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Agenda Item 5: Update of the Action Plans of the Task Groups of the NACC/WG, of the NACC/WG Action Plan and of the regional activities in the Development of the Projects of the CAR/SAM Regional Planning and Implementation Group (GREPECAS)

STATUS OF SAR IMPLEMENTATION IN THE CAR REGION AND MAIN CHALLENGES

(Presented by the SAR/TF Rapporteur)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	
This Working Paper presents information on the status of SAR implementation in the CAR Region and shares an analysis of its main challenges with the aim of supporting a regional air navigation vision for solving them.	
Action:	Suggested Actions are included in Section 6.
<i>Strategic Objectives:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strategic Objective 1 – Safety• Strategic Objective 2 – Air Navigation Capacity and Efficiency
<i>References:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Doc 7300 – <i>Convention on international Civil Aviation</i>• Annex 12 – <i>Search and Rescue</i>• Doc 9731 – <i>International Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue Manual (IAMSAR)</i>• Caribbean Region Search and Rescue (SAR) Plan

1. Introduction

1.1 Assistance to aircraft in distress is one of the basic principles of the Chicago Convention. In addition, the States and Territories of the CAR Region economies rely largely on tourism, which, due to its location in the Caribbean, has aviation as the main means of transportation for foreign visitors.

1.2 Aviation users in general and the air transport industry expect a timely and adequate Search and Rescue (SAR) response to be provided should it be necessary. States must be adequately prepared to provide effective and efficient SAR services; Consequently, national and regional collaboration is essential to achieve this goal.

1.3 Unfortunately, the Region's attention has been focused on promoting the sustainable growth of air operations without paying equal attention to the establishment and development of SAR systems.

2. Analysis

2.1 The provision of SAR services is a fundamental part of air navigation services. However, since its nature becomes evident in undesirable circumstances (such as accidents or missing aircraft) and, fortunately, infrequent, there is little visibility into the number of processes that consistently have to be carried out to make its functioning possible.

2.2 Unlike the different components of the air navigation system, which are expanding, in an almost mandatory manner, as traffic demand grows, the SAR system must adapt, in a parallel and programmed manner, to respond to the growth and type of operations carried out under its area of responsibility. The latter, is often not evolving in the same manner as the rest of the air navigation services.

2.3 Annex 12 – *Search and Rescue* defines this service as the performance of distress monitoring, communication, coordination and search and rescue functions, initial medical assistance or medical evacuation, through the use of public and private resources, including cooperating aircraft, vessels and other craft and installations.

2.4 Any SAR system should be structured to provide all SAR services:

- receive, acknowledge, and relay notifications of distress from alerting posts;
- coordinate search response;
- coordinate rescue response and delivery of survivors to a place of safety; and
- provide medical advice, initial medical assistance or medical evacuation.

3. CAR Region current situation

3.1 According to the results of the ICAO Universal Safety Oversight Audit Programme (USOAP), the effective implementation (EI) level of SAR in the NAM/CAR Regions is 51.79%. Currently, 8 States of the CAR Region have not made arrangements for the provision of SAR services in their territories and areas for which they have accepted the responsibility for the provision of these services.

3.2 The previous results by themselves are quite worrisome, however, the Region frequently experiences the dismantling of systems that have already been previously audited and considered as existing. From the dismissal of qualified personnel due to changes in the administration to the dismantling of the Rescue Coordinator Centre (RCC), there are documented cases in the Region without the States being alerted to the negative consequences of these measures. The limited resources for sustaining the SAR system have worsened because of financial cuts during the COVID-19 pandemic.

3.3 Due to the difficulties of implementation reflected in paragraph 3.1, the measurement of SAR performance must continue to be carried out based on the measurement of the progress of a project for the implementation of SAR components.

4. Regional initiatives to support SAR implementation

4.1 The Twentieth CAR/SAM Planning and Implementation Regional Group Meeting (GREPECAS/20) approved a project to support SAR implementation in the CAR/SAM Regions, where search and rescue services are addressed separately to other air navigation projects. This project needs to be harmonized with all SAR regions of responsibility, based on the objective, scope, and metrics that are mentioned in the aforementioned project, which begins in the current year 2023 and is projected to end in 2026. Given that the follow-up to the implementation of the SAR Implementation Project in the CAR Region will be addressed by the NACC Task Force that supports SAR Implementation, to ensure its success, the strategies and goals should be included in its work programme for the execution of this project in the NAM/CAR Regions.

4.2 Similarly, the NACC/WG SAR Implementation Support Task Force will work on a review and update of the Search and Rescue Regions (SRR) of the NAM/CAR Regions to include in the Air Navigation CAR/SAM Plan the coordinates that delimit each SRR with its adjacent ones, as well as include their SAR operations plans.

4.3 In order to achieve the expected results, based on the real needs of SAR operations of the States, the creation of a structure to monitor SAR implementation in the region and compliance with assigned goals and objectives must be requested, thus in the time scheduled for compliance with the same and a strict control is carried out in the monitoring of the performance and progress of this support programme for the participating States.

4.4 The States must assume the responsibility of fulfilling the assigned tasks, which will be monitored promptly through the tools that allow this working group to verify their progress.

5. SAR emerging subjects: Global Aeronautical Distress and Safety System (GADSS)

5.1 The implementation of the GADSS is an initiative that covers various areas of the provision of Air Traffic and Search and Rescue services. Procedures must be prepared to deal with the notification to the RCCs, according to their different phases and procedures.

5.2 It is important to know how the current procedures will be adjusted for the ATS, RCC, RSC and Operational Units for the proper functioning of the GADSS, also how it needs to be adopted and what will change.

5.3 In reference to training, it should be emphasized, and in compliance with ICAO Annex 12 Chapter 4 (Training) that in order to achieve a good implementation process it is necessary to coordinate with COSPAS/SARSAT and the mission coordinating centres, training workshops on the changes that have been made and those that are coming.

6. Suggested Actions

6.1 The Meeting is invited to:

- a) prepare a proposal for a work programme for the NACC/WG, with the considerations previously exposed;
- b) recommend to the Secretariat to coordinate with the NACC/WG task forces the aforementioned considering the weaknesses and strengths that they have identified with the different regions and that these be measurable and evaluable in their progress in the assigned times and depending on the complexity of the assigned task; and
- c) recommend any additional action deemed necessary.

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