

INTERNATIONAL CIVIL AVIATION ORGANIZATION

Sixth Meeting of the APIRG Airspace and Aerodrome Operations Sub-group
(AAO/SG6)

4 – 8 September 2023,

Agenda item 3: Achievements in airspace and aerodrome operations.**IMPLEMENTATION OF CIVIL-MILITARY COOPERATION IN AIRSPACE
MANAGEMENT***(Presented by the Democratic Republic of the Congo)***SUMMARY**

This information paper highlights the progress made by the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) in terms of civil/military collaboration, cooperation and coordination, with a view to guaranteeing the safety of air operations in its airspace.

Action by the meeting is as per paragraph 3

REFERENCE(S) :

- APIRG 25 Final Report, Decision 25/08: Strengthening regional civil/military cooperation and coordination;
- Cir. 330 of ICAO – Civil/Military Cooperation in Air Traffic Management
- Doc 10088 of ICAO - Manual of civil-Military Cooperation in ATM

Related ICAO strategic objective(s) :

Safety, efficiency and economic development.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. The Democratic Republic of the Congo's (DRC) shares in this Information Paper (IP) the progress made by the state in the implementation of civil-military cooperation in airspace management.

1.2. The paper outlines the best practices implemented by the DRC with regard to civil/military cooperation for civil aviation safety. It also proposes actions to be taken by the meeting with a view to helping ICAO member states in the AFI region to implement the provisions of Doc 10088, which provides many indicative elements for civil-military collaboration, cooperation and coordination in aviation matters.

2. DISCUSSION

2.1. In the Democratic Republic of Congo, civil-military cooperation in the aeronautical field has been established since the signing of Decree 65/198 of July 30, 1965, which stipulated that the Ministry of National Defense was responsible for carrying out search and rescue operations for civil aircraft in distress on national territory and in its territorial waters. This constituted the initial legal basis for civil-military cooperation, which has since been extended to other areas of civil aviation, including AGA, AIS, ATM, CNS, IFPD, MET, AIG, AVSEC, OPS, TRG, AIR, UAS/UTM, SAR, etc.

2.2. Although this cooperation was permanent at the country's major airports, over time it lost its legal context because it was not supported by a formal agreement between the parties involved. The aforementioned decree had become obsolete, as it limited this cooperation to search and rescue operations. Some civil operators' aeronautical activities were affected by the low level of civil-military collaboration.

2.3. The key stakeholders involved in aeronautical activity in the DRC met two years ago to sign a memorandum of understanding with the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of Congo (particularly with the Air Force) for the coordination of military activities hazardous to civil aviation.

2.4. Civil-Military collaboration/cooperation is currently ensured both at government level by the ministers and at the organizational level of the national civil aviation system by the various civilian and military officials. This has facilitated coordination within the operational units located at airports and operated jointly by civilian and military personnel resulting in ensuring flexible management of the airspace of the DR Congo in full compliance with ICAO international standards.

2.5. The implementation of effective civil-military cooperation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is a necessity for commercial air transport because the country includes:

- more than twenty airports for mixed civil and military use;
- an airspace covering an area of over 2.3 million km², which is a major air traffic corridor in central Africa;
- a dozen special use airspaces, including restricted and prohibited areas;
- a hundred or so civil air carriers operating alongside a multitude of State and United Nations aircraft, not to mention remotely piloted aircraft and aerospace devices used by scientists.

2.6. The flexible use of the FZR4 zone through which route UA617 passes is an eloquent example of civil-military cooperation in the DRC airspace. As long as no NOTAM is issued to restrict operations for civilian users, civilian traffic is allowed through the airspace above FL245.

2.7. Following the virtual workshop held by ICAO ESAF and WACAF regional offices from April 27 to 29, 2021, the DRC focused on this issue in order to meet the recommendations of APIRG as per Conclusion 23/6, which were reiterated by APIRG Decision 25/8.

2.8. Before the MOU was signed on September 10, 2021, several meetings involving national civil and military aviation experts were held at the initiative of the DRC Civil Aviation Authority.

2.9. Using the guidelines of ICAO Doc 10088 and the Eurocontrol Guide for information exchange in civil-military coordination (Eurocontrol-guid-183 edition 1.0 of 27/10/2020) as well as the Nigerian model memorandum of cooperation (MOC), the DRC civil and military experts were able to tailor a text of the MOC adapted to their working environment before submitting it to the Heads of their respective entities for approval.

2.10. On September 10, 2021, the National Civil-Military Cooperation Committee met to sign the MOC, which was subsequently sent to the Government of the Republic and to ICAO via its WACAF regional office.

2.11. The signing of this MOC paved the way for a new method of cooperation and coordination of civil and military aeronautical operations in our airspace. The Government will shortly put a new legal framework in place. This will also enable the composition of civil-military coordination committees at joint airport platforms, and the development of operational procedures for civil-military coordination.

2.12. Since the signing of the agreement, several training sessions and workshops have been held, bringing together operators and providers of civil and military services. This has led to a more effective coordination at operational level, particularly in search and rescue operations.

2.13. Despite the efforts made to date, the challenge of implementing effective civil-military cooperation remains. The difficulties encountered are due to the low level of awareness among stakeholders as well as the insufficient human and logistical resources.

3. ACTION TO BE TAKEN BY THE MEETING

3.1. The meeting is invited to:

- a) Take note of the progress made by the DRC in implementing civil-military cooperation for civil aviation safety;
- b) To take account of the difficulties experienced by the States of the AFI region in implementing civil-military cooperation through the lessons learnt.**
