INTERNATIONAL CIVIL AVIATION ORGANIZATION

AFI PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION REGIONAL GROUP
SEVENTEENTH MEETING (APIRG/17)
(Burkina Faso, 2 to 6 August 2010)

Agenda Item 7: Terms of Reference and future work programme of APIRG

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE REGIONAL AVIATION SAFETY GROUPs (RASGs)

(Presented by the Secretariat)

SUMMARY

This paper presents the action taken by the Council on the establishment of Regional Aviation Safety Groups (RASGs) with the aim of supporting a regional performance framework for the management of safety. Consequently, the Council called upon PIRGs to coordinate with respective RASG on a continuous basis so as to ensure that all safety issues are addressed in a cohesive manner.

Action by APIRG/17 is contained in paragraph 5.

1.   **INTRODUCTION**

1.1   On 18 March 2008, during its review of the report of the Commission concerning increasing the effectiveness of planning and implementation regional groups (PIRGs), the Council (C-DEC 183/9) agreed to request that the Commission present, in due course, a report to the Council regarding the development of new structures to coordinate the Business Plan implementation activities related to safety, security and environmental subjects.

1.2   Subsequent to the decision of the Council and taking into consideration Assembly Resolution A36-7: *ICAO Global planning for safety and efficiency* which resolved that the Global Plans (Global Air Navigation Plan and Global Aviation Safety Plan) shall provide the framework in which regional, subregional and national implementation plans will be developed and implemented, thus ensuring harmonization and coordination of efforts aimed at improving international civil aviation safety and efficiency, the Commission through and ad hoc working group initiated a study aimed at identifying a regional mechanism to address safety issues.

1.3   As the current regional mechanisms (such as PIRGs, COSCAPs, RSOOs, DGCA meetings) are not sufficient in addressing and harmonizing regional flight operations safety issues, it is proposed that a new follow-up body is needed that would monitor progress, coordinate actions among States and make recommendations to ICAO to facilitate the implementation of the Global Aviation Safety Plan (GASP) and the associated Global Aviation Safety Roadmap (GASR).

1.4   The Commission (182-5, AN-WP/8401) in agreeing with the concept of establishing a new regional mechanism, the Regional Aviation Safety Groups (RASGs), noted that in some areas (e.g. Pan-America), States have already established their own regional mechanism for addressing flight safety issues.

1.5   Subsequently, the Secretariat transmitted State letter SWG 21/1-09/94, dated 16 December 2009 to States and international organizations seeking comments on the need for uniform establishment of RASGs in all regions and indicating that the proposal would not fundamentally change the efforts that are presently underway in several ICAO regions.

1.6   On 29 April 2010, the Commission (184-5) reviewed AN-WP/8454 and Addendum No. 1 containing the replies of States and international organizations which showed general support for this initiative and agreed to recommend to the Council the establishment of RASGs in all regions.

2.   PROPOSED REGIONAL STRUCTURE

2.1   *Secretariat analysis.* In September 2008, the ICAO Regional Directors (RDs) were requested to provide their views, listing the strengths and weaknesses on proposed options for new regional mechanism(s) for addressing flight operations safety issues. From the analysis of their responses, as well as a teleconference held with the RDs on 3 September 2009, it was confirmed that the RDs were in favour of a separate regional group, similar to the PIRG framework, to address flight operations safety issues including the implementation of the GASP/GASR. Also, the RDs did not support the idea of holding either back-to-back or concurrent PIRG-RASG meetings.

2.2   *Regional structure.* The COSCAPs and RSOOs are organized on a subregional basis. It may be noted that eventually some COSCAPs may evolve into RSOOs where appropriate. Considering that COSCAP/RSOO mechanisms are more focused on safety oversight issues and, as of now, do not cover all of the States of the region, it is considered necessary to establish a new regional mechanism known as Regional Aviation Safety Groups (RASGs) to address and harmonize all flight operations safety issues on an ICAO region-wide basis. Noting that in several regions there was actually a gradual evolution toward RASGs, this proposal, in effect, would facilitate ICAO recognition of groups that Contracting States had already chosen to form. The eventual recognition of RASGs by the Council would lead to the establishment of a formal reporting channel allowing ICAO to monitor the worldwide implementation of the GASP. The RASGs are expected to build on the work already done by these existing subregional organizations and will facilitate the exchange of best practices, cooperation and collaboration using a top-down approach complementing the bottom-up approach of planning by subregions, States and industry.

