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WORKING PAPER

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Eighth Eastern Caribbean Civil Aviation Technical Group (E/CAR/CATG/8) Meeting
Miami, United States, 22 to 24 October 2024

Agenda Item 3: Follow-up of the activities of the E/CAR/CATG
3.4 Progress report of the SAR Committee

PROGRESS REPORT OF THE SAR COMMITTEE

(Presented by the SAR Committee Rapporteur)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Working Paper summarises the activities of the Search and Rescue Committee, as related to the improvement of the Search and Rescue Services within the Eastern Caribbean Region.

This paper provides a summary of the SAR Committee's work since the North American, Central American and Caribbean Search and Rescue Task Force Meeting (NACC/WG/SAR/TF/4) meeting.

Action:	Suggested actions are presented in Section 4.
<i>Strategic Objectives:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Safety• Air Navigation Capacity and Efficiency• Environmental Protection
<i>References:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• NACC/WG/SAR/TF/4/2 - Mexico City, Mexico, 7 to 11 August 2023• Annex 11: Air Traffic Services• Annex 12: Search and Rescue• PANS-ATM (Doc 4444): Air Traffic Management• Doc 9731: IAMSAR Manual – International Aeronautical & Maritime Search and Rescue manual

1. Introduction

1.1 This paper provides an update to the E/CAR/CATG/8 meeting on the activities of the E/CAR/CATG/SAR Committee since the E/CAR/CATG/7 meeting.

1.2 The following conclusions were included as part of the report NACC/WG/SAR/TF/4/2 - Mexico City, Mexico, 7 to 11 August 2023.

- a) Conclusion: '*NACC/WG/SAR/TF/4/2 UPDATE OF SAR INFORMATION IN THE CAR/SAM ANP VOL. I AND ENHANCE SAR COORDINATION*' stated that Trinidad and Tobago should "*designate a Point of Contact to represent their State, with the authority to provide information and make decisions about the lateral and vertical limits of their FIR/UIR and SRR*"; and

- b) Conclusion: 'NACC/WG/SAR/TF/4/4 SUPPORT TO INTERREGIONAL SAR EXERCISE (SAREX) IN THE CAR REGION' stated that "to support the State and regional participation in the interregional SAR Exercise (SAREX) organized by France - Trinidad and Tobago and the States and Territories under the Piarco Search and Rescue Region to join this SAREX".

2. Discussion

2.1 The E/CAR/CATG/SAR committee continues to work towards strategically implementing elements of the SAR system that will improve the response for aircraft in need of SAR services. The Committee, mindful of the challenges associated with the provision of SAR Services within the E/CAR Region conducted three (3) virtual meetings focused on States' needs and challenges.

2.2 *E/CAR/CATG/SAR Committee Contact list.*

2.2.1 In order to improve communications among regional SAR agencies, the E/CAR/CATG/SAR Contact list was created. States are encouraged to update their contact information whenever changes occur. The contact list includes regional stakeholders from both aeronautical and maritime agencies as well as ICAO administrators and regional regulators. The list is attached in **Appendix**.

2.2.2 The information on the contact list was utilized for the formation of a WhatsApp chat group. The chat group was created as a platform for information sharing and has been an efficient means of communication amongst members. As an example, the WhatsApp chat group was utilized to coordinate an event in which an aircraft departed Toussaint Louverture International Airport in Haiti (MTPP) to the Princess Juliana International Airport in Saint Martin (TNM). Santo Domingo issued a DETRESFA message which was shared to the group by the ICAO Regional Officer (RO). The members investigated and discussed the request for information. The results were shared with the ICAO RO on the WhatsApp chat group. The aircraft was not found in the E/CAR Region.

2.3 *Rescue Coordination Centre and Rescue Sub-Centres within the Piarco SRR*

2.3.1 Within the Piarco Flight Information Region (FIR), there are significant differences in the delimitation between the ICAO Aeronautical Search and Rescue Regions (SRRs) and the International Maritime Organization (IMO) boundaries. This provides a challenge to harmonise SAR procedures within the E/CAR. As a means of resolution, discussions were held during a virtual meeting for States to declare the lateral limits of their SRRs.

2.3.2 The ICAO RO identified discrepancies between the E/CAR AIP as compared to the Caribbean South American (CARSAM) Regional Air Navigation Plan (RANP). It was observed that the RANP lists the States of Grenada and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines as having the responsibilities for Rescue Sub Centres (RSCs) within the Piarco SRR.

