

INTERNATIONAL CIVIL AVIATION ORGANIZATION
**Seventh Meeting of the APIRG Airspace and Aerodrome Operations Sub-Group
(AAO/SG7)**
Nairobi, Kenya, 12 - 16 August 2024
Agenda Item 6: Activities to be coordinated with RASG-AFI
AREAS OF COORDINATION WITH RASG AFI
(Presented by Secretariat)

SUMMARY	
This working paper presents an update on the activities to be coordinated with RASG-AFI identified in the areas of AOP, ATM and SAR.	
Action by the meeting is in paragraph 3 .	
REFERENCE(S):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - APIRG/26 and RASG-AFI/9 reports - AFI-RASP reports - AFI Air Navigation Deficiencies Database - RMA LHD reports
Related ICAO Strategic Objective(s): A – Safety, B – Air Navigation Capacity and Efficiency	

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Regional Aviation Safety Groups (RASGs) serve as regional cooperative forums that determine regional priorities, and develop and maintain the regional aviation safety plans, and associated work programmes, based on the *Global Aviation Safety Plan* (GASP, Doc 10004) and relevant ICAO provisions. In establishing the Regional Aviation Safety Groups (RASGs), the Council identified the need for coordination between the APIRG, its subsidiary bodies, and the RASG-AFI on safety issues.

1.2 This paper presents an update on activities coordinated by AAO/SG with RASG-AFI.

2. DISCUSSION

2.1 The first edition of the AFI Regional Aviation Safety Plan (AFI- RASP 2023-2025) was adopted during the RASG-AFI/9 meeting held in November 2023 and is provided as Appendix A to this paper. The AFI-RASP presents the strategic direction for managing aviation safety at the regional level, in line with the GASP's goals, targets, and global high-risk categories (G-HRCs).

2.2 The 2023-2025 edition of the AFI-RASP outlines regional priorities in terms of safety, key safety enhancement initiatives (SEIs) at the regional level, and the roles and responsibilities of all the stakeholders. Mid-Air collision (MAC), Runway safety and air navigation infrastructure have been identified among key regional priorities in the AFI-RASP.

Aerodrome certification

2.3 Aerodrome certification is a critical challenge for the ESAF and WACAF regions. As of 25 July 2024, only 51 over 116 (43.96%) international airports were certified. Furthermore, 39% of States have not yet certified any airport nor have they developed the capacity to do so.

2.4 States must fast-track the process for certifying Aerodromes by addressing the challenges that impede certification, such as the lack of management and political will to support it. This call must be made in every forum of both RASG-AFI and APIRG. The expertise in RASG-AFI through various platforms such as RSOOs are critical in supporting capacity building initiatives on Aerodrome Certification.

Runway safety

2.5 Runway excursion and Runway incursion have been identified among the regional operational risks to be addressed as a priority in the AFI-RASP. The ESAF and WACAF regional Offices, working with States and industry, have championed the need for Runway Safety Teams at International Airports to foster Runway Safety activities. This has been undertaken through Runway Safety Go Teams.

2.6 The programme for Runway Safety Go-Teams relies on States to express interest in a Runway Safety Go-Team mission. Several States do not express interest due to lack of funding or lack of awareness of the Go-Team mission. The initiative requires beneficiary States to facilitate the Go-Team mission which takes place for three to four days.

2.7 Collaboration is key to improving runway safety. The ICAO Global Runway Safety Action Plan (GRASP) describes the roles and responsibilities of each stakeholder regarding runway safety. The second edition of the GRASP was published in February 2024 and is provided in Appendix B of this working paper. A Regional Runway Safety Action Plan should be developed to ensure alignment with global priorities considering actions identified in the RASP roadmap. RASG-AFI is strategically positioned to support the initiative on Runway Safety by participating in Go Team activities.

