International Civil Aviation Organization

AFI PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION REGIONAL GROUP
SIXTEENTH MEETING (APIRG/16)
(Kigali, Rwanda 19-23 November 2007)

4.0 : AFI Regional Air Navigation Planning and Implementation Issues

4.3: Air Traffic Management (ATS, AIS and SAR) including RVSM Implementation

EAST AFRICA UPPER FLIGHT INFORMATION REGION (UFIR) PROJECT

(Presented by Uganda on behalf of the East African Community Partner States[1])

SUMMARY

This Paper presents an overview of the East Africa Upper Flight Information Region (UFIR) Project. The paper outlines progress towards the establishment of the EAC UFIR. It gives the background of the project in reference to the EAC Treaty, the ongoing feasibility study on the proposed EAC UFIR and proposed recommendations to ensure effective functioning of the EAC UFIR entity once is established.

Given the overlapping memberships of the States among the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) in the AFI region, there is a need for coordination and harmonization of the efforts among the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) in AFI region to avoid duplications of projects and wastage of resources.

EAC is cooperating with COMESA, SADC and ICAO ESAF Office in implementing the East Africa Upper Flight Information Region (UFIR) Project.

Action by the Meeting is at paragraph 4

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The East African Community ("EAC") was formally established in November 1999 with the signing in Arusha, Tanzania, of the Treaty for the Establishment of the East African Community. The Treaty was entered into force on July 7, 2000, following its ratification by the East African Partner States, Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania

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[1] Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda

while Rwanda and Burundi joined the EAC in July 2007. The Treaty outlines a comprehensive system of cooperation among the Partner States in trade, investment, industrial development, and infrastructure and services.

1.2 The East African Community (EAC) Treaty recognizes the contribution of air transport in stimulating the economy within the region. Article 92 of the Treaty (Civil Aviation and Civil Air Transport) outlines a comprehensive system of cooperation among the Partner States in civil aviation and air transport. Paragraph 12 of Article 92 in particular requires the establishment of a unified upper area control system.

1.3 The object of the EAC Treaty is to create a single block of upper airspace (i.e. airspace above Flight Level 245) over Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda, Burundi and Rwanda, operating from a single area control centre (location to be determined).

1.4 The project was confirmed at a meeting of the Heads of Civil Aviation of the Partner States held in September 2004, to chart the roadmap toward the establishment of an EAC Upper Flight Information Region ("UFIR") controlled by one Upper Area Control Centre ("UACC").

1.5 The EAC envisions the new UACC will control a UFIR, and that the existing three (3) national Area Control Centres ("ACC"s) will be responsible for the lower air space of the national Flight Information Regions ("FIR"s) as currently defined. The upper ACC will coordinate with the ACCs of Partner States and FIRs adjacent to the EAC.

1.6 The process of incorporating Rwanda and Burundi in this project has commenced.

1.7 The US government through the U.S. Trade and Development Agency (USTDA) has availed fund to EAC for the study on the Proposed East African Community Upper Flight Information Region. EAC appointed a US consulting firm called DORS to undertake the study. It is expected that the study will be completed in April 2007.

The objective of the Study is to establish a road map for establishment of the EAC Upper Flight Information Region by 2010 rather than the viability of the project.

1.8 This Paper presents an overview of the East Africa Upper Flight Information Region (UFIR) Project and outlines progress towards the establishment of the EAC UFIR.

2 THE UFIR STUDY

2.1 The Study covers the following areas:

- Aviation forecast and traffic projections, and establishment of the baseline for ATC operations and ANS system conditions.

- Identification and evaluation of the air traffic services organization for the new UFIR and UACC,

- Identification and evaluation of potential interaction requirements for the Interactions between the UACC and National Low Altitude Airspace Systems,

- Development of concept of operations for implementing UFIR & UACC

- Identification of possible locations for the UACC

- Development of the requirements for UFIR & UACC

- Designing of the system architecture for UFIR & UACC

- Cost Benefit Analysis

- Air space redesign

- Evaluation of the different options for ownership & financing of the UACC

- Evaluation of expected development benefits of the Project

2.2   In order to support operations of the future EAC UFIR, EAC has embarked on harmonisation of regulations in areas of air navigation services (air traffic management, communication, navigation and surveillance and aeronautical information services) and other areas of civil aviation following completion of harmonization of safety, security and aerodrome regulations.

2.3   The EAC UFIR Study is taking place at the same time as COMESA and SADC studies and the three studies are undertaken by the same Consultant. Given the overlapping memberships of the States among the three Regional Economic Communities (RECs), there is the need to look at UACC configurations that are practical and not necessarily linked to the REC configuration.

2.4   The three Regional Economic Communities (RECs) have agreed to share the outcomes of the study and to harmonize the implementation processes. Representatives from the three Regional Economic Communities (RECs) are participating in each others study review meetings.

2.5   EAC recognises the role of ICAO in providing guidance and technical advice on the project. ICAO ESAF office is participating in the meetings of experts on implementation of the project. ICAO ESAF office, for example, has advised EAC to arrange for a meeting with the consultant to discuss the definition of FIR boundaries which is one of the outputs of the Study as it requires the approval of the ICAO

Council once implementation starts. This will avoid or reduce unnecessary delays during the implementation phase of the project.

2.6 EAC also recognises the contribution of stakeholders towards the success of the project. Stakeholders, both, government and private operators are involved in the project. Questionnaires were designed at the beginning of the project to collect stakeholders' views on the project.

One of the milestones of the project is stakeholders' workshops. Stakeholders' workshops will be convened to collect stakeholders' views on the study report to be considered during the establishment of the EAC UFIR.

3   CONCLUSION

3.1 The future EAC Upper Flight Information Region ("UFIR") controlled by one Upper Area Control Centre ("UACC") is one of the elements of a comprehensive system of cooperation among the Partner States in civil aviation as outlined in the EAC Treaty.

3.2 The objective of the EAC UFIR Study is to establish a road map for establishment of the EAC Upper Flight Information Region rather than the viability of the project.

3.3 Civil aviation projects undertaken at Regional Economic Communities (RECs) level should consider the overlapping memberships of the States among the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) in AFI region to avoid duplication of efforts and wastage of resources.

3.4 ICAO regional offices should play a leading role in harmonization and coordination of aviation projects in AFI region.

4   ACTION BY APIRG:

4.1   The Meeting is invited to:

4.1.1   Note the progress on establishment of the EAC UFIR as one of the elements of a comprehensive system of cooperation among the Partner States in civil aviation as outlined in the EAC Treaty; and

4.1.2   Support such initiative as a contribution in ensuring safe, orderly and expeditious flow of air traffic in the sub region.