2.3.3 However, it should be noted that the E/CAR AIP lists the RSCs within the Piarco FIR as, Antigua, Barbados, Guadeloupe and Martinique. Air operators and SAR agencies utilize the AIP information for SAR operations and SAR database updates.

2.3.4 France informed Trinidad and Tobago of SAR contact information discrepancies for the RCC and RSCs in the E/CAR AIP. As such, Trinidad and Tobago requested all States to provide updated

information. Subsequently, the E/CAR AIP was updated to reflect the information. This initiative was also harmonised with the French West Indies AIP.

2.4 *SAR Letters of Agreement (LOAs) among States within the E/CAR Region*

2.4.1 The ICAO RO reminded States of the lack of high-level agreements to reflect the collaboration and cooperation between States in support of SAR. States were also reminded that whilst there may exist a level of SAR coordination by their Air Traffic Services (ATS) Units, operational manuals/procedures should be developed in accordance with Annex 12 requirements. Annex 12 – Search and Rescue requires that RSCs have operational LOAs and harmonised procedures with the parent RCC.

2.4.2 The formalization of States SAR agreements require the contributions of other agencies. This has proven to be a challenge for the completion of LOAs within the region. The ICAO RO has suggested that entry into States by foreign SAR units to provide assistance may be addressed in a separate LOA specifically for this condition. Additionally, the ICAO RO suggested that the process utilized for developing ATS LOAs between States could be similarly followed for the establishment of operational SAR LOAs between the Piarco RCC and the RSCs in the E/CAR.

2.5 *E/CAR/SAR Update*

2.5.1 The ICAO RO indicated that within the Piarco FIR, France has been the most compliant in SAR requirements. France conducted a Search and Rescue Exercise (SAREX) in 2024 that underscored the lack of LOAs and harmonised procedures in the region. France has scheduled another SAREX in 2025, focused on Emergency Locator Transmitter-Distress Tracking (ELT-DT) technology and to verify that Location of Aircraft in Distress Repository (LADR) data is disseminated among airlines.

2.5.2 To fulfil Annex 12 – SAR obligations, the TTCAA conducted a virtual Table-Top SAREX on 18 September 2024, involving members of the E/CAR/CATG/SAR Committee. The SAREX focused on SAR coordination between the Piarco RCC and the ATS units of Barbados, Grenada, and Saint Vincent & the Grenadines. The SAREX highlighted that significant improvements were required, particularly in the areas of LOAs, harmonised regional SAR procedures and Civil-Military Cooperation.

2.5.3 Trinidad and Tobago developed operational SAR LOAs for the following adjacent SRRs:

- a) Cayenne (French Guiana),
- b) Georgetown (Guyana),
- c) Maiquetia (Venezuela),
- d) Dakar (Senegal),
- e) Santa Maria (Portugal),
- f) United States Coast Guard (San Juan and New York FIRs).

2.5.4 Trinidad and Tobago attempted communication with all adjacent SRRs to discuss the proposed LOAs. Responses were received from France, Guyana and the United States (US). Trinidad and Tobago continues to attempt to establish contact with all adjacent SAR stakeholders. Currently, discussions are ongoing with the US regarding a LOA submitted by the US Coast Guard.

2.5.5 Trinidad and Tobago developed operational SAR LOAs between the Piarco RCC and the following stakeholders within the Piarco FIR:

- a) Antigua RSC (Antigua and Barbuda),
- b) Argyle ATS (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines)
- c) Barbados RSC (Barbados)
- d) Guadeloupe RSC (France)
- e) Martinique RSC (France), and
- f) Maurice Bishop ATS (Grenada).

2.5.6 Trinidad and Tobago will engage in discussions with each E/CAR State regarding the LOAs over the next few months.

2.5.7 Trinidad and Tobago developed a SAR operations manual for use within the Piarco Area Control Centre (Piarco RCC). A dedicated workstation (equipped with the required resources) has been placed at the ACC to assist with SAR coordination. Briefings on the procedures for SAR coordination and Space System for Search of Vessels in Distress SAR Satellite Aided Tracking (COSPAS SARSAT) message processing have been provided to ATS Supervisory Staff.

3. Suggested Actions

3.1 The meeting is invited to:

- a) Note the information presented in this Working Paper;
- b) Urge E/CAR States/Territories/International organisations to continue working with the E/CAR SAR Rapporteur to ensure compliance and harmonised SAR procedures within the region; and,
- c) Provide other recommendations to improve SAR services in the E/CAR Region.

APPENDIX

E/CAR/CATG SAR COMMITTEE POINTS OF CONTACT
Updated: 2024 (March)

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