



Morocco, International Organizations and IAEA Member States Conduct 'Bab Al Maghrib' Exercise to Test Emergency Response to Dirty Bomb Attack

MONTREAL, 19 November 2013 – Planning for the unthinkable, 'accident State' Morocco and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) will be assessing the effectiveness of a coordinated response to a dirty bomb explosion during a two-day ConvEx-3 emergency exercise beginning 20 November 2013.

58 States and 10 international organizations, including the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), will be testing their national and international preparedness in response to a radiological emergency triggered by nuclear security event. Code named 'Bab Al Maghrib', the exercise marks the first time a scenario of this nature has been conducted on such a geographically significant and international scale.

ICAO will be taking the opportunity of 'Bab Al Maghrib' to evaluate its own emergency response coordination and preparedness, including its specific roles and responsibilities within the IAEA's Joint Radiation Emergency Management Plan. The Organization will also be assessing delivery of nuclear emergency and related SIGMET and NOTAM messages, evaluating decisions being made by impacted States with respect to flight operations and monitoring contingency plan effectiveness in the event of air navigation services being compromised.

The scenario of 'Bab Al Maghrib' was developed by the Moroccan National Exercise Committee and its international dimensions were coordinated by the Working Group on Coordinated International Exercises, part of the Inter-Agency Committee on Radiological and Nuclear Emergencies (IACRNE). ICAO will be testing the activation of the IACRNE's ad-hoc Working Group on Air and Maritime Transportation (WG-AMT) during the exercise and evaluating its level of inter-agency response.

ConvEx-3 Exercise Framework

ConvEx-3 radiological and nuclear emergency exercises, such as 'Bab Al Maghrib', have previously been conducted in 2005 and 2008. The first two were based on an accident at a nuclear power plant but 'Bab Al Maghrib' will set itself apart by featuring a dirty bomb explosion accompanied by threats of further attacks and widespread radiological consequences.

Morocco's offer to prepare and serve as host for this latest ConvEx-3 event was deeply appreciated by the IAEA and participating international organizations. The most westerly of North African States and other impacted countries will be expected to set established national response plans and procedures into action, while international organizations will be cooperating on the basis of bilateral agreements and specially designed IAEA emergency planning and response provisions, including its *Operations Manual for Incident and Emergency Communication*.

A specialized agency of the United Nations, ICAO was created in 1944 to promote the safe and orderly development of international civil aviation throughout the world. It sets standards and regulations necessary for aviation safety, security, efficiency, capacity and environmental protection, amongst many other priorities. The Organization serves as the forum for cooperation in all fields of civil aviation among its 191 Member States.

Contact:

Anthony Philbin
Chief, Communications
aphilbin@icao.int
+1 (514) 954-8220
+1 (438) 402-8886 (mobile)

Sue-Ann Rapattoni
Communications Assistant
srapattoni@icao.int
+1 (514) 954-8221
+1 (514) 212-1051 (mobile)