



ICAO

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North American, Central American and Caribbean Office

WORKING PAPER

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**Eighth North American, Central American and Caribbean Working Group Meeting (NACC/WG/8)**  
Mexico City, 29 August - 1 September 2023

- Agenda Item 3: Follow-up of NACC/WG 2022-2023 Action Plan**  
**3.6 NACC/WG progress in operations: AO, Air Traffic Management (ATM), Search and Rescue (SAR), ATFM and Aerodromes and Ground Aids (AGA)**

**REPORT OF THE THIRD NAM/CAR REGIONAL CONTINGENCY AND EMERGENCY PLANNING AND RESPONSE MEETING (NAM/CAR/CONT/3)**

(Presented by the Secretariat)

| <b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b>   |   |
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| This Working Paper presents a report of the activities developed during the Third NAM/CAR Regional Contingency and Emergency Planning and Response Meeting (NAM/CAR/CONT/3) and presents to the consideration of the NACC/WG the feasibility to maintain these meetings. |   |
| <b>Action:</b>   | Suggested actions are presented in Section 5.   |
| <i>Strategic Objectives:</i>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Safety</li><li>• Air Navigation Capacity and Efficiency</li></ul>   |
| <i>References:</i>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Final report of the Third NAM/CAR Regional Contingency and Emergency Planning and Response Meeting (NAM/CAR/CONT/3) Mexico City, Mexico, and Online, 9 to 11 May 2023</li></ul> |

**1. Introduction**

1.1 The continuity of air operations is of vital importance for States, since its various economic activities directly depend on them, and at the same time they have a strategic importance to meet different fundamental needs for the sustainability of people.

1.2 Although the contingency scenarios and crisis situations are so varied that it is almost impossible to address them exhaustively, proper preparation has been shown to have an impact very positively in response to them.

1.3 The ICAO NACC Regional Office maintains its focus on the resilience of the civil aviation of the NAM/CAR/SAM Regions, promoting activities that allow the development and strengthening of the response capacities of the States, as well as the coordination of the different initiatives that affect the States accredited to this Office.

## **2. Background**

2.1 Since 2019, the ICAO NACC Regional Office organizes the Regional Meeting for the Contingency and Emergency Planning and Response. The purposes of this meeting are to review the contingencies that occurred in the previous year, take concrete actions to address contingency and emergency situations from a regional perspective and make the necessary arrangements to prepare for the hurricane season.

2.2 This meeting has made it possible to significantly improve compliance with the requirements of ICAO in terms of contingency arrangements, as well as identify opportunities to improve the existing plans, such as their effectiveness and harmonization, from a regional perspective. Due to the pause due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the activities of this meeting were carried out virtually, focused on complying with the annual review of contingency plans, as well as the analysis of specific events.

2.3 The Third NAM/CAR Regional Meeting for Contingency and Emergency Planning and Response (NAM/CAR/CONT/3) was held at the ICAO NACC Regional Office in Mexico City, Mexico, and online, from 9 to 11 May 2023. The meeting was chaired by Mr. Luis Miranda, Deputy Director General of the General Directorate of Civil Aviation of Costa Rica and attended by 19 States/Territories of the NAM/CAR/SAM Regions and 2 International Organizations, totalling 89 delegates (40 virtually).

2.4 NAM/CAR/CONT/3 evaluated the status of compliance with the requirements related to contingency planning for both the provision of air traffic services and the operation of airports.

2.5 In this same context, the different regional initiatives that address contingency planning and response in the CAR Region for the areas of air traffic management and airport operations were addressed in a combined manner. During it, synergies and possible joint efforts between the ICAO NACC Office and the different related regional groups were analysed.

## **3. Conclusions and Decisions of the NAM/CAR/CONT/3 Meeting**

### ***3.1 Status of airport emergency planning and response***

3.1.1 In 2019, the United States and 16 Caribbean States signed a Declaration of Intent (DoI) creating the CARRG seeking to strengthen coordination on aviation resilience and recovery from emergency events. From the United States, the FAA's Office of International Affairs has served as the de facto coordinator of the CARRG. Since then, ICAO NACC Regional Office, and ACI-LAC have begun coordinating how best to collaborate in resiliency and disaster preparedness in the Caribbean.

3.1.2 The group (ICAO, FAA and ACI-LAC) agreed to seek two phases of simultaneous work to support resilience efforts specific to the needs of aerodromes:

- Phase 1 Foundational Effort: The goal of Phase 1 is to identify what guidance and training is needed to allow airport operators to respond to an emergency. Additionally, this effort can identify where Civil Aviation Authorities (CAAs) might need to increase guidance and/or oversight to their aerodromes.
- Phase 2 Operational Effort: The goal of Phase 2 is to launch a “Mutual Assistance Subject Matter Expert Pilot Programme” that airport operators can virtually contact for assistance/advice related to an emergency event.

3.1.3 Phase 1 is important, when it is observed that the level of compliance, for the States of Central America and the Caribbean Region (CAR), of the USOAP Protocol Questions (PQs) related to the airport emergency plan (PQs 8.291, 8.293, 8.297, 8.299 and 8.301) are average 50% unsatisfactory.

3.1.4 Consequently, the ICAO NACC Regional Office will send an electronic questionnaire to the civil aviation authorities of the States of the CAR Region to inform about the planning and response to airport emergencies. Simultaneously, a project for the CAR Region is being structured with the objective of developing guide and instruction materials for the preparation of Airport Emergency Plans with a focus on natural disasters (eg hurricanes and others), and to support airports and States to respond to an emergency.