2.3   *Need for partnership.* The GASP and GASR are built on the principle of partnership and, as such, it is essential that all relevant stakeholders are involved in the development and implementation of any activities aimed at improving safety under the focus areas. Together with ICAO, the stakeholders in the civil aviation sector are States, airlines/operators, airports, air navigation service providers, aircraft and equipment manufacturers, maintenance and repair organizations, regional organizations, international organizations, training organizations and industry representatives. The commitment of all stakeholders is fundamental for success in improving safety.

3.   **ESTABLISHMENT OF RASGs**

3.1   ***Regional groups.*** It is proposed that the following RASGs covering all of the regions of the world be established: Regional Aviation Safety Group – Pan American (RASG-PA) for the Caribbean, South American and North American Regions; Regional Aviation Safety Group – Europe (RASG-EUR) for the European Region; Regional Aviation Safety Group – Asia Pacific (RASG-APAC) for the Asia and Pacific Regions; Regional Aviation Safety Group – Africa (RASG-AFI) for the African Region; and Regional Aviation Safety Group – Middle East (RASG-MID) for the Middle East Region.

3.2   ***Terms of reference and membership***. It is noted that currently regions are addressing flight safety issues through different mechanisms established by States and industry partners. For example, RASG-PA has already been established by the Pan American States themselves and held its second meeting in November 2009. In addition, the AFI Comprehensive Implementation Programme (ACIP) and its Steering Committee are monitoring and coordinating the implementation of the GASP/GASR within the region; however, once the ACIP project has ended, an entity will be needed to follow-up, monitor and coordinate activities. These regional experiences have been taken into account in determining the global model. With this proposed establishment of RASGs by the Council, the current regional mechanisms would be formalized and thus facilitate funding and support from ICAO Headquarters. In addition, this formal creation of ICAO regional groups, similar to PIRGs, would allow the reports of RASGs to be reviewed by the Commission on a regular basis and by Council as deemed necessary, thus providing interregional harmonization related to flight safety issues and a means to monitor implementation of GASP/GASR. The proposal for RASGs would not fundamentally change the efforts that are presently underway in several regions. The terms of reference detailing membership of the RASGs and their work programme are proposed in Appendix A hereto. Depending on the regional situation, sufficient flexibility can be exercised in determining the membership of each of the RASG.

3.3   ***Resources.*** With the creation of RASGs, one officer for each of the regional offices will be required. Currently, all regional offices have a post of Flight Safety Officer in their establishment. Further support for the RASG meetings would be provided using Headquarters staff. The expenses (including travel and DSA for the Headquarters officer to support the meeting) for the RASG meetings will be accommodated within the regional meeting budget which will be augmented suitably.

3.4   ***Coordination between PIRGs and RASGs***: A concern arose related to the parallels that were being drawn between the PIRG framework and the RASGs. It was noted that while the PIRGs did touch on some safety issues, they had been developed to deal with air navigation plans at a regional and global level with ICAO playing a key leadership role. In contrast, safety continued to lie within the sovereignty of individual States. It is expected that States will provide input on how to determine the safety issues to be covered by the RASGs and those that should remain with the PIRGs. Also, the need for a mechanism for coordination between PIRGs and RASGs was discussed and accordingly this aspect has been reflected in the suggested terms of reference for RASGs as well as for PIRGs.