Safety in RVSM airspace

2.10. Following the APIRG 26 meeting, the Airspace sub-group has followed up on the safety margins in the AFI reduced vertical separation minimum (RVSM) airspace. In the last year, there has been marked reduction in Large Height Deviation (LHD) reports in the region. The ICAO secretariat and ARMA continued in providing awareness on LHD at all opportunities available to sensitise the ATM community on the need for continued vigilance in the RVSM airspace.

2.11. The AFI Tactical Action Group (TAG) held its fifteenth meeting on 14th February 2024. TAG/15 report highlighted increase of coordination failures in the period 2022/2023 in the southern part of the continent, leading to heightened increase in Large Height Deviation (LHD) reports. The occurrences were contributed mainly to staffing, equipment failures, procedures, and human factors. The trend of reported incidents in 2024 indicates the situation remains highly unsatisfactory with increased LHD reports in the interface region between the AFI and MID. The table below reflects the distribution of the unsatisfactory condition reports (UCRs) for 2022/2023:

YEAR	COMMS	COORD. Failures	AIRPROX	LHD	Total number of UCRs
2022	17	21	2	9	49
2023	1	52	0	3	56
2024	<i>To be analysed at the end of 2024</i>				

- 2.11. The closure of the Khartoum FIR and the political unrest in the Middle East continue to put pressure in the Red Sea region thus affecting the interface airspace between ESAF and MID. Safety of the RVSM airspace remains as a major challenge in this region with emphasis on the Asmara FIR where traffic density has increased.
- 2.12. The Khartoum FIR remains closed, however marked progress has been made in trying to open up part of the airspace in areas outside the conflict zone including the airspace above South Sudan. The Khartoum contingency coordination team (CCT) has continued to develop procedures for opening up of portions of the airspace; to date the eastern sector over Port Sudan has been opened with air navigation services provided from Port Sudan. Following the two contingency routes developed over South Sudan airspace last year, flight information service was been established in the airspace with the FIC setup in Juba.
- 2.13. On 16th February 2024, reports were received of unlawful frequency interference within the Mogadishu FIR mainly on the enroute frequency 132.5MHz and Hargeisa TWR frequency 118.7MHz. The interference created serious safety concerns in the region, however the State responded to the matter adequately, putting in place mitigating procedures with use of CPDLC and SATCOM communication and notifying the airspace users on the matter. The interference has since reduced significantly however remains a threat as not all flights have the datalink capability; there is need for a permanent solution to the matter.
- 2.14. Other Emerging threat to civil flight including jamming and spoofing of GPS signals. This occurrence has mainly been reported to affect the flights operating in the Red Sea region however, recent reports received of similar occurrence in the great lakes region in the central part of Africa. The occurrences are usually aimed at deflecting drones and other military operations; however, the civil aircraft operating in the same region also get affected.
- 2.15. There is urgent need of coordination with RASG-AFI on this new threat as it affects current operating procedures; as more and more of this activity is seen in the region it is important that close coordination is carried out in order for the region to fully address the matter.

Performance Based Communication and Surveillance (PBCS)

- 2.16. The implementation of PBCS remains a challenge in the region with lack of capacity at state level. There is urgent need to address the deficiency in capacity; this can only be done adequately with a combined effort between the APIRG and RASG-AFI technical teams in coordination with ARMA.

3. Action by the Meeting

3.1 The meeting is invited to:

- a) Note the information provided in this working paper;
- b) Review the RASP roadmap provided in Appendix A to assess the progress of Safety enhancement initiatives (SEI) related to Airspace and Aerodrome Operations at the regional level and provide feedback to RASG-AFI ;
- c) Propose a Regional Runway Safety Action Plan for adoption by APIRG aligned with the GRASP and the AFI-RASP;
- d) Request States and Organizations to review the status of implementation of aerodrome operations requirements provided in Appendix C, verify its accuracy, and provide any update by 30 September 2024;
- e) Encourage States to participate actively in reporting of identified safety concerns and deficiencies to the accredited ICAO Regional Offices; and
- f) Propose action to be taken by RASG AFI in support of eliminating deficiencies in safety.
