICAO and its partners can only do so much to strengthen SAR services. State administrations, working closely with SAR service providers and military authorities, must take action to develop political will, establish institutional arrangements, facilitate interaction between stakeholders, set performance objectives, elaborate practical and operational measures and, finally, implement the necessary changes to ensure adequate SAR service proficiency.

ICAO should disseminate a State letter to advise States and international organizations of the outcomes of this Forum.

