



**SECOND MEETING OF THE CSCAP STUDY GROUP ON
HARMONISATION OF AERONAUTICAL AND MARITIME SEARCH AND RESCUE**

Venue & Timing:

Hotel Taj Mansingh, New Delhi
April 8-9, 2016.

Co-Chairs

CSCAP India and CSCAP Malaysia

CONCEPT NOTE

Background

Global Context

International Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue (IAMSAR) manuals call for a comprehensive global SAR system. However, ICAO Convention of Civil Aviation 1944 Annex 12 (SAR) and IMO SAR Convention 1978 created distinct approaches to SAR. In light of this, the ICAO-IMO Joint Working Group (JWG) was established in 1993, with the objective of assisting ICAO and IMO in developing provisions regarding new holistic search and rescue techniques and procedures where both aeronautical and maritime interests were involved. The JWG is currently working on a new version of IAMSAR to be published in June 2016.

Regional Context

The Asia-Pacific is a maritime-configured region with increasing traffic, both by sea and air. The regional community is becoming increasingly aware of the imperatives of SAR, including in terms of harmonization of its aeronautical and maritime elements. In 2012, the ICAO Bangkok Regional Office established the Asia/Pacific Search and Rescue Task Force (APSAR/TF) with the objective of considering the enhancement and improvement of SAR capabilities within the Asia/Pacific Region and adjacent regions. In September 2015, the Task Force developed the Asia Pacific SAR Plan.

In the Asia-Pacific, another leading forum on SAR matters is the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF). In the wake of the 2014 incident relating to the Malaysian Airlines flight MH370, the ARF issued a statement, which called “for regional countries to strengthen SAR coordination and cooperation at bilateral, regional and multilateral levels, including through dialogue and cooperation in ARF” (**Attachment A**). The Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia-

Pacific (CSCAP) serves as a Track II resource for the ARF. In 2015, the CSCAP established the Study Group on Harmonization of Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue, noting that *'In spite of international, extra-regional and regional efforts, many States in the region are yet to harmonize aeronautical and maritime SAR architectures as there are no policy recommendations to do so. CSCAP has the opportunity to conduct studies into the benefits and the way forward to harmonizing SAR.'*

First CSCAP Meeting

The first meeting of the Study Group was held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on 19-20 June 2015. The meeting led to the formulation of an overarching approach and framework of cooperation to harmonize aeronautical and maritime SAR in the Asia-Pacific, and outlined the broad areas and issues wherein the two dimensions of the member States' SAR effort needed to be harmonized. The findings of the meeting reflected in the Co-Chairs' Report (**Attachment B**) encompasses a host of measures ranging from accession to the relevant conventions and forging inter-State agreements to national and trans-national coordination and standardization. The report further states the need to study the areas/ issues in greater depth.

Second CSCAP Meeting

As a sequel, the second meeting of the Study Group is being conducted at New Delhi on 8-9 April 2016. To follow-up the study, it is realized that greater insight into the country-perspectives would be necessary to identify the specific approaches and nuances of such harmonization, with the aim of feeding pertinent recommendations into the policymaking process.

Towards this end, the endeavor of this meeting would be to understand the country-specific aspects of aeronautical and maritime SAR pertaining to the CSCAP member States. These include their organizational structures, policy formulation processes and their implementation architecture in terms of functional aspects, subdivision of responsibilities and inter-agency coordination. It is also considered necessary to obtain insights from country-representatives into their respective SAR guiding philosophies/ doctrines, their national positions on SAR-related legal instruments, any SAR-related MoUs that they may have signed with other countries, and the responsiveness of their national SAR plans as part of the global SAR policies and plans.

It will also be necessary to be aware of the challenges and constraints that the countries may be encountering with regard to organizational, legal, financial or technological issues, to obtain their insights on how to overcome such challenges, and learn their experiences. The lack of capacity may be expected to be a major challenge for the regional countries. On the other hand, capacity-building bears a high potential for cooperation among the countries. The country-perspectives would, therefore, need to address issues of capacity constraints and opportunities, including in terms of cross-competency/ cross-training in aeronautical and maritime SAR. All these issues are encapsulated the attached questionnaire, as a guide for the participants to prepare their papers and presentations. (**Attachment C**).

The meeting would also need assimilate perspectives of the non-resident and functional ‘stakeholders’ – like the IMO and ICAO – in the context of global SAR initiatives and developments, particularly in organizational and legal terms. Furthermore, given the security environment in the Asia-Pacific, it is becoming increasingly probable for terrorism or other forms of subversion to be the cause of maritime and aviation disasters. Hence, the study would also need to factor such acts directed against maritime and air transportation, which would be relevant for both SAR policymaking and implementation.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives, therefore, of the second meeting of the CSCAP study group on Harmonization of Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue are enunciated as follows:

- To generate awareness of best-practices and lessons-learnt with regard to regional States’ SAR organization, processes and experiences.
- To map the ‘common denominators’ as well as divergences through a comparison of the country perspectives.
- To identify areas of SAR cooperation at the bilateral and multi-lateral levels, and the impediments to cooperation.
- To provide recommendations on harmonization aeronautical and maritime SAR for national policy-making; and more broadly to the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) and at relevant global forums.
- To reinforce the findings of the Asia-Pacific SAR Task Force.



