Twenty Second Meeting of the Africa-Indian Ocean Planning and Implementation Regional Group (APIRG/22)
(Accra, Ghana, 29 July – 02 August 2019)

Agenda Item 4: Other Air Navigation Issues

PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION IN ICAO DELEGATED OCEANIC AIRSPACE

(Presented by IATA)

SUMMARY
This paper discussed the need for a harmonized approach to the administration, planning and implementation of ATM, CNS and SAR within oceanic FIR's as well as across multiple ICAO regions.
REFRENCE(S):
Related ICAO Strategic Objective(s): Safety, Air Navigation Capacity and Efficiency Environment.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The airspace over the high sea surrounding the African continent is delegated to a number of African states to provide air traffic and related services.

1.2 This delegated airspace is not sovereign to any state and should therefore not be affected by social, political or economic factors influencing the state.

1.3 To the West, these oceanic FIR's are coordinated through the informal ICAO group, SAT (Meeting for the improvement of air traffic service over the South Atlantic), which brings together not only the AFI region, but also the South America (SAM), Central American (CAM) and North Atlantic (NAT) regions.

1.4 To the East, there is no formal or informal ICAO group that coordinates these FIR's, however partial coordination has, in the past, been facilitated through the Indian Ocean Strategic Partnership to reduce Emissions (INSPIRE) and ASIOACG (Arabian Sea Indian Ocean ATS coordination Group). Additionally, the ASPAC informal groups such as BOBASIO (Air traffic Service (ATS) coordination meeting of Bay of Bengal, Arabian Sea and Indian Ocean Region) has provided partial coordination.

1.5 In 2017 ICAO facilitated a three (3) regional coordination meeting, inviting participants of INSPIRE, ASIOACG, BOBASIO and BIMT (Bangladesh, India, Myanmar, Thailand ATM coordination group) to address common challenges affecting the 3 ICAO regions (AFI, MID and ASPAC).

2. DISCUSSION

2.1 The FIRs making up the global oceanic airspace fall under the planning and implementation authority of multiple ICAO PIRG's and as such are subject to varying, administrative processes, ATM principals, infrastructure deployments, search and rescue as well as contingency arrangements.

2.2   Further to this the different regions have their own, unaligned/unharmonized future ATM and CNS implementation strategies with widely varying timelines.

2.3   Considering that these airspaces are all being managed on behalf of the same principal, ICAO, it would be expected that ATM operations, infrastructure, search and rescue, as well as contingency planning and implementation would be harmonized.

2.4   The levels of air traffic services, separation standards, technology deployments (current and future) as well as search and rescue and contingency procedures are however not coordinated or harmonized.

2.5   This leads to inefficient, and in some cases, safety compromised operations in oceanic airspace, particularly in the EUR/SAM corridor and the Indian Ocean where flights suffer flight level restrictions due to unaligned procedures and technology deployments as well as a lack of effective coordination.

3.   ACTION BY THE MEETING

3.1   The meeting is invited to:

a) Take note of the content of this working paper,

b) Consider how oceanic airspaces can be formally coordinated and harmonized:

      i.   Across AFI oceanic FIR's, and

     ii.   Inter regionally

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