

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

*Denarau Island, Nadi, Fiji  
22 — 26 October 2018*

AGENDA ITEM 4 :      AIR NAVIGATION

**PACIFIC AIRSPACE ORGANISATION AND MANAGMENT**

Presented by Tuvalu and Kiribati

**INFORMATION PAPER**

**SUMMARY**

Discussions on the organisation and management of Upper Airspace in the Pacific have been undertaken in many forums and on several levels over a number of decades. Numerous reports and recommendation have been generated.

The discussion on the political level in the Pacific Islands Forum has not been matched by related discussion in the technical airspace management and air navigation forums attended by representatives of the member States.

This paper provides all States with an update on the PIF policies with respect to Upper Airspace to enable them to consider action to ensure the airspace practitioner and political level discussions are coherent.

## PACIFIC AIRSPACE ORGANISATION AND MANAGEMENT

### 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 During technical level discussions on the Pacific Upper Airspace policies of the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) it has become apparent that a disconnect or lack of coordination and lack of understanding of those policies exists between the political level and the airspace management and air navigation practitioners of the member States of that organisation.

1.2 Kiribati has recently taken an active role in informing the technical representatives of ICAO APAC region on the political level discussions and policies of the PIF with respect to the organisation and management of Upper Airspace in the Pacific.

1.3 The Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) is a political grouping of 16 independent and self-governing states. Members include Australia, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, New Zealand, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Republic of Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu. Associate members include New Caledonia, Tokelau and French Polynesia. Current Forum Observers include: Wallis and Futuna, the Commonwealth, the United Nations, the Asian Development Bank, Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission, the World Bank, the ACP Group, American Samoa, Guam and the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas and the International Organization for Migration with Timor Leste as Special Observer.

1.4 The Small Island States (SIS) form part of the PIF.

1.5 Information on the PIF and SIS discussions and policy concerning airspace in the Pacific was provided to APANPIRG ATMSG/5 and discussed at APANPIRG/28, including an informal meeting of Stakeholders attending APANPIRG/28. Additional information was provided to APANPIRG ATMSG/6. A meeting of Stakeholders was held in Nadi in November 2017. It is planned to hold a side meeting of Stakeholders during DGCA/55.

### 2. DISCUSSION

2.1 Discussions on rearrangement of the Pacific Upper Airspace have been ongoing since 1993 and possibly earlier. Numerous studies have been conducted and reports issued. With one exception (2003) the reports have recommended some form of reorganisation of the airspace to both achieve greater efficiency in airspace management, consistent with the ICAO policies, as well as recognising the sovereignty claims of the smaller States.

2.2 The 48th meeting of the PIF was held in Apia, SAMOA during September 2017 at the same time as APANPIRG/28. That (PIF) meeting issued a communique providing, inter alia, reports of the airspace discussions and updates to the PIF and SIS policy.

#### Communique

2.3 The sections of the Communique of the 48th Meeting of the Pacific Islands Forum relating to Pacific Airspace are as follows:

#### a) **From the 48th Leaders' Forum**

Leaders acknowledged the importance of addressing equitable and accessible air services, including maximising benefits of greater ownership of upper airspace management by SIS. Leaders further recognised the urgency of addressing air services and upper airspace management and the importance of addressing these as separate issues.

**b) From the SIS Leaders Meeting**

Leaders acknowledged the importance of addressing equitable and accessible air services, including maximising benefits of greater ownership of upper airspace management by SIS. Leaders further recognised the urgency of addressing air services and upper airspace management and the importance of addressing these as separate issues.

Leaders agreed that the World Bank be requested to prioritise further work on the options identified for improvements in upper airspace management, taking into account current legal and institutional arrangements.

Leaders supported the conducting of an Aviation Officials and Ministers meeting to consider aviation issues and make recommendations for SIS Leaders' consideration at their meeting in Nauru in 2018.

Leaders tasked the Secretariat to work with Cook Islands and Nauru to share experiences with SIS that may progress upper airspace management arrangements and opportunities.

Leaders agreed to explore the legal status of upper air space areas of the high seas that are encircled by the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of SIS and their legal implications with respect to the UN Convention of the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), and a regional approach to upper air space management.

2.4 The 2018 meeting of the PIF was held in Nauru during the period 3-6 September. That meeting confirmed the policies articulated in the 2017 meeting communique.

**3. ACTION BY THE CONFERENCE**

3.1 The Conference is invited to:

- c) note the policies of the Pacific Islands Forum in relation to Pacific Upper Airspace;
- d) consider the means by which the political level PIF policies may be progressed within the technical forums of the ICAO APAC region.

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