

**58<sup>th</sup> CONFERENCE OF  
DIRECTORS GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION  
ASIA AND PACIFIC REGIONS**

*Dhaka, Bangladesh  
15 – 19 October 2023*

**AGENDA ITEM 4: AIR NAVIGATION**

**MEASURES TO IMPROVE CONTINGENCY PREPAREDNESS  
IN THE REGION**

(Presented by CANSO and co-sponsored by IATA)

**SUMMARY**

The ICAO secretariat has highlighted the poor implementation of contingency planning in the region at the last DGCA. There are two common and perennial problems in contingency preparedness that have been borne out from several disruptive events. The first is the lack of information flow, and the second is the lack of formal agreements with neighbouring States as required by Annex 11, as their operations are impacted by the contingency plan. To help mitigate the situation, CANSO is offering an Operational Information System (OIS) that is simple and free to use. This will be a useful information-sharing tool for business continuity. To help with the lack of formal agreements, CANSO is offering to facilitate a central meeting place for regional ANSPs to conduct contingency plan consultations. This will be akin to the ICAO Air Services Negotiation (ICAN) process. While it may not result in the immediate signing of formal agreements on the spot, it can lay the foundation for the signing offline.

## MEASURES TO IMPROVE CONTINGENCY PREPAREDNESS IN THE REGION

### 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 At the 57<sup>th</sup> DGCA held in Seoul, Republic of Korea last year, the ICAO secretariat put up a paper on *Key APAC Air Traffic Management Challenges 2020-2022 – Focus on ATM Contingency Planning and Operations (DGCA-57/DP/4/1)*. The paper highlighted the poor implementation of contingency planning in the region. Some of the lessons learnt from three major contingency events in the region were discussed in July last year before additional ATM disruptions occurred early this year. One common and perennial problem is the lack of information flow when disruptive events occur. The lack of situational awareness adds to the stress of an unusual and uncertain situation when time is of the essence in a contingency.

1.2 Invariably, other States and service providers will be affected by the unexpected event and the activation of contingency actions. It is not enough for States to just have a contingency plan in isolation. Annex 11, as captured below, requires that there be a formal agreement with neighbouring States that will be affected or expected to provide services. The lack of formal agreement for contingency is another common lesson highlighted in the ICAO Secretariat paper to DGCA last year.

#### *Annex 11, Attachment C*

*5.4 In the case of multi-State ventures, detailed coordination leading to formal agreement of the emerging contingency plan should be undertaken with each State which is to participate. Such detailed coordination should also be undertaken with those States whose services will be significantly affected, for example, by re-routing of traffic, and with international organizations concerned who provide invaluable operational insight and experience.*

1.3 This paper follows up on the above important matter, which deserves a priority response. It offers two tangible measures to address the abovementioned limitations in regional contingency preparedness.

### 2. DISCUSSION

2.1 Service disruptions could happen due to ATM system problems, industrial actions, civil unrest, or natural disasters. Such shocks can be dislocating but can be mitigated with more coordination. This can start with a simple and cost-effective means of information sharing that can be easily proliferated.

2.2 The Latin America and the Caribbean region (LAC) have experienced the long-duration impact of lightning strike at an Area Control Center (ACC) that disabled its operational capabilities, the devastating impact of powerful hurricanes, the impact of active volcanoes, the power outage at an ACC that resulted in the complete loss of communications, navigation, and surveillance. Hence, they have actively taken steps to minimise the negative impact on air traffic operations.

2.3 One important tool LAC uses for business continuity coordination is an Operational Information System (OIS). This allows ANSPs, and importantly, airlines, to easily access and share special events, contingency events, and operational information via the web. The information shared on the OIS includes the ANSP Contingency Form, briefings on the event, Contingency Events Checklists, and the Planned Airway System Alternative (PASA) route database. The ANSP Contingency Form collects pertinent contingency event information, puts all the available information in one form, and displays it on the OIS for stakeholders' situational awareness.

2.4 This OIS has 16 ANSPs, 19 airlines and 4 international organisations in the LAC region sharing information and collaborating on it. It has the advantage of being transparent and inclusive, with

very low barrier for entry. One reason for the proliferation of this OIS is that it is simple to use. Stakeholders can participate with just a computer and internet access, and the OIS is free to use.

2.5 There are distinct benefits in having a region-wide OIS that is simple to use and readily implementable. The Asia Pacific does not have such an OIS today. CANSO is now offering this OIS used by the LAC region free to use by the Asia Pacific region. CANSO and CGH Technologies, Inc., the developer of this OIS, signed an agreement in March 2021 to secure the use of the software for 20 Years. For contingency management, all stakeholders should be on the same platform. While another OIS can be developed, this would involve costs which may be difficult to recover. Having the same OIS as LAC has the advantage of having a common information system in the event of an inter-regional contingency. CANSO has also formed a CADENCE Task Force to encourage its adoption.

2.6 When the Asia Pacific ANSP Committee (AAC) met in April 2023, several work streams were formed to enhance ANSP regional collaboration. One of the work streams is on business continuity and contingency planning led by FAA, CAAM and JANS. This workstream is planning to conduct contingency exercises. It is strongly recommended that the above simple and free-to-use OIS be tried out during the exercises.

2.7 Besides information sharing for contingency events, another common problem is the lack of formal agreement among neighbouring States for contingency planning. Agreement is required because the plan may involve re-routing of traffic, establishment of contingency routes or reassignment of responsibility for air traffic services over the high seas. ANSPs are mainly the ones involved in the agreement consultations. As various stakeholders are involved, the process for formal agreement may be time-consuming.

2.8 The region can take a leaf from the ICAO Air Services Negotiation (ICAN) process for air services agreement. States need to meet to negotiate the exchange of air traffic rights before the signing of air services agreement. ICAN provides a central meeting place to conduct bilateral or multilateral air services negotiations and consultations. Such a marketplace has been highly commended by participants for being an efficient platform for air services negotiations.

2.9 CANSO organises an Asia Pacific Conference each year. Next year's Conference is in Chengdu, China. Since regional ANSPs are already attending the CANSO Asia Pacific Conference, something like ICAN can be arranged for the purpose of contingency consultations. CANSO is prepared to set aside one day at the side of the Conference and facilitate ANSPs to have consultations on their contingency plan. ANSPs are key stakeholders in such contingency planning. Appendix C of the ICAO Asia Pacific Regional ATM Contingency Plan provides a template which can be used as the basis for consultation. ANSPs would need to indicate who they wish to meet and send the draft contingency plan template to them before the meeting. While it may not result in the immediate signing of a formal agreement on the spot, it can trigger foundational work among neighbouring ANSPs, leading to the signing offline.

### **3. ACTION BY THE CONFERENCE**

3.1 The Conference is invited to:

- a) Note the state of contingency preparedness in the region;
- b) Support the use of an OIS for better contingency response;
- c) Discuss the relevance of a central meeting place to have contingency plan consultations.