



**International Civil Aviation Organization
Western and Central African Office - Dakar**

**Eighteenth Meeting on the improvement of Air Traffic Services
over the South Atlantic (SAT/18)**

Dakar, Senegal, 17 to 19 July 2013

Agenda Item 2: Air traffic management (ATM)

2.5. Any other ATM business

**Ascension Island FHAW/ASI and its criticality to airline operations
(Presented by IATA)**

Summary

Regulations require enroute alternates be nominated for twin engine aircraft operating in remote areas. Aircraft operations across the South Atlantic have limited choices of suitable airports in the event of an emergency diversion.

1. Introduction

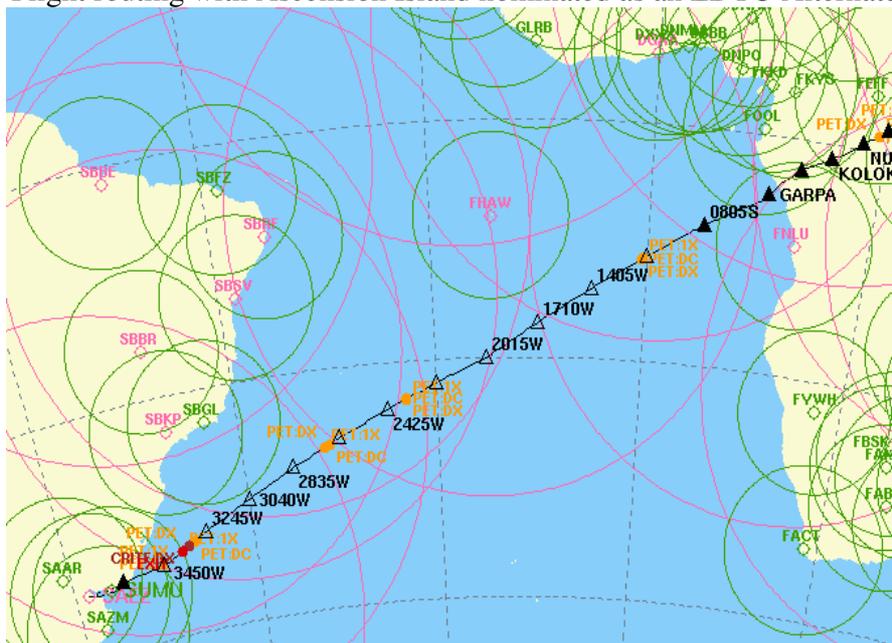
- 1.1 Two engine aircraft are required, by regulations, to nominate suitable enroute alternates when operating further than 60 minutes from an airport that the aircraft is capable of landing at.
- 1.2 With the Extended Diversion Time Operations (EDTO) future requirements, many airports, such as Ascension Island, will become more critical for aircraft operations over remote areas.

2. Discussion

- 2.1 The map below shows the scenario faced by operators when operating across the South Atlantic between Africa and South America. Ascension Island is important not just for this traffic but also traffic between North America and Africa.



Flight routing with Ascension Island nominated as an EDTO Alternate



Flight routing without Ascension Island nominated as an EDTO Alternate



2.2 The importance of Ascension Island is demonstrated with the above depictions and also with the recent example on 9th Jan 2013 where DL201 (B772), operating JNB/ATL safely diverted to FHW/ASI due to engine trouble.

2.3 Whilst operators frequently nominate Ascension Island as an Enroute alternate due regulatory requirements, the intention is not to use the airport except in an emergency.

2.4 Challenges faced by Operators when selecting suitable Enroute alternates

- **Validity of TAFS**
Flights legs across the South Atlantic can be up to 15 hours. With Flight Plans produced by dispatchers as much as 4 hours before departure times, TAFS with validity of only 24 hours can be a challenge for operators.
Airlines can only nominate an airport as suitable to use for an operation if there is a valid TAF.
It is therefore essential that TAF validity is not left to expire and that the validity is far enough in to the future to allow for ultra-long-haul planning.
Amendment 74 to ICAO Annex 3 contains provisions for MET authorities to issue TAFs with a validity of up to 30 hours to meet the flight planning needs of ultra-long-haul flights.
- **Access / availability of valid airport data**
In order to carry out safe operations at any airport the most up to date information concerning the airport must be readily available to all stakeholders.
Access to this information is sometimes limited at military airports. For example, NOTAMS may give reference to the DoD website that certain stakeholders are unauthorised to access.

3. Action by the Meeting

The SAT/18 meeting is invited to:

- Take note of the information published in this working paper
- Discuss suitability of publishing 30 hour TAFs vs. the current practice of publishing 24 hour TAFs for FHAW/ASI
- Determine how operationally important data concerning military airports can be provided to stakeholders to ensure safe operations.

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