



INTERNATIONAL CIVIL AVIATION ORGANIZATION

AFI PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION REGIONAL GROUP
THIRTEENTH MEETING (APIRG/13)

(Sal, Cape Verde, 25-29 June 2001)

Agenda Item 4.7.3 : **Review of the status of implementation of ICAO requirements
in the Search and Rescue (SAR) Services field.**

(Presented by the Secretariat)

Summary

This paper reviews the status of implementation of the ICAO Search and Rescue provisions with particular reference to AFI/7 Recommendations 6/1, 6/2 and 6/3 and APIRG/12 Conclusion 12/30. Action by the APIRG is at para 3 of the paper.

References:

- Annex 12 (Search and Rescue)
- Search and Rescue Manual (Doc 7333)
- Report of AFI/7 RAN Meeting (Doc 9702)
- APIRG/12 - Report of Meeting

1. **Introduction.**

1.1 The meeting will note that most of the ICAO provisions relating to Search and Rescue (SAR) services have remained **un-implemented** for quite a long time. Search and rescue units often require to extend their operations across national borders of neighbouring States for the purpose of searching for the site of aircraft accidents in order to rescue survivors of such accidents. The absence of SAR agreements between States was identified by APIRG as one of the specific shortcomings that constituted the long-time obstacles to the provision of efficient SAR services in AFI region. The situation has been attributed to geopolitical problems (i.e. sovereignty issue) of which possible solutions, for obvious reasons, are taking too long to materialize.

1.2 It should be recalled that a fast response to an alert is extremely essential in order to save lives of persons in distress. It has also been established that the humanitarian aspect of search and rescue should be the determining factor for States to negotiate mutual cooperative agreements. In this respect, the AFI/7 RAN Meeting recognized that the **COSPAS/SARSAT** system had been useful in the determination of accident sites as the system provides far more accurate location of emergency locator transmitters (ELT). The RAN Meeting was of the opinion that the use of satellite technology could better facilitate the appropriate search and rescue response in any given emergency if the new ELT generation operating on 406/121.5 MHZ was implemented in the region in conjunction with suitably located local user terminals (**LUTs**).

2. Discussion.

2.1. The AFI/7 RAN Meeting noted that the value of mutual assistance between neighbouring States was provided for in the ICAO Annex 12 and the SAR Manual in recognition of the need for aeronautical authorities to work closely towards more cooperation in the field of search and rescue. The seventh meeting of the AFI Planning and Implementation Regional Group (APIRG/7), under its conclusion 7/12, had called attention to the fact that the importance of cooperative agreements between neighbouring States to facilitate entry of SAR units of one State into another had simply been ignored. The meeting will also recall that various APIRG Meetings raised serious concern over the continuous lack of implementation of such agreements.

2.2. With the latest technological developments in terms of satellite systems, however, it is apparent that this technology will bring immediate and improved results in the provision of SAR services. In this regard, the meeting may wish to note that the ICAO Council, at the sixteenth meeting of its 130th session (21 June 1990), approved a policy which *inter alia* stated that all future aviation distress beacons should be designed to co-operate with the **COSPAS-SARSAT** system in alerting and locating distress sites. Annexes 6, 10 (Volume III) and 12 were subsequently amended to reflect this policy, which includes **ELT** carriage requirements and specifications. In line with these amendments, the AFI/7 RAN Meeting recalled that, in accordance with Annex 12, para. 3.2.4, States should designate a **SAR point of contact (SPOC)** for the receipt of **COSPAS-SARSAT** distress data and that the carriage of automatic **ELTs** operating on **406 MHZ** will be mandatory in the AFI Region and that relevant information about the **COSPAS/SARSAT** system must be published in AIPs and incorporated in SAR plans. In this context, AFI/7 adopted conclusion 6/3 and formulated recommendations 6/1 and 6/2 as follows:

Recommendation 6/1 - Carriage of 406 MHZ ELTs

That, in the AFI Region, all aircraft required to carry emergency locator transmitters in accordance with Annex 6, carry automatic ELTs operating on 406 MHZ, and on 121.5 MHZ for homing.

Recommendation 6/2 - Satellite-aided Search and Rescue**That States:**

- a) **take appropriate action to reduce the number of false alarms through the COSPAS-SARSAT system on 121.5/243/406 MHZ caused by inadvertent activation of emergency transmitters and eliminate unauthorized use of those frequencies;**
- b) **establish a register of 406 MHZ ELTs and make available information by publishing in the aeronautical information publication as to how ELT registration information can be obtained rapidly by rescue co-ordination centres (RCCs) of other States;**
- c) **provide to ICAO a search and rescue (SAR) point of contact (SPOC) for inclusion in Table SAR 1 of the respective air navigation plan (ANP); and**
- d) **include information regarding the COSPAS-SARSAT system in the SAR plans.**

Conclusion 6/3 - C-operation between States

In order to promote a more effective and economic utilization of SAR facilities, States should enter into precise agreements with other States in order to pool their resources and provide mutual assistance in SAR operations when requested:

- a) **to assist in meeting the minimum requirements specified in Table SAR 1 in cases where difficulties are experienced in fulfilling such requirements;**
- b) **to provide complete coverage of a search and rescue region with the assistance of SAR facilities of other States;**
- c) **to provide, if possible, SAR facilities additional to the minimum requirements in Table SAR 1, while at the same time avoiding prohibitive costs; and**
- d) **to establish common SAR procedures.**

2.3 APIRG/12 expressed concern that most of those provisions had remained unimplemented and, in its conclusion 12/30, urged States to accord a high priority to the implementation of AFI/7 recommendations 6/1, 6/2 and 6/3 above. Considering that States have

always attached a low status to the implementation of SAR, the meeting may wish to urge States to follow-up implementation of the above requirements.

3. Action required.

3.1. The meeting is invited to :

a) note that States should follow-up implementation of AFI/7 Recommendations 6/1 and 6/2 and conclusion 6/3 and report on the progress of the implementation at the next meeting of the APIRG.

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