



ICAO

INTERNATIONAL CIVIL AVIATION ORGANIZATION

Twenty Sixth Meeting of the Africa-Indian Ocean Planning and Implementation Regional Group (APIRG/26)

7 - 8 November 2023

Agenda Item 3: Implementation of air navigation goals, targets, and indicators, including the priorities set in the regional air navigation plan

Implementation of civil-military cooperation in airspace management

(Presented by the Democratic Republic of the Congo)

SUMMARY	
<p>This information note describes the progress made by the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) in terms of civil/military collaboration, cooperation and coordination, in view of guaranteeing the safety of air operations in its airspace.</p> <p>Action required is as paragraph 3.</p>	
REFERENCES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Annex 11 Air Traffic Services §2.18 and §2.33 - APIRG 25 Final Report, Decision 25/08: Strengthening regional civil/military cooperation and coordination; - ICAO Cir. 330 - Civil-Military Cooperation in Air Traffic Management - ICAO Doc 10088 - Manual on civil-Military Cooperation in Air Traffic Management
Strategic objectives	<i>A-Safety, B-Efficiency and economic development.</i>

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Through this note, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) shares the progress made in the implementation of civil-military cooperation in airspace management.

1.2 This note outlines the best practices implemented by the DRC in terms of civil/military cooperation for civil aviation safety. It also proposes actions to be taken by the meeting with a view to helping States in the AFI region to implement the standards and recommended practices of Annex 11 relating to coordination between military authorities and air traffic services.

2. ANALYSIS

2.1 In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, civil-military cooperation in the aeronautical field has been enshrined since the signing of Decree 65/198 of July 30, 1965, which made the Ministry of National Defense responsible for carrying out search and rescue operations for civilian aircraft in distress on national territory and in its territorial waters. This constituted the first legal basis for civil-military cooperation, which has since been extended to other areas of civil aviation, including aerodrome management, aeronautical information, air traffic management, aeronautical telecommunications equipment, flight procedure design, aeronautical meteorology, investigation of aviation accidents and incidents, safety, technical operation of aircraft, aeronautical training, management of remotely piloted aircraft, and search and rescue.

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 Two years ago, the main stakeholders in aeronautical activity in the DRC joined forces to sign a memorandum of understanding with the armed forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (particularly the Air Force) for the coordination of military activities hazardous to civil aviation.

2.4 Civil-military collaboration/cooperation is ensured both at government level by the ministers and at the level of the organization of the national civil aviation system by the various civil and military officials. This has facilitated coordination at the level of operational units located at airports and run jointly by civilian and military personnel. .

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 2,345,410 km², which is a major air traffic corridor in central Africa;
- a dozen special use airspaces, including restricted and prohibited zones;
- 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 craft used by scientists and the military.

2.6 The flexible use of the FZR4 zone through which the ATS route UA617 passes is an eloquent case of civil-military cooperation in terms of the flexible use of Congolese airspace. As long as no NOTAM is issued restricting operations by civilian users, civilian traffic is authorized to cross this airspace above FL245.

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

2.8 Prior to the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on September 10, 2021, several meetings involving national civil and military aviation experts were organized at the initiative of the DRC Civil Aviation Authority.

2.9 Using the indicative elements of ICAO Doc 10088, the Eurocontrol Guide for information exchange in civil-military coordination (Eurocontrol-guid-183 edition 1.0 of 27/10/2020) and the Nigerian template of memorandum of cooperation (MOC), the Congolese civil and military experts were able to tailor a MOC text 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. A new legal framework is being put in place by the Government. Local coordination committees and operational procedures for civil-military coordination are already in place at the country's mixed airport hubs.

2.12 Since the signing of the agreement, several training courses and workshops have been held for civil and military operators and service providers. This has led to greater efficiency in operational coordination, particularly in search and rescue.

2.13 Despite the efforts made to date, the challenge remains enormous. The difficulties encountered are due to the infrequency of meetings to evaluate the mechanism put in place, and to insufficient human and logistical resources at some of the country's poorly equipped airports.

3 ACTION BY THE MEETING

3.1 The meeting is invited to:

- a) Note the progress made by the DRC in implementing civil-military cooperation for civil aviation safety; and
- b) Take into account the challenges encountered by States in the AFI region in implementing civil-military cooperation and draw appropriate conclusions.