**1st Meeting of the CSCAP Study Group on
Harmonization of Aeronautical and Maritime
Search and Rescue (SAR)**

Intercontinental Hotel, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
19-20 June 2015

Co-Chairs' Report

Introduction

1. The first meeting of the CSCAP Study Group was held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on 19-20 June 2015 with Malaysia and India as Co-Chairs. The meeting was attended by 30 participants from Australia, China, India, Japan, Malaysia, New Zealand, Republic of Korea, Singapore, United States, Viet Nam, and a Subject Matter Expert (SME) from Chinese Taipei. Representatives from various think-tanks and SAR-related agencies from the United States, Malaysia, Singapore and People's Republic of China were also present. The Chairman of the *ICAO-IMO Joint Working Group on Harmonisation of SAR* participated to provide the overarching framework on harmonisation and to guide the Study Group in complementing other efforts on strengthening SAR cooperation and coordination.
2. The next meeting is scheduled to be held in India this year and will build on the findings of the first meeting. The following is a summary of the proceedings.

Session 1: Overview on Global SAR Plan and IAMSAR Manual

3. International Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue (IAMSAR) manuals call for a *Global SAR Plan* established under the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) Convention on Civil Aviation (1944) Annex 12 (SAR) and the International Maritime Organisation SAR Convention 1978. However, a number of states in the region are either yet to ratify both Conventions or develop responsive National SAR Systems taking into account the requirements of IAMSAR and the need towards a Global SAR Plan.
4. Recent global and regional aviation and maritime incidents call for enhancement and coordination in aeronautical and maritime SAR responses. The ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) issued a Statement in 2014 calling for the strengthening of coordination and cooperation in aeronautical and maritime SAR. A CSCAP Study Group on harmonization of aeronautical and maritime SAR was established in 2015 to identify and deliberate on specific areas for states to harmonise SAR in order to strengthen internal and external cooperation and coordination in Aeronautical and Maritime SAR. While studying this, it was also borne on mind that the ensuing effectiveness and efficiency of a regional SAR may also contribute to effectively responding to complex regional scenarios such as mass rescue and Humanitarian Assistance/Disaster Relief (HA/DR).

Session 2 – Approaches to Harmonise Aeronautical and Maritime SAR

5. The ICAO-IMO Joint Working Group (JWG) on Harmonisation of SAR was established in 1993 with the objective of assisting the ICAO and IMO in developing provisions regarding new SAR techniques and procedures where both aeronautical and maritime interests are involved. The revised IAMSAR Manual is scheduled to be published in 2016.
6. The ICAO Asia and Pacific Regional Office (APAC) has drafted the regional *Asia Pacific SAR Plan* to enable the region to meet the objectives of improving the SAR System. ASEAN has drafted the *ASEAN SAR Agreement* to enhance cooperation among members.
7. In spite of international, extra-regional and regional efforts, many states in the region are yet to identify areas that can be harmonized to effectively and efficiently cooperate and coordinate aeronautical and maritime SAR as there are no policy recommendations to do so. On completion of the Study Group Meetings, a CSCAP Memorandum will complement the existing frameworks in providing policy recommendations to Asia Pacific states in strengthening coordination and cooperation in this area. These recommendations may serve as regional best practices at the global level.
8. The Study Group paid particular attention to avoid duplication while complementing similar efforts on strengthening SAR.

Session 3: A Survey on Policies and Structures to enhance cooperation in Aeronautical and Maritime SAR in the Asia Pacific.

9. This Session collectively identified specific areas which may require harmonisation in order to strengthen cooperation and coordination in SAR. The areas identified are as follows:

9.1 SAR Policies

9.1.1 Global Level. SAR Policies are to be addressed at three levels, global, regional and national. States may need to rationalize the Flight Information Regions (FIR) and Search and Rescue Regions (SRR) proportionate to their SAR capacities.

9.1.2. Regional Level. At the regional level, the geographical scope of the study is confined to the countries in the Asia Pacific region that are members of the ARF. Notwithstanding this, considering the predominantly maritime configuration of the region, the SAR structures, capacities, etc. of the countries of adjoining SRRs would also need to be factored, which translates into extension of the geographical scope to the entire Indo-Pacific region.

9.1.3 National Level. The issues to be addressed by states would need to encompass *inter alia* the following issues:

- 9.1.3.1 Accession to International Conventions. States may need to accede to the international conventions relevant to SAR to harmonize the legal support for undertaking SAR missions. What are the national constraints or sensitivities of countries that have not acceded to these international treaties, particularly the SAR Convention, 1979?
- 9.1.3.2. Inter-State Agreements/ Agreements. As envisaged by the Asia Pacific and ASEAN SAR Plans, states may need to establish arrangements to address adjoining Search and Rescue Regions (SRR) in the form of formal agreements or Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). Could such bilateral arrangements help to assuage the sensitivities of the countries that have not acceded to the international conventions?

