International Civil Aviation Organization

The Twenty-Second Meeting of the APANPIRG ATM/AIS/SAR Sub-Group (ATM/AIS/SAR/SG/22)

Bangkok, Thailand, 25 – 29 June 2012

Agenda Item 4: Review outcome of relevant meetings

EAST ASIA AIR ATRAFFIC MANAGEMENT COORDINATION GROUP OUTCOMES (EATMCG/5)

(Presented by IFATCA)

SUMMARY

This paper presents a summary of outcomes from the 5th Meeting of the East Asia Air Traffic Management Coordination Group (EATMCG, 18 to 20 April 2012). The primary objectives of EATMCG are to develop tactical and strategic plans to improve en-route airspace capacity in addition to enhancing safety and efficiency in the region.

This paper relates to –

Strategic Objectives:

A: ***Safety*** *– Enhance global civil aviation safety*

C: ***Environmental Protection and Sustainable Development of Air Transport*** *– Foster harmonized and economically viable development of international civil aviation that does not unduly harm the environment*

Global Plan Initiatives:

GPI-1 Flexible use of airspace
GPI-3 Harmonization of level systems
GPI-4 Alignment of upper airspace classifications
GPI-5 RNAV and RNP (Performance-based navigation)
GPI-6 Air traffic flow management
GPI-7 Dynamic and flexible ATS route management
GPI-8 Collaborative airspace design and management
GPI-17 Data link applications

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The East Asia Air Traffic Management Coordination Group (EATMCG) Meetings are organised by IFATCA through the ATC Associations of the region. The group reviews current operational issues and the coordination of the development of new procedures related to a number of ICAO programmes that will impact the development of ATM in the region. EATMCG has been instrumental in developing the route structure in the area and a basic strategic ATFM process involving Hong Kong, Japan and Taiwan. Another important facet of EATMCG is that it is apolitical and can fully address matters that cannot be comprehensively discussed at other regional forums.

1.2 The 5th East Asia Traffic Management Coordination Group Meeting (EATMCG/5) was held in Hong Kong from 18 to 20 April 2012. The meeting was hosted by the Hong Kong Air Traffic Control Association and attended by more than 40 ATM experts from Hong Kong, Japan, Philippines, Republic of Korea and Taiwan representing the controllers, system development staff and ATM management.

1.3 This meeting was very productive with many issues discussed as part of the continuing efforts to improve the efficiency of air traffic operations in the East Asia area and assist in reducing the overall environmental impact of aircraft both in the airborne and ground phases of operations. The following is a general summary of the work of EATMCG/5 on topics relevant to the work of the ATM/AIS/SAR/SG.

2. DISCUSSION

2.1 Japan and Hong Kong each reported on the introduction of reduced longitudinal spacing. In Japan a trial of 20 NM longitudinal spacing on G581 between Naha ACC and Taipei ACC was extended to include R583 and R595 on 25 August 2011. The procedure will be implemented on a permanent basis when the LoA between Fukuoka and Taipei FIRs is finalised. Meanwhile, longitudinal spacing on A1, M750 and G581 between Hong Kong FIR and Taipei FIR was reduced from 30 NM to 20 NM with effect from 15 June 2011.

2.2 Because of the non-standard South China Sea Flight Level Orientation System (FLOS) and the Flight Level Allocation Scheme (FLAS) used between Manila FIR and Naha FIR, Japan noted the inadvertent use of incorrect flight levels of some flights at the boundary. To avoid any further repetition of such events, Japan requested the Philippines to consider revising the FLOS to comply with the standard ICAO Single Alternate FLOS, or not allocate non-standard flight levels. The Philippines advised that they will consider the proposal not to use FL360 for flights that will enter Naha FIR. To resolve this issue and other problems related to the modified Flight Level Orientation System (FLOS) currently in place in the South China Sea area, IFATCA proposed the adoption of the standard ICAO Single Alternate FLOS should be an item for consideration at the ICAO Seamless ATM Plan Meetings. (The significant increase in traffic since the inception of the modified FLOS in November 2001 has resulted in a growing additional workload for controllers who have to transition flights to or from the standard flight levels of the adjacent airspace blocks.)

