



International Civil Aviation Organization

**Trans-Regional Airspace and Supporting ATM Systems Steering Group  
Third Meeting (TRASAS/3)**

Paris, France, 19 – 20 October 2010

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**Agenda Item 1: Report on significant international aviation developments**

**SUMMARY OF PROGRESS ON  
PROPOSED LETTER OF AGREEMENT IN THE FIELD OF AVIATION AND  
MARITIME SEARCH AND RESCUE IN THE ARCTIC REGION  
IN THE FRAMEWORK OF ARCTIC COUNCIL TASK FORCE  
ON INTERNATIONAL SEARCH & RESCUE (SAR) INSTRUMENT FOR THE ARCTIC**

*(Presented by the Russian Federation)*

**SUMMARY**

The Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Arctic Council at its April 2009 session adopted the decision to consolidate efforts of the Arctic Council member States on search and rescue in the Arctic region. For this purpose there was established a task force to develop a multilateral instrument on aviation and maritime search and rescue operations in the Arctic region. The task force involved all member States such as Russia, USA, Canada, Norway, Denmark, Iceland, Sweden and Finland. The international SAR instrument was developed for the purpose of strengthening cooperation in the field of search and rescue as well as coordination of activities in the Arctic region between the States concerned.

**1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1. The Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Arctic Council at its April 2009 session adopted the decision to consolidate efforts of the Arctic Council member States on search and rescue in the Arctic region. For this purpose there was established a task force to develop a multilateral instrument on aviation and maritime search and rescue operations in the Arctic region. The task force involved all member-states such as Russia, USA, Canada, Norway, Denmark, Iceland, Sweden and Finland. The need for a new international instrument was triggered by the increased global focus on expanding opportunities for exploration of natural resources and on the Arctic as a whole, stable growth of crosspolar and transpolar traffic operating via airspaces of Russia, USA, Canada and Norway as well as an increased seafaring in the region, which raised the risks of accidents and contingencies.

(2 pages)

## **2. DISCUSSION**

- 2.1. As of now the task force had already met four times: Washington D.C., USA (December 2009), Moscow, Russia (February 2010), Oslo (June 2010) and Helsinki (October 2010). The next round of discussions was scheduled to take place in early December 2010 in Reykjavik, Iceland. The signing of the agreement was planned at the Ministers of Foreign Affairs' session in May 2011 in Greenland.
- 2.2. The Agreement was based on the 1944 Chicago Convention and 1979 International Convention on maritime search and rescue.
- 2.3. The task force member States agreed that the multilateral instrument should be formalized as a Letter of Agreement on aviation and maritime search and rescue in the Arctic region (further referred to as Agreement). The Agreement was considered a legally binding document for all parties concerned.
- 2.4. Pursuant to Annex 12 to Chicago Convention, the main purpose of the Agreement was to determine the coordination procedures between the States on search and rescue operations in the Arctic region as well as delineation of search and rescue areas of responsibilities between the adjacent States.
- 2.5. Some of the States did not have bilateral Letters of Agreement on the boundaries of search and rescue areas. This Agreement was developed to delineate the boundaries of these areas.
- 2.6. The Helsinki meeting mainly focused on defining and coordinating the areas of responsibilities for search and rescue activities between the States concerned. The States also agreed to carry out internal coordination of search and rescue areas of responsibilities before the Reykjavik meeting. At the above meeting the Russian Federation generally agreed to the boundaries of search and rescue areas with USA and Norway. The determination of boundaries between Russia and Denmark's areas of responsibilities (Sonderstrom FIR) would be continued as part of the trilateral consultation process between Russia, Denmark and Norway.
- 2.7. Respective notifications to ICAO and IMO would be sent for their coordination and approval upon finalization of the approval process with the national authorities.

## **3. ACTION BY THE MEETING.**

### **3.1 The meeting is invited:**

- a) to note the information provided in this information paper;
- b) to request ICAO EUR/NAT Secretariat to send an official letter to the Arctic Council on the procedure for introducing the agreed boundaries of search and rescue areas of responsibilities between the adjacent States.

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