4.   **CONCLUSION**

4.1   ***Systems approach.*** The proposed RASGs will serve as a regional cooperative forum integrating global, regional, subregional, national and industry efforts in continuing to enhance aviation safety worldwide. While RASGs will initially deal with safety issues directly related to flight operations, planning should be initiated as soon as circumstances permit to adopt

a systems approach so that RASGs address safety issues from an integrated perspective that includes flight operations and ATM safety. As the Commission reviews the mandate and terms of reference of PIRGs, it is expected to address in the future an integration of the safety work done by these groups. Until such time, the Secretariat will ensure that the safety issues raised by the PIRGs and RASGs are fully coordinated.

5.   **ACTION BY APIRG/17**

5.1   The meeting is invited to note the establishment of Regional Aviation Safety Groups (RASGs).

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APPENDIX A

SUGGESTED TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR
REGIONAL AVIATION SAFETY GROUPS (RASGs)

1.   **ESTABLISHMENT**

1.1   Consistent with the Planning and Implementation Regional Group (PIRG) mechanism, the Regional Aviation Safety Groups (RASGs) may be established in the following regions by the Council of ICAO. The meetings of the RASGs will be convened as required.

> Regional Aviation Safety Group – Pan American (RASG-PA) for Caribbean, South American and North American Regions; (based on the existing arrangements put in place by States.)

> Regional Aviation Safety Group – Europe (RASG-EUR) for the European Region;

> Regional Aviation Safety Group – Asia Pacific (RASG-APAC) for APAC Regions;

> Regional Aviation Safety Group – Africa (RASG-AFI) for the African Region;

> Regional Aviation Safety Group – Middle East (RASG-MID) for the Middle East Region.

2.   **MEMBERSHIP**

2.1   Contracting States entitled to participate as members in a RASG meeting are:

   a) *those whose territories or dependencies are located partially or wholly within the geographical area to be considered by the meeting;*

   b) *those located outside the area:*

      1) *which have notified ICAO that aircraft on their register or aircraft operated by an operator whose principal place of business or permanent residence is located in such States, operate or expect to operate into the area; or*

      2) *which provide facilities and services affecting the area.*

2.2   Contracting States not meeting the above criteria and non-Contracting States are entitled to participate in RASG meetings as observers. The aircraft operators, international organizations, maintenance and repair organizations, regional organizations, training organizations, aircraft manufactures, airport and air navigation service providers and any other allied organizations/representatives will be invited to attend RASG meetings in the capacity of observers. The members and observers will serve as partners of RASG and their joint commitment is fundamental for success in improving aviation safety worldwide. The Regional Director will serve as the Secretary of the RASG. Wherever two Regional Directors are involved, they would alternate serving as Secretary of the RASG and PIRG to balance the Secretariat responsibilities between these two regional groups.

3.   **RESOURCES**

3.1   An officer from Headquarters (ANB) will participate and provide support to the RASG meetings. The ANB officer will serve as the interface between the RASG and the Air Navigation Commission and present the reports of RASG meetings to the Commission/Council for review and harmonization.

4.   **WORK PROGRAMME**

4.1   The RASG will develop and implement a work programme that supports a regional performance framework for the management of safety on the basis of the Global Aviation Safety Plan (GASP) and the Global Aviation Safety Roadmap (GASR). The reports of RASG meetings will be reviewed by the Commission on a regular basis and by the Council as deemed necessary.

4.2   Using the GASP and GASR, the RASG will build on the work already done by States, existing subregional organizations such as the Cooperative Development of Operational Safety and Continuing Airworthiness Programmes (COSCAPs) and Regional Safety Oversight Organizations (RSOOs) and support the establishment and operation of a performance-based safety system for the region by:

a) analyzing safety information and hazards to civil aviation at the regional level and reviewing the action plans developed within the region to address identified hazards;

b) facilitating the sharing of safety information and experiences among all stakeholders;

c) ensuring that all safety activities at the regional and subregional level are properly coordinated to avoid duplication of efforts;

d) reducing duplication of efforts by encouraging collaboration, cooperation and resource sharing;

e) conducting follow-up to GASP/GASR activities as required;

f) coordinating with respective PIRG on safety issues; and

g) providing feedback to ICAO to continually improve and ensure an up-to-date global safety framework.

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