2.3 Japan reported the realignment of ATS Route J5 adjacent to the Naha/Taipei FIR boundary was completed on 25 August 2011. This is a more direct route for Hong Kong-bound trans-Pacific flights. The realignment was undertaken following a request from airline operators and required the cooperation of the Japanese military authorities.

2.4 Japan requested the cooperation of Taiwan in establishing an alternative route for traffic between Ishigaki and Hualien across the Fukuoka/Taipei FIR boundary. The current routing detours around some military restricted areas. Japan requested to establish a more direct route, giving a significant saving of track miles and flight time. Taiwan advised that they would discuss the request with military authorities.

2.5 There was lengthy discussion on the high traffic density on B576 during the overnight period. Japan reported that the implementation of 30 NM longitudinal spacing on B576 between Taipei, Fukuoka and Incheon FIRs has eased the situation, but there was still significant congestion on the route at peak traffic periods. The Republic of Korea highlighted the traffic numbers and controller workload during the peak period of 1900-2200 UTC. They are considering a number of measures to resolve the problems, including a one-way route system, alternative routes and rerouting some domestic flights and overflying traffic.

2.6 Hong Kong advised that if there was further growth in the traffic numbers it may be necessary to re-route some flights via G581. Taiwan noted that the alternative route via G581 could be linked with an RNAV route through the Taipei FIR and Fukuoka FIR up to the Incheon FIR boundary, which would also provide an alternative route for the Incheon flights from Manila.

2.7 Following the initiative of the Southeast Asia Route Review Task Force to re-designate routes where RNAV procedures are already in place, the Philippines re-designated B348 as M646 within their FIR with effect from 3 May 2012. This was in line with Singapore and Kota Kinabalu ACCs who had previously re-designated ATS Route B348 to RNAV Route M646 in their FIRs. Taiwan plans to re-designate the short portion of B348 within the Taipei FIR in a similar manner.

2.8 Japan proposed a number of measures to improve the efficiency of the Daily Notification Scheme between Japan, Taiwan and Hong Kong. This is a basic ATFM strategic planning tool for the notification of airspace and airport capacity. Hong Kong noted the proposals and advised that they already share the Notification Scheme information with the major operators in Hong Kong. They advised that a more effective process for calculating the Notification Scheme Level has been developed and it is hoped that this will provide a measure of uniformity to their information. Specifically they hoped this will alleviate the issue of repetitive short notice restrictions as tactical measures and instead provide a more strategic plan for implementing restrictions only when significant delays are predicted. Hong Kong also provided information on the coordination they have conducted with their meteorological office to provide extended coverage of the weather forecasts for the Hong Kong Terminal Area, including holding areas and final approach areas.

2.9 The issue of un-coordinated military activities was discussed, with Taiwan giving examples of several unidentified aircraft conflicting with controlled civil traffic within their FIR. They reported that they experience numerous occurrences of unknown traffic, believed to be military aircraft from foreign states operating under ‘due regard’ procedures within their airspace, but without any flight plan, radio communication, or coordination. In recent months there have been four such events resulting in TCAS RA incidents.

2.10 Japan reported that Fukuoka and Naha ACCs and Taipei ACC commenced AIDC trials on 22 March 2012. All parties noted the reduction in controller workload due to the reduction of coordination telephone calls. Hong Kong reported that during the AIDC initial test phase between Hong Kong ACC and Taipei ACC, a number of technical problems were encountered. These were subsequently identified as software problems and once a software patch has been developed it is hoped to re-commence trials by mid-2012.

3. ACTION BY THE MEETING

3.1 The meeting is invited to:

a) note the information contained in this paper;

b) note the productive work and accomplishments of the EATMCG participants;

c) note that EATMCG/6 Meeting will be hosted by the Japanese Federation of Air Traffic Controllers in January 2013, and

d) discuss any relevant matters as appropriate.

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