## **3.2 Update of the regional template for air traffic services (ATS) contingency plans**

3.2.1 The Secretariat presented WP/05 to provide information regarding the CAR Contingency and Emergency Response Coordination Team (CAR CERT) as the mechanism on which ICAO relies for the fulfilment of its responsibilities regarding the planning and response to contingencies that impact the CAR Region.

3.2.2 After the approval of the ATM Contingency Plan of the CAR Region, the establishment of the CAR Contingency and Emergency Response Coordination Team (CAR CERT) CAR CERT and the periodic ICAO meetings for contingency planning and response, compliance of ICAO requirements regarding Air Traffic Services (ATS) contingency arrangements has been significantly improved. The number of States/Territories that submitted updated information on contingency plans to ICAO has also increased.

3.2.3 The attention of the States/Territories regarding the planning and response to contingencies has improved, however, there is still important work to raise awareness, to improve transparency and sharing of up-to-date operational information. In the same way, the work to strengthen the resilience of air navigation systems deserves more attention, starting with high-level decision makers in the region.

3.2.4 The Meeting requested more information on the CAR Region Contingency Plan and its Contingency Plan Template Appendix C, agreed by GREPECAS. The contingency plan template contains arrangements to ensure the continued safety of air navigation in the event of partial or total disruption of ATS and is related to ICAO Annex 11 - Air Traffic Services. The contingency plan template proposes to provide alternative routes, using existing airways in most cases, which will allow aircraft operators to fly through or avoid affected airspace.

3.2.5 Most of the States/Territories of the CAR Region that have used this template established an ATS contingency route scheme to be used in the event of a total interruption of ATS, where air operators would fly through affected airspace without ATS surveillance or two-way communications. This ATS contingency route scheme requires coordination with adjacent ATS units. This coordination is normally reflected in the Letter of Agreement (LoA) bilateral.

3.2.6 Some States drew attention to the challenges they face with the use of contingency routes where surveillance and communication services are not being provided. Since the use of these routes must be agreed upon by the ANSPs that will use these routes, LoAs will be needed to document the approval of all ANSPs involved.

3.2.7 Given the time elapsed since the contingency procedures were published approved by GREPECAS, the Meeting considered it appropriate to present to the NACC/WG and subsequently to the GREPECAS, the difficulties regarding the contingency procedures adopted regionally, as well as make recommendations that promote its updating in the current context of operations. This will ensure that stakeholder expectations are considered, in order to ensure better levels of services, to the extent possible.

### **3.3 Harmonization of contingency procedures in the upper and lower airspace of the CAR region**

3.3.1 Within the framework of the evaluation of the contingencies that occurred in 2022, the meeting identified the challenges derived from the contingencies that occurred in the FIRs in which the responsibility of the ATS provision in the upper and lower airspace is assigned to different service providers.

3.3.2 In this context, events were pointed out in which the lack of harmonization of contingency procedures in upper and lower airspace was evidenced, as well as the lack of procedures for the assignment of routes and flight levels that allow the transition between these airspaces.

3.3.3 The Meeting requested the ICAO NACC Office to evaluate these contingency plans and take actions to ensure their harmonization. It was also recognized that closer collaboration between States was required to guarantee the efficiency of contingency operations.

### **3.4 Enhanced Guidance for Air Navigation Service Providers (ANSP) Internal Contingency Plans**

3.4.1 The Meeting took note of the updates from *Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Costa Rica, Cuba, Guatemala and Honduras*. The Meeting encouraged the States/Territories and International Organizations that provide ATS services in the CAR Region to comply with the ICAO requirements and regional agreements to present and/or update their ATM contingency plans.

3.4.2 The contingency plans of several participating States/Territories and Service Providers were reviewed. The CAR Region ATM Contingency Plan establishes a three-level hierarchy for contingency plans. Tier 1 Contingency Plans and Tier 2 Contingency Agreements are referenced, but not included in the Plan. Level 3 Contingency Plans are published by the States, Territories and International Organizations that provide ATS in the CAR Region to provide information and expected actions in case of

partial or total interruption of ATS. Following up on the discussions held at NAM/CAR/CONT/2, the Meeting considered it necessary to update the ATM Contingency Plan of the CAR Region, to include more guidance regarding Level 1 Contingency Plans.

#### **4. Conclusions and Recommendations**

4.1 The planning and response to contingencies and emergency situations requires the continuous support of the States/Territories and International Organizations responsible for the provision of air navigation and airport services.

4.2 The role of each of the entities that develop support programs in the CAR Region must be clearly recognized, to develop collaboration strategies on a clear basis, in accordance with the established work programs.

4.3 The development of support programs, collaboration, as well as the development and updating of guidance material will serve to improve the effectiveness of the response, saving lives and increasing the response capacity.

#### **5. Suggested actions**

5.1 The Meeting is invited to:

- a) Review the information provided in this Paper and request additional guidance on the NAM/CAR/CONT/3 Meeting, if necessary;
- b) Endorse the Conclusions and Decisions detailed in Section 3 and giving additional support to the achievement of their objectives;
- c) Considering the different regional initiatives on this topic, consider the feasibility of continue holding these meetings; and
- d) Propose any additional action deemed necessary.