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国际民用
航空组织

Bureau Afrique occidentale et centrale / Western and Central African Office

Ref: T 17/6 – 0579

29 July 2024

Subject: Implementation of APIRG Decision 26/24 on the preparation of a regional Summit on air navigation services

Sir, Madam,

I hereby have the honour to clarify the context and scope of APIRG Decision 26/24, and to share with you the comments of the Group Secretariat on its implementation after analyzing the approach taken so far in the light of the relevant provisions of the APIRG Procedural Handbook ([APIRG HANDBOOK- 6th Ed_EN.pdf \(icao.int\)](#)).

In line with the principle of an approach based on the operational needs of users, APIRG Decision 26/24 requests that, in order to ensure effective preparation of an AFI Air Navigation Services Summit, IATA, in collaboration with ICAO, coordinate a multi-stakeholder expert team to review existing frameworks related to air navigation, consolidate initiatives and deliverables.

These initiatives include the work of APIRG and its sub-groups, the 2019 African Aviation Infrastructure Gap Analysis as part of ICAO's Comprehensive Regional Aviation Safety Implementation Plan (AFI Plan) pursuant to the Ministerial Declaration and the Framework for the Development of an Action Plan for Aviation Infrastructure Development in Africa (Abuja, 22 November 2017), which is being completed by a joint study by ICAO, the African Union and the African Civil Aviation Commission, as well as other regional or subregional initiatives.

The team of experts is particularly expected to establish a compilation of regional technical projects with their evaluation and identify specific activities with clear objectives and related implementation timelines as well as the responsibilities of each stakeholder in order to prepare the background work toward the organization of an ANS Summit as recommended by APIRG Conclusion 22/35. This conclusion reads as follows:

« APIRG/22 Conclusion 22/35: Seamless Air Traffic Management

That, in order to improve the seamless flow of air traffic in the AFI Region:

- a) *The development of an AFI ATM Regional Vision Document, Concept of Operations and ATM Framework Plan with an Enabling Infrastructure Strategy for Africa be endorsed;*
- b) *The ATM infrastructure strategy should be developed in collaboration with aviation stakeholders;*
- c) *The ICAO Regional Offices consider the hosting of an AFI Air Navigation Summit on seamless ATM System for the AFI Region in 2020;*
- d) *The finalized Master Plan of the ATM Infrastructure Strategy for Africa should be endorsed and approved by the African Union through appropriate channels and following an agreed process, including deadlines;*
- e) *The process and timelines for the implementation of the strategy and the cascading of the strategy to States should be achieved through the development of National Aviation Master Plans and an acceptable funding model; and*
- f) *AFCAC shall monitor and follow up with States on the implementation of the process... »*

.../...

Obviously, the initial timelines for the implementation of this conclusion have been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic crisis. Conclusion 22/35 clearly describes the key steps to take along the process of preparation, organization, adoption, implementation and follow-up on the expected outcomes, and requests ICAO Regional Offices to consider holding a summit on air navigation services in the region. It also defines the terms of reference of the team of experts established for the implementation of Decision 26/24.

It is important to recall the definition of the Conclusions and Decisions of the APIRG meetings which record the follow-up to be given to the deliberations of the Group, in accordance with its Procedural Handbook.

Conclusions relate to issues which, according to the group's mandate, require the direct attention of States and for which further action is required, on the initiative of the Secretary in accordance with established procedures in this area. The conclusions are primarily intended to promote studies and programs being undertaken by the Group, its sub-groups and other ICAO groups or meetings. For the implementation of such conclusions, the Secretary shall:

- a) initiate the action to be taken;
- b) or through the relevant ICAO Regional Office, invite States and international organizations or other bodies, as appropriate, to carry out the tasks recommended in the relevant conclusion;
- c) refer them to the Council or the Air Navigation Commission for action.
- d) The Secretary shall ensure that the findings are transmitted to the States concerned by the competent ICAO Regional Office and shall take any reasonable action.

Decisions concern the internal working arrangements of the group and its sub-groups.

In the light of the above, the implementation of Decision 26/24 is essentially an internal mechanism of the group that, by definition, does not require any specific action by the Secretary. Therefore, the observed tendency to require a formal letter of invitation from the Secretary of APIRG is not a genuine *sine qua non* requirement.

Furthermore, you may recall that it is not necessary to convene physical meetings for the project teams established within APIRG framework, whose work can be effectively facilitated by electronic correspondence, teleconferences and any other appropriate mediums. Where physical meetings are deemed appropriate, the work should be done virtually as much as possible in order to reduce associated cost implications, allow for broader participation of stakeholders, and facilitate the timely delivery of expected results as well. Generally, instead of formal invitation letters, emails are the preferred means of communication in the conduct of project team activities.

It should also be noted that the activities of the project teams are usually facilitated by Officials from the Secretariat (appointed by the Secretary of APIRG), in coordination with Project Team Coordinators nominated by States.

The concept of lab-workshops being applied for the activities of the team of experts on the preparation of a regional Summit on air navigation services, does not comply with the above provisions of the APIRG Procedural Handbook, since this concept entails additional costs not necessarily budgeted for this fiscal year by States and stakeholders, and subsequently affects their participation in such activities. This generates unnecessary misunderstandings, whereas full adherence to the principles governing the internal functioning of the group and close coordination with or between its auxiliary bodies are essential to achieve the intended objectives.

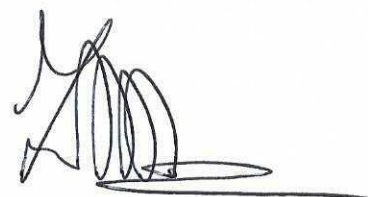
Considering the above, I have requested the Sub-Groups on Aerodrome and Airspace Operations (AAO/SG) and the Aeronautical Information and Infrastructure Management (IIM/G) to include the review of the modalities for the implementation of decision 26/24 and the composition of the team of experts on the agenda of their forthcoming meetings, and to formulate recommendations aimed to ensure that the work already initiated can be completed. For your information, the next meetings of the APIRG IIM and AAO sub-groups are scheduled from 5 to 9 August 2024 in Dakar and from 12 to 16 August 2024 in Nairobi, respectively.

It is understood that coordination and planning of a Regional Summit on Air Navigation Services will depend on the maturity level of the deliverables (such as AFI ATM Regional Vision Document, Concept of Operations, ATM Infrastructure Master Plan and Strategy, etc.), and that these deliverables will require prior validation by the APIRG, and by other regional planning and implementation groups (PIRGs) covering other African States located outside the AFI region.

As a reminder, APIRG is the governing and coordinating body established by the ICAO Council for all activities carried out in ICAO that pertain to the air navigation system in the AFI Region as defined by the Regional Supplementary Procedures (Doc 7030 - SUPPs); and that the work of its auxiliary bodies should be coordinated by the group in order to ensure coherence in all regional activities relating to the development and operation of the air navigation system.

I would like to take this opportunity to commend the tremendous efforts deployed by States and organizations, including the International Air Transport Association (IATA), the Air Traffic and Navigation Services Company of South Africa (ATNS) and the “Agence pour la sécurité de la navigation aérienne and Afrique et à Madagascar” (ASECNA), to support and facilitate the preliminary activities conducted. A copy of the summary of discussions of the first laboratory workshop hosted by South Africa is provided as an attachment to this letter, for your reference.

Please accept, Sir, Madam, the assurances of my highest consideration.



Prosper Zo'o Minto'o
Regional Director
Western and Central Africa & Secretary of
the APIRG

Attachment: Summary of Discussions on the first Lab Workshop