Session 4: Understanding Cooperative Mechanisms in National Aeronautical and Maritime SAR

10 Cooperative mechanism plays a significance role in handling any SAR operations. They are important as they should advocate the requirements of IAMSAR towards responsive National SAR Plans to be part of the regional and global SAR Plan. With this view, mechanisms which address aeronautical-maritime a, civilian-military and civilian-community (volunteers) aspects must be able to be comprehensively amalgamated into an effective and efficient system. In this context, the following mechanisms were discussed.

10.1 Rescue Coordination Centres (RCC). The use of separate Aeronautical Rescue Coordination and Maritime Rescue Coordination Centres has its shortcomings as compared to the Joint Rescue Coordination Centres (JRCC). Since coordination is the key to SAR, it will be vital for states to harmonise existing structures in strengthening cooperation and coordination especially where interoperability is concerned. The IAMSAR Manual provides guidance to states through a 'self-assessment' form. States may wish to conduct their own self assessment in recognising the need to strengthen cooperation and coordination of SAR. JRCCs provide a range of opportunities, which will be discussed further in the next Study Group meeting

10.2 Military – Civilian SAR. States that have separate military and civilian rescue capacities may need to harmonise their efforts to capitalise on the strengths and eradicate redundancies.

10.3 Community (Volunteer) SAR. There are growing number of states which have volunteers as part of the SAR System. Their roles, capacities and capabilities are vital to be harmonised into the National SAR system where every entity complements each other. Volunteers may fill gaps in civilian and military cooperative mechanisms.

11. Capacity and Capability Building. The strengthening of SAR by states may provide the impetus for capacity and capability enhancement of other states where shared competencies and capabilities will allow for better coordination and cooperation. SAR training and exercises include enhancing SAR Mission Coordinator (SMC) cross-competency in aeronautical and maritime SAR, and cross-training among diverse agencies. The inter-state SAR exercises are usually orchestrated; and therefore, these further the objective of diplomatic engagement more than enhancing SAR capabilities of participating agencies.

12. Coordination Processes. In a SAR situation, there will be a number of important coordination activities indirectly related to the main SAR effort. These include SAR logistics and regulation of information flow to the media. These processes may need to be harmonised to ensure timely and calibrated responses. This would involve a coherent SAR response to contingencies within the state, and involving inter-state cooperation, particularly in terms of synergizing the existing processes for aeronautical and maritime SAR, and the relevant civilian and military institutions. It would also involve considerations to cut-down reaction time for timely SAR response, and logistics arrangements for sustenance of SAR forces during a mission.

13. Technological Enablers. This would involve information sharing with optimum utilization of available SAR systems, maritime, aeronautical or space-based alerts and communication systems.

Session 5: Harmonisation towards Standardisation

States should not wait for accidents, calamities and catastrophes to begin collaborating. In such contingencies, the parties should have already developed adequate competency for coordinating their responses. The key lies in combined training.

Session 6: Summary and Planning for the 2nd SG Meeting in India

During this session, the SAR working group deliberated on specific areas and issues for harmonization of Aeronautical and Maritime SAR in the Asia-Pacific region, which were identified by the co-chairs. A consensus was reached, and the identified areas/issues received the consent of all participants of the working group. The areas/ issues are intended to be discussed during the 2nd Study Group meeting with the objective of strengthening the Asia Pacific Regional SAR Plan. Such a plan could be used by ARF to advise member states to strengthen SAR at national level, and serve as regional best practices at the global level. The forum agreed that the 2nd Study Group meeting be held in India.

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PRESENTATION OF COUNTRY-PERSPECTIVES

1. What is the national philosophy/ doctrine that drives maritime and aeronautical Search and Rescue (SAR) imperatives, policies and organizational structure?
2. Who are the national maritime and aeronautical SAR authorities? What are the participating agencies, the sub-division of their responsibilities and the methodology for inter-agency coordination?
3. How are national SAR policies formulated and implemented?
4. To what extent have 'aeronautical' and 'maritime' elements of national SAR response been strengthened in accordance with the IAMSAR Manual? Has a 'self assessment' been undertaken based on IAMSAR Manual? Has an audit been undertaken by an international agency like IMO?
5. What is the national position on IMO and ICAO based international legal instruments on SAR?
6. What are the national legislation(s) giving effect to global conventions, and what are their provisions?
7. Have any SAR MoUs have been signed with other countries? If yes, with which all countries, and what are the salient provisions in each? What is the mechanism for national-level SAR coordination with these countries?
8. What, if any, are the capacity constraints/opportunities for SAR, including in terms of cross-competency/ cross-training in aeronautical and maritime SAR?
9. Has a national SAR Plan been promulgated, both for maritime and aeronautical SAR? To what extent does it address effective and efficient coordination between aeronautical and maritime SAR?
10. What is the national maritime SAR voluntary reporting system in use? Since promulgation, how effective has it been in terms of reporting by foreign-flagged vessels?
11. What are your recommendations for revising /updating the IAM SAR Manual, 2013 to further harmonize aeronautical and maritime SAR?
12. Are there any real life scenarios which require a review in any aspect of aeronautical and maritime SAR ?